

The Batestown Oral History Project

Prince William County, Virginia

August 2019

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Prepared for and sponsored by the
Prince William County Historical Commission
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1 Introduction and Methods

The Batestown Oral History Project provides primary source material via oral history interviews focusing on the African American community of Batestown. Formerly known as the Cabin Branch Community, Batestown is currently located in the eastern half of Prince William County in Northern Virginia, roughly 1 mile northwest of Dumfries on Mine Road (Batestown Road). The research, interview process, and final report were conducted and prepared by Adam Rayburn, a summer intern working with the Prince William County Historical Commission partnered with the County Archaeologist and Historic Preservation Division. This internship was arranged through the Institute of Public History with the University of Virginia. The project was conducted during the summer of 2019, from June to mid-August.

The interviews are arranged according to the order in which they were conducted. Each interview section includes a brief biography of the participant(s), signed Interview Agreement(s), the final transcript, and any relevant photographs or documents shared by the interviewee.

Selection of Participants

A list of potential oral history interview candidates was prepared by Charles Reid, a community member who personally knew each individual on the list. The candidates were chosen to be interviewed based on their willingness to participate, their age, and their association with Batestown. Very few candidates responded to initial attempts to contact them, and without the help of Charles Reid it is likely that few would have agreed to participate. Eight interviews were conducted with a total of eleven interviewees. Many participants preferred to be interviewed alongside other Batestown community members, such as siblings, cousins, or neighbors. All interviewees were born between the years of 1927 and 1950. Nine of the eleven interviewees grew up in Batestown, and two of the interviewees grew up in nearby Dumfries and Triangle, though they did have close family ties to the Batestown area and spent much of their childhood there. Only one interviewee still lived in Batestown at the time of this project.

Methods

Interviews were conducted within the homes of the interviewees. Charles Reid was present for most of the interviews and often participated by asking questions or sharing stories. Upon arrival, the project would first be thoroughly explained, the interview agreement form(s) would be signed, and when all participants were prepared, the interview would begin. After the interview was complete, pictures and documents offered by the interviewee were photographed. An Olympus DS2500 digital voice recorder was used to record the audio, and a Nikon D40 was used for the photographs. The interview audio was then transcribed, and the photographs were cropped and labeled.

Oral History Interview Questions

Bio

1. Can you introduce yourself and tell me your name? (spell)
2. Do you go by any nicknames?
3. When were you born?
4. Where were you born?
5. What are your parents' names? (Spell) (Ask for mother's maiden name?)
6. Do you know when they were born?
7. Where were your parents born?
8. How many siblings do you have?
9. What are their names? (Spell)

Life in Batestown

10. What comes to mind when you think of Batestown?
 - a. What was it like growing up in Batestown?
11. Can you describe the house you lived in? (Electricity? Water?)
 - a. How many people were in your household?
12. Did you and your siblings have chores?
13. Where did you go to school? Describe.
14. What did the people (both children and adults) do for leisure activities?
15. Are there any interesting people or stories that you can remember from your childhood?

Batestown

16. Could you describe what Batestown looked like? (Roads, houses, people, transport)
17. Do you remember any of the businesses?
18. Can you tell me about any community centers in Batestown?
19. Was Batestown a segregated community?
20. How often would people from outside of the community visit Batestown?
21. Were there any legends, folk tales, or stories that people would tell around Batestown?

Parents and Grandparents

21. What did your parents do for a living?
 - a. Ask more about their jobs.
22. Can you tell me more about your parents? Maybe describe a typical week in your parents' lives.
 - a. What kind of food would they cook? Where did they get their food from?
23. Did your grandparents live in Batestown? What do you remember about them?
24. Can you remember who some of the oldest community members were? What do you remember about them?
26. Did people ever speak much about the history of Batestown?
27. Can you remember any important community events?

Leaving Batestown

28. How long did you live in Batestown?
 - a. Did you own property there?

- b. How old were you when you left?
 - c. What was the reason for leaving?
29. Where did you move after leaving?
 30. Do you stay in contact with anyone from the community?
 31. Do you know anyone who currently lives in the Batestown area?
 32. Can you describe how Batestown has changed?
 33. Is there anything you would like to share that we haven't covered?

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2 Themes and Trends

From Subsistence Agriculture to Occupational Diversity

From the late 18th to early 19th century, several free African American families in Prince William County held large tracts of land (Bedell 2004 p57). Over several generations, these large tracts were continuously divided into smaller parcels and settled by the children of the landowners, resulting in a greater population density and the formation of a community. This community, which later came to be known as Batestown, was rooted in a tradition of subsistence agriculture. When the Cabin Branch Pyrite Mine opened in 1889 it introduced the community to a non-agrarian based economy. The mine became the economic mainstay of the area, and many interviewees recalled hearing that their parents, grandparents, and older relatives worked at the Cabin Branch Mine. When the mine closed in 1920, Batestown residents continued to keep gardens and livestock, but they also began to expand their occupational horizons.

The experiences of the interviewees of this project mostly encompass the time period following World War II, or the New Dominion Virginia Period. When examined in the context of Batestown's history, a continued trend of expanding occupational diversity and decreased reliance on subsistence agriculture can be observed throughout this period. Batestown residents were resourceful opportunists who utilized any available method of sustaining their family and earning a living. Many found employment at the Marine Corps Base Quantico, and many worked in construction, building the Possum Point Power Station. Some Batestown community members pursued occupations in government and law enforcement, such as Wilmer Porter, the first black elected official in post-Reconstruction Virginia, and Claudine Porter Langhorne, the first black female officer in Prince William County. Some residents moved out of Batestown in search of employment, but as automobiles became more affordable, many of the interviewees and their parents secured jobs in areas like Manassas and Arlington and would commute long distances to work every day, often carpooling with other community members. "And my daddy, he did contract work... in Arlington County. He worked for Arlington County... And, uh, he carried five or six people back and forth to work up there with him," explained Garnell Bates.

With more families relying on automobiles, Daniel and Wilmer Porter recognized the need for an auto mechanic shop to service the vehicles of the black community, and so they opened the very successful Porter Brothers Garage at the base of Mine Road. Many residents saw the inconvenience of traveling from Batestown for common commodities, and so they opened small grocery stores in the area. Three of the interviewees' mothers owned small stores, one of which was the Beer Garden, an establishment that sold some grocery items but was also described as a juke joint. Other juke joints opened in Batestown to earn supplementary income while providing the African American community with a place where they were safe to enjoy themselves. To keep these operations stocked with affordable alcohol, many community members distilled corn liquor. When prohibition began the same year the mine closed, moonshining became a Batestown tradition, which many interviewees say was still very common when they were growing up. Contee Chapman explained the incentives of this enterprise, "That was part of raising your family. A little extra income to go along with." With the opportunistic expansion

of occupational diversity and the increasing convenience of store-bought food products, Batestown households had more incentive to work one or more non-agrarian occupations and use their earnings to purchase food rather than to grow and raise it themselves.

Race Relations

When asked if Batestown was a segregated community, nearly every interviewee said that it was, many stating explicitly that black people lived in Batestown and white people lived in Dumfries. Few mentioned that there were some white families that lived close by, and Mary Cole shared that her father was friends with a white man who owned a shop in town. Typically speaking, interviewees spoke of race relations in the area as being relatively well, but discrimination was far from nonexistent. When asked if people got along in the area, Jerome Johnson responded, “I guess we got along as long as you was in your place, put it that way... if you go up there and start talking to a white woman or something like, you might probably would have something like, you know, have big problems.”

In the Cabin Branch Pyrite Mine, blacks and whites worked side by side, but not necessarily on equal terms. John Kendall Sr. was a prominent member of the Batestown community who was tasked with driving the narrow gauge train engine known as the Dinkey. Many interviewees claimed that Mr. Kendall only received his job because he was educated, and his skin tone was light enough for him to be considered white. When the Dinkey crashed, and Mr. Kendall was severely injured, many suspected foul play. Garnell Bates explained that “Somebody set him up... Because he was black, what we say now, black, and they thought when they hired him, they thought he was a white man... Then somebody set him up and he had an accident.” A closer examination of the list of mine workers from 1910 to 1920 reveals that, aside from John Kendall Sr, blacks were almost always given positions as laborers, helpers, or miners, whereas the more esteemed positions, such as foreman, machinist, and engineer, were always reserved for whites (Turner).

Perhaps the most salient example of poor race relations was in the government mandated segregation of schools. Although the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling was in 1954, the Prince William County schools weren't desegregated until the late 1960's. As Batestown community members were permitted to attend white schools, many quickly took advantage of this option, primarily to avoid the long bus rides. The Batestown residents who were around when the Cabin Branch School was open, from 1889 to 1950, could walk to school for their early education. However, to reach Washington Reid Elementary and Manassas Regional High School (formerly known as Manassas Industrial School, and later known as Jennie Dean) Batestown residents had to ride the bus for many hours every day. Most interviewees lamented these long bus rides, saying they would leave home at night and come home at night, often passing many white schools along the way.

Leisure activities were also shaped by local race relations. African Americans were not permitted to swim in public pools, however, Batestown residents would regularly go to Quantico creek, which had at least two areas where the water was deep enough for swimming. Some interviewees proudly claimed that nearly all Batestown residents could swim, and Garnell Bates fondly remembered how shocked his granddaughter was when she found out that her grandfather

could swim. When explaining why his father couldn't go to the bars in Dumfries and nearby white communities, Charles Reid stated that "they didn't have a sign that'd say 'whites only,' but it was an accepted custom that you weren't to go there." The Batestown community responded by establishing juke joints, where they were safe to drink, dance, and enjoy themselves. In summary, although the residents of Batestown got along relatively well with their white neighbors, there were still many discriminatory obstacles that shaped the lived experiences of those within the community.

Little Union Baptist Church

Little Union Baptist Church has been an invaluable part of the Batestown community since its humble beginnings in 1903. Before the construction of the church, Batestown community members had to walk or take horse-drawn carriages to congregate at the Neabsco Baptist Church, at least three miles away. Mary Bates-Thomas, a prominent matriarch of the Batestown community, recognized the need for a church that community members would not have to travel so far to attend. In 1902 Mary and her husband, John Thomas, donated a portion of their land to the New School Baptist Church. When the church was constructed in 1903 it was renamed Little Union. The church has since been rebuilt twice in different locations, but all in the same area within Batestown.

Some interviewees recall fond memories of singing in the church choir, and Ora Glass played piano for the choir for many years. It had been a long tradition of Little Union to hold baptisms in Quantico Creek, as mentioned by Claude Thomas and Ora Glass. Claude explained that all the churches in the area would baptize in Quantico creek. Siblings Linda Hawkins and Contee Chapman explained that they were the first people to be baptized in the indoor pool that was built in roughly 1960. From that point on, baptisms were carried out indoors.

The largest community gathering in Batestown was undoubtedly the church's yearly homecoming. During homecoming, people who previously lived in Batestown and/or went to Little Union would return for a large celebration. Margaret Simmons explained that "the road would be lined with cars, all the way down, just a number of people." The congregations of nearby churches would also travel to Little Union during this time, and when those churches had their homecomings, Little Union would do the same. Even people who did not typically go to church, or who were not particularly religious, would participate in the homecoming. The importance of the homecoming tradition demonstrates that, beyond its religious significance to the community, the Little Union Baptist Church maintained a strong communal bond between the current and former residents of Batestown. Some interviewees expressed that this bond is not nearly as strong as it once was. "But now ain't nobody come back home. Homecoming is just like any other Sunday," said Garnell Bates during his interview.

Today, Little Union Church still stands in the heart of Batestown, now with two Prince William County historical markers posted at the entrance to commemorate both the church and the nearby Cabin Branch School. At one time, every Little Union member was a resident of the Batestown community. Although many of the interviewees are still active members, the church's congregation now reaches much further than it once had.

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3 Transcripts of Oral History Interviews

(Bio, Agreement, Questions, Transcription, Photos)

Interview with Mabel Tuell, and Jerome Johnson

Mabel Tuell Biography

"I had a good life, never hungry. Good parents..."

Mabel Henderson Tuell was born to Frank Henderson and Henritta Kendall Henderson on March 17, 1930. Mabel's mother worked for Dr. Phillips in Dumfries, and her father built houses in Manassas. Mabel was the second born of five children and the names of her siblings are Randolph, Claude, Famie, and Henritta. Mabel's mother grew up in Batestown and was the daughter of John Kendall Senior, and her father was originally from Neabsco.

As a child, Mabel would mostly stick to herself and read. She went to Cabin Branch school, where she was an excellent student. Mabel explained that when adults would gather, children were expected to go and play outside. Mabel had little to say about her early life, but she spoke highly of her parents and her upbringing. She lived in Batestown until she was 19 years old, when she married her husband, Lester Tuell, and the two of them moved to Washington DC, then to Maryland, and even lived in Bangkok, Thailand for a spell. She now lives with her daughter, Celestine Lee, in their home in Dumfries.



Oral History Guidelines for Prince William County

Oral History Interview Agreement

This Interview Agreement is made and entered into by the Interviewer(s):

Adam Rayburn

and the Interviewee(s):

Mabel Tuell + Celestine A. Lee

Interviewee(s) agrees to participate in one or more interviews with the Interviewer(s) named above. This Agreement relates to any and all materials originating from the interviews, namely notes, tape recordings, video recordings, any transcripts or other written manuscripts prepared from or using the notes, tape recordings and/or video recordings, or any images that might be used during the interview or created during the interview.

In consideration of mutual covenants, conditions, and terms set forth below, the parties hereto hereby agree as follows:

1. Interviewee(s) and Interviewer(s) understand that the copy of the interview in the possession of the interviewer is the property of Prince William County, and will be available in its entirety to researchers and the general public.
2. Interviewee(s) and Interviewer(s) irrevocably assigns to the Prince William County all his or her copyright, title, and interest in this material.
3. By virtue of this assignment, the Prince William County will have the right to use this material for any research, education, advertising, publications, and may be used in print or internet publications, or other purpose.
4. Interviewee(s) acknowledges that he or she will receive no remuneration or compensation for either his or her participation in the interview(s) or for rights assigned hereunder.
5. I understand that any photographs copied will become available to researchers, and may be used for education, advertising, publications, and may be used in print or internet publications. I understand that the Prince William County will properly credit me as the owner of the original photographs. I understand that I waive all title and right, so far as I possess them, to the image(s) described and to any future prints or copies produced from it/them or any profits gained from the sale of prints or other reproductions of these images.

Mabel Tuell

Interviewee(s) signature(s)

June 20, 2019

Date

Celestine A. Lee

Interviewer(s) signature(s)

June 20, 2019

Date

Prince William County
Office of Planning and
Department of Parks Recreation and Tourism, Historic Preservation Division



Oral History Guidelines for Prince William County

Oral History Interview Agreement

This Interview Agreement is made and entered into by the Interviewer(s):

Adam Rayburn

and the Interviewee(s):

JEROME S JOHNSON

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Jerome S Johnson

Interviewee(s) signature(s)

6-20-10

Date

Adam Rayburn

Interviewer(s) signature(s)

6-20-19

Date

Prince William County
Office of Planning and
Department of Parks Recreation and Tourism, Historic Preservation Division

Oral History with Mabel Tuell, and Jerome Johnson.

Interviewer: Adam Rayburn

Interviewees: Mabel Tuell, and Jerome Johnson

Location: Mabel Tuell and Celestine Lee's home at 17512 Wayside Dr, Dumfries, VA 22026

Date: June 20, 2019

Adam Rayburn=AR; Mabel Tuell=MT; Jerome Johnson=JJ; Celestine Lee=CL

Note: Mabel Tuell was accompanied by her daughter, Celestine Lee, who was also her power of attorney. Celestine joined the conversation throughout the interview and is identified by "CL." Shortly after the interview began, Jerome Johnson arrived at the interview location. He was invited by Celestine to accompany Mabel as a second interviewee.

AR: Today is Thursday June 20th, 2019. My name is Adam Rayburn and I am an intern working with the Historic Preservation Division on the Batestown Oral History Project. We are at Mabel Tuell's home in Dumfries, Virginia. Misses Tuell, uh, welcome and thank you for agreeing to speak with me today.

MT: Thank you.

AR: Could you please introduce yourself and tell me your name.

MT: My name is Mabel Tuell.

AR: And could you spell your last name, please?

MT: T-U-E-L-L

AR: Alright. And, you- how do you prefer to be addressed? Just, um, Misses Tuell? Or-

MT: It don't make any differ— It don't make any difference.

AR: Alright then. Um, when were you born?

MT: 1930.

AR: 1930. Um. What, uh, what is the exact date?

MT: March 17th.

AR: March 17th, 1930. And, um, where were you born?

MT: In Dumfries.

AR: In Dumfries. So, when did you, um, move to Batestown? Was that, eh, like your earliest memories.

MT: My earliest memories I was there.

AR: And—

MT: I was born there.

AR: And when did you leave?

MT: I left, uh— When did I leave? 19— 19, I was 19 so I don't know.

AR: Alright, and what are your parents' names?

MT: My mother's name is Henritta Henderson—

[House phone rings]

CL: Sorry.

MT: And my father's name was Frank Henderson.

[House phone rings]

AR: Henritta Henderson and Frank Henderson?

[House phone rings]

CL: Hello? Yes. [On phone]

AR: Here, I'll just pause this.

Note: Recording is briefly paused for the privacy of Celestine's phone conversation.

AR: Alright, so, Henritta and Frank Henderson, um, could you tell me when they were born?

MT: When they were born?

AR: Yeah.

MT: Hmm.

[Phone rings]

MT: I think, I don't know, I think my mother was born in 1905.

CL: 1905 and.

MT: And my father was born, 1900 I think.

AR: Alright. Um, do you know where they were born?

MT: No.

AR: Alright.

CL: Wasn't it Hickory Ridge?

MT: No, I think it was in Neabsco, I think. In Neabsco.

AR: Neabsco. Do you have any siblings? Brothers and sisters?

MT: No, they're all—

CL: They're all deceased.

MT: All deceased.

AR: But, um, do you remember, um, w-well what, what were their names?

MT: Their names?

AR: Mm-hm.

MT: I had a brother named Randolph Henderson, and I had a brother named Claude Henderson.

AR: Could—

MT: And I had a sister named Famie.

AR: Could— Could you, uh, spell those first two names please?

MT: Spell them?

AR: Yes.

CL: So the, which ones? The-

MT: Which ones?

CL: Randolph?

AR: Yeah, ok, Randolph.

CL: Randolph, yeah—

MT: R-A-N-D-O-L-P-H.

AR: Alright. And then?

CL: Claude.

MT: Claude, C-L-A-U-D-E.

AR: Alright.

MT: And I had a sister named, uh—

CL: Famie.

MT: Famie. F-A-M-I-E. And a sister named Henritta.

CL: H-E-N-R-I-T-T-A

AR: Alright.

MT: [Inaudible]

CL: Huh?

MT: That was all.

CL: Mm-hm. Yeah.

AR: So, um, which child were you? Were you one of the oldest or the youngest?

MT: I was the second.

AR: Second child? Alright, now let's talk about Batestown. What comes to mind when you think of Batestown?

MT: Batestown?

AR: Batestown.

MT: Nothing really. Just, uh, just glad to get from there.

AR: You were glad to get out of there?

MT: Yeah.

AR: Oh.

CL: Momma said there is a lot of history in Batestown though. It was a family oriented- oriented town, everybody knew everybody, ok? Um, she had all her aunts, her mother's sisters and uncles all around.

AR: Mm-hm.

CL: Um, Y-ya know it was, um, you know when your father was living? Think about when your dad was living, about Batestown. How a lot of people in the area were not doing well, but your father did well. Talk about that. Like, you always had food, and sodas, and people'd come over for Christmas. Think about all the good times in Batestown.

MT: We'd have a good time. [Laughter]

CL: Not that you were glad to leave, OK? Think about the good times in Batestown. Talk about—

AR: How about, how about your-your house. Do you remember what your house was like?

MT: Well, Yes.

AR: Like, uh, was it a big home? Or was it—

MT: No, small. Small home.

AR: Small home? Um, who all lived in your house? Just your parents, you, and your—

MT: Just my parents and the kids. [Doorbell]

AR: Alright.

[Footsteps, door opens]

AR: Um, where did you get, uh, your water from?

MT: Oh, we had a well.

[Door closes.]

AR: You had a well?

MT: Yeah.

AR: Alright. Was, um, did anybody specifically have a, a chore— or was it anyone's responsibility to gather the water?

JJ: Hey Mabel, how ya doing?

MT: Hey, how you doing?

JJ: Fine.

CL: This is my cousin, her first cousin.

JJ: How ya doing?

AR: Hi.

CL: She can- he can help you

AR: Jerome?

JJ: Yeah.

CL: Yeah, yeah. He was asking momma what she remembered about Batestown, so.
JJ: Your momma's older than I am, she can tell m, tell more about Batestown than I can.
CL: Yeah.
AR: Hm.
MT: I was only in Batestown on up till 19— when I was 19.
CL: Yeah, but you— he's talking about the home, your home. Was your home big or small?
MT: It was small.
JJ: W-w-what did you ask her?
AR: Well, just right now we're just getting to the part about, uh, Batestow— Batestown, asking about, uh, her home, what uh, w-w-what her life was like.
JJ: Oh, well-
MT: I had a good life, never hungry. Good parents and—
AR: And, so... did you have chores that, um, you were expected to do?
MT: At home?
AR: Yes.
MT: I had to clean up. My other sister cooked, and I cleaned. Mm-hm.
AR: And what school did you go to?
MT: Uh. Cabin Branch School.
AR: Could you explain what that school was like? Like, how many, how many rooms did it have? What kind of teachers were there?
MT: I think there was two rooms in that school. About two teach— three teachers.
AR: Did you get along well with your teachers?
MT: Oh yeah.
AR: Did you do good in school, or—
MT: Very good.
AR: That's, that's great. Uh, how many, how many grades did that school, um—
MT: I think it was three grades
AR: Three grades. Did—eh, eh, was there another school you went to after Cabin Branch?
MT: Yeah.
AR: What was that?
MT: That was, uh, Manassas I think, high school.
AR: Now, Cabin Branch School, was that a segregated school?
MT: Yeah.
AR: Um, could you maybe describe a typical week in your life when you were living in Batestown? I know y-you lived there from when you were a child up until you were a teenager, so, maybe as a teenager. Would you just go to school on the weekdays?
MT: Yeah.
AR: And then, on the weekends did you do anything for, for fun.
MT: Well, they had baseball, and something, I don't know.
AR: So, did you play baseball?
MT: No, never do, I don't know how to.
AR: Are there any games-
MT: Brothers and sisters do, but I don't.
AR: Are there any games you did like?
MT: Ain't no games, but I used to like to read. Stick to myself and [Laughs]
CL: Did you play jump rope, mom?

MT: [Inaudible]

CL: How about jacks, did you play jacks?

MT: No.

AR: What- So, you mentioned, uh, baseball, what did the other kids do, um, just for fun?

MT: Well they had a big baseball field and they would play baseball and we had a little swimming hole down the road there.

AR: Ah, a swimming pool. Was this a—

CL: You would remember that Jerome.

AR: A privately owned swimming pool?

JJ: No, it was a swimming hole.

MT: Swimming hole.

AR: Oh.

JJ: Yeah

AR: A swimming hole.

JJ: Yeah, Wasn't no pool.

AR: Oh so was it i-in the—

JJ: We wasn't allowed in no pool.

AR: Ah, yeah. Um, was this in Quantico Creek?

JJ: There was, in, right there where the, uh, um, down the stree— down the road right there where the, uh what is that creek called? Uh, [Sigh]

AR: Quantico or, um Cabin Branch?

JJ: Well Cabin Branch where the stream down there was a little, little swimming hole down there.

AR: Oh, so this swimming hole was in Cab— on the—

JJ: It's on the park now, yeah.

AR: Oh. Here, I have a, a map here, there's— A lot of people have, uh, different understandings of where exactly Batestown is and that's kind of one of the things I would like to learn is where you understand Batestown to be. Where you would consider its boundaries to be. Would you be able to look at this map and—

MT: I don't think I can.

AR: No?

CL: Jerome, Jerome—

JJ: Here, show it to me, I can.

CL: Jerome can do that.

AR: Here, I can give you—

CL: Would you like some water or something, Jerome?

JJ: Oh, no thank you.

AR: —A marker if you, uh, want to try to circle around—

JJ: I can't see, I can't see this map.

AR: Yeah, we were—

CL: Do you need some more light?

AR: —Trying to figure out a good map to use that might show as much detail as possible.

JJ: What is this right here? Nah, it ain't gonna do no good Celestine.

CL: It's not?

JJ: This map is—What is that right there?

AR: I'm not sure, but this is Mine Road, or Batestown Road.

JJ: That's Mine Road?

AR: Yes.

JJ: Batestown was from, uh, up here all the way down to I guess you'd call it Holloways Hill where you got the hill at. The bend and the curve, right here. To right here.

AR: W-what did you call that hill?

[Paper shuffling]

AR: Holloways Hill?

JJ: There, that's about, all the way to that right there.

AR: Oh. So, it's above that?

JJ: Yeah.

AR: I see. Could you describe what Batestown looked like? Like, um, the roads, the houses, were there any businesses there?

MT: In what now?

AR: In Batestown, what, what do you remember it looking like?

MT: Just a little town.

JJ: Basically, it's almost like, like it is right now. Wasn't no new houses built on it, Batestown. Um, the places you see now, you see them falling down, uh.

AR: Were there any businesses there?

JJ: They had a little store there.

AR: A little store?

JJ: Yeah.

AR: And what was the name of this store.

JJ: I don't even know the name of it. They called it Beer Garden, that's all I remember.

MT: [Laughs]

JJ: [Laughs]

AR: Say that again, the?

JJ: The Beer Garden, that's all I remember they called it.

AR: What kind of things did they sell at that store?

JJ: [Inaudible] store. Well, you know, what people need at a store. They couldn't go down to, uh, down to the food store. Couldn't go there because supermarket back then was either in Fredericksburg, Manassas or Alexandria. Or you could come down to Mountjoy Store down there in Triangle.

AR: So, what about, um, clothing, where did you get most for your clothing?

MT: We shopped in Alexandria, Fredericksburg.

AR: So, none of the stores nearby, like in Dumfries, sold clothes?

MT: No. No.

AR: Alright. Were there any community centers in Batestown?

MT: No.

AR: Like places where, where people would gather to, um, talk with each other, or— for example—

JJ: They used to do that at everybody's house. Little spot underneath the tree at grandfather's house where everybody used to be there, and talk and all that.

AR: Alright. And, was there just the one church, Little Union, there?

JJ: Yeah. And my great grand— great great grandmama gave land for that. Mary Bates Thomas.

AR: Oh, I've heard about that.

JJ: And, uh, the thing, I don't know if you know or not, all these people say we're slaves but we're not slaves. We were free people up there. I've got pr-proof right here.

AR: I would definitely be interested in looking at that.

JJ: Uh huh, here. I took it off [Inaudible]. Here's a, a great great great grandfather which was white and he's from Scotland and that's his will.

AR: Hm. Yeah, the Mackies, right? Or it's—Alright, I'll take a look at that later, um—

JJ: You can have that if you want.

AR: Alright.

JJ: But, uh, we come from, we were free mulattoes, ok, we came from John Gibson and Nancy McKee.

AR: Mm-hm.

JJ: And after h-he died, he had six or seven kids and he give all the land to the kids, which they would— he had by Nancy McKee, which was, they were classified as black. Yeah, but he couldn't get married because he couldn't— in Virginia you can't, couldn't marry a black woman.

AR: Mm-hm

JJ: Ok, so—

AR: Yeah

JJ: —That's why we know there's no slave had no land, they all had, even had land deeded to them in Ohio somewhere, I don't know what happened to that.

AR: Really?

JJ: You can read the will, you'll see it.

AR: That's interesting, I'm from Ohio so—

JJ: [Laughs]

AR: That would be interesting to look at. Um, did, do you remember anyone talking much about, uh, th-the history of Batestown when you lived there?

MT: No

CL: Yes, you did, momma.

AR: So, no one said too much about where it came from?

CL: Your mother, and Nanie used to talk about Batestown all the time, and your grand— great grand, and uh, your grandfather. Kendall used to talk about Batestown all the time.

MT: What were they saying about Batestown?

CL: It's just a— It's, it's.

JJ: It was self-sufficient, put it that way. Everybody, everybody was either farmers, they had pigs, cows, what did, you had, and they, they would, uh, there'd be a big day when they went and kill, slaughter hogs or kill pigs, everybody was out there, it was a big thing. They even did their own farming and all that. Batestown didn't come around until after the OSS took the land from the black people.

AR: Mm-hm.

JJ: Put the, uh, CIA camp up there. And then we wasn't allowed to even go up there. And, what they paid the black people was a whole lot different than what they paid the white people up there.

AR: Yeah, I've seen that.

JJ: Yeah, you know that, so. That's when most of us moved from Batestown, fr-from Hickory Ridge to Batestown. Hickory Ridge, a-all our people came from there. And then Batestown, that's when our grandfather built, he take—The mine, when they left, had the mine, the pyrite mine up there.

AR: Mm-hm.

JJ: When they left he went to Tennessee, and when they went to Tennessee, they left some house up there, that's when grandpapa, my grandpapa, bought the house, one of the, uh, big wigs from the, from the mining company, his house up there. That's how we get, uh, Batestown. So, he owned all that land up there, and that's where most of his daughters bought land from up there, from him.

AR: Hm, I see.

CL: Do you remember when m- um, um, Momma's mother and father were born?

JJ: Oh. I know grandpa was born in 1880 and, give this a check, 1879-1880 somewhat like that.

CL: He asked where her mother and father was born, do you know where nanny was born and um—

JJ: He was born up there in Batestown, I guess.

CL: She said he was born in, where did you say he was born?

MT: My father?

CL: Mm-hm.

MT: In Neabsco.

CL: Neabsco.

JJ: Oh, you're talking about Henderson then?

CL: Yeah.

MT: Yeah.

JJ: Well I'll say I don't know that much about the Hendersons.

MT: But my momma used to live up in Batestown.

JJ: Yeah.

AR: Um, let's talk a little more about your parents. What did they do for a living?

MT: They retired, they didn't work.

AR: They didn't work?

MT: Uh, my mother kind of worked for the doctor for a little while, Dr. Phillips.

AR: Oh really? And, your father, um, what did— did he do any farming?

MT: Any what?

AR: Farming?

MT: No.

CL: What did your father work, do mom?

MT: The [Inaudible] construction company.

AR: Oh, so he worked for a construction company? Do you know what kind of work he did?

MT: He built houses.

AR: Were these— Do you know where he built houses? Just all over the region?

MT: All over Manassas and, you know, like that.

AR: Alright, um. So, your parents, could you maybe tell me what a-a typical work week would be like for them? Like, were, when you, when you came home from school were they, were they at home?

MT: They were home. Often home.

AR: Alright, so they— they would typically work when you were at school, would you say?

MT: Yeah. Yeah.

AR: Alright. And, what would they do for leisure activities?

MT: Oh, they had a lot company, gathering, talking, go to town and all this stuff.

AR: So—

MT: The kids was all playing, so.

AR: Could you tell me a little more, maybe about, um, the gatherings, what they would be like?

MT: No cause we— they didn't have children around them.

AR: Hm.

MT: Children was outside, so.

CL: So they would gather and talk and just –

AR: A typical kind of family gathering?

CL: A typical family, uh. Where kids couldn't be around adults, right Jerome?

JJ: Yep. Most time they were drinking, and arguing [Laughter].

CL: Right. They were drinking and, and having a good time. Did they play cards back then, mom? Not too much?

MT: I don't think so.

JJ: You know uh, Possum Point they called Tom Cat Creek?

MT: Yeah.

JJ: Ok, that's where they used to go, at, on Possum Point Road. My kids have a picture of them, but I, I done lost all my pictures.

CL: See, that's why I brought him over here, because he, he—

MT: He knows, he knows.

JJ: I used to play ball over there, play baseball and, you know, just s-sell food and do different things.

AR: Do you know where the, where they would play baseball?

JJ: It's on Possum Point Road somewhere—

AR: Possum Point.

JJ: —I couldn't tell you where, I don't even remember myself. I just tell you what my mom used to tell me.

AR: Hm. So is there anything else you could, um, remember about your parents.

CL: Well, she had good parents.

AR: That's good.

CL: She's a little shy.

AR: I understand.

CL: Tell— Mom, tell, you should tell the stories about, um, your father. He used to have a lot of company, a lot of people would be over there. He used to have, um, Pepsis all the time, we'd survive, eat. He'd make sure they were never hungry.

AR: Mm-hm.

CL: Um. He was very strict.

AR: Mm. So, did you have a lot of rules in your household that you had to follow?

MT: Yeah, a time to get home.

JJ: Did you tell him that you, you never wanted to step foot in the kitchen?

[Laughter]

CL: Yeah, all the other kids would cook, but she, she would not.

AR: Ahh.

CL: She was kind of the spoiled one, I guess you'd say.

AR: [Laughs]

CL: She'd pass out when she peeled potatoes.

JJ: Actually passed out in the kitchen.

AR: Oh my goodness!

CL: In the kitchen when she peeled potatoes.

AR: Is that right?

CL: She was kind of spoiled. Yeah.

AR: Do you remember any, um, important community events? Any things that happened in Batestown that really, um, that everyone who-who lived there would be aware of, or familiar with?

CL: Jerome probably could answer that.

MT: No, not that I know of.

JJ: This is when the OSS came in and took their land and they have everybody had to move off of their land.

AR: Yeah—

JJ: And they moved, portions of grandfather, he had land so most of them ones up— it was called Hickory Ridge, moved into Batestown.

AR: So, do you remember much about that? About—

JJ: That was back in the 30's, you should remember. Back in the 30's.

AR: Did you—

CL: Yeah, cause you was born in 1930 mom. Do you remember that?

MT: I guess I do remember it.

AR: So—

JJ: Ended up being there— If anybody from Batestown wanted to go back to the old place where they used to live at—

AR: Mm-hm.

JJ: — Then th-they told them they would shoot em. They got Colonel Donovan bought that land for the OSS, trained CIA agents over there. But, we weren't to go back over there.

AR: Yeah, I, I—

JJ: You read about that?

AR: I read a lot about that, yeah.

CL: Wow, actually I didn't know that.

MT: Jerome doesn't know, cause I didn't know.

CL: Jerome, that's why I told him to come by, cause he know. Momma knows some stuff, but—

AR: Did any of the adults, uh, talk about this, about the, um— or, how about this, were there— do you remember a time when there were more people moving in to Batestown?

JJ: Nah, it was all, mostly all family.

MT: Most of em, yeah.

AR: So they're—

AR: — People that you're familiar with?

JJ: Yeah.

MT: Mm-hm.

JJ: Well, there was just a few families there. There's Williams, Reids, the Kendalls, the Bates, Thomas'.

AR: Mm-hm.

JJ: What else?

CL: [Inaudible]

JJ: Nah. That was it. Yeah, and all of em divi—, derived from different families. But all of them was, all of em kin with, if you look at the records, all of em probably kin to each other.

AR: Mm-hm.
CL: Did you want to know how many kids her grandfather had?
AR: Mm, yes! Yeah, that would be interesting. Any-anything you can remember about, uh, your grandparents, I would like to hear about it.
CL: Grandfather. Go ahead mom, you know how many.
MT: Who? My grandfather?
CL: Mm-hm.
JJ: Grandpapa.
CL: Grandpapa.
MT: He had seven or eight.
CL: Aunt Lottie.
JJ: Cleo. Aunt Sydney. Henritta, aunt Katie, Henritta.
MT: There was six of em, wasn't it? Six girls?
JJ: Six girls and [Inaudible] Jimmy, three boys.
AR: Wow.
JJ: Nine.
MT: Nine.
AR: And what was your grandfather's name?
MT: John Kendall.
AR: John Kendall.
JJ: Senior.
AR: Senior.
JJ: Don't get him mixed up with Junior.
[Laughter]
MT: Good lord!
CL: I got them, I got some pictures over there as well.
AR: Um, did any of your family members work in the mine?
JJ: Yeah, uh—
MT: My grandfather.
JJ: Yeah. Go ahead, she can tell ya.
MT: I think, if I remember, he worked in the mine.
JJ: Naw, he worked, he drove the, the— it started with him being almost— started with him being almost w-white looking. He let, they let him drive the little train—
AR: Mm-hm.
JJ: Picking up the pyrite from the mine.
AR: The Dinkey?
JJ: The Dinkey—
AR: Yeah.
JJ: —that John Kendall till, I guess he, well, somebody sabotaged it or either they got jealous cause he was driving that, cause that was a good job. But they just, they kind of sabotaged the train and he had a wreck on it. He almost got killed.
CL: Mm-hm.
JJ: And messed himself all up.
AR: Really?
CL: They thought he was black, right?
JJ: Yeah.

CL: They thought he was white, and then when they found out he was black, they sabotaged that.

AR: Ah.

JJ: Well, they knew he was black.

CL: Oh they did?

JJ: Yeah, they knew he was black, but, ya know. But he, I guess they give it to him cause he looked white.

CL: Right. Right.

AR: It doesn't always make sense necessarily.

CL: And that was the mine, he—

JJ: Yeah.

CL: In the mine.

JJ: And they even offered him a job in Tennessee. Momma told me that they offered him a job in Tennessee when the mine moved to Tennessee.

CL: Oh.

JJ: And grandpapa told em no and stayed there.

AR: Do you remember that? Your grandfather and all his, uh, work that he did at the mine?

MT: Yeah, I remember him working at the mine, but who knows what—

JJ: That's before my time, I don't remember that—

CL: She remembers.

JJ: [Laughter]

CL: You remember, mom.

MT: Grandpapa worked at the mine long but I don't know—

CL: I know, but you told me the story.

MT: Cause my mother told me.

CL: Ok.

MT: But I don't remember him working at, at the, at the mine.

CL: Ok.

MT: Grandpapa didn't probably tell about the mine.

CL: Ok.

AR: So, when your grandfather was around did he ever talk about work at all, or?

MT: Oh, well, he didn't talk too much about his job.

AR: And is that— would you say that's true with, uh, a lot of, uh, like your parents and your grandparents. Did they not really discuss, uh, the work that they did very much when they were at home?

MT: It's— I think they did. Not to children though.

AR: So e-even, uh, your mother who worked for, did you say Dr. Phillip?

MT: Mm-hm.

AR: Did she ever say anything about the kind of work that she did?

MT: No.

AR: If, uh, if people were sick in your community, is that who they would typically contact? Is Dr. Phillip?

MT: Yeah.

AR: And did he live in Batestown or—

MT: No, he lived in Dumfries.

AR: In Dumfries, and he would come up and, uh,

MT: Right.

AR: Alright.

CL: Do you remember Dr. Phillips?

JJ: Yeah, I remember Dr. Phillip, but I don't, I don't remember Dr. Kline. Do you remember Dr. Kline?

MT: Not too much.

JJ: Not too much. And he was the first one. He lived up above Jackrabbit.

CL: Ok, I didn't know.

JJ: In that big stone house.

CL: Ok. Ok.

AR: Now, you mentioned before that, uh, Cabin Branch school was segregated school. Um, the Batestown Community itself, was it a segregated community?

MT: I think it was.

JJ: Yeah.

MT: Sure it was.

JJ: Yeah, it was. Wasn't nothing but mostly family. That's why they called it Batestown. Cabin Branch was a segregated school, one or two rooms. I think the teacher, I remember, who was up there, I didn't ever go there, was Miss Porter. And then they built a school on 234. A segregated school, Washington Reid. It went up to the seventh grade. Then after the seventh grade, we went to what was Jennie Dean High School. It used to be Manassas Regional School.

CL: Yeah, I went to Washington Reid, first, first grade. First grade. And then I, um, my dad took me out of that because he and my uncle came up and there was no heat in the school.

AR: Oh.

CL: Yeah, so. He and my, my Uncle Fred and my Dad got arrested because they went up to the school commission's house and there was no heat. So, they stayed in jail for one day, and then I, uh, ended up going to DC to live with my aunt.

AR: Who stayed in jail?

CL: They, I think they stayed in jail overnight, that was it, yeah.

AR: Oh, wow. Huh. So—

CL: That's my dad. He's from Triangle though. You don't want to hear about that story, oh I'm sure.

AR: Well, anything about the region is interesting to me. So—

JJ: I think Jackrabbit and Waltfield went to Cabin Branch.

CL: Did they?

JJ: I think they did. I think Jackrabbit said he went. That one year, I think, before they closed it down.

CL: Ok.

JJ: I- I'm not sure about that.

CL: Right. Are you going to Claude Thomas' house tomorrow?

AR: Yes.

CL: Well he'll tell you.

CL: Jerome will be there.

AR: Yeah, Charlie said you would be there tomorrow.

CL: Yeah.

JJ: Way up there. Most of Batestown was, uh, a tight community. Was, uh, all family. Everybody knew everybody.

AR: Mm-hm.

JJ: Um. Wasn't much of an education because you had to go so far for an education. Like myself, I even had, I wound up going to an all-black school in Manassas. Passed by three or four white schools cause we wasn't allowed to go there. And, you know, we had all the way to the Manassas to school.

AR: And you said you went to Manassas as well?

MT: Mm-hm.

AR: For high school? So, was that a-a really long trip to get there and back.

MT: Well, it was on a school bus.

AR: A school bus?

MT: Mm-hm.

AR: Um. So most of the people who went to the Cabin Branch school, were those people from Batestown and from the area.

MT: Yeah, who went to Cabin Branch, yes.

AR: Alright. And the Manassas High School, I imagine its more people from outside of, uh, your community?

CL: Right.

JJ: Yeah, we had people from, uh, Fauquier County, we had—

AR: Oh wow.

JJ: —From, uh, Front Royal Virginia.

CL: Because it was the only black school around.

JJ: Yeah, from Fairfax County, and I think— I didn't think they had any from Stafford County because Stafford County, most of their kids went to school in Fredericksburg.

AR: Mm-hm.

JJ: But you had, uh, people from Haymarket, Front Royal, Fairfax, Fauquier County, Manassas all went to Manassas Regional School. Then they turned it to Jennie Dean. You had to stay overnight. Come home on weekends.

CL: You had to stay all night at the school?

JJ: Yes.

CL: See, I didn't know that.

JJ: The ones that lived away-way up there in, what's it? The ones that live up there in, uh, Front Royal and Fauquier County.

CL: I didn't know that.

JJ: Yeah.

CL: I didn't know that at all.

AR: So, um, Misses Tuell, uh, when you were a child do you remember who your oldest relative was who lived in the area?

MT: When I was a child, you wanna know my oldest relative?

AR: Yeah, like—

CL: Grandpapa, right?

AR: Was it your grandfather?

CL: Or was it, um—

MT: It was my grandfather I think.

CL: Or was it Miss Annie? Your grandfather or Miss Annie.

MT: I don't know, or I don't remember. I guess my grandfather.

AR: Alright. So, you said you lived in Batestown until you were 19, correct?

MT: Mm-hm

CL: Did you know Grandpapa's mother? Martha?

MT: No.

JJ: You don't remember her?

MT: Hm-mm.

CL: You don't remember?

JJ: I was— like I said, she's older.

CL: Yeah. So, your grandpa. Yeah, I remember him too, my great grandpa. Her mother— he lived in that house across from my grandmother.

AR: Mm-hm.

CL: And I used to go down there and stay for summer when I was a little girl and he would come over and my grandmother would fix him breakfast and stuff, you know. That was his daughter and it was aunt— another aunt Katie was not too far, and I would walk in that corner up to his house, so I remem- I was, I must have been very young, so, yeah. Her mother used to feed him every morning.

AR: Hm.

CL: Yeah.

AR: So your mother, was she good at cooking?

MT: Very good.

AR: Very good, hm? What kind of things would she cook?

[Garage door opens]

MT: Oh, she would cook all the vegetables, cabbage, string beans. She would cook potatoes and she would like to bake a turkey.

AR: Now, the, uh, the vegetables and things like that, that she-she cooked with, did it all come from the community?

MT: Come from the store.

AR: From stores?

MT: She'd get it from a store.

[Cough]

CL: Did she have a garden one time, mama?

MT: No, she didn't. She didn't-

CL: Ok, but she had guinea pigs one time, right?

MT: Yes.

AR: Guinea pigs, huh?

CL: Remember guinea pigs, Jerome?

JJ: [Inaudible]

CL: My grandma had guinea pigs.

AR: Ha! As, like, pets or—

CL: No, they weren't pets, they was just guinea pigs, running around.

[Garage door closes]

AR: Just guinea pigs running around.

CL: I remember that as a child. She had pigs.

[Door opens]

AR: So, when you were 19 and you, you left Batestown, um—

JJ: [Inaudible]

MT: I left Batestown [Inaudible] And I moved to, uh, Maryland.

CL: You mean to DC.

MT: I moved to DC.

CL: Yeah.

MT: Stayed there a few years, went back to here from DC, then I moved to Maryland. My husband got a job and we moved to Bangkok, Thailand.

AR: Oh really?

MT: Stayed there three years, he worked there.

AR: That's exciting.

MT: Yeah. So it was, uh, real exciting.

AR: So your husband, um, what was his name?

MT: My husband?

AR: Yes.

MT: Lester.

AR: Lester? And where did you meet him?

MT: In school.

AR: In school.

MT: Mm-hm.

AR: In Manassas.

MT: Right.

AR: So, do you know anyone who currently lives in the area of Batestown? Well, what-what you understood Batestown to be.

MT: Do I know anybody who lives there?

AR: Yeah, who still lives, like, on Batestown Road?

MT: Yeah, I have cousins there, but I really don't know their names.

CL: Johnny Balls.

MT: That's not—

JJ: You don't want to ask him anything.

[Laughter]

MT: He's got a home up there.

CL: Who else lives on Batestown that we know?

JJ: Just the kids of the former people that lived up there.

CL: Oh

JJ: But they going, going by the wayside now.

CL: Well Bernard, eh, uh, Susie's son lives up there.

JJ: Yeah.

CL: Bernard, you know Bernard has bladder cancer.

JJ: I heard.

CL: So, she doesn't know, no.

JJ: I mean there's nobody up there she really knows.

CL: Right.

AR: Oh.

JJ: Let me tell you this, people up there, they're descendants of people who used to live up there, but they're younger, most of em don't have— most of em don't have means of doing anything to their houses up there. So, people going up there now, buying, buying-buying up the land up there.

[Cough]

AR: So do you ever returned to Batestown?

[Cough] [Door opens]

MT: Well, I ride through there sometimes.

AR: You ride through there?

MT: [Inaudible]

[Door Closes]

AR: Um, how-how do you think the area has changed since what you remember as a child?

MT: There's a lot

AR: I imagine it has changed a lot.

MT: There's a lot of change, but I think there's a lot of family there. Uncles and aunts and things and.

AR: Um, is there anything you would like to share with me? Anything we haven't talked about? Any, uh, stories, perhaps?

MT: I don't know of any.

AR: Alright. Well, um, thank you very much for your time.

MT: Well thank you.

End



Mabel Henderson Tuell, Celestine Tuell Lee, Aunt (?).



Mabel Henderson Tuell and her husband, Lester Tuell.



Aunt Katherine and Henrietta Henderson, Mabel Tuell's mother.



Mabel Tuell's Father, Frank Henderson, on the right.



John Kendall Sr. at Mabel's mother's home.

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Interview with Claude Thomas

Claude Thomas Biography

“I hate to see all of the, the family-oriented parcels of land up there that... belonged to families for 150 years... being lost and gone. You know, I knew everyone that lived on Mine Road at one point. I can’t say that anymore.”

Claude Clagget Thomas Junior was born in April 8, 1945 to Lucretia Kendall Thomas and Claude Clagget Thomas Senior. He has one brother, by the name of George E. Thomas who is deceased. Claude’s father once worked in the Cabin Branch Pyrite Mine, then went on to work in Quantico and eventually worked in DC for the federal government. Claude’s mother, a daughter of John Kendall Senior, owned a small grocery store in Dumfries, and she also worked as a housekeeper and babysitter. Although he didn’t technically live in Batestown, Claude did live just a short walk away, near the southern part of Mine Road. Claude has worked at Quantico, has been a councilman and vice mayor in the town of Dumfries, and has even worked at the Pentagon as a supervisor and budget analyst.

In his interview, Claude mentions that his aunt, Annie Williams, was a midwife who worked with Dr. Ferlazzo and had helped deliver most of the children in Batestown and Dumfries. He spoke about Little Union conducting baptisms in Quantico Creek and that there were three different areas where the waters of the creek were deep enough to swim.



Oral History Guidelines for Prince William County

Oral History Interview Agreement

This Interview Agreement is made and entered into by the Interviewer(s):

Adam Rayburn

and the Interviewee(s):

Claude C. Thomas, Jr.

Interviewee(s) agrees to participate in one or more interviews with the Interviewer(s) named above. This Agreement relates to any and all materials originating from the interviews, namely notes, tape recordings, video recordings, any transcripts or other written manuscripts prepared from or using the notes, tape recordings and/or video recordings, or any images that might be used during the interview or created during the interview.

In consideration of mutual covenants, conditions, and terms set forth below, the parties hereto hereby agree as follows:

1. Interviewee(s) and Interviewer(s) understand that the copy of the interview in the possession of the interviewer is the property of Prince William County, and will be available in its entirety to researchers and the general public.
2. Interviewee(s) and Interviewers(s) irrevocably assigns to the Prince William County all his or her copyright, title, and interest in this material.
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Claude C. Thomas, Jr.

Interviewee(s) signature(s)

6/21/19

Date

Adam Rayburn

Interviewer(s) signature(s)

6/21/19

Date

Prince William County
Office of Planning and
Department of Parks Recreation and Tourism, Historic Preservation Division

Oral History with Claude Thomas

Interviewer: Adam Rayburn

Interviewee: Claude Thomas

Location: Claude Thomas' Home at 3970 Fairfax St, Dumfries, VA 22026

Date: June 21, 2019

Adam Rayburn=AR; Claude Thomas=CT

Note: Charles Reid was present during this interview, but only spoke a few times. Charles is identified by "CR."

AR: Today is Friday, June 21st, 2019. My name is Adam Rayburn and I am an intern working with the Historic Preservation Division on the Batestown Oral History Project. We are at Claude Thomas's home in Dumfries, Virginia. Mr. Thomas, welcome and thank you for agreeing to speak with me today.

CT: Thank you.

AR: Can you start by introducing yourself and telling me your name?

CT: Uh, yes. My name is Claude C. Thomas. I live at, uh, 3970 Fairfax Street, Dumfries, Virginia.

AR: And how do you prefer to be addressed?

CT: Well, most people that know me call me Jack, but you can call me Claude, OK?

AR: So, I-I heard you have a nickname, uh—

CT: Yes, uh, Jackrabbit was the nickname, in fact, but I guess as I've gotten older most folks have dropped the rabbit and just call me Jack now, but—

AR: Do you—

CT: I'll respond to either one.

AR: Do you know why you got that nickname?

CT: I don't. Don't know why.

AR: [Laughs] it just kind of stuck over time?

CT: Yeah, it just kind of stuck with me after all these years.

AR: Alright, um, when were you born?

CT: I was born April 8th, 1945.

AR: And where were you born?

CT: I was born at 39, uh, 80 Fairfax Street. The house next door to this one.

AR: So, have you lived in this area your entire life?

CT: My entire life, that's right.

AR: And what are your parents' names?

CT: Uh, Claude C Thomas Senior and Lucretia Kendall Thomas.

AR: Um, could you spell their names please?

CT: Yes, uh, Claude C Thomas is C-L-A-U-D-E, C, Thomas, T-H-O-M-A-S. Mother's name Lucretia L-U-C-R-E-T-I-A, Kendall, K-E-N-D-A-L-L, Thomas, T-H-O-M-A-S.

AR: Thank you. And do you know where they were born?

CT: My dad was born in the Minnieville area of Prince William County, uh, which, I guess, Neabsco district, Cardinal Drive. And my mother was born on Hickory Ridge in Prince William County, over in Dumfries.

AR: And do you have any siblings?

CT: One brother, who's deceased.

AR: And could you tell me his name?

CT: His name's George E Thomas and he passed away in either 2006 or 2007.

AR: And did he live in the area for most of his life?

CT: Most of his life, yes. Uh, the last ten years he lived in Dale City, but prior to that, he was always in Dumfries.

AR: Alright. Now let's, uh, talk about Batestown. What comes to mind when you think about Batestown?

CT: Family. Uh, you know, every weekend we would go to my grandfather's house, which is still, you know, standing on Batestown Road, and, you know, it was always— they'd get together with family and friends every weekend.

AR: So, what was it like growing up there?

CT: Well, that's kinda, that's kinda hard, uh. I didn't really grow up there, I grew up, I grew up here in—

AR: Mm-hm.

CT: — I guess considered the town Dumfries, but, again, with all my aunts, uncles, grandmother, grandfather on Batestown Road, we were there probably 90% of our time, uh.

AR: Alright. So, the house you lived in is right next door, right?

CT: Yes. The house I was born in. I was delivered by my Aunt Annie Williams, who was a midwife in the area, and Dr. A.J. Ferlazzo. The Ferlazzo building's named after him, and, uh.

AR: Ferlazzo.

CT: Yeah.

AR: Hm. Um, could you describe the house that you grew up in.

CT: Um, it was a modest, uh, three-bedroom, uh, one level house, uh. If you would like to get a picture of it, the house is still standing. We can get one before we— before you leave.

AR: Yeah, that would be nice.

CT: Yeah.

AR: And, who all lived in your house?

CT: Just myself, my mom and dad, and my brother.

AR: Alright, um, did you and your siblings have any chores when you were younger?

CT: I would've been, I would've been working in the garden in the summertime with, uh, you know, helping my dad out. Nothing, you know, nothing significant, uh. They primarily wanted us to concentrate on school and that's kinda what, uh, what we mostly did.

AR: So where did you go to school?

CT: Elementary school, I went to Washington Reid, which is located up on 234. This- this is the days now, "separate but equal," remember? I went to all segregated schools.

AR: Mm-hm.

CT: From Washington Reid I went Jennie Dean. Well, let me back up a little bit. I went to Manassas Regional High School, it was called at that point. That would have been my eighth and ninth grade year. Manassas Regional, and then it was changed from Manassas Regional to Jennie Dean, I wanna say in 1960, somewhere around there, and I graduated from Jennie Dean in 1963. Then I attended Northern Virginia Community College in Bailey's Crossroads.

AR: I see. And, when you went to Washington Reid, did you take a bus up there?

CT: I had to take a bus up there, yeah. In fact, I remember I was the first student to get on the bus. The, uh, the bus driver lived, what, three houses up from here on [Inaudible] Road. Herb Porter.

CT: And I was the first student to get on the busses. He came down the hill, I was the first, I was his first pick up.

AR: So it was a long trip then?

CT: A long trip. Yes. Many many miles, uh. In fact, uh-uh, I'll give you the directions a little bit. We, we left my house, went up Mine Road all the way to the end. Turned around and come back. Went to Triangle. Up Route 619 Joplin Road, all the way to the end. Back down Joplin Road. Into the town of Quantico. Back out of Quantico, and then to Washington Reid on 234, which is, I guess, considered the Montclair area of Dumfries now.

AR: I see.

CT: And that was probably a twenty-five-mile one-way trip, every morning.

AR: Huh. Were there a lot of busses? Was it a pretty big school?

CT: No, it was just, uh, went from grade one through, one through seven. I would say, at the most, 250, 300 students. It wasn't a lot.

AR: Mm-hm

CT: And that's covering all those elementary grades.

AR: Yeah. Um, could you describe a typical week or day in your life?

CT: A typical week, uh, well see, at what point do you want me to start? And then—

AR: Yeah, I guess, um, when you were younger, in elementary school.

CT: Uh, didn't have a lot of chores to do, uh, I guess we were somewhat, we were somewhat fortunate. Uh, my dad worked for the federal government and had a, you know, had a decent income, decent job. I didn't have to worry about chopping woods. We were fortunate enough to have, uh, indoor plumbing and didn't have to worry about bringing in water. So, you know, other than, you know, concentrating on school, mowing yards in the summer time, basically I kind of lived a, I guess maybe a somewhat, you would reckon, a privileged life. My mother also had a little grocery store right across the street from the house—

AR: Oh really.

CT: —Which, you know, helped supplement the income. Yes.

AR: What was that store called?

CT: I don't remember what it was called.

AR: It was just a store?

CT: It was just a little, yeah.

AR: Yeah, and people knew where to come?

CT: Yeah, just a little local, yeah, local folks would stop and, most of it was done on credit. You know, you would sign a tab with whatever you got and pay at the beginning of the month.

AR: Huh! That's interesting. What kind of things did she sell?

CT: Just bread, milk, you know, coffee, tea. Uh, like all kinds of canned goods. Nothing, you know, nothing frozen because there just wasn't a lot of refrigeration back in those days. Primarily canned, canned stuff.

AR: And, so, did most of her customers just come from close in the area.

CT: Mostly the customers were family and they were all right here in the area, yeah.

AR: Alright.

CT: Mm-hm.

AR: Um.

CT: So during that time, everybody on this street was related, uh. The first house over there, my aunt, aunt lived over there, Annie Williams. The house directly across the street, [Inaudible] Williams lived there, who was a distant cousin. Uh, A.C. and Ethel Turner lived in the next

house up, distant cousin also. And then the Porters lived in the next house, distant cousins, uh. Everybody on the street was related. Well, this street and Cameron Street behind us, they were all related.

AR: So, as a kid, uh, what did you do for fun?

CT: Well, during the summer months we would ride our bicycles, we would play baseball, we would swim a lot in the creek. Uh, my dad never wanted me to go to the creek, and I'm talking about Quantico Creek when I say the creek, to swim. He had a brother early in life who drowned.

AR: Hm.

CT: And he never wanted us to go to the creek, but we would always sneak away and, and go anyway.

AR: So y-you swam in Quantico Creek.

CT: Quantico Creek, yeah.

AR: Was there a specific part of the creek?

CT: Ah, well, there were several parts, uh. Where 95 crosses over (Batestown Road/Mine Road) now, was a way of crossing the creek to get to houses that was over on the other side. There was an area there where we used to swim. Then, further up where the old dam used to be, we used to swim. And then up further, which is now Prince William Forest, Forest Park, we called, we called the mine when we was growing up, we would swim up there also. So there were several areas.

AR: Actually, I, I brought a map with me.

CT: OK.

AR: And I don't know if it looks that familiar to you, but.

CT: Let's see, now, where are we?

AR: Around here is where we are. No, actually, I think it's back, back more.

CT: OK, yeah, cause I can't, I can't see the creek on here.

AR: This is Quantico, I believe.

[Paper shuffling]

CT: How old is this map? This is—

AR: It's, it's a recent one, so I don't know if things would look the same as they did.

CR: That's the church.

CT: That's, uh, little union?

AR: Yes.

CT: So this must be Prince William Estates, or Fore— No I guess this would be F-Forest Park land. Prince William Estates. Here, yeah, I can't, I can't really distinguish anything on this map.

AR: Alright, I understand.

CT: Yeah, if you would, uh, like I said, if you would, if you would uh, if you know where 95 crosses over Quantico Creek on Mine Road, it was in that area.

AR: Oh.

CT: And then, further up there was a dam, this has all been washed out now. That was destroyed during Hurricane Agnes, that was another area. And then further up in the park it was another area.

AR: Huh. Well that's one of the reasons I pulled out the map too cause that's one of the questions I'm, I'm trying to, trying to answer w-with this project is where exactly

was Batestown. I know we were talking about it earlier and from your description, I don't know if this map would be big enough.

CT: No. Well, from what I remember. Batestown started at, from Route 1 where you get on Mine Road now—

AR: Mm-hm

CT: —And went all the way to the end of what we call Mine Road now.

AR: Now is that the end, like, here, or when it kept going?

CT: Well, I, I, I don't remember when it kept going. I only remember when it ended for the park.

AR: Yeah, yeah.

CT: So, I-I don't, I don't know, but my guess would be, if it was an access through there, would all be Batestown Road and it would have extended on over to 234.

AR: Alright, that makes sense.

CT: Mm-hm.

AR: Could you describe what Batestown looked like back when you were younger?

CT: Uh, Batestown, again, it was all family. The, uh, I think pretty much all of the housing that was there when I was growing up is still there right now. Some of them have been remodeled and upgraded, but, uh, they were all moderate, uh, moderate houses. Working class folks that, that lived and worked there.

AR: One of the things I've been trying to understand, or, or figure out is exactly when the roads were paved. Cause some of the earlier, um, photographs and accounts, they were always, uh, dirt roads, maybe gravel.

CT: Yeah, I can remember when Batestown was a gravel road, I mean a dirt road, cause, I guess if people did this now, they would end up being locked up. My grandfather used to get used motor oil. And we, as kids, would get out there and help him, we were playing, put, we used motor oil all along the dirt road to keep down on dust in the summer time.

AR: Hm.

CT: So, I-I'm trying to think now, this road, Fairfax Street, was paved, I wanna say, in 1966, 67. And probably Batestown Road was paved maybe five years before that. Now that, that's just a pure guess on my part.

AR: Yeah, yeah.

CT: And I'm not completely sure. The reason I remember this road being paved in the '60s, and be-being a dirt road, if I would wash my car, I would leave my car at Porter Brother's Garage cause I didn't want to bring it over here to—

AR: [Laughs]

CT: — Get all the dust that's gonna, gonna created, be created from the traffic coming up through here.

AR: Yeah, heh. So, what about, uh, things like, like elect-electricity and sewage? I know you mentioned that, eh, you had, uh—

CT: Yeah, we-we had sewage, yeah, in 19—, in 1950's. But it didn't come to Batestown until much much late— In fact, I don't think they have sewage on Batestown Road yet. They just have the city water.

AR: Oh!

CT: But no sewage. That was a promise the county made many many years ago, but, I guess one of the reasons, uh, one of the main people, who happens to be Charlie's Brother, that was pushing getting that water and sewage on Mine Road passed, and, I guess nobody's really been

pushing it and forcing the county to go to supervisors and do anything, and it just kind of died due to the lack of interest.

AR: Yeah. I didn't know that.

CT: Yep.

AR: So, you mentioned your, your mother's, uh, store that she had. Do you know any other businesses that were in the area?

CT: Uh, well there were several little grocery stores here in the area, you know, mom and pop type grocery stores, uh.

AR: Were they mostly in Dumfries, or—

CT: Mostly in Dumfries. Uh, the-they talk about one being on Batestown Road, or Mine Road, but I don't remember that one. That was before my time. Yep.

AR: So, I would assume that, uh, of the people in Batestown then would come down to, uh, to the grocery stores around Dumfries—

CT: Around Dumfries, yeah.

AR: Alright.

CT: Yeah.

AR: Um, was Batestown a segregated community?

CT: Yes.

AR: Yes?

CT: Yes.

AR: And, can you tell me about any community centers in Batestown that you and your family frequented?

CT: Community cent—?

AR: Community centers, like, um, any kind of—

CT: There was to the left [??].

AR: —Halls or, or even a church.

CT: Little Union Baptist Church.

AR: Little Union.

CT: Yeah, there was a couple of beer gardens we called em back then when I was growing up.

AR: Beer gardens? [Laughter]

CT: Beer gardens, yeah. You never heard that term before?

AR: No, no, not where I'm from.

CT: Charlie, you heard that one haven't you?

CR: Absolutely.

AR: So—

CT: But again, that was all family owned and family oriented, you know, everything was based on that.

AR: So i-it wasn't necessarily like, like a business?

CT: Well—

AR: People did business?

CT: People did business and people made money, uh.

AR: It wasn't really on the map, just, just local people.

CT: Right. That's right.

AR: I see. Um, so, were any of those kind of places around once you were an adult and—

CT: Oh yeah, they went on, I guess, until the late, uh, the late '60s, early '70s, maybe a little later than that, I'm not sure.

AR: And would th-these just be like, uh, places in people's homes?

CT: Uh, no the, the one place I can remember was strictly designated as a, uh, you know, as a, as a beer garden. Uh, nobody lived there, they just opened up primarily on weekends, and uh people would come by and buy beer, food, uh, listen to jukebox music and just have a good time. You know, a little dancing, singing, and.

AR: Hm. Um, so what did your parents do for a living? You mentioned your mother had a store and your father—

CT: My mother had her store and my dad worked for the federal government, uh. In fact my dad initially started there working in the pyrite mine.

AR: Hm.

CT: Uh, when the pyrite mines closed, he moved and went to Pennsylvania to work in coal mines. Didn't like the coal mines, and ended up coming back here and getting a job with the, uh, federal government and from that point he worked until he retired in the early, uh, '60s.

AR: So, when he left to work in the coal mine, was, uh, was that before you were born?

CT: That was before I was born, yeah.

AR: Alright.

CT: In fact, that was, that was before he even got married, when he left go—

AR: Hm.

CT: When they closed the pyrite mines, that's when he left and went to Pennsylvania to work in the coal mines. Cause we had family in Pennsylvania also, and, you know, they used to, used to live here and and moved to Pennsylvania.

AR: So, your father is from the, the Minnieville area, right?

CT: Yes.

AR: And did he move down to this area when, to work at the mine?

CT: No, he commuted from the-the Minnieville area to the, to the mine every day, mm-hm.

AR: Um, could you tell me about your parents, about how they met maybe?

CT: I, I don't know.

AR: Alright. Heh. Um, so when your, when your father worked for the, uh, federal government, what kind of work did he do?

CT: He worked at the— Well, he retired from what they called the DC incinerator. He was what they call a, uh, he's called a crane operator. He'd lift— using the crane, picking up trash and putting it in an incinerator to be burned in the, and disposed of.

AR: Hm. So, did he just work, um— did both of your parents just work, uh, throughout the week?

CT: Um, my dad worked throughout the week. Monday through Friday. And my mom had the store and then she'd also did some days work, uh, uh, you know, housekeeping, babysitting for local folks also.

AR: So were they, uh, typically around at night and—

CT: Oh yeah, all, all the time. Yeah.

AR: That's great. And, how about your grandparents, did they live in this area?

CT: My grand, uh, I don't know if my grandparents on my dad's side, uh, cause my dad was, he didn't get married at an early age, uh, he got married when he was in his late 30's and his parents had passed by the time I was born. But my mother's father, John Kendall, also worked in the pyrite mines, and he drove the train from the pyrite mine down to cherry hill to unload the pyrite ore and, and, back to the mines again, uh. That was his primary job.

AR: That was your, your mother's—

CT: My mother's father, John Kendall.

AR: John Kendall. Yeah, I got some, um, pictures of him actually.

CT: Yeah.

AR: Um, do-do you remember much about, uh, your grandparents.

CT: Oh yeah, I remember. He stayed with my mom for many many years after he got sick, yeah.

AR: Ah.

CT: I remember him well. In fact, I've got a, I've got some pictures in my phone I can, I can, you may want to use, I can get to you.

AR: Yeah, I would like to take a look at those.

CT: Yeah.

AR: Um, what about your grandmother, um—

CT: She died. I think I was, like, 5 or 6 years old.

AR: Ah.

CT: So I don't remember much about her at all.

AR: Yeah, I can understand that.

CT: I do remember the folks talking about when, the day my grandmother passed. Uh, my uncle, Uncle Johnny came to Dumfries, came to the Washington Reid School to pick up, uh, his family. We just about emptied the school, cause he just about took everybody home on the back of my grandfather's truck because grandmother had passed. So that was probably the first grade when, uh, when she passed.

AR: Hm. So, your, uh, grandfather, um, John Kendall, did he talk much about his work at the mine?

CT: Not a lot that I can remember. I-I-I heard, I remember he used to talk about the train accident, uh. The train wreck, which kind of left him disabled.

AR: Oh.

CT: But beyond that I don't remember him talking, uh, a lot about it.

AR: I heard something about that train wreck, um.

CT: Yeah.

AR: D-do you know what exactly happened?

CT: I don't know. I don't know.

AR: Oh. Can you remember who your oldest relative was when you were younger.

CT: Well, yeah, that's easy. My, my dad's sister Annie Williams. That's the one who lived to be 106 years old.

AR: Oh. And what did she do?

CT: She was a midwife.

AR: She was a midwife.

CT: She delivered, I would say, probably 90% of the children here, uh, both black and white.

AR: Um, so y-you re— you remember her?

CT: Oh yeah, I remember her well, yeah.

AR: Oh.

CT: Cause she lived just two houses over from me, so.

AR: Hm. Alright, um, can you remember any important community events that happened in this area?

CT: Important community events?

AR: Any kind of occurrences, like, for example a uh—

CT: Oh, uh, well, I guess the one thing that would come to mind for me is I retired from the federal government also and, uh—

AR: Mm-hm.

CT: The, you know, the 9/11 incident, I retired August of 2000. The office I worked in lost 34 people when the plane hit the Pentagon in 9/11. I was called back from retirement and worked a little over a year because, you know, they, they had no one there to, to do the work. So I guess that's probably the most— And that's that article I'll try to find for you. Potomac news did a frontpage article on it. I thought I had it readily available, but I'll find it for you.

AR: Alright, so how'd you wind up getting a job at the—

CT: Well, I initially started out, uh, summer jobs working in Quantico. Uh, grass cutting, that kind of thing. This was when I was in high school and attending NOVA. Uh, you know, getting those summer jobs and from a summer job I ended up being offered a permanent job and I took the permanent job and just kind of moved around from that point. I worked at Quantico for twenty-six years. Uh, I left Quantico in 1988 and went to the Washington Navy Yard, and left the Washington Navy Yard in 1994 and went to the Pentagon, and from the Pentagon I retired. I retired as, uh, uh, a supervisor and budget analyst, was the job title I had.

AR: So you were a, uh, a councilman at Dumfries, correct?

CT: A councilman at Dumfries for ten years, yeah.

AR: What kind of work did you do as a councilman?

CT: I was still— oh, as a council member? Well, supposedly we did the uh, rules and regulations to keep the town, keep the town functioning and keep the town going.

