



Interview with Lew Williams

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

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Name of Interviewer: Connie Paul
Premises of Interview: Lew's home in Kerrville, Texas
Birth date of subject: March 31, 1927

Ms. Paul: Ms. Williams, you really were born and raised in Texas. How does it happen that you came to Monmouth County, and when was that?



In 1994 Bill and Lew Williams moved from Freehold Township back to Texas. They are shown the day before leaving at the site of the tie capsule buried as part of the Tricentennial celebration. The capsule is buried adjacent to the fountain, in back of the Freehold Township Municipal Building.

Ms. Williams: We came to Monmouth County in 1970. Bill changed jobs and became associated with Triangle Publications. And we were part of that group of people moving into the developments being made around Freehold Township. Eventually, we surrounded Freehold Borough. We moved into an area called Stonehurst West, an area that had been potato farms, we were told. The farmers were from Long Island. We lived in Freehold Township until 1994. We were there to see lots of changes and to see the difference that those of us, moving from other parts of the country, some from states far away, and some very close to New Jersey, made in the lives of those who had always lived in Monmouth.

Ms. Paul: What had the two of you done before that brought you there?

Ms. Williams: We had both worked on newspapers. We met and married while working on *The Waco Tribune Herald*, a daily newspaper in Waco, Texas. I was the night news editor, and Bill was the composing room foreman. Our son, William, was born there, and was three and a half when we moved to New Jersey. Before moving to New Jersey, we had a slight stop over in Colorado and could see Pike's Peak through our living room window. The land in New Jersey was flat and our house wasn't completely built. I thought it was a disaster. But it turned out to be a good move.

Ms. Paul: What did you do when you moved to Freehold?

Ms. Williams: Well, the very first thing we did was go to the First United Methodist Church because we were Methodists and that's what you did. So, the first Sunday, we went to church. One of the first things I said was, "If you're going to live in a place, you better know something about it." So, when I saw in the paper a notice about the Battleground Historical Society meeting. I took William in the car, and we went out to find a place called Tennent Church, where they were going to have their meeting. I wanted to be able to find it at night by locating it in the daytime first. I had heard a member of the Society talk at a small group who said, "Come to this meeting if you can," so I did, and remained with that group for many, many years. I became the secretary, which was the first elected position I had in Monmouth County.

Ms. Paul: Was that organization the first organized for the preservation of the Battle of Monmouth?

Ms. Williams: That was the thrust of it -- the reason it was started. It was all of Manalapan and Freehold Township in that area. But the thrust of it was to save the Battlefield, and to publicize the Battlefield. It was an interesting group, and I met many people. And, that is where I began to meet some of the finest ladies in New Jersey.

Ms. Paul: Who are some of the people you met there?

Ms. Williams: Lydia Wikoff, Lattia Burke, Mary Kyle, Edna Netter, Evelyn Harrod, and I remember Jane and Henry Zdancewic -- she was the treasurer forever. There was also Mary Evans, Ed King Jr., Fred Sanders, Helen Scofidi, and don't forget Charlie Wikoff and Fred Gray

Ms. Paul: So the group started out to protect the Battlefield. Was it going into private hands?

Ms. Williams: It could have gone into development of more housing, and our group was instrumental in getting the legislature to save the land, and then after it was designated park land, we took a further interest in it. You know there's a

visitor's center in the area. I don't know how much of influence we had on getting it there, but a lot of time was given to it.

Ms. Paul: Did that become a federal park or a state park?

Ms. Williams: A state park.

Ms. Paul: And very popular to this day.

Ms. Williams: Yes. The Battle of Monmouth reenactment had nothing directly tied to The Battleground Historical Society other than the fact that if the park hadn't been saved, they wouldn't have that popular event. Remember in 1978, the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Monmouth? I was so excited when I learned that we lived only a few miles from where this battle was fought, a battle I had never heard about, growing up in Texas.

Ms. Paul: Had you heard of Molly Pitcher? Or had you heard about General Washington on his white horse? So that was one of your first activities. And from that group, where did you branch into from there?

