



Interview with Sarah Ellison

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: Douglas Aumack
Premises of Interview: Ms. Ellison's home,
Matawan, NJ
Birthdate of Subject: November 22, 1915
Deceased: October 19, 2002



Sarah Ellison, present day

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

Ms. Ellison: We came down to Monmouth County in 1920 because my father wanted his family to be down in the country. We came from Newark. He still had his job in Newark, so he did commute. We lived in Keyport, where the trolley was the transportation until 1925. The trolley ceased running then. There was a bus, but it was not as convenient as the trolley. It was on a different street. So we moved to Matawan to be near the railroad station. The transportation in Matawan was better. So we lived where he could walk to the railroad station every day.



Sarah Higbie (Ellison)
in 1917, at the age of

two

Mr. Aumack: Now what was your father's job?

Ms. Ellison: I think today they would call it an electrical engineer. He was into electricity when electricity was new. Then when the Depression came along in the 1930s, he lost his job. Oh, that was a big step for us. We lived through the Depression, and we lived in Matawan. And he got odd jobs.

Mr. Aumack: What kind of odd jobs?

Ms. Ellison: Oh, he did different things. He worked for a coal company, he worked as a truck driver one time, and then finally he got a job in Newark as an elevator operator. He did that for awhile. Later on, when building resumed, he did go back into the electrical business. But by that time, in 1940, I was married. So I did not live home anymore.

Mr. Aumack: From 1930 to 1940, he held a lot of different jobs.

Ms. Ellison: He did. He held different jobs, anything he could get because during the Depression, it was very bad.

Mr. Aumack: Did your mom do anything during the Depression?

Ms. Ellison: No, mother stayed home.

Mr. Aumack: Do you remember the name of the coal or truck company that he worked for?

Ms. Ellison: Yes, I think it was Martin & Brown. It was a local company.

Mr. Aumack: Was that the coal or the trucking company?

Ms. Ellison: They did different things. It was trucking, and one of the things they did do besides trucking was also the coal business. They also did other things like lumber and different things.

Mr. Aumack: Was the coal and the trucking job both from the same company, Martin & Brown?

Ms. Ellison: Yes, well it was on a truck. They had trucks, and he just worked on the truck.

Mr. Aumack: Discuss the trolley. Where was it?

Ms. Ellison: Well, I think the trolley started down in Union Beach. It did run through Matawan, but I don't think it went to Freehold. We only used it to go to Matawan, so I don't know for sure. At the time, the trolley did go through

Matawan, and it came up Main Street. Now it couldn't cross the railroad tracks. But at that time, when the trolley was running, there was a road that ran underneath the railroad tracks, and it's no longer there. Do you know anything about Matawan?

Mr. Aumack: No.

Ms. Ellison: Where Key Autobody is now, there used to be a road. But they have filled that road up with a parking lot now. But the trolley used to go down and around underneath the railroad tracks, and it came up by the Matawan Lake dam. And then it went through Matawan. But I don't think it went past Matawan. And I know it didn't go to Freehold, so it must have ended. It ended at what we call Freneau, which is south Matawan. It ended in the southern part of Matawan.

Mr. Aumack: Do you know why the trolley stopped?

Ms. Ellison: It probably was not paying, but I don't know why it stopped, really. But it must have had difficulties, and it did stop running.

Mr. Aumack: So it stopped in 1925.

Ms. Ellison: Yes, we moved to Matawan in 1925. It could've stopped in 1924. The bus service was not handy or as good as the trolley.

Mr. Aumack: One more question about the trolley. Did the railroad maybe have a hand in getting rid of the trolley?

Ms. Ellison: I don't think so. I really think it was for financial reasons.

Mr. Aumack: Ok.

Ms. Ellison: You know who is an expert on the trolleys? Maybe Pete Koelsch. He is on the Transportation Committee in Monmouth County. He would be more of an expert on transportation than me.

Mr. Aumack: How do you spell that last name?

Ms. Ellison: Koelsch, Peter Koelsch. I know he is on the Transportation Commission or Committee, whatever they call it.

