

Interview with John Pancoast

Kathy Hersh: Today is March 30th, 2019. My name is Kathy Hersh. I'm interviewing John Arthur Pancoast for the Miami Beach Visual Memoirs Project. John is the great grandson of John Collins, one of the founders of Miami Beach. Let's start out talking about your famous ancestor. What was he like? What's the family lore about John Collins?

John Pancoast: No, I did not meet him because, of course, he died in 1928, and I was born in 1945. My father, I think, really had a very special relationship to him, because he used to call him The Old Man, and I've shown you a picture with his two great grandchildren. Also, for another example of the closeness of the relationship, my father wrote a story for Tropic Magazine, which in 1914, my father was 24, about how this man took a failing enterprise of growing coconuts and turned it into a successful grove that had 200 acres of avocados, 25 acres of mangoes, and all kinds of other crops, and how this was going to be such a successful thing, which is kind of interesting to think that was 1914. By 1920, probably, everything was over. But, there he was in 1914 saying how great everything was turning out.

Interviewer: You have heard stories from your father about his grandfather.

Pancoast: Right, right. Right.

Interviewer: They were close, you say.

Pancoast: Oh, I think they were very close, yes.

Interviewer: Your father went with him a lot of places, or worked with him?

Pancoast: Well, I'm sure he worked with him. My father's family came to Miami Beach around 1910 because they were concerned that John Collins was going to bankrupt the family. He would send letters home which said, in effect, everything is going great, send money. You get only so many letters about this, so they sent a delegation to Miami to see what the old man was up to.

Interviewer: Who was in that delegation?

Pancoast: At least my grandfather, and I think like Uncle Irving or Uncle Arthur or whatever. They decided that okay, we'll let him do what he wants, but we'll send somebody down to monitor the situation and keep things



from getting completely out of hand. Well, the person who drew, I think, the short straw on that was my grandfather, because my grandfather operated a hardware store that was one of two or three that my great grandfather owned called John S. Collins and Sons.

All he did was operate the store in [phonetic] [04:28] Merchantville, which is across the river from Philadelphia, so he did not have orchards or land like his brothers-in-law. He was free to come down here and take his family to a bug infested swamp, which we were talking before about how Mrs. Collins had to stay in Moorestown. How about Mrs. Pancoast, who had to come to Miami Beach and hack a place and build a house in this wilderness where her sons have stories about they lived in tents while the house was being built. What they don't really tell you is that every night, they would paint the window screens with kerosene or something like that to keep out the bugs. You can turn on the AC. But, on the other hand, there was the city across the bay.

The deal was he could do what he wanted with the grove as long as he built a bridge from Miami to Miami Beach. I think my grandfather had the idea that this ain't going to be a grove forever. It should be more like a resort, and the resort he had in mind, which is one that he used to go to, was Atlantic City. That was the model that they were thinking about. They and others were doing the same thing, started platting land and selling lots. The place that they did this was in their house, which was on a body of water, which is called Lake Pancoast because that was where their house was.

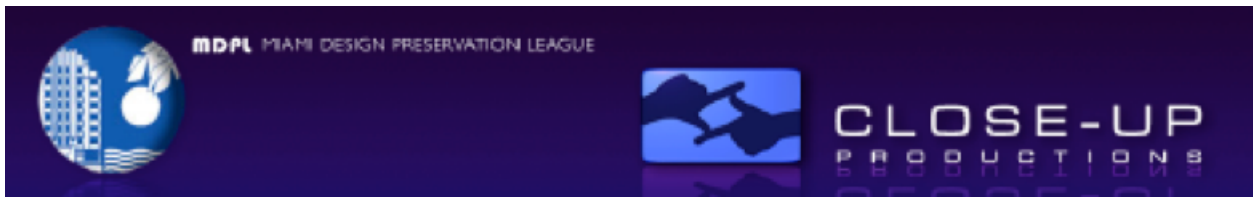
Interviewer: That lake was already there, right?

Pancoast: That lake was already there. I think that as part of improving, they probably enhanced it, shall we say. It's also the start of the canal that my great grandfather had built to take the avocados across the bay to the railroad to get them to the FEC and get them shipped up north. The bridge opened in '14, '15, whatever.

Interviewer: Which is now the Venetian Causeway.

Pancoast: Which is now the Venetian Causeway. Which, of course, it could have opened, except that he was a half a mile short of opening, which is when- well, the story I've heard is that Carl Fisher was vacationing in Biscayne Bay because the captain of his boat said hey, there's a man I want you to meet, and he's kind of a little crazy, but-

Interviewer: They were talking about John Collins?



