

## Oral History Interview

Kurt M. Adams

WH099

(Written transcript and digital audio)

On February 4, 2012, Kurt M. Adams was interviewed by Brenda Velasco at the Henry Inman Library around 10:30 A.M.

*Brenda Velasco:* I'm here with Kurt Adams, from Colonia, who's ancestry goes way back, back to even Sewaren. But we're going to concentrate on Kurt's life and then the other stories he'll fill me in on.

### *1. Identify individual-name, section date of birth.*

*Kurt M. Adams:* My name is Kurt Adams. I've lived in Colonia, on Dover Road, for fifty-three years. (145 Dover Road)

### *2. How long have you lived in Port Reading?*

*Kurt M. Adams:* I was born and grew up in the same house I still live in which was my parent's house. My parents originally lived in the house next door when they first came to Colonia and then as my mom kept having kids they needed a bigger house so we moved one over.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, so if you were born in 1958 you've seen changes in Colonia.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Oh, absolutely. With the information age and everything I'm the last of the small town Woodbridge generation when a kid could actually.....like I used to ride my bicycle to Sewaren. You couldn't do that today because of the highways. The roads were a lot less traveled. I have family Super 8 films of Chain O' Hills Road as a dirt road with the kids playing on the front lawn.

*Brenda Velasco:* Wow!

*Kurt M. Adams:* So the town has changed quite a bit.

*Brenda Velasco:* That's why I'm interviewing you.

*Kurt M. Adams:* I think that it drastically changed in the last fifty years.

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

*Brenda Velasco:* Now your father was originally from Sewaren.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Yes, he was.

*Brenda Velasco:* And your father was also the mayor at one time.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Yes, in 1960. In Sewaren, on the corner of Brewster and West Avenues, there's a three story home which was built by my great-grandfather and designed by my grandfather who was an architect from the **McKim Mead & White Architectural Firm** in New York City. They came here as a result of my grandfather working for **McKim & White**. The Pennsylvania Railroad built all new train stations and my grandfather was the lead architect on all that. As a matter of fact, he was the lead architect on the old Penn Station in New York City which **McKim** won. But he got to know the president of the Central Jersey Railroad who told him about Sewaren and Boynton and how easy it was to commute from Sewaren to New York City. At that time Sewaren had a train station that you could take directly into New York, at least Hoboken anyway because the tunnels weren't there yet at that time. But as a

result my grandparents moved here and built a house on the corner of Brewster and West Avenues and that's where my father was born and my aunt and uncle.

*Brenda Velasco:* Alright, so it wasn't your great-grandfather who lived in Sewaren?

*Kurt M. Adams:* No, it was my grandfather.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay and where did your great-grandfather come from?

*Kurt M. Adams:* My great-grandfather lived in New York City in Manhattan.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, the big city, and then your grandfather chose to come to Sewaren because of the popularity and the location?

*Kurt M. Adams:* Well, he worked in New York City. Like I said he worked for **McKim & White**. They were a very big architectural firm that did a lot of historic buildings. You know the **Arlington National Bridge** in Washington; a lot of big famous buildings. It was good for him because he wanted to get out of the city because they wanted to have children. At the turn of the century, back in 1900, New York City was pretty rough. You know the gangs and stuff like that so they wanted to get out into the country and believe me when they came to Woodbridge it was country.

*Brenda Velasco:* And they settled in Sewaren.

*Kurt M. Adams:* In Sewaren. They built the house and then moved here.

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

*Brenda Velasco:* We're going to concentrate with you on Colonia for Question #4.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Some people know and some people don't know that Chain O' Hills Road is actually one of the oldest roads in New Jersey. When the first settlers came in they referred to it as the Indian Trail and then later as the Old Dutch Trail and then became Cedar Road and then Queen Anne's Road and finally Chain O' Hills Road. I lived right near the corner of Chain O' Hills Road. There's a group of Tudor homes there which actually aren't Tudors at all. Most people believe they are but they're actually French. The name of the neighborhood was originally called the Normandy Group and they were designed by Mont Pattison who was Molly Pattison's either husband or son, I'm not sure, who had something big to do with the Princeton Chapel, those houses right there. Everybody knows the houses because they're kind of unique.

*Brenda Velasco:* Oh, they're distinct.

*Kurt M. Adams:* And it was originally the property of Dr. Albee. He owned all the property in the area and Dr. Albee, with Mont Pattison and a builder named Thaler, worked together to build the houses. Albee put up the property while Pattison did the design and Thaler did the building. The person that lived next door to me, when I was growing up, was a man named Mr. Tramberg. Mr. Tramberg was the original owner of the house; he bought it brand new. He told me a story that he and his wife Julie went to the 1930s World's Fair in New York City. There was an architecture show there and the house that they lived in, which was on the corner of West Hill and Dover, there's a brick house right on the corner, it was a model at the World's Fair. They were from Woodbridge, they lived in Woodbridge, and they walked through the house at the World's Fair and didn't like it. About a year or two later they were here in Woodbridge and they heard that the house had been built in Colonia so they took a

drive over and walked through it again and for some reason they liked where it was so they bought it.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay and this was Mr. Tramberg?

*Kurt M. Adams:* This was Mr. Tramberg, Julie and Ted Tramberg. Other things that changed, well I know I mentioned Sucker Brook in my notes. Sucker Brook is the stream that runs behind the little old library. That stream, when I was a kid, was a lot different than it is now. It was channelized in the late '70s because of flooding. As a matter of fact as a youngster I remember getting paid to tie people's cars to telephone poles on Maplewood Avenue so they wouldn't float away. But we used to fish in that stream. It was stocked every year with trout. We used to swim in it and we used to ice skate on it. You used to be able to ice skate all the way to Roosevelt Park on it.

(Sucker Brook is part of the South Branch of the Rahway River)

*Brenda Velasco:* Wow!

*Kurt M. Adams:* There were a lot more woods back then as well.

*Brenda Velasco:* We didn't have the developments back then.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Exactly. The developments are pretty much what caused the flooding. My brother, who was older than me, used to go hunting in Merrill Park. If you want to go back in history, where the little library is right behind it, the Chain O' Hills Road library which was where the Bishop's Mill was, it was the original proprietor of Woodbridge (Colonia). There's a millstone now sitting behind the library which we moved back in the eighties from the Albee estate because we wanted to preserve it. Behind the library, it was merely known as Pinkham's Rapids. Mrs. Pinkham was a school teacher in Woodbridge. I don't know if she was a full time school teacher or part time substitute teacher. But anyway, she lived right there which was, I think, one of the oldest houses in Woodbridge Township dating back to the late 1600s.

