

Bayside Historical Preservation Society Oral History Project
Interview of Morrill Martin by Jimmy Martin, his son
August 17, 1997

JM: This is an interview on August 17, 1997, with Reverend Morrill Martin, in the Crows' Nest Cottage for the Bayside Historical Preservation Society oral history project.

Question 1, Dad, is, "What dates cover your Bayside experience; when did you first come here, and how old were you?"

MM: The dates...we first came to Bayside in 1922 when my father, Rev. Charles W. Martin, served as the pastor of the Belfast, East Northport and West Northport churches and charge in the Methodist conference.

JM: Question #2 is, "How did you discover Bayside, or how did your father discover Bayside?"

MM: My father, the Belfast minister, was involved in the worship services of the Wesleyan Grove Campmeeting Association, and I participated in the children's and youth program services held in the Bangor Chapel at the top of the hill.

JM: Next question, Dad, is, "When you came here, how did you get here? How did you travel, and how long did it take, and did you ever come by steamboat?"

MM: No, we did not come by steamboat, but we came by automobile.

JM: And what was the trip like?

MM: Wonderful trip, coming to the state of Maine, to enjoy the summer, each summer of my life.

JM: What kind of a car did your father drive then?

MM: A model-T Ford.

JM: Where had he bought it?

MM: He bought it in Belfast.

JM: You don't remember what he paid for it, do you?

MM: No.

JM: What color was it?

MM: Black.

JM: Did anybody else ever drive it except for him?

MM: No.

JM: When you traveled here, didn't your father at some times coast down the hills?

MM: Yes.

JM: Why did he do that?

MM: To save gasoline. Coming by the post office in Belfast.

JM: What would he do?

MM: He'd put it in neutral, and coast.

JM: Would he tell you he was doing that?

MM: No, you could feel it.

JM: Was it scary?

MM: At first, yes, but not after that.

JM: Did he have a sense of humor about it?

MM: Yes.

JM: What cottages have you occupied in the circle...your family, since the start?

MM: Originally we were in the Belfast cottage because he was pastor in Belfast had the privilege of living in the Belfast which was next to the Brewer, and between the Brewer and the Lincolnville. The Brewer still stands, but the Lincolnville was torn down quite a long while ago.

JM: Talk some about after you moved from the Belfast, the transition to the Crows' Nest cottage. Your father bought that cottage?

MM: Yes, from Ida Miller in Rockland, Maine.

JM: Wasn't that because the Millers had another cottage at Owl's Head, and they preferred going down there?

MM: Yes, they were accustomed in those times to going there instead of coming here. Originally, their interest was here, but it changed as the years went on.

JM: And so the Crows' Nest cottage is the only cottage in the circle that points in a different direction. Do you think the Crows' Nest cottage was actually here before the rest of the circle was built?

MM: I'm not sure about that.

JM: OK, so your father and mother bought the Crows' Nest and then moved into it, and then you and your family bought the Carmel cottage. Was it in 1960?

MM: Approximately, yes.

JM: And do you remember who the family bought the Carmel cottage from?

MM: Sidney Rand.

JM: Can you tell us anything about Sidney Rand at all, and why he was selling the Carmel?

MM: He was the son-in-law of Mr. Spear, who purchased the cottage first in 1935.

JM: And did Mr. Rand have ties somewhere else in the summer? Was he not a Bayside person- is that why he sold?

MM: Yes, he had a cottage elsewhere, up near Waterville.

JM: At China Lake, I think it was. Now, would you talk some about the stores in Bayside...Tuttle's store, and what it was, and the stores at the top of the hill. What were the names of the principal stores?

MM: Across from the hotel...

JM: The Tuttle store was across from the Bayside Inn, right?

MM: Yes, and it had one or two owners at that particular time.

JM: As far as you knew, was Tuttle's store open all twelve months, or just in the summer?

MM: Just in the summer.

