

Lillian Francis McMackin, MD: In Her Own Words

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The material for this document was taken from interviews conducted with Lillian McMackin in 1993 by her son, Robert McMackin, and her granddaughter, Christine McMackin. Additional material was taken from an interview conducted with sons John, Thomas, and Robert in 2009 as part of a Boston Children's Hospital oral history project. All material was edited and formatted by Robert McMackin.

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New Bedford

I was born February 22, 1915 in New Bedford. My father was Antone and I wanted that to be



Bobby's name, but "Mac" [John F.X. McMackin] put his foot down on that one, so he ended up with Anthony as his middle name for my father. My mother was Mary Jesus Paiva. She came from the Azores as a small girl. She had four sisters and they were all named Mary. I think it was for good luck from the Virgin Mary: Mary Bella, Mary Stella, Mary Fanny and Mary Mary. They were my aunts Bella, Stella, Fanny and Mary. They came here with very little and worked hard. My mother lost a finger in the New Bedford mills. Education and buying property were important to all of them.

My father was a detective in the New Bedford Police. When my mother married him, he already had a son and a daughter. They were my half-brother and half-sister, but we were not close. It was me, my mother and father. My father wanted me to be a lawyer and my mother a doctor. One summer I worked as a candy striper. I didn't want to do silly things and one of the doctors let me follow him around. He was very good to me. He gave me a white coat and showed me how to take blood pressures and pulses and I could translate the Portuguese for him. Sometimes the people called me doctor and that made me want to be a doctor. My father was fine with that. He said, "You need to have career. You can't depend on men. You never



know what's going to happen to you in your life. Be a doctor, a lawyer, or a teacher," and I knew I sure as hell didn't want to be a teacher.

I graduated from New Bedford High School in 1933. It was a very good school back then and lots of the boys went to good colleges like Brown and Harvard. I was valedictorian of my class and on the tennis team. I think it was one of my teachers that said I should go to Wellesley. I had a good friend then, Evelyn Coderre, who I would sail with. She became a nurse and entered the navy eventually becoming a commander. We always stayed friends.



My father had arterial sclerosis and he became very paranoic and I had to sleep in the same room with my mother because there was a certain disorientation that went on and we had to keep our



doors locked at night because he would get up and pound at the doors and then he would be hard to control. Then I was away at college at that time. He never assaulted my mother, but there was always that uneasiness and also, if he walked away, he could get lost. He was a big man and suddenly to not to be able to drive and to have all these personality changes. He'd always been busy and active. It was very hard for him. We kept him at home for as long as we could. Then I was away at Wellesley and that would be my junior year of college, because without my knowing about it, my mother had taken him to Dr. Zawacki to talk about him and Dr. Zawacki thought he should be committed. My mother didn't say anything to me. Nelson never said anything to me until it was all over. Nelson drove

my mother and my father to Taunton State Hospital.

Nelson [Nelson J. Gurll, a childhood friend of Lillian from New Bedford] said to me afterward, "Lillian, I wouldn't have done this for did it for you." I guess the drive was difficult for my father. Then when he got suddenly have to confront this new can imagine that instinctively he must to stay, and that was probably very Nelson. It must have been very traumatic mother, too. I didn't go through any of Nevertheless, Taunton was wonderful.



anyone, but I very, very there, to experience, I have refused confusing to my that. After my

father was at Taunton my mother and I used to go visit him. He was very happy to see us. He was already adjusted and that was home to him. Then we could take him out for rides, and he was ready to go back to that simpler environment where we could be sitting outside with him. They had benches and he was always protective. If any of the patients came near us, he got very



upset. He didn't want them near us. He would right away feign them off. I remember that about him. If we were with him, he wanted nobody else to come near us. I think that was his way of protecting us. He still had that caveman instinct: this is mine! In the end he died very peacefully after three or four years when I was in medical school.

I did a summer internship at Taunton because I wanted to see the care my father got. It was excellent. They had no filing system and I had to go through the basement. Everything was piled up and I found his record. It did me a lot of good to

find his record, to read this record, to understand what he had, and to understand that we just couldn't cope with him. He did not have a mental disease as such. What he had was cerebral

arterial sclerosis. It wasn't that he had schizophrenia or paranoid depression or he had something that I could carry in a gene, so that really helped me an awful lot. It was not anything that I could pass on. It wasn't inherited. He was such a fine upstanding man. And what a memory he had. He did a lot of good. They kept him on the police force as long as they could. They really buffered him and kept him.

At the time of his death, there was no pensions for widows. My mother should have had a fortune coming to her after they revised that ruling. When I looked into it, she missed getting a back pension and an ongoing pension by two months. It was not by six months or a year. It was only a matter of two months. But that was beside the point. By that time, we gave our house away. That was Auntie's business. The lawyer didn't want my mother to sell that two-tenement house. She gave it away to goddamn Tony because of my Aunt Mary "Oh, poor Tony doesn't have a house!" and Aunt Mary was always trying to equalize things out. I can't complain because that house was like my house and I won't say anything more about that, but she was the equalizer. My mother sold that house to Tony for \$2,000 and I don't even know if he paid anything. Lawyer Silvia put up a fight to keep my mother from selling it. She never told me about it. We had rented that house. Rents were little, but they paid their rents, and beside that, there was no repairs there. My aunt's excuse on that was the fact that John, poor thing, it was a little work for him to go and collect the rents. Nobody told me that. My mother could have gone over and collected the rents.



Nelson [Gurll] was a big help with my father, but he ended up a goddamn bum. You cannot associate with rich people. If you're fun, fine. After that you are nobody to them. He should never have gone out to Arizona. That ruined his whole life. He didn't finish at Brown. There were no jobs in New Bedford and I'll never forget when I was in medical school, I told you, I'm



