

Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions
Oral History Documentation Project

PHILIP H. SCRIBER, SR.

Interviewed by Brenda Coates
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At his home in Hollywood Maryland
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[Begin Side 1, Tape 1 of 2]

Brenda Coates: I'm interview' Philip H. Scriber at his home in Hollywood. Mr. Scriber, I am going to say that if you are uncomfortable answering any of these questions, feel free not to answer them. Okay. We'll begin now. Where did you live? Describe the location and reference points? Where were you born exactly?

Philip Scriber: I was born down in on -- in Hollywood down on the site of the plantation. What it was, at that time, it was -- was a farm, but it originally had been a plantation. Because it was reverted back to a farm and I was born on the farm, and the house still standing today.

BC: On the Sotterley Plantation?

PS: On the -- Right. What was the Sotterley Plantation. The house is still there today.

BC: Oh, okay.

PS: And, that house must be -- Oh, it's over 90 years of age. In fact, we all grew up in the same house.

BC: Okay. So, about how much land was --?

PS: Well, my dad was a sharecropper, see, so we never owned anything.

BC: Oh, okay.

PS: He was a sharecropper.

BC: Okay. Describe where you live now, the location.

PS: Right now, I live in Hollywood off of old Route 235, back past the -- what was the Hollywood Elementary School, and in a bungalow-type of dwelling. Three bedrooms, full basement, etc.

BC: Okay. When did you move back here?

PS: I build this house six years ago.

BC: Six years ago. Okay, so 1990. Okay. When you were growing up, what were things like? How did you and your family live? Did they -- You said your father was a sharecropper.

PS: Well, we had adequate food to eat. Living conditions -- living conditions was deplorable as it was with everyone, and that, cleanliness was -- You did the best you could. And, but, my dad the best he could with the amount of kids that we had. It was, it really was 15 of us, but at no time were we all at home. Of course, the older ones, they grew up and had gone on. I had a couple of -- a couple that's even older than I am. My older brother and sister grew up, got married and started to make their own families. But, I would say we lived -- our living conditions was about average. It was a step above the lowest in that -- the guy that owned the property. Back then, they sort of looked out for certain ones.

BC: Okay. So what -- since your father farmed, a lot of what y'all ate was from the --.

PS: Right. Right, from the -- A lot of we ate, 90% -- 95% of the food we ate was what we grew on the land there. Back there, they used call it staples. He would go to the store on Saturdays and buy the necessary things like salt, pepper, sugar, vinegar, coffee, this type of things. But above and beyond that, the other types of food that we ate, we grew it. We made a special effort to grow it. Otherwise, you didn't eat. It wasn't like it is today. There was no way of conserving food like it is today.

BC: About how far did you have to go to the store? You said he went every Saturday.

PS: Oh, for, from where we lived to the store, it was, I guess, about 2 miles.

BC: Oh, okay. So, it was no problem.

PS: No, it was no problem.

BC: What did your mother do? She was just -- she was, as you say, a housewife.

PS: That's it, yeah. She was a housewife.

BC: Okay. What is your earliest memory?

PS: My earliest memory? I remember my mother. See, she passed away in 1930 ... -- I was born in '28 and she passed away in 1935. Course, I was in school, but I remember quite a few spankings that she gave us. My daddy, well, he was a strict disciplinarian, but, he, he, he was the type -- Most of his time he spent working and preparing something for us, to eat, survival.

BC: So, when your mother died, one of your older sisters --.

PS: Well, the older sister, the one were at home, they took over and they took care of us. They did the laundry and did the cooking and what have you. Lucky we was fortunate enough to have girls there, and they were able to be -- They were able and they took care of the house.

BC: What church did your family go to?

PS: St. John's.

BC: St. John's up in Hollywood. Okay. Did your family take many trips?

PS: [Laughter] No! No. We couldn't afford to, not in those days, because transportation was almost nil. We didn't have -- Back then, we didn't have an automobile. Where we went, we walked.

BC: Was your family involved in any community activities?

PS: No. Not to my knowledge. Not to my knowledge, no.

BC: Do you think the times were better then than they are now?

PS: By no means. By no means. There was a lot more love then, love and understanding than there is today, and respect. But above and beyond that, forget those old times.

Forget them!

BC: Okay.

PS: Forget them!

BC: [Chuckle] Okay! Okay! What were your family's health concerns? How did they deal with health and illness?

PS: Eew.

BC: Was -- Did they go to the doctor's or did they just have home remedies?

PS: No, well there was -- There was a couple of doctors that made house calls. My mother, of course, my mother, she suffered a great deal from hypertension. Fact is, that carried her away at an early age. She passed away when she was 49. We had a couple of doctors that made normal house calls. And, what we really did, like everyone else, we had what they call, "home remedies," and it seemed to suffice pretty good. But above and beyond that, I mean --.

BC: Do you remember any of them?

PS: Not, not really. Course, I kind of was so small. Not really. When you say, do I remember any of them, you mean the preparation of making them up, or --?

BC: No, not necessarily that, but do you remember, that when you had a cold, you used to give you onion syrup or something like that?

PS: Well, my dad, he would say, when you got a cold, you -- He would give a couple drops of kerosene on a spoon -- a spoonful of sugar. That was one. And another one was, he said, was cod liver oil and castor oil. Those two: He made sure that he kept those there, but that -- three 6's was another one. Those were, basically, about, just about all.

Course now, my -- Like I say, I remember my Mother faintly -- For swelling, there was a -- There was a plant that grew. It looked very much like tobacco and they had a name for it, but I don't recall exactly what the name was for. But what they would do, they would take and boil it, and then they would use the liquid from it to soak the part, if it was your ankle or knee or an elbow, they would saturate it with the cloth, and this was supposed to

help reduce the swelling, which it did. And, it was a lot of, I mean, people of different eras had different remedies for various different types of things.

And then, there was another one. I'm trying to think what I'm referring to. There was a root. We used to call it a sass --

BC: Sassafras.

PS: Sassafras or something like that. Yeah. That root. We take it and pick that root and--

BC: You scraped it.

PS: Scrape, wash it off and scrape it. Use the bark off it. Boil that bark and make tea out of it.

BC: Sassafras tea.

PS: Yea. That one and -- That's basically -- That's basically about it. Above and beyond that, you just --You came up with an illness, you just rode it out.

BC: Okay. Did y'all -- What about the hospital? And --

PS: There was only one hospital, St. Mary's Hospital, where everybody went, and the accommodation was limited. And that -- no matter what your ailment was, you were put in the same room because they only had, I think, two or three beds in there, and that remained in existence up until, what, the latter part of the '50's before they started -- They built a new hospital. Course, they had the black men, all the black men together and the black women together. No matter what your ailment was, you were put in the same room, and that could be contagious, too, depending on what disease you had. But, that was all we had.

BC: Okay. Do you remember how senior citizens were treated, cared for?

PS: They stayed all home. The kids took care of their elders--their parents, their grandparents, until, because there was no place else for them. There was no, no convalescent home or nursing homes or anything of that nature and so, you say, "Every guy sit on his own bottom, so to speak." I guess that's maybe a poor way of putting it, but that's the way they did it.

