

**VOICES OF THE CAPE FEAR
INTERVIEW WITH HENRY REHDER**

FEBRUARY 1, 1995

INTRODUCTION

This is the afternoon of February 1, 1995. I'm at the home of Henry B. Rehder at Oleander Drive and we will be recording an interview with Henry. This is the beginning of the tape and I want to just establish that part of it. Henry is here with me and I'm going to be asking him some questions and we'll chat back and forth and see if Henry can let us in on a lot of information about his 84 years on the Wilmington scene. 84 years is a long time, but here is a young looking man to have achieved that age.

INTERVIEWER: Henry, how about just a little background. Back when you came along, please tell me who was in your family and your father and mother and just a little of that.

REHDER: Sam, I certainly will try my best. I was born on September 24, 1911 at the family home at 812 Rankin Street or Red Cross Street and I was the second child of my parents Carl Frederick Rehder and Jessie Stewart Rehder and they had one child before that, my sister, Jessie Clifford Rehder who was three years older than I and I was the first boy born in the family. My grandfather was still living and he always said, "Damn it, another she baby!" Every time there was a girl born. First there was Mary Rehder Curtis, Johanna Rehder, Catherine Rehder, Jessie Rehder, Josephine Rehder and then I came along, the first one of the boys and then all the rest were boys after that.

INTERVIEWER: That was Stanley and Will.

REHDER: Uh huh, but my next brother was William Stewart named after mother's family and then George Stanley Rehder who was named after my uncle George Stanley.

INTERVIEWER: And with whom I played golf yesterday afternoon.

REHDER: Yeah (laughter). Who won?

INTERVIEWER: I don't know. We all played so bad that I don't think that was important. (laughter) Henry, church wise, I think you've been a Lutheran lifelong have you not, your church?

REHDER: Yes. I can't tell you when I was baptized, but my mother and father always were very devout Lutheran's and my father sang in the choir and my mother took us to Sunday school which was the thing to do every Sunday and then church and then Luther League in the afternoon.

INTERVIEWER: You have been a religious resident of 6th and Market then for a long time.

REHDER: That's right. That's right and I remember the old Sunday school building, the wooden Sunday school building that was there, torn down to make way for the new one and I remember a lot of other things that happened there. And speaking of my father again, on Palm Sunday for years and years and years, he always sang a solo of Psalms on Palm Sunday.

INTERVIEWER: That's nice to remember, nice memory. Tell me, tell me this, your middle name as I recall is Burbank. Is that right?

REHDER: That's right.

INTERVIEWER: How did you get the middle name?

REHDER: It's not from Luther Burbank.

INTERVIEWER: It isn't?

REHDER: No and people think that it is.

INTERVIEWER: I thought it was.

REHDER: No, we had a family doctor named Thomas Burbank.

INTERVIEWER: I see.

REHDER: And he delivered me at the house at 812 Rankin Street and we had two people in Wilmington named after him. Thomas Burbank Granger and Thomas Burbank _____ and when the three of us get together, we always say, "Hi Burbank," to each other. (laughter)

INTERVIEWER: Well, I'm familiar with that. Ruby's middle name, my wife's middle name is for Dr. Graham, Charles R. Graham.

REHDER: Oh, really? Yeah. (laughter)

INTERVIEWER: Okay, let me ask you about the business of Will Rehder. Tell me a little about that. It's supposed to be North Carolina's oldest florist as I remember.

REHDER: Sam, it may be the oldest florist in the South, we think that it is. My grandmother and grandfather lived on 2nd Street between Grace and Chestnut where Belk Beery has a building that used to be the old Wilmington Greeting Company and they lived there and she grew flowers there and had a pretty little yard, but she wanted a place that she could grow more flowers and my grandfather was in the grocery business. So between the two of them, they moved to 819 Rankin or Red Cross Street and she would give flowers to people as they came by on their way to Oakdale Cemetery because Oakdale Cemetery entrance was just off of Red Cross Street where it ended about 13th Street off of 10th/11th Street where the hospital was. And people would come out on the street car which ended there and would be going to the hospital and going to the cemetery and she would always give'em a little bunch of flowers and one day, Mrs. Parsley came by and said, "Mrs. Rehder, you should charge for those flowers." So she got to thinkin' about it and so she started charging for the flowers and my grandfather, who they say was a wonderful person, but he was sort of on the lazy side, so he gave up his grocery business and they went into the flower business. And I don't remember'em 'cause they both died within two weeks of other when I was 2 years old.

