

Interview with Alice Haddaway and daughter Mary Jane Fairbank, 8/24/88. Present were Beverly Abribrat and Linda Girod.

Abribrat:

Because, apparently, it was kind of a private retreat.

Fairbank:

It was. It was the predecessor to Camp David. It was for the democrats. It was a democratic club, and it was their weekend retreat.

Abribrat:

The information I have, some of which is contradictory, said that it was established in 1933, when Roosevelt had been elected, but he hadn't quite taken office.

Fairbank:

It was earlier than that.

Abribrat:

Earlier than that? Do you know when it was established?

Fairbank:

You have some of those papers that, I think, give you the date. She has them in the kitchen. I think my father went over there in 1929.

Abribrat:

Did it start mostly as a senate thing?

Fairbank:

It was a democratic club.

Abribrat:

Just a democrat; it didn't matter if you were a legislator or....

Fairbank:

It was for politicians in Washington, congressmen and senators. Roosevelt came there in 1936, and Truman in 1945.

Haddaway:

I could tell you in just a couple minutes. It's right here in this book.

Fairbank:

It seems to me that 1927 rings a bell.

Abribrat:

When?

Fairbank:
1927 ...1929 ...I don't know.

Abribrat:
You have the brochure.

Haddaway:
I think this will give you all the information you need. It tells you when it first started, and all about it. I can't see it. It's right in front of me. We went over in 1937. That's when we had the big Roosevelt party, in '40 and '45.

Abribrat:
When you went over there, Mrs. Haddaway, was the activity mostly like hunting and fishing? Was that why they came here? Or did they come here for political meetings?

Haddaway:
Both.

Abribrat:
Both. So it was kind of half business, and half pleasure?

Haddaway:
That's right.

Abribrat:
Ok, '37 was when you and your husband, Barnum, went over there.

Fairbank:
1929 was the year.

Abribrat:
1929. I was going to ask you if we could borrow your file of memorabilia, and maybe make Xerox copies of some of this stuff.

Haddaway:
That's the only one that I have in existence, and I wouldn't want to get away from it. You can look through it and read it. It has pictures of the club inside. This is the outside of the club.

Abribrat:
Now this is the one that burned down, is that right?

Fairbank:
That's right.

Haddaway:
'46. In March of '46.

Abribrat:
How did it burn down?

Haddaway:
It caught from the electrical wiring.

Fairbank:
This is the front porch. This is the Presidential suite. We had one skeet range here.

Abribrat:
I was thinking that it was on this part, is that right?

Fairbank:
No, this one. This is right.

Abribrat:
It was on this one?

Fairbank:
Yes, this is the small island. You see, this is practically washed away now. There is very little....

Abribrat:
There is still some of this island left here, is that right?

Fairbank:
There's some of this one left, but very little, and this one's gone.

Abribrat:
Tell me if this whole thing was called jefferson island, or was it that one right there, was Jefferson Island?

Fairbank:
This is called Jefferson Island. This small one is Coaches Island....

Haddaway:
And Poplar Island.

Fairbank:
And Poplar Island. These are the charter members of the club; Roosevelt....

Abribrat:
I do have a list of this, so I was wondering....

Fairbank:
Charter members?

Abribrat:

Yes, in fact I have a copy of this which the Talbot Historical Society still has. I don't know that I have all of those, though.

Fairbank:

Well, these are members, and these are the charter members.

Haddaway:

here's a list. Here's where you can find out all you want to know about the club, the beginning of the club.

Abribrat:

Thank you. I'd better put on my glasses. I just discovered that I can't really see.

Girod:

Was this club open year-round?

Haddaway:

Yes. They came in the Summer for fishing, and relaxation in the wintertime.

Abribrat:

I hadn't realized that the name had officially been changed to Jefferson Island Club, but that's what it says here "by act of the legislature of Maryland." Let me see if I can copy these. It looks like this little thing here was a special occasion.

Haddaway:

Yes. On the inside is a list of visitors that were invited. That was when we had that Roosevelt ... no, Truman party.

Abribrat:

The host was Russell Arundel. It says his guest of the day was James N. Barnes. He was assistant to President Roosevelt.

Haddaway:

Is that the 1945 one?

Abribrat:

Here it is "Seafood Outing, Jefferson Island;" 9-22 or 23, 1945.

Haddaway:

Yes, that's when Truman was there.

Abribrat:

Oh, my goodness. It was a big party.

Haddaway:

You'd better believe it. And that's only a third of them that were

there.

Abribrat:

Now, who did all the cooking for all this?

Haddaway:

Longfellow's did some. A lot of it was outside barbecue. We did all the serving for the dinner at night.

Girod:

When you say Longfellow's did some of the cooking....

Fairbank:

That was the original Longfellow's restaurant in St. Michaels.

Haddaway:

The old one.

Fairbank:

The old Longfellow's, not the current one. It was on the corner, by the Maryland National Bank. Mulberry Street.

Abribrat:

So, the name Longfellow's goes back quite some time. Gee, there's so many people in here, I wouldn't know where to start. I see General Omar Bradley.

Haddaway:

They were coming and going.

Abribrat:

Ellsworth Bunker, he's still around; the ex-ambassador. The thing is, I don't know the prominent Maryland politicians, since I was not here, but some of these people I know.

Fairbank:

Well, Louis Goldstein was probably there. He's still around.

