



Marc Chardon

Marc Chardon:

I guess given that this is about the Whaling Museum, one of the highlights of my childhood was being able to go and see the Lagoda.

I grew up in the summers, in a house in Westport, Massachusetts, that belonged to my grandparents, Clifford Warren Ashley, who's a local painter, and his wife, Sarah.

They both have been here in the Bedford area for 400 years. 400 years now, not then. I'm a little older than that.

One of the things that you really look forward to other than the beach, of course, which all kids love going to, was to come and see the Lagoda.

Because somehow, hearing all the stories and seeing all the memorabilia from whaling in my grandparents house, it was marvelous and interesting, but it became everyday stuff because it was just all around.

But when you could go and walk around, and imagine yourself being on that marvelous ship in that space and walk up those spiral stairs to all those wonderful little cabins and areas that showed what a whaling factors office looked like, and all of that, it somehow managed to bring the stories of Bedford's past to life.

Just this experience that I don't think you can recreate. It's hard to recreate in an interview on Zoom or something like that.

And I don't even know that everybody can go down below decks anymore on the Lagoda. But when you did that, it was magical.

So for me, the Whaling Museum represented something that over my career and over my family history, has become my philanthropic passion, but also my vocation, and genealogy, and bringing to life the different eras and times of New Bedford's past.

And seeing what made it a wonderful and attractive place to come to in the, say, the 1700s and 1800s, when the Nantucket Quakers came here.

And seeing how the Quakers were leading the U.S. in figuring out that equality is a good thing, and that women run businesses for three or four years while their husbands are off on a whale ship somewhere.

I think that we probably give ourselves, or get maybe a little less credit than we might otherwise get, if those stories were a little more widely known.

Because the population of New Bedford, not only was it the city that lit the world, but it was a city that had strong abolitionists, and a city who had very strong women.

I grew up in a family where the women did what they wanted and needed to do. My grandmother's quotation when she was working where it was, "If you bulldoze your heritage, you become just anyone."

And so, this multi-generational passion for heritage and for the value of place. And also, to try to remember those things that were great and before their time, has become my, later in life, passion and vocation, whether it's following Quaker religion, genealogy, going back to Natasha trying to figure out, "Why did this happen?"

Look at the archives at the Whaling Museum, are full of handwritten letters of all of these, and diaries, and ships logs.

Those were all things that people who were my great, great, great, great, whatever grandparents, not only knew about, they wrote them.

And so you look at that collection, and you look at the passion that's behind creating that collection, and you just say, "Wow! We're just so fortunate to get some people back in the beginning of our century, decided to put



together an organization that would have the Lagoda sitting there for kids to climb on, and look at, and get inspired by."

And would continue to embody the sense that New Bedford can be a leading light in many ways, now with oceanography.

Just one thing that I found amazing when I was looking in the archives, they told me that the ships logs that the Quaker captains kept had so detailed meteorological information, that the meteorological scientists investigating climate warming and climactic change have used that information as part of their data.

And you say to yourself, "That's not showing how good observation, and writing things down, and being aware of the world and trying to be part of the world you're in in some meaningful way, can still have a role to play a couple of hundred years later."

I don't know what else to say about that. To me, there are just so many different facets to being in New Bedford. I remember my grandmother who's behind me to my left, was part of a group of very passionate people who rebuilt the Ernestina, way back when.

I remember being out on Ernestina in New York Harbor at the Parade of Sail, and they're doing a wonderful celebration in the harbor.

And we were a flanking ship to the USS Eagle, which is the Coast Guard ship. And being out there on a ship, there was, I think, still the only remaining ship that brought historian immigrants to New Bedford.

The same time was when it was known as the Effie.M Morrissey, it was an Arctic explorer. You find that that's cool to know, and it's got a story for me, because my grandmother and I were on it on a wonderful day in New York City, a beautiful day in the Sunny Harbor. But when you talk to-

Interviewer:

Can you tell us your grandmother's name?

