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

Participants:

Interviewee: Speaker 2, Caucasian Female, Age 40's, Born and raised in Norfolk, adulthood spent in Windsor

Interviewer- Speaker 1

Date: July 8, 2008

Location: Windsor, Virginia

Key:

"(ph)" after the word- phonetic spelling

_____ - inaudible word/s

...(ellipse)- pause mid-sentence

--(double dashes)- incomplete thought/sentence or additional information in a sentence

--(double dashes flush with the last word spoken, ie: "and--")- interruption

[laughter]- speaker laughs

[pause]- strong pause in conversation

0:00

Speaker 1: Ok. What's your name?

Speaker 2: [WORDS REMOVED].

Speaker 1: And, where were you born?

Speaker 2: Norfolk, Virginia.

Speaker 1: And, what's your age?...ish?

Speaker 2: (laughs) Forty-something.

Speaker 1: Ok. Forty-something.

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Speaker 1: What do you consider to be a Tidewater Native?

Speaker 2: I think someone who is reared in Tidewater, spends most of their life in Tidewater as a resident.

Speaker 1: Ok. Um...Should they be born in the Tidewater area to be a native--

Speaker 2: Uh--

Speaker 1: or just spends most of their life?

Speaker 2: I think most of their life. It's where they've lived, where they've spent most of their time as a... maybe as young adult and then an adult.

Speaker 1: MmmK. Um, would you consider yourself a Tidewater Native and what qualifies you as a native?

Speaker 2: Yes, because I was reared and spent most of my adult life in Tidewater.

Speaker 1: Ok. What can you tell me about your memories of your neighborhood...growing up?

Speaker 2: Um, very quaint, little, middle class neighborhood.

Speaker 1: Where was it?

Speaker 2: Norvella Heights in Norfolk.

Speaker 1: Ok. Um, do you have any memories of your neighborhood friendships or children in your neighborhood or people in your neighborhood that you were acquainted with as a child?

Speaker 2: Mmmhmm. Sure. Umm...Children about the same age as me riding bicycles on the sidewalk, cookouts. Umm...badminton, looking for the ice cream truck.

Speaker 1: [laughs]

Speaker 2: A...All of the neighboring houses were very similar to ours working. Uh...most of the mothers stayed at home, raised the children. And the, uh, fathers worked.

Speaker 1: So when you say they were similar to yours are you talking about the homes being similar or the...uh...social structure of those families?

Speaker 2: All the above--

Speaker 1: K.

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Speaker 2: We were the same age groups, working class, umm...the homes were built on the same order, little three bedroom, one bath little ca....um, cape-cod looking homes.

Speaker 1: And, uh...when you say everyone was about the same age in that neighborhood what... what age was that?

Speaker 2: I guess for the adults --because that's where I spent my childhood-- um, the adults were probably all in their 30s and 40s with, you know, small children coming up.

Speaker 1: MmmK. And what elementary school did you go to--

Speaker 2: I--

Speaker 1:--while living in that neighborhood?

Speaker 2: I went to private schools as did most of the children in my, my neighborhood. We were zoned...that was during a time that, um, busing across the city was new and, and, uh, there was no way of getting around it and I think most of the families in that area wanted their children to be in neighborhood schools so they chose local, private schools.

Speaker 1: And, um, so you would say that most of the families in your neighborhood were along the same economic status?

Speaker 2: Mmmhmm. Yep. They were all little, you know, two car, one working parent, manicured lawns, perfectly painted little homes with white trim.

Speaker 1: What, um, years are you talking about?

Speaker 2: This would be, lets see as I remember, from 1965 to 1983.

Speaker 1: So those, um, families that you described as one working parent, two cars...at that time, would you consider that middle class?

Speaker 2: Mmmhmm.

Speaker 1: That was middle class, not middle to upper class?

Speaker 2: No.

Speaker 1: K.

Speaker 2: No it was middle class. It was a working, you know, neighborhood.

Speaker 1: What were the... um, --just to back to the, uh, neighborhood for a second--, what were the ethnicities within that neighborhood?

