



Interview with Joan Hague

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: Ms. Hague's home, Freehold, NJ
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Mr. Aumack: It is a pleasure to be with you. Let's start from the beginning: when did you come to Monmouth County and why?

Ms. Hague: My husband loved Monmouth County. I met him when he was stationed at Fort Monmouth, and everything was just green. It was all farms, and very few homes that were seeable from the highway. There were no stores whatsoever, and no billboards. It was just a beautiful place to live. My husband had never been to the ocean until he met me, and that became his second love. He just loved the ocean. I didn't have four kids to watch in the ocean, I had five kids to watch. So of course Mom never got in the water, because she was watching all five of them in the water. (laughter) But it was enjoyable growing up. Long Beach Island is in Ocean County, but we spent as much time down there as we could. My parents owned a home down there, and we spent a lot of time in the summers down there.

Mr. Aumack: Now you moved to Middletown when you first moved here?

Ms. Hague: Yes, in 1954.

Mr. Aumack: What highway, if any, was there?

Ms. Hague: Route 35.

Mr. Aumack: And that was it?

Ms. Hague: Yes, there was no Parkway.

Mr. Aumack: No Garden State Parkway.

Ms. Hague: No Garden State Parkway.

Mr. Aumack: And no Turnpike. Was there a Turnpike, do you know?

Ms. Hague: I don't remember if the Turnpike was built back then. It may have been.

Mr. Aumack: Did Route 35 have a lot of traffic?

Ms. Hague: Yes, more or less like the Parkway, but not the volume they have now. But there was quite a bit. I remember in the hurricane of 1937 that hit New York also hit New Jersey along the coast.

Mr. Aumack: Did it hit you in Middletown?

Ms. Hague: We were on Long Beach Island. We got off the island just before the tidal wave hit.

Mr. Aumack: Whew!

Ms. Hague: And there were two cars. My mom and dad and my twin and myself were in one car, and my aunt, cousin, and my older sister were in the other car. And we drove up Route 9, weaving in and out of farms because of trees and wires down. We got stuck in Freehold, and transformers were blowing up. A nice couple came down from an apartment next to where we were parked and invited us up for the night.

Mr. Aumack: Oh wow!

Ms. Hague: So I think we slept on the floor, but I don't remember that part of it. But the rest of it I remember vividly. The sky was yellow before the storm hit, and the ocean was like a lake. The sand, as we were going off, was coming down as hard as the water. The causeway was under water, so we barely made it off in time. We could have been caught down there. But the house we were staying in survived it. The house we stayed in on Long Beach Island was in Ship Bottom, and that house survived and was not swept away. The owners stayed down there and saw the tidal wave go over their home. And they survived. That's why I would never own a home on the ocean. I think if I could afford it, I'd spend the summers down there now. But I would never own a home there.

Mr. Aumack: Because of what you witnessed.

Ms. Hague: Yes, and there was also a bad storm in 1962, a Northeaster. That was right after my mother and father died. I could sit on the front stoop a block and a half away from the ocean, and I could see the ocean. It was just flat all the way to the ocean.

Mr. Aumack: What town did you growing up in?

Ms. Hague: I grew up in Cranford, New Jersey, which is in Union County.

Mr. Aumack: Do you remember the name of this hurricane that you were telling me about?

Ms. Hague: No. It's probably in the newspapers, because they have talked about it on television.

Mr. Aumack: How did you hear about it? Were you on the beach and then saw it coming?

Ms. Hague: We knew there was a bad storm or hurricane coming, so we opened the trunks of both cars and literally threw everything in. We didn't pack suitcases, we just threw everything right into the trunks and got off as fast as we could.

Mr. Aumack: Did you think that you were going to lose your home?

Ms. Hague: Well, that was not a home we owned at the time. My parents didn't buy one until many years later. This was a rental. It was scary!

Mr. Aumack: What about the Northeaster in 1962? Where were you?

Ms. Hague: We were not on the island at the time.

Mr. Aumack: Were you in Monmouth County in 1962?

Ms. Hague: Yes, in Middletown. My parents owned a home on Long Beach Island. My uncle's mother owned two homes, and they were both destroyed. The stoop was left of one, and the chimney was left of the other. The island was cut in three sections. That was devastating! I have a lot of pictures of it.

Mr. Aumack: Now you came here in 1954.

Ms. Hague: December 17th, to be exact.

Mr. Aumack: How old were you when you moved down here?

Ms. Hague: I got married when I was twenty, so I was twenty-two years old.

Mr. Aumack: Now you suggested to your husband that you move down here? Or did he want to move down here?

Ms. Hague: He wanted to move down here, which was fine.

Mr. Aumack: Where did you move to, do you remember the address?

Ms. Hague: Yes, 29 Handyboy Court. That's where that picture is from.

Mr. Aumack: Oh wow. How long did you live there?

Ms. Hague: From 1954 to 1983.