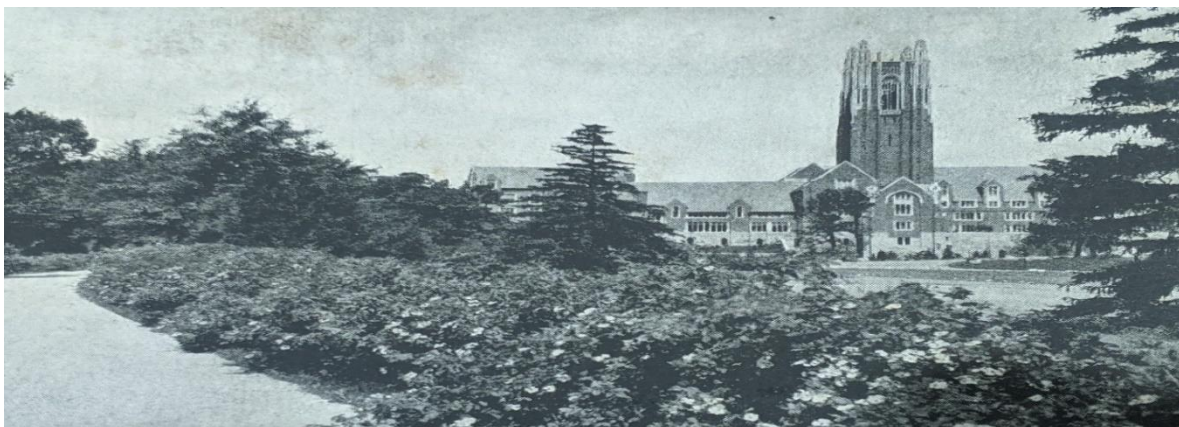
driving back with Mam¹ [Mam is Lillian's mother] and I see this guy against the fence looking down as though he didn't know what to do then my eyes came into his eyes and I couldn't help it, I said, "My God, that's Nelson!" He looked just like a bum. That was the last time I saw him. Then, one of my friends from New Bedford, Blanche

Filipek, wrote me a letter one day. It was in the paper. He was working at one of the factories and he was picked up for bringing tools out. He was arrested for bringing tools out.

That trip out to Arizona did him in. He was working for the Rhineharts up in Arizona. I thought he was going to bring back money for his tuition, to finish at Brown. He came back with problems. Had a great time probably, you know, drinking and running around and so forth. He had a great time, but he became a bum.

Emma, my cousin, became a schoolteacher. She was always competitive with me and one time she told me she checked my school records and saw I wasn't any smarter than her. My IQ was 110 or 115 or something. She was saying she was as smart as me, and I thought, "Yeah, but I worked a lot goddamn harder than you." What a stupid thing to say.

Wellesley



¹ Mam is likely an abbreviation of the Portuguese word *mamae* meaning mommy.

I went to Wellesley on a scholarship. We had lost our house and my mother came with me. She cleaned houses and worked as a domestic in rich people's homes. Once I visited her at a house on Beacon Hill. After I rang the door, the woman told me to go around to the back by the kitchen entrance where Mam was. After Mam introduced me to the lady and said I went to Wellesley, the woman told me I could use the front door, but my mother still had to go in the back. I told Mam we were leaving. I wasn't going to be anyone's goddamned poodle. We walked out and Mam got another job. She sent me ten dollars every two weeks. That's all the money I had and some of those girls had lots of money. I lived through the Depression and knew how to stretch a dollar.



I was in Alpha Kappa Chi. One day a girl presented me with a rose. I took it because I didn't want to seem stupid. The guidance person told me it was an invitation to join a very prestigious



sorority that had dues and everything. I had no money for dues, and she said, "Don't worry Lillian. Wellesley will pay everything."

Marion Brown, she was a classmate of mine. She also

belonged to Alpha Kappa Chi. We went up to open house in Dartmouth at Dartmouth College. What a lousy time I had. I got caught with this boy and all he did was drive around and want to



park. I wanted to go where all fun was, where all the girls were, where the dancing was and so forth, and this goddamn jerk, all he wanted to do was ride here and ride there. He really drove me crazy. There was the dance going on and all the fun and so forth, and this goddamn jerk wanted to park! The next day, when I finally got rid of him, we were all together. I find out he was engaged to get married in about two weeks.

What an awful time I had with that goddamn jerk. What a wasted weekend that was!

Every time I see Marion I think of English muffins. I could have killed her that day. I spent all my



money and I only had two cents. I was waiting for my \$10 to come and Marion liked English



muffins. It was a novelty. I'm sitting there at this nice eating place having a cup of coffee. That's all I could afford at that point, and Marion's eating English muffins. She was chewing on one and I felt like splashing it in her face (laughs). I would have given anything for an English muffin! And she never finished eating those goddamned things and I would have given my soul for one of those English muffins. We were sitting at Siler's, that's where we were, right in the village, and I had two cents to my name. I can't even call home and I've got two

weeks to go and she's eating English muffins. Every time I eat English muffins I think about it.

Poor Marion. She was in love with the boy next door and I think it was all up in her mind. She spoke about him for four years. I don't think they had any love affair at all. I think she must have died a virgin. She was very, very nice, a little simple-minded, but you couldn't hurt her. She followed me around like a lamb.

"Marion, let's go get the skis and we'll go over the top of the hill and come down" "Oh, all right!" (laughs) She'd



come right along. But she never shared her English muffins with me!



In '37 I graduated. I remember many of the girls on my floor at Wellesley. I forget some of their names, but still remember them. We had pictures taken at graduation and swapped them around with each other. Betty Kirkland was a very, very, very nice person. But it was hard for me. I didn't have the money to keep up with some of the girls. You know what I mean by that? I couldn't do the things they were

doing. I was a good tennis player and tried out for the tennis team. Many of those girls had had private tennis lessons and I couldn't keep up with them. Marion was always there for me; except she wouldn't share her goddamn muffins with me!



One summer I worked at Howard Johnson's on Memorial Drive in Cambridge. Jesus, did I work hard. I lived in the bawdy house for a week, until the soda fountain guy took a shine to me and he drove me home one day. He said, " You live here?! Get your clothes together right



now. We're going right to the YMCA!" And I guess one of the girls were leaning out the window and oh, it was a dirty place inside. After I got to the Y, the Y was like heaven. It's a good thing that he drove me home. We'd gone to Revere Beach. God, he ended up in the hospital badly sunburned. That took care of that guy.

