

Oral History Interview with Perry Duryea III

June 13, 2023

Interviewed by Virginia Garrison

For the Montauk Library Oral History Program

Virginia Garrison [00:00:01] Today is Tuesday, June 13th, 2023. My name is Virginia Garrison and I'm a library assistant at the Montauk Library. Today I am conducting an oral history interview with Perry "Chip" Duryea III. This interview is part of the Montauk Library Oral History Program. We're conducting this interview in the sound studio of the Montauk Library in Montauk, New York. Chip, I just want to confirm on tape your consent to participate in and be recorded according to the oral history informed consent and release agreement. Okay.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:00:44] Yes.

Virginia Garrison [00:00:45] Thank you. Also, I'm going to ask some questions that you know I already know the answers to, but the idea is to open a window for you to answer the questions for a broader audience. So on that level, could you please pronounce and spell your first and last name?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:01:03] Yes, my first name is Perry PERRY. Middle initial is B as in boy. Last name is Duryea DURYEA the Third.

Virginia Garrison [00:01:14] Okay. What is the story behind your name?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:01:19] Well, my grandfather, who came out here in the twenties from Amityville, was Perry Duryea Sr. He went on to be East Hampton Town supervisor, 1935 to 1940. So he was town supervisor during the hurricane of 1938, which was kind of a watershed moment out here. My father was actually born here in Montauk. He is Perry Duryea Jr. He went on to go away for formal education. 1942 World War II started. He joined the Navy, became a naval flight instructor, was ultimately sent out to San Francisco. He was the youngest naval pilot in the Pacific Theater in World War Two. And Dad, Perry Duryea Jr., passed away in 2004. I was born in Lawrence Hospital in Bronxville, New York, because my mom's parents lived in Bronxville, and I was named after my grandfather and my father, obviously as Perry Duryea III. But shortly after birth, people began calling me Chip so that we wouldn't get two or three people in the same room confused at the same time.

Virginia Garrison [00:02:45] What year were you born?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:02:46] I was born in 1949.

Virginia Garrison [00:02:49] And what was your mother's name?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:02:51] Elizabeth. Weed. WEED.

Virginia Garrison [00:03:03] Can you tell me a little bit about your family heritage and where your parents and grandparents came from, other than, of course what you've already told me.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:03:09] Sure. As I indicated, my grandfather had gotten a law degree from NYU and was practicing law up the island in the Amityville area. He moved

out here primarily for health reasons, and he subsequently, over a period of time, he bought into the.

Virginia Garrison [00:03:35] E.B. Tuthill?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:03:35] The E.B. Tuthill fish business, which was located where Duryea's is now on the eastern shore of Fort Pond Bay. He married my grandmother, who was Jane Stewart, STEWART by birth. In 1920 they were married, okay? And by the time he had gotten to the late 20s, 1928, 1929, he had pretty much taken over over the business from Captain E.B. Tuthill.

Virginia Garrison [00:04:09] And what about your mother's background?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:04:12] My mother went to Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs. She was born in Westchester. She grew up there. She met my dad while she was in college and while he was attending Colgate University. That was how they met. They got married actually, on the West Coast after Dad enlisted in the Navy in about 1945, 1946. They got married in San Francisco, and then Dad finished out his tour of duty out there. And then after that, they moved east and and they settled in Montauk.

Virginia Garrison [00:04:54] Do you have any siblings?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:04:56] I have an older sister, Lynn, who is two years older than I. She currently lives in Portland, Maine. She's in South Portland, Maine, actually. And she has a summer cottage over on Deer Isle, Maine. And she has over a period of a couple of years, she has supplied the Montauk Library with quite a few pictures from some of the old fishing vessels that we used and so on and so forth.

Virginia Garrison [00:05:28] Do you want to tell me what it was like growing up in Montauk?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:05:31] Obviously quite a bit different than what it is like now. I attended Montauk School. I graduated valedictorian Montauk School in 1963. There were 12 kids in my graduating class in the eighth grade. And out of the 12, four came from the Air Force base because at that time, Camp Hero was an active Air Force base.

Virginia Garrison [00:05:59] The Coast Guard as well?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:06:01] The Coast Guard? No, no. And I did have some friends who lived out at the air base and I would go to see them and so on and so forth. But things were a little bit simpler, shall I say, back in the day. Classes were smaller. I think people were probably a little bit tighter simply because there were a lot a lot fewer of us. But I began to notice once I graduated Montauk School and went and began going to East Hampton High School, that it it became hard for me academically and also also socially because everything was happening in East Hampton and we were out in Montauk. And if you couldn't drive, it seemed like getting across Napeague stretch was a hundred miles in either direction. So after my sophomore year in East Hampton High School, I approached my parents. I said that I wanted to go away to school, which I did. And I went to the Hill School in Pottstown, Pennsylvania for two years.

Virginia Garrison [00:07:07] Oh, you graduated from there?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:07:08] Yes.

Virginia Garrison [00:07:09] No, I remember that too, for extracurriculars and stuff.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:07:12] It was very difficult. And, you know, in the morning you would have that long ride on the bus up to the high school and then in the afternoon, the ride home. And most of your friends were up there. The activities were there, the sports were there. So it was hard.

Virginia Garrison [00:07:28] And you liked the Hill School?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:07:32] I did very much, yes. Now, in retrospect, I, I kind of wish I had gone for four years rather than two. Yeah, because I got on the swimming team and I'm a very good swimmer. And we had a we had a nationally ranked swim team. We had some some kids who were really, really good.

Virginia Garrison [00:07:50] And you went on to Colgate and Columbia, right?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:07:52] Right. I went to Colgate. I graduated Colgate in 1971, Phi Beta Kappa with high honors in my major. I was a philosophy and religion major, and then I took a year off while I kind of scouted around in terms of graduate schools. I decided that I wanted to get an MBA. I drove up to Cambridge and visited Harvard, but they informed me that I wasn't quite ready for Harvard Business School. So I wound up living in New York City, then in Brooklyn Heights. I worked for a bank for about seven or eight months. Downtown Manhattan, 140 Broadway. It was called Marine Midland Bank, which is now HSBC, and which is considerably larger. But there was that transition year in between college and graduate school where it was kind of felt that I should get some corporate experience. And the bank really wanted me to come back after graduation. After I graduated Columbia in '74, I had my MBA, but I always kind of felt the pull of Montauk and the family business.

