

NSW DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING

‘Millers Point Oral History Project’

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEWEE:	Warren Cox
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INTERVIEWER:	Frank HEIMANS
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START OF TAPE MP-FH18 SIDE A

00:06 Tape identification

All right Warren, this is what we usually do - ask some questions of the people who we are

interviewing for a little bit of background so that people who are listening to this tape will know something about you. Firstly can you tell me what is your full name?

Warren Lesley Cox.

And you were born when?

15 January 1947.

Okay, early 1947, so you'd be the baby boomer generation then.

Yes.

They keep on reminding us constantly about that. So tell me a little bit about your parents, their background.

01:05 My father's name was John Richard Cox and my mum was Vera Lynne. I was born down Harrington Street down The Rocks, and then we moved around to Millers Point. I had three older brothers, a younger sister and a younger brother. The oldest one was Johnny, then Alan, Graham, myself, my sister Glenda and younger brother Kevin.

Quite a big family, six children.

Yes.

So what sort of work did your father do?

01:39 Dad was a stevedore, wharf labourer in the old days, but it was all casual then and you just had to actually listen to 2KY or go down the pick-up centre and see if you got a job. He used to go all over the place, Pyrmont, Woolloomooloo, Walsh Bay, Darling Harbour, where all the old wharves were, Glebe Island.

So you didn't know until the day where you'd be assigned?

No it was all just casual then.

Did they announce the people's names on the radio?

02:09 No you had a number, you were in gang, Gang 78 I think their gang number was. Yes 78, that's right, because I used to go down and check it now and then. There were fifteen men in a gang, or something, sixteen men in a gang. They used to, like I said, it was on 2KY pick-up, they used to have it on there, I think it was on the afternoon shift during they day and they used to go for afternoon or midnight shifts, or the next day or whatever it was. I couldn't tell you what time it was on, but I knew it was on 2KY, like I said they had a pick-up centre down Towns Place. I think it has all been pulled down now, the old maritime thing down there, I think they are building flats or something down there.

They are building new flats opposite Dalgety Terrace, is that where it was?

02:56 Yes that was all part of the Maritime and Towns Place, that is where the pick-up centre was, one of the pick-up centres. There was another one up along the 'Hungry Mile' as

they called it down at Hickson Road there, up near the Big House Hotel, there was another pick-up centre there.

Why do you think they called it the 'Hungry Mile'?

03:16 Always said in the old days, before I think it was the Depression and all that, that is where the wharfies used to go and line up at the gates and they'd just pick heads – who they wanted to do the job. If you had an ugly head they wouldn't pick you, or if you didn't know the foreman people missed out. That is how they called it the 'Hungry Mile', they just queued up to get jobs you know and everyone was just queuing up all the time. Some blokes had fights and everything, so I was told I wasn't there for that, but I was told that.

What did your father tell you about working on the wharves?

03:49 He never really talked about it. He took me down a few times when I was young and I used to see how it worked and that. All the men with the hand trucks carrying the cargo away to the car hatches and away from the hatches into the sheds. There was men down below stacking cargo in nets and on trays and they'd lift it out with the ships' cranes. They left it on the wharf and the blokes would take it off and put it on the trucks and wheel it away. It was hard yakka.

They actually had to carry the bags?

04:22 Yes carry the bags of stuff or have a two-wheeled hand truck and stack it up, probably half-a-dozen bags or more on it, and wheel it away.

What were the conditions like in summer time?

04:36 Pretty hot. They weren't supplied with anything, they never had a canteen, they used to sit on the edge of the wharf and have their smokes and on the ship. They never had a canteen or change rooms. They used to say there used to be nails in some of the shed, on some of the posts in the shed and they'd hang their gear on that. Have their working gear and just go home in that. If they did dirty jobs sometimes the billies which they used to make their cup of tea in - they'd have an extra one that would have holes in the bottom and put water in it and just rinse the water off to get a lot of the dirt off before they'd go home, because they had no showers or anything. Pretty rough times.

Do you know of any accidents that might have happened, work place accidents?

04:17 I couldn't tell you about that, wouldn't have a clue on that as I never saw enough of that. I would say there would have been quite a few, because like I said it was hard work and it was pretty primitive. Like I said, things were just slung with ropes and wires and things like that, probably real heavy stuff with chains. You never had Work Cover or anything like that to

learn anything, so it was all just you learn on the job. Blokes helping each other and just people knew how to do it and just did it.

You said there was no worker's compensation if you got injured?

05:54 I don't know about that, I couldn't tell you on that. I wouldn't know if there was or not, I knew they were just casual labour so you just got paid when you went to work. I remember coming home from school a few times when I was young and mum saying, 'Dad's on strike again,' sometimes two or three days a week he'd be on strike.

What kind of issues would they go on strike for?

06:15 Well like I said, to try and get change rooms, which they ended up getting change rooms, things like a canteen, but the canteen wasn't actually on the wharf - it was around the road. They ended up with three or four canteens split up between the wharves and that. There was one working down there, I remember there was one down at 11 Walsh Bay, there was a canteen, one at 7 Walsh Bay, then there was one up at Darling Harbour, about 4 or 5 Darling Harbour. They were pretty spread out, but they'd come off the ships and they'd walk down and get it. Everything was pot luck, I suppose, you could call it.

Was the union pretty strong in those days?

06:58 Well that was when it actually just started off I think, trying to get it going I think. I remember there was a story about a bloke went to America and that and there was Jimmy Healey was the old union man that got it going, I think. That was a long time ago, like I said, but they fought for things and they started getting conditions and improvement.

Now the Waterside Workers Federation, or the union, was regarded by most of the other people as Communist, were there many Communists among them?

07:35 Oh I'd say like with a lot of things you had what they call factions in it. Some were Communist and some weren't, some were just there for the men as Labor. Probably if they did go political it was probably the Labor Party or whatever, I don't know how they did it, but there were some Communists in that because they used to come out with 'Comrades' and all that. They'd speak and all that and you'd see bits of paper with 'Comrade' on it and all this sort of thing. Actually there are still bits of around now - I don't know if they are actually Communist Party, I wouldn't have a clue. You never hear anything about the Communist Party now actually now you mention it.

Healey might have been, I'm not sure. They used to speak down at the Domain, didn't they, those guys.

08:18 Yes in the middle of the Domain. They used to call them the soap boxes I think, they used to go down there and people used to get up and speak. I think that is probably where a lot of it started, getting up and going down there. I remember going down there once too

and there was different people stood up and talked on different things. I couldn't tell you what they were talking about, but I remember I was pretty young going down and having a look at one time. Like I said there was different people speaking.

Union leaders used to do that trying to get some comrades and things to the cause. Do you remember the names of some of the union bosses?

