Transcript of OH-00057

Barnsley Edgar Warfield and Hazel Warfield

Interviewed by

John Wearmouth

on

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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

Rural conditions
Rural electrification
Patuxent River (Md.)
Ferries
Shellfish gathering
Fishing
Fish declines
Education
Middle school principals
School integration
Race relations
Piscataway Indians

United States--History--War of 1812
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865
Slavery
Farm tenancy

Tags

Benedict, (Md.)
Benedict fire of 1909
Patuxent Native Americans
War of 1812
Civil War, 1861-1865
Camp Stanton

Transcript

[Transcriber's Note: Tape 1 is focused on Barnsley Warfield's childhood in Benedict and his career in the Charles County Public Schools System. Tape 2 (P. 39) is focused on the history of Benedict with emphasis on the War of 1812 and the Civil War.]

[Tape 1]

John Wearmouth [J]: This is John Wearmouth interviewing Mr. and Mrs. Barnsley E. Warfield at their home in Benedict on is this Benedict Avenue that we're on?

Barnsley Edgar Warfield [B]: Right.

J: We're just a few hundred feet really from Maryland Route 231 and maybe a quarter of a mile from the bridge across the Patuxent. We're looking cross river at this point to Hallowing or Hollering Point depending on what period we're talking about. I've known the Warfields for oh my goodness 30 years. Believe it?

B: Yeah if you go back to [inaudible].

J: Yeah that's right. Yeah we were young together and we're growing old gracefully together. Okay

B: [And rebelling]. [Laughs]

J: Barnsley was born right in Glen Burnie?

B: Right.

J: Just up the pike what about 25 or 30 miles towards Baltimore. And a Depression baby born in August 1929. Think of that. Wow. And he is a retired teacher with I think a full time teaching experience in Charles County?

B: Charles and Calvert.

J: Okay Charles and Calvert. But your entire professional teaching career has been in Southern Maryland pretty much. Okay. And being right here on a river made it easy to go one way or the other. Okay. And you got a master's in education from the University of Maryland. What year did you get that degree?

B: [Inaudible].

J: Roughly. We'll fill that out later. Okay and his father was a Barnsley Warfield.

B: [Inaudible].

J: Okay. And mother was Louise Henderson Kelly.

B: She—I put her maiden name in the middle.

J: Oh okay alright. And Mr. Warfield as I said has been a life long resident of Benedict in this part of Charles County. This is another one in the Charles County Community College Oral History works and this one will be split as far as interests are concerned. Partly education and I guess the major portion we'll deal with the history of the community of Benedict. I guess the only way we can get going is to slide right into this.

B: What's the date?

J: Today is the 24th—the 24th of January 1991. Do you have a nickname?

B: Barney.

J: Barney. Do you mind using that?

B: That's what everybody—anybody calls me Barnsley doesn't know me well.

J: Okay. It should be Barney I guess. And his wife is Hazel. And your wife's maiden name was—

B: [Crisman].

J: [Crisman]? Where have I heard that name before?

Hazel Warfield [H]: I'm from Virginia.

B: She's from Stafford, Virginia.

H: [I'm inaudible Virginia].

J: That's where alright. We've prowled some cemeteries over there in Stafford County looking for descendants of Thomas Stone. Yeah. [Crisman].

H: My father's mother were the Stewarts of the Stewarts family.

J: Oh the Doctor Stewart family? Or the General Stewart family.

H: I don't know. I'm going to look into it. I don't know anything about my family much.

J: You can get that ready when we do chapter two.

B: They disowned her once she married me.

[Laughs]

J: Okay. Barney what is the—where was the your childhood home until you began school?

B: In Benedict just down next to what's presently the post office. The white house.

J: Okay—

B: And my daughter lives there now.

J: I see just a short city block away really.

B: Yeah less.

J: On this side of the street too?

B: On this side of the street. It was built about 1925 I guess.

J: Okay how far back can you go to some experience or a little adventure that you had as a preschool youngster either pleasant or unpleasant that kind of still sticks in your mind?

B: Well one of my early remembrances is when they put the electricity in the town. And I remember sneaking away from home and going over to watch them put the poles in the ground. Now my house had electricity because my grandfather had a generator ran by a gasoline motor. And it was quite an experience when you're doing something and the motor stopped and all the lights went out.

J: Was this a Delco type?

B: I don't remember. I do remember it was—I remember the motor. I didn't pay much attention to the generator.

J: At that time about what percentage of the families in Benedict had electricity?

B: None of them except our house.

J: So we're talking about the early 1930's.

B: Right. And they were putting in the poles in the early 30's to [rural] electrification.

J: Okay SMECO I think was over on the other side of the county yet. Was Baltimore Power and Light active down this far?

B: Not to my knowledge—

J: Or was that SMECO that was—

B: Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative—

J: Okay were the ones with the new generating plant over in Pope's Creek.

B: I guess I don't know—

J: [Inaudible]

B: You know I was just a little kid. I don't know where it came from. I do remember them putting the poles in.

J: Okay so that big difference between the have's and the have not's in those days electricity was one of them. What about telephone? Was there ever a time when your family didn't have a telephone?

B: I don't remember a time when my family did not have a telephone. Course there were the old fashioned party lines. And I still would jokingly say that's where I learned to do my public speaking.

J: Where was the switchboard here in Benedict?

B: Mechanicsville.

J: Mechanicsville? How many brothers and sisters did you have?

B: I had no brothers and sisters. I have two half-brothers and one half-sister on my father's side.

J: Okay now were the—were the half-brothers and sisters living in the same house that you grew up in?

B: No.

J: Okay so you were—you were an only child really.

B: My mother worked. I spent most of my time with my Grandpa going to boarding school.

J: Where did your grandparents live? At another house?

B: I lived with my grandparents in that house.

J: Oh okay I see. When was that house built?

B: I would say approximately 1925. In the 1920's. 1925 I think but give or take a year.

J: Is that the one in which the post office is?

B: No it's next door to it.

J: Aright. So I've taken pictures of it. Once we get them over here we'll ID that properly.

B: Okay.

J: You're gonna be a big help on that. Right now the [chapeliers] are going through them and we'll bring them up here and wherever else we need to take them for the best possible ID on 75 photographs taken last June. [Inaudible]—

B: [Inaudible Shorter] used to live right across the road in what was called the White House. And… right across the street where the firehouse is was the Johnson house.

J: How important was the water to youngsters living in Benedict as they were growing up in their up through their early teens? Was it a playground for you?

B: Oh yes. In the summer time we went swimming three or four times in a day. My favorite place to swim was down at the entrance to Mill Creek which has a very swift current moving through it.

J: What direction is that from us?

B: South.

J: Down the river.

B: Yeah. You know where the marina is down there?

J: Okay yes, yes, alright.

B: That goes up—that entrance [inaudible] above it. You go down below that marina and you have the entrance to the creek. Of course it was a very isolated area so we didn't ever have to bother with bathing suits.

J: How about nettles?

B: Oh yeah we got our share of stings from sea nettles but—

J: Are they any worse today really?

B: I don't think so. They got pretty thick in the waters in those days.

J: Otherwise was the water clean, safe, as far as pollution is concerned?

B: My grandfather always said it was one of the cleanest rivers in the country. I'm sure there was some pollution in it in those days but not like it is now. The biggest thing that we had to look out for being a resort area with a lot of broken bottles being thrown out and we never touched the bottles. Never touch the bottles.

J: When did—

B: Of course we used to fish too off the old steamboat wharf.

J: When did you get your first boat? Did you have a small skip or canoe when you were a youngster?

B: My grandfather had boats he rented. So I always had access to a boat because—

J: A boat [loomery] of some sort.

B: Well they were just tied at the pier.

J: Okay mostly row—rowboats or propelled? Okay.

B: Rowboats.

J: And you were free to take one of those out after what about 8, 10, or 12?

B: We did most of our fishing for perch. Off the—[if you're] getting a boat because you couldn't get to the old steamboat wharf from the land without a boat. But you know other kids—all the

families had boats so getting out—getting a boat was no problem. We turned them upside down when they sunk and you know come up underneath of them. Do all these kinds of things.

J: Yeah. Do you remember your—the earliest chores that your grandparents or parents gave you?

B: One of the earliest chores that I had was pumping out the ferry.

J: Oh really? How'd that go? What did you use?

B: It was a [convey] galvanized iron hand pump with you know the little spiral on it.

J: Did it have a funnel on top?

B: No it—well it funneled a little bit but it spiraled and you pulled the water up and I guess it had valves and when you pushed it down it came up.

J: Right okay alright. Yeah you pulled the handle up and the water came up.

B: You pulled the handle up. You pulled the handle up and you pushed it down the water stayed up and you pulled up some more. I know my grandfather said he'd give me a [gyp] to pump out the ferry. Let me look at a [gyp] if I would pump out the ferry. So I went down and I pumped—

J: What was that?

B: I went down to pump—I'll tell you in a minute. I went to down to pump out the ferry—

J: You got me curious now.

B: And when I came back he pulled a nickel out of his pocket and let me look at it and put it back in his pocket again. So the next time he said he'd let me look at a [gyp] I told him he'd have to do more than that. He would have to give it to me. And he agreed and that time he gave me a quarter.

J: About how old were you?

B: Oh I guess I was 10 older then.

J: Okay how many gallons of bills would you pump out of that in a 24—for a 24 hour period collection?

B: Gee I never worried about how many gallons. You know you just pumped till it stopped coming.

J: Okay. Now what was the displacement of this vessel? What would she have weighed?

B: I don't know it would haul five cars. You've got a picture somewhere haven't you?

J: I think I've seen one. What was [Inaudible]—

B: It was big. Yeah when you're a kid you don't consider things like that.

J: Yeah lot's of [inaudible] though. But she would hold two automobiles abreast?

B: Right.

J: Okay.

B: And roughly two deep. We always had trouble getting the cars on there because they would pull up as long as they could see boat but when they reached the point where they couldn't see anything but water you almost had to get in there with a stick and drive them forward.

J: Oh Okay yeah you were—

B: Even though there was a lot of boat left.

J: [Inaudible phrase] towards the bow as close as you could get them to the bow.

B: If it was busy. Most of the times you'd only hold one car or possibly two.

J: Okay.

H: [That doesn't show].

B: That doesn't show it too well.

J: Okay.

B: That was taken the last trip.

J: What kind of—what powered this ferry?

B: It has a gasoline engine. And it was cranked by hand. Later on we had an electric starter.

J: Two cylinder?

B: Oh no. No it was...it had to be at least four or six. It was—it had a metal crank. You would pull it around to start it.

J: When did that ferry service end? About what year?

B: That's the last trip there. 50 what Hazel? Have you found a date?

J: And your grandfather's full name was?

H: 52 I think it was.

B: Peter [Camblose] Henderson.

J: And how long did he live in Benedict?

B: I imagine he was probably born here or nearby. His father was a boat captain that used to come up the river on a boat. And he bought land in Benedict and set up here. The land was deeded I think about 1888.

J: Did he—was he on one of the Chesapeake Bay steamboats?

B: No I don't think he was a steamboat. I saw a man who said he visited him on the boat and he had on a uniform with all this gold braid and his cabin had red carpet on the floor and so forth.

J: So he was probably a ship's captain or first officer.

B: No he was a captain.

J: I see. And what was his name?

B: Benjamin Franklin Henderson.

J: Did he mentioned in any of [Burgess's] works on the Bay?

B: I don't know.

J: Okay. Did you ever here mentioned the name of his vessel or vessels that he captained?

B: No. I never heard of it.

J: How did your mother's father get into the ferry business? Did you ever hear the story? Had he been a waterman?

B: No my—I think my great—grandfather had a ran a store in Benedict and I think at one time my grandfather ran the store and he used to haul the mail from [Hughesville] down on the horse.

J: Henderson's store or did it have a name other than that?

B: Well in my life time my grandfather owned the building but he never—he always had it rented as a store.

