Virginia Fines Sullivan

Virginia Fines Sullivan of Belle Plains Road, White Oak, was born July 10, 1926, daughter of Leonard L. Fines, born 1892 in Stafford County, and Virginia Ann Newton, born 1903. Mr. Fines was the son of Elijah L. Fines and Sarah C. DeShazo. Virginia Newton Fines was the daughter of Willie Tobias Newton and Birdie Newton. The interviewers, Suzanne Willis and Nancy Bruns, have long been interested in the White Oak- Patowmeck Indian story and were advised to begin with Mrs. Sullivan and her family. The interviewers went first to meet and get acquainted with Mrs. Sullivan and her son, Gary Cooke . They have returned on July 16, 2006, to begin interviewing.

Interviewer: I want to return to something that we talked to you about last week. But first let me make sure about names.

We have your name as Virginia Elizabeth Fines and then you married Mr. Cooke.

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes, I am Virginia Elizabeth Fines. My first husband was Stuart Cooke and he was Gary and Darlene's daddy and my second husband was Garnett Sullivan. Mr. Sullivan has been dead for five years now. He was from out around Paytes. Do you know where Paytes is?

Interviewer: Yes, I do as a matter of fact.

Mrs. Sullivan: Garnett and I had one child, Cindy.

Interviewer: Now I want you to talk about White Oak. We would like to start by focusing on the geography of White Oak. I think that is how we will understand the Indian story of all this. Are we in White Oak now?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes. You are in White Oak now. White Oak begins at Ferry Road. They call that New Hope too, but that was the ferry road. And the kids went to White Oak School from all the way over to Wild Cat Corner. All the way down to the King George border. That was White Oak.

Interviewer: Did you mention a church when we talked last week?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes, White Oak Primitive Church and the White Oak School is now D.P. Newton's White Oak Civil War Museum. (Mrs. Sullivan's cousin D.P. Newton founded and continues to operate the well respected White Oak Civil War Museum and Stafford Research Center.) Now Danny's museum building is where I went to school. I went through the fifth grade there. Then we went to sixth and seventh at New Hope School. It is boarded up now but it is on 218 just after you pass the 7/Eleven when you are coming on down this way.

That was New Hope School. I went there two years and then I went to high school.

To Falmouth High School.

Interviewer: And what class were you in?

Mrs. Sullivan: Forty-six.

Interviewer: Let's back up just a little from 1946 to say the mid-30's, and your father (Leonard Fines) ran a store. What kind of a store?

Mrs. Sullivan: A small grocery store.

Interviewer: What did he sell? I mean this was the country. What food did people buy?

Mrs. Sullivan: Regular canned goods. Big bags of flour, baloney–I remember that. And drinks.

Just a regular little country grocery store.

Interviewer: And what was it called?

Mrs. Sullivan: Fines Grocery Store. He closed it when I was in the fifth grade. Say about 1936.

He'd run it about 10 years. Now why he started it I don't know. My dad liked to help people. At the end he actually worked elsewhere and would draw his salary and go to Julian Garner's

and buy wholesale groceries to sell people cheaper. I think people around here paid when they could and most did pay. I don't think a Newton would owe anything to anybody.
But there was a catch when they got their salaries they would go to Penders on Caroline Street and buy their big groceries. Then they would come back to Daddy to buy when they ran out of money.

Interviewer: That doesn't sound very fair.

Mrs. Sullivan: It was just the way it way. People everywhere were struggling to feed their families during the Depression. Most of us was farmers and we always had enough to eat.

Interviewer: What did your father grow?

Mrs. Sullivan: He grew all kinds of garden vegetables and he cut some hay. Corn was the big thing. We had pigs, cows, chickens, turkeys, geese. We had everything.

Interviewer: How big was the farm?

Mrs. Sullivan: It was 15 acres up here. Now my grandfather owned 15 acres down below here on Belle Plains Road. My father bought this farm from Aunt Betty Farmer.
Her daughter Genoa was married to Isaac Silver and they took Mrs. Farmer to live with them when she got too old to live alone. They lived at the Silvers' farm. You all know the Silver farm? (Both interviewers do. The Silver farm is on Silver Ridge lane in the White Oak area. The Silvers came into the area after the Civil War to raise horses and settled first in Spotsylvania but later relocated to White Oak area where they continue a major farming operation today.)

Interviewer: Let me go back to stores? Were there other little stores around here?

Mrs. Sullivan: Okay. But I have thought of another school. This house right across the road was Stage Road School. Gary has pictures of it when it was Stage Road School. My mother Virginia Newton went there and my uncles.
My grandmother (Birdie Newton) –I don't know where she went to school. But she didn't go to school. She was a licensed midwife and Dr. Frant Pratt and all of them coached her to write her name and be able to pass her tests so she could get her state license. You've heard of old Dr. Pratt? He coached her.
People would rather have her than a doctor. She didn't have a nickname. She was just Mrs.

Newton or Birdie.

Interviewer: How many babies did she deliver?

Mrs. Sullivan: I have no idea, but she went all around. Out to Spotsylvania. All around here. She'd stay three days when she delivered a baby and she'd leave granddaddy home with the children. There were 10–three sisters and seven brothers.

Interviewer: That means lots more Newtons. That brings me to my question–but have we really covered all the little stores in White Oak?

There was your father's and...

Mrs. Sullivan: There's another one around on Newton Road. Mrs. Mary Newton has a store.

Interviewer: Now where is Newton Road?

Mrs. Sullivan: Go down here to this corner and turn right and that's Newton Road.

Interviewer: You are at 340 Belle Plains Road so the house across the street is at 339? And it is the former Stage Road School?

Mrs. Sullivan: It's right straight across the street. They have redone it.

Mr. Gordon Bullock and his wife lived there for years and years and years. Now some other people live there, but I only know them by their first names. They are not part of our family.

Mrs. Sullivan: There was another school down here on the corner– it was torn down years ago.

My daddy went to school there and I just don't remember the name.

Now that is just in this section right here on Belle Plains road.

Interviewer: Well how big is White Oak?

Mrs. Sullivan: I don't know in miles but you know when you come from Ferry Road and you turn onto to Rt. 218. That's the way you came? Right below that they start calling it White Oak and then it goes all the way over to Caisson Road, White Oak Church, Danny's museum (former White Oak School), and down as far to the King George line. Well all of that is considered White Oak. It includes Bethel Church.

Interviewer: How far then from Bethel Church this way.

Mrs. Sullivan: It goes to the water... to the Potomac. Maybe down two miles to the Potomac. And there are still families down there whose sons and the grandsons fish. They was fishing down there since we were Indians. That's all the work they have ever done is fish. That's since we were Indians.

Interviewer: It really does go way back in time doesn't it? People must have been here when the English came.

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes. So I have heard them say–the English people came up the Potomac

River and come around Marlborough Point and right across is Stafford too and (the English) they saw the Indians and they said they can't be Indians. They are blond and of course it is said the Vikings had been there ahead of them. And that's why the Indians were light.

Interviewer: And this was just something that was known and widely accepted?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes. I mean we didn't sit around discussing that we were Indians. Like I said, my grandfather would say, Pocahontas was my cousin.

Interviewer: And he wasn't kidding? He was serious. And is there a genealogy that might show who these Indians were?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes, Gary, my son, can tell you every one of them down the line. (Gary Cooke has devoted some 20 years of his life to researching the White Oak-Indian story.) The one at Passamatanzy was Japasaw.

Interviewer: So the English people came and they intermarried and it emerged as an almost different culture.

Mrs. Sullivan: And people here didn't leave. When I got married I got a piece of land from my father and my husband and I built right here on family land.

Interviewer: And how many families were there which would make up this group? Ten?

Mrs. Sullivan: The main families are the Newtons, Jetts, Curtises, Sullivans, Greens, Monteiths, Bullocks, Coxes, Butlers. They were all right in this area. There are probably more than that, but that's the main ones I can remember.

Interviewer: But these are the English family names which they kept or took when they intermarried. It looks like they would take the English surname but they were all related as members of the Patowmeck tribe. I still don't know the correct way to say that.

Mrs. Sullivan: We didn't sit around saying we were Indians, but we knew it. I remember my aunt saying that they didn't say they were Indian because this man had come through and was going to try to make the Indians go to colored schools.

Interviewer: That's probably Walter Plecker, a state official, or someone from his office. Plecker determined that if you weren't white then you were colored. Plecker, according to what we read in preparing for this interview, said that there were no purebred Indians left in the state and that therefore the people of Indian descent had to be colored. There were two categories: white and colored. It may have made people go underground. Plecker's regulations were in force quite a few years during the 20th century and according to what I read he had contact with Clerk's offices, hospitals, schools and other places where a person might have listed his or her race.