Virginia Garrison [00:09:11] Do you feel that you got something out of the time with the bank?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:09:14] Very definitely, yeah. When I arrived and this was a huge bank within the confines of New York State, they had branches all up Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo, Albany, Marine Midland, believe it or not, was not yet computerized. Everything was done in ledgers manually, and one of my tasks, along with management, was to basically find out what the requirements were for transitioning over to a to a computer system.

Virginia Garrison [00:09:50] At that time, an unknown.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:09:52] Definitely an unknown at that time.

Virginia Garrison [00:09:55] And so you met Wendy when both of you were in college, is that right?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:09:59] We were college age. We actually met here in Montauk. She had a summer, her grandmother had a summer cottage over in Hither Hills. And Wendy used to come out here every summer for years, and I never really knew her at all. But I met her when I was a senior in high school, and she and I went out very briefly.

She went her way. I went mine. Then we reconnected the following year. Okay. And that's what started the relationship.

Virginia Garrison [00:10:30] When you were in Montauk or when you were in college?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:10:34] No, actually, here in Montauk.

Virginia Garrison [00:10:36] In Montauk.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:10:37] Montauk is how we first met. And then we reconnected here about a year later. Okay.

Virginia Garrison [00:10:42] And what is Wendy's maiden name?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:10:43] Ryan.

Virginia Garrison [00:10:47] RYAN?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:10:47] Yep. Okay.

Virginia Garrison [00:10:49] And when did you get married?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:10:50] Oh Oh. You're gonna get me, I'm not going...

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:10:53] I'm going to say 1974. Okay.

Virginia Garrison [00:10:59] You remember your anniversary date?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:11:02] We just had our 50th.

Virginia Garrison [00:11:04] Wow, congratulations.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:11:04] On June 2nd, even though we're separated.

Virginia Garrison [00:11:09] Are you separated?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:11:12] Yes. We're separated. We've been separated for two and a half years, and she lives up the island. However, I felt that it was only appropriate to travel west and see her, which I did.

Virginia Garrison [00:11:22] Wow. 50 years.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:11:23] Yeah, that's a long time.

Virginia Garrison [00:11:25] And what was her occupation? Or is her occupation?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:11:28] She was a teacher at Hampton Day School before they were taken over by Ross. She ultimately became director of early childhood. And then she went into admissions.

Virginia Garrison [00:11:44] At Hampton Day. Yes.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:11:45] At Hampton Day. But when they were taken over by Ross, things got rather rather political and somewhat messy. And she left. Yeah.

Virginia Garrison [00:11:55] And how many children and grandchildren do you have?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:11:57] We have two girls. Amy, our oldest girl, lives here in Montauk on Fairview Avenue with her husband, Travis. Travis is a commercial fisherman. Amy has an IT business. Okay, with another woman here in town. And they have two children, Christian, who's a freshman in high school, and Ava, who's in fifth grade at Montauk School.

Virginia Garrison [00:12:27] Ava, AVA, and Christian with a CH?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:12:30] Yep.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:12:32] And then my younger daughter, Erica, she lives in Brooklyn in Crown Heights with her husband, Eoin, which is EOIN. Obviously, he is Irish. They have two children. The girl, Liadan. LIADAN, is older. She's about 11 years old, 10 or 11 and Feinics, FEINICS, and those are both Irish names, obviously.

Virginia Garrison [00:13:04] FEINICS?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:13:04] Uh huh.

Virginia Garrison [00:13:06] And how old? Is that a boy or girl?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:13:07] That's a boy. And he's a redhead boy with blue eyes. He looks like he walked right out of an Irish travel magazine. High energy. Well, unfortunately, they are moving to Ireland very shortly.

Virginia Garrison [00:13:24] And how old is he?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:13:25] Oh. Pardon? Pardon me. Feinics is eight.

Virginia Garrison [00:13:28] Eight. Mhm. Oh, they're moving soon?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:13:32] In about three or four weeks. Primarily because of the violence in New York City. And I think when when they go, they'll probably be gone until the children finish their formal education, which could be eight or ten years.

Virginia Garrison [00:13:50] You'd have to start traveling.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:13:51] I can't fly across the ocean every week, that's for sure.

Virginia Garrison [00:13:55] I'm sorry.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:13:55] I know.

Virginia Garrison [00:13:58] Where did you build your own family? Where were you living at the time in Montauk?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:14:04] Well, it's when we came back here after grad school. At that time, we were married. We came back and I was obviously going right in to the family seafood business. May 16, 1974, I had my last final exam at Columbia. I didn't even hang around for my diploma, but they mailed it to me and we came right out to Montauk and my grandfather's house, Perry Duryea Sr. and his wife, Jane, is right across the street from the lobster house. It's that big white house with the green trim.

Virginia Garrison [00:14:46] That faces the pond.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:14:47] Exactly. You know, the big three-story house. That house originally was on the hill behind Ruschmeyer's, and it was moved from that location behind Ruschmeyer's. They moved it down to grade and they put it on logs and they rolled it all the way over to where it is now.

Virginia Garrison [00:15:10] What's that to be near the business or ...?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:15:12] Yes, And that was in the '30s. That house, that was in the 1930s that that was done. They used to move houses all the time then. Then it was a lot easier because they didn't have power lines and so on and so forth. But they got the thing over and they set it on the foundation right across from the lobster house. Then they added on the sun porch, they added on the back wing and they added on the garage and so on and so forth. And they moved it without a crack. It was a solid plaster house. And after Wendy and I moved in, originally, we moved in upstairs while my grandmother was alive. My grandfather had passed away. My grandmother Jane was alive and she was downstairs. And it got to the point where she had care. She had someone with her. Wendy and I were upstairs and we were basically paying her rent and I couldn't figure out why. After my grandmother passed away, the house got willed to my father's sister, Jane. Jane Duryea. But she had very bad arthritis. She couldn't live in Montauk because of the humidity. She was in San Antonio, Texas. She had no interest in preserving the house. So Wendy and I purchased it from her. And I couldn't understand the first winter after the purchase why the heating bills were so high. Come to find out, it was a solid plaster house and it had an air space in between the two layers of plaster. And there was no insulation in it, right. So I called up Hunter Insulation from Southampton and the guy came out, he gave me an estimate. They pumped the insulation into that house for days and when he got done he said, I didn't make any money on this job because it took so much.

