



Interview with Lorraine Ayres

Under the Auspices of the
Monmouth County Library Headquarters
125 Symmes Drive, Manalapan, N.J.
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Ms. Higgins: Mrs. Ayres has been affiliated with the Little Silver Public Library since April 1961 and with the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Red Bank since 1945. Good afternoon, Lorraine.

Ms. Ayres: Hello.

Ms. Higgins: It is nice to be doing this at last!

Ms. Ayres: Yes. I'm not too familiar with life in Monmouth County before 1945, but I came to Monmouth County because of my husband. I met my husband-to-be in the Navy. We were stationed in Gainesville, Georgia. He proposed to me and I said, "Well, I won't say yes or no until I see where you live." So I came up to Red Bank on the train. I changed the trains in New York to come down to the Jersey Shore. Coming through what I saw made me think, "I don't want to spend the rest of my life here." But when we got to Red Bank, Bob took me around and took me to the ocean, which did not impress me because I had seen the Pacific Ocean, and when I saw the Atlantic Ocean with its rocks at Sea Bright, I was not interested. But we went out into the country, and it was lovely, and I decided maybe I could spend the rest of my life here. Before coming to be in the Navy, I was born and raised in Northern Minnesota on a farm. I taught school for a year in a country one-room school, and decided that was not my life. Actually my mother had said to me, when I taught school for a year, I could save my money and do whatever I wanted after that. I decided to join the Navy and become a WAVE, which is what I did.



Lorraine Ayres by the Shrewsbury River, 1945

Ms. Higgins: Was that unusual? Not many women were in the service at that time, isn't that true?

Ms. Ayres: It was getting to be more common, and I decided to join this one summer I was spending in Minneapolis. Over the Fourth of July there were parades and I saw women in uniform, I saw women who were WACs, but I did not like the brown uniform. When I saw WAVES, I thought that was much nicer, so I thought I would try to join the WAVES. Luckily, I did finally make it, even though my parents were not happy about it. But they did not stand in my way, so I came to New York to Hunter College, and from there to Georgia, and from there to Minneapolis, and from there back to Georgia and then finally to Red Bank. Red Bank in 1945 was very different than it is today. I can remember going into Red Bank to do some shopping and there was a store called Yankos, which had one of these contraptions with a person up on a second story who would send the money that you were purchasing something with in a little metal container. It would go up, and they'd get the change to come back to you. And the only food stores, of course, were different. There was an A & P on Broad Street in Red Bank and it was the kind that they wrapped the meat up in brown paper and used one of these long hooks to take things off the shelves. I was staying with my future in-laws and everybody had things delivered; the laundry man came, the bread man came, the milkman came. And during the summer, there would be a truck coming by with produce. And I even remember knife sharpeners would go up and down and call out to see if you needed your knives or scissors sharpened. I think the first year I was here my next-door neighbor, who had a friend was on the school board of Red Bank, asked if I would be a substitute teacher, so I did that. It was hard to get a substitute teacher then.

Ms. Higgins: What differences did you see between your teaching out West and your teaching in Red Bank?

Ms. Ayres: They were very much different. I think they needed substitute teachers over in West Red Bank, River Street, which even back then was predominately Black, and the grade that I remembered the most vividly was a sixth grade. The very first thing, when I was a substitute teacher there the first day, they said to me was, "Miss Bvelland, you have to read the Bible." I'd never heard of that in Minnesota. We never had any reading of the Bible. So they showed me the Bible in the teacher's desk and I read a psalm. I decided to read First Corinthians Thirteen because it has to do with charity, or love, and after that I found out that you should have only read from the Old Testament. That was something that was very different. The children were quite well behaved; I didn't have any problems, and it was a different kind of atmosphere. Back in Minnesota they were all farm children, but these were all city/town kids.

Ms. Higgins: But they're all the same age. Didn't you teach different ages all in one classroom?

Ms. Ayres: Yes. These were just all in one. During the summer, my husband played a lot of baseball and softball, and if I went to any of the games some of the children would come up and talk. They were friendly. But I decided that I wasn't going to become a substitute teacher. After we were married, we lived with my in-laws for four years because my mother-in-law told me that there was no housing available. There was nothing built during the War, and it had just started up maybe a couple of years after the War ended. The developers started buying up property and building houses.