Mrs. Sullivan: We knew we were of Indian descent, but we never went around saying we are

of Indian descent until Gary and Robert Green became interested in getting it out.

Interviewer: Tell us more about the differences that you have observed between this community and others–almost a different world.

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes, people looked after each other when we were sick. There are no rich people down here. We were all average. Some might have had a little more, but most of us were poor people. And if we were sick– it wasn't anything for my kids to come to take care of me or my neighbor to come to help.

And at the time of death, you did not put people in funeral homes you had them laid out in the house and the people in the neighborhood would go and sit up all night in the house for the three nights before you buried them. We were just people who got together and stayed together.

We had quilting bees in the livingroom. The whole family would gather. And maybe 10 women from around the neighborhood would gather in the evening and make quilts.

Interviewer: Did you do baskets?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes**.** My grandmother did baskets. Birdie, the midwife, yes. She did baskets.

Interviewer: Did you save any of them? No?

Mrs. Sullivan: No. I can still see her and my grandfather– he would cut the split out of the trees in the woods and she would make oak baskets. She would be working with little splits about an inch wide. He had some tools but he also would take a piece of glass and shine that slat up until it was the size he wanted it. Then he would put it in the ditch. He always kept slats for baskets in the ditch. So when grandma decided she wanted a basket, he would go pull out a slat and she would make a basket.

Interviewer: They kept better in water?

Mrs. Sullivan: They would be supple and easier to work with. You could bend them anyway you wanted to.

Interviewer: She also made oak split bottoms for her chairs too, didn't she?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes. We just didn't---we didn't go to town for everything like you do to today. We made things. We made our clothes. The fact of it is my grandmother made my clothes for the first years I went to school. I didn't know what it was to have a bought dress.

Interviewer: Your grandmother not your mother?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes, my grandmother. Mama made some, but I would go through the woods to my grandmother's place and stay over with her.

Interviewer: Where would that have been?

Mrs. Sullivan: Well, we lived here and my grandmama lived off of Belle Plains Road.

And it is Paul's Hill Road now, but there was a cemetery and church there. In fact, my great grandmother (Virginia Potts Newton Stevens) had built her own church there. It was the Tabernacle Church and Cemetery. (*Tabernacle Church is no longer standing, but the Tabernacle Cemetery is still there, located off Belle Plains Road and Paul's Hill Road and is easily identified by a small* iron fence *surrounding several graves*.)

The tale is she got mad with White Oak Baptist Church and she decided she would build her own church.

Interviewer: Why did she get mad? Did you ever hear?

Mrs. Sullivan: I don't know. White Oak was White Oak Primitive and she was very stern and they didn't do what she thought they should do. She just built her own church. She built a Methodist Church. Mr. Isaac Silver (father of Mr. Sylvester Silver) helped her build that. In fact I think he (Mr. Isaac Silver) is buried there.

Interviewer: And the name of this grandmother?

Mrs. Sullivan: Virginia Ann Stevens. She was Virginia Ann Shelket– no, she was a Potts. She married a Newton and then later Ashton Stevens.

Interviewer: Is White Oak Church still there?

Mrs. Sullivan: Oh yes.

Interviewer: What does Primitive mean?

Mrs. Sullivan: Strict for one thing. Like the Southern Baptist only they have got their own rules.

Interviewer: In a way it sounded as though the Methodist were more strict.

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes. In different ways. The Primitives still stick to their old ways. I know they still heat with wood.

Danny Newton was married in that church (White Oak). And I'm not sure there was even electricity in that church. They stick to the old ways– almost like the Amish. The old beliefs.

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Interviewer: I think we have the grocery stores and the schools but I am not sure we have all the churches. We have White Oak and Tabernacle and one–

Mrs. Sullivan: There's Bethel. That's the one near the King George Line. And there was also a school behind that church years and years ago.

Down on the Bethel Road. And on the opposite corner from the Bethel church there was a store that belonged to Fielding Hudson.

Hudson was another name that was prominent down here.

Coming up the road there was White Oak Primitive and then there was grandmama's Tabernacle and then around on Ringgold Road or New Hope Road there was New Hope Methodist. The Tabernacle Methodist Church closed down and we went to New Hope.

Interviewer: That would be three churches for what is really a ten square mile area.

Second Interviewer: Church played a big part in their lives–in their culture.

Mrs. Sullivan: And that's what you did. You went to church every Sunday, rain, hail, shine or blow. You put that starched dress on and you went to church.

Interviewer: What time did you go?

Mrs. Sullivan: Early 8 or 9 a.m. and we'd stay until it was over and that depended on how long the preacher talked.

I never really joined a church because Daddy was a Baptist (through the DeShazos) and Mama was a Methodist. But Uncle Tom (DeShazo) was a Methodist. Maybe you just went to the church that was the closest to you.

Interviewer: That was the center of life. That and the school.

Mrs. Sullivan: Then on Saturday nights at Daddy's store you would see people coming with blankets and they would come to Daddy's store and spread those blankets out on the ground. We had a meeting at the store. All the neighbors.

Interviewer: For fun?

Mrs. Sullivan: For fun. They would just get together and talk. The children would play in the field and women would bring their babies and just sit with their babies and visit.

Interviewer: I want to ask you something. Alcohol. There was no alcohol in these gatherings?

Mrs. Sullivan: Oh yes there was plenty of alcohol. But I was brought up in a home where there was no alcohol. My daddy never drank a drop in his life. Newtons are known to love their alcohol.

Being of Indian descent they couldn't handle it very well. But in my family there was no

alcohol.

Interviewer: Did they make any wine or anything?

Mrs. Sullivan: Now my mother would make plum wine. She'd say it is a shame to let those plums go to waste. She made plum wine and blackberry wine and they might have it with a meal or something like that. We kid my daughter. She has grapes and she says she makes an Indian wine. She makes grape wine, raspberry wine. She still preserves some things. She loves to find something that the Indians did. She makes baskets.

Interviewer: This is Cindy Sullivan Sauls?

Mrs. Sullivan: She loves it. She loves that they dig up what the Indians did. Her and Gary both.

Me?

Interviewer: Well you grew up in a different time.

I do want to ask you about holidays. Tell about Christmas.

Mrs. Sullivan: Well that whole week between Christmas and New Year's was a holiday. My mom would cook up oh I don't know how much stuff and the family visited. Every day of Christmas week you would go to someone else's house and eat a big meal. The whole Christmas we would go from house to house and eat.

Interviewer: And people would serve different dishes? Something special?

Mrs. Sullivan: Everybody would have country ham and turkey and beef. And beef was special because down here we don't have beef. So we wouldn't have beef unless Mr. John Silver killed a beef and brought it around through the neighborhood and sold it.

We'd buy our beef then. There was only iceboxes. You know there wasn't anything to keep it in.

Mama would put it in a bucket and put it down into a deep well to keep it.

Interviewer: She didn't can it?

Mrs. Sullivan: She'd can anything she could get her hands on. And she dried fruit. She would put sheets or blankets up on top of the outbuildings and have her cut up fruit laid up there to dry. Peaches and apples would be dried that way for the wintertime.

Interviewer: We're talking now about the mid 1930's so we're talking before electricity.

Mrs. Sullivan: We had an icebox. Mr. Willie Payton up here had an ice house and in the wintertime they cut the ice from the pond and put it down into a hole in the ground and that would preserve it. And you could buy that in the summer for the ice box.

Mama also would put food on the end of a rope and you know stuff that had to be kept. And

she would put it down in the well and it kept like any refrigerator.

Interviewer: So that was before the icebox?

You didn't have cows?

Mrs. Sullivan: We did have cows. We didn't butcher our beef. We had plenty of milk.

Interviewer: And you made butter?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes, butter, buttermilk. And we had clabber. It was cottage cheese, but they called it clabber.

They'd take a big piece of cornbread and eat it with clabber. My grandfather would crumble the cornbread up in the clabber.

I don't care for it myself.

Interviewer: Were there Indian dishes?

Mrs. Sullivan: I don't know. They had a way of cooking things that's not like we cook today. They would cook anything to death. It was almost tough, they'd cook it so much.

Interviewer: They may have been trying to make sure it was safe to eat.

Pause to turn tape

Conversation resumes about Christmas gifts.

Interviewer: I wanted to ask about Santa Claus?

Mrs. Sullivan: I'll never forget this one Christmas at the store. It was during the Depression. Daddy always saw that we got something. Do you remember the Coca Cola company giving out the little coca cola metal trucks with little bottles on the side.

Interviewer: Yes.

Mrs. Sullivan: So Daddy got two of those trucks. And that's what we got for Christmas my sister and I. Two of those trucks. But we always had a big stocking hanging up and it would be full of nuts and oranges. It was a big treat. We'd get candy. Sugar candy. Peppermint ball candy. Bon bons something like that.

