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Carolyn Blouin

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Oral interviews for a project on the history of activist women in South Berwick, Maine

Interviewer: Jenny Meagher (JM)

Interviewee: Carolyn Blouin (CB)

Date: June 26, 1992

Recording number: 1992.2.8.c5.a

Length of recording: 64:15

[transcript begins]

JM: Okay. Jenny Meagher, June 26, 1992. It is 4:00 pm. I'm in the factory of Moore's, Maury, Morris—

JM: Maurice F. Blouin, Incorporated in Rollinsford, New Hampshire. Well, the way that we got our story together for South Berwick, a story idea, was that Salt [Salt Institute for Documentary Studies] pretty much realized they needed to have a project within an hour or so of Portland. Because that's where the school is based. So, they said, we're going to get, we're gonna find a town. They're very interested in small towns but not, they don't want something that's so small that there, there isn't a lot of variety and impossible topic options. At the same time, they don't want it so large that there's a large transient population, say commuter population, that's recently moved in. Um, so they looked in a one-hour radius and South Berwick seemed the perfect place and they came here one day. Two of the directors, [unclear] and Hugh French, and they went to Flynn's News and Flynn's Market and the Sarah Jewett Orne [Sarah Orne Jewett] House and they just spoke to a number of people in the library. And they, what, your name was one that was mentioned and they mentioned that they wanted to do an issue on women in South Berwick. And that's what came—

CB: Well, I think that's great, I really do. And again, since I'm not a native, I can certainly, you know, just say that I can't think of a town that would fit that description in this area any better than South Berwick.

JM: It's perfect.

CB: I'm glad you're finding it that way.

JM: Oh, it's been a dream. I just met so many wonderful people today. And, I'm just learning so much.

CB: Yeah, yeah.

JM: But just wondering, I just want to go over so I make sure I know what's going on with your husband's business. Just the very, basic, basic details. That you've had this business for how many years?

CB: We started out in 1948 and that was the year of a presidential election. And at that point we made exhibits and well—the first exhibit we made was the homes of president[s] and my husband had gotten a bank in Boston, the Home Savings Bank, which I don't believe is in existence any longer to say that, if we made exhibits that they would display them and they would pay us for it. They were large exhibits and heavy and they had to be created and sent from one bank to another, so we had to get other banks and they had circuits. Um, and that first exhibit was the homes of the presidents and he had pictures of the homes of many of the presidents and then at the very bottom there was a blank space and it had questions. Meaning who, what will be the home of the president that we are electing now.

JM: That's right. I remember you telling me that. Okay.

CB: And, um, and then we got more clients and more clients. Um, and we reduced from large exhibits to flatter ones and thinner ones and less heavy ones. And then eventually times changed and we decided that we would do things that had to do with the whole interior of the banks so that they could have a basic sense of feeling to the customers when they came in. And also, my husband's idea and well, I shouldn't say it was his idea because I think it's general. Is that the best people to sell your services to, no matter who you are or what you're selling, is your present customers. In other words, sell them more. And that's what we've been in the process of doing for many of these years and we've been going to the, to the to the clients and finding out what they need and trying to help them. Basically, we try to help our customers and of course we believe in quality.

JM: And so, originally you said you were in Montclair, New Jersey?

CB: Uh, you mean originally, originally what?

JM: You, before the business started here, you were in Montclair?

CB: Yeah, well, we were married in in Towson, Maryland. He had a business of his own there, a very small business. Then he got a job in Manhattan. And in Manhattan he was the, the publicity chairman and so forth of a bank. And then he got the job in Boston, which had to do with, with graphics and advertising and that, he proved, the graphics did not suit him, the quality. And so that's when we came up here for the summer. And that was 1948. Uh, but we did, so the business started in, in South Berwick, Maine.

JM: I see. And one thing that I find really interesting about your farm, and I was just speaking to Natalie that, she knew that we had spoken and that's how I got her number. And I was asking her about Old Joy Farm and she said, did you know I believe it's her husband's great-aunt—

CB: Oh yes, Joy. Her, her, her husband's, uh, and did she tell you she has a daughter, daughter named Joy?

JM: No.

CB: Yes, she does. Yeah, Joy. Her name is Joy Sharp, but the, at the, no, Joy Goodwin. It's her son's, it's her son's daughter. Yes, the Joy family is an old South Berwick family. And uh, that, the, we have, have some material. When I, it doesn't seem like it's the original deed but it goes way back to the 18th century. And we have three cemeteries. Family cemeteries on our property and the oldest one is just field stones. And there are about seven graves there we think. And then the next one has one that the person that's in it, the time that's on the stone which you can hardly read, uh, was, they were, they were born in the, in the late eighteenth century. And then, there's a new one which started I guess in the end of the nineteenth century and that's down near the road, right. But that Joy family has been a part of South Berwick up until the time we came here for generations.

JM: That's incredible.

CB: And, uh, there was old Mr. Joy had to live by himself because his wife died before him and he gave it to the state. And the state of course lets a person stay, or did then, until they die and then it was bought up by a man who is, was a lumberman. Hi. Hi, Roger.

RL: Hi, Carol.

CB: I didn't want to interrupt you, Jenny, this is Roger Legere.

RL: Hi, Jenny. How are you doing?

CB: Jenny Meagher. And Roger is the, is the president of Maurice F. Blouin Incorporated.