AR: Um, today, or nowadays when you drive through the Batestown area, or when you visit, um, how would you describe the changes?

CT: Well, I, I hate to see all of the, the family-oriented parcels of land up there that, you know, belonged to the, belonged to families for 150 years, uh, you know, being lost and gone. You know, I knew everyone that lived on Mine Road at one point. I can't say that anymore.

AR: So, when you say lost and gone, uh, is it that people are moving out or that they're selling the land?

CT: They're selling the land. Yeah. They're selling the land.

AR: So, traditionally people would pass the land on to their children?

CT: Pass the land on to their children, yeah. Yeah. Uh, a good example would be land— I don't know how many acres my grandfather had when they left Hickory Ridge and, and, uh, bought the land on Batestown road, but he gave two of his daughters and two of his sons land, and they build houses on those, uh, parcels of land that he gave them. I think there's only one of em left now that still even, that still has that land in the family.

AR: Do you, do you know why? Like, is there any reason people are moving away—

CT: I—

AR: — Or is it just kind of a sign of the times?

CT: I guess it's just a sign of the times, yeah, and, uh, and money.

AR: Money.

CT: Yeah. So, when my day, when my dad bought this land that the house next door and this house is on, I want to say in 1940, and I think he paid a hundred and fifty to two hundred dollars for it. Well, you know, now you're talking about that same land being a hundred thousand dollars. So, you know, folks are— And I don't hold anything against em, I guess, uh, folks are going for the money.

AR: Yeah.

CT: And I did just, I refuse to sell my dad's land next door, uh. Land that's been in the family all those years and I want to keep it in the family. In fact, I plan to give it my son.

AR: Mm-hm.

CT: And I hope he'll do the same thing.

AR: Yeah. So, do you have any stories to share that might, just, uh, offer some insight into what the Batestown community was like? Anything that comes to mind, any experiences you've had there.

CT: No, nothing that, nothing that really comes to mind or experiences, other than, again, it being a family-oriented community and everybody sticking together and looking out for each other.

AR: Is there anything you would like to share that we haven't covered?

CT: No, nothing I can think of.

CR: [Inaudible] or churches.

CT: Oh yeah, yeah, uh. [Clears throat] Talking about the, uh, Quantico creek area again, and uh, I was baptized in Quantico Creek. I remember it was in the summer of 1957. They used to have baptizings and pretty much a couple times a month, all summer long cause I guess you couldn't baptize in the winter time cause you'd be baptizing in the creek in the cold water, and I guess you'd have to wait until the warmer weather got here. But, that, that was a big thing.

AR: So, was this with Little Union Baptist Church?

CT: Well, when I initially joined the church, I, it wasn't with the Little Union, but I'm a member of Little Union now, but when I initially joined church, I joined First Mount Zion on 234.

AR: I see. And, um, so, at First Mount Zion, they, they baptist, baptized in, uh, Quantico creek?

CT: Oh, every, all the churches around baptized in Quantico creek.

AR: All the churches? Wow.

CT: Mm-hm.

AR: So, do you know if they still do that?

CT: No, all the churches now have baptismal pools.

AR: Mm-hm

CT: Nobody is baptized in a creek anymore. I, I would imagine that's probably something they stopped in the, in the early 80's, yeah. Maybe even before that.

AR: Alright, well is there anything else you would like to share?

CT: Well, no, noth-nothing I can think of, uh, if I come up with anything, maybe I'll get your number and maybe we can, you know, get together talk about it again. In fact, I know we'll need to get together so I can give you some pictures.

CR: Swimming, baseball, things like that.

CT: See, I never did, uh, yeah, I never played ball with y'all, but yeah. Uh, talking about activities, I just remembered that the activities, Charlie refreshed my memory. Just about every weekend, it was either a baseball game or a softball game, both girls and guys softball games in Batestown every weekend. The baseball field was right across the street from my grandfather's house.

AR: Right across the street. Do you remember—

CT: Right across the street, yeah.

AR: —Where that was?

CT: Yeah, I know exactly where that was, I can show you exactly where it was.

AR: Alright.

CT: Yeah.

AR: Is it still a baseball field?

CT: No, it's uh, someone bought it and built a house on it now.

AR: I see.

CT: Yeah.

AR: Alright, well, I think that concludes everything. Thank you very much for speaking with me.

CT: No problem.

End



Claude Clagget Thomas Junior.



George E. Thomas, Claude Thomas Junior's brother. (Courtesy of Mabel Tuell)



Claude Clagget Thomas Senior.



Annie Williams (Midwife who worked with Dr. Ferlazzo) at her 75th birthday celebration.



Fannie McKee Thomas and Charles Thomas.



3990 Fairfax Street, Dumfries, Virginia. Built by Claude Thomas Senior, inherited by Claude Thomas Junior, then inherited by Claude Thomas III. Three generations of Thomas ownership.

Interview with Ora Glass and Mary Cole

Ora Glass Biography

“Well, really, to me everybody seemed like they were family because, uh, we had gardens back then... it was more family, sharing whatever you had at your house with somebody else.”

Ora was born on June 15, 1935 to Ora Elizabeth Thomas Bates and Robert Bates. She was the first born of three children, including her brother Philip, and her sister Mary. She also had two half-brothers, Dewitt and French Bates, from her father’s previous marriage. Ora’s father was from Batestown and he worked at the Cabin Branch Pyrite Mine, and also worked at Possum Point. Ora’s mother was originally from Minnieville, was a lead singer in the Little Union Baptist Church choir, and worked in Dr. Ferlazzo’s home.

In Ora’s interview she spoke about teaching herself to play the piano with the piano they had in their home. She played piano and sang for the Little Union Baptist Church choir for many years. Mary explained that her father had one of the biggest gardens in the community. She also shared some stories that she remembered about Cabin Branch School and about swimming in Quantico Creek. Ora left Batestown when she was around 21 years old and moved to Dale City with her husband.

Mary Cole Biography

“We had a lot of fun though. I just can’t complain really... if they asked me what kind of childhood, I’d say I had a happy one. That’s what I’d be telling them.”

Mary was born on September 18, 1941 to Ora Elizabeth Thomas Bates and Robert Bates. She was the youngest of three children, including her brother Philip, and her sister Ora. She also had two half-brothers, Dewitt and French Bates, from her father’s previous marriage. Mary’s father was from Batestown and he worked at the Cabin Branch Pyrite Mine, and also worked at Possum Point. Mary’s mother was originally from Minnieville, was a lead singer in the Little Union Baptist Church choir, and worked in Dr. Ferlazzo’s home.

In Mary’s interview she shared that her family had a horse, which would pull the plow for their large garden. She mentioned that a white family, the Dents, would sometimes come into Batestown to sell fish they had caught in the Potomac River. Mary also explained that the Marine’s would enter the community to hand out bags of gifts to the children for Christmas. She stated that a desire to have running water was a major influence on her decision to move out of Batestown.



Oral History Guidelines for Prince William County

Oral History Interview Agreement

This Interview Agreement is made and entered into by the Interviewer(s):

Adam Rayburn

and the Interviewee(s):

Ora K. Glass

Interviewee(s) agrees to participate in one or more interviews with the Interviewer(s) named above. This Agreement relates to any and all materials originating from the interviews, namely notes, tape recordings, video recordings, any transcripts or other written manuscripts prepared from or using the notes, tape recordings and/or video recordings, or any images that might be used during the interview or created during the interview.

In consideration of mutual covenants, conditions, and terms set forth below, the parties hereto hereby agree as follows:

1. Interviewee(s) and Interviewer(s) understand that the copy of the interview in the possession of the interviewer is the property of Prince William County, and will be available in its entirety to researchers and the general public.
2. Interviewee(s) and Interviewer(s) irrevocably assigns to the Prince William County all his or her copyright, title, and interest in this material.
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Ora K. Glass

Interviewee(s) signature(s)

6-28-2019

Date

Adam Rayburn

Interviewer(s) signature(s)

6-28-2019

Date

Prince William County
Office of Planning and
Department of Parks Recreation and Tourism, Historic Preservation Division



Oral History Guidelines for Prince William County

Oral History Interview Agreement

This Interview Agreement is made and entered into by the Interviewer(s):

Adam Rayburn

and the Interviewee(s):

Mary Cole

Interviewee(s) agrees to participate in one or more interviews with the Interviewer(s) named above. This Agreement relates to any and all materials originating from the interviews, namely notes, tape recordings, video recordings, any transcripts or other written manuscripts prepared from or using the notes, tape recordings and/or video recordings, or any images that might be used during the interview or created during the interview.

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Mary J. Cole
Interviewee(s) signature(s)

6-28-19
Date

Adam Rayburn
Interviewer(s) signature(s)

6-28-19
Date

Prince William County
Office of Planning and
Department of Parks Recreation and Tourism, Historic Preservation Division

Oral History with Ora Glass and Mary Cole

Interviewer: Adam Rayburn

Interviewees: Ora Glass and Mary Cole

Location: Ora Glass' home at 3210 Burbank Ln, Woodbridge, VA 22193

Date: June 28th, 2019

Adam Rayburn=AR; Ora Glass=OG; Mary Cole=MC; Charles Reid=CR

Note: Charles Reid is present for this interview makes some comments throughout. A woman by the name of Tammy briefly enters the room near the middle of the interview, and she has two lines identified by "TA."

AR: Today is June 28th, 2019. My name is Adam Rayburn and I am an intern working with the Historic Preservation division on the Batestown Oral History Project. We are at the home of Ora Glass in Woodbridge, Virginia, and I am interviewing both Ora Glass and Mary Cole. Mrs. Glass and Mrs. Cole, welcome and thank you both for agreeing to speak with me today. Could each of you please introduce yourselves.

OG: I'm Ora Glass, I live here in Dale City and have for, oh—

MC: [Laughter]

OG: —Fifty years or more, I guess. But, um, that's about it. I still go to the church over at Little Union, um, but when I lived over there [Batestown] I joined Little Union. When I moved I continued my membership there. Um, that's about it, I guess.

MC: [Laughter] I'm Mary Bates Cole

AR: Alright

MC: And I grew up in Batestown, of course, and I live in Dale City. I've been over here for ages, and married with two sons, two grandsons, and one great grandson. And I attended Little Union Baptist Church, I think I was 9 years old when I joined, and, um, at that time Peter Carver was our pastor, and now Reverend Sessoms is our pastor.

AR: Alright, could you both spell your names just for transcribing.

MC: M-A-R-Y, C-O-L-E.

OG: Uh, Ora, O-R-A, Glass, G-L-A-S-S.

AR: And do you two go by any nicknames?

MC: Uh, I was called Sis.

AR: Sis.

OG: And I was called Puddin.

[Laughter]

AR: Puddin. And how would you prefer to be addressed for the interview?

OG: It doesn't matter.

MC: For me, Mary.

AR: Just Mary. Got it.

[Laughter]

OG: Well I guess you can put Ora.

AR: Alright. And when were you both born?

OG: Uh, I was born in June 15th, 1935. It's a while.

MC: September the 18th, 1941.

AR: So you're 6 years apart then?

MC: Mm-hm. And a brother in between.
AR: And where were you born?
MC: Mine Road.
AR: Mine Road?
CR: Hm-mm, Batestown.
MC: Well, well, well Batestown.
OG: Batestown.
AR: Batestown.
MC: Mm-hm. To Ora, to Ora Elizabeth Bates—Thomas Bates and to Robert Bates.
AR: To Ora Elizabeth Bates and Thomas Bates?
MC: Robert Bates.
AR: Oh, Robert Bates.
MC: Mm-hm.
AR: I see. And who were your parents?
OG: Um, Ora Bates and Robert Bates.
AR: Oh, so—
MC: We're sisters.
AR: Oh, you're sisters, I see. I thought you were cousins [Laughs].
MC: No.
AR: I apologize. I see. Yeah, that was going to be one of my questions—
MC: [Laughs]
AR: —Is how were the two of you related, so, that answers that then. [Laughs] Um, and do you know where your parents were born?
MC: I guess daddy was, Batestown.
OG: Yeah.
MC: Momma was Mi-, uh, Minnieville.
OG: Minnieville. Mom was, yeah.
MC: I guess then, I don't know.
AR: Do you remember how your parents met?
MC: Don't have a clue.
OG: No, I don't.
MC: All I remember, Mom was saying that she used to correspond with his daughter, cause my dad was a lot older than my mother. And, uh, they used to write each other back and forth and, I guess, somewhere along the line [Laughter] they met.
AR: Right.
MC: At the church.
AR: Um, so do you have any other siblings? I think you mentioned a brother.
MC: Our brother died.
AR: Oh. I'm sorry.
MC: Yeah.
AR: And w-what is his name?
MC: Philip.
AR: Philip.
MC: And we had two half-brothers.
OG: Mm-hm.
MC: They were old enough to be our fathers too. [Laughs]

AR: Oh really?

MC: Dewitt Bates and French Bates.

AR: And, so your siblings, did they also live in the, uh, Batestown area?

MC: They did, yes.

AR: Now let's, uh, talk a little bit more about Batestown. What comes to mind when you think about Batestown?

OG: Well, really, to me everybody seemed like they were family because, uh, we had gardens back then and we had a supply of potatoes or whatever, tomatoes, and mom would say, "Well take this bag and take it to Mister and Misses, I'll just say Smith or whatever, uh, house and give this bag to them." So then like, it was more family, sharing whatever you had at your house with somebody else.

MC: Togetherness more or less.

AR: Mm-hm. So everybody looked out for each other you would say?

OG: Mm-hm.

MC: Yes.

AR: And did everybody have a garden?

MC: Just about

OG: Some had gardens, were bigger than others.

AR: Mm-hm.

OG: I guess dad had about one of the biggest.

MC: I think so, yeah.

OG: He raised corn and potatoes and, wow.

MC: Everything. Yeah.

OG: And mom would can a lot of that for the winter.

MC: Our mother was a tree climber. [Laughs] We had two cherry trees and she was the one would go up and get the cherries and we'd stand at the bottom with the can when she'd come exchange the full one for the empty one. [Laughs] I wasn't going up there.

[Laughter]

AR: So, the gardens, did anybody grow food to sell it or was it all for the community?

MC: Well, my mother canned a lot, you know, she canned up everything for the winter.

AR: Mm-hm

MC: Plus we had pigs and chickens, and.

OG: A lot of people worry about snow now, we didn't then.

MC: Huh-uh.

OG: Because dad would go fishing and it was some kind of brine or whatever and he would prepare those for winter, and we had chicken for winter, and –

MC: We called it the meat house.

OG: Yeah.

MC: The meat house where the meat hung, um, to, I guess they salted it, something. I don't know what they did, but we always had, you know, meat in the winter, so.

OG: Yeah because dad would salt the, the, salted the meat—

MC: No, but the, the, them killing the pigs, also from the pigs.

OG: —Around win-, uh, fall, and then he would put this meat in the, what would you call it, meat house outside.

AR: So it was, uh, like a shed or something that was on your property?

OG: Mm-hm, yeah.

AR: Alright.
OG: And apples.
MC: And we had a horse.
OG: Yeah
AR: A horse?
MC: Yeah, we did.
AR: For?
MC: It was for the gardening, you know, it's for planting, you know, the plow.
AR: Yeah, yeah.
MC: So, yeah, I used to ride the horse back down [Laughter]. After my dad put, you know, watered the horse, I would ride him.
AR: Just for fun? Just around?
MC: I just liked riding the horse.
AR: Yeah. On your property—
MC: Yeah.
AR: —Or just all around?
MC: No, no. He would just let me ride it back where he's gonna keep it at, in the barn.
AR: Hm, I see.
OG: I wasn't a horse rider.
[Laughter]
AR: Yeah, I've never ridden a horse. Could you describe the house you lived in, what it looked like?
OG: Well, it was, two story and we had five rooms upstairs and four downstairs and a large porch.
AR: So it was a pretty big house then?
OG: Yeah.
MC: Aunt Blanks lived there at one time, did you know that?
CR: I did not.
MC: You didn't know? She lived upstairs.
CR: It was the biggest house down there.
MC: And cousin Mae Mae also used to stay upstairs. Then, uh, then she moved out and Aunt Blanks moved in.
CR: [Inaudible]
AR: So, you had two of your aunts living there at different times?
MC: Aunt Blanks was from marrying my half-brother.
AR: Alright.
MC: And Cousin Mae. Mae was really a cousin. Instead of my aunt she was a cousin. Her name was Mary also.
AR: So did you have a lot of, uh, other family members living in the home—
MC: No, it was—
AR: —Or was it typically just, uh, your parents and then the kids?
OG: Mm-hm. Yeah.
MC: Mm-hm.
OG: Most— that was, thee upstairs was rented.
MC: Mm-hm.

OG: There was like three rooms that was kinda divided from the parts of the house, so these three rooms were rented.

AR: Oh, so you would rent the rooms out to, to people?

OG: Mm-hm.

AR: Were they mostly—

MC: They were relatives.

OG: Relatives.

AR: Relatives. Alright.

OG: I guess they paid them, I don't know.

[Laughter]

MC: They probably didn't.

[Laughter]

AR: Yeah, either way, they stayed there, huh. Um, do you know who built the house?

OG: Uh, no I don't.

MC: Probably dad, I guess.

OG: That's all I ever heard, my daddy. I guess.

MC: I dunno.

OG: I really don't know for sure.

AR: Mm-hm. And, there was no running water in the house, correct?

MC: Hm-mm. The well wasn't, it was close to the house, so it wasn't too bad.

OG: No. The well was right in the yard. About twelve steps from the house.

MC: [Laughs] Probably.

AR: That's convenient. Um, what did the well look like? There, w-was there a pump or just, uh—

MC: No, we had a rope. You'd let down, ya [Demonstrates].

OG: You'd put it down to the end of the rope.

MC: Mm-hm.

OG: And you'd let it down in the water and you'd feel it when it would get full. It would kind of jerk, and then you'd pull it back up, pull it up and—

MC: It was like on a wheel. The rope was like on a wheel.

AR: Alright.

MC: And that way when you let it down, then you just pull on it and it would come back up on the wheel.

AR: Hm. Uh, so, if someone were to take a bath, would you just make multiple trips to carry buckets up to fill it up?

MC: That's what we did. We had a wash tub.

AR: A wash tub?

MC: Mm-hm.

CR: Mm-hm.

OG: We didn't have a bath tub back then.

MC: [Laughs]

AR: Well. Did you ever heat the water up at all?

MC: Yeah.

OG: Yes.

AR: With just, uh, your stove basically?

OG: Mm-hm.

MC: Wood stoves.

AR: So did you two have, uh, chores that you were expected to do?

OG: Uh, for me, I know, it was dishes. Do the dishes.

MC: [Laughs] oh lord please.

OG: And sometimes dad would tell us overnight if he needed help the next morning or next day in the garden, he would tell us the night before.

MC: It was even worse than the [Inaudible].

OG: "We're gonna plant potatoes in the morning." So that meant you got out of bed and, as soon as you finished breakfast, and you planted potatoes.

AR: Hm. Would, uh, would he ask you to help in the garden in the mornings, like, before school sometimes or—

OG: No.

AR: —I was gonna say, do it when school's out on the weekend?

MC: Because we left home when it was dark and we got home in the dark, so.

AR: Oh.

OG: Yep.

MC: Because j-just didn't go down Mine, Batestown Road, you went up Joplin Road, Quantico, Triangle.

OG: Him and I went to uh -

CR: Remember what Claude Thomas said? [To Adam]

AR: So you're talking about the, the bus ride?

MC: Mm-hm.

OG: Mm-hm.

AR: Oh, yeah.

OG: You never did go to Manassas, did you?

MC: Yeah, I did!

OG: Oh, ok. Yeah, I would leave home about 6 in the morning, go all the way up to Joplin Road to camp, where Camp Upshur is—

CR: Mm-hm.

OG: —And pick up two kids up there, and then we go into Quantico, pick up maybe three boys, and then go to Manassas. So, yeah, really early in the morning.

AR: And you got back at night time?

OG: At dark.

AR: Oh wow. So would you spend the whole time at school?

OG: Yeah.

AR: Oh. Pretty long school days.

MC: Mm-hm, hm-mm-mm.

OG: Yes, it was

MC: [Laughs]

OG: And sometimes the bus would break down.

MC: Mm-hm.

AR: What would you do then? No school that day, or?

OG: Well, if it broke down in the morning, just whenever you got there, and, one day I, uh, had been in Home Ec. that day and we made biscuits and I asked my cousin if he would like to have one of my biscuits and he said, "No, I don't want that." And our bus broke down up on Joplin Road and it got dark and cold and he said, "I'll have, I'll take one of those biscuits now."

[Laughter]

AR: Now that's funny.

OG: Oh gosh, nobody knows.

[Laughter]

MC: But I'll tell you what!

AR: So, I read that, that you went to the Cabin Branch School, correct?

OG: Mm-hm.

AR: Did you go to Cabin Branch as well?

MC: Mm-hm. And then I went to Washington Reid. I didn't think you went there.

OG: No, I didn't go to Washington Reid.

AR: And how many grades did they have at Cabin Branch?

MC: You know, I never know. It was only three rooms, so I guess three classes. [Laughs]

OG: Six.

CR: Mm-hm.

MC: At Cabin Branch?

CR: Mm-hm.

MC: Hm. Oh yeah.

AR: From what I've read it was about six grades

CR: Yeah.

OG: I miss it-

MC: For you, I think, I don't think—

OG: I think it was, I think it was around the fifth grade, and then they didn't have middle school when I went to school, so I went from elementary right on to high school.

AR: Hm.

MC: Yeah, we've been to the same—You didn't go to no middle school.

OG: Mm-hm.

AR: So what were the teachers like at Cabin Branch? Would you get along with them?

OG: Oh yeah.

MC: Mm-hm.

OG: They were real funny.

AR: Funny?

OG: Yeah. I had a cousin who was always in trouble and one day he got in trouble and she sent him in the woods to break off what he was gonna get a spanking with. So he had to go get his own.

CR: Mm-hm.

MC: [Laughs]

AR: Yeah.

MC: They didn't play, just put it like that.

AR: They didn't play?

MC: Nope, because, y-you didn't want to mess up too much because if she gave you a spanking, she was going to tell your parents and you would get it again.

AR: Mm-hm. But, for the most part, people would behave though?

OG: I think so.

MC: Yeah.

AR: And, uh, did you, did you two enjoy school?

OG: I did.

MC: I didn't.

[Laughter]

AR: Not so much, huh?

MC: Truth, I did not like school.

OG: I didn't mind.

AR: How did you, um, did you have, uh, report cards, or how did you—

MC: Yeah

AR: —Did they determine that, um, that you could go to the next grade?

MC: I think they did.

OG: I think, yeah, we had report cards.

MC: I know Washington Reid did, I don't remember Cabin Branch that much because—I don't even remember what year we transferred over to Washington Reid.

AR: And m-most of the kids at Cabin Branch were all from the Batestown community?

OG: Well, we didn't have busses then.

MC: Mildred, Mildred said she went to Cabin Branch.

OG: Mildred?

MC: Mm-hm.

AR: So were some people from outside of the community?

MC: Evidently.

AR: Do you know if they would, um, walk to school or—

MC: I don't know how they got there. But I thought she told me she went to— I'm a ask her again, but I thought she did. But they lived on c-, well, was that Cardinal over there?

OG: I guess, I don't know.

MC: I don't know when they went on to Cardinal Drive. [Laughs]

OG: In elementary school we had those, um, what did they call, pot belly stoves?

MC: Yeah.

OG: You put wood in it, and one day, uh, one of the teachers, I don't remember her name now, the fire went down and she threw some, uh, oil or whatever, they put it in there and it went [Sound effect] and I was sitting in the back row. I still have this scar. My hand went through the, uh, window.

AR: Oh, wow.

OG: Cause I was jumping out, I was [Demonstrates].

[Laughter]

AR: So, um, you, uh, would pack your lunches for school, right?

MC: Mm-hm.

OG: Mm-hm.

AR: What kind of—

OG: Occasionally I'd go back, we lived close enough that I could go home for lunch.

MC: Yeah, yeah, occasionally.

OG: Not all the time. But mostly we'd pack lunches, yeah.

AR: Did you pack them yourselves or did your parents pack them for you?

OG: I think Momma did that.

MC: Yeah.

AR: And do you remember what kind of food you would have for your packed lunch?

MC: Probably a greasy lunch bag. [Laughs]

AR: What was that?

MC: Probably a greasy lunch bag.
[Laughter]
OG: Well, if she had ham or something leftover.
MC: Yeah.
OG: She'd make ham sandwiches.
MC: Hm.
OG: And souse. Uh, and what's that stuff called? Scrapple.
MC: Oh yeah, yeah.
OG: Make a scrapple sandwich.
AR: What's scrapple?
MC: What?
AR: I'm from Ohio, I don't know! [Laughs]
OG: Um, well Momma made hers.
MC: I don't know how she made it, but.
AR: Alright.
OG: You'd grind up the meat and put something else in there and all that. Then it was from the pig, Daddy would kill pigs, then she'd make the scrapple.
AR: Alright.
[Laughter]
AR: But it tasted good?
OG: Oh yeah.
MC: Mm-hm!
OG: It was good.
AR: So, what kind of things would you do for fun?
MC: [Laughter] Tell him about the pennies! [Laughs]
OG: Huh?
MC: [Laughter] We were tossing pennies, and the pennies! [Laughs]
OG: Oh, we used to sometimes pitch pennies, make marks on the ground, draw squares and pitch the penny. My brother and I were playing one day and my mom came out there made us stop because she said we were gambling.
MC: We only had one penny!
OG: We only had one penny, so whoever won the first time!
[Laughter]
MC: That was about it, and horseshoes.
OG: Yeah, we did horseshoes.
AR: So, pitch the penny, is that something like hopscotch?
OG: No, you'd, well you'd draw something like hopscotch.
MC: You'd draw a line and whoever got as close to the line would win.
AR: Ah. I see, I've never heard of that game.
MC: I guess not! [Laughs]
OG: We used to play horseshoes at night. We would take a flashlight outside and, or a candle really, and pitch the horseshoes down and take the candle, go down and see who was closest.
[Laughter]
AR: So you couldn't even see?
MC: No, we couldn't see!
AR: Just, just by feel, huh?

MC: Well we weren't, see we weren't allowed to have cards in the house so, good thing we had dominos, but we weren't allowed to have cards, um, and that's why I don't know how to play cards today. [Laughs]

AR: Really?

MC: Yep.

AR: Why weren't you allowed to have cards? Cause they were—

MC: It was gambling.

AR: Gambling.

MC: Yep, yeah.

AR: Oh, so your family was very against gambling.

MC: Yes.

OG: Mm-hm.

AR: I see.

MC: But, uh, I guess we used to play tricks on mom when she was asleep [Laughter]. Dad would say, we would take something and, you know, go around her nose and mom would be [Demonstrates].

[Laughter]

AR: Was she mad at you when she figured it out?

MC: No.

OG: No.

AR: She'd just kind of laugh it off?

MC: Yeah. And when the storms came up, we, if we were eating, my father would just look at the window, which that meant put that fork down and get in the living room.

OG: And you'd sit quietly until the storm was over.

MC: Mm-hm, yeah. He would say, "God is talking now, you gonna listen." I said, ok I'm gonna get in your lap and go to sleep. [Laughs]

OG: And I would get on the other lap, the other leg of his and I tug his ear. [Laughs]

MC: Well, he was kind of, kind of strict but I-I, I appreciate it though, you know.

OG: Oh yeah.

MC: I mean, he never spanked us, Ora and I anyway, he'd chase my brother around a little bit, but he never spanked us. My mom was the one that had to discipline, with me, I was a mouth.

[Laughter]

MC: And I guess she found that out. Oh, I remember once she told, she told me to wash the dishes and Ora was supposed to dry and I said, "I washed last night, Ora's supposed to—" and she [Motions with hand].

[Laughter]

MC: But, no, I had respect for my parents. They were strict though, we, we did.

AR: Mm-hm.

OG: They were strict, but I can't say they were too strict.

MC: No.

OG: Because what they would tell you, y-you really were wrong to begin with.

MC: True.

OG: And we knew that.

AR: So they were just looking out for ya.

MC: Mm-hm.

OG: Yeah.

MC: We just, uh, when we came to church it was very important. And, I mean, I appreciate that till today because of the fact that I was brought up in church, um, I remember I told him I wasn't going to Sunday school once on Sunday and he said, "Why? Are you sick?" And I said, "No sir, I just don't want to go." He said, "You're going out of here." Well, and when he said it, it wasn't mean, but we knew. I just went on and got dressed and went to Sunday school because I knew my father had said I was going out of there, so I knew I was going to Sunday school. Now, he might, woulda had to drag me out, but, I'd rather do what he asked me to do. So, I just got dressed and went to Sunday school.

OG: I never heard him raise his voice.

MC: Nope.

OG: Never.

MC: Never. In fact, even to Philip. [Laughs]

OG: No. I, I did almost the same thing one Sunday. I got—I was going out Sunday night, on a date, and I said, "I don't think I'm going to church." So, he just kind of said, "Well, if you don't feel like going to church, you won't feel like going out tonight." And I put my clothes on real quick and walked.

[Laughter]

AR: Mm-hm. On second thought maybe, maybe I will go to church. [Laughs]

MC: Well it's, it's, it, I don't know it was the way, I guess, he did it. We would get rowdy, he'd be reading the bible, we don't know whether he knew how to read or not but he had it, and it was open, and he would just raise up and kind of look up. We knew.

OG: We were too loud.

AR: [Laughs]

OG: That's right, he didn't have to say a word. He'd put his finger like this, and go [Demonstrates pointing at Bible and lifting eyebrows].

[Laughter]

MC: He never said a word.

AR: So, when you, when you were children did you ever have any kind of toys that you would play with?

MC: I guess I had a doll baby.

OG: I guess that's about all I had.

MC: I got that, I think, at a Christmas, but we didn't, you know, you didn't get a lot of gifts, but what ya got you appreciated.

AR: Mm-hm.

MC: You know, we always had, um, programs at church, uh, at, for Christmas, and they always gave out a bag with an orange and some nuts and candy, and we would think somebody had given you a million dollars.

AR: Yeah.

MC: Yeah, it was nice. I miss all that too.

AR: That was kind of one of the questions I have, as well, is, uh, how would you celebrate special occasions? Like holidays or birthdays?

MC: My birthday always fell on the third Sunday of September and it was Homecoming at the church, so I would never [Laughter] I celebrated, I guess, at church.

OG: Mom would make, make a cake for our birthday, and sometimes she'd say, cut a slice, and said, give this to so and so, eh, one of the kids we'd play with or something like that. I don't remember any big birthdays.

MC: Yeah, we did Christmas a lot, I mean.
OG: It was a big thing, yeah. My mom—
AR: Was Christmas mostly at the church?
MC: No. I like that, at the church, but then my mom would do a lot of cooking. She'd make cakes and pies and stuff for Christmas. It was nice.
OG: Yeah, she would make her fruitcake about a month before Christmas.
MC: Mm-hm.
AR: Th-the—And, when you two said you had dolls. Um, were those homemade or purchased.
MC: I remember one of mine was purchased, I don't know about the others.
OG: I can't remember.
MC: Yeah, and we used to play marbles a lot.
OG: Yes. [Laughs]
MC: And, uh, my brother, with those little big marbles, he'd make sure I'd lose so he would, you know, they, he would shoot em at your knuckles.
CR: Mm-hm.
AR: Ouch!
CR: Mm-hm.
[Laughter]
AR: So, where'd you get your marbles from? Was that from, uh—
MC: I don't know where folks got em from.
AR: Oh.
OG: I don't remember that. You probably could buy them in the store, I guess.
MC: Yeah, maybe, probably down in Dumfries.
AR: Um, did you, uh, play any instruments?
OG: I used to play piano for church.
AR: Oh, w-when did you learn to play piano?
OG: I guess self-taught, along with Leroy.
MC: Well, because, well, we had a piano in the house.
OG: Yeah, we did.
AR: Oh, that's nice.
MC: But the choir used to practice at, at our house. They didn't practice at church, well, because most of the time, I guess, they didn't have no lights, so they, hah, we didn't have no lights e- except for lantern lamps, it was different than a, than a regular lamp, and it was real bright. So they used to come, my mom would fix a cake, so after they get through singing, practicing, they would have cake.
AR: So, were you both in the choir?
OG: Mm-hm.
MC: I came late, cause she was in it earlier.
AR: Did you sing in the choir for a long time?
MC: Mm-hm!
OG: Mm-hm.
MC: Until, when I, I don't know what year I joined, I know it was, uh, the junior choir.
OG: Miss Mary Porter started the first junior choir.
CR: Mm-hm.
MC: Yeah.

OG: Uh, gosh, I guess I sang around twenty-five to thirty years I guess. Was it that long? I started right as I was twelve years old.

CR: [Inaudible] with the men's choir.

MC: You were probably older than that.

CR: For a long time.

MC: Hm?

CR: The men's choir.

MC: Yeah, she played for the men's choir.

CR: Oh yeah.

AR: Was there any, um, songs that you particularly liked to sing?

OG: Hm, well.

MC: There were so many of em.

OG: I guess all of em I really like.

MC: And mom was a good, she was a singer.

AR: Hm.

CR: Mm-hm.

MC: Yeah, she did most of the leading in the gospel chorus. Yes, I like a lot of songs. I like "Precious Lord Take My Hand."

OG: I like "I am on the Battlefield."

CR: Mm-hm.

AR: What's that?

OG: "I am on the Battlefield of the Lord."

AR: Could you describe what Batestown looked like? Just—

MC: Uh, dirt road.

AR: Dirt roads.

MC: Uh, yes.

[Laughter]

OG: Yes, dirt road, uh, a lot more houses then, uh, that's there, then.

MC: Mm-hm.

CR: —Than is there now.

OG: That's there now, yeah.

MC: Yes.

OG: When we said Batestown, it was almost a town because that, when, uh, you mentioned the beer joint up there-

CR: Mm-hm.

OG: they used to sell bread I think at one time.

MC: They did. I think she made, like, sandwiches, started making sandwiches.

CR: Mm-hm. I used to steal em, I know!

AR: And what was this place that sold sandwiches?

TA: Hey.

MC: Hey.

TA: Hey there!

CR: Hey Latoya [??].

OG: What was the name of that place?

MC: I don't know. All I know is Mazerine—

CR: Beer Garden, they called it, Beer Garden.

OG: Used to call it the Beer Garden?

MC: I don't know.

CR: Miss Lottie used to o-opened it the first time. Remember Mister Hardy opened it?

OG: Mm-hm.

CR: Mister Hardy opened it.

OG: A little bit.

CR: He had it from her, like uh, I always known it as a beer joint, that's what Hardy, Mr. Hardy called it.

AR: Beer joint, and this was right in Batestown.

CR: Right there.

OG: Mm-hm.

MC: Mm-hm.

CR: I'm not in this conversation.

[Inaudible]

AR: Oh no, you can join, that's fine

MC: The baseball diamond.

OG: That's right, we had a baseball diamond and I used to play first base I think.

CR: I think they owned, they owned the land on that.

AR: Oh really? The baseball diamond was on their land?

CR: Mm-hm.

OG: I got in trouble and mom told me I wasn't gonna go play and I was gonna have to peel peaches. So, she felt sorry for me, about after the first inning she said, "You can go on and play ball now." [Laughs]

MC: I would rather do the peaches than the chitlins. Let me tell you, I hated that!

[Laughter]

AR: Yeah, I think I would agree.

MC: Wash, wash, and wash, and Mom would make sure they were clean, and I'd say. "Mom, no!" I didn't eat em and why would I have to clean em?

[Laughter]

MC: Didn't like em.

CR: Me either.

MC: You didn't eith- I didn't like pig feet either.

CR: But I eat em now.

OG: But I was talking about Daddy's garden. You remember Jack Gaines?

CR: Mm-hm.

OG: He would come up the, up to our house, walk from Dumfries up to our house—

CR: Mm-hm.

OG: —To ask my mom to make him an onion sandwich.

CR: I remember that. I remember that.

AR: Just bread and onions?

OG: Bread and onions.

MC: And mayonnaise.

OG: And mayonnaise.

CR: He had a fetish for that.

[Laughter]

CR: That's the only thing I can call it. There's no way I could eat it.

AR: Hm!

MC: I think I could, but, uh, there are other things that I could eat, so.

CR: [Inaudible]

MC: I'd rather have a tomato.

[Laughter]

AR: So, when you played baseball, would you, would the boys and girls play together?

OG: No. When I played it was just girls, played on the girl team.

MC: We never played—

OG: I don't remember each playing each.

CR: Batestown organized, didn't they? Cause we'd travel back and forth to play.

OG: Yeah, we went to different places.

AR: So you—

OG: You know, play a team.

AR: —Yeah. You, did you do that for a while?

OG: Mm-hm.

AR: For many years you were traveling around and playing teams?

OG: Yeah, I guess, I—

CR: They were, they were good.

OG: Mm-hm

AR: A pretty good team?

OG: Yes, I thought so. [Laughs]

AR: Um, did ya have a, well, I'm assuming you had a coach, right?

OG: Mm-hm.

AR: Was he, uh, in-in Batestown area too?

OG: Oh, everybody was from Batestown.

MC: [Laughter]

AR: I've just gotta confirm.

MC: Because you could walk to the baseball diamond, so—

AR: Yeah.

MC: The people on Batestown, Mine Road, just walked to it.

CR: So who was the coach back then?

OG: I really don't know who the coach was.

CR: Well, Jimmy Kendall did it a little bit, but then Otis did it, but I don't know who reported that.

[Inaudible]

AR: So you mentioned that the, the roads were dirt roads.

MC: Mm-hm.

OG: Mm-hm.

AR: Were they paved at some point?

MC: Yeah.

AR: When you were living there?

MC: Yeah.

OG: Yeah.

AR: Was this around the '60s or '70s?

[Whispering]

MC: It was a little bit before then.

OG: That was around the '50s.

MC: Mm-hm.

OG: The early '50s, yeah.

AR: Alright. And—

MC: Growing up, we had, remember when we had the books to get sugar, shoes—

OG: Mm-hm.

MC: The government, I guess, issued them out. So my brother used to purchase more shoes than anybody else.

OG: I remember that.

CR: How about when the Marines bring them trucks up there at Christmas time and they throw them bags, y'all remember that?

MC: Mm-hm.

OG: Mm-hm.

CR: Ok.

MC: No, this was little books you had to have to get coffee, sugar, and shoes.

CR: Don't remember that one.

AR: It's from the government you said?

MC: I guess it had to be from the government.

OG: Mm-hm. Because my, our brother used to use everybody's shoes, the tickets for the shoes.

CR: I'm sure we had it, but I just don't remember—

MC: Oh no, you pro-, you're not as old as we are anyway, so you wouldn't remember that one.

AR: And you said the marines would drive up into Batestown?

MC: At Christmas, at Christmas they would, yeah.

OG: Yeah.

CR: Throw bags out. Gir-, one'd be for girls and one for boys. They'd see a boy, they'd throw that bag for the boy, throw that bag for the girl.

AR: And did people know that they were coming?

CR: Oh yeah.

AR: And then everyone would just go out and meet them?

CR: See em go up the road, you know what's up.

OG: And they'd stop at your house.

CR: Mm-hm.

MC: Yeah, they stop because once they stop and they asked my mother— W-we never heard of the people.

CR: We would talk and they'd see if you've got kids or something.

MC: Yeah, but they just stopped and we didn't know who the, who the people they were looking for, I think they was in the wrong place, and he said, "Well, not gonna take this back, would y'all like to have it?" I think y'all was in North Carolina then, [Inaudible] or even Junior, I don't know which one. Then, uh, mom said, "Yes." So, [Laughs] we had a good Christmas because we were thinking we wouldn't have none

OG: I'll never forget, one Christmas, um, after they showed up, Mom was so excited because she said she really didn't have money to buy—

CR: Mm-hm. That's right.

OG: —Anything much for Christmas, and they came by and they left bags.

MC: Well, the Lions Club used to also.

OG: But they gave more food, I think.

CR: Mm-hm. They did.

MC: Yeah, they did, they, yeah, because, uh, Doctor Ferlazzo was into that one.

OG: Mm-hm.

MC: Yeah.

AR: What was this, the Lions?

MC: Lions Club.

AR: Lion?

MC: Mm-hm.

AR: Lions Club, what exactly is that?

MC: I don't know that—I don't even know if they still—I don't think they still have that, do they?

CR: It's like a, um, it's not like the Oddfellows or nothing like that, or maybe it is—

OG: I thought it was something like that.

CR: But Lions Club, I think, is for the community.

MC: I think it was something like—

CR: All, all little towns should have a Lions Club. I'm sure you got on where you're from.

Check the sign out—

[Laughter]

CR: —When you come to wherever it is you live and you can see it as your coming, they usually put the signs up for the Lions Clubs.

AR: I am not familiar with it. I know that there were things like that.

OG: They would know people that would know people—

CR: Mm-hm.

OG: —That would need a little extra help and that's why they would show up.

AR: Well that's nice.

OG: It was very nice.

AR: So, when you were much younger, did most of the people in Batestown—

[Home phone rings]

Note: The recording is briefly paused for the privacy of Ora's phone conversation.

AR: So, I was asking, um, when you were, when you were younger, were, d-did everybody in the area have cars?

MC: Eh, nope.

OG: No.

AR: There were some people who didn't? Your family had cars though, right?

OG: I think dad had—

MC: Dad had a car, yeah.

OG: Mm-hm.

MC: Yeah, and we used to go to see Grandma.

OG: Yeah. He had to get back and forth, back to work, so he had a car.

AR: Where did he work?

OG: Uh, he worked in the mine for a while, didn't he?

MC: I don't know about that.

OG: What was the other place he used to work?

CR: You got that list? About the pyrite mines?

AR: I do, but –

MC: I think its possum, is it possum? Possum Point?

AR: Possum Point? So he worked there? What kind of work did he do? Do you remember?

MC: Uh.

OG: I don't remember.

MC: All I know, I seen that little lunch bo-, that lunch box coming.

[Laughter]

CR: Probably building it up at the time. Cause my daddy worked down there for a while, for I think about the same time period, just building it. It was an, it was an electric company, so I think they built the foundations of it.

AR: Alright, is that what you can remember? Where he worked most of the time?

MC: Mm-hm.

OG: Yeah.

MC: Because he was old when I was born so I, uh, I don't know, I don't think he'd be still doing that [Laughter].

OG: I know my brother and I used to sit out on the step and wait for him to come home from work. Even though it was dark, we'd sit out there and wait.

CR: Mm-hm.

OG: Cause he'd bring us a piece of candy.

[Laughter]

AR: That's nice. A piece of candy that he would pick up on his way home, or?

OG: Mm-hm.

AR: Alright. And did your mother work any jobs?

OG: Yes.

MC: That wasn't until after he got sick though, wasn't it?

OG: Hm?

MC: She didn't work until after he had the stroke, wasn't it?

OG: I guess it was. Yes, gosh.

AR: Did she work on the base, in Quantico?

OG: No, she worked for a doctor. I think Doctor Ferlazzo. Uh.

MC: [Whispering] Because I remember, I guess when I was 14.

AR: So, Doctor Ferlazzo, w-what kind of, was he a doctor in Dumfries?

OG: Mm-hm.

MC: Family doctors.

OG: Yeah, family doctors.

AR: So, whenever somebody got sick, they would contact him?

OG: Mm-hm.

AR: Did he do house calls?

MC: Mm-hm.

OG: Mm-hm.

CR: He delivered me.

AR: Oh, really?

MC: Cousin Annie didn't do it?

CR: She might have been working for him, but he delivered me.

OG: What doctor delivered you?

MC: Now that's a good question.

CR: Probably Kline

OG: Doctor Philips?

MC: Oh, yeah, it probably was.
OG: I remember cause I was in the kitchen washing dishes and he came up and asked me did I want to see my baby sister and I told him no.
[Laughter]
AR: You said no?
MC: Thanks a lot Ora. [Laughs]
AR: Oh jeez. So, your mother worked for the doctor, do you know what kind of work she did? Just as—
OG: She worked in his, um, home.
AR: Oh, I see.
MC: [Speaking to Charlie about a photograph] I know the face, but I don't know exactly who it is.
CR: How about this one, Mary?
MC: I guess it's Laverne.
OG: Uh, yeah, Laverne.
MC: Mm-hm. Ora. Oh, ok.
[Laughter]
MC: Yeah, that is Laverne.
AR: Um, so could you just tell me a little more about your parents? Like, how would a typical week in their lives, what would that be like?
MC: Him in the garden, working and in the garden, and mommy in the kitchen. [Laughs]
OG: And, of course, mom did all the housework.
MC: Mm-hm.
OG: The washing and cooking.
MC: On a washboard.
AR: Mm.
OG: He probably never heard of a washboard.
AR: Oh, I know what a washboard is.
[Laughter]
MC: Until we got the machine, washing machine.
OG: Yeah, uh. Uh, I guess mom was everywhere because we told you about, she was the only one trying to climb up in the tree.
MC: Cause I wasn't gonna.
OG: [Laughs]
MC: She worked in the garden, she did everything, yeah she did.
AR: And what kind of food would she cook?
MC: She was a good cook.
AR: A good cook, huh?
OG: Excellent.
MC: Mm-hm.
OG: She would bake pies and cakes and fruitcakes.
MC: I think we had most, we had dessert almost every night.
OG: Yeah.
AR: And she was good with desserts then?
OG: Oh yeah.
MC: Oh yes.

OG: Lemon meringue pies and cobblers and cakes and—

MC: And she would say, “Go in that, go in that, uh, in the closet” and it was like a big closet under the steps, it’s where she kept all the canned food—

AR: Mh-hm.

MC: —That she had canned up, and she’d say, “Go in there and get some cherries out of there.” I’d say, “Yes!”

[Laughter]

MC: Cherry cobbler! [Laughs]

AR: Cherry cobbler. So, were most of her ingredients, uh, grown by her and the community, or were there some things that she would get from the store?

MC: Like flour and sugar, I guess, coffee.

OG: I think, cause we had apple trees.

MC: Peaches.

OG: Peach trees.

MC: [Inaudible].

OG: Cherries. We had [Inaudible].

MC: So, yeah, we, most everything you could want in a store, we already had it.

AR: Yeah.

MC: Except, like, the flour, the coffee, and the sugar.

AR: It sounds Batestown was very abundant in food.

MC: Uh, yep.

AR: Are any recipes, family recipes ever been passed down?

OG: Not really.

AR: Or was a lot of it just, just by experience and you knew what to do?

MC: We didn’t, I would watch her, but I didn’t—

OG: Occasionally I’ll go back and see if I can find a recipe, because I have a little stack of recipes I kept.

AR: Oh.

OG: So, sometimes when I want to know something from back then I would go in and see if I can find the recipes.

AR: So, did your grandparents live in Batestown as well?

OG: Mm hm. No.

AR: No?

MC: My father’s parents was already dead when we come along.

AR: Oh, I see.

MC: There was only one brother living, wasn’t it?

OG: Mm-hm. Mister Dawson [??].

MC: Mm-hm, and it was a lot of them, I think it was, what, seventeen or eighteen of them and he was the only one left, besides my dad. My mom’s parents lived on, 234? No, was that 234?

OG: No, I guess—

MC: Oh, Grandma.

OG: Grandma’s parents lived in Minnieville.

MC: Yeah, that’s right. And then she moved up there after, I guess, when my grandfather died, up on 234.

AR: Did your parents tell many stories about your grandparents?

MC: My grandfather was still living, uh, and my mom's mother, she was a good cook too. Yeah, it's just that they were mixed.

OG: Yeah.

MC: We found that out later, well we figured it though.

AR: Hm.

MC: What do you call it?

OG: Called who?

MC: My grandma. Because they were mixed, I mean she was mixed.

CR: Mulatto?

MC: Yeah.

OG: Yeah.

AR: Oh.

MC: She was, yeah.

AR: Do you remember who some of the oldest community member were?

OG: Uh. Uh.

MC: May have been Summer [??]. Oh, we had a cousin that lived to be 105, Mary Porter, well she was Mary Bates, then it's Mary Porter. She lived to be 105.

MC: Uh.

OG: Actually, she's on that co-, on that picture there.

OG: Where?

MC: On, Cousin Mae Mae.

OG: Oh, Mae Mae.

AR: So you remember her?

MC: Oh yeah.

CR: I do. I do too.

OG: Yes.

CR: Strong, religious woman.

OG: Oh, some people that lived on Batestown Road. There was Mister Kendall down there, they had the cow.

MC: [Laughs]

OG: And mom used to send us down there to get milk. So he'd go out and milk the cow.

AR: Yeah, and you'd get the milk for—

OG: Uh huh.

AR: —Just, what, a little bit of change, or?

OG: Yeah, a little bit of change, sometimes. If you didn't have any change, that was alright.

MC: Then there's Buckner, George Buckner.

OG: Uh huh.

CR: Mm-hm.

MC: And then Nancy.

AR: You said George Buckner?

MC: And his wife's name was, uh. I forgot just that fast.

CR: [Inaudible] wasn't it?

MC: No.

OG: Oh shoot.

MC: Louise, Louise Buckner.

OG: Yeah, ok.

MC: [Inaudible] uh, that was his sister.
CR: [Inaudible]
MC: Who, George Buckner?
CR: Mm-hm.
MC: Mm-hm
AR: So did any of the older people in Batestown ever speak much about the history of the community?
OG: Not to me.
MC: Not really, um, Mary Bates Thomas. Was that a Thomas that she married?
OG: That they got together about getting the church, you know, the premise of the church.
MC: Yeah, I think it was a Thomas.
OG: I think so.
CR: That's the one, John Thomas.
MC: Yeah, John Thomas.
OG: It was John Thomas and she was, uh, yeah.
AR: I also wanted to ask, is, was Batestown a segregated community?
MC: Yes.
OG: At that time, yes.
AR: So, all the people who lived there were black?
OG: Mm-hm.
MC: Mm-hm.
AR: Did anyone from outside of the community ever visit Batestown? For example—
MC: Dad's friend. Well, I call him his friend cause he used to come up and talk to dad. He used to own the store down in Dumfries.
AR: Who was that?
MC: Who was the, what, that white guy who used to come up and visit dad and they used to talk?
CR: Was it Garrison?
MC: Garri—Not, uh, what was his name? He had that store right in the cur-, uh, in Dumfries.
CR: Henry Reid? Henry Reid?
MC: Hm-mm.
CR: He had a store down there.
OG: Groners?
MC: Yeah, that's it.
CR: Groners?
MC: Mm-hm.
CR: Ok.
MC: [Inaudible]
CR: Henry Reid had a store, Thomas had a store.
OG: You remember those two brothers, Groner brothers? One had a store across the street from the other one?
MC: Well, but there wasn't no st-, no, I don't think it was a store across from his, you could see it was in the curve in Dumfries.
OG: Oh, I know what you're talking about.
MC: Where the house had run in to it before.
OG: Yeah, I know where you're talking about. Wow.

MC: What was his name?
AR: It wasn't Ratcliffe was it?
CR: No.
MC: Hm-mm.
OG: Hm-mm.
CR: I'll tell ya in a second. Uh, Norman Ginn.
OG: Yeah.
MC: Yeah, he used to come up and sit and talk with dad for a long time, yeah.
AR: Say that name again please?
CR: Norman Ginn.
AR: Norman.
MC: Ginn.
CR: G-I-N-N.
AR: Alright. How about any, w-w-were there any salesmen or anything like that who would come up to Batestown?
OG: Yeah, well.
MC: The Dents would come and sell fish on Fridays.
CR: Milk trucks. Milk trucks come up there too, remember?
OG: Not, not when I was there.
MC: Huhh-uh, not me. I remember them in Dale City when I first lived, uh, when we moved over, they used to, they used to, that's how we got milk then.
CR: Who did fish? The Dents did fish?
MC: Yeah, the Dents. I don't know—
OG: They would bring, sell fish.
MC: Wild fish, oh, that was—
CR: From Cherry Hill?
MC: Mm-hm.
AR: Cherry Hill?
MC: Mm-hm.
OG: Mm-hm.
AR: What was that name?
MC: The last name was—
CR: It was like a family called Dents.
MC: A family, yeah, Dents.
AR: The Dents. Alright, could you spell that las—
CR: D-E-N-T-S
AR: D-E-N-T. And they would just, what, go fishing in the—
MC: Mm-hm, we still do a lot of fishing.
CR: Mm-hm.
AR: Huh.
CR: And when they run out of corn liquor, they come up there fast and get that corn liquor.
[Laughter]
OG: Police came to, you know.
CR: Yeah, they would. They knew.
MC: They knew when the raid was gonna be so he couldn't find nothing.
CR: Mm-hm.

[Laughter]

AR: So, did the police ever come around Batestown?

CR: Yeah.

[Laughter]

AR: Just to cause trouble, or? [Laughs]

CR: No!

OG: No.

MC: No! Nope.

[Laughter]

CR: They used to come to our ball games and stuff like that too.

AR: Oh. So, would you ever—

CR: A lot of crowds.

AR: —Play other teams that would play in Batestown?

OG: Mm-hm.

AR: So they would, they would come in, so then people from, uh, you know, family members of that other team would come up there and—

OG: And maybe the next week or the next week after that then they'd go play them at their home base.

CR: Yeah, yeah, it wasn't families. It was different players and different teams.

AR: Alright, so it was mainly just, like—

CR: We was good.

MC: [Laughs]

AR: — Just the teams?

CR: Yeah, just the teams.

AR: Alright, so there weren't a whole lot of, um—

CR: It wasn't just families.

AR: —People watching though?

CR: Oh yeah!

OG: Yeah.

AR: Yeah, alright, yeah. That's what I was, meant by families, just that people would come to spectate.

CR: When I played, they used to come and sell beer and stuff and corn, I mean corn liquor and sandwiches, fish sandwich, chicken sandwich. That's what they did.

OG: Well, we were ladies so we didn't get that deep.

[Laughter]

CR: You might not have seen it, but it was on the sidelines.

AR: There wasn't a lot of—

MC: Tailgating

[Laughter]

CR: Tailgating. They'd do that at the church too.

MC: Oh god!

AR: Tailgating at the church?

CR: Yes sir.

MC: I guess they did.

OG: I think I saw it once.

MC: I never, I never bothered with the drinking part.

AR: With the what now?
MC: Drinks and partying.
AR: Drinking and partying?
MC: No.
AR: Yeah. Hm. Can you remember any important community events?
MC: Everything was basically around the church. Homecoming
[Inaudible]
OG: That was about the biggest thing on Mine Road.
MC: Christmas, Christmas program
OG: Was, uh, homecoming.
AR: Homecoming?
OG: At the church, yeah. People would come from miles around.
CR: From DC.
MC: Yeah.
AR: What exactly—
MC: Homecoming is like people that leave—
AR: Mm-hm.
MC: —Leave the area, but they always came back for homecoming.
AR: That's awesome.
OG: And the church would serve dinner.
AR: And it would, would it be at the, around the same time every year?
MC: Every year.
CR: Mm-hm.
OG: Mm-hm.
MC: Cause every church had it, in the community, well, you know, in the area would have it. So, when we'd have ours, they would come to ours, and then they had theirs and we'd go there.
AR: Oh. So, how far did some of these people come from? Were most of them still kind of living in the area of the church?
MC: I guess Stafford would be about the, and DC.
OG: DC and Stafford.
AR: Alright.
OG: But we didn't get to see them every Sunday or anything like that.
MC: No.
AR: And how long did the two of you live in Batestown?
OG: I was about twenty I guess, twenty-one.
MC: When Steward got out the service.
OG: Around when I got married, so.
MC: After Steward got out the service, that's when we went to Dale City. Marky was six years old when we went to Dale City and he's fifty-nine, will be fifty-nine so [Laughs]. That's how long I've been here.
OG: You've been, you were over here before me.
MC: Well Tammy was a little girl, Ora, and Tammy is a grown woman. [Laughs]
OG: Yeah. She's in her fifties.
AR: Who's Tammy?
MC: The girl that came down.
OG: She just came down stairs.

AR: And is that one of your daughters, or?

MC: Nope.

[Laughter]

CR: Don't forget that.

MC: Well, I guess, my brother and his wife had took her and they moved to Fredericksburg and my mom lived in Dumfries and she didn't want to go, so my mom said to leave her here with me. So when mom, when Ora and her husband moved over here, my mom moved and Tammy came with her. [Laughs]

AR: Mm-hm.

MC: And guess what? She's still here. [Laughs]

[Laughter]

MC: I know Monty was six cause he started school, in Dale City.

OG: He, he must, been about forty-nine years, I think, we've been over here

MC: We've been right behind the school. We haven't been out here that long, that long ago.

OG: About forty-nine years.

AR: Hm. So, um, do you remember, um, any activities around Quantico Creek? Did you swim there?

OG: We used to go fishing.

AR: You'd go fishing?

MC: And sunrise service on Easter.

CR: On the mine?

MC: No, Quantico.

OG: Down on the peers.

AR: Peer? There was a peer?

MC: On Quantico.

OG: A real small one.

[Laughter]

MC: That was about it.

AR: Did the, uh, did the church baptize in the creek as well?

OG: Yes, but they did that on, uh, Mine Road.

MC: Yep. Yeah, I was baptized in that.

OG: In the creek. Do you remember that?

MC: Mm-hm.

CR: Did y'all swim in the mine?

MC: Hm-mm.

OG: Mm-hm.

MC: Swim?

OG: Miss, Miss Lulu used to come down and, cause momma'd make sure she wasn't drunk.

[Laughter]

AR: What now?

CR: It's the truth, it's the God's truth.

[Laughter]

CR: You had to be there

[Laughter]

CR: It is the God's truth. Explain that, how all the kids used to go down there to the mine and Miss Lulu would bring all her kids. She had a whole group of them, and that's when she did— They'd be, in order to get to the mine, they'd come by your house.

OG: Mm-hm.

CR: And that's when they would, everybody would ask to go with Miss Lulu, cause she was the adult. So they would go and ask momma, "Can I go swim with Miss—" cause all of their friends and stuff. And momma, being momma, looking out for her kids, made sure she wasn't drunk.

AR: [Laughs] Oh, I see.

[Laughter]

CR: That's just the way it is.

OG: She'd have 8 or 10 kids with her.

AR: So, when you'd go swimming, would there usually be an adult there?

OG: She was there.

[Laughter]

CR: Yeah, most the time though. [Inaudible]

OG: Mm-hm.

CR: Snakes and everything'd be down there.

AR: [Laughs]

CR: But we'd go.

MC: Johnsons— The road at Holloway Hill.

CR: Mm-hm.

MC: It was a road that went down and there was a house over there.

CR: Mm-hm.

MC: Didn't the Johnsons used to live over there?

CR: Yes.

OG: Mm-hm.

CR: Mm-hm. Calvin's mother.

AR: So, when you moved out of Batestown, I know the two of you left at different times, correct?

OG: Mm-hm.

MC: Mm-hm.

AR: Um, what were your reasons for leaving?

OG: Well, I guess my reason, we just wanted, well we had trailers and we wanted a house and we liked the area over here.

MC: We wanted running water. [Laughs]

OG: [Laughs] Yes.

AR: I can understand that.

OG: Yes.

MC: It wasn't fun anymore. But we didn't pay too much attention, we were growing up, we would go to that out, that outhouse at night time. [Laughs]

AR: Yeah, that got a little old I guess?

MC: Yeah.

OG: My brother was gonna scare me, but I scared him.

MC: [Laughs]

OG: He would get mad because he said I had to go to the bathroom every night.

MC: You did.

OG: Ok, thank you.

[Laughter]

OG: And Momma would make him go out with me because it was dark.

AR: He didn't like that much, huh?

[Laughter]

OG: No, he did not like it. And I saw him, he was standing, there was a crack, like that, and I saw him go behind and was kind of in front of that crack and I said, "Mm-hm, he's gonna try to scare me when I come out!" So what I did, I came out quiet and scared him while he was standing there waiting for me to come out.

[Laughter]

MC: We had a lot of fun though. I just can't complain really.

OG: No. No.

CR: Hm-mm.

OG: We had fun.

MC: The thing about, if they asked me what kind of childhood, I'd say I had a happy one

[Laughs]. That's what I'd be telling them.

OG: Yeah, because, um, our half-brothers had been real close. And if we went to their house, their wives would, "Now I know you want a sandwich. Well, I-I'm gonna fix you a sandwich, and you'd have to eat at their house."

CR: Mm-hm.

MC: Yep.

AR: Who was this?

MC: Our, our brother, half-brothers and their wives.

OG: Wives, oh, yeah.

AR: So, do you still stay in contact with anyone who still lives over by Batestown?

OG: I don't know anybody over there now.

CR: Ain't nobody over there.

MC: Hm-mm.

OG: Hm-mm.

MC: Nope. Nope, there's no one there.

AR: So you haven't—

MC: The last, the last one who was there was our cousin Leroy, and when he died, that was it.

CR: Yep.

MC: I guess the only one next would be Arlene Susie.

CR: Susie's in Florida.

MC: She's living in Florida?

CR: Mm-hm.

MC: Well who's in the house? I thought it was her.

CR: The son, her son.

MC: Oh, her son, oh, ok.

OG: Mm-hm.

CR: She's been gone about three, four years.

MC: Well then, I know why I haven't seen her.

[Laughter]

OG: Oh, you, I think you mentioned that we still go over there.

MC: Yeah, yeah, we still go to church, but other than that.

AR: So you drive up there for church.

OG: Mm-hm.

MC: Mm-hm.

AR: And that's about it though. Um, how would you say the area has changed since what you remember as a child?

OG: Well I would, personally, it was more, a little town I guess you would call it, because the houses were close and they weren't scattered here and there, and—

MC: So I guess it was family because we were kin to the Kendalls.

CR: Mm-hm.

MC: And the Bateses lived there, and the Johnsons.

OG: Johnsons, Thomases.

MC: Thomases and Johnsons, so it was family.

CR: There was more land, there wasn't the Park taking over.

MC: Right.

OG: Yep. A lot more houses.

AR: There were parts of Batestown that are now part of the park, is that what you're saying?

CR: A whole lot of it.

MC: Mm-hm. I think it's, I think in the next ten years it won't, they will have all, it will be a park, yeah.

AR: Are they still trying to buy land from people around there?

OG: Mm-hm!

AR: Or, trying to acquire it?

MC: Yep.

AR: Hm. Well, is there anything that I haven't asked or that we haven't covered that you might want to share? Anything that you think would be important to understanding the Batestown community? Or even any stories?

CR: Any big people ever come from that area that y'all can remember? That made ya proud, or something like that?

MC: I don't think anybody did anything worth—

[Laughter]

MC: W-well, I meant, well, what I mean is ev-, uh, I guess everybody made-, everybody was.

CR: Everybody was good?

MC: I mean, everybody done, had something, something gonna be there, but if I didn't see it, I can't say nothing about it.

CR: Porter brothers?

MC: Porter brothers?

CR: Mm-hm.

MC: Well, uh, Wilmer started his own business and I guess it was brother's all worked there, I guess, I don't know.

OG: I think they did, when we first started anyway.

MC: Gara-, I guess the garage.

CR: Mm-hm.

AR: Mm-hm, the Porter Brother's Garage?

MC: Mm-hm.

AR: Was that in Batestown or just—

MC: See, I don't know that's, cause that's close down to, yeah, but he was born, uh, I mean, you know, they came off of Mine, uh, Batestown.

OG: Yeah.

AR: There's one thing I-I kind of forgot to ask actually, about businesses. What businesses can you remember that were around Batestown? I know we were talking about the Beer Garden and—

[Laughter]

MC: That was about, that was about it, yeah.

CR: Thomas's Store, y'all don't remember Thomas's store?

OG: Hm?

MC: Thomas's Store?

OG: Thomas?

CR: The store up there.

OG: I do remember asking if you remembered when that, uh, a time that there was a store for a while.

CR: Mm-hm. It was Thomas's Store.

OG: Oh, well I didn't remember that.

CR: That's Thomas's Store, Mm-hm.

AR: Now is that the store that was across the street from the church?

CR: Yes.

AR: So, you remember?

OG: Across the street from the church?

AR: From Little Union.

MC: Which church?

CR: Little Union, remember?

OG: Hm-mm.

AR: Hm.

MC: I don't remember no store being back there. Because I would have probably been, if there was a store I would have been there, instead of walking all the way to Dumfries.

AR: Did you walk to Dumfries a lot to go to the store?

MC: Oh yeah. Yes. Several times a day sometimes. [Laughs]

CR: Did y'all ever sell bottles? Bring the bottles and stuff like that? Get pennies for ell of em?

MC: Yeah, yeah, used to get pennies for them. I like that ones with the, it was looked like a bottle but it had like Kool Aid in it or something. You remember? And you could chew the liquid because it was wax.

OG: I remember them. The bottle was wax.

CR: Yeah, but I'm talking about real bottles.

OG: And it was a drink in the wax.

AR: Oh, yeah, those.

OG: And then you—

MC: Chew the wax.

AR: It was like a candy type of thing, is that what you're talking about?

OG: Mm-hm.

MC: Well it had a, uh, it was a drink in it, but it was just, it was wax.

CR: Yeah, you could bite the top off.

AR: I've had something like that.

CR: They still make em.

MC: Oh, they do?

OG: I didn't know.

CR: Gotta go to country stores to get em now.

AR: Yeah. I don't know, if there's anything else you would like to talk about?

OG: No, I think that's it.

MC: Hmm.

OG: I guess I could say, all the things that went on, it was basically, it was a good place to live.

MC: Yep.

OG: People kind of looked out for each other.

AR: Mm-hm. I've been hearing a lot of that.

MC: Yeah, they did.

OG: I enjoyed it.

AR: Alright, then, well.

MC: Are you taking any pictures?

AR: I will then, uh, end the interview and that concludes everything. Thank you both for speaking with me, I really appreciate it.

OG: Thank you.

MC: Isn't that your picture?

End



In the front- Gladys Bates, Ora Bates (Ora Bates Glass' mother), unknown, reverend's wife, Annie Reid (Charles Reid's grandmother). The men in the back are unknown.



1953 Little Union Baptist Church gospel choir.



From left to right- Unknown (faded), Ora Glass née Bates, Leroy Bates (Ora's brother), Ora Bates (Ora's mother), Reverend Peter Carter in the front, French Bates in background, Robert Bates, George Buckner, Emily Lindsay, Dewitt Bates, Nathaniel. Photo taken on August 3rd 1950.

Interview with Jerome Johnson

Jerome Johnson Biography

“We had ball games, we played ball out there. We had a little team... And they’d sit around up there and watch us play ball. We played, when we was kids we played ball every day. Girls and boys, played every day.”

Jerome Johnson was born on September 5, 1950 to Lottie Kendall Johnson and Daniel Chancellor Johnson. Jerome has one older brother, Daniel Johnson Junior. Jerome’s father was raised in Quantico and is a descendant of John and Mary Thomas. He owned the Johnson’s Café, which mainly catered to the black marines from the Marine Corps Base Quantico. Jerome’s mother grew up on Hickory Ridge as the daughter of John Kendall Senior, and she owned the Beer Garden in Batestown for a period of time. Jerome was not raised in Batestown, but he spent much of his time with his family there and played on the Batestown baseball team, the BT Express.

In Jerome’s interview he spoke about playing baseball and how successful the team was. Jerome described what the Beer Garden was like when his mother owned the place. He explained that his grandfather, John Kendall Senior, built the Beer Garden and many other buildings in Batestown and the surrounding area. Jerome's interview offers some insight into race relations in the area.



Oral History Guidelines for Prince William County

Oral History Interview Agreement

This Interview Agreement is made and entered into by the Interviewer(s):

Adam Rayburn

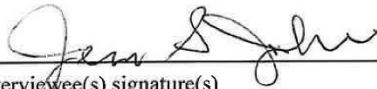
and the Interviewee(s):

Jerome S Johnson

Interviewee(s) agrees to participate in one or more interviews with the Interviewer(s) named above. This Agreement relates to any and all materials originating from the interviews, namely notes, tape recordings, video recordings, any transcripts or other written manuscripts prepared from or using the notes, tape recordings and/or video recordings, or any images that might be used during the interview or created during the interview.

In consideration of mutual covenants, conditions, and terms set forth below, the parties hereto hereby agree as follows:

1. Interviewee(s) and Interviewer(s) understand that the copy of the interview in the possession of the interviewer is the property of Prince William County, and will be available in its entirety to researchers and the general public.
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	7-2-19
Interviewee(s) signature(s)	Date

	7-2-19
Interviewer(s) signature(s)	Date

Prince William County
Office of Planning and
Department of Parks Recreation and Tourism, Historic Preservation Division

Oral History with Jerome Johnson

Interviewer: Adam Rayburn

Interviewees: Jerome Johnson

Location: Jerome Johnson's home at 16593 Badger Ct, Dumfries, VA 22026

Date: July 2, 2019

Adam Rayburn=AR; Jerome Johnson=JJ

Note: Near the end of the interview, Jerome's wife, Linda, briefly greets the interviewer and is identified as "LJ."

AR: Today is Tuesday, July 2nd, 2019, My name is Adam Rayburn and I am an intern working with the historic preservation division on the Batestown Oral history Project. We are at the home of Jerome Johnson in Dumfries, Virginia. Mister Johnson, welcome and thank you for agreeing to speak with me today.

JJ: Ok

AR: Eh, can you introduce yourself and tell me your name, please

JJ: Uh, my name is, uh, Jerome Johnson.

AR: And could you spell that?

JJ: Uh, J-E-R-O-M-E, Johnson J-O-H-N-S-O-N

AR: And do you go by any nicknames?

JJ: No.

AR: And how do you prefer to be addressed?

JJ: Jerome.

AR: Just Jerome.

JJ: Yeah.

AR: Um, can you tell me when you were born?

JJ: I was born in 1950.

AR: What date?

JJ: September 10.

AR: And where were you born?

JJ: I was born in Alexandria, Virginia.

AR: So, you lived in Batestown at one point?

JJ: Um, not exactly, never lived in Batestown, but all my family and my mother was from Batestown.

