

# The Weston Voices Oral History Project

Presents

## A Conversation with



**Carolyn Scribner**

Interviewed by Karin Giannitti and Arne de Keijzer  
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*The audio tape of this interview, a photo gallery of Scribner's memorabilia, and an annotated transcript have been placed in the Society's archives and are also available on the Society's website.*

*Transcripts are also available at the Weston Senior Activities Center and the Weston Public Library.*

*The opinions expressed are those of the interviewee alone and do not reflect the views of the interviewers or the Weston Historical Society.*

Videographer: Richard Frisch  
Photo credit: Julie O'Connor

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### A Conversation with Carolyn Scribner

*Carolyn Scribner was born and raised in Weston. Her father was from Naples, Italy; her mother was born to a German family in the Bronx. In 1920 her father came to Weston to spend the night in a house he was considering buying and woke up the next morning with a chicken at the foot of his bed. Nevertheless, the family ended up buying that house a year later – a house where Carolyn’s brother still lives. As recounted here, the family was quite entrepreneurial. In addition to a landscaping business, her father counted among his projects the building of three additional houses as a family compound. Her mother’s father built “Wessel’s Bungalows,” a 20 bungalow campground and, with his three sons, had an egg route called “Wessel’s Eggs.”*

*Describing herself as a “tomboy”, Carolyn talks about what it was like to grow up with two sisters and a brother at a time when Weston was truly rural. She enjoyed family trips, swimming in ponds, picking wildflowers, anything to do with farming, and her school classes in art and science.*

*Scribner went to work part-time at the age of 14, starting at a hot dog stand in Georgetown along Route 7. There, two years later, she would meet her future husband, Paul. They were married a year later, in July, 1962. After their son was born she returned to work part-time, first at a restaurant in Norwalk called “A Little Something” for ten years and then, for the next ten, at the “River Club” in Wilton.*

*Her current interests include nature, gardening, reading (“I like to learn”), country western music, country fairs here in Weston, visiting farms, and participating in activities at the Weston Senior Activities Center. She was interviewed by Arne de Keijzer, a Trustee of the Historical Society, and Karin Giannitti, whose deep knowledge of Weston history is evident by her editorship of “The Chronicle Quarterly” and her years as a collections manager and volunteer at the Weston Historical Society. Additionally, Karin was Carolyn’s classmate throughout their school years.*

**Karin Giannitti:** Let’s start by talking about your parents and their background.

**Carolyn Scribner:** Well, they were both born in 1918 -- my father in September and my mother in October. My father, John Modesto Gecinceis, was born in Italy, near Naples. His father had died in 1918 as a result of an influenza epidemic and his brother died then as well. Two years later, his mother – my grandmother -- took my father and came over to Ellis Island because she had a marriage arranged to a man in Ridgefield who had lost his wife and left him with four children.

My father grew up in that house in Ridgefield. Then his mother and stepfather would have three more children together. My father had a nickname: Boom-Boom.

Anyway, what I remember about my father is that he loved it here in Weston and while I was growing up he had a big, huge garden, which he loved. My mother would freeze the vegetables. He also had geese, rabbits, and chickens. The geese used to chase me into the house.

That's my father. My mother, whose maiden name was Wessels, was born in the Bronx, on Fordham Road and Marion Avenue. She had three older brothers, George, Albert, and Bill. Her father was born in Oldenburg, Germany. After he came to America, probably in the early 1900's, he became a grocery storekeeper in Greensport, Brooklyn.

After her youngest brother, Bill, had pneumonia for the fourth time, the doctor told her father that they would have to get him out of New York City. In 1920, he came by train to Weston to spend the night at the Beers House on #157 Georgetown Road (Route 57), where he woke up the next morning with a chicken on the foot of his bed. Nevertheless, they wound up buying that house a year later and my brother lives in it still.

It was my mom's mother who bought the property. It was around 50 acres. It was from Wilson Road all the way down to the gas station [*Located at the corner of Samuelson and Georgetown roads and abandoned for many years. -ed.*] They also had a wood lot that came with it across the street in what is now the Nature Conservancy. She paid \$2,000 for all the property and the house. My grandmother died when Mom was nine years old.

Growing up, Mom used to walk to school to the one-room schoolhouse on Godfrey Road. She always told the story that when she walked, she'd walk to the Corsa's house first. That's the house on Route 57 that's across from Cannondale Road. He used to be my bus driver.

**Karin:** That house was originally the Lockwood house.

**Carolyn:** Then she would walk the rest of the way to school with the Corsa's daughters. They would cut across the cow field to make a shortcut from Route 57. She always told the story that one day a bull chased them over the stone wall. Her graduation photo is in Thomas Farnham's *Weston: The Forging of a Connecticut Town* [page 208].

