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

0:00:00.0 Speaker 1: Hey.

0:00:00.0 Speaker 2: You don't have one, [WORD REDACTED]?

0:00:03.6 S1: I do!

0:00:03.9 Charlie West: He built us one.

0:00:04.0 S2: He built us one.

0:00:05.4 CW: He built us one. I've got a case, sitting on a case

0:00:11.5 S1: Oh, that's one.

0:00:11.6 CW: I want a glass case of mine. I never did get it. But I got... It just got here and all this stuff into it.

0:00:18.0 S1: Alrighty. Well, I'm gonna turn you over to [WORD REDACTED] because she wants to talk to you folks, 'cause she's talked to me and forget that, what lower east side of London I came from. But it's really, I came from Guinea. What can I say?

0:00:38.6 Jill: That is true though, because the watermen speak a dialect that comes from a different part of England than say the inward, inland Southern...

0:00:51.0 CW: Oh yeah.

0:00:51.3 S2: Yeah, they do.

0:00:52.9 Jill: So yeah.

0:00:53.0 S2: Yeah, you can tell. You can tell.

0:00:54.2 CW: I know we all... We was on this cruise boat and did pick up the accents.

0:01:00.9 S2: Accent. Mm-hmm.

0:01:01.1 CW: They're asking, "Where are you from?" And well, to me, their accent would have seemed different than I thought it was, but it was crazy the way you look at it. You don't hear it yourself, but you know the difference but...

0:01:14.4 Jill: Right. And so when you said you were on the cruise, you were with people who were...

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0:01:19.5 CW: All over the world. All over the world.

0:01:21.4 Jill: Okay. And then all of a sudden, you're like, oh whoa, all these people speaking a different accent.

0:01:26.5 CW: Their accent to me was so much different than I was used to and was, 'cause they even ask her, "Where are you from?"

0:01:37.2 Jill: So before we start, I'm just gonna let you know, if you get uncomfortable with your masks when you're talking, we do have an extra shield. Is that right?

0:01:46.3 S1: So [WORD REDACTED], I do have something like this in the car...

0:01:49.8 CW: That's okay.

0:01:51.1 S1: And I can put it together. I have to take the little clear protective things off of the plastic.

0:01:56.9 CW: Yeah, I got you. No just...

0:01:57.0 S1: But if you want one like this, I have in the car.

0:02:00.1 CW: I think I'm gonna be alright.

0:02:01.1 Jill: Oh you're good? Okay. Alright. Good. And so, unusual, when we started this project, it wasn't during the pandemic. So now it's like, "Oh, okay, well. It'll work." So both of y'all... So you were born here in Guinea... Oh, could you for the tape... This tape is gonna be collected here and Buck's Rowe Museum, and also for Tidewater Voices, which is a project through Old Dominion University. And it's collections of dialects from all over the area. And what I mean all over, I mean Chesapeake to here. So Tidewater. And so it'll be part of that collection as well. Yeah. So let me just make sure it's recording correctly. And then... Okay. We're good. So, so you were born here in Guinea?

0:02:52.5 CW: Yeah.

0:02:52.6 Jill: Is that right? Okay. And so where and when, so if you could state your name for the tape, and then the year you were born and where in Guinea.

0:03:00.6 CW: My name is [WORDS REDACTED]. I was born in Guinea in 1945.

0:03:08.9 Jill: Okay, nice. And which part of Guinea were you born...

0:03:10.6 CW: A place down here called Jenkins Neck.

0:03:15.2 Jill: Okay. Jenkins Neck or?

0:03:15.3 CW: Jenkins Neck.

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0:03:16.2 Jill: Okay. Alright.

0:03:19.0 CW: That's where I was born and raised.

0:03:19.0 Jill: And are you living in Jenkins Neck now?

0:03:20.0 CW: No. I moved out of there when I was... I stayed down there 29 years. I got I moved up here.

0:03:29.3 Jill: Nice. Okay. So when you were growing up, you were growing up in a family that made their living on the water or?

0:03:37.8 S1: Yeah. My Dad and well all of us worked on water all our life, really. That's the way we was born and raised on the water. Did my first step probably in the water.

0:03:48.2 Jill: Really? [laughter] That's good. Off a boat or on a boat or...

0:03:56.6 CW: No, no, I've been on a lot of boats... When I was small where I was born and raised at was a creek, river right down in front of it. And I love the water, still do love the water. And like I say, it's why I say my first step probably was in the...

0:04:15.6 Jill: Which creek is that?

0:04:15.7 CW: That was called Maundy's Creek.

0:04:17.9 Jill: Maundy's Creek, okay.

0:04:18.2 CW: It's called Maundy's Creek.

0:04:19.5 Jill: Nice. I have a friend who used to live on Heron Way or this little road, it goes on to Maundy's Creek. But anyway, yeah. So okay, so Maundy's Creek.

0:04:30.5 CW: And where I was born at was, we had a... It was two-story house, two families in the same house. Hallway down the center. Bedrooms on both sides, one kitchen. It was two families. My Daddy's brother and our family stayed in the same...

0:04:53.3 Jill: So your uncle and your cousins were living in the same house...

0:04:58.3 CW: Same.

0:05:00.0 Jill: Are they in different floors?

0:05:01.3 CW: No, it was the same floor, but like I said, it was two-story house, but it just had... Everything stayed down below. Upstairs, it's just, upstairs, there was... .

0:05:13.7 Jill: There wasn't anything upstairs?

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0:05:13.8 CW: No, some furniture, but no beds and no nothing.

0:05:16.1 Jill: Okay.

0:05:17.7 CW: Everything stayed downstairs.

0:05:18.1 Jill: Okay.

0:05:19.9 CW: And was a hallway, if you look down the hallway, you looked right at the river.

0:05:24.2 Jill: Oh nice.

0:05:25.1 CW: That's the way it was. Now, that's where I was born and raised. And I don't know where that name come from, but the name for where we stayed at was called Merhog's Point.

0:05:37.1 Jill: Merhog... Okay.

0:05:38.1 CW: Merhog Point.

0:05:39.9 Jill: Okay.

0:05:40.5 CW: That's what that was always called all of my life. Now, where that name come from, I don't know. But you get it when you come up as a child and you forget that name.

0:05:51.1 Jill: Yeah. I haven't heard of it, so yeah. Merhog Point.

0:05:54.2 CW: Merhog Point, is the name... 'Cause if somebody asked you where were you from, that's what you'd tell 'em... Well you know but...

0:06:01.3 Jill: Yes. And then they go where?

0:06:02.8 CW: But that's what it was called. I mean, where the name come from, I had no idea.

0:06:08.5 Jill: So when you were growing up... I mean, I know you started to work at some point on the water. What age was that?

0:06:15.7 CW: I went to school 'til I was, I think 13. I quit when I was 13. I might have worked in the water some before then, but I quit school at 13 and went full-time on the water, like oystering or crabbing, anything that you could do really to make money, 'cause back then money was tight. And we didn't have to buy so much stuff because we raised a lot of stuff. Back then, everybody had gardens, hogs, chicken, ducks. You raised most... Potatoes. You raised most everything that you wanted to raise. So you're not having lot of stuff to buy really, from the store and places. But like I say, things was cheap. Candy bar's a nickel, drink's a nickel. [chuckle] Back then, for back then 'til later years. But when they first started selling loaf bread, I think it was like 15 something a loaf.

0:07:18.8 Jill: Oh wow. That is...

0:07:22.9 CW: But that was back then and money was something that was... It went a long ways.

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0:07:26.8 Jill: Yes.

0:07:28.3 CW: You can make, you can take \$15 and probably buy enough of grocery for a whole week, and it was five of us. Four... Five of us. Five of us.

