

Oral History Interview
Irene (Vereb) Newman
WH053

(written transcript and digital audio)

On July 2, 2009, Irene Newman was interviewed at the Main Library by Brenda Velasco at 12:50 P.M.

1. Identify individual name, section, date of birth.

Irene Newman: My name is Irene Newman and I live in Fords. I was born on October 10, 1933.

2. How long have you lived in Woodbridge?

Irene Newman: I lived in Woodbridge for seventy-three years. I was actually born in Raritan Township on Amboy Avenue in a house that is still there; it was a farmhouse.

Brenda Velasco: Wow! Now, Raritan Township today is.....

Irene Newman: Edison.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, because we've had some name changes along the way. Alright, so you just moved to the next area then?

3. Why did you or your family originally move to Woodbridge?

Irene Newman: Well, let me explain a little bit. The whole section there was a farm owned by my father and across from Provident Bank, which is in Edison, my father decided to purchase a milk business from a man called Mr. Algar and he wanted to be closer to towns where there was a lot of population: by Perth Amboy and Woodbridge Proper. So he bought a house at 56 Hornsby Street and I lived there for a few years, because I was three and a half when we moved from Raritan Township. I lived on 56 Hornsby Street in Fords until I was eight and a half. My father passed away and the year before he had purchased a building in Woodbridge which is now the Furrier's Building on Amboy Avenue. My mother had no choice but to sell our home on Hornsby Street and move to Woodbridge, and sold the business also. I attended St. James School for a short time in Woodbridge. I made friends there that I met later when I attended St. Mary's High School in Perth Amboy. My mom missed Fords and her friends and her church. So she sold the Furrier Building which had a barbershop on the lower level and purchased a home in Fords on Hoy Avenue.

Brenda Velasco: On Hoy Avenue?

Irene Newman: Yes, I loved Fords and always have. My brother, John, lived on Sherry Street in Woodbridge and my other brother, Steve, lived there in the same house. My sister, Mary, lived in Woodbridge on Crampton Avenue for about twenty-five years.

Brenda Velasco: So your family is a Woodbridge family?

Irene Newman: So my family has lived in Woodbridge Township a long time.

Brenda Velasco: Alright, I mean you've lived in Fords, Woodbridge Proper and then back again to Fords, and as you said, you loved Fords.

Irene Newman: Yes, I loved it and she loved it too so she wanted to get back there.

Brenda Velasco: Was your mother originally from Fords?

Irene Newman: No, she was from Hungary and so was my father. They had immigrated here and he went to school to learn English, at night, while he worked in the tire factory in Keasbey. He wanted to always own his own business. He was an orphan. He was raised by his grandmother in Europe.

Brenda Velasco: Then he left his family there in Europe?

Irene Newman: He had no family. He only had his grandmother. His grandmother had died so I think he was nineteen when he came here.

Brenda Velasco: What was his last name because I didn't get your maiden name?

Irene Newman: It's Vereb.

Brenda Velasco: Okay.

Irene Newman: First name was Stephen.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, so I think you gave us a good explanation of your moving around Woodbridge, Fords and back and forth. What do you want to concentrate on, Fords then when we describe some of the changes?

Irene Newman: Yes, I'll probably do a few things about that.

Brenda Velasco: Alright, then let's go to question four unless you had anything else to add.

**4. What physical changes have occurred over the years in the area you lived?
-houses, streets, services, stores, houses of worship, schools, etc.**

Irene Newman: Well when I was a student in School No. 7 on King Georges Road, which is now the King's Professional Building, King Georges Road was not as well traveled as now. My house actually sits on the land that was part of **Waloff's Farms**. My mother used to give me money to go get eggs from Mrs. Waloff and chickens.

Brenda Velasco: So you moved from a farm in Raritan Township but you.....

Irene Newman: My house was built three years before I purchased it. So the house next door to me, presently, was the main house with the barn and a wraparound porch around it.

Brenda Velasco: How nice.

Irene Newman: It's wonderful. When I attended Our Lady of Peace I walked past that area all the time because I had to from Hoy Avenue. That's the way I walked.

Brenda Velasco: So you had quite a distance to walk to Our Lady of Peace School?

Irene Newman: Yes, it was a distance. I did a lot of walking.

Brenda Velasco: That was about a good dozen blocks or so.

