

**Name of Interviewee: Shirley S. Lovejoy**

**Recording Identification: Rec001\_0040**

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**Additional Materials: 29 Photos**

**Interviewer: Angelica Diggs and Victoria Lizotte.**

**Date: 06/06/2018**

**Location: Crane House and Historic YWCA**

### **Introduction:**

Shirley Saunders Lovejoy was born in 1928 and grew up very near the Upper Montclair commercial district where her family owned a business, Saunders Hardware. Her parents were well known in town through their ownership of the hardware store they bought in 1927. Shirley's story about growing up in Montclair gives a clear look into what activities and events people enjoyed at the time. She attended the Montclair Public Schools and was involved in many organizations like the Girl Scouts, the Sea Scouts, the Half Hour Club, the 200 Club, the Evening Club, the Girl's Club and the Woman's Club of Upper Montclair, and she continues to be very active in multipole organizations. She recalls her local shops that her family frequented in Montclair and nearby. She recalls the Great Depression, what it was like in town during World War II, memories from her school years, and what it was like to raise her three sons in town.

She has lived for many years now in the old Tuers farmhouse, built circ 1790s, on Alexander Avenue.

### **Timestamps:**

[0:00]: Shirley Saunders Lovejoy starts out by explaining a few objects she brought to scan, including photographs of the store her family owned -- Saunders Hardware, originally owned by her grandfather, and then her father, on Valley Road, Upper Montclair. She explains that the hardware store occupied two storefronts, her grandfather owned the property that had originally been occupied by the Lorraine. She also had photographs of her family members, a 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade in town, as well as Bradford Elementary School, Mt. Hebron School, and photographs from Montclair High School days.

[3:00]: Shirley was born on April 23rd, 1928. She grew up in several places around Montclair. Her family moved from Cedar Grove when she was 4 and lived on 20 Park Terrace, she also lived on 29 Norwood Ave with her aunt and uncle for a year. Then she moved to 216 Lorraine Avenue in Upper Montclair until 1953 when she had her first child. She moved to Chatham Township for two and a half years. She then lived at 20 Alexander Avenue at the old Tuers farmhouse and has lived there for 60 years now. Her mother's parents emigrated from Brooklyn to Montclair around 1913 or 1914. Shirley's grandmother was English and Italian. Her maternal grandparents' last name was changed and Americanized -- from Malespina (sp?) in Italy to Molcini (sp?) and then Molcine (sp?). Shirley's maiden name is Saunders.

[5:44]: Her parents met on a train in the 1920s. Her mother, who was teaching in Detroit, was returning to Montclair for a visit with a friend; her father, who hailed from Niagara Falls, was going to the University of Michigan. They had some flirty conversations!

[6:53]: Shirley's parents got married in January 30, 1926. Shirley has a younger brother, Richard. She has two first cousins, Carol Stalnaker, whose father worked for the Township of Montclair

in the housing department and her mother was a nurse at Mountainside Hospital. Her other cousin is Dean Garretson (sp?); his parents went to school together at Mt. Hebron and got married.

[7:40]: Shirley's father, \_\_\_\_\_ Saunders, was living in Niagara Falls when he met Shirley's mom. He was born in Chicago and lived in the midwest. Her grandfather was a salesman for a British corset company and constantly moved around. They eventually settled in Niagara Falls. Her mother's parents moved from Brooklyn to Montclair, and that prompted her Shirley's mom and dad to move to Montclair as well. Her grandmother's relatives, the DeVoti family, lived in Montclair at the time. Eventually her relatives lived on Lorraine Avenue around 1914.

[9:16]: Both of her grandfathers were looking for a workplace for her father, who had previously been an automobile salesman and an encyclopedia salesman among other things. Smith's Hardware in Montclair was for sale and he bought it in 1927. It was located on Valley Road between 609-611, further south from the current location of Saunders Hardware [627 Valley Road]. Her mother worked at a bank for a while. After graduating from what is now Russell Sage College, then called Central School, she had worked as a gym teacher in Detroit. She stopped working after she got married, other than doing the bills for the hardware store.

[10:30]: Shirley started elementary school at Mt. Hebron when she was four years old; her mother actually had to pay tuition since they were not yet living in Montclair, but were intending to do so. She was too young to enter first grade, so she repeated kindergarten – now at Bradford School since the family had since moved to Park Terrace [nearer to Bradford School]. She attended there until second grade. She went back to Mt. Hebron (which was K-9 at that time) for third to ninth grade. Her mother graduated from Montclair High School, but she's not sure which other schools her mother attended.

[11:40]: Shirley also went to Montclair High School. She participated in Latin Club, Glee Club, a bowling group. She had a lot of favorite teachers. Her Latin teacher, Ms. Cope, was really nice; Shirley ultimately majored in languages. She ran into her again when her son was 15 and Ms. Cope remembered Shirley, which was very special to her. Her twelfth grade English teacher, John Roberts, really helped her prepare for college. She majored in languages at Maryland College for Women in Lutherville, Maryland, which is closed today.