J: I see. Where was it?

B: It's where the post office is now.

J: Okay alright again just down the street [couple hundred feet or so].

B: I think there was always a type of crossing on this river. But he developed a means to haul automobiles across the river.

J: Oh so and that was a pretty significant change.

B:And he did something else too. He put—he took a barge and put a [skag] on it.

J: What's a skag?

B: It's a straight piece on the bottom coming down where the, [the hole where the propeller] is and rubber. So that most barges you know are towed or pushed. So he put a skag on it and a motor in it and what he had was a motorized barge.

J: But he had added steerage because of it? Okay.

B: And steerage Right. And in World War II the navy came down and looked at this when we were thinking about in the very early parts of World War II in designing landing craft. Well they just was curious. Whether they got anything or not we don't know. Another other thing I remember is wen Franklin Delano Roosevelt's yacht came to dock here when I was very young. I can remember my grandmother putting me up on her shoulders as he drove by so I could see him. He was—a car met him at Benedict. He came in. At that time the old steamboat wharf was all there. And he came in and they landed at the old steamboat wharf. He drove up what they called the lane which is right next to the old post office building. The old post building now and on up the road. Of course all the town's people were lined on both sides, the lane was very narrow, to see our president as he went past.

J: What was the name of that yacht? Was that the Sequoia?

B: I think it was the Sequoia.

J: That's being restored I [inaudible phrase].

B: Yes, yes. But I was very small. I mean to be held up on shoulders you can get an idea how.

J: What was the reaction of the public at that time? One of respect? Of some awe that the great man had come to Benedict?

B: Yes we—

J: Did [people still naive I mean it's so blasé].

B: Yeah we felt you know that we really received an honor. Just to have the President land in our town [and give us a chance to see him].

J: Yeah there's a difference there isn't there of the times. What do you remember any crush of secret service people in an effort to push the crowd back away as he came along the road?

B: No the people more or less just lined the sides of the road—

J: In an orderly quite manner?

B: And were not—orderly quite manner. And I think I remember him waving as he drove by but there was no pushing, hedging, they didn't even get down close to where—I guess there was some people there—but I'm sure if the word got out a lot of other people came into the town to see him.

J: What was the population of Benedict in I'm assuming we're talking about mid 30's?

B: Right.

J: Do you have any [inaudible phrase].

B: Or early 30's at that time.

J: Any different from now?

B: I don't think Benedict has changed really too much in population. I'm sure it's a little higher now because what it was fields then more houses now. I was—

J: Suburban sprawl.

B: I would say 100, 150 people but not much more than that. A lot of them [inaudible].

J: The nice thing about this is that this interview is that you spent a lot of time with the earlier generation with your grandparents.

B: Yes.

J: Do you remember some stories that your grandfather used to tell you that while they may have been absolutely factual fascinated you as a child and have to be considered as history really? Did he enjoy—was he a story teller at all?

B: No he was not a story teller. Not that kind of a story.

J: But there were stories?

B: I guess. He had quite a sense of humor and was quite a business man. But he did not talk much about history. My grandmother talked more about history from her family—

J: How many children were there in that family?

B: There were four. There were two sons and two daughters.

J: Any living today your?

B: Two of them are living today.

J: So do you consider this as having been a very pleasant part of your youth?

B: As I look back on it now yes. At the time no. This was a very boring—well in the summer time we had all kinds of people coming down and they would spend the night they would fish so forth. In the winter time you know blah, nothing.

J: [Jurorsville] huh?

B: Yeah you know there was nothing here to do. We would play poker for a penny or shot. If it got cold enough to freeze we would ice skate. If it snowed we'd go up on the hills and sleigh ride.

J: You do have some nice slopes here.

B: Yes we used to go—

J: For safe easy sleighing. How much cold would it take to freeze the Patuxent out here? Is it just mildly saline?

B: It's mildly saline but it takes—I don't remember it really being frozen but a few times in my life. I me around the shore you'd get a little ice and you could walk on it but it was always shaky.

J: We've had nothing this year so far that would make ice form on it?

B: Damn we haven't had anything for a few years.

J: Did you learn to ice skate as a child?

B: Oh yes. We used to do ice skating down at the creek which was much shallower water and that would freeze. But very rarely could you freeze on the river.

J: Where did you go to school that very first year? How about kindergarten? Was there any?

B: There was no kindergarten. There was no television [inaudible].

J: And even in Hughesville, the big town, there was no entertainment there either was there?

B: No. I began school in Hughesville school.

J: Okay and how did you get there?

B: A school bus.

J: There was a school bus?

B: Right.

J: Privately operated?

B: No it was a public school bus. McDonough's used to have a car dealership in Hughesville.

J: The La Plata McDonough's?

B: Yes, no, no. I don't know about La Plata. I would call these the Hughesville McDonough's. [Inaudible] Now I think his name was Clarence McDonough and he had a Chevrolet dealership. And he owned a bus or two. The bus came picked us up and carried us back to [in the evening].

J: How many youngsters in your first grade do you recall?

B: No but it was just one class so I would say—

J: Dozen, dozen and a half?

B: Huh?

J: Maybe a dozen and a half?

B: Oh I think it was more than that as I remember. The first grade teacher for years and years was Ms. Edna Dyson.

J: Ms. Edna Dyson. Did you ever know a Ms. Eloise Dyson? She's still alive.

B: Don't know if I know Ms. Eloise Dyson.

J: Well find out something about her [tomorrow].

H: Ms. Eloise, remember?

J: Well [I know] she was married in 1924 so Barnsley never would have known her. Okay.

B: Ms. Edna retired from teaching I think one year before I started teaching there at school. So most of the people in Hughesville are knew Ms. Edna Dyson.

J: Now you were never active in agriculture were you?

B: No as a matter of fact—

J: Little garden plot at the house?

B: I always grew a little garden but my family didn't though I always liked it so I did. Gave me something to do.

J: What's the soil like here within the village limits?

B: Very good soil.

J: Loose, permeable?

B: Sandy, very permeable, lot of oyster shells in it, not acid, the opposite.

J: Okay so it's a sweet soil.

B: Yes.

J: Partly because of the shell, [the lime]?

B: Could be.

J: From rotting shells? [Hmm that's interesting] How do root crops grow in town? Good potatoes?

B: I don't have too much luck with potatoes. I guess another thing I remember over in the big oyster shell pile where they had an oyster shucking [house] down in shore—

J: What's there today?

B: Part of the house is still there. The rest of it is just level land. Adolf Welch owns it and has a pier. I remember we had old storage tanks here off the lane and a long peer that they didn't like us to go on. It went really way out in the water. I guess they were afraid somebody would get hurt or something.

J: How far out did it go do you recall the length of that?

B: It's still there. Adolf Welch owns it now.

J: Oh I think I might've been on it recently.

B; You probably have.

J: You mentioned not being able to go out to where the ferry docked. Maybe I misunderstood you. How did an automobile get onto the ferry here on the Benedict side? What sort of a ramp arrangement was there?

B: He had a pier that was wide enough for a car to drive on with side rails.

J: Okay all wood?

B: All wood. At the end of this ramp there was a gangplank that moved up and down.

J: With the tide.

B: No it had pulleys on it and my grandfather had chains and four heavy cement blocks that gave a counterbalance on the weight. So a person could pull this up and a little weight would push it down.

J: One person could do it?

B: One person—I did yeah I used to do it as a 15, 16 year old boy so. And I wasn't very big and I didn't weigh very much. I had to put a little muscle into it but I could do it.

J: Was fishing fun for you? Did you enjoy that growing up through your teen years?

B: Yeah we liked fishing. We would go gather asparagus in the spring.

J: Where? Where did that grow wild you're talking about?

B: Wild up here on what used to be a point next to the bridge. It was a very wide sandy area and it was loaded with wild asparagus.

J: Any there now at all?

B: The point's not there at all.

J: [That would do away with the asparagus].

B: It's all gone. It's washed away.

J: What were your favorite fish out here? What did you enjoy most when it came to eating?

B: Well we used to catch white perch. When I got older we would catch the hardheads. Most of the people that came here would go for the hardheads or the croakers as they would call them because they made a noise that sounded like a croak.

J: What ever happened to the hardheads? Does anybody know? Have you heard a rational intelligent explanation of their demise?

B: The only I've ever heard was they found where they were going in the ocean and they netted them and netted them and netted them until there were no more.

J: Oh boy.

B: I understand there are a few now.

J: Okay.

B: But it was very much like a rock fish, you know, nice white flaky flesh and it wasn't oily like a blue fish.

J: How about in size? Average weight? For a mature hard head.

B: Oh they got pretty good size. Three, four, five sometimes the length of a big perch. That bigger, by not that much but you know.

J: You're talking about a rock fish?

B: Yeah I'll tell you. You know like this they were.

J: Have you enjoyed oysters most of your adult life and crab? The two great products of the—

B: Yes.

J: Patuxent.

B: Yes.

J: Have you noticed any difference in the average oyster size during your life time?

B: No and looking at the shells that I see I don't really, you know. I think the size of the oyster really depends on how long it's out there growing.

J: Probably.

B: Now what you're getting is [inaudible] oysters that they've planted. Now there are some places in the river were you can get what they call rock oysters which are not planted oysters and the shells are heavier.

J: How about the blue crab, is that changed much in your lifetime as far as the appearance, the taste, and the size are concerned?

B: No.

J: Okay.

B: We used to walk the shores catching you know soft shells.

J: What did the law say about size of keepers when you were a boy? Did that change any?

B: I don't know that I ever heard any law about the size of keepers.

J: What is it now five inches? Crab.

B: A lot of people crabbed here when I was a boy with boats with motors or rowboats without board motors they would use in those days. And they used to stack them up. Everybody would come in stack them up. And during the summer time we used to go down and help the bait [these crab lines] and we had to keep pulling them [note] and tying them with—

J: What they called the cross wire [inaudible].

B: Yeah. Tying them with slipknot and for the baits were badly eaten you took these out put a new piece in and so forth.

J: No crab traps?

B: No crab traps and the crabs were picked up and hauled away. They would be stacked in the shade and these bags of bushels baskets of crabs would be picked up by truck I guess I never really saw them picked up. Every day and taken away. They only crabbed early in the morning. You got till sunrise.

J: Did eels have any significant commercial value when you were a youngster here?

B: Only as crab bait.

J: Okay that's interesting because that picture changed a little bit.

B: Has it?

J: Do you like eel? Have you ever tried it?

B: Never have.

J: You might. You just might. I enjoy it.

H: I used to eat it.

J: I learned to enjoy it in Europe.

H: I haven't eaten it for a long time.

J: I've had a part of one over at Virginia in Cherry Hill last June when we were doing some interviewing of watermen over there. Gracious wow. Fellow held up a crab about oh 21 inches long and I remarked, "Boy I really enjoy eating them." And he said, "You enjoy?" Well he disappeared and he came back about 30 minutes later with a big tray, a big platter all sliced and deep fried till [delicious]. Right when we met he had been in the water 60 minutes before that. What is—is Benedict as active commercially today as it ever has been? Tourists, fishing?

B: Tourists no, but the fishing and the oystering yes probably more so because now with trailer boats and people in the farmlands around come down and run trot lines and oyster. Before you almost had to be waterman here in town to do it. You had to have a boat overboard and particularly if it was a motor boat.

J: It's a whole new ball game today isn't it?

B: Yes.

J: Keeping your boat in your backyard maybe 25, 30 miles away. Being able to ride over here. Even an evening after work. Get your boat in go out or two hours and then get back home before dark. That is a new—

B: Yeah. On Saturdays when you have—that's a change from what used to be.

J: During your days as a teenager who were the half dozen or so most active commercial fishermen operating out of Benedict? Let's say going back to the 40's, mid 40's.