Medical School, Children's Hospital, and Practice



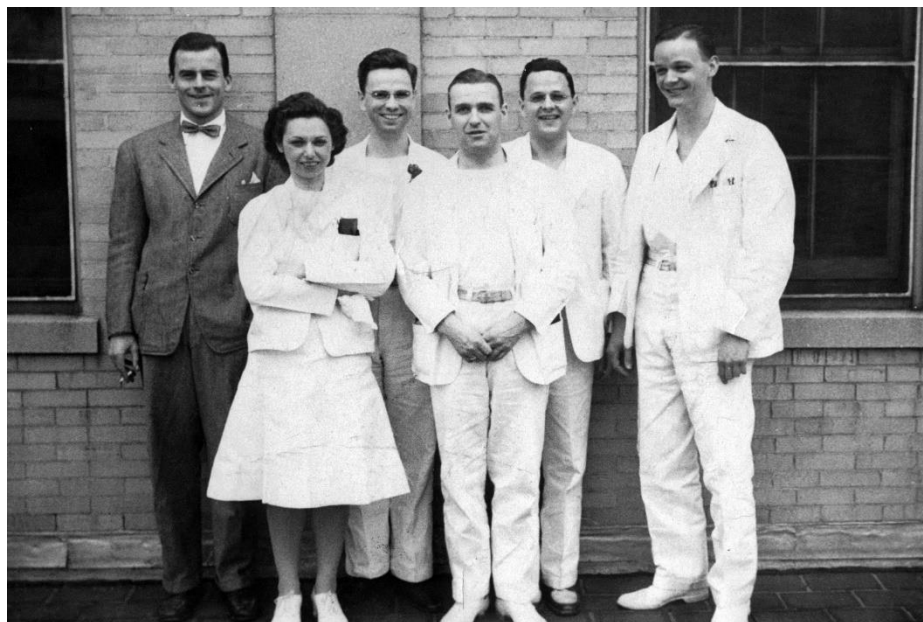
From the time I was three years old, I was to be the doctor. My mother wanted me to be a doctor and my father wanted me to be a lawyer. My mother was right there like a stage mother. She didn't care how many boyfriends I had, how many boyfriends I brought home, or where I went as long as I was going to be a doctor. That was the important thing. Mam sacrificed a lot for me.

After Wellesley I went to BU Medical School. There were a few other women there and most of the professors were very good, but there were a few who didn't think women should be doctors. One of my anatomy professors asked me in class to explain the male genitalia. I don't know if he did it to embarrass me or what, but I had just been studying it. I went through the male genitalia piece by piece by piece. One guy asked how I knew so much about it. I said, "It's my hobby." My friends laughed. I thought the professor would fail me, but I got an A in the course.

Once when I was on a rotation at Boston City Hospital a doctor put me in the sexually transmitted disease clinic. He didn't think I could manage the men. I think he wanted me to refuse or quit and I wasn't about to let that happen. One patient was uncomfortable with me examining him and I said to him, "See that guy out there? He wants me to quit and he's putting me in here so that this will happen. He wants me to drop out of the program. I'm not gonna let that happen." He let me examine him. Then there



was the time in anatomy lab when one of the boys cut off a penis put it in my pocket. They did it as a joke and I just went with it.



I was planning to do my residency in psychiatry at City Hospital, but was interested in pediatrics too. Before I was to start in psychiatry I went to Children's and asked to see the Chief of Pediatrics. I went in to introduce myself to

Dr. Smith who was in the doctor's lounge with a number of other doctors. They were all men and Dr. Smith asked how he could help me. I told him I wanted to be a pediatrician and do my residency at Children's. One of the other doctors there threw up his hands saying, "Look what it's coming to now." Smith only asked me one question - "Where did you go to undergraduate school?" He didn't ask me about medical school, only undergraduate and when I said Wellesley, I was in. When I got to Children's there were a lot of Harvard boys and they were always nice to me.



After I completed my residency, I had to take boards. We would examine patients and then diagnose them. I was examining this man that had irritations all over his back, when he whispered, "I've got scabies." I thought, "Oh my God. What if he's a plant?" Scabies was my diagnosis, and I began to question myself. Finally, I said to myself, "The hell with it and said scabies." I was right!

After I completed medical school, I did an internship at Mercy Hospital in Pittsburg. I saw so many of those miners with black lung disease. It was terrible. I was there when sulfur drugs were introduced. The patients' charts were hanging at the ends of their beds, a graph. They would be sick and then have "the crisis" and the graph would either go down or up – they would live, or they would die. After the sulfur drugs came in all the graphs went up – they lived. It was a miracle. After that I came back to Children's to do my residency in pediatrics. I was the chief resident in my last year.



I was about six months pregnant and finishing my residency when Richard Smith, the Chief of Medicine at Children's, called me into his office. He and Bill Turtle invited me into their office at the corner of Dartmouth and Beacon Street. It was an office of guys and there was a spot there available. I accepted. I couldn't say no. It was a great big honor for me and gave me a golden opportunity to step into medical practice, the top one in Boston.

So I went in pregnant and I even made house calls on the way to the hospital to have my baby. I gained very little weight and I was very strong. Duncan Reid, the chief at the Boston Lying In Hospital was my physician. I went back into practice about five days later



because I didn't want to lose what I had gained, and Mam was in taking care of the baby. You



have no idea of how hard I worked, but that was fine. I didn't have an office practice; what I had was a donkey practice. I covered for everyone. Scuttle work. I was covering all the Newtons. I was covering all of inner Boston. On a Friday I'd be having lunch with my colleagues and I'd hear a voice, "Lillian, are you going to be around this weekend?" "Oh, sure!" "Lillian, will you be covering..." "Oh, sure!" I'd be covering for half of the staff. That was no way to build a practice. That was a way just to run yourself down.



Still, it worked out good. Sooner or later, it was time for me to move out of Dartmouth Street. I could see the handwriting on the wall because I had to move to make room

for the next resident to come in. I was also associated with the New England Women's Hospital and I met this very interesting female physician, Dr. Slimmons, who was situated in Quincy. Slimmons had a fixation on her father. He wasn't too well so she wanted to go and take care of him. She asked me into her office in Quincy if I would cover for her while she was gone, and I almost had the feeling that she was going to be gone for good. I worked in her office for a couple

of weeks at one time when she went out on a visit. She had a nice office, all done in antiques. That's where I got the idea for antiques. She had a nice little secretary as well. Then, I thought, because I had this lead with Slimmons, I should get out of Boston and go to the suburbs.

I started looking for a house in Milton, even though I had that prestigious address on Brattle



Street. That probably looked nice when the chief found out that I lived on Brattle Street. I know one of my colleagues was up the street, and he right away invited Mac and me for dinner. He was a very wealthy man. He got married later in life and had three little children running around. They were really upper crust and so was Jim Cameron. I had met Jim in Children's outpatient and he had the distinction of being the youngest student that ever graduated from Harvard Medical School. He was a boy genius, and he was also doing a lot of work for Hollywood, too. He would read their medical scripts and so forth.

