

Transcription of OH-00020

Julia Hyde Posey

Interviewed by
John Wearmouth

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Typographic Note

- [Inaudible] is used when a word cannot be understood.
- Brackets are used when the transcriber is not sure about a word or part of a word, to add a note indicating a non-verbal sound and to add clarifying information.
- Em Dash — is used to indicate an interruption or false start.
- Ellipses ... is used to indicate a natural extended pause in speech

Subjects

Newspaper presses
Rural electrification
Catholic schools
Genealogy
Political parties
Roosevelt, Franklin D. (Franklin Delano), 1882-1945
Port Tobacco (Md.)
Rural conditions

Tags

La Plata Tornado 1926

Port Tobacco Times
Times Crescent
Mount Bleak

Transcript

John Wearmouth [JW]: This is John Wearmouth interviewing Julia Hyde Posey at her home on 311 Washington Avenue in La Plata, Maryland. And this is March 10th, 1992. This is part of the Charles County Community College Oral History Program. And we will talk about—. And if she doesn't mind I'll call her Julia?

Julia Hyde Posey [JP]: That's fine.

JW: First time I interviewed her was with other members of her family. I guess about fifteen years ago. Anyway, we'll be able to talk to her about Port Tobacco, the Hyde family, McDonagh Institute, and La Plata. And she was born at Mount Bleak which still stands. Her nephew John—
—. What's Johnny's middle name?

JP: Emery.

JW: John Emery Hyde lives at Mount Bleak now and carries on a family tradition which is now a good hundred years old isn't it? [Inaudible] Hyde's at—.

JP: Over, over a hundred years old.

JW: And she's been in Charles County all of her life. She was born April 21st, 1908. And I think one of the important things that she's done in her life is to be the business manager of Physicians Memorial hospital from 1945 'til 1971. I think the thing that most excites her now is that she's active and has been active with the restorers of Mt. Caramel and now she is the Vice President of that group and you continue to be active. Okay that's great and her mother was Elizabeth Geraldine Birch who was born and raised in Bryantown. Her father, Lewis Metcalfe Hyde was born and raised in Annapolis and came to this county in 19—. 1878.

JP: He was 16.

JW: 16.

JP: Or 14.

JW: Born—. And he was born in 1864. So that would mean it was about 1880. Is that about right?

JP: That's about right.

JW: And he was the—. He joined the staff of the *Port Tobacco Times* and *Charles County Advertiser* which had been printed at that time in Port Tobacco since 1844. And he remained the printer of that establishment, that newspaper, even for many years after it moved into La Plata under the management of the late judge Walter Jenifer Mitchell. Joined with the *Crescent* and became the *Times Crescent* which sadly died last year. That's the end of it. 1991. Okay I think that's a good introduction to who you are what we're going to talk about. Julia how many children did your father have altogether? He was married twice.

JP: He had 14.

JW: Who survived?

JP: Uh, 14 children survived but he did—.

JW: Anyway, I'm sorry to have interrupted, let's go through the children again. Can't—. There were 14.

JP: My father had 14 children who lived but he had I think 4 children by his—. Two children by his first marriage that died at birth and two by his second wife who died by which some people say he had 18 children.

JW: What was the birth date of the very oldest one?

JP: Well—.

JW: The first child [inaudible].

JP: The first child—. Papa—. Papa was married. He came to this county in, when he was 16 and he married when he was 19. I just found that out. And...so you can figure that year out. Can't you? When his first child was probably born a year later.

JW: I would imagine so. So he married when he was 19 that means he married in [inaudible]—.

JP: He was probably 20 when he had his first child.

JW: Well the first child must've been born about 1894. If he was 19 and married in [18]93 when he was 19 a child would have been born roughly a year later I would imagine. Now who was that child? Was that one [inaudible]—.

JP: That was Emma Hyde. Emma.

JW: And she lived to be a rather elderly lady?

JP: Yes. She lived to be up in her 90s.

JW: I'm sorry we missed her.

JP: Yes.

JW: What took her up to the west coast? Did she marry someone?

JP: Well she was a teacher and my father sent them to—. What do they call those colleges?

JW: Normal.

JP: Normal school. Normal school and she became a teacher and she taught in—. She was teaching in Washington, DC she met this man who was a lawyer. Studying to be a lawyer at George Washington University. And when—. Of course they fell in love I suppose. And he went back to Seattle, Washington. He was from Seattle, Washington. And she went out there afterwards and they married in Seattle.

JW: And she never really came back?

JP: And she never came back. Never came back again.

JW: Isn't that something. So when you were born at Mount Bleak how many of the children were still living in that house?

JP: Well all of the children from my Papa's first wife, by my mother, all the children by my mother were living there when I was born. And I remember that some of the step children were there. Is that what you call them? Or half brothers and sisters were there. But I can't remember that. It must've been when I was very young because I can barely remember that any of them were living there at that time. When I could remember.

JW: How many Hyde children were in the elementary school? In Port Tobacco? At the same time?

JP: I'd say about five of us I guess.

JW: And so you would have started school about 19—.

JP I started school on my birthday when I was six years old.

JW: Oh alright so—.

JP: Which was April the 21st. That was the day I started to school.

JW: Okay in 1914 then?

JP: Yes.

JW: Okay and what were the names of the Hyde children that were there then when you enrolled? Other than Julia who were the others?

JP: Rebecca, May, Mary, and Lucille, and Lewis M. Hyde Jr.. My youngest brother I don't think was in school at that time.

JW: Albert?

JP: No. He was born—.

JW: 15 I think.

JP: He was born quite a bit later. I was about 6 years old when he was born I think.

JW: Okay who was the teacher there at that time in 1914?

JP: I think it was Mrs. Gray.

JW: Okay. Now what was her first name?

JP: I don't remember but I think her husband's name was Arthur.

JW: Okay. And were these Gray's the ones from the Nanjemoy area trap?

JP: From Port Tobacco. From the Poorhouse Road area.

JW: Oh okay those Grays, alright.

JP: Yes. Yes.

JW: So, Mrs. Claggett Wheeler, Jane Gray Wheeler—.

JP: That was her aunt.

JW: I see, okay. Okay so there've been teachers in the Gray family for a long time.

JP: I think that's who was teaching me. I'm not really sure of that. Either was that or Ms. Wade. A Ms. Heidi Wade.

JW: Okay. Did—. Who were the other teachers? Were there others who taught you—.

JP: The ones that taught me were, Mike Stone, old Mr. Mike Stone, Ms. Wade, Ms. Heidi Wade, Abigail Mathews, and Lucille Barnes. And I don't think that I was ever—. Georgetta Paul taught there for a while but I don't think I was ever there when she taught. It was after I left there.

JW: You won't recall this probably but do you have any idea as to when the Port Tobacco ceased being a school for white children? Long after you left I'm sure....

JP: I would say about 1920.

JW: I would guess, yeah. What other families were—. What other Port Tobacco area families were sending their children to Port Tobacco school during the years that the Hyde children were there?

JP: The Wade children and the Swann's. Joshua Swann. And that's about all that I can remember.

JW: Were those Swann children from Rose Hill Road? Were they the Swann's that lived in our house?

JP: No, no, they were not. That was Catherine Swann.

JW: That's right. That's correct.

JP: And they were different Swann's. Joshua Swann married one of the Barbour girls. [In the state hall]. Well they had three daughters and Joshua Swann married Violet Barbour. And they were—. They ran the post office I remember.

JW: I see.

JP: And her daughter, Violet Swann, I think still lives down in La Plata. Her name is [Gullet].

