

Grace Halsey

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Interviewer: Ruth Terwilliger
Transcribers: Janena Benjamin, 2004 and Laura Cabbage-Draper, July 2019
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Abstract: Grace Halsey (1901-1997), daughter of James Harvey Halsey and Louise (Edwards) Halsey, was a lifelong resident of Metuchen who was born and raised at 64 Home Street. The property was originally owned by her great-grandfather, who worked as a fruit and produce merchant. Ms. Halsey's father died when she was only six months old and she was raised by her mother in the family home. Her mother, an organist, was a well-known photographer and artist who took photographs of Volkmar Pottery.

After graduating from high school in 1920, Ms. Halsey started working at the Metuchen Public Library as an assistant under the tutelage of Julia Bogert, the head librarian. She also attended summer school at Trenton State College for four years to learn how to be a librarian. Ms. Halsey became head librarian of the Metuchen Public Library in 1946 and she served in that position until 1969. Ms. Halsey, who never married, was also an active member of the First Presbyterian Church and sang in the choir. She is buried at the First Presbyterian Church Cemetery in Metuchen.

In this interview, Ms. Halsey discusses her family and her early recollections of Metuchen including her early education, social activities, local families and businesses, and miscellaneous anecdotes. She also talks extensively about the history of the Metuchen Public Library, its various locations, and serving as head librarian after the retirement of Julia Bogert.

Interview note: During this interview, Ms. Halsey is primarily reading excerpts from her written recollections titled *Reminiscences of Grace Halsey*.

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R. Terwilliger: Today is June 28, 1976 and I, Ruth Terwilliger, will be interviewing Miss Grace Halsey of 64 Home Street, Metuchen. [recording paused]

Okay, we are in business now. I want to say Miss Halsey that I really am thrilled today to have this opportunity to come into your lovely home and to interview you and hear a little bit about what you remember Metuchen was like as a young girl. So I'm certainly going to turn it over to you now, let you talk, and I'll ask questions as they pop into my head if you don't mind.

G. Halsey: All right, fine. I was born in this house [at 64 Home Street], which was the property of my great-grandfather on my mother's side. He owned the entire corner from Home Street to Bounty Street, which was nothing more than a cart track through to an apple orchard at the Amboy Avenue end of the lane.

The house was originally a basement structure with a dumbwaiter coming up into the corner of the dining room from the basement kitchen. Later, a large living room with two bedrooms above was added on the south side of the house and a kitchen back of the present dining room. A well in the backyard furnished water; it was never known to fail even in the driest weather, being fed by an underground stream, which I have been told was a feeder to the Raritan River.

My grandfather [Albert Edwards], mother's father, was a fruit and produce merchant in Jersey City. But when he died at the age of forty-five, my grandmother [Grace (Voorhees) Edwards] and three girls [Louise, Sarah, and Zoe] moved out with her parents.

R. Terwilliger: Miss Halsey, I wanted to ask you at this point, when you mentioned about your grandfather being a fruit and produce merchant—did he raise that fruit and produce on this property?

Miss Halsey: Oh no. No, no, he bought. He was a wholesale man. He bought. I can remember mother [Louise (Edwards) Halsey] telling about his going up to Keene, New Hampshire to buy apples, and he used to go south to buy fruit. And then they would sell it from Jersey City to the retail merchants.

R. Terwilliger: And did you ever travel with him at all? Did you ever go into the city?

G. Halsey: Well, no, because he died long before I was born.

R. Terwilliger: Oh, that's right. He was only forty-five; he was a comparatively young man.

G. Halsey: Yeah, he died of pneumonia.

R. Terwilliger: Right. Okay, you can continue.

G. Halsey: My mother was the only one of the girls to marry early, one aunt never married and the other one married late in life. My father [James Harvey Halsey] died when I was six months old, so mother came home to live [at 64 Home Street]. I went to private school until entering public school in the fifth grade. One of the schools was run by Miss Irene Mason, daughter of The Reverend J. G. Mason, who was pastor of the [First] Presbyterian Church for about fifty years. The school was held in the manse [at 260 Woodbridge Avenue]. Miss Mason later married The Reverend A. E. Harper and they went out to India as missionaries, where they both became noted for their work in both religious and secular education, and received many honors from both the Indian and English governments. India was, at that time, still under British dominion.

The main building of Franklin School had been built by the time I started public school. We used to walk down New Street and cut across the field where the A&P [grocery store] now stands, and as we approached Middlesex Avenue—if it was almost nine o'clock or one o'clock in time for the last bell to ring—we would see

the principal, Mr. T. G. Van Kirk, standing in the window of his office at the front of the building waving us on.

R. Terwilliger: [laughs] Hurry, hurry.

G. Halsey: On New Street stood two very dilapidated old frame buildings, which were the remains of the old school, which had been split and moved over from Middlesex Avenue. This was the local “slum.”

R. Terwilliger: Are those two buildings were eventually just torn down?

G. Halsey: Torn down. Oh, they were a mess. Oh!

R. Terwilliger: I have seen some pictures of the early school and it wasn't even an attractive building then, as I recall. And the pictures I saw, it was in good condition as far as structure goes, but it was sort of an ugly tall looking thing.

G. Halsey: Yes, it had a couple of towers on it, as I remember.

R. Terwilliger: And a long set of steps coming down the front.

G. Halsey: Yeah. I don't remember when it was over on Middlesex Avenue; it stood where Franklin School stands now [at northwest corner with Center Street].

R. Terwilliger: Was it strictly a grade school?

G. Halsey: Oh no, that was the only school in town.

R. Terwilliger: That was. Okay, you can continue again.

G. Halsey: As a small child—about nine or ten, I suppose—on Sunday afternoons, my mother and I used to walk over to Woodwild Park, a small hill area about where Mr. [Ernest J.] Hammesfahr's house [at 344 Middlesex Avenue] now stands. Just beyond his house, two stone pillars still stand with a metal plate and the name “Woodwild Park.” A path went up to the hill between these pillars and at the top seats were made of boards stretched between trees. There we would sit and watch the infrequent cars go by. On Saturday, my mother would have bought a five-cent bag of peanuts and when a car went by going toward New York, I could have a peanut, and when one went by going toward New Brunswick, she could have one. Needless to say, a small bag of peanuts would be more than enough for a couple of hours.

