# Transcript of OH-00262

## Harold S. Marbury

Interviewed by

John Wearmouth

on

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Transcribed by Shannon Neal on December 22, 2020

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## Format

Interview available as MP3 file or WAV: ssoh00262 (1:36:05)

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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
Race relations
Rural conditions

## Transcript

John Wearmouth [J]: This is John Wearmouth interviewing Mr. Harold S. Marbury at his home on Fenwick Road in Fenwick close to Marshall Hall, Maryland. The date is February 6th, 1991. The subject will be agriculture in the western part of Charles County. This is part of the Charles County Community College Oral History Program. We are interviewing Mr. Marbury at a place just a few hundred yards from where he was born and from where his parents were born. This

has been Marbury country for it looks like at least a 100 years and he's carrying on in the old Marbury farming tradition. This is a very active going farm establishment. It's not here just for looks. You look around and you see those baby pigs out there this morning and all the equipment. You know somebody's farming here in a serious way. How many children were there in your mother and father's family? How many brothers and sisters did you have and what are their names?

Harold S. Marbury [H]: Well there was eight of us then my mother got married after we lost my father then we have a half-brother.

J: So you have a half-brother plus eight full brothers and sisters?

H: Right yeah.

J: How many girls in that first?

H: Three.

J: Three and are they all alive today?

H: All living.

J: That's amazing. Where do you fall in the range of age? Are you—

H: I'm the oldest.

J: You're the oldest?

H: Yeah.

J: Okay and you were born in 1911 and you've got a birthday coming up April 1st every year it's on April 1st! Boy that's something.

H: Yeah that's right.

J: Okay and Mr. Marbury's mother was a Hungerford. His wife is a Posey. Edna Haddie Posey is present here in the house with us. She may leave us alone or she may wander in once in a while. So with names like that, Marbury, Hungerford, and Posey you've got to be able to locate this family in Charles County if you know Charles County history at all. When you started up as a wee small boy what were some of the earliest chores that your father gave you on the farm?

H: Carrying up wood. I can remember that.

J: Alright. How far did you have to—towed it or did you have a cart?

H: Well we towed the most because we had—I never could understand but we always had that woodpile down below the hill we did. The house was on top of the hill. We had to carry the wood up the hill.

J: Bad planning.

H: [Laughs] I know but that's the way they did it.

J: And you had to hand carry it from there?

H: Yeah we carried it mostly. Later days we got a wheel barrow and kids wagon you know.

J: Now where was the wood cut?

H: Oh just off the farm.

J: Right on the farm?

H: Yeah because all this land around here was wood then when I was a kid.

J: What kind of wood was it?

H: It was all kinds of wood. Everything, gum, birch, gum, sycamore, whatnot.

J: You'd burn anything that would burn.

H: Anything that would burn we burned. Pine.

J: And that was the only thing that you did have to burn?

H: Yeah we didn't have nothing else.

J: No coal, no oil, no gas?

H: No, coal, no oil then. [That was there].

J: Those were the days weren't they?

H: That's right.

J: Tell me Harold, how did you keep that chimney clean when it creosoted up?

H: Well that was—

J: Did you ever have a chimney fire?

H: Yeah! That was the least that we had to do because when we started a fire in that stove she stayed wide open.

J: That's the secret to it isn't it?

H: That's the secret to that. We never had no trouble with chimney's burning up or catching the fire like we do now you know.

J: Where was the Marbury home at this time that we're talking about when you were young?

H: Right over on the hill.

J: On the other side?

H: [You have a look].

J: Okay I can see it. [That's great for fog]. Okay.

H: That's where they lived where the yellow house is right across the road.

J: Okay I just passed it coming in.

H: Yeah.

J: Okay and that burned down did it?

H: Yeah. It burned about 20 years ago.

J: Was it a frame house made of wood?

H: A great frame house.

J: Okay who's living in the yellow house now?

H: My sister, Mary. You want to meet Mary?

J: Okay I should meet her. Okay were the chores pretty fairly divided up in your family? Do you recall saying Gee I get all the hard work you know?

H: Oh no we were not like that because you see I was the oldest and the rest was under me.

J: Okay so you got nailed with the heavy stuff first.

H: Seven of us and we had one brother born after our father died. So we were all little. Yeah we were little.

J: Yeah you were. What did the girls learn to do real early in the kitchen to help your mother?

H: Well they learned to do like—well you might say a grown woman because they could do most anything after they got big enough to do it.

J: Who brought the water in?

H: Well that was most anybody's chore. When the bucket got dry—

J: Whoever saw it dry?

H: And they were big enough to get. We had to draw water. We didn't have no pump.

J: You had to haul it up with a bucket?

H: We drawed water.

J: Okay.

H: With the wheel you know. You see and the wheel on the well?

J: Okay yeah right.

H: That's the way we got our water.

J: What was that bucket made of?

H: Galvanized.

J: Galvanized that you could buy at the hardware store?

H: Oh yeah.

J: Did that well have any kind of shelter over it at all?

H: Oh yeah it had a box around it and a frame.

J: Any roof?

H: No roof.

J: No roof okay.

H: Just a box and the top over this box. That was about as tall as we were. [See we opened it].

J: Okay so you could keep leaves out of it and animals. It was closed and sealed at the top.

H: Yeah.

J: And was there a hinge cover?

H: Hinge cover on this. You raised it up.

J: And the bucket was kept right there on the rope?

H: Right there on the rope.

J: Was it a rope or a chain?

H: Rope and a chain or a chain, whichever.

J: Okay and the girls as well as the boys would take their turn drawing their—

H: That's right soon as they were big enough to draw it.

J: How deep was that well?

H: About 26 feet.

J: A shallow well.

H: Yeah.

J: Did it ever go dry?

H: That one never.

J: Up on the hill there that's—

H: We never had any trouble with the well going dry.

J: That's amazing. Is that well still alive today?

H: No, no we had to replace the well.

J: Okay.

H: It's just a little below it but there's still a well there. It has a pump in it now.

J: As children were you a healthy group? Any serious?

H: Oh yeah we didn't know what it was the doctor going to the doctor's or nothing like that when we—

J: Your mother took care of things at home pretty well?

H: Yes right.

J: Did she have any of these famous spring tonics for the kids? Or did you—you didn't need it?

H: Oh she made her own tonics.

J: Pardon?

H: She made her own tonics.

J: Out of what do you remember?

H: Oh onions, served if you had a cold. Lemons, juice, stuff like that. They'd blend them.

J: Did you ever hear of aspirin when you were a child?

H: No.

J: No Mercurochrome, iodine?

H: Iodine or Mercurochrome yeah when you cut yourself.

J: Okay did she use peroxide?

H: Yeah that was very famous.

J: Okay and for a congested chest what would she put on it?

H: Oh we don't know nothing about that.

J: Nothing like that.

H: Congested chest or indigestion or nothing like that—

J: Who kept your hair cut?

H: Well we had an uncle when we got big enough to go up we used to go up to Uncle Will Thompson's on the hill to get a haircut. Of course she's taking care of them till we got big enough to be going out to church or school or something like that.

J: Without [a lot].

H: You take care of your haircut.

J: Were you going to Metropolitan in those days as a youngster?

H: Yeah.

J: How did you get there from here? That's quite a distance.

H: Well when we didn't walk we rode mules or went in the buggy. We had mules when our father died. We had two or three mules. We boarded [bigger boys] that were big enough to ride the mules. Of course we could ride a horse if he stays on the ground while we rode him. And we rode the mules to church. Tie them out there until after service and we'd get on—

J: Did you double up on a mule more than one person?

H: No we had many man we had [45]. See he was a farmer too. He farmed too.

J: What could the mule do for you that the horse couldn't do? Why did you?

H: Not any. I don't know he always loved the mules. He had these beige mules well right at the time of his death. He had just got them. They were young. I think some of them hadn't even been broke. Yeah we used to ride them but they hadn't been broke to work. We had horses.

J: Could a mule work as long and hard as a horse in the field?

H: Oh They're supposed to work longer and harder. I never paid any attention to them.

J: Tolerate the hot summer weather pretty well?

H: Yeah, yeah, we never—well we didn't have that much work to do because we were all, like I tell you, I was the oldest and my brother—they live up on the road—he was just a year younger than I am.

J: What's his name?

H: Lorenzo's the one I'm talking about.

J: Okay the one I've met.

H: You talked with him

J: Right.

H: But we were—but we knew how to handle horses and calves and things like that. We knew how to do that.

J: Did you ever have any oxen here?

H: No, we never had no oxen.

J: Did some of the neighbors have oxen?

H: Oh yeah there was neighbors around the community. The fellow below—

J: What could oxen do that mules couldn't do? Anything?

H: Well they couldn't do anything more. They were slower.

J: And they were slow.

H: That's why my father never had no oxen as I know of. He might have before my time. I never knew him to have any oxen. We always had horses and mules.

J: So there were times when you walked all the way from here to Metropolitan?

H: Yes sir. I have two—

J: How long a walk was that for you?

H: Five miles. I have two sisters that went from here to Pomonkey to high school and they never missed a week.

J: And did they walk?

H: In four years.

J: Did they walk?

H: They walked half the time.

J: So that would be a darned near hour and a half each way wouldn't it?

H: [About.]

