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ROBERT LAIRD, M.D.

Born in Freehold, New Jersey in 1811, Robert Laird graduated from Berkshire Medical College in Massachusetts. Later he assumed a medical practice in Manasquan. He was chosen Physician to the Almshouse for six New Jersey Counties. In 1851, Dr. Laird became concurrently the Moderator of the Day (Mayor) of the first Township Committee of Wall and the first Superintendent of Wall Schools while continuing his medical practice. During the fifteen years of this dual service in Wall, Laird was selected to be a member of the New Jersey State Constitutional Revision Committee. In 1855, he was elected a State Senator for a three year term. Dr Laird fostered the building of churches, the formation of mail routes and establishment of three post offices. Contemporary historians described Dr. Laird as “an extremely genial and social gentleman.

The area that had been separated from Howell Township from the Shark River to the Manasquan, and from the Atlantic Ocean to the Howell border was incorporated as Wall Township on March 7, 1851. Dr, Robert Laird moderated the first township committee meeting March 11, setting a \$ 400 municipal budget for the Free Public Schools. Three days later, as Superintendent of Schools, he named the following Wall’s school districts:

- Old Squan Bridge (Allenwood)
- Squan Village
- Chapel (Glendola)
- Nemons (now Spring Lake Heights)
- Manasquan
- Hurley
- Howell Works
- New Bedford

On March 18 he “notified the inhabitants....to elect three judicious men as trustees” for each district.

Having demonstrated his managerial abilities in fulfilling the legal requirements in one week, Dr. Laird visited the Superintendent of Howell to obtain as he reported “information relative to my office”. Laird’s first purchases listed eight blackboards which he deemed “modern appurtenances” for the one room schools and a book for records. “The Book of School Records” which reveals Dr. Laird’s philosophy of education and priorities, is now an historical treasure.

Even before reports of district elections were completed, Laird received a petition to divide the Squan Village district. When he called a public meeting for five days later, the school trustees requested two members of the township committee to “assist” After remarks “for and against” the division , the approved recommendation called for “an improved school house and more modern appendages of desks and comfortable seats.” In 1855 an issue took from April 7 to May 18 to be resolved: a proposed incorporation of the Manasquan District” in order to build a new school house. Dr. Laird recorded “a large number of parents and others present from the Manasquan district” gathered in a meeting “not very harmonious”. The solution caused Dr. Laird to write laconically, “The meeting adjourned with some disaffection”.

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In April, 1851, Laird reported the number of students in the Township to the Board of Chosen Freeholders to be 691. However, each schoolhouse contained different numbers of students: 35 in one and 135 in another. (Boys were always absent in planting and harvesting time) Students ranged from “very young” children to young “misses engaged in the higher branches of geography, grammar {and} hydraulics.” The Superintendent’s duty was to visit each school annually, accompanied by its trustees, to appraise the condition of the structure, and of most importance, examine both the teacher and the students.

Dr. Laird wrote his observations in great detail. His records show four women teachers contracted for \$ 35-\$ 40 per term while the male instructors received \$ 80 to \$ 100 reflecting the size of the school.. Accompanied by two trustees, he examined each teacher orally for competence in the subjects taught. These topics were:

- Arithmetic
- Geography
- History
- Grammar
- “Moral Character”

Licenses were granted for one particular school for that year. Dr Laird observed and examined the students. In one instance, Laird joined in the teaching of the students himself such as in the “pauses and modulation of the voice” in reading. Each visitation recorded includes praise for the progress of both the teacher and students. When visitation day business was concluded, Dr. Laird let the students of or closed the school. Classroom conditions were closely observed: lack of books, uncomfortable seats and improper height of writing desks, arithmetic tables and of course, blackboards.

His annoyance with one school in 1851 is reflected in his notation that “no stimulous by the parents and trustees” was responsible for a building “far behind the ages, boards falling off, glass out, stove in dilapidated state”. The new Manasquan school in 1857, however was lauded for having “ the best arranged rooms in the Township” and “highly creditable to the Township by private contributions” – the parents who built it.

One entry on April 19 1865 ties the rural Wall to national events:

“Announced the Death of the President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln. Requested teachers to close schools.” Services were held at Squan Village.

Laird continued to divide districts and promote modern school houses. Blansingburg was added as District # 9 in 1856 and Centre, as number 10 in 1866, the last year of his superintendence. Listed in his final report were 978 Wall students and a balance of \$ 879.69 to be handed over to the Superintendent elect, S.A. Freeman.

His superintendence was marked by an effort to maintain judicious trustees, good teachers, sound and comfortable school houses to promote student learning. He held that each one was

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responsible for progress: "He that will not help himself when others are trying to help them is not worthy of being helped".

Dr. Robert Laird led all others in trying to help Wall Township's Schools.

CAPTAIN SAM ALLEN MAN OF LEGENDS OR LEGENDARY MAN?

Whether a real man of legendary feats or just a legend, Captain Sam Allen embodies the rugged individualism, leadership and courage typical of a Revolutionary War hero. Wall Township was then a part of Shrewsbury Township, lying between the Shark and the Manasquan Rivers - a critical area for land and sea struggles. At age eighteen, according to Allen family records, Samuel was a second cousin of Ethan Allen and a landowner near the back waters of the Manasquan River. Although hereditary land ownership would have found him favorable to the Tories and British, Sam became a forceful fighter for revolutionary activities. He joined the Home Guard of volunteers who protected their homes and businesses from their Tory neighbors who became enemies by night. Soon Sam as "Captain Sam Allen" formed his own group of "Minute Men" charged with guarding the coast from Sandy Hook to Toms River. The Captain's tactical specialty was embarking by night in small boats from the Manasquan's farthest banks to prey on British shipping in the sea lanes near the shore line. His orders were to engage the British crews, throw them overboard and relieve them of their cargo of munitions and foodstuffs. Sam's men brought the needed booty home to supply their own troops. On land, Captain Sam fought and captured British and Tories. The enemy did not look favorably on such exploits and in turn captured Sam three different times. Before he escaped each detention, Captain Sam was forced by his enemies to watch his home burned to the ground. Undaunted, Sam pursued his nemesis Tory Captain Tighe with singular purpose. Tighe, in turn, hunted the Captain for his own war trophy. Sam won the Revolutionary chase, capturing Captain Tighe and his followers. A hasty trial presided over by Sam Allen convicted the enemy and sentenced them to hanging. Sam saw to Tighe's demise personally. After the War, Captain Sam Allen retired to a new house and lived in peace until his death August 31 1831 at seventy-four years old. Critics claim that Samuel Allen would have been too young to fight in the War, that he could not have risen to the rank of Captain nor carried out the heroic deeds attributed to him. Allen family descendants list dates to prove Sam's existence and a long line of oral history to verify his adventures. Time does not diminish the stories of Captain Sam Allen. But that is another legend - or more.