I was a retiring child and hated parties until the refreshments were served. The one exception to this dislike was a party given each summer by Mrs. Howard Bloomfield [Anita (Lundy) Bloomfield] for her daughter Eleanor [Bloomfield]. The Bloomfield estate [on Amboy Avenue in Edison] was a beautiful white-pillared house set in extensive grounds. The house has since been torn down, but it stood on the right going toward Perth Amboy just beyond the road that goes up over the hill to Woodbridge. And you said that was?

R. Terwilliger: That's Grandview Avenue today. I want to ask you a little bit about the party itself if you can think or recall at all. Now how old did you say you were about when you went to this type of party?

G. Halsey: Oh, I suppose eleven, twelve.

R. Terwilliger: And were these coed parties then—boys and girls—or were they just girls gathered?

G. Halsey: Yes, as I remember, there were boys as well as girls.

R. Terwilliger: And were there planned games—did you play games—?

G. Halsey: That part I don't remember anything about what happened after we got there. [laughter] All I remember is the ride down and the ride back. And one ride stands out in particular because Helen Corbin and I were sitting at the back with our feet hanging out over the back of the hay wagon and she lost one of her slippers, which created a great furor. [laughter] And we had to stop, and the hired man had to get out and get her slipper and bring it back for her.

R. Terwilliger: And did you dress up in special clothes for "Sunday best" kind of thing or party dresses?

G. Halsey: Oh sure, we're in party dresses.

R. Terwilliger: But you don't remember whether you played games that would cause or encourage some mixing of the group at all?

G. Halsey: No, I don't remember.

R. Terwilliger: You draw a blank on what happened, uh-huh. But this was kind of a little bit of the social event then.

G. Halsey: Well I think the reason I liked it was for the hayride part of it, and of course the refreshments. [laughter] I don't remember much about those either, but I'm sure there must have been refreshments. One of the hired men would drive a hay wagon up to the Lundy house on [241] Amboy Avenue, fourth from the corner [with Main Street] on the south side. Mrs. [Henrietta] Lundy was Mrs. Bloomfield's mother and the children would gather there, be driven on the hay wagon to the Bloomfield home for the party, and then driven back to Metuchen.

Memorial Day, or as it was then called Decoration Day, is another memory. The local children would gather at the [First] Presbyterian Church, each bringing as many flowers as they could come by. We would then go over to the [Old] Colonial Cemetery and then to the [First] Presbyterian Cemetery, leaving flowers on the graves of the Civil War soldiers, which had been marked with small flags. I always tried to hang on to my flowers until we got to my grandfather's grave. He had joined the Union Army against his father's wishes and had been disinherited. But when word came home that he had been killed, all was forgiven and my great-grandfather went down with a coffin to bring the body home, only to find that like Mark Twain, the report of his death had been greatly exaggerated. And he lived for twenty-five or so more years.

R. Terwilliger: Isn't that something? Did I note a little bit of amusement in your report on that when you said once he was reported killed, all was forgiven? I'd be curious to know at what your grandfather, or—was it a grandfather?

G. Halsey: My great-grandfather.

R. Terwilliger: Great-grandfather—what his reaction was when he found out he was alive?

G. Halsey: That I don't know. [laughter] As I say, we were a family that never talked things over. And there are an awful lot of things that I wish now that I had asked about but, as I say, I just didn't.

One of the local scandals, which I remember hearing discussed, was when a minister by the name of Ezra Mundy, if I remember rightly, came back to town for the purpose of having his wife's body exhumed in order to reclaim a diamond ring, which she had had on when buried. The populace, especially the Presbyterian contingent, were horrified. A later talk of the town was when a local man was reported to have been with a companion—not his wife—on the Duclos Lane site on the night of Hall-Mills murder¹.

R. Terwilliger: Now on that point I thought about, did this gentleman have anything to do with the murder?

G. Halsey: No, he was just in a tryst out there apparently.

R. Terwilliger: I see, and in the research or reporting on this, this event came out?

G. Halsey: Well, I suppose it must have. I didn't know about it until I read that book, which is in the library—maybe not now, but there was a book on Hall-Mills case and it mentions this Mr. Soper, and he lived right over here next to Ethel Mayo's [at 8 Clinton Place], the next house in. I didn't want to put his name in, but I guess everybody's forgotten him at this time, they know—

R. Terwilliger: Well, and it is in the book. I read the book also. But I wondered if as a local person, if you had read it someplace or it really was something that was brought out when they did the investigation?

G. Halsey: Well, I didn't realize it until it was in the book. Two of the notables in town were Mr. & Mrs. [Charles] Volkmar, who lived in the big house on the corner of Middlesex and—it is New Durham Road, isn't it? It's opposite that Flexi place.

R. Terwilliger: Yes, that's New Durham Road, right.

G. Halsey: Yeah. They had a small studio behind the house where they made beautiful pottery. My mother had become a portrait photographer and she took interesting pictures of Mrs. Volkmar and one of the workmen named Mike at their pottery

¹ The Hall-Mills murder was the double homicide of Edward Wheeler Hall, an Episcopal priest from New Brunswick, and Eleanor Reinhardt Mills, a member of the Episcopal choir, on September 14, 1922 in Somerset, New Jersey. The two murder victims were believed to have been having an affair and the priest's wife and her brothers were tried and acquitted of their murder in 1926.

wheels. There was a son, Leon [Volkmar], an arty looking young man complete with beard and beret, and he was the first man I ever saw wearing a wristwatch.

R. Terwilliger: Well that I found interesting. Is that really true? Up until that time, it was always a pocket watch?

G. Halsey: Yeah. Yes.

R. Terwilliger: But nothing—so he was kind of—

G. Halsey: Very arty, yes.

R. Terwilliger: —just from the way you describe him, as what the kids today would call “hippy.”

G. Halsey: Yes, yes, and of course he was, I suppose one of the first men (except very elderly men) I ever saw ever wearing a beard—the first young man certainly with a beard.

R. Terwilliger: Yes, and a beret.

G. Halsey: And a beret.

R. Terwilliger: Right. Was he part of his father’s business?

G. Halsey: Well, I don’t know. As I say here, he didn’t seem to be interested in the family business, but I think he did go into some sort of art work in New York². And Dolly Buchanan might know because she was very interested in the family and has, I think, a good many of the nice Volkmar [Pottery] pieces.

R. Terwilliger: Yes, you’re absolutely right.

G. Halsey: And I have some too, but mother couldn’t afford to buy the perfect pieces, so mine are all seconds. That big jug up there [pointing to item in room] for instance—up here above my head—is. And I have the tiles in the dining room, and several other vases, but they are all definitely seconds.