In the winter time, they had no heat in the big house. Her father had a job at the Splitrock Tavern in Wilton. Mom went to school, the one-room schoolhouse on the corner of Olmstead Hill Road in Wilton. Then she went to beauty culture school in New York when she was older.

Anyway, her father and my mother's brothers built 20 bungalows on the property. They opened a summer camp, which was called Wessel's Bungalows, after my mother's maiden name. They were built in the '20s and '30s. There was a community building that was used as a dance hall. My mother used to go and buy prizes for the bingo games that were held there. There was a swimming pool, filled with spring water. It's actually down where Nancy Mehos lives now, all the way down by the empty building that was a gas station. I remember swimming in that pool.

The guests, of course, were men from New York who would bring their wives and children out to the bungalows. They would go back to New York and work, and then they would come back to stay for the weekends.

In 1988, Jim Hoe, from the Historical Society, wrote my mom a letter in Florida and asked her if she could send some information about the summer camp. She sent him a seven-page letter. [*Hoe was an avid local historical and founding editor of "The Chronicle Quarterly," back issues of which are available via the Weston Library's website, <http://westonpubliclibrary-blog1.tumblr.com/newsletters>. -ed.*]

Then at one time my mother's father turned the downstairs of the big house, which is what I call the original house, into a tearoom. He had the different areas of the main room sectioned off with tree logs. Mom said she doesn't remember anyone ever coming for tea.

Then he made it one time into an old folk's home. My mom came home one day on the train from New York, probably when she was taking her lessons at a beauty culture school, to suddenly find all these old people in the house. They had made it into the old folk's house, so she went and spent the night with a friend.

I should say too that my mother and father lived in the big house when they first got married. Then my father built a house next door. Then he built two more houses on the property. He rented out the big house and two other houses. My mother's father and her three brothers each had an egg route, called Wessel's Eggs.

In the '60s they started going to Florida. They had a house in Florida, and would go there every winter and come back in the summer.

**Karin:** Do you know who owned the house before they purchased it?

**Carolyn:** The man they bought it from was David Reinholsg, but on the old 1867 map of Weston it is identified as the Fred Beers house. That was the original house, the one we still call "the big house." I read somewhere that it was the northern section of the Beers' property, meaning he owned more land beyond Wilson Road, I assume. On the property there was a smokehouse, a big barn where later Mom's house was built at 159 Georgetown Road, and a carriage house in back of the barn. There was an apple orchard. Of course, they also had the wood lot.

One time, many years ago, Mom and I went over to Weston Town Hall. We looked up the people that owned the house before my father did. I have the list here and a lot of them had well-known Weston names such as Lockwood, Sturgis, Meade.

**Karin:** Tell us about your siblings.

**Carolyn:** In terms of my siblings they had my sister Regina in 1942, and my sister Jacqueline in 1944. Then I was born in 1945. In three and a half years she had us three girls. My father, of course, always wanted to have a son. In fact, I was supposed to be a boy. Perhaps that is why I was a tomboy. Then they had my brother John ten years later.

**Karin:** Were there other relatives in town at the time?

**Carolyn:** When I was growing up all three of my mother's brothers lived in the area -- George, Albert, and Bill. They each had a section of land going down from Wilson Road toward Georgetown. They each built their own house and lived there.

**Karin:** You had a lot of uncles.

**Carolyn:** Yeah, it was like a family compound, which it still is today. My brother lives next door in the "big house." My brother John and his wife Andrea live in my mother's house, and their daughter, my niece Jen, lives next door at #159. My husband and I live at #147. Finally, Melissa, Uncle Albert's granddaughter, lives in the little house in front of us, which she rents. That's the relatives.

Well, of course, by now all my uncles are dead. They're all gone. I just have my brother, my niece, and then Melissa still in the neighborhood.

**Arne:** What did your father do when he wasn't working on building the houses?

**Carolyn:** My father did landscaping. He built many stone walls in Weston on Lyon's Plain Road and other places because he was Italian, of course, and a good stone mason. My friend Meta Schroeter, who lives on Lyon's Plain Road liked the walls so much that she had a plaque made up with his name on it and it's hanging on the wall now.

So my father worked for her doing landscaping. Then my brother wound up, after my father died, working for her. Then I wound up going over and doing some weeding and stuff for her myself. That's how I met her.

My brother worked with my father through the years. They mowed lawns, did garden work, and stuff like that. Then, when my father died or perhaps just before, my brother started his own landscaping business. It's called Twin Maples because in front of the big house years ago there were two big huge maple trees. I have photographs with those.

**Arne:** Tell us about some of your family's friends.

**Carolyn:** When my husband and I started a lot of the old timers like Ted Coley, Ray Fitch, and the Hanfords were very good friends of ours. Also Everett Flodeen – our son went to school with their daughter Cindy.

Then another very good friend is Emerson Phillips. His parents and grandparents lived in Weston for years. Then, well, Nancy Mehos. We're not connected by family, but she lives on the property where my Uncle Albert used to live.

