

Marilyn Brick

Hillsborough Remembers



Town 'N Country

Marilyn Brick

April 4, 2003

by Carolyn Vallone

[START TAPE 1, SIDE A]

*This is **Carolyn Vallone (CV)**. The date is April 4, 2003, and my last name is V-A-L-L-O-N-E. And I am interviewing **Marilyn Brick (MB)** in Town n' Country on this date.*

Marilyn Brick: And I am Marilyn Brick. And Carolyn asked me if I would say how I got to Tampa. And the fact is that my husband was offered a job at the University of Tampa. So we moved here from Kenosha, Wisconsin in 1968.

Carolyn Vallone: *Do you still live in the same house?*

MB: I still live in the same house. I have different neighbors, but I still love them all.

CV: *And how did you find your house?*

MB: Well, Sam was the one that-- [Several moments of silence pass on tape]

MB: --dark. Dark in the bathroom.

CV: *The porcelain?*

MB: No, the--

CV: *The tile on the floor?*

MB: The tile on the counters.

CV: *Oh! The counters.*

MB: Right! But they're not there any more. [Laughter]

CV: *Has your neighborhood changed?*

MB: Well, our neighborhood has changed a lot, but I, I don't want to say it's not for the better, because all people are wonderful. But it started out that we had service people. And as you--, some of you know, I'm sure, the service people are always very friendly and very thoughtful. And on the first day that we arrived, they brought us ice cubes for the refrigerator that we didn't have yet. And they gave us a few chairs to sit on and a table. So we were--. Unfortunately, most of those vol--,

military people have gone to different places, but we still hear from some of them some 36 years later- if that's right.

CV: How about landscaping and the canal in the back?

MB: Oh, yes! The landscaping and the canal in the back. When we came here, I'm not sure that the canal was dug, but I believe it was, because one day some children knocked on our door. And they said, "Oh, Mr. Brick, there is some animal on the tire of your car!" And it was an armadillo. And Sam told the young people-- my husband is Sam-- that if we'd all just go away, that he would probably go away, and he did. [Laughter]

CV: How about the landscaping- do you see a difference in the number of trees or things that have been planted? I know there're a lot of trees out here.

MB: Yeah, the ().

CV: () road that came into Fountain Avenue?

MB: When we arrived, there were roads to come into Fountain Avenue, but it--. The story goes that there was a fire in the woods behind us, and we were not one of the fortunate ones had any trees left. So the trees that we had were then instant trees brought in. But there's several streets in Town n' Country that are just beautiful because of the trees that they've had for so many years.

CV: (). You came here with three--. You had three children. Do you want to talk about where they went to school?

MB: Oh, I'd love to talk about that, because--. Well, I think that they adjusted, because they'd, they moved two times before coming to Tampa. But Sarah, our youngest, was a fifth grader in Morgan Woods School, which was pretty new at that point. And Bob was an eighth grader at Webb- what was then junior high and is now middle school. And John was a sophomore at Leto High School. And I would say that, that they all adjusted very, very well. And Mother-- and sometimes Dad-- but Mother for sure got, got involved in all the PTAs.

CV: How did they get to school- did they have buses then, or...?

MB: Yes, they had buses then. And we did not--. We did not get our children a car when they became 16, but we did get them a car when they were, in fact, their junior year at college. So yes, they did ride the bus. And then, when I started teaching-- which I did for 11 years at Carrollwood-- I had people that I could ride with. And I do remember that Sarah could then take the car, and that was a thrill to her on some days.

CV: Did they have hot lunches and everything at the schools? What kind of after-school activities were the kids involved in?

MB: I'm sorry, but I don't remember the after-school activities, really. And-- Well, John, our oldest, was in the Leto band. And that quite kept him busy, because I believe he was first chair coronet. And Bob actually came down to Tampa knowing how to play the cello, but since there wasn't a string program going at that time in the schools, it wasn't the thing to do. So the cello sits under our piano in our home still, waiting for somebody to play it. [Chuckle] And Sarah was a Girl Scout, and that kept her pretty busy.

CV: When you first got here, did you have a television?

