

William Mason Parsloe Interview  
Interviewed by Eugenia Allen 7/27/99  
Transcribed by George Scholhamer 1/31/03 Edited by Zelma Huntoon 5/5/03

EA: I'm supposed to ask you how Bayside became part of your life.

WMP: Well, my mother carried me ashore from the BELFAST, 73 years ago, and I was born, six months later in December.

EA: You're a December baby, what is your birth date?

WMP: December 4th. 1926.

EA: Now you have been coming here ever since you were in uterus, basically.

WMP: Yes.

EA: And who came before you.

WMP: My sister, Janet, my brother, Stanley and before that my mother and her sisters used to come down here.

EA: What were their names?

WMP: Minerva, Lola, and Medora Mason.

EA: What other family connections do you have at Bayside?

WMP: That would be about it, except for my grandmother who originally owned it.

EA: Do you know when she bought it?

WMP: I think it was around 1903.

EA: Do you have any idea what the cost was in those days?

WMP: No.

EA: I just wondered if it was in the hundreds or the thousands, or what.

WMP: I imagine it was somewhere in the hundreds.

EA: And this has how many rooms?

WMP: Four rooms and a shed in the back.

EA: And a large kitchen, the kitchen is pretty big. When it was rainy days, did you spend a lot of days indoors or on the porch.

WMP: Yes, indoors.

EA: What did you do? They didn't have a lot of TV then.

WMP: No, no, and before radio, too. We used to play games. My grandmother would keep us busy. Or my mother would keep us busy doing around the house.

EA: Perhaps helping in the kitchen?

WMP: Something like that, cleaning up, putting some wood in the woodshed.

EA: Well, it says here you are supposed to tell me how many years you were in Bayside, but obviously, 73 plus, because you were here when your mother was carrying you.

WMP: Well, I missed two years during the war.

EA: And what branch of the service were you in?

WMP: In the Navy.

EA: For how long?

WMP: Two years.

EA: Was that because you were drafted, or did you join up?

WMP: Yep. Joined up.

EA: And where were you stationed?

WMP: Sampson, Detroit, MI, San Francisco, Hawaiian Islands, Philippine Islands, and we made one trip to China, and we went to Bikini Atoll and moored ship at Bikini Atoll for the A-bomb tests.

EA: Really?

WMP: I wasn't there, anywhere near when they set off the A-bomb tests. A lot of ships were moored there. We took part in mooring the ships in different places. Right after that I was mustered out.

EA: Did you ever do any sailing on the Bay, here?

WMP: Yes, I used to do some sailing with Sonny Butters. The Shorts used to take us out once in a while--John Short. You could always get a free sail, then. Just hang around, looking forlorn and then, "come on". Somebody would take you out.

EA: Did you do a lot of fishing from boats?

WMP: Yes, Sonny Butters and I used to do a lot of fishing from boats.

EA: You're saying Sonny Butters. Is that Grammy Butter's son?

WMP: Yes, he used to live on the corner up here.

EA: That's right, the corner of Main St. and George. It used to be a brown cottage.

WMP: And then we used to go out fishing with the Eaton boys--Gordon Eaton. Mostly we used to get dogfish.

EA: Is that kind of a shark?

WMP: Yes, small shark. We used to hit them over the head with a hammer and throw them back in.

EA: You never ate them?

WMP: No.

EA: What about the mackerel? I've seen some pretty impressive runs of mackerel around here?

WMP: There used to be a lot of mackerel here. Almost net them off the boat.

EA: That's what I heard. But we don't have that many any more, because of the bigger ships--is that it?

WMP: Something is drawing them out of the bay. There's a few down there now.

EA: How did you used to get here when you were a kid?

WMP: Used to come up in a car.

EA: And how long did it take you?

WMP: Oh, it would be eight or nine hours. My grandmother had an old car which my aunt used to drive. And I used to come down to help out when I was a kid.

EA: Lola was the driver?

WMP: Yes, she was the driver.

EA: I guess the roads are a lot different today, now than they used to be.

WMP: Oh yes, very much so. Indeed.

EA: Where they dirt roads or were they paved?

WMP: Mostly paved roads.

EA: Route 1 from Massachusetts up.

WMP: Yes, Route 1.

EA: Where in Massachusetts are you now?

WMP: Twelve miles south of Boston, in Milton, MA.

EA: And that's where you were born?

WMP: No, I was born in Dorchester, Codman Square in Dorchester.

EA: OK, now this street to you, does it look any different to you than as a child?

WMP: No. It's not that much different

EA: You think that most of the cottages were here and have stayed - but gussied up a bit?

WMP: Oh yes.

EA: But their location is the same?

WMP: Oh yes.

EA: What cottage renovations have you made here?

WMP: I know you have done some insulating and things like that.

EA: But you haven't changed the basic character of it?

WMP: I updated the bathroom a little bit.

EA: Where was the bathroom? Was it in here or the shed or what?

WMP: It was a little shed in the back, beside the kitchen, just one little cubbyhole. And there was one pipe into the kitchen sink with cold water.

EA: And you had to heat the water?

WMP: We had to heat the water in the wood stove.

EA: Oh that's right, you used to have a big old heat stove, I remember that. Now you've upgraded to electricity.

WMP: And the icebox.

EA: Where did you get your ice?

WMP: Louis Drinkwater. He used to live up on Drinkwater's Hill, across from the Connors place here. There used to be a quarry up there in back of Hunters place, and now they are doing all that excavation. He used to get ice out of there and put it up over the winter.

EA: Oh, that was on the left side of Route 1 going into Camden, and its kind of a log cabin kind of construction.

WMP: Yes. There used to be a big quarry there.. He used to get the ice out of there. And he would put it up and peddle it around here during the summer.

EA: I wonder how he kept it from melting.

WMP: Sawdust.

EA: Not straw?

WMP: No, sawdust. He used to bring it down here and wash the sawdust off, and bring a piece of ice in the house. Put it in the icebox.

EA: And how long would that last?

WMP: Two or three days.

EA: Where did you shop, Where did you get food and stuff in those days?

WMP: Store down where Blair is now, there used to be a market next to BLair's. There's a house there now, used to be Higgin's Market. Then there used to be Tuttle's. The store where Blair is now was the postoffice.

EA: Oh, you mean the General store and post office that Blair and Ann Einstein ran for awhile.

WMP: Yes, there was a fellow Parker, named Parker, that ran it before that... after Tuttle, and Higgins had a place next door.

EA: Next door on?

WMP: Where the double doors are,

EA: Right in back of it.

WMP: Facing the store. Where Bartlett the painter lives now, there used to be a store there. That's the one my brother bought and moved down here and is now the cottage on the corner. So that's a change. And before that, Durgan owned the store. Hastings owned it, and before him was Durgan's, and before him was C.L. Dickey whom I don't remember.

EA: I think we have a postcard of it, and the label has Perking on it. It's a really old, old one.

EA: Has the parks changed at all?

WMP: No, No. Well the park has changed; there used to be a tennis court, where the basketball court is now.

EA: Did you play?

WMP: No, no sat on the sidelines. Watched. All the equipment down in the park, slides, swings. There was a bandstand there.

EA: Oh there was?

WMP: Yes.

EA: And who played in it? Was it used much?

WMP: About every Sunday they would have a concert there, they would come down from Bangor, or from Lincolnville, and have a concert here.