J: [If it's five] miles on old roads?

H: Yes sir and it would—it was just an old clear road then. Wasn't black top like it is now. You walked up through the mud and stuff out through there all the way.

J: You'd need a bath before you get there.

H: All the way. Well if you need a bathroom you'd slip off the side in the woods because it was all grown up.

J: Yeah, yeah you could do it then.

H: See until you get clear up to the Baptist church why it was all woods and just a narrow road. You didn't have to go very far when you stepped off the road.

J: I've seen pictures of that road when as it looked.

H: That's the way it was too.

J: In 1905 so it was nothing.

H: And you can go up to the top of the hill, just as you get to the top of the hill you turn short left they got this honey place there and you can see down there that's where the old road was.

J: Or you can go continuously on out here until you get to a big gum tree you turn short left the road went straight up the hill. That's all the wide it was. Just room enough for one—

J: One buggy wide huh?

H: One.

J: For one Model T wide.

H: Yes sir. Was no Model T's then.

J: Who had the first automobile in this neighborhood? Do you recall? What family?

H: The Thompson's, Will Thompson's [inaudible] and Wesley Key. I don't know where he is. He had the little store across the road. He had the first.

J: Right. I've interviewed two of his daughters.

H: Yeah but he had the first vehicle around here that I know of up in this section. Now further down in Pomonkey I think it was a fellow by the name of [Clarke, Willy Wallace Clarke]. He had an automobile. He was quite a—well he was an electrician and he had automobiles, motorcycles.

J: And needed money to buy them even if they didn't cost a lot by today's terms you still had to have cash to buy a vehicle.

H: Oh yeah and that was a lot of money whatever it was then. 100 dollars was equal to a couple thousand dollars now.

J: That's right. How well fed were you children? Your mother really had to do a day's work to get ready to feed what 12?

H: Well it was eight children. Eight of us see and let me tell you something. The eight of us, and you hear people talking about being hungry or anything, I never knew of ever being hungry. See we lived on a farm and our mother she could do as much work as the average two men.

J: Inside or outside?

H: It don't make any difference she could go out in the field and work with us and she'd leave out there 11:30 or 12 o'clock, 11:30 and come to the house and we'd bring the horses in and feed them. By that time she'd have our meals ready to eat. We were working in the field or whatever and shortly afterwards we'd lay around and play while she washed the dishes or something then we'd go back to whatever we were going to do. I'd say—

J: Would she come back out in the fields in the afternoons?

H: I'd say many times that she's—well she was the best mother in the world. These all of—all of our mothers should be.

J: Yeah did she live a normal life as far as years are concerned?

H: She was about 80, 81 or 2.

J: What a tough lady. Durable.

H: And with nine children—she had nine children. Like I said—

J: Women like that really work.

H: All of them still living and retired.

J: She'd be pretty proud wouldn't she? Your daddy too.

H: She would. She was.

J: So she lived to see all of you do pretty well.

H: All of them are strong, grown, and all married.

J: I'm sure she was gratified.

H: That's right.

J: The great reward for putting forth that much effort.

H: That's right.

J: Was she a steady church goer too?

H: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. Just as often as [you'd come].

J: Did she have a good singing voice at all or did your father?

H: Well she sang on the choir.

J: Okay very good. What were some of her favorite hymns? Did you ever hear her sing at home?

H: Well one of her great hymns was "Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross." And others you know, but that was the famous one.

J: Are they still singing that at Metropolitan?

H: Oh yeah they sing it every once in a while.

J: Sometimes those old ones are shoved aside.

H: Yeah well they take them out the books and everything else if you don't have a regular meet or something [inaudible].

J: How did your mother and father feel about education for their children? You may not remember your father?

H: Pretty, pretty [young] on us but all of the kids went to high school except my brother and I. They all went to high school.

J: I suppose if you could have gone you would have gone?

H: We probably would have but.

J: Pomonkey all?

H: Yeah they had to go to Pomonkey then. That's the only place see there was a high school and you walked. We had a buggy we used—well [it wore to last well it wore to last] the younger ones where we had a car. If a rainy day or something like this we'd always take them up.

J: Did you know Mr. Slater?

H: Tom Slater? Yes.

J: I understand that he and Wesley Key were two very important people in the community as far as education's concerned.

H: Oh yeah.

J: And that Pomonkey school owes a lot to their hard work.

H: Yeah that's right.

J: That's right. I've met Mr. Slater's daughter, Mrs. Michael. I've interviewed her. So I'm beginning to get a feel for what life was like over here. Okay—

H: A lot is different from what it is now.

J: We don't even understand.

H: We don't appreciate what's going on.

J: No. So you lost your daddy early didn't you? What carried him off so soon?

H: Well the instance that caused it really I mean he his mother used to be a market lady. She'd go to Washington most every other week or something like that to carry produce.

J: Did she stay there and sell it?

H: She'd stay there and sell it and then come down the river. See the way he got hit was at [Glymont]. See he was going down to meet her that night.

J: At the wharf?

H: At the wharf.

J: The Glymont Wharf.

H: The Glymont Wharf and right down—well it's just where Lee's market is now.

J: I know exactly where it is.

H: Right where that turn is is where he got hit right in there.

J: Who hit him.

H: Fellow by the name of Key, Charlie Key. And there was automobiles then but he was in a horse and buggy see.

J: Your father was?

H: Yeah.

J: So he didn't stand a chance?

H: No. He knocked him out the end. Course he fractured his neck and he never got over it. I think he lived about a week.

J: Who was the doctor that tended him?

H: Well he was taken to the hospital. They taken him from there to the Navy plant.

J: To Indian Head okay.

H: Then that was on a Saturday night. On a Monday they taked him to the hospital. Freedman's hospital now [inaudible]—

J: Up in Washington?

H: In Washington. I couldn't tell you [inaudible].

J: How did your mother stand up under that?

H: Oh she [inaudible phrase] but she was carrying a baby and a house full of babies. He might—

J: And so how many of you were already born?

H: Seven.

J: Seven and one coming.

H: Yes.

J: Did she turn out to be a pretty good family manager?

H: Oh ain't no question about it. [you'd been going down the creek if you had any] it was about oh 20 or 22 years before she got married after.

J: So she saw all of you raised and on your own pretty much? Wow.

H: Right.

J: Quite a lady.

H: Yeah I'm telling you.

J: Quite a lady.

H: That's her picture there, the one in the middle. Up top.

J: Here, right here?

H: Yeah that's her.

J: She looks [inaudible]. And who was the second lady here?

H: That was father's first wife. He was married a couple of times.

J: I see. What was her family name?

H: Porters.

J: Porters.

H: They were right next door really. They were born, they were down the road here.

J: Who is this lady up here? She looks familiar.

H: That's my cousin. She's the oldest. She was first. Well she had this school over here and redone it and she lived there. That was my first cousin.

J: And what's her name?

H: Agnes Ross.

J: I may have seen her somewhere. Is she alive now?

H: No. She's been dead for three or two years.

J: Well I bet I've seen her somewhere I don't know.

H: You've probably.

J: Well when your father passed you as the oldest son had to take on a lot of responsibility didn't you?

H: Went through a lot.

J: How did you handle that and how did you get your brothers to cooperate with you? Any problems with that?

H: Well we didn't have any problems that way because we grew up together and we stayed together and we played together and we worked together all the time. As of today if something happens here and I need something why if I call one and don't get him or another one comes

along and finds it out he wants to know why I didn't let him know so he could help. So that's the way it was.

J: Can't ask for a better family feeling than that.

H: And we've got along.

J: How many of those boys left farming? You remained on the farm.

H: Yeah I'm the only one.

J: What did they do?

H: Well all of us worked for the government at certain times.

J: Mostly Indian Head?

H: Yeah Indian Head and couple worked at Andrews Air Field. But they all right around here close. See I got one live down the road and the rest of them live up [Inaudible] Pomonkey.

J: Who lives just down the road now?

H: That's brother James.

J: James.

H: He lives down in my mother's old home kid place.

J: So that's great that so much of the Marbury land is still Marbury land.

H: That's right.

J: That's a good feeling. What's the future going to be for Marbury land?

H: Well, [inaudible] hoping it will still stay that way.

J: Okay so you have nephews?

H: Because I own about two thirds of it, the original part.

J: How big was the original part?

H: The original part was 34 acres.

J: Okay across the road?

H: Across the road and some of it was on this side of the swamp and that's bottom just as you start up the hill.

J: Have you increased the size of the farm in your lifetime?

H: Now this piece in here from the top here, 19 acres in here that was bought from the old farm on the other side of us, the other road, new road. But this back on this side was always Marbury property.

J: Okay at the very most how many acres were put under cultivation on the Marbury farm in your lifetime?

H: Well no more than what's about I'd say about 30 acres of it was in cultivation all the time.

J: So that must have been rough going to keep a family going on 30 acres. You must have farmed—

H: Well once we got going why we always had a garden. We always had a real garden and we grew potatoes and things that you could always sell you know and use. What we did use we could sell. We used to raise—the people talking about sweet potatoes—but we used to raise 2 or 300 bushels of sweet potatoes a year.

J: How many of those were for family use?

H: We didn't use—we used from one year to another we always had sweet potatoes and white potatoes.

J: Did they keep really well?

