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TMP-061

Interviewee: David Teagle

Interviewer: Austyn Szempruch

Date: October 24, 2014

S: Hi, I'm Austyn Szempruch at Mathews County Library and I am with?

T: David H. Teagle.

S: And it is October 24, 2014. Now, we were talking earlier about . . . Can you go into detail about—we were just talking about it, I . . .

T: [Laughter] Well, the things relative to this county. I'm a Teagle; my mother was a Hudgins from this county. My dad met her and married her sometime in the late [19]20s. I was born November 1, 1934, so I'm pushing on another birthday, which I'll be eighty years old. My dad came down here from Gloucester County where the Teagles, where we came from and lived. Got this nice young lady and I was fortunate enough that she was my mother and ended up being my mother for many years. Being a Hudgins, which in this county encompasses a lot of area and a lot of people because probably the predominate family last name in this county from the beginning and even up now, tremendous number of Hudgins that are here. So I'm proud to be a Hudgins, and I'll throw a little thing in there on my Teagle family. My ancestor, the first that came to Virginia, is buried at Abingdon Episcopal Church in Gloucester County, which is an old colonial church. He was buried there in 1728. So it's got a little bit of longevity to some of the Teagles 'cause we being still around. My time in Mathews was so great 'cause we'd come down here, and this was be during a period during World War II just before and after. My grandfather, W. Frank Hudgins, was born in the county, had business in the county, and lived down at Diggs Post Office which is roughly four miles from

where we're sitting here in this library talking. He was a waterman to a degree in those days; he also had some cattle, he was a butcher. He did butcher work. In those days, you didn't have too many shop. Sometimes people prepared stuff at home and not being much refrigeration in those days were **it would get well** [Inaudible 2:37] Captain Frank, they'd call my granddaddy. He wasn't a captain but they'd call him Captain Frank. Said, Captain Frank's gonna butcher a steer tomorrow. Word would get around and everybody, when they actually got it slaughtered, had to skin it of course and then put it in a place and cut it up. Then sold the meat, I guess, and people got it, you took it home and you didn't have too much time until you had to put it in a stove or eat it and everything. One trick that my mother used to do over in Gloucester when we had some things and there again, we didn't have refrigeration at that point in time and I can remember her doing it. We had a big dug well that went down in the ground. Prior to that, the home where I grew up, the well was probably twenty-five, twenty-eight feet deep. She had a bucket—of course, she had a bucket to get water out of the well, but she had another bucket. She'd put something like a couple of quarts of milk in there in the summertime—we didn't do that in the winter, obviously—and lower it down in that well. It was, what? Fifty-four, fifty-six degrees, see, down in that well. That was refrigeration.

S: Okay, oh, all right.

T: You see, to chill it and keep it, because in the summertime you got it from a cow one day, if you didn't consume it or put it somewhere where it was cooler. In the summertime it was warm, so it was not pasteurized milk.

S: Right.

T: So in the same way here in Mathews, people did whatever they could. They used that trick. Then later, even before World War II, they had an ice plant in the county that manufactured ice. It's back up the road towards the high school. They delivered ice to the homes, delivered it by truck, two men on a truck. Big truck, it had big canvas that covered the back. You could get twenty-five pounds, fifty pounds, seventy-five pounds, or a hundred pounds. That's four things. The way you let the ice man know whether you wanted ice—see, like my grandfather's place, the state road was out here and it was probably four, five hundred yards down to the farm from the state road. The truck didn't want to drive in that road to deliver ice unless you needed it. You had what they called an ice box. It's a thing wasn't much bigger than podium behind you, but taller and had two doors and it was insulated. They'd bring the ice and put it in there and that was the refrigeration you had. If you had that, you could put meat and milk in there and leave for a few days so it wouldn't spoil. What was so neat about that thing, they had a little—I wish I had one of them no. They had a little sign, the ice company would put it there. It was almost square but it was like this piece of paper here and it had like a hundred at the top, seventy-five here, and fifty here, and twenty-five here. Now see, whichever way you oriented it so the man could read it when he came up in the ice truck, you put it that way you'd want it to say a hundred pounds that day.

S: Right, okay.

T: They'd drive down the road and give you the hundred pounds. Then next time if you didn't want that much, you could turn it the other way, being square on and four-sided, you had the perfect definition of what you needed.

S: Yeah.

T: Ain't that a neat idea?

S: That is a good idea.

