STAFFORD COUNTY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW OF MILTON A DICKERSON
By A. R. MACGREGOR, III

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Subject of Tape(s)

INTERVIEW WITH MILTON A. DICKERSON

I'm Milton A. Dickerson. I was born in Stafford County in the year of 1911, November the 19th. The son of Captain Benjamin A. Dickerson of Stafford County and I have lived my life in the county. My parents and grandparents before me lived in the county. I grew up as a seaman. I sailed under my daddy and when I was 16 years old, I was mate on board the sailing vessel, Colonel S.A. Graham, whose remains lay on the bottom of Aquia Creek on the MacGregor property this day. I sailed all of my life until I was 23 years old and I sailed on many boats. And Aquia Creek was the center of activity in my early life and I would go on to name many of the sailing vessels that came into

Aquia Creek. There was the Clara J. Houth, Rosa Beatrice, the Pensacola, which was my father's boat,
and he twiced owned the Colonel S.A. Graham, and then there was the F.C. Kimball, the James 0.
Wright, and before then, Captain Wesley Knight owned two boats. One was named the Peri--a sailing
vessel--another was the Five Sisters. And him and his brothers before that owned Steamer, which was
blown up after it got old and sank in Aquia Creek. And I'm trying to think of the name of that boat. And
so there was much activity. There was cord wood, excelsior wood, lumber, railroad ties, there were many
barges that came in and had to be towed by steam tugs. And three of the tugs, in particular, was
the Captain Tobey, the James 0. Carter, and also the M. Mitchell Davis, which were owned by the Taylor
Brothers in Washington, D.C. There was schooners named the Thomas B. Shaw, the Columbia F.C., the
Mildred, which was formally named the Quinby, and such young fellas as myself, my brothers and Alaric
MacGregor, being locally stationed like we were and knowing the Creek like we did, those skippers on those
boats brought them boats in themselves, but after they were loaded, they were afraid to go back
out--afraid they'd get aground in shallow water, so if they could hire one of us to pilot them back out to
the Potomac River, we did it. So Aquia Creek in Stafford County is a place that much went on then that is
forgotten now and not many people that know about it.

At Coal Landing, there were three stores. Captain Wesley Knight run one, Mr. William Towson run
another, and Mr. Robert Flatford run another store. And much of the Creek is not navigable now like it
was then. And there are places on the Creek that those names no longer exist. Up the Creek from Coal
Landing , there was a place called Horton's Landing, which is way up the Creek. And there was another
place up there called Dent's Landing and some of my brothers or sisters were born up at Dent's
Landing. And then down the Creek, there was Tel Coate's Landing, which is owned by the Pearson family
today. Nobody knows anything about that, but much wood, lumber, and grain was shipped from there. And
then there was Segar's Point down there. Also, during the twenties and early thirties, there was a

stone quarry operating in Aquia Creek on a place called Rock Rommon--that's on the north side of the
Creek and it was owned by George Washington Stone Corporation and they had a tugboat named Vera and
they had a big barge. And this stone was cut out in huge chunks, maybe four feet high and four feet
wide and twelve feet long and it was carried to Alexandria to be manufactured like the customer wanted
it. And also, on the MacGregor property, there is a place cut out--of rock that was quarried out and
carried to Washington, D.C., to be put in the base of the Washington Monument. Accordingly, they got
stones from just about every county or every state they could for that, so the stone that was chosen
there come off from MacGregor's property. And the elder Mr. MacGregor, he was a farmer and his son,
Allie MacGregor, was a farmer and a fisherman. He had another son, N.M. MacGregor, also a farmer and a
fisherman and a sailing man. So, all this adds to the lot that went on.
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Q: Did you ever work for any of then or work with any of them?

A: Yeah, I worked with Uncle Pete, N.M.--yeah, I worked with him. Matter of fact, I fished with him,
too. My brothers did, too. Yeah. And of course, we freighted groceries back from Alexandria and D.C.
to Captain Knight to his store. Now, Mr. Bob Flatford's store closed while I was very young, like five
years old, and I reckon I was five or six when Mr. Willie Towson, of course, the old man died and that
store closed. And you see, at the same time, the Garrisonville Mine was running and we had a train
running down there bringing ore from the mine.I hereby give and grant to the Central Rappahannock
Regional Library, my tape recorded memoir as a donation for such scholarly and educational purposes as
it shall determine. It is expressly understood that the full literary rights of this memoir pass to
the Central Rappahannock Regional Library, and that no rights whatsoever are to vest in my heirs now
or at my death.

Q: And that was what kind of ore? Mica, copper?

A: Copper--and that was shipped to Baltimore or Philadelphia by boat and the same boat that carried the ore from Coal Landing, also brought coal back which the mines was run with. And in the county, there were many grist mills at the time. One grist mill was over here just off of Route 3 at the end of Chatham Bridge. Another bridge--mill was out at Daffon's(?) farm and part of the Stones out there today and then over at Whitewater, there was Calvin Baker's old mill. And up here at the head of the Potomac Creek Reservoir--the Abel Reservoir, there was another grist mill up there and a Mr. Shackleford run that one. And R. Jones, who still lives in the county, used to run a grist mill at Brooke. John Marshall Porter run a shoe repair shop at Stafford Courthouse. A man by the name of Mr. Smith used to run a blacksmith shop also at the courthouse. And back in the early twenties, we had the Knight Moore Motor Company which was a Ford dealership, and Mr. James Ashby, along with someone else, ran a Chevrolet dealership at Stafford Courthouse. So those kind of things we don't have anymore.

Q: No--they are gone now, aren't they?

A: That's right and in my early days at home, I could hear in the morning, any morning during the week, sawmill whistles blow at seven different mills, sawing lumber in Stafford County.

Q: What time of the morning did they blow?

A: Seven o'clock. It didn't make no difference who you were or how far you had to go, you were there at seven because you had that thing fired up and she was going to saw.

Q: And that was a steam-power saw?

A: Yeah. All mills were steam then--every one of them. Yeah. It was quite something. And there were ever so many stores in the county, but at that day and time, there was up in Garrisonville neighborhood, there was Dr. Paine, Dr. Gordon, and right where 95 runs now, there was Dr. E.M. Snead's place, and down on Aquia Creek was Dr. Chamberlain.

Q: They were the four doctors?

A: They were the four doctors in the county.

Q: If you wanted someone to go to, you had to go to one of them four?
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A: Dr. Snead and Dr. Gordon and Dr. Paine--they did have automobiles, but a lot of times in the winter them cars wouldn't go over them roads.

Q: What type automobiles did they have?

A: Nodel T's.

Q: Model T's?

A: Yep. And poor old Dr. Chamberlain--he had a horse and buggy. Of course, I think Gordon and Snead and them had them too, just in case, but at that time, they had got
automobiles.

Q: Getting back to when you were born and all, were you born at home or at the hospital?

A: No, wasn't nobody born in the hospital in Stafford County then. Midwives took care of all that. It wasn't anything any day or any night to see someone coming down to our home
looking for my mother because she did a lot of that kind of work.

