

Oral History Interview - John Stanbury

Isle au Haut Historical Society

Interview Date: July 25, 2012

Location: Isle au Haut home of John and Jean Stanbury

Interviewer: Richard (Dick) Marks with Tom Guglielmo

Transcribed by: Kristen Carlson-Lewis

Reviewed by John and Jean Stanbury, returned with corrections made on March 7, 2014

Dick: This is Richard Marks. It is July the 25th and I am at Doctor John Stanbury's house with Jean and Tom Guglielmo. My duty today as part of the historical committee is to do an oral history on John Stanbury. So, we will start...

John, where were you born and how long ago was that?

John: It was 97 years ago.

Jean: 1915

John: 1915... in Clinton, North Carolina.

Dick: Where in North Carolina?

John: Clinton

Dick: Clinton?

John and Jean: Clinton

Dick: It's interesting, there is a Clinton everywhere. I think I've been by there. I've never been to the town. It's near Asheboro?

John: It's west of Asheboro.

Dick: Alright. How long did you live there?

John: Oh, I think about two years.

Dick: Two years?

John: We moved to Winston-Salem...not Winston-Salem. Clinton...We moved to Wilton, North Carolina...was the second place where I lived.

Dick: And how long were you there?

John: About three years.

Dick: Three years.

John: We then moved to...what's the name of that town? Wilmington.

Dick: Okay

John: We were there about four years, I think. We moved to Raleigh and we were there about 5 years. And then, we went to Durham and the family was there for 5 years, I think but by that time, I was off to college.

Dick: Okay. So, your mother and father, were they from North Carolina?

John: Yes.

Dick: And what were their occupations? Your father's occupation?

John: He was a minister.

Dick: He was a minister?

John: A Protestant minister.

Dick: Which church was he with? Was he with all those churches?

John: Oh, yeah.

Dick: You had to move periodically?

John: Moved every 4 or 5 years.

Dick: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

John: One each...one brother, one sister.

Dick: Where were you in the hierarchy?

John: I was number two.

Dick: Were they both male or female?

John: Both, the first was male and the second was female.

Dick: Did either one of them become a doctor?

John: No.

Dick: Do you remember where your mother and father met?

John: I think they met in...what was the name of that town, eastern North Carolina...Fayetteville, North Carolina.

Dick: Were they both from NC originally?

John: Yeah

Dick: Okay. What do you remember most about your mother?

John: She was very efficient, kindly, housewife, part of the community.

Dick: Did she ever work?

John: No

Dick: Was she working before she was married?

John: No

Dick: Did your father go to seminary or college in North Carolina?

John: He went to what was then Trinity College.

Dick: Trinity?

John: And of course they changed it. But, he never went to Duke. He went to Trinity.

Dick: Duke was called Trinity before the tobacco money.

Tom: Oh really.

Dick: Did he go to seminary there, too?

John: No, it was part of the college curriculum.

Dick: How was your relationship with your father? What do you remember about him the most?

John: I remember he was rather stern, not very athletic, he was community oriented. He spent his afternoons always visiting members of his pastorate.

Dick: How was the health of your parents?

John: For my parents, it was good...always good. They had minor things but generally okay.

Jean: Your mother had the flu.

John: She had the 1918 flu, nearly died from it. But I remember that. I was about 3 years old at the time. I remember very well my mother being ill.

Dick: One of the questions in here: What is one of the first things you remember as a child?

John: The flu epidemic...I described it in a thing I'll give you by and by...I'll show it to you. But, I remember very vividly at the age of three, questioning my father as to why were all those black limousines going by our house all the time. And he explained to me that it was the flu. It was...it was a devastating disease.

Dick: Well, you were lucky. My grandmother had 14 children, seven of them died in the flu epidemic. They were between the age of 0 and 5.

John: We didn't lose any in the epidemic. My mother very nearly died...she was very ill for a couple of weeks. I remember that.