0:07:38.1 Jill: So, five of you in your family and then your uncle's family was... Or it's five total?

0:07:44.8 CW: No, five in our family. And my uncle's family was seven, I think.

0:07:50.5 S?: Wow.

0:07:50.6 Jill: I'm really curious, how you managed living in those situations with two families in one house.

0:07:57.2 CW: But you had to walk to school with dirt roads. Had to walk to school. And back then, it was cold. When you got snow back then, when I was... When I was young, when you got snow, it stayed on the ground from October 'til March. The ground snow.

0:08:13.7 Jill: So different now.

0:08:15.7 CW: We don't have it no more like that. When we had snows, we had snows. We had to go in the wood... We had no wood. We had to go in the woods and cut wood 'cause we had a cook stove, an iron cook stove to cook on, and can heater that we kept warm with. And we'd constantly go in the woods to cut wood, and cut it and cut it open, put in... That's the way we heat it, 'til I say back... 'Til I say about in the late '60s, early '70s before you could buy wood and we've got... Tell you what, coal, we had some coal warmers back then. But it was nice. I enjoyed it. I enjoyed again... Like I said, things was tight, but still, Daddy was...

0:09:13.4 Jill: You were happy.

0:09:13.5 CW: I was happy. In fact, we were happy. Had plenty to play with and plenty of things to do. I love hunting and still do. Love hunting and stuff, we used to do that. And a lot of my friends live close, you can walk right to their places. They ain't here no more, but...

0:09:36.8 Jill: So you grew up with your cousins. So are you still very close with all those cousins? Or...

0:09:42.1 CW: To tell you the truth, there's so many of them gone. I didn't remember, I didn't even remember my Daddy's family. I didn't remember none of them. I do remember my Momma's family, 'cause I was small and they was still living, but my Daddy's family was dead before I could remember. And my uncle's family, see... I don't... See... We have seven of them, and I don't think none of them are living. All of them died young. They died... When I say young, 40s, 50s...

0:10:21.0 Jill: Yeah, wow. Yeah.

0:10:23.0 CW: 60s. Young. But none of them left now and I'm the only one in my family.

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0:10:33.0 Jill: You said you used to walk to school, how far was school for you?

0:10:37.7 CW: When I started school, I had about a mile to walk, maybe a mile to walk.

0:10:41.8 Jill: Did you walk on your own or...

0:10:44.0 CW: Yeah, no, I walked on my own. Back then, you would not be afraid of... Back then. It ain't like it is nowadays.

0:10:50.8 Jill: Yeah.

0:10:51.9 CW: But yeah, we walked to school and I tell you, there are some of the coldest mornings teeth, legs... But I went. Daddy made me go. 'Til I finally, I told him, back then... Like I said, things was... Well, we made it. It was tight, but we made it. But when I started to work for myself, I'd save a little bit of money and give them the rest because \$5 would last me a week. I didn't need the money. If you go to the show or something like that, out here was 15 cent to go into the show.

0:11:27.1 Jill: Which show are you talking about? Is it one that was close by?

0:11:31.9 CW: The one on over 17

0:11:34.8 S2: Where Randy's is now.

0:11:36.4 Jill: Oh, okay. Alright.

0:11:38.4 CW: But it's all... Things was just so much. I've seen so many changes in my lifetime.

0:11:47.5 Jill: So you started working on the water when you were 13? Is that right?

0:11:51.1 CW: Yeah. Momma used to be scared to death. This man come to the house, oysterer named [WORDS REDACTED]. And he come to ask Daddy let me go with him and cut up some oysters, 'cause he was by hisself. Momma say, "No. He could fall overboard, get drowned." Momma was just scared. I kept after Momma, kept my Daddy and Momma. The man kept after Daddy getting me to go when I was 13 years old. Finally, Daddy said, "Well, you wanna go, you can go." Like I say, back then, oysters was like 60 cents a bushel. I'd make \$4 or \$5, \$5 or \$6 a day, something like that, \$7-\$8, depending on what you caught, and depending on how much you caught. I got to the point that day, when I first started to go with him, I was still in school, and I'd go like a day with him or two days a week with him, and go to school the other three. And I got lucky in that, so told Daddy, "I think I'm gonna give it up and just go ahead and go to work." He said, "You sure you want to do that?" Back then, there was no written law that say you had to do this and that. So I quit and I started working for [WORDS REDACTED]. And from then on, it was crabbing... Whatever I could find on the water, clamming... Whatever I could find to do on the water to make money, I did it, but it was on the water. There was nothing else, it was always the water. Always went back to the water.

0:13:21.0 Jill: You're very connected to the water.

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0:13:21.4 CW: Oh, I love the water today, I love the water. But it's... It was a rough life. I mean it was rough, if you say it rough, I'm guessing it's not rough nowadays, but I enjoyed it. Back then when you didn't have so much that you could spend it, 'cause you had to save because I remember, we got one present. Christmas present, we got one present on Christmas. Each one of us got one present. No bunch. One. And Daddy would save up for that during the year to get us all a present. You weren't looking for two or three, or three or four, 15, like nowadays. You got one and you really was happy with that one. You was happy with what you got because like I say, things it nowadays. Nowadays, Christmas, birthdays, holidays, everything is...

[laughter]

0:14:23.2 CW: Like I say, as far as my childhood come along, I really enjoyed it. I really did enjoy my childhood. And like I say, my family... Just me now because my sister got killed on a bridge in a accident, she was really young.

0:14:40.0 Jill: On a what accident?

0:14:41.4 S2: Car accident.

0:14:41.5 CW: Head-on collision on a bridge...

0:14:45.7 Jill: I'm so sorry to hear that.

0:14:47.6 CW: When was... It definitely would've been 15?

0:14:49.5 S2: I don't know, it's been 28...

0:14:51.7 CW: 28... 28 years ago.

0:14:54.9 Jill: Wow.

0:14:55.0 CW: She was young, really young.

0:14:57.1 Jill: Yeah.

0:15:00.4 CW: They had a head-on collision on the bridge. She got out the car, and walked around the car, and dropped dead.

0:15:05.3 Jill: Wow. So it was some kind of like blood...

0:15:06.0 CW: She had something over the... A bad accident.

0:15:07.0 Jill: Oh gosh, I'm so sorry.

0:15:10.9 CW: And my brother, he died young. He was 42.

0:15:14.3 Jill: Oh my gosh.

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0:15:14.4 CW: Heart attack. Out working the Rappahannock River. And Momma always had heart trouble. You just expect anything when somebody's sick, and this and that. I was there working one day and I looked... The Coast Guard and stuff was coming around the boat

0:15:35.9 Jill: Oh my god.

0:15:36.0 CW: And nobody thinking nothing really. So finally, they come right to us and telling me that there was death in the family. Well, first thing I thought about, Momma. My brother was healthy. So they get me on a... Coast Guard got me and brought me on in, and brought me home. And it was my brother. That was hard. I had to tell Momma and Daddy 'cause Momma and Daddy didn't know.

0:16:02.1 Jill: Oh my gosh.

0:16:02.2 CW: I'm the only one who knew it.

0:16:03.9 Jill: They found you, they found you to tell you and then you went home.

0:16:09.0 CW: They won't tell Mommy and Daddy 'cause like I said, Momma had heart trouble and Daddy wasn't that well. And I guess that's probably the hardest thing I ever had to do in my life, was to tell...

0:16:16.1 Jill: Oh my gosh.

0:16:18.7 CW: Tell him that. So young.

0:16:21.1 Jill: Yeah. He was working on the water as well?