Q: She was a midwife?

A: Uh-huh, yeah.

Q: What was her name?

A: Esther Ann Dickerson.

Q: Esther Ann.

A: Uh-huh. Wife of Benjamin A.

Q: And how long--you didn't mention this--but how long did your family live in Stafford?

A: Well--

Q: That you remember.

A: My grandfather on my mother's side, came from Eastern Long Island. This is interesting now, the Talmadge family came from England and they were sailors and whalers at that, and so my mother was a Black--my mother's mother was Sarah Black--she was a native of Stafford County. And after the Talmadge came to New York from England, my grandfather was the only one that migrated out of New York. He came down into the Falmouth neighborhood to be a farmer which he actually lived up in Hartford. And he was a farmer and mail carrier and he carried mail out of Falmouth on up 17--up that part of country. So, it's right interesting what was going on in the county back in them early days and my daddy being a sail man--he lived in many places around the Creek. As a matter of fact, my brother, Henry, was born on the Tailcoats(?) place. Some of the others were born up what we call Vent Hill, which is on the north side of the Creek. But I was born at the home place about a mile northeast of Stafford Courthouse and my twin sisters, which was younger than I--they were born there in the home, but none of the children were born in the hospital. I didn't know anybody in that day and time that was born in the hospital. Now a few of them that the doctor could get there, he may--but if he didn't, the midwives around the country took care of it.

Q: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

A: Well, I was the sixth child out of eight. I had--well, I'll start with my oldest brother--there was Lloyd B., then there was Robert T., then there was Beulah M., and then there was Leslie A., then there was Henry E., then myself, and then the last two, they were girls and twins at that--was Carrie and Bessie. And they were born there at the home place and to date, they are all gone but my sister Beulah, who lives in Boston, my sister Bessie lives in Louisa, and I'm still here. So there's three left out of eight. And we had a whole lot going in the county and we had a lot of good relationships, but a lot of this stuff we took it for granted. We didn't realize that some of it would ever stop. It was just day-to-day life--that's all it was and everybody was everybody's friend. Everybody helped everybody. I think the earliest I can remember--I saw one piece of posted land in Stafford County. Which was unusual. But later on, there was a lot of posted signs. But going back to transportation, like say the RF&P railroad run through the county, but there's something that can be said for that

that nobody seems to know now, because when the RF&P started, it was a single track and it only run
from Richmond to what is now called Aqua Po and at that time, and there was no need to change that
name, that was Ubedam wharf--that was an Indian name.

Q: Indian name?

A: That's right. And large steamer, or ferry if you want to call it that, but this was stopped before my birth, but the steamer came there and that's where the freight
and passengers were transferred from the train to the ship. And also, on the return trip, from
the ship to the train.

Q: And where would that be from--Richmond to--?

A: Richmond to Aqua Po.

Q: And then from Aqua Po on to the steamer to where?

A: D.C.

Q: To Washington, D.C.

A: Washington, D.C.

Q: Now, how far did you live from that Ubedam or Aqua Po point? How far was your home place?

A: Well, my home place, see, was up--you wouldn't say opposite--Coal
Landing because my home was halfway between Coal Landing and Stafford Courthouse. And so you might say
the length of the Creek that far.

Q: But at that time, everybody who depended right much on the railroad, transportation and things
like that, we don't think about today.

A: The railroad and the water was the only transportation we had. There was no trucks--well, there was no highways to accommodate. ... You take when Number 1 highway was
first opened, it didn't run on the same ground it does now. ... when you got up there in the winter time,
you was lucky if you got any further than that. If you was coming south, you got to Chopwampsie Creek.

Q: While you are talking about that, when was the present-day Number I highway, when was that put in
the way we know it? Do you remember the date or any time around that?

A: Number One South from Fredericksburg was put in in the mid-twenties. Because where Aqua Tavern now
is was the first time I went to Fredericksburg by road in a car, I had to go up by Aquia Tavern and
come around by Mountain View.

Q: When you talk about Aquia Tavern, explain to us where that is now.

A: Aquia Church--Aquia interchange.

Q: Across from Aquia Church?

A: Yeah--right down the hill in front of Aquia Church. It was called Wayside then.

Q: Did the Number One take that or did it go past it or between the church and it-Number One
highway?

A: Number One?

Q: Yeah.

A: Well, it was down the hill in front of the church.

Q: Did Number One highway take the Aquia Tavern or--?

A: The Aquia Tavern just went out.

Q: Okay.

A: And 95--one section of 95--is running over top of where Dr. E.M. Snead's office was.

Q: Okay.

A: In other words, 95 going north and south both, just about got Dr. Snead's
whole place, really. And..., we had a lot of stores around through the county. We had two or

three at the courthouse and we had one up at Wayside. Then we had A.C. Carter up at Garrisonville and-

Q: Now, your family--you talk about the stores--did they basically--what did your family basically do? Your father--you said he was a waterman, right?

A: Yeah.

Q: He shipped products?

A: My father--we hauled lumber, we hauled railroad ties, cord weed, excelsior wood, from Coal Landing
to Washington, D.C.

Q: And people would bring you that stuff?

A: No--see, that was the shipping point and your great-great-grandfather, him and his sons, they owned
Coal Landing and it was a good shipping point because the Creek was deep and the walls were good.

Q: And that was Captain Knight?

A: That was Captain Wesley Knight.

Q: And people brought everything down to--

A: That's right--sawmill men, the farmers whoever they hauled it down to that point and Captain Knight had a big warehouse. And such as store goods or grain or stuff could be stored in there, and shipped from there so it would out the weather. Of course, the lumber, railroad ties and wood that didn't matter-- it could lay out there, 'cause it wouldn't be there very long. But barges of a size of greater than 250 feet in length came in there and, of course, tugboats brought them and they would load them as deep as they could up in there and
then they'd tow them outside the Creek and then with smaller barges, they'd load the ties on them and carried them outside the Creek until that barge was fully
loaded to go to Philadelphia. And it was quite a movement.

Q: Lot of work, wasn't it?

A: And Captain Wesley Knight also had a little tugboat up there and after the barge was carried
outside, sometimes he'd did that, too. And then he'd tow the smaller barges, to finish loading that big
barge after it got outside the Creek.

Q: So your father made his living with ships?

A: Yeah--he sailed all his life.

Q: What type of ships were they?

A: All of them were sailing boats. We sailed under canvas. We did have a small boat for auxiliary power which was about 12 feet long--had a 71/2 horsepower, heavy duty, single cylinder engine and under normal conditions, if there was no wind, we could move between Coal Landing and Washington within one day. It'd take a good long day, but we'd make it. But, of course, if there was wind, we would make it a whole lot less than that, but by the same token, if the wind was against us, that was a different story.
It took quite a lot longer so-

Q: What did you bring back from Washington? Did you bring back from Washington anything?

A: Well, in the spring and in the late summer, we could bring back mostly fertilizer because the farmers, that's the way they got their fertilizer.

Q: The farmers in Stafford County?

A: That's right. And other than that, we brought store goods.