Irene Newman: I'd say like five or six blocks. Yes, it was a distance. It was good.

Brenda Velasco: And you're still here.

Irene Newman: I'm still here. Yes, I wanted to mention that they sold eggs and chickens and my sister lived on Hansen Avenue so I lived with her for a little while because my mother became ill. So I walked from Hansen Avenue to Our Lady of Peace. On Hansen Avenue there was a store named **Lukacs's Meat Market** and that was a very popular store, of course. Also, my niece still lives on Hansen Avenue in the same house. My sister Rose and her husband bought a war house on Hansen Avenue.

Brenda Velasco: What do you mean a war house?

Irene Newman: It was one of the ones that was put up real quick like, you know, with very little insulation. My sister always told me that the insulation was terrible in that house but it was built during those Pearl Harbor years. There were five or six houses that were built at that time and, like I said, I know they weren't well insulated.

Brenda Velasco: So we're talking the early 1940s.

Irene Newman: Yes, exactly. Our streets were not well traveled really until 287 and the Garden State Parkway were built. The Garden State Parkway came first I believe.(1954) There was a small confectionary store at the corner of Hoy Avenue and King George Road which was called **Brownie's** because Mr. and Mrs. Brown owned it. That's where the pizza place is right now but it was right on the corner there. They had the essentials that everybody needed like milk and bread and ice cream and candy and eggs. It was a necessary place to go when Mr. Lukacs wasn't open. Now I'm going to go to New Brunswick Avenue. We had a shoemaker there, **Horvath's**, and that wasn't too far from Hoy Avenue. Mr. Horvath was his name and he had two daughters. They both live in our area. One lives in Woodbridge Township. She lives in Fords also. They're both in the Women's Club at Fords. They both have lived in Fords; well Josephine has lived in Fords as long as I have. Across the street from the shoemaker's was **Lipinski's Hardware Store**. There's a beauty salon there now, I think. Next door to that was the **Crystal Shop** where my son, Robert, bought me a crystal salt and pepper shaker with his first newspaper route money.

Brenda Velasco: Amazing what memories we have as mothers!

Irene Newman: Oh, yes. It was very important that I mention that. She let him have it, by the way, at cost she told me later. We had **Thompson's Hardware Store** also on New Brunswick Avenue. **Dr. Saul Cooperman** was also on New Brunswick Avenue and we all went to him.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, he was your GP, your general practitioner?

Irene Newman: Yes, there was no primary care physician at that time. Everybody took care of everybody. That's where **Mitruska's Funeral Parlor** is right now. Dr. Cooperman lived on Hornsby Street also: the corner of Hornsby and Maxwell Avenue. I used to have to take the paper in for him. Now **Etzel's Cleaners** was in that building where **Mitruska's Funeral Home** is now. I think he bought it from the man who owned the **Fords Theatre** or he rented it from him. Then **Dr. Ralph Deutsch** was the dentist in town. He was on the corner of New Brunswick Avenue and Corielle Street. **Katz's Drugstore** was on the corner of Corielle and New Brunswick Avenue. **Dambach's Grocery Store** was right next to the drugstore. It was a great place to shop. When I was first married I bought my groceries from **Dambach's** all the time or from **Mezzo's Grocery** which was on Crows Mill Road.

Brenda Velasco: Now what were you able to buy there?

Irene Newman: Meat, fish, the essentials but pretty much we went there for the meat.

Brenda Velasco: How about your produce, your fresh produce?

Irene Newman: Yes, there was produce there, definitely.

Brenda Velasco: So this was a regular shopping area. Did you walk there?

Irene Newman: When I first got married I could have walked there, yes.

Brenda Velasco: Now when your mom moved back to Fords you had mentioned previously before the interview she was able.....

Irene Newman: To walk everywhere because she didn't drive. We walked everywhere.

Brenda Velasco: Were the streets paved when you moved there?

Irene Newman: They weren't paved like they're paved now. I guess you would call them paved but not like they are now.

Brenda Velasco: Did you have well water or regular running water?

Irene Newman: Regular water and sewer.

Brenda Velasco: Okay and you had the sewers in there as well.

Irene Newman: Yes.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, no septic tanks.

