

Transcript of OH-00148

Nannie Trueman Chapman Bryan

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

Agriculture
Genealogy
La Plata (Md.)
Race relations
Rural conditions

Tags

Food Preservation
Glen Albin
Habre de Venture

Transcript

John Wearmouth [J]: This is John Wearmouth interviewing Mrs. Trueman Chapman Bryan at her home on Maryland Route 6 about a mile east of the town of La Plata. The date is January 29, 1988. This interview is part of the Charles County Community College Oral History Program. Mrs. Bryan is a true native of Charles County as were about four to five generations before her even though she lived outside the county about 32 years in North Carolina. She has logged a total of 56 years residing inside the county. She was born at the traditional Chapman family homeplace on the western edge of Zekiah Swamp. The old home was called Glen Albin. G-L-E-N A-L-B-I-N. Named probably by its builder Colonel Samuel Chapman about 1795. Her father was William Briscoe Stone Chapman Sr. Her grandfather was John Grant Chapman Jr., John Grant Chapman Sr. was a United States Congressman. All of these people were born at Glen Albin. The house was burned about 1920 so it has not been on the local scene for many years. You went to school right here in this neighborhood in the Glen Albin neighborhood? Do you remember that first day at school at all? Did someone take you?

Nannie Trueman Chapman Bryan [N]: I wasn't sent to school until I was eight years old. I think now when they send children to pre-kindergarten all that stuff but I had to go out there to the little school on the farm in Newtown. They didn't know course there were all kinds of children who lived out there. They wouldn't send me out there. I guess they taught me at home I don't know. But I can remember my brother was older than I was and he took me to school and he gave me a push and he said, "Now go on with the children."

J: A public school?

N: Yeah. Newtown, it was Newtown school.

J: Okay very close to the farm.

N: Well it was part of the farm. They had—my grandfather or somebody had donated the land some time ago.

J: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

N: I had two brothers and two sisters.

J: What was the age progression from oldest to youngest roughly?

N: The oldest boy was two years older than I was. Then I came along.

J: And his name?

N: John Grant Chapman. He has a son now down in St. Mary's County. Then I came along. Mary Stone was next. Then Bill came, Bill Chapman. Then the youngest one was Catherine and she was the one that got Glen Albin. She married Compton.

J: And then they built another house?

N: Father, no, father built that house after Albin burned.

J: I see okay. So William Briscoe Stone Chapman Sr. built again on the foundations of old Glen Albin?

N: Yes right on the foundation.

J: Well what was life like for you as a little girl in Glen Albin? Was it fun?

N: It was just like an old southern home.

J: What things do you remember about it now that you really miss down through the years?

N: Well I remember we—there were five of us you see. Five of us children and we [were so close]. And we used to go to the different streams and find crawfish and all that stuff. There was never any time to think about being lonely. My life was just wonderful.

J: No telephone either?

N: No telephone, no ice. We had an ice house that they got the ice in the winter put it in the ice house then they brought it up in buckets and put in the refrigerator in summer.

J: How far was the ice house from the kitchen? Could you walk there easily?

N: Oh yeah it was just out of the yard.

J: What did it look like? Was it a big hole in the ground?

N: A hole in the ground with a little cupola over it like this. You went down and they had covered it up with straw and went down a ladder to get it.

J: Did you ever go down the ladder as a little girl to the ice?

N: Not that far but of course we were all in there, curiosity.

J: So was the roof low to the ground that shelter?

N: Yes.

J: You could almost walk over the roof?

N: Yeah. That's all they had.

J: Did you have a pond at Glen Albin?

N: Had two and they would freeze over in winter.

J: Were they up on the high ground?

N: There was one up there on high ground and one out in the woods just as you enter Glen Albin.

J: Do you remember taking walks down toward Zekiah as a little girl?

N: Well we used to [coast at them] all the way down.

J: But did you consider the swamp an interesting part of the farm?

N: Oh yeah we used to walk down there. Plant vegetables go down and see how they're getting along.

J: Was it pretty good soil?

N: Oh yeah was good. It was better down there than was upside. We rode horses. They had horses a whole stable full of horses.

J: How old were you when you began riding?

N: I guess I was 14 or 15.

J: Did you like it?

N: Oh yeah.

J: The horse didn't bother you at all? You weren't afraid of—

N: We had a horse that was kept for driving and riding and we just loved her.

J: I think we should say for the tape that this lady has Stone blood in her veins and Mathews and really represents at least three of Charles County's best known families of the nineteenth and eighteenth centuries. So in spite of that she's grown up to be a fine gentlewoman on her own, by her own.

N: I never [mattered too much].

J: Did your mother have help in the kitchen? How much—

N: We had a great a great big old fat colored woman—

J: What'd you call her.

N: That had been a slave. Her name was Julia.

J: Julia.

N: She lived over on the farm where they had slave houses. There were two left and she had one. She'd walk over every morning and cook then she'd go back. She would put—she'd get one apron soiled then she'd put another one on right over it.

J: Oh for goodness sake's sanitary.

N: Aunt Julia was her name. She lived with us till she got so she couldn't take care of herself and the little sisters of the poor came down and got her. I suppose she died. Mother used to send us children over there with food on a plate.

J: To her little house?

N: Yeah to her little house we'd go over.

J: What did she think of the family? Was she fond of the youngsters?

N: Oh I guess so. I guess she—

J: Did she have any family of her own that you ever knew?

N: Nobody she just lived there by herself.

J: Had been at Glen Albin all her life as far as you know?

N: I don't know she was there when I was born.

J: She was born into a slave family—

N: I don't know where. She always said she was a slave—had been a slave. I don't know whether she was born on the place or whether she came there.

J: To what extent did your mother expect you girls to take on household responsibilities?

N: Well Mary and I were always busy. We made cakes, we made bread, we canned helped to can, we did everything but Catherine was the lady of the family. She didn't do anything.

J: Was she the youngest now?

N: Yeah she was the youngest. She was the pretty one of the family.

J: That excused her from everything?

N: That excused her from everything. She used to fix her fingernails and do all those things and Mary and I we used to do all kinds of things and loved it. We just loved it.

J: Did your father have any pet in the family as far as you were concerned?

N: I think I was his pet.

J: Well that's great.

N: He'd take a little nap everyday wouldn't anybody wake him up but me. But he was really father was so wonderful to us all.

J: How do you remember your father now? As you know I knew your brother Bill. Did Bill carry over into his life some of the traits and character—

N: Bill was a lot like his father.

J: Okay that helps because we knew Bill. Who again for the record passed away last year.

N: Father was a hard worker but he was just good to everybody.

J: What was life like for him in those days? It was beyond the point where you could say, "I own a plantation and I just keep an eye on things." To what extent did your father get out in the field?

N: My father worked like a Turk.

J: Seven days?

N: Seven days a week. If he ever went to church the hog would get out or a cow would jump the fence and he was always late for church. We would march our pew was up at the head of the church.

J: Oh so everybody saw him come in. Came in late once in a while?

N: We would always be late and would march up there and sit in our pew.

J: Did he spend a lot of time fencing, repairing? Did you ever go around with him? Building or repairing fences.

N: Not too much but I suppose there were fences to be done on the farm.

J: Did he have any full time help?

N: Four or five men there all the time. That's where his—what happened was cash.

J: Was much tobacco grown at Glen Albin when you were living there?

N: Fields of tobacco. Anne was talking about it the other day. Said somebody was saying they got two and three cents a pound for tobacco. Well I can remember when father would sell his whole crop for 30 and 40 cents. Course they put [inaudible phrase] and sent it to Baltimore.

J: Did he pack it right there at Glen Albin?

N: Yeah he packed it right there.

J: He prized it put it in the hogs head.

N: They had a barn and had a prizer. Then it went on to Baltimore.

J: How did he get it from Glen Albin into La Plata?

N: Ox cart.

J: Ox cart. Did it then go by train?

N: Yeah. Yeah it went by there was a train.

Roberta Wearmouth [R]: In those days did you have to pay rent for your pew in church?

