

MJC Okay. [inaudible] [00:00:02] the library oral history project, and today is Tuesday, May 13, 2008, and we're recording at the Easton Library. This is Mary Jane Conner, and—

LB: I'm Loris Brownell, and, uh, I got to start out by saying that, uh, I appreciate this invitation with Mary Jane to, uh, participate in this program, whatever it may be. And, uh, I want to start at the beginning, and we'll proceed up to as near as the we can. I don't know how long this is going to take, but it'll take a while. [laughs] But, uh, I just want to tell you that, um, I was born in the town of Easton and I've spent, spent a good share of my life in the Town of Easton. And, uh, I was born right on, uh, Fly Summit Road just about a quarter of a mile up out of the Summit heading toward, toward Easton. And the house that the present day people, you might know it as the house where Somas lived.

And, um, uh, I got to interject this, because I had, uh, the privilege Sunday of meeting the people that tore the old house down where I was born. And I've been trying for four or five years to make contact with these people. And I finally did. And they gave me a tour of the house, and did I ever enjoy that, 'cause it is beautiful. That house is just gorgeous. And, um, I was born 2/19/1931. And, uh, I kind of surprised her. My sister and I surprised our parents, because, uh, back then they didn't have all these high tech tests that, uh, it'll tell you if it's going to be a boy or a girl, or if you're going to have one, two, three, or four, whatever.

So, um, when the time came, I was born, and, uh, then the doctor real-, of course, they were all born at home in those days. And, uh, the doctor realized there was another one coming, and that happened to be my twin sister named Doris. And I guess, um, as far as I can gather, the reason my name is Loris, which is un-, pretty uncommon, is because they wanted sound-alikes as long as we were twins, at least it makes a good story. So, um, uh, we live—I want to start out by saying that, um, we lived there in the Summit where I was born for three years. In 1934, we moved down in, uh, the farm just passed the Whiteside Church. And, uh, we lived there for four years.

And then, uh, we rented the farm, and, uh, Ernest Brownelle [phonetic] is the man that

owned it, and, uh, he brought a man by the name of George Bowles [phonetic] in one day in the summertime, and asked my mother if it was okay if they looked through the house. And she says, well, I guess I can't stop you. You own it, not us. And, uh, so consequently, uh, George Bowles ended up buying the farm. So my parents had to move. So the logical place to go was back by Summit where we were born. And we moved back there in, uh, I think 1938. And, um, we lived there till 1943 when World War II came on. And, uh, my mother and sister were both working in the Manhattan Shirt Company in Greenwich.

And, uh, we couldn't, uh, the gasoline was rationed and they couldn't get enough gas to get themselves to Greenwich to work. So they decided, I guess, they'd better leave Fly Summit and move into the Village of Greenwich, which we did. And, uh, we moved there in 1943, and lived on John Street in 1947. And, uh, my parents bought a house over on Barbara Avenue back in the Town of Easton. That's where I wanted to be. And, um, we lived there. I lived there with my parents till July 5, 1952 when I was married, uh, to a Eleanor Polly [phonetic]. And, um, we, um, lived there for, uh, on Barbara Avenue. I lived over my brother after we was married. And, uh, then in 1954, I moved down to, uh, the Skiff Farm. That's where Stuart and Carol Skiff live at the present time.

And I lived there for two years, and, uh, then Stuart and Carol came to live there. So I had to leave there, and I went up to Greenwich. And worked for John Skiff's brother, Chester, and, uh, worked for him for four years. Lived down on the flats there in, uh, the end of Academy Street where in 1959, uh, we were [futed? 00:04:48] out of there on the 29th of January. And we walked out at 4:00 in the morning with water to our hips. And, uh, ice, chunks of ice coming in on the flats there, and we were—the Lord was looking after us, because about five minutes after we got our feet up on high ground, these big chunks of ice came in. And, uh, I've got a picture of it out in the car, that I'll bring in to show to Mary Jane here before I go home tonight.

And, uh, it just gives you a little idea of what, what it was like. It was a pretty scary night. And, uh, we're just fortunate that, uh, the right person was looking after us. And that's

why I'm here today talking on this, uh, this little, um, program here. Um—

MJC: What's your earliest memory of Easton?

LB: Okay. The earliest memory of, of Easton, oh, boy, how am I going to answer that? Um, I can remember in the wintertime this would be, uh, one thing that sticks in my mind that, um, when we had a, used to have a snow storm, you know. And we had harder winters back then, than we have today. And of course, they didn't have the high tech big powerful trucks they have today. And, uh, sometimes our road there, Fly Summit Road, uh, we'd go two days before you ever seen a snow plow come by. And, uh, that's how different things were back then in, uh, 70 some years ago than they are today. And they had a piece of equipment. And all I know about it is that it was called, uh, it was a [lend? 00:06:26] whatever that meant. That was the name of this piece of machinery.

And it just barely crawled along so slow that you couldn't hardly see it move, but there wasn't any snow drift that could stop it. It was a powerful machine. And, um, as far as the, uh, Town of Easton, um, I, I worked for, um, the Town of Easton Highway Department.

MJC: You did.

LB: I did. I went there in, uh, I got out of school. Graduated in 19—I'm going to kind of jump around here. But that's just the way the thoughts come to my mind. And, uh, so just bear with me. Um, I graduated from school in 1950 and then 1952, I worked two years for a little oil company in Greenwich when I first got out of school. And then I went to work for the Town of Easton Highway Department in 1952. And worked there until 1954 when I went to work for the Skiff Farms. And, um—

MJC: Who, who was the, um—

LB: Superintendent of the highways was [crosstalk] [00:07:29], was Harold Snell [phonetic].

And I'll tell you, I, I enjoyed working for Harold Snell, because he was a, a fair man. And, uh, a good man to work for. Now that, uh, I mentioned Harold Snell, I've got to tell you a little story about Harold. [laughs] He had quite the temper. And, uh, [coughs] excuse me. One day, uh, we had this big Walter's truck. And that, that was one of the big yellow trucks that they had. They had a Walter's and they had an Oshkosh that were two big trucks. And, uh, the Walter's truck was used when they had really had bad snow storms, and stuff. And that wasn't used in the summer to draw gravel, or anything like that.

It was just used for snow plowing. And Harold wanted to do something to it. I don't remember just what it was, to work on the frontend of the truck. And, and, uh, he says to me one day there, he says jump up in that truck, Lor, and back it outside there. So I can have a little more daylight. See, what I, what I want to do here. So anyway, he had, uh, um, a socket wrench there, and a piece of pipe extension on it. So he could have more power, and whatever he was doing. And that handle slipped off of the wrench of the, of the pipe wrench that he was using. And, um, he hit his knuckles on the, some part of the frame. He banged them pretty good. And so I probably shouldn't say this, but I'm going to. He says, 'you hit me, you son of a bitch. He says, 'you'll never do it again.'

And he's standing there with an iron bar pounding on that truck. Now, can you imagine what, I'm sitting up in the truck just trying to control myself laughing. It was so funny. But that's one thing I re-, I recall about, uh, Harold Snell. And, uh, as I said, I worked there two years. And, and when I decided—gave him a time, decided I was going to go work for Skiff. We was working down on what they called at that time—I think it's McGowan Road now in the Town of Easton. But at that time, it was called Fred Luis Road, had a different name. And he had us down there. There was Hank Jennings [phonetic] who was my neighbor, lived just below the house where I was born.

And Hank Jennings, Earl Wolfe [phonetic], you all knew Earl Wolfe, and, um, myself, and Charlie Goldman [phonetic]. I think it was the four of us down there. We was burning brush, cutting brush, and burning it. And, uh, there was a haystack across the

field from where we was burning brush. And there happened to be a little wind come up, and it blew some of the ambers of he, of the brush we was burning over onto the haystack. And caught fire, and it was, it, it actually ruined the, the stack of hay. And I didn't know that day, but I heard afterwards that, uh, Harold Snell thought that I touched that off, because I was getting done. I had turned my time in, and he thought I did that just, I don't know for what reason. But I thought Harold knew me better than that.