08:50 No I can't remember that. Jim Healey was the one that really started it. Then later on there was Tommy Supple and Jimmy Donovan and blokes like that, they were later on, John Coombes and that not long ago. But they are all gone now, like they've retired and things like that. John Coombes was there in charge when that Patricks dispute was on not long ago, 1998 I think that was, he was in charge then. Jimmy Donovan was still there then. Just after, when they went back after that that is when John Coombes retired from that and so did Jimmy Donovan I think.

Yes that's right. Now there were six of you kids in one house, where was the house located, the first one?

09:38 The first one was 68 Harrington Street, I think it was 68 Harrington Street. It was a two-bed roomed sort of house. Kevin was born round Millers Point, Glenda was born down there, but I can remember I was only young, very small, that is when we moved I think because we never had enough room with the girl. I remember when we went to Millers Point it was a two-bed roomed house, but it was a big house with bigger rooms. I remember we had the two double bunks in there for the boys, we were all in the one thing with the double bunks. Glenda was downstairs under the stairs, which was on the side, out of the way. We ended up building a little room, part of the lounge room, for her, she was in there. She ended up in a little room of her own then.

Did you share a bed with one of your brothers?

10:25 No we had double bunks, a single bed but they were just double bunks, the old chrome. I remember that chrome and that.

How did your mum manage to cope with all that work?

Quite tough, I think, she used to get upset sometimes, driving her mad, but she was quite good. She looked after us well, made sure we were all fed properly. She worked hard I think, looking back.

Did she work before and after she got married?

She worked later on. I know I was still going to school, but I can't remember if I had started high school. She went and got a job at a place in town, I don't know whether they were one of the wool mobs like Winchcombe Carsons, it used to be over at Pyrmont and all that, something like that. She used to work in the canteen making sandwiches in the canteen up

there.

You moved at one stage to 11 Dalgety Terrace, is that right? How old were you then do you think when that happened?

11:36 Like I said I was only young. I don't know if it was when Glenda was born. Kevin was born not long after Glenda was born. I can't remember it was a long time ago, probably I was about five or six.

So in the early 1950s. Can you describe that house for me?

11:57 Yes. That was the one I was explaining before I think, it was a two-bed roomed house, but they were bigger rooms than the other one. That is where we had the stairs and like I said Glenda had her bed under the stairs in a little cupboard there. Then we made a little room from part of the lounge room, made the lounge room smaller and made a little room in there for her. Actually my brother Graham, he was a carpenter so he did most of the work on that, I just helped him. He knew what he was doing and worked it out. He might have started his apprenticeship, I can't remember, but I know he was a carpenter by trade and that.

So you created a whole separate little room for your sister. Take me for an imaginary walk through the house. Tell me when you walk in the door what do you see, where the rooms were?

12:47 When you walked in, this is down Millers Point down the Terrace, you walked in the front door and it was a big lounge room and that is where we made the little room on the right for Glenda and had still got the lounge room. Then you turned left and you had the stairs that went upstairs and the hallway went out to the back yard and the kitchen was off that, next to that. Then you went upstairs and up the top of the stairs on the left was our bedroom, the boys' bedroom, then mum and dad's room and there was the bathroom as you went straight up the stairs, a little hall part there to the bathroom. Just outside the bathroom was like a linen cupboard, built into the side of the wall. As I said it was a pretty good sized house.

Did you have a normal toilet with sewerage?

13:37 Yes. That was the bathroom and toilet up there. Then out the back yard you had a laundry out there we shared with the neighbours next door because it was like two flats there, one bottom flat and top flat and we shared the laundry between both lots there.

Now I believe that Dalgety Terrace and Merriman Street, all those streets, changed a bit over the time - did Dalgety Terrace change much or not?

14:01 No. The only thing that changed was right down the end I think it is fenced off now, you go round and look over the edge and that. Before that, coming down that back lane right down the end of the Terrace itself there used to be a big garage - what was their name. They

used to repair the fork lifts and things like that for down the waterfront. It was before Patricks. Actually it might have been Patricks' garage and they used to repair the fork-lifts and things when fork-lifts started to come on the waterfront. Just outside our back gate, in a little lane, a little triangle thing it wasn't a paddock or anything, but there was just a little bit there, just next to that was an old blacksmith's. He probably originally did horses and that, but I couldn't remember that, but he used to do all the wharfies hooks and the hooks for the bails and things like that, he used to make them. Macdonald his name was. When I got a job in the wool store he made the hooks and I got a hook from him for the wool store. He done the wool store and the wharves and made all the hooks up.

Did everyone have his own hook?

15:16 Oh yes everyone had their own hook. The wharfies had to have their own gear. The only thing they supplied I think was leather gloves and they had to last you all year I think, one pair of leather gloves or something - that's all they got. I remember dad used to go work and say he was going over to a job at Pymont because I went down one time down the wharf to find out where they were going and I said, 'Yes you are going over to 25 Pymont, I think it is Vishvah boat,' one of them Indian boats that used to come in, and he said, 'Well you need all the gear. You need your hooks. You need an extra jumper because you might be in the freezer,' things like that to keep warm. You didn't know what you were doing because they carried everything apparently, all the hatches had everything, freezer the lot, so you had to just be ready for whatever they were going to do. Like I said it was pretty tough times.

So you really needed your equipment, basic equipment.

16:14 Yes. That is when they used to have the big Gladstone bags with all their gear in it. Carry their gear and their lunch. He had two bags, he had the one with gear in it and the other one was because of the gang the billy and the cups in it, all the tin mugs. All the tin mugs and a tin to boil the billy in, the hot water, he used to carry that for them too because he was a gang leader sort of thing.

So your father was part of this gang, did he ever change gangs?

No, he used to have that gang all the time that I knew of.

So you were very loyal to your gang were you?

Oh yes.

What advantages were there in belonging to a gang?

16:51 Well if you had a good gang you had good workers, they'd get picked up more. They used to call them in them days the old 'Bull Gangs', which were the ones that would have a go, do the work. Some wouldn't work as hard. That is what I said before - you had your union

that made everyone equal and that it probably started from that 'Hungry Mile' that I told you before where blokes used to get picked up. If you were a bit of a bludger they wouldn't pick you up all that much. That probably come from there, that is what they used to call the 'Bull Gangs', they used to work hard.

How many people in a 'Bull Gang'?

17:27 Well as I said originally I think the gangs were about sixteen men. You had the hatch man, as they called him, to give directions for the cranes because they were sitting on the ship's cranes driving them, you had two of them, one each side. You had about four blokes down below, throwing the cargo around and I think it could have been four on the wharf. The rest were just on wheelbarrows, trucking things away. Like I said some of the stuff was pretty heavy and it would take a few to lift it up.

These guys were pretty strong guys obviously.

17:58 Yes they were all pretty strong, lot of big men yes. Dad wasn't real big, he was a bit shorter than me so dad would have been about 5'6, 5'7 or something, but dad was very thick and solid, strong, very strong.

You wouldn't last if you weren't I suppose.

You had to be pretty well built and strong because like I said it was heavy work. A lot of them were big men, big men, yes.

