

## EPS 109 Mary McLhinney transcript

Born: **2/14/1931** at Ft. Eustus, VA interviewed: 8/29/2016

*(First we get the details... what is your date of birth)*

2/14/1931 – My kids cannot forget my birthday. My maiden name is Phillips.

I was born in Fort Eustus, Virginia. My father was a career cavalryman. I always told Annie that's where she got her love for riding horses.

*(Start with the earliest memories you have...)*

We lived in Edgewood Arsenal up until I was 5 years old. Then my father retired and we moved to Perryville. My dad worked at Perry Point. My mother worked at Perry Point. My father was an attendant, took care of the patients, and my mother worked in the kitchen. Mother: Catherine and Father: Harry (Sr.) So your mom went to work after you all went to school. Mmmm hmmm

I have two brothers; I'm the youngest. My brother closest to me, Michael, died 11 years ago. He died the first of the year and my husband (Charlie) died the last of the year. The other brother.... He's got to be 95. He's Harry Jr.

The earliest memory I have, we were living in Edgewood. My brothers were outside playing baseball. My father told them to come in because they were going to break a window or something. Well, they didn't ... and they did .... And they got punished. He had spanked them and sent them to bed. They were crying and I was standing in the doorway laughing. Well, he picked me up, turned me over .... spanked me .... I was probably 3 or 4. But I never laughed at any punishment after that!

But my father, he wasn't a mean person. If you went out and ran, foolin' around, you knew to be in either by dark or nine, whichever came first. He didn't have to tell you. If you weren't there... you could come in early... but if you were late, you were automatically housebound for two weeks. No questions asked. No debate. No smackin'! No nothin'! Never laid a hand on us after that.

We lived in Perryville. You know where Boxcar Avenue is. Mr. Sprague, who lives here in Havre de Grace, used to take care of the freight house where the trains came in and unloaded.

Let's see. I went to Perryville Elementary. That's where the American Legion is now. Then we transferred to Perryville High. Graduated in 1948. From there I went to nurses training at Mercy in Baltimore – on Calvert Street. Training was 3 years. I was there a year longer because I worked in the operating room for a while.

My father had died. So I came back to stay with my mom because my two brothers were both married. While living with her, I worked at Perry Point as a nurse.

I married in 1952. And so... as a good Catholic girl I got pregnant right away. I quit Perry Point. I always said I was going back after my kids were in school – St. Patrick's. I can remember when I was turning 35,

I said, "You know Charles. If I was still at Perry Point, you could be living off my retirement. And he said, "well, if you take the evening shift, you could come home just in time to open the store" ...." (*Much laughter*)

I remember Rose. Her married name was Hooker. Anyway, she'd be across the street at Hecht's store. Charlie would walk out and say, "Hey Rose." She'd say, "yep." He say, "Are you still a Hooker?" She'd say, "Yes, I am." Everybody on the street would laugh.

After I had Mary Frances, my father-in-law insisted I needed to learn how to drive. If I was across the river to visit my mom and the fire whistle blew, and Charlie was gone, somebody would have to come get me. They made me learn how to parallel park down there in front of Vigna's.

When I went up to get my license, we went to Elkton, a woman friend of ours went with me. The guy said, "I want to tell you something. You park better than any man I've ever seen." I told him I had good teachers.

I used to go out to Aberdeen Newsroom to collect the papers, (Park Street I think) there was a restaurant there. Always the same guy was sitting there eating in the window when I went to pick up papers. Three weeks straight I'd back in and everything. The third time I got out and tapped on the window and said to that guy, "You didn't think I could do that three weeks in a row, did you?" I was always taught to pull up as close to the vehicle in front of you. When you back in, cut your wheels real short, and when you park, leave your wheels that way and you won't have a problem getting back out.

(*Laughter*)

Mary Frances in 1953, Charlie in 1956 and Annie in 1958. (*Annie in the background*)

About 1963, Annie went to school, and I started working in the store full time. Every one of our kids worked in the store. Even our grandkids worked in the store. Frances Kelly, the oldest one – she lives in Perryville now, she asked her mother if she thought mom-mom and pop-pop would be mad if I look for another job. Her mother asked, "why?" She said she just wanted to try something new. She told her to be sure to tell us. Don't let someone else tell them.

One day I ask Mary Frances what happened to Kelly, did she find a job? She could do everything – run the adding machine, the lottery machine, everything.

She said every place she (Frances Kelly) went, they didn't want to give her anything but the basic pay. She said, "I got to thinking. I'm going to back to work for my grandmother and grandfather. Not only do they pay me more than you do, but when I take off they still pay me and work for me.

We always paid the kids good that worked for us. We had a lot of newsboys that worked for us. Mostly newsboys, we didn't have girls until years later.

The original shop was where the SpeakEasy (Museum) is now (long and narrow to the left if facing Blue Earth Leather). We moved over to where Re/Max is after we got the lottery machine. The lease became

available. My father-in-law wasn't happy about it. But when he saw the space and what we could do with it, he was okay. The SpeakEasy area was newspapers, magazines, lottery, ice cream.... You'd be surprised what we got done in that little shop.

The funny part was after we had got the lottery machine, it was like pandemonium in there. People would be lined up to get the lottery tickets, the papers.... And ah, do you know Camilla Clark. She lives on Erie Street. She said, "I liked it when you were in the little shop, we could 'rub hineys' when we went there." *(laughter)*

We added more paperbacks when we moved to Re/Max location. And yes, we roasted peanuts at the store, too. In fact, when I was pregnant the smell would make me sick. So they put a hood fan over the top of it. Boy, did we sell a lot of peanuts then because the smell was sent outside! *(laughter)*

**NOTE:** *Charlie McLhinney (husband) died December 14, 2007.*