JM: And did it have various sundries and so on? Was there any special quality...was it just a little general store?

MM: General store...vegetables, canned goods, and so forth.

JM: Was it a post office at that time, or did that post office come with Lowell and Arlene Parker.

MM: Arlene's time, when she was postmistress (note 1).

JM: Were there any other stores that were popular in Bayside at that time?

MM: There were two up on the hill, in another part of the town, up towards the country club.

JM: They were similar kinds of stores?

MM: Yes, grocery.

JM: Talk some about some of your memories of Bayside, having first come here in the twenties. Give us some of your favorite memories that have imprinted your impressions of Bayside...some special things.

MM: Well, it was a center of activity for the Methodists in this part of the state of Maine. Many, many churches involved, and some people in those churches had cottages in Bayside so it was the natural thing to attend services in the auditorium, in Auditorium Park down from the pump at the top of the hill on the main street.

JM: And the services were first offered in the 1800's in a tent, and that tent then became a wooden structure.

MM: That's right.

JM: When you first came to Bayside, was it still a tent, or had the wooden structure already been built?

MM: The wooden structure had already been built?

JM: Was it painted, or was it unpainted wood...

MM: Painted white.

JM: And you told a story in which the wooden structure filled up so much of the park that the cars barely could turn around as they came down here by the Crows' Nest. Isn't that right?

MM: The road was seldom used because it was built for a horse or team, and then eventually they improved the road so that automobiles could come down behind the big auditorium that stood on the shore.

JM: Do you remember the day that they took down the auditorium?

MM: No.

JM: You came back one summer, and it had been taken down during the winter at that time. Now could you talk some about, as I remember, you and other people have said there used to be a very active horseshoe pitching league up...what street was it on?

MM: It was up very near the stores at the top of the hill, close to the country club.

JM: I think it was on that passageway where they keep boats now. It isn't really an active street, but it is a pass-through where boats are kept. Talk some about pitching horseshoes. Did you do it every night, or once a week? What was it like?

MM: Pitched whenever the opportunity came and people were there to pitch during the day, especially weekends. It was something that those who loved horseshoe pitching enjoyed the most when they were in Bayside, and some of the pitchers were excellent. They came from many places. Competition Sunday afternoons drew a large number of people who enjoyed watching.

JM: Would you say Sunday afternoon was the principal competition of the week?

MM: Exactly.

JM: Middle of the afternoon, or was it five o'clock...

MM: No, it was after dinner, and lasted until four or five o'clock in the afternoon.

JM: You mean, right after lunch it began.

MM: Yup.

JM: At the end of the summer was there any kind of an organization that awarded a grand prize or was there a competition of sorts?

MM: No.

JM: Do you still have any of your horseshoes?

MM: Yes.

JM: Could you pitch today if you wanted to?

MM: You bet your life, and get some ringers, too!

JM: Mr. Kendall (?) was the postman...

MM: ...and he lived in the Bucksport cottage at the top of the circle next to the Orono, and he was the one who taught me how to pitch. He was a ringer pitcher- didn't miss- so he gave me the technique of making one turn of the shoe and on the post it would go. We had a tremendous lot of fun, and it drew large crowds to watch the horseshoe pitching.

JM: Was Mr. Kendall a postman in Belfast, or somewhere else?

MM: I think in Bucksport.

JM: Did he have a sense of humor?

MM: Yes, he was a regular guy.

JM: Now tell us a little about when you could go up to a cottage in Bayside and actually buy some baked beans if you wanted to. Where was that? What was the story with that?

MM: Well, my Dad being pastor in the East Northport Methodist Church along with Belfast and West Northport Churches, had as a parishioner a Mrs. Beech, and she was noted for her cooking, and she was especially adept in cooking the best baked beans that were available anywhere in America.

JM: What did she sell them to you in...a little pot?

