Sandy Hook, Gateway NRA, National Park Service
An Oral History Interview with John Mulhern,
Child of Water Plant Worker
1908-1927
Interviewed by Kate P. James, NPS
January 24, 1979
Transcribed by Mary Rasa, 2012

John Mulhern in ROTC uniform in the late 1920s.

Building 338 where Mr. Mulhern's family lived from 1908-1927
Images Courtesy of NPS/Gateway NRA

Editor's notes in parenthesis ( )

KJ: (Interview beginning is cut off.) Mulhern, retired U.S. Army. The interviewee is Kate P. James, Park Technician at Sandy Hook and the date today is January 24, 1979. John has come out to the park today to tell us about the water plant, the electric generating system and in general the history about these two facilities. Okay, John let's see. We were talking about the early power plant that was down at the near the present maintenance area. That's what we were talking about before.

JM: Should we start there now?

KJ: Yeah. Let' go back to what we were saying before. You said before they built this one they had…

JM: They had the Ordnance Machine Shops which were adjacent to the (Sandy Hook) Proving Ground. There was a DC electric generating station built there to supply electricity for use on milling machines, lathes and other power equipment that was in use in the machine shops. The primary purpose of that power plant was to provide that electricity for that utilization. A little later some of that power was used to light the Officers' Club and the officers' quarters.

KJ: And the old red brick barracks too?

JM: That was later.

KJ: That was later, okay.

JM: No. (It was) to light the house(s) that were built for the commanding officer of the Proving Ground and the other homes of the other officers who lived in that immediate area.

KJ: Are those frame houses out here are they some of those old dwellings were they built, that the Coast Guard is in now.

JM: Yes.

KJ: They were associated originally with the Ordnance Proving Ground.

JM: Yes, with the Proving Ground.

KJ: Because they dated from the 1880s. I think so of those.

JM: That's a fact.

KJ: Right. Before we go any further I just want to ask you a question. I just want to clear it in my mind. The area where this power plant was, are those the unused buildings

now that are part of our maintenance yard? There is a bunch of three buildings or so that sit along the road there in front of our present maintenance yard. They are red brick.

JM: Yes. One of those is the generating building.

KJ: Is the generating room, ah huh.

JM: The boiler room was located in the area but not right there.

KJ: Okay. Right.

JM: And that room if you go in there now you will find the walls have white tile on them and it had a well kept floor where the generators were there. They thought necessary to keep generating electrical equipment clean.

KJ: Clean. Right. That is interesting.

JM: Nobody bothers now.

KJ: Nobody bothers now. (Laughter) Oh dear. And you were saying this was all DC.

JM: Yeah. That was direct current. At that time we knew very little about speed control of AC electrical equipment. So, it is very simple with resister type of control equipment to control the speed of lathes which is very important milling machines and other mechanical devices. So, DC was used and then all the batteries at that time or about the turn of the century it became possible to electrify some of the movements of the guns and separate DC generators were put in all the batteries for just whatever was necessary there 25 Kilowatt DC generating equipment.

KJ: Right.

JM: Then as time went on and AC became more popular up to the building of the AC generating station at Horseshoe Cove all the officers' quarters were lighted with oil lamps as were the barracks buildings and all the building around. Then in 1912 or '13 or '14 or whatever that date was when the, and following the completion of the new Pumping Station in Horseshoe Cove then the electrical generating when it was built onto the Pumping Station. And following that many of the building that previously on Sandy Hook had been heated, had been lighted with oil lamps were supplied electricity for heating purposes, for lighting purposes only.

KJ: Right.

JM: Because it was a limited capacity of the new generating station. The two large generators were 75 KVA each which is not very large. And the small generator was a 25 KVA machine. The two machines, the two large machines were installed so that they could be operated alternately. At nighttime, one machine would be turned on and it

would be run for that night and it would be shut down in daylight. And then next day the other machine would be turned on and operated for a night. And after a certain time at night like 10 o'clock at night the large machine would be shut down or rather the small machine would be synchronized with the large machine and the large machine would be run and only the small machine would be run and that provided all the light that was necessary. And of course, at 10 o'clock, at 10 or 11 o'clock at night lights were turned off in all the barracks buildings, in the mess halls, and probably all the other buildings or many of the other buildings. The small machine could carry the streetlight globes and whatever electricity was necessary.

KJ: Now you are talking about the main plant over here.

JM: The main plant.

KJ: Yeah the big plant. Right. Getting back to the old plant before over at Headquarters you were telling me about the steam.

JM: Oh yes, from the Ordnance Power Plant, the small power plant at the Ordnance Machine Shops some of the steam was diverted from the high pressure boilers there and heated such buildings as some of the officers' quarters, St. Mary's Chapel, the Standards' Laboratory.

KJ: Which is the school house now, right. Oh no, that's the Chem Laboratory that we call the school house, next to St. Mary's Chapel.

JM: Well, that was the Standard Laboratory.