Ms. Higgins: What year did you get married?

Ms. Ayres:1946.

Ms. Higgins: And so the Levittowns were just beginning then, probably?

Ms. Ayres: This Little Silver was practically all nurseries. And several of the developers bought up the land and started building houses. We were married in May of 1946. In May of 1947 our oldest son was born, and that was a different kind of lifestyle for me because my mother-in-law did all the cooking, and we sent the laundry out, and had a cleaning lady come in - so I mainly had just to take care of the baby and to go out with the girls.

Ms. Higgins: Did you know how lucky you were?

Ms. Ayres: Probably. But in those days, nobody worked. My husband had always lived in Red Bank in the house where we were living, and he had always been an athlete and had lots of friends, and so I was introduced to his friends and it became a cliquy kind of life. We all went out to the baseball games, and during the winter or whenever, we girls did something called the Hen Club - we got together. Everybody had children, except one girl, but the rest of us all had children, and we were all in the same category. I was not happy living with my mother-in-law, but she had said to me that there is nothing available, and Bob has always had a nice house, and it wouldn't be fair for him to live in some shack, so you better just be satisfied. However, when I became pregnant with the second child, she decided that maybe it would be time that we looked for something. I remember going one Sunday after church, driving around. My father-in-law was born and raised in Little Silver, so they knew what Little Silver was like. He said, "Don't buy any houses over in this section of town because the land is very low, and there'll be septic tanks, and it's not a good place to look for houses." At that time when Malmone was starting to build over in Queens drive and over in that section. But this one Sunday, we came through Rumson Road, and we found this new road that had just been cut through, and there were houses being built. So we came down this road, and there was this house, and there were workmen there, and we stopped, and I went in and I said, "Is this house for sale?" And Mr. Grandinetti said, "No, it isn't, but I'll build you one just like it across the street." He said that the lot had been sold earlier because it had

a lovely huge tulip tree, but the people couldn't get a mortgage, so that lot was for sale again. We were pretty ignorant; we looked at the house that he was building and said, "Oh, that's nice, and we'll take one just like it."

Ms. Higgins: Is that North Lovett?

Ms. Ayres: Yes. My mother-in-law said, "Oh, okay, this is high ground, this is fine." He was a builder, an excellent builder, I don't think you could find many good houses like that built today. So we waited until Linda was born in June and we moved in June of 1950.

Ms. Higgins: That must have been very satisfying, having your own home.

Ms. Ayres: Yes, it was. In fact, my parents, who had moved to Oregon, had said to me, "We will never come and visit you unless you have your own home." So I had been married four years and had two children before they even met my husband. So then they came as soon as we had moved into our new house. Then life was good with two little children, with all the neighbors on the streets. Everybody had the children go outside. My kids still remember my saying to them, "Go outside and play." Three years old; "go outside and play." And they did.

Ms. Higgins: Where did your children go to school?

Ms. Ayres: There was just the one, Markham Place School. When our oldest son started school, it was starting to get crowded because there were houses being built all around and they bought property, I guess, where the Point Road School is, and they tried to get a referendum to build, but it failed by eleven votes. That meant the children had to go on double sessions. So there was a year or two that our children went on double session. There were kids all over, and it was not a very good situation. Then finally the referendum passed, and Point Road School was built. During that time I was active in the PTA and did the usual thing that mothers do.



**Birthday party at 148
North Lovett Street,
1953**

Ms. Higgins: Did you keep up with the Hen Club?

Ms. Ayres: Oh, yes. That kept up forever.

Ms. Higgins: You know there was a man I interviewed at the beginning of this project who was an old time Red Bank person and he also played a lot of softball. His name is George Jones; he'd be about the age of your husband, I think. But before the kids went to school, did you take up with any activities then? Were you still active in the church?

