

UNIFIED COMMITTEE FOR AFRO-AMERICAN CONTRIBUTIONS
Oral History Documentation Project

Francis Oliver Maddox

September 20, 1996

Interviewed by Brenda Coates

At his home in Piney Point

Transcribed by REV.com on May 28, 2025

This interview is not logged and not edited

Original format is two cassette tapes

1 hour, 41 minutes, 34 seconds

[Very difficult to hear Mr. Maddox]

Brenda Coates:

... Francis Oliver Maddox at his home in Piney Point. Today's date is the 20th of September, 1996. Mr. Maddox, I just want to let you know that if you are uncomfortable answering any of these questions, you don't need to answer them. Okay?

Okay, we'll start off with asking, what were times like when you were a child? How did your family live? What did they eat and things like that?

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:00:38]

Brenda Coates:

Okay.

Francis Maddox:

You're getting into times where it was... Had them really tough times, they just were. But we'd read that Bible. [inaudible 00:01:00] you know, we'd read the Bible. There was no way you [inaudible 00:01:03] They'd go, "I want your money," now I [inaudible 00:01:06] because of them. [inaudible 00:01:10] I was standing proud, though [inaudible 00:01:19]

Brenda Coates:

Mr. Maddox, I'll ask you again, talk about times, like when you were a child. What did you eat and how was just life in general?

Francis Maddox:

I was mostly [inaudible 00:01:56] children, we liked fish, oysters, crab [inaudible 00:02:01]

Brenda Coates:

Okay. Did you have to buy this other food?

Francis Maddox:
[inaudible 00:02:26]

Brenda Coates:
The meats?

Francis Maddox:
Yeah, we bought that.

Brenda Coates:
You had to buy that. Did your family have... They didn't do any farming at all, they didn't-

Francis Maddox:
They didn't. We had [inaudible 00:02:35] and see, when we made our [inaudible 00:02:35] you ain't going to do nothing, we thought we were [inaudible 00:02:47]

Brenda Coates:
Did y'all have a garden?

Francis Maddox:
No, we didn't have a garden. We had Granddaddy's, oh, you know, field. They'd garden, everybody always gardened [inaudible 00:03:04] and he always would give something to you in the garden. But you know, always [inaudible 00:03:17] if he didn't have it then. I even [inaudible 00:03:17] garden.

Brenda Coates:
Okay. Now, you were born down on the St. George's Island. I'm not really familiar with the island, but exactly where were you born? Is that house still there?

Francis Maddox:
No, that house has been gone. That home, that home, where you go home to [inaudible 00:03:36] I mean, all my brothers and sisters [inaudible 00:03:46]

Brenda Coates:
All of your brothers and sisters.

Francis Maddox:
[inaudible 00:03:50]

Brenda Coates:
Well, what's down there at that location of your home? Is it someone living in that area, someone built another home in its place?

Francis Maddox:

Dave and Christine used to go back down there. [inaudible 00:04:07]

Brenda Coates:

[inaudible 00:04:15] So, where your home... Where your old home used to be-

Francis Maddox:

All right, because that's all done away with [inaudible 00:04:22] because Christine had that [inaudible 00:04:26] take that house. The other one [inaudible 00:04:29]

Brenda Coates:

And you built up a two-story house.

Francis Maddox:

It was three story [inaudible 00:04:38] in that house we built.

Brenda Coates:

No.

Francis Maddox:

No.

Brenda Coates:

So, where Phil [inaudible 00:04:44] has his house is where your parents used to live.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:04:48] Christine and Jerome.

Brenda Coates:

Where Christine and Jerome used to live, but how about where your parents used to live?

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:04:54] tore down and-

Brenda Coates:

But that's still in the same area.

Francis Maddox:

In that same area, yeah, just [inaudible 00:04:58] away from...

Brenda Coates:

Just a short distance from that.

Francis Maddox:

So it was very distant from that [inaudible 00:05:03]

Brenda Coates:

Oh, okay.

Francis Maddox:

So, you know, [inaudible 00:05:08]

Brenda Coates:

Okay. And y'all ate... A lot of what you ate was from the water.

Francis Maddox:

Yes, [inaudible 00:05:18]

Brenda Coates:

Uh-huh. And your daughter raised pigs and-

Francis Maddox:

And [inaudible 00:05:22]

Brenda Coates:

[inaudible 00:05:29] right now.

Francis Maddox:

No, it's [inaudible 00:05:31]

Brenda Coates:

Oh, where the old post office used to be.

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, where [inaudible 00:05:36]

Brenda Coates:

Yeah, right. Okay.

Francis Maddox:

The same place in the [inaudible 00:05:41]

Brenda Coates:

Uh-huh.

Francis Maddox:

And they served it to me [inaudible 00:05:45] you know what I'm saying, takes a little time, man [inaudible 00:05:52] drive on across [inaudible 00:05:55] yeah, and he tried... He'd walk down there, say, "Oh, I got my boots on." [inaudible 00:06:06] Every time, it's like, "Great, man." [inaudible 00:06:11] you know, they went, and especially [inaudible 00:06:16] years because they know that it wouldn't surprise me [inaudible 00:06:23]

Brenda Coates:

Oh, okay. It used to be that you could just walk across-

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, there, down at the point there, you'd be on the side where the bridge at, and you could just [inaudible 00:06:35] way down on the thing, keep it on, like with that [inaudible 00:06:38] died, it was like, you know what I mean, [inaudible 00:06:44]

Brenda Coates:

Hm. Okay. So when was the bridge built? Do you remember?

