

Sandy Hook, Gateway NRA, National Park Service  
An Oral History Interview with John Mulhern,  
Child of Water Plant Worker, 1908-1927  
Interviewed by Tom Hoffman, NPS  
April 30, 1975  
Transcribed by Mary Rasa, 2012



John Mulhern in his ROTC uniform late 1920's  
Photos courtesy NPS/Gateway NRA

Editor's notes in parenthesis ( )

TH: This is Tom Hoffman and we are standing here at South Beach. We are going to interview, and you could tell us your name?

JM: John J. Mulhern. We moved to Sandy Hook in 1908. We lived here until 1927. So certainly the early days of my life were well spent here or I feel at this point were well spent or even more well spent than perhaps I thought as a boy. There were those that considered Sandy Hook as a desolate area and it is possible to get that impression now I suppose depending on just where you look. The area where we are now standing I remember as a rather uninhabited area in the beginning but only the only sign of life being the Coast Guard Station or the Life-saving Station as it was called at that time, Station # 2 and later in the reorganization of this station designated as Station # 99. (Station) 98 being at the north end of Sandy Hook.

TH: That was the original number, well, designation # 1 up there.

JM: Yes. # 1 was at the main dock or the north end of Sandy Hook. And # 2 was down here in this area of Spermaceti Cove area. So this whole terrain at that time was rather uninhabited is the best way of saying it. You can't say it was barren because there always has been a growth of sea grass, of cedar, of heather and of holly and I am quite amazed at this late stage to see the development in the holly forest. I can remember holly

trees and a few large ones and I can still remember where they were and I could point them out too as a matter of fact. But in recent years, apparently with some attention on the part of the state and maybe the military installation here the holly forest has survived very well and developed to where there really is something worth seeing.

TH: Now just getting back here looking over this area of holly and cedar and you can see the Life-saving Station. We are trying to find a definite date on it. And you said as a young boy you still remember that white building being there. (The 1894 Spermaceti Cove Station was at one point painted white. It now has natural cedar shakes as it appeared historically.)

JM: I remember that as one of the first things that I remember and probably for a reason. The government train that used to run from the main dock area on the Post to the Highlands at that time or Highland Beach had a flag stop out here at the Life-saving Station and just on occasion the train would stop there and that was an occasion because the regular station stops were well known to us. We used to get on the train where the rolling stock was stored and where the chief engineer lived and all of the little things that go to operate a railroad. But it seems to me that as far back as I can remember this Coast Guard Station was here and how many buildings were associated with it, I don't exactly know but it seems to me that alongside of the Coast Guard building proper there was another boat house where the surf boats were kept and that there was also a small little building or shack alongside of the road and, of course, immediately adjacent to the railroad. I believe that that may have possibly been a storage point for a fire fighting hose cart. The type of fire fighting equipment that was quite popular around Sandy Hook in those very early days. We didn't have modern fire engines then.

TH: I was wondering you mentioned about going into the garages. That's where they kept the life boats?

JM: Yes. At the area where the garage is now at the station is one of the places where the surf boats were kept and they generally kept the boats on wagons which the men, the crew of the station would haul down to the water's edge and then launch into the surf. It was quite late, I think it must have been about 1925 or thereabouts before powerboats were available. The men simply launched their boats and rowed out to render assistance that seems to be apropos at the time. It was kind of a hazardous job launching a boat in the sea. The only time they were ever called to do anything in those days was when there was a storm or conditions were at their worst for launching boats but those men knew how to do it. If the captain of the station decided he couldn't render assistance they didn't. If he decided that they would, off they went come what may.

TH: Yes. I know that you mentioned to me about in 1908 being about what 4 years old.

JM: Yes.

TH: And I am just wondering if you came down here and saw those lifeboats about how old were you then about?

JM: I probably was about 8 or 9. I only have a faint recollection of our trip for Pier 12 in the north river in New York to Sandy Hook. There were times when I am not so sure whether it was in my memory that brings this back to me or whether I was told the stories several times and it sort of grew on me as the years went on. But I do have a recollection or there is a spot in my memory which says that I was very seasick on the trip across from New York to Sandy Hook. It probably was the first ride that I had ever had on a boat and at that time it took about two hours to make the trip across. The little boats were boats that were sort of utility type things. They were used for transporting freight, passengers. They were used for towing operations. They assisted in the mine planting operations. They towed targets out to sea for the Coast Defense target practice, and they also towed targets out to sea for the mine practice. They were certainly not the most comfortable thing in the world. The passenger space was very small and you were just as likely not to be sitting just alongside the engine room as you were to be sitting in a cabin. Utility use I guess is what you would call the vessels at that time.

TH: I am just wondering making this trip coming down where about did you come down to Sandy Hook, you know the docking of the boat?

JM: The boats docked at the present Coast Guard dock installation at the north end of Sandy Hook. That has been the permanent dock or the regular dock. We all as kids called it the big dock because near our home at Horseshoe Cove at our home was the remains of a dock that had previously been used by the Jersey Central Railroad as a terminal for the boats from New York to serve the Jersey shore. The boats came to the old dock. The passengers were transferred by trains and then were transported south to Sea Bright and Long Branch and down in that area. But practically all the government shipping in all the years we were here and since then as a matter of fact was to the big dock or the dock which is at the north end of the Sandy Hook peninsula.

TH: That brings to mind the famous paddlewheel boats, those famous steamers that used to come down. I don't know whether they were paddle wheel boats then around when you were a youngster but they still had the steamships coming down with passengers.

JM: Well, there were two general types of boats which served this area. There were screw vessels and there were paddle wheel ships. The paddle wheel boats served the area of Highlands, Long Branch, Red Bank, Fair Haven and the screw vessels, the steamer, the two screw steamers supplied the service from the Battery to Sandy Hook in connection with the Jersey Central Railroad. None of the paddlewheel boats ever operated in conjunction with the railroads. The paddlewheel boats landed at places previously stated at the Highlands, Fair Haven, Red Bank, Long Branch, Little Silver and several of those boats were named after those towns.

TH: Yes.

JM: Coincidental or otherwise there were some other boats that served the area for awhile that docked in Atlantic Highlands. They were also screw type vessels rather than

paddlewheel boats and all those boats had long since gone out of service and I don't know if any of them are in existence any more.

TH: Yes. I have heard they are going to make one a museum or floating restaurant. One of the last...

JM: That's an interesting approach.

TH: Do you recall a trip? It probably was enjoyable.