*Brenda Velasco:* Is it still there?

*Kurt M. Adams:* No, it burned down. There's a development where the property was now. Mill Street is there now. The rapids, what we called Pinkham's Rapids were there because when the Bishops built the dam for the mill, and being interested in mills I researched this, in the 1890s they knocked down all the dams down because of the mosquito population. But some of the stones that were in walls were left in the stream and some went up to the West Hill Road around the Albee Estate which makes up the wall on West Hill Road. There's an old stone wall that borders New Dover Road and it goes half way down West Hill Road. They took the stones from the creek up the hill because Dr. Albee, at that time, owned most of the property where the library was and everything else and they built that wall around his estate. The Albee Estate that is something else I can talk about. When I was a little kid the Albee Estate was still there. Dr. Albee lived there when my parents were originally there and my mom used to tell me about how difficult it was to play the pipe organ in the Albee house because it had the delay so you had to kind of play through it. But when I was real small Dr. Fredericks had just purchased it, George Fredericks, Fredericks Plaza over at the health center.

*Brenda Velasco:* Right, the health center right by the high school, Dr. George Fredericks.

*Kurt M. Adams:* He lived there and it was wonderful; it was unbelievable. Where Coral Court is now there were greenhouses on the back of the Albee Estate and that whole hill there is crisscrossed with springs. Water used to bubble up through the ground and into the greenhouse and then made a little stream that went down the center where Coral Court is towards the end of the road. Of course, Coral Court wasn't there at that time. It was all fields and there's an area there that they called the gully. It was a wooded area between East Cliff Road and West Hill Road. If you walk down there, there's a white wall. I don't think anybody knows what the white wall is but I know.

*Brenda Velasco:* Well you're going to tell us.

*Kurt M. Adams:* That stream, where Coral Court was, used to fall off the cliff down into a swimming pool at the bottom of the hill. At the end of Dover Road, if you go all the way up Dover Road to the dead end, there used to be steps going down into the gully. At the bottom was a footbridge that went across the stream. There was a gazebo and a row of swings. It was really a wonderland.

*Brenda Velasco:* You grew up in a unique time for Colonia.

*Kurt M. Adams:* I was very lucky. It's sad that it's been so built up because like there are eight houses now where the one Albee house used to be and the Nadler house used to be. There were two huge mansions on the top of Dover Road when I was a child. At the bottom of Dover Road there were two huge square stone fillers with rings on it for a chain that could be put across the road. It was his driveway at one time.

*Brenda Velasco:* So this change came about in the 1950s?

*Kurt M. Adams:* When the Albee Estate was torn down?

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Kurt M. Adams:* No, the Albee Estate wasn't torn down until the '80s.

*Brenda Velasco:* 1980?

*Kurt M. Adams:* No '86 or '87, somewhere around there. Same thing with the Nadler House, I think it went probably about 1991 or 1992. Obviously Coral Court was built in the '60s, mid-'60s I would say. That's when the swimming pool went and everything was deteriorating because Dr. Fredericks, at that time, wanted to turn the Albee Estate into a convalescent home. The people in the neighborhood fought him so he went elsewhere. He sold the house to St. John Vianney. It was the convent.

*Brenda Velasco:* Right, it was the convent for a while.

*Kurt M. Adams:* It was the convent for St. John Vianney for many years. Being a child there were a lot more woods then. I remember all the children from the hills. The hills were like Midfield, East Cliff, upper Dover Road and Colonia Place. They were on one side and we were on the other and we used to play army in the gully. Kids don't play army anymore; kids don't play outside anymore. They play with computer inside.

*Brenda Velasco:* Unfortunately.

*Kurt M. Adams:* There were no computers, there was only like a half dozen TV stations when I was young so we played outside all the time. But I can remember hundreds of children just down in that gully in the woods and running around down in the stream fishing and swimming. We used to swim in the creek too.

*Brenda Velasco:* Alright, so you also fished.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Oh yes, not in the gully in Sucker's Brook. It was stocked by the county or the state, I don't know. Every year in Merrill Park, there used to be a pond in Merrill Park, in the winter time when the ice was safe they would put a red ball up; they used to put up a sign with a big red ball on it. They used to have ice skating on the pond. There would be a police officer there and they'd have a 55 gallon drum with a fire going on it. It was like a community group; everybody went there.

*Brenda Velasco:* Where in Merrill Park was it? Was it in the oval or.....

*Kurt M. Adams:* No, the pond was down where the zoo area was that parking lot, it was down there. Probably half of that parking lot is where the pond was. But from that bridge, the footbridge goes across towards Pleasant Avenue and from the outer side of the parking lot, it wasn't a big pond I mean it was a small pond, but I mean there would be hundreds of people on it.

*Brenda Velasco:* Having a good time.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Oh, yeah. Like I said we used to ice skate all the way down there. There was a branch of the creek that went behind School No. 18 and you could go up towards Westbury, it was like a highway for kids.

*Brenda Velasco:* Not anymore. Except we did purchase through Green Acres to try and keep it opened so that's good.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Yeah, you purchased what was known as the pony tracks.

*Brenda Velasco:* Right.

*Kurt M. Adams:* That's what everybody called them.

*Brenda Velasco:* Because they had pony races there, right, and that was Joe Miele that was involved with that.

*Kurt M. Adams:* On a side note a lot of people don't know how Iselin got its name. Back in the 1800s, there was a gentleman named Adrian Iselin who owned the Adrian Institute for Girls which was a high class girl's boarding school for fine women from New York City. What happened was he put up a sign at the Iselin train station, which was then Uniontown, which just said Iselin so that the people coming from New York would know where to get off the train.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, so eventually that name is adopted.

*Kurt M. Adams:* The post office wanted to get rid of all the Unions in New Jersey. There were so many Unions in New Jersey and that's how Iselin became Iselin, Uniontown. Well Colonia was Houghtenville at that time.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes, and they had their own train stop.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Absolutely, I remember the train station. As a kid I used to play with Kenny Perrine, I remember his name; his father was the station master there. See back then the post office was on Morton Avenue right across from the train station. Where I'm speaking of is down near the American Legion that's underneath the bridge next to the train tracks near the Route 27 Bridge.

*Brenda Velasco:* It's down below the overpass.