KJ: Standards Laboratory.

JM: Standard Laboratory originally.

KJ: Originally, okay.

JM: And of course, associated with all coast defense activities it's all wrapped up chemically in one way or another with powder and explosives and ballistics at one time or another.

KJ: Oh, okay. Okay. That's interesting. When we were doing the thing for the nomination for the (National Register of Historic Places Nomination) register we went around. We discovered what we had been calling the school house building 109 next to St. Mary's Chapel was they are calling it in the National Historic Register they are calling it a Chem Lab and they had left it out. Of course, we are trying to get it back in now. Before that we should really insert in that nomination before that it was called the Standards' Laboratory for the Proving Ground this would be.

JM: What they precision measuring equipment.

KJ: Sure. Yeah.

JM: A standard meter.

KJ: Sure.

JM: And whatever else they might be using.

KJ: Okay. You know it fascinates me the more you talk about Fort Hancock the more you ultimately talk about the Proving Ground which was so important in the early days.

JM: That was the thing.

KJ: That was the thing.

JM: That was long before the coast defense batteries were built.

KJ: Right.

JM: Thirty years before.

KJ: Yeah. So this is fascinating to me. Should we get some of those pictures. Let's get some of those pictures. (Tape stops and restarts)

JM: Then if you want to put that picture together at some time or another if you want to coordinate the tape with the picture you would have some sort of .

KJ: Okay.

JM: So let's call this one.

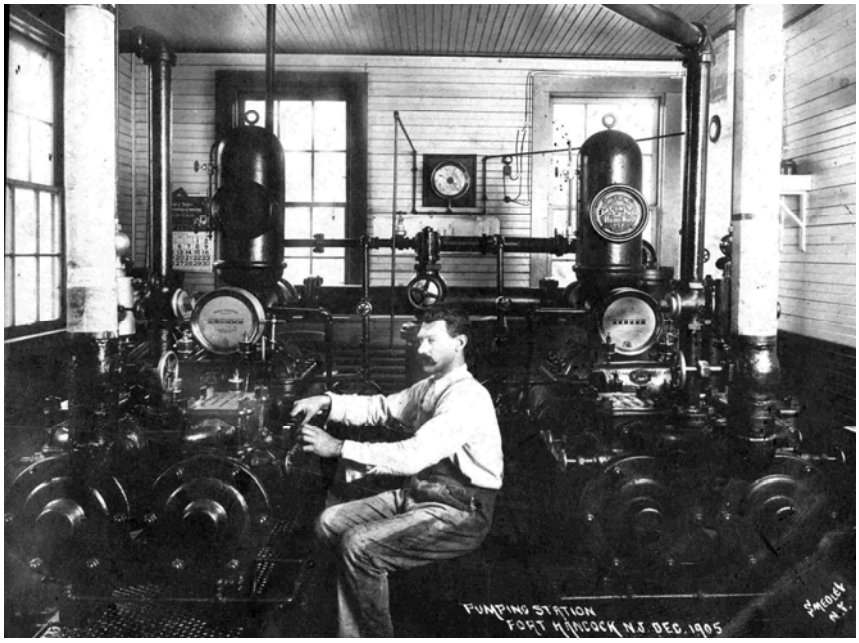
KJ: Alright. I will put one up here if your sister doesn't mind.

JM: Okay.

KJ: Alrighty, that's one. That's the…

JM: This is the old Pumping Station. The old Pumping Station is shown on a picture taken in 1919, in 1909 by Mr. Smedley who made a lot of photographs at Sandy Hook. He had an office at 808, I think its 808 on the Bowery in New York and he made official photographs as well as making personal photographs. In this photograph you can see the old Pumping Station which is at the right. The water tank in the middle.

KJ: And these are the foundations which are still there.



Inside the old Pumping Station in 1905. Mr. Hanson, who worked there before Mr. Mulhern's father, is sitting in photograph in 1909.

JM: They are still there.

KJ: I went out and saw them yesterday. And this is your house across the street.

JM: Right.

KJ: Okay.

JM: And the one quarters was for the engineer. Now some of the old maps of Middletown Township of which I have a set indicates that that may have not been the engineer's house but might have been a boarding house as so marked on the maps that I have.

KJ: Oh. Boarding house for what? What would it be used for?

JM: Probably people that worked the Pumping Station.

KJ: Oh, people working the Pumping Station.

JM: Could have been.

KJ: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

JM: Well, we can look at those later. In the foreground of the picture are several individuals. The one on the extreme right is Mr. Patrick Houston who was the chief engineer when my father first came here. Next to him is a man who I really don't recognize but could be Mr. Macintosh. The next man I don't know who he is either. The

fourth man from the right end is John Mulhern, my father. And the man who is holding the shovel I really don't know who he is either. It's possible that he might be Herbert R. Duffio who also worked at the plant about the same time. The picture at the house at the left hand of the picture is the place where the Mulhern family lived. Prior to them there was a family of the name of Hansen that lived there. And some of the Hansen's are still around here. Charlie Hansen, Sally Hansen and they're out in Middletown Township. The little figure at the right side of the house is possibly John Mulhern and the figure standing at the doorway is probably Mary Mulhern. To the left of the main dwelling and may be seen as a small house which was the sanitation facilities available to resident of quarters at that time. (Laughter.)