JW: That's right and I know him. I know her husband. And Violet herself lived until recently—.

JP: Yeah she did.

JW: And she's someone I should have talked to but just didn't get there. What was life like in the Hyde family home? Who was the boss in the home? Your mother or your father?

JP: My father.

JW: Was there a clear delineation of—?

JP: My father was boss.

JW: Okay.

JP: But he was a great father. And he—. I don't think anyone was really the boss. But I know my mother stayed at home all the time. He went out to work. He was a great provider. I would think that he was the head of the household.

JW: Okay and people—.

JP: But I can remember how much respect he had from my mother because we had a large table in the dining room and I can remember real well about him how he treated her at the table. Especially because he always sat on the end and she sat at the other and he, she always got the best piece of fried chicken and he was the one who passed the plate up and he gave her the best piece.

JW: And you never really know who was in command because so often times the mother would in a very quite civilized way just kind of pass the word along, "Oh Lewis I wish you would do this and that."

JP: That's right.

JW: And another one a very forceful and outgoing in the way they did this stuff. I usually ask because times have changed a great deal. All in all at least in this century as often as not the household has been run by, by a woman. It was Daddy's role after he left during the morning to go to work, but the household was run by the wife and mother as often as not.

JP: Well I can say that about my mother too. But when they were there together I don't think there was really much distinction.

JW: So you know who the ship's captain was?

JP: Yes.

JW: Alright I think that's important. That's important. Which of the children was most like your father? Which of the boys for example came closest to being like Lewis Metcalfe Hyde Sr.?

JP: I really don't know. They were so different. I think they were very different. All my brothers were very different in many ways from my father.

JW: And your mother? Did any of the girls follow in her footsteps as far as personality was concerned? Who would be—.

JP: Well it's hard to say. I don't think there was any great—.

JW: Okay [inaudible].

JP: I can't remember that anyone. Rebecca was, you know, she was sort of a mainstay in the family because I know she learned to drive the car first. Course she was the oldest that was at home. Geraldine was married. I can barely remember her wedding. I can remember what clothes she had on.

JW: Geraldine?

JP: Yes.

JW: Oh for heaven's sake. Where was the wedding?

JP: I think it was at St. Thomas's Church.

JW: Oh okay.

JP: And I can only remember her clothes. I can't remember the ceremony at all. So she left home when I was very young. And then Rebecca was the oldest then and she was the one who learned to drive the car first. And she was the one who used to help Papa at the printing office a lot. She also—. Well she was older than we, quite a bit older than I too.

JW: She—.

JP: And she worked for Walter Mitchell you know for a while.

JW: Oh did she?

JP: Yes she was—. She went to Annapolis with him to—. When he was State's Senator and was his secretary. Back in those days he only went for three months I think.

JW: Recently someone who knew Rebecca very well told me that she was a very accomplished driver.

JP: Well she was very good.

JW: And that's an old friend of hers and maybe yours? Muriel Hardesty Barnes.

J: Oh yes she was.

JW: Muriel used to drive into La Plata with Rebecca.

JP: Well Geral—Rebecca took a business course in Washington which was [Masters] Business college so she had a lot of business sense. But, you know, she, that's why she got the job with Mr. Walter Mitchell in Annapolis.

JW: Did your father and mother do very much to encourage their daughters to get out into the world—.

JP: Oh yeah.

JW: And try and make their own way? Okay. And this wasn't always true in those days was it?

JP: I guess not.

JW: It wasn't. And they all, they all went their own ways and did things on their own didn't they?

JP: Yes. Mhm.

JW: How many of the Hyde children went beyond elementary school? Other than you, I know, Rebecca?

JP: All of them went beyond elementary school. All of them went through high school.

JW: That's remarkable and that too was very unusual. How many eventually went to McDonagh for any particular period of time?

JP: They all went to McDonagh except—I'm speaking now of Papa's second children—all of them except Albert. McDonagh closed before he was in high school.

JW: Yeah it closed about 27—.

JP: He went to La Plata elementary school and then when the church bought Sacred Heart, bought the old McDonagh school, Albert was the first graduating class I think.

JW: At Sacred Heart?

JP: High school, yes. In the first.

JW: So how long was he in La Plata?

JP: He was there when the tornado came.

JW: And he was—.

JP: So that was 1926 when the tornado—.

JW: Was he injured?

JP: He was in the—. Very badly injured. He was the worst injured of any child who lived.

JW: I recently interviewed Rudolph Garner and the scar he has on his head even today is.

JP: Well most people say that Albert had a silver plate in his head but I think that was more of a rumor than anything because none of us knew about it if he had it. But he was very severely injured only on his head.

JW: For heaven's sake.

JP: And he was unconscious for over a week. He was 11 years old. I remember that day.

JW: What hospital was he taken to?

JP: Providence hospital.

JW: Providence.

JP: Mhm and he was there until March. This happened in November and he was there until March. The only other child that was injured badly but was never in danger of death was this Lewis Swann who [inaudible] that Joshua's son. He had a broken leg that was very badly broken and he was in the hospital for a long time.

JW: Can you remember the news reaching the family of the tornado?

JP: Yes. I went up to the hospital at night.

JW: Oh did you?

JP: Yes I did.

JW: With other members of the family?

JP: Yes uh huh.

JW: How did your father stand up under something like that. Well he must have stood up on it very well and my father had nurses around the clock for Albert. In those days nurses worked 12 hour duty. So he had two nurses for over a week and I used to wonder how he, you know, could [stand the] expense because in those days you didn't have hospitalization.

JW: No indeed—.

JP: And all of the expense was on him. I remember the first time that I went to see Albert in the hospital I didn't recognize him except by his hands. The only thing I recognized was his hands.

JW: He was that wrapped up in bandages?

JP: And his face it didn't look—. You see his head was just injured in his head. And that was the only thing that I could recognize about him.

JW: What grade was he in?

JP: Well he was eleven years old so he would have to be in like the fifth grade. I have pictures of him. I have a picture of that. I'm sure you do too.

JW: [Inaudible] of the school?

JP: Well I have pictures of the school and I have pictures of him in the classroom. Because I think the photographer had been there the day before or week before.

JW: That's right I have seen those.

JP: And there are a lot of pictures.

JW: That's right it's in the La Plata history book.

JP: Yes and I'm sure there are a lot of pictures of that and I have several pictures of him.

JW: And who was his teacher?

JP: Ms. Janey [Buoy] and Ethel [Hearn]...Ethel Graves I believe her name was then.

JW: That's right yeah. That's right. The old [inaudible] Mrs. Fairfax [inaudible]. How important was politics in your father's life?

JP: Very, very important.

JW: Took it seriously?

JP: He did. He was a great politician.

JW: Okay and what, which party? I know—.

JP: The Democrat Party.

JW: [Inaudible] and who, who were those that he found himself opposing year after year after year on the other side?

JP: Well I don't know. I imagine—.

JP: George Wade would've been a—.

JP: Yes George Wade, Sydney Mudd. They were Republicans.

JW: [Inaudible] grandfather probably.

JP: And [Adrian] Posey was a Republican. I'm sure he was opposed to them. In fact, of course my father was very opposed to Port Tobacco being moved to—. The county seat being moved to La Plata. And one of his starch enemies at that time was Adrian Posey [laughs]. Her grandfather.

JW: Isn't that something.

JP: And he was very much, very, very, very much in favor of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

JW: Oh was he?

JP: Oh indeed he was. In fact—.

JW: Not all Democrats were.

JP: I know. At that time there were a lot—.

JW: Especially here.

