

Emma Martz interview with Donald “Homer” Ernst, 19 April 2024

Emma Martz:

So, this is Emma Martz interviewing Mr. Homer Ernst on Friday, April 19, 2024 at D.J. Ernst Books. I have asked permission to record this interview and Mr. Ernst has agreed. This interview is part of a local history project conducted by the students of the Public History course at Susquehanna University.

So, correct me if I am wrong, but you grew up on Pine Street?

Homer Ernst:

I did.

E. M.

So, what was it like growing up in that area?

H. E.

It was kind of nice. Selinsgrove was different then. I was born in '51, at the end of that year. So, I don't remember '52 or '53 very much. I do remember being in a bassinette. That's pretty early, I think. I remember my crib mattress, the designs on it.

The neighbor next to us on the west side was an elderly lady, Mrs. Rischell, and the neighbors on the right were the Grieners. We had a big barn out back. Most houses in Selinsgrove had big sheds out back, from probably the 1800s. Ours had been a livery stable. We had half of it to use. It even had a little office in it that my dad used. And there was a big sleigh up under the ceiling on this loft up there that was just always up there. The section next to ours was filled with Kendall oil drums. It would have been a spectacular fire, I guess, if it were to burn. We had a little shed out back in addition to the barn.

Between us and the elderly lady was hemlocks, and it was just, it was my jungle. You couldn't see her yard from our yard. It was that thick. I could get lost in there. There were bushes. So, I had all kinds of little forts in there. I had a tree fort. We had a white pine out back that was over 100 feet tall, and I had a little tree fort above the roof of our house which was probably 40 feet up. That's where I read my Tarzan books when I got a little older. But, it was kind of idyllic. The neighbor lady used a

ringer washer; I remember that. Everybody had a garden. We had a little garden out back.

Most of my friends when I was really little were within a block or two **[3:00]** and we would play every night until dark, you know. In the summertime we were out and then after dark sometimes, we would play flashlight tag, you know where you shine your light and catch people.

We had a run out back so to speak. A water course; it's called Weiser Run now, but I didn't know it was named anything then. It was not covered then, but it's covered now. It had stone sides. I don't know how wide it was, but we used to jump it and it was as much as we could do to get across it. The neighbor behind us, like you go through my back yard and across the alley and they lived on Chesnut Street, parallel to Pine, they had a concrete bridge to their garage. Under that bridge was a clubhouse. That's where we hung out. I never smoked cigarettes, but if I did, that's where I would have done that.

There were dogs roaming freely. Everything roamed freely. Chickens, cats, dogs. A lot of dogs didn't have owners. It was kind of interesting.

The question was 'what was it like growing up there?' So, as I got older, I went farther afield. For instance, I know that there are tunnels with steam pipes running from every building to every building at Susquehanna University and I've been in through all of them. There are underground culverts and things that go for miles, and I've been through all those. The sewage plant was out near where the racetrack is now in a field and there were culverts that went all the way out to there. Everything was old then, you know?

Charles Avenue was new, Susquehanna Avenue was ne. There were no streets beyond those. My school was where the borough office is now. It was the Pine Street School. It was brick and wood, and that was 1-6. Then they built the elementary school when I was in 6th grade and we students all formed lines and carried the books to the new elementary school which was out near the high school now. Then long after that, they built the middle school.

I started branching out. We had to leave school at the elementary school in files of twos and the kids that lived on the east side of Market Street had to be in file until they crossed Market Street **[6:00]**. We had to be in file until we crossed Orange Street. As soon as that happened, then, chaos! There were vendettas, fistfights, whatever. You'd make somebody eat dirt, that sort of thing.

But as I started to get a little older, like 10, my parents bought a canoe from somebody down on Front Street. And Front Street then, which now I call the “Dutch Riviera” back then it was sort of like the wrong side of the tracks. The island was the tough kids.

When I went down to the island, across the bridge to the Isle of Que, past what used to be the ice-skating rink, Little Norway, which was underneath where the bypass is now. It was a beautiful little skating place, with a big old stone fireplace and benches and you could put your skates up towards the fire and steam would come off your wet socks. They sold coffee and hot chocolate and candy bars and stuff like that. Beyond that was Sheetz’s store. That was a grocery store, and then a couple blocks and you’re at the river.