I mean we got a great big stocking full of things. Mama always kept a new pair for us.

Interviewer: And this was for you and your sister Esther? And there is a third sister too, isn't there. She was born in 1934, I believe.

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes, Linda. She was born in the Depression. Esther is nearer to my age.

Interviewer: And these Santa Claus presents continued as long as you and Esther continued to believe?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes and we always had firecrackers. Cause I got in trouble with them.

Interviewer: How could you get in trouble?

Mrs. Sullivan: I blew the ice cream freezer up.

(All are laughing.)
We had an old fashioned ice creamer maker that you sat and turned and turned. Mama made ice cream every Sunday even in the winter.
We got these little fire crackers every Christmas and I guess I was showing off and I put the firecracker in where the top went over.
Needless to say, I got a good little seat warming.
Christmas wouldn't be Christmas if the whole neighborhood wasn't running around shooting firecrackers.
Interviewer: Did you have to buy a new ice cream maker?
Mrs. Sullivan: Daddy fixed it somehow and we made some more ice cream.
Interviewer: What flavor?
Mrs. Sullivan: Vanilla. Then in the summer blackberry, blueberry, peaches, strawberries. Anything that you could get.
Interviewer: Did you have fire crackers on other holidays, like we do today?
Mrs. Sullivan: No just on Christmas.
Interviewer: And did you have a tree?
Mrs. Sullivan: Yes we always had a nice tree.
Interviewer: It sounds like a nice Christmas. Now were there parties like dances? Events like that at Christmas?
Mrs. Sullivan: Not by us. That might be later in life after we got through school. But the time I am talking about it was all family oriented.
Interviewer: What about Thanksgiving?
Mrs. Sullivan: I can't remember that it was a big holiday.
Interviewer: What about Easter?
Mrs. Sullivan: We always went to church on Easter Sunday.
The only thing I can remember is the family getting together. There was always family coming for meals.
Interviewer: What about family funerals?
Were they big? Did people come from all around for family funerals?
Mrs. Sullivan: Yes.
Interviewer: And how would you get word out. Telegrams? There were telephones.
Mrs. Sullivan: I don't really know how we would get word out. There were telephones but not many. We were on a party line down here for years and years and years. We were on a party line when we built this house in about 1952. I just don't know how they would get word

out. There must have been a way.

Interviewer: You mentioned one thing about deaths. You said the funeral period would last about three days.

Mrs. Sullivan: Maybe more.

Interviewer: And then would the body be in a winding sheet or a coffin.

Mrs. Sullivan: Pine boxes I think. Then we started taking them to Mr. Wheeler Thompson and Mr. Elkins.

Interviewer: Was ever a time when you would take care of the body yourself?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes, my grandmother (Birdie Newton) would lay people out.

... I can remember when my grandfather died and I was six. I do remember that he was dressed and laid out at home because I remember the neighbors coming to sit up with the body.

Interviewer: I never have understood the custom of sitting up with the body, except that it is a mark of respect.

Mrs. Sullivan: I think that is what it is. It is difficult time for the family. At the funeral home you know how difficult it is but can you imagine where that couch is and body laying there. You would have that image with you.

Interviewer: I think once death was part of our living and now we have separated it. It was more natural.

Interviewer: Now you said there were a lot of little family cemeteries in addition to church cemeteries.

Mrs. Sullivan: There's DeShazos around here on Newton Road.

Interviewer: There must be a big Newton cemetery somewhere?

Mrs. Sullivan: There is one on the end of Paul's Hill Road up here. You go back in there behind my great grandmother's house. It's a family cemetery. There is a lot of the Newtons buried there and then a lot of the Newtons are buried either in Bethel Church Cemetery or White Oak Cemetery.

Interviewer: Does New Hope have a cemetery too?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes. Most all churches in the country did.

Interviewer: Tabernacle did too didn't it?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes, I think Mr. And Mrs. Silver are buried there. All my people are buried in the family cemetery behind my grandmother's house. That would be Stevens and lots of Newtons too.

All of the slaves. There was a slave cemetery.

Interviewer: Your great grandmother had slaves? Your grandmother Virginia Potts Stevens.

Mrs. Sullivan: She had a few slaves. There was one I have heard about-- Aunt Julie Kinny. She had three different slave houses on her property that I can remember.

Interviewer: What types of jobs did they do. Were they house slaves or field slaves?

Mrs. Sullivan: They were field slaves. Her son got killed by one. That Paul Hill I was talking about. The slave wanted him to chop butterbeans. Paul and Silas was coming home from school.

They were twins.

Interviewer: They were Stevens? No, Newtons.

Mrs. Sullivan: They were Newtons. Paul and Silas Newton. And this man wanted them to help work the butterbeans. And I guess Uncle Silas said he was hungry and he kept walking. And Uncle Paul I guess gave him some lip and the colored guy shot him.

Interviewer: And did he kill him?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes.

Interviewer: And do you know what happened to the slave?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes. Gary has a clipping or paper on that. He has dug back into the history. . And I think they executed the slave.

Uncle Silas left from around here when he got grown and he went to Maryland.

Interviewer: Do you know of anyone else around here who my have had slaves?

Mrs. Sullivan: No, not really. But I do remember my great grandmother telling about during the Civil War when there was a knock on the door. My great grandmother said come on in. You know how country people are, they tell anybody to come in.

And these two Yankee soldiers came in and they said. Don't you ever do that. We could have done you bodily harm. You mustn't ever tell anyone to come on in.

Later on, one of these soldiers sent her a little redwood box–a letter box–that this soldier sent her back years later.

Interviewer: Going back to the slaves, I was thinking about what that said of social class–I mean if you had slaves you were probably a little bit better off.

Second **Interviewer:** But you said this community could range from people who are fairly wealthy to people who have considerably less.

Mrs. Sullivan: Well most of the older Newtons had land and money. All the land from the water back this way belonged to the Newtons. And I think Gary told me last night in the 1600's all of it was Newton land. That all belonged to Major Newton.

And you know that Crow's Nest they were fighting over? All of that belonged to the family of my great grandmother. My grandmother Virginia Potts Newton Stevens was born over there.

They moved over here because she could not stand the cold weather.

Interviewer: And did they move around very much? I mean within the area?

Mrs. Sullivan: No. There always would be some who would go off like every family. Granddaddy had a brother who was in Iowa. But the usual thing was they would stay right around together,

Interviewer: I think there must be one in every one of these early families who can't stand it and goes west.

Mrs. Sullivan: (Laughing) Sometimes I see a Newton on tv and I wonder if that's some of Uncle Jack's people.

Interviewer: But Wayne Newton is definitely from here.

Mrs. Sullivan: That's right. His grandparents lived right below Bethel Church. I don't know if Wayne Newton was born there. His father was Patrick Newton.

Interviewer: Does that make Wayne Newton a cousin of D.P. Newton, your cousin? Maybe I misunderstood what was said about them being first cousins.

(There is a brief discussion of confusion stemming from the fact that both Wayne Newton's father and D.P. Newton's father were men named Patrick. In fact, Wayne Newton would be a cousin of both Mrs. Sullivan and D.P. Newton.)

Interviewer: Before we come to the end of this tape, I want to return to two subjects mentioned earlier: electricity and indoor toilets. Can we go back to the mid-30's or around then? Stafford County did not have electricity and there were many places that had no indoor plumbing.

Mrs. Sullivan: (Laughing). No that's right. We had two bedrooms and a path. (All are laughing.) It must have been the year we moved from up here down to granddaddy's place. I must have been in the fifth grade. That was the year Daddy stopped the store.

Interviewer: And why did he stop the store?

Mrs. Sullivan: He couldn't afford to take care of all these people. Mama said your children are going without and you're taking care of all these people. And there's got to be a change. Well, Daddy wasn't going to argue with Mama.

He went to farming. He share cropped with Mr. Willie Peyton for several years. He worked his farm 50-50 or whatever and that's how he made money until World War II and then he went to Quantico with the rest of them and worked in construction.

So no electricity until the fifth grade and no indoor plumbing.

Mrs. Sullivan: No indoor plumbing. No. When we first built this house over here in 1951. We didn't put the bath in until after that. Nobody had a bathroom. For years. We had as I said,

"Two bedrooms and a path."

Interviewer: Do you remember electricity coming in?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes, I remember when it come down this road.. It was Virginia Electric. Virginia Power.

Interviewer: Was it exciting?

Mrs. Sullivan: It was funny. You didn't have to wash all those lamps. See that was one job every weekend was to go in and wash all the shades on the oil lamps. You remember Bon Ami?