Ms. Williams: In 1973, I was appointed to the Freehold Township Board of Education, and served on that school board for about eleven years.

Ms. Paul: How did you get appointed to that?



Photograph taken in 1971 when Lew Williams returned home after being a hostess at a Battleground Historical Society tour of homes. Lew joined the Historical Society shortly after moving to Freehold Township in 1970 and early on had a colonial dress and bonnet made. The dress was loaned to a participant in a Battle of Monmouth parade and it never reappeared! Husband William H. (Bill) Williams doesn't seem very impressed and his clothing certainly does not speak of colonial times.

Ms. Williams: Another woman who was on the school board moved. Marshall Erickson, who was the school superintendent, attended the Methodist Church.

Ms. Paul: And he knew you from there?

Ms. Williams: Yes. And the school board president also went to the Methodist Church. This is one of the funniest stories that ever happened to me. One night I said to a friend, Carol Deneck, "Guess who is going to be appointed to the school board?" And she said, "Who? Who's going to be the token woman?" And I pointed to myself and said, "Guess who?" And she fell over with laughter, and so did I. Because this was probably one of the reasons I was appointed.

Ms. Paul: Was there a history of having one woman on the Township Board?

Ms. Williams: Well, she had been the first one.

Ms. Paul: I see.

Ms. Williams: I stayed on the board long enough to become vice president and the first woman president of The Township Board of Education.

Ms. Paul: What were some of the most important things that happened during that time?

Ms. Williams: Well, building schools to keep up with the growing population. The school boards which came before me and those who came after, particularly those who came before, built enough schools so that there were never double sessions in Freehold Township. There was always a school ready when that extra group of children arrived. We had to do some redistricting, but we were never without a school to put children in. I came on when the schools were in good shape. We only built one school after I was on the board.

Ms. Paul: Which school was that?

Ms. Williams: The Applegate School. The most important thing the board did while I was there was hiring a successor to Marshall Erickson. Marshall had been there many years and was well respected in the community and school. We hired David Cole to be the Superintendent. The process of searching and selecting was the most important thing ever done by that board, in my opinion. We had to pick a person who could follow a long-timer and who would fit in with the Assistant Superintendent. The succession did run smoothly because of their compatible personalities. But we could have hired the wrong person, then they could have been at cross purposes and we would have had a whole different system.

Ms. Paul: How long did Dr. Cole remain as Superintendent in Freehold Township?

Ms. Williams: Until his retirement two or three years ago.

Ms. Paul: Who were some of the other people who served with you on the board?

Ms. Williams: Harry Post, Carol Deneck, Jeannine Willis, John McCullough, Walter Cable, Dr. Lou Barth, Jane Bentley, and Lou Goselin.

Ms. Paul: I met you when you joined Hope Lutheran Church a number of years ago, but I had already known your name from the Freehold Area American

Association of University Women, which you were involved in. Tell me about your involvement in that organization.

Ms. Williams: I joined the AAUW about 1972, at the urging of Jean Carlson, who also went to the Methodist Church. She talked about what a good group it was. I thought it sounded like it would be interesting. I went to a meeting at the Donovan School and met some really neat people. One of them being Carol Deneck, and some other nice people. I joined and before I ever went to a real meeting, Carol Deneck, who was going to be the president, called and asked me if I would do public relations. If you've ever worked on a newspaper, when you join a group, they automatically think you will do the public relations -- the news releases and all that stuff. She called and asked me if I would come to a board meeting at her house. I became a board member as Public Relations Chair. When we moved in 1994, I was still doing the publicity for the branch, although I had also served as vice president and as president.

Ms. Paul: AAUW is a 100 year old organization meant to develop further educational opportunities for women. What are some of the things you are proudest of in your association with that group?

