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BEGIN SIDE A

R.S.: My voice carries.

S.D.: Okay. This is Shelly Drummond from the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum. I'd like for everybody in the room to say who they are. I'm with Mrs. Rebecca Simns, and we're doing the interview, and, Larry, could you say your name?

L.M.: I'm Larry McDaniels, representing the Rock Hall Museum in Rock Hall, Maryland.

S.D.: Okay.

J.R.: I'm Joanne Simns Ransom, and my mother is Rebecca Simns.

R.S.: And I'm Rebecca Stephens Acres Simns. And I am now— I was born in March the 16th, 1912. I'm now way past 91.

S.D.: Can you tell me what the community was like when you were a little girl, what you remember?

R.S.: What would you like me to start with, where I went to school, or the main street or what? Or do you want to go inside the houses, what it was like?

S.D.: We could go anywhere. How about start with what your family did for a living?

R.S.: It was very difficult to make a living in Rock Hall. My father had to always be going away to work because where the Chesapeake Bay was loaded with plenty of good seafood, there was hardly any market for it. They would give fish away, and if there was a market, it was so cheap, you know, peaches in Kent County that were shipped to the city, but they said there was a blight in the peach trees. And in my day, they were just about —there weren't many around at that point. My grandfather had one of those big schooners, sailing ships up and down the bay. That's his picture and his wife's picture on the wall there, the two there. There's my Grandmother and Grandfather Stephens. And underneath is her father, which is William Henry Davis. And so — and my Grandfather Acres, they were all watermen, so to speak. And my Uncle Frank was on the police boat for a while. And I read in the newspaper like 100 years ago or something,

and I found out that my grandfather was on the police boat before his son. And my father, at one time, was on Captain Smadger's (phonetic) sailing yacht. He was a mate on there. And I have seen a picture of my Grandmother Acres, and my mother and my father on the deck of that, and I can barely - and I think I must've been about a year or so old because I can remember the brass companionway, can remember the red velvet carpet, you know. And I can remember somebody having me over, the sails tied along the sides going like this, you know. And I think that was my father, you know. But anyway, so my father used to work in the shipyards, and during the war he worked in - I think he worked up at Aberdeen or someplace where they had -they - see, in World War I, a lot of the Rock Hall people would move over around South Baltimore and work over there. And we went over there one winter, my Grandmother Acres had moved over there, and we boarded with her. And my father then went on a train, I don't know whether they went to Aberdeen or something. And then the second winter, we had just moved over there when the armistice was signed. And I went to school down the - on the end of the street from there, and there was a church on the other corner. I lived on 130 East Clemont Street. So these people, they move - it was easier for us to get to Baltimore than it was to Chestertown because cars are- very few people had cars. Some people had - now if you wanted to go down to Gratitude where Yule Weer's (phonetic) place was, that's where the BS-40 came in, and you could either walk, or you could get on - get in, Mr. Jack Schoon's had a Dearborn or a farm - some of them had a farm wagon that you could go in, and in my young days, that was when I was real young, but in my teenage days, Mr. Walter Haddaway had a hack -they called it a hack, it was an open Ford touring car that took them to Chestertown or - and then we had the Tolchester boat in the summertime with excursions. And I've heard my Grandmother Stephens say that they wore dusters because the dust was so deep, you know, going to Tolchester. And in my day, you know, it was -wasn't easy to get up and down to there. But sometimes, you'd get somebody to take you in a hack, I guess, or whatever. And you want to ask me something?

S.D.: Well I was also interested in what - this is not the first time I've heard about watermen going to Baltimore to work in the shipyard. Was the seafood industry down, or what would people -

R.S.: Pardon?

S.D.: Were the watermen not working on the water that winter because people weren't buying seafood or -

R.S.: Well during the war years, it was more money to be made in the city, I presume. You know how the war, things boomed. So they worked in the shipyards, and I don't know whether they went - what is that place up there around Aberdeen where they have the -

L.M.: Aberdeen Proving Grounds.

R.S.: Yeah. I don't know whether that's where - but I mean they, that's what they did. And I know sometimes when my father was working away, I guess maybe when the bay - the bay has iced up, you know, I don't know whether that would be the reason, or whether he was going to Philadelphia or someplace. But I know one time he got Mr. John Hogans to drive us to Chestertown to the train so he could go on the train, and he got - mom and my sister and I could drive in there for the ride. Rarely did we ever get to Chestertown. Rarely. I remember one time we had - Miss Holly Downy (phonetic) was the Sunday School teacher, and she was - lived a couple of doors from us, and she took Claris and I in Chestertown with her daughter to see Santa Claus. And the crowds of people was just - I was afraid I was going to get mashed to death. And I - Claris and I have both been scared of crowds ever since. We just can't handle crowds. Because we were little, and you know, the push of the crowd was so great. Because everybody and his brother, all the farmers and everybody, that's the only entertainment we had. And so she - out of the kindness of her heart, she took us in there. But keep - what did you want to ask me? (Laughter). I get sidetracked.

S.D.: That's good. The yacht, what is the yacht that - this is the second time people have talked about working on the yacht, the sailing yacht?

R.S.: Well this was a big sailing yacht, and it belonged to a Captain Smizer (phonetic). And I've also seen a picture of my father in a tender with Baltimore Yacht Club on it. So, evidently, that was the tender, you know, the little boat that went back and forward to the big boat. One time my father worked on the Severn River bridge, and it's getting pretty old now, I guess, 'cause that - well that would be when I was a child. I would've been about 10 years old, I guess. And he took one, for one week, he took mom and Claris and I with him, 'cause by that time, he had a small boat of his own. Had a little

cabin on it. And we took bedding, and I don't know, I guess he got somebody to give him a little ride down the creek with this stuff, I don't know. But anyhow, we took stuff, and he had a galley on the deck of this boat that - where you cook in, you know. And he would leave mom and Claris and I on that boat, and it was really deep water under the banks of that - right under those high banks there of the Severn River. And he'd go to work on the bridge in a little, you know, he'd go ashore in a little boat. And I've thought since, my land, you know, we were never afraid. And he - kids in those days, you knew your limitations. You didn't try anything. You know, some kids, I'd be afraid to death, scared they'd fall overboard and drowned because it was deep water, and we couldn't swim. None of us could swim. But that's another place he worked. And then he had his own little - I don't know how long he had that boat. Had it for a while. And so he did carpenter work. He worked in - he worked in shipyards. And as I said, up to Aberdeen. But the men, and the women, see now lots of people moved over there because Aunt Annie Boyer (phonetic), who was my Grandmother Stephens' sister, she was also Elroy Boyer's (phonetic) grandmother, and my other grandmother was also sister to Judge Raze's (phonetic) grandmother. So, you know, on both sides, we had - but anyhow, Aunt Annie Boyer had moved over there. And I think - see, my Grandfather Stephens was away a lot on these boats. So my Grandmother Stephens would go over there and board with her and work in I guess some kind of dress factories or shirt factory or - my grandmother never turned her back on anything. She used to wallpaper, she'd do anything, you know. Sometimes she helped out down the boarding houses down in Gratitude. I mean she was just a woman that had a lot of ambition to help out And so - and then we had this dress factory. And Joanne can tell you about that. And that was what - the women worked in that.

