

Mr. and Mrs. Walden Bearse
Their early years in South Chatham
1st Interviewer: Unknown
2nd Interviewer/ee: Mr. Brown

Brief Description: Mr. and Mrs. Walden Bearse from South Chatham remember some of the early days of South Chatham and the people who lived there. Topics covered in this recording are: Icehouses, keeping house before electricity and running water, how Mr. and Mrs. Bearse met, past prices of fish, and other interesting remembrances.

Interviewer: This is Mr. and Mrs. Walden Bearse from South Chatham, and they are going to remember some of the early days of South Chatham and the people who lived there, and some of their experiences, and, um, I've had the pleasure of talking with them before about it, so I know they've got some darn interesting things to say. (Laughter)

Mr. Bearse: My wife has. I haven't.

Interviewer: Well. You have too, because I've heard you.

(Laughter)

Interviewer: Now you were, were you born, Walden, were you born in South Chatham?

Mr. Bearse: Yeah.

Mrs. Bearse: He's a twin, you know.

Interviewer: Oh, were you? Elijah your twin, Walden?

Mr. Bearse: No, Walter.

Mrs. Bearse: Walter. He passed away about two years ago.

Mr. Bearse: No, no, four years ago.

Interviewer: Four years ago, aha.

Mrs. Bearse: Yes, I guess it was.

Interviewer: And, um, I suppose your parents before you were, lived, were in South Chatham.

Mr. Bearse: Oh, yes.

Mrs. Bearse: No, your mother didn't come from South Chatham. She came from either Orleans or East Harwich. Which was it?

Mr. Bearse: Or Brewster, I think.

Mrs. Bearse: Or Brewster.

Mr. Bearse: From the Cape, I know that.

Interviewer: Ya, right. Well, your parents were ...

Mrs. Bearse: Yes, my parents were in South Chatham. My father was born in East Harwich. My mother in South Chatham.

Interviewer: Aha. And you were born in South Chatham.

Mrs. Bearse: I was born in South Chatham.

Interviewer: Speaking about you sitting closer to your wife, heh, I remember the other day, you told me how you met each other.

Mrs. Bearse: Yes. Ah, I said he picked me up and he's been picking me up ever since.

Interviewer: 59 years you've been married.

Mrs. Bearse: Last June.

Interviewer: Right. And you were in the church in South Chatham. How was that?

Mr. Bearse: They were rebuilding.

Mrs. Bearse: They were building. The other church burned and they were building this other church.

Mr. Bearse: The church they have now.

Mrs. Bearse: The church we have now.

Interviewer: The Presbyterian Church.

Mrs. Bearse: And they were asking for volunteers to help.

(Unintelligible speech)

Mr. Bearse: I was on vacation.

Mrs. Bearse: And he was here on vacation. And so, he gave it a day's work occasionally. And Lena Cahoon and myself decided to go in and see how they were coming along with the church. And we did, and as we came out, she got on the plank, a narrow plank. And as we came down the plank, she got down alright, but I fell when I got about half way down. And he happened to be the handiest one around, so he picked me up.

(Laughter)

Mrs. Bearse: So, he's always said he's been picking me up ever since.

(Laughter)

Interviewer: Well I think you did a wonderful job. And you've had, how many children have you raised?

Mrs. Bearse: Three.

Mr. Bearse: Three.

Interviewer: Three children. Well that's great.

Mrs. Bearse: Two girls and a boy.

Interviewer: Now, um, you know what I was thinking, Walden, you didn't live in Chatham, in South Chatham all of your life, did you?

Mr. Bearse: No, I was away about 15 years or so.

Interviewer: 15 years. But you came back.

Mr. Bearse: I came back. Glad to get back to the Cape.

Interviewer: I bet you were.

Mrs. Bearse: And he was here on vacation when I, when I met him.

Interviewer: Oh, I see. It was during that time.

Mr. Bearse: I was working in Somerville at the time.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Bearse: And he went back to the city, and I didn't see him again until the next year, until he came down again the next year. And he stayed down.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. Well that's fine. Well, you were in South Chatham all your life, weren't you?

Mrs. Bearse: Yes. All but a few years we lived in South Harwich. My father was Station Agent in South Harwich for a while.

Interviewer: Oh, that's right. Your father was Station Agent.

Mrs. Bearse: Ya. In South Harwich for a while.

Interviewer: Yes.

Mrs. Bearse: Then he was in South Chatham for a while.

Interviewer: Now, the Depot in South Chatham was, um.

Mrs. Bearse: Up on 137 don't you know as you go up that hill, on top of that hill.

Interviewer: Is that where the Catholic Church is now?

Mr. Bearse: This side ...

Mrs. Bearse: Well, this side of the Catholic Church. As you turn the corner, just as you get to the top of the hill.

Interviewer: I see.

Mrs. Bearse: The station was right, was on your right.

Interviewer: Well then, where was the schoolhouse?

Mrs. Bearse: The schoolhouse was just where it is now. (Unintelligible speech) Right across from where (Unintelligible speech) is. You know where that is?

Interviewer: Mm Humm (affirmative).

Mrs. Bearse: Right across that. That place that they made into a cottage inside.

Interviewer: Yes. I remember seeing that.

Mrs. Bearse: It was a grammar school and a primary school in the same building.

Interviewer: And you went to that school.

Mrs. Bearse: And I went to that school in grammar school. There were three of us in the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth. Just three of us in those classes. Just the three of us and I used to think, "Oh gee, I wish we had a big class. We wouldn't be asked so many questions."

Interviewer: Why, of course.

Mrs. Bearse: But we didn't. We went through the whole four grades, just the three of us.

Interviewer: Right.

Mr. Bearse: She learned more that way.

(Laughter)

Interviewer: Well, then you told me that you went to Chatham to school.

