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

**minutes** – time stamp  
[] – overlapping speech  
◇ - sound expression

**0 minutes**

S1: Ok, now what was your name?

S2: [WORDS REMOVED].

S1: Ok. And, uh, what year were you born?

S2: 1948.

S1: K, that makes you 58.

S2: 58.

S1: Ok. And where are we right now?

S2: We are in Chesapeake, Virginia, in the Hickory section of Chesapeake.

S1: Ok, and where were you born?

S2: In Norfolk, because that was the closest hospital.

S1: Ok, and you've live here your whole life?

S2: Yes, right here in this, what would you say, this fourth of a mile radius. Well, except, for the most of my life.

S1: Now, [was there]

S2: [when I] got married we moved to Germany for two years, when [WORD REMOVED] was in the Army. And then we moved to Chicago for four years when he was going to optometry school. But other than that

S1: So, fifty-two out of fifty-eight years

S2: Yeah.

S1: Ok. Now I heard, um, this area referred to as 'The Compound'. Can [you]

S2: [Yes.]

S1: explain 'The Compound'?

S2: 'The Compound', well, this, I was raised on the family farm, my, great, grandfather I guess was, the one that ha, was in the house first. Actually there were slave graves off to the, side of the house. But, um, the, when, we all, we grew up in the old house which was, built with, what was it wood nails? It was very very old. It doesn't exist anymore but my mother was raised in that house and her father, and, um, 'The Compound', my mother built a new house, and then, I, I'm in the house next to her, my sister built a house next to me and my mother's sister lives on the other side of her. My nephew lives on the other, other side of my mother, so we call it 'The Family Compound' because there's, so much family right here.

S1: Uh, so you could, as an adult you could live anywhere you wanted, what keeps you, stay here surrounded by your family?

S2: That's a good question. <laughs>

S1: <laughs>

S2: Well we like living out away from the big city, as you know in the middle of

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[nowhere]

S1: [middle of nowhere]

S2: as some of you people you people [think].

S1: <laughs>

S2: But, we like living out. And it's, it was always convenient to have, my mother close by when the kids were little she babysat them, the, when I worked part time so, that was convenient. She was always keeping a lookout when we were at work, to make sure, especially when they were teenagers that they were not up to anything that they [shouldn't]

S1: [right]

S2: have been. And now that my mother's almost ninety, she'll be ninety her next birthday, uh, it's nice to be, close to her and the roles have changed and now we're taking care of her.

<thumping sound>

S1: Thank you.

S2: <laughs>

S1: Uh, so how many kids do you have?

S2: Two.

S1: Two, Ok. And, how old are they?

S2: [WORD REMOVED], is thirty and [WORD REMOVED] is, twenty-five.

S1: Ok. And they don't live in the compound.

S2: They don't live in the compound. And, actually [WORD REMOVED] moved to California she got [way]

S1: <laughs>

S2: far away from the compound. [WORD REMOVED] lives in Northern Virginia. Whether they'll return to the compound I don't know [WORD REMOVED] voiced the desire to move back but only if, she could buy the rest of the family farm and it would remain unchanged and someone could promise her that it would never be developed, and, that promise could never be [made]

S1: <laughs>

S2: Anyway. She's not here yet. <laughs>

S1: [Ok.] Um, so what was it like raising kids here?

S2: It was, the best. The kids sometimes thought it would be nicer to live in a neighborhood, where they always had someone to play with, but I thought it was nice to be able to bring in kids when you wanted them, when you wanted to have 'em there, and when you didn't <laughs> they weren't. Um, I thought it was a good place to raise kids with family around. Actually [WORD REMOVED] when she was small she would go from house to house when it was time for supper to see who was having what. So she'd decide where she wanted to eat.

S1: <laughs> Was it just the families or was it like other just neighbors that she checked on?

S2: This was just family

S1: Ok

S2: because we were all on the same side of the [road]

S1: [right]

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**5 minutes**

S2: she wasn't allowed to cross the street [so]

S1: [oh, Ok]

S2: fortunately we were all on, this side of the street or that could have been a problem.

S1: <laughs> Um, so do you know pretty much know everyone in the neighborhood here?

S2: We used to when, when I was growing up there were no houses close by, and we really had no one to play with except my brothers and sisters, um, which wasn't always who you wanted to play with but but you did because that's all you had right? Um, but now, and when my children were small we probably knew everybody but now that it is getting more built up, this neighborhood across the street

S1: Mmhm.

S2: We don't know, everybody like we used to. We used to know when a car went by we knew whose car it was, you know?

S1: Mmhm.

S2: You wave and you knew who it was. Now you don't.

S1: Think that's a bad thing?

S2: I do. <laughs>

S1: [Ok.] Why can you maybe talk about why you

S2: There's a lot more traffic, there's more vandalism, there's a lot more, light pollution which bothers [WORD REMOVED], because he has a telescope and can't

S1: Uh huh.

S2: see the stars like he used to could. It's changed just year by year it's worse and worse. Um. There are some advantages there's now a Target just, what, five miles not even five miles, down the road gonna be a Wal Mart Home Depot it's nice having that close by but, I think I would just as soon have to go, ten miles to

S1: Ok.

S2: the nearest one.

S1: Um, so the greater region we live in

S2: Mmhm.

S1: what do you call that, Tidewater Hampton Roads something else?

S2: Tidewater.

S1: Tidewater usually. What do you how do you feel about the term Hampton Roads?

S2: I've, Tidewater I've always thought of as everything on this side of the tunnel. I've never included Hampton and Newport News I don't know if that is Tidewater. Hampton Roads, the term doesn't bother me but, I'm not sure if that includes Hampton and Newport News either.