MB: Yes, we--, I'm sure we did, because the children had pestered Daddy Sam to get a, a television in Kenosha. And I do remember that I went to a music meeting with--, a state music meeting with Sam. And the deal with the children was that when-- when-- the television broke down, then we would get a color television. And they greeted us with the door--, at the door with, "Well, it's finally happened."

CV: Why don't you tell about the story of how you got sick when you first got here, and who you went to for care? ().

MB: Oh, oh. Well, my first, first mishap was to get a kidney infection, which I've never had one since. But, but truthfully, Dr. Barlow, who I understand is--, was the first doctor here, actually got me well again. But--. So I appreciate that very much.

CV: Was Town n' Country hospital built? Or what changes have you seen as far as -

MB: No.

CV: --restaurants and buildings, and...? I bet you've seen some big department stores come and go.

MB: Well, that's certainly true. (). Well, when we came--. One thing that I'd like to comment on was the Davenport Drug Store was, was down on, on Hillsborough. And that's where U-Save and, and some other stores are now, but I do remember that that had a lunch counter in it. And--. But everything changes, and so I was--. What else did you ask me?

CV: Restaurants. Was Ranch House here ()?

MB: Oh. The Ranch House was supposedly the first one, and it is still here today.

CV: Any of the other little ones that have cropped up that you can remember? I know when I came, there was a Zayre's.

MB: Oh! Oh, you're talking about--. Yes, you're right. Zayre's Department Store. [Pause] I, I don't think--. Maybe we went downtown if we wanted to do very much buying.

CV: *What biggest changes politically have you seen in Town n' Country since you first came here?*

MB: Big changes. Well, since I'm not one who changes colors very often, why, I just stay the same colors that I've always had. And I, I read both sides of every story, and then I try to vote the way I feel I should.

CV: *Do you see more politicians now that decide to come out and meet with the people at home?*

MB: Well, it's certainly so-so. But that's probably thanks to our neighbor, Bob Hood, who, who did gather up a gentleman and his wife, that they were very, very nice to have around for an evening.

CV: *And what about religious diversity? I know that there is a Buddhist temple, and you see a lot of Filipinos and other religions.*

MB: Oh, we didn't have any of that. And when we came to Tampa, we actually were a part of a hopefully-growing Presbyterian church, which, due to various and assorted circumstances, never made it. And so that's why we today go to Wesley Memorial Methodist Church.

CV: *Was that here when you settled here?*

MB: I think it was, but I'm not really sure about that. I really don't know.

CV: *OK. What do you remember as the worst time living in Town n' Country- like during a hurricane or something like that? [Pause] Well, remember Helena? I can remember Helena when we had water up the street.*

MB: Well, is that the one where we were told to evacuate, and ()? Well, we, we were, you know, we were new then, and we decided that if the police came by with their little--. What did they have, sirens? Not sirens.

CV: *Megaphones.*

MB: The megaphones, and said, It's time for you to get out. Well, that's what we did. And we had a beloved cat at that time, and we really didn't like to leave him. But the interesting thing is that he survived very well. And that--. Those are a couple of the longest days, because we spent two nights in Leto High School.

CV: *Oh, so you were in one of the shelters?*

MB: Yes! Yes, we did what they asked us to do. But I must say, without mentioning any names on our street, that there--, some of our neighbors at that time who thought No, they didn't really need to, to stay. So when they got ready to leave, they just came back home. And they're still here today to prove it. [Laughter]

CV: *OK. What about--? What were some of the best times that you've had living in Town n' Country? What do you really enjoy, at any particular time of your life, that you really liked living here?*

MB: That's a nice question to ask. And I truthfully--. I have enjoyed living here, all the times that I have lived here, because I got myself involved in the women's group at the University of Tampa. And I--. Is it all right to be humorous?

CV: *Yeah!*

MB: All right. Well, I have to tell you about the time that, that I had been president of the University Women's Club. And I took the books and everything and said goodbye to Sam, because I was taking all this for the next president. And guess what? They couldn't find the next president. So Marilyn came back home with the books [Chuckle], and her husband wasn't too pleased to see them. But--.