R. Terwilliger: We had a whole display case last year down at the library [Metuchen Public Library] of Mrs. Buchanan’s collection and she does have a beautiful collection.

G. Halsey: Now I have, I think, these two pictures still that mother took. If the historical society [Metuchen-Edison Historical Society] would be interested in having those at all, I would be glad to give them.

R. Terwilliger: Of what—of Mr., Mrs. Volkmar?

G. Halsey: Mrs. Yeah, let me just see if I can—

R. Terwilliger: Let me just stop— [recording paused]

² Charles Volkmar and his son, Leon, worked together as “Charles Volkmar and Son” until their partnership dissolved in 1911. Charles retired due to failing health and his son established Durant Kilns in Bedford, New York.

- G. Halsey:** Another notable whom I remember was Mr. [Gustav] Lindenthal. Now he lived out in one of the houses out near Pumptown. You know where Pumptown Corner is?
- R. Terwilliger: Oh yes, right.
- G. Halsey:** And he designed and I suppose oversaw the building of Hells Gate Bridge. He was a famous bridge designer and he was a big burly German. He had a great beard. And what I particularly remembered about him was his shoes—the soles of his shoes were always about an inch thick. And of course, he used to come into Metuchen to take the train into the city. So he was another one of the notable people who lived here.
- R. Terwilliger: Now, what time period are we talking about here, do you think?
- G. Halsey:** Well, I suppose around the time of the—I don't remember when he died, but I suppose it must have been—probably around the time of the First World War³—maybe 1910 or [19]12, maybe even later.
- R. Terwilliger: Just a general idea, I don't remember how old that bridge is. And then he lived here then as a married man or a [unclear] person?
- G. Halsey:** He had a beautiful wife and they had one daughter.
- R. Terwilliger: Does that house still stand out there? Is that the very large one to the right as you approach Pumptown Corner?
- G. Halsey:** I don't know. I can't remember whether it was there, or whether there was another house further on, that has been since torn down.
- R. Terwilliger: Because there is a very impressive home on the right-hand side that kind of has a circular driveway and looks to be a vintage home.
- G. Halsey:** But there were several very large houses along that road. And as I say, I don't really remember which one.
- R. Terwilliger: Why did they call it Pumptown Corner? Do you know?
- G. Halsey:** Well, there used to be a pump there. There was a little sort of an island right in the middle of the road there, as I remember, and there was a pump there.
- R. Terwilliger: Didn't the Hales live out that way too? Didn't they have a large home?
- G. Halsey:** Well, they lived out at Wood Brook Farms.
- R. Terwilliger: Well then who am I thinking of—just before you approach—did they live in a very large house on the left-hand side [on Park Avenue].
- G. Halsey:** Oh, you mean the Williams.

³ Gustav Lindenthal designed Hells Gate Bridge ca. 1917, and he died on July 31, 1935.

- R. Terwilliger: The Williams, that's right, yes.
- G. Halsey: Mr. [Walter] Williams. He was connected with [F. W.] Woolworth's [Company] and that was a very lovely place, yes. And his daughter is Mrs. Dana, who stills lives somewhere here in town.**
- R. Terwilliger: That's the name I'm thinking of too, the Danas. I knew it was the Hales or the Danas that were connected with that area, but we used to go to the Hales. I can't remember what for now. I don't remember if it was as a scout troop to visit the farm or—
- G. Halsey: Probably went out to see the cows. [laughter] And then of course across the street from the Williams, is the old house that's still standing⁴. Drayton Mook bought it eventually. I don't whether—who lives there? Whether he still lives there?**
- R. Terwilliger: There is still a sign that says "Mook" on it.
- G. Halsey: Well, perhaps he's still living there then.**
- R. Terwilliger: But that's another lovely, lovely home.
- G. Halsey: It is very attractive. I've never been in it, but it's beautiful from the outside.**
- R. Terwilliger: Yes.
- G. Halsey: My early recollections of Main Street include a trolley, which ran up and down from Christol Street to Amboy Avenue, to connect with the Perth Amboy and New Brunswick line. It ran on a rather irregular schedule with a jolly Irishman doubling as motorman and conductor, and he was also inclined to tip all of us drunk occasionally.**
- R. Terwilliger: [laughs] Now I wanted to ask you something about the trolleys. I don't know who it was that I was interviewing that told me in the wintertime they actually had a stove on the trolley, that there was a fire kept going to keep you warm.
- G. Halsey: Well yeah, that was the only way, I guess. I didn't ride the trolleys much because I got carsick. And once in a great while in the summertime, we would ride down to—well it's where Camp Kilmer, where Camp Raritan [Raritan Arsenal] is now. Friends of my mother's had a farm there and they raised mostly tomatoes, and I can remember being taken down there in the summer and going out in the fields with the other kids and picking tomatoes off the vine and eating them. Oh, I've haven't eaten tomatoes that tasted like that since! But, my one aunt worked in the bank in Perth Amboy, and she used to first go back and forth on the trolleys and that was the only means of heating in the wintertime.**
- R. Terwilliger: You know it was just unbelievable to me that they would actually have—I believe it was Mr. [Paul] Fenton who told me—a small potbellied stove and it was heated by wood or coal depending on what they had. And he said a great trick for some of the young boys was to spit on the stove and listen to it hiss. [laughter] I'm sure the girls didn't go into this sort of thing. But he said it was quite a trick and some of the older

⁴ The Mook house was also called Pumptown Acres, and it was built in 1811. The house stood on Park Avenue near Herron Road. The farm was called Elmwood Farm.

men used to amuse the children by doing this. I wanted to ask you also, that run into Perth Amboy—did you ever go to the beaches along the river over in Perth Amboy?

G. Halsey: Well, once in a great while when I was in high school, we used to go down there occasionally to the shore right at Perth Amboy. But the sand was not very nice white sand, and also it soon began to get polluted so it really wasn't too—but people did bathe over there. I can remember once going over to Staten Island and going to a beach over there, but I never learned to swim so I wasn't particularly interested in that really after. There was a place they called Boynton Beach [in Woodbridge Township] and we used to go there on Sunday school picnics, and I think that was further down beyond Perth Amboy. I don't know what the town would be now, but it's where all those big gas tanks are.

R. Terwilliger: Oh, that is the Hess—

G. Halsey: Sewaren. Sewaren, yeah.

R. Terwilliger: Sewaren, right, yeah. Right along the river, probably there, was very lovely at that time. I think Mr. Fenton also mentioned, when I interviewed him from his church, that that was one of the annual kind of summertime things that the church did, was to go to Sewaren.