*Kurt M. Adams:* If you go down Fairview Avenue and make the first right there's a one way. If you go down that one way on the left hand side just before Middlesex Turnpike is a strange building. I think there's a printer or something in there now but there used to be two businesses in there. One side was the post office and the other side was known as the post store. It was a little soda fountain and they sold soda and

ice cream and stuff like that. I remember when I was little I used to go there. My father would give me twenty-six cents and I'd walk down there and get a double dip ice cream cone. As a matter of fact my first job that I ever had, I was about seven years old, Bernie the owner of the post store gave me a job dusting off his stock in his store, I dropped a six pack of coke which was in bottles at that time and they broke and I cried and ran home.

*Brenda Velasco:* Do you remember how much coke went for?

*Kurt M. Adams:* I have no idea.

*Brenda Velasco:* And those were the seven or.....

*Kurt M. Adams:* No, they were the returnable bottles. I remember scrounging around town for the bottles to return them so we can get money.

*Brenda Velasco:* Those days are long gone.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Yeah, but back then all the kids that played Little League in the park after the games would stampede down to the post store. All the kids would crush in there. But when they moved the post office over to this side again it was a tiny little building because Colonia was a small town back then. They needed a bigger post office obviously. When they moved it to this side of town the post store went under. Back then the soda fountains were like a meeting place for all the children. We had three that we could choose from. We had a post store which was on Morton Street and Middlesex Avenue and then we had **Charlie's Sugar Bowl** which was on the corner of St. Georges Avenue and Avenel Street where the bank is now. Charlie and his wife really catered to the kids. He had model airplanes suspended from the ceiling of his store that all the kids made. All the kids would make models back then and they were all suspended from the ceiling in the store. When you went in there the kid's names were on them. Then there was **Herbie Steins**. Herbie owned the St. Georges Avenue which was located between Colonia Place and Dover Road on St. Georges Avenue which was a strip mall kind of place. He was there forever. He was the one that lasted the longest. Herbie knew all of us and he would yell at us and scream at us but he watched out for us. I mean I remember when I went to School No. 2 and School No. 16 as an elementary school, and back then we would get released for lunch and we'd walk home for lunch. Very often my mother would give me a dollar and tell me to go to Herbie's and I'd walk through the gully up Dover Road to go to Herbie's and get a hamburger for thirty cents. But if a kid didn't have any money Herbie would give it to them on credit. He was just the guy everybody knew. As a matter of fact, when he retired they gave him a big banquet.

*Brenda Velasco:* What was his last name?

*Kurt M. Adams:* Herbie, Herbie Stein.

*Brenda Velasco:* Herbie Stein.

*Kurt M. Adams:* If you talk to anybody that grew up in that whole neighborhood up there everybody knew Herbie.

*Brenda Velasco:* And they had a lot of soda fountains at that time because the kids went to it and used it. Now you have the vending machines in the school and that has eliminated all those little stores.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Well these were the old times and stuff. I mean you can't even get that now. They used to have lime rickies and cherry rickies and milk shakes. That was the time when they used to pump the syrup in first and then put the seltzer in. Of

course there were no **Carvels** or anything like that. I mean **Dairy Maid** was there and it was originally a **Carvel** but that was too far away for us to walk. Like **Charlie's Sugar Bowl**, Charlie and his wife, they didn't really serve as much food as Herbie did. Herbie would serve food and stuff like that. We used to joke with Herbie that when you had his chicken soup you had a big teabag he put the chicken in to make the soup. He would laugh; he was a really nice guy. Later on he sold out and then other people came in like Don Negri, he was the head custodian of School No. 1 for a number of years. Eric Holmes owned it for awhile and then.....

*Brenda Velasco:* Joe Perricone's parents?

*Kurt M. Adams:* Yeah, the Perricone's from Water Street: Margaret and Joe.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, houses of worship. We've gone up in Colonia, Mom and Pop stores, where did your mom do her main shopping then?

*Kurt M. Adams:* My mother had five children, how she survived that I don't know, but she had five children. Back then the main supermarket where we lived was the **Food Fair** on Route 27. That was down near **Bell Ford**, I think there's a health club in the building now. That was a food store originally. She also used **Ray's Market** in Woodbridge who delivered. He had young guys with cars that would bring the food to the house. We also had the **Dugan** bread man and we had the milk delivery too, I remember those trucks. We had the old metal milk box sitting out in the front. The milk would have the cream going up to the top with the cardboard cap on the bottle.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, because you were sort of isolated. It wasn't like living in Woodbridge Proper where you had.....

*Kurt M. Adams:* No, no, no. As a matter of fact Colonia, I think, gravitated more towards Rahway back then because I remember when I was going to school we always had to go to Mark Harris in Rahway to get my first day of school clothes or we would go to Plainfield, I think it was a **Steinbach's**, we would go there. We went to Menlo, too. Menlo Mall at that time was new there. (Menlo Park opened as an open air mall in 1959)

*Brenda Velasco:* Right, that was in the late '50s correct?

*Kurt M. Adams:* Early '60s because I remember walking. We used to go see Santa there.

##### **5. What public buildings/property were there? Post office, library, parks, firehouse, schools, etc.?**

*Brenda Velasco:* We're going to get to some of the public buildings now. You mentioned the post office; the library was very close to you then.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Yes, I could tell you the story of the library. That library came about because of a group called *the Colonia Junto* which back in the 1910s or '20s was a civic organization run by the Cones, the Albees and the Pattersons and that wanted to build a library. There was a lady that lived on West Hill Road in the old Albee house at that point. When the Albees built their house it was an old farmhouse. It was located on West Hill Road. It's actually the second house on West Hill Road after you make a right from Dover Road. It's actually behind where I live. If I look out my back window I see the house. The Stephensons live there now. A lady named Soul lived there. Mrs. Soul was an elderly lady who loved books. Again

I wasn't alive at this point; these were stories in the neighborhood. Mrs. Soul would walk around the neighborhood and give people books because she thought maybe they needed them. Colonia, at that time, was in need of something civic because everybody would meet in somebody's house and they wanted a library. So they grouped together and privately raised money. Dr. Albee noted the land to the Colonia Library and they raised money to build the building. As the building was being built they ran into problems and stuff like that so they started to use materials. The bricks in the Colonia Library, they were orange bricks, were from a house called Neath Oak where Tanglewood Lane and Longfellow Road are. It was torn down at that time when they were building the library. Legend has it that the bricks were originally made for Neath Oak up off of Wood Avenue near New Dover Road. They were homemade bricks so they were secondhand brick and were like very old. So that library was built. There used to be a really nice fireplace in the back. I remember the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, everybody, used to meet there. All during my school years I did all of my research there and everything-plus we didn't have computers back then you've got to remember. That's where we went for the encyclopedias and stuff. It was a library like the Inman Branch where we're sitting. I was very sad to see it close. However the fact that it's being used for community business, you know. Are the Iselin Giants in there? (Iselin Giants)

*Brenda Velasco:* Iselin Pop Warner or Iselin Giants?