N: I think they did a long time ago. They bought it or something.

R: But your family didn't?

N: I don't know about that.

R: But you always sat in the same pew?

N: Yeah everybody.

R: You were assigned?

N: The Mathews had a pew, the Mitchell's had a pew, everybody had their own pews. I guess they bought them first but I don't know anything about that.

J: Okay so anyway you did work in the kitchen as a young girl?

N: Yeah I worked. I helped with everything. We helped with everything.

J: Okay what were some of your favorite sweet things that you liked to make? Desert type dishes? Did you have a favorite or two?

N: I guess I did.

J: Was there special work to be done getting ready for Christmas?

N: Oh yeah. I had two aunts that lived there. Maiden aunts father's sisters. They'd mother my mother wasn't brought up to cook. She didn't know how to make fancy things but she learned how to make plain bread and cornbread and do the plain cooking but my aunts did all the fancy cooking. We helped them.

J: Now these two aunts they were also born and raised there at Glen Albin?

N: Yeah.

J: And what were their names?

N: Susan Pearson Chapman and Catherine Grim Chapman. I guess her name was Catherine Grim Stone because there was a Stone, Catherine Grim Stone.

J: So do you remember visiting relatives at Habre de Venture when you were a little girl?

N: I remember [inaudible] my grandmother was dead.

J: Okay your grandmother was gone at this time?

N: Yeah.

J: Okay and your grandmother was a daughter of William Briscoe Stone the lawyer?

N: You know more about that than I do.

J: And was your mother a sister of Aunt Margaret?

N: No my mother was a...she was a Dorset.

J: I see okay.

N: And there were seven in her family.

J: Okay so your grandmother—

N: Yeah I guess on my grandmother.

J: Your grandmother was a sister of Margaret.

N: Yeah to Margaret.

J: And therefore a daughter of William Briscoe Stone.

N: I guess that's right.

J: Okay for whom your father was named?

N: That's right.

J: Okay he was named after his mother's father.

N: That's right.

J: So how old were you when you went to visit Habre de Venture for the first time? Quite young?

N: I must have been six or seven or eight. One of these old aunts would go over and stay and she'd always take one of us with her. I remember sitting out on the porch playing with my dolls. So I must have been right small child.

J: I would think. How old were you—did you attend her funeral at Habre de Venture in 1913?

N: I don't remember. She used to often come over to Glen Albin and spend the winter.

J: Oh did she?

N: Stay up in her room and have a little colored girl she'd take her her meals.

J: Mariah came with her?

N: Oh yeah she went everywhere with her.

J: Mariah Miles.

R: So she would just close up Habre de Venture in the winter?

J: She would completely close up the house there at Habre de Venture for the winter?

N: Yeah, yeah but she had a tenant in part of it.

J: Do you remember the names of any of those tenants there? That's asking a lot.

R: There was an Owen.

J: There was a Wright there for a while.

N: I was [inaudible] about somebody when I said that was a tenant some years ago but I don't know who it was.

J: Where did the tenants live?

N: There was a part of the house I reckon called a wing off from the kitchen. They lived in that.

J: Two story high it's still there. What did she use for her kitchen when these tenants were in that part of the house?

N: She was a big room off a living room I told you went down the steps.

J: Yes right.

N: Well there was a big place and they had windows on both sides and that was the kitchen and then on the other side was the wing where the tenant lived.

J: And do you remember that very peculiar looking fireplace in that room which she may have cooked on? Did she use a stove?

N: Yes she used a stove with wood. I can remember her and every time you'd go to see her she'd always have a potato pudding. Sweet potato pudding or white potato pudding.

J: Who was doing the cooking for her then?

N: Mariah. Mariah did the cooking and I seen [her other day]. She the spring was down in the woods some distance from the house. She brought the water up to the house. She fed the chickens. She fixed the milk. They had an extra house for the milk. She tended to that that one little girl.

J: Did she milk any cows do you remember?

N: Yeah but [tenant] milked the cows.

J: But Mariah tended the chickens?

N: She ended the chickens and she attended the milk. The [tenant] would bring the milk and put it in there. What you call—

R: Spring house?

N: No not spring house. What did you call those things where the milk is?

J: Creamery?

N: Creamery no didn't call it a creamery.

J: Milk house?

N: The meat house and the milk house.

J: The dairy building?

N: The dairy and the meat house were some distance from the house.

J: Okay how well did Aunt Margaret eat? Do you remember being pleased with—

N: I reckon she ate like a horse but I don't know.

J: What kind of a person was she? How did she look as a young girl to you physically?

N: Well she was old when I remember her. This little old dried up lady. She sat there in her chair. She never walked around much and Mariah waited on her.

J: As I remember the records she was born about 1825 so she would have been about 80 years old when you first met her.

N: Yeah well she was. She'd sit by the window and watch the outside but I never—

J: 1835 did I say 1835 I'm sorry. Her younger brother Thomas David was born in 1839. Did you know Thomas David who lived down at Pope's Creek?

N: No but I—my father and his sisters used to go down there to see the Stones down there.

J: Oh yeah that's the Stone family's—

N: [Callie, Callie] Stone and Bessie Stone I remember they came up to Habre de Venture and built a house where you all live. That was later.

J: Do you remember the road situation as it was in those days going to Habre de Venture from?

N: Habre de Venture, the entrance to Habre de Venture was a little place in the woods. You just turned in.

J: Sort of a little bit of angle off the main road?

N: That's right.

J: So that's the old main drive. We know where it is we walked it recently. Now did you ever go to church in Port Tobacco at old Christ Church?

N: I did.

J: Still there.

N: I remember the bishop—now they say I didn't but the bishop, Bishop Satterley from Washington—

J: Satterley.

N: Came down there and I guess I was a cute little girl. He took his hat off and put it on my head outside the church when he came out. I thought that was fun. Another time, we used to often go to Idaho for dinner [Sunday].

J: Nearby.

N: And father and Uncle Jack they vied who had the best horse. So they were—Uncle Jack was—had a little fun little [sir].

J: Now who's Uncle Jack?

N: Uncle Jack was mother's brother, John Mathews.

J: Oh John Mathews okay.

N: So we'd been over to dinner and we were going back to church. We had service in the afternoon. Father and Uncle Jack of course were racing and Louise had a beautiful dress on.

J: Uncle Jack's daughter?

N: Yeah. And the horse threw mud all over it. And they got out before they got to church and took the pen knife and got the mud off the dress, off of her dress.

J: Was she upset?

N: I don't know I don't think she was. I guess some of the others were.

J: Was she about your age do you remember?

N: She was about two years older than I was. But she was always dressed just right you know.

J: Prim and starched.

N: Yeah but she and I and Jenny were in this little run about. I can remember [the skirt] and they say I don't remember Bishop Satterley but I certainly do. I remember around the church picking violets. Going around picking violets.

J: Now Satterley's buried in a very fancy tomb at Washington Cathedral.

N: Yeah well he was the Bishop then that coming down.

J: Of Washington?

N: Yeah.

J: Yeah he would have been the one.

N: I remember that.

J: What do you remember of the little town of Port Tobacco? Any general impressions?

N: I don't remember anything about that except going to church and picking the violets. There was a cemetery built. There were a lot of people buried down there but they were brought back up here to La Plata.

J: Oh they were disinterred? Brought back up?

N: Yeah father helped them bring them. He said he'd be coming up the road and the bones would be rattling.

J: Ezekiel dried bones huh? What was the purpose of bringing them up here to Mount Rest.

N: Well I suppose it was you see they had a Port Tobacco was the county seat and they moved it when the train came to La Plata. They moved it to La Plata county seat. Well I guess they wanted to have the cemetery up in La Plata.

J: And in later years that cemetery in Port Tobacco gradually turned into a swamp. Today it's like a lake in there. There are a lot of graves that have just disappeared forever but some were brought up here to Mount Rest? That's interesting.

N: Well I can [inaudible phrase] you'd laugh about see you'd be coming up the road and the bones were rattling. So I don't know.