G. Halsey: Later when we got a little more prosperous, we used to go to Asbury Park and hire a trolley for the trip down and back and then take the train from Perth Amboy. And I don't know whether we had a special train or not. I doubt it, because I don't think enough people went. But we'd go down for the day.

R. Terwilliger: Just for the day—you never stayed overnight or in a cottage?

G. Halsey: Well, not on the picnics, no. I used to, as a child, we occasionally had a cottage in Ocean Grove for the summer or for a month or so. Did I say it was known as the Toonerville Trolley?

R. Terwilliger: No, and I thought that was just a very, very darling name. [laughs] It sounds like a children's story or something.

G. Halsey: Well, I think the Toonerville Trolley was a comic strip.

R. Terwilliger: I think you're right. When I read it, I thought, *Where have I heard it before?* Perhaps that's where.

G. Halsey: The stores that I remember on Main Street were Hanemann's Bakery [at 395 Main Street], which was I think where Drake's Hardware Store is now. And then came Robins Hall [at 401 Main Street], which houses Donald Hume's [Metuchen] Hardware, and this was the center for theatrical performances, minstrel shows, and other social affairs on the second floor. The downstairs was occupied by Mr. La Forge's Grocery Store, if I remember rightly. Then came a candy and stationery store run by Mr. & Mrs. [Jesse] Perry [at 405 Main Street], who lived upstairs over the shop. Mr. Perry also had a small press in the back of the store and did job printing. Then came a hardware store, and then McGuinness' Saloon [at 419 Main Street]. And in the next block was Kramer's Department Store [at

441 Main Street], and another saloon run by a Mr. [James] Lawless [at 435 Main Street].

R. Terwilliger: Was that actually his name—Lawless?

G. Halsey: Yes. A plumber’s shop and the [Centenary] Methodist [Episcopal] Church—now there must have been other stores along there, but I don’t remember what they were—and crossing over, Danford’s [at 476 Main Street] was on the corner and then came Mr. [Benjamin] Ford’s Hardware Store [at 468 Main Street] and while he was tax collector, one also paid one’s taxes there. On the corner of Highland Avenue, Mr. [Henry A.] Rumler, a plumber, built our first movie house and his daughter Helen used to bring his piano music for the silent pictures. The Metuchen Inn [Hillside Inn] sat on a rise in the middle of that lot. It had been built by Mr. Robins, but when he built another house on [443] Middlesex Avenue opposite Linden [Avenue], the home was turned into a hotel. Now whether it was Mr. Robins’ father who built the old house, and the house on Middlesex Avenue was built for the son, I don’t remember. I remember Nate Robins [Nathan Robins] of course, he was a cousin of mine; he must have been my father’s uncle. I think Nate Robins’ sister was my Grandfather [Daniel] Halsey’s first wife. Anyway, we’re related somehow. As I say, I don’t remember whether it was he or his father that built this big house, but they had loads of money. I don’t know how they made their money. So, when the old folks died off and Uncle Nate built his house on Middlesex Avenue, he turned this [Hillside Inn] into a hotel.

R. Terwilliger: The one on Main Street?

G. Halsey: On Main Street, yes.

R. Terwilliger: Now is that the Metuchen Inn that we know it today, that’s on [424] Middlesex Avenue?

G. Halsey: No, that’s an entirely different place. That was made over out of a house, I guess.

R. Terwilliger: Oh, where was this second home on Middlesex?

G. Halsey: It’s where the big house where they have three or four apartments, where the Poandls live [at 443 Middlesex Avenue].

R. Terwilliger: Oh, that was it, I see.

G. Halsey: Mrs. Robins still lives on the third floor.

R. Terwilliger: Third floor, right. Someone did tell me that recently, that I should get to her and do a tape.

G. Halsey: I think probably if you could. She’s very retiring as I understand it. And I hardly know her; I mean even though she’s a second or third cousin. Our family never was strong on visiting. Mrs. Poandl said to me one day, she said, “Why don’t you come over and see—.” Oh, I can’t even remember which one is still living. Oh, I hate it [unclear] I don’t really know.

R. Terwilliger: Isn’t it Elsie [Elsa Robins]? Was it Elsie?

- G. Halsey:** Well, there was an Elsie.
- R. Terwilliger: I think that's what somebody told me.
- G. Halsey:** And there was a Dorothy [F. Robins], but she married. And Elsie and—what was the sister's name?—they lived there together and then one of them died leaving this remaining one⁵. As I understand it, Sterling Mayo bought that house originally and turned it into apartments with the provision that she would live there as long as she lived. And I think the Poandls are very, very good to her.
- R. Terwilliger: Oh, they are very kind. I know Mrs. Poandl and they have—she's very comfortable there. But that [Hillside Inn] was a restaurant at the time or just a hotel then?
- G. Halsey:** Well, I suppose they served meals because in the early part of the century Metuchen was a summer resort for some New Yorkers.
- R. Terwilliger: Yeah you mentioned that, and I really never realized that, but I guess it was kind of coming out to the country from the city.
- G. Halsey:** True, it was. And on the corner of Hillside [Avenue], the Costas opened a small ice cream parlor⁶ [at 416 Main Street]. Mr. [Gregory] Costa and his brother [Frank Costa] were bricklayers and where they got their recipe for their ice cream, I don't know. But people came from miles around for their spumoni and ice cream. Business increased so a larger shop was built. That building now houses Mr. [William] Storts' (Costa's son-in-law) gift shop. That in time has outgrown and the factory was built at the railroad end of Pearl Street [at 16 Pearl Street]. And then later, they moved to Woodbridge. Mr. [George] Hahm ran a drug store at [412 Main Street]; I think the site of Wernik's Drug Store now. Mom and Pop, Papa [Charles] Frank owned a variety store [at 418 Main Street] somewhere along there. It was a very spooky place, poorly lit by a couple of twenty-five-watt bulbs, but one could buy little wooden animals, wagons, and so forth if one wanted to build a little farm with a barn made out of a soapbox and fences made of split clothespins.
- R. Terwilliger: This I found very interesting. I haven't heard anyone talk about this improvisation in making your own things out of just things that were available, but that was really refreshing.
- G. Halsey:** I can remember having a farm and [Nathan] Howard Ayers [at 279 Woodbridge Avenue] had one, and I guess [unclear] the town; she lived in the next house, he had one.
- R. Terwilliger: But boxes, these small boxes and things that were emptied from groceries were real treasures. I can even remember this and especially if it had the little cellophane cover that could possibly be a window. You remember some of the cookies had the cellophane?