KJ: Very good.

JM: Facetiously known as the chick sales. This water tank was for a long time the only tank at this end of the Horseshoe Cove end of Sandy Hook. For years before that there was a small water tank on top of the so called Fort Lincoln granite pile.

KJ: Yeah. The old Fort at Sandy Hook, you mean.

JM: Yes. The old Fort at Sandy Hook. I really don't know where the water came from for that Pumping Station. It's conceivable that there might have been a small pumping station in the Ordnance Proving Ground area.

KJ: Area, yeah. Yeah.

JM: However, the main source of water storage at Fort Hancock was the tank that you see in this position. And that tank was there for many years and I don't know when it was demolished.

KJ: Excuse me John, just a minute. Can I ask a question? Would this have supplied water for the steam works for the Ordnance Ground, Ordnance? So, they had their own well out there?

JM: They probably did.

KJ: They probably did because this wouldn't be able to supply all that steam to raise Battery Potter.

JM: Oh no.

KJ: No.

JM: No. That was an entirely different type of thing.

KJ: That was different. So they probably would have sunk a well.

JM: Yeah, they might have sunk a well or they might have stored that water on top of that Fort Lincoln.

KJ: Okay. Alright.

JM: And let that flow over to Battery Potter. That is entirely possible.

KJ: Yeah, okay alright.

JM: It appears that sometime around 1910 or so plans were implemented to build a new Pumping Station. You know that other picture that we have 1911.

KJ: 1911.

JM: Shows the building built. So, it was probably around 1910 that a new Pumping Station was built and a new brick building which had unobstructed floor areas and it was built directly over the old wooden Pumping Station and operations were continued in the old Pumping Station until such time as the roof was enclosed on the new Pumping Station and then all the woodwork that constitutes the old Pumping Station was eliminated.

KJ: Oh my word. That is interesting.

JM: There's one other building that I failed to identify in this photograph. In this small building that is alongside the farther most leg of the tower of the water tank is a little firehouse. There was a hand drawn fire reel in that little building. A hose cart I guess that's what you would call those things and you could drive it around in the area and there were a few water hydrants of which you could connect the fire hose after you reeled it off the little hose carts.

KJ: Sure.

JM: After the new Pumping Station was built and in operation and new machinery was installed, shortly there after the requirement was felt for an additional boiler and one was installed alongside of the two old boilers and at the same time 125 foot smoke stack which appears in another photograph was erected.

KJ: Very good. That is very interesting. I was around there yesterday and this house I have to go back there and look at it again. It looks like it's been altered quite some of it.

JM: Oh yes. This building out here on the porch is where my father built a bathroom.

KJ: Oh.

JM: Right at that little spot there. You could still come out to the front but the bathroom was right in that section there. The back porch was closed in because we used to have a

hand pump on the back porch to supply the water that we needed and there was a Pumping Station across the street.

KJ: Right across the street. You had your own well obviously.

JM: Yes. But it didn't take my father very long after we moved in there to pipe water over there from the Pumping Station. So we had our supply of water.

KJ: Did you have any idea how deep this big well was for the Pumping Station?

JM: I think this was about 350 feet deep. The one that was it was right here where the tower is. And the one that is over on this side is 850 feet deep. And we lived there when that well was built.

KJ: Okay, now you are I think you are talking about something that came up this morning and we didn't have the answer to. When you come today off Hartshorne Drive, make the right hand turn into the Brookdale complex up there, there is a concrete tower right there and Joe Boyle tells us that its number 3 or 4.

JM: That must be well #2.

KJ: Well #2. Why is the concrete tower there? Is that, when was that built?

JM: That was there when we got there.

KJ: That was there when you moved there in 1908?

JM: Yeah.

KJ: Yeah. Right. Okay I am going to stop the recording now for second. We will pick up here with picture number lets see we have to put a number on this. Which one comes after the water tower? (Tape stops.)

JM: Let's mark this number 2.

KJ: Mark this number 2. Alright.