Irene Newman: No, I would have known that. Oh, and I have to mention something else. Mr. Dambach would keep a running tally of groceries if my mother wanted to send me to the store and not give me money. She would just tell me to go and once a week she would pay for that which was very convenient. There was also a **Mezzo's Grocery Store** on Crows Mill Road where Dalina's tavern used to be. It was right next to it, I think, yes it was next door to them. I never went into the tavern so I don't remember. All I know is that it was there. They also had that same system where kids could go for their parents and buy items. Plus there was a laundry on Douglas Street off of Crows Mill Road.

Brenda Velasco: So you had a lot of mom and pop stores then?

Irene Newman: I would say, yes.

Brenda Velasco: Did you have any big supermarkets there?

Irene Newman: No.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, how about the Fords Theatre, was that.....

Irene Newman: Yes that was very popular, very, very popular. Let me just say this, everybody in town was very trusting. We walked a lot and we knew a lot of people. Even if it was just by sight we would know them. My mother was a young widow, so with me to raise, I'm the seventh child that she raised. All my brothers and sisters were older and she had to raise me with no social security by the way so she had to be conscious of the obligations that she had. Our Lady of Peace Church has been in our town a long time also. I was married in what was the old church or the elementary school now. Father Grimes married me in that church and my husband was a Lutheran and was a convert to Catholicism. He knew his bible better than I did.

Brenda Velasco: Usually Protestants did.

Irene Newman: But we raised three children in Fords. There was always a post office. The Fords Library was run by the Women's Club of which I had the privilege of being the president for six years.

Brenda Velasco: Do you recall when you were the president, approximately the years?

Irene Newman: Yes, 2001 until last year.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, 2008 then.

Irene Newman: Yes. And my children remember the library when it was run by the Women's Club and it was just down the street from us so it was kind of easy to get to and they loved it; and everybody knew everybody there too. And I meet all kinds of people that tell me, I know where the library used to be, I know that, I know that place. The firehouse was on Corielle Street where the dance studio is now. The First

Aid Squad was manned by Mr. Dambach, Mr. Faczak and several others which I can't remember their names but I remember those two very well. We had a survey once and I found out we had seven churches in Fords; I had to find out how many churches we had.

Brenda Velasco: Wow!

Irene Newman: We had seven churches in Fords. I think they're still all there too.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, we know Our Lady of Peace is there.

Irene Newman: Right, and the one next door to me which is the Grace Baptist Church but it used to be the Grace Lutheran Church. When I moved there I moved next to a church because my mother wanted to live next to a church. Anyway, it was quite interesting.

Brenda Velasco: And what other churches are there?

Irene Newman: There are two churches on Hoy Avenue. I think it's an Episcopal Church and there's a Reformed Church on that street. Then we had one on Second Street which that church isn't there any longer. It was St. Nicholas Greek Catholic Church. There's a church there now also. And where else, how many did I tell you?

Brenda Velasco: You have, let's see.

Irene Newman: I know there were seven at one time because I had to make a survey of it.

Brenda Velasco: We're missing one. We have two churches on Hoy Avenue, Second Street the Grace Lutheran and there was a church right off of Ford Avenue wasn't there?

Irene Newman: Oh, yes, Our Redeemer which is still there. Oh my goodness, how could I forget that.

Brenda Velasco: And that's the Lutheran Church.

Irene Newman: Yes, that's the Lutheran Church.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, so you had a variety of Christian churches there then?

Irene Newman: Yes, and they're still all being used which is wonderful.

Brenda Velasco: Okay and we could take up the schools in question five. That deals with public buildings.

5. What public buildings/property were there:-post office, library, parks, firehouse, schools, etc.

Brenda Velasco: You mentioned that the post office.....

Irene Newman: By the way, we walked to church every Sunday. My children walked to school from King Georges Road to Our Lady of Peace. We walked everywhere. We didn't use our cars for that.

Brenda Velasco: Quite different than today.

Irene Newman: Yes.

Brenda Velasco: Quite different. Okay then let's look at the post office.

Irene Newman: Yes, we had a post office, always had a post office of course.

Brenda Velasco: And did you have mail delivery at home or did you have to pick up the mail?

Irene Newman: No, we had delivery at home.

Brenda Velasco: Okay and that was located on New Brunswick Avenue?

Irene Newman: Ever since I've been around it's been on New Brunswick Avenue.

Brenda Velasco: Alright, the library we mentioned.

Irene Newman: Yes.

Brenda Velasco: And that was provided by the Fords Women's Club.

