

NSW DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING

‘Millers Point Oral History Project’

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEWEE:	Joan Taylor
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INTERVIEWER:	Frank HEIMANS
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00:06 START OF TAPE MP-FH46: SIDE A

00:06 Tape identification

Joan can you tell me your full name please, as you were born.

Joan Norton Dutton.

Tell me a little bit about where that was.

00:42 I was born in Brisbane actually and I was two when my parents came down. I

had another sister and we came down and my father was a wharf labourer. My mother and father came down from Brisbane and we lived at Darlington, near the Sydney University and we went to live there and he continued being a wharf labourer. My mother eventually had ten children, so there was quite a big family of us.

So you have got nine siblings?

Yes. At this moment two have died, apart from that we were a big family.

Can you tell me a bit about the origin of the family, the Duttons?

01:38 Well actually my father apart from being a wharf labourer he was a very keen cricketer and my mother was a person that never went into details to us kids about things but she always had what they called a 'Gold Q'. It was a 'Q', if you can visualise what a 'Q' is with the little piece that is down the bottom, you know from the alphabet, that type of 'Q' and it was always on a gold chain and she cherished that and it had my father's name on it, Henry Norton Dutton and the year, and he won that at cricket, which he was very proud of, I suppose. That is as much as I can tell you about that because she never told us much about it at all. Years later when the youngest of our family, which are twin boys was born my mother's mother took sick and she died, so my mother ended up going back up to Queensland. Now what happened none of us ever knew and if we ever asked our mother she would almost kick us out of the house rather than tell us what happened but the 'Q' was never there. Whether she sold it for money or not we don't know.

Do you know anything about your grandparents on the Dutton side?

03:22 No, I don't know much about them. Oh well I'm telling you a fib. My father's people, Duttons, they were originally from England. His father left England, he had a family, I don't know what happened to his wife, he ended up going to San Francisco. He was a printer and he had two children, a girl and a boy, and he had a printing firm in San Francisco. He left there and he ended up coming to Brisbane, and he married and my father is that family. Can you understand that, it sounds a little bit complicated. If you can understand a man leaving England, coming to San Francisco, being a printer, took up his profession. Then he left there when his wife died, his first wife, and he came to Queensland with his two children, a girl and a boy - well he met my grandmother there and they married and they had four children and my father was one of four children. So that's how that happens.

What was the reason the family left Brisbane to come to Sydney?

04:52 I don't know, I couldn't tell you. Once again, as I'm saying, my mother was never a person that would sit down and talk about family, you only knew of people by her mentioning names. She was never a person that would sit down and tell you anything of what happened in her family, what she did when she was a girl, or anything like that, she wasn't that type of person.

Right. Let us go back to where you grew up, which was in Brisbane.

05:27 No I grew up in Sydney because I came down when I was two, only two. The rest of the family, besides my elder sister, were born in Sydney. There is only two Queenslanders, that is me and my sister, who is deceased.

So which part of Sydney was it?

In Darlington near the Sydney University we lived there.

Tell me a bit about your early life, your childhood.

05:53 Well, we went to Darlington school, I don't think any one of us were great scholars or anything like that but we managed to get through school. I can't think of anything that was really outstanding amongst us, we were just a lot of kids that ran around.

Which year were you born?

1928.

So the Depression would have hit when you were very small.

06:25 Yes. That may have had something to do with the change of State, I don't know.

Yes it would have been difficult to find work. Do you remember much about that time as a young child growing up?

Only the fact that I went to school and looking back on old photos and things like that you remember kids at school.

You had a very large family, you said you were one of ten children. How did your mother feed all those kids?

06:58 Well she managed to, lots of stews and things like that but we always had plenty to eat. Mum was a type that if she wanted something done you did it otherwise you'd find a boot up your bottom or something to make you do it, that is the sort of person she was. Well she had to be I suppose.

So dad was never actually out of work as a wharfie?

