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Tidewater Voices Oral History Project
Old Dominion University
Norfolk, Virginia
For Research Purposes Only

Key

Speaker 1 Interviewer

Speaker 2 Interviewee

@ laugh

short chuckle

— truncation

[] overlap

* * outside of language

5.00 time stamp

0.00

Speaker 1: Uh first off would you like to tell me anything about your childhood or your memories from back then?

Speaker 2: Eh pretty pretty average I guess I mean I I grew up in uh the Oceanview section early early years and then uh from there we moved to uh area around Norview there

Speaker 1: Mhmm

Speaker 2: And uh I s—started out at Oceanview Elementary and wound up at Norview High School
uhm when I was a you know being growing up in Oceanview I was able to go to the beach pretty easy you know because it was it was close by
uh when we was able to to go to uh *clears throat* the uh amusement park that was a big thing
uhm but really other than that I mean it was normal activities of a average child I guess

Speaker 1: So are there any ways you think the area has changed since then as compared to now?

Speaker 2: Well the m—main thing really is the the growth of the area

Speaker 1: Mhmm

Speaker 2: That uh how it's expanded out from the core regions of downtown Norfolk uh Oceanview Ward's Corner uh and the area that I grew up in uh before I got a driver's license @
then it then it then then things changed considerably
but uh my my immediate area I mean it's like you said the the way things just spread out uh from the core areas that had all the population

Speaker 1: So that led to the development of the suburbs?

Speaker 2: Right uh-huh

Speaker 1: Which was in the '40s and '50s?

Speaker 2: Uh probably really got started in the I'd say the late '40s

Speaker 1: Mhmm

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Speaker 2: And then it uh was going pretty strong in the 50's uh
Speaker 1: And then since then everything's more widespread?
Speaker 2: [Yes]
Speaker 1: [You] can't just walk to the corner and go to the store anymore
Speaker 2: Yeah well you uh in growing up uh we didn't necessarily have the 7-11s
on the corner but we had the little mom and pop neighborhood-type [stores] that
you could uh go to as a kid and uh
Speaker 1: [Mhmm]
Speaker 2: So every—things were things were convenient
you had the drug store on the corner and that type of thing
uh and uh a lot of the places where I uh grew up in it wasn't unusual to uhm have
a service station on all four corners
Speaker 1: Wow
Speaker 2: Uh uhm so it was neighborhoods were kind of you know they were
contained you had a lot a lot of what you needed there
Speaker 1: Mhmm
Speaker 2: Uh the major things uh was the big trip to the city [downtown] Norfolk
Speaker 1: [***]
Speaker 2: Uh that was uh like going to New York *** I guess when I was [a kid] ***
Speaker 1: [*@*]
Speaker 2: Uh because all all your major department stores were in [downtown]
Norfolk
Speaker 1: [Mhmm]
Speaker 2: And uh so that was that was a big thing to go to downtown Norfolk
Speaker 1: So I suppose another way the area has changed all the bridge tunnels?
Speaker 2: Uh yes uh particularly the uh Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel uh uh having
the access to Newport News and Williamsburg just within a short drive
Speaker 1: Mhmm
Speaker 2: Uh it before that it was kind of a more like an adventure [***]
Speaker 1: [*@*]
Speaker 2: Uhm somewhat early in childhood I mean I re—remember taking the ferry
to uh Newport News and then uh s—in school around about the sixth grade or so
we had the field trip that uh we went to uh which we had to go on the ferry
Speaker 1: Oh really?
Speaker 2: To uh Williamsburg Yorktown and uh which that was a big deal to us too
Speaker 1: Mhmm
Speaker 2: But uh the ferry ride was about as much a part of it as the uh the scenic
tour when we got to [Williamsburg]
Speaker 1: [The Actual field [[trip]]
Speaker 2: [[Right uh-huh]] yeah
Speaker 1: And you said your dad worked on the bridge tunnel?
Speaker 2: Yes my father worked on uhm I guess probably the earlier stages of it [uh]
Speaker 1: [Mm]

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Speaker 2: He was a carpenter and uh they would do probably what he was involved in was form work where they form the things for the concrete and what have you that they had to make forms for but uh he was involved in that

5.00

Speaker 1: I'm sure it's a big change from the two-lane roads *##* from [back then]

Speaker 2: [Yeah]

Uhm uhm it was pretty normal uh as a young person uh when we used to like to go out and take Sunday rides and uh go in to Virginia Beach and what have you it was basically either two or maybe three lane roads

uh some of the roads used to have what they called uhm the suicide lane *##* I guess it was

Speaker 1: *##*

Speaker 2: They had a middle lane that you used for passing and you hoped you could get back in line before the car from the other side [approached you] so [[it was uh]]

Speaker 1: [Wow] [a big risk]]

Speaker 2: Right yeah it uh uh it could be qu—could be quite interesting *@*

Speaker 1: I've never actually heard about that before

Speaker 2: Yeah it uh like I say you had one lane in the center there that you that they would section off for part of it eh one side of the road you pass and then further down

Speaker 1: Wow

Speaker 2: the other side could pass *clears throat*

Speaker 1: Guess that was kind of dangerous [*##*]

Speaker 2: [Mhmm]

but uh and of course the speed limits were were much slower uh

Speaker 1: Mm I imagine

Speaker 2: 45 50 miles per hour and uh so it a trip say from Norfolk to Virginia Beach was had a little length to [it] uh time-wise [[uh]] in addition to the distance

Speaker 1: [*##*] [[Mm]]

Speaker 2: So it would uh you could make a pretty interesting uhm ride out it was nothing for us like I say to take a Sunday drive mama would fix chicken and uh

Speaker 1: Mm

Speaker 2: We'd have uh drinks in the cooler and stop somewhere or another and uh have our lunch and all we did was go to Virginia Beach

Speaker 1: It was a day trip?