THE HAUNTED HORSEMAN

Ghostly Stories arise from all sections of Wall Township, but stories of Allenwood's Captain Sam Allen predominate.

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Allenwood Village sits in a low basin surrounded by gentle hills in the southern section of Wall Township. The village center forms a natural amphitheater capturing sounds over five miles away under proper weather conditions. Evelyn Snodgrass and her husband Jimmy had a particular affinity for Captain Sam Allen and his legend. They were sitting on their front porch one warm night in the 1960's enjoying the quiet Allenwood center. From over a mile away near Highway 34, they heard the steady sounds of hoof beats coming down the hill towards them. Louder and closer the sounds persisted until they were right next to them. The Snodgrass's strained to see the horseback rider. No one was in sight. The hoof beats continued past them, over the Old Squan Bridge and up the hill to the Josiah I. Allen house. Although no trace of the haunted horseman was found, it was evident that the rider had to have been Captain Sam Allen. He began at the spot where he had hung Captain Tighe, and stopped at the old family homestead.

Some twenty years later, Evelyn Snodgrass was awakened in her back of the house bedroom by the noise of distant hoof beats. She reported the Captain Sam "haunted horseman" traced his same path through the night.

Was this a freak sound wave in the Village of Allenwood, or was it the Captain, reliving his life?

SHADOW OF A REVOLUTIONARY WAR SOLDIER

The Josiah I. Allen House, ancestral home of Captain Sam, carried a legend of its own through the years before its destruction by fire. While the homestead stood on a rise above the Old Squan Bridge, owners and tenants would complain of bloodstains in the living room near the fireplace. Each succeeding "Josiah I." resident scrubbed this area thoroughly, only to find the bloodstains reappear shortly afterward. Allenwood residents nearby claimed that these were spots left from Captain Sam's life and death struggle with his Tory enemies, particularly Captain Tighe.

Another poignant story recalls Captain Sam having given succor to a wounded revolutionary war soldier trying to find his way home. The bloodstains were testimony to the captain using his living room to bind up injuries of his fellow soldier. In 1975, three members of the Old Wall Historical Society visited the dilapidated Josiah I. Allen House to see if the rehabilitation of the homestead and cemetery would be feasible. After examining the inside, especially the bloodstain marks on the floor, June Herbert began to take pictures of the interior. She aimed her camera at the door with its windowed upper half showing only the bare outside.

When the pictures were developed, a full-length shadowy form of a revolutionary soldier stood in the center of the door's light. Society members returned to the house searching for overhanging trees or bushes that could have caused the illusion. There had been no one near the house on the day of the visit

Those who studied and published the photo claim it was Captain Sam Allen visiting the old homestead-perhaps for the last time before its destruction. Others conjectured that the form was that of the soldier aided by Sam, still searching for his home.

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So concluded the legends of the Josiah I. Allen House.

BISHOP HELLER

Industrialist, evangelist, real estate entrepreneur and sometimes advertising copy writer, “Bishop” Louis Brown Heller was a turn of the nineteenth century man of many talents. A compact section of West Belmar in Wall Township, located between Eighteenth Avenue and Highway 71, recalls Heller’s “America’s World Camp Meeting Grounds or “Heller’s Park.” According to the “Bishop’s” own advertisement in 1899, there would be “sweet cozy homes where all can live comfortably, happy and healthfully and well, and enjoy all the blessings of nature which God intended for all.”

Louis B. Heller began his career as founder/president of a tool company in Newark. During business trips when he traveled throughout the state to sell his product, he soon started to speak of God. He began to turn from manufacturing to evangelism. Thus was born “Bishop” Heller. (It was accepted practice for non-ordained individuals to be given honorary religious titles.) Leaving behind his brothers to run his now two factories, Heller initiated a search for an appropriate area in which to build his tabernacle and meeting grounds. The “Bishop” finally purchased a 42 acre West Belmar tract from a Mr. Van Shoick of Red Bank

In his usual business-like manner, “Bishop” Heller drew up plans to be finalized by an architect for submission to Wall Township and to Freehold for recording of the deed. Meanwhile he roughed out the streets of the camp meeting grounds: those running north to south were named “People,” “America,” “World” and “Camp Meeting”; those lying east to west were called “First” through “Sixth” with “Fifth Avenue, the widest, leading to the tabernacle.

“Bishop” Heller consistently pursued the spiritual goal of the camp meeting. He worked with James A. Bradley, founder of Asbury Park, and with the Ocean Grove Association. In a pitched tent near the oceanfront on Asbury’s Wesley Lake, Heller held services which were attended regularly by Bradley. Later, he conducted camp meetings at Bradley Beach and Key East (Avon.)

Eventually, evangelistic services were held in the “Bishop’s” own camp meeting grounds using a tent purchased from the Ocean Grove Association. A simple wooden tabernacle containing long wooden benches was covered by a wooden roof supported by branches.

It was located on the south side of Fifth Avenue. Although its the construction was rustic, the tabernacle boasted the first electric light in the area, thanks to the foresight of the “Bishop.” Heller sometimes left his Camp Grounds for nearby Shark River to officiate at baptisms.

At last came the time for the “Bishop” to combine his entrepreneurial and his evangelistic skills to write advertising copy for this America-World Camp Meeting Grounds. His 1899 promotion, including a street map, was peppered with brief, enticing phrases: “Fine drinking water and pure air...short walk to the ocean.” He emphasized protection from the cares of the day: “No arrests

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and no deaths {!} during the past ten years...Gambling prohibited...No saloons.” Heller listed the lots at \$200 and up for cottages, bungalows and tents.

Emphasizing the Camp Meeting’s advantages, the “Bishop” called it “A place of unrivaled excellence, refreshment and relief for both temporal and spiritual needs.” Heller’s 1915 promotional letter added to his original advertisement: “Prevention is better than cure. Call and talk it over.”

Many prospective buyers did call and buy lots in the Camp Meeting. Today, new houses line the streets which still bear their original names - quiet testimony to “Bishop” Louis B. Heller’s America-World Camp Meeting Grounds.

OCEAN BEACH AND BELMAR- A PART OF OLD WALL - 1892-1976

A TAPED CONVERSATION WITH

E. DONALD STERNER

BY

ALYCE H. SALMON

The subject conversation was taped about 1976 and transferred to CD in 2002. A CD is available separately. This publication contains only the print version.