He and his wife, Joan, had three little boys and we were very friendly. Then he bought a gorgeous place in Chatham and Mac and I went down for a weekend and I never forgot it. We even met the editor in chief of the Quincy Patriot Ledger. I forget his name. He was a very wealthy man, too. Then he bought a summer place up in Peterborough. That's how we got to New Hampshire. We went up there. He bought the whole goddamn side of the mountain! It was a great big lodge. They didn't build it. They bought it built. To be able to purchase that on the side of that mountain and build it. It was



gorgeous. They had fireplaces and so forth. Jim liked me very, very much. Then for some reason his practice went down, and my practice bloomed.

There's a lot of politics in medicine, and I always stayed clear of it. I always stayed neutral, but boy, Jim went down fast and then I knew he was going to move out of the Granite Trust Building. He charged me practically nothing. He'd say, "How can you stay in there so long with a patient, Lillian?" I thought, "Look, you're a man. I'm a woman. I'm trying to get established." And then the practice picked up very fast, but I'd always follow through on my chances. One day



I said to Mac, "Look, I need to get Well Baby Clinics in Quincy and Dr. Ash is Chief in charge of the Well Baby Clinics." Mac found out that he was in trouble with the Internal Revenue, so for some reason, Mac knew who was handling his problems. One hand washes the other. The hint was dropped to him that Dr. McMackin's husband was handling his case. I got one Well Baby Clinic. By the time I got through with Quincy I had all the Well Baby clinics, all the schools and the parochial schools - everything snowballed. Quincy wanted me full-time and Milton wanted me full-time. Then the war was over. The boys were coming back from the war. Suddenly somebody wanted my job, one of the boys coming back wanted my job at Milton and suddenly Milton goes onto Civil Service and you had to take an exam. The vet had a 10-point bonus advantage

over me. I wrote up my exam very precise, right to the point. He did not get the job.

We had to take an exam for that school position. A lot of it had to do with schoolwork and I learned very quickly when taking exams to write very little but write it right to the point. So I wrote my exam very carefully, not with a lot of idle words in it, but very technical and very precise, laying down policies. You know, writing down steps 1, 2, 3, what you would do in



setting up an athletic program and so forth. I came out way ahead of him and I stayed on. Then shortly Quincy made me an offer I couldn't refuse, that was all the parochial schools, all the clinics, and paid more than what Milton could afford, so I just moved from Milton to full time Quincy physician. I had an awfully nice group of nurses.

I always knew what I could do and what I could not do. If I saw a patient and I was unsure of

what was wrong, I sent them right into Children's for a workup. You can't take chances if you don't know or are unsure.

Then when the Vietnam war came out and the drug culture came in, I went to work at B.U. to find out what it was all about. At B.U. I did well enough so that the dean came to see me and offered me a full-time job. He said, "We have a package. Name what you want. We will meet it with the traffic, the hours." I saw myself running out on the football field, out on a hockey field. (laughs). Leered looked after me, "Go on home, Lillian, the traffic's getting heavy and leave now." He would have



absorbed all that, but suppose something happened to him? I'd have to still ride in. I thought, "No, it's too much of a risk."



I stayed two days a week. I'd go to my office, clean up and so forth, and hit the road and it didn't take too long. And the nurses lined everything up. Leered and Dr. Graham were very nice. They were all nice. Graham was so handsome. He was the one that lived in the corner of Beacon Street with a male. He might have been homosexual, but I don't care. He looked like Cary Grant. My, he was handsome, and he had us to his house for a Christmas party once. When you walked in the first thing you saw was a Venetian, you know, from Venice, one of those poles in the hallway. Oh, his house was magnificent. Antiques like I didn't have, exquisite. The Christmas tree was magnificent, right to the ceiling, and it was on the corner of Beacon Street.

They had the whole row house; it goes up like three flights and the maid was there and the china.

There was one little boy that I missed out on at BU. He was sitting there trying to tell me something and I didn't know what the hell he was trying to get at. Then I realized after he'd gone, he must have been having a drug reaction. He probably should have been hospitalized and I missed it. I couldn't figure him out because the drugs were so new. He looked at me like "Can't you see that I'm in trouble?" After he went it suddenly clicked in and I wasn't



knowledgeable enough to know that he should have gone into the infirmary. I felt very badly



when I came to, and I didn't even know enough to pick up his record and find out what had happened to him. It probably wore down. That's what I felt. I never forgot him, and I felt so badly because we were not into drug reactions at that time.

I view it as a great experience for me. There was a professor of philosophy. That man! Jesus, he looked just like a lion! Everything about him was red. Red beard, the red hair out to here, like a thick Afro on him, and underneath it all he was sort of handsome. After I got through with him, I asked him, which was really none of my business, "What school are you in?" I was trying to place him as to where he belonged in the student picture.

He looked me in the eye and said, "I'm the professor of philosophy." (laughs) I should have kept my mouth shut. I thought, "Well, Lillian, there's where you put your foot in it!" All I could see were two eyes but for some reason I knew underneath all that he must have been very handsome. I'll never forget his hair. It was curly and orange, all orange and curly and out to here. Could you picture that?

I had a Japanese student who would use nose drops to the point where he had dilated all the membranes in his nose, and he couldn't breathe through his nose. It was just a great big mass in there of tissue and the more he couldn't breathe the more nose drops he put in and he had like an allergic reaction. I spoke to him. I said it's going to be hard but throw those



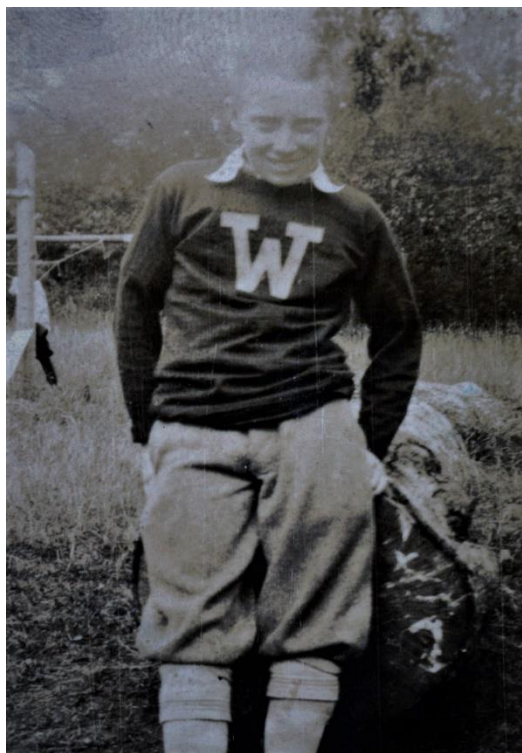
nose drops away and I gave him a little saline solution to rinse the inside of his nose with and I had him come back. He was very faithful. It must have taken a month, but he got off the nose drops, and the passages all opened up. You never saw anyone as thankful as him. He came back to visit me. The nurses were all very excited. He had to bring his fiancée a little Japanese girl to meet me. I had saved him! (laughs) But it took a lot of guts on his part to.