0:16:23.8 CW: He worked water for a long time. He used to work on the bridge, when they first built the bridge, he worked the bridge, too when they first built the bridge. But he was a waterman. 'Til later on years, he got married and moved up White [0:16:38.6] _____, and got working on a farm. But he was a born waterman too, like myself, my Daddy. Because I know back then, Daddy's clam on your shoulder like this, like this, and you pull it by hand.

0:16:57.5 Jill: For clamming?

0:17:00.1 CW: Clamming. When I was younger, young, like six, seven years old, I'd go with him. He had a little boat, really big, 18, 20-foot. And he'd catch the clams, and had a lot of them clams all the way around, boat like this. He'd tell me, he'd say... He said, boy... And we got hot too in summertime then, he said, "The sun is gonna kill all them clams." You see I'm opening up, did opened them out and they got the sunshine on... I have taken

0:17:30.1 Jill: You thought you were being so organized.

0:17:30.4 CW: He was a waterman who was a good waterman. And Daddy was a type of person... He was an honest person. He didn't believe in nothing wrong. I mean, Daddy, he didn't believe in talk enough and nobody... Somebody would tell him something, he would not go tell it, 'cause he said if he told... Things don't get told like it was told; always be something to add on. He didn't

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believe in that stuff.

0:17:57.2 Jill: I agree with him.

0:17:58.1 CW: He didn't believe in that stuff. And he was an honest person... And back... When we was coming along, we had money or not, it didn't make any difference because he had good credit. I mean good credit. That was a good thing to have too back then.

0:18:13.4 Jill: Yes. Managed his money well and...

0:18:15.2 CW: Yeah. He had good credit and... Like I say, word of mouth was all he had to do. If he wanted something, he had word of mouth. He didn't have to go to... Nowadays, you've gotta go through all kinds of things but not him. Because I remember, my first move... The last place I had... I was born and raised that I moved up to in Guinea, we had to get furniture and stuff for the place, furniture. And Momma told Daddy, "Where are gonna furniture from?" He said, "I'll get it." Brought us at the courthouse.

0:18:49.8 Jill: Oh my gosh, okay.

0:18:50.7 CW: We've got everything we needed. And he had to pay them like \$5 a month.

0:18:55.5 Jill: Oh wow.

0:18:55.6 CW: It's crazy he had... Like I say, word of mouth was all we needed. And from when I was born and raised, we didn't move, well maybe a mile from there when we moved to and the house was an old house that's on stilts, like you see built on stilts now, it was on stilts. I'd say, this high from the ground. I think it was 12 under the house, and the house was built on that. It had one bedroom, one kitchen. We bought it from the County. There was taxes out on the land, it was 8 acres of land and the house. It was, I forget what tax, it wasn't much taxes out on it. And I think Daddy bought the 8 acres of land and the house for like \$180.

0:19:47.9 Jill: Because of, they owed taxes on the... Oh, okay.

0:19:49.8 CW: Taxes, bad taxes. For \$180, got the house and 8 acres of land, for \$180.

[laughter]

0:19:56.7 CW: And that's where we stayed 'til I got married.

0:19:58.7 Jill: Oh my gosh.

0:20:00.7 CW: That's the place where he... We never did have running water, never did have running water there, we had...

0:20:04.8 Jill: Okay. So how did you deal with that? What did...

0:20:07.6 CW: We had hand... Well, up 'til I'd say early '70, '68, '70 along in there, we towed the water. We lived here and the road goes through a woods, and this woman right here had a pump,

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pump to pump water with. We towed water through there for, I'd say three, four years through that woods. Buckets. Water. I mean something, through that woods would get so muddy when it rained in there... So for three, four years we did that, and she was real nice. She was a [WORD REDACTED], too. And finally, she told Dad or me, I forget when it was now, had to start charging for the water. Oh my, it's like a nickel a bucket, can't remember what it was. And that's when Daddy told me and my brother he said, "We're gonna have to get us a pump instead of paying for the water." He didn't believe in paying for the water. She was nice about it... We ain't gotta...

0:21:06.0 Jill: Yeah, but there was water that you could get with a pump.

0:21:09.4 CW: That we could get ourself. So we got [WORD REDACTED], [WORDS REDACTED], his son still draw pumps today, [WORD REDACTED] Jr. He came down there and drilled the pump for us. He drilled 108-ft, and when he was still drilling the 108-ft, he was still pulling up clam shells and oyster shells, from 108-ft in the ground.

0:21:34.2 Jill: Oh my gosh. Yeah, so the history of the land there.

0:21:41.0 CW: History, yeah, the land. So he drilled 108-ft and we got to put the pump on her, and you had to let it settle a couple days before you could get your sand and stuff, all that stuff settle. And believe it or not, that 108-ft pump, to pump on this thing, it cost \$108. \$1 a foot. And that same pump today would run you \$3000. So many memories. And water, I don't care how hot summer got, you'd go there and pump that pump off.

0:22:16.7 Jill: It'd be cold.

0:22:17.8 CW: The glass, when you put it in a glass, the glass would bubble on the outside from the... It would be so pure. So pure water. I guess that pump is still there on that piece of land.

0:22:26.0 Jill: Oh my gosh.

0:22:30.9 CW: I hadn't been down there in probably, I don't know, 30 years. Because the land grewed up so bad, the house caught afire and burnt... We had a fire down there and the house got burnt down.

0:22:40.8 Jill: Oh no.

0:22:41.3 CW: We had a fire. Back then, fires was... Momma was scared to death of fires and we had plenty of fires back then that was set, just set And she was scared... She'd wake us sometimes at night, she'd wake us up... And I was young. She'd wake us up and Dad, and we'd go in the woods, and we'd fight fires 'til three or four o'clock in the morning, keep it off the land, keep it off of our land.

0:23:01.9 Jill: But how did you fight if there wasn't running water, what did you use to fight?

0:23:06.0 CW: You use... Whatever you could get hold to beat it with, like pine or whatever we could get to beat it with. I tell you what we do, finally it got over in our property and burnt the whole 8 acres up. But people set fires, they had fire bugs, they called them. They set fires.

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0:23:24.2 Jill: Okay. I've heard about that in Guinea, that does happen.

0:23:27.7 CW: They set fires. Yeah, like when... They still do it today because... Not as bad as they did then, because there ain't so much they can burn down there now, but when probably grass season and stuff like that come in, they burn it, they set the fire and sometimes it'd be a lot of wind, and that goes... That go on down through, the whole way through Guinea. It's dangerous, but people do it, people do that.

0:23:49.0 Jill: Yeah, it's just a tradition maybe, or...

0:23:51.9 CW: I guess. I guess, but Momma was always so scared of fire.

0:23:57.7 Jill: Yes, yes, very dangerous.

0:24:00.3 CW: And here's another one too, she's...

0:24:04.6 Jill: So you're from Guinea as well?

0:24:05.0 S2: No.

0:24:05.5 Jill: Oh, okay. Alright. How did you all meet each other?

0:24:09.7 CW: We...

0:24:12.4 S2: I was working at Poland's Supermarket.

0:24:13.6 CW: She was working at Poland's Supermarket.

0:24:13.7 Jill: Oh, where was that? Poland's?

0:24:14.8 S2: Down at Gloucester Point.

0:24:15.3 CW: In Gloucester Point.

0:24:17.3 Jill: Okay, alright.

0:24:20.9 CW: Well I was shy at the time, and me and a friend of mine were together, and he asked her out, and she wouldn't go. I said, "Well, I ain't got a chance." So finally I got the nerve up and I asked her, and when I asked her, she said, "Yeah." That's been 44 years ago. [chuckle]

0:24:38.9 Jill: Oh my God, wow. Congratulations. So sweet.

0:24:44.6 CW: But we've had it nice. Of course, I'm glad I did. I was wild coming around and she probably, I told her many times, "You probably saved my life, I guess." But like I said, life is good in Guinea, I enjoyed it.