Ms. Ayres: Yes, I taught Sunday school, and I was active in women's groups in the church and that was about it. The Friends of the Library was formed here in Little Silver. I was active in that, because after we moved to Little Silver in 1950, right away I was looking for a library. Of course, at that time, the old Borough Hall had the library on the second floor. It consisted of, I think, entirely donated books. I don't think there was any budget to buy new books, or anything like that. It was adequate; I guess we didn't know any better. But there were new people coming in to Little Silver who wanted to have a better library and formed the Friends of the Library, and that became the impetus to start really getting a good library. I think that group was formed in 1959. So by 1960 they had hired Harriet Balkan as librarian. Then in 1961, they decided they needed an assistant and put an ad in the paper and I guess the newsletter, or something, and I decided that it might be a good job. Our oldest son was, I think, going to be in eighth grade, and I got thinking, "How are we going to afford college?" Our insurance man came over and he looked at our finances and he said, "There's one way that you will be able to afford college for your son." We said, "What is that?" He said, "You have to get a job." I thought, "Oh, no, I don't want to be a secretary, and I don't want to work in a store, and I don't want to work in a hospital or anything like that." So I think it was providence that put this ad in the paper for a librarian. I went over and I think there were about twenty or thirty applicants. The committee reviewed the applications and then they called two of us in for a final interview and Mrs. Balkan called and said that I had the job. The salary started at two dollars an hour, it was part-time, like nine hours a week. She said with my qualifications they were going to pay two seventy-five an hour. So that was fine. At that time my youngest was in kindergarten, and he was very good. After kindergarten he would come into the library to check in and see that everything was all right, and then he would go outside and play. So I started my career with nine hours.

Ms. Higgins: What did you do when you were in the Navy?

Ms. Ayres: It's rather interesting how I got in. I had applied during the school year, and I sent in my application, and they called me and said, "Go to Fargo, North Dakota for the physical." And my students were all excited about this, and then I got the letter saying that because of my eyesight and my height that I was rejected, and my students were very disappointed because they thought it would be wonderful to have their teacher in the Navy. So I decided I wasn't going to teach again. I gave my notice and at that time they had NYA in Duluth, Minnesota, and -

Ms. Higgins: What's NYA?

Ms. Ayres: It's National Youth Association, or something like that. It was one of those left over from the Depression. So I went to Duluth, and I took radio courses, but I came home for the Fourth of July, and was just going to be home for the weekend and go back, and then they announced that the government seized all funding for the NYA so the school was closed. I said, "Oh, what am I

going to do?" I wasn't going to go teach, but this was 1943, the War was on, and I thought, "Oh, I can get a job somewhere." And then, I don't know how I found out, but my mother had gone to the mailbox and taken a letter I had gotten from the Navy saying that they really had changed their mind, that I could be accepted. She had burned the letter.

Ms. Higgins: On purpose?

Ms. Ayres: Yes, on purpose. And so when I was home, the second letter came and I got the mail and I said, "What?" And she admitted that the first letter did come and that she had burned it. So I took the letter. I had a cousin who lived in Minneapolis, and I decided I would go there and look for a job. So I got on the bus, and went to Minneapolis where my cousin picked me up. She was working for Pillsbury at the time, and had to go to work at eight o'clock in the morning, and I walked with her. I was going to buy a newspaper and look at the want ads. I said goodbye to her at the corner, and looked up, and there was the Navy recruiting station--right there! I walked in with my letter and went through the physical, and walked out, sworn in. I really had never had a train ride before, but they gave me money to go back, this was in July, and I think my day to go to Hunter College was the sixteenth of August. On the train I sat with a lady who said that her cousin was in the WAVES, and she was a link trainer instructor. And I said, "What is that?" She said, "Well, she has something to do with airplanes and she teaches pilots how to fly by instrument." And I thought, "That sounds wonderful, I like that!" So I got to Hunter College and we had to pass all of these tests to find out what you would be qualified for, and it seemed like most of the girls who had been secretaries or who had been working in the hospital or something, got those kind of jobs. What you did was what you were qualified for. But a couple of us, a good friend of mine and I decided that we would apply to be link trainer instructors. And we were called in by an officer for the interview. The two things that really got us into that field was we were farm girls and we knew how to work with machines, and both of us had been teachers in a country school. You had to know how to teach to be an instructor, so of course we impressed upon the officer that we were very good at that. We were picked. There were twelve of us, we went down to Atlanta, Georgia, to school, and that was the hardest I think I've ever worked. There were civilian men who were taking the course to be a flight simulation trainer instructor and they were very good with the written tests, but there were quite a few of them who flunked out on the mechanical. We had to take a link trainer apart and put it together, and some of the men could not do that. Anyway, we could and that was what I did. I spent all my Navy time - twenty-eight months...

Ms. Higgins: Training Navy fliers?

