

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH CONNIE HIRSHON

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

MOLLY GRAHAM

WASHINGTON, D.C.

JUNE 4, 2016

TRANSCRIPT BY

MOHAMMAD ATHAR

Molly Graham: This is an oral history interview with Connie Hirshon. The interview is taking place on June 4, 2016 in Washington, D.C., and the interviewer is Molly Graham. Before we dive into the interview, we were just looking at some pictures you have from growing up.

Connie Hirshon: This is Sigñono and this is Nancy Redman, Sigñono Carlos. This is their daughter Isabel Foster, with husband John, and sons James and Robert Munoz. This is my father [James Redman Munoz], so Dad was the first child, Isabel the second and Uncle Bob the third. This is Uncle Bob's wife Jimmy. This is my mother Alma, my sisters Carla and Nancy next to Dad and my mother, Alma Coons Munoz, and me. This is Charles Foster, or Chuck. I really need to put on my glasses. Is this what you want?

MG: Yes. I do not know a whole lot about Kip's Castle yet. This is all interesting to me.

CH: In reading these articles, I found history that I didn't know. For instance, Kip's Castle has twenty-three rooms. [Editor's Note: Connie Hirshon's grandfather Sigñono Munoz purchased Kip's Castle in 1926 from the original owners, Frederic Kip and his wife Charlotte Bishop Williams Kip. The Kips had built the 9,000-square-foot castle between 1902 and 1905. The estate is located on the border of Verona and Montclair and is currently owned by Essex County.]

MG: Yes.

CH: We bought it in 1926 and sold it around 1973, and I have letters about the sale. In this photo, this was a circular sunroom, and family and friends played cards here. Bridge was a main recreation. Money wasn't really spent on recreation. Montclair had dirt roads before I was born. By the time I was born, it was pretty well paved. Dad built our house at 46 Highland Avenue, and because it was on a hillside, he was really pleased that the basement held up. We never had water in the basement. The driveway was not paved, and the driveway came up beside the right-hand side of our house and wound up the hill to Crestmont Road. When I was growing up, a family named Schlocter lived on the left-hand side of the road. My understanding is that Grandma and Grandpa lived in that house. Here's our house. This is how I knew it had blue shutters and a red tile roof. The red tile roof was not like the castle roof; I was told the castle tiles came from Scotland. I'm not sure about that. This is the house at 46 Highland Avenue when we owned it. It had a small balcony, and that was my sister's room between two bedrooms and my parents' room. The house had blue shutters. Then, there was a little wing over here with a garage. I think this is an accurate old photo.

MG: Yes, it is beautiful. It looks like a wonderful home.

CH: Yes. There were four bedrooms. I never thought about that. This was a very small bedroom and Mom and Dad's.

MG: Okay.

CH: In this photo of 46 Highland Avenue, this wall seems awfully close to belong to the castle, but it looks like a castle wall. A family named Riley lived on this side and Reed lived on that side. The mailman, can you imagine?

MG: [laughter] He must have been in good shape.

CH: Milk was delivered at first on dirt roads, horse and buggy. That was before my time. They would walk it up to the kitchen.

MG: It was a different time.

CH: A very different time. I was born in '28, and you figure '38 is just before the Second World War, so it was a very fraught time.

MG: Yes. Well, let us start at the beginning. You said when you were born. Can you say where?

CH: Orange, New Jersey, Orange Memorial Hospital.

MG: Did you grow up there? Did your family live in Orange at the time?

CH: No. It was probably because of a lack of a hospital in Montclair. I'm just guessing. I think my sisters were born there, too. I'm not sure Montclair Hospital was [around yet]; I'm not sure.

MG: That is okay. Well, tell me a little bit about your family history starting on your father's side, and you can get to how you ended up in the Montclair area.

CH: Okay, so, it all started with Grandfather in South America, Chile, and then if that's true, he travelled to and he ended up in New Mexico and Texas. That's where this ranch comes in.

MG: Was this Sigñono?

CH: Sigñono, S-I-G-Ñ-O-Ñ-O, with a little ñ over the first n. Sig worked at the Bell Ranch [in New Mexico]. My sister Nancy sent me these, this book of the Bell Ranch, and she saved this magazine, which refers to the Bell Ranch.

MG: How did he end up at the Bell Ranch?

CH: Well, who knows? By horseback, I guess. [Editor's Note: Ms. Hirshon shows a letter.] That's in Montclair. This is from my father, a letter from my dad.

MG: This is written in 1963, "Dear Shugie."

CH: Shugie.

MG: Shugie.

CH: My mother's [nickname] was Shug. Friends in St. Louis had called Mother "Shug." It's a southern form of endearment, and it's spelled S-H-U-G. Now, I spell it S-U-G. This is Grandfather at the Bell Ranch.

MG: His father was from Chile I read. In my notes, it said that he was born in Chile, immigrated in the fall of 1865.

CH: Immigrated to?

MG: I am not sure. Maybe the United States.

CH: In when?

MG: 1865.

CH: Could be. My understanding is Spain to Chile and then [went] up to the Bell Ranch and then to St. Louis, where my father was born. James was born in St. Louis. That's where he met Nancy Redman. I don't know how long they were there or what they did there.

MG: That is amazing.

CH: Well, there's big gaps, and we weren't asking questions.

Russell Hirshon: What about Billy the Kid?

CH: Well, I hate to repeat that because others will deny it, but I understood that Billy was his roommate at the Bell Ranch.

MG: They look like they could be buddies.

CH: Yes. Don't they look alike?

MG: Yes. Well, where did that story come from? What was the story there?

CH: Simply that they bunked together at the Bell Ranch, nothing more than that. I have no stories of the Bell Ranch or anything like that. This was Sig in his youth and then from there to St. Louis, from the Bell Ranch to St. Louis, where he met Grandma, Nancy Redman. She was English and I thought very refined. She was very gentle, very sweet and quiet. I don't ever remember really having a conversation with her. I remember wrapping Christmas presents with her [with] tissue paper, painstakingly. [Editor's Note: Billy the Kid was a cowboy and outlaw

who lived in New Mexico and reputedly killed twenty-seven people by the time he was killed at the age of twenty-one.]

RH: Who's this?

CH: That's Grandpa. That's Sig in Montclair. It looks like my father actually.

MG: Yes, they look a lot alike.

CH: They do, but that's Sig. I'm sure that's not my father.

RH: There were stables at the castle, right?

CH: Okay. The garage was the stables and again dirt roads. If you were at the garage looking toward the castle, it just was a little driveway between the two. Then, the Stanley Russell house was a neighbor on the left. Crestmont Road, when I was growing up, was paved, and [I would walk on the road] if I didn't go through the woods up to the castle. Mom and I took walks on Sunday afternoons down Crestmont Road. Off to the left was an undeveloped area, and Gypsies stayed there. They put up their little tents. They were migrating, and they still do, north-south. I guess you know about that. We would see their fires and their tents, and that's all there is to that. I thought that was kind of exciting.

MG: Did you have any interaction with the Gypsies?

CH: Any what?

MG: Interaction.

CH: None, no. They came and went. If you happened to see them there, I just thought that was wow.

RH: On your property?

CH: Not on our property.

RH: Oh, not on your property.

CH: No, it was on the other side of Crestmont Road, which fell down to a highway in Verona. Verona is there on one side, Montclair on the other.

MG: No one gave them any trouble.

CH: No, no, not to my knowledge. I didn't know a thing about them except to have seen it. I thought, "Wow, what a lifestyle."

MG: Your grandparents met in St. Louis.

CH: I believe so.

MG: Do you know how they met there?

CH: No. I have so little family history.

MG: That is okay. We are creating some right now.

CH: Right.

MG: What about the history on your mother's side?

CH: Okay. Somebody has actually done something about that. They've gotten quite a few facts wrong, but Mom's family goes back to, well, she was DAR.

RH: Daughters of the American Revolution.

CH: Yes.

MG: Do you know where they were from?

CH: Okay. Grandmother was Minny Baptiste. Grandpa was English, Edward Townsend Coons. There are a lot of Coons in Pennsylvania and other areas, spelled with a "k" and in other ways. I knew Grandma and Grandpa Coons very well. Mom grew up in Montclair.

RH: The Coons that were here, remember?

CH: I knew Charlotte and met her sister briefly. Charlotte was the daughter of one of mom's brothers. Mother had two brothers. Chazi, I met here in Washington, and we hadn't known each other before. I had left Montclair at seventeen and just visited after that. My husband and I would visit fairly often.

MG: How long did your grandfather live in St. Louis for, and what was his life like there?

CH: I have no idea. I have no idea. I only know that my father was born there, and I believe Nan and Sig were married there.

MG: What was his occupation?

CH: I have no idea.

MG: They eventually came to New Jersey.