MM: Yes, she had containers, that I'm not sure where she got them, but they were adequate. You could get a quart, or you could get a gallon of them, depending on the number of people you were going to serve.

JM: Did you buy beans from her many times?

MM: Many times. We enjoyed every bean.

JM: What did Mrs. Beech look like, as an example.

MM: Robust. She looked like a cook. That's what she did best, was cook, and people

JM: The Northport Golf Club was also part of your experience here when your were a young man as you caddied. That was one of the ways for a young man to make money during the summer.

MM: Exactly.

JM: Talk a little bit about the Northport Golf Club.

MM: At that time, it drew a large number of people, and caddying was a money-maker. However, not one that you would get wealthy on because a round would cost that golfer

35 cents, and it boosted to 50 cents, and then eventually to a dollar, and I caddied for Dr. Ansel Lothrop in Belfast and I'll never forget being down on the course, on the fairway, which would have been the second fairway, and being hit by one of the balls that Dr. Ansel Lothrop hit off the ninth tee...hit me right in the back.

JM: Were you caddying for someone else on that day?

MM: Yes, exactly. Didn't even know that Lothrop was up on the ninth tee. Quite a few feet existed between the tees where they hit the ball and where it landed.

JM: And would you caddy some days for two people at one time?

MM: Yes, that's when we got rich. We made 35 cents a round. That's nine holes of carrying a bag loaded with golf clubs, or, if you carried double, you could get double the money. But they did boost it to 50 cents, and eventually a dollar a round.

JM: You enjoyed that.

MM: Very, very much.

JM: Was there anybody you remember as a particularly big tipper?

MM: Dr. Lothrop. He was the mainstay for me. Oh, Admiral Pratt was another one. It was a delight to caddy for him.

JM: Talk a little bit about Admiral Pratt.

MM: He was chief of naval operations. Lived in Belfast on the top in a beautiful home on Primrose Hill, and he was a gentleman, a real gentleman, and he was a good golfer, and he was very fair, he not only paid the round fee, but he would always tip generously.

JM: You've talked some points that the cottages that were built around the park needed to be repaired on an on-going basis. Some still do, and at the time that you and your mom and your dad and your brother Edward lived in the Belfast cottage, what would you need to do when it began raining buckets.

MM: Well, because it leaked, the building leaked, it was necessary to hold an umbrella over your head, or place it in such a way that it would remain where it was and keep you protected from being soaked.

JM: So you would have to put an umbrella over you head in the house from the rain.. . when something like that occurred, and you did have a problem with the house, and in the early times when at least it would appear that houses weren't owned by individual families, how did repairs on cottages which must have been necessary at some points, get accomplished? Who would take responsibility to do it?

MM: The Association had the major responsibility. Those responsible for the homes that were in the circle in particular, and further extremities, if the case was such, and they were carefully cared for and a delight to live in, and they were in the center of activity because it was the Auditorium Park where the big auditorium stood.

JM: So the Association held the responsibility to repair cottages that needed it the most. Do you remember stories when you were having an umbrella over your head, was it funny, and were there other people in other cottages also experiencing the same, or was the Belfast cottage a bit more run down?

MM: I can only speak for the Belfast cottage. That's the one that I lived in.

JM: During the rain storm, if you looked in the windows of other houses, did you see umbrellas inside?

MM: No.

JM: Why didn't you go up on the roof and fix it yourself?

MM: Too young.

JM: Ok, let's talk some about the leaders and memorable people associated with the campground and Bayside in general. Who would those people be?

MM: Paul Morris's dad was a pastor in Bangor in the Methodist Church, one of the Methodist churches in Bangor, and Paul became the business manager of the campground, and was that for quite a period of time. He would assist everybody who needed a room in a cottage, or to rent a cottage and so forth. Marion Eaton was a resident in the Winterport cottage within the circle next to the Rockland and the Eddington cottages, and she was a top notch golfer, and she was primarily interested in those years in sailing. And she started the Sailing School in the campgrounds, and attracted quite a bit of attention, people from out of town and cottages and other parts of Bayside would come and be members of the sailing school.