INTERVIEWER: That's the beginning of Will Rehder Florist?

REHDER: And they wore wooden shoes in the greenhouses and I could remember the wooden shoes long after their death because they kept them in the family. Because there was so much water in the greenhouse and that was the beginning of Rehder Florist, Incorporated and it was chartered in 1872, but it was before that, that she was in business.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, tell me this. Let's go back now to 1911. What is your first memory of

Wilmington that you have as a child?

REHDER: My first memory of Wilmington was during the flu epidemic.

INTERVIEWER: In 1919?

REHDER: In 1919 and I'm sure I remember something before that, but the reason I remember that is that I had to wear an onion bag around my neck to keep from catching the flu and I remember so many people dying and oh they just said it was such a shame that so many people especially among the Coast Line people died.

INTERVIEWER: You don't remember anything about the war, the end of the war?

REHDER: Yes, I do remember the end of the war. When the troops came home to Wilmington, the local troops. Here they marched and paraded down Front Street and my father for the City of Wilmington decorated the block between Grace Street and Chestnut Street with pine trees all up above and the welcoming banners from the old Elk's Club which was situated there across the street to the building across from there.

INTERVIEWER: Well, as we go back, we begin to think of things. I presume as a young man that you were, the discipline was pretty good in your family?

REHDER: (laughter) Are you asking me, you mean did I behave? (laughter)

INTERVIEWER: (laughter) I'm gettin' to that. Tell me some of the things that may have, that you can think of that might be interesting about being a boy in Wilmington in the early '20s.

REHDER: Okay, we moved from Rankin Street to Marcus Cicero Noble house on 5th Street between Grace and Chestnut.

INTERVIEWER: He's the one Noble School is named for.

REHDER: That's right and Hemingway School was right across the street so I didn't have far to go in the mornings, I just ran across the street to Hemingway School. Hemingway School is not there anymore now, but I can remember my first grade teacher was a lady named Miss Kate Johnson and my second grade teacher was a lady Ms. Yarborough and my third grade teacher was named Ms. Hill. So that must have been in the early 20's.

INTERVIEWER: Did you get into to any mischief then?

REHDER: Well, yes I did. Miss Herring was principal of the school and when I was in the 7th grade, I didn't behave very well, Sam and I had to copy the geography book and the third time I copied it, I copied it on a roll of toilet paper and she slapped me down for it. (laughter) I was expelled from school for three days.

INTERVIEWER: Expelled from school. I wouldn't have thought that would happen to Henry Rehder.

REHDER: (laughter)

INTERVIEWER: Well now, what did they have in Wilmington high school wise? The new building had not been built then had it.

REHDER: Yes, the new building had been built and when I was in the 5th grade, we went, we had to go to Isaac Bear _____ School because we had moved from 5th Street down to 308 North 15th Street, so I went to Isaac Bear School, but _____ it was so small, it didn't have room for the 5th grade and they put us over in New Hanover High School.

INTERVIEWER: When was the new school built? Do you remember?

REHDER: It had to be built in the early, very early '20s to mid 20's and Ms. Cornelia Brady was my 5th grade teacher and she just recently died not long ago.

INTERVIEWER: I see.

REHDER: And then, I went back to Hemingway School through the 7th grade and then went to the new high school in the 8th grade.

INTERVIEWER: You know I might think about this a little later on, but I'll ask you a question now-- who blew up Money Island? Do you know? Or did you know that it was attempted to be blown up or that there was a... I keep hearing stories about it, but nobody will admit to it. I've had one person who says he knows who did it, but he wouldn't tell me.

REHDER: No. The only thing I know about Money Island is the fact that we used to go down there and dig for treasure that was supposed to be buried on Money Island, but I never heard of it being blown up.

INTERVIEWER: All right, as a teenager, what did you do during the summertime?