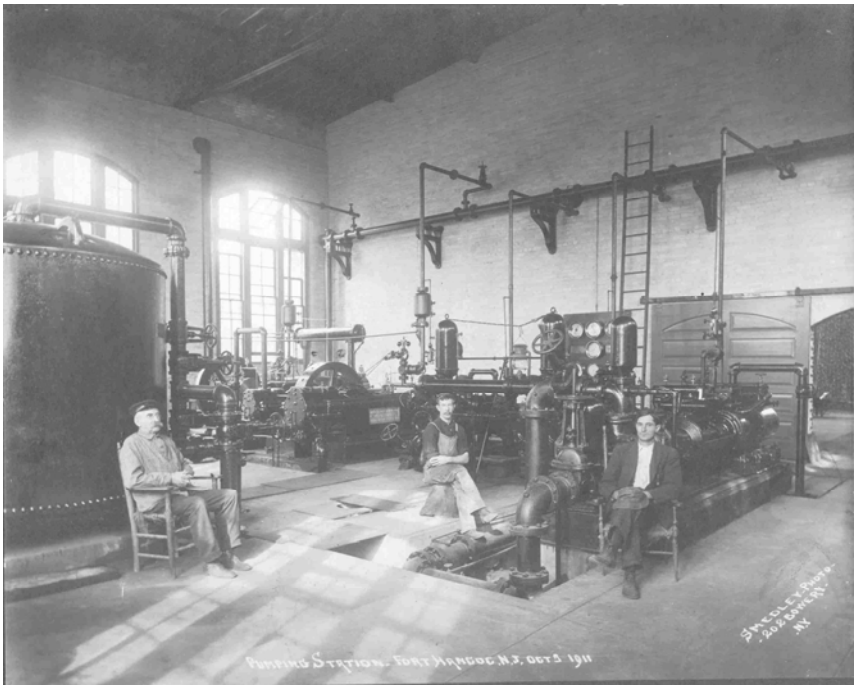
JM: Picture number 2 of this series shows the almost complete new Pumping Station. The one that replaced the old wooden building. You can see from the openness of this large girder supported roof building that it might well be built around the small wooden building. The equipment that is in here in this picture is some of the equipment from the old Pumping Station and some newly installed equipment. The tank on the left side of the picture is one of two mechanical filters. Those two filters are still there at this date and there are some additional filters.

KJ: What did they use in there for filtering materials?

JM: Sand and charcoal.

KJ: Sand and charcoal okay. The same way they make whiskey.

JM: They are mechanical filters and they are washed out periodically by the operation of these mini valves that are under the thing. You can run the water through the thing in either direction. Either coming from the wells or going through the filters or water coming from the system and washing out the filters and that all goes out in the sewer lines and the water lines are down in these channels that run through the floor here. In the far left background of the picture there are two air compressors. These two machines are both air compressors. And this, the one to the far left is the new air compressor then the one to the right of it is the old air compressor. Still farther to the right there are two air domes on two water pumps. The pump right behind one of the individuals in the middle and one along side of that. Easy to identify the two air domes on the compressor from the pumps. Still farther to the right is another air dome which is on a new pump. All these pumps were operated either individually or together depending on the water requirements. The people sitting in the picture, the man sitting alongside the filter is Patrick Houston again, the chief engineer. The man in the middle is John Mulhern. The man sitting in front of the new pump is Mr. MacIntosh and I am sorry I don't remember his first name. He was called Mac all the time. This photograph was made October the 5th 1911 and it sort of identifies the origin of the new pump room in the Pumping Station. Through the doorway to the right and looking towards the back in the distance is the boiler room and close examination of this will reveal a wheelbarrow which was used to wheel the coal from the coal bunker over to the boilers and the boilers are located behind the gauges that are on the wall in the right center of this photograph.



Thomas Smedley photograph of Pumping Station Fort Hancock, October 5, 1911.

KJ: Now the coal bunkers, are you referring to the garages over here?

JM: No. No. I am talking about the coal bunkers that go down to the Pumping Station.

KJ: Okay.

JM: An integral part of the station.

KJ: Oh the Pumping Station.

JM: And we can inspect those later.

KJ: Yeah. Yeah. Right. Right. 1911 then. Our historic record (Post Record Book) has a photograph of this building from the outside with the windows still intact. Now today the windows have been filled in. And it has the building date, of course, that historic survey was done in the '30s I believe or some time around then has the date has the building date as 1917. So, I must go I will have to go and correct it.

Fort Hancock Post Record Book image of Water Treatment Plant circa 1940.

JM: 1917 is probably when the generating plant was put up.

KJ: When the generating plant was added. I was just going to ask you that. When the new wing was put up for the electric generator?

JM: Well, we can check that with the maintenance records over here that tells us when the machines were installed over there. That big thick book we can go over that and copied that information once before and I have it someplace in little black book but I, that would be a research project to find that information. The large pipe up on the wall in the background was the steam header and that was the pipe that supplied the steam to all the machinery. In the middle of it at this point is where the pipe went back to the boilers which are in the back room. All these pipes these vertical pipes which are over each machines provide the steam to operate either the steam compressor or the pumps. And this operation is sort of an interesting operation. The well, the deep well and all deep wells, the deep 850 feet line, 850 feet deep, there is about a tinage cast iron pipe that goes to the bottom of the well. Down inside of that there is another pipe about a five or six inch pipe that had a strainer on the lower end of it. That pipe was lowered down into the bottom of the well. And down inside of that pipe was another line about one inch in diameter and that was an air line. The compressors forced air to the bottom of the well and that air pressure forced the water up through the six inch iron pipe that was inside of that until it got up to a level where the pumps had sufficient suction to pump the water out into the water system into the mechanical filters and from there up into the reservoir or into the main lines going up to the big tank on the…

KJ: South bastion (of the Fort at Sandy Hook) or whatever it is. I mean the present tank.