B: Well the Welch's did a lot. There was a Horseman here that used to do—I used to go down and buy fish 'cause he had fishnets. A lot of the people did boat if they owned waterfront. They went to deal to the public and [rainboats]. We had power boats here that would take out fishing parties. This is back when the hardheads were particularly going. When the hardheads left the power boats declined. I remember the Shorter's used to have three. My grandfather used to have one. Lewis Welch, he was the father of the [first Welch's], had one. Yeah [Mesik's] used to do—had a hotel and there were two hotels in this town.

J: What's happening to this Barnsley in the old timers I've talked to who were young men in the 30's and 40's they don't have any sons coming along to do what they have done? Isn't that going to change the whole complexion of life in Benedict in the net couple of decades?

B: Well—

J: Who's going to get into it?

B: I think there will be people that will do crabbing that will do the oystering.

J: But maybe not from Benedict?

B: Yeah, but it, not well, they live here. [Inaudible] I suggest it might go like the tobacco went. You know tobacco used to be the crop and now it's sort of a second income for people. So I think— I think you're going to see people retire doing it which you have some now doing it. People that have time, you know, are doing it as part time or to supplement their income. Some of the people are growing tobacco crop and oystering or crabbing. Now that you can trail a boat.

J: I guess the fact is there—always there have been relatively few people gaining a living from the water—entirely from the water. A lot of them had other things to keep them going.

B: Not, not in the old days. Unless you called the tourist attraction which was basically renting boats but my grandfather always said, "If you own some waterfront you can always make a living." And in those days that was the livelihood, the oystering, fishing, and renting out boats. I know my grandfather used to swear that he was the only person in the town that paid income tax. 'Cause there was no way of ever knowing how much money people made. But he conscientiously reported his.

J: About what years was he born?

B: ...Where's that book? I'm not sure. I know he got married as a young man in 1909 or 1910.

J: And was he working in one way or another on the water most of his life?

B: He didn't, except the ferry. The family owned the oyster beds so I don't know.

J: He was in the retail general merchandise business ever?

B: I think he ran a store for a while I know. He had one of the first automobiles in the town and he would hire himself out hauling people places.

J: So he was a renaissance man of Benedict. Several sources of income.

B: Of course the roads here were paved with oyster shells.

J: Probably among the best in Charles County.

B: Probably. Nobody ever got stuck here.

J: Do you recall or have you ever heard how much education your grandfather had?

B: Less than the fourth grade.

J: Okay and that right here or near Benedict?

B: Evidently yes.

J: He met his wife here in Benedict?

B: My grandmother came here in 1909 to teach school. She taught one—

J: From Baltimore.

B: She went to the state normal school and she taught one year and fell in love and got married and then she had to quit teaching because the Board of Education would not permit a married woman to teach school.

J: Oh boy. Where was the school then?

B: Right up here.

J: Right around the corner?

B: Yeah you know where those little white houses are?

J: Yes.

B: One of those was the school house.

J: Okay. And Mrs. Henderson's maiden name was?

B: Bree.

J: Bree. Okay alright. Did she always seem to you of course as a child contented with this life that she had settled into here in Benedict?

B: Well in the winter time—in the summer time it seemed that everything was geared to making a living. People were busy with their gardens, and canning, working. Particularly Saturdays and Sundays. Saturdays and Sundays were very busy days. In the winter time she had like a bridge club with women from the town came in once a night a week and played bridge. I remember [we used to have] two tables in the living room.

J: Who were some of these ladies? I mean I'm asking an awful lot of you but do you recall the names of some of these prominent ladies of the community?

B: Yes. One of them was, I called her Aunt Eva because she was married to my grandfather's brother but had separated from him because he liked to drink. One was Betty—

J: She was a Ms. Henderson?

B: She was an Eva Henderson but—

H: She was a Farrell.

B: But her father was a Farrell. And we have a very interesting story about the Farrell's in the Civil War because the old house that the Henderson's bought here at the time of the civil war there was the Farrell's living in it. There was an old man Farrell who was sick in bed with pneumonia and when they made this house into a hospital they moved the people out and it was very bitter cold weather and the old man Farrell died and they always claimed that he died because the Union Army made him move out of the house in the cold weather. Of course I'm sure he went to another house to live.

J: Right. Where was this house located? Do you have any idea?

B: It's right next door where I am. That house is built on the foundation of the old house. This town burnt 1909 and I guess one of the stories you might be interested: How did this town burnt?

J: Yes by all means. It's got to be an important history.

B: My grandmother always said because that was the year she was teaching school here that some people [inaudible] you know what she said?

J: [Inaudible]?

H: [Brestanham]

J: [Berstanham]

B: Had a little store or something and they had a kerosene stove. And the stove blew up and it was a very windy day and the wind just carried the fire from one house to another.

J: What time of the year again?

B: I think it was in March but I'm not sure. I'm really not sure so maybe I shouldn't say. But the Shorter's house, the people went out with buckets. You kept throwing buckets of water on it and that house was spared.

J: About what percentage of the structures were destroyed or seriously damaged in the 1909 fire?

B: Well the story was it burnt the town down. But I imagine anything below that place was just down the street before you get to the river and it evidently went north.

J: At about the curve?

B: Yes there weren't any house over here except this one but there were some on the other side of the road. There were none—that was all farm back on the back now where you have the Mill Creek Road. Imagine that the houses or structures below that were spared. But the saying was the whole town burnt down. I don't think it really did.

J: You know where the Horseman house is?

B: Yes.

J: Now that's a pretty decent structure.

B: Yes.

J: I've taken pictures of it. I wonder if that was standing the year of the fire?

B: I don't know.

J: May have been one of those spared. It's far enough down to it's—

B: I know just about Shorter's place used to be a house and I do remember as a kid it caught on fire and burnt down.

J: Now what about the old hotel? That was older. That went back before 1909 didn't it?

B: Story was that part of that went back to the War of 1812.

J: So that was not destroyed. [Know that].

B: But there was a—and right so that would be above it. I mean below it. And it had a—supposedly a cannon ball in it somewhere but I don't if it was there or whether it had been hit by one. But it wasn't the size down there it was in the 30's.

J: Do you remember hearing any stories about disasters in Benedict such as that? Violent storms of any kind that might have damaged the town?

B: Well we had—hurricanes would come in and the wind would push the water up the river. It pushed a tremendous amount of water into the river so the tide fluctuation, you know, when the high tide came the water would get along the waterfront up to the banks. I can remember the

Shorter's place you know being partially submerged in sea water. Of course the old hotel was up on the banks so they would take stock and stuff out of it [place and usually coming] and put them up in the old hotel.

J: Now how far are we right now above high tide in elevation?

B: I'm not sure here. But it's never—the water's never come up here.

J: Really?

B: Never.

J: I'm surprised it looks pretty flat between here and the river.

B: It does but it's got more skin than meets the eye, particularly as you get down close to the river.

J: Now you—we've been talking about artifacts that you have located right here on your own property. How far is this house from the river's edge now?

B: What 600 feet?

J: That's a good estimate. 5 to 600 feet. And the artifacts that you've found here cover a pretty wide range going back to possibly mid-eighteenth century?

B: Right.

J: Pennies and buttons. I wonder what sort of structure had been on this lot during the past two and half centuries? What is the—

B: Well in my life time there was a barn here. In my mother's life time there was a church here. But tracing back through—

J: Catholic?

B: No. The catholic church has always been I think where it was. No it's—

H: Methodist.

B: It was a little Methodist church here I think my grandfather or my great grandfather was Protestant and he probably—

J: Did you ever hear it named?

B: No I'm not sure but.

J: You ever hear of Friendship Methodist Church?

B: No. But going back through the property. Very early this was referred to as the old place or the burnt-out place. So I imagine that at one time there was a house here somewhere back in maybe it was about the time of these coins.

H: Where was the house?

[Tape Interruption]

J: Barnsley do you recall or has anyone ever told you about what time your grandfather Henderson began operating this ferry… and how long do you think he did operate this all together?

B: I somewhere in the 1920's I think was when he began operating it. I've heard that he used to land on the other side of the river at first in a place called [Barn Hollow]. [Barn Hollow].

J: For heaven's sakes.

B: And then later moved down to Holland, Holland Point.

J: Okay in those days did he have to undergo any competitive program to determine whether or not he got this position? Did the state play any role in determining whether or not he was to be the ferry operator here? How did it work? How was it controlled?

B: He was—he was a business man. It was his business as far as I know the state did nothing said nothing. The only thing they ever did was when he built the bridge it put him out of business as an old man leaving him with no lively hood.

J: Yeah I asked this because in colonial days the person who had the right to run a ferry service had to get permission from the crown. And this was an important [sinecure]. And usually the party like say the [Inaudible] down in Morgantown who got the ferry service they never did the work themselves. They always hired someone to run the ferry but they got the income from the crown. So that was not the case here in our lifetime in Maryland. Okay. Just because he had to get up and go to establish and manage apparently efficiently the ferry service.

B: I think there was—I think the Higgs's ran some kind of a ferry service across here but I'm not sure they hauled automobiles.

J: Did your grandfather or grandmother ever say anything about an earlier ferry service? Was there one and who ran it?

B: Bertram Higgs I understand ran it. Course I remember hearing comments that Bertram was a great drinker. So I imagine that he was not very reliable. And there seemed to be some resentment because my grandfather had established a ferry and was very successful with it.

J: How important was this ferry service to the economic life in this neighborhood? Both sides of the river. What did he carry?

B: Well salesman this was the only way to get from Charles County into Calvert County. The only other way was to drive to Upper Marlborough and come back down the other side of the river which was a pretty good trip.

J: Even by automobiles.

B: Even by automobiles right. So this was the only way to get across the Patuxent River. I don't even think there was one at Solomon's—

J: Between Marlborough and always [in the mouth]?

B: Yes.

J: That's incredible. What distance are we talking about? Miles, 50 miles?

B: I imagine 25 miles up to Marlborough.

J: And up to Nottingham was how far from here?

B: Well there wasn't anyway to get across to Nottingham.

J: Still is. I was up there by boat last June. Okay now getting back to—oh one more thing. Do you have any feel for the charges? What did the motorists have to pay?

B: One dollar.

J: One dollar each way?

B: Each way.

J: Regardless of the size of the vehicle?

B: That's right.

J: Okay there were still in your early boyhood days horse drawn vehicles going across weren't there? No, no that goes back—

B: No not in my boyhood, not in my boyhood.

J: I'm adding age to you. Yeah. Okay now society in a small rural community like Benedict, as you say and I must agree from what I've seen, it hasn't changed a great deal. Was there any social stratification? Were there differences in quality of sophistication of families here? Was there much interconnecting of lives? Was there any snobbishness here? Snobbishness between families? Did your grandparents or parents ever forbid you for example to associate with children from other families and if so for what reasons?

B: Well if there were—

J: This is the morph and weave of life and society today too.

B: Basically no but sometimes yes. You know a lot of times that kind of restriction gets put on when you're with somebody and you get in trouble. You know what I mean. So I keep, you know, if somebody's getting in trouble unfortunately yes but otherwise in that no. The people here tend to live and let live in those days. We never saw a policeman.

J: Has Benedict ever had a town Sherriff?

B: No but we didn't see them from anywhere. If somebody came and caused trouble it seemed like there was enough local toughs. You know these oyster men get pretty strong tonging all day long. They managed to take care of it. And the men of the law was a little different than it is now. They didn't read them their rights first.

J: So even on Saturday night things were usually quiet and orderly?

B: And slot machines.

J: Okay even during the period of slot machines things were quite, well run?

B: Very rare was there ever any problems. I do remember one time somebody came down, [Harry] Shorter's, and they had taken Harry Shorter's kerosene and Shorter's dog put them in his automobile. And Harry Senior wanted them to let the dog go and the man refused to do it so a fight ensued. The dog was let go and the man came back and this was one time the police did come in. He called the police because the dog had been abused.

J: Where would the police have come from?

B: They were state police this particular time.

J: Oh okay.