S1: So what uh what cities does Tidewater include?

S2: Tidewater to me is Norfolk Portsmouth Chesapeake Virginia and Suffolk.

S1: Ok. Um, how has the just the area in general you can you know you can use the specific Hickory area but also the general Tidewater area how has that, changed since you've been living here?

S2: The traffic, [is]

S1: [yeah]

S2: much worse. Year by year it gets worse and worse. There are a whole lot more, people whole lot more sho everywhere you go there's a shopping center. I don't

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know how they all stay in business. Um. There's it's just becoming more like Northern Virginia was. It's, encroaching on us.

S1: It's coming out to getcha?

S2: It's coming out to get us! <laughs>

S1: <laughs> Uh, so do you think you think that's a bad thing they're coming out to get you?

S2: I do, I like I don't like change I would like things to, stay the same.

S1: Ok. Um, so you and [WORD REMOVED] how long have you guys been married?

S2: Since '67 so [that's]

S1: [it'll be]

S2: forty years in June.

S1: Wow.

S2: Yeah.

S1: And you guys met when'd you guys meet?

S2: In high school.

S1: High school.

S2: We started dating when I was a junior, and he was a senior the summer before I was a junior.

<rustling>

S1: So what was it about him that made you attracted to him?

S2: He was very outgoing, and friendly, funny. <laughs> Still is.

S1: When you guys started dating you think you were gonna be with him forty years later?

S2: No.

S1: <laughs>

S2: I he asked me out many times before I ever went

S1: Ooh.

S2: He finally wore me down.

S1: <laughs>

S2: <laughs>

**10 minutes**

S2: Three times.

S1: Ok, um. Feel like I'm running out of questions. What does it mean to you to be from uh Tidewater, from Chesapeake Hickory?

S2: What does it mean to me? Well, my ex-boss used to say I was a hick from Hickory

S1: <laughs>

S2: <laughs> But I guess I've kind of not never minded being a country girl so, um. I like being from I think Virginia is a good state to be from. It's not too Southern or too Northern. <laughs>

S1: K. Um, tell me about where you worked and what what you what kind of jobs you've held.

S2: Um, I worked for the government for thirty-eight years, most of that time with the Corps. Of Engineers, as in Personnel part of the time and, Council as a paralegal part of the time.

S1: Mmhm.

S2: Thirty of those thirty-eight years were part time.

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S1: Mmhm. And you just retired recently right?

S2: I just retired, a month ago.

S1: Ok. You've been working at [WORD REMOVED]'s optometry office?

S2: Yes, about [four]

S1: [optometry]

S2: five years ago I started, working part time for my husband, who's an eye doctor, and now I'm working there still part time more hours than I was working

S1: So what kinda hobbies do you enjoy to do?

S2: I read, not, um, I read novels, not anything real [brainiac]

S1: [hmm.]

S2: like my husband reads.

S1: Like what kind of what are some authors you like?

S2: John Grisham, uh, can't think of the trying to think of the one I just finished Rice somebody Rice.

S1: Anne Rice? Was that

S2: No it

S1: No.

S2: It's not Anne. Patterson James Patterson. Oh. Yeah.

S1: It's Ok. The occasion'll come up. Um so you like to read is there any other kind of hobbies?

S2: Um, I like to bake.

S1: What what kind of stuff do you bake?

S2: Sweet stuff. And bread, rolls. [WORD REMOVED] likes to eat so I do a lot of just general cooking.

S1: Like to keep him happy.

S2: Yeah. Keep him happy.

S1: Uh, what kind of TV do you watch?

S2: We watch, 'House'

S1: Ok the doctor show?

S2: The doctor show yeah. And some of the 'CSIs' sometimes I'm getting tired of those.

S1: <laughs> [Me too.]

S2: [And], uh what is that other one, 'Close To Home', sort of, police, murder mystery, [That kind]

S1: [Mmhm.]

S2: of those kind of shows.

S1: K.

S2: Some news but, I get a little tired of the news.

S1: Why do you get tired of the news?

S2: It is, they always dwell on the, bad stuff and they repeat it every hour on the hour and you think they're've been ten murders when they were really all the same one.

S1: Ok, um, do you guys watch movies? Much?

S2: Not a whole lot, um, no. [WORD REMOVED] doesn't actually like he likes to read, his science books, he doesn't like a whole lot of television so

S1: Mmhm.

S2: We do watch some movies but not a whole lot.

S1: Ok.

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S2: We're pretty boring.

S1: <laughs>

S2: <laughs>

S1: That's Ok.

S2: We just kind of work eat sleep you know. Exercise.

S1: What kind of exercise you guys do?

S2: I just got back from walking with my sister we try to walk a couple times a week.

Um. I've started since I retired, working out with Jane Fonda

S1: <laughs>

S2: on an aerobics tape.

S1: Yeah.

S2: Try to get in shape.

S1: I had a question and I just lost it. It happens.

**15 minutes**

S1: Oh, uh, I was hearing a story about how you were the first one to have to buy your house. Um.

S2: Uh, yeah. My sister was given property to build on, that was when we were out we were living in Germany I guess, and she built her house her actually the house we live in now. When her and her husband separated or divorced ten years later, uh, she had to buy him out so when she sold it to us shortly thereafter within that first six months we, we had to, pay for it what it was appraised at

S1: Mmhm.

S2: because he had to get she had to pay him, so, yeah.

S1: <laughs> So the first one in the family that had to buy the house?

S2: <laughs> Yeah.