Francis Maddox:

First bridge, the first bridge was built in [inaudible 00:07:34] early '30s. 1930s. Then a storm washed [inaudible 00:07:34] from the storm washed that, washed part of it out. [inaudible 00:07:34] you know, he had, like, a ferry, he had... You know, and I'd just try and force myself [inaudible 00:07:34] he lived in the same area, [inaudible 00:07:34] trying to go out with Mom over to the mainland [inaudible 00:07:34]

Brenda Coates:

Okay. So, the first bridge was built in about the '30s, and-

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, that was early '30s.

Brenda Coates:

... and that got washed up. And then Mr. Bristol had a little ferry service. Okay.

Francis Maddox:

That's [inaudible 00:07:44] take them on the mainland and [inaudible 00:07:52] running on the schedule, you know?

Brenda Coates:

Uh-huh.

Francis Maddox:

But, mainland, yeah, we'd get there, we'd go out and come back [inaudible 00:08:00] then he would put cars on that [inaudible 00:08:08] cars, some cars, I mean, we know that. They loaded two, three cars on [inaudible 00:08:08]

Brenda Coates:

Okay. Yeah. But do you think times were better or worse then than they are now?

Francis Maddox:

Well, [inaudible 00:08:30] six and one half over another. And many times, everything was so cheap that I could... And you could live off of them. Little things, I'm [inaudible 00:08:42] things that are in the same time. Of course, [inaudible 00:08:46] you're going to need some more. [inaudible 00:09:03] I would be the last one on. I'd be the [inaudible 00:09:03] same place with my [inaudible 00:09:03] down in the Florida [inaudible 00:09:08] they had took the [inaudible 00:09:12] like that. You can ask their family. [inaudible 00:09:17]

Brenda Coates:

Uh-huh. So you said your brother-

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:09:23]

Brenda Coates:

Okay. But you said... Who had the store on the island?

Francis Maddox:

Adams.

Brenda Coates:

Oh, Adams had the store.

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, they call it Adams and Brothers, said [inaudible 00:09:36]

Brenda Coates:

Adams and Brothers had a store on the island. Okay. And you'd... That's when y'all would go on Saturday evenings to buy your groceries. And for a dollar and a quarter, you can get a big sack of [inaudible 00:09:52]

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, big sack, quarter. You guys sit down and play [inaudible 00:09:55] comic book.

Brenda Coates:

Uh-huh. So you said, six and one half dozen of the other brothers that have now [inaudible 00:10:07]

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, it's... Say we bought a pound of greens from [inaudible 00:10:10] and cookies and pie. Can you figure that out [inaudible 00:10:18] you know what I'm saying? Like a dozen eggs, would be [inaudible 00:10:26]

Brenda Coates:

Okay. What is your earliest memory?

Francis Maddox:

My earliest memory, you said?

Brenda Coates:

Uh-huh.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:10:43]

Brenda Coates:

Yeah. And what was it that you remember?

Francis Maddox:

I remember doing... I worked on the [inaudible 00:10:50] when I was [inaudible 00:10:50] I couldn't have been 15 years old when my father died. So I was going to go get [inaudible 00:11:02] they said, but actually, at the store, with your captain hat on [inaudible 00:11:19] you had one. [inaudible 00:11:26] getting down, and you're, like, on deck. You know, we're standing on the deck, you know, we're standing on [inaudible 00:11:34] you know, he was good, [inaudible 00:11:39]

Brenda Coates:

Yeah. And you said you were 12 years old when you were helping your father?

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, I remember [inaudible 00:11:45] where he died at, so when he died, I remember [inaudible 00:11:52] because they really let me [inaudible 00:11:55] because my Momma [inaudible 00:12:04]

Brenda Coates:

Okay. How did you get along with your brothers and sisters?

Francis Maddox:

We got along all right. [inaudible 00:12:14] growing up here, we had, going up to the paper mill and [inaudible 00:12:23] when I'm down there [inaudible 00:12:29] on your hair or primer, something [inaudible 00:12:33] these kids might really [inaudible 00:12:36] and start fighting. [inaudible 00:12:41] We full-grown men, so we [inaudible 00:12:48]

Brenda Coates:

Uh-huh. So that... Everybody got along good.

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, we got along all right.

Brenda Coates:

Okay. What church did you go to?

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:13:13] Saint Francis [inaudible 00:13:15] but mainly [inaudible 00:13:17]

Brenda Coates:

Saint Fran. Saint Francis is [inaudible 00:13:20] Catholic church on the island.

Francis Maddox:

Yeah.

Brenda Coates:

Okay.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:13:26]

Brenda Coates:

Okay. And is that church still in the same spot?

Francis Maddox:

The same spot. Really don't have no [inaudible 00:13:37] it comes back and [inaudible 00:13:42] has been going on down [inaudible 00:13:46]

Brenda Coates:

Okay. Do you remember taking trips as a child?