**Arne:** Tell us about growing up and the kind of things you did.

**Carolyn:** When I was growing up, there were four houses on the property and three of them were being rented out. One house had two or three rentals in it. There were always kids in the neighborhood so we had no lack of friends. We used to play outside. We used to play tag, hide and seek, badminton, and croquet.

Then in the winter we loved to go sledding down the hill right by Mom's house. We couldn't wait to get out in the snow. She dressed all three of us girls in snowsuits. What a job. Then we'd go out for an hour, come in, and she'd have to do it all over again in another couple of hours. So that was quite a task for her.

Then we used to swim in the pool. We've always had an above-ground pool on the property. We used to swim at Georgetown Pond, with its "beach," Sherwood Island in Westport, Great Pond in Ridgefield, and then in a pool in the Saugatuck River at Cartbridge Road where it meets Lyon's Plain Road in Weston.

**Karin:** I remember in August the river would dry up at Cartbridge and you'd have to lay down in a puddle to get wet.

**Carolyn:** Then my mother used to take us down to my Aunt Peggy and Uncle Bill's house, and they had a beautiful built in pool in back of their house. We'd go down there quite often and swim. We had bicycles. I used to love climbing trees because I was the tomboy, the boy my father hadn't yet had.

Then I used to walk to the gas station with a wagon with returnable bottles. Chickie Demitt had that place. We traded the bottles in for ice cream and popsicles.

I also used to go fishing; my dad took me. One time he took me at night with a spear to get eels over by Pent Road, by the little river right there. My father used to love to eat the eels. I wouldn't taste them. [*She is referring here to the West Branch of the Saugatuck River, which runs through Devil's Den Nature Preserve and crosses Godfrey Road West at Pent Road. --ed.*]

When we were younger my mother used to bring the three of us girls for walks. We'd go over across the street where there was a path going down into what is now the Nature Preserve, Devil's Den. We would walk all the way down to a little pond we called Mosquito Pond. In the winter, we'd walk down to Hidden Lake, which is down a little further from Mosquito Pond, to go ice skating. We also picked two kinds of ground pine in the winter each year and made wreaths out of them.

We would go looking for wildflowers, especially the pink Lady's Slipper, which you don't see anymore. She would also take us up to Putnam Park in Redding where we would walk around looking for the wildflowers. She let me have my own garden in the backyard, where I planted nasturtiums.

We used to play down by the big, long metal bars that you could climb up in front of my mother's house -- my father made these bars -- and there was a whippoorwill. We always heard the whippoorwill even when I first got married. I always remembered the whippoorwill, and of course, the street down the street from us is called Whippoorwill Lane.

When we were a little older, Mom or Dad used to drive us down to the roller skate rink in Norwalk, and we used to go roller skating at night.

Also, every Sunday my parents would take us on a drive. Lots of times we'd go to my grandmother's house -- my father's mother -- in Milford, and have all the wonderful Italian food, spaghetti and meatballs. They were delicious. Other Sundays, we might go to Howe Caverns and the Game Park in the Catskills, and the Beardsley Zoo in Bridgeport. And each year my mother would take us to the Bronx Zoo.

Every night after dinner, and after the dishes were all done, my mother and I used to play games together. We used to love to play games, and one of the games I remember most was the games we had of the states. We learned all the states, all the capitals. Even after I was married we'd go over them. Even one time when I drove her home from Florida we were asking each other the capitals and the states. I always enjoyed that. Even in later years we always played cards and games like Scrabble together.

All three of us girls had to do chores after dinner. One of us had to clear the table, one had to wash dishes, the other one had to dry dishes. Mom had a calendar -- I still have one here from 1953 -- and she would put our initials on the calendar, like CRJ, JCR, so we would know whose turn it was to do the chores. In that calendar she wrote down that I had gotten the mumps. "Cookie got the mumps" that's my nickname, Cookie. [laughs] "Cookie got the mumps on April 13th."

**Arne:** Do you know why you had that nickname?

**Carolyn:** Oh yeah. See, my two sisters couldn't pronounce Carolyn, so, somehow, I got the name Cookie, which stuck to me up until my husband met me. He said, "No, we're not calling you Cookie." He started calling me Carol, which isn't my name either!

**Karin:** You don't like that, either. [laughter]

**Carolyn:** Nowadays I use "Carolyn," even though a lot of people call me "Caroline."

Coming back to my growing up, on Saturday mornings all three of us girls had to help do housework. We got an allowance, and I did extra chores myself to make money. I saved my money and bought a hammock and a sewing machine. But my sisters spent all their money on candy.

When I first went to school we were in Hurlbutt's East House through second grade and then moved to South House for grades three, four, five, and six. That's now where the Senior Activities Center is. In recess after lunch, I always went outside with the kids and we played marbles. We also rolled down the hill behind the primary school.

