

Woodbridge Public Library Oral History Interview

Lenny Lloyd

WPL03

(digital audio)

On July 1, 1978, Lenny Lloyd was interviewed for the Woodbridge Public Library Oral History Interview. There were two interviewers, one male and one female.

Lenny Lloyd: Do you ever try to think actually how far back in your life you can think and have a clear memory. Try to just do that sometime and see what you can remember.

Female Interviewer: Would looking at pictures be helpful?

Lenny Lloyd: No, I'm just saying I find it very possible to go back to my age of three years. I was born in 1914. When I was three years old, I can still see as clear as day, we had the Morgan explosion. This was World War I and I remember as vividly as possible this guy coming around on horseback and notifying everybody to get out of the house because these things were going off, windows were shaking and breaking, and we were all in the house trying to take whatever we could to keep warm and what not. We took a few chairs and things like that. We went out in the fields, out in the open, down in Sewaren right about where you cross the bridge now where the used car lot is. There were opened fields there and, of course, there were no homes there, everything was opened. We sat in chairs and the kids were bawling. We didn't know what it was all about. Our mother and father grabbed whatever food they could for lunch, we didn't know how long this was going to go on, and we sat up there and watched these explosions going up. I remember that night very vividly. Now remember I was three years old and my dad carried me in his arms and watched these explosions go off.

Male Interviewer: You could actually see them from Sewaren?

Lenny Lloyd: Oh God, yes. This was Morgan, it's only on the other side of South Amboy, and the whole sky would light up. Everybody from miles around was ordered out of the house because all the windows in our house were shattered. Now of course where we lived, and where I was born, was right on the corner where Merwin's Junkyard is now. That was Woodbridge Avenue and a little street ran down there paralleling the creek which was McVicar's Lane. Now the McVicar's were well-to-do people. They owned a house right in the center of this complex. It was a beautiful big home, up and down the stairs, with all the modern equipment in those days which we didn't have. They also owned six or eight duplex family houses that went right down to the meadow where the meadowland is there now. Our house, where I was born, was formally a tavern. They called it McVicar's Tavern and it was built sometime, I believe, just after the Civil War. I was born in that thing right on the corner, if you can visualize where this junkyard is as you're going to Sewaren right where Merwin's takes up that whole corner.

There was another home right next to it that also was a tavern which was named the Pendor Tavern. That home existed up until only about seven or eight years ago. They just tore that down when Merwin took over the rest of the property. But where I was born they had a complete porch around the house and a cellar. By today's standards that home would be condemned. You wouldn't let people in that thing because when we wanted to see how high the tide was we went up and lifted the cellar door and it would come in and out of the cellar just like clockwork. If the tide was high we knew a storm was coming. My grandma used to make stuffed peppers that we would put in crock jars and sit on the cellar steps. Now, of course, if we knew there was going to be a nor'easter, that's a good storm coming, so many times the water would come right up to the porch and flood the peppers which would be a national disaster. But I mean it would be filthy. Mud and muck would be in the cellar everywhere. By all modern standards you couldn't live. Here I am, God bless me, praise the Lord, I'm still in good health. The other thing, the street that ran down there, everyone had their own little dock in the creek and we all had rowboats. Of course, at that time, you could go out and catch crabs and we'd catch small weakfish. I'm talking about that little creek that's there now. We'd fish right off the bridge catching weakfish and tommy cod fish and all sorts of things like that. Of course, that's long since gone. Prior to my time, by stories I've heard and the millstone still existed up in Merwin's yard, there was a flower mill right on the creek that was operating and I don't know what the name of the flower mill was but that was right on the right side of the bridge going towards Sewaren. Of course, here again, that was prior to my time. Jim Zerro, who recently died, I don't know if you might have known him, he knew the real story and it's too bad we couldn't have got to Jim because it's only about a year ago and he was very anxious to preserve this stone. But I'll just ramble on here. Of course, in this area where I was born, they called it Crab Beach, everybody used to come here. This was the poor man's version of Boynton Beach which used to be down in Sewaren. It was a beautiful area that had excursion boats coming in and everything but everyone would come from Fulton Street and those around here walked across the meadowlands and, of course, you always had to be careful when you were diving off the bridge because the trolley cars would go across the bridge. You'd dive between the cars and so forth, you know, when there wasn't any cars coming. We all learned to swim in the creek and of course where you could always get crabs and so forth. When you said you were going out to get a couple of soft crabs there was no question if you would get them. You would say, how many should I bring home for supper. I was born in December, December 18, 1914, this is all not in chronicle order I'm just rambling on as I have thoughts in my mind. My dad, at that time, was on the police force. He went on the police force in 1912 or 1913. At that time the police force consisted, including my dad, of six men for the whole Township of Woodbridge. It just included everything, Hopelawn, Fords, everything. My dad had the Fulton Street beat that night I was born because I think he tried to arrange it because he knew I was coming. Now the signal was like

