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

(00:00 min)

- I am [WORD REMOVED], Senior. I was born in 1937 at the corner of Brambelton and Church Street, at old St. Vincent's Hospital. I grew up in Bortwick village, then we moved to Brambelton, then I moved to Berkley, then I moved to Riverdale which is in South Norfolk. Then I grew up and I went into service. I was in the service there in South Carolina, the army, and I got out, and I came back and I started working at Lane Atlantic Company drilling wells and ... It's a nice area, I live downtown which now is totally grew up. It's not the same town. Different, we had ferries and we didn't have no tunnels. And, uh, then I got married, and lived around in Virginia Beach and Portsmouth, Chesapeake, then... uh... I went to California and lived out there for about five years and I came back here, then I went back, then I came back again, and I end up being divorced which, you know, everybody does, so.. But this area has got a lot of things going that nobody knows about, really. They got a lot of sights people don't know. And it's just.. it's a nice town. It's very convenient to everything. All depends on where you live at. You live down the beach, then you have to pay the consequences.

- Right

-And uh.. but other than that, I met my wife [WORD REMOVED], we been married three years now, we've been...I've been ... been living here five years. And I love to play golf, and I got a lot of good golf buddies, and major things is just... it's a lot of work around here for people if they want to work and I really don't know it's just that... I was born and raised here.

- Hm, what do you think, like now it's popular to say Hampton Roads. Do you use that, or you still just use Tidewater?

- No, I very seldom I ever say Tidewater,

- Really?

- No, I always say Norfolk, or Chesapeake, or Portsmouth, or Virginia Beach...

- So you like don't refer to the whole area as a whole?

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- No, I just don't Like I say, we live in Virginia Beach here now and I don't... When they say Tidewater, I know what they are talking about, but I have never, you know...and I lived over in Newport news for a while but I didn't like it over there.

- Why is that ?

- Well, it was just so far me it wasn't worth it me going back and forth and just the traffic was brutal and uh ...but other than that ... I mean you know It's just very, very convenient for me and it's convenient for my wife to run back and forth to work. And she works downtown, CHKD at hospital and ...but I have four children they all grown. They all gone, thank God.

- What are they doing?

- Well, I got one son in Carolina, and my daughter, I don't know where she is at... and I got a son up there in... What is that? Larnsville? And I got another son he lives with his mother and I got ... three grandchildren, I got two great-grandchildren. Well, I actually got more than that. I got about five grandchildren now and two great-grandchildren.

- Wow.

- So and my stepson, they live in Williamsburg. And my stepdaughter she and my step son lives in Rhode Island. And ... we... I met her daughter one time, this was just past August and ...her mother, she lives in .. North Carolina go down there and see her and she got a sister lives in Charlotte, North Carolina. And got a sister lives up there what? I cant think of Norman Lake? Normany ? Norman Lake and we don't see them very often. But other than that it's just all the thing about my life there... And I done construction work and I traveled all over the country but I always end up back here.

- So why are you coming back? Is it the fact that it's home or it's just that...

- It's home and uh I , I have all my friends here and, you know, I have a sister who lives and my brother who lives in California.

(5:00 min) Kingswork , California, and I lived out there with him, but I've traveled back and forth and I got to the point I just hated that drive, so I just packed my stuff up and said to my sister, I said "I want to come back here and live," which I'm glad I did.

- Ok, so what was the longest time you lived outside of Virginia?

- Oh, well, I would say from 93 until 98 and then I left here in 93 and I came back in 2000 to live, about 7 years. But I always came back and forth at least once or twice a year.

- So it wasn't like you lived outside for several years or something. You always..

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- Right.

- Yah, you like I say I play a lot of golf. I play every day if I can. And uh, it gives me something to do. I been retired since 93 and...my healthwise ain't all that great but thank the good Lord I'm still breathing .. so... but other than that it's good. I love the town, I really do. And for a young person looking for it, they got golden opportunities here. There's a lot of work here people don't realize it There's a lot of work, here people want to start work... But never had no trouble, I worked in the shipyard I worked for shipyard for about ten-eleven years. And I worked for the general market out in Chicago I worked for them till seventeen years ago building all these big storage tanks which I've got to meet a lot of different people I worked all over the country New York, Jersey, Philadelphia, a few Pens..., you know, all over up there in New Hampshire, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina...

- Mm

- I worked all over and but I've really enjoyed it. I've to meet a lot of interesting people.

- When you meet all those people did you ever hear something about "you are from South"/ you know, something about that?

- Oh, yeah. Ya'll, they say

- Any funny stories?