J.R.: Shirt factory.

R.S.: Shirt factory I meant. We did have a - later we had a dress factory. But then we had the canning house where they canned tomatoes in the summertime. Joanne even went down there one time.

J.R.: When I was 13.

R.S.: Huh? What did she say?

J.R.: When I was 13, 14, 15 -

R.S.: We all --when I was a teenager, I went to worked in the telephone exchange as a relief operator, you know. Not a steady job. It was just when somebody wanted to get off, and I was going to high school. By the way, our high school was our middle school. And we had a switchboard, and you know you plug in and then when --they give you the number, like if it was something and it had 2, 3 at the end, and two longs or three shorts or there's 1, 2, you put one long and two shorts and all this stuff. Well we had a line going to Skinner's Neck, line going to Piney Neck, a line going to East Neck Island. And I don't know where else around Rock Hall. Wasn't many people had phones, number one. And when you did-- you bring these party lines, you could hear the receivers going up all down the line because they all listen in because that's all the entertainment we had. We didn't have TV, we didn't have radio. Radio came out when I was a teenager. And that was entertainment, listening in on other people's business. So it was strange.

S.D.: What year did the tomato factory close down?

R.S.: I don't know 'cause Larry -- I can't think of his name, it was past Joanne's --

J.R.: Oh, yeah. I was away from here when it closed. It did also canned tomatoes.

R.S.: Would you think it would be in the 60's or 70's.

L.M.: I thought Ethel Tolson worked in there.

R.S.: Who?

L.M.: Ethel Tolson. We have a picture at the museum of Ethel Tolson.

R.S.: Working there?

L.M.: In there.

J.R.: And Ethel's a year younger than Lee, so --

L.M.: Yeah.

J.R.: She was probably working there when I worked there, but I worked only one year skinning tomatoes. They got me on the corn husker, and I loved that job, so I did that every year. There was a machine.

L.M.: I was under the impression it was in the late 60's.

J.R.: No, I graduated --

R.S.: What? It was in the 60's?

L.M.: In the late 60's.

R.S.: It might've been.

J.R.: I don't know what -

R.S.: Larry Harrison had it last before - and then Bobby Clark bought it. I don't know what he did with it.

J.R.: I graduated and he didn't have the - I graduated 1948, so you go back to 1942, '43, '44, in that area, that's when I worked, like '44, '45, '46, or '45, '46, '47, '48, that's probably what it was. I worked to get money so I could graduate with white clothes and cap and gown and all that stuff. We didn't have money, you know.

R.S.: My kids, they went to work to help themselves. We had to. We didn't have that kind of money.

J.R.: Ethel was about a year younger than me. I would suppose, Ethel was in the telephone company a long, long time, so I think she might've been in school when she was doing it. Maybe -

R.S.: You did this while you were in school 'cause, you know -

J.R.: It was just a summertime job. It was never -

R.S.: Joanne worked up Doc Smith's drug store and, you know, different things.

S.D.: How about the boarding houses at Gratitude? Tell me a little bit about those.

R.S.: The boarding houses. Let me tell you, the Baltimore people, city people, they flocked down there in the summertime to get away from the city heat, I guess. And they, see, they could come on the BS-40, or come by Tolchester or whatever. We started with the BS-40, my young days, but then later, we had the Rock Hall ferries. There were two that did intermittently, I guess you would call it, back and forth across the bay, and one - they would go to between the end of Route 20 to Sandy Point or Bay Shore Park, I think it was Sandy Point instead of Bay Shore Park, wasn't it?

J.R.: Uh-huh (affirmative). Yes.

R.S.: And then, but that wasn't near as convenient as the BS-40 because when you did that, you had a long trolley ride up to the city. But you could get on that old BS-40, you're right in Baltimore

Harbor in two hours. And they served meals on there, because I remember a colored waiter with his white step on, ringing bells like this, come to dinner, and you'd go downstairs or something in the dining room, and it was like plush stuff. Have you heard that before?

L.M.: Now did that BS-40 also run up to Chestertown at that time?

R.S.: Yeah. Stopped in, I think it stopped Quaker Neck Wharf, stopped at Gray's Inn, stopped all up and down the line.

L.M.: Right, right.

R.S.: And people used to-- Down East Neck Island, I think they had peaches, and they would ship them there when they'd stop down there. See, there was Darden's Creek, you know, Bogle's Wharf (phonetic).

L.M.: Right.

R.S.: Bogle's Wharf. My Grandmother Acres was raised part of the time down there.

J.R.: Mom, that boat was a steamboat. Is that correct?

R.S.: The BS-40 was a steamboat. Yeah.

S.D.: What was it like, do you remember riding on the BS-40?

R.S.: Yeah, but I was very young. 'Cause Aunt Edith and Uncle Walter had gotten married. That was my mother's sister. And they took me over there when I was a real little girl, and they would take me to the Hippodrome Theater, or the Garden Theater, I believe it was. Was there a place called the Garden Theater? I think, in Baltimore. And, you know, see I was the first grandchild, and Aunt Edith wasn't married when I was born, neither was Uncle Norris, so they kind of all took me under their wing.

S.D.: Do you remember the sights and the sounds of being on that boat?

R.S.: No, I don't remember that. I remember -- and then the Tolchester Boat, I used to go back and forth on that We could go to Baltimore, do shopping and come back, same day. You know. Even on the Tolchester boat. When I was first married, I used to do that. Of course, in the dead of winter if it was iced up or something like that, you -- they stopped. But we had a lot of service then that we don't have now. Of course, now we had a White's Express that started up there where Cape -- is. And they operated out of there. Lloyd Stephens, I think, worked for them too. And they -- but see,

when the cars and the trucks started, you know -

J.R.: Was that a trucking?

R.S.: It was a trucking thing. It was called White's Express. These big trucks that they would send out.

S.D.: What would they haul?

R.S.: I don't know. (Laughter). I guess anything necessary to come and go, you know.

J.R.: Most likely corn, fish, tomatoes, peaches.

R.S.: Well, yeah, but remember, we had to have stuff trucked in here too. So I don't know. I can't remember. I guess anybody -

S.D.: Did you spend much time in the harbor? Ever just go on down there to eat at the restaurants?