BC: How did the black folks get their news, when you were growing up? What did they read?
Or, I know someone told me one time that there weren't newspapers in the County.

PS: No, there weren't. No, there weren't any newspapers. Well, no, the, no, there were newspapers in the County. When I, when we came up in this area in 19, in '35, there was a guide here, The Washington --The Washington -- It was the *Times Herald* paper used to be delivered down here once a day. There was a guy in Leonardtown by the name of -- What was his name? Badell. It name was Johnny Badell, and he used to deliver the papers. I can remember that because we were going to school and we would always try to make it a point to be in a certain place -- We used to refer to him as "the paper boy" -- at a certain place when he came down to deliver papers. It was only a very few people that got the paper. At the time the paper was 3¢, and he delivered the papers every day. Well, he had a route from Leonardtown to Hollywood, and he drove his car and he delivered the paper.

BC: Okay. What about radio and TV?

PS: Of course, the radios. Just about whatever station you could get. Of course, they were all battery-powered and was you -- You had the radio [Laughter] by the time -- I don't -- I can't recall just as to how long a battery would last. Course, we always tried to conserve the battery, and they only played it at a certain time. Try to conserve the battery. And then, didn't, too many households have radio anyway back in the '30's. Course, things began to improve in the latter part of the '30's, 1937, '38, '39. And when I was going to school then, we used to start reading the papers, but back when I was a youngster coming up.

BC: So, it wasn't really --It had to be word of mouth.

PS: That's it. The only communicate you got was if someone went somewhere and they saw so-and-so doing, then they come back and say, "Well, I saw so-and-so and he said this, and he said that, and he said the other." That's the way, that's the way the word would pass. Back then, depend on where you live; you could probably go a week without

seeing any of your neighbors because the houses was so few and far apart. And of course on weekends, the head of the household -- like my dad and all the men heads of households, they used to meet up at the General Store, and this is where they would -- Once they purchased their groceries, then if they had any money left, it was to buy themselves a couple beers or a couple of drinks. Then, they would sit down and discuss what they knew about: about farming or whatever the case may be. But above and beyond that, you know.

BC: What types of things did you do as a child? You know, games you played.

PS: Only games we played were mostly was amongst ourselves as kids, and we made our own toys, so to speak: our own homemade wagon and this type of thing and that's about it. We weren't able to buy anything. At Christmas time, we'd get toys, but how long they would last, and that was about it. After maybe two or three weeks, they were broken up and that's about it. What you made, was able to make yourself, that's what you played with.

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

PS: Oh, we got along well! We were very closely-knit family. Very, very close-knit family. In fact, my oldest living brother was up yesterday to a birthday, birthday party. A lady, the other day, gave him a birthday party.

BC: What -- Okay. When you were coming along, what did you like to do the most?

PS: Down the water. Play around the water. Crabbing. Crabbing and fishing.

BC: So you lived -- Okay.

PS: Well, we only lived about 3 minutes from the water.

BC: Okay.

PS: Going in the water and this is where you spent out most of our leisure time during the summer months and when Dad didn't have us working in the fields. We used to go down and catch crabs and things. That was pure survival. That's what we did for survival.

BC: What kind of chores did you do?

PS: Well, we did the chores and of course, we raised our chickens. We had our own hogs. And every day we got home from school, that'd be the first thing we'd do: prepare for the next days. That is, you would search the kindling's. We busted up the kindling's for to make the firewood the next morning, getting enough wood so that they'd make the firewood, had enough for the next day, and fill the water pails with water and feed the chickens, feed the hogs. Of course, I'm not gonna feed them. My dad and I went out to feed them. That was his thing.

BC: Feeding the hogs?

PS: Feeding the hogs, that was his thing. If we didn't give them or if we give them too much or not enough, so that was his thing. He fed his own hogs. Now, sometimes on the weekend when you got a couple too many, the hogs went without. But normally, nobody gonna feed those hogs but him.

BC: Oh, okay. That sounds -- You know, you would think, you know, if he had maybe a favorite horse, he didn't want anybody to feed that favorite horse.

PS: No.

BC: But feeding --Okay. [Laughter]

PS: That was his thing: feeding his hogs.

BC: Okay. How did your parents treat you? Okay, you said that --And most -- By your mother dying when you were seven?

PS: I was seven when she passed away.

BC: But --

PS: See, my dad, my dad remarried again though. He married your --Your husband's grandmother was my stepmother.

BC: Okay. I think I -- yeah. Okay. So, how old were you when he remarried?

PS: Oh, see, I was 10, 9 going on 10.

BC: Okay.

PS: Yeah.

BC: How did they discipline you and what kind of things did they have to discipline you for?

PS: [Laughter] basically, just about what any other kid would do, why any other mischievous child would do. A lot of the things that I did, I didn't get caught doing and so I never got disciplined for them. Then on the other hand, oh yes. He was very strict, and that was one of the things that I sort of held it against my dad in that when he went to discipline you, he never sat down and talked with you.

BC: Oh!

PS: It was always a physical discipline and with anything he got his hands on. No matter what it may have been. If it was in the reach of him, that's what you got hit with: a stick of wood, tobacco stick. Anything that he got his hands on, that's what you were hit with because see he would only do it in his rage of anger. Because, he would build up so much frustration within himself and instead of talking to you, he never did that. But, I blame him.

But then on the other hand, since then, I've sort of forgiven because he never had any part in the case. My dad couldn't read or write. And see back in those days, that's what, that's the way everybody treated their kids. And, you didn't sit down and talk. The child did something wrong, you didn't sit down to explain to him what they did wrong and tell him don't do it again and why you shouldn't do it again and this types of things. When he did something wrong, the only thing they did was the physical discipline. That was a whipping.

BC: But like you said, everybody treated the kids like that--

PS: Pretty much the same --.

BC: At the time, it was like --.

PS: I know your daddy didn't do it, but I guarantee his daddy -- Very few, there was a very few that didn't do that, didn't do that.

BC: Okay. Do you feel that your parents prepared you well for life?

PS: I feel as though he did the best that he could do with what he had to do it with, if that's

answering your question. I wanted to go further in school, but he, he didn't --None of us that stayed home had a high school education.. He said, "Well," he said, "Well, I didn't go to school, so you don't need to go." And the only reason we went, because at the time, they passed a law that everybody had to get a basic education. But had it not been for that -- Now my oldest brothers, he wouldn't let them go to school. My oldest brother, Ed. You know my remember Ed.

BC: Oh yes.

PS: See, he was my oldest brother, and he and the next one living in New Jersey, the three older ones and my older sister, he didn't let them go to school because they didn't have to go. There was no law compelling them to go. See, they didn't pass the law until -- What was it, until 1922 or '23? That, making it mandatory that you get an education. Everybody get an education. See part of it, especially blacks. Now, whites. There's always been whites going to school and see, so, he -- as far as he was concerned, you didn't need an education. But he couldn't prevent them from going because the law said you have, they had to get a basic education.

BC: That's very -- That's really interesting. I didn't know that.

PS: You didn't know?