Dick: My grandfather had it and Pat's father had it. They both had Parkinson's disease and they said later on it was probably a result of the flu. You probably know more about that than I do. What was the relationship with you and your brothers and sisters? Were you close, and did you do a lot of things together?

John: Nope, not very close. In fact, I was very hostile to my brother into adulthood. My sister had spina bifida which she suffered all her life...she survived to about 82 or 83.

Dick: My goodness!

John: But, she was always crippled and had to be taken care of. It was the principal task of my parents to take care of my sister... but she was helpless.

Dick: Okay. This is one of the questions: Describe the house you grew up in...well, it sounds like you grew up in quite a few...so maybe we don't have to do that.

Dick: Where did you start to elementary school?

John: The elementary school was in Wilmington. It was just the beginning. Then we went to Raleigh. Of course, I went to the public schools in Raleigh and in Durham.

Dick: You said public or private?

John: Public, always.

Dick: Did they have kindergarten in your day?

John: Nope

Dick: Did you ever go to kindergarten? [to Tom]

Tom: Sure did.

Dick: I didn't, they didn't have it when I came along.

Tom: I'm a little younger.

Dick: You're a little younger. What are some of the happiest things you remember about growing up? Before you say, you went to college?

John: Various things, certainly I think, one of the local children. I played ball.

Dick: Which sports were you most interested in?

John: I was not very good at sports but I was interested in football. I was sandlot baseball and football.

Dick: Did you play a musical instrument?

John: I tried but it didn't work.

Dick: I did too. What was Christmas and holidays like at your house?

John: Well, it was very much celebrated. Christmas was a big event but short-lived, not celebrated more than 2 or 3 days.

Dick: Do you remember the first book you ever read?

John: Oh, I sure don't. No idea.

Dick: Was it something that was part of your life growing up?

John: Well, reading was...yes. But, I don't remember the things I was reading.

Dick: Did you have any pets that you were fond of? Or any pets at all?

John: Dogs, yes...We always had a dog.

Dick: So, you moved with the dog.

John: Sure

Dick: When you started to school, what were the school buildings like then?

John: Well, it was just a plain structured building at first, but nothing pretentious but [illegible].

Dick: Did the school go all the way through, from grade one through high school? Or was it separate?

John: It was separate buildings, separate towns. Of course, the family was moving every 4-5 years.

Dick: Do you remember when you started school how big your classes were? How many kids were in a class?

John: About 25.

Dick: Did you have one teacher for each class?

John: No, no, we had multiple teachers.

Dick: Actually, did you go to what we call middle school or high school in Raleigh or Wilmington?

John: It was just grammar school in Wilmington. Then when we went to Raleigh, I was...I don't know what you call it...it was just a regular school.

Dick: Did you graduate from high school there?

John: Yup

Dick: From Raleigh?

John: Yeah, in Raleigh.

Dick: In high school, was there anything particular that you liked, any subjects that were really important to you that you remember that you enjoyed?

John: In high school yes, there were always projects in the south department, south group. That's what I remember best is the science.

Dick: Did you have any idea in high school what you wanted to do with your life?

John: No

Dick: Was that decision made later in college or later after that?

John: Well, later in high school, I become very interested in the sciences and that continued into the rest of my education.

Dick: Did you think you had a good science background in high school?

John: Yes.

Dick: Did you feel prepared when you went to college for the science background you had?

John: Oh, yeah.

Dick: In those days, obviously they didn't have TV. Was radio important?

John: No

Dick: Not that important. So, how did your parents feel about things like that? Obviously, they weren't number one things in your life. Like children today have computers and cell phones.

John: None of that stuff.

Dick: Do you remember what year you graduated from high school?

John: What year? That would have been about '25 [1925]...is that reasonable?

Dick: Okay. So, were you in college when the Depression hit?

John: Yup.

Dick: Where did you go to college?

John: I went to Duke; it was Trinity College initially.

Dick: Did you call it Duke when you were there?

John: No, I don't think.

Dick: Still Trinity?

John: Still Trinity.

Dick: What year did you finish college?

John: '35 [1935], I think.