*Kurt M. Adams:* It's still being used for the intended usage.

*Brenda Velasco:* It's a civic.....

*Kurt M. Adams:* But I don't think the town has clear title to it because it was never a municipal building.

*Brenda Velasco:* It was privately owned.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Similar like the Sewaren library it was a privately built library but then again I don't know.

*Brenda Velasco:* Also at the same time they approved what was known then as the Memorial Historic Triangle on Chain O' Hills and Dover Road. Prior to it being the way it is now, it had huge trees on it. It had evergreen trees on it, it was all slate and it had a memorial stone. Back in the late '80s, '86 I'd say, I led the effort to preserve it because the county wanted to come in and put in concrete dividers. So I started a petition drive for people in the neighborhood and got, I don't know six or seven hundred names, I really don't remember how many names, to save the triangle because it was dedicated to veterans. With the help of the Colonia American Legion, we got the county to do it up nice and rededicate it to all wars. Originally it was just dedicated to World War I and World War II so it was rededicated to all wars plus Armed Services, nurses. It's still there today. It's a little different than it was.

*Brenda Velasco:* The traffic pattern is much safer now.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Yes, there were a lot of accidents back then; nobody denied that. It was just that we tried cutting down the trees, we tried all different things, but it didn't work. The original plan was for the county to actually get rid of the whole thing and put in concrete dividers and take the memorial rock which says Memorial Historical Triangle and put it behind the library. It was going to be a monstrosity similar to what they did to the creek when they channelized it. It was like a highway going through



town. I mean, granted, things are sometimes needed but how you do it could be a little nicer. You know it doesn't have to be concrete blocks.

*Brenda Velasco:* And it's nicely maintained by the American Legion.

*Kurt M. Adams:* To this day, the Sons of the American Legion maintain it and they do a very good job. Mr. Wagner is the lead on that and every year he's down there and I talk to him.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, let's go to schools for you.

*Kurt M. Adams:* I went to No. 2 and No. 16 in Colonia which is between Fairview Avenue and Outlook Avenue.

*Brenda Velasco:* And you could walk that.

*Kurt M. Adams:* I used to walk to school every morning or ride my bicycle. You were allowed to ride your bicycle, too. We had bicycle stands and all the kids from the whole area, all the way up to St. Georges Avenue, went to that school. I remember back then there was one bus that serviced the school. There were a lot more schools back then. I think during the '70s they sold off a lot of the schools so there wasn't as much busing back then; there were more neighborhood schools. But I remember one of the things that always made me laugh. Mary Mullen was the principal and I remember being a little kid and I was so scared of her; I was just terrified of this lady. She was big and mean, you know, to me and years later I went with my father and we visited her down in Toms River and she was this tiny little sweet woman. Your perception, when you're a child.....

*Brenda Velasco:* Is quite different.

*Kurt M. Adams:* But I remember going to School No. 2 there. It was old when I went there. They had a stage and for Father's Day there was a big Father's Day thing that we used to put on the stage and all the kids would participate. We used to have a Halloween parade that went down Outlook Avenue and up New Dover Road. I mean you couldn't do that today because of the traffic. It was a very good place. It was a small town growing up back then.

*Brenda Velasco:* And that was when we had the population explosion too.

*Kurt M. Adams:* There were thirty-two to thirty-six kids in the classroom then.

*Brenda Velasco:* So you went there K through.....

*Kurt M. Adams:* K through 6, then the Iselin Junior High School. I didn't go to Kennedy because when my father died we had a shore house down in Mantoloking and when my father passed away my mother had too many bills with the house up here so she moved us down there for a number of years and I went to Bricktown High School.

*Brenda Velasco:* Which was huge, too, because that was experiencing another population explosion.

*Kurt M. Adams:* We were on split session. They only had one high school back then. I went to school from one o'clock in the afternoon until five o'clock at night which as a kid was wonderful because you didn't want to get up in the morning.

*Brenda Velasco:* That's right; that's how we have to look at it.

*Kurt M. Adams:* So we had bonfires on the beach every night back then when I was in high school.

*Brenda Velasco:* Different experience than Colonia.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Right, it was different but we came back. My mom never sold this house up here so we always had this house. It went from us going down to the shore house on weekends to check in to living at the shore house and coming up here on weekends to check this house. I mean the role got reversed.

### **6. What did you do for recreation?**

*Brenda Velasco:* Alright, for recreation you touched on it but you had so much going for you.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Oh, it was wonderful. Again back then we did a lot of bicycle riding. We used to ride our bicycles everywhere. Like I said before I used to ride my bicycle to Sewaren. I had a close friend by the name of Glenn and our routine was on Saturday mornings we'd get on our bicycles and ride down St. Georges Avenue to Freeman Street, go down Freeman Street, go down to my father's office which was on Rahway Avenue, my father was an attorney and his office was on Rahway Avenue, and we'd stop in and see my father. Just what my father wanted to see—two little screaming kids! So he'd give us a couple of dollars and then we'd go around to the soda fountain down the street there near sort of where **Pop's Place** is now and we'd have lunch. Then we'd get on our bicycles again and head out to Sewaren and we'd stop to see my grandmother who had the same scenario where she'd give us a bowl of ice cream or something like that and a couple of dollars to get rid of us. It was working the relatives.

*Brenda Velasco:* That was a smart way to do it.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Then we'd go down to the waterfront. You didn't go in the water during the '60s and '70s down there because there was so much industry and the Arthur Kill and the water was actually orange. But there was I think it was called Captain Jack's, the marina there right near St. John's Episcopal Church; we were members there. But Captain Jack's we would go down there and get a soda and then we'd walk down to the waterfront. Where the boat launch is now, there was the pilot house of a tugboat which was owned by the Sewaren Outboard Motorboat Club. We would play there and then we'd go down the beach and kick around horseshoe crabs and skip stones or whatever tickled our fancy back then. We had a lot of fun and then we went home. But there was so much more to do, really. Today everybody's playing computers and they've got their video games and all the texting. We didn't have any of that. My God, I remember when I was a little kid we didn't even have a colored TV; we had black and white with just a few channels.

*Brenda Velasco:* But you didn't miss anything either.