But, um, he, uh, the other men told him there after I got done, and left. He says, 'Harold,' he says, 'he didn't have a thing to do with that.' He says, 'you've got that, that all wrong.' And I'll be darned, uh, we got paid every, uh, week, I think on Thursday, or something like that. And the first week I was at the farm for Skiff's, Harold comes riding over, and handed me a week's paycheck. So I guess he forgave me [laughs] when he realized that I didn't touch that haystack off. And, uh, but, uh, I, I enjoyed my two years there working for Harold. And, uh, like I've enjoyed my whole life living in the Town of Easton. And, uh, if I had my choice, that's where I'd be now. But, uh, things have a way of changing.

And I'm living next door to Easton in Greenwich. So, uh, that's not all bad either. And, uh, now I'd like to go back now and, um, kind of give you a little synopsis of, uh, when we started school. And we started in, uh, what they call the West Cambridge School, which is the house—it's now a home. It was, uh, converted from the school into a home. And it's right at, uh, the foot of what they called Hungerford's Hill. That's what—

MJC: [crosstalk] [00:11:33] moved down to the farm then at that time.

LB: At that time, at that time, that was, uh, I started school in 1936. That'd be when I was 5 years old. And we were living down—we had left Fly Summit. We was living down on the farm by the Whiteside Church. And, uh, we went there, um, I'm not sure, I think two years. But, uh, then my mother, uh, had, she had a little problem with a school teacher. And I, I, I'm not going to mention the school teacher. I don't think it would be proper. And, uh, but I'll just leave it at that, and so she went over, uh, and got us enrolled in the

district four, which is over in the Conner district. And, uh, we went to school there for, I think two years there. I'm pretty sure it was two years, because when we left there, we went up into [Gillis? 00:12:23] district in a one room school house.

And we went there for two years. And then we went to the Greenwich main school when I was in sixth grade. So I think that was about two, two, and two. And, u m—

MJC: How would you get to—from the farm up to the district [inaudible] [00:12:39]?

LB: Um, walk.

MJC: You would.

LB: Walk, and, uh, I'm glad you asked me that question, because in the wintertime how we got there was, uh, a man by the name of Beman Cole [phonetic]. He lived in Fly Summit, uh, right there where, uh, you remember where Cliff lived?

MJC: Yes. Yes.

LB: Clifford, well that was the Cole House. And, uh, they had a big family like I showed you in the picture here that, uh, that we had when I started school. And, um, Beman used to go up by our house, 'cause he worked—I'm not too sure where, whether it was in Troy, or where, but he always wen by our house, and right over by the school. And so in the wintertime when there was snow on the road, and stuff, Doris and I, we'd go out and, uh, wrap the rope around the bumper of the car. Get on our sled, and he'd tow us over to school.

MJC: On your sleds.

LB: On our sleds.

MJC: The two of you.

LB: The two of us, the two of us. That's how we got to school. I never in my life when, even whether I was in Greenwich, or in the country school, or whatever, I never that I can recall, got a ride to school by my parents, or anybody in the family. They were always busy working. And that just wasn't convenient. So we got there the best way we could. And, uh, when I went to the West Cambridge School, of course we walked. That wasn't too far from the farm by the Whiteside Church. That was just a, a nice short walk. And, uh, we walked there, and then when we moved back to Fly Summit, and, uh, we still—

MJC: I can see you on, on your sleds [laughs].

LB: [laughs] I will say he went slow. He went slow for us. Yeah. But we never had any problems. But it would be impossible to even, um, think of what, of doing something like that today, because everything is so fast, and speed up and stuff. If somebody had us on the back of the car, they'd want to go 50 miles an hour with us back there. And, and that wouldn't work. But, uh, back then things were a slower pace. And, uh, I think a better pace, personally. But, um, let's see. Now I'm going to leave the, uh, West Cambridge School. And I think I mentioned this, when we went to Conner district, and, uh, there was an incident, one incident that really sticks in my mind over there.

Um, it was in the, probably the month of September. And that's when they used to play the World Series, baseball world series. And, uh, of course, I was a—I like baseball. I was old enough to know what was going on then, and, uh, most all the kids enjoyed baseball. And apparently the teacher enjoyed baseball, because, uh, we didn't do too much work when the ballgame was on. We had a radio there, so we could listen to it. And, and, uh, this one particular day, um, I was one of them. We was sitting there with our feet dangling out the window of the school listening to the ballgame.

And it just so happened, my brother—mother, and brother had been down to Montgomery Wards, I think is where they went that day. And when they come back

through, they seen us sitting there. And of course, uh, it didn't take them long to stop their car, and back up to the school. My mother come in and said to the teacher, she says, 'if that's all they're going to do here,' she says, 'they're going home with me.' And that's what we did. She loaded us in the car and home we went. And, uh, that's something that I'll, I'll never forget that, because, uh, it sticks in my mind as if it happened yesterday.

MJC: [inaudible] [00:15:59] made quite an impression.

LB: Yeah. She did. Yeah. I think she got her point across. Of course, uh, uh, the, the sad, the one thing about this is that, um, still sticking with school, when we went to live in, uh, Greenwich in the village, because we lived out in the country still at that time. And we couldn't go to Greenwich school, and, uh, unless we lived in the village, and, uh, at that time. I forget what the reason was. I don't recall all that exactly. But, so we went up and lived with my aunt. She lived in—my mother's sister. And, um, we lived—she lived on Washington Street, and my mother made us go up and stay with her Monday through Friday. And go to school, then we'd just come home weekends down to Fly Summit.

And, uh, so that way we got to the big school in, in Greenwich, and, and it was in sixth grade. And, uh, low and behold, the first year after we got out of sixth grade, and went to seventh, and junior high, uh, who happened to be our homeroom teacher but the teacher we had down in district four, the same lady. And here, again, my mother wasn't very happy over that. But, um, this is not a very, uh, nice thing to have to say about this, uh, particular class. But at that time, they had—in junior high, they had 7A and 7B, then we were two classes for seventh grade. And then they had 8A, and 8B.

Well the better students were actually in 7A, and 8A. The poor students were in the B classes, and where I was, I was in the B classes, and, uh, my sister and I both. And, uh, I'm not exactly sure, um, how many, uh, uh, students there was in that class there, probably, uh, uh, 26, 28, something like that, pretty good, pretty good sized class. And, uh, I'm not too sure if it was because we were that bad and belonged in 7B, or if the teacher had something to do with it. But when it come June that year, out of all the people



in that class, there was only four that passed.

MJC: Out of the whole class.

LB: Out of the whole class.

MJC: Wow.

LB: Four people passed, so we repeated seventh grade. And, uh, along with a lot of others. I wasn't alone. There was—yeah. My sister and I weren't alone. It was, uh, a lot of other kids there, and but needless to say, that teacher only taught one year. And, uh, she was history, but one experience that happened that year while we were in, in her class. And she taught arithmetic which was my best subject by a long shot, and, uh, I kind of thought I was going to get 100 in, um, the, uh, the test at the end of the year in arithmetic. And like lots of times happens when kids are taking tests, and stuff, they don't check it over. And, and to see if they made a silly mistake, or something.

And, uh, low and behold, that's what happened. I thought I had everything A-1. But I made a silly mistake, and I got a 98. So, but I was happy with that. That was the best marker I ever got in school. [laughs] I didn't have many good ones. But, um—

MJC: That's what you remember right.

LB: That's what I remember. But one thing I remember about going into that history class, or into that, uh, math, um, that was our homeroom. But then of course, we rotated around. Like, once you get in seventh grade, you know how you do that Mary Jane, go from room-to-room for your different subjects. And when I come back in this one day to have, um, uh, into our math class, uh, Jay Hill Ripton [phonetic], do you remember hearing that name? He was principal in Greenwich before Hendrin [phonetic] came in, before Henry came. You should remember Hendrin probably, I think. You remember him. But Ripton was president, or, uh, principal before, uh, Hendrin.