REHDER: I worked in the florist shop for my father. We had moved to Front Street, from a little office that he built on Rankin Street he moved down to Front Street where the Wachovia Bank is now was our first downtown store and there was a little passageway that had been built through an alleyway and we had to go back through the alleyway to get the trucks to come in and back up. And I can remember being there for a while and we would get all the flowers down below and peek through the steps to see who was upstairs to come in to wait on and then go upstairs to wait on them.

INTERVIEWER: In your work in the summer, did children in that day have the fondness for the beach that we've had in the last generations?

REHDER: Oh yes, we went on Sunday School picnics to the beach. Way back yonder we went on the Steamer Wilmington down to Carolina Beach and got off there and went on a little train car over to the beach itself for our Sunday School picnics and then, that was the Hanover Seaside Club and it moved then from there to Wrightsville Beach and we went out...

INTERVIEWER: I never knew it was at Carolina Beach.

REHDER: Yeah, it started at Carolina Beach.

INTERVIEWER: I've already learned something.

REHDER: Yep and I got terribly sunburned there I remember. I went down and got blistered just staying outside in front of the pavilion at the New Hanover Seaside Club next to the pavilion.

INTERVIEWER: Was Lumina in full swing in those days?

REHDER: Oh, yes Lumina was....

INTERVIEWER: It was very near to the Hanover Seaside Club wasn't it?

REHDER: Yeah after they moved to Wrightsville Beach. Lumina was Station VII and Hanover Seaside was in between Station VI and VII and we went down there quite often and at that time, there was Morris Inn, it was where Mercer's Pier is now and charter boats where the Oceanic hotel there where Station I was.

INTERVIEWER: Um hmm.

REHDER: And we would go out on the charter boats a lot of times fishing through Moore's Inlet.

INTERVIEWER: I presume by this time you had found out about girls is that right? (laughter)

REHDER: (laughter) Well, the first time that I can remember having an affair with anyone, I mean not an affair. (laughter) I didn't mean that.

INTERVIEWER: A friendship.

REHDER: A friendship, yeah. I said, "I hope you're not going to record this." (laughter) I met this beautiful Jewish girl named Evelyn Einstein and she lived on the corner of ...

INTERVIEWER: Now don't tell me anything I can't make public knowledge.

REHDER: All right. Now Evelyn lived on the corner of, just opposite then, Dr. Green who has two daughters, Mary Green who is now his Mrs. William Fuchs and ...

INTERVIEWER: Is that the one who ran the pharmacy?

REHDER: No, that was another one.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

REHDER: Dr. Green was a very prominent doctor here and took in with him Dr. Koonce and Dr. Koonce took over Dr. Green's practice and the Sibleys lived on the other corner and the Einsteins lived on one corner and there were some other girls (laughter), Jackie Stockard and Peggy Hall and so I had....

INTERVIEWER: Margaret Tannahill Hall?

REHDER: (laughter) Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: All right. Henry, tell me, when did you graduate from high school.

REHDER: Sam, conditions were so poor that the city didn't have enough money to educate everybody and so I graduated as a junior, not as a senior. I had enough points to graduate as a junior when I was 16 and the reason I got out was I had religious education. The buses took us from the high school down to St. Paul's Lutheran Church where Dr. Edwin F. Keyhole of whom you ...

INTERVIEWER: I remember the name.

REHDER: You remember the name. He was our instructor and by having extra point of religious education for a year, I graduated in '28.

INTERVIEWER: I see.

REHDER: 1928.

INTERVIEWER: I see. Well now after you were graduated, what happened to you then for the next several years?

REHDER: Well, I only went to school for one year at Carolina. I ...

INTERVIEWER: And you were getting right into the, well just before the crash of '29. Just before the depression.

REHDER: Just before the depression and in the meantime, my father had built a greenhouse at 15th and Rankin Streets and tore it down and sold the property and gave me the money, eight thousand dollars to deposit in the bank and I deposited the money in the bank and the bank failed the next day. And never got anything back from it all. That was the Murchison Bank, but then you want to know what else I was up to?

INTERVIEWER: Well, I just want to know what happened. Did you continue on in the florist business after that or?

