

**Oral history interview with William S. Gosman
For the Montauk Library Oral History Program
12/12/2024**

Virginia Garrison [00:00:02] Today is Thursday, December 12th, 2024. My name is Virginia Garrison and I'm conducting an oral history interview with Bill Gosman. This interview is part of the Montauk Library Oral History Program. We are conducting this interview from the sound studio at the Montauk Library in Montauk, New York. I just wanted to confirm on tape your consent to participate and to be recorded according to the oral history Informed Consent and Release Agreement.

William Gosman [00:00:41] Okay.

Virginia Garrison [00:00:42] Thank you. Could you please pronounce and spell your first and last name?

William Gosman [00:00:47] Well, my full name is William Shannon Gosman, and I like to put the Shannon in there because that was my maternal grandmother's name.

Virginia Garrison [00:00:55] SHANNON?

William Gosman [00:00:55] Right.

Virginia Garrison [00:00:55] Okay. And that's the story behind your name. That was your, you said maternal.

William Gosman [00:01:04] Yeah, from Ireland. Yeah.

Virginia Garrison [00:01:07] That would be Mary Gosman.

William Gosman [00:01:09] Yeah, her name was Mary Harrington.

Virginia Garrison [00:01:12] Oh, okay. And did she live in the United States? Did she come over from Ireland?

William Gosman [00:01:20] She sure did.

Virginia Garrison [00:01:21] She was the one who founded the restaurant. Gosman's restaurant, right?

William Gosman [00:01:24] Right? Well, I don't know if she founded it or not. I don't know who founded it. But it was a family thing, I guess. I don't remember whose idea initially it was. Probably my father's. I don't know.

Virginia Garrison [00:01:37] And what was your father's name?

William Gosman [00:01:39] Robert Gosman.

Virginia Garrison [00:01:42] And your mother?

William Gosman [00:01:44] Mary Ellen Harrington.

Virginia Garrison [00:01:45] Mary Ellen. All one word, Mary Ellen?

William Gosman [00:01:48] No, two words.

[00:01:48] Okay.

Virginia Garrison [00:01:56] And Shannon was your maternal grandmother's first name.

William Gosman [00:02:01] Last name. Lots of people think Shannon's a first name, everybody uses it as a first name the damn fools don't realize it's a very Irish name.

Virginia Garrison [00:02:09] Well, I know it's Irish, but.

William Gosman [00:02:11] Well, you know the Shannon River where the Shannon River flows.

Virginia Garrison [00:02:14] Ah, okay. Where were you born?

William Gosman [00:02:18] I was born in Amagansett.

Virginia Garrison [00:02:21] Well.

William Gosman [00:02:22] In a house in Amagansett. Dr. Nugent delivered me and charged my father 50 bucks.

Virginia Garrison [00:02:32] And what was the year?

William Gosman [00:02:33] 1940.

Virginia Garrison [00:02:37] This. One question is can you tell me a little about your family heritage and where your parents and grandparents came from? We've sort of started down that path.

William Gosman [00:02:47] Well, unfortunately, you see, my family was, my father was Presbyterian. My mother was Roman Catholic. And oh where was I going with that, that as far as heritage, basically because we were brought up in the Catholic Church and my mother was I would say basically we were brought up in sort of an Irish Catholic thing. You know, that's why I mentioned Shannon, because at that time I identified that with as a child, and I was proud to be Irish and all that other stuff, you know, and but my father's history. Getting back to my mother's history, her father was a tailor in Ireland, and their family were tailors for 400 years. And I don't know if they were in the Guinness Book of Records about that or not. I know they were going to put them in, I don't know if they ever did. So that's where that heritage comes from, that side of family. Although I've never been to Ireland. A lot of my cousins and aunts have come over here. So I never went there myself.

Virginia Garrison [00:04:07] Did you want to?

William Gosman [00:04:09] Well, I thought about it sometimes because I really got into I really liked Irish folk music back when it was popular, when the Chieftains were around, I guess in the late 60s and early 70s, you know, and also referred to as Tweedlededee music. Sometime people make fun of it, you know. Dididididedidida. You know that type of

stuff. But it's great music and the Celtic, old Celtic melodies are really beautiful, but a lot of people don't know about them, whatever. And they have a tradition of singing over there called I forget the name of it. Where it's they do it without instrumentation and it sounds really cool.

Virginia Garrison [00:04:48] Acappella?

William Gosman [00:04:51] It's done acappella, yeah, but there's a specific Gaelic name for it, I can't remember, but it's very traditional, very haunting in it, and it's really cool.

Virginia Garrison [00:05:02] I know you have siblings. They are?

William Gosman [00:05:07] It would be John Harrington Gosman. Robert Emmett Gosman. We got the name Emmett because Robert Emmett was an Irish patriot who helped free Ireland from England in the early 19th century. Early 20th century, rather.

Virginia Garrison [00:05:31] And ...

William Gosman [00:05:37] Oh geez, I forgot Roberta. Roberta was the oldest.

Virginia Garrison [00:05:41] Okay. What was Roberta's middle name?

William Gosman [00:05:44] Ann, ANN.

Virginia Garrison [00:05:45] And then?

[00:05:49] And then myself. William Shannon.

Virginia Garrison [00:05:53] So you're the fourth?

William Gosman [00:05:54] Yes. And then my brother, Hubert James Gosman.

Virginia Garrison [00:06:04] How do you spell his first name?

William Gosman [00:06:06] HUBERT.

Virginia Garrison [00:06:08] Oh, Hubert, ookay

William Gosman [00:06:09] Yeah, but his name, we always called him Sandy.

Virginia Garrison [00:06:15] I don't know of him.

William Gosman [00:06:18] Well, he died when he was 42. And he had some real mental problems or something when he was a teenager. It was a very kind of a tragic story where the whole thing went like that. Personally, I think he was the best of the lot of us. But, you know. As a kid. You know, he was a good kid. He had a good heart. Very strong, very athletic and so on.

Virginia Garrison [00:06:46] But did he live out here in Montauk?

William Gosman [00:06:51] Well, in Amagansett, he came to Montauk too he worked down at the dock quite a bit when he was younger.

Virginia Garrison [00:06:57] And then the next one was Richard.

William Gosman [00:07:00] And then Richard. Yes.

Virginia Garrison [00:07:02] What's his.

William Gosman [00:07:04] Name? Richard Fleming. FLEMING

Virginia Garrison [00:07:10] And one question on here is what were your parents occupations? And it wasn't just the restaurant, right?

William Gosman [00:07:18] No, no, no. My father was, my father left home when he was about 15 or 16 and he dug clams at Lazy Point.

Virginia Garrison [00:07:28] When he left home where home being where?

William Gosman [00:07:31] Amagansett. Right next to the Presbyterian Church there, next to the place where the minister lives.

Virginia Garrison [00:07:37] And you had said that he was not Catholic?

William Gosman [00:07:41] No, he was Presbyterian. He was from very strong line of Presbyterians. My grandmother played the organ in the church for years. And my aunt on my father's side, which I never knew, Aunt I think Aunt Irene, but I never knew her. John and Emmett and Roberta knew her, but she must have died by the time I was young or I was too young to remember her. And he had another sister, too, this is my father. Her was Amy or something. They died kind of young, I think in their 50s. Just like my grandfather on my father's side, Robert. He also died in his, I think in his 50s, too. And back in the 19th century, he was, he was a conductor on the Long Island Railroad.

Virginia Garrison [00:08:37] Now this is your grandfather?

William Gosman [00:08:40] That would be my grandfather.

Virginia Garrison [00:08:41] Yeah, okay.

William Gosman [00:08:42] That would be my grandfather, but of course, I never met. He was dead by the time I came along, because he died pretty young.

Virginia Garrison [00:08:46] What was his name?

William Gosman [00:08:49] Robert. But his ancestors go back to their farm in Brooklyn, and I think the Gosmans once had a farm in Central Park at one time. Well, they were here a long time, but the big thing on his side of the family a lot of them were church people, were preachers. And one of them, John Gosman, was known all over the Northeast and so on. He was very famous within the Presbyterian circles, you know, so and he also has his picture in the Rutgers Hall of Fame for some reason I don't know. So I guess he was a real churchman.

Virginia Garrison [00:09:39] So they were the first like generation of the family in your father's, in Amagansett, is that right?

William Gosman [00:09:46] No, my grandfather was. I'm talking about his people before him. Where my grandfather came from. But, no, he lived in Amagansett. Yes. And apparently my father used to complain. That's why he left home early, because he didn't like to go out and hoe the corn hoe the plants, weed the plants in the morning. So he quit school and went down the Lazy Point and started digging clams. My grandmother was I really loved her very much and the few fond memories I had and she treated me very nicely. And I was going back and forth to school in Amagansett she used to see me and I, when I five, six years old, would come in and she'd give me lemonade or cookies and stuff like that and just sit down and play the organ. Because she played it at the church. She had one in her house too and play the old hymns and things like that. And that's one of the reasons I, I like music a lot, I think stemmed from that.

Virginia Garrison [00:10:48] So did you live near the church? The church on Main Street?

William Gosman [00:10:52] Well, no, I lived down where the Amagansett lumberyard is now they used to call it the [?] lived a few houses down there down from that. They used to call it Devon Road, but then they changed the name when the when the new, more sophisticated new people started coming in here in the 60s and 70s, they changed the name to Abraham Landing or something like that. So anyway, it's the road that used to go down to Devon Yacht Club or Fresh Pond in Amagansett.

Virginia Garrison [00:11:25] But that's not that far really, from the Presbyterian Church, right? It's by the by the train station there.

William Gosman [00:11:30] Well, it was when I walked to school it was about a mile each way. Okay. But it was scary because I was only 5 or 6 years old and I was scared as hell of dogs, I really didn't like dogs. So anybody I knew which houses had the dogs and I'd steer, I'd go out by the road so I wouldn't they wouldn't see me or something, you know. So it was like, right. Then, of course, I had to walk past the graveyard too and that's when I started whistling. It was no bullshit. People used to really whistle when you went past a graveyard. I became a good whistler. I can't anymore. But I used to really be able to whistle anything in my head.

Virginia Garrison [00:12:08] And so your father's family ended up in Amagansett. How did they land there?

William Gosman [00:12:19] I don't know, because he married my grandmother. She was from the North Fork and she had the Tuthills. Horton. Horton was her maiden name.

Virginia Garrison [00:12:31] Are they related to the Tuthills.

William Gosman [00:12:34] And the titles. I don't know. I don't think. I don't know. There's two different Tuthill families, branches, and I don't know if it's the Montauk titles like Frank Tuthill, them or or Baker Tuthill who I went to school with or just some of the other Tuthill over in East Hampton.

Virginia Garrison [00:12:50] Greenport and stuff.

William Gosman [00:12:51] Cause there's TUTTLE and TUTHILL and I don't know which one it was, I don't know which one it was. I mean, I have it someplace in a genealogy book, but anyway, they related to those families over there. You know, there's streets

named after they were there so long. So I think they came in the late, late 1600s or early 1700s. She was a member of the D.A.R. Daughters of American Revolution. Yeah. But she was a very quiet, humble person. But I liked her a lot.

Virginia Garrison [00:13:26] That sounds nice growing up in Amagansett.

William Gosman [00:13:29] Well, it was, but there was a friction between my mother and my father's side of the family. Consequently, the only one I knew on my father's side of the family was my grandmother. And she died after I, I guess I was either 12 or 13. I don't know if it was because of the Catholic Protestant thing or what because in Amagansett in the 1940s and 1950s if you were a Roman Catholic, you basically a second class citizen. That's no kidding. Because there was us, our family, the O'Briens and the DiSunnos, those you know, the Italian family had a big thing just like us. They had about six kids, too, and all kind of they're still all over the place now. Their descendants and. And who else? There were a few others, but everybody else was Protestant. And even the Rodriguez. They changed to a Protestant, to the old Jesse. Jesse. Jesus had gone. He was they lived down the road from us. But anyway, this is all Amagansett before I got to Montauk.

