

SARASOTA COUNTY WATER ATLAS
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
NEW COLLEGE OF FLORIDA — FALL 2012

Interview with Jane Burgess

Interviewed by: Erica Lindegren

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Jane Burgess (J): So this is a collage. Now, this center picture is my husband and I in our...these are our album photos. They go in the Sarasota High School Yearbook. So this collage begins with us and it radiates up to the right from his roots. It radiates up to the left from my roots. And then it comes down with my family on the left and it comes down with his family from the right, and then we just happened to get married. And these are our four daughters from the union, just different scenes of them.

This is skip day at Sarasota High. There is nothing like it. Oh, how I wish I could take everybody back to those days. Those days were like what you see in the movies of the families. Of the Judy Garland Movies. of The Boy Next Door. Of that simplicity of life. Nobody ever locked their doors. We walked wherever we wanted to go. Everything was so safe. There were no murders. There were no murders. There was no robberies. There was nothing like that. It was so beautiful.

And sometimes I look at our children, our grandchildren, and our great grandchildren, particularly the great grandchildren and the grandchildren, and I say, oh how I wish you could know that time. So this is part of it. And Skip Day at school was so wonderful. It was so exciting for teenagers. It was really exciting. Can you imagine this being exciting to the teenagers today?

Erica Lindegren (E): Ha ha, oh they still like to skip school.

J: We got to with permission skip school and go and spend the day at the beach. Now do you notice that little girl has braids on top of her hair? Would you like to see them?

E: Oh Wow! That's amazing.

J: This is me, in high school. All these years...how old are they? I graduated '48. Yeah. So, can you imagine the teenagers thinking that's exciting and so much fun? So that was skip day, and my husband was a football player. He did get a scholarship to the University of Georgia.

And when I did this collage I tried to get pictures with cars in them so in the years to come there would be the old cars, as many of them as I could get. I would put up...select a picture because in the background it would have a picture of the car. Another reason I wanted to start with the collage was because I wanted to begin to introduce you to us.

E: Yeah, this is great.

J: Now, this is the first house we ever lived in.

E: Wow, where was that?

J: Do you know where South Gate is? Do you know the street before you get to Siesta Dr? Orchid St?

E: I do not.

J: Okay, well that's where this house is. And it was one of the first what they call subdivisions in Sarasota. And my...there is our first child. She must have been about 3 months old. And we bought the house, and my husband said now we're not gonna move out there until you learn to drive because that's out in the country. We lived at the end of the road and on the east side of our house, right up to our house was orange groves and in the very front of our house, which would back up to Siesta Drive, was orange groves owned by Minute Maid. And then King and Smith came in and bought up all of the orange groves and made South Gate. And the South Gate shopping mall was the first mall, and that literally killed downtown Sarasota. It went through death because everybody wanted to come out to the mall. Now, when we moved into this house the street right in front of us was dirt and it was very lumpy, so it was the first subdivision and we literally were out in the woods. And you can see how far, that's not far from town. But then, so yes, I did learn to drive, and yes, we did move out into one of the first subdivisions.

E: What year was that? The year you moved into the subdivision?

J: Alright, must've been about '53? We were married in '50, so it was approximately... I'm trying to think with Bonnie how old she is and the age she is there in that picture. She was just a few months old when we moved there, and were married in...it was about '51, '52...

E: And when was the mall built?

J: The what?

E: The mall?

J: I don't know darling. I'm not good at that.

E: That's ok

J: Yeah, I'm family. Hey, they do the history of that.

E: Was it pretty soon after you moved into the subdivision or was it much later?

J: It was, um, I'm trying to think if it went right...I think it more or less followed right along with the subdivision as it was developed and then the mall came about. The first Publix was there. And a McCrory's dime store was there. And things like that. It was wonderful, still small but yet growing into larger what Sarasota is now. And the interesting thing is, one of the

interesting things is, we moved really out in the country to raise our family in the country, and in no time we were in the heart of downtown Sarasota. So our house is here, and Siesta Drive became here, and the Tamiami Trail here, which is 41 now.

E: Right.

J: So as our daughters got older, if they had bikes, were could they go?

E: Right.

J: If they went South, they hit Siesta Drive and the mall. If they to the end of the street they hit 41, or we called it then, it was Tamiami Trail, Tampa to Miami, the Tamiami Trail. And those poor girls never had bikes as youngsters because where can they ride them? If they can leave their street and they're in all of this traffic.

So some of these pictures, this one, is when I graduated. We had nice clothes under our graduation dresses or gowns. And graduation is now come as you are, which is fine, I love it, but back then it wasn't.