07:28 Well wharf labourers in those days were different to what they are now. Wharf labourers in those days used to go down to Sussex Street and they were hand-picked, you know, there could be hundreds down there trying to get jobs and onto different wharves. No it was hard, it wasn't easy. I think the wharf labourers get it much easier now.

It was called the bull system in those days wasn't it?

That's right.

What do you know about that?

07:56 Nothing much apart from the fact that - I suppose you'd call them foremen who did the hand picking and I think they had their favourites, that is how that sort of thing came about.

Do you remember times when your father was out of work?

08:15 Oh yes, I remember many times. He could go for maybe a couple of weeks without a job and things were hard. I don't think us kids had to worry about it, we knew there would be a meal there, so that never worried us. That is all the kids worry about when they are young, getting up in the morning going and having a play and making sure there is plenty to eat.

What about mum, did she have a spare time job as well?

08:52 No, no, she was well and truly stuck at home with the kids. Washing machines weren't even thought of, or I suppose they were thought of but they weren't thought of in our house, it was always the copper. You know boil the copper up and that was a hard way of washing. Those were the times.

When was it actually that the family moved to Millers Point?

09:20 Well the family never moved, my family didn't move, I moved. I knew my husband from the time I was about ten years old, we went to the same school, though I don't think Charlie went too often. There was about four or five of us who had bikes and we'd go for rides on bikes and things like that. Then the war started and he decided he wanted to join the Air Force, and he did.

Tell me a little bit about Charlie's background.

10:02 Well Charlie grew up when children were being taken from their mother. I

don't know anything about his father because I never ever knew his father. I think when he was younger his mother came from Tamworth and he was born in Sydney and I think she came from Tamworth to Sydney to get away because I think she had in mind that he was going to be one of the stolen children, that was what was happening in those days. She was a good hardworking mother and when Aboriginal people come to Sydney they seem to congregate in Redfern and that is where a lot of his life was spent, in Redfern.

11:02 He did have a family and I met them and they were very nice people out at La Perouse, Happy Valley as they called it in those days, and he had a family out there that he used to live with. So in a sense when he was very young, when he was small, one, two, four, five, up to school years, he was shunted from family to family that knew his mother.

Are they Aboriginal on both sides of his family?

11:37 I couldn't say because I didn't know what his father was like.

Was his father not alive any longer?

11:46 I couldn't tell you who he was. His mother, once again, was a bit like my mother and would never confide in you. I do know that Charlie did ask her because even in her later life towards the time she died I think he asked once again because he thought there might have been someone in Tamworth that knew or something, but she would never tell him. There was just Charlie and his mother.

So his father left at any early age.

12:17 Well I don't think he was ever with him, I think he was somewhere in Tamworth or somewhere like that, up at Barraba or places like that that she came from. I think she just left him up there when she knew she was pregnant, I suppose, I can only think that is what happened.

No Social Services in those days so it would make it difficult for her, wouldn't it?

She sort of came down here and once again as I say she knew a few of the Aboriginal families that had come down to Sydney and that is where she used to live, she used to live with them. She was a very good worker his mother so she was able to look after him money-wise.

How many children did Charlie's mother have?

Only Charlie.

So here is a single Aboriginal woman coming to Sydney, living in Redfern and managing, that was typical in those days.

13:17 I think it was a very hard life for her. I have got photos of her somewhere but with all the moving and that I have put stuff everywhere and I don't know where I have put them. She was a very good looking woman, very good looking and I think Charlie takes after her, although Charlie was a lot lighter-skinned than his mother, so I would say that his father was not Aboriginal.

Interesting. You said you grew up with Charlie.

13:50 Well both of us were at school. We had moved from Darlington, only a couple of streets down, to Chippendale actually and we went into a house that my mother eventually ended up buying. The little group that we were friendly with all lived in that little area, so you got to see them almost every day. Went to movies, went to the Old Broadway Theatre down there in George Street, it is not there now. That was our life, Saturday we'd go to the movies, or the pictures as we called them, and eventually he got serious and I got serious and we ended up getting married.

How old were you when you got married?

Seventeen.

Pretty young by today's standards of course.