S1: Hm. [How'd that make you feel]

S2: [Not that I wouldn't have]

S1: when you found that out?

S2: Well, we had a choice not to buy it.

S1: Mmhm.

S2: Um, so, I guess we wanted to live here badly enough that we, did.

S1: So you spend since you live so close to all your family you spend a lot of time with them?

S2: Yes. Every, we have always spent every Sunday afternoon after church, uh, we come to my mother's to play cards, and volleyball, and then we have Sunday dinner not a big dinner but. And all holidays we spend next door at my mom's Thanksgiving Christmas. Everybody brings food and, uh, but that's where we gather and still do.

S1: At your mom's house?

S2: At my mom's.

S1: Mmhm.

S2: We've started having the big meals that have lots of people like twenty-five thirty people Christmas Thanksgiving at different houses, cause it got to be too much for her, but

S1: That way she can just be a participant [instead of]

S2: [Yeah.]

S1: Ok.

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S2: But we still we eat next door at my sisters because she has a big house. We go to my mother's to open all the presents

S1: Mmhm.

S2: and have our sing-alongs and dessert just because it's a tradition. Wouldn't be the same anywhere else.

S1: Do you guys have a lot of traditions that you do for holidays and things?

S2: Yeah. We do. Certain foods that the kids think we it's not Thanksgiving or Christmas if we don't have, cheese soufflé pumpkin pie you know, certain dishes that they've always had and if you don't fix them they're like 'where's the cheese soufflé' it's not Thanksgiving we didn't have pumpkin pie. That happened last year.

S1: Oh yeah? What kind of reaction they they got mad?

S2: Pump [WORD REMOVED] said 'it's Thanksgiving and there's no what do you mean there's no pumpkin pie it's Thanksgiving.' It didn't matter that we had five other kinds of pies. [Understand]

S1: [Is that why you] didn't have pumpkin? You had [enough]

S2: [Yeah.]

S1: other'n?

S2: Yeah. We though nobody would miss it but, we were wrong. <laughs>

S1: Won't make that mistake again.

S2: No. <laughs>

S1: Uh, so you guys go to church?

S2: We go to church.

S1: Yeah?

S2: Uh, actually the church that I was raised in which is not too far down the road the church we were married in

S1: Oh wow.

S2: and actually, the church just celebrated its, two hundred and, sixteenth, anniversary of when it was founded which was during the Civil War. That'd be the Civil War? <laughs> Uh, [it was]

S1: [trying to imagine]

S2: when, the Revolutionary War. Because the they broke of from the St. Brides Episcopal Church because the minister was selling secrets to the governor about what the patriots were doing so a group broke off and formed the Hickory Methodist Church and they just celebrated that anniversary plus the building that's there now is a hundred years old. And they were celebrating that and my mother was being honored as being the oldest member. She's been a member for seventy-six years.

S1: Wow.

S2: But yes that's the church I was raised in we were married there and then we started we moved away for a while we started going to a different church but when we moved back into this area from his being in graduate school we started uh, shortly thereafter started going back to that church.

S1: How long has your family been here?

S2: Since, well that's a good question. How far did we trace it back? Um, sometime in the 1800s

S1: Oh wow. That's a long time.

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**20 minutes**

S2: But, my grandfather's parents where from around here, um my, so my mother and all her people have lived here for a long time my father was originally, his family was from, s, n, from North Carolina.

S1: Mmhm. Where in North Carolina?

S2: White, Lake, and I'm not sure what it's close to.

S1: I don't I've never heard of that either.

S2: It's I know it's about six or seven hours from here but I'm can't remember what it's close to.

S1: From one small area to another right?

S2: Uh yeah, although he was raised in South Norfolk. His family moved here from Carolina and he was raised in the Port Lock section of South Norfolk Chesapeake.

S1: Ok.

S2: His father was mayor of, Port Lock or Chesapeake the year before it became Chesapeake it was before Chesapeake became incorporated or whatever.

S1: Ok.

<bird noises>

S1: Is that a bird?

S2: It's a clock.

S1: Oh. Ok. Scared me. Um, So you guys lived in Germany for a while?

S2: We did.

S1: So how was that different from living here?

S2: It was, nice. It was in the late 60s when things were still very reasonable over there. The Deutschmark was there were four Deutschmarks to it was the same as a quarter one Deutschmark. [WORD REMOVED] was an optician making glasses for the soldiers over in Vietnam and, we were living because he was a private, enlisted person we had to live on the German economy. We couldn't live on the base.

S1: Mmhm.

S2: So, that was interesting. He worked long hours and I couldn't find a job. So I would go to work with him and help him put the pads on glasses before they start grinding them. Cause he worked from like six in the morning till nine at night

S1: Mmhm.

S2: and I was just sitting there in the apartment with nothing to do. I couldn't talk to anybody

S1: Yeah.

S2: it was too expensive to call home I'd never lived away from home before. I was nineteen and, it was lonely so, [I went to work with him a lot]

S1: [Probably a real communication gap.]

S2: Yeah.

S1: Yeah.

S2: Couldn't go anywhere because I didn't know how to ride the bus to say, tell anybody where I was going

S1: <laughs>

S2: and you know I can get lost. But after six months, I did get a job working on a base so it got better but, we traveled a bit

S1: What kind of places have you traveled?



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S2: We took the thirty days before he left we were there for two years the thirty days before he left to come home we went to Italy all the places in Italy Florence and Venice and Rome and Al Capri and

S1: <laughs>

S2: went to Switzerland, and Austria, Denmark. It was great.

S1: Did you have a favorite among those?