Mr. Aumack: Thank you. Let's go back a bit. Do you know what company your father worked for when he was an electrical engineer?

Ms. Ellison: He worked for Westinghouse.

Mr. Aumack: Westinghouse!

Ms. Ellison: Westinghouse in Newark.

Mr. Aumack: Now you moved from Keyport to Matawan in 1925. Describe, if you can, what Keyport was like, if you remember it at all.

Ms. Ellison: Keyport was a very nice waterfront town. A lot of people lived along the Bay, and it was a nice place to live. It was a good residential area.

Mr. Aumack: Was it very big?

Ms. Ellison: No. It was a small town, like many of the towns here in Jersey.

Mr. Aumack: Was it very rural, Keyport?

Ms. Ellison: No, it sort of depended more on the water, I think. There were more fishermen. It was not farming, like Matawan. It was just residential. And the main industry was fishing, I think.

Mr. Aumack: Describe Matawan in 1925.

Ms. Ellison: Well, it was a small, rural town. The center of town had several streets on each side of Main Street. And then about three streets beyond were all farms. Of course the Township was mostly the farming part. And the Borough was the residential area.

Mr. Aumack: Oh, I see.

Ms. Ellison: Matawan Township was a large area. In the 1880s, maybe 1885 or 1886, the residents in the center of town decided to be free from the larger area, which was the Township. So they named themselves the Borough. Now Matawan Borough was surrounded by Matawan Township.

Mr. Aumack: When the developments came in, like Strathmore, did you live in Strathmore?

Ms. Ellison: No, I lived in Matawan. A lot of the people who came down to the developments were city people.

Mr. Aumack: New York City?

Ms. Ellison: Well, New York, Newark, or Jersey City. I knew a lot of people came from Staten Island, especially when they built the Verrazano Narrows Bridge.

Mr. Aumack: Do you remember what year that was?

Ms. Ellison: No, I don't remember. Maybe in the 1960s. When they built things like the bridges, it took whole neighborhoods out. I knew Lillian Burry, and I found out that many of her neighbors were from Staten Island. I said, "You've gotten your neighbors to move down with you." And she said, "Well, a lot of us were dispossessed when they built the Verrazano Bridge." So whole neighborhoods moved, and the people knew each other. But it was the people in the Township who decided these people were strangers. The people who moved down were not local farmers, because all the farmers had moved out. Now the farmers were content to be part of Matawan Township, but the people who moved down from New York were not satisfied with being part of the Township. So the name was changed to Aberdeen. The name Aberdeen goes back to the very first settlers. The first settlers in Matawan Township were Scots who were looking for religious freedom in 1686 or 1687. So these people who had moved down to Matawan Township did not want to be called Matawan anymore, because they felt that they were second-class citizens compared to Matawan Borough. And so they changed the name back to the original Scotch name, because the original settlers came from Aberdeen. So that's a little early history. Do you know the history of Matawan?

Mr. Aumack: Yes, I have heard of that story before.

Ms. Ellison: So you know that story then. Ok, I won't go through that.

Mr. Aumack: No, please go through that. Many people haven't heard it, so please go ahead and go through it. Now let me get a few things straight before you go on, please. Is what is now Aberdeen what used to be Matawan Township?

Ms. Ellison: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: Ok. And that used to be all farm area. And that was larger than Matawan Borough?

Ms. Ellison: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: What kinds of farms were in Matawan Township?

Ms. Ellison: Truck farms. The farmers sent their produce into market.

Mr. Aumack: Where did they send their produce to?

Ms. Ellison: New York City. There is a market up in New York where they all went.

Mr. Aumack: Fulton Street?

Ms. Ellison: Yes, I guess Fulton Street is where it is. I know there was a trucking company here, Van Brunts Trucking. The farmers depended on them, because they took the produce into market every night.

Mr. Aumack: Were there any animals on these farms?

Ms. Ellison: No. Maybe a horse or two that they used, but they didn't raise pigs or anything like that. It was mostly produce, vegetables.