R.S.: You mean Rock Hall? My sister and I used to walk down to the end of the road and go in a little ways. You didn't have to go very far into the ferry park from Route 20 then because the ferry park was not inhabited at that time. And we'd go in there a little ways. There's sandy beaches, and we'd go bathing, and then walk back. I mean -

S.D.: Where is this beach that you're talking about on the ferry park?

L.M.: On Beach Road.

S.D.: The beach, the sandy beach that's -

R.S.: Beach Road goes from that end to that end. And this would be off of Route 20.

L.M.: Right, to the left going down.

R.S.: Yeah.

L.M.: That beach ferry down there.

R.S.: You know where you get into Gratitude? It would be right opposite, it would be right going the other way out of, like across the road from Gratitude, you'd go in there a little ways.

S.D.: So the beach that exists now, is that the same beach that was always here for Rock Hall?

R.S.: Yeah.

J.R.: No. When we went down there, remember she said just a little ways you walked down? The beach was there when you first walk in.

L.M.: There were no houses.

J.R.: There were no houses there. Later when the houses came, the town bought a certain part to make the beach.

R.S.: See the thing of it is, that's what makes it so bad in storms. They had two farms, I understand, I mean two houses. Had the Young property, and it was over there like bayside, like over toward that way. They said the entrance to— with the entrance to that was around the bay, down that way, right around bayside. I guess opposite from Joanne's street, I imagine. Something like that. You know, where Larry's Wharf is, I think — they said the ice house was like close to the entrance of that where you go in.

L.M.: What about — Schoon's? Schoon's at that time?

R.S.: No, that was way — I'm talking about way back there, before Schoon's.

L.M.: Okay.

R.S.: 'Cause I'm talking about — my mother and father were married six years before I was born. And I think they lived on the Young property with Aunt Cate and Uncle Buggy Stephens. And, of course, I wouldn't know anything about that because that was long before I was born. They were married in 1906. So it seems — and I never saw a house there. Evidently, you know, so evidently, that was long gone. And then there was one supposed to be along round there in front of Beach Road, something in there. And I never knew, they must've been there many years ago and just left. And Mr. Marshner bought that ferry park. And he owned it, and he sold a lot of locks there. He wanted Clifton to buy something out of there one time, I think. At one time, Clifton and Eddie Buckheight (phonetic) and a bunch of them were making runways through there for airplanes. Eddie Buckheight had been in the, in the war, and he'd been ditched in the Pacific, and he flew one of those big, I don't know, big planes. He ditched in the Pacific. And —

J.R.: Bomber, I think, of some sort.

R.S.: Huh?

J.R.: Bombers.

R.S.: Yeah, I think so. And — you're getting worn out, aren't you?

S.D.: It's okay.

R.S.: Sit on that —

(Off-topic discussion.)

R.S.: So Eddie Buckheight and Clifton, I don't know, there was some half-wit scheme. Clifton was always into something. They were making runways in the ferry park, you know. But I don't know. It kind of petered out. I don't know whether they were out of money or what they had.

J.R.: When I was a teenager, my father owned a plane with another person. I don't even know exactly who. I think it was Eddie Buckheight. And my father had his pilot's license. That was something that very few people had.

R.S.: He had what?

J.R.: His pilot's license.

R.S.: Oh.

J.R.: And I — my mother and I flew to Baltimore to go shopping. And I was so thrilled that we got there so quick. But it took us as long from the airport to downtown Baltimore as it would if we had driven there.

(Laughter).

R.S.: I don't remember that. I remember Eddie Buckheight taking me over there one time.

J.R.: Well I was with you. And on the way, I looked at the gas gauge and it was a Piper Cub, so it was quite noisy. And I was doing this, I was a child. Maybe I was 10 or 12 or something. And I was doing — patting the man that was piloting — I think it was Eddie. And I was pointing to the gas gauge because it said E. And we were right over Steelton, which is Bethlehem Steel with the red fires coming out of the chimney, and I thought oh, dear Lord, we're going to go down here because it says E. But you couldn't be heard. You had to — it was all gestures, because the loudness of the motor. And mom probably didn't even know that I was doing that. And he looked at me and winked, and he said it's broke.

(Laughter). I never forgot that because I was a child.

R.S.: Was it Eddie or was it Monroe Coleman?

J.R.: It was Eddie.

R.S.: Eddie's the only one I remember going to Baltimore with. I'll tell you, Clifton was into airplanes. One time he had a horse. Kept it on somebody else's farm - Mr. Frank Scurvins a while, and then he kept it up to Leslie's, and they were on Granddaddy Simn's or someplace. Oh, my Lord. Anything that you mention, he was into. Gunning clubs, bringing home all these dead ducks for you to pick. And he, one time he brought home a wild goose for me to pick, and I tried that once. No more wild geese am I fooling with because they are something else.

J.R.: Well you would scald them. You see, a chicken you scald, and then you could pluck the feathers out better. But wild things you can't. It doesn't help.

R.S.: Well we picked some stuff dry, didn't we?

J.R.: Dry, a lot of ducks and geese are picked dry.

R.S.: And but those geese, I said no more. Fish, I did all the scaling of fish and cleaned the fish. And the reason I did it, and Clifton always said - he could do a better job of cleaning fish. I guess so. He didn't have to do it. But I didn't want him doing it because I'll tell you what he would do. You know, we'd put newspapers in the sink and put the fish in there. And Clifton would get in there, and he'd be like - and the scales were going up like this all over the windows and stuff -

J.R.: Ceiling.

R.S.: Yeah. When I did it, I would make long strokes like this and try to behave myself. So I, and you always had to do them over after you got done with them anyhow. Leave half the scales, half the muck inside.

J.R.: He was always in a hurry.

R.S.: And he wanted to do everything in a big rush and get it half way, in that long. Same way with husking corn. He'd leave all the silk and crap on there -

J.R.: I know.

R.S.: And so when I do stuff, I want to do it right - but anyhow, he was a character.

J.R.: I still don't make John husk my corn.

R.S.: No, and I don't know anybody -

L.M.: Do you remember when Mr. Clifton first started making decoys?

R.S.: They first, first they did, they were gunning. So they start chopping out these things to use on the water for decoys, these 1041 ducks, and he had a bunch of them down back, because it was a bunch of these guys together worked on that. And they divided them up, and they'd - and then we had, one time we had this big out building that was built on poles, and it didn't have, you know you know how they do. It was a huge big building. He had it loaded with stuff. We had this big snowstorm, and it just caved in, and a lot of stuff got lost.

J.R.: A bunch of antiques.

R.S.: Huh?

J.R.: And lots of antiques.