0:25:01.1 Jill: So when you go out to Maundy Creek, do you go out there at all?

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0:25:04.3 CW: I haven't been, I've been down to Maundy Creek I'd say about probably two, three years ago. But it was on the little part that you could drive. It was down there where the West family and all them lived down there. Now you can drive all the way down right to the shore, right to the rope.

0:25:22.1 Jill: Does it bring back memories?

0:25:23.7 CW: Oh, me. Just to look over that land and stuff now, and see the difference than the world when I was coming along as a kid, everything was growed up, ponds was everywhere, all up it was... You couldn't see nowhere. Like I say, when you went down there, it was just the road and it was ponds, trees and everything everywhere, the land and stuff, you couldn't see nowhere. You know what I mean? Now you go down there and probably see half or two-thirds of Guinea just by looking. 'Cause fires has burnt so much up and the land is settled so much. Persons realize how bad their land settled, but that land down there had really settled. I ain't kidding.

0:26:02.5 Jill: So the water, the level is much higher now?

0:26:07.8 Jill: Yeah, we have... I think it was 1953, Hurricane Hazel, that hurricane. That's the worse one we ever had down there. And believe it or not, the whole time I stayed down at Guinea, we had hogs and all this kinda stuff and we had tides made up, from winds from the northeastern places. We'd have to tote the pen, tote the hogs around on a piece of land, so that we could get water... Tote the pen and all of it, the hogs would fight you right along inside the pen. And when you had a northeaster, the whole would flood, one of them had no cause, but the place would flood, and we did it, oh we did it many time. And finally did it, like I said, the house would be up on stilts. We never did get tide making that house, we never had tide in that house.

0:26:53.8 Jill: That's... So you're talking about that king tide that comes up from the coastal tide? Okay.

0:27:00.6 CW: Yeah, we never did have tide get in our house, never did.

0:27:04.0 Jill: It was a good choice.

0:27:04.1 CW: I know. Like I say, and one of them maybe lifted off the ground, but I've seen it come that close. Like I said, there weren't many cars then. You could walk from Guinea... I've walked from Guinea all the way up to the show, on 17.

0:27:23.8 Jill: How far is that, like how many miles, do you think?

0:27:25.9 CW: I think seven miles, I think, seven, eight miles. And I walked all that distance to see the show, go there to the show, and not see one car on the road, not one. And I've left there many, many a time and walked all the way from there, home, and not see a car. Cars were just so... Ain't many people had cars. Very few people had cars. You'd look around behind you and see... You'd look all you want, you'd see no cars. And now, you can't get on a road.

0:27:56.7 Jill: Yeah, I mean even back here, busy roads back here.

0:28:01.4 CW: Yeah. Busy. But so much has changed... I don't know whether it's for the best or

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what, but I tell you the truth.

0:28:08.6 Jill: Yeah. I know.

0:28:10.3 CW: To see things change so much in my lifetime. You hear people say, "We had a rough year", well, you had it rough now too. We got it rough now, too. Look at all this pandemic and all this... And President lost, and all this... And all this year... Ain't gonna... I don't know when it'll get better, but if you look back then and see how rough it was, I don't know if you can say it was rough or not.

0:28:39.0 Jill: Well, it's so cool that you have great memories of growing up and that you were connected to the land in that way. I think that takes you a long way.

0:28:45.9 CW: I can remember way back when I was five, six... Nothing wrong with my memory, I can... It's so much that I thought was something I'd forgot, but I can just remember so much stuff.

0:29:00.6 S2: Tell her the time they had to ration... And the river, it was froze up. That the river was frozen up out of here, York River?

0:29:07.0 CW: Yeah, I've seen the river froze up, it couldn't work. York River. And my grandfather, my mother's father and mother, [WORD REDACTED], his name was [WORD REDACTED], of course, he named me after... And he used tell us stories years ago, all of them was Guineamen. By then it was 19 and... I think 1917. York River froze across, froze solid. He was working oil refinery. Walked across the river, walked to work across the river. Sugar was on ration, you couldn't get no sugar, nowhere. So he got five pounds of sugar over there, somewhere over that river. And on the way back across the river walking, he fell down and busted the bag of sugar. Scooped the sugar off the ice and put it in his hat and brought it home.

[laughter]

0:30:04.3 CW: He told that story many a time. Things back then was... But he said, when it froze up, he said, I forget what he said, it froze up like sometime in November and it was late March before the river thawed back up again.

0:30:19.9 Jill: Oh my gosh, that never happens now, never.

0:30:22.1 S2: No, no.

0:30:22.5 CW: He said ice was like... The whole river like this. If he walked to work, he had to... And he used to... He knew somebody had a horse and buggy. He used to drive the horse and buggy across the river and back.

0:30:35.3 Jill: I hope they don't fall in. [chuckle]

0:30:38.1 CW: And you talk about nowadays, we don't have no more, could've had no more winters, no more cold weather. But back then, we had some rough, rough up. But once again, you know you always get them.

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0:30:52.9 Jill: Yeah, so when you said your father collected clams...

0:31:00.8 CW: My Daddy clammed.

0:31:00.9 Jill: And you learned how to do clamming. So I want to ask you about your... Did you go out and get your dinner? How did you get, what did you have for food?

0:31:09.8 CW: We'd carry a sandwich or something, whatever we had, whatever we had to carry, we'd carry with us. We wouldn't stay too long, 'cause back then, there was plenty clams, plenty. But like I said, with that rake back then, everything's driving and stuff now, you don't have to do all kinda stuff no more. Back then, if people wanted 1000, 2000, 3000 clams, he'd go and he knew exactly how long it'd take him to catch them. And believe it or not, he could catch them clams on the bottom of that rake, he'd tell you exactly how many he had in that rake when he pulled that rake up. That's how good he was at it.

0:31:41.1 CW: I learned it from him for... I never did do it as a living, do that type of clam as a living, but I've clammed a lot in my life. I used to love to get old board shorts on, and washing with a little rake. Oh, boy, like this, and rake them that way. I used to like to do it that way. And like I said, there were plenty of clams. And I seen back in... I'd say, in the '70s or '80s, we had the real coldest of winters. Me and my brother-in-law was working up in Rappahannock. We'd come home, everything had froze up, we couldn't work up there. We came home and went down here, right in, down this right here now. Went down there and had a little, small boat we pulled and washing. Tides made so low. It got so cold, the clams would come out the bottom.

0:32:34.5 Jill: And say, "Here, take me." [chuckle]

0:32:35.3 CW: Yeah. We got 2000 and 3000 like that. We couldn't oyster, we had to do something, and the tides were so low. Well, we had to wait for the tide to get up some, so we'd pull everything back across the thing. And we waited 'til it was dark one day and the tide never did rise, and we had to pull that thing all the way across on that mud and all the way back to that truck. I said, "No more I'mma do this." I still had clams. And like I said, it was, things were just so cheap. Nowadays, clams are like \$40 a hundred, back then we've got about a dollar or something like that, for 100.

0:33:18.3 Jill: I've heard about that with oysters, too, that it was so cheap back then, but now they're so...

0:33:20.2 S2: Yeah, so cheap.

0:33:23.2 CW: We got 60 cent a bushel but we were rough culling. Back then, there wasn't no clean culling or soups to cull or whatnot, wasn't nothing like that then nowadays, we rough cull, for 60 cent a bushel. We'd leave again and go to James Rowe.

0:33:40.3 Jill: You'd go down across Point Comfort?