*Kurt M. Adams:* We were outside all the time. My mother used to have a saying, she'd open up the door in the morning and say go out and play in traffic.

*Brenda Velasco:* She had five kids and a sense of humor; she had to with five kids. Okay and you also could fish in Sucker Brook you said right?

*Kurt M. Adams:* Yeah. A lot of time was spent down along the creek. My mother used to say that there's been a bully down there for twenty years because that same bully must of pushed everyone of my kids in that creek. Because we'd all come home soak and wet and covered with mud and say the bully pushed us in.

*Brenda Velasco:* Five kids, were they all boys?

*Kurt M. Adams:* No, I have three sisters and a brother. Like I said I had three older sisters, I didn't go bald naturally it was ripped out by the roots.

*Brenda Velasco:* That's tough having three older sisters.

*Kurt M. Adams:* I was the youngest too, I had an older brother.

*Brenda Velasco:* Ah, you were the baby.

*Kurt M. Adams:* I got away with everything.

*Brenda Velasco:* Now we've gone over libraries, parks, and firehouses. For your area.....

*Kurt M. Adams:* Where we were was part of Avenel (Fire District). However my knowledge of the firehouse.....I was never big for the firemen. But my father, who was an attorney, did a lot of legal work for the firemen so he used to take.....my father took me a lot of places when I was a kid. He used to take me to the firehouses. I remember going to Avenel Firehouse, Woodbridge and Port Reading. I went to most of the firehouses because he did a lot of legal work for them.

*Brenda M. Adams:* Then eventually he was elected mayor, too.

*Kurt M. Adams:* No this was after he had been mayor. When he was mayor I was a babe in arms because that was in the late '60s. The thing about my father is in 1963 he was diagnosed with melanoma cancer and told he might have three years to live. He wound up living ten years so as a result of that, he spent a lot of time with his kids. Me being the youngest and still available he took me everywhere.

*Brenda Velasco:* That was great!

*Kurt M. Adams:* It was. I mean the Elks Club in Woodbridge I remember when it was a little house. It was just a little house and everybody was so excited because they had this key lock thing where you used a card to get in. I remember I met everybody because I was with my father all the time.

*Brenda Velasco:* You had a unique experience with your father then, you realize that.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Truly unique because, I mean my God I must have drove him crazy though. All the old names and faces like we went through this thing of people that you did the interviews on, I remember most of the names on there because I used to go everywhere with my father. I knew everybody. I still know a lot of people, the ones that are still lingering. I see people now and they talk about my dad and stuff like-oh I remember Port Warren. That was when Sewaren and Port Reading tried to secede from Woodbridge Township when my father was mayor and he said back then the Council meetings were unbelievable. They were the number one show in town. Everybody used to go to them; you couldn't get in the building. It was like a debating society in there. But the funny thing about it back then is everybody was friends.

You got to remember Port Warren was Sewaren and Port Reading trying to secede. My father was a Sewaren boy and he was mayor at the time and he was trying to stop it against his friends who were all from Sewaren and Port Reading; people he grew up with. But you know the funny part about it, they all remained friends all through it.

*Brenda Velasco:* In this day and age, it's so uncivil and personal.

*Kurt M. Adams:* I agree and I think a lot of the view I have towards political things is, like my father always said just because someone else's view is different doesn't make it bad. You have to respect everybody with what you do and it's true.

*Brenda Velasco:* That was a good lesson he taught you.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Everybody's got the same goal he said which was a better town. Back then there was the fight for the free school lanes which was where Gill Lane is, South Wood Avenue where all the high rises are. Gill Lane used to come out sort of where South Wood Avenue comes out to Route 27. When they built the Parkway, they cut the free school lanes in half and as a result they weren't really useable for schools anymore. So there was a big argument whether or not to sell the land outright or to lease it as a township owned industrial park for high rise buildings. High rise buildings wound up there anyway. I think they sold it in the end result.

*Brenda Velasco:* That was part of **Coppers Dairy Farm** too?

*Kurt M. Adams:* No, this was from where Gill Lane, where the cemetery is on Gill Lane, that whole cemetery all the way down if you follow it.....if you go down Gill Lane it makes a sharp right hand turn at the bottom of the hill if you're taking it to Route 1, if you look in the woods there you'll see a bridge that actually goes over the creek. That road used to go straight through to where the Parkway is now and come out sort of near Metro Park near South Wood Avenue. That whole area was woods when I was a kid. I remember going with my father; my father used to take me up there where **Eastern Airlines** was. Before they built the **Eastern Airlines** building that was all woods up there. The Boy Scouts used to camp up there. Well one of the things that was up there was a pile of seashells and my father told me, he said, you know why there are seashells here? I had no idea I thought they were everywhere. The Indians, the Lenni Lenape, used to come down from the mountains in New Jersey once a year to go to the Arthur Kill, the Bayshore (Recycling) area, to get seafood.

*Brenda Velasco:* It was part of their route.

*Kurt M. Adams:* It was part of their tradition and that's where they camped.

*Brenda Velasco:* By the old **Eastern Airlines**.

*Kurt M. Adams:* I may still have them but we used to find arrowheads up there.

*Brenda Velasco:* Wow!

*Kurt M. Adams:* The reason they went there was because, where I live on the corner of Chain O' Hills and Dover Road, that was the most inland port. There was a landing right behind the mill. That was as far as you could take a boat inland on the south branch of the Rahway River. If you wanted to go any further.....

*Brenda Velasco:* You had to go by foot then.

*Kurt M. Adams:* But the mill would stop you from continuing on. I guess you had the portage around it. But there was a landing.....as a matter of fact I think one of the roads was Landing Road or something like that. I don't know, Mill Street and Landing.....

*Brenda Velasco:* Because I know Mill Street is back there.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Yeah, there was originally I think a paper street there, Landing Lane or something like that.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, fascinating.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Yes, that was the most inland port. But I remember finding arrowheads up where South Wood Avenue is. I might even still have some, I don't even know.

*Brenda Velasco:* That would be great.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Strange stuff, you know: things you remember.

*Brenda Velasco:* Well I'm glad I'm interviewing you and you're remembering. That's great.

**7. What was the focal point of your community?**

*Kurt M. Adams:* Well my father having been a politician and an attorney he was all around town. As far as Colonia goes I would say the area near the post store and the post office as I kid. Because you got to remember you had the train station there and trains used to stop there every day and every morning at seven o'clock or so you'd see all the suits with the briefcases walking down the street going to the train station. And at night, at five-thirty to seven o'clock they'd go the other way. So there was a lot of movement and action in that area.