14:49 He was in the Air Force, he joined the Air Force. In the meantime his mother had managed to get a place at Millers Point - now exactly what that involved I don't know, but she ended up coming down to live at Millers Point. That was around about that time, 1944 or something like that.

So how long was Charlie in the Air Force?

Three years.

(interruption to recording due to aircraft noise)

So he was away for three years?

15:35 No, never went away, the farthest he did go - he went to North Queensland, he didn't go to the Islands or anything like that. He was a LAC which was only maintenance type of people, he wasn't a pilot or anything like that.

So he came back on leave quite often, did he?

16:01 Yes he used to come home. He got stationed at Bradfield Park eventually, over on the North Shore, he was stationed there, so he would be home all the time. That is how we came to live at Millers Point with his mother.

Now was that at 41 Kent Street?

Yes, 41 Kent Street.

Can you describe that place to me, what was it like?

16:30 Well there is actually three storeys there. You go in off the street, no veranda or anything like that so you went straight in off the footpath into the front room, as everybody used to call it. You'd go down a flight of stairs and there was a kitchen and you had your laundry and your back yard and all that sort of thing down there. Coming in off the street again you would have two rooms on the street level and then you'd go up a flight and there were two bedrooms up there. So it was three storeys of two rooms.

How did you like Millers Point when you first got there did you think it was better than Darlington?

17:16 Well no I don't know about better but I think it was a bit strange in the beginning because you think jeez, I'm not going to know a soul here. But eventually because people never changed you did get to know them and they were families, they weren't sort of individual people they were families of people.

Can you describe that atmosphere to me, some people say village atmosphere, that there was.

17:45 Well when I say families the lady living next door to Charlie's mother was Kaye, their name was Kaye, but she had children that were married and they were living in the same street, so she had quite an extended family all along the street and that happened on both sides of Kent Street. You had Kent Street and then you had High Street, which is down the back of Kent Street, and all around there everybody knew everyone. Or you'd walk up the hill towards Observatory Hill - once again they were a relation to someone that was in your street or something to that effect. So in a sense there were a lot of families, big families.

Did you identify at that time or because you had married a man who had some Aboriginal background were you classified as an Aboriginal family or not?

18:48 No. I don't think I ever come up against that, never. As far as Millers Point was concerned it made no difference to them. I don't think there was another family of

Aboriginal people on Millers Point, not to my knowledge anyway.

There was another family I think but it could have been at a different time.

What was their name? Russ has told you has he?

I think there were two Aboriginal families, I can't remember their name exactly but there was another family. Anyway, it doesn't matter. So this is 1944 you are saying?

1945.

Was the war still on when you moved in?

19:42 Oh yes. Actually it was the beginning of 1945 and I think the war ended towards the end of that year. People were still in the services, just because the war ended you didn't just take your uniform off and chuck it away - you were still in the services.

Did you have ration coupons and that sort of thing?

20:04 Yes we had ration coupons for food and for clothing and all that sort of business. Yes everybody had to have their coupons thought I don't think it was as hard as people thought it was, you always had plenty really, plenty of coupons. Not that you had any money to buy anything, I mean it doesn't matter how many coupons you had, it wouldn't matter if you have no money to buy it. The Air Force I think we were getting something like thirty bob, something like that.

A week in their pay, it wasn't much was it?

Yes something like that so you really had to watch your pennies.

So when you married you moved in with Charlie's mother. You said you didn't feel the war too much, it wasn't too difficult, but what changes did actually happen when war broke out and what was life like in Sydney during the war, was it very different from before?

21:22 Well no. I suppose it was, but remember when the war was on we were only early teenagers so you don't take that much notice of it. The only time that you did, remember when the Japanese came into the harbour I can remember that would have been about 1942 or 1943 or something. I was at the movies, I was at the Prince Edward Theatre at the movies, and the air-raid sirens came over and the loud speaker said everybody had to vacate the theatre, so when we came out it was pitch black because they had turned the street lights off, there were no street lights or nothing, so you had to sort of find your way. You knew your way home, you knew how to get home, had to walk straight down Elizabeth Street, but that sort of thing brought the

war to you, you thought this was really war time. But it was more like an adventure than anything else. That was only because the submarines were in the harbour, there were no planes going overhead dropping bombs or anything, so in a sense I don't think the war hit us really.