Oh this one is interesting. This is when I was younger, when I was little, I must've been what do you say honey? 6, 7, 8? 6,7, 8 or 9, and this actually is history because you know where Myakka State Park is? Do you know the subdivision right before it? Myakka Valley? Okay, my uncle, my aunt and uncle owned property that backed up to Myakka State Park, and he had 3300 acres that went from the road way back and backed up to Myakka State Park. It was 3 miles from the road to their house, and it was a log cabin. It was a log cabin. So then the property was bought and made a subdivision – Myakka Valley – but it still has the name of the owner Vanderipe on some of the roads and the Vanderipes are very well known. They're families here for the Vanderipe Nurseries and the Reasoner Nurseries, so that's all a part of the history of both the counties. But that is...they tore down the log cabin except the fireplace was still there. And what is so unique is our granddaughter Amanda and her family moved out to Myakka Valley and had a home out there for quite a while. But, going out there as a child, and when we were married, when my husband and I were married, before we were ever married we would go out there and play Parcheesi with my uncle. We loved to play Parcheesi, but you didn't really take his advice when he advised you a certain move because you could be certain it was to his advantage. But those memories formed such a wonderful place in me and such a beautiful place they had, which was exactly like Myakka State Park. Much of our family and history has taken place in Myakka State Park. And when we were getting ready to move someplace, my husband knew of this land that we're standing on right now, and he drove us here and it was like coming home, because if you've ever been to Myakka State Park, you know how much it's like that.

E: So you grew up in Myakka?

J: No. No, my father died, I think when I was in about the 5th grade, and my mother and my brother and I moved in with my mother's father. That's my granddaddy, we moved in with them on Citrus Avenue in Sarasota. And there's granddad and his daughter Martha, who lived... who was married to Vanderipe and lived on the ranch. And there's my mother, and so I lived with them until I was married. This is history; this is the old Lido Beach Casino. It was so beautiful. It was torn down.

E: Wow, I didn't even know they had a casino on Lido Beach.

J: Oh, not Casino, not like gambling Casino. I don't know why it had a casino. I'll have to google that.

E: What was the casino?

J: The whole premise was. They had a large pool where the high schools had a competition, and of course the public was able to use them. They had wonderful very fine dress shops, restaurants, a ball room for dancing, a grill for the beach people. So it was just overall for everybody, and it was really just magnificent.

Alright, let's go back up here. This is my husband's roots, which really go up to Pennsylvania, and this is his grandmother in Macon, GA. And we're up visiting and... this is my husband and the sisters here. I wanted to... have you been listening to the news? Do you know this young man who was bit by the shark?

E: Recently? Or...

J: Oh, it was two months ago. He's been on national news, and just ripped his leg open and he was rescued by his best friend. So anyway they are having a blood drive this Saturday in 3 different locations with live music, but you're already booked up. Anyway, I was going, if you did know, I was going to show you that it's a son of that young boy.

E: Who is that young boy?

J: These are our nephews and niece, the Wickershams, out on Longboat key.

E: Did everyone, um, is your husband also from the Sarasota area?

J: He came down at the age of 12 from Macon, GA. From Georgia with his family

E: And then most of your immediate family is in the area? They're in Lido Key or...

J: The woods are full of them. Whenever I meet anybody and they say, "Oh, I was born here." I say, "Honey what's your last name?" And if it's any of the names that I know of, I say, "Oh, you're my kissing cousin." And it's true.

So...would you like to meet my grandfather? This is my granddaddy. I've spoken about my granddaddy and that's my grandmother. And then my mother, and my other grandmother.

E: Wow, these are great.

J: And you're from New College?

E: I am from New College

J: My granddaddy was on the Board of Directors

E: Wow!

J: And there's a plaque there. My granddaddy's name, and my granddaddy was born right down there on the Bay.

E: Really?

J: So we've been here quite a while.

E: Literally born here on the Bay?

J: Mmmhmm.

E: Wow

J: His father came down, rode it from the Civil War to recuperate down here, and that's how they got established. Yeah. So. Alright. While you're up here, could I take you to my bedroom?

E: Sure.

J: I want to show you a part of who I am.

E: Okay.

J: I don't come upstairs except occasionally, as you can tell. This is my old bedroom. I moved down when I had knee surgery, but, oh I do love my old bedroom! You'll see why. It's my grandson's bedroom now, so I don't know what condition it's in. I love bunnies. I do this stenciling.

E: Did you paint the ears though?

J: Yes.

E: This is beautiful

J: Come in. I'm going to sit down because I want to talk. Now...

E: Can I move this out of your way?

J: Yes honey. Thank you.

I do love gardening. And, I first started as a child loving flowers. And in Sarasota when I was very young, I thought if I could see flowers or pick flowers I was so happy. And I lived on Orchid Street, Hyde Park Avenue, when I went to Southside School. And I'd walk down the end of the road where the Pine Trees were and the wild violets grew there. And I would pick wild violets. Well, a million dollars does not compare to a bouquet of handpicked personal picking of wild violets. So flowers have always given me joy, and gardening as always given me joy, and I needed something to do and I wanted to...I can't paint. I am not an artist. I would like to, but I began little by little stenciling, and I learned with stenciling you can be an artist with your stenciling. These are simple stencils. I do not use the whole stencil as a stiff piece. I cut them apart. Now I love gardening, I love to plant. I don't do that anymore, but I still enjoy it in my heart and these flowers, would you believe I planted every one of these flowers with the stencil? Every flower. Every flower. I would look, I would sit here and I would say now where do I want a flower and what kind of a flower? And I'd look at my stencils, my singles, I think I want that one with a little curly there, and then I want a bud. I want a bud there. And then another flower. Maybe a bumblebee. Every one of these were selected and planted for my visual point of view of what it would look like. And I wish people could know that you can go to the store and buy just your simple stenciling paints with the stubby paintbrush and all you do is run it around on the paint and dab a little bit of it off and then do your stenciling. I took it a step further. I wanted it more realistic. And if you look at the bunny behind the door, it took me a long time of practice to get the colors right. And I would practice, and then I'd put that sheet aside and then I'd practice and practice getting the colors blended and just the right colors. And after many many many times of getting it just where it satisfied me, then I went to the wall. And it takes absolutely no time to put it on the wall once you've done all of that practice.