Ms. Williams: Being able to raise enough money to give scholarships to women returning to college seeking a higher degree or seeking a degree. We started a used book sale and my husband, Bill, had access to a lot of books. And, we inundated the place with those books year after year. We moved the book sale around because it was hard to find it a house. We went from the racetrack, to a storefront, to a church, to a school. We just had to move it around as we didn't have a permanent place, but we always had a lot of books. People began to look forward to it and we made a good bit of money. And some of us who were involved with it from the very beginning had such a good time and worked so hard. One night we had sorted books until we were dead. And this truck came up with a load of books and just dumped them out. They were from the penitentiary in northern New Jersey. We could never bring ourselves to say no to a load of books, but there were times we really wished we had. I was really proud of the book sale and the proudest moment in my AAUW life was the night they announced that the scholarship would be named for Lew Williams. I think that was probably more because of Bill than me, but I'll take the credit.

Ms. Paul: Why not? I know you worked long and hard for that organization as well as so many others.

Ms. Williams: There are people still there working on the book sale who were working on it in the beginning. Leila Sulkes and Joan Odud might have been there the first year if not, very close to that. They are younger than I am, but they're still around, still in New Jersey, still doing the book sale. And it's probably easier than it was then. Lila used to let us store all those books in her garage. We stored a lot in my basement. It was really tough to take them up and down.

And then we stored a lot at Bill's newspaper, *The Daily Racing Form*. And then we brought them over to Freehold just before the sale.

Ms. Paul: What was Stonehurst West like when you moved in? You said it was one of the first developments, or maybe it was the first development in Freehold Township.

Ms. Williams: There were still lots and lots of trees around our house and the whole row of houses between our street and the next street had a real stand of trees between us. During the time we were there, we lost a lot of trees in storms and things like that, but when we left there were still lots of trees. As we moved in all the houses weren't finished, even on Kettle Creek Road, which was our street. But, the developer of Stonehurst West sold the property behind us to Levitt, and Levitt came in and leveled trees to put up his houses. He planted new trees, but it wasn't the same. I can remember how quickly those houses went up. Of course, when we first got there, the house was barely finished, and the yard wasn't finished, and there were piles of debris in the front yard. And I thought, "And to think I exchanged Pike's Peak for this." Mounds of building junk and stuff, but it got moved, and we put down some sod that happened to be given to us. So we had grass pretty soon. People were all from "somewhere else" -- many from apartments in the city. The area was not overly friendly and Oldimes thought it was a "ritz" area -- it wasn't really.

Ms. Paul: After William went to Freehold Township Schools, where did he go?

Ms. Williams: The Peddie School in Hightstown.

Ms. Paul: Was Bill active in Freehold Township politics during most of that time?

Ms. Williams: During a lot of that time. Most of Bill's community involvement was with Freehold Area Hospital. One day, he came home from the office early. I was reading the local newspaper, *The Colonial News*, and it said, "There is going to be a meeting of people who are trying to build a hospital on Thursday night at the First Presbyterian Church." My comment to him was, "Do you mean we have moved to a place where there is no hospital and we have a three and a half year old child?" And he said, "Well, I guess so." So, Bill went to that meeting. They were trying to raise money, and he agreed to canvas our immediate neighborhood, and then he asked his boss, Walter Annenberg, for a donation. When Bill went to the next meeting, he had quite a sizable donation for the hospital. Those people who had been working for years raising money welcomed him with open arms and he was involved with the hospital from that night until the day we left. He went all the way through all the offices, to president of the hospital board and the president of other boards that had formed in the hospital family. It was really a labor of love for him. He spent a lot of hours out there, went to a lot of hospital events, and did a lot of fundraising for the hospital. He was the first non-Freehold native or long-time resident to be

