

Hudson River Valley Institute
Walkway Over the Hudson Oral Histories
Craig Fisher

Date: Saturday, April 26th 2008

Length: Approximately 5 ½ minutes

Interviewer (Joe DeLisle): Alright could you please say and spell your name for the camera?

Craig Fisher: Yes, I'm doctor Craig Fisher C-R-A-I-G F-I-S-H-E-R.

Interviewer: And so you have a couple of different angles for this interview, could you tell us about your eyewitness account?

Fisher: What I basically remember in spring of 1974, I worked for IBM we had an office at High Street currently Dutchess County Office for the Aging is in the building but there's one four story building right at the top of the hill on High Street. I was in my office, my office did not overlook the river but some other people started commenting they're seeing smoke come from down by the river. So many of us went up to the conference room and looked out the conference room window on the fourth floor and we literally saw tons of black smoke going up from the bridge. And one of our members that we worked with at IBM was a gentleman named Ken Martin. We called him Kenny sometimes a nickname we called him fire truck because he, it was his second life to fight fires. He later became chief of the Hyde Park Fire Department but he actually left the office and he went down to the fire. We noticed, we didn't go with him because we were still working but the next day his picture was in the paper for getting credit for helping to save a few houses. With that bridge if you ever notice on our side of the bridge there's houses right under the bridge and hot tar that was on fire was dripping off the bridge landing on roofs of houses. And Kenny was the first one who really observed it and called attention to it and got the firefighters to put those out. If he had not probably it would have been caught later but we wouldn't know how much more damage. He caught it right away.

Interviewer 2 (Andrew Buccitelli): Do remember any of the reactions from the community while this was going on or just after this was going on?

Fisher: I really don't remember a lot of reaction in the community, sort of there were debates going on, what's going to happen? Are they going to rebuild it? Are they going to fix it? Is it destroyed? How safe is it? But I really don't remember any decisive points.

Interviewer 2: After the fire, did recall any local businesses or local traffic?

Fisher: No I don't remember any real problems. I was probably all tied up in my own life doing my IBM things and I didn't, I really was unaware of other impacts.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you would like to touch upon from that well [cuts off]

Fisher: It's a beautiful bridge; I'd just say it's a beautiful bridge. It's a beautiful bridge. I grew up in Syracuse New York and Oswego New York and when I was in Oswego they had two bridges that went over the Oswego River and as child we used to go across the catwalks

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underneath the bridge just for the fun of it. I always wanted to that but I never did, after I saw the fire I said I'm never going to try it here.

Interviewer: When they reopen it are you, will you think about, at least think about going up there?

Fisher: When they reopen it I will walk across it, but I won't go under it.

Interviewer: Alright I think that's it.

Interviewer 2: Got your eye witness accounts though.

Fisher: Thank you.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you would like to add?

Fisher: No.

Interviewer: Alright.

Fisher: Thank you very much.

Interviewer 2: Thank you for your time

Fisher: You're welcome.

[Start of interview is 15:38 and end of interview 20:50]

Transcribed by Paul Contarino