JP: There were a lot of Democrats in La Plata at that time that were very much against Roosevelt. And some of them who were very much one was Thomas P. McDonagh and Mr. Walter Mitchell. In fact my father and Walter Mitchell got along fine all the years that they were working but that was a little disagreement that they had towards the end of his stay at *Times Crescent*. He and Mr. Mitchell did not agree about Roosevelt. But Papa was very staunch Democrat and although Walter Mitchell was his boss he did not go against Roosevelt.

JW: What was it about Roosevelt's policies that your father most admired?

JP: Well I don't know that John. Maybe the same reasons we have today. Probably for the middle class people.

JW: I think so. I would say your Democratic Party down through the years in Charles County were of the landed aristocracy for the most part. And your father being from Annapolis wouldn't have had that background. And he probably didn't have the connections down here that would have forced him to go along this traditional Democratic Party way.

JP: Well, you see my father made his own life. He was born in Annapolis and he never knew his father died very young. He never knew his mother or his grandmother. He was raised by his stepmother mostly and he never—. She must've been very good to him because she sent him to Catholic school. He was not a Catholic but she sent him to Catholic school because she was a Catholic. And she was instrumental in getting him to come to Port Tobacco because she had a brother who was interested in the *Port Tobacco Times*. In fact, I think he had an interest in it or she bought an interest in it or she had something to do with it.

JW: And the brother's name?

JP: Was Jake Daley.

JW: Okay.

JP: John Daley.

JW: Alright I think I've got that correct [inaudible] better writing.

JP: Alright. And he came—. And that was her brother. And he came down here with John Daley and worked on *Port Tobacco Times*. My father, my grandfather, Papa's father was one of the richest men in Charles—in Annapolis. And, but he was married four times and Papa was the child of the third wife and therefore when Papa's father died he did not inherit a lot of the money. He did inherit quite a bit. He inherited two homes in Annapolis and he must've inherited some money too because Papa did a lot of things that he couldn't have done on his salary that he got at the *Times Crescent*. He—. In fact when I was a child I used to think that we were poor. But I'm sure we were not poor looking back. I don't think we were because we had so many luxuries.

JW: Such as?

JP: Our clothes. My mother made a lot of our clothes and what she couldn't make Ms. Barbour down at Stag Hall made. At Christmas time we had very exotic things that came from far away from here. I remember the one thing we had grapes that came in the, like the Thompson grapes and these grapes would come from California. They don't even grow here. We had boxes of those that came in sawdust. And you'd pick down into the sawdust and pick out a bunch of these grapes. And we had all kinds of delicious things at Christmas time.

JW: Citrus fruits?

JP: Citrus fruits and raisins that came on a—. That were dried on the stems.

JW: Clusters of raisins?

JP: They were clusters of raisins right on the stems.

JW: Sun dried I suppose.

JP: And figs and all these things that we had.

JW: Now where were those purchased do you remember?

JP: I don't know unless Papa got them in Baltimore. He used to go to Baltimore a lot on the train and whenever he came home he always brought a whole bunch of bananas. I mean a bunch. That's the only time we ever saw a banana because besides being—. Besides working for the paper he also was Supervisor of elections for years and years. And he used to have to go to Baltimore on business a lot.

JW: Now in his day this job was the top one in supervising elections?

JP: He was the supervisor of elections for years. And he did—.

JW: A paid position?

JP: A paid position. And he did that on Saturdays and Sundays. He did it and he worked at that. And then at, when—. We had electricity in our house before anybody had it. There was only one family in La Plata I think who had electricity. That was the Ruben's.

JW: Oh yes, yeah.

JP: And....

JW: Now was the electricity generated?

JP: We had Delco.

JW: Okay,

JP: We had a Delco Plant.

JW: In the basement.

JP: No it was in an out building. Our house didn't have a basement.

JW: No that was a luxury.

JP: Yes but there was a—.

JW: Roughly how old were you when that electrical system went into operation?

JP: I guess I was around 10 maybe.

JW: So that's, that's pretty early. During World War I.

JP: The Mathews over here has a Delco Plant too. The people that live right over here.

JW: Oh yes.

JP: And I remember so well that this out building was that the whole side of the building was lined with batteries. And one battery had a big ball in it. Do you know this?

JW: No, no this is new to me.

JP: And you had to watch that ball and when that ball fell down to the bottom it was time to start the Plant up and generate more electricity until the ball went up again.

JW: That's what they call specific gravity.

JP: Is that what it is.

JW: And today when they test an automobile battery and it's dead they say the specific gravity is gone. The battery is finished. Okay, so that's how they marked it with the ball it went up and down in the water of the battery.

JP: Yes. It was just one of them. Just one of these batteries that had the ball.

JW: I'll be darned that's interesting. And that was—.

JP: And another thing my father bought a farm when I was just a very young kid. Poorhouse farm was for sale.

JW: The Poorhouse farm?

JP: The Poorhouse farm. 300 acres. And he bought that farm. Well he had to have money to buy that. He wasn't making enough money at that to buy that.

JW: The judge himself wasn't making that kind of money.

JP: And he bought this farm and the Poorhouse was on the farm at that time.

JW: Did you ever see it?

JP: Yes I did.

JW: Could you describe it?

JP: I can't very well. It was in very bad repair and it was almost falling down. And I'm not sure whether it was made of brick or wood. But I do know there were a lot of brick in the building because Papa tore the building down and sold the brick. And I've heard him say many times that he got enough money from the brick to pay for the farm.

JW: The land and everything?

JP: Yes that's what he used to say. And we had a tenant over there that worked the place and the farm itself was on the right hand side of the road but there was a few acres on the left.

JW: Across Poorhouse Road?

JP: Across Poorhouse Road. And that building. That old house, grey looking house that sits there real close to the road.

JW: Quite an old house.

JP: Yes quite old. It's a cheaply built looking house with funny looking shutters on it and all. Well down buried down in that house somewhere is a five room bungalow that my father built for the tenant. And that house has been added onto until you never know that that was there. This tenant lived there, Joe Birch, lived down on the farm in a little place right on that side of the road. And one year he got pneumonia and Papa thought it was because the house was not, you know, it was drafty and etc., etc. And he, and Joe got pneumonia so he made him come over to our house to live.

JW: Now was this a black Birch or a white Birch?

JP: White. Joe. Joe Birch.

JW: Okay, okay.

JP: His children still living over there. Now Birch Road.

JW: Oh yes, okay.

JP: Well that's named after him. And he lived on the third floor of our house. And then he got married. When he got married he was still living there with us.

JW: How old a man was he when he?

JP: He was quite, he was older than most. He got—. I'm sure he was up in his 30s when he married. And Papa sold him the farm later on.

JW: Well your father must have been a good money manager.

JP: Yes and then not long after that he bought—. He had a place he bought that he [property] in Port Tobacco. Where the church sat. The Catholic chapel.

JW: Oh yes, yes.

JP: And that was still there when he bought it. The building itself. And—.

JW: So you, you saw that as a girl?

JP: I saw that. Yes I did.

JW: Have you ever seen any pictures of it anywhere?

JP: No.

JW: I haven't either.

JW and JP: [Inaudible]

JP: —It was good, it was called a chapel. It was never called a church. And it had—. It also had a lot of brick in it. And as a child I remember going down there and helping to clean the brick. You know you had to cut the mortar away from the brick and pile it in these piles. And we found these large pennies this size in the that had been put in the mortar when it was built.

JW: Old English penny possibly?

JP: Yes. Right. So I think that Albert who finally got a home place in Port Tobacco sold it to Frank Wade I think. That—. It's still just grown up now. It's nothing there.