And now, with so many people working the faculty group, faculty women's group really has kind of disbanded. I don't think they have it, and the nice women who work at the University of Tampa kind of have taken over.

CV: *OK. Do you remember the Webb Dairy that was out here?*

MB: No, I don't.

CV: *Do you remember the Sweetwater Ranch?*

MB: I remember all those names, but I don't really remember them. No.

CV: *Uh huh. How about the old West Gate Library that was located in the shopping plaza and opened in 1969?*

MB: You know, I probably would not, would not have remembered very well, because if I wanted a book, I'd go down to Tampa U and get it. And I was thinking today, when we have such a lovely library here, that I don't remember where the first one started. I really don't.

CV: *Well, it did start in the shopping plaza in 1969, and then it moved to--*

MB: We moved here in '68. So I probably hadn't gotten my feet wet yet. [Chuckle]

CV: *And it moved to its present location in '75.*

MB: Oh!

CV: *Do you think that there is a Town n' Country resident who has made a difference in your life- one person who has inspired you or who's had an impact in your life?*

MB: Not anyone. Well, yes. Pearl Golo was the principal of Morgan Woods School, and in my PTA days, she was very helpful to me.

CV: *Do you remember any of the other teachers or anything that had an impact on your children?*

MB: Yes, one is still a neighbor- Bob Patterson. And he is--. He and another gentleman, whose name I can't remember, were co-sixth grade teachers. And I remember that Bob liked to spend time (), that liked to spend time with them.

CV: *Was Bob popular with any other teachers?*

MB: I should remember his name, but I don't.

CV: *It'll probably come back to you.*

MB: Probably.

CV: *How about Sarah? Was there anybody that was--, that influenced her a lot? Because she ended up as a librarian, as a matter of fact.*

MB: Yes, but, but the interesting part about that--. You know, sometimes your children don't tell you some of the things that maybe they could be helpful about. And I didn't know that--. At least two of my children didn't know what they were going to do after they got their degrees from the University of Tampa. And Sarah was one of them. And I really don't know how she got the idea of being a librarian, but I can say that I think she's a very good one. And Bob--

CV: *Your son.*

MB: Yes, Bob, my second son--. And John, my oldest son, is deceased now, but he always knew that he wanted to be a band director like his father. And Bob went up east. And I can't remember now what he started out with, but he's very much now into the computer world and works for, for industries like that.

CV: *When you first moved here, do you remember meeting any of the Shimbergs or the Lamontes?*

MB: Oh certainly!

CV: *Do you want to talk about that?*

MB: Well, I, I wish I could talk about it, but these homes here, where we live now, are--, were designed by Shimberg. And I also had a couple of his children in Morgan Woods School--

CV: *That you taught.*

MB: --that I taught. And I don't remember, really, too much else. I remember when the display homes were down there where the, the library--, across the street from the library--, where the library is now.

CV: *Was the post office there then, across from the library?*

MB: Not to my memory. I really don't know where it was.

CV: *Let's see. Did you have--? When you were working and living in Town n' Country, did--, what was it like trying to commute? Did you have problems with the traffic the way you have now, or did you drive yourself to work, or what happened?*

MB: I'm saying this with a big smile on my face, because first, my husband, Sam, could get--, and I could get to our respective work areas-- mine was Carrollwood School-- in twenty minutes. And now, that would be an impossibility. So to be very honest, I'd like to sum it up this way: that I don't think I would happily move to Tampa now, because it's so big.

CV: *I'd like you to talk a little bit about how you got involved in Town n' Country Hospital as a volunteer and some of your experiences there.*

MB: Well, I really did enjoy that.

CV: () *the year.*

MB: Oh, the years?

CV: ().

MB: Well, let's see. [Pause] I think the story goes this way: that Sam retired from the University of Tampa, and Marilyn quit. And then, that was--

CV: *Quit what?*

MB: Quit working. And I think that was in '82 or '3. And since then, after I got--, stopped teaching, then I knew that I wanted to do something besides stay around the house and see what I could find to do there. So I--. Well, Town n' Country Hospital was starting then, and it makes me feel very happy to see how it is doing today, because it certainly got a slow start. But I still--. You know, I've been sick in that hospital a couple of times, and it's very nice to have some of the volunteers that I knew come up and see me.