Speaker 2: Yeah day trip uh circle back around come back down Shore Drive and uh Little Creek Road back home but uh course it it wasn't as developed then so it was it was uh it was a lot of interesting things to see

Speaker 1: Mm

Speaker 2: We'd stop at the water look at that uh

Speaker 1: Because I imagine it probably didn't take as long once you actually got the interstate versus taking the two lane roads

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Speaker 2: Well of course the uh in the interstates the time thing was there but uh you could get so far you [know] travel a greater distance in such a short amount of time

Speaker 1: [Mhmm]

Speaker 2: And uhm naturally eh you'd have more time there

Speaker 1: Yeah

Speaker 2: Where you d—at your destination because you weren't so uh involved in uh the length of the trip with the uh narrow roads and the lower speeds so that was a uh a—advanta—a real advantage there to uh not only go further but to have more time when you got there to your destination so and uh then of course after I learned how to drive got my car uhm I kind of branched out and would take little rides myself and uh so it was it opened a lot of opportunities *#*

Speaker 1: Probably a big change from driving 65 miles an hour versus 35

Speaker 2: Oh [most definitely]

Speaker 1: [*@*]

Speaker 2: most definitely uh *clears throat* not all good *@* uh sometimes people got too many things on their mind when they're traveling at [these higher] speeds uh

Speaker 1: [Mhmm true]

Speaker 2: But uh there wasn't as many distractions

Speaker 1: [*#*]

Speaker 2: [Uh] back when say let's I first started driving as they are now uh maybe we had a radio in the car I mean of course but uh we weren't doing all these other things with the cell phones and all that type of stuff

Speaker 1: Ah true

Speaker 2: But uh you could get distracted by the scenery or something like that

Speaker 1: Mhmm

Speaker 2: Uh that might be going on but uh yeah it uh it definitely opened things up with the with the highways improving size and and increasing speed limit uh gave you more opportunities to do things

Speaker 1: True

also distraction I imagine when you're first learning to try to drive a manual and you're on the road *@*

Speaker 2: Well I uh I started out basically with uh learning with the manual transmission although I think the uh one of the first cars that I had did have automatic then I then I did get another one that had the manual transmission uhm I actually like driving the manual transmission because eh eh I feel like I'm more attuned to the car and how it's driving

10.00

Speaker 1: In control?

Speaker 2: Mhmm

Speaker 1: Me too *#*

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Speaker 2: Yeah it uh it's a uh it's a good feeling that uh well I always enjoyed driving

Speaker 1: Mhmm

Speaker 2: And like I say I felt more like I was connected with the car with the uh manual transmission but uh I must admit that uh I I was I was a *##* talking about distractions I used to be have a CB radio in my car and it was kind of difficult to operate a [CB radio] and a manual [[transmission]] and all the other things so

Speaker 1: [##*] [[True]]

Speaker 2: Maybe that wasn't such a good thing there but uh *sniff* it was kind of fun sometimes though

Speaker 1: Mhmm

I don't know if they actually started putting manual transmission as a default in cars back then did they?

Speaker 2: Well really I mean manual manual transmission was how y—how they first started out

Speaker 1: Oh [really?]

Speaker 2: [Yeah] Yeah the automatic came later

Speaker 1: I always had the impression as the manual first and automatic later

Speaker 2: Well that's what I say the manual was first

Speaker 1: [Oh oh]

Speaker 2: [Yes]

Speaker 1: So I mean with driving too I mean you were talking about how gas prices were a lot lower back then?

Speaker 2: Yeah uhm I can remember actually now this would be a special but I can remember paying uh somewhere between 15 18 cents a [gallon]

Speaker 1: [Wow *##*]

Speaker 2: Uh as a maybe if a new service station had opened up and they had a promotion going on but uh and 29 cents a gallon that was around for a pretty good while

Speaker 1: Mhmm

Speaker 2: Uhm uhm the real turn in gas prices came uh when they had the uh Arab oil embargo

Speaker 1: Mhmm

Speaker 2: And uh the prices started escalating where at where we're at today *@* We don't know where it's going to stop but uh yeah you used to be able t—I had I had a uh very well remember I had a little Volkswagen and uh we used to get uh I think i—it held something like about eight gallons so gas was about a dollar a gallon so ei—eight dollars there or so

Speaker 1: Wow

Speaker 2: Pretty well filled the vehicle up

And I got uh thirty-three miles to the gallon and uh so you know go a pretty pretty good distance on a tank of gas with the uh Volkswagen fact is I owned about least two or three [Volkswagens] over a period of time *@*

Speaker 1: [*@*]

Speaker 2: So it it's it was one of my better memories of a car

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Speaker 1: Mm

Speaker 2: And uh I enjoyed driving it

Speaker 1: I'm sure if people told you that gas would be almost four dollars a gallon some places they would [have] thought you were crazy *** back then

Speaker 2: [Oh yeah]

I d—I don't really think anybody would ever thought that uh

Speaker 1: No

Speaker 2: It's got up to what it is now

And uh and i—you know in the case of high test gas could actually going over four dollars a gallon

Speaker 1: Mm really

Speaker 2: So uh yeah it's uh and it it definitely curtails your activity *** a little bit it

Speaker 1: ***

Speaker 2: uh when you go to the pump and uh you got a fourty dollars or so or or more in some cars filling that thing up it uh it's curtailed our driving I know that

Speaker 1: Mhmm

Speaker 2: So and I'm sure young people who are uh working part-time it's probably uh affected their uh going out too

so it's made an it's it's made a a definite adjustment in people's lives the price of gasoline

Speaker 1: I burn up a lot of gas driving from Newport News to Norfolk everyday ***

Speaker 2: Right

Speaker 1: Eh gosh

Speaker 2: *clears throat*

Speaker 1: So growing up in Virginia do you really consider Virginia the South?