they would say two if by land, one if by sea and if there were two lights in the attic window, I'm talking kerosene lights because we didn't have electric, and my dad could look across the meadows, this was before the Turnpike and all that stuff, he had a baby boy. This was about two or three o'clock in the morning while he was on beat on Fulton Street. Now, of course, like I said we had kerosene lamps and no water in the house. I have an old story about the Saturday night bath with the tap water. They had a big copper kettle which you could just about squeeze into and my brother was always first and I was second in the same tub of water. I mean you got your bath on Saturday night whether you needed it or not. That's what makes me appreciate things when I go away camping now and when I come back I have a common shower. What a pleasure it is just to have a shower, you don't realize how much you miss it.

Male Interviewer: Yes.

Lenny Lloyd: But that was the way it was anyway. So Pop was on the force in 1912. Oh, also at this time Berry's Brick Factory existed. This is when we were getting up into our early teens and they had molds that they would mold these facer pieces for the faces of buildings and so forth. I think the only thing, if I can recall right, these molds that were shaped like boats in which we made boats out of. They're all made of good wood and they were shaped like sort of, if you can visualize, an arched bridge being made. Did you ever see the big arch wedges that came down the bridge, six inches here and then they widened up and they'd wedge? Well these molded, apparently arches, over the brick factory and some of the molds, with these kids with vandalism, would probably throw them in the creek and these things would come floating up the creek and we'd make boats out of them. This was another, you know, phase of life. As I'm saying, I'm grabbing as I go along.

Male Interviewer: Where would that factory have been?

Lenny Lloyd: Right where Middlesex Concrete is now. It was Berry's Factory.

Male Interviewer: Okay.

Lenny Lloyd: Of course, the trolley cars. We took them when we went to the first grade. That was before the Sewaren school was built. We used to take the trolley car right in front of my house. They gave us green tickets which we would give to them when we'd go to school by trolley car. This was before, of course, the Town Hall was built now too. This is prior to 1924.

Male Interviewer: Okay.

Lenny Lloyd: In the winter they didn't plow the roads, they plowed the sidewalks so you could walk because the roads were used for sleds. They'd have horse drawn sleds and the sleds would come from the clay banks with clay heading toward Maurer or delivering anything just like our trucks would be delivering. They'd be delivering this in a horse drawn sled. Now this is going back, I'm talking about in the teens like 17 or 18, in that vintage. It was always a sad thing for us kids because we'd see them beat the horses in the spring. You know they'd have the bare spots that would start coming on the road and they'd have these sleds and it would be snowing and these horses would be straining and they'd be whipping and they'd drag the horse

along the spots where the snow would melt. It was too early to change the wheels and too late not to take them off.

Male Interviewer: How about in the spring, were the roads paved at all?

Lenny Lloyd: No, this was all.....

Male Interviewer: Because in the spring this must have been pretty bad.

Lenny Lloyd: This was all like a semi-pavement of stone and mud and muck and frost and so forth. I can't quite recall when they paved Woodbridge Avenue. That would have been going from Woodbridge to Sewaren. I don't know when the period was.

Male Interviewer: Maurer's was out on the end.....

Lenny Lloyd: That's where Hess Oil is now down towards Perth Amboy. That would be the Maurer Brickyard. Of course, the old Maurer School was there. From what I understand it was sort of a company run school but I may be wrong on that. I think it came under the jurisdiction of Perth Amboy. It was a quant old school and they had their own school. They had company buildings there too where the workers lived right around the area. Then again this is back around the Depression. My dad opened up a little stand on the corner of the porch that went all around and used to offer ice cream and candy and stuff to take care of these so called crowds of people who would be coming to Crab Beach. Believe it they would come by trolley cars and get off because it would be crowded at Acker's Beach so they would go there.

Male Interviewer: So into the '30s they were still swimming?

Lenny Lloyd: Oh, yeah.

Male Interviewer: The waters weren't too polluted?

Lenny Lloyd: No, the waters were still okay however not without complete control of pollution because the main drain for all of Woodbridge's sewer system, those that had sewage, was the Heard's Brook which goes down through the park, you know where the Parker Press building is? That was made sort of like an open sewer but other than that it was fairly clean because the fish were still in there and the crabs were in there so it couldn't have been too bad. Now there was a pond that we used to ice skate down on in Sewaren where Shell Oil is still now. They use it as a pumping pond for fire and so forth in there. It was all tree lined and bush lined and set in there alongside of the railroad was Simonson's Pond and it used to freeze over in the winter. Now when that froze they would cut ice because here again there was no refrigeration and we didn't have ice. They would cut the ice and store it down on Cliff Road which runs along the waterfront down at the mouth of the creek. There's a pretty steep bank that goes down and set in the side of the bank was this fairly good sized building about two foot thick with cork lined walls that they would store the ice during the winter and have it for the summer. They peddled the ice, of course, by horse and wagon. The foundations of that was still somewhat available about fifteen years ago but there's all sorts of growth in there now and you could hardly see where the indentation is. The indentation might be still there. Of course, we had no central heat in the house I was born. We had a kitchen stove, kitchen range,