CV: *Yeah, I think that you ought to mention that you were president.*

MB: Oh well, that's true. The hierarchy goes this way: that you're vice-chairman one year--

CV: *Of the volunteers.*

MB: --of the volunteers. And the second year, you are the chairman. And the third year, you are the honorary chairman. And truthfully, that is what its name says; it's honorary. I don't remember that I did anything too much. Oh! Maybe, maybe I took one day in the office. I think that's what I did.

CV: *Were there any funny stories that happened, or did you take care of any notable people that were patients there when you were a volunteer there?*

MB: Not that I remember, but I certainly do remember the times that, that maybe one of our volunteers would get sick and need help. And so when you were a chairman or a vice-chairman, you had that obli--, -- well, I felt it as an obligation-- to go help.

CV: *Now, you've got your little cheat sheet. Is there anything on your cheat sheet that we didn't cover that you want to bring up?*

MB: Let me think a minute. Well, one thing I would like to mention is that when I was president of Morgan Woods, as was Marilyn Hood, who is a--

CV: *Morgan Woods PTA?*

MB: PTA. And we had--. The school money-makers were a carnival. And I remember spending a lot of time with those carnivals, but they usually ended up well.

CV: *And everybody, all the residents in Town n' Country, came the way they do to Incarnation now?*

MB: Yes, well, I, you know, I don't know if we can say that they equal Incarnation's carnival now, but, but we hope so. I, I'd like to think so.

CV: ().

MB: Right, right. And I would like to also comment that when we came to Tampa, there was only one ten-story building downtown. And--

CV: *What was it?*

MB: Oh...

CV: *Was it the Hotel Florida?*

MB: That was there.

CV: *Yeah- because that was nine or ten stories.*

MB: Was it?

CV: ().

MB: Well, I remember eating there. It was a nice place to eat.

CV: *It's a historic building.*

MB: Yes. Right, right. No, I don't think there's anything I left out, except--. Well, I think we already touched on it. The traffic is something to behold these days.

CV: () *on Eisenhower.*

MB: Well, that's true, but, but I feel-- as I hope that the rest of the people who live here feel-- that if you know which lane to get in, you'll be fine.

CV: *[Laughter] That's right. You want to end with anything philosophical here?*

MB: No. No, but this has been, been a nice experience, and I thank Carolyn, my interrogator. [Laughter]

CV: *Interviewer! [Laughter]*

MB: Excuse me. She says the word's interviewer. [Laughter]

CV: ().

MB: ().

This is April 5. It's the day after the original interview with Marilyn Brick, and the interviewer is Carolyn Vallone. There is about one minute of missing information at

the beginning of the tape. And this is to fill in that information. So may I ask () the part that () she and her husband came to Tampa and (). So this is Marilyn Brick.

MB: We moved () to Tampa because of a ban at Tam--, the University of Tampa. () stayed in his office () obviously been very happy there, and they didn't ().

CV: ()?

MB: Oh, yes. Oh.

CV: ().

MB: () my husband June 1, and (). And since we had a grand piano, there was some () that couldn't accommodate us, and so we found one in Town n' Country, and--, yes, in Town n' Country. And it just suited our purpose fine.

CV: ()?

MB: Oh, yes. I had a gold piano (). You're right about that.

CV: OK. () little bit about this house. () see the house the same day you got it?

MB: Yes, actually the builders () what colors to choose (). And he would call me in Wisconsin at night and tell me what had transpired during the day. () everything, except () counters that were in the bathrooms. And since then, ().

CV: OK. How many houses are here ()? ()?

MB: Definitely not. Let's see. (), and--. No, I don't think that there was any (). The () were here, and the () were here, and the, and the Pattersons were here. And all of us came in this August--, the summer of 1968, I should say.

CV: I think that should probably () with Marilyn Brick.

MB: ().

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A]

[END OF INTERVIEW]