JM: Yes.

KJ: Yeah. The new present tank on the old fort.

JM: That's right. That's where the water is pumped up through there.

KJ: That's interesting. What did you say that thing was at the bottom of the second pipe? The straighter?

JM: The strainer.

KJ: Oh strainers, sorry. Okay.

JM: I don't know what a straighter is.

KJ: (Laughter) probably sentiment could get in…

JM: Straighten yourself.

KJ: Alrighty, picture number 3 is on the back.

JM: We have to dig out from the records on the construction dates of these things. You can also get about when the machines were installed and when they were removed.

KJ: Okay.

JM: I have gone over all the books.

KJ: Okay. Alright.

JM: Photograph number 3 is a photograph of the completed Pumping Station and generating room. That section of the building which is closest to it is the electric generating room. This building off to the left is the boiler room and of course the smokestack which was 125 feet high is right alongside of the boiler room. That was quite a trip to watch them building that.

KJ: The smokestack I was just going to ask you.

JM: Us kids lived right alongside of it. Of course, they built it from the bottom up. (Laughter) How else would you do it?

KJ: They dropped it in by helicopter. (Laughter) Yeah right.

JM: And they built a scaffolding up inside the smokestack as they built it with sort of a boom or crane that would lift each one of these section up and then the man sitting on a boson's chair on the outside would rivet the sections together and all these sections were riveted together. There was a man inside. A bucker upper on the inside and a riveter on the outside. And watching these men toss the rivets in the early stages and later pulling the rivets the red hot rivets up the outside of the stack and getting them up there before they cooled off so that they could be riveted in place was something to see.

KJ: I bet it was. How did they dismantle the inside when the stack was done? The wood framing.

JM: They just threw it over the side.

KJ: Just when it was all done there you have to work from the top down.

JM: Top and bottom both.

KJ: Right yeah.

JM: They probably had some type of a hook up arrangement up on the bonnet up here. That they could raise and step up and lower it down.

KJ: Sure.

JM: I don't know that. I don't remember it that well. This wood that is along side of it could well have been some of the scaffolding that was dumped out after the construction was finished. Now the black tank on the side was a sort of a safety pressure release that

was associated with the air compressors and you could see a safety value on top of this tank.

KJ: Oh yeah right. Now your father was, was he supervisor?

JM: He eventually became chief engineer.

KJ: Chief engineer. That's what I thought.

JM: He started as a fireman.

KJ: He started as a, yeah, right. And these pictures he's a…

JM: He's an engineer.

KJ: He's an engineer here.

JM: Mr. Houston was the chief there. I don't remember when he left. My sister maybe does and shortly after that. Well when he left, my father…

KJ: Your father became the chief engineer when he left.

JM: It was the right of eminent domain. (Laughter)

KJ: Sure.

JM: What do they call that in royalty?

KJ: The next in the line of succession. Something like that.

JM: I think that's about all there is. Now the next one could be an interior photograph of the generator room.

KJ: Alright.

JM: We have two or three.

KJ: This is number 4. We are going to copy all of these I think.

JM: I really think you should.

KJ: Yes.

JM: It's a shame not to do something. And order a couple copies. Get one for me and I will give these back to her if she wants them.

KJ: Sure. Sure.

JM: Photograph number 4 is an interior photograph of the generator room showing a couple of engineers and a couple of pieces of machinery. The generator, the alternating current generator on the left side of this picture is a Ridgeway Dynamo and Engine Company Coorless Valve Steam Operator AC Generator or Alternator. Or 75 KVA capacity. The small machine to the right of it is the exciter driven by a leather belt from the main engine to the exciter and the exciter or course excites the fields and the operation of course starts in the generation of electricity. The machines at the right end of the photograph is a 25 KVA Ridgeway and Dynamo Company Slide Valve Engine. The two individuals standing behind the engines are the one behind the right hand engine is John F. Mulhern and the man at the other end I believe is Mr. Swift but I can't be sure about that. This must have been taken shortly after the engines were installed. For instance the mats, there are not mats in front of the engines. There are no mats on the terrazzo marble floor. The mats will show in later pictures.

KJ: I wonder why they filled the windows in?

JM: Pardon me?

KJ: I wonder why they filled the windows in? It's crazy.

JM: Somebody thought they had a big secret or something, you know. They…

KJ: Oh, during World War II.

JM: Well, the transformer wall and the major switching equipment is in that room and they probably didn't want anybody to interfere with that. And by blocking it in that way it added more security.