Mr. Aumack: At the time, what was your husband doing? What was his job in 1954?

Ms. Hague: He was an x-ray technician, and then x-ray manager for General Electric. He worked for them for twenty-five years in medical x-ray and then industrial x-ray. He was an expert in the field on some equipment. In fact, I would get calls up to two or three years after he died asking for him.

Mr. Aumack: Now was he one of the pioneers of x-rays?

Ms. Hague: No. General Electric isn't in that field anymore. They sold that part of the company.

Mr. Aumack: Tell me about your husband's work on the first hydrogen bomb test.

Ms. Hague: I don't know too much about it, because he never talked about it. All I know is it was a rock in the middle of the Pacific, and that's where he worked. That's really as far as I know. He did not go into any detail at all.

Mr. Aumack: Do you know how long he was working on it?

Ms. Hague: Probably about one and a half years, until he was injured. Then he was sent to a hospital in Hawaii, in Honolulu. He was there for eight or nine months.

Mr. Aumack: How did he become injured?

Ms. Hague: Unloading a ship. A cable snapped, and he got a crate on his back.

Mr. Aumack: I thought maybe it would have something to do with radiation.

Ms. Hague: No, it had nothing to do with radiation.

Mr. Aumack: So it was a safe distance away?

Ms. Hague: He worked in microwave.

Mr. Aumack: Alright, we'll get back to that later on. So he worked from 1950 until about mid-1952 on the island where the H-bomb was set off.

Ms. Hague: No, that was before we were married.

Mr. Aumack: Do you know the year he worked on the first H-bomb?

Ms. Hague: I don't know if he actually worked on the H-bomb, just that he worked on the island. He got out of the hospital in Honolulu in the spring of 1952. So it was the two years previous to that, I guess, which was when he started. The island is no more. The island was destroyed during the test, which they expected. You would probably find it on an old map, but not the new maps.

Mr. Aumack: So this was the first hydrogen bomb test in the world?

Ms. Hague: As far as I know.

Mr. Aumack: Wow, that's big!

Ms. Hague: I guess he was like a lot of other servicemen, they just didn't want to talk about their experiences. And he was one of them. It didn't bother him not to talk about it.

Mr. Aumack: What did he do in the service?

Ms. Hague: He worked on microwave.

Mr. Aumack: Was that the Army?

Ms. Hague: Yes, the Army.

Mr. Aumack: What did he do with microwave?

Ms. Hague: I have no idea. I'm not much help in that category.

Mr. Aumack: That's fine. Tell us what movies you saw when you were younger.

Ms. Hague: I enjoyed the movies, but my husband hated going to the movies. When we were married, we very rarely ever went to a movie. I wanted to see the first James Bond movie. It came out the year he died. He died before the movie came out. No, it wasn't *Star Wars*. It was one of the James Bond movies, the first one that came out.

Mr. Aumack: *Doctor No* was the first movie.

Ms. Hague: I wanted to go see it, and he wouldn't go. He said to wait until next year and it would be on television. When it did come out on television, I told him that was the longest year I ever waited. Eleven years later it came out on television!

Mr. Aumack: Wow, was it worth it?

Ms. Hague: Yes, it was worth it. I have enjoyed every one.

Mr. Aumack: So have I.

Ms. Hague: Now I usually watch them on HBO.

Mr. Aumack: Why did he hate the movies?

Ms. Hague: Probably because he fell asleep when he went. I had a brother-in-law who used to do the same thing. He used to fall asleep at the movies, so he didn't enjoy going either. Some men just don't like it.

Mr. Aumack: When he was working on microwave, he was working at Fort Monmouth, correct?

Ms. Hague: He was working at Fort Monmouth, but he got a discharge when he left the hospital. It was a medical discharge.

Mr. Aumack: So then he worked for General Electric.

Ms. Hague: He worked for them since high school. The first five years we were married, he put himself through night school at Seton Hall.

Mr. Aumack: That's good!

Ms. Hague: He got his business degree and ended up being manager at the office in his field, the industrial x-ray and at first medical x-ray, when he worked in hospitals. Then he switched over to industrial x-ray. Many nights he'd go out at two o'clock in the morning and come home at four o'clock, reeking of beer because he'd be going to a factory that made beer and the line wasn't working. And of course that's all done by x-ray. All the cans are x-rayed. If the amount was under or over the limit in the can, the cans would automatically be kicked off the assembly line. And of course, then all of them would start to be kicked off. So he would have to go up and fix it, and he'd come home reeking of beer. And he hated beer! He wouldn't touch it. He very rarely drank anything.

Mr. Aumack: Tell me more about what he did with x-ray, to your memory.

Ms. Hague: Well he spent a good many years in medical x-ray, and then he switched over to the industrial. There was something out in Harrisburg, and he would go out there. He spent a lot of time there. He also spent time at the Whitman Chocolate Factory, which he always enjoyed because he would bring home five-pound boxes of discards. They tasted just as good, they just weren't formed like little candies.