About a half mile down river, we kept our canoe. So, I started becoming a River Rat then. And from that age, I was allowed to go out and sleep on the islands by myself. That’s when I turned 16 and started dating. Those were a lot of my first dates. I would take them out on the canoe with steak and potatoes, a collapsable grill, and a hatchet, and I would cut some wood, make a fire, and make some steak and potatoes. But in the earlier years, I’d just have a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and a comic book and a flashlight and I’d sleep out there and read comic books with my flashlight after dark. My parents picnicked on the islands a lot back in those days.

But yeah, the town was smaller, the campus was much, much smaller. Seibert was the far wilderness edge. There wasn't anything. And then they built the chapel auditorium. That was a big deal. I played extensively on that construction site and got fined for it. My barber, who’s no longer living, got caught and gave all our names, so that's how I got fined, because he wasn’t fast enough. So I know a lot about the innards of Susquehanna from those days. It was a lot of fun! You could walk out to football games; it was all free. Well, maybe it wasn’t free **[9:00]**. But it was free if you could climb a tree and jump a fence. So yeah, I spent a lot of time running around town. Just having fun.

When I was really young, my friends that lived towards the far end of Orange Street up toward route 522, I walked home with one of them one tie and I said, “Where do you live?!” and he said, “I live on the moon!” I was carrying a book about the moon that I had got for Christmas, and it was a big book, and I didn’t want to carry it home. I gave it to him. It was just so far.

Eventually I became a long-distance runner because of running all around town. But I don't know, that's part of what growing up in town was like. There were a lot of grocery stores on corners too. Sheetz's was the one on the Isle of Que. There was one on the corner of Orange and Pine called Miller's Store and that was a half-block from us. So, when I was like 6, my parents would send me there to buy cigarettes! They would sell me a carton of Pall Mall or whatever, I can't remember. My dad smoked Lucky Strikes. They had a cooler with water in it and the soda bottles were sitting in there and I could take my dog in there until one day he raised his leg and peed on the bread loaves. The dog never went in again.

There were dogs everywhere in town and this was the main road; Market Street was the main road. That was the main highway and there was hardly any traffic on it. So that's how much things have changed. Now the bypass can hardly handle the traffic. And there's gridlock on the Golden Strip just north of town and that back then was very sparsely developed. It was mostly woods and fields but there were some interesting businesses up there. Custard Cup was one. It had a giant root beer mug on the roof. A fake one but it was like twenty feet high. I think it had maybe an ice cream cone with it, soft ice cream, on top and you could get sodas there.

I'm sorry I took too much time.

E. M.

No you are totally fine!

So, you were talking about Susquehanna. You attended Susquehanna, correct?

H. E.

I ended up at Susquehanna after getting thrown out of Thiel College twice!

E. M.

Oh!

H. E.

Ha ha!

E. M.

You majored in, was it, English Literature?

H. E.

Yeah.

E. M.

So, what was Susquehanna like when you went, in comparison to today?

H. E.

So, my oldest sister graduated from Susquehanna in '58. **[12:00]** So, she was there from '54 to '58. So, I was affiliated in certain ways with SU since my earliest memories. They used to put on really good Shakespeare productions, students did. Of course they seemed like really old to me then, the students. Now some of my friends from out there are doing *Midsummer Night's Dream* this year, yet some of them are reading their part I think and I'm like "What?! You're reading?" Because they really did good Shakespeare productions. But, my mom made me wear my Sunday School suit and all that. My bowtie, my *clip-on* bowtie. She took me to everything out there; every concert, every play.

But my sister, she's a fairly distinguished alumnae of Susquehanna. She was a chemistry/biology major. She's mentioned in this history here [held up book discussing Susquehanna University history] that came out in '58 actually. I got to go into her laboratory. She was always doing experiments and stuff. She went to Temple Medical School from there and then to Yale where she got her PhD. in biochemistry and taught at Harvard and at Yale and at East Tennessee State. So that was my first connection.

Then my mother got a job in the alumni office, so she was the secretary in the alumni office. For two years there was no Director of Alumni Relations, so she ran the whole thing. They said, "Will you be the Director of Alumni?" She didn't have a college degree. She was a secretary. A really good secretary. She said "Oh, I couldn't possibly be the director!" in the meantime, she ran the whole thing for two years, put out the magazine and everything.

Anyways, I could have gone there for nothing but, having been thrown out of Thiel for entertaining a female companion in the men's dorm, studying German, literally, is what we were doing. They raided the dorm. But my mother paid my tuition to SU because she would not take any freebies. She paid my tuition out of her secretary's salary. Tuition wasn't very much then. It was like \$10,000 a year. Seemed like a lot. I mean you could buy a house for \$15,000 then but, times are different now.