R.S.: Do you remember when that was, Joanne? Was it when you were living in New York?

J.R.: Yes.

L.M.: Would it be fair to say you started carving in the 40's around the Second World War?

R.S.: We were married in 1930. And what he was used to doing in the beginning, these guys would all go out coon hunting at night, and these dogs are barking and yapping. And, of course, I suspect they stopped in the beer joints because they was bootlegging days, you know, it was before prohibition. And -

J.R.: Could I add something here? There was Hebrons that lived at the end of East Neck Island, all the way down. There was a big house where there's a monument now, and the house was three stories, and her name was Blanch Hebron, and daddy went coon hunting with her husband. And mom and all of us would go down and we would stay the night because they coon hunted all night They didn't coon hunt in the daytime. And so the men would all go coon hunting -

R.S.: You were only about a year or two old then, weren't you?

J.R.: I was six years old, five, six years old

R.S.: Oh, that was later.

J.R.: And when you went up in this house to the second floor, you could see the Chester River

to your left, Chesapeake Bay to your right Was absolutely breathtaking gorgeous when you woke up there, 'cause we slept there, and when you woke up in the morning, that's what fascinated me. I never forgot that It fascinated me, because she was raising her sister, who her mother had died almost very soon after the child was born.

R.S.: I don't think — her mother was still living then though when we used to go there.

J.R.: Her mother was living?

R.S.: Uh-huh (affirmative).

J.R.: Oh, well. Anyway Suze was there, and we had, we used to have a good time there because all the women were downstairs laughing and doing whatever they did. And Suze and I would go upstairs and, you know, play with her dolls or whatever. But the most important thing that I remember was to look out the window at this spectacular view. And I was just a young kid. I guess, you know, I had oyster mud on me already. And it was just something that never left me. And when they tore that house down, which I'm sure was probably termite infested or they wouldn't have because it was a huge house, had great big oak trees out front and, you know, a big porch on it I'm sure that the termites had done something or they wouldn't have torn that down.

R.S.: Now the gunners see, these people would have plenty of money, came and bought this. They owned, they bought it to gun. And Amos Waterrield and his wife lived in a place down on the shore. And Harry Hebron who — they let Harry and Blanch live in this big old farmhouse that was originally a Wicks or a Sappington place.

J.R.: It's the Wicks place where General Wicks or somebody —

R.S.: Yeah, Lambert Wicks or something, he was that big sea captain way back.

J.R.: Yeah.

R.S.: But that was before that It was the Sappington Wicks place. And this house was like the front of this house except right along the road and it went a long ways. It had, it had a wide hull, and a big room on that side, and a big stairway. And then you went in the other part of the house, and that's what they lived in, you know, they didn't even use that big room. I don't know whether it had been a ballroom, living room, I don't know what it was. But the other part of the house, they had this room with a

bay window they used for a living room, and then there was a passageway with this pantry, huge big pantry on the side, and then a great big kitchen. And, of course, these old kitchens, you know, the mice and the rats and every other thing come in 'cause you know how they just wainscot and then that kind of stuff. And I don't know what else. It was just a big, big house. It was an old farmhouse, and it was two or three stories high, I guess it was three stories high, wasn't it?

J.R.: Right.

R.S.: And so Blanch and Harry, you know, they're just that couple, and they'd have us down there. We'd have a ball. We'd go down there and just have a good time. And she'd make pies and we'd just have -

J.R.: She was a good cook, a very good cook

R.S.: Yeah.

L.M.: Well that would've been the Cedar Point Gun Club, right?

R.S.: That's exactly right.

L.M.: Right And that's where -

R.S.: And Amos Waterfield was there for years, and Harry Hebron was the guide. So he lived in, he and Blaze lived in the house. So I don't know how long they lived there. But, see, that was owned by these gunners, so they had charge of doing whatever they wanted to with the property.

J.R.: And Harry Hebron's brother was Mr. Percy Hebron who was a senator from Maryland.

L.M.: Right.

R.S.: It was a bunch of those - bunch, Archie Hebron and, oh, there's a bunch of those guys. Louis and -

J.R.: They grew up with my dad. They were friends for many, many years.

R.S.: Or, I'll say it this way. Clifton was friends with them when I - when he was going with me. And at that time, they moved - see, the mother died, this Aunt Laura died, and left this husband and these boys. Percy, the Senator, was already married to Edna. And they lived on the hunting field. So Percy then stayed, lived on the hunting field, and he moved up in Swan Point with these boys. And that's when Clifton and these boys were all raising cane up there in that farm.

J.R.: Well my father's grandmother, his mother died when he was nine, his grandmother took him to raise him. Took him down to Quaker Neck Wharf, and there was a house right almost on the wharf, and he lived there. Well he did a lot of walking. He walked from Quaker Neck to Rock Hall because when that grandmother told him he couldn't do anything, he came to this grandmother in Rock Hall, and he was back and forth all the time. So on his way, he would stop at Swan Point, which, you know, seems a long ways to walk, but that's what they did.

S.D.: Where the marina is now?

R.S.: No, no.

J.R.: No, no, no. Out further towards Tolchester, and you go -

R.S.: No, no, no, Joanne. That wasn't - that wasn't in that time span at all. When he was a little boy, he wasn't -

J.R.: I don't mean little boy, I mean when he was being raised by grandmom, he used to walk in -

R.S.: But that wasn't in the - that wasn't - see, Quaker Neck, he was going up this road, he wasn't going up that road.

J.R.: I know, but he told me he cut across fields to go to Swan Point

R.S.: Oh, I don't know anything about that.

J.R.: Yeah, he's told me that.

R.S.: It's hard to tell. He could tell you some tales.

J.R.: He was all over the county. He had a horse in - and a horse and sleigh, and used to get in the horse and sleigh races on High Street in Chestertown every winter. And the guys would all go there.

R.S.: He was with Uncle John Dequip then, I think.

J.R.: I thought he was with - but it doesn't matter, I don't think he had a sleigh with grandmom. He would go in from Quaker Neck, and he would take the sleigh, and they'd start at the top of High Street and go all the way down, race all the way down to the river.

R.S.: Yeah, they used to have - and then used to have them up in the middle of Rock Hall

too. I've heard Clifton talk about that.

S.D.: Horse and sleigh races?

J.R.: Uh-huh (affirmative).

L.M.: That's right. We have a sleigh in the museum. And we have a postcard from 1908, and they're racing right up Main Street.

R.S.: Is that right?

L.M.: Yeah.

R.S.: Yeah, I've heard Clifton talk about that 1908, I wasn't even born.

J.R.: But daddy was. He was born in 1903.