Dick: '35. I was three years old in '35. When you got through college, did you go right into med. school?

John: Yeah, directly.

Dick: Where did you go to med. school?

John: Harvard.

Dick: Alright. Growing up in North Carolina and going to schools down there, who got you interested in Harvard? Or how did you figure that out?

John: Well, that's an interesting question. I got a scholarship to Wood's Hole, the marine biological lab. I had never heard of Harvard. And I was sitting on the front door of the classroom one morning at lecture time. I didn't know anybody. But there was a fellow sitting there also and we struck up a conversation. "Where did you go to college?" He said, "I went to Harvard Medical School." I said, "Where's that?" Of course, I didn't know, and so I decided then and there, he was a nice fellow that I would go to Harvard Medical School. So, I applied and was immediately accepted. Why I don't know but I was. So, that next term I went to Harvard in Boston.

Dick: So, there weren't really any transitions, you just went from high school to Wood's Hole for this project and then...

John: No, Wood's Hole was a summer position.

Dick: After that, you went right on to medical school with no time out after that?

John: Yeah.

Dick: By that time, did you know you wanted to go to med school?

John: Yeah.

Dick: What sort of science were you doing at Wood's Hole? What sort of projects were you doing there?

John: Well, I was working inappropriately on cats...cat physiology. Not the sort of thing you expect at Wood's Hole.

Dick: So, you finished college in like '35 and you went to med school? Obviously, it was a four year school. Was medical school then, I guess, sort of like mine was, with two years of basic science and two years of clinical?

John: Just the same.

Dick: Was anything different at Harvard do you think from any other medical school?

John: Not so far as I knew.

Dick: How was it, I mean how did you fit in, or what did you think about somebody from...I'm from South Carolina...somebody from North Carolina coming way up here to New England?

John: Thought it was a little strange.

Dick: Strange? Did it take awhile to get used to it?

John: No, it was a large class, a very diverse class, so other people were in the same fix as I was.

Dick: So, how big was your class?

John: About 125.

Dick: How many?

John: 125

Dick: Mine was 72 so that's...

John: What school's that?

Dick: At Virginia, my medical diploma.

John: Charlottesville?

Dick: Right...it was 72.

Tom: What did you find strange about it?

John: About?

Tom: About medical school?

John: I don't know there was anything strange about it.

Dick: I sort of meant living in a different part of the country. You know, obviously, where you lived was a little different from Wilmington or Raleigh.

John: Oh, yeah, very different. But it was a big class...it was 125. And so all of us had different experiences which we related to each other.

Dick: Was the age group about the same or were there older people in your class?

John: It was about the same, there were a couple of fellows who were older but most of us were about the same age.

Dick: Were there any females?

John: None.

Dick: Were there any minorities, any Blacks or Asians?

John: No Blacks, no Asians.

Dick: Did you think medical school was tough? Did you think it was hard?

John: Not particularly, no. It was okay.

Dick: Did you feel very satisfied with your outcome and your standing in the class? And that sort of thing?

John: Yeah

Dick: When you were in medical school, did you know Jean?

John: No

Dick: We'll talk about when you met her later then. When in medical school did you decide what type of doctor you wanted to practice? What kind of medicine you wanted to practice?

John: Fairly early, I think. I didn't want to practice medicine at all, I wanted medical science. But I didn't fancy practicing at all.

Dick: So explain about what you meant that you wanted to do?

John: I don't understand your question.

Dick: I mean, obviously, you didn't want to be a country doctor?

John: That's right.

Dick: And you didn't want to be in academic medicine. I mean maybe you did but you didn't want to get in a group for a private practice.

John: Nope

Dick: So, what did you really basically want to do then?

John: That was something that was made up for me because it was just at the beginning of the war. I was involved in that for 5 years.

Dick: Did you have to go in right after medical school?

John: There was a year between medical school and the navy.

Dick: Were you drafted?

John: Yup

Dick: That was like 1940 or '41?

John: It was '40 [1940].