A lot of those boys didn't want to go to Vietnam. That was a stupid goddamn war. I didn't want my boys or anyone's boys going over there. I helped some of them, so they didn't have to get drafted.



B.U. was good, it helped me with my boys. I went there on account of them, to understand the drug culture.

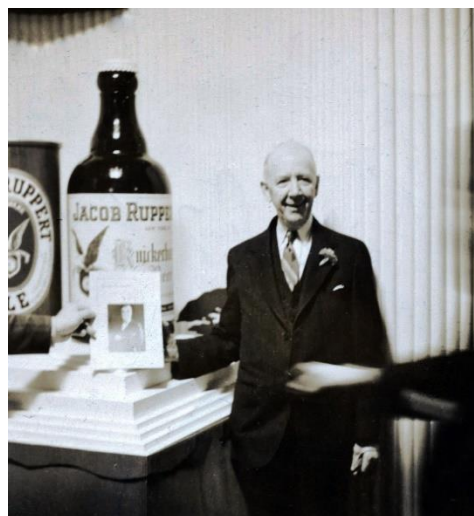
McMackin's



Mac had had a very hard childhood. When he was around his mother, he would always cringe, but he adored his father. The father babied Mac. He adored the father but around his mother he was frozen. I think he babied Mac. He was very, very fond of Mac. Very proud of Mac. And Mac was very uneasy with his mother, but he adored his father. His father was like his mother, very supportive. He was also the president of the Bottler Association.

There were three boys and they had to sleep in the bedroom right outside the parents' room,

all in one bed together. They weren't poor but they were a little stupid. When I changed a diaper often the baby would put his hand down to his genitalia, which is normal. Mrs. McMackin would right away take the hand away and move it to one side. I thought, that's stupid, this is the child's body. He had a right to, when the diapers were off, to suddenly put his hand down to his penis or to his scrotum, because they say to a male feeling his genitalia is a feeling of security and to suddenly come along and slap a baby's hand because he's feeling his genitalia. That must do an awful thing to a male's ego, so I thought, "This is kind of a stupid upbringing." I wasn't going to subject my boys to too much of that kind of behavior.



Mrs. McMackin meant well. She used to like to buy clothes for the children. She and her



husband were very much together. They wanted to keep all their sons equal. Mrs. McMackin would go to the market and send everybody a piece of roast beef every week, but how did she know we wanted a roast? And then she'd show up at our house uninvited with the sisters-in-law. Of course, I was a physician. I had calls to make and so forth. And then they'd sit there and sit there and sit

there. That was alright, Mam could entertain them, but I had records to do and I had house calls to make. That that could be hard, too.

Mr. McMackin used to like the dog track, so we all went to the dog track. We were sitting next to him and he said, "How are things going with you? Are you getting enough to eat, you know?" (laughs). Like a fool I said to him, "Oh, yeah, we're doing very well," I'd borrowed \$10,000 from my mother, so I said, "In fact, we've already paid my mother back." My mother was my mother, so the first thing I did when I worked was to put \$10,000 aside into her name and my name. I figured that at least she could go back to New Bedford if worse came to worse and she wouldn't be a pauper there. I was securing for her for what she had done for me and I



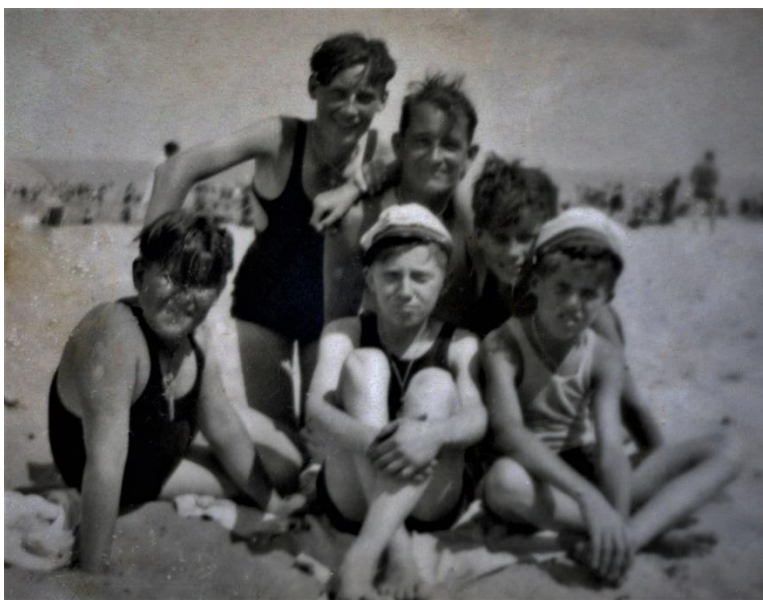


was happy that I had saved \$10,000 as fast as I could. That was a lot of money in those days. Mac knew nothing about it. It was in her name and my name because that was her security.

Mam gave me the \$10,000 to buy Brattle Street. We had, my mother and I when I was in high school after my father died, \$10,000 between us. That's all we had. No home or anything, our furniture stored. When I graduated from Wellesley, we still had \$10,000. When I graduated from medical school, we still had \$10,000. and that was going to be for me to open up an office and I would have been my own nurse. (laughs) That was going to start me in my practice. How could you start a practice if you didn't have some capital and I knew that you had to have

a house and wherever I started my practice that was my nest egg. Fortunately, I never had to use it, but then after I got married if I was to die my husband wasn't responsible for my mother. That nest egg was there for her, so I had to get that for her, for her security.

When I was going out with Mac, he said, "There's no future in the business for me, Lillian. Paul wants it all for himself." I felt there was nothing there to do but let Mac be



himself. Let the two brothers fight it out together, regardless of what was involved there, how much money was there, that didn't matter to us. We had to make our own way.



Right after Mac died Paul sent down for the car. He thought the car should go back to them. I was very insulted, and said no. He said, "No Lillian, I'm buying that car from you." I thought, well, I'll call Delaney where we bought the car. Delaney used to play cards with Mac in that group downstairs and he knew Mac very well and I thought, "Well, he's a man and I'll ask him for his advice." He said, "No, Lillian, that car is yours." He said, "It's worth \$2,000 and I'll buy it back from you." He gave me more than a fair price for it, so I sold it to him.