REHDER: I went that summer to Philadelphia School of Floral Design all summer and graduated from there and one of my father's best friends was Mr. William F. Goody who owned Goody Brother stores at 1212 F Street in Washington, D.C. and they were very good friends and Mr. Goody had said that he would let me come up and be an apprentice there. So, I went up that year in 1929 and stayed there for a year. And then, I went to California as a florist in 1930 and you and I have been to the same St. Frances Hotel there.

INTERVIEWER: We certainly have.

REHDER: (laughter). That's where the florists stayed in those days there in San Francisco. Then I was very disappointed that I had not gone back to school, so I wanted to travel and I started traveling in the United States and drove cars for people on the eastern seaboard in different places.

INTERVIEWER: Um hmm.

REHDER: And my cousins Cath Rehder and Johanna Rehder had been to Europe in 1933 with Brownell Tours and they were so entranced with it and had such glowing reports that I decided that's what I wanted to do. So I applied for a job, the Tour was for eight weeks for four-hundred and fifty dollars, everything paid for from New York and they gave me a fifty dollar reduction for being in the baggage car. So that was the first time I went and sailed from New York.

INTERVIEWER: How many times would you guess you've been to Europe?

REHDER: Well..

INTERVIEWER: Or do you know?

REHDER: I think I've been twenty-four times. I'm quite sure its been about that.

INTERVIEWER: I know you've taken tours over for many years, Wilmington people. In fact you have a good name for providing a tour in which most of the people know each other from Wilmington.

REHDER: That's right. And this year I've taken a couple back that have been with me several times before.

INTERVIEWER: Well that's interesting.

REHDER: Yeah, but the nicest thing that happened about the tourist business was that in 1937, Mrs. Brownell who owned the company was to take the world tour of 35 people for three and a half months and she had a heart attack and her son who had gone into business with her called me and said on June the 1st, said, "Would you take the trip and conduct the tour of 35 people for three and a half months?" And my father was still living and I had two wonderful people, Mildred Robinson and Agnes Hayden who were working with me at the time and I said sure I would and I was gone for that length of time.

INTERVIEWER: And that is something you have done for a long time. Now thinking back just a minute, what was Wilmington like in the city and what is considered generally the edge of town in you might say, in the early '30s at which time you would have been a young man probably in the early '20s.

REHDER: Sam, the city was divided into really three parts, downtown and Brooklyn and Dry Pond. Brooklyn was the north side and Dry Pond was south side and there were a lot of business downtown, the most prominent ones and the other prominent ones were on 4th Street, North 4th Street and then on Castle Street going from about Front Street up to about 6th Street and the street car lines ran both ways.

INTERVIEWER: How far did it go out as far as what we now know as 17th Street? Were there buildings and houses as far as Burnt Mill Creek for example?

REHDER: Yes. Burnt Mill Creek is where things stopped and I could remember where Trinity Church is. When it rained real hard overflow of the water came over there so you couldn't go Dock Street or Market Street.

INTERVIEWER: Then the area that we know as Forest Hills and all these other areas were nothing but woods here I guess.

REHDER: No, I remember when they developed Forest Hills and they had a contest to see who would name it and my cousin Mary Rehder _____ named it Forest Hills.

INTERVIEWER: I see.

REHDER: So that's been a long time ago, but see when Winoca Terrace came in first and then ...

INTERVIEWER: Then 19th, 18th and 19th Streets. That and Carolina Place.

REHDER: That's right and then Carolina Place. Wrightsville Avenue and Metts Avenue and all of that. Then that joined into Forest Hills.

INTERVIEWER: Well, what was the traffic then for example, to go to Wrightsville Beach for people that didn't use the street car.

REHDER: You went down Wrightsville Avenue.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

REHDER: Oleander Drive wasn't even thought of then.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Now tell me about Wrightsville Avenue.

REHDER: Well, Wrightsville Avenue, the Street Oars were not on Wrightsville Avenue, you know that the Beach Line ran down 17th Street and up around Castle Street and out towards Delgado. Delgado was one of the stops and then out to Audubon and then on down to Seagate and across the Trestle and Causeway there...

INTERVIEWER: Now you're gettin', now you're gettin' in my time. I can remember that because I rode that many a time.

REHDER: (laughter) Yeah. Well the street cars started at Front and Princess Street, the beach cars and that was about the only way of getting back and forth to the beach. People loved to go on the beach cars.