So the time when you kind of grew up and you started working on the wharves yourself, was most of the population engaged in that kind of work in Millers Point?

18:40 Yes a lot of them were. A lot of them were wharfies or foremen, some worked in the coal lumpers to, which was over at Pyrmont - the coal where they used to load the coal. So basically it was waterfront work, a lot of them were waterfront workers.

Did your dad ever do coal lumping as well?

Not that I know of, no not that I know of.

Was it worse work than what he was doing?

No, just shovelling coal and that sometimes. I suppose about the same, it would be what you get used to. Like you said people adapted because they had to do it to get a dollar or a quid to live.

The coal dust is pretty bad for your lungs isn't it, did any one every get sick do you know?

19:23 They could have over the years but I couldn't tell you for sure. Down the wharves there - asbestos, you didn't know they were unloading it. You know just bags of stuff, just all powder and stuff, you didn't know what you had. You just went down the ship and whatever they were doing. The same as I remember Jackie Flood, one of the foremen there in the old

days, he mentioned one about the Depression. He said something about they were doing the hides and they were just all bundled together and wired up and this juice used to just run out of the hides, you know. He said they would be stacking it up and there would be maggots and everything, he said it was terrible.

The guys had to carry that stuff.

20:08 Yes they'd have to push it round and put it on trucks and stack it all up and you'd stink of it. I remember him telling me one time the juice would be coming down, the juice would be about two inches thick on the deck of the ship and you'd be walking through it and all, he said it was terrible.

They didn't wash it off?

Like I said they didn't have showers, they used to just go and get the billy and wash themselves off with that before they went home. They never had showers or anything.

Sounds like the old barbaric days, doesn't it.

They were yes.

Right.

I remember Jack saying that.

What about asbestos, do you think you ever unloaded asbestos, or your father?

20:50 I don't know he could have. I don't know about me because when I worked in the gear store I could have myself. We used to clean the gear up when the ships finished and roll all the nets up and you'd get dust off that and you'd be breathing it in, so it could have had asbestos in it or anything you wouldn't know what they were unloading. Like I said we took truck loads of gear to the ship before it started and the ship would come in and they'd work and we'd go and clean it all up and carry it back. If anything needed repair the gear man would repair it and stack it all away for the next time, we'd put it on different ships. But as I say you wouldn't know what cargo they were unloading or anything.

Now were you paid directly by the ship owners every time you worked or by some other agency?

21:33 No I was paid by the stevedoring company, Consolidated originally, become Conoffs (?), which is now P & O Ports. But the wharfies then were paid by the AWL, which was subsidised by the government I think it was then, the AWL.

What does it stand for?

Australian Waterside Labour.

Ah, so a sort of a labour organisation to hire.

22:10 Yes. They all got picked-up, like I said. That was run by that. That was when they got

the union and all that, that was after dad went more or less. I think when dad was doing it they could have been paid by the stevedoring companies themselves, each company. But when they were paid by the AWL I think the stevedoring companies paid the AWL money and then they just paid it out. I think the government had money in it too, sort of thing, it was run by the government, I think, it was a government body I think.

Now there must have been a fair bit of tension I suppose between the unions and the stevedoring companies was there?

22:53 Yes that's when they had a lot of strikes and that. As I said they never had a lot of things, they started getting their canteen and change rooms and things like that come in, but they still fought for better conditions all the time. Like I said, you get a dirty job like hides in it - they'd say they wanted extra money or they'd get extra money, say twenty cents an hour or something, just to get it done, to do the job, because they thought they'd need their clothes washed and all that. Then they started getting supplied by the AWL with overalls and they even got freezer gear when they did freezer jobs, which they didn't have before, big freezer overalls and jacket and boots they could put on over their shoes. Same with industrial gear, they got a bit of industrial gear, which used to go back to the AWL which they used to wash, keep clean, because we used to go and pick it up from the AWL take it down to the job.

So there were improvement over the years?

Yes, yes.

What was the pay like? I mean how much would your father have earned?

23:57 I couldn't tell you exactly but I know you worked day shift you got single rate. I don't know how they worked out what they got, I know they do it now if you worked an afternoon shift you got time and a half, single time for day shift, time and a half for afternoon, double time for midnight. Same you used to get double time for Saturdays, I think it was double time and a half for Sunday. That is where they made their money on penalty rates with weekend and night work. That is what made the waterfront pretty good money because you could work a week of midnighters, so you are getting two weeks pay. But like I said you didn't sleep and it is terrible trying to sleep of a day and that.

Now you left school at sixteen and started on the wharves yourself didn't you?

24:46 I didn't start straight on the wharves, I went to an electrical place as a storeman up town near Market Street. I think it was called Planned Lighting, they used to sell light fittings and I started there for a while as a storeman, packing the light fittings back into boxes. They helped me get my licence and I used to deliver the light fittings to some of the houses, like come over here to someone's house, if they bought a chandelier or something I'd deliver it,

just drop it off.

So how old were you when you actually started on the wharves?

25:18 In 1971 I started, that's right October 1971.

So you were about twenty-two years old. What was your pay, do you remember how much your first wage was, what they were paying you?

Oh Jesus. I couldn't tell you off-hand, I can't remember that.

Now tell me a little bit about the neighbourhood you lived in, your street, let's say Dalgety Terrace, who were the neighbours there on either side of you and what kind of shops were there, paint me a picture.

25:59 As you are facing our place on the right there was Mrs Crimmonds, an old lady there. She had a big place there and there was this little thing on it. I think hers was split up too, like little boarding house rooms that people lived in all different things. Mrs Crimmonds would have the first floor and down the basement and all that, she had a pretty good thing. She was an old lady then because I used to go in there and do messages for her, dad asked me to do messages and different things for her. Like I said they were two-storey terraces all the way up the rest of the Terrace and a lot of people lived there. We had friends up there, I can remember the Lambs - we used to play cricket in the back lane. The Pearsons. McKennie, Mickey McKennie.

Which Pearsons? There were quite a lot of Pearsons around the Point.

26:55 There was David Pearson, Frankie. Billy, Frankie, David and Owen, Mr and Mrs Pearson. There were other Pearsons lived up the top in Merriman Street at the back too, that was Georgie and Tommy, Margaret, I think it was Veronica. Tommy Pearson, yes.

Were they at number 13, were they right next door to you? What number in Dalgety Terrace would they be?

27:26 I think they were up further towards the Palisade. There were quite a few people who never had kids were there too, like families and their kids had probably grown up and moved away.

Where did Jack Martin live?

He lived right next door to us in number 13.

Who was Jack Martin?

27:48 He used to work down the Maritime as a cleaner, clean the wharves up when they finished the ships and that, sweeping the wharves down. He probably got the same, asbestos and stuff, they wouldn't have a clue either because they are just sweeping up dust and the wharf is just covered in dust. They were sweeping everything up. He lived right next door to us, down the bottom part, and then there was 13a, which was up top, was the Misses Scott,

two sisters. They were nice old ladies too, I used to do messages for them, help them out a few times.