My middle sister started at Susquehanna but got married and left and finished later at Bloomsburg. She had children right away. Then my youngest sister went to Mount Holyoke for a year and her boyfriend was at Dartmouth, from Selinsgrove, and then

they both **[15:00]** transferred back to Susquehanna for various reasons. I think they spent too much time between Mount Holyoke and Dartmouth. So, she finished up at Susquehanna in '67 I think. She went on the first Susquehanna at Oxford summer study program. It was just a thing that you could sign up for. There was no study abroad thing then. So, I knew about that.

And then when I went to Susquehanna, having lost some credits, twice, having been thrown out of Thiel twice I lost a lot of credits. It took me five years to finish college. So I needed a couple credits so my parents sent me over to Oxford for the summer, and I got some credits and had a lot of fun. By then I was 21, so I learned about real beer! It was great.

I knew everybody except maybe the youngest professors, but they are all either dead or retired. The ones that were brand new then, they're gone now. So I knew almost everybody that was a teacher of mine, and they knew my family. We knew Gus Weber, Gustav (Gus-tave) Weber, personally. I don't think I filled out an application. I don't even remember filling – I was interviewed, but I don't remember filling out an application. It was all informal. I graduated in '74 from there.

But I didn't run. I had, in the meantime, broken my left leg. I have a foot-long pin in my left leg so I couldn't run cross country. I did do that at Thiel. Somehow, I did a lot of things at Thiel. Some of them I shouldn't have done but that's how I ended up at SU. I was going to run cross country, but I went back out to visit Thiel and broke my leg sledding. Hit a tree. I enjoyed my time at Susquehanna. But it was really hard to meet people as a day student and a transfer and living at home 4 miles out of town. But when I went to Oxford for the summer, I met some people who are still in close touch who are students, so I sort of met some crazy people who I synchronized with back in those days. I did study too. I pulled my grades up, redeemed myself. When I was at Thiel, slowly **[18:00]** diverged from the straight and narrow. By my sophomore year, I was not the best student anymore. Freshman year I was pretty good, lettered in cross country and track. I didn't go out the next year but then by the time I was at Susquehanna I was going to go out, but I broke my leg.

E. M.

So, your whole family has some form of affiliation with Susquehanna?

H. E.

Except my dad.

E. M.

Except your dad. That's crazy

H. E.

He worked for Weis's for 47 years

E. M.

Okay, that's impressive!

H. E.

My family's old. My parents were born in 1910. My grandparents in the 1880s. So, when I went to Gettysburg with my parents and grandmother, she was telling about her father at the Battle of Antietam. So yeah, everybody I knew, other than my cousin, they were old. My parents were among the oldest in their families, too. So, they were older than my uncles and aunts. It seemed like everybody had pretty early roots so I was used to hearing about what life was like in the 20s and 30s.

The music I listened to a lot was big band and classical and show tunes and jazz and my sisters were listening to jazz and that sort of thing and then folk music so that introduced me to Joan Baez, Bob Dylan and stuff like that. My youngest sister started listening to the Jefferson Airplane. And The Doors showed up and Susquehanna in '67 when I was in 10th grade. So, I went to that. That was my first rock concert: The Doors, Jim Morrison. It was wild. I don't remember it real clearly. I mean I was only 15.

E. M.

So clearly, you've been in Selinsgrove for a while, so is there something specific about Selinsgrove that made you want to stay here for so long?

H. E.

It was probably circumstance. I mean, I did always tell my friends from Thiel when I'd bring them here to visit, "Such good people around here!" now I'm like, "Yeah, I guess they're good a lot of good people." But I'm more into politics now and I'm seeing what they're into and I'm like "*oh my God.*" When I go to vote in Washington Township now, which is out near Freeburg, I go in to vote and they say "Donald Ernst, Democrat," and everyone looks like, "Oh, that's what a Democrat looks like."

[21:00] I forget how I got on that now. What did you ask me?

E. M.

Why you wanted to stay here.

H. E.

Ohh. Why I wanted to stay here.