Haddaway:

Who?

Fairbank:

Louis Goldstein. He's still around

Haddaway:

He's the state comptroller.

Abribrat:

Yes.

Fairbank:

I don't see his name. He may not have been in that one, but was there for everything that went on over there.

Abribrat:

Tom Powell, was there. I was from Texas. I remember him. He was a judge. That is amazing. Tom's D.L. Saunder Jr. Is that a Maryland politician?

Fairbank:

Yes, Baltimore politician. I started to say his name....

Abribrat:

Is he the one that just died here recently?

Fairbank:

Is that Junior, or the third?

Abribrat:

Junior.

Fairbank:

He just died. He was mayor of Baltimore at the time.

Abribrat:

Gee, there's so many people, I can't even.... Here's all these Dodges; Arthur C. Dodge. James O. Easlan, now, he was a Postmaster General, I think.

Haddaway:

I don't know, they were able to just guess. I knew all the club members, but I don't....

Abribrat:

The Honorable.... I think he was the postmaster general then. The Honorable James Forestall. I knew who he was.

Fairbank:

And I've heard so many people say that he was such an S.O.B., really.

Abribrat:

Really?

Fairbank:

And I adored that man. he would sit on the bank with me, and ask me questions about the island and the surrounding areas. He listened to me like I was an adult. I thought he was wonderful. I was impressed.

Abribrat:
How old were you then?

Fairbank:
Fourteen or fifteen.

Abribrat:
That must have been really....

Fairbank:
It was, because he listened, and i have never forgotten it.

Abribrat:
Who else do you remember that you particularly liked?

Fairbank:
There were so many. Senator Gary Halls, who was the senator from Missouri, found out when i was 11 years old, that I had never been to Washington to see all the things to see. And he insisted, that was not right, that I had to go to Washington, and see everything, and I went to his home for the weekend, and he had his Chauffeur take me all over Washington, and he would pick me up, so I could see the monuments out the windows. I went places where the general public usually aren't allowed to go. I went up in the statue, up on top of the capital, which is closed, and looked out the eyes of the statue.

Abribrat
You must have been a little overwhelmed by this treatment.

Fairbank:
I was. No, I really wasn't, because I was too young.

Haddaway:
Not old enough to realize what it was all about.

Fairbank:
I spilled peas down Harry Truman's back.

Girod:
You're the one (laughter).

Abribrat:
We had several different versions of that story; that it was either you or Mary Jane.

Girod:
I think it was both of them (laughter).

Fairbank:

I was serving peas, and I had two bowls. Well, in each hand....

Haddaway:

That was at the same party.

Fairbank:

That was at this party.

Abribrat:

that was at this party?

Fairbank:

That party right there. I reached over to put one bowl on the table, and I promptly poured this bowl down his back, and i stood there with my eyes glistening, hoping the floor would swallow me. And he turned around, and he saw my face, And he put his arm around me, and he said "Aw, hell, honey, don't worry about it, you'll have a story to tell your grandchildren."

Abribrat:

And you do (laughter).

Fairbank:

And that saved my life, and I was all ready to break into tears. they were just ready to spill over.

Girod:

How old were you at that point? That was at this same party?

Fairbank:

That was ...1946.

Haddaway:

That was at that same party; 1945.

Girod:

September 23rd.

Haddaway:

That's Mr. Anger. They called me Miss Bunsy. My husband was nicknamed Bunsy, and they called me **Miss** Bunsy.

Girod:

Mr. Bunsy? How do you spell Bunsy?

Haddaway:

B-U-N-S-Y.

Girod:

Why did they call him that, do you think?

Fairbank:

(laughing) There is a reason.

Haddaway:

It's a funny story. He was very famous for buns.

Fairbank:

When he was a kid, he worked at a bake shop.

Haddaway:

He went to the bake shop they used to have down on Tilghman before school. Every morning before school he'd get a pocket full of buns to take to school with him.

Fairbank:

He'd sweep for the man. That was his spending money. He'd sweep out the bakery and clean it up before he went to school, and they'd give him a bun.

Haddaway:

Then my son, they'd call little Bunsy.

Fairbank:

And he was on his way to school with a bun in his pocket. So, the kids started calling him "Buns."

Haddaway:

He said "Miss Bunsy, I'll give you so much money to set all these members on the front porch." And I said "ok, we'll try it." And I had a hundred and... fifteen, maybe a hundred and twenty people sitting on the front porch, all for dinner that night.

Fairbank:

I don't remember how many stayed for dinner.

Haddaway:

So, you know we were a little crowded, but I did it.

Fairbank:

Then after dinner they took some of the tables out, and pulled the piano out, and Morton Downey was there, Morton Downey Sr. Now this Morton Downey Jr. is nothing like his father. And he sat until the piano started playing.

Haddaway:

Mexicali Rose. I never will forget that.

Fairbank:

And I went to clean some of the tables off, and he said "here, young lady, you can sing," and they picked me up, and sat me up on top of the piano....

Haddaway:
She was a little thing.

Fairbank:
And he played Oh. What a Beautiful Morning.

Abribrat:
And this was Morton Downey playing?

Fairbank:
Morton Downey playing. And I sat up there, and I was smart enough to keep my mouth shut. I sang along.

Haddaway:
She sang Mexicali Rose, too. Don't you remember that?