Irene Newman: Right.

Brenda Velasco: Okay how about parks?

Irene Newman: The Park has been there forever also.

Brenda Velasco: We're talking Fords Park?

Irene Newman: Fords Park. Not in the condition that it is in now, it was a little bit, you know, but we still went to the Park. We'd walk to the Park but we had a problem going over the Parkway with our bikes and so forth because, in fact, my children were involved, there was an accident in fact on King Georges Road one time because of not having the overpass over there. So I know that overpass was very important. I know the Women's Club had something to do with that getting the overpass put in so that kids could walk and could ride their bikes over to the Park.

Brenda Velasco: Yes, because it's right over.....

Irene Newman: It's right over the Parkway.

Brenda Velasco: And that way it gave accessibility to Fords people.

Irene Newman: Right and you see the parks, my children played ball there. I spent a lot of time in Fords Park. All three of them played ball. My husband was a coach and a manager and their mother was everything else. We helped out at the refreshment stand and helped clean up all the stuff over there. It was quite interesting. I spent nine years going back and forth.

Brenda Velasco: When you have three kids you weren't ever going to finish.

Irene Newman: And my daughter played softball. So it was quite interesting.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, we mentioned about the firehouse. That was on Corielle Street.

Irene Newman: Right, trust me I know that was there a long time because when I would take a walk with the kids we never wanted to be in front of the firehouse because the whistle would blow very loud.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, and then the schools because you went to Our Lady of Peace School.

Irene Newman: There was No. 7 School on King Georges Road. Then Fords Middle School was introduced (1960). My daughter, who is my third child, she went there. The other two both went to St. Mary's for a year and then my son switched over to Woodbridge High, one of them.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, when you say St. Mary's.....

Irene Newman: St. Mary's in Perth Amboy. I graduated from St. Mary's in Perth Amboy. My older son, Robert, also graduated from St. Mary's. I was president of the PTA in St. Mary's. Nobody else wanted to take that job.

Brenda Velasco: You were an involved person whether it was the Fords Woman's Club or sports or the schools. They got you hooked. Again, now did they have bus service to St. Mary's?

Irene Newman: Yes, it was public transportation. I had to go by bus or I had to walk either there or home. I'd say it was either the 82, the 4 or the 6 Bus. Those were my choices to come home.

Brenda Velasco: You had quite a few bus routes.

Irene Newman: Well, the 4 and 6 Bus were pretty much the ones but the 82 would also come to a certain point and we'd have to walk from that point.

Brenda Velasco: Now how frequently did these buses run, every hour, every two hours, every half hour?

Irene Newman: I believe it was every half hour if you were lucky. Like I say my older son went by bus there also and my middle child, Paul, he went there for a year also. Then he transferred to Woodbridge High School. It was not for financial reasons it was because he wanted to be an architect and they had mechanical drawing and I wanted him to get the best advantage that he could get.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, they had a wider selection of courses at the public school in contrast to St. Mary's.

Irene Newman: Right and then my daughter also went to Fords Middle School and then she went on to Woodbridge High and she graduated from Woodbridge High.

6. What did you do for recreation?

Irene Newman: Well when I was growing up my mother was told by her doctor to go out and go to the movies as much as you can. Get your mind off of whatever you have to worry about because she lost two children and a husband all in the same month and the same year and she still had me to raise. I can't imagine all that but what are you going to do. That was the way it was. We went to the movies on Sunday afternoons and there was also a Hungarian show that they would have because the owner of the Fords Theatre, Mr. Lang, he was also from the Hungarian part of that area so he used to have Hungarian movies there. So she would go, I don't remember what day, maybe it was Tuesday afternoons, something like that, and there were dishes that they gave out and glasses and glassware. It was interesting.

Brenda Velasco: Do you remember how much it cost?

Irene Newman: I don't think it was more than a dime. It couldn't have been more than twenty-five cents to get in, I doubt it.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, so you could get all your plates and glasses there.

Irene Newman: Yes, it was really something. She had them for years, I know.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, was there anything else you did for recreation growing up?

Irene Newman: We rode bikes, we played ball and we walked the whole town. We would walk to Roosevelt Park and we'd walk to Fords Park. We weren't allowed to go too far but, you know, the town was it.

Brenda Velasco: Well, Roosevelt Park, that was already in Edison.