H: Oh yeah we could keep them.

J: How?

H: Put them in the ground.

J: Okay did you dig a hole and bury them?

H: Dig a hole and bury them and take them out.

J: And put what over them?

H: Straw, potatoes, set them in, cover them up with so much [soil].

J: What's the soil like out here? Heavy?

H: Well we have a combination. It's everything. Sandy.

J: Some of it's a bit sandy. Was tobacco ever a big thing?

H: Well not with us. We used to raise when we was half way big enough to—we used to raise two or three acres. We did two small barns and we used to fill them. We raised around oh say a small crop is about two thousand, three thousand pounds a year. Until we got big enough to get out of the tobacco and then we didn't raise no tobacco.

J: What year did you raise your last tobacco?

H: 34 I think.

J: That long ago?

H: Yeah.

J: You got out of it early.

H: Yeah.

J: A lot of them are getting out of it just now.

H: Well we went to—next year so the oldest boys went to work for the government and some of them went in the CC Camp and then from that if we come out of that then we went into the government.

J: Now what were the food products that you could provide here on the farm? What dairy products for example? Fresh milk?

H: Well we had cows all the time. We had cows.

J: Butter?

H: Yeah and milk. We had our own milk. We didn't have to buy things like that. We raised our own pigs.

J: What else could your mother do with that milk? There was plain milk, cream, and butter, what else did she do?

H: That's all. When we got through it the pigs got the rest of it.

J: Okay well that was darn good use of it.

H: Yeah and we always had our pigs all the time.

J: Okay always hogs. What on the average while all the kids were still on the farm on the average how many hogs would you butcher in the fall to get you through—

H: Well we'd usually kill four or five. They weren't the biggest but 200 pounds.

J: Okay and how did you get that meat preserved?

H: Well we could cure and that's it. We'd cut it up and—

J: What was your favorite way to cure it?

H: Learn to salt it. That's all we did to it then.

J: You didn't smoke it?

H: Well we smoked it yeah in the spring but we could take care of that. We learned to cut and learned to grind our sausage.

J: Did your own butchering?

H: Yeah.

J: What was your favorite seasoning for sausage? What did your mother like to put in it?

H: Well just regular sage. Sage and pepper. Red pepper and black pepper salt.

J: And that's it?

H: Right.

J: I've made that myself.

H: Didn't have a lot of this fancy stuff like they have now today. We had salt.

J: I use venison to make sausage. Did your mother ever show any worry about such a thing as cholesterol?

H: No not much of—

J: You ate whatever foods were on the farm?

H: Whatever was there to eat we'd eat. We didn't have to worry about—

J: Much beef?

H: No much beef, meat or beef or whatever.

J: Was bacon a popular thing in the family?

H: No bacon or nothing else we just fried it. [Meat that side meat]. We didn't know what it was. They named it later.

J: Well that's interesting.

H: Yes sir.

J: Yeah come to think about it you don't see much mention of the word bacon until I guess the 30's or so.

H: Yeah recently, after that.

J: Just sliced it and it was side meat and salted?

H: Yeah that's right.

J: Okay. If you had any serious illnesses at all what doctor would have been available here?

H: Well there was a local doctor used to be Dr. Lynch. I don't whether you've heard of him or not but he was [inaudible] in Pomonkey you see.

J: Now was he a black doctor or white?

H: No white, he was white. We didn't have no black doctors around here.

J: Did you ever hear of Bicknell?

H: Bicknell? Yeah he was in Marbury you see. [Inaudible] all the time. But the last doctor we had here was old Dr. Lynch that was in Pomonkey and he was just beyond where the school is now. Just beyond that on your left going back towards Pomfret up on that hill there.

J: Oh there's a pretty much house up there. You can't see it.

H: Yeah well that's his son in law or grandson or granddaughter's husband or something like that. Some of his people.

J: Okay I need to take some pictures of it.

H: But that's—and his was an old house. I haven't been up in there for 30 years or more. I don't know whether they've remodeled it or whatnot. But it's not the first house you get to. The first house is a fellow that used to work at the plant. He's retired there the first one you can see. But this house go up that hill you can see and it's a big house.

J: Is there a lot of woods in front of it?

H: Lot of woods and it's a big house.

J: So that was the Dr. Lynch house.

H: That's where you had to go to the doctors.

J: Do you recall ever being taken to the doctors?

H: I don't recall ever having been taken to the doctor myself and none of the children.

J: Did any of the children break and arm or a leg or anything like that?

H: No I don't believe they did. Get a cut or something like that.

J: That's a pretty good record. What was your favorite meal Harold? If somebody had a birthday or somebody was coming to visit what would your mother put on the table that was a little bit extra? What was her favorite?

H: Well I don't know. We didn't have too much company then because everybody that was coming there was walking.

J: Did the minister ever come to eat?

H: Occasionally but we never paid much attention to the minister. He never excited us then. No we didn't have much trouble with that.

J: Was chicken more of a favorite than pork? If you had a choice.

H: Well that was about it. That was the weekend. That's all.

J: Okay so that a little bit above your average. Did your mother serve meat at every meal? Once a day?

H: Well not always. Sometimes it was the middle of the day in the winter time like it's soup or something like that. We never—might have had a little meat but it was plenty there. We always could have it you know if we needed it.

J: In the days before cornflakes—I'll bet you never ate a corn flake in your life till you were—

H: Oh sure. Oatmeal is what we used to eat.

J: Okay. That's what I had this morning.

H: Yeah.

J: Hot.

H: Yeah we'd eat oatmeal. That's about all we had.

J: Was that your average breakfast in cold weather?

H: Those cornflakes and things that's—

J: And that means you have to have cash money for that.

H: That's right.

J: You could buy oats in big boxes.

H: Yeah you could buy great big boxes of oatmeal for about 50, 60 cents. Now of course five dollars for that.

J: Nothing fancy like bran flakes, or raisin bran.

H: No, no we didn't have that kind.

J: Captain Crisp.

H: [Hominy] used to have that.

J: Now that was a corn?

H: Yeah.

J: How was that prepared? What had to be done to that?

H: See you boiled that. You could buy it some of them could make it. You could grind your corn half way [inaudible]. This is [hominy]. Then you had to score the [it see] to get the skin off. That was a lot of work for us.

J: So the [Hominy] is just the inside of the cornel?

H: Yes. That's right.

J: How about cornbread? Did your mother make cornbread?

H: Cornbread oh yeah we'd make our own cornbread. We shell our own and take it up. Well we had to go to Accokeek to a mill. So finally after we got going we'd well this was later years we bought an old tractor and we bought a mill. We'd make our own cornmeal.

J: What did this mill look like? It was pretty much a hand operated thing?

H: No. You could buy a hand one. Hand turned one. You ever see a cherry seeder?

J: Yeah I have one.

H: Well they used to make a little mill that one kid could pour the corn in and one turn it. That thing we made meal with a little looked like a coffee grinder.

J: And it just simply grinds it up fine.

H: It grinds it up and we'd sieve it. What we didn't eat the chickens would eat.

J: When you got your first tractor what year was this?

H: Oh this way down there now.

J: 30's?

H: Around in there. Well after that.

J: What kind was it?

H: An old [Inaudible].

J: Hard to start?

H: They're hard to start and hard to run.

J: No hydraulic steering or anything?

H: No sire no hydraulic steering, no self-starter either.

J: Took a man just to steer that.

H: God dang yeah that's right.

J: But anyway it was a help?

H: That's right it was [faster].

J: Out in the field straight run. But you beat yourself to death turning around at the end of the field to come back.

H: Yeah.

J: I can hear that motor.

H: Yeah whining hear that old thing.

J: Now would yours burn kerosene?

H: Yeah if you got it hot enough.

J: Okay. Short of a diesel.

H: Yeah always had to have it start on gasoline and if you got it going and got hot then you could switch it on kerosene.

J: Did you do that sometimes?

H: Used to but it had gotten so bad that you could—well it was the gas was almost as cheap as the kerosene.

J: Look at it now.

H: Yeah now it's worse. Kerosene is higher than gasoline now.

J: 50 cents a gallon, 40 cents a gallon. Adds up today.

H: Yeah. That's right.

J: You're right. I buy kerosene. That is right.

H: Yeah yes sir.

J: So when did electricity come to you folks down here at Fenwick?

H: Electricity...we got electricity 36 or 37.

J: And where was it generated? Where did that electricity come from?

H: Pope's Creek.

J: Alright the generating station. So you're talking about 1938.

H: Yeah somewhere in there.

J: That went online—the building went up in 37.

H: We were some of the first ones down in here that [raised up]. The fellow that owned Strawberry Hill, he was the secretary—

J: [Hup?] Right?

H: [Hup] right.

J: [Inaudible] [Hup]. That's right he was on the board of directors.

H: [Inaudible phrase] and I used to work for him. We was on the first [the list].

J: He was a naval officer wasn't he?

H: Yeah right a retired navy officer.

J: So that's how you got it. He lived down he.

H: Sure he lived on [Strawberry] hill. Then he had a list of all these people up in here and we were some of the first ones.

J: I know his daughter Josephine.

H: We were some of the first yeah.

J: Who wired the house? How did you go—

H: James Clarke.

J: Oh James Clarke. So enough for another motorcycle?