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Speaker 2: They were 99% Caucasian, (clears throat), we had one African-American family that lived, umm several blocks down, who were a fantastic family but they had owned that home before the actual neighborhood development was, you know, created, before it was subdivided, they had actually owned the farmland and when they sold off the acreage to be subdivided they maintained, umm, their lot and their home.

Speaker 1: So not a lot of variety in ethnicities?

Speaker 2: Nope, and that's what I remember as a child growing up was that we all did the same things, liked the same things, enjoyed the same things.

5:00

Speaker 2: Um, our Saturday evenings were summertime cookouts in the backyard with, you know, badminton and dodgeball, you know, riding bicycles after school. It was a very safe, happy neighborhood.

Speaker 1: Um, what...what do you remember about elementary school? You said you went to private schools for elementary school.

Speaker 2: Mmmhmm.

Speaker 1: What school was that?

Speaker 2: It was a little school in, umm, it was off of Tidewater Drive. My neighborhood, Norvella Heights, was near the Azalea Gardens, the botanical gardens, not far from the airport, and...I guess the school was maybe, and maybe not even, 10 miles away from the home. Um...rode the little bus there and back in the afternoons. It was small school. It was just a...um, a very close knit, little school.

Speaker 1: How many people, or students, would you say were in a class, if you can remember one of your classes in elementary school?

Speaker 2: Maybe 12. Maybe 12 to 15 students.

Speaker 1: Wow.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Speaker 1: Um, and since this was a private school I'm assuming that...um, your parents paid tuition.

Speaker 2: They did.

Speaker 1: Do you remember what the tuition was, maybe?

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Speaker 2: No, because I attended elementary all the way through graduation from high school. (*Note: "elementary" was meant to be "private") Yeah, uh...of course a different school but--

Speaker 1: You attended private schools?

Speaker 2: I did and um, they increased, of course yearly, and I think when I finally graduated it was probably over 200 a month plus transportation but maybe back then, as a child in elementary school, it might have been 50 or 60 a month--

Speaker 1: Mmmm.

Speaker 2: --plus transportation.

Speaker 1: S--

Speaker 2: Which was a lot then.

Speaker 1: Mmmhmm. What would you say that maybe the average, um, income of those middle class families in your neighborhood might have been?

Speaker 2: Mmph. Wow. I don't even--

Speaker 1: I guess we're talking about the 70's.

Speaker 2: Yea. I don't even dare to try to guess that.

Speaker 1: Ok.

Speaker 2: I really don't.

Speaker 1: Um, so memories of elementary school...what can you tell me about friendships, um, teachers...

Speaker 2: Well, teachers back then (increased volume) could spank the children, especially in a private school, so I never warranted a spanking but I certainly viewed those who did, and they were strict. You had dress code and it was not a uniform at that time but, um, the children were kept very much in line and they didn't seem to step out of line too much. They knew the rules. They abided by them. It was a very pleasant and happy scenario.

Speaker 1: Did you have any young teachers or were they--

Speaker 2: Uh uh.

Speaker 1: mainly middle aged?

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Speaker 2: Nope, I had some young teachers. I had one, um, Hispanic teacher. She was from Spain, wonderful, 5th grade. Umm, I think she was married to a military man and, uh, this was one of their stations, was in Norfolk, and, uh, so she began teaching us Spanish in the 5th grade which we all thought was neat. But then you didn't change classes, I mean, you went to one teacher--

Speaker 1: Mmmhmm.

Speaker 2: and you stayed with that teacher and you had, umm...

Speaker 1: So, she taught all of your classes--

Speaker 2: She taught--

Speaker 1: for 5th grade?

Speaker 2: Yes, all of the classes except for your art. You would go out for art or you would go out for PE. Umm, even the lunches were served...they were brought to the classrooms and they were cooked in a kitchen and, as I remember back, Wednesdays was always fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, and green beans. [laughs] And they were delicious.

Speaker 1: Do you remember your, um, Spanish teacher, um, did you notice at the time, I guess since you were so young, um, that she had an accent?