Yeah. Not because I love Trump supporters. *You can leave that on the tape.* But the river is wonderful. I lived along Penns Creek for 30 years. I didn't know my wife when I was in high school. She was in the same high school, but she's three years younger, so I graduated in '69. She is '72. And when I came back to this area, it was party time. I was 21, and there was a lot of going out and stuff. And so, I met her and she's from way out in the boondocks near Middleburg in a valley I didn't even know existed. I met her a year before I opened this store.

I graduated in '74. I couldn't get any jobs in editing and writing and stuff like that. I went out to Johnstown applied at that newspaper. I applied for a job at Bucknell, didn't get that. I thought about getting a master's in arts and teaching. My brother-in-law, who has a master's in philosophy, but has been a carpenter ever since he got it, said, "Do you wanna be a nursemaid to a room full of assholes?" So other words most of his students weren't interested in philosophy. They just had to take it. He was really smart. He's the guy that made that carving right there [pointed to a carving of a young girl holding a book]. He has hundreds of those, all around this house and out in the woods and everywhere.

Anyways, I married this girl two years after I opened the bookstore. We rented an apartment down near Port Trevorton for a year. Then we rented a farmhouse out near Kratzerville for two years. And then we bought a house just outside the town limits on Penn's Creek, down below the adult bookstore. They used to call it the "Penn Township Library."

I lived on the creek for thirty years and so we'd have canoes and floating docks. I always had a dock. lost a lot of docks in floods. I made my first dock. I never made another dock after that. I always got other people's docks in floods. The same floods that I lost my dock, usually taken by **[24:00]** ice in the wintertime. Then I started pulling my dock up in the wintertime in dry dock, so it wasn't setting in the Creek and freezing fast the ice when the creek rose, you know, I had a steel cable that snapped. I saw it snap too, it was in a flood and the dock flew up. This 1000-pound dock flew up in the air and turned over and splatted down in the ice and went away. I don't have any floods I've been in at that house. This is a picture of Hurricane

Ivan (points to a picture of his old house). It was 8 feet in the house at that point. That flood that I told you about was in January. There was 3 feet of snow on the ground and torrential tropical rains fell and the temperature went up to like 65°. There was thunder snow and we had eight feet of water in the house then. Anyway, I loved living in that creek house in spite of learning to clean up after floods. So that was 30 years of my life and I—well where am I supposed to funnel this thought into again?

E. M.

Why you wanted to stay here or why you stayed here.

H. E.

Right. I forgot why I was telling you this.

Well, I loved living on the creek, and I had a bookstore. So, you wanna know how the bookstore got here. That's part of the whole thing why I'm here. If it wouldn't be for the bookstore, I don't know if I'd be here.

My wife was a dental hygienist, so she was working locally. She started when she was in high school, just going in and assisting. She was a good student, but she came from a farm family that never thought about college. She was in National Honor Society and all that. I was not. I might get an A in biology one term and an F the next term. And then back to an A, because I didn't like genetics. Now I find that interesting. But things change.

This place became—OK, I have to go back to 1960.

In 1960 I came home from Boy Scout camp and our barn out back was filled with books. My father bought a warehouse full of old books, among which were probably rare books. Back then people didn't care about stuff like that, except for bookstores in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Baltimore, real bookstores, rare books. He sold books by mail for years. He started going to auctions and buying books, and then he would be invited to people's houses to buy books, you know, and he drove around for Weis's. He was a regional produce supervisor, so he'd be in Wilkes Barre, Tunkhannock, or Altoona. He would **[27:00]** visit people who had books for sale. He had connections that he made through acquaintances with antiques dealers. One dealer would buy all the glass and another dealer would buy the books. Another person would buy the oriental carpets and stuff.

There were lots of big old mansions back then with the families still living in them in the coal country and in lumber country. Things have changed. You can't live in an old mansion anymore because, I mean, you have to insulate, you have to rewire it, you have to replumb it, you have to put a new roof on it, you have to paint all the gingerbread. People just got rid of those so he would come along when the last person in the family wanted to get rid of it. They lived in California and their parents died, and they'd have to liquidate the estate. They're not coming back here.

So, from, say, 1960 until I graduated in '74, my dad was doing this mail-order book business through a magazine called the *Antiquarian Bookman Weekly*, which was comprised mainly of lists of books wanted by bookstores around the country. So, this room became available, and I was working in a steel mill. I worked five years, well summers, in a cannery when I was in college. That I had an affinity for. Steel mill I did not. I left there at break-time one night in tears. Tears of frustration that I quit because I'm not a quitter generally, but I quit. I went home in tears. Shortly after that, my dad rented this room here. It was \$125 a month with the basement, too.