INTERVIEWER: Well, what sort of surface did Wrightsville Avenue have on it then?

REHDER: It didn't have a ...

INTERVIEWER: Was it a dirt street? A dirt road?

REHDER: It was dirt. Yeah, it was dirt. Dirt and oyster shells.

INTERVIEWER: Well what about transportation for example in the late '20s and '30s. Were the automobiles getting to the point where they were taking over?

REHDER: Oh yeah. They were getting to the place where they would take over and you could drive as far as Wrightsville Sound.

INTERVIEWER: Uh huh.

REHDER: And then you had to park your cars at Wrightsville Sound and take the beach car over to the beach. Then, shortly after that, and I can't remember what date, they opened Harbor Island. So they built the causeway across and so then people could drive over to Harbor Island. And then, later on of course is when they built Waynick Boulevard.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, yeah. And then we come into 1940 and that's my time that I remember that the bridge over to Wrightsville was finished. The causeway was built in 1938, '39.

REHDER: Well, you could ride to the beach round trip for fifty cents from Front and Princess Street and had many stops along the way and they had repair shops along the way as the beach cars broke down too.

INTERVIEWER: I see.

REHDER: So that was a lot of fun to go.

INTERVIEWER: It sounds like Wilmington was ... What did people do for entertainment in those days?

REHDER: Oh, Lumina was nationally known. I mean not just state known, but very many kinds of people came from Atlanta and from Philadelphia and Baltimore and Washington and of course the Atlantic Coastline was here. That was the main thing about Wilmington. It was easy to get to. Trains came in at seven in the morning from the north and went out at seven at night with wonderful dining service and sleepers on it too.

INTERVIEWER: What about entertainment downtown? Early movies and that...

REHDER: Well, there was the Victoria. Oh gosh, now I'm remembering. There was the Victoria Theater where Dennis Hopper's building is now and I used to love to go to the movies and I remember seeing...

INTERVIEWER: Well, the Bijou was there.

REHDER: Yeah, but I'm going to tell you a minute about the Victoria. I remember seeing a Gloria Swanson picture called Male and Female and I don't know why I was so interested as young as I was, but I went to see that and I went to see Lillian Gish and Richard Barthlemass in Broken Blossoms, so I...

INTERVIEWER: These were movies?

REHDER: These were movies, but then up at the other end was the Bijou and the Bijou was between Princess Street and Grace Street and that was owned by Mr. Wells, Howard M. Wells. You paid ten cents to go there and had every feature on. He had serials like the Perils of Pauline which was on every Friday and we weren't allowed to go to the movies very often except on the weekend. If we had been bad, we couldn't go. And I didn't go a lot of times. (laughter)

INTERVIEWER: You are telling a side to you that I didn't know. Well, now what do you remember about the World War II days and what was your situation during the wartime years of 1941 to 1945?

REHDER: Well, now let me go back one more time.

INTERVIEWER: Sure.

REHDER: When I was in high school you said you were learning things about me that you didn't know. We had a wonderful history teacher named Miss Margaret Williams who later taught you. Do you remember Margaret Williams? (laughter)

INTERVIEWER: I do.

REHDER: Ms. Margaret Williams taught me history and one day she said, "Abraham Lincoln walked a mile to return a book." And I said, "That's nothin', I walked around Lake Waccamaw for nothin'." And she said, "Come here." And instead of going there to the front of the room, I ran down the hall and ran all the way down to the staircase and ran into Miss Lang. She stopped me, she was the principal then and then I was expelled also from school for three days. (laughter)

INTERVIEWER: Henry, (laughter). It's a wonder you ever got an education.

REHDER: That's about all I got, but my father helped expel me too. Okay, you want to talk about World War ...

INTERVIEWER: World War II days.

REHDER: Wilmington changed dramatically. Camp Davis sent thousands and thousands of trainees and Camp Lejeune too and the old USO hut was back of the Post Office in those days and there were many, many new restaurants and places. St. John's Museum was a restaurant run by Jimmy McCoy at that time and many people opened their homes to these people, soldiers who would come in on the weekend and that's how a lot of Wilmington girls found their futures. It was a wonderful blessing in a way to have Camp Davis here because it helped the growth of the city tremendously. And then of course with the Coast Line here back and forth, you could bring in all kinds of troops and ammunition and everything else.