Q: To the local stores?

A: That's right. And then there was another store, too--Mr. G.W. Stewart(?) had a store right down by the RF&P railroad tracks.

Q: On the Creek?

A: Right on the Creek. Yeah, Mr. G.W. Stewart and the old man was a good old man and he was badly humped over and a lot of people called him Mr. Hump, but he farmed and he runned the store and he owned a lot of land and therefore, owned a lot of land, there was a lot of timber cut on his property and his timber was shipped from what we call Hope Landing at Hope Point right down on his farm east of the railroad tracks.

Q: And that's at the end of what is now Hope Road--the county has named Hope Road.

A: Well, I'm glad they did.

Q: They did. At that time when you were growing up in Stafford County, you went to the store, what mostly did you go to the store to get?

A: Well, if we had some eggs to sell, we would carry eggs and bring back the value of the eggs and Captain Knight would buy the eggs and pack them in crates and ship them to Washington to market, but we raised what we could, but sometimes we had to buy flour, sometimes meal, sometimes lard, and fatback meat--yeah, it would be some fatback because it was no fresh meat--you couldn't have that and like hams and shoulders and that--that was very seldom in the store because you'd only have that in the fall when people were killing hogs. And most every- body raised their own meat at that time and like I say, well, we canned fruit-- anything we could raise and can, we canned it. But like beans, you keep dried beans, so we had the dried beans to eat during the winter months and everybody pretty well survived on what they could raise. There wasn't too much bought and of course, naturally, clothing--and of course, a lot of clothing was made at home at that time, too. You could buy all kinds of bolt of fabric goods in those stores and like the store at the courthouse or Knight's store at Coal Landing, you could buy anything from a hoe handle to a plow point, plow or horse collar, a set of trace chains, a pair of knee boots, a pair of hip boots, a pair of blue jean overalls, an overall jacket--anything like that, you could it there at that store. And of course, they carried coffee and spices, too.

Q: Now, going back to when you were a child growing up, what were--what did you do a normal when you were a child growing--maybe before you went to school or right after you started school?

A: Well, every child in the county at that time, when they got old enough to be some help to do something, they did something. We worked in the garden at home, we also worked on the farm for the farmers. When we were small, we used to go in the corn field and pull weeds, chop weeds--do anything like that to help let the crops grow and as I say, everybody helped everybody. There was a lot of things that young people could do and it was there to be done, but it's not there today because everything is done with machinery and farms are very scarce for the man had 15 or 20 acres back there then, he was doing some farming, too, so--

(A: continued)
yeah, thin corn when it was planted too thick and after it got to a certain height, that was 25 cents
a day--that was big money. And we had--it was a lot and in fact I'd say everybody helped everybody--
actually when I was eight years old, Mr. Newman Knight, him and his wife they had a son and being
eight years old, I reckon I was right good size and Newman he was clerking in the store for his daddy
and his wife was doing the things around home--they had a little farm--and I went over there and
stayed with them a year to help her take care of Junior and it was that year at Thanksgiving time,
their home burned and they lost everything they had and Newman Knight and his brother-in-law and some
more people come over next to Fredericksburg to go up to Hartwood the next day to hunt and so, there
was just Ms. Knight and Junior and myself--I believe two more women at home the night the house burned
down. Yeah.

Q: At that time, nobody had insurance, I guess, like they do now.

A: Well, very few had it, I can tell you that. Then I had to run two miles
to get to a telephone to call Newman Knight to tell him his home had burned down.

Q: And the fire department--was there a fire department?

A: There was no fire department. There was one or two men around through the
county that were very good at fighting a fire if they had a chance, but you didn't have water so
if a house caught on fire, you had to get it right away or else it was gone--that's all it was to
it.

Q: All the water you had was drawn down a well, I'll bet.

A: That's right--most cases--and in some places, you had to go to the spring
and get it. 'Cause we lived on spring water and the MacGregors lived on spring water and the
Knights, they had wells. No, we didn't have any fire departments until the late forties. Falmouth Fire
Department over there on Number One in Falmouth was the first fire department in Stafford County. And it
was well needed and it's done a wonderful job.

Q: Yes, it is.

A: And now we've got stations all over the county which is good and we need them.

Q: Your--let's get on up to your school days. You haven't mentioned too much about your school days.

A: Well, I started in a one-room school--at about 1915 and I went to school 'til about 1925 and by that time, they had built what they called Stafford High School and to me, at that time, that was a very nice school--of course, it was a far cry over what we had. And after they built that school, the old one-room school that we went to was then sold and it was converted into a residence. It hadn't been torn down too many years--it stood a long time. And I would like to add when I started to school at age seven, my first school teacher that I went to is still living in the city of Fredericksburg and is in pretty good health yet. And I'm going to be personal--I'll name him--his name was William Byrom and he was born and raised at Stafford Courthouse. Incidentally, his brother, Wesley, married Carrie Knight. Mr. Wesley Knight's youngest daughter.

Q: Do you remember any of the other teachers?

A: Oh, yeah--well, my second teacher was Mr. L.R.--no Miss Lula Griffis and my third teacher was Mr.L.R. Curtis and him and his wife, they team taught and if one of them couldn't be there, the other was.After Mr. Curtis, that's the time that we come about and built the new school. And then when I went over there, Miss Lynn Cox was my first teacher over there and she lived up in what is now Quantico Reservation. She lived up there just across Aquia Creek above Ebenezer Church. That's where their farm was. And then, Miss--no, I skipped one--Miss Lula Griffis taught me in the one-room schoolhouse at Stafford.

Q: Yeah, you did mention her.

A: I did? Well, then after we went to the big school, Miss Lucy Criffis, who was a sister-in-law to Lula, was my teacher over there to begin with. Then, I had Miss Lynn Cox and then Anna Caruthers, she was from Colonial Beach. And then came Katie Wayne Golden which was Miss Kate Woods today. And after her, Elizabeth Paine, which was a sister to Dr. Paine. That was young Dr. Paine, 'cause there was two Doctor Paines. And, yeah, Elizabeth Paine was my last teacher and I left school in the sixth grade because I had to go on the water with my

daddy on the boat. Matter of fact, at age sixteen, I was a mate. And I sailed from sixteen until I was twenty-three and during that time, I worked on many sailing vessels and a lot of them that frequented Aquia Creek. And I went on to be on the Norfolk and Washington Steamboat Line, where I spent three years nightly,every night we sailed one way or the other between Washington and Norfolk, which was quite an experience. People today don't realize it, but when you live a thousand nights in succession because we were a night line. When you live a thousand nights in succession on the Potomac and the Chesapeake Bay, and you always go through, you have accomplished quite a bit. We didn't know nothing about rain, snow, ice, and fog. We did lose 16 days in February in 1936 because of ice, but the lighthouse--the river had been froze up for some time, the lighthouse department had discontinued the lighthouses and took all the men off for their safety and so the insurance company said, "You all can run, but you run at your own risk." And that was too much risk to run. And at this point, I would like to interject something else about the transportation system. Back there in the early thirties, I came ashore November the 23rd, 1936--that's when I made my last run--back there during those three years that I was on that steamer, we could take you from Washington, D.C., to Norfolk for $5 on a passenger ticket that didn't include rooms or meals, but we put a baggage check on your car and your car went free. So, if you were in Washington this evening, you'd be in Norfolk in the morning 200 miles down the line, done got a good night's rest, and hadn't burned a drop of gas.