Mr. Aumack: Matawan Borough separated from Matawan Township in the 1880s.

Ms. Ellison: Yes, about then.

Mr. Aumack: Why?

Ms. Ellison: They did not want to be associated with the farms. I guess they were a little bit snobbish!

Mr. Aumack: When did people start moving down from Staten Island, New York City, and Jersey City?

Ms. Ellison: When the developments came in, which would be in the 1960s.

Mr. Aumack: And most of these people settled in what is now Aberdeen?

Ms. Ellison: Yes. Matawan was fully built up. The developers bought up these truck farms in the Township. The Strathmore development was all Italian farmers out there, and now we have a big development of houses. And there was a farm where Marc Woods was built. And it was a farm there on the other side of town. All these developments coming in made it more people than farms, do you know what I mean? Now it is really not a farming community anymore. It changed the whole flavor of the place. Years ago, before the developments came in, Matawan had Main Street, which was like the village part. And all the farmers or people that lived on the outskirts, which would have been the Township, would have come into Matawan to shop. Now, we don't have downtown shopping the way it used to be, because of the malls and stores like Shop Rite and Grand Union. Those large stores are on the outside of town, out on the highway, and that's what sort of did in the downtown area. Now there is a drive going on to try and build up the downtown. But without a big grocery store or without a shopping mall downtown, you don't get people down there the way you used to. As I said, it changed the whole flavor of the area. Matawan is no longer the center of the village, because people do their shopping out on the highway. The grocery store that was downtown, or several of them, left because there was not enough business. People would rather go to a big shopping center out on the highway, on Route 34.

Mr. Aumack: Which stores were in the downtown area?

Ms. Ellison: The last one that went out was a co-op called Food Town. But when I was growing up, there was an American Store, which later became Acme. It was called American Store then, and it was a grocery store. Before that, there was a Butler's Store. And there was a meat market downtown, and it was called Dell's Meat Market. People would go there to buy their meat, and then they would go to the American Store to buy their groceries. Now you have these large places like Grand Union or Shop Right, and you can get everything in the same store. But years ago, you went to different stores to get everything you needed. I notice now that when you go over to Grand Union, you don't even have to go to the florist anymore. They have flowers there, besides all the vegetables. For fresh vegetables, you used to go out to one of the farm markets. Although I do remember men who came around with a horse and wagon and had vegetables for sale. They would be the farmers from outside of town, and they would come in to sell their vegetables. At one time, there was a man with a truck that had fish for sale. He probably picked up fish down at Keyport and went door-to-door selling them. He had people in town like my mother who always bought fish from this guy, whose name was Gormally. He came to the door, and we bought fish from him. And there was also an ice man who came to sell ice. You got your ice delivered every day, and you had the fish man, and the vegetable man. So you really used to have things brought to you. Nowadays, nobody brings anything to you.

Mr. Aumack: Did anyone else come to your door with any type of food or any other product?

Ms. Ellison: Yes, I remember one time there was someone from a tea company. I think it was probably due to the Depression, but somebody came around selling tea, coffee and spices. There was a company, I think it was called Larkin, that might have come around with soap.

Mr. Aumack: But Larkin was separate from the tea company?

Ms. Ellison: No, it was Larkin that had everything. And there might have been others, but I do remember someone coming around from Larkin. People didn't have a job in the Depression, so they would take up selling door-to-door. And I remember the Fuller Brush man, too. It was the Fuller Brush Company that sent representatives around, but it really was hard because people didn't have a job, and they would do anything. And you know, selling door-to-door is hard.

Mr. Aumack: Yes. Did you do anything during the Depression?