AR: I see, so you would visit them often?

JJ: Oh we was up there every day.

AR: Every day.

JJ: Yeah.

AR: Um, and what are your parents' names?

JJ: Uh, my parents name is, uh, Daniel Chancellor Johnson and his nickname was Chancey.

AR: Chaney?

JJ: Yeah, C-H-A-N-C, C-Y

AR: Say that again? I'm sorry.

JJ: Chancy, Chancy, C-H-A-N-C-Y, I think C-Y. Or E-Y.

AR: Alright, um.

JJ: And my mother's name was Lottie Johnson.

AR: Can you spell that?

JJ: L-O-T-T-I-E. And she was a Kendall.

AR: Alright, that's, I was going to ask that, what her maiden name was. She was a Kendall.

JJ: And my father, his mother was a Thomas, so.

AR: And, do you know where they were born?

JJ: They were born right there in Dumfries. There in, right there in Dumfries, yeah.

AR: And they were raised in Batestown? Both of them?

JJ: Yeah, yeah. No, well, my dad wasn't raised in Batestown, he was raised in Quantico.

AR: Oh.

JJ: And my mother was raised in, on Hickory Ridge. Ok.

AR: Do you, do you remember when their birthdays were, or when they were born.

JJ: Oh yeah, uh, my daddy was born in 1909, April 4th. April, I'm sorry, April 6th, yeah. And my momma was born in 1912, February 4th.

AR: And do you have any siblings?

JJ: I have a brother, yeah. He's, uh, Daniel Johnson Jr.

AR: Do, or does your brother live in the area?

JJ: No he's, ha, he's over there in Roatan, Honduras.

AR: Honduras?

JJ: Yeah.

AR: Oh wow.

JJ: But he has a house here in Dumfries.

AR: Oh, so he has a home here?

JJ: Huh?

AR: Did you say he has a home here?

JJ: Yeah, he has a home here. But he's got nobody but himself so he's over there in, uh, over there, over there in the resort area, over there, staying over there.

AR: Well that's exciting.

JJ: Right. He is a retired US Marshal, so. He's got no kids, no wife [laughter] so.

AR: Alright, now we'll, um, get into Batestown. What comes to mind when you think of Batestown?

JJ: Just, uh, what we grew up and where we used to have fun playing. We played, you know, games like all the kids would do back then. You know, there wasn't no computers, there wasn't no, uh, you know, cell phones, there wasn't none of that. We played marbles, we'd shoot. We played basketball out there, we had a little rim, we played basketball. Played baseball every day. We played, we played softball with the girls every day up there. Uh, you know, that's what and, and, uh, the old people they, they gathered around a big tree and they talked and, you know, they'd drink a little spirits [laughter]. And, uh, it was family, so they'd talk about, you know, everything going on with them and what somebody was doing, you know, and stuff like that. And there was always people coming around so they was always gathering. And we kids would go out there and play. There wasn't a whole lot of traffic on the road cause a lot of people didn't even have cars then, so.

AR: Hm. So, the house you lived in, was that in Alexandria?

JJ: No, the house we lived in, we lived in Triangle.

AR: Oh, so—

JJ: My grandfather had the big house up there on Mine Road and that's where everybody congregated at because all his daughters w-were beside him, lived beside him, and, uh, his son lived beside him. So, they all lived on land that, uh, my grandfather gave to em. So, all the family was right around there, so. When you go up there it was just like being with family, you know. It was like if your mother and father lived and all your sisters and brothers come around, so. That's how things were.

AR: And your grandfather was?

JJ: John Kendall.

AR: Oh, John Kendall.

JJ: Yeah.

AR: And is that on your, your—

JJ: Mother's side.

AR: Mother's side.

JJ: Yeah.

AR: I know we talked about a John Kendall.

JJ: Yeah, we talked about him. Ok, my daddy, his mother was Lucy Thomas, and her father was Weilman Thomas, and then her, uh, Weilman Thomas was Mary Thomas's son.

AR: Oh.

JJ: That's the one that gave the church and the, and the school. You know, she had land that she used to own and run a store up there.

AR: Could you spell her name for me?

JJ: Weilman?

AR: Yeah.

JJ: I think it's, don't get me right, W-I-E or E-I-L-M-A-N.

AR: Alright. So, when you went up to Batestown you would usually stay at your grandfather's house then?

JJ: No, we'd go up there, I lived, we lived in Triangle.

AR: Tons of family there, so—

JJ: Yeah, you know, it was, Triangle was two or three miles away, so we went up there, be up there all day playing. Be with the, be around the family.

AR: And would you usually just drive up there, or—

JJ: Yeah, we would walk or drive, no we didn't walk, we drove up there, you know. And we'd be up there all day, yeah.

AR: So, school, you mentioned that you went to Washington Reid.

JJ: Yeah, well, you know, after they closed, uh, Cabin Branch down.

AR: Mm-hm.

JJ: And then I guess they made a school, the Washington Reid right up there on 234.

AR: Mm-hm.

JJ: Then, Uh, then I went to, uh, then they'd bus us to Manassas, all the way up to Manassas. I, but at the end they desegregated the schools, so I wound up, uh, uh, graduating from over in Garfield High School. It was, uh, you know, a predominately white school. In 1968, so.

AR: So, do you know what happened, um, to the, uh, Manassas Regional, was that—

JJ: Well it was called Jennie Dean.

AR: Yeah.

JJ: When went up there, it was called Jennie Dean. When they desegregated schools, they made that a Junior High School.

AR: Alright.

JJ: And they don't call it Jennie Dean, they call Dean.

AR: Mm.

JJ: Yeah.

AR: So you, you mentioned when Cabin Branch (School) closed, did you ever go to Cabin Branch?

JJ: No, I didn't ever go.

AR: I imagine a lot of your family did though.

JJ: Yeah. The ones older than I am. I think I got another cousin, you talked to him, Claude. I don't think he went, I think he's—

AR: He didn't mention it.

JJ: He didn't, naw, because he didn't go there, you know. But somebody older than him went to Cabin Branch, yeah.

AR: He did mention the, uh, the bus route.

JJ: Yeah.

AR: Very detailed, it went to—

JJ: Yeah, all the way up to Manassas, yeah.

AR: Definitely a trip. Um, so w-what were the teachers like at Washington Reid?

JJ: Oh the teachers was, you know, most of em were, uh, th-they, they teached, you know, they made sure you got your lessons, they made sure, you know, that you had respect for the teachers. They made sure that, that, at that time they would beat ya. [Laughter]

AR: Hm, yeah.

JJ: Uh, if you didn't, if you, if you act up in class, they would beat ya. And they would, uh, most of the time they, they would, they would tell you, show you how to do, do stuff and, and the ABC's, arithmetic, and all that stuff, and then, uh, and then sometimes you would, you, at that time they had somebody there that came from some, [sigh] religious, and they would take about an hour of our time, come in there and teach us about religion and all that stuff, but you can't do that now. [Laughs]

AR: Yeah. Huh.

JJ: But it was, the teachers were, they were good, they were good. They made sure, they wanted the kids to learn, but some of em, some of em kind of hard to learn, yeah. But, you know, sometimes they didn't show up to class cause, well in elementary school, after it got about, I think sixth grade, seventh grade, some of em didn't even come back, ya know.

AR: Hm. What do you think, uh, was the reason for most of them—

JJ: Well, the reason why some of em just they didn't value ed— they didn't value education, or their parents just didn't care, or hunting season or whatever. [Laughter]

AR: I've seen that before [Laughter]

JJ: Or whatever.

AR: So was your family pretty, um, you said value education—

JJ: Oh yeah, she made us get up many a morning when I didn't feel like going to school. But she said, "You getting out of here." Yeah, you know. We, uh, yeah we went to school, you know, she, if we missed the bus she would take us to school in the car. [Laughter]. So, same thing I do with my kids right here. I've got a daughter and granddaughter. Like I said, my daughter graduated from University of Virginia and my daughter, granddaughter graduated from the, uh, James Madison and now she's going, in August, going in to, going to Temple University for her Master's degree.

AR: That's awesome.

JJ: So I always tell em, I say either you, either, uh, either you get out of here and you get to work, go to work or you go to school. One way or the other, you know.

AR: Yeah.

JJ: Or you go in the service, ok? So, there ain't no— and I didn't really, didn't have to make em do it, cause they, they knew. You know, how things are now, if you don't have uh, uh, a degree or something in there, it's kind of hard out here now. Even a degree won't get you the best job. You have to get an advanced degree, yeah.

AR: So, Manassas Regional, or Jennie Dean—

JJ: Mm-hm.

AR: — It, uh, when, uh, the schools around here were desegregated you went to a different school, right?

JJ: Ok, when we first started out in Manassas, I was in the tenth, no in the eleventh grade, they give us a choice of whether you want to go to Garfield, or Woodbridge, or Stonewall, or either, or come back to Jennie Dean. Ok, most the time I went, I went back to Jennie Dean. The teachers at Jennie Dean were good. They made sure that you was ready to go out in the world. They made sure, they tell you the difference between black and white, and what you had to do. With the white schools, they really didn't care. They didn't, you know, they didn't care whether you went to school out, they didn't care, the teachers. Uh, so, th-they were, they were good, I can, I say, I wish I had finished at, uh, at Jennie Dean because at the end, when you was a senior, you had to get up on top of the stage in front of everybody and say a speech. That was part of getting out of cla— graduating. If you didn't say a speech you didn't graduate. [Laughter]

AR: That's interesting.

JJ: Yeah.

AR: So it was a pretty small student body?

JJ: Yeah, it was—

AR: I guess in comparison to some of the schools nowadays.

JJ: Compared to now, yeah. At that time, at this time when I went to school it wasn't no Hispanic, it wasn't no Africans, it wasn't nothing but black and white. That's all. You know, and we took the brunt of it, you know.

AR: So, about Batestown, um, what did people around there do for leisure activities?

JJ: Well, like I said, they, they played cards. They would sit around, talk about, you know, things happening or what the family was gonna do. They, they went and got, they ate crabs, you know, and uh—

AR: Crabs?

JJ: Yeah, crabs.

AR: Where would they catch these?

JJ: Oh, right there in the Potomac River, down there. Yeah. And go eat them and we'd cook em.

AR: Awesome.

JJ: Uh. What else, um, mostly they played— and then we had ball games, we played ball out there. We had a little team. I'll show you pictures later on. And they'd sit around up there and watch us play ball. We played, when we was kids we played ball every day. Girls and boys, played every day. It wasn't no kids sitting around with video games.

AR: Hm, yeah.

JJ: And, usually all the kids was in good shape, they wasn't big and fat, you know, like that. They played girls, played— girls could play just, them girls we played with could play just as good as the boys, I mean. And then, you know, then we had a team. Me and Charlie was on the team, uh, we went all over, all over Virginia, played softball. We had a softball team, and uh—

AR: Do you remember the name of that team?

JJ: Yeah, uh, Batestown Express.

AR: Batestown Express.

JJ: But we called it BT Express.

AR: Hm

JJ: Ok.

AR: So, when you, when you had these baseball games, would you have some of them in Batestown?

JJ: Oh yeah, we had a little field in Batestown.

AR: And people from, from other— Other teams would come and play?

JJ: Yeah, come up and play. We had a rocky, hah, a rocky field. You know, it wasn't the best, you know, but you had to play with what you had, you know. We played on the same field they did, but, you know. You might go out there and catch— A ball might be coming to you and hit a rock and it might [sound effect] go over that way, you know?

AR: [Laughter]

JJ: But, uh, we played ball— it was, they would find, people, no matter what poverty level you're on, people find their own enjoyment, you know.

AR: Mm-hm.

JJ: So.

AR: Did you have any rivalries with any of the other teams?

JJ: Oh yeah, we, we plaid ball against people in the Stafford.

AR: Oh.

JJ: And then, uh, up in Woodbridge, we played a team up in Woodbridge. And then after Woodbridge they'd go to little, the little store and drink beer and stuff, and you know, brag about who did this and who did that. And that's, you know, that's, uh—But we always had something to do. I mean it ain't like it is now, ya know, but. And we had, one time we had a bus, uh, we got a bus, I forgot where that bus come from, somebody had one, and we used to go all down into Culpepper, go down into Orange, play ball. Go over to Maryland somewhere and play ball. Go over to Lorton play ball. We went all over the place. We were good, we were good, yeah.

AR: Yeah, that's what Charlie was saying.

JJ: Yeah.

AR: Pretty good, huh?

JJ: Yeah.

AR: That's awesome. Um, were there, when you would play in Batestown, were there concessions or people selling food?

JJ: Well yeah, people, people made a lot of money off of us. You know, you know we would go around ask for a cont-, you know, contributions, you know. Some people'd give us some, some wouldn't, you know. Uh, you know we, well you know, you know at that time balls, bats and balls cost money and stuff like that.

AR: Mm-hm.

JJ: And, you know, some people, like I said, some people give, go up– My uncle used to go around with a, with a cigar box and ask for a contribution. He'd maybe come back with four dollars [Laughter]. You know, then you got a whole crowd of people, then you have people selling, selling beer, liquor, all around, you know, over there making money.

AR: Liquor?

JJ: W-well yeah, yeah, well at this time, yeah.

AR: [Laughter]

JJ: And, uh, it was illegal, but, they and, they wouldn't give em nothing, you know.

AR: Yeah. Do you know if there were any, um, stories, legends, or folk tales from around Batestown?

JJ: Hm. No, not– [Inaudible] Charlie Rei– [Laughter] Charlie's dad used to, well w-we all came from Hickory Ridge. Charlies daddy, they used to have pears and peach trees and stuff up in Hickory Ridge where the old people planted, and I mean, actually, them pears was big and juicy. But Charlie Reid's daddy told everybody there was a mountain lion or bears up there so nobody would go up there.

AR: [Laughter]

JJ: So he'd go up there, he'll go up there–

AR: And more pears for him!

JJ: Yeah, go up there and get the pears. And mom, and my mom used to make pear preserves out of it. You know the kind.

AR: Mm-hm.

JJ: I went up there one time with Charlie, his brother Pete, and his daddy Theo and [Laughs] and Charlie was, he, Charlie, he made Charlie go up there in the, the tree, shake the tree, and the pears would hit Charlie upside the head and, and he was crying cause they were big pears hitting him upside the head. And Charlies daddy would say, "shake that tree boy!" [Laughter]

AR: Oh jeez.

JJ: But, uh, that's the only thing that I know. A lot of other stuff goes on, I'd rather not say.

AR: Yeah, I understand. Um, could you describe what Batestown looked like from your memory?

JJ: Well it really wasn't no town. It was just a set of houses, like, the middle of the house was, uh, we called the big house, was where my grandfather lived at. Ok, if you look at it towards the houses, they had a big tree in front of his house and he had a bench sitting right there. That's where everybody congregated at, right there. Ok, to the right, if you're facing his house, to his left was his daughter, Katie. To his right was his daughter, Henrietta, and further to your right was his son, James, uh, Jimmy. And behind him was his son, Johnny. So everybody came up there and then grandpapa, John Kendall, he owned land, he bought, that's where Charlie and his Mother's land, bought land from my grandfather who lived up there. And across the road was, was people on the Thomas Track, which my daddy's family's from. Mary Thomas, they owned that land. So, they're still up there but they ain't nobody paying no taxes up there on it.

AR: Hm.

JJ: And they don't have a right of way or something out of it. Uh, that's what they call a Grandma Mary. But that was my daddy's great great grandmother. And she owned all the land on the other side of Mine Road. Down there in the, where she had the store at. And it, it was just houses every, just go around like houses every– really wasn't no town. The church was, was up the road a little bit further. She had the church, she gave the church, uh, land for to build a church, and then she gave land for the, uh, school up there.

AR: She being Mary Thomas?

JJ: Yeah, Mary Thomas, yeah.

AR: So the roads were dirt roads?

JJ: They were dirt roads at first and my momma was, she said she got electricity put on, uh, uh, brought up the road. Everybody used the kerosene and outhouses and stuff like that.

AR: Mm-hm.

JJ: And she got, she told me she got the electric company to bring electric up there, and, I think she had something to do with, I don't know if she did or not, about get-getting the roads paved up there.

AR: Hm. Do you know when this was?

JJ: Oh, this was— I was just a little boy then, I mean, it was back in the '50s.

AR: Oh.

JJ: Nobody at one time up there had running water.

AR: Mm-hm.

JJ: I'll say you had to go to the well, wind the water up. The bathrooms outside. Uh, and then, uh, I think eventually they, uh, you know, I guess when they got electricity, they started getting the-the running water and, and the outhouses, they did away with em.

AR: Mm-hm.

JJ: But, uh, they made their own waste, sewer, well, sanitary and sewer somewhere, they dug a hole somewhere. You know, it wasn't like it is now, you gotta go through the county and all that now for that.

AR: Yeah. So, do you remember fetching water when you were younger? From the well?

JJ: I never had to fetch no water.

AR: You never had to?

JJ: I never had to fetch no water, thank goodness, cause my mother and father, ok, my-my daddy owned, he run the restaurant down in Quantico.

AR: Oh really?

JJ: Yeah.

AR: What was that called?

JJ: Johnson's Café.

AR: Ah.

JJ: Ok, and they catered to the Marines down there. He got—and, um, we lived in Triangle, so Triangle had running water and I don't remember an outhouse. Uh, in fact I know there wasn't no outhouse right there in Triangle where we lived at.

AR: Charlie mentioned something about the Blue Bird Inn? Do you know something about that?

JJ: Yeah, Blue Bird, Blue Bird Inn was in, uh, in Triangle.

AR: Mm-hm.

JJ: Ok, uh, uh, when they had that, they had Blue Bird Inn in Triangle and they had Johnson's Café in Quantico. At that time the service was segregated. You couldn't, a black Marine couldn't go on the front street of Quantico an-and buy, get anything to eat, so they had to come to Quantico. Bill Cosby used to come down to my mother's café cause he was stationed in Quantico.

AR: Say who?

JJ: Bill Cosby.

AR: Oh.

JJ: Yeah.

AR: Hah.

JJ: Yeah.

AR: That's interesting.

JJ: And then, there was always a big thing happening when they used to have the relays, Quantico relays, back in the '60s. All the athletes and all the people would come down there from Penn, from the Penn relay and everywhere, and they would all be in the café. You know, be in there drinking beer, you know, sodas, maybe drinking sodas and that's where everybody congregated at down there.

AR: Hm.

JJ: And, let's see, who else? I think, uh, I think my dad was saying that, like, Willy Mays came down there when he was in the service, came down there. I know Bill Cosby, uh, that's all I can remember. Well, see, Bill Cosby was stationed in Quantico at the, at the, uh, Navy hospital. So I know he used to come in there.

AR: Hm.

JJ: But at that time, he wasn't famous, so he was like any other Marine.

AR: Yeah.

JJ: He was a Marine I think, yeah, he was a Marine.

Note: In the previous interview, Jerome said, "go down to the food store," which was mistaken for "Johnny's Food Store."

AR: Now, um, speaking about just, um, businesses in the area, you mentioned before that, uh, you couldn't go to Johnny's food store, could you tell me a little more about what Johnny's food store is?

JJ: Johnny?

AR: Johnny's f-food store.

JJ: I never heard of that.

AR: Oh, I m— I might have transcribed it incorrectly then. Johnson's food store or something like that?

JJ: No, no, I think, uh, at that time they only had, well if you wanted to go to actually a supermarket you had to go to Manassas, Fredericksburg, I think Manassas or Fredericksburg or Alexandria. Ok?

AR: Alexandria.

JJ: My mother had a little store up in Batestown, up there, they called it Beer Garden.

AR: Mm-hm.

JJ: But, uh, and then she had— and then my daddy had the restaurant down in Quantico.

AR: So your mother—

JJ: Huh?

AR: Your mother owned the Beer Garden?

JJ: Yeah. Yeah. Cause, uh, her dad, John Kendall built it. He gave each of his, each of his kids a half an acre of land.

AR: Mm-hm.

JJ: So, that-that half an acre that-that she had, she put a house on it and a little beer garden. It's up there now. I can sh— you know, it's up there now.

AR: Really?

JJ: Yeah. Uh.

AR: So, would she just go up there every day to work?

JJ: Yeah, she'd go up there, and then my daddy had the restaurant down in Quantico.

AR: Uh huh.

JJ: Ok.

AR: So, could you maybe just tell me a little more about what the Beer Garden looked like?

JJ: Oh it just had a little front porch—Everything had a little front porch on it.

AR: Mm-hm.

JJ: And you'd go in and she had, you know, regular potato chips, uh, sodas. I don't know if she fooled with ice cream or not cause didn't have no air conditioning in place in there. It was just like, she had shelves up there and you would get, like, if you want some beans or whatever, you know, what it was, or molasses or whatever she had there, up there, and—

AR: Alright. So just a lot of, like, groceries—

JJ: Yeah, yeah. You know, stuff you can just pick up, yeah. It's not like a—

AR: Like a convenience store or something?

JJ: Yeah, it's not like a grocery store where you have a, a million items, you know, uh, uh, you know, to choose from. She mostly had what people wanted.

AR: Yeah. So, I'm assuming they called it Beer Garden because they'd sell beer there?

JJ: Yeah, I guess, yeah, yeah.

AR: [Laughter] Did they drink it there? Like, is there an actual bar or a counter or something?

JJ: Well, there was a counter up there, but you had, you had, uh, seats up to it. You could drink it there. You had tables back in the other room back there.

AR: Hm.

JJ: Where you could sit down and, and eat whatever you wanted to eat, you know, whatever.

AR: So a lot of people from the community would kind of—

JJ: Oh yeah, yeah

AR: – Hang out there, and—

JJ: Yeah. You know, and then you had some of the church people didn't even want to go there, cause, you know. Yeah.

AR: Yeah. I can understand that. Um. So—

JJ: It was just, there was a lot of jealousy going on back there. I don't know why people get jealous.

AR: Really?

JJ: Yeah, it was, you know. My mom, even her own siblings was, you know, jealous of her. My dad was a go-getter, h-he was, he-he, you know he knew how to make a dollar. You know, he knew how to make his money, um, so. And, you know, momma was, she was, she knew, she, you know, was around long and she knew how to do it, so, and then, you know, she used to ride around in them, in a Cadillac back then.

AR: [Laughter]

JJ: You know, people were jealous.

AR: Yeah, I'm sure. [Laughter]

JJ: So, you know, I don't have to tell you anything any further, you understand that.

AR: Yeah. So, were there many people from outside of the community that would go into Batestown.

JJ: There was—I mean outside, you know, outside of Batestown it was always people from Triangle.

AR: Although you didn't live there—

JJ: Right.

AR: —You were still, like, a community member.

JJ: Well, it was all, it was mostly all people that were kin to each other, but they wouldn't just live exactly in Batestown. They lived on Joplin Road, they would live, you know, Quantico. They lived on and around surrounding areas. In Woodbridge, they would come there. Yeah, you know.

AR: Mm-hm.

JJ: They, it was, uh, I mean didn't, once in a while it would be, um, uh, soldiers from Fort Belvoir would come down there.

AR: Hm.

JJ: Yeah. Batestown had the girls, women. They would, they'd come down and follow them down there, you know.

AR: I see.

JJ: Mm-hm.

AR: So just kind of, um, for relationships?

JJ: Mm-hm. At that time, yeah, you know, black soldiers or black Marines, they didn't have nowhere to go, you know. You either went to Johnson's Café or you stayed there on the base. When you go—First thing, if I go into a new neighborhood, I like to know where is the black community at, you know, like they always say, “go across the tracks.” [Laughter]

AR: Hm.

JJ: You know. I don't know if you ever heard that term or not.

AR: Oh yeah, yeah.

JJ: Yeah. That's supposed to be the worst land you can have, across the railroad tracks. So, but we didn't have no railroad tracks where we at [Laughs].

AR: Yeah. It's just a, the term though. Could you maybe tell me a little more about your parents or if they ever, um, shared any stories with you about their childhood or growing up?

JJ: Oh, my daddy didn't talk too much about it. H-he said his daddy was a, a fisherman. He said he can't stand fish today cause that's all they eat, it every day. And, uh, he didn't never tell me about hi-his dad, I don't know where he came from and I wish I, I wish I had known, uh, or talked to him, but he never, he never, uh, I got something else I can show you too about him.

JJ: My dad used, used to, used to play sports when he was younger. He could tell you a lot of— [Shuffling through paperwork] That's him and his brother. He played, played baseball.

AR: Where at?

JJ: Right here.

AR: The Fredericksburg Frogs, huh?

JJ: Mm-hm.

AR: Hm.

JJ: It's a long thing that used to tell you about, they played ball and they were good and—That's his brother, him and his brother. Now, his brother, never heard of this before in my life, his brother used to pitch one game right-handed and pitch the next game left-handed.

AR: Hm.

JJ: I never heard of that before.

AR: That's interesting.

JJ: Yeah.

AR: Was it—

JJ: I thought that was an old wife's tale. You know how people talk when they old, they make it more than what it is. I asked my daddy, I said, "Daddy, is it true?" He said, "Yeah, he did." What do you call, ambidextrous? Yeah.

AR: Yeah.

JJ: Yeah.

AR: So he did it on, kind of on purpose just to throw em off or something, or just—

JJ: No, he just, he just, hey, I guess his right arm was tired the next, next game I guess he just throw it with his left arm. [Laughter]

AR: Well that's something.

JJ: Yeah. You can take pictures of that or, if you want to take pictures of it.

AR: Yeah, I'll, I'll—

JJ: And I've got the story right here.

AR: —Look closely at it when we're done.

JJ: I'll put that over there. Uh.

AR: Hm.

JJ: He'd tell you about, you know, the times he had in, uh, in Quantico.

AR: Mm. So here it says "segregated team members." W-when you played baseball were you only playing against other black teams?

JJ: No, we was an all black team, all black. Once in a while we played, it would be a couple white boys played with us. You know, you know, guys had friends that played, and we didn't bother nobody, you know, and people didn't say nothing to em, people didn't bother them. At least the black people didn't say nothing to em, but, yeah.

AR: Yeah. So, um, let me think, um, did people get along?

JJ: I guess we got along as long as you was in your place, put it that way. You know, if you, you know, back then if you go up there and, just saying, I'm just saying, if you go up there and start talking to a white woman or something like, you might probably would have something like, you know, have big problems, you know.

AR: Yeah. I understand. So, hm, your, your mother, did she share many stories about growing up.

JJ: No, uh, most the time she would tell about, she would tell me about Hickory Ridge and tell me how the people, you know, uh, how Charlie, [Laughs] most of em, Charlie Reid's daddy, h-he, how he got religious and he had this horse and buggy and he'd be going up and down Hickory Ridge, you know, you know, preaching god to everybody. Everybody'd be laughing and say, "Oh he got religious today." You know. [Laughter]

AR: Hm.

JJ: Stuff like that, and they had, I think they had Oddfellows hall up there where they had dances and stuff up there, but, you know, uh, yeah, stuff like, like that up there, but, it was mostly family and, you know, most of the people—The big thing then was when people we-went and killed the hogs. What do you say, you know, everybody would come around and help you kill the hogs, and then, you know, gut em, and that was like a big thing, you know.

AR: Mm-hm.

JJ: Uh.

AR: Were they still doing that when you were a kid?

JJ: We, yeah, a little, at the end, it was at the end, it was, but I never would go over. They used to get, like, get these big turtles out of the river and they used to cook em and I said, "No way that I'm eating them, none of that!"

AR: Hah.

JJ: You know, coons, they eat coons and I said, “No. That’s nasty.” Heh. And my uncle was a, he was a, man, he would buy all kinds of dogs to go coon hunting.

AR: Eh.

JJ: And, uh, one thing he would tell me, uh, I had a, uh, uncle, his name was Uncle French, and, uh, he always bragged on his coon dogs. Uh, he had the best in the world, and stuff like that. He would brag on em, brag on em, and they went somewhere hunting up there, cause my daddy used to hunt with him, and he said, when they went hunting, he said the dog, one of Uncle French’s dog’s get a deer and run the deer and when he come back, Uncle French took his gun and shot the dog for running the deer, cause he bragged on him too much. [Laughter]

AR: Jeez. Wow. So, a lot of people up there would hunt?

JJ: Yeah, yeah. That was, basically every man I knew up there, older man, would hunt, go hunting. If you ever been coon hunting, that’s the one thing, you can’t see nothing late at night time. You got the dogs barking. I went up there once and switch, and trees hitting you on the side of ya head. You’re stumbling on down through the woods, you can’t see nothing, dogs be hollering. When you got the coon up the tree, they be sitting around the tree, be like [looks up] and the coon’d be up there waiting and the dogs would be hollering. [Laughter]

AR: Hm.

JJ: I went one time, that was it.

AR: [Laughter] Sounds like a lot of fun.

JJ: Yeah, well, you’re a young boy then and you didn’t care.

AR: Yeah. So, you mentioned before that a way to describe Batestown was self-sufficient.

JJ: Yeah.

AR: Could you—

JJ: Yeah, well, you know you had little stores where you could get what you couldn’t make at home.

AR: But mostly it was—

JJ: Self-sufficient farm, you know, Batestown. Batestown, when I, when I was up there, got a little bit more modern.

AR: Mm-hm.

JJ: When the Hickory Ridge, most of them were self-sufficient, you know. Uh, they grew their own food and stuff like that. Had, uh, chickens, hogs, stuff like that. And then, you know, you could only do so much with, then you had to buy something, you know, uh.

AR: Mm-hm. Did you, um, did your family grow any food in Triangle?

JJ: Naw.

AR: Did your family from Batestown ever give you a lot of food, or?

JJ: No.

AR: No?

JJ: Well, at that time we were, I’m, I ain’t saying we were all, well, you know, what do you call it? We wasn’t poor, put it that way, but most the time, you know, you don’t have to put that in there, but my mom helped out her people. You know, you know, and they helped, helped her out. You know, I don’t like to bring it up, to bring it up [Inaudible]. But whenever family needed something, she was always there. All her sister’s and brother’s and stuff.

AR: Can you remember some of the oldest community members from Batestown?

JJ: That’s still living?

AR: No, when you were around.

JJ: Oh, well grand-, my grandpapa was 95 when he died. H-he knew—

AR: That was John Kendall?

JJ: Yeah, yeah, yeah, he was al-, everybody always around there would call him Uncle John, they used to call him, you know, pop, we all used to call him Grandpapa. Rest of his sis-, his daughters would call him Papa, you know, he was around and everybody went around, he was a nice person.

AR: Mm-hm.

JJ: He used to drink a little liquor and talk-talk and make you laugh.

AR: Yeah, sounds like he was a, kind of, big member of the community. You remember him though?

JJ: Oh yeah, oh yeah. I remember him as a little- a little boy all the way up until he died, and I was, he died in, I think in '77, I was twenty seven years old.

AR: Oh, wow. So, did people ever speak much about the history of Batestown?

JJ: You heard little bits and pieces. I was, I was one that-that sit around and listened.

AR: Mm-hm.

JJ: And they-they'd, they'd tell you about the old people, you know, uh, you know, what they did and all that, and all about the church and—I didn't go to church now, my family wasn't that religious, and, uh, and then just-just stuff that just really happened, you know, uh, couple people got killed up there, they'd tell me about that, you know.

AR: Oh really?

JJ: Yeah. Uh, I'd rather not even go into that.

AR: Alright.

JJ: Yeah, yeah. You know, things like that'd happen and then, you know, a couple of em went to jail and it was stuff like that that, uh, that they would talk about, and. But they were mostly law-law abiding citizens, but they'd just do, they had to do what they had to do to survive.

AR: Mm-hm.

JJ: You know, if it was selling liquor, they did it. If it was, you know, doing stuff like that—If it was what they had to do to survive, they did it, you know.

AR: Yeah.

JJ: You know they would fix food and sell dinners and do all kinds of stuff, you know.

AR: S-so they would sell food sometimes?

JJ: Yeah they would, you know, they had, you know, sometimes you'd be up there, fix dinners or something, and people, people find out, they come by and get fixed up dinners for em so they can charge em a dollar, two dollars or whatever for the dinner. I mean it wasn't no everyday thing, you know.

AR: Yeah, yeah, it wasn't like a official thing, it was just—

JJ: Mm-hm.

AR: So, can you remember any important community events? And that can be anything from just a, uh, I don't know, a natural disaster or even a gathering of people, or celebration of something.

JJ: No, I uh—It used to be a big thing up in Batestown when they had, the church was having the, uh, what do you call it?

AR: The homecoming?

JJ: Homecoming.

AR: Yeah.

JJ: That's the biggest thing up there, you know, the church up there. And then the ball games. You'd be up there and that-that was it, you know, up there.

AR: Alright, um, were there any kind of, uh, traditions to celebrate certain events?

JJ: Well they'd celebrate a whole lot!

[Laughter]

JJ: I don't know if they were even celebrating a, uh, a particular, uh, holiday or nothing, but they celebrated. When they got together, they would celebrate. Uh, I mean they-they would—Most of the family was, they was about having a good time, that's all.

AR: Yeah.

JJ: Yeah. Cause nobody had a whole lot, but they-they celebrated, they had a good time.

AR: So, the property that your mother owned in Batestown—

JJ: Mm-hm.

AR: —Um, whatever happened with that?

JJ: She sold it.

AR: She sold it.

JJ: Yeah, she sold it. Uh, I think she sold it to a man named, his name's Thomas Hardy. Mm-hm, she sold it cause at the time they had the café I think, and then she got so much flack [Laughs] from her, from her own people.

AR: Yeah.

JJ: But she said, you know, "Hey, y-you gonna sell it, sell it to her." You know, sell it to her sister, you know. Then she didn't run it right, so, it didn't las long [Laughs]. She was just jealous cause—

AR: Hm.

JJ: —Cause, you know, cause my mom and dad, she kept throwing it in my mom's face, said, "Aw, they got two businesses." Two, you know. Uh, but I don't wanna say no more about that.

AR: Alright. I understand. So, this guy that she—It was a guy that she sold it to, right?

JJ: Mm-hm.

AR: Um, was he from the community, or?

JJ: Yeah, he was brought up in, he was brought up in there too. His mother owned land down by the mi-, by the mine.

AR: Oh.

JJ: Where the mine was.

AR: Interesting.

JJ: And he was a, he was a barber from, uh, he worked up there in-in DC.

AR: Hm. So, did he stay on that land for a while?

JJ: No, no, everybody went—If you live up in DC, no way you're coming back down here.

AR: Hm.

JJ: Down here, you know, um. He didn't live up—There was a house and, uh, and the Beer Garden, I think she sold both of them. She wasn't getting, she wasn't getting rich. She had—My grandfather really was a, what do you, was a carpenter too. He could do, my grandfather could do almost anything, and he, she had a couple houses down in the town of Dumfries, down there, and he owned two, two houses in Triangle, our house where we lived at, and there was a house behind us that he built.

AR: Really?

JJ: That, um, Grandpapa built.

AR: Wow.

JJ: And, and he also built the two, the two of my, the Beer Garden and, and the, uh, and the house beside the Beer Garden, and she had two more down there. So they were, we were, I wouldn't say, wasn't rich, but, w-we owned several houses. My dad, like I said, my dad and momma was, well, what you would call now entrepreneurs. You know, they [Laughs], you know, they was just there trying to make a dollar cause it was hard for a black man to make a dollar cause you didn't, you couldn't work nowhere. They'd pay you, you know, you'd work somewhere, you'd work all day long and they'd give you a dollar, you know, two dollars, you know, and, you know, some of em were lucky enough to work in the, in the government, they got a decent salary, enough to do well. During, uh, during the war, my daddy, uh, he drove a torpedo truck, uh, at the Alexandria torpedo factory, down there on the dock, down there in Alexandria, down there.

AR: Wow.

JJ: Most of the, well, at that time, during World War II, all the white guys went into war. They, you know, they didn't have too many black guys, or all they had was black guys so they drove for the torpedo factory going to the, uh, naval yard putting torpedoes, bringing torpedoes from there to the naval yard over in DC.

AR: Hm.

JJ: I did have a picture of that, but I don't know what I did with him during that time.

AR: So, you lived around this area—

JJ: I've lived here all my life, yeah.

AR: And do you stay in contact with some people that still live in Batestown?

JJ: Oh yeah, yeah, all, I told ya most of em all my family. We don't stay, I really don't stay in contact too much with em now, but, the kids, they, we had about forty or fifty first cousins, now I think it's about ten or twelve of us now and I only, I only talk to one or two now. That's Claude, and I got some other cousins up in DC. I don't talk to some of em, you know, now.

AR: Alright. And when, when you were younger did you ever see, or I guess were there some kind of noticeable generational differences between the older residents of Batestown and the younger ones?

JJ: Well yeah, the younger ones didn't want to work [Laughs]. The older ones worked and-and kept their houses up decent, painted, grass cut and other, but now, the kids up there now, that come up there, they really don't have jobs enough to-to even do what ya need to do for a house.

AR: Mm-hm.

LJ: Hi there, how ya doing?

AR: Hello.

JJ: So this is, this is Adam.

AR: Yeah.

JJ: This is Adam.

LJ: How ya doing, I'm Linda, nice to meet you.

AR: Nice to meet you.

JJ: He's, he's going to University of Virginia.

LJ: Oh, ok, good.

JJ: And I tell him, uh, I was telling him, uh, Yvette went to, uh—She graduated, he said when she graduated, he was three years old!

LJ: Yeah, that's been a while for her.

[Laughter]

AR: So, do you ever visit th-the Batestown area?

JJ: I go up there every once in a while. Now I don't go up there at all most of the time. Everybody's gone.

AR: Mm-hm.

JJ: Everybody's gone up there now. It's a rundown community now. Uh, they don't have, they got the water running up there, but don't have the sewer line. As soon as they put the sewer line up there, it's, somebody's gonna go up there and buy up all the land and-and you ain't never gonna see it no more.

AR: Yeah, I've seen that.

JJ: And the kids up there really, the ones up there, like I said, the older people that worked and everything, they had people that'd do stuff for em and everything, take care of the house, cut the grass. Now the kids, I don't know, you know, they died and left the kids house, th-they don't have a good enough job to even, to help, you know, if somebody leave you a house and stuff, and they don't have jobs enough even to maintain the house.

AR: Yeah.

JJ: Yeah, so.

AR: Well, is there anything you would like to share that we haven't covered?

JJ: Naw, naw, that's just about it. All I can just tell you about the '50s and '60s.

AR: Mm-hm.

JJ: That's it.

AR: Alright then, if that's it then, uh, that'll be the end—

JJ: Are you gonna take pictures of that, or?

AR: Yeah, yeah, we'll do all that.

JJ: I guess, I got the other picture of the ball team if you want, want a picture of that?

AR: Yeah, yeah, I would like to look at that. But, uh, thank you for doing this interview with me.

JJ: Ok, alright.

AR: I appreciate it.

End



BT Express.

Interview with Linda Hawkins and Contee Chapman

Linda Hawkins Biography

“The development has been further down Mine Road, down there further, not up on the Batestown Road part, and they’re waiting on people, really, to sell their land. It’s coming. When they can get this land it’s gonna change, but, uh, I don’t know what day that would be.”

Linda Chapman Hawkins was born on May 21, 1947 to Mazerine Davis Chapman and Contee Alfonzo Chapman Senior. She was born in a log cabin in the woods in an area close to Batestown known as the “Davis Tract,” and she grew up in Batestown with her three siblings. Her father was a World War II army veteran who served in the Pacific and received a purple heart. He also worked construction building the Possum Point Power Station. Her mother was a steam presser at Marine Corps Base Quantico, and also kept a garden and owned and operated the Beer Garden for a period. Linda married a marine that she met at Quantico. She moved with her husband to Pennsylvania, then North Carolina, then returned to Virginia in 1986, where she now currently lives in Stafford. Although she moved out of Batestown, Linda would regularly return to visit family. Her brother is currently the only family she has left in the community.

In Linda’s interview she spoke highly of her mother, Mazerine Chapman, for her hospitality, saying that people and animals would come to her house to be fed. She also said that her mother took in some children from the community and raised them. Both Linda and Contee spoke extensively about their uncle, Addison “Chief” Chapman, who mysteriously went missing on December 3rd, 1985 while supposedly walking the pipeline path to the east of Batestown.

Contee Chapman Biography

“I plan to be here until the end of my time. I don’t see, in the near future, me going anywhere living-wise, unless there’s something in the future for me that I don’t know, as far as moving out of the area. But this is my little spot on God’s green earth, right here.”

Contee Alfonzo Chapman Jr. was born on November 1, 1948 to Mazerine Davis Chapman and Contee Alfonzo Chapman Senior. Like his sister, Linda, Contee was born in a log cabin in the woods in an area close to Batestown known as the “Davis Tract,” and he also grew up in Batestown with their three siblings. His father, and namesake, was a World War II army veteran who served in the Pacific and received a purple heart. He also worked construction building the Possum Point Power Station. His mother was a steam presser at Marine Corps Base Quantico, and also kept a garden and owned and operated the Beer Garden for a period. Contee is the only interviewee who still lives in Batestown, in the same house owned by his mother, and before her his uncle, Roger Davis. He plans to keep the property in the family.

Referred to as a walking encyclopedia by his sister Linda, Contee provided a wealth of information during his interview. He is an avid raccoon hunter and has spent a great deal of his time in the woods surrounding Batestown. He mentioned stumbling across an opened mine shaft in the woods, and shared stories about moonshining in Batestown. Contee mentioned that he and his sister were the first to be baptized in the indoor baptismal pool at Little Union.



Oral History Guidelines for Prince William County

Oral History Interview Agreement

This Interview Agreement is made and entered into by the Interviewer(s):

Adam Rayburn

and the Interviewee(s):

Linda H. Chapman Hawkins

Interviewee(s) agrees to participate in one or more interviews with the Interviewer(s) named above. This Agreement relates to any and all materials originating from the interviews, namely notes, tape recordings, video recordings, any transcripts or other written manuscripts prepared from or using the notes, tape recordings and/or video recordings, or any images that might be used during the interview or created during the interview.

In consideration of mutual covenants, conditions, and terms set forth below, the parties hereto hereby agree as follows:

1. Interviewee(s) and Interviewer(s) understand that the copy of the interview in the possession of the interviewer is the property of Prince William County, and will be available in its entirety to researchers and the general public.
2. Interviewee(s) and Interviewers(s) irrevocably assigns to the Prince William County all his or her copyright, title, and interest in this material.
3. By virtue of this assignment, the Prince William County will have the right to use this material for any research, education, advertising, publications, and may be used in print or internet publications, or other purpose.
4. Interviewee(s) acknowledges that he or she will receive no remuneration or compensation for either his or her participation in the interview(s) or for rights assigned hereunder.
5. I understand that any photographs copied will become available to researchers, and may be used for education, advertising, publications, and may be used in print or internet publications. I understand that the Prince William County will properly credit me as the owner of the original photographs. I understand that I waive all title and right, so far as I possess them, to the image(s) described and to any future prints or copies produced from it/them or any profits gained from the sale of prints or other reproductions of these images.

<u>Linda H. Chapman Hawkins</u>	<u>7/5/19</u>
Interviewee(s) signature(s)	Date

<u>Adam Rayburn</u>	<u>7/5/19</u>
Interviewer(s) signature(s)	Date

Prince William County
Office of Planning and
Department of Parks Recreation and Tourism, Historic Preservation Division



Oral History Guidelines for Prince William County

Oral History Interview Agreement

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Adam Rayburn

and the Interviewee(s):

Cortee Alfonso Chapman

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Cortee Alfonso Chapman 7-5-19
Interviewee(s) signature(s) Date

Adam Rayburn 7-5-19
Interviewer(s) signature(s) Date

Prince William County
Office of Planning and
Department of Parks Recreation and Tourism, Historic Preservation Division

Oral History with Linda Hawkins and Contee Chapman

Interviewer: Adam Rayburn

Interviewees: Linda Hawkins and Contee Chapman

Location: Contee Chapman's home at 17019 Mine Rd, Dumfries, VA 22025

Date: July 5, 2019

Adam Rayburn=AR; Linda Hawkins=LH; Contee Chapman=CC; Charles Reid=CR

Note: Charles Reid was present during this interview and was very active in the conversation. Multiple times throughout the interview, Contee would briefly leave the room, then return.

AR: Today is Friday, July 5th, 2019. My name is Adam Rayburn and I am an intern working with the Historic Preservation Division on the Batestown Oral History Project. We are at the home of Contee Chapman in Batestown and I am interviewing both Contee Chapman and his sister, Linda Hawkins. Welcome and thank you both for agreeing to speak with me today. Could you both please introduce yourselves and tell me your names?

LH: My name is Linda Lee Chapman Hawkins.

CC: And I'm Contee Alfonzo Chapman Junior.

AR: And could you spell your names please?

LH: L-I-N-D-A, L-E-E, C-H-A-P-M-A-N, H-A-W-K-I-N-S.

CC: C-O-N-T-E-E, A-L-F-O-N-Z-O, C-H-A-P-M-A-N, Junior.

AR: And do you go by any nicknames?

LH: No.

CC: They call me T.

AR: T?

CC: Mm-hm.

AR: And how do you prefer to be addressed during the interview.

LH: Linda.

AR: Linda.

CC: Contee.

AR: Alright, and can you tell me when you were born?

LH: I was born May, the 21st, 1947.

CC: And I was born November, the 1st, 1948.

AR: And where were you both born?

LH: We were born here, uh, in, not on Batestown Road, over in—

CC: 234, off of 234. Dumfries, but off of Route 234.

LH: Contee, what was the name of that, over there? They had a name for it, I can't think of it.

CC: I know the name of, uh, where you go down there near Cousin Jim was, uh, Garden Gate. That's what they called the interstate and Davis Tract down there was Garden Gate.

LH: Over there where Grandma Estelle lived what was that called? That was called Blood Field or something?

CR: No, cause Blood Field is up there by the Thomas's house.

LH: OK. Sorry. It had a name though, but I can't think of what they used to call it.

AR: So, you were both basically born here though, in Batestown.

[Inaudible]

LH: Born in the area, the local area, yes, raised on Mine Road, but we were born right there, over in the in the woods a distance.

AR: Alright.

CR: That was Batestown.

CC: You know the 7-11 is on 234 when you go up there and take a left on 234 like you're going to Manassas?

AR: Oh.

CC: The 7-11 there, where the big houses are, was the Davis Tract where we had, my people had 50 acres in there. It borders where the church is up there and it borders down where you turn to come down Van Buren to come down this road and it comes back in here to the gas line that goes through the park back there. The Davis Tract consisted of 50 acres of land.

AR: Alright.

CR: Right where we were at. So I'd consider that Batestown. Remember when it went down there?

CC: Yeah, yeah.

CR: It's all Batestown.

CC: Yeah.

AR: Alright.

CR: This just had a name. It had a little name for it.

LH: [Inaudible]

AR: And what are your parents' names?

LH: My dad was named Contee A. Chapman Senior.

AR: Mm-hm.

LH: Our mother's name, Mazerine. M-A-Z-E-R-I-N-E.

AR: With an M or an N?

LH: M-A-Z-E-R-I-N-E. Davis Chapman.

AR: Alright. And, what was her Maiden name?

LH: Davis.

AR: Oh, Davis then. And where were your parents born?

LH: Momma was born over there, well, Batestown, Batestown.

CC: Batestown, yeah.

LH: And our dad was born—

CR: In Cul-, in Culpepper?

CC: No, not our dad.

LH: He wasn't born in Prince William County, but, just put, uh, Batestown for the time being. I may make a correction on that as soon as I find where his birth record, where he was born, OK?

AR: OK, that's fine.

CC: He was born up there in Bristow, wasn't he?

LH: No, it was, uh, I'll tell ya. He was the only one that don't have it listed as being born in Prince William County, our dad.

AR: Mm.

LH: I'll say he was born up in, born in Dumfries.

AR: Oh, so he was, he was born in Dumfries.

LH: I said that, but that wasn't, he was born up in Gainesville, somewhere up there.

AR: Do you know when he moved down here?

LH: Oh, no, he always, this was all of their homes, was here in Dumfries.

CR: I thought he was born in Culpepper.

LH: Hm-mm, they was all born, as far as ancestry, now this is ancestry cause we can't remember when our parents was born, but they said that they were born, that he was born, only one of the Chapman children was born in a different place than Prince William County and I think it was up there where, uh, if you go to Manassas, what's that called up there, where that old post office, where Chapmans had some land a long time ago that was in question?

CC: Yeah, that's what we were saying, uh, uh, Bristow Road.

LH: Bristow, that, that was saying that.

CC: Right there by Bristow High School.

LH: Right. And the ancestry lists two places that one place was dad was born up there, but I just put in, I'm a just put Dumfries. OK.

AR: Do you have any other siblings?

LH: Yes, we had one sister, another sister, Carolyn Jean Kendall. That was her married name.

AR: Could you spell that please?

LH: K-E-N-D-A-L-L.

AR: Oh, no, I mean, like uh, Carloyn.

LH: C-A-R-L-Y-N.

CC: L-O-Y-N.

LH: L-O-Y-N. Jean, J-E-A-N. And we have a younger brother that's younger than us, William, William Leroy Chapman.

AR: Alright.

CC: And my sister Carolyn being the oldest.

LH: So, Carloyn, me, Contee, Leroy.

AR: Alright. And do any of your siblings live in the area?

LH: Carolyn is deceased.

AR: Oh.

LH: And Leroy lives in the area also. I live in Stafford. He lives down in Triangle.

AR: Alright, and now we'll talk about Batestown. What comes to mind when you think of Batestown?

LH: Fun [Laughs]! When we were kids, fun!

[Laughter]

AR: That's awesome.

LH: Uh, neighbors, good neighbors. Everybody looked after everybody's child.

CR: Mm-hm.

LH: We'd visit each other's houses, we played together, went to school together. It was just, uh, like a big happy family really. Cause everybody was family.

CC: The road was dirt.

LH: Dirt road.

CC: They didn't pave this road until 1956.

AR: Hm! You know the exact year. I've been asking people and they say around the '50s.

CC: 1956,

LH: Mm-hm. A walking encyclopedia. Leroy's a G-, my other brother's a GPS.

[Laughter]

LH: And me, I'm just a dumb dumb! [Laughs]

AR: Ah, no.

LH: I just don't remember a lot of stuff, but anyway, yeah. And then I left the area when, when I was younger and lived with my uncle for a, well it was just after my dad died and I left at 3 years old and came back at 6.

AR: Oh.

LH: About 7 I started at the second grade when I come back home, so that makes a little bit different, that missing, you know, not knowing—

CC: And I stayed two years, at the same time, with my aunt, my dad's sister, in, uh, land over in Maryland.

LH: Well now Mom was 23 when our dad died [Inaudible] our youngest brother was only a month old. So she was working and she had four children, so they just stepped in and helped.

CC: She was 26, wasn't it?

LH: I don't know she was that old, was she?

CC: They had gotten married in 46 and he died in 50, so they were married for four years. I thought they were 22, or maybe 20 when they got married, and she might have been 24, I'm not—

LH: She was 21 when she had me.

CC: And she was 22 when she had me. And 24 when she had Leroy.

LH: Yeah, so she was 24 when he passed.

CC: So she was 24 when he passed.

LH: Mm-hm.

AR: Oh, wow.

LH: Yeah, he died a young man, but anyway.

AR: I'm sorry to hear that.

LH: But our mother raised us. They would help her out, grandmother, our great grandmother and our uncles, our friends, neighbors, about everybody would just, you know.

CC: It took a village to raise a child.

AR: Mm-hm. I think that's definitely true with Batestown.

LH: Yep.

AR: Um, can you describe the house you lived in when you were younger?

LH: Wish you could see it. It was a big house, right there, down the road there a little way, right there where the church is actually.

CC: Where the old church was. We almost lived right in the church yard.

AR: Hm!

LH: It was a big house, big old house, two stories, no running water and no electricity.

AR: Mm-hm.

CC: Well we had electricity then.

LH: Oh, yes we did!

CC: We didn't have no electricity in Grandmama's old house over there.

LH: Contee taught me [Laughs]! We didn't have running water, I'm sorry.

AR: So, you had electricity as long as you can remember there?

CC: Well, at that house we had electricity.

AR: Mm-hm

CC: No inside plumbing.

AR: Mm-hm.

CC: The house where we were born in, which was a log cabin over in the woods, didn't have plumbing or electricity, but we were born on Davis Tract, where we said, the land on 234. That's where we were born.

LH: And I left, I didn't come to Mine Road-, I didn't come to Mine Road, I didn't come to Batestown when my family did because I left from over there to go to, uh—

CC: To Maryland.

LH: Have the, yeah, to have the [Inaudible] to live with my uncle until I was 3. So I didn't come, so I guess that's why I thought we didn't have no lights and no water cause I didn't have em there.

CC: I might have been in Maryland too when mom moved over there, but she moved with Grandma Hess over there while we were gone.

LH: Yes.

CC: Yeah, Leroy and Carolyn was here.

LH: Mm-hm.

CC: Yeah.

LH: When we came back, we lived in the big house, we called it the big house.

CC: That's when we came from Delaware.

LH: Yeah.

CC: Cause we lived in Delaware for—We s-, I started school in Delaware. You started in Maryland.

LH: Yeah.

CC: Did you go to first grade in Maryland?

LH: I went to first grade in Maryland. I came home for second grade.

CC: And you went to first grade in Wilmington Delaware.

AR: Alright

LH: That's too much information.

AR: I'm trying to keep up here. I was gonna ask about, uh, schools actually. L-l-let's talk about school now, um.

CC: Well, since we're talking about it.

AR: Yeah, yeah. What schools did you go to?

LH: I don't remember the name of the school, and we don't even have to put a name. We all went to Washington Reid, right up here on 234.

AR: Uh huh.

LH: That's where we went most of our years. Cause I went to school one year away, and he went one year away. Other than that, we went to local schools, Washington Reid.

CC: Washington Reid Elementary on 234.

LH: That's where we went to school.

AR: And, up until what grade were you there?

LH: We—

CC: From the first to the sixth.

LH: Sixth, and then we went to Jennie Dean. Was it six, Charlie?

CR: Six.

LH: OK.

CC: Then we went to Jennie Dean High.

AR: Mm-hm.

CC: In Manassas.

LH: Which, because the schools weren't integrated then, that was a black high school that had a middle school age and high school age.

CC: And elementary too, cause—

LH: Oh yeah, cause Manassas was, that's right. The kids over there went to Jennie Dean elementary, it wasn't just a school, it was elementary, middle, and high school.

AR: So, did you both graduate from Jennie Dean then?

LH: No, I graduated from Garfield.

AR: Oh, Garfield, yeah.

LH: Mm-hm, I was in Jennie Dean, I dropped out, then I went back and by that time the schools were integrated and I went to Garfield.

CC: I went to the tenth grade in Jennie Dean, I didn't graduate from there or Garfield.

AR: Alright. What do you remember about Washington Reid school?

LH: They were strict, they would whoop you.

[Laughter]

CC: They were good teachers though.

LH: They were good teachers, very good, loving teachers. They fed us good, had a nice cafeteria, we ate well, we played well, and they were, uh, we learned well because they were strict about learning. I, uh, couldn't learn my, uh, uh, time tables. Just could not remember my time tables. So when I was sick, earlier I had pneumonia at 10, I went to the hospital, I carried my book, I put it under my head, they say if you sleep with it [Laughs]. But when I got back to school, I knew my time—I was so proud of myself because I had the hardest time. And now I haven't forgot, I still know em and can say em pretty good cause I can do a lot of math in my head. I should have been a mathematician, but anyway, I could not remember them, but I thought that was kind of interesting.

AR: Definitely. And, um, Jennie Dean, what was that like? Also, good teachers, or?

LH: Jennie Dean was—

CC: It was a learning experience. I-it was a good school, had smart teachers. Most of em came out of, uh, North Carolina cause at that time, down in the Winston Salem area they would, most high schools, black schools, had teachers from that particular area.

AR: Really?

CC: Look, Jennie Dean was an interesting school, uh, the lady herself, um, there's a street named up there right after her. She was a real educator at the time that, uh, the school was first Manassas Regional High and people came from out of the state to even come there. They had dormitories and everything. They had technical, and, you know i-it was a really good high school. If you wanted to learn, you could get a good education there.

LH: Yeah.

AR: So, when you say technical, do you mean, like uh, like trades?

CC: Trades.

LH: Trades, yeah.

CC: Mm-hm.

LH: Beauticians, uh, auto mechanic, um, what else did they have?

CC: Lay brick, masonry, carpentry.

LH: Carpentry.

CR: Barber.

LH: Barber, that's right, beauticians and barbers.

[Inaudible]

CC: Cause, you know, in the kitchen, they don't, uh, what was that boy who graduated, um, what was his name, what was his name?
LH: Pete?
CC: After graduation he got a, um, and he was, um, Sam Moore. He got a, uh, degree and he was the head dietician at Prince William Hospital.
LH: I remember that. Oh, that's mentionable.
CC: Mm-hm, yeah.
LH: And they had a lot of curricular activities too, they, you know, sports and things for the ones that wanted to, you know be in sports, different sports. They had football, base-, basketball, baseball.
CC: Talk about baseball.
LH: Mm-hm. Cheerleaders, you know we had those cheerleaders.
CC: I wish we would have had a track team, we didn't have that.
LH: No, we didn't have track.
AR: Mm.
LH: But it was, well, if you wanted to, T, that, it was there for you.
CC: It was the only high school around here that had dormitories, wasn't it?
LH: Mm-hm.
CC: In fact, there's, there's, it's a memorial to the dormitories out on memorials up there now, in Manassas. On Prince William street.
LH: And now it is a, what, Charlie, elementary school? What is that?
CR: What's that?
LH: Jennie Dean now.
CC: Dean Elementary.
LH: Dean Elementary.
CR: [Well the old one where they used to have the dormitories, it's gone.
CC: Yeah, but the dormitories, the plaques are out there.
LH: Yeah, the plaques.
CC: Three. One, two, three. Three dormitories.
CR: Right.
CC: And they, uh, bulldozed em down and it's, it's, they have plaques out there, memorials.
AR: So, these dormitories, uh—
CR: I don't know if it's a middle school or, I think it's a middle school.
LH: I don't know, but I know it's still a school.
CR: It's still a school.
LH: If it's not a high school—
CC: It went to, it went' to Dean Middle School after the high school.
CR: Right.
CC: And now it's Dean Elementary.
CR: OK.
AR: So they had dormitories, uh, other people mentioned that there were students that would come in from counties away sometimes.
CC: States away and stay.
LH: Mm-hm.
AR: Alright.

CC: That's what the dormitories were for. That's when it was Manassas Regional High, but the lady, the educator Jennie Dean, she founded Manassas Regional, and then it went on to be named after her.

AR: Mm-hm.

CC: Jennie Dean

LH: Was it Manassas Regional Tech, Tech, Technical something.

CC: Manassas Regional Technical School.

LH: Because it really was a Technical School instead of a high school, but you, you know, you went to high school courses and all, but that's why people came in from all parts of Virginia.

CC: That's why they called it "Regional," because they brought people in from all over.

AR: I see.

CC: Pennsylvania, some schools were from New York.

AR: Really?

LH: They had to live there.

CR: I have the paperwork from when they first decided to make it, on the school board.

LH: Yeah, Charlie has a lot of that.

CR: I've got all that.

AR: So when you were going there were there very many people from very far away?

LH: Oh no, that had stopped then. I don't think so.

AR: It ended by then?

LH: But the dorms were there, but I don't think anybody was, um—

CC: The [Inaudible] the way that I can remember is they came there as technical school, uh, students were some from, uh, Culpepper from—

LH: King Market, Culpepper, all up in there. They didn't have busses running that far.

CR: Yeah. I think, a lot of it, o-once we got up in there and, uh, a lot of them kids, um, what's the word I want to use, grandfathered in. They didn't want to, they wanted to graduate there.

LH: Mm-hm.

CC: Mm-hm.

CR: And they made other schools, like, crowded.

CC: As long as they were in Prince William.

CR: A lot of them weren't in Prince William.

CC: Well, I guess they were not.

CR: From right across the borders.

CC: A lot of em probably drove.

CR: Yeah, they mommas took em and stuff.

CC: Yeah. Was up there [Inaudible] Taylor High School up there, yeah.

AR: Alright, so when you were children living in Batestown, what did you, what kind of things did you for fun?

CC: Heh. Go swimming.

LH: Played ball.

CC: Played in the woods.

LH: I played ball, played in the woods, played ball.

CR: Played ball. You're gonna hear a lot of that.

AR: Yeah, I have.

LH: Softball. That's what I wanted to be when I grew up.

CC: Swim at the old mine, down there.

CR: The old mine, see [Inaudible] it's the mine, we called it the mine.
LH: The mine, yeah.
CC: That's where we learned how to swim.
CR: I told you.
CC: Mm-hm.
AR: I see. So, is that the swimming hole that we went to?
CR: Of course.
CC: Everybody up here, I don't think there was many people up here that couldn't swim.
CR: That's true.
CC: Cause if you went down there and the older guys were down there—
CR: You were gonna swim!
LH: They'd take you and throw you in the water.
CC: They'd throw rocks at you and make you stay under the water and, and—
[Inaudible]
LH: We was so mad at Joe, Aunt Jane too. He held us down under water. I-I was scared, I didn't want to swim!
CC: That was, he'd throw Aunt Jane down under the water, kept dipping her, and Clarence said, "Joe, if you don't let Aunt Jane up she's gonna die down here." Had her over there by the shirt, his own sister, and he was just dipping her, I don't think he would have drowned her.
LH: I don't know [Laughs].
CC: But they made him stop.
CR: From that point, from that wall to right here was as deep as it was, and that was the deepest part, I mean, right there.
LH: Mm-hm.
CR: It really wasn't that deep.
CC: No, it wasn't. But it would be, if there was a lot rain it would be up—
CR: It'd be over ya head.
CC: —Over ya head.
CR: And when you were kids, like that [Motions to demonstrate height]
LH: It's deep.
CR: Real deep.
LH: Real big, mm-hm, that's right.
CC: And plus they'd throw, would get you, and swim with you out there over there in the deep water, yeah. Picking people off the rocks and just throwing em over in there.
CR: I swear to god they did. I remember.
LH: But, uh—
CC: We had a lot of fun there.
LH: —A lot of fun. And then, in the woods—
CR: Yeah, certain people, I'd turn around, I'd duck and just turn around wouldn't even go, I ain't going down there.
CC: And then and we got older and we'd stay down there.
LH: And, uh, uh, play ball.
CC: Burn tires, swam all night.
CR: Yep.
LH: Ice skating.
AR: Did what? Slept all night?

CC: We used to, uh, go down there and burn tires and we'd swim all night.

CR: Mm-hm.

AR: Ah.

CC: And then, down there, we'd go on the ice and you could ice skate cause the ice was so thick on the creek, with your shoes on.

CR: That I was telling you about.

AR: Yeah.

CC: In the winter.

[Inaudible]

LH: We had a lot of snow back when we were growing up. We had a lot of snow in this area.

CR: Yep.

LH: Sled riding and down, um, behind, uh, who's those ladies, the older ladies that lived down there?

CR: Miss, um, uh—

LH: Your mom's sister. Miss Teet?

Note: Miss Teet was the nickname for a woman by the name of Ruth Carter.

CR: Aunt Teet?

LH: Wasn't that Aunt Teet's hill we used to go down that, sliding, sled riding down there?

CC: Yeah, you could go back down there, go down to the mine—

CR: You could go down—

CC: We used to go down Miss Porter's hill too, all the way down past.

CR: You could go all the way down past Miss Sudie's.

CC: Mm-hm.

CR: That was a long ride, sled ride.

AR: That was Aunt who?

CR: That was my Aunt Teet. That was the house that I wanted you to take a picture of. That's the, uh, the house from the mine that they bought, uh, her name's Ruth Carter.

LH: But we call her Aunt Teet.

CR: We call her Aunt Teet.

CC: We call her Teet.

AR: Could you spell that? Just for transcribing.

LH: Teet, T-E-E-T. Yeah, Teet.

CC: Yeah, Teet.

AR: Alright, I'm just making sure I'm hearing you right.

LH: Teet, Teet, Aunt Teet.

CR: And a lot of people have had nicknames so long that we don't know their proper names, well we do, some of em, but some of em though, like Aunt Bet. Anybody know Aunt Bet's real name?

LH: That's what we called her. They take it to their grave and you really don't remember.

CC: Uh, was it Beatrice?

CR: If you get that one, we good.

CC: I think, I think her name, well we called her Aunt Bet, but her name, I believe, was Beatrice.

CR: Could be.

CC: Yeah.

LH: Yeah.

CR: Beatrice Carter.
CC: Beatrice Thomas. That was Miss Lulu's mother, and she was Miss Teet's mom to, eh?
CR: Mm-hm.
CC: Yeah. That's her.
LH: He knows about this, see I told you he knows but I don't know! [Laughs]
CR: You good.
LH: He knows your family! Momma did too.
CC: She was the one that, uh, wanted to know where the store was, the Thomas, because that was her daughter.
CR: That's right.
CC: And Margaret Thomas was Miss Lulu's and Miss Teet's grandma.
CR: Uh huh.
CC: Yeah.
LH: OK.
AR: [Laughs]
LH: We'll move right along.
[Laughter]
LH: I told ya, he, he—
CR: You'll learn something. I ain't lying.
LH: Contee can, he has a memory about that old history.
CC: My momma, I used to sit around and my momma, and I would listen to her.
CR: Mm-hm.
CC: And, you know, old folks when they try to hand down things I tried to pay attention to it.
CR: I wish I had.
CC: Cause you, you can't pass things down to the people that's behind you.
CR: Mm-hm.
CC: Somebody's got to know something.
CR: Somebody's got to know it, you're right.
LH: OK.
AR: So, what would some of the adults do for fun.
CC: Baseball. We had a ball field down there. We'd go swimming.
CR: Disco.
CC: Barbeques.
LH: Party and drink.
CR: Party.
CC: Party.
LH: Party and drink [Laughs].
CC: Oh, we had juke joints on the road now. We had a—
LH: [Laughter]
CR: Beer garden.
CC: Beer garden, yeah.
CC: Oh yes.
LH: They found ways to entertain themselves.
CC: A lot of beverages made on, out in the woods.
LH: He said beverages! [Laughs]
CC: There was plenty to do.

LH: [Inaudible] ordering a cocktail down in Virginia.
CC: Mm-hm.
LH: Order a cocktail.
CR: [Inaudible]
CC: But, you know, around here and all these old places, you know, people had stills, you know, moonshine.
AR: Distilleries, yeah.
CC: That was part of raising your family. A little extra income to go along with, you know. By any means necessary.
LH: A supplement.
CC: Yeah, a supplemented income. If you have to raise your kids, you got to have money.
AR: Mm-hm.
CC: You know there wasn't a whole lot of social services then, people'd get a welfare check for 30 dollars a month. Wasn't no thirty dollars a piece for kids, so, you know.
LH: Cheese and, cheese and, um, whatever. But anyway.
AR: Were there ever any, um, legal problems associated with that?
CC: What the stills?
AR: Yeah, yeah.
CC: Oh, the stills? Yeah, the feds would c-come in here and they got some of the older guys and they would run em and, but that only happened about every ten years, uh.
LH: Then they'd go somewhere else and build another still.
CC: Go somewhere else and build another still, and.
AR: Huh.
LH: Yeah, it was against the law.
CR: Remember when we found Johnny's still down by Aunt Lulu's?
CC: Sure, and Mister Rucker had a still, a still up here.
CR: Mister Rucker, remember when it blew up and burned, uh, the guy.
LH: See, I don't remember all that.
CR: Burned him real bad, Chris Waltfield's, uh, wife's father.
LH: [Inaudible]
CR: The [Inaudible] man, I remember seeing him.
LH: Is that how he got burnt like that?
CR: Yeah!
CC: I know.
CR: [Inaudible] Me and Wilson watched him burn, cause he was setting the woods on fire cause he was walking.
[Inaudible]
CC: The top blew off the kettle.
CR: It blew up and we went down in the woods, a-and I don't think they, the police, the ambulance, knew nothing about it, all they thought was that somebody set the woods on fire.
CC: Really it was somebody
LH: I though he had a skin disease, I knew his skin was—
CC: Cause I remember him before he was like that.
CR: Me and Wilson saw it. Man, I mean, when I say his skin was flapping.
CC: Was his still back here by Mister Johnny's?
CR: I think it was Mister Johnny's.

CC: Remember when Mister Johnny lived in that small house?
CR: Uh huh.
CC: By the ballfield.
CR: Right.
CC: And when you went over the hill, that little stream behind Miss Lulu.
CR: Right.
CC: That's what you're talking about, right?
CR: Right.
CC: Yeah, yeah, OK.
CR: She had pines.
CC: Mm-hm, covered it up.
CR: Covered up, and they, I guess he hadn't been down there in a while and they died out so it looked odd, you know, and we went in there that particular day—Well actually we was all, we boys was throwing rocks and we hit a bottle and we could smell it.
CC: Mm-hm.
CR: And we said, "Oh shit!" this is, and we kept, I don't know if you remember, we got a little club house back there, remember that?
CC: Yeah, I remember.
CR: And we got drunk a-and we set fire to it! [Laughs]
CC: Yeah, I remember that. Right down there by the creek.
CR: Yeah!
LH: Too much information, Charlie! Too much information!
CR: Too much? We took a sip and we go down there [Inaudible] and come to find out they was, there was a lot of us, boy we had some potatoes, one of em, somebody went and got some potatoes and bread and we roasted potatoes and bread and, uh—
CC: Are you talking about that little club house down behind the school?
CR: Yeah!
CC: Yeah. It even got a little table.
CR: We burned it, burned it down.
CC: Hm-mm-mm.
CR: And, uh, come to find out, we only drunk that mu-, probably only that much. [Motions with fingers]
CC: Man, that shit was probably 200 proof.
CR: Yeah, 200 proof probably. Reminds me of Quinton. He'd make it down there, cause in Texas you're allowed 200 gallons, he can make.
CC: He can make it right in his house.
LH: Oh my lord.
CR: Yeah, he's got a still and he made, uh, [Inaudible] y-you still recording?
AR: Yeah.
LH: I said too much information and y'all still talking!
[Laughter]
CR: Alright!
AR: Well, um.
CC: Well you know when George Washington was president he was, he, while he was president there wasn't a White House in, in, uh, Washington, so he was at Mount Vernon. He, he had a distillery, he had a-

CR: Yeah!