And so, one day we come in and I, I think every student in that class happen to see Ripton sitting in the back seat in the room. And so, we went in and of course, uh, nor-, normally we weren't very quiet in there. We was kind of raising cane. But that day, we did sit right down like a prim and proper student should do. And she started progressing with her, her class. And we had a kid named, by the name of Tom Blandy [phonetic]. And he, uh, sat right about in the middle of the room. He was a little short fellow. And he, and he didn't stand out as far as size goes too much. But I guess he stood it just so long, and he raised his hand. And he says, called the lady by the name, Miss So-and-so.

And he says, you know, I don't understand why everybody is so quiet in her today. Of course, the principal sitting in the back of the room had quite a lot to do with that. And somebody must have kicked him in the shins, or whatever. I'm not sure. And says, 'back there,' well he sat down in that seat. And he just about slid right down underneath the desk. [laughs] He was so embarrassed, I'll tell you. And, uh, the school teacher's face got just about as red as a beat, because that, uh, kind of brought out kind of a bad point there. But anyway, them are, them are some things that I remember in, in, uh school.

MJC: Can we go back just a little bit to district four? And, like, who, who are classmates? Like, who—

LB: Oh, boy, well, um, Joe Conner for one. Uh, I think, I, I'm not sure if Robert was there with us, and, or not, or if he was going to the high school. I'm sure that your dad and, uh, Aunt Katherine were going to the, the main school. I'm pretty sure of that, but I know Gerald was there with us. And, uh, Robert could have been. But I'm not certain on that. And, u h, George Pearson [phonetic], I think was there with us, the man that was killed in the car crash. Um, I think, um, I think Jim McGraw, the youngest one of the McGraw's was there for one. And, um, I'm having difficulty recalling just, uh, how many people were there.

But those were people that lived in the neighborhood, because I know your, your parents

took over the McGraw farm. And maybe you still own that farm. Does, does that still belong in, in your, with you girls?

MJC: Yes.

LB: It does.

MJC: Yes.

LB: And, um—

MJC: I just wondered who, who you remember being—

LB: Yup, in that school, in, in that, uh, at that time. Um, I can't remember really any others. There was only probably, uh, 8 kids there maybe, probably not much more than that, 8 or 10 at the most.

MJC: Did anybody come up—go—come from your way, like, in [inaudible] [00:22:27]?

LB: Uh, no. No. No. And see, we, we, yeah. We shouldn't have been going to that district, see. We, we were out of our district. And the other ones went to the right district which was down where we started in West Cambridge. That's where we should have been going, but because of she was teaching down there too, see. She started. That's what—she was our first grade teacher.

MJC: Do you want to say something about your mother here, about—

LB: Uh—

MJC: Uh, she—it sounds like she had a—

LB: Yeah.

MJC: ...strong sense of education.

LB: Uh, well, uh, I don't know just how far my mother went. And, and, and I will say this though about my mother. Um, uh, uh, she was the king pin of the family. And I've told this to a number of people. I don't think I ever, ever once in my life was disciplined by my father. I don't ever recall it.

MJC: May-, Maybe we should say your mother's name.

LB: My, my mother's name, um, maiden name was Beverage. She was, uh, uh, Gladys was her first name.

MJC: Gladys, okay.

LB: And her middle name, I'll say this here, like, 'cause she can't—is not here to hear it. But she hated it. But it was Gladys McDoogal Beverage [phonetic]. And she hated the name McDoogal.

MJC: Was that a family name?

LB: I am not sure of that Mary Jane, if it was or not.

MJC: But it wasn't her favorite.

LB: No. It—by a long shot, it wasn't. And they lived up in North Greenwich. And, um, anybody that hears this is—that's familiar with the Greenwich area. It's where Bernie Sanders [phonetic], uh, well, Bernie, um, Barber. She married Bozzy Barber [phonetic]. And that was right across from, uh, um, Brian Barber's farm. That's a little farm that sits up on the hill. That was the Beverage homestead. And, uh, my father—I've got a little

story to tell you on this one. My father at that time was living in, in Fly Summit where I was born when he was courting my mother. And, uh, of course there was no automobiles, so everything was a buggy in the summertime, and a sleigh in the wintertime with a horse.

And, uh, my father's told me this more than once. He said that, uh, how well trained that horse was, because when he would go up there and get ready to go home in the wintertime. He'd curl up in the corner with a blanket, and say 'get up' to the horse to go. And then he wouldn't have to worry about—he'd go to sleep, and when the—we got to the wagon house door in Fly Summit, the horse would stop. He knew every turn to take, and, and everything. I thought that was, u h, pretty, uh, pretty amazing.

MJC: [laughs] He was pretty tired out after he [inaudible] [00:24:45] horse would do the work.

LB: [laughs] The horse did the work. The horse did the work. Yeah. That's right. That's right. Um—

MJC: I, I bet your father liked that story.

LB: Oh, yeah. I'm, I'm sure he did. I'm sure he did. Um—

MJC: So I just wanted you to say something about your mom since you were talking about how she—

LB: Yup. And, um—

MJC: ...[crosstalk] [00:25:03] school for you guys.

LB: She, uh, she saw to it that, uh, that we did what we, we should be doing. Uh, uh, let me put it that way about my mother. She, uh, when she spoke, we better pay attention. That's just the way it was and, uh, we generally did. And, uh, she—like I said, she, she didn't

like it when you didn't have a school teacher that she approved of or something. And so, that's why we moved around at those country schools to try to stay one step ahead of that one teacher. But I seemed to follow so long as we went. So, uh, but we, we got through. My sister—my twin sister, uh, didn't, uh, graduate.

She quit school and, uh, went to work in, uh, Donohue's drugstore. That was her first job where she worked. Yeah. And, uh, so I don't know. For some reason, she didn't care about school. I didn't either, but, uh, thanks to Ed Snyder. And of course, everybody knows Ed Snyder. He was superintendent in Greenwich for years. And, uh, a very, very good friend of mine and, uh, everybody else, and, uh, one day I got disenchanted with a school. And, uh—

MJC: This is later on.

LB: This was later on. I think it was when I was—I don't remember if I was a junior or was in my senior year, probably, I was a junior. I'm not sure. But, um, I was going to quit school. And, uh, I told my mother and father that I wanted to quit. I had, had enough of school and, uh, my father at that time worked at the S and T Papermill. And, uh, he says, uh, 'I can get you a job down there.' He says, 'that won't be any problem getting you a job.' But he says, 'you want to remember one thing.' He says, 'you go to work down there, you're going to be working with a bunch of older men. And they've been there for years. And you're going to be at the bottom of the totem pole.' And he says, 'it won't be easy.' He says, 'I can tell you that.'

Well, I never got that point, because, uh, when I decided to hand my books in. I went into the office and of course we only had the one school at that time, which is the middle school now in Greenwich. And, uh, the office was upstairs. And I took my books in, and gave them to the principal's secretary. And I says, I'm leaving school. Well at that time, Mr. Hendron was the superintendent and Ed Snyder was guidance counselor. But his office was right off of the main office. And he heard me out there telling the secretary that I was quitting school and turning my books in. So I turned and walked out of the

office, but he was right on my heels when I walked out. And he says, 'Loris,' he says, 'what did I just hear?'

I told him. I says, I thought I had enough of school, and I didn't like it, and I was going to leave. He says, 'you and I are going to have a little visit.' So you—I'm sure you remember Mary Jane, uh, the benches that were—used to sit up in the second floor of the school. As you went up the stor-, stairs at each end of the building, there was a bench that sat there. And for anybody that wanted to use it, no particular reason. And he says, 'let's come down and sit down here.' He says, 'and I'm going to visit with you.' Well, there wasn't an awful lot of visiting done, at least on my part. And that's very unusual, 'cause as you can tell, I like to talk.