Mrs. Bearse: I went in high school. Went only one year. And I was sick with tonsillitis and I was out going into my second year. I was out for, I don't know, as much as a month or six weeks and I didn't have spunk enough to go back to try to catch up to go into class, so I left school.

Interviewer: Mm Hmm. Well, how did you get to Chatham? Ah, just to go to school.

Mrs. Bearse: Oh, we used to go down on the train. The train went down the line by 8:30 and there was a, the freight train and a passenger car in the back.

Interviewer: Oh.

Mrs. Bearse: There was Lena Cahoon and, and Christina. I don't know how many more, but the three of us used to go down on the, we had gone to school by freight. We'd go down that way in the morning and then, in the afternoons, come back. They'd let us out of school a little bit early so we could, we'd be sure to make the train.

Interviewer: Well, I remember walking, going up to my grandma Buck's, you know, and going home at night on that train. We called it the Tunaville Trolley. Fifteen cents fare, you know.

Mrs. Bearse: Ya. We had a book of tickets.

Interviewer: Oh.

Mrs. Bearse: While we were in school, we had a book of tickets, and you used the ticket. And if you wanted to go anywhere on Saturday on the train, we could use that book of tickets.

Interviewer: Oh, I see. I don't know how they could afford to keep the training going, you know, it's so little.

Mrs. Bearse: Well, there were many more people, not so many people who had cars then.

Interviewer: That's right.

Mrs. Bearse: Like now.

Interviewer: That's right. Did you ever go by horse and buggy to come, to come to school?

Mrs. Bearse: No. No, I never did. My mother did, but I didn't.

Interviewer: Aha. Course, I suppose the roads were pretty dirt, dirt roads.

Mrs. Bearse: Just dirt roads, yeah. I can remember when they were putting in the, uh, putting in the first Macadam Road, as they called it. We lived in South Harwich then.

Interviewer: Mm Hmm.

Mrs. Bearse: And my uncle used to ride a, we owned a steam roller and I'd go out, ride back and forth with him on the steam roller. Hardening the road.

(Laughter)

Interviewer: And you never went to sea, did you, Walden?

Mr. Bearse: No, I didn't.

Interviewer: What did you do when you came back to Chatham after you'd been away.

Mr. Bearse: Well, I went, ah, shell fishing.

Interviewer: Shell fishing?

Mr. Bearse: Yes, and scalloping. Quahauging.

Mrs. Bearse: Quahauging. And he worked for Wilbur Crowell for quite a few years.

Mr. Bearse: The grocers.

Interviewer: Oh, that's right. Wilbur Crowell had the store, didn't he? Was there any other store in South Chatham besides Wilbur Crowell's?

Mr. Bearse: Not at that time.

Interviewer: Now that was in the same, in the same location, wasn't it?

Mrs. Bearse: By the village store, yes. And the other one was, eh, ya, the post office. The post office was the joke out there. That would bother that was the post office.

Interviewer: Oh. Mm hmm. Yeah.

Mrs. Bearse: And, I've forgotten what the other was.

Mr. Bearse: Wilbur had that, then. The post office. Then he moved up to the village store.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. When you, you must have had some cronies hanging around the store then.

(Laughter)

Mr. Bearse: Oh, yeah.

Mrs. Bearse: Where'd they used to hang out mostly? Was it Minnie (?) Cahoon's store? That's where the gift shop is, right across from the Village Hall.

Interviewer: Oh. Are you talking ...?

Mr. Bearse: Martin's store.

Mrs. Bearse: No, I didn't mean Martin's store. Down the street further, right across from the Village Hall is that little gift shop, now.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Bearse: And Minnie (?) Cahoon had a store there and had, oh, a few canned goods and candy and cigars and all that stuff, and that's where the men used to hang out.

Interviewer: Did you ever play poker around the stove?

(Laughter)

Mr. Bearse: I didn't.

Interviewer: You didn't.

Mr. Bearse: No. I guess they did some. I'm sure Don knows a lot.

Interviewer: Oh, yes, yes. I guess so.

Mr. Bearse: Yeah.

Interviewer: You were speaking about the Village Hall, you, know, I don't know if there's many people of our age, well, I remember it but not very vividly. But you had entertainments there, didn't you?

Mrs. Bearse: Oh, we used to have dramas every summer. Might find a play two nights in the summer and that hall would be packed every night.

Interviewer: Hmm.

Mrs. Bearse: Lizzie Coyle (?) and, oh, I can't think. The Vaudeville Sisters, and Mrs. Emery was all the prompter. Dick Emery and George Emery.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Bearse: We really had a lot of fun.

Interviewer: Did you ever, Walden, did you ever play in any of the plays there?

Mr. Bearse: No.

Interviewer: You never did?

Mr. Bearse: Didn't have any talent.

Mrs. Bearse: Wilbur Crowell. We got Wilbur to take part one year and of course he was nervous and he stuttered. So, we said all he had to say was two lines and he said them right backwards.

(Laughter)

Mrs. Bearse: But we used to look back, the one thing that we looked forward to in the summertime was our plays.

Interviewer: Yeah. Well, you must have rehearsed all winter.

Mrs. Bearse: Oh, we rehearsed a long time.

Interviewer: Yes.

Mrs. Bearse: Night after night. My father, my mother and myself. All three of us took part in it.

Interviewer: Well, I remember my father, I think, was there as a young man too, right? I remember he, um, was, ah, in one play and they had no dressing rooms, a place to change your costumes.

Mrs. Bearse: No, we had to go down the cellar, in the dirt.

(Laughter)

Interviewer: Well, he was on the stage and he was, he had a long-sleeve undershirt on, and he tried to get it off. And he got hold of the back and he jerked and pulled, and he tried to get the sleeves off. He heard the audience begin to laugh a little bit, but he was all wrapped up in tis undershirt. Finally, he got hold of the back of it and he jerked it over his head, and somebody opened the curtains and the audience was watching him struggle with that undershirt.

