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Mrs. May Hall McCabe

[00:00:00]

Interviewer: This August 8th, 1968 the interviewee is Mrs. May Hall McCabe. A real estate agent in Rehoboth Beach and the interviewer is Mensa. Okay?

Mrs. McCabe: Well if you want to know how I got into Real estate, in about 1933 and 1934 the family vessel who originated in *[inaudible]* [0:00:25] told me she wanted me to go in real estate. They got a real estate license.

Interviewer: Now was she a resident of Wilmington?

Mrs. McCabe: She was a resident of Wilmington but she had property here and she was like a mother to me. She told me what to do, what not to do.

Interviewer: You had lived in Rehoboth had you?

Mrs. McCabe: I had lived in Rehoboth since the better part of 1919 and anyway I thought I couldn't take it. I didn't think I could take the criticism that real estate people here were getting.

Interviewer: What were those criticisms?

Mrs. McCabe: Well that if you found that someone hadn't paid their taxes, you'd try to have them pushed and you'd have the property put up for public sale and you'd bet it in at a nominal figure. That was one of the stories that was told about a couple of the real estate people here. Well anyway I started making a list of the criticisms and after three years she told me that she asked me to take out licenses now she was telling me to do it and she didn't mean maybe.

So I gave her this list of criticisms and told her to look them over and see if I was strong enough to overcome this, not do the same that they'd been accused of. So she did and she phoned me to go get my license. So I did, in March of 1937. And anyway I thoroughly have enjoyed the word.

Interviewer: 31 years of it?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes. And the first year from March one I never worked harder, leasing properties and trying to rent them *[inaudible]* [0:02:45] and that year I made \$400.

Interviewer: Was that because there was not a lot of property moving or was it because commissions were very low?

Mrs. McCabe: Rehoboth was much, much slower.

Interviewer: And it was also the depression too wasn't it?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes. But I can't imagine any business that I could have gotten into that I've enjoyed more than this. The very first time that I ever had, I still have. And as the family came along the first that got married, I happened to have a little apartment over on Hillapen Avenue and I fix that up and they came there, spent their honey moon. So they want anything here to rent or to buy I do it, I *[inaudible]* **[0:03:44]** so and I think just as much of them now as I did then.

Interviewer: You have a regular clientele then that comes back every year?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes, many of them.

Interviewer: Yeah. How was Rehoboth different say in the 20s than it was in the 30s?

Mrs. McCabe: Well there was not nearly how the number of houses here.

Interviewer: But were there a lot of people who came in the excursions in the 20s?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes but not very often. The excursions didn't come in not too often.

Interviewer: And they came in once a day did the train come in?

Mrs. McCabe: Well the train came in yes once a day but it would be more, well maybe one day a week there would be an excursion.

Interviewer: From Wilmington?

Mrs. McCabe: Well it came over from Baltimore, Greenwood, you know this way and come down to from Wilmington to Harrington and they'd change there.

Interviewer: Harrington was the railroad town, I knew that. Did most of the people who rented from you in those days did they come from Wilmington? Has this always been a Wilmington, Washington town or?

Mrs. McCabe: No, Pennsylvania as I imagined has more people than the other states here.

[00:05:07]

Interviewer: Even now?

Mrs. McCabe: Pennsylvania is well represented here. Of course Washington and the area around Washington you've got an awful lot of people.

Interviewer: Now what was Ocean City like in the 1920s was it much different than Rehoboth Ocean City in Maryland?

Mrs. McCabe: I don't think so, no.

Interviewer: How do you account for the fact that Ocean City grew so much while Rehoboth didn't?

Mrs. McCabe: Ocean City has, whether they have taken over state land or *[inaudible]* **[0:05:38]** they had a long area that they could make a fall back on. Where we are confined then we were confined from Silver Lake up to Henlopen Avenue.

Interviewer: You were cropped between what? Between Silver Lake and what was up here? Fort Miles?

Mrs. McCabe: No, Henlopen Avenue.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Mrs. McCabe: Because then even the acres hadn't been developed.

Interviewer: Now how come Rehoboth didn't go all the way up to Capen Lopen? Why wasn't it developed up in that direction? Was it because of Fort Miles because they couldn't get that property? Which seems to me that they would be able to...

Mrs. McCabe: I don't think people had any desire to be up there.

Interviewer: Yeah but you see in Ocean City they did, they continued to push out.

Mrs. McCabe: I know.

Interviewer: And I wondered what the reason was.

Mrs. McCabe: I know it but no I couldn't tell you.