Dick: So, was there any way that you could have avoided going in?

John: If there was, I didn't find it, didn't learn about it. I tried...I got into the hospital then as a first year intern and uh...

Jean: Didn't you join the reserves thinking it would give you more time? And then, they called him up right away before Pearl Harbor.

Dick: So, did you have to do a rotating internship right after medical school?

John: No, I did straight medicine for a year.

Dick: So that was first year of residency you did that?

John: Well, it was first year, it wasn't called a residency, it was just the next step.

Dick: But, then after that internship or straight medical year, did you go in the army then?

John: Navy. Yeah, for nearly 5 years.

Dick: What were your duty stations?

John: Well, I started out in Norfolk, Virginia, the naval hospital there in Norfolk. That lasted just 3 or 4 weeks. Then, I was off on a ship for almost 2 years.

Dick: What type of ship?

John: It was a light cruiser.

Dick: Did you go in the Pacific?

John: Yeah...a couple times...went through the canal.

Dick: So, you were there 2 years and then what happened after that?

John: I was assigned because I was interested in...volunteered for what was epidemiology. So, I was in epidemiology for a couple years for the Navy.

Dick: Where were you stationed there?

John: Mostly on board ship, two years.

Dick: So, were you discharged then after the Japanese surrendered?

John: Yeah.

Dick: You got out then?

John: Yeah.

Dick: That would have been in August when the surrender was made, in '45?

John: Yup, I was home with Jean's family, about 6 months after the H-Bomb.

Dick: Did you meet Jean then after medical school while you were in the service?

John: While In the service, yeah.

Dick: Where did you meet her?

John: In Norfolk. She was in Smith at the time and she was visiting her uncle...what was it the Thanksgiving holiday you came down to...where was it? Norfolk? No, not Norfolk. What's the name?

Jean: Yeah alright, I've forgotten now, too.

John: It was in a big naval base in New England.

Dick: So, that was your first meeting right? Then, how long did y'all know each other? Or were you courting before you got married?

John: About a year.

Dick: During that time, were you in and out of the country? Or were you stationed...?

Jean: Newport.

John: The ship was based in Newport, Rhode Island.

Dick: So, how long were you separated because of the war?

John: About 6 months, more or less.

Jean: He went back overseas in June of '45. You went to the Pacific.

Dick: So, what year were you married then?

Jean: We were married in January '45 and then he went overseas out to the Pacific in June of '45.

Dick: Okay

John: It was just before the H-bomb.

Jean: And he came back in December of '45.

Tom: Can you describe the day you met?

John: Well, we met in the offices of your uncle and aunt in Newport. Jean was at Smith and came down to Newport. We saw as much of each other as we could but we didn't have a lot of time because I had to go back to Navy duty. That about right?

Dick: So when you got married, where were you living first? In Cambridge or Boston?

John: Boston [Bethesda, MD]

Jean Well, my family came from Illinois.

Dick: So, but after you married you started living in?

Jean: In Bethesda.

John: In Bethesda, Maryland.

Jean: He was stationed in Bethesda.

Dick: So, you were there how long before you got out of the service?

John: Oh, about a year.

Jean: Then, we were 6 months in Bethesda and then you went to the Pacific for 6 months and that was when he was discharged.

Dick: Okay, alright.

John: Discharged, what was it? November of that year? '45?

Dick: When you were stationed on the ship as a physician, obviously you couldn't just practice internal medicine? Did you have to do everything?

John: You had to do everything but it wasn't very much. It was a healthy group of sailors. Not much else. We had a couple of episodes that were different but it was pretty quiet duty.

Dick: Were there any scary frightening times for you in the service?

John: Never heard a shot fired in anger, no. So, I saw a lot of real water under the bow.

Dick: After y'all were married and you got out of the service, tell me what happened after that?

John: Well, I guess I went back to the MGH.

Jean: Yes, when he came home from the war in December and we had Christmas together. And then he came back to the MGH to finish and do his residency.

Dick: So, you had to do 2 more years?

