

Speaker: Jeff Milroy
Interviewed by Matthew Gunby and Linda Hough
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MG: We do have some questions if they end up being helpful, if not, we're happy to say as little as possible. No one really has any interest in our perspective; we weren't there.

JM: Questions are good.

MG: We'll just start with a very basic one: What are your memories with Meredith's 200th celebration?

JM: I don't know if I was talking to Linda or if I saw something on one of your e-mails about the Memories of the Bicentennial fifty years ago. I would say my specific memories of that day are – the old expression – slim to none. I remember being there. I don't know if I remember being there because I saw my picture in the paper 1969 when the time capsule was being buried. I started coming to Meredith when I was an infant in 1960 and was there every summer through 2002 when we sold our property. So, anything that was going on in Meredith – we did and we were involved in. Based on that, I knew we were here for the parade.

I don't remember anything too much specifically about the parade. I can look around town and see – remember where certain buildings were. When they showed the film down at the time capsule opening of the parade, every time a building would popped up like Grad's or Samaha's or the Diner or some other places everybody would go 'Ooh!' I said, 'I remember that! I remember that.' So, I remember the buildings that were here in 1968, but I don't remember too much about the actual parade.

LH: It's okay because we're also getting a general overview of what Meredith was like in the '60s and late '60s so that would be helpful as well if you have any recollections.

JM: Well, it's nice to see that shopping was downtown and there was actually an article written up my way in Lebanon in the Valley News recently about how there just seems to be a whole lot of nostalgia and they did a whole article on that – when shopping was downtown. They showed pictures of old downtown Lebanon and how everybody would come down before the big stores – of course, Meredith hasn't really been hit with all that – the big stores.

My favorite stores in Meredith, were food shopping and there were lots of places to go. I remember the Sundry Shop, which was down the road, and I don't know what it is now. It's an auto parts place or something like that. Mr. True – I think there's a True still in town. Isn't he the police chief? Keith? Ok. I remember him when he was this tall and a little skinny kid and his grandfather was running the store. Everything I call Pre-Cumberland Farms, because that was the first chain that everybody 'no, no, no, we don't want that.' Well, it finally came in.

I heard a couple of women talking at the parade this year; somebody mentioned they were sad that Week's General Store isn't there anymore. That's on Water Street across from where the Newspaper is. I'm sure you know where all these places are; people have been telling you for years. There may be pictures of it.

We used to go to the Sundry Shop, Week's General Store, it was a lot of fun. I'm originally from East Providence, Rhode Island and if you go there today, it looks the same now as it did fifty years ago – nothing but houses and tenement houses and there's no room to do anything. There's no character, there's no charm to it. That's what I always like about Meredith, New Hampshire. Small places that were all anybody needed. Isobel's Market was down on Main Street. I think that's where there's a little second hand antique shop now.

What else was there? Well, there was the First National. There's something in there now – a glass place. The A&P Market down on the corner. We used to go shopping at. That was kind of what I enjoyed. Just the downtown aspect to it.

Shopping in town, a lot of neat looking places, I never personally went to the diner, but I'm sure my parents and grandparents went to the diner. I was sad to see that go just because diners are neat. As I got older, living in Rhode Island and New England, diners are really popular. So, It's sad to see a diner go. We got George's now so that more than makes up for it.

MG: Do you remember anything about the time capsule burial in 1969?

JM: Well, I do remember being there for that and just being fascinated by that whole thing. Even realizing at that age – nine years old, nine and a half years old – that I stood a decent chance at being here for the fifty year one and what do you know, I made the fifty year one. It kind of snuck up on me too because I had that piece of paper that I think was probably at my parents' house in Rhode Island that we cleaned out in 2003. So, I'm glad I was able to come for that. My brother seems to remember, because nobody knew why all the wooden nickels were in there. I think maybe, my brother was telling you when we were at the opening that he remembered they were handing them out to the kids to let the kids have something to throw in there. I don't personally remember that – I'm sure I had one and threw it in there. But, that's it for that.

LH: How did you notice that you were in the news article for the 1969 time capsule?

