



Citation for this collection:

MSS 179 Robert H. Richards, Jr., Delaware oral history collection, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware

Contact:

Special Collections, University of Delaware Library
181 South College Avenue
Newark, DE 19717-5267
302.831.2229 / 302.831.1046 (fax)
<http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec>
askspecref@winsor.lib.udel.edu

Terms governing use and reproduction:

Use of materials from this collection beyond the exceptions provided for in the Fair Use and Educational Use clauses of the U.S. Copyright Law may violate federal law.

Permission to publish or reproduce is required from the copyright holder. Please contact Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, for questions. askspecref@winsor.lib.udel.edu

A note about transcriptions:

Of the original 252 audio-recordings in this collection, 212 of these tapes were transcribed around the time of the original recordings (between 1966 and 1978). In 2012, Cabbage Tree Solutions was contracted to create transcriptions for the remaining tapes. Corrections to and clarifications for all transcriptions are welcome, especially for names and places. Please contact Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, for questions. askspecref@winsor.lib.udel.edu

Interview with Mrs. Elizabeth Bishop, Irish immigrant, at her home on Baynard Blvd., Wilmington, Delaware by Michael Fahey, April, 1972.

Q This is an interview with Mrs. Betty Bishop . . .

A Elizabeth Bishop.

Q Elizabeth Bishop, yeah, and this is Michael Fahey doing this for the University of Delaware and we're talking to Mrs. Bishop in relation to her being an Irish immigrant. Where did you come from in Ireland?

A Castlepollard in County Westmeath.

Q Do you remember the conditions there?

A The conditions were very very good. The economy of the town was very good. And my father happened to be one of the outstanding businessmen. In fact, he was active in many business occupations. He owned several stores. He did a large commercial egg business with Manchester, England. He was justice of the peace, auctioneer for landowners and he had--we had gas, sawmills, owned a lot of land, lot of cattle, horses.

Q So conditions were good for you. Were you from a large family?

A 11 children, yes.

Q All right, so we've covered the occupation of your parents. Your mother didn't work, she kept the house, I take it.

A My mother kept the house.

Q And what was your parents' education and your education in Ireland?

A Well, my parents' education, in those days, your school, say for instance your eighth grade, would be comparable in some subjects, for instance math or business, would be equal to about your--partly through your high school here. And they were there. They seemed to have very keen business minds and mathematical-type minds.

Q And you went the same?

A I went to private schools most of my life over there. First I went to school in Castlepollard and then I went to school in Contarth [sp?], Dublin, and then I spent four years in a boarding school in Cloghan, that was in County Offaly. Cloghan

Q Was that with nuns?

A Yeah. The Sisters of St. Joseph of Clooney.

Q So how many years total did you go over there?

A Over there? Well, I was through high school. I didn't come over as an

immigrant, I came over as a student.

Q Oh, so you came as a student.

A Um hmm. I took my entrance tests, various tests, over there under supervision.

Q Where did you come to go to school here?

A Antioch.

Q In Ohio.

A In Ohio, um hmm. I had three brothers already there in school.

Q Why Antioch--because your brothers--I wonder what the first. . . .

A My first brother? He had gone to South America and came up to New Jersey and there he met--he was going to night school; he was the only one of the eleven children who didn't have a high school education. So he was the real student of the family. So he made contact with Angela Patrick and she encouraged him to go to school. And he applied at Antioch, and they said well they had never taken a student who hadn't a high school education, but from his reports and all that, you know, they accepted him on trial. And he came through with a "B" average, he now has a law degree, and a Master's.

Q All right. So in other words, to answer the question why you left, it'd be because of college.

A I came as a student, yes.

Q At what age?

A 17.

Q And how did you come?

A I came on the--by boat, the Adriatic, I think, on the North Cunard Line, or something like that.

Q And do you remember how much money you brought?

A Well, I remember I brought the full year's tuition. At the end of that year my father died, so after that I had to work my own way.

Q What route, do you remember?

A Well, I landed in New York, left from Cork, Ireland.

Q And so the Cunard Line, it wasn't a rough trip.

A Yeah, very rough.

- Q Oh, was it? But I mean conditions on the boat were. . . .
- A Oh, no. I was second class, which was a very good class. And it was a rough voyage, weather-wise.
- Q O.K. All right. Well, how did you come to Wilmington, then, since you were out in Ohio.
- A Well, I met connections with the Hercules Power Company in New Jersey. Then after that I returned to Chicago. And from Chicago during the Depression I came to Wilmington because I was familiar with their work.
- Q With the company.
- A The company, yeah.
- Q How long did you work there?
- A Oh, I think overall I worked maybe three years with Hercules. See, I came on first and worked oh, about a year and a half, and then I went back to Chicago.
- Q Why did you decide not to go back to Ireland?
- A Well, I hadn't particularly planned to go back to Ireland, and I had six brothers over here, so instead of going back, we took one of my parents who was living over here to live.
- Q But--I mean, had conditions changed in Ireland with your father's death?
- A My father died, yeah.
- Q Yes. I mean, in other words, no one wanted to stay in what. . . .
- A Well, the family, you know, had grown and dispersed. Yes, my brother was at home. Well, he died sometime ago.
- Q But none of you and the brothers who were over here, none of you considered going back?
- A Not to live, no.
- Q O.K. So when you got to Wilmington, what were the conditions you found, and what year was that if you can recall.
- A 1931.
- Q And you originally came over to the country in 19--? For college.
- A '25.
- Q Uh huh. So what were the conditions in Wilmington in '31, do you recall at all?

- A Oh, I thought it was a miserable little town. Few streetcars, and I lived at the Y.W. and it wasn't too impressive, if you are a stranger here, you know.
- Q And working at Hercules?
- A Oh, that was very nice, yeah.
- Q And you stayed through there 'til what, you got married?
- A Yeah, I worked after I got married, too.
- Q And you've stayed here the rest of your life.
- A Pardon?
- Q And you've stayed here all your life.
- A Yes.
- Q In drab little Wilmington. O.K. Thank you.