



Genie Rice

Interviewer:

That's recording now.

Genie Rice:

Okay.

Interviewer:

And that should be fine. So this is Michael Lapidus. I'm here with Ginny Rice. Today is November 21st, 2023, and Ginny is going to tell us a common ground story. Hi, Ginny.

Genie Rice:

Hi.

Interviewer:

Maybe since I just introduced you, you don't need to say your name.

Genie Rice:

Well, it's Genie, like a lamp Genie. That's okay.

Interviewer:

So sorry.

Genie Rice:

That's okay. No problem. My family, I grew up in Worcester. And then in summers we came to Mattapoisett. So every summer we were in Mattapoisett from the late '40s on. I was one of five children. So we spent a lot of time mucking around ourselves with cousins who lived nearby and just really people on the street or people that belonged to a little casino for tennis, just 4 tennis courts and a little cabin and then sailing, that sort of thing.

So it was very nice. It was very easy to walk to different places or ride your bicycle to different places. And when it rained, we were lucky enough to go to the Whaling Museum in New Bedford, and that was always a treat to come to the museum and see the Lagoda and see some of the exhibitions and then often maybe go to the Buttonwood Zoo.

But it was quite somewhat insular, I think. And now I think there's much more diversity of sharing different people's tribes, so to speak, and different people's experiences, which I think is exciting. And so you learn from that.

And I was lucky enough to live in New York for a number of years and be involved with a citizens zoning and planning organization for the Upper East Side and East Harlem where we tried to get citizens we'd hire for board members, grassroots board members from both communities, a planner to talk about zoning and what people would like. And people came from different backgrounds. There were Hispanic people, black people, even within those groupings, and different people from the Upper East Side who came from different backgrounds, as well. So it was kind of a melting pot and that was a lot of fun. And I really discovered that you can learn a lot from



other people's tribes, so to speak.

And I think that's what's happening here in New Bedford, which I think is an amazing city with an incredible history. A Quaker background, and the Underground Railroad and people who had made fortunes from tobacco, I guess in Virginia and whale oil here, and accepting other families that came from the Underground Railroad, so to speak. Or even different people in whaling. People needed jobs on whale ships. And I just think I'd like to know much, much more about some of the different people who live here and bring up families here.

And I think the museum is doing a terrific job in looking at whaling as an historical subject, but also realizing what's happening today in the climate and the fishing industry and what the roots are in this area, and how we all need to appreciate the history and use the past as prologue, which I think this museum does. But it also is very open to Manjiro from Japan, who came over here and was in Fairhaven, and other connections that I think the museum has successfully done outreach with.

Interviewer:

Thank you. That's wonderful. So you're from Worcester, right?

Genie Rice:

Right.

Interviewer:

And so did you spend many summers here or?

Genie Rice:

Yes, pretty much all summers. It was always such a treat because the ocean is so wonderful, and all these communities are really... To have beaches and have places where you can sail and swim and walk and enjoy everything, it's kind of a unique spot.

Interviewer:

When did you move back here and now you live here?

Genie Rice:

Yes, yes. I guess our parents sold the house to the five of us and then we sort of made an arrangement and two of us ended up owning the house that we had grown up in and then tore that house down, split the property, built two new houses. So my sister lives here and one of my brothers lives here and the other two live elsewhere.

Interviewer:

Very nice. Well, wonderful. So thank you for sharing a story.

Genie Rice:

Right.

Interviewer:

I don't know if there's something else you want to say, but that's wonderful.

Genie Rice:

Okay. I'm trying to think of anything else. I think that the Bedford Light newspaper that is being published is a



fabulous thing. So that journalism is really helping this community, and we need journalism that's accurate in so many other communities. And I think it has come at a very needed and special time. And so I'm learning much more about New Bedford through reading about some of these issues that never were necessarily, you would read in the paper where in the local papers. Something about a decision had been made, but not the reasoning, or the reason wasn't really accurate or whatever. And the Star Store and Art Gallery.

Interviewer:

It's good. I mean, journalism these days, it's good to have local coverage.

Genie Rice:

It is absolutely essential to have local coverage, I think then people realize that there is some gravitas in some of the issues that you hear about. And then you can do more research and really feel that you can understand the real story. And if there's anything, as a citizen, you can do attempt to do that.

Interviewer:

Wonderful. Well, thank you so much.

Genie Rice:

Okay, so.

Interviewer:

I'm going to turn this off.

Genie Rice:

Okay.