Ms. Ayres: Um hmm.

Ms. Higgins: Now, when you came to Little Silver, did you look back on those

days and think that you were now working in a library and it was pretty quiet? Of course, that's a common question of all veterans. After the War, did life seem more tame, or were you glad it was over?

Ms. Ayres: No, I didn't have any bad experiences, and my husband-to-be got sent up to Cape Cod and never went overseas, so we didn't have any horrible experiences. It seemed to me glamorous. Actually we all keep in touch, those of us who are still living. These twelve girls, and some of the fellows that we met, are sort of a cliquy bunch. Of course, my husband was always involved in sports and I guess that's -

Ms. Higgins: Did your boys play Little League?

Ms. Ayres: Yes.

Ms. Higgins: Back in the 1950s was that a pretty new thing?

Ms. Ayres: Yes.

Ms. Higgins: So, did they go out and practice all the time? Did you feel it was too much, or not enough?

Ms. Ayres: It was one of those really, I would work until five o'clock, come home, and it would have to be a quick supper, and there'd be practice or a game at six o'clock and away everybody went. And that was the life style.

Ms. Higgins: Soccer mom! I'm trying to think back to Middletown, where I lived then, because the library experience was so much the same. The library was in the police department, in the basement, and I don't know if Middletown organized the 'Friends' the way Little Silver did. But the 'Friends' are still active in Little Silver and continue to work for the library.

Ms. Ayres: Well actually we always used to say we should have called it the Ruth Branch library because there was a very active person in the 'Friends' whose name was Ruth Branch. She came from New York, and she was a New Yorker who had lots of get up and go, and then it was, I think, during the Johnson years, when there was money around and she'd get through all of this red tape, to get all the money, because as you know, this part was the first library after the old Borough Hall was demolished. This was the garage for the old Borough Hall and they spent about twenty five thousand dollars to make it into a library. It wasn't enough. The space became inadequate almost immediately.

Ms. Higgins: Was the first library about half this size?

Ms. Ayres: It was up until where you can see the first divider. And we had a lot of books and the circulation was fantastic. Nobody had television, what else was

there to do?

Ms. Higgins: But Little Silver has always had the reputation of having a lot of very well educated people, and I think that was true back then.

Ms. Ayres: So, they decided that the library was too small, and there was this federal money out there, and Ruth Branch did all of this work. She got the money to build the extension, to buy the furniture, to buy the drapes, the shelving, and all of that.

Ms. Higgins: Was Ruth Branch ever the librarian here? Did she have any input into your affiliation with the County library system, was that always the arrangement?

Ms. Ayres: Yes, we were always affiliated with the County, and after we really got started in this first part of the library, the bookmobile came. I don't know how often, but that was a big to do when the bookmobile came, because usually Harriett would send me out and say, "Pick out the books that you want." And you'd pick out everything and put them in boxes and whoever was driving the bookmobile would bring them in and these would be our books for the next go around. Sometimes we would go into Freehold where they had this old building for more books. Then, after we got the big addition, we had all of these shelves and we didn't have enough books to fill them, so some of us went to the big green building and we just picked out a lot of books and started to fill our shelves.

Ms. Higgins: How did you know what to choose?

Ms. Ayres: Mainly by what the people in Little Silver liked. I mean, it was mysteries, fiction, history, and whatever else, cookbooks.

Ms. Higgins: Knitting books.

Ms. Ayres: Not so much now, maybe then.

Ms. Higgins: And how often did you rotate these books?

Ms. Ayres: I think we kept a lot of them for a long time.

Ms. Higgins: Okay, so they were old, right?

Ms. Ayres: Yes.

Ms. Higgins: I'm scheduled to interview the man who was one of the first bookmobile drivers for the system. I'm eager to talk to him, because he went all over. He was saying that when he came around, it created a lot of excitement for the community. Little Silver was one of the first libraries in the system, wasn't it?

Ms. Ayres: Oh yes. And we did have some very interested, intelligent people who worked very hard to get the library.

Ms. Higgins: Who else were some of these people who were active?

Ms. Ayres: There was Patsy Ingram, there was Myrtle Borgeson, Alice Correa, Elise Jacobi, who is still living. In fact, her daughter-in-law is president of the Board of Trustees at the moment.