I didn't have to say a word. He did it all. And, uh, he says, 'you are not quitting school.' He says, 'you just can't do it. And, uh, it took some convincing. But when, uh, we got all said and done, I went back to the office. And got my books, and went back to the [homeroom? 00:28:34]. And I graduated. And I didn't even have to take a high school diploma. I got a Regents, and, um, I don't know how. But I did. So, uh—

MJC: Did you ever revisit that conversation with him?

LB: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. We did. With Mr. Snyder, I—matter of fact, with Mr. Snyder, I thanked him probably before he passed on, I probably thanked him a dozen times for, for saving me. That's what I did and, and he really did. Yup. And, uh, he coached baseball, and, uh, one year, 'cause George Jackson was the regular coach. For some reason, when I think I was a sophomore, uh, Georgy Jackson didn't want to coach that year. I think his wife was sick. I'm not sure, but I think that was the reason, because she was ill. And passed on in, uh, within a matter of a year or so, and I think that was why he didn't coach. So, and Mr. Snyder took over coaching baseball.

And, um, baseball as I said is my sport, and, uh, I wanted to play in the worst way. But I had one problem holding me back, I couldn't run. I thought I was going fast, and I wasn't

going anywhere. And, uh, Mr. Snyder says to me before the season started, he says, I'd, uh, 'I don't know what I'm going to do with you Loris.' He says, 'I'd like to have you in, because' he said, 'I know you can hit.' He says, 'that's not a problem with you.' But he says, 'where am I going to play you?' He says, 'you can't move.' And, uh, Bob Lyons, of course, who, everybody knows Bob. And, uh, he was our best pitcher at that time, and also our first [trained? 00:30:08] catcher.

So, and that's a little bit difficult to do both at the same time. So [laughs] Mr. Snyder says to me. He says, 'we'd, uh, like to have you, uh, catch while Bob is pitching.' And I said, Mr. Snyder, you've got to be kidding. I says, I cannot catch. I'll—I never had, see. I says, I'll close my eyes every time that ball comes in there. He says, 'no. You won't.' He says, 'you might think you will, but you won't.' He says, 'I just want you to try it.' And there's another thing that Mr. Snyder did for me that turned out to be one of the best things that's ever happened to me, because I not only caught Bob that year. But then the next two years, I was the first trained catcher and had, uh, a lot of fun playing baseball.

But here again, because of Mr. Snyder, so I owe a lot to him, that man. And I've even told his kids. Uh, Erica, I think her name was Erica. His, uh, his granddaughter, Morgan's daughter, and, um, I got to know her pretty good, because I followed the girls basketball in school. And I still do today. I like to go to girls games and, uh, if they do something good, I tell them about it. And, uh, I don't make no bones about it. I think that's what should be done when somebody does something worthwhile.

Hey, complement them. Let them know that. And, um, so I told Erica a couple of times about what I've just told you about how her, how her grandfather helped me. And, and he really did. He—I'm not the only one he helped. He helped a lot of kids, but, uh, I happened to appreciate it maybe more than some. But I'm sure they all did.

MJC: [inaudible] [00:31:38] that. That's a great story.

LB: Yup. It, it is. And, uh, u h—



MJC: I—part of me wants to go back to the house on, by Summit just for a little bit. And just tell us about the house, and tell us about, um, because I guess you caught my attention when you said you just visited the house.

LB: Okay. Um—

MJC: So I thought, what was it like when you lived there?

LB: Yeah. Well—

MJC: Um, just a little bit. Do you mind?

LB: Oh, no. I, I'd, I'd love to. I'd love to. Uh, the, the first thing that I noticed when I was fortunate enough this past Sunday to catch the people that own the place now. Uh, and they invited me in, like, in. Uh, well, Eleanor and I both, uh, my wife, they invited us in to see the house, because it is brand spanking new on the same foundation where the old house sat, same foundation. And, um, it's, uh, it's just wonderful and the one thing that caught my eye that certainly wasn't there when we lived there, they've got a beautiful bathroom. And all we had was an outhouse. We didn't even know what a bathroom was back then.

MJC: [inaudible] [00:32:43].

LB: [laughs] Yeah. That's right. That's right. And, um, oh, oh, let's see. Uh, in, in that—

MJC: What about, um, electricity?

LB: And we had electricity.

MJC: Did you have [inaudible] [00:32:55]?

LB: Uh, no. That part, I can't really say. I'm not too sure but I know we did have electricity. And we had, um, we burnt wood for heat. And, uh, we had, um, an old fashioned, um, oak stove, I'll call it, a p-, uh, I'll call it a pot belly, uh, for lack of a better word, oak stove. And, um, it sat right in the, well not quite the center of the floor of the living room, but close. And, um, that stove, the, the man that owns it now that showed us through the new house this past Sunday. He says, 'you know, I'm going to show you the barn when we go out of the house,' which used to be the woodshed. And they've put a bit—somebody in—he didn't.

But the people, Soma's, or somebody that owned it before these people now, put a new addition on it with a nice big two car garage in the back side of it. And, uh, but the old woodshed that was there when we were there is still intact. And, only, he fixed it all up. It's, it's modernized, and pretty nice. He says, 'I've got a stove to show you out there,' and he says, 'I'm just thinking now when you tell us about having that, uh, wood round oak stove, uh, sitting there for—and that's what you had for heat. You know, this could be the same one.' And so, we walked out, and just the minute I saw it, I says there's no question in my mind that's it. That's it. And I'll bet you that stove today is worth some money, 'cause it's an antique more or less.

MJC: Was it, was it the cook stove, or just the heat stove?

LB: No. It was heat stove, just heat, just heat.

MJC: It was just heat, so it, so it was like [crosstalk] [00:34:25].

LB: Just heat, yup. It had a, it had a [inaudible] [00:34:28] can't see this on the recording. But, uh, it, it had a good size, uh, you could put, put a lot of wood and it would go all night in the stove, on a good cold winter night.

MJC: [inaudible] [00:34:36].

LB: Sitting out in the woodshed. Yeah. It, it needs some work on it. It needs, it needs some, uh, refinishing to bring it back to its original luster, you know. But, uh, it, it, I know it's that stove. There's no question, because I remembered everything about it. As I told these people Sunday there, I says there's no question. And he was, he was glad to hear that. And, uh, I says that thing, if you decide you want to get rid of it—he says, I don't want to get rid of it. But he says, if I—I says if you do, I'm sure that's worth in this day and age, that's worth something. And, uh, in the kitchen, we had, um, I think what they called them then at that time was, uh, home comfort stove. I think is what they called them. And it had a, a deck up on the back of it, like a warming—

MJC: [inaudible] [00:35:19].

LB: Yeah. Or, yup. There, and, uh, they were great big things. Gosh sakes, they were, they were huge. That stove, that's what we had in the kitchen. And we had a picture pump in the sink in the kitchen. Yup. And there was a well right out across the driveway, uh, y-, yup. Yup. That, uh, we could pump the water in the sink in the, right in the house, and we also used to go out and, uh, we had a handle with a, a roller on it, and a rope, and you'd put the—hook the rope onto the pail. And let it down the well, and, and then just turn the thing up with a rower, and get your—if for some reason you didn't want to use the pump inside, or whatever. And, uh, of course, uh, I said we burnt wood all the time.

We, my father owned land across the road, which now that doesn't go with this place. They only own on the side where the house is. He says, 'I wish I did own that,' but somehow or other after the past years, that got separated. And, and, uh, the, the—somebody bought the lower, the lower side of the road including the chicken house. And, and they built another house down in there too. And, and, uh, so this man didn't have the opportunity to own that. But, um—

MJC: [crosstalk] [00:36:24] that man that owns that land [inaudible] [00:36:25].

LB: He told me that he lives in Glennville is where he lives. And he just retired this year from the GE, but he does—he's a consultant kind of now more than anything with him. And he says he gets called a lot more often than he wished he would. But they, they have him come in, and help them out on certain things. So, uh, Barb Jennings who lives just down the road where, uh, of course when we was there as kids, the people that lived there was Bert and Carl Wipple [phonetic]. And that was—

MJC: [inaudible] [00:36:54].