Marc Chardon:

I'm sorry. She was Sarah Scudder, was her maiden name. She was married to Clifford Ashley. Before that, actually, she was married to a man named FJ Clark, and then she was married to Clifford Ashley, who was my grandfather.

And then in later life when she was at Wales, my grandfather, Clifford Ashley, passed away in '47, and she was married to Steven Delano.

I know I really shouldn't be trying to define her by the people she was married to, but it is the answer to the way our society gives names. Isn't it?

And so, I guess she was Sarah, Scudder, Clark, Ashley, Delano, or something. But she was just granny. And she was the president of Whale for, I think, something like 16 or 15 years, or something like that.

And had a real passion for saving the heritage of the Bedford, and a time when urban redevelopment was going to just tear it all down.

I can't even drive through the streets without saying, "I remember working..." And I did a little bit of work with them; taking stuff out.

I was carrying crap out of old buildings in order to make them better and so on, as a kid. But I got that that sense of passion for history, just even doing little things like that. So that's granny.

She truly embodied this belief that they don't build statues to people who leave well enough alone. And if you look at the...

I've been doing DNA research up her matrimonial line. So the women who were her mother, and grandmother, and great grandmother, and great, great, great, when you go back, it goes back to one of the founding women in



Nantucket, who was born in the 1500s.

And all those records are there because Quakers love to keep records, by the way; just so you know. And you look at each of them, and when you read in the archives and in the histories of New Bedford and of Nantucket, you see that by the peculiar nature of the business of whaling, the city was whole women.

Women ran it in a great measure when all those men were off on the ships. Because you know what? The women didn't go whaling for four years, for the most part.

It's a wonderful and untold story. And that's part of what I love when I look at your website that talks about the women who influenced the South Coast, it's because every one of them has a story that's like that.

And some of them will get told, and some of them will get rediscovered, and some of them will just have labored in an obscurity and have their families still here, and are still part and parcel of the places [inaudible 00:09:26] New Bedford and Westport, and what used to be Old Dartmouth, which goes up basically from Paignton all the way over to Fairhaven.

That whole period of time, just to me, it fills my heart, but it also fills my mind with stories of... And you were asking about stories earlier.

When you do genealogy, there's some people who they'll just go to a place like ancestry.com, or the Family History Library, or some such thing.

And then they just click on, "I'll collect this one, and I'll collect this one, and I'll collect this one." They're bagging trophies.

But until you start to tie that to the history where that person lived, you can't put yourself in their shoes. This is a silly example, but it's a telling example.

What famous English author was writing when the Pilgrims first landed Plymouth? A lot of people can't answer that question. Is this guy named Shakespeare.

And you know what? Shakespeare was writing it, almost his last play in 1620. And interestingly enough, there is a strong belief that one of the characters in that last play, valet named Stephano, was modeled after one of the pilgrims, a man named Steven Hopkins.

Stephen Hopkins, I think, was the only Pilgrim who had also settled in Jamestown before. And the fleet he was in had been wrecked in Bermuda. And they'd been shipped wrecked there, and they had to build new ships in order to get the Jamestown.

That wreck, somehow inspired Shakespeare to write The Tempest, probably, and Stephano found his way into The Tempest. And that same guy may have been the only person in Plymouth, who spoke any of the native language, because the Algonquin language spread up and down the whole coast.

And if I'm getting the names wrong, I ask all my friends to forgive me. But I think that it was the family group of languages that was spoken in different dialects by the native American population in Jamestown, as well as Wampanoag, our tribe up here.

And he may have been the only person who had any way of communicating other than those who had already been taken to England as prizes or slaves, by earlier traders who'd learned English.

But he may have been the only one who had any awareness in native customs. When all of a sudden you say, "Wow!" Shakespeare's writing at this time, that shipwreck may have caused him to write The Tempest.

And this guy who was in Jamestown, may have gone to Plymouth in order to be maybe one of the people who helped them come to a far better agreement with the previously resident, First Nation, population that was there, you get a whole new appreciation for your 13th grade grandfather.

