

Cape Charles Rosenwald School Restoration Initiative
Oral History Interview – October, 26, 2013

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Sex/Age/Ethnicity/City of Habitation

CS: M 78 AA Cape Charles, VA
AA: M 29 SA Norfolk, VA
AT: F # C Norfolk, VA
LS: F # C Cape Charles, VA

AA: alright Mr. Clarence uh, would you like please my name is Abdullah Alqarni i'm from Saudi Arabia [CS: okay] would you would you like please to introduce yourself

CS: i am uh Clarence O Smaw

AA: okay

CS: yes S-M-A-W

AA: okay <LAUGH> and, uh, where are you from <BACKGROUND DISRUPTION> w- w- wer- were you were you born here and raised here-

CS: -yes born here and raised here yeh

AA: interesting interesting so do you like the area here and people w-

CS: its wonderful i love it here [AA: okay] i worked outta state for thirty some years and i ended up comin back home [AA: interesting interesting] yeah

AA: w- w- why do you like the town_ the island (sic)

CS: because of the quietness and its small and you get to know all the people here

AA: <LAUGH> its the same thing you know i was born in like a village and i like it so much

CS: yes you know just about everybody in town to [AA: exactly yes] that makes a difference yeah

AA: what kind of activities, like you usually do during the day

CS: well now i'm uh i am a carpenter [AA: okay] we work on we finish houses just for us to have something to do

AA: okay good good you work with- <BACKGROUND BEEP/DOOR OPENING> do you work with people like like do you have specific people to work with in building_ working on-

CS: well i-i-i'm just a helper [AA: okay] and the man i work with he takes care of the people end of it <LAUGH>

AA: <LAUGH> interesting good, uh, did you like move out of places to live did you like travel other places as well-

CS: uh uh i-i-i up there where i was workin i liked it up there i coulda lived up there if i uh had to uh but i prefer to be back home so i came on back home [AA: so okay so you don't (INAUDIBLE)] in f- actually i never left home i would go on Mondays and come back Fridays home [AA: okay <LAUGH>] <LAUGH>

AA: alright sounds interesting and, uh, w-, okay can you give me like_ because i'm a new visitor here and you know its my first time [CS: right right] you know it was amazing while we were driving here and we see the islands here you know and i was just you know [CS: <LAUGH>] <LAUGH> watching here and there can you please give me, uh, summary or description about the town_ people here or since_ from your childhood until now can you give me like small like description

CS: well you take uh our town once upon a time was uh had more conveniences uh than it has now more or less going to like to me a uh resort area [AA: okay] i was grown up we had uh three or four stores we had sh-s-shoe stores [AA: okay okay] clothin stores rather an' uh three or four clothin' stores and four or five mom n' pop stores [AA: wow] but we lost all that now so it's always_ its a little different [AA: right] but i still love it here anyway [AA: we see we see] yeah

AA: uh, how about the like back in the days (sic) and now what's the difference in like, uh, life in town_ work_ everything

CS: well, back in the day when i was young uh it was a lot of work mostly was farm work n' uh every now and then you would get a job outta industry or somewhere <BACKGROUND LAUGH> i had uh two or three jobs comin up i used to the service station, arranging cars and changing tires, i used to work to the ice plant used to be on the corner here_ fig and mason avenue worked there in the summer time storin ice [AA: okay] and uh icin the railroad cars [AA: okay] yes and uh that w- that was more or less a fun job [AA: yes] mm we used to have to store f- three hundred blocks uh block of ice [AA: okay] nine stories_ nine piles high n' put nin- pu- pile em up on top eachother [AA: mhm] and uh it was really fun travelin up on the elevator and take em off the elevator each level [AA: right right] n' (UNINTELLIGIBLE)

AA: that's good that's good do you have children or-

CS: i ha- i have f- four girls and three grandgirls <LAUGH>

AA: oh wow <LAUGH>, grandchildren, are they living with you or-

(5) CS: no they're scattered all over, one in Norfolk one in Richmond one in California and uh one in Washington D-C [AA: that's interesting] and my granddaughter_ one of my granddaughters she's fourteen_ my youngest one she's fourteen years old [AA; okay] and my other granddaughter she lives in Houston Texas and my other granddaughter lives up in Maryland <PRON: >

AA: do you guys like meet each, like like celebration or thing_ you meet

CS: oh yeah oh yeah we gather every now and again [AA: okay] different places sometime I go up there n' sometime they go in Norfolk <PRON: > with my other daughter