Abribrat:
Oh my goodness, even Lyndon Johnson was at this party; Estes Key Barber; I guess about anybody we wanted to name would probably be there.

Fairbank:
That's the truth. There were a lot of V.I.P.'s at that one.

Abribrat:
General of the Army George C. Marshal; Maury Mavrick, that's a notorious Texas politician. Look at all these people. This was to honor....

Fairbank:
Truman.

Abribrat:
See, this says "In Honor of James M. Barnes," who was Truman's assistant. What authority; Wilbur Mills.

Haddaway:
It wasn't Barney, believe me.

Abribrat:
I just can't believe that you can feed all this many people without ...I mean the island's too small.

Fairbank:
Really, all the 600 people who were there, were there for lunch. They barbecued a side of beef, and Longfellow's brought in the

potato salad, and stuff like that. Then the guests of Mr. Eringle stayed for dinner. The rest went back. We shuttled people back and forth to the mainland all afternoon.

Haddaway:
And by plane.

Abribrat:
The Honorable Claude Pepper. He's still around.

Girod:
Would you happen to have a menu from this, showing what was served?

Fairbank:
I don't think so. I remember we had peas for dinner. I don't remember what else we had.

Haddaway:
I remember one thing distinctly; I had pans piled up in the corner of the kitchen. I didn't have anyplace else to put them; from the floor to the ceiling.

Girod:
From that same party?

Abribrat:
I can understand that. The Honorable John Joe Spartan; I know him, but I don't know why I know him. General J.W. Stillwell; he was head of the marine corps at that time, I think. You probably have the only one of these in existence, too.

Fairbank:
Yes we do, unless some of the guests held on to their programs. I don't know.

Abribrat:
And Miller Tidings, now he's from Maryland, isn't he?

Fairbank:
Yes.

Abribrat:
And I wonder what he was at that time; Maybe Senator Tidings?

Fairbank:
Then his son was Joe Tidings. He ran for senate, too.

Haddaway:
There's a lot of memories attached to those two pieces of material.

Abribrat:

The Honorable Carl Vincent; now I used to work for Tenneco, Newport News Shipbuilding; they had a submarine named after him. I don't know what he did ... but he got a submarine named after him for some reason or another.

Girod:

What's his name?

Abribrat:

Carl Vincent. And Fred M. Vincent. I don't know what he did.

Fairbank:

Fred Vincent was.... was he the postmaster general?

Abribrat:

That must have been a real party. How were people invited to these affairs? Was this strictly a men's....

Haddaway:

It was supposed to have been, yes.

Abribrat:

Men's club, and....

Haddaway:

Yes, there were very few ladies there.

Girod:

Did Roosevelt bring his girlfriend?

Haddaway:

No.

Girod:

Just curious.

Fairbank:

No, Roosevelt was dead when this party transpired.

Fairbank:

Yes.

Haddaway:

This was the Truman Party. I was at Redman when Roosevelt was there, but I was over there.

Abribrat:

Now, I have down that you came in 1937.

Haddaway:
My husband did.

Fairbank:
We went over there in '37.

Haddaway:
I didn't go when he did.

Fairbank:
No, we went before that.

Haddaway:
No, that the year that social security came about, wasn't it?

Fairbank:
Thirty-six.

Haddaway:
Well, that the year he went, because he got his first social security check there. That's how I remember that.

Abribrat:
Ok, then you joined him later?

Haddaway:
I guess it was about three years later, was it Mary Jane, when I went?

Fairbank:
No, we went in '37, because I was in second grade.

Haddaway:
That's right. My son used to bring the boat back and forth. Him and her used to come over in a little boat.

Abribrat:
Where did you leave out of, here at Sherwood, or...?

Fairbank:
Yes.

Haddaway:
They were over there with us.

Abribrat:
I mean from the mainland. Where did you....

Haddaway:
Oh. Down at Sherwood; Lowe's Wharf. They'd go back and forth until

he graduated from high school, in St. Michaels.

Abribrat:

He had to make that trip every day?

Haddaway:

Every day.

Abribrat:

It seems so much trouble, but I guess it's not.

Haddaway:

Well, every body else in Talbot County's never done it, but us.

Abribrat:

Now, this is Varnold Jr.?

Haddaway:

Varnold Jr. Eugene is his They'd both come over in a little boat. He was captain, and they'd go back and forth in a little motor boat to school every day.

Girod:

Herbert O'Connor was there, the Governor of Maryland.

Abribrat:

What was his name?

Girod:

Herbert O'Connor.

Haddaway:

Except in wintertime....

Girod:

Colonel Wallace Graham, he was the physician to the president. Charles Luckman was president of Pepsident. Ralph B. Lewis was Elizabeth Arden. Everybody was there.

Haddaway:

When the weather was bad, they stayed with my mother in Claiborne.

Girod:

Morton Downey.

Abribrat:

What do you have, an autograph book?

Girod:

Yes. It's got everything in it.

Abribrat:
Oh, let me see your autograph book.

Abribrat:
In fact, can we just look at what you have, and take notes? We won't take it away. We just want to look at it.

Haddaway:
At what?

Abribrat:
Your clippings from when you were....

Haddaway:
Oh my gosh, it would take you a week.

Fairbank:
This was Virgil Chapman. He was a congressman from....

Abribrat:
Well, I guess I really have to just scan it.

