

Fell's Point Out of Time



Lu Fisher Interview, April 28, 2003

[Interviewers, Jacquie & Kraig Greff]

[Lu]

So what do you want to know?

[Jacquie]

I'm curious as to what brought you to Fells Point, and then tell your story about how you found the building and then what happened after that, just tell your story.

[Lu]

I really didn't know much about Fells Point, because even though my husband was a doctor at Hopkins, we called this, what did we call it "the water front" and it wasn't called Fells Point. It was just right down,.. of we called it "the foot of Broadway". That is what it was.

And so I hadn't come down here much, but I had heard that some architects had been very, very interested in old houses down here. So my brother, who lived in New York, wanted to come down and see some old houses, and I said, "Well we'd better go to Fells Point." And then, we tried, and it was hard to get here. And nobody knew Fells Point. And we came and found it was on the waterfront and we liked it very much, although it looked almost deserted, very, very few cars there, very few people; it was pretty much deserted. And, so, we saw this house we liked very much, it was a fine looking house from the outside. And the little bar next door said "Just go in, it's vacant." And so we did and we found that it was in very original condition, which really surprised us, because it hadn't been ruined at all. I guess mainly because whoever had it at that time didn't have the money to do it. That's about why, about why I'm sure. So we looked into the whole story. She, the people next store said they thought it was for sale. We finally found the real estate office, a little office off Broadway, and oh they said, "Yes, it's for sale." It turned out it was for sale at such a low price so we were sort of astounded! And so right away we put some money down and let them know "We want it." And then we were so excited. My brother spent the weekend. We were so excited at what had happened, we couldn't stand it. We went down here again, and we were walking along the waterfront, and this man who sort of looked as if he lived here. He was kind of in working clothes. I said "We just bought that house over there." I couldn't contain myself. And he said, "Oh yes, that is where they are going to put the expressway. I think they're going to take out three blocks. So, that was kind of a pretty quick' - oh, forget it! And my brother said, "Well, you know, we can't fight city hall." "This is ridiculous." "This is all too good to be true," and so forth, and so on. So he went back to New York, and then the next day, I came back and I went up in the house and spent some time. The second floor has a got wonderful room which just must have the best proportions, something that really gets you, because it happened to a lot of people, not just me. And I thought, when I

thought of Europe and all of the old places there that go way, way back. And, here here we are with the few things we have, just destroying 'em all! So, I thought, "Well, I'm just going to see what I can do."

So, I called an architect who had a house, an apartment, not far from me, right on the harbor, further over that way, one of the few people that even liked the harbor. Everybody thought it was a sort of dirty, unattractive place to be. "Forget it, you can't fix it."

So I called him and I said, "What would you do if you wanted to save Fells Point?" He'd say, "I'd say it's about five years too late. I really don't think that you can do it now. People have given it up, and the City, the County, the Federal government are all in favor of it. I'm sure you knew that the Federal government paid 90% of the cost of the expressway. I mean, you knew that..."

[Jacquie]

I did.

[Lu]

And so that was the big incentive to the people of the city. They were thrilled to get a new road paid for mostly by the Federal government. So, he said, "No, there is nothing you can do. Forget it." I said, "Look, just tell me what you would do if you definitely wanted to do something, no matter how foolish it was or how late it was, what would you do?" He said, "Well, I guess you could call a meeting at CHAPS" which was the..., let's see, what does it stand for? It's the architectural preservation part of the city, but it is very small. I mean, it's backed by the city, but it's not..., it doesn't have a lot of support. So, he said, "I'll get the people that are working on the road, then I'll get people who are against it and we'll just see what we can do?" So, we did. And some of the attempts, ... I going to have some lunch, if that's...

[Jacquie]

Sure.