Interviewer: You are talking about the globes?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes. They had sooted up. And you had to trim the wicks. But that was Mama's job to trim the wicks. But our job was to wash the globes.

Interviewer: How many would they be?

Mrs. Sullivan: There would be four or five. I don't see how we could see to get lessons as dim as it was.

And I can remember the first radio. It was battery operated. And everybody around the country would come on Saturday nights to hear the Grand Ole Opry at our house. To set in a room and hear music coming from a box on the floor. This was before they got electric down here. This was battery operated and we got it at Western Auto. This was one that set on the floor.

Interviewer: A console.

Mrs. Sullivan: Some people had never even heard of a radio.

Interviewer: You know you mentioned about the heat. You mentioned wood. Was it put into stoves or fireplaces?

Mrs. Sullivan: It was stoves. Most of it was put into stoves and some people might have a boiler in the basement.

Interviewer: Oil.

Mrs. Sullivan: No that would be much later.

When we came back up here, Mama and them heated with coal. We had little pot bellied stoves and we used coal.

Interviewer: But in the kitchen stove you used wood?

Mrs. Sullivan: In the kitchen stove you used wood. You cooked with wood and I never could get the hang of it. I usually burned it or something.

Interviewer: But the stove was where you heated your bath water. I don't want to ask too many personal questions.

Mrs. Sullivan: Go ahead.

Interviewer: Where do you come in the bath order? Were you first in the bath order?
Mrs. Sullivan: Mama had a great big tub and she usually put Esther and me in together.
Interviewer: So you got clean water?
Mrs. Sullivan: Yes... but people didn't care about cleanness like they do now. We were clean. Don't get me wrong but it was a different...
My kids thought if they don't take a bath every night somebody is going to get them.
Interviewer: It's just the way we were raised. Really. There weren't deodorants and things like that. A lot of that came along during World War II.
Mrs. Sullivan: I can remember my daddy coming in from work and smelling.
My kids will say they remember Big Daddy coming in smelling like horse and cow. You know where he had worked with them all day. That's what we remember about granddaddy. They called him Big Daddy, never granddaddy.
Interviewer: We were talking about heating in the winter, but what about summer. What did you do in the heat? Did you sleep outside?
Mrs. Sullivan: Open the doors. Sleep on the porch. We wasn't afraid of anybody bothering you then. Nobody bothered anybody. We could have slept in the yard and nobody would have bothered you. There was no such violence as it is now.
Interviewer: It was just a different world.
Mrs. Sullivan: Isn't it funny how the smarter we get, the dumber we get. I've slept on the floor many a night. Right by the door. Put a blanket down and camp out, we'd call it.
Interviewer: Do you remember the teachers when you went to school?
Mrs. Sullivan: My first grade teacher was Margaret Monroe. She's gone.
Interviewer: That's a familiar name. But she wasn't from White Oak was she?
Mrs. Sullivan: From Hartwood. You know Horace Monroe?
Interviewer: I don't really know the family. I met Betty Monroe at church but I think she married into the family.
Mrs. Sullivan: I think she married Thomas Monroe. I went to high school with Thomas Monroe.
Then there was Miss Ida Robinson.
Interviewer: Is she still alive?
Mrs. Sullivan: No.
Interviewer: But it hasn't been too long. Is she the one who used to tell Indian stories.
Mrs. Sullivan: Yes. She was an Indian herself.
Interviewer: She wrote a small booklet?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes**.** She lived at the Reamy Farm. Now it's the Kendallwood Estates. Her brother- in-law owned all that. Her sister Kathleen was married to Mr. Reamy.
Billy Reamy's father. Ann Lowe's father.
Mrs. Sullivan: Then Miss Mattie Chinn? She taught me.
She lived in the big white house across from White Oak Church. Then there was Miss Mattie Lee. That reminds me of Dr. Lee. We had a doctor down here. That might be something you would want to know-- Dr. Lee. Fitzhugh Lee, no Dr. Ludwell Lee.
Interviewer: And he was the White Oak doctor?
Mrs. Sullivan: Yes.
Interviewer: And this would be about when.
Mrs. Sullivan: In the 20's, 30's. In there. Dr. Lee delivered my sister Esther and she will be 80 years old in the fall.
Interviewer: But he didn't deliver you.
Mrs. Sullivan: No Dr. Payne in Fredericksburg delivered me.
He had a daughter named Elizabeth and she was in nursing school and I was the first baby she had ever worked with her father in delivering.
So they tell me.
Interviewer: So you weren't born at home.
Mrs. Sullivan: Oh no, I was born at my grandmother's up the road.
Interviewer: Esther was born in the hospital?
Mrs. Sullivan: Oh no. She was born at home. I think Mama was having trouble so they sent for Dr. Payne to come out from Fredericksburg. So Dr. Lee was here then, he just didn't do the delivery.
But Dr. Lee was the doctor down here. Two of his sisters– Miss Mary Lee and Miss Fanny Lee taught me. And that was at White Oak.
Interviewer: Well how many grades were there at White Oak again.
Mrs. Sullivan: Five, but there were several teachers. Some of them were older and retired. and later his wife Mary Lou Lee taught me.
Dr. Lee was a crippled man. He was on crutches.
Interviewer: And he would pay house calls?
Mrs. Sullivan: Oh yes. That's what doctors did.
Interviewer: Now how did you get the doctor to come to the house?
Mrs. Sullivan: I think you sent a message. Someone got on a horse and went and got the doctor and some people had cars. My mother drove a little car. Probably a model T or a model

A.

Interviewer: You wouldn't have needed a license. There were no rules. So she could have been driving when she was very young too.

Mrs. Sullivan: As I remember the first car Daddy had and it didn't have a top. It was an open top one and Mama would put Esther and me in it and off we'd go. There was a little colored boy who lived here down the road from us and she'd take him and he'd hold the babies on his lap so she could drive.

And people still drove buggies too. Horseback whatever. But Daddy had a car when they got married.

Interviewer: When were they married?

Second Interviewer: I wanted to ask about the weddings. Maybe this is a good time.

Mrs. Sullivan: Do you want me to tell you about the biggest wedding I can remember

Interviewer: Yes, of course.

Mrs. Sullivan: The biggest wedding I can remember was Mrs. Iva Ballard. She was Lou Silver's grandmother. She was Mrs. Iva Young. It was a second marriage.

I don't know where they were married but people serenaded them.

Interviewer: Shiffereed them we used to call it.

Mrs. Sullivan: I don't know what they called it. We were out at Daddy's store and the grownups were going around that road–they lived on that road around there towards Stone Landing– and

the grownups were going to serenade them. And me I thought I was grownup and I couldn't have been over six and I followed them. I don't know if they knew I was behind them, but I was following them and this big dog got after me. It come out and I froze right stiff and scrreamed and I remember my cousin Floyd coming back and getting me and bringing me back to the store.

They were beating and banging on pots and pans and shouting and carrying on and I wondered if everyone who got married acted like that.

(Mrs. Sullivan says that her first marriage to Mr. Stuart Cooke was a small church wedding and her second to her long time husband, Mr. Garnett Sullivan, took place at the Fredericksburg Baptist church where Dr. Robert F. Caverlee performed the ceremony.)

The first interviewed is concluded.

Interviewer: Today, I wanted to ask you, Virginia, about illnesses. I know you came through a time when childhood illnesses were serious and wiped out little children. What kind do you remember? Diphtheria?

Mrs. Sullivan: My cousin – I don't remember diphtheria – back then polio -- they called it infantile paralysis – Marjorie Shackleforth, she's still living, had it and …

Interviewer: Do you remember any of the details? Was she stricken suddenly?

Mrs. Sullivan: I don't remember that because it was when we were young kids, but I can remember the injection they gave her in her back left a hole in her spine because being kids and all of us together, we were always talking about the hole in her spine, whatever they put in it. And she was a little paralyzed in her arm and her leg. It didn't touch the next sister but the youngest sister they had to give her the injection, too, because they were afraid it was going to get Hazel – she's passed on now. When it came through the second time, when everybody had to have the shots, there were some down the road-- the daughter – and a cousin of mine, all of them -- had the polio and by then there were hospitals to take them to. Now when Marjorie had it there wasn't a hospital, you kept them at home. They were quarantined.

Interviewer: Oh, they were quarantined? Who came and did the quarantine? The health officer?

Mrs. Sullivan: I imagine so – I don't really know. And I don't know whether – well, Dr. Pratt's father was the doctor. And then there was a Doctor Lee.

Interviewer: Was he crippled?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes, he did a lot of the tending most of the time there was any kind of illness.

Interviewer: What about normal types of things, like chicken pox? Did that just run through families?