Speaker 2: Uh I guess Virginia's kind of that in between uh

Speaker 1: *@*

Speaker 2: There is the uh I guess some of the traditions of the South uhm but I I think Virginia because mainly of the military influence I mean it's uh more of a worldly *** I guess you might [say] part of the South

Speaker 1: [*@*]

Speaker 2: Uh w—because we have so many people that come from different backgrounds

Speaker 1: Mhmm

Speaker 2: Uh that have you know that have influenced our lives that in school uhm y—it's you meet so many people from that actually have come from other areas uh in school uh it's not like you'd be in a small town or something or other then everybody lived and gr—and was born and lives in within a small space uh people come from all around

15.00

Speaker 1: Especially in Tidewater

Speaker 2: Mhmm that's right but uh and it it makes it kind of interesting really because eh they tell tales of where they're from

Speaker 1: Mhmm

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Speaker 2: So I I I think it's a good part of being part of this this area and uh we have different backgrounds
people from different backgrounds

Speaker 1: That's true I think the military's brought a lot of that into the area

Speaker 2: Right

Speaker 1: Which is maybe why we don't all sound really y—you [know Southern]
Southern

Speaker 2: [Right well]
Yeah I uh I always say that uh my relatives in uh Lynchburg sound a little more uh shall we say country [*@*]

Speaker 1: [***]

Speaker 2: Uh but then when I listen to recordings of myself I know that I'm a little slower *** tha—talking than some people
so I guess I has I still have some Southern roots there that uh I hang on to

Speaker 1: Yeah ***

Speaker 2: So do you consider a native somebody that's actually born and raised somewhere or do you c—more consider you know you can trace your lineage back generations and generations in an area?

Speaker 2: Uh I don't kno—I don't know as uh you necessarily have to be born there but uh I think that uh having come maybe at a little earlie—a young age probably would my definition of being a native
but uh having some experience year-wise of being in [the area]

Speaker 1: [Mhmm]

Speaker 2: But not necessarily having been born here

Speaker 1: I've heard people say that they don't consider somebody a native unless they can trace their lineage all the way back ***

Speaker 2: Eh well it's like everything else
everybody's got their own definition uh

Speaker 1: That's very true

Speaker 2: A—a—and I getting back to what we said earlier with uh having so many people come into this area uh from out of state because of the military
uhm that's just a fact of life ***

Speaker 1: Sometimes it can be difficult to find a native actually

Speaker 2: Uh yeah I I I think there would be times

Speaker 1: Especially with people my age a lot of parents in the military
a lot of my friends aren't even from around here

Speaker 2: Well I it it w—it works both ways
I mean you have people coming into the area and then because of the military you've got so many people that've gone out of the [area]

Speaker 1: [That's true too]

Speaker 2: But uh so it works both ways

Speaker 1: So I mean I know the military has a big impact now but did it have such a big impact in the area in the past too?
or is this more of a recent

Speaker 2: Well I'm sure back probably before my memory uhm say at World War II time I'm sure that uh there was uh quite an influence in the area

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Speaker 1: Mhmm

Speaker 2: That had to be a strong influence uh
having been born in 1940 I I don't remember too much of the say World War [II]
era

Speaker 1:

[True]

Speaker 2: But uh and then again in the 50's uh there was quite a bit of activity going
on

uh not that I [personally] [r—] remember so much of it uh

Speaker 1: [***]

Speaker 2: Because uh there wasn't anybody in our family at that time uh that was
involved

in the military so

but uh like I say just the size size of the military installations is

probably what impresses me most of what kind of influence they do have

Speaker 1: Mhmm

Speaker 2: Uhm but there again no firsthand experience in being part of a military
family or

anything like th—like that

Speaker 1: And you said your brother was in Vietnam?

Speaker 2: Yes uh I I have a younger brother that uh was in the army uh in Vietnam

Speaker 1: Uh-huh

Speaker 2: And uh he uh just served his one ter—one hitch and uh came out

Speaker 1: I think a l—o—people that are older Vietnam is one thing a lo—a thing to
remember

like everybody remembers Vietnam, everybody remembers where they were when
Kennedy was shot

[do you remember that too?]

Speaker 2: [Yeah it's uh] I guess that's probably one of the uh moments in your mind
that will forever be burned [there] uh when uh President Kennedy was shot

Speaker 1: [Mhmm]

Speaker 2: Uhm I know myself I I was at work that day and had gone to uh to the
bank and uh I like I was with an employee of mine
somebody came up on the street and told us th—

Speaker 1: Wow

Speaker 2: That it had happened and and of course the first reaction is that it was
disbelief

[And uh you don't] uh it's it's I want to check this out it's to make sure it's right

Speaker 1: [A joke]

Mhmm

20.00

Speaker 2: Because it just didn't seem like it could happen
and of course as w—as we know it it it sadly it did happen and uh so it's it's it's
something that's burned in there that you'll never forget

Speaker 1: Just like the thing for my generation is September 11th too

Speaker 2: Right [right]

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Speaker 1: [Same kind of]

Speaker 2: And uh and and and also for for my generation it uh just the horror of the s—the site of those planes uh crashing into buildings and and then later on seeing the newscast of uh of people coming out of it and hearing the stories of them actually jumping out of windows [but uh] you just

Speaker 1: [Mhmm]

Speaker 2: In America that's something other you you don't think is ever going to happen

Speaker 1: No

Speaker 2: Had to happen somewhere else but uh you just don't really think it's going to happen and y—you almost have to pinch yourself to say did it really happen you know and unfortunately it's it's there it did happen and we should never forget it

Speaker 1: Something you think you would watch on the news have it being taking place overseas somewhere
[not exactly here]

Speaker 2: [Right that's w—that's what] I say
you just you just would never think that anything of that magnitude would ever happen in this country

Speaker 1: [No]

Speaker 2: [It's uh] you jus—you just can't really conceive of it happening

Speaker 1: Which uh I guess sparked a lot of controversy and then you have the war just like when you had Vietnam
all the controversy with the protests

Speaker 2: Yeah uh from a personal level I mean I I never got involved in too much of it

I I was working in uh Newport News uhm downtown or close to the downtown area and uh the particular business that I was working for they

I got a phone call that I had to go back to the store there

That uh my window to one of my doors glass in the door had been broke out

Speaker 1: Mm

Speaker 2: And I had to go down to the store like about 4 o'clock in the morning and uh course I had when I uh got there the police were there so I knew something of what had happened

I mean I didn't now all the details but and they couldn't stay with me but I couldn't leave the store *@*

So uh it was it was a a little unnerving to be there and know—knowing what had transpired to uh until I could get uhm people in there to take care of repairing it so and then later on of course the you see some of the films of uh on tel—of the highlights on television of uh some of the things that happened further in downtown Newport News with the fires so

there again it's those things that happen like that you don't believe is going to happen in your neighborhood or your state or your country

I mean that uh unfortunate and hopefully it's behind us

Speaker 1: True

So you think that the Vietnam protests weren't as prevalent here as in other areas?