Virginia Garrison [00:17:12] It's really exposed there.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:17:14] They're very we used to get the northwest blast, you know, that would come off of Fort Pond Bay and, you know, Gardiners Bay. And it got cold and windy in the wintertime. And I could sit in the living room and kind of watch the blinds kind of sway back and forth.

Virginia Garrison [00:17:33] I love the, in the, in your book, I love how you talk about the need for electrical power for the lobsters. Yes, I'm getting a little ahead, but but but then the exposure to the elements that, you know, imperils that.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:17:52] I know we had a lot of power surges. We had some power failures in there and so on and so forth. And obviously we were very exposed in terms of hurricanes and in terms of nor'easters, because, as you know, when the system goes by, the wind blows out of the east primarily and it shoves the water up into Long Island Sound and into Fort Pond Bay. And if the wind comes around northwest as the

system goes by and it begins to blow, which did not happen during Sandy, fortunately, because had that wind been blowing hard northwest on the high tide that evening, I think the lobster house was probably gone.

Virginia Garrison [00:18:34] And you talk a lot. Okay, let's back up a little bit. Okay. Lobster business. Sure. Your father, right? Really gotten involved with that rather than your grandfather, is that right?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:18:45] Right.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:18:45] The dad came back here after the war. It was about 1948. And at that time Duryea's was being run by my grandfather but it primarily relied upon local fish. And my father realized that that was on the gradual decline and that there was the opportunity to go up to Maine and Canada and locate some dealers and sources of supply and bring lobsters down here, warehouse them here in Montauk over at Duryea's and then ship them out all over Long Island -- supermarkets, restaurants, fish markets and so on and so forth. So he set off to do that and he went up and traveled along the Maine coast and found a buyer in Stonington, Maine, and then went over to Nova Scotia and he found a dealer there and he traveled up to Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island. He was all over the place.

Virginia Garrison [00:19:45] So he's okay. So you've got the fish business that used to be E.B. Tuthill's right on the east side of Fort Pond Bay, right, and the house right across the street from there. And then and his your father's whole business is, is there. But then they're traveling by boat primarily to places like Maine and Canada to buy from distributors who purchased the lobsters from fishermen?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:20:13] The way it worked in those days was if you had a dealer, say, for instance, in Clark's Harbor, Nova Scotia, you had a fellow who was your dealer. He would buy lobsters from the local fishermen. He would he would get a commission for every pound he bought. He would then consolidate the load. And then when it was time, we would send over one of the boats. Okay, which was either the Perry B, which was a 115 foot converted World War II sub chaser. Either she would go from Maine over to Clark's Harbor and pick up the load and go from Clark's Harbor in Nova Scotia right to Montauk or also the Lynn, which was named obviously for my older sister, which was a smaller vessel. She was about 60 foot and she was different because the Perry B had a refrigerated hold aft where they could just put crates of lobsters. The forward hold on the Perry B had big tanks that held 400 pounds of lobsters each and the seawater constantly circulated down through the tanks and out. Now the Lynn was totally different. The Lynn was called a wet-well lobster smack, SMACK. My father had her built in Blue Hill, Maine. And when she was built, they actually bored holes in the hull right in the center of the boat where the center hold was, so that as she went through the water, seawater would actually circulate in through the hull and all throughout that giant kind of holding tank. And that was what kept the lobsters alive. The Perry B could carry 25,000 pounds a trip and the Lynn 15,000.

Virginia Garrison [00:22:15] That's unthinkable.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:22:15] They each came in in the summer high season twice a week. So that's 50, 30, that was 80,000 pounds a week that we were running through the Montauk plant. So we were doing over 1,000,000 pounds a year.

Virginia Garrison [00:22:30] Wow. That's amazing. Do you like lobster.?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:22:34] I do.

Virginia Garrison [00:22:34] You do? Okay.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:22:36] I do. And I know some dealers, even though I'm totally out of the business now. I sold it in 2014 and then at leased it back for two years. But as of 12/31/15, I was done. But I there's some guys I know up in Portland, Maine, and stuff who have some pretty good retail product. So sometimes I get a yearning for it. Yeah.

Virginia Garrison [00:22:57] And will they help you out?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:22:58] Oh yeah.

Virginia Garrison [00:22:59] That's good yeah. And you describe like the running lights at night as the I forget which of the two.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:23:08] That was the Perry B.

Virginia Garrison [00:23:09] Yeah, the Perry B?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:23:10] Because it was a much larger boat. I mean it was 115 foot when my father saw it and it had all the armor plate on. He saw it in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Once he kind of firmed up a dealer in Nova Scotia and a dealer over in Maine, then he had to get the product down here and he went to the Brooklyn Navy Yard and he saw the Perry B. It had all the armor plate on it from the war, World War II. So they took all the armor plate off the boat. They took it on a trial run and it went too fast. They were afraid it was going to break up because World War II sub chasers were fast. So then they put ballast in the stern and the bow just to kind of slow it down a little bit. But even so, she could move along.

Virginia Garrison [00:24:02] But she would have the ballast on the return trip with the lobster load.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:24:06] No, no, that was permanent. In other words, they put ballast permanently in the bow in the stern just to kind of slow it down.

Virginia Garrison [00:24:13] Wow.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:24:14] Yeah. Yeah.

Virginia Garrison [00:24:15] It's impressive. Mm hmm. You talk about. Let's see.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:24:22] And actually, actually, all of our product was brought down by either the Lynn or the Perry B, and then the Lynn subsequently got sold, and my father got a little bit larger boat. He called it the Lynn II. We brought everything down by boat, right up until they installed a commercial ferry service from Portland, Maine, over to Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, which was in the mid-'60s. And after that it was really quicker and more economical to bring everything down by truck.

Virginia Garrison [00:25:02] By truck? Why? With the ferry? Oh, because the truck would go on the ferry.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:25:06] Exactly. Yeah. So that was about the end of the boats, I would say mid-sixties.