It hit Darwin but not Sydney.

That's right.

So when you got to Millers Point in 1945 what was the street life like, the sort of pub life and so on, were there many pubs?

23:01 Oh yes there have always been a lot of pubs in Millers Point and they are always full. The street life - people would talk to you. You had the chap up the road by the name of Jackson, he used to come round every day with his cart and that was vegetables and things like that, you'd buy your vegetables off him, I think it was every day he used to come. The corner shop was there, the butcher round the corner. You got to know everybody because people, if they looked at you they would know that you were new in the area and they would say hello, so eventually you got to know everyone.

So it was a friendly atmosphere.

It was a very friendly atmosphere.

Were you accepted straight away?

I think so, I found no problems.

So you said there was a butcher's shop.

Duggans.

Where was he located?

24:14 Probably in the same street as the *Palisade Hotel*, you know the *Palisade Hotel*? Well that street that runs down at the end, Munn Street, the starting of Munn at the end of Argyle, it runs from Argyle and then Munn Street. There was a couple of shops over the road. First of all on the corner, the little shop on the corner of Kent Street, at the end of it was a barber's shop, Rube Lewis. He eventually moved over to a shop next door to the butcher's, he moved over there. Everybody knew Rube Lewis, he'd cut all the kids' hair and all the rest of it and they loved to go there because he always had miles of comic books. So everybody knew Rube Lewis, that was quite a

character there.

I have heard a few stories about him already.

25:20 See the kids would tell you a different story that I'd know, I was only a mother taking the kids to get their hair cut, but the kids were probably bits of pranksters and they'd do a few things and Rube would throw them out of the shop or something.

So is it like a village with small shops? No supermarket in those days of course.

Of course not.

Did you go to the pub at all?

25:51 No, not in those days. As I got older I'd go, Charlie and I would go and have a beer or something to that effect, but not when you were young. Although I knew everybody, I can't say I didn't know them, I did.

When you had your children who was the first?

Jim is the first. He was born in 1945 and Russell was born in 1948.

Now you are a young mother in Millers Point - how did life change for you there?

26:26 Well it didn't really change. As in lots of places you get people who think that you don't know what day it is half the time and they try to tell you what you should be doing and what you shouldn't be doing. I was in that side of things and I would get my back up a little bit and I'd try and sort of dodge these people because I know they were going to try and tell me what I was doing wrong. When I think back on it it was all good, all good natured on people's part. But as I say those that were born at Millers Point and lived there all their life with their families they knew what was right and what was wrong and the new one just had to fit in, which is exactly what I did.

Now were there any Chinese, Italians or other kind of people in the area apart from the Anglo-Saxon Australians?

27:26 No, not to my knowledge. No, not when my kids were little anyway.

What about religion, what religion were you?

Church of England.

There were quite a few Catholics in Millers Point.

27:46 Mostly all Catholics. St Brigid's Church was the centre of their life and their families and all that but I was Church of England and Charlie was Church of England

so our kids didn't go to the Catholic church.

Were they sort of apart from you, did they stick to themselves more the Catholics?

28:07 Oh no, no, no, except for the fact that most of them went to St Brigid's Church and all that business. The rest of them went to Fort Street, up on Observatory Hill. No they got on well together, I think so.

What about the political divide in Millers Point? What were most of the population Liberal or Labor voters?

28:32 Wouldn't have a clue, I wasn't interested so I didn't take much notice. When I did come to a point of voting you voted what your family did, Labor Party, or whatever it was.

You were a tenant in 41 Kent Street - who owned the place?

Maritime Services Board.

There was no landlady or anything?

29:00 No, the Maritime Services Board owned all the property there. As a matter of fact one of Russell's mates, I don't know if he mentioned him, Russell Fitchett, his grandfather was what you'd call our rent man, he used to come round every week and collect the rent, Mr Fitchett.