*Brenda Velasco:* And that became the focal point.

*Kurt M. Adams:* That was the focal point of Colonia back then. It wasn't until they really moved the post office that it changed. That's when it became quiet.

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

*Kurt M. Adams:* I just told you actually.

*Brenda Velasco:* And you're still there.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Well again it's funny I still love living where I live. I'm in the house that I grew up in. I own the house now; I bought it from my mom. This is a big house for a single guy. I have five bedrooms and two kitchens in that house. I'm the last of the Adams in Woodbridge Township. My sisters have moved to Warren County or southern Middlesex County. They say why do you live in that big house by yourself? And I say because I love it.

*Brenda Velasco:* You have good memories.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Exactly, and I know I'm comfortable here. I'm never going to go anywhere else. It's funny because they keep trying to get me to sell the house and move out there but when they come to visit me, the first thing they do is sit on the couch and they fall asleep. And do you know why? Because they're home. Once you lose home, you can never get it back.

*Brenda Velasco:* That's a good statement. No, you can't.

*Kurt M. Adams:* There's always a fondness for the home you grew up in. I remember with my mother my mother was from Youngstown, Ohio and the house she grew up in every time we went there, Ohio. After her parents passed on, we always had to drive past the house. It wound up in the worst ghetto of Youngstown, Ohio as a result. But I'll tell you we always went there to look at that house. Why? Because it was home; it was where she grew up and that's the same thing for me. I don't want to have to be driving up Dover Road looking at the house and saying I wish I were still there.

*Brenda Velasco:* And it's nicely kept and everything.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Well it could be better. I do the best I can. It's a nice neighborhood.

*Brenda Velasco:* It is.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Speaking of the houses I feel honored to be able to live in that house because it's not a track house; it's a cluster of similar type houses. I remember a friend of mine who lived in Iselin that I went to school with I was talking to his father

one day and he said where do you live Kurt and I told him? He said wait a minute and goes in the other room and comes back out with a picture of my house in a snowstorm.

*Brenda Velasco:* Wow!

*Kurt M. Adams:* He goes I took this when it snowed. He says it looked so charming. So that's what I love about living in the house. They are unique home and they're designed in such a way that my house.....you got to remember in the 1930s people had a kitchen, a living room, a dining room and they were all separate rooms. My house is actually opened which was unheard of. Now we have great rooms in most houses but my living room and dining room are all spread out and they're all connected. There are no walls between them. It's all one room which is unique especially for the time. It's funny because you go into the house and go up to the bathroom its art deco. You go in the living room and dining room and the light fixtures are hanging in brass; strange things that they just don't do anymore. Knotty pine wood which is actually about three quarter inch thick planks not paneling, you know. The exposed beams in the ceiling actually hold up the upstairs and when you're looking at the space between the beams it's actually the bottom of the floor boards upstairs which are two inch thick.

*Brenda Velasco:* You're not going to get.....

*Kurt M. Adams:* You're not going to get a house like that anymore.

*Brenda Velasco:* No.

*Kurt M. Adams:* You can't do it. Nowadays they don't build like that.

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

*Kurt M. Adams:* How about the tercentennial. I still have a lot of artifacts from the tercentennial celebration.

*Brenda Velasco:* And that was in 1976, right?

*Kurt M. Adams:* No, tercentennial not bicentennial. No tercentennial, Woodbridge, 1969.

*Brenda Velasco:* Oh, 1969 okay.

*Kurt M. Adams:* And 1964 they had actually had two of them here, 1964 for the settling of Woodbridge and 1969 for the Charter. When I was a kid they used to have fireworks in Merrill Park every year and the two big events of the summertime were the fireworks in Merrill Park and St. Cecelia's Fair where you watched everybody wrestle Victor the Bear. People used to actually wrestle the bear Tubby Trusdale, I remember his name. We used to have a wrestling bear there every year. Anyway, the tercentennial celebration was held in Merrill Park and it was a big party. I remember the fireworks. Ralph Barone was the mayor at that time and he and his wife dressed up as old time settlers in the white wig and stuff like that. And the Parker Press most people think that's an historic building but it's not. It was a barn that was down in Plainsboro that they dismantled and brought up and made the Parker Press building. The good thing about the Parker Press building is the reason it's where it is because you can't build on that lot because there's underground water.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes, and it's also Green Acres now.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Because of the underground waterway that's why it became Green Acres because you could never build there. But anyway, they did the big reenactment and stuff in the Parker Press and then he came over to Colonia. I remember Officer Joe Corton was there and Soupy Sales.

*Brenda Velasco:* Oh, wow!

*Kurt M. Adams:* Yeah, that was a big time thing. Sky drivers came in; it was a big to do which was pretty funny. It was great being a kid.

*Brenda Velasco:* And you walked there.

*Kurt M. Adams:* You could see the fireworks from my backyard. Well of course the trees weren't as big then. Every year on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July they would have fireworks at Merrill Park. They did away with it, which was ironic kind of, in 1975 instead of in 1976 where they could have had the bicentennial celebration. But they didn't, they stopped it in '75. A girl named Jolene Lawrence got hit by a train. I knew Mr. Lawrence, her father. I knew her, too. It was tragic that she got hit by a train and they thought it was just too dangerous to have it there.

*Brenda Velasco:* Too bad and it's all built up now around the whole area.

*Kurt M. Adams:* No, it's pretty much the same. The only difference is where you go down Middlesex Turnpike towards 216, the back road toward the baseball fields that was also burnt down there. As a matter of fact Merrill Park, the County Park, actually goes from Iselin where Merrill Park goes all the way down to where Home Depot is (Colonia).

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes, and that's where we have the flooding.

*Kurt M. Adams:* If you go down Fairview Avenue on the other side of New Dover Road to the end right off the end of that was what we used to call Turtle Pond. Before the channelization of the creek, there was a big pond there. We called it Turtle Pond because there were so many turtles down there. And then there was a dirt road that ran along the tracks behind the American Legion all the way down to where Home Depot is. A lot of kids played there all the time.

*Brenda Velasco:* It was a wonderland for you.

*Kurt M. Adams:* It was really nice. I mean you could ride your bicycle down to **Foodtown** I think which was there.

*Brenda Velasco:* There was a **Foodtown** and it flooded and then there was **Stop and Shop**.

*Kurt M. Adams:* **Stop and Shop** that's what it was. I remember there was a **Buxton's** there too.

*Brenda Velasco:* Anything else as far as events that you could think of. Okay, we have the fireworks, Sucker Brook we've mentioned when it was concreted for the flood control.