S2: Um probably, Birch's Gardens in Germany. It's in the Alps. They do a lot of skiing. It's really pretty.

S1: You guys skied a lot? [Um]

S2: [We] didn't ski

S1: Oh. [You did]

S2: [But]

S1: [unintelligible]

S2: [it's a] big ski [area]

S1: [Oh Ok.]

S2: We didn't actually ourselves ski. It's just really very pretty. And Switzerland was very pretty. Just like the postcards.

S1: <laughs>

S2: <laughs>

S1: Uh do you guys do a lot of traveling just in general?

S2: We have traveled a good bit. We used to travel every summer with my brother and his wife and their two boys when our two girls were small. They had a big van and we went across country to different different places. We went to California to Yellowstone. We went to Niagara Falls and Canada. We went to out west to uh, the national parks. Went up to Washington state. And, out west. Yeah. [Lots of places]

S1: [Is it different]

S2: Pardon?

S1: Is it different out west, uh, compared to here?

S2: Oh yeah. Lots of flat. Not many people around. Not many cars. Wide open spaces. Pretty. Pretty country.

S1: Um, so when I came in you said I just wanted to record your Southern accent

S2: <laughs>

**25 minutes**

S1: So you think you have a Southern accent?

S2: Yeah I do.

S1: You do.

S2: People when we lived in Chicago, people used to make fun of the way I said a lot of words so I got to every time I was talking I was very conscious of what I was saying. Instead of retire I'd say retire. <laughs>

S1: So you you change your speech not to be made fun of?

S2: Uh hun.

S1: Ooh.

S2: Well I won't say I changed it but I was just tried to be conscious to not to speak a little more distinctly than I normally do

S1: Mmhm.

S2: because I normally don't I just kind of mumble.

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S1: Would you say you speak different say when you're here with your family than when you're when you're at work?

S2: Oh yeah.

S1: Yeah?

S2: S, yeah. Some. [In]

S1: [Like in] in what ways?

S2: I guess I use more slang. Instead of saying 'Did you eat yet?' you might say 'Didcheatyet?'

S1: Cheatyet.

S2: <laughs> Um. It just. Yeah.

S1: Ok.

S2: Maybe, I won't, not improper English but, just not good English I guess. When you're being relaxed

S1: Mmhm.

S2: around your family.

S1: You think people have stereotypes against, uh Southern

S2: Definitely. Yeah.

S1: Yeah?

S2: Oh. I have to remember this. When I went to work when I went to work in Chicago for Chicago District Corps. Of Engineers actually. I'd been there just a couple of weeks, and the girl I was working with said 'We are so glad that you've turned out so well. We were very reluctant to hire you because being from the South we thought you would be kind of slow.'

S1: <laughs>

S2: I just wanted to punt 'em out.

S1: <laughs>

S2: And they were serious.

S1: Mm. Does that ever happen around here even?

S2: No. No I don't. No.

S1: Ok.

S2: They soon found out that I could put them all to shame and maybe they learned something from it. Uh, [WORD REMOVED] when she was in California she encountered the same same thing.

S1: Think you're slow cause you

S2: Yeah.

S1: speak Southern?

S2: Mmhm.

S1: That's pretty common stereotype [that]

S2: [Yeah] I think it is.

S1: I was talking to somebody just the other day and she said that that's from Boston they said that's cause they talk so slow

S2: Mmhm.

S1: you think they think slow.

S2: Mmhm.

S1: Hm. Feel like I should have prepared better. <laughs> Um

S2: You're doing fine I'm just not a talker. And nobody else can help me. <laughs>

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S1: So you guys have a very nice house here.

S2: Thank you. We like it. It's not very big but it's big enough for us.

S1: Has it been different since you guys since you don't have the kids here anymore?

S2: Yes. It has. It doesn't stay as messy. Messy. Part of that is because I don't have to cook quite as much. I didn't say it's not totally not messy um, it's been quiet. We used to them not being here and then when they come home for Christmas it's uh like, it takes a while to get used to them being back.

S1: <laughs> So it's like you miss them and then you're almost like well [you guys can go again]

S2: [When are you going back?] <laughs> [do that since]

S1: [How often do they visit?]

S2: They um, well when [WORD REMOVED] was in California she came home for Christmas two weeks for Christmas and she usually came home for a week, in the summer when we went to Nags Head for vacation. And she'd come home in May for her birthday and my granny's birthday are a day apart so she would come home for her granny's birthday. So three times a year. Now that she's in Ohio maybe she'll, she comes home a little more. Um, and [WORD REMOVED] comes home about once a month, [which]

S1: [Cause] she's just up in, Manassas?

S2: Yeah. She's just a few hours away.

S1: Is that right? Manassas?

S2: Uh, Fredericksburg.

S1: Ok.

S2: Yeah.

S1: Ok.

S2: This side of Manassas.

S1: And she's a school-teacher right?

S2: Uh hun.

S1: Ok.

S2: Latin.

S1: Latin. Ok. Now where did the girls go to college?

S2: [WORD REMOVED] went to Mary Washington Fredericksburg which is where she ended up staying and [WORD REMOVED] went to James Madison in Harrisonburg. And after she graduated with a theater degree she moved to Los Angeles.

S1: She wanted to be an actor? Is that

**30 minutes**

S2: She wanted to, seek fame and fortune in the big city and after she got there she decided it probably wasn't her thing. Maybe if she had gone to New York to the theater

S1: Mmhm.

S2: part it would have been different but in L.A. you have to hit upon the right thing you have to take acting classes, spend big money, take 'em with the right people and, just it was just a scene that she wasn't, ready for. She just wanted to act and she enjoyed that in high school college but, um, she decided she didn't want to do it there.