RL: Are you interviewing her? For what? I want, now wait a minute, I want to be sure you're talking to the right person.

JM: [laugh] Well, not specifically about the business, but we decided to come here today because we were going to be in the library and it turns out it was, it was open and we had been hoping it would be closed.

CB: No, see I stupidly—

RL: What are you interviewing her for?

JM: Well, um—

CB: Roger, he's a real good guy. He's been here over 30 years.

JM: Wow, Seems like there are quite a few people—

CB: But you see the problem is, again this is [unclear], I mean you don't have to cut it off, but the problem is that both he and Maury are very creative and imaginative. And finance and that kind of stuff is, you know, it's just not their dish. And so that's, that's part of the reason that we're going to have management people in and that's the young man that you just met is a new, is new. He hasn't been here very long and he's a top guy in financial.

JM: That's important, yes. That's important. So, back to the old—

CB: I'm sorry for all these interruptions.

JM: Oh, no, don't worry about it. I really appreciate being able to meet Harris. He's great. But I was just interested, that's, that's wonderful. I didn't realize that there were actually gravestones on the property. Is it the kind where they have sort of a thin wire fence around and it's right in the middle of the field?

CB: No, well the one that has the stones, they're just plain field stones, has nothing around it except trees that have grown up all around and I didn't even realize that was what it was but it's right next to the one that has well, it originally was, you know, was the granite stones, the fork at either, and then they have chain that go, you know. But the chains are mostly gone. If you would like to see it, I mean, would you?

JM: I really would.

CB: Oh, I'd love to show them to you.

JM: Oh, I would love, I love old gravestones. I would really love to see them.

CB: Well, by all means. I'll be very glad to.

JM: And I'm also interested. Natalie was saying that she thought one of the Joy family members was a blind woman.

CB: Yes. Okay, the room that we talked in. We sat at the table and I almost told you and I just didn't think about it. Um, that was a large bedroom, I told you. And that was her room. She lived with Minnie and Frank Joy and I think she was his sister. I'm not sure which one. But anyhow, that was her room. And she apparently was a very remarkably fine lady and I don't know any, any more about her.

JM: Natalie thought that at one point she was alone on a farm taking care of the farm herself. Do you know about that?

CB: No.

JM: And I thought that's a very remarkable woman being blind and taking care of a farm.

CB: And it's too bad that I can't tell you. The person that could have helped me with that you will be interested in. A next-door neighbor, the Hastys. You know Hastys? Gladys Hasty Carroll, I told you about.

JM: Yes.

CB: The Hasty family is an old wonderful old South Berwick family. Ethel Hasty died about three weeks ago and Ethel Hasty was a hundred and three years old. Still as clear as a bell.

JM: That's amazing.

CB: And she would have been able to have answered that.

JM: A hundred and three?

CB: A hundred and three. And she, and she was in perfect health until just fairly recently. She had a loving family. She didn't even move away from her home which is next door. It's part of a, I mean they, that house became two families when her son was, or someone, watched out for and so on. And she didn't move away from that and to him just a few years ago. And her daughter in Ogunquit took her and she lived there very happily. They just loved her. And it's just so wonderful when you get old if you have loving family.

JM: Yes, that's very important.

CB: And especially if you appreciate it and she did.

JM: That's so interesting. I, that's a shame that I couldn't find out. I, I just—

CB: Well, I'll see if I can make it. I'll get onto that and if I can find something out I'll be in touch with you soon.

JM: Great. And do you know what they farmed there? I don't know if you mentioned—

CB: Well I think it was a big barn as you can see. They had cattle mostly. Um, and I think they raised corn and you know the usual. I don't think they had anything special other than the things that they needed. For example, of course, for their regular vegetable garden plus corn. And I don't know if there's been a—but I'll see if I can find out from the Hastys. 'Cause they probably would know.

JM: Now, I'm just curious to switch back for a minute to politics. You were telling me about the different places that you had marched and one of them was Kennebunk.

CB: Yeah.

JM: And I'm just curious about what, what type of demonstration it was and what—

CB: Oh, well none of them was, was anything, um, shall we say violent. There was nothing. But for example, when I went to the one in 1963 in Washington, you know when Martin Luther King, I can remember my, my major professor at Sweet Briar, I majored in philosophy, and not that it did me any good, but, at any rate, she was, she was really my mentor. She was just a remarkably wonderful lady. And she used to go into Lynchburg, Virginia and, and pray. You know this was, this was in the nineteen, late 1920s. And you know it was, it was you just didn't do that kind of thing but she just went in and, and they would, a few, a few white people would be with the, with the black people and, and they would just publicly let people realize. And especially, Miss Lucy Craw, her name was Lucy Crawford, and you know she was a very famous person. And, and it did something for that kind of thing and, and it just, it just really impressed her, her students. And because of her we became very, very interested. So, when 1963 came along and that's quite a while that I've been out of college at that point. Um, and of course we'd been in touch constantly. In fact, she was such a dear friend that, Maury and I had three children, and none of us had, [unclear], had

anyone that if something had happened to both of us that would have taken care of our children. So, we asked Miss Lucy and she said, I'll have to think it over. And so, she thought it over and she said, yes, I will take care of your children. She was that kind of person. Not married, but big, you know. I mean broad and just it would have been just [unclear]. But at any rate, um, I did tell her that I was planning to go to Washington. And she wrote back and said, oh, I don't know if you should. You know, I'm afraid there's gonna be violence. Of course, there wasn't. There was none at all. And I've never been involved in anything that was violent.