John: Two more years.

Dick: While you were doing that, did you know what you wanted to do when you finished your residency?

John: Pretty much. I wanted to finish the residency and be fully qualified and then I wanted to go into Endocrinology which I did at the MGH.

Dick: Okay and so you started out as an instructor or assistant professor or whatever they call it?

John: Instructor.

Dick: So, how many years were you there?

John: MGH...what fifteen, 16, 17 years?

Dick: The rest of your..?

John: Just on the staff, the medical staff.

Dick: When you were there, how rapidly were you able to get promoted? In other words, from instructor to assistant professor, associate professor?

John: Pretty slow.

Dick: Did you have certain things you had to do? Other than doing a good job working?

John: No nothing, just working in that department.

Dick: You didn't have to write so many papers or edit so many books and things like that?

John: No, you did those things but you did them because it was expected of you not because someone told you to do them. Nobody one ever told me to write that paper or read that book...it just came naturally.

Dick: Did you remember when you became a full professor?

John: I never became a full professor.

Dick: You never became a full professor? Okay.

John: Not there. I went over to MIT and they had a full professorship.

Dick: Beg your pardon?

John: I went over to MIT and had a full professorship there.

Dick: Were they associated or was that a separate position there?

John: A little of both. You were not only associated, you were part of the staff and had your duties at both institutions.

Dick: As an endocrinologist, what were your main interests?

John: I became interested in the thyroid.

Dick: Beg your pardon.

John: In the thyroid gland. I worked on that for the remainder of my time at the MGH.

Dick: And you've written about it.

John: Yeah

Tom: What interested you in the thyroid?

John: Circumstance, the patients you were responsible for and took care of and studied and wrote about.

Tom: MGH is Mass. General Hospital?

John: Yes, right.

Jean: Why don't you tell about Argentina?

John: Well, about a year after I was at MGH as a young physician, a fellow came to visit us at our laboratory at the MGH from Argentina and he seemed like a promising fellow. So we struck up a good friendship. He was assigned as a physician to the MGH thyroid unit because that was his principal interest back in Argentina. So, I suggested one day that we might go and study that curious organ, the thyroid gland in Argentina because they had a lot of thyroid disease there. So, I did. We got together and raised a little money and went to Argentina. I was there, what two

months. Jean came down at the end of it. Wrote it up and it became an important experience, that time in Argentina. We focused on the thyroid gland.

Dick: Why did they have a lot of thyroid disease in Argentina?

John: Iodide deficiency. That's what we set out to find out why and that was the upshot...the Iodide deficiency.

Dick: I've been coming here 19 years. I think when I first met you; you were still going into the hospital and working on things? Is that correct?

John: That's correct.

Dick: So, when was the last time you did that? Do you still do that?

John: I still do that when I can. I'm a little old for that now.

Dick: A lot of places at 72, you have to pack up your bags and lock your door. But, you didn't do that?

John: I didn't do that.

Dick: All right, so after you and Jean were married, how long before you had your first child?

Jean: Just about a year.

Dick: About a year. How many y'all have?

Jean: Five children.

Dick: And how many grandchildren?

Jean: Nine grandchildren and one new great grandchild.

Dick: What are the occupations of your children?

John: The oldest is an architect. Who's next?

Jean: Martha is in public health. She works in Michigan for the department of public health.

John: And um... her sister Sally is a professor and teacher, a writer. Brother, David is a professor in chemistry in Alabama at Auburn. And who else is there?

Jean: And then there was Pam that we lost [to cancer in 1999].

John: You look out the window down the cut here, you see her memorial bench.

Jean: Pam was an anthropologist.

Dick: So, you have 9 grandchildren. And the oldest grandchild? How old is your oldest grandchild?

Jean: I guess he is 34.

Dick: Are any of them doctors?

Jean: One grandson, Jeremy is a doctor, his wife's a doctor, another grand-daughter's a doctor and two son-in-laws are doctors.

Dick: Plenty of doctors in your family.

Jean: A lot of doctors.