JW: There's no sign of anything there.

JP: No.

JW: Did that house have double brick chimney's on the ends? Two on each end?

JP: Our house or?

JW: The chapel house.

JP: Well I don't know. I don't know. See it was so far gone when I remember it that it was more or less like it was a foundation with brick and probably chimneys. The same way the Poorhouse farm. I think the Poorhouse farm was probably a frame building with a lot of brick foundation and brick chimneys.

JW: Yeah that may be. I've seen the buildings specifications for that drawn up about 1820 when young William Briscoe Stone was on the Board of Trustees and all the specifications are there. In fact I have a copy of it now at home. And recently talking to Al [Neev] I found out that his grandfather Samuel [Neev] held the insurance policy on the Poorhouse.

JP: Well my father had his insurance with [Neev] all his life.

JW: Oh is that right?

JP: Yes.

JW: For heaven's sake.

JP: Everything that we had insured was with [Neev]. [Inaudible] I guess was on Papa. There's a [Neev] still in the insurance business.

JW: Yes there is right the grandson.

JP: Yes.

JW: The grandson that's right. Was life a bit crowded there at Mount Bleak? Quite a few people living under that one roof for a while. Did that ever cause any discomfort or problems?

JP: Well no it didn't seem to us that it was. See we had two bedrooms on the third floor.

JW: Mhm. And those were pretty good size rooms?

JP: Yes they were. And we had two beds in each room. I remember that. Two double beds in each room.

JW: So there were four children in each of—.

JP: Yes. Uh huh.

JW: So that would take care of—.

JP: And I don't remember it ever being crowded. And we had—. There were 20 acres to that farm to the place in Port Tobacco. And we had large garden and my mother did a lot of canning. In fact one year we had a canner outside that we canned tomatoes and put them up in cans.

JW: Outdoors?

JP: Tin cans.

JW: Oh for heaven's sake—.

JP: And sealed them and had labels put on. They looked just like they came out of the store. I think we sold them too, commercially.

JW: So your mother even though life was fairly comfortable for her she got into the nitty gritty hard work of a country wife?

JP: Oh she did, yes she did.

JW: How much did the daughters help her?

JP: We did a lot.

JW: What did you get into?

JP: We did a lot. We had a lot of things to do. We had our chores to do like everyone else. I remember we used to have one week someone would clean upstairs and the next week. We'd divide it up. One was upstairs one week and the next we did the downstairs.

JW: That's the one thing the Hyde family had was household help.

JP: Yes we did and we did have outside help too.

JW: Did you?

JP: We did.

JW: Did the boys help with the garden? The vegetable garden?

JP: Not very much I don't think. No I don't think so I don't know unless that tenant—. See we had a tenant on the farm over there.

JW: Where was the tenant home? There's no sign of it today is there?

JP: Well the tenant I'm talking about the Poorhouse farmer—.

JW: Oh yes, okay.

JP: And we had horses at home. And plows and plowed the garden and stuff. And we had—. Oh and we also had a little black boy. Snowden [Norris], who came to live with us when he was young and he did a lot of the work in the house and out of the house. He lived there. I've forgotten where he slept. But he there night and day until he was a grown man. And when he left he went to Washington to work. And I remember he came back years later to see us. And he often came back but one time he came back all dressed up with a gold watch and a chain. And you know, the watch was in his pocket and the chain went across to the front of him and he had the fob on the side. And Mama had black ladies that came in. I can name a lot of them.

JW: Who were just a few of them?

JP: Frances Queen and the Thompson's.

JW: Any of the Wesort?

JP: Frances Lee, Frances Lee. Yes. She died not too long ago. She had a big reception over here in Marshall's Corner not too many years ago. I remember Catherine Posey going to it because she used to work for them. By that time my mother and father were dead. But I remember a lot of these older people. And I do remember that Catherine Posey went to this reception that she had.

JW: When—. Were any of the Hyde children born outside the house?

JP: No.

JW: That's remarkable too. [Inaudible]—.

JP: I remember when Albert was born. I remember very well when he was born.

JW: Now was there always an MD in attendance?

JP: I think most of time yes. Dr. Spencer was there when Albert was born but I do know they had midwives too but I don't remember. My mother had a doctor I think. A midwife too.

JW: Do you remember the names of any of the midwives?

JP: No I can't remember them.

JW: That's a bit of history that's just disappeared. There's only one alive and she doesn't want to talk about it. She's one of the [Gross] women from Grosstown Rd. near Bryantown. She's living up in Washington I think now. So that's remarkable. Those children in a family that size. All born at home and to have that many grow to maturity, become adults. That's a record in itself. To what extent did your mother and father encourage you to educate yourself as far as you could go? Did they really make a big thing of this? Did they increase a respect for education in their children?

JP: Oh yes. I think they did and I think if any of them were ambitious enough that they would have done everything they could. Because I know that from experience that I had myself. And I'm not sure I want to put it on the tape. If you—.

JW: Who did your father Mount Bleak from? Do you recall?

JP: I think it was a Ferguson. Dr. Ferguson.

JW: Sometime about 1888 a Wingate family lived there. Now whether or not they owned it I do not know. But on our 1888 map of Port Tobacco Mount Bleak is shown as being the property of the Wingate's.

JP: That name rings a bell.

JW: They are down in the Newburg area now and own Cherry Hill down there in Wicomico.

JP: Is this on or?

JW: It's on, it's on now. Where did your father and his first wife live during the early years of their marriage?

JP: They lived at [Haldane].

JW: Oh right here [inaudible]—.

JP: In La Plata.

JW: La Plata. And that was when he was still with the *Times* in Port Tobacco?

JP: Yes, uh—huh.

JW: So he was commuting?

JP: That's right he was commuting.

JW: By horse and buggy?

JP: Yes.

JW: No doubt. Where did the— . What route did the road take that way? Was it where it is now?

JP: Almost exactly where it is now.

JW: Oh okay. A dirt gravel narrow, narrow road?

JP: Yes. The only thing that's different about it right now is a little bit—. The road is not—. The bend in the road down past Albritton's was almost at a right angle.

JW: Oh okay.

JP: But now, you know, just goes around. That's about the only thing I can remember.

JW: Okay. So when about what time did your father begin to think seriously of working in La Plata? What things happened that changed his life that way? From working in Port Tobacco to working in La Plata. Is it something that happened suddenly?

JP: Well, no, I don't know because I don't remember all that. That was before my time.

JW: That was before your time, that's right.

JP: But see he when he was married, first married he lived in [Haldane] and then he bought the place in Port Tobacco when his first wife was living. And there—. And then Port Tobacco was moved—. I mean the county seat moved to La Plata then he was in the same position. But he lived many, many years in Port Tobacco and worked in Port Tobacco.

JW: While?

JP: While he was living at Mount Bleak. I don't think he lived too long at Haldane.

JW: Who—.

JP: And there was—.

JW: Who owned [Haldane]? Did, your father was renting?

JP: My, I think my father was renting it yes.

JW: Okay.

JP: I don't know who owned it. There was a school there one time, you know? There was a finishing school. And Papa's oldest children by his first wife went there. And that's another thing about my father, talking about you know why I used to think he was poor. He sent both of his oldest children to normal school. They both graduated from normal school.

JW: Well that's—.

JP: Emma and Louise.

JW: That took some doing. The properties that your father inherited in Annapolis, did he hang onto those for a while?