Mrs. Sullivan: It would go through a whole family and then we didn't have shots then, we just had chicken pox and measles. We would get so sick with the measles. I remember when I had it, I was so sick and weak. I got the mumps from playing – I must not have been more than four or five years old – and my cousin and I shared bubble gum – chewing gum – (laughing) and she had the mumps, so that's how I got the mumps.

Interviewer: What about scarlet fever?

Mrs. Sullivan: It's never been in our family-- only with Gary – Gary had scarlet fever from somewhere when I lived in Richmond and we never knew where. Nobody else had it except him and I sat up nights with him. We didn't put him in a hospital – the doctors from Medical College came over to the house and we were quarantined. When he finished with it, his little fingers peeled just like gloves. The skin came off. I remember that with him. They told me to watch him because of his kidneys; that was one thing that could be damaged – your kidneys. We were lucky. We were healthy.

Interviewer: You really were. We talked about the doctors. What about dentists? Did you have access to a dentist in White Oak?

Mrs. Sullivan: We went to town. There was a Dr. King that did the first dental work on my mouth. He's the one that caused me to have this gap right here. He pulled out two teeth back here and didn't space them, so (laughing) …. That's what caused that. That was Dr. King. He was right down beside …. I don't guess you even remember when Penney's was on Caroline Street?

Interviewer: Yes, Maam.

Mrs. Sullivan: He was right in beside that – upstairs at that.

Interviewer: Now, back up a little bit. When we left you last time we were talking about the big wedding that you attended as a little child – the big noisy wedding and they were banging on pots and pans.

Mrs. Sullivan: And I was frightened.

Interviewer: And frightened and lost. And then after that when you were married, you were married in a small …

Mrs. Sullivan: I only had small weddings. The first wedding was at the Methodist Church in Stafford, across from Stafford Courthouse.

Interviewer: Was Mr. Cooke from White Oak?

Mrs. Sullivan: No, he was from Richmond.

Interviewer: Oh, you were working in Richmond?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes.

Interviewer: Did you go down there right after high school?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes, just about -- I worked at Woolworth's and I worked at -- Woolworth's is the most place I worked in town after I finished high school – and then I worked at DuPont. You've heard of DuPont paint? Well, down below Richmond there was a DuPont Factory that did thread and, of course, like everyone else it paid good wages. My girlfriend and I went down there – got a job and went down there.

Interviewer: And your parents let you go?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes, they didn't really want to, but I did. And we lived in a home that the Methodists ran called the Wilson Inn that girls of Methodist belief and all could live there, just like a dormitory you had restrictions and I lived there until we decided we wanted to get an apartment of our own and that's where I met Gary's father.

Interviewer: As you continued on then, did you work after you married Gary's father?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes, I had left DuPont and went to work at Thalheimer's. Remember when

Thalheimer's was on Broad Street in Richmond? I worked there.

Interviewer: Where did you work there?

Mrs. Sullivan: I worked on the Third Floor in Dresses at first and then I decided it cost too much of my salary to buy dresses to work on the Third Floor so I transferred down to Sportswear. I made good commission there. I worked there till Darlene was born.

Interviewer: Tell us a little bit about the Dresses on the Third Floor. That's intriguing.

Mrs. Sullivan: That was Expensive Dresses – one of a kind.

Interviewer: Designer?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes, designer dresses. Everyone had to wear black dresses and stockings. You never went anywhere without stockings.

Interviewer: And stockings had seams in the back.

Mrs. Sullivan: Oh Yes! And I could never keep them straight. (laughing) They showed my bow legs and knock knees.

Interviewer: Did you wear high heeled shoes?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes, most of the time. No pants. Then, girls did not wear slacks or pants.

Interviewer: And you wore black?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes, most of it was black.

Interviewer: And did you shop at Thalheimer's?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes. That was why I said I couldn't afford the Third Floor. (Laughing). But then I learned that at Thalheimer's anything that was below the Third Floor, you could go to the basement and buy it a lot cheaper. It was the same thing, the only thing you didn't have was Thalheimer's label in it.

Interviewer: I remember when Woodward and Lothrop did that.

Interviewer: Well, after you had Darlene, did you have a particular profession or job then?

Mrs. Sullivan: I went to work as office manager for Model Laundry after Darlene was born. Darlene was three months old when I went back to work in the office.

Interviewer: Model Laundry in Fredericksburg?

Mrs. Sullivan: In Richmond. I lived in Richmond till Darlene was six years old and then I brought her up here and put her in White Oak School. By that time I knew my marriage was gone. And then Gary was 1 ½ when I came home.

Interviewer: Did you live with your parents?

Mrs. Sullivan: I came back home and lived with my parents, yes.

Interviewer: I'm a little bit confused, they lived over …..

Mrs. Sullivan: They lived right across the field right here. Now, when I first came home we

had the home place farther down this road down here. It was what Daddy inherited from his father.

Interviewer: Is that the Leonard Fines Road? Or the Fines Road?

Mrs. Sullivan: No, the Fines Road is over here; that's just a little lane that goes off Daddy's property.

I have a nephew that lives over there and my granddaughter, Cindy's daughter, built over there on the lane. (She is Melaney Hill.)

Interviewer: So, when you lived with your parents for a little while, did you work at that time?

Mrs. Sullivan: I worked at Montgomery Wards when I came home from Richmond. I was working at Bodica Drug Company in the office when I came home – left Richmond and came home.

Interviewer: Which drug company?

Mrs. Sullivan: Bodica. Down on Main Street. Do you know where it is?

Interviewer: Is it still there? I know where Main Street is.

Mrs. Sullivan: I think it's still there.

Interviewer: You're talking about Richmond. I don't know Richmond very well.

Mrs. Sullivan: I don't know it now either. Melaney (her granddaughter) was telling me something about Commerce Street and I never heard of that when I was working in Richmond.

Interviewer: Then you worked at Montgomery Ward's in Fredericksburg.

Mrs. Sullivan: Then I went to work in the factories. I went to work in a pants factory.

Interviewer: Morgensterns or G&A?

Mrs. Sullivan: No, the Pritchards, right on Lafayette Boulevard which the Robinsons owned. – I don't know who owns it now – but it was right on Lafayette Boulevard. where you turn off and go to Kenmore Avenue. You know, right there in that corner, there's a big brick building. I went to work there because I had two kids … it was easier for me to go to work even if I liked office work. It was easier and more time off with my children to work in a factory, so I went to work there.

Interviewer: I'm confused as to how you met Mr. Sullivan.

Mrs. Sullivan: I met him at a dance. First, I met him in the office. He came and fixed my typewriter years before I even knew who he was in Richmond. This was funny; oh, I guess Darlene was three months old so you know how long ago it was and I met him there. I never thought any more about it because the girl who graduated with him and I were good friends all the way through the time I worked in the office. And she used to come in and tell me well, "Garnett and I rode the bus back together."

Interviewer: So you thought he had a girl friend?

Mrs. Sullivan: Well, I guess he did. And then he went in the navy and I didn't meet him till he came out of the navy, the second time. I met him at a dance.

Interviewer: Where was this?

Mrs. Sullivan: Poplar Tavern. Do you all know?

Interviewer: Down on "One"?

Mrs. Sullivan: No, it was in Spotsylvania. You go on Plank Road and – Johnsons owned it then. It was called Poplar Tavern. And I met him. I went with a girl friend to a dance. I hadn't been anywhere. So, she said, "You know I'm tired of you" – cause my divorce was final and everything – she said, "I'm tired of you just setting home all the time, so let's go out tonight." So, I met him on the 16th of October cause it was the night Hazel, the hurricane, came through.That's when I met him.

Interviewer: That was about 1969?

Mrs. Sullivan: No, no. 1954, I believe it was.

Interviewer: And did you recognize him?

Mrs. Sullivan: No. I was talking to an old boy and dancing with him. I don't know if you've all been to country dances and do the "Paul Jones".

Interviewer: No, I don't know what the "Paul Jones" is.

Mrs. Sullivan: You all get in a line and then you go around and the whistle blows and whoever you stop in front of you have to dance with.

Interviewer: It sounds like fun.

Mrs. Sullivan: It was fun, and I got him and I never danced with anybody else.

Interviewer: That whole evening?

Mrs. Sullivan: Never again, I don't think!!!! (*Laughing)*

Interviewer: You mean when the whistle blew again.

Mrs. Sullivan: And Garnett and I started dancing. And Garnett said, "if you can leave your crowd, let's just keep on dancing." So I went back to the table where I was sitting with my girl friend and her friend and he sat with me and I never danced with anybody else.

Interviewer: That whole evening? Or the rest of your life?

Mrs. Sullivan: No.

Interviewer: Do you remember what you wore?

Mrs. Sullivan: Not really, no.

Interviewer: But it was a dress?

Mrs. Sullivan: Oh, yes. It was dress. You didn't wear slacks. It was a dressy dress.