Q: And you had your car on there?

A: Carried your car right along. We would carry 42 average-size cars on the freight deck at that
time.

Q: And that was in what year? Or approximately what year?

A: '34 through '36.

Q: Okay.
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A: That was just beginning to come out the depression--that was in the depression.

Q: Okay, since you brought that up, do you remember anything in Stafford County how things were during the depression?

A: Well--

Q: Did it affect Stafford County that much?

A: It affected it a whole lot, but due to the fact that people had been

self-sufficient most of the time, they made it a whole lot better than a whole lot did.

Q: So they didn't really notice it as much as some people--

A: Well, let me say this--back in them days, I didn't see any food lines at Stafford Courthouse or anywhere else. But at the same time, I can take you to Washington and in the morning when they'd be serving or late in the evening, there would be a food line that would reach two or three city blocks. And they weren't just single file--they were three or four people wide. No, the people in Stafford, and of course, some of the people in Stafford were working at Quantico and of course, some of them--the plant got started down here and some of them were working--

Q: Down at the FMC?

A: Sylvania then, it was.

Q: Well, okay.

A: Matter of fact, my brother, Leslie, helped some on building that place.

Q: And that was an important part of the county in terms of work.

A: Yeah, it was a lifeline to a lot of people in the county 'cause all down in the southern end of the county, there were ever so many people that worked down there.

Q: It was out of Stafford, but ...

A: It was out of Stafford, but Stafford was benefited.

Q: Right.

A: Yeah, it really benefited.

Q: And going back to Quantico, what kind of impact did that have on Stafford?

A: Well--

Q: Did people get much work out of there?

A: Well, there were quite a few people out of Stafford working at Quantico. You take around Brooke there, even Stafford Courthouse because those fellows used to go down to Brooke to catch a train to go to Quantico. Right at that time was very few people who would drive as far

as Quantico from Stafford Courthouse.
(A: continued)

In other words, if they could use some other means of transportation, they would do it. Also, a lot of the people from over Widewater--see at that time they brought a fleet of World War II ships up into the Potomac and anchored them off Widewater. And they carried those ships--they were wooden ships--they carried them over to Sandy Point on Maryland side and they burned them. Of course, incidentally, a whole lot of them got burned out there in the Potomac off Widewater, but that wasn't supposed to have been. But a lot of the people from around Widewater and Quantico went across the river and worked where there were salvaging what they could off the ships as they burned them. So that was in the depression time--it was a whole lot of things going.

Q: So they did salvage some of the ships--the lumber and things off the ships?

A: No, not the lumber--the metal.

Q: Metal?

A: They were taken to Alexandria. They were towed to Alexandria. They were brought here from down on the James River and they were towed to Alexandria and the machinery was all taken out of them. Everything of value that they could get at that point.

Q: Well, at one time, in the county, around the depression era, you could sell metal and things, couldn't you for the war effort?

A: Uh-huh.

Q: And a lot of people sold the old cars, and old--

A: Any old scrap, yeah.

Q: That's where a lot of the old scrap iron went--old tractors and things.

A: Yeah, but back before that, you could sell scrap iron. Sure you could

gather up newspapers until they got enough--they could sell them, too, but it was very little money
involved in it. It was something.

Q: Yeah.

A: It really was. So--

Q: What newspaper did you have?

A: Free Lance-Star

Q: Free Lance-Star.

A: And some people got the Washington Post.

Q: In Stafford County?

A: Yeah, The Washington Post was read in Stafford. I don't remember--well, a few got the Star, also-- it came out of Washington. Evening Star, but I don't
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(A: continued)
remember anybody in the area reading the Richmond paper. I don't recall ever seeing one.

Q: And did you live in the same basic area most of your life?

A: Yeah, uh-huh.

Q: Right in the same, basic area?

A: Yeah. Right where I was born.

Q: Where you were born?

A: Uh-huh. That's rigbt. Yeah, I stayed there until I left home and went on my own.

Q: Begin working and--

A: That's right. And of course, now my brothers before me with the exception of
Leslie--Leslie stayed around, but, being seafaring people, we could get a job on another sailboat all the time, so Lloyd and tom--they left home early. Well,I reckon they were eighteen years old, but somebody else saw they were good seamen and my daddy was--he couldn't read or write, but he was considered

the man who could make seamen out of young men, so anybody who was under my dad, he was generally hired by somebody else--they wanted that man. It was like when a lot of these mechanics went out of this plant down here--anybody who needed a good mechanic--he would hire one of those plant men because he knew the man had the experience. Then so--my daddy on the river--especially around the Creek where he was well-known, but he was well-known the whole river, but my dad, as I say, he couldn't read and write, but he could do a lot of things a lot of people can't do. I didn't never see anybody who could splice rope neater than he could and he could take a boat and go anywhere he wanted.

Q: Now, splicing rope was something he needed to do on a sailing ship?

A: Yeah--any seaman--a man that can't splice rope ain't no seaman, that's all-he just isn't.

Q: And you had to do that for the sails?

A: That's right. In otherwords, before you got a job--a real job--you had to prove yourself. All of that was in the deal because if a rope breaks, what do you do with it? Throw it away? Nope--you put it back together. And such a thing as we call an "eye"--you splice a loop in the end of a rope. If you need it in there, you splice it in there, otherwise you tie it in. Another thing when you tie a knot, you want to know that you can get that knot undone if need be. And in sailing, sometimes it's got to be
undone mighty quick or else it is too late. You've done turned over or broke a mast or something like that. So sailing experience is a wonderful experience. I say today, with all the years I had at it, I would like to be able to go back to the same conditions and take some young men and train them.

Q: Let them try.
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A: Let them try--give them the opportunity.

Q: When was--what you remember, what was the last ship that sailed in Aquia Creek-about what time was that?

A: The last ship that sailed into Aquia Creek--the last one fully active, there was the F.C. Kimball and that was my daddy and I, but after my daddy retired, they was still buying ties and bringing them to Coal Landing. And the last sailing vessel, which would be about 150-ton vessel, come there, was the Mildred and it was under Captain Norris Wilkinson. And when that boat was loaded with ties and ready to go to Clairborne, Maryland, Norris Wilkinson, he wasn't about to take that boat out the Creek by himself, so he got Alaric MacGregor to pilot him back out of the Creek to keep him in deep water and, best of my knowledge, that was the last one, but--

Q: Do you remember about what year that was?

A: That would be about '33.

Q: About '33. And the ties you are speaking of--railroad ties--how did they get railroad ties--how did you manufacture railroad ties?