JM: And talk about Reverend Wall a bit. What do you remember about him? Reverend E. Lewis Wall.

MM: Oh, he was a pretty good sized man...in fact you'd call him stout. Yet he got around very well. He occupied a cottage right on the shore...

JM: Who has that cottage now?

MM: Gordon.

JM: The one that sort of hangs out over the property line...

MM: The one that's on posts.

JM: When Reverend Wall lived in that cottage, was there a road that went down next to it, just the way there is now?

MM: Yes. (?) used to go down there then.

JM: Do you remember anything during that period, because many of us of course have had an interest in Gordon's cottage as it's been one of the ones farthest out on the ledge and buttressed by posts. When Reverend Wall lived there, was it also close to the edge or was there more of a banking underneath it?

MM: No, there might have been a few feet but not many. It was on a precipice, more or less, all the time I knew it.

JM: And he was a stout man.

MM: Yes, heavy.

JM: In 1934, there was a flag-raising and a dedication of the memorial stone, and what part did your father, Reverend Charles Martin, play in that ceremony?

MM: He was the speaker at that occasion, and that drew quite a number of people, because that was the final meeting of those interested in the campmeeting association on the spot.

JM: Let's talk some about the Wesleyan Campmeeting. Can you tell us anything about the campmeeting for someone who wasn't part of that? Everybody was welcome to it?

MM: To the services, which they sponsored. It was the governing body at that particular time, and services were held every Sunday, and sometimes there was a solid week of services during the summer season.

JM: Not every week though in the summer. It wasn't every week every day.

MM: Occasionally they had special services to draw the crowds.

JM: What time of day were the services typically?

MM: Afternoons. They would have drama, plays, soloists, and entertainers. It was a high point in the life of the campmeeting association.

JM: You mean in the afternoon service they'd have drama and plays, or was that at another time? That was part of...

MM: Other times, as well as incorporated in the service of worship.

JM: And was there any activity in the evenings...any organized activity?

MM: Yes, special evening entertainment programs.

JM: Entertainment- would it be with a spiritual focus to it...hymn sings and so on?

MM: Yes, because it was a church camp meeting, and that laid a heavy emphasis on their relationship to the Lord.

JM: Sunday was one of the principal days in the summer for Wesleyan Campground activity though.

MM: That's right.

JM: When people came to a cottage from Carmel or from Unity or from Rockland, how long would they typically come for?

MM: Sometimes they would stay for the season and not miss any. They would have cottages here. Others would come for those services they were primarily interested in.

JM: And if you came to the Rockland or Belfast cottage as a participant, would you come for one week?

MM: Yes. The campmeeting weeks...there were not too many of them...would draw crowds, in fact, hundreds would come.

JM: Would people come and stay in the Union, or the...

MM: They would come by boat across the Penobscot Bay from various points and stay in the cottages..

JM: I understand...and the weeks there wasn't a camp meeting, would people still come from Carmel or from Bucksport and stay in a cottage, for rest and relaxation and renewal.

MM: Yes. They had that privilege.

JM: You said to me once I think, that it may have cost around \$5.00 a week to come. What do you think people paid to come, because they did make a contribution, didn't they?

MM: I wasn't the one who paid at that time. I was just a young man, young fellow.

JM: Do you remember though, in order to keep the association going, they must have made a contribution.

MM: Yes, the family of those who came to stay and attend the services and the meetings that were held, youth meetings as well as adult meetings, would pay.

JM: And when you came to a cottage for a camp meeting, did you have to bring your own bedding and your own linens, or would those be provided here, as an example.

MM: Oh, they were provided if necessary, but you would have your own when you came. You'd bring them with you.

JM: You'd bring them with you. Were the beds all narrow, single beds?