FOREWORD

The interviewee, E. Donald Sterner was the former highway commissioner of the State of New Jersey. Sterner was a preeminent New Jersey Shore politician who, operating as highway commissioner, aided in the construction of the Belmar Marina , partly through filling in the waters of the Shark River that once covered what is now the north and south lanes of route 35 in Belmar New Jersey. Route 38, now route 138, from route 35 to route 34, was built about 1944 and was known as the “Sterner mile”. Indeed, the construction of route 195 from Wall to Trenton can be substantially attributed to his initiative and early work.

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Sterner recounts his early days in what was then called Ocean Beach. His references to early shore geography and history provide insight into how and when the shore was developed. The direction of railroads, the social life in Ocean Beach, along with some exploits of the Belmar Mystics and other Belmar Sports teams are included in the interview. Further views of education in the 1900s are afforded the reader and listener.

Alyce H. Salmon, the Township Historian of Wall from 1976 to 2000 conceived the project, conducted and taped the interview and edited the transcript. Mrs. Salmon, a 1954 Fulbright scholar received a Bachelor's degree from Trinity College and an M.A. from Middlebury College. She is the author of other local history publications including other video and oral history projects.

Alyce: Mr. Sterner, would you tell us about how your father and your mother came to the area known as Ocean Beach.

Mr. Sterner: Ocean Beach, yes, at that time. Well, the way it all happened in my mother's case, she, for some unknown reason, I never did find out from her just why she decided she wanted to become a schoolteacher. And, of course, you realize in those days, the girls stayed at home to learn cooking and sewing and housekeeping and the boys went to school and, of course, all the teachers were men.

Alyce: Could you tell us about which days these were, approximately which year, so we can set ourselves in time.

Mr. Sterner: This is about I'd say around 1882. My grandmother, Louise Disbrow, lived in Matawan with her two daughters, my mother, Jenny and Louise, and my grandfather passed away with pneumonia when he was only about 35, so that my grandmother had a tough time raising two girls. But for some unknown reason, as I say, my mother decided she wanted to be a schoolteacher and she went to the Glenwood Institute in Matawan and got her certificate and then came the tough assignment of trying to find somewhere where they would accept a girl or a young lady as a schoolteacher because it was unprecedented. So she hunted all over the county and finally, heard that they would consider her in Wall Township, and, of course, Ocean Beach at that time was a part of Wall Township. So she was interviewed by the head of the Wall School System at the time and they accepted her. So then, Grandma Disbrow decided, well, I guess we better sell everything we had in Matawan and move to the Ocean Beach so she'd be near the school.

Alyce: Keep an eye on her.

Mr. Sterner: Yes. And so my grandmother bought the property which is now the Belmar Wall National Bank location right there in F Street and built a little combination residence and dry good notion store which she operated. So there was my mother's base of operations and two blocks to the schoolhouse. So now to get back to my father's side of it, how he came to Belmar, he was going to Millersville State Normal School, also to become a teacher. He was one of eight

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or nine children who lived near Burrwood, Pennsylvania. He worked in the fields in the summertime to make enough money to pay for his education. He was about in his junior year when some of his classmates told him about the wonderful opportunities there were along the Jersey Shore and particularly in a place called Ocean Beach which was being developed by some of the Charter members of the Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Association, who, when they were in Ocean Grove on special days, or for a day's outing, would go out on Shark River which was so famous in those days for crabbing and oysters and clams and fishing, and they discovered this plot of ground on the south shore which is not Belmar, of course, and so they decided to start this development. So the sons of these men decided that they would get summertime jobs instead of working out in the fields out there in Pennsylvania and instead of working from dawn to dusk why they put in maybe 12 hours.

Alyce: Only 12.

Mr. Sterner: Yes. And got two dollars instead of one, so they convinced Daddy that he ought to come down and try it. So Dad decided he would and came down and got an assignment working in the material field which is where the present Memorial Field is located at Twelfth Avenue and F Street and Eleventh Avenue and the railroad. They had a siding there and they brought in freight cars full of building materials and Dad used to work with a variety of things, mostly in the office but then out in the yard when they needed to load a wagon with materials to go down to

The beach to one of the job sites.

Alyce: Now, which railroad was this?

Mr. Sterner: This was the New York and Long Branch Railroad right here in front of us at Twelfth Avenue and the railroad. I'll tell you a little bit about how all that developed, the New York and Long Branch extension to Sea Girt. I think it would be interesting. But, however, getting back to Dad and Mother meeting, it so happened that one day, a young lady came up to the lumberyard and wanted to get a piece of molding for her mother and Dad waited on her and he never went back to Pennsylvania. So that's the beginning of the Sterner tribe along the shore.

Alyce: And where did the two of them settle when they were married in Ocean Beach?

Mr. Sterner: Well, they weren't married immediately, of course, but the courtship naturally went on, and then, in the blizzard of '88, why they built the old homestead, which was on Sixth Avenue at the site of the present parochial school in the middle of the block between E and F Street, they were married and moved in to the old homestead. I remember Mother saying that the snow was up to the second floor windows. That's how deep it was.

Alyce: And near the ocean. Can you imagine?

Mr. Sterner: Yes, so that's where we all started and then in 1894, I came along.

Alyce: About how long did she teach here in Ocean Beach?

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Mr. Sterner: About five years, and I think it would be of interest to your readers to know that that original two-room school house that was on the corner of Twelfth and F where the local school is now located, is the same building that later was moved down and became Sherman Tailors at Eight and F Street where Freedman's Bakery is now. That old building of the front part of Sherman Tailors, those two rooms in the front, one is where we used to go in and leave our clothes to be pressed and the other room was where a little Jewish gentlemen who used to sew and mend clothes; those two rooms are the original two-room schoolhouse that Mother taught in and was the Principal and the other teacher in that schoolhouse.

Alyce: I was wondering if there were another male or female teacher there?

Mr. Sterner: Yes, Milo Grego who was also Justice of the Peace and many old timers will remember him living there on F Street between Eight and Ninth, just to the South of where Sherman Tailors was.

Alyce: Everyone walked in those days?

Mr. Sterner: Oh yeah, bicycled.

Alyce: Oh, you had bicycles down there. See, out in Wall, the terrain was such that no one had bicycles.

Mr. Sterner: Matter of fact, once you got married and you decided to make extra money, you'd go into the bicycle business and a man named Gus Pyott ran it and Dad was a silent partner, I guess. And, of course, Dad continued working over there in the material yard and later, as the Ocean Beach developed and Belmar was created, why it became a regular lumber yard and that's where he worked and had a position of management for several years before he went with the Lewis Lumber Yard in Asbury Park in 1900.

Alyce: Now where did you go to school by the time you were old enough? You were there around 1906, 1907.

Mr. Sterner: 1908 when I left the Belmar grammar school and then Asbury Park High School in 1912.

Alyce: Where was the Belmar Grammar School at that point?