JM: I traveled on all of those boats at one time or another in order to when we lived here at Sandy Hook in order to use the screw type vessels we would take the train from here on Sandy Hook to Highland Beach. (Then) transferred to another branch of the line which went to Atlantic Highlands and at that point transferred to boats. The trip in the screw vessel was about an hour and 15 minutes and they stopped at the Battery and at 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and at 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and there were several boats on the morning run, the commuter run and actually it was a commuter line. There were several boats in the afternoon, also commuter lines and then there was a very early morning boat for travelers I guess and there was a late evening boat. The late evening boat was not necessarily a moonlight ride. It was one way that the railroad had for getting their boats down to Atlantic Highlands to pick up the very early travelers in the morning that went in. As I recall, there were only two boats in operation at any one time. The Jersey Central Railroad through its course of operation had three boats that (were) screw type vessels that operated on that run. But I can only remember on the schedule two boats at any one given time. On the side wheeler boats or the paddle wheeler boats and I guess side wheeler is probably a better designation for the boats because they had a paddlewheel on two sides on both sides of the boat. There's another type of paddle wheel, of course, which has one big paddle wheel on the stern like the Mississippi River boats and I traveled on those boats many times the side wheelers from the Highlands to the Battery and that's as far as those boats went. They didn't go uptown. They picked up all their parts, all their whatever they had to pick up, some freight and passengers at the Battery, the aquarium site (Castle Clinton) or the Jenny Lind Theater.

TH: Right. They would come down here but its funny they would never be able, they couldn't use these beaches here. Not Sandy Hook.

JM: No. I believe that's right. I have no recollection of any of the passengers who came on any of the Jersey Central boats from New York had any access to Sandy Hook or any part of the fort installation. It was simply a transfer point or a hopping off point for the commuters from the Jersey Shore who used those facilities. And while they were considered, the Jersey Central boats were considered more or less expensive transportation still at that time there were many people who could afford luxury travel. And of course, many of the people who commuted on those boats in those days and even in much later days were the people who lived south of the Highlands. The people who lived in Sea Bright and Monmouth Beach, in Long Branch and other points south and they were generally better off and wealthier and those that had in order to avail

themselves of this transportation which was lovely and there were even some people who hired their transportation for a season. There were staterooms on the boats where people could enjoy whatever company they chose in privacy on their trip from these were Sandy Hook in the early days or Atlantic Highlands in the later days and these rooms, these state rooms were assigned to the same people and that was your room on that boat for that trip for that day. It was a very luxurious way of travel.

TH: Sounds great.

JM: Probably a lot more comfortable though not as fast as commuting by airplane from Monmouth Beach now to the Battery.

TH: Yes. The old days, right. No. I shouldn't say that. It seems like yesterday to you.

JM: It doesn't seem so long ago.

TH: Yeah. Getting back though this source of travel and then the Life-saving Service, I wanted to ask you now because we want that definite date. This building was here though. I am back in around 1910. Our Visitor Center right now.

JM: Yeah. My recollection serves me that it was here at that time.

TH: And that you do recall, who was the captain in charge at that time?

JM: Captain Dows for a long time was the captain at the Life-saving Station at the north end of the Post and in the realignment of facilities Captain Dows was transferred to # 2.

TH: Down here at Spermaceti Cove?

JM: Down here at Spermaceti Cove.

TH: And I know its hard for you to remember we were talking about the original life boats station house but you don't know exactly if that was that cedar building, you know, shed building.

JM: No. I really don't know that.

TH: But there were a couple of buildings just north.

JM: There were a couple of buildings adjacent to where your office is now located.

TH: I see.

JM: I think I will have to have some little consultation with my sister who has a pretty good memory about his matter and confirm some of this business about what buildings were there and about what time. My brothers, both of whom were born on Sandy Hook

were a few years younger than Mary and probably don't recall those things that are early in her life.

TH: I am wondering about you also mention witnessing the Lyle gun drills?

JM: Oh yes, that was always a very exciting piece of business. We had heard about rescuing men by breeches buoy from sinking ships and probably had seen some pictures of those at a very, very early age. When we started to go to school on Sandy Hook we always had to walk by the Life-saving Station and the flagpole or the mast the simulated ship's mast with its crossed trees right out there in the front lawn or alongside the Life-saving Station and frequently the men or the crew of the station had lifeboat drill of one kind or another or life-saving drill of one kind or another and it frequently required the use of the Lyle gun and the breeches buoy. (This is called the Beach Apparatus Drill.) The mast, the simulated mast was I think about 30 feet high, the cross trees were probably 20 feet above the ground, the little Lyle gun was mounted I guess about a hundred yards. I don't think it was much farther than that. It might have been about 150 yards from the mast. When they were ready to affect their operation they would fire the little gun which carried a very light line from the gun to the cross arm on the mast and someone about that time would scamper up the mast and grasp the little line and haul that to the mast and the heavier line to which it was attached and I think there was a third line. It seems there was third line which would be hauled up to the cross trees and that made fast to the mast and the breeches buoy then would be pulled up to the cross trees. The breeches buoy was a sort of a life-saving ring with a certain amount built in of floatation to which was attached a canvas bag with holes in the bottom. The man would be lowered in this thing or climb in it while it was still attached to the mast and then the breeches buoy would be released from the mast and slide down the incline until theoretically the man was in the water. Of course at that point he actually had his feet on the ground. But with this sort of arrangement the life ring sort of came up under his arms which kept him more or less upright in the water and of course his legs were dangling down in the water and hopefully he could be pulled to the rescuing parties boat and brought ashore safely for rescue at sea.

TH: Yes. We are talking about this was when you used to walk up to school in the fort area, that Life-saving Station. We will visit that site later to identify it. But I was wondering while you were down here for the visit, any reason why you would be down at the Visitor Center, Coast Guard Station.

JM: Well, I suppose the only reason we might be down this way as youngsters was to pick beach plums in the area. We always knew where the best beach plums were where the white ones were, where the purple ones were. We knew where the huckleberries or blueberries grew in the swamp which is just north of your station and we knew where the best wild cherries were. My mother would make wine or maybe my father would make the wine and my mother would make the jelly from the wild cherries. The beach plums always went into a jelly which my mother made and the blueberries I guess were delicacies that we ate, delicacies that we won from the attacking mosquitoes that were

always in great quantities in the little swamps as we called them where the huckleberries grew or blueberries.

TH: You would come down on bicycles?

JM: I guess in the early days we'd probably walk.

TH: Walk.

JM: I seemed like we always had bicycles as far back as I can remember I had some kind of a bicycle usually made from the parts of bicycles which some one else threw away. But some how or other it seems I have always had a bicycle and my sister never rode very much. I guess I did my bicycle riding by myself most of the time. My father always had a bicycle.

TH: I was going to ask you now you mention brothers being born here and your sister. How many were in your family here?

JM: Four. My sister and I were born in Brooklyn, god help us, one might say and my two brothers were born here on Sandy Hook on in 1912 and one in 1910 I believe.

TH: And then your dad was working here as a construction...

JM: No. My dad was working as an operator in the public utility services in the Pumping and Lighting Station.

TH: I see.

JM: As an engineer, as watch engineer and then later as chief engineer.