So, my brother-in-law, the carpenter, with the master's in philosophy (that immediately became a carpenter as soon as he got out of grad school) decided teaching wasn't for him. He's a great mathematician and logician though. So, he's good at carpentry. He says, "If you are good, you don't have to measure." That's one of his things. So yeah, he made these [the store's bookshelves] here from scaffold planks, because I complained that the other shelves were slightly bowing from the weight. Those used to hold cinder blocks. Scaffolding, you know, you put the cinder blocks up and then you go up to the next level. I used to help him a lot and my mom and dad would come in here while I would work for him. Or my mom was here when my dad and I would go to one of those mansions and look at the books and make an offer and bring them back here. There were some really **[30:00]** amazing things back then. There were illuminated manuscripts from the Renaissance and stuff like that. I mean, there were really good books in these houses. There was easy come, easy go. I had documents autographed by the Penn family that one auction across the river. John Carter was the name. He was one of the prominent figures in Northumberland County Historical Society and his auction. A lot of good stuff. He wrote a lot of historical articles for the Northumberland County Historical Society.

Once I started doing this, it was with my mom and dad, but mainly my dad and me. But it was my store from the beginning. He retired when I graduated, you know, he had to work till I was out of school. I was the last one.

So that's why I'm still here. I don't like change. I used to be adventurous, but I'm not anymore. I just sort of settled in here. I can't explain it. I took the easy route. I just stay here. But now I'm thinking about my exit strategy, and I can't figure out how to do that. The basement is full of stuff. If someone would just take it away for free. There're hundreds if not thousands of dollars' worth of books down there, but I don't want them.

Yeah, I would like to have everything just up, like it is here, so I can get out fast because my landlord, who inherited this from his mother, from whom we first rented, he hasn't raised my rent since 1982. This place is falling apart. My windows are falling out, he says. Just keep taping them. The bathroom ceiling just, is made of cardboard that I put up there because why put a new ceiling in every month? Because the upstairs bathroom leaks. So, when I leave here, they're going to have to make – to rent this as a store to somebody for more money.

My rent is really low. He hasn't raised it in thirty-two years. But I pay the rent. Most of his other tenants around in this god forsaken building don't pay their rent. They can't. I hear them fighting every month. He's out there banging on the door and they're cursing at him and he curses right back. He's a horrible guy, but I get along with him, but he doesn't come in to see me anymore. He's getting old so that's why I'm worried.

Because his kids are going to get this and **[33:00]** they're gonna see the rent. Maybe they'll still let me stay here 'til I die. I'm 72 now. I'm thinking, I can't just get in the car and drive to New Orleans now like I would do if I was 18. I haven't done that ever. I used to do like Cape Cod or Maine. Stuff like, you know, road trips. I can't do that. Even though I don't have regular hours anymore, I still have to have some because I have to make enough money to pay the utilities and the rent and to buy books. I'm sort of tied to the place. I'm tied to Selinsgrove because I'm tied to the bookstore.

My wife has always had a decent. Well, sort of decent position, you know, with dentists. Her last one she was at for, well, he's like 78 now. He worked until she was 65 just so she would have a place to work till she could start collecting Social Security. That was four years ago now. She'll be 70 this year. But I'm thinking, it would be nice if while we can still walk a little bit, do things. Although I have to do a lot of things. I'm pretty active, but I can really feel it. We have 14 acres out in the country, and I burn wood. I cut my own wood, split and stack it. All that and I have a 600-foot-long lane. I just cut the brush on both sides of it. That's 1,200 feet of

cutting that that this week so I mean I'm fairly active still, but I really feel that I can I tell I'm 70-something.

I feel ludicrous with my hair being like a hippie because I feel like an old person trying to not get old. At least it's not real gray because I think that looks ridiculous, like long gray ponytails. It's like, I'm sure you looked a lot better when you were 20 with your ponytail. I find that a little amusing. There are a lot of my friends who are old, but a lot of them are young too. I mean, I have people that graduated in 2015 that I loaned money to buy a car, they paid me, they got married in my yard they got divorced somewhere else but she's remarried, he's remarried, He's teaching out there now.

So I have a lot of young friends, and I like that because I do a lot of things that require some stamina and some of my young friends can keep up, some of them mostly kayaking. We switched from canoes to kayaks. I grew up with canoes. Also, **[36:00]** sailboats. Believe it or not, on the Susquehanna.