Ms. Higgins: The organization of the Little Silver library differs slightly from most libraries in the system. There are volunteer groups in some libraries, but I think Little Silver has maintained the most active volunteer group consistently over the years. Would you tell us a little bit about how that got formed and organized?

Ms. Ayres: Lynn Mack was another person who was very active, and even when we were upstairs in the old Borough Hall, somehow the 'Friends' decided that they wanted to become more involved than just coming to a meeting, so we had people who came in to jacket books, to do typing, to shelve books, and we had a very interesting woman who did story time for the children. Today, there's a children's librarian from the County who comes and does children's programs, but then it was a volunteer.

Ms. Higgins: Lorraine, who taught the people how to do these things with the books?

Ms. Ayres: What do you mean?

Ms. Higgins: Who taught them how to cover the books and organize and shelve them? Did you?

Ms. Ayres: Yes.

Ms. Higgins: Seems you haven't gotten far from being a teacher! What with the Navy experience and then teaching library volunteers here.

Ms. Ayres: That is still my job, to deal with the volunteers.

Ms. Higgins: And scheduling?

Ms. Ayres: Um hmm.

Ms. Higgins: They are an active part of the library.

Ms. Ayres: Very much. They are very, very active, and very necessary.

Ms. Higgins: I think that's a singular achievement, I really do. How do you see

Little Silver being different in the year 2000 and from 1950? What are the major differences that come to mind?

Ms. Ayres: When we moved here in 1950, there were no supermarkets. There was a barber shop and there was something called a Sugar Bar which sold newspapers and ice cream, and things like that. There was a butcher shop, and I think there was a hardware store, but I'm not positive. And there was a river running through, which is now all covered up, but it used to have a little bridge and the children used to go and watch the fish swim. You can still see portions of it.

Ms. Higgins: Now of course you have stores.

Ms. Ayres: Stores and traffic. Unbelievable, terrible. And everything is built up; there are no vacant lots.

Ms. Higgins: That's too bad. Lots of senior housing in Little Silver, or -

Ms. Ayres: Um, yes, there's Cheshire Square, which is senior, and Alder Brook, which, I guess that could be senior -

Ms. Higgins: Is that down by the old Ski Haus?

Ms. Ayres: No, Alder Brook is over by Sickles. That's high class, three hundred seventy, three hundred eighty thousand dollar condos. And then there are other developments that are not senior.

Ms. Higgins: Can you think of any famous people from Little Silver that you might have known, or may know? Tell us about Sickles.

Ms. Ayres: Sickles?

Ms. Higgins: Yes, I used to buy at Sickles, and then I was convinced to buy at Laurino. And there seems to be a singular rivalry between Laurino and Sickles. Why is Sickles corn the best?

Ms. Ayres: Well, Sickles has been here as long as I can remember and they have become high class, high priced, I suppose and have everything because it started out as just a little farm market and then it became bigger, and when this Parker died, and they were relatives, and the land is now gone.

Ms. Higgins: It's no longer being farmed?

Ms. Ayres: There's nothing. There are maybe a few fruit trees, but everything that they get comes from other places.

Ms. Higgins: Then he's not selling his own produce as he did.

Ms. Ayres: Maybe some fruit, but nothing - they may rent or do something out into other fields, but not here. So that's all. And there were a few other places in the beginning that people had gardened and sold stuff, but not anymore.

Ms. Higgins: Were the Ayres some of the original settlers in Little Silver?

Ms. Ayres: My husband's father, yes. They lived in a house on Prospect Avenue and they are buried in Embury Methodist Cemetery. My father-in-law married Hazel Rogers, and that was how he came from Little Silver to Red Bank.

Ms. Higgins: I see. Was there much interaction between Little Silver and Fair Haven and Rumson?

Ms. Ayres: No. I think a reason could be that Red Bank had a high school from way, way back. In fact my mother-in-law and my father-in-law both graduated from Red Bank High School. That was a long time ago. And Rumson and Fair Haven did not have a high school. I don't know where they went. Holmdel children came to Red Bank until Holmdel built their own high school.

Ms. Higgins: Where did Little Silver students go?

Ms. Ayres: They always went to Red Bank. Well, way back, way, way back, some of them could go to Long Branch High School. In fact my father-in-law went one or two years to Long Branch High School and then transferred to Red Bank.