Interviewer: Do you think it was a conscious effort to keep Rehoboth small I'm not trying to put words in your mouth but.

Mrs. McCabe: I think that Rehoboth has been more selective than a good many reserves, I really do.

Interviewer: And the people who have been selective were the people who lived here originally or who acquired the property?

Mrs. McCabe: No, well yeah who owned the property they were very careful who they sold to.

Interviewer: I see.

Mrs. McCabe: Or sold their lands to.

Interviewer: But there doesn't seem to have been a commercial development with the amusement peers and...

Mrs. McCabe: Rehoboth is a family resort pure and simple, it hasn't been commercialized and I hope it never will be like Ocean City.

Interviewer: The control of the town has remained pretty much in the hands of the Delawareans and who have always controlled it?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes.

Interviewer: Yeah and they are not about to sell it to the Washington lawyers and the New York lawyers and the rest of that?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes.

Interviewer: Just pure Delaware that's for sure. Well then during the war nobody came then here really did they?

Mrs. McCabe: Not much.

Interviewer: What was the security along the beach I remember guard towers there, weren't there towers there?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes.

Interviewer: What did you have to do to go onto the beach, could you go onto the beach during the day?

Mrs. McCabe: At certain hours.

Interviewer: You were only allowed to go at certain hours. Did you ever see anything sunk off the beach? Did you ever see any ships?

Mrs. McCabe: No.

Interviewer: You never saw anything. I can remember being 12 that there was tanker smoke off the coast and submarines and all of that.

Mrs. McCabe: Well you could see what you would imagine but not sunk, you could see boats that you wondered whether they were ours or somebody else's.

Interviewer: Somebody else's. Fort Miles was a fairly active military post then wasn't it?

Mrs. McCabe: Very yes.

Interviewer: Did it have much effect on the town?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes a lot of families lived over here and it was hard to get houses for them especially in the winter time as many of the houses were not heated, not at all. We'd even put those old fashion heaters.

Interviewer: The space heaters.

Mrs. McCabe: Space heaters so that they could have a little, but the demand was really greater than Rehoboth could take care of.

Interviewer: When was the inlet put in?

Mrs. McCabe: Don't ask me, you'll have to ask somebody else.

Interviewer: I remember you couldn't get the inlet bridge, wasn't there a bridge? There was no bridge over the inlet or it was difficult to get to Ocean City from here? Could you always drive down to Ocean City right along the coast?

Mrs. McCabe: It wasn't a nice bridge like they have now and every board seemed to be **[inaudible] [0:09:27]** over there.

Interviewer: But it was always there as you can remember?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes. But I hope I'll repeat it, I hope Rehoboth will remain a family resort, now both ends of it, that's not Rehoboth. Rehoboth runs from Silver Lake to *[inaudible]* **[0:10:00]** Avenue. Now that's Rehoboth and I hope that space will not change, it hasn't changed that much. It has homes in here.

[00:10:10]

Interviewer: I came here as a child and I can always remember Rehoboth being just about the way it was, with pretty much the same kinds of places.

Mrs. McCabe: Of course on both ends where they've changed the atmosphere you might say *[inaudible]* **[0:10:27]** Rehoboth proper I think a very comfortable place to live in, all year round.

Interviewer: All year round.

Mrs. McCabe: Yeah, all year round.

Interviewer: Well who are some of the famous people that you ran into? Can you talk about Richard Nixon?

Mrs. McCabe: I don't think that I should.

Interviewer: Well it's going to go into a library somewhere and this man is probably going to be president of the United States.

Mrs. McCabe: Well he was nominated.

Interviewer: He was nominated last night and you know somebody may be listening to this maybe 30 years from now.

Mrs. McCabe: Well I was called one Friday afternoon and the person who called me said well we're calling you because you don't talk. Richard Nixon wants to be down there tomorrow morning by 10 o'clock, find him a place.

Interviewer: He was then vice president?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes he was vice president.

Interviewer: Do you remember the year?

Mrs. McCabe: I'm afraid to tell you.

Interviewer: 1953?

Mrs. McCabe: I don't know, I *[inaudible]* **[0:11:35]** maybe I could look it up but anyway and after I selected the place.

Interviewer: What did you use as criteria for selecting the place?

Mrs. McCabe: A plain family home.

Interviewer: This was their request or did they?

Mrs. McCabe: No, but I felt that they were not people that would want well something too elaborate and staying only two weeks well they wouldn't have to have.

Interviewer: Was it a Rehoboth person who called you or was it the someone from Washington who called you?