Haddaway:
This is the articles from the Sun paper. I'll tell you what's here. Turn that light on first.

Girod:
General Lewis B. Hershey. Fred M. Vincent was secretary of the treasury.

Haddaway:
There's so much stuff here.

Abribrat:
I do have a copy of this article.

Haddaway:
I would imagine that with all that....

Abribrat:
Well, this article is mostly about the island itself. My problem has been finding things that were specific about this club. So much of it usually just mentions the club in passing when it gives the history of the island.

Haddaway:
All I know about the people you've got right in that book that she has. Some of my essays from high school are there, but I know that's not interesting.

Abribrat:
Oh, it might be.

Haddaway:
No way.

Abribrat:
Saved it for posterity, here.

Haddaway:
I think that these are just pictures of neighbors here. They are so old and right rotten.

Abribrat:
Well, that's why I was hoping our curator might copy them before they disappear. He's got a lab set up, and a photographer there that photographs, makes new negatives, and restores these things, before they disintegrate entirely.

Haddaway:
Here are some pictures of my son and some of the gunners getting ready for gunning.

Abribrat:
Now, that would be a really important picture.

Haddaway:
That's my son right there. You can hold it if you want.

Abribrat:
Would you consider letting us try to make a negative from this? Do you have a good copy? We could give you a good copy of it. Because I don't think it's going to last much longer in its present state.

Haddaway:
There should be a date on the bottom of that picture.

Abribrat:
And what they can do is, once they take the negative off they can make a fairly clean print from that. But this is a very great valuable picture right there.

Haddaway:
What got that picture off of there?

Abribrat:
The Sunday Star Washington D.C. I'll tell you what; if you don't want to let go of it, the other thing I could do, except this paper's out of business, isn't it? The Washington Star no longer exists.

Haddaway:

Well, the Washington Post, I don't want anything to do with it. I'll tell you right now.

Abribrat:

Well, this is the Star. And I was saying I could ask the Star, but I don't think it exists anymore.

Girod:

They have a building, over there on New York Avenue, as you go down towards Washington.

Abribrat:

Is that the Star?

Girod:

Yes. It started up again, and my guess is they have archives as well.

Abribrat:

December 22, 1940 Washington Star.

Fairbank:

We had some people from the Washington Post that came. They wanted an interview, and we talked to them. And I was almost ready to sue.

Abribrat:

Did they publish something, or not?

Fairbank:

They did. What information we gave them, they published accurately, but to make the story interesting and readable, you would have thought none of us had seen the inside of a school. That's the truth.

Abribrat:

Oh, you're kidding.

Fairbank:

And it has just turned us off to giving anybody any information whatsoever.

Abribrat:

I could tell you were reluctant when I called.

Fairbank:

And that's why.

Abribrat:

What we're trying to do is.... How do I say it? Is preserve you as

a resource, because when people who have this in their memory are gone, it's gone forever.

Fairbank:

That's true. We don't have anyone around that were there during the presidential heyday of the club.

Abribrat:

So we people know that. We have a big readership; 4,000, almost 5,000 members, the majority of whom live on the western Shore of Maryland. We have a lot of eastern Shore residents, and the rest of our members are in surrounding states like Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia.... They are history buffs, I guess you could call them, and this magazine that we send is scholarly in intent. We try to pattern it after the Smithsonian. It really is well read. I would say it appeals to people who have feelings about this area.

Fairbank:

Well, the one story that offended me so was.... He wrote it to make it a quick read, you know? But he wrote so that we all came out as a bunch of dumb country bumpkins. He asked me how many children I had, for instance. And I told him I had 4. He said "how old are they?" And I said "well, I have one in college, one in high school, one in middle school, and one in kindergarten." And he printed it that when he asked Mrs. Fairbank, age 39, how many children she had she said "I got 4. I got one in college. I got one in high school. I got one in middle school. And i got one in kindergarten." That's how he wrote it, and that to me was very offensive.

Abribrat:

I don't blame you. What a jerk.

Haddaway:

He made my husband look like he was stupid.

Fairbank:

And when the Washington Post journalist came back the next time, I went to my mother, and practically ran him out of town.

Haddaway:

I was so mad, when I saw him I didn't know what to do.

Abribrat:

I don't blame you. That's irresponsible journalism.

Fairbank:

I think so, too. I really do.

Abribrat:

This picture is just about to fall apart. It is a wonderful.

Haddaway:
That one is of the clubhouse.

Abribrat:
Yes, this one. As they forget the world's headaches. Official retreat, mostly reserved for recreation. Latchkey's always on President Roosevelt. Did anybody else ever use his room when he wasn't there?

Haddaway:
Sure.

Fairbank:
Not too many people.

Haddaway:
They had Coast Guard and every other kind of officer all around that whole island when they had that party.

Fairbank:
They had machine guns set up as security.

Abribrat:
Oh really?

Haddaway:
Even when I went to dress for bed I had a security guard right by my side.

Abribrat:
I was going to **ask** you that, if when all these dignitaries were out there, if they didn't have a lot of secret service....

Fairbank:
They did. They had machine guns set up around that island everywhere.

Haddaway:
They had us shut up in the bedrooms with secret service.

Fairbank:
Yes, secret service was all over the place.

Haddaway:
I'll tell you, it was something else.

Abribrat:
I wouldn't think that would be too much fun.