S1: So were you supportive of her going out to L.A.?

S2: Um. [We weren't crazy]

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S1: [You can be honest. It's not]

S2: about the idea. We of course didn't try to talk her out of it because we knew that was not gonna happen. She was always strong willed and she was gonna do what she was gonna do. Um. We weren't happy with her living alone in L.A. You know, it's just kind of scary to think about it but, she did fine. And she started volunteering for her minor was in Geology so she started volunteering with U.S. Geological Survey and, ended up being hired there, and doing that while she was going to school and, become, she eventually became their education outreach coordinator so she did a lot of public speaking about earthquake hazards and so her theater degree came in handy [in the end]

S1: [So you can do the presentations.]

S2: Yeah.

S1: That's good.

S2: I guess they say it's good for anything you go into because you always need public speaking. As you can tell I never had any. <laughs>

S1: <laughs> No you're doing great. Feel like I failed you by not being a little more prepared [with my questions.]

S2: [No you're doing] fine.

S1: I think if we could've kept [WORD REMOVED] it would have been uh, [a little better]

S2: [Yeah.]

S1: He it wasn't it wasn't told to me that he's not a native. He's from Roanoke.

S2: Well he was just a wee thing.

S1: <laughs> How long do you so do you consider him a uh, a Cheapeakeian or a [Tidewaterian?]

S2: [I would.] I mean, all the life he can remember he's lived in this area.

S1: So what would what does it take to you to define someone as being from Tidewater?

S2: I would say if you moved here before, before you finished I I don't know that kind of cut kind of cut and dry I'd say junior high. If you move here

S1: Oh.

S2: before you were a teenager.

S1: Ok. So you count in her book but not in ours.

S2: <laughs> So when did you move oh you can't talk.

S1: She can't talk. I'm a native. [We're]

S2: [You are?]

S1: we're the only natives here.

S2: Oh ho ho.

S1: I'm Virginia Beach born and raised. So that's good. Um. Is there anything you wanna talk about if you just wanna this could be your chance to just get your soundbox get up on the soapbox and say this is what I think of this.

S2: No. Other since the election day is tomorrow that's the only thing I could get on a soapbox about. Because

S1: Get up.

S2: Uh, no it's not gonna be a Democrat Republican thing

S1: Mmhm.

S2: I am like everybody tired of all the ads, the negative campaigning, the phone calls

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the, news, everything. I don't, want to vote for anybody that's running. I'd like somebody totally different.

S1: Is that what that does to you when you hear [all the negative ads?]

S2: [It does.] Yes.

S1: Yeah I have the same feeling.

S2: I remember back ten years ago you people just didn't do the negative campaigning because it looked so bad on them and now that's all they do. Dig the dirt out on somebody.

S1: Do you think that's a cha a societal change?

S2: Yeah.

S1: Yeah. That we're just a more negative society

S2: Mmhm.

S1: than we were.

S2: And you can't put any faith in what they say because it's doesn't necessarily mean anything, cause they only tell part of the truth.

S1: Mm.

S2: And you can't trust what you read in the newspaper because that can be slanted too.

S1: Yeah they have ads now where it has the Vir The Pilot say, so and so isn't, fit to run they have their opponent they're

S2: Yeah.

S1: also not fit to run

S2: Yeah.

S1: So. Hm.

S2: Elmo. We're voting for Elmo right?

S1: Vote for Elmo.

S2: <laughs>

**35 minutes**

S1: Out at the Constant Center?

S2: Uh huh.

S1: Yeah. I walk I walk by that every day they have the little placards out there.

S2: <laughs>

S1: So did you didn't go to college did you?

S2: I did not.

S1: Yeah.

S2: I went one year, to Old Dominion

S1: Uh huh.

S2: when [WORD REMOVED] got orders to go to Germany and said 'Marry me or forget it.'

S1: <laughs>

S2: And I said 'Forget it.' And then he called back a week later and said 'Ok, nevermind, I didn't mean it.' <laughs>

S1: <laughs>

S2: So no. I went one year at Old Dominion before we got married.

S1: Did you ever regret, not finishing?

S2: Uh, no. I can't say that I do. Uh. Because I never found out what I really wanted to do with my life other than, I'm happy with what I ended up doing. But I never

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thought 'Oh I wanted to become a lawyer and I didn't become one.' I never had something, that I wanted to be other than a mother wife whatever

S1: <laughs>

S2: however corny that is. So no, I don't.

S1: Well that's not corny. It sounds like you got what you wanted.

S2: Yeah.

S1: Worked out pretty well for you.

S2: I'd like to be smarter and exercise my brain more but, I guess you don't have to go to school to do that.

S1: Mmhm. You mean like uh, read more or what kinda stuff you think you would do to?

S2: Well my sister was telling me yesterday that she read that putting jigsaw puzzles together and doing crossword puzzles helps to keep your, synapses firing and we have Alzheimer's in our family

S1: Mmhm.

S2: and I guess we're all worried about our brain function. We want to keep it going.

S1: So who in your family has had Alzheimer's?

S2: My father and his sister and their father my grandfather. Um, so, that, my father's side of the family is pretty

S1: Mmhm.

S2: heavy, in it.

S1: You don't have to talk about this if you don't want to but I mean, how hard was that to deal with?

S2: It uh, as far as my father since we just, in the last couple weeks put him in the assisted living facility um, it's been a hard couple of years, taking care of him. Um. My mother's, not physically able to do, they both live at home independently somewhat but, uh, they're I have, one brother and two sisters that live, close by so we take nights going over there and getting him to bed getting his medicine and uh, getting mom to bed and spend some time with them. We rotate that and still do now that dad's gone but um, someone needed to go over there and, you know, clean up after him and things but, it's been hard. But he is happy now, where he is, because he doesn't know that he's not at home.