Irene Newman: Yes.

Brenda Velasco: Along Route #1.

Irene Newman: But we walked, you know, the back streets. We all knew where to walk from Ford Avenue. We'd go down one of the streets off of the first part of Ford Avenue and go towards, what was the name of that street? I'll remember it as I go along. We made up games. We would go to each other houses and make games up.

Brenda Velasco: Do you recall any of the games?

Irene Newman: Giant steps and the one that you hit the ball against the building, what do you call that?

Brenda Velasco: Not dodge ball.

Irene Newman: Not dodge ball, no. Three Fly's Up, I think. I remember more than I thought.

Brenda Velasco: You're doing good. Did you have any picnic areas that you went to?

Irene Newman: Oh, yes. There was a picnic area off of Ford Avenue and we'd meet a lot of people there.

Brenda Velasco: Do you recall, was it a grove or something?

Irene Newman: Yes, the owner of Lynwood Grove owned that also. It's the name of the street right over the bridge off of Ford Avenue. Whatever the name of that street is that's the name of the grove.

Brenda Velasco: Varady?

Irene Newman: Varady, Varady's Grove, yes.

Brenda Velasco: And he also owned the Lynwood Grove.

Irene Newman: Yes, he did.

Brenda Velasco: Was that in Fords too?

Irene Newman: No.

Brenda Velasco: Was that in Perth Amboy then?

Irene Newman: No, that was Edison somewhere. I didn't go to that one too much but I went to Varady's Grove all the time. That's where we met. We would have picnics almost every Sunday during the summer and everybody would meet there and dance. It would be great. We had the **Katz's Ice Cream Parlor**. Everybody went there. We had lemon phosphate there which was absolutely delicious.

Brenda Velasco: Was that a drink or ice cream?

Irene Newman: It was just a drink. It was a fizzy soda. I don't know what the concoction was because I could never reproduce it. It was quite popular and for me, I was also in the church choir so I spent a lot of time doing that.

Brenda Velasco: A lot of practices.

Irene Newman: Yes, but I liked it a lot. I like to sing so I liked it a lot.

Brenda Velasco: So you were busy as a young person and we know you're busy as an adult. We just established that with your various roles as mother and PTA and sports. Is there anything else you want to add for question six?

Irene Newman: No, I think I did everything.

Brenda Velasco: I think you did.

7. What was the focal point of your community at that time?

Irene Newman: There was **Lopez Restaurant** right on New Brunswick Avenue right where the Chinese place is now. We'd go to church, a lot of people would go to church, meet there for breakfast, they seemed to kind of get together over there, and have breakfast or a cup of coffee. It was kind of neat. I know the theatre was quite popular and there was a bowling alley on New Brunswick Avenue. I wasn't a bowler but a lot of kids were and their parents were, so I knew a lot of people that did bowl.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, so this was in Fords?

Irene Newman: Right on New Brunswick Avenue, yes.

Brenda Velasco: So you had **Lopez's Restaurant** on New Brunswick Avenue and you had the theatre right on New Brunswick Avenue so New Brunswick Avenue was really the place.

Irene Newman: Yes, there were two hardware stores, **Thompson's** and **Ford's Hardware** and there was another one on King Georges Road which was also a hardware store.

Brenda Velasco: So this was the main artery.

Irene Newman: Right, everybody went there and the bowling alley was very, very popular. We'd go and meet there. The kids would just go and meet there even if you didn't bowl you would meet there anyway. We don't have anything like that right now. That's too bad. Kids need to go somewhere.

Brenda Velasco: Yes, out of the house but where it could still be somewhat supervised.

Irene Newman: Yes.

8. What did you like about living in your section of Woodbridge?

Brenda Velasco: Because you keep on going back to Fords.

Irene Newman: Well everybody knew everybody. Somehow you knew who these people were - by sight or we belonged to the same ball clubs or the same schools or the churches. We had yard sales. Everybody had a yard sale and everybody would come to all the neighbors just to support them and help out somehow. For many years I had yard sales and everybody would say, oh I'm so glad you're having a yard sale today and come to see it. I think our churches and our schools and the areas to eat and gather, people would gather. It was very important at that time I think.

Brenda Velasco: You had a community.

Irene Newman: Yes.

Brenda Velasco: And you felt it and people knew it was a community.