JP: Yes he did. I remember when he still—. He still had them when I was a child because I remember him going to Annapolis. I wondered recently—. I've been wondering how he got to Annapolis. You know whether he—. Because there was no train line.

JW: That's true. How on earth would he—.

JP: But I remember that they, he had to go to see about the steps and about this and about that. And that those houses are still there. They're on Green Street.

JW: Downtown pretty much?

JP: Right downtown.

JW: I know where Green Street is. So they would be downtown.

JP: Those, those two houses are—.

JW: Very near the old dock area.

JP: Yes. Well they're right down past Maryland Inn.

JW: Yeah, yeah that's right.

JP: See one of my grandparents, grandfathers built the Maryland Inn.

JW: Oh yeah I think I heard that. Yeah my wife and I were looking at a very old house on—.

[Tape Breaks]

JW: Was your father one to bring business home from the office? Did he ever talk at the dinner table about what had been going on during the day?

JP: Oh yes he did. Well we used to work for the *[Times]*. The children used to go down help him work and we never got paid for it.

JW: Oh for crying out—. Now where was this—.

JP: That was mostly up over the where the Stephen's building is now.

JW: Oh I see. A second floor?

JP: The second floor and that's where the press was. And Rebecca every single week went up there as long as I can remember and ran off the papers. And she never got paid for it.

JW: Did she ever mention it? Was she—?

JP: No, nobody ever mentioned it. Nobody was upset about it.

JW: Now what kind of presses were these? Can you describe them? Can you name them?

JP: They were huge. She had to stand up on—.

JW: How did that floor support all that weight?

JP: I don't know but it made an awful lot of noise. I can tell you that.

JW: The building must've jumped up and down.

JP: It did. It did.

JW: And this was a letter press operation too wasn't it? Where the type actually struck the paper—.

JP: That's right yes.

JW: And left impressions on the paper.

JP: Yes. And we, and we used to go—. And I myself folded the papers. We used to go up there and fold. All of us worked up there.

JW: Now what year are we talking about?

JP: And you worked for nothing.

JW: Early 30's?

JP: No. Earlier than that.

JW: Earlier than that?

JP: Oh yes because no it was—.

JW: How old do you think you were? 15?

JP: Yes.

JW: Okay about 1923, 24 or somewhere in there?

JP: That's exactly right. And we used to, you know that all those papers had to be folded.

JW: How many folds now? One?

JP: Was at least two. The paper was like this and was folded in half and I think again.

JW: And then one more time? Okay alright.

JP: Yeah. And then we had—. They went out in the mail and then they had to be stained, you know for....

[Tape Breaks]

JW: And that's that and away we go. Now back to second floor of the really Mitchell building at that time. Built by Walter Jenifer Mitchell himself.

JP: Yes.

JW: As I understand it. And I'm still amazed that that second floor could use the weight that was put on it when the—. How many presses was your father running for the newspaper alone?

JP: Just one.

JW: Just the one, okay. How many subscribers about 1925?

JP: I Haven't the slightest idea. But I want to tell you something else about the paper itself and about the family working. The paper came out on Thursdays and that was the highlight of our week at Port Tobacco because Papa was always late coming home that night. He worked until midnight getting the paper out. And the children went up there and helped. I went and helped, Lucille, Rebecca, and they had what they call single wrappers. This is what I wanted to tell you. And they had to be—. They were papers that were sent all over the country not only Charles County but overseas, everywhere. And there were quite a few of them and they had to be done up separately. And they were wrapped in a piece of paper and pasted. And the name was written on them.

JW: Was the paper rolled?

JP: The paper was rolled.

JW: Bit of brown paper?

JP: Mama made the paste the day before for us to paste to make the single wrappers. And all of us worked the—. And we all worked for nothing. We were never paid. Walter Mitchell never paid us one cent.

JW: Incredible. And he had enough money to do it didn't he?

JP: Yes he did. But I don't know what he paid my father, but I do know that we lived very well. We had an abundance of everything to eat and an abundance of everything to wear. But a lot of it was what Papa did on the outside as well as what he did for Walter Mitchell. Now I never, I never knew what he paid him.

JW: Now when all of the children showed up for the mailing you came from where McDonagh? And where did the others come from at this time? How many of you were here in La Plata.

JP: Well when I was doing it, it was just—.I was living in Port Tobacco then with my family. It was with Papa, with Lucille and myself and Rebecca mostly that would fold the papers and do up the single wrappers.

JW: Now did you all go home together at the end of the day?

JP: Yes. Right.

JW: In an automobile?

JP: An automobile yes. We were one of the first that had an automobile. Not the first but we had an automobile long before other people had an automobile.

JW: Did your father learn to drive—?

JP: No he never did.

JW: He never did? No interest in it?

JP: No.

JW: And your mother? No interest in it?

JP: No.

JW: And who was first in the family to become a good driver?

JP: My oldest brother Metcalfe. See he worked with Papa on the *Times Crescent* too.

JW: Eventually he worked for the government printing office?

JP: And then he went to work for the government printing office yes.

JW: Which was probably a wise thing.

JP: Oh and another thing that I know that my mother and father used to do at Christmas time besides what we had my mother had baskets for so many people in Port Tobacco. Most of them were black. All of them that she gave to were black. And in that basket was a chicken and fruit and bread and all kinds of things like that. And we delivered those I know it was a treat—.

JW: And your family did this on your own.

JP: On our own we did that.

JW: Isn't that amazing.

JP: Aunt Annie Smith. That's one name I remember. She lived in one of the catslide houses. There were to catslide houses then.

JW: Oh were there?

JP: Yes.

JW: Where was the one?

JP: Right next door to it.

JW: Okay.

JP: And Ms. Aunt Annie Smith lived in one of those and that was one of the places that we went to deliver the baskets.

JW: When you were a young teenager who were the families living in Port Tobacco other than the Hyde's and the Wade's. I know about them. And who was living in Stag Hall?

JP: The Barbour's.

JW: And what was his name? Which Barbour was it?

JP: Well it was...William Barbour. It's not Robert Barbour that lives there now. Not his father. I think his name was—.

JW: Guy.

JP: No Guy Barbour is Robert Barbour's father anyway he lived in Rock Point. He was a bus driver. And Robert Barbour and Jimmy Barbour living down there now.

JW: Yes.

JP: They never lived in Port Tobacco. It was—. And this Barbour man William. I guess his name was William had two sons Eddy and, Eddy and hmm. His name was Robert.

JW: Robert something Barbour.

JP: I think it was Robert Barbour.

JW: Yeah I think so. Who lived in the so called—.

JP: And he had two sons Eddy and another one. I can't think of the oldest one's name. And they never married I don't think.

JW: Oh for heaven's sake. Who lived in the so called Chimney House?

JP: That was in ill repair when I [lived in] Port Tobacco and they rented it out. I remember one time it was an Italian family living in there. I remember one little girl that I was very taken with because I—. I guess it was the first time I'd ever seen someone who was—. because she looked very um Spanish I guess you'd call it.

JW: Darker without being black.

JP: Yes, uh—huh.

JW: Okay. And let's see who was living in the house that we call Catslide House now?

JP: Well when I was a child Aunt, I don't know, Aunt Annie Smith lived in one of them and I can't remember who lived in the other one. But I think Aunt Annie Smith lived in the one that is gone because it seems to me like it was the one on the right. There were two of them there together.

JW: Looking at it from the front from the [square]?

JP: Yes. Right.

JW: Now you, you remember the old *Port Tobacco Times* building don't you? Still standing [inaudible]—.

JP: No just the, just the—.

JW: On the edge of the road.

JP: Just the foundation.