Pancoast: John Collins.

Interviewer: Was he a little crazy?

Pancoast: He certainly had that reputation. My mother, who lived in Key West, said that the people in Key West were talking about this crazy man that thought he could build a city in a swamp. Yes, I think he had something of that aura about being not the normal, usual person.

Interviewer: You refer to him, when talking about the family decided to come down and monitor what was going on, as the old man. Is that what he was known as in the family?

Pancoast: To my father.

Interviewer: To your father?

Pancoast: I don't know to the others, but yeah, definitely to him.

Interviewer: He may have been crazy, but- or, at least entrepreneurial.

Pancoast: Yeah, unconventional. Let's put it that way. Of course, you had this idea that this staid, Quaker, strict gentleman, whatever, which I'm sure he was, but because when my family- that is to say, his other Collinses and so forth would come and visit, and even as late as the 1950s, they used the Quaker speech, so suddenly everybody was talking about thee and thy. I was going who are these people.

Carl Fisher gave them the money to finish the bridge in exchange for 200 acres on the south end of the property that my great grandfather had gotten [inaudible] [10:31] of the coconut enterprise. That 200 acres included Lincoln Road. That was the first piece of property that Fisher- of course, Fisher definitely, I understand, definitely was kind of a visionary as well. He had the good sense of selling a business called Presto-O-Lite, which built all the automobile headlights for all the cars, and they ran on it acetylene, not electricity, so he managed to sell that to Union Carbide right before electrical headlights became popular, so he had lots of money. He also was a car dealer. He had lots of money, plus he knew people that had lots of money, like the Firestones and the Allisons and all those people.

He came down and thought- well, his idea was to build hotels that were kind of like these towers in the wilderness, so you could come to the



hotel, have a wonderful winter, you could look out your window, and you could see, oh, I could own that piece of property over there, or that lot over there. So, these hotels were not only hotels, they were part of a real estate, let's develop the beach kind of business.

In the meantime, of course, the Pancoasts were developing real estate as well, say from 41st Street, the district that is now the Collins District, 41st Street to where the museum is.

Interviewer: Tell us about the building of the Pancoast Hotel. Was that a family decision?

Pancoast: Well, yes. Let me just tell you one more thing about the selling lots. My father loved motorcycles, and he would take his mother, Katherine Pancoast, across the Collins Bridge at full speed, and it was a wooden deck, and it would go boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. The poor lady would be crying and whatever, but she loved it. One year, like in 1914 or '13, he decided to go out west.

Interviewer: Do you want to start again?

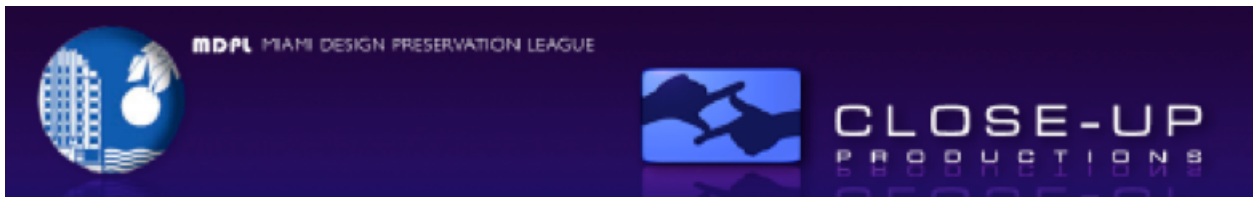
Pancoast: Okay, like 1914, he took a motorcycle trip out west.

Interviewer: This is your father?

Pancoast: My father. In 1914, there are no roads. He ended up in Colorado for the winter, and was too proud to wire home and say I need money. He worked as a sheep herder and came home the next spring, but, of course, he hadn't shaved in the meantime, so he came home, went to the office, and pretended that he wanted to buy a lot. Nobody knew who he was, except the dog.

Interviewer: He sounds like a character, your father.