[Lu]

The historic, the little historic group there; it's called CHAP; and it is the, the part of the city that is interested in historic preservation. And so, there I met the man who was president of the Baltimore Heritage, which is another historic organization for people have old houses and try to do their best to help restore them and all the rest of it. So, he, I had a long talk with him. But first I talked to everybody. I said, "This place has got to be saved." And, of course, a lot of the people were people who were working on doing it. And, everybody who was working on it wanted it. Of course! So, it was, you know, a combination, of different things going on. So, anyway, Arrngold(?) said, "Join Baltimore Heritage, I'll put you on the Board, and I'll give you a chance to have an Expressway Committee." So, I said, "Good, we'll do that." So, that's what I did. That was the first thing. And, I said to Bo Kelly, "See here is someone who is helping us do something!" And, he said, "It's too late." And he really was very enthusiastic about doing something, he just said "It's too late."

And, but I kept after him, too; after we got a committee going and some people joined it, and all the rest of it. And he said, "I think it would be a good idea to have a really big meeting for architects all over the city," people who were interested in preservation at the, there's a factory there, what do they call that, the factory that has spice, spices, McCormick, McCormick, you know, McCormick building. And that was right on the waterfront, so it was a good place to have it.

[Jacquie]

Was that here in Fells Point?

[Lu]

No, no it's further down that way, but it's right on the water. But it is further, I'd say, well it's a little beyond Fells Point, but it's right on the waterfront. So, we did that. And, it was a big meeting place and it was quite full. And a lot of architects were very interested in old things. So that was a big plus. To have that kind of exposure.

[Kraig]

What year?

[Lu]

That was in '96, wait a minute, no, '66. 1966, because when we bought this house, it was '65.

[Kraig]

I was 11. I was 11.

[Lu]

Why weren't you down here helping?

[Kraig]

I played my first professional gig when I was 11. I had an actual steady performing job.

[Lu]

Good. Good.

[Kraig]

Playing accordion when I was 11.

[Lu]

But you weren't anywhere near Fells Point?

[Kraig]

No, I was in Springfield, Illinois.

[Lu]

So you weren't even in Baltimore.

[Jacquie]

Oh, we are Midwesterners.

[Lu]

Oh, OK, well this is going to be hard to take!

[Jacquie]

No, this is great!

[Kraig]

We're sons of the soil.

[Lu]

But not near any waterfront.

[Kraig]

No.

[Lu]

No. Well, I've always been crazy about a waterfront, no matter what it was; any old dump, just to have water there. And, not that many people, until lately, felt that way at all!

[Kraig]

I've always felt that way.

[Lu]

And they were wondering, "What in Hell are you doing, trying to save this grubby waterfront?"

[Jacquie]

Now you were in New York when you came down and bought this place, or...?

[Lu]

No, I grew up in Pittsburgh, and when I was about, well nineteen actually, I left Pittsburgh to marry my second cousin who lives here.

[Jacquie]

So, then you came,... You had mentioned New York and I got confused... So, your husband, was he involved in this, too, or was he...?

[Lu]

He was very busy as a doctor at Hopkins, but, you see, he was close by, and he was interested that I was doing it. I think he was interested that I got in so deeply.

[Jacquie]

Well, what, what was the reputation of the area at the time that you came down here? Had you heard anything about it? What was it like then?

[Lu]

No, I hadn't heard anything about it until I came down, and then I heard the councilmen told their constituents, "You're so lucky that the City wants to buy your houses because you are living in a slum." And, they told everybody, "You're just in a slum. You're in a slum. That is what it is!" And some of the people really still owned houses, but a lot of them were vacant. And it, it was sort of like a place for ships to come in, and and sometimes people who were on the ships to spend the night, sort of. They had some places where they could stay overnight, that kind of thing, for a few days. And, so that's really what it was!

[Jacquie]

Was it busy, or was it just pretty dead?

[Lu]

You would hardly see any cars here, and now parking has gotten to be one of the biggest problems we have! There really were hardly any cars at all!

[Jacquie]

OK, go back into your story where you were. You had a meeting with the architects, I think at McCormick?

[Lu]

Yeah, and they were very enthusiastic. And, then, what Bo Kelly did, and he can't even remember all this. He made a great design of what the bridge across the inner harbor... Actually, according to this picture, I can show you. Actually the inner harbor was where the expressway was gonna go. And, you see that the inner harbor is one that always has had sort of shallow wharfage. And so, the big ships used, at one time, really came in here more than in there because that was sort of shallow. So, they were going to put this expressway right across the inner harbor and cut Federal Hill in half. Do you know where Federal Hill is? Have you ever been there?