with the four burners which would heat your water up. That would run constantly. Up in the upper stair room there would be a cylinder stove and you'd have a cylinder stove in the living room where you would warm up, if you were close to it. But if you were more than five feet away you would freeze. Upstairs, at night, everybody would go by the fire to get warm and dive into bed. The peapod would be frozen in the morning, this was no exaggeration, and it was cold, really cold. There was an outdoor toilet, outdoor john, and that was always a thing of beauty with my father. We had little curtains on it and he used to keep it painted up and there'd be a winding path with flowers so you'd go and meditate on the way out and meditate while you were in there. He also had a Sears and Roebuck catalog in there, no exaggeration. Paper was a luxury to the average person. We were a low income family and we couldn't afford those things. There were very few people, except the rich ones, who could during those days.

Male Interviewer: Were there many houses down in that area at the time?

Lenny Lloyd: No, I'd say on Woodbridge Avenue from the bridge up on the north side there was one house or two houses. I think the old store might have been there on the corner of School Street in Sewaren. Otherwise there was nothing on that side of the street back in 17 or 18.

Female Interviewer: Who owned that property?

Lenny Lloyd: I have no idea whether it was partially the township or whether people who just had holdings. Now see the McVicar family owned that whole shebang that we lived on, that complete street. They were well to do people who had a beautiful home in the center with a big orchard in there. If you can visualize this now, where the junkyard is, there were all beautiful apple trees and pear trees in there. The thing extended way down to the marshland as far as his property goes down with six duplex homes. There were twelve families that lived down there. We had a small lane where we'd cross over an excess and we had had our little dock along the creek with a rowboat. Almost everybody had some sort of a rowboat to fish and crab and so forth.

Male Interviewer: Now across the street would that have been the trees or would that have been marsh along there also via captive?

Lenny Lloyd: Some of the big oaks that are still standing, some of those, were there but most of it was open field with clusters and there was a pond over in the back where the first homes were built up on Grant Street back in about 1924. The rows of homes up on Grant Street, the older homes, you'll see goes up and sort of makes a T. There were about five or six homes built up there. Other than that there were all opened fields. I used to hunt there with my dad. We'd go right across the street and hunt pheasant and rabbit all through marshes and grass there. You'd go up all the way into Port Reading with practically anyone of the older homes. The old Olsen home, that was halfway through the meadows there and the Boynton home. That's about the only thing that was there. Everything else was built in since. Boynton Beach – I just about can remember the tail end of Boynton Beach. I remember the slide, they had this fantastic slide like the rainbow shoots that they have down the shore. Have you tried those yet if you're down

there? I'll tell you about them later. Anyway, they had this beautiful slide and you'd go down in full depth to the bank right down floating into the water. You'd zoom about thirty feet off the end of the shoot into the water.

Male Interviewer: Where was this, down towards Sewaren?

Lenny Lloyd: Down where Shell Oil is now. That was all Boynton Beach with a big dance floor over the water and they'd bring the bands and the people would come down two ways. You know where they launch the boats now? That was what they called the hotel dock and the excursion boat would land there and the people would then disembark from the boat and go down to Boynton Beach which was within a hundred yards or something. Also they called it the hotel dock because it was a full sized, fully fledged hotel right where the launching ramp is now. Between there and Royal Petroleum there was this big hotel where they used to come down with the horse and carriages and they'd come from Newark on either the trains or the trolleys and get off and go to Boynton Beach. Later, of course, Acker's beach came into being. I don't know, they may have been even around the same time. Ollie Acker ran the Acker's Beach. That was a pavilion up a little closer near where the old hotel was. That went out over the water and I had a picture of that here somewhere.

Male Interviewer: Yes, we have some photos too.

Lenny Lloyd: You must have pictures of that I'm sure because you talked to Olga Howell didn't you?

Male Interviewer: Yes.