- "Ya'l"l and I laugh about it, you know. "Eat grits, you eat grits, God, who can eat that," you know. Stuff like that you know. But they accepted me. They really accepted me. Especially up in New York they really accepted me. And I lived up there in New York from 68 to 74. But I'm always coming back here. You know, visiting and stuff. Because I had my mom and dad here before they died. Well, my mother died in California. My dad died here.

- So do you know how many generations of your family actually lived here?

- Well, yah. My dad, he was born in North Carolina, but he was raised up in Hickory and my mother, she was born in Jacksonville, Florida. But her family moved here when she was small. And she was raised here, so, you know. And all my brothers and sisters lived here. The youngest sister, she moved to California. And got married to the guy while she was in there in the navy and but that was just... We have good relationship my sister and I.

- That's good.

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- Talk to my brother once in a while. But uh, my oldest son he was living with us until October the thirteen. I told him he had to go. He needed to get out on his own, so he moved to Carolina.

- Right

- So, but other than that that's just about.. you know ..this and other things but if you have any questions I'd try to answer them for you.

- Sure. What is the memory that you ... the brightest memory of high school. Like when you went to high school. I know it's very important, you know, where you go like people relate to each other in terms of which high school you went to and it's important until I don't know, until the rest of their lives, from what I understand. People say, oh I went to Kempsville or.. All those areas are so important and so if you can talk about that.

- Well, I went to Borkwick village, uh to the sixth grade than I moved to back in town the I went to Henry Clay I graduated sixth grade to seventh grade roughly junior high school, which is downtown now and then I left I graduated seventh grade to the eighth grade to Maury but I never did finish. I just started there and just quit which I .. it was my mistake but

- It happens

- **(10:00 min)** But other than that I enjoyed Maury cause I always try to keep up with their football team and see what how they are doing there and all but uh I had a lot of friends there. In fact, I think [WORD REMOVED], he gone to that. If they went to Maury, I am not sure. But uh it was nice high school and we had a lot of stores that we could go out, you know, at break time and at lunch time and we cant go to cafeteria to eat. But they finally closed them down because so many kids were getting in trouble.

- Right

- So they just shut it down. It's what I heard now. I don't know. I haven't been over there in along time. The school has probably changed a lot since I was there. 1952. so that was I liked the area pretty good I enjoyed it.

- When did you get your first car?

- I got my first car when I was fifteen years old, 1939 Ford Convertible. My brother had it and he tore transmission out of it and he owes money on it so I just take the payments over so I got it from my dad. My dad was a mechanic, so I went and bought a transmission and put it in. then, a second car was 1976 Ford. And uh, then it all went up the ladder. So. But that 39 Ford I

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had a lot of fun in that. Drop the top and go. But it was a lot of fun. I really did. We lived in poor areas, but you know, because I come from a very poor family. But uh, I had a good life, good mother and father. And they tried to provide for us the best they knew how

- Sure

- And my dad was my best friend. He wasn't my father, he was my best friend, really. Because I could go talk to him and he understood me. But he sure whipped up on me when I was a little one. Because he said: "I'd tell you, I know I'm gonna whip you for something I did not catch you doing." But he was a good father, but he was a very strict father.

- Did you do something together like fishing or ?

- Oh, yah. We did a lot of thing together. We went fishing, he flew these little light planes, he would take me flying with him and we fly over and see the country and, you know. And I went and helped him on the jobs and stuff. And he learned me a lot. He said don't always depend on one job because it always allows you something else you can do – get another job, which he was right. But he was... he was a good father, very strict father. And my mother was very religious. We went to church every Sunday. Every twice a week, during the week and then on Sunday. Sometime we had revolves, we had to go every night. But my daddy played music, which he was terrific steel guitar player. One of the best in this Tidewater area. He had a band for 37 years.

- Wow

- But he always jumped on me about rock-and-roll music. And I cant say what I want to say but he said: "Who wants to listen to that mess?", you know. And I said: "Well, dad, that's the generation."

- Right

- But I enjoyed rock-and-roll. I love to dance. Love to dance.

- Was there a specific place that you went to or..?

- Now, it's.. we go.. I took her one time and she likes it. It's called "Stepping Out." And it's a .. They call it "the shag club" but it's fifties style dancing; Jitter bug. But they put out a lot of fancy stuff. But I don't do that but I still can hold my own on the floor. But I love it. I love to dance.

- Where is it?

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- And he and I we go fishing quite a bit. And but I like I say, it's a lot of things to do here. People just don't realize. Like Botanical Gardens, you know, it's beautiful to go through there.

- Right

- Take that little boat ride, but it's just really

- What do you mean when you say "people don't realize it"? Like you hear somebody saying it's boring here?