Pancoast: Absolutely. Absolutely. He then worked for Carl Fisher. Apparently, we owned- we, the Miami Beach Improvement Company, which was the Pancoast, Collins Enterprise, owned a casino, meaning pools and a restaurant, and Carl Fisher bought it and turned it into the Roman Pools, and my father was the manager of the Roman Pools, which also- by this time, like 1920, '21, the beach was so incredibly different from 1910 or whatever. It was a whole other city. People that were wealthy would come to the Roman Pools, and he had a story about how Mrs. Astor, whose husband, we all know where he is, he's in the bottom with the Titanic, but that Mrs. Astor, who they put in a lifeboat- of course, he was a male. He couldn't get on that lifeboat. Mrs. Astor



was a guest one day at the Roman Pools, and my father looked up at the rafters, and there was a big black snake up in the rafters right over Mrs. Astor. I don't know how they resolved this question, but that was his- the wildlife did not leave Miami Beach.

Interviewer: You don't know what happened to the snake, or-

Pancoast: Obviously, Mrs. Astor was quite fine, because-

Interviewer: Yes. So, to have survived the Titanic and then to have been bitten by a snake on Miami Beach wouldn't have gone down very well in history.

Pancoast: No, no. That would have been a big deal. When he used to go fishing in Lake Pancoast, and he had a big cast net, and one night he was doing this with a friend, and he cast the net, and in the net came a crocodile. My father started to say to his friend, come on, come on, let's get this thing on the boat. The man said if this creature gets in this boat, I'm getting out. Well, think for a moment. There are other crocodiles in this lake. But, that didn't stop him, and he took the crocodile to the Roman Pools, must have been in the summertime, and turned him loose in the pool for a few weeks.

Interviewer: Did that put the people off, or did that-

Pancoast: I mean, there must not have been anybody there, because you don't go swimming- yeah, I don't know how he got him back out of the-

Interviewer: Oh, that was in the summertime.

Pancoast: It must have been, yeah.

Interviewer: There was no summer-

Pancoast: Whatever time-

Interviewer: People didn't come in the summer.

Pancoast: Whatever it was, at that point, yes. It's hot. Then, my father, having this experience running the Roman Pools, I think, gave him the thought- and, again, we're talking we're building Atlantic City here. What does Atlantic City have but wonderful hotels on the ocean? The Carl Fisher hotels were never on the ocean. They were always on the bay.

Interviewer: Why is that?



Pancoast: I think that he thought that it was more peaceful, perhaps. Carl Fisher loved to speed, and he had speedboats, and they would have races on the bay.

Interviewer: Maybe he was saving the waterfront real estate.

Pancoast: Of course, the real estate on the ocean was ours. He didn't want that.

Interviewer: Interesting.

Pancoast: In 1924- well, as you say, was this a family decision? The story I've heard is yes, and my grandfather voted no, but my father persevered, and on opening day, when they had all the dignitaries and all the rest of it, my grandfather came over, too, and told everybody what a wonderful idea this was and what a great place.

Interviewer: When was opening day of the Pancoast Hotel?

Pancoast: It was like New Years of 1924.

Interviewer: Was it an immediate success?

Pancoast: Oh, I think so. I think so. There were no other luxury hotels on the ocean.

Interviewer: It was the first.

Pancoast: It was the first. Again, in 1924, we had to get rid of this idea of being a backwards little town. There were lots of people.

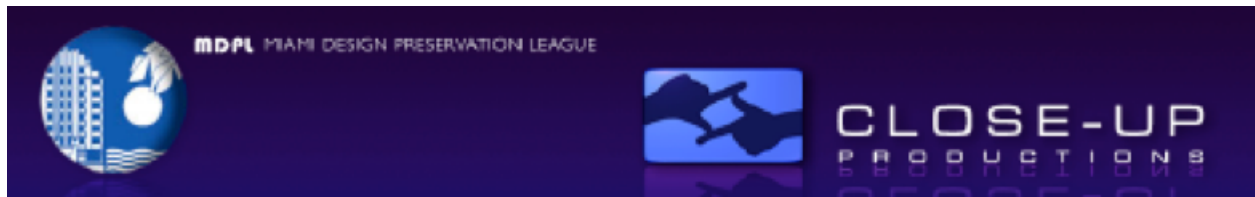
Interviewer: What kind of folks came down?

Pancoast: You would come down and spend the winter or whatever, six weeks or whatever, and you could bring- of course, you would be expected to bring somebody else as a servant or whatever, so that you weren't just on your own, and they had places where these servants could live, which was across the street.

Interviewer: In a separate building?

Pancoast: In a separate building.