S1: Right.

S2: It's really harder on mom. Because she said 'This is a heck of a way to end up after sixty-five years of marriage' and I said 'Do you mean for him or for you' and she said 'Well I was thinking about for him' and I said, 'Well he doesn't know any better' He's happy where he is because he didn't know when he was at home he'd say

<phone rings>

S2: 'I wanna go home. When are we going home?' Um.

S1: <laughs>

S2: But

<phone rings>

S2: She's lonely.

S1: That dang phone

<phone rings>

S2: <laughs>

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S1: has been the bane of our existence tonight.

<phone rings>

S2: Oh he'll get it.

S1: <laughs>

S2: She's so used to cooking for him and

<phone rings>

S2: taking care of him that, she misses that

S1: Mmhm.

S2: not being needed. But, she's adjusting.

S1: So you guys, still take care of, each of 'em every night?

S2: Yeah. My sister's over there tonight. We play cards with her and little puzzles. She gets lonely. Help her get her pajamas on. She has a hard time walking. She has a walker but

S1: Right.

S2: we worry about her falling.

S1: That's one of the nice things of having the whole family here is [they're all]

S2: [It is.] And I don't know what people that don't have family around, when they get older I think that's why a lot of people end up like they do. When you think how hard it is for them figure out how to order their medicines and take their medicines and when to take it. Um, yeah. It is nice.

#### **40 minutes**

S2: She would not be able to live alone if we weren't around. For sure.

S1: Do you hope that you have that one day? People to

S2: I do. I don't, see that happening.

S1: <laughs> That's gotta suck doesn't it? <laughs>

S2: <laughs> Uh. And I don't know that I'd want them to feel like they had to take care of me.

S1: Mmhm.

S2: But, uh.

S1: Do you think though it might be unavoidable that they feel that way because they've lived in this close-knit family community?

S2: Y. Well. I don't know. But they're out of it so

S1: <laughs>

S2: maybe not.

S1: Ok. Um so your daughters, are they married? Either one of them?

S2: They are not.

S1: No.

S2: One of them was married for a five years but she is no longer.

S1: And, no kids?

S2: No kids.

S1: Not a [grandmother yet.]

S2: [No grandchildren.] [No.]

S1: [No.]

S2: No.

S1: Are you getting to the point where you kinda want that to happen?

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S2: Yeah I would like some grandchildren before I get to old to enjoy them but. But since neither one of them are married, maybe not. No need to rush into it.

S1: Mmhm. So what do you think you would like about having grandkids?

S2: Oh I like I like babies and little toddlers so just having them around. Playing with them.

S1: Getting the stink eye over here. <laughs> Hey, you have a cat I see.

S2: Oh yes. That's our fat cat.

S1: How long, uh

S2: He is, twelve? Or so. He is, he was declawed back when declawing was considered humane. [It's]

S1: [Oh, it's] not anymore?

S2: They've, pretty much gone away from declawing cats.

S1: Didn't know [that.]

S2: [But] it made him a biter. So

S1: <laughs>

S2: to get your attention he will bite you. Especially me because I'm his primary, focus.

S1: Mmhm.

S2: And, he he can be kind of strange. He gets in a mood and, he wants to be in you lap but he does not want you to read the paper. So if you're reading the newspaper

S1: Mmhm.

S2: and he's in your lap he will start biting you until you put the paper down. He bit my leg and it got infected.

S1: Oh really?

S2: Um, I was rushing around kinda, I don't know, he didn't like it so, he bit me and, it got infected.

S1: I couldn't keep a cat that was biting me getting my leg infected. <laughs>

S2: <laughs> He can be nice but, I'll I'll never have another male cat.

S1: Oh.

S2: I think [it's a male cat thing.]

S1: [Is that what it is?]

S2: No offense. <laughs>

S1: No that's, I don't, I like male cats either I don't think. So you guys always been cat people or you have, [dogs?]

S2: [We have] always had cats

S1: No dogs?

S2: Always female cats. No dogs. I had dogs growing up. Dogs, cats, chickens, pigs

S1: <laughs>

S2: cattle.

S1: You live, so it really was a farm?

S2: It was a farm.

S1: [Is the farm]

S2: [We actually had] a little pet pig that we called 'Little Oink' that walked us to the school bus. It was a fourth of a mile, down the lane to get to

S1: Mmhm.

S2: the school bus. And he actually got on the school bus one time.



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S1: Bet the driver liked that.

S2: Yeah. I bet you city boys can't say that can you?

S1: I've never had a pig walk me to school. No.

S2: <laughs>

S1: Sorry. <laughs> So the the farm doesn't really exist anymore does it?

S2: Actually yes.

S1: Oh it does?

S2: There's, behind these houses

S1: Mmhm.

S2: there's not quite a hundred acres anymore

S1: Oh.

S2: that my mother and her sister there were three sisters that owned it after my grandfather died and one of those sisters died but my mother and my aunt own the farm now and they have the they rent it out to a farmer and he gets two thirds of the profit and they get one third.

S1: Ok. So will that go to you one day or?

S2: That will go half to her two children, and half to my mother's four children, which I'm one of.

S1: So you'll get an eight?

S2: So.

S1: Hm.

S2: That's the part [WORD REMOVED] was worried about and we'll see how that plays out.

S1: Ok.