CC: Yes, and he wasn't licensed to have it.

[Inaudible]

AR: So, um [Laughs].

LH: Interesting.

CR: But, give him, tell a little more about the base-, the softball, how we used to play and go to different communities and play and stuff like that, and people would sell chicken dinners, whatever. Uh, around here—

CC: Charlie, do you remember when they first made the ball field down there?

CR: Mm-hm.

CC: Remember about the [Inaudible] man you talked about? He was the one that bulldozed the trees down, right by Miss [Inaudible].

CR: They had the old thing down in the woods, they'd use that to clear it every now and then, remember that?

CC: Yeah, the little, to clear it.

CR: I remember mister, they told mister, uh, um, what's that man's name? Mister, um, Thomas's[??] friend that lived at the old house.

LH: George Wash-, George Williams.

CC: George Williams.

CR: George Williams, and Leroy, uh, not Leroy, Linroy[??] burned it down and blamed it on Jim. [Laughs] But he burned it down, I know he did.

CC: Look, I remember one time Mister Georgie, cause his mother was living there, then she died, I remember one time we were practicing ball out there and his kitchen was faced back to the ball outfield, ball went right through the window, he had a pot of stew, it went right in the pot.

CR: I remember that, I remember that. That's true, that's a true story.

CC: Sure did.

AR: The ball went in the pot?

CC: Right in the pot of stew, beef stew that he had on the stove, might have been deer stew, but that's what happened.

CR: I remember that.

LH: But the ball, we had a male baseball team, then we had a female softball team that Charlie's brother, Otis, was the manager of it.

CR: Yeah.

AR: Oh really?

LH: And we would go play, uh, different areas around, local areas. Down in Stafford and Manassas.

CR: Gum Springs.

LH: Gum Springs, a lot of different places we would go.

CC: Spring, Gum Springs fighting.

CR: Oh my god Contee.

LH: And the guys' hardball team used to go over to Lorton Reformatory, where the correction, over there.

CR: Yeah, we played over there.

LH: Lorton is where the prison was, it was a prison at Lorton. DC, DC inmates' prison, Lorton, that was where they have their inmates.

AR: Alright.

LH: And the male, men's baseball team would go there and play.

CC: And they'd feed ya over there.

LH: Mm-hm.

CR: Mm-hm.

LH: And they stopped it at, they got out, they didn't appreciate, they didn't appreciate good things so they stopped it, but anyway, but there were some good ball players who come from around this area.

CR: The inmates would be cheering you and booing them.

LH: Generations of ball players.

CC: And then the men had the, they turned the softball team, when we had a team Charlie was the pitcher.

LH: Mm-hm.

CR: Yeah, well, we'll talk about that!

LH: That's enough information on Charlie!

[Laughter]

AR: I am going to interview Charlie, so!

CR: We had fun, that's all you gotta say.

LH: Oh yeah, that was fun, it was all fun. We had a lot of fun. Go play ball and get run out of town. Went to Gum Springs, that's up, uh, up there a little bit north. And, uh, they was fighting, and they believed in fighting. People around here believed in fighting.

CR: We had a hell of a fight up there.

LH: Nora Bates lived right over there, but he's gone now, ran a man right through the man's, went in the man's house and run him through and tore his screen door coming out the back door.

CR: He shot, I-I remember it like i-it was yesterday. He was shoot, he was shooting at the man's legs and every time that leg would come up, a bullet would go underneath of it.

LH: Thank god.

CR: How he didn't hit that man, I don't know.

LH: God.

CR: Yeah. And, uh, finally he ran into a house where there was gambling at and they threw him—All we heard was this fighting in there and they threw him out, and then they threw this big refrigerator on top of him. I remember that like it was yesterday, and then, uh, it was this guy that came with his pistol, about that long, he shot it a couple times and that stopped it. Then the police come, but they were, I mean.

LH: We didn't go to Gum Springs anymore after that.

CR: No, we didn't want to.

LH: It was too dangerous.

CR: Come to find out—

AR: All of this happened in where?

CR: It's called Gum Springs.

LH: Gum Springs.

CR: What had, what had, what had provoked it was, we didn't realize it, well we had a cousin of everybody around, a guy, uh, Lymond Thomas had shot a guy down at one of the juke joints down there and killed him, and he was from Gum Springs. So that's probably what—

LH: We had no business up there, we shouldn't have went up there.

CR: Yeah, we shouldn't have went up there. We didn't realize that that was the deal.

LH: Mm-hm.

CR: My sister cut some guy across his back—

LH: Oh lord.

CR: —with a razor and he climbed a fence, I don't know how [Inaudible] and he was, he was climbing up that fence because he thought that he had bothered me. I've never seen nothing like it in my life.

LH: And also, we forgot about the, uh, talking about all the, uh, our church, our local church.

CR: Mm-hm.

LH: We all was raised up, you know, going, going to the church.

CC: Sunday school.

LH: Sunday School, all day.

CC: Christmas plays.

LH: Christmas plays and all that, in church.

AR: And what church is this?

LH: That's the new church [Points toward the church] but that's the same, Little Union is the name that it was named too, but that's the church right there. It's the same church.

CC: We were the first two to get baptized in the old church's inside pool.

LH: Mm-hm.

CC: Back in the day.

CR: Mm-hm. Yep.

LH: It was, I was fourteen, you were thirteen?

CC: You was—

LH: Cause you said you were thirteen.

CC: You were fif-, no, you might have been thirteen, you, yeah, you were about thirteen and I was about eleven, I guess.

CR: Churches were [Inaudible].

LH: We were in our early teens because they wouldn't baptize you after ten.

CC: Alright, well you probably was, you probably was thirteen or fourteen and I was probably eleven, twelve, something like that, yeah. Cause Cousin Dewitt and Cousin French was the ones that built the pool.

LH: Mm-hm.

CC: Yeah.

AR: So, is that when they stopped baptizing in the, in Quantico Creek?

CC: Yes.

LH: Yeah.

CC: Mm-hm.

LH: Mm-hm, and then—

CC: We were the first ones to be baptized in the indoor pool.

AR: Alright, well—

CC: And I've got a scar on my leg where they, right here [Shows leg] that scar, when they, well they had the, you remember the old well used to be out by the church, down there by, by the old church?

LH: Mm-hm, yeah.

CR: You had to go down a hill.

CC: So they dug a trench around there to get the plumbing to go in there to the pool, the water to go in there to the pool. Me and my brother, Leroy, were down there throwing rocks and mud cakes at the door, the side door that goes into the church, and jumping across there.

CR: Oh lord.

CC: It looked, when I jumped off there I slipped and one of the rocks coming out the bank right there, you know how you, you dug down, and it did that right there.

AR: Hm.

LH: [Inaudible]

CC: And I hid it from momma for the longest kinda time and I told her after it healed up because it didn't heal good, but then when it healed up, Momma noticed it, "Oh, where'd you get that scar on your leg from?" And then I was big then, then I told her. Momma said, "That's what you get for, down there throwing mud cakes at the church."

LH: At the church, that's right! [Laughs]

CR-Throwing all that. Remember when we first smoked cigarettes?

CC: Mm, yes.

CR: Where was we at?

CC: On the mine?

CR: Nope. Right down there, well me anyway, not you, but, uh, you give me my first cigarette down there behind y'all's house, right there.

CC: Where the pig pen's at down there?

CR: Yeah, by Little Union

LH: Our old house.

CC: Yeah, yeah, pig pen, and then Charlie was down there.

CR: And he kept, Contee said, "Just, just breathe it like you're breathing air."

CC: Mm-hm, yeah, I do remember that.

CR: Yeah!

CC: Yeah, the chicken house, we had a chicken house back there, yeah.

CR: Yeah, and I was coughing [Laughs]

CC: [Inaudible]

CR: The only thing that saved me, remember that, you, there was ice on the road, ice, like snow and ice, I put some in my mouth, that was the only thing that saved me.

CC: Yeah cause you were probably smoking old Pall Malls and Chesterfields.

CR: Yeah!

LH: And Camels.

CC: Mm-hm camels, Pall Malls whatever his uncle told him they was.

CR: And you would have thought that would've taught me not to smoke, but it didn't.

[Inaudible]

LH: Crazy young man. Crazy. You'll get addicted.

CC: Mom would say to us, you just stick around and smoking, I would say, "yeah." Y'all keep going, I'm a come over there. Cause we could hear Mom's car coming up the road.

LH: Lulu would tell on us. Lulu would say, "Momma they smoking them cigarettes!" she would sing the song "Momma they smoking them cigarettes."

AR: Heh!

CC: As long as y'all don't burn the house down trying to duck them cigarettes. Cause you could hear a car coming, you know.

CR: Gardens. Did y'all have gardens and stuff?

LH: Oh yeah.
CC: Mm-hm.
LH: We had pigs.
CC: Mm-hm. Chickens.
LH: Don't forget the pigs. Chickens, we had goats, till the do-, till the dog, till the, uh, dog killed the pig.
CC: Dog got bloodthirsty and killed two pigs and the goat.
LH: And the goat.
CC: Yeah.
CR: Hm-mm-mm.
LH: He sure did. We had dogs, cats—I don't think we ever had no cats. We had a lot, we always had a dog, but, um, anyway. My mommas house was a house where dogs come to feed them. Even children'd come and she'd keep them and her, all our, all our drunken uncles'd come. Everybody'd come to my momma's house to get fed and rest, and Momma would take em in.
AR: Mm-hm.
CC: Mm-hm.
LH: And they'd eat, and sometimes they'd put em in the wheel barrel. [Laughs]
AR: In the what barn?
LH: Wheel barrel. W-what's it called, a wheel?
CR: A wheel barrel.
LH: Wheel barrel, you know, a wheel barrel.
CR: Wheel barrel.
LH: Mom would say, get Mister Johnny and put him in that wheel barrel and take him home. Oh wheel barrel, OK oh, yeah, I'm sorry. Wheel barrel.
[Laughter]
CR: She said, "wheel barl" [Laughs]
LH: And, uh—He said, "What?" And, and—
AR: I'm just making sure. I have to transcribe all of this so—
LH: Yeah.
AR: —I want to make sure I'm hearing the words right.
LH: Wheel barrel.
AR: [Laughs] yeah.
LH: And, uh, my brothers would put, my mom would say, "Put him in there" and he, they'd put him in there and wheel Mister Johnny home and Miss Violet would say, "Just dump him on the porch," and they'd pick the wheel barrel up and just dump him. [Laughs]
AR: Yeah.
LH: But, uh, we, it, it was interesting, I mean we—
CC: Charlie, we've got some bottled water here if you want it?
CR: Yeah, give me one of those
AR: Yeah, sure.
LH: Anyway, that's the way that goes. [Laughs]
AR: What kind of chores would you do?
LH: Don't talk about cutting wood. We had to gather water and cut wood. We'd come up to the well and draw water with, by the well and carry buckets of water—

CC: We had a crosscut saw.

LH: —That was for our drinking and cooking, but we had a well in our yard, but it was, we didn't, my momma didn't trust it to eat or drink, so she would just wash clothes with it. And then we would cut wood.

CC: Linda, do you want one? [Offering water]

LH: No, I don't want one right now. Then we would saw wood.

CC: With the crosscut saw.

AR: Thank you! I didn't even see you sit it down. [Bottle of water]

CC: Yeah, why did, why'd you never tell him about our hunting experiences? Night and day? [Inaudible]

CR: No, no, I left that to you.

[Inaudible]

CC: Talk about coons and coon hunting

[Inaudible]

LH: Water up from the well.

CR: Cause we did a lot of that.

LH: That's about all we did is chores and played, we mostly played, we—And garden, we'd get the gardening done.

CC: But you had to get them chores done before you could go out to play.

LH: We had, we had so much grass that we'd play it down.

CC: Yeah, we didn't have too much grass in the yard.

LH: You probably never have seen it, but we played so much in the yard that it was just a dirt yard.

AR: Ah, I've seen that.

LH: With grass on the side just a little bit, but no, um, in the front yard. Yep.

CC: We'd go down there and ride the pigs, beat em, and ride em.

LH: We'd tear them pigs up.

CC: Then cry when Momma getting ready to kill em for, for, put up for meat, have meat and stuff. Momma's yelling, "Don't", then we say, well, "Oh! Well why you gonna kill the hog?" Momma would say, "When you get the snow on the ground out there and there ain't no bacon up on your plate, you'll wonder why there's no meat."

CR: Mm-hm!

LH: And I used to be embarrassed, ashamed that I had to saw wood and one time, I don't know why I wasn't in school but, I know the school bus came up the road, and I let the, uh, I let the saw handle go and I thought I was cute and didn't really want my boyfriend to see me chopping wood. Momma said, "Don't think he's gonna come over here, keep going!" [Laughs]

CR: Yeah. [Laughs]

CC: See if he gonna come over there and saw any of this wood for ya!

[Laughter]

LH: Yep! I did not like the hard life. Momma'd say, I don't know where you think you come from.

CR: Yeah.

LH: Where you think you live, cause this is where you live!

CC: I remember one time Momma told me, said, cause I wanted to go down the road and play ball, but we had a little chores to do, so the water buckets didn't have no water in em. So Momma told me, said, said, "The first thing to catch on, if the house caught on fire,

the first thing to burn up would be the water buckets cause there ain't no f-, ain't no water in em!"

AR: [Laughs]

CC: I told her I'm going on, momma, I ain't getting no water. Boy, Momma come out there said, "You ain't getting none?" you can imagine what happened.

LH: Sh-she'd convince us. She put some beatings on us.

CR: Oh I bet she could.

LH: She'd lay em up on the shelf. If she didn't feel like beating us she'd lay up on the shelf.

CC: She'd store em up for you.

LH: But when she brought em down—

CC: You could get it.

LH: Whew!

CR: With that cigarette.

[Laughter]

CC: I hear ya, I even got more of em. Mom would beat with the ashes on the cigarettes hanging and none of em never fall.

[Laughter]

AR: Oh my goodness!

LH: My mom was something though. If she didn't, with four children, she had to keep us in line because, you know, she was raising us.

CC: This is a picture of our mother right there.

AR: Oh.

LH: Yeah, that's our mom there.

CR: Contee, tell him about the hunting, coon hunting.

CC: Yeah, we, when we were young, we started out cause his, his father was—

LH: King of the Woods.

CC: King of the Woods.

LH: And the King of the Jungle.

CR: [Laughs]

CC: He'd hunt deers, wild turkeys at night time, and then I got into hunting at night, his father's buddy, uh, cousin too, Mister Jimmy Kendall.

CR: Mm-hm.

CC: And he taught me the fun out of it and I had dogs and, and Charlie and I and his brother, we, my brother, we used to go in them woods and be all night sometimes, but we did a lot of coon, coon hunting.

CR: A lot of fun.

AR: Mm-hm.

CC: A lot of raccoons up in Batestown. You from Ohio, right?

AR: Yeah.

CC: What part of Ohio?

AR: Columbus, but I've lived all over the Central Ohio area.

CC: That's where, uh, Ivan Baker lived, right up there.

CR: That's right.

CC: But let me tell ya, there's a lot of good coon dogs come out of Ohio.

AR: Really?

CC: Yes indeed. Yes, I-I got magazines and things on em, different breeds of coon dogs.

CR: Remember my daddy bought, bout a coon dog.

CC: Yeah.

AR: Interesting.

CR: He had got paid and, and spent every dollar, I think 500 dollars on it. My momma told him, said, [Inaudible] [Laughter]

CC: “He’s just a dog.” What was the dog’s name, Smokey?

CR: Smokey.

CC: [Inaudible]

CR: Yeah, that was his name, Smokey.

CC: Jimmy used to tease him, talking about, “Oh, Theo, you couldn’t even let a dog home Roena made you keep the dog at Jim Davis’.” Yeah.

CR: Poor Smokey. And we’d get out in the woods and, uh, Mister Jimmy would always tell a joke about my daddy, he’d say, you’d have a flashlight, he’d said it could burn the top of the trees [Laughs]. He’d say he had a dog called Old Blue, he said Old Blue would screw anything. Excuse me for the French, but that’s what he said, but, uh, he hit the ground, he’d say, until one day he said he told my dad to get up and go in the tree and knock the coon out—

CC: Shake him out, yeah.

CR: —Of the tree. He said my daddy fell and said, he was talking about “Pull Old Blue off!” [Laughter]

CC: There was nothing you could do but hold Old Blue! If anything hit the ground, Old Blue was gonna get it, man!

[Laughter]

LH: Charlie [Inaudible].

CR: It was the truth.

LH: Old Blue was a humping on your dad!

CR: We would tell a joke like that all the time in the woods.

CC: While we’d be hunting, yeah.

CR: I’m serious.

CC: Jimmy’d tell Theodore, alright Theodore, he said, don’t burn all the tops off the trees at night. Said, “Looky here Mis-, looky here Jimmy look at my new light I got.

CR: And we would, as Contee said, have a little beverage out there, we’d always have a beverage, but, uh, it was fun. That was the, probably, I would say, even growing up as a child, that was the best fun, going out coon hunting.

CC: Yeah.

LH: You enjoyed that hunting?

CR: I did, I really enjoyed that.

LH: And he’s the man of the woods now.

CC: The dogs would run the coon tracks, it was quiet in the woods. Me, Leroy, Charlie, a bunch of us, we were way back in there, all of a sudden one of the biggest trees in the woods just happened to fall about four hills away and where we were standing you could feel the hills just shaking.

CR: Yeah. Right.

CC: It was, it just, it was about 12 o’clock at night and the tree just all of a sudden fell—

CR: Yep.

CC: —You could hear it. Sounded like five minutes it was falling through the other trees getting down to the ground.

CR: Mm-hm.

LH: That sounds scary.

CR: Yeah, it was scary.

LH: Tell him about the slaughter of the, uh, pigs, your daddy used to, uh, when they lived down there.

AR: I'll interview Charlie.

CR: He'll interview me, I'm sorry—

LH: Oh, OK.

CR: But, uh, we want y'all to talk about, um, talk about Chief right now.

CC: Yeah.

CR: How he used to come up to your mom's all the time and stuff.

CC: One of my dad's brothers, his name was Addison Chapman, he used to live at the last house on the road, and it was in, at 1985 on the 3rd of December he came down here, and my mother wasn't here, and he used to always break her a little kindling up to start the stove with fire wood, and he left some on the porch and he left going down this road going to the post office in Dumfries to get his, uh, social security check and we haven't seen him since. He disappeared and the Park, they flew helicopters, we searched by foot on ground and everywhere and he just disappeared right off the face of the earth and hadn't been seen to this day.

CR: What time frame was it? Was anything else going on in these woods at that time? Something supposedly found in these woods?

CC: Yep.

CR: [Laughs]

CC: There's a lot of things I guess.

CR: Tell it, tell it what it, tell it like it is.

CC: Well I know, you know, the Hoot-n-holler, the thing that was hollering, whatever that was. They had—

CR: I told you about that.

CC: —They had old, and that old mine was over there it's, it's, it's, well, you know, it had old shafts and things. We don't know—

LH: What happened.

CC: —Actually what happened to him, but he disappeared off the face of the earth. Now, the last people to, when he went down that hill where you turn where the red gate is where y'all went to the swimming hole, you come up there, the lady, Miss Holloway, was living at the time and she remembered seeing him go past the house and down the curve and she was a, and cause, she told us about it and told, and Miss Holloway told us that, if, Jimmy and I, if, if you saw Chief? She said, "Yes, I saw Chief" cause, you know, uh, taking 234 and she stayed up there and she knew him and, but, she was the last person that tell us that, yes, he was down past her house, whatever took place was, she had seen him physically walk down the hill and around the bend there.

LH: But we, she didn't think—

CR: Down by the mine, there.

CC: He never made it to the post office. Mm-hm.

LH: We, we talked about it, but we seem to think maybe somebody thought he may had his check, had gotten his check and picked him up—

CC: Mm-hm.

LH: —And took him away, away from this area. Because they searched this area real good.

AR: Hm.

LH: And everybody in those didn't find him. No old houses or old wells, there was a well up there and they checked the well where he was at.

CC: They checked the well.

LH: And his sister was living in DC and we, she come down here—

CC: And at that time Jeffrey Dahmer was killing around this East Coast. The serial killer, Jeffrey Dahmer.

AR: Hm.

LH: So we don't know what happened and never did find [Inaudible] never did.

AR: And what year was this?

CR: He's a retired cop—

LH: 85.

CR: But, see, he was a retired cop, that's why a lot of people got upset because they, if anybody's gonna be, ya know, uh, on guard or anything, it's gonna be him.

CC: Right.

CR: Ya know, so.

CC: And he didn't have, like, enemies, so.

CR: Naw, everybody liked him.

CC: Everybody knew him and he, he, wasn't like he couldn't stick up for himself. Like he said, he was a, he was a, a policeman at the Pentagon.

AR: And this was in 1985?

CC: In 1985, but he was an older man then.

CR: He had retired.

LH: During Thanks-, during Thanksgiving cause I came up from North Carolina, and, uh.

CC: Yes.

LH: It was Thanksgiving time, late November.

CC: Right, late Thanks-, uh.

LH: 30th, I think it was, the date.

CC: I don't know, but the last Thursday that November, and then he disappeared on the 3rd because the 3rd was the date.

LH: December.

CC: Yeah.

LH: Cause I carried him before I left cause he had been on a bender and I called, when I got to North Carolina, I called Aunt Martha and said, "Go up there and check on Chief cause Chief been on a bender."

CC: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

LH: And I had carried him something up there, some food or something I was taking up there before I left for North Carolina. So I saw him and did not see any broken wood there for mom.

CC: Cause Momma had made some, some of that Cha Cha.

LH: Mm-hm.

CC: And he was living up there in that house and that day when my mother came back to the house, on the 3rd, he would always break up a little something to start a fire with and when she saw it there out there and she knew he had went past here because he had left the wood out here.

AR: Mm-hm.

CC: And we haven't seen him ever since.

LH: This is Chief when he was a younger man [Shows photograph]. That's Uncle Addison.

CC: You know I got a little picture of him over here.
LH: And this is, uh, our granddad. That's Uncle Addison's, uh, my dad's father.
CC- [Inaudible]
LH: I thought it was my dad but Contee said, "No, it's Uncle Addison." He looked a lot like my dad, but that's Uncle Addison.
AR: Alright.
CC: Now this is exactly what he looked like when he disappeared, and you can see my daddy's picture on the wall [Shows picture]. But I think we was, that's when me and Shirly lived down in Ben's house.
LH: Yeah, that's a different house.
CC: But anyway, that's what he looked like when he disappeared and we haven't seen him since 1985. That's my daddy's brother.
AR: Alright.
CC: Mm-hm. And you can see my dad's picture on the wall because I was living right down the road and it was Christmas time and he was at the house.
AR: Mm-hm. Do you remember any of the businesses that were around Batestown?
CC: Yeah, my mom had a, uh, had a business. Well, my mom had it when we lived, not in this, the first house we lived in, but down to the second house we had a house and she had a store.
AR: Really?
CC: Yeah, we had a pool table in there, a juke box in there, she sold groceries and things, cans.
CR: Remember when I showed you down the road, said there used to be a juke joint there?
AR: Oh.
CR: But that was a store and a house.
CC: Mm-hm.
CR: And they lived in the house next door to it.
AR: Alright.
CR: Those two houses.
AR: So, so both of those buildings are still here?
CR: Mm-hm.
LH: Yeah, they're down there.
CC: Uh, some, uh, people come, uh, from over in the Middle East own them now.
AR: Oh.
CC: But they have a something down there every Saturday night, uh, they Muslims, but, uh, every Saturday, if you come up here, you'll see a bunch of cars up there and that's where our store was and we lived next door in the house.
AR: Alright.
CC: Are you gonna want this? [Talking about a picture or document with Charlie]
CR: Mm-hm.
AR: So were there any other stores around Batestown at the time?
CR: Mary's store.
CC: Yeah, th-the oldest store that I hear people talk about—
AR: Mm-hm.
CC: —Was down there where the church, this church, right here, the parking lot across the road, Charlie and I was down there the other day, it was an old house there. The lady and her husband that gave the church their land, John and Mary Thomas—
AR: Mm-hm.

CC: —Had a store right there in that house. That was years and years and years ago. Those people were slaves and they, they had a store, they had a store inside the house there.

AR: Alright.

CC: Yeah, and then that's the oldest store, then they—

AR: Do you remember seeing this store or just hearing about it.

CC: I, just hearing about it, because I remember another family that lived in the house, but the house stayed there for the longest kinda time. It was an old house, had a, uh, stone fireplace and had the hook that'd hang down in there where you'd put a, uh, what do you call it, a dutch oven on.

AR: Mm-hm.

CC: Yeah, it was a, it was a old old house, yeah. And then down on the mine when you come up there where you see the red fence then you went on through there, that's where Mine Road is, this is supposed, this is Batestown Road up here, but they called it Mine Road, but they had a store down there on the mine, where the mine was in operation.

CR: Remember that store I told you?

CC: They had a store down there for the people in the mine, you know.

AR: Mm-hm.

CC: And, uh, my grandfather, my dad's father worked at the mine. He was a, a timberman, you know the, when they bore in there and they, the structure to hold the walls up, yeah.

AR: What was his name?

CC: John, eh, James Edward Chapman. That's my father's father. Your grandpa worked at the mine, didn't he?

CR: Mm-hm.

LH: That one, that one. That's him. [Talking about photograph]

CR: He's got a list of em, I told him, I said that's not everybody. I say cause he broke his leg and his daddy took him out of there. And plus, his other brother got killed.

CC: Cause Uncle Jim still worked in the mine and they were about the same age.

CR: Mm-hm.

CC: Said that they job was they'd bring the other workers water.

CR: Mm-hm.

CC: Yeah.

CR: And they'd bring rocks, he said they would throw rocks.

CC: Get stones and put in there, yeah. Cause they were just young teenagers.

CR: Mm-hm.

CC: Cause see my grandfather was a older man.

AR: Hm.

CR: But my daddy broke his leg and sometime away, he told, he was down there, and he said you ain't going down there no more.

CC: And then Wallace Reid, you know, went in the shaft over there.

CR: It cut his head off.

LH: Good lord.

CC: Yeah, and then, I guess he was the one that probably told Miss [Inaudible] and them, "You ain't working there no more."

CR: Yeah.

CC: Yeah. But there was a lot of people disappeared in there, that mine shaft over there. In fact, when they closed the mine—The park think that they have all the mine shafts closed up, but they don't.

CR: Listen to this.

CC: I was telling him the other day that I was going to take him and me and his brother, cause we hunted all the time, his brother was there, and one night we were up in there coon hunting and we were shining and the dogs was at the tree and I was shining the tree looking for the coon and it happened that Pete said, said, "T, look out!" And if it hadn't been for him, I had backed up and, and the leaves had this thing covered up, it was in the fall, and I would have fell in one of those mine shafts. And we dropped a big rock in there and you know when something goes down, you'll see it go down but once it hit the bottom, you'll see bubbles come up. Well, the shafts go down like that, then go like this [Motions with hands]. The shafts in that mine over there runs under the ground plain to Woodbridge. Like my well outside there, when the guy dug it, see we don't drink that water, we on city water, but it's 220 feet. My mother was living then, and he told us, said, "Misses Chapman, I don't understand why it's so much water in this vein down here." Said that you could run a car wash, a commercial car wash for ever and ever and ever. But what it is, all those shafts to the mine is full of the water and it's never-ending water down there, but you can't drink it because of the iron ore. That was an iron ore mine during World War I.

CR: Sulfur, turned it to sulfur.

CC: Yeah.

AR: Hm.

CC: And then, after the mine closed down, then the military took over and they had, um, kind of top secret base up in these woods up here.

AR: Mm-hm.

CC: Yeah, like, uh, Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Maryland, they experimented with a lot of, yeah, with a lot of stuff here, so there ain't no telling what might be in these woods [Inaudible].

CR: Russian prisoners were up there.

CC: Mm-hm. Probably, uh, World War II prisoners of war up in the park. Up there interrogating and, shit. [Coughs]

AR: So did any of the older people ever talk much about the history of Batestown?

CC: Sure, that's how we know about this.

AR: That's how you know about all the things you're mentioning?

CC: Yep. Well, the Batestown, the reason the name got the, uh, name was the Bateses.

AR: Mm-hm.

CC: Yeah. And that's why we would, I think we want to get a petition to get our road changed back, this part of it, back to Batestown Road instead of Mine Road. Mine Road comes up to where the red fence is, the Mine Road, because the mine was that way. When you turn to come up here, it's Batestown. This is Batestown up here. So Mine Road is-is Batestown Road. That's the way, uh, it used to be on the mail, before they turned it to Mine Road.

AR: On the mail?

CC: On the, on the mail, you bet it did. They have the address right down there by the church was 142 Batestown Road —

CR- Batestown Road.

CR- Yeah.

AR: Do, would you maybe have any letter heads that have that on it?

CC: Uh, I'm sure that, um.
CR: [Inaudible]
CC: Yeah! That letter I gave you to Van Rosen [??].
LH: No, that's, uh, it has, uh, RFD Box 134 Manassas, Virginia.
CC: OK, that's on 234.
LH: Yeah that's 1933.
CC: But I'm sure that in some of Momma's old stuff around here th-there's a letter here with something on it.
CR: I can't find one. Not one.
CC: I bet ya I can find, I bet ya I can get Momma's stuff out here and find one.
CR: Get it.
CC: But if I get it I'll get you—
CR: Call me or take a picture, just take a picture of it and send it to me.
CC: Alright, I'm gonna find one.
AR: I would like to see it.
CR: [Inaudible] unbelievable.
AR: Now, was Batestown a segregated community?
LH: No.
CC: Um.
LH: Well. Kind of [Laughs], kind of!
CC: It was, it was, it's always been some white families spotted, you know.
CR: You know the road down there, before you get up there, by Mister, uh, Ford.
LH: Back there where, uh, [Inaudible] Lindsay used to live?
CC: No.
CR: No, right, right, before that—
CC: The Franklin house, the Franklins.
LH: Oh, the Franklins
CC: You know white people used to live up on those, uh, boys was, uh, one of em, they come up here now they, uh—
LH: But they're not in Batestown.
CR: That house where Tuck used to live there, up in there.
CC: Barron, Barron Heights, yeah.
LH: Barron Heights.
CC: But you know, right there by the [Inaudible] house, that driveway that come up through there—
CR: Mm-hm.
CC: —You know that big white, there was a big white house that was up in the hill?
CR: Right, right.
CC: Ashley, the Ashleys lived up in there.
CR: Correct. They said there used to be a jail up there, you ever heard that? Anything about that?
CC: Momma said it was a road camp.
CR: Road camp, that's what I heard.
AR: A road camp, what's that?
CC: A prison camp.
LH: A prison camp.

CC: Where they work, they work with—

AR: Oh.

CC: And did you know, Charlie, down there across from the sewer they had a gristmill.

CR: Yeah, I tried to, I wanted to show him that. Same place I told you where—

CC: People would carry their corn their and grind it up into cornmeal.

CR: —We used to do, uh, uh, ice skating, it's right there. They said that all the timbers, that-that they're all downstream now. It ain't up there no more.

CC: But you can see some of em, you used to could see part of the, uh—

CR: A little bit of it.

CC: —The wheel.

CR: Oh yeah, yeah, they got a big, uh, I went up there last year—

CC: And there was a ice house right across the road from Mister, Mister Hollaway's.

CR: It's a huge, it's a huge thing, I think where they set the wheel, it's still there.

CC: The grist wheel that the water would run off of.

CR: Yeah. Well, that, the wheel ain't there, but it's like where it would sit on.

CC: Yeah.

CR: It's huge.

CC: I remember when we were kids, Charlie, th-the the boards that the wheel was made of—

CR: Mm-hm.

CC: —Over there by that bank.

CR: Right.

CC: A lot of that rotten board is from that gristmill.

CR: Right, and you could swim, the bottom of it was deep, you could swim right there.

CC: Cause Momma said the old people, Grandmama, my great grandma now, everybody would grow they corn, carry down there and they would grind it up into cornmeal.

CR: Yeah, and I'm a throw one at ya. You ever hear anything, Miss Lulu told me that back where Mister Ike Kendall used to live there was a bank, and there was a bank there, that people all around, Manassas and everywhere would come down there and get pieces of that clay as snuff and put it in their mouth. They couldn't afford snuff. You ever heard that?

CC: Yeah, I heard that too.

CR: I said I thought I was the only one that heard that, I said that was crazy.

CC: Yep.

CR: She told me that, Miss Lulu did, I said, "What?"

CC: And look, I'm gonna tell ya something else, you know when you go up Van Buren?

CR: Mm-hm.

CC: You know where the power line used to go, you remember when you was a police officer I found a man, me and Sam found a man dead over there.

CR: Mm-hm.

CC: Alright, you remember the power line used to cross there?

CR: You're right.

CC: Alright, you remember when you go up past there, right over there where the doctor's office and all that stuff is over there, where you carried me the other day when I dropped, dropped that paper off, they used to call that Gallows Hill. Said that, old folks told em, said that long time ago they used to hang people up there.

CR: I wouldn't doubt that.

CC: Yeah.

CR: You can go on Turner, the Turner, uh, things and, uh, I'm a get away from this, but they would talk about selling a lot of slaves in Dumfries, a lot.

CC: Yeah cause it was a port city, yeah.

CR: No doubt.

CC: Th-they used to, um, that's why they dubbed it Port of Dumfries.

CR: My thing was, what gets me is they used to mention where the blacks were at but they never, they didn't live in Dumfries so, I think they had to be living up in here. I'm talking about the 1700's, they had to be living here.

CC: Yeah. Charlie, if you go down there in that cemetery down there, I can take you right to an oak tree, as big as that tree out there—

CR: Oh I know where it's at.

CC: —Where the tombstones is grown up in it. Them people th-the, they was there before George Washington was born.

CR: They fixed it up now, that was an old slave cemetery.

CC: I knew it, up there in the—

AR: Where?

CR: Dumfries.

CC: Where the Dumfries Elementary is.

CR: Elementary is.

CC: So they made a corn field where the black people used to be.

CR: Mm-hm.

CC: Yeah.

LH: It used to be all white down there, didn't it?

CR: Mm-hm.

CC: But the blacks were buried and the Native Americans were buried there before them.

CR: Yeah, um. I-I remember as a child, growing up, like I said, I saw that sign say, "Batestown" right there on Route 1. I saw it.

CC: Yeah, it used to be there.

LH: Mm-hm.

CR: I know it was there, and, uh—

CC: And when you come down by papa Ginn's, coming south, you would see a sign that said Batestown, Batestown Road on it, and it all pointed up here.

CR: And for the life of me, how it changed, I don't know. It's just like the old 95, them people that used to live there, one of em was called the Whites, it was two black families, right? The Whites and—Remember them?

L-Oh, where?

CR: On 95, before 95 got built, them two houses they tore down.

CC: Yeah, where, where it come over.

CR: One was called the Whites—

CC: With the old 234.

CR: No no no no no. Well, yeah, it was near those.

CC: Old 234 came right down here.

CR: Right, came right over 95.

CC: Yeah.

CR: But this was further up. Right, right by Mine Road. Right there, up on that hill there used to be a family called the Whites and something else, I—Do you remember [Inaudible] and that other name?

LH: Hm-mm, but I remember the houses.

CC: You talking about coming down number 1?

CR: No, on Mine Road.

LH: Mine Road.

CR: Right up on 95 where them bridges sitting right now.

CC: OK, it was two houses.

CR: Two houses back there.

CC: Right, like that, going over there where Mary lived. Across the bridge.

CR: No, uh, no.

CC: On-on the side where, um, after you pass Mister Ikes—

LH: Francis! Francis Gaines.

CR: OK. The Dumfries cemetery.

CC: OK.

CR: Then the houses right there.

CC: That was Willie Schafer's house.

LH: Schafer's, yeah.

CR: OK, now that house, now, then they had two houses up on that hill before it was 95.

LH: Before it was 95. I don't know their names.

CC: Would be in there, where the two brothers are, and where Van Burren's at.

CR: Correct.

CC: Cause there was no Van Burren. You had to come all the way down to Number 1 to get on Batestown Road.

CR: That's correct

CC: Yeah, it was, it was some houses up there.

CR: It was one called—

CC: Where the southbound and northbound lane meet.

CC: Yeah, it was the, yes. It was the Whites, I know they were in—It was two black families though. I couldn't remember the other name.

CR: [Inaudible]

CC: I know you're right because I think they went to Washington Reid with us, the kids.

CR: They did.

CC: Yes.

CR: They did, that's why I knew that the kids was the Whites.

LH: But the families were black.

CR: They were black, uh huh.

LH: And their last names was White.

CC: You haven't been out here in a long time, Charlie, but you—

CR: A very long time.

CC: Yeah.

CR: I remember me and Wilson Thomas would go—

CC: But they didn't open 95 until 63, we remember when it wasn't there.

CR: Me and Wilson Thomas would lay down in the middle of it and look at the stars, wouldn't be a car coming for miles.

CC: On this road?

CR: On 95.

CC: On 95? Yeah.

CR: You can't do it now.

CC: Yeah cause that, man, we used to go down there when there was proper equipment and we'd drive the equipment up and down before they opened it up.

CR: That Queen boy got stuck in one of the banks down in there. Oh my god that's the scariest I ever been in my life. We couldn't get that boy out of there.

CC: His brother would go down there on Halloween and take the school bus [Inaudible].

CR: Over there and steal it.

CC: Pick us up on the road, driving a school bus.

AR: He would steal a school bus?

CC: Yeah, took us for a ride.

CR: That's just one thing. [Laughs]

CC: On Halloween. Yeah it was.

CR: That was just one thing he did.

AR: Heh!

LH: Hm-mm-mm-mm.

AR: Goodness.

CR: Stay away from that.

CC: [Inaudible] I think about it, and I'm a tell you, I, shh, we didn't do nothing so bad that I— You, we just did childish, mischievous things. We never hurt nobody, but we had some fun around this place. The best years of my life, and I've been all over the United States—

CR: Right here.

CC: —It has been right here, and I've been to a lot of places. This is my little place on earth.

CR: I told him at Calvin Johnson's funeral, I said as children we would play cowboys and Indians, but we used BB guns. Wasn't no, "cap cap cap" and when you hit em you say, "I got you." You knew you were got!

CC: [Laughs]

CR: We'd do BB gun tag. How we didn't shoot each other's eyes out, I don't know.

CC: Way up in those woods right new is two army bunks that come from down, when they remodeled down Quantico a long time ago, and we had baby houses all through the woods, and it's two of them little metal bunks over there laying in these woods right now.

CR: Yep. They are, they are.

CC: Still thankful my childhood was spent in the woods.

AR: Hm.

CR: That is so true. Anything else you can think of?

LH: Uncle Bob shot Carolyn in the butt with a BB gun.

AR: Uncle who doing what? [Laughs]

LH: Uncle Bob, that's my uncle Joe, up there, but I have another brother, my mother's brother named Bob. He shot my sister's butt with a BB gun. [Laughs]

CR: But they got, uh, a lot of, like I said, a lot of good people came off of this road and contributed to this Dumfries, um, area.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: Um, like our daddy. He's, uh, h-he was in the military.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: And, um, uh, granddaddy, he was also in the military, and, uh, you know, you don't have to be a cop or, or a politician to do, to be good as far as I'm concerned.

LH: Do good for the community.

CR: They, they did just as much as anybody else. [Clears throat] I would like y-you to take pictures of them.

LH: And they was workers, uh working in these, everybody's family is workers, these people worked.

CR: Yeah, people worked up here.

LH: To survive, ya know? They didn't have the best paying jobs, but they, you know.

CR: From school teachers to nurses to the service, you know.

LH: Custodians, whatever.

CR: Custodians, whatever, they worked. They worked for their money, they, whatever they got they were proud of it, so, you know that's why I come up here to be with you cause I know what's up here, I mean. We-we-we, they would always, uh, I'm not gonna say we had some bad seeds, but people were al—You were never given an equal opportunity to do anything. Everything you did you had to come out of the bottom to get to the top.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: And, so.

LH: Nothing was given out or handed out.

CR: You know, some people tried to take shortcuts, I ain't, I'm not mad at em for that, you know, so, life is like that, you know. It's hard, it's very hard. You, when you sit here and look at TV and see people doing the same thing you're doing, living better than you, something's not right with the system, you know, and so.

LH: And like I said, everybody in the community, Batestown Road, you know, they, um, they gave back to the community.

CR: They did.

LH: Without everybody giving, the community wouldn't have survived and children and all wouldn't survive, but everybody pulled together. One was down, like I said, my mom would feed all the drunks, all the thugs and feed the kids. My mom took in a couple children, raised em up, you know, with us, all in the house.

CR: She did. My sister's daughter.

LH: Mm-hm, Marcel, Lulu, our baby, our little Lulu. But anyway, uh, and it was just like that, you just—

CR: I was telling him about my momma, when she used to cook them rolls and give everybody them rolls on the road.

LH: Oh yeah.

CR: Good lord have mercy.

LH: Oh yeah. Everybody was giving and loving. This loving, now, didn't have no, might have a little disagreement, everybody'd disagree, agree to disagree.

CR: Everybody would disagree, but—

LH: But it went on.

CR: —It didn't go to the violent extreme.

LH: Oh no, hm-mm. Naw, it was, uh—

CR: And I was telling him, I said there was a time you just couldn't come up this road any kind of way.

LH: Hm-mm!

CR: You had to know somebody.
LH: You had to know somebody or you gonna get thrown out face down.
CR: You'd get hurt, get hurt bad, I'm telling ya. It was some mean people up here, I ain't telling no lie.
LH: Oh yeah, they, territorial, they were territorial when you come up in here.
AR: Makes sense.
LH: When I married my husband, Velva Jean married an army guy and I married my husband, a marine!
CR: Yep, mm-hm.
LH: Mister Johnny said, [Inaudible].
AR: You married a marine?
LH: Yeah. He's from North Carolina but he was stationed at, uh, Quantico.
AR: Oh.
CC: I'll show you a jar of preserves that my mother preserved back in, in the 80's.
AR: Oh wow. What is that?
CR: You could take a picture of that.
CC: Pear preserve.
LH: It's probably, uh, liquor. [Laughs]
AR: A what?
LH: Pears, pears.
CC: Pear preserves.
LH: Put it on this and you'll get drunk. Pears and wine. Your mom used to make homemade wine.
CR: Everybody did.
LH: Mm-hm.
CR: Everybody did that. Homemade wine, homemade beer.
AR: Mm-hm.
LH: And she was a wine, little wine, a little ole wine maker.
CC: It was good wine too.
LH: Somebody, I worked in corrections, I retired from corrections and there used to be guy that come by here, and he was talking about, "Anybody know Miss Mazerine Chapman?" I said, "Oh my god!" [Laughter]
CC: Some of them boys from down south [Inaudible].
LH: Yeah, they would come out here with one of, uh, Robert, another local guy, a Kendall, and he came by and he had met my mom so I was working in corrections and he was an officer in the facility I was working in and he come up there talking about, "Anybody know Mazerine Chapman?" and I looked at him, I said, "I know this man doesn't know my momma name." I said, we used to call him Louie, Lou, Lou, "Louie! What you talking about?" "I've met your brother and I, and your mom gave me—" and I said, "Don't say no more!" [Laughter]
CC: Yeah, he used to come here all the time.
LH: He gave him some of her homemade wine!
[Laughter]
LH: I said, "Don't let the people know my Momma makes wine!"
[Laughter]
AR: I see!

CR: But you could come up with, I mean, wine was the least problem up here on this road.
LH: I mean, she didn't make no corn liquor!
CR: Like Contee say, it was a lot of beverages up here.
CC: And your mom used to make them good homemade rolls.
CR: Yeah, baby!
CC: And souse.
CR: Oh yeah.
CC: You know what souse is?
CR: Aunt Blanche made that.
LH: He don't know what no souse is.
CR: Oh my god.
CC: I betcha he do.
LH: No, he don't.
CR: He didn't know what scrapple was.
AR: No, I didn't.
CC: You didn't?
CR: [Laughs] He didn't
CC: You've never heard of-of-of, uh—
CR: Hog head cheese. You know that?
CC: You ever heard of that?
AR: [Shakes head]
CC: Do you eat—Charlie, when you leave, why don't you take him to the st-, go up there to shoppers somewhere and show him, get some of that, it's 99 cents a pint of souse.
CR: Yeah, get him a little piece, might get it myself.
LH: It-it's pigs, what?
CC: They use the ears and the this and that.
CR: It's jelly, yeah, snout, and the head really.
CC: And the feet, then ground it up.
CR: Yeah, all the parts, it jells up.
CC: You would probably know it if you see it, it's called souse.
LH: Souse, mm-hm.
CR: Yeah, souse.
AR: Souse.
CC: Souse.
CR: S-O-U-S-E
CC: It's got a good taste, it's got a good taste to it.
CR: It's got a bitter, bitter—They make it up at Wilson's on, uh, 28. I buy it up there.
CC: Yeah, over at the meat market.
LH: And, uh, scrapple is a meat to, fried, yeah.
CR: You can buy it up there.
AR: I'll try it.
LH: Mm-hm.
CR: OK then, remember you said it!
[Laughter]
LH: Who else will you visit? Who's on your schedule in Batestown? Who, who are you visiting next Charlie?

CR: Uh, probably, um—

AR: We don't have anyone scheduled next, I don't think.

CR: Probably Mister Bates, I would hope.

AR: Oh, yeah.

CC: Garnell?

CR: Mm-hm. Garnell knows a lot, he knows when Batestown was, like, back when the park had bought almost all of that over there on that side.

CC: Mm.

CR: Not the park, the, uh, mine bought all of it up, and everybody else lived on this side.

CC: Yeah, cause he remembers, but he-he, actually, you see now—

CR: He said he remembered.

LH: He's probably one of the oldest ones living now.

CR: He is. But he has a good recall, but it takes a little while to warm up, but he's got some good stuff.

LH: And he's an original Bates.

AR: We'll talk with him.

[Laughter]

CC: We will see what he remembers, but look here now. The white guy that's in the graveyard is his grandfather and Gusty Cole's daddy. See if he's gonna remember that.

CR: Gusty Cole.

LH: OK, what else about that family, come on. Sorry

AR: So what else did your parents do for a living? I know you mentioned that your mother had a shop, correct?

CC: Yes, but she, she was, uh, she was a presser, she pressed, I think, the military clothes in Quantico. That's what she was, a professional presser, yeah. My dad died at a young age. He had been in the military, and then he helped build dominion power plant which was VEPCO back in the day, and he worked for the, uh, after he got out of there the Stony Weber company, which build the power plant.

CR: I think you're right because [Inaudible] in the paper, I got a piece of paper warned about that

stony weather the exact name of it.

CC: We got some of my daddy's, uh—

LH: And my mother had military benefits for us, she got benefits for us because my hu-, my father was in the, and that helped with, you know, supplement with her work and all, so she benefits until we grew up.

CC: And our father got injured in World War II cause he had a purple heart.

AR: Oh really?

CR: Do you have it?

CC: What?

CR: The purple heart?

CC: No, but Momma had it and it was on his discharge. We don't even have his discharge now.

AR: Did you say that was your father or your grandfather?

LH: That's our father.

CC: My father. My father served in World War II. My father was 20 years older than my mom.

LH: Than our mom.

AR: Uh huh.

LH: We had an old dad. But he was forty, he would have been forty, he died in the same month that he was born. He would have been forty when he died.

AR: Alright. Do you know what he did in World War II?

CC: He was an infantryman.

AR: Infantry.

CC: Yeah, he served in the South Pacific.

AR: Oh, wow.

[Inaudible]

CR: — Weems Botts museum and see if I can bring copies of this [Discussing copying photographs with Linda]

LH: I can make a cop-, I can take a copy with the phone if you want me to.

CR: OK.

AR: Could you, maybe talk little more about what, uh, what kind of food your mother would make?

CC: My mother would make everything. Mom mother—

LH: She was a good cook, a very good cook.

CC: —Fried chicken, potato salad.

LH: Greens.

CC: When they had the ball games, uh, my mom would sell chicken dinners and fish dinners and—My mom was a good cook. And his mom is [Motioning toward Charlie], everybody's mom, everybody's a good cook around here.

LH: My mom, uh—

CC: There's one thing we never—

LH: Potatoes, potatoes.

CC: —Never short on food.

LH: No, we always had food, and she cooked fried potatoes, mashed potatoes. We was a potato family, but I'm a rice person, but they, we were a potato family. Salt fish. Just what most Blacks eat, that's what. And she, my grandmother could cook, she cooked, was a cook in a restaurant. So she took her cooking after, um, my grandmother. My sister could cook, but I don't like to cook.

AR: Your grandmother cooked in a restaurant?

LH: Uh huh, down in Quantico town, yes.

CC: This is a picture of my father, in his early days, and this is a picture of my mother in her early days. This was probably right after he passed.

LH: It seems right.

CR: [Inaudible]

AR: So, would you say most of the food that—that your mother would cook from the community, or come from her own garden?

LH: Well the garden and the store. She had a garden, but, uh, she'd shop down at A&P, with A&P when, uh, but she would grocery shop for stuff for the store. Cause she had a garden, but she didn't have a whole lot of stuff in the garden, just a small garden, cause she didn't have time to work no garden, but, and then we had chicken, and had eggs. [Laughs] Well, the chicken had eggs.

AR: Yes, as they do.

[Laughter]

LH: Yes, they do! And, uh, well, other than that I'd say when people, you know, they'd share, you know you'd borrow something every once in a while but most the time she had, we had all that you need, you know, even when we were little, we lived with our grandmother, our great grandmother. We always ate well, we always had plenty. [Inaudible]

AR: So the stuff in her store, where did that come from?

LH: She would buy—It was nothing perishable. Most of it was just canned foods and stuff like that, and, uh, snacks, and what else, Charlie, was in there?

CR: Potato chips, stuff like that. Cans, canned goods.

LH: Bread, potato chips, snacks, and stuff, but there was no meat.

AR: So would she, like, go out, get it, then bring it—

LH: Yeah.

CR: She got it in Springfield.

AR: Oh.

CR: I can tell you cause I went up there one time.

LH: Is that where she got it?

CR: Mm-hm.

LH: OK, wholesale places, I guess, is where she went and got it. Wholesale places.

AR: Alright.

LH: Mm-hm. And sodas and—

CR: Uh, what's the—Pickled eggs and, uh—

LH: Pickled pig feet.

CR: Sausage, s-sausage, stuff like that.

LH: Get a jar of pickles.

CR: Yeah, yeah.

AR: You just come in and-and pay a little bit and grab one.

LH: And buy it.

CR: Just somewhere to hang and talk and—

LH: Just a community little store, you know.

CR: She wasn't gonna get rich on it.

LH: No.

CR: I can tell ya that.

LH: She couldn't stop working her job. [Laughs]

CR: No, not one bit.

LH: Uh huh, but, uh.

AR: So, well, Contee, I don't know where, oh he's out there talking to—

LH: The guy, that's probably his parole guy out there talking to him [Inaudible].

CR: [Inaudible]

AR: Do you remember who some of the oldest community members were?

LH: Oh yes.

AR: I'll say I'm sure he probably does. [Laughs]

LH: Oh yeah, I know, uh, Mister Kendall, grandpapa.

CR: Mm-hm.

LH: What was his real name? What was grandpapa's real name? Walter Ken—No, not Walter Kendall.

AR: John?

CR: John Kendall.

LH: John Kendall, Grandpapa, and, uh, my grandmother Estelle, Estelle Davis.
CR: Mm-hm, Estelle.
AR: Was he the grandfather of, of your—
LH: No, we called him—
AR: —Everybody calls him that?
LH: Everybody calls him Grandpapa, Grandpapa Kendall. No, he wasn't my grand—Was he kin to you [Asking Charlie].
CR: I'm sure he was. Everybody kin to everybody up here.
LH: Yeah, but, you know, we all called him Grandpapa.
AR: Alright.
LH: And, uh, my grandmother and Ora Bates, Miss—All the Bates.
CR: Uh miss, uh, Miss Ora.
LH: French, Dewitt, all of em.
AR: That's Ora Glass's—
CR: Mm-hm, yeah.
LH: Her mother? Mm-hm. Yeah, so they all lived a long—The people, the older lived a long, pretty long lives up here, all of em's in their '70s and '80s.
CR: They taught us a whole lot like this. Mister Holloway was old.
LH: Holloway.
AR: Is that why they call it Holloways Hill?
LH: Yeah, that's cause he lived on that hill.
AR: Alright.
CR: He used a plow to plow his garden. Pay him a couple dollars each to plow your garden
LH: [Inaudible]
CR: He-he-he and my father was good friends cause when he first come up here he stayed with us, so he, my dad would buy, board his, uh, horses and take the plow with the horse and go use that plow, when I used to live over there he did mine.
LH: Mister Holloway actually was from my husband's home town.
CR: Yep, from Mount Vernon.
LH: In Mount Vernon. Cause my husband's from Mount Vernon.
CR: He got a family of, what, ten, twelve or ten kids, around that.
LH: Oh yeah, yeah, he'll have children on both places. He had two hus-, two wives. But anyway, but uh, and who else, the Bateses, Ora Bate-, uh, Leroy and his mom, and just knew all of them people of that generation.
CR: Yeah, Miss Sudie and I guess Miss Violet, well Miss Violet, Kendall?
LH: Yeah, she's [Inaudible]
CR: Miss, um
LH: Miss, her momma, Miss Neils up on 234, but she was on 234, but.
CR: Mister Honkey Reid and, uh, Miss Dorothy Reid. Miss Edward.
AR: What's his name? You call him Honkey?
LH: Honkey.
CR: That was his name, not in, not in a racist term—
AR: [Laughs]
CR: —That was his name.
LH: That was his- Honkey, Honkey.
AR: Alright.

CR: Richard Reid was his name.
AR: Interesting.
CR: But they always called him Honkey.
LH: I wonder why, cause he was short?
CR: I know it.
LH: But anyway.
CR: Something the way he talked, the way he talked.
LH: Might've just been that.
CC: Who's that?
CR and LH: Honkey
CR: Telling him about all the older people that lived on this road.
LH: Lived on this road. He asked if we remember the older people, sure we did! From great grandmama Estelle on down. And we had five generations one time.
CC: [Inaudible]
AR: Wow.
LH: My, uh, great grandmama Arevil-, uh, Estelle, Arevilla, my momma, my sister, my older sister Carolyn and she had a baby, and it was 5.
AR: Oh wow. That's crazy. [Laughs]
[Inaudible]
LH: He has to take a cig—He's having a nicotine fit. I'll answer the questions that I can.
AR: And then we can ask again when he returns, but, um. So you don't live in Batestown currently?
LH: No, I live in Stafford.
AR: In Stafford. Um, when did you move out of Batestown? Was it—
LH: Oh, I was, when I got married to my husband.
AR: Alright.
LH: I was thirty-one or whatever and we went to Pennsylvania because he was stationed up there.
AR: Alright. When was this?
LH: Now why you have to ask dates?
AR: At least, at least how old were you?
LH: Thirty-one.
AR: Alright.
LH: That's when I first married, thirty-one, so that means, uh, 1978. [Talking about a photograph] Uncle Bob and, uh, Uncle Johnson, I think.
CR: Oh my god.
AR: So where'd you move again with your husband?
LH: Philadelphia.
AR: Oh, Philadelphia.
LH: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
AR: Oh, wow, and when did you move back down here to the Stafford area?
LH: I move back here to Stafford 1986 when I went to work for corrections, because I left Pennsylvania and went to North Carolina to my husband's home.
AR: Ah.
LH: So that's why my [Inaudible], cause he could pass and whatever, so while I was away I'd travel back and forth. So, uh, cause I came back in 1986 and I've been here ever since.

[Inaudible background conversation]

AR: Alright. Do you stay in contact with anyone from the community, besides your brother?

LH: Oh yeah, always, always, always came back for [Inaudible]. All the people would come out this way, Mister Johnny's wife, people we were close to. Different people called, and come home to funerals somewhat of us

AR: Yeah, so, um—

LH: I was away but never gone.

[Inaudible background conversation.]

AR: Are there any people still living in Batestown now that you remember from when you were younger?

LH: No because mostly all the people that lived here are gone. The older people are.

AR: Oh this is going to be so hard to transcribe. [Laughs]

LH: Y'all are talking and he's recording!

CR: OK, go ahead, I'm sorry.

LH: Um. Charlie, who lives up here now that, um, we grew up with? There's not too many people live up here anymore.

CR: Johnny Balls. That's it.

LH: Johnny Balls.

CR: That's it.

LH: His name is, uh—

CR: Johnny Kendall.

LH: Johnny Kendall, young—

CR: Junior.

LH: Junior.

AR: Ah.

LH: And he lives down there, up the road a little ways, but other than that, Charlie's family is all gone, nobody lives up on the road anymore, but our family—Oh and, uh—

CR: But they wasn't here when we were.

LH: No, they came from Woodbridge here, OK. So it's not no, not, like I said, come to this road and it seems like a different—

CR: Ain't nobody. Everybody's gone.

LH: Mm-hm. Off the road.

AR: How would you describe the changes to the Batestown area from when you were a child?

LH: It hasn't changed that much. Possi-possibly—What do you think?

CR: It, the road ain't changed.

LH: The road hasn't changed, just people, different people have moved in and bought property, but as far as the road, the road remains the same, just the people are gone.

AR: I mean the whole community, I guess, how has the community changed?

LH: As, as, the community has changed as far as people.

AR: Mm-hm.

LH: All the original people are gone other than, I'd say, the Chapman house here and then the Kendall, old John- young Johnny Kendall down the road there. And they haven't made a whole bunch of improvements, we got a new church built, but as far as everything else, you know, it's nothing, I want to say—Charlie, what's the word I want to use?

CR: Oh, i-it's, it's like time done stood still here.

LH: Yeah, on Batestown. This part of Batestown.

CR: As far as, the houses are gone, but we know where they used to be at, stuff like that, but people, you know, it's like, even with the water that th-they got water now, but you don't have sewage, or do they do have sewage now?

LH: Mm-hm.

CR: OK, they got sewage, my bad. But I'm-I'm, I know that the park is just waiting to buy it up, buy all the land.

LH: And the new homes and all the development is, that's what I was trying to say, it hasn't, it hasn't been done, but it's coming. The development has been further down Mine Road, down there further, not up on the Batestown Road part, and they're waiting on people, really, to sell their land. It's coming. When they can get this land it's gonna change, but, uh, I don't know what day that would be.

AR: Alright. Um—

CR: But you couldn't pick a better place to grow up at. Ever.

LH: But I wouldn't want to live up here now.

CR: Oh my god, y'all got the— [Talking about photographs] You want a picture of these too?

LH: When my mother was little I would've want to. We wanted to build a house here, but we didn't have no land, wanted to build one closer to my mom. Now that she's gone I have no interest in, just other than to come and see my brother.

AR: Yeah.

LH: Other than that, I wouldn't want to live up here.

AR: There's not—When you were younger was it like, you know, you knew everybody here?

LH: Everybody.

AR: And now they're—

LH: Gone! It's a different area. I have no connection, no connections other than my brother here, and other than that—

[Inaudible]

[Background conversation]

AR: So, Contee, have you lived in Batestown your entire life?

CC: Off and on mostly, yes. I lived in Jersey for three years, but my whole life has basically been here.

AR: Alright, and this property that you're living on now, um, how did you acquire this?

CC: This was my great uncle owned this house. He died in June of 1971. My mother finished paying for this house and it became hers but, um.

AR: What was your, you said your great uncle, right?

CC: Yeah, his name was Roger Davis.

AR: Roger Davis.

CC: Yeah.

LH: That was my grandmother's, my mother's mother's brother.

CC: He was our great uncle, he would be my great uncle.

AR: I see. And, um, hm, I was asking her before, um, do you remember, do you know very many people that live here now that were still here, or were here when you were younger?

CC: Uh, y-yeah. Other than us, it's, uh, other than me, I think they might have told you one of the fellas down the road, he grown up with us, but, you know—

LH: Johnny Ball, that's all I could think of.

CC: Right, Johnny Kendall, but, I'd rather put him to talk about his part of the family rather than us, cause he kinda-

CR: We ain't worried about Johnny Ball, don't worry about him.

LH: This is, uh, the uncle we were talking about, this is my great, or my grandmother's brother, Roger Davis, this was his house.

AR: Yeah, I see.

LH: And this, this area has been passed on to my momma cause she paid for it.

AR: So, can you describe how the area has changed from what you remember when you were a child?

CC: Well, different people live here now, but area-wise and sight-wise, it's the same as it was. See cause we are landlocked by the, uh, Department of the Interior, the Park land. So unless the people up here sell they land and somebody buy it and make a development, and then it would become a gated community, this is, it's landlocked, this is the only place right around here close that you will find, uh-uh, road that hasn't been changed much over the years since way back in the day.

AR: Alright, um—

CC: And my mother and all of, uh, all of our people attended the little school over there, you know, the Cabin Branch Elementary school, the school that's right, was right across there.

AR: Your mother went to Cabin Branch?

CC: My mother went there, mm-hm. Grandmother, because it was, the school was further up the road then, the first one, this was the second here.

AR: Oh. Yeah, yeah. Did your grandmother tell you much about Cabin Branch?

CC: Yeah, well first it was a one room school, then they build another room to it, but the original site was up the road about a quarter a mile on the right, which is in the park now.

AR: Mm-hm. Is there anything left of that, do you know?

CC: The foundation, just like over here.

AR: Yeah, I was over there, was that yesterday? No, the day before yesterday.

CC: The day before yesterday, I saw y'all over there.

AR: Um, well, is there anything else you two would like to share with me that we haven't spoken of? Um, any stories or anything like that?

CC: Oh god, we could go on and on and on!

AR: Yeah, I'm sure you've got a lot of stories.

LH: Nothing we would, nothing we would like to have recorded. You know.

AR: Alright [Laughs].

CC: But we was—My only thing, and I'm sure I'm speaking for them too, we, this is our home, we had fond memories up—I couldn't have picked a better that I ever been to be from than right here. And I've been to incredible places.

AR: Alright then. Well, if there's nothing else that the two of you would like to share or talk about, or any questions you have for me, then, uh, I guess that will be—

CC: I plan to be here until the end of my time. I don't see, in the near future, me going anywhere living-wise, unless there's something in the future for me that I don't know, as far as moving out of the area. But this is my little spot on God's green earth, right here.

AR: Mm-hm, do you know, do you have any plans for the property, um, as far as who will inherit it?

CC: Well, it'll be, it'll be family, just like I, we inherited it, then our family will inherit it.

LH: The next generation, generation down from my brothers, whoever goes first. Because it's their property, my brother, I took my name off of it, it's my two brothers' property.

CC: She gave us her share of this property, my brother and I.

LH: So, if something happened to him, then Leroy would be, then something happen to both of them, then, then their children and my sister's name is on there. Her children will only come in, for this property, if we sell it for monitorial, but other than coming in and taking over they can't, you know, it just is my two brothers and myself, still, but I have to naturally give it to my sister. So it's, you know, that's what it is, it just goes down, passed down.

AR: Mm-hm.

CC: A lot of people don't realize that back in the day what our ancestors had to go through just to—Um, actually, now when you get to speak to Mister Bates over there, on the Davis Tract over there, they have paperwork showing when the slaves were freed and Sarah and Jim Davis were granted, you know the rule was 40 acres and a mule, but they got 50 acres and a mule. That's why the Davis Tract over on 234, which is on my mother's side, they have 50 acres, maybe because he had 10 children, so 50 acres, each of em would have had 5 acres of land, and Gusty Cole being a stepchild, I guess he had paperwork to show where he didn't wanna, him to be left out.

AR: Hm.

CC: So, and that's gonna be Mister Bates' grandfather, great grandfather that you gonna be speaking to him on.

LH: You might have to go over there and help Mister Bates out! [Laughs]

CC: Yeah, when are y'all going to do that?

LH: Cause his memories not, if he's 90 years old he may not, you know.

CR: He, he got warmed up, he started telling me some stuff, I was like, "Damn, I didn't know that."

CC: But then, w-when are y'all gonna talk to him?

CR: I'm gonna probably talk to him next week, cause h-he went to the hospital.

CC: If there's something that he don't remember, then I-I would go over there when y'all meet with him.

CR: OK. Alright.

CC: Because he depended on, he's one year younger than my mother and whenever he wanted to know something about the family, he would come over and ask my mother because she had a very good memory about it. So, you know, if y'all need me over there, then I'll go over there and kinda refresh him on, on the things.

AR: Alright.

CC: I'm sure he wouldn't have a problem with it. Cause he wouldn't know that I remember would be from my mother telling me because when he needed to know something back when they were young, he would come over and talk with my mother about it.

[Inaudible background conversation]

AR: Alright, well, is there anything else to mention?

CR: Let's take some pictures.

AR: Alright then.

LH: We appreciate it, you know, and if you ever need anymore, you ask my brother and you won't even have to talk to me [Laughs] just ask my brother, he can, uh, if you have any other questions, to fill in some spots, or you can call me or whatever.

AR: Alright, well thank you both very much for allowing me to interview you.

CC: And I enjoyed you interviewing us, and you're always welcomed here.

LH: Thank you young man.

End



Mazerine Davis Chapman, mother of Linda Hawkins and Contee Chapman Jr., standing in front of their garden in Batestown.



Contee Alfonzo Chapman Senior, WWII veteran, Pvt. 1st Class, Infantry. Father of Linda Hawkins and Contee Chapman.



Chapman family Christmas- Siblings Caroline with a doll baby, Linda, Contee with a toy sword and shield, and William (Leroy) with a cap gun.



Mazerine Davis Chapman with her son, Contee Alfonzo Chapman Jr. in Quantico.

Interview with Garnell Bates

Garnell Bates Biography

“Brought back the memory, years ago, how the place had grewed up, cause Batestown wasn’t grewed up like it is now. And then we got a couple new houses up there, but most of the houses gone. I remember the house that we were raised in, it’s gone, and the house that I was born in, gone...”

Garnell Bates was born on April 2nd 1927 to Martha Cole Bates and Mitchell Bates in Batestown. Garnell was the first born of three children, Leroy, Mary Alice, and Wilson. Garnell’s mother, a descendant of the Cole and Kendall families, did housework for a living. His father did contract work in Arlington. Both of Garnell’s parents were born and raised in Batestown. Garnell mentioned working on a golf course when he was younger and later having a career working for Arlington County on the sewer line. He left Batestown when he married his wife at the age of 35, and he moved into the house where he currently lives.

In his interview, Garnell explained the difficulties of keeping heir property in the family and how much of the land in Batestown had been sold. He discussed moonshining and Batestown’s rivalry with Stafford, and how both of these things were changed by World War II. Garnell also shared a story about when the Dinkey from the mine wrecked, injuring John Kendall Senior.



Oral History Guidelines for Prince William County

Oral History Interview Agreement

This Interview Agreement is made and entered into by the Interviewer(s):

Adam Rayburn

and the Interviewee(s):

GARNELL BATES

Interviewee(s) agrees to participate in one or more interviews with the Interviewer(s) named above. This Agreement relates to any and all materials originating from the interviews, namely notes, tape recordings, video recordings, any transcripts or other written manuscripts prepared from or using the notes, tape recordings and/or video recordings, or any images that might be used during the interview or created during the interview.

In consideration of mutual covenants, conditions, and terms set forth below, the parties hereto hereby agree as follows:

1. Interviewee(s) and Interviewer(s) understand that the copy of the interview in the possession of the interviewer is the property of Prince William County, and will be available in its entirety to researchers and the general public.
2. Interviewee(s) and Interviewers(s) irrevocably assigns to the Prince William County all his or her copyright, title, and interest in this material.
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Garnell Bates

Interviewee(s) signature(s)

7-10-19

Date

Adam Rayburn

Interviewer(s) signature(s)

7-10-19

Date

Prince William County
Office of Planning and
Department of Parks Recreation and Tourism, Historic Preservation Division

Oral History with Garnell Bates

Interviewer: Adam Rayburn

Interviewee: Garnell Bates

Location: Garnell Bates' home at 18305 Johnson Rd, Triangle, VA 22172

Date: July 10th, 2019

Adam Rayburn=AR; Garnell Bates=GB; Charles Reid=CR

Note: Charles Reid was present during this interview and participates by asking questions.

AR: Today is Friday July 10th, 2019. My name is Adam Rayburn and I'm a summer intern working with the Historic Preservation Division on the Batestown Oral History Project. I'm here at the home of Garnell Bates in Triangle, Virginia.

GB: Right.

AR: Mister Bates, welcome and thank you for agreeing to speak with me today. Can you introduce yourself and please tell me your name?

GB: My name is Garnell Bates, I'm 92 years old, I was born in 1927 in Batestown, Virginia. That's what they called it, Batestown, then.

AR: And could you spell your name please?

GB: G-A-R, G-A-R-N-E-L-L,

AR: And then Bates.

GB: I do have problems with that, saying D, but it's a G.

AR: Oh, ok. Bates, B-A-T-E-S?

GB: Right, correct.

AR: And do you go by any nicknames?

GB: [Laughs] They called me Butternut.

AR: Butternut, huh? How'd you get that name?

GB: From the CB people.

AR: Ah.

GB: When they had the C-, when the CB was going.

AR: And, uh, how do you prefer to be addressed? Just, Garnell or Mister Bates?

GB: Most people call me Mister Bates.

AR: Alright, Mister Bates. And you, when were you born again?

GB: 1927, April the 2nd.

AR: April the 2nd?

GB: April the 2nd.

AR: And you were born in Batestown?

GB: I was born in Batestown.

AR: Uh, do you know who delivered you?

GB: The lady was nicknamed Aunt Tidy Kendall.