[13:00]: She met her husband on a blind date for her 21st birthday, while she was still in college. He was in the Marine Corp. They got married in September 1950. They briefly lived in California. He fought in the Korean War. Her husband then attended Officer Candidates' School and they lived at Camp Lejeune. By the end of 1952, they lived with her parents in Montclair, where she had her first child. Then she and her husband bought a house in Chatham Township, where they stayed for two and a half years and moved back to Montclair at the Tuers farmhouse on 20 Alexander Avenue. It is old enough to appear on the town map in 1790.

[16:00]: Tuers Park comes from the Tuers family. The Tuers had sold their house to a family that could not keep up with the mortgage and the taxes. So the Tuers took back the property and donated the land for Tuers Park in lieu of paying the back taxes owed.

[16:32]: Recalling her childhood, she remembers that the circus used to come to town. It was a traveling circus, but does not remember a lot about it. For holidays, she spent time with the family. Her grandparents lived on the same street as her family eventually did; also her mother's

family as well as her mother's two sisters' families ate at the maternal grandparents' house every Sunday dinner. They eventually started going to Long Beach Island (LBI) after the family was invited by a friend when Shirley was about 12 years old. Shirley's parents fell in love with it, rented there for years before purchasing property and building a duplex beach house in 1947, which Shirley now owns and rents.

[18:20]: Shirley and her brother attended Union Congregational Church when they were young. Shirley has been going there for nearly 80 years now. Her family also belonged to the Commonwealth Club, a men's club to which her father and other men in her family belonged. She was in the auxiliary, as her mother had been. They went bowling there, on a women's bowling team; they had mixed bowling [men and women] on the weekends. She recalls it being a lot of fun, many parties, and a wonderful group of people. She is also very involved in the Upper Montclair Women's Club (since high school) and is currently a Vice President of the club. She recalls that when she was in high school, they would hold a Sadie Hawkins Ball at the club, where the girls invited the boys. They used to hold many balls there. They also raise a lot of money for charity.

[20:27]: Recalling the Great Depression, she considers it lucky that her father was in the hardware business, because the Depression prompted people to make more repairs on their own to save money, etc. Her family was able to survive financially. Even after malls opened up years later, people would still go to Saunders for the customer service and attention they could not get from larger chain stores.

[21:15]: She recalls that when she was young, her mother would take her to Newark and East Orange for shopping. She recalls Best & Company. She would shop in downtown Montclair at Hahnes, which she misses; she had purchased the layettes for her own babies there. The grocery store in Upper Montclair was Angelbecks, which today is a liquor store. It used to have everything – meat, vegetables, liquor. Since they lived just a few doors away, Shirley was often sent to pick up groceries for her mother. Her mother was a very active gardener, bridge player, and member of the Women's Club.

[22:44]: She discusses some local stores. A butcher named Max (?) that was on a corner but later moved to Laurel Place. She grew up with Clarence Paul; Paul's Pharmacy was on the corner of Lorraine Avenue and Valley Road; that space would later be home to Murph's Sports Store. On the [NE] corner of Bellevue Avenue and Valley Road was Val's Pharmacy. It had a counter there for lunch or breakfast.

[23:40]: Her mother played bridge, which is a card game. It takes four people, two partners on each team. They would sit at the table and make bids. Might have been called Whist in earlier times. Her mother was an excellent bridge player and actually won a bit of money. She had a foursome; they would play once a week. Shirley did as well. The Women's Club has Monday Bridge once a month for multiple foursomes.

[26:30]: Shirley got married in a Catholic church; she wasn't Catholic but her husband was considering becoming Catholic. She got married while in Sierra Madre, California; she only lived there for eight months before her husband's departure overseas.

[27:30]: After graduating from college and returning to Montclair, she started working for her dentist as a receptionist. She was then asked to be dental assistant. She never pursued a career in her languages major.

[28:25]: Shirley begins to describe the photos. One is from first grade at Bradford School and includes Grace Donahue, her first grade teacher and her class; Shirley had very blonde hair at that age, and her mother curled it with finger curls. Gracie Donahue, who never married, became like a grandmother to her. She became close with Shirley's mother and was like family; Ms. Donahue occasionally went to the Saunders' house for lunch. Another photo is Ms. Erma Meyers, her fifth-grade teacher, a favorite of Shirley's from Mt. Hebron.

[30:59]: Shirley went to class with one of astronaut Buzz Aldrin's sister and he was in the class below her. He used to play football for Montclair High School.

[32:54]: During the war [WWII], her father was an air raid warden. He would meet with the other men in his group on Thursday nights. As a teenager, she remembers coming home from choir practice and seeing the group of men gathered.