chairman of the Charity Ball -- he was chairman in 1973. We hadn't been there very long, and I was down in Texas during the summer with our son visiting our parents. I came home and Bill had been to the Charity Ball and said they were going to make him vice-chair. They were going to put him on the learning curve to be the chairman. Then, I found out the learning curve was very sharp, because he was the president the next year. We took the theme of, "It's your hospital, Charlie Brown." You know how Charlie Brown always hears, "It's your dog, Charlie Brown"? All his friends said to him, "It's your dog, Charlie Brown." Well, we took that theme and said, "It's your hospital, Manalapan. It's your hospital, Englishtown. It's your hospital, Freehold. It's your hospital to all the places around." Friends and I cut out a jillion Snoopy and other *Peanuts* characters, like Charlie Brown, Lucy, Linus, and hung them on fishing lines across the Freehold Raceway. The Raceway donated the building for the ball. The Charity Ball was the biggest money maker for the hospital at that time, but the place where you did the betting was like a long alley. In fact, when Davis and the Nashville Brass came to play, he said, "It's the only time I can remember playing in a tunnel." We had a great turnout the night of Bill's ball, and it raised more money than it had up until that time for quite a few years. Since then, it has become a much more elegant fancy affair. But then, it was a ball and an auction and maybe pretty rustic, but the Charity Balls made the money that bought the land where the hospital sits today.



From 1970 until 1994 William H. (Bill) Williams was involved in Freehold Area CentraState Hospital work. His first major involvement was taking on the chairmanship of the 1973 annual Charity Ball. Adopting the theme from the "Charlie Brown" of the *Peanuts* cartoon strip, the ball told the entire Freehold area it was their hospital with signs of It's Your Hospital, Freehold; It's Your Hospital, Manalapan; It's Your Hospital Marlboro etc. With Williams in front of a monstrous Snoopy is his wife, Lew (far right) and Marie Rodriquez of Manalapan, who earned the title of Charity Ball Queen by raising the most money in the Queen contest.

Ms. Paul: It was called Freehold Area Hospital in the beginning wasn't it, and then it became CentraState Medical Center?

Ms. Williams: Right. It was Freehold Area Hospital for a lot of years. And then, I guess as a kind of continuation of the theme "It's your hospital," it was a hospital for more people than just the Freehold area. I was really involved in that name change. More people buy into CentraState. At the time, you think they won't, but they do if you change the name of the building.

Ms. Paul: How did you get involved in the Freehold Tricentennial Celebration?

Ms. Williams: Bill was mayor, and the city manager, Fred Young, was a good friend of ours. He heard me talking about a job I was doing for another organization. And, he said, "Why don't you do this?" So, between the two of them, they kind of talked me into being the coordinator for the Tricentennial

Celebration. The Committee and the City Manager were all very supportive, and they let us do some interesting things.

Ms. Paul: Tell me about Freehold Township being 300 years old before we talk about the interesting things that you did. I think most people think of the township as the johnny-come-lately around Freehold Borough. And yet it wasn't really like that, was it?



Freehold Township celebrated its 300th birthday in 1993. This was the logo for the year-long celebration.

Ms. Williams: No, it wasn't. Freehold Township was developed. Farmers moved there or settlers moved to the area that is Freehold Township and were living there before the town or the borough was established. At the time of the Battle of Monmouth, there were about forty houses in Englishtown and about forty houses in Freehold. But that included those that were out in farm sites too. It was a prosperous area, I'm told. The land was good. They could grow things.

Ms. Paul: And so, what kinds of things did you decide would be fitting to celebrate a 300 year old history?

Ms. Williams: The very first thing we did in January when the township committee took office, as it always does in January. I had colonial clothes made for them, including the tri-cornered hats. I even managed to scrounge up two of the long white wigs, and when the township committee and the township officials came into the room that night for the meeting, they were all dressed in their vests, their pants, their knee stockings, their tri-cornered hats, and it kind of set the tone for the year. The next month, we had them dress up in those outfits again and go down to the Covenhoven House, which is on the edge of the borough. (Laughs) And they cooked some stuff because the lady down there leads cooking demonstrations for school kids. She showed our mayor and committeemen how food was prepared 300 years ago, and they all fooled around with the cooking. It made a good picture and good TV spots. So, we did various things all year, and then on October 31, 1993, which was our actual birth date, the actual date on the charter, we had a parade. And we had worked so hard on that parade, and we had so much in it. And, it was a cold, wet, terrible day. Those of us who were there saw a great parade led by the Old Guard from Washington, D.C. We had first seen the Old Guard in the Bicentennial Parade in downtown Freehold in 1976. We called that The Battle of Monmouth Parade every year. And mercy, it was a good parade, and that was such an effective Fife and Drum Corps. So, we invited them back, and I thought we had no chance to get them, but we did. We got them for our Tricentennial Parade, and we had bands, we had floats, and marchers from everywhere. Too bad it rained on our

parade.