Haddaway:

I didn't like it too much, but it had to be done.

Fairbank:

In the kitchen when you were preparing food, the secret service would be standing right over your shoulder.

End of Side 1 of Tape

a:

..Exactly everything that was served, food-wise, but it says right here that they had 500 cases of Budweiser, 300 cases of Mount Vernon straight rye, 50 cases of bourbon, and 100 cases of Vat 69, 30 bartenders, people to play the piano, sing and dance.

Girod:

Alright!

Haddaway:

That's true.

Abribrat:

Let me see if I don't have this mailing list.... Now this fellow, I don't know who he is. Carol Newcomb, I have one article on him.

Fairbank:

He's dead now. His wife moved to Richmond this year.

Abribrat:

That was one article we have. Now let's see, we have some others. Here it is. No, this is Perry Cooper.

Haddaway:

He had no connection to the club, or if he did, it was before my time.

Abribrat:

It says he worked at the Poplar Island Gun Club in the 1930's. maybe this was before.

Haddaway:

That was before then, I guess.

Fairbank:

Maybe before we went over there.

Haddaway:

He's still living. Perry's still living.

Fairbank:

That's Perry Cooper you have there.

Abribrat:

Well, I was wondering if this could possibly be the same guy. This is more about just the island itself. This is Washington Post, but it's all about the island, not about the club. My husband calls the Washington Post the Washington Daily Worker. He thinks they're so liberal, and so bad. Now this one is from the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, which shows Archie C. Taylor, Archie Jr., and Maxwell Taylor.

Haddaway:

They used to live on there before Perry Cooper did. One of the boys drowned down here at Lowe's Wharf, one of those Taylor boys. He fell overboard and drowned.

Abribrat:

I was wondering if Maxwell Taylor was the same fellow that was the general, but I guess not. What is this one? Oh, this is the Washington Post.

Girod:

1983, was that about when they interviewed you?

Fairbank:

It could have been. No, I think it was a lot earlier than that.

Abribrat:

There's nothing in here.... And you can't really see it. Apparently it was right after somebody bought it; Irving Av. Does that name ring a bell?

Fairbank:

He's a lawyer, I think. They just bought it to hunt there.

Abribrat:

Right. Not to establish a....

Fairbank:

I think there were six lawyers from Washington that bought it, just until.... They know it's going to erode away, but they think they can get their moneys worth out of it before then.

Abribrat:

Is this somebody that owns it now?

Fairbank:

Poplar Island, the back island....

Haddaway:

I understand that Jefferson Island's been sold again.

Abribrat:

I don't know if I have that article that someone wrote.... I was going to ask you if you had a picture of him that we could publish with this article.

Haddaway:

Who?

Abribrat:

Your Father.

Haddaway:

There's a picture of him in that paper there.

Abribrat:

I noticed that, and I would like.... I don't know if it was this one or the other one that I thought was such a great picture. I think it was the other one. These things are so fragile.

Fairbank:

Here's a picture our Father before he died standing out on the dock.

Abribrat:

He was really a nice-looking man.

Haddaway:

He was when he was younger.

Abribrat:

Well, he is when he is older. The older I get, the more appreciative I become of nice-looking older men.

Haddaway:

He'd be 85 now.

Abribrat:

He looks like a strong man.

Haddaway:

Or would he be 86? Born May 1902.

Abribrat:

This was published in the Washington Post. If I could get a photograph instead of a reprint, I could see if the post....

Haddaway:

That might be the article that I would like to forget was ever published.

Abribrat:

It might be, because it says "see Tales, page 8 column 1."

Fairbank:

Do you have that one over there that Reverend Alister wrote?

Haddaway:

Me?

Fairbank:

Yes.

Haddaway:

I don't think so. But these were taken out here on this dock.

Abribrat:

Well, that's pretty similar to the one that you just showed me.

Haddaway:

There's an article in this Sun Magazine somewhere.

Fairbank:

Here's the article Reverend Alister wrote. That has some information in it.

Abribrat:

I have this one. Wasn't that the one where you didn't know that the fellow was going to do it, then it just appeared.

Fairbank:

He was our minister. And that's the one about Miss Bertha Sinclair growing up on Poplar Island.

Fairbank:

Here's F8, were you looking for that one?

Abribrat:

I think so. It says "continued on F9." No, this is it right here. "Jefferson Island, where Truman played the piano." This is F8. It says "continued on F9." And it's continued from F1. August 13 1970, Washington Post. Now this is interesting right here. It says "did you ever hear of the time that the senator from Nevada sat in the clubhouse after a few drinks, and shot out windows with twin pearl-handled revolvers? Or the time President of the United States got half the members of congress outdoors in their pajamas early one morning help him restrain a fish?"

Haddaway:

Yes, I remember that. I remember a lot of things....

Fairbank:

This F8 is the article that I didn't like at all.

Abribrat:

The one I'm reading from?

Fairbank:

I don't think I have the whole article.

Abribrat:

Well, part of it is over here. This says "Or the time that Talula Bankhead shot two red foxes on the run.

Fairbank:

Yes, that's the one. What do you have, F8?

Abribrat:

I've got F1, and I think this is the first page of this. Yes, this is it. I've got everything but F9.

Fairbank:

Well, I have F8. I don't have F9 either.

Abribrat:

I've got F8, too.