Mr. Aumack: Oh wow, so you got the great chocolate.

Ms. Hague: Yes, we got the great chocolate. Of course this was many, many years ago. But he enjoyed his work. He was offered a promotion out to Milwaukee, which was one of the main branches at the time. And he turned it down. He would not take an office job. He said it would drive him up the wall to sit in an office from nine to five. He liked being out on the road.

Mr. Aumack: So he was like a field engineer, or something like that?

Ms. Hague: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: Ok. Why did he change from medical to industrial?

Ms. Hague: It was a step up. It was a nice promotion.

Mr. Aumack: Oh, that's nice. What did he do with industrial x-ray besides the assembly line work?

Ms. Hague: Any problems anybody had with their x-ray machines, he would go out and analyze it and find out what was wrong. And then he would fix it. When he was first diagnosed with heart problems, he had to go in for an x-ray. I think it is an echocardiogram, where they put the probe into the heart. And the x-ray went out. And they saw everything through the x-ray, where the probe was going in. And it broke down in the middle of the test. And he laid there and told them how to fix the x-ray. So they got it working again, and they were able to continue with the test. They could not believe it, the doctors there, that he could lie there and tell them exactly what was wrong and how to fix it.

Mr. Aumack: Was he in pain?

Ms. Hague: Not as far as I know. They did call him a walking time bomb. Then he had a quadruple by-pass. And he died eight months later. He was forty-seven years old.

Mr. Aumack: So he died in...

Ms. Hague: In 1976, St. Patrick's Day.

Mr. Aumack: When you were in Middletown in the 1950s, where did you shop for groceries, produce, and things like that?

Ms. Hague: When I was in Middletown, I shopped at A & P on Route 36. There were no supermarkets in Middletown yet. Once they built supermarkets, then I shopped in Middletown.

Mr. Aumack: Let's talk about when you heard about Pearl Harbor. You had discussed hearing about what happened on the radio.

Ms. Hague: I was nine years old, and I heard about it on the radio. I can remember it as clear as if it was yesterday, hearing that radio report that Pearl Harbor had been bombed. It shocked everybody. I also remember the Hindenberg very clearly. Also, one time I was talking on the phone to my husband in Milwaukee, and he asked what that loud noise was over the phone. And I said I didn't know, but it was a very bad explosion somewhere here. That was when one of the silos or something blew up at Earle Naval Station. I saw pieces of metal flying up in the air. And that was quite a bit away from where I lived off Route 35, and this was over at Earle in Atlantic Highlands.

Mr. Aumack: So how many miles was that?

Ms. Hague: It was several miles away.

Mr. Aumack: And you still saw metal flying?

Ms. Hague: Flying over hundred-year old trees, yes, straight up in the air. The whole house shook. I know there were some killed, but I don't know how many.

Mr. Aumack: Did you later hear why it exploded?

Ms. Hague: If I did, I don't recall why it exploded. I also remember feeling an earthquake in Middletown.

Mr. Aumack: Oh, tell us about that.

Ms. Hague: It was just like a loud bang! They said in the paper the next day that it was an earthquake. It shook the house, and it lasted only three or four seconds, if that. And it surprised me--an earthquake in New Jersey! But that's what they said it was.

Mr. Aumack: Let's go back to Pearl Harbor. The gentleman on the radio, what did he sound like?

Ms. Hague: Very, very serious. I don't know what newscaster was on. Also, when the Hindenberg went down, the announcer was crying. They still play the

recording of the announcer, and he was crying. And that really hit hard to hear that. He saw it coming down and crashing, it was so emotional to him that he was in tears. One of my sons-in-law works at Lakehurst now with the MTSB.

Mr. Aumack: So he actually witnessed this.

Ms. Hague: Yes, he witnessed the whole thing. And I also remember the newscast of the Martians landing in southern Jersey, somewhere. (laughter)

Mr. Aumack: That radio program, *The War of the Worlds*. Did you hear that on the radio?

Ms. Hague: Yes, I heard part of it. I don't remember too much, but I do remember that it was all over the news and the newspapers. I thought it was an absolute riot!

Mr. Aumack: Did you believe that Martians were landing?

Ms. Hague: No.

Mr. Aumack: Because a lot of people did believe it.

Ms. Hague: I know a lot of people did.

Mr. Aumack: They got into their cars and packed up everything, like you did when you knew that a storm was coming. And they drove off! But you were cool?

Ms. Hague: I don't recollect. I don't even remember what year it was in, so I don't know how old I was.

Mr. Aumack: It sounds like you were entertained instead of fooled.

Ms. Hague: Yes, it was more entertainment than anything else.

Mr. Aumack: When you were in Middletown in the 1950s, what was hospital and medical care like? Where was the nearest hospital from Middletown?

Ms. Hague: Riverview Hospital.