LB: That was, u h, they were living where Barb lives now, where Barb and Pat—that was the Wipple place. But it was, it was, uh, Burt Wipple and her name was Cora. And that was Elthia, Pat's mother's parents. That's who that was. That would be Pat's grandparents. Yup. And, uh, the one thing I remember about—of course, anybody back then, we could go to our neighbors. There was Wipple's down there, and then there was Mary Jennings who was Hank Jennings's mother, that lived up the lane, in the house up on the lane there. And I spent more time up there probably than I did down at my own house. And, uh, because Mrs., uh, old Mary Jennings, I never knew the—Hank's father.

I think he died as a young man. But, uh, Mary was a, a, a elderly lady, and I'd always go up there and get milk, and molasses cookies, and all this kind of stuff. And she made a lot of us kids, and we could just go up there, and walk in. Didn't make any difference if anybody was there, just walk in, that's the way we were treated. And now the Wipple's, the same way, and Burt Wipple, um, the one thing that sticks out with him is in the wintertime for entertainment, we—um, have you ever heard of anybody riding a skip jack? Do you know what a skip jack is?

MJC: No.

LB: A skip jack is you take a barrel stave, and you put a, a wooden block on it, and a board across the wooden block to sit on, and hang onto it on both sides. And they'd polish up the barrel stave, and send it on a curve, see. It's not a flat—this is a curve. And, uh, he

used to build them for us. And, uh, if we broke one, that didn't take him long, because it was, it was just a matter of having the stave. And he would put some wax on it, so it would go a little faster on the snow. And—

MJC: Where did you go downhill?

LB: Right out back of the woodshed. We had quite a steep hill, a short hill, oh, yeah, right there. Right there at the house in Summit. And, uh, I used to get so mad, because I could not ride that skip jack down without falling down with my sister. She would ride that thing down there, and it'd never tip over. And I didn't like that, [laughs] when she could do that, and I couldn't. But anyway, we—that's—we made our own fun. And another thing, um—

MJC: Now just before you go on, um, like, you said you were born there, but weren't you born in the hospital?

LB: No. No. No kids were born in the hospital then.

MJC: No. The hospital [crosstalk] [00:39:08].

LB: No. Well, they might—there was probably hospitals, but the kids were all born at home back when I was born.

MJC: [inaudible] [00:39:16]

LB: I don't even know, Mary Jane. I don't know if it was or not. I don't know that.

MJC: Well I was thinking that you were born in a hospital but—

LB: No. No.

MJC: ...but you were born right there in the house.

LB: No. We was born right there, and the doctor that delivered us was Dr. Oatman [phonetic], his name was. He was an old time doctor and he was in Greenwich. He had his office in Greenwich. But, uh, he was—

MJC: So even a bigger surprise.

LB: Oh, yeah. Yeah. And, um—

MJC: Were you the only twins there in that area—

LB: Yeah. As far as I know, as far as I know, and when we were born, uh, you know the—  
Stan Brownell.

MJC: Yes.

LB: And they lived the next place up the road. And, uh, his mother Irene, well, and my mother were close friends at that time. And sad to say that, um, some—I don't know what happened. But they didn't wind up being close friends. As a matter of fact, they wouldn't even speak. But, uh, in later life, but at that time they were close. And Irene had come down to help Dr. Oatman deliver, well supposedly one child. And, uh, they, they, uh, the way he house was set up there, we had, uh, the kitchen was on in the back. And then you'd come in through a dining room, and you went into the living room. And then you went around by the front door, and that passed the stairs that went upstairs.

And then you went right in the door passed the stairs that went into what they—back years ago, they used to have—most every house had a parlor. They had a living room, and then you had another room they called the parlor. And I guess that was supposed to be if you had special company, or something. That's what I always figured. But, uh, and then off the parlor was another bedroom. And that's where my mother was when she

gave, uh, delivered us. And, uh, of course thinking there was going to be just one, they had provisions for one. But when I was born first about a half hour before my sister, and, um, Irene, when she found out that I was born. And, uh, she went out to tell my father. He was out in the kitchen.

And she went out, and his name was John. But they, everybody called him Jack. And, um, she says, Jack, you've, uh, you've got a son. And, uh, I don't know how tickled he was over that. It took an awful lot to excite my father most generally. But Irene says, the doctor says there's another one coming. So I guess that's all it took to excite him, 'cause she says he was beside himself. He didn't know what to make of it. And, uh, of course, uh, they—as I said, they didn't have provisions for two. So, um, we slept for the—I was—I've been told of course, that we slept for the first month, or six weeks, and they took a dresser.

And he took two drawers out of it. And, uh, that's what we slept in, uh, bureau drawers. Yup, so that's, uh, that's kind of the things that I remember. And then, um, my mother passed on, uh, in 1965. And, uh, my father lived till 1981. And, uh, when I left the Skiff farms, uh, I had to have a place to live, and went to work for Agway Petroleum of course. And, um, so he went down to live with my sister, Geraldine. And he lived there. That's where he died, right there in the house. He didn't even go to the hospital. He died right there. And, um, he was kind of a hard man to visit with even with us kids.

Uh, you'd—I'd go down there, and I'd sit there, and I would think, and think of something I could say to him that would get him talking. And, um, but if I could mention something that happened that he had told me happened in Fly Summit. 'Cause Fly Summit, Mary Jane, used to be a pretty vibrant place. Um, when Brownell lived where Mary and Otti [phonetic] lives, that was Mary's father, Winniford [phonetic], and Edna. And my God, he had a general store down on the corner that was a real up and coming store, everybody done their shopping there. And, uh, he, uh, had a milk—he had milk trucks. He had two trucks. My brother drove one of them as a matter of fact. Paul Bangle [phonetic], you know Paul and Gladys Bangle?

MJC: Mm-hmm. [affirmative]

LB: Paul worked there. This Beman Cole I was telling you about—

MJC: Did Paul work in the store?

LB: Uh, no. No. He—they drove trucks. They drove trucks. Uh, I, I think in the store, um, kind of the women, at night it was a gathering place. As long as everybody wanted to stay around and visit and stuff, there was never any set time to close it. Uh, they'd sit there, and Winniford would run the store. But I think during the day that maybe his wife, or some of the women, or something in the community. But, uh, the men that worked for him, uh, drove milk truck. And it was all cans then of course.

My brother did that and I, uh, I remember riding with him on weekends, Saturday and Sundays. And, and, uh, one thing that I enjoyed when my brother drove milk truck, we— McGraw's, we always picked their milk up. And, uh, of course that had quite a hill coming down from McGraw's coming back down toward Pearson's, toward your place. And then he'd go, and see how fast he can go going down that hill. Of course, I thought that was big time. I liked that. [laughs] I wasn't too old at that time.

MJC: Well, tell us—say a little bit more about the store, like, what was that—

LB: It was—

MJC: ...[crosstalk] [00:44:01] place for all of the—

LB: Uh, for—

MJC: ...neighbors?



LB: Yeah. People would come in there, and, and sit around. As I said, did all our, all our shopping there, and, uh, it was a, it was a pretty thriving store. He carried a, a, a lot of things. And, uh, and then he had a, a coal business across the, the road from, across the road from the store. He had coal [vans? 00:44:23] that was out, and then went in, and some of them off of County Route 74. He had them separated in different sized coal, you know, [inaudible] [00:44:29] coal, um, stove coal, and, and chestnut, all different sizes. And, uh, he, uh, as I said, he had, uh, milk routes.

And he, and he, uh, and the one thing I really enjoyed doing with him was in the wintertime was, uh, uh, nobody had refrigeration, and didn't have, uh, [bulk? 00:44:47] tanks for ice. So how do you, how do you cool your milk? Well, you have ice houses, and, uh, they used to draw the ice off of, uh, the ones that I remember going to was, uh, Harvey Daly's sawmill down South Cambridge, or Center Cambridge on the road from, uh, do you know where that was? You know where, you know where Bell Road is? Uh, well, where Trinkle's [phonetic] lived.