BC: Now, it's a whole lot of things that a lot of us don't know and if someone didn't mentioned it and we, you know, researched it more, or whatever -- Now, it's just, like I said, it's a lot of stuff that's, well -- I'm not gonna --.[Laughter]

PS: Well, by talking with various different people, see, you pick up a lot --You pick up a lot of things. See because, like, what I just stated there just now. In talking to various different people, they went through certain stages in life. They did things differently.

BC: Describe your schooling. You told me that you went to Phyllis Wheatley Elementary School in Hollywood? And, where was that exactly?

PS: The building is standing there. It's the building there today. It's a private dwelling today. [Pause to think] Course, you said you're not too familiar with that road going down there.

BC: Oh, it's on the side—I mean, it's on the road going—

PS: It's on the road going towards Sotterley. The, Curtis-- the guy who lives there now—Did you know? No, no. You know Lorraine.

BC: Yes.

PS: You know where Lorraine lives?

BC: Yes.

PS: Well, it's the large building on the right just before you get to where Lorraine lives, and that turns. There's a building on the right there. Nowadays, they've redesigned it to look like a house, but it was a two-bed --.

BC: Two-room schoolhouse.

PS: Two-room schoolhouse. Yeah. They taught the 1st to the 7th Grade.

BC: Okay. About, at one time, about how many kids were in that schoolhouse?

PS: I would say, at the -- Well, they had accommodation -- At the max, I would say probably about, maybe 30 or 35, maybe about 35.

BC: At one time?

PS: At one time, I would say, max it... Of course, the average class then was from five to seven kids in the class.

BC: Oh! Okay. I still haven't -- I've talked to quite a few people and it's still hard for me to imagine trying to teach seven different groups of kids in one or two rooms.

PS: Well no. They had two teachers. One teacher taught the 1st, 2nd and 3rd, and the other taught the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th.

BC: So, you would teach all those grades at one time.

PS: No, no. Well, see, no, it was two-bedrooms. Two-bedrooms! I mean, two-room school and one teacher remained in her room at all times. She only taught the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Grades.

BC: Right. But what I'm -- Okay. She taught all three of those classes the same thing at the same time.

PS: No, no, no. The way they had it -- The way they used to do it, if my memory serves me correctly, is the -- In the morning, the 1st Grades, you'd have the 1st Grade class pertaining to whatever it may be, whatever the subject may be. The 2nd and 3rd Grade classes would sit ideal or doing whatever, they were studying whatever the case may be. And then, when she finished them, then she'd move to the 2nd Grade, then she would move to the 3rd Grade. Then in the afternoon, in the afternoon, she would go back the same thing again, but on another subject.

BC: Oh! Okay.

PS: That's the way they did it. And the other side of the coin, they did pretty much the same way.

BC: Okay. I understand that a little bit better. It's just boggles my mind to think how --

PS: And, I agree with you. When you think about then, I didn't realize the significance behind it. But when you think about it, it was a hell of a job.

BC: Yeah!

PS: Really and truly, they had a hell of a job! To be able to maintain control over all those kids and make sure that they get the basic reading. Because, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic -- The three R's, and that's basically what they got. It turned out pretty good.

BC: And naturally, you walked to school and you said it was a total of seven miles.

PS: Up there and back. About three and a half miles.

BC: Do you remember any of the teachers?

PS: Yes, I remember all my teachers.

BC: Who was your favorite one and why?

PS: Oh, really to be frank with you, I guess Miss Reese and Miss Bell. Or course, she married him. Did you remember Mr. Lee, Henry Lee? Or her name was Esther Bell. She was from Frederick, Maryland. She was my favorite teacher. She was a very sweet lady, and they, they -- She taught the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and Henry Lee, he was from Eastern Shore, over at Stevensville, he taught the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th.

Now, Alice -- Did you remember, did you know Alice Young? Alice Freeman Young? You not that old! Well, she taught me for one year. I didn't like her. Brent Thompson taught.

BC: Yeah, I remember Brent.

PS: Brent taught me two years. Brent taught me two years.

BC: Well, that was a little different from how it now.

PS: Yeah.

BC: What was your favorite subject?

PS: History.

BC: History?

PS: Yeah. History was my favorite subject. Always liked World History. Math, too. I liked Math, but I liked World History better. That was my favorite. [tape cuts off abruptly]

[End of Side 1, Tape 1 of 2]

[Begin Side 2, Tape 1 of 2]

BC: ...becoming.

PS: Really, I don't know. I ain't really -- I didn't because there was nothing. There was nothing -- nobody to motivate me into trying to, be something special. So, I don't recall of ever having any desire to be anything particular.

BC: Oh, okay. I guess that's why now, they try so hard to get black male teachers in schools and have these male role models for -- Okay. I never, I just never -- Like I said, sometimes you -- you don't think. You know, if there's nobody that kids can see that have made it, it's no reason why they want to do anything except just go along.

PS: And back then, back then, there was no blacks, no role models. The only role models we had when I was a kid coming up back then, the only one was -- You know, Joe Lewis, the

boxer? Course then, back then, everybody -- Everybody wanted to be a boxer just because he was the only role model that we all knew, basically. But as far as someone to pattern your life after, not down here in the country. Now once you go into the city, then you could probably, I'm sure, a lot of the kids then saw people that have been successful in their little corner business store or the little hot shops or something of this nature, see. Say, "Well, damn, he's doing good. He's driving a nice car. I'd like to pattern after you, pattern my life after him." But down here, there just wasn't.

BC: Oh, okay. Okay. As a teenager, where did your parents approve of you going? Did they allow you only to go to church functions or what?

PS: Well, we just -- There were very few church functions, like very few church functions, and the only place we went was just visiting neighbors. We played with the kids in the neighbors. My oldest, like I said, my oldest brother, Ed: He had a family of four kids, he only lived about a 10, 15 minute walk from where we lived and we got to play with them or basically, the kids in the neighborhood.

BC: Now, this is after you'd gotten older. You're a teenager now?

PS: Yeah, even at 14 and 15 years of age, there was nowhere -- You didn't go nowhere. Where were you going to go? In addition to that, you had to walk, and you could only walk but so far.

BC: [Laughter]

PS: And then, because they made it mandatory that you be home by sundown. That was, whenever you got permission to go somewhere, "Young man, remember. Be back here before sundown," and that was the last word was said. And if you didn't make it by sundown, hey, you didn't go the next time.

BC: Okay. Okay. What was it like when you first went out on your own? You know, where did you move to? Did you move to, like, Washington or --?

PS: No. When I left, when I left on my own, I went in the Service. Went in the Military.

BC: And, you went in to what? The Army?

PS: The Army.

BC: For, what, four years or --?

PS: I stayed in the Army eight years.

BC: Eight, okay.

PS: I went in the Army.

BC: Did you -- Did you go into the Army because that what was expected of men of that age or did you go there to get away from --?

PS: I went there to get away, get away from home because there wasn't -- I wanted to get away. When I reached the age, I wanted to get away from home. There wasn't no place to go, so fact is, what happened was, in my particular case -- Everyone else left home, but I was the only one left home with my dad. The rest of them kids had left.