S2: It means more to the two of us that live here. And actually my brother is getting ready to build a house too. <laughs> [[WORD REMOVED] par came]

S1: [So you're bringing another one to the compound?]

S2: So they'll be another one.

S1: Ok.

#### **45 minutes**

S2: It probably means more to us to stay like it is than it does to my aunt's two girls who have never lived here. We'll see.

S1: Why did they never live here?

S2: Um, well there wasn't, there's not, there wasn't anymore road frontage for them to uh, to have, to build on. Uh. But.

S1: They live in the area or was it?

S2: Yes. One of them live fifteen miles away and the other one lives in Suffolk.

S1: Ok. So how long was your ride to work everyday?

S2: When I worked in Norfolk actually it only took thirty minutes.

S1: Really?

S2: Because it's pretty much straight interstate and with the new 464 it's not bad.

S1: How bout now when you go into the?

S2: Going to Great Bridge it's ten minutes.

S1: Yeah, Great Bridge.

S2: Ten miles. Uh, it's about ten miles. Fifteen minutes. At most.

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S1: So it's never really a problem for you going

S2: No.

S1: [getting to places]

S2: [From here to Great Bridge] the traffic is, not bad.

S1: Ok. And how often do you guys go into say, Downtown Norfolk or doing events and things?

S2: Uh, um, maybe, every other week.

S1: Yeah? What kind of stuff do you go to do?

S2: We might go shopping or book store or you know hardware stores.

S1: Where where at in

S2: Military Circle or

S1: Ok.

S2: sometimes in Downtown Norfolk. Pembroke.

S1: Mmhm.

S2: Greenbrier Mall.

S1: What do you think of the new Virginia Beach Downtown?

S2: I have not been to the new Virginia Beach Downtown

S1: Oh no?

S2: believe it or not. I know that's hard to believe.

S1: Not not hard to believe.

S2: I've been to the Newport News Downtown. What is, what that Newport News? No I've heard a lot about it.

S1: Yeah.

S2: I've heard a lot of good eating places there.

S1: That's true. Yeah. There are. What did you think of the idea of Virginia Beach having a downtown?

S2: I think it makes good sense.

S1: Yeah.

S2: Although I like the Courthouse area for the

S1: Mmhm.

S2: That's always been a pretty spot.

S1: Yeah. Ok.

S2: But I don't know. I think it's

S1: Now Chesapeake doesn't have a downtown does it?

S2: Not really.

S1: No?

S2: No.

S1: So you think it'd be a good idea for them to get one?

S2: Um, yeah. I guess. [Long]

S1: [Long]

S2: as it's not here close to me. <laughs>

S1: Just gonna say that. Long as it's not close to you. So you don't want the downtown to be in Hickory?

S2: No.

S1: No.

S2: You know the new Hillcrest down here where the Target is it's supposed to be bigger

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than Greenbrier when they finish doing all that Greenbrier [Greenbrier]

S1: [Oh wow.]

S2: conglomeration.

S1: Mm. Ok. Um. No other soapboxes?

S2: No.

S1: K. No. Killing me here.

S2: Um, Christmas traditions. We used to, there's so many in the family we started drawing names

S1: Mmhm.

S2: and it seemed like it became year after year you would, end up buying your own present and saying this is what I wanted an exchange of money.

S1: Mmhm.

S2: So we decided that was getting old we decided that we would just take the money that we were putting into those presents and find out some needy person or something going on in the community that could use it better than we could.

S1: Mmhm.

S2: So we started just giving small presents to everybody in the family. I think ten dollars is the limit. We give the big gift that we were exchanging names for to, we put that money in a pot. We talked to we rotated years of um, like it this the year I would research a family or somebody in the community or talk to the minister or if someone in the community had been burned out and um, you know find out someone that needed the money.

S1: Mmhm.

S2: So um. That's been kind of fun. And it's anonymous. But, that kind of solved our problem of buying our own gifts.

S1: So that that makes you feel good to do that?

S2: Yeah it does.

**50 minutes**

S1: Yeah? That's good.

S2: Oh the only other Christmas tradition I can think of, it's a corny one. We have this uh wooden Rudolph that, I don't know it's was, it's a big wooden Rudolph and my sister one year probably ten years ago put a Christmas ornament on her nose, hung it from her hair I think and started then got this little wooden reindeer in front of her and started winding around the room singing 'Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer' picking up people along the way so that it's like a little train going along

S1: <laughs>

S2: singing 'Rudolph' going up and down the hall and in and out the living room where all the people are singing 'Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer'. So this is after we open the presents at Christmas which takes about two hours. And this we eat, then we go open presents, then we have dessert, then we have a um, Christmas caroling that we just, my dad used to play the piano

S1: Mmhm.

S2: and the guitar, and the harmonica, all at the same time sometimes.

S1: <laughs>

S2: And uh. Anyway we sing Christmas carols and um do the Rudolph thing.