- I don't know whether that's said or, you know it's a lot of places, go downtown, museums and all. Downtown is really became.. All downtown used to be just number of slums. Trust me, not like now. Dirty, had a train station down there, on Main Street. They had on Main Street back in the 50s and early 60s, it was wall to wall bars.

(15:00 min) I mean wall to wall bars. And during a week or on the weekends you couldn't even walk down there. It was just wall to wall. Then they had a ferry going from Norfolk to Portsmouth, then they one down at the base, going from by the naval base to Newport News

- Mm

- Then they had another from where the tunnel is from here to go to Cape Charles. And that's how you got across the water. Just taking the ferries. So, but a lot of people remember all of that, you see.

- Right

- And it's very-very... they got.. you go downtown museum they got all downtown all cars running, had all wall to wall department stores down there. Then when they started to build all those big shopping centers around, it's just kind of fizzled out.

- Right, well

- And I can remember you go down to Ghent by down there where the hospital is you can get a two-story house for thirty dollars a month.

- Wow

- Now it's 15 to 2000 dollars a month. That's the difference. They renovated it and it's just like Norfolk General Hospital is started on Alley road. A lot of people didn't think that when they moved the rid gate and they kept adding on and adding on and now it's one of the best hospitals in United States. And it's grown. Like right now we got tunnels,

- Right. What do you think about that .. I know people always mention like 2-64 East used to be a Toll Road?

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- Yah
- And then they changed it?
- No, they had the toll road used to be going over to the Hampton roads bridge, 64. They used to have tolls there. Then they had a toll downtown. When they had that tunnel they finally took that off.
- What do you think about that?
- Just like I say, you know, you had to go and I think it was 10 cents to get across. And it was 25 cents to go and get across from Norfolk to Hampton. Cost 25 cents. And but the traffic was back up. People going through, getting change and stuff like that. And it was a mess, they finally took it off. And they had a toll road on 2-64 going down. You left here and you did not hit it until you get almost to Rosemont. Then you had to pay 25 cents to get through that. Then you had to pay, I think 10 cents to get off some of the exits to get off. And they finally took them off.
- Right
- But, it's uh, the town is really grown, it's just really grown.
- Did you ever think Norfolk was going to be so business-like? There is so much business there..
- Well, yes. I figured it grows because we got the navy here. And this is World's largest naval base right here. And I used to go and work on the ships down there, the carriers and stuff like that, The Enterprise, the Coral Sea, which they scraped yet. And there's another one... The Enterprise and another one.. I forget the name of that one. But... and I worked in the navy yard and it weren't very long. But everything just goes, comes around, you know, it's just one thing else goes to another thing, you know. It's just they are building so fast. I remember 30 years ago go out to Pungo there was nothing out there. 40-50 years ago you could buy an acre of land for 300 dollars. For 100 000 now better. Now that's the difference. Like you go now to Nags head. They got interstate through there now. Before – it's just two lane road to go into there, going and coming. And you leave here on Saturday morning about 10-11 o'clock in the morning. It will take you 4 hours to get there. And but like I say more people moving here and traffic is really bad here. You know that for sure
- Yes, it takes forever to get to ODU.
- How long is it take you to go?

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- Depends on the time of the day, in the morning, 30-40 minutes to an hour. Depends really.

- **(20:00 min)** Well, my wife, [WORD REMOVED], she gets up every morning 4 o'clock. She has to be at work at 5:30. And she works downtown at CHKD down right by Norfolk General Hospital. And she gets off at two so she don't have to fight the traffic going or coming.

- Yes, that's good

- So,

- Because even at 6 it's already kind of ... it starts picking up.

- We left here on Thanksgiving to go to Charlotte. We left here. It took me one hour and a half to drive 30 miles. And we got we were going to Charlotte, I think it took us almost 9 hours made out of 6-hour drive. That's with traffic but being beat we said we won't do that ever again.

- So, did you think when say 30-40 years ago people drove the same or more friendly than they do now? Like now people are more crazy or less crazy or faster or slower?

- Well, they had their moments here but it's like I say it wasn't congested. And you don't have the accidents now you did back then. I mean it's more accidents now because it's more people. But like I say you take Military highway, it wasn't but a two lane highway. And only way you get to Virginia Beach is go down shore Drive which was a two lane road. Virginia Beach was a two lane road all the way to Virginia Beach. And you go out to the court house – two lane road. Haul down through there it's just a two lane road and you know then they started widen it. Now it's just highway is obsolete now, cause the time they get then built it's more traffic.