Francis Maddox:

Taking trips as a child?

Brenda Coates:

Uh-huh.

Francis Maddox:

Mmm, [inaudible 00:13:50] as a child, [inaudible 00:13:50] I don't know, I'm sure we [inaudible 00:14:12]

Brenda Coates:

Yeah. On 249 and [inaudible 00:14:21] Callaway area. Yeah. That was as far as you-

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, we spent [inaudible 00:14:34] we'd see everything [inaudible 00:14:34]

Brenda Coates:

You would walk up there?

Francis Maddox:

Right. I mean, [inaudible 00:14:35] used to take us fishing, and we'd go with Danny all the time. Sometimes, you'd catch [inaudible 00:14:35]

Brenda Coates:

Oh, okay.

Francis Maddox:

The reason why we didn't know. Because [inaudible 00:14:57]

Brenda Coates:

So you didn't take many trips as a child?

Francis Maddox:

No, no.

Brenda Coates:

Okay. When you were coming up, how were old people taking care? How were the senior citizens taken care of?

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:15:26] they need someone to sit there [inaudible 00:15:26]

Brenda Coates:

Let's grab this.

Okay. So there were no types of nursing home facilities?

Francis Maddox:

No, ma'am.

Brenda Coates:

So people took care of their own.

Francis Maddox:

Yes.

Brenda Coates:

Okay.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:16:01]

Brenda Coates:

Now, when you were coming up, what were your health concerns? How did your parents deal with health and illness?

Francis Maddox:

Don't know. They buy me medicine at the stores, when the store manager would set the right medicine out. Cold [inaudible 00:16:41] They'd fix you up [inaudible 00:16:52]

Brenda Coates:

[inaudible 00:16:52] buy anything that they used to fix up themselves?

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, just fix up themselves. [inaudible 00:17:07] caught a stomach bug, [inaudible 00:17:20]

Brenda Coates:

Do you remember any other... Anything else that they used to make up?

Francis Maddox:

I don't really know exactly [inaudible 00:17:34]

Brenda Coates:

Sulfur and-

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:17:34]

Brenda Coates:

[inaudible 00:17:34]

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:17:34]

Brenda Coates:

Oh, okay. Okay. You said, "Dr. Lynch."

Francis Maddox:

Dr. Lynch is the [inaudible 00:17:34] how to heal [inaudible 00:17:34] your mother's home. [inaudible 00:17:34] then he went to my sister's house and [inaudible 00:18:37]

Brenda Coates:

On Happyland Road?

Francis Maddox:

No, on the main road there.

Brenda Coates:

249.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:18:45]

Brenda Coates:

[inaudible 00:18:48]

Francis Maddox:

I don't know [inaudible 00:18:49] It's 244.

Brenda Coates:

The one in front of the fire house.

Francis Maddox:

Yeah.

Brenda Coates:

Oh, he used to get up on that, up at the top of that hill?

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:19:01]

Brenda Coates:

Above the road that goes to the church.

Francis Maddox:

Yeah. [inaudible 00:19:01]

Brenda Coates:

Oh, okay. Okay.

Francis Maddox:

They wanted him to come back in [inaudible 00:19:15] you know I always [inaudible 00:19:17] used to come down the road [inaudible 00:19:18]

Brenda Coates:

But they did that at the island. He would go down to the [inaudible 00:20:09] and then-

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:20:12] across the creek, then he'd go across the creek [inaudible 00:20:14]

Brenda Coates:

And bring them over to the island.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:20:19]

Brenda Coates:

Put up the fort.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:20:29]

Brenda Coates:

Times when the doctor was there, he wanted somebody to come get him.

Francis Maddox:

Yes. First time, [inaudible 00:20:34] because they knew he was coming.

Brenda Coates:

Yeah, the schedule.

Francis Maddox:

And [inaudible 00:20:35]

Brenda Coates:

Oh, okay. So, the doctor would always come to see y'all.

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, yeah.

Brenda Coates:

Oh, okay. You wouldn't necessarily have to go to him?

Francis Maddox:

No.

Brenda Coates:

Okay.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:20:38] But, you know, on the other side, he had a cottage [inaudible 00:21:00]

Brenda Coates:

Oh, what kinds of things did you do as a child?

Francis Maddox:

I did [inaudible 00:21:11] and playing.

Brenda Coates:

What, playing and... It'd been...

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:21:11] playing, he'd [inaudible 00:21:11] go down, he's cutting wood. [inaudible 00:21:11] playing, we'd play ball. Play basketball, [inaudible 00:21:11] deep water, I hope you know how to swim. That was recreation to me, I liked to swim.

Brenda Coates:

You liked to go swimming.

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, [inaudible 00:21:49]

Brenda Coates:

How far is that?

Francis Maddox:

Maybe, I'd say it is a half hour [inaudible 00:21:51]

Brenda Coates:

And you said that, for your chores, that y'all had to cut wood and-

Francis Maddox:

We'd do that, we'd do it all the time. We had work to do before we could play, so [inaudible 00:22:12] you got to work, man. [inaudible 00:22:19] ice skate [inaudible 00:22:19] ice skate.