0:33:45.7 CW: It was across the bridge, and go all the way over, and James Rowe was down there at Warwick. Warwick. And I think, I can remember, there was one gas station... There was two gas stations across the point. One right there where the bridge is now on the right-hand side. There used to be a tattoo place right there, that was a... At that stage, there was... BP station came there. Gas

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was 18.9 a gallon, 18.9.

0:34:18.5 Jill: I remember when it was 25 cents. I don't remember 18.

0:34:21.1 S2: I know.

0:34:21.4 CW: 18.9 a gallon. You stop and think about it. And oysters for 60 cent a bushel, James Rowe . And here, they're all, what, \$40, \$40, \$50 a bushel.

0:34:36.1 Jill: So you came, you saw, you experienced life in Guinea before the bridge and then after the bridge. So what kinds of like... Was it a huge change for you all, or...

0:34:48.2 CW: Yeah, it was a big change. It was a big change. But you adapt to it, so it's like anything else, you adapt to it. But like I said, I always told her and I always told it myself, hard work don't hurt you, 'cause I have had hard work. I got married, I went on a scallop boat, when I first got married. On a scallop boat, and...

0:35:12.7 Jill: Oh, so you had to go out to sea? Or...

0:35:15.1 CW: Yeah, and ocean. First trip I made, I was gone 29 days. It's like leaving home forever. Weren't no money made, on 29 days I might've made a couple thousand dollars to cover... But you couldn't spend nothing because you weren't going nowhere. I think I made like eight, 10 trips on there when I first got married. And I told her, I said, "This ain't no life for me." Away from my son... I got one son. I never did see him. You'd come in, you'd be home two or three days, you're gone again. I told her, I said, "I'm gonna give this up." I said, I can't.

0:35:51.3 Jill: And it's hard too, isn't it, scalloping is hard?

0:35:52.6 CW: It was a day of hard work. We'd work all of a... We'd go all up, up in New England, New York, off North Carolina. Some days, we'd leave Hampton, I worked for boats out of Hampton. We'd leave there and you'd steam two days before you even put your dredges overboard. You be off there right on the Continental Shelf. You'd be offshore like ocean too... It would be in like thousand foot of water, 800 foot of water, stuff like that. And then it was just... You miss your family and your kids and, you don't see much of them when you get home. But it was something I had to do at the time, and I done it. After that I came home, started driving a bread truck, bread truck, done that for two years. Picked up odd jobs and stuff. I worked carpenter; in my later years I worked carpenter work. Last job I worked would up be in the Hospitality House up in Williamsburg, that big Hospitality House, last job I worked was that. I was, I've been carpenting. And the foreman wanted me to go with him on the road, would pay everything. Motel up in New York. I didn't want that... I'd done enough of running. But even then...

0:37:08.2 Jill: It's good you know what you want, that's for sure. [chuckle]

0:37:08.9 CW: He begged me to go. It was good money. I was making like \$25 an hour and it was good money. But money weren't worth that much to me, leaving and staying away from home. So I didn't do it.

0:37:30.0 Jill: So you had... You said you have a son?

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0:37:31.0 CW: Yeah, I got a son. He's a manager at Lowe's, the Lowe's over here.

0:37:34.6 Jill: Oh okay, nice.

0:37:35.4 CW: He's... Isn't [WORD REDACTED], 44, 44 years old?

0:37:39.1 S2: Yeah.

0:37:40.4 Jill: Is that the Lowe's up here?

0:37:41.6 CW: Yeah. Lowe's over here.

0:37:42.1 Jill: Oh nice. Okay, so he did stay close by, that's... Nice.

0:37:44.8 CW: Yeah, everybody stayed by. He's got, I got one granddaughter. [WORDS REDACTED].

0:37:50.9 Jill: [WORD REDACTED], nice.

0:37:51.9 CW: [WORDS REDACTED] She's a case.

0:37:55.5 Jill: Have you introduced her to the water, and...

0:37:57.1 CW: Yeah, she likes the water.

0:38:00.3 S2: She likes to fish.

0:38:00.5 CW: She likes fishing. Now she'd been with me fishing a little bit, she enjoys it. You ever see the kick she get out of catching that fish. She... We offer sometimes... We take her out on our boat or something. She, "No, Papa, I don't wanna go in no boat." For some reason, she's scared of it.

0:38:15.2 Jill: Okay. Some people are, yeah.

0:38:17.6 CW: She's scared of the water, she's just scared of the water. We had her out in the water when she was what, three?

0:38:22.7 S2: 'Bout that.

0:38:23.9 CW: 'Bout three years old.

0:38:26.5 Jill: So what would be your favorite... And I was thinking of this for kids too, 'cause when I went to my grandparents, that I would get some special food or whatever, something that they had growing up. What is one of those foods that you loved growing up in Guinea? Is it some kind of seafood, is clams, or is it like...

0:38:53.8 CW: Well I'll tell you what right today, right now, right then or right now too, I love

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clams. I love clams. I love oysters. Love steamed crabs. I don't like soft crabs. You hear people say you like soft... I don't like soft crabs, but I love, I could eat myself crazy with steamed crabs. I don't like soft crabs, I don't know why. My son loves them. But Daddy, when he was clamming years ago, I'd go down there from school, I'd meet him when I'd come from school, he'd come in in his boat. He'd bring me like 25 clams ashore, like this. I'd sit on the shore there with my knife and I'd eat the whole 25 clams. And right today, I could sit down right today and eat 25 clams, just like that. I love them raw. I love them in a chowder, I love them in a fry, but I can eat them raw just as good as I can.

0:39:44.2 Jill: How do you get them open when they're raw?

0:39:46.4 CW: I take my hand out, squeeze them open, put a knife in there where the sharp part or the bill is, and crush it open. Ain't many can do it, I've done it all my life, and it'd put the clam down.

0:39:56.0 Jill: Oh my gosh. I've always heard you can't open them when they're raw, but I guess you can.

0:40:01.9 CW: Yeah, ain't nothing to it. There's nothing to it.

0:40:06.1 Jill: Yes. So seafood, you would say.

0:40:08.0 CW: Seafood, I'd say seafood.

0:40:09.1 Jill: Yeah, and raw clams.

0:40:10.7 CW: Raw clams. And believe it or not, that's the honest truth. I believe that is my favorite food is all clams.

0:40:16.8 Jill: Yeah, it's probably very healthy. If you don't run into issues with it, it's probably a healthy piece of protein that you can get.

0:40:24.2 CW: Yeah, I love them. I love oysters too. She likes oysters too.

0:40:27.4 Jill: So you're like an otter.

0:40:30.2 CW: Yeah, like an otter, right. My wish I'm like an otter.

[laughter]

0:40:35.2 CW: But life's been good.

0:40:36.0 Jill: Yeah. So there's like, it sounds like you've had some sad times in your life, but great times in your life.

0:40:42.1 CW: Have. Have.

0:40:45.2 Jill: If there's one memory that you cherish from your time in growing up in Guinea,

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what would it... What would that memory be? Some special time or special...

0:40:55.5 CW: Well, my special time, probably coming along as a kid, hunting. I'd leave home, eight o'clock and nine o'clock in the morning and go all day long 'til dark. Me and a friend of mine would go into the woods with air rifles and hunt, hunt, hunt. I used to love to do that stuff. And I forget, we was hunting one day, me and a friend of mine was hunting one day, it was way... I can't think of what year, And it was this... Woods had this ditch go through these woods like this, and the road come by here. We was right here, almost to the road, hunting, shooting birds and all are what we'd hunt. And a truck came by there like that and he slowed down right there and stopped, backed up. Game warden.

[laughter]

0:41:44.5 CW: Scared me to death. We'd killed two or three birds. And he'd seen we had killed two or three birds, he'd seen the birds. He said, "You know it's against the law, son, for to do this?" I said, "No, I didn't know." He took the two or three birds, took my air rifle, gave me a warrant, went to court, and he still had the birds at the court.