J: So do you remember when you first went to Christ Church in La Plata?

N: I remember when it had the cornerstone.

J: Oh do you?

N: There was a father's brother lived over where the Hancock's live now. That was a part of Glen Albin and they gave it to him when he was...he wasn't married until he was older. His name was John and we called him Uncle Johnny. He and one of my aunts took me to the cornerstone.

J: The ceremony laying the cornerstone?

N: Yeah. We had a whole roast pig in a wooden box that we took because they had lunch, serve lunch. I can remember that roast pig in that box.

J: Did it smell good?

N: I don't know but it had a smell.

J: I bet it did. I bet it did.

N: But father used to often give a roast pig down on the farm.

J: So when that cornerstone was put down that was the first step? The walls weren't up? Were they at that point?

N: Not over. My aunt and my uncle took me. My father didn't go and my mother didn't go. But you see they—

J: Which Aunt took you?

N: Katy.

J: Katy.

N: [But you know] went anywhere. She used to go over there in [inaudible]. But you know the church burned soon after.

J: Now that was going to be my next question. Do you recall the condition of it inside after the fire? Did you ever go there and look in? Was it a serious fire?

N: Yeah I think so.

J: Yeah that's what I hear.

N: I know it burned soon after they built it it burned.

J: Yeah the next year or two.

N: But I don't remember anything.

J: So you've gone to church there since about 1905 or six.

N: Yeah somebody said I was eight but I don't know. I've been there all my life.

J: What were the names of some of the early rectors of Christ Church? Do you remember?

N: Graham.

J: Graham?

N: Graham and...I don't remember the other. I don't remember too much.

J: Do you remember the choir there at Christ Church about 1910? Do you remember any of the members in that choir?

N: I remember that the see the chaplain over here at [Elmwood]. There was one of them in it, Ethel Chapman. Well Louise and all that bunch was in the later years.

J: Did you know any of the Berry sisters?

N: I remember two of them.

J: Which two?

N: I don't remember there were—

J: How about Carmen? Do you remember Carmen Berry? She was in that choir and one of her other sisters but I forget which one now.

N: I remember two of them but I don't remember who the first is.

J: Now Carmen is still living in Washington, DC at 92. Her sister Connie I guess is about a year older and also is living up there in Silver Springs. We've talked to both of them and got this story of the choir at Christ Church. See about this time when you were going to church there. So you have heard those women sing. Were you ever in the choir?

N: No. None of us Chapman's never had any—I guess we didn't have any training but we never had any music in us.

J: Do you remember the Clarke family that went to church there?

N: Yes. I remember the Clarke family.

J: A couple of them were supposed to have been in the choir.

N: I remember the Clarke family.

J: How long a trip was it roughly from Glen Albin into Christ Church?

N: It took 30 minutes.

J: 30 minutes?

N: 30 minutes.

J: Well that's better than I would have thought.

N: With the horse and buggy.

J: On the average how many went together? The whole family?

N: Yeah we had a great big old [Dayton] and we had it all filled up.

J: Could you seat that many in the Dayton? All five children?

N: Yes.

J: And mother and father?

N: And mother and father.

J: Did either of the Aunts go to church frequently?

N: Not much they stayed home most of the time.

J: And they were all church of England people? Episcopalians?

N: Yeah all of them. Somebody always came home from church for dinner. Always had some relation.

J: Did you ever hear your father or mother way back then discuss the good old days or family fortunes or appear to feel badly about maybe days had been better in the past?

N: I don't remember that. Seemed like they didn't talk about it much. I know father spent a lot of money in fertilizer and seemed like he always had about five men working with him. Of course that was a big place.

J: Where did he get this fertilizer? Was it bought in La Plata?

N: Yeah.

J: Came in by train probably by the—

N: That's right. Different people over there sold it I guess. Got rich off it.

J: Where did your father normally do business in La Plata for farm merchandise? Farm supply.

N: It was Cochran. He had a store there by the...where Bowling's is now.

J: Okay on that side.

N: And we went in we bought our shoes. We bought our hats. We bought everything right there in that store. Did they have some pictures of old La Plata?

J: Yeah we have a few.

N: I would like to have a copy of those. And it's exactly like a little old western town. Nothing's like it is now.

J: Is that the store that burned? Cochran's first store?

N: It could've.

J: About 1917 or 18.

N: There used to be a bank in the store. [Inaudible phrase].

J: That's right that's the one. We have a good picture of it. It will be in the book when it comes out. Well what other excitement could youngsters find in La Plata about 1910, 15, or 20? Anything that you brought you in in the way of cultural activities or entertainment? Any diversions—

N: Didn't have TV's. I don't know we had skating parties out on the farm.

J: Ice skating?

N: Ice skating, [coated] parties, and seemed like we never thought of—and we had our horses—seemed like we never thought of—

J: If you were going to plan a get together how did you get the word out to your friends that at such and such date we're going to have a skating party? How did you communicate?

N: I don't know but I remember if anybody died they'd put a boy, colored boy, on a horse and give him a note and tell him to go to all the houses around. I can remember him coming to our house if anybody else's death around. Then of course you knew all the neighbors.

J: Was there ever a telephone at Glen Albin the old house?

N: No.

J: What was the running water situation at Glen Albin?

N: The water they had a barrel and a sled that they hooked the horse to and they brought a barrel of water and put it at the kitchen door every morning.

J: And sometimes it froze over night?

N: I guess it did.

J: And where did they get this water?

N: Down the pump. They had a pump. Where the pump is now they'd bring it in from there. Which I guess [inaudible] in later years.

J: Do you remember the house ever being a bit uncomfortable in cold weather?

N: You couldn't—

J: It was a large house.

N: You couldn't go from one room to another. We had stoves.

J: Was any of the house shut off for the winter?

N: Yeah lot of it. I can remember we all undressed in mother and fathers room. That had a fire. Then we ran across the hall. We had—the girls had a room across there. I don't know what the boys did.

J: Was there a fireplace or a stove in your parents' bedroom?

N: Oh a stove.

J: A stove.

N: And a fireplace.

J: Both?

N: But I don't ever remember them having a...room had a fire place.

J: The original Glen Albin?

N: Yes.

J: Where True lived well almost till you were married. How old were you when you married now?

N: I was 19.

J: See so she lived at Glen Albin all that time. Were you home when it burned?

N: No it was the first year I was married. We were down in Virginia. [Inaudible] My father was a—he'd been in Indian Head and they sent all the men from Indian Head down there to Dahlgren and we went down there.

J: How did you get word about that?

N: How did I get word?

J: They couldn't phone. They wouldn't have sent someone across the river.

N: I must have been—no? I don't know. I know I came up here and they were living in one of the tenant houses. I remember I just sitting out there crying. Mrs. Mitchell came over to see me. Came over to see [inaudible]. She just, "Oh that child is distressed to death." Well there was enough to stress.

J: Which Mrs. Mitchell was this?

N: Mrs. Walter Mitchell.

J: The judge's wife? The lawyer's wife? Walter Mitchell's wife?

N: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

J: What was her first name?

N: Florence.

J: Florence that's right yeah. From Thainston.

N: Yeah from Thainston. They were a good friends of my mother. Father went with Mrs. Mitchell for a long time before she was married.

J: What was Mrs. Mitchell's maiden name?

N: Jenifer. She was a Jenifer.

J: Was your father interested in politics at all? Did he speak about it at home?

N: Not too much but if something came up he would get all excited about it. If someone of his friends running for something but he didn't take much and he'd just go to the farm meetings.

J: Was he a Democrat?

N: Red hot Democrat and my husband was a red hot Republican but he made me vote. He'd take me down and make me vote every time.

J: What did he think of Sydney Mudd?

N: He didn't know Sydney Mudd too much. Now the [Brown's] were very—they thought Sydney Mudd was lord in heaven but father never knew him too much. He thought all [inaudible] was fine.

J: So your dad would have supported [Barnes Compton] for example all the way until well? How much did your generation know about going way back to Colonel Sam and to John Grant? Were these stories passed down to you?