Mrs. McCabe: Someone from Washington.

Interviewer: How did they call you? Why did they choose you? What was your connection there?

Mrs. McCabe: There wasn't any connection.

Interviewer: Well how did they know you?

Mrs. McCabe: Well they had some friends in Washington who came down here and the friend said if you call her she will not tell that he's coming, because she doesn't talk. And I don't much to the **[0:12:44]** *[inaudible]* in the office. But as I said I did come out and...

Interviewer: Did you have a number of houses that you thought might be suitable?

Mrs. McCabe: I had probably half a dozen but I had to start and with the children that age I wanted to get them where they could walk to the beach, they could walk up Rehoboth Avenue if they wanted to, to the shop, they could walk to the movie. And as I told *[inaudible]* **[0:13:27]** decided on 19 Virginia Avenue, I went to work on it.

Interviewer: Now was this house occupied at the time?

Mrs. McCabe: No. the owner was in Washington, it wasn't occupied then. And before I called the owner we were handling the *[inaudible]* **[0:13:52]** before I called the owner I took the bed spreads and the scalar rugs to the

laundry. Now I was *[inaudible]* [0:14:01] when I did select a place to get hold of... now I can't remember her name, a woman that was here in town that would know if it was alright location wise and so on. So she said that house would be fine.

Interviewer: Did the Nixon's have friends here in Rehoboth at the time?

Mrs. McCabe: No, not that I know of. He wanted to get off where it'd be quiet and wouldn't be bothered. *[inaudible]* [0:14:32] so after I did that I called the owner from her own telephone in her own house there and told her I rented the house. She said you can't she said we are just about packed ready to come down.

Well I said well I can't help it you'll have to go somewhere else. Mrs. McCabe what do you mean? I said that's what I mean, I have rented the house. I said now you are in Washington and I can tell you who's taking it. Vice president Richard Nixon, his wife and two daughters.

Oh well, well. She said yes but the bed spreads need, I said the bed spreads are at the laundry and the scatter rugs are at the laundry and we're going to mop the floors and dust. And they are to be here by 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

Oh well that's alright, and I said you can go to well somewhere else and get a room, that's alright, we will. O the next morning, my husband walked across the street as he did every twice a day to get the family roose and he came back and he said well we have extinguished visitors in town but no one can find out where he is.

I didn't say anything. Two o'clock that afternoon he took his trip across the street again and came back well he said I know where he is. And they all yelled where, where? He said he's at 19 Virginia Avenue. And one of the *[inaudible]* [0:16:24] working for me she put her hand on her hips and she said and that's what you were doing yesterday afternoon.

Interviewer: To find a place for Mr. Nixon?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes.

Interviewer: Well how long did they stay?

Mrs. McCabe: Two weeks.

Interviewer: They were here two weeks, did they ever come back after that?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes they've been back, they've been back twice I guess since.

Interviewer: Did they stay in the same place?

Mrs. McCabe: No, it was just where we used to get them you know when they wanted to come back.

Interviewer: What were your dealings with him? Did you have much in the way of dealing with him?

Mrs. McCabe: No, not very much. Now this nephew of mine there is a time he would walk over, find out if they needed anything at the store and **[inaudible]** **[0:17:21]** and he just thought he was on top of the world.

Interviewer: How old was he?

Mrs. McCabe: Then he must have been around 10 and anyway after what I told you with the picture after the Nixon's went back they sent him a picture and had to, what I would say written his name.

Interviewer: Autographed it.

Mrs. McCabe: Autographed the picture. So it's one of his valuable possessions.

Interviewer: I should imagine it would be and it may even be more valuable this time next year.

Mrs. McCabe: Yes, probably. So that's the story of Mr. Nixon but we like him very much he was very democratic.

Interviewer: How did Rehoboth take to him? Did they let him alone?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: People didn't bother him much?

Mrs. McCabe: But you see it was around Labor Day and you know around that there wasn't too much going on then so.

Interviewer: And nobody took advantage of him?

Mrs. McCabe: No, no. They didn't.

Interviewer: I wonder where he's going since...

Mrs. McCabe: Well I don't know.

Interviewer: Of course he went out of Washington in 1961, he hadn't been back ever since really. Who else did you rent to that you could think of that was interesting like that?

Mrs. McCabe: Well I don't think there's been anyone quite as interesting as he was. I mean down to earth and that would create the interest.

Interviewer: Yeah the stir of the town.

