

Sandy Hook, Gateway NRA, NPS  
Oral History Interview with Judith Saxe Schneider  
Chaplain's daughter 1959-61  
Interviewed by Billy Yirce, Monmouth University student intern  
September 14, 2003  
Transcribed by Mary Rasa 2010



Judith Saxe Schneider and her future husband Chuck Schneider outside the bowling alley at Fort Hancock in 1961. Photo courtesy of Schneider Family



Judith Saxe Schneider in 2003 at Fort Hancock Nike Radar Site, NPS Photo.



Chaplain E. B. Saxe, Judith's Father.  
Photo courtesy of Schneider Family



Fort Hancock Chapel with Chaplain Saxe, Mrs. Saxe, Col. Lewis and his wife, Jane and her mother, and the Chaplain's assistant.

Photo courtesy of Schneider Family

Editor's notes on parenthesis ( )

BY: This is an oral history interview of Judi (Judith Saxe) Schneider taking place at Sandy Hook National Park. First off, where were you born and where did you grow up?

JS: Okay. I was born in Point Pleasant Beach, New Jersey. And I grew up lots of places. My Dad was in the Army a little bit. And so we moved a lot.

BY: Okay and what brought you to Fort Hancock?

JS: My Dad was stationed here in '59, '60, '61.

BY: Okay and what was your Father's job here?

JS: He was the Army Chaplain.

BY: Okay. Now, what was it like growing up as a child here? Were you a child?

JS: I was 15, 16 and it was lots of fun. Lots of fun.

BY: Do you remember anything specific about what was happening here during that time?

JS: No. No. I don't. World news, no, that wasn't important.

BY: What did you do for school?

JS: We went off post to Middletown High School. And also I was, my sister and I went to, where did we go to school...Bound Brook, New Jersey at the Pillar of Fire School. So we went there too.

BY: Okay. And what building did you live in?

JS: I hear that it burned down. Its across from the, kind of kitty cornered from the Officers' Club. (Building 112 was a wooden frame building near Building 104 and 108.)

BY: Do you remember anything specific about it?

JS: It was a nice big house it had a lot of porch area built in. Upstairs, downstairs, the front stairs. I remember my little brother and sister dug a, their own little handmade pool off to the side of the house and filled it with water. And it was fun living there.

BY: And what were the religious services like, since your Father was the chaplain?

JS: It was mostly Methodist based. And so he sang. He sang a lot himself. He was a singer. And I remember teaching Sunday School there.

BY: Okay. And do you remember any types of games or activities that you participated in while on the base?

JS: No. We rode our bikes a lot out here and walked.

BY: Did you go to the beach at all?

JS: Yes.

BY: Which beach, do you remember?

JS: We went to the Officers' Beach 'cause my Dad was an officer. He was a captain. And, but we also could go to the Enlisted Mens' Beach so we went to both.

BY: Did you know any servants, minorities or women who worked at the Fort in any other civilian or military jobs?

JS: No.

BY: Were there a lot of, do you remember a lot of children?

JS: Yeah. There was lots of kids here.

BY: Alright so it was fun to be here?

JS: Yeah. It was fun to be here.

BY: Do you remember any humorous stories that occurred that you remember?

JS: I remember when we had a hurricane. I think it was (Hurricane) Donna. Our house sat like Noah's Arc. It was surrounded with water. And we rode our bikes through that storm water when it was all over.

BY: Do you still keep in touch with anyone that you...?

JS: No. Other than my husband who I met here.

BY: Okay. What was that like?

JS: Well, being 16, I really wasn't interested in being in love. So, but we met and my sister mostly who was two years younger was hanging around with those soldiers. (laughter) She was 14, I was 16. So we just kind of made friends with some of the guys and they would come to the teen club and we would have dances and stuff and kind of just little friendships.

BY: Where was the place to hang out when you left the base?

JS: Teen club, we went to the movies, the bowling alley, the PX.

BY: Alright. What about the food? Do you remember anything about the food when you were here?

JS: I remember I stole ice cream from the PX. I do remember ice cream. (laughter)

BY: Did you take, did you ever go to the City? Did you ever go to New York, take any excursions to the city?

JS: No. No. Never went.

BY: You were still young. Well, that's about it. It was great interviewing you.

JS: Thank you.

BY: And thank you for coming to visit.

End of Interview

(Editor's note: Chaplain Saxe served as the Post Chaplain at Fort Hancock from 1959-61. His office was located in the Post Chapel. He first served as a bomber pilot in World

War II and used the G.I. Bill later to become a chaplain. He served at Fort Dix, Korea, Fort Hancock and then in Germany.)