CH: To New Jersey. My understanding now is Uncle Bob [Robert Redman Munoz, Sr.] handled the office out West. There were two companies out West, [one of which was] the exploration company where Uncle Bob was a geologist. [He was] a Princeton graduate, geologist. He's the only college graduate pretty much in the family. Uncle Bob headed Southwood Exploration Company, Inc. and Santa Fe Corporation. There were two companies. It's in here somewhere. In New York, Grandpa founded Cosmopolitan Shipping Company. This is a picture of Grandpa before Parkinson's [disease] and in New York and what a difference from this fellow here.

MG: The shipping company was in New York.

CH: Yes, Cosmopolitan Shipping. I guess it still exists. Dad took it over. The company acted as representatives for various lines, a Norwegian line, a South American line, and I think they had a couple of offices in France, one in Paris and one in La Havre, as I understand. They consigned cargo and passengers for ships. Home Lines was another one they represented. At one time, I think Dad, during the Second World War, I think we owned three tankers. One of them was blown up in the harbor. This is just all I remember, just barely the facts.

MG: Well, this is what I am interested in.

CH: Me, too, and I'll probably learn from you, which would be nice. I'll certainly read and listen to whatever you come up with.

MG: Do you know about when the family moved to the New York-New Jersey area?

CH: No, I truly don't. Maybe we could figure it out.

MG: What year was your father born?

CH: Okay, well, I think he was born in the 1890s [1891], and he died in 1970, '68, I believe.

MG: Okay. Where did the family settle when they did live in New York? Were they in Montclair?

CH: I'm not aware that they lived in New York.

MG: But not yet at the castle.

CH: No. Montclair was a small town. I think when Grandma and Grandpa arrived, they were very foreign to Montclair, and they were downtown. I know that. I think Grandpa wanted to prove something, so he bought the biggest and highest point. Again, I think they lived in this house on the other side of the driveway. I think before the Schlocters owned that property, I

think Grandma and Grandpa owned it. Now, if they bought the castle in '26, 1926, two years before I was born, they will have lived in that house before I was born, and I knew that family. I don't know what importance that has. I think they moved from downtown to I'll call it the Schlocter house. It was a big stucco house. I don't know whether it's still there. Then, there is this property on the right side of the driveway, which seemed to be part of the castle property. The Schlocters owned part of the woods.

RH: Is that next to the house?

CH: Yes. It's behind the house.

RH: Okay.

CH: We had a lot beside our house between the Reilleys and ours. We had a big garden, vegetable garden, during the war. The woods going back seemed to belong to the castle. The Schlocters owned immediately behind our house and to the west, and they also had a large vegetable garden.

MG: What was the exploration company?

CH: They [would] have been looking for oil, Santa Fe Corp. and Southwood Exploration Company, Inc. Uncle Bob was a geologist.

MG: Some of the family history that was sent to me, who was Nannie Munoz?

CH: That was Sig's wife, Nancy.

MG: Okay.

CH: My sister's name is Nancy, and she was named after Grandma. My sisters are Carlotta Townsend, and that will have been after Mom's side, the Townsend [side], and Carlotta was just chosen as a Spanish name, and Nancy Redman after Grandma, and I'm Alma Consuelo after my mother.

MG: Did any of your family serve in World War I?

CH: My uncle, Dad's brother Robert, served in the wars as did Mother's brother, Cyril. I think Dad was excused from serving, because he was supporting his father's family and his own family. He had the responsibility of the company and the support of the family.

MG: What do you know about your parents' experience growing up, what their lives were like?

CH: It was such a different time. I'm going to say Mother's life, I believe, was circumscribed. She had art talent, and she studied art. I was told she attended the Cordon Bleu [culinary school]



in New York. That's my mom. [Editor's Note: Ms. Hirshon points to a photograph of her mother, Alma Coons Munoz.]

MG: She is beautiful.

CH: During the war, she learned a lot about nutrition, and she made great soup. We lived on soup. It was the best food in the world. She never developed her art work. She had her friends and her mom and dad. Mother's mother and father lived in a small apartment downtown with a screen porch.

Yes, her mother died early on. Grandfather Coons lived on in the 1930s for quite a while in his apartment. The thing I remember was the Sunday suppers we had together, which I was to prepare, and we had fun with that, and there was a dumbwaiter. I loved sending stuff up and down, but I was very young. I attended Edgemont [Elementary] School, which was down the hill, and Mom walked me down and back until third grade when I switched to [the] Kimberley [School]. It was a modest plant, so to speak, building, but a great school. It was all girls. The Montclair Academy [for boys] and Kimberley School. Montclair Academy was on Lloyd Road. The [Montclair] Academy on Lloyd Road was almost at the top of a hill. When 9/11 happened, students, all at the Academy, could see the [World] Trade Center coming down. From the castle, from the second floor, one had a view to New York. [Editor's Note: The Montclair Academy and Kimberley School merged in 1974 to form the Montclair Kimberley Academy.]

RH: Of New York.

CH: Of New York and a sweeping view across, and I, in my imagination now, thought I could see the river and boats, ships on it. I'm not sure that's the case, but you did have this view going toward the skyline of New York. Both sets of grandparents died, all within a couple of years, 1940 and '41.

MG: What was your father's experience growing up in that area?

CH: He was sort of rebellious. He liked to just be arrogant I guess. I'm told he had a pet alligator, and he used to keep it in his shirt.

RH: At what age did he do that?

CH: That would've been when he was very young. I'm not sure that's true, but these remnants of stories come back. He was devoted to his family, our family and his family. Families are fraught often. Aunt Isabel, here, married mother's brother, whom I don't have a picture of. Uncle Cyril did fight in the First World War and lost his hearing. He was a neat guy, just wonderful. He lived a long time in Montclair after everyone else was gone and just a really nice guy.

RH: How old were you in this picture?

CH: I don't know. The exposure of the legs really does not make me happy. I'm going to say nine, ten, eleven.

MG: It is hard to tell.

CH: I'd like to think around ten.

RH: Yes, maybe a little older.

CH: Eleven?

RH: Yes, something like that.

CH: Okay, so I think Carla in this photo was about sixteen or seventeen and Nan about fourteen or fifteen.

RH: They look a little older than that.

CH: Who does?

RH: Nan.

CH: Well, she was about two years younger than Carla.

RH: Where's Carla?

CH: Here. They wore these funny little shrugs. This is Uncle John Foster who was married to Aunt Isabel and their two children.

MG: That is your mother's brother.

CH: No, mother's brother is not in this picture.

MG: Oh, okay.

MG: John Foster married Isabel, after mother's brother Cyril Coons and Isabel divorced.

MG: Oh, okay. So, that is her husband John Foster.

CH: No, her second husband.

MG: Oh.

CH: This is Isabel's son John. Now. This is young Bob. He is the son of Aunt Jimmy and Uncle Bob. This is Uncle Bob, Dad's brother. [Editor's Note: Ms. Hirshon is referring to her uncle Robert "Bob" R. Redman Munoz, Sr. His son was Robert "Bob" Redman Munoz, Jr., whose daughter Laurie Blackwell lives in Colorado with her husband Robert "Bob" Blackwell.]

MG: Your father's name was James.

CH: Yes, James Redman [Munoz], and [his brother was Robert Redman] "Bob" Munoz, [Sr.]. This is Aunt Jimmy Morris, M-O-R-R-I-S. There was her mother, Aunt Fanny Morris.

RH: What I'll do is I'll get left to right names of both of those, and we can send the picture, because I'm already lost. [laughter]

CH: Sister, sister, father, Uncle Bob out West, Charles is Isabel's oldest son, with Uncle Cyril from Isabel's first marriage to Uncle Cy.

RH: Who's this on the first row, far left?

CH: My mother, that's Alma Munoz.

RH: This is Alma.

CH: Yes, and Jimmy.

RH: That is?

CH: My father.

RH: Then, this is the grandfather.

CH: Sig and Nancy, yes. The rose garden is here. You went down some flagstone steps into a beautiful rose garden. The surrounding wall had a circular corner and was the top of the dungeon. Then, beyond that, a park with a large stone family barbeque sort of place, where we cooked hotdogs and hamburgers. This round room pictured here was a card room. Nobody ever sat in it except to play cards. This is the chapel. One of the articles said it had a gold leaf ceiling. When we lived there, the whole chapel was painted gold. It wasn't large. [It was] very small [with] beautiful stained glass windows and a little, modest wood altar, dark wood. All the wood was dark and in my imagination I think of a dark oak. As I remembered, it was almost black.

MG: I am comfortable.

CH: Would anybody like anything to drink? You know where to find it.

RH: I do. I can bring it to you.

CH: This was the entry here, and this is the room where Sid and I stayed, ever so pleasant.

RH: So, this is a carriage overhang.