Lenny Lloyd: Anyway, so long after that Acker had upwards of about something like three hundred rowboats and on a good day, when the fish were running across the river where the oil company is now, Exxon, that was all woodlands over there and a big picnic grove on Staten Island, directly opposite Sewaren, but all along that area from there all the way down to the Outerbridge they would fish. They had two or three hundred rowboats they would rent out by the day with bait and everything and they'd all come flocking down in trolley cars from Newark, Elizabeth and Bayonne, you name it. You know, because this was quite a spot. The water was clean and beautiful. They had a nice sandy beach there along the side of the dock with bathhouses. Of course, you'd rent a bathhouse to change your clothes. The gals, of course, would put on their bikinis which used to come down to their knees, bloomers you know, and skirts and hats. They hardly ever swam but anyway they'd go down there and get into the water. Also, once a year, they'd have this great sea day or Salt Water Day they called it and masses of colored people would come down from Newark and they'd have full baptisms right in the river down there. You'd hear screaming and hollering and they'd have all the white dresses on. They'd plunge them in and baptize them right in the water. This was usually once a year that they had this. Later Turk's Beach, Joseph Turk, took it over and brought amusements in there. A merry-go-round and things like the tilt-a-whirl that they have today and all that sort of thing was there. They had a

Ferris wheel and in order to attract people they'd have a balloon accession. Every Saturday they'd have a hot air balloon, they'd have this big pit and they'd build these fire in this pit, and all us kids would be down there and get blacker than hell because the smoke from all the soot and coal they put in would make it burst out. But you're holding the balloon until it got fully filled up to this cutoff point where the hot air was coming. Of course, the big attraction was the gal, Ruby. I still remember her name. She'd go up and the parachute was hooked directly under the balloon extended, in other words not packaged, and she was on like a sling with the parachute standing back some fifty or seventy-five feet from where the fire was. Then by the time they had everybody charged up and interested they'd swarm around and people would come up from the beach and stop swimming and this balloon would go up. This was spectacular to see because the balloon would sweep up and she'd come running along full tilt. Once the roof took you'd see her swinging under this balloon going up. You know, eventually she would stop and depending which way the wind blew would depend whether she would land in the marshland or the river. They'd always send someone to pick her up. She'd get up to some five, six, seven or maybe even a thousand feet. Of course she would pull the rope to release the thing and the parachute would extend. Then we kids would go tearing around to get the balloon back. That was a big deal. Then we'd get a raft of tickets for the merry-go-round or the rides because you got the balloon back. This was quite an attention. Along with this at Turk's Beach my dad and my uncle, Al Pender, my father's name was Samuel, Sam Lloyd, they'd open up what was the first hotdog stand in New Jersey believe it or not. There was only one other one that had the same thing and that was over in Coney Island. I think we started prior to them. But they had the first hotdog stand in New Jersey and they were selling them down in Turk's Beach here. It was a new thing and in those days there was no freezer. If the weather turned bad many a day we dumped rolls by the hundreds in the creek for the fish to eat and the meat would go bad also so it was a pretty tough game in those days to figure who was coming and whether the weather was going to be good. But that lasted for two or three years and they kind of gave that up. Also another attraction was they had fireworks. They'd have fireworks a couple of times during the summer to attract people and one year one of the girls, I believe her name was Mae Pateman, was killed by a fragment of one of these pipes that guild these rockets up. Something happened to the rocket that shattered the pipe and just like a fragment, a shell, burst and hit her in the head right within five feet of me. I didn't know what it was all about. It killed her outright on the spot. Of course there were big lawsuits about that and everything. We also had a dance hall which wasn't a big hall but to this day that exists. I think John Kazmark moved that up from the beach when the beach went to pot. He made a home out of it. It's right opposite where they have the tennis courts on Ferry Street. If you come up from the beach you make a right at the first block, not Including that little private lane, and then go in one block and make a left.

As you going down on your left there's a square building with sort of an open porch in the front with two sides to it. You see on the sides one of them used to be a ticket office and the other one was a cloak room on the way in. He converted it into a beautiful home. You'd never know that that was the old dance hall.

Male Interviewer: Now that was actually over the water?

Lenny Lloyd: No, that would be about where the road going into Royal Petroleum is now maybe back about seventy-five feet from the cliff, the width of the road. That wasn't out over the water. The big one he had, which burned, was out over the water.

Male Interviewer: Oh, okay. So was there always two of them or was the smaller one built afterwards?

Lenny Lloyd: The smaller one was built afterwards. The smaller one was originally a bar. They had the old Nickelodeons which they had put in the player pianos with the violins in them and everything, drums, and you'd get a whole serenade for a nickel. Also, here again, I'm jumping around. There was a movie, Monty Blue, and Mae Murray ran this movie in Sewaren, I can't think of the name of the thing, but all the kids were hired as extras. We had to wave banners and, of course, the old station was a beautiful thing. It was the old Victorian type station that they built in Sewaren. It had a newsstand there with all the magazines and candies and so forth and the commuters would buy them in the morning. It had a full operating railway station in all the sense of the word. They would receive mail and ship mail out and they also had a freight office which was separated from the other buildings. It was beautifully kept. They just put the last couple of homes up there now. Right off the light there was about three or four home they just built. That was all part of the bid driveway going into the station with beautiful trees and everything.