AR: Hmm.

GB: Is that ok of an answer? But, she delivered most the people in Batestown at that time.

AR: I see.

GB: What they call em, midwife?

AR: Yeah, that's what I've heard them referred to as. And what are your parents' names?

GB: My mother was named Martha Bates, M-A-R-T-H-A, And, uh, my father was name Mitchell, M-I-T-C-H-E-L-L. Mitchell Bates.

AR: And what was your mother's maiden name?

GB: Cole.

AR: Cole.

GB: Mm-hm.

AR: And do you know where-where they were born?

GB: The were born in Batestown.

AR: And do you know when they were born?

GB: No. They was born in between, I say Batestown because that's, they were born between 234 and Batestown. Right there Charlie?

CR: That's right.

AR: Mm-hm.

GB: So all that was Batestown Road, everybody from Dan Reid and his momma, they'd a farm over there, and, uh, Dan Reid had a fence around everything. In round his house, then they had a big fence around it, around his place and, uh, and his wife, what was her name? Her name was Martha, right? Anyway, you go down through the fence, it opens up to this fence, go through that, and opens another fence, go through that, and you had about three, four fences, but, uh, had a whole bunch of apple trees and pear trees. Had all kinds of apples and pears. You didn't see nobody, but you pick up one apple, the apple was rotten and everything like that, and you pick that apple up, man you'd get, "Hey! Ahh! Why you stealing my apple!"

AR: [Laughs]

GB: [Inaudible] "You've got to ask Aunt Martha. Aunt Martha's got plenty, you got to ask her!" You ask her you can get all you want, but you had to ask her. You ask for it, you can pick up any of em. But that's the way she was. Apples laying on the ground, uh, uh, bees, everything all over there, but you better not pick any of em up.

AR: [Laughs] Not till you ask, huh?

GB: That's right. [Inaudible] you didn't see nobody, you go and say you don't see nobody or anything, and you pick up an apple, you found out then. One apple.

AR: And do you have any siblings?

GB: I've got one son.

AR: Hm?

GB: I've got a son.

AR: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

GB: Oh, oh, yeah, I had three, it was four of us.

AR: Oh.

GB: Uh, my brother next to me, his name was Leroy, and my sister's name is Mary Alice.

AR: Mary Alice?

GB: Yeah, Mary Alice Bates. And, uh, baby brother, he's still living and his name is Wilson Bates. It was four of us.

AR: And which one were you?

GB: My name is Garnell.

AR: Well, I meant—

GB: I'm the first one.

AR: You're the first one.

GB: Right.

AR: Oh. So you said Wilson is still alive?

GB: Wilson, right. He's eighty, uh, he's about eighty-two or eighty-three now. He was born in 1938.

AR: Does he live in the area?

GB: Mm-hm, he lives over in Dale City.

AR: Oh. Alright, no we'll, we'll talk about Batestown. What comes to mind when you think about Batestown?

GB: [Laughs] First thing, I can see that little elementary school up there, um—

CR: Cabin Branch.

AR: Cabin Branch.

GB: Cabin Branch Elementary. That's the first thing I can think about. I can think of some of the teachers, some of em, I can't think of all of em, and, uh.

AR: What do you remember about Cabin Branch? Like, how many rooms did it have?

GB: [Laughs] I remember we used to have to walk up to that school every day, in the rain and snow. And then when, uh, when they made it, built on to it, and then the school bus, they put a school bus, and then we could catch the school bus. The way I understand, they didn't have to pick us up, but they would pick us up, and carried us, I guess, about a half a mile to the school.

AR: So you're saying there was a school bus that drove up to Cabin Branch?

GB: That would drive up. I think they started school busses in the, uh, er, uh, when the war started up, yeah. During the World War II, when World War II started. That was just before the school bus. Yeah, cause the bus would go to Quantico, go up to Joplin, go back down the road and pick up everybody in Triangle, then come up to, to uh, up to the school up there.

AR: Yeah. So, the kids who went to Cabin Branch, they came from a lot of nearby towns?

GB: They lived nearby, right. The whole neighborhood of Joplin, Quantico, and they didn't go up to, uh, 234, but they had two guys, two people. Name was Molly, uh, uh, Molly and, uh, Jack Harris, and she'd just walk down there, in the snow, about 3 miles. And, uh, and Rolland Thomas, I think he walked through three miles or four miles from all the way down from north end of, of, uh, Montclair, and they lived on the opposite side, but they owned that land over there from the opposite side of Montclair, they owned the north side all the way down to Cabin Branch Elementary.

AR: And he walked there every day?

GB: Every day.

AR: Wow. And did they take, uh, like, paths through the woods?

GB: Yeah, yeah, mm-hm. But that's where Batestown could come down to. When I told ya that Batestown went up past Washington Reid, I don't know if you know where Washington Reid's at?

AR: Mm-hm, I'm familiar.

GB: Ok, the road come out a little way past Washington Reid.

AR: Mm-hm.

GB: And they would take that road and come on down, cause that road had a—The CC Camp [Civilian Conservation Corps] made the road [Inaudible] and when it first started, was a buggy road.

AR: Mm-hm.

GB: And I don't know if you know what I mean, but it was a path, like—

AR: Yeah.

GB: And that's when they used to run down that little Model A up and down that path.

AR: Um, say that again?

GB: [Laughs]

AR: You did what up and down that?

GB: I'd run that old car I bought.

AR: Oh.

GB: See, what it was, I was working on the golf course and, uh, you might not believe it but go all the way around that golf course was twenty five cent, one bag, and you get two bags and you get 50 cent and, uh, sometimes they give you a tip and sometimes they wouldn't, but you go down the golf course and make a dollar, a dollar a day and you made a whole lot of money in that day.

AR: Hm!

GB: And, uh, but anyway. This marine, he was going oversea, and this car, he was running up and down the street and it went [Makes car noises] and it had tags on it. Wasn't no bad looking car, but it didn't have no top on it.

AR: Hm.

GB: And, um, it was one of them rag top things and, um, but the man was running a tax scam, name was Dexter, and, um, Dexter told me, he said, "You can get that car for 10 dollars." So I went home and asked my daddy, I tell him, "He wanna sell me the car for 10, will you let me? Can I buy that car?" he said, "It's your money, you can do what you want with it." Man, I jumped back in that car and told him, "Take me down to Quantico." right then.

AR: [Laughs]

GB: I went on down there and give Dexter the ten dollars, cause Dexter was, you know, trying to sell it. Dexter gave me the keys, but what it was, it didn't have no tittle to it!

AR: Ahh.

GB: Ya know. I bought that thin, brought that thing on home I had trouble getting, keeping gas in it cause I wasn't working, had no money to buy gas and stuff like that. But I run up down all them roads and, uh, dirt roads at that time, it wasn't black top and stuff like it is now. Went through the woods, right through here, uh, I don't know—Charlie knows, you can come out here this way and we'd come out down there on, uh, eh, Van Buren.

AR: Yeah.

GB: Used to come out, we would come out on Van Buren, shot around, come right on down through them woods and didn't have no problem. But them were horse and buggies though, them cars could get through there, their called sprint [??] cars now. But that one was what I think was a '29 Ford and that's how it ran. You could make a road almost. Yeah.

AR: So it was a '29 ford, what? Model T I think?

GB: No, that was a Model A.

AR: Model A, oh, oh.

GB: That's when they changed from Model A to, from Model T, '29 until '32 when they, in '32 they changed it to a—Anyhow, they put a V8 engine in it. But Ford first one where I can remember come out with a V8, and that thing was fast too, you know what I'm saying?

AR: Yeah.

GB: It wouldn't last long. You drive it about ten, fifteen thousand miles then had to, you had to get another motor or else overhaul it. You don't hear nobody talking about overhauling motors now.

AR: Overhaul?

GB: Yeah, they tear it down and put everything new in it.

AR: Ah, yeah, yeah. And how much did you pay for it again?

GB: Ten dollars.

AR: Ten dollars.

GB: But that wasn't the Model, that was the, that was a four cylinder. That wasn't the V8, that was a four cylinder.

AR: Yeah.

GB: And that thing, you could take and, uh, if it wasn't cranking by the battery, then, uh, take that crank, pull up on that thing one time. That thing'd go, "Ch-ch-ch-ch."

AR: [Laughs]

GB: Yep.

AR: That's pretty reliable.

GB: That was it.

AR: So, what would you say it was like growing up in Batestown?

GB: I guess we thought we was just like everybody else, I guess. We wasn't hungry, didn't dress all that great, but, uh, but, uh, we always had some food on the table.

AR: Mm-hm.

GB: Salt fish, salt meat, uh. I don't know if you ever heard of putting salt and meat in a barrel. Take a hog and kill it, put it in a barrel, then you salt it down, just like you do salt fish. When you want a piece of meat, you go out there and brush that salt off and put it in there, then mom would, like, in the morning boil it, boil the salt out of it, then fry it.

AR: Hm. So that's how you would preserve meat.

GB: Yeah, that's the way, yeah.

AR: So, I guess since we're on the topic of food, uh, did your family have a garden?

GB: Nah, we never did fool with no garden. Other people used to give us garden stuff, but we didn't, we didn't have no garden, and my daddy, he didn't do no fishing. Probably had other families fish, and they would, uh, come give us fish and, and know how you see them squirrels and things running around out there? Weren't no squirrels running around out there in, uh, [Laughs] 1930's. And if so, a squirrel would go up a tree and look around and [Laughs], it would look around the corner and said [Motions as if shooting a rifle]. And this Charlie guy, called Charlie Daniel [??] he married my great aunt, and he better not pop his head around there or he'd get him. He was good.

AR: So people would go squirrel hunting a lot.

GB: Uh huh, yeah, yeah. Rabbit hunting, squirrel hunting, coon hunting.

AR: Mm-hm. I heard coon hunting was pretty, pretty big up there.

GB: Yeah. I even, uh, I got groundhogs out there, you catch the ground hog, what'd they used to do to put em up? In the barrels [Inaudible] put that dude on and boil him, put him in the, uh, skin him and put hi in a pot, boil it. Then they turn around take, and, uh, put him in the stove and bake him. Sweet potatoes up all around, you'd call it something good. And children would say, "Oh my lord I wouldn't eat that thing!"

AR: You said children wouldn't want to eat it?

GB: Not now! We would see it and didn't think nothing of it.

AR: [Laughs] Yeah. So, um, most of the food that you would cook, would you say that most of it came from Batestown?

GB: Yeah it come from Batestown people could, uh, yeah. People would garden. We didn't have a garden, but other people had gardens. Friends look out for one another. Momma had three children, had four children and look out for Sudie, they called her Sudie, and, uh, Mitchell.

Didn't have a well, we had to go to somebody else's house to get water and, uh, that's what we did. We survived with everybody.

AR: So, you would just go to one of your neighbor's homes to use their well.

GB: Use they well, mm-hm.

AR: Was it anybody's job to fetch the water or did everybody just do it whenever it was needed?

GB: Everybody get the water they needed. Had a bucket, bucket down in the well, wind that bucket up, put it in, and his name was John Kendall.

AR: Hm.

GB: And, uh, I used to think they thought they were better than, had a, I don't know, you see people think they're—Because the old man had a pretty good job, and I don't know where he got his education from, but he had a little bit of education and, uh, he was pretty smart because he could build a house. He built the Beer Garden, we called it, he built a house there, and he built the house that Larry Williams lived in. You don't know him but, uh, Charlie'd know him.

CR: Yeah.

GB: And I think he built that house that, uh—

CR: Claude Thomas.

AR: Oh, wow. Yeah, I've heard he built a few houses.

GB: He built a couple of houses there in Dumfries. Yeah, he built a couple of houses there in Dumfries. He was pretty good though, you know.

AR: So, it was his well—

GB: Yeah, John Kendall's well. Mm-hm.

AR: And, um, I've heard that a lot of people, a lot of the older people would get together at a big oak tree in his front yard, does that sound familiar to you?

GB: Oh, he had a, a, he had two or three trees, he had a, uh, at that time he had a nice place there.

AR: Mm-hm.

GB: And [Inaudible] he had the best place there.

AR: Was it a big house?

GB: On, on Batestown. He had a big house. I see that they painted it now. Had a big house, I don't know how many rooms it had in it.

AR: Could you tell me a little more about your house that you grew up in.

GB: Oh my lord, I don't want to talk about that. It had three rooms and, uh, we all used the same bedroom, and we had, uh, a cot. You would let it out at night and then, in the daytime it looked like a studio couch. And then, in the day time it looked like a studio couch. And then, and then when you go to bed you pull it out, and that's two. And at that time, uh, my sister was, she was small, she was in the room with my mother and father. And, uh, it wasn't such a good house.

AR: So, it was pretty old when you were living there?

GB: Eh, no it wasn't all that old, but the way they built it, they just throwed it up like. Like, throw it up like. Didn't have no plaster board on the wall, it had paper. I don't know if you've seen this, it was thick paper they had, I don't know what kind or what they call it now, on the inside. [Inaudible] outside and all that.

AR: Hm.

GB: And, uh, he didn't want to build nothing on the house on his land because it was four or five more people involved in the land and, uh, it was, otherwise it was heir property. And my uncle, he built a house up by the church, he built his house, and my father was, well, and they proceeded to build a house, cause his house was, after he died my mother built the house anyway. I'll give her that, praise for that. And she built that house by herself.

AR: She built it on, what, Batestown?

GB: Mm-hm. Well, it was on Mine Road, before you get to Batestown.

AR: Ah. So, when you said earlier that there were, that they didn't want to build something o-on the property because there was four or five people involved or something? What do you mean by that?

GB: I was thinking, uh, uh, this morning or last night about that, it's all heir property now because, uh, Maury Bates had—

AR: Heir property?

CR: Mm-hm, you never heard that?

AR: No.

GB: Uh, heir, ya see—

CR: There's a lot of that in Virginia.

GB: Let's see, my father's daddy, he had three boys and two girls. One of the boys didn't have no children, never wanted to get in to none of that. His name was Paul [??], and, uh, ok, my father had four, Cliff had two, and Sudie in Pennsylvania had one. And Lizzie, had a aunt named Lizzie, she died in Harrisburg, she had two. Where all had to divide up between on that day we couldn't get together on it, you know, on the land. So Cliff, Cliff was the baby boy of my brother-, or my father, and he built a house up by the church, and my father was gonna build a house down there where my mother built a house there. They used to call it, the place with the mud, Cane Foley, you ever heard of that?

CR: I have.

AR: What's it called?

GB: I don't know why they called it that. They called it Cane Foley Land. And, uh, anyhow, at that time he, they had a mill across the run.

AR: Really.

GB: And I don't know what they're made out of, what they made—You remember that don't ya, I mean the mill.

CR: I remember the mill.

GB: They made it here though anyway.

CR: [Inaudible]

GB: And, uh, was a dam there in front of my mother's house, where she built the new house at, and that had a trough and had water running down and turn that thing and then, and, uh, that water would come down that dam, come down that and by falling down so often, it built a hole there. That's where we went and swam down there. Charlie's been there, he's been swimming there. Everybody went swimming there.

AR: Hm.

GB: It was a nice place to swim. And the way, and like I tell ya with my grandchild, man, she seen me get across there soon [Inaudible] “Aahhh! You can swim! Ah!” Then I gotta jump off the diving board, I just do it for the heck of it. I got on that thing, I was like [Motions] and dived off the board. Soon as I dived, just my legs.

[Laughter]

GB: I didn't realize until I got going there that you aren't supposed to dive with your legs out, oh my lord. I hit, I, they got a name for that I don't.

CR: A belly buster.

GB: Belly buster, yeah.

AR: Belly buster. [Laughs]

GB: She was surprised. "I didn't know you could swim." I said, my brother Leroy can swim too. Sam, Sam can swim. That's, uh, my brother, my baby brother's nickname, Same. [Laughs]

AR: Sam, w-which one, the—

GB: That's the baby one, named Wilson.

AR: Wilson.

GB: We learned, we learned him how to swim too.

AR: Did ya ever, uh, ice skate?

GB: Never did ice skate, but I'll tell ya one thing, we were blessed. Going down on that ice and hear it crack and everything, we'd keep going. That wasn't nothing but the good lord. They had, that thing was about fifty feet, wasn't it Charlie?

CR: It was deep.

GB: No, I'm talking about wide.

CR: Oh, yeah, big time.

GB: At least fifty feet.

CR: We used to go down there, put up lights, make a fire.

GB: You'd go down there and next thing you'd hear it cracking, we'd keep on going.

AR: Hah.

GB: Didn't have sense enough to know it was warning us.

CR: Do you know anything about that mill down there?

GB: No, I don't know nothing about it, I can't remember nothing about the mill.

AR: W-was the mill operating when you were younger?

GB: No, no, no. The mill—

AR: Just what was left of it.

GB: Yeah, well yes, you know some tore half way, it was tore down. And then, well, I was told what they made in that mill but I forgot now what it was.

AR: So, when you say the Run you mean-

GB: Quantico.

AR: Quantico Creek?

GB: Quantico Creek now, yeah. But Quantico Creek split, I don't know what they call the one, the north of the, uh.

CR: The north and south branch.

AR: The two forks?

GB: Yeah, uh huh.

CR: It's called the branch.

AR: The branch, I guess, yeah.

GB: And the water ran more better then, it ain't just a little bit of water running. At that time a lot of water was running through there. A steady stream, all the time. And the water in some places, that water was so pretty blue you could see it was blue looking, you know, how clean and clear it was and we'd dive right in there. Come back home get ya hind end tore up [Makes whipping sound]. Next day, do the same thing.

AR: They didn't want you to swimming there, or?

GB: Naw! Because they said it was dangerous.

AR: Dangerous, yeah.

GB: It wasn't all that deep but, uh—I don't know if it was in up over my head or not, I'm telling you, but it might have been in some places. Didn't make us no difference.

AR: So, they were scared you were gonna drown or something?

GB: Yeah.

AR: Oh.

GB: Yep. "And I want y'all to go down to that run today." "Ok." Before she could get out of the house we'd be down there.

AR: [Laughs] Yeah, I mean, it sounds like a fun place to be, so.

GB: We, uh, had another guy, his name was Stanley Reid. He was a little bit older than us. He was something like a leader and he and all the older boys, eh. And then he left and went to DC, never did come back.

AR: So he was, you said he was like a leader?

GB: Well you know how older boys are.

AR: Yeah.

GB: Leroy and I were younger than he was, I guess about three years, two, three years younger than he was. And I believe he was the one that got us in the Run, learned us how to swim, I believe he was, I ain't for sure.

AR: Hm.

GB: But I know one thing, we stayed in that run and got that whooping and the legs all whipped up.

AR: But you kept going though?

GB: Kept going back.

AR: [Laughs] So that was kind of a regular occurrence then?

GB: We didn't get a whooping every day but, uh, [Laughs] we got it quite often.

AR: Yeah.

GB: Mustn't have been all that bad.

AR: So did you and your brothers and sisters, or, uh, sister have chores?

GB: Yeah, I did. I had a chore but, uh, I don't think none of the rest of em did. My sister, she didn't have no chores that I know of. When I got old enough though, 12 years old, I had a t-, I had to get wood to make a fire in the morning.

AR: Mm-hm.

GB: And to make a fire in a tin heater. You know what a tin heater is?

AR: Yes.

GB: And if it wasn't made right, if you couldn't get the fire going, then you had to, I had to get up to make that fire. From then on, you made sure of it.

AR: Yeah. So, did you ever have to, like, cut the wood.

GB: Yeah!

AR: Yeah.

GB: Yeah. Wouldn't nobody ask a twelve-year-old boy to cut wood now. Hm-mm-mm.

AR: Probably not, not many people.

GB: I might have been younger than that. And then he whipped me one time, said to put up the ax cause I wasn't supposed to use the ax. I don't even remember using the ax. I don't remember, he say I did, I don't know, been so long.

AR: Y-you said you got whooped because you used the ax?

GB: Yeah.

AR: What else are you gonna cut the wood with?

GB: Well that was his ax.

AR: Oh, it was his ax.

GB: Yes.

AR: So he didn't want you using his.

GB: I wasn't supposed to use that ax.

AR: I see. So, what did you do for fun? I know you mentioned swimming in the run, w-were there any other things you would do for fun?

GB: Yeah, I mean, you used to play ball, baseball.

AR: Mm-hm.

GB: And that's about the only thing. I'd have a bike. I took care of that bike like I did when I first got a car. So I loved that bike and I stayed on that bike. From the school to Dumfries is about two miles I hear. And I was coming down that hill there at one time, there were Mine Road rounds that curve, I came down too fast and I'll tell you one thing, I got scared up terrible. I layed there and got-got up and made sure nobody seen me [Laughs]. But it was my fault, cause I knew that was, you know, too fast down there.

AR: Going a little too fast?

GB: Scarred my whole leg all up.

AR: So, you would ride your bike down to Dumfries?

GB: Yeah, yeah.

AR: What kind of things would you do in Dumfries?

GB: Oh just ride down there and you'd go up to the store, cause that was only two miles from the store. Go down there and get some ice cream, or, if you had any money.

AR: Now, what store was this? That you went to?

GB: They had three of em. They had three of em down there. Uh—

AR: Di-did the stores have names or was it just, uh, the kind of store that everyone knows is there? Cause that's one of the things that I've noticed, is that a lot of the stores didn't really have signs and-and names, it's just someone would open a store and—

GB: Well the two brothers had a store right in front of one another. One name Randolph.

CR: Braner? Randolph Braner? He was a Braner.

GB: Randolph Braner, and, uh—

CR: [Inaudible] you remember that?

GB: I'm thinking of Randolph's brother, the oth-, the other one didn't, uh—Randolph was kind of nasty, but, uh, the one that, uh—

CR: I can't remember the other one.

GB: The one that ha-had the two daughters.

CR: Oh.

GB: The one, the, uh, the furniture store what is his name?

CR: [Inaudible] wife.

GB: Yeah, [Inaudible] wife, um.

CR: Yeah, Jane, Jane [Inaudible]. I can't remember the other name.

GB: Eh. But anyway, he was good.

CR: Right.

GB: And he was a nice guy, but Randolph was a little bit on the nasty side. Then they had another store right there by him, where the, uh, right there where the, uh, [Inaudible] is at. Uh, that woman's name was, uh, Ella Wardens and she was nasty. She was just a nasty woman. You go there and buy something and i-if it didn't come up, she'd put her fingers on it, and, uh, you know.

AR: Oh, on the scale?

GB: We used to, the older people'd say, "She-she ain't got no fingers cause she done sold all of em."

[Laughter]

CR: That's a good one.

A-That's funny! Oh goodness. So, what kind of things, uh, would they sell at these stores? You mentioned ice cream.

GB: Bread, bologna mostly, and hot dogs, and I-I don't know too much of bacon. I think we used to get that when we'd go to—

CR: Cheese.

GB: Ch-cheese, and they'd get that, um, you'd cook that in the beans and cut that meat and then you'd slice that your own self. I don't remember it being sliced, but I imagine it was. Just, uh, bread mostly and, uh.

AR: So, were there any stores up in Batestown?

GB: No.

AR: No.

GB: Wasn't no stores come up there until, uh—

CR: Thomas Store?

GB: Uh, I don't know what year it was, tha-that was really right after. Chaney Johnson [??] uh.

CR: Remember the Thomas Store?

GB: Huh?

CR: You don't remember John and Mary Thomas's store?

GB: Oh no, that was before my time, naw.

CR: Ok.

GB: Hm-mm, naw.

AR: So, when you were a kid there weren't any stores?

GB: Wasn't no stores, all the stores were in Dumfries.

AR: Ah.

GB: You had to go to Dumfries.

AR: Do you have any interesting stories from your childhood that you might want to share? Just anything that—A funny story, or, uh, an interesting thing that happened?

GB: No, nothing at all.

AR: Alright. Could you describe a little more what Batestown looked like?

GB: Looked a whole lot different than it do now.

AR: Mm-hm.

GB: Don't look like up there. I went up there one day, it was raining, and it was kind of foggy, and it looked terrible up there. I said, "Lord have mercy." And I told Mabel, uh, that was a lady that lived up there in one of them old houses, she said she'd been up there and she started crying. She said she didn't have no idea that it looked like that up there. But the day I was up there, it looked terrible that day, couldn't believe it. Tree's was over and, uh, it really did. Brought back the memory, years ago, how the place had growed up, cause Batestown wasn't growed up like it is now. And then, we got a couple new houses up there, but most of the houses gone. I remember the house that we were raised in, it's gone, and the house that I was born in, gone, and, uh, Lula Thomas' house, you remember that don't you?

CR: Mm-hm.

GB: That house, gone. They had a house up there in front of his mother's house and that was Lemon Johnson's house, gone.

AR: What was her name?

CR: Lemon Johnson.

AR: Lemon.

GB: She was a Johnson, uh huh. And, uh, Frank Bates and them's house.

CR: Gone.

GB: Gone. And, uh—

CR: Aunt Laura, Uncle Dan.

GB: They house, gone.

AR: Wow. Now, when you say gone, were a lot of these homes demolished or just—

GB: Demolished, yes.

AR: —Abandoned?

GB: Abandoned, didn't nobody live in it, it's been down.

CR: Yeah, it's, um, um, um—

GB: And the road was just like a wash board, wasn't black top like it is now. Run over it [Sound effect] [Laughs].

AR: From all the rocks in it?

GB: Wasn't so many rocks, it—

AR: Oh, roots.

GB: Yeah.

AR: Roots, yeah.

GB: We had a ne-neighbor, one was named Johnny and one was named Ike, and they was a little bit older than we were. We were young boys, young men, and they were something else too, they would go down that road and come back up there and slide around there at Miss Lula's [Laughs]. Oh, a wonder they didn't kill somebody, but never did!

CR: They were Kendalls.

GB: [Laughs] Yeah, they was Kendalls. Ike and Johnny.

AR: So when you were younger living there, did most of the people have cars?

GB: Naw. No, nobody had a car hardly.

AR: Do you remember when people started getting cars?

GB: During the war. When the war started and the people started getting cars. And you didn't see a whole lot of fat people [Laughs].

AR: Hm.

GB: You didn't see a whole lot of fat bellied people neither, brother.

CR: Mm-hm.

GB: Did ya though?

CR: No.

GB: Cause everybody was slim, you know, you'd see a few.

AR: So, you remember Batestown before the war started?

GB: Yeah! I was born in 27, the war didn't start until 41.

AR: Wow. So, can you describe any-any other kind of changes that happened in Batestown during that time? Did a lot of people leave to join the service?

GB: Only thing I know that started during before the war, people from Stafford, the men, had a problem coming up in Batestown. The men out of Prince William County couldn't go down in Stafford, especially to fool with the women, and they would run you away from down there, and they wasn't playing. But when the war started, it broke all that stuff up. Bout the best thing that ever happened from that.

AR: Hm.

GB: You'd meet a lady somehow, you-you'd get them [Inaudible] "You better not go down there by yourself!" [Laughs]. You go down there by yourself.

CR: That was the same way with Batestown too.

GB: Same thing, Batestown, they would do it.

AR: So, Batestown and Stafford, could you say they had kind of a rivalry?

GB: Oh yeah!

AR: Oh.

GB: But when the war started, they'd come and meet together. When they were fighting one another, what, you know, [Inaudible]. The war, anyway, what I'm saying is the war broke that up. I'd say that's the way it was in a lot of places, not only Batestown and Stafford, but, uh, people were like that everywhere, in a lot of places. You don't come to my territory and I don't go in your territory, bother your women. That's what it was all about.

AR: Hm, about w-women, you said?

GB: Mm-hm.

AR: Oh. Yeah, hm. Um, so o-on that topic, how often would people from outside of the community come up to visit Batestown?

GB: If they come up there, th-they come up in a crowd-like. Uh, come up with buddies, one of those like that. You come with some buddies so they can look out for one another, you know.

AR: Hm.

GB: You don't go up there by yourself, up there [Laughs].

AR: Not un-, not unless you're—

GB: Yeah, I got into fights all the time, all the years and things I was, uh, going around. I had trouble, I said the war was going on then, they were breaking that stuff up. I was up in a place called Hall's Hill, that's up there on, what, 29 and 211?

CR: I don't know.

AR: What's it called? Hallow's Hill?

GB: No, Hall's Hill. I was up there on, up there in Arlington County, and, uh, I was working with a lot of those guys cause I was working up in Arlington County, and the guys told me come up there and, you know, we gonna, you know, we was drinking, you know, and, uh, I went up there looking for em, and I got there and I didn't see none of the guys I knowed. And, uh, well the lady down here in Stafford, her name was, uh, I forget her name now, and-and she broke bad over there, and I was, "what you talking bout?" said, "They want to start a fight with you." I said, with me and, uh, somebody else with me, I think it was me and Lewis Queen.

CR: Hm.

GB: I said, "We gonna get away from him." [Laughter]

AR: What was that? I missed that.

GB: I told him, "You gonna get away from him."

AR: Hm.

GB: She broke bad, she was a good-sized woman, woman, cause she was young. Said, "You ain't gonna bother with them, my people. You ain't gonna bother them."

AR: Hm.

GB: She was a little bit on the rough side too, ya know. And sure enough, we told we gotta leave, and the boys we were supposed to-, I was supposed to meet, they-they had an excuse why they wasn't up there. If they had been there, they wouldn't have bothered us, but they figured we was up there after they womens. Yeah, I didn't know none of the womens up there.

AR: Hm.

GB: Hall's Hill, isn't that what you call it?

CR: That's a good one.

GB: 211 and 29.

CR: 211, 29. Can't remember that.

GB: And that's where, uh, Lee Road cross, where Lee Road crosses, uh, 29, up in there. Well, it wasn't built up like that.

CR: I bet it wasn't.

GB: You know, it wasn't built like it is now. I could go up there and get along, I worked up there for about three years, up in Arlington county, on the trash truck and sewer lines, stuff like that. Uh, I worked for the sewer line and, you know, eh, when it rained the sewer and stuff would stop up. So, we got a call up in, uh, Clarendon, we went up there and, went up there, I didn't up to the, uh, to the manhole, went on up there and a guy named Teet Chapman, all of em, all the guys—

CR: Remember that name? Teet Chapman.

GB: —And took the top off the manhole and come to find out it was a woman. They had killed her and put her in the manhole.

AR: Ahh! Jeez!

GB: Mm-hm. And the minute we called and told what happened, man you talking police and the fire department, whole bunch were there. They didn't need all them people up in there. They surrounded the area, saying you couldn't do that. They pulled the woman out the manhole and the water went on down.

AR: Jeez Louise!

GB: Little hole, wasn't so deep now, waist high or so, was about three or four like that.

AR: So—

GB: That was a long time ago.

AR: Could you tell me about any community centers in Batestown? Any places where people would get together and gather.

GB: [Laughs] Well we used to do that every Saturday night. [Laughter]

CR: Tell him that, tell it.

GB: Get together every Saturday night and didn't nobody do no shooting and stuff like that, like they do now. You see, you can't have a house party, they call it. Ain't that very well, Charlie?

CR: That's what they said.

GB: A house party, and play the guitar, and the guy that played the guitar, most of the time is was my neighbor, Ollie Reid. He'd play pistol-, what do you call it? Pistol Packin' Mama all night long.

[Laughter]

AR: Pistol Packin' Mama, I know that song!

[Laughter]

CR: He ain't lying, that's true.

GB: He played it all night long, same thing. They'd say, "Ollie why you gotta—", give Ollie a drink and he'd go to work on it again. Yeah, we'd go to house parties, we'd call it, that's where we had the fun.

AR: Mm-hm.

GB: Didn't nobody go shooting and fighting and all that stuff. Once and a while they'd get a fighting.

AR: But for the most part people got along in Batestown?

GB: Mm-hm, yeah. Back then most of em was kin to people anyway.

AR: Mm-hm.

GB: Somewhere down the line they were kin. If you followed it all the way up. Cause there wasn't no, you know, didn't have cars that you could go anywhere you want go, now you, you gonna walk. From Batestown to Neabsco, you would walk over there. I never did do it, but they say they done it. I don't know. They would get together and the church would go to Neabsco Church. And when Neabsco, and when Little Union would have something, they would get together and walk. They walked through the woods, had a path.

AR: What kind of, why would they do this?

GB: Walk to the church.

CR: The homecoming, that's what he's talking about.

GB: Yeah, right, the homecoming.

AR: Ahh. For the homecoming.

GB: Church homecoming.

AR: So, did you go to church at Little Union then?

GB: Naw.

AR: No.

GB: I used to go to, when they had the homecoming, I would go up there, but, uh, I didn't start going to church until, uh, I got married in, uh, '72.

AR: '72?

GB: I joined the church. That's when I started going to church.

AR: Alright. Um, was Batestown a segregated community?

GB: In a way, yeah. Wasn't no white people at all.

AR: No white people there at all?

GB: None at all. Everybody up there was Bateses and Kendalls and, who else? Johnsons.

CR: Kendalls, Reids.

GB: Reids there.

CR: Johnsons.

GB: But they was all kin.

AR: Mm-hm.

GB: They was all kin. And, uh.

CR: Even now they still kin, but not the people up there now. Everybody was kin.

GB: Yeah, everybody was kin up there cause if you, uh, if you traced it down they was kin, if you factor it. I was liking one of the Kendall girls one time, and [Inaudible].

CR: Which one?

GB: Um, it was, Adeline.

CR: Uh huh.

GB: That was, uh, Sidney's oldest girl.

CR: Mm-hm.

GB: And, uh, and momma told me, she said, uh—

CR: She said—that's your cousin.

GB: You said it, that's right.

[Laughter]

GB: I said, "Why didn't you tell me to stop it then? You didn't say nothing about it?" I was kin to the Wests over there, didn't nobody tell me we were kin to the Wests.

CR: Yep. Oh yeah.

GB: Yeah! I said, uh, I didn't really know until we got ready to settle that land over there that we were kin to the West's. I said, ain't that something? Nobody'd tell you nothing. She'd keep her mouth closed up, then, "Ah! You and me cousins!" I said, "Shit!"

CR: That's true.

GB: Tell you nothing. But, that's the way it was.

AR: Mm-hm.

GB: No running water, no toilet. You'd go to the bathroom and go to the toilet, outhouse, and one of them, some of them snakes is in them places, and never did have a problem. I guess the lord did that. I ain't never hear of none of em getting bit by a snake in a toilet. You know what I mean by a toilet, don't ya?

AR: Yes.

GB: [Laughter]

AR: An outhouse basically?

GB: My grand-, my grandchild, I'll never forget, she wanted to go to the bathroom and we were down in Stafford and her aunt didn't have a bathroom. She wouldn't do a dang gone thing and, uh, I-I told you're gonna wish you wouldn't do that neither, I said, "Well you don't want to pee bad enough then."

[Laughter]

GB: I said if you wanted to go bad enough you would do it, go somewhere. Huh-uh, she wouldn't go till she got home. God! My wife said, "Huh-uh-uh, these children are something else."

AR: [Laughs] Just a whole different generation, huh? Um, so what did your parents do for a living?

GB: Oh, well, my mother used to do housework once in a while and, uh, way back then she did housework. Five dollars a week. And my daddy, he did contract work and more or less he went up to work up in Arlington County. He worked for Arlington County.

AR: Hm.

GB: And, uh, he carried five or six people back and forth to work up there with him.

[House phone rings]

AR: I'll just pause this.

Note: Recording is briefly paused for the privacy of Garnell's phone conversation.

AR: Alright.

GB: Yeah, we had a baseball team up there and, um, years ago. We'd go to different places and play baseball.

CR: What years did you play?

GB: I'll tell you the truth, I didn't play, but I went to games.

CR: What year?

GB: I guess about 38, uh, 38. Until, uh, around 38, 39, until the war started.

CR: Oh, ok.

GB: See, the war broke up a whole lotta stuff.

AR: Mm.

GB: Young people left for that.

AR: But they would play baseball up there?

GB: Yes, in different places. We'd go to like, uh, Fairfax, we had different places, the little communities, play ball. You know, they had a baseball team down in Stafford, down there, different places. I'd say all of the little communities had a baseball team, you know.

AR: Mm-hm.

GB: They got along pretty good, I-I don't know if none of em, you know, had a little fighting or, you know, like they do now.

AR: What was the name of the team?

GB: Oh, I don't remember, I done forgot the name of the team.

AR: Cause I know, uh, I-I've seen some pictures of the, the uh "Batestown Express," the "BT Express." I don't know if they were still called that back then or not.

CR: That's when I played.

AR: Yeah, I seen you. Hm. So you're, uh, you said your father worked as a contractor for Arlington County?

GB: Yeah, mm-hm.

AR: Uh, what kind of work did he do.

GB: He worked for the county.

AR: Just—

GB: Uh, I guess you would call it, uh, he worked for the sewer department.

AR: Oh, I see.

GB: That's when he, uh, that's when he, uh, got sick and passed away, he was working up in there. I guess he worked up there for a great little while, but he was working there when the war started and the gas got, got skimpy and he had to beg for gas to get up there.

AR: So he had to drive up there every day?

GB: Every day. He'd take four or five men with him, they'd ride.

AR: Mm-hm.

GB: Mm-hm. And he was lucky on that, the old car would, uh, never had no problems. During that time, you had to go through Alexandria. Didn't have 95, you know. You'd go up Number 1, go through Alexandria and come on back out to it.

AR: I see. And can you tell me a little more about your parents, about what you remember about them?

GB: Now, you know, them old people, they didn't tell you too much about themselves, you know. They'd tell you don't do this and don't do that, and that was it [Laughs]. Yeah.

AR: So they'd have a lot of rules for you?

GB: Not exactly. Naw.

AR: So—

GB: They wanted me to go to school and I wouldn't do that, I know that. That's one rule that he was right on and I been paying for that ever since. That's one thing that, uh, he was right one hundred percent.

AR: Mm.

GB: But, Uncle John had that '36 Ford sitting over there for fifty dollars and I wanted that car!

CR: [Laughs]

GB: And only way I could get that car, I had to go to work.

AR: Yeah, and get money.

GB: And get that fifty dollars to pay for that car. Then I got the car and I didn't have money put gas in it!

[Laughter]

AR: Yeah.

GB: Ya understand what I'm saying? That's the way it was. I'm not lying, that's the way it was. And the car sit up there and I shined on it and shined on it and he was telling me, he said, "If you, uh, a mosquito landed on that car it'd slip up and fall, it was shined up."

CR: [Laughter]

AR: The what?

GB: Uh, it was shined up. Said, "If a mosquito landed on the car it'd slip up and fall cause it was so slick."

AR: [Laughter]

GB: I had to shine it, I had to do something to it cause I didn't have money to put gas in it.

AR: That's funny.

GB: You go down and get fifty cents of gas, it's alright then, but you would, if come and sell somebody fifty cents worth of gas now, they'd look at you like you're crazy.

AR: Hm.

GB: Gas was, uh, ah, gas was twenty cents a gallon. If I'd get a dollar's worth of gas, you get five gallons of gas, and you could ride a pretty good while off five gallons of gas, you know. That old car I had, it didn't burn a whole lot of gas.

AR: So, did your grandparents live in Batestown as well?

GB: Huh?

AR: Did your grandparents live in Batestown as well?

GB: Did what?

AR: Your grandparents, like your grandpa and grandma.

GB: No. They scuffled like all, everybody else did.

AR: Do you remember much about them?

GB: Naw, I really, I don't know much, uh, nothing about my grandfather, but, uh, m-my, uh, grandmother, she a kind woman, and, uh.

CR: Where'd she live?

GB: Well, she'd live one place, then a other, and I think you can tell me, I don't remember that. Didn't she used to live down there in what we used to call, uh, Uncle Will's place, down in the back of Uncle Johns?

CR: Uh, in Batestown?

GB: Yeah.

CR: Oh, ok, I know what you're talking about.

GB: Then, uh, and then, uh, how long did your mother live down there? They lived down there a good while, didn't they?

CR: That's where I was born, Mabel Gatlen's.

GB: OK, yeah, right. But y'all, y'all were there first, uh, that was Mabel Gatlen's house?

CR: She was there first.

GB: Mabel Gatlen was?

CR: Yeah.

GB: Ok, then y'all moved in. So that was a deep well too, I understand. You could look down there, good God almighty, that well, how in the world'd somebody dig a well that deep?

CR: It was on a hill [Laughs].

GB: That was the, uh, deepest well I could ever look down into. Wasn't that well something?

CR: Yeah.

GB: I wonder how deep that well really was.

CR: I don't know.

GB: [Inaudible] That well was dug by hand I imagine.

CR: Uh huh.

GB: That was a deep well, but it had, you know, that water was nice and cold.

CR: Yep.

AR: So, did any of the older people around Batestown talk much about the history of Batestown?

GB: Shoot, them old people didn't talk to you nothing, they was—

AR: Mm.

GB: The way I found out about most of Batestown was when I was, uh, up and, me and my brother got tied up in some land up there, which we shouldn't have done it, and if I knew what I know now, I would've never gotten into it. And this guy named, uh, Jesse Bates kept coming up. And, uh, he didn't know nothing about Jesse Bates, and I didn't either. Who in the world is Jesse Bates? And, uh, so we, uh, before he got sick his name was Dewitt, Dewitt Bates was living up there, he owned some of that land too cause his father gave him some of it. Anyway—

AR: What was his name?

GB: Jesse.

AR: The-the second one though?

GB: Dewitt.

AR: Oh, Dewitt.

GB: And, uh, Dewitt told us, said, "That's my great grandfather! My grandfather." That's what it was. Cause Dewitt was up in the age too.

AR: Mm-hm.

GB: He said he's the one owned the land, and he gived the land to the children, and the land was given to them during the transa-, uh, during the slavery time, you know, during that translation there. That's how the Bates had got that land, there two of em. I'm going by what he told me, it was Mary and Jesse, and Jesse got half and Mary got half. Then it become a Thomas because she married a Thomas.

CR: Right.

GB: And that's when the Thomases come in.

CR: John Thomas.

GB: Mm-hm.

AR: Hm.

GB: That's right, John Thomas. She married John Thomas and that's when, uh, when the land became the Thomas Tract. And he had a lot of land too, all that land in front of the church was.

That land that Uncle Dan claimed, that wasn't their land, that was Thomas Tract land, right?

CR: That was Thomas Tract land, yeah it was.

AR: Hm.

GB: But he said it was their land, you know. But he did, I don't know how in the world they put a fence around it, and he had a fence around the land he get. Now why he got that fence around, I-I used to ask Grandmama then, "How in the world Uncle Dan got a fence?" She said, well he got them guys working, they weren't doing nothing, and uh—

CR: [Inaudible] the power lines [Inaudible].

GB: Put a fence around all the land he had, they had. Sure did.

AR: And who was that again, that had all that? Dan Reid.

GB: Uh huh.

AR: Oh.

GB: He married one of, uh, Mary daughters, right?

CR: Yeah.

GB: Aunt Margaret was, uh—

CR: Marjorie.

GB: Right. Mary was her mother. Where in the world Miss Lulu's come from? [Laughs]

CR: Um, Miss Lulu came in—

GB: Aunt Marjorie.

CR: Aunt Marjorie. Cause her, believe it or not, her and Aunt Mile [Ruth Carter] were sisters. Didn't know that, did ya? I think they were sisters.

GB: Miss Lulu was Aunt Marjorie's daughter. Daughter, right?

CR: Yeah. Aunt Mile was too though. I can look, I'll go and look that up. Well Dan was uncle, Aunt Marjorie, Aunt Laura's father. I-I don't know—

GB: Dan Reid was.

CR: Yeah.

GB: Dan Reid and Marjorie had, uh, the, uh, Miss Laura.

CR: Yeah.

GB: And they had, um, Miss Boobie, right?

CR: Right.

GB: And I don't know anybody else.

CR: I think that's all [Inaudible].

GB: Miss Lula used to get drunk and say she, uh, her grandmother, her mother and grandmother something like that, give the church the land [Laughs].

CR: We had a laugh at little Ora's about that [Laughs].

AR: Hm.

GB: She wouldn't say nothing about it until she got her [Inaudible]. She could tell ya something. She told me, I believe it too, she said, "I'll tell you one thing," she said, "you don't know it," she said, "Lizzie Cole didn't look like she looks." Lizzie Cole, that was my grandmother. Said, "Lizzie Cole was a nice-looking woman, when she was young." Dan [Dan Reid] told me the same thing cause Dan [Dan Reid] would know that, you know.

CR: When she got older she told me some things I can't say.

GB: That's right Lula, uh, well, Lizzy Cole, uh, eh, cause she had two children. She had my mother and she had, uh, she had Riesa, and, uh, uh, Lizzy was a whore. I'll just tell it like it is, cause she had two children. But, when the deal went down, she's the one that went over there and, cause I knew he'd know that, went over there and stayed with him, in them woods.

CR: Sure did.

GB: Ain't that right?

CR: You're right.

GB: That whore went over there and stayed with him. I got that, now you know I don't know, you know I was told that, ya know. Told me exactly what she did too. [Inaudible] Lizzy Cole, they said his name was, Gusty Cole.

CR: Gusty Cole, yep.

GB: They gave Lizzy, cause Lizzy had two children. Didn't none the rest of em have no children. Emma didn't have none, Louise didn't have none, that was the rest of em, Emma and Louise.

CR: Both of em?

GB: Didn't have no children. Martha was the only one that had any children, and grandma.

CR: [Inaudible]

GB: Well, I'm going by what people told me, you know, the older people, they, uh, and I don't think they was lying when they told me, you know, cause they was talking, uh, didn't have no right to lie, you know.

CR: No.

GB: That's why I tell you about, uh, Jesse Bates. I didn't know, I had never heard of Jesse Bates. We know Jesse Bates used to be in Manassas, he used to live down here somewhere, on Joplin road, but I didn't know him. But he, he, uh, supposed to been known kin to these Bateses, supposed to be kind to some other Bateses, I don't know what that is. But anyway, this Jesse just kept coming up and I told Leroy, I said, we, I'm gonna find out, cause I went by Dewitt's house. And Dewitt was a, he-he was, Dewitt was a smooth guy, he was a nice guy to talk to. I ain't never know him to say anything to nobody, never was nasty.

CR: I love that man.

GB: And he said that, um, that was his grandfather, and he told me the history of that land and why the, uh, Noah, that was my grandfather, that was my father's father, got sixteen acres of land, because that wasn't only, and the rest of em got eight acres, seven acres, like that. But the land, the [Inaudible] had sixteen acres, and my brother and I went up there in Manassas to talk to the man, and then, uh, the guy we talked to said, "I can hold it for you." Before they had to put it in the paper. He said, "I can hold it for you for a year." He said, "But after a year, I can't hold it no longer." And he the one that told me that he had, uh, [Laughs] didn't know how to cook chitlins. You know what chitlins is?

AR: Mm-hm.

GB: [Laughs] He told me you don't cook long enough. Said you gotta cook chitlins, you can't put em on the stove in your house, said you gotta let em cook [Laughs]. And, uh, sure enough, he held the land for us for about a, about a year or something. We went up there and paid, I think it was fifteen thousand dollars. And, uh, I think it was something like that. He and I paid it together. I didn't have no fifteen thousand dollars. I went up there and borrowed the money.

AR: Mm-hm.

GB: And that was a mistake! He did a lot.

AR: Where'd you borrow the money?

GB: We had to pay the tax on that, on the land.

AR: Did you borrow it from a bank?

GB: Yeah.

AR: Oh.

GB: And, uh—

AR: When was this?

GB: I don't know.

AR: Just around what time?

GB: I guess around '79 or seventy something else like that. Right, and anyway, we paid taxes on it for fifteen years, on top of the fifteen thousand we paid. When we sold it, we got our money back, but we didn't get a dang gon thing, cause my father never had too many children. The one up there in Pennsylvania that had one child, he's the one that got the money and didn't know where the land was at! And didn't care. And the other one up there, his name, that was, uh, they called him Bucky, and he had two, uh, he had two children, and he used to call my brother every week until he sold the land, [Laugh] when he sold the land, his phone stopped. And he promised him, but he didn't promise me, that he was gonna give use some of the money when he got it.

We ain't seen him or hear from him since. But he did come down when my sister paid, he come down with one of his daughters. We ain't heard from him since.

AR: So, you paid the taxes to keep this land and—

GB: We paid the taxes on the land for all them years and Cliff, and my uncle Cliff, he paid taxes on it, and when he died, th-the tax went, wasn't nobody paying taxes on it. So finally the county said they were gonna sell it, sell it for taxes. We went up there and talked to the man, and that's when he told us we can, uh, he can hold it for a year, and sure enough he did. He said they're gonna take it out the paper, but they had, had not put it in the paper. Sure enough.

AR: So, where did the land wind up going to, like who—

GB: Yeah, to be sell-, wind up selling, but we rather not listen to nobody else, that's what I'm saying. But we did get our tax money back. I understand now, Charlie, you can't get your money, your tax no more, they done changed the law.

CR: They changed the law on it, yeah.

GB: If you gonna pay taxes on land for years and years and then you can't get you, your, that's bad, that's bad.

CR: Well, it stops predator people from coming in and taking the land. It's a good law, really. Stops em—

GB: See, I don't know the whole details of it.

CR: Taking, taking land from people that's their land that they've had for years.

GB: And I'll tell you the truth, I wish we had never fooled with it.

CR: I hear ya.

AR: So, what happened to the land that-that you owned up there, did you sell it as well?

GB: No, we owned the heir property, that was heir property, we sold that, we didn't own no land up there.

AR: Oh, you didn't own it.

GB: But my brother did. Yeah, we sold his land up there, but, uh, that was altogether different.

AR: Oh, alright.

GB: Cause I wanted to give it to my brother, but he didn't want it.

AR: Hm.

GB: He said, I told him, well if you figure we'll sell it. And we got, uh, we got a young realtor that worked, eh, was at the church, Charlie'd know her, and I guess Charlie was probably went to school with her, and, um, she said, "Yeah, I'll sell it." I thought she lived down in, uh, Fredericksburg but she said she could sell land anywhere in Virginia cause she got a license and a company.

AR: Mm-hm.

GB: In two weeks' time, she had it sold. One person wanted to spend a whole lot of money on the lan-, on the house, wanted to do this and wanted to do that and all that, and she said, "Forget it, we don't have to finance to get somebody." Next thing you know, she called me and told me, she said, "We got somebody who's gonna buy that land. Somebody's gonna finance it for em." We didn't care, as long as we're selling the land. Cost us about twenty thousand dollars to get it cleaned up. Get the house and everything in good shape. It was terrible. And, uh, he had a whole lot of carpet, old house, and, um, and, uh, concrete basement and the water leaking down there, and it was terrible, real terrible, in the basement. Cost about, I guess about twenty thousand dollars to get it all taken out, house cleaned out. Cause he had everything in the world, clothes on top of clothes, I ain't got no room to say nothing. I got clothes back there now, sitting. My son told me, "Why don't you get rid of some of them clothes?" I can't say no

different, cause he's telling the truth. He said, "You're as bad as Leroy." That's my brother [Laughs].

AR: Hm!

GB: I said, you right.

AR: So the, um, the mine closed down before you were born, right?

GB: Yeah.

AR: Do you remember much about the mine, or at least anything—

GB: The most I heard anything about the mine, they, uh, the mine, uh, went on strike, and it never did open back up. And this man, John Kendall, I was telling you about, he, uh, he had a little bit, I don't know where he got a little education at, somewhere, but I know Uncle John used to get the paper on Sunday morning and he'd be out there reading the paper. Like I said, them big oak trees out there and, uh, he had a, like a, I thought it was a nice place there, but that dude would take that hand clipper and cut them hedges and man it looked so smooth, just like they do now. It was some kind of purty. And he'd be out there in the morning reading the paper, nobody else up there would be reading the paper. Yep, John Kendall, but anyways, he, uh, he was running the Dinkey from the mine to the railroad track, or, uh, I think it was a railroad to the river. But they used to have all that stuff down there where they, you know, cause I used to work down through the plant, see all that old stuff around there, cause that's where the new stuff, see I don't know, they might've run it to the river. I believe they run it to the river because they had to build the bridge overtop the railroad tracks. And he had an accident.

AR: Hm, I heard about that.

GB: I'd say it wasn't an accident. Somebody—

CR: Set him up.

GB: Set him up.

AR: Hm.

GB: Because he was black, what we say now, black, and they thought when they hired him, they thought he was a white man.

CR: Cause that was—

GB: Is that what you hear?

CR: — He was considered an engineer.

GB: They didn't even ask you like they do now, they considered he was a white, and he was pretty smart, that's the way, that's how he got that job.

CR: Yep.

GB: Then somebody set him up and he had an accident. Anyway, he tripped until he died, didn't he?

CR: Mm-hm.

GB: He always did have trouble with his legs, and during that they didn't have people sitting in things like they do now.

CR: No.

GB: I don't know if he ever got anything out of that or not. Probably not. If you go in the mine, you get killed, you're dead, that's it. They might get ya out, they might not, that's the way told me up there in West Virginia, where I used to go, up there. Um, you get killed in the mine, you're gone. They tell ya they try to get ya, they didn't try to get ya, close the mine, that part of it, keep getting up. But when John Dale Lewis, you don't know nothing about John Dale Lewis. That's a union man, John Dale Lewis got in there and got set up with the government, out in West Virginia and they said that all day you pack your lunch and go around to them mines that

wasn't going by the rules, and they go in there and bring the state police with em if they say it's closed up.

AR: Hm.

GB: They used to go in the mine, them women was saying, the secretary at the office, they'd get nervous, and they'd call em out. "Aint nobody in the mine!" He said, "Well, we going down to see." They had the police with em.

AR: Hm.

GB: That's, that's when the mine, that's when the union first started, and they had a hell of a time.

AR: Were they at this mine here?

GB: No, did that in West Virginia.

AR: Oh, this was in West Virginia.

GB: And John Dale Lewis, that was a long time ago, you know, when John Lewis came. I didn't know they had a union then, when they had the mine over there. I didn't know what name, what name was the mine?

CR: It was the agricultural something.

GB: I used to know the name of the mine. And they had that stuff that—

AR: The Cabin Branch?

GB: —That stuff was shiny, you know that, that stuff, you get that stuff and you could see it sunshine, looks like gold, you know?

CR: Yeah.

AR: Pyrite, yeah.

GB: That stuff would shine some kind of pretty.

AR: Hah.

GB: But I don't know what they did with it. I ain't never know what they did with it.

CR: They made a whole lot of things, soap, gunpowder. Uh, they also got sulfur out of that and there's like twenty things that they made. Some of it's textiles and, uh.

GB: It's amazing how they used to dig them holes and things go down in the ground and get that stuff out of there at that time, hm-mm-mm. You dig a well right now, you go down too deep and run into that stuff, can't use the water. That woman over there got, I think she went down six hundred and some feet down there, or so they say, I'll put it that way. They can not use the water.

CR: Because of the pyrite mine?

GB: Uh huh.

AR: Oh.

CR: Didn't know that one.

GB: To use the water you gotta—I don't know why she didn't sign when they, uh, built the, uh, got the water to the church, they wanted to bring water down Mine Road, I mean Joplin Road, wouldn't nobody sign it.

CR: Wow. That's crazy.

GB: Didn't nobody push it neither, you know.

AR: Hm.

GB: Got a well, paid all that money to get it dug and can't even use it. That's bad.

AR: Yeah. So is that people o-on this road?

GB: Right here.

AR: They didn't want, uh—

GB: They wouldn't, huh-uh, they wouldn't sign up for it.

AR: Hm

CR: That's amazing, I didn't know the mine went this way. I know they went to 234, but I didn't know they went this way.

GB: What, the mine?

CR: Uh huh.

GB: No, I-I-I don't mean that they w-were, the mine was there, but I know what I'm saying, you get down and you hit that old, uh—

AR: Pyrite.

GB: That old stuff was in there.

AR: The pyrite is still down there, so.

GB: Yeah, it's down there, yeah. That's what happened to the well, you know, she couldn't, uh, down 234.

CR: Cause they go that way.

GB: Right, right.

AR: Um—

CR: Juke joints, mine-, uh, moonshining.

AR: I guess I'll ask about that, um, would you be willing to talk much about, uh, the juke joints on Batestown or the, uh—

GB- [Laughs]

AR- —The moonshining that people would do? I've heard, supposedly.

GB: You're right. That moonshining, out there!

AR: [Laughs]

GB: That was a regular thing, moonshining. Yeah. I'll tell you one thing though, after the war started, most of that stuff got broke up. After the war started, everybody went. Young people went in the service and, uh, yeah.

AR: It wasn't as big then after-after the war?

GB: Yeah, it wasn't big as it is, but it wasn't like it was before the war. I'll say it wasn't.

AR: Alright.

GB: What'd you say?

CR: Nothing. You don't know nobody that used to make it?

GB: Huh?

CR: You don't know anybody that used to make any of it?

GB: Yeah, my uncle made it?

AR: [Laughs]

GB: Cliff made it.

CR: Uh, he gone, so [Laughs].

GB: Yeah, he made it, Wyoma made it, Johnny made it, everybody's people making it. I've been down one time, seen him, Johnny, make it, I never did get interested in it. One, I didn't get far, and I had to go to work. [Laughter]

AR: Hm!

GB: Oh my lord! Hm-mm-mm. Go to work, had to go to work two o'clock on Saturday and I had been up there with my uncle at the still and I was supposed to be tasting the stuff, shoot. I ain't never— Hm-mm-mm.

CR: Tasted too much?

GB: Mm-hm!

AR: I see.

GB: [Laughs] And I went to work.

CR: But they did it for extra money, right?

GB: Huh?

CR: They, they made it for extra money?

GB: Yeah, if you made it you didn't make that much, no. A little extra change. And, like I said, uh, I'm not sure of this, uh, Honkey had just bought a new car. I said he was the first one up there that had a new car, and it was a maroon Chevrolet.

CR: Mm-hm.

GB: And it, uh, I don't know what they call it, but anyways, it was, four people could sit in it but it had another name for it. That thing was some kind of pretty.

CR: I know what you're talking about.

GB: It wasn't a convertible, but it was built like a convertible.

CR: Yeah, and you sit in the back?

GB: Yeah.

CR: A rumble seat?

AR: Oh, a rumble seat, yeah.

GB: Yeah, and, uh, but this wasn't a rumble seat, what he had cause they didn't start making rumble seats during that time. So, anyway, now, they know who's making this stuff, but you go up there and buy it and they gonna put you in jail and take your car. And he went up there and got the, uh, to get the stuff and sure enough the man didn't have none. So he come back down the road and the police stopped him.

AR: Ah.

GB: And, uh, they said, "Now we're gonna search your car." And they said give em the key and he said, "Go ahead, search it then." He said, "Oh, so-and-so didn't have nothing today, huh?" But they knew where he had the still at! You never did, that-that's terrible!

CR: Yeah, that is.

GB: You know who the man making it, but he didn't bother him, but you gonna bother me cause I come up there buying it from him.

AR: Hm.

GB: That, now that's, eh—

CR: DO you remember him having a still blow up or something?

GB: I don't remember that. It probably did, cause a lot of people had them little stills on the, uh, on the run. That cabin branch down there, by the graveyard down there. I told Wallace Thomas, Wallace was about my age, I said, "Wallace," I say, "What that smoke doing down there every morning?" He said, "I don't know, see, but we gonna find out." Didn't come to our minds at that time, we were young.

AR: Mm-hm.

GB: We didn't have no idea that it was a still. And I think it was [Inaudible] owned it. And we went down there and we found out what it was, but didn't, you know, never did say nothing about it.

AR: Mm-hm. Hm!

GB: And then they started making them helicopters, came, and that broke that up.

AR: Wow.

GB: They see that smoke and that helicopter roll along there and then they didn't have to walk a long way because before that time you'd have to walk that branch, cause that branch was a long way. But, they had that helicopter, he'd roll right over top of it.

AR: Hm.

GB: And then, uh, I said, my uncle said one time he had to run cause he heard it coming, heard the, uh, heard the thing coming.

AR: Mm-hm. Hm.

GB: Wouldn't have stopped if it weren't for them.

AR: So, uh, can you remember any important community events? Any-anything at all that happened in Batestown that, uh, I guess you could say, just any kind of big events that everybody knew about?

GB: The only thing I know is it'd be there the third Sunday in September is, uh, uh, the, uh, homecoming. That's the only thing I know, I don't know if Charlie would know anything about that, but, uh. Uh, people would live, like in DC, a lot of people in DC, and homecoming, they would come back home. But now ain't nobody come back home. Homecoming is just like any other Sunday.

CR: Yeah.

AR: Hm.

GB: And over there when-when Little Union'd have a homecoming, our church would close up and go over there.

AR: Really?

GB: And, uh, Neabsco, they would—

CR: They'd all do the same thing.

GB: —All do the same thing. And so, when we'd have a homecoming over here, they'd do the same thing. And now they don't, you don't, they don't even know when a homecoming is at a different church.

CR: They don't.

GB: Hm-mm. They don't pay it no mind. But that's just that time has changed.

CR: Yeah.

AR: Mm-hm.

GB: Sure did. They made it, that's all I'm saying. That's the biggest thing, homecoming, but right now ain't nobody come home. All of em gone. I'll tell em any minute, all my people gone before my brother died. And then, like you said, Ora and her sister, and then, what, Ora had one child and I never know little, uh, the other girl's children. Her name Mary?

CR: I don't think nobody did.

GB: I don't, not, never did know her children. She had two boys, I think, but I never did know em. What I did know is Bateses mostly. They're girls, they didn't go by Bates, you know, they go by their husbands' names.

AR: So was there any other, um, things that happened in Batestown—

GB: I don't remember.

AR: —That, uh, were kind of, uh, I don't know, uh, that everyone would remember. Um, anything like a, uh, a disaster or, maybe somebody, um, was very successful, or anything like that?

GB: Right now, I can't think of nothing.

AR: Alright.

GB: Homecoming was the biggest thing. [Inaudible].

CR: When you got your, when y'all got your mail, w-what address did it show? Did it say Batestown?

GB: You had to go to, go to the post office.

CR: And what did it say? Addressed to Batestown?

GB: Dumfries.

CR: It didn't say Batestown?

GB: Naw, hm-mm, Dumfries.

CR: Ok.

GB: What was his name, French? French Braner? That's the one that stole the money?

CR: Down at the post office?

GB: Yeah. Wasn't it French?

CR: I don't know his name.

GB: [Clears throat] But you remember that though, I know you do.

CR: I do, I know.

GB: We would get check from the, uh [Clears throat] little checks, thirty dollars, forty dollars, fifty, wasn't a whole lot of money, a hundred dollars, that was great then, and he was cashing the checks, the post office man was [Laughs].

CR: That's something to know.

AR: Where was this post office? It was in Dumfries?

GB: It was in Dumfries.

AR: Was that the, the one that was on Fairfax Street?

CR: By Claude Thomas, yeah.

AR: Well, I guess it wasn't called Fairfax Street back then.

GB: No, it wasn't.

CR: But that's where it was at.

AR: Alright.

GB: Yeah, he was cashing the checks, and he [Inaudible] the woman, she moved, the way I understand, she moved and, uh, she wanted to know where her check was at, and they'd written back to her, said you cashed your check at such-and-such a date in Dumfries. Oh, and when they said Dumfries, they said that put the light on it. She said, "I ain't cashed no check in no Dumfries.

AR: Hm.

GB: It wasn't all that much I don't think. Said, "Eh, no I ain't never cashed no check in no Dumfries, what are you talking about?" So they went and checked it out.

AR: Hm.

GB: I think I had sixty dollars that he took, that I had.

AR: Hm.

GB: Back then people didn't have a whole lot of money. They'd spent a whole, a whole lot of money trying to collect sixty, uh, thirty dollars from just the same, but that's what he did.

AR: That's terrible. Hm.

GB: Pay a man fifty dollars a day, come down to something like thirty dollars.

AR: Hm.

CR: When you were growing up, I think you mentioned something about the-the mine owned to the left of Mine Road, of Batestown, and then the Bateses owned the right side of Batestown.

How-how far up did the mine own land?

GB: That's a good question. I don't know.

CR: But you know they owned the b-, the buildings?
GB: I know they owned a lot of land there, but I don't— [Clears throat] I know they owned, uh, owned that land uncle John owned.
CR: Right.
GB: [Clears throat] And Miss Ruth Carla.
CR: Mm-hm.
GB: And the house that Frank Henderson lived in.
CR: Frank Henderson, where'd he live at?
GB: Lived right there in front of Dewitt, right across the road there from Dewitt. You don't remember that?
CR: Huh-uh.
GB: Yeah. You talking about, well you don't remember the old big houses down there where that, uh, where Elsie and them used to live?
CR: Yeah, I remember that.
GB: You remember that?
CR: At one time they used to own that, that was one of their houses too, wasn't it?
GB: Yeah, that was one of em, uh-huh. But somehow or another, the Johnsons bought it.
AR: The, the, the big house that you showed me? The one that—
CR: No, no not that.
GB: No, you wouldn't know, it's tore down now.
CR: But Johnson, Mister Lemon, Lemon, uh, bought that land, correct? Right across from Mister Dewitt? That's Lemon's property?
GB: Heh. Lemon Johnson, Lemon Johnson, that land belonged to Lemon Johnson's wife.
CR: Right now?
GB: Uh, when the land, and, um, she died.
CR: Right.
GB: And he was married to her.
CR: Right.
GB: And that become Lemon Johnson's, cause Lemon Johnson one of these, say he, way I understand, he was one of these hippies, and she liked, uh, uh, Lemon, and quite naturally, you seen they done the deal—
CR: Uh huh.
GB: And he came in the land.
CR: Ah! That's what happened.
GB: Uh huh. But what I want to know, [Clears throat] the land that, uh, Thornberry—
CR: Mm-hm.
GB: I wonder, did he build that house himself rather than mother and father?
CR: I don't know, I know who you're talking about.
GB: But I know where, I know she was a buying.
CR: Where was the house at on Lemon's property?
GB: Huh?
CR: The house which was back further up, where he made his little house at, that old house?
GB: Lemon Frank?
CR: Yeah, you said it was a big house across from-from that? From Mister, uh, Dewitt?
GB: Oh, that was, uh, [Clears throat] that was Mary Johnson. That was Mary Johnson's place. Uh, I don't know how-how she got it because at that time there was a lot of Johnsons.

CR: Was it up on a hill where he put his house? Same area, or down in the bottom?
GB: It seemed like to me it was right straight across from Dewitt's house.
CR: Oh, ok. That wasn't where his house was at.
GB: And, if you were [Coughs] if you'd come out of Dewitt's house and walk straight on across—
CR: Mm-hm.
GB: It was a big old, uh, big red house at that time. That was a mine house.
CR: OK, now, Elsie's house, when they lived down there. What kind of house was at the mine, what-what-what was that a [Inaudible] house, or what was that house considered? Do you remember?
GB: I'm trying to put my finger on what it is. It was a big house. It was a big house and it had a whole lotta sheds around it.
CR: Uh huh.
GB: Like barns or something like that.
CR: [Inaudible]
GB: Then they had a [Clears throat] then they had a house down there on Mine Road, when you would go up the hill, you'd see it go-go straight through to the mine, you know where the house up there on the right.
CR: Uh huh.
GB: Uh, did Elsie live in that house?
CR: [Inaudible] But then they moved over there, to the big house, then Old Man Franklin bought it and he sold it.
GB: He wasn't nothing but an ass, excuse me.
AR: That's alright [Laughs].
GB: That man was something else, they, eh, they told a lot of jokes about him up at Fort Belvoir, him and the sergeant, [Inaudible]. [Laughs]
CR: Ok, let's let that go.
AR: [Laughs] So how long did you live in Batestown?
GB: All my life. I was born and raised up there. I was born and raised up there, brother.
AR: So, do you consider where you're living now as part of Batestown?
GB: Yeah.
AR: Yeah?
GB: I would say.
AR: Alright. So, you used to live on, uh, Batestown Road, correct, or Mine Road.
GB: Yeah, I was born and raised up there and I got married in nineteen, uh, I was about thirty-five years old, I'm ninety-two now, so that's how long I've been living from over there.
AR: Alright, and di-did you move over here?
GB: Over here, mm-hm.
AR: To this home, from there?
GB: Mm-hm.
AR: Alright.
GB: I moved when this house was built.
AR: So you lived on Mine Road until you were thirty five you said?
GB: Yep.
AR: You, um, so did you move, you moved here when you got married?
GB: Mm-hm.

AR: Alright, so you, like, bought this with your wife?

GB: Six thousand dollars.

AR: Oh.

GB: And I couldn't get that. And they let me have six thousand dollars.

AR: Hm.

CR: Wow.

GB: And the man who owned the house, he, he took the second, what you call the second trust, and I paid one payment to the, uh, bank, then one payment to him.

AR: Mm-hm.

GB: And then, uh, finally I found somebody who would take [Inaudible]. I mean the whole deal is, now I think it was 1960, uh, sixty something, I know I didn't have the house long, like '64, and I got a letter from the man, said you can get somebody that'll, uh, take [Inaudible] and I'll knock off six hundred dollars. At that time six hundred dollars would be good money.

AR: Mm-hm.

GB: And, uh, I had a great uncle, I think his picture is on here, he was the one that got it.

[Inaudible] I thought George Buckner was on there. I think I may got a picture missing.

CR: I thought that was him.

GB: That's AC

CR: Oh, OK.

GB: Well anyway, George Buckner has, he, uh, he had a, hadn't too long built a house, about sixty, he had about ten years, but anyway, he had made a good credit with a man up there with a loan company and I don't know how he got a loan up in Fairfax, up in Springfield, but wasn't really where the mall is at, it was the other side. I went there and talked to him, he was a young guy, he told me, he said, "You know why you can't get the money, don't ya?" I said, "Yeah, I know why." And he said, "But I'll tell ya one thing," he said, "I'm a work with ya." He said, um, "You don't need to make your payments like you're making." So one day I got a letter from him, told me not to make no more payments, and had took care of it. I paid sixty dollars a month for ten years and thank the Lord I never missed a payment.

AR: That's awesome.

GB: Never missed any payment. And I told my wife, I said, "the Lord was with us, that's all."