My oldest sister, she married a Polish physicist. They ended up living in Tennessee when she went from Yale to East Tennessee State to open a medical school there. She was a charter faculty member of the Quillen School of Medicine at East Tennessee State. And then she had a stroke and died in 2013. That was a shame. She was my mentor, pretty much. She taught me about art and all the humanities. She could have taught art; she could have taught literature instead she taught medical students all her life. Where was I going with this?

E. M.

Well, we are almost out of time.

H. E.

Oh OK I see, that's why you're getting poked!

E. M.

I have one final question for you.

H. E.

Ok. It's easy for me to babble.

E. M.

I love it. I love listening to stories; it's one of my passions.

So has there been any significant changes in Selinsgrove that you've seen?

H. E.

There's been tremendous changes in Selinsgrove. A lot of development. I hardly recognize the house I grew up in. I can't even imagine living there anymore. I thought that was so big a backyard and a jungle for me. But it's changed a bit. That tree is gone. The corner store is gone. A lot of things are gone. The place where A Small, Good Thing is now—I know that he's a character—that was a camera shop. You could buy cameras and that's where you got your film developed and stuff like that back then.

Yeah, a lot of things have changed, especially the corner stores. Which now they're like a gas station with sodas and hoagies, premade, and stuff like that. My gas station that I always went to up the street here, just got purchased and so I have to learn how to use a credit card at a gas pump now. That was a full service – although they didn't actually come out and do your windshield like they used to. But all the gas stations in town used to come out and they start your gas going and they'd wash your windshield plus they talk to you but that's not anymore.

The dogs don't run freely. People pick up their dog poop. That was unknown. You were constantly stepping in dog poop. People have collars on their cats and then they have indoor cats. There weren't any indoor cats. They were in and out.

Weis's Market was downtown. That wasn't out there. That was all wilderness out where Weis's that now it's Cole's. **[39:00]** Cole's hardware. This is the new Weis's was and there was an Acme this way. There was an A&P down this way. There was a women's clothing store. There was a men's clothing store. There were two hardware stores in these three blocks here. There was a big furniture store down here on the corner where Remember When is now and the thing next to the Mystic Gem. That was all a big furniture store. There was more than one gentleman's clothing store in town. And probably two women's clothing stores. There were candy stores. There was a stationary store.

And there was a sporting goods store right across the street here, where the pillars are out front in the middle of the block. That was a sporting goods store. You could get your football helmet there. You could get footballs, baseballs, baseball bats, fishing lures, fishing rods, models, car models, ship models, plastic model kits to put together and stuff like that. You get your Selinsgrove T-shirts there and things like that. That's all gone.

BJ's was called the Governor Snyder Hotel, and that was sort of the next thing to the Country Club, that's where the older people went. There was no Bot's, Botdorfs. Botdorfs opened on Pine St. when I was 21, so that's where I started. That's where I matriculated, sort of as a boozier. There was an elderly couple that opened it. They didn't seem elderly to me then. They were just a friends' parents. They had homemade pickled eggs and stuff like that. 25¢ beers and a pinball machine and a little bowling machine, stuff like that. A kitchen where they made their stuff. There was a bar on South Market which Jack Holt's wife Natalia has a junk shop there now.

There were no thrift stores in those days. They were all regular stores. So, when I opened here the mall was built and the for the bypass was built same year. Everything changed. They dug up Market Street and redid it. There were no sidewalks. It was all mud here my first year and all the businesses, most of them, just collapsed. They all left town. The mall took it, sucked all the money out. One gentlemen's clothing store right across the street there, Kleinbauers, they held out for a long time with really high price, high end clothing. So that's where the doctors and lawyers bought their – and my mother shopped there because she knew Joe and he was an alumnus of Susquehanna. She was very loyal to alumni.

So yeah, that's and then I told you the Isle of Que has now become desirable property. Back then it was people that sort of made their living on the river. They dredged coal. That's where they got their firewood, from the islands. Every time they went out duck hunting or fishing, they put another piece of wood in the boat, take it home and then saw it up for firewood. It's changed quite a bit, and the University campus has, what?—tripled at least.

E. M.

Well, thank you so much for your time. This has been a lovely conversation. I very much enjoyed it. I hope you have as well.

H. E.

Well, it's my standard babble. I've done it before, yeah. I mean, I do it without being interviewed. Sorry it went on so long.