Speaker 2: Yes. She did. She had a thick accent and often times she was asked to repeat herself.

Speaker 1: Hmm. Did you find her hard to understand--

Speaker 2: Sometimes.

Speaker 1: at that age?

Speaker 2: Mmmhmm. Sometimes I did.

Speaker 1: Do you remember anything that... specifically, that was hard to understand? Were there any words that...that you would often confuse?

Speaker 2: No. Nothing that comes to mind right now but I...the little bit of Spanish that she taught us was just, I don't know, it was just so interesting to us. It was interesting to me to be learning, you know, even just simple words, daily greetings, and like that of another language. But her accent we could never duplicate.

Speaker 1: What did the students --, how --... you were 5th grade, right?

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Speaker 2: Mmmhmm.

Speaker 1: What did the students think about her accent? Like what comments did you ever hear maybe from friends or classmates?

10:00

Speaker 2: Um, I think, and this is...is sad to say, but they...they had a view of, her name was [WORDS REMOVED], they had a view of her that she did not fit. She did not belong there. It was almost as if, you know, she's not American or she's not one of us and that's a sad thing but, um, I don't think that they ever treated her, you know, ugly but I think that was really their view.

Speaker 1: Um, did the teachers, did her fellow teachers have the same view of her?

Speaker 2: Her colleagues may have. I don't remember. Um, you know the best of that, that I can recall, is being a 10 year old, 11 year old child, if even that old, out on the playground and, you know, noticing who, which teachers, you know, were out with each class that was out on the playground, sat with each other.

Speaker 1: Mmmhmm.

Speaker 2: And...she always had someone who sat with her, you know, she never seemed to outcast but it may not have been the whole 5 or 6 teachers who, you know, who's classes were on the playground at one time. So, yeah, I think that she was probably viewed differently.

Speaker 1: So, being in a private elementary school, what can you tell me about, um, the different backgrounds and cultures of your classmates? Was everyone Caucasian and cookie-cutter or--

Speaker 2: Yeah. [laughs] They were, you know, it wasn't...it wasn't a lot of variety there. We weren't a big melting pot even though Norfolk is, the school itself, the little private school, being as small as they are, they were pretty cookie-cutter. We were, um, there again probably 98, 99% Caucasian, um--

Speaker 1: Teachers, too?

Speaker 2: Teachers, too. Um, we did have male and female teachers. I do remember there was a good mix of both. Umm, but as far as ethnicity, they...other than the one Hispanic teacher, I think that they were all Caucasian. They were varied in age. They weren't all young, all middle aged, or all older, there was a good variety of each. Um. and different backgrounds. Now that part, as far as some were military and some were, you know, professionals, um...not that the military is not professional but they were in the civilian professional realm.

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Speaker 1: Mmmhmm.

Speaker 2: Um...and I remember that my parents made certain that they were all certified, licensed teachers. They wanted to be sure that, you know, the education was the quality that they... were paying for.

Speaker 1: Right. That's understandable. Umm...Ok. Middle school. What middle school did you go to and where was that?

Speaker 2: Um, I began maeddle "[ph]" school seventh grade. It was then called junior high. It was seventh, eighth, and ninth was middle school, was junior high school...and I went to a Christian school at that time and that's where the uniforms came into play...and there was more, um, variety, uh, with ethnicity. We had more African-American students. Um, fewer military. They were mainly church-based families that sent their children there and they maintained the...the uniform just to keep the controversy out.

Speaker 1: Mmmhmm.

Speaker 2: Um...you had a standard suit that you wore each day, vari – (clears throat) varied in colors and, you know, uh, for the summer and the winter.

Speaker 1: When you say there was, um, more variety regarding ethnicities, do you remember any specific classmates or teachers with different cultural backgrounds or--

Speaker 2: Other than being African-American and Caucasian--

Speaker 1: how does that compare to elementary school?

Speaker 2: those, those are the only --I don't remember, you know, um--

Speaker 1: Ok.