Mrs. McMackin at one point wanted to take my piano, the piano that my mother and father sacrificed for. We had gone uptown to try the different pianos and that was quite a purchase for them. I could hardly play but they were very proud of me. My mother lugged that piano all over the place.





There were two other sisters-in-law. I was a third and the other two girls weren't happy with me. Mrs. McMackin wanted me to give my piano away because I was not playing on my piano and Elizabeth wanted to take piano lessons, but this was the piano my father bought me. She was out of her mind if she thought she was going to come into my house now and start distributing my things around. I said, "No. I'm sorry. Let her go buy her own piano." Then Elizabeth was – "Don't forget you're the third on the totem pole." But they're living in an apartment and I got a house. That bent their noses a little.

I remember the first time I met Elizabeth she had a fox on, and Paul's wife she had a fox on, too, that Mrs. McMackin had bought for her. She said, "Ask and it will be given to you." Welcome to McMackin's: Ask and it will be given to

you! I thought, "That's what you think, Baby. I don't ask anybody for anything. I make my own way." She was nice, don't get me wrong.

Mrs. McMackin rented a summer cottage for us our first year of marriage. Now who the hell wants to be at a summer cottage with another baby and another woman. I went down with Mam, but I never went again. I rented my own summer cottage. She wanted to keep everybody equal. You can't do that. Also, I worked too hard for what I had and the one thing I liked was my independence. Mac had told me there





was nothing in his father's business for him. He had to make his own way, too, because Hugh and Paul were going to fight it out between them.

Paul's wife came the following Christmas after Mac died with Christmas presents. They sold Mrs. McMackin's house and moved her into an apartment. I took my children there to see her. She was so depressed she was like all cringed in a little corner. She didn't even get up off the couch. We stayed for a little while

and then I thought, "I don't need this, you know? I've got to make my own way."

After Mac died Hugh had bought a boat. One day Hugh comes and sits next to me when I'm having coffee. He had sold out his share and the business went big. Of course, he had a boat, and he had this and that so he sat near me and he said "You know Lillian, if Mac had lived, this would not have happened to me. I wouldn't have sold out my part of the business." I suppose Paul came along when he knew that he was going big and made him an offer Hugh couldn't refuse, and he took it. And then Paul probably had this deal up his sleeve that he was pulling through and getting a big contract. I thought, "You goddamn son of a bitch, crying on my shoulder, if Mac had lived you wouldn't have sold out your part of the business. Too goddamn bad about you, you fool, you jerk."

The McMackin's could be jealous of me. I was a physician. I was also independent. I would make my way. I would take from you, but I wouldn't sponge. I wouldn't ask anything from you, but if you offered me something and it made reason, I appreciated it. The traumatic blow to them was when I bought Milton. That was me. Mrs. McMackin didn't help Mac and me, none of them did.



Marriage



I went all the way down to St. Mary's Hospital in Pittsburg for my internship to see what the miners' diseases were like. When I was through with my internship, I was ready to get married. I'd had a lot of boyfriends. Even after I'd got married a boy that I interned with in Pittsburg, Schloss was his name, came to see me and he brought a picture of his fiancée. I was already married. He said a nice thing. He said, "Lillian, of all the girls I brought home you were the one my mother really liked. But I knew that you were tied up with someone and there was no chance for me." I'd go home with him occasionally and liked his mother and father. They raised prize chickens.

I got along well with my friends at medical school. I wasn't tied up with anyone, but I had been studying with one boy. We had to work as partners for four years and he was from Holyoke and they presumed we were very interested in each other. We weren't. The boys in my class were all looking out for me. I got along with all of them.



Mac came along at a time when I was through school. I was in my second year of internship, and he was already through Holy Cross and working for a finance company. I had to make up my mind where I was going to go, whether I was going to stay in Boston. I didn't want to go back to New Bedford because I didn't think New Bedford was ready for a woman physician. He came along at a good time in my life. Mac also was very ambitious, and I liked that about him. He wanted to go places. He wanted to go to law school and so forth. He had played around a lot. He really had moved around quite a bit, so he was ready to settle down and I wanted to stay in

the Boston area, so we really combined forces. I encouraged him to go to law school and he really stayed behind me in everything I wanted to do.

I met him through one of the social workers at Children's, Kathy Scott. I was very friendly with the social workers at Children's and sometimes they'd call me down, "Come on down now, you're working too hard," and they'd have a chocolate sundae for me. Then we'd sit and talk and laugh. I became very friendly with Kathy. Her father was president of a bank and she'd grown up pretty affluent. She had connections in Newport and so forth. I was still wearing my wardrobe from Wellesley.

I got my wardrobe out of the student aide closet! The boys thought I had all these new suits from Lord & Taylors, outfits, and evening gowns. I always liked clothes and at Wellesley, I'd go into the clothes room where all the rich people would send their clothes. Those outfits took me all through medical school. In



fact, a few boys used to walk by me and say, "Nice suit, Lillian." I always liked boys, so I always got along nicely. The Jewish boy especially noticed. I'll never forget that. (laughs) I think I still have some of their clothes, too. When I found out that there was a clothes cupboard at Wellesley, I'd go in; the lady got to know me. The clothes they had! The coats, the cashmeres, the suits, the dresses, the evening gowns. I'd go when there was nobody else around, so nobody knew what I



was in there for and I'd come out with bags. I'd bring them home and I'd go back in a couple of months again for a few more bags, too. What a

wardrobe I had! When I got to medical school, I still had a fabulous wardrobe that took me right through my interning years, too.

Kathy Scott, she had the money, and I didn't. I'd go with her when she was shopping at Lord & Taylors and she's put this on an that on. I'd remember all the hats she bought, and I'd try one on myself, too, a similar one, and it looked so pretty on, but I had to put it down. The clothes that she could buy that was the latest stuff.