When I got older and I went to, probably, the junior high, I used to like the art class with Harvey Gustafson. I loved that class. It was one of my favorite of all the years. Gym was another one of my favorites, with Mrs. Hecht. I used to be on the volleyball team. I was a very good player, not to brag. I used to go on the bus trips to other schools and play volleyball.

I also loved science class, because I had Richard Benzing as a teacher.

**Karin:** He was wonderful.

**Carolyn:** When I graduated from the junior high in 1960, I went to Staples in Westport because Weston didn't have a high school at the time. I can remember some of the girls that I used to go visit from the school: Mary Conway, Connie Robinson, Ann Dunston, Judy Gompert. We used to go after school and visit each other and all that stuff.

For trick-or-treating the neighborhood kids and us used to walk down to the gas station and back, knocking on all the doors. And then we went back up as far as Wilson Road, and then we'd come back home again. One year, Mrs. Gustafson, who lived across the street from us, had a Halloween party and I remember going to that. We played dunking for apples.

**Karin:** Can't do that anymore. [laughs]

**Carolyn:** No, you can't. [laughs]

**Karin:** Being Italian, was Christmas a big holiday in the family?

**Carolyn:** Yes, we always had a big do, but it was with the immediate family; extended family gatherings were held at another time. We could open one present, just one, on Christmas eve, then the rest on Christmas day.

**Arne:** There was no high school in Weston then so you had to go to Staples in Westport. Did you enjoy it there?

**Carolyn:** I didn't really care for Staples, because in Weston I knew all the kids I went to school with. But when I went to Staples we were all scattered, so I never really liked it. I didn't like it at all. I hated it.

**Karin:** We went from a class that had forty-two students in it to a class with 200. It was culture-shock.

**Carolyn:** The buildings were all so far apart. You had to walk and I never liked it. It wasn't the same... it just wasn't the same.

**Karin:** Didn't you get a car or a license when you were sixteen?

**Carolyn:** Yes, I did, and I remember driving to Staples. I remember once when I was driving out from Staples to go home I was driving a little too fast and I got stopped. [laughter]

**Arne:** Were there other ways you found to get into trouble?

**Carolyn:** To get into trouble? No, I was a pretty good girl, really. No, I didn't get in trouble much. [laughs]

**Karin:** We were all afraid of our parents, I think.

**Carolyn:** My sisters did, but I didn't. They used to climb out their bedroom window to go meet some boys in the neighborhood at night. One time -- I was terrible, I was a little tattletale -- one night I scattered some powder or something, or a string or something on the window to catch them. Anyway, I guess that was naughty.

**Arne:** What happened when you got out of high school?

**Carolyn:** After high school, let's see, I met my husband. No, I guess I was still in high school then. I met my husband when I was about 16, while working part-time at the Stone Mill Market on Route 7 in Georgetown. Lloyd and Grace Scribner owned that property. They had the market, a vegetable stand, and next to that was a hot-dog stand. It was along Route 7 going south toward Norwalk, on the right-hand side. The little market is still there, and the hot dog stand as well.

Lloyd ran the vegetables. Every year he would go to Danbury Fair--where they had a booth in the big-top as well as two stands outside at each exit--and sold apples, pumpkins, and maple sugar candy.

Their daughter, Phyllis, who had married Danny Palmieri, ran the hot dog stand next door. My sister Regina worked there for a while and then, when I was 14, I used to go and help out. I cooked the hot dogs, waited on people, worked the old cash register, and the old coke barrel with the root beer.

That's where I met my husband Paul, working at that hot dog stand. He was one of Phyllis Palmieri's cousins. Anyway, Paul pulls up in a dump truck one day. I'd never met him before. He had some business to do with Phyllis. He orders a hot dog and I waited on him, and I had to say, "Would you like sauerkraut or chili on it?" Of course, he still loves sauerkraut.

Phyllis Palmieri could see that we liked each other, so she talked us into going on our first date the next night or whatever to the Georgetown carnival. We did that. I was probably 16 at that time. Right after that, another date. It was the Danbury drive-in, and we saw "The Guns of Navarone."

We dated for a year and then we got married in July, 1962. I was only 17. We moved next door because it happened that the people who had been renting that house my father built were moving. So we moved in there and rented that house from my mother, which now is left to me. It's now my house with the little house in front, which we rent out.

We went on a honeymoon. We drove to New Hampshire and Maine and all that. Then the following year, April 21st, nine months to the day we were married, we had our son, Steven.

**Arne:** Did you have other children?

**Carolyn:** No, only the one child. I'm glad now, but at the time I thought I wanted another one. Now I'm glad. Although it would be nice to have a daughter.

**Arne:** Where is your son now?

**Carolyn:** He's still in the area. He still lives around here. His birthday's coming up, April 21st.

**Arne:** Before we turn to your own family life is there anything else you'd like to share about your parents and their social life, as well as any other relatives?