JM: I thought that I had kept it for fifty years and I'm thinking to myself – that can't be – because, I moved a lot when I was younger and I don't remember moving much other than a box of clothes. So, I'm guessing that my parents saved it at their house in Rhode Island and when I was responsible for cleaning out the house after my mother passed away and my dad moved into assisted living, that somehow that came to light again. It must have been packed pretty well in between something because it held up pretty well. I had had that newspaper for a while and looking forward to that 2018 thing. Maybe say I found in 2002-2003 and I've kept it in my box of special papers and a lot of it's Meredith stuff. I just remember looking at it and I don't think I

noticed that we were in that picture initially, because I don't remember anybody my parents saying, 'Oh look, you boys are in the picture.' Then I realized that I was in the picture my brother and my father. That's when I brought it to Brandon over at the paper, then came over here, and met with Erin [Apostolos], so I thought that was neat. That there's actually a picture of us standing there watching the time capsule be buried. That's what they used when they had the little get together – up here, on the table, it had a little photograph and that was a scanned copy of mine because the Meredith News didn't have a copy of it anymore. Maybe in microfilm, but I don't think anybody realized that they still had it or even stopped to look for it. I felt kind of like I helped participate somehow just to have the picture and I was showing it to everybody I could show, but I didn't want too many people handling it. That thing's pretty old; it looks like the Declaration of Independence. [Laughter]. So, that was kind of fun.

MG: Do you remember, either from your own recollections or from talking about it later, any of the children's' activities that happened during the 200th to celebrate the Bicentennial? I know there was a separate Children's Parade, I think there was that clown – so, different children's' activities. Do you remember any of those?

JM: No, nothing specifically, like I said being here for so many summers it all just kind of ran into itself. We had kind of our family routine of all the places we went and did. Played a lot of miniature golf. As far as the Bicentennial in particular or any specific events, they may be in here somewhere [Points to his head], but I can't recall them now. I'm confident of that or semi-confident of that because a number of years ago a friend of mine came up to visit me up in Northfield for motorcycle week and we went to the Mulligan's restaurant and we were waiting for a table. We were sitting in the bar and they had a bunch of trivia games to keep people occupied while you're waiting to get called into order, and there was one of these card games that had a lot of English – like the subject of English, like in school – questions related to that. My friend just to kill time started asking me all these questions. I always say math was my strong suite and English wasn't – I can show you my report cards to justify that [laughter]. He was asking me all these questions and I knew all the answers. I was shocked that I knew all the answers. He was too, but I was even more so. Things can be in your memory and it takes something to bring them out. Those questions happened to bring out all the answers I had to those English questions that I would have bet any amount of money that I didn't know the answers to, but as far as this one goes I can't pull anything out that I remembered for that Bicentennial

LH: Do you remember seeing any of the outfits or the costumes? A lot of the people dressed up that year.

JM: One thing I remember from the Bicentennial – the word costumes brings out an answer – there was some film, I don't know if it was something Bob Montana made or was involved in, but it was a black and white film but they showed it around town. We saw it up at the high school. It was about – they might still have it around if they've transferred it to something – and

it was kind of a comedy. It was actually hilarious. [It was] about the early days of Meredith and they showed people – they filmed it up over on Barnard Ridge Road or part of it and part of where the old the Chase House used to be. Not the restaurant but the Chase property. You know where the condos are? Over just at the beginning of Pleasant Street. The original Chase House was sitting in that location. It's moved up by the road now. They filmed that in a couple of locations. It was about the early settlers in Meredith and they kind of dressed like colonial troops. That was funny. I think that had to do with the Bicentennial and I don't know if in that same film there was something to do with the Hermit of Meredith Hill. They kind of had a recreation of that.

After that, we'd go up to the property and look around for the cellar hole. I don't know if that was Meredith's Bicentennial or if that was the country's Bicentennial. That might have been 1976. That's the only kind of specific event that I can remember.

I wonder if that was 1976. Because you know all the festivities for that.

LH: I believe you're referring to Bob Montana's *The First 200 of Meredith*.

JM: Was that filmed in '68?

LH: Yep.