N: No. We didn't know a thing and my father came down to North Carolina when he wasn't well and he came down and stayed with me. He would sit there and tell me all about the family and I didn't pay one bit of attention to him

J: Well if you had one of these which weren't available.

N: I know he told me about so and so and so and so. It just went in one side and came out the other.

J: Was there a family pride there under the surface that you all felt a bit?

N: [Well I think so]. You mean in the last years?

J: Well when your father was alive and you were growing up could you sense a connection with the past that he was something pretty solid and to be respected and revered and listened to?

N: No usually got along pretty well I think.

J: So he was just a good sensible down to earth unpretentious?

N: That's right. Father was very interested in farming. They had a farmers club down there. All the men—

J: Was there a grange down in that neighborhood?

N: Yeah I can remember we all joined the grange but that was in later years. He belonged to the farmer's club. They came to our house one time for dinner.

J: Who were some of these people now? Your father's friends and associates.

N: Well I remember...one of those people had a hotel in La Plata.

J: Well there are Bowling's and Wills had a hotel.

N: Bowling's...Wills Mr. Wills. John Hamilton. I don't even know if Jack belonged to it. Just all the men around belonged to it.

J: Now Hill Hamilton's father that's right John Edward?

R: John Paul.

J: John Paul Hamilton.

N: John what?

J: John Paul Hamilton would've been your fathers contemporary.

N: Now we saw them a lot.

J: And his farm was within walking distance of Glen Albin?

N: Yeah. Well was our [near]—and the Hamilton's lived very much to themselves. But they came over home at any time. He and father were very close Mr. John Hamilton. He had long whiskers.

J: Do you remember any of his children?

N: Yes.

J: Who were they? Can you tick them off?

N: One of them was [Hill Hamilton] was youngest. He married Rebecca. You know Rebecca Howard?

J: Yes we do.

N: And Frank Hamilton was he lived over there and he drank himself to death. He was a nice fellow. And Henry Hamilton went to Washington and he really made something of himself but he the only one.

J: Was he the one that became a lawyer? Well we're not sure.

R: Did she know Mrs.—

N: And then Cousin Bessie and Cousin Kate.

J: Yeah that was Roberta's question. How well did you know them? How well do you remember them?

N: We used to go over to see them.

R: Did [Hill] and Henry and Frank all live across the hill or was there another house?

N: No they all lived there with their mother and father.

R: And then Ms. [Lizzy] and Ms. [Katy] also lived there—

N: And cousin Katy and cousin they lived over at Prospect Hill. Next farm.

R: Where Normandy?

J: Okay where?

N: No they didn't go that far. The Chapman's lived in Normandy.

J: Now the big house, the original Hamilton family home is called Prospect Hill.

N: Well that's where the old ladies live.

J: That's right now where did John live and his family?

N: He lived in a house between Prospect Hill and Glen Albin.

J: In the swamp?

N: No wasn't in the swamp but you went back in there.

J: Okay alright.

R: I think it's where Danny Acres is. [That little building you say there's something there]—

J: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

N: I think the house is down now [inaudible]. But we used to go over there real often. They used to come over and every time they came they'd stay for supper.

R: Was that an older house than Prospect Hill where Ms. [Lizzy] lived?

N: I don't know but Ms. Lizzy's house is still there.

J: It is?

R: Now you don't know which is the older of the two houses?

N: No but the other house just went to pieces. I don't think anybody.

J: Was this Mr. Hamilton John a prosperous farmer? What sort of farm manger was he?

N: Well they were supposed to farm but they didn't do anything. Frank was the farmer. He had a brother that lived in Washington, Ernest Hamilton and he was well off.

J: George Ernest? Was he a lawyer?

N: I think he was with the railroad.

J: Oh well this would have been a different—yeah.

N: Ernest had a lot. I think he had something to do with the railroad. I know he had a lot of money and he used to come down and send Cousin Lizzy and Kate all kinds of things.

J: Did you ever meet Mr. Norbert Langley?

N: Marbury. I taught him.

J: You did?

N: In school. He used to come over to Newtown school.

J: I just talked to him this morning. I talked to him earlier today. He has great memories of living there at Prospect Hill. He worked in the house for the ladies.

N: I don't remember him working there but his father was a tenant over there. One of the girls worked in the house. Yeah those little children walked down from Prospect Hill down to Newtown school every day.

J: And you taught there how long?

N: I taught there two years until I was married.

J: Okay when you finished the public school there on the Glen Albin property how many years did you go there?

N: I have no idea.

J: Six, eight?

R: Oh from eight to—

N: Well I went there until I guess I finished there then I went to McDonough.

J: Okay about two years at McDonough about what 1915, 16?

N: Yeah about 16, 17.

J: Who were some of your friends there in your class?

N: Do you know [inaudible]? Charles [inaudible] was a—

J: Oh yes Olga Hawkins.

N: Olga Hawkins she was my best friend.

J: Is that right?

N: And of the Hawkins's at Oakley. We used to go over there and have a lovely time.

J: So she lived in La Plata on Oak Avenue?

N: Yeah.

J: And met her future husband there.

N: I lived with her there yeah... McDonough.

J: Oh did she? Right on Oak Avenue. And went to school from there?

N: Yeah.

J: Did you walk from there to the school?

N: Yeah we walked down every morning.

J: What did La Plata look like then going to school? Do you remember some of the buildings that you passed on the way?

N: They looked exactly like a little old western town.

J: Everything but the guns and the chaps.

N: Yeah if you see those pictures on TV that's exactly the way it looked.

J: Where was the post office then?

N: The post office was I think it was—the post office burned and they had a post office up there right as you enter Oak Avenue.

J: On the corner?

N: Yeah on the corner.

J: Where Barry's department store was later?

N: Yeah I don't know about Barry's but—

J: Was there a blacksmith near there at this end of town?

N: There was blacksmith down on the other side. Many time bygone had the horses shod there.

J: And what was the name of that blacksmith? Was he a Clarke?

N: I don't know. I believe he was.

J: Was he near Dr. [Sasser's] house?

N: No Dr. [Sasser] that's where we used to go get our teeth fixed.

J: So he was on the main street too on Route 6?

N: Yeah.

J: On that side of the street on the north side?

N: Coming down.

J: Okay now was this blacksmith on the same street?

N: Yeah.

J: But on which side?

N: But he was out on the road.

J: He was out on the road. [Sasser's] house was back some from the road?

N: That's right.

J: Okay so you took some of your father's horses to be shod?

N: No but I'd go he'd go over and we'd sit in the buggy or carriage or whatever it was until the horses were shod.

J: Was there some special odor about a blacksmith operation? How did it smell?

N: Well he had this big thing in the middle of the...blacksmith you know was the fire coming out where you fix the shoes but I don't remember being any odor.

J: Just the smell of burning coal and smoke and soot.

N: Could've been I don't know.

J: Okay what was the condition of the main road through La Plata then? Let's say going from here in to Christ Church? What sort of road would—

N: I have been going up that road when it was hog deep. Just plowing through that road.

J: A horse driven vehicle?

N: Horse driven but then when cars came it was almost as bad. We had an old Ford. My older brother he could go anywhere in that Ford. He'd plow through that mud. I don't know how he'd ever. You can't think of it now because those roads are so good down there.

J: Well Mr. Langley tells the same story about the Ford's going through the mud and the rear axle would leave a trench right in the middle of the road between the wheel tracks. So it looked like you drove a three wheeled vehicle.

N: Well I'd like to see [inaudible].

J: Well there's no reason why you can't. He's in good health. He's in good shape.

N: Where does he live?

J: On Hawthorne Drive near La Plata. Not far from the National Guard Armory. I'll tell him. And George still drives his car and his wife is Mary Langley.

N: I don't know her. I didn't know her he was just a young fellow of course when he came to school.

J: Do you remember anything unusual about going through the flu epidemic of World War I? Did you lose any friends? How did it upset the community?

N: It was terrible.

J: Did your family feel it in any special way?

N: Everybody had the flu. But I don't anybody that died. Everybody had the flu. Went through with it.