**Carolyn:** My parents became good friends with Lloyd and Grace Scribner. Before she was married she was Grace Scofield and had grown up here in Weston along Georgetown Road, just down by Cobb's Mill Inn. The house is still there. She grew up in Weston and then she married Lloyd Scribner, who is my husband's uncle. They had lived in Wilton at the time.

Then they moved back here to Weston in that big house just over the bridge where Georgetown Road crosses the river by Cobb's Mill Inn. They lived there for a while, in what was Lizzie Adam's house. (Lloyd Scriber was the one who donated the old post office to the town of Weston.) Then the Scribners moved into another house on Newtown Turnpike, that little house next to where the old post office is now. *[Built in approximately 1790, it is located adjacent to Bisceglie Park, and was once one of several post offices around Weston between 1750 and 1830. It became the official Weston Post Office in 1883. -ed.]*

Lloyd and Grace lived there for a while and my parents were very good friends with them. They went to dances together. They also had a house in Clearwater, Florida, where my parents had a house. They would get together down there and have card parties, have dinner, go to dinner, come back to somebody's house and play poker, go to dances down there, go to picnics at the different parks and things.

Also, my parents were good friends with Evelyn and Bill Bennett, who lived down on Whippoorwill Road, down the hill from us. They also bought a house in Clearwater, Florida just a couple of streets from my parent's house. She worked in the school office for years. When I went down to visit Mom in Florida we used to go visit them at their house. Very nice people. They had a son, Bill. I have a photo, because he came to one of my birthday parties.

**Karin:** He was in our class as well.

**Arne:** Returning to your work life, did you begin to work again after you had your son?

**Carolyn:** Yes, but maybe just a day a week or so, and part time. Again at the Stone Mill Market at the hot dog stand.

But I should note that before then, when we first got married back in July, 1962, I was working at PerkinElmer's South Wilton Plant in Norwalk. I got that job because my aunt Peggy, my uncle Bill's wife, worked in their main office where she supervised -- I don't know how many people -- in the main plant.

I worked in what I think was the mail room. They had a Telex machine and all that kind of stuff. It was a big, huge machine and we'd get these messages from California and stuff on it. *[Telex was the commonly used name for a "teletypewriter", also known as a "teleprinter," a machine dating from 1933 that could be networked with other teleprinters. It was similar to a telephone network for the purpose of sending text-based messages. They were still in use well into the 1980s. -ed.]*

But I could only work for five months there because, at that time, they had a rule that you couldn't work if you were pregnant after that.

**Arne:** And then, after you had your son?

**Carolyn:** Well, I stayed home and took care of him. Then I did little part-time jobs just to have money for things that I wanted to buy for the house while my husband paid all the other bills. In those days, that's how it usually worked. We rented from my parents, in the little house that we're still in.

Anyway, that's when I went back to the hot dog stand part time. Also, one year I worked for a whole week at the Stone Mill Market during the Danbury Fair. I loved working there, cooking hot dogs and all that stuff.

Then I got into teaching. I was taking an adult education class in cake decorating. I took a lot of adult education classes, in fact. I loved to learn new things. Anyway, I went and took this woman's class, and then she wanted to stop doing it. So she asked me, of all the students, if I would like to teach it. I did, and so for years I taught in Norwalk Adult Education.

At the same time we were members of the Norfield Grange on Goodhill Rd., where there were regular meetings at night. Even then I didn't like to go out at night. So a couple of nights a week I was teaching and also going to the Grange. It was just getting to be too much.

**Arne:** How active was the Grange at that time?

**Carolyn:** Oh, pretty active. See, my mother and father joined the Cannondale Grange at Cannondale in Wilton because they had more dinners and things. Also, Lloyd and Grace were members there. There were quite a few others we knew. We always had the big fair. We'd go to the meetings. Yeah, it was nice. My sister-in-law, my husband's sister, Audrey, and her husband, Vic, were members first. They sort of talked us into becoming members as well.

Anyway, I was volunteering at the Norwalk Hospital, working at the little cafeteria at the entrance when you first walked in to the left. I worked there for quite a while. Then another woman who volunteered there and a friend of hers were going to open a restaurant on Route 7 called "A Little Something." She wanted to know if I would come along because she liked the way that I worked. "As if two people," she said.

I went to work for them in 1976 when I was in my thirties and stayed there for ten years. During that time the restaurant was sold twice. They sold it first to another couple, and I stayed with them. Then they sold it to a young man, Jim Choyce, and I stayed with him until the place closed. So I was there from the day they opened to the day they closed, ten years.

When "A Little Something" first started up they had homemade quiche, homemade soups. It was wonderful...a small little place. They first started with just lunch. Then when the second owners took over, they started having fondues and dinner. Then when Jim Choyce, the final owner took over, he had lunch and dinner and it was really good food, too.