Kathy was going out with this boy from Newport that she



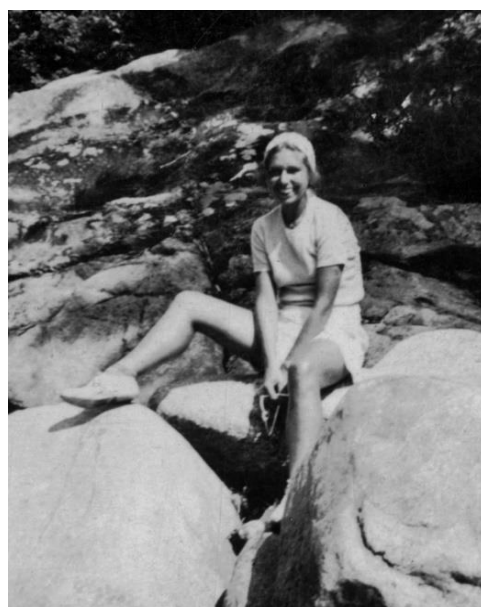
was really very fond of. I think she was hoping that it would move on to something else. She invited me out because she was going out with him and he had a friend. It was a blind date. That



was all right for me because I'd always liked boys and I didn't care. Blind date or no blind date, if he was OK, OK, if he wasn't OK, so it was just an evening. They came to pick me up and they parked behind because I was in the morgue area and there was a door that led out to the

back, so I didn't have to go through the front of the hospital. They parked around the corner.

When I got outside Kathy was there and the boy she was dating was there, out of his car. He was very polite, a very nice person, but I didn't see my date, so I thought, that he probably changed his mind. Then, suddenly I'm conscious somebody is hiding around the corner. I thought, "This has to be a jerk." I could feel that he was peeking around the corner. He wanted to see what I looked like. I suppose, he was wondering what an intern might look like. He probably thought I was some kind of a freak. Pretty soon out comes the whole body. (laughs) He had just broken up with The Big Job in college. He had dated her for years and she must have had great big tits because her name was The Big Job. I found that out from the Cody's. He comes out rather stiff. It was Mac. I kidded him about that, his hiding around the corner. He said, "I had to see what you looked like." I didn't know if he was going to go running down the street or what.



That was my first impression of him! This is a blind date. I'm meeting somebody that I don't know, and he's supposed to be my date and he's hiding around the corner? Wouldn't you think he was as goddamn creep?

We went to the night club Levaggi's in town, and he was a very good conversationalist. We sat there and after that, I don't know why, things moved very fast for us. Maybe because his girlfriend had gotten married and maybe he was tired of dating. I knew he was very ambitious. The offer came at a good time for me because I had to make up my mind where I was going to settle. On one of the dates I had with him, I took him to a gathering that one of the staff members was having us all out for an evening. There would be physicians and interns and residents. It

was at Dr. Brother's house. He was the neurologist at Children's. I invited Mac because they



could bring their wives and so forth. Boy, he went over big. I was sitting on the couch with some of the wives and everybody was gathered around Mac like a news commentator. Sports. He didn't play but he knew everyone who was out on the field. He knew what their scores were like. You would have loved it at basketball games, football games. They were talking sports and they were laughing and laughing, and Mac was the center of attention. He did very, very well socially.



Look at the Dolan's next door in Milton. Mr. Dolan was an older man than Mac and we were only there a few months when Mac was invited to play poker with Mr. Dolan and the head of a garage in Milton. These were businessmen. I know Mac was very precise. He didn't have time to buy nuts and asked me to get them. They had nuts on the table when they played down the cellar. I bought mixed nuts and he was quite upset. He wanted a more expensive variety. So I had to go out and buy the nuts that were "in". The mixed nuts had peanuts in them and that didn't go. And me, being a Depression baby, I went for the cheaper nuts. But I learned fast. Nothing but the best.

The McMackin's used to summer at Poland Springs, up in Maine. They decided that we were working very hard, that we needed to relax, so once in a while they would take us with them. That was very nice. Poland Springs was very elegant in those days. They had golf. It was like the Cape, but it was this great big manor home and they had tea in the afternoon and fabulous meals. At night everybody would line up for their little bottle of Poland Springs water to take up because that was supposed to cleanse you out. You were supposed to drink all this water, water therapy. They were very nice.

Those people who rose high in the church were astute politicians, too. Very astute. When Mac and I went to pick up Cardinal Cushing there were so many people. People just come to these people. When he was



leaving his house to come into the car all these people were around him. Mac introduced me, and of course the Cardinal goes like that with his hand. He's got the ring, so I shook his hand. He didn't blink an eyelash. And he turned to the next person with his hand and you are supposed to take the hand and kiss the ring and they're all kissing the ring (laughs) and I think well, that was an interesting thing that I did! I admired him for not breaking the expression on his face. He kept



the same face.

These were people that he didn't know.

The men who rise up in the hierarchy of the church, they have tremendous ability.

We were in the back of the limousine with the cardinal and

Mac was complaining about something at work. He was going on and finally the cardinal said, "Until you get to write the rules, Mac, you have to play by the rules." That shut him right up.

Mac died in 1950. He had an ulcer and required surgery that was considered minor. I told him to have it done in town, but he insisted on having it done at Quincy, so he could be home the next day. My surgery professor did it. I spoke to him beforehand and he said, "Don't worry, Lillian, I haven't lost one yet." He did the surgery and then went on a two-week vacation. I visited him every day and right away knew something was wrong. I was always a good diagnostician, but didn't want to say anything to interfere with another doctor. His color wasn't good. Some of internal sutures had let go and he had peritonitis. I saw it a day before they did. His kidneys

began to shut down and they shipped him to the Brigham where they had one of the first dialysis machines. It was as big as a small room. When he was there, I saw one of his lines was infiltrating. I didn't say anything, thinking, "They will notice that." A nurse didn't turn off the heparin and he bled out internally. The last thing he said to me was, "Lillian, take care of our boys." He must have known he was dying.

After he died, I went to see the surgeon. He just stared at his desk. He wouldn't even look at me. I left after ten minutes.

A lot of Mac's friends were lawyers. They wanted me to sue. If I got lawyers involved, I'd be blackballed. I told myself, "You have to let it go, Lillian. If you want to practice medicine, you've got to let this go." So, I let it go, but never forgot.

I had Milton by then, so I made an office there so I could see the boys. Mam came to live with me and Aunt Mary sometimes to help out.

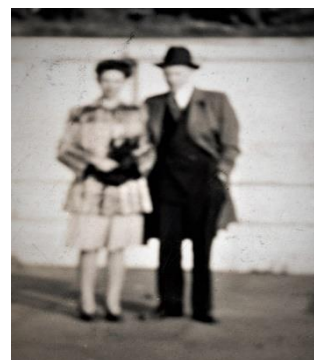


Friends



Mac had lots of friends.