AA: alright... how 'bout the like the education here in the town, like what's the difference_ I mean did you study in the r- rosenw- Rosenwald school

CS: yes I went to Rosenwald school in forty-two and I graduated from there in forty-nine yes

AA: you spent like four years there_ five years s- [CS: seven, seven years] seven years okay, yeah how w- how was_ was like the teaching there-

CS: the teaching was fine we had one teacher uh her name was Alice, M- Moses at the time but she became Ames later [AA: okay] she taught me and when I left <PRON: > the school that I was at and came here she was so good my grandmother <PRON: > made me stay another grade she put me back in the first grade when I came to Cape Charles <LAUGH> [AA: <LAUGH>] so uh that's- that's how I got taught through Mrs. Ames then I went uh th- first second to the third grade uh uh a lady names Mrs. Joins [AA: okay] taught me third fourth and fifth [AA: okay] and uh Mr. W-H Smith taught me sixth and seventh grade [AA: okay] then I went on to uh high school yeah

AA: so what kind of <HICCUP> can you just tell me what kind of cou_ uh uh subjects that you studied at Rosenwald school

CS: well we had arithmetic <PRON: > as usual arithmetic and reading and uh some_ a little uh history <PRON: > but not much 'til we got to high school yes

AA: okay, and uh how many teachers were there

CS: was three there, Mrs. Ames_ I keep sayin Mrs. Ames that's her married name_ Mrs. Moses Mrs. Joins and Mr. Smith were three [AA: three] three at the time

AA: uh and how many_ how many students at that time were in that school-

CS: how many students [AA: yes] woo-oo I guess better than a hundred there uh maybe [AA: okay...okay] because we all lived right in Cape Charles here

AA: and uh were there like any community service uh including the education or just the education

CS: just education

AA: okay...was it like only for black people

CS: yes yes

AA: did you like that or-

CS: well it's all I was used to at the time so later on we and the white boys we used to play together out on the gold course where the moms and dads wouldn't see us, we'd go back there and play football and have a good time together, Halloween night we'd fight and the next morning <PRON: > we'd be huggin and talkin 'bout what a good time we had the night before n' all that uh uh so far as the racial part of it I think we did lovely in Cape Charles between the races as far as we didn't have no trouble, we all knew each other by names and although we were separate we_ we knew all eachother

AT: do you think that part of the_ uhm part of the- the good racial relationships b-between the black and the white students was because of the isolation of Cape Charles that it's not mainland or-

CS: uh i- oh I don't know I couldn't say I really couldn't say whether it was or not but we got along anyway...

AA: okay, uh alright, so do you think the quality of education was the same_ the same in school that you went and white school

CS: I think so because it's up to you_ education is something that's up to you whether you grasp it or not that's what I think they can say there's a difference in it but if you don't wanna have no interest in it you gonna_ you're not getting anything at all

AA: exactly exactly, but how 'bout the like the subjects_ were the same or-

CS: well I don't know_ I don't know if we had the same subjects or not

(10) AA: okay, okay uhm <MOUTH CLICK> ... what was the educational social and culture environment of the school like how is it different from today

CS: well you got mor- more things today to talk about today yeah in the old days we'd talk about John Smith and all those type of people and George Washington and things like that and we had a little one little book in our first grade had a little girl in it and we'd call it a primmer <PRON: > or something and we talked about her a lot in this book cuz uh_ my daddy even named one of my sisters after little girl in the book <LAUGH>

AA: <LAUGH> okay by mentioning your parents what is the whole of your parents like did they, uh, w-were they like encouraging you t-to learn [CS: yes] what kind of-

CS: well m-my father <PRON: > he was just a regular laborer, shucked oysters <PRON: > down in Oyster Virginia in the beginning and then he uh got in a uh truck drivers job and he drove a truck from then 'til he passed yes and my mother was a house keeper she used to keep hotel n' houses downtown until she moved to Philladelphia an- and then she changed to something else too

AA: okay what did they about education like what's the impression of education did your education add to your_ you know to your

CS: well, i-i-i-it brought me a good job after I graduated I got a god job I got out I was car control clerk for conway railroad a long time and uh things like that yep

AA: alright uh, how were the parents churches and other aspects of the community a part of the life of school-

CS: oh the churches we uh we had to go to church and the churches would come over sometime the ministers and things would visit the schools and see how we were doin [AA: okay yeah]