R.S.: And, you know, when you're real young, you remember that stuff, you know, just little things here and there. But see, Clifton was eight and a half years older than me, and his Grandmother Coleman, I mean his mother died when he was only nine, and he was the oldest of four children. And, of course, he just — I guess Ma Coleman had all she could handle. He just roamed around wherever he wanted to. So he was his own boss. I'll tell you, he was — like his father's mother, his Grandmom Simns went to Quaker Neck and rented this house just to —

R.S.: But see, at that point, Grandmom's — Grandfather Simns was dead. He was alive when Clifton was real small.

J.R.: Yeah.

R.S.: And I don't know when he died, 'cause I don't ever remember him. I never saw him. But Grandmother Simns and then her daughter, which is Clifton's father's sister and her husband, took over the farm, and Grandmom Simns lived with them. So when she rented the house down Quaker Neck Wharf for two years to take Clifton down there, he was a teenager then, and she lived down there in Quaker Neck Wharf with him two years, but then she went back to the farm again. And that was when, and then they bought this farm up here off of Eadesville.

J.R.: But they wanted to — he used to have to go to the mill in Chestertown. I don't know what they were having ground, I don't know. He went to the mill, and that's when he lived with Nanny and

John in Quaker Neck too.

R.S.: Right And then there was a Mr. Joe Lewis that had a meat - a store on the corner of Cannon and - Cannon and - what's that street runs through there that -

J.R.: Cannon and -

L.M.: Cross Street.

R.S.: Cross.

J.R.: Cross Street.

R.S.: Cross. He had a store on the corner of Cannon and Cross, and Clifton used to go there and deliver groceries for them when he was just a boy. Clifton hated Chestertown with a passion. He didn't like Chestertown. But anyhow, he said he went to - he went to school to somebody down in that custom house they had going on down there. And he was all over Chestertown too. (Laughter). So he got around a lot -

S.D.: Who did he make decoys for, the gun dub?

R.S.: Well he started out doing it so they could go gunning for themselves, and they made rough decoys. They chopped them out with hammers. Hatchets and - and then I don't know when he, I guess sitting around the barber shop, you know, just fooling with stuff, and he got into doing that.

J.R.: Father always - when he doodled, many many years before he ever did swan, he doodled a swan's neck.

R.S.: Right, he did. The curves.

J.R.: He did. And I think of all the swan that I've seen that weren't my father's, he has the prettiest neck If you know ducks and geese -

L.M.: It is. It's very lifelike. But to answer the question, now Joanne, you have a canvasback. The oldest duck that you have, your father signed on the bottom that he made it. There's no question about it. He made the duck.

J.R.: He made the duck.

L.M.: And I believe it says 1944 on the bottom, he signed it.

J.R.: I think it does, I think it does.

L.M.: So maybe we can put it, you know, towards the end of the Second World War he started -

J.R.: I think that that's true.

L.M.: He carved some stuff for these dubs.

J.R.: He was carving them for people that were using them to hunt.

L.M.: Right.

J.R.: And I want to tell you that not even - well he's been dead six years, and I would say three years or four years, maybe five years before he died, he had an order, and he was very distressed about it, because he had an order for a lot of decoys to put weights in. You know, make the decoys, put the weights in, and he - remember he got so upset because he had so many to make and he, you know, he wasn't keeping up with the - because he was getting old. He wasn't doing them fast enough for them. They keep coming down to get them. So that was the only time that I ever knew that he did weighted ducks except like the one I have is what I'm getting at.

L.M.: There was a number of people carving, carving ducks.

J.R.: Yeah.

L.M.: In the 40's, it would've been Johnny Glen. He carved 5,000 decoys for the Cedar Point Club down -

R.S.: Well see, I think -

L.M.: August -

R.S.: Yeah, see Clifton probably got the idea knowing they did it, and then he got it off of them 'cause they had made these rough ducks to gun with, and I think he started after them.

J.R.: He was friends with Johnny Glen. He knew him.

R.S.: What did you say?

S.D.: How did he learn to paint?

J.R.: He had a lot of books. And he didn't mind looking it up when he wanted to know something. And he had all kinds of duck books.

R.S.: Yeah, I gave them all to each one of the family.

J.R.: Yeah, we have them. He had a book open whenever he was painting. He always had a book open with that duck there.

R.S.: And the time we, in our 50th wedding anniversary where we took the duck carving school, he took a course that was from — I don't know, was one guy, he had a book from him too. I can't remember his name.

L.M.: Do you think he would have gone around and visited Johnny Glen when he moved next to Jess Yury (phonetic)? He probably did, didn't he?

R.S.: I don't know 'cause Clifton got around.

J.R.: He was everywhere. As they got old —

R.S.: He knew Jess Yury then. Roger and Jess Yury he was very familiar with. And, of course, Mr. Johnny Glen was next door to Jess Yury, so I don't know how that worked.

J.R.: But as the friends got old, that always came to him for having their hair done. He gave shaves. And they got sick — every Wednesday, he was off half a day, and every Sunday, he was off. He would go to their house and cut their hair for nothing because they were sick.

R.S.: Anybody that was sick, he would usually take care of his customers. He'd go —

J.R.: He didn't take any money for that.

FLS.: I'd go with him, sit outside and read a book while he was doing it, you know. 'Cause we always had our Sunday afternoon ride. And so we just made that part of the —

J.R.: We had an old Ford, what year was that Ford? Do you remember? '46? No.

R.S.: We bought it when we were in the brick house, and it was — we lived there from '36 —

J.R.: '36 or '37 Ford.

R.S.: It was old when we got it, and we —

S.D.: Can we pause here real quick?

(Off record.)

R.S.: — time with Clifton after Women's Lib came around — we got to live with Women's Lib now because he was one of these same background — they'd think the men were —

J.R.: The reason she's saying that is my father built a 44-foot boat in this yard, and he then

took it on a truck. Emmet Wood took it down and put it overboard. And my father when he's - Sundays and his Wednesdays off, he ran fishing parties besides doing the barber shop and carving, and flying planes and whatever. And that's what she means. She would go down on the boat and help him paint it, and she would go down on the boat and go out with him, you know.

RS.: No, I mean I was thinking, you know, like when we first - the men, of course, I know God's words. The man is the head of the house, and - but Christ is the head of the man. But it also says that a man should love his wife as his own body, so no woman would mind that too much. (Laughter). So anyhow, that's the way that goes. But the men, when I married Clifton, the men, the women were kept like in their place, you know. The men were men, and you know, that's the way it was, wasn't it, Joanne?

J.R.: Yeah.

RS.: You can remember that far back, can't you?

J.R.: Yes.

RS.: In fact, I think your ex probably got a little taste of that.

J.R.: My ex has a great amount of that (Laughter). Oh, my.