Speaker 2: Latino or, or--

Speaker 1: Any other--

Speaker 2: any others. Uh uh--

Speaker 1: backgrounds? Um, what, what was the name of the school?

Speaker 2: Azalea Garden...Christian School, because I mean there again that was closest to the neighborhood.

Speaker 1: And that was on Azalea Garden Road?

Speaker 2: Mmmhmm. Right down from the Botanical Gardens.

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Speaker 1: Um, [Pause], did you notice any changes between... um...how the school was run going from...a private elementary school that, I guess, was not a Christian School--

Speaker 2: Mmmhmm.

Speaker 1: to a Christian school? Did you notice a difference in maybe the students, how they acted or the behavior of--

Speaker 2: Well probably, not only going from a private, um, to a Christian school, not only that but also the age, I mean, you had a whole different age range in there. There were different issues, different hormones that were flowing at the time so the children's interests were varied from elementary school and so were the, the rules, of course. It was much stricter.

Speaker 1: Um, and what about highschool?

Speaker 2: High school I went to another Christian school. It was little bit further away, um, from our neighborhood but it was Gateway Christian which is where I graduated from.

Speaker 1: Did you ride the bus?

15:00

Speaker 2: Um... I did. I did ride the bus some in Gateway. I'd never rode the bus for Azalea Garden -- back to the junior high -- because it was so near that, um, my father took me to school each morning and picked me up. But, um, at Gateway I did ride the bus some and then of course I became driving age so I drove some.

Speaker 1: And you started driving, I guess, at sixteen--

Speaker 2: Sixteen.

Speaker 1: is that right?

Speaker 2: Mmmhmm. That was the magical year, yeah.

Speaker 1: What kinda car d'ya "[ph]" have?

Speaker 2: We had a, at the time it was a Buick. A Buick Sentry, a little four-door, navy blue...um, sedan, I guess you'd call it.

Speaker 1: So what are your, um, memories of high school then, as far as friendships, teachers, um, cultural exposure and did they really differ from elementary and middle?

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Speaker 2: No. Still cookie-cutter, um--

Speaker 1: Why do you think that was? Was it the area?

Speaker 2: [Pause] Uh...I think those who choose to put their students in private schools, their looking for a particular atmosphere that they want their, their children exposed to or maybe their looking for a particular ack – atmosphere to avoid. Um, in this case I think that those who were, you know, my fellow students, came from backgrounds just very similar to mine. A very simple,...working, middle class, Christian family.

Speaker 1: Mmmk.

Speaker 2: We weren't quite the "Leave it to Beaver" family but we weren't far from it.

Speaker 1: I guess I'm just wondering why those middle class, working, Christian families didn't cross into other ethnicities and cultures.

Speaker 2: That was 60s, 70s, and early 80s. I think, um, my did it as -- they felt as -- probably being an only child they had had me in private and Christian schools thus far and, and had to, you know, finish out.

Speaker 1: Do you think that there were less, um, that there was less of a variety of ef – eth – ethnicities in, um, the Tidewater at that time as compared to now?

Speaker 2: There may have been but one would think with the military that there would have been, you know, it would've been as varied then as it is now.

Speaker 1: MmmK. Um, what do you like about the Tidewater area...and what is the Tidewater area to you?

Speaker 2: Well, of course it's home. That's the first thing, and what I love about it are the memories and, um, they're good ones and those, those localities, those places that I remember, you know, coming up and visiting that were just routine to us...owIn "[ph]" special occasions when I want to, you know, take friends or family who maybe haven't visited, you know, they still come to mind.

Speaker 1: What areas or cities make up the Tidewater area...in your opinion?

Speaker 2: I think Virginia Beach, Norfolk, um, Portsmouth, Chesapeake...those were -- in my recollection -- those were the main four cities that made up the Tidewater area but now it's expanded. I think they've taken in, um, of course Western Tidewater which, um, includes Suffolk—

Speaker 1: Mmmhmm.

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Speaker 2: and then, um, they call it the Southside and then the, um, I forget the other...the Peninsula, but they still consider it Tidewater “[ph]”.