Dick: Alright, Tom, I am sort of through with this sort of part. Anything else you want to ask that I didn't cover? I thought maybe we got time we could go on and do the Isle au Haut bit.

Tom: I just wanted to ask about the paper that you did in Argentina. Was it a very important paper? Did it subsequently turn out?

John: Significant, read and bought.

Tom: It must have had a powerful impact in Argentina.

John: Well, I think it probably did, yeah.

Dick: In South Carolina, we have the highest incidence of stroke and diabetes of any state in the union.

John: Do you really?

Dick: Part of that's because we have 30-40% Black and quite a few Hispanics. But, a friend of mine whose not quite as old as you, but is a chemist. Well, he's a physician too; he's in charge of the chemical lab and pathology. And he said we have the lowest level of magnesium in the country and he says he doesn't know why somebody hasn't jumped on that and I figured out that's why we have the highest incidence of stroke and diabetes because of the low magnesium level.

John: I hadn't heard that...didn't know that.

Dick: Do you think that makes sense?

John: The only sense it makes is that you go and try to find out why.

Dick: Right.

John: there is no a priori reason for it...you just have to explore.

Dick: Well, now, we'll now talk a little bit. When and why did you first come to Isle au Haut?

John: My chief at the MGH, Dr. Howard Means was an assistant professor in medicine [who had previously owned the 'Professor's house' on Isle au Haut]. He came by my office for coffee one morning and I said 'Got any thoughts about where I should go for my summer holiday?' This was mid-winter. He picked up the phone and called Fred Eustis's mother and asked her where this fellow should go for his summer holiday. And she said, "Isle au Haut." She picked up the phone and made the arrangements. And so that summer we came to Isle au Haut for the first time and we were back here every summer since with one exception.

Dick: Do you remember what year that was?

John: I'm not sure I remember exactly. I've got it written down. I'll show you.

Dick: It had to be obviously after the war? It might have been in the fifties, early fifties?

John: Mid-fifties [1956].

Dick: Mid-fifties. Where did you stay when you first came?

John: We stayed at the French house. You know the French house? I guess we stayed there one summer.

Dick: You rented for two summers?

John: We rented two summers. We rented various houses until '71 when we moved here.

Dick: You bought this in '71?

John: Yup

Dick: Has the island changed much since you first came?

John: Not a whole lot, no. People do rotate a bit. But, it stays much the same.

Dick: Do you think if it has changed at all, do you think it has changed for the good? Or do you think it has gotten worse?

John: It has changed for the good.

Dick: What do you think is better about the island than it was when you first came?

John: Certainly the availability of supplies like food. There was a very shoddy store when we first came and it didn't have much in it. And it went through various transformations and it's quite a good store now. That's been a major change.

Dick (gesturing toward Tom): When did you meet this fellow over here? Tom Guglielmo?

John: Oh, what about 10 years ago?

Tom: Yeah, I have been here 40. I think that I knew of you when I first came.

John: The trouble with Tom Guglielmo, he's lived down at the other end of the island.

Dick: He's in another country, isn't he?

John: Yeah.

Dick: What are the things that you really enjoyed doing when you first came here? What were the greatest times that you had here?

John: The family and the children. Wouldn't you say so? Played a lot of tennis.

Jean: We first rented the French house in the village in 1956. And there were not many people here...a lot of empty houses. But we came up with five children, a babysitter and a dog. He would work in the morning on his papers and in the afternoon, we would picnic and hike and do things.

Dick: Did you do a lot of hiking?

John: Yeah. With young children, you didn't hike very much or very far.

Jean: Well, they were kind of young.

Dick: Did you use the pond a lot? Did your kids use the pond a lot?

John: Yeah, we did.

Jean: There wasn't a beach then. They had to jump off the rock. We would give them life preservers and they would jump off the rock.

Dick: Have you been interested in boating or sailing?

John: Neither one very much, no, never interested in sailing. We would go several times sailing but we didn't like it.