BC: Philip, too? I mean, Spencer, too?

PS: Well see, it's a long story. See, Estelle --her names on there. Estelle Collins, she had gotten married, and Spencer left home to live with them. Frank and Savella was older than I. Frank, when Savella had left home, she was, back then, black girls, then you just go work for the white folks and live in. And, Frank was already in the Service. I was the only one home left with my dad, and my dad, he was getting into stop farming then because nobody then was sharecroppers. And you know, back then, if you couldn't produce, you had to go. That's how come he end up buying this place.

And so, during that, so I put my age up to get my, go to work on the Base. And over on the Base, you had to have a -- Then, you had to have your Social Security card. And course, I put my age and got my Social Security card. And once you put that up, you had to register. And of course, once you registered, that was it. And, I didn't mind. Of course, I was sick of down there and I just wanted to get away. Green Horn, you're young and full of vim and vigor and vitality. I wanted some excitement in life. And so, I went in the Service and after one week, they shipped me all the way down, all the way, all the way to New Orleans, Louisiana. And, my first experience of ever being called a

“nigger” to my face was down there.

See, down to the store down here where we used to live, there’s a old grocery store. That grocery store is still standing there today.

BC: Right, right on the corner.

PS: Not at Hollywood. Going down, down below where Lorraine and them live.

BC: On down.

PS: That old Bowles Store, that old store on the right.

BC: On the right, okay.

PS: Yeah, on the right. Well, and the guy that owned this store, he would --Now, you speak of a gentleman, he was a fine gentleman. As far as he was concerned, a man is a man and there is no difference in color. And, he had this store there. He had a little bar room on the right. Blacks and whites drank in there together; they socialized together in that store. That was back ever since I could remember. When I was a little snot-nosed boy coming up, they socialized together in that store. I mean, that’s the way he was, and he didn’t stand for no hanky-panky. And, they had no problems. Really had no problems. You know you was black and you knew how far you’d go. You knew, you knew your place in life. So, hey, you -- That’s the way it was.

And when I say, down in New Orleans, that was the first I had been called “nigger” in my life. A white man called me to my face. Was getting ready to get on the train one day down in New Orleans and I was getting my stuff up on the train, and he said, “Get back, nigger! Where in the hell you think you’re going!” Course, I stepped on the train in front of him, and I was in uniform and he was in civilian clothes. But you know, that’s the way it was. And, I just politely stood back.

BC: That’s -- I guess, that was sort of -- by you not growing up with people really treating you like or did -- You say you never experienced it at the store?

PS: No, not really at the store.

BC: Anybody else?

PS: No. That -- You know, it was a very strange thing, but segregating existed, but it -- I don't know -- it never seemed to bother me as much then as it was in the later years. After I reached manhood and all and that's when it really affected me. But back then, I don't know, for some strange reason, I guess you didn't realize the impact. You realize, so you didn't pay any attention to it. And when we was going to school, the white kids road the buses, we walked to school. They road past us on the buses; we walked to school. And I guess, we just thought that's the natural thing to do. And later on in life, we realized then the things, the things that, the way we were treated and all, but --

BC: So, you really didn't have any experiences with any hate groups.

PS: No, no, no, no. No, there was no hate groups. There weren't any hate groups around.

BC: Well now, how do you feel about segregation even though it supposed to not be here? What do you think about it now? Or, the racial problem in the county.

PS: Hmm. I don't know how to answer that question.

BC: It's -- Okay. When you were coming along, like you said, you knew how far you could go. What was -- Yeah, how far is a black person -- What you could do or what you couldn't do. Now, is it more undercover?

PS: Oh, by all means! Oh, by all means, it's deceiving now, very much so. Very much so. At once upon a time, I thought it was only for awhile, but it will never leave. It will always exist. People are people, and it'll always exist although not as bad as it was. And see -- See the thing here is what happened, the way I see it, as long as you keep a person uneducated, like my poor parents and all, you can control them. You keep them under control. No matter what you can control, there's no question about it. But, you cannot -- you cannot educate a man and keep him down no matter I don't give a dang who he is! And, the worst thing you can do is not educate him because it costs you three times as much by not educating. So, you best off to do it, than he can do the things for himself that, without the education, you have to do for him. Like I was telling the guy the other day, like the jails, like this Congressman. He says he's in charge of the prison system and

he was speaking about all this money appropriated to his Bill: so many more prisons throughout the country. Well now, if they would stop and think it costs between \$25 and \$30,000 a year per person to keep a man incarcerated. Wherein if you spent \$8 to \$10 to \$12,000 in educating that man, then he can do for himself.

BC: Okay.

PS: But when you deny him these things, putting him in jail is not going to solve the problem. But, this is the first thing they do is likely not going to solve the problem. It's interesting thing I read in the paper today about the, that Sheriff over there. See, locking them up is not going to solve the problem.

BC: Oh, that's what he's saying?

PS: No, no, no, no. That's not what he's saying, but something related to that.

BC: Oh, okay.

PS: But, incarceration: That's not going to solve the problem.

BC: I can sort of see that because, in the business that I'm in, any time in a one-year period if you, if I personally get one person out four times, and see, it may be other times during that year where he did something and they just let him out on his own.

PS: Yeah.

BC: Now, if the person keeps going back all that many times, something not right. One reason or another, like you said, education, and I find out that most of them cannot read or write.

PS: That's right. That's it.

BC: And, these are young people. They don't have the excuse of, like when y'all were coming along, you know, your father said, "I didn't have it, so you don't need it." Or, if you have to walk, like, 10 miles to get to school or, just, parents need you to help them farm or whatever, so they don't have that excuse.

PS: They don't have that. They don't have the excuse. So, they don't have any excuses, really they don't.

BC: Right. When you went out on your own, when you went in the Service, do you remember how much you were paid? You know, what the basic pay was?

PS: \$50 a month.

BC: Whew! I guess really in the Service, it's not a whole lot more than that now! [Laughter]

PS: Oh no! In the Service today?

BC: Not when you think about, you know, the year that you went in and what the --.

PS: Oh yeah, well, yeah. Comparatively speaking, I guess, well, you get more money today so you can do a lot more with it. But for what was available at the time versus what's available today, you had more than you do today. Do that make sense what I just said?

BC: Yeah, I agree with you. Just like, bread may have been a quarter whereas it's almost \$2 now. Like that kind of thing.

PS: No, well, see bread then was 7¢ and 9¢ a loaf. Wonder Bread, when it first came out down here to the country, you got -- What you call it. They had two sizes: small loaf and a large loaf. The small loaf was 7¢ and the large loaf was 9¢. But, the key, too, was getting the 7 to 9¢! [Laughter]

BC: Yeah!

PS: That was -- That was it.

BC: Especially if you working a job that pays a dollar a week.

PS: Right.

BC: What kind of work have you done to support yourself? You told me that you have done construction work and then until '83, you were a Supervisor at the Navy Base down in Patuxent River. What other kind of work?

PS: What other type of work have I did?

BC: Um hmm [yes]. Just about everything.