TH: I see. Now then you would be in this area just to collect the fruits and berries of the reason and then you would just stop by to pay a visit to them. They wouldn't mind at that time, did they?

JM: No. They didn't mind and yet we never sort of walking in on them or never make ourselves too much at home. My father, of course, was a civilian employee of the War Department at that time. It's changed its name several times now. Then it was the War Department. That was one group that might say. Then there was the Coast Guard that was another armed services affair. Then there was the Coast Artillery Corps. This was the Army. Then there was the Ordnance Proving Ground which also the Army. That was another group of people. Then there was operators of the marine observatories. There were two marine observatories operated by the Western Union Telegraph Company and the Postal Telegraph Company. And then there were the families of the Coast Guard or Life-saving group and while they were all apart of this little strip of land one mile by five miles they were all little societies of themselves more or less. Each one, I guess, kept to

himself more or less in accordance with his designation or his classification or whatever, his caste system.

TH: Well, getting into their little world the Life-saving Station world and you'd come riding up here just to pay that visit. What were they doing? Were they ever kept busy around the station?

JM: I thought that they were really busy most of the time. They were either painting the boats or they were doing something around the station or they were doing some practice work or they were taking care of their clothing. It never seemed that it was a pointless operation. It seemed that it was always something going on. There was always somebody on duty in the tower. And he would convey whatever information he gleaned from his observation to the detachment commander or to who ever else had to know the things that he felt he should know and it was up to him, of course, to make any decisions as to what information he would use or just casual information. The watches were kept very regular. The crew patrolled the beach always at nighttime there was a patrol on the beach. In the daytime, they could more or less see from their vantage point anything that was necessary to be seen off shore or along the beach. The stations were close enough together so it was possible to observe anything that was real importance offshore. At that time, the Coast Guard activity was not as great as the present time. There wasn't the small boat activity off shore that there is in our days. Any vessels that plied the coast line were good size and you could see them for miles. That whole picture of course is changed now and the whole ocean is dotted with all kinds of vessels. Some of which are difficult to see if you are three blocks away and others which you can see miles and miles away.

TH: That's interesting about the beach patrols out here. Do you recall them as a young fellow here?

JM: Oh yes. I recall the beach patrols very well. About the time I could walk or it seems that way, my father and I used to go frost fishing along the beach in the cold winter months from about the middle of November until the end of December probably or maybe a little later. Since I was the oldest one in the family, my father would take me with him to the ocean beach. It was about I think roughly about three quarters of a mile from where we lived. At that time, it seemed an endless trip. But my father at an early age took me with him on these escapades on these cold winter nights and frequently in our walking along the beach we would meet coast guard's who were on patrol. We would say to them, "Well, what did you find out? What did you find on the beach between #2 and #1?" They would say, you know, "Down there off such and such a battery the fish seemed to be coming in on the beach there." We would make that trip down there. Or they would say, "I've been out now for an hour on my patrol tonight and I haven't seen a single fish." If they said that, we generally went home at that point. No fish.

TH: That's a great source of information.



JM: Yeah, it was at that time. I am not so sure that the Coast Guard now are, Coast Guard operators, Coast Guard people are as intimately associated with the beach as they were in those early days and I have talked to in recent years to people in the Coast Guard about accidents along the beach, about wrecks that I have heard come ashore and no information. Either they don't tell you or they don't know. But as I said before, their interest is off shore and their interest is so many little boats and there doesn't seem to be any requirement for patrolling the beach anymore.

TH: Yeah. So now with technology, radios, radar, I am wondering did they travel in pairs?

JM: No. They didn't. During World War II, they traveled in pairs but I can never remember their traveling in pairs during World War I or at any other time. We always met them alone and we always used to feel sorry for them walking on the beach at night and we were generally only on the beach at night in cold weather. So, we sort of felt sorry for the Coast Guard's who had to spend their life walking the beach on cold nights.

TH: You'd latterly be walking on the beach near the surf?

JM: Yeah right near the surf. It's easier walking there, walking near the surf.

TH: Yeah. Right its harder ground. I would like to ask you your style of dress for this. You know, going out here to fish and also his style of dress if you can recall?

JM: They wore regular woolen uniforms with some kind of a long coat like the old Army long coats. It wasn't until considerably later that they started to wear what they might call pea jackets or the navy pea jacket, a mackinaw type coat and that word sounds a little odd anymore but a reasonably short overcoat and they generally had caps that they could pull down over their ears like a watch cap but little else. If the weather was real bad I can never remember them wearing anything but that type of clothing. I don't think they ever wore rubber boots when they were walking the beach. They wore overshoes.

TH: Are these leather?

JM: Rubberized. Rubberized material that they wore over their shoes. Our uniform you might say or the clothing that we wore whenever we went frost fishing was whatever it was to keep ourselves warm. A sweater or two woolen trousers, long pants of course and we generally wore rubbers, just ordinary rubbers that you just slipped over your shoes and frequently had some kind of a hood like the army type winter uniform, a hood that fitted down to your shoulders with a drawstring that you could draw around your neck our your upturned collar. And of course, gloves a couple of pairs of gloves maybe, preferable something that would be reasonably waterproof on the outside and maybe woolen gloves on the inside because you picked up the fish and they were always wet when you picked them up.

TH: Yes. Right. I was just wondering how you would keep warm in the good old days? I hate to say it that way again.

JM: Well, when we went out on these escapades and I remember the wind blowing and being hard to walk against but I don't know that we ever thought so awfully cold. First of all, my father was a good walker. He really walked very well. He expected you to walk well too. I am sure from your experience of walking on the beach if you are really walking and not lawling along, you don't have much trouble getting cold. You would keep your self pretty warm. The extremities pretty warm as long as your hands and feet are warm you are normally not cold. You could be pretty thinly clad in other areas of your body but as long as your terminals are warm you don't feel very cold.

TH: The, talking about keeping warm and all these men that were walking the beach were probably in good physical condition and young?

JM: Oh, they were not all young but they were in good physical condition. Although I suppose they probably, they had the organization so set up that they older men took care of the home fires and they younger men did the beach walking. I would presume that to be the case.

TH: Yes. I see. Did they have any special equipment for signaling back to, because you know this is the time before walkie talkie radios.

JM: No. They didn't have any special signaling equipment that I can recall. Even then, of course, flashlights were not common. The batteries used to operate the early flashlights had a very short life, a very short service life or a very short shelf life. So, they didn't, I don't recall their carrying anything by the way of signaling equipment. When we went fishing we always carried oil lanterns. It may be at some time or another of if it were a stormy season or some such thing that they may have carried kerosene lanterns but I don't recall that they ever did. Now they may have. It is entirely possible but we always carried the lantern and I don't know how much good it really did either. When you were fishing if the night was the right kind of a night for fishing, you could hear the fish flop on the beach maybe the equivalent of a city block away because normally it would be very quiet except for the rolling surf but on the right night wouldn't be rolling very actively. If there were any light at all you could see the light being reflected on the fish's body on the shore and you could say it was perfectly dark and you could come from a lighted area and you walk onto a sandy beach late at night with no moon and its very dark, but when you are out there for a half hour you could start to see things that you couldn't possibly see otherwise. So I am not sure how much good our lanterns really did. I suppose at times they were alright.