Dick: Ever since you bought this place and been coming regularly, would you say you met most everybody on the island?

John: Well, they do turn over. We knew about 75% of the people on the island earlier more recently of course, but people turn over and so do we.

Dick: Has the church been about the same since Ted has been coming most of the time? Since you've been coming?

John: Yes

Dick: Did you know his father?

John: No not that I remember.

Jean: When we first came, they had two services. A morning service which the summer people went to and a 6 o'clock service for the island people who went to church. There was quite a separation between the island people and the summer people when we first came.

Dick: Would the church have as many people at the services as they do now?

Jean: No

John: I think Ted has been the big drawing card.

Dick: You mentioned that your father was a Protestant minister. Were you a Protestant follower for a number of years because of that?

John: No, we were not.

Dick: You were not. Were you a member of another denomination when you were in the Boston area?

John: No, we became Episcopalians...Methodists before that.

Dick: Do you think things on the island now are headed in the right direction to maintain the autonomy of the island and preserve the year-round community?

John: I think there is a lot that needs to be done. I don't know quite what. I don't think things are going very well just now. The church is not as full on Sunday as it used to be. But, I think it's going in the right direction but not very fast.

Dick: Do you think we have been forced in the last few years to have people like Fred and Marie Noel and George Cole to maintain some services on the island?

John: That's fiscal viability...yes.

Dick: What do you think will happen if we don't have those folks anymore?

John: Well, I don't know, it's happening right now, it seems to be drying up. The island population seems to be decreasing. I don't know why. Ted is the big drawing card but the church isn't quite as full as it used to be 5 years ago.

Dick: When we don't have people like Fred and George, do you think the boat service will continue to be as good as it is now?

John: The boat service?

Dick: the boat service...

John: It's hard to say. Because things are undergoing a certain transition at the moment, and I don't know how it's going to come out. Whether it's going to grow or whether it's gonna just...I don't know what will happen to it. We are all worried about that.

Dick: What do you think about the island school? Do you think it's a good thing to maintain a one room school with a handful of students? Or should we just abandon that and have the kids go off the island?

John: Well, I think as long as you can, you should keep the school viable. I think it's an important factor in the community and everything should be done to maintain it.

Dick: Well, that's certainly what the town is trying to do. I am sure that you have traveled as much as you have traveled and lived in the places that you have lived. Is there any other any place that you think would be as nice or as important for you to go to in the summers as Isle au Haut?

John: No, we have been here so long and dug in here. I don't think we would consider any other place. It's just what we want. There's some improvements that could happen. That store could be put on a firmer basis. Except for Marie-Noel. She's really held things together the past 5 years. It's been wonderful having her because of the financial support she's...

Dick: Do you think we will be able to maintain when she's no longer here?

John: I think that's a question up for grabs. I don't know.

Dick: You have a big family. Y'all have them here a lot and you enjoy them. Do you think that is a stressful thing or a joyful thing? That you would always want?

John: The latter certainly. I could scarcely imagine any other place to spend our summers at.

Dick: And you all have made it all nice and convenient by having the guest house. It's a big help.

John: We put a fair amount in here; the guest house, the gazebo, in addition to improvements on this place.

Tom: Can you speak about this house John? Did you have this house built for you?

John: No, this was here. We purchased it.

Dick: It's written up in Peter Scott's book as being here during World War I. You remember the story about people seeing Nazis in here. Do you think it's true?

John: That's up for grabs. That's how true it is. We don't know.

Dick: It makes an interesting story.

John: There's still a German beer stein here in the house. Want to show it to him?

Jean: It's in that room. They claim it was out on the table.

Dick: Tom, anything else you want to ask?

Tom: No, I think you covered everything.

Dick: Well, we thank you very much.

John: I have a write-up of our experiences on the island.

Dick: Well, we'd like to have that definitely. The archives committee would like pictures, write-ups, anything you think would be nice for other people to be able to see.

Jean: That's right; I don't think they have a copy of that book here, John...Cabin by the Sea. We just had it published this past winter.