T: I would give something to have my hands on one of those, but anyway, I don't. So my grandfather would slaughter this animal. And in the wintertime, they slaughtered their own hogs and then they made sausage, they cured hams. They cured hams by using salt and smoking 'em. Like I said, my grandfather had a little building up here in the Courthouse right down the street here, I don't think anything remains of it. But he smoked hams in that building and then had 'em, people would come in town and buy 'em and do all that. One of the things that he was so proud of in his life—and I can't remember, I probably wasn't over five or six years old when he first told me about that. He was a Spanish-American War veteran and he spent time in Cuba. I guess he saw some battling; he never talked about it an awful lot. But he and some other Spanish-American War veterans from around the nation, they'd get together every year up 'round in Washington D.C. until his health was so that he couldn't do that. But he was proud of that. He had boats, he oystered, you could get oysters off the—you can still get 'em off the shore here, but in those days you could go in any creek and you could get oysters worth—I mean, so big you didn't want to fry them hardly,

shuck 'em out, open them. He had oysters, he caught fish in the summer down around that area, around Diggs, around the water, around New Point. There were beaucoups of pound fishermen. They put nets out on sticks, **not the way it is today**, and you could go buy fish from 'em. You had access to 'em if someone in your family was a fisherman. Some of them worked on the fishing boats, helped out with the man that owned the fish rigs. Of course, they could bring fish home to eat. So probably, fish and oysters were a staple of food in this county and in Gloucester also because we've got—a lot of water surrounds the county I live in. I remember my grandfather, when I got old enough to kind of come down here and stay on my own a few days and my mother would go back up to Gloucester take of things, my grandfather had a sail boat. If I remember, I can't find a picture of that boat but I think she was about twenty feet long built here in the county. One thing I remember about it, the doggone sails—they didn't have Mylar and all the stuff they got on the sails now that's super light and everything. They were canvas, heavy canvas. I can remember one day helping my grandfather. He had taken the sail off to repair it, I think, and had gotten it back to whoever repaired it for him. And I helped him to take it off the dock and put it on the boat. Once you got it on the boat it had to kind of fold so it would come out like an accordion, you know, put a line on there. But that thing was so darn heavy for that boat that it was—I mean I had all I wanted to lift on the end I had and I was probably eight or nine years old . . . But that was a great sailing boat. He used to take me fishing, hook and line. We'd go ahead and fish, no rod and reel. We didn't need 'em. In those days, there were some rod and reel, but not many

around here. We'd go out from the home place down here; White's Creek is where he kept the boat. He was right shrewd. He always timed it so that the day he wanted to fish—'cause we were going out of White's Creek and going out in Chesapeake Bay, which from the landing to where we went was probably five or six miles under sail.

S: Right.

T: And the big oar paddle, but you couldn't very well paddle a twenty-foot boat.
[Laughter] A little bit harder than a canoe.

S: [Laughter] Yeah.

T: So we'd go out there and Granddad would go down—this particular day that he wanted to fish in the week, if I remember, was usually about Thursday because the tide would turn at a certain time. So we'd go out in the morning the tide was still going out. What they call ebb tide, still going out of the bay. We wanted to go down the bay, so we'd come out the creek, had a little wind, and we'd sail with what wind we had. But if we didn't have a whole lot of wind, the tide would help move the boat.

S: Right.

T: So we'd go on down there and fish near—it's a lighthouse off there. It's not used now but it's an old light house there. Wolf Trap Light, it's called. There's picture of in this library. Down near that is where he wanted to fish. We'd fish and we'd catch, I mean you wouldn't believe . . . I don't know whether you fish or not, but

we'd catch croaker and trout and spot. It depended on the time of year, but I mean, sometimes you catch something that big. Nice eating.

S: That's very impressive.

T: His refrigeration was . . . he had a croker bag. You ever heard of a grass bag called a croker sack?

S: No, I haven't.

T: They're still used some places. Some places they put potatoes in 'em because they kind of breathe. You know, the mesh is not too tight. We call 'em grass sacks, burlap sack some people—they're made out of burlap. So Granddaddy had one. He had a rope in the top so he could close it up like you tighten up a drawstring on a little clothes bag or something. Put his fish in there and put them in the water and they stay alive, see.

S: Oh, right.

T: He tied it to the gunnel of the boat. He'd have that. Every time he'd catch a croaker, he'd open that bag and throw them in there. When he got ready to come home, all he did was pick them up out of the water and lay them in the shade up in the boat somewhere. Well, by the time you got to the landing they had all passed away—

S: Right.

T: Because they didn't have any water to get oxygen from. But I was always looking forward to coming back because he let me—sometimes he'd decided clean some

of the fish coming back right there in the boat, and get water out the boat in the bucket and clean them, scale them, cut the heads off, just throw them overboard for the crab. He's give me the tiller, give me the helm on the boat. He's up here on the other seat. And before we turned around or whichever way the wind was, sometimes he'd get the boat squared. And most of the time, the wind coming up in the afternoon like that—we'd fish into the afternoon—was a southeast wind. It's very predominate in the summer down here coming in off the water every day, unless you've got a front that changes. The wind would be up and he'd pull the sail up and get the boat going and he wouldn't—have you ever sailed? Are you a sailor?

S: I've never been sailing, unfortunately.