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Speaker 2: Well from my own personal experience uh I didn't uh encounter that uh course watching television of course w—we saw it in different localities where it really did get bad so there again hopefully it's a point of history that's

Speaker 1: Mhmm

Speaker 2: In the past and won't have to come up again Uh everybody's got a right to their opinions it's just that it extreme condi—extreme expressions of it maybe we don't need that

Speaker 1: I think with any tragedy there's always going to be conspiracies Some people think that 9/11 was an inside government job and **

Speaker 2: Yeah uh you've always got the the suspicious type and uh and I think rightly so they had they had their inquiry into uh things like Martin Luther King's death and President Kennedy's assassination and I think you need those to settle people's minds [but] uh

Speaker 1: [Mm]

Speaker 2: They've pretty well proven the facts as they were so hopefully uh most everybody's agreed [to that] by now **

Speaker 1: [**] I'm sure that Martin Luther King's death also is something that a lot of people remember as well

Speaker 2: [Yes]

Speaker 1: [where they were when they found out]

Speaker 2: There again, it's one of those moments whether you uh agree with somebody or disagree with them uh it's a tragedy [that uh]

25.00

Speaker 1: [Mhmm]

Speaker 2: That people can't agree or disagree in such a manner that you won't have the kind of result that uh happened there that uh uh he meant an awful lot to a lot of people and uh somebody silenced his voice so that should never happen

Speaker 1: That's very true Especially during that time when they had the segregations in schools and they were desegregating the schools around the time Kennedy as well

Speaker 2: Well the desegregation was s—a little bit more [before] Kennedy

Speaker 1: [Mm]

Speaker 2: Uh uhm my recollection of that is I mean it it was kind of like you know it wasn't anything political with me because we didn't uh l—have th—the uh communication uh outlets like you have now [course] you had television and you had radio

Speaker 1: [Mhmm]

Speaker 2: But uh I didn't necessarily sit there glued to a television set [or] anything like that at that age

Speaker 1: [**]

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Speaker 2: So really it was school was closed and it was like spring break *## I guess for us

Speaker 1: Yeah *##

Speaker 2: Uh we we were out of school so when it came time it was it was good to get back and get back and get on with things

Speaker 1: Mhmm

Yeah I imagine too maybe at least in Virginia maybe it wasn't as big of a deal as say in the further South where there was maybe more racial tension as well

Speaker 2: I don't think it was as big in the Tidewater area

I think in some of the uhm [more rural rural] sections of the state

Speaker 1: [more rural areas]

Speaker 2: Uh sentiments may have been a little bit higher

uh going back to what we said earlier about uh the the wide diversity of people in [Tidewater] area I mean you have so many different opinions about things

Speaker 1: [Mhmm]

Speaker 2: People come from different regions that uh they don't necessarily have the strong feelings one way or the other

there's a kind of a blending of of things so maybe it help us weather things a little better than some other areas of the state

Speaker 1: I think having a vid—diverse area probably helped with that

whereas in you know in the western parts of the state where there's more rural it might I guess it was more of a controversy

Speaker 2: Right

Speaker 1: That makes sense

and ano—another thing a lot of people when they look back on their their childhood and their past is the first time they voted

do you remember the first time that you voted?

Speaker 2: Yes the first time I voted uh I didn't vote when I first became eligible but

uh I voted for uh President Nixon uh uh that was the first time I ever voted

and felt pretty uh not so much uh that I was so strong for Nixon

it just this was the first time that I voted [and uh] it was it was uh I considered it a privilege and uh and I was proud to do it

Speaker 1: [*##]

Speaker 2: And uh and uh I feel like it's eh my duty er to vote

but I feel like it's also my duty to try to have some knowledge of the candidate

that I'm voting for and not [just] let somebody say vote for this person

form my own opinions

Speaker 1: [Mhmm]

True

Speaker 2: In uh however I might vote

Speaker 1: Their first vote and I think a lot of people probably remember their first

drink

was it the age was 18

the drinking age when you were younger?

Speaker 2: Mm I may have had a taste of beer before that time [*@*]

we'll just leave it at that *##

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Speaker 1: [**@**]

But when you were younger the age was 21?

Speaker 2: Uh 21 was the drinking age legal drinking age yes

Speaker 1: Mhmm

So uh how did you meet your wife?

Speaker 2: Well we both uh we both our first job first real paying job I guess you would say

we went to work in a loc—local supermarket in Norfolk

and uh and of course I lived in in Norfolk but she lived in Virginia Beach

but uh anyway our paths crossed there and uh the uh

I remember my daddy uh came home one day and uh I hadn't been at work that

particular day and uh he says there's this pretty redheaded girl that uh **@** has

g—went went to work at uh the store that you work at

and uh so that kind of interested me [**@**] and uh I guess you could say it was

love at first site **#*

30.00

Speaker 1: [**#**]

So he was the one that actually encouraged you to talk to her so you have him to thank?

Speaker 2: [Uh] well she was uh really she was very easy to talk to as a matter of fact

Speaker 1: [**@**]

Speaker 2: Uh uh it was like I had known her uh after we first had our introduction to one another so I guess it was one of those things that was meant to be [**@**]

Speaker 1: [Another thing you tend to remember]

Speaker 2: Yup

Speaker 1: So you said after World War II more people started moving from the cities to the suburbs?