Now where were the Stewarts living?

I think they were next door to them on the bottom, would have been about 15 or something on the bottom there. I think that started just the block from us, then it started all the terraces.

Who were the Stewarts?

28:39 I can't remember much of them, I couldn't tell you much about them I can't remember. I know there were Andersons and different ones but I couldn't tell you which houses they were in or anything.

29:02 END OF TAPE MP-FH18 SIDE A

29:03 START OF TAPE MP-FH18 SIDE B

Now the Palisade Hotel, right, that was in your street, towards the end of your street.

Right at the end, yes.

Now what used to be round there, tell me were there any shops there?

29:20 There was a little shop opposite, a little grocer shop, on the end of the terrace, had a little grocer shop in there. That was straight opposite the hotel and on the end of the Terrace itself there was a little shop, it wasn't very big, probably as big as this room. You went in there and there were just shelves and a little counter and I think you could get like tins of tomatoes and different things like that and milk and a bit of cold meat, I think they might have had cold meat there the old Devon and stuff and that,

Do you remember the name of the people who ran that?

No I couldn't tell you their name, I couldn't remember that.

Now there was a Mrs Smith she had a sandwich shop somewhere.

29:59 Yeah, that was on the corner of High Street and Argyle Place. I remember going over there, especially school holidays used to go over there and get a sandwich or a roll for lunch sometimes. There were a few little shops there with a paper shop and a boot-maker, a little section there, kind of up Argyle Place.

Right. So these shops all changed over time didn't they?

Yes. I don't know whether they are now or not I can't tell you, I haven't been in there to take much notice. Last time I went there to see Glenda I couldn't tell you what's down there now.

What sort of a shop did Charlie Conron have?

30:31 He had a milk bar, used to go there when we were kids and you used to get your ice-cream in a dish with flavour and all that, it was really nice, for about probably tuppence or something like that, or a penny or something, it was incredible. It was a real old shop and next to him was a place called John Holly's, which was like a grocery shop again too and you could get all your stuff there. I can remember them, yes.

Are those shops still in existence?

Not that know of, I couldn't tell you, no. 'Cause Charlie and John Holly - their place was condemned later on I think, they ended up pulling them down. They moved across on the corner of Kent Lane and Argyle Place.

Right. So why was it condemned?

31:20 I think it was just old and the buildings were just too old and were like beyond repair. Probably one of the first places ever down there, I know they were old sandstone places. When you looked at the side there you could see between a lot of the sandstone where the grout had come out and all that, so they probably thought they were just too far gone to repair.

That's impossible today with the heritage orders on things, isn't it.

Yes I know. But they were just the end of the terraces there, they would go up Argyle Place, they were on the end of that just before Kent Street where you went down the hill toward Nelson.

Where was John Halcrose's chemist shop?

32:03 He was originally over in Kent Street between the corner and a little lane way just down from the Captain Cook Hotel, that was a little chemist shop there. And then he ended up moving down on the corner, right on the corner, to a bigger a shop later on in years. He might have retired, I don't know, the shop ended up going and ended up a laundromat, dry-cleaners actually, yes.

That is still there.

Still there is it?

Well there is a dry-cleaner.

I remember that. Next to them was Marie's Milk Bar, used to be another milk bar there with Marie and Tony.

Who were they?

32:41 I don't know, I just remember they had the milk bar, that's all I remember Marie and

Tony had the milk bar. We used to meet up on the corner there and always have a milk shake or something in there later on. That is where we used to meet a lot of times on the corner, say, 'Meet you up the corner,' and that was the corner where everyone would meet, outside the milk bar there. Whether we went to movies or went out somewhere, or going up to the King George Playground, we met up the corner and all go up, all go over to the park and have a game of football, that's where everyone seemed to meet.

What was life like in Millers Point for a kid like yourself?

33:16 Very good, very good. Everyone, how can you put it, everyone looked after each other, everyone was caring, like parents even. Everyone knew each other, like their own little community in there - it was really nice. No one got into much trouble. Growing up everyone gets into trouble doing things, I suppose, when you think of it, but everyone helped each other and everyone was good, I thought it was just a terrific little place, I was wrapped in it - it was really good.

What sort of sports did you play down there?

33:49 We played a lot of football in the park. We went up to the King George Playground, we played basketball up there and cricket, tennis, played just about everything up there. If we went swimming we'd go over North Sydney Pool, walk across the Bridge. Or walk down to the Domain Baths, the old Domain Baths, down Woolloomooloo, walk through the park down there, the Botanical Gardens, go down to there.

The adults in the area, the families, how would they interact with each other? What sort of things would they do?

34:25 Everyone was good like that, everyone helped each other. If people got into trouble, something happened, people would donate things or run raffles or things to help each other out, whatever they could do to help. Everyone was good like that, as I said it was a good community, everyone was very friendly to each other. It was quite a good community, yes.

Do you remember any people delivering stuff to the community, were there any sort of hawkers with carts, that sort of thing?

34:49 Thinking about that I was talking about that with the wife. There was Wally Jackson, if I can remember his name, he used to go round with a wagon selling fruit and vegies. Go round with a horse and cart originally, I remember the horse and cart, then he got a truck later on. I think once a week, I don't know if it was Wally did that too, used to go round with the rabbits, selling rabbits. I remember him selling the fruit and vegies, going round. A lot of the old places had the old coppers out the back and another bloke used to go round with a truck too, delivering coal, selling the coal, bags of coal, for the old burners out the back. Used to be the old coppers and they were copper too, copper, big tubs.

Used to burn coal?

35:38 Yes or timber or whatever they could get. When they started digging up the tram tracks when buses started coming, people used to grab all the little wooden blocks with all the tar on it because they'd burn forever apparently, they'd throw them in, they'd stink a bit. I can remember that in Argyle Place there used to be that tram track that would go around Argyle Place, back down lower Fort Street and that, and like I said it was all timber blocks with tar in them and they used to dig them up because they were cementing it or re-tarring them properly. People used to grab them and put them under their coppers.

Someone used to sell those blocks?

36:16 I think that was all part of the, what would you call it, government transport, like the trams, so they would just stack them along the side and people used to go and take them, save buying coal.

I believe the wood was pretty good too, it came from the forests of New South Wales, the north.

Yes it would have been good, that would have been hard wood, being in the ground like that.

Right. Tell me a bit about school, which schools did you go to?

36:43 I went to Fort Street Primary School up the top of Observatory Hill there, up there. Used to play in the park opposite there at lunch times. Go home for lunch and things like that and go back up. Then I went from there to Rozelle Tech, they called it then, Rozelle High School in Victoria Road and Darling Street, Rozelle. Used to walk down to Circular Quay and get the Ryde bus, go past and get the Ryde bus from down the Quay, a straight bus to school. Come home and do the same, get off at the Quay and walk up. Sometimes we could get a bus over to Pyrmont, get off at Pyrmont and get a Woolloomooloo bus that would go through from Pyrmont past Millers Point down to Woolloomooloo, which a lot of the wharfies used to get to go to work. That's where all the wharves were, Pyrmont and Woolloomooloo and that's where a lot of blokes would get the bus to go to work on the bus.