[Jacquie]

Yes.

[Lu]

Well, you can see what it would be, cutting it in half? Can you picture that? And I said, when I heard they were going to do that, I said "Cutting it in half! Why would you do that?!" "Oh, there'll be room on either side!" So, then this was going to be completely right around the whole inner harbor, so there would have been no, no inner harbor, which people really like. I mean, you know, they made a big thing out of it. That would never have existed, because this would all have been filled out, and be three-tiers some places.

[Jacquie]

Yeah, I mean, it's that way. South would be a harbor now!

[Lu]

So that was, that was the problem. So everything we tried to do was hard to do, because the city, the state, and the Federal government were all strongly behind this plan, and they really wanted it in a big way. So, we didn't have anybody really important on our side. We had a lot of people who thought it was a good idea, but not a whole lot of power in any of it. So, we had meetings, we had meetings, we had people gathering down at the, you know, main city hall, and had meetings down there, had people coming from different parts of the city, and so forth. And we sort of chugged along, and finally I had this person that got interested and wanted to meet me, and say let's get together and let's start a whole kind of preservation society and see what we can do. His name was Tom Ward. He was the only member of the City Council who voted against it. He later became a lawyer, but then he said he wanted to really help. So, I guess, without him, we couldn't have done it, because he knew a lot of the background that we were totally ignorant of, as far as where we could get help, you know. And so, he joined and we formed this society. And, one of the houses, that in the meantime, my brother and I had bought to try to save people from turning it over to the city. And then I talked to my friends. I'd say, "You have to buy houses down in Fells Point. They're very cheap, but that's the only way we can save the city. And I said, "Our friendship depends on it." They said, "That's a good way to lose friends!" Actually, in the end, I only got three. Because I felt, the more people, the houses were very cheap. The more people bought the houses, the better off we'd be.

[Kraig]

How much would a house go for?

[Lu]

I'll tell you what we paid for that little house we finally bought. \$1200.

[Jacquie]

They went down from there, because didn't the city actually sell them for a dollar after they scratched the plan?

[Lu]

No, not here they didn't. That was another part of the city where they sold them for a dollar. Here, what they did, when it finally came to that, after we had one, which took eleven years. They let you buy them, but then you had to guarantee that you were going to restore them, and they let you buy them at a reasonable, very reasonable price: \$50..., \$30... whatever, that kind of thing. But everybody had to then restore it the best way that it could be done. So, that's what happened then, but that was after the whole thing was saved, which was a bigger surprise to me than anybody else.

[Kraig]

So, before it was saved, it was, the property was dirt cheap. Did the property go up after it was saved?

[Lu]

Oh, yeah, sure, but then the city had taken over so much of it, but a lot of it was worse than before the city took it over, because they would, for instance, turn off the heat. Everything would be ruined. Roofs would be leaking. It needed,... a lot of the places needed more work than they did, even before the city took it over. You see, that was eleven years of vacant houses. And that was really bad!

[Kraig]

Was there one person in this area that just bought up, had the foresight to just buy up everything?

[Lu]

Just me and my brother. And we didn't do nearly what, he looked at it after and said, "We should have...." Instead of trying to get people to buy it, we should have done it.

[Kraig]

How many places did you buy, just a couple of places?

[Lu]

In the end, I think he and I had about, oh maybe, ten.

[Kraig]

Well, that finished me!

[Lu]

It wasn't anything!

[Kraig]

I know, but now!