(Laughter)

Mrs. Bearse: I never, ah, he was, he was a little bit, uh, above me, and he took part before I was old enough to take part.

Interviewer: Oh. Yes, yes.

Mrs. Bearse: I never took part with him.

Interviewer: Yes, he was much older.

Mrs. Bearse: Lizzie Coyle was, Lizzie Coyle and uh, Bertha had took part in summer.

Interviewer: Oh, did she?

Mrs. Bearse: Ya.

Interviewer: Hmm. Summertime she was up here.

Mrs. Bearse: She was here in summer. That was the one thing we looked forward to in the summertime, because there was nothing else.

Interviewer: Imagine.

Mrs. Bearse: Nothing else during the summer, but the fair the Ladies Aid would have. And then that, the play.

Interviewer: I suppose you had a Temperance Society.

Mrs. Bearse: Yes. We did.

Interviewer: The WCTU.

(Laughter)

Mrs. Bearse: We did. And, uh, I can't remember who was head of that now, but we had it.

Interviewer: It was quite the thing, you know.

Mrs. Bearse: Oh, yes.

Interviewer: For quite some time. That was another, like the Missionary Society, and some of the others.

Mrs. Bearse: Yes, and we used to have (Unintelligible speech) socials once a week, once a month, I mean. Meet at somebody's house and they'd have a devotional meeting, and then they'd, oh, they'd play games or do anything they wanted to.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Bearse: It'd be around a lot of different places. And that was, that was, in the winter time, that was the one thing to look forward to.

Interviewer: How often did you meet? Once a month?

Mrs. Bearse: Once a month.

Interviewer: Once a month. Good grief. Some difference in having tv all the days.

Mrs. Bearse: Oh, I guess so.

Mr. Bearse: We lost the old Village Hall during a hurricane.

Mrs. Bearse: I 've got a picture somewhere, of the old Village Hall as it collapsed.

Interviewer: That's right. What happened to it?

Mr. Bearse: In '78 I think it was. A hurricane.

Interviewer: Hurricane. Blew it down?

Mr. Bearse: Blew it down.

Mrs. Bearse: Somewhere, I've got a picture of it, as it, as the hurricane put it down.

Mr. Bearse: It smashed it all down.

Interviewer: Oh, dear. Mm. So that ended the Village Hall. They never rebuilt it, did they?

Mr. Bearse: Yes.

Mrs. Bearse: That is, that is the Village Hall right now.

Interviewer: Oh, is it?

Mrs. Bearse: Yes, the same spot the other one was.

Mr. Bearse: They just replaced it.

2nd Interviewer: Did you ever go (?) raking? Over in the bay?

Mr. Bearse: Yes, I did.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Bearse: (Unintelligible speech)

Interviewer: Where'd you sell your, your, um, scallops and things?

Mr. Bearse: Yeah, yes. Well, we sold the quahogs to Benny Cahoon, West Chatham.

Interviewer: Oh, yes.

Mr. Bearse: And Captain Frank Cahoon bought scallops, bought the scallops in those days.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. Was he really a captain?

Mr. Bearse: Oh, yes.

Mrs. Bearse: Oh, yes. He was a sea captain.

Mr. Bearse: A good one.

Interviewer: Well, you were telling me about Captain Kendrick, who lived across the street from you, and I couldn't remember his first name.

Mrs. Bearse: Vernell.

Mr. Bearse: Vernell.

Interviewer: Vernell Kendrick, yes. You, you told me such an interesting, um, happening. You were speaking about the danger of fire, you know, aboard the ship when they were way out in mid-ocean. What happened when his ship caught afire?

Mr. Bearse: Well, I think I told you, I think it was, ah, caught fire up in the bough, and he turned the ship 'round, and backed it up so the fire wouldn't spread.

Interviewer: I see.

Mr. Bearse: He kept it in there - put it out.

Interviewer: So, the flames. Oh. Turned it around so the ...

Mr. Bearse: Turned it around and backed it ...

Interviewer: Yes.

Mrs. Bearse: He was a very interesting ... I used to love to hear him talk.

Mr. Bearse: He was a good captain

Interviewer: Was he?

Mr. Bearse: Yeah, he was one of the best.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Bearse: He had a license for every port in the world.

Interviewer: My goodness.

Mrs. Bearse: Interesting to hear him tell of some of the experiences that he had.

Interviewer: I bet. Did he tell you?

Mr. Bearse: And during the war.

Mr. Bearse: He used to be a pilot of the Canal, the Canal.

Interviewer: The Cape Cod Canal? Mm.

Mrs. Bearse: Pilot of the boats.

Interviewer: Well, that was interesting.

2nd Interviewer: What'd you used to get for quahogs in those days?

Mr. Bearse: Ha, not very much. Ha. You'd have to get half a boat load to get a day's work.

2nd Interviewer: Would you get 15-20 bushels a day, would ya?

Mr. Bearse: No, we wouldn't get that many, but, ah, we'd get quite a few of them. We'd get seven or eight dollars.

Mrs. Bearse: Well, then, if you got five or six dollars a day that was a big day's work.

Interviewer: Hmm.

Mr. Bearse: Now, you couldn't make forty or fifty, now to get by.

2nd Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewer: You couldn't even go all year 'round, could you?

Mr. Bearse: No, you couldn't go in the winter time.

Interviewer: No.

Mrs. Bearse: Went scalloping in the winter.

Interviewer: Did you ever go eeling?

Mr. Bearse: Some.

Interviewer: Laughter.

2nd Interviewer: The scallops today, I mean the quahogs would be worth about fifteen dollars a bushel, wouldn't they?

Mr. Bearse: Well, of course, more than that, I guess.

2nd Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewer: Nowadays?