JM: That was. When they kind of march into the field and the guy is looking through the surveyor glass and all of a sudden the colonial guy turns into an Indian? Ok good. See? A little something.

MG: We have copies of that at the library.

JM: And that was funny. Some friends of mine were there and my best friend Lawrence from down in Rhode Island, his family was coming back from Freedom, New Hampshire and they used to stop in at our place in Meredith Neck Rd for a little visit, and what he thought was funny and this was I filmed down at the Chase Property. Two guys – the old film it's really fast like the Keystone Cops – and two guys had gotten in a fist fight and rolled down a hill. One guy got up and there was a dog there and after getting into the fight he still had time to pat the dog before he staggered away. My friend thought that that was hilarious. And it is, kind of, and he was laughing, but that's it. I wish I could pull more out. If someone triggers me with a keyword or something all of a sudden, the whole thing may come back to me. It may come back to me tonight while I'm sleeping. I'll have to come back and do a part two. Yeah, I can't really pull out a whole lot of things specifically either from the day of the parade or that summer because like I said we kind of did everything there was to do.

MG: Can you describe your typical summer vacation in Meredith around this time period?

JM: Well, that I can do. How much time you got? Summer started for our family in Meredith in

the 1930s. My grandfather Arthur Preston Roffee Jr. and his wife would come up from Providence in the 1920s to Newfound Lake in New Hampton. I'm assuming that was on weekends and maybe the two week factory shut down because he used to be an accountant for General Electric. I think, back in those days, they did that. They used to vacation in cabins. Now, back then, it was pretty much all cabins wherever you went and maybe a motel was considered like the monster hotels you see today.

In the 1930s, somehow, whether it was his doing or a friends doing, or whatever the reason, they came over to Meredith in the 1930s and started staying in Cygnet Cabins. If you go down Pleasant Street at the beginning of Meredith Neck Road, just before you get to Wagon Wheel Trail, you arrive at Cygnet Shores – that used to be all little white cabins. They used to be – I think I counted seven from the beginning of Pleasant Street, up. I was trying to remember the names the other day; I think the first one was Aqua Terrace, that beautiful Victorian house. Then there was Stella Rae and Cozy Pine and next to our place was Crestview Motel it became like Motor Lodge. A lot of people can remember Old Neck Motor Lodge and then Cygnet.

Of course, I started coming up, my mother would come up with her parents, and then she got married and they started. They bought – my grandfather bought a place in 1949 and my parents bought it from him in 1959. I was born in '59 and adopted in '60. So, I'm assuming they probably would have brought me up in 1960. So, pretty much every summer from then we would come up Memorial Day and come up for the three day weekend. My parents had one thing figured out, though, that a lot of people didn't. They waited until eight or nine o'clock at night to leave Providence, Rhode Island to go up 95, 128, and Route 3 -- This is even before Route 93 – and come up through Nashua, Manchester, and the like. Those trips – our trips – were three hours and our grandfather's trips back in the '20s and '30s were six to six and a half hours. That's pretty dedicated, to make a six or six and a half hour ride to come up to Meredith for the weekend. So, that means they really loved it here. There was a lot of things to love.

So, we would take our rides up and we would come up for the weekend. Then we would stay up for the summer – my grandfather, my mother, and my brother and I. My father, unfortunately, got stuck staying in Rhode Island in the hot summers and he'd come up in the weekends. Again, that's pretty dedicated too, to work all week and drive up and he would come up in Friday afternoon traffic and he would go back Sunday in the traffic. So, that was kind of the general plan.

We'd go up to Leavitt Beach during the day, and I think that's in Meredith even though it seems like it's in Center Harbor. Going over towards that way – you know where Leavitt Beach is? So, we'd spend our days there and we'd meet some of the other summer folks there. Oddly enough, one of those people was at the time capsule opening and I didn't recognize them. We were out back waiting for them to open up the time capsule. Well, put the time capsule in the truck. This really tall guy was standing next to me, and I said 'Were you here when they buried it?' and he says 'Yeah, I was. My name is Andy Minster.' I said, 'Minster, my god!' So, it was a family

from Massachusetts, I thought they were from Connecticut, but that was, you know, all this time I forget. Well, he and his mother and his brother Doug used to be part of the crew at Leavitt Beach. Then there was a family called the Carters and they came from Troy, New York and they were there every day. So, that was kind of our day. Have lunch there, spend the day there, watch the Mount Washington go down to Center Harbor and come back – that was kind of a ritual – sitting there waiting for it, and it was a ways off but you just had to watch the boat the entire horizon.