Virginia Garrison [00:14:42] All right, let's get 'em in Montauk, I guess.

William Gosman [00:14:44] But during this time, I started coming down to Montauk. My father took over the place down there in 1943, and before he had that, Sam Joyce had it.

Virginia Garrison [00:14:55] This was a commercial fishing dock?

William Gosman [00:15:00] Yes. That's all it was down there.

Virginia Garrison [00:15:01] Yeah.

William Gosman [00:15:02] Before he was there. Sam Joyce was there. It's kind of funny because Sam Sammy Joyce is the grandfather, great grandfather of young Sam Joyce. Sammy, who was Chef and our kitchen for about 24 years and now has his own place down by the docks called Sammy's. So anyway, my father took it all. We didn't own it. Just man by name of Charles Bonner owned it.

Virginia Garrison [00:15:26] BONNER right?

William Gosman [00:15:27] Yeah. Was kind of a he also owned Marshalls.

Virginia Garrison [00:15:29] Marshall's Service Station?

William Gosman [00:15:29] Yeah. Yeah. He's kind of a nasty old Presbyterian, very uptight and so on. And he had a butler called Emory.

Virginia Garrison [00:15:40] He had a butler?

William Gosman [00:15:41] Yeah. His name. Well, I guess that's what you call me. You know, a guy took care of his house, took care, whatever. And Emory was a gay, a gay Jamaican. And he was quite a character, believe me. And he used to come down to the dock all the time, drink beers with the fishermen. And I don't know what else he did, but whatever. I mean, just this is might have been a century ago. I mean, people today

wouldn't even relate to it. It would be the way the situation was. So then we got there and then we started going down there in the summer times. We lived in the Round House there, which was the Harbormaster's house, and that was built, I think at the same time that Carl Fisher was building all this stuff here and other than that we had the old fish house, which was just a regular building where we, I think we had one refrigeration unit there, probably about twice as big as this room here. The rest of it was this open thing where we would put the after we offloaded the fish from the fishermen, the draggers, we'd box it up into wooden boxes and ice it down on the dock and so on. I had to put one shovel on the bottom, put the fish in, put in another shovel in the middle, put the fish in and put in another two shovels on top and nail the thing shut. And by the time you were done, you had about 150, 200 pounds in there. But the thing about it was, we liked porgies better than the fluke. Because porgies filled the box up faster and they were a lot lighter than the fluke with the fluke packed tight and it was they were a lot harder to work with.

Virginia Garrison [00:17:26] That's hard work.

William Gosman [00:17:27] Yeah, it was extremely hard work. We didn't have forklifts then or anything. Everything was done with your back and your hands. And hand trucks.

Virginia Garrison [00:17:33] So those shovels were in there so that someone could remove the fish with them? Was that why you left the shovels in there? The layers? With the shovels?

William Gosman [00:17:42] No. The layers was just to keep it cold because it had to go to New York City.

Virginia Garrison [00:17:46] But you were saying you put a shovel in and then you put fish on top, and then.

William Gosman [00:17:50] You had to put a shovel on the bottom of it because, well, it kept it that's where the cold is the cold goes down to the bottom. And that kept a layer. Plus it kept the fish from slimy fish from going right on the boards where it would degrade faster. And it would start, you know, turning sour.

Virginia Garrison [00:18:10] Okay.

William Gosman [00:18:11] And then sometimes if the fish need it, we'd put a little small shovel in the middle of it and we'd fill the remainder of the box and shovel them on top and then we'd nail it. And then we take it in the fish house and the truck would back up. And we had these two big hooks with hang on to it and some be on the winch and pull it out. And we would push it into the back of the truck. And we used to do that and I thought that was pretty cool.

Virginia Garrison [00:18:35] So you were doing that, like with your father or.

William Gosman [00:18:39] Yeah, well, my father, brothers, and Francis Fougere.

Virginia Garrison [00:18:42] Who's that?

William Gosman [00:18:44] He was a guy lived in Montauk, I believe he was down from Nova Scotia too with the rest of the Nova Scotians. I think he came down with them.

Virginia Garrison [00:18:54] You don't happen to know how to spell his last name do you?

William Gosman [00:18:57] Jeez, I really don't.

Virginia Garrison [00:19:00] It's okay.

William Gosman [00:19:00] Because they had a daughter named Alice Fougere too and a daughter named Janet. She married a cop out here way back in the 50s or something. That's right. And Francis. He was wiry little guy, but he was super strong, he only weighed about 140 pounds. Jack [?] was 50 gallon oil drums around like nothing. But anyway, all those guys were like that.

Virginia Garrison [00:19:28] So as a child and then as a young man, you would be going to school in Amagansett and and then staying in the summer at the Round House in Montauk?

William Gosman [00:19:39] Right on weekend as long as the weather was warm because it wasn't heated at the time. No, it was heated because I think we had kerosene heaters and there some when we had a fireplace too, which we used to cook steaks on or, you know, we just put it on one that was folding grill things it wasn't charcoal but you know, you just stuck it right in the flame. It was really good enough. And we used to have fresh scallops and stuff like that. We used to put them with a few breadcrumbs and fry them of all things, in bacon grease, which everybody used to use, bacon grease. And then and then you put lemon juice on it. And man it was so sweet and good. I haven't had that taste. My son tried to cook them the other night, but didn't. Didn't get it. Yeah. I have to try it myself, see if I can recreate it because I had a lot of good food then because it was all fresh and my mother was a good, just a naturally good cook, you know, she put stuff together good. But anyway.

Virginia Garrison [00:20:43] So now it sounds like there were some characters in Amagansett as well as in Montauk.

William Gosman [00:20:49] So yeah, they were. There were a lot of them, but going to Montauk was still a different world.

Virginia Garrison [00:20:57] You want to elaborate on that?

William Gosman [00:20:59] Yeah, it was because you come down all there was like I said, they had the draggers. And that was it. They didn't have the open boats or the charter boats down here originally. As far as I remember. Right, because I don't this is the thing I don't know about the chronology. I can't remember it because that next dock, we were the only people there, right? Except for Star Island. They had the Yacht Club and Mrs. Aubert's buildings there which under those great big bright green roofs, slate roofs were really cool.

Virginia Garrison [00:21:33] Those are the ones at the end of Star Island Road?

William Gosman [00:21:35] Yeah, they'd be. They used to be on the Deep Sea Club.

Virginia Garrison [00:21:38] Right? Right. Okay. Well. And who. What was her name, Mrs. Aubert?

William Gosman [00:21:42] I don't know. We always said, Mrs. Aubert owns that. I don't know who that was. She was just another French name for.

Virginia Garrison [00:21:48] Yeah, right.

William Gosman [00:21:48] But I think she was just some rich old lady or something.

Virginia Garrison [00:21:51] I don't know. But the yacht club was different then.

William Gosman [00:21:53] Yeah, the yacht club. Yeah, but the yacht club there, they had gambling over there and everything else. I mean people used to come in on their yachts go past the dock. They'd go up to the yacht club and they'd party up there. This is in the 40s and 50s when they had casinos and whatever they had there.

Virginia Garrison [00:22:09] Whatever they had. Right. Because that was built during Fisher's time in the 20s.

William Gosman [00:22:13] Well, no, no, it was after Fisher's time.

Virginia Garrison [00:22:15] Was it.

William Gosman [00:22:15] They still had something going there.

Virginia Garrison [00:22:17] On there. yeah. No, I mean.

William Gosman [00:22:18] You know, I'm not sure of the chronology about that. Yeah. I'm just saying. the physical layout of the place. And then they had the Navy dock which was built during the Second World War to accommodate anything the Navy had to do. The Coast Guard station wasn't there. That came down later.

Virginia Garrison [00:22:35] The Navy dock was on Fort Pond Bay, though, right?

William Gosman [00:22:37] That was one of them. Yeah. They had a dock. They also had a dock that took care of submarines that could come in there also.

Virginia Garrison [00:22:44] So on Montauk Harbor at the north end, there was like Charlie Bonner's dock.

William Gosman [00:22:51] Right? That's it.

Virginia Garrison [00:22:53] And then to the south of there, pretty far south was the yacht club.

William Gosman [00:23:00] Yacht Club and Mrs. Aubere's and the Navy dock.

Virginia Garrison [00:23:04] Oh there was a Navy dock there.

William Gosman [00:23:06] That was there. And as you look between us and the Navy dock it was just a lot of sand and reeds or beach grass or whatever and tons of mosquitoes and gnats. Because I remember as a kid that's when I started smoking I would have been nineteen we always trying to imitate the men there who were all smokers

and heavy drinkers. So that's what we were supposed to do if you were a boy, you know. But anyway, and the reason I'm I'm getting ahead of myself. But anyway, it was all like swampy there and so on.

Virginia Garrison [00:23:46] So it's it's so interesting. It's hard to picture now, you know?

William Gosman [00:23:50] Yeah. And where was I going? It made me think of smoking cigarettes. Is is because of the gnats, mosquitoes. Because we'd be working on the dock when we were kids. We were only, once we got to be about 12, we started doing the heavy work, which is grinding the ice and then fixing the, nailing the loading the boxes, the fish boxes, and unloading the boats.

Virginia Garrison [00:24:22] How'd you grind the ice?

William Gosman [00:24:25] Well, we had a platform with an ice grinder on it, which was it had a big steel drum. Probably the steel drum is probably about 24 inches in diameter, I guess. And then they had or that wide and made it and it had these spikes in it, you know, spikes on it. I don't know. Through the whole drum maybe there were twenty spikes in it. We had to take a 300-pound cake of ice and cut it into 3 or 4 pieces, grab it with the ice tongs and lift it up onto a platform about maybe six inches higher than this table, maybe a little higher even, right? Because I remember it was up to about here and put it into the throw it on the platform, then push it into the crusher and it would go down there. You had to be careful because there was no safety thing at all. And the last thing you want to do is be in that ice crusher. But yeah, that's what it was. And then of course, we figured, well let's see how strong we can be. Okay first when I started doing it, we could do it in six pieces. Then you could do it in four pieces. And finally, when you got stronger, you could just cut once across, one down the middle and swing the whole thing up there. So, I mean, these started off at 300 pounds, but by the time they melted or something, they were less than that maybe. But, you know, 250 or something. But we used to get those from Perry Duryea. He used to because he had a little insulated little house. You know, we he would bring it down, we'd, we'd take the cakes of ice off the truck which was a ramp sliding down there so their driver would slide it down to us and we had to stand there, straddle it and catch it with the ice tongs. So make sure it didn't turn over on our legs or something. But it was then we'd stack it in there and then as we needed it, we'd give a ton of a ton of ice or seven cakes basically. And sometimes I would take one ton from Guy Pete two tons or something like that. So it was all done by hand.

Virginia Garrison [00:26:23] I tend to forget how important ice is it, I guess, in the seafood business, you know, and it's huge right?

William Gosman [00:26:32] Yeah. Yeah, exactly. Yeah. So and was getting back to when we were unloading the thing, that's when we started smoking is because Red Cantwell or somebody like they I don't know Francis said hey I have a cigaret so we it because to keep the bugs away and it did to a certain point because you just have clouds of gnats that you got them all over the place you know and so it's that's all you started smoking. And of course back then that was a sign of manhood when you smoked and drank beer. And I know we used to have the Lucky Strikes and the Camels unfiltered ones. I remember in the summertime rolling up in your T-shirt like that, which you've probably seen in a James Dean movie or something. Right, Right. But everybody used to do that.

Virginia Garrison [00:27:20] And did you did you have a nickname as a kid or. No.

William Gosman [00:27:26] Bruce Erickson and a couple of my buddies and Bob Cody. I used to call me Shannon.

Virginia Garrison [00:27:32] Which you must have liked because.

William Gosman [00:27:34] I like that yeah.