H: No not that [guy] that was his father Wallace Clarke was the father. This is the son. He lived just beyond where the little store is up on the hill. The Key's Store. As a matter of fact he married Key's daughter Eleanor.

J: Do you remember what the charge was to wire a house then?

H: Just roughly I'd say it might have cost a 100 dollars maybe.

J: And you were able to come up with that kind of money then?

H: Oh yeah then.

J: A lot of people couldn't afford it. The electricity was available out there and they couldn't come up with that kind of cash.

H: Yeah that's true.

J: So when the Marbury's got electricity what was the first appliance that you bought?

H: I guess the first thing we got was an icebox.

J: You know that was—

H: [Inaudible].

J: What year were you married now?

H: 34. 1934.

J: Okay so when the electricity came through you had your mother's house to think about and one of your own at that time?

H: Yeah well she got married right after that see.

J: I see okay. Did she go somewhere else to live?

H: No.

J: She stayed right there across the road.

H: Yeah that was her home.

J: So she lived right in the midst of her children all of her life?

H: All the time yes sir.

J: All of her married life. Who did she become in her second marriage? Mrs.?

H: Morton.

J: Morton.

H: You probably know a [Joe Morton].

J: No I don't think so.

H: He worked for the board of education.

J: I don't recall the name at all.

H: He's a carpenter.

J: So she finally was able to give up all her farm work and settle down and relax a little bit?

H: [Yeah but she] [inaudible phrase].

J: Okay now what did your mother have to do to keep all you kids in clothing? Did she make some at home?

H: Oh yeah she made clothes—

J: In addition to working out in the field?

H: Yeah.

J: Where did she buy her yard goods?

H: Well up the road you could buy goods up the road.

J: At what store?

H: Store Warren's.

J: Warren's in Pomonkey?

H: Yeah.

J: Oh yeah okay right there near Bumpy Oak Road.

H: That's right. Right in that corner was a big store there.

J: She had to go way up there.

H: Yeah well they didn't do like they do now. They didn't just go up there and get enough for to make one dress you see. They would go up there and buy so many yards for more than one [inaudible]. Sometimes the dresses was all the same color.

J: Did you ever hear the story when you were a boy of the murder that took place there in the store? Did you hear that one? Probably.

H: Heard of it but we didn't see much [inaudible phrase].

J: Yeah well that's 1876 or something like that. Probably pretty quiet by that time. So she would have to take the buggy get in the buggy and one of the boys drive her?

H: Yeah she could drive herself.

J: Could she drive herself? Okay. Where was your post office most of your life as a youngster? Where did you have—

H: [Inaudible].

J: That right down Fenwick on the river?

H: Yeah right on the river.

J: Is that building still there?

H: No.

J: Okay, okay. Do you recall getting much mail?

H: Oh we didn't get much mail. You'd get a letter now and then.

J: Okay not like today.

H: No not every day. You [get more junk].

J: Where do you get your mail now.

H: Bryans Road but it's delivered.

J: A lot of junk? Oh okay.

H: Yeah down the road.

J: Who was the lady that used to deliver mail out here in a horse and buggy?

H: Ms. [Kate]. [She used to live down here].

J: Okay and she carried the mail out of the Fenwick post office?

H: Yeah.

J: Okay I've seen a picture of her.

H: But she had a back road. She went back through the woods out to Marshall Hall see.

J: Oh a river road? I see.

H: Yeah and then up to Accokeek. I think that's as far as she used to go.

J: On the back road?

H: Up to Accokeek up the back road and back down. That's as far as she went.

J: About what years was she delivering the mail? Do you recall?

H: Oh my that's...well when I was a kid she was delivering the mail.

J: Definitely before you got married.

H: Oh yeah, yeah.

J: In the 20's perhaps.

H: Right yeah and then [Willet's] father.

J: [Inaudible phrase].

H: He used to carry mail too from down there.

J: Was that right? Rose [Willow's] husband?

H: Yeah the old man. Yeah.

J: For heaven's sakes. So what did the tractor do for you Harold to make your life a little easier? Could you get more work done?

H: Well we just had that as an extra more than anything else. We always had horses [there for]. We'd do the most of our work with the horses. We used to grind feed with that. That's about all.

J: Yeah [power take off]?

H: Yeah.

J: So really it was a whole power plant.

H: [We had inaudible]. Yeah it had pulley on it. We used that to grind our feed.

J: Could you saw wood with it too?

H: Yeah.

J: And did you?

H: Oh yeah.

J: Okay. That's [very essential].

H: [Inaudible saw].

J: When did you give up your last mule? During your life when you were farming?

H: Oh we got rid of the mules oh I'd say about eight or ten years—because we always had horses. I've had horses since I've been here. Then we didn't need but one. One horse would take of everybody because we had tractors. It got so the tractors would do everything that the horses would do—

J: What's your favorite all time tractor?

H: John Deer's.

J: John Deer's, you still like them?

H: Yeah I've got two of them now.

J: Okay what models are they?

H: One of them's 83 and the other's that 151 down there.

J: Okay. So what job on the farm during your entire lifetime have you found most objectionable? The one that you really didn't enjoy doing too much.

H: It didn't make any difference. If a job had to be done you had to do it.

J: And that didn't bother you?

H: No.

J: Went ahead and did it. Mucking up the barn [inaudible].

H: Yes that's a big job. I was over there yesterday cleaning out the [aisle way in] to my hay barrel over there.

J: And that's still just hard work isn't it?

H: Yes it's hard work. That's why these youngsters don't do it.

J: Did you ever get yourself one of those carriers that would haul it from the barn up, drop it in a pile, conveyor type thing?

H: No we got a spreader—we loaded it over there at the barn and take it out and spread it.

J: Okay so you still used every [cotton picking] [inaudible] in the field.

H: That's right. Yeah.

J: Organic farming.

H: Yeah.

J: Do you have to add much fertilizer?

H: Well not too much.

J: Store [purchase]?

H: Yeah we only put maybe 3 or 400 pounds, something like that. [Inaudible].

J: And has that been the way it's gone most of your life here on the farm?

H: Most of my time yeah.

J: So you've always had enough farm animals to help you manure the fields in the old fashioned way?

H: That's right.

J: Okay. Now the spreader you're using now, is there anything modern or convenient about that? Is that the old time auger drive spreader on the back that kicks it out?

H: Yeah right. The new ones the same way.

J: Okay technology hasn't gotten—

H: Chain in the bottom.

J: Oh yeah like an old Mac truck.

H: Right.

J: Remember the Mac truck with the chain driven rear wheel?

H: Yeah.

J: When did you buy your first pickup truck? You do have one don't you?

H: Yeah I have an old one now.

J: What year?

H: Oh I guess that was way up there...[inaudible phrase] about 1960 I think. I think I paid for it in 87.

J: God now everybody has a pickup truck even if they don't need it really got to have a pickup truck.

H: Yeah, yeah used to. Now the prices is going up so that you just as well buy a car. One time the pickup used to be cheap but now it costs you as much as a car or more.

J: That's true, 12, 15 thousand dollars that's right.

H: Yeah yes sir. I've got one over there now but it's 20 some years old. But I got a load of fertilizer on it right now.

J: Has modern machinery in the past 25 years helped you get more out of this land?

H: Well it helped you get more out of the land and you could do so much. You can do it one man because that's your problem now is labor. Getting somebody to help you to do something.

J: If you had to go back 50 years with this property you'd have to work from dawn to—

H: Not necessarily because the equipment if you're able to buy the equipment you'd keep up with the modernization.

J: Okay right now are you doing the work that would take what three men to do 50 years ago?

H: Oh more than that.

J: Okay that's amazing and you're an old—

H: Because I worked the farm below here then I rent a farm up the road there.

J: So how many acres are you going to be working this year in 1990?

H: Well I'm working less this year.

J: Alright and last year what was it?

H: But what I've gotten is just I've got most of a season in hay. See I cut the hay and bale the hay.

J: Is that profitable for you? Is it worthwhile?

H: Well it takes [inaudible] I have about 20 cows and I raise enough feed to take care of them.

J: Okay alright there you go that's the economy of it. If you got 20 head of cattle you need the hay and they're not giving hay away these days.

H: That's right.

J: What's it sell for a bale last year?

H: Well roughly about two dollars a bale.

J: Okay well it's been—

H: But if you cut it out the field why it's a little less, dollar and a half, dollar [a lot of—a whole lot of places] you can get it for a dollar.

J: And what kind of grass are you planting?

H: Just anything. Oh you mean kind?

J: Yeah what's—

H: Oh [Timothy] clover, regular mixed hay.

J: Is that much different than your father's days? As far as hay.

H: No because we didn't have hay enough to feed two cows hardly. We used to use then stock fodder. We'd cut that corn and save that stalk part and maybe we had two or three acres of hay then. Now today I've got 30 acres of hay.

J: So the economics of farming have changed a little haven't they?

H: I don't raise any corn see. I don't raise the corn. I planted about 10 to 12 acres of corn but that's it.

J: What's the most acreage you ever put into corn?

H: About 25 but it's no money in it. There's no good work [inaudible] on it.

J: Even if you convert the corn to [pork]? Does it not pay?

H: Well you just take until about a year ago your pork wasn't worth anything. 40 cents a pound. You can't raise pork for that.