0:42:07.5 Jill: At the court, okay. Evidence.

0:42:10.0 CW: Up at the courthouse. And I think the fine was like \$8, \$8 or something. That learned me a lesson back then, hunting I didn't know. I was young, small, didn't care. You don't care.

0:42:24.1 Jill: What was the lesson you learned from that?

0:42:26.3 CW: When I see the game warden, run.

[laughter]

0:42:30.1 CW: We sat there like dummies. But I never did have no trouble, that was the only... The only ticket I ever got in my life. In my life.

0:42:44.4 Jill: Yeah, wow.

0:42:44.4 CW: But if we'd took off running. He couldn't have caught us 'cause we were young, he couldn't have caught us but...

0:42:47.7 Jill: Yeah, but he had to catch you, because you were just standing there.

0:42:50.8 CW: Yeah, we didn't go nowhere, we just, we... You understand, we were doing nothing wrong. But he said, "Son, y'all be awful good with them," we were good with air rifles back then, you'd learn. He said, "Y'all must be awful good with these." I said, "Yeah, we're fair." He laughed. He got a joke out of it, really. Went home and told Daddy. "You all knew about it?" I said, "No I don't know about it." He saw the break to the air rifle, he said, "You break my air rifle." He was mad about it, 'cause we got the ticket.

0:43:22.0 Jill: Yeah, he had a lot of integrity, say...

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0:43:27.3 CW: But we had, they were fun times. They were really fun. I enjoyed them so much.

0:43:30.5 Jill: So really being in nature for an entire day and nobody calling you, "Do this, do that," you were just out there.

0:43:39.2 CW: Out there, yeah. We was just out there. We'd enjoy it. I'd leave home, Momma'd say, "Boy, you'd better dress warm 'cause it's awful cold." We didn't care, you was eight, 10, seven, eight, 10, 12 years old, you didn't get cold. Momma would say, "When you coming home?" "I'd be home in a little while." That's nine o'clock in the morning, coming back before dark, get home. But we enjoyed it all day long with hunting. Just go with friends of mine. They enjoyed as much as I did, but it was what we did, that was what we did.

0:44:11.8 S2: Tell her when you skipped school and your Daddy found out about it.

0:44:14.9 CW: Huh?

0:44:15.2 S2: When you skipped school and your Daddy found out about it.

0:44:17.1 CW: Oh yeah, I was going to school... I was going to school, I'd say He says, "Oh." And Momma, I could do anything with Momma. Momma, she'd lie for me. Went to school, and I got on my way to the road, I thought to myself, "I ain't going to school today, I'm gonna play hooky today, 'cause something I want to do. I'm gonna play hooky today." I went on with my bookbag, went on out the road, when I leave the house, I had to walk down the road maybe a quarter of a mile from where I lived. So I walked down that road and I kept looking behind me. Daddy, he was clamming at the time. I watched Daddy leave the house with his lunch in his hand, and his stuff, and went on down... Had to walk down a little path and go down and get on top of a ditch bank and go on down there, and there was a boat over here. Oh I can... He went on down there, he went on down there to the boat. I watched him. I went back home.

0:45:12.1 CW: Well, I changed my clothes and stuff, and here I go off. I got home that evening before he did; clamming, 'cause if I was gone, school was closed, he knew there was something wrong if I get home before Daddy got home. He come on home. Momma fixed supper and stuff, we sit down to eat. About nine or 10 o'clock, we'd lay down in the bed. I'll never forget it as long as I live. He threw the covers back over me like this and he got me by my arm, pulled me out the bed, had his belt in his hand. Did he put one on me.

[laughter]

0:45:52.1 CW: And Momma begging of him 'cause he, Daddy was a good person, but when he got mad, it looked like he run mad. And all he say was, "Now you skip school again..." That was the farthest thing in my mind. He stopped on the way to the boat and watched me come back home.

0:46:08.0 Jill: Oh my gosh.

0:46:08.9 CW: Momma begging... He was gonna kill me. He said, "I am gonna kill him." You believe it or not, I never missed another day of school.

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[laughter]

0:46:20.5 CW: But he was smarter than I, I thought I was smart. I wasn't smart, he was the smart one.

0:46:23.9 Jill: Did he saw you head back home?

0:46:25.5 CW: He saw me come back home, then he went off clamming like nothing wrong.

0:46:30.2 Jill: Yeah, I was gonna say...

0:46:31.2 CW: Come home, eat supper, nothing said. Wait until I laid down and he put one on me me like this.

0:46:40.6 Jill: Oh my gosh.

0:46:41.6 CW: And then it hurt him probably worse than it did me, but he'd get mad. So no more skipping school for me. But that's the way he was. You lied to him, no, you didn't lie to him. You did not lie to him, better not lie to him. We had these two boys that used to come to the house all the time, back years ago when I coming along. To just listen, hear what they could... Gossip. They'd hear what they could hear, and they'd go home and tell it. Daddy found out about it some kinda way, and Daddy told Momma, he said, "If they come here again, I'm gonna run them away from here and they gonna never come here again." And they'd been coming to our house forever.

0:47:22.5 CW: So that weekend, here they come. Daddy met them right at the foot of the road, he said, "Now listen, I don't ever want you, neither one of you two on this piece of land again." We never did see them boys no more. He was that way, and he always said if you'd tell something, people go off and tell, they'd tell twice as much as they heard. He didn't believe in gossip. He did not.

0:47:45.5 Jill: I'd have to be there with him on that one. [laughter]

0:47:49.3 CW: He didn't believe in that stuff.

0:47:49.9 Jill: Yeah. Yeah. What was I gonna say... Oh my gosh, I lost my thought...

[laughter]

0:47:55.9 Jill: This happens to me all the time lately. So yeah.

0:48:01.6 CW: No. Guinea was a good place, really. There was rough times back there years ago. There was a lot of trouble. I never was in none, but there was trouble there down across Maundy's Creek was the worst place from us. We was on Guinea... We was over here in Jenkins Neck and Rowe Creek, then there's Maundy's Creek. Back then it was a lot of shooting, cutting, all that kind of stuff.

0:48:27.5 Jill: Oh, wow.

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0:48:27.6 CW: We never was into it, but their worst enemies was their own... They was their own enemies. We never did get into it.

0:48:34.2 Jill: I've heard that in Gloucester, it used to be or might still be, that if, once somebody did something in Gloucester, your parents would know right away just because of the network of the... How would they communicate that?

0:48:50.3 CW: I don't know. Do you know?

[laughter]

0:48:54.8 CW: You did not treat them wrong. They didn't believe in you treating them wrong. You'd treat them right, they'd treat you 100%, but if you treated them wrong, seemed like they just had... They'd hold it. They wouldn't let it go. They'd hold it. I was never like that, but they were really like that.

0:49:10.7 Jill: Oh yes, okay. I had that on my mind, that's a good one. Yeah, no. So she just... Something I thought of since you were, grew up, until you were 13 or so at Maundy's Creek...

0:49:20.9 CW: 13 or so.

0:49:22.7 Jill: So did you ever have the chance when you were going out to do your fishing or clamming or oystering to stop at Big Island? Was that...

0:49:33.8 CW: Big Island? I'm glad you brought that up. We used to play ball on the Big Island. We used to go there on Sundays and play ball. We'd cut trees down for the bases, just off on the ground. We'd play some nights, dark. You'd hit the ball, you'd hear the ball hit a tree, it'd be so dark. That's something my Daddy's brother broke his back at. He was playing ball over there back when they were... Like I said, they had trees for bases, nothing would move. And he slid into third base and a tree broke his back. That was back...