JM: But I'm just interested in when you first got involved with the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People], was that through her influence?

CB: Was that what?

JM: Through her influence?

CB: Um, well, um, I, I guess, I just, I just felt her influence, yes. But basically, also my feeling of the unfairness of things. Because as I say I'd been born and brought up there and I had these, these black friends that I, you know, that I had played with as a child and then when I went back to college a couple of them were maids at college, and uh—

JM: Some of your friends were maids?

CB: They were, yes. I mean my black friends. And it wasn't fair. I mean they didn't have any access to education. In addition to that, Sweet Briar was definitely a school for white young women. And I was one of the few, way back, that said, this is not right, and I can remember my roommate calling me from Cincinnati, I think I mentioned her to you, the other day. She's the one, did you read that thing that said perspective, did I give you that?

JM: Yes.

CB: Isn't that frightening?

JM: Yes.

CB: Anyway, she called me because she was on the alumni board at the time. 'Cause I had been pushing for, please, let's get some black students. And, why, she said you're all wet, Carolyn, the idea. Why, if they came, they just wouldn't be, well they wouldn't be, oh, you know, they don't have enough background. They wouldn't be, why they, they'd flunk out. No idea whatever that you've got to help people that start with an unfair advantage and so on. So, I mean, I guess I've just felt that way for a long about the unfairness of things. And it just seemed natural to belong to the NAACP.

JM: Right. And how did you, was there a local chapter in—

CB: There is in Portsmouth.

JM: In Portsmouth?

CB: Yeah, and, and I still belong to that. But the NAACP was, well, did I tell you about my, that my daughter worked for Roy Wilkins? Well, um, my daughter went to college and then she went to Katie Gibbs [Katharine Gibbs School], uh, to get, you know, secretarial school, you know Katie Gibbs. Um, and she went a year afterwards because she didn't have secretarial training and she didn't want to teach and so forth. And she became one of Roy Wilkins' two secretaries. And she was a secretary for him for a couple of years at the headquarter of the NAACP in Manhattan. And one summer she went to Mississippi to help register black voters. Um, and that, of course, so. That has—

JM: Sorry.

CB: —made me feel, and I certainly don't ever want sever my connection with the NAACP. Um, but no I haven't, there's been nothing that's been really violent that I've had any, have, I don't have any, any reason to be proud of my taking a chance because I haven't.

JM: And so, you would, you would aspire to Martin Luther King's theory of non-violence?

CB: Oh yes, definitely.

JM: Did you study King's readings or—

CB: I've read— I didn't show you, I guess I should have. One, this, we have quite a few books and on the left-hand side there are two, the front bay windows and the left-hand side is, is books that have to do with, with race and, and with civil rights and all that. Practically all that is and I've done a lot of reading and so on. But no, I'm not a student. I mean this, I'm just, just an ordinary person.

JM: Um-hmm. Did you, when you were a child, I know you know in the further deeper South there was a great deal of violence at that time. A lot of racial tension, race riots, that sort of thing. Did you experience that when you were growing up?

CB No. No. Never. Because you see, I left, I left Virginia when I was 10 and until then I had been very sheltered. Because I lived on the campus at Sweet Briar that my father had charge of the buildings and the grounds and so on. And, and also, it, you know, it's a huge several-thousand acres and they had, they had a herd of cattle and then horses of course. And I grew up on horse practically. Um, and I miss it but at any rate, the whole idea was that I just had the friends that I played with. And then the first three or four years in school one of the people who, well actually, her husband was the treasurer of the college, she had a little private school. And it must have been six of us who were just children of faculty and so on that went there. And then, my parents decided that I'd go to Amherst to school and

Amherst is just a little town right next to Sweet Briar. And I went on the train. You know the train from Amherst to—from Sweet Briar to Amherst.

JM: How long did it take?

CB: Well, I think it's about five miles and there's no stop in between. Yeah, and I went there for several years and then my mother took me up to Pennsylvania and, and I went to eighth grade and high school up there. And then I went back to Sweet Briar on an Amherst County scholarship. Because at that point, um, I couldn't afford to go anywhere else. And I had, my mother still had some wonderful friends at Sweet Briar. And so, they, they, I don't know what they did but they pulled prob— this, my father was still in, in Amherst County, and, doing other work. And, um, so they decided that they would count me an Amherst County student and so I got in on a scholarship. And for the first two years I boarded in room at a house which was, I mean, not in the dorms. And it happened to be the house I was born in. And so, I walked back and forth for those two years and then the last two years, um, two other gals in my class, we had a suite in a couple of places. Yeah, but actually, no, I didn't grow up having, having experienced anything in the way of a violent disrespect or, or hatred. But I did grow up with a feeling of um, the difference that didn't exist.

JM: The difference that you couldn't talk about?

CB: Well, no. I just mean that that here, here were people that that I had grown up with and that, that no longer were treated the way I was.

JM: Um-hmm.

CB: And it just didn't seem fair. And then, of course, when I went North there weren't that many black people. And then when I came back and Sweet Briar didn't, you know, it was all

white. Now of course, eventually, they decided they would take some black people and they do. But, that was, that was inexcusable really.