J: And what's it up to now?

H: Now it's about I think about 60 or 70 cents.

J: That's a big change.

H: Yeah.

J: Now would this make growing corn more worthwhile?

H: It still isn't gonna make it worth anymore because you can grow more but if you go to sell it on the market you get more than you can use then you still can't get nothing out of it. I think last fall corn was two dollars and 30 or 40 cents a bushel. That's about—

J: Are we talking about the kernel dried?

H: Kernels, dried kernels. That's what it sold for.

J: How much?

H: About $2.40. Course it wasn't cured then. That's when you take it right out the field.

J: About how many ears of corn fresh and green would it take to make a bushel of dried kernel corn?

H: Now I never counted the ears but it takes two bushels of ears to make one bushel of kernel corn. That's five bushels of kernel corn to the barrel, see. That runs you about 12....

J: Fenwick has always been pretty much an integrated neighborhood hasn't it?

H: Oh yeah.

J: A mix of black, whites, dark whites, light blacks, and the whole range.

H: Yeah all the time.

J: How has it been as a place to live for the Marbury's?

H: No problem.

J: Is it pleasant, have you enjoyed it?

H: Right over on the hill the next house after you come by we grew up together. Now those folks there they were Germans. The older people were German and we played with their children like sisters and brothers.

J: What was their family name?

H: [Tate], [Tate's].

J: Okay I've met some of them.

H: You know Jerry, the boy that runs the, he's a grandson. The auto place up here on the corner.

J: Oh yeah.

H: And Tommy, he works over at the gun factory. Billy used to be the—he worked for the county sheriff department. Those were the grandchildren but all of the [Tate] girls wasn't all of them—I think there was six of them and they were all girls the children. But we used to play with them just like we were sisters and brothers. All the time.

J: What's the difference here? What makes it possible for people to get along or not to get along? Some can't.

H: Well like I told you, old, old, on the hill when we used to come in over here. When you grow up together you don't know the difference.

J: Yeah, yeah that is really the secret isn't it.

H: That is the secret.

J: Learning to respect each other.

H: And not only that, it wasn't anybody else around here but. We lived on the other hill, they lived over there, and you'd go from—well it was one house back in the woods way back over here across the field was the Brooke's. They were colored and then you went on up the hill. The [Bron's] they were white on the left side and on the right side was the Warren's, they were colored. Then when you get up where the little store was then they were all colored up in there. Key's, and the Thompson's, and the Butler's.

J: Keyville? Keytown yeah.

H: Yeah. So but we, we like sometimes—now them boys over there you can ask any of them do they know me or know anything about them and they'll tell you what the story is.

J: Well I've already gotten that feeling from others. That's why I called you.

H: Is that? And like I say we just—and even the grand—now they're the grandchildren you see of the original children.

J: What was their grandmother's name? She still alive?

H: No. She was a [Tate].

J: And their mother's name.

H: Their mother—now these children's mother's name was [Martha]. She was a Norris. Now her husband Thomas, Tom Norris, he come from across the swamp. I don't know whether you know where the Norris's [inaudible phrase] well it's old establishment. But you know about where the Dutton's was. Like if you go through this road up by the [inaudible]?

J: Yeah.

H: If you go across there and when you go up there the real crooked hill the Dutton's live up on there, right to your left down in—

J: That's [Willet Willard]?

H: Yeah.

J: Yeah I've interviewed him.

H: Well the Norris's live back of him on the hill.

J: Oh alright.

H: His father, this boy's father—

J: Billingsley Road then?

H: Yeah.

J: Yeah sure across the Mattawoman.

H: Right.

J: I know where it is. Yeah who used to live in that big old house that George Miles recently sold? On the right.

H: I don't know that one. He's the only one I ever knew [that lived back] in there. That's where you go down the hill. Yeah I've been there.

J: Yeah that's right on the left before you go down right. Okay I suppose one of the things that's made it attractive here for everybody is that it's been a steady stable community. You haven't had a lot of new people pouring in here.

H: Oh yeah. Oh no not down in through here.

J: That's important because the old timers always distrust the newcomers and the newcomers feel the old timers are out to get them. And it takes years.

H: Well then you take—[the take right through here then]. Well you take the [Tate's] and on the other side of the road was [Rhinesvelt]. That's on old Marshall Hall see all of those folks they were white but they owned all the property. See they owned all the property on that side and the [Tate's] owned it all on this side. You can go halfway to the river, they owned—

J: When did the [Tate's] arrive in this neighborhood?

H: Oh that's before my time. I couldn't tell you.

J: What do you hear about the Spear's family? That's before your time?

H: Yeah that's before me too.

J: But you've heard the name?

H: Yeah I've heard it.

J: And you know the house?

H: I know where the place is yeah.

J: Okay that's looking pretty good. Did your mother ever have much interest in family history background?

H: No.

J: Did she say anything to you about her parents?

H: No we were too young to talk much about it then. Didn't care much about history then.

J: What white families in this neighborhood were the Marbury's and the Hungerford's and Posey's associated with down through the years? You know three or four generations ago. I suppose the name itself is a clue.

H: Well that's about all—see like I said there they were [Tate's] and they was originally German from Germany see. This family here and the one of the other side they were German. The only Southern Maryland an actual family was the Bryan's and they were on top of the hill, see. They were originally around here and they were the oldest family that I know of.

J: [Hup] lived in that house did he?

H: That's right. [Hup] bought the [Bron] property where Strawberry Hill is today. All of that was now you see that's what I said. One family would own a plantation where they own I don't know 3 or 400 hundred acres of ground back there. See and the same thing about the [Tate's] and on the other side of the new road now the [Inaudible]. Then you go on down to Spears's to the river and Marshall Hall they own the rest of that. The [park's and even] around on the other side as you go around the river down the other way's the Hungerford's. They were white the boys that run—

J: [Cap] Hungerford [inaudible]. I know his...

H: [Cap] Hungerford's [father]. [Cap] come out of there see.

J: What were the names of some of the old white families that live down the river road?

H: Well that's [inaudible phrase]—

J: The Hungerford's are one.

H: They own property all that's practically from Marshall Hall down to the Spear's property. Around the river. All the way around the river to [Dr. Owens]. I don't know whether you ever was [made it with him].

J: Yeah I know of him.

H: Well he owned—the Hungerford's owned from Marshall Hall to [Dr. Owens] place. That's I'd say 5 or 600 acres in there.

J: Right on the river?

H: Right on the river all the way down the river.

J: Pretty nice piece of property.

H: I'll tell you.

J: Then and now.

H: Yeah. Well that's the way it went. You didn't have a whole lot of small patches in there. They owned all of the ground.

J: When you were going to school Harold was there—did your teacher ever express the opinion that the colored schools weren't giving the children as much as the white schools?

H: Oh we never had anything like that.

J: That subject was never brought up?

H: No. That's politics you see. We never got into that.

J: Some of them I've talked to do remember and they're now willing to talk about it. Mayme Ransome was pretty bitter about it.

H: Well she was up into it see because she was into the school system from the time that she was grown.

J: 1913 was her first year teaching down in Wicomico.

H: Yeah see that's what I said. See I was just for three or four years old. I didn't know what was going on.

J: Did you ever meet Joseph Parks?

H: Yeah sure.

J: What did you think of him?

H: Professor Parks yeah. That was a great fellow. Anytime I—

J: Okay did a good job of educating the black community.

H: That's right all over the county.

J: I understand his daughter's still living?

H: Yeah, yeah.

J: Should I?

H: [Inaudible] home place she lives up there.

J: Where is the home place?

H: You know when you go out to Bryans Road before you get to the stop light where the old road is?

J: Yeah where the cabin on the corner is?

H: Do you know where—cabin on the corner you turn left. And go up there and it's the first house on the left as you turn to go back to the main road. That's where she lives right back in there.

J: Well I should talk to her don't you think?

H: That's the original place.

J: She's his only living now?

H: Well she's the only child yeah.

J: How old do you think she is now?

H: Hmm...35, 40 something like that.

J: So he was well along in years then when she arrived.

H: Yeah oh yeah.

J: Did he marry a local girl?

H: No I think she's from [inaudible] I think. I think she's probably from the [inaudible]. Lillian her name.

J: Lillian?

H: Lillian.

J: Lillian Park.

H: Yeah she's often at the church at Metropolitan. She's [inaudible phrase].

J: I guess you know James Washington?

H: Yeah I know James Washington.

J: I've interviewed him and [Georgia Barbour].

H: All these fellows, all the people around through the [area] I know the most of.

J: I guess I've interviewed seven or eight people now that go to Metropolitan.

H: I guess you have.

J: That's a pretty fair number. Someday I'd like to set this thing up when they've got their choir going for some special program. I told the [Kane] but I haven't heard from him.

H: Well he's the musician there at the—

J: Yeah he ought to be able to help set something up.

H: Yeah get you straightened out.

J: How has life changed for the black people in this community now against 50 years ago? What are some of the major changes that you have seen in your lifetime?

H: Oh my it's so much that has been changed and well if you take you start talking about history like I say now this used to be the only road if we were going up here. That black top road that you come down.

J: Right 227.

H: That wasn't there.

J: It wasn't there.

H: This the way you went to Marshall Hall: You went down here.

J: Right across the bridge here?