Sarah Ellison with her daughter, and Friar Frell at Trinity Church in Matawan, 1942

Ms. Ellison: No, I was going to school. I did babysitting. I think it was towards the end of the Depression that I started working. I went away to art school, and then when I came back home to Matawan, I had a job as a tile decorator. I painted tile. I did that at the end of the Depression, because it was like at the very beginning of World War II. I got married in 1940, and I had been a tile decorator maybe two years, and I worked a year after I was married. I had retired by 1941 because I got pregnant, and World War II was coming along. Of course that was in the end of 1941. Ree was born in 1941 on December 3rd, and Pearl Harbor happened on December 7th. I was in a hospital bed in Long Branch looking out over the ocean. Once Pearl Harbor came along and the War started, they had vigilantes in Long Branch, because there were submarines out there. People who lived along the shore here knew

there were submarines out there. My husband at one time was working in Sandy Hook. Actually he worked for Western Electric, but they were doing a job there. At that time they were discovering radar. It was the very beginning of radar. They were testing the radar on Sandy Hook. And he said the big guns would come up, the sirens would blow, and everybody dived into ground shelters. And the guns fired. Now it is just coming out and stories are talking about the submarines that were out there. I guess some of them are still out there. They were sunk. When the War came along, things changed quite a bit.

Mr. Aumack: Where did you go to art school?

Ms. Ellison: At Newark School of Fine and Industrial art.

Mr. Aumack: What did you want to become?

Ms. Ellison: Well I didn't want to be a teacher at the time. I just wanted to be an artist. I really was interested in commercial art or just painting. I became a teacher when my children were going to school. I filled in for the art teacher, and when they asked me to take on the job, I had to go to college. I spent fourteen years going to night school to get a Bachelor's Degree! I actually graduated from Kean. I attended Monmouth, but Monmouth did not have a degree for me in the Extension Service. You see when I got the job, I had to sign up to get my degree. I signed a paper that said I was working towards my Bachelor's Degree and my teacher's credits. So I just kept going to night school and teaching. And I couldn't stop teaching because they told me if I stopped teaching, I would lose my job. So I didn't stop teaching. And when it came time for me to graduate from Kean, they understood that I could not do student teaching because I was teaching every



Sarah Ellison with her husband and daughter, 1945

day. So they sent a professor from the college to watch me teach, and that was my student teaching. I mean I was teaching every day, so I couldn't do the regular student teaching that others were doing. And then I finally got a degree. My Degree is in Fine arts, with a codicil in Education, which is different. They needed an art teacher. You see there were no art teachers around at the time, and I had been substituting for the art teacher in school. And they knew I could do it, because I had gone to art school.

Mr. Aumack: Describe what the War did and your experiences.

Ms. Ellison: My husband didn't go to war because he had a family already, and he worked for Western Electric in the line that made radios for fighter planes. His business was to make radios that went into fighter planes. So he went to work every day, and he did not have to go to War.

Mr. Aumack: Did he ever tell you about his experiences in Sandy Hook? Comment more on that.

Ms. Ellison: Actually no, because at the time it was secret. It was secret work, and he was told not to talk about it. Of course after the War was over, he did tell me that what they did was to perfect radar, which had been invented by Bell Labs. Western Electric was the manufacturing end of the Bell Labs. And Bell Labs had invented this thing called radar, which was used during World War II. His business at the time he worked for Western Electric was with the radar. Now after they finished perfecting radar, he was back up in Newark or wherever Western Electric is. I think it was maybe Kearny. Well anyhow, wherever the plant is. After the War stopped, they didn't need to make radios anymore for fighter planes, so they cut back. He was offered a job in Connecticut, but he wouldn't go. He said he wouldn't leave Matawan. He was a big Matawan supporter. He had been born here, and grew up here. He actually grew up in the house next door. His father owned that house. And then he bought this house from his father. His father bought this house after the War, of course. And then we moved in here when his father got sick and could no longer work. So we moved in with grandmom and grandpop. He bought the house from his father. So now I am still here!

Mr. Aumack: So he was there while they had the scare in Sandy Hook?

Ms. Ellison: Yes, when they were working out there on radar in Sandy Hook. That's where they tested it. And he knew that there were submarines out along the Atlantic Ocean.

Mr. Aumack: Because they saw them on radar?

Ms. Ellison: Well, probably that, and because the defenses along the coast could follow them. But they knew they were there.

Mr. Aumack: After the War, what happened?