Brenda Coates:

How did your parents treat you?

Francis Maddox:

They was all right, they [inaudible 00:22:27]

Brenda Coates:

What do you remember best about how they treated y'all? The kids.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:22:39] and you know what I'm saying, they don't really talk about it. [inaudible 00:22:47]

Brenda Coates:

Did they have to discipline y'all much?

Francis Maddox:

Oh, yeah. [inaudible 00:22:53]

Brenda Coates:

Okay. Do you think that they prepared you well for life?

Francis Maddox:

In a sense of the word. [inaudible 00:23:25] in the school, see. There was a kid [inaudible 00:23:31] and they told me in high school [inaudible 00:23:33] all different counties, different kind of [inaudible 00:23:51] Virginia, [inaudible 00:23:54] relationship. Telling me about all the crazy [inaudible 00:24:01] because I'd never had to disagree. [inaudible 00:24:04] I put two and two together [inaudible 00:24:06] I said, "Keep going," said, "We got lost," and then [inaudible 00:24:24] right in the middle of the road [inaudible 00:24:27] I said, "No, I'm [inaudible 00:24:29]" Because I knew I had [inaudible 00:24:36] before I got a new compass.

Brenda Coates:

So you're saying that if you had been able to get more education, you would've been prepared a little bit better for life.

Francis Maddox:

That's what it is.

Brenda Coates:

Yeah. Okay.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:24:56] two hours, and it was like two hours before they [inaudible 00:25:40] Then it's like, [inaudible 00:25:55] if something happens, you come to me, I'm [inaudible 00:26:05]

Brenda Coates:

Oh, good. Man, you said that because you worked a lot on the water, and your father had died early, that you didn't have really any formal education. That you were only able to go to school for two years, down on the island, to... The school didn't, as far as you know, didn't have any formal name, and it's at the site of where Evan's Seafood is today.

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, that's true.

Brenda Coates:

And you said... What was the teacher's name?

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:26:51] questions in there [inaudible 00:26:54] five years being [inaudible 00:26:55] and she stayed down there, and she [inaudible 00:26:56] and I said, "I'm going to stay there, down there too, then." And because [inaudible 00:27:37]

Brenda Coates:

Services?

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:27:38]

Brenda Coates:

[inaudible 00:27:38]

Francis Maddox:

Like Christine, man. Christine [inaudible 00:27:38] was her name.

Brenda Coates:

Christine [inaudible 00:27:39] was a teacher too?

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, she was a [inaudible 00:27:53]

Brenda Coates:

As a young adult, what did you dream of becoming?

Francis Maddox:

I don't know, [inaudible 00:28:32] you do anything you can. [inaudible 00:28:45] I'd do this before doing anything [inaudible 00:28:52] off and on, [inaudible 00:29:09]

Brenda Coates:

Mm. So you worked on these boats for \$4.00 a week.

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, so I [inaudible 00:30:15]

Brenda Coates:

Okay. So, all you really ever wanted to do was work on the water.

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, well, I [inaudible 00:30:24]

Brenda Coates:
Knew how to do. Okay.

Francis Maddox:
Yeah, [inaudible 00:30:42]

Brenda Coates:
Uh-huh.

Francis Maddox:
[inaudible 00:30:42] my fishing [inaudible 00:30:42] 26 days [inaudible 00:30:42] I was around water, see what I mean? Yeah, those [inaudible 00:31:04] doing nothing, man.

Brenda Coates:
Doing nothing, yeah. As a teenager, did your parents let you court?

Francis Maddox:
Court?

Brenda Coates:
Yeah.

Francis Maddox:
[inaudible 00:31:17] No, I [inaudible 00:31:20] once a week. [inaudible 00:31:38] She used to always try to catch us kissing [inaudible 00:31:39]

Brenda Coates:
How old were you then?

Francis Maddox:
I don't know, [inaudible 00:31:49] 15, [inaudible 00:31:55]

Brenda Coates:
Yeah, that's true.

Francis Maddox:
[inaudible 00:31:58]

Brenda Coates:
Well, when you were a teenager, where did you go? What kind of... When you had the time.

Francis Maddox:

Well, with the family and the island [inaudible 00:32:14] take a old sock and [inaudible 00:32:14] real tight and you put it in [inaudible 00:32:16] and everything, you know? You [inaudible 00:32:16] play ball with it. [inaudible 00:32:16] you put it through there, here's how it works. [inaudible 00:32:39]

Brenda Coates:

But, okay-

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:32:43]

Brenda Coates:

Okay. So that's what y'all did a lot was visiting each other.

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, [inaudible 00:32:50] you got people, and you got... She told me that there [inaudible 00:32:50] come back every time [inaudible 00:32:50] come back [inaudible 00:32:50]

Brenda Coates:

Okay. What was it like when you first went out on your own? Yeah, you said that you didn't leave home until after you really came back from the service. You still were staying home when you went in the service.

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, I stayed home and went into the service.

Brenda Coates:

Okay, well-

Francis Maddox:

No, I never left for years [inaudible 00:34:00] come out of the hotel and [inaudible 00:34:00] I used to [inaudible 00:34:03] then we used to put our [inaudible 00:34:04] \$15.00 a week. That's what I was making.