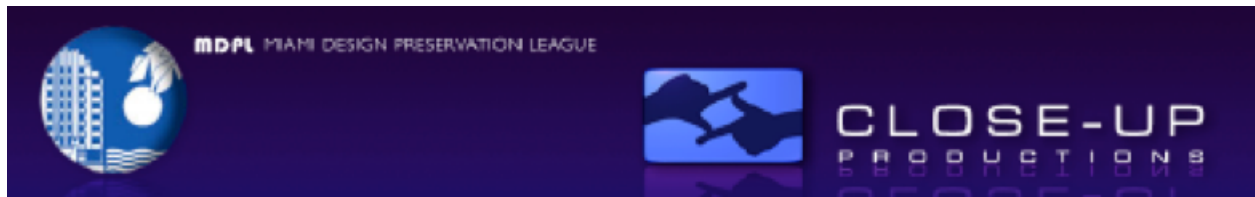
Interviewer: Were most of those servants white, or were they-



- Pancoast:** I think so. You have your chauffeur or whatever. The early advertisements for the hotel stress that you had steam heat and-
- Interviewer:** They needed heat?
- Pancoast:** They had heat because, I guess- I don't know why that was such a big deal, and my father was big in sports, so he stressed that you could come down and play sports. Athletic kind of people that he was trying to attract. As years go on, he hired somebody to write advertising copy, and so the copy would tell you that you're escaping to this marvelous old Spanish wonderland in the tropics, so you don't have to go to Europe. You can just come down to Miami Beach and go swimming and have wonderful food and pleasant company and all that sort of stuff. They had dances.
- Interviewer:** This promotion, was it geared to the Northeast or the Midwest?
- Pancoast:** Northeast, I think. Well, I say that because, although, on the other hand, we had books. Like, for example, every single advertisement that he placed for the winter of 1941 or '42 is pasted in this book, and it's a big book. They must have done more than just New York. I'm sure they did everything.
- Interviewer:** Well, Carl Fisher had, of course, connections in the Midwest with industrialists and-
- Pancoast:** Right, right. Right. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Department store folks, moguls, and the Firestones. Where was that connection?
- Pancoast:** Well, automobile.
- Interviewer:** Automobile. Wheels.
- Pancoast:** Tires. Carl Fisher had a billboard in Times Square that said, like 1920 or whatever, it's always June in Miami Beach. My father, as well as many others, dated their letters June. Every letter was labeled June. Below, it would say otherwise November, or whatever, but it was June in Miami Beach.
- Interviewer:** So, they picked up that slogan from Carl Fisher.
- Pancoast:** Right. Right. Right.



- Interviewer:** That's interesting. What other promotional ideas did your father have about that? What did they do? Did they do Rosie the Elephant, like Carl Fisher did, or were they a little more sophisticated?
- Pancoast:** My sister rode on Rosie the Elephant. When you have Carl Fisher, you don't need anybody else. Of course, wasn't he the one that, when Harding was down here playing golf, and people said this is bad publicity, he said, "Doesn't matter. It says Miami Beach." So, they did everything they could to get Miami Beach across the country.
- Interviewer:** So, people would come for an extended period in the winters. What did you do in the summer?
- Pancoast:** Well, eventually, I think they opened in the summer as well, but of course that would be not the same level of clientele.
- Interviewer:** Now, Carl Fisher, in his establishment, what was his hotel? The Flamingo Hotel?
- Pancoast:** Well, they had The Flamingo, the Nautilus, the King Cole, the Lincoln.
- Interviewer:** He restricted his clientele to non-Jewish. Did the Pancoast Hotel have any restrictions?
- Pancoast:** Absolutely. Yes. You could not be Jewish.
- Interviewer:** Which is kind of interesting for a Quaker to have a-
- Pancoast:** This is one of those big questions that I could have asked my father about but didn't. It's interesting that, for example, I was talking to a friend of mine who was a docent at Whitehall, which is [phonetic] [27:04] Flagler's [inaudible] [27:06] in Palm Beach, and Whitehall, after Flagler died, was turned into a hotel. He said that Whitehall was not restricted, whereas the Breakers, which is where we know, was. Of course, a hotel such as the Kettleworth were very famously restricted. I think that was just the way it was.
- Interviewer:** It was the times.
- Pancoast:** It was the times. [inaudible] [27:42], or to say that it was right, it was also true in suburbs up north. There were deed restrictions on who to buy a house. It's just an incredible thought that that was happening.
- Interviewer:** Tell us about the Depression. What impact did that have on... did it



affect your clientele at the Pancoast Hotel?

Pancoast: I think that when you think about who the clientele were, it didn't, because the people that were rich continued being rich and, unfortunately, the other people- and I'm very much speculating- other people were probably working for less. No, I don't think that-

Interviewer: It didn't have a period of a crisis financially during that time.