I could either just say, "Yeah, I got that guy." And maybe I could get the Mayflower society to give me a certificate for a wall, saying I'm descended from him along with 10 million other people.

Or you could say, "Wow! Can you imagine getting on that leaky ship months later than you thought you would



and landing in Cape Cod area in December, in the 1600s when it was much, much, much colder than now."

Because they were in a mini ice age. Seriously. And so, when you hear that story then... And that's the story that built New Bedford.

I was had the privilege of going to the Azores, with my mother, and my brother, and sister. It was a lifelong dream of my mother to go there.

We went and saw the Whaling Museum there, which had a replica of one of the panels from the Panorama, which was from there. Because, of course the Azores, there was the mountain, the same one that you're looking out there, "There's the panel, there's the mountain, there's the panel, there's the mountain."

And you look at what these group of people could do is seafarers. When they went whaling, there weren't big ships with three masts. There was no Lagoda, there was a guy on the mountain side with a bunch of flags waving his flags so that you knew where the whale was.

And then people just got in those little whale boats and they rode out to meet the whale. I understand that now as you look back on it, it's a blood sport.

So that you can be in a way squeamish, but for them it was life. It was part of subsistence in that way, and it was maybe not in perfect balance with nature.

But I can tell you, when you're in one of those little boats and the whale is there, it's a fairer fight that if someone has a harpoon gun.

Many, many, many brave Azores mariners lost their lives to that, and many brave whales fought valets. But you look at that and you say, "This history of these people..."

It's like when you go to Polynesia, they're a nation of voyagers. You can go hundreds of miles in any direction, and there's nothing when you're at the Azores.

And so, if you're not comfortable on the ocean, you probably have to move to the interior of one of the islands and not look.

And so, it's no surprise that people would go there and pick up Azorians for their ships, and that those people became respected whalers.

It wasn't that you picked him up just to row the boat. Harpooners were talented people. And many of the people who worked in the trades that kept a boat afloat, were talented people.

And so, you look at the ability and you say to yourself, "What's the story of a place where people of talent, regardless of ethnic, skin color, geographic providence, would be picked up by?"

They were Quakers, and they were already standing for equality for all. Already by 1783, they completely declared that no Quaker could own another human being well before the United States came to that conclusion.

There were many who suffered for upholding that belief. And there were many who fought in order to oppose the belief.

So I like to think that in our society, even imperfect as it is in the New Bedford area, because there are always things that one can improve, benefits from both the breadth of that courage, and experience, and background, and love of the ocean, as well as the values of tolerance and understanding, "People bring different skills and perspectives to the world."

And I wish that there were more of that, both for us in the Southeast Massachusetts area. Because like anywhere else it's unevenly distributed.

Even more so, in other parts of our country and our world. And so, part of what makes me passionate about learning, and researching, and writing about this, is that sense that if we forget our past, we're doomed to repeat the bad parts, not the good parts.

Our heritage isn't just buildings. My grandmother would say, "If you let them bulldoze your heritage, but if you let them bulldoze your heritage, that's not just buildings."



And so, a part of what's been fun for me, as an example. And I told you that I could probably go on for stories longer than you could spend the time.

But part of what I found very interesting, is that no matter what I start to research in Southeastern Massachusetts, it all comes back to the moment in history when the newly almost...

The Pilgrims lost half of their people in the first winter. There're 102 of them on the ship, I think 51 or two survived the first winter.

In large part, it was because two very courageous men, one, a native American and one Pilgrim leader, decided they were going to figure out how to not fight. And it wasn't perfect.

The indigenous population was certainly taken advantage of by a legal system that was not probably fully explained, and all of that.

But every time you go and dig into anything here, if you go far enough back, you come back to the fact that, this whole area, which became what was known first as the Dartmouth Propriety in about 1652, was bought for something or other, from the population that had been here for untold generations.

And that, when you go back and look at my family's farm, we can take the deeds back to probably about 1710, which is about the time that Benjamin Crane was doing all the surveying for the Dartmouth Propriety.