29:29 END OF TAPE MP-FH46 SIDE A

29:31 START OF TAPE MP-FH46 SIDE B

We have interviewed Russell, he was quite an interesting character. He came down to Sydney.

Oh lovely.

He's a nice fellow.

Isn't he.

So you were tenants in 41 Kent Street, so you were paying the rent directly to the Maritime Services Board, how would you describe them as landlords in those days?

30:00 Oh I think they were pretty good landlords. If you had any problems, like stuffed up drains or anything like that they never hesitated in coming and rectifying it. Every so often they would come and offer you a coat of paint somewhere or other and so it went on. No I think they were pretty fair landlords.

So when your first child was born and grew up a little bit - did you send him to the kindergarten?

30:46 Yes down the Lance Kindergarten, they all went to the Lance Kindergarten, that was part of the thing to do. No they used to go down there, both of them went down there. We only paid about a couple of bob a week but part of sending them there when it was your turn you had to take home all the linen, such as all the towels and things like that and you had to wash them and iron them and bring them back on Monday, that was part of the kindergarten.

Everyone had to do that? You took turns?

Oh yes. There would be a roster I suppose. I remember the woman in charge would say to you, 'It is your turn for the laundry.'

Was it free, the kindergarten?

31:36 No, we used to pay. We'd pay probably twenty-five cents, it was about two shillings and six pence a week. You could start between the ages of two and three and you could stay there until you went to school.

Any memories from those days?

Oh we used to have concerts and things like that and the fathers used to do a little bit of fixing things. When Charlie came out of the Air Force they offered them a rehabilitation type of thing and he took a trade of painting and paper hanging and all that business. If they wanted a bit of painting done at the kindergarten he'd do it, or he'd bring home the little furniture that the kids use and paint them in the back yard and things like that. So they all did a little bit of something.

Was Charlie still working on the water front?

32:50 No he didn't work on the water front for quite a long time, he stuck at his trade as a painter for about, I suppose, fifteen or twenty years. Then he became a watchman on the waterfront at White Bay.

White Bay Power Station?

White Bay Wharf.

What sort of stories did he tell you from those days? Did he ever tell you what was going on?

33:32 He didn't tell me much. Only about his friends. At that stage, when he went in, Pat Armstrong, who owned the *Palisade Hotel*, you mentioned his sons are there now are they?

His son doesn't live there any more but we have interviewed his son Michael and he lives in Dee Why now, he is a doctor. Pat has passed on.

33:53 He had a brother, Michael, too and he was a doctor, wasn't he? One was a dentist, I think. But anyway it was a family hotel and Pat Armstrong had that hotel and Charlie was still a painter. They had a golf social club from the *Palisade*, they got into a bit of play-up with that every now and again, but they were good mates socially you know, and that is how we got to know Pat so well. He would say, 'Come on we'll go round the *Palisade* and have a couple of beers and find out what is going to happen on Saturday.' Or if the Christmas Party was going to be at Harbord or places like that, discuss it all. We had a punters' club from there and things like that, you know. So Charlie was a member of the golf club was he?

Oh yes, so was Russell and Jimmy, they all were.

Tell me what was it like for your kids to grow up in Millers Point do you think?

35:02 Well I think as far as mates and that is concerned I think there was a very strong feeling of mates there. Once a mate always a mate, you know. They got into some terrible, terrible scrapes. Something which was another bad thing and used to worry Charlie because the blokes used to say to him if he ever went into the pub, 'Your kids one day - the bloody sharks are going to get them,' they would swim down the Metal Wharf, down the Central Wharf, the Metal Wharf they called it. They would swim down there and they'd come home after I'd been at 'em and at 'em and at 'em about swimming down there and I'd say, 'Have you been down the Metal Wharf?' 'No.' Their hair would be stuck up in the air with salt water and you knew perfectly well they'd been swimming. Charlie would go in to have a drink and blokes would say to him, 'Your kids are going to get taken by the sharks one day. They are for ever lasting, swimming down that Metal Wharf,' and that is exactly what they were doing. Anyway that went on for a number of years and the sharks didn't get them. Used to