Virginia Garrison [00:27:35] Brucie Erickson And who was the other person?

William Gosman [00:27:40] Bob Cote. COTE. He was from Amagansett. His father was French-Canadian. Or of that descent. I don't know if he came from Canada. I don't think he did come from Canada, but his mother was a DiSunno.

Virginia Garrison [00:27:57] And Brucie Erickson was out here, right?

William Gosman [00:27:58] Bruce Erickson I think she knows him because he knows that she. I know they knew the Lusty family because I remember hearing that name from Bruce. And Bruce's father, Johnny, was a very good, excellent sword fisherman, you know. And Bruce used to go out swordfishing I remember that.

Virginia Garrison [00:28:21] Did you have a preference, like being in Montauk or Amagansett?

William Gosman [00:28:26] Now, going through school grade school, I went through in Amagansett. I graduated and, you know, in the eighth grade there and I think there were only like 11 kids in the class. There weren't many kids. And I was I was smart in Amagansett, but I didn't. Then we went to high school in East Hampton, and that was a huge change. So for a few years most of the time when we lived in Amagansett I hung out with Amagansett and East Hampton kids, all different kinds whether they were Bubbies, nerds, jocks, or whatever. I had a lot of different friends from different groups and I played sports up until my junior year. Then I got my brother went nuts and there was a real family tragedy and so on. So I dropped out and I really regretted it because I loved playing football and basketball. But then, of course, by that time I was 16 or 17 and part of the time I had to hitchhike all the way home from from East Hampton in the middle of the winter to Montauk down by the docks. I'd hitchhike.

Virginia Garrison [00:29:37] You were living in Montauk then?

William Gosman [00:29:37] Well, at times, yeah. How the hell was that? Because that would be in a winter. But anyway, I just remember at one time we didn't have busses taking us home or anything like that. That was out of the thing. And of course I was always worried about if I got some times you'd get stuck in Napeague in the middle of that big stretch with somebody to turn it off. And then I'd be scared as hell because they had wild dogs down here. And then at certain times of the year, because I remember seeing wild dogs chase down a deer and kill them. So it was, you know, it was pretty scary. So and then I just started hanging out more with Montauk kids and going going downhill. That's when we started robbing beer off the boats and so on.

Virginia Garrison [00:30:25] Tell me more about that.

William Gosman [00:30:28] Well, when we were kids, this is what I'm not quite sure of the way the the time, the chronological thing. Because actually, originally I told you about us being the only place down there. But then Frank Ward built a dock next to us.

Virginia Garrison [00:30:42] Frank Ward.

William Gosman [00:30:43] WARD and the Fitzgerald Boys, it was Dick Fitzgerald.

Virginia Garrison [00:30:50] Is that the guy who owned the Dock?

William Gosman [00:30:52] Well, yeah. I like Dick Fitzgerald. And Frank Ward built the dock, and Bob Fitzgerald, I think, ran the bar. They built a bar, which is now George Watson's.

Virginia Garrison [00:31:06] It was Bob Fitzgerald before Watson.

William Gosman [00:31:08] Watson And that's who George bought it off of.

Virginia Garrison [00:31:10] Right.

William Gosman [00:31:12] And that's where the house where I live in right now was it was Dick Fitzgerald's house and the cabins next to me was and that house there was Joan Behan who was Bob Fitzgerald's wife, wound up keeping that. And I remember once when I first started living in that house, I'd look across the pond and I'd see Bob Fitzgerald walk down. He must've been drinking at the Shagwong or something like that. And then late afternoon, I'd see him looking across at my house, you know, from. Yeah. No, no, no. From. From where the landing is on Fort Pond, you know, behind the, the, the .

Virginia Garrison [00:31:55] The boat launch?

William Gosman [00:31:55] The boat launch behind the white elephant. That one there where the soccer field is.

Virginia Garrison [00:32:00] So he'd been walking from Shagwong through town.

William Gosman [00:32:01] I'd just see him walking by that had half drunk and looking over there. I just felt like, God, he must feel bad because he's looking at those kept my house and cabins and all that and and realized he doesn't own any of it anymore.

Virginia Garrison [00:32:15] How did that happen?

William Gosman [00:32:17] They got a divorce or something you know, the Behans and Fitzgeralds. I don't want to elaborate on that.

Virginia Garrison [00:32:23] Yeah. And you bought the house from them? From Fitzgerald?

William Gosman [00:32:30] Yes. But at the time that Fitzgerald boy had died. Had divorced too. And what's her name? Got his wife? Ex-wife owned the house. That's who I bought the house off, I think, in 1971, 72. I bought it for something like \$31,000 and my mortgage payments were \$150 a month. No, 135. And I didn't think I could do it. So but I was worried about that.

Virginia Garrison [00:32:57] That looks like a nice spot there on the pond.

William Gosman [00:32:59] Yeah, it is a nice spot. I've been living there too long ago and I got to get a lot of work done before it caves in.

Virginia Garrison [00:33:05] How long? So around when did you buy it?

William Gosman [00:33:07] Like you said, I think was 72. 71. 72. Right. A couple a year or so after I got married.

Virginia Garrison [00:33:15] Now, who who did you marry?

William Gosman [00:33:17] Suzanne Koch. The one who helped build his library. Okay, Suzanne. Suzanne Koch Gosman. KOCH.

Virginia Garrison [00:33:22] Okay. Yeah, yeah, just amazing. Okay. And how long were you married?

William Gosman [00:33:31] 16. 17 years, I guess. I don't remember when it was finalized? Yeah, we had two kids.

Virginia Garrison [00:33:38] And they.

William Gosman [00:33:39] Asa and Lilah.

Virginia Garrison [00:33:40] And Lilah's the musical one.

William Gosman [00:33:44] Yeah, she studied opera. She sang in a lot of different places. She lived in Germany, in Italy.

Virginia Garrison [00:33:52] LILAH right?

William Gosman [00:33:54] Right, right.

Virginia Garrison [00:33:56] Asa's here? And Lilah studied like opera.

William Gosman [00:34:02] She studied opera music major at Peabody and Manhattan School of Music. But then she wound up after competing with about 100,000 other sopranos in New York City to try to make money. She was a starving artist for about ten years, and they're getting gig here and there and so on. Singing wherever she could sing, whatever. And then she decided, okay, I got to get something else more dependable. So she went back to school. She had a good deal at the University of Pennsylvania. A friend of hers told her about it. She went and became through the system there to become a therapist and so on.

Virginia Garrison [00:34:40] Oh wow.

William Gosman [00:34:41] She's now lives in Philadelphia and she's doing very well for herself in her practice.

Virginia Garrison [00:34:47] Nice. Do you go visit her? Philly's a nice city.

William Gosman [00:34:51] I've only been down there twice. I mean, she comes here, she'll be here in a few days. She comes up here 3 or 4 times a year, but four times. But the problem with Philadelphia I hate going down there is because of having to go through Penn Station. It's a nightmare for me because I can't hear or see that good. I'm trying to find and find my connections and it'll be ridiculous. You know, every time I'd make it, the train would be pulling away and I'd have to jump on the Amtrak just to get down there. It was very stressful. So I got to figure out different ways to do it. You know, maybe I can fly down or something like that. Once her husband came up and picked me up, he was very nice about that. But anyway.

Virginia Garrison [00:35:36] That's. And Asa was working at the fish house?

William Gosman [00:35:46] Yeah, he runs that. But now that it's sold, he's not owner but the people bought it want him and Bryan to keep running that business down there. okay. So the wholesale business there, boats will still offload there and the retail market there where they sell all the steaks and one fish and all that other stuff and gourmet stuff here and there that'll be there too. So for how long I know at least another two years if they. Depends on how it works out. If you're going to I don't know if they want to stay there or what, but the at least they have a job they're not out of a job. The rest of the family are just they're a little bit older and they kind of go on their own ways and they divided up different things so I don't know what they're going to do.

Virginia Garrison [00:36:31] And so we should talk about. Did you go to college?

William Gosman [00:36:36] Yeah, I went to two and a half years at University of Kansas.

Virginia Garrison [00:36:40] Okay. What were you majoring in?

William Gosman [00:36:41] Well, wound up majoring it. And I had to choose a major in my junior year. I didn't know what the hell to do. First I started studying art when I went there. Then I changed that. And then I was going to major in history. You know, I was interested in anthropology and stuff like that. So but anyway, at the point I was 26 years old at then and back in the day, know, 24 years old. Back in the day, if you were a male, it was just assumed you had to do military service because if you didn't, you know, if you dodged the draft, that was a federal offense and you could go to jail. So rather than volunteer for the Army, which I would have had to spent three years with the Navy, which would have been four years if I volunteered for the draft and got drafted, that means I'd only have to serve two years. Volunteering for the draft draft means you go down to the local draft board, which was in Kansas City, Kansas, there, and I said, Move my number up. So the next time they called, the next month they call. I would then I dropped out of classes and I was in the Army in March, March 22nd, I think was 1964. And my family didn't even know it. I just so I wrote them from after I was in basic training in Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. The reason I remember it there, because when the Army, they have a lot time, they don't know what to do with you. They make you do these stupid jobs. So we had to go throught the forests and pick up leaves in these cotton bags which you put around mattresses, you know, mattress bags or something. And we had scooped the leaves up, put them in. The only thing I remember this is all coming across all these baby copperhead snakes, which are poisonous. So that's what I remember of that. But anyway, then I remember the other time in basic training when everybody about a thousand kids got food poisoning. So around 7 or 8 o'clock at night, everybody in the squad, about a thousand guys in the different buildings were all in line to go to the toilet because everybody, you

know, how many times did you go last night? Ten times. How many you got seven or 8 to 10. [?] held the whole food poisoning in the whole goddamn battalion. And then they tried to say what it was. They thought that the soap wasn't rinsed off enough on the food trays, the stainless steel food trays. So that's the other memorial thing about basic training then and then the regular stuff, whatever you do, you know, of course, the big nose crawling under machine gun fire.

Virginia Garrison [00:39:37] Did you have to go to Vietnam?

William Gosman [00:39:41] Well, that's the story because once you once you get out of basic training, they assign you an MOS they call it and then that's your job in the Army, could be infantry, engineering tanks or whatever. Communications is something. So I got assigned to a tank, tanks. So in the early part of the war of 64 to 66, they weren't using tanks over there and they were just building it up. And so our unit would normally rotate to Germany and we just happened to be in for two years. But we had to be in Texas for two years. So I missed out going to Germany. But anyway, so no, I didn't go to Vietnam and I spent most of two years just driving around the plains and hills of Texas and maneuvers and stuff like that. And of course, I remember the scorpions when we had to sleep outside and everybody was trying to sleep on top of the tanks he was caught in. But. But they weren't the bad kind, supposedly. But anyway, I was like, no, I don't have to go to Vietnam. I was lucky. That's I lucked out. Marshall Marshall Prado was in the Army a little bit later than I was, and he didn't have to go either because he got in a unit that went over to Germany also. And so we kind of lucked out. So I'm really glad I didn't do it because I have kind of an addictive nature and they had all kinds of heroin and pot and everything else going on over there. So I'm glad that I didn't.

Virginia Garrison [00:41:20] Are you still friends with a lot of people that you were during your childhood out here?

William Gosman [00:41:24] But there's not many of them left, you know, I mean, the ones I grew up with, like in grade school or high school? No, I really I hardly ever see them. Once in a while, I'll run into them someplace, you know. Supermarket or something like that. And back to Montauk. Where were you with Montauk. I forgot. We were talking about, you know, my Army career. Yeah, that was really I hated it at the time and I'm really glad I did it now that I'm 84 years old. But at that time, as soon as I got out of the Army in 1966, it's like the world had changed. That's when the anti-war movement and the civil rights movement was going strong and the feminist movement was going strong. So things were completely strong. I went from being a 1950s person, where you're supposed to be this macho, tough kid and all this other shit with a cigarette dangling out of your mouth, you know, to, to the 1960s where you're supposed to be a flower child, you know. So that was interesting.