Did you wear shoes when you went to school?

37:43 Not when I was at the primary school, I remember a couple of times I never had shoes. I mean first or second class, whatever they call it, I can remember a couple of old photos of me sitting there with no shoes on, a couple of the others too.

Was it because the family was pretty hard-up?

Yes probably, yes, because things were pretty tough. Like I said, there were six of us all up and it was pretty tough, yes.

What religion was the family?

Church of England. Used to go up to the Garrison Church there in Argyle Place, used to go there to Sunday School. Sometimes you didn't go, used to go up and play football instead, and mum would say, 'You didn't go,' and give you a clip across the ear.

Was she pretty religious, your mum?

38:27 No. Just like when you are young they used to send you to the Sunday School and things like that, but no we were never into religion like that, no.

Was there much kind of difference between the Catholics and Protestants there?

No. You used to just say it as a joke, saying you were a Catholic, but no, everyone was just friends it was good. No there was none of that.

We sort of learned there were quite a lot of Catholic families in Merriman Street.

Yes, but no there was no animosity or anything between anyone like that. No it was good.

Now I believe you delivered papers as well, you had a paper run did you?

39:03 Yes when I was going to school, I used to deliver papers. I used to go up Kent Street, near Caltex House, and back down along High Street and up Merriman Street and Bettington Street around there near the Palisade. Used to have the old barrows, used to pull them with the rope, before they got the ones with a little handle, like the old bucket ones. We used to have the old barrow and pull the old barrow around with the rope and the ball-bearings, make a bit of noise.

Did you make your own billy-cart?

39:35 We did yes, we used to race them down there when we were kids. Down Munn Street, which is gone now. Munn Street used to go down there from the end of Argyle Place, where Mrs Smith's was, that's where we used to get on the barrows to start there. Go down, it is like a big U-turn and come back down to Hickson Road. The gates in front went to 1A and 1B Darling Harbour and if you couldn't take the corner you'd go straight into the gates, which a few did. We used to start up there and race and it used to get that popular we had the whole street blocked off one time with barrows going down. There wasn't many cars around then which was lucky, because there might have been a few fatal accidents I think.

Quite a steep hill was it?

Oh yes very steep.

All the way down Hickson Road.

Yes. Went down and done a U-turn and come back down to Hickson Road.

So that road has gone now, has it?

Yes it has gone.

What replaced it?

40:29 Well they cut it off and made the wharf bigger, the back of Darling Harbour and that there. The Maritime Tower, that's just out further, which they used to call 'The Pill' because of the shape of it.

What actually was demolished to make room for that enlargement?

40:49 Dalgety Wool Stores and there was a bond store down there too, an old bond store, I'm trying to remember the name of the bond store. You see there were a few bond stores around, there used to be Metcalfe Bond down near where the steps were, near Towns Place, Metcalfe Bond. Oswald Bonds was down The Rocks area, no Oswald Bonds could have been down in Windmill Street, there used to be Oswald Bonds there, I think. There was another little bond store straight opposite the Palisade Hotel, Munn Street divided it, it was straight opposite a little bond store there and it went right down to Hickson Road. Just a tall bond store about six floors, or something, might have been four, because I think the roof might have been higher than too. But up the back, from the back of where Bettington Street went down to the back of the Palisade, the houses down there, right up was the wool store, Dalgety's Wool Store.

They all went to make room for...

41:50 Yes they got all pulled down, yes. That is where I used to work in the wool store when I first started.

So what was life like in the wool stores for you?

42:00 That was all right. I was learning because I was only young. I left the other job as a storeman to go there because it was more money, it was about twenty pound a week or something, where as originally I was on about seven, so I can remember that part. Probably would have been about the same when I started in the gear store, would have been twenty something pound a week or something like that. I was in the wool store for a few years and that is when I ended up in the gear store after that. Yes that went from Merriman Street, that was the floor there, and that went all the way down to the wharf - all the levels of the wool store and there was wool on every floor, stacked on every floor. So it was a pretty big business then, wool, exporting it and all that. Plus that wasn't the only one, there were places over at Pyrmont too, wool stores over at Pyrmont.

Tell me a little bit about what activities went on, on the wharves, like 1A and 1B Darling Harbour and the Walsh Bay wharves, what sort of ships would come in, what kind of thing.

43:05 All down Walsh Bay was all the cargo. There was the old *Biloela* and things like that used to go up the Islands and come down and bring the copra. Used to go down to 7 Walsh Bay to unload the bags of copra and they used to stack it in the shed there. Lot of ships like

that used to go up around the Islands because they were a bit smaller. Then around Darling Harbour it was a bit bigger and IA and IB a couple of passenger jobs came in there from England, the *Southern Cross* and the *Northern Star*, they used to tie up there a lot passenger ships, yes. Used to go down Munn Street straight into it. I remember a few of the crew on there used to think they were something special and went up the Captain Cook, up there, and ended up in a few blues with the locals. They thought they were top dogs or something and ended up with a few blues. But everything was forgotten, the next day they'd go up and have a beer with the same bloke they had a fight with, so pretty good times like I said - no grudges were sort of held, you know, it was good.

What nationality were those seamen?

44:13 Pommy. They used to call them different things over in England, I couldn't tell you half the things, but I know a lot of Pommies come from England, yes. What they call Liverpool and all that different areas over there. Actually I remember one bloke - Scouse, they used to call him, I don't know whether that was his name or that is where he come from but he was a friend of dad's. He was on the ships that used to go to Walsh Bay, the Blue Funnel Line they were. I remember he used to come up and visit, he'd come up and have tea sometimes with mum and dad. That was his name, Scouse, that was where he sort of come from, the area or something, you know. There were some good times like that, like I said people were friendly and all that.

It sounds like the whole of Millers Point was kind of tied to the waterfront in some way. was it?

45:13 Oh yes it was, yes. Even later on in life some of my friends ended up going to sea as seamen, went to sea as seamen and all that. Worked on the waterfront, went to sea, different things like that. Some of them started off before they went to sea working on the ferries, linesmen on the ferries, the little ferries down the Quay.

Now Warren did many people have boats?