Female Interviewer: Did the movie Peacock Alley play in Sewaren?

Lenny Lloyd: That's it, there's the name.

Female Interviewer: Did you ever see it?

Lenny Lloyd: I don't remember; I don't think I ever saw it. All I know is this sequence that they filmed here someone was getting off the train. I can't recall what it was supposed to be except that somebody was meeting somebody at the train. I don't know if she was coming in or he was coming in but they met there at the train and they had the big brass band playing in their uniforms with a lot of color and hooping and fan faring.

Male Interviewer: Were you in that as an extra?

Lenny Lloyd: Yes, we were all kids. We were all on the steps going down to the train waving the flag.

Male Interviewer: We've been trying to find a copy of that film because we thought it would be terrific footage of Sewaren. We can't find it. They think that its possibly a lost film.

Lenny Lloyd: Now I'm going a little bit back, about 1928 or 1929, six of us got together and formed a little club and called ourselves the Sewaren Dock Rats. We were always a group that hung around the river. We always loved

the river and the water and this group, there were three Karr brothers, a fellow by the name of Howard Brown whose father was very prominent and who used to own the property where the high school is now, there used to be a racetrack there, that's something else again, a half mile board Indy type car racetrack at one time, myself and a fellow by the name of Ferguson. There were six of us. We actually incorporated and believe it or not we were listed in the Lloyd's Register of Yacht Clubs under Sewaren Dock Rats. Mr. Turner, a well to do man who sponsored us, thought that was terrible that we had such a name. He later tried to get us to change our name but we never did and, of course, he passed away and the club sort of went down the drain. But we all kept together after that. We just lost one last week, Joseph, so there are half of us yet and half of us are gone to the good old beyond. What else? Oh, Land and Water Club – this is back in the late '20s, 1926 or 1928. The Land and Water Club, were just a few pilings sticking out at the foot of Fulton Street. I'm sure you heard of this. Of course we were the lowly peons, we had to sneak in, we weren't the blue bloods. On Saturday night, these were well to do people, had their dances down there and, of course being friends of Fred Turner, he sponsored our group and everything, his son Fred would always manage to spirit us in the club. We would come down by rowboat with white pants. We tried to get duked up as well as we could; everything was white suits in those days. They had a float that you could land a boat there and we'd come down the rope and Freddie would spirit us in and once you were in it was okay. Also, they'd have this beautiful Saturday night Japanese lantern and everything with all the color you know and good bands playing. Of course, that whole thing went in a hurricane. That, I'm sure, I have pictures of around but I've been frantically looking for pictures for the last few days but I haven't been able to come up with too many pictures. Of course, you can duplicate them can't you?

Male Interviewer: Yes.

Lenny Lloyd: But I definitely would want them back but that we have a little time with. I want to get back and see if I can get some more pictures. Of course another phase now is supermarkets. There were no supermarkets in those days. We used to get a grocery man by the name of Housman. I believe George Housman just died. Now George Housman, Gordon Hutt and Hymie Bernstein were, I think, instrumental in forming the first aid in Woodbridge in 1937. George just died and his dad was the one that used to come with the horse and wagon from Blum's Grocery Store right on Main Street right about where Spark Auto Store is now. There was a big old buildings sitting there, old wooden building, with a porch on it and the round columns. Blum's Grocery Store had everything from soup to nuts. He would come over and take your order in the morning, he'd go all through Sewaren with his horse and wagon picking up orders and they'd say, let me have a quarter pound of this or Mom would order all this sort of stuff and in the afternoon he'd be back or sometimes it would be the next morning depending how much of a load he'd have. He'd come back

with your groceries because there were no automobiles; we had no cars. You could take the trolley over to shop but we always felt it was much easier for him to come. There were always little book accounts. You had a book and he had a book and you'd enter all this in. Once a week you'd pay whatever your bill was or some part of it. But God bless these people, these were the kind of people that kept us going during the Depression and who had trust and felt that when there wasn't work they figured some day they'd get their money. There was Kate's Store which was another one up in Sewaren which is where the little old library used to be next to Spoon's you know where the haircutter is?

Male Interviewer: Yes.

Lenny Lloyd: Well, right there there was he had Kath's Store right where the gas station is now. Well as kids, of course, we'd like to sled ride and we'd go down to the end of Woodbridge Avenue where the little church is going down towards the creek and when the creek would freeze over, it seemed in those days it did, we almost had it this year ago, we'd sled ride from the top of the hill down over the bank and down over the frozen creek. But the big thing, like the Alps to us, was Strawberry Hill. Of course up on Strawberry Hill there was nothing just a big old building up on top of the hill. That was the sleekest sled riding in the whole township. We'd come zooming down right over Fulton Street.