You go and you find that there is a rock called Narragansett, which is and it's still to this day known as Narragansett, the little island in the Westport River, which means in the Wampanoag language, means something like a place of grasses, or a field with brooks in it, or something.

And it was where settlers would take their cows to get salt, grass, because cows need salt. There wasn't the local grain store to go and buy salt lakes for them.

So you look back on that, and this rock was known as Narragansett in the 1770, at least, and it's still known the same thing today.

But you think we've been knowing it this way, obviously, for almost 200 or 300 years. It's probably known as that for 200, or 300, or 400, or 500, or something years before that.

Because when you go and look at the world and say a place like Europe, when you can see the written history, you know that a town that's been on the river or wherever, whether it's Germany, or France, or England, or whatever, you know it was there in 1899.

But it was also there in 899, when the Vikings invaded England or something, but we don't have the written records for the First Nations of the North America.

So it's easy to overlook the amount of lore, and investment, and connection with land that existed then.

But I like to think that when the two great leaders got together and decided that they were going to do their best not to fight, this broke down when they were both gone, then we've got the King Philip's War.

But it lasted for long enough that, I think, that both of them really created a fertile ground for us to continue to explore that out even three, 400 years later. That's a lot.

Interviewer:

I know I said I wasn't going to ask questions, but I'm really interested in the genealogical work that you're doing. Is it all personal for your own family, or are you hoping to publish it or archive it? I know there's never an end point to research like that, but what are you hoping to do?

Marc Chardon:

Some of the research that we're working on right now, I think, could end up in a scholarly genealogical journal, and I suspect that, a podcast of it.

I have a marvelous research partner who is part of the New England Historic Genealogical Society. She's forgotten



more genealogical skills than I'll ever be blessed to have, just put it that way.

But I think that when she gets to a point where we have both done the fundamental research into the Quakers of New Bedford and Nantucket, and we've identified some of the key economic and religious turning points that happened over the period from the mid 1700s to the mid 1800s, I'm sure there'll be something publishable from a scholarly perspective, but I think there's stories in there that will come out.

I think that one of the underutilized assets at the Whaling Museum is that enormous treasure trove of original letters, and diaries, and logs.

We mentioned earlier the oceanographic impact of some of those logs. I just was looking this morning for a specific ancestor of mine, whose name was Sarah Rodman Morgan.

So she was born in Sarah Rodman, and she became Sarah Morgan by virtue of marrying the man who the boat would be called the Charles W. Morgan, because his name was Charles Weil Morgan.

And there's a letter in your archives, which I can't access because I'm not there now, and it's not digitized yet, from him to his wife saying something like, "Honey, I just arrived in New York City."

It's in 1853, so they're both quite getting on an age. "I'm about to head to the hotel. I saw Emily." And such, and such, and so on.

We were talking about the stories and about, for example, Steven Hopkins or any of the others. But when you can read the letter between Charles Weil Morgan and Sarah Rodman Morgan, you just have a totally different picture of them.

And then if you look at the silver gel type or something, you have two photos of this woman, and they're very stern Quaker photos.

And if you can probably pull one of them up or I can send you the link to it or something, so you can show what it's like. But she's wearing her lace bonnet, and she's got her collar up to her chin.

And you just say, "This is a woman who just came from meeting." Where meeting means church in Quaker talk. Or, "This is a person who believes in plain dress, and plain discourse, and honest dealing amongst business people, and believes in finding their own way with their own inner life. And that redemption comes from within, not from without."

You can look at her face, and if you don't know that she also got really nice letters from her husband saying, "I arrived in New York safe and sound."

You just think of her as this larger than life stern matriarch, who kept everything together with a bull whip and a chair, while hubby was out at sea or something like that.

But when you find that these people were devoted to each other, into their families. And so, you look at all of that wonderful stuff that's in the museum.