JM: Yes. And I'm curious, you were mentioning before about the anti-war movement with the hippies.

CB: About what?

JM: The anti-war movement.

CB: Oh, yes.

JM: Was it marching with hippies?

CB: Yes.

JM: This is in Kennebunk? Wasn't it?

CB: No, no, no, no, no. Oh, no. I haven't marched in Kennebunk until, except, since Bush has been there.

JM: Right, right.

CB: Yeah, no.

JM: I wasn't thinking. So, so with those people which, which marches were you speaking of?

CB: Well, uh, that, that had to do with, with civil rights largely. And, you know, the old thing about, and we will overcome, and so on and all that and also it had to do with anti-nuclear. I, I've done quite a bit of that. Although, again, it's never been violent, it's just been against, against nuclear proliferation and so on.

JM: Right, well even with nonviolent protests sometimes there can be violent reactions. Have you experienced that or at least riot police where that sort of tension is going on?

CB: I can't, I cannot in any way take credit for having been anywhere where I felt I was in danger.

JM: Um-hmm.

CB: Oh, not that I, not that I wouldn't have been, but I just haven't. See it's all been, well, in, in New York I've marched in New York and I have marched in Boston. Ah, but I haven't been in any of the ones lately. Apparently lately they've been some really bad ones. Uh, but no, I haven't, I haven't been in danger.

JM: What was in New York and Boston, which marches? Which marches were those in New York and Boston?

CB: Uh, well, they had to do with civil rights largely and also anti-nuclear.

JM: What were the—do you remember the dates?

CB: Hmm?

JM: The dates?

CB: The dates. Well, not recently. I really, I really don't remember. For example, it was the people's march on Washington [March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom] that I went on and that had to do of course with poor people. I mean and the unfairness of, of their lives and that kind of thing. And, of course, it largely involved black people as well and recently of course everybody realizes that it isn't just black people or people that are from other countries and, and, uh, yellow people or anything. It, it's, no matter what color, um, it

happens to every, every brand, kind of person. Uh, but no, I, I really haven't been in anything that that we could say was dangerous.

JM: Um-hmm. Um-hmm. And I'm wondering, you said the other night you were at a meeting, um, about choice?

CB: Yes.

JM: Now, are you involved in an organization—

CB: Um, well, I belong to WAND [Women's Action for Nuclear Disarmament], uh, you know, and uh, NARAL [National Abortion Rights Action League], of course. And there are, there very few that I don't belong to, so—

JM: Can you tell me what those stand for, those two? WAN and NARAL?

CB: NARAL is um, [long pause] that I know exactly. Um, let's see. Isn't that awful? You, you don't know what that is either.

JM: No, cause I—

CB: I do, um. Well, I'll have to tell you at some other point.

JM: Sure, sure.

CB: Okay. Um, and of course there are WAND, I can't tell you what that is either. But that has largely to do with women against nuclear power and that kind of thing. Um, and, for example NARAL has they, they have an organization in every state. And I belong to the one in Maine and also the one in New Hampshire because we're so close here. And that, of course, you don't, when you contribute to that, you don't, you, none of that is a deductible contribution. They use that for, you know, for really, really going to town to drive a lobby

and that kind of thing. Which I think it's a wonderful organization because they, no holds barred.

JM: Now that's, NARAL is to make abortion legal? To make abortion legal? Is that what it is?

CB: Yes, yes. And in other words, they're real, um, everybody is upset now. We don't know, it could be tomorrow as a matter of fact. That the Supreme Court will come out and mess things up. And that's what the march is going to be, or the, whatever it is, in Portland on the 2nd of July. It's going to be because they anticipate by that time, probably, we will know what the Supreme Court has decided. And then I also had a card, and these are postcards, and they're red, and they kind of, you know, they call your attention to, that the day after the, um, the Supreme Court's decision is announced, there's going to be a huge rally. And whether it's yes or no, but of course, you can't help expecting it to be negative, rather than positive, but whatever it is, there's gonna, I think that's going to be Portland too.

JM: Great, the day after, okay. And as you said, would you be able to make it to one of those days or you just don't know?

CB: I hope so.

JM: Yes.

CB: I certainly hope so.

JM: And with the meeting the other night, do you mind if I ask you what was on the agenda at that meeting? Was that to plan for the march?

CB: Uh, which meeting are we talking about?

JM: When I phoned you the other day—

CB: Oh.

JM: —you said, oh, I'm at a meeting for choice.

CB: Um, well actually that was, that was on Monday night. Um, that I said I was going. And that was over in Dover, in Durham, and actually, the person who spoke, and with my hearing problem I did not, wasn't able to hear very well, but she spoke about it and she was a fascinating speaker. But that's what it was. But it was it was sort of, it was basically a fundraiser for the feminist health center which has been running very low on funds. And we got there. I did not, Maury did not go. So Matt, I took Matt Goodwin with me.

JM: Right.

CB: Um, and when we got, it was from five to seven, and when we got there, there were very few people there, but very shortly there were loads more. And there was nothing except it was a real wonderful house. Um, delightful outside, inside, and they've collected things from all over the world and just no place you could look that you didn't see something interesting. Um, and of course, beautiful service and lovely, delightful, delicious refreshments. But the only thing was the, the speaker. And then, of the people that were there, of course, we're all talking and we talked with everybody that we could about what was going on. But I can't tell you anything specific as far as what was decided except that the funds that come from that will help keep that feminist health center operating.