Mrs. McCabe: Of the town, yes. I know we rented to one of the senators at one time, he did not want and I won't mention his name *[inaudible]* **[0:19:25]** and when he came, he was a young man working as a salesman, I told him to leave this person to this house because he'd never been to Rehoboth before. And so he was smart enough he asked his name, so when he came back the salesman came back he said oh boy that will give us some probably *[inaudible]* **[0:19:54]** for sure. I said what do you mean? He said well if we're put in the paper I say you let me know you are put in the paper and you'll lose your license immediately. I said well you don't tell things like that. So he didn't.

[00:20:14]

Interviewer: Linda Johnson had a lot of publicity when she was here but I guess she wanted it, didn't she?

Mrs. McCabe: I don't know whether she wanted it.

Interviewer: Yeah you don't know.

Mrs. McCabe: But we had rented to the group that she was with but we had well some of them, not all the group stayed over when she came. But we didn't have anything to do with brining her here.

Interviewer: How about Negroes in Rehoboth? Are there any? Where do they live in Rehoboth or are they just.

Mrs. McCabe: Over the bridge.

Interviewer: On the other side of the canal.

Mrs. McCabe: And they are nothing the colored people here I think they are fine as you could find anywhere.

Interviewer: Now do people come down from Washington, would a Negro come down from Washington and rent a house here?

Mrs. McCabe: He could.

Interviewer: He could? He wouldn't experience any difficulties?

Mrs. McCabe: Not at all, he wouldn't be bothered.

Interviewer: I expect that to change isn't it? In the last 30 years?

Mrs. McCabe: I don't think Rehoboth really has been disturbed about it in any way, shape or form?

Interviewer: What has disturbed Rehoboth? It's a fairly placid town, has anything?

Mrs. McCabe: I don't think.

Interviewer: Never really disturbed it? Did the hippies ever bother the last couple of years?

Mrs. McCabe: No. I would say not, I think that they are more in town now because Ocean City is cramping down on them. I think there are more coming to Rehoboth now. But they'll have to watch their step because Rehoboth will not put up with it at all. If they do want to shop.

Interviewer: If they do put up with it. Has there ever been any kind of political things that have taken Rehoboth apart?

Mrs. McCabe: I don't think so.

Interviewer: It's a very quiet town isn't it?

Mrs. McCabe: I feel myself that it's an exceptional town.

Interviewer: Yeah it kind of is.

Mrs. McCabe: I really do. Maybe I'm not telling a lot of things about the world and I try not to get into anybody else's business it's not mine if I can help someone I'm glad to do it but I don't think that.

Interviewer: Were you here during the storm in 1962?

Mrs. McCabe: I was.

Interviewer: Right in this house on Rehoboth Avenue?

Mrs. McCabe: I was right here, didn't go to camp.

Interviewer: Can you describe that for us? That's the way everybody describes it with a great sign.

Mrs. McCabe: I didn't go to bed from Tuesday until Friday night.

Interviewer: Now were you managing properties for people at that time?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes.

Interviewer: You had a headache then didn't you?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes and this nephew that lives with me, he said mother you. I took him when he was five months old so he doesn't know any other mother. You lie down on the diner den and I'll get my sleeping bag and I'll stretch out here. Now that's what we did.

Interviewer: That was Monday night?

Mrs. McCabe: Tuesday night, Wednesday night and Thursday night. And Friday night I went to bed. Just about 12 o'clock the phone rang, come quick. He's going fast. And that was one of my closest friends in town. I tried to get her around, she was 81 or 82. I tried to get her to come here and stay with us she wouldn't do it. She lived on Junior Avenue pretty close to the ocean and anyway the doctor called, he said come quick she's going fast. I said I'll be there as soon as I get dressed.

By the time I got half-dressed I called Solis to come pick me up and when Junior heard me he said I'm going with you. So he put some clothes on and we got over there and the doctor had ordered the ambulance and they were ready to take her to the hospital.

Interviewer: Over to Louis?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes. So I came back and I think I slipped *[inaudible]* [0:25:03] I came back Grace brought me back, and Junior got the car around and we went to Louis, we went to the hospital.

[00:25:20]

Interviewer: Did you get to Louis? The road was passable was it?

Mrs. McCabe: Yeah, we got there and she was in the you know what care.

Interviewer: Intensive Care.

Mrs. McCabe: Intensive care. And I held her hand and as she squeezed my hand she could speak, and I would say a few words to her doctor standing there, I hadn't been in many minutes he said you go at the waiting room. But when he said that she squeezed my hand a little bit. And I said well you can tell me to go on case, I'm not going. So finally *[inaudible]* **[0:26:09]** and he said I've asked you to go now I'm telling you to go in the waiting room. Well she didn't last for a few more minutes. So we came on home.