Ms. Higgins: What were some of the ways you as a family would amuse yourselves during the 1940s and 1950s?

Ms. Ayres: When our first child was born, the trains came through Red Bank and they were the old fashioned locomotives. He loved the train, so every night he and his father would go to watch the train come in. And there was a newsstand right by the train station, and Bobby used to get a comic book, or a Golden Book almost every night after watching these trains. We went to movies -

Ms. Higgins: Where?

Ms. Ayres: Carlton Theater.

Ms. Higgins: Which is now the Count Basie.

Ms. Ayres: Right. And there was the other one, on Broad Street, the Strand, which had second-class films.

Ms. Higgins: I never heard of the Strand in Red Bank, that's something. And did

you go out to dinner?

Ms. Ayres: There was a restaurant in Little Silver, The Farmhouse Restaurant, only it wasn't called that then, it was called The Roosevelt Tea Room.

Ms. Higgins: Why Roosevelt?

Ms. Ayres: I think because that was the name of the women who ran it. I'm not sure, I'd have to look in the book of Little Silver history. They made very good homemade cakes. To go out to eat was not a very common thing.

Ms. Higgins: Several people in the County have commented on the change in the weather; do you notice the change in the weather?

Ms. Ayres: Yes. Much more snow back then, blizzards, and I think the year 1946 was supposed to be a really bad year.

Ms. Higgins: Also a lot more ice-skating.

Ms. Ayres: Yes.

Ms. Higgins: Did your boys have to clear off the pond and all with their shovels before they skated?

Ms. Ayres: They were not skaters.

Ms. Higgins: There's water around here, but of course a lot of it is salt water, which doesn't freeze.

Ms. Ayres: Right. My husband had a sailboat when he was a teenager, but my boys never got that interested.

Ms. Higgins: Was that at the Monmouth Boat Club, that old one in Red Bank?

Ms. Ayres: Yes.

Ms. Higgins: Sailing is big on the river. Lorraine, were you content with the education your children received? Did they go on to college?

Ms. Ayres: Yes. Actually, as the insurance man said, I had to pay for their education, and all three of them graduated from college and all three have Masters degrees, and one has a PhD. They all did very well.

Ms. Higgins: And all on two seventy-five an hour.

Ms. Ayres: That's right. And the interesting thing was that when my husband

retired from the government in 1973, he was making the most money he ever did, that was twelve thousand dollars a year.

Ms. Higgins: He worked for the government? Where?

Ms. Ayres: He was a machinist at Fort Monmouth.

Ms. Higgins: Oh, Fort Monmouth, yes. Was he at Fort Monmouth during the troubles in the fifties?

Ms. Ayres: Yes.

Ms. Higgins: Would you care to venture an opinion on that?

Ms. Ayres: Well, to go back to when my husband graduated from high school, he was not academically interested. In fact, he tried to flunk out so he could go another year so he could play basketball, but that didn't work. He got a job driving a truck for a dry cleaners, and my mother-in-law was not very happy, so she met somebody who worked at Fort Monmouth and somehow she got my husband into the machine shop at Fort Monmouth. He seemed to like that pretty much, and in fact he was one of the last ones to be drafted, because they did not want to let go of what he was doing. They thought it was necessary for the War effort. But he did finally say, "I'm finally going to go, everybody else is going, so I'm going." So he did. But his job was waiting for him when he got back, when he got out of the service. So he worked all the time, and it was a bad thing that he didn't have a degree, because he did all of the work and those who had the degree got the honors and the salary.

Ms. Higgins: But he must have been there during the McCarthy era.

Ms. Ayres: Yes. You couldn't go and visit, and he never said anything about what he was working on. One of our neighbors also worked there, and he had to be demoted or whatever. He didn't work for the government anymore.

Ms. Higgins: The more I'm talking to people, the more I realize what an economic factor Fort Monmouth has been in Monmouth County.

Ms. Ayres: Well it was very much. I just wonder now how people make seventy to eighty thousand dollars a year and can't make it; how did we ever manage?

Ms. Higgins: If you had several things you could be empowered to say to people in this new century, as Little Silver, and, in fact Monmouth County and the world grows and develops, what would you like to say to them, the people who will be reading this archive? Any advice?