45:39 Yes there were quite a few down there, sailing boats. I am trying to remember his name, he lived up the Terrace, an old man he had little model sailing boats he made. Used to be the old eighteen footers, they used to have big sails and all that, and he used to tell me stories about all the boats and he had a little putt-putt boat, the old clinker-built boats and all that. Frankie Pearson, who lived just up from us, he was a shipwright, got a trade as a shipwright, and he built a little sailing boat, a little Moth. One of the blokes who sailed it was Kenny Imber, he sailed it for him because his uncle, I think it was, Alec, used to sail in the eighteen footers and all that. A few of them went into sailing the boats. Apparently, originally, the old man, I forget his name - was it Williams up the road, I think it was - he said originally

down the wharf, before the wharf was actually built was all sand, it was like a beach, and they used to sail the boats up onto the beach originally, before they built the wharves, before that. So he was around for a long time. I remember the stories some of the old people told and he was good like that, used to listen to them. There was a couple, there was the Imbers - liked sailing, and Duggans down in George Street North, Johnny was into sailing too, he did a bit. I think there was Alan Scott down High Street, he done a bit of sailing too. There was a few done a bit of sailing, they were in the old eighteen footers and things like that. Them days I don't think they had their own boats because they were pretty expensive I think, but a few of them got into it, yes.

Did many people sort of fish for local fish?

47:33 Yes everyone used to go down the wharves fishing, especially just down there at Towns Place, the steps. Sometimes you'd go down there to swim and people would be there fishing and we'd start diving in and they'd have to pack their gear up and go. Sometimes you could get onto some of the wharves if you knew the watchman out at the end of the wharves, get on the wharves and get some good fish. Good fishing out of the wharves, yes, leather jackets and things like that under the wharf and that, it was good. Lot of good fishing down there, yes.

Now tell me a little bit about life in the pubs.

48:00 The pubs they were good. They were all mainly just locals there, you wouldn't get many people coming for a drink. Just the locals would go up after work mainly, they'd go up for a few beers. I remember when I was young to they used to have the closing time, 6.30, closed for an hour, people would have to go home for tea, make sure everyone went home instead of just going right through. Remember the old closing time, 6.30, and I remember going up there one time and I remember the publican saying, 'Last drinks.' That was your last drink before they closed 'cause they closed for an hour and cleaned the pub up. Like I said everyone would go home for tea, have their tea, and some might go back after, it all depends you know. It was different because you had your Ladies' Parlour out the back which was separate and things like that, 'cause the ladies weren't allowed in the bar there, the men's public bar, so there was the Ladies' Parlour, it was funny. It was good times though.

Did your father drink much?

49:04 Yes he drank quite a bit, he liked his beer, especially because he used to say he had trouble sleeping during the day, so he'd go and have a couple of beers to try and make him sleep, make him tired, really relax. You are tired anyway, but you wake up again and you have trouble going off, so he'd get up and have a couple of beers and try and sleep during the day

when we were at school and that. Yes he liked his couple of beers. Later on when I got older I used to go up and have a couple of beers with him up the Palisade and that, it was good.

Did you drink in all the pubs or just one or two?

49:38 Yes we used to go round. When we were getting older, our age group used to go round all the pubs, right around the Point, everywhere. The Cook, the Nelson, the Hero, up The Rocks area, the Australian, the Glenmore, all over - it was good.

Was there much difference between different pubs and the way that they kind of treated you, or whatever?

No, everyone treated us good. As I said everyone was friendly. Just different pubs they might have had a snooker table - some of them had snooker tables and things like that, and you might go up that pub and some of the boys would have a game of snooker and things like that. It was good, yes.

Was there much gambling going on, or illegal SP bookies?

50:17 There were a few SP bookies, a few of them around in them days. Actually, a bloke at work yesterday told me, Becks, used to live down old Fort Street, Terry Duggan, Lucky Fernleigh was in the paper he died the other day, eighty-eight, came originally from Millers Point and end up the Central Coast, he used to run an SP. Lucky used to run the SP down there in a house opposite the Palisade, next to the little grocery shop. Used to go in the back there, he used to run a SP in there. I remember dad used to be the cockatoo out the front of the Palisade standing on the corner on a Saturday arvo, and when the coppers would come a message would go across, close up the shop so they couldn't get in and all that, close the back gate, lock everyone in. There was another one down at Windmill Street, Cec Moore's, that was another one. There was a few. I think there was one up The Rocks area too.

Anybody ever got raided?

51:18 Oh yes they got raided quite a bit. But like I said I think they just got a fine, I couldn't tell you, they were back operating the next week anyway. They knew where they were I think, they just had to do it now and then to make things look good I think. I don't think they could ever stop it - they never had the facilities they've got now with coppers and things, it has all changed. No, they were good times, there were SPs and all that, yes. Actually I was talking to my wife, we were talking about it last night, where she lived in Argyle Place her nanna used to have a couple of bets, like a shilling bet or something, and they used to drop a tin on a rope over the back of Cec Moore's and the cockatoo out the back of Cec Moore's would grab the tin and take it in and put it on for them. We were just talking about it last night, it is funny you remember things like that and she said, 'I can't remember what I had for tea yesterday.'

Good long term memory.

Yes.

Now talking again about the wharves and strikes that your father had, what would have been the longest strike do you think that your father or you would have had to endure?

52:29 I couldn't tell you about dad. I remember quite a lot they'd go back the next day and come off again. I can remember I had one, we were off for two weeks one time, was that around about 1982 or something. I think we were on strike for about two weeks trying to get better things, better pay things and all that.

Could be quite difficult for the families.

It was because Jack was only a baby and Sally was only a baby. Was pretty tough.

Where did you meet your wife?

53:00 Oh I'd known Cathy over the years though we never really had that much to do with each other when we were younger, we used to sit out the playground, because everyone would go out the playground and that. Then later on just went out different places over the Abraham Mott Hall, they used to call it the 'Louse House', sometimes there'd be dances and different things on and everyone met each other there, saw her down there sometimes. Then later on in life we just met and a couple of us used to go to South Seniors Rugby League Club, used to go there sometimes if there were shows on there and things like that. She had a friend that lived over the road from there and she used to go with them and I met her a couple of times and then we just started going out from there, I think. Trying to think back on it. Hope I was right because I'll get into trouble.

Was she a Point person?

53:52 Yes she was in Argyle Place, about three down from the church in Argyle Place there with her mother and her grandmother. I think the father left, I can't tell you when, and she had a step-father, Eric, he was a very nice man.

So you married a person from the Point as well. Now what about some changes on the wharves, like the new technologies and things when they were coming in, what difference did that make?

54:24 Well as they say it is technology and modernisation, they have all gone for the containerisation. That was the big step up, containerisation. Where everything used to be done by hand and loaded straight onto trucks and all that, now it is all big containers and they just come and pick their containers up, it is just go, go, go. They still do a little bit down Darling Harbour, but they are talking about closing it down with general cargo where you've still got to lift big steel plates, big steel pipes and things, like bulk in timber, bundles of timber, which probably they can't put into containers because they are too big. Some of the packs of timber are as big as containers, you know, some of them are even longer because you get

them forty foot long. Like you still get poles come in, telegraph poles and things like that.
You are still working on the wharves aren't you.

Yes I'm out at Port Botany now, still on the waterfront.

So tell me about the difference now and then, when you first started and how things are now.