AA: alright uh did you like go to church after school or just like you go to school and then like you learn a lot about religion and everything

CS: yes uh we uh I went to school after church we had school_ Sunday school every Sunday and uh then uh main service maybe about ten_ eleven o' clock and uh I joined the church in fifty-four_ nineteen fifty_four [AA: okay] yeah

AA: alright uh, what were the building grounds like compared to how it looks today

CS: oo uh over there [AA: yeah] oo it was a big difference oh it's been through something it's been uh sold and then I understand they had a eel factory over there and they just tore <PRON:> it up w-w-when we were over there we had a auditorium n' four class rooms w_ only three operating [A: okay] and had nice heat and all that yes back in that day we had hot water heat uh a furnace_ from a furnace

AA: and also I'd like to know your hobbies like what kind of you know like other than work-

CS: my hobbies [AA: yes yes] oh no I don't know what to say I, I-I do a lot of everything_ I uh [AA: like football...basketball] I like to play basketball and uh in high school I played football my biggest football game was our last year in high school I run four touchdowns before the first quarter [AA: <LAUGH>] [AT: wow <LAUGH> did the other team just give up] [LS: <LAUGH>] yeah uh it was a big we they had just as well have_ n' uh I went to school with a fella you probably know him, Johnny Sample [AA: Johnny Sample] well he was a football player he was our quarterback at that time

AA: interesting

LS: so did he throw the football to you for your catch

CS: he throwed_ he threwed the football to me

LS: so you were a good receiver then

CS: yes yes ye-yeah uh

AA: what role did the school play in the community like did the school uh operate as a hub of culture

CS: well sometimes_ sometimes yes yeah

AA: okay

LS: so what did it do_ what did the school do for the community that was important for the culture in the community of Cape Charles

(15) CS: oo well the school would have uh different affairs and uh invite the parents and things to it at the time and mostly it is the uh community went to our football games and uh if we had a play or something n' they went to that n' things like that...

AA: interesting interesting

AT: did the school enrich the bonds in the community_ was the community stronger because of the school

CS: oh sure

AA: alright, uhm I think we talked about the uh_ the subjects but id like specifically to know what kind also of training and education teachers had at the time a-at Rosenwald school-

CS: at the Rosenwald school [AA: yes yes] training for the teachers-

AA: like any specific training or education you know

CS: oh you wanna know about a special education like something like special

AA: yeah kind of

CS: uh... I can't <PRON: > come up with that one I don't think uh

AT: did they have special degrees did they have to go to college to teach you

CS: oh oh well they were college_ they had college degrees yeah yeah

AT: did they attend the colleges around here or did they come from all over-

CS: oh how mostly out_ from outta state uh Johnson an' Smith uh A-and-T sch-schools like that, yeah

AA: okay- okay-okay

LS: where were those_ where were those sch-

CS: we had Maryland <PRON:> State_ Maryland some of em went to [LS: where was Johnson-] North Carolina [LS: North Carolina and A-and-T where is that-] that down in North Carolina too [LS: okay]

AA: d-d-do you have like relationship with teachers like uh outside schools or you just like have formal relationship-

CS: no th-the teachers would come ou- come out like to be out n' they could be out playin sport [AA: okay they play with you] they yeah yeah [AA: that's good] and uh give us advice when we weren't in school you could go to one of em and ask help and they'd help us

AA: yes yes, is there any whipping if you-

CS: oh yes yes [AA: <LAUGH>] were there any whippings_ yes and if you didn't do it right

AA: it's the same thing where I am from

CS: hold your hand out n' just take a ruler <LAUGH> spankin your hands

AA: it's the same_ it's still happening in my country today <LAUGH> [CS: <LAUGH> oh boy] but you know they make us good- good students [CS: yeah yeah make you good] especially if you are-

CS: you could go home and get another one if mother found out <LAUGH>

AT: hmm

AA: okay uh, what are the_ what are alumni's favorite memories like what is your favorite memory of attending the school like what did you or-

CS: well i remember I liked mostly_ we use shoot marbles [AA: okay] you had three holes so far apart [AA: okay] and we shoot holes and if you lose the mar- the marble game [AA: uh huh] then you'd put ya knucks down and we'd hit ya knucks with the marbles [AA: ooh <LAUGH>] s- w- we use to play that alot, yeah and then we have another game, we draw around a circle [AA: okay] put the marbes in the middle of the circle [AA: okay] and we shoot them out [AA: wow] but i used to do better snatchin marbles [AA: <LAUGH>] than i did shootin em cuz uh i couldn't shoot marbles too good <LAUGH> i'd wait til the gang put th- set the marbles up [AA: <LAUGH>] then i'd go snatch em put em in my pocket 'n i'd go somewhere else <LAUGH>

AT: oh <LAUGH> did they ever chase after you or catch up

CS: <LAUGH>

AA: run away yeah

CS: yeah that was fun, most the time i was the larger one so i snatched the marbles up [AA: <LAUGH>] i didn't have to worry about em <LAUGH> ...