KJ: Oh, okay. That would be World War I or World War II. World War II probably.

JM: When we go down there we can bring these pictures along and you will have a little better feel for some of this stuff. I don't know how much of this is of any interest to you. You know if it becomes a question you can just be a little more knowledgeable you know.

KJ: Oh yes. No. It is of interest because we think it of terrific interest to put in the historic thing.

JM: Picture number 5.

KJ: We are up to 5 yeah. Interesting to get a hold of this official photographer. Would it? I wonder what ever happened.

JM: I had planned to try and look him up. I asked Tom, I said, "The next time you go to New York look him up." He said, "He's not there anymore."

KJ: Well, of course, he might be.

JM: But the business.

KJ: The business, right, right.

JM: Photographers never give up there negatives unless they burn them up.

KJ: I know. Wouldn't it be nice to get a hold.

JM: I am sure they are around someplace. Picture number 5 is another picture of the interior of the electric generating room. In this picture you can see for instance the lighting fixtures they used to light the generating room and to the left of this picture is the second 75 KVA alternator. The standard operating procedure was to used either one or the other of these alternators to supply the main power load on Sandy Hook. One machine might always be considered to be a standby generator. The smaller generator, the one at the right hand of the picture was generally started about 10 o'clock at night and synchronized with the larger alternator then operating. When the load had been synchronized then the large generator would be taken off the line and the small one would be run for the remainder of the night. These machines were operated principally for nighttime use. I don't know if they ever operated in the daytime unless there was some particular reason for operating them in the daytime. In those days, such things as electric percolators, electric cooking material, all that kind of equipment was not to be used on these generators because they were of limited capacity. So, their prime function was to supply lighting.

KJ: Just lighting. Okay, that's interesting.

JM: That's why they shut them down.

KJ: Sure, of course, that's interesting. Yeah. That would kind of curtail your evening social hour. For instance, if you had guests over for dinner or something.

JM: They would be running at night, see.

KJ: Oh, I am sorry. I got it backwards.

JM: These machines were operated on a standard daylight schedule depending on the time of the setting and the rising sun. The standard table of sunrise and sunset was provided to the chief engineer of the Pumping Station, the pumping and lighting plant so that he knew when to turn on the generators in the afternoon and when to shut them off in the morning. In addition to that, there was also a street lighting schedule. And every night at an authorized time the street lighting circuits would be turned on. This wasn't

until after dark and then the streetlights would be turned off in accordance with the schedule in the morning.

KJ: Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Really interesting.

JM: Picture number 5 is it?

KJ: We are up to 6, 6. Yeah. 6.

JM: Picture number 6 is another picture of the interior of the generator room and it shows in addition to the generators it show a switchboard. In the middle of the picture is a doorway leading to the pump room. And through that you can see the valves that controlled the mechanical filters on the side and you can see the large pump, the large new pump that is in the background and the little room all the way in the back is the telephone booth.

KJ: Oh. (Laughter.)

JM: Telephone.

KJ: Telephone.

JM: The switchboard on the right hand side of the photograph contains all the equipment and meters necessary to synchronize the generators, to put load onto to transfer load, to turn on the streetlights and for recordkeeping. There was a kilowatt hours recording instrument on the gauge at this side where you could always tell how much power was taken from station and there was also another graphic voltage indicator so that you always knew you were operating the generators at the proper operating voltage. And of course, the voltage could be controlled by the speed of the engines and if there was some even because of sudden increase load or of dropping load the voltage varied one way or another it could be controlled by this steam input to the generators. The desk at the right hand end is, of course, the seating place for the chief engineer and down in that Pumping Station there are some of these books.

KJ: Oh really.

JM: Where they kept these records. Now I have talked to Tom a dozen times about getting those records out of there and storing them someplace else.

KJ: I think Joe has them. Joe Boyle, he told me this morning when I was on the phone with him he would have to look it up in the record. So, he knows where they are. So they must still down there then.

JM: A lot of them were but the ones that my father used to handle are no longer there.

KJ: They are not?

JM: No. You can tell by the handwriting. The ones that are there started about 1928. That was about the time this place closed down as a generating station.

KJ: Okay, maybe unless Joe had them.

JM: Maybe they are the ones.

KJ: Maybe he took them out.

JM: Maybe so but it would be interesting to see which ones they are.

KJ: Was the ceiling so high because of the noise? Was there a lot of noise in there?

JM: No. No. It was unobstructed work space. Just moving, you know, if they ever had to do a major job on moving one of these engines…

KJ: Oh, they had to get a crane.

JM: They'd have to get a crane and these beams here were sufficiently strong so they could run a crane it was and I am not I really think they had a couple of chain hoist, one on each side of this thing so they could lift up parts of this machinery because it was fairly heavy and I don't know if they ever had to do a major overhaul when I was there but my father was always working on his own repair and maintenance schedule of these things.

KJ: Sure. Yeah.