Interviewer: Did you then remember him?

Mrs. Sullivan: No, until we got talking about Dot, this girl he'd gone to school with and I don't think she was at the dance. And we met her and I was talking, and he said, "You were working in the office and I did your typewriter years ago."

Interviewer: How long before you got married?

Mrs. Sullivan: I met him in October and we got married the 5th of February.

Interviewer: And that was by Dr. Caverlee at the Baptist Church. Were you married in the church?

Mrs. Sullivan: No, we were married in the study.

Interviewer: And then you came out here and built this house?

Mrs. Sullivan: We lived with Mom and Daddy and started this house immediately and we built this house. This is 2007 and we have been here 53 years.

Interviewer: And he built this house himself?

Mrs. Sullivan: He built this house – worked up to the Sylvania Plant. There weren't any jobs for typewriter servicemen at that time and he built the house and worked 3-11 shift work at the Sylvania Plant. And he would come home sometimes at 11 at night and something had to be done. I mean we moved over here before it was finished. We had two bedrooms and a kitchen.

Interviewer: And a path.

Interviewer: Did you know much about his navy time at all.

Mrs. Sullivan: He didn't go overseas. He was stationed most of the time at Pensacola, FL.

Interviewer: He was going there for training?

Mrs. Sullivan: He was an instrument man. He wasn't just a man in the navy. He did typewriters, watches, all that stuff.

Interviewer: Did you have any other stories, about World War II, did it affect you much?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes. I know I went to school one day with every body and then we went back and half of the kids – the boys – were gone. They were seniors, the senior boys, most of them belonged to the National Guard and they were gone. We lost a lot of our senior class.

Interviewer: Do you remember the day of Pearl Harbor?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes, I do. I can tell you where I was. They laughed at me at bingo this year when we were talking and I said I bet I can remember something nobody here remembers and they said what. I can tell you exactly where I was when Pearl Harbor was attacked and what I was doing.

Interviewer: What were you doing?

Mrs. Sullivan: I was at the movie at the Victoria Theater but I don't remember the movie, when they cut the screen off and announced it. Any servicemen there were to report to their place of duty.

Interviewer: How dramatic.

Mrs. Sullivan: And it was sprinkling snow when we came out of the theater.

...I turned 81 in July. I do, I remember exactly. Everybody said I don't know what I was doing (at the time Pearl Harbor was attacked.). But I do, I remember it because Mr. Grady, he and his wife both worked at Victoria Theater. And "Cream" Sullivan or Fred Sullivan – whichever they called him – do you know him?

Interviewer: Everybody had a nickname at that time. I do know that name.

Mrs. Sullivan: You know what Garnett used to say about that? Well, everybody's got a nickname so when the police come down here to White Oak, they ask for the right name, don't nobody know anybody. And what was so funny was when Garnett had his stroke and he was building houses down in Ebb Tide in Westmoreland County he had retired from the office machines. And he had started building houses in a resort where we had a house down there. When he had his stroke he was working for Mr. Louis Jesse and, of course, Garnett came home on Friday evening and had the stroke and never went back and his tools and everything was on the job. From Fredericksburg he went right on to Medical College and he stayed in Medical College a month – one whole month in Intensive Care. And then he was transferred over to the VA, being a navy man. And Jesse decided I probably needed the pay that was coming to him, so he contacted a boy helping him named Bow Legs but Jesse couldn't remember. So he went around here looking for elbows. He went in the store up at the 7-Eleven up here and wanted to

know if it there was Elbow around –he had a paycheck for him, that he owed him a week's pay. And they said, Elbow, we don't have anybody named Elbow. Well, he said, he's a nice dark-haired boy, no, he's a man, he ain't a boy. He's been in the navy and said Garnett called him Elbow and the guy in the store said, you're not talking about Elbow, you're talking about Bow Legs. And that's how he got his pay.

Interviewer: Do you think giving nicknames to people was because there were so many people with the same name?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes, same name. Yes, we had a laugh calling people different names, you know, different things.

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Interviewer: Is Montgomery Ward the last place you worked? No, the pants factory.

Mrs. Sullivan: I never worked after I got married. When I got married he said you take care of the children, you take care of the home and he didn't ever want me to work, so I never worked anymore in my life.

Interviewer: Outside the home. You worked!

Mrs. Sullivan: I worked, but not to get paid for it.

Interviewer: Do you remember saying that when you were growing up that you made everything for yourself, that type of thing? I was wondering, today do you still garden?

Mrs. Sullivan: Garnett and I had big gardens. Believe it or not, even after he had the stroke he and I would have all this land in gardens. We gave a lot of it away but that was his therapy, to keep him going, that got him back walking and he walked behind the tiller instead of … We planted this whole field, all the way around us in garden. And I canned and froze all of the stuff that we did.

Interviewer: Did you all grow tomatoes and corn?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes, and butter beans – any kind of vegetables, any thing that you wanted.

Interviewer: Did it all grow? This is kind of a clay soil?

Mrs. Sullivan: No, this is good sandy soil.

Interviewer: Did you ever sell any of it?

Mrs. Sullivan: Well, that's sort of a funny thing. Yes, for awhile he sold it; he put it in the little van and took it to the flea market. Remember when Fredericksburg had the little flea market at the drive-in theater? Well, he got an idea it would be of fun to sell our vegetables out there, which he did good at. But, one day, he decided we had a lot of beets and there's not so much you can do with beets – with me, you can't do anything with them – but, anyway, he pulled up a couple of bushels of beets and sat them right here on the side of the road. Got his

chair, put his sign out and there was an accident out there. Some woman stopped and didn't put on any signals or anything and a woman who came up behind her and ran into her. The police asked Garnett how did that happen? He said, I don't know, I was sitting there asleep. He didn't – he had no idea, but he never sold any more vegetables. That was the end of that. We did all of ours. I canned.

Interviewer: How many quarts did you can?

Mrs. Sullivan: Oh, I don't know how many – I would be afraid to guess but I had a closet and Garnett's parents come down and Garnett's father said, "Look at this girl, what she's done." I had everything you could think of canned.

Interviewer: Did you have root vegetables, too, like potatoes? You had beets.

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes, and we put them under the house. We didn't have a basement, so we put them under the house and they stayed under the house until wintertime and then we would – of course, by then it was probably, practically all raw.

Interviewer: Did they grow squash? And watermelons? And cucumbers – this is cucumber country, isn't it.

Mrs. Sullivan: Squash, watermelon, cucumbers, yes.

Interviewer: What about sweet potatoes, will they grow?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes. We had our own sweet potatoes. In fact, we didn't buy a whole lot. Even Garnett and I at the grocery store would buy flour and stuff like that, sugar and stuff that we didn't make. But all the vegetables, almost all we raised. We even had chickens, Garnett and I did.

Interviewer: Did you can them?

Mrs. Sullivan: No, I froze them. Garnett was going to school in Elmira, New York, and the chickens got big enough to be put away and I didn't have a freezer, so he drove – got off from school on Friday and drove from there down here. On Saturday, he and I went to town and he bought a freezer and he had to leave right after to go back to school in Elmira. So, every time a new typewriter or adding machine came out he would have to go to school.

Interviewer: Would you have had nuts around here?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes, they were around here, but we didn't have any. We had black walnuts. Have you seen them?

Interviewer: I have seen them.Where we lived around Newport News there were pecans. Black walnuts are a little different.

Mrs. Sullivan: Black walnuts – I hated those things, but they make delicious candy.

Interviewer: What kind of fruit?

Mrs. Sullivan: We had apples, pears, peaches, cherries.

Interviewer: Did you have an orchard?

Mrs. Sullivan: Mom and Dad had the most of the orchard.

Interviewer: And they're right over here.

Mrs. Sullivan: They were right over behind those trees, uh huh.

Interviewer: So, if Gary is talking about walking in the woods and he really was ….

Mrs. Sullivan: He owns 15 acres right over there.

Interviewer: Gary?

Mrs. Sullivan: Gary does.

Interviewer: He was talking about being a little boy and walking in the woods..

Mrs. Sullivan: From Daddy's farm. Daddy would walk all around the woods over there. He stuck right behind Daddy.

Interviewer: I think I may have only one more question. After you got married, were there clubs or organizations that you were particularly interested in?

Mrs. Sullivan: Not really. Garnett was never a person to go a whole lot. He liked being at home and doing with his family and fishing. He liked to go fishing. And then as soon as Cindy got old enough–as soon as she was big enough to put her in a boat we went to Ebb Tide and went fishing all the time. She had a little thing up in the boat where she took her nap and everything. She didn't mind being on the water. We never did a lot of going after we got married. We were more or less content just to be together and do things together.