MM: Yes. Occasionally there was a double bed, the old-fashioned double bed with a head and a foot...

JM: But more generally it was a single bed (note 2).

MM: Yes.

JM: And you could bring your linens, or linens would be provided.

MM: Yes.(?) for the young people (?)

JM: So within the circle, your're saying that the Unity Cottage was at one point (not its entire history) a center of activity for children in the summer. That was the focus around the circle where children might have activities.

MM: Exactly. The youngest of the children would usually leave the older youth for action in the Unity, and they would go to the Bangor Chapel at the top of the hill.

JM: And you said the Union Cottage was owned by a man, a farmer from Union named Mitchell.

MM: Yes.

JM: Do you remember him at all?

MM: A potato farmer. Yes, he was a big man.

JM: Did he come and vacation himself at the Union cottage at all?

MM: Some, but he was a worker. He didn't use it primarily as a place to come and relax. It was just a drop-in to make sure everything was right for the occupants.

JM: In estimating in terms of the people that attended, are you saying between 200 and 300 people. Is that an estimate that is fair?

MM: Well, maybe 200. That was when they had an outstanding speaker or some special program.

JM: If they didn't have that it would be fewer, but you'd still have upwards of maybe 100 people?

MM: Yes.

JM: OK.

MM: They would occupy the balcony in that big auditorium as well as the downstairs area. Since it was on the side of a hill, it was sloping, and the building was built in such a way that the floor sloped as well, towards the beach.

JM: Now down off our park here, the campground park, there is a massing of rocks, that appears to have once been some sort of dock. Do you ever remember in your lifetime seeing it, or was it even when you were younger just a memory?

MM: Just a memory.

JM: What were the stories that you can recall about that dock? Was it once THE dock, in fact prior to where our wharf now is?

MM: Exactly. They would come to that dock, and go to their cottages, or otherwise.

JM: So would that have been the dock originally in your memory where the Belfast steamboat would have come?

MM: No, that was later on in the history of Bayside.

JM: But originally that mass of rocks at the based of our campground was a dock of some sort.

MM: Part of the dock.

JM: So there's always been steps coming up from there. That's a long history of steps. So you never saw it, though, or never used it either. When you were in the campground, obviously now the campground for everyone is a memory of differing sorts, and this is an important project to preserve that memory, while for many people in 1997 the Northport Village Corporation is more of a reality, as we're assessed taxes and work with them in the preservation of our properties. Do you have any comment or memory of how the Village Corporation came to be, or how the campground worked with it.

MM: There had to be a business organization to manage the business of the campmeeting association, so it prevailed for a number of years.

JM: 1934 was the last time you said that there was actually a gathering of sorts, and you would have been 22 at that time. Can you in those teenage years, leading up to 1934, did you sense leading up to that point, a diminishing of the interest in the campground, or what at the time, we can only read about it in history books in retrospect now, and assess it as a history experience, but when you were living it, what was going on such that after 1934 it just didn't exist any more? Why didn't people come?

MM: People came, but they used the cottages for summer vacations, following the closing of the Association, and the church was represented to some extent in this area by the Belfast church, the East Northport and the West Northport churches closest to the campmeeting site.

JM: Do you remember sensing in the early 1930's and the years leading up to the final meeting a smaller attendances or less of an interest in the campground?

MM: Yes.

JM: So that it wasn't a surprise in 1933 or '34 when it was finally concluded.

MM: That's right. After the formal services were discontinued, then it didn't persist.

JM: Can you talk some about, just generally speaking, when cottages then, after 1934, these very nice cottages, some of them obviously needed repairs to their roofs, but the cottages were here and gradually people began to value them for their recreational and their beautiful position with regards to the water, how did the cottages generally move into private ownership? Each story is of course its own, but what do you remember noting? Did some member of the parish in a given town really enjoy it very much, and say "I'd like to make a bid (on a given cottage)," or what happened?