Virginia Garrison [00:25:11] Okay. Yeah, but you know, the whole description of the boat coming in and the immediate, like, you know, starting to unload it and everything.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:25:19] Yes, it was. I mean, the whole process was now that I look back on it, now that I'm out of the business, it was really fascinating because to bring that quantity of product down on a regular basis and sometimes the boats would come in at 9 or 10 at night and sometimes 5 or 6 in the morning. If they came directly from Nova Scotia, there had to be a Customs man there who came out from New York City. He would certify the load because it was coming from a foreign country and so on and so forth. And then we would wheel everything up the dock and everything would be tanked in lobster tanks, you know, that we had inside the lobster house and the lobsters were all graded by size and, you know, so on and so forth.

Virginia Garrison [00:26:05] It does sound like a lot of work.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:26:08] It was a lot of work.

Virginia Garrison [00:26:10] And you've got this valuable product, too,

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:26:12] Yes. Yes.

Virginia Garrison [00:26:14] To keep alive and everything.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:26:15] But keep in mind that when my father first got into this, he was buying lobsters on the dock in Nova Scotia for 25 cents a pound.

Virginia Garrison [00:26:25] Wow.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:26:25] And his Canadian fellow who was his buyer there, or the dealer or whatever, he got, you know, 3 cents a pound, 5 cents a pound, I'm not sure. And then the lobsters were brought down here, warehoused here. And then he one of our larger wholesale accounts was Bohack's supermarkets. I don't know whether you remember them.

Virginia Garrison [00:26:51] Yeah.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:26:52] When they when Dad started out, he was selling lobsters to Bohack's for 69 cents a pound.

Virginia Garrison [00:26:59] In like New York City, or?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:27:00] No, no. Here on Long Island. Yeah. And everybody was happy. In other words, everybody was making money.

Virginia Garrison [00:27:07] That's great.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:27:08] You know?

Virginia Garrison [00:27:09] Yeah. Your your father's flying experience during the war. Did that dovetail in some way with the lobster business?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:27:23] Not really. He was a senior at Colgate in 1942 when the war broke out. But, you know, should I say Pearl Harbor and a lot of men from Colgate and from Syracuse University and, you know, a lot of colleges up there automatically ran up to get drafted because they wanted to serve. He was sent back to Hamilton, New York, which is where Colgate is located, to serve as a naval flight instructor, which he did for a period of time. But then he was actually sent out to the West Coast. But we did a little bit of flying of lobsters down. We tried to do it a couple of times from places like Newfoundland and Cape Breton, but it never really worked out.

Virginia Garrison [00:28:12] Why?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:28:13] Well, I think it was just it could have been changes in temperature. Lobsters are very sensitive to temperature changes. And, you know, also time, time out of the water and so on and so forth.

Virginia Garrison [00:28:26] Right.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:28:27] Yeah.

Virginia Garrison [00:28:28] And I'm sure you're compromised somewhat by you with what you can do in a plane.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:28:32] Exactly. And they couldn't land in Montauk because at that point, Montauk Airport wasn't paved. They had to land in East Hampton and so on. So it was just a cumbersome kind of operation.

Virginia Garrison [00:28:44] And then your father was one of the the founders of and partners in the airport, it was kind of his idea, like '57?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:28:52] Yes, it was. It was in the mid-'50s and the corporation was formed. He and the other people involved purchased the land where the airport sits today from, I believe from Suffolk County, huh? I think so. I'm pretty sure.

Virginia Garrison [00:29:11] It's a lot of land, right?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:29:13] There's about about 27 acres there. Yeah. But it's bordered by county parkland on three sides. And, obviously, East Lake Drive is the fourth side, and there's a lot of wetlands there, too. But he used the airport primarily when he was in the Legislature. He would fly back and forth, you know.

Virginia Garrison [00:29:37] Albany.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:29:37] Right. Because he had a twin-engine plane at that time. And then in the in his early years in the Legislature, he would he would call down to Montauk and he would tell us what time he was going to land. And we would go down to Montauk Airport and we would kind of position our car so that the headlights were shining

down the runway, because at that time, Montauk Airport wasn't even paved. It was just a dirt runway and it had no lights and no really.

Virginia Garrison [00:30:11] Okay. So a briefly so your father's political career. So he was speaker of the Assembly. Is that right?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:30:25] He was elected to the New York State Assembly in 1960. He served from 1960 until 1978 when he ran for governor against Hugh Carey. She was speaker for six years.

Virginia Garrison [00:30:41] Okay.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:30:42] Six years out of the 18. It could have been 1968 to 1974, perhaps. And then he was also minority leader for several years as well. Yeah.

Virginia Garrison [00:30:55] And then did you ever have an interest in going that far with politics or not particularly?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:31:00] I was involved politically. I was East Hampton Town Republican chairman from 1988 to 1997. I was asked, I guess, because of, you know, the political lineage and the family name, I was asked to run for everything from supervisor to Congress to state senator and so on and so forth. But I was more interested in the operational side of it. In other words, basically finding qualified candidates and formulating campaigns and also raising.

Virginia Garrison [00:31:35] Thus the Republican Committee.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:31:36] Yes.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:31:37] So I was on the organizational side of it, obviously, whereas Dad was on the elective side of it.

Virginia Garrison [00:31:47] That makes sense. How did you how did the Lobster Deck that come about? How did that evolve from the, that was a that was wholesale and retail business, right?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:31:59] We were exclusively wholesale from the time I got out here in 1974.

Virginia Garrison [00:32:05] Okay.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:32:06] Until the late '80s or maybe even 1990, we were 100% wholesale. We had a little retail market at Duryea's, but not much. And yeah.

Virginia Garrison [00:32:18] Thus Bohack's and things like that. Okay.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:32:20] But we had this kind of dirt patch on the north side of the lobster house that kind of faced out onto Fort Pond Bay. And one day I was out there doing something or other, and my father came walking around the corner and he said, you know, maybe we should maybe we should put a deck here and serve seafood. My father was, he was the visionary of the family, so I was the implementer. In other words, he came up with the ideas.

Virginia Garrison [00:32:55] That reflects the political thing, too, right? Yeah.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:32:58] And I was in charge of making it work. But basically that was how it started in 1991.