Virginia Garrison [00:42:28] And did you come back to two Montauk at that point?

William Gosman [00:42:31] Yeah, yeah, I did. I did because it was just. It was too easy.

Virginia Garrison [00:42:36] What was too easy, coming back to Montauk?

William Gosman [00:42:38] Being in Montauk. Yeah, yeah, yeah. There was all kind of booze around and you know, you can work and, and and summer time and fall and part of the spring, get your 20 weeks and then you could collect unemployment through the wintertime and so on. And that's what a lot of people operated around that all on the East

End every by probably most of the old timers collected unemployment at one time or another. And getting back to my father. That's another thing I wanted to say what he did for a living, but he was he did some commercial fishing a little bit on Fort Pond Bay before the 38 hurricane. And he used to have small draggers. And he did that for a while. And then during the Depression, he ran this road gang or something. He worked in Franklin Roosevelt, started that CCC program, whatever it was, and he worked on that for a while. Then he became a salesman for Lester Motors up in East Hampton, and he was a great salesman. He did really good, he used to get awards for it and so on. Then he had the opportunity and he did some carpentry too, like that's what everybody used to do, either fish, carpentry or whatever. And then he got the dock, you know, he decided to lease the dock and so on. So a lot of people knew him. He actually ran for the town justice once in the in the 50s. I remember I was in grade school. That must've been 12 years old handing out pencils "Gosman for Trustee." Of course, he was a Democrat. He was a Truman Democrat. And of course, the East End has been ruled by Republicans and still has been until recently. And it may again be I don't know. But it's whatever but so you know he was a but he lost you know he was popular people liked him though he was very personable and stuff. But ah but his family though he didn't he was kind of a I don't know, I never had any problems with him but my older brother used to fight with him. It was horrible. He'd fight, you know, on the table. He he was a maniac. I remember once he broke a plate of spaghetti on my mother's face. She would complaining at him. He just took that thing and threw it.

Virginia Garrison [00:45:08] Who did that ?

William Gosman [00:45:10] My brother John. But she wiped the stuff off and kept talking. But my father. He. He went and my mother was always criticizing. So he eventually left.

Virginia Garrison [00:45:22] Your father did?

William Gosman [00:45:24] This is when they got older, you know. They were still married but he started going to Florida and she didn't like Florida. And then she got her windmill house up there, her dream house when we started making money and so on, so we could buy the thing for her and so on. one reason I felt an obligation to be working there to I to help make enough money for my brother Sandy to get him in a good institution, mental institution so they could cure him. But we didn't understand that it was so bad then, the mental health, I couldn't. I know it. I still almost want to tear up when I think about it was so goddamned bad. And they wanted to talking about doing a lobotomy on him and so on. I think his initial thing, when he cracked it, they didn't even diagnose it right. I don't know if they ever did, but whatever. My mother never sent him back to school, so he didn't integrate with kids his own age. But he was a tragedy of the family. And I could go on and on about that. That's another whole different thing.

William Gosman [00:46:35] And I'm trying to think of what it would be like the fishermen down there. I remember Captain, Captain Nat Edwards, he had the Sally O, it was a open boat, about 30 foot long. And he used to have traps out beyond the East and West Jetty. And I remember Narscis Briand, These are the Canadian guys that came down here from Nova Scotia.

Virginia Garrison [00:46:54] How do you spell that, do you know?

William Gosman [00:46:56] NARSCIS, I guess.

William Gosman [00:47:00] And Briand, BRIAND.

William Gosman [00:47:01] BRIAND, and you know they have family descendants out here.

Virginia Garrison [00:47:05] Yeah okay.

William Gosman [00:47:06] And one of the Paon boys I don't know Wilford Paon or one of those Pete.

William Gosman [00:47:12] Pete, that's the Ronnie's, would have been Ronnie's uncles I guess.

William Gosman [00:47:13] And Captain Nat could go out there a couple of hours pull the traps up and he'd come back with about 50 boxes of porgies. You know, that's how ample the fish were, you know, So they had porgy season, fluke season and so on. And of course all the draggers there. And, you know, Bobby Byrnes and his mate Emmet Sarris, they ran the Marion H. And then had Lars Manars [?] from East Hampton from Amagansett. He lived down the road from us and the Mary Ogden, I think was it was an old school schooner that he converted into a fishing boat, Eastern rig fishing boat, eastern rig's when they have the cabin in back. It was the most seaworthy boat down there. And then there was the Alwa, ALWAYS, which was Gil Parsons's. Actually, as Ken Edwards's owned the boat, he was from Amagansett you know, the big extensive Edwards family, you know, all involved in fishing or whaling or something at one time. And Bill Parsons ran it. He was another guy from Amagansett. And I remember Gil because he was one of the strongest fishermen down there, he had he had fingers about that big around. I mean, these guys, these guys were rugged guys, you know.

Virginia Garrison [00:48:35] And worked hard and played hard, right?

William Gosman [00:48:36] Well, yeah, they a lot of them did. But some of them, Bobby Byrnes wasn't like that. And Gil Parsons, and, you know, they didn't drink a lot. You know you could tell the difference. There were the guys who who didn't drink or drank very little and the guys who drank a lot. And you'd see it right away, the guys who didn't drink a lot they'd have nice boats again, make more money and so on, and the other guys would have much more problems. But the one one main character down there that I remember everybody remembers was Shipwreck Halliday. HALLIDAY. And he had a we bought him a boat called The Undine, which was a dragger about 35 foot long or so on. And Dick was really striking looking. He was about six four and about Skinny guy, very pronounced features and so on. Just a cool guy. He loved Hank Williams, you know, the original country singer, you know. You know, he used to sing. I love those songs still, remember, I still do remember them because, you know, that one "Hear that lonesome whippoorwill," and "Heart " something or other. I don't know. It's a very famous country western classic. And you could hear the midnight train blowing and where I lived right down from Amagansett, down from the tracks here. I hear the steam engine go down before the diesels came. And you could hear them blowing the horn, hear that lonesome whistle calling. And it was a lonesome whistle, you know, And we used to hear the whippoorwills. And too, you don't hear whippoorwills anymore. They're all gone. They were beautiful. These are the things I remember, especially in dusk, growing up here. I don't remember if we had them in Montauk but we had them in Amagansett. And that's what I was afraid of. I was going to go start going all over the place.

Virginia Garrison [00:50:29] It's totally fine, really.

William Gosman [00:50:30] So anyway, Shipwreck Halliday was a real character down at the docks.

William Gosman [00:50:33] Yes. What happened, yeah, this was the Coast Guard. What what did, he was a very good fisherman, he was a good fluke fisherman. So he'd go out there, he fished by himself, which is dangerous to begin with because if something happens to you there's nobody else to rescue you if you fall overboard or you slip or something or get caught in the winch, you know, you're in bad shape. So he every time there was a storm hit, he'd stay out till the last minute. Everybody else would be coming in, came in, bigger boats, whatever. And where was Halliday? All of a sudden, you look across the east jetty and you see the top of this mass come down, up and down. The waves are like huge there. And he'd be going up and down those waves. Here here Shipwreck! Dick's coming in and he comes through the thing and everybody's like wow, he made it, you know, but sometimes he didn't make it. And he sank a boat. And one time he had to swim two miles to get to shore. I imagine he did the side stroke cause he was long and lean he probably could do that. And he sank a couple of boats or the radio, the fishermen he'd radio the Coast Guard to come save him or something like that. So the Coast Guard knew him really well. So I don't know if they nicknamed him Shipwreck or just the other fishermen named him Shipwreck, but unfortunately he got he was an alcoholic, too, at the same time. So at one time, he had to get an operation at Southampton Hospital because of his stomach, cancer or something like that. I don't know. And he got he got the operation and he came back, back, back down to the docks. And while he was in the hospital, they needed blood donations for him. And so all the fishermen donated a lot of blood to him and so on. And he came back, he started fishing, he was never the same though. But then he kind of started living down there on the dock. We had this old wheelhouse from a boat, which was at one end of the dock, was about big as this thing.

Virginia Garrison [00:52:38] This room?

William Gosman [00:52:38] And that's where he slept. That's where he lived, you know, he had his little boat and he had his little cooking thing, whatever he did. And he survived on it for quite a few years.

Virginia Garrison [00:52:49] This was like where the town dock is now?

William Gosman [00:52:51] No, this is where our dock is. It'd be right where the clam bar is now.

Virginia Garrison [00:52:58] Yeah, I guess we should talk about the clam bar, the restaurant, too, the sort of growth of that.

William Gosman [00:53:02] Well, the restaurant. The restaurant started. Well, actually, I'm talking about that wheelhouse it connected to something else. That's where the original or what should I call breakfast stand or hamburger, hot dog stand or chowder stand, whatever you want to call it. That was about as big as this room, too. And I had these pull-down shutters. You pull it up and the thing would lift up like that. Then they'd have a counter on the outside, which people would come up and order and they served hot dogs, hamburgers and chowder. And.

Virginia Garrison [00:53:39] And the commercial fishermen were there.

William Gosman [00:53:41] Yeah, they were there then. But yeah, but also the party boats were coming down.

Virginia Garrison [00:53:46] Okay so now docks. Yeah.

William Gosman [00:53:47] And so I don't know if they did breakfast there or not. Mike Nicoletti used to work it a lot. Mike was a great guy. He was from Rhode Island originally and he had a lot of kids. He had married one of the Beckwiths, I believe, and so they started going good here. Well, why not? So then all of a sudden somebody approached my father, I think it was, or my mother and father. And they had these two model homes up right now where the real estate office is now where the Dime Bank is?

Virginia Garrison [00:54:25] Yeah.

William Gosman [00:54:25] They had these two buildings, adjacent buildings. Back then they used to have model homes like when Leisurama was built, they'd have a model home so people could look at it, whatever. So they had two of these and they were outdated so they wanted to move them so they talked to my parents and my father. Okay, bring them down to our place and we'll make a restaurant. And that's what they did. We had a counter there and we had a bar. The bar was on one side and the counter was on the other side. And mainly the business was early morning. Fishermen coming and getting breakfast like 3, 4 or 5 o'clock in the morning, stuff like that. When they'd come back, they'd come in and get something too before they took busses back to the city. And and that started doing really good. And then people began to discover the place from further, Amagansett and East Hampton, starting coming down here then we realized we can do some more business. So we put a concrete apron in front of the building like that and put an awning on it. And me and my brother John made these barrels. We had these old fish barrels like this and we painted 'em up. And we cut plywood rounds on top of it. And we made the tables. And I remember them distinctly because I had to sand them every spring to get the old junk off because being in a humid thing they'd start crackling and so on. And so I'd recoat them and resand them and and coat them. And I'd do this for years. I think there may still be a few of them left from about from about 50, 60 years ago. Whatever it was I don't remember.

Virginia Garrison [00:56:03] They sound familiar. The description of them.

William Gosman [00:56:07] Yeah. I try and think if there's any left. Anyway, they were left for quite a while, but then they replaced them. When we built a big restaurant, we started replacing them more, but they were there for quite a while, only on the lower deck and so on.

Virginia Garrison [00:56:23] So they had the two model houses.

William Gosman [00:56:26] Yeah. We put them together. Yeah. Right. And we had a built a freezer out back, a cooler out back. And so we'd start serving people there. And then I guess I was in college when I was in college I was there in the summer but when I was in the Army I missed the whole thing about two or three years. But business began to grow and people discovered it and people come down from Amagansett for their steamers and lobsters and we used to serve them on Ballentine Rheingold trays. There used to be these metal trays about 12 inches in diameter. The beer distributors used to give them to you. So we'd just put put the mussels on those. I mean the clams. I mean the soft clams, steamers

rather. Right? Right. Everybody calls them piss clams, soft clams. This that. There's about four different names for them.