⁵ Ms. Halsey may be referring to Abbey D. Robins. Based on the 1955 Special Telephone Directory, Abbey D. Robins was the only identified member of the Robins family living in Metuchen at 443 Middlesex Avenue.

⁶ According to Grace Halsey's written recollections, Costa's ice cream was originally made at the rear of the store.

G. Halsey: Well, that was later than my time. This is just a solid wooden box.

R. Terwilliger: I was so delighted to hear that, that you did this kind of thing. I wanted to mention to you while you're talking about this—something that made me recall—is Old Mrs. Mundy [Anna Mundy] who lived on [191] Middlesex Avenue in a house that I think—oh, what was the architect's name who built? He either renovated this old house and then rented it out to the Mundys—not the Mundys, the Chapmans. I'm sorry, it was the Chapmans. It's on the right-hand side going toward Menlo Park. And I'm trying to think of people who lived in it after the Chapmans—the Littersts—not Litterst sisters.

G. Halsey: You don't mean the old house that Mr. [Clement Wilson] Fairweather made into a nice little—yeah.

R. Terwilliger: Right, yes, that house. Well there were Mundys in it when I was a girl. An old man and an old—I guess it was the grandfather—grandmother lived in one half and I played with Helen Chapman and I guess her mother [Ethel (Mundy) Chapman] must have been a Mundy and she married a Chapman. But the grandmother [Anna Mundy]—the point being—she used to take hemlock tree branches and make doll furniture out of them and these darling little cushions for the seats. And we used to pick the little dried branches—you know they had kind of a rough finish on them—so it looked like almost alpine kind of furniture, and she put them together with straight pins. And we'd sit by the hour with her and watch her make. And she made me a whole dollhouse full of furniture, which I, the dollhouse, was nothing but old boxes. But this was a summer afternoon's project—was to sit and work on this dollhouse and curtains and furniture. And it just amuses me because children today don't know these kinds of things.

G. Halsey: Children miss an awful lot not making their own toys.

R. Terwilliger: And using their own imagination. I can remember for hours spending on our front porch just sitting and playing with this dollhouse. And then when paper dolls came around and you could trace the one paper doll, you were fortunate enough to have been able to buy and make a whole family from this one pattern. I really feel bad that they've missed this kind of playing that we had. So I'm sorry, I just had to talk about it.

G. Halsey: There were cheap materials and kitchen utensils and so forth. Mama [Clara] Frank looked just like pictures of an old witch [laughter]; and we were all rather frightened to go in there, but we did—though not alone—for the small treasures. One of the fire companies [Eagle Hook and Ladder Company] came next [at 398 Main Street], and Burroughs' [Metuchen Pharmacy at 396 Main Street] was on the corner just recently occupied by the travel service. The post office for years was just back of Burroughs [Building] and one had to ask at the window for one's mail. Then it was moved for a short time over on Main Street⁷ ... [recording ends]

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE 1]

⁷ According to Grace Halsey's written recollections, the post office was moved "about where the Commonwealth Bank now stands" at 407 Main Street for a short time.

- R. Terwilliger: [recording begins mid-sentence] ... I don't know what he does. He has someone who is in electronics; the voice repeat is much better on the final tape. I think we're into it now that you could start again.
- G. Halsey: A new building was built, again back of Burroughs. And I have here the laundry now occupies that, but I looked the other day and it isn't—it's an antique shop.**
- R. Terwilliger: Oh yeah, Dolly's Antiques. Right.
- G. Halsey: Yeah—is in that building. I don't know where the laundry went. And then the present [post office] structure was erected [at 360 Main Street]. Among friends in school was Edith Campbell, whose father [William T. Campbell] was one of the owners of large clay banks later bought by the government for Camp Raritan. At least once during the summer, Mr. Campbell would take Edith and me down to the clay banks so we could ride the donkey engine and paddle around the pond—I suppose a hole diluted of clay and filled with rain and seepage—on a raft that he had built for us. He was Christopher Columbus and we were the crew. [laughter] And members of the Metuchen Club used to give an annual party for the children of the town in the clubhouse [at 483 Middlesex Avenue]. I think that was at Christmas; I don't really remember whether it was Christmas or summertime.**
- R. Terwilliger: Well, I'm interested in the Metuchen Club. What was the Metuchen Club?
- G. Halsey: Well, that's where the Masonic Temple [Mount Zion Lodge No. 135] is now.**
- R. Terwilliger: Was this sort of like—or would a good reference to the same kind of thing be the Metuchen Country Club? Was it a local club?
- G. Halsey: Well of course they didn't have a golf course, but they met there and had dances and they had card parties. It was just a social club.**
- R. Terwilliger: And was there a fee involved to belong to the club?
- G. Halsey: Well, I suppose there must have been. I mean they couldn't keep, manage the upkeep on that place unless there was.**
- R. Terwilliger: But your family was not—your mother did not belong to it?
- G. Halsey: No. I was just invited because all the kids in town were invited to this party as a rule. And of course, I didn't care for that either. I don't think I went very often. After graduating from Metuchen High School with the largest class ever (nineteen members), I definitely did not want to go to college. I've never been very studious and couldn't be persuaded to go away from home for any length of time.**
- R. Terwilliger: Now let me stop you once more there and ask, was it unusual for a young lady to go away to school in your day or was this quite common?
- G. Halsey: Well, by the time I got out, I think most of the girls in my class went off to college somewhere. And also during summer vacations, they all went down to Newark and got jobs at the Prudential for the summer, which I never did either. I was always such a homebody; I don't know why.**