H: Right down here and across right along by the way of that bridge. Well it was a bridge then.

J: So we're sitting on the old main road?

H: We sitting on the old main road to Marshall Hall.

J: Can you trace that across the [inaudible]—

H: All the way down there.

J: Well that's interesting. When was the new road put in? 227.

H: Well the new road was put in there in 48...[inaudible phrase] then.

J: Did that help this area? Was it a good thing for Fenwick and Marshall Hall?

H: Oh [inaudible phrase] and the property [as far as that's concerned].

J: People could get to it.

H: Because it wasn't nothing but just an old gravel road like that. It wasn't no black top road. It was just a gravel road, muddy road.

J: So when the Marbury children walked to Pomonkey this is where they walked right?

H: That's the way they went.

J: Across your backyard between the barn and this house?

H: Yes sir right up through there that's right and that was the only road.

J: I'll bet that road is much difference than it was 50 years ago, right out here.

H: Not too much it's smooth now but that's about all.

J: It's been worse huh?

H: It's been worse. I know when you couldn't even walk up there. Not only when you went up the hill beyond that old tree. If you go out you go out that way. You can't get lost. You just follow the road you come right out at the foot of the hill. The road actually is through the farm when you start out through there.

J: I better wait till it dries up a little.

H: It's dry now.

J: Oh is it?

H: [Yes] [inaudible] and you can go right out there and when you get to the black road you just go up the hill.

J: I ought to try that.

H: But the original road went straight on up and when you get up to the gum tree you know where the road went. You can see it....

J: Who were your teachers in elementary school? Can you remember them at all?

H: Well I had Griffin and Mayme Ransome you talking about. You know she taught down here.

J: Right here in this school that we can see from here?

H: Yeah right there.

J: There it is about 300 feet away.

H: And she come from up there where you turn to go up to the Metropolitan church. There's where she used to live in right in that spot. Remember that old house?

J: Yeah I remember her saying, right.

H: Used to be a house right in that little [V] back there.

J: And she owned that land almost till she died.

H: Yeah [the parents] did. I guess they still own some of it in there I reckon, the Ransome's. But there's where she comes from.

J: So there's two—

H: And she used to come down, [left], and then we had a teacher by the name of Griffin. That was Mrs. Slater you talk about Tom Slater that was her sister.

J: Mrs. Slater's sister.

H: Used to teach down here. That was the first teacher that I went to over there. Then later on she had another sister that taught there near a few years in there was [Datcher].

J: I've heard that name.

H: Then we had the girl there and after I guess she was there when I went out of school. Carol, she was from down at Nanjemoy. She lives right up the road here too now. Almost right out to the way Ms. Mayme Ransome's place is only she's on the left side and Ms. Mayme's on the right like going out. And that's about all—

J: Not far from Dorothy Barbour's place I guess.

H: Yeah right along in there, just below there.

J: Yeah Dorothy Barbour was born and raised near where I live in Marshall Corner.

H: Yeah over in Marshall Corner.

J: Right. You must know Charles Woodland?

H: Yes sure.

J: I've interviewed him.

H: Yeah?

J: Yeah. He cleaned some catfish for me that my daughter caught in the Patuxent and that man knows what to do with catfish. They were—he cooked too.

H: Oh he fixed [inaudible phrase].

J: They were good but he refused to do it again. He said, "I'm too old I don't want to. I don't want to skin them anymore."

H: That's work skinning catfish.

J: Yeah I've never done it. I know my [scaling] but I'll tell you he knows what to do with catfish.

H: Yeah you skin them, you don't scale them you skin them.

J: Yeah it's a whole different thing. Did any of the Marbury's have strong feelings about the integration of the public schools? How did you feel about it?

H: Well that never bothered—like I told you I guess I was about the first one that ever told a story on that and then I didn't get very far. I never, never went into [inaudible].

J: Has it been good for the young black people?

H: Oh I think it's been good for everybody I mean [inaudible] in general.

J: Are the schools turning out better prepared—

H: Well [better I do think] because I don't keep up with things in education too much.

J: Well you never in your life really asked anybody to give you anything did you?

H: I never had the opportunity. There wasn't anybody to give. [Inaudible phrase].

J: Yeah right and you knew it. I guess if you sat around worrying about how tough times were you wouldn't be anywhere today.

H: That's right.

J: You wouldn't be anywhere. Your father could come back and see what you've done for yourself. He would hardly believe it would he? Hardly believe.

H: I've often wondered that same thing myself. [How it would feel just to imagine what would he have done].

J: The world has changed so much since he lived.

H: And then you look at it today. Today there's so many places that didn't make much difference with the white and blacks. The kids have places left to them and they just squandered them. They just don't value them you know and it didn't cost them anything. It never cost them anything. All they had to do was pay their taxes. So much of them.

J: Yeah it's a shame. I guess in the long run that hurts more than it helps I'll tell you. That hurts.

H: When you think about it, it does.

J: Yeah because they got to do—

H: And they would be the first ones that complain on top of you. You know that what I haven't gotten but they had.

J: Harold don't you feel that the life that you led—and you didn't have much choice really—this was put before you and what you did to meet the challenges and the way you've lived has shaped you into a pretty [stout] human being.

H: Well there ain't no question [right there]—

J: Not too much shakes you up does it?

H: No, no because once you know the roads a lot of these things that come up and they talk to you about why [I don't it's just some water run off the back]. Because—

J: That's because you walked that road. You walked that road.

H: That's right. [With how I'm lasting what they get today].

J: Yeah that's why we're doing this.

H: With a lot less than what they get today. That's what makes me—

J: I'll bet you have never asked for a hand out in all your life or any other member of your family.

H: Yeah like I said when we started there wasn't nobody to ask because everybody was as bad or worse off than we were.

J: Don't you think that hurts if a young person knows well if I don't make it here I can fall back on this and they're going to help me and pretty soon I get—

H: Well that's [the padding on it you know]. That's what's happening.

J: It's a real shame. Some of those folks when they listen to this tape down the road some of them are not going to understand.

H: They won't believe it.

J: No they won't believe it. They'll think we've been sitting here writing this all up.

H: [You take your kids in the day] and [you]—well let me tell you something that happened 30 years ago. [Inaudible phrase] didn't nothing like that happen you wouldn't have been here. They tell you in a minute. You wouldn't have been here.

J: Yeah that's right. When you were coming along here in Fenwick you were a long way from the sheriff's department in La Plata.

H: We didn't even know what a sheriff was. [Inaudible phrase] the sheriff. I think he used to live up in the country here. Now he was the deputy sheriff.

J: Who was he?

H: He was John Brown. He was the first man that I ever know that was a deputy sheriff. Then we had—I didn't know who the sheriff was. We never had to worry about no sheriff.

J: How did you handle things? Did you even need a sheriff?

H: We didn't need no sheriff down here.

J: What was the reason for that?

H: Because we had been talked to whatever that it was wrong. You wasn't supposed to do that then you didn't do it.

J: And if you did do it what was the [inaudible] consequence—

H: Then you [inaudible]. You didn't have nobody running out there [give them a hand inaudible]. I don't think as I know of any of my brothers or sisters ever been locked up. Well if it was it was for speeding or something.

J: That could happen to everybody including my daughter.

H: [Pay the farm]—the fine I mean the fine as far as that's concerned. I don't know. Like I said see these that's what it was for.

J: Does it worry you a little Harold from time to time about what the heck's ahead of us down the road?

H: Well I think about it. I try not to worry about it but I think about it a lot of times.

J: Yeah well we have to think about it.

H: I think about it a lot of times. I say just 15 or 20 years from now what will be happening?

J: It can be a little bit scary. A little bit scary.

H: I can't understand—a lot of times—well you take the kids today. Well they make as much in a day or whole lot of them make as much in an hour as we used to make in a week. And they're a lot worse off than we were. Lot's worse off. I don't care what it is or where they come from.

J: I find a lot of the young people today are not nearly as much concerned about property as home ownership.

H: They're not. That's the least of their worries.

J: Those cars and those recording machines and the TV those are big. Those are big in their lives.

H: Yeah that's right and they put a lot into them. Put everything [inaudible] into them.

J: Oh you better believe it. You better believe it.

H: Yes sir and after they come to a mature age why then they come to find out that they're going to throw it away a lot.

J: Right then they come to you and they say to you how did you get a nice house like that? What did you do to deserve that? And how can you tell them?

H: That's right. And you got [it paid for]. You don't owe nothing on it and you got some property over there too.

J: Sometimes I get the feeling that even if you gave them an acre or two what would they do with it?

H: Go up the road and see if they could get 500 dollars for it.

J: That's right.

H: Or [inaudible phrase] well I got a piece of property down there I can get with no intention of ever paying for it. [They think that car] and start with the car and two or three months they run into something and tore that up then.

J: And back to zero.

H: That's what's happening.

J: Yup you're back to another visit to Mr. Marbury.

H: And it's one—and if you go out there and tell them it's one of the solidest things you can invest in then they laugh at you. Oh if I don't get this one for 17,000 [or this one for 15,00] well I didn't. That thing ain't worth going up the road in.

J: Why was it so—

H: And it won't do any more than the one for five or six thousand that you can go up to the store and come on back. That's all you do with it.