[Lu]

Yeah, but it wasn't anything, and actually I, I sold them as I went along. And one person I sold this house to on Thames Street for very little, and then the hotel came in and bought the big, the Admiral Fell Inn, bought the whole corner, and then bought this. And he hadn't done anything to the house, and I sold it to him for something, I don't know \$35, \$40 thousand. He got something like \$200 thousand for it without doing anything! So, this was not a money-making proposition that I was into. Although, as you say, it certainly could have been. But, so it went on and on, and we had a meeting at the city hall for the people who lived here and the people who were trying to save it. You see, I think I've got something here that had something about the meeting. I like it because of what he said about me. [Reading:] "At about this time, Ms. Fisher and the preservationists helped to sponsor a meeting with architects and highway engineers, which resulted in architect Archibald Rodgers (This is a part of the story I wanted to tell you, too.) set up the Design Concept Team." (Probably you've heard about that. That was the Design Concept Team that was supposed to come and weave the expressway in a very acceptable way through the city, which of course isn't possible. I mean, it was a sort of silly thing, but that is what he was trying to get an architectural set up, group, to do it.)

[Kraig]

Did you know that the 83, Jones Falls, there is an example in most all engineering and architectural schools as what not to do in building a road? It really is. It's a real big... The thing is banked wrong, you don't do this, no drainage, all kinds of stuff.

[Lu]

See, we got this sort of, too, from all the other,... and that's, I'm glad you brought that point up, because, we got that a lot from the other towns that had already decided to do this, and let them go through. They were so upset with what it did to their city, and the part of their city that was taken! Philadelphia was one. I heard that out in San Francisco they had stopped a road in full swing that was, whether it was part of this, I don't know, but they stopped it.

[Kraig]

San Francisco is that way. I mean, if they don't like some type of law, the people like step in mass, in thousands, and just not do this...

[Lu]

Good!

[Kraig]

People really care about their city. They really do.

[Lu]

That's good! I know they do. I've got a granddaughter that lives there and she really loves it. And, well, so this was something that they went ahead and put a lot of money into, to get this road woven into the city so people wouldn't object. But, of course, we were always going to object, because when they weave this road in, they've got the road, and it's taking out a lot of other things, and it's a

big one! So, that, that was something that people didn't like, and, of course, we were trying to do our best to get all the information we could about some of the other cities and find out how badly they'd fared in other cities. And, so, let's see, what's the next thing? Oh... Then, Tom Ward said, after we'd worked on this thing for a few years. He said, "We've got to sue the city. We've got to sue the Federal government." Not just the city, we're gonna sue the Federal government! So, so a few of the people who lived here, in fact, two women, really, at the meetings we had at City Hall had come up to us afterwards and said, you know, "What can we do, because we do like the place, and we'd like to save it." The other people just felt, they believed that they should get out of the slums while they can. So, one of the women, who had been a school teacher, said that she would be the principle in suing the Federal government.

[Jacquie]

Who was she?

[Lu]

I was afraid you were going to ask that.

[Jacquie]

It's probably out there.

[Lu]

She still lives here! I'll get her name for you. And, ah, Eleanor was her first name, and she was married to a man who lived here. She was good enough to do that. Anyway, so, I'll just tell you what I have here at the meeting. [Reading:] Meanwhile, former Second District Councilman Tom Ward, (He was the one that was helping me.) as chairman of the Transportation Committee, had been hauling Councilmen around to other cities to look at mass transit systems, and had been conducting what he referred to as "guerilla campaigns" against the expressway here, at home introduced an ordinance with the backing of the preservationists. He would have shifted the condemnation line in Fells Point slightly to save the valuable block of buildings. (Well, that's the thing that didn't work. So, I don't need to go into it, but he was trying to move the road just a little bit, so it would be less destructive of the old buildings.) It was really a class confrontation: working class Poles from Fells Point against WASP preservationists with strange accents from the suburbs. Neither group distinguished itself. The preservationists read desperate telegrams from garden clubs "Save Fells Point!" The residents, egged on by their councilmen, heckled them at every opportunity. (It was a wild meeting, no question about it! And, here's the way he writes it: "At last Mrs. Fisher stood up. Amid the cat calls, and with great dignity, said that if she were a resident of Fells Point, she would wonder why so many people were interested in the neighborhood. 'It must be very special,' she said." (Which is true.)