INTERVIEWER: All right, do you remember any stories associated with the German U-Boat patrols and things that took place during the World War II as far as Wilmington is concerned because we did have, Wilmington was blacked out I know and we did have things going on that were strange. Do you remember anything? Any instances?

REHDER: Yeah, but now let me go back because Sam there was something during World War I that I didn't tell you about.

INTERVIEWER: Tell me about it.

REHDER: There were two German ships tied up on the other side of the river across from the customs house and one of 'em was captained by a Captain Hans Lemekee and he had a son named young Hans Lemekee who was allowed to go to St. Paul's Lutheran Church Kindergarten at 6th and Princess Street.

INTERVIEWER: Were these impounded ships?

REHDER: Yeah, uh huh. During the war and the crew was impounded too and they did not have to go that place at 8th and Meares Street. They were allowed to stay on the ship the whole time. Dr. Caldwell was head of the doctors at James Walker Hospital which was at 10th and Rankin Street and his wife was Mrs. Florence Caldwell who became head of the X-ray Department there and she was there later and she moved to 3rd and Walnut Street and had a private practice X-ray there. Dr. Caldwell was coming back with his brother and three other men in a row boat from the ship one night after having gone over to check the patient's over there, the crew and the boat overturned and all five of them were drowned. That was World War I. Now, getting back to World War II, what did you ask me about then? (laughter) I got so ... (laughter)

INTERVIEWER: I was thinking about things that happened in the Wilmington area, stories and things that happened regarding the U-Boat Patrols.

REHDER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Blackouts.

REHDER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Torpedoing the tankers at sea.

REHDER: Yeah. Well we had, of course we had warnings to put lights out at certain times and you couldn't drive a car around after a certain time at night because they had spotted U-Boats off of the coast

here and shells had been fired at the Dow Plant down at Kure Beach.

INTERVIEWER: I didn't know that.

REHDER: Yeah and they, well actually they knew that. I mean that was known by the people there and they also thought that some of the U-Boats at night, some of the crew would come ashore and that actually happened in Charleston because they even came and went to the movie houses in Charleston. The ships, there were two or three of them that were torpedoed right off of the coast here and that is now, the remains are still there of the ships.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, let's leave World War II a minute. Haven't you had a long acquaintance with the North Carolina Azalea Festival? Was it the Azalea Festival of Wilmington at one time.

REHDER: Yes. Dr. Moore envisioned the festival as a means of drawing people to Wilmington and showing the beauty of the locale and back in the first year, it must have been '48, '48, '46. He might of thought about it in '46 and he called a group of people together. He called Yi Le Gwin, Kenny Sprunt, Hugh Morton, Paul T. Marshburn, David Harris and besides myself, there were two or three others. So we met and that was the beginning of the festival.

INTERVIEWER: The festival then is just about 50 years old.

REHDER: It will be 50 in 1997.

INTERVIEWER: 7?

REHDER: 1997. And the garden tours were not established right away. It took about seven years for them to establish, but it grew and grew and grew and grew and it's still growing.

INTERVIEWER: Um hm. Well that takes us on up into the beginning of the '50s in Wilmington and at that time, I know you were involved... How long have you been a member of the Civitan Club?

REHDER: (Laughs) Since 1938. How long is that? (laughs) '38, fifty some years.

INTERVIEWER: 1938? That's 50, 57, 58 years.

REHDER: Yeah. There's still three of us who are charter members of the Civitan Club. Everett Huggins, Louie Woodbury and Henry Rehder are the three.

INTERVIEWER: Did you know my father was a member of the Civitan Club when he worked in Wilmington when he was here for a time?

REHDER: No, no, no.

INTERVIEWER: Yes he was. He was a Civitan for a matter of several years, but then he left and moved to Fayetteville.

REHDER: Well that must have been the time I was gone in the Merchant Marine for three and a half years.

INTERVIEWER: It may have been.

REHDER: So, it may have been in that time.

INTERVIEWER: You were in the Merchant Marine then?