J: What doctors were?

N: Dr. Owens did you ever hear about him?

J: Oh yes.

N: Over La Plata. He'd come on over there. He brought us into this world and he would call. We put a man on horseback—

J: He made house calls?

N: Yeah. We'd put—

[Tape Interruption].

N: Well she has some stuff. She says she got—

J: Who are some of the families that your mother and father visited with back and forth? Wasn't that the regular thing?

N: The Hamilton's, and Cousin Katy and the Mitchell's.

J: Now that was a long way to go over and see the Mitchell's.

N: Well the Mitchell's they'd have a party for the children. They'd invite all of us and we'd all go.

J: Who were the Mitchell children at this time? What were their names?

N: [Mary Emily], Max, Walter Jonathan, and [Crick. Crick] is Jimmy.

R: You called him [Crick]?

N: They called him [Crick] then.

J: So the five of you and the four of them would have made a good group.

N: Yeah we always went to all their—I never remember us skipping a party. I suppose we did.

J: Who in the neighborhood other than the Hamilton's did you like to associate with? Were there other families in the?

N: Not us we didn't associate with other families.

J: What was the reason for this?

N: We just saw the Hamilton's and we'd just have them. They'd come over to our house and we'd go over to theirs.

J: And these are families that had known each other for generations?

N: That's right. There were lots of people around here. There were a lot of tenants and those kinds of people.

J: So you felt you had a lot more in common socially with Hawkins, and Hamilton's, and Mitchell's, and Mathew's.

N: Then mother had her family was—I think they were about seven. Ms. [Blunt] she lived down....

J: Near Newburg?

N: Newburg.

J: Okay we've heard that.

N: Ms. [Blunt] was one of many. And Minnie Wilbur she was another. They lived down in La Plata.

J: Now these had been Mathews?

N: They were all sisters.

J: I see okay.

N: And different ones around.

J: Did you how many of the Mathews boys did you know? That is the brothers of Louise?

N: I knew them all.

J: Okay Jack and Bruce and Fred?

N: Jack, Frederick, Harris. There was four of them [inaudible phrase].

J: So that was a big party right there. When you visited one family.

N: Well the family all mother's family we all got together often. Mother went down to see her family. They all had a big picnic every year. I think I told you. When the train came we all went to La Plata and Mrs. Stone got on the train went down to Pope's Creek had a picnic and came back on the train. Now that was a big day. She always had a picnic down [inaudible] every year and had a church picnic and farm picnics.

J: Which Mrs. Stone was this now?

N: That was Louise's grandmother. Her Aunt Jenny Stone. She was a Stone. Louise's mother was a Stone. She married Judge Stone.

J: Or Stonestreet?

N: Well Stonestreet was—I think Stonestreet was a sister or brother.

J: Sister. Now as I understand Judge Stone Frederick married sisters.

N: I guess you're right.

J: His first wife was Marie Louisa and then she died and Judge Stone married this woman's widowed sister.

N: I don't know about that.

J: So they were Stonestreet's.

N: I know they're related to the Stonestreet's. They lived across the street from Idaho.

J: Yeah that's right. Right on down on the line. Do you remember going to the county fair's as a girl? Were there any as we know them today?

N: I don't believe I remember but I guess I had....

J: Was one held in La Plata at one time that you might have attended?

N: The old town hall.

J: That's what I'm thinking of.

N: I didn't know—I don't know whether they had a—I know we had our church bazaars in the town hall.

J: Oh did you?

N: Going up in the whole place.

J: Did you ever go to any moving pictures there? That's when you were probably—

N: Yeah but moving pictures came later. They had dances there up in the town hall.

J: Did you go there to a dance on occasion?

N: I have been there but not too many. See I was married when I was 19.

J: That's true. Where did you meet your husband?

N: My husband was in France. He came home and his sister lived in Washington and my brother married his sister. A brother and sister married a brother and sister in my family. Beck and I went to Washington as we often did to shop. And I [was up with Jo] that was my husband's sister. We went there and spend the night and [Bob] walked in. We didn't even know he was in this country.

J: What was his nickname?

R: Bob.

J: Bob.

N: Bob, Robert. He was engaged to another girl but somehow or other he had had enough of her since he was in France. He from then on there was nobody else for him and nobody else for me.

J: Isn't that marvelous. How old was he at that time?

N: He was five years older than I was. I was 19 or 20.

J: So he was overseas with the army?

N: Yeah. He'd been overseas.

J: He got home in good shape?

N: I didn't tell anybody he was in World War I.

J: What's your wedding date?

N: June the 23rd. We went to Washington and got married.

J: What year?

N: I guess in 1920.

J: And the names of your children now?

N: My children is Trueman, Catherine Trueman [Brown Inaudible]. That's the [end and the first].

J: One child?

N: One child.

J: Well no wonder she has a lot of responsibility. She has to represent a lot of generations.

N: She's been a good child. She couldn't be any better.

J: Well she's very proud of her mother.

N: And her father was [inaudible]. She could do no harm. But he was taken sick. He broke down his health just about that time she was born. So there wasn't any more children.

J: When you were living in North Carolina how often did you get back to Charles County?

N: Well we came back once a year maybe more. We came up here right often. Sometimes we came for Christmas and sometimes we came. You see Bob's people were over at Strawberry Hill. That was his old farm and they sold it for nothing. Well they gave it to the younger sister. Rick's mother she was the youngest. They gave it to her and they sold it for nothing. Now look what if they kept it.

J: Think of that. When did your father pass away? What's the year of his death?

N: I don't know when he passed away.

J: Before World War II?

N: No he used to come down stay with us and we were living in North Carolina.

J: Did he farm all of his life? Continue to live there?

N: All his life. Lived right there on Glen Albin.

J: Did he ever express any desire to leave or get into any other line of work?

N: I think he used to say he wanted to be a doctor but his father wanted him to stay there on the farm so he stayed. But he could do most anything. He'd wrap up your hand or anything like that.

J: Now what were the names of his children? I mean let's see his father's children? Your aunts and uncles.

N: Oh his name was William Briscoe Stone. And then there was John Grant. That he lived they gave him [Ashley]. Then there was Catherine. She was one of the old maid sisters. And Susan Pearson. She was an old maid sister. Then there was another one that married a Robertson in Washington and I think if there was ever any money somehow he got it. They thought he was a lord in heaven.

J: Where was Ashley located relative to the house at Glen Albin? Across the street?

N: Yeah across the road.

J: Okay coming out the drive from Glen Albin looking straight across that's what I heard.

R: Where the Hancock's are?

N: Yes. Where the Hancock's is now.

R: Was there an old house there?

N: I think so. I think still there. The school was right on that corner the little old public school. So I kind of would have liked to have that outside the woods but I didn't know he was going to get rid of it.

J: That would have been nice.

N: You know it was well built.

J: Why did you leave McDonough eventually?

N: I don't know I suppose.

J: Felt they didn't have enough to make it worthwhile?

N: I guess when [inaudible].

J: Did you feel the teaching there was good quality instruction? And your teachers you remember any of them?

N: Mary Rita she was [inaudible].

J: Reeder?

N: [Rita] from down St. Mary's County. Mrs. [Rike] taught there. Professor [Rike] was head of it.

J: And where did you go next now? To Maryland?

N: No I came home then. But I went to Maryland when I started teaching. The teacher out at the school was one of the Owens girls and she got a government job and they asked me—

J: Which girl was she now, Eleanor? Was she Eleanor by any chance?

N: No Eleanor's still living. Carmen. She was Carmen. She's dead now. She was teaching and she [inaudible] and they came over and wanted to know if I'd take the school. So I took it. I think I was 19 or so.

J: Now this was the white students only?

N: Huh?

J: White students only at this school?

N: Oh yeah.

J: About how many in the group?

N: There was about 15.

J: Now other than Norbert Langley can you remember any other names?

N: I can remember all of them.

J: Let's have them.