Pancoast: Right. Right. Right. Right.

Interviewer: What about the hurricanes?

Pancoast: You know, the '26 hurricane is special, not only because it's special, but because the '26 hurricane was the first hurricane to hit for many years, so nobody knew what a hurricane was. They had had like a tropical storm earlier in the year, but that kind of got everybody, oh, yeah, we know what a hurricane is, but they didn't. When the hurricane struck, it damaged the hotel.

Interviewer: Which had just been open two years.

Pancoast: Two years before. Of course, there are all kinds of marvelous, funny stories, because my father, even at that point, loved animals, and one of the things that the Pancoast had was an aviary, and he had monkeys. It had all kinds of things that you could look at and be entertained and know something. During the hurricane, the monkey got away, and somebody was walking up Collins Avenue, and the monkey jumped on his back. Needless to say, I guess he stopped worrying about the hurricane. There were people, I'm sure, that they opened their doors and got people into the hotel, into safety.

Interviewer: Did you hear any stories about people riding out the storm in the Pancoast Hotel?

Pancoast: Not so much that, but that the hotel had been severely damaged. He said that there was like a ship that had sunk and unsunk and rammed the hotel.

Interviewer: Wow.

Pancoast: As well as all those other things. But, this was in September. They opened in January, so whatever damage there was, they really put their backs to it and really worked.



Interviewer: You were saying how your father kept records of the clientele who came and their special needs. Could you tell us a little bit about that?

Pancoast: I think you've kind of summed it up, but it would seem like if John Smith came, they would know what it is that he liked for breakfast. They would know- that is to say if he liked something special, or if he was taller and therefore he needed a special mattress. Any little detail, which also points to the fact that the clientele was repeat, because you wouldn't keep records if you're just going to check in for one winter. The atmosphere that they were striving was a family atmosphere, that you're part of the Pancoast family, that this is your winter home, and you have all the amenities, good food, places you can go golfing or whatever it is that you want to do.

Interviewer: Did the hotel employ a lot of local people then?

Pancoast: I'm sure they must have.

Interviewer: What about chefs and specialty people like that?

Pancoast: I don't know exactly, but I do know that it had a reputation for having marvelous food. I have some menus, so we'll see just exactly what it was you could have to eat, and I can tell you that it's not what you would get-

Interviewer: At a cafeteria.

Pancoast: From a cafeteria.

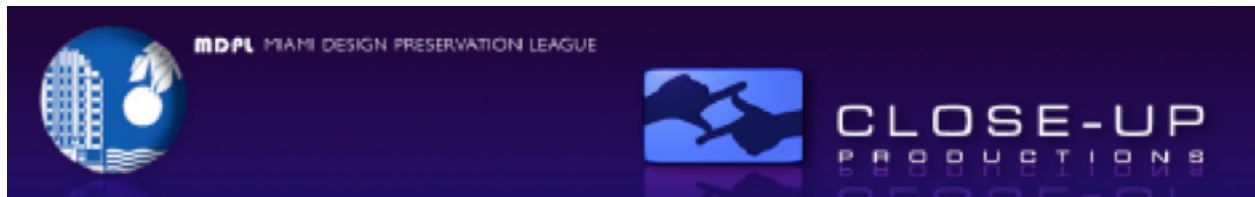
Interviewer: Tell us about the war years that was crucial for the hotel.

Pancoast: Okay. Well, in 1942, all the hotels in Miami Beach, like 140 of them, were taken over by the government as barracks and hospitals and what have you. The 1940s were kind of a critical time for my father, because in 1935, his son, Thomas, Jr. had gone camping and died of sepsis, which apparently, especially his mother, Bettie, was very much affected by that.

Interviewer: By the death.

Pancoast: By his death.

Interviewer: This was your brother.



Pancoast: Yeah, my half-brother.

Interviewer: Half-brother. How half?

Pancoast: His mother was Betty Quarterman.

Interviewer: Okay.

Pancoast: Fast forward to 1942 or whatever, the Quarterman's apparently had, I don't know, a problem. Anyway, Bettie got ill with breast cancer and, if we can take a [inaudible] [35:30] aside from here, she went to St. Francis Hospital during this time of closing the hotel and all that, where she was taken care of by a private duty nurse whose name was Alice Atwell. Alice is my mother. The story is that Bettie said to my father, "When I'm gone, you need to marry this woman." Apparently, she took good care of Bettie.