Ms. Ayres: No. I was fortunate I could stay home with my children until the

youngest was five, when I went to work. I can see how hard it is, because my daughter has had to go back to work since her child was a baby, and it's just the difference in lifestyle or whatever.

Ms. Higgins: The times. In remarks to your whole life, Lorraine, what would you say about that, your life here?

Ms. Ayres: I am very happy that I've been here, I have lots of friends, and a very good church relationship. We did a lot of traveling, so I've never felt cut off from my family who was out West.

Ms. Higgins: And you and your husband continue to enjoy good health.

Ms. Ayres: He's still working every day. He carried over with his talents as a machinist and he works for antique dealers, doing repairs on all kinds of things that nobody else can do. And he likes it very much.

Ms. Higgins: And two of your children are both here, and one is out West. Is that correct?

Ms. Ayres: Yes.

Ms. Higgins: But you do go back and forth?

Ms. Ayres: Yes.

Ms. Higgins: Your ethnic heritage is -

Ms. Ayres: Norwegian.

Ms. Higgins: And have you been to Norway?

Ms. Ayres: Yes.

Ms. Higgins: Do you want to talk about that?

Ms. Ayres: I went in 1990 and liked it very much. I did go with a group of Lutherans and we toured from Bergen to Oslo, and then we went to Sweden and to Denmark, and then we went to Germany. I would like to go again.

Ms. Higgins: That sounds like a nice trip; I would like to go myself. Lorraine, please comment on the reading tastes of the public. Do you see any changes in literature in the thirty years you've been working here?

Ms. Ayres: Not really. The people are looking for pleasure reading, mainly. The children are looking for pleasure reading, except for when they have reports to

do. I have noticed that there are still a number of young mothers who are home with their little toddlers, and they come in and take out lots of library books. I would say the majority are not young teenage mothers, these are more mature mothers. Of course, now that we have videos, too.

Ms. Higgins: We circulate a lot of videos, too. A lot. Can you recall what you were doing when you heard when Franklin Roosevelt had died, or when President Kennedy had been shot?

Ms. Ayres: It was very interesting when President Roosevelt died. He died in Georgia, and I was stationed in Georgia then, and the train went right by the Naval Air Station, and we stood by and watched the train go by, and I think many of us were crying. We felt very sad and the train went very slowly through the town. When President Kennedy died, I was doing dishes. It was a Friday, and I heard it on the radio, and for some reason, I went to work, which seemed like sort of a strange thing, and nobody came in the library except for this one woman who was very sharp spoken. She said, "How come there's nobody here?" and I said, "President Kennedy died." And she said, "Don't tell me that blankety-blank Johnson is going to be our president now."

Ms. Higgins: What do feel you still want to accomplish? You've accomplished a lot.

Ms. Ayres: I have no idea.

Ms. Higgins: Have you ever thought of publishing your journals?

Ms. Ayres: I would like to, probably in the future, be able to talk into something and have a vocal record. Because the one journal I would really like to have done is the one I started when I was in high school.

Ms. Higgins: Lorraine, we'd be most pleased to lend you this equipment, and you could talk into that. That would be something we could talk about later. I am going to conclude this interview for now; unless you have any other things you'd like to say. Are there any locations in Monmouth County, Little Silver or wherever, that have any particular significance for you.

Ms. Ayres: Yes, the old Tennent cemetery. My mother-in-law's family has a plot there, and it was bought in perpetuity, and she was telling us when her mother died, during the flu epidemic in World War I, they went to the cemetery with a horse, and taking the casket. She said it was quite a drive from Red Bank to Tennent, and she said that they went to the cemetery and her mother was buried there. Then afterwards they stopped at the American Hotel in Freehold and got a meal.

Ms. Higgins: Have you been to Freehold lately?

Ms. Ayres: Yes.

Ms. Higgins: Lovely town, isn't it? Coming right along. Some people think that what's happening in Red Bank is wonderful, and some people think it's terrible. What's your opinion?

Ms. Ayres: I think it's good.

Ms. Higgins: I do, too. And Prown's is always there, and you can always get what you want at Prown's. Woolworth is gone.

Ms. Ayres: I miss some of the things that were here when I first came here. There was something called Lerner's that sold cheaper clothes, and Newberry's, and Woolworths. All of those stores had everything.

Ms. Higgins: Well, Lorraine, thank you very much.

Ms. Ayres: You're welcome.