Mr. Sterner: Same place but a little larger building. They built a small two-story brick building, situated on the same corner but they moved the old two-room school house, as I stated, down to Eighth and F and erected this brick building, which I think was about 1900 also.

Alyce: Is there anything left of that original two-room school? You really can't see anything of it.

Mr. Sterner: No, it was under the Urban renewal and then, of course, Freedman's Bakery was built on that site. Getting back to the New York-Long Branch Railroad, there is a general interest

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for a lot of people. As the name implied, the original railroad was New York and Long Branch and that was the terminal of the road. And then, at the southern end of Monmouth County, there was the Pennsylvania Railroad that came across from Trenton to Sea Girt to the State Camp Grounds of the National Guard.

Alyce: Its' been there that long?

Mr. Sterner: Oh yes, and, of course, it also serviced Manasquan Village as they called it in those days. The only reason that Pennsylvania built that was to move all those troops and artillery and everything that had to be pulled by horses and the horses and everything were transported across the state by rail and unloaded at Sea Girt. So that, and this was before the Civil War, between Long Branch as the terminus of the New York and Long Branch Railroad and Sea Girt as the terminus of the cross state railroad, there was just nothing but marshes and sand dunes and as you look at all the lakes that we have here today along Monmouth County between those two points, they were all actually inlets of the ocean, mostly marsh lands. Later on, of course, they were dammed up at the ocean end and they all became lakes and that's the reason we have so many lakes along the coast.

Alyce: These are man-made really, although some were made by nature.

Mr. Sterner: Yes, they had little streams feeding them, so when they dammed up the ocean end of it, that created a nice series of lakes, and of course, you can see mother nature is attempting to get back to those lakes because you watch the erosion of sand along our coastline and at the foot of the lake between Belmar (Wreck Pond we used to call it) and Spring Lake, the ocean is right up against the seawall along Ocean Avenue.

Alyce: That's right. It floods over at the gate.

Mr. Sterner: And if you go over to Sylvan Lake between Avon and Bradley, you'll see that the ocean is battering against the wall.

Alyce: The same place up there in Deal and the Loch Arbor area.

Mr. Sterner: All along.

Alyce: All the way along and it's amazing and Sea Bright especially.

Mr. Sterner: And between Spring Lake and Sea Girt – I guess that was called Wreck Pond – and there, they even have a flue and at high tide, the water runs in and out, so it shows how mother nature is still trying to regain her children.

Alyce: If you look at Shark River and the Manasquan, they are really the two inlets, outlet areas that still remain until you get up to the Shrewsbury.

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Mr. Sterner: Well, they were so enormous that they remain as rivers and were developed.

Alyce: Now, this is very important for your transportation too. If both man and nature hadn't dammed up the shoreline, there couldn't have been any roads or rail transportation. Am I correct? It would have been extremely difficult.

Mr. Sterner: Well, you see that's the reason that it was such a long time before this area was developed because there was just a series of sand dunes and marsh lands with a few mosquitoes and that wasn't a very attractive factor for building housing developments.

Alyce: Would you tell me again how far Belmar's limit existed when you were a boy. I was very surprised to hear that the people weren't camped down by the ocean, that the development was right up near the rail area, you might say the downtown section. Isn't that what you indicated at one point?

Mr. Sterner: The original Ocean Beach Association took in from First Avenue to Twelfth and then, south of Twelfth Avenue was just open fields and, as a matter of fact, Mr. Bennett and Mr. Wilson, who had the two big fisheries off Sixteenth Avenue and Eighteenth Avenue, used to dry all their fishnets in those fields in the wintertime, stretching from B Street all the way to F Street and so Sixteenth Avenue was in existence and Eighteenth Avenue was an old, what they called a turnpike in those days, a county road that led down to the ocean, but Eighteenth was really the only one a hundred years ago that led from the Belmar-Manasquan Turnpike down to the ocean.

Alyce: So people were mostly clustered in their first developments right up here in this area.

Mr. Sterner: Yes.

Alyce: Was it just the fishermen who sent down toward the ocean until that area filled up?

Mr. Sterner: Yes. Well, they gradually built what we used to call summerhouses. People would build a little place to be in the summer. Nobody ever lived in those houses year round like they do today.

Alyce: So eight blocks away you had a summerhouse.

Mr. Sterner: Sure.

Alyce: Were those built on stilts of sorts?

Mr. Sterner: Some of them. But most of them were on pretty solid foundations. Very few of them had cellars, however. But the people, all the families who came down from the city, their houses remained closed all winter until the middle of June when schools closed, and then, of course, a very interesting thing developed at our railroad stations when the trains pulled in and all these families would arrive. There were a number of stages that were backed up there at the platform, ten or twelve at a time, so that as these families got off the train, there were no automobiles, of course...

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Alyce: About what year is this now?

Mr. Sterner: It's going back to 1905, 1900, in that era, and they'd all get in these stages and then the driver would whip up his horses and down the street they'd go, heading for their summer homes, and then behind them, which was always very picturesque and interesting, was the local grocer and his wagon...

Alyce: The huckster.

Mr. Sterner: The baker, the butcher ...

Alyce: And the iceman.

Mr. Sterner: The milkman, everybody, the fish man, there'd be a string of eight or ten of them, all following these stages, and of course, there'd be a lot of confusion when four or five families arrived at once and they all took different stages and had to decide which one looked like the biggest prospect. I imagine the one that had the biggest number of children was the one that was the best prospect. And they'd follow them all down there and then the minute the stage unloaded, up on the front porch would be all these different men with their books out ready to write down orders. That was all very interesting.

Alyce: Those were the days when the supermarket came to you. I wish you would tell me again too about the character of the waterfront. You talked about the nets being spread out, but you talked about the various dwellings, like houseboats and the fishing shacks...

Mr. Sterner: That was along the river.

Alyce: Yes. Tell me about that.

Mr. Sterner: Well, that's back in the days ...

Alyce: Before there was a marina.

Mr. Sterner: Yes. That's one of my pet projects.

Alyce: It sounds so picturesque, I gather there were even some rumrunners in those days.

Mr. Sterner: The Borough of Belmar, in their wisdom, I think, and very properly so, acquired the oceanfront for public use and that was fine for bathing but the riverfront was privately owned, and as a result, it was divided off into 25 foot and 50 foot lots and again, we had the vision of the little summer bungalows that people from the city would build out, hanging over the riverbank. This was from Seventh Avenue and the River all the way around to Sixteenth and River. Of course, at that time, the Borough Line was at L Street where the present Bathing Beach is located, but in between, we had these numerous fishing shacks where the commercial fisherman – there were only about ten of them in those days – had their little 18 foot motorboats and went off shore to catch bluefish. They all stored their equipment in these small shacks and usually, I

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think, they were more or less squatters, just sitting on the land, maybe made arrangements with the owner that they just put up these little shacks to store their equipment. And, again, as I said, there was an occasional bungalow and then between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues, we had Buhler's Pavilion which was famous for its rowboats and sailboats and people by the hundreds used to come there everyday on the trolley cars from Asbury Park and Ocean Grove and get off at Tenth Avenue and all swarm down Tenth Avenue to the Pavilion.