B: And of course a lot of Welch's, Higgs's, and all the rest of the town when they found out the police were coming all the men in town went down to Shorter's and lined themselves around the bar and they all looked so much alike the man could not identify who it was that hit him so to speak.

J: Wow. Hazel did you know Barnsley's grandmother? She's no longer living of course the grandmother. What—how do you remember her? What kind of a person? How old were you when you met her?

H: I was 16. [When I met her].

J: Oh really? Oh for heaven's sakes.

H: So—

J: [Inaudible phrase]. Right?

B: Water and a poker game.

J: That's Benedict. That's Benedict.

H: She mothered me. She was a woman of a lot of wisdom. And she gave me a lot of guidance. She—

J: How old was she roughly when you met her?

H: That was back in 1951.

B: Well.

H: I'm figuring how old she would be.

B: 21, 22 born [mother] of 18. So that would be 32, 40. She died when she was 80. When did she die?

H: She died in 72 I think wasn't it? No she died before that.

B: Yeah she died oh 7, 87.

H: I'm not good on numbers.

B: So I would say 60. Early late 50's or 60.

J: And she had come here as a school teacher?

B: She came here 1909.

J: With a pretty good education for her day?

B: Right.

J: How did she fit into the community for heaven's sakes? What was life like for her and what was the reaction of Benedict people toward this woman from the big city? How did she get along?

H: Well the time that I knew her she was always to me a little bit different society. She enjoyed reading crossword puzzles. She could sow, she—before she married Grandfather Henderson she had a job designing lace for a company.

J: Really where?

H: Baltimore I think wasn't it? And she drew the designs for the lace and even after she got married and had her first child a man would come to her and ask her if she would continue but she couldn't with her responsibilities with the children and everything. She could draw. She could sit down and cut out a pattern for a dress. She could make design coats. She could do anything like that.

J: So there was some art there?

H: Very much.

J: In her fingers and in her soul.

H She was a very capable person.

J: Did she come from a large family do you know? Ever see of meet any of her brothers or sisters?

B: Yeah she had a very large family.

J: Okay mostly from the Baltimore area?

B: Yeah. Well see there was—her father there were two brothers on the Eastern Shore who had farms there. Her father was an architect and one brother stayed with the farm and he moved to Baltimore to work there on buildings.

H: One of them—

B: Her father came here because she went to normal school with her first year probably realized that there was a job here. So in those days you know if you take a job you left home and went and boarded probably.

H: She was a very stern person. She believed in discipline.

J: What church did she go to? Was she a member of any church?

H: Well she was a Baptist. But his grandfather belonged to Old Field Episcopal Church so therefore I guess she felt obligated to take her family there because Barnie was baptized there and all the other children.

J: Okay and they are both at rest so to speak at Old Field?

H: Yeah.

B: They got married and drove a horse and buggy to Bryantown used the little indoor hotel or something in Bryantown and that was where they went on the honeymoon.

H: She was the type of lady that she wouldn't go out of the house without her gloves. She would not attend church without her hat and gloves. She was always very particular about her appearance.

J: Was she rather unique in these respects here in Benedict? Were there many other women of that class?

H: I don't think so.

B: No.

H: I think she was—she was quite different.

J: Okay and for the record let's put down her full name. Louise?

H: May Reid.

J: May Reid. Okay and that's R double E or R-E-I?

H: R-E-I-D.

B: R-E-I-D.

J: Okay. And I guess I better say before it's too late that Mrs. Barnsley Warfield is sitting here and participating as much as she's been allowed to for heaven's sakes. And her given name is Hazel and she's a native of Virginia. Right? What town were you born in?

B: Stafford.

J: Stafford right across the river. Near what community? What town?

H: Fredericksburg.

J: Fredericksburg.

B: Above Fredericksburg. You lived pretty close to the Stafford courthouse.

H: Yeah. Well the courthouse is right in the [Stafford].

J: Okay don't know where it is.

H: But there's a lot of history to my family. I have an uncle that researches and he's even been to England to research [inaudible] source.

J: What names now are we talking about? You mentioned Stewart. Your mother's maiden name was what?

H: My mother's maiden name was [Bach].

J: Okay. Barnsley when did you graduate from high school now?

B: Well I really didn't.

J: Oh you were a drop out? [I've thought that before] really?

B: I was a drop out. I was—

J: You're a World War II veteran are you or a Korean War?

B: Well I wasn't old enough to be a World War II veteran.

J: Oh that's for sure.

B: The war ended and I was 16. Started when I was 10. I dropped out of school and enlisted in active duty [United States Naval] Reserves and served six years. [A little over] six years. Got out

to go to college. I was in the last class that had 11 years of schooling before the [cut off]. And I was in the first class that was trans—when they consolidated the secondary schools into what is now La Plata High School. This was when Hughesville had a high school, Glasva had a high school, Nanjemoy had a high school, La Plata had a high school. And they consolidated these schools and made Hughesville and the others junior high schools at that time. So I was in the first class to go to La Plata. Milton Somers was my principal. T.C. Martin was my principal too really. He should have a school named after him.

J: That's true. That's true. Okay so if you had graduated what class would you have been in?

B: Well 48.

J: Okay. Have you lived anywhere else other than Benedict during your married life?

B: During my married life? No.

J: So your entire life has been spent here in Benedict?

B: Not really. I spent two years, in particular in the school part of the year at Camp Springs. I always spent my summers here. During World War II my stepdad was in the Navy and I got a chance to visit Hutcherson, Kansas for a few months. I wanted to then when he was being moved I would come back to Benedict. And [usually] would finish the school year out and in the summer I would go live with my mother and my stepdad so he got transferred from Hutcherson so I came back went through a school year and this time he's in Jacksonville, Florida. I went down there and lived for a summer.

J: Was he in Naval Aviation?

B: No well he—at first he was but he was not a naval aviation [inaudible]. He was an electrician. [Enlisted man]. And before I got to school in Jacksonville he was sent to sea duty so I came back home and I lived another year. And then my Mom was living in San Diego, California. So the next summer I went to San Diego, California to live with them again. That's when the war ended so we all came home that time.

J: At what point did you decide you would like to go on and do some college work?

B: It's a very interesting story. I—

J: I think you're gonna hear it Hazel for the first time.

B: No she has heard it before.

H: No we were married when he went to college.

B: I was—I had been reading a book and finished it and I just picked up a book randomly out of the book case in my grandmother's home and it was Plato on *The Trial of Socrates.* And I read it and I was so engrossed in it and I realized that hey there's so much in this world that I don't

know. And it gave me a thirst to, you know, go on. Plus being in the service I soon realized that the difference between the guy who was scrubbing the floor and the guy who was inspecting it was education. So—

J: And this book was in your grandmother Henderson's library?

B: Yes.

J: Did she have others of that quality? Of that sophistication?

B: I don't know. I didn't really pay that much attention to them.

J: She may have had the most sophisticated library collection in town. Was she a reader?

H: Yes.

J: That tells you something doesn't it? Well evidently some of it brushed off onto Barnsley.

H: But see grandfather was different. He was not highly educated. He was a typical type of person. And she was just the opposite.

J: Isn't that something to think—

H: She was a foreign lady.

B: But he had a good mind but he was left handed. And schools in those days they wouldn't permit you to write with your left hand and I think my grandfather got very, very frustrated not being able to write with his right one.

J: Did your grandfather's family go very far in the world of business or agriculture or was he sort of an outstanding member of his family?

B: Well I don't think he did much in agriculture. I don't see—

J: Not even his parents?

B: My great grandfather was mostly dead before I was born so I don't ever remember them.

J: Okay.

H: This was the book from one of grandmother's collections.

J: Did you get your introduction to teaching in Charles County?

B: Yes.

J: What school and what—

B: Hughesville. Same school which I attended.

J: Did you like it? Did you have any idea that you would enjoy teaching?

B: I debated rather to be a teacher or a minister. Decided to be a teacher and I [very] enjoyed it. I never really ever met a mean child. I met a couple that were very mixed up, hostile but not really when you got to know them.

J: Where was your next school? About what year did you start there?

B: Started teaching in 57. I taught three years in Hughesville.

J: So when we met you you were teaching at Hughesville in 58?

B: I [Inaudible phrase] I guess.

J: Hi.

H: You remember Sharon?

J: Hi Sharon how are you? It's nice to see you.

Sharon: [Inaudible].

J: Join us listen to this, this excitement.

B: The principal wouldn't let me have any of the subjects which I'd been trained in. So I left Hughesville to Calvert County for a few years. The principal left and I went back to Hughesville and taught a year.

J: Who was the new principal at Hughesville?

B: When I went back? Walter Johnson. He was related with principal over in La Plata Elementary. Not La Plata Elementary but what's the name of the school in La Plata?

H: Walter J. Mitchell.

B: Walter J. Mitchell.

J: Oh yes, yeah.

B: At the end of that year I'd just finished my master's degree. Calvert County wanted me back as a vice principal. C. Paul Barnhart said that if I would stay in Charles County that he would give me some [summary from] or something to make up the salary difference that there was a possibility of a principal's job opening up and if it did it'd be mine. So it opened up and I then went to Nanjemoy. And was Principal there two years. At that time they consolidated the junior high schools. Okay?

J: Okay.

B: And the old La Plata High School when they built the new one, the one that's presently the Milton Somers school, the old La Plata High School became the consolidated Junior High School with Glasva, Nanjemoy, and all the others brought in.

J: About what year are we talking about right now?

B: 61. [Inaudible] was there eight years, 64. At that time the Charles County Community College operated in the building upstairs at night. And the Superintendent Bruce Jenkins of course what used to be the first head honcho. I don't know whether to call him President or what then of the Community College. He later became Superintendent. So I was there eight years and the county started a Middle School. So I had to go to the Middle School program and by default they had to put six graders into my school or the Milton Somers school because of housing problems so I had the opportunity of really developing the first middle school in Charles County.

J: That's interesting. And what was the name now?

B: Milton Somers.

J: Okay. Okay. At this time was Milton Somers himself still active in teaching?

B: No he was retied but he used to come over and walk through the school once in a while. He used to say he was taking his morning constitutional.

J: Did you have much to do with Paul Barnhart when he was here.

B: Well he was my Superintendent.

J: Okay. How'd you like Paul? Was he a decent Superintendent?

B: I thought he was a good Superintendent. And I mean he was a straight upfront man. He told me when he—when I went to Nanjemoy he says, "You'll be there two years. After that I promise you nothing except possibly a teaching job of course." [Granted] at the end of two years I really felt that, you know, I was looking at Glasva, Hughesville, with Bob Carrie and Walter Johnson, they both much more time in teaching than I had and so forth that you know I was going back to a teaching job but I was Vice Principal the first year and then Principal for seven years after that. Mr. Carrie taught there. I offered him my Vice Principal's job but when—after one year—but he preferred to be a teacher. Which is strange you know I went back and taught my last few years too.

J: Did you?

B: At Thomas Stone.

J: Oh did you? Okay.

B: Fairly enjoyed it.

J: They were good years for you?

B: Yes.

J: When—what year did you retire now?

B: I've been retired eight years now so. It was in the 80's somewhere.

J: What thoughts did you have Barnsley in the 1950's and early 60's about the subject of integration? Did you think seriously about this? Did it concern you in any way? Did you find it troubling?

B: Well, being brought up in Southern Maryland—see as children the two kids of the two races in this town played together. Up to a certain age. When you reached a certain age it became taboo. And I remember the time it did because we all decided that no longer colored kids were going to permitted to play with us. And I remember doing some soul searching—

J: Was that a little hard for you?

B: That this is not exactly right but then again this is the way that things were done and that you really felt caught up and really had no choice about it. So of course when you mature with this concept it becomes fixed. It becomes hardened. And I remember at Nanjemoy the year that I left was the first year that they had what they call freedom of choice. And I can remember the first black parent who came into register a child. And I didn't have the same soul searching I did as a kid when we stopped playing ball with them. But this was the day, a new day, and [I was leaving]. Charles County began desegregating its schools in the summer school program.