Mr. Bearse: Oh, yeah.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Mr. Bearse: They sell them by the, they sell them by the pound now. Littlenecks are thirty-five cents a pound.

Interviewer: That's right.

Mr. Bearse: And I think, the last, the cherrystones were fourteen and the big ones, the chowders were five cents a pound, an ounce. In those days, there was only two calls for, the littlenecks and the big ones.

(Laughter)

2nd Interviewer: (Unintelligible speech)

Mr. Bearse: No, I haven't. Some of the boys do. I haven't sold to him.

2nd Interviewer: I know they used to go up in the bay and collect them.

Mr. Bearse: Ya, that was before I started. He used to come around in the boat and buy them right out of the ...

Interviewer: Buy them right out of the boat, huh?

Mr. Bearse: Yeah. Fishing.

Interviewer: Did they every ship them to Boston?

Mr. Bearse: Well, I don't know what he did, but the fishermen didn't. But he did, I guess, he had customers for her. He had quite a business I would guess.

Mrs. Bearse: Frank Cahoon, at the same time as the scallop fella used to buy scallops, he'd go 'round 5:00 or so, at night, he'd be down there he was already getting stuff open 'cuz then he'd be all 'round to sell 'em, and they didn't last long, so they'd have to take him out to his shanty.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Bearse: He'd had a blow a horn as a sign for them to come out there.

Interviewer: Well.

Mrs. Bearse: And I can remember, oh, they used to call him Hyrie (?) (Unintelligible speech) Nickerson, and Hyrie Nickerson, and one of them would holler up, "Horns blowin', come on."

(Laughter)

Interviewer: You didn't have to have licenses, I suppose, in those days to do things like shell fishing?

Mr. Bearse: (Unintelligible speech)

Interviewer: Oh, did you?

Mrs. Bearse: Ten dollars, I think it was, five or ten. One or the other.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Mr. Bearse: But now, you have to pay twenty-seven dollars.

Interviewer: Yes, I know it. It runs up pretty high now.

Mrs. Bearse: That doesn't seem right for a man that has to do that for a living, to have to pay so much for a license.

Interviewer: Well, I wonder, they have to charge so much, make ends meet.

Mrs. Bearse: Yes, I know it.

Interviewer: Right.

Mr. Bearse: You have to get a state license; fifteen dollars; the town ten dollars, and you have to get a chucking license for two dollars. Twenty-seven dollars.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. Now, did you get, did you go shell fishing up in Pleasant Bay?

Mr. Bearse: I did. Quahoging. Yeah.

Interviewer: Quahoging at Pleasant Bay?

Mr. Bearse: I've been scalloping there, too.

Interviewer: Did you ever go out into the Sound off South Chatham.

Mr. Bearse: Over in (Unintelligible speech) Point.

Interviewer: At (Unintelligible speech) Point, yeah.

Mr. Bearse: Oh, yeah. Stage Harbor.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Mr. Bearse: You know I was a scalloper.

Interviewer: You had your own boat.

Mr. Bearse: Yes. Yes. Used to go alone.

Interviewer: You were a loner. Well.

Mr. Bearse: I was in the boat alone.

Interviewer: Yeah. Mm. Well, you had to, you, you told me about some chores you had to do when you were a girl, Zelma.

Mrs. Bearse: Chores I had to do?

Interviewer: Yes, things that you had to do around the house. You know, everybody did. All the kids had to do chores.

Mrs. Bearse: Oh, we sure did, I know I first learned, first learned to make molasses cookies when my mother had an abscess on her hand. I don't know, it was long in the palm of her hand and she couldn't stir. She couldn't stir and she couldn't roll out the cookies. That's when I first learned to make molasses cookies, and I've been making them ever since.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. (Laughter) Mighty good too, huh, Walden?

Mr. Bearse: Yes, she's a good cook.

Mrs. Bearse: I have to make them pretty often.

Interviewer: I think you've been picking her up for 59 years. Laughter.

Mrs. Bearse: Oh, dear.

Interviewer: Well, you had to clean chimneys, I suppose?

Mrs. Bearse: Oh, I had to and that was a job I hated. Oh, how I hated to fill the lamps and clean the chimneys.

Interviewer: Mm.

Mrs. Bearse: That was the one thing that I hated to do. I didn't mind making beds.

(Unintelligible speech) And I'd let it be until it was almost time to use the lamps, and mother would say, "Have you done the lamps, yet?" "No, but I'm going to." So, I got 'em done by the time was, time to light 'em.

(Laughter)

Mr. Bearse: She'd do it over the next day. But she didn't like to do dishes, either. Did you?

Mrs. Bearse: No, I didn't like to. My brother used to help me quite a lot to do dishes.

Interviewer: Do you still help her to do the dishes?

Mr. Bearse: I do.

Mrs. Bearse: He does them all if, quite often I'm in the hall on the telephone about the time it's time to do the dishes, so then I don't have to do them at all. He does them all.

Interviewer: He does what?

Mrs. Bearse: He does all the dishes if I get a call on the telephone a lot of the time.

Mr. Bearse: Yeah, she works that on me. (Laughter)

Interviewer: I have to ...

2nd Interviewer: What you gotta do is take the telephone out.

(Laughter)

Mrs. Bearse: Well, it's just the two of us, so not too many dishes, anyway.

Interviewer: That's right.

Mr. Bearse: Well, I take that I can help her, and she can sit down and read the paper when I do and ...

Interviewer: Sure. It works both ways. Yeah. Well, of course, I think that women in, oh say, fifty years ago had a lot more to do and didn't have the conveniences, you know.

Mr. Bearse: Oh, absolutely.

Mrs. Bearse: They didn't have anything. When we first lived where we do now, we had a pump at the back step. We just had to pump all of our water.

Interviewer: And did you have the kind of old stove that had the kind of water tank on one end?

Mrs. Bearse: No, we never had one of those.