A: Well, the man that bad a piece of timber--that was the winter time when a man had timber and he wasn't working on the farm, he either--it took two axes--a regular ax and a broad ax and of course, take two men to saw them apart. But they would--what they called score it--they'd cut the tree down and then a man get on top of the tree and go up it on one side with his ax scoring, then he'd come back down the other side and then he took his broad ax and he hewned that off--you might call it a bunch of chips, but some of them scores could be 18 inches, 2 feet long, and maybe 2 inches thick. And some of those guys were just as good with those broad axes as they could be. It looked almost like a sawed tie after they got through with it. And the main thing about it was the man who scored it, he had no way of doing it--he had to score it right--had to score it straight down because the tie could not be wedge-shaped. And then that left two sides with bark on it and before it could be shipped, that bark had to be took off them two sides. You did that with a regular ax. But you see, a broad ax had a blade about 12 inches long, maybe longer, and the handle some people spoke of it as a left-hand and a right-hand broad ax, but the handle came out and curved like that so you could put the ax up against the tree and your hands and that handle would be away from that tree. It was real odd in hewing out a tie.

Q: So you were planing the side of the log?

A: That's right--two sides so you cut like planing (such as plane a board).

Q: And at that time, the railroad ties weren't standard square like they are now?

A: No, you couldn't ship anything less than a seven by nine then. Anything under seven by nine was classed as a cull tie and it might be bought for little single track or narrow gauge railroad, something like that, but it would not be bought for a main line.

Q: But it could be much wider than nine?

A: Oh, yes. Back then, I've seen some of them so wide that two of them would bed a wagon.

Q: So you would just cut a tree and hew it down to a certain thickness?

A: On two sides.

Q: And it didn't matter how wide it was?

A: That's right. It could be any width then, of course, they can't do it now. I think about nine by nine is what it is now.

Q: Was it any particular kind of wood they used?

A: Oh, yeah. Good white oak was the best tie. And then red oak would be a second tie. And hickory was considered a very poor tie. Hickory didn't have the lastit would rot out fast. And there wasn't any ash ties or pine ties like they got now. No, you just as well say they were all oak ties, of course, there were some locust ties and once in a while, but not many would do that because it was worth too much, once in a while you would find a walnut tie--black walnut.

Q: Is that right?

A: It was a good tie, but--

Q: The lumber was worth more--

A: The lumber was worth more otherwise. That's right.

Q: Was any of the chestnuts--the old American chestnuts--do you remember any of those being in the county?

A: oh, yeah--we had seven trees on our place. And one of them was a very cragged tree. It was big and short and the limbs went way out on it and the rest of them grew just a straight as an arrow. They'd made wonderful telephone poles.

Q: But they died?

A: Yeah, that blight back there at the beginning of the thirties wiped them out.

Q: Talk about lumber, ... I think we did speak about some of the sawmills and things they had--a lot of people who didn't farm and they didn't fish, they'd run sawmill, I guess. Saw lumber. Your daddy helped haul some of that?

A: Yeah. We hauled quite a bit of it. Yeah, there was Mr. G.L. Armstrong, he was one of the main millers. He would buy timber anywhere. He actually cut in Stafford, he cut in Fauquier County, and he cut in King Goeege and I don't know, he might have cut in Prince William. But he had several mills and he could put a mill most anywhere one of them was wanted and his milling went on year around. Now, Mr. G.L. Armstrong, he lived up in the Ramoth neighborhood and back in them days when people died, they didn't have boxes or vaults, they'd put the casket down in the ground and the grave was dug with a step in the side of it and they'd use after they'd put the casket down, before they started putting any dirt in, they'd use these heavy boards, which would be about 3 to 4 inches thick and

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(A: continued) usually always oak. And to the day Mr. Armstrong died, or didn't work in timber anymore, there was always timber to put in those graves over top of those coffins at Ramoth Baptist Church. He saw to it it was there.

Q: Is that right?

A: And that was free of charge.

Q: You say they put it over top--?

A: Yeah, they'd dig a grave so wide and they'd go down and they come in 4 inches and then they'd dig it the rest of the way down and that would fit the casket. And this 4 inches on each side, they'd cut these heavy boards and they'd put them cross-ways over the grave and they laid on that shelf that they'd laid when they had dug the grave.

Q: They filled in over top of that?

A: And then that went on over top of that.

Q: I'm glad you brought that up. I hadn't thought about it.

A: Yeah, and of course, I do remember back when Wheeler and Thompson was the first one I remember.
They first had horse-drawn hearses, but finally they got around to where they had the motorized
hearses. That made a big difference, too.

Q: What was the first automobile that you remember in the county?

A: I reckon Mr. E.S. Moore had the first car that I know of in Stafford County, really, and then Mr.
Moore had one and like I say, the three doctors, but I believe Mr. Moore had his car before the
doctors. And then Mr. James Ashby had a car. I remember Mr. Leary down in Brooke had an old Cole. Now
that was a car that had acetylene lights on it. And of course, back in them days, there were no
sedans, they were all touring cars at that time. But a few years later, the sedans started coming
along and the coupes.

Q: The first you see, did it have a steering wheel or how was it steered?

A: The first one I saw did have a steering wheel, but like 1909 or 1911, there were some Fords that
did have a handle that sat cross-ways in front of the driver that you steered it with. And but, the
first one of them I saw was over in Maryland and it wasn't in Stafford. But then there was another
old car, a Rambler. And Mr. W.W. Lumpkin had that. And it had a big single cylinder engine mounted
under the rear of it and it had what we called solid tires. No tubes and it was belt-driven and it
was called a Rambler and that's what the Rambler of today came from.

Q: And the roads--what was the condition of the roads back then? ... paved roads...

A: Well, no there wasn't no paved roads. Not even gravel roads. There were
just dirt roads. And in the winter time, plenty places you could go near about up to your knee in
the mud when it was freezing and thawing.

Q: Do you remember when they started graveling the roads? The first paved road or anything?

A: Yeah. Long about 1921.

Q: What was the first one that they paved? That you remember?

A: Well, they paved the road that came into Stafford Courthouse from the north. They didn't call it Number One highway--I don't know what they called it then, but they graveled it right on through the courthouse there to the intersection of the Brooke Road. And this is kind of interesting too--a lot of people don't know this, but where the Brooke Road now intersects with Number One, it was in the form of a Y and right in that Y is where the Stafford Jail set.

Q: And that was a stone building, right?

A: That was a stone building. And when they built the present courthouse, in its original form, they tore that old jail down and those stones that was the old jail, now form the wall that is around the courtyard at Stafford Courthouse. And that was in the early twenties.

Q: Okay. Do you remember the first electricity in the house? When did you all get electricity in Stafford County?