J: In what year? About? remember?

B: In the early 60's. I could tell you, pin point it for you I guess because I was working in the summer school program and my first encounter with mixed groups was in summer school. At that time, I'd done my souls searching. I'd made my mind that kids are kids. They're all the same. They're all equal. And was prepared to operate on that philosophy and treat each one according to—

J: Were you surprised or disappointed in anyway over the developments after that?

B: No, but it presented a lot of problems that we were not used to having to deal with in our schools. Race relation problems between the kids because a lot of them white kids were very prejudiced and a lot of the black kids were very prejudiced. And any time we throw two very prejudiced groups together you get sparks flying and we had them.

J: And I suppose some teachers were really not prepared psychologically to deal effectively with this. Did you have some teachers who found it very, very difficult to contend with?

B: I think the biggest problem I had—they didn't do that much in the classroom but they really didn't expect anything from the black kids. You know, it's something you have to have. At Somers we also had the first—of course the county—we had the first black teacher come into an all-white school and I remember that they hand-picked this teacher. They picked one of the best teachers, black teachers they had in the system.

J: Who was this?

B: Oh gee. I should remember her name.

J: Not Mary Neal?

B: No.

J: Sarah Cain?

B: No Sarah Cain was a Vice Principal. No this was a classroom teacher and I can remember the parents and the concern of what kind of repercussions you were gonna have on this black teacher walks in front of these white kids in what had been La Plata High School and what the, the foresight was there after one week we had white parents requesting their children be put in her class. She was a good. Later on, when they desegregated staffs a lot of the black teachers looked down on black kids. You know, and when I would deal with them they were, "You can't expect any more from this kid." You know because of his background and all and I would think how horrible. You'd think that this person at least should be looking to support you know a child of the same race.

J: Yeah that's an interesting comment. Well as you look back on it now Barnie would you say that the integration of public schools came off more smoothly than you had anticipated?

B: No I can't say that. I had a Vice Principal knifed in the back.

J: Yeah I know who [it was]. My kids were going there at the time. My son Peter was in school at that time.

B: There was a colored boy shot by a white parent and killed.

J: And I know who this was too.

B: Where you used to deal with educational problems and an occasional problem between the kids you're spending all day long dealing with conflicts and the results of, you know, discipline. Black kids didn't want to be disciplined by white teachers and white kids didn't want to be disciplined by black teachers. I mean education somehow suffered with this through a few years. You know, I guess it was necessary. I guess this had to be done and it should've been done.

J: Did you find it draining yourself?

B: Yeah.

J: [Inaudible phrase].

B: Yes, yes. I would go to school and I always carried a lunch and many, many days when I got ready to go home my lunch was still sitting there. I was so busy I didn't even know that I hadn't eaten.

J: Who were your teachers at that time? When for the first time a black teacher became a member of the staff of the faculty? Who were some of the other teachers?

B: Well Jane Linton. I don't think Mrs. Gardiner was there. Kitty Newcomb.

J: Mrs. Wheeler by any chance? Jane Grey Wheeler.

B: Mrs. Wheeler was there. Well she was in the elementary—she was more—yeah she stayed there sixth grade. Mrs. Margaret [Dipold]. [We had] a pretty good core of teachers and I think in the system after the first couple of years because the first couple of years was very hard and the building was [inaudible phrase]. The elementary school was still in there. Over—I can remember saying to one of the—under Fred Brown when he was Superintendent, I used to have Gladys over one day. No Fred Brown came over one day. And we had no intercom system, we had no fire alarm system, and I remember looking at Dr. Brown, and I said, "Dr. Brown there's something that bothers me. What do I do if this building catches on fire? Send smoke signals?" And he says, "You're not funny."

J: He didn't last long did he?

B: Two years.

J: This is great see we're getting some good history out of you. And all of these teachers that you mentioned I knew, have known, still know if they're alive.

B: Yes.

J: I've been working with the [Stone] family for years on [the Thomas Stone thing]. Jane Grey Wheeler's one of my favorite all-time favorite people. Marvelous person.

B: [Inaudible phrase] came and went but you always had the core teachers that you had to have.

J: When you retired how many years of integration had you experienced? Let's say from 65, 66 and you retired how many years ago?

B: Eight.

J: So you taught in an integrated system for quite a while. 65, 75, 85. Almost 20 years. 17 years roughly in an integrated system.

B: 15, 17 years yes.

J: Okay did you see any leveling off any lessening of the problems? What was the course of quality of education in Charles County during this almost two decades of integration? The first couple of decades. In your opinion. We're just asking for personal opinions.

B: Well at first and for many years okay it's a desegregated integrated school. Classes are that way, but you know you cannot make people associate that don't want to associate. So, the races tend to segregate themselves within the school building and there was still, you know, prejudices are prejudices. They're not gotten over with quickly.

J: They're deep and they linger.

B: And the time when we've got children you know they've already been through six, seven years of school. They were not young children. Many of their prejudices were deep set. When they desegregated the staffs you know it got to the place where it was very hard for white staff members to deal with black kids and vice versa. So though some of them did well don't misunderstand me. Eventually it would get to a place they depended on the individual teacher. But there are always some very prejudiced kids on both sides [inaudible]. Many of them associated very well, did not do hostile things to each other but there was always some.

J: Did you run into any problems, Barney, with the newly integrated black faculty members not being as well qualified academically as the majority of white teachers? Do you recall this to be a problem.

B: I I won't—I can't put that on a racial basis because I've had some very poor black teachers. I've also had some very poor white teachers okay.

J: But this was not a serious problem?

B: So the race was not the problem. I think it became more of problem because we were always conscious of having to have a certain quota of black staff members. So therefore we would not hire a better qualified looking applicant because he was white in order to hire one that was very questionable to full a racial quota. And see this to me helped put education back too because this was another kind of a thing we had to deal with with all the other problems with the children was trying to handle this thing with your staff.

J: Okay another nitty gritty question: During your teaching career did you note any decreasing, decrease in the quality of college-prepared teachers coming out looking for jobs in the system?

B: No. You see if you try to put all this on one bag it doesn't work because people are individuals. And, you know, if you are very careful with looking at the credentials and so forth of staff you hire there're lots of good people out there. It might've been maybe you were getting more. I don't know what it used to be but they seemed—but a lot of depends on what are the system, what are they paying? What do they have? How many good people want to come here? Now in the very early years of Charles County you used to jokingly say that we were the training ground for Prince George's because they would come in teach a couple years and they paid a lot more money so they would migrate north. I remember one supervisor or something said, "Well if we're gonna be a training ground by God let's be good one." You know so that was the philosophy that we took. If we're gonna break these people in, teach them to, help them develop into good teachers because when you first come out of college they have the training but they're not teachers. It takes a year to let the kids teach them how to be teachers.

J: So do you feel that the teachers coming out of Baccalaureate curriculums today are as good as we have seen in the past two or three decades? Are they being as well prepared in college for teaching careers now?

B: I found them so when I was there. If you want to take it as a general rule. That doesn't say I would question sometimes how some individuals ever got through without somebody saying you don't have what it takes because we did occasionally get people that they should have recognized in their training and [inaudible] teaching and everything else did not belong in the classroom. Maybe something else maybe. And I think some of them probably changed jobs or changed what degrees because some people just could not relate. Just some people cannot relate well with other people. And if you can't relate with other people you certainly should not be a teacher.

J: Do you feel that the black youngsters of Charles County have benefited from integration?

B: Yes and I'll tell you what I base it on. You might want to cut your tape when I say this.

[Tape Interruption]

J: Barney do you feel in looking back at your last years of teaching do you feel that the black students of Charles County have benefited in any way from integration? What has it meant for them in your opinion?

B: Well yes some have because when schools first desegregated up to that point the white schools the test averages were pretty much the national average. The average for a school was national average. When we first desegregated the schools, we found many of the black students, their averages were two three grades below and—

J: And that's a significant difference?

B: Right we suddenly encountered children that could not read the materials that we had, could not handle the materials that we had. And I'm not saying this against the black race. I'm saying that basically that the differences in the cultural backgrounds that they brought to school made was a significant factor. Plus many, many of the parents couldn't read or write. So I think that through the years I have seen that become—it tends to medium between the two now. Maybe that's the price that school systems had to pay for what should have been done. You know they really put it upon the kids in this country what the parents wouldn't do.

J: Now American society is paying a terrible price.

B: Yes.

J: For the past.

B: Yes for the sins of the past. We certainly are.

J: And yet I personally feel that there's not another nation in the world that could've handled it any better than we have. We have survived. It hasn't shattered us.

B: No.

J: It was tough.

B: But I think it—I think it took a commitment from both races to bring that about too.

J: I guess the pay off—you know check me if you think I'm wrong is that as a result of all this the better educated young blacks who were going on to college are now being admitted to pretty darned good schools. And those that will major in education some of them we hope will be able to come back much better qualified than the earlier generation to teach in public schools. So that great spin-off we haven't really appreciated but I think we will in the near future.

B: Well I think I'm noticing the homes. I noticed that in the years afterwards many blacks began to take more pride in their homes, keeping their homes up. There begin to be a lot lessening of the prejudices from the majority. That doesn't mean there still not very prejudiced people on each side but on the majority that the coarseness beginned to ride a little smoother.

J: I think you're right. And it's been a waste, a horrible waste of a national resource.

B: Yes.

J: Millions of people that didn't do as well as they could've done for themselves.

B: It was a waste to our country.

J: It really was. Well as you look back on your—how many years did you teach Barney?

B: I put in 25.

J: Okay. Good years for you? Gratifying years? Rewarding years for the most part would you say?

B: The earlier years were much more rewarding than the years that we had the problems. The problems then were not what I would really call educational problems. They were problems that society put upon the schools which in my opinion we should have done our share but we shouldn't have had the total burden. And the schools got the total burden.

J: No question about it. What do you think your grandparents might say if they could come back today and read the local newspapers and maybe take a look at law and order and crime and disorder and prejudice? Do you think they would comprehend what had happened or what is happening to society today?

B: Well people pretty bounce back easy, you know. They can adjust pretty good. I remember my grandmother telling me that when they were having the women's suffrage that my grandfather told her that if she ever voted he would divorce her.

J: Ouch.

B: And after they got the vote he was trying to tell her who to vote for. So you know we tend to put ourselves in the position and do a lot of talking and speculating but when we're really faced with it we tend to adjust and come through. So I imagine that firstly they'd be pretty shocked. I

can remember reading back in the 60's reading some things that [the county had a] youth group and what these youths were asking for—

[Tape 2]

J: This is John Wearmouth interviewing Barnsley Warfield again at his home in Benedict. His wife Hazel is with us again today. And this is now February 12th right?

H: 13th.

B: 13th.

J: Is it the 13th already? Wow. We did our first tape, oh, two or three weeks ago. And with this one I'd like to concentrate on the history of the Benedict area. Mr. Warfield wrote a, well let's just call it a paper, on the occasion of the tercentenary of Charles County, 1958.

B: Benedict.

J: On the history of this community, the port of Benedict. The peaceful port. And it still is a peaceful port. So we—we'll concentrate on that today. Barney what were the important primary sources of information that you got into when you were doing that paper? Which were the most helpful to you?

B: Well they were journals on Chesapeake history. Got a lot of stuff on the War of 1812 from that. *History of Maryland* gave me the early colonial [content stuff].

J: The sharp work, [bowsmen]?

B: Well I had that one book on the history of Maryland that you know I showed you. Which seemed to be pretty detailed on the first meeting of governors in the new world between the Governor of Virginia and the Governor of—the Calvert's of Maryland. Basically over settlement with cows and someplace where Virginia had its settlements—

J: Yes. [inaudible]. William [Clayborn's settlement].