T: Oh, okay. Well, you got a term called close haul. That's when you really pull the sail in and get it tight and get all the wind so you get a lot of speed. But he'd leave the boom out and you didn't have a really close haul so it wouldn't go to fast and he'd give me the tiller. I can see him right now: big seat across the whole stern was wide, and that's where he had the tiller. Didn't have a wheel then; tiller went down to a thing like a rudder and you know, you move the tiller and the boat changes position. He'd put me up there and he'd say, all right David, he'd say, you see that? I can't remember whether it was a tree on the shore or where, but a mile or two up the bay where we were going or something, but there was something in the water. Maybe it was an old pound net standing in the water that had a hole. He'd say, you see that? And I'd say, yes sir. He'd say, all right. You keep that [inaudible 13:36] right on that. I'm gonna clean fish. That was my job

back on the tiller, and I'd watch that thing keep—every once in a while, he'd stop cleaning fish, he'd look up and he'd say, hey, you're doing a good job! You're right on course. I'd say, yes sir. And that's the way we'd come back . . . I sailed for a number of years, had my own boat. I don't sail much now because it takes more work than an old man wants to do. But I still love sailboats, a lot of fun. I've, with some friends, brought sailboats from as far north as Boothbay, Maine all the way down here to Virginia. That's a nice trip when you come down the coast in a sailboat.

S: Yeah.

T: Sometimes we'd stop in to . . . now, was it Narragansett were they have--? They used to run the World's Cup in sailboats out of there. It's a great port. A lot of Portuguese, and they got some fine beer and nice places to stop. We'd layover some time there, some time we layover farther down the coast. But kind of got my love for sailing from the water. Also my father, he was on boats. He sailed on boats in the Chesapeake Bay; they used to run merchandise to Baltimore up the coast. Maritime **moving** back in the early [19]20s and on up into World War II, tremendous maritime shipping it locally. They had boats that depending on the size, some of them could go up in the small rivers, so of them had to stay in the deeper water, and they ran—my daddy ran on those boats for, oh, probably six or seven years, over on the Gloucester side. They ran the York River, they went down Hampton Roads, Newport News, and Norfolk. They'd make a trip to go to Baltimore at night, they carried passengers, they carried everything. So my dad, being a seaman, he always had a small boat. So I spent a lot of time with him,

got a great love for moving around in the water. I've got a couple of small boats now, not anything too big. But Granddaddy Frank, who I was talking about, he went out and he was probably as old as I am now. I can remember when it happened. I wasn't down here but somebody called my mother. He was like me: he was a little hardheaded and somebody said, Captain Frank, it's blowing too hard today. Don't take that boat out the creek. And he said, you're not going to tell me where to take my boat. [Laughter] That kind of attitude.

S: Yeah.

T: He went out in the bay, out of White's Creek, went on out down the bay towards Wolf Trap, but anyway there's another squall even stronger than what the wind had blowing came up, and he got knocked down. The whole boat went over.

S: Okay, what happened after that?

T: Once it went over like that—of course, the sail was up; he was under sail—once he got knocked down and that sail being out, laying out on top of the water and it wasn't long before that caught water in it where you couldn't right the boat no way. Some of these small sailboats they've got nowadays, one-man little things, if you get knocked down, you can get overboard, and you can get on the keel and stand on it and make it come back up. He wouldn't make her come back up. [Laughter] So they find him, anyway. Long story, but somebody saw him and realized that, Lord, Mr. Hudgins is out there and I see the boat's upside down, or whatever. And somebody got in a paddleboat and went out there. He was just hanging on to the boat, you know, like well, it's happened. No big deal. [Laughter]

And they got him back to shore. Right now, I'd have to go to the cemetery. I can't remember the year he passed away but, gosh, he was way . . . right at ninety, I would say, eight- nine or ninety I think when he passed away. This probably happened a number of years before that. But, he used to come over sometimes. They don't have many hickory trees down in this part of Mathews around the water. It's a lot of pine. They used to use the hickory to smoke those hams I was telling you about over here in the smokehouse of his. He'd come up on my daddy's property where I grow up because we had some hickory trees. I can remember him coming in there he'd usually bring a black fella with him to help him and they'd cut down—they didn't want stuff too big when they used wood to smoke the meat, because I think most of the time they preferred it to dry out some. So he'd come like maybe this time o' year when he getting ready to smoke and a month or two later when it started killing hugs and things. He'd cut down old hickory trees—they were about as big a gallon jar or something—in my daddy's woods. Then they'd cut them up and bring them home and split it. That wood was used to put on the fire. They wanted smoke, see, because you want to smoke the meat. You didn't want a blaze so you didn't want the wood—you wanted some dry where it would burn some and smolder, but in other words, you didn't want it to blaze up. They'd hang the hams from the houses. They still smoke over in Smithfield, Virginia. They smoke old ham there and that's an old—the old country hams in the world come out of Virginia. I mean, that's a big business over in Smithfield, Virginia. Some local people still will kill a hog or two

now and then, but most of us have gotten so lazy, instead of feeding a hog we'd rather buy a ham around Christmastime. [Laughter]

S: Yeah.