Virginia Garrison [00:33:06] '91, okay.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:33:06] We constructed the lobster deck and we put some furniture out there. And of course, we did it in the styles which the Duryea's did -- it was basically build it first because if you wait to get your permits, you'll be 20 years down the road. So so we built it and it just we opened it with myself and Wendy and two Irish girls. We knew nothing about the restaurant business. I mean, I knew a lot about the seafood business, but we knew nothing about the restaurant business. And the thing took off like a shot. It just it just went because we had the view, you know, that sunset view, very simple menu. Everything was either fried or, no, no, not fried, steamed or broiled. No fried. We didn't serve liquor. People could bring wine or beer, and that was it. And I don't know, the concept just caught hold.

Virginia Garrison [00:34:10] Simple with a beautiful setting.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:34:11] Yeah. Yeah. And the word spread and before you knew it, it, you know, it gradually expanded to the point where I had probably 10 or 12 people working there every season. And after a couple of years, Wendy phased out, she wasn't she wasn't up for the back of the house. But we did really, really well. And we had fun doing it, too.

Virginia Garrison [00:34:35] You did have fun.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:34:36] Yeah, we really did.

Virginia Garrison [00:34:38] What did you like about it?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:34:40] I like the people. I remember Ina Garten. She would come with her husband, Jeffrey. They would only come for lunch. They wouldn't come for dinner. Well, they didn't want the big crowds and, you know, being seen, seen and having people, you know, questions and so on and so forth. But since we didn't take reservations, it was first come, first serve, and we had some notables come through, but it was just the opportunity to meet a lot of different people, and ...

Virginia Garrison [00:35:17] And you enjoyed that.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:35:17] All I wanted to do was to serve good seafood, and I kind of modeled it. We had spent some time down in the Outer Banks, Wendy and I, when I went surfing down there at Cape Hatteras and stuff.

Virginia Garrison [00:35:31] Oh, did you used to surf that as well as in Montauk?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:35:32] Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. I surfed in a lot of different places. I surfed in France when I was going to school in France and I went to Australia. Australia was the culmination of my surfing career. That was in 1985.

Virginia Garrison [00:35:45] Was there a reason for that?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:35:46] I always wanted to surf in Australia. I totally overflowed Hawaii and I just kept going to Australia. That's why I wanted to surf, because I had seen pictures and so on and so forth. But when we went to the Outer Banks and we went to these big seafood restaurants in North Carolina that were very simple, very plain, really good seafood, of course there everything is fried and all you got was iced tea or lemonade. They didn't serve liquor because they were dry counties. So I thought, this is what I want to do. All I want to do is to serve really good seafood.

Virginia Garrison [00:36:23] And so, yeah. So that was your model, except that it was fried. But it was kind of a keep it simple, enjoy the atmosphere kind of thing? Um, and what did you dislike about it?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:36:36] It was a grind, because if you're in the restaurant business, you really have to be there all the time. You have to watch over your staff. And I was very fortunate. I had a very good staff. They really wanted to work, but it was long hours. It was probably 15 hour days and in season it was seven days a week. I mean, we were open year round at Duryea's in some form because they wanted to cater to the local people and we kept our prices reasonable, but very long hours. And a lot of, because it's all perishable commodity, a lot of inventory control and so on and so forth.

Virginia Garrison [00:37:22] And you really had some in terms of like electric power and stuff like that. I mean, that's almost like harrowing to read about.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:37:27] Lot of issues. Yeah, a lot of issues. You know, you lose your power when you've got we used to do on a good day at the Lobster Deck, we used to do 350 covers per day between lunch and dinner and that was from 12 noon until probably 9 o'clock at night. It's sizable if you have a lot of people out there and all of a sudden your power goes off, people get restless. God forbid somebody falls down.

Virginia Garrison [00:37:55] Oh, because of lights.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:37:56] Yeah. And you've got perishable seafood sitting there and so on and so forth.

Virginia Garrison [00:38:00] That perishable seafood has been a.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:38:03] Yeah, that was a big a biggie.

Virginia Garrison [00:38:06] A nail biter for you, right?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:38:07] Yes, yes, yes, certainly. That was a biggie.

Virginia Garrison [00:38:10] Um. Oh. In "Full Circle," there's a couple of nice, really, pages about what it felt like to sell both the business and the family house. Would you mind talking about that a little bit?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:38:26] Sure. I spent when I was young. Meaning 9 years old, 10 years old, 12 years old. I probably spent more time at my grandparents' house at Duryea's, okay, than I did at home. I was there all the time.

Virginia Garrison [00:38:44] And home at that time was?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:38:46] We had a we had a little house on South Delrey, kind of near Montauk School.

Virginia Garrison [00:38:52] Right. Okay.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:38:52] Okay. I was at my grandparents' house a lot, and I actually began working for my father when I was 12 years old for 25 cents an hour. I would pack lobsters and shovel ice. Those lobsters, they keep coming. So that obviously, there was very big emotional attachment. And when I was at business school at Columbia, they kept saying over and over again, you know, you have to separate yourself from your emotion, because if you're going to make a good business decision, it has to be quantifiable and you have to leave your feelings out of it. But nonetheless, it was really hard to leave, you know.

Virginia Garrison [00:39:35] So much history, I'm sure.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:39:36] Yes, so much history, family ties and the fact that we lived in my grandparents' house after we bought it for 42 years.

Virginia Garrison [00:39:45] It's a long time.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:39:46] Yeah. And the the summer before we actually closed. We sold in March of 2014. We negotiated with a buyer for over a year. But the summer before we closed, Labor Day weekend, I took one of my employees and we went up in the attic of our house right across from where he is. I found things of my grandparents'. I found my father's college exam books, those little blue books that you used to write in with the lines from 1942, which was his senior year at Colgate. And obviously we had all of our personal belongings. So there was all of this to be kind of sifted through. What are you going to keep? What are you going to throw? Of the stuff you keep, where are you going to put it? And I could only do it for a couple of hours at a time. It was very tiring.

Virginia Garrison [00:40:42] It's draining. It's emotionally draining.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:40:46] Yes, yes, yes.

Virginia Garrison [00:40:48] Yeah. And then of all the history and the people who've been in it and stuff, but then also the business, right. I mean that's what three generations?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:40:58] Yeah. Yeah.