My family has got Rochers, and Rodmans, and Morgans and Swifts, and Macy's, and Starbucks, a lot of names. But there are a whole bunch of names that they're not just named there, and then there are a whole bunch of them that aren't just English descent people who also became whaling captains, or ship owners, or whale rights, or whatever.

There's a whole broad range of fascinating stuff in there to be had. One of my not so secret dreams is that, we'd be able to help people see the stories.

As we illustrate these individuals, I'm sure there's stories to be told about Sarah Rodman Morgan or any of those people.

If you forget your past, you're doomed to repeat the bad parts of it. And I'm just so glad that, back in 1902, or whenever the Whaling Museum was founded, a hundred people or so got together and said, "We're going to preserve the Old Dartmouth historic society.

We're going to preserve the memories and the important things of our past." I think the museum has grown with



its times and it has expanded.

But what's important is, it seems as I speak I started this with, is, it engages people while they're young. Where else can you crawl inside of the whale yard?

Where else can you see oil dripping from the skeleton of a whale onto a floor, because it's just hanging over your head?

Where else can you see what a whaling ship really was like, and imagine yourself out on it, because it's your size, when you're a kid?

And that ability to bring people into our history and engage them, that was just wonderful. It is wonderful. That's getting a longwinded answer to-

Interviewer:

No, that's a great answer. I can tell you, it's a story I feel like people are bored with it at this point because I've told it over and over again.

You're talking about the wealth of resources in our archives, and I actually found my own family in our archives is by chance. Wasn't looking for it or anything.

Marc Chardon:

What'd you find?

Interviewer:

I found a random picture, one of the William trip photographs in our collection, of a man steering a boat and said, "That looks a lot like my uncle Teggy, that looks a lot like my uncle Peter, that looks like the men in my mother's family."

And so I put my great grandfather's name into WhalingHistory.org. And mind you, it's a picture of a boat steering. It said, "Boat steer bark, Wanderer."

Put in my great-grandfather's name into WhalingHistory.org, and he came up as boat steerer bark, Wanderer, 1921. And so, I always tell people-

Marc Chardon:

1921?

Interviewer:

1921, and by putting his name in, I saw that he was also on the wanderer on the 1918 voyage.

Marc Chardon:

Wow! Wow!

Interviewer:

And again, I was just looking for photos of Cape Verdean whalers, not looking for him. And then when I told everyone in Curatorial about it, Mark Potnick said, "I've got 30 pictures of that guy. He was one of trip's favorite subject to photograph. So I've got these awesome pictures of him harpooning a whale and steering boat."

Marc Chardon:

That was the big cheese, that was the big gunner on the boat.



Interviewer:

No one in my family knew. No one knew, because a lot of men back then just didn't-

Marc Chardon:

They didn't tell that story's. That was one of the things that us all high blood pressure and heart attacks, having to fight about anything.

Interviewer:

I did have one. I hesitate to ask it because it's such an unprofessional question, but I'm going to ask it anyway.

When did it hit you that your grandfather was Clifford Ashley, when did it dawn on? Did you always know when you were growing up that he was this fabulous artist, and photographer, world traveler?

Marc Chardon:

Yeah. So I spent the summers in his home. He died when my mother was young. So one of the things he did that you didn't mention, was he wrote the Ashley Book of Knots. So I grew up not tying out of the book. And every summer-

Interviewer:

Wonderful.

Marc Chardon:

... we would pick turks head bracelets for all the kids using nodding cord that he'd had made by one of the mills in New Bedford, so that he had this humongous.

It was this big around, I can't even fit in this frame. It's, I don't know, 18 inch spool by two feet tall.

And you know how you get those little balls of twine that have the red plastic around it, and they're all wrapped around themselves and you pull the cord up from the middle.

This was exactly that, except that it was a foot and a half wide by two feet tall. It's not in cords. And his easel was still out in the studio, at the barn.

Interviewer:

Is that the one we have at the museum?

Marc Chardon:

You have one of theses. I don't remember if that was from the Fair Haven studio, or from his studio down in Wilmington, or the one at our farm. There's still one in our farm. So I suspect you have the Fair Haven one.