Virginia Garrison [00:57:19] There's not that many around anymore.

William Gosman [00:57:21] It's basically steamers and would serve them with a cup of butter. And then it was very primitive. And we did the same thing with lobsters. We put them on a tray. I don't remember if we put a piece of wax paper underneath or not, I don't remember, but and people liked it. Very rustic. It's really cool. You sit outside and it was, you know, neat, you know. And that grew and I remember we were serving over 400 people a day after a while. And then then it came along, this idea of building the whole new a huge restaurant. And I don't know how that how that got started. My brother John did a lot of designing with these two two architects, Howard and Arlie Ollie.

Virginia Garrison [00:58:08] They were those were their first names?

William Gosman [00:58:12] I don't know what their name. They were two gay guys. This is back in the mid-sixties. So they start planning it and I don't know where they came from. Way this is just all the different mix of different types of people that came through that place. Every nationality, everything you can think of, every persuasion. And it's a so we built it in 1968, and I remember building it. We did the physical work ourselves. We got Davey Webb, a local contractor, and Davey was an engineer, graduated from a good school. I forget where he graduated from. His father was a builder out here too. But Davey didn't want to go on to corporate things, he wanted to work with his hands so he became a contractor out here and my brother knew him well. I knew him vaguely because he was ahead of me in high school. And so he got a crew together, Ronnie Sauers and his brother Timmy and Donald Briand and Foster, Harold Foster. And I don't know if you've heard these names, you probably I'm sure Gary knows them. And Richie Nessel, everybody knows Richie Nessel and my cousin Valentine Harrington and David Quigley from Ireland. They stayed the winter to work on it -- myself, Dickie, I think Sandy even helped us too. And John and Emmett and who else was in that crew? There might have been a few other people, but I remember doing hauling a lot of lumber, banging a lot of nails and drinking a lot of beer, you know, And it was all good.

Virginia Garrison [00:59:53] This was around '68.

William Gosman [00:59:54] Yeah, we finished it in '68. Yeah. But I remember shingling the roof there in the middle of the winter and I remember being on the highest part, you know, it was kind of scary. What was more scary was shingling another part of it with my brother John, who was so goddamn mad he had to do physical work that he'd slam things around. You'd be next to him you'd be afraid he's going to knock you off the roof. I don't want to go into him believe me, but he he did do the design and he was a driving force behind a lot of it to get it done. So, I mean, he deserves a lot of credit. He does. So after '68, then it took off. Yeah, eventually, myself, my cousin Val and David, we were in the kitchen. Ran the kitchen. Emmett was still over in the other place.

Virginia Garrison [01:00:42] Which was the other place?

William Gosman [01:00:44] Which was the fish house. No, the fish house. They were still doing the commercial fishing dock. All right.

Virginia Garrison [01:00:49] Okay. And and so who was doing the. The restaurant you and?

William Gosman [01:00:54] Roberta, myself, Val, and David. None of us know what the hell we were doing except for Roberta. So we kind of struggled through the kitchen, and it was tough. It was tough. And but we got through it, you know, kind of learn a bit and so on. But then it got to a point where I just couldn't figure out how the hell to do it because I was no good with books and figures like that. And even though I was probably very smart in school, I just couldn't translate it. So I got to the thing when I had to, you know, or I'll do the cooking. I'll do a lot of the prep work and all the other stuff. Sorry, cutting all the fish, the portions and all the other stuff. So I wound up doing a lot of that.

Virginia Garrison [01:01:38] And then when was the all the shops and all the green space?

William Gosman [01:01:41] They were they were built gradually after that. I don't know when the first one after that was maybe Captain Clancy, That building. Clancy. Gosman's general store, Captain Clancy ran that, no we ran it. Jimmy Hewitt's father ran it for a while for my father. That building was over where the clam bar is now. Then we moved it. Where the Kai Kai is now.

Virginia Garrison [01:02:08] Which is what used to be the Owen Clancy's Oar House is where Kai Kai is, but down by the clam bar, is that where the general store originally was?

William Gosman [01:02:19] No, the general store was some other little shack before. That's. That's where we had the oh Christ what did they call it? The windowsill club, where all the fishermen used to come down. The old general store.

Virginia Garrison [01:02:33] The windowsill club? You gotta describe that.

William Gosman [01:02:35] Because in order to be a member, you had to come in, buy a six pack and set it up by this big long window so you'd have about 24 beers because it.

Virginia Garrison [01:02:43] This was at the general store, which was closer to the harbor than?

William Gosman [01:02:44] Yeah, which was the old general store, which would be approximately just north of where the clam bar is right now.

Virginia Garrison [01:02:54] I love that the windowsill club.

William Gosman [01:02:59] Yeah. So we got a lot of the captains and stuff. Mates from the open boats and charter boats have come there and start drinking. But then then the local plumbers, Joe Smyth and Buster McLaughlin and a few others used to come down there, carpenters and stuff and, you know, get drunk down there and they'd go outside and be pissing right out the door. And then one guy get drunk, the guy sign and one guy smacked the other guy or something, and a few things like that. But it was pretty peaceful, though. It wasn't too much fighting and stuff like that. But at one time we were the underground bar of Montauk. You know, more people were going there and getting drunk. The wives are calling up, have you seen Buster, Butster down there? Send him, get him the hell home, blah, blah, blah. And Joe Smyth. Yeah, that's where the picture of Joe Smyth drinking there in that picture, that was the old general store. And there was a

potbelly stove there which we used to heat up. And we have serve baloney and salami and all that crap. Then for bread and candy, all that stuff. We so so what they used to do is slice off the liverwurst and thing and put it on another one of those grills, stick it and stick it in the stove and heat it up and then you'd make sandwiches and stuff. So that would job was kind of cool when I look back at it anybody come in and saw that whole situation they'd think, wow, what is this? so there'd be about 12 guys in there. And the space was very small space, but they all drink and half drunk and telling stories and whatever, you know, tell the story about the bootlegging days or this or that. And, you know, and that's that's where those photographs were taken. Yeah, except for Joe Roy, that was a different one. But yeah, they were taken there and that, that would be a good, that would be interesting. Just doing a story on those photographs and all.

Virginia Garrison [01:04:55] Yeah, totally. You know, the windowsill club and I just love it. So too, I mean, see, you were saying that the I'm kind of going into a different time, but the fish used to be like so plentiful. And that really has changed, hasn't it? Or I mean, or whatever you want to talk about what you feel has changed since that. Well, I guess a lot of stuff has changed.

William Gosman [01:05:22] Well, I'll give you an example. When I was a kid, I used to know every dragger, open boat and charter boat that came in and out of the channel whether they went up to Duryea's or even Darenberg's in its infancy and Viking Dock and all that. I knew all the boats, I knew the mates on the boats. We used to drink together, sometimes steal beer together, they didn't have to steal beer. They had it right there. But when we were 15 or 16, we used to -- the open boats used to have beer coolers, so they'd take a couple of cases, you know, ice boxes and throw it in there. Maybe not the next day, but we knew which ones were unlocked so we used to sneak aboard and steal a bunch of beer and we'd go out at the end of the jetties and drink the beer and get half drunk. And we'd goof around like 14, 15 year old guys drinking. We were going and smoking cigarettes and cussing a lot, you know, And it was, you know.

Virginia Garrison [01:06:28] But so changing stuff.

William Gosman [01:06:30] Change.

William Gosman [01:06:31] Golly, that's what I mean.

William Gosman [01:06:34] Yes, it. Well, the change was after. It's just. What can I say? I mean, how many thousands of boats going in and out of there every day? I can't stand it. I mean, after the after I got involved in the restaurant from about 1980, well, I used to work on the dock too because I'd go back and forth, but I don't after the mid '70s, late, I just don't, you know, I never got I got away from the fishing dock and I began I didn't know I the fishermen, I used to know more. But then the last one I don't remember was Philly Ruhle.

Virginia Garrison [01:07:10] RUHLE like Tom Ruhle?

William Gosman [01:07:13] Yeah. I don't know Tom Ruhle. Philly Ruhle. He was a daredevil guy. He had this boat. They used to go swordfishing. They used to go I, I think they even used to go as far as the Azores almost. They were, you know, crazy crews on too. And then when we talked, you asked me about the other thing about the docks. Right.

Virginia Garrison [01:07:36] Well, one thing it was about change in general you know I'm sure so many things.

William Gosman [01:07:42] Things now all those people those type of people, you don't see them anymore. And I don't know I don't I can't relate to the change that much. I don't know what the hell. I remember the old-timers like Uihleins and all them and Forsbergs and Darenbergs.

Virginia Garrison [01:07:58] In what sense? Like in that you knew them individually or that they were sort of characters.

William Gosman [01:08:03] Well, I knew their family. Some of them I knew individually, some of them I don't. I never really knew the Darenbergs because it was just always anticipation, you know, there were our enemies, you know, taking business away from us or something like that. So we were always worried about Duryea, because he was a bigwig the

Virginia Garrison [01:08:23] Yeah, well, he was before you guys, too, right?

William Gosman [01:08:25] No. No. Well, yeah, up here at Fort Pond Bay he was. Yeah, but down at the docks.

Virginia Garrison [01:08:31] What was he doing down at the docks? What were they doing down at the harbor?

William Gosman [01:08:34] Well, they didn't come down after we, after we built our dock down there for the party boats, then Duryea came down, he built a dock, and he did commercial fishing. He unloaded the boats, too, but not near as much as we did. He had maybe about 20% and we did the other 80, because if people got pissed off at us, they go over to Duryea's.

Virginia Garrison [01:08:55] I didn't realize that. But so their property is that we're where like the Ben and Jerry's used to be?

William Gosman [01:09:02] Well, it's adjacent. It's adjacent on the other side of the town dock.

William Gosman [01:09:08] And so but of course I'm talking about the change where the Dock, where the Dock the barroom is, there was another dock going out there, where our dock, goes out there for commercial fishing thing where it has a big building there. So it's a little bit further over than that. And that had a diner at the end of it called Steve's Diner. Steve I forget what his last name. My father knew him well because they liked each other. They both bet on the horses. And my father used to take bets down the dock for a gangster in Southampton called Charlie Walker. But anyway, I'm getting off this thing about change. But after that, it was just I don't know then the change happened with and the whole hippie thing out happened originally. And of course that wasn't too big out here in a way. I mean, people pretended to be. They just let their hair grow long, smoked a lot of dope, drank a lot, partied a lot. And so as far as being politically active or any of that other stuff, they weren't. But there was so much stuff going on then it was kind of a blur, kind of a blur because drinking's, I mean, your motivation was to go out and get drunk.

Virginia Garrison [01:10:24] But in terms of change, like it was. So you used to know like the family, you know, who owned the boats and stuff. And that stopped.

William Gosman [01:10:33] Right, right. I don't know who owns what. You know, I don't relate to the boats at all. There's so many of them. Yeah. Are there any of the old draggers left jeez I don't know if there is or not, because then it changed. They had them building a lot bigger. Dave Krusa came and people like that from upisland that's when Gary probably came out here too I don't know where is Gary from originally?

Virginia Garrison [01:10:57] Floral Park, he came out to surf.

William Gosman [01:11:00] Yeah, a lot of guys came out to surf. Yeah. And Dave Krusa would up being a really good fisherman. A tile fisherman. Going way the hell offshore for a week, A hundred miles or whatever. The boats [?] halfway across the Atlantic. And then they started more of the trip boats. They used to be just day boats where a guy would go out overnight, maybe two nights at the most. Shipwreck is to do that, Shipwreck Halliday. But. You know, so. Yeah. So the boats got bigger and bigger and so on, and. And that's when I got more involved in the restaurant. So I wasn't so I didn't know the guys so much and so on. But I remember offloading their boats and in the wintertime it was cold as hell working on the dock and then they still had all the draggers are big, my son services down there, you know, and Chuck Weimar and now I don't know I don't know half those guys, you know, I just know them very. I think they're a different generation. Yeah. They're a generation behind me, so. And they never got to know me because I wasn't working every day on the docks that much. So, you know, so they just kind of change.