JW: Oh so you, you didn't see it when it was still up?

JP: I don't remember. No. No.

JW: Oh for goodness sake's. Now Roberta's books—. My wife's just printed her second book on the *Port Tobacco Times* the abstracts [inaudible] more history in those two books—she did one last year, one the year before. She's working on volume 3 this year. And they'll be volume four. And they're not of any interest in Charles County. There's no interest in Charles County history, really. It's outside that people are buying these books. It's incredible.

JP: The—. There was a hotel in Port Tobacco that sat this way up in—. What was the name of that street down there right opposite Robert Barbour's house? Now there was a big hotel. I remember that.

JW: Well was that the old Birch Hotel?

JP: No. I think they called it The Centennial.

JW: Yeah, that's right. The Centennial was across the square and it faced the Chimney House.

JP: Yes it did.

JW: Those two faced each other.

JP: I remember that building.

JW: Okay so that stood until like—.

JP: And we used to play it was in, you know, it was just run down and stuff. We used to play in there and birds would build a nest in there and stuff. And it had two porches on the front I remember that. Very similar to the old Bowling's Hotel.

JW: What was the main road like between Chapel Point past Mount Bleak and it connected with Valley Rd. I guess originally; was it a sandy road?

JP: Yes.

JW: Clay, gravel?

JP: Sort of sandy and that when you go down there and make that sharp turn past [Wale's] way you know, [Inaudible] [Wale's] home. You know that real sharp turn?

JW: Oh yes. Yes yeah.

JP: Then on further down there's a bridge sort of there.

JW: That's right.

JP: At times there was a big run there. And sometimes you'd be up to the hubs of the buggy in water when you cross over there.

JW: I know where that is.

JP: But the road was almost where it is now. Just about.

JW: Now how long did the Hyde family go to church at St. Ignatius?

JP: Up until I was I guess about 17 years old.

JW: Okay and then it was Sacred Heart?

JP: Then we went to Sacred Heart. 16 or 17.

JW: Now where are your father and mother interred?

JP: At Chapel Point.

JW: Okay. Were all of you children christened there?

JP: Yes. Mhm.

JW: At that church. So that's been a big part of your—.

JP: I was baptized there, christened, made my first communion, I was confirmed, was married, and my first child was baptized there.

JW: So that's been a big part of your life. Do you remember the names of some of the priests that had that charge during your early lifetime?

JP: Yes the one that I can remember farthest back is Father Tynan, T—Y—N—A—N. That's about the one that—.

JW: And who conducted the marriage ceremony?

JP: Huh?

JW: Who married you?

JP: Oh not Father Tynan that was a long—. A Father Hennessy.

[Unidentified Voice]: Oh I remember him.

JP: But he was—. Yes. I think it was Father Hennessy.

JW: Were you living in Mount Bleak all of the years you went to McDonagh?

JP: Yes.

JW: And that brings us up to what year? What year did you leave McDonagh?

JP: I left in 1926.

JW: Okay. Who were some of the faculty members then?

JP: Mr. and Mrs. [Rike]. Mr., Mr. [Rike] was the head of the school. R.H. Lee [Rike].

JW: Now. Okay so the [Rike's] were really managing the school weren't they?

JP: Yes and Eleanor was his wife.

JW: Okay. What was the attitude of most of the students toward them?

JP: Absolutely wonderful.

JW: That's marvelous. I've heard that before.

JP: They were the best teachers I think anybody could have. They were—. They had—. They demanded respect and they got it. And everyone, every child in that school loved them. And they

were very good disciplinarians yet you didn't know it. You didn't know it, they were never harsh on you at all. They just had that way about them.

JW: They managed and they taught.

JP: They did. And we used to have—. And we always called them Professor. We never called them Professor [Rike] and we had other men teachers. Professor Stevenson and Professor Stickley and—.

JW: I had lunch with Professor Stickley two weeks ago.

JP: Professor Stickley I know. Yes. I know you did.

JW: Nice time.

JP: And they had the boys hall over there. It was a very elegant school. That's another thing. We had to pay to go to that school. It wasn't a free school. They had a few scholarships but they paid and it was also a boarding school. For the girls had their dormitory in the same building where the auditorium was and the dining room. And Mr. and Mrs. [Rike] had their—. Professor and Mrs. Rike had their apartment. And then there were always a couple of teachers who lived there.

JW: Who were the other teachers other than the [Rike's] and Professor Stickley.

JP: Well there was Ms. Atkins and Mrs...Ms. [Spraden Boor]. I was trying to think of the music teacher's name. It's always right on the tip of my tongue and now I can't—.

JW: Was there a Ms. [Bushy]?

JP: Ms. [Bushy].

JW: I have [inaudible]—.

JP: She was the music teacher.

JW: Nice looking lady.

JP: Yes she was. And the graduations there were very, very elegant and very nicely put on and the. Mr. and Mrs. [Rike] really had—.

JW: There was class there wasn't there?

JP: Very much class yes.

JW: Real class. What sort of music was available for a graduation ceremony?

JP: Well just the piano.

JW: Okay, alright.

JP: I don't know of any other music they had besides the piano.

JW: When you were there were the phonographs popular? Was there a recreation room for the students?

JP: No we had an assembly hall. There was no recreation whatsoever outside of whatever we made for ourselves. There was a tennis court but you could play tennis if you wanted to if you had a tennis racket I guess but it was mostly for the boarding girls I guess. And it was a grass court. But outside of that we just went out and made our own fun. But there was always a teacher that stayed in the classrooms during lunch hour.

JW: How many—. What percentage of the students were boarder students who stayed there through the school—.

JP: I'd say half of them.

JW: Half of them?

JP: Yes.

JW: Okay. I wonder what they had to charge for room and board per student.

JP: I have no idea. I know someone that's still living that boarded there.

JW: Now do you recall what your father paid in way of tuition for his children?

JP: No, I haven't the slightest idea.

JW: Okay. About what was the student enrollment the last year you were enrolled? Any Idea about?

JP: See, well I guess there were—. There were four—. No there were three large classrooms. And I guess each one of those classroom had about 20, 25 people. I would say 75.

JW: Okay that's pretty good enrollment. How was the diet there? What was the food like?

JP: Well I never ate there because you see I was not a boarding student but I never heard any complaints. And it was all cooked right there. It wasn't—. And I think it may, probably very good. You never heard anyone complain about it. And—.

JW: Were many of the students from outside the county?

JP: No I don't think so. None hardly. And they had the curly hall. Oh not curly hall the boys hall was back over there behind the school. I don't know if you know where that was or not.

JW: No, I don't.

JP: The building was there when they, when the church—Sacred Heart Church—bought the property. And the boys had a Professor that lived with them too in that building. And they went over to the main building with the girl's hall for meals. And they used to cut through the Glenn in the back. And that was beautiful down there. It was just beautiful down there.

JW: I wonder what its like today.

JP: That little bridge had to go over and it's really gone back now I know.

JW: So you, you knew [Dun Wreath]?

JP: Oh yes. Yes I did. Yeah very well.

JW: Took her cousin, Ethel—.

JP: Ethel she told me about it.

JW: She had a good time I swear she had a [good time]. Life is not been too kind to her lately, her physical—.

JP: I know, I know. She talked about that. She had to get a permanent before she went.

JW: That's right, that's right. What do you recall about when and where did you meet Francis Wills Posey Jr.? How did the two of you get together? Had you known each other for any brief period?