And the house was so idiosyncratically his, that you couldn't live with it without having a sense of who he was.

He had an amazingly wide ranging and eclectic set of interests. Now when he was born, he was born in 1881, there's no electricity, no telephone, no cell phone, no internet, no smartphone kids.

And people made their own fun, and stories, and did their own things at the time. And so, his passion was the ocean and art.

At one point, he went to Caribbean and he bought up all this out of fashion mahogany. Because all of a sudden, mahogany was out of fashion. It was dark wood and all this stuff.

So he bought literally a shitload of antique furniture, and brought it back, and then sold most of it. But there's a



stool with three legs that's got a carved thing that looks like a tractor seat; how it's carved in a dish sheet.

And right above it, is a picture of a young person sitting on that stool in Jamaica, or wherever it was. And then there's another place where there's some people carrying all these disassembled pieces of furniture.

And this one guy is carrying one of those huge long posts, the four poster beds, and the bed is four feet off the ground. You got to get a ladder to climb up into it, when you're a kid.

But there's a guy carrying the post that's in that bed, that's in my aunt Polly's bed. You know what I'm saying?

It's hard to not know that Clifford Ashley had been there. And then every time you went down the staircase, the person you stared at was Clifford Ashley.

Because that portrait that was in the middle of, "Thou shall not." Hangs in that staircase. Literally, as you take your first step down the staircase, there are four steps before you turn right, right in front of you is grandfather Ashley.

There are beds that side through walls, to go out to the sleeping porch. You can lie in bed and you can pull a cord, and the bed slides right through the wall like a drawer, so you're out on the sleeping porch.

Those are all of his idiosyncratic personality. And he just loved fun, and he loved his family, and he loved the Bedford, and the art, and all of that.

So it's saying, "When did you first become aware of breathing or hoisting?" Because I think I was aware of it before I was born, but it didn't ever seem extraordinary to me. Because he was just one of many people who are passionate about this area, who lived in that house.

Interviewer:

And one of many extraordinary people in your family.

Marc Chardon:

Maybe one or two. But I think they're extraordinary because they realize that if you have something in terms of skill or talent in the world, if you don't use it for the good of the world, in our family, you don't amount too much.

Because you sat there and you watched your grandfather do it and, your grandmother do it, and your step grandfather do it, and then you watched your father figure out how to get a whole bunch of land protected from development for the future, and the farm is protected.

And every generation is doing their bit, and this is in part, working on this genealogy and so on. Is for me, is, a little bit of my way of trying to not leave well enough alone, and just leave the world a little better than we found it. So to me, it wasn't really extraordinary because not all grandparents do that.

No one made a big deal of it, I guess, is what I'm trying to say. In a way, I was surprised in 1973, when the Whaling Museum did an exhibition of all of his paintings. It was, "Wow!. I guess people are interested in this guy."

Interviewer:

No, that's just my grandpa.

Marc Chardon:

Just a grandpa. Yeah. And one of the biggest regrets in my life is that I never got to meet the man, because of course he died eight years before I was born.

He obviously had a sense of humor, and he obviously had passion and [inaudible 00:35:17]. He loved the life he lived and he loved the area.

I don't know. It's a very interesting and a very small world. Just the other day we were doing some cataloging, my brother is got a catalog essentially, the Ashley's work, that is based on the cards that he did contemporaneously



of the work.

He had a card for every painting. And he came across one and we were looking at it and he said, "Yeah, this was given to Mrs. Arthur Donnor."

And Mrs. Arthur Donnor was my grandpa Steve, who was technically my step-grandfather, but the only grandfather I knew. He was my grandfather.

So Clifford Ashley painted a painting for his mother before he married my grandmother. And it's a small world. This is New Bedford at that time. How wonderful?

Interviewer:

I'm from Newport, it's the same here.

Marc Chardon:

Absolutely, absolutely. We were just in Newport the other day. It's just so amazing. I don't know if you've ever been to the Rough Point Museum of Doris Duke's?