55:22 Oh I remember when I first started in the gear store they used to cart all the nets to do cargo and trays and rollers to roll the freezer out of the holds and things like that. Actually, they used to have three trucks, Jack and Stan and myself, and there used to be three loads of gear go to each ship, that is how much cargo. You'd do different things with nets, you had pallet legs which you'd lift pallets of stuff up. You had trays and they'd put stuff on trays and you had wires to go with them. You had chains for different things that were there. There was ladders because sometimes they be doing timber logs over the side and you'd have a ladder to go over the side of the ship, which was thirty foot long. Over to the end of the truck and you'd have to tie it down with flags on it. You only had standard trucks then, I think they were a fourteen or fifteen foot tray or something. Like I said there was two or three truck loads of gear to go to each job. When I was with the AWL you'd go over a get a box of wet weather gear, because they never had your own wet weather gear. That had to be picked up and taken back to get washed. Freezer gear for down in the hold of the ship, the freezer. Or the lockers on the side with doors and that.

How long would you spend in the freezers before it got too cold?

56:40 Well they'd work around, they'd do the whole shift on it, but they'd be coming out probably every hour. Come out every hour for a five or ten minutes break, so you could get some fresh air and that. Probably somebody else in there and you'd have a break, they'd help each other out, you know. Like I said that was some of the conditions they used to fight to get, because they never had conditions they just said, 'You go in the freezer,' and that is what your are doing and probably you'd have to have your own extra jumper. Whereas now they work it out the most you can be in there is an hour because it is too cold, so everyone has a turnabout. You can work in there and have a fifteen minute break or something like that you know.

Now Warren just talking about Millers Point as a place how do you identify with living there in Millers Point?

57:29 When I lived there like I said it was a community in itself. Where Argyle Cut was, Dawes Point, it was all part of it, where you went down to Harbour View and all that and under the Bridge. It was like your own little community, everyone helped each other and all that, it was good. It was really just a good place to live, especially growing up, it was really good. Your front door was never locked, no one ever locked their front door. I remember

growing up when we did lock the front door of a night, we used to have a hook and the key was on the hook outside, because if you'd go out the key was there for you to get in. That's how things were. Now you've got security doors and everything everywhere. I can remember doing that when I was a kid because I couldn't reach it I used to have to straddle the door to climb up to get it. If we went up the playground it was late, sometimes you were up the playground of a night, things like that.

58:37 END OF TAPE MP-FH18 SIDE B

00:02 START OF TAPE MP-FH19, SIDE A

00:03 Tape identification

Warren there were quite a lot of changes in The Rocks, especially in the 1970s, with the green bans and Jack Mundy and the BLF and all that, do you remember any of that and did it affect Millers Point?

00:28 Didn't affect us that much I think at the time. Down in George Street North I think and actually they wanted to do the same in Merriman Street, they wanted to get rid of all the residents and put doctors and solicitors and that in there. I think a few ended up down in George Street North, I think they took part of that over, near the Mercantile there. But they didn't do it in Merriman Street, which they wanted to do because I remember my brother was living around in Merriman Street at the time, when he was married. When I got married - I got married in 1972 - and we moved out, Cathy and myself moved away, we went out to Randwick-Coogee. I remember seeing it on the TV and I used to go down and visit mum and all that and talk about things like that. But the actually Point itself I don't think it affected it that much, it was mainly down The Rocks area I think.

Did the residents of Millers Point think that they were next on the list?

I think they did, a lot of them did I think, yes.

They felt threatened did they?

1:31 Yes. I remember my brother saying, 'They want to get rid of us here in Merriman Street and do the same as they did down in George Street North, put doctors and things like that in there, solicitors and all that type of thing. That was overlooking Darling Harbour, the new wharf down there, 3 and 4 Darling Harbour. Yes.

Were you ever a member or part of any resident action group, or any kind of protest?

No I wasn't, no.

Now what were some of the significant events in your life, like major events that have happened to you or your family?

02:04 I suppose everyone left school and went to work and a thing that worried me a lot was that time they had the draft for the Army and that to go to Vietnam and all that, and I was lucky I missed out. A friend of my brother's he said, 'Oh you haven't heard yet - you might be lucky, I think you will miss out, you should have heard by now.' I was lucky I did miss out. A friend of mine, Geoffrey Thompson from down the Point in High Street, he got drafted and he only went to Puckapunyal, though. He went down to Puckapunyal. He was an electrician by trade and they used him as an electrician, he was doing auto-electrical work on tanks and jeeps and things like that. He was lucky too I suppose, he didn't have to go to Vietnam. That grocery shop I told you used to be up on the corner turned into a hairdresser's shop, which was Pam, a girl-friend of my wife's, her husband went to Vietnam, John Williams, he went to Vietnam. They were there with the hairdressers and then they moved over to Manly Vale I think. Pam used to live next door to the wife, her mum. I think Cathy said one time they lived in their place, boarded down stairs, down the bottom of their place that is why they are so close.

I believe your brother had rather a tragic event happen to him, tell me about that.

03:41 Which one, is that Graham? Graham got hit by lightning, that was in 1991, I remember that. His two sons were down the beach swimming and they see the storm was coming and that and he was at home with his wife and he said, 'We'll go down and pick them up,' he drove down, parked and said, 'I'll go for a quick swim and tell them we're going home, pick them up.' They swam in and as they were coming he was walking up the beach and the lightning struck and hit him straight in the chest and killed him. We heard it - his wife rang my place and I was at home at the time - and I went straight down there and my car stalled going down and I was panicking because I had hit a puddle. I was panicking and going off and got it going and got down the beach and Clive kind of grabbed me and said, 'I don't like your chances,' and that and I grabbed her and was hugging her and looking at my brother, I could see him there. The next minute the ambulance men said, 'We are going to take him up to Prince Henry Hospital.' So I said to my brother's wife, 'You go home and I'll go up.' I went up there with it, followed them up, and the doctor came out and said, 'We can't revive him. Can you go and identify him?' I just broke up. I identified him and then I rang my wife, she got home, she'd been out, and she was home with Jack. I said, 'Can you go down Marg's and keep her there, tell her not to come up to Prince Henry, Graham's dead.' She went down there and I drove down there from there and I went home and got changed and said we'd better

drive down and tell mum. We drove down to the Point to Glenda and mum. It was a terrible day

How did your mother take it?

05:35 Well mum wasn't real good at the time, she'd had a brain haemorrhage and that. She used to get us mixed up sometimes, but as soon as I walked in she said, 'Something's wrong isn't it?' I said, 'Yes.' She said, 'Something's wrong.' I said, 'Yes Graham has died.' She couldn't cry because she had no tear ducts, like there was no water in the tear ducts - she used to have drops and all that and she just couldn't cry. Then about month later mum died.

You've had a lot of tragedies in your family. That is a freak accident isn't it, that is something strange.

06:17 Oh yes. I went down the beach a week later to thank the life guards and the couple of life savers that tried to revive him and all that and they were good. That was really sad that.

Now your son is working on the wharves as well is he?