E: Yeah, this is absolutely incredible.

J: Now, look at the bluebird up there. I worked on her a loooooong, long time. Getting your shades of white and the right color and the breast and the little worm coming from her and then the nest that she's flying up to. And then down here is just a garden, and one of my granddaughters helped me do this. She did some of it and I did some of it. And I call it a wedding for the two of us blending together. And that bird bath, I worked on that a loooong time to get the right green mold that's coming through on it and the right shades of the light. A looong time on that. And then hidden there you'll see the little snails and the little chipmunk, and this granddaughter, she wanted a weeping willow. And I went downstairs for something and when I came up she says, "What does that look like?" I said, "Well, it looks like a weeping willow." And she created her version of the weeping willow there.

E: That's amazing. You have a chipmunk and a snail. What kind of birds are those?

J: Yeah, and then up here in the corner someplace up top you'll see flying birds and see if you can plug in my lights. It's so sweet when the lights are on. I hope they still work. Yes! Isn't that so nice? And I love to do the dragonflies. On that wall is a dragonfly, and I really enjoy doing the dragonflies. I have it on my sugar bowl in the kitchen. Lots of dragonflies. So for people that aren't artists, they can still create pictures of their own. And I wish more people knew this. This was such a joy in doing it. Yes, it was work. Can you imagine being up on the ladder and clipping...

E: Those are really detailed stencils.

J: Each flower and planting them. So that's what I did want to show you.

E: So all of these animals in your garden as well?

J: We don't have chipmunks here, but the snails we have and the birds and the birds and these... whenever you see flowers outside these flowers are not planted for the pleasure of people's eyes that were cultivated to appreciate the cultivated flowers. These flowers are planted like wildflowers would be out in nature. And I did about 5 years of study as to what will bring in butterflies and hummingbirds. We now have hummingbirds year round. They nest here and there's food supply for them and the butterflies year round. And outside I did the same thing. I would sit at a window and I would say it needs a flower if I'm going to look out the window I have to see a flower. So out each window you will be able to see a flower, and many times a hummingbird on that flower and sometimes two. My husband and I were in our movie theater downstairs, which looks out the backdoor and he said, "Oh look, there are 3 hummingbirds." And that's another thing I would like for people to know. Here in Florida, you can have hummingbirds. You find out what nectar they need, what plants they need, and shrubbery around, and plant the plants they need to survive, they will come. You will have hummingbirds. So there are lots of secrets that people don't know and I want them to know.

E: Are there lots of dragonflies around here as well?

J: Yes. Not like that, but the kind of greenish ones more. We do have the dragonflies.

E: Would you plant a dragonfly garden like instead of a butterfly garden at all?

J: No, but they come. They come along, that's part of the insects, and I love to see the bumblebees get on a nectar plant because he's so heavy that he pulls the whole plant down. Then when he flies away the plant goes boing boing boing boing boing... heh heh. So, we have the bumblebees and bees, and you know bees are having a hard time. civilization is coming in. We just have bees because they're drawn here by the many nectar plants that we do have.

E: Right. So neat.

J: Oh could you...

E: Unplug?

J: And now we are going to move right along to where my husband and I dated for 3 years, and then we did get married and there are some pictures here.

J: We have been married, what, 62 years, but on our 50th anniversary our oldest daughter wanted to give us, you know, the big beautiful 50th wedding anniversary, but I didn't want it. I'm not that type of person and I'm really very private and we're really quiet and private, and she loves to celebrate and honor us. And I said, "No, Bonnie honey, no." So comes 61, all of a sudden something got a hold of me, and I don't know what it was but all of a sudden I had specific plans that I wanted carried out by the family. And that plan was I wanted our grandchildren, and that consists of about 5 of them there, this young man, this girl, Amanda, and Shelley. There are about 5 grandchildren with their families. I wanted the grandchildren as a love gift to do all themselves and give us a 61st wedding anniversary celebration, and I knew exactly what I wanted. I had instructions given exactly to my innermost being, and it started with our Linda. She was to plan it. As I told her what I wanted, and I wanted it held, can you guess where?

E: Your yard?

J: No place but Myakka State Park. That's our heritage. Our grandfather had a part in establishing that park. Amanda was married there and grew up there. We all spent so much time out there, and I said first, I want it held at Myakka State Park. Linda got up out of that chair, went over called Myakka State Park and reserved the pavilion right there. I said next, I want this...can we sit down?

E: Absolutely.

J: And I said next, I want the grandchildren to do it because those grandchildren spent so much of their life here sharing together, playing together, being together, from infants on up to graduation to marriage. And we played volleyball, badminton, all those good things. Do you know what those lights are for?