Virginia Garrison [01:12:16] What. And what about Montauk in general?

William Gosman [01:12:19] Well, Montauk in general, it became more, you know, the the surf thing started and that wasn't a big deal. But I mean, surfers are cool, you know, they like loved to party and they were sort of like the hippies of the time. Right? In a sense that they wanted to do what they wanted to do. And it was good for them because they could get a job dishwashing or something like that and surf. Or if they stayed here year round, they'd get a job fishing or banging nails or whatever and make a living and then season would come around and they'd go surfing all the time or a lot of times and so on, or fit it into waiting, waiting and waitressing, bartending and stuff like that. That's what I think the local people did. Like, I like people like Gary's age and younger. And so that, that, you know, they had all barrooms, the Blue Marlin, and Shagwong when Jimmy Hewitt came back, and a few other, Trail's End, and Salivar's. Yeah, Salivar's was a big deal too.

Virginia Garrison [01:13:33] Yeah.

William Gosman [01:13:34] So we would do all nighters and all those things [?] until they threw you out. And that's that was a change. And then of course, but when it really changed, when you really saw a lot of changes, is when the Surf Lodge opened up and I don't know when they opened up in 2000 or 1990 or something like that, and a whole different crowd of people came in and I want nothing to do with them to like, you know, that's the way I feel. So it's just I can't relate to them, even though at the time I had a lot of different interests and I used to go to the city a lot and actually even got into New Agey stuff for a while after I got divorced because I was so lost I didn't know what the hell to do. And I went down to do so because I always had an interest in kind of yoga and things like that. Of course I had an interest in music, so you know, I gravitated to stuff like that for a while. But then I realized, that's no good. So then I wind up dealing with my drinking problems and so on.

Virginia Garrison [01:14:31] You had drinking problems?

William Gosman [01:14:33] Yeah, after my divorce I met another person I was with for about 16 years.

Virginia Garrison [01:14:38] Wow.

William Gosman [01:14:38] Or something. But then after that, I don't know, I'm by myself now.

Virginia Garrison [01:14:44] So the Surf Lodge. I don't know. Is it the age, the attitude, the fashion?

William Gosman [01:14:54] The attitude? All of the. All of the above? Yeah. Well, because it became celebrity, you know, whether you are left wing, right wing or something. Bill, what's his name? The big loud mouth Irishman that used to be on Fox News. Be there or then some, some hippie musician or something who that there's always always that kind of on in I from what I hear they just moved in like that within one year they're doing over \$100,000 a night down there. The first year they brought their whole crew with them and everything else from the city. So, you know, I never I never went in the place. But it's it's still going. Yeah. You know, it's integrated part of the thing now. I don't know what they do down there now, but then the restaurants started different.

Virginia Garrison [01:15:42] In what way?

William Gosman [01:15:43] Well well the Harvest did very good because they took over from what was the people? This guy used to run the supermarket years ago. Bob Lachmann.

Virginia Garrison [01:15:54] Yeah, yeah.

William Gosman [01:15:55] Yeah, somewhat. They took it over from him. His wife ran it for a while it was pretty good. Yeah. But then somebody else took it over and they really did good. And people would come.

Virginia Garrison [01:16:04] It was the Boathouse for a while.

William Gosman [01:16:05] Yeah. Yeah. So it became. They are actually good competition for us, but there was plenty to go around at the time too. So at the most highest we, we, I think of our record was 2,500 people in one day.

Virginia Garrison [01:16:19] This is this where not the main restaurant.

William Gosman [01:16:23] The main restaurant yeah. That's from noon till 10:00. But of course, a lot of the stuff down there was shrimp baskets, you'd cook it up in two minutes whatever and we used to cook the fish in trays rather than individual orders. We'd have a sheet the way we did it on the expediting thing, it was okay. Give us, put on five orders of swordfish because you know they're going to be gone in half an hour. So you didn't have to put one a table one day. We could just come and scoop it up, put it around the plate, take it out. That's how we could serve so many dinners. We devised that system. We got ideas from the chef from Nova Scotia or Austin Stoddard, and this Black guy called Jim, and he's the one that, Hey, you guys do this, do it this way, get the trays, you know? So we started doing that and it worked.

Virginia Garrison [01:17:09] Stoddard, STODDARD?

William Gosman [01:17:09] Yeah, he's he's he's the one who taught us how to make chowder and how he taught us a lot of stuff. But Mike Nicoletti too that's irrelevant [?]

Virginia Garrison [01:17:23] Around what year was that? When you like the peak, would you say?

William Gosman [01:17:29] I'm trying to think. I think Sammy Joyce was then and my cousin Val was there. Val was more like the head cook there. And then Sammy gradually took over. What happened to Val, he used to come over here, make a bunch of money, take a bite, get a sackful of cash, go back to Ireland and Donegal someplace and live it up for the heavy drinker. You know, there were drink there was waiting for them to come. So he'd buy the whole house all the time, you know, because he was a rich guy coming from Amagansett. This was before Ireland started making money back in the day it was very primitive. People didn't have much at all. So where was I going from that? So that would have been, I don't know, maybe in the early '80s sometime I can't remember to tell you the truth, but that held steady pretty much until it got into the 2000s. I mean, you know, we do were 18, 1,900 dinners a night and Saturday.

Virginia Garrison [01:18:30] And what do you think happened in the 2000s?

William Gosman [01:18:33] Well I think we just got to getting more competition and so on probably you know people are realizing the business of it changing people had new ideas. And we still had basically the same menu type of menu, which was a family thing. But then there was a lot of people wanted sort of more sophisticated type of stuff, so they started going to some place else. But still we held held strong because it still was a traditional place.

Virginia Garrison [01:19:03] And it's such a beautiful spot.

William Gosman [01:19:03] A beautiful and you could come down there and during the day you could come down to have five your kids and family. You sit down, eat whatever you want and wouldn't cost you a fortune. I forget what our per head thing used to be then. Well, it's irrelevant today because it's so much inflation the past 40 years. But it's

Virginia Garrison [01:19:24] What do you mean by per head? What you would predict?

William Gosman [01:19:26] Well, you would predict. Well, okay. You get a table, you get a certain amount of guests. Okay. We had 1,500 guests last night. These we served so many 1,500 dinners. And then you had the gross, the gross from the night before, how much you made you just divide it up so it can be \$35 a head. Now you go to restaurants, \$100 a head, you go there if you drink at all. All right. I mean, if you can get in and out for \$75 a head at any restaurant out here, you're doing good.

Virginia Garrison [01:19:56] And I guess the clientele has gotten more like more sophisticated expectations, I guess.

William Gosman [01:20:02] Yeah, They got more money, too. I mean that.

Virginia Garrison [01:20:05] Yeah. What's that?

William Gosman [01:20:06] Yeah. You know, you have all these rich people and all these young people are making a ton of money in the city, so I don't know where they're making it, different things, you know? I know I hear of hedge fund people. This [?] or what they call it, trust fund babies, whatever, they're people with money.

Virginia Garrison [01:20:28] Yeah. And they are it's more it's more money than it used to be. I think the people visiting.

William Gosman [01:20:35] Yes. definitely. Well look at the room prices on the hotels. Right. But I mean, how much is that? How relative is that today? The way things changed, like I said, in 1972, I paid \$31,000 for my house. I probably could get at least 2 million for it out now, maybe more, cause I had to put a lot of work in it. And in fact, I may ask Gary in there, but no, I have to do some major work, you know, but well over 100, \$250,000. So I don't know.

Virginia Garrison [01:21:04] So did your family, like, acquire like that property there? Like, over time, that's just how it went?

William Gosman [01:21:10] Yes. That's what happened after we got we got the restaurant, my brother Richard bought this old motel right adjacent to it from another old Greek guy who used to make his own wine. He had his own grapes over there and stuff. Remember that wine, it was wicked?

Virginia Garrison [01:21:26] And not Pete Chimpoukchis, but someone.

William Gosman [01:21:29] No, I forget what his name was. And Dick bought that. He got a really good price on it as soon as he got out of high school. He was smart. Dickie didn't get an education, but he started buying property as soon as he could, and it served him well over the years. And so he had that. But then we then the company bought it off him a few years later.

Virginia Garrison [01:21:50] The Gosman company.

William Gosman [01:21:51] Yeah, yeah.

Virginia Garrison [01:21:52] And then that was turned into.

William Gosman [01:21:54] And then that was the help's quarters, you know. okay. But then, then we bought Schwarz's house, which was another house next to us and Newman's which is that little cottage on the road.

Virginia Garrison [01:22:05] Yeah.

William Gosman [01:22:05] And then there was the Mueller house which burned down. We bought those properties after year after year, but then we bought the Rod and Reel motel and the High Sea. We bought those and we had that two acre piece of land in between Uihlein's and where the meat store is now which we used to own that, that was the bank building there used to be a bank branch down there and, and we owned that and we sold it, you know, we had it where the Merry Mermaid was. We knocked that down, which we shouldn't have done.

Virginia Garrison [01:22:42] That would have been a great tiki bar there.

William Gosman [01:22:45] God, the building wasn't in that bad of shape either. But we couldn't agree on stuff because we, we were working so hard what do we want to spend all the money again, God damn it, let's enjoy what we got and blah, blah, blah. But that was that was that was a prime. Anybody bought the place, hopefully they'll build some kind of motel or something because the best view of the whole dock and the sound is up on top of that hill and it's a shame we tore it down at the time. We probably could have fixed the thing for 100 hundred thousand dollars and made a lot of money on it, whatever.

William Gosman [01:23:22] But I'm actually talking about to the but the property where like the rest on right where the restaurant is and stuff.

William Gosman [01:23:29] We bought it from Charlie Bonner.

Virginia Garrison [01:23:31] That was all Charlie Bonner's?

William Gosman [01:23:33] Yes. It must have been.

Virginia Garrison [01:23:35] So was that your parents bought that?

Virginia Garrison [01:23:37] Well I don't remember the day we bought it. We actually bought it. I think I was in college or in the Army when we actually I think it was when I was in college.

Virginia Garrison [01:23:46] Because that's a lot of property there on the water really

William Gosman [01:23:48] Well, yeah. Must have been Bonner I don't think because all it was the sand dunes there before that because I remember my father used to have 5 or 6 boats, little sharpies, you know, the wooden boats. I used to rent them to fishermen, you know, outboard motors. You rode them out beyond the thing and so on. But. That would have been. What did you ask me I forgot.

Virginia Garrison [01:24:17] We were talking about whether that came from Charlie Bonner and that was while you were in college.

William Gosman [01:24:20] Yes. Yeah. Must be have been Charlie, must have been his. Yeah, because what happened? We used to rent the thing sometime. We rented that house out and made Mr. Reiber, Jack Reiber was a real rich guy from Scarsdale or someplace out like that.

Virginia Garrison [01:24:36] Rent which house out. The round house?

William Gosman [01:24:38] The round house, yeah. And he, he lived there summers for a few years, but Mr. Reiber ept telling my mother, Mary, you got to buy it. You should buy this piece of land. Buy this piece of land. Right. And we did. We did. And where we got some of the money from, I don't remember that from my brother Sandy, because he had been working down there and he saved a lot of his money. And he had some I don't know what we paid for it when we paid for it. I really I had nothing to do with that transaction because I was away at the time.

Virginia Garrison [01:25:05] Right. Right. Reba you think is REBA?

William Gosman [01:25:11] REIBER, I believe. Or the I before the E, I don't know. It probably sounds like a German name, so I know what it was. And I remember during the '54 hurricane, my brother John helped save and Nate the Mate Mariano help save his boat because it's crashing against a dock all over the place and the waves breaking in over the docks like the ocean. And he got some lines at it and they could pull it away from the dock so it didn't smash itself to pieces. Mr. Reiber, when he came back out, he gave John \$100 bill and gave Nate \$100 bill because they're on that boat slipping all over but no railings or anything. And he could have got crushed and killed really easily. And yeah, that's why I remember Mr. Reiber, the characters from that era, talk about change. But I am talking about change, actually. But you're talking about more of a change from more recently.