But the meetings really worked fine for that reason. And they didn't really get us anywhere. We were still, you know, headed for the end. And, so when we did this, sued the Federal government; Eleanor Lukowski(?) is her name. They lived here, and her mother-in-law lived here, and her mother-in-law's family lived here, all very much into the Fells Point thing. They had come from abroad years, generations ago. And so, we never actually had to do it, but we had it pending the whole time. And

whoever was the head of the roads thing in the Federal government, (I can't think of his name, but I'll get it for you, too.), she was against him: Eleanor Lukowski versus.... It was very good, it looked good to us. And so that was a big part of what we wanted to do, was to try to stop it. Then we decided we'd have to get a lawyer that didn't mind fighting the city. And that was hard, but we finally did. And we got a very good lawyer who helped us a great deal: helping us how to, you know, do the things, and have enough people spurred so that there were enough and it got to be a bigger and bigger group that was opposed to the road.

So, I guess part of this was, give you an idea of what we felt: this was for our thirtieth anniversary. The ah, and Mayor Thomas D'Allisandro was very much in favor of the road, because it would have been a free road for the city is the way people looked at it. We named our group the "Federal Hill and Fells Point," because Federal Hill was very much opposed to it. We got them into the whole side, made up of both groups.

[Jacquie]

Now was Federal Hill in better shape at that time than Fells Point was?

[Lu]

A few people had started restoring houses there. That's how, it was ahead of us there. Nobody had tried to do it in Fells Point, but in Federal Hill there was a street where a few people had tried to restore and were restoring old houses. That's why they could help us, too, because there was nobody down here that was doing it, nobody. That was a plus, too, to combine the two. And, then, one of the people that had joined our club, our society, who was very interested in it, decided and. I got to be President because Tom Ward said, "You've got to run it. Somebody's got to make it work."

So I did, and then we got people to come and join it, and see how many we would get that would really be interested. And, this, this one man, who was very interested decided that we would have to have a big fair here and show people what Fells Point was all about. And I said, "We can't. We're trying to do everything we can. And we're having to go over all these houses. We're trying to, you know, write them all up. We have very few people. We can't have this big fair. Fair is not the right word. What's the right word? But, not "Bazarre." You know, what's the right word?

[Jacquie]

Was it like a street thing? Open houses?

[Lu]

Yeah, a street thing. I'll say a fair, but I think there is a better name. Anyway, he was all set to do it and he just overrode me. Luckily. And we started with the first fair the first year we'd been having the group. And it just gave us a lot of publicity. A lot, because so many people came. Had it right on the waterfront. Had beer, had tables for people to buy things.

[Jacquie]

Festival?

[Lu]

Festival! Thank you. Of course that was the word. It was the Fells Point Festival and it has been going ever since. Still goes every year. It's the way, actually, that we have been able to survive, because we had enough money to make our group work. So that was a big help.

When the group came to weave the expressway through the city, well, we worked with them, but, of course, we were totally against the whole thing. And there wasn't any sort of... and they spent so much money on that thing that it seemed almost ridiculous. But, in a way, it got us into all of the different people all across the city who hadn't really worked against it, but weren't then very convinced to do it. Because then they saw exactly what was going to happen where they were. So it was really a big help to do that. And it gave us a lot more backing.

So time went on, and we had our lawsuit against the Federal government. And the way we did it against the Federal government for destroying a historic area. Without, ... and actually there was a kind of a law, but nobody had paid much attention to it, that the historic areas should not be destroyed. But it had never been really tried, and that, that was what our suit was about. They were putting a road through an historic area without trying to save the area.

[Jacquie]

Now was this, ... at some point, Fells Point was declared a Historic District. Was this about the time?

[Lu]

Yeah. That happened when... Gee, I wish I had that material at the hand. That happened before we actually... All we knew was that we wanted to save the area, but we hadn't gotten into any real system to do it. The, the, I guess it was the whole country, in Congress a bill had come up where they could save historic areas if they were considered historic enough, with all the work and so forth to find out if they were worth it. And this was going to be over the entire country. And they had to pass this to show they were an historic area that should be saved. So, so that's what happened. We got in almost on the first. We heard about it, we heard about the bill, and we got,... and what we had to do was go out and find out what we could find and describe all these historic houses in the area so that we would qualify. And so, that way, we had that behind us, which of course really had no meaning because it hadn't been tried. We used that in the suit against the... that they would be willing to destroy an historic area that should have been protected... If I had had more time when you called me, I would have had this in much better order! I really would, I'm sorry.