Speaker 1: So, you would include the rural areas in with the, the cities to make up the whole Tidewater region?

Speaker 2: I would. I don't know if that's accurate or not but I think that Newport News, Hampton being the, the most, um, urban area as well as Norfolk, Chesapeake. Chesapeake is somewhat rul (“[ph]” for “rural”), Suffolk, uh, uh, yeah, I think so. [Pause] And I think Isle of Wight even, you know, being the most rul (“[ph]” for “rural”).

Speaker 1: Um, [Pause] let's see, what um...do you think that there are suburbs in the Hampton Roads area? In the Tidewater area, do we have suburbs?

Speaker 2: [Pause] Uh--

Speaker 1: You've mentioned cities and we definitely have, um--

Speaker 2: I think you'd find more suburbs further out Virginia Beach, the furthest way toward Pungo and Croatan and...S -- out Suffolk way, further out in Chesapeake and Suffolk that you actually find suburbs before you, you know, get in between the rul (“[ph]” for “rural”) and the urban areas.

20:00

Speaker 1: What, um, what do you classify as a suburb? What is a suburb in relation to the Tidewater area?

Speaker 2: Well, I, I think that you certainly have an urban area within Tidewater being the inner city of Norfolk and, um, Hampton, Newport News, Portsmouth, um, I don't know that Virginia Beach so much has, um, an urban area but its more suburban and then your rul (“[ph]” for “rural”) areas being the outlying areas of Suffolk and Isle of Wight and, and some of the further ends of Chesapeake.

Speaker 1: What would be the, the, um, -- of Virginia Beach -- what would be the real city area—

Speaker 2: Well—

Speaker 1: the, the business and commerce area?

Speaker 2: Well, I, I think for a, a city who did not have a downtown they have just in the last five years created a downtown being Pembroke (“[ph]”- Pembruk as in “could”) now.

Speaker 1: Mmmhmm.

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Speaker 2: I always just, you know, viewed Virginia Beach as once you hit Atlantic Avenue that was... the city.

Speaker 1: Um, good. Um, what cultures make up the Tidewater area?

Speaker 2: Well now...I've noticed -- actually even when I was coming up as a, a young adult -- you have a big, um, Korean culture, uh, you know, as far as the Asians that are...I think mainly because of the military, the wives and, and their children, um, of the military, of the service men. You have a high population, I believe, now of Hispanics, the Latino community and you see that, you know, in the churches that have been established and the markets actually that gear towards these cultures. I don't really see a big difference in the um -- as you do more in the rural ("rural") areas -- the, um, African-American and the Caucasian churches and markets, I mean, they're pretty mixed whether it be inner city or the suburbs but as you go more into the rural ("rural") areas you'll see more of, um—

Speaker 1: Definitely more of a separation?

Speaker 2: Definitely more separation and I just think that that was the mindset and the way that they were reared and, you know, they, they just haven't blended—

Speaker 1: Mmmhmm.

Speaker 2: or had need to blend—

Speaker 1: Hmm.

Speaker 2: as they have in the inner city.

Speaker 1: [Pause] Hmm. Ok. Um, how 'bout traditions? Does the Tidewater area have any traditions or maybe celebrations that are, um—

Speaker 2: Mmmhmm. You have the Neptune festival. You have the lights—

Speaker 1: What is the Neptune festival?

Speaker 2: Well, it is a...party on the boardwalk. [laughs]

Speaker 1: [laughs]

Speaker 2: It's a weekend and I forget which month it's in, I wanna say September but I'm not absolutely positive. Um, it includes a, an art show, you know, different, um, arts on the beach of sandcastle building and then, of course, volleyball and, and, you know, various games and sports.

Speaker 1: Do you know who Neptune is?

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Speaker 2: King Neptune?

Speaker 1: Mmmhmm.

Speaker 2: Surely.

Speaker 1: What's his story?

Speaker 2: I don't know his whole story. [laughs]

Speaker 1: [laughs] Ok. Um...