[34:35]: Shirley's was a family of bowlers! Her mother was an excellent bowler with a 160 average; Shirley had a 140 average. They bowled at the Commonwealth Club and also in another league. She remembers another bowling alley near Bloomfield Avenue when she was in high school. It was located in a basement of a building. There was one on Valley Road called Valley Bowl. Shirley was also very active in the Girl Scouts as well as a Sea Scout until 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> grade. The Sea Scouts were "girl mariners" and wore their uniforms to school. They learned about boats, knots, and sailing.

[35:50]: There were many activities for young people in her church, Union Congregational. She sang in the youth choir up to twelfth grade. She bowled, they played bridge together. She was also in a monthly book club called the Half Hour Club which started in the late 1800s. It is not church related, but they would occasionally meet there. She is still a member of it today. She was in a Girls Club from the Women's Club when she was in high school, the 200 Club until she was 35 years old, and an Evening Group for working women at the Club. Then when she stopped working she met with the big Club. She makes a point of staying active.

[37:40]: She worked in Mountainside Hospital during World War Two. She also worked in the Township Health department – washing petri dishes! She had her first high school dance just after war ended with Japan, when she was a sophomore in high school. There had not been any kind of activities like that during the war – until VJ Day, Victory in Japan Day. The celebration and dance was for the end of the war, which had started with Pearl Harbor. They did smaller service activities during high school, to help the service men.

[39:20]: She remembers they had RKO newsreels about the war at the Bellevue Theater. They did not have television at the time, so they went to the movies for only 25 cents when she was in high school.

[40:37]: When asked how she feels about how the town has changed, Shirley says she does not like all the big buildings downtown. She feels like they are turning our township into a city, and she prefers the feel of the smaller township.

[41:27]: She was asked to compare her Montclair public school experience with her sons. All three of her sons went to Northeast Elementary School. Her second and third sons, Scott and Brett, went to Northeast School and then Mount Hebron; her oldest, Glen, went to College High School [at Montclair State College] in the 7th grade, graduating the year before they closed College High. College High School was taught by Montclair State College professors at the time, and Shirley considered it a wonderful opportunity for her son to attend. It had a class of 30 and you had to pass a test to get into it. They chose 15 boys and 15 girls. It was a great experience for her son Glenn. He went on to Duke University and then New Jersey Medical School; he's now a physician. Her middle son Scott is a pharmacist, her youngest, Brett, is a lawyer. She is very proud of them for self-financing their educations and for their accomplishments.

[43:50]: She recalls when her children were young. They had a lot of other children in their neighborhood and were close to Tuers Park. Her children would go out all day and come home for lunch. They played games like basketball and whatever else was in the park. They were all in Boy Scouts. They would go to church every week, and were involved in church recreational activities as well. When Shirley was a kid she used to go to meetings, book clubs and other groups she was involved in. She remembers living at 216 Lorraine Avenue near the Upper Montclair commercial district; her family had rented it for many years but when she was in college, her parents had an opportunity to purchase it approximately 1947; Shirley sold it in the 1990s after her parents passed away. She remembers the empty lot that was on the corner of Lorraine and Norwood Avenue, before St. Cassian's School was built there.

[46:52]: When asked what it means to her to be a Montclairian, she replies that she was involved in a lot of things and is happy here. She is, however, not happy with the taxes. It is difficult to stay here, but she doesn't want to leave because she's active in so many things here. She was happy in school, she had a wonderful childhood. She felt it was easier to have neighborhood schools, but she understands the necessity of the magnet schools to increase integration in the town which wasn't very integrated until students got to high school. But she misses the days of kids being able to go home for lunch. She notes that in high school she had friends of multiple races, and still does today.

[49:25]: Her grandfather's parents came to the United States before immigrants were processed through Ellis Island. They came into the country at Castle Garden Migrant Arrival Site in the Battery Conservancy in Manhattan. Her grandfather was born on an Italian ship en route to Genoa Italy, as her great grandmother was on her way back to Italy to settle an estate there. Shirley had always thought her grandfather had been a natural born citizen but in fact, she learned through Ancestry.com that since he was born on an Italian ship, he was an Italian citizen and became a U.S. citizen at 21.

[53:00] Shirley describes a few more photos. Her friend Rachel Cole (sp?)..her parents owned what was called the Montclair Swimming Pool and is now the Montclair Beach Club. Rachel lived at 219 Lorraine Avenue and Shirley lived at 216 Lorraine Avenue and they were great friends. The photo she described is of a group of high school friends who had returned after college and the photo was taken on Rachel Cole's front porch. Other friends in the photo include Colleen McKelvey (sp?), Betty France, Muriel Gibbis (sp?) and Rachel Cole and Shirley Saunders.