T: A lot less work and mess.

S: Yeah, a little bit.

T: A little bit. Well, I'm talking a lot, do you want to ask me some questions? Anything I can allude to I'll be glad to attempt.

S: Well, I usually begin an interview by asking what your childhood was like or what your parents or grandparents were like, but you've already begun to kind of cover that already. But, yeah, is there anything else from your childhood into your adolescence?

T: One thing that I mentioned: my father and his working on the bay boats and stuff. Then I think it was, let's see . . . 1938 I would have been four years old. It was around must have been about [19]36 or [19]37, he started running—I think the shipping company was out of Baltimore, Maryland. I think it was United States Mail Lines. I mean, this was a big ship: carried stuff all across Atlantic to Germany, England, I mean, ports over there. He did that for several years. I can vaguely remember that he was gone for a long time and then he'd come home. He came home, this particular trip had to be about probably [19]38. The German U-boats—I mentioned submarine warfare earlier—they weren't sinking I don't think in those days, any American shipping but they were getting active in the

Atlantic and everywhere. What was it, the *Lusitania* or something I believe was the first one they torpedoed?

S: Yeah.

T: I can't remember whether-

S: I think it was the *Lusitania* that started it.

T: Yeah, I don't think that was an American vessel. But anyway, they weren't sinking any, but my dad went into Bremen, Germany, the ship he was on and they were unloading cargo and stuff and getting stuff. Of course they'd bring things back, too, when they'd come back across the ocean. I remember him talking about the U-boats and of course, they know what the U-boats were for and Germany, they were kicking their heels up but they weren't hitting any of our shipping in those days. So Daddy came back home and . . . my mother—he and I would talk about this. I didn't remember the day he got home or anything. Obviously I am four, five years old. Later when they were talking I'd ask him and he'd tell me. But he came home and my mother said, glad he was home, I was glad he was home 'cause I was an only child and my dad had been gone for probably the best part of a month.

S: Right.

T: On a round trip over there in those days. He told my mother. Well my dad was Henry, I'm David Henry, used his middle name. And she said, well, Henry when have you got to go back a sea? 'Cause my mother didn't work. She was a home

keeper and helped run his small farm when he was gone and stuff like that, took care of the chickens, and pigs, and everything. He said, I'm not going back to sea. And she said, what do you mean? What are we going to do? What are we going to eat? That was the only income, monetary income, the family had. He said, I'm not. He said, I'm not gonna die in the North Atlantic. He said, hell's gonna break loose 'fore long out there, and I'm not gonna be on a boat out there. He was making reference to the war that was forthcoming evidently. And he didn't go back to sea. He worked, he could do a lot. He had good skills. He did a lot of things. We had a small farm and he did work during World War II away from home. The government was building—down here in Newport News shipyard over in Norfolk Navy Yard, the government was putting up, having contractors put up houses as fast as they could so they could take care of the influx of workers coming in these yards to build all these ships. You know, we got right down here in Newport News, Virginia, we got one of the finest shipyards in the world. I mean, they build all the carriers and everything down there. He worked on those projects to earn income.

S: Where in Virginia?

T: Right in Newport News, right sixty miles from here.

S: Okay.

T: Less than that, probably fifty-five miles from here. Newport News Shipbuilding, well they build that cap I got on there, the *Reagan* up there. I was at the commissioning of her . . . I can't remember the year, but she's on active duty.

That's hull number seventy-six. But kind of getting away from what my daddy said. Well, he did. He didn't go back to sea. And I can remember this it must have been probably about, I don't know, 1943 or so, way after Pearl Harbor but probably [19]43. I can remember somebody knocking on our door; we didn't have telephone. There wasn't a telephone in the whole community where I lived. That was at the county store; we didn't have many phones in those days. Poor country people. I went to the door and this nice-dressed man he said, is this Henry Teagle's house? And I told, yeah. My mother was back in the house somewhere. And I guess I asked him to come in because in those days in the country, you were hospitable. You didn't leave anybody standing on the step. He came in and my mother came up and she said, well, can I help you? He said, yeah, I'm looking for Henry Teagle. And she said, well, what is this about? He said, I've got a wonderful offer for him. I know he's an ex-merchant seaman and got seaman skills and he's worked on boats. We're looking for some more. We need some more Merchant Marines, and he said, we can sign him on. In those days, I don't remember. I wish remember what the figure was, might've been twenty-five dollars a week or something like that. But in 1943, twenty-five dollars was a big handful of money.

S: Yeah.

T: They tried to recruit because they knew where he lived and they found out, like I said, they couldn't call him by phone 'cause we didn't have a telephone. But he would never. He said, I'm never going back to sea unless they draft me, and he was too old to be drafted, you know—

S: Right.