Speaker 2: He's the king of the sea I guess.

Speaker 1: Ok.

Speaker 2: [Laughs]

Speaker 1: How about other traditions or celebrations or festivals that we have that are maybe specific to the Tidewater Area?

Speaker 2: Well, there's the, um, -- of course because I lived so near there -- the um, Azalea Festival--

Speaker 1: Ok.

Speaker 2: where you have the Azalea Queen.

Speaker 1: Ok.

Speaker 2: That's always been a big thing in the spring.

Speaker 1: And, what is that--

Speaker 2: At the botanical gardens.

Speaker 1: based on?

Speaker 2: It's a, um, it's the blooming of all the azaleas and the --, it's just gorgeous at the Botanical Gardens. Um, you have, I don't remember when it was, but they would have the Blue Angels, on the military realm, they would have um, a big show—

Speaker 1: Oh. Right. The jets, right?

Speaker 2: the air show. It was the air show I believe.

Speaker 1: Mmmhmm.

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Speaker 2: And they would have the Blue Angels come and perform and that was something that my father always took me to.

Speaker 1: Um, what about the, uh, Peanut Fest?

Speaker 2: That's Suffolk! [Laughs]

Speaker 1: That's Tidewater, right?

Speaker 2: I did say that I felt like it was so, yep, that's more of your suburban and rural ("rural" for "rural"), mmhmm.

Speaker 1: And what, what's that Peanut Fest all about?

Speaker 2: I guess that's the harvest time, um, I believe it's in October, and I may be off again. It may be more in September. Um, they have a weekend that, I guess, it's dedicated to the harvesting of peanuts and they make a big party out of it.

Speaker 1: What about the, um, celebrations and traditions that are --? Are there any that are maybe specific to the rural areas or the, the more, um, rural, um, country areas?

Speaker 2: They do. They have their fairs. They don't have the, um, the celebrations on the grand scale that, I guess, that the, the downtowns of Norfolk and Virginia Beach Portsmouth and have. They have their little county fairs, which are a big deal for the rural ("rural" for "rural") people.

25:00

Speaker 1: And how about cultures in this area? Are there any—

Speaker 2: In the Isle of Wight area?

Speaker 1: No, in the Tidewater area.

Speaker 2: Ok.

Speaker 1: Mmmhmm. Which you said includes Isle of Wight, so, yeah. Are there any cultures that are very distinct to the Tidewater area or any practices, or, you know, just every day, um, things that, that you would notice in this area that you...if you went maybe further into Virginia or even out of state that you wouldn't notice?

Speaker 2: Well, I guess, you know, being so close to the water "rural" that it is often times geared towards the beach and the, the celebrations that are on either the boardwalk or downtown Norfolk where they have the Harbor Fest, you know, everything seems to be centered around a body of water "rural" often times.

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Speaker 1: Mmm. Mmmhmm.

Speaker 2: Whether it be, um, the swimming and the sport of, you know, just things on the beach or towards, um, the military.

Speaker 1: MmmK.

Speaker 2: Everything, uh, all of the celebrations except for in the rul (“[ph]” for “rural”) counties, you know, the outlying counties seem to be always held near a bo – body of warter “[ph]”.

Speaker 1: Ok. How ‘bout, um, accents? What kind of accents might you hear in the Tidewater area since you’ve been raised here? What have you come across?

Speaker 2: Uh, a variety because of the military.

Speaker 1: Mmmhmm.

Speaker 2: You have, um, you have a Northern, you have many from Michigan and uh, Maine, various places, and those from Texas and California.

Speaker 1: And how can you tell a difference between those accents?

Speaker 2: I guess the pronunciation of their, their, um, various words. I don’t think that in the Tidewater area you have a very thick Southern accent that you might find further North Carolina or South Carolina unless you went into those that are transient.

Speaker 1: Mmmhmm.

Speaker 2: But as far as from a native Tidewater, um, resident I don’t think that you’ll find... but of course I don’t hear it, I identify with it and then I don’t, you know, differentiate in it, but I don’t hear a very thick Southern accent.