E: No.

J: We set up a ping pong table here. We had to have a ping pong table. No, there wasn't much room, but we could still hit it back and forth. And down in what we call the barn we set up trains, and on a big table with all the fillings in it. Many, many hours were spent here by the grandchildren filled with love and fun. Yes, there were fights. Yeah, we had some doozies. Sometimes I had to turn the hose on to break up some little bit too exuberant things that went on, but it was such a bonding together of all of us and so much fun. And I wanted the grandchildren as a love gift to do it themselves. And I said, I know what I want. I want kites. We have to have kites. There's always room to fly kites out in Myakka State Park. It's tradition...tradition

because my husband loves to fly kites. If you go out and look in our car now, you're gonna find a kite. And when they were little, he would start and put us in the car and we'd go and find as much room or vacant lot as we could, and we would...they would fly kites. So that's a part of us all being together and tradition. And there has to be kites and there has to be Frisbees and there has to be a piñata, and I want music and I want all of you to do all of the decorating and everything that needs to be done. Well, our granddaughter Amanda has the natural gift of organizing, so immediately she received it and got all these thoughts going. They would plan workdays, and they would meet together and have sessions of planning who was going to do what and what was needed and all of that. So that was such a time for them together, just to do that. Well it's amazing what they did. They went far above and beyond anything you could ever think of. I meant to have it out here. Let me go give one thing as an example.

While I do that, let's step over here to this that was done. Our oldest granddaughter lives in Gainesville. She went to school there and found her niche in working there and getting her own website and her husband became head of the computers there. But this is a combination of she put this together. This is our grandparents' name. I'm Day and that's Bampi. And see how she put the background of Myakka State Park? And then this is at the prom. It's Sarasota High School. This is on our honeymoon in St. Augustine and this was in the newspaper. This is our honeymoon, and there's Sarasota High. And then this is so wonderful, this means so much to me. If you read it, please bury it in your heart and keep it forever. And there's a wonderful story with this. This is what the saying is. We were married in the Episcopal church of the Redeemer down on the Bayfront in Sarasota. And when we graduated that summer, that church was being built. And my husband helped to build that church. We were the first couple ever married in that church. Isn't that so sweet?

E: That is really sweet.

J: Yeah. So, let me step in here now. I want to get something. You can come in and see my bedroom downstairs. I was moved down because of my knee, and I love my little bedroom. And this is my family bedroom. My family gathers in, because I've gathered up a memento of as many members of my family as I can. And you can see I'm surrounded. My family in here. This is what one of the things they did, let's get over in the light, this was a family affair. Amanda came out here and down in what we call a barn is a bookcase full of picture book albums. And Amanda would sit and find family pictures, and she would put a sticky paper there and then took a picture of them all that she chose of all – there must be 50 albums down there – she chose the pictures and then the couple that you see on the window, they put this together, a picture on each side to put on the picnic table at the reunion for all of our guests to take home a memento. So all of them went above and beyond what they should have. And the granddaughter Jane in Gainesville she had t-shirts made with Day and Bampi and that picture of Myakka. Just things like that just go far beyond, and then the guests that were invited were members, adopted, that have been brought into the family and then the family, like this couple. He became a part of the family when he was invited to Shelley's 16th birthday here. He's been a member of the family

ever since. And he married Erica, and she's been a part. So our family has grown and grown and grown. And Erica is a teacher and she has since just recently retired from teaching and gone into full time cake making. And when she found out we were having a reunion, she says I want to do their cake for them. So it all was like that, and so many contributing to it and oh did they ever have fun. And I was asked by Shelley to pick out the music of those years that were our favorites, which I did, and then they played that music during the..and it became a family reunion of others coming in. I said everybody there that's been a part of our lives, so it did grow and it was beautiful and it was fun. One of my fondest memories...come on I'll show you...was of my cousin I babysat with when he was young and one of my favorite memories...I'll have to find him...I'm holding his face...is him running with a kite and flying a kite when I was a teenager. And I'm holding his face right then. Anyway that was one of my best memories was of him flying that kite with his snow white hair flying with him.

E: Where did you fly kites? Was it in Myakka?

J: Yes. Mhmmm. All around there. But they flew...I'm speaking now of flying a kite at the anniversary because there's just this large area behind the pavilion where we did it. I'll be looking for it, but this is so interesting. Years and years ago Sarasota had such wonderful tradition: the Sara Desoto Pageant. Since they discontinued that pageant, there's been nothing like it. They've tried, but they've not been able to come up with how wonderful was the Sara Desoto Pageant, which would take you back into history of the story of Desoto coming and establishing where people began to settle and the story of the young Indian and Sara Desoto, the young girl, and they went through all the history of that. And it was a big wonderful, all kinds of activities. The men had to grow beards. If a man was found without a beard down on Main Street, he was put in jail and locked up in jail because he didn't have a beard on. They would have a...the young boys would build their cars...I don't know what you call them, they'd build their own cars and they had a big ramp and they'd go down the ramp and the fathers would help the sons build cars. That was so wonderful. But I was the most important person in that pageant. I was in charge of the Lily Pad Hotel. I was in charge of the frog jumping contest. Heh heh. And that was so much fun! You see I'm all dressed out and there's my froggy at the Lily Pad Hotel.