- Yes, not keeping up

- So like you take, you go out here towards the Greenbrier, they been doing all that through there. By the time they get through, it's still going to be congested.

- Or like the one in Hampton by Coliseum, like all that construction.

- Oh, well they started on that back in the late 90s, cause I was living in California. And you get through there, if you come through there 6-6:30, 6:45 in the mornings, you stop and start, stop and start. Leave here 3:30 to go over there, stop and start. And you get one fender bender going through that tunnel either way, then you get to the other side of Hampton you get up there towards the Coliseum, it's a nightmare. It's just so many people, trying

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- Yes, I'm sorry for people who have to go to work like in Newport News or Hampton when they live here. Like I have friends who live in Norfolk and the guy has to go to Newport News. Sometimes it's two hours to get to work.

- Yes, cause I was living over there in Newport News right off [WORD REMOVED] Boulevard and I would leave at 4 o'clock in the morning to get here so I wouldn't fight all that traffic. And then most time I would go through Portsmouth, go around James river bridge instead of fighting all that traffic to get home. But I just got tired of it I said no, I'm going to move back over here. So, I did.

- So, you live in Norfolk, do you go to Virginia Beach a lot or?

- No, not really. We just.. I try to stay away from there

- Why is that?

- Well, one thing about it is fighting the traffic, place to park. If you park towards down there, they are ready to tow your vehicle away. That is a racket down there. And they are looking for you. They sit on the corner there and they will snatch your car up in a heartbeat. And she loves the beach. I play golf and I say don't sit here, just go down there and sit on the beach. She goes down here at Lynnhaven. And but we go to the fishing piers when they are open and she loves to fish.

- That's cool.

- And but like I say you know we I like it here because it's very convenient to everything. But **(25:00 min)** I don't really like to live here but you know this what I can afford right now. But

- Right, well..

- So that's the main thing.

- When did you start playing golf?

- When I was 9 years old.

- Really?

- I ... we moved in Brambleton, where Norfolk State is, it used to be a golf course, little 9-hole golf course, 3 or more par golf course. And I happened to go there one day and I started caddying. And this one particular Sunday, I was caddying for this guy, I pulled out his new 4-wood. I started swinging it. He said: "boy, put my club away cause I know, if you break it, you can't afford to pay for it." So, I said: "Oh-oh, here goes my caddy fee." So, it was just the a nine

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hole, they played it twice. He got in and I took his bag to his car. He reached in and gave me a dollar. And he reached in and got a set of old wooden clubs, the whole complete set. He said: "it's about a hundred of golf balls in there now, I'm going to give you them, you go swing them balls as much as you want. But don't take people's clubs out of their bags and start swinging it." And that's how I started playing golf. Never had a lesson.

- Wow

- Self-taught.

- So, I know you play at "Lake Wright," do you play anywhere else?

- I play at Kempsville, I play at Stompy lake. We played a couple of weeks ago over riverfront. We go to Nazmen River. And we take bus trips once a month which we go down the Valley Pine which is called Alaska. And we go up Yankatank that's up in York town. We go there and go down to Ahoskie. We are going to play a West Neck next Thursday and it's just we got a really good group of guys we play with all the time. And I play at Cypress. I can play at Chesapeake. I can play at Al's Creek or Honey Bee. But I choose to play here because it's so close to the house. I'm five minutes away, exactly one mile from here to the golf course.

- That's cool.

- So

- Is it the same group of people you play on different courses or ?

- Yes, when we go onto trips it's the same guys from Lake Wright. Then we have a few other guys, they will come and join us, you know. We try to get all our guys that play in our blitz first and then, if they don't, we try to fill it up with other people who wants to play.

- Right

- So

- Did you just start at 9 years old by yourself and

- See, I watch people. And just like I say you know, it's just come natural to me, cause nobody else in my family played. My oldest brother tried to play but he never took it up, really. None of my kids took it up.

- Did you try to teach them?

- No, They was never interested. And I did never force it on them, really. So, when they was young I went to their... They was on Little League Baseball, you know and I went to her

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games and supported them. But they never did ever get into it. Well, my oldest daughter, she likes to dance, you know. But none of the boys cared for it.

- Did your father help you?

- Pardon?

- Did your father help you? You said your father... you did a lot of stuff together..? Did you play golf?

- But he never was ...he thought he said: "who in the world wants to hit a ball and then you have to walk to it." He said: " if I hit a ball, I want some other to chase it," you know. But it was just .. he never downed me for it and you know, I used to go every weekend caddy, make money. Because he.. we didn't have money to give us allowance. So I would just go out and make my own money. That's how I got started.

- Right.