Mr. Aumack: Was there any talk of faulty medical care, to your recollection?

Ms. Hague: I heard rumors about Bay Shore Hospital in the early 1970s or late 1960s. My daughter was in a car accident in 1974, and she was taken to Bay Shore. The care that she got there was beyond reproach. She had fourteen operations over three years and had excellent care. The nurses and doctors were great. And I lost my husband in those same three years.

Mr. Aumack: This was on her leg?

Ms. Hague: On her arm. She almost lost her arm. Surgeons wanted to take her arm off, and we said no. We called our neighbor, who was our doctor and close friend, and he told us who to get. In fact, I'm going to go see that doctor in the next couple of weeks. I have to have some tests done there.

Mr. Aumack: Do you think that Bay Shore is to blame for the arm problems of your daughter?

Ms. Hague: No, it if wasn't for them, she wouldn't have an arm. Dr. Kappy was a new doctor that was just starting practice, and they said he was phenomenal. And he certainly was! He was an orthopedic doctor. And then there was Dr. Norwitz, who was the plastic surgeon. And they did wonders for her.

Mr. Aumack: Good. When your husband had his quadruple by-pass, where was the operation done?

Ms. Hague: Mt. Sinai, New York City.

Mr. Aumack: Do you remember any other faulty medical work at Bay Shore? Any rumors?

Ms. Hague: I just heard a few rumors that it wasn't the best hospital to go to. And yet the nurses, the doctors, and everybody there was fantastic. I was there every day. It got to the point that if I went to the cafeteria, I would get my meals for half-price. They thought I worked there. And I didn't let them know any different. (laughter) At that point, I was just widowed. And any money I could save, I would. I would just go up to my daughter's room, hang my coat up, and then go back down and have breakfast. When she was in Intensive Care, I stayed with her all day. They didn't have enough help, so I would bathe and feed her. And they were very grateful for any help that I could give.

Mr. Aumack: You discussed an armored car robbery. Describe that as best you can.

Ms. Hague: The first I had heard of it was a phone call saying there had been a shooting and a robbery at the Two Guys Store. We were told to close and lock our doors, and to close and lock all our windows, because they were back in Applebrook. So we did that. And there was a policeman with a rifle and a dog on every corner. And they tracked them over to the next development, which is now behind Bradley's in Middletown. It was scary! People looked out their windows, and then they would call the police and say, "They just went through my yard." They told me, when they called me, to call as many neighbors as I could and let them know. So they had not called every person in the development. So I called

all my neighbors and told them to lock up and stay away from the windows and doors.

Mr. Aumack: Now this was in Middletown?

Ms. Hague: Yes, in Middletown.

Mr. Aumack: Do you remember the amount of money that they took?

Ms. Hague: I have no idea. They also had someone who was breaking into homes. I don't remember exactly when that was, but they made one major mistake. He or they tried to break into the home of an FBI agent, who lived in our development. In fact he was a friend of ours. The robber couldn't get into his house, but because he tried, they got him. They got him in California, as a matter of fact.

Mr. Aumack: Do you know what gave the burglar away?

Ms. Hague: No, I don't. All I know is that he made the mistake of trying to break into this FBI agent's house. (Laughter) I don't know if they still live in Applebrook or not. I go back there occasionally. In fact my kids were in the house they grew up in. Last week they drove over there and knocked on the door, and the woman let them in. So they got to see the house.

Mr. Aumack: Before this crime, did you lock your doors or anything?

Ms. Hague: No. We lived on a dead-end street. It was just a cul-de-sac at the end of the street, and there was a meadow down at the end of the street. My brother-in-law died last November, and up until that time, my sister never locked a door, morning, noon, or night. Now she does because she is alone. But nowadays, I don't think it's safe for anyone to leave a door unlocked. I don't take the chance, and I'm alone. I don't lock my storm door at night, so if anything happens, my kids can get in the house. I don't have a key to the storm door. It was never given to me when I moved in.

Mr. Aumack: It's just incredible. Why do you think that people feel they have to lock their doors now?

Ms. Hague: There is a lot more crime now than there was back when I was growing up. I don't remember locking the door when I grew up or where I moved to when I got married.

Mr. Aumack: Now in your development, did everyone know everyone else?

Ms. Hague: Everybody knew everybody else for blocks around. My son had twenty-seven other boys in the development that he played with. So he never

had a lack of playmates. My eldest daughter had a problem with playmates because we were new in the development, and we were the first house on the street. She had no playmates, so she was the only one that went to nursery school. And that was so she would have contact with other children. But the others, I never had to send them to nursery school because there were a lot of playmates around.

Mr. Aumack: It sounds like if there was a criminal who was local, it sounds like they could say, "Oh, he lives two houses down."

Ms. Hague: Well, it was unusual for someone to come into the development because there was only one way in and one way out by car. So a professional would not come into our development, so it had to be somebody local, possibly teenagers.