TH: I am interested in knowing if he saw a ship in distress here or starting to get stranded and breaking up how he would get back to and signal either station either north or south, Spermaceti Cove.

JM: Well, I think the only way he could do it was walk fast.

TH: Get back to the station.

JM: Get the story back to the station.

TH: I am wondering this seems like I have read they were only supposed to they didn't patrol in the winter months except they were here in December?

JM: Oh yes.

TH: They were out in all types of weather?

JM: Yeah.

TH: That must have been a lonely job against cold winds. They were out here in the bad weather also?

JM: Oh yes. The bad weather was when they could be most useful on the beach. That's when you expect something to happen.

TH: Yes. Right. Now # 1 Station which they later re-designated did they send down a man and a man from Spermaceti would walk up?

JM: They had some sort of an assigned area that they patrolled.

TH: I see. (A surfman from station #1 would walk and meet a surfman from #2 in the middle and exchange beach checks.)

JM: I don't know exactly how it worked. It's conceivable that the man would come from #1 and walk to #2 and walk back and then maybe an hour later a man from #2 would walk up to number one and walk back. Or they may have some spots up on the beach that they established as a point of contact where they would exchange the tours.

TH: As a young boy out here with your father, these fish by the way, were they whiting again?

JM: Whiting, yes.

TH: Be out here, you were young enough, I am sure they still had the wooden sailing ships, didn't they? Lumber schooners or masted schooners?

JM: They sure did and there is a very interesting story now that you just mentioned that. One year when we were still small children and I don't remember we were probably about 8 years old or maybe less. The winter had been the usual winter. All winters were rough. This winter had been the same kind of a rough winter. In the springtime, or at the end of the winter there had been a terrific storm, snow, sleet and wind. It was just

blowing and a four masted sailing vessel came ashore, lumber vessel from down south some where blew up on the beach for one reason or another and I never really met the crew and I was too small at that time to get the full impact of what was going on or be concerned about things which I would now be concerned. Anyhow, this vessel blew up on the beach and for years the stem with the anchor chain was still visible at low tide along the shore and I haven't walked along the beach in a long time and I don't know whether that was still there or not.

TH: Whereabouts do you think it was from south beach here?

JM: Oh, it was probably about a mile and a half from here or two miles. It was about opposite Horseshoe Cove. The vessel came ashore loaded with lumber. No effort did I recall was made to get the vessel off the beach. It had been damaged in its going ashore. Some of the cargo had shifted but it was an oasis or a hay day for some of the enlisted personnel who lived on Fort Hancock singly who wanted to have houses for themselves. Government quarters then as now were scarce. There were sergeants and some others, several who lived in the Horseshoe Cove area who decided to build houses and they did. So they took this lumber off the ship. It was dressed lumber. Took the lumber off the ship and stashed the lumber along the beach here and there and in the woods and at their leisure came back and got the lumber which they hauled across the peninsula over to Horseshoe Cove area where they laid out and built their little homes, little houses for their families. I think the salvaging, if that's what you want to call the stealing of the wood went on for probably about a month or so and then for some mysterious reason the vessel caught fire and burned to the waters edge. It was a four masted schooner which is a good sized vessels.

TH: Yes, those lumber schooners.

JM: It was probably a 125 feet long, 150 feet long, maybe more but I know it was a tremendous thing as I saw it and then I saw what remained, the vessel burned down to the water's edge. I felt very bad about the whole thing. But as a result of that accident we suddenly had neighbors. When we lived down there at Horseshoe Cove ourselves for years we were the only family there. There wasn't anyone else in that area. Then, the government built a two family brick house alongside of our wooden residence. And then, about that same time this lumber vessel came ashore and these cottages were built. There were two of them built alongside of Battery Arrowsmith. There were three of them built alongside of the road that we now travel on. On the so called cinder or back road from the Pumping and Lighting Station there were five houses built on that road. There were three close to the Pumping Station and then two up near the present site of the Marine Laboratories. However, they were all of these houses were in the woods so to speak. Nobody seemed to be concerned. The military body on the Post, the commanding officer and his people were not really concerned that these other people had built homes for themselves. I supposed that helped the morale of the troops to the extent that at least those people had houses for their families on the Post. I don't know how many other vessels had gone ashore on the shore here at Fort Hancock. I have pictures of a 75 foot Coast Guard vessel that came ashore very close to your office and that vessel stayed on

the beach until it finally broke up. No effort was ever made to salvage the vessel that I knew about. And it almost goes without saying that any vessel that runs ashore on a sandy beach is generally a total loss. Some other vessels larger vessels, vessels of great draft than either the lumber schooner or the *Alexander* have run aground some distance off Sandy Hook and several of them through unloading their cargo or other salvage operation have been able to float again. Sandy Hook is a very deceptive piece of land from the navigational point of view and when you come in from off shore its very easy to be confused by the lights from the Highlands area, the Keyport area, the Perth Amboy area, all of which, or many can be seen over Sandy Hook over the top of Sandy Hook unless you the navigator are very close to check off the buoys as you approach the anchorages to which the channels lead it is very simple very easy to run aground at Sandy Hook. Again of course, all good navigators do check all their navigational aids but still the point of Sandy Hook and especially in this development of 20 or 25 years is such to make it even a more hazardous strip of land for the offshore navigator.

TH: Why is that in the last...

JM: Sandy Hook has extended out in a northeasterly direction and the shoal water appears to be becoming more and more a hazard. The Corps of Engineers is constantly dredging off the north east corner of Sandy Hook to keep the channels of the Navy Ammunition Depot, the channels going into Perth Amboy open and clear for vessels that have to pass in close proximity to the point of the hook and there in lies the danger and a few degrees on a chart can make a big difference to your safety.

TH: Yes. That's right. Especially here, I think even with all the navigational aids it's still hazardous out there.

JM: Its only a year ago that a good sized vessel ran ashore down off Sandy Hook but it was out far enough so it was floated by some salvage operation.

TH: You have those photographs of the boat that ran ashore over here. Was it near the Visitor Center?

JM: Yes.

TH: What type was that?

JM: It was 75 foot, we called them 75 foot Coast Guard boats. They were about the time of rum running and what other activities were around these parts and it ran ashore and we were aboard the vessel and as I recall at the time we were aboard it, it seemed more or less a complete vessel. I don't exactly remember what happened to the thing but it was never salvaged. It just broke up piece by piece in the weather.

TH: Talking once again about the Visitor Center we are going to get away from that in a minute but I just wanted to know about any Lyle gun drills out over there. Did you ever witness any?