Brenda Coates:

\$15.00 a week.

Francis Maddox:

\$15.00.

Brenda Coates:

Okay. Because when you were working on the boat, you were only getting \$12.00 a week.

Francis Maddox:

Yeah. \$12.00 [inaudible 00:34:26]

Brenda Coates:

Okay. So, how long were y'all there?

Francis Maddox:

I would say [inaudible 00:34:34] I guess I didn't think [inaudible 00:34:38] Normally, I'd say that's four, five years.

Brenda Coates:

And then, while you were up there, you went into the service.

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, [inaudible 00:34:50]

Brenda Coates:

Okay. What branch of service did you go into?

Francis Maddox:

In the [inaudible 00:34:55]

Brenda Coates:

Army.

Francis Maddox:

Army.

Brenda Coates:

Okay. And what year was that?

Francis Maddox:

That was 1942.

Brenda Coates:

1942, okay.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:35:08]

Brenda Coates:

And you went in for how long?

Francis Maddox:

That'd been November 1945.

Brenda Coates:

Okay.

Francis Maddox:

That's when I come back to Washington state [inaudible 00:35:24] he was taking on different jobs, see. You know what I mean, they were doing a lot of good, and that's what we've done. We've done hospitals and [inaudible 00:35:51] and find ways to [inaudible 00:35:54] things we do [inaudible 00:35:55]

Brenda Coates:

Okay. So when you got out of the service, you weren't able to get a job like that.

Francis Maddox:

Not [inaudible 00:36:05] plus my kids, and really trying to the stuff that [inaudible 00:36:24] they asked me, "[inaudible 00:36:24]" I said, "Oh, [inaudible 00:36:24]"

Brenda Coates:

Okay, so you weren't able to get a job in Washington.

Francis Maddox:

I [inaudible 00:36:30] I got a job with the [inaudible 00:36:30] Trucking Service, [inaudible 00:36:36] and I drive truck for them. [inaudible 00:36:40] climbing trees and [inaudible 00:36:55] like climbing trees.

Brenda Coates:

And how long did you do that?

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:36:59] like two years [inaudible 00:37:08] my mother was home by herself, and she had six. So I told her, then I told him, [inaudible 00:37:19]

Brenda Coates:

Oh, so all the other children had gone?

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, they were away. She's the only one I [inaudible 00:37:28] she would stay in the shower, the shower [inaudible 00:37:30]

Brenda Coates:

Okay, so, what year did you come back down here, down into the country?

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:38:10] Let me see. [inaudible 00:38:21]

Brenda Coates:

Okay. But you came back and-

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, she was [inaudible 00:38:28] she would sit up in my [inaudible 00:38:28]

Brenda Coates:

Yeah. Oh, this torpedo base-

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, torpedo base.

Brenda Coates:

... in Piney Point. You helped build that?

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, [inaudible 00:38:41]

Brenda Coates:

Okay. And you came back down to St. Mary's. When your mother got sick, she was living in Washington.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:38:51] got home [inaudible 00:38:53] because people will help you in Maryland. [inaudible 00:39:05] you know, and the torpedoes ain't even in there.

Brenda Coates:

Okay. Okay, you said that all during the years that you've... So, always worked on the water, but you had other jobs as a truck driver and as a compression-

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:39:39]

Brenda Coates:

Right, okay.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:39:42] dump truck's going and going [inaudible 00:39:49] you know, I didn't do anything, I [inaudible 00:39:51]

Brenda Coates:

Fill it? Okay.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:39:54]

Brenda Coates:

Do you remember about how much money you were making when you were at Stewart's?

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:40:00]

Brenda Coates:

Mm. This'll be your first daughter or when you were-

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:40:21]

Brenda Coates:

Oh, okay.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:40:39] and the two girls had been around since [inaudible 00:40:51] for \$3.00, \$2.00 an hour. When I [inaudible 00:41:07] I had trucks coming [inaudible 00:41:11] but since I hadn't [inaudible 00:41:19] what I'm saying?

Brenda Coates:

So the most that you ever made while at Stewart's was about \$3.00 an hour.

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, [inaudible 00:41:28] \$3.00 an hour, just like that.

Brenda Coates:

Mm. Okay. But you had said earlier, it didn't sort of matter sometimes, as long as you were working.

Francis Maddox:

Yeah.

Brenda Coates:

As long as-

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:41:40] buy you paying us to do [inaudible 00:41:42]

Brenda Coates:

You worked more hours.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:41:50] yeah, we worked on the overtime. For our overtime. They'd be [inaudible 00:41:55] time, you all have to work [inaudible 00:41:56] Because they had to do that because other people [inaudible 00:42:00] I been two, three [inaudible 00:42:03] you'd have to go over there and cool down, like the [inaudible 00:42:03] that's the kind of job that [inaudible 00:42:03] see it all the time. They say if you're [inaudible 00:42:20] when you do maintenance. Because of they're working all day, [inaudible 00:42:27]

Brenda Coates:

So you would've preferred working on the water but Stewart's was a steady job. Okay.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:42:43]

Brenda Coates:

Even thought you would've made more on the water when you were working.