Mr. Aumack: Let's talk about the names of the horses for the streets. Talk about Applebrook.

Ms. Hague: It used to be a working farm, and they raised horses there. And they did actual farming there. Back before that, the Conover family raised horses. And all the streets are named after horses. The main street is Hamiltonian Drive. Then there's Attaboy, Gayboy, Handyboy, Orphanboy and Highboy Court. We lived on Handyboy Court, and they called my husband the Handy Man of Handyboy Court, because he could fix anything.

Mr. Aumack: So was he the neighborhood handyman, then?

Ms. Hague: Yes, if anybody had problems, they would call on John.

Mr. Aumack: I guess his weekends were a little filled sometimes.

Ms. Hague: Always. We could never use the garage because it was filled with x-ray equipment. He would take old x-ray equipment and bring it up to par, and then he would sell it. It was a way to earn extra money. He was a good man. I never dared open the garage door when he was working though, because the air sometimes would get kind of blue.

Mr. Aumack: Why would it get blue?

Ms. Hague: Swearing.

Mr. Aumack: Oh, I see.

Ms. Hague: He didn't smoke, and he would never swear in front of the kids or me. I never heard a swear word come out of him, except once when I opened the garage door. And I didn't do that again.

Mr. Aumack: Talk to us about Dearborn Farms.

Ms. Hague: It was a tragedy when they sold that. I spent a lot of time there, and it was a great place. I always bought all my fruits and vegetables there. Then they turned it into apartments or condos and then a strip mall, and it was huge. I mean it looks very nice from the highway, and they did a good aesthetic job when they built it. But I hated to see the farmland go. And that is the one thing that I don't like about Route 35. It used to be such a beautiful place. I liked it because it was so green and so open, but it's not that way any more. It's nothing but stores, shops, billboards, and restaurants.

Mr. Aumack: When you first came here, there wasn't Route 35, was there?

Ms. Hague: There was Route 35. The main street of Middletown was Kings Highway. That's where there were stores, four or five of them, but no more than that. And that was the center of Middletown.

Mr. Aumack: Tell us about Red Bank.

Ms. Hague: Red Bank used to be a very nice town, and then it kind of went downhill. Now it's getting to be a real nice town again. They have really built it up, and it looks very nice. I haven't been there in awhile, because with my back it's too much of a drive. But I get over there when I can. If I have a doctor's appointment, I go to my doctors over there. I didn't get new doctors when I moved here to Freehold. When you have had the same doctor for twenty years, you don't want to change. But Red Bank is nice, and I get to drive through it occasionally. And I like it.

Mr. Aumack: Why do you think it declined?

Ms. Hague: I guess people just seemed to lose interest in it, and it just went downhill. But now it's really getting nice again. It's a nice town.

Mr. Aumack: Let's go back to Wagon Wheel Farms. I just want to make sure on some facts. Is what used to be Wagon Wheel Farms that area across from the produce store known as Dearborn Farms?

Ms. Hague: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: Ok, alright.

Ms. Hague: And they have condos behind that. They are \$200-400,000 condos. But they also have interspersed low-income housing through it. And I know someone who lives there, who used to live across the street from me. And those low-income houses are really beautiful. They are very small: it's just living room, kitchen, bedroom, and bathroom. But the architect did a beautiful job on it.

Mr. Aumack: Do you think the availability of low-income housing is a good price to pay for more people in the area?

Ms. Hague: Well, it depends on how big a place you want. Senior citizens with little income enjoy being able to stay in the area in affordable housing. Some of those condos are huge. I mean I lived in a condo for twelve years, and it was a very nice one.

Mr. Aumack: So Wagon Wheel Farms used to be hundreds of acres.

Ms. Hague: Oh, hundreds of acres, yes. There were apple orchards, peach orchards, and it was really nice. It was a nice place to bring your kids to, which I used to do quite often.

Mr. Aumack: Talk to me about your philosophy of raising your children in Middletown.

Ms. Hague: In a way, just let them go their own way. We told them they were always allowed their own opinions. We might not agree with it, but you are allowed your own opinion. And we'll give your opinion a lot of attention, too. But they grew up pretty happy. Things changed when my husband died, and my youngest was eleven and my oldest was twenty-one. But it was a very happy home life, and we never had any problems with the kids. Not like you see nowadays. I know my one daughter tried marijuana behind her girlfriend's garage, but I didn't like it, so she didn't try it again. But I know kids experiment. I can remember my son coming home drunk once. He walked in the front door, trying to be so nonchalant. He was walking across the floor to his bedroom, and we just sat there and laughed because it was so funny. I mean you knew he was drunk. And we never punished him. We figured he was going to get his own punishment when he woke up the next morning. And when we knew he was awake, we started slamming doors, banging cabinet doors closed, and we slammed the back door when we went outside. We figured we were really going to let him pay for it! And that was the last time he got drunk.