Photograph taken during the Tricentennial birthday party in September, 1993, in Turkey Swamp Park. At left is Lew Williams, Tricentennial Coordinator. In Center is Barbara Fatovic, a member of the planning committee.

Ms. Paul: You had a big party out at Liberty Oak too, didn't you?

Ms. Williams: We had a late summer birthday party, so big it took two days. We had the fair with activities and games and regular fair type events, with food and stuff. And the day ended with a performance of the New Jersey Symphony, along with fireworks, and then we repeated it on Sunday night with the New Jersey Pops and fireworks that closed out that night. It was fun. I remember it because I had a broken ankle that I didn't tell anybody about, that I was walking on during those days. Went to get the cast on it the Monday after the party.

Ms. Paul: You and Bill decided to come back to your roots, and you bought a newspaper in Kerrville, Texas and moved. What year was that?

Ms. Williams: 1994. Bill came in late 1993, and I stayed in New Jersey and got the house ready to sell, and said some long good-byes and left in mid 1994. We had bought a weekly paper in Kerrville, and we were really fortunate. The place is pretty, and it is a small town, and we like it. But we also found that it is actually harder to run a weekly paper than it is a daily. Now, we had lots of experience with daily papers. But after about three weeks, we said "To heck with this. Let's really retire." So we did, to an extent. We sold the paper.

Ms. Paul: And now the two of you seem to be as involved in Kerrville activities and politics as you were in Freehold, but looking back on those years in Freehold Township, what changes stand out in your mind?

Ms. Williams: The growth, and the covering up of the beautiful land with houses. They're needed, obviously for the economy, but it is so sad to see productive land covered up with houses. I have this theory that the good Lord is going to look down some day and say, "Well, they've covered all the land that will grow anything with houses and pavement," and he is going to say, "That's it." It's the growth that I remember, and Freehold Township changed from a place with a small town feeling. Freehold Township was never very united as a town, because there is no central town place. The Borough, of course, feels like a town, but not the Township. So you made your family-type feelings with the church, or like us, with the hospital, and then with the Township Committee and the things we were doing with it and the other groups you belonged to. But, even the feeling that was the beginning began to go away because it was very hard to meld all those people who came from so many different areas because there was

never one place for them all to get together. And in the Township, you have seven schools, and not everybody is at the same place every time, and it was the change and the feeling of it just being a busy place.

Ms. Paul: You said that you were asked to run the Tricentennial because you were doing another project at that time that Fred Young had heard about. What was that?

Ms. Williams: I had been working for the Battleground Arts Center, an organization that was designed to bring performances to Freehold both for adults and for youngsters. In our program, we didn't have a theatre. We used Freehold Township High School. We used it for children's performances, and we used any place we could find, most often the Reform Church, for sometimes excellent programs that we got from all sorts of places: New York, and Philadelphia, and the audience came mostly from the retirement villages around. But, I worked for that for two or three years, and felt like it was a tremendous ideal, but it was an uphill battle to get funding. But I had a good time doing it, and learned about and met a whole new group of people, and that was nice.

Ms. Paul: When was that organization started?

Ms. Williams: It must have started in the mid 1980s. Carroll Dicker had been the first executive director. I also knew her in AAUW. You run into the same people. And, when Carroll left to take another job, two of my friends from the AAUW, Jean Carlson and Sue Craig, talked me into taking that job. There were a lot of times when I didn't know where the paycheck for the help was coming from that week, and I thought, "Why did I say yes?"

Ms. Paul: Where was your office then?

Ms. Williams: The office then was above Ben Alfred's Corner on Main and South Street. We had the upstairs office there. And then they were going to raise the rent, and goodness we couldn't afford that, so we went across and then we were above that shoe store on Main Street, not Al's Bootery, but a children's shoe store. It became many other things, but you entered right next to the café on the corner.