PS: Right. A little bit of everything. Just a little bit of everything. But, I stay active pretty much in the community, but a little bit of this, a little bit of everything. And, my brother and I, we was one of the first to be on the Rescue Squad. They give us a hard time. It

was '60? I joined the Rescue Squad in '64; and at that time, he and I was the only blacks to be on the one in Leonardtown.

BC: You were in Leonardtown, not this one.

PS: No, we were -- At that time, Leonardtown and Hollywood was together.

BC: Oh, okay.

PS: 36th District was together. But see, the, I can recall one night that a white lady took sick and we went. Of course, when you sent for the ambulance, why we went up to her, she wouldn't let us touch her. And, there was another case when something similar to that happened. And but see, of course then, they told us, "If that's the way they feel, just leave them. Call back in. Tell them what happened. Come on back home." Forget it. It happened again, but not with me but with Neil. I think it was Warren Neil, and they give him -- course, they had told a lie -- but they gave him a hard way to go and they want to say that, "I wasn't happy that he didn't show up on the scene. He didn't do this and he didn't do that." See, they didn't want the blacks to touch them.

BC: [Laughter]

PS: And, I can recall another time when I said, "The Lord works in mysterious ways." I don't know what would have happened, but I duty -- We used to have to have duty every Monday night. You have the ambulance to go on, and that Monday, just about this time, the guy got trapped under the tractor back there on St. John's Road. And at the same time, had it not been for him being trapped by the tractor, there was a lady with OB case. She was on the way to the hospital, and she had the baby on the side of the road, but we had responded to this one and so they had to get the ambulance out there, I think it was from Lexington Park to come out there. Otherwise, Neil and I would have had to respond to this lady when she was having the baby because we had been trained to how to do it: how to cut the umbilical cord and all this, all this thing. But, it would have been interesting to see just what would have happened, taken place. And, I have said a number of times, "I'm glad it didn't" and on the other hand, maybe it would have been really

interesting, to say the least, to see what would have happened.

BC: [Laughter] Oh yeah! I guess it would have been! Okay. Why did you decide to get on the Rescue Squad?

PS: Well see, I've always -- I've always been community-minded. I've been on the Fair Board. Right now, I'm the only black on the Fair Board. And, they gave me the job as a General Manager, but I'm having problems because everybody else is white, see, and I'm having problems right now. It started last night. We had the meeting last night. And of course, they tell me they going to give me their whole-hearted support, but you know that's --.

BC: Yeah, you know what "whole-hearted" means?

PS: But see, I've got to bring that to the head. I've got to bring that to the head and see what -- It was a shock to me last night, see, cause we got a project going and they've been working behind my back on it. And all of the sudden, last night they hit me with it, you see, and I wasn't prepared. Two or three of them went out fishing yesterday. They got their ducks in a row. And when they hit me at the meeting last night, I wasn't prepared. And at least, the President was on my side, but I've decided I've got to tell him a few things.

Well, I joined the Rescue Squad. I tell you: Why did I join? Well, you know, one of the reasons is that they always say that the blacks don't do anything in the community.

BC: Okay.

PS: And this is one of the reasons why. I stayed on about six years, and I regret that I got off. I wish I had stayed with it. First of all, because I tried to get into the Fire Department, but that, that's was no. And, I wish I had stayed with it, but that didn't happen.

BC: When you started working on the Base -- Now, when you first came home from Army, what were you doing? You came back here to St. Mary's or --?

PS: Yeah. I came back to St. Mary's. Well, I was doing construction work, and I was -- I had put in an application to work on the Base,. But at the time, it didn't have anything,

any opening for my field, the field that I had been in when I was in the Service so I went down and I just put an application for just anything. Like, I put an application for labor cleaner, anyone. I used to work, during the summer season, worked in construction -- seasonal work. And so, finally they called me, called me in to work down there. I started out as a labor cleaner and I worked my way up. Went back to school and took classes.

BC: Do you remember how much you were getting paid then when you first started?

PS: Course, at that time, the pay was very low in the government. If my memory serves me correctly, I think I started back -- I went back. It was 1956. I was making \$1.16 an hour if my memory serves me correctly. \$1.16 an hour, and you know, I built a home. I built my first house on that salary.

BC: Well, you think about it. You said, "God, you know, how could you survive on that?" But when you look at that, you looking at that \$1.16 in today's value and you can't. Okay.

PS: Well see, this is the third house I've built since way back.

BC: That's right. You were --.

PS: I was right there beside Spencer, where Spencer live. My first house, my first house was right there beside Spencer.

BC: Where James is.

PS: Right..

BC: Okay.

PS: That was the first house I built.

BC: Okay. And you built that?

PS: Well, no. I mean I had it built. Yeah.

BC: Well, you know, when I said that, I meant --.

PS: Yeah.

BC: Sometimes, you work on a project. Okay. How did you meet your wife, your first wife?
[Chuckle] How old were you and --?

PS: I was in the Service when I met her because she, she -- She had come -- She was born in West Virginia, but she had left. Her parents was here, and she was up there. The fact is she was living here then. She was working. Where was she working? Worked in the laundry down at Jill's. And of course, I had just come back from the Korean conflict and of course, I'm on leave and, pardon me, I met her over in Leonardtown. And just, the relationship started and six months after I met her, we got married.

BC: What do you remember about your wedding? What was your wedding date? Do you remember that? [Laughter]

PS: We got married in 1953 in June. Her birthday was -- We got married in June the 6th in 1953. Her birthday was July -- I think her birthday was July the 6th.

BC: Okay. Did you have a big wedding?

PS: No, no. It was just -- It was small, very small. We got married down at Immaculate Heart of Mary. Well see, she wasn't Catholic so we couldn't married -- At that time, you couldn't get married on the alter see.

BC: How come you got married down here rather than at St. John's?

PS: He wouldn't -- The priest wouldn't marry me.

BC: Because she wasn't Catholic?

PS: That's because she wasn't Catholic.

BC: It's amazing how you can go to another priest and it's all supposed to be one religion.

PS: You tell me about it!

BC: Okay. Who was -- Do you remember who your best man was or the maid of honor?

PS: Delores. Alfred and Delores.

BC: Alfred? Okay. Did you have a honeymoon?

PS: No!

BC: [Laughter]

PS: I couldn't afford it! Couldn't afford it.

BC: Okay. Well, say, how about your second one?

PS: My second marriage?

BC: Yeah.

PS: That was smaller than the first one!

BC: [Laughter] and, you've been married, what, eight, nine years?

PS: No. I got married the same year I retired.

BC: '83. So, you've been married 13 years. Okay.

PS: It will be 14 years. Well, just about 14 years.

BC: Okay. Do you remember who your --?

PS: Justice of the Peace.

BC: That's all you had, just the Justice of the Peace?

PS: Yes. Yes.

BC: [Laughter]

PS: Just a waste of money.

BC: Okay. Did you have a honeymoon this time?

PS: No.

BC: [Laughter] Okay.

PS: We did a lot of traveling since then.

BC: Didn't have a specific honeymoon? Okay. What has your family life been like?

Describe your marriage, your relationship with your spouse and with your children and your grandchildren.