And we'd go back to our house, it was a little camp. It was a cabin down by the lake; a one-room cabin like Abe Lincoln lived in, and a garage up by the road. Originally, there had been a large house down by the water and a woman had used it as a summer home. One winter it burned to the ground. She was so distraught but the loss, that she put the property up for sale in 1948 or 1949. That's when my grandfather, who was at Cygnet Cabins, noticed that a little lot was available and the lot next to it where the Crestview Motel was eventually built that turned into Olmec was available. My grandfather bought that piece of land on Lake Winnepesaukee in 1949 for \$500. He would have bought the lot next to it for an additional \$500, but he didn't have the money. That's how we started in Meredith.

We did all the things. We did the Sophie C, the Doris E., and the Mount Washington, and the Cog Railway. My parents made sure we went to every single – I'll call them tourist traps – but, Santa's Village, Six Gun City, and Story Land. Some of those places – God help them – are still there and thriving. I don't know if Six Gun City is around anymore.

We did a lot of cookouts. It was mostly outside because there wasn't very much room inside. We were right on the lake, so, you spent summer time in the lake and you're up by the campfire. We did a lot hiking when we were younger. We started the four thousand-footer club when we got a little older and I probably did, from the time of age 15, I might have done sixteen of them as well as some of the smaller ones. You start at Red Hill, then you do Monadnock, then you work your way up. Eventually, my mother -- who was five feet tall weighed about 102 pounds -- and my brother did all of them. That's pretty impressive. How many four thousand footers are there? Forty? Forty-three, forty-six, something like that. So, we did a lot of hiking in the area. Castle in the Clouds, I think, was one of the places we went. We went everywhere. Kona Mansion [Decipher] Inn in Moultonborough, which is a pretty neat place.

We just tried to have as much fun as possible. Most of it involved swimming. [Laughter].

LH: Do you remember any water events? Special water events? I know there was a water ski event that year. I know there was a water ski event that year I don't know if you ended up seeing that.

JM: [Sighs] Maybe years ago, I think they used to have power boat races out on the bay. They did that a while back. I don't know how often they did that, but that definitely sounds like a sixties thing. You know, once and a while, I think one time there was a big deal the Mount

Washington came into town and they had a band concert. That was before it was on the regular route. We did some train rides. North Conway and that's something I still do. [Laughter] I still do trains.

MG: Were there any other families in Meredith that you became really close with during this time period? I know you mentioned a couple of people that you met at the 250th celebration.

JM: I met one woman there who was – it's funny, her name is Wendy Piper and I met her at the Library. I was showing her the picture and I said, 'Well I live in Enfield now.' She goes, 'Oh, I live in Enfield!' She's been over there for fourteen years. I didn't know her when she lived in town. There were a few families that we became familiar with some or all of the family because there were kids our age. We did a lot of things down at Prescott Park there – baseball, softball, basketball, tennis, and then games.

So, there's a local family by the name of Skidds and I'm sure they're still around. As a matter of fact, they were part of the Leavitt Beach contingent too. Mrs. Skidds – the husband was working, I think he was a police officer at the time. I was always trying to remember the whole Skids family name. There was Johnny, Ronnie, Donnie – twins, Deborah, Sandy, Michael. There was maybe more after that. It was a big family. We knew them from over at the beach and down at the games, you know, at the park there. Another local family. Well, I became friends with Jim Guyer and his friend Mark Benoit. We used to play basketball. This was when I was a little older. You know, a teenager. Used to play a lot of basketball down at the Prescott Park. I think Jim still probably lives on Plymouth Street. I haven't stopped by. Every time I go by there, I look up at the house, I'm looking for somebody, and I just never see him. But, it's been a long time.