- R. Terwilliger: I understand that too. I was and all my children were until they went away to school. I never did go away to school. I started at Douglass [Residential College] and married instead; I figured that way I could stay home. [laughs]
- G. Halsey: **Good idea. Miss Julia Bogert had taken over the position of librarian in the little building on [40] Hillside Avenue [at southwest corner with Robins Place]. I can remember borrowing books there from Miss Ruth Thomas, whose desk was a kitchen table and who sat in a captain's chair still in our library.**
- R. Terwilliger: Yes, I've seen that there. And the thing I wanted to ask you is, do you recall what kind of checking out system they had in the library then? Was it just a little—some of the old date-stampers I've seen?
- G. Halsey: **Well they had I guess just bought envelopes at the stationary store and pasted in the back and I guess just a little cardboard. And she must have I guess written the names of people on there; I really don't remember too much about it.**
- R. Terwilliger: Was there a time limit—how long you could borrow the book?
- G. Halsey: **That I don't remember either, but I always took mine back so fast. I always was a fast reader and I can remember going in there once and taking in three or four books and having one of the ladies in town saying to me, "Well, you haven't read all those books in a week," or two weeks as the case might be. And I thought, *Well that's none of your business what I do.* [laughter] But of course, I didn't say anything. I really don't remember what the system was.**
- R. Terwilliger: Well, did she set up the system for this first library—Ruth Thomas, was it?
- G. Halsey: **I supposed she must have, yeah.**
- R. Terwilliger: She was a pretty woman. I've seen pictures of her down at the library.
- G. Halsey: **Yes, she was a very sweet [unclear], white hair.**
- R. Terwilliger: A very, very sweet lovely lady.
- G. Halsey: **But she was on in years and Miss Bogert had studied in New York; I think she was in the [Mid-Manhattan] 42nd Street Library [in New York]. And then of course, her father [Nicholas J. M. Bogert] had been minister here in the [Dutch] Reformed Church and they lived here [at 23 Graham Avenue], so she took over. The library was open I think two or three afternoons a week from two to five. When Miss Bogert took over, she thought the library would be more popular if it was on the Main Street, so the [Metuchen] National Bank Building [at 406 Main Street] having been built—that's now the [Metuchen] Professional Building—the library was relocated on the second floor in three rooms: one was reasonably large, and one of the smaller rooms was the children's room, and the other was the workroom. Miss Bogert asked me if I would like to help in the library and I accepted. Business did pick up and we soon needed more room so we moved across the street to the second floor of a new Commonwealth Bank Building [at 407 Main Street]. Then when the Borough Hall [at 500 Main Street] was built, we were assigned quarters on the second floor there. Quarters consisted of one big**

room, a smaller room used as a workroom, and back of that, an open attic where the magazine files were kept. It was most inconvenient; the roof was too low for me to stand upright and it was hot as Hades in the summertime and cold as Pharaoh's heart in the wintertime. The little workroom overlooked the barred windows of the two small cells in the [Metuchen] Police Department. And one day as I happened to look out, I saw a young boy standing looking out of one of the cell windows, he looked up and saw me and said, "Oh, you and me both."

R. Terwilliger: [laughs] I thought that was amusing.

G. Halsey: Very much on my dignity, I simply turned away. As the town grew, the borough needed more space and they were eyeing our space with envy. And when the late 1930s arrived and the WPA [Works Progress Administration] workers and money were available, Miss Bogert with others worked very hard to get our attractive Colonial building erected [at 480 Middlesex Avenue]. The cornerstone is dated 1937.

R. Terwilliger: This was then part of the WPA project work plan then?

G. Halsey: Yes, they built Roosevelt Hospital and they built our library.

R. Terwilliger: I understand that—was it, Mr. [Paul] Fenton that was also—he said, I think he was involved in politics at the time and that was part of his project, one of his projects.

G. Halsey: Aylin Pierson was the architect I guess for both those buildings, the hospital and the library.

R. Terwilliger: Right, I don't know what follows after this, but I wanted to talk a little bit about the library. You know working there myself now, and having been part of the library ever since a little girl here in town, what kind of—the amount of books, can you ever remember? In the early days, say back in the early thirties, was there a good amount of books, a wide variety?

G. Halsey: Well, I think Miss Bogert was an awfully good librarian; she was really excellent in her work. And as far back as I remember there was always a Book Committee. There were five or six women and they met once a month and each one would come with a list of books that they thought would be advisable to buy, and they would discuss these books and just decide whether or not they were to buy them. Of course, the book budget was limited, but they had I think a very good selection. And of course they could buy fiction because that was still a pay collection and it paid for itself, so that the money that the borough allocated for books went for nonfiction.

R. Terwilliger: Oh, that's interesting. You mean to read fiction, there was a rental fee for the books?

G. Halsey: Well yes, until I suppose for the first four or five months maybe, and then they would come off as you bought new, you took the older ones off. And it started out at two cents a day and eventually worked up to as much as I think five cents a day. Of course, Miss Bogert ordered other books too, as I did. I mean I ordered things that I knew we needed without taking it up with the Book Committee, but I always liked the Book Committee because I thought we got a very varied selection.

- R. Terwilliger: Right, it was kind of a good cross section.
- G. Halsey: What one person would think was appealing, somebody else might not and I might not, and so I liked the Book Committee very much and they did an awfully good job.**
- R. Terwilliger: How was the Book Committee formed? Was this sort of an appointed kind of thing?
- G. Halsey: Well yes, I don't know how it started originally, whether Miss Bogert picked them or not, but I think that it—of course, the women who were on it seemed to enjoy it very much.**
- R. Terwilliger: It was all women then?
- G. Halsey: Well, at one time Dr. [Adolph H.] Behrenberg was on, but he got through the press of other work. I think he was only on one year. And of course, it met during the day so naturally it was women. But unless somebody moved away or died, there weren't openings. But as I remember, we appointed our own, and it was an invitation affair that you got into.**
- R. Terwilliger: Right, yes. Very much as the Library Board is. This is probably—
- G. Halsey: Well the Board at that time—**
- R. Terwilliger: Was there a Board besides this?
- G. Halsey: Oh yes, there was the Library Board [of Trustees]. And the Board almost invariably picked someone when someone was retiring, and the mayor would appoint him. Later it got to be one of the political plum and now I guess the Board doesn't have much to say about who's going to be on it. I really don't know.**
- R. Terwilliger: No, it's a strictly political appointment.
- G. Halsey: But when we first started, it was an appointed job. And as I say, the people on the Board decided on someone who they thought would be an asset and suggested them.**
- R. Terwilliger: Right, they had library-oriented kind of person. That's terribly important to the total success of a good library is a very well-appointed board, and unfortunately quite often the appointments are not made with that in mind alone.
- G. Halsey: We had Dr. Martin at one time, and of course he had been librarian at a big library, I think, in Chicago; and then he was connected with some library work in New York. I don't remember just what, but there wasn't any he didn't know about library work. And Mr. [John] Ciardi [famous poet] was on our Board at one time.**
- R. Terwilliger: Well, we still to this day will have some of the older people that come into the library and they'll tell us they still preferred the old checking out system because they could just take the card out of the book and see if they had read it. This was when you wrote

your name in the back. And they said with this new system, unless you really keep a private list of—especially if you're a mystery reader or science fiction or had some special area where you could easily go through the collection we have—they will still complain to us about it.