Speaker 2: Yeah uh the uh I guess really the big thing was when the soldiers would come back from uh World War II and started their own families and what have you

but uh there was you know a demanding need for housing that uh uh all these projects went up uh uh

of course when I as I mentioned earlier my father was a carpenter and uh he was quite involved in

Speaker 1: Mhmm

Speaker 2: Building all throughout the area uh so it kind of had made me aware a little bit uh of what was going on and uh

and then we used to li—like I say we used to take drives and uh you could see this s—everything sprouting up uh all over the place

uh because really everything uh I may have mentioned it earlier

everything was mainly concentrated in uh a couple places uh like Oceanview

where I grew up and uh Ward's Corner and then you kind of had to go downtown for all your big stuff

Speaker 1: Mhmm

Speaker 2: Uh where all the department stores were so

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- uh at that point when these developments went up then you started having the smaller shopping centers going in with the the jewelry store the drug store and the small five and dime type store and all that and uh over time of course it's it ke—it just kept spreading and spreading and uh we have what we have today *@*
- Speaker 1: So it increased more of a need for transportation when they had the suburbs?
- Speaker 2: Uh most definitely uh we uh you kind of get to the point you hear a lot of people say you know you you can't get around unless you have a car
- Speaker 1: Mhmm
- Speaker 2: Uh I didn't ride the bus a whole lot myself other than uh going to school that type of thing uh and uh I think it may have been a time or two that I went to downtown Norfolk with my older sister on a bus but uh uh definitely just getting around to the normal things you do in life in this area uhm definitely need f—your own [transportation]
- Speaker 1: [Mhmm]
So they did have public transportation you said they had buses back then too?
- Speaker 2: Yeah and I can just very faintly kind of remember the uh trolley lines there from uh I think it went from Oceanview Park to into downtown Norfolk eh
- Speaker 1: Mm
- Speaker 2: Uh don't think that I ever rode a trolley that I can [remember] ***
- Speaker 1: [***]
- Speaker 2: But uh and uh like I s—like I said before I I really the bus as far as that goes that was mainly going to school uh you had city buses of course in Norfolk and then we lived in Norfolk County for a while an—uh had the the old yellow bus fleet ***
- Speaker 1: ***
- Speaker 2: Riding from that
- Speaker 1: I didn't know they actually used to have trolleys in this area
- Speaker 2: Yeah like I say it uh I just have this small memory of uh of the uh trolley line there in uh going like I say through Oceanview and downtown Norfolk one of the things that uh you was talking about being a native is the Tidewater region that uhm growing up as a kid it you had a lot of things to do
- Speaker 1: Mhmm
- Speaker 2: Uh uh going to the beach of course that's high on the list
- Speaker 1: ***
- Speaker 2: Uh but uh being able to go fishing uh I used to enjoy going fishing uh one of my uncles in particular we used to it wasn't a big deal we just went to the uh piers that they used to have underneath the bridges uhm I think they had one on Hampton Boulevard and I think it was one maybe on Granby Street where you had a pier that you could go [underneath] the bridge and fish
- Speaker 1: [Mhmm]

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Speaker 2: Uh and they used to have the well they had the fishing pier at Oceanview Harrison's and uh we used to go to that and uh I can uh I can remember very well as a kid uh uh course everybody didn't have the big freezers and things like that so when somebody would go fishing and they'd come back and they'd come back with tubs of fish uh and so the call kind of went out in the neighborhood that anybody wanted fish uh you'd come get it so if somebody in your neighborhood went fishing just about everybody on your block [said] if they wanted to have fish they would get fish

Speaker 1: [***]

35.00

Speaker 2: Because they just didn't have the the place to put all [these] these fish that they caught

Speaker 1: [Mhmm]

Speaker 2: And uh a lot of times they'd catch you know a couple tubs of fish so that was a good part of the diet uh growing up and we had we did have a lot of fish to eat

Speaker 2: And uh course my father he grew a garden so we had the homegrown vegetables

Speaker 1: Mhmm

Speaker 2: Uh but like I say there was course there was the normal activities of the neighborhood uh baseball and all that stuff er because we have such good weather most of the time uh lends itself to a lot of outdoor activities so it's uh it's an interesting and a fun place I think to be

Speaker 1: So think one of the interesting things about this area is that while we have the cities we also have the more rural county areas too?

Speaker 2: Yeah and you don't have to go that far either to uh well you just *clap* think in our area here within a short distance of time you go across the Coleman Bridge over there and uh you're out kind of in the county rural area or go past uh Williamsburg or as I mentioned earlier with uh growing up I used to like to take rides w—my wife and I uh we'd go across the James River Bridge well once you get a little ways over that bridge you're kind of back in [the country] again you know so

Speaker 1: [***]

Speaker 2: And we we enjoy th—being able to do that

Speaker 1: Mhmm

Speaker 2: Uh I don't know with the growth we were talking about earlier uhm I don't know how much longer [that'll] be possible I mean *** at the price of gas you might not be able to go that far to uh to get in the country

Speaker 1: [***]

Speaker 2: But uh that—that's always been one of the nice things of of this area you have the nice city to get everything that you needed and uh a short distance away you had the peace of quiet that uh

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Speaker 1: Mhmm

Speaker 2: The uh outlined section provides

Speaker 1: So there's something for everybody no matter what area that [you prefer]

Speaker 2: [I I really think so]

it's uh the it's if you were looking for uhm well from my my viewpoint an ideal place [uh] I think we've pretty well got it all

Speaker 1: [Mhmm]

Speaker 2: Uh if you want the big city, we got it

Speaker 1: *#*

Speaker 2: If you want the peace and quiet you got enough money to pay the gas we've got that too *#*

Speaker 1: Yeah that's very true

Which I mean with a lot of the water and things we have a lot of it wouldn't be possible without the bridges so it's in a way I thin—I'd say urbanization is probably a a good thing

do you think a lot of people your age think the urbanizing this area they see it as more of a negative in a negative light?