Male Interviewer: That was a long ride.

Lenny Lloyd: Yes, but that was like going to the Alps, today, skiing. The other thing I wanted to mention was the trolley cars. In the summertime they had the summer cars, all opened. They had steps along the side with the seats all opened and you'd get the fresh air. They had the fast line that used to come through Sewaren which had a drinking fountain on it which was unbelievable. They were exceptionally fast and powerful cars. They'd go from, I believe, all the Newark. You could go definitely to Elizabeth for like a nickel or a dime. They had the most precarious trestle that went over the railroad plus the road that runs between Port Reading Road and just a single track. We kids just loved to ride. We'd get Pop to take us just for that ride over the bridge. We'd go to Elizabeth for the day to visit. We didn't care about the visiting it was getting back so we could ride over the trestle.

Male Interviewer: Do you remember going to Kath's Store?

Lenny Lloyd: Oh, yes.

Male Interviewer: What types of thing did they have?

Lenny Lloyd: It was such a different thing. Everything was in barrels. As of matter of fact I just thought last night while I was eating a Lorna Doone that year's ago they would come in a big boxes with swinging doors. You would buy them by the pound. They be on racks and you'd buy the cookies like vanilla snaps, Fig Newtons, Lorna Doones and oatmeal cookies by the pound. Pickles you'd buy loose, well you still had some pickles in the deli loose. If you ever go down to the deli here and you see the big barrel well that's how you could

practically get everything. Grapes would come in barrels with sawdust. They'd keep the grapes in sawdust so they wouldn't ferment or rot or something because they didn't have the flight business going. I don't know where the grapes would come from. I'm talking about California type grapes or maybe from Florida, the big grapes, not the Concord grapes we grow here but these grapes would have to be somewhat preserved. They come in packed in sawdust and they keep reasonably well, it was amazing. Salt pork and things like that you'd always buy. He'd go down and cut you a piece of salt pork which he would have in a barrel. We'd buy beans loose too. There was no such a thing as beans being sold in boxes. It was always loose; you'd scoop them out with these ladles and weigh everything up on the scales. Even little things like Cheez Its you'd have to scoop them out of the bin.

Male Interviewer: We used to have barrels, I think, in Fagan's Hardware in Amboy. For the longest time he had barrels of beans loose in the store, I remember that as a kid.

Lenny Lloyd: Well you know what that was? That was for planting.

Male Interviewer: Probably, yea.

Lenny Lloyd: I was just there yesterday and I stopped in to see Dave Fagan because the old man, Charlie, died.

Male Interviewer: Oh, he did?

Lenny Lloyd: Yes, his dad died. Dave looks pretty decrepit at this point. They had a Briggs men store and of course this urban renewal came in and they tore all the old stores down including Fagans. It's like a big open parking lot there. Sad thing, perfectly good stores, there were a lot of beautiful buildings there but the he moved up into the old clothing store, Briggs, and he just keeps the bare minimum of stuff. He has no stock and he has some bronze shafts he used to use for the old sea skip boats years ago. It was still in the window. The bronze is probably worth more than the whole item right now. It's probably worth ten times what he paid for it just for the weight of the bronze.

Male Interviewer: I remember my father always took us there to find things that were just hard to find anywhere.

Lenny Lloyd: Well he was a Marine too and he had a lot of Marine stuff in there. At one time he was the only one that had that stuff. If you have any other questions you can keep asking me. I'm going back to make sure I didn't forget anything. Oh, another big thing, Blue Common Express. The central railroad came out with what they called the Blue Common Express. Don't quote me on this but I think it was something like ninety minutes from New York to Atlantic City. It was a big long steam locomotive that was painted a navy blue color. The first time this thing came through Sewaren, all along the line, down through Matawan at all the stops people were out in hundreds to see this Blue Common thing come steaming through. Of course,