N: They have some Moran boys from across the swamp. They had Eugene Langley. He was the oldest one. I mean he was older than all of us. I had five boys that had long pants on and I couldn't do one thing with them. So one day they got on top of the school, got up on top of the school so I expelled them for a week but they didn't mind that. Those boys didn't mind that. They just came to school just to get out of work.

J: What was their age group? Middle teens? 14?

N: Oh they were about 16 I reckon. There were five of them. These great big boys. Then after that my sister taught [over at] Mary Stone. She couldn't do anything with them. I did keep [inaudible phrase]. But I'll tell you it was a handful.

J: Do you remember what the pay was for you there?

N: Huh?

J: What was the annual salary for a teacher there at school in those days.

N: I think it was about two dollars a week.

J: And you were lucky because you could live at home.

N: Yes.

J: Didn't have to pay room and board as some of them did.

N: That's right.

J: Were you able to walk to the school from Glen Albin?

N: Oh yeah, yeah.

J: Did your mother and father place a premium on education? What was their attitude toward it?

N: No seemed like it was alright if you had education or you didn't have it.

J: They didn't push?

N: Didn't push you. Mary Stone was the smart one in the family. She was one that.

J: How far in school did she go? McDonough too?

N: She graduated McDonough.

J: Oh I see.

N: She got it and Catherine was the other girl. I mean she was [inaudible]. She graduated St. Mary's Seminary. I got a scholarship down there but I was doing McDonough then so I didn't want it but I missed out on it.

J: Now when they asked you to teach True did they ask you to take any sort of examination? Did you need a certificate?

N: No but we had to do summer school every year.

J: Oh and that was where?

N: Then we had to take [foundation of ed]. I think I don't know whether [inaudible] went there or whether...a whole lot of girls around here. They couldn't get teachers [during the war].

J: What was destroyed in the fire at Glen Albin that you considered to have been priceless family heirlooms?

N: Everything was—they didn't save anything on the second floor. Not one thing. Somebody pull [that mirror out].

R: How did it start?

N: Nobody knows.

J: Was it during the winter that it happened?

N: No it was in the summer because it was soon after I was married. That table over there that was saved. That little chair over there. There were a few things. I've given [Shirley] anything she wanted because I had so much stuff and Bill had stuff. Bill that dining room table was the old Chapman table.

J: And they were carried out as the house was burning I imagine?

N: Yeah they grabbed those and took them out. I wasn't here when it burned.

J: Was any mention made after the fire of the loss of family books and documents and things like that?

N: No [they all thought it was flu or something] [inaudible phrase] home burned. [Inaudible sentence].

J: Looking back now at Glen Albin on the second floor could you describe it for us going upstairs the hallway, how many rooms, and so forth?

N: [I say here] it had a winding stair.

J: A spiral staircase?

N: Yeah went on up to the attic. As you went upstairs there was one big room right in front of you and then they had on that side of the house had a [blanket closet]. They had a double room where Katy and [Bessie] lived. On down father and mother's room. Then had a little room that we slept in. That was on the right side. On the left side they had another little room. Then there was a room I suppose [was father's]. I [inaudible phrase] eight bedrooms in that house. Think of it. And they were all furnished.

J: Sometimes when your daughter is here do you sit down at a table with her help and sketch out that floor plan?

N: No I tried to sketch it but it seemed like their parlor—we had two parlors. And if you wanted to entertain there was a big hall right across the front of the house. Right across the whole front. Then next to that was a parlor on the side and parlor on that side. If you want to entertain you open the doors and it was all one room.

J: Sounds like [inaudible].

N: That's the way they build those houses.

R: That was a hall down the front.

J: Now did the hall actually follow the porch along the front or did it go straight through and come out the other side?

N: It came [well] outside. You see where those porches are? Well you could go in one door and then come out the other.

J: Come out the other side from porch to porch.

N: Yeah it was a big hall.

J: Okay about how wide would you say? As wide as this room is?

N: No it was wider than this.

J: So it's a good 16 feet wide.

N: I reckon so. I don't—and the other rooms next to it were great big rooms.

J: Rather high ceilings?

N: Oh yeah real high. And they had a library. It had alcoves from bottom up to the ceiling and that was filled with books. Had a whole lot of old [gilded]. Whole shelf, several shelves with old [gilded].

J: Prints?

N: Pictures you know. So all those books were burned.

J: Was there a fireplace in the library?

N: Yeah. All the house—all the rooms had fireplaces.

J: About how many? Would you say about a dozen fireplaces?

N: Let me see there was one in [fire] in the hall but the two parlors each had one. Then there was another room downstairs and then a [library] that would be four. Then the kitchen and upstairs they all had open fireplaces.

J: Well close to a dozen then.

N: I reckon so.

J: Was the kitchen part of the house when you were a little girl?

N: Yeah but there was another extension that father had taken off before I was born. I used to hear mother talk about it. It was out what we call out in the garden.

J: Okay a little apart from the house?

N: Yeah.

R: Who built Glen Albin?

J: Do you know who built Glen Albin?

N: No.

J: Well I've been told and I think Bill agreed: Chapman, Sam. Colonel Sam. Soon after he married.

N: Yes Bill would know more about it.

J: So I did get that from him.

N: I told Bill one day I said, "Bill Jane doesn't talk much about the family." Bill said, "Well you tell that John Wearmouth come over here I'll tell him everything he wants to know."

J: And then he got sick.

N: Yeah then he got [inaudible phrase] sitting over there. I thought it was terrible. All those old people sick.

J: Yeah that really hurt him. He didn't think he should be there with them. He didn't mind being there. I took a picture of him you know a month before he died. I gave it to David because I wasn't sure Jane would be ready for that sort of thing.

N: He used to [turn] look out the window all day [inaudible]. I'd say, "Bill what are you looking at." He'd sit there and look out the window. He said, "I wondered if Jane was coming today." I

slipped over there real often because I could slip up there and see him. His children were certainly good to him.

J: Yeah they were.

N: I thought they were. They'd go Dave was good to him and Jane was good to him.

J: Well, True when you came back to Charles County about 1960?

N: 1962.

J: 62. What did you notice about changes? What bothered you a little bit about the changed between 1920 and 1960? Anything at all? What were the big differences?

N: I don't know. I came in my husband was sick then. He was [hardly]—well he came back here because he knew that he wasn't gonna live long and he wanted to be up near his family. It certainly was wonderful to be here with family. [Inaudible sentence]. I don't know. Seemed like came along alright. Just went along with it.

J: Didn't miss a beat?

N: No I was glad to get back up here.

J: And the church was the same?

N: Church was the same.

J: New stories in La Plata. Lots of new neighbors.

N: Lot of people you knew.

J: You ever wish you could paint and could put down on paper some of the things you used to see?

N: No, no I never thought about it.

J: Just to let it lay.

N: Just it let it lay.

J: Let it lay. What was the road like going from the main road in front of Glen Albin? What is the name of that road?

R: Newtown, Bel Alton, Newtown. Bel Alton Newtown Road.

J: Bel Alton Newtown—

N: Bel Alton it was Newtown Bel Alton.

J: Going back to the house from the road what would you see on both sides? Open fields, forests, trees, here and there? Open fields?

N: Open fields.

J: Of under cultivation? Corn. tobacco?

N: Yeah.

J: Did the crops change once in a while in these fields do you remember?

N: Well I reckon tobacco. I reckon they raised tobacco.

J: Did you ever go into La Plata with a load of tobacco as a daughter?

N: No we were too proud. We would not these girls running around in the trucks. They don't think a thing of it. They're proud to go in them. I wouldn't go in La Plata in a truck for anything.

J: For goodness sake's that's interesting isn't it. Now what sports did you like?

N: No sports. We had crochet.

J: Did you ever play tennis?

N: No I never did.

J: Never?

N: We never had tennis. Well they used to play it around La Plata.

J: That's what I hear.

N: But I never played because I didn't know how.

J: Okay did you ever watch anybody play?

N: Yeah we watched them play.

J: Where were the courts?

N: They were over you know where the rectory is? Now but over next to Rebecca Hamilton's house on the corner. Yeah up Oak Avenue. Well the tennis court was over there and everybody went over—

J: Near the old rectory?