S.D.: So you were talking about some of the activities that happened in the house.

R.S.: In the house, you either washed clothes on a board or gave them to a colored woman to wash. You see that basket over there, on that TV? That was my mother's wash, laundry basket. And we sent stuff to the colored house, you know, back then. But I didn't see my grandmother do that much. We used to have one wooden tub -

(BEGIN SIDE B.)

- and a wooden wash bench, and two other tubs like those big round sink tubs, and they would put them on. And every house had a rain barrel. Just, for instance, you can't see the back of - not on that side of the house, but on this side of the house, it was - there was a porch in the back, not on the side, and nearly ever house had a summer kitchen at the end of the porch or across the porch. And they did, they cooked -they'd have a coal stove or a gasoline stove in there that they cooked on in the summertime. And the summer kitchen would keep the heat out of the house. A lot of the summer

kitchens that were across the alleyways and stuff, they were like board planks like this up and down, and they were whitewashed, inside and out. And they'd get a colored woman to come in the springtime and whitewash them inside, and they move out there for the summer. They had pans and pots hanging around the walls, and just cooked out there. And that kept the house cool. No electric fans, no air condition, nothing like that.

J.R.: Tell her what you did, what was your duties when you first got up in the morning.

R.S.: When we first got up in the morning, the first order of the day, you make the beds, and you had like chambermaid duties upstairs and get that all straight. And you had lamps that you — newspapers down on the table, and you get your lamps and you trim the wicks and wash the lamp chimneys and fill them so they'd be ready for the next night Every house had — like you take Grayson Street, go down Main Street and Liberty Street. The gardens back to back, you know, 'cause each — and at the end of the gardens, there would be an outdoor toilet and a compost box beside the toilet. And everybody nearly had a garden. And the compost box, I guess, rotten potato peels and all that stuff, they can use that to put on the garden too. And —

J.R.: And the outhouse was also whitewashed, some of them. Well, most of them. And they had a big bag of lime in there with a scoop.

R.S.: Yeah, you had lime.

J.R.: And anybody that went in there had to dust through the holes with a scoop of lime, and it kept it, you know, dean.

R.S.: Yeah, kept it sort of sanitary. And as I say, these rain barrels, because water was a problem, everybody, they'd either have a dug well with a well box and a wooden pump, or they'd have a driven hard pitcher pump. Well you either got ironing water out of the pitcher pump, and the dug wells, every once in a while they had to be cleaned out, they had to be slugged — we used to call them snails, you know how they get around. It's a wonder we didn't all die, you know, when you think about these kind of things. And we didn't have any running water, nothing like that. But that rain barrel was nice soft water, and it caught water and helped with the laundry water, and also helped you, you washed your hair in it 'cause it was nice and soft But you had to take some cheesecloth or a strainer and strain the

wiggles out 'cause it would get these wiggles on top, you know, that make mosquitoes. That's how we made -

J.R.: You think you should cancel that, or is it okay?

S.D.: No, that's fine. And mosquitoes are a way of life on the Eastern Shore.

R.S.: Oh, indeed they are. And East Neck Island, they're the worst in the world. They take you -

J.R.: They have big enough ones at my house, you can - if you get the right one, you can go through the inner harbor on their back.

S.D.: In the early days of Gratitude, I've seen where they had, I guess they were loading, it's a picture that you have at the museum where they're loading and unloading produce and stuff at Gratitude. There's a big thing that says Rock Hall. Was Gratitude always considered Rock Hall, or was there -

R.S.: Maybe they called Rock Hall - Rock Hall - know they were - I don't know about that. I know that that street there was always called Gratitude.

L.M.: That's Lawton Avenue.

R.S.: Yeah.

L.M.: Right.

R.S.: That is Gratitude.

L.M.: Right.

R.S.: Was Gratitude. And the county wharf has always been right down there at Watermen's. I mean that's straight down Sharp Street after you cross this corner. Up here, we had - on the crossroads, Rock Hall Crossroads where George Washington's supposed to have come through here. And we had Downy's store (phonetic), it's still there. We had the store on this other corner across from Downy's store on the curve like. My great-grandfather Stephens who was my grandfather's father, he built that, he had that store, and he - inside of that store was the post office, like a little square cage in there. And he kept that store, but that was before my day. Across on the other corner where the firehouse is, there was Mr. Joe Downy's store, Joe Downy in Chestertown's grandfather. And it was a great big store and had an upstairs to it, and had hardware and all of that But I've seen a cage in the

middle of that store where they had the first bank. And then there was this little barber shop on like in a three-corner place right on this side of that place. Then behind in that whole big lot that goes clear down to the next property, the whole where the fire company lot is was where elementary school was, and it was two stories high. There were great big oak trees in the play yard, and they had long boards between the oak trees like so you could sit on them, and there was a toilet that sat up over against the fence next to Mr. Max Alexander's, the property going down Main Street, back in the corner. And it had one side for the girls and one side for the boys. And then on the other side of that fence was Mr. Max Alexander's house, and on the other side of his house was this two or three-story store. And he used to have an opening on for Christmas opening, like that And, you know, they'd give out stuff, orange or whatever, I guess. And he had stuff upstairs, and he had stuff downstairs. Then our Methodist church, going down toward the harbor, right behind the Methodist church was Mr. Matty Miller's store. And he had a Christmas opening, and they'd give you a candy cane or something and an orange. And it was, that was, big thing you all went, you know. They had the toys upstairs, and downstairs they had dress material and work clothes for the men, and groceries up front and candy and all that stuff.

J.R: The lines for the Santa Claus upstairs, I went there, would come out the store and up the street with kids because it was a big deal.

R.S.: It was a big deal. It wasn't anything else -

J.R.: It was a big deal. I mean we thought you couldn't dare miss that because Santa Clause was giving out a candy cane and an orange, and it was the most - and you were in the toy department that you never got to go into unless your mother was with you, and the lines were astronomical.

RS.: So then beside that, we had - I want to tell you about the movie hall. Where our news center is on the corner of Liberty and Sharp, that was a Junior Order of United American Mechanics. They -Junior - they used to call them Junior's Hall. And upstairs was the dance hall. That's where I met Clifton. And downstairs was a movie hall. And, of course, the men had- and the Juniors had their lodge hall. Down Main Street when you come to where that sailing place is where they have the sail loft and all, right on the corner of Chesapeake Avenue, that was a Knights of Pythias Hall. And there was Red Men Oddfellows and Knights of Pythias. My father belonged to all three. I don't know whether they

had the Oddfellows in Rock Hall. They had the Oddfellows up the county, but I know he — whether he belonged to Oddfellows or not, I don't know, but I know he belonged to all three, but I do know the Red Men and the Knights of Pythias were there. And I've been there — and the Daughters of America, I think, used to meet there up the stairs. And my Grandmother Stephens and I, she took me up there one time to some dinner they were having, and had her market basket or whatever on with the food in it, and we went up that stair. They had these stairs that were high — Lord, I couldn't even begin to get up and down. Same way with the junior hall. These, I don't know—run up and down those stairs and think nothing of it. Everybody did. I don't know how they did it But I mean they were the places. Now one time, right up here at the head of Route 20, you know where the grocery store is — am I wearing you down?