Who else did we know in town? Well, we knew Mr. True down at the sundae shop and met both of his boys at the time. Again, Keith, who is now police officer or chief, when he was just a little tiny kid. I can't remember the older brother's name. Who else we'd know? Well, there was the Hardings. Steve Harding and his brother – they were part of the baseball group down at the park. I don't know if there are any Hardings that are around here. Do those names ring a bell to you? Skidds, Harding, Guyer.

LH: I know True.

JM: True, ok. Do you know what Keith's older brother's name is? There were probably more than two of them because large families seemed to be, well, the thing up here. Where I'm from, down in the suburbs of Rhode Island, it's you know. Well, it's not uncommon, my friend's family had four, but it's usually, you know, 'a boy and a girl and a dog and a cat and a picket fence.' They make fun of that because there's some truth to that. A few people.

My parents knew quite a few people up here because we used to go to Trinity Church up on the hill as you go to the high school. So, they became friends with a lot of summer folks. Jim Hughes, as a matter of fact, they were pretty chummy with him. I didn't even know he was in the

picture for the 50th until I saw a copy of the newspaper and he was standing at the end. Jim Hughes! I would have gone over and said hi, but I didn't even recognize him. I tell you something, I don't know how old he is, but he still looks good for his age. I don't know if Charlie Chatternin [check] is still alive – if he is, he's very old – but he was one of the church people up at Trinity and they were pretty chummy with him too.

They actually started going to Trinity Church when it was in – I don't really know if it's a masonic hall now – it's a big building. It's almost across the street from here [the Meredith Public Library]. One of these was a masonic hall at one time; I think Trinity Church had its origins there. So they started going to church there when it was right here on main street. That's pretty much my knowledge of local people.

When I got older, I worked at the Inter-Lakes Dairy Bar and Grill, which is on the corner of [Routes] 3 and 25. Sadly, that whole building looks like it's ready to be taken out of there. I worked at Hart's Restaurant for three years, but most of the people that worked up there that were waitressing and doing bussing, or stuff like that, they were all summer people. You know, some of the local people, you know, even old Mr. Hart's been gone a while. What a show that guy ran up there. They're nowhere near as busy as they used to be. I worked up there for three summers. A Saturday night: they filled the place! They had a seating capacity of I think it was six hundred. They'd have a waiting line out the door for three, four, five hours on a Saturday. They could process people through there. So, I worked there for three summers. That would have been seventy-seven, seventy-eight, seventy-nine and then after I got out of college in eighty-two I stayed in Rhode Island and started working down there.

It wasn't until eighty-six that I came back up here and quite by accident, I got a job at the IGA. I went to Bede Laundry [check] to do laundry, I was just up visiting my folks. I don't know what the problem with that laundry mat was – I guess they're not there anymore – but only about seventy-five percent of the washers and driers would work and one or two of both change machines would never work. The soda machine would only work half the time and the candy machine only worked half the time and that was like that for decades. So, I wanted a coke and the soda machine was broken and I walked across the street to the IGA to get a can of coke. They had a big sign on the door: 'Now Hiring.' I inquired about it and stayed there for that summer in eighty-six and came back eighty-seven through ninety and when I moved back to Rhode Island stayed in the grocery business for another six years. I'm just wondering, what would have happened to my life had that soda machine in the laundry mat been working? Because, I'll tell you what would have happened: I would have gotten my soda, done my laundry, gone back to my parents' house for the next couple days, and went back to Rhode Island. So, it's weird how one little thing can maybe alter your life in ways you just go down a different path.

I don't regret any time I had at the IGA, it was fun. It was a little grocery store, but it's hard, you know. That was after Sundry Shoppe was gone, Weekes was gone, Isobel's was gone. The only other market in town was Heath's which became October Farm Market. They stayed on for a

while but Jackson Star when they came up to the plaza up here which is now the Job Lot – that put the IGA out. It happens in every business. I just thought that was interesting. I still to this day wonder what would have happened if that soda machine would have been working.

See, the story followed the same path that my career did. It just went like that. [Laughter]

MG: I think you've gone into a little bit of this which the character of downtown, but what are some of the biggest changes that you've seen in Meredith since 1968?