CH: It's called a *porte cochère*, in old times [for] horses, carriages. There was a big step up and I remember cement steps, and they seemed to have been colored pink. They had a peachy cast, like this rug, peachy in the rug. You could come up the steps, but if you were being dropped off in a carriage, you would step right out under the (silo?) and then go up.

MG: Do you know how your parents met?

CH: It seems to me they will have met through Isabel probably, Mom and Isabel's connection. I think it was wrenching. Uncle Cy, a veteran, and not sociable, and Dad sort of a driving force. Cy worked for a company in the South and may have been in sales, Mom's brother. Mom's other brother was a dancing instructor, had a dancing school.

RH: They're not in this photo, right?

CH: No. This is mom's side, and I don't have any pictures, photos.

RH: They were the Redmans.

CH: No, the Redmans are Nancy, here. Mom's side was Coons, Edward Townsend Coons. All I know of them is Montclair.

MG: Do you know what year they were married?

CH: My mom and dad?

MG: Yes.

CH: I'm going to guess this. They were married in New York at a hotel. I think they were married around 1918. I'm guessing at that, but that's what I think.

MG: Are you the youngest?

CH: I'm the youngest. Both my sisters have died.

MG: What years were they born?

CH: Okay, so Nancy was four years [older than me], so let's say [she was born in] '24, and Carla was five or six years [older] and she would have been born in '22 or '23 and I think again at

Orange Memorial Hospital in Orange, New Jersey. I think all of us lived at 46 Highland always. I don't remember any other address being mentioned.

MG: What are some of your earliest memories from growing up in the area?

CH: Well, mostly outdoors with friends. Okay, so, you had a best friend and a couple of other friends. Montclair was such a simple town. There was a trolley. If you walked down Highland Avenue, you caught the trolley downtown, all the way to Newark, from Caldwell to Newark.

RH: When was the country club founded?

CH: Okay, the Montclair Golf Club, I don't know, but Dad helped put that together with Johnny Foster and with others. The Bank of Montclair, Dad was somehow probably a trustee or something of that.

RH: I remember his picture was on the wall in the country club at one point.

MG: What was your father's business? What was he doing?

CH: Well, it was Cosmopolitan Shipping as well as the western companies.

MG: Right.

CH: He took over from my grandfather, and Grandpa must have come down with Parkinson's at a rather early age. It may have grounded him in other ways. Okay, so, Dad had a high school education. Both he and Grandpa briefly attended Yale, very briefly. Grandpa said to Dad if he wasn't going to go to college to go around the world, and so Dad shipped out and sailed around the world for a year on this freighter. This is not Grandpa, no. This is my father. [Editor's Note: Ms. Hirshon is looking at a photograph of her father.]

MG: Was it part of the service?

CH: No, it was just a freighter that went to China. Dad saw a lot of the world, and that was the certificate he received.

MG: Yes. [Editor's Note: Molly Graham reads from the certificate.] "This is to certify that Mr. James Munoz served aboard the above named British vessel as purser from May 10th of 1911 to November 1st, 1911, during which time I always found him absolutely sober, most attentive, and," I'm not sure what that word says, "to please in his various duties and can safely recommend him as a conscientious, painstaking man in anything he does. He has my best wishes for his future success." Did he ever tell you any stories from that time around the world?

CH: Only he was very surprised at China, just surprised. Yes, it was truly an education. Travel is a wonder.

MG: Yes.

CH: Yes, it makes us so grateful. Anyhow, I guess that's a picture of him over there.

RH: It's just hilarious, "I always found him absolutely sober." [laughter]

MG: I could not make out that word.

CH: Anxious.

RH: Yes, anxious to please.

MG: Oh.

CH: Attentive and anxious to please, anxious, A-N-X-I-O-U-S.

MG: My script is a little fuzzy.

RH: Yes, it looks like a "c".

CH: So, Grandpa insisted that Dad do that, but Grandpa himself had only spent maybe three or four days at Yale and Dad even less. They weren't formal students. Dad read a great deal, and he was always up on everything. He was great to talk to. So was my mother. They were really interested in everything that was going on, and the times were so interesting and so fraught. Then, we only had radios. We were getting our news on the radio and in the films. The newsreels that we got in movie theaters were jaw-dropping and to find out what was going on in the world, so incredible.

RH: It's interesting. It's got James R. Munoz at nineteen years old, born in St. Louis.

CH: That gives us an idea of when he was born. The year was nineteen what?

RH: '11.

CH: So, subtract nineteen from that.

RH: Yes.

CH: What do we get? We get 1892. Mother would have been born probably a couple of years later.

MG: What do you know about the Kips?

CH: Nothing. Only what I've read here. I'm so grateful that friends sent me these articles from the *Newark Star-Ledger*. County of Essex, okay, and this is the sale of the castle [by] Uncle Bob. This is from somebody at the school I attended asking questions. These articles are really something else. The secret room, so to speak, was a little area all perfectly finished, white plastered, on the landing of the staircase going up to the second floor. As you went up this wooden staircase, I'm talking about Mrs. Kip now, but her wooden floors, her windows, her lighting, I mean, incredible. On the landing, there was a little loose piece in the whatever you call that [wainscoting]. What do you call that that goes around? You could jiggle that, and the door would go back on the staircase.

RH: It's like the wood trim.

CH: Yes, whatever you call that. We did it often. Finally, they had a couple of *torchères* [ornamental stand for a candle] there and as I remember it a window. They finally sort of wired the panel closed.

MG: Do you know anything about maybe why your family wanted to buy the castle and what their interest was in it?

CH: I think Grandpa just wanted to say, "I'm here. I can do this. Don't fool with me. Don't mess with me."

RH: Montclair had a social scene, a society perspective.

CH: WASP, white Anglo-Saxon [Protestant], and protecting that.

RH: He wanted to be [a part of that].

CH: Yes. It was said that Grandfather had a priest. I have no idea. I never knew of any family priest. Outside of Anglo-Saxon Protestant, everything else was on the fringe. Boy, this stuff hasn't changed much. These articles, I've learned more from them than [I knew]. Here is the chapel. When I knew it, the whole thing was painted gold.

MG: Would you have services in the chapel?

CH: No, no, we didn't. Mother was Congregational, New England, and her family will have been from New England. No, we were Protestant. Dad said he always felt Catholic, and Grandpa had been Catholic evidently. Dad was very sympathetic to Catholic doctrine.

MG: Would you attend church services in town?

CH: Congregational Church, yes.

MG: Do you know what happened to Frederic Kip, where he went?

CH: No. Have you read these articles?

MG: No, I have not seen these.

CH: Well, they're terrific.

MG: Yes, helpful.

CH: Yes. Frederic Kip evidently was in textiles.

MG: These articles look they were published in the 1970s. What was happening to revisit the history of Kip's Castle when they were published?

CH: I think Peter Purvis, with whom I grew up, a lawyer family, well, anyhow, I think that group bought the castle at some point. He's done much to put it in the public domain, which is such a good thing, so nice that it will be kept. [It is] incredible, wonderful.

RH: That's a nice view.

CH: The entrance, yes.

MG: Talk to me about these pictures just so we can get a little description on the record.

CH: Sure. Here's the view from the second floor.

MG: That is incredible.

CH: Now, I'm saying second floor, but this is the view if I remember it. This will be New York over here, the skyline of New York.

RH: You almost can see the water.

CH: Yes, I really think so, Russ, and ships.

MG: How was this landscape maybe different when you were there?

CH: Far simpler, far simpler, but there were skyscrapers and planes. Planes were kind of new. As a child in the early '30s, [it was a] big deal to see a plane going over.

RH: What about blimps? Did you ever see a blimp?



CH: I don't think I ever did. Okay, here's the wall and this would be the rose garden and the entrance, the northeast view. So, here's east over here and north up there, west here and south here. This is the kitchen in here.

RH: Bottom left hand corner of the page.

CH: [Editor's Note: Ms. Hirshon is reading from an article.] "West wing, exterior walkway shows the prevalence of the rounded arch styling." Yes, so it was an entryway to the kitchen, and [there were] very steep steps coming up. The only people other than family and a few friends who visited, and my friends and I, who just liked running around the property, not so much in the castle, the people who worked there were just absolutely wonderful and they were truly, truly like family. There were two Japanese people who were [interned] when the war came on and the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. That was 1941, December 7th. There was a cook named (Ura?). I don't know how to spell it, but he was a family person, very benevolent. He wore a white shirt and a big, white apron. I loved to be in the kitchen. I wasn't allowed in their kitchen, but I lived in the kitchen at home. (Ura?) was the cook and just a beaming, lovely Japanese man and very light skinned. Then, there was (Higa?). (Higa?) created Japanese gardens. Outside the dining room was a little, round room, probably a low turret I'm guessing, and upstairs might have been the master bedroom and a living space, in this round room with windows that came at least halfway down.