Speaker 2: Uh there are times you maybe want the good old days but uh in order to uh enjoy things y—y—you got to you got to go with progress

I mean there's there's no way of getting around it so uh like I said being uh stuck in traffic is no fun [but uh]

Speaker 1: [*#*]

Speaker 2: Uh the fact that you do have uh conveniences uh close at hand you don't have to go too far to to get all the services that you need I mean course that's good

Speaker 1: So can you tell me about the time you bought your house in Newport News?

was it an upcoming suburb at that time?

Speaker 2: Uh it was it was pretty well an established

Speaker 1: Mhmm

Speaker 2: Area that uh not too far really from the heart of the city [uhm]

Speaker 1: [So]

there were already a lot of families living there [[at that time?]]

Speaker 2: [[Right uh-huh]]

But uh uh one thing that was kind of uh maybe a little different but we were the youngest among the youngest

Speaker 1: *#*

Speaker 2: People that lived in the neighborhood

And now as time has progressed *#* we're getting to be the oldest people *#* that live in the neighborhood or amongst the oldest people that live in the neighborhood so

and uh there was uh a time between our children growing up and going to school and and graduating and getting on with their lives that uh there wasn't too many small children in the neighborhood

40.00

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Speaker 1: Mhmm

Speaker 2: So that was something that we we missed but of course now uh we've gotten more younger people coming in having families and so it's nice to hear children's [laughter] and and uh know that they're around

Speaker 1: [Mhmm]

Speaker 2: Uh but uh basically we kind of have a quiet neighborhood that uh th—th—thankfully uh doesn't a whole [lot go on *@*]

Speaker 1: [*@*]

Maybe when you first moved the older people decided they wanted to live in the country *#*

Speaker 2: *#*

Speaker 1: The good old days quote unquote

Speaker 2: Yeah eh well more the uh the uh evolution of the neighborhood unfortunate has been to people uh passing away you [know] so it's a it's it's one of the areas that uh people kind of like so they don't uh they don't move that frequently

Speaker 1: [Mm]

Speaker 2: Uh and it was it's that's what we like [about it] that uhm been fortunate to have good neighbors

Speaker 1: [Mhmm]

So you can have neighbors that have been living in the same house for twenty years and you [you know very well]

Speaker 2: [Right well]

Actually one of our neighbors uh was living there before we ever got there so

Speaker 1: Wow

Speaker 2: And uh well at least one or two of them uh were living there before we were

we've actually got one neighbor down the street that the child of the uh neighbors that were there has lives in their house now so

Speaker 1: So they're continuing [the tradition]

Speaker 2: [Actually went to school]

with uh my uh youngest son

Speaker 1: Mm

Speaker 2: So so they like I say it's it's ki—it's it's the kind of neighborhood that people tend to stay in

Speaker 1: I think that's good though because with a lot of military around some neighborhoods might see a a lot of different people in one area you might [rent the same house to different people every year]

Speaker 2: [That that's that's true too]

You're constantly uh to use a term at work having turnover *@*

Speaker 1: *@* Yeah

Speaker 2: But uh by the time you get to uh know somebody they they're being transferred out uh

Speaker 1: Mhmm

Speaker 2: Whether it be military or so many jobs now that uh people are involved in that they get transferred so uh for one reason or another you know you're getting

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people moving out of the area but there again like I say our neighborhood has been pretty well stabilized that we don't have that much of a turnover of the people [other] than uh time some point in their life uh they uh reach that [golden] age and pass on uh

Speaker 1: [Mhmm] [Yeah]

It must be nice though to have the consistency of knowing the same people for a long time

Speaker 2: Well yeah uh the familiarity

Speaker 1: Mhmm

Speaker 2: That uh you go out your and you you know who's there

Speaker 1: That's true *#*

Speaker 2: One of the uhm uhm we were talking earlier about uh things that uh transportation-wise I think was maybe the subject we were on but uh James River Bridge

Speaker 1: Mhmm

Speaker 2: Uh being an old two-lane uh road across uh to the other side over there and uh now we've got this big highway there [that uh] two lanes on each side for traffic

Speaker 1: [*#]

Speaker 2: And uh eh just uh other than a bridge draw uh it's a quick trip across to the other side of the water and uh and uh and I I'm one of those people who like to stop and smell the roses and I I enjoy the scenery uh uh just going across the bridge I mean I thi—I guess a lot of people take it for granted all they want to do is get on the other [side]

Speaker 1: [Mhmm]

Speaker 2: And uh and I've the occasion when I when I worked on another location that uh that would have been my goal too just to get on the other side [but] uh at other times when I have the luxury of time on my side I enjoy the scenery and what's going on on the water too

Speaker 1: [*#*]
Mhmm

Speaker 2: But uh it's definitely uh been a big improvement that and course the Monitor Merrimac uh bridge tunnel system that uh we can go a great distance in a short amount of time and closes things [together]

Speaker 1: [Mhmm]

Speaker 2: But uh uh we have relatives on the other side of the water and being able to particularly we don't go as much now but uh in previous years the ability to make that connection in a short amount of time uh ha—and therefore when you [get] there having more time spent with them [too] you're not on the road all that time so that's that's definitely been a good uh real good thing

45.00

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Speaker 1:
[Mhmm]

[True]

Speaker 2: Not a good thing when you're stuck in the traffic [*@*]

Speaker 1: [*** No]

But I've heard of the uhm the old James River Bridge is now the fishing pier is that true?

Speaker 2: Yeah uhm I think I've been on it one time since it was made into a fishing pier

they used a short section of it

Speaker 1: Mhmm

Speaker 2: And uh which thankfully somebody was smart enough to r—realize that uh it could be utilized for that

Speaker 1: That's true

Speaker 2: And a lot of people have enjoyed it uh as as I said before I like to see what's going on in the water and we always kind of glance over in that direction when we're going to the southside uh I'd see if somebody's pulling in the big one [*@*]

Speaker 1: [*@*]

Which is true

and you were talking earlier about the mom and pop stores that used to be there was it a big change do you remember when you got the first Wal-Mart here?