- Started caddying when I was nine years old. Then I got out of it. After I got married, I got out of it. Because every time I went it was a big fight about it. So I just quit. Then after we got a divorce, then I started playing. And when I went to California, I really got into back into it. And when I got back here, I was working over there to Kempsville, putting out carts. And playing over there on Thursdays and Sundays and during the week.

(30:00 min) And then one of the guys he was playing over there, he started coming over here, he told me about it. So I was playing on Thursdays here and then one day I was helping him and the guy said he was going to give me a break, paying 10 dollars for the cart, you know, because I was working at Kempsville. Then he said: "Since you over here all the time", he said, "I'll give you a job." So, I started washing carts and then they put me as a marshal and a starter. Then, when this cart deal come up, they asked me would I take it – I snatched it in a heartbeat. Cause I go in the mornings, get it done, and I back home in an hour. So, tomorrow I've a golf tournament, I've got to put out 30 carts tomorrow plus two rows on the blind, so when I get that done I can come home and forget about it. Especially in summertime, them starters, they get here, in the afternoons you get on at two o'clock and you don't get through them until 7:30, 8:30 or quarter to nine. Because you have to stay down there until the last cart is in. So... but we got a good bunch of fellows working with us there and a good bunch of good golfers and.. Especially your husband, if I can hit like he can hit a pitching wedge farther then my driver. He kills it.

- Yah. He scares everybody.

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- He's a super nice guy. I can think a world of [WORD REMOVED]. He is always after me, teasing me or something. He said, "Where you are going to hit today, [WORD REMOVED]?" I say, "get out of here, will you?" But he is a lot of fun to play with.

- So when you went to California and you said you started playing more?

- Yes, I started playing there. I was playing Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays. I didn't play there as much as I did here.

- At that time?

- Yes, because I didn't want to pay for it. That's the difference.

- So, did you also have a group of guys that you played with?

- Oh, yes. We had a group. I belonged to the Men Association there and I got to... we won our Club Championship there. We competed in the northern state of California. We all ended up.. they paid our trip over. I got to play Spyglass which was a very exclusive

- Is that the one . the PGA course?

- Yah. And Bobby Hills, I played that. And which Tiger and all of the big boys played there. I've been to Pebble Beach but I have never played Pebble Beach, which is a gorgeous... They have got some golf holes there that are just out of this world, especially coming around that water. See the seagulls out there, the otters, it's just unreal.

- Do you ever watch golf tournaments on TV, like when you are..?

- I used to watch it all the time but I ..if..well I like Phil Mickelson, that left-handed guy. And if he doesn't play, I don't watch it much. John Daly, he is my favorite.

- Right

- Cause he can crush a ball just like Scott can. And I just.. every once in a while I'll watch it. When there is nothing else on TV. When football's on, I don't watch none of it. The races, I love car races. I love to watch NASCAR, I've been to a lot of them.

- Do you ever go to Richmond or where?

- No, never been to Richmond. I have been right here, I've never been to Dovernes right here, but I've been to Charlotte, been to Daytona, Rockingham, Martinsville, and what else we've been to? Can't remember. It was a couple more I've been to but I never, you know but

- You traveled a lot

- I grew up around all of them. Because this place up here they used to have these short races right here, the buggies, the 39 Fords, 40 Fords, and all like that. They had a dog track down

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there and I used to go down there and watch them race down there. But.. I used to.. I loved to watch them.. they had one right there at Chinese Corner, right there, which is Witchduck Road in Virginia Beach Boulevard there. They used to have a race track right there and they had one over there by little speed way, midget race right at Glen Rock which is right there where Janaf's at.

(35:00 min) And yes, Janaf. And they used to have airport right there, Glen Rock Airport right there. Where all the malls are it used to be an airport there.

- I would never guess that.

- And then they had another one over there by Norview Asco Data, little airport called Norview Airport. Then they had one up there at Rosemont where all Rosemont it used to be Lynnhaven Airport.

- Is it like a private, small?

- Yah, little private airport. And I flew plenty of time out of Glen Rock, couple times out of Lynnhaven, cause my daddy knew the guys down there. And they had one over at Chesapeake. And I flew out of that quite a bit.

- I would never guess that. For me it seems like airport is just big planes and all of that.

- Well, they got a small one over at Chesapeake, over there off the West Road down there and they got another one down at Suffolk. You know, Chesapeake, that's grown up quite a bit, which they did away with that one and the one at Norview and the one at Lynnhaven. They did away with that.

- What did you think when they were talking about, I mean they are still talking about it, taking Oceana and all that fleet to Florida?