B: Yeah right and they were there to try to get this resolved and they met in the cabin of a great ship and I was very impressed that the chief of the Patuxent Indians was seated between the two Governors at this meeting. Which led me to believe that Patuxents at that time must have been a pretty influential, powerful tribe of the local Indians but for one coming from here down to St. Mary's County.

J: Barnsley does this mean in your opinion that the Patuxent's controlled the area on which or at which St. Mary's city was settled? Did they have that much range in their—

B: No I don't. From reading the history I didn't get an impression that they were settled over, but that they were a very large group of Indians and very influential. Otherwise why would the—these two Englishmen have the chief of the Patuxents there? This was some kind of an honor like for them.

J: Oh yeah. No they wouldn't have bothered to invite anyone that they didn't think was.

B: Right.

J: Capable of being an important ally or supporter.

B: And they also supposedly had a large quote whatever that is city which I'm sure was a pretty populace Indian village compared to other Indian villages in the area.

J: Have you located any Indian settlement in the neighborhood of Benedict? Has any archaeological work been done here with that in mind?

B: I don't think so. But one thing that's always—that has intrigued me is the sign, the state road sign, that says Patuxent City. And there's never been anything there.

J: Not even a city.

B: Not even a city. An inn, a building, but nothing that would even remotely be a city. And I'm wondering if that may not be where their sort of home base was. Now I know they came down on the rivers and they probably had settlements and you know people scattered through the area.

J: Well it may be as you point out in your history of Benedict that the depredations of the Susquehannock's reached far into Southern Maryland.

B: Right.

J: And that the Patuxent's were afraid of them. They may have settled back from the edge of the water a little bit to give them time to observe and arm or flee as the case may have been.

B: Because they came down the rivers in canoes. And—

J: Right. It would have been pretty risky having a community right here on the water that the enemy could be upon you before you knew he was here. But you may be right. There may have been a—but it makes one wonder who determined that and what their resources—

B: Well also, in the hundreds when they were—[list] in the hundreds most of them had English names but the one in Benedict was the Patuxent hundred.

J: Now that's interesting.

B: So I found it fascinating that this particular hundreds was called by an Indian name rather than by an English name.

J: Incidentally, how was the determination made of the boundaries of a hundred? And why was it called a hundred?

B: You got—I'm talking off the top of my head now but it was done on population. And these were—I forget whether it would be a hundred people, a hundred families but it was based on a political subdivision based upon population.

J: So those boundaries were pretty flexible as the population grew?

B: Could be right. But I think later they begin to get other political entities that probably was an outgrowth of the hundred.

J: Right. Reminds me of gerrymandering.

B: Right.

J: To gain the political advantage today.

B: That's right. But it's interesting as the first political structure was based upon population and size of population. It's later on entered into, you know, the Congress of the United States. With the dual—with the House of Representatives.

J: To your knowledge has anyone ever done any research, anyone, on this part of Maryland? For example, has anyone investigated the official reports of [Cochran and Roth]? With possible recorded observations of what they saw along the Patuxent? It would be interesting to do because these were both well-educated men. They were professional observers and may have included in their topographical reports for example what they found here. So something that remains maybe to be done sometime?

B: Somebody must have because—I'm trying to think exactly. I've quoted the sources I've used at the back of my paper. But you know when you begin to get into—the British landed here first twice. They landed the first time they came up the river and at this time they were trying to get back at the American privateers who were raiding their shipping. We had no shipping they could raid so they figured the next best thing was to come in and raid the plantations along the rivers. And they got all the way up to Upper Marlborough but they landed at Benedict and the Americans [inaudible] they had an observation post here. It was the British policy to destroy any town that they found any type of soldiers in. Now the observers evidently left when they came and landed because they had a pretty substantial force. There was a woman here named [Forbes] who was in Philadelphia visiting her son who was very ill and evidently would die. And she had asked a man named Clement Dorsey from Bryantown to look out for her property. When he heard the British had come into the town he rode into the town on a horse right up to General Ross and very brazenly demanded you know just what was he gonna do to this town? And General Ross informed him that their policy was if they found any troops no matter how small that they'd destroy the town. And he evidently gave up went back up. Many of the townspeople had left and were up in the hills. When he was talking with them he found that one of the good

citizens of Benedict had taken a keg of whiskey and put poison in it. So this so concerned Mr. Dorsey that he came back down to warn the General that this keg of poisoned whiskey existed. The British were evidently very savvy to this kind of stuff. They'd found the whiskey and determined it was poisoned and thus there was no harm done. But the question in history always has been [was] this Mr. Dorsey coming back saved this town because the British did not burn it. Now maybe they were saving it because they figured this was also a good landing site for future operations too.

J: There's that possibility for sure. Now Mrs. [Forbes], now we're talking about 1814 aren't we now?

B: Right.

J: August of 1814. Earlier delegate to the Continental Congress James Forbes from [the Plains] had died, we think of pneumonia, in Philadelphia and is buried about a block away from Independence Hall. His grave is still there if you want to go take a look at it according to Eleanor Carrico. And I have been there. I have located the cemetery but didn't have time to go in. In fact, the cemetery was locked. Big gate fence all around it but it is a block or block and a half from the big entrance to Independence Hall. So this Mrs. Forbes—

B: Lived in Benedict.

J: Up there in another war in another time to minister to a child? An ill child?

B: I've just said her son. So the fact that it's a son living in Philadelphia I'd assume that he'd reached maturity.

J: Which one of the Forbes drowned crossing the mouth of Indian Creek in the winter? Fell through the ice. Did you ever hear that story?

B: One of the—probably—

J: Male and heirs.

B: Now I'll tell you where you find the probably the information because the Forbes lived at the [Plains]. And at the cemetery at the Plains there—I always heard that there was a 14, 15 year old young lad buried there that had drowned.

J: Well that's probably—

B: And not.

J: The only son—

B: And I found it—I found the stone but I don't remember the name upon it.

J: Well I'll bet that's the one. He was a Forbes a young man and the only boy in the family. One of the great tragedies of—

B: And he's buried at the cemetery at the Plains which by the way they are restoring.

J: The cemetery?

B: Right. [Inaudible phrase]—

J: Yes I saw it about a year ago. Glad to see it. Glad to see it. Have you ever seen any account, any description whatsoever, in colonial times of what Benedict was like? The appearance of it, the number of buildings, the village plan, the quality of construction, is there anything of that sort anywhere that you know of?

B: I have not found any, except to references like General Ross writes that there was a huge tall hedge along the water on the place where he landed. There's some description but I guess in account. But a detailed map of it, no. But then you gotta remember this was like a port and basically it was used to trans-ship tobacco grown from the farm areas in the vicinity. And probably as a port it may have had custom officials here. I don't know. Water was a main means of communication and travel so roads were only used to reach the rivers.

J: After that Act of 1683 which officially established towns at certain points where inspection stations were set up did Benedict have a tobacco inspection station after that point? Do you remember was that mentioned anywhere?

B: I don't—I've not come across it. I've not seen it. But now you've got to remember this about the Act of 1683. This was the same Act that established Port Tobacco [inaudible phrase]. One of the things they did was they laid out towns [within sites] with the idea of selling the lots and some of them flourished some did not. But they also took into recognition existing ports and towns. And everything I can find seems to point that Benedict was some kind of a port maybe originally established to trade with the Patuxent Indians.

J: Who were some of the major colonial period landowners in the immediate Benedict area? What are some of the names other than Forbes? How about the Maxwell family? What role did they play here?

B: I don't know.

J: I read somewhere Maxwell was in business with one of the Forbes or one of the [Inaudible]. Just general merchandise and if he had a store here who knows where it was.

B: Well the [Jarricks] were from the Plains too one of the families that established—

J: Right. Some of those are in the cemetery aren't they?

B: Yes. One interesting thing is one of them is buried next to what he calls his consort. Most of them are wives.

J: A bedroom buddy, huh?

B: This was on was a consort.

J: Well sometimes that meant wife, sometimes otherwise.

B: Yeah she might've.

H: Live in buddy of a few years.

B: She got—I don't know whether she was legal or had the benefit of the doubt.

J: So, I guess during the eighteenth-century Benedict was as important in Southern Maryland as Port Tobacco what was left of St. Mary's City. What other ports were there? Newport was maybe still being used.

B: I don't think these towns were large. [Settlement that was] down on the river. They probably had a store. There's always been a store here. You know for purchase of goods. It received goods that came in and sell them. And was a trans-shipment point for tobacco. And stuff come everything even my mother when a little girl stuff came by steamboat into this town. The trucking industry really not become developed good in 1910, 1912. So this, this probably was an outlet not just for this town but for the farmers, the plantation owners, all in the vicinity.

J: As they say the hinterlands adjacent thereof too.

B: Right.

J: So probably all the way from here to Hughesville, perhaps to Bryantown, Charlotte Hall. Those farmers relied on this river and this town to keep them going.

B: I would figure.

J: Before the railroad came and before the highways were approved this was your highway.

B: Right.

J: And people who lived on the other side of the county let us say from Dentsville west from Port Tobacco area, from [Dubois] west they had a choice: They could go to Potomac River or come over here. There was a middle ground where you could—

B: Probably—probably which one of them was easiest to travel over.

J: Now I found this out just recently, Barnsley. The Dyson family, mother and the father of Eloise Dyson… Archbold, told me that her father took his tobacco from [Dubois] Road to Trent Creek for Trent Landing. And how far is that from here? Is it down river from where we are?

B: I don't know. The boats probably stopped, you know, any place. There were probably little landings on plantations. Probably the Plains had a landing, you know.

J: So that tells me that there at that point Newport was no longer being used as a port. We're talking about the early twentieth century and people living in the heart of Charles County were as often as not still relying on the Patuxent River heavily.

B: Well this town probably wouldn't kept existing if it hadn't changed the way of making a living based on the river.

J: Do you have any feel, Barnsley, where about where the oldest docks were located? Does anybody—have any ancient pilings been discovered in your lifetime here?

B: Not to my knowledge. When you say ancient I'm going back to—

J: Before 1800's.

B: 1800's so, no. But the town was located pretty much down there where Shorter's, the old hotel used to be. The lane went down to where the steamboat wharf. It might—you can't really say for sure, but you might figure things were updated added on to, rebuilt probably along the same place. And it's not really much space in this town. You know we have a river on one side, a creek in the back with an outlet. So we're really on a [real] peninsula.

J: Built on a shelf in a way.

B: Right. It's really a little peninsula so. And if you come up the river what—if you head straight forward Benedict.

J: Now this Hollering or Hallowing Point is directly across from where we're sitting now isn't it?

B: That's correct. That's where—

J: So there's an indication there that the wharf has been almost straight across for years and years and years. At the Hollering Point I mean the people had to be heard on this side so that's a clue but

B: [Inaudible] referenced somewhere even Indians used this place as a transport—

J: Crossing place.

B: So see what the settlers did was really just keep going with what was already there. Probably an Indian's transport in the first place.

J: Does the—does the nature of the terrain both upriver and downriver from us change much with respect to altitude above sea level?

B: No I don't think so.

J: And the consistency or texture of the soil?

B: I don't think so.

J: What I'm getting at I was wondering what reasons there may have been for both Indian and white colonists to have settled on the Benedict ground at a port type site. It must have offered certain advantages to them.

B: Well if you go much above Benedict the river becomes very narrow.

J: Shallow?

B: And shallow. Now just above—just above us there was a point. Shipman's Point too and one of the small Nottingham [isn't it?].

J: Yes.

B: That was a port which is pretty much silted in now.

J: Were the British able to get any ships up there in 1814? As far I—

B: Well Commodore [Abari] went up there with his ships but they weren't that big a ships.

J: Those barges probably didn't need what more than three feet of water.

B: Yeah they probably needed—

J: Flat—they were flat bottomed would you say?

