

**BRICK WORKERS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT  
LEWISTON-AUBURN, MAINE**

**Pauline Turcotte**  
(Interviewer: *Andrea L'Hommedieu*)

**#16**  
August 27, 2008

**Andrea L'Hommedieu:** This is an interview for the Brickyard Workers Oral History Project at the Museum L-A. The date is August 27th, 2008, and I'm at the home of Pauline Turcotte in Auburn, Maine. And Pauline, could you just start by giving me your full name, including your maiden name?

**Pauline Turcotte:** Yes, my name is Pauline Dennis, maiden name, Turcotte.

**AL:** And where and when were you born?

**PT:** I was born in Auburn, August 4th, 1933.

**AL:** And did you grow up in Auburn?

**PT:** Yes, yes.

**AL:** What part?

**PT:** On Washington Street, that's what they called Washington Street then, but now it's, they call it the Brickyard Circle.

**AL:** And your family was involved in brickyard work.

**PT:** Yeah, yeah, my grandfather started this business and three uncles and my father worked there, to start off, you know, it was just, so.

**AL:** And this was the Dennis Brickyard?

**PT:** Yes, Dennis Brickyard Company.

**AL:** And what was your grandfather's name?

**PT:** Joseph, Joseph Dennis.

**AL:** And he started it small and then it grew?

**PT:** Yes, yeah. I think, I'm not sure but my sister Jeannette would probably know,

that my grandfather used to work for his uncle, I think his last name was Brooks, and that's, and then he started his own little place.

**AL:** And so your father and three uncles grew the brickyard larger, I imagine.

**PT:** Oh yeah, but it wasn't a great, great big place, it was just, you know, a family run company, so. Of course they had to employ workers as the years went on, and my brothers worked down there too, like after, during summer vacations and after, one of them worked after he graduated from high school for a while, then moving on to something else, which is really very hard work, not anybody can do that. You have to have a lot of strength.

**AL:** So was your home near the brickyard?

**PT:** Yup, there was three houses on that street. The first one was a brick house, my grandparents lived there, and the middle one was our house, where I lived, white house, and then it was, my aunt's little house was the third one, and her husband was working for the shoe factory, he was a superintendent at one of the shoe factories.

**AL:** So you had family all around you.

**PT:** Oh yeah, it was a just a Dennis little rendezvous.

**AL:** Do those houses still exist?

**PT:** Yes, yes, they're still there.

**AL:** Right on that, what was Washington Street.

**PT:** Yeah, it's just across Crystal Springs, yeah, right across there.

**AL:** Did your dad ever talk about his work and the process and how the business was going, did you get a sense of that?

**PT:** No, by the time he'd come home, usually he had worked til after five, he'd just get home and he'd wash up and have supper, and he wasn't a too talkative man. Those times, you know, they didn't, kept things to themselves more or less.

**AL:** Now how many brothers and sisters did you have?

**PT:** I had two brothers, they both passed on, and I have three sisters, we were four girls.

**AL:** And your uncles and your father, did they work their whole career in -?

**PT:** Yes, they all, the younger one, Rossie, he went in the service, and I think Willy did too, William, yeah, I think he was stationed I think, is it Fort Devons? Is that in Massachusetts? I'm not sure. But two of them were in the service, WWII.

**AL:** And then they came back.

**PT:** Yes, then they all worked, returned working at the brickyard.

**AL:** Are any of them by any chance still living?

**PT:** No, the oldest one was William, he died just last year, the year before, he was ninety-seven. He just made it, I think a couple of days after he passed on, after his birthday. So he had a nice long life.

**AL:** Now did any of their children, your uncles' children -?

**PT:** Yeah, the boys, yes, they worked there.

**AL:** Oh, you did mention that.

**PT:** Yeah, the, would be my cousins, yeah, they all did except, no, I guess all the boys did, because most of them had girls, you know, they didn't have too many boys. Yeah, the cousins all, as they grew up, you know, they did work down there.

**AL:** I'm trying to get a timeline of how long the brickyard ran for, do you recall when it started, when the family was no longer involved in brick making?

**PT:** Yes, I wouldn't know the year or when, like my, Jeannette, my sister would, she's good on dates and stuff like that. Yeah, I don't, I can't say when it was, it was probably nineteen-, let's see, maybe '80-something? I'm not sure. Because they sold the land as it was, because the last few years they weren't working it at all. What they did, they used to, in the winter they started up a little oil company, so they delivered oil during the winter because there's not much in the winter. And then in the spring and summer and fall, then they worked down in the brickyard. But that date, Jeannette would know more, you know, she'd be able to pin it down.

**AL:** Now, were you ever around the brickyard where you got to see things happening and how they worked?

**PT:** Hm-hmm, a lot of times, we used to go down, take a walk. And when they'd have a kiln up, that's K-I-L-N, that's where they'd bake the bricks, they called it baking I guess, and it was real hot there, you had to put wood logs under, you know, through the, like a little hole thing that they'd make the – I can't explain it too well, anyways.

**AL:** Like a small opening?

**PT:** Yeah, yeah, and then they would keep that going, I don't know, probably over a week, probably eight days, day and night, somebody had to be there and shove some wood in because it had to be a certain temperature all, you know, once they started. So during it my mother would make lemonade and she, we'd go down the brickyard and give the workers, if they wanted a glass of lemonade, and of course they liked that.

**AL:** Oh yeah, hot work.

**PT:** Yeah, just a chance to have something, you know, nice cool lemonade on a hot day like that. So they'd work through the day and at night, so that's when they (*unintelligible*), and my father would hardly sleep then because he'd be more or less checking up on the workers, you know. Like nowadays, I don't know, like Morin Brick, is that still going? And it's probably all automatic, huh?

**AL:** Yes, yes.

**PT:** So it's nothing, everything's all -

**AL:** It's not the same process.

**PT:** No-no, not the same.

**AL:** Did your dad ever come home and tell stories about the brickyard?

**PT:** I don't remember really, no. Well what would happen, you know, (*unintelligible*) go down and see, because we lived right there. And it's, you know, he probably had little stories about certain ones, but nothing that I can remember.

**AL:** Is there anything that I'm not asking you about brick making or your family's involvement that you think is important to add?

**PT:** No. Well they had two kinds of bricks, they had the wire cut and then the water struck, water struck I think.

**AL:** Yes.

**PT:** Yeah, water struck. They were made entirely different, in a different manner.

**AL:** And then they were used for different purposes also? Were the wire cut like -

**PT:** Face brick, (*unintelligible*). And the other one I don't know, I think it was rougher, it wasn't as smooth as the wire cut, after it was all finished, the finished

product.

**AL:** Well thank you very much.

**PT:** I'm sorry I can't -

*End of Interview*

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