REHDER: In the Merchant Marine. I tried first to get in the Navy and I didn't have but one year of college and I couldn't be accepted for Officer's Academy School and then I knew I was going to be drafted in the Army and I didn't want to do that, so my experience with traveling around Europe and around the world, got me in the Merchant Marine.

INTERVIEWER: Now let's get to some important things. When were you married?

REHDER: I was married August 20, 1945.

INTERVIEWER: All right.

REHDER: Yeah. And you want to know?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, let me have the rest of it.

REHDER: All right. (laughs) Well, bless her heart, Rose Dicot who was buried just a couple of weeks ago down in at St. Mary's Church had a cottage down on the beach across from ours on Lumina Avenue and she had a brother named Amos. Amos was in the Army and I was home from the Pacific on leave waiting for my next call and he and I went surfing and we were swimming out there and here came this nice lookin' girl up the beach and he said this is Barbara Beeland and her husband had been killed, died last year and she is at the Landis Cottage where I'm down there staying and said, "I would like to introduce you to her." So, he did and I said, "Hello and what are you doing?" She said, "I'm on my way lookin' for sand dollars." And that was when Moore's Inlet was still there, so Amos said, "Now you'll have to come down and see us." And I thought hm umm, I'm not going to see you, I'm going to see her. (laughs) I called her up after she got back and I said, "Would you go to the Surf Club with me Saturday night?" This was Thursday and she said, "Mr. Rehder," said, "I just met you, I don't even know who you are." And I said...

INTERVIEWER: That was prim and proper for that time.

REHDER: (laughs) I said, "Well you ask Jane Bellamy whose mother owns the Ocean Terrace Hotel." And that's where Barbara's in-laws were staying. So she did ask Jane and Jane said, "That I was the perfect gentleman and it would be all right for her to go."

INTERVIEWER: All right. Tell me about your stepchildren and your children.

REHDER: Okay, Barbara had little Perrin who was 2 years old at the time. That was her only child. Now wait a minute, let me tell you something. That was that time, that was that week and the next week, she and I went, she went from Charlotte to Chapel Hill and I met her in Chapel Hill and I took my mother-in-law to chaperone me. I had a florist shop in Chapel Hill at the time too. And then the next week, from Wilmington, I hired a plane for twenty-five dollars and flew to Charlotte and we got engaged there and then we were married.

INTERVIEWER: Were you a pilot then?

REHDER: No, I had a pilot. And then, the next week, I went to Greenville, Alabama and we were married three weeks after we met.

INTERVIEWER: Um hm.

REHDER: And we were married for almost 49 years.

INTERVIEWER: She was a lovely person.

REHDER: Thank you. Thank you.

INTERVIEWER: And you lost her recently.

REHDER: Quite recently, October 24, 1993. And now my children, do you want to know about them?

INTERVIEWER: Yes, I would like just for the sake of the record, just tell me...

REHDER: After we were married, Robert was the first one who came along and he's named Robert Beeland after Barbara's father who was Robert Beeland and then our next child was Henry Burbank.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

REHDER: Okay. And then our next child was Kristen, and when Kristen was born, we thought we were goin' to have another boy and I had picked out the name William Stewart or David Carlton and I was sitting in Marion Sprunt Annex when Kristen was born and Ina Taylor who married Hal May, you know was the nurse and she came running down and said, "The baby's here," and I said, "A little boy?" She said, "No, it's a little girl." So that's how I got Kristen. Then, we've got seven grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

INTERVIEWER: I see, I see. So you've got quite a nice family.

REHDER: That's right.

INTERVIEWER: You certainly have. Well Henry, in the last, let's see, you and I became acquainted very closely from a business standpoint when you came on the board of People's Savings. We'd known each other, but just as passing business people or whatever and that began our relationship of knowing each other much more closely than we had before. After you joined People's Savings what were some of the other interests in things that you enjoyed or things that you noted around Wilmington as the years, as the generations changed and as the years changed.

REHDER: Well, Sam there are a lot of things that I used to love to do. I like to fish. I always did like to serve fish and believe it or not, I used to play golf all the time and I was playing golf with Cook Pretlow and Fred Willetts and Hooper Johnson when Pearl Harbor happened that afternoon. At that time, the golf course ran, you know, back over on Mimosa.

INTERVIEWER: Ran down where Camellia Drive is now.