MJC: Yes.

LB: Bell Road, and then, uh, Viramay [phonetic] and her husband live on South Road. But the other Trinkle farm was up on Bell Road. And it goes over to Wilmont chicken farm.

MJC: And that's where the sawmill [crosstalk] [00:45:19]?

LB: And that's where, uh, the, they had a sawmill, and a pond. And that's where that the— when all the ice that he filled, all the ice houses around. Every farmer had an ice house. And they packed the ice in saw dust. And that's how you kept it. And that would last them right through the summer. Hard to bel—

MJC: What would you do?

LB: ...hard—I would just, I would just ride with my brother. 'Cause I was a young kid. I was

just—

MJC: Oh, so he was delivering—

LB: And he'd draw ice from the pond, and put in the, in the houses for the farmers. So, and, and most every house had an ice box in the house. And they would go out, and these chunks of ice would, would probably weigh, um, I'm just going to throw out a guess here of about 100 pound a piece, something like that. And then they'd go out, and whatever they needed for ice, they'll put in the icebox. They'd take a, a chisel and a hammer, or something, and chisel, chisel off a few pieces. And went and stick it in, good for a day. That was, uh, that wasn't a GE refrigerator. That was a, an old ice box [laughs], I'll tell you. But it done the job.

MJC: Yes.

LB: It did the job. And—

MJC: So you really—you got to see, um, the area through your brother, through his job.

LB: Oh, yeah. Yeah. I did, because, because, because of him there. And I think probably, that's one thing. You see, I've never been a, a kid that wanted to go out and play with other kids. I, I never did. I always wanted to be with the men, and with the horses. I always wanted to be out. And any time when I'd get home from school, the first thing I do is get my clothes changed, or whatever. And I'd hightail it out to, to be with the men. Yeah. When I was, uh, uh, five, 6 years old, I did that. And, uh, that's why I went to work for, uh, Duane Brownell when I was—I was only about 10 when I started there. And then, u h—

MJC: You should talk a little bit about that. I just have to check the tape, 'cause rather than have it click off—

LB: Okay.

MJC: ...while we're telling a story, I'd rather have us, um, just [inaudible] [00:47:08] close to being done too. So I think I'll stop it now, and—

LB: Okay. Yup.

MJC: ...[crosstalk] [00:47:13] start—you can talk about when you were 10 years old [laughs].

LB: Yeah. When—

MJC: When you got your job at 10.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[BEGINNING OF NEW INTERVIEW]

MJC: There we go. Okay. So I [crosstalk] [00:00:01].

LB: Oh, oh, okay. Now I'm going to go to, um, I, I think I mentioned there about working on a farm when I was 10 years old. And, um, I worked for a man by the name of Duane Brownell. And, uh, he was an elderly gentleman at the tail end of his career. And, um, for the people that are listening to this that would be familiar with the area and what we're talking about, Earl Hordenham [phonetic] is, and his family has owned that farm now for probably the last 50 years, or I'd say about that.

And, uh, but anyway, I worked for this man for, uh, u m, two summers. And I got a dollar a day. And I'll tell you, I, I thought I was making big money, because I stayed down there. I, I stayed there for room and board all summer, or every week. And, um, I'd go home to my parents, and stay over the weekend, and go home on Saturday night. And, and then come back down to farm on, on Monday morning. Ride down with the milkman,

or whatever I could catch a ride from Greenwich. And, uh, so—

MJC: Did they have kids, Loris, or were you—

LB: No. He had, he had two children, but they were grown, and his son Donald Brownell was called in the, was killed in the Battle of the Bulge in World War II. Yup. As a matter of fact—

MJC: So you stayed out there with him, and—

LB: I stayed there with him and then, yeah. And, uh, well at that—no. At that time, he did not have a wife. He married one later on, but he had a housekeeper. And her name was Netty Keefe [phonetic] from Cambridge. But she kept house for him. And, um, uh, Joe McGraw, of course you knew Joe, and he worked, uh, for Duane at that time. One year, the two years I worked there, the first year he had a man by the name of Floyd Townson [phonetic] working for him.

And then, Joe come the second year I was there, and worked, because, um, there wasn't enough on the McGraw family farm to keep Jack and Joe both out of the service. That's really the way that worked. And so Joe left the farm, and went over to work for Duane. And, uh, that way he, he didn't go in the, didn't get called for the service.

MJC: So you were only 10 years old.

LB: I was about 10 years old when I started there. Yeah.

MJC: Did they come and sort of recruit you?

LB: No. I, I think how I got that was Lyle Wilkinson lived just up the road, and Lyle was about the only guy that I was friends with. There wasn't many kids around Fly Summit that, uh, there was kids there, but no, nobody—as I said, I didn't like to go out and play

with kids, and get associated with them. So the only—for—and for not any reason, because I didn't like them, I don't mean that. But it just wasn't my nature. I wanted to be with the men and the horses. I didn't want to play games. And, uh, I never did. And I got to know Lyle, and I used to go up to this house, and, and of course his mother, Beth, there and stuff. And I got treated there like he did, and, and that's how I got to know Duane.

And I think that's how I got to, to go down there. And I think Duane, maybe asked me if I wanted to come spend the time on the farm. I kind of forget. But I think that's basically what had happened. And, um, I'll have to tell you a little story on, uh, that one. You've got to bear in mind now I was getting a dollar a day. And, um, we had a, a lady that lived over at the end of the road and, uh, went over from, uh, the farmhouse to the, the T in the road. And there was a, a house there. But her name was, uh, Incilman [phonetic] and her husband, uh, Mr. Incilman, uh, was in New York City as I, as I recall it. But he was also a, a spy during World War II. And, uh, he—I think he was, uh, imprisoned in New York, is where I really think he was.

But getting back to the reason I'm telling this is she came over to the house one morning, uh, after we had, had breakfast. We was down at the barn unloading hay. And, uh, Joe and I were, or was, and, uh, Duane was down in the cow stable. And she come up to me and she says, uh, 'Loris, I'd like to ask you a favor.' She had a, uh, a son. But, uh, he was going to stay there, because her aunt and uncle was going to come up from New York and stay with her son while she went for two weeks down to, uh, visit her husband. That's how, how this turned out the way it did. And they had a [currency? 00:04:01] cow, a family cow. And her son couldn't milk the cow. She always milked it and they tried their darndest [sic], and he could not milk that cow.

And of course, I could milk. I was milking right along, 10 years old, I used to—we probably had about 18 cows there. And Duane, and Joe milked the bulk of them. But I always milked two or three. And then they milked the rest of them, but, um, I thought I was an important cog there. [laughs] And so anyway, she had come down. And she says, 'I'm going to ask you a favor.' She says, 'do you suppose you could come over, and milk

that cow for me,' she says, 'while I'm gone to New York?' And she says, 'you can milk it after breakfast in the morning.' And then she says, at night, so it won't interfere with your work with Duane, um, um, after supper, like 8:00 at night or something.

And I says to her, um, I says, I'm not sure if I can or not. But I says, I've got to ask Duane. And you would have to know Duane to really appreciate this story, 'cause he was a kind of a gruffle man. He had a—you, you'd think he was going to chew your head off. But he really wouldn't. But, um, so I says, I'll go down to the barn and ask Duane, go down to the cow stable where he was. So I went down, and I says, Duane, and of course we didn't call her this to her face. And I don't know why, where she picked up the name. But, uh, she hated the name. They nicknamed—they called her Ruby. And, uh, I—Ruby Incilman, but we never called her to her face. She'd get mad. So I says, 'cause she wasn't where she could hear me.

I says, Ruby's up here and she wants to know if I can milk her cow for her for two weeks. And, uh, I says, do it right after breakfast, and then at night I can do it after we get done with supper, so that won't interfere or anything. And he says, um, 'well, I don't know, he says, if we can do that or not.' He says, 'what's she going to pay you?' Well, she told me she'd give me a dollar a day. He says, 'by means, Loris, you get right over there and milk that cow.' I was going to double my pay. [laughs] So how can you beat that. And that's one thing that I'll never forget and you, as I said, you'd have to know Duane to really appreciate that story. But, um, that's the, that's the way it was.