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, because I can still [inaudible 00:42:50]

Brenda Coates:

Made them tip. Okay. Now, what do you remember about your wedding?

Francis Maddox:

Wedding?

Brenda Coates:

Yeah. When did you get married? How old were you?

Francis Maddox:

Let me see. 20 years...

Brenda Coates:

What year were you married [inaudible 00:43:19]

Francis Maddox:

I'm trying to [inaudible 00:43:20]

Brenda Coates:

So, if you-

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:43:56]

Brenda Coates:

Okay, you were married down on Saint George's Island at Saint Francis Church. How did you meet Ms.
[inaudible 00:44:38]

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:44:45]

Brenda Coates:

[inaudible 00:45:03]

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:45:05]

Brenda Coates:

[inaudible 00:45:48] Oh, okay, so she's a local lady. She was local.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:45:54]

Brenda Coates:

Okay.

Francis Maddox:

Yeah.

Brenda Coates:

Why did you decide to get married?

Francis Maddox:

Well, I mean, I [inaudible 00:46:11] get married and [inaudible 00:46:25] she didn't want to go, she doesn't want to be [inaudible 00:46:34]

Brenda Coates:

Okay. Did y'all have a honeymoon?

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:46:44] No, we never honeymooned.

Brenda Coates:

Okay. What was your family life like? You said that y'all got along pretty good.

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, we did. [inaudible 00:47:03] before they starting doing anything.

Brenda Coates:

Okay. What was your relationship with your children and your grandchildren?

Francis Maddox:

I don't know. [inaudible 00:47:21] I can call him [inaudible 00:47:26] he pissed me off. [inaudible 00:47:37] my sister were coming down there [inaudible 00:47:39]

Brenda Coates:

Yeah. That's very offending.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:47:51]

Brenda Coates:

You told her. Yeah.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:48:22]

Brenda Coates:

What part has religion played in your life? You told me you used to attend Saint Francis Catholic Church on the island. What does the church mean to you?

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:48:42]

Brenda Coates:

Okay. What community activities do you participate in? Do you belong to any clubs or...

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:49:06] it depends on, yeah, what kind of activity they were doing. [inaudible 00:49:25]

Brenda Coates:

Okay. How do you feel about life in general, today, in St. Mary's County? In what ways is it different than what it used to be?

Francis Maddox:

I mean, I feel that [inaudible 00:49:50] I tell you, I've been [inaudible 00:49:50] traffic lights, I don't know [inaudible 00:49:50] No, I'll tell you, [inaudible 00:49:50] sandwich, you know, you got to get a sandwich [inaudible 00:50:52] you know what I'm saying? Ain't had [inaudible 00:51:00] the dumbest people [inaudible 00:51:15] yeah, that's my vehicle down there, so he [inaudible 00:51:23] at night. [inaudible 00:51:26] first time I was over there, he said [inaudible 00:51:49] I had never seen them before. [inaudible 00:53:02] years, and through that, two weeks ago, I had to go up there. So she [inaudible

00:53:15] two weeks, been waiting on [inaudible 00:53:18] some point, find a way and [inaudible 00:53:25]

Brenda Coates:

So you had to go up to Motor Vehicles.

Francis Maddox:

Yeah. Went up there [inaudible 00:54:01] so it would've been [inaudible 00:54:04] sign me up. [inaudible 00:53:57] green light and I [inaudible 00:53:57] I'd have failed the test. If I passed the test, [inaudible 00:53:57] had a new car, and it might've been [inaudible 00:54:32] like this, right there?

Brenda Coates:

Yeah, I love him.

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, [inaudible 00:54:48]

Brenda Coates:

Mm. That's a shame.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:55:00] confident, though, [inaudible 00:55:02]

Brenda Coates:

Hm. Okay. But you know, just looking at life in general, how do you think it's different now than it used to be?

Francis Maddox:

I can't [inaudible 00:55:17] understand they [inaudible 00:55:19]

Brenda Coates:

So you feel that-

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:55:27] she's one of the best [inaudible 00:55:38] right there. She doesn't want to be [inaudible 00:56:03] and she told him that [inaudible 00:56:03]

Brenda Coates:

Do you think people are different than what they used to be?

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:56:13] these kids, nowadays, they don't want to [inaudible 00:56:24] go as far as [inaudible 00:56:37]

Brenda Coates:

So, you're saying, because everybody's out for a nickel-

Francis Maddox:

Everybody's [inaudible 00:56:58]

Brenda Coates:

So they don't... You're saying people don't help each other anymore.

Francis Maddox:

No, you know they don't.

Brenda Coates:

And do good, and do favors for people.

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, they don't want to do favors [inaudible 00:57:14]

Brenda Coates:

What do you think caused these changes?

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:57:24] back in my day, [inaudible 00:57:52]

Brenda Coates:

What do you think about race relations in the county?

Francis Maddox:

I think [inaudible 00:57:59]

Brenda Coates:

Do you think that it's worse than it used to be?