AA: are children now a days play these games again or they just left it, they don't play it anymore

CS: no no very seldom you find about anybody shootin marbles anymore [AA: okay] and like mm my sisters an i we use play hop scotch [AA: hop scotch] we didn- i don't see no kids playin that no more [AA: okay] you see em jumpin a rope a little [AA: mhm] but uh jrum- jumpin rope back in the day was uh [AA: fun] was fun yeah and hide and go seek mhm and all those things, [AA: <LAUGH>] what, you don't see em playin that no more, especially_ especially we'd get a hide and go seek thing goin down about dark at night and the girls be playin too ya know n when you'd start out you'd have ten or fifteen [AA: mhm] and end up wouldn't be no body comin back [AA: right <LAUGH>] <LAUGH>...

AT: were the girls in the classes with the boys or was there-

CS: oh yeah the girls and boys all together yes

AA: together okay, uh do you still hang out with like your_ your_ your friends back

CS: yeah sure when i run across em_ most of em <PRON: //> most of us are scattered all over the country [AA: oh yeah] Phillidelphia New York California places like that, i

got two or three around here [AA: right] that i_ we go and talk about old times
<LAUGH>

AA: <LAUGH> oh old times yeah it must be ver beautiful moments

(20) CS: yeah yeah, and one fella my brother in law um he lives in Raleigh North Carolina
and he calls me all the time and we get talkin about_ that's all he talks about he gets cryin
over the phone [AA: UNINTELLIGIBLE] you know and we have fun yeah

AA: interesting... so what kind of places do you visit now like you said bahamas

CS: yeah w- well now well now i flewed up i used to live in Trenton New Jersey and uh
my mother lived in uh Phillidelphia [AA: okay] and uh durin the summer i used to go up
there and stay for a couple weeks and her an my sisters and they tried to teach me how to
do the cha-cha and all that [AT: <LAUGH>] n all that n uh they taught me for three
years and i was so dumb i couldn't learn it they quit <LAUGH> [LS: <LAUGH>] i never
learned how to-

AA: well is this a-

CS: dance it's a dance [AA: oh dance okay] and uh it was so_ it was so uh funny they
said well we not gonna try to teach you no more you just dont gonna be a dancer [AT:
<LAUGH>] <LAUGH>... in Phillidephia i had some inlaws n we all stay n visit different
times [AA: okay] went to_ been to New York once in my life n that was nineteen forty
six, i went there one time [AA: okay] n that's the_ haven't been since

AA: yeah okay very interesting... alright um what was the impact of the school's closing
in nineteen si- sixty six, when the Northampton County school system consolidated the
school system-

CS: -right they consolodated the school system they got rid of all the schools n so it
came to one school, like Cape Charles consolodated with [AA: mhm] the school over
here [AA: okay] and uh they had two or three_ two or three more schools that
consolidated like Capeville and they sent them up to_ up to Matchapungo, yeah

AA: yeah, okay, is there any impact on your life after closing [CS: imact] yeah

CS: no not in well the_ see then in sixty six i was out of school [AA: ooh] then so we
did_ i didn't bother me [AA: oh] yeah i left there i graduated uh high school in fifty four
[AA: fifty okay] yeah after years of bein up there and i_ i was uh type of a student who
didn't care too much for education at the time [AA: okay] and uh after football season i
quit school [AA: okay <LAUGH>] so it took me six years to get outta high school by
quittin school my uh aunt moved down here from New York she lived in Brooklyn uh all
her younger days and older_ part of her older days and she took over the household
where i was [AA: okay] and she told me you either go to school or get a job [AA: or get
a job okay] so at the time i was allergic to work so uh i went to school <LAUGH> [LS:

<LAUGH> [AT: <LAUGH>] [AA: <LAUGH>] so i graduated in fifty four and i went to army, i got outta school in June of fifty four and the seventeenth of June I was in fort Jackson South Carolina in the army [AA: in the army okay] just quick as that and after the armu_ i got outta the army, i got a job to the service station on the corner of fig street and mason avenue just right across from the drug store use to be a service station now i worked there for about two years n then i heard about a job on the railroad [AA: okay] so i went to the railroad [AA: mhm, mhm] down there and that was in fifty seven i think and uh i worked down there til it closed and then i was on the run and had seniority so i bunked in Salsbury Maryland on a job and i worked there and from there i worked for Salisbury Maryland to a place called delmar- Delaware_ in Seaford Delaware, then i went from there to Bridgeville Delaware from Bridgeville Delaware i went to Dover Delaware and from Dover Delaware i ended up in Delaware City [AA: wow] all that_ uh because the places were closin and uh n my_ an uh one of the positions i had_ two positions n uh the first black to ever had the job on the Eastern Shore n uh i was a clerk_ i was a clerk and a freight agent [AA: okay] uh they gave me those jobs and i ended up as a clerk because uh freight agent just was no longer around [AA: right] and uh i had retired from a place uh called Delaware City and uh workin t_ workin season up there i went from uh, Delaware City over to Delaware and in an outta Philidelphia for the company [AA: wow] so,

AA: it's a lot of experiences <LAUGH> [CS: <LAUGH>]

LS: so it was al_ all working for the railroad

CS: all working for the railroad yes thirty eight years i worked there yes

AA: wow

LS: in the same company

CS: the same company yeah_ well they changed the name but it was the same company it wen_ i started with the Pensylvannia railroad [LS: right] and then it went to New York Central and Kong rail so that where i_ i retired from Kong rail

AA: wow, did you make good living from that-

(25) CS: -oh oh yeah, i made a lot of over time and things like that, i stayed_ i'd go to work sometimes seven o clock in the morning and wouldnt get off til three o clock the next morning [AA: okay] w-we had_ it's two of us workin a job in the same place and they didn't have no relief people to relieve em so i releived the other man when he was on his vacation 'n uh i worked double shift plus three or four more hours uh

AA: yeah that's too much work yeah, and how bout the payment, is it the same if you are white you know or black or white

CS: see when i started there we had two different rosters they had a black roster and a white roster [AA: okay] the white roster could work the black roster but the black roster couldnt work the white roster [AA: ah okay] so the unions changed it, put em both together an after that i had more seniority than a lot of em back then cuz i had been workin on the black roster for along time when they merged em together that made me have a lot of seniority

AT: how did the white workers take that

CS: they did like it_ they did like it at all [AA: <LAUGH>] they liked the other version of the rosters yeah

AT: when did that happen_ the merging

CS: they uh_ i- i- i- think the merger happened back in, the sixties i think the sixties when it happened i think... yeah and uh i uh i had a wonderful job had a wonderful boss, uh he_ a lotta time he left a lotta stuff on me to do for him an uh that made me good_ you se- like me livin here, like Thanksgiving i'd come home for Thanksgiving n he's tell me well you don't come back Friday you come back Monday [AA: that's good] i had my mother_ when my mother died i wasn't supposed to get but three personal days [AA: mhm] they gave me five and they were_ they were a good-

AA: that's good that's good [CS: yeah] it must be you know [ALARM SYSTEM "BACKDOOR"] good_ good worker like

CS: yeah a good worker i guess, i learned to know a lotta people on the railroad cuz of me travelin from one location to the other, i had a lotta experiences in some places that we went that th- the officials didn't have so when they came around they come get me to take em [AA: wow] show em where the place was <LAUGH>

AA: exactly exactly

AT: do you think you had those experiences because you were well educated through the Rosenwald School

CS: well that's that's got somethin to do with it too, yes yes, got somethin to do with it... cuz we had over at the Rosenwald School we had a good time yeah i didn't know nothin but playing at the time but you know most the kids between six n seven years old all they wanna do is play you know <LAUGH> but we had some fine teachers [AA: exactly] they were sincere in uh learnin you...