*Kurt M. Adams:* To me I hated to see that happen. I realize it was necessary. People were losing their homes. They're still going underwater.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Kurt M. Adams:* But it was so nice, you know. There were just trees and we used to build forts in the woods. When you were a kid, it was just a wonderland. As an adult, you know who cares right; but for kids it was just unbelievable.

*Brenda Velasco:* It gave them the chance to explore. They didn't have all these restrictions on them.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Well again people weren't as scared back then. I always say crime really isn't much different than it was back then, it just gets reported more now I believe.

*Brenda Velasco:* Or we have a wealth of knowledge right now.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Same things happened back then but nobody was so skittish about it.

*Brenda Velasco:* You've got a point.

*Kurt M. Adams:* I really don't think crime has increased that much in Woodbridge Township.

*Brenda Velasco:* And we had pedophiles back then, too.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Right, exactly. I think it's just reported more now. I don't know I may be wrong. It just seems like everybody is so scared and that's no way to live as far as I'm concerned.

*Brenda Velasco:* Anything else that you can think of for Question #9? If not, we're going to go to Question #10.

### ***10. What do you like about Woodbridge/Colonia today?***

*Kurt M. Adams:* Like I said I'm never going anywhere else. They're going to carry me out of that house, feet first. I'm going to be the grumpy old man of the block whose been living there forever. Actually I think I may be the longest living resident in my neighborhood now. The last one was Laverne Doll whose husband was Wendell Doll the police officer who used to go to the schools and talk to the kids but I understand they just recently moved. Oh, no, you know who it was it was Crowe, Mr. Crowe, who lived up on Chain O' Hills Road and just passed away about a year or two ago. But to my knowledge.....

*Brenda Velasco:* You're it.

*Kurt M. Adams:* I may be it.

*Brenda Velasco:* You were the kid; you're the baby.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Little snot nosed kid that used to run around the neighborhood is now the old timer in town. But it's kind of funny because I have noticed that there are a lot more kids in the neighborhood.

*Brenda Velasco:* Well, that's good.

*Kurt M. Adams:* I have a new next door neighbor and they've got like four or five kids and it's nice. It's nice to see kids in the neighborhood again.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes, it brings it to life.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Again they'll never experience.....I remember building a soapbox derby car which I used to go down the street. We used to ride our sleds right across Chain O' Hills Road and there were no cars back then.

*Brenda Velasco:* Because you live on a little slope there.

*Kurt M. Adams:* We used to build up some good speed. We'd build the soapbox cars and we'd go all the way up past Maplewood Avenue.

*Brenda Velasco:* Wow!

*Kurt M. Adams:* Because we'd get a good go.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yeah, you'd have the momentum coming down the hill.

*Kurt M. Adams:* But there doesn't seem to be a lot of the old timers left. I still see some kids I grew up with occasionally but not in my immediate neighborhood.



People that I went to school with live up the road. Most of everybody has moved on. It's a shame.

*Brenda Velasco:* Sometimes you need bigger accommodations or you have a family.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Yeah, well you get married and move away. That's what happens.

***11. Are there any other stories or events that you would like to discuss that we haven't covered that pertains to Woodbridge?***

*Kurt M. Adams:* Let's see I've covered quite a bit.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, how about your grandmother or your grandfather.

*Kurt M. Adams:* My grandparents were involved politically in Sewaren. My grandmother was a woman suffragette who actually got arrested in Trenton for smoking. My grandfather, and well my grandmother too because she did everything with my grandfather, they ran the Bull Moose Party for Teddy Roosevelt (1912). She was a trustee for the Free School Act for a while.

*Brenda Velasco:* What do you mean by that?

*Kurt M. Adams:* When Woodbridge was founded, chartered I should say if you read the original Charter, a certain amount of land had to be put away for the operation of free public schools and this was done with land. This land all the way up into the '60s existed and they had a special.....

*Brenda Velasco:* Until the 1960s?

*Kurt M. Adams:* Yeah, and for a while there it was the nuns for St. James they used to call them cone sisters under the Free School Act. My grandmother was on the panel for a while. A lot of people served on it back then. My grandfather and grandmother also fought the refineries going into Sewaren. If you look at the old town minutes you'll see Mr. Adams, or as they called him Papa Adams, would get up at the Council meetings and committee meetings and rally against **Shell** because it was going to ruin the town and it didn't change the town a lot. Well again you got to remember you got to put things in perspective. I can understand the reason for having the refineries because we needed jobs.

*Brenda Velasco:* And that was an income base. It was a source of revenue.

*Kurt M. Adams:* It was a rough time back then but my grandparents lived in Sewaren so long ago that they had to sell land so that the trolley line could go through. Back then they owned from West Avenue to Old Road and the trolley line went right between West Avenue and Old Road: where the pipeline is now, that's the old trolley line. Like I said before if you go to St. John's Episcopal Church they have the stained glass windows in that church with my family's name on them because so many of my family have been through there. I mentioned that my grandfather was the master of ceremonies at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church. My father was the master of ceremonies at the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary and I was the master of ceremonies at the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. My mother was the church organist there for forty years and I was an altar boy. It was a unique church, though. It was funny because like I said before with the Central Jersey Railroad I don't know whether it was the president or vice president of Central Jersey Railroad lived in Sewaren and when he passed away he and his associates-there were a couple of other that were involved with the railroad there. When they passed away, they willed a lot of stuff to the church so the church was self sufficient. They didn't care if they got contributions or not.

*Brenda Velasco:* That's a nice position to be in.

*Kurt M. Adams:* It was wonderful. It was always a tiny church. They never wanted to be big, no flashiness you know. It was always just a little quiet church. I mean I remember times in the '70s when it was just our family, you know, because the attendance had gone down. I mean its way back up now because of Edison and.....

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes, it depends on the demographics.

*Kurt M. Adams:* But it was always a tiny little church and the reason that church was built, a lot of people don't know this, that back in the old days if you lived in Sewaren and you wanted to go to an Episcopal church you had to hook up your horse and buggy. You had to ride it down to Sewaren to the Woodbridge River and take one of the two little ferries that went across the Woodbridge River either on Woodbridge Avenue or on West Avenue. You either went to Perth Amboy or you went to Trinity in Woodbridge. So it was a pain every Sunday going to church so they built their own little church in Sewaren. Then again you got to remember back then Sewaren wasn't so much a blue collared town.

*Brenda Velasco:* It was very affluent.