S.D.: No.

R.S.: At the grocery store now, that big grocery store, that was solid across there. It wasn't open, that road wasn't open then. And right at the head of that road that would come up from Route 20, there was a building there, and they said, now not in my day, but they said it had been a dance hall, and when — in my day, there was a man named Joe Larahead (phonetic), that had some kind of — he was a county machine man or something, so they moved that building from there around there, the water tower, it's still there, I guess. And Williams, Mr. Fred Williams and his sons built their Williams Brothers Garage there. Well then a little — I don't know how many years later. This is when I was a, when I was a teenager, I believe it was built there. Then later years, I guess they wanted to put the road through. So they put Williams Brothers over on that side of the road behind where the first house was. And I'm just trying to think about all these places we have here.

S.D.: What is —there's a house as you're coming in between Ford's and the Methodist church, it's got one, two, three —

RS.: Now wait a minute. Between where now?

S.D.: After you past Ford's and before you get to the Methodist church.

R.S.: Oh, you're talking about Wesley Chapel.

S.D.: Yeah.

R.S.: Okay.

S.D.: Okay. It's a big, and then smaller and then smallest, it's like one, two, three. It's like a row house, but there's one, two, three.

R.S.: Do you know what she's talking about?

J.R.: Which side of the street? Right?

S.D.: It's the right side of the street coming in.

J.R.: You mean it's on the corner?

S.D.: I'm not sure about that. It's just -

J.R.: Is it yellow?

S.D.: Yeah.

J.R.: Okay. It's that house that's almost across the street from the Wesley Chapel house. Elwood Boyer lived in it for a time.

R.S.: You mean that house that's got a long lane and goes up?

J.R.: Uh-huh (affirmative). I think that's what you mean. Elwood Boyer lived there with Mickey.

R.S.: Yeah. He did live there once.

J.R.: But I don't - she wanted to know where that came from, who lived there.

R.S.: I believe that was the Stephens' place, some of those Baltimore Stephens people.

S.D.: So it was Baltimore. It just looks different. It's just different looking.

R.S.: But it's - I don't know how you noticed it because it's back from the road.

S.D.: Because I saw the roofline.

R.S.: Well how -

S.D.: The roofline, I saw the roofline -

R.S.: Oh, the roofline. Oh, okay. Well way right opposite Wesley Chapel Graveyard, there's a long lane that goes way back, and it goes a low place that floods in between. You're not thinking about that are you? Way back.

S.D.: Yeah.

R.S.: It goes straight back where - what I'm - what Joanne and I are thinking about is kind of a

slanted road through it.

J.R.: Yeah. It's a yellow place, and it's across the street on a slant from Wesley Chapel. Not on the same side.

R.S.: But the lane is slanted too, isn't it?

J.R.: Yeah.

R.S.: Did you notice that?

J.R.: No. She looked at the roofline.

R.S.: Oh, okay. You can't look at everything when you're driving. That's for sure.

S.D.: How about the — they're like lithe small shotgun houses down by Rock Hall Seafood.

R.S.: Now wait a minute. Let me get my bearings straight

J.R.: Rock Hall Seafood. The clam house?

S.D.: Yes, the clam house.

J.R.: Okay. They had lots of —

L.M.: They're —

J.R.: Huh?

L.M.: Duffy's now.

R.S.: Oh, yeah. Chesapeake Avenue, down there?

J.R.: Yeah. I think some of them might have been originally shanties they built onto, weren't they?

L.M.: I think so.

J.R.: See, a lot of the men used to live in the shanties around the waterfronts. And but I think Nancy Duckett bought one of those places and built onto it Yeah, they're just like little extended shanty houses, I guess. And then George Muck and his wife built a lithe house next door for her mother to live in, you know.

S.D.: So that area, was there a lot of older men living in that area?

R.S.: Well they were closer, closer to the water. Not a lot of them. And down —

J.R.: They necessarily could have been low men, men who didn't have a wife, and didn't care,

and they could get closer to the water and go help somebody on a boat, or work for somebody on a boat. R.S.: Yeah. They all were men just lived alone in those places.

J.R.: They just didn't have a lot of money, and so they just put these shanties up.

R.S.: And sometimes these men would take these shanties and tow them behind a boat and take them up to bay shores and work out of there, didn't they?

J.R.: You see the boat -

S.D.: So these, so the difference between - were these the shanty boats that maybe had the boat part cut off or -

R.S.: No, they'd hook onto them, I think, didn't they? They towed them up there.

L.M.: They towed them.

R.S.: They towed them.

L.M.: Just like one up on the corner here.

S.D.: Yeah. I know the shanty boat, and I know the one that's at the corner of Hawthorne.

L.M.: Right.

S.D.: I'm wondering, because I thought that, that those might be converted shanty boats down there, but I've been told not, that you're -

R.S.: I'm not sure, but I think so. I think so.

J.R.: They might be.

R.S.: You could call Nancy Tolson up and ask her.

J.R.: Yeah, but they didn't really add that much on. Just the bedroom got a little bigger. They didn't have a lot they added on. That was pre -

R.S.: Somebody else had done something before that time.

J.R.: Yeah. Because I was in it when she bought it, and I've been in it just a couple weeks ago. It's a very nice little place for one person. It has a living room, and a little kitchen involved there, and it has a place for your washer and dryer, and a bathroom connected - two different rooms, and you go back to the bedroom. It's really a nice place for one person. Like something like you would like, you know.