Ms. Ellison: Well, then he came back to Matawan and bought a business. His father was a laundry man already, but he wanted to do the same thing as his father. Now this is a door-to-door business!

Mr. Aumack: Laundry?

Ms. Ellison: Yes. They don't do that much anymore, but at that time in the 1940s, not every house had water. I am talking about the countryside. His business was around the farms, and he went around to them. Every summer the farmers would need a lot of help with the wash. Sometimes the wells dried up. And even if they didn't, the farmers got working and sent their wash out. You probably can't remember when people sent their wash out! And that was a business they had, a laundry business. My father-in-law did it for many years, from World War I until World War II, when he got sick. But my husband had his own business, and he eventually had both of them. He took over both lines. But every day he went out all around. He had a business from South Amboy, to Keyport, to Keansburg, and to Red Bank. He visited all around the countryside. He had some customers in town, but in a town like Matawan, you don't need your wash done every week like the farmers did. But that was a big business, to pick up the laundry every week. You picked it up on Monday and delivered it on Thursday. That's one of the businesses that have gone away now, but that was good business then. And besides having a truck to pick up the laundry, we had a store. The store was up where it is now Angelo's Pizza in the Colonial Shops. That store, the end store there, is where we had a store where people could drop off their laundry, too. Then when people got more mobile with cars, and people started going shopping to the malls and out to buy their groceries, they quite often would drop off their clothes. That was mostly men's shirts that had to be washed every week, maybe the tablecloth and sheets had to be ironed, and there would be dry cleaning, too. Now he took his business down to Keyport. The laundry that he was affiliated with was in Keyport, you see. They did the work down there, and all he did was pick it up. Yes, he owned his own business then. This is what happens when you lose a job. You have to think of what you can do, so you start your own business. And he knew about the laundry business, because his father had done it.

Mr. Aumack: Right. Was his father successful?

Ms. Ellison: Yes, he made a living for his family.

Mr. Aumack: Did people need a laundry service because there wasn't any indoor plumbing, or why?

Ms. Ellison: Well that was one of the things, but that would be out in the country on the farms. Now you can't really see the country. I can remember when it was

all farms. People lived in Matawan or they lived down on the farm. Matawan had no place to expand. Matawan was all filled up, but it was the Borough of course. But we called everything Matawan. And we called all the towns, Matawan Township. It wasn't until they went to Aberdeen that there was no more Township. Now it's Matawan Borough or Aberdeen. It's all the same to me, though, it's still Matawan Township.

Mr. Aumack: When did he set up the laundry store?

Ms. Ellison: He had the store for five years, and we closed it in 1972. So he started it around 1966 or so. You see, my husband was killed in 1970. He was in his laundry truck, and he was delivering down in Freehold. A couple of girls came through and hit his truck. Actually, it was both of their faults. The girl got out of it because there was no Stop sign, but he was like in the middle of the street. She hit the truck, it spun around, and he flew up, hit the ceiling, and he broke his neck. This was before seatbelts, so he was killed instantly. Ree took over the business because I was a teacher, and I couldn't do it. She ran the business for a couple of years after that. But that is one of the businesses now that are out. Nobody needs a laundry man now because there are washers and dryers in every house. That was another thing. When the developments came in, the developers put washers and dryers in every house. Before that, if you did wash your own clothes, you hung them outdoors to dry. And I think in the developments, they have restrictions that say you can't hang clothes outside. A lot of developments won't allow clotheslines. But every house has its own washer and dryer.

Mr. Aumack: Was it Levitt who built Strathmore?

Ms. Ellison: Well, Levitt was one of them. Segall did Marc Woods, but Levitt had the big development. We called it Strathmore.

Mr. Aumack: Describe your teaching experience.