PS: Well, course since I've been married, my son: He's been in the military and he's been, we only see him -- The only time I see him, maybe once every two or three years we get a chance to see him because his last tour of duty, he was up in Alaska. We went up to visit them. The same -- In fact, we was up there when the time that OJ got involved in that problem. We was in Alaska when that happened.

But, my marriage has just been an ordinary marriage and nothing -- I don't have anything I didn't think of. Anything different -- Is that answering your question? Not really.

BC: That question's a little [Chuckle]--

PS: That's a little touchy.

BC: Yeah, yeah. Everybody's probably gonna to answer that question the same. Okay. What part has religion played in your life? I know, just a moment ago when you was talking, when you got married, you said you got married in Immaculate Heart rather than St. John's because of the priest wouldn't marry non-Catholics. So, how have you felt about religion?

PS: I am a Catholic. I was born and raised a Catholic and that was one of the things my mother used to always preach to us to remain, to remain a Catholic. And, just about everyone of us, I think everyone of us goes to Catholic Church, and that was one of her wishes. And, you know, I see a lot of deficiencies in the Catholic denomination; things that they preach that. But then on the other hand, you'll find it in almost all denominations. It's up to you, as an individual, to, to -- Course, there's only one God, see. So, you see these things, and you say...that's going to make a difference. So, I go to church and...Whatever the case may be because you go from home.

BC: Uh huh. Okay. [recorder is shut off]

[End of Side 2, Tape 1 of 2]

[The label on Tape 2 of 2, Copy 2 says, "10-29-96."]

[Begin Side 1, Tape 2 of 2]

PS: ...No. Not now because I don't need to get on any more committees. [Laughter]

BC: Okay.

PS: They want me. They've been trying to get me to join, but I'm involved in too many things now. And when you get involved in too many things, you're not that efficient at

any of them.

BC: Any of them. Right.

PS: You just spread yourself out too thin.

BC: Are you involved with any other churches, or religious organizations? What community activities do you participate in, both now and in the past? You had said that you are involved with the County Fair Board.

PS: Yeah, the County Fair Board, Christmas in April. And of course, the Big Foot Hunt Club, the Jolly Gent's Club, and what else? I guess that's about it. Those four's enough. Course at one time, I was with the LOTT...but I was the Treasurer.

BC: Treasurer. Ah huh [yes]. Did you, when you were coming along or later, were you involved with 4H?

PS: No.

BC: And Little League?

PS: No. Yeah, I had the Little League ball club, but I wasn't involved in 4H...ball club.

BC: Did you ever -- Were you ever on one of the ball teams?

PS: No, I wasn't. Unfortunately, I wasn't much of a -- I never was much of a ball player. Yeah. My feet and everything must have been too big or something like that. [Laughter] I never was much of a ball player.

BC: Okay. How do you feel about life, in general, today in the County? What ways is it different than what it used to be?

PS: I would say it's a lot different than it used to be. It's like everything else: It's for the best. Pretty much better: living conditions, overall I think people are a lot more neighborly. Course see, a lot of people say that things are worse now than ever was, but I, I disagree with it whole-heartedly due to the fact that if they had maintained their feelings about the whites -- What I'm saying about the feelings about the whites, maintaining feeling that they have towards us -- We wouldn't have gotten where we are. Now, you look at it in front and you say, "What are you talking about?" But see, they

kept me suppressed; and when you're being kept suppressed, what can you do? And course, it's a little percentage, 2 or 3% of them now that talk like the skin heads and what have you talk about they want a pure race and all that junk. Well see, that's a bunch of bunk anyway, and eventually the majority of the people are sensible thinking people and the idiots like those people, you don't need them anyway which reverts back to what I was saying awhile ago: If you got a bunch of uneducated people, you got to take care of them because they're unable to take care of themselves. This is what happened after the 2nd World War when you probably read about the Chicken Bone Express? Chicken Box, you know, when a lot of those black folks left the South?

BC: Yes. Yes.

PS: Well see just after the 2nd, after the War --.

BC: Went to Detroit and Chicago.

PS: Detroit, Chicago, Washington --all the way north. New York. See, the government, the government did this, too. The states, the federal government did this, too. See, all those plantations over there that those black folks were raised up on, see, they encouraged these farmers to put their land in the land bank. They got more money out of that than they would be by working the land. There's a lot of them today that's got the land bank, and the federal government using our tax money and all to pay the big shots. I mean...

BC: Not the farms.

PS: Not the farms. Not the millionaires today. Not the farms. They got their money in the land bank. And so when they put their land in the land bank, they didn't need servants and said, "Well, you've got to go." So, where were they gonna go?

BC: Okay.

PS: So, they left, they left the plantations and what have you, and they took off for better places. They took off North. And course when they went to the cities, then the white man left the cities. But see, had they remained there and helped to educate these people, we'd all been a 100% better. Course, a lot of them now have went to cities, and of

course, a lot of them went there and they going back to square...have pretty good jobs and retired, and so many of them are going back. Back home. And, you know something? And, they're being received with open arms because that land -- A lot of them, that land they owned, but what good was it? Nobody could work; nobody could farm. See the land; they wouldn't get nothing for it. At least, they got their home. They get taxes and all from it. So, it's paying off. And --

BC: But now, okay. Is the quality -- Do you think the quality of life is better now?

PS: By all means! It is better. It is better for those that wanted it to be. There's a certain set of people, no matter what, they don't want anything anyway. They don't want a better living. They want to hand-sucker: "Gimme! Gimme!"

BC: Now, I think -- I can't remember what question it was. I think you answered it like-- Okay, it was better loving back then.

PS: Oh yes! Oh yes! Back when I was a kid, there was loving and there was a lot more togetherness then. People did things together. They work a great deal together. And if someone got down, like they say, they didn't have all of these -- What do I want to say? Agencies, various different agencies now. But, and so when someone got down, people around heard about it and they give you a helping hand. And like, for when I was kid during the Christmas time: From Christmas to New Year's, no one did any work. They spent the whole week socializing and fraternalizing, and I know, like I said, my mother and course my sisters and all in the same pattern because that's the way she taught them. Every year at Christmas time, they would make at least one cake for each day of the holiday, and that day -- And in some cases, they would make two cakes, and this is what they would cut that cake. You would just go visit, and they used to make the homemade root beer. And, these were the type of things where you got really loving and togetherness. And, this is what they used to do.

BC: And, it's a shame that that's not happening now.

PS: It is. It is.

BC: You sort of think about: Well, you have more. You have more money. You have more leisure time, but unfortunately --

PS: You don't have that loving.

BC: Yeah.

PS: Loving and caring is missing.

BC: Right. Yeah. Okay.

PS: That loving and caring is not there. I was talking to a lady the other day. She was talking about her -- I'm not going to call the name, but her stepmother be coming to be and she was having her centennial birthday. I think it's March or April, and some of the things of being --you know, in that family, bickering is going in that family. Now, you know, my dad was 102 when he passed away. But see, you know, you reach your centennial birthday, hey, how many people make this? And, that was a day for --.

BC: Forget all that other stuff.