L.M.: Patsy's place.
J.R.: Patsy's, yeah. I don't think - I don't think they were both. I don't think they're the shanties that they carried because the one down at Hawthorne and Route 20 is definitely a boat.
R.S.: Yeah, that's definitely one.
J.R.: That's definitely pulled.
R.S.: That was Mr. Crayton's.
J.R.: And what they did with those was they took them, when they seine hauled, they would take that boat and pull it and they would beach it, and they would seine haul there and they would go back there and sleep and make their dinners. If you got into the watermen's museum down next to Haven Harbor, they have lithe rooms made up to show you what they were like. You've been in there.
R.S.: Did they have one up there where the man is on your way to Rock Hall?
J.R.: Yes, that's another one. Yes. Right there on Route 20.
R.S.: Across from the grocery store.
J.R.: And Main Street
S.D.: Who did the one in Hawthorne belong to?
J.R.: What was that old man's name?
R.S.: Mr. George Crayton.
J.R.: Mr. George Crayton. Now I don't know if that's -
R.S.: But it's been a couple people had it since then 'cause he's been dead a long while.
S.D.: But he was the waterman that put it there?
R.S.: He lived there, and it would flood every time we - it flooded there all the time.
J.R.: It was a great place to put one because every time we have a lot of rain, it would look like it was all water.
R.S.: It would flood because, see, the Haven Crypt comes right up to North Hawthorne. I wouldn't want a house there for nothing. You know, they're building these houses high, but I still think it's a bad place to have them. And then we have the Haven, we have all these places.
S.D.: What would you want people to know about Rock Hall?

R.S.: Well we're sort of a close-knit town. —

J.R.: Move your hand

R.S.: Huh?

J.R.: Take your hand away from your mouth.

R.S.: A close-knit town. One thing that's nice about it, if you're really in trouble, I think somebody would sort of come to your rescue. Or they would —they wouldn't see you just sit and die and — away, they wouldn't see you on the street with no place to go, I don't think. I don't think they'd do that in Kent County period, would they?

J.R.: And when somebody dies, the food is brought to the hall or wherever the funeral is going to be. I mean nobody even has to ask for it. It just comes. We all stick together. And, you know, whoever is the closest, of course, knows what they need. But if somebody needed help or somebody couldn't do something, they're always willing to help, you know.

R.S.: It's a caring community. I'd say that.

J.R.: We all get along. I mean it's a fallacy that more things happen here in Rock Hall than happens anywhere else because I lived in Staten Island, New York. It happened there too, we just didn't know everybody it was happening to. And because it's so many people, everybody knows everybody —

R.S.: Knows everybody's business.

J.R.: Well everybody knows everybody's business in Staten Island, believe it or not

RS.: Did they?

J.R.: So I don't buy that, and I've always fought that because Rock Hall is not a bad place to live. It's a friendly place. There's a big sign as you come into town to tell you that

R.S.: I'll say this about it. A lot of people that might go away, but they come back. They come back to retire.

J.R.: Well that's that oyster mud. You get it on your feet, you will eventually come back.

R.S.: Yeah, I'd say they get this Rock Hall mud on them, and they have to — (laughter). But I mean its always been a caring community. Now our community's changing. We had —we used to know everybody in town. Of course, now I'm old, I don't get out much anyhow. But I mean there's so many

strange people in here now that didn't used to -

J.R.: But it still is a - the communication is great, even with the strangers.

R.S.: What did you say? The what's great?

J.R.: Communication.

R.S.: Yeah.

J.R.: That's why they're here. They enjoy the camaraderie we have. So, therefore, the communication is still there. Is that right, Larry?

L.M.: Yeah.

R.S.: Cut that off a minute. I want to tell you something.

(Off record.)

S.D.: Is there anything we've talked - that we haven't talked about that you want to add?

R.S.: I don't know. You know me. I just run my mouth all night (laughter). And it comes to you, you know. I can say we walked wherever we want to go. We walked to school, you know. Thought nothing about it. Just walked to school. We didn't live that far away. And then we'd come, at lunchtime, we'd come up on Main Street. And in that house were - let's see. There's a drug store, and there was a house attached to the drug store where Mr. Bender and his wife lived. The next place was where Alvin Suskin had his place. Well in my young days, Ms. Attie Satertfield and her husband had it. And then later, Mr. John Downy and his wife and family had it, and they had some kind of a lunch room. And when I was going to high school, Miss Florence and Mr. Russell Sewell had it. And we used to come there to get our lunch from school. And across the street where the Main Stay is, that was a post office on the side next to that lithe building that was a bank, post office on that side. And on the side next to Kline's, over there in that way, was a restaurant. And they lived behind the restaurant. Plus they had two apartments upstairs over the restaurant-

J.R.: Tell them what your mother did when your father died in that building.

R.S.: Oh. My mother was a Valedictorian - I don't think they had but nine grades in those days, but they were very strict teachers. And my mother was not a person that was outgoing at all. The Stephens are not. But anyhow, she was Valedictorian of her class. And she quit before she graduated

because she didn't want to be that So my father died when I'm 14, Claris is 11, and my mother is in her 30's. And she never been out to work at all. So, of course, I guess the whole town felt sorry for us and everything, and somehow she got this job as assistant postmaster in that part of the Main Stay. And then later, Miss Annie Durdington took— see, the Durdingtons owned Durdingtons store, the house adjoining Durdingtons store. Then there was this big bulking I'm talking about, Attie Satterfield's — Suskind's and all that. Well then next there was this house which is now Bay Breeze. Well at that point, it had a yard and a fence, going on the street It had a little square cupola, you've seen the lithe square cupolas out front I don't even think it had a roof. And there's a porch over the side, and an entranceway from the side porch. I don't remember anything much about the inside, although I spent a lot of time there when I was a baby, according to pictures. But anyway, Miss Annie Durdington, who was Mr. Ben's wife, I don't know whether Mr. Ben's still living there, they took that house and they built onto it and made that front, and they had a, like a five and dime store or something, and then they had — I don't know whether the post office was first or the store was first, but then the post office was there. So my mother did spend part of the time as an assistant postmaster in the Main Stay, and part in the — part of that new building. And I don't know when they moved around on Liberty Street

J.R.: Tell them about the Milliner's store.

R.S.: Milliner's?

J.R.: Yes.

R.S.: Clear down to the end of — on the end of — you know where you go into the Civic Center, across the street there as you go into Catholic Avenue on this corner here closest to town, that house, remember when the house — the front porch upstairs was falling off, do you remember that far back? Well anyhow, there was a house there, and there was a lithe — across the yard, there was a little shop on the edge of the road, and Aunt Mary Ashley, who was my — who's brother was my Grandmother Stephens, her husband was my — my Great Grandmother Stephens brother. And she sold cotton and hats and things like that She was an old lady then. And then right up at the front of Chesapeake Avenue, that house you face on Main Street when you come up there, like a bay window open, well Mr. and Mrs. Tom Joyner, she was a Masland and that was her second husband I guess, she had a milliner's

place there too. And then right up here across from the end of Judith Vine Avenue, that house that sits there, it had one place like a bay window storefront, I don't know what it's got now, and I think she had a little milliner's store there that Ms. Masland Joyner before that. So we had some things around Rock Hall.

S.D.: I think we're getting ready to run out of C.D.

R.S.: Yeah, I've run your ears off too. (Laughter).

S.D.: Thank you very much.

(End of interview.)