T: In the military in World War II. Lot of people in my community that I grew up with did, like my uncle over here that we were looking at his pictures. In this county, they supplied a lot of people, if you were health and able, it was pretty hard to get a deferment. If you had a critical job, now, if you worked in the shipyard—a lot of my neighbors for Gloucester where I lived worked at the shipyard, they worked at the Naval Weapons Station which is on York River. Did you come across the York River, cross the York River Bridge coming this way?

S: Yes, I believe so, yeah.

T: When you back across there, if you look upriver to your right, probably might be a big ship up there. They provide all kinds stuff: guided missile frigates, stuff for submarines. It's a big government placement over there in York County. But . . . it was a good life in this county even during the war. I remember this, but one of my—let's see, he would have been my first cousin, Edwin. He worked in the shipyard that I spoke of in Newport News, and they'd get a ship in there that was damaged, maybe had a collision or might've been torpedoed and didn't sink or whatever. They did a lot of repair along with building ships during the war. They did all kinds of repair, and when they built a new ship they had to outfit the life rafts and some of the safety equipment that they had on board. They had to outfit it with food rations, stuff, nonperishable canned, you know in cans, kind of like some of the same stuff like G.I.s carried in the field, those K-rations they call them. If the ship had been damaged in a collision, some of that might have been

damage—a raft—and they'd take all the old food that was on there off and put all new stuff on it, and the ship was finished where it was ready to go back to sea and everything. They'd distribute that, those men in the yard might have been twenty-five or thirty, forty men working in that position on the ship where they cleaned the rafts out and put new stuff in there. Anyway, they'd give the rations to the people. Of course, man, you were glad. It might be a little thing of coffee. I don't know **if there was** coffee **on** life rafts. But one of the things that I remember were Hershey's chocolate bars, and it was some other things that my mother got like what they would—he'd bring those home in the community and word would get around. Right where I grew up over in Gloucester County, there was a tremendous number of my family, our cousins, and all around the whole neighborhood. Everybody would get to together, man, and Edwin would come. I can see him with this box. And he'd put that on a table. Most times he brought it was in warm weather, see. Maybe that's when they would doing most of that. But out in the yard and you didn't go and grab. I mean, some of the older people went first. If you were a child like I was, you'd get a turn to go up there and get you something, if it was a candy bar left. That was priceless in those days because you couldn't buy them in the store.

S: Right.

T: My mother wanted to get sugar, coffee, gasoline, I can't even remember how many other products were rationed. They had a coupon book. If she went to the store to get, I think, for coffee you allotted so much a month that you could get. Because those things, like the coffee came from, what, South America and down

in there. They weren't worried about bringing coffee up too much on ships; they were worried about getting the oil up here to for the war effort. That was a big time then. But Edwin bring that stuff home and everybody'd have a big celebration. [Laughter] So World War II was rough, like my uncle got wounded. When he was wounded, the War Department—I don't know how many days after the invasion of Normandy, but the family here in Mathews revived notice that Hudson had been wounded. But they got the notice and as soon they heard, my mother came from Gloucester and drove down here to stay with her mother and just spend a little time with her and I came up. It was in the summer, because if I remember correct Normandy invasion was June the sixth 1944, I believe. So word had probably took, I don't know, maybe a week in those days for the War Department to notify you that a relative was wounded or had been killed or whatever, but they got the notice. I can remember now, some of the neighbors came over and I remember my grandmother, the house is still down at Haven down there but on the porch screen and in summer, spend as much time on that big porch as you spent anywhere else other than working and doing stuff in the yard. So everybody was sitting there on rocking chairs on the porch. There again, I don't have any pictures of any of that, but they were talking about Hudson being wounded. Later, I don't know whether—might've been a week, two weeks maybe. Anyway, my grandmother got a letter from Hudson. Finally he'd gotten so he'd written a letter. I don't know if the War Department, I don't think when they were wounded they stated where the wound was but they just stated he was wounded. He was in the hospital and that was about all the info you got. But

somehow, my mother-in-law said, well, great. This is great to get this letter. She said—I know I remember her saying this; he was left-handed, okay?

S: Mm-hm.

T: This writing was of a left-handed person. She said, oh, praise the Lord wherever he was wounded, it wasn't in his left arm. [Laughter] I remember her saying that. You know, that was pretty good comprehension from a lady that, God, **Mama Annie** then had to be in her sixties. And he was. A machine gun or rifle bullet—he'd offloaded his troops from the barge. This is my memory and I could be wrong, but I think he was unloading on Omaha Beach. Anyway, he'd got his troops out; he got in there far enough that they could get out without getting drowned. Of course, bullets were flying everywhere. That was a hell of a landing there. We lost, what, four thousand something troops, the Allies did, right there on, I think, Normandy Beach. But he turned around, backed off. He was a coxswain. He ran the—he and another guy had a mate on the barge with him. He turned around and had backed off, he was going back to his ship to get another load of troops or whatever, and that's when he was hit. A bullet. Because he's standing up there at the helm heading back. He didn't have that big door like you got in the front on a barge to protect you going in and it hit him. I remember later he was telling everybody about it when he got home after the war and stuff and he said, that damn thing hit me. He said, knocked me and I went right down over the wheel in the boat and my mate grabbed the wheel. Of course, thank goodness where it hit him, it went through his shoulder, but it kind of went in the joint. It didn't hit him—it was so spent, it didn't quite come out. It came through