Alyce: When did the trolley start in after the stages had gone?

Mr. Sterner: They started back in the Nineties.

Alyce: They did? But they went sort of north and south where the stages had to cover the east and west routes.

Mr. Sterner: Yes, that's right. The location of the various buildings along that waterfront were quite numerous, but this Buhler's Pavilion that I was touching on was so famous that the people from the north seashore towns would even charter trolley cars.

Alyce: You could charter a trolley in those days?

Mr. Sterner: Yes, they'd load up wherever it might be, at one of those big hotels in Asbury Park, the trolley would start – they had the Belt Line in Asbury in those days – went all around up Main Street and down Cookman Avenue and the along the Oceanfront and then up Deal Lake and back to Main Street – and they could charter a trolley car down in front of their hotel and they'd all get on board and ride up to Cookman and Main and then have to change cars and get on another trolley and then come down to Tenth Avenue and get off and swarm down to the riverfront and go out ...

Alyce: So you had big vessels down there to hold parties?

Mr. Sterner: Yes, they held over one hundred, the larger trolley cars.

Alyce: No, I meant boats too. The trolley cars were big so they must have had fairly big boats or did they break into small groups?

Mr. Sterner: They had sailboats. They usually had about seven or eight people on a sailboat. That's right. They had two launches, one was called Annie B, I remember now, named after Mrs. Buhler and then they had the River Queen, but I don't think John Bickel ever names one after himself. That was usually for the elderly people. They never talked about senior citizens in those days, but those that were not physically able to go out in a rowboat and row the boat and then also be able to scoop a crab off the bottom of the river which took quite a little doing. That would be the younger groups and then they would also sail the sailboats all over the river. In those days, the river was just a mass of white sails. There must have been 200 sailboats and just as many rowboats.

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Alyce: Did you have fewer accidents than you have today with all these motorboats coming head on?

Mr. Sterner: No, they never had more than a ten-horse power motor in them so we never had any traffic problems that way.

Alyce: Were there any refreshment stands? With all those people down there, they must have gotten hungry and thirsty.

Mr. Sterner: Oh Yes, Buhler's had quite an elaborate refreshment stand. Of course, in those days, the only kind of ice cream you ever could get was chocolate and vanilla, they were the only two flavors. I think they called one Neapolitan, which was red, white and blue.

Alyce: They did have a strawberry that came in eventually.

Mr. Sterner: That was a cake and they used to serve that. But also at Buhler's Pavilion, and I have a picture of it there on the wall over on the other side, they had this Pavilion with a refreshment stand in the center where they could buy different kinds of candy and popcorn plus the ice cream, plus some kind of ham and cheese sandwiches, things of that nature. Nothing elaborate. I don't think they ever had hot dogs or hamburgers in those days. I don't recall it. But again, what we call our senior citizens who just didn't want to venture out on the water at all, they had a big wide veranda on this pavilion so they could sit there on rocking chairs and enjoy the breezes off the river and wait for the younger folks to come in and then all back to the trolley car at a specified hour, all load up and back to their original point of departure.

Alyce: There wasn't any nightlife at that point?

Mr. Sterner: No, I don't recall anything like that.

Alyce: I wonder if they used to have some sort of a festival, stringing lights along and did things in groups in evenings.

Mr. Sterner: They did have carnivals on Silver Lake back in 1907, 1908, 1909 and 1910 and even in 1920, 1921. The Silver Lake Carnival was quite a famous institution with all the canoe races and rowboat races, canoe tilting. That's where I won my first bicycle race too when I was 14. All these city kids as we always called them; I was the only native that rode a bicycle in a race ...

Alyce: And had good strong legs from practice.

Mr. Sterner: From riding back and forth to Asbury High School every day.

Alyce: You rode from Belmar to Asbury every day?

Mr. Sterner: Except when the snow was too deep.

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Alyce: What did you do then?

Mr. Sterner: Then we'd go on the trolley car.

Alyce: Were those enclosed trolley cars, by the way?

Mr. Sterner: Oh, yes, very nice. It was quite a luxury for us kids. I don't say we prayed for rain and snow, but we never objected when it came along because those were the days we rode the trolley car.

Alyce: How much did it cost to ride the trolley in those days?

Mr. Sterner: a nickel.

Alyce: And how long did it take you to ride your bike one way?

Mr. Sterner: About a half hour I'd say. Something like that.

Alyce: That's pretty good time.

Mr. Sterner: Well, we'd go right up Main Street about two miles. And the high school in those days was on Bond Street in Asbury.

Alyce: And of course you walked when you went to grammar school here. Did you have to take a lot of books back and forth when you went to both grammar school and high school?

Mr. Sterner: Yes. We were a little careless about studying them sometimes.

Alyce: That sounds familiar. Times haven't changed. Can you remember back to what you studied in grammar school?

Mr. Sterner: Reading, writing and arithmetic.

Alyce: Those were the basics. Did everybody study the same thing?

Mr. Sterner: Oh yes, everything, everybody. They were cardinal subjects.

Alyce: Were you broken into any groups like all second grades together or sixth grades together or did the whole room learn together?

Mr. Sterner: Usually, there were two grades in one room.

Alyce: Only two grades? You had ...

Mr. Sterner: One teacher with two grades.

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Alyce: So that wasn't bad compared to out where we were in Wall when it was still back to the one room school. You were a little more sophisticated by that point.

Mr. Sterner: Well, I guess when they had the two room school, they had three or four students in each room and likely, Mother was teaching.

Alyce: And what did you do when it wasn't your turn to be up there reciting?

Mr. Sterner: I don't recall. But getting back to the riverfront and its development, well, as I say, the borough fathers were wisely acquired the oceanfront property. I was President of the Chamber of Commerce in 1925 and I felt that, just as they had used their wisdom in acquiring the oceanfront, that they should also acquire riverfront for future generations. So, in 1925, I went before the Mayor and Council – George Van Note was Mayor at that time and who was also Superintendent of Schools in Wall Township. I was just a young man and I said that the Chamber of Commerce had decided that the best interest in the future of Belmar that they also acquire the riverfront for public use and that all the seashore resorts had the ocean as an attraction for their summer guests but that we were very fortunate in having a river and the waterfront should be acquired by the borough. I'll never forget when Mayor Van Note looked at me over his glasses and said, "Young man, you haven't been an adult very long and you'll learn eventually that you can't always have everything you'd like to have and let me tell you that the Borough of Belmar is in no position to buy that riverfront. And let me tell you one other thing. You can say all you want about that river. I know it's nice to go out there in a rowboat and get a mess of crabs or some clams or oysters, but if it weren't for that ocean down there, we might as well be back in Glendola." Well, I said that was my first rebuke when I first proposed the acquisition of the riverfront but the rest of the Chamber backed me up and we kept hammering on it and eventually they agreed to acquire it so today, we have a beautiful riverfront and marina which is certainly one of the most valuable assets of the Borough and one that really pays for itself when you consider the fact of the enormous rentals they're getting for the marina.