Girod:

Sounds like a bingo game.

Fairbank:

It sure does (laughter).

Abribrat:

I have everything but F9. Do you remember Talula Bankhead?

Fairbank:

I remember Talula.

Abribrat:

"The congressman from Kentucky drank a fifth of whiskey before dinner, and then almost drowned in the mashed potatoes.

Haddaway:

Oh, yes. I remember that very well.

Abribrat:

Who was he?

Haddaway:
Virgil Chapman.

Fairbank:
Virgil Chapman.

Abribrat:
Was he sitting at the table?

Haddaway:
He was sitting at the table, all of a sudden he began to faint. One of the boys that was working with us, he jumped up, and he caught him right under the arms, and the boy laid him right out on the floor. He was so drunk, he couldn't stand up.

Abribrat:
I guess these guys got out there and just figured they would get away from it all, and escape, not only physically, but mentally.

Haddaway:
But that kind of stuff, it is sort of personal to me, I don't think they would want anyone to know....

Abribrat:
I don't think so either. Well, my biggest problem, I think, with this article, is going to be pictures, because it is so difficult to get them. Could we make a print of one of these? Do you trust us to take this and make a print of this, because that would be a very easy one.

Haddaway:
Oh, yes. Pick that one out that you want, instead of taking them all.

Abribrat:
Well, these are pretty much alike. Either one of those would be fine, because.... Actually, I like that, too, because it shows more of his face.

Haddaway:
Or this one down here in the corner is not too bad. You can see better than I can.

Abribrat:
This one is a little sharper.

Fairbank:
These are the negatives from the....

Abribrat:

That's a contact sheet. What we do is we shoot a negative of it, blow it up, and probably crop it a little bit. Not the picture, but the negative.

Fairbank:

I believe that is a better one of him. I like this it's kind of casual, but you can't see his face as well. That looks more like my Father.

Abribrat:

And here's a picture of the two of you.

Fairbank:

Yes. That was 1968, so that was two years before he died.

Abribrat:

When did he die?

Fairbank:

1972 [sic] .

Abribrat:

If we could make a copy of this, that would be super. And then I was going to ask you if there was any way that you let us take this and make a copy of it. And I'm not sure that it would come out, because it is sepia, but I think they could probably get a good copy of this picture, I'm not so sure about this one. This one down that's got your son....

Haddaway:

My husband, he's in there.

Girod:

"John P. Stafford..."

Fairbank:

Jack Stafford.

Girod:

"...Gene Haddaway, son of the caretaker...."

Abribrat:

I think they could get a copy of this one. I don't think the rest are in good enough shape that they could.

Haddaway:

There's John B. Gordon there. He was secretary of.... [?1

Fairbank:

It is strange. I didn't know his children at all. I didn't even

know he had children. And my daughter was working at Chesapeake House, my youngest daughter, and she had a table she was waiting on, and they were asking her questions about Poplar Island. And she said "well, I don't know too much about it. My Mother does, and my Grandmother." She said "well, who is your Mother?" And she said "she was a Haddaway, and she lived on Poplar island when it was a club, and my Grandmother and my Grandfather managed it. My Grandfather is dead, but my Grandmother still lives in Sherwood." She said "ask your Mother if she remembers John B. Gordon. I'm his daughter." And I certainly do remember John B. Gordon. He's in all of those sepia pictures. What?

Haddaway:
Is he still living?

Fairbank:
I don't think so. She said "that was my Father," so I took it to mean that he was dead.

Haddaway:
I do remember him well.

Fairbank:
He was there an awful lot.

Girod:
That should be a great one for the book, too.

Abribrat:
Yes, that would just be great. If we could just save it.

Fairbank:
As long as she gets that back, I don't think that she would object to your trying.

Abribrat:
I can guarantee that you will get it back just like this.

Haddaway:
Well, that's alright.

Abribrat:
And along with it, a good black-and-white print.

Fairbank:
Good.

Abribrat:
Because they are used to restoring these very old photographs

Fairbank:

Well, I was about 28 years old then.

Haddaway:

Do you want to cut one of these out? These two are just the same, aren't they?

Abribrat:

Actually, this one is a little sharper, and it shows more of him, so I prefer the one on top. And we'll give you back prints of that one, too.

Girod:

Do you have scissors?

Fairbank:

Upstairs, do you want to cut it?

Abribrat:

You want to **ask** these ladies if they have a recipe.

Girod:

Well, let me just tell you why I'm here. I'm in charge of a project at the museum. They're putting together a cookbook. It's really more of a cookbook, because there are going to be historical narratives of the region. For example, I've just gotten done with a steamboating section where we talk about the boarding houses in Claiborne, and the steamboats that used to come over. And we're telling our story with a food angle, because it is a cookbook, so there are some recipes that help tell the stories of the boarding houses. And my question of you ladies is, first of all, who were your cooks?

Fairbank:

My mother was the cook.

Girod:

You were the cook. And were there specialties, or special recipes that you considered a staple there that you served a lot, or was on demand, and if so, what would that be?

Haddaway:

No, It was mostly seafood....

Fairbank:

Seafood or lamb. Seafood or leg of lamb, that was their main meat that they asked for.

Girod:

Do you have a leg of lamb recipe that you used? Or was it just all in your head?

Haddaway:

I don't go for recipes, really. Unless it's a new one that i'm not accustomed to.