0:50:16.8 Jill: A tree fell on him?

0:50:17.7 CW: No, no. He'd this tree cut off for our base. He'd cut trees down and move the trees, and there were your base, a tree in the ground. That were your base. He'd slid in there, that wasn't going away. That was... And he broke his back.

0:50:30.5 Jill: Oh my gosh.

0:50:31.6 CW: And all his life, he had to wear a brace, a truss, all his life.

0:50:38.5 Jill: He was able to walk again, right?

0:50:41.0 CW: Yeah. And I used to play ball in there, coming along as kids too, we'd go there, we'd just have a ball. And it was like, see, one, two, three... Were four homes on there. One big time, big home. Two big homes. There was a lot of people on there at one time. I'd say, I don't know exactly how many, I'd say all them families were big families. They were, some of them, one of them had 18 children, 16, 18 children.

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0:51:04.0 Jill: Oh my Lord. Wow.

0:51:04.5 S2: Yeah, that was then, not now.

0:51:05.4 CW: A small family had six or seven, five or six.

0:51:08.9 Jill: That's a small family.

0:51:12.9 CW: I know a woman named, her name was [WORDS REDACTED], she had five sets of twins.

0:51:14.4 Jill: Oh my God, is that possible?

0:51:15.9 CW: Five sets of twins, you had 10 kids. Like I said, the first thing they did, I was about probably 10, 12 years old before I learned how to swim. You go down there, six years old, they was in the river like an otter, six years old, learn how to swim, gone. That was in Big Island. That was a big island there one time, now it's nothing. It's gone.

0:51:45.3 Jill: Yeah, I have kayaked up there, so I've seen the remnants of it, but I heard that it was a vibrant community.

0:51:53.8 CW: Yeah, that was a big place, that was a big place.

0:51:58.0 Jill: Did you have friends on that island? Okay.

0:52:00.4 CW: Yeah, we had kin on there too. We had kin on there, and everybody was so friendly. Everybody was, everybody was home people. Everybody was... They used to have fig trees over there, them big fig trees. Oh, they had one over there, the figs get on there like that.

0:52:17.1 Jill: Yum.

0:52:21.0 CW: But you had to go there by boat, but still. We had, we didn't have no running our big boats, we had we'd shovel over there. It didn't take very long from the lower end of Guinea to over there, maybe 20, 30 minutes. Have a ball over there. And all of them loved hunting and they were watermen. They love hunting and this and that...

0:52:45.7 S2: And if anybody got sick, how did they go to the doc?

0:52:49.3 CW: Boat. They had midwives there, when they had children, they had a woman, they had a nurse, had a midwife, that would deliver the children and stuff. And that's how they took it up theirselves, delivered their kids. That's something else, you think about it now, you get to a hospital, all of them doctors and nurses, and they had a midwife that would... When the woman... When they'd get ready to having... She'd go there with them and had the kid and everything went along fine. All the kids and everybody grew up healthy, strong, so.

0:53:18.6 Jill: Everybody.

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0:53:19.5 CW: Everybody. Everybody did

0:53:22.2 Jill: Yes. Nice. Did you ever hear of any folklore or stories about anything unusual in the marshes at all?

0:53:37.2 CW: No.

0:53:37.5 Jill: You didn't?

0:53:38.1 CW: No more than somebody getting lost or something like that, but... 'Cause my brother one night, he left here, he used to go with a girl over there on Big Island. Left there to come home, foggy, and he never made it home, because you couldn't see. He had just an oar and stuff with him. He got home the next day 12 o'clock, when the fog let out. He said he was scared to death 'cause he didn't know where he was at, and...

0:54:04.0 Jill: Yeah, that's smart. He didn't go back... Yeah.

0:54:07.9 CW: But now... You hear a lot of things about back then. There's just so much you could tell, there's so much you could really sit down and talk about. You talk a month about things. You know what I mean? Something else'll pop up, you know and you wouldn't think about. But altogether, it was good. It was a good life, I enjoyed it. I ain't got one regret. Not one regret.

0:54:35.4 Jill: You said you learned swimming when you were 12, you learned to swim when you were 12 or so?

0:54:40.3 CW: 11 or 12, 11 or 12 years old I learned how to swim. But them ones down on the Big Island, you go down there, six years old, six years old, just like a... They learnt me. They learnt me how to swim, the Big Island. They learnt me how to swim, and there they were, they'd been doing it since they were six years old; six, seven years old, they're getting and there they go. And that's... Well like I said, probably the first step is probably, you had to learn how to swim.

0:55:07.0 Jill: Yes. You had... Probably, yeah.

0:55:09.2 CW: That's one of the best things I think a person that work right in the water... Everybody should learn, know how to swim. Because I fell overboard twice. I was haul seining on them, you know what haul seining is? Pulling on them nets and stuff off the boats. I fell overboard, it's been, I'd say, 10 years ago now. I fell overboard here in Point, 30 foot of water. Had waders on, had waders on.

0:55:34.2 Jill: So that'll sink you down, right?

0:55:35.5 CW: I went on down and when I came back up, I got hold of the boat and they threw over and got me in the boat, because the waders had filled up with water, it must've weighed about 300, 400 pounds.

0:55:49.2 Jill: Oh my gosh.

0:55:50.2 CW: I'd have drowned if they hadn't... If I'd have went back down again, I would have

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drowned. Luckily, I caught hold of the boat. They pulled me in the boat, dislocated this shoulder. There was so much weight and so much water in them boots, and tore the rotator cuff up in this shoulder.

0:56:08.0 Jill: Yikes. Yeah. So the boots didn't fall off?

0:56:13.8 CW: No, no. Because you had them strapped on here, so they fill right up, and they hold, oh me, water, and back then, I weighed 240, and you figure that much water in the boots. I just got lucky that time. I could swim, no doubt about it, but you couldn't get the boots off, 'cause once you got water in them boots, they'd lock to your legs. I was lucky that time.

0:56:36.5 Jill: Yes, it does sound like it. I saw the fog this morning on the...

0:56:42.6 CW: Yeah, sure foggy this morning. I got up, she was so thick.

0:56:46.9 Jill: So you wouldn't have gone out and done any water, water...

0:56:52.7 CW: No, not like there was this morning. But we was good at the water, we was real good at... Fog's the same for all of us. We'd run in fogs just like we would. The only thing about fogs is danger. You run up with somebody, don't know where they're going, or you can't see. But we used to go up Rappahannock and leave out of Rappahannock, and go all the way up to the bridge every day, like it was this morning. Run up there by compass. Never had no radar, it was compass. You had compass numbers wrote down. But like I said, the only thing about it was, you run up with somebody laying there, not moving. The danger is not seeing what you're doing and not nobody else know what they're doing. That's the danger in fogs. But I'd write numbers down, while we was there, I'd write numbers down, we left at the creek, I'd follow them numbers written on the compass, would tell you right there where you wanted to go.

0:57:41.3 Jill: You had fixes, fixes that you... That's cool. Wow.

0:57:48.3 CW: But we had to get good at it, 'cause you were at the water, you couldn't stay home every day because of fog, you know what I mean?

0:57:53.5 Jill: Yes. You had to figure it out.

0:57:55.2 CW: Yeah, well I got good at it myself, at compass. But now you got a radar, you look at the radar, it'll show you everything.

0:58:01.1 Jill: So which way is north? Can you...

0:58:03.2 CW: Here.

0:58:04.5 Jill: Yeah. So you have a natural sense.

0:58:06.8 CW: Yeah, natural... Everything comes natural.

0:58:09.8 Jill: I always admire that 'cause I never know.

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0:58:11.7 S2: I would have said that way.

[laughter]

0:58:16.5 Jill: I can do left and right.