JM: Oh yes. That's right. We did and only once or twice did I even have a hazy memory. Every Coast Guard station in those days of the Life-saving Service every Coast Guard Station had a simulated ships mast with cross arms, cross trees.

TH: Yes. You were saying that before, right.

JM: And they went through this Lyle gun drill every once in a while. If I saw one at #2 it was only once or twice, certainly not a frequent thing.

TH: Perhaps you can recall the area where they held it? Right perhaps in the sand dunes?

JM: Yes. As I can recall it was between the road between the present road and the station.

TH: Right down here at the Visitor Center building. Out there right in the back area where our little road comes up and loops...

JM: Yes. Right in there.

TH: And they would actually load it up as if they were firing a Lyle gun and all that.

JM: They did fire it. They did fire a Lyle gun. The gun was only a little bit of a thing. It was probably about 18 inches long, maybe two feet long like a little cannon on a little wheeled base. They would wheel the thing into position and stake it down and then fire the little projectile to carry this light cord and would be hauled out to the crossed tree on the simulated mast.

TH: I see.

JM: I guess most of the time they managed to get the line over the mast. And if it didn't go over the mast it would probably land on the deck of the boat if there were a boat there.

TH: One final question on the Coast Guard Station, I hear during World War I that famous story now that a German submarine threw some shells at it. You don't think it's true?

JM: Well, it certainly makes a good story but I don't know how true or false it is. However, we lived here all during that area and I think you sort of have to keep the (Tape ends and new one begins)... around the time of World War I or after the initial of batteries were built a contract was let to the Turner Construction Company to build about 25 magazines down here principally for the storage of gun powder. The buildings were not large, probably about 40 x 60 feet and they were built of asbestos, corrugated asbestos board which was fireproof reasonably but certainly wasn't bombproof and the buildings were not explosion proof and I don't know how long those buildings were here but they were here for quite a long time.

TH: Now, we are parked right here at the road that goes over into the campground area where Battery Kingman and Mills were located and you say do you think that these batteries were out here during World War I period or were they added on later?

JM: They were after World War I.

TH: Right, because they are marked up there with dates of '41, '42 something like that but I just thought that maybe they had artillery up there at this time.

JM: I believe that the dates on there must apply to the renovated batteries. (Completed in 1919 and casemated during World War II.) When Mills and Kingman were first built the guns were strictly out in the open. There wasn't any cover on them for protection and then later as attack by air seemed to be imminent or possible the canopy was built over each of the gun emplacements and these umbrella like structures that you see there now were built to protect the guns from air attack and I am sure that they were built long after the original fortifications were erected.

TH: Okay, so from here we are going to make a short stop over at Halyburton and then we could also go back and visit where you lived out here. (Tape stops and restarts) I just forgot to mention that when we were back over at the Kingman and Mills road the road back in there an accident happened to one of your friends right there?

JM: Oh yes, the road down here used to be a single lane gravel road and when that was rebuilt it was converted to a single lane concrete road which didn't provide very much space for anyone who might be traveling and one of my friends Howard Davenport was going out to the Highlands in his Model T Ford and I guess got going a little too fast to make the corner and ran into the wall that was out there and he was very seriously injured with a couple of broken legs and spent a lot of time in the hospital. Well, he and his brother lived around the Post for some years and finally moved out of this area and one of his family, his sister Gladys Davenport still resides in Red Bank in New Jersey. We haven't seen Gladys in a long time but will one of these days.

TH: We have returned back to the Halyburton Monument and you were just a youngster when they discovered that grave that was long lost all those years.

JM: Well, as a matter of fact, we were not living on Sandy Hook at the time that this vault or grave was uncovered but it happened shortly before we got here. However when we moved onto the Post at that time it was common talk by people about the excavation of the railroad that was about to be put through. There was a spur road that came in from the main road into Fort Hancock at that time and the spur was constructed for the purpose of getting coal gondolas into the Pumping and Lighting station and I guess if it hadn't been for the necessity of building a railroad those graves might have never been discovered again.

TH: Yes.

JM: But they were an apparently the thing has well been taken care of and now is well marked. When Queen Elizabeth was here in her most recent trip of course the monument that you now see was erected in the memory of those people and they were indicated by name as to who had been buried there and why. (Tape stops and restarts.)

TH: Alright we have a copy of George Moss' book here and on page 36 we have got that photograph taken in 1908 when they discovered the gravesite.

JM: That must have been just before we got here. We got here in 1908.

TH: There is a date saying here April 1908.

JM: Let's see if I can find something in my father's records or something that would sort of identify. He always wore one of those horse chains on his watch.

TH: This man right here in the photograph? He is third from the right.

JM: From the right, yeah. Patrick J. Houston, H-O-U-S-T-O-N, they spelled it.

TH: He was an old timer then correct?

JM: Yeah he was the chief engineer of the Pumping and Lighting Station.

TH: I see. They found that grave right out here. Do you think the monument over here marks the original gravesite, this burial vault pictured here?

JM: No. I don't think so. It was farther back

TH: Actually farther back.

JM: I was back 100 feet or more from where that thing is.

TH: From that monument.

JM: At least that far back. It was right along the route of the railroad. Now there's a little mound of earth still there. (Tape stops and restarts.)

TH: Okay. We are standing behind the Halyburton Monument is a few hundred feet away to the east. And this is probably the site of Camp Lowe, the World War I barracks?

JM: Yes. There probably were 20 barracks buildings in here all wooden two story buildings. Sometime between the two wars the buildings mysteriously all seemed to burn down on a very windy night and the fires were usually 100% successful. No more building in other words and finally they all disappeared. This area was called Camp Lowe for a long time. I don't know when it got that name it certainly was prior to World



War I. It was always known by everybody on the Post as Camp Lowe for some reason or another.

TH: We are standing right here on some type of old road here. Probably marks a company street.

JM: It might well be a company street or certainly a main roadway leading into the barracks area proper. I think there is another roadway that enters by way of the old balloon hanger that was built a long, long time ago probably around World War I too. It never used to house any blimps or other balloons that I have any knowledge. It has been used variously as a storehouse, a place where vehicles were kept and heaven knows what else.

TH: And you believe that the original vault of Halyburton's was somewhere right in here?

JM: Yes. I would presume it probably was very close to the current monument if anything within a couple of hundred feet anyhow to the east of the present monument.

TH: Because the monument does say it marks the site there. That they were buried there but...(They were buried where the railroad spur was being built and the monument is nearby the location.)

JM: That well could be but my memory doesn't guarantee that.

TH: Did you ever see the original burial vault?

JM: I never did see that. And of course, the original monument had been destroyed many, many years before by marauders of some type. (Tape stops and starts.)

TH: We have worked our way back to Horseshoe Cove and we are overlooking those wooden pilings you have been telling me about.