Virginia Garrison [01:26:13] And you can talk about that. That's good, too.

William Gosman [01:26:15] And I kind of just well, I remember the Surf Lodge and when the Surf Lodge hit, I just kind of and I don't know, just saying this is just out of I can't do any of this. It just didn't appeal to me at all. And so, you know, I don't know whether I felt left out. I couldn't relate to any of those people or whatever, you know, because most of the locals didn't like it at all, you know, And they'd rather go to the Shagwong when Jimmy still owned ti. But I also thought because I heard the interview with Jimmy Grimes and I always thought it was really interesting about that side of Montauk to the all the French Canadians from Nova Scotia. Yeah, and that's really interesting. And it I never realized they had such an interesting history and that's why I said the Briands, the Paons, the Martells, and Marshall's mother came from there. She was a McDonald. She was from there, too, I believe. And Marshall's father, he was from Spain. He was a Galician, I believe. I don't think it was Basque. I think it was Galician or Basque.

Virginia Garrison [01:27:30] I don't know.

William Gosman [01:27:32] They're they're part of, they're different sections of Spain. And what was I talking about. Yeah, that's right. Those French Canadians and stuff, they were. They were always just hard-working people. The other thing is, is they really helped build that Catholic Church. The original. The original one back in the '30s. Yeah. The reason I'm familiar with it because as I got older, I always loved playing the guitar, but as I got older. I couldn't. I could never quite, my fingers just got screwed up. I got this condition called this just like something dyslexia or something. But I started singing. I started taking to singing lesson learned that and I used to start singing in the choir in the Catholic Church. Went before they built a new church.

Virginia Garrison [01:28:26] Okay.

William Gosman [01:28:26] Because we used to sing in the cellar where the little school is now, that's where they used to hold mass. So I started singing there. And then they built a new church I was singing there but then I started singing in the Choral Society. And I went into the city and started singing Hungarian four Hungarian folk songs in Hungarian, which is really hard to do.

Virginia Garrison [01:28:47] Are you still doing it?

William Gosman [01:28:49] No, that all went down the tubes with this Covid, you know.

William Gosman [01:28:52] And now I as far as Choral Society, you have to drive up to Bridgehampton at night time, and the goddamn bright lights will just kill you, you know? So I just kind of. Well, I was losing interest in that music anyway, but I wanted to get into something else, but I never did. So I still stay home playing and I drop a gummy once in a while to play for a couple hours.

Virginia Garrison [01:29:17] Play what?

William Gosman [01:29:18] An anything. Yeah, I know some country Western songs. I know songs in Spanish. I used to play a little.

Virginia Garrison [01:29:25] Play on what instrument? Piano?

Virginia Garrison [01:29:27] No, guitar. Guitar.

Virginia Garrison [01:29:29] Okay.

Virginia Garrison [01:29:30] Yeah, I can sing in Spanish. I can sing right now for.

Virginia Garrison [01:29:33] Good for you, yeah, go for it.

William Gosman [01:29:34] [Singing in Spanish] Your mother when she gave birth to you and she took away the world, she didn't give you a heart to love again. A heart she did not give you, a heart she did not give you.

William Gosman [01:29:34] And the chorus.

William Gosman [01:29:34] [Singing in Spanish] Bye, bye, my dear, I don't want life -- you have made it bitter for me.

Virginia Garrison [01:30:16] That's very nice. Do you know Spanish?

William Gosman [01:30:18] I studied it in college, but don't know it very well now because you have to use it. And I haven't been using it because when I'm in a work situation, I don't want to use Spanish because you want them to speak English, you want them to learn English. So, you know, over the years I worked with Spanish people in the kitchen for 50 years. But but that song was about it's a breakup song because you the guy's telling them you're so heartless, I can't stand with you, I can't be with you anymore. So I'm going to say I'm going to say goodbye and so on. And then they say, you know, it's basically like, I can't stay in the situation anymore, I've got to leave. So that's one of them I know several of them. And but I'm not going to them right now. But I used to go in the city, take a lesson and all this other stuff. I was singing classical music too.

Virginia Garrison [01:31:12] So that must be where Lilah gets it from?

William Gosman [01:31:15] Well, I don't know. Her. Suzanne's family had a lot of music into them, the grandfather was an opera singer, too. But all my Irish side of family sang. And my grandmother, of course, played in a church. And my father used to play boogie woogie, of all things. Where got that out, that was really cool.

Virginia Garrison [01:31:36] What do you want to talk about that we haven't covered?

William Gosman [01:31:48] No, I don't want to talk about my family too much and running the businesses down there.

Virginia Garrison [01:31:57] Anything for what you hope the new owners are going to do with the property or not really.

William Gosman [01:32:01] I don't care.

Virginia Garrison [01:32:02] Okay, that's fair.

William Gosman [01:32:03] As long as they don't screw our name up too much, I think they'll keep their name because, you know, when you sell a business like that, they keep the name, you know, when they sold McDonald's, [?] It's still McDonald's. And I don't know but it's yeah and and the fish house, the wholesale retail is still going on I don't know where that's going to go, nobody does. But I don't know I feel kind of lost, to tell you the truth. But the big thing it did is preserve the family's wealth because it's going down the tubes and it's just a matter of time before we get a severe hurricane and so on. Like I said, every hurricane season, I'd say to myself, start praying to God. I hope it doesn't happen this year, you know, because it can, you know, we had we had the thing where it flooded the city and all that. I remember going the bus the next day, you know, they were pumping out the tunnels and everything else. And that wasn't even a bad hurricane out here, just that the water came up higher.

Virginia Garrison [01:33:06] Was that Sandy?

William Gosman [01:33:06] Sandy Yeah. Yeah. The winds weren't that. The winds were only about 70 miles an hour.

Virginia Garrison [01:33:09] We didn't get that that bad.

William Gosman [01:33:11] You know, but the '54 hurricane that went that was bad.

Virginia Garrison [01:33:15] Yeah, we have a lot of photos of that.

William Gosman [01:33:17] That was bad. And I remember, like I said, we were driving down from Amagansett in this old '39 Cadillac -- my father, my aunt, myself, and my brother John, and the thing petered out. So we got stuck on the side of road and a big Goebel truck came, a tractor trailer -- they used to have assembling the parts down here.

Virginia Garrison [01:33:39] On Navy, on the bay.

William Gosman [01:33:40] Yeah, over there where the railroad station is, that area. And so he gave us a ride down. But I remember the wind blowing and it almost blowing the damn thing over. But he. He dropped us off down at the dock took us back. That was cool because I remember I had to sleep up. I had to get up in the back because there wasn't any, you know, a metal shelf, those cabs. And then I got down the dock and things are going like hell. And I remember the top of the docks breaking loose and floating down the road. I remember grabbing a rope and tied it on to when we tied it around telephone poles. We didn't lose a thing. I remember freezers were floating out of Frank Ward's place, the Fitzgerald place. Like, you know, like those ice cream freezers you see that type of thing. And and the barroom. I remember going in there and everybody's drinking, getting drunk because hurricanes, that's what people do. They get drunk. And I had an old drill like that -

- we didn't have electrical drills then, at least we didn't -- with a bit on it. I remember going around I must been about 14 drilling holes in the floor in the bar so the water would drain out.

Virginia Garrison [01:34:57] This is what it is currently the Dock?

William Gosman [01:35:00] Right? No, no, no. This is the old restaurant, the old bar and the old restaurant.

Virginia Garrison [01:35:04] All the old bar. Okay. Right.

William Gosman [01:35:06] Right. But. But the. The Dock was there, too. But it was the dock in front of the Dock that Frank Ward's dock I'm talking about. And the water was way up over the road. And the draggers, there were a couple of draggers, one of them tied up to him to the dock and the water was rushing through the channel probably about 12, 15 knots and it pulled up the bit that held the [?] that was about 50, 60 foot long and they had a bit by like eight by a bit which comes up with a tight rope around to secure the boat to the dock. They had that tied in and the whole thing just snapped off and then the boat broke loose and went careening up the channel way up into Lake Montauk. But they didn't go. They didn't go aground. There was, Gil Parsons was still in it and they I guess they rode it out in the middle of Lake Montauk. Yeah, but Big Dick Stern's boat, Betsy C, that broke loose it went way the hell up and he didn't make he went way the hell up on the on East Lake Drive, grounded up there. The water carried them up upland there and when it receded he was about I don't know somebody said he was about 100 yards from the water. So they had to get a bulldozers and stuff like that to dig a channel so they could refloat him back.

Virginia Garrison [01:36:33] I feel like we might have a picture of that.

William Gosman [01:36:35] And on the Montauk Yacht Club some boats rode up on top of each other, like you see in those Florida hurricanes.

Virginia Garrison [01:36:42] Unbelievable. And that was a really.

William Gosman [01:36:45] Yeah. And what else was that thing? It was. I just remember it was exciting. It was kind of cool, but it was a little scary at times, too. Still, with when really I don't remember the wind so much.

Virginia Garrison [01:37:03] But do you remember? Were you here for the Pelican?

William Gosman [01:37:06] Yes, that was the other thing, you know, I'm not sure that when the Pelican sank, was it '51 or '54?

Virginia Garrison [01:37:13] I think it was '51.

William Gosman [01:37:15] I should only be 11 years old, but I don't remember either. When I was 11, in '51, did Duryea have his dock down there? I guess maybe he did. Because what happened I told you Bruce Bistran, was a guy who grew up with in East Hampton. I mean, Amagansett, we were in Peter Rana's barbershop in Amagansett. And we heard about it. And said let's go see what's happening. And we got to hitchhike down to the dock. We got down there and people, police around, ambulances, all that stuff. And the round house was there and my mother was there making soup or coffee or hot tea or

something, trying to feed some of the survivors were there. And the fish house, the old fish house, they wouldn't let us go in there. I think they had dead bodies in there, in over in Duryea's fish house they had a lot of dead bodies in there, too. And my brother Dick, who is a lot younger than me, he remembers it, he must have only been about 6 or 7 then again, 5 or 6, whatever. He says he remembers looking in the window at Duryea's and seeing dead bodies in there. And what happened when they heard that it sank all the boats at the dock, the open boats, Lester Behan and Peter Huser and Luck Jack and all those guys, some of the charter boats, they went out there looking for survivors to help find people, you know, in the water. And that was a big deal. That was a big deal. And the guy, I think it's Tom Clavin or something. He's a guy, right? I think you he wrote a book about it.

Virginia Garrison [01:38:51] He did.

William Gosman [01:38:52] I never read the book because a lot of times I read some of these stuff and for some reason we always seem to be left out, the Gosman family. I do not understand that because we've been the primary people down there the whole time. It's almost like you're being purposely ignored. Well, we had kind of a chip on our shoulder about that because part of it was being Catholic and part of it was, you know, I think that's when it was, you know, and part of us being paranoid, we're worried that, you know, or we're worried about Perry Duryea's going to come down here and do something terrible to us or something like that, you know?

Virginia Garrison [01:39:30] Yeah. Jimmy Hewitt I remember talking about remembering it, too, because I think they they take the boat itself to like the south end of the lake.

William Gosman [01:39:44] Yeah, I know they still recovered bodies inside the boat.

Virginia Garrison [01:39:47] I think that's what he remembered.

William Gosman [01:39:49] Yeah. Yeah. When Jimmy was a year I think was a year younger than me. Yeah.

Virginia Garrison [01:39:56] His family's house was there, right?

William Gosman [01:39:57] His family's house was on Old West Lake Drive.

Virginia Garrison [01:40:03] Yeah.