RH: What are we talking about, Connie? What's that?

CH: Okay, this is off the dining room. This is where (Higa?) built a platform table and on it created a scene of Japanese countryside. It had live moss and he had little villages. It was enchanting. That was off the dining room. This is the living room. The dining room will have been in here somewhere. This is the upstairs living room. Russ, you really did point to that. That is off the dining room.

RH: There was a little garden, right? A rock garden?

CH: Yes, the rock garden is over here.

MG: Okay.

CH: Now, I don't remember this at all. This will be coming up from Highland Avenue, and why does it go like that? We used to just run up and down the hill. Here are steps going up here.

RH: Where are the stables?

CH: Okay, here is the garage, and the stables were in here.

RH: Highland Avenue is down here. Then, there's a walkway to the side, isn't there, that you could go up?

CH: Yes, our house was down here.

MG: Okay.

CH: You could walk up through the woods this way, and the picnic grounds was over here. Crestmont Road is down there and the Stanley Russell house over here.

RH: We're looking at an aerial view of the house in the winter.

MG: When was this picture taken?

CH: You've got me. I'm so sorry. I don't mean to be rude.

MG: No, no, it is okay.

RH: It could've been more recent.

CH: It looks recent.

MG: Did you continue to call it Kypsburg?

CH: Never. [I] didn't know the name Kypsburg, but [we] called it Kip's Castle. We may have bought it from the Kips, but since then, there have been several owners. I never lived there. I lived at 46 Highland and visited and knew more of the property than I did of the castle. We had formal meals in the dining room. That was with family. As children, we were absolutely insignificant, pusillanimous little creatures. There was a little library, again, inside this, okay, there was a very small library. It was fairly dark. You couldn't read in there, but you could read outside. [Editor's Note: Kip's Castle was originally known as Kypsburg.]

RH: Didn't Helen get locked in this one secret room?

CH: Oh, that was funny.

RH: Was it the bathroom?

CH: Yes. We were visiting as a family, and the doors were very heavy, very thick. The bathrooms were tiled and lovely. The doors had keys that went in.

RH: Like skeleton keys, right?

CH: Skeleton keys. I remember we were shoving it back and forth under the door, and she did let herself [get locked in the bathroom]. [laughter] But [it was] pretty scary. I don't ever remember doors being locked, but I think she did lock that door.

MG: Your family purchased the house in 1926. A few years later, the depression hit, and I was curious if there was any big impact on your family.

CH: Huge, huge. I mean, I've been told that we were broke several times. I never particularly felt it. Is this too cold?

MG: I am fine, as long as you are comfortable.

CH: I'm fine. We lived pretty simply. Clothing was not a big thing.

RH: You told me that when it was the depression that you had periods of time where you guys ate very modestly.

CH: Yes, well, we had soup, and mother made the most marvelous soup. You got a soup bone, started there. Anybody who didn't finish their cereal, that hot cereal, that went in the soup, marvelous, marvelous soup, and corn bread. Dad was crazy about corn bread. We sometimes had a cook in the kitchen.

RH: Do you remember her name?

CH: (Betty Sutherland?).

RH: (Betty Sutherland?), and (Burt?).

CH: (Burt Tucker?).

RH: Was the driver.

CH: He drove Dad into New York in Dad's later years.

RH: Did they both live at the house?

CH: No, Betty did.

RH: On Highland.

CH: On Highland Avenue. I lived home at 46 briefly after I left college, [when I] came home and worked in New York for a while. Mom used to get up and bake muffins for breakfast. We'd have breakfast together before I caught the bus or whatever. Just a very nice growing up and nice friends. Friends sort of came together where they lived. My oldest closest friend was on Lloyd Road. She's still a friend. The Reeds who lived next door, Jane was a bit older than me, about twelve years, but I was godmother to three of her children next door. I mean, it was darn

pleasant. Now, you asked a question how did the war affect us. Well, people were just devastated.

RH: The depression.

CH: Yes. I was born pretty much in the depression, but Dad was able to build 46 Highland. It was a pretty simple house.

RH: That house had a lot of beautiful art in it on Highland Avenue.

CH: Yes.

RH: The rugs were gorgeous. The furniture was beautiful, ornate.

CH: Mom was artistic. She studied interior decoration, so, yes. Where you got your furniture was auction houses and stuff like that. This is furniture that was in Mom's house. That, I need to put back, that piece that's missing there. This furniture, that bookcase comes apart, top comes off, sides come off. Everything comes apart. It just fitted together. That was painted black, and it was in the back hallway and stored linens and had a wavy glass, the original glass.

RH: The desk.

CH: The desk was in a bedroom upstairs, where the French doors are on the house in the center. People coming into the house who cared for Mom or Dad when they were ill later on didn't treat the furniture too well.

RH: And borrowed things.

CH: I guess that happened, yes.

RH: She had a beautiful paperweight collection.

CH: Oh, yes. This comes from Russ' wife, Jen, from Scotland, but my mother did like paperweights. People, whoever, only took the real ones that were signed and dated. Russ, it's not part of the conversation, but I would like to show Molly Sid's father's pharmacy journals from Harvard at the turn of the 19th century. You may not even want to see them.

MG: Of course.

CH: My husband was a chemical and electrical engineer. This is his father's pharmacy/chemistry book.

RH: This was his textbook to carry. [laughter]

MG: Oh, my gosh. Well, let me take a peek inside. I don't think I've ever held a book this thick.

RH: It seems, right, thick as it is high.

MG: It is two thousand pages.

CH: Russ' father, Sidney, graduated in '38 and '39 from MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology].

MG: Oh, my God.

CH: It's got to be at least six inches.

RH: Yes, it's ridiculous.

MG: Wow, and this is before computers. If you make a mistake. [laughter]

RH: I expect you to be briefed on this. [laughter]

MG: Okay, well, quiz me next week.

RH: Look how small the print is.

CH: Yes.

MG: I know. It really should be about three thousand pages.

CH: Sid had a little typewriter, with ribbons. [Editor's Note: Ms. Hirshon makes the "ching, ching, ching" sound of a typewriter.] He attended the University of Maine with two fine roommates who were very disciplined and organized.

MG: Where in Maine?

CH: The University of Maine.

RH: Molly's from Maine.

CH: Are you?

MG: Yes, my parents live in Wells now.

CH: We love that area.

MG: Yes, I do, too. I really miss it.

CH: Yes.

MG: Well, we will talk about that in a little bit I think. What other memories do you have about the grounds or the inside of Kip's Castle?

CH: Okay, so, outside there was a groundskeeper. His name was (Philip?) Diconza, D-I and probably C-O-N-Z-A, and he probably had two or so people working for him. How they kept the grounds I have no idea, Molly. I don't ever remember anybody mowing. It's on a rock base. I don't know how much ground, dirt, there was on top, but when I would walk up the hill, it would be solid underfoot. The woods all around were deciduous. They weren't evergreen. It was always sort of light. When I would walk up as a young girl and this was around ten or so, eleven, twelve, walk up the hill, there was no high grass. There was no high anything.

RH: Were there horses on the property?

CH: No, not then. No, the horses were gone. Mom and Dad probably both rode horseback. The stables were probably there when they were there, but then cars came in [and] the horses no longer. Mother loved to ride horseback. My sisters belonged to the cavalry, Essex County Troop.

RH: This might have been on the property. [Editor's Note: The group is looking at a photograph.]

CH: Yes. So, I think that's Grandpa.

RH: It looks like your grandpa.

MG: Can you talk about how the immediate area might have been changing over time? Was it being built more up? Were more families moving in?

CH: Not when I was there.

MG: Who lived in Kip's Castle?

CH: Do you mean after Grandma and Grandpa?

MG: No. When they bought the house, was it your grandparents living there, and did anybody else live there?

CH: No. There were (Higa?) and (Ura?), who I think may have lived there, and later, because of Grandpa's Parkinson's, there were two nurses, one who stayed on as caretaker with her family until, I believe, it was sold. When you and I went up there, Russ, Mac greeted us in the park. Okay, her name was Catherine McGuinness Ingram. We called her Mac Ingram, and

(Ferguson?), and the two of them cared for Grandpa. Then, there was (Higa?) and (Ura?) downstairs. At my home, 46 Highland Avenue, we were brought up to clean up after ourselves, clean the bathtub, do the dishes, and cook. We learned cooking from my mom and a cook she had in the house. It was pretty much hands on.

MG: Did you have special responsibilities or chores you had to do?

CH: No, just don't make a mess and clean up after yourself. No, just learn to do stuff.

MG: It must have been very exciting to bring friends from the neighborhood over to the house and run around there.

CH: Not so very much. We were so much into ourselves, just in school. There's a letter from Ellie here, and she said, "I remember the dungeon." Sure, I will have shown them around the castle grounds and taken one or two people into the house probably.