CR: Yeah.

GB: And they make all that money, because I remember when I worked down there at the depository for years, we weren't making a dollar an hour, and I wind up down there and I make sixteen dollars an hour. Lined up [Inaudible]

CR: I'm gonna ask one more question. Um, I notice when you had, when you had the car and got a little older, you used to go to these pantries and give food and stuff to the community, uh, do you consider that, uh, something you learned from growing up in Batestown? How people used to have to look out for each other and give and take, somebody'd give to the people who didn't have stuff?

GB: Heh, well I guess you'd say yes and, well, just in between. Well, uh, but I got tired of that through the church, so, I don't know.

CR: But you did a good job up on it.

GB: Well. Well the church let me use the van and, uh, the pastor, he's the one that got it going, and anyway.

CR: Did you volunteer?

GB: Yeah, mm-hm.

CR: Ok, so.

GB: Yep, yeah, Thomas, but, uh, yep.

Note: Mr. Bates had been fidgeting with a candy wrapper close to the voice recorder.

CR: Ok, pull that candy away from there.

[Laughter]

AR: Yeah, that's definitely gonna, that microphone's gonna pick that up real well.

GB: Oh, I forgot that. You were right about it. That's a good one there.

AR: So, um, do you stay in contact with a lot of people from the community, people that you, uh, grew up with?

GB: I'm a be frank with you, all of my people that I know, they gone.

AR: Hm.

GB: All my kin people, people I went out with, danced with, had a good time with, all of em are gone. The last one left was, well it was Willie Thomas, and he died three years ago. All the rest of em gone.

AR: So do, do you know very many people who currently live up on Batestown Road?

GB: I don't know nobody up there now. Wait a minute, naw, the Parker girl, what her name?

CR: Um.

GB: I know about two or three people up there.

CR: Yeah.

AR: Alright. And you mentioned before that, uh, th-the last time you went through Batestown, it was a lot different, it was very different than what you remember.

GB: Oh yeah, yeah.

AR: Could you—

GB: It's a lot more grew up now, it's grew up now, uh, during that time all-all of Batestown was clear.

AR: It was what?

GB: Clear. Wasn't no trees or nothing there.

AR: Oh.

GB: And right there in front of where, in front of the church where, uh—

CR: And all that dirt.

GB: That was terrible, that woman did that. Hm, it was her land, I guess. I don't know why she done it, put that dirt up there.

AR: Who was this?

GB: That was a nice piece of land there too, had a nice, had an old house there, but I don't know how many rooms, I ain't never know how many.

CR: The mine, when we walked to the mine, all that there.

AR: Yeah, yeah. So, is that.

CR: That's where that old house was at too.

AR: Which old house?

CR: Beautiful land. The one that we were talking about.

AR: The old house from the, th-the mine, that was owned by the mine?

CR: That's the one.

AR: Mm.

GB: But I wonder why that house never did get paint—Most mine houses were painted red, you know?

CR: Uh huh. Oh, they painted em red?

GB: Mm-hm.

AR: Oh really?

CR: That's good to know.

AR: I didn't know that. So most of the-the houses or buildings in general that were owned by the mine were painted red?

GB: See, uncle John's house wasn't red, but Lemon Johnson's house was red.

CR: Maybe he painted it?

GB: The house that Frank Henderson lived, red for years, it was red. Lemon Johnson's place was red.

CR: Was that a house that—Lemon Johnson's house come from the mine?

GB: Mm-hm, it was red. A big old house. And he, after he, after she died I don't think he did nothing.

CR: And she bought it from the mine?

GB: She, her husband, somebody bought it from the mine, I don't know how she got it.

CR: OK.

GB: Uh, her name was, uh, I did know her name. But he married her and he came into that, he wasn't a happy go lucky guy. He was there when I, I'm going by Miss, Miss Lula and them.

CR: Uh huh.

GB: And, uh, but they, somebody's paying tax on it now.

CR: Got to be. I-I think it's some—I checked on it and yeah, somebody is. I don't know who.

GB: I'll tell you a joke about that. He had a real big, uh, well it wasn't all that big, uh, pear tree, and that thing would, that thing would, pears come out of it, real big yellow pears, you know.

CR: Yeah.

GB: And, um, we were going to school, we were going on up there, I don't know if it was Leroy with me or not, but somebody else was, and we went up there and got one of them pears, crossed over the road a little bit, and he took and shot a gun, and he was close to us, but he wasn't shooting at us [Laughs]. Scared the heck [Laughter].

AR: Jeez!

GB: You talking about somebody, he-he scared-scared us and he laughed his butt off. He didn't care if he—

CR: I remember that pear tree.

GB: You remember that pear tree?

CR: I do.

GB: You know I'm telling the truth.

CR: It got so old it just died.

GB: Died. But that thing had some pretty pears on it.

CR: Yeah it did.

AR: Hm. But he was just trying to scare you, more than—

GB: Uh huh, yeah.

AR: It wasn't necessarily about the pears.

GB: No, he didn't care about them.

AR: Just trying to laugh at your fear I guess [Laughs].

GB: Him and Uncle Jordan and Aunt Lula, went over there and Aunt Lula'd look out for him [Inaudible].

CR: They lived right across the street from him.

GB: Yeah, right straight across the street. It was big old house.

CR: Now, that land between Baby Sis and the Butlers, not-not [Inaudible] land, but that land that the park got now. Wh-who owned that land back up in there?

GB: Henry Bates owned all that land.

CR: Good god that was a lot of land.

GB: Henry Bates owned a lot of land back in them, then. Don't ask me where he got it. Henry Bates left here and went somewhere, to Pennsylvania somewhere. And, uh, something happen or another and he'd gotten some little money somewhere and he bought that land, the way I understand. Now that's why I'll say somebody told me, cause I don't know. And, uh, Henry Bates had a lot of land there.

CR: That was a whole lotta land.

GB: Went all the way down to the branch.

CR: All the way to the branch, and the park got all of it. Got every, almost every stick of it.

AR: Hm.

GB: Now, see, they bought some of it. And that land up there, where the old church was at—

CR: Right.

GB: I wanna know about that.

CR: Um.

GB: They made a deal, uh, they made a deal with the park?

CR: Yeah, they made a deal with the park.

GB: OK.

CR: But that other part, um, that, uh, that the, the Soul on Wheels sold the park that land. Th—that, uh, Jack Williams to live on.

GB: See, that was Tasewell Bates's land.

CR: That was Tasewell Bates's land?

GB: Right, mm-hm.

CR: I hadn't heard that.

GB: And Tasewell Bates give—When they built that school up there—

CR: The Cabin Branch?

GB: They give that land to first build the school, and he gave em an acre of land.

CR: Right.

GB: And so when, uh, when they teared the school and stuff down, they're supposed to give Tasewell his land back.

CR: But they didn't.

GB: And they didn't.

AR: Hm.

CR: They took that land.

GB: Yeah, they took it.

CR: How many schools did you know was up there?

GB: The only one I know was, uh—

CR: Cabin Branch?

GB: Mm-hm. I don't remember no other school.

CR: [Inaudible] You told me some stuff today.

AR: Here's a question, I don't know if you'll be able answer, but, uh, when you were younger did any, did the people in Batestown have any kind of, uh, stories that everyone would tell, like folk tales or-or legends or any kind of just stories that everybody knew about a place or person or anything like that.

GB: [Laughs]

CR: Like hoot-n-holler or anything?

GB: [Laughs] No. People understood, he told some stories, we know they was stories, we liked to hear em anyway. [Laughs]

AR: Say what?

GB: Deron, then, used to tell them stories, we know they wasn't nothing but stories. But, uh, we know they were nothing but stories, but we still liked em, liked to hear him tell em. We used to go down to a guy called French Bates, he had a bunch of children and, uh—

CR: My uncle.

GB: And he, uh, he could tell ya stories, and we got a walk about, uh, I think it was a quarter of a mile, no lights, dark as all, [Inaudible] go up the road scared to death come back up with me and Wallace Thomas. Oh shoot, we used to laugh at that afterwards. French could tell em. [Inaudible] Hm-mm-mm, yeah.

AR: Well, I've pretty much asked all the questions I have, if there's anything else you would like to share, anything we haven't covered that you want to discuss, you're more than welcome to.

GB: The only thing I can say is Batestown ain't what it used to be, that's all I can say.

AR: Mm-hm.

GB: It's growed up, but least they got a decent road up there, cause Batestown never had a decent black top road up there. That think they put up there, remember they got a road up there now.

AR: Mm-hm.

GB: And they say that road cost six hundred thousand dollars.

AR: Really?

GB: And I guess it did. But they gotta—Batestown never had a decent road up there. There's a road up there now.

AR: Do you know when—

GB: And it's 2 miles.

AR: Do you know when they put that road up there?

GB: Yeah. We know when they first, well, I guess they called it—

CR: They used to tar and put gravel in it.

GB: Yeah, put gravel in it, but that's not a black top. But we were glad to get that. We were glad to get that.

CR: What kind of name do you think they ought to name that road?

GB: Huh?

CR: What kind of name do you think they should name that road?

GB: I'd just say to name it Batestown, like it is.

AR: Hm.

CR: Alright.

GB: And then Jimmy Kendall, they interviewed him for something, I don't know, people come down there to talk to him and he didn't know what, he might have forgot. Jimmy's like I am, he doesn't have ed-, didn't have much education then and people come and ask but he didn't know. But, uh, years ago they went and asked Jimmy some questions about the road, Jimmy couldn't, he didn't know nothing. But Jimmy knows more than I know, cause Jimmy was older than I was.

AR: Who asked him questions?

GB: Uh, Channel 5 or Channel 4, one-one of em, I don't know which one it was.

AR: Oh. Huh.

CR: [Inaudible]

AR: That's interesting.

GB: One of em asked Jimmy about it. He was in the, I don't know if it was in the paper or was on the news, but one of the channels.

CR: It was paper. I remember seeing the paper.

GB: Yeah.

CR: I got the newspaper. But I will say one thing, y-you knew a whole lot more than you thought. A whole lot!

AR: Yeah, thank you, thank you very much for sharing all that you've shared and, uh, it's been a please talking to you and—

GB: Well, if somebody can get around like he has, with all these questions and, you know, remember some-, some things are hard to remember if stuff happened or not, that's just the way it is though.

AR: Mm-hm.

GB: Like everybody, you know, people at that church, they got some good people up there, at least I think they do, they act nice, treat me nice, you know, what else can you say? They really do act nice, most of em. A woman jumped on me who lost her husband. She wanted to know why—I didn't know you were supposed to go see a woman when she, uh, I thought the wife go to see you, and they were strict when they would come over there to see her.

CR: Alright now.

[Laughter]

GB: She didn't go, look, she didn't go behind my back and tell me, she told me to my face.

CR: [Laughter]

GB: She said she expect for me, you know, she said I was the main one! And I thought, what else can I say, I said, "I will check in with ya." If she wants me to check on her, you know.

[Laughter]

AR: Alright. If there's, uh, if there's not anything else that you would like to share—

GB: Nah, I tell all I know about.

AR: Alright.

GB: If I think of something, I'll tell Charlie.

AR: Alright then, well, well that about wraps it up then. Thank you again for speaking with me.

GB: Ok, you're welcome. Ok.

END



Martha Bates, Garnell's mother, standing in front of Leroy's 58 Chevrolet.



Garnell Bates.



Lizzie Cole, Garnell's grandmother and one of Ms. Annie's sons.



Steve Bates (Garnell's son), Garnell Bates, and Sadie Cole Bates (Garnell's wife).

Interview with Hilda Howard and Margaret Simmons

Hilda Howard Biography

“And you used to leave from Batestown and go to Hickory Ridge to Aunt Mary Byrd’s getting food. Cause she had a farm, mm-hm, so. But she didn’t have no kids, but she had a farm. She, you know, raised kids, but she didn’t have any... Everybody that wanted food or whatever, you go there and you get it.”

Hilda was born on March the 4th, 1932 to Roena Brown Williams and Andrew Williams. To her knowledge, Hilda was born on Hickory Ridge, and moved to Batestown when they built the Prince William Forest Park. Hilda has a total of 12 brothers and sisters, including Charles Reid, who is much younger than her. Being one of the older children, she was often tasked with taking care of her younger siblings. Hilda’s father was ill and unable to work, and died when she was still young. Hilda’s mother, originally from Batestown, remarried twice, to Walt Kendall, then to Theodore Reid. Hilda’s maternal grandmother is the sister of Margaret’s maternal grandfather, making them cousins.

In Hilda’s interview she discussed Carpooling in Margaret’s father’s truck to go to the five and dime store in Manassas. She shared information about going to Cabin Branch School as a child. She also talked about going to watch films at the theatre on the Quantico Marine Corps Base. Hilda moved to the Joplin Road area in the ‘50s, when she married.

Margaret Simmons Biography

“Can the food, they would, you know, give this one some, that family some. They would give back, you know? But, yeah, they, they weren’t greedy people.”

Margaret Jackson Simmons was born February 3rd, 1939 to Doris Lorraine Porter and Irvine Jackson. She has one older brother, William Jackson, and one younger brother, Charles Jackson, and they currently lived in Maryland and Washington DC. Margaret’s mother was a member of the Porter family, grew up in Batestown, and cleaned houses for a living. Margaret’s father was from Manassas and worked as a painter at the Marine Corps Base Quantico. Margaret’s maternal grandfather was a Porter, and the brother of Hilda’s maternal grandmother, making them cousins.

In her interview, Margaret mentioned that she went to school in DC after high school to become a nurse, then her mother became ill when she graduated and she took care of her. Margaret was the Little Union Baptist Church clerk for 48 years and is still an active member of the church. Margaret moved out of Batestown in about 1951, when her father built a home off Joplin Road, but she was still very close to the community.



Oral History Guidelines for Prince William County

Oral History Interview Agreement

This Interview Agreement is made and entered into by the Interviewer(s):

Adam Rayburn

and the Interviewee(s):

HILDA - Howard

Interviewee(s) agrees to participate in one or more interviews with the Interviewer(s) named above. This Agreement relates to any and all materials originating from the interviews, namely notes, tape recordings, video recordings, any transcripts or other written manuscripts prepared from or using the notes, tape recordings and/or video recordings, or any images that might be used during the interview or created during the interview.

In consideration of mutual covenants, conditions, and terms set forth below, the parties hereto hereby agree as follows:

1. Interviewee(s) and Interviewer(s) understand that the copy of the interview in the possession of the interviewer is the property of Prince William County, and will be available in its entirety to researchers and the general public.
2. Interviewee(s) and Interviewers(s) irrevocably assigns to the Prince William County all his or her copyright, title, and interest in this material.
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5. I understand that any photographs copied will become available to researchers, and may be used for education, advertising, publications, and may be used in print or internet publications. I understand that the Prince William County will properly credit me as the owner of the original photographs. I understand that I waive all title and right, so far as I possess them, to the image(s) described and to any future prints or copies produced from it/them or any profits gained from the sale of prints or other reproductions of these images.

Hilda Howard

Interviewee(s) signature(s)

Date

Adam Rayburn

Interviewer(s) signature(s)

7/18/2019

Date

Prince William County
Office of Planning and
Department of Parks Recreation and Tourism, Historic Preservation Division



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Margaret Simmons

Interviewee(s) signature(s)

7-18-19

Date

Adam Rayburn

Interviewer(s) signature(s)

7/18/2019

Date

Prince William County
Office of Planning and
Department of Parks Recreation and Tourism, Historic Preservation Division

Oral History with Hilda Howard and Margaret Simmons

Interviewer: Adam Rayburn

Interviewees: Hilda Howard and Margaret Simmons

Location: Hilda Howards home at 18325 Williams Rd, Triangle, VA 22172

Date: July 18, 2019

Adam Rayburn=AR; Hilda Howard=HH; Margaret Simmons=MS; Charles Reid=CR

Note: Charles Reid is present during this interview and participates in both asking questions and sharing stories. Hilda Howard and Charles Reid are siblings. Hilda Howard and Margaret Simmons are cousins and Margaret lives just across the street from Hilda's home.

AR: Today is July 18th, 2019. My name is Adam Rayburn and I am an intern working with the Historic Preservation Division on the Batestown Oral History project. We are at the home of Hilda Howard in Triangle, Virginia. I am interviewing both Hilda Howard and Margaret Simmons. Uh, Misses Howard and Misses Simmons, welcome and thank you both for agreeing to speak with me today. Could you please introduce yourselves and tell me your names?

MS: I am called Peggy. My name is Margaret Simmons.

HH: Oh, [Laughs] They call me Dennis, but my name is Hilda Howard.

AR: Alright. Dennis you say?

HH: [Laughs] Yeah.

CR: Charles Reid.

AR: Uh, could you spell your names please?

HH: My name?

AR: Well, whoever wants to go first.

MS: M-A-R-G-A-R-E-T, Margaret, S-I-M-M-O-N-S, Simmons.

HH: And mine is H-I-L-D-A, Hilda, and H-O-W-A-R-D, Howard.

AR: Alright, and, so, you already mentioned that you go by nicknames.

HH: Sometimes.

AR: Sometimes.

HH: Back when I was young.

AR: I see.

MS: Well, mine is all the time [Laughs].

AR: Is there a way you, um, prefer to be addressed for the interview?

HH: Huh?

AR: Uh, what would you prefer me to call you?

HH: By my name!

AR: By your name, alright. Just making sure [Laughs]. Um, so, when were you both born?

MS: Uh, I was born February 3rd, 1939. Mine Road, Dumfries, Virginia. Batestown.

HH: Oh, I was born, uh, March the 4th, 1932.

AR: Alright, and, you were both born in Batestown?

HH: Where was I born? I think Hickory Ridge.
AR: Oh, really? So, um, when did your family move to Batestown from Hickory Ridge?
HH: When the government had taken their property.
AR: So —
HH: Then we moved to Dumfries.
AR: Alright, um, do you know around what year that was? I imagine you were very young then, at the time?
HH: I was young. I don't the, eh.
[Long pause]
AR: That's alright if you can't remember the specifics. Um, so, uh, what are your parents' names?
MS: Uh, my mother's name was Doris Lorraine Porter.
AR: Alright.
MS: And my dad's name was Irvine Jackson.
AR: Alright, could you spell the first names?
MS: I-R-V-I-N-E.
AR: Alright.
HH: Oh, and my mom's was Roena Brown Williams.
AR: Could you spell that please?
HH: R-O-E-N-A, Brown, Williams.
AR: Alright.
HH: And my father was Andrew Williams.
AR: Andrew Williams.
HH: Yeah.
AR: Um, do you know where your parents were born?
MS: My dad's from Manassas.
AR: Alright.
MS: And my mom—
CR: And your mother was Roena Reid. [To Hilda] [Inaudible]
HH: He asked what was my mom's name, I'm giving him the name, Roena Brown Williams.
CR: She was Reid.
HH: She was married to a Williams first.
CR: But she was a Reid when she [Inaudible].
MS: No she wasn't—
[Inaudible]
MS: Your momma was, didn't she live with Grandmama?
HH: What-what, yeah, uh, what ya call it, yeah.
MS: When she was young.
HH: But, uh—
CR: After her husband died—

HH: After my dad died, yeah, she married Walt Kendall, then after he died, she married Theodore.

CR: Yeah—

MS: But I thought she was there before?

HH: Huh?

MS: She was over there before she married Theodore, wasn't she?

HH: When she was coming up, yeah.

MS: Yeah.

HH: She stayed with, uh, Granny Caroline and Aunt Laura.

MS: Mm-hm.

CR: She was born in Batestown.

MS: Is that where she was born?

CR: Yes. Yes, born in Batestown.

MS: OK.

CR: That's where her mother grew up, in Batestown as well.

HH: Yeah. OK.

CR: Down there at the bottom, where they all grew up at.

HH: Oh.

MS: The bottom.

CR: Where you got them chiggers.

[Laughter]

CR: That house, with the creek, around there, that's what we're talking about.

AR: Oh.

MS: That's where I grew up.

AR: Oh.

CR: It was a big, two-level house, that's where mama said she told me she grew up at.

HH: Yeah.

MS: Yeah, but I don't remember that. I mean, I don't remember, but I heard em talking about it.

HH: My mama's mother died at childbirth.

CR: Yeah.

HH: So, uh, Granny Caroline and Aunt Laura raised her.

CR: Right.

AR: Aunt who?

HH: Granny Caroline.

AR: Granny Caroline and who?

MS: My aunt, I mean my grandmother, Laura Porter.

CR: That was there grandmother's—

HH: Grandmother or great grandmother?

MS: No, that was my grandmama, that was my momma's momma. Yeah, the first on you said.

HH: Yeah.

AR: Alright.

HH: It's a little confusing.

[Laughter]

MS: No it ain't.

AR: So, you said that your father was from—

MS: Manassas.

AR: —And your mother was from?

MS: From Dumfries.

AR: Dumfries?

MS: Mm-hm.

AR: Or Batestown?

MS: Well, Batestown.

AR: Batestown, alright.

MS: Same thing to me [Laughs].

AR: Oh, alright. Um, do you know when your parents were born?

HH: No. Do you know, Charles, off hand?

CR: I do, but it's at the house.

MS: Let me see. My daddy was born in 1906. Let me see, I can't think, Momma was born in nineteen oh, 1911 I think, I'm not sure.

AR: Could you explain a little more about how the two of you are related? You're cousins, correct?

MS: Mm-hm.

HH: Yeah.

AR: Alright.

MS: Her grandparents—

AR: Right.

MS: —Grandmother—

HH: Caroline.

MS: Let me see, my grandmother, mother.

HH: [Inaudible]

CR: They had the same great grandmother.

AR: Alright, OK, that makes enough sense.

MS: [Laughs] Well, he's been gone before, after—[Laughs]. Plus, we have to start from the grandparents and go to their grandmother, I mean their mother.

HH: Yeah.

CR: In a nutshell [Inaudible].

MS: [Laughs]

AR: Alright.

MS: Well you don't need this before, so, you know.

AR: So, um, do you have any siblings?

MS: I have two brothers.

AR: Could you tell me their names?

MS: One, the eldest one is William Jackson, the youngest is Charles Jackson.

AR: And, so, are you the middle child then?

MS: I'm the middle one.

AR: And, so, I know that you are [Laughs] Charlie's sister, but, uh, do you have any other siblings?

HH: Uh, yeah. I have a sister, Thelma Lucas, and Therman Reid.

Note: Hilda's mother, Roena, had 13 children, but she named the ones that were still living at the time of the interview.

AR: And what was the second one?

HH: Thurman.

AR: And could you spell that?

HH: T-H-E-R-M-A-N.

AR: Alright.

HH: Therman.

AR: Thanks. Um—

HH: And my mother was married three times. Each one of her husbands died.

AR: Oh.

HH: So, my husba-, I mean my father died when he was 28 years old. So he left her with all these small kids. But the rest of my sisters and brothers is deceased.

AR: Oh. Um, do you have, do any of your siblings live in the area?

MS: Uh, no. Maryland and DC.

AR: Oh, alright. Alright, um, about Batestown, what comes to mind when you think of Batestown?

MS: [Laughs] Country [Laughs].

AR: Country.

MS: Nice place to live. Quiet.

HH: Yeah.

MS: Family, all family, friendly with one another.

HH: Go outside and play.

MS: Had to grow your own food.

HH: Mm-hm.

MS: Pigs.

HH: Right.

MS: And what else?

HH: And you used to leave from Batestown and go to Hickory Ridge to Aunt Mary Byrd's getting food. Cause she had a farm, mm-hm, so. But she didn't have no kids, but she had a farm. She, you know, raised kids, but she didn't have any.

AR: Yeah, I heard that before, that, um, she would take kids in and raise them a lot.

HH: Mm-hm.

AR: Do you remember anybody that she raised?

HH: Uh, Richard Beckett, but he's deceased. She raised him. Uh, Eugene Johnson, wasn't it? What's his name?

CR: [Inaudible]

HH: Eugene Johnson. She raised him, but he is deceased too. And-and she helped, you know, everybody. Everybody that wanted food or whatever, you go there and you get it.

AR: So, um, on her farm, was it mainly her that was working the farm, or her husband or her children or anything like that?

HH: Well, her husband, when he was living, but then he died, so, the nephew, Dick Beckett, he would work the farm.

AR: Alright [Clears throat]. So what was it like growing up in Batestown?

MS: Back then you didn't have a TV. Wasn't no TV back in the day.

HH: Sure wasn't.

MS: All you had was the radio.

HH: Right. If you had that.

AR: Hm.

MS: That was live. Just live in the country. No running water, let me see, no electric either.

HH: Right, you had them lamps.

MS: Yeah, you had lamps.

AR: So the, the radios, were they, uh, like battery powered?

MS: Mm-hm.

AR: Do you remember, uh, what kind of things you would listen to on the radio?

MS: You were a kid, you didn't listen.

AR: Oh, I see [Laughs].

MS: [Laughter] Whatever the adults put on the radio. The news or something, I mean there wasn't that much news back then, but. Whatever they put on the radio.

AR: So, whatever they were listening to?

MS: Mm-hm.

AR: So, did the two of you, um, spend a lot of time together when you were younger?

MS: Uh, not really cause they were older than me.

AR: Mm-hm.

MS: My-my cous-, my aunt—

HH: We would be, we would be there—

MS: Yeah, they would be there, but I was a little girl.

HH: Right.

MS: My aunts were older, that age.

HH: Yeah. And we would go outside and play. You had a branch right there, we'd go to the branch sometime.

MS: Huh? Not me.

AR: Would you—When you say the branch, what's the branch?

HH: Uh, it's a creek.

AR: Yeah, that's what I figured, I just wanted to make sure, because, uh, I've heard people refer to it as the mine, the-the run, and the branch now, so. It almost seems like, uh, I don't necessarily want to say generations, but different, uh, you know, age groups have different, uh, names for it. But it seems like a very common thing that everybody spent a lot of time in the creek, so. Did you swim in the creek?

MS: No.

AR: No, you didn't swim in it?

MS: I didn't like the water. Still don't.

AR: Oh, I see. Um, how close were your homes when you lived in Batestown? Like, did the two of you—

HH: They were close enough for us to visit.

MS: Well, walking wasn't a problem, that's all you had to do is walk, you didn't have nothing to ride, and—

HH: Yes, but we would ride every now and then to Manassas.

MS: Yeah, but I mean that's different [Laughs] I mean that, like, if we were going to your house—

HH: Right.

MS: —We would walk.

HH: Yes.

MS: Cause you would have to, like, when I lived in the bottom, we call that the bottom—

HH: Right.

MS: —You would have to walk up the big hill until you got to the road.

AR: So, when you say the bottom, do you mean the bottom of Batestown Road?

MS: No, where we lived. You know, over there where the branch is.

AR: Oh.

HH: You didn't show him that Charlie?

CR: Mm-hm, went that way.

HH: Oh, OK.

MS: Yeah, that's where I lived, over there, the house.

CR: [Inaudible]

AR: Yeah, so-so it's—

MS: Up on the hill.

AR: Ah.

CR: [Inaudible]

HH: And then it was a big family, so you would go out and play or whatever.

MS: Yeah, and I lived with my grandmother with, um, fourteen kids. After my mom married, she was the oldest girl, oldest child of fourteen kids, and she got married, we had a room on the back of the house where we slept in. But as I got a teenager, I went upstairs with the big girls [Laughs].

AR: So, one house, fourteen kids.

MS: Mm-hm.

HH: Mm-hm, yep.

MS: And they s-, the boys and everybody stayed there when they were grown.
HH: Yes.
MS: They didn't move out until they got married.
HH: Mm-hm.
AR: Could you describe what that house looked like?
MS: Oh it was a big house.
AR: I imagine it would have to be [Laughs].
MS: It was a two-story house, um, you had to, well, big kitchen—
HH: Big porch.
MS: And big porch in the summer time, where the long table was out there, where we ate. But in the winter time it was ate in the kitchen. And you had, uh, the kitchen, the living room, with the fire stove, wood stove, and upstairs we didn't have no heat, but the heat came up, you know, it was warm up there. And, let me see, three bedrooms upstairs, pretty big bedrooms.
HH: And then, and then different months in the night—
MS: Yeah.
HH: We'd, all the kids—
CR: Well water, yeah.
MS: Yeah, yeah, yeah, well water.
HH: And you take a bath in a tub, you draw, eh—
MS: Yeah.
HH: You'd get that tub of water and everybody'd take a bath in that tub of water.
AR: Mm-hm. Would you heat it up first?
MS: Oh yeah, you'd heat the water up.
AR: Mm-hm. Um, so, what was the-the home you lived in? Could you describe that to me?
HH: Where'd we live? We lived down in the bottom, and then we moved over to live at Miss Lemon Johnson's.
CR: Mm-hm.
HH: Two. That was a two-story house. Well both of those houses were two-story houses, that we lived in.
CR: It was an old, uh, mine house wasn't it?
HH: Yeah.
MS: Didn't y'all live over, down—
AR: Say that again?
CR: It used to be owned by the mine.
MS: Yeah, down there a-at, uh—
CR: Mabel Gatlen's house.
MS: Well.
HH: That was the last one that we lived at. It was up on the road at Lemon Johnson's house.
CR: Correct.
HH: And we moved from there down to the bottoms.
MS: Yeah.

CR: [Inaudible]

AR: So, how many different places did you live at in-in Batestown?

HH: Three.

AR: Three.

HH: Maybe four, or five! [Laughs] Let me see, after I got married, I lived.

CR: [Inaudible]

HH: I lived—

MS: With your mother in law.

CR: At one time. But, I-I decided on my own, I lived up there by that, uh, Ora Bates, her house, in Batestown. Was that where Leroy? Was that where Leroy built this house?

CR: Ora Bates?

HH: Yeah. And then like that, uh, next to the beer garden, I lived there for a little while, and then from there I moved to Joplin. Yes. And I've been over on this side ever since.

MS: [Laughs]

AR: Where you live right now, um, what do you consider this? I know the address says Triangle, would you consider this Triangle?

HH: That's what it says, Triangle.

AR: Um, how about you, did you just live in the one house—

MS: No, my dad, um, decided that it was time for him to move out and in nineteen and, I guess it was fifty—

HH: Oh, OK.

MS: —That he built that house right across here.

HH: Right across from this.

MS: Built the house right across here and then that's where I grew up until I got married in sixty one, and my husband built a house back here.

AR: So when you moved over here, did you still spend a lot of time in Batestown?

MS: No. Just to visit my grandmother until my mom said, "Uh, it's time for you to move." And they got her a house up the road [Laughs].

HH: Right, yeah.

MS: It was a house from Fort Belvoir they had brought down here.

AR: Alright. So, um, could you maybe describe what kind of, uh, or if you had chores, um, what kind of chores were they?

MS: I had to keep my room clean, wash the dishes, and that was all I had to do.

HH: And I had to babysit my siblings [Looks at Charles].

[Laughs]

AR: I'm sure that was a handful.

[Laughter]

HH: And have to wash clothes, scrub clothes on—

AR: On a washboard?

HH: Yes. That was our job.

AR: Would you, um, did you have like, uh, like a tub to do that in?

HH: Yeah.

AR: Alright.

HH: Fill it up with the water, and then you got the tub that you rinse em in, and then you hang em on the line.

AR: So, um, where did you two go to school?

HH: Cabin Branch.

MS: We started out in Cabin Branch, up Batestown Road and, I think, I started, I wrote it down.

HH: Did you write it down?

MS: Yeah, I started [Unfolds paper] I guess about 1945.

HH: Is that when that when they built the school? [Washington Reid]

MS: No, it was way before that. But you went to Cabin Branch before that.

HH: Right.

MS: And I ha-, I don't know whether it's on that plaque or not, at the church.

HH: Oh.

MS: Yeah, and I probably went there until Washington Reid, in 1951.

HH: And that's when you go to Washington Reid School?

MS: And then I graduated from Manassas Regional High School in '58.

AR: Manassas Regional in '58. It was called Manassa-Manassas Regional?

MS: It was Manassal-, mm—

HH: Industrial.

MS: Manassas Regional when I went there.

AR: Alright.

MS: And, but they done changed the name, how many times? I think it was Industrial when you were there.

HH: Industrial, yeah. And then, I went to the ninth grade, and then I had to come home to take care of my siblings while my mother worked. Isn't that right Charles?

CR: That's correct.

HH: But no-no regrets. I didn't mind doing it.

AR: So, what can you tell me about Cabin Branch? What it, what it looked like, um, what the teachers were like.

HH: The teachers were nice. It was a three-room building. Each room had—

MS: It really was just two, two rooms with a, um, a draw, what ya call it?

HH: A petition.

AR: Oh.

MS: Petition.

AR: I see.

MS: [Motions with hands] From the first to the second, and then the third and fourth, and fifth and sixth in the second room.

HH: And the stove, it used coal.

MS: I don't remember it being that.

HH: Yeah.

AR: The stove used coal?

HH: Yeah.

CR: [Inaudible]

MS: You sure it wasn't wood.

CR: Yeah, they switched.

[Inaudible]

MS: I don't remember, I never seen em putting nothing in there.

CR: I can tell ya who used to bring it up there. Charlie Reid would bring it sometimes, uh, [Inaudible]. Way before my time.

MS: [Laughs] Well, you know, back in the day when it would, it wou-, we had snow, when it snowed, and it, of course there wasn't no school when the snow'd be up like this. And we would have to walk up that hill.

HH: yeah.

AR: Hm, so, if-if there wasn't any school because of the snow, how did you find out? Or did you just not—

MS: It was just automatic, it's just an automatic thing.

AR: Alright. So there's no set, like, uh, amount to where [Laughs].

MS: No, but you know you couldn't get around when snow was like that.

AR: S-so if it was snowing, basically, too much to—

MS: And then the road wasn't paved neither.

AR: Yeah. So, is, about Cabin Branch School, did you have, uh, recess, or, uh, a playing time?

MS: Mm-hm.

HH: Yeah, oh yes, and the kids used to fight like something else.

AR: They would fight?

HH: Yes. These boy kids would fight the girls.

AR: Oh really?

MS: I didn't know that.

AR: So, it was a little different when you were there?

MS: Yeah, never.

AR: Did they do anything other than fighting?

[Laughter]

AR: Like, were there any games they would play or anything like that?

HH: Oh and they would fight the teachers too.

AR: Oh, wow.

MS: Really?

HH: Yes!

MS: Wow, mm.

CR: Who were some of the teachers?

MS: I can't remember.

HH: Mary Porter was one of em.

MS: She wasn't at, um.

HH: Cabin Branch.

MS: No she wasn't at Cabin Branch.

CR: Yes she was.

HH: Mary Porter, a-and—

MS: Are you sure?

CR: Yes.

HH: Miss Kimbleton[?]. Mary Porter, Miss Kimbleton, Miss Washington, Miss Snyder, Misses Archie—

MS: Yes.

HH: William Archie or whatever her name is.

MS: That's something we can talk about. We didn't have but one teacher for each room.

AR: Mm-hm.

HH: Right.

AR: And what, uh, would you have text books that you would use?

HH: I'm sure.

MS: Yeah, we did, we did. Not like they have now, didn't have all these books.

HH: Probably come from the other schools, you know.

MS: Yeah, we didn't have a whole bunch like now, you know.

AR: Um, would you have tests or quizzes?

MS: Oh yeah, yeah.

AR: About how often?

MS: It wasn't that often. You know, every, what, half of the year, and then before you finished school, to see whether you passed the grade or not.

AR: And you, uh, named all these teachers, uh, were most of the teachers from Batestown?

MS: No.

HH: No, hm-mm.

AR: Were any of them from Batestown?

HH: Nobody but Mary Porter. But she wasn't really from here.

MS: She wasn't—Yeah.

HH: Cause she married into the family.

AR: Ah, I see. What kind of things would you do for fun in Batestown?

MS: [Laughs]

HH: Play!

AR: Just play?

HH: Yeah.

AR: Well what kind of games would you play?

HH: Uh, play ball, or whatever.

MS: Mm-hm.

HH: Ticktacktoe, jump rope.

AR: Jump rope.

HH: Yeah.

MS: Go fishing, we would fish, your parents, daddy'd take you fishing, get your dinner [Laughs].

AR: Where would you go fishing?

MS: Not me! He said where did they go fish, down in Quantico?

HH: Possum Point.

CR: Possum Point.

MS: Oh, I don't know.

AR: So, that would be in the Potomac then?

CR: Mm-hm.

HH: Yeah.

AR: So, you wouldn't go fishing, but—

MS: No, my daddy'd go, went fishing and I used to hate it as I got older, but, uh.

AR: So y-you did go fishing sometimes?

MS: I went with him, just to get out [Laughs].

AR: But you weren't too fond of it though, yourself?

MS: No, hm-mm.

CR: I can remember when they used to go frog gigging too, they did that.

MS: Frog gigging?

CR: You don't remember that?

MS: Hm-mm.

CR: They'd get newspaper and open em up and put a piece of, or drip some oil in the middle of it. Then they'd roll em up real tight and with a piece of wire tie em, and there'd be three pieces of wire, they'd be that long [motions with hands], they'd tie, uh, light em at the top and that's how they got their lights, cause they didn't have no flashlights. And they had old plank, paddle boards, a piece of wood that, you know how you put a piece of pizza in, and they would see the frogs eyes and smack em! I seen em, they would have a whole tub full of em. My daddy, Daniel, I think [Inaudible] and somebody else, might have been [Inaudible] I seen em. And all them frog legs were good.

MC: Hm-mm.

[Inaudible]

AR: So, judging by your reactions I don't think the two of you never went frog gigging much?

MC: Never heard of it [Laughs].

CR: We did.

AR: Is there, I don't know, anything else you would do for fun? Like in the winter time?

HH: Oh, well you would go outside and-and make a snowman or something, uh, play snowballs.

AR: Mm-hm.

HH: Uh, sleigh ride.

AR: Sleigh ride, um, you mean just, like, down a hill?

HH: Yeah, wherever you could sleigh ride.

AR: Um, what, uh, what would you use as a sled? Just, like, did you—

MS: Rubber tire.

HH: Rubber tire or either a cardboard box, y-you'd get on it and it'd slid you on down.

CR: Rubber tubes.
HH: She said a tire.
CR: Not a tire, a rubber tube.
MS: Yeah, well [Laughs] all the same! I wasn't an outdoor person.
AR: What about the adults, do you know much about what they would for, uh, leisure activities?
MS: Nothing. Too busy working [Laughs].
HH: I guess they played cards, a lot of em, and probably drank booze and whatever, you know.
AR: Alright, are there any, um, interesting stories from your childhood that you might want to share?
HH: No.
CR: Nothing? Nothing was interesting growing up?
MS: No. All they did was work and come home and clean the house.
CR: Did somebody get killed at Cabin Branch school?
MS: Yes.
HH: Did they?
CR: Don't you think that's a little interesting?
HH: Somebody did what?
MS: Got killed.
HH: Oh, I meant to ask you about that—
[Inaudible]
MS: It was, well, we were outside, you know, for, um—
HH: Recess.
MS: Recess and then two boys got to fighting and, um, hit his head on the cement.
HH: On the concrete.
AR: Oh.
HH: And he died right there.
MS: No, he went to the hospital. Well, they don't know whether they, he died there or what.
HH: Right.
MS: You know, back in the day, they'd just take him.
HH: Right.
CR: What was his name?
MS: Buddy, Buddy and Ralph Minor.
HH: Buddy Porter—
CR: But he was kin to us?
MS: Mm-hm.
HH: Yeah!
MS: Ch-, uh, Leon's son.
HH: Leon's son.
CR: Oh, OK.
HH: Yeah, and I'm trying to think of the age. They couldn't've been more than six, seven.
MS: No, they were older than that.

HH: You sure?
MS: They might have been in the third or fourth grade.
HH: Mm-hm.
MS: I'd say nine or ten.
CR: What year was that?
MS: Now you asking that?
HH: Probably. I don't know. It'll say there on his tombstone, in Harden's Hill.
MS: Let me see. Had to be in forty something, '43, '44, something like that.
HH: Yeah.
AR: Could you describe what Batestown looked like? I know you had mentioned that it had dirt roads, but, um, were there, were there any businesses there?
MS: No. Just houses and the school.
HH: [Inaudible] Yes there was a—
MS: Oh, oh, the store.
HH: What's the name?
CR: Mary Thomas?
HH: Mary Thomas had a store.
CR: Juke joints.
HH: Huh?
MS: Then later on they had the little joint.
HH: I thought they had a grocery store. It was a grocery store, down on the mine.
CR: No, it was up here.
HH: Hm.
AR: So, if you needed any kind of, uh, groceries or anything that, uh, you couldn't grow or produce in Batestown, do you know where your families would go to buy these things?
HH: To Dumfries.
MS: Triangle.
HH: Triangle, Dumfries, to the Gramer's Store in walking distance.
AR: And what's that?
HH: It was in walking distance. Walked, we walked everywhere. We walked to the store, it was every day, we walked. On Saturday, Peggy's dad would go to Manassas and we might be able to ride then on the back of his truck to go to Manassas, go to the five and ten cent store.
AR: Five and ten cent store?
HH: Mm-hm.
MS: [Laughs]
AR: Is that what it was called or did it have a name?
MS: Yeah, that was Five and Dime Store.
AR: Hm.
HH: And, and the store was A&P wasn't it?
MS: The grocery store, yeah.
HH: Yeah, A&P.

CR: Anthony Bonds.

MS: No, Bonds was way later.

HH: Mountjoy.

MS: Yeah.

HH: And, uh, the-the Gramer's Store. [Inaudible] Aunt Blanche, I mean Aunt Mary used to go to Gramer's to get her flannels and stuff.

AR: To get her what?

HH: To get her flannels.

AR: So what, what other, what kind of things would you buy from this Five and Dime, or w-what did you call it?

MS: Well, you could get, um—

HH: I guess you could buy some candy.

MS: Yeah.

AR: That's always—

MS: It was just like a regular—

HH: Little store.

MS: Uh, Walmart or something, but not that big.

HH: Something like a Dollar Tree, that sort of thing.

MS: Yeah.

AR: Alright, so it's kind of like a grocery store or a—

MS: It wasn't a grocery store.

AR: A market or a department store.

MS: Yeah, it wasn't a grocery store, they didn't sell food in there.

AR: Oh, I see.

MS: You know, dishes or whatever. Just like a regular Kmart or something like that.

AR: Alright, yeah, that makes sense. Um, so the, do you remember some of the stores that, uh, your families would go to in Dumfries and Triangle?

MS: They didn't have none.

HH: Mountjoy Store in Triangle.

MS: Triangle.

HH: We used to go and—

MS: Buy meat and stuff.

HH: —Buy food and put it on the tab and pay later, they used to do that. Uh, down in Dumfries, at the Gramer's Store, I think they used to do that there.

MS: Mm-hm.

AR: At what store?

HH: The Gramers.

AR: Gramers?

HH: Yes.

MS: That's the name of the people.

HH: Of the people.

MS: Gramers.
AR: Could you please spell that, just for transcribing.
CR: G-R-A-M-E-R-S.
HH: And the store used to be right back where the—
CR: G-R-A-M-E-R-S.
MS: At the, uh, town hall.
HH: Th-the store used to be right there at the town hall. That store, used to be right there.
AR: Were there a lot of houses in Batestown? Or were they close together, I guess?
MS: Mm, kind of, not too many.
HH: About like it is now.
MS: Yeah.
CR: There was more.
MS: It's more now.
CR: No, I heard it was more then. [Inaudible]
HH: No.
MS: No, hm-mm, no.
CR: I heard that.
HH: OK, Sadie Bates, or Sadie Cole
MS: OK, start all the way up the road. Uh, um, Honkey. Honkey's house, come on down there—
CR: But what was up there past him?
MS: Nothing.
[Inaudible]
CR: People owned the land up there, right?
MS: Not us, the park now.
CR: Now, but I'm talking about back then.
MS: But I'm thinking there was nothing past Honkey, not that I remember, um—
[Inaudible]
MS: I think that was the only house that I know, ever known, that was up there.
CR: OK, Alright.
MS: And then you come on down, um, where the church, on the other side of the church. I'm, now I'm on this side of the road [Motions with hands] um—
HH: Sadie.
MS: Yeah.
HH: Sadie Cole.
MS: Now this is on this side [Motions with hands].
CR: [Inaudible]
HH: Uh, Frank Bates.
CR: No, um, Jack William's house.
HH: Jack William's house, that where Sadie Cole—
MS: Yeah.

HH: I said Sadie Cole.

[Inaudible]

HH: And then the old man used to live right there—

CR: Big old house, big two-story house.

HH: Mm-hm.

CR: Then nobody lived in [Inaudible] house wasn't around.

MS: No, hm-mm.

HH: Right.

MS: Grandmama, her grandmama's right across the road.

CR: Then mister, uh, Lindsey, Mr. Lindsey used to be down there, right? By [Inaudible]?

HH: Lindsey?

CR: Mr. Lindsey, Mr. Lindsey they were up there.

[Inaudible]

CR: Are you OK with that?

AR: Yeah, sometimes just the names and the people who lived there —

CR: And then you go down to the Reid's, and, uh, [Inaudible] owned a piece of, uh—

HH: Right.

CR: The two houses, the Beer Garden and the other house, then we go to Mr. Jimmy, he had two houses there. Then Johnny Kendall had a house, then you go down the Bottom, uh, [Inaudible] and them had a house, then there's Miss Henrietta, then the old, uh—

MS: Young John Kendall—

CR: Young John Kendall had his house there. Miss, uh—

HH: Miss Katie Chinn.

CR: Miss Katie Chinn, then aunt, uh, Aunt [Inaudible] she had a house, then Mr. Lee, then Ralph Minor[??] and them had the house down on the road, uh—

HH: Yeah, but he was a Kendall. Will Kendall.

CR: No, that was Minors that had that little house.

HH: I, but the Arnolds was with, um, uh, William Kendall.

CR: Willy Kendall was—

HH: Old man, old man.

CR: I thought that was at the bottom.

HH: No, th-the house where—

CR: He come from where they're putting all that dirt at now.

HH: What, were you talking about where the mine at? Yeah wh-, yeah where they're putting all that dirt.

CR: Correct, that house, that was for who? Who owned it?

HH: Will Kendall.

CR: Will Kendall.

HH: Uncle John Kendall's brother.

CR: OK, that was one of the, that was also one of the mine's [Inaudible]. And then you go down, and Billy Kendall is down at the bottom.

HH: Yeah.

CR: Then you go down around the corner and Miss, uh—

[House phone rings]

HH: Bates, Bates.

[Inaudible]

CR: Uh, Miss, uh, Leroy's mother.

[House phone rings]

CR: What's her name? Then you come back down all the way there, the other house—Well, it depends on how far you, well how far Batestown is. [Inaudible] Over there by Mister, m-, uh, the Lindseys, uh, [Inaudible].

HH: Uh huh.

CR: They built house, had houses all back up in there. That was considered Batestown.

HH: Back up, Back up. Remember Miss Sudie Bates is?

CR: Yeah.

HH: And remember they had the prison camp right there?

CR: Yeah, they had a prison camp up there. Talk to him about, talk to him about it.

MS: [Laughs]

AR: A prison camp?

CR: Yeah

AR: So you heard there was a prison camp there?

CR: We never heard, it was!

HH: Yeah, it was. Prisons, you didn't show him that? [To Charles]

CR: I did, I was trying to show it to him.

HH: OK. It was, and we would have to go past there and you'd be scared to death.

CR: Yeah.

AR: Hm. And this was—

HH: In that little strip.

CR: Yeah, remem-, remember when I showed you where we used to go ice skating?

AR: Hm!

CR: To the left.

AR: Yeah.

CR: You go back just a little bit, up on, I'll just say where they got those town houses at now.

AR: Ah.

CR: When you get to those houses up there, you'd see it right up in there, where the town houses at.

AR: So, do you, people would tell you about this? That that used to be there?

HH: No, you could see it!

AR: You would see it?

HH: Yeah.

AR: What, what did it look like?

HH: Like little buildings.

AR: So little buildings?

HH: Yeah.

AR: Do you know who was kept there?

HH: No. But it was prison, it was a prison camp.

CR: It was like a work camp, I don't think it was a prison, it was like a work camp.

AR: So they would take prisoners there in order to, what, do construction work or something?

HH: They come to clean up, they used to clean up, they used to clean the road.

AR: Ahhh.

MS: Yeah, they used to clean the ditches out and all that stuff.

AR: I see.

CR: Now, it wasn't like a—

HH: Work camp?

CR: —Maximum security or anything like that.

AR: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

CR: It was like a work camp.

AR: Work camp, that makes sense.

CR: Yeah, I had heard about it but I don't know a whole lot about it.

HH: Yeah, it was there.

CR: It was there. A lot of people, the old bridge, y'all remember that?

HH: Mm-hm.

MS: Yes.

CR: [Inaudible] Bridge.

HH: Yeah.

AR: Well how long was this, this, uh, work camp I guess, cause I don't know what else to call it, how, do you know how long that was there? Like, when they stopped, uh, bringing people there?

HH: No, but I'm sure it-it was a few years. Yeah. I don't know how long.

CR: It just disappeared like that.

MS: Yeah [Laughs].

CR: I'm serious.

MS: And then you'd see the ditches clean.

AR: Around, on Batestown Road?

CR: Anywhere.

MS: All over. Yeah, everywhere.

AR: So, would you see them out working?

MS: Yeah.

HH: Mm-hm, yeah.

AR: Oh.

MS: Every summer they would be out here cleaning these ditches.

AR: Wow.

HH: Garnell didn't tell y'all about the prison camp?

CR: See, I don't know if he did or not, he told us everything.

MS: [Laughs]

AR: Yeah, I don't, I don't remember.

CR: I don't remember that though.

MS: H-he prolly forgot it.

HH: It was right across from where his momma's house is.

CR: Yeah, where his mom lived, I know.

HH: Yeah.

AR: Really?

HH: Yeah.

AR: Wow. Hm.

HH: Cause I know we used to be scared to walk past that going to the store.

CR: Oh yeah.

AR: Um, you mentioned that your, your father had a truck and a lot of times people would, uh, ride along with him when he went to Manassas, correct?

MS: Mm-hm.

AR: Um, how many other people had cars back then?

MS: I think about everybody had a car or truck, he had a truck, pickup truck [Laughs].

CR: Theodore never owned one.

MS: Oh [Laughs]. Well the ones that work, went out to work had it, had, had vehicles.

AR: Hm. Alright.

MS: Yeah, I mean had a, he put a canvas back thing over it and in the winter time we would have to cover up sitting in the back.

HH: Mm-hm.

CR: Mm-hm.

MS: But I didn't have to ride in the back. I could ride with my mom and dad up front.

[Laughter]

MS: Yep.

AR: Um, is there, um, did most people maintain their own vehicles?

MS: Mm-hm.

HH: I never had no vehicles, so [Laughs].

MS: My, my uncle owned the, uh, Porter Brothers shop, the only black, uh—

HH: Right.

MS: —Company here, and he was the first, um—

HH: Mayor.

MS: No, it wasn't mayor, uh cou-, uh council in Dumfries.

CR: No, well, yeah, he was the first black official after reconstruction.

MS: And they name-named the building after him. John Porter.

AR: John Porter?

MS: Mm-hm.

CR: John Wilmer Porter.

AR: Ah. Wilmer Porter, yeah, that's definitely familiar.

MS: In Dumfries.

HH: And he was, what? A councilman?

MS: Mm-hm.

HH: OK.

MS: And his daughter was a councilwoman, and his son in law. Both was on the council in Dumfries.

CR: And his neighbor—

HH: You didn't tell me.

CR: —Claude Thomas.

MS: Oh, yeah [Laughs].

HH: Yeah, Claude.

MS: And they still have the, um, somebody else has got the shop open.

AR: Yeah, I've noticed that, I've seen that there. So, um, would most of the people in Batestown, if they had to, um, take it to a mechanic, that's where they would go then? I assume.

MS: I assume, I don't know [Laughs]. They had plenty of business.

CR: Not only the people in Batestown but—

MS: All over.

CR: —The white population in Prince William County [Inaudible] done on their car they knew he did good work with his brothers. They were considered probably one of the premier body shops in Northern Virginia. It was a big thing.

MS: Yeah. Had his brothers working for him.

AR: Could you tell me about any, uh, community centers in Batestown? When I say community centers I mean any places where people would gather together. Any places where people would, um, I mean, this could be a-a church, a baseball field.

MS: Church. Little Union. In the summer time they would have baseball, uh, girls used to play baseball.

HH: Right.

MS: My aunts used to play on the team they had in the summer time. Used to have, uh.

CR: What year was that, with the team?

MS: Don't ask me.

CR: In the '40s, '50s?

MS: Oh no, that was, I was a teenager then.

CR: So what year was that?

MS: I can't count back that far [Laughs].

HH: I can't either.

MS: Let me see, it was probably in the '50s.

HH: We had a quite a few, uh-uh-uh baseball...

MS: Games. Mm-hm. The girls mostly.

CR: Been doing it for years up there.

HH: Yeah.

AR: So did you play on-on a team?

MS: Yeah, they had a team.
HH: Yeah, they had a team!
AR: Um, what was the team's—
HH: And then we would go out and play some, and play.
MS: Mm-hm.
AR: What was your teams name?
MS: Didn't have no name [Laughs].
AR: Didn't have one, just Batestown Team?
HH: I guess so. Either—I don't remember their name.
AR: Did you have, uh, uniforms or anything.
MS: No.
AR: Not when you played.
CR: [Inaudible] Beer joints or anything like that?
AR: What's that?
MS: No, you know I couldn't go to no places like that.
CR: Well, Hilda could.
HH: Have what?
CR: Have little beer joints or anything like that?
HH: Over there [Inaudible].
CR: No, here.
HH: I remember hearing—
MS: We talking Mine Road.
HH: It ain't on Mine Road.
CR: Batestown, refer to it as Batestown.
MS: Oh, OK, Batestown.
HH: Th-there is a couple juke joints catered at—Well, they had the store.
CR: So what about Mama's parties? How about Mama's parties?
HH: Oh yeah, and Mama would have birthday parties all the time.
CR: Mm-hm, do birthday parties.
HH: Yeah, and then we would, Roena'd have parties in the basement.
CR: Mm-hm.
HH: All the time.
AR: In the basement, what do you mean by that?
HH: At the house, we had a basement.
CR: It wasn't called a basement.
MS: [Laughs]
HH: A cellar.
CR: A cellar, yes, yeah, maybe a cellar basically.
HH: Yeah, they had parties.
AR: So, you would have parties for birthdays you said?
HH: Yeah.

AR: Oh. But, would you have parties for other things? Other kinds of events?

HH: Yeah, my mom always cooked, we always had something, mm-hm. Back then—

CR: We had gatherings for differe—My mom would, dictated that we always come back, see her, on like a Sunday evening or something. She would always cook rolls and chicken, and we, well she didn't have, she didn't have to press me to, like, to come up, cause I'd just come up there for it.

[Laughs]

CR: She'd cook the best rolls in the world, and, uh—

MS: No, my momma.

CR: Oh, your momma? Well, maybe that's where she learned it, from her. I'm telling you—

MS: My momma was the best cook all of the way around.

CR: She cooked all the time and we would always—

HH: Well we grew up together.

MS: Yeah, nah, mm-hm.

CR: Everybody on the road would come for a birthday party, you know, all the neighbors would come and I think she would go down to them whenever they had one. Miss Gladys and Miss Bates, when they would have one. But that's all they did, most of em. They, and they dressed up, wasn't going nowhere, but they'd dress up just to go to the next house for a birthday party. [Inaudible] And I-I'll tell you, when we had a two-bedroom house, and when you look at the, you'd have thought it was huge, the way they took pictures. Cause we moved the furniture to make it look like it was bigger than that.

[Laughs]

CR: Then take some pictures.

AR: Really? Do you remember that?

CR: Oh yeah, she probably moved it to!

AR: Move the furniture to make the whole room look bigger. That's interesting, I've never heard of that. So, when there would b-be these parties, would most of the people in the community go to it? Or just, um, people who were closest, I guess, to your families?

HH: Yeah, the closest.

MS: Everybody? Not everybody.

CR: Each of em would just come in, say, "Wish ya happy birthday," and go on and take pictures. Over the years we made a lot of pictures of certain people that I haven't see in god knows when.

AR: So as, as far as, uh, you know, community centers, um, were there any other, um, any places where people would gather? Like the, the Beer Garden, would people get together there?

MS: Well really it wasn't nothing for people, you know. We didn't have places like that to go to.

HH: And we used to go to the movies, walk to Quantico, go to the movies, with the older girls.

AR: Well that's interesting. So you would walk down to Quantico to go to a-a theater?

HH: Yeah.

CR: Quantico Base.

MS: Base, on the base.

HH: Yeah.

AR: Oh, so it was on the base?

HH: Yes.

MS: Yes, [Inaudible].

AR: Oh, huh.

HH: So ya walked, and the older girls was in charge of us, so we could go. [Inaudible]

AR: Do you remember any of the films that you watched?

HH: No.

MS: [Laughs].

CR: So, y'all didn't go in the mine? Swim in the mine?

MS: No, I didn't ever go. The only time I went somewhere is in the summer time to Manassas to Daddy's folks.

CR: You didn't go—

MS: You'd go up there and come back home, that's all you did, and vacation time was no such a thing. Well I just didn't have money to go, and you couldn't go certain places.

CR: To the mine, y'all weren't allowed to go there?

MS: No!

HH: Charlie, yes we used to go down to the mine and wash clothes.

CR: I know that.

HH: With mom.

CR: I know that, but they went—

AR: So you would wash clothes in-in the creek?

HH: Sure!

MS: Yep.

AR: So, was it a very far walk to the creek?

HH: Naw, cause we lived in, lived at, uh, I'll say Mabel Gatlen's house and would walk down the creek with ma, then we would all wash clothes and rinse em. I guess Grandma [Inaudible] [Laughs].

CR: So when they'd kill pigs, y'all didn't come around, people didn't come around?

MS: Hm-mm, that's what men did. I was a child.

CR: But your dad was around.

MS: No.

HH: Yeah.

MS: Not really. You had one or two, but you didn't have a whole bunch of people.

CR: Theodore killed a couple of em.

MS: And chickens be running around in the yard, in the garden, pick that thing, [hand motion] and crack their neck off.

HH: And have a chicken that day [Laughs].

MS: Mm-hm, and that's your dinner.

CR: Roena did that. I remember that.

HH: Yeah.

MS: Didn't go to the store and buy no chicken [Laughs].

HH: If you'd have people that's wanting wood, they'd cut wood, saw wood, but I was at home babysitting. The rest of em were cutting wood.

AR: [Inaudible] Um, did your families have, um, gardens at all?

MS: Yeah.

HH: Yeah.

AR: Do you remember what kind of things they would plant?

MS: Everything you could eat. Potatoes, string beans, greens, you name it, they would. That was your food. And they'd, uh, can it for the winter.

HH: Yeah.

AR: Would you ever, um, gather food from the woods that you didn't grow?

HH: We used to go out and pick elderberries.

MS: Oh, fruit.

HH: Not elderberries.

MS: Strawberries and—Elderberries? Not elderberries, blueberries. Blueberries. So you would go pick blueberries and blackberries, yeah.

AR: And blackberries. You'd gather berries and stuff like that?

MS: Yeah, in the summer time, yeah.

AR: Were there any, um, were they just kind of all over the place or were there specific patches you would go out to.

HH: All over the woods.

MS: All over, wild.

AR: Just go out and grab some then?

HH: Mm-hm.

MS: Mm-hm.

AR: Alright. Could you just tell me what you remember about your parents?

MS: They were good people. Wanted me to go to college, but I didn't go. She would always say, "you want to be a, eh, I want you to be a nurse." So, and I didn't want to be around sick people, I just couldn't, you know, to be around sick people. So when I graduated from high school, she said, "You going to school." And of course, you better not say nothing. So my daddy would get up 5 o'clock in the morning, I caught the bus to DC, go on to nursing school.

AR: Wow.

MS: And I went to, um, graduated from, um, being a practical nurse. And then, when I finished and everything, got my certificate, she got sick. So I guess god planned that, you know, for me to go and finish and take care of her. So that's what I did.

AR: Wow. So you would take a bus to DC from—

MS: Greyhound bus from Triangle.

AR: Every day?

MS: Every day.

AR: Wow.

MS: No, it was three days a week.

AR: OK. Well, that's still, hm.

MS: Three days a week.

AR: Um.

MS: Me and my girlfriend used to go, Patty Bates.

HH: Oh. Well you [Inaudible]. Mm-hm.

MS: She went with me.

HH: Oh.

AR: So, um, what did your parents do for a living?

MS: Uh, mine worked on the base, Quantico. What did he do? I don't even remember. Momma cleaned houses for a while, and that was it. I think he was a painter.

AR: A painter?

MS: A painter on the base.

AR: Oh.

HH: And my mom worked. I think she worked on the base for a while too, and she used to do the day's work.

AR: What was that?

HH: She used to go and clean people's houses.

AR: Oh, OK.

CR: What'd they call it, day's work?

MS: That's what I called it.

CR: Day's work, you ever hear that term? Day's work.

MS: [Laughs] Well, back in the day you had a name for it.

CR: They'd call it day's work, try to make it sound like it's something decent to do.

MS: Mm-hm.

CR: Day's work. Paid money.

HH: Yep.

MS: Yep.

HH: And her granddaughter, she always wanted her to go to college.

CR: What'd your daddy do?

HH: My, my daddy died.

CR: You don't know what it is?

HH: No. He stayed sick, so he died at twenty eight years old, so he couldn't have [Inaudible].

MS: Just had children.

HH: Yeah.

CR: He wasn't sick then!

[Laughs]

HH: Had kids and [Inaudible]. And they had, that was, [Counting] five or six kids for momma to raise, and she's a young woman, so she had to remarry.

AR: So, um—

HH: And her niece, I mean her granddaughter, she wanted her to go to college to be a nurse, and, which she did. Margaret Williams.

AR: Margaret Williams?

HH: Yes.

AR: So what kind of, um, what kind of food would your family eat?
HH: Hm?
AR: What kind of food would you eat, what kind of food would your, yeah, um—
HH: Oh. Well, back in the day I guess they ate a lot of pork.
MS: Chicken and pork.
HH: Chicken and pork.
CR: Coons, and squirrels, and rabbits.
HH: Coons and raccoons and all that, I didn't eat that.
MS: Naw, naw. No!
CR: Somebody ate em cause the plates were clean.
MS: No, we had chickens and pork and beef, we had beef too.
HH: Well, you'd get beef every now and then.
MS: Yeah.
HH: Not that often.
MS: No. But you always had a pig.
HH: Yes.
AR: Would you get beef from, uh, somebody who had cows in the community?
MS: Cows, yeah, some of em had cows.
AR: Alright. Um.
CR: Salt fish.
MS: Hm?
CR: Salt fish.
MS: Salt fish, nah, not me, but they had salt fish.
HH: Salt fish, yeah, they had salt fish, not me though.
AR: So you don't prefer that?
HH: Hm-mm.
MS: Hm-mm.
HH: I don't do seafood, and I'm Pisces the fish.
AR: What do you know about your grandparents? Do you know if they, if any of them grew up around Batestown? Or moved to Batestown, I guess?
HH: No. My-my grandparents lived right down the street.
CR: One side of it.
HH: Mm-hm, one side, yeah.
MS: Owned all this property.
HH: Owned all this property, yes.
AR: Your grandparents owned where we're currently at?
MS: All of it.
HH: Yes.
AR: Wow.
HH: Well there's three brothers of em. So each brother bought a certain portion, accept—
MS: Well.

HH: Uncle Pres[??], and-and Grandfather Clarence, and, uh, Harvey[??] Williams.

CR: Not Harvey.

HH: Yeah, Harvey. All three of em bought property there. Bought the property.

CR: And Zeal. Did you say zeal?

HH: N-not Zeal.

CR: He wasn't kin to him?

HH: He was kin to him, but he didn't buy as much. Uh, and the other brother bought down there in Triangle. Robert Bates. I mean Robert Williams. Down there where, uh, Scott and them live. He bought a piece down there. The rest of the brothers bought this property.

AR: So, do you remember much about your grandparents?

HH: Not much, but I know they had a farm and had food and all kinds of stuff. They had a beehive where they'd get the honey.

AR: Hm.

HH: They had horses and they probably had cows, I guess, and chickens. I-I went around them at the later years.

AR: Alright. Do you remember much about your grandparents?

MS: Well I grew up in my grandparents' house until my dad built up over there. So they, you know, had to farm, raised on chickens and pigs and stuff, and had, what, fourteen kids and all of em lived at home.

AR: Um, did, did any of the older people around Batestown ever talk much about its history?

MS: Not that I know of.

HH: No.

MS: Hm-mm.

AR: Alright. How often would people from outside of the community, um, visit Batestown? For example, um, in a previous interview we talked about the marines coming up during Christmas and other people mentioned, um, like, traveling salesmen, were there, was there ever anybody like that who would com into Batestown?

HH: Yeah, people used to come around and sell, like, uh—

CR: Milk, that one—

HH: Yeah, olive oil, uh liniment, that kind of stuff.

AR: What kind of stuff?

MS: [Laughs]

CR: Liniment?

HH: Liniment, rub in, that you rub in.

CR: Who did that?

MS: Some man.

CR: What'd they call him, the—

MS: I don't.

CR: There's a name for it.

HH: Well, I don't know what you call him.

CR: Oh lord, what do they call it?

HH: Used to have a trunk load o-of the, of the stuff.

AR: Oh yeah, I have that in my notes, I do. I've seen that before. [Possibly the Watkins Man]

CR: I don't know what they call it.

AR: It was like a, it was a company.

CR: I think—That he works for though, right?

HH: I guess. They used to come around with all this stuff, different bottles of medicine and different things that you could buy.

CR: And people would visit. Cause a lot of, a lot of people that would go to Batestown's church lived there, who lived there would come.

HH: They would go from church to church.

CR: Baseball games, they would come.

MS: Well the people like grew up there and moved out, they would come back in the summer time.

HH: Mm-hm.

MS: And visit.

CR: Homecomings.

MS: Yeah, homecoming at the church.

AR: Could you maybe describe what that was like, the homecoming?

MS: At church?

AR: Mm-hm.

MS: It was a big occasion.

HH: Yeah.

MS: The road would be lined with cars, all the way down, just a number of people.

HH: And they'd have them [Inaudible] like that.

MS: Yeah.

HH: And preachers, and all that. And sell them—

MS: Selling those—

HH: —Cones, uh, candy canes.

MS: Whatever. It would be a—

CR: Sell beer.

[Laughs]

MS: —Big—I ain't never seen that! [Laughs]

CR: I heard it.

MS: But it would be a big time.

HH: And they used to gamble. The church'd be going on and—

CR: They'd gamble and drink liquor.

[Inaudible]

AR: At the homecoming?

HH: Yeah. Up the street they're gambling a-and selling liquor.

AR: [Laughs]

MS: Well, I'm not gonna talk about that.

[Inaudible]

MS: Well that's in your time.
CR: You must've been sheltered.
MS: I was!
HH: Hey, it was Granddaddy—
CR: Uh oh!
HH: It was your granddaddy who used be going to church, and you know right there in the curve where Miss Lulu is? He'd be right down in there, shooting craps.
CR: Your granddad. [Laughs]
MS: See, they didn't tell me nothing about that stuff.
HH: The well digger.
MS: Alright [Laughs].
HH: He used to dig wells. You remember? Did you hear that Charlie?
CR: I heard it.
HH: Yeah.
CR: Whole lot of that stuff up there.
MS: Well I'm sure they did [Laughs].
CR: I said I didn't know Theodore got arrested for, uh, for bootlegging [Laughs].
HH: Oh, a lot, a lot of bootlegged.
CR: Yeah!
AR: So that was common there?
HH: Yeah! Mm-hm.
CR: Yeah. Yeah.
HH: I guess that it's still going on [Laughs].
CR: I doubt it's still going on now.
HH: Cause everybody done died out.
MS: Yeah.
CR: All the ones that did it back then.
MS: There's nobody left that nuts.
HH: Right. Remember when Johnny Balls [Laughs].
CR: I know, uh, Ball games, used to be a lot of people up there too.
MS: Yes.
HH: Mm-hm.
CR: They would pack, they'd be selling sandwiches and stuff.
HH: Beer.
CR: Beer.
HH: Mm-hm.
CR: People always tried to make a dollar up there, and I ain't looked down on em for doing it because it's, you know, income was limited. All they could do up there.
HH: And then [Inaudible] used to, uh, sell those ice cream cones.
CR: Yeah.
MS: Yeah.

HH: They would sell that, uh, make some money.

MS: Yeah.

HH: Snow cones or whatever they used to call em.

AR: Oh, I see. What, for—Did they do that just for events? Like, just for, uh-

CR: Some of em did.

AR: —um, baseball games and stuff or would anybody just kind of set up and sell.

CR: Her husband had a gas station (Margaret's husband). He probably had one of the black, first gas—I think they built the first black gas station around here. Unless it was somebody else, I don't know. But he had one, and, uh, he used to go, uh, at the Union 76 up on, he started at 234, then he moved to, uh, Triangle, but, uh, I remember one time, uh, uh, a truck wrecked up there and had a truckload of chicken and everybody had that chicken.

HH: Everybody.

CR: Then at the next ball game everybody cooked that chicken and tried to sell it!

AR: And the market was flooded?

CR: It was flooded.

[Laughter]

CR: Fifty cents get you a big ole chunk of chicken. I'm telling you. So that's something to talk about too, I'm telling you.

AR: That's something else [Laughs]!

CR: It happened. It really happened. I mean fresh chickens, big ole chickens.

AR: So, do you remember that?

MS: [Laughs] Yeah, he was there twenty-four seven [Laughs].

AR: Hm.

MS: That's when he first started, oh my goodness, he would never come home.

CR: Yeah, he worked very long hours.

MS: He was a very hard worker.

AR: Um, was Batestown a segregated community?

MS: This whole area was. Yeah, because we had to ride the bus to Manassas to go to high school.

AR: Mm-hm.

MS: The black school.