Interviewer: They did have them.

Mrs. Bearse: Oh yes, they did have them but we didn't have, didn't happen to have one of those. But when we first started in, to keep house, keeping house in the front part of where it was, Heman (?) Chase's House. I don't know if you remember where that was, or not. You may know or not. And we went keeping house in that first part of the house, and my kitchen was, well, it was a 2 by 4 almost. It was just room enough for a little sink, and the sink for a drain drawer had that, a bucket down underneath, and what little water run down, would run down in that bucket, and then you had to ...

Mr. Bearse: You had to take it out.

Interviewer: Your job to take the bucket out, huh?

(Laughter)

Mrs. Bearse: And a 3-burner kerosene stove. That's where I did all my cooking on for years.

Interviewer: Oh, my goodness.

Mrs. Bearse: And an oven that you'd put on and put off.

Interviewer: Yes, I remember that as a little girl.

Mrs. Bearse: Yeah. That's what - started with.

Interviewer: Right.

Mrs. Bearse: How times have changed.

Interviewer: Sure have. Used a broom and no vacuum cleaners.

Mrs. Bearse: Oh, yes. No vacuum cleaner. I did have, after a while, I had a carpet sweeper, but we used the broom most always.

Interviewer: How in the world did you heat up enough water to give everybody a bath on Saturday night?

Mrs. Bearse: They didn't. They had to take turns. One take one one night and one take one another. Of course, then I didn't have, I didn't have any children for two years. Then I had Natalie. It was just the one.

Interviewer: Mm

Mrs. Bearse: And the, uh, after my mother passed away, my sister, well she was only ten years old when my mother died, and she came and lived with me, and we just had to rotate it. Take turns to get water hot enough to take a bath. On the kerosene stove.

Interviewer: Oh, my.

Mrs. Bearse: Had to heat these up and sometimes brought a wash bowl. We'd fill that. And then you'd have to take a bath in one of these bowls, and simply have a bowl and pitcher. Now, it's (Unintelligible speech)

Mr. Bearse: Sponge bath.

Interviewer: You used to call it spit bath.

(Laughter)

Mrs. Bearse: I left out all that, but that's how it was.

Mr. Bearse: There's a story about that, but I'm not going to tell it.

(Laughter)

Interviewer: Well, why not. I'd like to hear it. Laughter. Go ahead.

Mr. Bearse: I think you would.

Mrs. Bearse: No. It wouldn't (Unintelligible speech)

(Laughter)

Interviewer: Well, I remember as a little girl, you know, then, the bath night, you closed up the kitchen and warmed up the kitchen, and my mother opened the oven door. We had a black iron cook stove, you know, and, uh, had a big brown wash tub, and she set that in front of the oven. And, I was stuck into that, you know, and soaped all over like you give all a bath these days.

(Laughter)

Mrs. Bearse: When I was growing up that's what mother did. Mother, we had, she had a pump. And, of course, you could pump plenty of water.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Mrs. Bearse: And we had, had a tub out in the kitchen. We had a big kitchen when we lived at home. And that's when we would take turns. I'd have one, and only got one once a week, when I could bath all over.

Interviewer: Right.

Mrs. Bearse: And my brother. He had his turn the next night.

Interviewer: So, if you had a big family, you'd have bath night every night.

(Laughter)

Mrs. Bearse: I know it.

Interviewer: Well, that was always a problem, I imagine. To get hot water.

Mrs. Bearse: When I look back and think of what I started in with, and then find what I have now, I don't, I couldn't go back to do it over again.

Interviewer: I know it.

Mrs. Bearse: To save my life.

Interviewer: Cold houses. How'd you heat your houses?

Mrs. Bearse: Just coal and wood.

Mr. Bearse: We had, we had a cook stove.

Mrs. Bearse: No, we didn't have a cook top when we first started keeping house, we just had the kerosene stove.

Mr. Bearse: Well, yes (Unintelligible speech) When I built the new house.

Mrs. Bearse: And in the front room we had a gas - one of the big stoves that we'd put wood and coal in. And we'd keep it, bank it, fix it so it'd stay warm all night.

Interviewer: Was it one of these sort of tall, round things?

Mrs. Bearse: Yeah. Big around like that.

Interviewer: Yes. My grandmother had one like that.

Mrs. Bearse: At least. Get undressed in front of it and get dressed in front of it.

Interviewer: That's right. That's right. Well ...

Mr. Bearse: Go through the rest of the part of the house seemed like the North, the North Pole.

Interviewer: Oh, it sure did.

Mr. Bearse: You'd have to have so many clothes on the bed with you. Lay it all out for the morning.

Interviewer: Featherbeds were quite warm.

Mrs. Bearse: Yes, we had, we always had a featherbed.

Interviewer: Yes.

Mrs. Bearse: But I could never make it to look right, trying to get it puffed up and fixed up.

Interviewer: It was lumpy, I know.

Mrs. Bearse: The children, some time out, once in a while I'll tell the children something about the things like that, and my grandchildren, "Grandma, what was a featherbed? What'd you do with that and how'd you do that?" And they can't realize what those things were all about.

Interviewer: That's right. Oh yes.

Mrs. Bearse: They couldn't go back and do the things as we used to do.

Interviewer: I think it would be pretty tough, believing it would separate the men from the boys.

Mrs. Bearse: I guess so.

Interviewer: To have to put up with things like that, I'm afraid. I remember going to visit my grandmother, you know, and I had to sleep up attic. It was a bed chamber up off the attic. And in the

winter time nobody slept upstairs except me when I, heh, when I came to visit. I must have been about ten or eleven years old, I think. And I was put up the stairs with a lamp in one hand and a soapstone and a flannel rag under the other arm, and scared stiff, you know, (Laughter) to go through the attic to get into that bed. I'd get into the featherbed; I'd pull the covers up and I'd be scared to get out from underneath to blow the light out.