JM: And that's where you were an escort.

CB: Yes, yes.

JM: Right:

CB: Yup. Um-hmm.

JM: Can I, can I ask you what, what makes you feel that that issue in particular is so important?

Well, I mean I know that you know that—

CB: It's, to me it's the basis of, it's the basis of life. Um, and as I see it, I think the hope as I had told you before and I think the hope of this country and the hope of the world is women. Because we're the ones that bear the children, number one, and we're the ones who have, I think, more sensitivity and more sensibilities, let's put it that way. And I think we have more understanding for people who are in pain than men. Uh, maybe I'm being unfair to them, but I just really feel that we have more ability to give in helping people. And I think helping people is probably the key to life. I mean, I can't, I think of so many people that their goals are, are sure, they're fun, but really the basic goal in all life is, is to try to help. And, so you— [no sound for several seconds (~31:56 to 32:08); cut off?] but basically, having had a child, having had three children, um, I can't think of anything that would make me feel that any, any man or anyone else, as a matter of fact, would have a right to tell me whether or not I am willing to go through that experience again, whether I liked it or didn't like it. And I just don't think that it makes sense when we consider that people are free. You know, you think of the black people in this country and basically you think, I do, of the injustice that they had to suffer and, and things happened to them that weren't right. Where could they go to complain? Nowhere. They were absolutely without any right whatever to have people look at what happened to them and say, look that was wrong and we're sorry and we'll make it right. There was no place they could go. Justice is tremendously important. All right, that comes down to a matter of children. A matter of, of what you're gonna do with if you have children. Are you gonna try to help them? Are you gonna try to help them understand that, that basically this world is, it is for, for people to make it a better world. And therefore, it just seems to me that for any woman not to feel that it's important that she

have a child if she wants the child and if she doesn't want a child, I think she should very carefully decide whether her reason for not wanting the child is, is right. But it's up to her. And I just feel that it's, it's almost the basis of, of the morality of life.

JM: How do you feel about the ACLU [American Civil Liberties Union]?

CB: I think they're great. I belong to the ACLU.

JM: I was just wondering about that because—

CB: Oh yeah, I belonged to, I belonged to them for years and years and years. And when people start talking about what they do in, in support of the Nazis and so on, I think it's too bad but again that's the whole basis of this country. I mean the First Amendment. And, um, we, we should certainly stick up for people's right to express themselves as long as they don't hurt people. And I think the ACLU is just a tremendously wonderful organization and I would hate to think that it would, that would, you know, it wouldn't exist.

JM: Yes, I agree. And I'm wondering, I know myself, when I came of age to start thinking about issues such as abortion, one of the things that really gripped me was hearing stories about what happened before abortion was legalized. Horror stories. And I'm wondering, since we are of different generations, if maybe you may have heard, especially in a college, a women's college, horror stories of what that was like for women who didn't have that option.

CB: I can't help you out there. You know, I guess, I guess I was just dreadfully, what shall I say, I didn't know much about life when I was in college. I was just unaware. And I don't remember ever talking about those kinds of things until I went back in reunions and, and, and then it's interesting when you go back to reunions. You haven't been out long enough to realize that but you go back and you see these friends that you've had, that, you know,

that you're just so glad to see again. And they're two kinds, you find. There are those that were your friends and they'll always be your friends because whether you haven't seen them for 30 years you're still on the same wavelength. And then there are other friends that you really didn't know in college and you really didn't care that, and they're also on your wavelength. And then there some that were on your wavelength that no longer are you interested in. You have nothing in common with them anymore. And that's especially true I think with where I went to college because that is the South. And I find that there are two kinds of people, two kinds of women, that, that I know very well. There are those, I'm talking about Southern women, and they are those that really, really care, and that are really upset. And there are those that are absolutely on the other side. And if you are a Southern woman, you feel—I don't know any Southern woman that doesn't feel either very strongly one way or the other.

JM: Wow, that's very interesting. And so, did you find, was it hard for you to go back to those reunions? Was it painful because you had changed?

CB: No, it wasn't because there were enough people that were there that I agreed that, you know there were enough of us on the same wavelength. Of course, I have found that living in the country like I do and not being in the midst of a lot of entertainment, we do have one big, I don't know whether you've heard about it, but we have a party at Christmastime and sometimes there are 250 people there. But I mean, because we just like people, they're just wonderful people around. But, basically, we don't do a whole lot of entertaining. We're not in, in what most college graduates who are living in suburban and urban areas are in. We're not in that kind of dealing. We, we just don't go out a lot of places and do a lot of things that most people I guess do. And so, basically, I just haven't, I have dealt largely by

keeping up with my friends by mail. And, and, so, when I go back to reunion we just have a great time.

JM: Um-hmm.

CB: Because the ones that don't agree aren't with us, you know.

JM: So, after college what did you do after that?