HH: Right.

MS: We had Cabin Branch and Washington Reid, they were all just for black kids.

HH: When did they integrate the schools?

CR: I don't know.

MS: That was in, in the '60s.

CR: [Inaudible] were the first ones down here. [Inaudible] I did it myself, I didn't wait for mom and dad, I forged their names to go to Graham Park, I did. Signed their names, next thing I know I had, the bus was up there, I said I'm going. I refused to ride thirty miles to school. You'd go in the dark and come in the dark.

MS: Thirty miles? Where'd you go to school? Where was that?

CR: Jenny Dean.

MS: That wasn't no thirty miles.

CR: It was more than that. If you figure, they picked you up—

MS: Oh, yeah, going around everywhere.

CR: —Go to [Inaudible], Woodbridge, everywhere else. Probably fifty miles.

MS: Yeah, we went on a drive, let's see, we left here, I guess about 8:30 in the morning.

HH: Mm-hm.

MS: And get back at 8:30 pm. But there wasn't no traffic back then.

CR: No, you're right. It was just a long right. You were in sixth, seventh grade and you're going into seventh grade, going with grown men who failed five years in a row and they're still going to school. Mustache, got kids and everything. What do you look like hanging around them kind of people? It's crazy. It was crazy. I quit that quick.

AR: So, can you remember if there were any legends or folk tales or stories around Batestown?

HH: I'm sure it was.

CR: That ain't what he asked.

HH: Oh, no, I didn't get into a whole lot of story-telling.

AR: So there wasn't any other kind of stories, like ghost stories, or anything that people would share?

HH: No.

CR: You might not want to talk about all that, but I bet you fifty thousand dollars y'all wouldn't walk down them roads by yourself.

HH: What, the hoot-n-holler?

MS: Well, my mom wouldn't let me go around there.

CR: Well why don't you talk to him.

HH: What are you talking about, the hoot-n-holler?

CR: Well, you might want to talk about it if you've got something to say.

HH: Well, I don't know nothing about it. Y'all have been talking about it.

CR: Oh I'll talk about it.

[Laughter]

HH: I ain't see, I ain't see nothing, I ain't heard nothing.

CR: I've seen it, but we'll talk about it. Did your mom, mother hear something?

HH: Yes.

CR: Yes, and your niece?

HH: Yes.

CR: OK.

[Laughter]

MS: Well, see, my momma didn't talk about stuff like that to the children.

HH: I told ya I don't know anything about it.

MS: That's news.

CR: OK, [Inaudible].

AR: Well, here's a thought, just, um, were there any kind of, uh, I don't know, songs or nursery rhymes or anything like that? That people would sing? Or perhaps, uh, did you ever play jump rope?

HH: Yeah, we played jump rope.
MS: Mm-hm, at school.
AR: Did ya ever have songs you would sing during jump rope?
HH: Nope.
MS: [Laughs]
AR: Alright.
CR: You were a bunch of slow kids! [Laughs]
MS: Yeah, but this was back in the day, we didn't have what y'all had [Laughs]!
CR: I can see, y'all didn't do nothing!
MS: Nothing! But it was fun. They didn't know no more.
CR: If it was just one of y'all talking about it I wouldn't believe it, but both of ya saying the same thing, so I guess—
MS: Well we came up in a different generation.
CR: Yeah, yeah, she grew up in—
MS: You-you all wild children [Laughs].
CR: I was.
MS: Still wild [Laughs].
HH: And we were the kids that listened a-and stayed home.
MS: That's right. Get over there and sit down.
CR: [Inaudible]
AR: So, I know you talked about, um, homecoming, but are-are there any other, um, big events or things that happened in Batestown that are, uh, kind of important to understanding Batestown or to understanding the culture of the people who lived there?
HH: I can't think of anything, can you?
MS: No, well, all I know is just, it wasn't no wild place.
CR: People helped each other—
MS: Yeah, yeah.
CR: —They always helped each other.
MS: Yeah.
HH: Yeah.
CR: [Inaudible], remember that? Things like that?
MS: No, I was a child.
CR: All your life?
MS: Yes. You didn't mess with adults.
CR: Even when you were sixteen, seventeen years old you [Inaudible].
MS: No, you, no, you don't go around adults. You don't mess with adult's business. Now, when adults talk [Motions zipping mouth shut].
CR: You ever seen em share physical stuff?
MS: Uh, what you mean? Give to other people? Yeah, they shared! People shared back in the day.
CR: Talk about sharing, talk canned goods, stuff like that.

MS: Yeah, stuff they, um, what did I say they do with the food for the winter?
HH: Can it.
MS: Can the food, they would, you know, give this one some, that family some. They would give back, you know?
HH: Right.
MS: But, yeah, they, they weren't greedy people.
CR: Everybody ate pretty much what they want. [Inaudible]
MS: Everybody that you know that's from Dumfries, aren't they like this [Motions towards belly].
[Laughter]
HH: So you know they was well fed.
MS: They had food. They had food.
CR: [Inaudible]
AR: You mean Garnell? Garnell mentioned that, uh—
CR: No one was a fat person.
AR: [Laughs].
CR: Only lean people up that way.
MS: Who said that?
CR: Garnell.
HH: Because you walked.
MS: Well that was a dif-different generation.
CR: Yeah.
HH: And they walked back in the day.
MS: Back then everybody had their own garden.
HH: Yeah.
MS: And chickens and whatever. They had. They didn't want for no food.
CR: OK.
MS: But now, in this generation, it's different. What's mine is mine. You understand that?
CR: I understand. The games y'all played, y'all didn't play house or nothing? Y'all just stayed inside?
MS: Stayed inside. I played with my doll babies. You mind your own business, you don't get in adults talking.
AR: You had doll babies, did you have any other kind of toys?
MS: No. Girls had doll babies, boys had cars.
HH: Little cars or trucks.
MS: Or whatever. They had bicycles. I didn't have a bicycle because they thought that was a boy thing.
AR: Hm.
MS: But I learned how to ride a bicycle [Laughs].
AR: That's good at least.

MS: But, yep, girls had doll babies. They'd take the doll babies, dress doll babies. We had the little paper ones you'd cut out and put the clothes on, these things, I don't know what you call that?

AR: Just paper dolls, I guess. I don't know.

MS: I guess so.

AR: W-were they—

MS: It was on a, like a piece of paper.

AR: So you'd buy it like that?

MS: Buy it like that and cut it out, and then you'd cut the clothes out and it had a little thing that just.

AR: Yeah, I've seen those before. So di-did you know where you bought those from?

MS: In the nickel and dime store.

HH: The five and dime store.

AR: There wasn't any of the local stores that had anything like that?

HH: No.

MS: No.

AR: Um, do you know, you're doll babies, were those bought as well, or—

MS: Yeah.

AR: Alright.

MS: You only get it at Christmas, get a doll baby at Christmas. I did, that's what my Christmas gift was, a doll baby.

AR: Could you speak a little more then about, um, how you would celebrate-celebrate Christmas and, uh, and other holidays?

MS: Well Christmas was a family thing. My mom would start cooking weeks before Christmas.

AR: Weeks?

MS: Weeks. Making cakes and cookies and you name it.

AR: Lots of sweets then?

MS: Lots of everything. Yeah, then a lot of times the families from DC would come and get the food, you know, come and eat and take some back with em and, uh, and the neighbors would come too.

HH: Mm-hm, right. Because on-on Christmas Aunt Laura would have, give us a orange and some candy, and you thought you had a million dollars.

MS: Mm-hm.

HH: And they would put [Inaudible].

AR: Ora and Mary said the, almost the same exact thing.

MS: And on Thanksgiving, my mom would start cooking. I had to peel potatoes. She would have her, that's after we moved over here, her family, his family would be in the basement and it was just, wasn't room to sit down would be so many in there, and she would feed everybody on Thanksgiving, and I don't know how she did it. That's a lot of cooking.

HH: Yeah, but she didn't mind cooking.

MS: No, she loved it, she loved it.

CR: That's a lot of people to feed.

MS: Yes, she did. That basement would be loaded down. Yep, and she loved cooking.

AR: What about, um, Halloween, did you ever celebrate Halloween up in Batestown?

MS: Not really.

AR: Not really. Alright, um, Easter maybe?

MS: Easter was, wasn't a big family thing, but, uh, you'd have, you know, cooked food and—

CR: Went to church for Easter.

MS: Yeah.

AR: Yeah, definitely, Easter is a lot more of a church-oriented holiday. Um, alright, so, you said that you moved out of Batestown in, uh, 1961, is that correct?

MS: No, I got married in '61.

AR: Oh, you got Married in '61.

MS: It was in fifty, about fifty something.

AR: Fifty something.

MS: About '51, something like that. Whenever I started at, uh, Washington Reid. I remember I caught the bus to go to Washington Reid. It was in the '50s.

AR: And when did you move out of Batestown?

HH: Me?

AR: Yeah.

HH: Hm. Well, I moved out of Batestown back in the '50s probably, cause I had gotten married. And I was on my own.

AR: And, did you move over to this area?

HH: Over on this area. Charlie was my baby then.

CR: She raised me.

MS: [Laughs]

AR: Um, so, you moved out because you got married and were, you know, starting your own family, I would assume something like that, you were getting your own house?

MS: Mm-hm. Right. And Charlie was my baby until I had one.

CR: Till she kicked me out.

AR: Alright.

MS: [Laughs] I don't blame her. [Laughter]

AR: So, when your father built the house over here, uh, the place that you moved out of, do you know what happened to that?

MS: My grandmother was still over there.

AR: Alright, so your grandmother, so, uh, she owned the property then?

MS: Yeah, she was still over there, and, um, my mom would, used to go over there on weekends and clean the house. So I don't know whether she got tired of going over there and then she got her to, they got a house up there for her and she moved over here cause it was closer.

AR: Um, and your place that you moved out of, when you moved, um, over to this area, um, do you remember what happened to the place that you used to live?

HH: Uh, it's, is that house still standing?

CR: I don't know, I don't think so.

HH: I don't think it's still standing.

CR: Mabel Gatlen's house?
HH: Yeah.
CR: No.
AR: So, di-did you, did you own that house? Or, no, well, y-your parents did, right?
HH: No, they rented that house.
AR: Ah, I see.
HH: They owned the house that they built later, in later years.
AR: Up on—
HH: Batestown Road.
AR: Alright.
HH: Well, Mine Road.
MS: [Laughs]
HH: Batestown? Alright.
AR: Well, what—
HH: And I'm sure Charlie Showed you where he used to live, what house he used to live in.
CR: We didn't get that far.
HH: Oh.
AR: Uh, what, what did you call the road when you lived there?
HH: Mine Road.
CR: No, you did not.
HH: What?
CR: Batestown Road, it never was Mine Road.
MS: Yeah, yeah, they never, yeah it was Mine-, uh, Batestown Road.
HH: Cause so many Bateses lived up there.
MS: Yep.
CR: It was never Mine Road, they made that name up.
MS: Yeah, they just did that lately.
HH: Huh. OK, I understand.
MS: But it was always Batestown Road to us.
CR: Correct. When you sent a letter out, what address did you put, what name?
MS: Dumfries.
CR: But, yeah, but Batestown was—
MS: It didn't have a name, not legally.
CR: Batestown Road, y'all didn't put that?
MS: Dumfr-Dumfries.
CR: You didn't put Batestown?
MS: No, you didn't have, uh, uh, numbers and street numbers, or names.
AR: So, they didn't, they didn't deliver—
CR: [Inaudible]
MS: No, you went to the post office. No, no, you had to go to the post office. Wasn't no such things as mail carriers.

AR: Ahh.

CR: But that was back then.

MS: That's what I'm talk-, that's all I know, that's what he's asking about [Laughs].

HH: Now, later, you know, in the years—

MS: Way back.

HH: —There was mail carriers.

MS: Yep.

CR: But they actually had a, whatchamacallit, uh, mail sent from Hickory Ridge and it was, considered that Manassas.

MS: Yeah, I guess so. Yeah.

HH: In Manassas?

CR: Yeah!

MS: Yeah, yeah. But, uh, this wasn't, wasn't last they had done, for the name up here. They just, not too long ago, named this Williams Road.

CR: That's true.

AR: Right.

MS: So it wouldn't be Joplin Road.

CR: Mm-hm.

HH: Yeah.

MS: But we just had Triangle for our address. Your name and-and Triangle.

HH: Or they did six nineteen.

MS: No, just Triangle.

HH: Oh.

AR: Um, do you know when this was that they started naming these roads?

MS: Oh, it's been a while.

HH: About forty years ago maybe.

MS: How much?

HH: About forty years ago, probably, or less.

MS: Probably, maybe not that long.

CR: I don't know, it's been around forty years.

MS: Yeah, cause none of these roads didn't have no names.

CR: They named this one Joplin Road, Johnson Road.

MS: Johnson Road, mm-hm.

CR: But Batestown Road was old.

MS: And Forestburg Lane wasn't, that was all, see that was Joplin Road until they cut it off.

CR: Yeah, well.

AR: So, do you stay in contact with anyone from Batestown still?

MS: Nobody's living no more.

CR: You visit the church.

MS: No, well, the church don't count.

CR: Sure, sure it does.

MS: No it don't. Well how many people are over there now? A handful.
HH: Right.
MS: A handful. About twelve people from around this area.
CR: Yeah, true.
MS: Everybody's from somewhere else, and they look like you, a stranger [Laughs].
CR: Well I'm from Batestown sure enough as you [Laughs].
MS: Well I'm te-, well I'm telling you we don't have that many people over there, it's about that.
OK, the Reids, the Porters, the Bateses—
CR: The Kendalls.
MS: The Kendalls, what Kendall?
CR: Johnny Balls.
MS: Oh you, you talking about at church.
CR: Yeah, church.
HH: Oh, at church.
MS: And the Porters, that's it.
HH: Yeah.
CR: That's it pretty much.
MS: Ain't nobody else, everybody's gone.
CR: Well, that's family, everybody's family.
MS: Yeah, it's family.
AR: Do you still go to Little Union?
MS: Yes, I do. Ain't nowhere else to go.
AR: So the, um, the people who go there, you're saying a lot of them come from—
MS: Other places.
AR: Other places?
MS: Mm-hm.
AR: I see.
MS: Yep.
CR: And she was, like—
MS: I was a clerk for forty-eight—
CR: A clerk for forty-eight years.
AR: Oh.
MS: Forty, let me see, I can't even remember. Forty something, but I don't remember.
AR: A-a clerk you said.
MS: Mm-hm, church clerk.
CR: Would read announcements and stuff.
MS: And minutes and whatever. Then I retired, thank goodness.
CR: You just did it last Sunday.
MS: I know it. I got a phone call [Laughs]. I got a phone call, Chavez's [??] on vacation.
HH: Oh.
MS: I had to call the [Inaudible].

CR: Two whole, two whole announcements!

MS: [Laughs] And I was getting ready to tell him, the announcements, I ain't gonna go up there. I'm not getting up there to read em again. I was gonna tell him hand me, uh, invitation, uh thank you note from her daughter for graduation. I said, "OK, I'll get up and read that." But if it's in the bulletin, it ain't worth reading. Yes indeed, I said, "This is my last time." Everybody said, "Oh, thank you for reading, you have done your job again." I said, "No I'm not." [Laughs]

CR: You did a good one.

MS: Yep.

AR: So, do you know anyone who lives in Batestown currently?

CR: Johnny Balls, that's about it.

HH: Huh? Johnny Balls, that's about it.

MS: That's all.

CR: But I really just know him by name, not know him know him.

MS: Mm-hm. From a kid, growing up. Uh, yeah, everybody's new. Everybody done bought the houses up.

CR: [Inaudible]

MS: Oh yeah, Charles.

CR: Charles, Contee.

MS: There really ain't nobody else up there.

CR: Rene.

MS: Oh yeah, Rene—

CR: Rene's up there.

MS: Yeah. But she's not from there.

AR: So when you drive through Batestown nowadays, um, how would you describe the changes from what you remember as a child?

MS: Well the road by itself is paved and it's smooth riding, and the people drive around like they're the only one on the road, so you gotta be on your side, and that's about it [Laughs].

CR: [Inaudible]

AR: So we, just, well, we talked before about the amount of buildings there, um, what about the growth of-of trees and stuff like that, uh, would you say that there's more or less?

MS: I guess it's a little bit less cause it was, you know, back in the day it was real big in some parts especially up the road a little bit, and that's about, that's about it. And, you know, where I used to live it's really grew up. All you see is trees, the road is gone and everything.

CR: And you lived with Aunt Laura, right?

MS: Mm-hm.

CR: And behind y'all lived [Inaudible] yeah?

MS: Mm-hm.

CR: And behind him, who lived there?

MS: Oh, that was way way way way way back. Almost close to 234.

CR: Where the cemetery's at, there?

MS: Cemetery?

CR: Hardens Hill?

MS: There?
CR: Yes. Right behind him.
MS: Yeah, you could go through, that's where we would walk to go to the cemetery.
CR: OK.
MS: Goes through there. But now I wouldn't—
CR: How far was it—
MS: Huh?
CR: How far was it, that you would call, going from his house to the cemetery?
MS: It wasn't that far cause from where we used to go to pick the berries and stuff, we used to go down in the woods.
CR: Well the cemetery, the cemetery is not far from there.
MS: Yeah, no. We used to go through there, you know, go through there to two, I call it 234.
CR: Oh, OK.
MS: Yeah.
HH: All the [Inaudible]—
MS: Would walk through there, yeah.
CR: Did you know anybody that lived to the left towards that way?
MS: I can't remember, but there was a house back there.
CR: Were they black or white?
MS: Black.
CR: Black?
MS: I can't remember. I don't remember where it was, but it was, you know.
CR: OK, as you're facing the cemetery, then you come up the road, it was to your left.
MS: I don't remember [Laughs]. I was a little kid.
CR: Oh, OK, that, that's OK.
HH: Now you talking about all the people at the poor house?
CR: Yes.
MS: Yeah, we-we would walk, I can-, I can't remember, who used to live right there.
CR: Remember houses all the way up to Washington Reid owned by black people?
MS: No.
CR: Don't remember that?
HH: Margaret Parker.
MS: Oh yeah.
HH: That's one.
CR: Either you do or you don't now.
MS: Well I can't remember. That's been eighty years ago.
CR: Alright. Y'all ever heard of Blood Field?
MS: Blood Field? Hm-mm.
HH: Yeah. Uh huh.
CR: You remember Blood Field?
MS: I don't remember. I don't remember.

HH: That's over in there where Jeanie—

MS: Oh yeah! OK.

HH: Where Jeanie and them lived, right?

[Inaudible]

CR: It used to be back behind, um—

MS: Neabsco.

CR: No, not Neabsco.

HH: Washington Reid.

CR: Yeah, just past Washington Reid, just a little bit past. Alright, the back way of Montclair, over there in the woods.

MS: OK.

CR: That used to be Blood Field. You remember [to Hilda], but you don't remember. Have you heard of it?

MS: Yeah, I heard of it.

HH: But I thought you meant behind, uh, Washington Reid School.

CR: Some of it was down there.

HH: Going down—

CR: Going back up toward Manassas.

HH: Oh.

CR: You're there, you're close, but you're going the wrong way.

MS: [Laughs].

HH: But I don't drive, so.

AR: Is there anything you would like to share, um, about the changes in Batestown, from what you remember.

HH: No, I done told you everything I know. I don't think I—

CR: About the changes, anything about the changes, anything that has happened over the years.

AR: Anything that has changed.

MS: They have the other churches that come on Mine Road now. Two churches, two other churches.

HH: Oh, yeah. Two churches? What two churches?

MS: The house.

CR: Aunt Teet's house. Mister, uh, John Kendall's house, the one that's standing there.

HH: Uncle John Kendall's house?

MS: Well I know it's a lot of cars up there on Sunday.

CR: That's what they said, remember? They use that as a church.

AR: That's a church?

CR: Yeah.

MS: That house. I know there's a whole lot of cars there.

CR: [Inaudible] We took the picture but I didn't tell you about, you're right, but it is a church.

MS: But that's been a church down there.

CR: But, check it out. You'll see them, they don't come until Sunday.

MS: Yeah, they Sunday's there's a lot of cars up there.

CR: You ain't gonna see that now.

HH: [Inaudible]

MS: Somebody said they had bought that for a office building.

CR: It's not no office building.

MS: I don't know.

AR: Hm.

CR: Anything else?

AR: Well, I've pretty much asked all the questions I have. So, if there's anything you would like to, uh, discuss or share with me.

HH: I don't know nothing else [Laughs].

CR: What about the name up there? Would you like to see Batestown restored to it. As, when you grew up it was called Batestown back then. So, you need to know, you should, you should want it to continue to be like that. This road should go right back to what it was, shouldn't it? That's what you're talking about, Batestown, right?

MS: Well it will never be like it was.

HH: No, never.

CR: Well it won't be like it was, but the name could always come back.

MS: Oh yeah. That can change.

CR: I pray to god it don't come back like it was!

HH: [Inaudible]

CR: Otis knew so much history about Batestown.

MS: Yeah.

HH: But he's not here.

CR: They know, he's talked about it. It's in the record.

HH: Oh.

MS: Yep.

AR: Well, if there's, there's nothing else to say then, uh—

HH: Yeah, I can't think of nothing else right now. Charlie will make me think of something [Laughs].

CR: Well, you know, as soon he shuts it off, you'll think about something.

AR: Well, if anything comes to mind you can share it with him or me. But thank you both very much for agreeing to speak with me.

MS: OK

HH: Alright.

End



Mary and Charles Byrd. (Courtesy of Charles Reid)



Mary Byrd



Hilda (Williams) Howard.



Third from the right- Roena (Brown, Williams, Kendall) Reid, mother of Hilda Howard and Charles Reid. This photograph was taken during her birthday party.



Grand Pap (Dan Reid) and Obrian.



Freddie Nash (in wheelchair), Dan Reid (Grand Pap), Mama, Bee, Little Helen (Relatives of Margaret Simmons).



Hilda Howard in the center of the back row and Margaret Simmons on the bottom right.
(Courtesy of Charles Reid)

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Interview with Charles Reid

Charles Reid Biography

“If could’ve picked anywhere to change where I grew up at, I couldn’t do it. That time and place was where I needed to be, in Batestown, and I’m proud, I am so proud. I want the people that donated that church, donated that school to know that I am a proud person from Batestown.”

Charles Reid was born on April 20th, 1950 to Roena Brown Reid and Theodore Reid. Charles has twelve brothers and sisters, including his older sister Hilda Howard. His mother was born in Batestown and was employed as a domestic worker for most of her life. Charles’ father was raised on Hickory Ridge, and he worked at the Cabin Branch Pyrite Mine and worked in construction after the mine closed. Charles grew up in Batestown from 1950 to 1973 but has lived in the area for much of his life. Charles served as a police officer for many years and has been highly recognized for his accomplishments.

Charles’ interview was extensive, and he provided not only a wealth of information and stories, but also many photographs. In his interview, he shared his family genealogy and discussed the many prominent and noteworthy figures that come from Batestown. Charles offered his insight on a wide range of topics, from Little Union Baptist Church and Prince William County Schools, to moonshining and juke joints. He has been very active in the preservation of Batestown history and, along with other community members, would like to see the official name of Mine Road changed to Batestown Road.



Oral History Guidelines for Prince William County

Oral History Interview Agreement

This Interview Agreement is made and entered into by the Interviewer(s):

Adam Rayburn

and the Interviewee(s):

CHARLES REID

Interviewee(s) agrees to participate in one or more interviews with the Interviewer(s) named above. This Agreement relates to any and all materials originating from the interviews, namely notes, tape recordings, video recordings, any transcripts or other written manuscripts prepared from or using the notes, tape recordings and/or video recordings, or any images that might be used during the interview or created during the interview.

In consideration of mutual covenants, conditions, and terms set forth below, the parties hereto hereby agree as follows:

1. Interviewee(s) and Interviewer(s) understand that the copy of the interview in the possession of the interviewer is the property of Prince William County, and will be available in its entirety to researchers and the general public.
2. Interviewee(s) and Interviewers(s) irrevocably assigns to the Prince William County all his or her copyright, title, and interest in this material.
3. By virtue of this assignment, the Prince William County will have the right to use this material for any research, education, advertising, publications, and may be used in print or internet publications, or other purpose.
4. Interviewee(s) acknowledges that he or she will receive no remuneration or compensation for either his or her participation in the interview(s) or for rights assigned hereunder.
5. I understand that any photographs copied will become available to researchers, and may be used for education, advertising, publications, and may be used in print or internet publications. I understand that the Prince William County will properly credit me as the owner of the original photographs. I understand that I waive all title and right, so far as I possess them, to the image(s) described and to any future prints or copies produced from it/them or any profits gained from the sale of prints or other reproductions of these images.

Charles Reid 8-2-19
 Interviewee(s) signature(s) Date

Adam Rayburn 8-2-19
 Interviewer(s) signature(s) Date

Prince William County
 Office of Planning and
 Department of Parks Recreation and Tourism, Historic Preservation Division

Oral History with Charles Reid

Interviewer: Adam Rayburn

Interviewee: Charles Reid

Location: Charles Reid's home at 32329 Singleton Rd, Locust Grove, VA 22508

Date: August 2nd, 2019

Adam Rayburn=AR; Charles Reid=CR

AR: Today is August 2nd, 2019 and my name is Adam Rayburn and I'm an intern working with the Historic Preservation Division on the Batestown oral history project. We are at the home of Charles Reid in Locust Grove, Virginia. Mr. Reid welcome and thank you for agreeing to speak with me today.

CR: Thank you for allowing me to speak with you.

AR: Can you introduce yourself and tell me your name please.

CR: My name is Charles Reid. I'm, uh, a former, uh, resident of Batestown, um, I moved there, from there maybe in 1973 but I grew up there from 1950 to 1973.

AR: And could you spell your name please?

CR: It's Reid, R-E-I-D.

AR: Do you go by any nicknames?

CR: Charlie

AR: Alright, and when were you born?

CR: April the 20th 1950. Four twenty.

AR: And, uh, where were you born?

CR: Uh, Dumfries, it was, uh, in a house called Mabel Gatlen's house.

AR: Mabel—

CR: A few people may remember what that is, where she is.

AR: Could you spell that name?

CR: Mabel Gatlen?

AR: Mm-hm

CR: Gatlen is G-A-T-L-E-N

AR: Alright, and, uh, what are your parents' names?

CR: Uh, Theodore Reid was my father and Roena Reid was my mother.

AR: Do you know when they were born?

CR: Hmm... my father was born, I'm thinking 1903. All I know is Dumfries, I don't know if it was Hickory Ridge or Batestown, probably Hickory Ridge. And my mother was born I want to say, I couldn't swear to it but I think it was like 19, uh, 11, something like that. She was born in, um, Batestown.

AR: And how many siblings do you have?

CR: Oh god, there was thirteen of us at one time.

AR: [Inaudible]

CR: Down to four, four of us now, still living. Um the reason it's thirteen's because my mother was married three times—

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: —Before my father, and, um, she died, you know, married to my father. She was a Williams at one time, and she was a Kendall at one time. But she was born a Porter.

AR: Oh.

CR: Yeah.

AR: So, what comes to mind when you think of Batestown?

CR: Oh God, um, I always thought of it as a place that, um, built character. [Laughs] Because you had to be a special person to live there. And, uh, like I spoke with you earlier, uh, I never knew I was poor until somebody told me. Um, as kids growing up, I thought that was the best place in the world, you know, running crazy into the woods all day long, swimming, um, you could eat whatever you want, you know food but you—Might not be the best food but it's a lot of food, you could eat all day long back and forth. Um, whether it's salt fish or peanut butter and jelly sandwiches or whatever, you know, you could eat, um. Friends that I still, you know, keep in touch with, um, to this day, um, I look back now at some of the things that we did, um, there was like a grown man that used to take us strawberry-, pick strawberries and blackberries, and, uh, he was a distant cousin of mine, his name was Jamie Reid, and, uh, he, uh, I mean, you couldn't do that now, as a, he was like fifty one years old and we were—But he was kind of handicapped and we would go down there with him at all times, and he'd buy us sodas and stuff like that, you know. You'd go to jail probably doing that for kids now, but we did that with him and he always, uh, he would have these spells and stuff. Uh he'd fall out and I felt so bad for him, we'd all grab him and make sure he was alright. He technically, he was a kid with us really, um.

AR: Hm.

CR: We'd do all that. Um, like I said, we'd play cowboys and Indians, we'd play, we didn't just play cowboys and Indians, we would play with bb guns and stuff and I mean you, you could say you shot me all you want but until you stung me with that bb gun it didn't count. And I'm telling you we would go out, oh my god, and just, I don't know why none of us got killed, I really don't. Uh, we would play around the mines, the mines had shut down during that time, and we would play around the shafts, oh my god they would be so scary and they were kind of down- [Charles' phone rings]. Yeah and, um, I remember this one particular time I was with a couple of my, I think it was my friend Wilson, I'm not a hundred percent sure, Wilson Thomas, and this particular time we were, uh, at the mine shaft on top of a hill. It had a slight incline and it was muddy, it had rained, and I got some kind of way, I was sliding down and it's a straight drop, about 100 or 200 feet, and it woulda killed me, and I was sliding and I don't know how I stopped. And I just used my way back up, crawled back up. That scared me, I never went up there ever again, that was pretty traumatic. And, uh, we would play, um, we-we would go up there near the mines, they-they would go down and out towards route 234.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: And we would play in an area, we'd come back the next day and there'd be a twenty-foot sinkhole. These things were, they was just bad. And uh, I would look at the water on the creeks and right by the mine it used to be like Easter egg colors I mean just red, green, yellow, um black, I mean it was, it was, obviously sulfur had poisoned the-the water but we didn't really know it was poisoned. Um, we would go swim in the creek as young kids, everybody did that. Uh, I think it was probably a little section maybe ten, fifteen, feet long and maybe six feet wide that's how we learned to swim, everybody learned to swim on Batestown, everybody could swim no matter where you at, you could swim, and, uh, that water was maybe six foot tops, in a few spots and, uh, we did that during the day. Um, we did our chores, come home you'd wind water, things like that. You know, but, by and large we played sports, uh, we just stayed in the woods I mean it was our, the woods was our playground, you know, in a nutshell, and uh, everybody did that, you know.

AR: So, the woods, was it park land when you were a kid?

CR: Yes.

AR: Did you ever have any problems with playing on the parkland?

CR: No. Um, I would uh, believe it or not we would fish up there in the creeks,

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: We would take, uh, stick pins and bend the tip of them and tie it on to a string and we'd go up there and, believe it or not, there were, uh, bream and sunfish, we could catch them up there, near the damn area. And, uh, we would do that and we didn't really care if somebody saw us or not, but they didn't really have aggressive park rangers to do anything. We would, uh, as I got older, we would go hunting. Sometimes, uh, at night we would lose the dogs and, we were coon hunting, and we'd lose the dogs and uh we'd leave the guns and stuff and go up into the park and find them, bring them back.

AR: Mm-hm

CR: You know, it wasn't illegal or anything it's just that that's what we would-would do, ya know.

AR: Could you tell me about the house that you lived in, in Batestown?

CR: Yes, my mother bought, uh, it was just about the time of, well, at one-, we moved from two other houses on Batestown, uh, one of em was out there on the ballfield, I remember that, that's where my brother was born. So my father and his brothers built this house for my mother that she bought from Mister, uh, John Kendall, she bought, I think it was, three-quarter acre of land, and, uh, I remember it like it was yesterday because I saw them, him and his two other brothers, they built that house totally, with the limber and everything, and I remember the day we went into it we was so happy. Probably we moved in before they got the last shingle in it, but, uh, it was so great to have your own house, you know. My father never, uh, he was a good man, he was a good heart—He was what you would call a gatherer, he was very good about being, um, providing for, for his family, and stuff like that. He worked hard all his life, he knew how to collect food and uh his father who lived in, uh, Hickory Ridge on a seventy-five-acre farm, taught him all the basics of growing food and, uh, slaughtering pigs and all that stuff.

AR: Mm-hm

CR: And, uh, I could tell ya man he, uh, we would kill pigs, do you want to know about that? We-we would kill pigs.

AR: [Laughs] Sure.

CR: And, uh, my-my dad would, first of all he'd go get the irons back from one of those old cars, he'd get

Iron pieces. He'd dig a little hole and he'd put these barrels in the hole and he'd put water in it.

Then we'd start this big old fire, then, uh, the fire'd be running and he'd go and shoot the pig.

Uh, then he said, uh, OK, uh—On one occasion, I think I was about twelve years old, I never paid any attention to him, what he was doing when he killed the pigs because I didn't want to see the pigs get killed.

AR: Hm.

CR: But this one particular time, I thought I was a big boy, I was only about twelve or thirteen, I went and looked and when he shot this pig, then he stuck the knife in his throat, and he cupped his hands and he drunk a little bit of the blood. I about fell out, I said, I said, "This man is no father of mine!" I was like, "Oh my god!" That freaked me out for years, I mean I said, "Wow!" But anyway, then we went and got the, uh, the irons while the pig was bleeding out and they'd put him, hang him up, well they didn't hang him up, they just left him down there. And they put

these, the irons'd be blood red and they'd take a pitch fork and they'd stick it in the iron and put it down through this water and it'd be bubbling, and he did like five or six pieces of-of that iron and that water was so hot that you couldn't touch it. And, uh, he kept this sack ovetop of the barrel so it's stinging and stuff, and he would dip that pig in there and he'd do the back first, and he'd pull that out and dip it back in. Then he'd pull the hair off the back off it. Then he'd say, OK, and he'd put the front down. And we had these mason jars and we would scrape that pig, it would be white, all that hair, everything'd be gone off it. Then he had these three pieces of wood, like that, and he, and he, put-put the, string the pig up, start cutting. And then we'd, uh, have a feast that night. It was good.

AR: Would you save the meat? The leftovers?

CR: Oh yeah, they salted it. Sometimes we would, um, they would salt it mostly during that time cause we kinda had a, finally got a fridgerator and we'd put some of it in the fridgerator, or freezer.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: But it wasn't a real big freezer, you couldn't, cause we-we'd kill three pigs, man, it was nowhere to put all that mean in and stuff. So, we, you'd either salt it or give it to somebody else to hold for us. That's the way they did it, but from what I understand they also salted every piece of it back then when they didn't have electricity or a freezer.

AR: Mm-hm. So, back to the houses, how-how many houses did you live in in Batestown?

CR: Three.

AR: Three different ones?

CR: Three different houses. Um, my experience living in those houses was, uh, they were all— Even though we had a brand-new house, it didn't, it didn't have running water or sewage. We had to build a toilet to go along with it. Um, I never knew what running water was until I was in the sixth grade, when I went to Washington Reid, I mean not sixth grade, first grade. And I saw a spicket, and I saw the water coming out and I couldn't figure out why it come out without being wound, you didn't have to wind it. So, that was, ya know, I know it sounds crazy but I had never seen it before, before that, of all my travels, so. But living, it was, it was decent. We had a wood stove, I had to cut wood, that was part of our chores. All the boys, well, most of the boys cut wood and wound water. I couldn't—Once you did your chores you could go and do anything you wanted, but you better do your chores.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: I'd cut kindling, then I had to cut wood, and sometimes my dad would have one of those saws where he pulls and you pull and you pull.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: He literally ran me down to the ground, man, I mean that thing wore me out, I hated that. But splitting wood, doing the kindling, winding, I would wind water, I used to pray for rain sometimes because my mother was, whenever she wanted to wash we had a big barrel that had a, um, that had, u, rain, it would catch rain water, and if that thing didn't catch no rain water I had to fill that bad boy up and I'm telling you we had a deep well and I know for a fact that that wa-, that w-well water was poisoned because we had a lot of cancer in our family, from that water, to me, I know it was. And I remember as a child drinking that water thinking it tastes so good, but it'd stink, I mean the stink from it, you could smell the sulfur, which is weird. I mean I don't know nobody that could drink sulfur and say it was good for them, so.

AR: Hm. So the-the three houses you lived in, you said you lived in a house first, and then you, you had, uh, your family had a house built, right?

CR: Yes.

AR: And then was there a third one after that, or?

CR: No. The third one was the house.

AR: Alright.

CR: Uh, out of all these houses, like I said, I didn't know I was poor until somebody told me. The first two houses, well the first houses that I can remember you probably didn't even have steps to get into em, and you had to just step up into it

AR: Mm-hm

CR: And I've got pictures of that, uh, back then, how we used to live. And the other house, my father built a, like a small step portion of a porch on, uh, so it was kind of upgraded.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: But it was only a two-bedroom house. Uh, we had a living room, dining room, a small kitchen. And he-he built a portion where we used that as a room too, but it was like you'd bring your clothes and you'd come in out of the cold you'd put your coat and stuff, it wasn't considered a, um, a room, but we made it into a room, and put a couch in there some kind of way. Uh, he dug a half portion of the basement, he never did finish it, but that half, he-, my mother would go down and do our laundry, cook some things, she'd cook rolls and stuff like that, she was famous for cooking rolls. And we had, uh, chickens, hogs, um, chickens and hogs—Oh, I will say this about my father I remember one time we were, uh, it was near thanksgiving and my-my mother was getting anxious because we didn't have a turkey or anything and he went hunting and come to find out he shot this turkey, he didn't kill it but the turkey I heard this god awful noise, somebody was coming down the road, and he had it on his back and that thing was flopping and I said uh, well momma said get some water we gonna, we gonna clean that turkey, and my father said we're not cleaning this turkey and she said well we gotta have a turkey! But he said I don't care, we're not killing this turkey, so, he said, "I've got other plans for it." And uh, my mother was some kind of hot that night, so, uh, next thing I know he was out in the woods and two days before thanksgiving he brought another turkey, he took that turkey that was injured and he had a wire, he had its legs wired together where it couldn't fly and he would take a stake, a steel stake, and take it out into the woods and he'd stand off maybe twenty, twenty-five yards and be quiet, and the turkey would call another turkey to it. I kid you not, he killed eleven turkeys like that. That's the truth, I've never seen a man do that in my life ever.

AR: Hm!

CR: And, uh, so then he got tired of doing it and then he just killed the turkey. But we had turkey for thanksgiving that year. We had more turkey, we had like a lot of turkey.

AR: What did you do with all the turkeys?

CR: We ate em!

AR: Killed em all and then—

CR: Oh yeah, we cooked, yeah.

AR: Alright [Laughs].

CR: But I never, I'll never ever forget that. With the way he did that, I mean I would have never had visioned to think that you could do that. So that's what I said, his father prepared him a lot for, uh, providing for his family.

AR: So, you said that, um, you had, uh, thirteen siblings?

CR: I did.

AR: Is that including you?

CR: Including me.

AR: Alright. Um, did they all live together or some of them had grown up and moved out?

CR: Uh. Most of em, I think, uh, one died at child birth, he was like [Inaudible]. My brother, Warren, he was living in DC but he'd come back sometimes, stay. My sister Thelma, she was married, Hilda was married by that time, and I think Joyce was married, and Otis was coming, they were coming back and forth and they ended up getting married. So, oh my god, in that two-bedroom house at one time it was my father, my mother, Annie, Joe, me, uh, my brother Otis, before he died, he stayed there. Thirteen, um, it could have been nine people sometimes, cause there was two bedrooms. But they would sleep on a cot, stuff like that. There was a lot of people. We had bunk beds and everything.

AR: So you had lots of company?

CR: Lots of company, lots of company.

AR: And you had a lot of siblings to play with?

CR: Always, always. There was always a lot of people. My mother always demanded that we, uh, as her kids, certain times we had to be around her, she made us. Like her birthday, you gotta be there, no ifs ands about it, you had to be there. And if she says she wanted you to go to church, you had to be there, you know.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: She, she didn't demand a whole lot, but those two days, two or three days, she made sure that you were there.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: And, like I said, when I was twenty-three years old, I'd been smoking for twenty-three years, not twenty years, three years, and she smoked, but she saw me smoking and she pushed that cigarette right in my face, boy I swear. I was like, wha-, eh, I was twenty-three years old, a child, it didn't matter to her, she didn't want me to smoke. That was the type of parenting you had, they-they wanted you to do right, no matter what.

AR: Did ya quit smoking after that?

CR: Nah [Laughs]. Not then, twenty years later.

AR: [Laughs] Um, could you tell me about where you went to school?

AR: Originally, I went to Washington Reid school till I was in sixth grade, and, um, I remember a lot about that. Um, I remember, uh, the first grade at Washington Reid I, uh, I got introduced—Cause my mother, um, she-she grew up with, uh, um, Wilmer Porter and this particular summer Wilmer Porter's wife, he married Mary Porter, she was from, a school teacher from Farmville, and she had originally taught at Cabin Branch, and after Cabin Branch closed, she taught at Washington Reid and Washington Reid was somewhat new. And I knew she was gonna be my teacher, so I was like "Oh wow," I said, "My cousin's wife's gonna be the teacher." So I said, "I ain't gonna have to do anything." So Miss Walker, Miss Porter had a thing about if you talked she'd have somebody else go get a switch, and that one person would always get a good switch and tear your butt up. Well this particular day I was just, maybe a, just maybe a month into the class, I was talking and it didn't dawn on me that she wanted me to get a switch for me! But she telled me to go get a switch, so I said, "Uh oh." So I went deep in the woods and got the best switch I could and god as my witness. I got back and then she called me back up and lit me up, man, and that really put me in perspective to be a better student in the school at that time. And I-I didn't mess up at all, I mean I went to—Washington Reid was an eye opener to me because, to me, those teachers, not-not a couple, but Miss Porter, she beat me because I deserved to be beat. A lot of those teachers, they'd beat you with sticks, I mean anything buddy.

I saw, I saw a kid get hit with a bag of nickels. I mean the principal hit him with a bag of nickels. I mean that boy was never right again. He would have went to jail for that, I'm serious.

AR: Oh yeah, I bet.

CR: He tore that boy up.

AR: It's definitely against the law now.

CR: Oh without a doubt! And, uh, but, um, I learned a lot, I saw parents fighting the teachers and stuff, I mean it was, it was brutal, it was, it was bad. And so, from there, I graduated from sixth grade to the seventh grade and I went as a seventh grader, I was going to high school with grown men from Jennie Dean. And we would get on the bus at daybreak, dark, go all over the eastern part of Prince William County, all the way up Joplin road, Quantico, Woodbridge, Dale City area, and then we'd go, by that time, then we'd get there maybe eight o'clock. And, uh, we stayed until three thirty. Go back, we did the same thing, we'd always be the last people off the bus and it was dark. I did that in the seventh and eighth grade and, uh, the ninth, after I— OK, I got up, I graduated to the eighth grade, I passed the eighth grade. I made up my mind then, I either quit school or go somewhere else, but I was not going back to Jennie Dean driving that far. I mean I couldn't do sports because my father never owned a car in his life. I had nobody to drive me up there. There were very few friends [Inaudible]. So I said I either quit school— And this one particular day in the summer time somebody said, why don't we go to, uh, they mentioned to go to Graham Park. So I said, "I'm going to Graham Park." So I walked through the [Inaudible] hall and I said, "Hey, uh, what kind of paperwork do I need to fill out, uh, not, my parents need to fill out for me to attend school here?" They said, "OK, you need to give em this and this." So I went, I didn't even go to my parents, I went and filled everything out, signed their names everywhere. And, uh, next day I gave it to em, and next thing I know a school bus, uh, route letter came to us "We'll be picking your son up at such and such time." My mom said, "OK, but you're not quitting school." So she was OK with it, and my dad, he didn't care. So from there I went to Garfield and, uh, by that time, uh, actually Graham Park had integrated, had integrated, and it was just like the second year of integration. Uh, I learned how to play basketball. I went to Garfield and I played basketball and I played against a lot of guys that used to go to Jennie Dean, which I considered friends, and, uh, at the time I was most proud of-of, uh, we beat them. Uh, the guys, me and a couple other guys that couldn't play on the team in Jennie Dean. Jennie Dean won the black championship and the whole team came over to Osment [??] Park, and we couldn't play, but we beat them. So, uh, we beat em twice and I was so happy for that. And senior year we won the championship, the first ever championship for Garfield. And I was, uh, I was pretty good, I was the first trained varsity player in sophomore all the way through.

AR: So if you hadn't have gone to Garfield, you probably would have missed out—

CR: I would have been out of school, probably in jail. But, uh, I'd made up my mind that, even as an eight year old-, eighth grader, I was not going back—I-it wasn't anything against Jennie Dean, I enjoyed Jennie Dean, it was the time you had to go all the way up there, and it was, it was brutal on me riding that bus. And I'm, and I'm not the only person that ever thought like that, you know, I mean, there was a lot of people dropped out of school simply because it was too far to drive, it really was. I mean the school system in Prince William County sucked back then, it really did. You had probably the worst school supplies, or worst books, everything was second down, hand-me-downs, you know, so. We had, we had very good teachers, they were very aggressive. Some of the teachers, uh, left from old all black schools and would come over to, uh, to the uh, uh, to the white schools, and one of em was, uh, a gentleman that, uh, another

man that, that I consider made a mark on my life, uh, Howard Goldstein. He was a science teacher at Jennie Dean and he came over to Garfield. And as a sophomore I was first playing basketball and, uh, I didn't think about, ba—I just knew that I was, I was the big dog, I played basketball and, uh, I didn't put any effort into his class, I didn't, and I'll honestly sit here and tell you that, uh, I was not shocked when he failed me for the semester. Well, I got failed another semester and they kick ya off the team if you don't do it, so. I recall the coach coming to talk to him and he stood firm, he said no, he said, "Education comes before sports." And I hated him for that. I got kicked off the team and I was doing very good, man, even as a sophomore. So, I, for a long time I didn't like him at school and I blamed him for my faults, and he always told me, "You did it to yourself." And I did. And, uh, I, before I got out of school, I thanked him for making me a better person, and, um, I see him now a lot in life and I thanked him, I do. I tell, I tease people like my wife, I say that's the man that failed me, I say, but I failed myself. And he—he was an exceptionally good teacher and I consider him a friend to this day. He's a good man.

AR: So are there any interesting stories from your childhood that you might want to share, or people, um, that you remember from your childhood.

CR: Oh yeah. Um, people that I grew up with and that I know, uh, people like, uh—Well first of all, everybody that lived, that I can recall, worked hard there. They, they had good, not "great" jobs but the jobs that they had, they worked them the best they could to their abilities.

AR: Good work ethic.

CR: Good work ethics, yeah. On man, Mister Dewitt Bates, I-I'll never forget him, he was, to me he was a mentor that, to me, but he didn't know he was.

AR: Hm.

CR: Uh, at church, uh, we would always, all the kids would go up there and they would remember him as the superintendent of the Sunday school. Whenever we had Christmas plays, we always got a little bag with an apple and a orange a couple pieces of candy and we'd think that was huge back then. And, we, we, uh, we all looked up to him because he opened those doors for many a year, for our kids, when we were kids, you know. And, uh, when I finally gave my life to god, I-I was a young man, I think around nineteen, twenty years, twenty maybe twenty-two years old, I joined the church and he was very detrimental in keeping me straight. Uh, I stayed there for a good little while. I was an usher and, what else did I do, sung in the choir and I won't say singing in the choir, but I was up there.

AR: [Laughs]

CR: And, uh, I-I really was forward with him, I would talk to him a lot and I'm telling ya, that man, uh, meant a lot to me. Um, whenever he would pray it was like you'd catch that man's—He was like electricity, honest to god, he was, he was special in my life, he was a very special man. And even my brother was special, but not like him. Um, a lot of people, uh, that I didn't realize things that they were doing, um, because it was so secluded, you know, uh, things didn't mean a lot to me, like who's the first one who did this or did that. But, uh, Batestown has such a rich history that, uh, people just-just don't have a clue that one of the first black police officers up in Bates-, uh, female black police officers was my cousin Claudene Porter, at the time. She-she

AR: In the county or?

CR: In Prince William County, yes. She was one of the first. And Claudine was, uh, so missed that, uh—She married a gentleman from, uh, uh, Bedford, Virginia, and she went there with him and, uh, she had retired from Prince William County and come to find out she joined down there and she was one of the first , uh, officers down there, one of the first black female to join down

there. So, uh, like I said her-her dad was proud and everybody was proud, cause she was my cousin and they were, she-she had the porter background. So she was the first, instrumental, and I went to school with her, and I was proud of her, uh. Claudine, you know, can look back at forty years of law enforcement as a female. That's a whole lot of people that can't say that ever. Uh, Calvin Johnson. I went to school with Calvin. Uh, we grew up together, go in the woods, you know, shooting bb guns at each other, playing football, um. At Calvin's funeral, I talked, uh, talked to his, uh, uncle, telling him about how he, uh, played football, uh, toughest football captain that played was up by, uh, Batestown. Cause I'm telling you, we-we would, we could care less if you scored a touchdown, it was whoever hit ya the hardest, you know, knock ya out or whatever. Guys would come to work with combat boots on from—I mean it was rough, it was brutal out there. So, everything he got from Jennie Dean and Garfield from football, uh, was a piece of cake. Uh, Calvin was the star of the Garfield football team when he, when he was a senior. They were undefeated, they only got scored on twice and those two scores were a result of the second string of third string next to nothing, it was like, I remember this guy's first touchdown got scored on him. They fumbled the ball, third string, fumbled the ball at the one-yard line. And there was a guy named Tommy Mills [??] from Manassas.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: He took four times from that one-yard line. He finally got in.

AR: hm.

CR: So, that was Calvin playing football. Uh, Calvin was so good, uh, he got, uh, a scholarship to Delaware State. He-he went to a lot of other places, but Delaware State wanted him. And Calvin was a junior, uh, at, Delaware State, he beat this guy named Steve Davis, uh, out at the first string. Steve Davis was a senior. Steve Davis went on to play six years for the Pittsburgh Steelers. And Calvin, beat him out, he sat on the bench while Calvin played. Calvin got like all these yards, a thousand yards, touchdowns, ya know.

AR: Hm.

CR: He ended up getting married after about two years and, uh, he went in the military and, uh, had two kids, and he come back to the county and, uh, he tried to go out for the, uh, Redskins. A couple guys said, "you can do it." Well, he said that, uh, he should have prepared more, gotten in better shape. But things just didn't work out for him. So, the Prince William County police came and a guy named Eddie Stallworth suggested that Calvin Johnson would be an excellent first black police officer for the county. And that's what Calvin became, and not only was he the first black police officer, he was the first black police chief in the town of Dumfries. He's probably the first black police chief in the county as well.

AR: Hm.

CR: So, uh, that's another person that, uh, grew up in, uh, that I can remember very good. Eddie Stallworth, I mentioned his name, he was, uh, a gentleman, uh, he wasn't originally from Batestown, but he lived up there forty something years, so he's been there long enough to be from Batestown as far as I'm concerned. Uh, he was a, considered a community activist but, uh, he also was the first black Quantico Police officer. [Coughs] Excuse me. He, uh, he did a whole lot in the community, um. I've known him to build a, uh—He-he was, uh, instrumental in doing the Jennie Dean museum, uh, which was awesome, I mean, not a whole lot of people did that, but, uh, I-I-I was, uh, told that he did that, and I was shown that he did a lot of that work without a lot of people's knowledge. Eddie was a like that, like I said, he was, uh, he would, uh, he was one of the first, um, uh, black owned taxi cab services in Manassas, he did that, uh. He was just well known, and, um, uh, as far as doing the museum, I think that was the greatest thing he ever

did, you know, cause it kept everybody in the whole county aware of something that was, that we had pride in.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: Um, he, uh, like I said he joined the police department and, um, he was a, uh, NAACP president at one time. I think he was one of the first from Batestown.

AR: President, huh?

CR: Yes, of the whole county. He held that title for quite a while. Um, also my cousin, um, Curtis Porter, he was an NAACP president of the whole county as well—

AR: Oh, what was his name?

CR: —For several years. Curtis Porter.

AR: Curtis.

CR: Uh, we had, um, uh, one of my cousins, Wilmer Porter, he was one of the first black elected officials, he was *the* first black elected official after reconstruction in Virginia. Um, Wilmer was special, like I said, he married, uh, a school teacher, uh, Mary Porter, who was basically, they named a school after her because, uh, her, she was one of four that desegregated the, uh, the-the white school system here in the county. And, uh, like I said, they named the school after her, so she was a special person. And she beat me good, so she was special at that too, hah!

AR: I guess so, hm.

CR: And, uh, the second thing, Wilmer, uh—Let-let me step back before I talk about his being elected as an official. [Coughs] Excuse me. He and his brothers, and his sister, Juanita, opened what was called a Porter Brother's Garage, like a black owned business. And far as I'm concerned, it was one of the only black owned businesses that did good in Northern Virginia, like they did they'd stay open as long as they were making money. Um, they, uh, gave a reputation as solid workers. They did good work, and people recognized em. Uh, Wilmer would walk, you know, even, you know, the white population in Dumfries, they respected him. He lived down there on, he moved from Batestown down to that area, which he started the business. And he, uh, was very influential with a lot of people that told him to run for m-, uh, for council. And so he did, and um, it wasn't, and he won very easily, and he ran for probably, he was on it for like twenty or thirty years. And, uh, eventually he got his daughter she's ran, and she's Gwen, and she's run for, uh, council. And his son in law, Clyde, he ran for council. His neighbor, uh, Claude Thomas, you remember him—

AR: Yeah.

CR: —He ran for council and won, and then, you know, and a lot of, it's, you're talking about, oh god, hundreds of years of dedication, at least a hundred year. I mean they, cause he had thirty, and Claude, he did it for a little while, and Clyde, he had thirty, almost forty years. There's a story that one time they, uh, the town hall needed somebody to sign the loan and he signed the loan for it. That was unheard of, a black man doing that, you know. And they, justifiably so they built a, uh, they named a building after, uh, after Wilmer Porter and they named a—

AR: What building?

CR: The town hall, the Dumfries town hall, it was named after him. Uh, they named a police department after Calvin Johnson for his dedication. I mean he-he spent twenty-seven years there. Um, Wilmer also has a street named after him as well. Um, any, uh, these are all people that I grew up with or know personally. Um, and like I said, you can go all over Prince William County, but right here in this little spot of Batestown, it's so much history, like I said, I didn't go back farther where I talked about the Coles or the, uh, the Kendalls and things that they did with,

uh, with Batestown. Um, it, uh, it behooves people and-and to me, in Dumfries, to find out the gold mine of wealth of information that they got here, they really don't do anything with it other than have a little black history thing, they'll call somebody to talk and something like that.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: But the history that's here is like unbelievable. I have tried everything I know to do to stir it up and, um, I've interviewed Miss Archie, who was a school teacher at Cabin Branch and she'd talk a lot about things like that. I don't feel comfortable doing that, there's more better qualified people than me to do that, but I didn't want it to go. I knew she was getting up in age and I wanted to make sure something was said and remembered by her. So, um, my biggest thing with history is that it should be recognized then and there before it's too late. And, like I said, I could talk about Miss, um, Miss, um, oh god, uh, what was her name? She was a, uh, um, a midwife, and, uh, golly what was her name?

AR: Was it Annie something?

CR: Yes, Miss Annie, Miss Annie Williams. She was a midwife for so many years down there, and a lot of people know, that was something that, uh, was-was considered a necessity.

Remember when I was saying when people did certain things?

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: You know, she would do it, and she would always go with the doctors and—Me, take me for a prime example. We didn't know what being born in a hospital was. I got born at home. I what they would call a Dr. Ferlazzo baby. That's the thing in Dumfries, people know who you were by either Dr. Kline or Dr. Ferlazzo baby.

AR: [Laughs]

CR: And I was a Ferlazzo baby.

AR: I see.

CR: People in Dumfries know exactly what I'm talking about. It's-it's, uh, just that, but, uh, they moved into those areas and, uh, you know, uh, just like, um, you and me could probably go into Batestown. Uh, I-I can just, I'm a stop right there cause there are other things I want to talk about.

AR: Alright. Hm. Um, you mentioned a few things about, um, um, the, uh, segregated schools and a lot of, uh, prominent Batestown community members that were the first to-to, you know, um, be council members and police officers and things like that. Um, what can you tell me about, uh, segregation in Batestown and the surrounding community?

CR: Well, um, segregation was a part of life. Um, we accepted it, we went to black schools, we accepted that. I never knew there was a such thing as a white school. All I knew as a young child growing up was school. I thought everybody was black, I didn't know [Laughs]. So, uh, even when we went to the park it was segregated. I'll tell you a little story about something that happened in the park. Um, there was, uh—We would always play ball in the park on Easter, and this particular Easter some guys from somewhere, I think Fairfax, they came down and, uh, I-I will say with a, with a hundred percent accuracy, black and white relationships were pretty good around here, uh, and, uh, in Batestown and in Dumfries. Uh, but this particular incident, these people, uh, I think they pushed black people a little too much and it didn't work out too good for them. A lot of people got beat up and cut and stabbed and everything. And, uh, they had a big ole fight over there and it was, uh, it was ugly. Police came and everything and from that point on, after that happened, there were no more black-black bathrooms, no more white bathrooms. It was bathrooms. It was little things like that, and it was sad that it took that to make people realize it. And, but th-the, that issue with the park having a certain time whites could play

baseball and a certain time blacks could play baseball, that what festered on people's minds, I guess, which caused the whole thing, the ruckus. But it's in the newspaper, uh, that happened.

AR: And when was this?

CR: It was a while back. It should be, the park should have it.

AR: Oh, alright.

CR: Yeah. Oh, they have it, it's in there, and I think I found it on the website once. But, uh, that was an ugly time in the area back then. But Batestown, I'll tell anybody who wanna to hear it, when people'd run out of corn liquor in, uh, Cherry Hill, they'd come to Batestown and reup, whatever. And they had no problem going house to house, and letting people know it. Corn liquor was sold between both of them like nothing.

AR: So—

CR: What was your question?

AR: [Laughs] it was a bout segregation.

CR: OK, yeah, and-and, uh, we, uh—

AR: So, race didn't matter when people needed their corn liquor, huh? [Laughs]

CR: No, race was never, not an issue. I've always had a, uh, soft spot in my heart for the Marine Corps because as a child I remember they used to bring this old big bus, not a big bus, a big truck would come up the road and, we would, we would wait, we knew it was close to Christmas and that was our Christmas. They would have a bag that said boy on it or said girl, and they would throw you the bag and you'd hope you got a boy [Laughs]. And the toys, some of them were good toys and some of them were broke, but they were toys. And, uh, we would get those and, uh, to my knowledge, every time I seen them come up the road they were white men that did it, I never saw any black men that would throw the toys. Uh, but they did that and-and I thank the lord for em. That, a lot of those, if they ever hear, if any of them ever did it, I'm letting them know now, that was my Christmas, a many time. Because me and my brother, I mean we would go outside and play, we didn't have toys, we had bottles, we'd take soda bottles and make an impression in the snow and just follow em, you know, slide em down. But I swear to god toys were, I mean, you just didn't have it, you know.

AR: Yeah.

CR: You know, so, I-I did do that, um, I can honestly say whenever I went to Graham Park, I had no problems with anybody. Um, I walked around with a chip on my shoulder, I would solve any problem, but I didn't have any. I, like I said, I played sports, and that broke a lot of the ice with people. Uh, I heard some smart remarks sometimes, to me, but, uh, I never had a racial problem until I became a cop, I'll tell you the truth. Honest to god truth. That was a whole new ball game, you know. And, uh, but, uh, I've, uh, had a couple incidents when I played basketball going to different schools, but I didn't have a problem per say. Um, when I went to Garfield, we were kind of, sports wise, we were accepted pretty good. I mean, uh, from GAR:, from Garth, Graham Park to Garfield, I went with the same group that I went to school with, so we already knew each other a year in advance. But, uh, I can honestly say, um, anybody knew, um, I look at the land that was taken for the park and for Quantico Marine Corps Base, you can almost go to this, to, right now in this day and age, and the same people's land that my grandfather talked, same people their families take, the land was taken from their families as well. All of the people, the Amidons, the McIntires, they're all still here, all of em, they're still here, so, you know. And then, you know, the bottom line is when everybody's poor, there is no racism. It's just like, uh, you know, everybody in a manhole, you know, for, eh, for a war, ain't no racism. Might be after the war.

AR: A foxhole?

CR: A foxhole, yeah.

AR: Hm. [Inaudible] So were there, what kind of community centers were there in Batestown, or places where people would gather and spend time together?

CR: Well, there, uh, oh god. Juke joints, they always had what's called juke, I called em juke joints. I went to em [Laughs]. I don't think you—There's very few people, I mean they can say they didn't go as an adult, but when they were younger everybody went to places. We used to have a place called the basement, 808 club, Disco, we called this place disco, I went there. And, uh, uh, I enjoyed it, I mean, when-when you figure you work hard, you know—Cause my father always told me, he-he would go to a house where they sold liquor and he'd sit there and get, take some drinks, then he'd come home, you know, if he had all his money, hah. But, uh, that's what he did. And, uh, he said, he told me, he said, "I work hard all my life. I can't go down to a regular bar and drink, so I go up here and I know I'm OK right here."

AR: So you said he can't go to a regular bar, because?

CR: Correct, they just—I-it, they didn't have a sign that'd say, "white's only," but it was, it was an accepted custom that you weren't to go there, you know what I'm saying? So that's, you know—And some people could say that they went there and that's good for them, but I don't recall a whole lot of it, so. Uh, I remember as a young boy, and I know the guy and I ended up working with the guy in the sheriff's department, which is weird, uh, I went to get a haircut, his name was Hal, people will know who I'm talking about, and, uh, I liked him, we were good friends, and, uh, I came in there to get a haircut and he was standing outside of, in Dumfries, and I made up my mind, and I said, "I'm gonna go to a white barber. I'm not going to the black barber that's further down the street." So I told him, I said, "I'm gonna get a haircut." He said, "Come and listen here, son," he said, uh, "You Annie Reid's boy?" I said, "Yes sir, that's my grandmother." So he said, uh, "Well, I don't think this a good place for you to get a haircut. You might wanna go further on, uh, up in Joplin somewhere." So I didn't, I was like eight or nine years old, I said, "Nah, I'm not gonna, I'm not gonna push it." I said, "I'm eight years old." So I went on about my business. But that happened and, uh, when we met, like I said I became a sheriff, a deputy sheriff, and, uh, we talked, he never mentioned it. I know he knew who I was cause I knew who he was, you know, but we never said anything about it. And I didn't hold it against him, you know, I don't think he would not have given me a haircut, I think he thought it was best that I didn't get myself involved in something like that, so, that happened.

AR: Hm.

CR: But, uh, overall, I can honestly say race relations could have been a hell of a lot worse than what they were, you know. Were they great, eh, not really, but people got along. My mom, my dad, all, uh, you know, I've got white in my family, my grandfather was a white man, so, w-what can I say [Laughs], you know. It is what it is, so, you know, but, uh.

AR: So, the juke joints that you mentioned, were these in people's homes or were they—

CR: Some of em, some of em were in the basements of their homes or in their homes, period.

Uh, there was this one place, um, it was called the beer joint, beer garden, whatever you wanna call it. I remember as a little boy I saw my cousin shoot a guy on the, on the, it was just clear as day. We were looking out, we would always, uh, on Fridays and Saturday nights we would look at the beer joint from our window and we could see, there wasn't a whole lot of trees, but we could see down, right on the front steps of it, and this particular night we were looking and this guy sh-, my cousin shot this guy, killed him. And, uh, I used to go to the same place and, uh,

I'm not gonna tell ya a incident that happened with me. It wasn't, I didn't shoot nobody or nothing! [Laughs]

AR: OK! [Laughs]

CR: But it kind of woke me up.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: Well, I'm a tell I-I'll tell it, I'll tell the truth. I remem-remember one night, uh, I'd been playing ball and I got drunk and, uh, I mean I was laying in my car and it was on a slight incline, and I remember it was an old Chevy Vega, and I knocked it out of gear and it backed up and blocked the road. Well, not that many people would come up the road, but this was like on a Saturday night, and Sunday morning the church people trying to get, I heard the horns and I looked up and I said, "Oh my god!"

AR: [Laughter]

CR: I couldn't start that thing, it was in third gear and I finally got it up and I looked at all the people, there was like five cars facing back.

AR: [Laughter]

CR: I looked and I said, "I will never, I'm not drinking no more." I quit right then and there. I quit, I did. I said, "I'm going to church." That's true. I was wide open man, I said, "This is crazy." They all looked at me and they were like shaking they heads.

AR: [Laughter] "It's Sunday morning, what are you doing."

CR: I'm serious, I'm like ahh! I knew better. But-but the juke joints up there, oh my god, I mean, even—It was a party place, I'm telling ya. It, weekends that place transformed. A lot of people came up there, they would, they would do, uh, um—As a, my daddy told me, he said when he was young they would build a plank dance floor, out in the woods and they'd go out there and dance and stuff, he said they used to do it all the time, he said. He said Batestown, man, he said if anybody said they didn't party up there is telling a lie. He said they all do it, everybody. And I know a lot of people, man, that partied up there and it just, I mean, when you'd play softball, baseball, it was like a little city up there. People just came, you know, they'd sell beer, they'd sell chicken dinners, whatever, make money. And, uh, we had, I'm a tell ya the truth, I had fun up there, I really had fun. And, uh, I can recall a motorcycle club had a little juke joint, well it wasn't a little, it was a big one, and they used to have people come all the way from Pennsylvania down there.

AR: So, this motorcycle club, did it have a name?

CR: Yeah. It was soul on something, Soul on Wheels, something. But they had to change the name because they got in trouble. [Laughs]

AR: Trouble?

CR: With the real, the real Soul on Wheels! [Laughs]

AR: Oh! [Laughs]

CR: They made them change their name, yep. But they were, they weren't like a biker club, they were just friendly riders.

AR: Yeah.

CR: This other place was, the guys were serious bikers. They didn't play. So, but they had parties up there, oh my god. It was something. It was fun, I'm not gonna tell a lie, it was fun up there.

AR: So, the beer garden you mentioned, when you were growing up, was that one of the only real businesses in Batestown?

CR: It wasn't a business cause they didn't have a business license, it was just some place that they put a, uh, juke box in it, sold some beer out of it, some potato chips or whatever—

AR: Little grocery things.

CR: Yeah, little grocery things, cause my brother used to operate it and I wait for him to fall asleep from drinking and I'd steal stuff [Laughs]. Me and my buddy! So [Coughs] we did stuff like that and, um.

AR: Could you tell me a little bit about Little Union Baptist Church?

CR: Yes, um, Little Union at one time, um, we met, um, in the big church, at one time it was a smaller church, uh, it was one of three buildings, um, the first—

AR: Do you remember the first building?

CR: I did.

AR: Oh, wow.

CR: I went to church at the first building, I was a, I went to Sunday school mostly, I would go to big meetings and stuff like that, homecoming. Uh, I remember as a little boy, my mom gave me a quarter at one time, it was the first quarter, she said go to the, said go walk up to church. I really wanted that quarter from it, and I'd go walk the power line and I'd stay there until church was over, until Sunday school was over and I had my quarter, and I'd keep that quarter, man. I'd go buy some candy or something. But, uh, back then, um, the things that I remember mostly about was when my grandmother died. She, uh, well, not even before she died. She used to, um, [Coughs] sit there, and she'd always make sure you sit by her, and she'd give you little pieces of mint and stuff, and she, she sung in the choir and she, she, uh, to me she wasn't treated right for it to be a church. They didn't treat her right at all because I guess she came from, uh, Mine, uh, Hickory Ridge over there to the church, but she didn't let that stop her from going there. And, uh, the day that she died, um, back then they used to have your body in church, they'd keep it up all night long, you'd have to have your body there, and my father and, uh, his brothers and all of em, they'd stay there all night long. And I fe-, I was up there with them and, uh, I-I was in a church pew, and there was no more than ten pews in that place, I thought, and, uh, I fell asleep and I woke back up and I, it looked like she was looking at me from the casket. And I tell ya, I think about that all the time, and, uh, I looked around and there wasn't nobody in the church but me, I was by myself. And I thought I was dreaming until, uh, my uncle came in. He peeped in the door and then he walked back and I was like "I'm out of here!" So I went behind him. But that, that was kind of scary.

AR: Hm.

CR: And, uh, the-the big Sundays that they had church there, um, well it was, it was just unbelievable. The people would eat outside, like they said. The church was so small, the basement was so small, you couldn't get all the people down there. And, um, my father had a lot of sisters with kids and stuff, they would come from DC, and that's just our family, so I know other families would come down. That little church would be packed and most of the people would be outside while church service is going on, and I know for a fact I seen some of them had their trunks up and they weren't selling Kool-Aid.

AR: [Laughs]

CR: I'm sure they were selling something else. But that's what they did back then. Um, there was, um, it was, it was an interesting time to be going to the churches, uh, they were like family oriented, where the families pretty much run those churches. I mean like their family. If they wanted to have a meeting, then they'd have a meeting at the family's, not at the church. You know, they did stuff like that and, uh, I-I'll refer back to, uh, Mr. Dewitt Bates, uh, he was such a

good man. The way he treated everybody, um, when he was up in the school, Sunday school, he-he was, he deserved a lot of the credit for keeping us, uh, all the kids in the community, you know, doing stuff, uh. I remember that man, every church, every-every Christmas time he'd get that harmonica, he'd play a church song. He was very good at it; I mean even when he was a custodian at schools, he would play it for the kids. I mean he was a loved man; he was just a good man. You know, you don't have to be anything special to be a good person, and he was that person. I think, uh, you know his family didn't realize how great that man was. I mean I was friends with both his sons, they were good men as well. But, uh, that Little Union probably was real close because it was just a few families that went there. The Porters, Thomases, Reids, Kendalls, Chapmans, uh so it was just a few families. Like I said, we, uh, you know, we were small back then, you know, and everybody knew everybody. You couldn't go up that road with, and I'm telling you, you better not go up that road and start something and not know somebody, you'd get hurt up in that place, man, I'm serious. Batestown was not a place to go up there if you didn't know people. I'm serious. And I've seen a many person get hurt up there. You know, you didn't go up there selling woof tickets. You better know what you knew.