(Laughter)

Mrs. Bearnse: We have a, we have a soapstone. My mother would; kept it in there all the time and bring it down in the morning and put it in the oven.

Interviewer: Yes.

Mrs. Bearnse: It was (Unintelligible speech) We had it that next night.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Mr. Bearnse: Very nice. Keeping the open chamber.

Interviewer: Did you?

Mr. Bearnse: It was cold.

Interviewer: I bet it was.

Mr. Bearnse: But I guess it was healthy.

Mrs. Bearnse: When I, when I just began going around and there were no heaters in the car, so I'd heat the soapstone and have that wrapped up and had it to put my feet on.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. Well, of course, we dressed warmer back in those days, too.

Mrs. Bearnse: Yes.

Interviewer: We didn't depend on, eh, central heating to keep ourselves comfortable. I, I guess everybody wore heavier underwear and, uh, socks, you know, heavy socks. Don't you think so?

Mrs. Bearnse: Oh, yes. Yeah.

Interviewer: High shoes.

Mrs. Bearnse: High buttoned shoes.

Interviewer: Yes.

Mrs. Bearnse: And oh, how I hated those, 'cuz when, just about the time I'd get ready to go to school, one of the buttons would pop off.

(Laughter)

Interviewer: And long stockings for both boys and girls. Black ones, I guess.

Mrs. Bearnse: Black.

Interviewer: Black stockings.

Mrs. Bearse: I don't think I ever had a pair of silk stockings up until, well, either the time I was married or just before that.

Interviewer: Really?

Mrs. Bearse: Yeah. We were married in (19)16, and I don't think I had anything but just, you know, the plain cotton stockings.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Bearse: I don't know if there's very many people did.

Interviewer: No, I guess not. They had to be, er, bought abroad ones. They had to be brought from abroad. Oh, we, we. I think the long dresses helped to keep one warm, too, and didn't you have to wear long stockings, Walden, when you were...

Mr. Bearse: I wore long stockings when I was a boy.

Interviewer: When you were a boy. Yeah.

Mr. Bearse: Way up.

Interviewer: Way up, yeah, right.

Mr. Bearse: I used to have garters to keep them up.

Interviewer: Did you? I thought only women wore garters.

(Laughter)

Mr. Bearse: No, round garters.

Mrs. Bearse: Round garters to hold them up.

Interviewer: Round garters. Is that so?

Mr. Bearse: Oh, boy.

Interviewer: And of course, woolen pants.

Mr. Bearse: Yeah.

Interviewer: And that helped to keep you warm, too.

Mr. Bearse: Yeah, well ...

Mrs. Bearse: I would hate awful to go back well even say forty years.

Interviewer: Mm hmm

Mrs. Bearse: To do the things that we had to do then.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. That's right. Well, I still get up early in the morning and I suppose you do too.

Mr. Bearse: Not very.

Mrs. Bearse: Don't you get up somewhere between eight and nine? Laughter.

2nd Interviewer: Well ...

Mr. Bearse: Don't go to bed, though, 'til eleven, eleven and a half passed.

Mrs. Bearse: Well, now that he isn't working, when he, suppose when he was working, we had to get up about six to six-thirty. Somewhere there.

Interviewer: Yes, yes. Almost everybody got up early back in those days, didn't they?

Mrs. Bearse: Father used to be out the first crack of daylight; he went out in the garden.

Interviewer: Oh.

Mrs. Bearse: He'd always be up early and out in the garden before he went to the station.

Interviewer: Hmm. Mm hmm.

Mrs. Bearse: But I like my bed better at night, in the morning than I do at night.

Interviewer: Hmm. Laughter.

2nd Interviewer: Did you ever dig clams for bait? The scallops?

Mr. Bearse: No, I never went that kind of fishing. You mean to sell?

2nd Interviewer: Ya, to sell.

Mr. Bearse: No.

2nd Interviewer: 'Cuz I know (Unintelligible) speech dig a couple of barrels of them. (Unintelligible speech)

Interviewer: I ran across an expression the other day, you know when somebody is undecided what he's gonna do; he's gonna do this or he's gonna do that, and then the comment is, "Well, either fish or cut bait."

(Laughter)

Mrs. Bearse: Well, there's something in that.

Interviewer: You can't do one. You can't do both. Might just as well make up your mind and do one.

Interviewer: Mr. Brown, when did you come to Chatham?

2nd Interviewer: Oh, I came back on a pillow when I first come here, so they tell me.

Interviewer: Really? You were that little. Well. You were here just summers or ...

2nd Interviewer: Just summers for a while, yeah, before I moved down here. Thirty or forty. Thirty-five, I guess, moved down here.

Interviewer: You were about thirty-five?

2nd Interviewer: No, I moved down here in '35.

Interviewer: Oh, in '35. Ah, hmm. Well I was wondering about that because I remember, er, quite a long time ago you were here.

2nd Interviewer: They bought that house over there. My folks did in 1912 in Chathamport (?)

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

2nd Interviewer: So that's how I got - like the rest of 'em. (Unintelligible speech) Bassett and (Unintelligible speech), George and all the rest of them.

Mrs. Bearse: (Unintelligible speech) was a nice man.

2nd Interviewer: (Unintelligible speech) when I was a kid, I used to ride when he'd come down town to sell his clams. He'd go digging clams and come down on town to sell 'em.

Interviewer: Hmm. Peddle them? He'd peddle them?

2nd Interviewer: That's right. Peddle them, different places and, ah, used to go down to the Surfside, I remember that.

Interviewer: Mmm. Didn't you, I remember you saying something about the peddlers used to come with a cart once a week.

Mrs. Bearse: Oh ya. Jesse Tuttle used to come up through there with a meat cart. And then there was a man by the name of Mr. Farmer. You remember him? He used to own the, ah, oh, the inn up here. I can't think of the name. I can't think of the name to save my life.