Girod:

Now these things that people hunted, did they bring back their game, and **ask** you to prepare it?

Haddaway:

Once in a while they'd want a wild duck cooked. Now don' **t ask** me how to cook it, because they wanted it raw.

Girod:

Aaaag!

Haddaway:

Half raw.

Girod:

Well, that's disgusting.

Fairbank:

It **is**.

Haddaway:

It just made me sick as a dog.

Fairbank:

We had one man over there that had a goose he had killed, and he wanted it hung on the side of the building, by the head, until the body dropped off.

Girod:

Uuug!

Fairbank:

And then prepared.

Girod:

Aaaag!

Fairbank:

I wouldn't touch it. And I certainly would not put it in a **cookbook**.

Girod:

Yes. Now let me **ask** you this, I know that in one of the articles

there was wild turkey that was hunted over there, too. Did you ever prepare a wild turkey?

Haddaway:
Yes.

Girod:
Do you have a narrative recipe that you could share on that?
Haddaway:
It was awful.

Fairbank:
No, because it was so awful grassy and garlicky.

Girod:
Garlicky because of what they eat?

Fairbank:
Sure, they ate wild grass and onions.

Haddaway:
To me just cleaning one would be a monumental task. Of course, our colored boy used to do all that. Rufus, we used to call the man.

Girod:
Well, do you prepare it like you do a regular turkey?

Haddaway:
Exactly like a turkey you would buy.

Fairbank:
You should have smelled it; onions and garlic.

Abribrat:
Really gamey taste I guess.

Fairbank:
Grassy, garlicky taste.

Girod:
Well, let me **ask** you this. In your food preparations over at the club, was there a special dish that you enjoyed preparing, such as dessert; something you counted as your specialty?

Haddaway:
I cant think right off the bat what we used to serve for dessert.

Fairbank:
They really didn't eat that much dessert, because they would have drinks before dinner, and you just usually served just cheese and

crackers, or something with the drinks, didn't you?

Haddaway:

We used to serve some kind of dessert, but I can't remember now what it was.

Fairbank:

It was probably pie, or....

Haddaway:

Probably something like pie, or cake, or pudding, or something like that.

Girod:

Was there any kind of a dish that you really enjoyed preparing the most for these people? Anything at all.

Haddaway:

Fish, crabs, and oysters is about it. That's all they wanted was fish, crabs, and oysters.

Girod:

What did you do? Did you usually eat the crabs and oysters steamed?

Haddaway:

Oysters on the half shell. Or baked rock.

Girod:

Baked rock? I know it's illegal right now, but there's going to be a day when rockfish is going to be back on the tables. Do you have a special way of preparing rockfish.

Haddaway:

No, I really don't.

Fairbank:

Now, you used to put onion rings, and bacon over the onion rings.

Girod:

Onion rings and bacon; now that's significant.

Haddaway:

Just a strip of bacon, a little lemon juice...

Girod:

Over the top of the rockfish?

Haddaway:

Yes, and then you bake it.

Abribrat:
I'll bet that's good.

Girod:
Did you have a special ingredient for your crab cakes?

Haddaway:
No, it was just a regular Maryland crab cake.

Girod:
Regular Maryland crab cake ...alright.

Fairbank:
People, with their crab cake recipes, get real wild sometimes with what they put in there. Some even put in capers.

Haddaway:
Oh, no.

Fairbank:
They're not Eastern Shore crab cakes. I bet you that there aren't 6 Eastern Shoremen that know what capers are, let alone use them. They're just not an ingredient that we use.

Haddaway:
I don't use anything like that.

Fairbank:
If you turn your recorder off, i'll tell you what they call them around here.

Girod:
(laughing)Ok. Well, if I include a narrative recipe, would it be alright to do the rockfish one? The simple one. And what I would do, which is what I've been doing with the people i've spoken with, **is**; I've been working up my writing on it, and having them go over it so that it's factual. Because you are the people with the story, I'm not. I'm just going to try to put in words what you tell me. And I'm going to make sure that it's the way that you want it presented.

Abribrat:
I think the same thing with my article. I just wrote an article about a museum volunteer named Joe Liener. I don't know if you knew him.

Fairbank:
I know him. His wife is a church organist.

Abribrat:

And Joe, I spent two or three hours with Joe, and he gave me all this stuff, his childhood, and so forth. Then after I wrote the article, I gave it back to him, so he read it before it was published. He knew exactly what was going to be in it. And I was going to do the same with you. So, if there is something in there that is inaccurate, I want to know. I don't want to publish anything fake.

Fairbank:

Yes we can go over it. Good.

Abribrat:

Yes. If you wouldn't mind doing that. I would really appreciate you looking at my drafts.

Fairbank:

I'm going to put a recipe in the cookbook.

Girod:

Good!

Fairbank:

In fact, I'm going to serve you in a few minutes.

Girod:

How did we get so lucky?

Fairbank:

It's a coffee cake that my husband's Grandmother used to make.

Girod:

How wonderful! How nice of you!

Fairbank:

So, you'll see what it looks like, and what it tastes like. It's an old, old recipe.

Girod:

Did you make this at the club, too?

Fairbank:

No. This was my husband's Grandmother's

Haddaway:

She was old enough to do the cooking then.

Abribrat:

How old were you when you moved from there? About 15?