JP: Well know you see Wills went to Gonzaga High School and I didn't see—. I didn't even know him. And we used to have a lot of company at Mount Bleak. The kids from La Plata used to come down there. The [Gwinn's] and the well Robert Stonestreet and lot of the kids from La Plata loved to come to Mount Bleak.

JW: And did your father enjoy this? Meeting young people?

JP: Yes he did but it was mostly daytime stuff it wasn't like evening. It was not. It was mostly during the day. And Wills came down there one day.

JW: Oh for goodness sake's. From La Plata?

JP: And I knew of him but I didn't know him well. But he came with some other boys—.

JW: Well, what was your first impression?

JP: I remember the first kiss I got. That's about all I remember. It went on from that.

JW: How long was it then before you were married?

JP: Oh I guess about 2 or 3 years and all—.

JW: And what year? Can you find—.

JP: 1927.

JW: Okay. So you were 20?

JP: I was just about 19.

JW: 19? That's right you would have been 19. Now before I forget I've got to get this down. How many children did you and Will Posey have?

JP: 4 sons.

JW: And let me have them in order of their birth. And the oldest is?

JP: The oldest is Francis Randolph. He was born in 1927. And Francis Will was the next one. Francis Wills Posey the third was born in 1929. Thomas Howard Posey was born in 1930. And John Hyde Posey was born in 1935.

JW: And which one was nicknamed Sonny?

JP: Francis Will Posey the third.

JW: I did know him. I did know him. And he's gone.

JP: Yes.

JW: He's gone now. Yeah, okay. Four boys. Did you ever wish for girls?

JP: Yes I did I was hoping but you know I was never disappointed. I can't—. I never understood that. I wasn't disappointed.

JW: Now which of those boys is most like his father? I read—. Now I know only Tommy and not well.

JP: Well I guess Tom probably looks more like his father. Well Tommy...I guess I'd say Tom.

JW: Well he does. There's no question. There's no question about it. So when did you set up housekeeping in La Plata? And did you live in La Plata first?

JP: No we lived one year down in Bel Alton. And then we moved to this little house right next door here. We bought it later on from—. You know who we bought it from? [Dun Wreath's] mother.

JW: Yes that's—. [Dun Wreath's] mother and her father built it intending to live in it? Isn't that the story?

JP: That's right, yes.

JW: It's a nice little house—.

JP: I wish we had never sold it because it's gone down so. It was a beautiful little house when we—.

JW: It's a nice house. I like the lines on it.

JP: And inside is very well planned. Inside I loved it and I'm sorry we ever sold it.

JW: Yeah that's a shame. Well the house right next door to you was the first one you lived in in La Plata?

JP: In La Plata.

JW: And what year did you move into that now?

JP: I guess in 1928.

JW: Okay just at the dawn of the depression. Now your—.

JP: Or 29. I don't know which.

JW: Your father in—law had a pretty important job in county government and what was it?

JP: Well he was a lot of things. His job when he was married—. My father in—law?

JW: Yes.

JP: When he was married he was Pennsylvania Railroad. He worked for the Pennsylvania Railroad as an agent you called them.

JW: At what station?

JP: White Plains.

JW: White Plains okay.

JP: Wills was born in White Plains. And then he had several jobs. He was a—. He worked in the courthouse for quite a bit as register of wills and worked under Mr. Compton I believe as county treasurer. And he finally ran for—. He wanted to run for County Treasurer but the party did not want to put him up. They did not—. He worked for the Republican Party all his life and he wanted to be on the ticket as County Treasurer. But the party did not nominate him or whatever you do. And I remember this very well. My father I told you was supervisor of elections and you had to register with him at a certain date if you wanted to run on the ticket for any position. And on the very last day that you could register at night I remember this when Mr.—. When Will's father came down to our house in Port Tobacco and registered to run as Independent on the Independent ticket for County Treasurer. And he ran and swept the county.

JW: Isn't that something. What year would this be now?

JP: Gosh it must've been 1921 or something like that. I don't know I'd have to look back. And he—.

JW: He must have been widely known and well thought of—.

JP: I have, I have a letter and I just gave it to Tommy the other day. The letter that he wrote to the Party saying why he would like to become County Treasurer. But he was denied.

JW: Probably some—. Just one individual—.

JP: Yes. And I have the letter that he wrote. And I had already given Tommy a letter that Robert Crain had written to Will's father telling him why he should not run. That he did not have a chance to run. And Tommy has both of those letters right now.

JW: That's the best argument he could make? He just should not run [inaudible]—.

JP: Well I've forgotten what's in the letter. Tommy has the letter in fact I just gave him the letter a couple of days ago because I had been going through some things trying to get rid of some of this stuff.

JW: To me that's a compliment to Mr. Posey. It probably means that the Party felt they could not use him to their best advantage.

JP: That's right.

JW: Not to the public's [inaudible]—.

JP: Well they didn't think that he could win, the problem was. I mean they thought—. I don't think they had anything against him. I think that they thought he was a very upstanding person but they wanted to put somebody that they thought would win. And they didn't think that he was the winning person. Not that he wasn't good.

JW: Well maybe they thought it was—.

Unidentified Voice: They couldn't manipulate him.

JW: Couldn't use him.

JP: That's right.

JW: That he was an intelligent, progressive, honest—.

JP: He was a graduate of the University of Maryland.

JW: Oh wow [inaudible phrase]. That's a shame. That's a shame. In what ways was your husband like his father?

JP: Exactly. Exactly like him.

JW: A real chip off the old block.

JP: Yes he looked like him.

JW: Carbon copy.

JP: Yes.

JW: Oh that's great. Do you have any photographs?

JP: I have a photograph of my, of Will's father right here.

JW: Oh look at that. Huh. Yeah. Sure enough.

JP: And this is Wills.

JW: Younger than I remember him.

JP: Oh yes that's a lot younger.

JW: Same chair for heaven's sake. That's great. Yeah. So what—.

JP: And that's Wills.

JW: Wow oh yeah. What big changes were there for you?

Unidentified Voice: Is this Wills?

JP: Yes.

JW: In your married life starting out in La Plata who were some of your early neighbors? People that you hadn't known too closely.

JP: Jack [Clarke]. Well I had known them all my life. Jack, Jack Clarke and Louise Clarke lived next door over there.

JW: On the other side of this house?

JP: Yes uh huh. And—.

JW: Was Richard Clarke a son of theirs?

JP: Yes. Yes he was. And—.

JW: Okay so you knew Richard all his life?

JP: Oh of course I did. They were just like family. They still like family. And there was—. At that time when we first moved here there weren't very many people living up this way. The next house was Farrell's and the next house was Cochran's which is torn down now.

JW: Oh that was pretty thin. And the Diggs house was there?

JP: And the Diggs house was there yes.

JW: And along the other side of Diggs was there but—?

JP: Yeah that wasn't brand new but it was there.

JW: [Lorey] Mitchell?

JP: [Lorey] Mitchell, yes.

JW: Okay. And back here is the hermitage and I guess they've always been there.

JP: Well you see the hermitage owned all of this land.

JW: What was the property called before La Plata took it over as part of the town? The same name? Always the hermitage?

JP: This was the hermitage. Yeah and this land it was all the way the Clarke house, the house where we lived, this property, and where the next house down here Barnes's, and Farrell's all belonged to the hermitage.

JW: I see. I see. Okay.

JP: But it belonged to Cousin Gus. They called him Cousin Gus Mathews. I think it belonged to him.

JW: Now is [inaudible]—.

JP: When Mr. Brook Mathews got married he came to live with this uncle of his who lived over here in this house. His uncle was a bachelor he never married. And he left this property I guess to Mr. Brook Mathews.