CB: Well I, I forgot to tell you too. The, the lad that, the three summer, the first summer I was in college I worked as a waitress on Silver Bay on Lake George. And that's a non-denominational center for summer programs that have to do with, with the Protestant faith. And I worked as a waitress there. The next three summers I was a counselor at Camp Wyonegonic in Denmark, Maine. And that is the oldest girls camp. And the reason I went there is because the doctor, the MD at Sweet Briar, was also the doctor who had brought me into the world. She was still there, a dear friend of my mother, and she had been the doctor at Wyonegonic when it started. And so, she suggested that I go there and I was there for three summers. Um, and after my senior summer I then went, of all things, to Baltimore and worked in a department store. They had training courses there. I didn't want to teach. I didn't really know enough about any other specialty. Um, and so they have a special training course and you take the training course with college graduates and then they put you in various departments. And I got put into the department of, it was telephone orders and telephone and so on. And I worked there, um, and hated it.

JM: Which department store was it?

CB: Hmm?

JM: Which department store was it?

CB: Hutzler, Hutzler Brothers Company. Do, do you know it?

JM: No, actually I don't—

CB: Oh, it was the very best department store in Baltimore. It's now, it is no more. It went under several years ago. But at any rate, I got fed up with, you know, we had the telephone orders and you deal with people ordering things and you deal with people constantly. And I'm like that when I want to buy something. You know, they want the best, it's inconsequential matters. And so, then I got married. And Maury and I kept on and until we moved to Bos—, to New York, I mean to Montclair. And then I did not work, and, but, I did, know, you know, volunteer work and things like that in the hospital. Like I'm a volunteer at Wentworth Douglass [Hospital].

JM: Really, you're a volunteer? What do you do there?

CB: Well, you know, there was a thing, actually I take care of the mail. Because I have trouble with my hearing so I can't use the phone. I mean it isn't right to ask people who are phoning in for information to have the person ask you three or four times, hey, I didn't hear what you said, you know. [laughter] Um, but no, I just distribute the mail and that way you get to see the patients and you have. But I've been almost 30 years doing that because I have a very dear friend who was the head of the volunteers and she got me into it and it's, it's wonderful, it really is. But where were we?

JM: You were talking about the department store where you worked.

CB: Um, so anyway, so I did that in, in Montclair and then we, then we well actually we had, I had the three children and I had them all when we were in Montclair. And then we moved to Newton Center and were there just two years because during that time you see we had had bought All Joy Farm. And then I, we moved up here and then in 1948 we stayed up here.

And then Maury got his business going and he needed help. And so, I was the help to begin with and then I worked until he really didn't need me anymore. And like I told you the other day, I mean, I just didn't feel comfortable about some of the ways he, he does things. And I don't think any woman would necessarily feel that her husband, no matter how good he was, was doing everything that the way she'd like. I mean that just doesn't work. I mean it isn't, it just isn't human. Not to think something should be different. And so, then I did not, I decided that I wasn't needed anymore. I still come in, as you can see, I come in all the time. Um, but then I decided I thought it would be nice if I could at least prove that I could work and hold a job. So, I got a job over at UNH for a couple of years. And that made me feel better. And since then I have been just really not doing anything.

JM: Oh, I don't believe that for a second. [laugh]

CB: No, but really, it's, it is, it's wonderful to see how many things people can do if they want to. And it's wonderful to have friends like there are friends for us in South Berwick. And it's very, very I think disturbing at this point to see what's going on in this country and what's going on in the world. And especially as far as democracy is concerned, that perspectives thing, set it in a nutshell. We want what we want and if we're bad off a little bit we'll help and then when we get too much, we want more. And we shouldn't. We need to decide and we need to decide that we're interested in things that don't necessarily touch us personally. And that's why it's so important, like I told you, that League of Women Voters bumper sticker that, democracy is not a spectator sport, and that it is for so many people at this point.

JM: Exactly.

CB: And especially men.

JM: Um-hmm.

CB: And that's where I feel that, that women and—Maury asked me a question this morning that I hadn't thought about 'cause I had just come from a League of Women Voters meeting earlier this week. And he said, are there any black women? Well, um, sure, there are some, but they probably don't have the time.

JM: Um-hmm, um-hmm.

CB: And, you know, there's just so much to be done.

JM: I was wondering how you felt about that because I remember last time that I spoke with you I mentioned this woman Frances Crowe who works with American Friends Service Committee—

CB: Yes, you told me, yes.

JM: —and one thing, we're very good friends. I worked in her office for a year. And we were speaking, I was just, she was a fascinating woman and I was asking her what she felt the most difficult thing about being a political activist and organizer was. And she said breaking down the barriers between classes and race. And she felt that for, especially with women of color, that she felt that it was generally educated upper to middle class white women who were getting involved in this. And she did not, for the life of her, though she had been organizing, she was, she's in her early 80s and she'd been organizing for a good 20 or 30 years.

CB: She's right.

JM: How do you feel about that.

CB: She's right. I am, hadn't, I haven't actually thought of it in those terms but that's true. And, and, and we've got, we've got to have, you know a large percentage of women realizing how important it is. Otherwise, I mean just a few can't do it. But basically, it is certainly true that each person can make a difference. And if we just get that story across that no matter how little a person can do, I mean the waves can, can get big. And each person I think has, has got to feel her own responsibility.

JM: What about women who have not really been given a chance. You mentioned, I think you kind of hit it on the nose when you, when you said that one of the things that really affected you is when your black friends could not go to college. I think that education is one of the eye-opening tools. What do you do when these women aren't even allowed an education?