Interviewer: That was Friday night the week of the storm? Did the water come up into up this far? How far did it come up in that storm?

Mrs. McCabe: No on Rehoboth Avenue it didn't come up some in the next block but it beat over sort of a high ledge you might say.

Interviewer: There's a blockade down here?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes. But the *[inaudible]* **[0:26:47]** and there were quite a few puddles in that next block, but it didn't come up in here.

Interviewer: But it did come up on the beach down around South Avenue didn't it? And it knocked all those buildings down?

Mrs. McCabe: Beyond that *[inaudible]* **[0:27:02]**

Interviewer: What did it do to the storage Kingston gallery?

Mrs. McCabe: Well I think it ruined I think most of the things.

Interviewer: Just probably emptied it out?

Mrs. McCabe: It was *[inaudible]* **[0:26:14]** experience.

Interviewer: You had no power? Did you have water?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes, we had water but no electric. Fireplace when I cooked I cooked on there.

Interviewer: Was it cold?

Mrs. McCabe: No, it wasn't.

Interviewer: It wasn't particularly cold.

Mrs. McCabe: Not particularly cold, no. I always tried to keep some wood on the end and you know a case like that where we can't have.

Interviewer: Has that happened very often that you can remember?

Mrs. McCabe: No, no.

Interviewer: That was the worst storm that you recall.

Mrs. McCabe: That's the first storm that we've had since I've moved here.

Interviewer: How about hurricanes? Did they come by and give you a swipe every once in a while?

Mrs. McCabe: Very light, very light.

Interviewer: Did a lot of people call you about your property while you were here?

Mrs. McCabe: Oh sure, yes.

Interviewer: And a lot of people came into town?

Mrs. McCabe: After they could.

Interviewer: After they could.

Mrs. McCabe: You see we had the national guard here and no one was allowed without they had business off from the first street up to the *[inaudible]* **[0:28:23]** for some time.

Interviewer: Was there much looting? Did people try and steal much?

Mrs. McCabe: No I don't think so, we didn't hear of it even if there was. No, of course they were afraid of it. But take with me any property that we had in that

ocean block there was *[inaudible]* **[0:28:42]** but it was an awful experience.

Interviewer: I'm sure it would be. I guess that shook Rehoboth up a little bit.

Mrs. McCabe: Sure it did.

Interviewer: There has been a series of fires here too haven't there?

Mrs. McCabe: Not really.

Interviewer: Do you remember any fires?

Mrs. McCabe: No, I don't remember anything.

Interviewer: This is what Riley was talking about, apparently in the early days of Rehoboth back in 1910 that the town used to burn down periodically.

Mrs. McCabe: No, no. Thank heavens.

Interviewer: Okay go ahead.

Mrs. McCabe: Rehoboth Height that was all that section was developed. That was a farm when we first came here.

Interviewer: Now that was in the 30s in the early 30s?

Mrs. McCabe: Yeah. And well it didn't start to develop until the probably 25, 26 in the year and they started building a house once in a while over there. Yes they *[inaudible]* **[0:30:02]** public sale, not souvenir.

[00:30:08]

Interviewer: Who owned it originally?

Mrs. McCabe: They, I'm afraid to tell you.

Interviewer: Was it that Rehoboth Corporation?

Mrs. McCabe: No mercy, no. Mr. Robert Hancrick owned it when we first came here.

Interviewer: He had bought the farm then, right?

Mrs. McCabe: And Henry Connet was a developer over here that bought it and developed it. And he had public sales and out up different sections of lots for public sales.

Interviewer: But he didn't build the houses?

Mrs. McCabe: No, no. Individuals did.

Interviewer: You bought the lot and then you build the kind of house?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes.

Interviewer: Was there a restriction on the kind of housing that you could build?

Mrs. McCabe: They tried to I guess.

Interviewer: And it wasn't successful?

Mrs. McCabe: Well guess it was, they were all very comfortable homes that were built over there.

Interviewer: In other words you couldn't just come down and put a shack up on your lot?

Mrs. McCabe: No, no.

Interviewer: Has there ever been any place in Rehoboth where you could do that? If you owned a lot I mean say well it's my lot if I want to put a tent on it I can.

Mrs. McCabe: No, that wouldn't be allowed in Rehoboth. No. and of course the country club has been sold recently and some of it, not all of it some of it has been put up in lots. But I have seen from Lyle Street all down I've seen all that developed.