this side far enough that he said when the doctors operated and got it out, even you could see the bulge. But so he didn't lose a lot of blood. They got back to the ship and got him in sick bay. But that took care of his time until that healed. But after that healed, then, like some of this information I've showed you here, he went and I know he was in Iwo and Okinawa invasion both because we took after the Japs over there. The European Theater was slowing down a little bit right in those days. Hudson came home from the war and he was always a lively guy. I mean, he enjoyed life. So he wanted an automobile. Its type—it was hard—I don't know when he got it, probably six or eight months after he'd been home. They'd cranked up the industry after the war and started producing some cars. The vehicle he got was a Hudson. Hudson got a Hudson. There was a dealer here in Mathews down the county near New Point that sold 'em. What was so funny, what I can remember so vividly, when he finally got the car, that thing was pretty. Man, she was. They tooled up, stopped making tanks and stuff and started building automobiles. But the only thing, it didn't have a bumper except a piece of oak, about two by eight oak, the width of the bumper was bolted on where the framework for the bumper came out. The war effort had taken so much chrome that they used to cover steel for a good-looking bumper that they couldn't produce bumpers for a while, I don't know, probably a year after the war. He got his new bumpers for his Hudson. He took the planks off. Then again, I'd give something for a picture of that car now. I don't think there's any around the family. But they put that chrome bumper on there and he wasn't the slowest driver in the county. [Laughter] Good Lord, aren't they? Those guys, when they

came back—if you come back from a situation, if you'd been in Iraq or Afghanistan for a year or so or eight or nine months and dodging missiles and bullets and H.E.D.s, the explosives they mount in the ground . . .

S: Right

T: Anyways, anything in war is hell, I mean. But you get back from that and get back home, I mean, running around with your buddies and drinking some beers and driving a fast car, that's just like being in bed as far as comfort and rest and security. He'd been through all that stuff. And that's the way Hudson was. He came home. They had a dance hall up on 198 from here called **Postals**. It's been made into a nice residence now, but I can remember that. They'd go up there and they danced. The boys that came home from the war, a lot of his friends were around the county and they lived a happy, wild life there for a while. Most of them later got married and settled down. But he was, I guess . . . I own my uncles. My mother's brothers were favorite, were good, I loved them all. But when you're a kid that age—and he got home probably from the war, he got home early [19]46, so I was, let's see, what, [19]34, ten, I was just old enough really. So times I wanted to go with him but sometimes he'd have a cold beer and I'd eye that but he wouldn't dare give me that. [Laughter] My mother would have beat his head in if he'd given me a beer to drink. I probably wanted one. But anyway, so that's kind of the life here in Mathews and somewhat in Gloucester when the war was over, when I was growing up. It was an interesting time. In fact, you've meet my son Robert who was in here a few minutes ago. His older brother—did he tell you what my oldest son Peter does, did Robert tell you?

S: No he didn't.

T: Okay, he's an educator; he's a teacher at Hampton Roads Academy which is over in Newport News and also coaches athletics. I guess it's from me and my love of—not loving war but hearing about World War II when he was growing up, telling him a lot of things that I've told you. He's quite a World War II historian from research and he's had his students interview—I don't know how many, could be up as high as forty or fifty—World War II veterans that are still living. Some of them have passed away since he had the interview. The student would be like you would be the student and Peter—that's my son's name—he would line everything up and sometimes they would go to the person's home, sometimes the person would come to school and sit down and do an interview just like we're doing. Peter would vacate the room, he'd leave the student in there to ask the questions and they put it all on tape. He's got some great, great stuff from World War II. Robert loves history, too, even though- Robert is an Education Director and Curator over King Carter Church over in Northumberland County, Lancaster County. That's what he does for a living. So he's history-oriented, historically-oriented very well, too, interest and all. If you want to ask me some questions that—

S: Oh yeah, sure.

T: Go ahead. I've been doing all the talking. [Laughter]

S: Yeah. I was curious: did you or your family have any sayings that you ever had? Like . . . your own personal sayings to describe something that happens? Uou know what I mean?

T: Like an article maybe or something?

S: Like . . . I'm trying to think of—like a phrase that you might say to describe something that happens.