Alyce: Now you said those are 50 and 75-foot lots. That must have been quite a job of acquisition.

Mr. Sterner: They bought it, as I remember, for about \$25 a front foot, so a fifty foot lot cost them \$1,250 so it was too expensive, and of course, today, it would be worth \$1,000 a front foot.

Alyce: Now when was it that Belmar added on beyond your original boundaries where you had stopped at Twelfth Avenue? At what point was that?

Mr. Sterner: That's what they call the Rhode Island Point section from L Street on up to Sixteenth Avenue and the River. Sixteenth Avenue was still the boundary line so it was just that area north of Sixteenth. That was made part of the Borough, I believe about 1940.

Alyce: What was that reason?

Mr. Sterner: During the thirties perhaps.

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Alyce: What was the status up till then? Was it just an independent area?

Mr. Sterner: It was part of Wall Township.

Alyce: Oh, I see. I don't know my own history.

Mr. Sterner: But the residents of that area signed a petition saying their wish was to join the Borough of Belmar. Of course, the main purpose was so they could get sewer water. Up to that time, they were all using septic tanks.

Alyce: Hasn't changed much in Wall Township. You talked to me too about getting the highway. Up to the date when Belmar was one, all the way up to what is now its present borders, you still didn't have one big highway set up on the rest of the river, wasn't it as I understand.

Mr. Sterner: Well, when the Borough acquired the riverfront, it only went to L Street and then, of course, up to Sixteenth Avenue and the river, it was covered with small bungalows. I believe you asked me how we happened to acquire it. There was a Highway Commissioner at that time who just happened to be friendly to Belmar and decided that it would be in the best interest of the motoring public if that would be made public property instead of private.

Alyce: Who was the Highway Commissioner at that time?

Mr. Sterner: Well I had something to do with that. I sometimes wondered if I had exceeded my authority as a highway commissioner. I was a little hesitant to acquire that property but I asked my Attorney General who was assigned to my office if there is any law on the statute books that permitted or gave to the Commissioner the latitude to acquire property adjacent to the highway if he thought it was in the public interest. And so he looked through all the books and found out that there was such a law so under that statute, I was able to acquire that waterfront.

Alyce: That's magnificent use of eminent domain.

Mr. Sterner: So now, the Borough of Belmar is negotiating with the Highway Department to take it over and relieve them of the maintenance and still reserve it for the public, only they'll have more direct control over it and I believe in their thinking, they are planning to build another marina just north of Sixteenth Avenue where the smaller boats – since with the great number of large fishing boats using the current marina, they're sort of being crowded out.

Alyce: Would you tell me too, you started to mention about the railroad ending in Belmar and how that was continued on into Sea Girt.

Mr. Sterner: I guess I didn't make it clear. The railroad ended at Long Branch.

Alyce: Excuse me, at Long Branch, you went by trolley and we have a lot more distance to follow. I know there was a certain intrigue at one point in Wall history where there was going to be a spur coming out through Glendola and going out toward Farmingdale and that was with the Jersey Central Railroad, wasn't it?

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Mr. Sterner: I think that had to do with the gravel pits for the movement of gravel. That was the primary purpose of that. But that never developed.

Alyce: No. That is correct. It went down through Manasquan instead of through Farmingdale but that's not the same route. These two were separate but somewhat parallel, weren't they?

Mr. Sterner: No. The New York-Long Branch first terminated at Long Branch and then it went across to Trenton and terminated at Sea Girt, so, as I say, there was nothing in between at all. This is what we're talking about now prior to the Civil War and it was shortly after the Civil War, the plan of extending the New York-Long Branch south from Long Branch to Manasquan was developed and so in the late 1860's and early 1870's, the New York-Long Branch was extended from Long Branch to Sea Girt.

Alyce: And there were ample passengers at this time because of the development all along the line.

Mr. Sterner: Well, the development hadn't started yet, but the minute they built that railroad which is just one mile in back of the ocean, then it started all of these developments, Asbury Park and Bradley Beach, Ocean Grove and Belmar.

Alyce: So this is the reverse of today's trends. Today we have people who demand transportation. In those days, transportation brought the people.

Mr. Sterner: Oh yes, definitely. There was no other way to get there except on horseback. Of course, the stages, now for instance, at the Columbia Hotel, all the prominent hotels were built in Belmar, the Columbia Hotel at Third and Ocean had its own stage a team of horses which held about 20 people. They had steps up the rear and two seats facing each other on both sides.

Alyce: This was open air, needless to say.

Mr. Sterner: Yes, and then there was the Colorado Hotel on Ninth Avenue and they had a stage but the Columbia was the biggest and most important and the social center of the summer colony at Third and Ocean.

Alyce: From where did most of the people come for the summertime? Which particular part of New Jersey?

Mr. Sterner: A lot of them came out of New York and it's amazing, there were families who came from Chicago, all through the Midwest to get away from the summer heat. I remember the first couple of years after Dad and Mother built the old homestead, they built a cottage next door that they used for the summer, and then, they'd rent the big house. There was a family named Poland from Cincinnati who traveled all the way across by train into New York and then took the New York-Long Branch and came down here and spent the whole summer. In those days, there weren't any of these one-day visitors.

Alyce: Everybody settled for the season.

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Mr. Sterner: They were all families who just came here right after school closed, then they'd come for the whole summer and leave right after Labor Day. With all these homes that were built, you'd never see a light in any of them in wintertime east of D Street. Then, the first block or two from F Street, they were our winter residents but from there on down, practically solid, every house, maybe one of the larger homes might have a caretaker living in it, but no families lived in them.

Alyce: What sort of business did you keep within the center of Ocean Beach which became Belmar? You mentioned your Grandmother's little dry good store. What other stores were down there at that time as a boy and a young man can you remember?