I don't know if you've ever seen the old steam locomotives but they are a spectacular thing. They look like a beast with steam coming out of them with the big round face on them. It almost looked like something supernatural. To this day, whenever I get a chance, I go on one of these rides. They had one out in Allentown last year and I missed that. But it's a costly thing to fire one of these things up. They burn a tremendous amount of coal. They used to run once or twice daily to Atlantic City and that was a spectacular thing. Everybody would come out and see that. This also brings to light the fact about airplanes. In those days everybody would be calling the neighbors and yelling airplane. Everybody was out of the house looking at it. Garrison's Field, up where Witco Chemical is near the girl's vocational school going toward Perth Amboy, opposite that was a big open field and these Garrison brothers who had the Packard Motor Car Agency in Perth Amboy, owned airplanes. They were all wrapped up because I guess they interested in World War I. They had an old Jenny Plane from World War I. They had some kind of a French plane down there and they built their own planes. All these sort of bi-wing planes that they would have during the war, that type of thing. But to see those come out and land, coming over your head, the whole neighborhood would be out there to see this so called airplane thing. It was a rickety thing. At one time he was taking passengers up for a couple of dollars. Another thing, the whole Sewaren, the biggest part, was developed prior to the nineteenth century between the Civil War and the turn of the century. All these beautiful big homes you see down along Cliff Road were built by DeForrest who is president of the Central Railroad now. The whole theory was to attract Finn and Sears from New York to be commuters. He wanted them to live in beautiful areas and commute by train. So Sewaren was one, Matawan was another one, Red Bank, Bay Head and Point Pleasant. All those places were developed through this Central Railroad deal and they'd put up these beautiful big homes. At one time in Sewaren they had two or three well-to-do people that were of the Blue Book, the society Blue Book in New York. There were the Ballards and the Browns. There's a huge white thing with a tower down here where Mrs. Rankin now lives. If you talk to her she can tell you some stories.

Male Interviewer: We have to contact her.

Lenny Lloyd: Her husband was one of the committeemen in Woodbridge for awhile. J.C. Brown had his own boat slip and he had a ninety foot steam yacht right down in front of this house. You can still see the semblance of where the thing is caving in now where the slip used to be. They just sold off the property. It was a big beautiful thing that was on the cliff and it was all concreted and stairways going down. He hired a full fledged carpenter who also later doubled as a chauffeur and his name was Mr. Conrad. He also made a full sized woodworking shop down at the foot next to the creek and also a shop for his boats and

boating equipment. That's still there. You can still see the semblance of the dock. As a matter of fact my grandfather, Bill Cook, built the house that my brothers live in right on Cliff Road which was the old Drake homestead. My brother bought this back twenty some years ago. Of course during the Depression all these things were a dime a dozen because everybody lost everything they had in the Wall Street crash. I could have bought a beautiful home along there for anywhere from thirty-five hundred dollars up to sixty-five hundred dollars which was the one the former mayor lived in but sixty-five hundred dollars to us in those days were like six hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Who had the bucks so to speak, that was behind the midst of the Depression. Oh, the Sewaren Motor Boat Club that was a different group. That was an active group that all owned yachts and boats of various sizes and they would conduct races during through the years, speed boat races and they would conduct races for the cruisers right out in the sound. Of course they had their gay nights, their Saturday night affairs too. Many would become quite inebriated. It wasn't anything new.

Female Interviewer: Where was that located?

Lenny Lloyd: The building is still there. Do you know where Karness's Boat Yard is?

Female Interviewer: Yes.

Lenny Lloyd: You back up toward the mouth of the river and there are a couple of little homes tucked in there but then you'd see a fairly good sized building, it must be seventy-five feet or so, and it sits down next to the creek with all the boats tied in front of it. That's the old Motor Boat Club. They had their own railway and you'd pull out the boats and everything there. Of course that was long before anything was on the island. As a matter of fact this Mrs. Brown, here was a woman who could have built or lived any place on the East Coast, from Florida to Maine, and she thought this was the most beautiful view. Of course at that time it was. There were no oil tanks or nothing there. It was all beautiful forest land in Staten Island. Public Service wasn't there neither was Hess Oil or nothing. There was all waving pruned grass, you know, over the island there. We'd walk across the creek in Sewaren and we'd walk up to the ship store. Up in Port Reading at the coal docks they had a full fledged ship store that you could buy anything like a hunk of three inch horsier down to a piece of pie. It was a general store and they had, at that time, schooners coming in, tugboats and ships of all types, picking coal and so forth. That was a big deal. My brother used to take me along. I was always a little tagalong at that time but I still clearly remember going up to the ship store and buying coconut pie or some fancy stuff we couldn't get home. That, of course, was a beautiful walk. You'd walk through this high grass and it was a very beautiful view. Now it's all covered up with the factories and so forth.

Male Interviewer: What do you think really led to the downfall because it seemed a lot of it kind of ended even before the Depression? In the Depression everybody lost everything, a lot of them being bankers.

Lenny Lloyd: It just changed. I think the mobility. I think America on wheels. Even myself, when I think about going to High Bridge, we used to go out to High Bridge to camp, it's about three quarters of a mile from here with the old Model T. Man we thought we were a hundred miles from home. Now you hop on a plane and go to Florida or hop on a jet and go to Paris or anything. I think everything has shifted. Lakewood for instance, although I understand Lakewood is somewhat having a comeback, the story with Lakewood we used to get was mostly Jewish people went to Lakewood. It was the cheap man's Miami. In other words when you went to Miami you owned a mink coat, when you went to Lakewood you rented it, that kind of thing. But you had horse and carriages in the middle of the winter. They'd bundle you with blankets and you'd see the big horse and carriage going all through Lakewood getting the fresh air. That was wonderful.