Interviewer: Is that ten blocks or five blocks?

Mrs. McCabe: Well...

Interviewer: Roughly?

Mrs. McCabe: It's, let me see. It's Lyle, Pittman, Newcastle, Stocklin, *[inaudible]* **[0:32:05]** Rodney, St. Marks, and Lake Drod. I really might say it's well nine blocks from maybe from don't put this down. Running from here,

this is Wilmington and Delaware and it could be about eight or nine blocks of that down there.

Interviewer: That'd be quite a few houses in there? Considerable development?

Mrs. McCabe: Not then.

Interviewer: Now is that kind of development still going on around Rehoboth? In 1968? Are there still openings being developed?

Mrs. McCabe: Well the old country club is.

Interviewer: Will be developed in the same way?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes.

Interviewer: People will buy a lot?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes.

Interviewer: What's happened to the average value of the price of lots? Has it tripled has it ten tripled?

Mrs. McCabe: Don't say that Handopen Avenue in the 25s, 26, and 27s along in there you could buy lots, Handopen Avenue for \$75 a lot. And I wanted to buy some lots we didn't have much but I wanted to buy some lots. My husband said I wouldn't have one over in that forest, nothing doing.

Interviewer: That's what they called the Pines?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes. They didn't call them the Pines then, it was the forest over there, anyway a friend of ours wanted six lots and I wasn't in real estate then but we located two lots here and then skipped a block and two lots there and on down. \$75 is what he paid for. The cheapest one that he sold was 3000.

Interviewer: That was how much later?

Mrs. McCabe: Oh well probably 12, 15 years later.

Interviewer: And now what do they sell for?

Mrs. McCabe: Those \$3000 lots, if you got one for much under 10,000 you'd be very lucky.

Interviewer: Are the lots still there?

Mrs. McCabe: Not for sale, none for sale.

Interviewer: No, you couldn't buy them even if you did have the money. Somebody made a lot of money then.

Mrs. McCabe: Angur Riley has I think 12 but he wouldn't sell in the interim.

Interviewer: Is he just going to hold on, well you don't know.

Mrs. McCabe: Well he's not going.

Female speaker: His wife *[inaudible]* **[0:35:00]** he told me that this morning.

Mrs. McCabe: No he's not going to sell.

Interviewer: Were they local people who made the money? Because with that much appreciation in the value of land somebody made some money out of it.

Mrs. McCabe: Sure they made some money, not very few local I would say.

Interviewer: Where did they come from, Wilmington?

Mrs. McCabe: All over.

Interviewer: All over, people who came in and speculated on the land and held on to it and then made money out of it. How about the DuPont's? This is Delaware and they are into everything and, this could become a DuPont Summer home, this could become a DuPont Holiday but it never did. Any reason?

Mrs. McCabe: I don't know what the reason is behind that. They did buy...

Interviewer: I know Felix had that big house because I've stayed in Memorial House.

Mrs. McCabe: *[inaudible]* **[0:35:55]** they had some property of their own point you might say, that comes out there in the lake, you know? Christopher Warren had a home over there, he was a very fine person and well they owned quite a bit in there. And I think they have lend their family some of them to come and live. But the parks, we still have parks. And across from Ed Greveer that too there are a good many acres in there, many acres that I hope will never be sold.

Interviewer: Are they public park land or do they belong to the?

Mrs. McCabe: They belong to the town.

Interviewer: They belong to the town, and they probably won't be sold.

Mrs. McCabe: I hope not.

Interviewer: Did the Duponsky have the rest of the town?

Mrs. McCabe: No sir, they didn't.

Interviewer: Then they haven't really been benefactors of Rehoboth?

Mrs. McCabe: Well they have done some very nice things for Rehoboth yes but they didn't give any land. No.

Interviewer: Not to the extent that they have done in other places in Delaware?

Mrs. McCabe: No, well it just wasn't there to do you see, do with, or to give. The land wasn't there to give. Rehoboth is not a very large area.

Interviewer: That's probably has as much to do with the development of this town as anything else, it's the simple geography of the town, would you say that?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes.

Interviewer: How about the mosquitoes? When did they disappear? Were they an awful curse?

Mrs. McCabe: Well there some years yes, and there were some years no.

Interviewer: Do you think that kept people away from Rehoboth?

Mrs. McCabe: No I do not.

Interviewer: No, they came anyway.

Mrs. McCabe: Yes. People that like simple living came, so.