AA: very interesting very interesting

LS: so one question that we started to talk about that didn't finish really was when this Rosenwald School_ Cape Charles Elementary closed um h- how did that affect the community, do you think it was a loss to Cape Charles or, you know

CS: i think it was improvement-

LS: -it was an improvement because

CS: because learnin to live together and associate with each other, i think that's what improved it

LS: cuz it closed to desegregate the schools [CS: yeah right, yeah] so you were not at school in that time [CS: right] but you were back_ back and forth here to Cape Charles [CS: right right] y- uhm how_ how smoothly do you think the desegregation went from your observation

CS: w- from my observation i think it went along perfect [LS: mhm] cuz i don't recall any incidents about the situation, people talked but you know you dont listen to all of that most the time so far as the school i think it uh didn't harm i think it helped

LS: from what you heard was the edu_ was the educaiton that was given to the children_ to th- the black children in the inegrated schools equal to what was given to the white children

CS: well i never heard anyboyd say any difference abou- about the education part of it [LS: mhm] so they musta been on the same level, yes,

LS: of course it's hard to know if you're not there [CS: true] but you never heard_ people talked

CS: no no i never heard

(30) AA: do you have any like ...uh like brothers or sister attended the Rosewal_ Rosenwald School

CS: uh one of my sisters... no i t- i take that back, my sisters attened uh attended the uh Capeville school cuz they were livin out in the country with my grandmother at the time so they didn't go so they_ when they left here my mother they went to Philly so, [AA: oh okay] they didn't att- n-ah- didn't attend a uh a high school

AA: and uh, you, like, the_ the um your ex classmates_ if_ if i am right uh in Rosenwald School do they have like any, what is that impression about the th_ the situatio back days d- while you were like if you are talkin about in the past memories, do they have anything like interesting like good thing bad thing they mention or usually good memories and-

CS: - oh all good memories for me they were all good [AA: okay] they were all good

AT: do you remember when the Brown versus board of education came down to desegregate all the schools in the U-S, so you remember that at all happening

CS: no, no

AT: okay we_ i'm from Ohio and they didn't_ my mom and grandparents said they didn't remember either they said it wasn't a big deal [CS: mhm] they know about it until the sixties and it came down in fifty four so, just wondering...

LS: so... what is you_ if you could kind of the first thing that just pops in your head what is your favorite memory of_ of the Cape Charles elementary_ absolute favorite

CS: ohh i would said the special days they brought food down and we all eat [AT: mmm] <LAUGH>

LS: who brought the food

CS: some of the community people would every now and then would bring food and we'd eat over there [LS: so you'd hav-] other than that we carry our brown bag

LS: so they'd bring food for the lunches

CS: food for the lunch yeah we'd hav- we'd have a meal n back then i was a big eater, it wasn't nothin for me to eat a whole ham and a whole loaf of bread n my grandmother used to make my tea_ my lemonade out a pot_ i'd drink it out a pot not a pitcher [LS: <LAUGH>] i could eat <LAUGH>

LS: that's a great memory

AT: i love it_ so were there any special dishes that the community made then that [CS: no] that they don't make anymore-

CS: no no it was just a country meal you know maybe some beans or soup maybe or an some hot biscuits or somethin like that they'd bring for lunch uh mostly anyway we got it in the winter time

AA: and h how long did they last like the_ the school_ from the morning like eight in the morning til something or from six

CS: June_ school went from June to uh i mean uh September til uh June

AA: yeah but uh ho- how long uh [LS: was the day] was the day

CS: oh oh we stayed in school eight thirty to three [AA: to three] mhm yeah

AA: okay okay and uh you take a break in between--

CS: --you know uh we at twelve o'clock_ twelve oh one we ha_ have a whole hour and then uh i think at two fifteen we had another break and uh ten fifteen we had a break [AA: okay] and we take the, uh , we take the smaller kids so maybe after we got up in the sixth up in the fifth grade lunch time we would steal over town to a grocery store and we could get us some eatin over there uh uh coffee cake and a soda and have that [AA: mhm] and some of the kids that have_ have a little bit more money they have some party meat and crackers and we go over back to school

AA: wowso you can't_ you could go out and get back-

CS: yeah we could go out and get back in yeah

AA: very interesting, very interesting, and uh did you bring some food from home

CS: yeah yeah most the time that's where we had to eat from home so we went on a stealin trip and we use to steal some of the girls lunches [AA: <LAUGH> oh really] <LAUGH>

AT: [UNINTELLIGIBLE]

CS: we go to school we hide in the closet_ we knew the ones who had the best food you know and we go on an eat some of their food and uh <LAUGH> oh boy