I made a lot of money there. I would work two shifts sometimes, lunch and dinner, and made big bucks. I still have the paycheck stubs.

**Arne:** What did you do after "A Little Something" closed?

**Carolyn:** I was looking for another job and saw an ad in the paper for the River Club restaurant in Wilton, across the street from where the Stop and Shop market is now. It was started by Joanne Hush, who had a catering business in Westport. I got the job there working lunches and then eventually they started having dinners. They did catering, too. They had weddings right there because she used to do catering in Westport at different places. I worked there [laughs] from the day they opened until the day they closed.

**Karin:** There seems to be a pattern here.

**Carolyn:** I know. They liked me. Well, I liked them too. I loved working in a restaurant. I love food. I was a waitress. I made good money. But I loved working as a homemaker as well. I didn't really ever want to get a full-time job. I like cooking, I like my gardens. It was just to have some money to spend.

In 1979, while I was still working at the restaurant, my mother decided she wanted to take a trip to see her brother, Uncle Albert, who was out in California in a veteran's hospital. He was going to die, so she wanted to go out and see him before he did. I went with her and that was our first trip together. We flew out, rented a car, drove down into Mexico, and up to San Francisco.

After that we started traveling together every year. I think Italy was our next trip. My aunt Lucy came with us and we went on a Perillo Tour. Then we went to Hawaii. Over the years we went all kinds of places...London, Paris, Italy a couple of times, Germany a few times, Norway...

**Arne:** Always with your mother, never with your husband?

**Carolyn:** Well, [laughs] Norway, Sweden, Denmark, England, Scotland, Ireland, France of course, Germany, Belgium. We'd do those trips every year at the end of the summer and we'd go for ten days or so.

Then we started doing cruises. In the wintertime we'd take different cruises. We went on the Disney cruise one time. My mother and my sister and I went on that one. We had asked my husband each trip, "Did you want to come?" He's impossible to get a decision out of. He went only one time: on the ship Emerald Seas to Nassau.

**Karin:** Did he like it once he got there?

**Carolyn:** I think so. It got rough, though, and they had to pad the elevators. It got really rough. I think he had a good time.

Anyway, my mother and I did a lot of cruises for about 10 or 12 years. We did a lot of nice traveling, good memories. I have a scrapbook album for each trip, including samples of the foreign money. I like to take them out and look at them every so often.

My mother and I, we had the best time. She was my best friend. She was a very fun person. Everybody loved her. Everywhere we went, we'd have some story to tell. Like, we had to have ice in our drinks, so we had to learn how to say ice. We always got into some kind of crazy thing. [laughs]

We both liked to have fun. She loved flowers like I do.

**Arne:** Did you and your husband have some good friends in Weston?

**Carolyn:** When we were in the Grange we made good friends with Ethel and Fred Hanford, especially. We went over to their house. She made a delicious – the recipe is in the Grange Cookbook -- fish chowder, which I've made a couple times. She'd have us for dinner on her porch. She made the fish chowder. Audrey and Vic, they were there. We were good friends with them.

My husband was good friends with Ray Fitch, who loved old engines, like my husband did. Ray Fitch was into that. We were also very good friends with the Flodeens. They're just up the road from us.

Now we're very good friends with Emerson Phillips, who is very nice. His parents were right here from Weston. He knows everything about the town. He's got old things that he was going to give to the Historical Society.

**Karin:** Where did you shop when we didn't have the market in Georgetown? Did you have to go to Westport? Did you go to Danbury for shopping and stuff?

**Carolyn:** Well, let's see. I used to shop at Bonsignore's, run by the brothers Jaspers and Mondo, and Connery's, in Georgetown. The Connery's had the big lumber yard and the big grey building across the street, where downstairs was the groceries, and upstairs there were dry goods. [*The lumber yard was located at the time at the southeast corner of Georgetown Road (Route 57) and Main Street, it closed in 1973 and had become a pub called the "The Lumber Yard" before it closed shortly after this interview. --ed.*]

**Karin:** Wasn't there also a store where the veterinarian is now, and the post office?

**Carolyn:** It was Kearn's, the little store. I used to go there. On the wall when you first walked in were all the comic books. I used to like Scrooge McDuck. That was fun, to go in there and look around. That's the stores. Before that, there was the old A&P in Georgetown nearby the Bible Church.

I can remember going there one time with my mother, going in the old A&P. They had a potbelly stove in the middle of the floor. They had fly paper hanging down. I can remember getting, every Christmas, a plum pudding in a can and we had to have the hard sauce. I remember her getting the plum pudding in that store.

**Karin:** Sure. By that big old stone church across from where the restaurants are now was a Waldbaum's. Then it was A&P for a little while.

**Carolyn:** I can only remember going there with my mother to get the plum pudding. Going into the old post office over across from the Gilbert & Bennett wire mill, too.