B: But they didn't follow him up. I'm sure they were getting ready to march. Put the troops ashore and march. They probably went as far north up this river as they felt comfortable in going. Or maybe the fact that there was a town here, you know, at a good place to land troops I'm sure would [enter in] to it too. But [inaudible] that you had here was ideal.

J: Not flat but pretty solid. When you started to unload artillery, and horses, artillery carriages, and heavy munitions you sure had to avoid swampy areas.

B: Right and gets a little swampy, marshy from upriver so.

J: So geography has been important in the settlement of Benedict, I'm sure. It's a good natural place for people to depart from and to come into with supplies of all kinds, including war material.

B: [Inaudible] steamboat wharf on both sides of the river.

J: What was the name of the wharf on the other side? Was that the Hallowing Point? Did it have a name other than that?

B: Hallowing Point is the what I've always heard it called.

J: Is that where the steamer burned down? The St. Mary's? Was that her name?

B: The steamer burned. It's an interesting story on that steamer that burned. The—

J: About what year are we talking about?

B: I'm not sure. I mean it's been a few years since I wrote that paper but the—across the river right on the hill was Mr. [Inaudible] home. And his wife always kept a lamp burning in the window.

J: To help navigation?

B: Well she just always kept a light burning in the window. The man that owns this house now still keeps a lamp burning in that window. Electrical lamp now [inaudible]—

J: Is this that very good looking large house?

B: Yes right here—

J: Near the end of the bridge?

B: Right. A college professor told me in—I was been associated with him in education. He invited me over and I would talk to him about the lamp and he said he still has the lamp in the window because of that tradition. But the steamboat it was a very bitter cold wintery night. The steamboat would come up the river and it had to make a turn. A man from Benedict was supposed to run the river and hang a lantern on a pole. A guy from the Calvert County side was to walk out to the end of the pier and leave a lantern. The steamboat would come up and then turn and go across until it's lined the two lanterns up. Then it knew it missed the sandbar and it could come straight up the river to the wharfs. The night was cold, rough, the man from Benedict did not go out and hang his lantern on the pole. The man from the—on the steamboat wharf on the other side of the river went out with his lantern got very cold waiting and started back in. When he got halfway in off the wharf he remembered he had to leave the lantern. Rather than carry it back to the end of the pier he set it down in the middle of the pier. Now when the steamboat came up and the lantern was not on the pole, they were not worried, because they knew that the girl always kept a lamp in the window and if they got over far enough to line up the lamp on the end of the pier and the one in the window they would miss the sandbar. But when they lined them up and when they turned then the other lantern being in the middle of the pier rather than the end of it they ran aground. Now the when I wrote the paper I was very enthused. You know here's a steamboat on fire, people jumping overboard in icy cold water, but that didn't occur. Basically the people who were all taken off of the boat and the boat caught fire really a couple of days later. You kept the caretaker on but it really—

J: Could've been a real tragedy.

B: Yeah it would've been a really nice little historical story if there'd been more tragedy in it.

J: Right. Okay, so I would imagine that the most prominent place of Benedict, in Maryland history, was the landing of British troops here in the later summer of 19—1814. What worth remembering happened here during the Revolutionary War period?

B: Well they say a ship was built for George Washington here so there was ship building here. The...at the Plains there are a couple of [inaudible] and another member of the family that were officers in the Colonial Army. I'm sure that you had others here that joined the Colonial Army from Maryland and fought for independence. I don't think there was any kind of action because that was usually above us or down south but it sort of escaped this place. They were patriotic with the American colonists anyways.

J: Well at least there was a capability here for building boats, and there still is. That's interesting. I photographed all that I could find that were built here by the Welch's and others that are still living. When I can get the builder standing next to the boat as I did recently I do that. But there—it's really frustrating to know how much has disappeared and has not been recorded. People in the past were very unsophisticated about making records. If they did, they often were burned.

B: If we could find the newspapers that went back to that time. Of course there's—the news items that refer during Civil War times that this area of the country was very sympathetic to the southern cause. And a lot of times they would land here in Benedict searching for people you know on the Union Army for—

J: That is federal's?

B: Right. Would land here searching for people that were spies and so forth in this area. They evidently were very rampant in this area.

J: Yeah they were.

B: So it's been so much that is gone.

J: It really hurts. It may be, Barnsley, that what we're doing now is gonna be as much Benedict history as anyone will ever know and that's why it's important. It's been so tough for you doing your research and for me trying to get a handle on it. [You know] this place has been here as a settlement for at least three centuries. But exactly what was here and who did what and what supported life here we're left kind of wondering. That river of course in its own way supported life. It's—the role it played in transportation supported life. People made a living here either with farming, fishing, or transporting. There were carters, I'm sure, that made a living. Simply hauling produce to and from the river. There were watermen out here during the winter months who farmed during the summer months. It's a real mixed bag. And I'm sure there were people here who were simply merchants. I think your grandfather was a merchant part time wasn't he. And he had a brother who was also in business here?

B: My great grandfather was—had a store here. And I think my grandfather probably took it over or I mean but now this is was the center. You see as society changes things tend to shift so as you begin to get the big—the state roads, the tobacco, the tenant farming after the Civil War you begin to get stores [at them] like some of these bigger stores. You see a Bowling's store and a [Line] store in Hughesville that their bases was—

[Tape Interruption]

J: How much information were you able to find, Barnsley, on life in the Benedict area between the War of 1812 and the outbreak of the Civil War? Was it—did it seem to have been a quiet fairly prosperous period?

B: I really couldn't find anything kind of noteworthy which would imply it was very quiet. You know you had—you had your farms, plantations, some of them very large. This would be—there were—these contained slaves.

J: Do you—what were the names of some of the really big well to do land owners within say, oh 10 miles of Benedict?

B: Well [inaudible phrase]. Colonel [Southern] from the Plains. I became associated by marriage in that family later so I learned some of the history of Colonel [Southern].

J: What was his first name? Henry?

B: I think, yeah. I read a news account—news account—news article that somebody really credited him with developing the Mint Julep. The history of the family he was quite aristocratic kind of a man. He married a girl from north and they had a barge they floated down the river on the wedding day with musicians playing and so forth. Evidently he was a big spender too. Plus, a hothead, because in the Civil War he was the one who shot a Lieutenant White.

J: Right. He's lucky. [Southern] that he got away. Did you ever read an account of where and how he died?

B: No.

J: I got a newspaper write up, from Katy, before she died and Southern was in Washington waiting for some political thing to transpire and some friends of his apparently had visited the White House and talked to perhaps Cleveland. They were staying at the Willard and the old man had a heart attack, probably called an apoplexy in the write up, and fell flat on the marble floor in there in the Willards and died in front of everybody and that was the end of him. Still trying to con the federal government out of something—oh he was trying to get reimbursed for damages done to his property, which I thought was took a lot of gall. Gee whiz.

B: Well they—

J: [Inaudible]—

B; They did treat the Plains as a conquered territory. They tore the family out of the house. The Forbes's have a picture in their house now of what they call one of the twins with a bullet hole in it. One of the soldiers there scratched his name in the windowpane and the date. I've seen it. Course I'm sure the people who tore the house down didn't even know it existed.

J: No that was a shame.

B: But the silver was taken out of the house by the girls. Colonel Southern had a bunch of—a large group of daughters. I did meet one. Ms. Emilia they called her. They took the furniture. One of the tables fell off the boat and floated ashore and people brought it back to them. Katy still used to have that table. I've eaten on it many times.

J: Was this the large one there? [Inaudible] I've sat at that table too. That's a coincidence. Think of that.

B: Well so you know—

J: It was almost a boat in itself.

B: Right. The government literally took their property and I'm sure he felt that that was war time and what he did could be excused as war time, but that didn't excuse what happened to the property and the family after that point.

J: Was—when you were growing up here what was Maxwell Hall like? The house. Do you recall seeing it before it's restoration?

B: I don't remember seeing it until I was a young man. [Not] the way it was kind of run down a little bit.

J: I would think so.

B: And you know it looked like it might be reaching the end of it's road.

J: Well it's come back—

B: I was really impressed with the fire place but over in the Plains they had a pretty huge fireplace in their kitchen too.

J: Would you say that Maxwell Hall and the Plains those two houses were as large and sophisticated as any in the Benedict area?

B: Well the Plains I would say for that period was a superior type of structure.

J: Was it all brick construction?

B: It was solid brick, slate roof, walls like a foot to 18 inches thick. You know, it wasn't places like Sotterley where there's wooden construction. There was no comparison. The area lost a very historic monument. And by the way the Plains was never ever finished. There was supposed to be a little cupola or something up on the roof that never got put on.

J: Who took the house down? A developer?

B: The developer of Golden Beach.

J: Couldn't save it. What a shame.

B: When Lloyd Curtis—Lloyd Curtis was my uncle—when he sold the property to the developer they gave two commitments. They would keep the house intact and the cemeteries would be kept intact and left. His first thoughts were that they would convert the house into sort of like a country club or a you know base for the people within the Golden Beach community. So when Lloyd sold the house it was on the condition that the house was to remain.

J: So he did all he could to save it.

B: Right. Then later I understand that students, cadets from Charlotte Hall school would come when the building was empty and they made fires in the fireplaces and tore up some of the floor boards and this kind of—the floors by the way were three or four inches thick. Also heard that there were termites in it but I don't know how many termites you're gonna get in sloid brick wall. You know there may have been some in the floor boards and I don't even know if they could get up to the ceiling.

J: Do you recall what year the house was torn down?

B: It was in the 50's. That's all I can say. Exact year in the 50's, in the late 50's I would say. 55 somewhere between 55 and 58.

J: So there was definitely a preponderance of Confederate sympathizers in this part of the county during the war?

B: Yeah [they found here] 10,000 dollars in confederate money. I still have some of it.

J: Do you know the names of any Benedict area young men who did make it south and joined the Confederate Army? Is there any record of them at all?

B: I don't—I did not find any. There must be a record of them somewhere but they went to Richmond. The cook at the Plains when I was a boy was Nora Holly. Her mother had been a slave on the Plains.

J: H-O-double L-Y?

B: H-O-L-L-Y. And I used to talk to Nora a lot in the kitchen you know while doing chores and helping her get the things. And she told me that as a young girl that in the summertime the house was filled with company. Evidently relatives from Baltimore would all come down in the heat of the summer and spend the summer on the Plains and I also got impression in the winter time a good amount of the family there went to Baltimore and spent the winters there I guess where there was more life and so forth to do. So it gives an idea of [what life was like]—

J: Of what life was like for the people of that class.

B: And it went by boat I'm sure.

J: Okay. I guess one of the most important things that happened to Benedict during the Civil War was the establishment of the camp here for black soldiers?

B: Right.

J: And they were—what unit were these black soldiers put into when they left Benedict?

B: Oh I'll have to look at my paper—

J: Was it, I think you said this was the Seventh regiment of Maryland United States Colored Troops, USCT. What happened to them while they were in Benedict? What sort of training were they put through here? Does anybody know?

B: Well, this was the camp was not really so much in the town as it was just over on the Plains below the hill on the other side of the creek. They evidently were recruited from the local farms. And I imagine what they got was what like we would consider basic training now where they learn to march, drill to shoot. And I understand they equipped—they did pretty well in battle. In Benedict itself the house right next door to where I lived was a [inaudible] store and house and was used [as a] hospital and you know we find all kinds of pieces of little clay pipe here and every Union soldier was issued a clay pipe with a long stem and when the end became clogged they broke it off. And you my yard is littered with these pieces of pipe.

J: Have you seen any photographs of the house next door before they lowered it to the one-story level?

B: No. The only picture I have is when it was very new. The tree in the front was just a twig. It was a pecan tree and I understand that it was planted before the fire and the fire scorched it but it survived but it didn't grow. It just sort of stayed the same size for years and then all the sudden.

J: Was the 1908 or 9 fire?

B: Yes. It's a pretty good size tree now.

J: Oh for heaven's sakes. So prior to that fire this had been a three story frame house?