RH: A level of modesty it seems like.

CH: No.

RH: No.

CH: Just it was home to my grandparents, and then Mom didn't tolerate much running around our house.

MG: Can we get you a glass of water?

CH: I'll have some iced tea. Russ, will you get it?

RH: I can get it, yes.

CH: And something for Molly maybe.

MG: Just some water would be great, Russ, thank you. Can you describe the dungeon again? I am not sure I was recording when you talked about it earlier.

CH: Okay. It's built into the wall of the rose garden, the [retaining] wall. The rose garden had a [retaining] wall around it. The immediate castle area has a retaining wall.

RH: Yes, I'm going to get it.

CH: And maybe a glass.

MG: I am okay with a bottle. It is fine.

CH: Thank you so much, Russ. I have some croissants. I made salmon salad.

MG: Oh, wow.

CH: I hope you'll have some.

MG: Thank you.

CH: Thanks, Russ, and you, too. Mom was a big disciplinarian. As kids, we lived in each other's bedrooms, same as ever.

MG: Would you ever go inside the dungeon?

CH: You could, it had a dirt base and covered with leaves with a wet leaf smell. Yes, you could. It was not very big, but, yes, you could go in there. It had an opening but no door on it, and it had probably two barred windows so it looked authentic. It didn't have anything on the walls.

MG: You do not think it was actually used as a dungeon ever.

CH: No, no, it was decorative.

MG: Okay.

CH: I think Mrs. Kip was probably just such an extraordinary designer. I think what an incredible mind the two of them had to build something like that.

MG: I have read in a couple places, including the article you just showed me, that Frederic Kip commissioned a history of the family in a book.

CH: Yes.

MG: Do you know where that exists?

CH: No, but I'd love to read it.

MG: Did you ever feel there was a mystery to house that is sometimes in big, older homes?

CH: No, no, I didn't. It was so much about Grandma and Grandpa and visiting them, and it was in the background.

MG: Where was their favorite place to be in the house?



CH: They lived on the second floor when I knew them, and they were older. I really don't know a whole lot.

MG: You mentioned going to school in the town. What memories do you have from your education there?

CH: Pretty darn pleasant, just plain pleasant and aiming to go to college. That was the big deal, and once there, aiming to get out and go to work and really enjoying work.

MG: Did you have any teachers that stand out to you?

CH: Well, art teachers, I had some very good ones in high school as well as college. Molly, here in Washington, can I waste tape?

MG: Oh, yes.

CH: We have the Kreeger Museum in the neighborhood.

MG: Oh, neat.

CH: Are you familiar with it?

MG: No, not with that one.

CH: Okay, Philip Johnson, the architect, designed a house for the family, which they always intended to become a museum for their Impressionist art, and they have some wonderful collections there of African [art]. That's in the neighborhood and [also] Dumbarton Oaks, Harvard's, Dumbarton Oaks. [Editor's Note: The Kreeger Museum and Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection are located in Northwest Washington, D.C. After amassing a collection of modern art, David and Carmen Kreeger founded the Kreeger Museum, which opened to the public in 1994. Robert Woods Bliss and Mildred Barnes Bliss gave their Dumbarton Oaks estate to Harvard University in 1940 to establish a research center and museum.]

MG: Right.

CH: Philip Johnson also designed the wing of pre-Columbian and Mayan art there. That's in the neighborhood. Dumbarton Oaks, the building is open to the public, and scholars study there.

MG: Yes, oh, that is nice to know.

CH: Growing up is mostly about relationships. Lucky if one has family.

MG: Who were Jim Morrison and Sandra? I read that they lived in the house for a few years.

CH: Right. My sister Carla, okay, Carla and [her daughter] Sandy, Carla was divorced from Charles Stevenson, whom she met around 1941. They had a child and were divorced. Later, Carla married Angus Morrison. Together, they had Jamie [or] James and Christian Morrison. They adopted Mark Andreas Morrison. Now, Sandy was Carla's daughter by her first marriage, adopted by Angus and who now lives in Tampa, Florida. She and Carla lived in the castle for some time before Carla remarried, other than at 46 Highland, where there was less space.

MG: What do you remember about the war years during World War II?

CH: Well, just honestly what I heard. It was indirect, what you saw in the films and heard on the radio. I remember where I was when [President Franklin D.] Roosevelt died. I mean, that was terrific. I was touched. I went abroad after the war with Dad's company and saw how Italy was making a comeback by producing leather goods, and the people in Italy seemed so upbeat and revived. France [was] also making a terrific comeback. Then, [we] touched briefly in Spain and saw crushing poverty in Barcelona. After the war was such a relief. It was not like having endured the cold and the hunger. Somebody from Dad's office, Pierre Leporte, visited us and spoke of the hunger and the cold in Paris. Now, I study French with a senior group from the neighborhood, and the French teacher was there during the war. She shares memories a bit.

MG: Before we talk about your life after high school and getting into college and work, I just have a couple more questions about Kip's Castle. Was there a connection with Kips Bay in New York?

CH: I don't know. I guess Kypsburg refers to the Kip property and First Mountain there. There are castles going up the Hudson River, people who have built them, moguls. Grandpa never seemed like, or my father, like the big businessman. You wouldn't pick them out on the street. They just went to work at 42 Broadway. I worked [in] Downtown New York for a Spanish-Portuguese magazine for a little a while and sometimes worked as a receptionist at 42 Broadway. Granville Conway had come to work for Dad and then took over the company when Dad retired. Granville always used to kid, [when] I was behind the door, you know, as it opened, I would be back here, he said, "One more move Connie or Shugie and you're out the door." [laughter] Times [were] so hard and people just devastated by the economy. What we do when we had money, fine. When we don't have it, we stop spending and we tighten up.

MG: Does the name (Nell Tidgeridge?) ring a bell?

CH: (Nell Tidgeridge?)?

MG: Nell.

CH: Not at all.

MG: I found a note online that someone named (Nell Tidgeridge?) had lived there in the 1920s and 1930s, but that does not sound right.

CH: Could have, but in what regard I don't know.

MG: Would your grandparents ever host people visiting from out of town?

CH: No, I don't think so, because they were older. When I knew them, they were older, not infirm, but Grandpa certainly had lost his voice for the most part. What they did was play bridge. This was the big deal, playing cards. [There was] a little bit of gambling. They had a roulette wheel. These were family gatherings with maybe a few friends, not a whole lot of people at the castle. They'd have a roulette wheel and bet and stuff like that. The local police sometimes came and were part of the party.

MG: How long did your grandparents live there? I know that they lived there until the end of their lives, but when was that?

CH: Well, the end of their lives was around '41-'42, between '40 and '42. What are we saying, that we owned it from '26 to '42?

MG: Let us see.

CH: Wait a minute. Actually, Uncle Bob sold it around '73.

MG: Yes, that is the number I have.

CH: I have his letter selling it.

MG: Yes, I saw that. I know that the Ingram family was employed there from 1945 to 1971. I am kind of curious about those years. Who was going in and out? Did anybody live there?

CH: Okay, this is when family might have spent the night in traveling. For instance, Sid and I did. We will have stayed there. Mac was just a magnificent woman. She had two children, young Fred and Nancy, who's on the West Coast I understand, and I think I got that from Alma, who's in Florida.

RH: Can I change the Band-Aid on your thumb?

CH: I know. Isn't it ghastly?

MG: Let us take a little break, and you can clean up.

[RECORDING PAUSED]

MG: I am kind of curious about the years between World War II and when the house was sold in the 1970s. Who was staying there and what was the activity?

CH: Well, Mac Ingram was in charge and [had] her family living there. That's honestly, Molly, all I know. Various family members, I'm sure I hear about them, people I've never known at all, will have stayed there. When Sid and I stayed there, Mac was there, and we will have eaten somewhere else. She, I think, was on the first floor. I had an Aunt Edith, who was related to my grandmother, to Nancy Redman, so Aunt Edith Redman was on the third floor, while Grandma and Grandpa were alive, but she will have died at some point while I was away.

MG: Did the Ingrams live there?

CH: Yes, yes, definitely.

MG: They were also in charge of its upkeep and maintenance.

CH: Yes. As far as that goes, probably not much because they will have lived in an apartment. Probably some of these pictures we saw were their apartment.

MG: An apartment somewhere else?

CH: No, in the castle.

MG: Okay.

CH: I visited Mac, and she was using a little dining room off the kitchen. She was a great gal, an RN [registered nurse] who retired. I think her husband had or worked in a gas station. Her daughter Nancy probably also is a nurse, married. I'm not sure about her son. Mac will have been in her fifties, sixties. When Russ and I went up there I don't remember where we stayed, but we saw Mac at that point. We were picnicking, and she offered to have us in the house. We didn't go at that point. Earlier, in the 1950s, my sister Carla and her daughter lived there. Various people that I don't even know about will have stayed there, family members who I've never met.