CB: The, the only way you can answer, that I can answer that, is to say that you have to look to the future. And that we've got to get enough women and also men interested in seeing that all, all of these young people have an opportunity to get a decent education. Not necessarily a college education and I think it's wrong to think that everybody should go to college. Because there's so many, many people who have other abilities rather than going to college. But every person should have an opportunity to be educated to his greatest ability. Uh, and I think that people who are really caring and who are really seeing the dangers that exist now have a tremendous responsibility to reach out and touch whatever, whatever person or thing or organizations we can to see that they realize that we have to start way down when kids are born. And, and, like, you know, well, it certainly is proved that, that, the organization that had, what is that, you know? I even forget it now but it's what the kids have had for several years and they, it's like pre-kindergarten and so on. I, I'm sorry, I've forgotten the name of that but it's a federal program and, and they have, they

have [unclear], it's been what, 15 years or so. And they have followed the kids that have been in that and it has paid off.

JM: Headstart, is that it?

CB: Yes, Headstart. I don't know why I didn't— And it's paid off. And that kind of thing on a much broader scale. I mean it needs to be available. And we need to decide that we're going to do something with all that money that's going toward military and put—and somebody, I read in the paper the other day, is saying, let's, let's get the people that are in military. Just have them start building. I mean really building roads, building houses and that kind of thing. As long as they're in the military, they're in there and it makes sense. And like, for example, Jimmy Carter. What he and Rosalynn are doing is just unbelievable. So, anyway, be that as it may, I just, I just feel that every single person who is, who is concerned has an, has not only an obligation but an opportunity to make himself or herself felt.

JM: Right. And, I'm wondering, um, it seems that women of your generation often have, I'm just saying this for my own experience with my grandmother, um, who grew up pretty much a little bit before the Depression. When she, when the Depression hit, she was just starting out in her marriage. They were just trying to make a start. And I was wondering how you felt that affected you because I know for her that was a very, very traumatic and overwhelming experience. And I was wondering, for you, how that, what age you were and how that affected you and if you—

CB: Are you talking about in the midst of the Depression?

JM: Yes.

CB: I'll tell you what NARAL is. National Abortion Rights Action League.

JM: Okay, okay.

CB: Well, when we started out, I had my job in Baltimore at the, at the department store. And Maury had his own business and it didn't work very well because everything, everything was depressed. And we had a bud—, I've worked on a budget all my married life. We had a budget, a food budget of \$4.75 a week, and, well, I mean, and that of course, you can't understand but your mother could. I mean 19 cents a pound for coffee, for example, and I remember thinking, I can't possibly afford more than 25 cents for the meat for this meal, and so on. And, but, everybody was in that problem, in that sit—, and somehow, I, you know, we didn't sit around complaining. We just did the best we could. And sure, it was tough and all that, uh, but again, it, and at my age, for example, now, I get, I get discouraged at times, because I'm not able to do as much as I would like to do. I really want to do, I want to do more volunteering and at this point I haven't been able to figure out just what or how it will work out. Um, but, we didn't just sit around and get discouraged and say, boy, this is lousy. We didn't have time. And, and so, no, I can't say that it was, you know, that it was so bad that I, I wouldn't want to have to go through it again. [phone ringing in background] But again, that's the kind of special trauma that adds to a person's ability to cope.

JM: Um-hmm. Yes, and, and how do you feel about the generation now? Many people call what we're in now a recession, but I personally choose to call it a depression. What do you feel about the way that people of my generation and the next generation are reacting towards this?

CB: Well, basically, I feel that number one, I feel very guilty. My generation, that your generation is having to face what you're having to face. Uh, because it isn't fair. I also feel very badly about, for a lot of our children. My children, uh, I mean that age, are not being good

parents. Uh, they're not overseeing their children. Their children are watching violence on TV. Their children are not being properly managed and not being put to bed at the proper hours. There, there are loads and loads of things that are not being done by people that are the age of my children. And I just feel very responsible for the fact that we have allowed ourselves not to impress upon the people that were, that we were responsible for, their responsibilities. And I, as I think I said before, I'm surprised there isn't more crime.

JM: Hmm.

CB: I really am. And I just feel so badly for you because there aren't that many of you. That, that realize, you know, what's going on. And again, that makes me feel even more responsible. And more, more than that, I just think that it's much more necessary that, that we, while we're here, try to do whatever we can to help you. Because it's your generation that is, that you're either gonna, you're either, you're either going to survive or, or the whole world isn't gonna survive. I mean you look at the environment now. I mean we haven't talked about the environment but that's basic in all that we're talking about. I mean what we've done to that.

JM: Right.

CB: And it's dreadfully important. And again, I mean, from the third world, what are they telling us? They're asking us for our help and we're trying to help them with dollars and so on. But actually, what we're doing is we're just using a lot of the things that they need. With, the rain forests, for example, and all that. And we're taking it away from them.

JM: Exactly, for our profits.

CB: Oh.

JM: Now, I don't know if you have, I want to, if you need to leave by a certain time.

CB: No.

JM: Are you okay for time?

CB: Um-hmm.

JM: Um, I'm, I'm just curious. A lot of women have mentioned to me, in fact Natalie and Esther were mentioning that they felt that the Second World War was a very, very much a turning point for a lot of women. I know I've learned in history classes about Rosie the Riveter and women finally being able to enter the workforce. And they felt, especially, even in South Berwick, but that was a time when women were really allowed to take more leadership roles. And I was wondering how you felt about that?