Speaker 1: No?

Speaker 2: Uh uh.

Speaker 1: But, um, how ‘bout when someone from the North moves in or comes to visit, do you tell – can you tell, uh, distinctively that they have a very different accent?

Speaker 2: Mmmhmm.

Speaker 1: What is it about—

Speaker 2: Surely.

Speaker 1: their—

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Speaker 2: It seems like the don't pronounce their "R's." [Laughs]

Speaker 1: Ok. They don't pronounce their "R's."

Speaker 2: And they certainly don't have a drawl. Their, their words are usually sharp and—

Speaker 1: What is a drawl?

Speaker 2: They don't draw out their syllables. [Laughs]

Speaker 1: Ok.

Speaker 2: [Laughs]

Speaker 1: And who does that?

Speaker 2: Well, the – I think the Southern, the Southern, um, dialect. You know, the Southern drawl?

Speaker 1: Mmmhmm. And you said, um, Southern dialect so while we're on that what is – what is a Southern dialect, or what features other than that drawl might you find in the Southern dialect, thinking—

Speaker 2: I think—

Speaker 1: about the friends and family you've got that might have a--

Speaker 2: Oh, the word that sticks out is "ya'll."

Speaker 1: Ya'll? Ok. Anything else?

Speaker 2: [Pause]

Speaker 1: Are there things that are maybe said here in the Tidewater area that you would not find elsewhere?

Speaker 2: Mmm. I don't know. I think that that one is the one that always stands out in my mind when you hear anyone refer to, to guests as ya'll you just assume that they're from down South and I think that...I think that there's a new Mason-Dixon line. I think it's, uh, Northern Virginia. I think that we've, we've changed that quite a bit.

Speaker 1: Ok. Um, what changes, since you have grown up in the Tidewater area, what changes have you noticed over time in this area, be it, um, culturally, socially, economically, um, geographically – building up of the area? What changes have you really noticed about this area and can you be specific?

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Speaker 2: Well, Suffolk, in particular, was known as the, the largest city in Virginia.

Speaker 1: Really?

30:00

Speaker 2: And that was geographically. It was because they owned – there was more ... to Suffolk, not so much population, but I think they have even – it used to be known as the, uh, as Nansemond County and then it was Suffolk City within Nansemond County but they have expanded and it all now Suffolk, the city of Suffolk. Um, and Suffolk is very diverse just like Chesapeake is whereas they have the, the very rural (“[ph]” for “rural”) areas and farmland that just goes on for miles (with the “i” pronounced [Speaker 1:]) and miles...and just a few miles down the road you go into their little inner city or their little, um, urban area. So, that I’ve seen changed where the, the city has built up more—

Speaker 1: Mmmhmm.

Speaker 2: you know, of an urban area. Um, the same with Chesapeake, very much so. Chesapeake was at once, as I was coming up, just land. When you took a ride in country on a Sunday afternoon after church it was just a few miles (with the “i” pronounced [Speaker 1:]) down the road to Chesapeake and you were in the country and there was nothing but farmland and, you know, houses.

Speaker 1: And, so how has that changed?

Speaker 2: We --, the, the urban area has expanded. It’s crossed the borders from downtown Norfolk into Chesapeake and, and even further...There’s more public funding, more public transportation. Um, I don’t know whether that’s an effect of the military. There’s so much military land, uh, as far as bases. Norfolk and Virginia Beach, Oceana, um, Damneck, uh, where in the world – am – amphibias base and then the Norfolk naval station, there’s just so many, um, areas that are military. And over in Hampton there you have the airforce base, Langley.

Speaker 1: Mmmk. Have you noticed any, um, social changes in the Tidewater area since you were a child, maybe the way that people interact? Is there a difference?

Speaker 2: I think so. I think that, you know, there’s, there’s just less of a, a distinction, a differentiation between, uh, the cultures, uh, whether it be Hispanic, African American or Caucasian, I think we worship together more, we, you know our neighborhoods are, are more diverse. They’re not all Caucasian as they were in the 60s and 70s. Um, or, you know, all one or the other. I think we’re more tolerant to each other and more accepting.