Ms. Paul: This is in Freehold Borough?

Ms. Williams: In Freehold Borough. Both places were in the Borough. That was a soft spot in the heart for the Borough. It was a neat place.

Ms. Paul: You were also involved in the Freehold Area Habitat for Humanity in the Borough as well, right?

Ms. Williams: Yes. One more "You do the public relations." But I also went to a lot of the board meetings. And I went to that first board meeting because I wanted to go somewhere where I could do something and see the results, like driving a nail and seeing a house. I went to an organizational meeting and left there to do the publicity, and never got a hammer in my hands. I always regretted that. But, I took a lot of pictures and wrote stories.

Ms. Paul: And you were on the board for a number of years, right?

Ms. Williams: Right. I had been working before that volunteering at the Open Door. And I was the Monday lady along with Anne Smith for a lot of years. She and I kept it open when it was on Throckmorton, and again when we moved around on South Street.

Ms. Paul: What is Open Door?

Ms. Williams: Open Door was an organization founded and sponsored by the churches. Many of the churches in town provided assistance to people who needed it, and we started to help people find out where to go to get help. That was the purpose. It evolved into a place where we gave away clothing, food, arranged some transportation, and occasionally, we could arrange emergency shelter in hotels, along with utilities, rent, and stuff. We never had a lot of cash, but the churches donated to us. There were times of the year when we had plenty of food to give away. There were other times when the cupboard was almost bare. But we always had plenty of clothes, because as the minister of the Lutheran Church in the borough once said, "People clean out their closets, and give away their clothes, and they think they've done something. Clothes they're not going to wear anymore, and they think they've done something." I can't count the number of hours and the effort put into sorting clothes and throwing away stuff people give you; they think the poor will wear anything. That's not true. They won't.

Ms. Paul: I know that clothing storage became a big problem, and Open Door eventually went out of the clothing part of it, but it maintains an active food pantry, and also an active school tutoring program that's gone on there for a number of years.

Ms. Williams: That's marvelous. We talked about stopping doing the clothing, and then we would look at the number of people who would come in, particularly for children's clothing. And then we had people who came year after year because I was there long enough to see children of people that I had helped before come in. But then, there were people who came because it was a place where they could go and feel like they could look around; and because it was a place where they could go. So then, you would run into people saying, "Well, we've helped this many people this week, do we dare shut it down?" And if you reject somebody's offer of clothing, what does that make you look like? So, we

would accept anything, and then spend hours going through it. Many times we were brought the estate -- whatever was left in somebody's home, they dumped in boxes and brought to us. My sister and I give joke gifts at Christmas, and I have found her many presents at Open Door, including one of those fur pieces that had the nose and the little feet all left on it. That was a real treasure we could give away; and I did give it away to my sister.

Ms. Paul: Some poor person really did not need a fox to wear around the neck.

Ms. Williams: That's right.

Ms. Paul: So in all of those organizations, the only paid position you held was for Battleground Arts Center? Was everything else volunteer?

Ms. Williams: Well, when William was a senior, that would have been in 1984, Art Schreiber had the paper -- he had made a great success out of *The Colonial News* and then he sold it -- and he had in his contract a non-compete clause. As soon as it ended, he asked if I would help him start a weekly newspaper, and I remember saying, "Art, do you have enough money to do this?" And he said yes. Well, the advertisers you had before don't come back just because you say you are starting a newspaper. We had a good time, and all of a sudden, it was interesting that I could -- I'd been writing news stories all the years, but I could write a headline and lay out a page now. And it was nice to know that you could still do that.

Ms. Paul: What was the name of that paper?

Ms. Williams: *The Colonial Free Press*. It had news in it, but it didn't last very long. And then I went from that paper to the Battleground Arts Center. I had stayed at home with Will until he was a senior, and made him do a lot of volunteer things with me. We took food to the crotchety little lady toward Lakewood, who, when we got there would say "There's somebody under my house," or "They threw rocks at my house and broke my windows."

Ms. Paul: Was this for Meals on Wheels?