Virginia Garrison [00:41:00] So that must've been a yeah.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:41:02] Yes it was hard. But on the other hand, I was ready because I had gotten cancer in 2007.

Virginia Garrison [00:41:10] Yeah. Can we talk about that?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:41:12] Sure. Yeah. I was diagnosed with colorectal cancer in 2007, and fortunately, my gastroenterologist in Southampton, Steve Georgopoulos, he had trained at Sloan. He was the one who found my cancer. He was able to get me into Sloan

right away, and they put me on a treatment protocol and so on and so forth. But once I had made my cancer journey, and I was fortunate enough to come through it, I always had a little bit of a nagging doubt as to whether it would come back. And I didn't want to have Wendy wake up one day with me gone and have her look out across the road at this seafood business and say, What do I do with this thing? You know, that would have been a terrible burden. So it had kind of gotten really to be time. All right. Time to go. And the buyer for the business just love the asset. He loved the property. He had brought his boat into Fort Pond Bay. They used to tie up at Navy Beach and then they would go ashore and have lunch and this and that. But it was always kind of eyeing Duryea's from afar. And he just loved it. He just loved the location. So that's what made the deal.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:42:27] But I, I had chemo and radiation combined for six weeks, then I had six weeks off. Then I had my cancer surgery in November of 2007. Then I was fitted with an ostomy, which I still have. That gave me a little bit more time off. Then they put me in a treatment protocol. Sloan's theory is to try and hit it with a big hammer. So when they put me back on, they put me on chemo only, but they put me on a chemo cocktail. I was on four at once, and that was really debilitating. I never missed a day of work. I would go in maybe for an hour or so just to get the crew organized and then I would go home and rest.

Virginia Garrison [00:43:17] What year was this about?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:43:19] We're talking 2007, early 2008.

Virginia Garrison [00:43:22] Must've been very draining.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:43:23] Yes, but I had a very positive attitude about it. I formed my own Montauk cancer support group.

Virginia Garrison [00:43:32] I know you were involved with Fighting Chance, too, right.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:43:34] And I was on the board of board of Fighting Chance for three years. When I left Sloan, my surgeon said to me, If we have people come through our department, which was colorectal, who wind up, you know, with the same appliance, okay, that you're wearing, which is a big physical adjustment and a big emotional adjustment, he said, Would could we reach out to you just to have you talk to them? Because I had made the journey.

Virginia Garrison [00:44:05] Some encouragement, and empathy.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:44:05] Yeah. This is what you do. This is how you deal with it. This is how you're going to feel about it. You know, let's talk about it a little. So I said, Sure. So I went home. I didn't think much of it. And about a month or two went by and I got a referral from Sloan. And then I got another and then I got another. I currently have worked with, I would say, probably between 30 and 50 people, most of whom have had colorectal cancer, primarily men, some women, a few cases of breast cancer, you know, pancreatic, whatever. But I think because I have made the cancer journey, that I'm in a position to relate to them on a totally different level, you know, And it's almost all teleconference. I rarely meet the people face to face who I'm working with. And then last year, I got recruited by a national organization. It's called Cancer Hope Network.

Virginia Garrison [00:45:11] Cancer, Hope Network? HOPE?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:45:12] Cancer, Cancer. Hope. Yeah, Cancer Hope Network. And I went through their formal training, so now I'm also part of that organization, too. Yeah.

Virginia Garrison [00:45:23] And how are you doing? You're doing well, physically?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:45:25] I'm doing great.

Virginia Garrison [00:45:26] That's wonderful. Yeah. You really. You really tried to work force yourself to stay in good physical shape and stuff.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:45:36] I feel that you have to. You have to get access. Particularly when you're on a chemo regimen. You have to get some form of exercise every day. You have to keep yourself hydrated and so on and so on. But even after the fact, even if you're in remission, you kind of come away with the feeling that you should really try and take care of yourself because you don't know how you got there. We all have the capacity. Apparently, from what I've learned, we all have the potential for getting some form of cancer. What triggers it? It could be your diet. It could be the water you drink, it could be stress. It was rather coincidental that my father died in 2004, my mother died in 2006, and I got cancer in 2007. So who knows?

Virginia Garrison [00:46:31] Who knows is right. And I know you're involved with the Montauk Community Church, too.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:46:37] Yes, I am. I'm involved with the church. I'm a member of the session. I'm an elder in the church and in the Protestant Church, the session is the ruling body, okay? There's about six or seven of us on session, but as kind of an interesting sideline, back in 2009, 2010, we had lost our permanent minister at the Montauk Community Church, and we were going through a candidate search to find a new one. And there were several instances where we needed someone to actually be in the pulpit on Sunday. So I began giving sermons, and I've done that here in Montauk probably six or eight times. In March of this year, I was invited to the East Hampton Presbyterian Church because they're in the process of trying to find a permanent minister, and they've been looking for about 10 months. It's a very arduous process. You have to screen people, they have to come for interviews, and.

Virginia Garrison [00:47:40] There's probably a political aspect too.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:47:42] Of course, and everyone has to like them. So to make a long story short, I was invited to conduct a service at the East Hampton Presbyterian Church in March of this year, which I did, and I'm going back there on Sunday. I'm going to give another sermon on Sunday in East Hampton.

Virginia Garrison [00:47:59] And you write the sermons.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:47:59] Oh, yes,.

Virginia Garrison [00:48:00] Okay. Because you have one about one of your employees?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:48:01] Yes.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:48:05] Yes. And that's kind of where I'm going this Sunday, because it's Father's Day and I'm going to be. Talking about this young man who I felt was certainly had redeemable qualities, but that had kind of fallen by the wayside. And he and I have gotten extremely close.

Virginia Garrison [00:48:23] I was just going to ask.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:48:24] Yeah, extremely so. Because he's in the country undocumented. He has family here. He has a job here. I helped to get him a house in East Hampton, not a house, but a place to live. And it's gotten to the point now where he calls me Papa, and I call him my boy.

Virginia Garrison [00:48:44] That's sweet.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:48:45] So it's really special.

Virginia Garrison [00:48:48] Any other community organizations you're involved in in Montauk?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:48:52] I'm a lifetime director of the Montauk Chamber of Commerce.