do things like that. Or another time they had a sheet of galvanised iron, and old bed mattress or something, and they paddled from one side of the thing to the other side of the Bridge. I mean they used to do things like that. They used to do some naughty things too, they used to break in on the wharves, get in off the wharves. I think at one time, I don't know which wharf it was, they got in and had a great old feed of tinned fruit salad, opened one of the cartons or something and sat there eating fruit salad all day. Things like that, not really bad things, but bad enough to be reported to you.

Did the police ever come?

37:07 Oh yes. Oh yes the police would come and say that they had been doing this or doing that and of course by that time there was no evidence around and I'd say, 'Not that I know anything about it.' The police would say, 'Well I'm just warning you,' sort of attitude. I can remember one time Russ was only little, like when I say little I suppose before he started school, so he'd be under five, they would walk from our place down to the Domain and swim in the pond down there and one time they had been swimming in the pond down there and they threw the duck eggs at Russ and he was covered in duck eggs. The police brought them home, they had him in the side car of a bike, and they said, 'Just get him inside.' He stunk, you have no idea. They said, 'If that ever happens again that's the end of you, you are going.' Things like that, you know. But they always got home again, time would come for tea-time they'd be there. *They would be hungry enough.*

That's right.

Was it safe for kids and adults in Millers Point?

38:24 As far as I know it was, definitely. Yet I'd been out one day, and I never forget it - I was coming home from my mother's actually, and it was about seven o'clock at night and I got a cab home because I'd missed the bus and I was a bit worried about getting home. I got a taxi and when I got in the taxi the taxi driver said to me, 'Millers Point, what are you going to Millers Point for?' I said, 'Because I live there.' He said, 'Strike a light.' I thought I wonder what he means, but that was the atmosphere, you know, people would say that. Yet for years and years and years I don't think we ever shut our front door of a night time, especially in the summer time, the front door was always open, you never locked it up like you lock up today. Here Russell tells me to keep this locked and keep that locked. That was the sort of atmosphere it was.

There have been a few murders committed in Millers Point you know.

Oh yes, I suppose there was.

Any while you were there?

39:35 I can't think of them, was there?

Well Danny Chubb got killed.

Yes, I knew of Danny.

A few others as well.

Yes, but they were men they weren't children. They went their way and I don't uphold what he was doing, by no means. But then again the drugs got in, come into Millers Point, and I thank God we never ever had any problem with that, never. I'm so happy about it. The drugs were there but our kids were very lucky, they weren't involved with it.

Did you have the whole house at 41 Kent Street?

40:35 Yes. When Russ was born we lived with Charlie's mother, but Russ was born in March and September of that year we got a house of our own. So we moved out of that and we moved around behind the church, the street behind the Garrison Church, Trinity Avenue. So we were there until Jim had gone and Russ had gone. We decided to move and we came up to the Central Coast one week end, Charlie and I, and we happened to see a place up there that was nice and we decided then that we would move.

What was your total length of residence in Millers Point from 1945 until?

41:57 Till 1982. I ended up working for Myers, it wasn't Myers at the time, I ended up getting a job at Farmer and Company and then it was bought by Myers. I was at Myers for twenty-six years, actually. That is how I know what the year would be because that was the year I retired, 1982.

What transport did you use? Do you remember the trams at Millers Point?

42:30 Yes the trams and then we got the buses. It was a good service too, a very good service, about every twenty minutes or half-hour, so you were never short of transport.

Did you go to town very often?

Well actually, when I started work, when both the kids went to school, it wasn't

immediately they went to school, I did get a part-time job between nine and three while they were at school. When I took full-time work on it was much later.

(interruption to recording due to aircraft noise)

So you worked at Farmers for twenty-six years, it is quite a while that you were there, you were there for nearly forty years almost at Millers Point, what were the most unusual things you ever saw there do you think?