For our honeymoon we went to Washington, D.C. Mac was a pol. He wanted to go down and to introduce me around. We were there for about three days. He had to call on the congressman and make his appearance and (laughs) introduce his new bride. I remember the congressman shaking my hand, but I forgot what congressman it was. Mac was a natural politician, just like his father. Not running for office but the power behind the scenes. He used to go into Boston and stay at the Statler for a week when he was involved with a campaign. This friend of his, Joe Santosuosso, was all excited with Mac and Mac's politicking. He came along



with the milk bottles for Mac, (laughs) because Mac would go in and he had to have his milk and



he had to have his gel for his ulcer. Joe was low key, and Mac would be running around to all the politicians and running around with the newspaper people and running around gathering votes and so forth for whoever he was campaigning for and Joe would be there waiting for him, carrying his bottles, and clearing the paperwork and so forth. Mac would come back exhausted but thrilled.

I never went in but this one day, he said, "Lillian, I want you to come and meet this man. You've got to meet this guy. This guy is unusual." So I went all the way in. It was one

of the big hotels, the Statler, I think, and when I walked in, oh, you could hardly move. The place was jammed, absolutely jammed. After a while I spotted Mac and he came right over. He was all excited, you know. He said, "Come on now, I want you to meet this guy." So up we went in the elevator and we got into this room where you couldn't even stand. It was so jammed with people. I'm standing there next to him thinking, "This is his life, but boy, it's not for me!" (laughs). We talk about this and that and so forth and the kids at home so all of a sudden the door opens at the far end and this guy comes out of the shower, all soaking wet, holding a little towel around himself. He's



naked but he's got a little towel and he's walking to all these people, shaking their hand here and shaking their hand there, big grin on his face, his hair's all wet. Suddenly Mac grabs me saying,

“Come on now, I want you to meet this guy.” He stands next to this guy and I'm thinking, “This poor guy.” Then Mac says "Jack, this is my wife Lillian. Lillian I want you to meet a guy who some day is gonna be the president of the United States." This guy just stands there with a big grin on his face and I thought, “Oh, how embarrassing.” (laughs) I said to him, "For Christ's sake, Mac, why don't you tone it down!" I thought, “How embarrassing, to come out with this is the guy who's going to be the president of the United States.” Anyways, it's Jack Kennedy. He was really nonchalant, you know, shaking hands here, shaking hands there, saying a word with this one, saying a word with that one. I thought, “Let me get out of here.” It was a

different of kind of life, and Mac was thrilled, absolutely thrilled with this sort of thing. He lived for that. No matter who he was backing, he lived for it and then later on Jack came through because then he was appointed as the youngest



attorney in Federal Housing Authority. He told Mac I could organize doctors for him and become the first female Surgeon General. I remember at the funeral he was late and had to run up the stairs to get in the church.

We used to go to Briarwood beach. I had a patient, and I rented her cottage. A very quiet beach around the Wareham area. The Cody's and



Marcellino's would come down. I forget if we rented one together or separately. We all had small children.

In the fall we would get bundled up and go to football game, with blankets to sit on. We'd be out of doors for quite a while and I'd get frozen, but he loved that, especially the Holy Cross games.



Photos

Page 1: 1990 Lillian McMackin

Page 2: 1940 Lillian McMackin; 1932 Mary Francis

Page 3: 1932 Lillian Francis & Evelyn Coderre; 1935 Lillian & Mary Francis at Wellesley

Page 4: 1933 Lillian Francis; 1935 Lillian Francis

Page 5: 1935 Lillian Francis

Page 6: 1936 Nelson J. Gurll; 1936 Wellesley College

Page 7: 1936 Mary Francis; 1939 Lillian Francis & friends, BU Medical School

Page 8: 1936 Lillian & friends, Wellesley College; 1935 Outing Club trip to Mt. Monadnock

Page 9: 1937 Lillian Francis & friend; Wellesley College; Tennis friends Wellesley College

Page 10: 1937 Lillian McMackin Wellesley graduation; 1935 Howard Johnson's work group

Page 11: 1940 Mary Francis; 1936 Mary Francis

Page 12: 1942 Children's Hospital residents; 1937 Lillian Francis Wellesley yearbook

Page 13: 1942 Children's Hospital medical staff; 1944 Lillian & Jack McMackin

Page 14: 1944 Jack McMackin & Mam (Mary Francis); 1943 Lillian Francis & friend

Page 15: 1946 Lillian, John, Jack & Tom McMackin in Milton; 1946 Lillian, Jack & Tom Milton

Page 16: 1946 John McMackin "Mac"

Page 17: 1948 Lillian McMackin Quincy Well Baby clinic; 1954 Lillian examines Jack in Milton

Page 18: 1955 Lillian McMackin & Fritzzy; 1969 Bob, Lillian, Ton & Jack - Jack's wedding

Page 19: 1975 Lillian McMackin; 1977 Lillian & Taffy

Page 20: 1954 Tom, Bob & Jack New Hampshire

Page 21: 1931 John McMackin; 1935 Hugh McMackin

Page 22: 1935 Hugh & Margaret McMackin & friends Atlantic City; 1935 Hugh Atlantic City

Page 23: 1945 John F. X. McMackin; 1932 John McMackin & friends

Page 24: 1943 John & Lillian McMackin wedding day; 1944 John McMackin & friends

Page 25: 1943 John McMackin; 1949 Lillian, Jack, Tom & Bob McMackin Milton

Page 26: 1943 John McMackin & friend; 1932 John McMackin & friends

Page 27: 1944 Lillian McMackin

Page 28: 1944 John McMackin; 1937 Lillian Francis & friend

Page 29: 1937 Lillian Francis & friends; 1945 Lillian McMackin & friends

Page 30: 1943 John McMackin & friends; 1935 Lillian Francis at Mt. Monadnock

Page 31: 1943 John McMackin; 1943 Lillian McMackin

Page 32: 1943 Hugh McMackin; 1943 Mary Francis, John & Lillian McMackin wedding day

Page 33: 1946 John McMackin, Cardinal Richard Cushing, Mayor James Curley

Page 34: 1943 Lillian McMackin; 1949 Jack, Tom & Bob McMackin

Page 35: 1949 McMackin's, Cody's, Marcellino's & others; 1943 John & Lillian McMackin

Page 36: 1945 John F. X. McMackin; 1943 John McMackin & friends

Page 37: 1933 John McMackin; 1949 Lillian McMackin reading to children in Onset

Page 38: 1945 Lillian McMackin & friends; 1949 John & Lillian McMackin Onset Beach