REHDER: Yeah, down Camellia Drive. And then I got interested and I've always been interested in art and I started out with that, I don't know why, from 14 years old when I met Ms. Chant and went to her exhibit at the YMCA which was on 2nd Street between Chestnut and Grace Street where Belk Beery is now. She had her first exhibit there in 1920, 1927, '25. 1925.

INTERVIEWER: I know that you are really one of the sources of more information about Elisabeth Chant than anyone that I know of.

REHDER: Yeah. Well, she had her studio later on up above my father's store in the Southern Building when we moved from down Lower Front Street up to High Front Street next to Julien K. Taylor, and Miss Chant would come by every morning and look in the window and admire the flowers and the colors. She was crazy about flowers and one day, I had made a little corsage and put it in the window and she admired it and I gave it to her. And about a week or so later, she brought me the little painting with the corsage and gave it to me.

INTERVIEWER: Well how nice. How nice.

REHDER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Well you've had quite an art interest.

REHDER: Well that's how you and I knew each other so well.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, through the association of St. John's, what became St. John's Museum of Art and what was then St. John's Art Gallery.

REHDER: That's right, but you were president too of that.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, we were both past presidents of St. John's.

REHDER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: But I was president for a couple of years back in the ...

REHDER: What year was that?

INTERVIEWER: I forget now, it seems like to me it was back in the latter '60s, somewhere back in there.

REHDER: Yeah, yeah. And tell me now, you've been asking me questions, now I'm going to ask you a question. When did you get so interested in painting?

INTERVIEWER: Oh, I've been interested in painting for a lifetime, but I never had a chance to do it. I had a career and whatever, children to support, children to educate and I just didn't get interested in art. It was real late. I always had a latent interest in it. That sort of brings us back into now. When did you consider yourself officially retired?

REHDER: (laughter) About two years ago and I thought maybe I was goin' to relax, but I've had more to do since I've retired.

INTERVIEWER: Do you still have a desk there?

REHDER: No and that reminds me, the biggest surprise that I ever had from you and the most pleasant thing that ever happened to me was the day you came into my office with Mr. Woodus Kellum and said, "Could we speak to you?" and I thought, "Oh my goodness, what have I done now?" And we closed the doors and you said that you and Mr. Kellum would like for me to be a director down at People's Savings and Loan. And that was one of the happiest days that I ever had.

INTERVIEWER: Well we were looking for someone that had a fine reputation and acquaintanceship that would add some depth to our board of directors as far as the people in the community that we knew and that was important that we had people on our board that were from different occupations and that was another reason for you, the acquaintanceship you had, the name you had and the occupation put you in touch with people, therefore you were a person who knew your way around Wilmington and directors should have those qualifications.

REHDER: Thank you Sam. That is very nice of you to say.

INTERVIEWER: We are about to finish up here now. I think we've quite well-covered the landscape. What are your plans now, you don't seem to hide your age and I don't believe there is any reason to hide it. You ought to be proud of it.

REHDER: (laughs) Well...

INTERVIEWER: What are you planning for this year?

REHDER: Mildred knew that I lied about my age, that I've tried to tell people that I was younger than I was and then when I got to be 75 I was so proud of it, I started telling the truth. Sam, I do a lot of garden work. I still love to fish. I just came back from the Outer Banks fishing up there with my son, but my main interest now is gardening and ...

INTERVIEWER: You have some spring plans don't you?

REHDER: Yeah, I've been working out there today and of course the Azalea Festival, we are going to be, Barbara's and my garden, I like to call it "Barbara _____." We are going to be on time more that anyone in Wilmington and I think its the 18th time we've been on tour.

INTERVIEWER: Well that's remarkable. I want to thank you for letting me record this, this afternoon because these tapes will ultimately end up in the New Hanover County Library in their North Carolina Room as part of a group of information about Wilmingtonians that might not have been available anyway had we not spent this past forty-five minutes together, so I want to thank you very much for letting me come in your library here and have a little chat with you.

REHDER: Sam, thank you. If I had known you were going to record all this like this I wouldn't have said some of the things I did. (laughs)

INTERVIEWER: Well fine. I'm glad we brought some of those out and thanks so much. I appreciate your letting me come.