T: Yeah, maybe. I know there's some in my—you might've noticed some dialect in my talking. The people in Mathews here, especially down the county, they call them New Pointers, and they say, well, New Pointers down there—a lot of them, not many now, but a lot of the old folks when I grew up, they say, New Point down there in New Point. It's Old English, see. Everybody settled down here in the beginning and around here: Tangier Island up the bay, **Guinea** in Gloucester, the water-faring people in the lower part of Gloucester County. That area down there is called Guinea. I mean, it's on the map. Guinea being an Italian coin, I think, too, why it got that name. But they're water people, water-faring people, hardworking, still a lot of them. And their dialect is really a lot heavier and different, a little different from mine. I give you a little bit of it though: hey, sir, young fellow, what are you doing today? What's up? What's happening? You been at oystering today? That's oystering, you know that. That's kind of the dialect that they spoke and they spoke it in their homes. One time with my company, the power company, when we were working down there, we had a new man come down. I was in the line construction crew then, had a new man come

down from Richmond was in that crew, fella. And we were working down there at lunchtime. In those days, that was back in the mid-[19]50s, there wasn't any 7-Elevens or anything else. If you want something to eat, you went to the country store. I mean, you had packed your lunch, had your own lunch box. I carried a lunchbox for years and we kept it on the truck and we'd go so cold. We were working down on near the marsh, wind blowing across there. Doggone, it was cold and I was up a pole. I don't know if Louis' boy was—he was up a poll next to him I think. Anyway, the foreman hollered. We had crews then with five or six of us and had a foreman that ran the crew. So he said, y'all come on down. Let's go up the road, let's go up to **Elmer Green's**. Let's go up to the store and get warm. They had an old wood heater in there that was heating the space, big as the front of this library. We all got in there, sitting around. I knew a lot of the guys and I was talking with them while we were eating a sandwich. We all bought a soft drink I guess. I notice Louis, my friend Louis Melton, he was the guy who came down with the crew had been down here, I don't know, about a year working. But he hadn't been out too much in that part of the county. He wasn't saying a whole lot. Louis loved to—he was a great conversationalist. Finally we finished eating and the foreman said, all right, let's go. He looked at his watch and rolled it up like this. Come on, let's go. Was only supposed the have thirty minutes for lunch, he said, we already almost been an hour. It's cold. We got to get back out to work. We were in a small truck going back down to the job site, and I said, Louis, are you okay? He said, yeah, what's the matter? And I said, you didn't talk. He said, I couldn't understand five words that they were saying!

S: [Laughter]

T: I remember that. Lord, he said, I couldn't—he said, what kind of language you all speaking? I said, when I got with those people, I'd kind of put my dialect down on the way they talk some, too, 'cause I grew up with a lot of them. We had two schools in Gloucester County, two upper-level schools in Gloucester in those days. All these boys went to the one down on the county, and my wife, she dated some of them. She graduated from school in Gloucester County before she went away to college. She could talk right along with them. You'd think she was—we called her a Guinea gal because she could talk just like the kids she went to school with. They were proud of it and other people—I've seen one coming—I've worked in the service station part-time in Gloucester County. Sometimes some people out of town or maybe even out of state would stop in. Be some boys from down the county talking and I'd see people, they'd turn their head trying to figure, I'm in Virginia, what in the world is this? [Laughter]. It wasn't a foreign language but it was so heavy dialect that it sounded different. I mean, a lot of those guys then, they still speak that way.

S: Yeah, we actually went down to Guinea yesterday. But we didn't talk to any Guineamen, but we were in the area.

T: See, they tell you if you go down there now, they may not do it. But the real dyed-in-the-wool ones when I was growing up, if you drove down in the car and you were say from Richmond or somewhere, and you were looking for some particular place so you go down there. You stopped at one of those stores or saw

somebody walking down the road and you say, hey, are we in Guinea yet? Can you tell me where Guinea is? He'd say, oh, down the road a little bit, and they'd send you down the road till you got overboard. [Laughter] They never would say they were in Guinea. But people there say, down the road, go on down, doll. They loved to say doll, like oh, darling, go on down the road a little bit. You'll find it. Go down there to **Elmer Green** store, darling.

S: Yeah. [Laughter]

T: I loved them; I got some good friends down there. We hunted together, and those boys out at school down there at Achilles—the school I went to was Botetourt up in Gloucester Village. It's an elementary now but it was a high school in those days. Those boys out of Guinea, I'm gonna tell you. They were hard knockers. They football players, I mean they were tough. They were brought up hard, they'd worked on the water and did hard work. One of them hit you, he'd knock you down and if he didn't knock you down he'd stomp on you and trip you or do something, you know. [Laughter] They were rough. Good athletes, every one of them that played were great athletes. Some of them went to colleges and played Division One in those days. All right give me—I'm doing all the talking and not giving you any chance.

S: Oh yeah. Well with the interview I usually like to try and give what you say a much respect as possible, so I want to give you as much time as we can to talk. Unfortunately, it seems like we are out of time, I'm so sorry, but I'm really thankful

that you were able to do the interview and I had never heard the Guinea speech and I thought that was really interesting.