Interviewer: Well, you talked about quilting with your neighbors or baskets, but those weren't necessarily any clubs or organizations.

Mrs. Sullivan: No. Now there are Indian things starting back doing quilts. As I said, we do them and we started this year, weaving baskets. Cindy has them up to her garage and we weave baskets.

Interviewer: They were making canoes yesterday or something. Dugouts? Did you see them? Little boys out there. They were having the best time..

Mrs. Sullivan: One of the members did. Leroy Jett. "Buddy" Jett made it. He made two. One great big one.

Interviewer: The Indian heritage began to resurface which I think was about in the 60's or mid 60's. Or was it much later than that?

Mrs. Sullivan: Let me see. Melaney was in college when we started making quilts. Gary and them was talking about it a long time before I ever got into it, but I don't remember exactly, but it must have been in the 80's, maybe.

Interviewer: Was there anything that triggered that?

Mrs. Sullivan: I think the more curiosity got because everybody would meet everybody, you know, and we can and we know the same ones, and I know I would meet people that I had no idea was any kin to me and come to find out they were cousins down the line. Everybody around here we did our own thing, we stayed together, and you were asking me how far White Oak went. Well, as far as the school was concerned, it went to Hard Corner. Have you ever heard of that?

Interviewer: Well, no, but I was going to ask you about that.

Mrs. Sullivan: And it went there, and that was in our school district and all the way down to King George line, down that way. We all went to White Oak School. I mean in school, as Mrs. Newcomb said, she could tell we were all kin because we all had the same mannerisms, we go the same way. If we decided at school that we didn't want to wait for the bus we would get permission to walk home. We didn't think anything of walking out to where Danny's school bus is back here. Just get in line and walk home and be home long before the school bus.

Interviewer: Then the Indian thing began to surface. Did the whole community support it?

Mrs. Sullivan: No, I have two sisters who don't say anything about being Indian.

Interviewer: To this day.

Mrs. Sullivan: Today, right today. I have nephews and nieces who laugh about Gary because he dresses in his Indian outfit with …. He enjoys doing that.

Interviewer: It means something to him.

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes.

Interviewer: He was one of the ones that was instrumental in starting the heritage movement.

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes, he and Roy Green – Robert Green –

Interviewer: Does Gary have an Indian name?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes, Walking Crow.

Interviewer: Walking Crow. But you have family members who are still rather withdrawn from being part of it.

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes. I don't know why --- I do know why, too, because a lot of them considered the Indians mixed with the Blacks. There are so many of them, really and truly. Well, you take those black women here but there were white men mixed with black women; plantation owners had black women. That's how this …

Interviewer: So, they still have this association?

Mrs. Sullivan: I think so. They still think Indians are down below. I mean I feel that way.

Interviewer: You mean class wise. You don't mean …

Mrs. Sullivan: No, not me personally.

Interviewer: I know what I wanted to ask you. You said this was Hard Corner?

Mrs. Sullivan: Hard Corner. Right down here at this "V".

Interviewer: Why is it called Hard Corner?

Mrs. Sullivan: From what I can gather from tales, I guess nobody would let anybody from Fredericksburg or out of here come down. They would whip them or shoot them or either or, all back in that times, run them back to town.

Interviewer: And Hard Corner?

Mrs. Sullivan: In this Indian Territory they just, you know, they say the girls here are ours and you stay out, from what I could understand.

Interviewer: And that's how it got its name?

Mrs. Sullivan: I guess so, I don't know.

Interviewer: We are talking quite a ways back.

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes, we're not talking about in my time.

Interviewer: So, this tradition of sort of this being Indian Territory, this goes way back.

Mrs. Sullivan: Oh, it goes back as far as I can remember and then way back before that, too.

Interviewer: When Danny, your cousin up here, was showing me a picture of his father, he said you could see the color difference. Did you ever see skin pigment different?

Mrs. Sullivan: No, because we're grown up with it and I never …

Interviewer: You never noticed.

Mrs. Sullivan: No…. I mean we would talk about someone born with high cheekbones, you know, Indians as the usual thing have high cheekbones. And we would say, well, my aunt has got – she can't deny she's an Indian – cause look at her cheekbones, which was true. She looked Indian.

Interviewer: Now you're talking about your Aunt Gladys.

Mrs. Sullivan: No, I'm talking about my Grandma Laura, my granddaddy's sister, Virginia Stevens' daughter. But then I've also heard that my great-grandmother Stevens was snooty because she had the money around here.

Interviewer: Where did she get that money?

Mrs. Sullivan: I guess she was born in it, I read that they owned all of Crow's Nest and her family did before that and then the Fitzhughs and the Moncures. You see she came from that side. The Moncures …

Interviewer: She was a Potts, wasn't she?

Mrs. Sullivan: She was a Shelket that married a Potts. The Potts are from King George.

Interviewer: Then she married a Potts.

Mrs. Sullivan: Her mother was a Shelket and married a Potts, and then my great grandmother married a Newton and then she married Ashton Stevens.

Interviewer: So, her first husband was Newton and the second husband was Ashton Stevens. You were mentioning the names Fitzhugh and Moncure, who was…?

Mrs. Sullivan: They were on my grandmother's side and they were also tied in with the Indians.

Interviewer: Are you talking about Monteith, Ellen Monteith.

Mrs. Sullivan: I'm talking about Moncure… Tom Moncure; and Stafford County's Moncures.

Interviewer: Tom Moncure?

Mrs. Sullivan: He and Gary went to school together; they were on the same debate team.

Interviewer: Usually I think of that family up toward Aquia, the northern part. The Moncure name is an important name here, one of the first.

Mrs. Sullivan: I tell you, some don't do it; some don't want to be a Native American. They say it's foolish. I had a second cousin, Mama's first cousin. When it started down here somebody said, "well, Willis -- he was a Willy Newton, too – why aren't you helping to find the descendants of the Indians?" He said, "it's just a big bunch of foolishness. Them people were all black and I'm not kin to any of them." They weren't; they probably married blacks and they had black and white. But then everybody did. I mean if you stop and think about it, when those men came over here they were nobody but either black or Indians.

Interviewer: Are you any kin to Lou Silver?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes, White Feather and I are cousins on theDeShazo side and on the Indian side, too.

Interviewer: Are the Deshazos not Indians?

Mrs. Sullivan: Gary says there are some Curtises that married into the DeShazos. No, I'm wrong. Taylors, that were Indians; they were of the Rappahannock Indians, and he's looked at that. But, no, they didn't claim to be Indians. They were a little snooty, too. (laughing).

Interviewer: So, there were definitely people that looked down on them?

Mrs. Sullivan: On the Indians, oh, yes. They still do.

Interviewer: But now they often use the term White Oakers. But is that what they really mean?

Mrs. Sullivan: I don't know. White Oakers. We just … Because we lived to ourselves, I think and we helped each other, you know. It's like a clan, we're independent.

Interviewer: What about the water part of it. Were they different, the people who were the watermen who lived on down farther? Were they part of White Oak, too?

Mrs. Sullivan: They were White Oakers. They were Newtons, most of them.

Interviewer: So, the dominant family is really the Newtons.

Mrs. Sullivan: Newtons and Sullivans and Greens.

Interviewer: Not Jetts? I always thought Jetts ….

Mrs. Sullivan: Jetts come into it, but Jetts married into it. (laughing)

Interviewer: But the Newtons are the dominant family, right? They were a large family, and many men, so the name carried on.

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes.

Interviewer: I know when I first came here, people always said, "Stafford County --Newtons, Jetts and Sullivans".

Interviewer: What about Wildcat Corner, what's the story behind that name?

Mrs. Sullivan: I don't know. I've always heard it called Wildcat, but I never knew why.

Interviewer: New Hope – what was that?

Mrs. Sullivan: That's right up here and I don't know why that got that name, unless it's because of New Hope School up there, and I don't know where that came from, either. But the Newtons all live in New Hope, too.

Interviewer: And Newton Road …

Mrs. Sullivan: Newton Road.

Interviewer: And then there's a Fines Lane?

Mrs. Sullivan: Fines Lane is right over here, just got four houses on it.

Interviewer: I think there's a little cemetery back in there, maybe.

Mrs. Sullivan: No. The cemetery is around on Newton Road. When you go …..Let's see, how far have you been on Newton Road?

Interviewer: We went down one night when it was getting dark . . .

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes, that's where a lot of my ancestors are buried there. And the DeShazo family cemetery is just right across – just go up Newton Road and right up on the hill over there you'll see it when you go down Newton Road.

Interviewer: On the same side as Danny's museum.

Mrs. Sullivan: No, it's on the opposite side. It's right here, right around … have you ever been down this way to the corner?

Interviewer: Yes.