Irene Newman: Yes, very much so.

9. Did you experience any significant happenings in Woodbridge-construction, accidents, sports events, riots, discrimination, etc.

Irene Newman: When 287 opened King Georges Road became congested (early '60s). When Raritan Center became active there was also more traffic. On King Georges Road we used to have an accident weekly by that so called light that was by Max Wagner. But sports events and parades for baseball were always around which was good.

Brenda Velasco: And when they had the parade where did they have the parade in Fords?

Irene Newman: It would start from actually the Edison area and go through King George Road and go up to Fords Park. So it would go from one field to the other field. It was called the Fords/Clara Barton Baseball League. I was a team mother and all that stuff. King Georges Road would be the street that they would go up.

Brenda Velasco: Rather than New Brunswick Avenue.

Irene Newman: Yes, I don't know exactly why. Maybe less time to walk, I don't know.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, so when we mentioned construction you felt 287 and then the buildup of Raritan Arsenal increased the traffic and congestion.

Irene Newman: Oh, a great deal.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, were there any other forms of construction?

Irene Newman: Forms of construction?

Brenda Velasco: In Fords?

Irene Newman: Other than the sewers or all that stuff? I would say it was clean other than when there was construction going on.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, how about accidents, did you have any major accidents?

Irene Newman: Yes, someone was killed next door to me.

Brenda Velasco: Oh my gosh!

Irene Newman: Someone hit into my house one time.

Brenda Velasco: They hit your house?

Irene Newman: Into my house.

Brenda Velasco: This was on King Georges Road?

Irene Newman: Yes, this person was coming along and went up the hill next door to me, which isn't a big hill right know, but anyhow it was a hill then, hit their porch, went around, and hit my house.

Brenda Velasco: And your house suffered damage?

Irene Newman: Oh, yes. My mother was in that room, in the bedroom.

Brenda Velasco: Was anybody hurt too?

Irene Newman: He wasn't, he was inebriated. It was the son of a landscaper that lived on our street near No. 7 School, his son. He was very apologetic but many years later I had much to do with my house because my house caved in a little bit. I had to have a lot of work done because of it. It made a crack in my wall.

Brenda Velasco: And your mom, she was okay?

Irene Newman: She was okay but it was unfortunate that that had to happen.

Brenda Velasco: Yes, so King Georges Road was one area where there were a lot of accidents then.

Irene Newman: There was an accident and this other fellow came along in one of those small little cars, I don't know what they're called, but he came around the curve over there after **Fords Lawnmower**, I worked for **Fords Lawnmower** for a long time also, it was owned by my friend. That's another thing that was there for many years, **Fords Lawnmower** has been there. She owned the business for thirty some years.

Brenda Velasco: What was her last name?

Irene Newman: Gibson, Josephine Gibson.

Brenda Velasco: Okay.

Irene Newman: She and I grew up together.

Brenda Velasco: I know people throughout the township go to **Fords Lawnmower** to get it fixed.

Irene Newman: She doesn't own it any longer.

Brenda Velasco: But it's still **Fords Lawnmower**.

Irene Newman: Yes, and the bend after that, there used to be so man, that's why those guardrails are up there because of that. But we haven't had one in a long time and don't know why.

Brenda Velasco: Then if there's nothing else to add to that subject let's go on to the next question. Are we ready for question ten?

Irene Newman: Yes.

10. What do you like about Woodbridge today?

Brenda Velasco: Or Fords because you're still living there.

Irene Newman: It's clean. It's nice to drive down to Main Street. It's a nice area. Everything is well taken care of. We have **Wegmans** and we have Woodbridge Center Drive. It's very easy accessibility to these areas. As a driver for many years, I find it easy to get around. I think that this Tooling Around Woodbridge has done a great deal for people, so I might ask for their help sometime in the future.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, and this is a program for seniors or those who are disabled on a limited income but it keeps the maintenance of the house in the neighborhood.

Irene Newman: Right, which is what is needed.

Brenda Velasco: Yes, and it also gets the neighbors involved because we just had a house done on South Maple or East Maple in Fords and the seventy year old neighbor was up on the roof helping. It's amazing how it gets people together.

Irene Newman: My garage roof needs to be done and my son can't do it anymore. He hurt his back so I'm going to have to have somebody help me with that. But I think keeping it neat and clean when riding down, I rode up to Montclair to my son's recently and coming back I have to look and see, what do I see here that's convenient. Don't forget, I come off the Parkway right onto my street.