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:58:10] and, partially, when [inaudible 00:58:35] children, they won't tell them [inaudible 00:58:37]

Brenda Coates:

Okay. Now, you said you lived in Washington for a short period of time. Did you like living in the city?

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 00:58:51] but I was in there too, I was [inaudible 00:58:55]

Brenda Coates:

That's a big difference. Okay. But now, compared with life in the city and life here in the county, which do you prefer? Which would you prefer?

Francis Maddox:

I'd go living in [inaudible 00:59:28] county.

Brenda Coates:

County. Okay. Why?

Francis Maddox:

Maybe because there's always somebody [inaudible 00:59:36]

Brenda Coates:

Do you think there's a difference between the people who were born in the county and people who come in later on, perchance?

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 01:00:26] more or less. I don't [inaudible 01:00:37] I don't know, they're all [inaudible 01:00:43] more or less.

Brenda Coates:

Do you... When you were able to drive yourself, did you drive to the other parts of the county? Did you just drive down to the bridge area or the southern district of whatever?

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, yeah. I'd drive there because [inaudible 01:01:17] I used to take them to the [inaudible 01:01:21] stay with them. [inaudible 01:01:24]

Brenda Coates:

Oh, okay. Mostly, you did that on Sunday evenings just to go out for your drive.

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, [inaudible 01:01:41] you know? Pretty nice. [inaudible 01:01:41]

Brenda Coates:

Okay. What do you think have been the biggest changes in the county in your lifetime?

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 01:02:04]

Brenda Coates:

Uh-huh.

Francis Maddox:

They're still looking for that HIV that's [inaudible 01:02:10] and that's like you can inform people [inaudible 01:02:21] and they may never really like you in the first place, you know what I mean? Maybe that's a different [inaudible 01:02:33] and we didn't really go places. [inaudible 01:02:38] when you have taxes so high you can't pay the tax [inaudible 01:02:45]

Brenda Coates:

How did Black folks get the news? Did y'all have newspapers or just by word of mouth?

Francis Maddox:

Oh, yeah, yeah, newspapers. [inaudible 01:03:07]

Brenda Coates:

I'm probably good off that. Did y'all listen to the radio a lot?

Francis Maddox:

I don't know. [inaudible 01:03:47] There wasn't [inaudible 01:03:54]

Brenda Coates:

Okay. What are your feelings about the Navy base? You know, not the torpedo base down here, but the... Over in [inaudible 01:04:04]

Francis Maddox:

The base?

Brenda Coates:

Uh-huh.

Francis Maddox:

They be like [inaudible 01:04:08]

Brenda Coates:

Do you think it's a good thing?

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 01:04:12] you know what I mean, no. It's just like that [inaudible 01:04:39] Everybody got their plans to build a [inaudible 01:04:45]

Brenda Coates:

But, man, okay, you said that the base was good in looking for jobs, but it's bad in that so many people have come there that prices have risen.

Francis Maddox:

Yeah.

Brenda Coates:

Yeah.

Francis Maddox:

That's what I said.

Brenda Coates:

Okay. And it's even... You're saying it's even worse now, since they doing more building.

Francis Maddox:

Yes, they're building [inaudible 01:05:37] highly expanded out there. You know what I mean? Like, you know, sometimes you got to [inaudible 01:05:37] new highway and all of this here, there's no highway [inaudible 01:05:37] All this be [inaudible 01:05:37]

Brenda Coates:

Uh-huh. Okay. Did any of your family have to move off of their land to build the base?

Francis Maddox:

No, [inaudible 01:05:46]

Brenda Coates:

Okay. Yeah, we're not-

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 01:05:48] I know, face to face, and everything after I lived there.

Brenda Coates:

[inaudible 01:06:02] Okay. [inaudible 01:06:06] meant that he didn't live there, but he was [inaudible 01:06:08]

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, [inaudible 01:06:10]

Brenda Coates:

On the bay.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 01:06:11] on the bay, [inaudible 01:06:14] he lived right beside it. [inaudible 01:06:18] get along with the staff. And some of [inaudible 01:06:34]

Brenda Coates:

Oh, [inaudible 01:06:42] school.

Francis Maddox:

Yeah.

Brenda Coates:

Oh, Frank Knott. Right on the corner of the main gate.

Francis Maddox:

That's right.

Brenda Coates:

Yeah, Frank Knott.

Francis Maddox:

Yep.

Brenda Coates:

Yeah.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 01:06:52]

Brenda Coates:

Okay, Mr. [inaudible 01:06:59] his property was [inaudible 01:07:01] for Frank Knott School there.

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, [inaudible 01:07:03] they owned the property [inaudible 01:07:04]

Brenda Coates:

Okay, and he was in the process of building a recreational center for colored folks-

Francis Maddox:

That's right, [inaudible 01:07:14]

Brenda Coates:

... when the base came.

Francis Maddox:

That's [inaudible 01:07:16]

Brenda Coates:

Okay. Okay. Have you done everything in your life that you wanted to or plan to do?

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 01:07:28] I wish... I don't know. I don't know. I [inaudible 01:07:28]

Brenda Coates:

You'd just like to get married again?

Francis Maddox:

Yes.

Brenda Coates:

Okay.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 01:07:51]

Brenda Coates:

Okay. If you could go back and live your life over again, what would you change?