Mr. Aumack: How old was he when he got drunk, do you remember?

Ms. Hague: Probably around seventeen. He very rarely has any drinks, and I don't think he does drink anymore. Since his father died, he changed his whole lifestyle. He has inherited his father's heart problems, which is something that has been brought down on his father's side of the family. So he is on medication now.

Mr. Aumack: And how old is he now, may I ask?

Ms. Hague: He just turned forty-four on Sunday. I think he weighs now what he did in high school. So he keeps himself in very good shape, as all my kids do.

Mr. Aumack: When they were young, where did they play?

Ms. Hague: In the backyard, in the development. We had 200 feet between my house and my neighbor's house in back of me, and it was all open. So there was plenty of place to play. Our backyard became the home base for a lot of the kids, particularly the boys. I know one boy decided he was going to be Tarzan and swing from one tree to the other, and of course he ended up with a broken wrist from falling. And his mother told me I didn't have to pay the bills, although I had offered to. She said it was the same wrist he had broken the year before trying the same thing. She said he was just accident-prone.

Mr. Aumack: Well, if he didn't swing, maybe he wouldn't be so accident-prone.

Ms. Hague: He did swing, and that was the problem. And you can't watch them every second, you know. Every once in awhile I would go look and make sure they weren't doing anything they weren't supposed to do. And my son got in trouble a few times. One time he was showing his sister, who was fourteen months younger than him, how to break all the windows in the garage with a baseball bat. He was about three, and she was a little over two. And he thought that would be fun because she would get blamed for it because she actually did it. But oh no.

Mr. Aumack: How did you discipline them?

Ms. Hague: We didn't discipline Heidi, but Blake got disciplined. I don't remember how, but he got disciplined. And he said, "But I didn't do it." And we said, "Yes, we know you didn't do it, but you showed your sister how to do it. That makes a big difference." But they were pretty good. He was stubborn, but I never had any major problems with the kids.

Mr. Aumack: Do you think being home with them was essential to them growing up and making that type of family?

Ms. Hague: Yes, all four are very caring kids, which I wanted. I wanted kids that grew up with responsibility and caring, and they are all that way. And I think that's important.

Mr. Aumack: Do you think that it would have gone another way if you had a job during the day?

Ms. Hague: With the fourth one, I had to go to work. But I got a job from a neighbor in a store in Middletown. I worked from nine in the morning until two, and my daughter got out of school about ten minutes after two. So I was home before she was. She didn't want me to stay home on her account, and I told her I wasn't staying home, I was just getting home right before her. And she said she didn't need a babysitter, and I told her I wasn't doing it to be her babysitter. I was

home for her sisters and brothers, and I wanted to be home for her. I told her that was something that I wanted to do. So that's what I did until she went off to college. The store was open at ten, and I was there at nine. It was at Cloth World, in Middletown.

Mr. Aumack: Describe your job at Cloth World.

Ms. Hague: I managed all the notions, the whole wall of notions.

Mr. Aumack: What is the wall of notions?

Ms. Hague: Threads, scissors, sewing machine parts, zippers, and everything that wasn't fabric.

Mr. Aumack: How long did you work there?

Ms. Hague: Until they fired the manager. They didn't make as much money as some of the other stores. They only made \$800,000/year instead of one million, which was their goal. So because he didn't make their goal, they used him as an example and fired him. And he was fired by his best friend, and he said that was what really hurt the most. So of course the new people came in, and they changed everybody's schedule. And they knew I had to be out of work at two. And they changed my schedule from two to nine at night, and there was no way I could be there. So I had to quit my job. And it was awhile before I was able to get another one.

Mr. Aumack: Why do you think that was? Was it tough?

Ms. Hague: Tough getting a job? Yes. Of course I hadn't worked in so many years. I went to Berkley Business School, which wasn't the training for working in the notions department in Cloth World. But I had been out of work for so many years. The problem with getting a job was they don't want you unless you have experience, and no one will give you a job to get the experience. So it was like a three-ring circus. So it was very difficult getting into the work field. I finally got a temp job at the Board of Realtors, for two days. And then it ended up being twelve days, and then three months later, they called me back to work full-time. So I worked there for six and a half or seven years, which I enjoyed, because it was five minutes from my front door. It was great, and it worked out fine.

Mr. Aumack: Let's discuss the Middletown Library. Do you remember when that came about?

Ms. Hague: The Middletown Library. I don't remember the year, but they had a library on Kings Highway in a house. And it was the library. It was many years later when they built the one on New Monmouth Road. That still stands today. I spent a lot of time there, because I was an avid reader.

Mr. Aumack: What did you read?

Ms. Hague: At the time, I guess it was mainly mysteries and historical novels that I enjoyed the most. And I still do.

Mr. Aumack: Did you like the way it grew and expanded?

Ms. Hague: Oh yes, very much. I didn't get to the one in Shrewsbury very often, which was the main library. I really had no reason to go there. My kids went there when they were in school, for reference work when they couldn't find what they wanted in Middletown.