Mr. Sterner: Well, there was the Borden Brothers was across the street. It's where Schatzow has the Five and Dime and the Acme used to be. That was the main grocery store of the town. It was a big rambling building, almost as big as the one that's there now and it had a covered sidewalk all the way around it. So that was the place to accumulate when it rained and all the natives had nothing else to do and that's where they'd accumulate and talk over the affairs of the community and the country as well. But on the other corner which used to be Moyer's Drugstore was Fillbrick's. Mr. Fillbrick owned that and lived above it. That was on the northwest corner. And, of course, at Seventh Avenue and F Street where the A&P is now, was the location of Bergen Livery Stables. Just like you drive a car today, they would rent a horse and carriage and Mr. Bergen had enormous storage houses. As a matter of fact, right behind our hold homestead on Seventh near where the Goodwill Fire Company is now, that whole area was all the big stables where he stored all these fancy carriages for the winter.

Alyce: Where did you have your blacksmith and wainwright?

Mr. Sterner: What I was going to say is where they had all these carriages stored, in the wintertime, a lot of us kids used to have a lot of fun bouncing around in these carriages. Two of the most prominent blacksmiths were Mr. Al Bennett at Eleventh and F Street where Langs' is at the present time. He became Mayor of the town eventually. Then there was another blacksmith shop near Seventh Avenue to take care of Mr. Bergen's horses, I guess, on the southwest corner right across from Bergen's stables. They were the two principal blacksmiths.

Alyce: Did you have any bakeries? In those days, everyone baked their own bread. I was wondering about the summer people for instance.

Mr. Sterner: Right next to the blacksmith shop, was Bresnahan's Bakery, just to the south of that. I remember that very well. Getting back to the shops, naturally, with all the horses and carriages, there was the harness shop. Mr. King had his harness shop just about where Lou's Barber Shop is today, next to Freeman's. He always had a lot of horse collars hanging out front.

Alyce: Is he a relative of our Mr. King today from King's Market? Vernon.

Mr. Sterner: Vernon King. I don't know. Maybe a distant relative. I think maybe he is.

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Alyce: I hear names that come all the way through from seeing them on the gravestones all the way up to people living today.

Alyce: Were there any icehouses?

Mr. Sterner: Oh yes, as a matter of fact, where the Borough Hall is now.

Alyce: You cut it from the river? Wasn't that the procedure? Where would you get the ice?

Mr. Sterner: No. They brought it in on boxcars from the Pocono Mountains. Mr. Titus who formerly owned this location, George Titus, had coal and feed. There again, a tremendous feed business is those days, straw and hay, and Dad purchased this location, Twelfth Avenue, in 1919. That was his coal and feed and they did a tremendous business and all these summer homes of these wealthy families who lived here all had built their own stables. When they came down by train, attached to the train many times was a horse car with all their horses in it. So the whole family arrived, not only Mom and Dad and the kids but also their own horses. They were all out here on the side, unloaded and taken down to the stables where they spent the summer just like the family did and in the fall, they went back home up north wherever they came from.

Alyce: You probably had as great a horse population in the summer as you had a people population. What about dairy goods? Were those brought in from ...

Mr. Sterner: As a matter of fact, next door to us at the old homestead on Sixth Avenue, Frank Morris, that Kenneth Morris' father from the township, had a milk dairy. I used to go out and help him deliver milk when I was a kid. He'd bring the milk in from the farms out in back country. Those days, we seemed to have more snow because he had a regular sleigh, a big sleigh filled with cases of milk. That was more fun with bells jingling and going down and delivering milk. We always considered that a great treat.

Alyce: Were there any community activities in those days? You said people would gather under the awnings to talk but say in the winter when everyone else had gone home and just the natives were here, did the people get together anyway?

Mr. Sterner: There used to be a lot of card parties. I remember Dad and Mother and there would be Dr. Snow and his wife and the Vandevveers and the Scudders down on Tenth Avenue and the Pierces. They'd generally have about six couples and once a week, they'd play cards and they'd rotate the six families, and, of course, I can remember those. What impressed me more than anything about those was the fact that, naturally, every time Mother had them at our house, she always had to prepare a lot of refreshments and I was always out in the kitchen and I had to sample to be sure it was fit for the guests.

Alyce: What did the young people do? What did you do as a boy? Did you go sledding, skating, fishing? You had everything right here.

Mr. Sterner: Well, skating Silver Lake was the hub of skating activities. And we always used to build a great big bonfire on the bank. We had skating and playing hockey and then we all played

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baseball, basketball and football over in that same ball field across the street which later was abandoned as a lumber yard and it was just sitting there and the Borough finally acquired it under Mayor Banford back about 1908 or 1910 and named it Memorial Field and it was graded off so we had a football field.

Alyce: This was just pick up football. It wasn't any organized ...

Mr. Sterner: Yes, this was just a scrub team. We had 16 in their first...that's the original Belmar Mystics. It was a football team of 16 and under.

Alyce: It had to be the origin of the Pop Warner as they call it today. Fred Richey is about the only one left besides myself of the original Mystics. Chief Newberry just died. He played tackle on the team and we just organized ourselves, and frankly, we did pretty good. We licked all the local kids. There was a Freehold Military Institute and they heard about us defeating all the local teams from Neptune and West Grove and Asbury, they had a Carlyle team over there and so they invited us to come up and play them. Well, of course, we didn't have coaches.

Alyce: Did you have uniforms or protection?

Mr. Sterner: We had headgear and maybe had a sweater, never bothered with shoulder pads. I never wore shoulder pads even when I played with Jim Thorpe. We always kind of looked upon that as if you couldn't take it if you did that.

Alyce: Your headgear wasn't too protective from what I've seen of the old uniforms, just to keep your ears warm.

Mr. Sterner: A piece of hard leather with some cotton sewed on the inside. But your nose, I've had my nose knocked all over my face I don't know how many times.

Alyce: Did you start that with the Mystics at first?

Mr. Sterner: That's right. They challenged us to come over and play them. Well, we thought we were getting into the big time and so we had quite a time getting the money together to charter a stage to drive us over there. It was the only way to get there and so we chartered this stage, and of course, you know how boys are, sometimes late. We were supposed to leave say at nine in the morning. Well, two or three of them didn't get there on time and the result was that we had to go because we were supposed to play at eleven o'clock, I think it was. It ended up that two of them arrived on bicycles – they rode all the way over – and one fella we called Bo Seymour whose father had a newspaper stand down there on F Street – he ran and walked all the way over. He didn't get there until the second half and we put him in and he got cramps in his legs and he couldn't play anymore, but the way that team ran over us was just like a steam roller and they had all these tricky plays that we never even heard of.

Alyce: They had a coach?

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Mr. Sterner: Oh sure, they had a coach and they knew all the real plays. They had been trained. I think they licked us something like 60 to nothing. Terrible.

Alyce: Where did you learn your plays? You didn't have any teams at school, right?