E: What is the frog jumping contest? Is it like leap frog?

J: No darling, real frogs!

E: Real frogs?

J: Real, really really the big giant frogs! That people would bring their frogs to compete in this contest.

E: Where did you get frogs from?

J: I didn't, they did. In the woods. Well could we sit down?

E: Oh sure!

J: I want to tell a frog story. I told you we used to go out at the ranch and my husband and I, even before we were married, and then after we were married, and my husband was a milkman. And he worked 7 days a week, all from about 3 in the morning till about 8 at night. And if he, if it was his vacation time, he would take somebody else's vacation and let them go so that he could earn their money for delivering. And because a milkman didn't make much money, we had 4 daughters and I did not work. So we lived off the land a lot. He squirrel hunted, I cooked squirrel stew. He went duck hunting, I ate duck. And we went frog gigging at nighttime, and we were learning how to do that. And he was told that, well, you get a croaker sack, you kept your frog, and you hold the back and the front and you break their backs and they die and you have your frogs. You put them in the croaker sack. So he did all that he was told to do, and we got our frogs and drove home. Those frogs didn't know they were supposed to be dead, and they got out of the croaker sack, and they got all through the car. And a week later you could know where there was dead frog because they stunk. It was smelly. So we ate frogs. And cooking frogs is very, very interesting. You're shaking your head. Tell me what you know about frog cooking.

L (the videographer): Oh well, we had to boil a frog for a biology project one time, and it was very difficult to, uh, work with that kind of meat.

J: I didn't have to do that. Mine was an easier assignment. These were actually dead, and I breaded them like you do any other meat you're gonna fry. And you put them in the frying pan. What made it so interesting is with those long legs, they would begin to ballet dance. The legs would go this way and the legs would go that way, so they would do their dancing while you cooked them. But those frog legs were the best eating you ever had because they fed off the land and the meat was sweet. These farm fed frog legs, they do not have the flavor. They do not have the texture as what eating the land gives to them naturally. So, we did get a lot of our meals from the fish out at the bay and quail, is delicious, and dove. And my husband took me dove hunting with him. He wanted me to shoo the doves up so he could shoot them. So, I was placed in this patch of grass here and he was placed over here. He said, "Alright, I'm ready now, shoo the doves up." So I made a lot of noise and the grasses whoooosh up and all these doves. He shoots, and by the time all the shells was falling down around me. I came out of there, and I said I'm not shooing dove out for you and have you shooting at me and your bullets falling all down around me. I'm not doing that. So, but that really is wonderful wonderful eating, when you got to eat off the land like that.

E: How often did you go, or he go hunting?

J: He did it. He has the most wonderful hunting stories that he tells. I'm sure he told Matt a lot of them.

E: Did you have a garden?

J: Not vegetables. Flowers.

E: What kind of flowers did you grow?

J: Chester daisies and just the shrubbery around the house. But I liked getting out and doing that and that was my relaxation and my...if there was a lot that was going on and I needed some tension release, then I'd go out and weed. There's nothing like weeding that will do that. Girls, I've gotta get me some water.

E: Of course.

J: But, can I please offer you a Sprite? A Gatorade? A water?

E: Water would be great.

L: I'm okay, thank you.

J: I've always enjoyed gardening, and when we moved up here there was lots of time, and I never had time to do gardening in our previous home. Incidentally, this is the second home that we've ever lived in. We've only lived in two homes. The one that I showed you in the picture and this one. We raised our family in that one on Orchid Street in Sarasota. They all were leaving home, they all left home, and Sarasota was just getting entirely too big, entirely too much traffic, so we wanted to go back to the woods. And my husband, being a milkman and traveling and delivering milk at so many areas, he knew this piece of property was up for sale. And when I said, "Honey, we want to move," he said, "Get in the car." He drove me back roads and came up the driveway there. I said, "This is it, this is home." Because it was just like driving into a lullaby. Trees and all a part of the ranch where we grew up and exactly like Myakka State Park. I said, "This is home." So that was on a Sunday and Monday morning we went down to the realtor's in Bradenton and said, "We want to make an offer on that place." She said, "Oh, I'm so sorry, but somebody's already got money down on it." And she said, "Why don't you put a backup offer for it?" I had never heard of that, but we did, and the seller turned down the money that was already there and took our money, and this is how we came to live here. And this was to be not just our home but a home for many many people. We've had people come here from all over the world. We didn't know them, but they were sent here by friends or whatever. So this land was set aside for this small amount for Lynn and for Erica and was developed into really a haven so people will know there is such a place for everybody. For everybody to experience it. My...as I said I didn't have time for gardening. I used it as a stress release to go out and weed and when we moved up here, then I had time for a garden. And the first plant I experienced working with was our oldest granddaughter named after me, Jane. Our second plant was her sister Olivia. The third plant was Amanda. And then came Brian and Shelley. And then came all these other plants that I could nurture and water and help take care of. And all the children became my garden, and I could nurture them and take care of them. And got all them young ones raised and poor me, I didn't have any living garden anymore. They're all gone and out and