Mr. Aumack: So in the 1960s, the Monmouth County Library in Shrewsbury was the place for Middletown student to go for school work?

Ms. Hague: That was the main library in Monmouth County, I believe.

Mr. Aumack: Let's discuss Dr. Alice Tyndall.

Ms. Hague: She was a great lady. I don't know if she has quit her practice yet or not. As far as I know, she is still practicing. And I thought she was marvelous. She took very good care of my children. She had what a lot of doctors don't have, and she had call-in hours. You could call her between eight and nine in the morning, and you would always get to talk to her. You could always call her then, and I quite frequently did call her if I had a problem or question, as I was a new mother. I would give her a call, and she was a very compassionate woman. When my husband died in 1976, my kids hadn't gone to see her for quite some time, because they were grown. She came to the funeral home when John died. My youngest was eleven, and at the point she was going to an adult doctor and not a pediatrician. I had gone to another doctor with my eldest, but I didn't like his attitude. It was always, "Maybe we should do this, or maybe we should do that." I don't want to hear "maybe" from a doctor. I want them to say exactly what has to be done. And Dr. Tyndall fit the bill perfectly. My daughter had gangrene in her foot. The other doctor kept saying she was alright every time I would bring her in. And I kept saying there was something definitely wrong with her foot. And they would say no, she was alright. Well, when I saw streaks coming up her foot, I took her to the Emergency Room. And she had gangrene, and they had to give her a blood transfusion. And of course the doctor came by and asked what was wrong. And I told him. They had to take a scalpel across the bottom of her foot. And she was humiliated. She was three years old, and she had to be pushed around in a stroller because she couldn't walk on that foot. She had to have her foot encased in a plastic bag to keep it moist. But she turned out ok, but that was the last time I ever saw that doctor. I wouldn't go back to him. You know when something is wrong with your own kids.

Mr. Aumack: Yes! Do you remember the name of that doctor?

Ms. Hague: I don't think it would be right to say his name. I don't know if he is in practice in this area at the present time.

Mr. Aumack: When did you meet Dr. Tyndall?

Ms. Hague: My kids were pretty little. It was in the mid 1950s. My daughter was three at the time, and she was born in 1953. I married in 1952, and she was born thirteen months later. I had a doctor in Cranford until we moved down here. The first fourteen months, my daughter had a different doctor up in Cranford. And then we moved down to Middletown.

Mr. Aumack: So this was a neighborhood doctor which you could all trust?

Ms. Hague: The one up in Cranford, yes. In fact, he was my obstetrician and pediatrician. He waited for my pediatrician to get out of the service to take over the pediatrics part of his practice. And Chris was his first patient. And oh, did he ever earn his money! He was at my house fifteen days straight once she got out of the hospital because she was such a sick little girl. When Chris was fourteen months old, we moved down here to Middletown.

Mr. Aumack: Where were you when you heard Kennedy had been shot?

Ms. Hague: We were just coming out of a motel in Williamsburg, where we had just finished our vacation. We went without the kids, which was very rare. My sister-in-law, who was about fifteen years old, came and stayed with our kids for a week. And we knew she was capable, and the kids just adored her. She came down for a week, and of course the neighbors were all there, too, to help out. And we went to Williamsburg for the week. We were just packing up and leaving the motel when we heard about it on the radio. And I never forgot it!

Mr. Aumack: This was in the car?

Ms. Hague: In the car, the station wagon. Tears were rolling down both our faces, and it was a very somber trip home.

Mr. Aumack: How has Monmouth County changed?

Ms. Hague: Boy, there have been a lot of big changes. I would say the biggest change I didn't like is that all the farmland is going. When there are places where there is farmland, I enjoy driving through it. When I worked in Manalapan and traveled from Middletown there, there was a lot of farmland along the way. And I enjoyed that every morning when I drove to work. At night, I was more anxious to get home than to look at the scenery. I drove past Marlboro Psychiatric Hospital on Route 79, and that is where I used to see all the farms before it changed. I worked a block from the library at Gloria Nilson Realtors. I had a part-time job there after I lost my full-time job. I worked for a couple of different agencies

before I was laid off from the last job in Manalapan because they were cutting back. Of course I was the last hired, so I was the first to go. So I hadn't worked since then. I really tried, I must have tried for about 350 jobs. Unemployment says you have to try for three jobs a week, and I would try for at least ten jobs a week. But there is age discrimination, there is no doubt about that. A lot of people agreed with me, but the Unemployment Office said there was no age discrimination.

Mr. Aumack: How else has Monmouth County changed, for better or for worse?