MG: But just briefly it sounds like for different times.

CH: Yes, passing through.

MG: It stayed under the Munoz family name until the 1970s.

CH: [Yes]. I believe it was sold in '72 or '73 according to correspondence.

MG: Who decided to sell it?

CH: Uncle Bob. The taxes are impossible, Molly. The blessing is that it's being taken over and made into a little [park], New Jersey's smallest park they mentioned. It still seems to be around twelve, thirteen acres. I heard the number fourteen growing up.

MG: Tell me a little bit about what you know of the history since the family sold it.

CH: Well, the Indian group came and went. Then, Peter Purvis, who has enabled much of this to happen.

MG: Peter Purvis was not the people who bought it after your family.

CH: No, I don't think so. I don't know who first bought it. Maybe he did. I don't know who first did, but when did the Indian group come?

MG: If this is the same Indian group, here is the timeline I was given. Peter Purvis and Brett Aster had joint ownership from 1975 to 1981, and then [Bhagwan Shree] Rajneesh from 1981 to 1984.

CH: Okay, okay.

MG: Then, this was from 1984 to 2007.

CH: Right.

MG: When the law office had it. Who was Peter Purvis? [Editor's Note: Molly Graham is referring to the law firm of Schwartz, Tobia and Stanziale, which purchased Kip's Castle and owned it until Essex County bought the property in 2007.]

CH: He and his family lived in Montclair, and he was a lawyer. That's all I know. He grew up, you know, just my age but not somebody I palled around with. [He had a] very attractive family. That's all I know.

MG: Did he buy it as a residence?

CH: I think as a law firm office. When my daughter and my cousin and I visited there, we were walking around the grounds, and a lawyer was going to the garage whom I didn't know. (Chazi?) said, "Tell him you used to live here," but you just don't do that to a stranger who is now in the house.

MG: How would you stay in touch with Kip's Castle after your family sold it? Would you read about it in the paper?

CH: No, nothing, dear. There was an advertisement in *The New York Times Sunday Magazine* for selling it at some point. I kept that. People would mention things, but that was all. [I had]

really no connection. Once you leave, Molly, often you've left. I visited Montclair for occasions like a wedding, a funeral, something, but that's about it. [I] had a dear friend living in Verona with whom I'd gone to school, and she had a home there. With my husband, as we traveled north, south, we would often stay along the route. You can see the castle from the New Jersey [Garden State] Parkway I think.

MG: What was that like to take your family and your children there?

CH: Well, I don't know. I haven't had any feelings of ownership or loss or anything. You leave growing up sort of behind and move on. [I had] really no connection, dear. [It is a] point of interest. When it becomes open to the public, I'd love for the grandchildren to see it. My son up in Gloucester, [Massachusetts] and his wife went to Cornell [University] Architecture. She's an interior architect, where she designs spaces for libraries and you name it. She's learned and marvelous, and I think she'd get a kick out of the place. I don't have any feelings, because I really felt for the family more than the place. It was someplace to run around.

MG: Had people made offers on it before the Purvis family took over in the 1970s?

CH: I don't know.

MG: Sometimes you want to sell your house to people who will take care of the house.

CH: Yes, and keep a connection. Many of my friends speak of that. Laurie, from my old school, Kimberley, wrote that her mother is a realtor and that our house on Highland Avenue had been well tended to, and I think that's great. Dad would be pleased and Mom, because they both cared for 46 Highland so much, and Dad cared for the castle, because he was devoted to his parents and family. The Englands bought 46 Highland after we left, I believe.

MG: When would that have been?

CH: Gosh, I don't know. Let me think. It has to be a guess, '70s, '80s. The family England and others have kept it up. Where we had a driveway and the garage, there is a pool and a changing area. People are enjoying living there, which is great. Laurie (Ounhut?), whose mother is a realtor, said it was so beautifully kept.

MG: Were you aware during the 1980s when the religious group took over?

CH: I heard about it. That's all. I heard that they had dyed parts of the entire castle orange. That was all I knew.

MG: There were a lot of complaints from the community during that time about what was going on there, and I did not know if that made you feel something. How did that make you feel?

CH: No. I think it's so regrettable.

MG: Do you know how that group came to leave?

CH: How they came?

MG: How they left?

CH: [No].

MG: How would a group like that afford a castle?

CH: I don't know, and why would they want it? Really, the fact that the state is taking it over [is a good thing]. People visiting the castle will want to use the staircase. The staircase is very wide and accessible going up to the third floor. The ceilings, as I remember them, were high. The back stairs were very simple and very steep and narrow.

MG: I do not remember if there is any elevator. I do not think so.

CH: No, Mom and Dad put an elevator at 46 Highland. Mom had a problem walking and Dad in his later years. They were able to put a little elevator in a hall closet.

MG: What other memories or stories stand out to you about Kip's Castle, anything I have not asked about?

CH: I wish I could give you some, dear, but I really can't.

MG: You have given me so many so far.

CH: The rock garden. There were so many rocky areas. (Higa?), I believe, had created a waterfall out there that came down over the rocks into a little pool. It had goldfish in it that lived there year round, big fish, big goldfish. Then, again, as children, we'd go over that wall and scoot down the hillside to Highland Avenue, quite distant from our house at that point, because it curved around. I was pretty much a roughneck. There was bulldozing going on up there.

MG: Do you want me to turn the recorder off?

[RECORDING PAUSED]

MG: Well, can you remind me when you graduated from high school?

CH: '46.

MG: What did you hope to do when you graduated?

CH: I hadn't an idea, but everybody was going to college, so I thought I should. I didn't do particularly well and was delighted when Dad said there was an offering of a trip by cargo ship to South America. [I was] thrilled. [I] left Skidmore [College] in the middle of my sophomore year with my sister Nan and ten other passengers, my mom and dad and dad's friends from Texas. We sailed to Argentina, and it took about, let me get this right, it took thirty days to go from New York, Brooklyn, to Buenos Aires. That was just wonderful. When I came back, I visited Skidmore, but instead of returning went to work in New York. I've done that ever since.

MG: Well, tell me more about that trip.

CH: Well, it was thrilling to be at sea for many days and to go from the Northern Hemisphere to the Southern Hemisphere. [We did a] stop off at Trinidad and a whole [side of] beef came on board. The food was absolutely marvelous. Of course, if you're at sea, you're always hungry. The food was fantastic. With the passengers, what did we do, we listened to a lot of music, got to know the crew, and my sister and I were very close, Nancy and I. In Buenos Aires, Mom and Nan and I did a great deal of sightseeing and the little churches and the above-ground graveyards. Buenos Aires back then was a beautiful city. We stayed at a hotel where neighbors had outdoor birdcages, hence the birdcage over there. All the roofs had bird cages on them. A friend gave us a little dog, which we brought home [and] we called Gaucho. They were liberating the railroads at that time, Juan Perón, the president, and his wife, Evita Perón. Argentina was in a state of turmoil. Nan and I were caught in a protest, but there was no threat. There were many Germans there, even before the migration there of Nazis from after the Second World War. We met people who were blue collar as well as not. We visited Uruguay and saw great wealth and great poverty. [Editor's Note: Radio actress Eva Duarte and Juan Perón married in 1945. Juan Perón served as the president of Argentina from 1946 to 1955, during which time the country nationalized the railroads. Evita Perón, known as Evita, became a popular figure in Argentina. She died from cancer in 1952. Juan Perón again rose to power in Argentina from 1973 to 1974.]

MG: From Argentina, did you continue on or return?

CH: We returned.

MG: This was not the same trip you took through your father's company.

CH: This was by invitation from a shipping company that Dad represented. After that, for the most part, I worked.

MG: What was your job?

CH: Mainly editorial. I was a play reader for NBC. People loved to send in scripts, and they had this department that accepted scripts once in a while. I met some very interesting people there. The agricultural magazine I worked for, (*La Hacienda o Facenda?*), was Portuguese and



Spanish [and located] downtown, and I did scut work, the lowest possible level. Then, I married Sid, and that's about it.

MG: Did you ever return to school?

CH: Well, yes, I continue to go to school constantly, because I don't have a degree, Molly. If you don't, you just keep studying and studying and studying. My object is not to have a degree but to keep learning, and the possibility for that here is endless. There's AU [American University], and there's Osher Lifelong Learning. There's Sibley Senior Association, which provides all kinds of lectures, a lot on healthcare but also on everything else imaginable. I volunteer at Palisades Village, which aims to keep older people in their homes by providing transportation to appointments and sociability. What else? Georgetown University over here has courses you can audit, and my friends do that. I've attended lectures at Osher and taken courses there, which if I were being graded and tested I wouldn't have the nerve to take, and learned a great deal. It's wonderful.