Interviewer: Was there ever much in the way of a night life in Rehoboth?

Mrs. McCabe: No sir, thank heavens.

Interviewer: There were not many night clubs or saloons or anything like that?

Mrs. McCabe: No.

Interviewer: What do you attribute that to was there a strong?

Mrs. McCabe: The type of people that come here.

Interviewer: The type of people that always came back and that owned the property here?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes. Now the few that we have are very high citizens so anyway.

Interviewer: The fire department here is a volunteer fire department isn't it?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes it is, and it's one of the finest in the state.

Interviewer: Is it a social club as well?

Mrs. McCabe: No sir, not really. No sir. I don't know how the boys when that whistle blows I don't know how they get there as fast as they do and get those engines out. I'm so proud of them really.

Interviewer: Are there many fires in Rehoboth? *[inaudible]* [0:39:27] do you know how much quality is there?

Mrs. McCabe: No, no. They go anywhere they are called, really.

Interviewer: Inside and outside of Rehoboth.

Mrs. McCabe: Yes.

Interviewer: How about your police department, how long has it been a paid police department, do you remember?

Mrs. McCabe: Very fine. Well a long, long time.

Interviewer: As long as you could remember.

Mrs. McCabe: Yes.

Interviewer: What is it? One man, two men, five men, eight men? Do you have any idea?

Mrs. McCabe: It's a good many men, I wouldn't know how many.

Interviewer: Now it's a good many men, do you ever remember when it was one?

Mrs. McCabe: One and two, yes. Long, long time ago.

[00:40:00]

Interviewer: I mean there wasn't really much need for a police department probably in those days?

Mrs. McCabe: No. I don't know just how many they have now but the town was pretty well covered.

Interviewer: Is the town government been a good government?

Mrs. McCabe: Very good, very good.

Interviewer: They never had any scandals or anything like that?

Mrs. McCabe: I don't think so.

Interviewer: Was there any zoning in Rehoboth?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes.

Interviewer: To what extent?

Mrs. McCabe: There is now.

Interviewer: There is now?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes, that didn't come along until maybe too late in some sections but it's zoned now.

Interviewer: It's zoned what? Commercial and residential?

Mrs. McCabe: Semi commercial.

Interviewer: And semi commercial. Is there any industry in this town other than tourists? There are no canneries or anything like that?

Mrs. McCabe: There is a cannery out beyond the, well they don't can anymore now, they freeze things out you know when you get out and turn on the

highway straight out going north, out in that section. Really in the colored section is where the cannery was and they still freeze so of course there's...

Interviewer: Has there ever been much fishing out in Rehoboth? Other than party boats I mean, there has never been any commercial fishing.

Mrs. McCabe: There was out of Louis for a while you know that?

Interviewer: Yeah, right.

Mrs. McCabe: But not in Rehoboth.

Interviewer: The people that live in Rehoboth did many of them ever go to sea, any of the boys ever go to sea? They grew up here at the beach but they didn't turn out to go to the sea? What's the biggest changes that have taken place in Rehoboth since you've been in business? What would you say were the greatest changes in 30 years? There sure has been some.

Mrs. McCabe: Well the increase in homes I think is the biggest change really. The number of homes that have been built here.

Interviewer: Just the number of people.

Mrs. McCabe: And families that have come in to stay. Now for instance today I got a telephone call and someone is I don't know what **[inaudible] [0:42:12]** but they want to come here to make it their home, they are older people. They want something new that they can occupy year around. And it is a very nice place for older people really.

Interviewer: Do you think it may develop in that direction as well?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes I think it will.

Interviewer: As a retirement kind of community?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes, well there has been developing I would say, the retirement community.

Interviewer: What do you see is the future with this condominium this big apartment down here, do you see more of those things developing in Rehoboth or in this area?

Mrs. McCabe: I think there will be, yes.

Interviewer: Do you think that's a desirable thing?

Mrs. McCabe: Well it is to a good many people and of course there are those who'll object to it. They don't feel that it belongs in Rehoboth, or the type that ought to be in Rehoboth but it is answering the purpose for quite a few people.

Interviewer: I think that's significant, yeah.

Mrs. McCabe: *[inaudible] [0:43:28]* the apartment houses have gone up very well.

Interviewer: Would you say that the majority of people still come and rent the houses that.

Mrs. McCabe: Oh if they can get a house, yes.

Interviewer: If they can get a house?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes, if they can get a house. Yes.