Now, we have this man who lost his son and lost his wife. 1941, he lost his father. 1944 or whatever, he lost his mother. Fortunately for him, I suppose, he had built a horse farm in what is now North Miami Beach. We had 40 acres, and he had a little apartment there so he could- I mean, since there was no place for him on the beach, he went to live in North Miami Beach.

Interviewer: Why wasn't there a place for him on the beach?

Pancoast: Well, I mean, the hotel was gone.

Interviewer: The hotel was occupied.

Pancoast: Right. Right. Right.

Interviewer: The family had been living in the hotel?

Pancoast: I'm not quite sure. In any case, he had this horse farm that I think he built for his daughter, Polly. We had Tennessee Walking Horses and Palominos and a marvelous barn that was designed by his brother, my Uncle Russell. We played, like we made our own bread, we made our own butter, we made our own ice cream. We had gardens that we could have our peas, strawberries, and all kinds of his own little mango orchard, just like his great grandfather, which was a commercial grove. They used to come and pick it. He could sort of retreat back into Miami Beach in 1910. Of course, he also had two children, which is where I grew up.



Interviewer: You grew up on this horse farm?

Pancoast: Yeah. It was a horse farm until like 1952, when we sold it. He also owned- another detour. He also owned farms in North Dade, which he also sold around that time and moved their bases of their operation to Delray Beach, where he had a cattle farm until he died in 1967, which seemed like a long time at that point, but it's not very.

Interviewer: Tell us about, back to the Pancoast Hotel, it was sold eventually. Tell us about the controversy around that.

Pancoast: It was sold to Grossingers, which, of course, is a very Jewish hotel people. Apparently, there was a deed restriction on the property, as there was on most of the properties in Miami Beach. Aside from who you could rent to, and I do remember signs, not on the hotel, but of course on other places that would give you that idea, there was a deed restriction that said you couldn't sell it to a Jewish, but he did that anyway. If we could go back in time, I'd ask him why, but that's what he did.

Interviewer: You mention that Damon Runyon-

Pancoast: This was a big deal that he did this. It hit the national columns. The irony of this place that had been a restricted and, unfortunately, infamously restricted hotel was now sold to a Jewish hotel person. I remember- this is back in the early '70s going to a hobby shop or something like that in North Miami, and when the owner of the shop learned who I was, told me in no uncertain terms how he felt about the fact that the hotel had restricted clientele. I couldn't say anything to that.

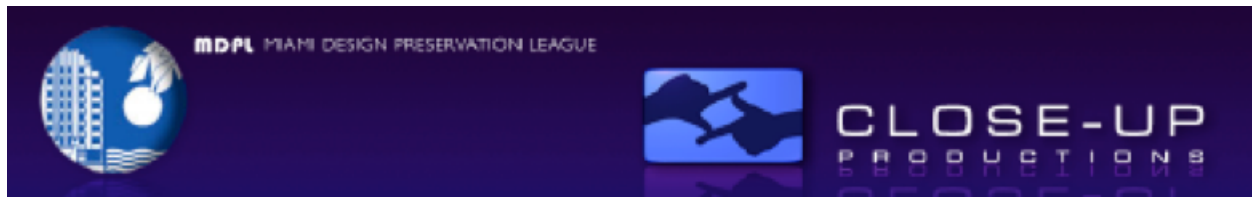
Interviewer: That the Pancoast had restricted, or the Grossingers?

Pancoast: The Pancoast.

Interviewer: Yes, in the '70s.

Pancoast: Well, in the '70s is when I was told by this man. So, in other words, he had kept this resentment for over 30 years. I don't know why he picked, out of all the hotels on the beach, because I'm sure you couldn't go to a Fisher hotel either.

Interviewer: But, you were a Pancoast standing in front of him.



Pancoast: Right. Absolutely. Absolutely. Of course, that's the penalty you pay when you name something after yourself.

Interviewer: Was that the only time that you'd ever experienced anybody who had resentment about that?

Pancoast: Yeah.

Interviewer: Would you say that the sale of the Pancoast Hotel to Grossingers was a turning point in lessening restrictions?

Pancoast: It certainly was a very visible turning point.

Interviewer: It was a high profile transaction.

Pancoast: High profile. I think the restriction was being disregarded. The interesting thing about Miami Beach is that thanks to the fact that it was used during World War II to bring all these service men to Miami that would never have come to Miami before, and the invention, of course, of air conditioning, meant that after World War II, Miami Beach was a totally different town. All these stories that I've been telling about something that just seems like a dream.