MG: What kind of classes have you taken?

CH: Epigenetics, science courses, for instance, even math courses that I absolutely would not have had the nerve to take. I had the opportunity to take a course in surgical technology at Washington Hospital Center, which was a two-year course condensed into eleven months. I was sort of clumsy, but you learn so much and I was grateful to be able to do it. I'm certified and to this day a member. In working, I worked for a little while in the operating room but after that at Georgetown University for the director of the cancer center, Lombardi Cancer Center. I was his secretary. [I] saw his patients with him and did minor stuff, very low level. [I] solicited articles for the newsletter. It's lovely to be in a learning position.

MG: I agree. Can you tell me a little bit more about the work you were doing for NBC? This was for early television.

CH: Yes. Let me think. Play reading, make a recommendation if you had one. I can't ever remember having one. I remember the name Ernie Kinoy. He was in our office, and he was an authentic writer. I read scripts that people sent in. All were given attention. [Editor's Note: Emmy Award-winning writer Ernest Kinoy (1925-2014) started his career at NBC Radio and then moved to NBC Television in the 1950s. Kinoy is best known for his work in co-writing the miniseries *Roots* (1977) with William Blinn.]

MG: Would they turn into programs, television shows?

CH: They might have turned into a proposal for a show. Science fiction was sort of just on the cusp then. That's really after my time.

MG: How did you meet your husband?

CH: My mother and I took a trip to Hawaii and met a couple from Washington, who invited me down and arranged a blind date with Sid's roommate. He was living in a house on P Street with a bunch of other people and working at that time. Sid worked for the Defense Department for the most part. I'm going back to the house. Sid was playing the piano. I thought he was fantastic. Actually, he played the piano very badly, but he was concert master of the MIT orchestra. He played the violin nicely. I went back to New York, where I lived with friends in a group house. Sid and his friends used to drive up in a convertible. They would take us, three or four people, out in the convertible, and we would ride around New York City. I was living in the Village [Greenwich Village] then, which was such a peaceful, pleasant place. The only murder that had occurred there made quite a splash, but it was personal. It wasn't over theft. It wasn't violent. Somebody got mad at their partner or something, and that's it. I married Sid in 1955 in Stratford, Connecticut, and neither my parents nor Sid's parents [approved of the marriage]. They did not want him to marry a non-Jew, and my family did not want me to marry a Jewish person. I drove up with my family, and Sid's family came down. There was much bantering afterward at the Red Roof, whatever it was, restaurant, where we had a meal after we were married by a justice of the peace there. Three close friends of mine, from N.Y.C., and Sid's best man, that was it.

MG: Well, tell me a little bit more about Sid and his background, his family.

CH: Okay, Russian and German, Jewish background. His mother spoke both those languages. His father was a pharmacist and was in the first dental class at Harvard, graduated. They owned one or two pharmacies in Boston, Hirshon Drug. They were in a brownstone. They had the second floor, and it was a long apartment with a porch on the back. Elias, Sid's father, had the dental chair center in the living room, where he saw his patients. Sid has a sister, who I'm in touch with. She's wonderful, and his brother, who has died, Joe. His mother and father died. Boy, Molly, I have trouble remembering when people died.

MG: That is okay. Did you then settle in D.C. after you were married?

CH: [Yes]. Sid was working in D.C. We first lived in an apartment near Dumbarton Oaks, and Harold was born while we were in that apartment. Then, Helen was born fifteen days after we moved into this house, which we bought in '57.

MG: Tell me a little bit more about family life down here and things you would do as a family.

CH: Well, we had Hardy School two blocks away, a public school, wonderful. All three kids could walk to school. That was a big deal in the neighborhood, and [there were] many children growing up in the neighborhood, [which had] nice neighbors, quiet, churches, libraries, a supermarket, small businesses, a few restaurants, very little traffic, the basics. As time went on, airplanes coming down are supposed to follow the river, the Potomac River, and they don't. They come right over houses. They don't bother me, I'm indoors, but if we were outside, you'd be drowned out. There were far more before than are coming now. They've re-routed. They come in the straightest line they can get to National. Dulles didn't exist then.

MG: What did Sid do for the Department of Defense?

CH: He was an engineer concerned with contracts for reliability, maintenance and design. As an engineer, he will have looked into the specs [specifications] of things. He was involved in inertial navigation and putting that in airplanes, taking it from the military and putting it into civilian use. We attended a lot of meetings for aviation. During the war [World War II] in the Pacific, he had gone on missions with the PT boats that he didn't have to go on, and he was an honorary member of the PT Boat Society. They were located around Mindanao [in the Philippines] in the Pacific. He was on a ship, the *Verona*, a fuel supply ship, which carried fuel for other ships. If they had been blown up, [there] would've been no trace. He remembers the nights that were so dark it was like a carpet of darkness in the ocean. They were swimming off the boat until a fellow caught a piranha. [Editor's Note: The PT boat was a motor torpedo boat that was used by the U.S. Navy during World War II for laying mines, reconnaissance and recovering downed aviators.]

RH: A piranha.

CH: Anyhow, I have a photo, and I think it's right up there, of this sailor with a razor-toothed fish. After that, they didn't swim in the ocean anymore. [laughter] The island that I think they went ashore to take from the Japanese at one point was Mindanao. They were exploring caves, and Sid brought back a Japanese handbook from those caves, which I have. I have a lot of photos of his war experience in the Pacific. His brother and he met in the Pacific Ocean when the ships pulled up alongside each other and enabled Joe and Sid to get together.

MG: Living in D.C., were you an eyewitness to the different movements and moments in time? I am thinking about the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War protests.

CH: Yes, in a way, because they marched on MacArthur Boulevard. It was violent change. We felt it deeply, the assassination of John Kennedy and Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, my God, one felt these things so deeply. I remember being in a drug store and seeing John Kennedy's assassination on the TV and tears running down my face and the cashier not knowing what was the matter with me, but I was sobbing. Anybody can be affected anywhere at any time. [Editor's Note: On November 22, 1963, President John F. Kennedy was shot and killed while traveling by motorcade through Dealey Plaza in Dallas, Texas.]

Yes, the protests, destruction, conflict of the marches in Washington. It's like [Muhammad] Ali dying and being sick all those years from the pummeling he took, but he, with Malcolm X, doing much to bring about the revolution we are now experiencing. [Editor's Note: Malcolm X was a civil rights leader and advocate of Black Nationalism. He was assassinated in New York on February 21, 1965. His teachings influenced the formation of the black power movement, which challenged the mainstream civil rights movement and its emphasis on nonviolent civil disobedience.] Race relations are not good. Serving on jury duty with maybe one or two other white people and the rest African American, and they will refer to us as the white devil. My

daughter has a couple of Asian friends, one Japanese, one Chinese, and we were sitting here having a meal together. I said something about the imperfection of Americans, and she said, "Boy, you can say that again." We feel our mistakes deeply. Ali refusing to go to Vietnam and being deprived of competition and his having been to the Olympics and celebrated and all this taken from him for several years when he was not allowed to fight. It's on the radio today and last night. People are foolish. We're all much the same. Human nature has a common bond. [Editor's Note: Muhammad Ali died on June 3, 2016, the day before this interview took place. Born Cassius Marcellus Clay, Jr. on January 14, 1942, he converted to Islam and changed his name in 1964. Ali won a gold medal at the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome, and he became the heavyweight boxing champion in 1964. On April 28, 1967, Ali refused to be inducted into the Army during the Vietnam War. After being convicted of draft evasion, Ali was sentenced to prison, fined, and banned from boxing for three years. In 1971, the Supreme Court overturned Ali's conviction. Ali went on to reclaim the heavyweight title several more times before retiring in the early 1980s. In 1984, Ali announced that he had Parkinson's disease.]

MG: I meant to ask you when you talked about (Higa?) and (Ura?) in the house, where were they interned?

CH: I don't know where they were interned. One of Helen's first bosses in I believe it was the State Department had been interned out west. This is not answering your question. She set up a library and helped form a school, made an entire community out of their internment place. (Higa?) and (Ura?) probably had Japanese families I knew nothing of, I didn't know whether they lived in the castle or house or anything about them, but all of a sudden they're gone. Somebody had come in and taken them.

MG: Took them from Kip's Castle?

CH: [Yes].

MG: To an internment camp?

CH: Yes. They were Japanese. Now, what my grandparents did or could have done, I have no idea, but the shock of having been attacked at Pearl Harbor was huge, even though we should've known better. We had every reason to expect it.

MG: They never came back to the castle.