Mr. Sterner: We didn't in Asbury but Neptune did. Neptune High School was quite famous in those days. They won State Championships. When I went to Asbury – all this group who I played with in Belmar was Hollis Parker, the McCormacks and the Seymours and the Harris and Richeys and Newberry, they all went to Neptune. But my father felt that Asbury Park had a higher scholastic standing and he didn't care anything about this football business. He was Pennsylvania Dutch, you know, and he often said to me, "Donald I wish you'd put as much effort out in that garden as you do on that football field." The fact that Asbury Park didn't have a football team didn't mean a thing to him so he insisted I should go to Asbury and I was the only one and Asbury not having a football team and Neptune having a championship team, the ribbing I got from all my buddies on the Belmar Mystics about Asbury Park, I started working. We had a new principal, Charlie Huff, who came to Asbury High School in 1911. I found out he played halfback for Brown University. I said to Dr. Gene Rockefeller, the dentist who was a student in Asbury High School and his brother Harry, and a couple of other fellas, let's work on Mr. Huff, see if he'll let us have a football team. Since he was a halfback at Brown, maybe he'll coach us. So we worked on him and worked on him and finally he said, "I don't know how you can expect to have a team when you haven't had one here in so many years. You don't know the first rudiments of the game." And I said, "Oh yes we do. I do. I played with the Belmar Mystics and Gene Rockefeller and Harry, they played with the Carlyle Indians a fella named Carlyle A.C. they called it – I'm getting mixed up with Thorpe now – in Asbury and we know something about football." So finally the last day we could enter the East Jersey High School League, Mr. Huff finally said, "Well, if you can get 22 fellas so we'll have two teams to sign up, I'll put up the dollar to join the league and I'll be your coach." That's all it cost in those days. So that's the way they started football in Asbury High School and it's been going ever since. And the beauty of it all is that we won the League Championship. Then, in later years, Andy Vola who just passed away just yesterday or the day before, was Captain of the Asbury team two or three years later that won the State Championship and so Asbury became quite a powerhouse to match Neptune. Up until that time, I took quite a ribbing from my old teammates about going to a sissie high school like Asbury.

Alyce: Where did you pick up your baseball? Who taught you or was it just that all the kids played it?

Mr. Sterner: Everybody played baseball and basketball and track. Dr. Shepherd who was the Superintendent of Schools before Mr. Huff arrived just said the boys get hurt and he didn't like it. He was like my father, more inclined on the scholastic side and anything to do with athletics
...

Mr. Sterner: You had a little bit of that at home with a father and a mother with academic backgrounds.

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Mr. Sterner: I should say. Yes. I never got much encouragement for playing anything in athletics. Dad being Pennsylvania Dutch, they had always been taught that every ounce of energy you have must be productive and not on the sport pages but in the production of food.

Alyce: Wasn't there a point when there was a semi-pro team that came down and played baseball at Memorial Field?

Mr. Sterner: Oh yes, that was later., The Belmar Mystics,. We were the Mystics A.C. I forget where we ever got that name. We picked it out of the sports pages of a New York paper. But the Belmar Mystics later became a very fine baseball team, used to play a lot of the best semi-pro teams from the city.

Alyce: I thought there was really a strong semi-pro feeling around the whole shore area which we don't seem to have as much now.

Mr. Sterner: Harry Lyons just celebrated his 60th wedding anniversary with Emma but he was a first baseman on those Belmar Mystics baseball team and he could give you a tremendous story on the background of semi-pro baseball.

Alyce: Do you think the children today with the Pop Warner and the Little League are getting the same thing you had?

Mr. Sterner: Well, it's more systematically organized and a lot of fine fellas like Tom Hope here in Belmar and Bob Seitz give a lot of their time coaching these men and boys and that helps tremendously for their future development in high school and later.

Alyce: Some people say it was so much better in the good old days when everyone just organized his own activity and picked up here and had a little scrap of equipment there. But you contend that it is better to start them out properly right from the beginning and show them how so they won't be hurt.

Mr. Sterner: It's so much better. They teach them the elementary rudiments of the game right from scratch and how to slide and how to tackle and everything else that's so important in order to avoid injuries.

Alyce: Can I get back to your high school for a minute? Your father said that Asbury was academically superior. What kind of courses did they offer? Did they have what we might call college preparatory type courses?

Mr. Sterner: Yes it was. They had three courses really. They had a commercial course for those who wanted to prepare themselves to get a job upon graduation in the commercial world, girls were stenographers and typists and that sort of thing and boys who wanted to go into business. Then they had a general course and a college preparatory course.

Alyce: Did you get into Latin and lots of math?

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Mr. Sterner: Yes. French and German, Algebra and Trigonometry and Solid Geometry.

Alyce: Have you found that to be a good background for what you're doing today or was that just a good time that you spent?

Mr. Sterner: Well, the French I learned helped a little bit when I was in France.

Alyce: This is in World War I?

Mr. Sterner: Yes. In fact, the same way the German I learned. There was one particular phrase that I decided when I joined the Second Division that I better get back to my German and brush up a little bit and that was to say "Gatzin ze meir vas u essen?"

Alyce: That's basic. That's not the usual phrase you hear G.I.s saying.

Mr. Sterner: I always felt that if I was captured and I was a prisoner, I would want to be able to tell them I would like to have something to eat. I wouldn't say "Give it to me", but I thought maybe if I spoke their language, I would get a little favored treatment. But, if they asked for anything else, then I would fall flat. But I always liked languages. When we were in Germany and France, they were helpful and you could limp along as a result of them. The Latin, I don't know, Another thing I liked was the old ancient and medieval history. As I traveled around Europe and saw all those old ruins and historical places, and go way back to those days, I said to myself, I wish I had paid more attention to those subjects because they were so interesting, whether it was the Coliseum in Rome or in Athens looking at all those ruins.

Alyce: Those engravings on the wall are sitting there looking back at you and you can't realize they're real. I would think that your math would have stood you in good stead in the business that you have now.

Mr. Sterner: Well, I'm sure that it did because it's been one of my favorite subjects.

Alyce: What would you say would be a good thing just to sort of wrap this up to bring the good Belmar Ocean Beach of the old days to the Belmar of today? Do you think that our history today is going to be just as important to record or to write up as the days when you were a young man?

Mr. Sterner: The fortunate part, as I look at it, in those days were that we were pioneers in a sense, Dad and Mother in particular, and, of course, being a part of the next generation, being a part of the pioneers and the founders of the community, we just can't have that thing again, but I do think that our Mayor and Commissioners are farsighted and forward looking and they did what they did with Urban renewal and made such a success of it in marked contrast to other towns that just got bulldozed rightists for lack of another name and just bulldozed everything they saw in sight and then said "Let's see, what are we going to put there." But our Commissioners who were working with a Citizen's Committee agreed that "Let's find out what we're going to put there before we tear down everything and just have a blight. The result is what we have today.

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