N: Yeah the old rectory.

J: Okay Oak Avenue in that corner right.

N: That was of course as you go around now by the school.

J: Okay yeah not far from the pens or the cravat place?

N: Yeah right across from it.

J: Okay that's good we have not known that. Did you ever watch them play tennis at Sydney Mudd's house?

N: No. I didn't associate with the Mudd's. They were politicians and they were Roman Catholics. I just didn't know them.

J: That's true a lot of differences. Do you remember seeing Sydney Mudd bandwagon in La Plata with the—

N: No. Did you ever hear of General [Wilmer]?

J: Yes I don't know much about him.

N: Well he you see he was Rebecca's uncle and Rebecca lived with us while she taught school out here. Rebecca Hamilton.

J: And she lived with you?

N: She lived with us for two years.

J: At Glen Albin?

N: Yeah.

J: She married a Hamilton?

N: Yeah she married the youngest Hamilton boy [Hill] Hamilton.

J: Now Rebecca taught school? Where?

N: Right out there at Newtown.

J: Same—so if that's—

N: But she taught over at—her first school was over at Bowling Green. What is it?

R: Bowling Green? Bowling Green?

J: Over beyond Hughesville?

N: Yeah. She taught over there her first year. Then she came over [home] then she lived with us for two years. I guess and then she was married I guess.

J: Was she an attractive young woman?

N: Oh my yes.

J: I've seen a picture of her—

N: Everybody thought she was.

J: She looked like a real beauty I'll tell you.

N: Yes well she and Emily—that was the oldest girl—they were really two beauties. They were into everything.

J: Did you know any of the [Dement] children at McDonough? Melissa [Dement]?

N: The name is familiar.

J: I think they were there just before you about 1913 or 14. Who were some of the beauties of the La Plata area when you were growing up? Do you remember?

N: Well I guess the Mudd girls. There was the Mudd girls and Mary Allison Wilmer.

J: Mary Allison?

N: Mary Allison was Judge Joe Wilmer's daughter.

J: Okay who did she marry?

N: She married Rock Walter in the service. He was an Annapolis man. Skinny Rock [wall] they called it. He hasn't been dead too long.

J: And Sydney Mudd's sister Eleanor?

N: Eleanor married...I think Eleanor married one of the Wilmer boys.

J: That's right you're right she did. And then your youngest sister was an attractive woman?

N: My, her youngest sister.

J: And what about your youngest sister?

N: Catherine married Compton.

J: Yeah right she married a Compton. And she was Anne's mother?

N: Yeah. Mary was never married. She worked in Washington for a while. She had cancer poor little thing. She lived with me and then she lived with Catherine.

J: Do you remember going to a few funeral services at Christ Church as you were growing up?

N: I've been to many of them since I've been grown but I don't remember going when I was little. I suppose I did.

J: How about weddings? Do you remember going to a few weddings there before you were married?

N: Yeah I remember going to....

J: Any big social weddings?

N: Yeah I think the Mathew's, Louise's mother and father had a big wedding. And there was one Chapman girl. One of Chapman's [inaudible phrase]. She married [Inaudible Hawkins].

J: Oh that would have been—

N: And we went one I remember mother took us over and put us upstairs us children. Upstairs in the ladies room while the reception was going on.

J: At [Elmwood]?

N: [Elmwood]. Then when everybody left we came down and had a....

R: Had your own party huh?

N: Had our own party but I don't know how old we were but I remember that.

J: And who were married?

N: Mary Chapman. She was one of the older ones who married [Inaudible] Hawkins.

J: I see and who was her father? Which Chapman was her father? Marshall?

N: Yeah.

J: Marshall Chapman okay.

N: No it wasn't.

J: Or Robert?

N: No it wasn't Robert. I think it was Marshall.

J: I should know. I think it was Marshall. Do you remember Andrew Grant Chapman [Conman] the judge?

N: Yeah.

J: Yeah you must.

N: I remember him.

J: Yeah he remembers coming down here from Georgetown and visiting—

N: Well his family used to come down a lot and visit these Chapman's at [Elmwood].

J: Do you remember some of the experiences?

N: Yeah.

J: Now who lived at La Plata Farm before it was knocked down by the tornado?

N: I don't know maybe tenants were there. Well that was the original Chapman home, La Plata. They called it La Plata Farm. But I don't know who lived there and I don't know what happened to them.

J: We recently saw a letter written about 1855 by Andrew Grant Chapman.

N: Well he was lived over in [Andrew]. He lived at [Normandy].

J: Yeah—

N: And I think he was in Congress.

J: He was too both of them. But now we're talking about your great grandfather Congressman John Grant Chapman. He wrote a letter to old John Hamilton in 1855 inviting him to join him at a bachelor dinner at my old home La Plata Farm.

N: Well that was the original farm of the Chapman's.

J: So that told us something.

N: John how can you remember all that stuff?

J: It's difficult. My head is just crammed full of this stuff. But can you give us your story of where the name La Plata came from? We have to say in our book that we're working on. What do you think? What were you told?

N: Well I've always heard that tale that it was an old Chapman over in South America somewhere over there and saw this fog coming up and they called it La Plata. Something about La Plata springs and he thought it was so pretty and he came home and called—named his place it.

J: Where was he when he saw the fog?

N: It was in one of the foreign countries said South America.

J: I wonder if this was Uruguay. See there's the River Plata down there. Rio Plata.

N: I don't know.

J: But anyway for the first time in writing we have the name La Plata by John Grant Chapman Sr. spelled exactly as it is today with one T so we will quote from this letter written by your great grandfather to his neighbor John Hamilton.

N: Well you see La Plata Farm that house when I came along it had tenants but there were a lot of papers in it. I think those papers were destroyed during that storm.

J: Now that's what I was wondering about. How was it that so many family papers were there.

N: Because that belonged to the Chapman's and somehow there was an Elly Chapman lived over here. She had that place. She managed it and there was another Chapman, Robert Chapman was a doctor in New York.

J: Oh yeah did he ever come back to Charles County?

N: Yeah he came—he was coming down here every summer I think.

J: Who were his brothers, this Robert?

N: Now I don't know.

J: How was he related to your father for example? First cousin?

N: They called him uncle.

J: Uncle Robert. Do you remember visiting Normandy?

N: I never visited Normandy. I've never been to that house. I think it was burned.

J: It burned. Did you ever visit Oakley?

N: Yeah I've been to—we used to go to Oakley a lot.

J: Is that house gone now?

N: Yeah.

J: What did it look like compared to Glen Albin? Smaller, bigger?

N: Little. It was very...wasn't a mansion or anything.

J: Just a nice farm house type building?

N: Just a farm house.

J: About the size of La Plata farm house?

N: No I don't believe it was that big. There were a lot of young people up there. You'd go up there and have a really good time.

J: Now to get to Oakley from Glen Albin what road or path did you take?

N: We went up this road.

J: Route 6?

N: 488.

J: To 488.

N: And then when you get to that old church up there you turned off [went off]. They were on that ridge like Glen Albin is.

J: Yeah overlooking the valley? Overlooking the—

N: Overlooking the swamp.

J: So there was no shortcut from Glen Albin to Oakley?

N: No there was a shortcut because I've been up there and one of the girls and I road across horses road across there and there was a creek down in that to Cousin Liz and Cousin Kate's. So there was a shortcut but I don't know anything about where it went out or anything but I remember as a girl riding across there with the horses.

J: What was your diet like at home as a girl? What was the average meal say during the period of a week or two? What sort in the winter now let's deal with the winter?

N: Listen we had everything to eat. We had turkeys, we had hogs, we had salt fish for breakfast. I was thinking about that the other day.

J: What kind of fish?

N: We called it salt fish.

J: Okay were they herring?

N: Yeah and they would cure them in the summer. We thought they were so good.

J: What how did you store them?

N: We stored them in a row. A row of herring and a row of salt in a barrel.

J: Oh just lay in the fish, sprinkle salt, more fish?