Brenda Velasco: Yes you do. King Georges Road. You have a couple of exits from the Parkway for Fords. So you have King Georges Road or New Brunswick Avenue and you also have the Route #9, which is probably Hopelawn, but you have easy access to you major arteries in Fords.

Irene Newman: Yes, we do which is a good thing.

Brenda Velasco: Yes, but then it also has traffic.

Irene Newman: I had spent many times outside doing my weeding and I will say every time I'm outside I'd get asked for directions to go to either Woodbridge Center or how do I get to Middlesex College, a lot. But that's okay. I try to be nice because we want people to like our town.

Brenda Velasco: Yes, and it's a great town to live in.

11. Do you have family members still living in Woodbridge?

Irene Newman: Yes, my niece lives on Hanson Avenue.

Brenda Velasco: And all your children have moved out.

Irene Newman: Yes, they lived there a long time. I had my daughter and my one son live there for quite a long time after my husband died.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, is there anything else that you want to mention for the interview or that we failed to include?

Irene Newman: I personally, I guess this is in addition to number nine, I would like to see more stores on New Brunswick Avenue occupied. Like a ice cream parlor similar to the one in Metuchen like **What's My Scoop**. Because I have taken my granddaughter, who is fifteen going on fifty, they go and they hang out there. It's also like a pizza selling place too and then you can have a party there. I mean, all the kids hang out there and not just the kids, the adults, I was sitting there having ice cream too with my friend when I was going to pick her up. There were benches out there and it was just great.

Brenda Velasco: Okay, make it more accessible to pedestrians - inviting.

Irene Newman: Yes, exactly.

Brenda Velasco: Our current mayor is looking at that.

Irene Newman: They don't have too much parking either. When you go down one of the little lanes in back of **What's My Scoop**, you can go in the backdoor to **What's My Scoop** and go in that way. I mean, there's a lot of stuff going on in Metuchen. We could have the same thing.

Brenda Velasco: And you have that memory of New Brunswick Avenue as a very vibrant shopping center and hopefully it will come back.

Irene Newman: Yes, it was great. Kids can meet, hang out and spend money.

Brenda Velasco: Their parent's money.

Irene Newman: The old cinema needs to be knocked down, I think, for parking. We don't need that old cinema or else put something there that's a little bit, I don't know, getting people all times of the day. The café on King Georges Road and **Villa Borghese** I think have been very good for our town. The café on King Georges Road has been a very congenial place to meet. A lot of senior citizens go there. I meet them all the time because I bring a lot of them there. **Villa Borghese** is a nice place to eat.

Brenda Velasco: Agreed.

Irene Newman: And **Fords Jewelers** has been very, very helpful because with his advertisements all the people come there for jewelry, not just people from Fords but all over.

Brenda Velasco: No, that is statewide.

Irene Newman: On King George Road right across the street from me on the corner there is that professional building there, the **Arianne Hair Salon** is there. That is owned by Jon Bon Jovi's father that building. My kids used to play ball on that field. We have several hair salons in Fords also. I happen to like that one.

Brenda Velasco: Most women do.

Irene Newman: Because I walk across the street and it's right there.

Brenda Velasco: Alright, so what you'd really like then to include is a more pedestrian friendly.....

Irene Neman: Yes, exactly.

Brenda Velasco: Alright, very good. Anything else? If not, I think you covered all bases.

Irene Newman: I don't think there is anything else.

Brenda Velasco: If there is you just give me a call or write it down and mail it to me and we will include it. I thank you very much, Irene Newman, for finding the time and sitting and I'm very glad Fran Brown recommended (you).

Irene Newman: This has been a very great opportunity for me. Thank you very much for letting me share this.

Brenda Velasco: I enjoyed it very much.

Irene Newman: Thank you very much.

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After the formal interview concluded, Irene Newman recalled other stores located in Fords:

Ann's Grocery Store, corner of Egan and King Georges Road;

Martiak Confectionary Store, the corner of 3rd Street and King Georges Road;
a bar owned by MaryAnn Chirico, the corner of New Brunswick Avenue and Crows
Mill Road (now the **Lemon Tree**);
and the **Liberty Tavern** whose owner was Helen and Gerald Bertekap.