A: Well, the first electricity that I knew of in Stafford County, was a Austin Farms Restaurant. And Mr. Constantine and them bought a big single from a diesel engine and a big generator and right across the road from Austin Farms, they built a house out of cinder block back in the bank and this generating plant was in there. And it was during this time that they were generating their own current, that Mr. and Mrs. E.B. Constantine, Sr., started the movement to try to get electricity in Stafford County. There was electricity in Fredericksburg at that time and so, so far as I'm concerned, Mr. and Mrs. E.B. Constantine, Sr., are the father of electricity being in Stafford County. And of course, when they get set up to build the lines through the county, there was quite a lot of people that fought it. They didn't want no part of it because there was going to be something on their land, but right at that time, they were only taking 30 feet of land, so to speak, and them poles were as far apart, they didn't bother

anybody. And they did come across the corner of mine own home place. Yeah, they did and they went across
French Woodard, William Woodard, Captain Wesley Knight.

Q: These... you spoke of--when they first set these up, did they supply current for other people?

A: No, that was just for the operation of Austin Farm Restaurant and the cabins around there.

Q: And the restaurant at that time, that was back in what period? In the thirties?

A: No, that was before that. That was in the twenties.

Q: Did people go to restaurants much then?

A: Well, see they had opened Number One highway.
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Q: okay, between Washington and Richmond?

A: That's right. They'd opened Number One highway. As a matter of fact, they had concreted Number One
highway by that time.

Q: Okay.

A: And there was quite a bit of travel from the north to the south. And south of Stafford Courthouse,
had not been concreted, but it had been, I'll say, oil-treated. They poured a combination of oil and tar
on there and then poured sand on it to keep it from sticking.

Q: Who was responsible to concrete Number One? Who did that? Did the state do it--the county?

A: No, I'll say the state did it and the contractor was H.H. George. He was
a big road contractor and he had steam shovels.

Q: He also built the bridge over--in next to Earl's food Market.

A: Yeah, that's right.

Q: At the railroad--

A: Yeah, that was Haley George, but Haley George got a big contract over on Eastern Shore and that was
a new territory to him and he didn't understand what he was doing. And there was a lot of marsh country
and stuff over there so Haley George went broke on the Eastern Shore of Virginia building I'll say U.S.
13. That's right.

Q: Now, when they concreted, did you ever see any of that done or was it before your time?

A: Oh, yeah, uh-huh.

Q: Do you remember?

A: Yeah.

Q: What type of trucks and things--can you describe anything?

A: Well, some of that was done with old two-cylinder auto cars and they would carry a ton or ton and
one-half. And they had dump bodies on them. And they had some four-cylinder Model T Fords. And even some
four-cylinder Chevrolets. They had a little body that would carry it about a yard or two, so to speak.
And the gravel would come to Brook Station and the gravel and the sand had to be loaded off cars at
Brook Station in them trucks and brought up on Number one highway. And the concrete also came to Brook
Station on railroad cars and-

Q: The cement?

A: Yeah, the cement.
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Q: Where did they mix it and all that?

A: Oh, they had a big mixer and they set the forms for the concrete they were going to pour and the
mixer had wheels on it something like a train. And after those forms were set,, that mixer run on top
of those rails. And they had a big platform and everything went up on this platform and it was fed
from there into the mixer. And Austin Run furnished the water. They run a pipe--they run a pipeline

all the way from Austin Run to Stafford Courthouse and they run a pipeline from Austin Run past Aquia
Church. Well then, when they got that far, then they started getting it from Aquia Creek. And that's
how they supplied the water to mix the concrete. And at the time they were building Number One in
concrete, they had the camp right down where the Stafford Wayside is now.

Q: That was the C.C. Camp or which camp?

A: No, C.C. hadn't come along.

Q: Okay.

A: No, they were just hired people.

Q: The ones that worked on the road.

A: That's right. And as for moving the dirt off the road where the dirt had to be moved, when that
shovel was digging, they'd dig that with wagons that was pulled by two or four horses. And of course,
when the man got to where he was going with this, he pulled a lever and the bottom of the wagon opened
up and dumped the dirt on the spot where they wanted it. In other words, the steam shovel loaded the
dirt into the wagon and the driver of the wagon, he just pulled the lever and dumped it when he got
where he was going. And they had quite a big camp up there because they had a lot of wagons and a lot
of mules. And quite a few of the folks that were truck drivers up there--the Gentry boys--they came
from down at Ashland, Virginia. And some of them-Lloyd Berry--they lived from over here in Falmouth.
But building that Number One in concrete in a two-lane road, that was quite an operation for that
time.

Q: Yeah, I can imagine--it sounds like it was. And so after that was built, the Restaurant--the Austin Farm Restaurant, was that one of the first restaurants you remember
in the county?

A: The first place, I don't remember whether they had a restaurant or not--I think they did, was
Brown's Auto Court.

Q: Brown's Auto Court.

A: Mr. Harry Brown.

Q: At that time, was it the little buildings around there. Could you spend the night in them?

A: Yeah, he had--they called it a tourist's camp then--he had little one-room buildings with double
bed in it that you could rent for overnight or you could rent for as long as you wanted, but speaking
about travelling people, they
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(A: continued)
generally stay one night. Of course, when the weather got real bad and there wasn't nothing to clear the roads, sometimes they stayed longer. But to
build it and have the cabins and the restaurant, the Austin Farms was first.

Q: Brown's w-,s there and then Austin Farms had a restaurant and all with it?

A: That's right.

Q: There's a little stone building down next to Aquia Creek--was that ever a part of a auto court or anything that you know of? A little stone building down
at the bottom of Aquia Creek, right at the bottom across the road from the Crucifix.

A: No, I don't believe it was, no. I remember when the Crucifix was put there, too, but no, that-

Q: I was just curious.

A: And then right up the road from that, there's a big two-story building, I don't know who had it now, but Mr. Thomas Shackleford built that and he
lived there and ran a store there. And then right up the road a little further, was one
of two stone buildings which one of them was Sunnyside Restaurant at one time.

Q: Something else I wanted to bring up about the first telephones that came into the county.

A: Well, as long as I can remember, we had a telephone in the county and Mr. and Mrs. Tom Gallahan up at Garrisonville, they operated it. And the Gallahans
family operated that phone service longer than I can remember.

Q: Did many people have a phone in their homes?

A: No, not many.

Q: So every time you'd use a phone, where did you go?

A: Sheriff Dick Moncure had a phone. Mr. Warren Snead, which was right across the road over there where Austin Farms now is, had a phone. And there were one or two phones at the courthouse. And phone service went to Brook, but the phone line come from where Number One now is to Coal Landing and there was only one phone on that line and that was Captain Wesley Knight. And I can remember the man's name that took care of the phone line. He was named Mr. Gill and he had a son named Wilmer Gill. And Wilmer died at a young age.

Q: Was it a company at that time, a telephone company? Do you remember?

A: I reckon it was a company, but it was a very small company. It didn't have many owners in it. And I have no idea what it cost you to subscribe to it because was so cheap in that day and time. I think that you could make a local call if you didn't have a phone yourself, I think you could probably make it for a nickel.
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Q: At that time in the county, people didn't move in and out a whole lot, did they?

A: No, people were very stationery at that time.

Q: And everybody knew everybody in the county at that time.

A: That's right. Yeah, I'd say 25 years ago, I knew 90% of the people in Stafford County. But now 25 years later, if I know 1% of them, I'm doing pretty good.