JM: Oh yes, shortly after we moved to the area and the folks were taking us out to walk around we saw a number of things of which a few still remain. We were told that the Sandy Hook boats used to dock a short distance from here and that there was a turntable in almost the exact spot on which we are now standing where the locomotives could be switched back or turned around as we were then told to bring the trains back down to Highland beach and on down the shore to Sea Bright, Monmouth Beach, Long Branch and for other connections for trains going south. Some of the old pilings are still in evidence and you can follow closely around the beach to the left in sort of a wide semicircle to the newly developed land is off to your left.

TH: The sand spit out here?

JM: The sand spit, right. The dock to all intensive purposes went directly west from the sand spit and then out on the bayside farther out on the beach and out there, there are still some remains of the pilings that constituted part of the dock that ran in a north south direction just beyond the spit as you now see it. There was a time shortly after World War I when the Sea Scouts had a U.S. Navy Destroyer down here for their use. It was one of the vessels that was considered no longer serviceable for combat purposes and was turned over to the Sea Scouts. They had the vessel here for several years and eventually it too was moved out of the area to some other station. The water is quite deep in here. The Sandy Hook boats, propeller driven vessels could moor in here to the dock and turn around for their trip back to New York on daily commutation type service.

TH: We are also talking about a rifle range. You were able to find bullets and cartridges.

JM: Oh yes, just to the right of the old dock or to the piling, the remains of which was still here. There was a rifle range and first position for firing the 400 yard range was immediately adjacent to the little creek that comes out from the marsh area to the north. That is a nesting area for birds that fly through the area. The first position the 400 yard range was right by the little creek and then about 150-200 yards farther to the west was another firing point and then the target butts as such where the targets were mounted was a little closer to Battery Arrowsmith. There were sand mounds that absorbed some of the impact if a soldier accidentally overshot the target he would have to do so by quite a serviceable margin in order for the bullet to go over the top of the target butts. Whenever there was any firing in order at this point, red flags of course were always displayed at the top of the target point.

TH: Also we were trying to find a construction date on Arrowsmith and we believe it is somewhere before 1908?

JM: Yes. I am quite sure it is because that was there and operational when we moved in here to Fort Hancock and every once in a while there would be target practice called at this Battery Arrowsmith and only with short range charges because actually its not very far from Battery Arrowsmith to Perth Amboy and I am sure there would be unwelcome recipient of 8-inch shells with the charge to be adequate to carry a projectile with that range.

TH: We are also looking out of here. Do you think the troops from Camp Lowe would march over here too for that rifle practice?

JM: Well, I think at the time of World War I and shortly thereafter the rifle range here was considered unsafe and a new rifle range was built out near the Highlands or near the south end of the recreational area and at that point the marksmen had opportunity of shooting out towards the oceans where at that time there was less traffic then there is today for instance. It's been a long time since this rifle range was in use and I rather believe that somewhere around the time of World War I that the use of this range was discontinued.

TH: I see. But those were in Arrowsmith, the 8-inch guns?

JM: Yes. I believe there were two in there or three. It seems to me there were only two of them over there.

TH: What about, there was a building out there also? Do you recall the use of that building?

JM: Yes. There was a rather large hanger type building out there that was used principally by the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company at the time of World War II for radar experiments. Radar sets were established down here and installed and made operational and a considerable amount of the experimentation was done at this point in conjunction with the Signal Corps laboratories at Fort Monmouth and the extension of the Signal Corps Laboratories at Camp Evans in the Sea Girt area.

TH: You were also talking about an interesting little side story there about clamming here at Horseshoe Cove. Remember about the....

JM: Oh yes. We lived not very far from this area over at the Pumping and Lighting Station and there were two, we had two favorite clamming areas here. At one, we got white clams and at the other point we got black clams. Somehow or another the black clams were always bigger than the white clams so when we wanted fried clams at home we would dig the black clams. If we wanted clam chowder or steamed clams we would get the white clams that were along in the area close to this little inlet. Also at the opening of the little inlet where the four large conduit are at the present time we used to catch eels just on the other side of the conduit there. There is a rather deep hole in the little creek formation and the eels would come there and we would set our eel pots there and also fish with the line and hook for eels at that point. (Tape stops and restarts.) It seems that in the early days around World War I or thereabouts the army had a number of people who today would be called homesteaders. People who stayed at some particular post or camp for as long as they liked. And among this group of people if I may call them a group there was one who was known as Rabbit Hayes. (Rabbit Hayes story is in another interview.)

TH: I think from here we can go up over to your old home right at the pumping station.

JM: We enter this area of the Pumping Station. The towers that you see as short as they look are the locations of the artesian wells here. There are three artesian wells and they range from about 175 feet in one case to 850 feet for the third well. The third well was probably built around 1920 or thereabouts and we were living here at the time and observed the whole building operation and was very interesting for us kids to look at. First of all, all the equipment was steam operated. The steam line ran over from the Pumping Station over to the well drilling equipment and was in operation of course all the time the well was being built and that took quite a long time. When they build these wells over here. There was my radio station. When they build these wells over here they put down a big iron sleeve. They put a water line down inside of that and they put an air

line down inside of that. The air forces the water up in the second jacket to a certain point at which the suction pumps have enough suction to bring the water out and into use in the Pumping Station.

TH: There is the other well right here behind the yellow brick building.

JM: Yes. That's the 850 foot well that we as youngsters watched being drilled. And immediately on your right these four foundations that you see here are the foundations from a water tank which used to be here and was taken down quite some time after the new one was built up on the upper end of the Post.

TH: Now the yellow brick building...

JM: The yellow brick building was the Pumping and Lighting Station. The front station or the section to the left is where the Electric Generating Station was and all the section to the right was where the water pumping equipment was.

TH: That's building 341 so we and identify it. Alright we are standing in the yard of the pumping station the yellow brick building and looking at your old home. Can you tell us a little about it?



Fort Hancock Pumping Station

JM: Yes. We moved here in 1908 and I sort of half remember our trip across New York Harbor. My first trip on a boat. We got down to this house and at that time it was about half the size of the house you now see, the outside dimensions about that same. The house had no water inside there was a pump on the back porch. There was no heat except for coal stoves and the lighting consisted of oil lamps which provided as we thought adequate illumination for our purpose at that time. In subsequent years, my father built an indoor bathroom, extended the back porch, installed water and, of course, being an

engineer of the Pumping Station it certainly seemed logical that he would have water in his own house and he did put it in. The oil stoves or the coal stoves that we used for heat were replaced by steam which was piped from the Pumping Station from the boilers in the Pumping Station at 120 pounds pressure. That made for very hot radiators I can assure you. That is changed in recent years. There is an oil burner in the house now. The house has been extended so there is quite a good sized livable place at the present time. We, I guess, enjoyed living there. We never seemed to be over crowded. There were enough of us, there were 6 of us in that little house but we did alright.

TH: And that was the only house around here right?