PS: Forget all the other things and they worrying about money. Where they gonna get the money to sponsor a big day for her? Well, my God! On your centennial birthday, you dig down, you scratch, you do whatever. Hey, that's Mom! And, you only have one -- You don't have two; you have one. So, you know, it's asinine. It's idiotic to think in terms of that, and everyone of them, that she was saying, everyone of them is financially well-off. And, it shouldn't be no problem, and like she said, if they want to up fuss, that's their mother. All they do is put up 200, \$300 and they could have one fantastic because, but - Course, she gonna send out invitation. Most people gonna tell you they gonna bring you money because what can you give a gift to a person that's a hundred years old?

BC: Right.

PS: Nothing except money. So anyway. I mean, these -- I just mentioned that as to how things have changed.

BC: Because back then, it wouldn't have been any problem.

PS: No.

BC: And back then, everybody, you wouldn't have had the money, but you had the love that you bring in there, and it wouldn't be for -- People be planning for two or three years in advance. And everything else is on the back burner.

PS: My dad was -- My dad was -- 1971, '79. He was the only centennial birthday since 1979, and we planned for that thing, ah, three years. In fact, on his 96th birthday, we gave him a big party. We started planning for it right then. He died. He lived two years after. He died in '81.

BC: Do you think the teenagers are different than they used to be? How are they different? Or, is it hard for you to judge because --?

PS: Well, the teenagers -- Well, the teenagers are -- I won't go so far as to say they're different, but they coming up from a complete different environment and they -- They have so much leisure time, and they -- The thing is that they -- I don't know. It appears to me like they don't appreciate it like we did, and it appears to me that as far as they're concerned, you never get tired of giving: "Mama give me this. Mama give me that." And, so many parents, like me and my first wife, we had our first -- Fact is, see, me and my first wife were separated, and that caused our separation on account of my son.

BC: Oh, she wanted to give him everything.

PS: Give him everything and see, see, my son: He was pretty sharp. And when he graduated, he had been selected to go in one of the Military Academies. It was just a matter of, you know, two or three months he'd be gone. He had a car. So, she wanted to give him a new car. I said, "Hazel, why you gonna give him a new car, because if he goes in the Academy, he can't take the car with him. So why spend that?"
"Well, I want him to have the things I didn't have."
I said, "When he came in this world, he had things that you didn't have and I didn't have."

And he says, "Why? Why?" And, we argued about that thing.

“Well, I’m going to do that!”

I said, “Okay. I’m not—“

So today, the graduation, after it was all over, I saw this guy, this salesman down there. I was wondering. Someone said he was talking with me, but he never told me why he was there. And so, when it was over, after he told me, he said, “Sure. I want you to come see your graduation present.”

And he said, “Do you want to see it?”

I said, “What is it?”

He said, “Come on.”

So, I walked out there, there was this brand new car that she had purchased for him. And I let out, I says, “It’s pretty.”

“That’s all you got to say?”

“Yes, that’s all I got to say.” So, we got home that evening, afterwards of course, she give him the key and of course, he just pulled off his cap and gown and he was ready, he was ready to boogie then, see.

And she said, “Well, now I made a down payment on it and I’m going to make one payment for you.”

And I said, “No, no, no, no, no, no. I told you I bought him a car. The car he had was good enough to suffice until he left to go in the Service, and no, I am not gonna make a payment on it.” And, we had a knock-down, drawn-out fight -- I mean, not no physical. “No,” I said. “I don’t give a damn. I am not gonna make a payment on it.”

“Well, what are we gonna do?”

I said, “It’s up to you. I’m not gonna,” and I didn’t do it. Well, I mean, just lead it on and lead it on and just, we couldn’t seem to get along after that. Well anyway, so, I go back to --As far as he was concerned, he didn’t particularly want that car. It didn’t mean anything to him. It was a new car, but he already had one so he didn’t need a new one. It didn’t mean anything to him. Now, had it been me, it would have meant something to me

because I never had anything like that. And so, it's what I say now: Kids today, they never, you never get tired of giving, and so many parents are putting themselves in financial difficulty giving their kids -- I mean, you see so many of them giving their kids credit cards. They use their own credit cards. I was watching on TV the other day, this couple there from New Jersey filed Chapter 17, bankruptcy.

BC: Because of their child?

PS: Because of their child, and he went on the show about various different accounts were on the credit card, money that he owed. So he said, well, he and his wife both were working and he said, "Everything we make, it goes back to paying credit cards. We don't even have a penny to -- A lot of time, we don't have a penny to buy food in the house. It goes back to the credit card." And, that child could care less, and she's still purchasing. She's still got the card and still purchasing. So, so, so, this is what I'm saying. And when you bring a person up on that type of environment, see it gets imbedded into them. They are expecting this; and even after, once they get to be an adult, they still feel as though they should have it. And, this is why so many young marriages fail is because they can't get the things they're accustomed to getting free. What used to come given to them, be coming to them over the table or under the table, under the table. Now they have to get it over the table.

BC: Yeah.

PS: And, it's completely different ball game. And so, if that answers your question, I think we, as parents -- I'm not saying that you should deny a child because it's a complete different type of world environment all together, but put some sort of control or restraint on it. You don't give them everything they want, and if it requires -- See, you're saying, "Sow a tree, then a sowed tree grows." If you start in time teaching this child, showing them the difference, you'd be surprised what happens. And so many cases where one deny, Mom deny Dad would give it to them. If Dad deny, Mom would give it to them, and this is just what happens.

BC: Yeah.

PS: And, there's lot of ... "If you don't give it to me, Daddy's gonna give it to me."

BC: People have that attitude.

PS: They have that attitude and it creates, it causes nothing but problems. And more and more, as they grow older, because they're gonna continue to expect these things. And when they can't get them, what are they gonna do.

BC: And, that's why people end up in jail.

PS: They're gonna find some way of getting it.

BC: Okay. How do you feel about living in the County? You really never lived any place else except for when you were in the Service, right?

PS: Me, myself, I've never liked metropolitan living.

BC: Okay.

PS: There's a saying. It goes, "I've been a plain, old country boy." And when I say that, "a country boy," because like I say, I don't like congested living. Now, I got to the city to visit, but after two or three days, hell, I'm ready to come out of there. To me, -- And especially today, more so when I was a kid. When I was a kid coming up, we used to go visit my oldest, Minnie living in Baltimore. Course, she still living today. She's, my oldest sister's 84, but the thing is, then, the crime wasn't anything. You could sit out on your front steps all night long if you so desired and sleep with your door open in the cities. Ain't nothing to worry about. But hell, you can't even do that. Now, you've got to have, you've -- You know, and it's ridiculous. You're a prisoner in your own home. And of course, see, now, I was born and raised, grew up in the country. And before I married Diane, when I was single, most of the nights, I never locked my doors. When I was living in that old house -- See that old house up there, that's where -- That's the old house.

BC: That's the --

PS: Where they had the beauty shop.

BC: Yeah, okay.