2nd Interviewer: Wayside Inn, Z?

Mrs. Bearse: No, um, it used to be the Monomoy Inn.

2nd Interviewer: Oh, the Cranberry Inn.

Mrs. Bearse: Yeah, the Cranberry Inn. Mr. Farmer owned that for quite a while. And then he used to, used to come with a butcher cart, and he had the nicest meat. One thing that I can remember that he used to make, he'd cook corned beef and press it. Put it in a, quite a good-sized pan. Press it. Put a heavy weight on it and then he'd sell it. Sliced off it at so much a half a pound, or so much a pound.

Interviewer: Did he cut it right on the cart?

Mrs. Bearse: Ya.

Interviewer: Cut it off for you?

Mrs. Bearse: Ya. And then he'd have corned beef. There'd be a thing about, oh, perhaps, that deep that, just like a extra box on the outside of the cart and he'd have it for the beef, all corned and everything, and he'd take it out there, as you wanted corned beef.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. He came once a week; made the rounds.

Mrs. Bearse: Yeah.

Mr. Bearse: That was the wintertime.

Mrs. Bearse: That was the wintertime. He didn't come in the summer.

Mr. Bearse: 'Cuz he'd run the hotel.

Mrs. Barse: I don't, I don't suppose he could because he was stuck with the keep.

Interviewer: That's right. They had an icehouse here; I remember as a little girl.

Mrs. Barse: They had one in South Chatham.

Interviewer: An icehouse?

Mrs. Barse: Off Cockle Cove Road.

Interviewer: Off Cockle Cove Road?

Mrs. Barse: Ya. Way, way down, almost to the end.

Interviewer: Mmm.

Mrs. Barse: And the men, in the wintertime, would go cut ice - places before, and then the different ones, them that peddled ice, would buy it from them.

Mr. Barse: We had an icebox then. You'd have to put a chunk of ice in. Aha.

Mrs. Barse: A chunk of ice in, then put the drip pan out so it wouldn't go all over the floor.

Interviewer: Oh, yes. I remember that.

(Laughter)

Mr. Barse: A lot of extra work in those days.

Interviewer: But, um, someone asked me the other day, "How did they keep the ice in the ice house all summer long from melting?" And I don't know.

Mrs. Barse: Didn't they put hay or something over it?

Mr. Barse: They would put ...

2nd Interviewer: Sawdust.

Mrs. Barse: Yeah, something like that.

Mr. Barse: Sawdust, hay.

Interviewer: Sawdust and hay.

Mrs. Barse: Sawdust and hay and all that stuff.

Mr. Barse: And then, of course, it'd melt.

Mrs. Barse: It'd melt some.

Interviewer: Sure.

Mrs. Barse: They'd save some of it.

Interviewer: Did they have any way of insulating the building, so that ...?

Mr. Barse: They didn't in those days.

Interviewer: They didn't. Mm hmm. It just depended upon, I suppose, what did they'd put a layer of ice and then a layer of sawdust or hay?

Mrs. Bearse: I suppose. I don't know.

2nd Interviewer: That's right.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Bearse: It was not ... It was almost as if it was set in a hole in, um, Cockle Cove Road, down, ya know, a family lot. Whether that made a difference, I don't know.

Mr. Bearse: Yes, yes, yes. There used to be a sand hill where they built that ... They took sand from there to make the cranberry swamp. And that was there separating this great big sand hole in the area.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. Well, they had to have fresh water to cut the ice.

Mr. Bearse: That was fresh water.

Interviewer: It was? As close to the beach as that? I mean, the salt water ... there was an inlet there.

Mr. Bearse: Ya. It was all a cranberry swamp and there was a dike across that kept the salt water out.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Mr. Bearse: But that's all gone now. The house of metal ... salt water.

2nd Interviewer: The icehouse over back then at Great Hill, wasn't it? Was it Lovers' Lake?

Mr. Bearse: Yes.

2nd Interviewer: (Unintelligible speech) was another site up there.

Mr. Bearse: I think Henry Emery had ice.

Interviewer: Yes.

Mr. Bearse: There were several.

Interviewer: Well, it's quicker nowadays, isn't it? You just open your refrigerator

Mrs. Bearse: Oh, I should say. Al Kendrick used to be our iceman when we were first married. 'Course I had a, just a small, very small ice chest. It was just the two of us. And I can see him now coming down with this piece of ice on the hooks, about that big, and that would last about ... He'd come a couple times a week.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. Mm hmm

Mrs. Bearse: And that would (Unintelligible speech) it, keep it cold.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. Somebody's job to empty it every night.

Mrs. Bearse: Oh, yes, you had to empty it. Sometimes, in real hot weather, you'd have to empty it before night, because it would drip out so fast.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. Right.

(Laughter)

Mrs. Bearse: How times have changed.

Interviewer: Well, ya. Were there very many, er, tourists, like there are today that came down either on the train, I suppose.

Mrs. Bearse: Well. There were some, near as I can remember, but there weren't anywhere near as many as there are now. Down the Cockle Cove Inn, Ned Johnson had, there used to be quite a few that came down there, and there was your Hampshire House in South Chatham, where Sarah (?) Baker's store is. That was the Hampshire House, and she used to have quite a few people, 'cuz I worked there one summer.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. That's where his hardware store is now.

Mrs. Bearse: Yeah

Interviewer: Yeah. Well, what did they do when no golf courses, or anything? I suppose they ...

Mrs. Bearse: I don't know. I suppose they found enough to do. I don't know.

Interviewer: Go swimming in those funny ole suits.

(Laughter)

Mrs. Bearse: I don't. I don't know what they did. I know they used to play tennis a lot. Play tennis.

Interviewer: Oh.

Mrs. Bearse: There was a tennis court where the Village Store is now.