around, and so I really had time and I discovered I was inspired to begin to create a much needed butterfly/hummingbird/bee garden, and put several years into finding out what was needed to draw them through the reading and talking to people. And began planting and planting and planting until now we have the perfect garden out there that I don't have to tend to anymore. And now we got a new crop of babies, a new crop of young ones, and they're all coming back here again. So we get to nurture that first garden again with the new plants and the new crop of the babies. And he's two now. She was just born. She's 3 months and then this little one, he must be about 8 months now. So we have new plants that I'm nurturing, and it's wonderful to have all those generations in there now coming back together. It's a renewing of this bonding together that had to be put on hold for a while. Now, they are enjoying seeing that this bonding is going on. And it takes a lot of maintaining for these grounds that Pete and I just can't do it anymore. So the grandchildren were here one day for a workday to clean it up. And they came in as a group and sat down at the table here, and they said, "Now, we have decided that once a month we will be here to take care and to maintain the property." And that has been a wonderful help to us. And most of all we do call it a workday, but most of all it's a knowing that once a month we will be together as a family, and this is what it's all about. So they do come for the workday or for the gathering day of just being together. If they can come, that's wonderful. If they can't come, that's wonderful too. But it keeps the family bonded together, and it's so wonderful to see the young ones come and the house is always baby-proofed. This is the second time they've had their own niche. I've had to take all of my library down to the barn and make room again for the second generation of toys, which will grow in different toys as they grow. But that is a joy of my heart is to the children and the family and they're all...there's no age...they're all children. A person can be 60, 70 and still they're my children. Even all the adopted family that come in, and it gives me the greatest pleasure. And I put this out so I could remember to show you the story of the quilt. I will introduce you to my husband, the sweetheart of my life

Pete Burgess: Hello! How's everybody?

E&L: Good, how are you?

J: This is Erica and this is Lynn.

P: Good! Nice to meet you both.

J: With the first news that we were gonna be grandparents, I thought you know I'd like to make a quilt. [Let me take a drink I haven't had one yet]. With this first grandchild, now I had never seen a quilt before in my life. In Florida you don't have quilts. It's warm. I didn't know what a quilt looked like. I didn't have a clue as to how to make a quilt, but I wanted to make a baby quilt. I didn't know anybody that had quilts. I didn't know anybody that knew how to make a quilt. One day Pete came home from delivering milk. He said, I saw a lady making a quilt. It's four o'clock in the morning, he's delivering milk to this house and the light's on, and he sees this precious little lady sitting and quilting and smoking her corn pipe. I said, give me the

address. I wanna go there and ask her to teach me how. So I went there and I knocked on the door, and this young lady came to the door. I explained to her who I was. I was her milkman's wife and someone knew how to make quilts there, and I wanted to learn how to make a quilt. She said, "That's my mother. If you come in, I'll introduce you." So I was taken in, and I explained to her who I was. She says, "I will teach how to make a quilt as long, as you wanna come, I will teach you." And she began to teach me from the beginning. And this quilt I appliquéd on them, and my first appliqués I would do, would be, if you're familiar with it, the old fashioned, it's almost a Dutch pattern. The girl with just the full skirt and the bonnet hat where you never saw her face. The first granddaughters got that and then it's in the pink. It's in the pink, and the first boys got the boys done in the blue with no hat. And then I would put balloons up and then draw strings up to the balloons. And it was very simple, very very old fashioned. So those were the first quilts I did. But that quilt is at least 35 years old. Yes the appliqués gone. It's one of the few that has lasted. I am 82 years old, and come winter time I sleep with my blanky still. That is the warmest. Feel the material and pass it. That is the softest material and so warm. But our granddaughter Olivia has one, and they keep telling her to throw it away because the appliqué is all raggedy. And she says, "I won't." And I think one other granddaughter has hers because she never used it. She saved it. And it still has the appliqué on. And then I did water, it was so unique and I combined doing it... I stretched out a little bit, sometimes I would do some stenciling on it and then some the appliqué, but that too was fun and that too you can create your own pictures with the stenciling combined with your appliqués. So by the time of about the 10th grandchild, I got burned out. And I don't think the 10th, 11th, and 12th got quilts. But then, the tradition was picked up again with the great grandchildren. And that was a lot better and easier because one person doesn't make a quilt, it becomes a family quilt. All that want to participate are invited to make a square. The mother picks out the material she wants and several different pieces of material and then sends that or gives it to those that choose to make the quilts. And then they take that material and do whatever they want. And it becomes a family quilt that members of the family have actually done it. So the tradition has carried on beginning with I don't know how to make a quilt to become a family tradition.

E: So neat. My grandmother used to make quilts for all of her grandkids as well.

J: What honey?

E: My grandma used to make quilts for all her grandkids as well. It was really time consuming.

J: Awww, yeah.

E: I have one other question about Skip Day. I keep thinking about it. I want to know what the beaches were like and what you did on senior Skip Day.