CB: Well, that's probably true. Of course, I wasn't in South Berwick at that point.

JM: Um-hmm.

CB: Um, that's probably true. I hadn't thought of it from that point of view. But sure, I mean, because of course the men were away and a lot of women went to work when their men were away. I mean all over the country that happened. And I guess it was the beginning of a lot of them realizing that yeah, they guessed they'd keep on working.

JM: Um-hmm.

CB: Yeah. Um, no, I hadn't, I hadn't really you know gone deeply into that but I think they're probably right about it.

JM: And they were telling me that they felt that the town of South Berwick changed after the Second World War. That that was sort of a time where people were questioning their identity and the town's identity.

CB: Now I didn't hear that.

JM: They're questioning their identity and the town's identity.

CB: Oh, um.

JM: And it seems like right after that event, aftermath of the wars, when you came to South Berwick.

CB: Yes, yeah.

JM: And did you feel that? Did you feel—

CB: Well, you see, I think I mentioned the other day. Um, the, the French-Canadian and, oh, I shouldn't say Frenchman, but the, the complete division between the Protestant South Berwick and the Catholic South Berwick. And that had just really, had really, when we came, it was just beginning you know, to, to be dispersed. And I know I told you about the priest and how unkind he was to Maury and so on. And, and Father Lem wasn't here very long then. And then we've had a group of very wonderful Catholic priests here. Uh, and again, I guess history, you know what was happening in the world, like you just said had a lot to do with it. But certainly, it's true, that that the whole town must have changed dramatically from what Nat and Esther had seen before that. And I think they're right.

JM: Because they were telling me about Shoetown.

CB: Yeah.

JM: And the different mills and factories and everything. And it sounded, it did sound sort of like a Northern slavery.

CB: Oh yeah, I think it was.

JM: Because it was, you know, there was housing provided for the workers. But they said that the man that owned Shoetown did not allow electricity wires to run through his trees. Who didn't want to tear, you know.

CB: Tell me again?

JM: He didn't want electricity. He didn't want the wires running through his trees so there was no electricity to those houses. There was no running water. There was running water but there was no, there were outhouses. There were no bathroom facilities. And it, which sounds a lot like the Southern slave quarters.

CB: Certainly does.

JM: And so, you came when that was all breaking up.

CB: Yes, it definitely was 'cause I didn't, oh, I didn't really see any of that. But I do know that you know many, many people their whole, their whole family existence depended upon the shoe shop. And, and you just work there and, and you, you know, it was an assembly line kind of thing and people were not treated as people, they were treated as things. But I'm sure that that it was much more noticeable to people that you know had lived here before. That that change had happened.

JM: And they were mentioning that the area where you actually moved to. It's known as Tatnic?

CB: Oh yeah, that's Tatnic. That's the other side of the tracks.

JM: Right.

CB: Yeah.

JM: Now why is it, what, where does Tatnic come from? What does that mean?

CB: Oh that, that's Indian.

JM: I see.

CB: Yeah, that's Indian.

JM: What, do you know what tribe or?

CB: No, I don't.

JM: Just curious. And that's the country area outside.

CB: Yes, in other words, you go ahead, you know where your turn on it to come, Agamenticus Road to Emerys Bridge Road. And Tatnic starts, I think, about maybe a mile or so after you turn on Emerys Bridge Road. Maybe a little farther than that. And Tatnic is, I mean, nobody who is anybody lived in Tatnic. I mean, you know, and that included foreign people as well as, as people of French descent and so on. I mean Tatnic was just beyond thinking about. Um, and, you know that, it's wonderful the way South Berwickians. And I'm talking about those for generations, that have been here for generations, have accepted, um, the change in, in society. I mean that's why I say the people that are basically South Berwickians for generations like Nat Goodwin and like Esther Holmes are just super, super people. To begin with, a lot of people who don't have the education that they have, for example, Nat went to UNH, and I mean there's no difference between her and, and her background and any of the rest of us. But there are some who haven't had really adequate educations. But

there's a dignity and a quietness and a determination and a caring about those people that's natural Maine stuff. And there are many, many of those people here in town. Many.

JM: And do think that's Tatnic? What's Tatnic? I mean what, what characterizes that part of town?

CB: Well Tatnic's just country. And Tatnic is, is, is resentful now. The Tatnicians, as we call ourselves, of the fact that there are, and again we shouldn't be, but there are many, many more houses out there. There are many more people living out there. And every time we go out there, uh, we can't [unclear], which isn't right, you know. It's just not right. You shouldn't resent that. Uh, but you just do. I mean you want it the way it used to be and, and, so, but no it's just basic country. It's the other side of the tracks. Or that's what it was. But of course, now, and now, really, Jenny, there are sev—, I wish you could be here longer. I'd like so much to have you meet some people your age. There are any number. I would say maybe eight or ten couples that I know of that are living out in Tatnic now who have come there. They are not yuppies. And there are probably a lot of yuppies in South Berwick at this point. I don't happen to know many of them. But I mean these are young people who see what's in Tatnic. Who see the values in South Berwick and who want to be there. Who are not interested in how much money they can make as such. I mean, I don't mean that they were that they're, you know, poverty-stricken but I wish you could be around. I'd like to have you meet David McDermott and, and his wife Nora. David has been in his—

[end of transcript]