T: If y'all get a chance to—will you go back down there anywhere? If you go around some of those—let's see. I'm trying to think what boatyard in Guinea. Stuff's changed so much down there but if you go to a local's its one when you get down in there that was called Buck Rowe's Market. It's about half way off Seventeen down in to Guinea. It's been made it kind of a shrine store. I don't know how much stuff they sell. But there's some others on down. It would be nice if you could really meet some of the guys that really still speak all the time with right much accent on the English language. But it's not that much difference—you haven't been up the bay in Virginia, up Tangier Island and all those?

S: No, not yet.

T: Seaside Islands, they say. Those people still carry heavy dialect, a lot of them. Most of them are still watermen and still work the water they live in. From colonial days on, man, this area and these rivers—John Smith wrote this. John Smith and some of his work . . . voyages, when he was checking these rivers out from Jamestown after settlement. There were reefs, the oysters were so plentiful, there'd be ten feet of water there and the oyster reef would be up on tide maybe down low, partial tide, would be out of the water, there were so many oysters.

S: Wow.

T: Now, of course, they're bringing them back. We've had a good term. Oh, I read in the paper—I might not quote the right figure, but seems to me I saw in the paper

from last year that we were up about, I think, three hundred thousand bushels or so out of the Tidewater area and that's a lot of area. James River's a big oyster producer, where Jamestown Island was, where the settlers settled and all that over there. If you ever come back on free time again, there's a ton of wonderful—Colonial Williamsburg in there and Jamestown and Revolutionary War. It's a fabulous amount of history over there. You'd be spellbound; you could stay over there a couple weeks being the work you do and just reading and looking at what's available. This county was settled and Gloucester was settled extremely early, too. It's because we're so close Jamestown.

S: Yeah we haven't gotten a chance to go Jamestown yet but we did go to Yorktown yesterday. I mean, I don't know if we—I thought originally, we were maybe planning on going to Jamestown but I think now our schedule's been so packed that we might not get a chance.

T: Well, you might come back as a visitor. The Revolutionary War Center is great; they got a maritime museum right there in Yorktown. Did you get a chance to go in that? It's kind of down under the bridge down on the waterfront there.

S: No we didn't, but we did like a tour of the town and then we went to one of like the local eateries there.

T: Got the old monument up there on the hill.

S: Oh yeah, yeah, we saw that.

T: The battlefield, my oldest son Peter is a cannoneer in a Revolutionary War reproduction. What do they call when people? They fire the canon and they dress in Revolutionary clothing and everything and they have things like that in Yorktown.

S: Oh, reenactments?

T: Reenactments. Thank you, that's the word I was trying to think of. But it's been a pleasure talking with you.

S: Yeah, I really have been enjoying talking with you.

T: Come back to Virginia. I don't have one of my cards with me, but you have my name and all and if you ever get back down here, my son Robert, his museum will over in Lancaster County.

S: Yeah, if we have some free time maybe we'll be able to check it out today hopefully.

T: Yeah, if you can go over there. He's going back to work when he finishes up here anyways, he's got to go over there. But he likes it and he says, I ain't gonna a millionaire with what I do, but I love it. And his goal is probably to get his kids out of school and **give himself** a little more free time. He's probably going to get his Ph.D. and do some—he'd like you; he'd like to do some teaching and work a lot with students. He was an undergrad at William and Mary and got his master's from Virginia Tech, who got slaughtered last night in football.

S: [Laughter] Oh! Who were they playing last night?

T: Miami. Tech is weak this year. I mean, I don't know, what'd—they beat Ohio State?

S: Yeah, I don't know how they did that.

T: I don't know either, but anyway. Robert's got some great friends up there; he goes up **there every year**. My oldest son, Thomas, is a stockbroker in Richmond, Virginia, but he and his wife went to the East Carolina game last night. Which they beat what Connecticut, I think they played.

S: Yeah, I think so.

T: They were tied up at halftime, twenty-one twenty-one, I believe.

S: But East Carolina won, right?

T: Yeah, East Carolina came back and won it. Oh, he loves East Carolina. He buys season tickets and he and his wife and his mother, my wife, she's up in Richmond with the grandchildren up there [inaudible 50:41]. She'll be home later today. So it's a pleasure, Austyn, talking with you. They call you Austyn, or?

S: Oh, yes, they do.

T: Oh well, that's good. That's a good name. I met somebody not long ago because it's so significant a name that evidently wasn't used much here but it makes you think of Austin, Texas and I don't know, something else. Keyed something in my mind, first time I heard somebody say their name was Austyn. But that's a nice name.

S: Well, thank you.

T: Your family born, you born and bred in Florida?

S: Yes, I was.

T: Oh, great.

S: Yes I was born in Orlando and then raised in a couple different towns in Florida and now I live in Gainesville at the university.

T: Great, that's nice. Yeah, my oldest son Peter, his first teaching was at a private school in Florida. Let's see. I'm trying to think of the town it was near—it wasn't too far from Orlando 'cause I'd go down to visit him. I want to say River City, but that isn't right.

[End of interview]

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