J: Why was it so important for people of our generation and we're not many years apart, to have a respectable place to live and to own it and to maintain it? But the youngsters today have got to have a big chrome plated car with [white wall] tires and dual stereo speakers in the back. To them that's prestige.

H: And that's real loud if you drive by it why it shakes you in your car.

J: Better believe it boy. I don't know what the answer is.

H: I don't know.

J: And it's something to worry about tomorrow I'll tell you. So at this point in your life I gather you feel and you should that you've done pretty darn well considering all the talents that God gave you, you haven't wasted many have you? You haven't wasted many.

H: Well, that's [for the other side] to talk about.

J: Well no the proof is here. You can see it. When I listen to you talk you're speaking like a man who's not ashamed of anything he's ever done. Not ashamed of anything. I suppose that there would be for you and it would have been for me very gratifying if we'd had a son or two that we could have backed up and supported and gotten on the right track. We can't deal with other people's children.

H: Oh no not anymore.

J: I've got one grandchild and he's going to be alright I think.

H: Once in a great while you find one that's interested in something like that. Then you have to wonder and it makes you nervous—it even makes you nervous sometimes to even be with him. [Because you just around the bend now what's going to happen].

J: It's a shame parents are often even afraid of their children. They're afraid of them.

H: I'm telling you.

J: Did you ever hear of Mr. Harry Graves down at Colton Point. Ran a hotel down there for black people?

H: [Inaudible phrase] heard of him. Might of heard of him.

J: Fine man. He and I went to the same college. He used to entertain the President of Siberia—I mean Liberia. President Tubman, the Tubman's come from here.

H: Yeah.

J: Well anyway he didn't have any children and then he married a very fine woman and they tried to take in a young person and they were always disappointed. Robbed blind, robbed blind and this couple would have left a fortune to any youngster who was responsible. That was a very, very disheartening thing to Harry Graves. I'll tell you. Who walked from Kansas to Michigan in 1910 to play football for the school I went to. You heard of the Oldsmobile?

H: Yeah.

J: [R.E. Olds] paid Harry Graves to come to Michigan State College to play football. Harry Graves never disappointed let me tell you. Big man and you would have enjoyed him. Huge! A real man. Okay. What do you hope to do here on the farm in 1991? What are your plans?

H: Just moving along.

J: Okay. Now are you leasing or renting land at all?

H: I haven't. Most of it is pretty well fenced.

J: Very good okay.

H: And I'm going to keep good pasture and raise the stuff I got.

J: How many acres of hay this year?

H: Well I've got about oh 30 acres or more already seeded.

J: And that your organic fertilizer.

H: Yeah.

J: Most of it.

H: And I'll get some commercial.

J: In your father's day did he have to spend much? Do you recall your father ever having to buy commercial fertilizer?

H: Well he used to buy a little but he never bought much maybe a—

J: Do you remember what kind he put on?

H: That old phosphate. That's what that was.

J: Okay nothing fancy.

H: No sir. That's about all—

J: Did you ever hear of guano?

H: Yeah well that's the same thing. That's all that was—

J: Okay yeah that was an organic fertilizer too.

H: And they had—then they used to have an old fertilizer—it used to be well it come out fish fertilizer.

J: Oh okay. I'll bet that was pretty good.

H: But that was about oh about his last years and I was young then but we used to have that.

J: Okay that last year of your father's life let's see you were what 12 years old roughly?

H: I was 10 years old.

J: 10 years old. What were you doing to help on the farm that year roughly?

H: Whatever come up because I could handle a team—

J: You could handle a team out in the field okay.

H: As good as the average man.

J: One or two mules mostly?

H: Yes.

J: Okay how many blade plow?

H: Just one.

J: One single blade and you could cultivate?

H: Yeah me and my brother we used to cultivate the corn. Well we had got to that age. He was nine I was 10. [Nosing] wasn't do so much.

J: Okay and you could use the manure spreader?

H: Yeah but we didn't have a manure spreader we had pitchforks.

J: Oh boy how did you carry it out to the field?

H: On the wagon.

J: Two wheeled cart?

H: [That wagon]. Four wheel wagon.

J: Okay boy that—

H: And size on it about foot, foot and a half. We'd fork that in there and fork it out. Do whatever it takes.

J: You're talking about 30 pounds a load?

H: That's right.

J: [Inaudible phrase]. Take your arms right out of your shoulders.

H: I'm telling you.

J: Okay so you weren't puny little kids then?

H: No we were strong as they come. We were for our size we were strong as they come.

J: So you were already—you were milking cows at the age of 10?

H: Oh yeah.

J: Doing anything out in the field, getting the wood in if necessary.

H: That's right. Necessary—it was necessary.

J: When did you start—When would you start cutting wood for the next winter? Year before or just a few months?

H: We didn't do that then we cut it the same winter.

J: You burned it green?

H: We could find some dry wood somewhere. I was talking about the fellow on the other side, [Rhinefelt].

J: Yeah right.

H: We'd go over there and get two or three loads of dried wood and a lot of this timber you know. Cut down old trees that fell down. Up on the other hill like if you'd go up this way where you'd go straight out to the road you just kept straight across that road and go up there up on the hill, Strawberry Hill. Lot of that belongs to him. We'd go up there and get a couple of loads of dry pine wood you know for kindling.

J: Just to mix it with the green?

H: Just to mix it with the green and then of course we had plenty of old gum poplar or anything because all of this down in here was wooded.

J: How did you heat that house in the winter? What kind of stove did you have in the old house.

H: Oh we had these old long wood legs iron stoves you know.

J: Okay alright with a top what about this high from the floor?

H: Something like that with lids on top and we'd heat and cook and everything else right on top of that thing—

J: Do you remember your mother working on laundry day?

H: Oh yeah.

J: She'd heat the water in the house?

H: Yes sir that's the only place on top of that stove for the kettle or [bottles] or have them fresh. We used to have a long boiler. Like that about that long with two handles on each end. I [could remember].

J: Boy that was some job on a hot summer day. Did the boys have to help get the water in to the boiler in the summer?

H: Oh yeah indeed yes sir.

J: Who kept the oil lamps clean and in good working order?

H: Well that was up to the girls. They used to take care of that.

J: But you still know how to trim a wick don't you?

H: Oh yeah.

J: And clean that chimney and get a good bright kerosene fire out of it because we have better grade kerosene today.

H: Oh yeah.

J: So that's I do for a hobby. I rebuild old oil lamps. Do you remember having much homework as a kid from school?

H: Oh we had plenty. We always had something to do when we got home. We had some work there then we had to get that homework afterwards. Now the kids get their homework first and don't have nothing else to do. And maybe put off carrying off the trash for the next day or something. That's all they have to do. We were different. We had a job when we got home.

J: And you just knew what it was. You went to it. Nobody had to tell you.

H: That's right. Okay.

J: Now after your father passed what were some of the things that the Marbury children did to have fun? There must have been times when you could break away and play a little bit. What was it—

H: Well you would be surprised. You would be surprised. You've seen these old iron bands off of wagon wheels?

J: Oh yeah. Steel rims. Tires, steel tires.

H: Steel tires. It's foolish but we did it. We would take that thing after we got through our work after we got through our supper and maybe that's like Friday night or something and we didn't have homework to do. We'd run them things up this road up the way I'm telling you. Cross to that other road through the woods, mud and stuff, when we got back most of the time we'd be just as muddy as we could be.

J: What'd you do just roll them along?

H: Just rolled them.

J: Did you take a stick?

H: And we'd have a stick there yeah to keep them going.

J: Okay people don't even know that today.

H: And they won't believe you when you tell them.

J: These were normally what three feet diameter about two inches wide. Now you're talking about with the spokes out or in? Just the steel itself.

H: Spokes out because it's be too heavy for us to—it would get stuck on [inaudible]. But that's what we used to do for after—

J: So you had to keep moving you couldn't just walk along slow otherwise you'd lose it.

H: You run all the way and all the way back.

J: What are you talking about a half a mile or more?

H: Sure it is. Yeah and that's after we had worked. We didn't go sit down after the work.

J: The kids today would consider that hard work.

H: That's right.

J: It used a lot of energy.

H: They'd come in and sit down and turn the television on and get as close to that as they could get.

J: So you didn't have any electric trains did you?

H: No we didn't have no electric.

J: No electric. Did your father ever make any toys for you kids when you were real small?

H: No.

J: You didn't even have a wheelbarrow for a while did you?

H: No we didn't have. I don't think we had a wheelbarrow when my father died I don't think we did. We got one afterwards but I don't think we even had a wheelbarrow [inaudible].

J: Did the Marbury children feel that they had kind of a tough life that they were sort of a poor family?

H: I don't think so because we were well off as any family.

J: As anybody.

H: As the average family was.

J: So that's a relative thing. If you've got a neighborhood in which many of the people are well to do if you're not then you feel poor.

H: We [have been around here. They go and come and they would say great moderations] you still here. Then they would ask me a question maybe well what have you done? You've been away and been back what have you got.

J: Yeah and you could sit here and laugh at them.

H: And they couldn't answer you. So what. [Inaudible phrase] and they say, "Well you've been around in here all your life. What have you done?" I say, "House home over here and home over there and I build one up the road." "Well what did you do with it?' I sold it.

J: Are any of your brothers better off than you are in your opinion?