Speaker 2: Oh yes at uh at uh it seems like you was in a uh airplane hanger [*@*]

Speaker 1: [***]

Speaker 2: Eh pretty good sized stores and course they they pretty well carry everything and uh and the thing eh they're fairly convenient to you know to get to of course uh

Speaker 1: [Mhmm]

Speaker 2: [I think] we have w—two of them uh in the area right now so uh but then again sometimes I I like the smaller store too the uh the cozier feeling but uh they have their place and uh certainly they're successful

Speaker 1: *** Support the underdog sometimes

Speaker 2: Right [*@*]

Speaker 1: So you think it was a big culture shock for some people?

Speaker 2: Up—well probably so

I I I having been in the retail business I mean it uh it was just a a bigger th—thing than I was used to so maybe not so much for me but uh I'm sure some people yeah

Speaker 1: People that live in the rural areas that are used to the small stores all of a sudden [have to go to this big]

Speaker 2: [I I I would I would say so yeah [*@*]

Speaker 1: [*** True]]

Which I think sometimes is part of so much of the culture now but uh you talk to people that are older than I am it d—wasn't always around when they were younger

it's kind of interesting to get two perspectives

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Speaker 2: Yes it uh well I think the the the biggest thing is uh when you any of those larger stores uh like I s—I mentioned earlier about going downtown you know when you had the uhm smaller stores in say Ward's Corner

Speaker 1: [Mhmm]

Speaker 2: [Uh] uh and then go downtown and the expanded [departments] you know what I mean

there was there was so much more there for you to see

Speaker 1: [***]

Speaker 2: But uh the Wal-Mart I guess it you know it it does have that advantage it uhm that they have a quite a bit to choose from

Speaker 1: It's all about convenience like the 7-11s [and all the gas stations all over the place now]

Speaker 2: [That's well that's that's what everybody wants now is]

Speaker 1: 24 hours

Speaker 2: 24 hours uh in and out as fast as you can

Speaker 1: That's true

which also goes for another thing that they didn't have back then the interstate you said that uhm it was implemented for military use at first?

Speaker 2: I I as I best remember that was one of the s—strong selling points for the interstate [system] that uh that they would be able to utilize it for military purposes

Speaker 1: [Mhmm]

Speaker 2: Uh I think a lot of it was uh President Eisenhower having been uh a military commander uh he saw the highways in Germany and uh felt that this would be a good thing for

Speaker 1: Mm

Speaker 2: You know the United States

and of course it's proven him right that uh it would kind of have been unheard of going from Newport News to California **

uh or as we have done we've gone to uh we have a daughter in Texas and the uh ability to take such a long trip

Speaker 1: [Mhmm]

Speaker 2: [Uh] going back to those two-lane roads I don't think I'd want to do it but [I've done it] several times on the on the interstate and uh the uh convenience of having the rest stops and

Speaker 1:

[***]

Mhmm

Speaker 2: Being able to get off the highway and go eat uh I mean it's uh if you can if you can remember back to looking for a uhm place to get something to eat or what have you uh in say the 50s as compared [to what you're] as to what you have now

Speaker 1: [Mhmm]

50.00

Speaker 2: I mean it's just night and day difference but uh yeah

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you w—you definitely wouldn't want to go back *#*

Speaker 1: Wouldn't have to drive around searching for half an hour [*#*]

Speaker 2: [That's] right
yeah

but uh we just you know of course we just take it for granted now [but] uh

Speaker 1:
[Mhmm]

Speaker 2: Having seen the uh uh what it was like years ago
the scenery was nice but sometimes it was a long stop top uh get out and stretch
your legs and

Speaker 1: True

Speaker 2: Get something to eat

Speaker 1: And just strange to see now that we're so dependent on the interstate
[where would we be without it? *#*]

Speaker 2: [Oh yeah yeah it's like] what in the world would you do without it [you
know?]

Speaker 1:
[mhmm]

Speaker 2: Uh of course I k—I kind of not that I mean participated in it
I and I don't know that much about it
I know in Norfolk they're getting ready to uh and doing the preliminaries for this
uh light rail system and uh

Speaker 1: I think I've heard about that

Speaker 2: I think that's going to uh be a good thing
uh I think it'll course it'll just be part of everyday nor—uh normal routine for
those

Speaker 1: Mhmm

Speaker 2: Uh that would use it but uh I think it's a good thing for our area and uh I
hope someday that uh maybe we'll have something that uh be similar to that that
uh make it easier for people to get back and forth to work and uh and get the cars
off the road

Speaker 1: Alleviate some of the traffic

Speaker 2: Right uh-huh

Speaker 1: Yeah

Speaker 2: So that's something that I'm I'm looking forward to happen
whether or not I'll I'll be one that'd be riding it would be another thing but [I
think] uh if it gets cars off the road then

Speaker 1:
[*#*] Mhmm

Speaker 2: I I I'll have some benefit from it too

Speaker 1: May d—maybe no more six mile backup go on at the [HRBT] anymore
#

Speaker 2: [Right]
That's true uh well I u—I I may have mentioned earlier that I worked in
Gloucester for a while and uh the Coleman bridge used to

Speaker 1: Mm

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Speaker 2: Have a little habit every now and then of getting stuck

Speaker 1: Wow *##*

Speaker 2: Uh after an opening and uh i—it was nothing to maybe be there for a hour or two hours

Speaker 1: Whew

Speaker 2: Uh until the bridge was able to close again so and there were a couple times that uh I had to detour all the way around West Point just to get to Gloucester

Speaker 1: Oh [wow]

Speaker 2: [So] that added I think something like about another 45 minutes to my drive

Speaker 1: *##*

Speaker 2: So maybe one thing that we hadn't mentioned uh earlier when we was talking about and I was talking about going to downtown [and] what have you was the shopping malls that uh having all those stores uh there at your fingertips