JM: This picture indicates that the job was finished as far as the building was concerned and operations were underway. On this little stand there was an oil can. This little pipe stand, there was an oil can there where they had to lubricate some of the components of the machines from time to time. And also the walkways had been installed here. These are an open steel mat, matting that went up and down and in front of the engines. That mat in front of the switchboard is heavy rubber to prevent grounding if somebody is standing in front of it.

KJ: Oh, sure.

JM: The machine.

KJ: Huh, it looks very nice and clean.

JM: The floor in this building is terrazzo marble and is always spotless when John F. Mulhern..

KJ: Mulhern was there.

JM: Taken care of. Things have changed. Well that…

KJ: That's the last of the series…

JM: Of the Pumping Station. And we can make a field inspection of this thing for greater familiarization of the details of the things.

KJ: Alright. Excellent.

JM: From time to time I have been asked about social life at Sandy Hook in the early days and the picture that we have here number 7.

KJ: Yeah. Let's put number 7 on this. Alrighty.

JM: Number 7 is a picture of a cast of a play that was put on by Mrs. Dan Murphy who was the wife of the postmaster at Fort Hancock at that time. And as I recall it the play was called, "The Stone Outside Dan Murphy's Door." That still is an Irish song that you hear every once in a while on the radio. The cast is in front of what was called Liberty Theater. That was somewhere in the location of the present theater here on Post. Not the Chapel but the Theater. (The Liberty Theater was a World War I era building replaced in 1933 by the current Post Theater Building 67.)

KJ: The Theater here on the end of the parade field.

JM: The people in this photograph, some of them are still in the neighborhood. The girl at the extreme left is Mary Mulhern. The fourth person from the left is Herman Simpson and there are still some of the Simpson's around. The little girl with the braids or curls sitting on the step is Peggy Gould who is the daughter of the Postal Telegraph Tower that at one time existed in the present Coast Guard area. The tall man with the Army hat is Howard Davenport. Immediately to his right is Marion Emory. Mrs. Murphy is sitting on the steps, sitting on the…

KJ: Porch.

JM: The porch of the Theater. The man in uniform and the girl who is holding his arm I don't recognize. The man with the derby hat I don't know. The next girl is Adele Emory sister to Marion Emory. The little girl in the foreground with the thick glasses is Estelle Emory. The girl with the hands on her hips is Virginia Murray. And some of the Murrays are still around in the area. Her brother is over in Middletown.

KJ: Oh yeah.

JM: The man with the campaign hat is John Mulhern and the girl on the extreme right is Mable Bylewell.

KJ: Now who came to these? All the officers and wives?

JM: The whole installation came.

KJ: The whole shebang.

JM: That was a big thing when anything was put on in the Theater whenever it was movies or dance. In this Theater they used to also put on dances.

KJ: Oh now what is the date of this Theater?

JM: To the music of the Army band.

KJ: The Army band. Okay, now what…

JM: Well, its prior to World War II. It's someplace between the Wars.

KJ: Okay. Someplace between the Wars.

JM: Now, I can sort of figure out when this might have been because it looks like in this picture that I must have been about 12 or 13 years maybe 14 years old. I was born in 1904. I was 14 this must have been about 1918.

KJ: Okay. Yeah. Well, those are World War I uniforms that you have on or campaign hats.

JM: It must have been about 1918. Well, we weren't living on the Post then. It must have been about 1920. That's pretty close. 1920.

KJ: Okay. 1920. What, were the officers' kids or the NCO's kids would they take part in this too?

JM: Oh sure. There was only a few civilians. There was only a half a dozen civilians.

KJ: Most of the people you mentioned…

JM: These were all military.

KJ: Oh, they were all military. Most of them are civilian people that you were…

JM: This reminds me. This must have been Eileen Connolly, Colonel Connolly's daughter.

KJ: Okay, the second from the left.

JM: Yes. And this must have been, its right there, I will talk to my sister about this again.

KJ: Was the Connolly girl, was her father commanding officer?

JM: Yes. John Connolly. Not the governor of Texas.

KJ: Not the governor of Texas John Connolly (laughter).

JM: He had a son.

KJ: Now that is interesting. Now did this show last for a week or was it a one shot affair?

JM: I think it was run for two nights.

KJ: It was free.

JM: Oh yeah. Everything is free.

KJ: Everything was free.

JM: Nothing new about that.

KJ: Okay. This is fun.

JM: This was 7.

KJ: Number 8 coming up here. Okay.