G. Halsey: **Well there are a lot of people who will make little checks through books. I do it myself—**

R. Terwilliger: Especially mystery readers.

G. Halsey: **Yes, I see a little dot here and I think, *Well somebody else is checking off the books they've read.***

R. Terwilliger: Yeah, I think you'd almost have to because, as I say, outside of keeping a private list, which I think we all forget to do or will not write it down.

G. Halsey: **Well you forget to take it with you when you go to the library.**

R. Terwilliger: So they do have their own little checking system, which we don't mind at all. The circulation is the important thing. Never as a young girl and seeing lovely Miss Halsey in the library, did I ever think I'd be on the other side of the desk seeing Miss Halsey check out books from me. Okay, you continue.

G. Halsey: **The [library] cornerstone is dated 1937. This finally became inadequate and in the middle sixties, the Trustees started talking addition. I was not willing to take part in this headache for two reasons: one, I was nearing retirement age, and two, I thought that my successors should have his or her ideas incorporated in the new building, rather than having to put up with my ideas.**

The last summer that we were in the Borough Hall, I started four years of summer school at Hillwood Lakes on the outskirts of Trenton, which is Trenton State College [also known as Trenton Normal School], so that I was qualified to take over after Miss Bogert retired.

R. Terwilliger: You went just summers to do this?

G. Halsey: **Four summers, yes.**

R. Terwilliger: You worked through the winter and went to school.

G. Halsey: **Yeah, it was six weeks.**

R. Terwilliger: Did you work along with going to school?

G. Halsey: **Well no, this was my vacation and Miss Bogert gave me—she was so nice to work for. I never had a chance to go anywhere or wanted an afternoon off that wasn't perfectly all right. And of course, I was working by the hour then, so it didn't make any difference.**

R. Terwilliger: But she was a lovely woman. We should talk about her a little bit briefly. She was scary to me as a little girl.

G. Halsey: Well, she was. She was very abrupt in her speech and very nervous in her actions. I know people used to say to me, “I don’t understand how you can work with her.” And I said, “She gets on my nerves occasionally.” But I said, “She’s awfully nice to work for. She’s so considerate and so appreciative. Anything I ever did was spoken of appreciatively.” Now in fact for, as I say, all this time off if I wanted time off. But as I say, she was an awfully nervous temperament and she had a way of sort of thrusting books on people that she thought they should read.

R. Terwilliger: This is what I was going to mention. [laughs]

G. Halsey: Which didn’t often go over, and she was so insistent that they would take them home—

R. Terwilliger: You had to!

G. Halsey: —to avoid an argument. Whether they read them or not, of course that was something else again. But she really was an excellent librarian and an excellent worker and—

R. Terwilliger: And really underneath that façade of being kind of very stern and very much library oriented, there was a lovely sweet woman that every once in a while—I don’t recall what it was, but I remember there were a group of us in there one day after school and we were reading something that she didn’t approve of. I won’t even mention what we were reading, but she came over to the table and she collected the books up that we had out. And she said, “Now I’ll show you what you should be reading!” [laughs] And she brought out these other books and put them down. She said, “Now this is what you should be reading.” We of course very properly started to read what she put in front of us, and she said, “And I don’t want to see you looking in that corner again!” We were about twelve or thirteen and curious about what made young ladies be young ladies and this kind of thing. And she was very upset with us because we were curious and, in this way, she [said], “Want to know that sort of thing, you go home and talk to your mother.” And then she kind of—there was a twinkle in her eye as she walked away like she really understood, but she had to make sure that whatever we were doing in the library was in complete approval.

G. Halsey: She had the best interests of the public at heart. There is no doubt about that.

R. Terwilliger: Yes, and she was a dear woman. She really was.

G. Halsey: She was a character, that’s really what she was.

R. Terwilliger: That’s right, she was a town character. She was one of those people like so many others that—or so few really—that had her own special personality. How long did you work for her? I said before, did you answer that?

G. Halsey: Well, I went in the year I graduated [from high school] in 1920 in June and I started working in September of that year, and I worked right straight through until she retired. And I don’t remember the year she retired⁸. I think I was

⁸ Julia Bogert retired in 1946 and Grace Halsey took over as head librarian.

librarian nineteen years or—I can't remember how many years I was head librarian⁹.

R. Terwilliger: I was trying to think of how long I can remember. Now, I was in high school in the forties and graduated, as a matter of fact, in [19]48 and I don't remember seeing her. She probably retired. I think you were librarian for all of my high school years. And was it Miss [Mary] Lane that worked with you?

G. Halsey: Yes, she came in.

R. Terwilliger: Were you there alone for a while after Miss Bogert retired?

G. Halsey: No, I think I always had help. I mean hourly help. I remember Mrs. [Sophie] Plechner—Richard [F.] Plechner, the lawyer's mother—she lived right back of the library and her husband [Walter William Plechner] was in the Second World War. As a matter of fact, he was killed in the Second World War and she worked for me. And Peggy Potter—Peggy (Ruegger) Potter [Margaret (Ruegger) Potter] worked for me. Oh, I don't remember, Mrs.—

R. Terwilliger: There must have been a variety, because I don't—it seems that I can remember just you most of the time when I would go in. But I have always been very library oriented and very much enjoyed it.

G. Halsey: Mrs. Coffey [phonetic] worked for quite a while. Then there was Mr. & Mrs. Tauman [phonetic], who lived in town for a while, and Mrs. Talman [phonetic] worked for a while. And then of course, Mrs. [Eugenia] Berta starting working for me in the children's room. I had a succession of assistants.

R. Terwilliger: And you enjoyed your years as librarian?

G. Halsey: Yes, I really did. Yes, I liked it very much.

R. Terwilliger: Yeah, I suppose, much as we see now in the library, there are library people—there were the same people, like good customers, good patrons we call them. It is a same group that comes back and back and I have always said that I wish we could do things in the library to bring in those people that don't come to the library, or feel intimidated by a library for some reason or other. I've had people say that to me, and this is why I think they've started to have the open house so that maybe people would feel more comfortable about coming into this building for the first time. I think they're intimidated by maybe some of the systems, of how you have to check a book out.

G. Halsey: I don't know. Of course when I was there, the town was so much smaller and everybody seemed to know everybody else and they'd come in the library and they'd see their friends there and they knew us, and it was more personal. And of course, as the library grows, you can't have that personal touch. You don't have the time really.