- Yah

- Did you think about it? Is it a concern?

- Yah, it upset me because they wanted to take it away. That airport has been there ever since I can remember. And it's always been there. And these people squawking about this, that, and the other. They knew that that airport was there. Nobody told them to build down there. That was their choice to build down there. They had but maybe three or two little accidents there but you know, airport is airport, you know. But I just think all these people screaming and hauling about the airports. Why? Nobody told them to move down there. Nobody told them to build their homes down there. That's the way I feel about it. I think it's wrong. And the navy is wrong, if

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they take Oceana out of here, it's going to put a hurting on this town. We might get over it, but it's going to take a long time.

- Yah. All the housing and they..

- Yah, you take all the navy guys, they're going to take them to Jacksonville, where are they going to take them? These people are going to move and the houses are not selling like they used to.

- Right

- So that tells you something, just like the Ford plant. See, a lot of people don't realize it, the Ford plant, the navy took over the Ford Plant during World War II, until 46, I think. And then the Ford Motor Company took it back over. So..

- Yes, it's upsetting, all those people now have to do something.

- Well, like I say, you know it's just people screaming howler because it's disturbing them coming over their home. Nobody told them to build there.

- It's not like they were trying to hide. Oh, no we don't really have an airport here.

- Right, so like naval base has been down there at Ocean view and all. They aren't complaining about it. It's been there ever since I can remember. Same thing with Oceana. Why? I mean you are taking a lot of money out of this town. It's just like all these ships and carriers goes out. It hurts economy, because all those sailors they spend a lot of money.

- Yah.

- So, it's a lot of things. People don't realize it, they just take it for granted that "Oh, well, I'll live here and I shouldn't have to put up with the noise." Put it up with, you built there. That's the way I feel about it. But all and other and that, that's about my story.

- Do you have, I don't know, like traditional things that you do with your family? Like all the kids get together for Thanksgiving or Christmas or? Do they do that or?

- Well, like I say we went.. her mother and them .. we live so far away, you know. We're going to go Thanksgiving, we went to Charlotte. And then we went to North Carolina this past summer, like a family reunion.

(40:00 min) Her kids from Rhode Island came except for her youngest son. And all the rest of them, you know we all got together and we all had a great time down there. The grand kids and the kids and all like that. So, we do I mean .. a lot of times she has to work on holidays, so I don't know what's going to come up. She's supposed just go get her mother this Thanksgiving,

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bring her back up to Williamsburg. And we're going to have Thanksgiving dinner over there.

And so

- But it's not something like you do every year, specifically. It's not like well-established thing?

- No, her and I like we say, she works every day and then on the weekends she don't work. I won't play golf on Sundays, because it's her day and I, whatever she wants to do, I let her choose what she wants to do

- That's so nice

- And sometimes she said you just go play golf, I just want to fuss around the house or something and I'll go play golf. But that's her day. I feel like if I play golf six days a week at least I can give her one day of my time. And she doesn't complain about it. I can play every day, Sundays, too, and she wouldn't complain about it. But I don't do that, I mean, you know. Then we go out to dinner, sometime once or twice a week.

- What's your favorite food?

- My favorite food – lobster. I like steak, I like prime rib, and I like shrimp. We go to Ledo's sometime, we get us some steamed shrimp, they got best in town. But

- Where is it?

- It's out there by Little Creek Road, Sewell's Point there and shopping center, Circuit City shopping center there. It's country western place. But they got the best steamed shrimp in this town. And we go there once in a while. Then, we go to Mexican food sometime, or Smorger's Borg or something and Coral or we got a little place down here, it's a bar. But you can't hear yourself think when you go in there but they got some good food. But it's real reasonable. It's Brass Bell. And we go to... I took her down there by the water that Lynnhaven fishing pier down there, that seafood place down there. We had dinner there. We go, we eat out at least once a week, or something like that. Sometime we don't

- That's nice.

- But most item we do.

- Do you cook?

- Yah, I cook. What do you cook? Like something in the grill or something?

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- Yah, I can cook anything I want to cook: chicken, roast beef, anything, you know. But she's.. I got a good cook, so I don't even care about cooking. She is the best as far as I'm concerned. She'd take nothing and make something out of it.

- Right, but I mean, like if you have to, you can. It's not like

- Oh, yah. I cook steaks, chicken, I make pork chops, anything like that.

- That's cool.

- Vegetables – I'm not very good at it, but most of the time... I make mashed potatoes, homemade no those instant.

- Right, I don't like those either. And she is a very good cook. Very good cook. Carolina girls can cook. But anyway like I say we do quite a few things together. Like I say my grand-great daughter we was going to movies once a week. But they stopped me seeing her. But, she is my sweetheart, I can tell you that right there. She is my sweetheart.