B: I think a frame house.

J: Used as a hospital for, by the black troops at fort—at Camp Stanton was that?

B: Camp Stanton. It was used by the hospital during the Civil War. You know you had—you had as many people then die from disease as you did get shot. Probably more I think.

J: What sorts of diseases carried them off? How about malaria here at Benedict?

B: I don't know you had much malaria but...I guess the kind of diseases that troops get. I'm not sure but you know medical treatment wasn't really good.

J: Dysentery.

B: Dysentery.

J: Maybe typhoid fever?

B: Probably if they were—had been wounded you know infections. There were good number of graves evidently here at one time that supposedly were dysentery and moved onto the National Cemetery.

J: Where was that cemetery located that was here?

B: I'm not sure.

J: Near the campsite?

B: I'm not sure where. I only know that my grandfather when digging a hole for a septic tank dug up a skeleton and pretty badly decomposed but part of skull was there and it's, you know, he would say that maybe he missed some. But then you don't know either because when I built this house and I dug the foundations I dug a part of a child's jawbone. I know it was a child because of the second teeth were under in the jaw underneath of [inaudible]—

J: Could it have been an Indian child do you think?

B: It could have been. I don't know.

J: That's interesting. What sorts of artifacts did you discover working on this house? Clay pipe bits, I suppose.

B: Well I found one in my garden. I have a [Vermont] cent, British half pennies, buttons, numerous tiny chips of dishes… a padlock.

J: And the garden is between us and the river?

B: Yes it's well it's right here.

J: So it looks like it would have been back from the river's edge well, maybe 250 feet or something like that.

B: I think at one time there must have been a house burnt down on this property and I'm wondering if this is not where it was.

J: Sounds like it.

B: Because there's also foundation there in the ground.

J: Stone or brick?

B: Stone.

J: How far down is the water table in your backyard? How far do you have to dig before you get water?

B: You can probably have water within 10 feet.

J: Okay. So these—

B: But you—they have trouble putting a septic tank in here because you hit water and it floats.

J: Oh boy. Do you—did you ever find out when Camp Stanton was officially closed?

B: No.

J: Or how many years it was here?

B: Well I imagine—I imagine they recruited what they could, trained them. I don't know whether they kept recruiting and kept training or whether they just recruited, trained this particular unit and then sent them all into combat and left it. An interesting thing about this town is that the people of Southern Maryland that wanted to fight usually joined the Confederate Army, went across the Potomac to Richmond and there was a Maryland unit there and they became Confederate soldiers. Of course later President Lincoln instituted a draft, so the people of Southern Maryland were probably truly brother fighting brother because those that went were in the Confederate Army and those that were drafted wound up in the Union Army and you could very well have first cousins and even brothers across the battle lines from each other.

J: Is there any record, Barnsley, of white people in the Benedict area ending up in the Union Army? Is that a possibility?

B: Since you had a draft I would assume it was.

J: If you could find it.

B: Right. You almost have to go back through the records of the [personnel] and those types.

J: That would be—yeah that would be quite a—

B: [Inaudible] the Maryland Regiment because most of that regiment came from Southern Maryland.

J: Yeah I would think. I would think so. Do you feel that the Civil War period did any lasting damage? Did it leave any long term scars on the Benedict area? What about economically? What was the outcome there?

B: Well I can't speak for my study in history in the Benedict area but you gotta remember that when the slaves were free it certainly had an impact on tobacco farming economy. But they seemed to get this pretty much straight by moving from what had been slave labor into what became tenant farming labor where the same people were doing the same job and probably almost as poor as they had been when they were poor. Maybe were poor because they had to buy their own medicine and everything else now. When good slave owners probably would make the doctor [inaudible] property.

J: So in many cases the black people were not any better off for many years.

B: No well the Civil War really this is the only place in history that had freed a group of people without giving them anything. You know when the serfs were freed at least they were given land to work on. The only thing that the black Americans were given enslaved was quote their freedom and many of them at the time didn't even own their clothes vaguely they had they were wearing. You know we criticize, we used to criticize a lot the morals and so forth of the black Americans but when you go back to slave times they weren't criticized then, you know. Propagation of children they didn't really care how they did it. They probably encouraged immorality. Then when they became free we suddenly stand up and say, "How come you don't have a better moral structure when basically we had fostered, encouraged, and abetted the opposite for hundreds of years.

J: Well I guess there's some reasons some understandable reasons for that. The black people in their part they probably thought it was not to their advantage to put together a solid normal family structure because they never knew when the family was gonna be ripped apart.

B: A lot of slave times they could be ripped apart.

J: Yeah and then the those who owned slaves didn't mind whether the black child was legitimate or illegitimate. He had a monetary value. He was valuable property normally. So for the black community to start out from that was bad on the whole community. Not simply on the blacks but on the white community who found itself I guess having to deal with the very loosely knit perhaps culturally immoral by white standards segments of the community. And that's been a caustic thing for everybody to deal with down through the years I'm sure.

B: You know it's the—take the plantation owner. His slaves are suddenly free. It stands to reason he's gonna say, "Listen you don't have any way to dig, you don't have any place to live. I will furnish you a house. You work and you grow the crops same as you always did I'll give you quote half of the money for them and then in return I get the other half." So it became a convenience really for both sides. He had to have the labor. They had to have a livelihood.

J: They needed each other. They really did. Yea there's no question about it.

B: Now he had no more concern for them as tenant farmers as far as education and culture and all the rest.

J: He'd give them their own garden plot so they could—they were responsible for at least feeding themselves—

B: Yeah they could have—well it was up to them. And then say you had—you had different classes of slaves. A lot of people don't realize there were. You had the servants in the houses which were a status thing in the slaves. And you had the field hand and I'm sure the servants in the houses when you hear about this wonderful treatment that slaves got we were talking about the house servants. You know the nannies for the children and the other kinds of things. When you hear about the brutality you'll be talking about the field hands.

J: Yeah no doubt. No doubt. The well trained black people who were given what often were considered the plush jobs inside probably did everything they could to make sure they continued to be inside and perform the best possible service to the white people who owned them.

B: They ate better. There was a chance of getting good hand me down clothes.

J: And they were respected.

B: They also—they also probably developed a veneer of culture from association.

J: No doubt it would rub off.

B: That the field hand was deprived of even associations with.

J: Barnsley as a young boy to your guess Benedict what was the relationship between blacks and whites? Was it comfortable? We mentioned this on the earlier tape but as you look back on it now were there any peculiar tensions or pressures in this community?

B: Never.

J: Okay.

B: Never. The community was pretty much segregated. The black had its little area but it's not a big town.

J: There was an accommodation of mutual—

B: They was concerned for each. I can remember as a young boy ex-slaves that used to live in little shanties around different places. How they survived I don't know. I remember one that lived in a garage you know with no heat. All he had in there was a little cot, some blankets, and I guess he fortified his own little alcohol to keep warm.

J: Must've been a rather elderly—

B: Yeah there was another one and of course the trend in those days is when a slave became elderly they were called awful. You know and I heard this. You know, awful, bad, and whatever their name would be.

J: So we're talking about what the late 1930's.

B: Right. The 30's right.

J: So you were 10 to 12 years old. So anyone—anyone living then probably any old black person probably had been born before the emancipation proclamation?

B: The old ones right. And these were usually very old older men.

J: Have you—did you get any feel at all in your research about the change in the population or changes in the population of Benedict during the past say century and a half? When General

Ross was here or example I wonder how many households were within walking distance of the water? How many people? There just aren't any statistics are there?

B: No. I couldn't find any.

J: Did the census of say 1800, or 10, or 20 cast any light on the size of Benedict?

B: I don't know. I know there's been very little growth in this town in my lifetime. And it seemed to stay pretty much the same up until I guess I was 30 years old then some of what had been farms were developed into houses which made the population increase. But there's not much left for it to increase.

J: How would you describe for this record the present day bounds of Benedict?

B: The present day bounds?

J: Boundaries.

B: Boundaries? Well we have a river to the east. And a creek to the west. With the mouth of it so it makes us a peninsula. And then we have a highway that comes down across. Basically the town itself is what from the road down that peninsula.

J: It's pretty tightly confined isn't it?

B: Yes but you still get a lot of people from the surrounding areas that come here to the Post Office for instance. Not so much anymore for groceries but it used to be a lot of them came for groceries.

J: In your lifetime what economic changes have you seen here? What changes in ways that the town supported itself? What has happened?

B: When I was a young boy there were two hotels in this town. They depended a good bit on tourists for recreation. People came here for boating, spending the weekends on the water, and evidently long before my time there were a lot of restaurants here. This was a big thing and actual boating. Plus people still harvested oysters in the winter time and netted fish. They didn't need too much. They crabbed in the summer. And these were shipped out. There's a big oyster house here to shuck oysters and they were shipped out.

J: Who owned the oyster house?

B: It was a company but the local man here was named [Sawlers] but I think he was the manager. I don't think he was the owner. Well maybe the family owned it and he was just the manager of it here. The ships then there were motorboats that carried fishing parties. The hardheads disappeared and the inboard motor became a thing. And then the [ship you would move on sails and motors] what had been rowboats or with outboard motors put on the back but still a lot of boating kind of activity. Recreation. Then you get trailer boats and the rented boats sort of went by the way. People owned their own boats they hauled them on a trailer then you get

the boat ramps, this type of thing. But still it's recreation. And of course people are still oystering, still are fishing with nets. And still are crabbing and selling them.

J: What changes caused the demise of the hotel?

B: Well basically people—

J: There aren't any here today are there?

B: No. Basically people used to come on a Friday evening and spend the weekend and they were—[you are] a half trip from Washington. You could come down. You could spend the weekend. You could go fishing. You could go drinking course there were slot machines too. You could play slot machines. But you see the hotels closed because people did not start spending the night.

J: Complete change in the life style. The roads got better. They could get home in 45 minutes.

B: They could get home quick faster. And there became more elaborate places to visit you know. And you still see this trend happening in the country. Because what are they dealing with today? Disneyland.

J: Las Vegas.

B: These kinds of things. Plus they [loose a] means of travel means we can go now for our delights to much more sophisticated things than a little you know fishing village on the river.

J: That may be turning around you know.

B: I think—

J: People are beginning to be fed up with these great delights of Atlantic City and Disneyland and Las Vegas. Once again the simple quiet country places I think are looking pretty good to a lot of us. So apparently Benedict is as quiet and slow paced now as it's been at any time in this century.

B: Oh probably.

J: No more canneries, no more shucking houses, no boat liveries, the hotels are gone. What do we have left right now today in the way of business and commerce in Benedict?

B: Basically boat ramps and oysters, fishing, crabbing.

J: How many restaurants open?

B: Restaurants. There's a still popular seafood place.

J: And how many of those are there? What's the nearest one to us? One right down here isn't it?

B: Yes.

J: And that's Ray's?

B: Ray's.

J: And then?

B: Shorter's and [Cappelair's] and I don't know. Down at the marina I don't know whether they have a good restaurant or not.

J: I don't either.

B: And then what used to be the Benedict Pier burnt down and [inaudible]—

J: That was quite a place. That was quite a loss. I think. Somebody could've done something with that pier. That was a beautiful pier.

B: Well they couldn't get in to fight the fire before [inaudible].

J: Isn't that a shame.

B: It was all over the river. We had firetrucks all over the place and all they could do was hose it down in front of the building. That's all they saved.

J: Think of that. What's happened to the value of real estate in Benedict in the past couple of decades?

B: Oh gee. [Inaudible phrase]. Land here is going very high.

J: What are we talking about for the cost? The average cost of an average sized single house building lot?

B: Well when I built my house 25 years ago the cost was a 1,000 dollars. I guess now it's probably 12 to 20.

J: That's what a quarter of a third of an acre roughly?

B: Well these lots are not even a third of an acre. I have two of them and I've got about a third of an acre. The bridge has taken care of—

[End of Tape Two]