JW: Nice way to get a piece of land—.

JP: I guess that's what happened. Because he did not build the house. There's—. Mr. Brook Mathews' uncle built that house. And I think Mr. Mathews added on what's on the back there.

JW: Well it's kind of fun to see it still standing there like a little bit of a hundred years ago. Just look out your rear window. Did you know—.

JP: That's gonna be on garden tour.

JW: Is it?

JP: Yes.

JW: Is that first time?

JP: It's the first time on garden tour but they had it on the Christmas tour two years ago.

JW: Did they?

JP: It's a lovely house inside it's beautiful.

JW: It is. And how are the ladies—?

JP: Oh they're absolutely wonderful.

JW: That's great.

JP: They're just—. There're three of them living over there now. Two of them never married and the other one married and her husband died. She worked for the State Department.

JW: Mrs. [Cappers]?

JP: [Cappers] uh huh.

JW: And the other two let's see Mary Claire and who's the third one?

JP: Mary Claire and Brooke.

JW: Brooke. Brooke I see him once in a while. At breakfast [inaudible] used to see. [Tommy]. But what was it like for a young married woman living here in La Plata in the 1930's. What was life like? What did you do to have fun?

JP: Nothing.

JW: Couldn't have been a real swinging town.

JP: Well it wasn't. It was very.... Well we had a boat.

JW: Oh did you?

JP: Yes.

JW: That would've helped.

JP: A little boat. We used to go out in the boat a lot.

JW: Where did you keep it?

JP: Down at Port Tobacco Creek.

JW: Okay.

JP: And we had a car.

JW: That would've made a difference.

JP: And Wills and I used to take the children on rides. I know we used to go to Luray, Virginia a lot.

JW: Oh did you?

JP: Yes when our children were little.

JW: That was a long ride in the 30s.

JP: It was.

JW: Yeah.

JP: And—.

JW: What was your first car.

JP: And we, and we had movies and we used to let the children go to the movies.

JW: Right here in La Plata?

JP: Yes.

JW: Okay.

JP: In the old town hall.

JW: Jack Taylor was there?

JP: Jack Taylor [saw] the movies yes.

JW: Cinematographer.

JP: And the kids used to roller skate. They used to roller skate at the courthouse.

JW: At the courthouse?

JP: At the courthouse. And nobody ever complained.

JW: Where?

JP: That was the only place to.

JW: On the sidewalk?

JP: That was the only place that had a sidewalk.

JW: Oh right in front.

JP: Yes and down the side the way I remember it, down to the where the old the old jail there was a cement walk there too.

JW: And those were the only paved sidewalks?

JP: That was the only place that could roller skate.

JW: I see. Were there wooden walks?

JP: Yes there were wooden walks. I don't—. When I was a child I remember wooden walks. Down by in front of Stumble Inn and down by the where the Coca—Cola place is and all the way down to Farrell's store there was a wooden sidewalk there.

JW: Sort of like a western town?

JP: Yes.

JW: When, this is going way back, do you remember when the main street of La Plata was paved for the first time?

JP: No I don't.

JW: That's probably [inaudible phrase]—.

JP: But I remember when we lived over here it was not—. This road was not paved cuz—.

JW: This was the main road to Maryland Route 3?

JP: Yes this was the main route to Washington and Chapel Point was a very popular place. Not only for county people but for people in Washington came by droves to Chapel Point.

JW: By boat or by highway?

JP: By car. And they came down this road and it was a steady stream all Sunday morning. The people in Charles County hardly ever went to Chapel Point on Sunday because it was carried away with people from Washington.

JW: That's insane.

JP: We only went on weekdays because there were too many people there on Sundays. And I can remember watching the cars come back it was a steady stream—.

JW: Sunday evening?

JP: Sunday evening and it was dusty.

JW: Was this a gravel surface?

JP: Yes. Uh huh.

JW: Tell about what time? Do you recall the first—?

JP: Well my children were little.

JW: Smooth first pavement put on this road?

JP: You know I haven't the slightest idea.

JW: Before World War 2 would you guess?

JP: When was World War 2? 45?

JW: Well it started [inaudible]—.

JP: When was the bridge built?

JW: The bridge was—.

JP: 1939, 40.

JW: The bridge was completed in December of 40 and had been underway for at least a year and a half. About what time did the new road take the traffic off of this road?

JP: When that bridge was built this was the main road.

JW: Okay.

JP: I remember this was something I started to tell you when we were talking about Roosevelt. Roosevelt came down here to view this spot where the bridge was going to open and he came right by our house over there. And we were living over there.

JW: In the house next door?

JP: Yes. And see this makes it right. It was about 1939 or 40 and I think that road had some pavement on it then. He came in an open car with the top—.

JW: And you saw him [go in]?

JP: I saw him. Johnny was just a little boy, 4 or 5 years old. Well he was born 35 so he would've been 4 or 5 years old and he had a little American flag in his hand and he stood right up on the road. Our house and the road were even. There was no—. There were no shrubbery or.

JW: No curbs or [inaudible]—.

JP: Nothing it was just sort of even with the road and he stood right there on the side. And when Roosevelt came down the road he was standing out there and he leaned out and touched him.

JW: Now there's a nice little bit of La Plata history.

JP: And I remember talking about the people that were against Roosevelt. Mr. McDonagh would not come out of his house that day. And some of the Republicans—oh some of the Democrats in La Plata would not come out. Mr. Leo Farrell down here he did not like him for anything in this world. In fact I had a friend that used to board at Farrell's. She lived in Waldorf and she worked—.

JW: In the Adelaide Farrell house?

JP: Yes. She boarded there when she was working for P.D. Brown. And she told me not too long ago how old Mr. Leo Farrell used to cuss Roosevelt out. She said, "He went into—. He would go mad speaking about how much he hated that man." Why did people hate him so?

Unidentified Voice: Didn't Roosevelt come down here and talk against Radcliffe?

JP: Not that I know of. The only time Roosevelt ever came to this town was when he was coming down to view the spot where the bridge was going in.

JW: That's my understanding too.

JP: The only time he ever came down.

JW: 39 I think. Well he was considered by conservative people of either party to be a socialist. A man who had betrayed his class and his party by wanting to help people who had nothing. And that was just enough to turn people against him.

JP: That's what it was, yes.

JW: That's right. And there're family divisions. John Hanson Mitchell was a friend of mine for years but he was the only member of his family to have any respect for FDR. We won't go beyond that but the family was not happy with him, Johnny, cuz of that. Now that's a shame.

JP: Yes it is and look what they did. We didn't have any electricity at that time, they started the REA and people—.

JW: That's right. Everybody liked that part didn't they.

JP: We didn't need it. We had our electricity. We still liked Roosevelt.

JW: And I know from collections of photographs I have uncovered in the library of congress that Roosevelt administration people were down here teaching the farmers to make better wells, to get purer water, to get better crops on their lands. They visited Rock Point, visited with the fishermen, did surveys of the life down there. The photographs are here now [I can go out back] they're over at the college. The finest photographs taken in Charles County during the late 30's

and early 40's were taken during the Roosevelt administration. Do you know Esther [Hardesty]? Lives off here near Dentsville.

JP: I probably know her.

JW: John Hardesty farm was one that they visited.

JP: Oh I know John Hardesty yes. Listen, you know, I hate to stop this but we might have to [inaudible].

JW: Okay well anyway.

JP: If you wanna come back sometime.

JW: Maybe.

JP: I don't know of anything else I could say.

JW: Well I think—. I think we've done—. I think we've done very well.

[Tape Ends]