- How old is she?

- She is five. Isn't she? Six? And she is smart as a whip. But she's got a sorry father so far as I am concerned. He lives with his grandmother and he don't get his way, "I'm going to take [WORD REMOVED] and leave," you know. So, you know, he holds it over.. if you don't do what he wants you to do, he takes your privilege away of seeing her, you know. I said, "I aint buying you, son." I aint gonna buy you to get to see my granddaughter.

(45:00 min) One day she is going to realize how much I love her and she will come by and see me. I leave it there, I don't fight with him.

- Do they live in this area?

- Yes, they live at Providence Road over there off the Witchduck over there. She is very loves [WORD REMOVED] to death. [WORD REMOVED] bought her a tea pot set for Christmas. And we kept her there for a little while. And soon as [WORD REMOVED] would hit the door it was nothing to do for her to sit down and have a tea party with her. Tea party. She is a trip. I love her to death. And I got another one at Williamsburg, she is a corker buddy. She is going on two years old. I mean, [WORD REMOVED], you wouldn't believe this kid has got so many expressions. When she does something, "U-u-u-u"she will go and now she got "Hey, hey! Hey!" Just as loud as she can. And got a temper, I am telling you, she's got a temper. She will throw...she will get mad at me in a heartbeat. She is a corker, but I love her to death. She is a trip.

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- Is that her grandfather's temper?

- No. I used to have one, gally day. But them days are over with. I'm seventy years old, I got to cool it. Tell you little joke. I was sitting in this chair. I had it all extended out, come by she says, "You want to arm-wrestle?" "Oh, yeh!" She grabbed my arm and next thing I know, the chair went over, my feet was sticking straight up in the air. I couldn't get down, I couldn't get up. I'm telling you, I said, "Get me out of this!" She was having a fit! She was having a fit! I said, "Get out of here!". And she very once she would.. No I said, "I'm not arm-wrestling you!" She was a trip. The other night she brought me a glass of tea, right there. And I went to reach to get a piece of candy, them Tootsie Roll, and I knocked that glass of tea off. I said, "Oh, Lord." She goes, "That's all right. Your wife will clean it up for you." I say, "That sounds like a shot to me." But you know, we've been married for three years, 31st of last month. We haven't had the first argument. Not the first crossword. Not the first one. Cause when we got married, we both sat down, she went through a bad marriage, and she said. "I'm not going to fight or argue." I said, "Hey, it's not going to be no fight, no argue. We start arguing and fighting, you're gonna go, cause I'm not going to fight. I lived in it for 23 years." And she feels the same way. I said, "If I do something you don't like, come say 'we need to talk'." And that's the way we always have been. If something... I can tel when something bothers her, cause she don't say nothing. Then, she would tell me, and you know, we talk it out and everything's fine, you know. But she is a terrific lady, and I tell you what, I thank the good Lord everyday for her. She is my pride and joy.

- Great.

- And my grandkids... we just had another one. He is just what, couple months old. A month old now? One month old, yah. Little boy. [WORD REMOVED]. Then, I got... She's got two up there in Rhode Island. One seven, and one is three, going on four, I think now. She is a living doll baby. But that other one, boy, she is a corker. It's his way or no way.

- So, he has temper, too?

- Oh, he'd throw the tantrum. But I mean I have never been around him. I said, "That dog wasn't hunting for me." Because I would get right on him. And like my little great-granddaughter, she would try a couple times. I said, "No, no. I'm not your daddy, I'm your grandfather." My rules. [WORD REMOVED] took her shopping, to get her something at Wal-mart, the rule was, stay with me, don't get out of my sight, with me. So she decide, she's gonna hide. And she like had a heart attack. And finally, she said, "I'm here, Granny." And

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[WORD REMOVED] took her at some.. “This don’t work. You know better now. You scared me to death. Anybody could have picked you up. You know the rules.”

(50:00 min) So, [WORD REMOVED] said, “That’s it. We aren’t gonna buy you nothing.” And we didn’t. And then when she wouldn’t eat her food, we wouldn’t let her have no snacks. SO she told.. she said, “You know, you make her eat.” I said, “Nobody makes her eat.” She don’t want to eat than she is not going to get no snacks.” So... but she loves [WORD REMOVED] to death. And I got another one in North Carolina. She’s about 4-5, I think. Five, isn’t she? Six? She isn’t six. Four? Two? [WORD REMOVED]. She will be three. She is.. She’s like her mother. Throws a tantrum. But I don’t get to see them early. We got another good grandson, and a great-grandson. His name is [WORD REMOVED]. I’ve seen him twice. But yah, like I say, it’s just ... I’m more close to her family than I’m mine. Except my sister and I. we are really, really close. We got a good bond for a sister. And I have a good relationship with her son here, and her daughter-in-law. We just have a good relationship.