44:09 You see lots of scraps with people in pubs and things like that, that would be every day - you wouldn't think that was unusual. I don't know. I know that Anzac Day was a great day on Millers Point because you'd have two-up games in all the pubs and they weren't only in the pubs, they were out in the street. It is amazing that the fellows, mainly men but women too I suppose, they came from all suburbs because they knew that Millers Point would be blocked off. The people used to block Millers Point off themselves, there would be no cars there, the only thing that would get through would be the bus. They would have two-up games going all day with Anzacs and all the rest of it because a lot of them were returned soldiers. A lot of the families that I am saying, different branches of the families, that lived on Millers Point they were all in the Army, all of them.

Any tourists in those days looking around like they do at The Rocks now?

45:19 Yes they used to just walk around. Different days, like Easter time, when there were holidays you always saw a lot of people just walking around and looking in houses, which sometimes you resented. As I say you never ever had your house locked up, the front door would always be open, but people didn't think twice about standing there and looking in, whatever they thought they were going to find I don't know, whether they thought it was like a zoo. They would just come and look in the places and sometimes you felt like going out and insulting them or getting the hose and hosing them or something, but you always got that anyway. They were the people who have eventually gone there to live.

Millers Point is a pretty historic sort of a place as you know, it is the birthplace of Australia, did the residents have that sort of sense of heritage do you think?

46:20 Oh yes, I think they did and I think sometimes you'd get a little bit of a feeling that sometimes they resented these people coming in, I'm sure of that. There were lots of places like down in Windmill Street, lot of places down Windmill Street, that people used to say, 'Now that house there used to have all the sailors,' and everything

like that. The shop on the corner was the *Ship Inn*, or whatever the case might be. Lot of tales like that that people told and as they told them they would add a little bit more to it so the story got quite big by the time you got to listen to it, so it was quite interesting really.

Now being a maritime precinct, all to do with the waterfront, Millers Point, all the employment coming from the Maritime Services Board, what sort of evidence was there that the place was a bit different from other suburbs do you think? The waterside atmosphere - did you take to that and did you find it interesting?

47:40 No I don't think it ever occurred that it was a waterside suburb. I think the only thing that used to surprise us at times when you saw a strange face, someone else moved in, because you got so used to seeing the same people. The kids would be the same too, you'd see probably a strange kid in amongst their friends.

Was that very frequent that new people were moving in?

48:20 Well no, it wasn't frequent. As I say I couldn't quite understand..... I think the reason why Charlie's mother got a place there, she knew someone that lived there, lived in Millers Point, and that was like the entry fee. If your parents were there and you got married, well the Maritime Services Board would give you a place straight away. So for a stranger to get a place you'd wonder how. I think what Charlie's mother did - she knew someone that was there and they were going to take this place in Kent Street and they decided they didn't want it, so they offered it to her. She went through the right channels and the Maritime Services Board agreed to let her have it. So to see a strange face you'd wonder who they belonged to because they'd have to have a relation there.

So occasionally new people would move in but not too often, you are saying.

49:51 No. You could get a street like Windmill Street. Windmill Street could have a few houses and you'd find that more than half would belong to the one family, they were sons and daughters of the one people.

Did you know the Pearsons in Windmill Street?

Yes, I knew the Pearsons.

We've interviewed Eileen, she is now ninety-two, she is amazing. So would you say you have happy memories of Millers Point?

Of course, very happy memories.

What is the saddest thing that ever happened there do you think?

50:43 I can't think of anything that I could really say was sad. I know that we were very sad when we decided that we were going to leave it, Charlie and I, to the point where we thought the kids had gone. We had never owned a home and that is one of the reasons when saw this place on the Central Coast. We had never owned a home of our own and we thought you have got to own a home once in your lifetime and that is the reason why we left. I don't think it hit Charlie too much because he still went to work, he was still working for a long time. He used to travel down from the central coast to White Bay almost every day, so it didn't strike him as it would me. No I can't think of anything that was terribly sad unless it was something that happened to the kids.

Did Jimmy die at Millers Point?