Interviewer: Do a lot of people who live in Rehoboth then own houses then, do they rent their houses for a month at a time and go somewhere else themselves, does that of that happen?

Mrs. McCabe: Not that lived in Rehoboth all the time, no.

Interviewer: But the summer people who own summer houses here would frequently.

Mrs. McCabe: Yes maybe they'll come in September or they'll come in say in June and then rent through July and August.

Interviewer: Are there still many rooming houses in Rehoboth?

Mrs. McCabe: Not many.

Interviewer: Did there used to be?

Mrs. McCabe: Well I think that there were more houses, more homes that rented rooms than now. There used to be more that rented rooms than now.

Interviewer: How do you capture that difference?

Mrs. McCabe: Well I don't.

Interviewer: Yeah I mean just guess, you've been in the business.

Mrs. McCabe: Well so many people want to go where there's more people instead of wanting to be just in the individual homes or houses.

Interviewer: Maybe people feel that they have more privacy in a motel or a hotel than they do in someone's house?

Mrs. McCabe: Today I received, this morning I received a letter and I don't know where I put my *[inaudible]* **[0:45:07]** and I could read it because it was...

[00:45:15]

Interviewer: You find that there are still a lot of people who like guest house and combinations?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you get many requests for that?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes. But we can't do anything about, we don't rent rooms we only give them a list of what we know is open. Now if somebody comes down without any reservations we'll sit there and work for well I'd start to say hours and sometimes it is almost because we can't let them down we've got to find a place that's all. Maybe it isn't what we want to find for them but they are here and there isn't much open.

Interviewer: Now there really isn't if you don't have reservations or anything it's very difficult to find a place to stay.

Mrs. McCabe: Well yes.

Interviewer: Are most of these places originally say in the 1930s when you first went into business, did most of the people in Rehoboth make their entire living off the summer people?

Mrs. McCabe: No, not most of them I don't think, they helped out you may say.

Interviewer: What kind of people lived here say in the 30s? Were they people...?

Mrs. McCabe: Well they were people that were able to live without doing, not on a grand scale, don't misunderstand, but able to live comfortably you might say.

Interviewer: Without the summer people?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes and they didn't demand food prices and so on of course were nothing like they are now.

Interviewer: Yeah, there were hucksters in those days?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes sir and wonderful ones.

Interviewer: You don't have that anymore.

Mrs. McCabe: Very few.

Interviewer: Are there any hucksters left in Rehoboth?

Mrs. McCabe: There is a huckster that I've been dealing with ever since I lived here, he's well the one that that's here now his grandfather I started with and his father and now the son.

Interviewer: Is he Negro or white?

Mrs. McCabe: White.

Interviewer: White?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes sir.

Interviewer: And he has a regular route does he?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes sir, he has quite a few of us that he wouldn't skip on a *[inaudible]* **[0:47:24]** he would be in tomorrow and he'd have all sorts of vegetable he grows himself.

Interviewer: I see, and he brings them himself and he sells door to door.

Mrs. McCabe: Yes sir.

Interviewer: But did they sell everything door to door in say 1925?

Mrs. McCabe: Well you'd call it door to door because he still had his list but now maybe someone would call me maybe tonight and say will you ask him to stop at my house tomorrow or if he can't stop here would you get me so and so.

Interviewer: And he sells fresh vegetables?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes.

Interviewer: Does he sell anything besides fresh vegetables?

Mrs. McCabe: No in the fall maybe he'll have a few chickens but they are very few. But there are a few of us that he would tell and he will have a chicken for sale and they taste different from what you buy.

Interviewer: I see it's probably better, it's much better.

Mrs. McCabe: Oh boy.

Interviewer: Does he make a pretty good living would you guess?

Mrs. McCabe: Splendid living, he has.

Interviewer: He lives very well, so more people could do it then wouldn't they?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes, they could.

Interviewer: But they just don't.

Mrs. McCabe: Nope.

Interviewer: How did you keep things cold? Did the hucksters come every day in say the 20s and the 30s? Or did you have an ice...?

Mrs. McCabe: Well you had ice refrigerator then.

Interviewer: Was there an ice plant here?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes, just before you get out of the pier on the right there.

Interviewer: It's still there?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes, we still get crushed ice there.

Interviewer: And they made the ice and then the ice man came around, were there fish men?

Mrs. McCabe: Yes.

Interviewer: They sold fish, were they fish that were caught locally?

Mrs. McCabe: No, not most of them. No.

Interviewer: They didn't take them out of the bay?

Mrs. McCabe: No.

[00:49:14] End of Audio