[Jacquie]

Oh, that's all right. I mean if it really turns out that we want to do it again, we can do it again at some point. It's not important.

[Lu]

If you think it should, and I will have a much more, sort of, ordered...

[Jacquie]

I can change the order.

[Lu]

Yes, I guess you can. I didn't know, once you talked into a place, whether you could change it or not.

[Jacquie]

It's easy to change. In fact, I would probably take important clips. I wouldn't take the whole thing.

[Lu]

You know, I only brought it up because I was just rambling on.

[Jacquie]

I can reorder it.

[Lu]

Oh, that'll be fine.

[Kraig]

She does that with my life. Just edits me down until like five or six minutes.

[Lu]

You know you are really lucky. Did you ever realize how lucky you are? Yeah, you gotta feel lucky when that happens.

[Kraig]

I feel real lucky.

[Lu]

Well, you probably are.

So then, how did I put it here... might as well. We did get, we were lucky to get a good lawyer and his firm to work with us, regardless of whether they were doing it against the city or not. They did help us an awful lot. And we were able to restore some houses and work with the area and so forth. But we still hadn't beaten the road thing. It was still hanging there. And then one of the members of our group called me up and said, "The City Council is going to rescind the order to destroy Fells Point." This is eleven years. So, I told everybody, but only he and I were the ones that went to the meeting and heard them pass it and went to a bar across from City Hall. And that was a good feeling.

[Kraig]

Oh, I do that, it's the only thing we have in common!

[Lu]

Now, you're with me!

[Kraig]

I've never saved anything. I've saved a few squirrels and chipmunks and stuff, but I haven't done the bar thing

[Lu]

So, with that drink, you know, we sort of sealed the future, we thought, of Fells Point. Of course, there was a long time to do all that, but we felt that it had finally come to pass. And, I was really, many times thought it was impossible. Because something that has been so backed up by the whole system, and even the Federal government giving ninety percent money,... It's not easy getting a whole group of know-nothings to say "Stop!"

[Jacquie]

Yeah!

[Lu]

But I think they had done it in other places, but we didn't hear about doing it so much, as we had to really stop the whole thing and then they had to find another way to do it. And they, and they finally did. And they spent, I guess wasted an awful lot of money on that Design Concept Team. And then I ended this up by saying: [Reading:] Gradually the realization came that time itself was an ally. The estimated cost of the Baltimore expressway system was mounting constantly. (Which it was getting more and more expensive as time went on to build the thing.) So whatever the cost was going to be, the city was going to have to do its share of it, and it was going to be tough. And citizens in other cities were opposing similar innercity highways planned through the hearts of their communities. (San Francisco...) It is difficult to say which of the many actions taken against the road caused a change in plans. (And it was hard. So many things kind of came together in the end, you know? Most likely, it was a combination of all of it.) In any event, eleven years after its passage, the City Council rescinded the condemnation ordinance and the expressways were routed around the inner harbor (the harbor, not the inner harbor) instead of through it. The results are there for everyone to see, and the Harbor Place has become an example for other cities.

[Jacquie]

Can you talk, just real quickly, about the changes that you've seen in Fells Point since then?

[Lu]

They have been overwhelming. No question about it, they've just been overwhelming! I suppose because we worked so hard to do something that was hard to do, that I don't think we anticipated the amount of building and rushing to be in Fells Point would occur. We were even surprised that so

many people wanted the houses, because, you know, there are a lot of bars around, and a lot of people... Certainly my husband's family and people that lived in the county, "Why are you spending so much time down in Fells Point, in the city, that's terrible!" You know, they just didn't think the city was a place to spend your time. There hadn't kind of been a good reason to. You know? And so, there was always that, too, that you had to feel that only the people that really cared about it and had worked for it and liked the waterfront. But, it just began to have people coming down all the time. And it just grew and grew. And it was sort of amazing to me how much money people were putting into the houses down here, and how much they wanted to be here. And how much people want to be here anyway. How did you happen to get here?