S1: Is this Christmas [Eve or]

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S2: [This is] Christmas night.  
S1: Christmas  
S2: Not Christmas Eve but  
S1: The day of [Christmas]  
S2: [Christmas day] [night]  
S1: [Oh. Ok.]  
S2: Christmas, day night. Any other traditions of Christmas let's see  
S1: Oh we were somebody was telling me about, uh black beans, on New Year's Day being a Southern [tradition]  
S2: [For good luck.] Yeah.  
S1: Yeah. Do you do that?  
S2: Black eyed peas. Yeah.  
S1: Black eyed peas. [That's what]  
S2: [Mmhm.]  
S1: Really?  
S2: Yeah.  
S1: Now where does that come from? I'd never heard of that.  
S2: I don't know where it originates. But yes, my mother always cooks black eyed peas for good luck on New Year's Eve. And if you've not been eating them and you've been having bad luck there you [go.]  
S1: [That's] the reason right there. My my mother didn't [have any traditions like that.]  
S2: [Your mother is from West Virginia.] What did y'all do for good luck? <laughs>  
S1: Any other kind of good luck things that are kind of a Southern based thing? Or just things that you do. They don't have to be Southern based.  
S2: Um. The family plays a lot of cards.  
S1: Yeah?  
S2: We've always get together and play a lot of games. Spades, Hearts.  
S1: Are you good at those?  
S2: Rummy. Um. Sometimes. It depends on how the cards are running.  
S1: Is there anybody in the family that maybe wins more than everyone else?  
S2: Uh my mother's very good at cards. Even at eighty-nine. She can still remember what everybody, picks up.  
S1: Wow.  
S2: And, that's how we knew she'd had a mini-stroke when she started, misplaying at cards and not remembering and playing off.  
S1: Wow.  
S2: And we would tell people 'She's play you know, something's wrong.'  
S1: Mmhm.  
S2: And they'd say 'Ehn, big deal. I do that' and say 'No. You don't understand. My mother doesn't do that.'  
S1: Wow.  
S2: So um, but anyway. We've always played a lot of games.  
S1: That's one of the good things about having the family so close is you know their tendencies and can notice [little]  
S2: [Yeah.]

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S1: things like that.

S2: Yeah.

S1: If you guys weren't so close you might've

S2: That's true.

S1: never been able to see something like that. Wow. So. Mm. So did you like your boss at your job.

S2: Um. Yes. He was a nice guy.

S1: Mmhm.

S2: He, though family was very important and if you needed to be off for anything family he's, go ahead. He's um, I think he's ready to retire and probably should. Because he's kind of, not into it anymore.

S1: Mmhm. Now they bought you out. Do you miss it at all?

S2: They paid me to go away.

S1: <laughs>

S2: <laughs> Uh. I miss seeing some of the people. Especially certain ones.

S1: <laughs>

S2: But I don't really miss um, the job. No.

S1: No? [So]

S2: [It's] pretty sad to have been there that long and

S1: <laughs>

S2: not miss it any more than I do but I guess was time for me to go too.

### **55 minutes**

S1: So what about, the people you're working with that made you miss them?

S2: The people I worked with what?

S1: The people that you miss? Um.

S2: Oh.

S1: That you worked with? What about them makes you miss them? Wasn't worded very well but.

S2: Um. Just, being able to talk course we can still talk on the phone. But just being able to see each other, you know, on a regular basis and touch base with what's going on in their lives and, share problems. Misery. Commiserate together.

S1: <laughs> So you guys living out here in Hickory kinda out away I know everything's encroaching on it now but, has there felt like there's maybe been a gap in communication between out here and maybe the rest of the world? Or is it, has that changed maybe throughout your life?

S2: I think, just like um, you were talking about people having the perception that Southerners are, slow.

S1: Right.

S2: I think they also have this, people also have the perception, maybe Virginia Beach people for instance or, people in the city have the perception that people in the country are less um, cultured, or less, intelligent or less you know. There's always those kind of <laughs>

S1: Yeah no we definitely do. [<laughs>]

S2: [perceptions.]

S1: And that's not accurate at all is it?

S2: It's definitely not.

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S1: <laughs> That's good.

S2: We're the smart ones. We're here

S1: Oh.

S2: and we're happy. <laughs>

S1: So living in the city you couldn't be happy? Is that

S2: Uh no.

S1: No? What what would you be unhappy about if you were living in the city you think?

S2: Having people to close by.

S1: Mmhm.

S2: Just, it's Ok to have family close by but. I guess neighbors that you don't know that could be different. They could sell their house and be different next week.

S1: Mmhm.

S2: Um.

S1: That doesn't really happen out here does it?

S2: No.

S1: No? Um. So the area, just the Tidewater area in general has really just blown up in your lifetime.

S2: It has.

S1: I mean, can you talk maybe a little bit about how, different things, are than they were?

S2: Trying to remember back. We used to when we were dating, we had to go to Norfolk to see a movie. Course now you can go to Greenbrier Mall which is just

S1: Mmhm.

S2: ever so much closer. Or to go to a grocery store you had to go a whole lot farther. Trying to think of good examples. Um.

S1: That's Ok. I know putting you on the spot doesn't exactly make for the best things.

S2: I'm not a good talker.

S1: No?

S2: He's picked my brain clean.

S1: What what do you think the reason would be that you're not a good talker?

S2: I don't know. I've just always rather listen than. What's the saying better to keep you mouth closed and be thought a fool rather than open your mouth and prove it. [Maybe that's my theory.]

S1: [<laughs>]

S2: <laughs>

S1: There you go.

S2: I've always admired people that are talkers.

S1: Is there anybody in your family that's a talker?

S2: They all are more, course my husband is.

S1: <laughs>

S2: I guess my both my sisters are more talkers than I am. My brother and I are both pretty quiet. Maybe we didn't get a chance to talk.

S1: I was gonna say. How close are you guys in age?

S2: My brother's the oldest and my sister's four years younger and I'm eighteen months younger than her and my youngest sister is four years younger than me so there's a

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ten year age spread between my brother and my youngest sister.

S1: So you're not you're the middle child. One of the middle children.

S2: Yeah.

S1: And you're pretty close to both the girls so that

S2: Yeah.

S1: That could have been if they were both talkers that could have been part of [why.]

S2: [Yeah.]

S1: Interesting.

**60 minutes**