Ms. Hague: I hated to see some of the things come into Middletown, but the Garden State Arts Center was a good thing for Monmouth County. But I think since PNC Bank has taken it over, it has gone downhill. I'd rather it go back to the Garden State Arts Center, because that's how I will always know it. My husband and I used to go over there for concerts, but they don't have concerts anymore. It's all these big name bands and singers, which don't interest us. I know for a couple of years, I used to go eight or ten times a year to a concert over there. I saw Liberace there, and it was very good. I also heard Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture there. I am a classical music lover, so that has been a big change that I didn't like. AT&T I know has been marvelous for the area as far as jobs go, and I guess it has brought in a lot of revenue for the County. So that's why my son's taxes are lower in Holmdel than they would be in Middletown. I left Middletown because of high taxes, and he had to sell his home in Middletown because of high taxes. It was over \$3,000 for a two-bedroom condo, and that is ridiculous. When I moved here to Howell, it was \$1400. It's a little bit higher now, because I just got the new tax bill. But not that much higher. But it was too expensive living there, although I hated leaving there because I had been there for forty-four years. But none of my old friends lived there anymore. They all moved south, west, and to all different places. I still call Florida every month, and I have a schoolmate there. I went to school with her from second grade, and I talk to her every month in Florida. My best friend lives now in North Carolina. And I talk to her. In fact, they built the same house they had in Applebrook in Middletown. They built the same house in North Carolina. They obtained the blueprints. And the only thing different was the kitchen. The kitchen was on the meadow in Middletown, so it was downstairs. And in the new house, the kitchen is upstairs. Otherwise, the house is a duplicate. But they were good homes they built in Applebrook. They were good, sturdy, and we never had any problems. The only problem we ever had was we had to change the front door because there was a crack in it.

Mr. Aumack: Usually when they took away the farmlands they put up shopping centers, homes, and developments. Do you think with the growing number of developments going up now, do you think it is still necessary?

Ms. Hague: I would like to see less. I'll have to admit that they keep the AT&T buildings looking very nice. The property around is always well kept. But I still

hate to see all the farms go. I guess I'm just an old-fashioned girl. I've always been an old-fashioned homebody.

Mr. Aumack: Is there anything you would like to say to young people of Monmouth County or anyone else? Any advice you would like to give them about raising a family or anything else?

Ms. Hague: Just to give children good values, to live honorable lives, and be independent. Parents have to let them be independent, with limits. You can't let them do things that you know are really wrong, but let them have their own opinions. And I think that makes a big difference. You are not going to tell a child, "Absolutely not." You need to say, "We'll talk about this and come to some kind of settlement between your idea and my idea." And I think that is what parents don't do anymore. They don't spend enough time with their children. Unfortunately, too many families have to have both parents working. It's not their fault, it's just the way things are now. And I would like to see a little more help for seniors.



The Hague Family, present day

Mr. Aumack: What would you like to see?

Ms. Hague: More help with prescription drugs, for one. I have heard that prescription prices are going to double. If that happens, I don't know what I am going to do. Because I just wouldn't be able to afford it. I'm on more or less a fixed income. I have some income from my husband when he died, and social security. Of course I had to apply for it when I was sixty-one, and I could get it then being a widow. But I had to take a greatly reduced amount, five hundred dollars less a month than I would have gotten if I had waited until I was sixty-five. And it hasn't gone up much since then. It hasn't even gone up one hundred dollars in nine years.

Mr. Aumack: Do you think the big insurance companies have ruined it for senior citizens?

Ms. Hague: Yes. I have an HMO, and there are restrictions.

Mr. Aumack: Before the present restrictions came, were there any problems?

Ms. Hague: I never had any problems with the medical. The biggest problem I had was pre-existing conditions. A lot of people in my family have had problems with their feet. They asked my grandmother if she had had polio, which she did. It was just something she inherited, which my mother inherited. And I inherited it,

and two of my children inherited it. And because it was a pre-existing condition, I had an eight thousand dollar hospital bill they wouldn't pay for. Also it was because of my boss, who kept changing our medical coverage every year. I had to wait two years before they would cover it. Well, I literally could not walk. I could not wait the two years. I needed surgery, but as I had no coverage, I had to pay the eight thousand dollar medical bills myself, which is hard when you don't have much of an income. It took me more than three years.

Mr. Aumack: Why do you think you didn't receive the money that you deserved?

Ms. Hague: Because they wouldn't pay for anything pre-existing until you have had the policy for two years. All insurance companies are that way. This was through the coverage I had through my work, through my job. I don't know if the HMO is the same way or not. But I know seniors could use a lot more help. I'm not just talking about me, I have heard cases that are unbelievable for seniors.

Mr. Aumack: Is there anything else you would like to say to Monmouth County residents?

Ms. Hague: Enjoy your life here. You only have one life to live, so enjoy it. I try to. I can't get around very easily anymore, but I enjoy it. I have family close by, which is great. And all seniors should have family close by. And if not, they should get as many friends as possible. I have made some nice friends here, and having grandchildren is the greatest.

Mr. Aumack: Well, that is a good place to stop. I thank you very much.