JM: The biggest changes? Huh. Well, I remember when the McDonald's issue came up. I think that was probably the second chain, because Cumberland Farms had come in. I don't remember how Cumberland Farms came in. There wasn't the big – I don't remember a big to-do or uproar about Cumberland Farms coming in, but I remember a big uproar about McDonald's wanting to set down. The people said, 'No, we don't want that here, it's gonna ruin the whole character of the town and it's going to start on top of that more of a domino effect.' Now all of a sudden you get McDonald's then why can't you get it looking like Burger Alley in Laconia type of thing where it's nothing but just chains and fast food places.

The main street, what's kind of sad, and I noticed this after the parade I walked around. I noticed that when I lived up here in the late eighties, but on main street there just seemed to be such a huge turnover of places. The places that were anchors for decades, now new places come in, a year or two they're gone. Somebody always seems to come in right after them, but then a year or two they're gone. Now, I'm looking at six seven eight empty places. I'm thinking to myself, 'what's gonna go in there? What could go in there? Who would want to go in there?' Because if it's retail, primarily, you're dealing with that what [decipher name] calls the '90 days of summer'. If you're lucky, you're going to make some money over that ninety-day period, but are you going to make enough to cover your expenses for your family, for your home, for your business?

What I see in other towns, and I see a little bit in Meredith, is that, you see it in a lot of communities, small towns, is that that main strip – if it's not like Concord or any community that had the foresight or the luck to have a wide long main street – those narrow streets with no parking, there just doesn't seem to be much hope for them. I thought that the future of little shops on main street – cause upstairs is residential – is to just turn your downstairs into residential. Because don't you think it's sad that there's just empty places? You feel bad for people that probably put a lot of money into. I know two things, Not only in Meredith, but I've seen in other communities – the two businesses you don't want to go into. I think this applies not only to small areas but big areas. A book store and a bakery. If any of your friends think opening your own bookstore or a bakery is a good idea, they better have a lot of cash on hand or really good plan. Hopefully they don't borrow a lot of money.

Restaurants are tough too. I don't know, it's just sad to see empty places on any main street.

You had Grad's, Samaha's – occasionally we'd go down to Sweaterville in Laconia. This was probably even before Ames and Zayres. It's funny, I used to say to people, I used to just joke to people about when I lived up here – and I think Grad's and Samaha's had, I forget what years they went out, I don't know if they were still going in the late eighties, but it's like how far do you have to drive to buy underwear? It's just like the basic necessities. There's plenty of food. There's always plenty of food – you had a lot of farms, a lot of farm stands, we used to do that and pick our own corn and go to places where there was fresh corn. So, access to food didn't seem like an issue, but access to – your lumber yard you had Prescott Lumber, now you got Lavalee's down there it looks like they did a nice job with that. I just find that the main streets that are vacant are sad. If you fill it up with tattoo parlors and nail shops – those are the first two that usually go in – oddly enough, tattoo parlors and the nail shops that are run by some of the Asians and I'm not sure which particular groups of Asians seem to specialize in nails – but those two places seem to do well. It seems like a sad compromise that all the beautiful shops they used to have on main street, all you can put in there are tattoo shops. That's maybe evolution. I read a book a while ago, called *Metropolitan Corridor* and it describes rural, suburban, and urban evolution as transportation modes changed. So, I guess it's going to happen, everybody wants something to stay the same. I'd love to go down to a Sundries shop or I'd love to go to Week's, but now you go to Hannaford and actually the Hannaford's really nice you got here now. I went in there and said, 'Boy, that's really nice.' That's it. You can't wave a magic wand. Can't make the trains come back to run daily service either. It's nice you still have trains running back and forth, but it's just touristy stuff.

LH: You ended up answering a lot of our questions.