And, uh, so we went over and, um, the aunt and uncle came up from, uh, or no. I guess it was, was, was just her son that was there. They didn't have any children. They didn't bring one with them. They was just keeping her boy. And they wanted to take a picture of us, of, of—he was about my size. We were about the same age. And, uh, of course I wore bib overalls at the time. And, uh, he had them on too. And so when they got ready to take the picture, of course, uh, I call it the, the city style. He took and put his fingers in—like this in the, in the, uh, the big of the overalls here, you know. And here I am standing there like this with my hands in my pocket, [laughs] and all slumped over like an old man.

And they says to me, uh, the aunt and uncle did, says, 'get your hands up there like he is, so you both look alike.' I says, no thank you. Not me. I, I wouldn't, I wouldn't do that. I couldn't do that. It wasn't my nature. And, um, uh, them are things that I remember about, uh, my little experience with Duane. But I worked there for two years and then I, uh, one day, my mother was going to go down to visit, uh, Vera May Trinkle's mother, Bert and Hazel Welling [phonetic] and you knew them of course, Bert and Hazel, I'm sure. And, uh, so we went down, and, uh, and she asked me if I wanted to go. And I said, sure. I'll go. I'm, I wasn't doing anything or whatever. And, uh, Bert was there, and, uh, we got talking about me working up to Duane's for a dollar a day. And he says, uh, he says, 'you want to come down and work for me?' He says—

MJC: How old are you now?

LB: I was, well, I was about 12. I was about 12 and, uh, he says, 'would you like to come down and work for me?' He says, 'I'll give you \$10 a week.' Well, there's quite an increase. Six, uh, 10 against 6, and, uh, I says, yes, I will. So I went down there, and I worked there for three years. And, uh, for, uh, \$10, then he gave me 12, and then he gave me 15 in them three years. And then, um—

MJC: And what were you doing, Loris, with all that money? I mean, you were just a kid.

LB: All that money, I saved every nickel of it. I'd go to—oh, I, I meant to tell you this before. When I'd go home on Saturday night from Duane's, of course, the Swan Theater was there in Greenwich then. And, and that on Saturday night was standing room only. You couldn't get a seat in there if you wanted to. And, uh, but I'd always go to the movies. And, uh, my sister, uh, Gerald-, my older sister Geraldine was cashier at the, the theater. She sold tickets. Yeah. But that didn't help me get in. I still had, I still had to pay the 12 cents it cost. I think it was 12 cents to, to get in the movies. And then of course, on Saturday night, it was double feature. And then of course, they always had the, the, um, oh, what do you want to call it?

Uh, I can't think now. But it carried over from week to week to week, like to spend, like a soap opera on television today. And that would be on first, and then they would show the two features. And then at the second, they would show the first movie. They would show that over the second time. Only the first one got showed twice. Yeah. Along with the cereal, that's what I wanted to call it. They called them cereals. And, uh, I'll tell you, that was the place to be on Saturday night in Swan Theater.

And, uh, so anyway, what did I do with the money I made? As I said, I saved most of it. 'Cause, uh, it didn't cost me much to go to the movies and then on the way home, I'd go down by Donahue's drugstore, and I'd stop and buy a half a gallon of ice cream. And I'd take it, and—

MJC: Your sister wasn't working there yet, 'cause she was just—

LB: No. Well, yes. Yes. Yeah. Um, no. My older sister worked at Donahue's too, along with selling tickets. Yeah. At the theater, and of course that wasn't the same night, but she did work. They both worked there, and my older sister—

MJC: For Bill Donahue.

LB: For Bill Donahue, and that was right where, um—

MJC: Oh, I remember—

LB: ...uh, right there next to the laundromat now.

MJC: Yeah. I remember that.

LB: Yup. Yup. That's, uh, you do.



MJC: Yeah.

LB: Yeah. That was a, that was a popular place, boy, I'll tell you.

MJC: [inaudible] [00:10:11].

LB: Yeah. But both my sisters worked there at one time. Uh, not at the same time, but—

MJC: And then, um, [inaudible] [00:10:18] your neighbor, Maryanne [inaudible] [00:10:20] worked there.

LB: I think she did. I think Maryanne did work there. I really do.

MJC: [crosstalk] [00:10:24] she did.

LB: Yup. Yup. I'm pretty sure she did.

MJC: [crosstalk] [00:10:26] made ice cream downstairs—

LB: Yup. Yup.

MJC: ...as well as work the cones.

LB: I think they did. That's right. Yup.

MJC: So you would go down and, and buy how much ice cream?

LB: I'd buy a half gallon, and take it home with me. And if I—back then I'd eat a whole half gallon all, just sit out on the front porch. And sometimes eat the whole thing, but if I didn't, I'd save it and finish the rest of it on Sunday. [laughs] But that was my life.

MJC: You had money, so why not?

LB: Yeah. I had money. I had money. I wouldn't, I wouldn't—back then, I wouldn't spend anything. Unlike everybody, I was an old [miser? 00:10:54], I'll tell you. Yeah.

MJC: Now, do you—should we go to John [inaudible] [00:10:57] now, or—

LB: Um, John, uh, well we can. I want to tell you one thing. I'm going to back up here a little bit about when we were kids in, uh, in Fly Summit. Um, my parents were poor people as you, as you know. When I tell you my father worked for a dollar a day, and my mother had a bread route, an egg route, and stuff in Cambridge on Friday, and Greenwich on Saturday, just to, just to get by. And, um—

MJC: Uh, you didn't say that.

LB: I didn't say that. I forgot that. But that was an important part, that—what my mother did.

MJC: So she had chickens.

LB: Always had her own chickens, own pigs, and had a family cow, had her own milk, and we made butter with one of them, uh, churns. I, I did that. I can—you can see yourself in your sleep doing it. And you just pound it in that [dug? 00:11:43] there to make the butter. And, um—

MJC: Did you—

LB: ...they were pretty self-supporting.

MJC: ...[crosstalk] [00:11:45] what you needed, or?

LB: Uh, yeah. Once in a while, she would have a little bit to sell, but most generally we used,

uh, most of what we had ourselves. But, um, yeah. And, and, see, I'm the, uh, doing the bread and stuff. Uh, of course, she had to get up. She'd, uh, make it the night before, and then you—I guess you have to let bread rise, and stuff like that before you put it in to bake it. And, uh, she'd get up in the morning about 3:00 and, uh, and do this, so she'd be able to start out about 8, or 9:00 in the morning, and to go to Cambridge on her, uh, bread route.

And, and of course we always had, uh, always used to have a couple hundred chickens. So we had lots of eggs, and stuff. And she sold, uh, that's, that's how, that's how we got by, 'cause we—the family couldn't have done it on a dollar a day, what my father was working for. But she made more than he did by doing that, and—

MJC: Uh, and any of those barns [inaudible] [00:12:37]?

LB: Uh, the chicken house is the one below the road that, that guy that owns the place now does not own. That chicken house still sits there though. That sits there, and then when they had the baby chicks, the Buger [phonetic] house, the Buger house was up on, up on top of the hill in the back of the woodshed, way up on top of the hill. That's where that sat when they started them out as baby chicks. Yup. And, uh—

MJC: [crosstalk] [00:12:57] [inaudible] [00:12:58]?

LB: Oh, God, all her life, she didn't know what it was not to work. Yup. She was a hard worker. As a matter of fact, the night, uh, that, of course she died from a ruptured appendix, that's what she died from. And, uh, Kings Bakery, there for a few years after she retired from the shirt company, um, they had a, a bake shop there on Main Street in Greenwich. And of course, their main place was in Cambridge where Kings Bakery always was. And, um, my mother got a job working Friday and Saturdays at night, and stuff there when they were open in the evening in that bake shop.