J: The beaches were beautiful, as they still are. I think they extended out further than they do now. And just the same beautiful water. But they did go out further and... just the beautiful beaches. Just as they are now. But mother nature comes and steals sand from here during the

storms and takes it and puts it here from say in front of one of the public areas, and then man comes, “Oh, our sand has been stolen, let us dredge up more sand and put it back where it’s missing,” and then all of those millions and thousands of dollars they spend to replace the sand that no longer was there, and it looked almost like it did before. And then mother nature sends a storm and steals the sand and maybe takes it down there this time. So you don’t win over...and they’re still doing that today. So the beaches were still beautiful and wonderful and the waters to swim in.

E: What was your favorite beach, or what is your favorite beach?

J: I am not a beach person. My husband is a beach person. I have to...when there is a pause, I call it I’m processing. You know my favorite beach is on Longboat, on the very end of Longboat, right before you cross over the bridge going into, I think it’s Carson Beach there, right before that, there’s a little village there with homes and a restaurant, and I think it’s called Longboat Village where my husband’s mother lived and raised her family. But you don’t go towards the Bay, but you go take a little tiny road and the parking is close to the main road. And you park there and then walk down to the beach left in its natural...there’s no conveniences and it’s a beautiful beach that has been left untouched except recently. I truly have not been there in the past few years. I’d say at least 3 years. But the condos were encroaching and spoiling some. And the storms have come and blown down the trees, down on the point, which you walk and it goes all the way around the point to the pass, which the bridge goes across that pass where the current is so bad. But we would walk all the way around there, a wonderful walk, my husband and I enjoy doing our walks together like that. And the trees were blown down, but it was fun to walk and climb over the trees still because it was still left in its natural, without the conveniences brought in and a beautiful beach. And one year we went, and the birds had chosen that place for their nesting, and they were called skimmers. Do you know what they are? Okay. They skim at the top of the water, and with their mouths open and they’re scooping up the little fish there. So they were the skimmers, but to me they were the most interesting of any bird that I know. Those birds mate for a lifetime. At that beach, it was mating time, and there must’ve been 100, 200, 300, I don’t know how many just walking around, walking around, and squawking or calling. This precedence that they do. I was fascinated – what is this? What is this? And then came home and we still used World Books. Took out the World Books and bird books and found out these birds mate for a lifetime. They mate then and there and then they separate until the next mating time, and the only way they find their mate is this calling, and they will recognize their mate when they hear their mate. So that was a wonderful experience to actually see the birds and hear them as they are seeking that mate that they haven’t seen for a year. So that is my favorite beach from South Sarasota to the tip end of Anna Maria.

E: That’s great.

J: I’ve done ‘em all many times.

E: So you prefer gardens and woods more...than beaches?

J: The reason I don't like beaches...two reasons, mainly is the sun. My skin is susceptible to skin cancers, and therefore I should not be at the beaches. I never really cared for swimming in the Gulf and the salt water. We'd go to beaches as a family outing on Sunday afternoons, and my husband just loves the beach. And he and our four daughters enjoyed it. Yes, I went, and we'd go out and cook breakfast on the beach and all of that. But I was more the worker and preparing for them as they enjoyed it. And a lot of times I find my joy and fun, I can enjoy watching as much as participating. I am an observer, not just of birds, but of people. I love to watch people in a public area. And I would find, rather than participate in everything, I am a contented watcher and can get just as much fun out of watching as participating. So that was my role in going to the beaches. I did not enjoy the swimming and the salt water, how you're sticky when it comes out and then it begins to itch. But my husband loved it, and the girls loved it and they still do. Mine is, if you look around, I like the shade, the coolness, and if you have ever been in the woods and turned over a log or a stone, you'll find the critters under there. Well I'm one of those little critters, in the cool, in the quiet where it is. But yet, I'm a people person. I love people. I love the one on one, two to three big affairs. I'm too little, my voice is too little to really be a part, so I'm happier in this situation that we're in now. And I do love people, and I do love to participate with them and relationship with them but in a more, in a smaller setting.

E: Makes sense. I have one more specific question, and then you can tell me any other stories you want. You said Arthur was his name...

J: They called him A.B., A.B. Edwards

E: ...A.B. And he was on the board of New College? Did he help found New College? Do you know anything more specifically about that?

J: I should. No. Actually, two or three years ago, our granddaughter, our daughter was down from Toronto. We had two daughters living here and the grandchildren. And we had a wonderful time going to the New College area where we could and where the little plaque is, which actually was supposed to be where his log cabin was. And we had a wonderful time researching all of that, but I probably was looking at the flowers and the eagles that were in the nest there and the treetops, while my more studious daughters and grandchildren absorbed all of that and could tell you specifics of all of that history. But you won't find it all there, and I find it...Granddad, he looked to the future. He helped make the future of Sarasota, I remember when he was quite old, and I would help take care of him. Late 80s, early 90s before the I-75 was built. "Jane, I want you to go and get me a very large Manatee map and a very large Manatee County map and a very large Sarasota county map. I want to plan out I-75." Mind very very active. Mind in the future. Mind still planning. So I am a person, I am a personal person. Not a detail, not a historian, but the personal things about people and events, but they gotta be really personal. If its history, hmmm, interesting, but gone. Even though I am a part of history, of Sarasota. I can remember

when they came to Sarasota to film *The Greatest Show on Earth*, and that was so very very exciting, but it was personal. It thrived with the people of Sarasota that became a part of the people that were actually in the movie. And I can remember that was such a wonderful exciting time for this town...and don't go away. People have a magazine talking about when Cecil B DeMille came here to Sarasota for the grand opening of that. Where are you? I have so much...[looking for magazine]. I guess I'll have to tell you about it till my eyes see it. But I am a people person rather than a statistics and history person.