Fairbank:

It burned in '46, yes.

Abribrat:

Then you moved off the island.

Fairbank:

Yes. I was born in '31, so I was 15, and i was in high school.

Abribrat:

How did you feel about that? Were you happy or sad?

Fairbank:

Well, I went to see a basketball game at the high school, and when we came home I saw this huge red glare in the sky, and I said "boy, there's a big fire somewhere on the Western Shore." I was staying with my Grandmother at Claiborne. And when I got home, My Grandmother met me at the door, and told me that there was a big fire at Poplar Island. Of course my first thought was Mom and Dad, where were they? But there was no way to fight the fire. You just had to let it burn.

Haddaway:

Oh my you won't see nothing like that. We had gone to bed in the cottage where we were staying, and I looked out the window. At first I heard the power plant running that made out electricity. And I said "what's that power plant doing running when the lights are all off?" He said "I don't know." I raised up to the window, And with that I saw a little blaze start. I started in a receptacle in the presidential bedroom. And it caught the drape, and went right up the drape.

Abribrat:

Oh my goodness.

Haddaway:

And he jumped up. He had those long underwears on. It was cold. He jumped out of bed, and ran over there. And he pulled a switch on the power plant. And when I saw that smoke rolling out, he run in that smoke, and tried to grab up a bunch of high-priced guns that were sitting in the corner of the club room. And i started to scream. And he finally came out, but there wasn't a thing we could do, just the two of us. And they saw it on the other side of Tilghman, and some of the boys came across with boats. There was nothing left. Gas tanks were exploding. Everything was going.

Abribrat:

It must have been scary.

Haddaway:

Oh, scary. And I had just come out of the hospital from an

operation. And I ran into our cottage, in case it caught there.

Fairbank:

She had a hysterectomy. She wasn't supposed to do any lifting. And my father saw her. She had an old treadle sewing machine. And my Father saw her she was going down the bank with this sewing machine on her back. She picked it up. I guess the adrenaline was flowing. You don't realize your own strength.

Abribrat:

I bet she saved that sewing machine.

Fairbank:

She still has it.

Haddaway:

It was my Mother's.

Abribrat:

Well, did he save the high-priced guns, or not?

Haddaway:

No. he didn't save anything.

Fairbank:

The smoke was so intense that he couldn't get in there.

Haddaway:

All we could do was stand there and watch it go.

Fairbank:

And they had a lot of things stored. They had been going to auctions and buying things. For the day they would leave the island. See, they had bought a house. In 1938 they bought the house here in Sherwood, and they were renting it out. And during the off season they would come over and go to all of these auctions. And they had bought so much china, and silver, and stored it over there in the big house, in the attic, and they lost every bit of it.

Abribrat:

That is so unfortunate.

Haddaway:

Those were great days that I' 11 never forget, as long as I have any memory at all left.

Girod:

If I can pursue this leg of lamb thing for a moment, too, because that's unusual. In my interviewing around here, leg of lamb is not typically served.

Fairbank:

Sure, in Talbot County, but these people are city people.

Girod:

And that's what they requested?

Fairbank:

And that's what would want.

Haddaway:

With mint jelly.

Girod:

I think the rockfish one represents the area well, so....

Haddaway:

Pepper and salt goes on that, too.

Fairbank:

Pepper and salt, and she would put slices of onion down the length of the fish, and then diagonally wrap a slice of bacon over each onion slice, and bake it with lemon juice.

Girod:

Boy, does that sound good.

Haddaway:

You'd be surprised. It doesn't take that fish no time to cook.

Fairbank:

Until the bacon would be crisp, and the onion would be cooked.

Haddaway:

You can overcook fish.

Abribrat:

I think that's probably true. They probably do, and then it gets really dry. The texture is not as nice as it is when it's done just right.

Haddaway:

I wouldn't know the time to cook. It depends on the size.

Girod:

Sure. Exactly. And it'll be a narrative recipe, not one that's set up specifically; one that's written just the way you described it. Did you also raise then produce that you served there?

Haddaway:

No.

Girod:

So, you got supplied from the mainland somewhere.

Haddaway:

Yes. We did have four pigs that we raised there one year.

Girod:

And then did you slaughter them, and do the hams?

Fairbank:

We had a few chickens over there that she used just for her own use for eggs, but that was it.

Girod:

it was not like you could run down to the corner grocery.

Fairbank:

That was true.

Girod:

So, your supplies came from where? Tilghman?

Haddaway:

No, St. Michaels.

Fairbank:

She would come over every week. There was an ACME in St. Michaels. That's where she bought all her supplies. During the war, when sugar and everything was rationed....

Haddaway:

When I went shopping we didn't get that much sugar.

Fairbank:

But you didn't have any problems with sugar and things . In spite of the war she had lockers stored full of sugar; metal lockers in the gun room.

Abribrat:

I remember my mother saving shoe coupons. In fact, we all wore tennis shoes a lot, because leather....

Fairbank:

Tokens; those little red and blue tokens.

Abribrat:

I remember those, and meat; meat points, or whatever they would call them.

Fairbank:

Well you had coupon books, but you had more books than....

Haddaway:

I had more books than I knew what to do with.

Fairbank:

Washington saw that she had rations like a restaurant would have.

Abribrat:

Well, I would like to thank you for the information.

Girod:

Me, too. This was just wonderful.

End of Interview