Virginia Garrison [00:48:55] And you've been involved with the Playhouse, too, right?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:48:57] I was chairman of the Montauk Playhouse Foundation for five and a half years, and I think they are going to build that pool.

Virginia Garrison [00:49:05] Can't wait to see it.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:49:06] That long-awaited pool is finally going to happen, I think.

Virginia Garrison [00:49:10] So the the writing of sermons, in a way, kind of dovetails with your interest in writing and writing poetry, I would guess.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:49:19] Definitely. Definitely. And also, I was a philosophy and religion major in college.

Virginia Garrison [00:49:24] Oh, so that's sort of theological.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:49:27] Exactly. That was and I thought I thought seriously, when I graduated Colgate, I thought rather seriously about perhaps divinity school.

Virginia Garrison [00:49:35] Oh, wow, huh.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:49:36] But that concept kind of came and went, you know, And I thought, well, perhaps I should get an MBA.

Virginia Garrison [00:49:46] There's kind of a difference.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:49:49] Quite a difference. Quite a difference.

Virginia Garrison [00:49:52] But what do you like about it? Giving sermons, do you?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:49:55] Well, I'm a very spiritual person. And people tell me that I'm very empathetic, which is why I think I'm fairly good at the cancer counseling thing. But I see. I see giving. Now, I am not an ordained minister, so when when I do a service on Sunday mine is not a sermon. It's a message.

Virginia Garrison [00:50:21] Okay.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:50:22] Because I'm not ordained, but it's kind of an extension of my feeling that I can somehow, I don't know, reach people, touch people.

Virginia Garrison [00:50:32] Be of service.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:50:33] Yeah. And if maybe they're having personal issues and I try and I try and tie my sermons into something that is happening in the real world, I've heard a lot of sermons and some of them kind of focus on the Bible and Bible passages and what this means. And, you know, that's all fine. But I kind of like to bring in the human element.

Virginia Garrison [00:50:55] Make it less abstract.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:50:57] Yes, yes, yes.

Virginia Garrison [00:51:01] And so I want to ask you about hobbies, but I know that you you must enjoy writing.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:51:09] I enjoy writing. I've become a very, very avid reader since I, quote unquote, retired.

Virginia Garrison [00:51:18] Uh huh.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:51:18] Even though I now have a position at the Downs, I do a lot of reading. I do a lot of walking. I walk at Montauk Airport every morning, even though I've sold it.

Virginia Garrison [00:51:29] Oh, really? They let you do that?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:51:32] Well, that was part of the sale, you know. Oh, yes.

Virginia Garrison [00:51:35] Really, that was a condition of the sale?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:51:36] I mean, I told him, I don't have it in writing, but I said I want to be able to walk, you know, the airport early in the morning.

Virginia Garrison [00:51:44] How long ago was the sale? Oh, '22, right?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:51:47] Last June, we closed in June of 2022. Yeah. So it was about a year ago.

Virginia Garrison [00:51:53] Okay. Yeah.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:51:54] Yeah.

Virginia Garrison [00:51:55] Do you do you do you hunt anymore or no?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:51:58] Oh, yes.

Virginia Garrison [00:51:59] You still go to, is it the Eastern Shore?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:52:01] The Eastern Shore. We have family hunting property down there. I've been going there since I was very, very young. The hunting season down there runs basically November, December, January. It's kind of a three-month waterfowl only. You know, I don't hunt deer or any of that stuff. However, I love to hunt waterfowl, ducks and geese.

Virginia Garrison [00:52:21] That's like an intergenerational. That's there's a long tradition of the Duryeas with that.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:52:25] Oh yeah. Going all the way back to my father and my grandfather and they used to take trips to down the Outer Banks to go hunting in North Carolina. And then, and then my father found the property down on the eastern shore that they ultimately bought because my grandfather had had a heart attack. And they thought it was kind of hard for him to make those long trips. So we've been doing it, I guess my father bought the property, I think in the mid-'50, probably '55 or '56. Yeah.

Virginia Garrison [00:52:52] So no more surfing lately.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:52:55] Haven't surfed since Australia really, that was kind of the culmination of my career.

Virginia Garrison [00:53:00] You quit while you were ahead kind of thing? It doesn't get any better than this?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:53:02] This. Exactly. Plus, when I began surfing, I think I was in the eighth grade. So. So let's say 1963.

Virginia Garrison [00:53:11] And this was in Montauk at Ditch?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:53:12] Here in Montauk at Ditch. When I started surfing here, when I paddled out, if there were three or four guys in the water at the same time, it was a lot. And they were basically guys from up the island. They were guys from Amityville and Babylon who would drive out here and surf, and sometimes they would stay here, sometimes they would go home. But three or four people. Four or five of us in the water at a time. Now, I wouldn't even think about going near Ditch.

Virginia Garrison [00:53:43] You wouldn't find a parking spot anyway.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:53:44] No, no.

Virginia Garrison [00:53:48] And golf.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:53:50] I'm an average golfer, but I love to play. I love to be outdoors. And I just love Montauk. Is Montauk Downs is one of the top 30 public courses in

the country. And it's a beautiful course. It's a hard course. It's a long course. And you have wind and you have rough and so on and so forth. But it is absolutely gorgeous.

Virginia Garrison [00:54:13] So you're so as of about a month or so ago, you're both playing there and working there as a starter and a ranger, right?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:54:20] And uh huh, I'm a starter and a ranger. Sometimes I'll play when I get off work, I'll just play nine holes or whatever. I thought I would get a little bit of consideration in terms of green fees, but no, because I'm working for the State of New York.

Virginia Garrison [00:54:37] I hear you.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:54:38] Yeah.

Virginia Garrison [00:54:40] Okay. That's really any any other interest they like to talk about?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:54:47] Wello, not really. It's kind of the reading and the writing and the physical activity.