Interviewer:

Yeah. I've given presentations there.

Marc Chardon:

I can tell you, we've been also to Shangri La in Hawaii. I was thinking that I haven't actually visited any of those places since, before she died.

Because back when I was a much younger man, we'd go to Marvel house and all the places that you'd go. And of course, her house wasn't open then, because she was living there. Right.

Interviewer:

It was her house.

Marc Chardon:

But what's interesting and what's fun about it, when you go into the Marvel house or something, it's going back to our concept of story.

You don't really get a story from the house, because it's really empty of the people who lived there. But you can't walk two steps in Rough Point without getting a sense of who Doris Duke was.

She was a force of nature. It's weird in a way to have something preserved exactly as something was as somebody died, but at the same time, it's weirdly wonderful.

And what you get from that, is a sense of how that house was when it was alive, which is, I think what many house museums should strive to do and some do better than others.

Interviewer:

Yeah. Absolutely. I've taken up a lot of your time. I hope you've enjoyed sharing your story with me. I know it'll contribute to the project so much.

I didn't know if there was anything else you wanted to add before I let you get back to your own life and stop monopolizing your time.



Marc Chardon:

At first, let me say that this is my life as well as everything else is. So when people used to ask me about work life balance, it's implying that work isn't life.

You really should be talking about your life balance. I guess what I tell people is that, you should just be investing yourself in the change you want to see in the world, and the world you want to live in.

And whether it's by doing an interview, or by doing some research, or by restoring something, or by building something new that's going to help save the planet.

Because we're going to figure out how to generate electricity without generating fossil fuel, carbon into the atmosphere. Whatever it is that you'd have a passion for...

When you look at someone like Clifford Ashley, or probably your boat steering ancestor, it was a living. I'm extraordinarily proud of the accomplishments that they had, and they built lasting legacies.

I think that people sometimes get the sense that they can't do anything to change the planet. And you look at whether it's civil unrest, or whether it's global climate change, or COVID, for that matter, it all seems bigger than we are.

But in the end, relationships and what's local is what you can do. We can't save everything on the planet, but together we can.

And what you can do is start by working as an individual to promote the good that you see in the world.

In my case, if you bulldoze your heritage, it becomes just anywhere, to paraphrase, again, my grandmother. But for other people, it's about fighting for equality and justice, or for other people it's about saving the planet.

For other people, it's that science will help save us. And in fact, COVID has shown that's true too. So I guess the thing that I close in, is that, we are just extraordinarily lucky people to be alive in this moment of time. And that knowing history is the key to knowing that. I know we're all sitting here, tired of wearing masks.

Interviewer:

I know.

Marc Chardon:

But I can assure you, if you've ever read anything about the influenza of 1918, that we are 10 to 50 times better off today than we would've been had we been born a hundred years earlier.

And that the guy up behind me to my right, is a Frenchman as my father was French. One of his granddaughters is over a hundred. She was alive at the end of the Spanish flu, she's alive through COVID, she turned a hundred.

She has 60 some odd, all the way down to great, great grandchildren. I can tell you, that's a wonderful, amazing thing, and it's a story.

It's amazing that people have come through that, but going back to this, "You know what? We are so blessed now." I can tell you that she was extraordinarily fortunate to survive 1918 or 1920, when she was born.

It was a lot easier for her to survive 2020, as a person who turned a hundred in May of 2020, than it was for her to have survived as a baby in 1920, at the end of the Spanish flu.

And so, this concept that somehow everything is a disaster right now. There are terrible things in the world. Don't get me wrong and we should be incensed about terrible things in the world.

We should do our little part to make some little part of our corner of the world better. At the same time, please don't lose sight of the fact that we are very blessed by being in Southeastern Massachusetts, by having the history we have.

Our shared history of whaling or whatever shared history you have in other parts of the world, other people have



in the parts of the world.

And we should remember that every single day, it means gratitude. That's it. So enjoy and make the world just a little better place than you found it.