Ms. Ellison: Well, I always was in Matawan. I was active in the PTA when my children were growing up. I knew the teachers, knew the superintendent, knew the principal, and I knew the art teacher. So I used to go in and help the art teacher, just because I liked it, you see. Then when the art teacher got sick one time, I filled in. So the following year when Matawan grew, they needed another art teacher. The one art teacher used to do it all for grades one through twelve. The high school art teacher didn't want to teach in the high school anymore. She wanted to teach the little kids. So she went to the grammar school, and I got the high school. So they asked me to fill in. I taught in the high school for five years without a degree. But then the State came in and said they couldn't have teachers without a teacher's certificate. So they let me go. But the principal of the grammar school then said they needed two art teachers in the grammar school, and he hired me for that position. I was let go from the high school in June, and

the following September, I was hired to be an art teacher in the grammar school. Then finally Matawan built another grammar school, and that art teacher left to go to the new school. So I ended up here on Broad Street. And I was the Broad Street art teacher.

Mr. Aumack: So you ended up becoming the Broad Street School art teacher.

Ms. Ellison: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: What grade did you teach?

Ms. Ellison: One through sixth.

Mr. Aumack: When you were filling in, what school were you at?

Ms. Ellison: Matawan High School.

Mr. Aumack: And then what grammar school did you teach at?

Ms. Ellison: Matawan Broad Street. You see it was right over here, I was close by.

Mr. Aumack: So how long were you an art teacher at Broad Street?

Ms. Ellison: I was a teacher twenty years. Five years I was in the high school, and fifteen years in the elementary school.

Mr. Aumack: What did you like to teach as an art teacher?

Ms. Ellison: Well, I just liked teaching children. Of course I enjoyed art so much myself. I just found a way to teach it to the kids so they liked it. But art is something that children like. So being an art teacher is really better than being another type of teacher.

Mr. Aumack: At any time, was there any worry that the Art Department was going to be cut from the rest of the curriculum?

Ms. Ellison: No. They always had to have art.

Mr. Aumack: Good. When you were a kid growing up in rural Matawan, what did you do for fun?

Ms. Ellison: Well, Matawan had two lakes, and I liked to swim. So I had friends that lived on both lakes. Sometimes I went in Lake Matawan, and sometimes I went in Lake Lefferts. So we could always go swimming, or we could join some

of our friends. I had lots of friends. In my graduating class, there were only thirty-five people.

Mr. Aumack: Was this in high school?

Ms. Ellison: Yes. When I graduated in 1932, there were thirty-five of us, so I knew everybody in town. I had lots of friends, and it was nice growing up in Matawan. Of course I did a lot of walking, because I lived down by the railroad station, and most of my friends were uptown. And in the wintertime, we went ice skating. We used to have ice on the lake for months! I used to be able to walk to school on Lake Matawan. You could walk on the ice all of the way from the dam, where I was, to Church Street.

Mr. Aumack: So you could walk across the entire lake without any worries?

Ms. Ellison: Oh, yes. We had a lot of ice when I was growing up. We went ice skating all winter long. We did lots of sleigh riding and ice skating, and we never had any problems. Of course by the time I got into high school, things were tough. I remember that if you went out on a date, usually I knew two or three people, because there were several girls and several fellows, and maybe somebody in the group would have a car. And we would all chip in. Everybody put in a dollar or two to buy gas. They were really tough times, but we always had a good time. It was the deal that everybody brought the refreshments to a party. Nobody was rich enough to put on the whole party, so everybody brought something. It was like a co-op deal.

Mr. Aumack: And that worked nicely?

Ms. Ellison: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: Now, did you graduate from Matawan Regional High School?

Ms. Ellison: It was Matawan High School. It wasn't called Regional, but just Matawan High School in 1932.

Mr. Aumack: How has Matawan changed, besides what you have already talked about?

Ms. Ellison: Now, because so many people have moved, there are a lot of people I don't know. When I walk downtown, I don't know everybody the way I used to. But then I don't expect to know everybody anymore.

Mr. Aumack: Do you recall the year that you started locking your door?

Ms. Ellison: No.

Mr. Aumack: Really? Ok. How long has this house been standing?