JM: That was the only house around here. That was the only house around here for a good many years. A few years after we moved here another two family house was built about 150 feet from our quarters.

TH: The yellow brick one down here.

JM: The yellow brick house, right. Even later than that several small houses were built by soldiers who were stationed at Fort Hancock but lived elsewhere. There'd be inadequate housing on the Post then as I guess, there is even now in many posts, camps and stations. About that time and I guess you might say as luck would have it, a four master lumber vessel from down south washed ashore on the ocean beach in a terrific storm and washed up high enough on the beach that I guess that salvage was out of the question. Some of those soldiers who wanted homes for their families and didn't have them, helped themselves. Moonlight requisition, I guess, is the word for the lumber that was aboard the vessel and just as I say helped themselves. Moved as much of it as they wanted into the adjoining woods and onto the beach, stacking it up for further use. The post commander didn't object probably nobody officially brought it to his attention and maybe there wasn't any particular point. The lumber was certainly was not going to be salvaged by any salvage company. After a month or so of this operation the vessel one night caught fire and burned to the waters edge and it was that way for many years. Whatever lumber had remained on the vessel also burned. As a result of the lumber which was moonlight requisition from this lumber schooner there were about eight little cottage type buildings built in this area. There were two alongside of Battery Arrowsmith. There were four built about 200 yards from where we lived along the road and the little creek that winds around through the marsh and up the back road as we then called it. Another four buildings were erected by enlisted men or non-commissioned officers and whatever help they could get from the local community. Those houses were there for many years and I believe it must have been sometime around the time of World War II that it seemed that more quarters were becoming available for enlisted men and other housing arrangements made elsewhere that those buildings were finally torn down.

TH: How big were they about?

JM: They were all about the size I would say of a four or a five room cottage as you think of four and five room cottages today. They probably were about I would say 30 feet

square maybe or oblong with a similar type of square footage for living space and they were we thought they were very comfortable places. Some how or another the people who lived in them with oil lamps and coal stoves and enough blankets and kept warm in the winter and in summertime they lived outside.

TH: What about the furnishings in your house? How did your mom furnish the house here? Can you remember any type of the furniture you had?

JM: Yes. I can remember quite well that we had in the bedroom where my father and mother and the two little kids lived they had one great big brass bed and then they had one or two little cots and then when the boys came along we got some more cots, army style cots and they always seemed to be available some how or another and it seems to be we had one other conventional type bed and that provided the bedding down requirements for a family of that time. In our living room, we had an organ that we came by some how or another and my sister in later years learned how to play that and my father always enjoyed that little thing. There a couple of good sized arm chairs. There was a very nice roll top desk that I wish I had now but it seemed to become antiquated as we moved around from place to place and was disposed of with is something now that would be considered less desirable. However, we had a good sized dining room table and of course, we always were present for meals and we always ate whatever my mother had cooked and there wasn't any question about whether we liked it or we didn't we just ate what was cooked and that was it. It was always substantial. There was always a good breakfast for everybody. Everybody got up early enough in the morning. My father got up about 5:30 or 6:00 and when he got up that was a signal for me to get up. Then of course, my mother would be up before that or slightly thereafter. By the time we were ready to go to school, we all had a good breakfast and I guess our family had always been that way. I don't think of any way of starting a new day without having a real good breakfast. And then if something cuts me short during the day I am not really hurting for nourishment. It has always been that way and let's hope it will continue.

TH: Right from here you walked up to the school?

JM: Yes. When you stand here at the point where you are now standing and look to the right there is a roadway that runs up there that we called the ash road or the back road as contrasted with the gravel road which was about two blocks down from our house. But on the ash road there was less traffic if you can consider traffic at that time of day which is mostly with mule driven vehicles or mule drawn vehicles. There were no automobiles that I can remember except for an occasional steam driven automobile or maybe some Cadillac or Pierce Arrow driven by some inspectors from First Army Area in Governors Island (NY). But anyhow, we would walk up that road which was considered safe to a point where the Marine Laboratory is now located and at that point there were sidewalks then as there are now and we would walk the other  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile or mile from that point on up to the school where we went to school.

TH: What about by that road where it bends over here the ash road. You had your garden over here and there was an interesting story about that garden with the pipe down in here?

JM: Home gardening is a fashionable kind of thing in these days but when we lived here in Fort Hancock where stores were certainly not on every other block and there were no supermarkets and where the commissary had all kinds of staple products but no fresh vegetables and where the PX had a market at that time sold fresh vegetables at an exorbitant price my father decided as in Ireland that he would have a garden here in this country too. So in the area to the right of our house which is a slightly depressed area a depressed geologically you might say or topographically as it were my father decided he would have a little garden. It so happened purely by coincidence, that a waste line that carried off a certain amount of vapor and oily liquids and water and oil mixtures flowed down through the middle of our garden. A terra cotta pipe was about 10 or 12 or 14 inches in diameter. It was buried about 3 feet below the surface and it extended about 200 yards down from the Pumping Station down into the woods into a settling station where the refuse liquids petered off into the soil. The important point about the whole thing is that those warm liquids heated the ground and long before anybody in the neighborhood or anywhere else in this part of the world were planting their gardens my father had his things growing down there. It was shielded more or less from the cold winds. Whenever there was any sunlight it just seemed to be down in the area and of course the heating plant under the garden was great for growing anything you wanted to grow and we did that.

TH: Also in the backyard, you have another interesting building that they just tore down on us. You have got a photograph of it.

JM: Oh yes, you know I thought that when we were going to be making this trip today that I would take probably what would be probably one of the last photographs of the little shack the little building that I built for my amateur radio station. In 1919, I got my first license as a radio amateur. 20P was my call sign at that time. We built that little shack down there where I used to sit on cold nights with my oil stove copying ham radio stations all around the country and elsewhere and sending an occasional message. We came down today to take the picture of the ham radio station and there is a big front end loader there and the last scraps of the building are being dragged away to the dump, gone forever from radio station 20P. However in recent years the buildings around the fort have been numbered by some organization or other and there were a number plate on the side of the house which said temporary number 341 and that now I suppose I can frame with my original ham license.

TH: That's right. It's too bad we couldn't get the block too, the block you mentioned. What letters were on that?

JM: JJM. My initials. Where was the dump you were talking about?

TH: That's up at the tip of the hook. So, I can get up there late this afternoon and look around. You mentioned you saw this being built here, the 850 foot well, the water well.

JM: Yes.

TH: Mentioning that it was a small type railroad, gauge railroad that ran through here?