JM: Well, I'm just going with the flow here. I've been telling people these stories of Meredith for years just to my friends. It was so important to me, as a child, to be here. I tell you, I would look forward to summer. We'd come up here and I tried to convince my parents to live here year round in the winter. I wanted to live here year round in the winter. At one point they actually had a plan to build kind of a year round home up here but maybe not move from Rhode Island up here. My mother later in life said, 'well all our doctors are in Rhode Island.' I'm starting to understand what that means. So, I always wanted to live here, because fall was my favorite time of the year, and we'd stay up through the summer but then we'd come back weekends through Columbus Day. Like a lot of people, you'd close your camp and then you'd go to the Sandwich Fair and we'd stop at Hart's and we'd go home. Of course, I moved back up here in the spring of eighty-seven and I stayed up here through the winter of eighty-seven into the beginning of 1990. After having spent three winters here, eighty-seven, eighty-eight, eighty-nine, I'm glad my parents didn't move up here year round. To go from a summer resident to a year round resident and I've met other people who have tried that in various parts of New Hampshire where they're from New York or Connecticut, Mass, Rhode Island, and they're just fascinated and they love New Hampshire in the summer and they stay up here in the winter – it's a pretty brutal reality. It's very cold. It's twenty degrees colder in this part of the country than it is in the coastal New

England. That's an awful lot of snow compared to rain. Even if you go from – well when I lived in Northfield and that's comparable to Meredith – even if you go from there to Concord. Just that change in elevation results in maybe a quarter of the snow that you get up here and the accompanying temperatures that create that. I've lived up in New Hampshire now for twenty years consecutively. I moved up in ninety-eight and winter is just [sighs]. We've been having warmer winters – unseasonably weird winters really, not traditional, just freakish winters. But anytime it gets really cold and nasty out – snowy and icy – I'm not a happy camper. [Laughter]. But, I love it so much that I'm willing to struggle through that winter. If I could afford a summer home and a winter home like some people, I'd be out of here. I really would. It's just as I get older the cold is really – and that's what they say, older people if they can afford to be a snowbird – that cold is just something else. With my physical condition not being what it used to be, slipping and falling on the ice. I'm getting to that point now where I've taken a few hitters and now I gotta be very cautious. I still love New Hampshire.

My parents asked me years ago when they were still alive, over dinner in Rhode Island, they would say: 'Your father and I are getting plots in the cemetery in Providence where the family is buried, do you want one?' I said no. I really had plans I wanted to go back, live a long full happy life, and be buried in New Hampshire that I love. I'm still thinking along those lines. It'd be hard to leave permanently if I had to. If I get to the point in my life where I can do what Laurie Bard did and I don't know if she still writes for the Weirs Times, but she and her husband a few years ago, decided to go on the road with a Winnebago and sell their property and travel around the country. She wrote articles about all their travels and it sounded fascinating. They eventually I think they settled in Florida. I don't know where they are now because I don't read that paper much anymore, but that's maybe what I'm gearing up for, something along those lines. You don't have a permanent home and you just travel to wherever it's the nicest at that particular time. Because to afford a home in central New Hampshire and a home somewhere else is – you're looking at you got to have a million dollars or more. Literally a million dollars or more to do something like that.

I'd still like to be part of New Hampshire and Meredith. I just walked down main street every once and a while but I see it as I did – I see it two ways. I see it as a fifty-nine year old and I can see it as a nine year old, a nineteen year old, and all the different stages of my life. All the places. It always bothered me that the old pharmacy isn't there anymore. It's the little park now where they put the Archie statue. That was the pharmacy. Oddly enough, my brother, in the film from sixty-eight, the camera pans across that building and it says 'Fruit Market' on it. My brother tells me – he's two years younger than me – he remembered the fruit market, but I don't remember the fruit market. I only remember it as the pharmacy. Maybe you got to talk to him too, I know you've probably been in touch with him. Maybe he can give you a detailed description of that day, but everybody remembers things differently I guess.

I'm still very fond of Meredith or I wouldn't be here today.

LH: Do you have a favorite Meredith memory?

JM: A favorite one? Hmm. Boy. That you should have e-mailed me so I could have thought about that. [Laughter]. Well. I think if I had to pick one thing it's just swimming, because we had our own place right on the lake. Although, there's a collective of things that I find very memorable. You didn't get in the city, and I'll call it the city – East Providence is really a city. Back then everybody would, again, shop downtown. The suburbs were built but the shopping was downtown.