Mrs. Sullivan: Did you come down this road to go to Danny's museum?

Interviewer: We turned off on Newton Road.

Mrs. Sullivan: Newton Road,… You could have come straight down 218.

Interviewer: And then we went back that way, and the firehouse is there – the new firehouse and the church. Oh, it's really like the heart of White Oak.

Mrs. Sullivan: But my mom went to school at White Oak School and I went to school at White Oak School and my kids – all three of my kids – went to White Oak School.

Interviewer: That's wonderful.

Mrs. Sullivan: Then Danny bought it and made a museum out of it.

Interviewer: Danny is your cousin, not your nephew?

Mrs. Sullivan: Cousin. He's Patrick's, my mama's brother's child.

Interviewer: I got it.

Mrs. Sullivan: Gosh it must be nice to have a good memory.

Interviewer: Well, I should have printed it (Newton genealogy) out to help. You all have repeat names.

Mrs. Sullivan: Repeat names, oh yes!

Interviewer: I can sympathize with Bow Legs.

Mrs. Sullivan: Well, his name really was Roger O'Neal.

Interviewer: (laughing) That's not even a White Oak name.

Mrs. Sullivan: No, but when my oldest child was born, I named her Janice Darlene. I said I will not name her Virginia. That stops right now.

Interviewer: Why do you think it ever got started?

Mrs. Sullivan: I don't know. Gary said way back everything was Virginia, Virginia Anne. For four generations he traced it back and the oldest girl was

always Virginia or Virginia Anne.

Interviewer: That's true of all the people here in Virginia. The same name generation after generation.

And the first English child was Virginia Dare so that established a tradition for the name.

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Interviewers and Mrs Sullivan remembered that they had wanted to talk about rationing during World War II and resumed taping.

Interviewer: Do you remember the ration books?

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes, I remember the ration books.

Interviewer: What do you remember?

Mrs. Sullivan: Well, you got these little books and you got so many cans of food, of canned food you could buy, and so much sugar, so much flour. Let's see, canned food, sugar and flour.

Interviewer: Shoes?

Mrs. Sullivan: Oh, yes, shoes, silk hose.

Interviewer: They wouldn't even let you have them at that time.

Mrs. Sullivan: No, they wouldn't. And gasoline.

Interviewer: Where did you even get the ration books? Who handed ration cards out?

Maybe the city government authority?

Mrs. Sullivan: Maybe you had to go to Stafford Courthouse. Maybe where you voted at. Maybe they had them there. You may have registered and got them there.

Interviewer: Were you living in Richmond at the time?

Mrs. Sullivan: No, not when World War II was going on. I was going to school at the time. But I remember I wore a lot of shoes and, of course, every so often you were allowed a pair of shoes. I don't remember how long, a year or six months or what. And I wore out a lot of shoes and I would use Daddy's card to get shoes to go to school with. And I remember, of course Momma and Daddy raised their own fruit and we had our own bacon and everything, so that part of the ration didn't hurt us at all, but then I remember back – it must have been the Korean War. They rationed again, because a bunch of us girls were out. I guess it had to be Korea, but maybe it was late in the war (World War II), but anyway my uncle, we had missed the bus from where we were and we were standing on the side of the road waiting for another bus and my

uncle came along and he was not being true to his wife. I'm not going to call any names. And he stopped because he saw me standing there and, of course, he was afraid something would happen to me, so he stopped and brought me home, me and the three girls I was with. And he made me promise that I would never tell because I knew who he was with, and I didn't. I didn't tell, but I blackmailed him. When we wanted to go somewhere he had a farm and he had gas tickets. I would go to him and I would say I need a gas ticket, and he would say, I don't have any. Well, I would hate to go to --- and tell about you, and he would always have a gas ticket. That's what rationing means to me. He got killed in an accident and I always felt sorry I did that to him because he did help me. He saw me stranded, I'd missed the bus.

Interviewer: That was a school bus?

Mrs. Sullivan: No, there was a bus that would come through – I think we were at a party – and it came through on Rt. 1. A bus would come through Fredericksburg and bring you to Dahlgren to
the railway station and then we would call somebody to bring us home. You see, there used to be a train that went from Fredericksburg to Dahlgren and there was a bus that run from way out on Rt. 1 back to bring the sailors and marines from Dahlgren so they could catch the bus to go back to camp. And so we would get back that far, then one of the girls' fathers or someone would come pick us up. So, we had missed the bus that night because you didn't have cell phones then; you couldn't call and he came along and he saw us standing there and he picked us up, loads us all in his car, but we blackmailed him the whole time.

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Interviewer: Did you go to the beach much?

Mrs. Sullivan: Mostly, I did because I rode the boats with my uncles and things. They were down at the river. And I stayed at the river with them a whole lot and I went to the beach. I mean not at roller skating. That's how I got my leg tore up-- was at roller skating at the beach, Fairview Beach. And there would be busloads, like Sunday School picnics and things like that, we would go to the beach that way. Or maybe the families would get together and go to the beach and have a thing.

Interviewer: This would be in the '40's? When you were in high school.

Mrs. Sullivan: Yes, we would go to Fairview Beach cause it had the big roller skate marina. We loved that.

Interviewer: I never knew that about the skating marina. Could you swim?

Mrs. Sullivan: Oh, yes, it was clear, it wasn't dirty like it is now.

PATAWOMECK INDIANS OF VIRGINIA
INDIAN HEAD DRESS QUILT RAFFLE
HAND QUILTED BY TRIBAL MEMBERS

The Patawomeck Indians and their descendants have lived in Stafford County, Virginia since according to oral interview with a Piscataway Chief taken in the earl 1600's, since about 1350. This was reconfirmed by a historical excavation of our early village site which was located on Indian Point at the end of the peninsula formed by the intersections of Accaqueek Creek, Aquia Creek, and Patawomeck Creek.

Our people have an Elder based society, in other words. The Elders, their wisdom and opinions are held in high regard in the Tribe. It is the task of the Elders to pass their knowledge and skills to the younger generations. Quilting Bees were one such gathering. When someone's child was to be wed, all the tribal members would gather at one of the houses and make the newly weds a quilt for a wedding present. In this way they met as a group which included a age span from the very young to the Tribal Elders. Not only did they pass their knowledge of how to quilt to the next generations, they also used this time to pass the oral history and stories of our people. This gathering was also used as a time of feasting with each contributing what they could to the feast.

When the Quilting Committee chose to undertake this quilt for Raffle, we were fortunate to have had Tribal Elders whom had set with their mothers, grandmothers, and great grandmothers during the 1920's and 1930's while they quilted, so we retained the knowledge and history passed from those generations . This quilt design was named The Indian Head Dress Pattern. The square blocks measure approximately 14'' square, made of many smaller blocks. These were sewn using an electric sewing machine. All the quilting was done by loving hands. The overall dimension was about 51" x 80" not including the border.

The drawing will be held at the annual tribal meeting on Sunday, October 07, 2001. The Winner will be notified.

Interviewer: You actually swam? I thought maybe you picnicked or ….

Mrs. Sullivan: No, we swam. Yes.

The Potomac used to be a clean waterway. There was Fairview Beach and Belvedere Beach, Colonial Beach, Westmoreland Shores.

Interviewer: Could you swim right down here?

Mrs. Sullivan: Many a time, but it was black, muddy; awful bottom to it.

Interviewer: Is this Indian Point down here?

Mrs. Sullivan: Indian Point is across the cove. I think Gary calls it Indian Point.

(There is a discussion of the Potomac Creek area and the interviewers conclude their interview, thank Mrs. Sullivan and promise to return.)

On November 8, 2007, Virginia Sullivan had one more interview. This conversation was not taped. Notes were taken by hand and are transcribed here.

Interviewer: In this White Oak area, were there any black churches or schools that you remember?

Mrs. Sullivan: There was a colored church called Bethlehem Church on 601 right off of Bethel Church Road going to Route 3. The church is still in existence and is very active. Then there was a colored school, don't know the name of it, that George and Helen Bourne bought and made it their home – about a half a mile down Belle Plains Road.

We had black families that would come and help us and many others as well. Remember I said everyone in White Oak helped each other. The Williams and Preston families came and helped us the most. That would be John and Hattie Williams. Annabelle Barney made cakes and even did laundry and some housework when Mama was sick. Attitudes were different in those days.

Hattie and John Williams's house caught on fire and almost everything went up in the smoke and fire. Hattie said, "Len you have to get my rocking chair out." The fire was really bad. But, Hattie still wanted that chair out. So, finally, my daddy, Leonard Fines bought the rocking chair out of the house. Turned out that was where all the money was hid – in the seat of that rocking chair.

Interviewer: No wonder she wanted that rocking chair out!


STAGE ROAD SCHOOL

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