Ms. Williams: No, that was for Open Door when she called and she needed help.

Ms. Paul: Oh, I see.

Ms. Williams: So, I'd make him go with me, and we'd take food to her. That's not a bad idea. Kids need to know there's more than one way to live, and not everyone lives in a house on Kettle Creek Rd. Some need food somewhere.

Ms. Paul: We've covered a lot of the organizations you were involved with. Talk

about Hope Lutheran Church, that you and Bill had joined.

Ms. Williams: We came in about 1976. We went to the Methodist Church about five years and one Sunday five families of us showed up at Hope Lutheran Church. We had known the pastor, Al Gibson, socially, and we also felt like it was the most alive church in Freehold. And I can now understand, much better than I did then, that the mainstream churches along Main Street were overwhelmed with newcomers from everywhere. And if newcomers come in, they want changes, and we were dangerous to them. We could do the work, but don't step on how we do things. Bill was named lay leader there, and I was president of Methodist Women, and then all of a sudden, it got to the point where we needed to do something else, and Al Gibson's church sure looked alive, so we all went out there. And then Al had a meeting with us at our house, about "What are they doing to me?" And we told him how we felt and then he went to see the minister and said, "I didn't ask them to come! They came on their own!" But we never went back, all of us. And the interesting thing to me is that some person, sometimes both persons, out of those families, wound up serving on the Church Council, and had big roles in what happened at Hope Lutheran Church, during the time we were there.

Ms. Paul: You also got involved in public relations, and publicity, and writing the history of Hope Lutheran Church for the twenty-fifth anniversary and a number of other things.

Ms. Williams: A funny, funny thing happened. Margaret Rosen asked me to be on the Altar Committee. In the Methodist Church there's no such thing as an Altar Committee. I said okay, so I went one time with her at the church to do what you do to take care of the altar. Then she left, or something, and Sandy Sproat who was also the committee, announced that I was the vice-chair because I was so well trained! And I had been there once! It was interesting and we were never sorry for a minute for having left and come out there. It was an interesting move and a good move for us.

Ms. Paul: When you think of Monmouth County in general, what do you think of now from the perspective of living in Texas?

Ms. Williams: Well, it's really sad to say, but when I think about our last trip there which was last December, 1998, the traffic was overwhelming. And they didn't seem to be doing anything to alleviate it. There was still no train. There was still no decision to get a train. They had been talking about that when we lived there. Nobody is finding an answer to the traffic and it's just getting worse. And when I think about Monmouth, I loved where we lived in the Township, and it's still a pretty street, but I really think about that road to Colts Neck, in the beginning when it was just horse farms.

Ms. Paul: Highway 537?

Ms. Williams: Yes. Horse farms and land, and to drive over there, which we did in 1998, and saw much of that land covered up was sad. I tell people here "New Jersey's prettier than you think. You just think about the Turnpike. And that's not true. It's really pretty." But I have to gulp a little now, when I tell them, "And it's more rural than you think," because I think it's losing the rural feeling. And I'm sure that people would look at me right now and say, "But there's still a lot of land down here," and there may be, but it sure is getting crowded and full of traffic.

Ms. Paul: And so here you are in less crowded, more rural, Kerrville, Texas.

Ms. Williams: Right. If anybody has to wait through a light twice here, the next time you see them, they say, "Did you see that traffic jam today? I had to wait through that light twice!" We're growing too, and I already see changes here. There are enough houses on the building plan out in the surrounding area that will be covering up our land and our rural feeling. It's just that thus far, we have so much more of it. But Monmouth County was stable. I always felt like it had a stable government. Freehold Township had excellent leadership with the city manager. It had good people elected to the township committee, too, but the city manager led it on a nice path and kept the growth. You can't stop growth, but you can control it.

Ms. Paul: That was Fred Jahn.

Ms. Williams: Yes, Fred Jahn.

Ms. Paul: There are a great many people in Freehold Township and Monmouth County who remember with gratitude all the contributions you made to life there. This has been delightful, and thank you very much.

Ms. Williams: Thank you.