Also because we lived on the Georgetown end of town, and that they didn't have a Catholic church in Weston at the time, we were married where my mother was married, in the Sacred Heart Church, on Church Street, in Georgetown.

**Karin:** That's a lovely church, so pretty.

**Carolyn:** Oh, I know it. I know it. They had nice church dinners. Every summer they'd have a church dinner, like a potluck. That was nice. I can remember that, just like I remember swimming at that "Georgetown Beach" nearby.

**Arne:** Georgetown beach?

**Carolyn:** Georgetown beach, yeah. You go past the wire mill and there's a big lake there; that was the Georgetown beach..

**Arne:** Shifting gears, do you remember any major issues or significant events in Weston over the years?

**Carolyn:** I remember the junior high school burning down in 1963. It was not long after we were first married.

**Karin:** The biggest thing to ever happen in Weston, I missed it. [laughs] I was in New Jersey in college.

**Carolyn:** In terms of places and events, I can of course remember the moving of the old post office that Lloyd Scribner had donated to the town. The opening of the Senior Center in 2006. The new firehouse on Lyon's Plain, when they had us for lunch over there. Each year the firemen have a beautiful lunch for seniors there.

As for events, I love to go to the Memorial Day parade, the Emmanuel Fair, and the Grange Fair, which, when they had it last year, wasn't much. We used to go to the Norfield Fair. We like to go to some of the Historical Society events and the Senior Center.

For me personally, I remember giving my mother and father their 50th anniversary over at the River Club, where I worked. They had a very big party there. I can remember the landing of a man on the moon in 1969. I guess the event that had a personal impact would be when my father died at 76 in 1995. He died in Florida. Then my mother died ten years ago, 2006. She was 87.

**Arne:** Has the character of the town changed much over the years?

**Carolyn:** To me, the main change has been these McMansions. When they started having tear-downs and building these big McMansions. To me that's sort of when the character changed. Also, there are a lot more cars driving through Weston. These big SUVs. They drive like crazy. They follow you, they get too close to you. You go to pull into a driveway, you're signaling, they're beeping their horns, they're passing you. It's crazy! Crazy! [laughs].

I still love Weston, as long as they keep it rural the way it is now. It's just a nice rural town and the people are nice. I want the town to stay kind of the way it is, rural and small and nice. Not to have a big huge shopping center over there and all that stuff. Two acre zoning is nice, it's nice and quiet. When the neighbor's dogs aren't barking.

One woman at the meeting of the Planning and Zoning the other day suggested making the shopping center on the other side of the road and somebody else said two roundabouts are needed there. I didn't care for any of those ideas.

**Karin:** I think the sidewalk idea was terrible. It's the busiest place in town and you've got kids crossing the street. *[The idea of a sidewalk that went from Town Hall to the corner of Route 57 and then north to the start of School Road, with a possible extension along School Road, was proposed and studied in 2016-2017. No action had been taken as of the time of this interview. -ed.]*

**Arne:** If you're going to go use the sidewalk, where are you going to park?

**Carolyn:** That's right. Who's going to walk from the Library over to the center? I want Weston to stay the way it is.

**Arne:** There continues to be talk about creating more of a center to the town; perhaps a community center, or other facility to attract people.

**Karin:** Yes, we've had a lot of discussions about community centers over the years that have come and gone.

**Carolyn:** I'm very thankful for the Senior Center. To me it's just wonderful. Here I'm going to the same school I went to when I was a little girl, five years old. I have a lot of friends. We go to all the lunches, do a lot of activities, take bus trips. To me it's the greatest thing.

Before I was a senior I used to take my mother to the senior lunches at the Norfield church, way before they had the actual Senior Center. Then I became a senior. To me it's very important. I enjoy it very much. They're doing a wonderful job, Wendy Petty, the Director, and all the people there. *[At the time of the interview Wendy Petty was the director, assisted by Carla Jegen and Linda Gilmore.]*

**Arne:** Given what you have said, the answer seems obvious, but who was the person, or persons, who had the most influence on your life?

**Carolyn:** My mother. I just loved her. I learned so much from her, and she was such an intelligent person, and everybody loved her.

As far as any other people? Maybe my brother-in-law, Vic. My husband's sister, Audrey's husband. He just passed away last year from lung cancer. I learned a lot from him. I had known him since I was sixteen years old...well, since I met my husband. I didn't know him before that.

**Arne:** What words of wisdom would you like to pass on to other people?

**Carolyn:** I feel like when I get up in the morning, while some people get up grouchy, I wake up and I'm just thankful that I woke up. I'm alive. I can eat, I can drink, I can walk...smile. I'm thankful every morning that I can do all that, and that I'm living in the USA and in Weston.

Then I think it's important to take time every day to do something you like, even if it's only for 15 minutes. Like, I go out and I walk around my flower gardens every day, and look at everything. I like to read. It's important that you do something you like. Listen to music, whatever.