MM: Exactly. That's what happened. For instance, the Union cottage was owned by a potato farmer in Union, Maine, and eventually he had it open for anyone, whether they came from Union or otherwise, to rent a room in that particular, and so in some of the other buildings in the campground area.

JM: Now, some remember Paul Morris may have had possession some of the deeds of the cottages. You described Paul Morris at one point. Was he an administrator who managed the... did the deeds of the cottages come into his control for him to dispense.

MM: Yes, his dad was a prime mover in the early years, lived in Bangor. Reverend Albert Morris. So Paul came by it more or less naturally. He had a business mind, was actually a teacher on Cape Cod. He considered this of prime importance. He occupied the Unity cottage throughout his career.

JM: Was he one of the principal coordinators of the transitions from campground ownership to private ownership then? He was naturally positioned in a central way to

coordinate the transition to private ownership, and did Paul Morris himself purchase the Unity eventually? Or did his father Albert Morris purchase it?

MM: Yes, they owned it. It ended up that the Morrises owned it.

JM: I see. And then that went down to Paul Morris, and now to Eleanor Morris, and as we know Eleanor Morris is still alive in 1997 and lives in Zephyr Hills, Florida, and be contacted, and I can provide that address to the Historical Preservation Society. A couple more questions, and then our request for any final thoughts you have on the history project. The Wesleyan Campground Association, also a question that many people don't have an answer to, and wonder. How was it governed itself? How were decisions made? How were meetings organized. How did the Methodist Church play a part in governing the Wesleyan Campground Association?

MM: Well, I was not involved of course, at that time in the leadership or any part of it, but they had the major responsibility for the disposition of the services and the rental of some of the properties.

JM: The Campground Association then, would have worked in conjunction with the Methodist Church prior to its being called the United Methodist Church, and within the Methodist Church, the governing, so to speak, body would have been the East Maine Conference of the Methodist Church. So the East Maine Conference of the Methodist Church in coordination with the Wesleyan Campground Association within that. Finally what was, for particularly someone who may not be Methodist, or only have a sense through pictures of the campground, what was a typical service like? It lasted an hour to an hour and a half, maybe?

MM: Approximately an hour, sometimes it would run over, but they'd shoot for an hour as the length of the service.

JM: And would it be if you're a church attender in these years now, would you have noted anything different at one of those services from what you would see in a Protestant church service on a Sunday now?

MM: Not at all.

JM: It was similar to a standard church service then.

MM: Exactly.

JM: would there be announcements...

MM: (?), and participants, announcements being made, people with particular interests that needed to be promoted were involved in the programs of the services that were held.

JM: Okay. Now how about any final thoughts you have on the Campground Association, the Bayside experience for people that may be listening to this 100 years from now, in 2097 about the Methodist Campground and Bayside.

MM: Well, when it existed, it was a very happy experience for all that were involved, because they sensed they belonged to something important, and in many instances they would leave their churches and come to cottages in Bayside or they would come distances for special services in the auditorium, because they loved it. The Campmeeting Association meant an awful lot to a lot of people.

JM: And it started with people coming in horse and buggies and it ended with people coming in automobiles.

MM: Exactly.

JM: It started with people who must have used kerosene lamps, and it ended with people using electricity.

MM: That's exactly it.

JM: No televisions, though.

MM: No.

JM: This concludes this interview with Reverend Morrill o. Martin on August 17, 1997, related (?) to Bayside, the Wesleyan Campground Association and the Historical Preservation Society's Oral History project. This is Reverend Jim Martin, Morrill Martin's son, concluding the interview.

Notes

1. I believe Arlene Parker was not the first postmistress. The Tibbets had the store and post office before Parkers. (E. Lagner)
2. Union Cottage was furnished entirely with double beds, although smaller than today's double bed. They came with straw mattresses, and when we purchased the cottage, we burned 22 straw mattresses on the beach. (E. Lagner)