MJC: Now, where was that on [inaudible] [00:13:35]?

LB: It was right about, I'm going to say it was right about where something brewing is, right in there, one of those stores right in that area. It was before you get to the red light, right there in the main drag. And, uh, I'm not sure if it was that building, or the one next to it.

MJC: [crosstalk] [00:13:50] she baking there?

LB: No. She just—they brought the, they brought the, the goods over from Cambridge, and, and put it in the counter and stuff. And then she just worked there, and sold it. And, uh, I didn't realize, uh, when she was sick that—of course, she was never—I, I couldn't hardly ever remember my mother being sick until she got that, uh, until she died with it. And, uh, she was—I don't think she was ever in the hospital. And, uh, I didn't know she was sick then. And, uh, I went up. My, my—I always went up with Bill—I was working for Bill Skiff at that time. This was in 1965. And, uh, I always used to take Bill's tractor up and my father had a little field down in the back of the place that he owned, went with this place here, when it just grew up.

Hey, it wasn't too valuable, but he didn't want to just let it lay there and rot, and I always went up with Bill's tractor, and cut it. And, uh, then he'd go out and punch it up, and when it got dry, and I'd go up with Bill's truck, and throw it on. Take it down, and throw it out in the field to the cows. [laughs] Just to clear it off for my father, Bill let me do that. And, uh, I remember going up this one night. It was on a Friday night. And, uh, I loaded down the load of hay in the pickup, and, uh, I went out the, the further driveway from, uh, at the house to head back down to the farm. And my mother was sitting on he, by the door, what goes into the kitchen, and the telephone stool's there. And she waived to me.

And, uh, now, let's see now. No. I think that was, I think that was a day or two before that, because the, the Friday night she was at the, up at the bakery working. And she was so sick that she couldn't, um, uh, operate and, and sell the stuff. So she called my sister Geraldine up to, to stand there, and do it while my mother sat in the chair. And so we walked up street, Eleanor, and I, and the kids, and, um, we always did our shopping right

in Greenwich. And we walked up by the bakery, and that's when I waived to her in the, in the bake shop. She threw her hand up. I didn't go in, 'cause I thought it was funny my sister was there. But I didn't think too much of it. And about 3:00 in the morning, I got a call from my brother that, um, my mother was over in the hospital.

And, uh, there was no hope. She wasn't going to make it. And so, that morning, I, uh, actually, I didn't go back to sleep again. I got up, and I got out in the barn pretty early that morning, and I, and I was already milking when Bill got out there. And, uh, I didn't say nothing for probably a half an hour or so. And then it kind of got the best of me, so I went over, and told him what had happened. Well, he says, 'what are you doing here?' Of course, he was mad at me for, for staying there, and milking. And I says, well, I am going to leave now Bill. And so, I went and got my sister. But I stopped in to talk to my father first, and he was in the bathroom. And of course, he lived where I lived on Barbara Avenue.

And that's where my mother and father lived. And, I, uh, I went in and I—he was in the bathroom shaving. And I says, uh, I understand we've got quite a serious problem dad. And, 'yeah,' he says, 'I guess we have.' He says, 'it's, uh, it looks like there's not much hope.' So they had been over to the hospital, Geraldine and my brother Harwood [phonetic], and my father. And so I says, I'm going over and getting Doris. And we're going over to the hospital. And so we went over, and, uh, they got Nelson Pedasis's [phonetic] wife. She was a nurse. And they called her up and asked her if she would come over to the hospital, and take care of my mother. And that it was only for a matter of a few hours.

Because, uh, after they got her over there, and, uh, I've got to backtrack a little here, because I did forget to interject this, that, uh, uh, on that Saturday night that, uh, my sister was working for my mother in the bake shop, they went home. And, uh, my sister took her home, and then she went on home. And, uh, of course, back then women wore these different today. They wore the big corsets, or something that—yeah. The whole thing, big, great big—I remember seeing what my mother wore, and when she took that off,

apparently that let this, uh, venom, the poison go out into her body. And then, I guess she let a scream out or something to my father. She says what awful pain she was in, so he turned right around, and called my sister.

And she come right back up, and they took her to the hospital. And, uh, this was probably, by the time they got over there, 10, or 11:00, something like that. And, and doctor, um, Cornell [phonetic], that lived down on, uh, Brownell Road in the brick house.

MJC: Yes. Yes.

LB: He's the one that operated on her, and, uh, so anyway, when Doris—my sister and I got over there, uh, we just went up to the room. And I didn't even go in. We just stood in the door and, uh, my mother was laying there, and, uh, this is something I never knew before, but her eyes was going backwards in her head. And, uh, the—they tell me that that's what happens sometimes when people are near death. That's what my brother told me, 'cause he saw that in World War II. And, um, I says to Doris, my sister, I stood there for a few seconds, and I says, 'let's leave.' I, I, I, I don't want to stand here, and, and watch that. And, 'cause Helen, the nurse, Helen Pettit [phonetic], she stood up there.

She was just shaking her head, never said a word, but she was just shaking her head. And so, of course we knew, and, and so I come back, and my father and brother was down to Geraldine's there where they lived on, uh, the North Road there and I put cows on the farm. And I stopped in there, and, uh, I told them what was going on over there. And my brother says, 'we'll be getting a phone call.' Probably, in 5 to 15 to 20 minutes, my God, it wasn't 5 minutes, the doctor called and said she was gone.

So, yeah. Called and said she was gone, but she got her wish. Like, nobody wants to lay around, suffer, uh, Mary Jane. And that's one thing that she wanted more than anything is, 'I hope when the time comes, I don't lay around suffering.' She didn't, so we were thankful for that. Yup. Yup. That's, uh, that's the way that went.

MJC: It sounds like she was, um, [inaudible] [00:19:47] in pain.

LB: Yeah. Yeah. I'm, I'm sure she did over the years. And I, I'll tell you now that we're talking about my mother and father. I'll tell you, um, another thing here that, uh, my father was a heavy drinker. He really was a heavy drinker and my mother despised it, so that didn't make for a very good combination. But, um, a few years after my mother died, I was down—of course, I think I went down to visit my father probably more than my brother, and my other sister did, and, and stuff. But that's neither here or there. That doesn't make any difference, 'cause I wanted to do it. And, um, one day we sat there and I said to my father, something—I mentioned something about drinking to him, and how much my mother despised it.

And I says to him, I says, Dad, if you had to do this over again, and relive your life, I said, do you think you maybe might not have drank so much, because of the, the hurt and the abuse that, uh, mom had to take from the drink? 'Cause she despised it so. He says, 'you don't know how many times,' he says, 'I've sat here and thought of that.' And that time Mary Jane, I saw tears come down his cheek, and I never saw it before in my life from my father. But he did that day, and so that told me that he, he really meant it. He was serious about that. Yup. Yup.

MJC: [crosstalk] [00:21:14] say it.

LB: Yup. I brought it out. I, I got him to say it.

MJC: Yeah.

LB: Yeah. And I think that was bothering him from the time she died until, till then, till, till I brought it up to him. Yeah.

MJC: Yeah. So he got to say it out loud—

LB: Yeah. Yeah. He did. He, he, he admitted it to me. Yup. Yup. So them or—

MJC: [inaudible] [00:21:35].

LB: Yup. That got taken care of, but, uh, you can't back up. You, you've got to go ahead.

MJC: You know that, right.

LB: And, no. We can't back up. That's right. Yeah. Yeah. Well, you've been through this. Yup.

MJC: We, we haven't got a lot—like, we—I thought we would finish [inaudible] [00:21:51] tape time, but we're coming up to library closing time.

LB: Oh, yeah.

MJC: Yeah.

LB: Yeah. Right.

MJC: So—

LB: We don't want to keep the—

MJC: ...[crosstalk] [00:21:59] the decision, um, could we continue this another time?

LB: Oh, sure. If you think there's, eh, um—

MJC: 'Cause we haven't done a lot. I'll turn it off right now.

LB: Yeah. Okay.