AR: Selling what tickets?

CR: Woof tickets. You know, starting something and you can't back it up.

AR: Oh, I see, heh.

CR: But the church, um, the preachers, I think one preacher, I got it right in a book here, he would come to Mo-, uh, Mom's house or, or Aunt Blanche's and, uh, they'd cook dinners for em. And I'm sure Miss Ora Bates done did it. Mister Dewitt Bates done did it. But I remember when my momma did it. I remember when she cooked this steak. I never saw a steak. I was fatuate-, infatuated with it. She had this grease in the skillet and I was standing over there watching it and I was like, "Wow, this's a steak!" and it wasn't pork, it was a steak. And a piece of it bubbled up and hit me right on the head. It burned my, not-not my eye, but it burnt right there, I mean. I got away from that skillet then.

AR: [Laughs]

CR: Then the second one, uh, the second Little Union was the one when they'd march down, uh, that was when Reverend Green was there and, uh, I love that man. Um, they-they built that one and my brother was a chairman of the Deacon Board then. And I'm gonna add that back then they had some praying deacons. They could pray, they'd get on their knees and they'd pray, they prayed for ya, they'd come visit ya and do things for ya. Um, you'd be proud to be saying that you were a part of that church. Uh, not so much now, things have changed. I think it's education dictates that, that religion is not so much as praying now or something, I don't know, but something's missing. I can't put my finger on it. But in the, back then it was so different, you know. You, you saw a deacon, it meant something to be a deacon back then. These guys walked like they were almost preachers. They acted like they were preachers, I mean they knew their stuff, they knew the bible, you know. You couldn't just walk up to them and say, "Hey, could you do this for me." They'd tell you why they could do it or couldn't do it, you know. Um, this was in the old, second Little Union. Um, we had good times there, that's when I had joined the church and, uh, I was in the choir, and I had to stop drinking [laughs], so. I enjoyed myself there, uh, the third church got built. Now I started off in there and, uh, I drifted away till I got married and got into, uh, other churches. You know, I never stopped going to church, never. Even when I wasn't going to Little Union, I've always went to other churches even to this day now. I'm back as a member of Little Union, uh, I love Little Union Church, I'll always be there, it'll always be a part, somewhere in my heart is Little Union, cause I, like I said, you

know, to go up that road every day, it makes me feel so good, but I, you know, I relive, every time I go up there, my childhood. I mean I think about the things that I've done and I, it's just a fabulous, a fabulous lifestyle to live, growing up there like that.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: The churches, um, to me, the churches are in the community but they're not part of community, you know what I'm saying. Because people come from outside the community and fill that church up and they don't know the history of-of Batestown. They don't have a clue about Batestown. They just come from, people come from, now from Arizona, Utah, wherever, you know, Alabama. They don't know anything about Batestown, they just go to church and serve God, which is their right, but there's a history of going up that road, you know, and, uh, a lot of em just don't know what it took to, you know, maintain churches or whatever. Um, I will say this, John and Mary Thomas were the ones that donated the land for the church. They were good people. I can't say nothing about John and May Thomas. My grandfather's mother died when he was a child, he was like one or two years old, and they raised him. That's what I, my grandfather had a connection with them, how I don't know, to this day I don't know, but they raised him at the Thomas house by the Thomas Store. And when he got married, I guess, I, that makes-makes me understand why he was able to accumulate all of the land and everything in the way that he did, because of their background, the background of them, because John and Mary were educated, smart people. Um, it took me a long time to realize that, that they had raised him because when I was doing genealogy, I found that he was adopted, which I didn't know, and I found that they raised him. And they have, uh, you know, given a lot. I heard somebody say that there used to be so many houses up there, now, not too many up there now in Batestown.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: It's just depressing.

AR: Yeah. So, uh, about your parents, what did they do for a living?

CR: My mother was sometimes a housewife, but the majority of the time she was a domestic worker. She would go to Mount Vernon [??], clean houses for a living. She did that a many a year. My father worked construction almost all of his life. Uh, he, originally his first job, I guess, was working at the pyrite mine.

AR: Hm.

CR: Uh, I looked at the thing and it didn't have his name on it because when he worked there his brother got killed, and, uh then my, then my father, grandfather worked there—

AR: His brother who?

CR: His brother, uh, uh, Morris got killed, the one in the second grave, beside his father.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: Morris got killed in py-, in, uh, in the mine. And so, when my daddy broke his leg at the pyrite mine, uh, his father told him he couldn't work there no more. He said, "I lost one son, and I'm not gonna lose another." And he couldn't, so, he said that probably helped him expand his- his life. He said he went up to Pennsylvania, he said he worked up there in the mine, but his father didn't know it.

AR: [Laughs].

CR: And he said he played ball up there, then he came back here and married my mother. And, uh, he started working at, uh, building, uh, oh the sub-, it was the subdivision in Dumfries. Uh, I know the name and I'll think of it later. But anyway, it was part of a, um, uh, place for the people that lived, that were gonna work at the, the, uh, power plant at Possum Point, but they had to build a place for them to live. It was at Howard [??] Street in Dumfries, people will know

what I'm talking about. Anyway, um, he worked down there for many a year at, uh, Possum Point. And then he worked up to Fort Belvoir, he worked up there where they were building buildings up there. And in the last, later part of his life he worked for a guy named John Speck, I remember that, Mister Speck, I love that man. They would buy, they would buy a case of beer every Friday when they were working construction. And that's probably the most money my father ever made of any job, but, you know. And they'd sit there and drink they're beer every night [Inaudible]. But, uh, I remember that man, uh, for the longest time, even when I was an adult. I would see him and he'd always ask me, "How's your daddy doing?"

AR: Hm.

CR: So I really respected that man. He treated my father real good. That's about jobs.

AR: Yeah. So, you said your father never owned a car?

CR: Never owned a car in his life.

AR: How would he get to and from his work?

CR: He would hitchhike or catch a ride. But I, but I know for an absolute fact, you know, I, when I was given a scholarship to Delaware State the guy says, you know, "You can come up here" I said, "How am I gonna get there? How am I gonna get home? My dad doesn't even own a car." I'm like, that stopped me from going to college, a lot of it.

AR: Yeah.

CR: And then I used that as a crutch, you know. But, being realistic, Delaware is a long way to ride, so.

AR: Yeah, um, so were there other people in Batestown that worked at Possum Point that he would ride with?

CR: Oh yeah, oh yeah. Uh—

AR: Did a lot of people in the area work there as well?

CR: Oh yeah. I can't remember all of their names. I'm trying to think, who, was it Ted Davis?

AR: Yeah, just other—

CR: Huh?

AR: Just other people in the community?

CR: Just other community, yeah, there was a lot of people.

AR: Alright, and—

CR: Or he'd walk. He would walk.

AR: Yeah.

CR: Oh yeah, I mean, we would catch fish—

AR: It's a hike, but it's doable.

CR: Oh, it's a hike. We-we, I-I remember like yesterday, we-we would go fishing for herring and walk about two miles with a big old tub of herring, and I mean that was a long hard walk with almost two hundred pounds of herring. I mean Jesus Christ. I hated hearing that he wanted to go fishing. I could tell ya some things about him. He was so, just the way he did things, I couldn't think of things. Uh, he would, he would go fishing for, not fishing, they called it gigging for frogs.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: And he would take the old newspapers and he'd put oil in the center of the old newspapers and he'd take these wire things, and he'd roll em up and tighten them up like the wire things that you put on bread.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: And, uh, he'd put them up, and he had about five or six of them and he couldn't afford a flashlight or nothing, but he'd light them like torches, he had a big old paddle, he'd get in the boat, go down to Possum Point. He had half of, half of, uh, uh, a whatchamacallit of frog legs.

AR: [Laughs]

CR: I mean, he was good, I mean he, I gave that man credit, he could do some things that just blew my mind. He was always just fiddling with stuff, you know, but I couldn't do that.

AR: So, when you, when, when your father and your mother worked, did, um, were they home when you were home from school, or would they work late into the night or anything like that?

CR: Uh, well they usually got home about the same time.

AR: Alright.

CR: I don't recall either one having a night time.

AR: Alright.

CR: That, or being late. Sometimes my daddy would work construction with Mr. Speck and they would come in a little late, if they had a deadline for a job or something.

AR: So, did you and your family usually, um, eat dinner together?

CR: Yes. Um, it was one of, one of the things that my mother, [Laughs] you either eat it together, or you won't eat anything [Laughs]! You better be there on time for dinner, you know. Um, uh, I would cut the wood, then, uh, maybe time to play a little basketball with a couple of my buddies and stuff. And, uh, she'd, you could, this is kind of funny, but it, even though you're in the country, you could hear, they, you could hear everybody's mother yell [Laughs]. And you better come through! When they say come and get dinner, that—I don't care how tight the game is, they come to eat.

AR: You gotta eat!

CR: Yeah, they gonna eat! Food was no joke, buddy [Laughs].

AR: So you kept pigs and chickens, did you also have a garden?

CR: Yes, we did. Uh, oh my god, my daddy would grow string beans, potatoes, corn, onions, uh, always had pigs, always had to slaughter the pigs, uh, go out in the woods, find ac-acorns for em, feed em them. And, uh, I dreaded when we had to, he-he'd cut the testicles to make, that's what you'd do to make the pigs big, and, uh, I used to hate that. Man, the mud and stuff [Laughs], those pigs, they hated that.

AR: Yeah, I can imagine.

CR: But, uh, I loved it when we fried, fried em up! And he made, uh, I'll tell ya something else, he made homemade wine, oh my god, he could make some good wine. Him and his buddy, uh, Jim Davis. Jim Davis probably made the best homemade wine of anybody in Batestown. But, my daddy was pretty good, but Jim Davis was the best at that.

AR: Hm. What would they use? Like, uh, grapes, or?

CR: Grapes, dandelion wine was usually my daddy's best, Jim Davis would do parsley wine, that was some of the best.

AR: Parsley?

CR: Yeah, oh yeah. And, uh, anything, they'd make wine out of anything, you know.

AR: And did ya ever, um, you already mentioned coon hunting, but did you ever forage for food, like, uh, berries or anything like that?

CR: Yeah, we'd get that, we would pick strawberries, blackberries, pears [Laughs]!

AR: Pears, yeah [Laughs].

CR: Yeah, we would always, my father would take me back to his home site in the park, we would take sacks and pick pears, anything, apples up there, whatever.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: But yeah, we foraged, if you want to call it foraged. My mom would, uh, go get stuff out of the woods, I don't know what it was, but whenever you got sick, she'd use it. I guess they call it roots or whatever you want to call it. But it was, uh, like I'd say, you didn't go to the doctor too much up there. I walked around with a broken leg for two years, I mean two weeks before they finally took me to the doctor. Doctor Ferlazzo got mad at her and told her, said, "I don't care if you've got the money or not, bring that boy!" [Laughs] He says, "Look, his leg is purple!" I mean, I, two weeks, that ain't no joke. I couldn't even walk, yeah, so.

AR: So you said she knew, um, she could identify some medicinal plants, and, uh—

CR: Oh yeah, oh yeah. I had a stump on my heel one time, if you've heard that term. And she went up in the woods and got some kind of onion and some kind of weed and then mixed it together with some Vaseline and put it in the sock and it went down.

AR: Hm.

CR: However, my mom was very creative. I had chicken pox one time, and I'll never forget it till the day I die, she put me under this tree and let this chicken jump over my head and that was supposedly gonna cure me. Well, I'm cured today, but it didn't cure me then! It was a slow cure [Laughs]! It didn't cure me at all, it just, nature, nature just—She knew I wouldn't have died from it, but she knew I was itching, I remember it was itchy, itchy darn thing. And, uh, she just thought it would take care of itself.

AR: Hm.

CR: And it did. But I think she thought the chicken jumping over the tree saved me, man, I'm like, "OK," so.

AR: But, do you know if that and the plants that she would use, if that's stuff that she would learn from older people, things that have been passed down, or?

CR: I'm sure it was, I'm sure it was because, you know. They did, like I said, I don't know where they got a lot of that stuff from, but, you know. We would use whatever we thought would work.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: If you were sick and there was something out in the woods, like a pine or a [Inaudible] or something, they would boil it. They didn't have money to buy anything else, you know. Did that stuff work half the time? No. But it was something to get your mind off your problem, you know.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: And you would drink some of that nasty stuff and, you know, if you got like a headache, that's the last thing you're worrying about [Laughs] you'd be throwing up.

AR: [Laughs] Jeez.

CR: It was nasty, that stuff. But, uh.

AR: So, do you think many people still keep gardens up in Batestown or people who are from Batestown. Well, from Batestown, some of em still do. I plan on doing one next year myself. The reason I haven't done it these last couple of years is cause the deer eat everything down here, but I've got this stuff to take care of that now. And, uh, yeah, I've always, even when I moved out from my parents', I always had a garden. And my father would help me with it. He just loved the fact that I had a garden.

AR: Hm.

CR: You know, that was the most important thing to him, that I did that, so. I used to grow big, big old potatoes, green beans, and tomatoes and stuff like that. Um, I haven't done it, like I said, in a while because I didn't have the area to do it. This is something I can do it in.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: And me and my brother, we talked about it, we might try to do it together one year because we both miss it. I mean there's nothing like fresh cooked food that's growing off the vine. You know, you're missing that now because everything is in a can.

AR: Hm.

CR: And that's probably what stopped people from doing it, but I grew up with eating peaches and stuff like that, preserved, and it tastes different than this stuff that they grow now, I mean. I wouldn't eat out of a can, it's not the same, not the same at all.

AR: So, your grandparents, um, I know you mentioned before that your grandmother was from Hickory Ridge, right?

CR: Mm-hm.

AR: Um, do you know, could you tell me a little more about where your grandparents are from?

CR: My grandmother, OK, on my father's side—

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: —His grandmother, I mean his mother's name was Annie Reid. Annie Reid, uh, married Joe Reid when she was probably eighteen, and the family, uh, Annie's mother was Isabella and Joseph Johnson. Annie had eighteen brothers and sisters out of that batch and—

AR: Wow.

CR: —Uh, Joe, uh, Joseph, Joseph Reid, uh, was adopted, like I said, by John and Mary Thomas, he was married to Annie Reid. His mother's name was Anne and his father's name was Henry. Uh, Henry died in the [Inaudible], Anne died probably in a short time, almost giving birth to him. So, he was about one, one or two years old after she died, and John and Mary Thomas raised him. On my mother's side her-her father's name was Eddie Brown and her mother's name was Jane Porter. Uh, Jane's, uh, oh my god, Jane's mother was, oh lord, um, I done forgot just that quick. Jane and, uh, well, anyway my, when-when Jane died giving birth to my mother. And she was raised by my mom's brother, uh, brother's family. Which Aunt Laura and John Porter raised her. So she was raised with Wilmer Porter, Juanita Porter, Madie [??] Porter, all the Porters, just like she was part of the family, so that's why she was so close to most of em [Coughs]. So, and—

AR: And that was on Batestown, then?

CR: Yes. And, uh, like I said, her mother's mother was, uh, golly I can't think of it.

AR: [Laughs]

CR: Anyway, if you give me a second, I can finally think of it. But, um, they all between Stafford county and Prince William County, that's where they all come from. It wasn't very far. Like I said, the family bible's 140 years old, that, uh, Isabella and John, I mean Isabella and, uh, uh, lord I'm forgetting everybody's name. Isabella and, uh, John gave-gave my mo-, grandmother, and, so. That's, uh, that's a lot of people.

AR: Yeah.

CR: They had a lot of, both large families from both sides. Uh, my grandfather on my daddy's side, I can't go back to far on that cause that's the white side and it-it stops with Anne, I don't know a whole lot about that, um. That, uh, my older aunts, they wouldn't talk too much about it at all, um. My m-, uh, my dad's side with my grandmother, Annie Reid, they would always talk about Isabella and Joseph Johnson. Uh, he had, he was such a sharp dresser, they said he was a,

he was a sharp man, and his father married, uh, well, uh was also named Joe Johnson, and he had, uh, had him by a Hill, lady named Hill and she was single, they weren't married. That was back in the 1800s, 1812 or 10. But, uh, cut this off for a second.

Note: Recording is briefly paused as Charles takes a restroom break and recovers a document about his genealogy.

CR: But, uh, getting back to my mother's mother, Jane, Jane's mother was Caroline, and she's buried over in Neabsco cemetery, both of em. And Caroline m-, Caroline was a Taylor and she married Charles Porter, and Charles was, uh, Porter was, hi-his father was Thornton porter and also married a Caroline Green. And Green, Caroline's parents was Louis Taylor and Mae Taylor. So I can go all the way back to probably about the early 1800s, probably 1803, stuff like that.

AR: Um, can you tell me what you remember about your grandparents that were—

CR: Oh my god, my grandmother, Annie Reid, is the only one I can remember, the rest of them died.

AR: Yeah.

CR: She, uh, she used to, oh god, she could cook a whole heap of food, that woman could, it was so good. She always, she never believed in TV or electricity, she never had electricity, she would al—Even though her kids got old enough to buy it for her, she lived in, she—She would always talk about her land being taken from her when she was, uh, a young, young woman and her husband had died, cause my grandfather, Joe Reid, is still buried in Prince William Forest Park along with his son, Morris. She would, uh, my father would make me walk through the park to her house and cut wood for her once a week, it was one of my duties. And I mean it was, eh, I didn't like it, but I did-did what my father said. And she would cook food for me. And I had friends that I went to school with and she would never allow me to go and play with them, ever. And I was like, "Wow!" So, uh, she would sit there, like I said, oil lamps, I was sitting on this little cot, and she would be reading her bible. She's a very very religious woman, very religious. Uh, there's no doubt in my mind that she's got Native American in her because she would chant, she would do chants, I-I don't know how to explain it, but she would be doing chanting and she would, like, uh, I don't know what kind of prayers she did, but it was just strange. It wasn't nothing we did in church!

AR: Interesting.

CR: So, I would watch her, and, uh, she would always talk about her husband, and, uh, there's no doubt in my mind that she loved that man with every breath in her body. She talked, she would tell me sometimes about how he took care of her and the kids and how great a man he was, and, uh, I-I'm gonna tell ya a quick story she was telling me about, they-they had a big farm, it was seventy-five acres, like I said, and she always told me about how they would have crops and get ready to take the crops in, and said this one woman that lived around, down past them, they didn't have a whole lot. And so she would tell them, said, "Come on, if you can get, you know, I'll give you a couple bushels of corn if you and the kids want to help me take this side of the field and pluck the corn." So, said she'd stand out there waiting for em, she said they didn't really need them to do it, but she wanted to help them.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: Up there in, uh, up in Hickory Ridge, you had to borrow for things, if you didn't have nothing, you sold a piece of your cow, or a piece of your hog to get it. Or, like if they didn't have the money to do anything, they had to go work for it. They just knew you would—And they would do it because they wouldn't be embarrassed, they didn't want a handout. So anyway,

she said she-she saw her poke, they were in the buggy, and the kids, there were like six kids, said she had a piece of pork rind in her mouth, and she took it out of her mouth and rubbed it around the kids mouth, make it look like they just finished eating. And she said, said if they want something to eat, when they got up to her, she said they said, “No.” They looked at her mom and said, “No, we just ate.” Something like that. She said she put em out in the corn fields and she watched them kids pulled the corn and they’d be eating that green corn, they were [Inaudible] they were eating the crap outta that corn. But, uh, I said, “Wow,” that’s a, I mean those stories she used to tell me all the time and I wish to god I would have paid attention to a lot of stuff. But she said the horses, um, they had a creek behind, I mean the-the land that they had was perfect, it was perfect, you couldn’t get better land. It had a creek behind the, uh, house, and she said sometime, that the, uh, my granddaddy would probably, the horses would be so hot that they’d be falling down and stuff, he said they’d try to get em cooled off in the creek. They said that they would cut the ice, brought the ice, put it in the, under the ground with sawdust and they had ice in July.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: And, uh, my daddy told me that they did that a lot. But, uh, I just, I’ll always remember her stories, how she would chant at night, and how her heart was so broken. She used to always, she always told me, she said they took me kicking off that, she said, “I ain’t give em nothing.” she said, “I never gave em nothing.” said, “They, they gave me the money, but I didn’t, I didn’t take it” she said, “first, but I wasn’t, but I had to take it,” she said, “I didn’t want to take it, so I had to find a place to live.” So.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: You know, I listened to her and it hurt. She died of a broken heart, there ain’t no doubt in my mind. I mean, during that time, in order to get to the park, you had to pay to get over there and stuff like that. They’ve come a long way as far as recognizing people—

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: Having graves over there and going over there, you know, to see their people. And, uh, uh.

AR: She, once she lost that land, she moved to Batestown, right?

CR: No.

AR: No?

CR: She moved to a little place in, on Joplin Road.

AR: OH.

CR: She bought a little three-quarter acre land from that whole, she went from seventy-, she downsized as they say, from seventy-five to three quarter of a acre [Laughs].

AR: And that’s why you had to cut through the park to get to her home?

CR: Exactly. Yep, cut through that park.

AR: Was there a path you would take?

CR: Oh yeah, oh yeah. And, except one time I got, oh god, I was so scared, I was only like twelve or thirteen and, uh, this one particular time I was going, I, my daddy said go over there and cut the wood, it’s going to snow. So I went over there, cause this is back during the time we used to have deep snows. Anyway, I got that wood cut and everything, and she told me, said, “Why don’t you stay here, cause it’s gonna get started.” It started snowing when I was cutting, you know, just a little bit. So I said, “Naw.” I got in those woods, man, and it started *really* snowing. Next thing I know I was walking up, I was not in the path, I don’t know where I was, but I, something said if you get to the stream, follow the stream back there. I was lost for a long—It was getting dark. That was the scarest I’ve ever been in that park! Finally I got to

this fire road and you could either go this way, but I also had to go to another path and I, and I knew that path was covered up so I said, “Nope,” and I took this fire road and then I walked up mine road, then on to my house.

AR: Hm!

CR: That was scary.

AR: [Laughs]

CR: That was very scary. I remember things like that.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: And, uh, occasionally they’ll come to me. And, uh, I loved her to death, I did, I really loved that woman.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: And, uh, and, uh, it was just sad that stuff like that had to happen to her. I mean, I, I put myself in her shoes, you know, I said, “What if my husband or wife has died, and they’re the bread winner of my family and I’m left here with kids.” And she had, uh, three children, uh, three kids that had, uh, that her son left her with, who died in the mine, so.

AR: Hmm.

CR: So she was, she was in a bad way. She was in a bad way. And, uh, unfortunately, you know, I have to gauge stuff like that, sometimes I have to write that out of my mind whenever the park wants me to help them do something, or if I can assist them doing something, you know.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: You know, at one time I would never do it, but now, you know, I don’t, I don’t want to say I’ve grown up, I want to say my-my mindset is where I’m gonna always present my family’s history first and foremost, and if it means helping them, I’ll help em, I don’t, I don’t mind doing that. But, uh, I’ll never forget it, ever. Ever.

AR: Yeah, you can’t.

CR: Nope.

AR: Did people ever speak much about the history of Batestown?

CR: Actually the, [Sighs] yeah, yes and no. The history was not a good history, um. It was always bad news, you know, and you didn’t want to remember bad news. It was, I, you know people’d get shot and stabbed up there, and stuff like that, that was the history, and killed, you know, and nobody wanted to know that. Um, my father always told me certain things, um, and-and, uh, where we lived at, there was an old wagon trail that went right beside our house straight to the pyrite mine. I didn’t know that until later, I mean, I was a grown man and he just happened to be matter-of-fact and tell me that. I was like, “All my life I’ve lived here and you haven’t told me that?” [Laughs] You know. And, uh, he said, “Yeah, I thought you knew.” I said, “No, I never knew that.” So he would tell me stuff about that, uh, he would tell me how they used to travel. He said he would come, he said his family would travel from where they lived on Hickory Ridge over to Mine Road, or to Batestown Road, turn right there and go up that road to Blood Field, he said it would go straight into Blood Field. I said, well, where’s Blood Field? He said it’s where Montclair is today at the very second, the second entrance, right across from there, he said that’s where Blood Field used to be. He said they got that name honestly, he said there’d be blood flying. He said there’d be fights and stuff up there.

AR: Hm.

CR: He said it was a dangerous place. He said, he said his father knew people up there. And, uh, they’d also take the buggies and go over to Neabsco for church, and, uh, back then he says, when he was a young whipper-snapper. But he said maybe one or two years before he, you

know, before he, you know, they started going to Little Union. But he said his mother and father was going there. And he told me, like I said, about building the planks, and they would go out in the woods and party and stuff like that. But by and large there really wasn't a whole lot of history, except in your family, you talked about your family history.

AR: Mm-hm, family history.

CR: Uh, it's like the Coles, they got the big land and everything, but nobody knew the Coles that well except for themselves and them, but nobody knew they had all that land, except for them, they knew that. Thornton Kendall, nobody knew who Thornton Kendall was except the Kendalls.

AR: Interesting.

CR: It's very interesting. Now, they did talk about Mister John Kendall being a, uh, driving the, um, the Dinkey, the locomotive, which is, you know, something towards history. And they talked about, uh, some of the teachers that taught up, to, uh, Cabin Branch. And I do remember the boy that died up there, they talked a little bit about that. Uh, not real god-awful back in the distance.

AR: Not the-the distant history, I guess.

CR: Yeah, the distant history, no, not too many people knew it. And, [Inaudible] it's sad stuff that happens up there, and they kind of wipe it out their mind, they don't want to remember. It's like that guy, Chief, a lot of people don't want to talk about that. That man's gone, dead, somewhere, you know.

AR: Um, I know you mentioned a lot of, um, you already mentioned a lot of, um, community members from Batestown who were, uh, very successful and, um, were there any other community members that you hadn't mentioned?

CR: I'm sure there is, uh.

AR: You spoke about, uh, Wilmer Porter, right?

CR: Yeah, I talked about Wilmer and Mary. Like I said, Wilmer was different, the way my mother always said, cause she said she grew up with him. But he, he had the help of his brothers and his wife to establish that, uh, the business. And I think once he established that business and was successful, and because he could depend on his sisters and his brothers to be trustworthy, and, uh, they had his back at all times. So, he said, uh, or she said that she knew it was gonna be a good business. And as a child I worked down there, I mean, I mean everybody could come down there. We could clean up cars or stuff like that and make a dollar or two. Everybody had the opportunity, and you were proud to go down there knowing that this guy, somebody kin to you that-that owned this, you know.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: And there's, like I said, uh, Wilmer, I don't think he knew exactly how powerful he was, cause he didn't use it as power. He had a lot of power, he had a lot of influence with the white population in Dumfries. He could have been the mayor just like that [Snaps his fingers] had he wanted to, but he only wanted to be the vice mayor, you know. I think he feared the lack of education maybe, you know, could have stopped him, because he only had like a six-year education, I think, from Cabin Branch.

AR: Cabin Branch.

CR: Ya know, that was like graduation back then, ya know. Uh, I could, you know, I will say Dumfries has opened their arms to the black community, you know, and recognized the things that we've done down there. You know, when they've talked about him, they've talked about Mary Porter, they've talked about Calvin, uh, Calvin Johnson. And, uh, i-it makes you feel good

that they, their, they don't have to do that, but they do that. And, uh, I think-think they, uh, they're appreciative of what we've done, you know. We've come from, we've come from a hard pool up there in Batestown, I mean, we didn't always have the best of anything, and we still made the best of what we had up there.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: You know, there was a guy I grew up with, Levi Thomas. This-this boy was brilliant. He played football at Jennie Dean and he graduated at Jennie Dean with my sister. And, uh, he ended up getting a scholarship to a black, which is unheard of, to a black college and he eventually become a engineer. And the guy was brilliant. And I never, I mean, I just never thought, looked at him, I thought, I looked at him, me and him fought over, then we'd take it back. Me and his brother, his brother Wilson, were the best of friends.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: We were so bad, we were, we just bad. We would look at him like he was somebody that would be boring, you didn't want to be around him or nothing like that. But Levi was brilliant, and, uh, I can't think of, I can't say it enough that, uh, his kids, if they read this right here, their father was an awesome, smart man. And, uh, he was a gentleman at all times. Even when we'd do bad dirt against him—

AR: [Laughs]

CR: —He was still a gentleman. But Wilson and I, oh my god, we-we did some dirt.

AR: Hm!

CR: We were bad kids, we were bad. We shot, we shot the bus, uh, the church bus, radiator up, it leaked. Yeah, we were bad, we were bad. Uh, I almost hung his brother, we were bad! Um, used to find corn, uh, whiskey stills in the woods and we would, uh, all that stuff.

AR: So, you lived in Batestown from 1950 to '73, right?

CR: Probably longer than that, maybe '76. We lived in this little trailer, my mother always had a little trailer so if any of her kids got married she'd let us live in the trailer, where we didn't have to pay anything except maybe help her on electricity.

AR: Hm.

CR: And, uh, I, like I said, I lived there and it was just, it's just different, you know, living with your parents and stuff.

AR: [Laughs]

CR: We were right next to em.

AR: Yeah.

CR: You know, as long as you lived near em you-you depended on them. It was bad, well it was good and it was bad, so.

AR: So the whole time you lived there you would, lived on your parents' property basically?

CR: Yes, mostly.

AR: Um, do you know what, uh, happened to the property?

CR: My parents' property?

AR: Yeah.

CR: Oh, my niece sold it, uh, and, um, she sold it, she didn't ask any family members anything, she just up and sold it. She hadn't invested one nickel into the property, but she sold it and made money off of it, big money.

AR: Hm.

CR: And, uh, it was kinda, it-it was very depressing for everybody in the family because we thought that would be one place that would not be sold to the park or something and now it's— When I go to church, I look over there, it's depressing, big time.

AR: I can understand that.

CR: Yeah! And I-I know the sacrifice my father made, my mom made, for the few dollars she paid to get the land, and the money that they, you know, I mean, I used to sit and walk up there with them and watch em slave on that house, building that thing stick after stick, you know.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: It is what it is.

AR: So it just, um, she just put it up on the market and—

CR: Just like that.

AR: —Somebody bought it?

CR: Yup. They didn't call one person to see if they'd want it or nothing. And there was several people that wanted to buy it and she didn't even return calls.

AR: That's too bad.

CR: It's very sad.

AR: So, how old were you when you left?

CR: I think around twenty-three, twenty-four.

AR: And where did you move?

CR: Uh, Mills Gardens.

AR: Where's that at?

CR: It's an apartment complex in Triangle.

AR: Oh, I see.

CR: I wasn't far away.

AR: And, uh, was there any particular reason why you left?

CR: No, I just-just—

AR: Just getting out on your own.

CR: Getting out on my own, and, uh, I don't know, my mother wanted me to get, uh, move. That was not a permanent place to live, just to help ya, and I saved up a few dollars. But eventually I moved back to Mine Road. I lived in two other houses up there.

AR: Hm. Did ya?

CR: So I've always been close to my mother.

AR: Did you, um, rent those houses?

CR: I did.

AR: Oh. Did you know the people you were renting from.

CR: Uhh, yes-yes, yes I did.

AR: So they were community members?

CR: One wasn't, he had just bought the land from somebody else. He just wanted to rent it out for a few days, a few years. I think stayed up there around three or four years. And, uh, that was when I had nice gardens and stuff, when I was living up there.

AR: Hm.

CR: That's when my father would come up, help me and stuff, and it was just like I was still being home.

AR: Yeah.

CR: That's true, I think I moved back and probably I stayed nine or ten years.

AR: Hm.

CR: So, like I said, I didn't go to far.

AR: Didn't go to far, huh?

CR: Nah.

AR: Do you stay in contact with any people from the community? I know that's kind of a silly question to ask since you've introduced me to everyone I've interviewed basically.

CR: Yeah, I've kind of, people know what I'm about, as far as history goes, you know. I-I don't claim to be the most knowledgeable person on Batestown, not by one inch, but I am knowledgeable about the Reid family. I know family, I know that.

AR: Like you said, people know—

CR: Know their own, yeah, know their families, yeah. I'm, I'm pretty well—And I like to think I'm an approachable person that you can talk to, and that helps to. You know, I'm, I've never tried to rub people the wrong way. You know, to ask something, if it's something dumb, you know, it's just, it's just a question, it doesn't hurt you, ya know. In history there are no dumb questions.

AR: So, are you still a, um, member of Little Union.

CR: Yes.

AR: Do you go there every Sunday or just when you can?

CR: No. When I can. My mother in law, she had a bad stroke and she stayed here for about a couple months with us, and my wife is from Charlotte County. So, uh, in order to—On the weekend we'll go down, and sometimes pick her up, take her to church, or just go to church with, where she's gonna be at. So I would be remiss if I didn't go and, you know, try to, you know—My wife's mother is eighty one years old. She has a mother, I-I lost my mom when I was twenty-three and I don't ever want her to have that feeling, so I will go wherever it takes to make my wife happy. And-and Little Union, I love Little Union and I'll always be there for Little Union, but right now it's, I'm split between my wife's church and this church. And I'm, and I, ac-actually I love going down there because it reminds, it's a small church, it reminds me of the old Little Union.

AR: The old Little Union.

CR: Yeah. I mean it's kinda hard to explain to you, but, uh, yeah, it's a nice church. The preacher down there, I love him to death. His name is John [Inaudible] and they call him John Crackhead, which is wrong!

AR: [Laughs] That's not right.

CR: And they say it wrong all the time. I laugh every time I think about it. But he's a good man, a very good honest to god preacher, I'm telling ya, he's awesome. [Inaudible] that's what I think about him. He's a good man.

AR: So, when you go back to Batestown, um, you know, if you're going to Little Union, or for any other reason that you're in the area, what do you think about Batestown now?

CR: Well, it's slowly evaporating. It-it's gonna be something that people are gonna look at and say, "Wow, I never knew that this was a kind of community." And I know that change is inavail-, what's the word?

AR: Inevitable?

CR: Inevitable. I know that for a fact, however, eh, when I was growing up I used to watch my friends cross, you know, all my friends would move out and never come back, I mean never come back. Cause, to me, I looked at it like it wasn't that hard of a life, but they looked at it like it was hard, they hated it. And, uh, I remember all of my-my best friends, girls that I knew, went to school with, and, uh, the grandmother had raised a lot of em and there was nobody over there,

she by herself. And, uh, I would talk to her and I was like, “Wow, where has all this time gone?” You know.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: And, uh, it was like, what do you say? You—you can’t say nothing, I mean, she’s by herself and I’m like, other than one or two’d come back and see her for a little bit, but she was by herself for a long time, I was like, man. But I-I giver her props because she raised all of em. And, uh, I respected her.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: She would beat me, I’d get a beating at home. That’s the truth, I mean, it was that kind of, well, uh—It’s hard to explain because it was the way we grew up, they wanted you to be good, you know. And I think, I’m telling ya, they’ll, the words of, uh, “It takes a community to raise a child,” that is so true, man, I mean I experienced it. You know, they always wanted you to do good. When Calvin was the first black cop, everybody up there wanted him to do good, not one person talked bad about him. Uh, when Claudine become the first black female cop, or when Wilmer was the first black elected official after Reconstruction, everybody wanted them to do good. And I dare to say it’s not just them, my niece, Margaret Ann was the first, uh, nurse, black nurse from Batestown that I know of, and she-she did very well. And, uh, i-it’s just professional people, it’s just like a community that-that doesn’t have a background of having professional people, but they are there. Uh, school teachers, a lot of em up there, Gwen Porter’s a school teacher, Clyde Washington’s not from up there, but he’s a school teachers, his son is from Batestown, Rene Pippins, I went to school with her, she was a school teacher. Um, just like, uh, what’ the other lady, ah, there’s like three or four of em. I mean those are professional jobs that are gonna affect, police and teachers, are jobs that’s gonna affect people whenever they come into contact with them, forever, you know, so. That’s what, I mean, they-they built a lot of cops up there, a lot of military.

AR: Mm-hm

CR: My best friend, he ended up retiring from the Air Force, his brother retired from the Air Force. My best-best friend married a young lady from Taiwan, she joined the military and retired from the Air Force. And he’s living good now, and I’m a give him props, Wilson Thomas, if he listens to this, that’s my best friend, and I thought we were brothers, we were that close. Um, like I said, the place, you either, how do I say this, you either were military, a professional, or an aspect like a teacher or a police officer, or you went to jail. No in-betweens [Laughs], pretty much. And I’ll also say something else, when World War II came, they had, uh, a lot of people had Batestown, uh, um, backgrounds that went-went to the military, I mean went to World War II. A lot of, I mean a lot of, I had a lot of uncles that fought in World War I. They weren’t from Batestown, but they were from right around the area.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: So, generals and stuff.

AR: Alright, well, is there anything you would like to share that we haven’t covered?

CR: Well—

AR: There’s always more to share.

CR: There’s always more to share. I would say the bigfoot thing, but I’m a hold that, I’m not gonna bring that in here.

AR: [Laughs]

CR: I will say that growing up in Batestown, even to this day, a background for hunting, everybody hunted up there. You hunted, you treated women with respect, you, um, always call

an elder mister or miss, it was always a first name, it wasn't Miss Reid, Miss Laura, Miss Annie, whatever. They always taught you that. And I'm not saying everybody did that, because there was always a couple bad apples up there. But by and large, uh, most people that you asked that lived there would tell ya that that's where they come from, you know, and they were proud of it, ya know.

AR: Mm-hm.

CR: I don't know a whole lot of people that'd say, "Hey, I come from Batestown, but I don't want to talk about it." That's not, just not me or people that I know. Um, and I saw a article in the paper, they called it like, uh, made it sound like it was a rat infested, you know, and-and it wasn't, it was just people that lived the best they could where they could in-in the way that they would, you know, living up in life, you know. Sure, we didn't have running water, we would have liked it, uh, you know. But, I saw increments of growth in that community as I grew, um, we didn't have running water, but I, we got a pump, we finally put a sink in for my mother to have running water, and she was just tickled pink, you know. And we did this, as I got older I worked at a furniture company and I bought her the best furniture I could get, you know, from that furniture company. And, um, it made me feel good that I was able to do something before she died, you know. Uh, I, like I said, I-I'll tell anybody I had the best mother in the world, Roena Reid was the best woman, I mean she did not take nothing from her kids, but whenever her kids, uh, did something, she would always, you know, make sure that the kids knew what they were doing. Uh, you had, she'd always tell me, she said, "If you have to fight, you gotta fight." Said, "You could be a coward forever, or be a person that a coward won't pick on forever too." So, I didn't understand a lot of things she said, but I, I always said, uh, you know, ain't nobody gonna run over me. You know, I-I'll stand up, I'll take a beating, but you ain't gonna run over me, ya know. And I think all of us are like that, so. That was something that I lived with for the rest of my life, and I teach my kids the same thing, um. You don't pick on people, you don't do that, um, you help people. Anybody that knows me, or knows my sisters and brothers, know that we will always help you, they know that. They know us for that if nothing else, we'll help, you ask for help, you'll get it. That's an absolute fact, I-I don't have, you can ask around, I don't have to ask nobody.

AR: Hm.

CR: You just ask and they'll tell ya, I'll give you the shirt off my back, things you need, you know. I won't ask you why, if you ask me I'll give it to you if I've got it. And, uh, we about ready to close?

AR: [Nods head]

Like I said, I, if could've picked anywhere to change where I grew up at, I couldn't do it. That time and place was where I needed to be, in Batestown, and I'm proud, I am so proud. I want, I want the people that donated that church, donated that school to know that I am a proud person from Batestown. I wish I could've had the opportunity to go to the, uh, the-the school, Cabin Branch, but I didn't, so. I'm happy with what I've got today. I'm very happy with the way things happened in Batestown. I'm not gonna be one of these people that say, hey, I'm affected cause I didn't have running water, give me a break, you know. There're, like I said, I could tell you a million things about Batestown, this is just a little bit right here today.

AR: [Laughs]

CR: I'm telling ya.

AR: Well thank you very much for allowing me to interview you and thank you for everything you've done for the project.

CR: Oh, yeah, any time.

End



Roena (Brown, Williams, Kendall) Reid, Charles Reid's mother.



Theodore Reid, Charles Reid's father.



Annie Reid (Charles Reid's Paternal grandmother).



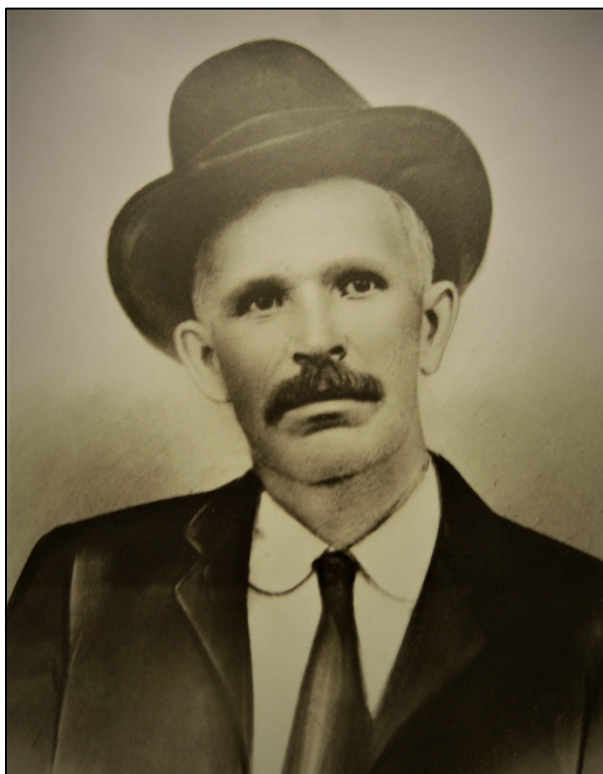
Annie Reid on her wedding day.



Joseph Reid, Charles Reid's grandfather.

PRINCE WILLIAM FOREST PARK, TRIANGLE, VA.				HOW ACQUIRED	AREA	COST	ASSESSMENT	PARK IMPROVEMENTS	TOTAL VALUE
RES. NO.	NAME LOCATION	DEED RECORDED	DESCRIPTION (LAND ADDRESS)						
6/42		11/6/42	Robert Taylor Tract No. 200	War Dept. Purchased	8.0	2,790.00			
6/42		11/6/42	Georgia A. Norman Tract No. 201	War Dept. Purchased	103.0	4,300.00			
12/42		11/21/42	Norman Waite Tract No. 202	War Dept. Purchased	54.5	1,400.00			
1/16/42		11/16/42	Joseph Reid Tract No. 203	War Dept. Condemnation	74.5	4,200.00			
1/22/42		10/22/42	Walter Kendall Tract No. 204	War Dept. Purchased	.22	250.00			
3/43		2/8/43	Hannah Gaines Tract No. 205	War Dept. Purchased	4.5	815.00			
1/16/42		11/16/42	Ardella Nash Tract No. 206	War Dept. Condemnation	1.0	400.00			
1/20/42		10/20/42	Norman L. Henderson Tract No. 207	War Dept. Purchased	.683	100.00			
1/30/42		12/30/42	Joe E. Clark Tract No. 208	War Dept. Condemnation	25.0	1,050.00			
1/22/42		10/22/42	Provie L. Henderson Tract No. 209	War Dept. Purchased	.724	100.00			
1/24/42		10/24/42	Bertie E. Keyer Tract No. 210	War Dept. Purchased	.790	100.00			
1/24/42		10/24/42	Cleve C. Henderson Tract No. 211	War Dept. Purchased	.598	100.00			
1/6/42		11/6/42	Odd Fellows Hall Tract No. 212	War Dept. Purchased	.33	750.00			
1/16/42		10/16/42	Virginia Taylor Tract No. 213	War Dept. Condemnation	100.00	4,180.00			
1/16/42		10/16/42	Jennie V. Tuell Tract No. 214	War Dept. Condemnation	6.00	800.00			
				HOW ACQUIRED	AREA	COST	ASSESSMENTS	IMPROVEMENTS	TOTAL VALUE
					379	85			

Charles' grandfather's land from Hickory Ridge.



Charlie Reid, the namesake of the Charles Reid who was interviewed. He is the brother of Joseph Reid, Charles Reid's grandfather.



Jane Porter, Charles Reid's maternal grandmother.



Joseph and Isabella Johnson, Charles Reid's great grandparents on his mother's side.



Morris Reid, Charles Reid's Uncle who died in the Cabin Branch Pyrite Mine.



Annie and Charles Reid, siblings.



Sixth Grade Washington Reid Elementary. Charles Reid is in the middle of the top row, to the left of the boy in red shirt.



Reid Kendall Williams sisters November 1961, Hilda Howard in center.



Dewitt Bates playing harmonica for Triangle Elementary students.



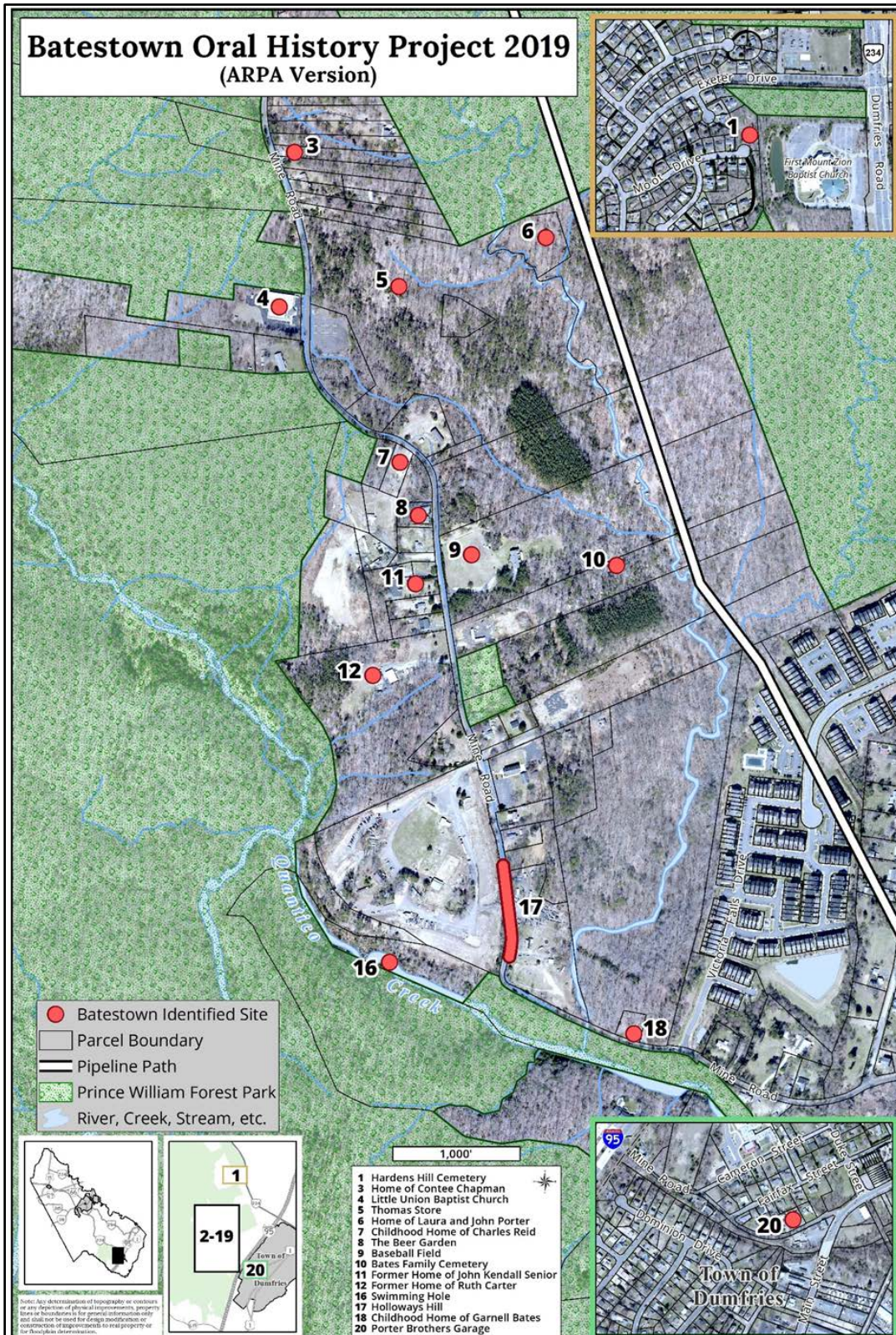
Calvin Johnson, the first black police officer in Prince William County.



Claudine Porter Langhorne First Black Female Officer in Prince William County.

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5 Batestown Area Site Map



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Map Point Descriptions

1) Hardens Hill Cemetery- In the subdivision of Brittany, at the end of Moot Street, is the Hardens Hill Cemetery. The final resting place of many Batestown residents, this cemetery contains members of all of the major Batestown family names, such as the Bateses, Chapmans, Coles, Kendalls, McKees, Reids, and Thomases. Hardens Hill contains the graves of Mary and John Thomas, who donated the land for Little Union and owned and operated the Thomas Store. The burial dates range from the early 20th century to as recent as 2012, and there are many unmarked headstones that could be much older. Many believe that the boundaries of Batestown ended just behind Hardens Hill.

2) Cabin Branch School- The Cabin Branch School was first built in 1889, then rebuilt in this location in 1916, where it remained in operation until it was replaced by Washington Reid Elementary in 1950 (Phinney 1993 p97, Haydon 1935 p103). Praised for its construction and condition, this single room school house received a two-room addition in 1939. Mabel Tuell, Ora Glass, Garnell Bates, Margaret Simmons, and Hilda Howard all attended this school. Mrs. Mary Porter, one of the only Cabin Branch teachers who was also a Batestown resident, began her teaching career at this school. The foundation, standing chimney, and a nearby well are all that remain of this school.

3) Home of Contee Chapman- Contee Chapman was the only interviewee who still lived in Batestown at the time of this project. His home was once owned by his uncle Roger Davis, then his mother, Mazerine Chapman, and finally split between him and his siblings. Contee and his surviving siblings plan to keep the property in the family.

4) Little Union Baptist Church- Originally established in 1903 on land donated by Mary Bates-Thomas, the Little Union Baptist Church played an important role as the religious center of the Batestown community. The church has been rebuilt twice and continues to serve the community. Many of the interviewees of this project are still active members of Little Union. (See Little Union Baptist Church section in Themes and Trends)

5) Thomas Store- At one time the Thomas Store, which was opened by Mary and John Thomas next to their home, provided the Batestown community with groceries and other goods. This business was listed as a merchant with a merchandise and tobacco license and operated until at least 1918 (Turner 1999 p156). Being that it was a building constructed entirely of wood, all that is left of the Thomas Store is a grassy plot and a nearby bottle dump.

6) Home of Laura and John Porter- This house was built in an area known simply as “the Bottom” because it sits at the bottom of a ravine next to Cabin Branch. It was a large two-story house with a well and had a long driveway that crossed over Cabin Branch on a wooden bridge, which has long since washed away. Margaret Simmons grew up in this house, along with many notable members of the Porter family, including John Wilmer Porter. The house burnt down in the 1970’s or 1980’s and its remnants have been left abandoned.

7) Childhood Home of Charles Reid- Built by Charles Reid's father, Theodore Reid, this was one of the houses that Charles and his sister Hilda Howard remember calling home when they lived in Batestown.

8) The Beer Garden- Mentioned by nearly every interviewee, the Beer Garden sold beer, snacks, canned goods, and similar convenience items. This unlicensed business was owned and operated by many different Batestown residents, including both the mother of Jerome Johnson and the mother of Linda Hawkins and Contee Chapman. The Beer Garden had a jukebox, a counter and some chairs and tables where patrons could eat, drink, and commune with one another. The building itself was constructed by John Kendall Sr. and still stands today as a residential property.

9) Baseball Field- This large grassy front lawn was once the location of the Batestown baseball diamond. Baseball was undoubtedly the favorite pastime of the Batestown residents, and every interviewee recalled playing baseball, softball, or attending the games that were held at this field. The baseball teams from Batestown, such as the BT Express, were very successful and would travel counties away for games. When other teams came into Batestown for a game, most of the community would come out to participate, spectate, and sell beverages and cooked meals.

10) Bates Family Cemetery- This cemetery is the location of over twenty Bates family burials ranging from at least the 1920's to the 2000's.

11) Former Home of John Kendall Senior- A prominent Batestown community member, John Kendall Sr. had a large family and was known as an educated and successful man. He was often referred to as "Uncle John" or "Grandpapa," even by people outside of his family. John Kendall Sr. is well known for driving the Dinkey at the Cabin Branch Pyrite Mine and for building many houses in Batestown, Dumfries, and Triangle. According to oral history, Mr. Kendall bought this home from the mine when it closed. Many of the adults in Batestown could be found gathering beneath the large oak trees that once stood in the front lawn.

12) Former Home of Ruth Carter- After the Cabin Branch Pyrite Mine closed, many Batestown community members purchased homes which had previously belonged to the mine. Some say that all of the land to the west of Mine Road (Batestown Road) was owned by the mine until it closed. This house in particular used to be the home of the superintendent of the mine, but later came to be owned by Ruth Carter, also known as "Miss Teet."

13) Former Homes of Mary and Ora- These parcels were once owned by Ora, Mary, and, at one time, Dewitt Bates. Both parcels were eventually sold to Prince William Forest Park. This section of park land is unique in that it is situated in the middle of Batestown and is not connected to the rest of the park. The homes on this land have been left in a state of abandonment and disrepair.

14) Mine Overlook- Operating from 1889 to 1920, the Cabin Branch Pyrite Mine introduced Batestown to a non-agrarian, extraction-based economy, and it became the economic mainstay of the region. Many interviewees mentioned that their parents, grandparents, and older relatives worked at the mine, and some suffered severe injuries or death. The Cabin

Branch Pyrite Mine is now registered as a national historic district (US Department of the Interior 2002). At one time remnants of the mine could be seen from this platform along a trail within Prince William Forest Park. Wastes from the refining process had left much of the area uninhabited by plant life, but with the success of recent reclamation efforts, a thick wall of pine trees is all that could be seen from the overlook at the time of this project.

15) Mine Road- Most interviewees agreed that Mine Road came up from Dumfries and went to the Cabin Branch Pyrite Mine, but the portion that split off to the right and went north was known as Batestown Road. After the mine closed, and with it the remaining section of the road leading toward the mine, Batestown Road became labeled as if it were the continuation of Mine Road. The interviews show that many Batestown residents believe that the name “Batestown Road” should be restored.

16) Swimming Hole- Simply referred to as “the Mine” by some interviewees, this swimming hole is a small section of deep water in Quantico Creek. With large rock formations and rushing waters, this beautiful place was surely the location of many great childhood memories. In the era of segregation, not all African American communities had a place where they could enjoy swimming. The swimming hole now lies secluded behind a steep embankment, soil dumps, and an overgrowth of thorny vegetation.

17) Holloways Hill- Named after the nearby Holloway family, this inclining section of Mine Road marks the beginning of what many residents remember as Batestown Road. Holloways Hill is known by all Batestown community members and commonly referenced in stories.

18) Childhood Home of Garnell Bates- This home was mentioned in the interview with Garnell Bates, and briefly mentioned by Hilda Howard. The mill was across the street from this house and some interviewees recall that a prison labor camp was located nearby, where inmates were housed while tasked with cleaning up the roads in the area.

19) Mitchell Mill- The Mitchell Mill is listed as a corn and flour mill in the 1888-1889 Virginia business directory (Turner 1999 p112). This mill had been abandoned long before any of the interviewees were born, but many recalled seeing the foundation and pieces of timber from the mill. Nearby there is an old damn that has mostly washed away. Many Batestown residents would spend time here, as the water in this area is deep enough to swim in. Charles Reid and Contee Chapman remembered ice skating here in the winter.

20) Porter Brothers Garage- Originally opened by Batestown resident Wilmer Porter and his siblings, the Porter Brothers Garage was the first black-owned business of its kind in the area (Turner 1999 p126). The shop developed a reputation for quality work and brought in customers from great distances, both black and white.

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Photographs of Map Points

1) Hardens Hill Cemetery



Hardens Hill cemetery facing north.



Hardens Hill, facing west, residential property in the background.



The graves of John and Mary Thomas, who donated land to the church and owned the Thomas Store.



One of many unmarked headstones in Hardens Hill Cemetery.



Old driveway connecting Hardens Hill Cemetery to 234, facing northeast.

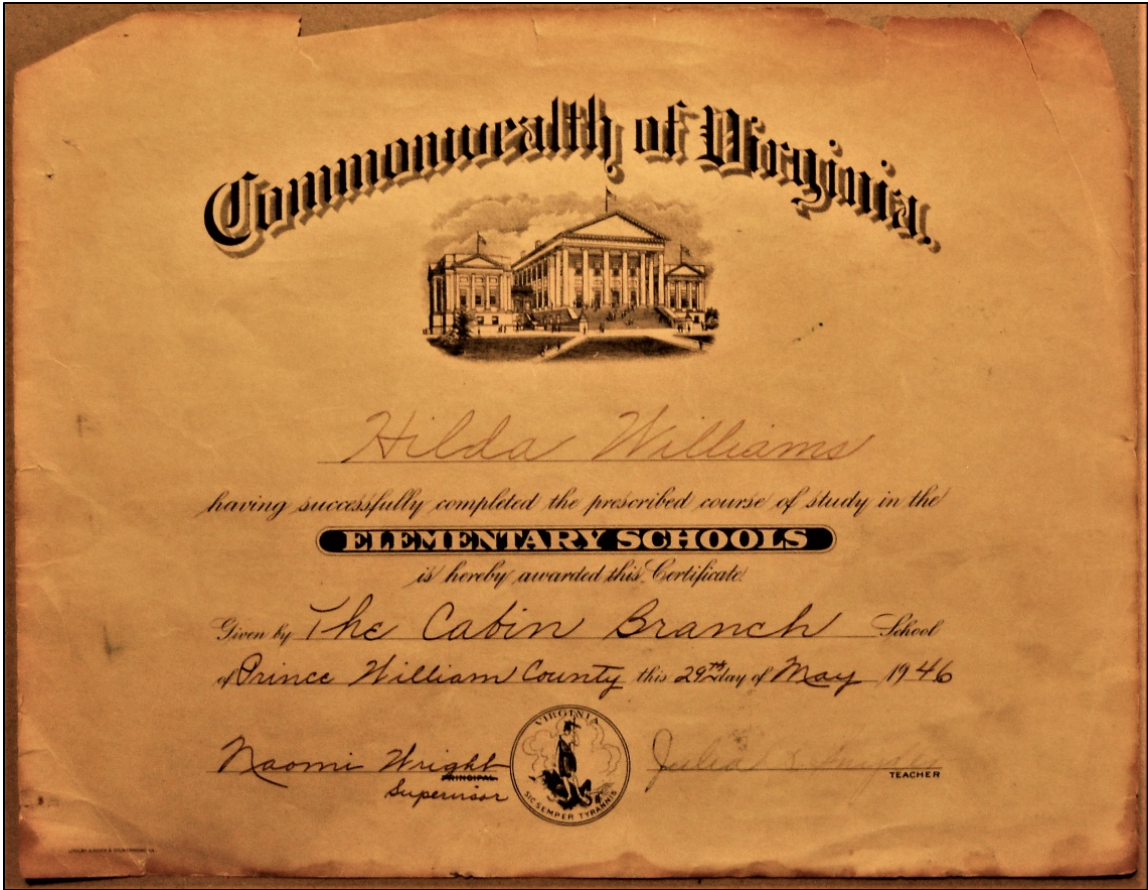
2) Cabin Branch School



Well beside Cabin Branch School, facing east toward Mine Road.



Foundation and chimney of Cabin Branch School, facing east toward Mine Road.



Hilda Williams (Howard) Cabin Branch school certificate. (Courtesy of Hilda Howard)

4) Little Union Baptist Church



Little Union Baptist Church as it stands today. The sign in the front mentions the homecoming.



The old (2nd) Little Union Baptist Church. (Courtesy of Charles Reid)



Historical markers in front of Little Union Baptist Church commemorating both the church and the Cabin Branch School.

5) Thomas Store



Where the John and Mary Thomas Store once stood, facing west toward Mine Road.



Bottle Dump south of the John and Mary Thomas Store.

6) Home of Laura and John Porter



Foundation of Laura and John Porter's home.



Chimney of Laura and John Porter's home.



Foundation of Laura and John Porter's home.



Well behind Laura and John Porter's home, facing south. Wire placed over top to keep people and animals from falling in.

8) The Beer Garden



17302 Mine Road, the Beer Garden, now a residential property. Facing southwest.

9) Baseball Field



BT Express at the Batestown baseball field. (Courtesy of Jerome Johnson)



BT Express after winning a trophy. (Courtesy of Charles Reid)

10) Bates Family Cemetery



The Bates family cemetery.

11) Former Home of John Kendall Senior

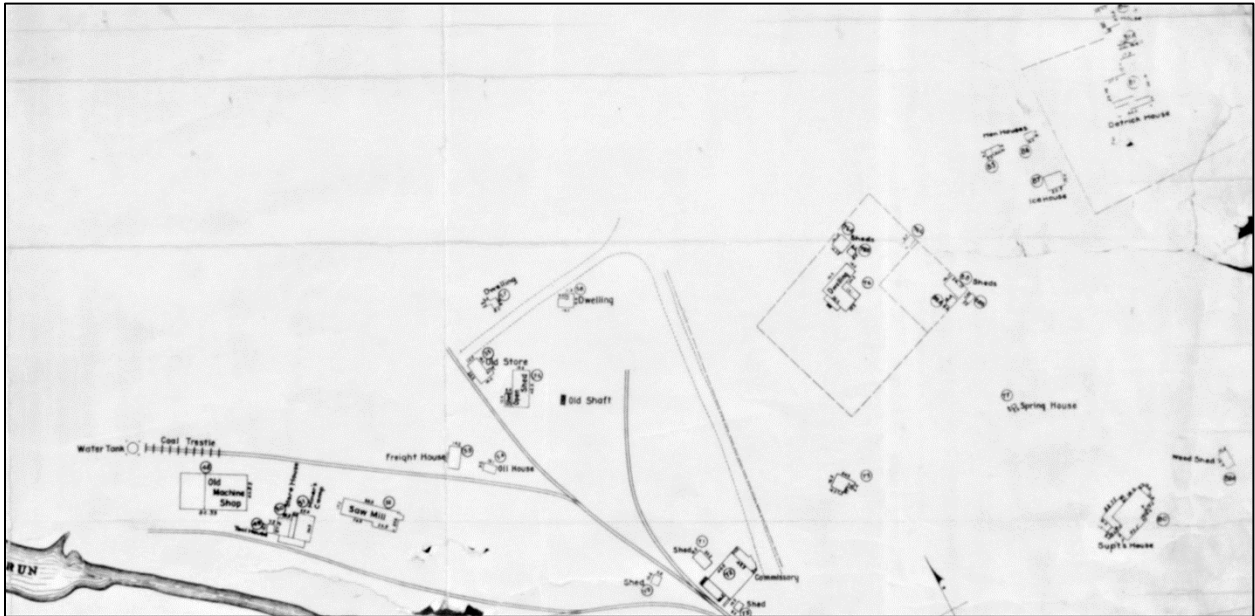


John Kendall Senior's home at 17312 Mine Road. Previously the "Detrick House" on a map of the Cabin Branch Pyrite Mine.



"Grandpapa" John Kendall Senior.

12) Former Home of Ruth Carter



Map of mine property showing the Detrick House (Former home of John Kendall Senior) and the Superintendents house (Former home of Ruth Carter) on the upper right and lower right respectively.

<https://www.nps.gov/museum/exhibits/prwi/pyriteMine.html>

13) Former Homes of Mary and Ora



Stairway entrance to property previously owned by either Ora Glass or Mary Cole. Now owned by Prince William Forest Park.



Entrance to property previously owned by either Ora Glass or Mary Cole. Now owned by Prince William Forest Park.

14) Mine Overlook



Approaching the Cabin Branch Pyrite Mine Overlook facing Quantico Creek.



Cabin Branch Pyrite Mine Overlook facing Quantico Creek. Can't see any mine remnants through tree growth.



Cabin Branch Pyrite mine commissary building as seen from the pyrite mine trail in Prince William Forest Park.



View from Cabin Branch Pyrite Mine toward Batestown Road (Parker 1985)

15) Mine Road



Facing west, this red gate closes off the section of Mine Road that used to lead to the Cabin Branch Pyrite Mine. To the right is Holloways Hill and the section of Mine Road known by the Batestown community as Batestown Road.



Northwest end of Mine Road as seen from inside Prince William Forest Park, next to the pyrite mine walking trail.

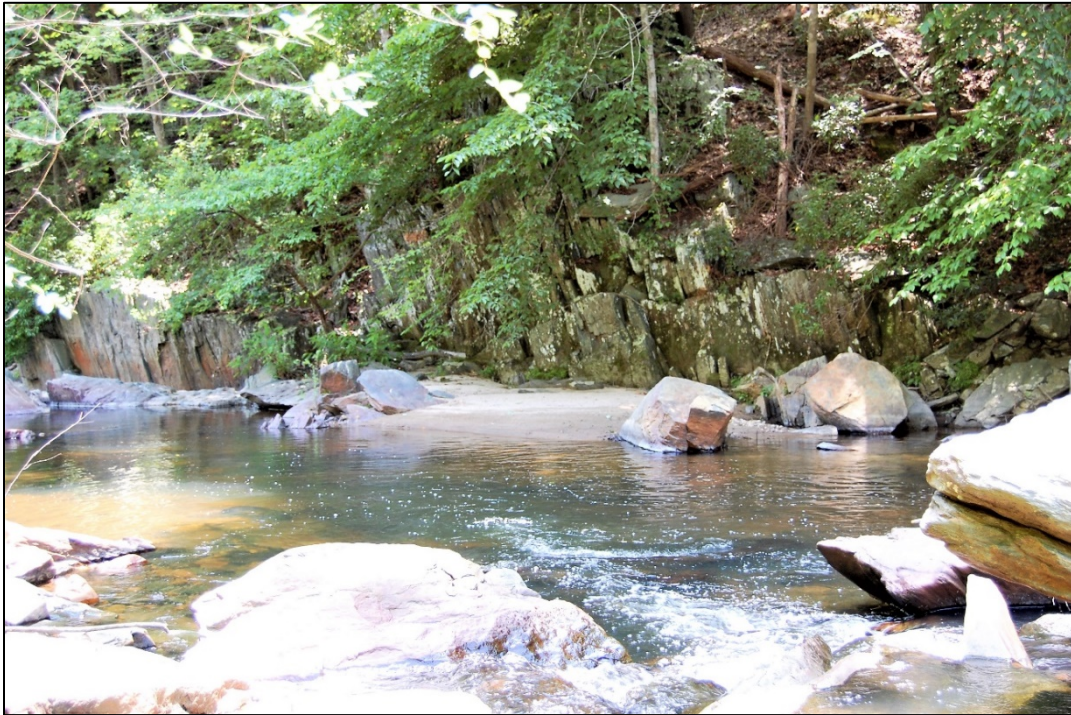
16) Swimming Hole



Approaching the swimming hole from the northeast embankment of Quantico Creek.

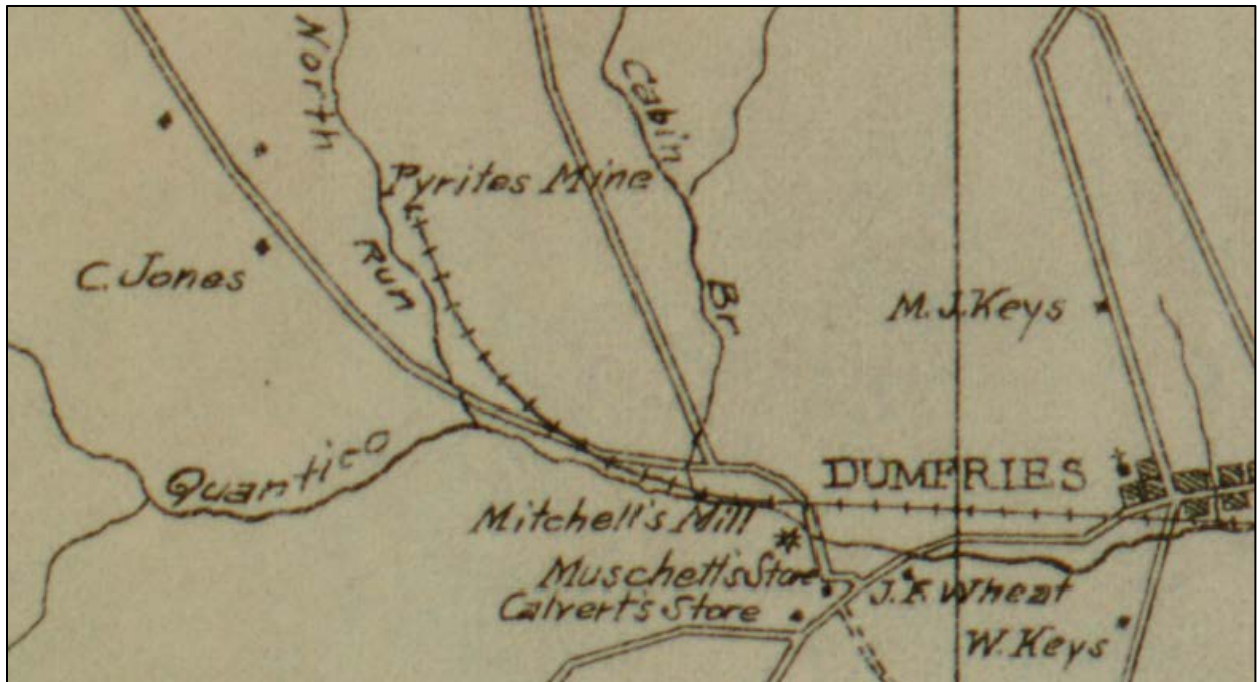


Swimming hole from northeast side of Quantico Creek, looking downstream.



Swimming hole from northeast side of Quantico Creek, looking downstream.

19) Mitchells Mill



Section from 1901 Map showing Mitchells Mill (Brown 1901).

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