William Gosman [01:40:04] Yeah.

Virginia Garrison [01:40:05] That's right. Because he used to do the bottomland shellfishing.

William Gosman [01:40:11] I don't, I don't know about that.

Virginia Garrison [01:40:14] What do you call it, hatchery.

William Gosman [01:40:16] That must've been much later.

Virginia Garrison [01:40:19] But I'm just talking about.

William Gosman [01:40:21] There was no fish farming or anything like that until recently, past 30 years.

Virginia Garrison [01:40:26] Yeah, I was just talking about the location.

William Gosman [01:40:28] Yeah. No. Right.

Virginia Garrison [01:40:30] And yeah, yeah, that's.

William Gosman [01:40:33] And what else I? All I remember? This is the windowsill club and the characters there. And I know each one and I know which ones were the grouchy guys to stay away from, you know, the fishermen that would put you down and so on, you know, or the ones that were friendly or nice to you. And so I had, you know, very sensitive to that.

Virginia Garrison [01:40:58] How how old were you when you when your family or did was your family still spending time at the round house, like when you went to college and stuff like that?

Virginia Garrison [01:41:07] Yes. Yes. They were still.

William Gosman [01:41:10] Yeah, we still lived down there some time. And I've seen Dickie and I and Tony Falcone, which was one of the bartenders in the restaurant at the time. This would be in the '60s and '70s, and we used to stay down there for a couple of months in the fall, I guess it was, and why we were there. People used to stop in there too like Milton Fromm, the Jewish guy from Amagansett, Uncle Milt used to come down, he was a real character, he and his brother Larry and his mother ran that up there and Milt used to bring us down the leftover bagels and Danish and stuff and he'd sit there and drink coffeee. He was a cook in the Army or something in the Second World War I think it was. He was quite a character too.

William Gosman [01:42:00] And then other people used to come in. Jesus, Jesse Scott would come in. Jesse Scott was a wild man. He was yeah, he was dangerous. I mean, he was a criminal, basically. But they were okay to us, you know, they'd drink coffee with us whatever. And.

Virginia Garrison [01:42:18] You know, you were telling me about the McCann brothers when you grew up?

William Gosman [01:42:21] Yeah, Gene and Roger, they were characters, too. Gene wound up being in special forces in Vietnam. I remember when he got home and when he got home, I was out of the army we're talking about. And Marco [?] was he used to be, of course, from his old bar across from Salivar's [?]. And and he was, You ever kill anybody? Yeah. No, Gene. Well, he did apparently. He wound up being in the in special forces, wound up going to the mountain guards [?], the tribes that were fighting the Vietnamese, the North Vietnamese. He he was supposed to go in there and train them and how to, you know, fight. And Roger was a ne'er do well, too. They were both smart guys, they were intelligent guys. I think Roger did graduate from college. I don't think ... Gene wound up going into the Army instead. But he loved guns, you know. And but Roger was more of a crazy guy. He was all kind of wild and got in a lot of fights. And but he was a character sort of like John Belushi type, you know, and he wound up, oh the story was he wound up OD'ing. So I don't know if that was true or not because when people say that means

somebody's going to O.D. them on purpose or somebody could have knocked him on the head and threw him overboard or something, who the hell knows? You know?

Virginia Garrison [01:43:43] And when it comes to boats.

William Gosman [01:43:45] You know, Yeah, yeah. and that's what happened to Davy Crockett, also known as, his real name was Davy Bouse. And he was another character. And his older brother Kenny is Kenny died recently, a couple of years ago. He was a good guy who did a lot of rampaging and so on and and that and things. But he sobered up and he got to be a really good guy and he wound up helping a lot of people out here. So, you know, people with alcohol problems.

Virginia Garrison [01:44:15] And you when you were a kid, you know, what you were describing to me was like very little supervision, like, you know, going out.

William Gosman [01:44:24] Well, we didn't have it was that, you know, my father and mother, they couldn't control us. I mean, as soon as we got 11, 12, 13 years old, even when were kids, we were on our own, for Christ's sake. And then when they started having a restaurant down here my mother was never around. We'd go home in Amagansett, be nobody there know where the hell is everyone I don't know what's and I remember Sandy and Dicky sitting on his crib they're crying "Oh Mommy, wa wa wa." And the neighbors would go by and say, I don't know what the hell is going on, so so I just giving. But that wasn't unusual at the time. No, You know.

Virginia Garrison [01:45:05] Yeah.

William Gosman [01:45:06] People were just tougher and more independent then, although I wouldn't say that they were smarter. But they didn't they didn't understand about alcohol and they'd understand he's a drunk. And so they'd say, you know, and you live with it, you know.

Virginia Garrison [01:45:22] And there was a lot of alcohol.

William Gosman [01:45:23] So alcohol is a big thing. Any time you're around the waterfront.

William Gosman [01:45:27] You're going to have drunks.

Virginia Garrison [01:45:28] That's weird.

Virginia Garrison [01:45:31] I think it goes back to naval traditions. I mean, look at the British Navy. They conscripted people off the street, robbed them off of the boats, gave them hardly anything. Their only piece was was whores and rum. So, I mean, seriously, the tradition of that. But I mean, that's one thing. But it's all the captain drank everybody drank in those old days you know two, three 400 years ago. So it's it's just a maritime tradition. You know?

Virginia Garrison [01:46:00] That's interesting.

William Gosman [01:46:02] Because I mean men by themselves out on boats. You know, they have to. I don't know. So as soon as you hit shore, man you head for the barroom. Really! Even if you're working onshore, I'm sure you know, the first time you're done with

work, you head for the barroom, it's 3 o'clock in the afternoon, 8 o'clock at night or 11 o'clock at night, you know. That was the whole party scene out here with the restaurant people, the regular workers. And then when they got it done work, there was a rush into the barrooms, it's 11 o'clock everybody was getting off from the different restaurants. And then they'd party to 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning because they could sleep till noon, start all over again.

Virginia Garrison [01:46:45] A big part of the culture out here.

William Gosman [01:46:47] Yeah, yeah, yeah. I mean, we didn't have that East Hampton culture with the historically with the more uppity families -- the Rattrays, Edwards and all those people, you know, and Hunttings and all that East Hampton royalty, you know. But I don't know where they are now because they don't own the place anymore either. All you have to do is go to East Hampton village. I can't stand it anymore. I don't like it. My granddaughter loves Starbucks. Well, because they make some crazy kind of concoction. Can we stop there? I really love those. Yeah, that's right. A big thing now is for my age is watching my kids play sports. Girls and boys. My grandson's a good baseball player and my granddaughter's working in different sports and playing field hockey and volleyball, whatever.

Virginia Garrison [01:47:40] So are they like in high school now?

William Gosman [01:47:44] They're still in grade school.

Virginia Garrison [01:47:45] So you don't have to travel then?

William Gosman [01:47:47] No, you do have to travel. Well, my son, my grandson, he's all over the place. He was upisland a long time on travel teams and so on all the time on travel teams and so on. He's a very good player.

Virginia Garrison [01:47:59] What does he play?

William Gosman [01:48:01] Well, they play up in Eastport.

Virginia Garrison [01:48:02] No, I'm sorry, what does he play?

William Gosman [01:48:04] Baseball.

Virginia Garrison [01:48:04] Oh, baseball.

William Gosman [01:48:06] Yeah. And he plays up, he's the youngest kid on the team all the time cause he plays on a first the ten year olds and then the 11 years old, but he's only ten years old. So that type of thing. So generally, the kids are bigger and more developed and but he's smart and he's good. Okay. I mean, his father coaches him, too, so that helps. And the changes. Yeah, I don't know, it's hard to itemize like changes because it's so involved going the summer when we were open down there, that's all you thought about. Well, I got to get up there, get in there, get things done, you know?

Virginia Garrison [01:48:46] At work, yeah.

William Gosman [01:48:48] At work, yeah. Whether you're cooking at night or whether you're prepping the whole whole day or whatever, and then the season's over and you go

home and relax or do I don't know, we'd travel some time, usually down to the islands, you know, St John's, St. Martin, Barbados and whatever those different things, or Mexico or something. Once I took a trip to Spain and Morocco and that was interesting. Yeah, stuff like that. And just do whatever thing. I used to like the carve a lot, I used to carve stuff, you know.

Virginia Garrison [01:49:25] Carve wood?

William Gosman [01:49:26] Wood and stone. But it got really rough because it's really hard on your shoulders and stuff like that holding up. And I and my shoulders have been screwed up. They're still screwed up. I don't know if from what that was from maybe lifting weights too much or something at one point or whatever. I don't know. But. Yeah. I'm just. Believe me, this is just a train of thought. I don't even know what I'm thinking next. I was just thinking, you know, when I get the photographs, maybe you could do something about those.

Virginia Garrison [01:50:09] Yeah.

William Gosman [01:50:09] Actually, a lot of stuff I'm talking about today, about the old days. Applies more to those time from those photographs were taken rather than because, you know, I can just tell you the history of the restaurant. The big restaurant. And but to tell you the truth, I'm not particularly happy during those days and, you know, I don't the memories I have, aren't great. They really are. You know, just the fact that we made a lot of money and so on, we had a lot of spare money and so on and I got married and so on. And then, of course, you had the divorce, which was painful and kind of sets you back in a lot of different ways. And then I can I had a girlfriend for 16 years basically in Sag Harbor. So we spent a lot of time over there.

Virginia Garrison [01:51:00] Sag Harbor's interesting.

William Gosman [01:51:01] So, yeah, Sag Harbor's a cool place. I haven't been there about 15 years. I used to go there all the time. In fact, I bought property over there. I had a house over there and so on. And that's when it was called basically Greenwich Village of the Hamptons. But now, I think it's it's like that super expensive. I mean, Greenwich Village is all they're worth millions of billions of dollars. Now I get. So that's what happened to Sag Harbor, too, I believe.

Virginia Garrison [01:51:30] Yeah. The grittiness goes away.

William Gosman [01:51:32] Yeah. Yeah. Boy I remember Sag Harbor. The kids used to be really tough down there. And I remember we got chased out of there when we were in Montauk. Paul Forsberg, myself, Bob Baldwin[?], Edward Townsend, Johnny Walsh, God they chased us out of there. Johnny Walsh got smacked in the face. He was he. But they scared the shit out bob Cody, Bobby was tough guy too. But we ran like hell, man, because they had. They had. They had outnumbered and outgunned. So. So we got the hell out of there. But that used to be very working class over there, you know, gritty kids, kids went to reform schools and stuff like that, you know. And but Montauk had that element too, too, you know, and who knows too, in those days when the dope started going through here how much I think, you know, that was a whole thing going to how much really happened before that. It was the bootlegging, you know, was where we're positioned, a maritime place, and when the booze comes through and where the cocaine and pot and everything else come through and, you know, some local people were

involved in that. Some of the fishermen were involved in that so it would be, you know, made some money there. And if they weren't doing it here they were doing it down down in Florida. You know, remember "Miami Vice"?

Virginia Garrison [01:53:00] Yeah. Yeah.

William Gosman [01:53:00] Well, that was true. But not in Miami. They were doing all over the state. You know, they all thought it was cool, you know, they were a bunch of, you know, wild guys. You know, a few of them went to jail. I don't remember most they got away with it, I think. But how much they did, I don't know, because I didn't really didn't get into that stuff because at that time I didn't want to be ... any experience I had guys dealing with dope as you let them in and let them in your house, they take over, you know? So, I mean, I didn't do a lot of those too hard drugs, smoked a bit of pot and pot wasn't that strong then. But anyway, now I like pot a lot, but I realize you can't do it too much or you just scrambles your brain. I don't know. I've become so confessional, or whatever it is, Jesus Christ. That's my life. That's my life.

Virginia Garrison [01:54:01] So this is the end of the oral history interfered with William Gosman. The interviewer was Virginia Garrison. This recording can be found in the archive collection of the Montauk Library.