Interviewer: Oh. Mm hmm.

Mrs. Bearse: They used to play tennis a lot.

2nd Interviewer: You wanna play; you went there. You walk.

Mrs. Bearse: That's right.

2nd Interviewer: There were no cars.

Interviewer: That's right.

2nd Interviewer: That takes up plenty of time.

Interviewer: And plenty of mosquitoes, as I remember.

2nd Interviewer: One or two around now and then.

Mrs. Bearse: They spent a good part of the time at the beach, whenever it was decent weather.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. You didn't get much of a suntan. (Laughter) I remember the first bathing suit I had. I think it had a high neck and it had sleeves almost down to my wrists, and it had these heavy woolen bloomers that came way down below my knees. (Laughter) And stockings.

Mrs. Bearse: Bloomers that came down over the knees, and there was a skirt over that, that I had.

Interviewer: Yeah. Right. And stockings that came up. You had shoes.

Mrs. Bearse: Ya.

Interviewer: Sandal-like shoes.

Mrs. Bearse: Ya. Made of canvas.

Interviewer: Then you had stockings that came up, underneath the bloomers, so you wouldn't...

Mrs. Bearse: Nothing showed but your face. (Laughter) And now they don't show much to the imagination.

(Laughter)

Interviewer: Sure don't. They'd sure be scandalized if they could see what's going on now.

Mrs. Beard: Yes, they would.

Interviewer: Yeah. Mighty discouraging.

Mrs. Bearse: If you go down to the beach, down to the end of the street, Pleasant Street, there used to be either two or three bathhouses down there.

Interviewer: Bathhouses?

Mrs. Bearse: Mm hmm. There was one that, I don't know, I think they said it belonged to the town. It was in, divided up in, oh, perhaps a couple of sections. Then there was one that belonged to, I don't know whether it belonged to the Emerys. It belonged to someone else special anyway. It was theirs. They were there for quite a long time.

Interviewer: Really?

Mrs. Bearse: Yeah.

Interviewer: Did the town take care of them?

Mrs. Bearse: The town took care of one. I don't know how; I don't know about the other one. But I know that they were there for quite a long time. Just about at the end of where the road comes down into the sand.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. Were there many other old timers besides Captain Kendrick in South Chatham when you were around.

Mrs. Bearse: Captain Frank Cahoon. Rhonda Cahoon.

Interviewer: Do you remember any others?

Mr. Bearse: No.

Mrs. Bearse: Captain George Bearse. He was quite an old man.

Mr. Bearse: Yeah.

Mrs. Bearse: He had a, ah, coal ...

Interviewer: Coal business?

Mrs. Bearse: Coal, coal business, yeah.

Interviewer: After he retired from the sea, I suppose?

Mrs. Bearse: Yeah. I don't know so much about him going to sea but I know it.

Interviewer: Yeah.

2nd Interviewer: Did he bring that in on the barge? Did he? The coal?

Mrs. Bearse: I suppose he must have. I don't remember. That was my younger days and I don't know much about that. I remember him.

Mr. Bearse: I used to ... They used to bring lumber up Deep Hole on the ship and then they'd make rafts, and saw and float them ashore and cart them ...

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Mr. Bearse: Up to the lumberyard.

2nd Interviewer: Oh, yeah?

Interviewer: Mm hmm. Deep Hole? Would that be South Harwich?

Mr. Bearse: Yeah. I can remember that.

Interviewer: And be rafted to shore, huh? My golly.

Mr. Bearse: Right into the surf.

Interviewer: Gee.

Mr. Bearse: We'd be soaking wet with salt water. Laughter. What it takes to do it.

Interviewer: Must have taken a while to dry out after all that.

Mr. Bearse: Yeah, that salt water; you never dry out.

2nd Interviewer: (Unintelligible speech) made that way from salt water and it eats the softer part of the wood, pine really, the soft part of the pine, like (Unintelligible speech) home. From the wood.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

2nd Interviewer: One that was softened from the salt water.

Mr. Bearse: So, years ago, when they thought that was a good plan. Then they used to send it by rail, you know.

Interviewer: Oh, yeah. By freight train. Mm hmm.

Mr. Bearse: That was better.

Interviewer: Well, I remember some of the old, old houses. They, I guess there must have been so much salt in the wood that the nails that would; the spikes that were driven into the beams, they were all rusty all around them, and I often used to wonder what made 'em get rusty, and I guess it was the salt in the wood. Mm, gee.

Mr. Bearse: I don't know how they used to do it in Chatham but I know South Harwich. Fred Sears at the lumberyard, where he used to have his lumber company ship. He rowed it to shore.

2nd Interviewer: (Unintelligible speech) Ellis in Chatham - Didn't he?

Mrs. Bearse: Yes, he had a coal business for quite a while.

Interviewer: Mm hmm. When?

Mrs. Bearse: (Unintelligible speech) that I can ... found it out that I can remember after I get home. (Laughter) I can't even think about it now.

Mr. Bearse: (Unintelligible speech) was big business then.

Interviewer: Yes.

Mr. Bearse: In West Chatham. Benny Cahoon?

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Mr. Bearse: They used to have, um, their oysters, oysters come from Greenport by ship.

Interviewer: Hmm. The *Sea Urchin*?

Mr. Bearse: By Salem, a two master.

Interviewer: Hmm.

Mr. Bearse: I used to go and shovel the oysters on scows and they'd take them up the road and plant them.

Interviewer: Mmm. At Oyster River.

Mr. Bearse: Yeah. And that would be year after year.

Interviewer: Well, how could a two master get that far in?

Mr. Bearse: They'd stop, down at Stage Harbor, anchor down there at Stage Harbor. They couldn't get way up the river.

Interviewer: No.

Mr. Bearse: It was deep water then.

Interviewer: Mm. Hmm.