0:58:16.6 CW: She'd tell me sometime, I be going somewhere. "I didn't know we would go back this way." I say, "Common sense will tell you, if you go somewhere and it's to the eastward, the only way you can get back is to the westward." "I wouldn't have went that way," she say. Said, "Well, that's the difference, me and you."

0:58:37.0 Jill: Wow. Well, what a pleasure to talk to you and hear all your stories about growing up in Guinea.

0:58:42.9 CW: I hope I satisfied you.

0:58:44.0 Jill: It was fantastic, it was really great. And so it was a pleasure, and if you do think of anything else, I'm sure they'd love to hear other stories here that you write down, or...

0:58:52.5 CW: Like I said, there's plenty I probably forgot and there's plenty I probably will remember later on.

0:58:57.8 Jill: Exactly. And things might come up just because you've had this conversation, you might start thinking about things, you could just get a little recorder out and you could write down something and share it with them.

0:59:07.3 CW: Like I said, I enjoyed it. I enjoyed it, Guineaman, I enjoyed it. People talk about Guinea this and Guinea that, Guinea wasn't a bad place. Some bad people, but it wasn't Guinea. And like I said, the people in Guinea was, their worst enemy was their own self. You just didn't, they wouldn't... If you treated them wrong, they just didn't forget. But across Maundy Creek was the worst place over there, because they bet on cutting you, cutting you, shooting, killing, they bet on it back then, when I was coming along. We was there one day, we was eating breakfast outdoors, we ate breakfast outdoors all the time back then, at the old place, Sunday morning. We heard a gunshot over that way across the creek. Momma said, "Now, [WORD REDACTED]," my dad's name was [WORD REDACTED], "Somebody shot somebody," just off the top of your head. "Well, how do you know?" She said... She just brought it up for some reason. Later on about 11, 12 o'clock, sure enough, over there was Williams' store, Jack Williams' store on this side of the road, and Clarence Williams had a store on this side of the road, right across from one another almost.

1:00:33.4 Jill: That was Jenkins Neck Road?

1:00:35.0 CW: That was Maundy's Creek.

1:00:38.4 Jill: Maundy's Creek.

1:00:38.5 CW: Down Maundy's Creek, all the way down, go right down Maundy's Creek, and go by. And Clarence had a lot of young boys back then. He'd hired them to go off and steal, good places to steal like canned foods or whatever it was, and bring them to him, he gave them a little bit

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of money for stealing them, he'd sell them. Back then, a can of soup probably 10 cent, I'd say, 10-12 cent a can. Well, he had soup and stuff over here too, he was selling. If he had to get 10 cent a can for his soup, he'd sell his for five cent. It's called price gouging, just to beat his brother at that. But the gunshot was, Clarence left his store, rode by his brother's store, his brother was sitting on his front porch reading the paper, shot him right in the face and eyes with a buckshot, and killed him.

1:01:36.9 S2: His own brother.

1:01:37.0 CW: His brother was laid back on the chair like this reading a paper, his chair was sat right there, he never even moved out his chair, his chair stayed back there. The buckshot went through the glass case of the door, went to the back of the store, and went to in the meat case. Them buckshots' places are still there today, to date. Killed his brother and rode down the road and shot his brother-in-law's wife [WORD REDACTED], and he shot at his brother-in-law. And when he'd seen him with a gun, he got behind a corridor and a load of buckshots went and hit the corridor. That's the only thing that saved him. Killed his own brother, over maybe 10-12 cent on a can of soup on back then, shooting. But that stuff never did go on over Jenkins Neck way. You never did that. It was stealing, fires set, and stuff like that, but was never no stabbing, killing, shooting and all this stuff.

1:02:35.0 Jill: So I just wanna... Because, so the Jenkins Neck Road come up and then Maundy Creek is on the...

1:02:39.5 CW: On this side.

1:02:42.0 Jill: So across that is where you're talking about.

1:02:44.4 CW: Yeah, I'm across in that side, Jenkins. So you go down straight down the road here, you just go straight on down, you go to Maundy's Creek. Where the crossroad is, there's a store there, got a big W on there, Williams. You turn there, and you're going to Jenkins Neck, all the way down Jenkins Neck. And I was raised and born on it, far as you can get down there.

1:03:04.9 Jill: Okay, and then the other way, across the other side of Maundy's Creek is what you're talking about, yeah.

1:03:09.6 CW: Maundy's Creek. See, all it is is creek, like this thing, there's the creek and there's Jenkins Neck, and then Maundy's Creek.

1:03:15.9 Jill: Yeah, and then you're talking about on the other side on Maundy's Creek was where those other events happened. Okay. I just wanna be...

1:03:19.9 CW: That was a rough place. We used to go there to get haircuts and stuff in but you'd have to watch them Watch them. They'd get drunk up there, so we had to watch them, really. And we had to walk... We had to set off from my house, cross that creek over here, get on the road, walk all the way down that road up there to the post office, and take that road all the way down here, and down here where the seafood place is at, where the barber shop there on the barber shop there, that's where we got our hair cut. Then we had to walk all that way back there, get in the boat, go across that creek, go home. Haircuts for 15 cent, 15 cent.

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1:04:04.5 Jill: Wow, I guess that was worth it. It was a good price. [laughter]

1:04:08.1 CW: 15 cents, but we didn't mind it. We didn't mind it.

1:04:11.0 Jill: It'd be funny if you went into a barber shop today and just said, "Here's my money."

1:04:16.4 CW: Now it's \$18. Oh, me. But it was good memories.

1:04:24.4 Jill: Oh my goodness. Yeah, it sounds like your growing up was very... A little bit safe, in that sometimes dangerous place.

1:04:34.8 CW: Yeah, well, it was dangerous; at times it was dangerous. Especially weekends. Importers, drinking, drunk, and whatever. I know over there, the boy shot... One boy shot the other one in the store over there, shot him seven times, right here, with a 25 automatic pistol, you know he lived?

1:05:00.9 Jill: Really?

1:05:02.3 CW: He'd pull his shirt up now and show you the holes.

1:05:07.5 Jill: He survived.

1:05:08.2 CW: He survived seven times with a 25.

1:05:10.0 Jill: That's kind of a fact.

1:05:12.6 CW: So you knew he meant to kill him, but he didn't do it. There was a lot of us, a lot of... A lot went on over that creek that...

1:05:22.7 Jill: But you could spend your entire day in the woods too, and you were fine. So, yeah, so it was like...

1:05:25.9 CW: Oh, yeah. Yeah, I didn't care. No, I didn't care. I loved it. You always find something to do. You know what I mean? Always find something to do.

1:05:34.1 Jill: Never bored. [laughter]

1:05:39.9 CW: You always find something to do.

1:05:40.8 Jill: Nice. Thank you so much for sharing your memories, I'm very, very grateful.

1:05:45.9 CW: You're certainly welcome, you're certainly welcome. I hope there's something out of it that you could...

1:05:46.0 S2: Hope he told you something you could use.

1:05:46.3 Jill: So yeah, no absolutely, and in fact, for the store, it's gonna be part of a collection of stories from several people in the area. For our part, we're gonna be using it to study the dialect,

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actually. We're gonna use it to compare phonology from one to another, and so yeah, so we just have it as a collection for that, all the different dialects and variations in the area. But it was absolutely wonderful and I'm very grateful.

1:06:24.3 CW: I'm glad I could help you.

1:06:26.5 Jill: So nice to meet you.

1:06:28.2 S2: I hope you're gonna use what he said.

1:06:32.0 CW: Thank you.

1:06:33.0 S2: Nice meeting y'all.

1:06:35.1 CW: Let me put my glasses on or I won't be able to see this darn thing. Okay.

1:06:38.3 S2: Okay.