N: That's right.

J: A wooden barrel?

N: Yeah.

J: And where was that kept?

N: That was kept in the wood house—meat house. We had two meat houses there at Glen Albin. The food I reckon if we hadn't had so much food we'd have more money. But they always had all kinds of food. They had a lot of company.

J: Did you ever help your mother and dad at butchering time? Was this something that someone else did?

N: No we helped. I had to mind the baby. When I had that it was one of worst jobs in the world because I wanted to be downstairs and there I was upstairs with the baby.

J: What baby now?

N: Well I guess it was Billy, Bill.

J: Okay little Bill. Alright.

N: I can remember how awful it was to go upstairs and take care of the baby and everybody's down there making sausage and all that stuff.

J: And you wanted to be down there? That was an interesting job?

N: I wanted to be down there making sausage and all the curing.

J: Do you remember what was done to cure the hams then? How were these hams cured?

N: They were sugar cured. My father thought they had to be just right. He cured them. Molasses, put molasses on them.

J: Brushed it on? Poured it on?

N: Rubbed it in and brown sugar and finally he packed it in barrels for a while. Then they took it out of the barrel and hung it up in the meat house in the spring and smoked it.

J: Boy that must have been made delicious.

N: That worked to keep the insect off.

J: So molasses coated first?

N: Yes.

J: When it was fresh right after butchering?

N: Yeah.

J: Then sprinkle brown sugar on it and rub that in?

N: Yeah and salt.

J: And salt.

N: I know there was a great time fixing. Father used to kill bout 15 hogs.

J: Do you remember how long the smoking took?

N: Well it was two or three days.

J: Two or three days.

N: And they had to smoke it with hickory chips.

J: Green or dry or a mixture?

N: Green I think. They had two meat houses and the meat houses had a hole in the middle where you put the fire.

J: Okay right on the floor?

N: Yeah right on the floor.

J: And a hole in the roof?

N: Yeah I guess so I don't know.

J: Did that smell kind of good when that smoking was going on? What did that smell like?

N: Oh it smelled good. Like smoke.

J: Now what pork products? Sausage and ham and how else did you use the hog?

N: We had spare ribs. They were cured. Sausage. Never made any scrapple. We made lard. That's [what you cooked with]. I don't know.

R: Pork chops?

J: You used everything but the oink as the saying.

N: They used just about everything.

J: Did your father raise any beef for butchering?

N: Yeah. Yeah [a big bunch of beef].

J: Okay that's interesting. Now the average Charles County farmer apparently concentrated hogs and poultry. Not many raised cattle to butcher.

N: Well he had a cattle but he didn't butcher many of them. He milked them and they had one summer one went off. Mary and I that was our job to go after sheep. We had to go down the field after them and bring them in.

J: Where were the sheep kept? On the lower level?

N: Well they were—no they were kept on there was a big barn out there as you go into the house.

J: On the right or the left.

N: Right in front of the house. And there was a sheep barn back of that.

J: Now were they allowed to graze there close to the house? Did the sheep graze near the house?

N: [There's an orchard and all round] [inaudible] not too close to the house.

J: So there was an orchard now?

N: Yeah.

J: What kind of fruit?

N: A big orchard and it was filled with trees.

J: About how many acres do you think the orchard took up?

N: I don't know but probably a couple.

J: Apples?

N: Apples.

J: What kind do you remember?

N: We had [spawn saps.] I don't know and big yellow apples had all colors.

J: Okay were some apples [inaudible] for special uses?

N: Yeah we had the [York Imperials].

J: York Imperials.

N: I remember those [inaudible phrase].

J: Is that an eating apple? York Imperial is that an eating, fresh eating apple?

N: Yeah.

J: And what was best for cooking and baking?

N: I don't know I guess we had a big yellow apple that would just cook fine. We called that I don't know [Golden Pippin] or something.

J: Any grape vines?

N: Yeah had grapes down in the garden. In front of the house. I mean in back of the house they had a peach orchard when I came along. And that grapes down there and apples too they were great on fruit.

J: Was most of your bread baked there? Biscuits and things? Did your mother bake?

N: Mother made biscuits. But Bessie or Susan, one of the single sisters, she made loaf bread every Saturday. I see that now.

J: Can you smell it now coming out of the oven?

N: Mother would make biscuits but she didn't know how to make loaf bread.

J: Now what groceries did you have to buy?

N: They sent to Baltimore and got a lot of their groceries. Send down a barrel of flour.

J: By train? Come in by train?

N: Yeah came by train. They'd get all a great big thing of tea and a coffee and all. And ground the coffee. I can hear that old coffee grinding in the morning going.

J: Butter? Make your own butter?

N: Oh yeah made our own butter.

J: How what form did the butter take True? Did your mother use square molds? Round?

N: Round. Which Katy made the butter. Mother didn't.

J: I see okay.

N: She did all skim the milk and did all that stuff.

J: Was there a form of cottage cheese as we call it today? Was that—

N: We never made any cottage cheese. Or very seldom. Nobody would eat it.

J: That was for the hogs?

N: Yeah or pigs. Yeah pigs would got that.

J: Do you think your mother gave much serious thought to nutrition and diet?

N: No indeed. She didn't know what it was.

J: But lots of fresh vegetables in the garden in season? Lots of fresh vegetables in the summer?

N: Yeah we had a big garden.

J: So you had a good diet regardless?

N: And we had a big asparagus patch and all that stuff.

J: You think people ate more heartily in those days than they do now?

N: I think they did.

J: And they worked harder maybe to work it off?

N: I guess so.

J: Was your father a spare man or heavy set?

N: About medium.

J: How tall was he?

N: He wasn't very tall.

J: 5'7 would you think?

N: You can tell over there mother was tall.

J: As tall as he was?

N: She was...5...she was 5'6 and a half or something like that.

J: About his height then?

N: Well she was taller than he was.

J: Now how did they meet? How did your father and mother meet? Had they known each other most of their lives?

N: I think they had. I think they just met down here.

J: Now how about courting as you were growing up? What were some of the courting customs and how about chaperones? Were they still being used during the teens?

N: I remember one night of my husband and I walked out in the moonlight to the pump and here comes mother with her lamp looking for us. And I always think wasn't that awful to worry her like that. Of course there wasn't a thing to it but she didn't know where we were. To worry her like and she was coming flying along. I can't think I was never going to go looking for [inaudible] with a lamp.

J: That's an interesting story. When did you last think of that?

N: I sometimes I can't sleep at night and I get thinking about all this stuff.

J: What did your mother and father think of your choice of a man for a husband?

N: Oh they loved him. Bob called mother mother and she was I think she thought more of him than she did her own boys because he paid more attention to her. He was real and father he was real good to father. He came down to my house twice or two or three times and he was sick. He wasn't well. Bob would took him up in his arms and try to feed him. He was just as good to him as you could be.

J: True what kind of vehicles were kept at Glen Albin while you were there that is in the way of buggies, wagons, sleighs?

N: Well we had wagons and we had a buggy.

J: Okay the Dayton?

N: We had a Dayton and we had a scraping old bastard sleigh that had a sheep's skin at the bottom and when it snowed they'd hook the horses to it and put the bells on and just go a flying.

J: Some of the heavy wheeled farm wagons with the big wide steel tires?

N: Yeah they had farm wagons. They kept those out at the barn. Then we had a carriage house in the yard, end of the yard where they kept them.

J: What kinds of teams? Mules, oxen, horses, or all? What kind of animals, draft animals?

N: We didn't use it. They didn't use carriage horses to the farm horses. Father had those kinds of things I think he was very [inaudible]. He had a whole stable full of horses. He just loved them?

J: So you'd need some for riding?

N: We had a—kept a horse to ride.

J: How many riding horses at one time?

N: One. Nobody rode for fun in those days.

J: And how many to pull the Dayton?

N: Two.

J: And how many to work in the field?

N: They took of the others. They all had mules and horses and oxen. That [inaudible [phrase]].

J: Did you ever see mules and oxen?

[End of Tape]