*Kurt M. Adams:* You look at some of those mansions there, it was very affluent. It wasn't until I would say the 1920s I guess that Boynton Lumber started selling.....as a matter of fact I even have a book of it, plans, build your own house plans from Boynton Lumber. All those little cottages that you see now in Sewaren were Boynton Lumber kit houses. There are some over here in Iselin too, the Correja Avenue area; little kit houses. They used to go through this magazine, which I have a copy of, and look at the plans of the house and you'd buy it and they'd ship you, everything. Boynton Lumber was over near Town Hall. Speaking of which, Town Hall, I have a button from the dedication of the Town Hall and I also have a program.

*Brenda Velasco:* Oh, wow! That's great. Hold on to them because we have, in the library right now, main library, local history archives and Wendi Rottweiler is our historian for that so we now have a separate room and everything.

*Kurt M. Adams:* You know what's funny I had books from my father's days and squirrels had gotten into my attic and they destroyed them. I had to throw everything out but there were pictures of all these people. Oh you know one thing I should tell you about back then, back in the '60s, I was talking about Port Warren and everything at that same time. Now these are people that are fighting in the Council chambers, they got together and they started what was known as the Lucky Eight Hunting Club. There was a piece of property in Bartonsville, Pennsylvania that was bought from Les Paul and Mary Ford, of all people, and they starting building the Lucky Eight Hunting Club. These were people that were fighting against each other for Port Warren was seceding in Sewaren and Port Reading. But they had a hunting club that went up there. It was later sold to John Molnar of **Molnar Electric** and every year between Christmas and New Years everybody went there. I could tell you Casey Mullen, the tax collector, Robert Mascenik, the principal of School 26, George Garrick from Iselin Middle School. Oh you name it everybody was there. Charlie Molnar was a former Councilman, Maynard Winston; the roster was unbelievable. I mean

everybody who was anybody in Woodbridge went there. There were all these cabins and all the families would go.

*Brenda Velasco:* It sounded like a great time.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Oh, it was wonderful. Like I said how do I know everybody from Woodbridge, this was one of the ways?

*Brenda Velasco:* Socialized.

*Kurt M. Adams:* They went on vacation together. Everybody went on vacation together and John Molnar ran it. It was just so much fun.

*Brenda Velasco:* Good experience.

*Kurt M. Adams:* I had sat with a friend of mine whom I grew up with and we said what a childhood we had because I was lucky enough to be born in a time when it was a time of plenty because it was post World War II and it was just post-'50. You know '50s everybody was a little bit uptight and stuff. I was around in the '60s and stuff like that and in the '70s and everything was plentiful. You didn't have to worry about, you know, crime so much around here. I mean there was crime but nothing like is recorded now. Again there were the Newark riots.

*Brenda Velasco:* But you were sort of isolated.

*Kurt M. Adams:* They didn't come here.

*Brenda Velasco:* And you had Plainfield with the policeman being stomped. This area was isolated.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Right, it was completely isolated here and you can do whatever you want here. I mean I remember you knew the cops, every cop. Back then again the Woodbridge cop was a middle aged guy with a big belly who knew you. And if you did anything wrong, you didn't go to police headquarters. He threw you in the back of the car and took you home to your parents and that was worse than going to the police headquarters.

*Brenda Velasco:* And your parents took care of you.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Absolutely, but everybody knew each other and everybody looked out for each other. It was a different time. It was like a touch of the old with a touch of the new. But now technically is taking over. Like my grandmother used to say, everything is getting more and more fast paced. Of course she was around when it was the horse and buggy time. By the way my grandmother, we talk about Sewaren, she was in the historic history club for many years in Sewaren and she lived to the age of 105.

*Brenda Velasco:* Wow!

*Kurt M. Adams:* So she was a long time member over there just to say the least.

*Brenda Velasco:* Now what happened to all her papers and collections, they're in the Sewaren library then?

*Kurt M. Adams:* I don't know. Well there's the spoken word recording of her. I know my sister has a lot of stuff.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, please take good care of that.

*Kurt M. Adams:* I come from a long line of packrats.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, but we don't want squirrels to get into them and I know that's what happens in attics and sometimes the paper becomes too brittle but there are things you can do and Wendi Rottweiler of the library can help you with that.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Again the things that we preserved most of from my grandmother was my grandfather's drawings because he worked for a very famous architect. I mean I have plans from the Arlington National Bridge, the University of Rhode Island, you know I have all these plans and stuff. He was the guy that they went to for all the gargoyles and scrolls and stuff. I mean he was an incredible artist. What he did was unbelievable work. But he also did like the house that's on the corner of Brewster and West. The way it looks now was not the way it looked like when I was growing up. It's now aluminum sided but back then it was cedar with trim. It looked like a house you'd see along the ocean.

*Brenda Velasco:* Like Deal.

*Kurt M. Adams:* Right, exactly. Well maybe not Deal but it's a box house but it had this huge veranda in the back and the yard was a lot bigger back then because it went down Brewster towards the back where there are houses now; it was just different.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, is there anything else?

*Kurt M. Adams:* No, that's it.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, I think we covered it intensively.

*Kurt M. Adams:* I just want to say I love Woodbridge Township and like my father always want to make it better. It's been a thing instilled in me. My father was very community involved. He was a Republican mayor in Woodbridge (1960-1961); the first one in many years back then. But as people ask me what are you Kurt? And I always answer I'm a Republicrat because my father worked more with Democrats than Republicans. This is from a political point, I mean, he wanted to make the place better and that was the bottom line. My father was so community oriented. I mean you talk to people who knew him and stuff.....

*Brenda Velasco:* He's mentioned in previous interviews.

*Kurt M. Adams:* It's very difficult to live up to those standards because he was the man. I mean he did a lot for this town when he was alive.

*Brenda Velasco:* Well we're grateful to him putting us in the right direction and I'm grateful to you for sitting down and being interviewed. Thank you.

*Kurt M. Adams:* I wish I knew more. I mean you try to think of things and I'm sure when I get home I'm going to say I should have mentioned this or that.

*Brenda Velasco:* Write it to me; email it to me. You'll use the technology that way.

*Kurt M. Adams:* It's very nice that you do this and I know that I listened to part of the one from my grandmother and it was interesting to hear. Again, it won't be interesting to anybody today but a hundred years from now somebody listens to this.....

*Brenda Velasco:* It's a different era and she captured it just as you captured the transition for your era and that's important because as your grandmother said everything is happening too rapidly.

*Kurt M. Adams:* That's right.

*Brenda Velasco:* But thank you.