[Jacquie]

We liked it. We like the city as well as the...

[Lu]

Yeah, but when you came here, how did you get into HERE? How did you hear about it? How did you want to come here? You came to the city you didn't know.

[Jacquie]

We wanted to live in the city. We had a suburban realtor who didn't really know her way around Fells Point that much.

[Lu]

I'm sure!

[Jacquie]

She showed us a few places in Fells Point, Canton and Federal Hill. And Fells Point was a better buy in terms of price and the same amount of space as Federal Hill. That was one thing. And we liked that it was near the water. I mean, Federal Hill is separated.

[Lu]

Well, part of Federal Hill,... and I think that is why it's expensive there, is right over the water, I mean, can see the water.

[Jacquie]

Yeah, but you can't walk out your door and be there in a block!

[Lu]

No, and I really would never have chosen Federal Hill, because it's so much in the city. This is so removed. And I kept telling everybody, when the family would always say, "What are you doing down there?" I said, oh, I have an old car, "I don't even lock my car!" And ever since I'd come down here, twenty years, thirty years, I've never locked my car in Fells Point. I made up my mind I wasn't going to do it. Just as if I were at home, or something. And the only time I had any problem was when there was a drunk in the backseat. And I just said, you know, "I want you to get out." He

got out and that was it. In all that time! I did when I had my Jeep down here. I had some boys that broke a window, but that was..., they didn't do anything. I mean, I just wanted people to know it is a very safe place. I think, for a city, it is amazingly safe. I never felt that way about Federal Hill because it was so much in the city, so much a part of the city. You know what I mean? Sort of, just in the city. This is really, this is removed because it's where it is. So I just felt that way about it. Now you can make that public.

[Jacquie]

If you had a dream, if you could set the direction for what Fells Point was going to be like in the future, what would you do with it?

[Lu]

I would protect the waterfront in any way that was feasible and acceptable that I could, and try to keep people from destroying it by using the waterfront, because everybody wants to be there now. I think it's a possibility. I honestly do. You see this pier? I don't think this is going to last. The meetings that I went to here in the City Pier, five big companies had come, except for Streuver Brothers, from all over the country to just get that place. Waterfront, I don't know why, people used to hate it, but now they have to have it. So, that's why it's now another thing entirely, to save it from that, and whether that is going to be possible.

[Jacquie]

Are you going to lead the charge?

[Lu]

I don't think I could. I thought of a lot of things I could do, and one of them is to try to get people to join me, and then buy this place right here, which is the most vulnerable place in the world. If you can go out there and look, you can see...

[Jacquie]

The pier?

[Lu]

The pier and what the pier means and the other part of the pier. The pier actually goes all the way around here, and there's another entrance to it over there. And there's a building there, and there's a lot of waterfront. This is the most kind of desirable place.

[Jacquie]

As long as I'm here, can you tell us where we are, you know, just for the context of the camera? And I'm going to take the camera out on the patio real quick before I run out of this tape, and try to take a quick look around.

[Lu]

OK, sure. So, you want me to say, "This is Fell's Street?"

[Jacquie]

Yeah, what's the history of this house? How did you come to own it? How old is it?

[Lu]

I had seen this house and I liked it very much, and I found out it belonged to a tugboat, not a owner, a tugboat hand. And he had it for along time, and he wanted to sell it because he's on the water all the time, didn't want to be on the water anymore. So, eventually he sold it to me. And then I found it was almost all original except for the third floor. They had, you know how often they do, they take the roof, the pitch roof off, and give you, which they gave us this, which was wonderful because this is the part I like best. That part was something that kept it from being totally original. That was probably about a hundred years ago, so I didn't want to lose this top floor. And it was built by the shipbuilder, who built it after he bought the two little houses next door. And then this was a vacant lot, and that's where he put his good-size building, which is kind of big for Fells Point, too, this size house. And then he had his shipyard right along this coast as far as I know. And I think he did.

[Jacquie]

OK, I'm going to take the camera of the tripod and take it out on the balcony.