What I remember most about Meredith is four things, maybe five. Chipmunks is one. The sound of crows. Church bells, because they'd echo across the lake. The train whistles because the freight train still ran in the afternoon and at midnight coming out of the Lincoln. I think it was the horn at the fire station? It goes off at noon and 5pm or something like that. It used to go off twice a day. I think there used to be a 5pm – there used to be two, but just the whole package. You know, the smell of the pine trees. Chipmunks – I'm still a big fan of chipmunks. As long as they're not tearing apart too much stuff but usually they stay outside. Just the whole thing was nice. The breeze, the smell of the country, the smell of the water, even in the fall when the leaves turn you get that special smell. The other day, we've been quite humid all summer, but about a week or so ago we had yet another thunderstorm up my way anyways in Enfield. The humidity finally broke. I went out in the morning to get the paper, and you could just smell the beginning of fall – it just has that smell to it. Just all the sensory stuff. The sights and sounds.

Every time I go back to visit friends in Rhode Island and I spend two or three days there, I'm just like yuck I got to get out of here. People want me to move back, I think I'd like to move back, and I go down there for two days and I can't do that. I can't live like that with those crappy roads and this traffic and there's no place to pull over, there's no scenery. Rhode Island is the ocean state. I could care less about the ocean or clam bakes or anything like that. People down there look at me like I'm crazy. They're walking around with all sorts of clams and mussels and I'm like here you go, you keep it. I'll keep my country and my hills. [Laughter]. It's just the whole experience of being here as a kid and an adult just enjoying the surroundings.

What else you got?

MG: I think that's it for specific questions.

JM: Well, I'm glad you had some questions because it just brought out certain stories. I just like being here. I don't get up this way too often. When I lived in Tilton, my friend from Concord would come up. We used to eat at George's a lot. We don't anymore now because I moved an hour away. As far as something to bring me into town nowadays, well, for the last few years or the last actually twenty years, really the draw for me in Meredith has been George's restaurant. I'd have friends up and we'd always make sure we'd stop at George's for breakfast or lunch. Then they became fans of George's so they'd want to go to George's. The thing about George's, when I worked at the Inter-Lakes Dairy Bar in 1976, the man who ran the kitchen was George. I

don't know what his last name was and I don't know how long he worked there, but he was a very nice man – a very hard working man. From there, he went up to the State School, which I guess that's not really a state school anymore. He ran the kitchen up there and then started George's down here. I believe at the time it was either breakfast or breakfast and lunch. It wasn't the full thing they have now. I didn't get over there too often when he started there, because I just either was not in town or busy with something else. It wasn't part of my regular routine. I don't know what exactly happened to the man, but I had heard that he just had worked so hard for so many years that he had had a massive stroke and he became incapacitated. I'm assuming that this day and age he's passed on, but I thought that was kind of sad. Because, I've worked with other people over the years, one fellow in Rhode Island who started his own heating and air conditioning business and did the same thing. Built himself up a business, got into his late forties, and died of a massive heart attack. Those of us that who experience that or have heard stories of that, you've got to kind of take some kind of a lesson from that. You work so hard to build something up for yourself and it kills you. I think that's sad. It's nice that George's is still there. Those people have done a tremendous job with that place. That's kind of what brings me to Meredith nowadays.

I think the Ocean State Job Lot is actually nice and I told the manager there that of all the ones that I'd been in and the one I worked at a number of years ago in Rhode Island – they would usually look like a bomb had gone off in the place – and I told him that's really the nicest looking Ocean State Job Lot I've seen. He said, 'thank you, we try and keep it this way.' He said they're trying to do that with more and more of their stores now. I started with Ocean State Job Lot back in ninety-three or ninety-four. They had seventeen stores, probably mostly in Rhode Island. I think the fellow told me now they're upwards of a hundred pushing a hundred and twenty stores. That's pretty impressive. Hopefully, they'll do well there.

LH: Sounds good. Well, thank you.

JM: You're welcome. Thank you very much.

MG: Thank you so much.