Male Interviewer: Was Atlantic City very big then?

Lenny Lloyd: Oh yea, Atlantic City was always big.

Male Interviewer: So there still is.....

Lenny Lloyd: Atlantic City was always a tremendous drawing thing. That was its heyday in the twenties. Of course now it's getting even bigger.

Male Interviewer: For a lot of what we read Sewaren was supposedly a real big attraction but that was before say 1910.

Lenny Lloyd: The thing is now like I see them down there parked in their cars and walking around. You couldn't walk on Cliff Road. For instance, you couldn't walk down Cliff Road with a bathing suit on, you had to be dressed. In other words, all those homes along there were well-to-do people. That lane that you see in back of the homes that's a private lane and all the deliveries that were made, whatever it being groceries or Bamberger's or whoever, had to deliver up that lane. They couldn't drive any trucks down Cliff Road, heaven forbid. And you didn't do any loitering or sitting on somebody's front lawn without getting yakked at by the chauffeur or caretaker or somebody else. Of course, all along Cliff Road there was bulkhead and there was money. This was a mysterious thing. We questioned the mayor a while ago about that about whatever happened to the money to rebuild the bulk headings. That's why everything is washed out down there that used to keep the bank from washing out from the storms but that all deteriorated and it was supposed to be rebuilt. They had an allotment of money about ten or fifteen years ago but the money is gone and nothing ever happened. I think it's really the mobility that's really changed. I was amazed. We just came back, a friend of mine has a place down in Florida down in South Venice and we went down to this motor home. He has a twenty foot mini camper they call it. It

sort of looks like a van in the front but it's spread, and we stayed in these camping areas. Now, of course, my version of camping and what they call camping today is utterly ridiculous. I mean they drive with this motor home and everything but the thing that I'm saying is this is off season now, the latter part of May early June, and by ten o'clock at night damn near everyone of those things would be filled by the next morning with people in trailers, motor homes and vans. Just for instance, now I just came back, I had a week away up at Lake George. I remember the time we'd go up there and you didn't just call the ranger first you got in your boat and went out in the island and picked a spot. Then when you got all set up you went back somewhere to the ranger and told him look I'm on so and so spot. Now you don't move. You got to call the ranger and ask if there's a spot available. I mean you go up there many times and no spot so we just started to double up on one of the spots and then somebody else happened to move out that was supposed to go out the next day. The fact that you're on wheels is unbelievable. Just skiing even, when we started to ski, everybody would be looking. You'd go up in April to ski and people would look at you in amazement because you had skis on your car. Today if you're going north and you don't have skis on your car you're an idiot but in those days it was a rare thing. I think the fact is that we just multiplied. There's just too many of us doing the same things I guess you'd say. That's why every camp ground you go to is loaded no matter where you go. You go to any of the local ski areas on the weekend, forget it. I don't go to any in New Jersey. I'm lucky to be able to go other places since my retirement. This retirement, they say, is wonderful if you have your health. The only problem is if you don't have your health then it becomes a real chore. You can't do the things you'd like to do. But right now, like I say, praise the Lord, I'm able to do the things I like to do. I was up At the lake last week waterskiing. Shell Oil came here in 1929 or 1930 and the pile butts, they cut off tops of piles, we used to build our clubhouse. We stuck these pile butts in the ground and it was built like the Rock of Gibraltar. Royal Petroleum came sometime after Shell Oil.

Male Interviewer: Was Shell Oil down past.....

Lenny Lloyd: Shell Oil was right on the point past Royal Petroleum. How Shell Oil ever let that property go without buying the whole package I don't know. I don't know how they let Royal Petroleum get in there because they needed room for expansion. They had to buy the meadowlands way back here and they put tanks so far isolated from the plant that it would have been much better having them right along the shoreline.

Male Interviewer: Well, Boynton Beach was still there when Shell Oil was there, is that right?

Lenny Lloyd: No, no. That was the end of Boynton Beach when Shell

Oil came. There was a shipyard down there. I think they called it Louis's Shipyard. It was on the very point and about where the Laboratory of where Shell Oil is now, there was a saw mill too. It was Boynton Lumberyard. They used to repair barges and ships, wooden ships of various kinds, down there on that point on Shell Oil. But Shell Oil absorbed the whole point from the point back from the shipyard on up next to the Royal Petroleum property. I can't recall when Royal Petroleum came in but when Royal Petroleum came in that wiped out the old beach, Joe Turk's holdings.

Male Interviewer: Were people glad that industry was coming in because it was taking away part of their recreation facilities but it was supplying jobs?

Lenny Lloyd: I couldn't answer for other people but to me it's always sadness. I suppose there are other things but right now I think we've covered quite a bit.