LS: oh that's too funny <LAUGH>

(35) AA: so so like your favorite_ your favorite food is like what kind of food

CS: oh i love chicken [LS: <LAUGH>] [AT: <LAUGH>] love chicken

AA: do you have guys here like fish something

CS: yeah yeah i have some friends that fish but i don't fish [AA: you don't...oh okay] yeah yeah cuz i like to eat em but i dont ...yeah

AA: okay okay yeah...and it was_ it was_ i'm sure it was very interesting back in the day [CS: sure sure yeah] yeah

CS: in the summer we had places where you_ we used to swim over uh across uh the harbor there where the water was deep n all those tug boats and ferry boats used to come in the water was so oh about fifty or sixty feet deep [AA: wow] and we didn't go down there cuz uh youda had to walk about a mile up before you got in deep water to swim [AA: oh okay] so we used to swim over the hump there and we could get on the parlors and jump ov_ or even off the dock an we'd go over there and spend all day over the summer_ summer uh fellas would be crabbin for uh food to steam the crabs when we finished swimmin_ we used to steam the crabs in a house over here around the corner [AA: i love crabs] yeah we used to steam em there n uh eat em and uh we'd go home

AA: that's great that's great uh you don't sail_ like you don't_ you don't fish

CS: no no i don't fish

AA: you know you are surrounded by sea <LAUGH>

CS: yeah yeah you know you asked me the same thing the people i used to work with out on the North End they found out i lived in Cape Charles and the first thing they asked me 'well how many boats you got' well i told them i don't have no boat n they say man you must be crazy down around all that water [AA: <LAUGH> and you don't have no boat_ so i don't go fishin

AA: exactly it's interesting you know [CS: <LAUGH>] very interesting

AT: out of curiosity how did you meet your wife

CS: that's_ she's my friend [AT: oh sorry] yeah my_ my other_ my wife was uh uh- her and i_ we're separated_ she livin_ uh we're separated yeah

AT: oh well happy to meet your friend

CS: we're separated for now ever since eighty two

AA: how did you meet her

CS: oh oh she always lived in town and uh i knew her uh ex husband and her and i were friends so maybe that's what it was <LAUGH>

AA: oh okay <LAUGH>

AT: did you steal her lunch [CS: hmm] did you steal her lunch

CS: no no she didn't go to ovr school [AT: <LAUGH>] [LS: what about now] but woulda got hers if she'da gone

AT: do you steal her lunch now [CS: hm]

LS: do you steal her lunch now

CS: yeah i steal it now

ALL: <LAUGH>

...

AA: so uh how did you spend the day_ every day like uh s- [CS: now] yeah

CS: like i said i got a little hustle n i cut a lot of grass for a lot of people [AA: okay] n uh cut this grass here to the other corner [AA: okay] they got a lot over there i cut [AA: uh huh] an i cut for the uh museum_ the Cape Charles museum [AA: yeah we should visit here today] and i got a couple uh more three or four more lots i cut i got one down a place called [UNINTELLIGABLE] i cut grass down there a lot and i do that because a little extra change, it's more or less charity than pay <LAUGH> [AA: exactly] ohh

AA: i like the beautiful how and you things you do here like the decorations that- that- that's beautiful

CS: yeah well you wanna buy it, <LAUGH> talk to me when you get out side

AA: alright <LAUGH>

AT: out of curiosity what was it like to walk to school_ was it a long walk to get over the hump

CS: well most the time_ most of the time you'd meet somebody and you'd talk and you'd play an you'd kid around with eachother all the way over there_ only time we had problems was in the winter time it'd rain or we had a man that bought a bus and he would take us over in the winter time for ten cent, we could ride the bus over the hump and back an uh but uh other than that it was fun just_ nice_ you notice now over the hump it's just steps_ use to be steps when we would go to school used to be steps and we go for a little walk and down over to the school but i see they've done away with the steps uh

AA: is it far away from here the school

LS: we'll_ you'll see

CS: yeah she'll take you over there, but they uh_ fo- fo- for us bein young it wasn't far for us

LS: where did you live when you were--

CS: --well i lived on madison avenue over where budwiser is [LS: oh yes] next house next to the budwiser yes

AA: so it was like walking an uh not taking bus all the time

CS: yeah_ yeah we where ever you'd meet well half the time_ say you and i knew eachother i'd go over your house and we'd meet [AA: exactly exactly] and you and i'd go to school to gether and in the mean time we'd meet somebody on the way over there and comin back was the same way_ i used to be a patrol man yeah i had a badge and belt i wore <LAUGH>

(40) AA: so you're the big leader huh <LAUGH>