- That’s good. So you’re saying, you have a brother, a sister, ?

- I have a brother, younger brother, but he chose to find everything in the world wrong with him. One of the best still guitar players, you have ever heard in your life. But he won’t pick it up, play straight he won’t play it. He wants everybody to feel sorry for him, and I won’t. I used to send him money for his birthday, for Christmas. He would never send me a card, never nothing like that. Because he couldn’t afford it, so I stopped. And he called me, he said, “ I got your card, but I didn’t get a check.” And I said, “Cause I didn’t send you a check.” I said, “Bank is closed.” I said, “I’m sorry.” I just cant afford to sent them nomore. But he said something, I know he had a wife, he had a good job working at a navy yard, playing music three nights a week, had money in the bank, savings account, bought a new truck. He married this woman, in six months time, he had to move in with my dad, lost his pick-up. He ended up going back in the service. Then he got into accident and they put him out. And she said, “You don’t have to go to work, I’ll take care of you.” And then they ended up living off my mother. And then she died, and he just tries to find everything in the world wrong with him. He wants to be sad. And I’m just not gonna do it no more. So, it’s sad, you know. But like I say, you know... but I got a good family now. I got two stepsons and a stepdaughter, which I love to death, grandchildren. We got enough grandchildren to fill this trailer up, I think.

- Sounds like it.

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- Let's see. I got three grandchildren myself, I got one, two, three, great-grandchildren. She's got two here, she's got two up there. So, what? Four? You got five? Six?

- Yah, it will be full.

- Now, I got ... my youngest son's daughter lives in Atlanta. We have her e-mail to her mother, wanted just break ties from the whole family. She took the e-mail away. She is 17 now, almost 18. And I don't ever hear from her. And like I say, I talk to my granddaughter there in North Carolina. If she's looking for something, she'll call. And I talk to her for a few minutes. And I hadn't seen [WORDS REMOVED] for quite a while. And but.. that little one across the border she is a high ball now. She is taking [WORD REMOVED] place. Love her to death.

(55:00 min) But she's a mind of her own for a little one. She would fly right into her brother. He do something wrong, she balls right on him, boy. You try to take something away from her, you got a fight on your hand. She is a trip. But that's just about general thing about... unless you have some more questions.

- Last question. When you talk about South, what does that include? Like which states you refer to as South?

- Well, I figure from the Mason-Dixon line right there in Maryland, all the way back to Florida, through there, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Virginia, West Virginia.

- West Virginia?

- West Virginia is right about.. not far from here.

- I know where it is, but I've never heard people say South, because I know some people say..

- Well, that's hill-billy that what you call it. That's South there, that's hill- billy. Kentucky.

- But some people say that even Virginia is not part of the South.

- Oh, yah, It's part of the South. We are more Eastern than really the South now. You're talking about South, you get down there in part of North Carolina, down there towards Myrtle Beach, and down through there, South Carolina, all down through there, you know. That's the Deep South, Florida. And Kentucky, that's up in the hills and all like that.

- But I don't mean South geographically, I mean, you hear people, "you talk Southern."

- Right. Well, like I say. I've been here and everybody always said that I had an accent, but I... you know... I don't sound like I have an accent. It's just like you, you know. You got an accent.

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- Right, but

- I know because you're Russian and all like that. But you don't talk like one, really. You know, because I've heard a few of them, you know, got more of an accent. But really, when you go Deep South, you get down to North Carolina now, you get somebody "y-a-h, y-o-h." You can't understand a word there are saying. You don't know what they are saying, really. But South Carolina really, and Georgia. Florida is not that bad, because Florida's got a lot of Cubans and stuff in there, you know. Got a lot of Cubans down through Florida. Especially, you get around Miami and Tampa, and all like that... Fort Lauderdale. And you got a lot of Cubans down there.

- Yes, so it doesn't really

- So, but you more hear Northern people is down in Florida cause it's warmer. But I always say, if you take the Carolinians out of Virginia, it wouldn't be nobody here. You take Virginians out of Carolina, it wouldn't be nobody there, so..it's just good thing, you know, ..but I really like I say if I'd picked this town, it's one of the top ten states right here. All over, for the climate and everything else like that, in the United States.

- Ok, we're done. Thank you.

- I hope that helps you.

(60:00 min)