CH: No. At that point, it was about the time Grandma and Grandpa will have died, soon after 1940-1941, within two or three years, and Mother's family also. Dad will have continued to work at 42 Broadway until he turned it over to Granville Conway. Granville had a son with his name. I know nothing more of that company. I've not followed up or kept in touch, but I went abroad with Captain Conway and his wife Carolyn and their two daughters Barbara and Mary Ellen. Granville was going abroad to Italy and various places on business. Mother had been

very ill, and I had been taking care of her. Dad wanted to give me a break, so I had this wonderful trip to Europe. I've been very fortunate and very privileged.

MG: Well, tell me about some of your trips to Maine, bringing your family up there.

CH: Sid discovered Ogunquit. I don't know when he discovered it exactly but certainly before we met. He had been vacationing up there. Sid was not an artist, but it was an art colony. Interestingly, a friend's father, a dear friend in the neighborhood, whose daughter was a good friend of Helen's, is, her father was artistic and he had painted up in Ogunquit. It was an art colony.

MG: Yes, I noticed the Winslow Homer book you have over there, and he painted a lot in that area.

CH: [Yes], beautiful, and New Hampshire right there. Sid used to stay at McDougal's Surfside, which was on the beach. After the McDougal's, another family took it over, and it was a bunch of wooden buildings leaning slightly away from the wind. We just spent summers there, drove up, stayed at his family's in Boston, saw his parents and his sister and brother, and onto Ogunquit, a long drive, kids knitting on the way and [listening to the] radio. The beach there is about six miles long, pure white sand, rocky coastline, fantastic air. When you get above New York and start breathing New England air, oh, and then when you get into Maine, oh. We would just open the windows and be thrilled. Russ has taken the boys up there, his boys, and we've vacationed together up there with his family and Helen. Harold and Lois too. Ogunquit has grown up hugely, and the traffic going through. The tides are rather dangerous, and the beaches are now crowded. We could walk up to Wells, and there were wonderful eating places. [It was] such a pleasure, and appetites increase the minute you get above New York. [laughter]

MG: Well, tell me a little bit about how your children's lives have unfolded and where they have ended up.

CH: The boys went to St. John's College H.S. Helen went to Georgetown Visitation. After that, Helen has worked in the State Department, purchasing and acquisitions. Russ has worked construction for a while, hands on, and has his own companies. Harold is a teacher in the Gloucester area, tutors. They have a very old house up there and a very good life.

MG: Good. Well, is there anything I have forgotten to ask you about or anything I overlooked?

CH: No, no, dear.

MG: Was there anything we missed from this pile of articles and photographs, or is this something I can scan?

CH: Gee, Molly, I don't know, dear. Russ will have done this.

MG: Okay.

CH: This is an ad for the castle.

MG: Wow.

CH: It's from this magazine.

MG: *The New York Times Magazine*.

CH: [Yes].

MG: What is the date there?

CH: The date is August 12, 2001.

MG: That must have been when the previous law firm, Schwartz, Tobia, Stanziale, owned it.

CH: Yes, which I know nothing about.

MG: They had it until 2007.

CH: Okay. This is the sunroom here. It's a very good picture of the castle.

MG: I think what happened, according to my notes, was that the law firm, not Purvis, but the law firm that was there in the 1980s and 1990s and 2000s, they wanted to develop the area, but they ran into a number of problems.

CH: Condominiums.

MG: Yes.

CH: They wanted to put [in condominiums]. Those haven't happened, is that correct?

MG: That is correct.

CH: Isn't that a blessing?

MG: Yes. I think the town intervened, and they finally got the funds to purchase it.

CH: This is on a visit to Norway, and Mother took Sandy, who calls herself Alma now. Mom was invited to christen a ship.

MG: How did she get that honor?

CH: Well, because Dad was representing Norwegian lines and will have been consigning cargo and passengers for their ships. This is Edgemont School, and that would've been kindergarten and first and second grade, and somebody who was a neighbor on Highland Avenue. These two were twins. That's just that picture.

MG: What about the Highland Avenue house?

CH: Well, from our family, I think it was the Englands.

MG: Oh, right.

CH: Okay. This is my sister Nan, who died in 2000. Sid and I visited her not long before she died. She did not have any children of her own but adopted a daughter, Gay. My sister Carla at her home in Ottawa.

RH: Who's that?

CH: Carla and her home.

RH: Looks a little younger.

CH: Okay. This is my sister Nan at Edgemont School.

MG: Wow.

CH: This is an article. It's just so great that that is happening. Here is '69.

RH: That's a nice picture.

CH: Here are two of Dad's companies being sold, Southwood Exploration and Santa Fe Corporation, and an offer to purchase common stock. Anyhow, I read this, but I can't tell you what it says. This was the sale of two companies that Uncle Bob was running.

MG: Right.

CH: This was an audit of the companies. So, those were two western companies and then Cosmopolitan Shipping.

MG: Right, right.

CH: You developed these, Russ, which are terrific photos.

MG: Yes, if there are copies of anything, I would love to look over them.

RH: What I can do is scan them.

MG: That would be great.

RH: And then send them to you. Who's this?

CH: My mother on her wedding day.

MG: That is an incredible picture.

RH: That's a hell of a picture.

CH: Isn't it?

RH: Yes, it's amazing.

MG: She must be standing on something.

RH: That's amazing.

CH: Yes, and the headdress.

MG: It is beautiful.

CH: Yes. Dad and his office at 42 Broadway. The office was rather large, as I remember it. He had an office fellow who was good and a wonderful secretary. It was just the three of them.

RH: Beautiful photos.

CH: Yes, Dad, a portrait, young man and later. This is how I remember him. Mac Ingram was Catherine McGinnis Ingram.

MG: Even this would be helpful information in case there are some folks we can track down to also interview if they are interested.

CH: Carla's daughter in Florida is very bitter about her separation from the family and will give you an earful, which would not be good.

MG: Okay, I will not go down there.

CH: Alma got in touch with Russ through a friend's computer. She's had a wonderful marriage to Ben (Coleman?), who died about a year ago. Alma herself is angry and bitter and has visited me once or twice. I've been very welcoming, and we talk on the phone. [We] haven't talked for



about a month. She knows I was going to talk to you and that the castle is being put in public domain. She is one angry woman because of Carla's life, that she was not included in Carla's life by Carla and her husband. This is the front door.

MG: Okay.

CH: Yes, the glass. This was the first letter a year ago or so. I didn't answer it, Molly.

MG: That is okay.

CH: Because I still feel I don't have that much to say. It was a privileged and pleasant growing up. I took it for granted. If you don't know anything else, you do take it for granted.

MG: Well, I think whatever environment you grow up in you think is the environment that exists.

CH: That's it, right.

MG: You have a hard time thinking around that.

CH: Right. It was the films that brought me to [see the rest of the world], seeing these newsreels, these newscasts, and listening to the radio.

MG: When did you realize this was kind of a unique way to have grown up?

CH: I'm not sure I ever did, because growing up is much about friends and the things you do and then you go home and you have meals with your family. I never really gave it much thought, and nobody else did either. Nancy's best friend lived on the street, the next street over. We did things. Bicycling was the big deal. Picnics were the big deal. We put on little shows in church. My closest friend was Presbyterian and three of us, we'd put on these little [shows]. When the church group had a show, we'd be up there singing and dancing. It was that kind of thing. It was action. Then, we'd go home to family. This was from this gal whose mother is a realtor, and I didn't answer her letter because she mentions a guy who I really hated. [laughter] Well, I didn't hate him, but I didn't like him and I didn't date him or anything. Life has so many coincidences. Anyhow, he's telling her that he thought I had lived at the castle. I didn't. This is Dad's letter about the photo of Grandpa at the Bell Ranch.

MG: Right.

CH: Which I think is really kind of thrilling.

RH: I can make a scan over here, Connie, and I can just get all this digitized.

CH: Okay, that's very nice of you, Russ.

MG: Yes, that would be a huge help, but only if you have the time for it.

CH: It's something he does.

RH: It's good, because some of these we don't have digital.

MG: Yes. Is there anything I am missing? Russ, did you have any questions that I neglected to ask?

RH: No, I think that's a lot of good stuff.

MG: Well, if you think of anything, just jot it down, and one of the next times I come back here, we can connect again. If I listen back to the tape and realize there were a few things I forgot to ask, we can be in touch.

CH: So many worlds here in this country.

MG: Yes.

CH: So many different ways of living and lifestyles and layers.

MG: Well, it has been such a treat to hear about your life and all the layers it had. I will turn this off and we can talk a little bit more, but thank you for all the time you spent with me. This has really been an enormous treat, and I have learned so much.

CH: Well, it's Russ' doing, and I appreciate his doing it.

MG: Me, too. Thank you.

CH: Thank you.

-----END OF INTERVIEW-----

Transcribed by Mohammad Athar 8/2/16  
Reviewed by Kathryn Tracy Rizzi 2/28/18  
Reviewed by Connie Hirshon 9/9/2019