Q: That was before Interstate 95 came through, wasn't it?

A: Yeah.

Q: Well, how about before--in that period back when everybody knew everybody, was there much crime or anything that went on?

A: Well, there was quite a bit of crime--mostly, most of it would be minor crime,
but I would like to cite one incident. There was a young man by the name of James Minnick and he got some helpers and their object was to rob stores, so one night they got together and they went down--he told them he knew where there was a small store and it was just a pushover. So they went down to rob

this store. And that was at Coal Landing and when they got there, it was Captain Knight's store, the building had an A roof on it and it had a window in each end of the attic. And so when they got there, where they were going to break in at, in at the north end of the store, the big double doors that he went in and out when he opened and closed the store, that would be the easy way. They looked up there and the moon was reflecting through the attic out the window and they thought that Captain Knight was up there in that attic asleep and that was a light that he had up there and they left. Then they left some evidence, but they came back another time and they broke in. I can't say what they took--I don't think they took much 'cause they couldn't find the money, but anyhow, they also robbed another store somewhere in the northern end of the county. And it was owned by a man by the name of John Doyle. and John Doyle happened to see them and got the number of the car--they were driving a Model T Ford. So when word got out and they got to looking for them, they rounded up that car and they had all the burglar's tools in it. And there was one young man in the group--he was up from in what we call the Mount neighborhood, which is in the upper end of the county from Midland Island and his name was Boo Ray(?) and him along with James Minnick, they were the main two. They served some time. And I don't know just what they got out of that, but along about 1924 or 1925, two young men from over in Widewater had been out hunting one day--good friends. And they got done hunting about midday and they come down the road and they stopped in front of the home of one of the boys. And nobody knows what happened, but one of them, just as they parted--divided the game and of course one of them had to go on further on down the road, but this one was going on up the roadway to his home. Just as they parted, he had a double-barrel 16 gun and just as they parted, he turned that gun on him and shot him right in the small part of his back, both barrels. And as he fell, he turned around and hit him with the other end of it and broke the stock off it. And the boy that was killed was named Arthur Decatur and the man that killed him was Lee Randall. And so, it's quite interesting when they had the case in court. The murderer got five years, but he had a good lawyer--he had William Butzner from Fredericksburg. So, there was two boys at the same time they had come down the highway and they stopped up at Midway

(A: continued)
Island at E. Bigg's store and they got eight gallons of gasoline. In the meantime, they overpowered
Mr. Biggs and they kidnapped him and he had a .38 pistol that belonged to the government and they took
his pistol. So they drove him down the road, put him out where it was all woods, and he didn't have a
phone in his place. They didn't harm him. So, when they put him out, all he had to do was walk just a

little piece through the woods and he was at a farm. So, they called down here at Fredericksburg and
they set up a blockade at the Falmouth Bridge and old Sargeant Chichester at that time was heading the
police down here. So, they set up that blockade and they caught them. So they were tried right behind
the murderer. So when the jury went out to decide the case on the murderer, the judge called them two
boys up and that was Judge Frederick W. Coleman. And being in the winter time and we not being on the
river, my daddy and 1, we used to attend the court cases, so the judge informed them boys that they
could take trial by the judge or by the jury. If it was by jury, they might have to wait six months or
more before they'd be tried. And if they took it by the judge, it could be done right now, so they
decided they would take the judge's decision. So the judge called Sargeant Chichester up and said,
"Sargeant," he said, "What were these boys doing when you arrested them?" He said, "Oh, they were
scuffling and crowing." And of course, Judge Coleman was a very solemn old guy. Old Judge Coleman says,
"Scuffling and crowing. What do you mean by that?" He said, "Well, they was scuffling all over the road
and crowing like roosters." He sat there and frowned a while and looked at them real hard. He said,
"Boys, I'm going to give you all ten years to learn how to scuffle and crow real good." He said, "Take
them away, Sargeant." So when the sergeant carried them across the road to the car to carry them to the
lockup, 'cause they were going to the state penitentiary, they still went across the road corwing like
roosters. And Mr. Warren Snead, who was a J.P. in the county at that time, I think they called them
magistrates right at that time, hadn't maybe named them Justices of the Peace. And him and my daddy
being good friends like they were, sitting side by side in the courtroom, he said to my daddy, he said,
"Lord, Captain Ben, a murderer got five years and two boys stole eight gallons of gas and a pistol and
got ten."

Q: So it isn't too much different than it is today, sometimes. Who was the sheriff at that time?

A: W.E. Curtis.

Q: W.E. Curtis.

A: Mr. Will Curtis was sheriff then and--

Q: There was anothing you were going to tell me about the train robbery.

A: Yeah.

Q: You want to bring that up?

A: Yeah. Well, let's get on that because a lot of people don't know anything about that. But way back
in my very early years, there were two men. One of them was named Morganfield and the other's name was
Sircy(?) and they decided they would rob a train. So I don't know where they got on the train, but the
train was headed north and so they held up the train at Arkendale Crossing and
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(A: continued)
they robbed everybody on the train and after they completed the robbery, they run the engineer and the fireman off. So then they--they knew what they were doing. They knew how to handle an engine, so they disconnected the engine from the train. So after they started rolling up the track, they pulled the throttle down on the engine and they jumped off and one of them broke his leg, so they didn't get away. And I don't know now, but anyhow, somebody called ahead to Quantico that there was a runaway train on the track and they threw the switch at Quantico to derail the train and no telling where the thing would have stopped if that hadn't happened. And that throwed it off the track up at Quantico so that ended the train robbery. And of course, those men were tried at Stafford Courthouse and I can't tell you what year because I was very young at that time. And, but, this is accurate and there should be a record of it in the courthouse at Stafford somewhere. As records get lost from time to time, it might be lost from the record, but it was true.

Q: So later on after you got married, did you stay in the county?

Well, see, after I got married, I had gone on this passenger line. Matter of fact, I just had enough time off because we only got ten days a year. That's what we got--ten days a year and, see, we sailed every night one way or the other, either from Washington or from Norfolk. So, I just had off enough time to get married, you might say, and go on and take my wife up to Washington so for them three years I spent on there and like I say, three years, that's over a thousant nights. 'Cause 355 days a year and you take ten days out of the year for vacation, so-

Q: And your wife's name was what?

A: My wife's name was Mary Staples and she lived down here south of Brook. Near Potomac Creek.

Q: She was a Stafford native?

A: Yeah, she was a Stafford native. Yeah.

Q: And how many children did you all have?

A: Just one.

Q: Just one child.

A: Yeah, he's 50 years old last Saturday and he lives in Hanover County.

Q: Hanover County?

A: Yeah.

Q: All right.

A: And when he went to Falmouth High School, when he graduated, when he went in high school, he went with Falmouth Fire Department and he stayed with Falmouth Fire Department until his work took him out the area. And as of this date,
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(A: continued)
he is still a volunteer fireman and he has just come off the Hanover County Rescue Squad after 15 years
active duty with them.

Q: Now, when you went on the line--after the line, after those three years was up, what did you--did you
stay--come back to the county?