0^:39 Yes Jack is down there, he is out at Port Botany. When he left school he started there. He was lucky because they had a traineeship going at the time, it was a new thing they were trying out, and it was quite good because they were teaching them. There was fifteen all up and ten stayed at Botany and five went to White Bay. They taught them everything, they taught them computers, give them a first-aid course with oxy-vive (???) resuscitation. They really trained them up for two years, really good on everything. He is still out there now. Not long after that he got a job in the pay office, and he was in the pay office for five years doing all the pays and compos and things like that and was going good. Then all of a sudden they changed that, they want to do that in head office, so they put them out. There's only two men in the pay office now and they are going too, they reckon in another month or so their job will be gone and it will be done over at head office. Everyone said, 'Jesus Christ how do you get your pay fixed up?' because a lot of the casuals you see they get paid penalty rates and different things and if they get upgrades for driving cranes and things like that, well that is what the pay office does. Well now it is going to be done in head office there will be mess-ups all over the place. Yes, there have been some changes like that but Jack's still there, he is still going out there, driving a fork-lift and all that.

What do you feel about the changes that have been forecast for the Patrick Wharves when they leave next year they are going to turn them into half-residential, half-office space?

08:19 Well I can remember years ago Neville Wran wanted to close them all down, he only wanted passenger ships in Sydney Harbour, he wanted everything to go to Port Botany, but I don't think he expected it to be as big as it is with containerisation. See, even Port Botany is not big enough now, they are starting to run out of room, they are talking about expanding

Port Botany because there is not enough room for Sydney, you know. The closing down I don't know what is going to happen there for the general cargo, because there is no room out at Port Botany for general cargo. You need a shed to put stuff under cover, like some of the timber and paper and stuff like that they used to bring in rolls of paper; and if it is not in containers they have got to put in a shed and keep it under cover. So I don't know what is going to happen there. They were talking about sending it to Newcastle and then it is going to cost more because they will have to truck it down or put it on rail to bring it from Newcastle. A bloke told me years ago he said ninety per cent of the stuff that comes in the ships comes to Sydney, the stuff that comes in ships to Sydney stays in Sydney. It is the same in Melbourne. We get containers out there that go on the rail to go to Brisbane and Melbourne and all that too, so there are some ships that are bringing stuff to other places. If you are going to put stuff into Newcastle you are going to put more traffic on the freeway and it is going to make it worse.

So when these wharves have gone, the Patrick Wharves, in about a year and there won't be any more activity how do you feel about that?

09:44 I think it is bad, I think it is bad personally. Not just for me personally, being a wharfie and that, and other wharfies and that, to me it is getting rid of work for people because it is not everyone can work computers or do office work, so you've got to have labourers' jobs on the waterfront and things like that. If you are going to get rid of them where are you going to have jobs for people in the future? To me that's how I look at it.

What about from the Millers Point perspective, I mean how the suburb's going to change without the waterfront activity?

10:20 Well I haven't take much notice of things down there now, but it does affect them a little bit. I suppose it might even improve some of the hotels and things down there because they might have more residents, or think they'll go up the Point for the pubs and things like that. But as far as other shops, I don't know about the shops, will they go to the shops or just get in their car and go up to Broadway to the big shops up there, that big shopping centre like your Coles and all that.

There's really no shopping Millers Point now.

No, not now. I don't even know if they've got a little grocery shop or not, couldn't tell you. Occasionally there is a little convenience store that is up there.

I remember Marie's and that - they had things like biscuits and things, not much.

So you are actually a second generation wharf labourer, your father was the first to work on the waterfront.

My eldest brother Johnny - he was a wharfie too, he was in dad's gang.

And your son is a wharfie. That's three generations, that's not bad. Feel proud about that?

11:25 I do in a way, I feel good about it. I suppose there is a bit of tradition there, keeping something going. But like I said to me it has always been a good job, it is hard work but a good paying job and a good job, and you make good friends, a lot of good people down there. I've met some good people over the years, yes.

So what are your views on the future of Millers Point? How do you see it going?

11:54 Oh I know development, they want to change it and put all big units and things like that. I don't know what people they want in there, whether they want working class or they want something else. As I said, the way things are going you haven't got much working class left. I'd like to see it as it is, because we've thrown everything away, we've thrown too much old stuff away to me. Like I've been to Tasmania not long ago and I got a shock at how a lot of the traditions still live, the old house and factories and things like that. I know they have done a few up, like they've done at the old bond store down the Quay, made it into restaurants and things like that, well it is similar down in Tasmania. But they've kept a lot of the old things which is beautiful, lot of the old houses - they are lovely.

You mean Salamander Bay in Hobart?

Yes.

That has been nicely restored hasn't it.

12:51 Yes beautiful. That's what is missing I think, I think Sydney is just throwing too much away. Too much tradition has gone, it is hard to find someone like I'm talking to you know, someone you can talk to like that.

You said that there won't be too many working class people left, but there are a lot of working class people being moved in by the Department of Housing.

13:10 Well yes. They started moving them in from Balmain and all that, they've kicked them out of Balmain - Balmain, Pyrmont and all that, they've gone down there. I remember my sister telling me one time a lot of these were from Balmain and that, they used to be over there and now they've gone from there. So I don't know where they are going to go from down there if they ever move them again, unless they move them out to Mount Druitt, out them ways. But people don't want to go out there, people like my sister and that they are born and bred down the city. Woolloomooloo was the same.

Warren you live in Mascot now, do you miss Millers Point at all?

13:46 Not now, no. Not since I got married and had my own family and that, I've enjoyed it and it has been good. I've looked after Jack and give him all the sports, we've been all the sports everywhere which I did when I was young down Millers Point. Whatever he wanted to

do, we'd do with him. He wanted to go live saving and we took him down and he did that. Different things like that. He's played basketball and football. Whatever he wanted to do it was good.

Do you still have any family living at the Point?

My sister Glenda is still down there, Glenda is still there. She is the only one.

Anything else you want to talk about before we end the interview?

14:21 No. As I say, I'd just like to see it stay there because it is a beautiful place, was a beautiful place the way it used to be. The old houses, terrace houses and all that, had a lot of character. Same as your place here, it has got character to it, it is nice. That is what is missing nowadays, things like that. We have got friends live out Leppington, they've got kids and that, and we go out and see them and it used to be farms out there, Camden Valley Way and that, now all you see is rooftops now and the houses are so close together and all that they've got nothing. At least down there you had something. I know they were terrace houses but still everyone got in together down there, that is how it was in the old days. They started building them close because they didn't have the land they have now to spread out. But up there, Leppington, it used to be farms now it is all rooftops, they are just moving away from the city.

Well let's hope that in this oral history project we can try to preserve some of the past, even in words even if we can't do it in actual physical locations. Okay thanks very much Warren for the interview that's great.

Thank you. I hope something comes out of it.

END OF INTERVIEW WITH WARREN COX AND END OF TAPE MP-FH19 SIDE A