**Arne:** What kinds of things do you like to read?

**Carolyn:** I like to read books. I like biographies. I like to learn. Even reading a novel, you learn things. I used to like to read different books, but I don't seem to have time. Just getting through the newspapers and some magazines, I like to look at the different magazines and things.

**Arne:** And what kind of music that you like?

**Carolyn:** I love music, but my favorite music is country western. I love country western music. I like good music too. Strauss and all of those.

But back to talking about wisdom: I would say that every day, no matter the task, if you need to do something, all you can do is the best you can. No matter what it is, even if you think you can't, just do the best you can. That's all you all can do.

Then I'd say: be kind, treat everyone with respect. Think about where the other person is coming from, why they think the way they do and not just your opinions. I think that's very important, which a lot of people don't do.

Just one more thing. I live by the rule that every day you have to do the most urgent thing first. If you have a bill that you owe, you have to make it out. Do the most important thing that you have to do first before you start doing other things.

**Arne:** What other things among your life's positive experiences would you like to talk about?

**Carolyn:** I would say working. I just enjoyed working and meeting people and stuff. And travelling, all the travels with Mom. We even went to Germany one year and we found her first cousin. We found out she still has relatives over there. Her father was born in Oldenburg, Germany. We actually saw the house where he was born.

My mother's first cousin had a hotel nearby in Brake, Germany. So we stayed with her and they drove us all around to the different relatives whom we visited. That was very nice.

I love to go on gardens tours, local ones. I have also something called the Yellow Garden Book, which is like the one they have in England, which lists open days and tours. For years I was ordering the Yellow Book and going on all the garden tours and things. That's what I like. I like gardens, music, restaurants, day trips. I have egg collections from different countries. [laughs]

**Karin:** Egg collections? Oh, cool.

**Carolyn:** I started collecting eggs from each country we visited. I have a Wedgwood egg from England, then a Venetian glass egg. And one from Mexico, and an egg from Ireland that is beautiful -- white with little shamrocks on it. All the different countries.

We love chickens and pigs and all that stuff. Then, I love PBS television. There's a lot of wonderful shows on there and I learn so much. And I love nature. We like our birds. We have a little red squirrel on the property.

Next door we have a red fox. The mother comes around all the time. For the last few years she has her den, or whatever, up in back of my brother's house right next door. This year she's had six babies. She's killed two of Andrea's, my sister in-law, squirrels.

Yesterday I'm talking to somebody, I looked out my sliding door, the red fox comes, I could see her get all excited. She stoops down and I said, "Oh don't get my red squirrel." [laughs] She didn't, but she might someday. He's jumpy, my red squirrel.

**Arne:** Is there anything you'd like to see in Weston that's not here now?

**Carolyn:** I'd like to see a farm, like the Ambler Farm in Wilton. There's a Muscoot Farm over in New York State, near Katonah. They have animals, pigs and things.

We go to the Ambler Farm quite a bit. They just got two baby pigs the other day. It's very nice. They have a big garden...huge garden. Kevin is the one that lives in the house there. He's a school teacher, but he does the children's programs for the farm. They have all kinds of nice gardens. They have rabbits, they're going to have turkeys. They have goats. Now they just got the two pigs. Chickens, baby chickens...beautiful place.

**Karin:** At one point I was hoping that the Historical Society would rent out the Coley Homestead for a farm with animals.

**Carolyn:** Now there's chance with the Lachat Farm. Now they have the community garden there and we like to go see that. I'm hoping they will organize more nice events over there. Maybe even eventually get animals. [*In 1997, the late Leon Lachat left his 42-acre working farm with its pre-revolutionary homestead on Godfrey Road West to the town of Weston and the Nature Conservancy. Lachat dedicated the property for public and educational use that emphasizes Weston's agricultural roots. –ed.*].

We love farms. My husband and I both. We love to go to see any kind of farming. I'm not a city girl, I'm a farm girl. I could be a farm girl very easily. We used to raise chickens and guinea hens. My son had a duck. My father always had the geese and the rabbits, and chickens.

My father had geese. When I was little, he had this big huge grey goose. They chased me into the back door all the time. [laughs] Honking...and they'd actually bite you. They were very protective...

When I fed the chickens, the rooster would peck my knees. Then my father had the rabbit. I happened to look out the window at the wrong time and he had hanging upside down and he slit its throat. I wouldn't eat the rabbit. [laughs]

**Karin:** My father killed one during the war and it screamed. That was it. He didn't raise rabbits any more.

**Carolyn:** No, my father grew them to eat.

**Karin:** Exactly. Well, Carolyn, thank you very much for doing this.

**Carolyn:** I really enjoyed doing this. I've enjoyed looking up all the old things and looking through my photo albums. I feel like I'm a movie star with having my picture taken and everything.

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