R. Terwilliger: No, and this is my biggest battle and I think Lee's [Leola Symonds, former head librarian] greatest criticism of me, being a local person, is that I want to visit over the counter and it's not that way anymore. You just can't do it. And she's absolutely right

⁹ Grace Hasley was head librarian for approximately twenty-three years from 1946 to 1969.

that I shouldn't, but being a local person, many people feel they want to visit with me when they come in.

G. Halsey: Well yes, they appreciate that sort of thing. They really do.

R. Terwilliger: But I think I've gotten it under control now after a year and people know a few minutes of my time is fine, but I am working.

G. Halsey: Had you had library experience before?

R. Terwilliger: Only in that I worked in the high school library and volunteered down in the library for a while. But I have no—as far as college education or library work—and I went in there mostly to plan the programs for the library. This is the kind of thing I did for another place here in town called Venture Theater, who did in-school programs. And I think I told Lee I felt I could handle with the contacts with people I knew locally that I might be able to plan some interesting programs. And I really enjoyed it. It's been a great learning experience for me. But this isn't my tape, this is yours. [laughter]

G. Halsey: There were activities other than being a librarian. I had been a member of the [First] Presbyterian choir since high school days and had had some voice lessons, so I took part in Old Folks Concerts organized every year or so by Mr. Luther Riddle, grandfather of the Band Leader Nelson Riddle. There was also an organization in New York that would put on musicals. As I remember, they provided the scenery and some of the costumes and a director, who would come out and work at length with the principals and then whip the chorus line into shape. By this time, the present theater [Forum Theatre] had been built on the corner of Bissett Place and Main Street, and that with the stage at the YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association at 65 High Street], furnished good places for any such performances. We were fortunate in having a number of good voices for the leads, among them the Crowells: Edith, Louise, Malcolm, and [Hugh] Ramsay. Each sang a different part and they formed an excellent quartet—and then Mrs. George Kelly, Ellen Thompson [phonetic]—Kelly Thompson's [phonetic] mother—had a beautiful contralto voice.

R. Terwilliger: Do you remember a woman by the name of Mrs. Noon [phonetic]? Someone mentioned that she took part in a lot of the minstrels that took place in town. She was down from South Main Street. I don't remember her first name, but it was a German family.

G. Halsey: Well, we had a lot of people with good voices, and we had to make our own fun in those days and we did. Radio was just coming in, we didn't have television, and people did that sort of thing.

In the winter, there was skating on Redfield Pond, which was in a lovely woods where Redfield Village now stands. And Daniels Hill furnished sled and toboggan runs, the hill being at the end of Hillside Avenue just before the land now occupied by the [Centenary United] Methodist Church [at 200 Hillside Avenue]. And care had to be taken not to finish one's run on the railroad tracks. [laughter]

During the 1914-[19]18 war, we were overrun with soldiers from Camp Raritan. Everyone did what they could to entertain our boys—dances on the post, arrangement to entertain men on Sundays and holidays. There was a center at

the camp where people, who were willing to entertain, could call. We almost always had two or three for dinner on a Sunday. Believe it or not, some of the soldiers used to come up to church and would almost always be invited home with different church members. A small Service Club was set up in the house next to the corner store on Main [Street] and Amboy [Avenue]. That store, in the early part of the century, was a grocery store [run by Freeman Edgar] and the opposite corner where the gas station is, was a feed and grain store [run by Thomas Eggert] for there were still horses and people also kept chickens. And at Christmastime, we bought our tree there at the cost of thirty-five or fifty cents.

R. Terwilliger: That seems incredible.

G. Halsey: The Service Club was not much more than a place to wait for the trolley back to camp. There was a pool table and a few books and magazines, and my mother was in charge of it for a time.

R. Terwilliger: Did you work with her there at the Service Club?

G. Halsey: Well, I'd go over for dances and things like that, yes.

R. Terwilliger: Do you remember meeting any interesting people—any of these young men that were traveling on? How far away did they come from?

G. Halsey: Oh, all over. We corresponded with ones from out in Illinois, Michigan, [and] Lincoln, Nebraska. A lot of the fellas out there toward the end of the war were—well they were not in the first group. I mean they were fellows that had to wear glasses and things like that—but they worked out there in the capacity of clerical jobs, I guess that sort of thing. And of course, they still had to have guards out there because they still had a big ammunition dump out there. We got quite friendly with many of them.

R. Terwilliger: Did they correspond when they went overseas to France?

G. Halsey: Well, most of those fellows didn't go overseas because it was toward the end of the war, but they had to be kept on.

R. Terwilliger: Did you ever go out to the center itself and do any of these little—

G. Halsey: Out to the camp?

R. Terwilliger: Yeah, entertainments.

G. Halsey: Oh sure. Yes, they had dances out there and I can remember the war first started, one night they had a huge entertainment in a field somewhere out South Main Street—it wasn't so well built up then—but they built a platform out there and they had all these famous New York artists come out and entertain. I don't remember that they ever did that except just the once, but they had weekly dances out on the post.

R. Terwilliger: I wonder how many of those men or soldiers at that time ever came back and settled in Metuchen, having seen this lovely part of town.

G. Halsey: I'll tell you one—[Carleton] Lake from the post office. I don't know where he came from, but he was a soldier here. I remember he was—we used to have dances here.

R. Terwilliger: In the house here?

G. Halsey: Here, sure. And we used to hear from some of those boys after they went back home.

R. Terwilliger: But he actually came back from the thing?

G. Halsey: He's the only one I remember that settled here. There probably were others. As I say, I don't really remember.

R. Terwilliger: Well, it sounds like another world to hear your story of growing up in Metuchen.

G. Halsey: It was another world, I tell you.

R. Terwilliger: We've come a long way and I do hope—especially in that one section of the tape where you talk about sitting at Woodwild [Park] because your mother would probably not believe the amount of cars that go by those gates daily now. Someone gave me a count recently which just made my head spin. But there still is, for maybe you and I and many of the other older people here, something very precious yet about this town if you can kind of close out what we don't like and hang on to what is still lovely.

G. Halsey: I remember when it used to be a nice little country town.

R. Terwilliger: Right. And I do thank you so much Miss Halsey for taking this time.

G. Halsey: Well, it's been a pleasure. I really enjoyed that I remembered so many things when I started to do this, that I had forgotten over the years.

R. Terwilliger: Well this is what so many of the people say, once they sat down and really put their mind to recalling, it's amazing how all events seem to follow an order and in fact the recall was enjoyable.

G. Halsey: Have you talked to Dolly Buchanan?

R. Terwilliger: We just did her. You have to hear her tape. I think we are going to close this off now; we are just about to the end.

[END OF INTERVIEW]