JM: It was a standard gauge railroad as a matter of fact, but it was a spur from the main line from the main railroad that came into Fort Hancock in general. This spur was used to bring in coal gondolas because at that time the pumping station relied entirely on coal for fuel to make the steam to run the generators and to operate the pumping and air compressor machinery. The supply of water seemed to need some enhancement on the post and a contract was let to drill a new well near the pumping station and that is the structure at which we are now looking. The well driller brought steam driven machinery to do his entire operation and the steam to operate the machinery came from the pumping station. Now he might have had his own steam boiler plant but since the pumping station was so close they used the high pressure steam. Well we used to watch the operation of the well drilling and we used to also watch the operation of the brining the coal in to supply the fuel for the steam and notice that there was a certain technique by the people who moved the coal cars around that by the use of a crow bar they moved the coal a little bit from one bunker to another and at the end of the coal bin, coal bunker there was a slight rise and of course decline in the railroad tracks. We noticed as the cars were moved and we got to this point they would just roll freely without any more coaxing from the man with the crow bar. One day Mary and I said, "Let's go for a ride on that coal car. It's empty now. They don't need it again. Let's get that thing moving and we will go for a little ride." So, you know, we were only little shavers at that time. The crow bar which was about 6 feet long weighed about as much as we could handle, the two of us. We knew exactly how to do it because we had seen it so many times. I said to Mary, "Now look. We will get the car moving and when we do you jump on the little ladder on the front of the car and I'll grab onto the ladder on the back of the car and we will ride down that little incline." All went fine until the car got moving. Mary jumped on the front. I jumped on the back. We really didn't pay any attention to the high pressure steam line but as soon as the car hit the high pressure steam line, of course, the unions broke and the live steam just poured out on the side of the car. Luckily the brake was far enough away that live steam didn't scald my sister or myself and we rode through this cloud of steam until the car finally stopped rolling. At that time, the men from the well drilling machinery were conscience that their machine had stopped. The people in the Pumping Station were concerned about the hissing noise that they heard outside. It wasn't natural. Well, both of us had our fannies properly tanned.

TH: You were into quite a lot over here especially also about the liming here.

JM: Oh yes. There was, in the early days of water treatment and before there was so many exotic chemicals as we have these days the common way to treat the water was with unsaturated lime, unslate lime. The procedure was to lay out some 50 or 60 pounds of lime from the barrel, empty it into a tank containing enough water to unslate the lime and after it was thoroughly slake, that water and lime would be poured down into a device called a lime saturator which was built in the water treatment plant. I used to watch the men do this and I was really enthralled by the great bubbling that would ensure following the mixing of the unslake lime with the clear water. I decided that one day I would do



that job too myself. I was going to be a water purification engineer. So when I didn't see anyone around, I went up the side of the hill. Measured out the lime as well as I could and I am not too sure that was too accurate but I kept dumping big scoopfuls of lime into the lime vat and of course the bubbling the ensued was terrific. I am sure I put too much lime in. Anyhow, somebody in the Pumping Station noticed that the door to the water treatment plant was open and they said, "Well, something is wrong," and came to investigate. Well, of course, they found out what was wrong and the investigation was complete. That was another thing that sort of gave me reason to remember the whole deal. They were very unhappy and maybe a little bit overgenerous with bottom treatment. I am sure I never did that again.

TH: You also mentioned that little area over here by the house where you hurt yourself.

JM: My sister and I for many years or quite a number of years played we were our own playmates. There weren't any other little youngsters in the area. A popular pastime was playing in the sand. We would just dig the sand with our hands or if we had a little toy shovel we might use that. One day while we were out here I was digging and probably digging a little bit deeper than I usually did and at some time prior someone had buried a broken bottle there. The bottle became a very effective instrument in making a nice little scar on my finger which I still have. Of course, it bothered me to no end. Practically the whole end of the finger was hanging off at least the skin was and bleeding profusely as terminal will. So I was rushed up to the post hospital and several stitches were put in the incision and I still have the finger.

TH: We will be moving on from this area, but I would like to know that locomotive that you made mention of. Tracks ran through here at the pumping yard.

JM: Oh yes. The railroad siding of which I spoke came in from the main line in a wide curve in and back of the water reservoir and in and back of the Pumping Station. At the same about that time of which I am giving you a few details. There were a few small switching engines down here at the Post and had been in use for a good many years and the operators felt that the time had come to say good bye to those engines. But even disposing of a locomotive can not be the simplest thing in the world. The decision was made that one of these locomotives that could be written off the books would be buried. So at the proper time a steam shovel, a crane with a bucket attached dug a huge hole just to the east of the curve in the railroad track by the water reservoir. Dug a hole big enough so that when one of these small locomotives was jacked up on one side it would just topple into that hole and that's exactly what happened. Somebody figured it out just right. The big hole beside the tracks, the locomotive jacked up to the proper angle and when the center of gravity got to the right point over the hole went the locomotive and to the best of my knowledge is still buried there right along side of what used to be the railroad tracks. (This was dug up and scrapped during World War II)

TH: Alright, so we are leaving the Pumping Station. We are going down this road and that was known as the ash road.

JM: The ash road or the old road.

TH: This is the road you would walk to school on.

JM: Yes. All the way to what is now the Marine Laboratory and then at that point of course, we had access to the sidewalks and my mother and father thought that was a good way for us to go to school go the same way as possible. We agreed and did. We used the same road for going to church and for going to the commissary and the PX and everything. It looks like this was just our regular way of travel so we went this way. We came back this way. One day we were coming back from church I guess it must have been on a Sunday morning with not many people around and ourselves enjoying our own company but not rushing and as we were coming down from what was the hospital (Building 19 which is no longer standing) and now the marine laboratories there was a little sand lot alongside of the road where the post engineer used to leave the snow plow, kind a crude looking wooden construction but anyhow it was there. So Mary and I walked over there to the snow plow and were just kicking around in the sand as you sometimes see children do and kicked the neck of a bottle. Well, surprise. So we picked up the bottle. It looked familiar. We had seen whiskey at some time or another and we decided this must be a whiskey bottle. Well, to assure ourselves it was a whiskey bottle we broke it on the edge of the snow plow and as we then recognized even the aroma of whiskey which we probably had had in milk as medicine at some time or another. Well, having broken one bottle and having found one bottle and broken one we sort of felt that there might be another bottle there. So, we sort of shuffled around in the sand the soft sand and sure enough another bottle of whiskey but we didn't break that one. And a little more kicking of the sand we found a third bottle of whiskey. Well, we went of course as two dutiful children we took this down and over to the Pumping Station where dad was working at that time and said look what we found. And he said where did you get that? We told him. Well, the information about the whiskey up in the sand lots spread like wild fire and I don't believe there was a cubic yard of that sand that wasn't turned over within the next few days with no results. We had gotten the 3 bottles of whiskey.

TH: You could probably say this is whiskey corner right as we come into Fort Hancock.

JM: You certainly could have called it whiskey corner and if you could ask grandpop about it he would say the same thing.

TH: So, that was right over here where we are looking at?

JM: Exactly where it was because this little bit of water out here and these rocks and this whole corner was the way it has been as long as I can remember.

**END OF INTERVIEW**