E: Yeah, I can see that. That's great, though. Well, I think we need to wrap up a little bit. Are there any final thoughts or anything you want to share?

J: I will show you one more thing that's history. Have you girls ever heard of the Highwaymen? I'm going to introduce you to the highwaymen. I find their lives and their stories very very inspiring. Over here. This painting was done by one of the first original Highwaymen, was done by Harold Newton. He was a 19-year-old, Afro-American, we called them colored people. That was not an insult, that was just the name. And Granddad was sitting in his office down on Palm Avenue in Sarasota and this young man comes in with paintings, and he said, "Would you like to buy some of my paintings? All I want is enough money to buy more supplies so I can paint more." So Granddad bought two paintings, he bought this one, and he bought the daytime scene of this which this is a Royal Poinciana tree and in the other painting it is in full bloom and just magnificent. So I think Granddad paid about 10 dollars, there again I could be wrong and I probably am...but it was about \$10. All he wanted to do was to buy more supplies. So Granddad had these two paintings, and he asked my husband, "Pete, do you wanna buy one of those?" So Pete says, "Yeah, I like it." So we gave him \$25 for it. Well my dears, I'd like to introduce you to the Highwaymen. This is Harold Newton's. He was considered the best of all of these. Now we're gonna sit down while I finish my story. Now please, sometime, I want you inspired. If you can read the life story done by this Gary Monroe. There was, it's over in Fort Pierce, Florida, these young boys. It started with Harold and Al Backus and these young boys. They did not want to be crop pickers. They wanted to have a life without doing what had always been one – crop pickers. And there was this white artist, Al Backus, and he took a shine to, in other words he was nice to them. You know, back then you don't cross the color barrier at all, but Al Backus would receive them and treat them like people. So they would watch him paint and then Harold Newton was one of the first that started painting. And all they wanted to do was make money as fast as they could. And they painted on as cheap of material as they could and they would slap the paint...they learned just to paint what they had seen all their lives. The picture you see and the pictures that they have painted are just wonderful. Just the palm trees and the palmettos and the little tributaries of waters like at Myakka State Park. So they began, one or two of them, to paint and paint as fast as they could. They'd throw their paintings in the trunk of their car and they'd drive down the highway and they'd stop in a motel and say, "You want to buy a picture?" And many of the motels bought them because the tourists liked them. It was Florida. That was paradise to people in those days. And to see palm trees in Florida, that was paradise then. So

many of the motels bought the up and people, they'd go in papers, neighborhoods sometimes and they would buy them. Businessmen, my granddad, they would go in the lawyers' office, they would buy them. And then another young boy would say, "He can do that, I can do that!" And then it'd be another, "He can do that, I can do that." Well, I guess there got to be quite a few of them doing this painting. And they'd get together and they'd bring their painting and they'd paint together and then load up the back trunk, and down the highway they would go. Sometimes their paintings were so wet they'd get smeared, and they'd have to fix them before they could sell them. So, there came a time where everything was kind of saturated – the motels and offices were kind of saturated with them and fell on hard times. So it slacked off on them, and they did their own, they had their own lives going, but they kept on painting. And their paintings began to be, go into the better stores. I can remember going down into a Moss Brothers, downtown Sarasota back then, that was the first nice store where they went in, but their paintings began to, people began to discover them. And they became desirable again and people began to buy them. So very slowly they became known for their paintings and someone put the name on them – The Highwaymen – because they would put 'em in the trunks of their car and go down the highway selling them. And since the beginning of that with Harold Newton in my Granddad's office, they had become very very famous. We had an estimate on that picture, and it was \$4000. There's one hanging in the White House. I'm just so inspired by those young boys. They are not well accepted as artists because they don't follow the rules that artists are taught how to paint. The master artist is God Almighty, and he gives a gift and they don't need lessons. But it has to be done his way, no you can't do it that way. It needs to be done this way. So those boys kept slapping the paint on, painting from their innermost being of what they had seen all of their lives, which their paintings are so incredible. There are many galleries, very fine galleries now, which have their paintings and...it just helps us to know that if you want to do something, and you have the gift for it, then do it regardless of whether it's accepted now. I think in the last write-ups I had read that the art culture is having to accept them as real artists. And I wanted to show you that.

E: Yes, thank you. That was great. Well, I'm gonna take a few pictures if that's okay...

J: And one of them went onto prison, and he was so bored he asked the warden, "Can I paint a mural on the wall, on the prison walls?" And the prison had to, the warden had to get special permission for it to be done, and do you know that those walls and that prison, and he became famous for painting them? But you know, it became an inspiration to the prisoners, and it brought out in many of the prisoners the desire to be better than what they were, and it helped to change lives of those that were in prison.

END INTERVIEW