Ms. Ellison: I don't know, I never bothered to research it. My father-in-law bought it, because he knew the people who lived here. And the old man who used to live here must have been in his nineties when he died. And he had been born here. So we know it is over 100 years old! Because we bought it from my father-in-law, and he bought it from his friend, I don't know if anybody ever researched the deed. We know where our boundaries are, but we have to find them because they are sunk in the ground.

Mr. Aumack: Tell us about the name change.

Ms. Ellison: I started teaching in 1959 and then stopped in 1979. So it had to be in the 1970s. I remember being over in Strathmore one time. I had gone over there for a day to teach, to help out with something. Many of the teachers had moved into Strathmore from the city. And they were complaining to me, saying they moved down here because they wanted to live in Matawan, and now they were changing it to Aberdeen. So some of the people weren't happy. Some people wanted to live in Matawan, but I guess the majority wanted to have their own name.

Mr. Aumack: Once it became Matawan Borough, Matawan Township, and Aberdeen, were there any problems? Can you discuss that?

Ms. Ellison: It wasn't any problem, as far as I was concerned, because I was in the Borough. The people in the Township were the ones who thought they had the problems. I didn't have any problems. To me, it's still the Township.

Mr. Aumack: So you lived in the Borough since 1925, and essentially you had nothing to worry about?

Ms. Ellison: Right.

Mr. Aumack: So your zip code never changed.

Ms. Ellison: No. When they changed Matawan Township to Aberdeen, they did not get their own zip code. They still kept the same one.

Mr. Aumack: So you have 07747 for Matawan Borough, Matawan Township, and Aberdeen.

Ms. Ellison: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: Are there any things in Matawan that you wish to happen? Do you want anything changed?

Ms. Ellison: Of course everybody would like to have nice, smooth streets. The holes in the streets are bad, but Matawan is working on them. Yesterday there were surveyors out here. I talked to them and asked if we were going to get a new street, and they said yes. They didn't know when, but the surveyors are at least the beginning. But the potholes are very bad. I would like to see, for the benefit of the people who live downtown, a good grocery store. When Food Town went out, it really was a big minus for Matawan. Again, all the business moved out. And I know they are trying. There is a downtown association that is trying to get people downtown again. But once the Food Town went out, it sort of deserted the downtown area. But that happens everywhere, in all small towns. They all have the same problem. Tonight, you know, is supposed to be Matawan night. I don't know what they are going to do with the stormy weather if it rains. They are having music and things going on down by the Summit Bank. We have to go down there tonight.

Mr. Aumack: What is it celebrating?

Ms. Ellison: Well, I think it started first with the police, where you were supposed to turn on your outdoor lights and go out in the street and celebrate with your neighbors. Well, now they are making the celebration downtown, and they have music down there. I know our church is supposed to be down there with flyers, and I am in the Historical Society. I am supposed to be downtown handing out flyers for the Historical Society. So it is sort of to "blow Matawan's horn," as it were. To talk about the good things you can have in Matawan, I guess that is the idea. Just to let people know what is going on.

Mr. Aumack: What advice would you like to give to future Matawan Township, Matawan Borough, or Aberdeen residents? Or what would you like to say to the future generation who reads this interview?

Ms. Ellison: Enjoy your local benefits, I guess you would call it. Enjoy the countryside. Keep your lakes and streets clean, and make it a nice place to be. Plant flowers, and just make it a nice place to look at and a nice place to be. Keep the old buildings. I enjoy the old buildings. Downtown, everybody likes The Blue House, which is Dr. Ambrosio's house. That is Victorian. I am involved with the Historical Society, and I do the tours at the Mansion, which is the Burrowes Mansion. That house was built in 1723, and it is a beautiful old house. So I enjoy those good-looking old houses. And I would like people to keep them up and not destroy them. We have lost a lot of good-looking houses in Matawan because nobody seems to want them. They are hard to maintain, the plumbing goes after 100 years, and they are hard to keep cool or warm. And in a big old house like this, you can't have central air because the walls are solid. So we have like five air conditioners in this house, on both sides up and down. And people don't seem to want these big old houses anymore. Of course along Main Street, some of them now are businesses. But a lot of them have been lost, because they get torn down. Where the Summit Bank is, there was a nice, old house on that

corner. And they tore it down and put in that awful-looking bank. They built a bank that was not in keeping with anything in town, but they did it because it was the cheapest way to put up a building. And that's too bad. We have two, beautiful lakes, if they just keep them up and use them. I still go swimming in them. I go swimming in Lake Matawan all the time. I have a friend who lives over on the Lake, Mrs. Hardy. And she has a dock and a float. I enjoy swimming there.