JM: This is number 8 is a photograph of old St. Mary's Chapel in 1911 at Christmas time. St Mary's Chapel originally was built by the Methodist Church and I don't know when it was but it must have been before the turn of the century. But evidently it wasn't a growing concern or they couldn't make it go and it was finally sold to the Bishop of Trenton and it became one of the parishes of the Trenton Diocese. The man who is standing at the rail at that particular time was John, Father John Sullivan. Frequently the Diocese of Trenton didn't have a priest who would be assigned to St. Mary's Chapel and if the Post was lucky enough to have a Catholic chaplain at that time then the Post Chaplain became the parish priest so to speak. St. Mary's Chapel was heated by steam from the Ordnance Machine Shop area. It was maintained by the parishioners. The Bishop of Trenton had no money to spend on the maintenance of the place and many of the chaplains felt the building should be owned by the government. But it never was. Many years later around it must have been around the time about maybe it was just before after World War, around World War II time, a chaplain who had been at the Post for some time Chaplain William R. Arnold who lived in Quarters 7 over here became Army chief of chaplains as a major general and sold Congress the idea of erecting standard chapels on all posts, camps, and stations. And throughout the world even now at military installations in the United States government you will find standard chapel like the building that is now the lecture hall.

KJ: Oh right, the Auditorium.

JM: Yeah, the Auditorium.

KJ: The one we took the steeple.

JM: You people.

KJ: I don't blame you. That's a standard…

JM: Yeah and Fort Monmouth had three or four or five of those.

KJ: No kidding.

JM: And there is still one in Fort Monmouth, I think in Camp Wood.

KJ: Okay.

JM: And the building is still in existence and it seems to have…

KJ: Was it always used right up to World War II as St. Mary's Chapel, Catholic Chapel?

JM: It was until the standard chapel was built.

KJ: Until the standard chapel was built. Became the multi-denominational…

JM: Yeah, multi purpose chapel. In the days of St. Mary's Chapel which was a Catholic Church there were no Protestant churches on Fort Hancock but the Protestant services were held on the second floor of the YMCA Building. (Building 40)

KJ: Where was that?

JM: That is now the thing alongside the Museum.

KJ: Oh the Gym, the Service Club. Okay.

JM: Yeah the Service Club. Inside.

KJ: Right next door here or in back right next door here.

JM: Yeah.

KJ: Okay. Now how did it pass into, did it ever pass into federal ownership?

JM: No.

KJ: Never did. It still is privately owned?

JM: So far as I know.

KJ: Is that right? And it's on Coast Guard property.

JM: Yeah.

KJ: That's interesting since we are trying to get it on the register.

JM: It's still privately owned so far as I know.

KJ: That's easy to find out. We can call the Trenton Diocese.

JM: It may be that, you know, they used some of the buildings in the back for NCO Quarters where the priest used to live.

KJ: Okay. That was my next question. Father Sullivan, he would live in those quarters over there.

JM: In the back yeah. Father Sullivan and his sister Miss Sullivan was his housekeeper.

KJ: Now that's called the Rod and Gun Club.

JM: Yeah. But that is after it stopped being used as a chapel.

KJ: Yeah sure.

JM: The front part of it I guess became the Rod and Gun Club.

KJ: Yeah. Yeah. That is interesting.

JM: It would be nice if that were in color. Wouldn't it?

KJ: Sure would. I wonder what happened to the benches that were inside.

JM: I don't know. Smedley again.

KJ: Smedley photo New York.

JM: That would be interesting to see that thing. You know some semblance of a restoration you know not the whole business but some semblance.

KJ: Well, it should be included particularly because it's not on our property.

JM: You know, I was talking to somebody about these pictures the other day and I was talking about restoration of Sandy Hook. We got involved in a great big thing over with Sal the other night, Sal Giovenco.

KJ: Oh yeah.

JM: You know about what we would like to do about things in Sandy Hook and we were talking about restoration of the batteries and all that kind of stuff and out of the blue it came to me.

KJ: Do you wish this to be on tape?

JM: Yeah sure. The thought came to me that restoration of the batteries and a lot of the big masonry and all that kind of stuff is expensive and how much useful purpose would it serve but whether I had seen something like this elsewhere in old relics, old ruins I don't remember or it might have been that one bright thought in the moon. It seemed to me in place of the big batteries down here and we have many photographs of them that the small shelter could be constructed at ground level alongside one of those batteries or in front of it and have large enlargements put in there. When I say large 20x30 inches something like that. Have two or three or four of those in there and at ground level so you could stand there and see just what was up in there and with that perspective you know standing on the ground and looking up at that big gun if you stood down here and looked at a photograph if projected would be the same size as that gun up there would be a very realistic approach to seeing those thing the way they were when operated.

KJ: That would. We will get it off the tape and that suggestion that certainly will pass that one. We regularly see these people like the Denver people.

JM: Trying to build up everything we have here even that with making a mockup of some of them. Even putting a wooden gun on a carriage and things like that. Very expensive if you do it right.

KJ: Yeah extremely.

JM: I thought it seemed to me wouldn't that be so simple. Here I stand if a picture is wide but if I stand and look at the picture and look up the gun goes right up there and if you get up there where the gun was there it is.

KJ: Okay.

JM: A portion, an illusion.

KJ: Yeah why not. That's a good idea. That's a very clever idea. I don't know actually what they are going to do with it.

END OF INTERVIEW