A funny little offshoot of this. I had wanted you to talk to one of my cousins, Norman Arthur. He is like nine years older than I, and he grew up- I would not say grew up, but he was a young boy during World War II, and his nickname was Joe because he was a GI Joe, so we used to call him Joe.

Of course, there's the Collins Historical District, like Pancoast is still there, and the canal that they built to- I'm sure that there are people that would like to have filled in that canal, because I'm sure it helps to flood the beach, but other than that, I don't-

Interviewer: Did you visit the beach a lot?

Pancoast: When you first asked me this question, I said I grew up on a horse farm in North Miami Beach. Well, guess what? There ain't anything to do on a horse farm in North Miami Beach, so for example, in 1953 and 1954, my brother and I went to the Bath Club in the summer and learned how to swim and play tennis, and we were just part of the Bath Club. My brother had his wedding reception at the Bath Club, which I think is the last time I've been there. We would go there when I was in elementary school. I went to Miami Country Day School, and I think



some of my classmates came from the beach. They would hold birthday parties at the Bath Club, or we would go to the [phonetic] [46:51] Romey Plaza.

As I said, my mother was a nurse, and she had a very good friend, her name was Kay Sullivan, and she lived at 1600 Michigan Avenue, which is just south of Lincoln Road. On some weekends, my brother and I would go to her apartment. She lived with her sister. Her sister worked for the Miami Beach First National Bank, which is right around the corner there. We would walk to the little stores that was up the street and buy- if you wanted a pound of hamburger, they would grind the hamburger right then, so all that sort of stuff.

Interviewer: What years were these?

Pancoast: These were in the '50s. It was like an eight story building, four on the bottom two and four on the top, with the thinnest little steps to climb up to the second floor. She was very good friends with her neighbor on the second floor, the [phonetic] [48:28] Quinalines, and I think that their son became a priest and married my brother. We also would go to St. Patrick's on Sundays.

Interviewer: Your social life pretty much centered around the beach.

Pancoast: Yeah. If we wanted to go to the movies, you went to the beach, because they sure didn't have any- there were movie theaters, but we went to the premier of a movie called *When To Cross the Everglades*. I think my father was invited because he was a pioneer of the area, so they had all the stars of the movie. There were stars in that movie.

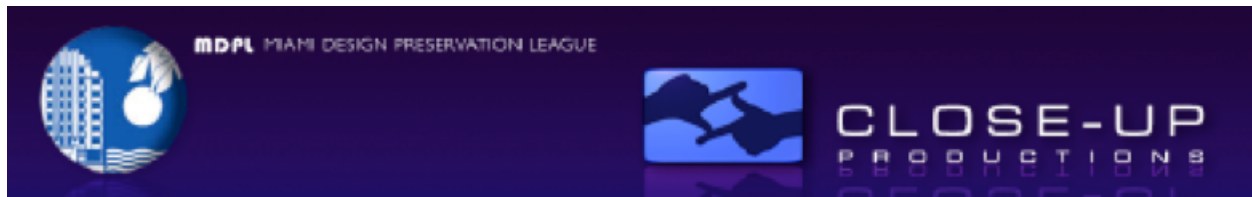
Interviewer: What was the name of it again?

Pancoast: *When To Cross the Everglades*. You don't see it on late night television, but it's an interesting story about the plume hunters in the Everglades and the Audubon Society and how one of the plume hunters was, of course, killed, which was a very bad move for them, because they got rid of the plume hunters rather than...

Interviewer: You're referring to the man who was- the ranger who was trying to stop the poaching.

Pancoast: Right. Right.

Interviewer: Okay. The Pancoast family is noted for architecture. Where did that start? Who was the first architect that kind of-



Pancoast: Well, the first was my Uncle Russell. I remember when I was visiting my father at St. Francis as he was dying, my uncle came to visit his brother, and we walked down to the end of the little island there. This was 1967. My uncle started pointing out this house, I designed, and it had just incredible, beautiful woodwork, and of course they were tearing it down.

Interviewer: Then? Even then?

Pancoast: Well, yeah. All the houses, there was, again, the Firestone house, which he didn't design. That was known as Millionaire's Row, so all the houses up there, up to whatever street that the hospital is on, were all these luxurious estates, and my uncle had designed one of those. They're all now condos, of course.

Interviewer: He was really pointing that out. He was sad that his work was being destroyed.