A: Yeah, I came back into the county.

Q: And stayed there until--

A: I stayed in Stafford County until last November.

Q: Okay. And at that time you lived at--

A: Well, no, when I first came back down in 1937, 1 lived at what we'll say is White Oak Road, 218 and

Deacon Road.

Q: And where did you work at that time?

A: Why, I was doing construction work. I worked anywhere from here to Dumfries because I dug a well in Dumfries for Wilbur Brom(?). We did excavation, we poured concrete, we did plumbing, we dug wells, we did everything. I've dug wells all over Stafford County. And in February of 19 and 41, 1 went down to what was then Sylvania. And I worked there from that day until the last day of November 1976, which was 35 years and 9 months. And I did a little bit of everything when I was down there. I didn't know--nobody knew when they went down there and went to work what they was going to do, but I spent my first year down there making rubber thread. Such as goes in stocking tops, girdles, bathing suits, and these elastic stocking for bad limbs. And of course, December 7, World War II broke out. So that was '41, so they let us run that rubber department until February 10th and then they wouldn't let us use another drop of that liquid latex, so the rubber department was shut down. And I went in the printing department and I didn't know one end of a printing machine from the other which I didn't know one end of a rubber machine from the other either, but I went through the printing department and you might say I worked up from a helper or feeder to a first-class printer. So I printed better than 20 years and then the company sold the printing department out to a Chicago-based outfit and they wanted me to go to Chicago with them and I decided not to. And I'm glad I didn't. But, I--my head boss, my head boss that I worked under for 20 years, I went and talked to him about it after they talked to me and he told me that for what it would cost me to live and what I'd give up, it wasn't worth it for what I'd get, to go to Chicago. So I stayed down there and I don't regret it. And I went from a first-class printer down to a laborer and went out on the yard in the dead of winter and I don't regret it. And so I went there with the idea I was always taught to get a job and stick with it--don't be hopping around from job to job. So I went there with the idea that I would work until I retired or died, which-ever. And so, I was fortunate enough to stay there and retire, which is nearly ten years now. But the plant closed 16 months after I left, so I had accomplished my mission down there and I felt sorry for those who lost jobs when the old plant closed. It was a big operation and it was a life blood to much of the area around here. I can drive 30 miles west of here and find people that worked down there. I even can go into Louisa County and find people that worked there. And way down lower Caroline--matter of fact, I worked with one man who lived at Tappahannock. So, that plant put income into many a home and it's a many home that was built around here that somebody wouldn't have built if it hadn't been for that job because it was the most consistent job and, actually, the pay was better than any other job we had

around here. It wasn't anything to brag about, but it was there.

Q: So your last home was--your last address in Stafford County was?

A: Was Route 11, Box 1714.

Q: And that was on Cool Springs Road?

A: Cool Spring Road. I built my home in '41 after I went to work at the plant, or we built our home there after I went to work at the plant and we moved in it in the fall of '41 and we lived in it 44 years and sold it last November.

Q: Well, going back to just an overall summary, we'll just wrap this up, the county-basically, the county before 95 which was 1964, which I think is around the time they built 95, before that, it didn't change drastically in any way?

A: No, there was no drastic change. They had started making a few subdivisions. Take over here, across the Chatham Bridge, up there in Chatham. When you say 2,000 or 2,500 dollars, now you're not talking about any money. But Chatham was set aside to be strictly a residential area. You couldn't even have a chicken house. That's right--that's the way it was set up. And there was no business then. And of course, Earl's Market is the first store or business that actually went in Chatham. But what I was getting at, you could not build a home--now think of this--you couldn't build a home under $2,500. Of course, $2,500 would build a whole lot back at that time. Of course, that's peanuts in this day's market.

Q: It sure is.

A: 'Cause all around that--all around just out Leeland Road a little ways out, there none of them under $100,000. But right there on Deacon Road, the first three or four houses right there, were built for less than $1,000 when they were built. Man paid $100 for a lot.

Q: That's hard to believe now, isn't it?

A: It is hard to believe. You tell people this thing and they can't believe it.

Q: Had the traffic begun to get to be much of a problem on Number One before they built 95? How much...

A: Yeah, traffic--yeah, when 95 was built, it was actually needed.

Q: 'Cause it was the main route between Washington and Richmond.

A: Yeah. It wasn't that drastically needed, but it was a good move when they built it. That's right.And of course, you take right now, 218 is busier than Number one was when 95 was built.

Q: How about 610 in Garrisonville, too?

A: Oh, Lord. Well, you see, if you go back to my childhood, Garrisonville, we'll say it was Number One highway. The highways did not have numbers--they went by Names, really. And I don't know what they called it, but they might have called it Jefferson Davis Highway, but anyhow, when they built Number One, those people that was on what was old Number One then, they were plum out of it. That's just like when they built this bypass over here. Number One, Princess Anne Street, and all those businesses down there, when they built that bypass, people just drove on by and really cuts the heart out of Princess Anne. But when the bypass was built. Princess Anne Street was getting to where it could not handle the traffic. So I look at all those things because I knew what was going on before and what was going on at the present time. Those roads might have been built at the time they wasn't really needed too bad, but they wasn't too far out of line. In other words, let's say they come at a good time to be there to take care of it. And now look at the bypass over here and let's say they had never built 95.

Q: So good or bad, it had to come.

A: It had to come, that's right. And there's a whole lot of other things that's happened that's good. I'm glad to see, since I've been on the water all my life, generally speaking, I've bad a hand in it, I'm glad to see that something's being done to clean up the waterways. I remember when all the sewage out of Washington dumped into the Washington Channel raw. And matter of fact, while I was on the

steamer, I saw the sewage treatment, the first one they ever had built, up there, and one of our
engineers went over there to be an engineer at that sewage treatment plant.

Q: And that was in Washington?

A: No, it was over--

Q: Blue Plains, Maryland?

A: You probably drove by there and seen all that sludge piled up.

Q: Oh, I have. Sure have.

A: But I know when all that was in the river. And all of Alexandria's sewage went in the river--all
of Occoquan's sewage went into the river. All of Indian Head-all that sewage went in the river and any
other sewage. Quantico--

Q: It's hard to believe, isn't it?

A: It is--it is hard to believe. And so, something had to be done and we're running late on that.
That's one thing didn't come ahead of time. I wish it could've got started sooner. And, I go along
with another thing, too. I think that whereever you've got a right good stream of water, if that water
can be impounded anyway, without hurting anything else, it should be impounded because you never know
when you're going to need it. I was just across the head of the Ni River the other day, there at the
reservoir, and it's a little stream up there about the little branch that runs down through most any
farm now, and that's a lot of dry ground out there where there used to be water. Now, they're kinda
figuring on the Po. The Po is a much stronger river. It would make a good water supply and it should
be impounded. And just like we got the two reservoirs in Stafford,

(A: continued)
that's good. And we may have some other streams in Stafford that could be.

Q: That's right. Well, I certainly thank you.

A: Well, you're certainly welcomed. I hope this will be some help.

Q: Okay, I'll stop it here.