51:51 No. He ended up coming to live at the Central Coast too and he was a cab driver, used to drive a cab. Actually he was with Charlie on the wharf, he was a watchman too. When they made them redundant off the wharves he ended up driving a cab up at Woy Woy and he died there.

From cancer, that is very sad. Did you miss Millers Point after you left it?

52:28 Yes I did because I used to often think of people and if I got an opportunity I would get on the train. I didn't drive, I'd get on the train and go back again and have a walk around and see people and say hello and things like that, you know. Up the road from us, where we lived in Trinity Avenue - did you meet Billy Caruana?

No we haven't.

Well Dawn Caruana was married to the eldest boy, John, and Billy still lives in Trinity Avenue at the moment. He was a bit of a rogue, he used to get out on the balcony with a shotgun and shoot. Next door to the Garrison Church is the Garrison Hall for the Army and he'd shoot the roof, things like that, you know. Talking about Rube Lewis, I don't know what the kids told you about Rube Lewis. Billy is in between Jimmy and Russell

54:05 They were Maltese, there was John, Billy and Tina, but Billy had the most beautiful head of hair and he had curls down to the middle of his back. I used to pick them up from kindergarten, they were under five, I suppose, and he was always getting hair pulled, like the kids would pull his hair, and things like that. I took my blokes into Rube Lewis to get their hair cut and I thought oh Billy you've got to get

that hair off, so I thought I know his mother is going to hit the roof but I said to Rube Lewis, 'Cut it off Rube, make him a boy.' I took him home and his father said to me, 'The best thing that could have happened,' his father was as rough as bags, but his mother really got upset about it. I used to pick them up from school, she never, I said, 'Look Peggy you never pick them up.' He was always crying him and they were always having a go at him with his long hair. So that is what happened with poor old Bill's long hair.

Now you haven't lived in Millers Point now for probably twenty-three years - has it changed a lot? When you have come back have you noticed any changes?

55:39 Oh yes just the look of the place has changed. You know they have knocked down gates and they have put in different fronts, the whole place has changed. I've walked around and there is a lot of Chinese there now, and Lebanese, and those sort of people. I notice the shops are selling that sort of goods, cakes and stuff like that that you never ever saw in the shops, they are catering for what do you call them, ethnic people, no you don't, do you?

People from different countries.

Yes. It has changed. The whole look of the place has changed as far as I'm concerned. *Is it for the better or not do you think?*

56:43 Oh it is quite attractive, I know that, and I should imagine they would be paying through the nose, the rent. The rents would be very, very high so I would imagine they would have to make it more attractive.

What is the best thing that ever happened to you at Millers Point do you think?

57:12 All I can think about is the fact that we did have a good life. I can't think of the best thing. They used to put on concerts and things like that up at the church at the top of the hill, what is the name of that church near the Bridge? It is not on the Point, it is at the top of Clarence Street, is it? Anyway whatever it is there is a hall up there and they used to put concerts on and things like that, they were very good. Russ used to put on some concerts at the hall at the Garrison Church and they were good too. I can't think of anything that is outstanding.

Do you think you are a different person now for having lived at Millers Point? Has it changed your life?

58:06 Well I don't know about different because I don't know what I would have

been like if I hadn't lived there, but I think it gave me a very good outlook of what people can be like. It makes me feel that no matter where I was I could meet people and be friendly with them because there were such different types of people down there.

Okay Joan, is there anything else you want to talk about before we close the interview?

58:38 Oh such a lot as happened. Here I am, I am almost going back to Millers Point now. I am not very far from it. I seem to go right round the world and I'm coming back again. I miss my family, shouldn't be. Of course everybody gets old, you don't want to be old, nobody wants to be old. No, I can't think of anything that I can say was outstanding apart from the fact that it was very good training for me to have lived at Millers Point. Although I lived at Redfern and Darlington and they were equally a mixture.

Well Joan thanks very much for the interview.

59:42 END OF TAPE MP-FH46 SIDE B AND END OF INTERVIEW WITH JOAN TAYLOR