Pancoast: Right. Right. Being destroyed. But, if you look at the real estate market and so forth, people, to say that you have a Pancoast House is really quite something.

Interviewer: Are any of them declared historic?

Pancoast: I don't know. Of course, his son, Lester, became an architect and two grandsons, Thorn, and Thorn's brother, Ward are also. My aunt, his wife, Kay Pancoast, was an architect, although I don't know if she ever practiced, but I worked for her one summer. She was a ceramic sculptor, so I made the tiles for her to sculpt. When they lived on Miami Beach, they would have these parties of opening the kiln and seeing just exactly what happened. She made wallpaper. Very incredibly creative person, and, of course, during World War II, back to the World War II again, she ran the USO, the officer's club, so she entertained a whole bunch of...

Interviewer: She was active civically.

Pancoast: Very active civically.

Interviewer: I imagine that most of the Pancoast women were involved.

Pancoast: Right. Right. Well, I'm sure that my grandmother was, of course, president of the Women's Club. I've read something that she helped



educate children because, of course, where did you go for school? She would hold the teas, which we have her tea set that she would have all the women over to have tea.

Interviewer: They did a lot of fund raising that way, did they not?

Pancoast: Yeah, I'm sure.

Interviewer: What were some of the causes or philanthropy of your family?

Pancoast: I don't know for sure, but my grandfather was one of the founders of the University of Miami. I know my father used to give them money. He was like the treasurer or something of that nature.

Interviewer: What about the Quaker connection? You still consider yourself a Quaker?

Pancoast: I am a member of Miami Meeting. As I say, I went to George School, which is, at least then, a Quaker school in [phonetic] [55:31] Swarthmore, which was founded as a Quaker college.

Interviewer: What profession did you go into?

Pancoast: I'm a landscape architect and planner.

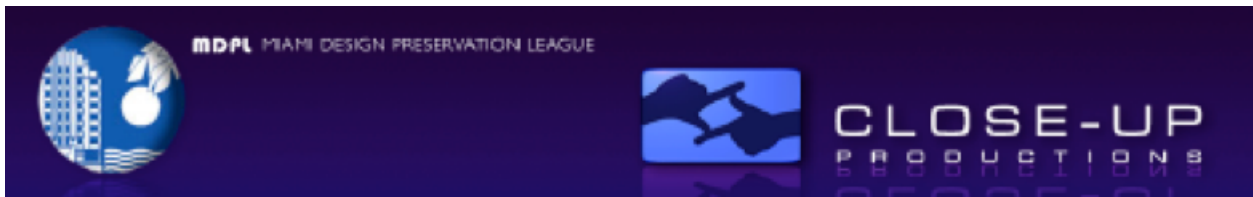
Interviewer: That runs in the family, then.

Pancoast: I think somewhat, yes. There were other cities, towns, whatever, that were designed by the Collins-Pancoast family. Lester Collins- that word, Lester, again- was a landscape architect, and he designed Miami Lakes.

Interviewer: That was a big project.

Pancoast: That was a big project. My Uncle Russell had a friend, Mr. Peters, who owned a piece of property in what was then Western Broward, but was the city of Plantation. Uncle Russ designed the city of Plantation. Every third Thursday, he was on the planning and zoning board or whatever it was. He would come by and have dinner with his brother before he went to the meeting. The things that I remember him talking about are the things that we talk about in Pompano a lot. Signs. Signs are just the bugaboo of urban development. Even back in the '60s was trying to find ways to keep Plantation from becoming a gaudy mess.

Interviewer: Did you get involved in any of these projects in your career?



Pancoast: Very, very little. I worked with him a little bit, but not much.

Interviewer: What were some of the things you did? What did you focus on?

Pancoast: You mean other than outside of-

Interviewer: I mean in your profession, so landscape designer.

Pancoast: I designed or helped design, whatever, several housing developments in Broward County, one of them called Welleby, which the idea Welleby being, instead of having a golf course, let's make it a tennis oriented community. I designed the streets and some of the buildings and placements and so forth. I helped design the corridors, shall we say, for golf courses such as Pine Island Ridge, which is off of State Road 80. I laid out the golf course so there were enough holes, and each building overlooked the golf course. It had a special restriction in that the ridge had to be preserved, so all those kinds of things with the commercial development. I've also worked in the public sector for Broward County and Palm Beach County. Many of the things that I worked on had to do with development restrictions, so there's not too much traffic and those sorts of ideas.

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