Speaker 1: [Mhmm]
Mm

Speaker 2: Uh uh I know when they first opened uh and it was just amazing to go in there that uh you could walk inside no matter what the weather was that *##* and uh there was something for for everybody uh something to keep the children amused and uh course they always had places to get something to eat and that sort of thing there again things have you know having seen what it was like before it happened and

Speaker 1: [Mhmm]

Speaker 2: [What] may be just everyday to someone your age you know but uh it that was kind of an amazing thing when it first happened but uh you could go and have all the stuff at your fingertips and uh and the comparison shopping that you could do within a short amount of space [and time]

Speaker 1: [Mhmm]

Speaker 2: Uh instead of getting in a car and driving five miles [over here] and five miles over there to check on the same thing

Speaker 1: [*##*]

Speaker 2: And uh course now with the younger people uh they're doing it on the internet so uh

Speaker 1: Mm

Speaker 2: But uh anyway to our generation the sh—shopping malls were one of the one of the big things that happened in our lifetime uh [really was]

Speaker 1: [So it's another] move toward convenience

Speaker 2: It really was yeah yeah

Speaker 1: Just like cell phones I guess for my my generation even maybe my parents' generation

Speaker 2: Right

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Speaker 1: You don't have to go anywhere you can just call somebody and ask them pretty much anything

I guess people more maybe accessible with more technology now

Speaker 2: Yes it uh it uh convenience

Speaker 1: Mhmm

Speaker 2: It's uh that's the big thing nowadays

55.00

Speaker 1: And you think people maybe your parents age when you were younger if they knew in the future people would have cell phones and the internet and computers you think they'd probably be pretty shocked?

Speaker 2: Well you know we used to have uh Dick Tracy with the uh thing on his wrist there *** that uh

Speaker 1: ***

Speaker 2: You would you'd no you never thought it was going to happen really that uh eh maybe in your wildest dreams you know you thought [something] like that but uh the the

Speaker 1: [Mm]

Speaker 2: As I mentioned before we have we have a daughter in Texas and to be riding down the road and somewhere in let's say Arkansas on the way going down there and the being able to call them and tell them that we're such and such place

Speaker 1: Mhmm

Speaker 2: Going to stay overnight and be leaving such and such time the next morning

when we were kids we would have never conceived the possibility [of] doing something like that it just

Speaker 1: [***]

Speaker 2: Beyond beyond even possibly happening that uh so it's take it for granted but it's uh it still has uh when you think about it it's to somebody from my generation it's kind of an amazing thing

Speaker 1: So it seems like it would be something out of a science-fiction movie ***

Speaker 2: Kind of yeah

Speaker 1: [Yeah]

Speaker 2: [Yeah]

Speaker 1: I'm sure there's an example b—for us when or my generation when we're older we're going to be thinking about that as too ***

because you know you think parents when they hear their ch—k—children's music they think it's always you know terrible

did you ever your kids' music and all Jimi Hendrix and Led Zeppelin and [Pink Floyd] did you ever listen to them?

or do you think it was just [noise]

Speaker 2: [***]

[Uh]

Speaker 2: Well Jimi Hendrix uh I know of it but I didn't really listen to it but uh I guess I my music taste e—evolved over time

uh I grew up in a household that was basic uh country music

Speaker 1: Mm

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Speaker 2: Well of course when I became a teenager it was rock and roll

Speaker 1: *##*

Speaker 2: And uh so I I didn't listen to the music that my parents listened to but then as I got older I kind of went back to the country music although it wasn't the country music uh like the kind of country music that my mother and father used to listen to

Speaker 1: Mm

Speaker 2: Uh it had it had changed and uh so it was it had and then it it is evolved over time that it's more like the rock and roll music that [I] used to listen to and uh you dog gone all it's noisy *@*

Speaker 1: [Shania Twain]

Speaker 2: So I tend to find myself going back and listening to more of the older music uh uh an—and I did like pop music too uh the Frank Sinatra that [type] of thing so

Speaker 1: [Mm]

Speaker 2: Uh I've kind of gone back to listen to some of the my wife kind of grieves me every now and then about [uh] liking to listen to the old music but that's that's my taste now is more towards the older music

Speaker 1: [*@]

Speaker 2: Uh the things that have evolved recently I mean I d—[*##*]
I can't get it *##* that uh I just don't have any taste for it

Speaker 1: [*##*]
So you weren't a big fan of your children's music when they were growing up either
all the rock and roll

Speaker 2: Uhm some of the uh I guess they w—what they would call now soft rock

Speaker 1: Mm

Speaker 2: Some of that music I did like and I still like some of it uh but the the hard rock

Speaker 1: *##*

Speaker 2: No I I I n—never could bring myself around to developing uh an ear for that but uh some of the soft rock I did like that [and] and I s—like I say I still like it

Speaker 1: [Mhmm]

More Elvis less Led Zeppelin [*@*]

Speaker 2: [*@*]
Yeah it uh well I I've l—I've listened to uh and I don't know as I know all the names of the acts but uh even things like uh ZZ Top [and] some of that I can listen to

Speaker 1: [Mhmm]

Speaker 2: Uh uh the Silver Bullet Band [*##*] with Bob Seager I I like some of that [[uh so]]

Speaker 1: [*##*] [[I know the names]] but I don't know [[[that]]] I actually know *##*

Speaker 2: [[[Yeah]]]
and uh but uh and I you know I listen to the songs on occasion

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Speaker 2: I probably couldn't tell you a single title but uh some of that I like but uh I kind of like the some of the music that was popular in the 50s and some of it in the 60s 70s when it gets beyond that it's an occasional song in there that maybe I like but for [the most part] that's not what I like to hear **

Speaker 1: [**]
This has been pretty interesting
thank you for letting me interview you for my project

Speaker 2: Well I've enjoyed [it]

Speaker 1: [You've] been a big help

Speaker 2: ** I very much enjoyed it

60.00

Speaker 1: Thank you very much

Speaker 2: Thank you