Virginia Garrison [00:54:52] And. What do you like to read? Fiction. Nonfiction. Philosophy.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:54:55] I like to read. Well, I started on a graduate degree. This was after grad school. I'd come back to Montauk after my cancer diagnosis. When I began counseling other cancer victims, I realized that I was getting into situations that involved things like depression, family dynamics, substance abuse. So I embarked on a graduate degree in mental health counseling, totally online, which was for me, that was a challenge because I'm not exactly computer literate, but I enrolled with an online program and I was doing very, very well. But then I had to break it off for a period of time because I was having problems reading the computer screen. I went to my doctor in Southampton, who I had gone to Colgate with, and he said, Have you had chemo? And I said, Yeah, I've had quite a bit. He said, You have cataracts in your eyes from the chemotherapy. He said, I'm going to fix that. So he said, What's your shooting eye? So I said, My right eye. He said, All right, I'm going to put a long-range lens in your right eye and a short-range lens in your left eye for reading.

Virginia Garrison [00:56:18] By shooting, Does he mean like for hunting?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:56:21] Yes. So long-range lens here, short-range lens in the left eye. And that solved the reading issue. So then I went back to the online program. It was called Walden University, and I contacted them and I said, okay, I'm ready to come back. And the person I was talking to said, I'm sorry, Mr. Duryea, but you're going to have to reapply. And at that time, I was in my my early 60s and I said, I've got a 97 average in your course of study and I'm over 60. You're telling me I have to reapply? I'll think about it. And I broke it off. Yeah, but as a long way of answering your question, I like to read. I'm fascinated by the mind and by all the permutations of the mind and things like schizophrenia and, you know, bipolar.

Virginia Garrison [00:57:21] Mental illness.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:57:22] And mental illness. So I read a lot of that stuff. You know.

Virginia Garrison [00:57:29] That's pretty much all that I had for questions. But I'm asking you if there's anything you'd like to add or clarify that we haven't covered.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:57:39] I think just to talk for a couple of minutes about obviously Montauk's transformation.

Virginia Garrison [00:57:47] That totally makes sense.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:57:48] For instance, I just saw on East Hampton Patch today that the Sands Motel is on the market for 48 million. The Atlantic Terrace, which then became Marram for a couple of years, traded last year for 78 million. The amount of money coming into this town is staggering. And I think that in some ways it's good. And certainly I'm a prime example because here was a three-generation family business that was purchased by an investor, Duryea's, in 2014. He had the wherewithal to take the operation to a higher level, which obviously we could not do. We didn't have the capital. It is beautiful.

Virginia Garrison [00:58:45] You like what he's done with that?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:58:48] Yes. And a lot of places in town have been purchased, the Ronjo, Crow's Nest. And it all started, I think, with the Surf Lodge, which was about 10 years ago.

Virginia Garrison [00:58:57] Maybe maybe even more.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:58:58] More. Maybe 12 or 14, I don't know. But it just seemed that once the Surf Lodge arrived, all of a sudden some of this outside capital became, you know, coming into town.

Virginia Garrison [00:59:11] In terms of investors and ownership, not clientele so much.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:59:15] Right. And it it has certainly transformed Montauk. And I am very curious to see where Montauk is going to be in about ten years.

Virginia Garrison [00:59:24] Do you have a vision of what it might be?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [00:59:26] Is it it going to be a Newport, Rhode Island, where only the very wealthy, kay, can be here? I said to a friend of mine, and I remember in 1986 we were standing on my front lawn at the house right across from Duryea's from the lobster house, and I said to a friend of mine, I said, You watch, within ten or 15 years, a lot of the local people are going to be priced out of Montauk, and the labor force will come here from a thousand miles away. Well, it took longer than ten or 15 years. However, it's happened. The kids graduating high school now can't live here. They can't afford to live here. Our work force has gradually transitioned over to Hispanic and also Jamaican and also students who come on the J-1 program. And I would not have been able to run the operation at Duryea's. Certainly the Lobster Deck I could never have run if I hadn't taken advantage of the J-1 program, but I had to house them too. And that was a challenge.

Virginia Garrison [01:00:35] And the investors, I believe, are in a better financial position to provide housing.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [01:00:42] Right. And they can pick up they can also pick up, you know, some other houses around town, accessory housing, if they have to. In other words, they can buy, you know, places like the Lido Motel they can buy or the Neptune or, you know, whatever. But Montauk has really changed a lot. I think it's got some pressing infrastructure needs that have to be addressed. I mean, we get a big density here in the summer now, big. Montauk isn't built for that. I mean, we used to get people here in the summer, but when it goes from a year round population of 3,500 to on a busy day in July, 35,000, that's an issue. So whoever's on the planning side of this thing should begin to take a look at obviously the infrastructure needs and there are quite a few. Quite a few, but I don't know. And I'm very curious because now I'm kind of a bystander. I'm 74. You know, I've done my business thing here. I may even want to leave here at some point.

Virginia Garrison [01:01:51] I was going to ask you that. You don't necessarily want to stay?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [01:01:52] Yeah. Because the character.

Virginia Garrison [01:01:54] Not necessarily.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [01:01:55] It isn't that I don't want to stay. I love it here. And I love the fact that Montauk will always be like 65% open space. Yes. Thanks to the town and the county and the state. And my dad, I mean, he did 1,200 acres up in the woods, you know.

Virginia Garrison [01:02:11] What was his role in that?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [01:02:12] He was he was the driving force. And he also helped out with Shadmoor, too.

Virginia Garrison [01:02:18] That's awesome.

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [01:02:19] Yeah. Yeah. But Montauk has a natural beauty that is just phenomenal. But the character of the community has changed, and the people coming here are different. I mean, I'm sorry, but they are. We're getting a much younger crowd. We do have, obviously, second homeowners here, but it doesn't feel like the kind of town that I grew up in. Now, is that enough of a reason to leave? I don't know. But I certainly want to be here as long as I can. But if I have to go, I have to go. And I certainly have a place to go, the Eastern Shore. You know, and I'm fortunate that way, although I wouldn't want to be there in the summer because it's so hot and buggy. But I could theoretically rent, you know, further north, maybe an hour, hour and a half away from the hunting camp and, you know, travel back and forth. But I just don't know what's going to happen here. It's it's very, very interesting.

Virginia Garrison [01:03:20] Yeah. Anything else?

Perry "Chip" Duryea III [01:03:24] No, I think that's about it.

Virginia Garrison [01:03:27] I'm going to say thank you, Chip. I'm going to say this is the end of the Montauk Library Oral history interview with Perry "Chip" Duryea III. The

interviewer was Virginia Garrison. This recording can be found in the archive collection of the Montauk Library.