H: Well I—

J: Do you envy them anything they have?

H: No, no.

J: Okay then you're better off. That's the big thing. If you feel badly about what somebody else has.

H: Now that never crossed my mind. You just better [behaving] and work hard.

J: How many nephews do you have?

H: Oh my that's—

J: Do any of them show interest in this kind of life?

H: Well I'll tell you once in a while they come around and help me a day or two. But other than that like taking hold of something or starting something you don't have that. It's too hard a work for youngsters today. They'll jump on it and raise a [inaudible] for a few hours but it's last longer than that.

J: That's why the watermen's going down the drain because their sons are not going out there and fish for a living.

H: That's right.

J: Have you spent much time out on the Potomac yourself?

H: No I don't never fished in 20 years I reckon since I've been anywhere to fish.

J: Do you remember the days of the hardhead though and the perch?

H: No man I never did much fishing.

J: Where would you find—

H: No fishing, no hunting.

J: Not hunting either?

H: Never did any. If I'd go hunting I'd take my gun from here go around up through the woods to the barn feed my cows and come on around the field and come back.

J: What kind of game used to be available here in your farm neighborhood? What was easy to get when you were a boy?

H: Rabbit about most of the easiest thing.

J: What's happened to the rabbit?

H: [Inaudible phrase] rabbits in this fall.

J: Oh was there okay.

H: Was good rabbit but no birds. We don't have—I haven't seen a coven of birds around here this fall.

J: We haven't seen them either.

H: I don't know what's happened to them we used to have them.

J: Did there used to be quail here?

H: Yeah. You had plenty of them.

J: Ducks of any kind?

H: A few ducks. And we've had more geese here the last couple of years and we've had ducks or quail. They go up and down eating right out there in the fields.

J: Did you ever see a bobcat or hear a bobcat, a wild cat, on your property?

H: No.

J: Okay any deer around here?

H: Yeah we got plenty deer.

J: More than there used to be?

H: Yeah plenty more. Too many really. Yeah we got plenty deer.

J: So if you get a rabbit once in a while today does your wife take care of it in the kitchen?

H: Oh yeah. I think we got two or three this fall.

J: Oh really good. Do you grow any rabbits yourself? Do you raise any rabbit?

H: No.

J: How many hogs are you going to have to butcher next fall?

H: Well I don't know.

J: Do you butcher?

H: I never butcher any for myself. Well what I usually—now I raise to or three for my sister and her son but that's about all. We don't kill them at all.

J: Do you have any livestock left other than the hogs? Do you have any cattle left?

H: Oh yeah.

J: Oh do you okay. Are you milking any at all?

H: Yeah I milked two.

J: How long does it take you to milk those two?

H: Well about 15 minutes. I used to be able to do it in less time than that but my fingers get a little—

J: Got a little arthritis. 15 minutes each cow?

H: Or less.

J: That's pretty good isn't it?

H: That's two or three gallons.

J: Two or three gallons each?

H: No.

J: From the two together. So a gallon and half to two gallons is a good yield or make good milk?

H: That's if you ain't feeding them particularly good you know—

J: How old are these cows?

H: About three or four years old.

J: So they're prime milking—

H: Yeah [you know these are the right age].

J: What make are they so to speak? What breed?

H: Well they're Jersey.

J: Jersey okay. Jersey still good as a good rich?

H: Oh yeah.

J: If you were going to go into beef cattle today what would you take on the land here? What would be your choice?

H: Oh [inaudible phrase] and Angus's.

J: What 50 years ago would a farmer have brought onto land like this in the way of cattle? It's changed a little hasn't it?

H: Well they wasn't into it. You take 50 years ago if a farmer had two cows that's about all they had. That was just for family milk.

J: And none were worried about purebred cattle?

H: That's right.

J: And most of them I suppose never heard of Angus.

H: Yeah that's it.

J: Okay just a good old brown [box inaudible].

H: Yeah that's old [boxy].

J: But wasn't their milk pretty near the quality of—

H: Just about the same thing. But the only thing difference is you feed them a little more now. Then they just give them what they had to give them. [Maybe a good bundle of fodder]. They used to feed [inaudible phrase] fodder you know then and cut the tops off and give her that and [inaudible phrase] the milk. But now you've got to have to fancy feed you know and all that.

J: Is fodder always corn? When you say fodder you mean corn cut up?

H: Yeah that's all it is corn fodder.

J: Did you ever have a silo here?

H: No. Never had a silo. We had [one a valley we put a silo] in two or three years.

J: But not one of the big high.

H: No. We put it in there and covered with so much sportage, waste good, [inaudible phrase].

J: Do you have a corn house now or corn shed, corn crib as we used to say?

H: Yeah [inaudible phrase].

J: What have you called it down through the years? A corn house or corn crib—

H: That's about all it was [inaudible phrase] no you on the side of my barn out there. It's about six to eight feet wide and about 25 to 30 feet long. I put corn in there and I put some in the grain there because—in that old building right across there I've got the wheat and stuff upstairs and I've got a room back there that I put corn in.

J: Have you built any new buildings in the past 10 or 15 years?

H: No nothing.

J: Okay so what I see now has been here for quite a while.

H: Yeah right.

J: Okay have you had any tobacco hanging barns?

H: Not in here no. Used to have one down at our home place we had a tobacco barn down there.

J: How old is this big barn? [Inaudible phrase] is that an old one?

H: Oh yeah that's 40 years old at least. In fact it's been built around put a shed on it too but I had the barn there just about the time we come up here.

J: Are any of the barns left across the road that your Daddy used?

H: No.

J: They're all gone. So I suppose the average life of one of those is 50 to 70?

H: 40. 35, 40 years if you don't keep going putting stuff [inaudible]. Because most of the time they were built they were built out of green lumber. Stuff that was cut off and placed slapped up you know. 35, 40 years and that's about it.

J: You're lucky if they last that long. Normally what kind of roof was put on the barns here?

H: Tin roof.

J: Tin.

H: Yeah tin was cheap then. Now it costs you a fortune. Sheet of tin well you could buy—

J: Or is aluminum better now?

H: Huh?

J: Aluminum better now?

H: Well it's better but you've got to have a tighter [sheeting] because you got to keep it tight if it moves why it won't be long [after you tore] it won't stand. It's galvanized it lay there for years.

J: Yeah even if it loses a few nails the weight of it.

H: Yeah you can always put them back but with aluminum you can't do that.

J: That's true. Once you lose a few nails and the wind gets down in there it's like a sail on a boat. That's right.

H: Yeah [you got a hole in it] oh I tell you.

J: So what equipment have you got now on the farm that's in working order? How many tractors?

H: I've got two.

J: You've got two. And you've got the manure spreader?

H: Yeah.

J: And what else?

H: Mowing machine.

J: Mowing machine.

H: Baler.

J: Baler.

H: I've got whatever it takes to.

J: Did you ever think of investing in a combine?

H: I have one.

J: You have one?

H: Yeah.

J: Okay. A farm this small it still pays?

H: More than pays for.

J: Okay. Do you remember the days of the threshing machines? The steam powered—

H: Threshing machines and the [binder] too.

J: Okay. What's taken care of the old binder? What's displaced the old binder?

H: Well the combine do that.

J: Alright that really combines everything.

H: That does both things. See that cuts it and threshes it.

J: Kicks the straw.

H: Kicks the straw out. [Inaudible phrase] and bales it up. [Inaudible phrase].

J: What do they cost? 80,000?

H: Yeah and pack it right up comes out in a bale.

J: I wonder what it would cost a young man today to get into farming in Charles County. Let's say a 200 acres spread and a 100 acres to put under cultivation. What kind of money are we talking just to start up?

H: He'd need 200,000 dollars.

J: Even if they wanted to how could they do?

H: Yeah well you take the average tractor—the average tractor—will cost you 35, 40,000 dollars and you ain't got nothing but a tractor. You take that little tractor I got down there. A three powered tractor today is about 30,000 dollars.

J: What did you pay for a new—

H: I paid 23 hundred I think—23 thousand.

J: How long ago?

H: That's a 10, 11 years ago.

J: Wow. About say toward the end of World War II about 1945 to 50 what would you have had to pay for a tractor then? Average—

H: half that much.

J: Well that's another sad part of the story. If a youngster did want to get into farming he'd have to borrow a pile of money.

H: Well that's the answer. That's the answer and then he can't make enough out of his commodities to pay his interest, see. That's the trouble. Like we saying a while ago. Two dollars and 38 cents a bushel for corn. You can't buy nothing. Course I don't know what this tobacco gonna do this year. But a dollar and—it's got to bring a dollar and 34 cents a pound. Then you not got to have the hired help to help you to take care of it. You got to have some boys or something. You got to be a family in other words.

J: Yeah that's right.

H: You got to be a family to do farming.

J: You can't pay anything less than what?

H: You can't pay 30 or 40 dollars a day for farm labor. You know that. You come from a farm [inaudible] pay for that kind of [money].

J: Yeah [you're finished there] I know.

H: That's it.

J: Not down here.

H: There's so many days that you go how you gonna pay them?

J: How important has the Indian Head Propellant Plant been in the lives of this community?

H: It's [inaudible] saved Southern Maryland Indian Head has been because—

J: You've worked there?

H: Yes sir.

[End of Tape]