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Speaker 1: Ok. Um, how 'bout the history of the Tidewater area? Do you remember any – I guess in the last 40 years – do you remember any big, key moments, um, or any events that were, um, that need to be remembered...in this area?

Speaker 2: [Pause] Wow. Forty years is a long time.

Speaker 1: [Laughs] You can think.

Speaker 2: It takes a lot of thinkin'. I'm sure there have been. I'm sure that there have been. There've been buildings that were, you know, historical settings at, at one time that were demolished and I'm tryin' to think of, you know, what particular ones they were. I can remember them coming down and they were certainly landmarks...for years that I remember as coming up. Um, [Pause] but I can't remember their names. I can't remember the, the names of the buildings. Those were, um, [Pause]. Amtrak came back to this area. That was a big, um, passenger train. I re--. Many, many , ships, of course, were christened and stationed here and they were all, you know, mo – momentous occasions, where many, you know, people came out and either welcomed or, um, participated in the celebrations. I can't think of any, any one thing that stands out or any, you know, two or three things that stand out as being, uh, fabulous event for Tidewater and I'm sure that it's just because I can't think of them.

Speaker 1: Mmmk. Um, we can come back to that if you think of anything. Um, [Pause] going back to... language here in the Tidewater, are there any figures of speech that you might hear, um, here that you would not hear elsewhere? Or have you ever, um, been called out on something that you say that someone from a different area thinks is um,--

Speaker 2: [Laughs]

Speaker 1: funny or different or unique?

35:00

Speaker 2: I can't think of any phrases but I can think of individual words then I don't know whether they would be --. Um, and of course the first thing that comes to my mind is that others view them as ignorance.

Speaker 1: Mmm.

Speaker 2: Um, I can remember hearing all through my childhood a particular word that I've learned is, um, very quickly – that is not correctly pronounced and that is chiml – chimney.

Speaker 1: Mmmhmm.

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Speaker 2: I can remember as long as, you know, as I was a child and comin' up that it was pronounced chimbley.

Speaker 1: Chimbley?

Speaker 2: Chimbley. Um, also the city Portsmouth, Porchmouth, you'll hear some, some locals refer to Portsmouth as Porchmouth.

Speaker 1: Huh.

Speaker 2: And Norfolk (with the first vowel sound pronounced as the "coffee" vowel)

Speaker 1: Uh huh.

Speaker 2: Rather than Norfolk (with the first vowel sound pronounced as the "boat" vowel) or Norfolk (with the second vowel sound pronounced as the "boat" vowel). It's Nɔ̃folk "[ph]".

Speaker 1: Who says Nɔ̃folk "[ph]"?

Speaker 2: I really think those that have, have very much in the, the old Tidewater area coming up and have never really, you know, been exposed te ("[ph]" for "to"), tə other dialects as much maybe. Um, I can remember my father [Laughs] being totally Tidewater for 76 years Porchmouth was Porchmouth.

Speaker 1: How do you pronounce the name of, um, the city that you just said—

Speaker 2: Ports—

Speaker 1: Not Portsmouth but the other one.

Speaker 2: Portsmouth. Oh! Norfolk (with the second vowel sound pronounced as the "boat" vowel).

Speaker 1: Norfolk (with the second vowel sound pronounced as the "boat" vowel)?

Speaker 2: Mmmhmm. I do get the "n-o-r" not necessarily the "folk."

Speaker 1: Ok.

Speaker 2: Norfolk. And he always did say, as well, my father always reper – referred to it as Nɔ̃folk. "I live in Nɔ̃folk."

Speaker 1: And which one's correct?

Speaker 2: I guess the, the standard way of saying it would be Norfolk (with the first vowel pronounced as in "boat").

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Speaker 1: Ok.

Speaker 2: Actually probably Norfolk (with the first and second vowels pronounced as in "boat").

Speaker 1: Ok. Okay.

At 3.6 mins=40mins