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 01:08:06] what do I change?

Brenda Coates:

Uh-huh.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 01:08:30] them women out there, [inaudible 01:08:30] in the street, looking like... [inaudible 01:08:30]

Brenda Coates:

Okay. Can you share your old stories about your life, about what your life was like in the country with your parents?

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 01:08:57] just to keep the [inaudible 01:09:23]

Brenda Coates:

So... Oh, okay. This was down on the island. You talking about the weather.

Francis Maddox:

But they couldn't [inaudible 01:10:04]

Brenda Coates:

Yeah. Yeah, down by [inaudible 01:10:13]

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, [inaudible 01:10:14] you know exactly [inaudible 01:10:17]

Brenda Coates:

Uh-huh. Okay. How often, when you be living on the island, how often did y'all have to move off the island because of the water?

Francis Maddox:

We never did move off [inaudible 01:10:38] It was a two-story house, and I can't even [inaudible 01:10:45] if they have an event, just took a [inaudible 01:10:50] or a tidal wave. [inaudible 01:11:03] tell me, tell me what's wrong [inaudible 01:11:09]

Brenda Coates:

Yeah, huh-uh.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 01:11:29] one of them. They didn't try [inaudible 01:11:29]

Brenda Coates:

So the floodwaters used to get y'all.

Francis Maddox:

Yeah.

Brenda Coates:

You didn't have to move off the island but it would... You said the... It'd be up to your chest sometimes?

Francis Maddox:

It would. That [inaudible 01:11:55] and especially in the back where there was [inaudible 01:11:59]

Brenda Coates:

[inaudible 01:11:59] Uh-huh.

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, and [inaudible 01:11:59] and I'm looking to see if [inaudible 01:12:22]

Brenda Coates:

So this was before they built the seawall?

Francis Maddox:

Yes, that was before the seawall, that's right. But it was nasty, all right.

Brenda Coates:

So are the storms worse now than they used to be?

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 01:12:58] more often than they used to [inaudible 01:12:59]

Brenda Coates:

Oh, okay. When y'all were coming along, didn't seem like you had to... Okay. You didn't have that many storms.

Francis Maddox:

No, [inaudible 01:13:08]

Brenda Coates:

Oh, oh, oh, oh, okay.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 01:13:32]

Brenda Coates:

Tornadoes. Not tornadoes.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 01:13:38]

Brenda Coates:

Okay.

Francis Maddox:

We've been having days where [inaudible 01:13:41]

Brenda Coates:

So they had a lot of-

Francis Maddox:

I would say a little bit.

Brenda Coates:

Okay. And... Okay. You know, a lot of what I've wanted to find out from you is how life was because you lived on an island and because you did a lot of work on the water. Because you still... Up until about what age did you still go out there to do your... To do...

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 01:14:18]

Brenda Coates:

So, about how old were you when you first went out on the water?

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 01:14:54] not that old when [inaudible 01:14:56] went by myself [inaudible 01:15:00] when we first got it on the water [inaudible 01:15:05] I mean, I would've been 16 years old, by myself. [inaudible 01:15:30] wanted to go fishing [inaudible 01:15:58]

Brenda Coates:

And back then, you didn't have to have licenses and all of that.

Francis Maddox:

I did, I had [inaudible 01:16:28]

Brenda Coates:

So you always had to have your license, and you always had state fees and everything?

Francis Maddox:

Oh, no, you didn't have to pay for a license, [inaudible 01:16:38] no, what it was is [inaudible 01:16:38]

Brenda Coates:

Okay. But now you have to have... There's so much that you have to have now.

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, [inaudible 01:16:51] million dollar check [inaudible 01:17:14]

Brenda Coates:

Oh, yeah. Okay.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 01:17:48]

Brenda Coates:

Shit!

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 01:18:10]

Brenda Coates:

Ah-ah, not on the party boat.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 01:18:15] yeah, we used to do that. Party boat. [inaudible 01:18:19]

Brenda Coates:

Okay. Oh, when you were coming along, after you and your brother sort of went on your own with the boats and whatever... [inaudible 01:18:34] when you and your brother started really doing the [inaudible 01:18:38] making a living off the water, was it a lot of men down in this area-

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 01:18:46]

Brenda Coates:

... that... Most of these people on the island and Piney Point made their living off the water.

Francis Maddox:

Exactly right.

Brenda Coates:

Okay.

Francis Maddox:

And they were [inaudible 01:18:56]

Brenda Coates:

Did he enjoy working on the water too?

Francis Maddox:

Yeah, he did the same thing.

Brenda Coates:

Okay.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 01:19:32]

Brenda Coates:

Okay.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 01:19:32] certain time [inaudible 01:19:36] some guy left them [inaudible 01:19:56]

Brenda Coates:

Okay, so, I think that's just about it. And you said the only thing that you can think of that you haven't done is get married again. Okay, well, you still have plenty of time for that.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 01:20:29]

Brenda Coates:

Okay. So, that'll be the end of our interview for the day, then.

Francis Maddox:

Okay.

Brenda Coates:

Okay.

Francis Maddox:

[inaudible 01:20:39]