Mr. Aumack: It's not dirty or anything?

Ms. Ellison: Of course, it is dirty around the edges. The problem with a lake is the leaves have been falling in along the edge. You have to have a dock, or something where you can get away from the edge. Because if you step on the edge of the lake, you step up to your knees in leaves and stuff. But if you have a dock, you can use the lake. But Lake Lefferts has a dock over there, and they sometimes have children's programs there.

Mr. Aumack: The last question had to do with the railroad. Do you remember when it came about and how it changed Matawan?

Ms. Ellison: No, but I do know that when they were putting the railroad in, they did get it into Matawan. The old railroad station there is one of the oldest on the line. Now it has been abandoned, and I am hoping that somebody will come along and really use it or make something with it. They could use it for businesses, restaurants, or something like that. I would like to see that preserved, because right now it is falling apart. The railroad has made a lot of changes because it is a good source of transportation. When they put the electric line in, that was a big step, too. Because so many out-of-towners use it, the traffic is bad here in Matawan at the time of the trains. On Main Street, when the trains come in at night, there is a steady stream, like a parade, going south. Everybody in Marlboro who needs a train comes to Matawan. And that is our biggest problem right now. I think it's the traffic generated by the commuters.

Mr. Aumack: Right, because Marlboro doesn't have a train station.

Ms. Ellison: Right. Everyone south of Matawan comes up here to get the train. The train service is pretty good to the city, whether you are going to Newark, Jersey City, or New York. I do hope that the railroad gets another line south of Matawan. It would be better on our streets. And the commuters are not a benefit for Matawan, because they don't shop here or anything. They just go to the train, get off, and go back home, so all we have is traffic. And that has an effect on everybody in Matawan. That end of Matawan is just one big parking lot now. And they need more parking. I understand that they are talking about putting in a parking garage, because everybody who owns a house down by the station has got cars parked around it.

Mr. Aumack: So it seems that before they are going to make a Marlboro station, they are going to add parking here so more people can come to Matawan.

Ms. Ellison: Yes.

Mr. Aumack: Do you know of any plans to make a Marlboro train station?

Ms. Ellison: No, I don't know of anything. I read in the newspaper that nobody wants a train in their back yard! You know, it's that kind of a deal. I think they are proposing a line that goes north from probably Lakewood or something like that, but I have no knowledge of anything.

Mr. Aumack: Discuss for us the teaching, more in-depth. Was the school system good for you?

Ms. Ellison: Yes. I always felt the Matawan schools were good. With the developments, of course, the school system grew from one or two buildings to maybe seven buildings now. At one time, there was a school in Cliffwood to take care of its Cliffwood children. And then they came over here to high school. Then of course in the 1960s, they built a new high school. At the time they built it, it was the junior and senior high, both. And in about two years it was filled up, because then the developments came in. And then they built a junior high school over on Matawan Avenue. So the school system has gotten rid of the Broad Street school. Where I taught is now the Community Center. And they got rid of Cambridge Park, which were two buildings. We don't have the children like the people did when they first came down.

Mr. Aumack: Do you think that the school systems have made enough space for all the citizens?

Ms. Ellison: Oh yes, I think they built new schools to accommodate them. And now they had to get rid of some buildings because there aren't as many children.

Mr. Aumack: Where do you see Matawan going in the future?

Ms. Ellison: I don't know, I am just trying to hold on. I do think they are going to have to do something about the train station. And they need to try and build up the downtown. That is the main thing now.

Mr. Aumack: Well, thank you very much.

Ms. Ellison: You're welcome.