PS: I never locked my doors. Well, I'd just been accustomed to it. And now, of course, see, Diane grew up in a – Of course, she grew up in the city and I can be outside working. I go to come in the house, the damn door is locked. I get go so X?X?X?–pardon my French. I get so God blessed frustrated. “Why you go this God damn door locked?! I'm right out there!” But, she's -- That's what she's been accustomed to. She, as soon as somebody go through, they lock the door. They lock the door. And I come in, “You lock the door downstairs?” “Diane, the door's locked!” I got security lights on back there. If a cat move back there, the lights will come on. But see, you know, that's the difference in yesteryear and today. And, that's one of the reasons why I never liked the metropolitan areas. I have always been a plain, old country boy, and that's me. That's what I am!

BC: Okay. Now, do you believe there's a difference between people who were born in the County and born who came from other places to live in the County? Do you think there's a difference?

PS: I -- Yes, because, see, the majority of the people, no matter wherever you was born at, your traits sort of follow you, and you pursue -- In life, you, wherever you go to make your home, you sort of pursue some of the things that you enjoyed doing when you were a kid coming up. Whatever it may be. A lot of people, they come here and they, and whatever they did wherever they grew up. Like me, if I were -- If I left here to go some place to live, I would have to be somewhere where there's a lot of fishing because I love fishing. And, I love the water, see I love fishing. A lot of people come here and they love fishing, so they like to be close to the water, and some of them, like the gardeners, like to have their own little garden. And, there's a lot of different things. There's a lot of them, horticulture --. I think a person, most of the majority of the people, they follow what, the thing that they enjoyed life, that's what they grew up at. May it be farming or whatever the case may be, whatever it was.

BC: Well, okay, I understand that, but I guess what I'm trying to say if it was someone that you didn't know and you were around them for quite a bit of time, after awhile, would you be able to tell this was a person that was born in the County or someone from outside? That's what I'm saying. Is there a, some difference that can, you know, between County people and outsiders? I guess, it's like, maybe if all County people, say it's one word that they use all the time and it's the way they pronounce it. That's, I guess that's what I'm trying to say. And then, you know, maybe they have, maybe, outsiders that you know have a different way of looking at certain things, whereas, you know --.

PS: Well, I guess. I'm sure there is a distinction between and you could probably distinguish whether or not that they're not a native of this County or this general area; but in as far as being able to tell where they native or where they come from.

BC: Okay. Do you interact with the outsiders who live in the County or do you not even think that they outsiders? You don't know that they're outsiders.

PS: Not. No, no. No, not too much. Not too much, no.

BC: Okay. You told me that you haven't traveled much outside the County. But, do you interact with people in the other sections of the County, like the 7th District or down in the Ridge area?

PS: Yeah, well, yeah, well, yeah. Yeah. I do. I got friends down in the Ridge and over in the 7th, yeah. Yeah.

BC: And what reasons? I know you said you like to fish.

PS: Well, most for socialize -- socialization, basically, yeah.

BC: What do you think has been the biggest changes in the County in your lifetime?

PS: The influx of people. [Chuckle] I don't know -- I would say just general standard of living, raising the standard of living compared to what it was when I was a kid.

BC: What are your feelings about the Navy Base? Okay. Were any of your people, sort of, moved off of their land to make room for the Navy Base?

PS: My stepmother. They grew up down there.

BC: And what were their feelings about it? Were they hostile?

PS: They were very hostile. Just about everybody that lived down there was hostile at the time that it took place. What I said was that she, that she was -- Of course, she was married to my dad and left him down there before the neighborhood was taken away. But she, even at that, she was very hostile because a lot of her friends and associates still lived there and they were forced to leave.

BC: Did they, they -- Where did they move to? They still lived in the County or they just moved away --?

PS: Most of them, most of them moved elsewhere in the County, but the majority of them couldn't afford to. The younger ones moved went to the cities, but mostly the elderly ones moved to other, throughout the other areas of the County...stayed around down Lexington Park, too.

BC: What are your feelings about the changes that are happening on the Base now? The influx of all of these people coming in.

PS: Hmm. Personally, I welcome them, but along with this is gonna improve your living conditions, but other problems gonna follow: crime and what have you. But, and -- but the only unfortunate part of it is -- I think -- is that those people that are uneducated, they won't be able to get any jobs down there because it's all high-tech. And another reason why, you got to get that education.

BC: So, it's a good thing that the community college is expanding --. --

PS: Right.

BC: And all of that.

PS: And so, I think that overall it's an asset to the County although it has brought along with it some problems. And, like I said, I feel it's unfair to the, to poor people because so many of them won't be able to stay here no more. They won't be -- They will not be able to stay here. They won't be able to stay here. What's gonna to happen: If you already well-situated, got your own home and all, to try to buy, a person, for a home and all. And

what they're doing -- First, you say, they're putting up low-income homes. They're just continue to build them.

BC: Oh, so this project up on Macintyre?

PS: Oh, that's one finished. That one's finished. They're looking for occupants for that. That's the last one.

BC: That's the last one.

PS: Course, see, what they once said --Last year they said they're gonna put up a 1600 newt homes in the Leonardtown area, but now they have been downgraded to about 400, and they gonna be in the price range from \$175,000 to \$300,000.

BC: Low income?!

PS: No, no, no, no, no. No, houses, no.

BC: Oh, okay.

PS: But see, a couple years ago, they said they was going to put up over in that area.

BC: I thought you meant low-income going to be between \$100 --.

PS: No, no, no, no, but I said that this is the type of houses they gonna put up now.

BC: Oh! Okay, because of all the high-tech jobs.

PS: High-tech jobs, and see, that's gonna control the, the, the --.

BC: The housing.

PS: The housing that people coming in, and the tax is escalating every day, every year, going up.

BC: Yes. Okay. [recorder is shut off]

[End of Side 1, Tape 2 of 2]

[Begin Side 2, Tape 2 of 2]

BC: What do you do you think of the direction the County is going into today? Do you believe that St. Mary's is going become an urban rather than a rural county?

PS: I can't see them going urban – urban county because they are too far out.

BC: But then you think about what their doing to 235. Four lanes.

PS: Their only going up to Route 4. It's going to stop right there.

BC: Right, Okay but – I guess if I say anymore I'll be getting into an argument and I don't want to do that. I guess, like I said you think about fishing.

PS: I know, I know but as far as the County is concerned – isolated, it's going to be -- Between St. Mary's County and up into the metropolitan Waldorf is quite a distance. Over a period of time. It won't be in my time. Maybe in yours. But it won't be in mine.

BC: Okay. How have you contributed to the county? Through your work, volunteer, family, citizenship, whatever. You talked about getting on the Fairgrounds – I mean the Fair Grounds Committee. Do you think you contributed a lot to this county?

PS: I really think I do. I really think I do.

BC: Have you received any recognitions such as awards, certificates. Anything thing of that -

PS: No, not really. I got some recognitions – Letters of appreciation – couple letters of appreciation from some of the ... for some of things that I was able to do for them. But beyond that --.

BC: What do you consider to be the most valuable thing you have ever had? Something you could not have done without in your lifetime. That's a question that I have a little problem with because I'm thinking what are we asking.

PS: That's what I'm thinking now.

BC: It might be like a – the idea that you were bought up that you had to work. You would expect that people would give you anything. You know, ideas or it could be the fact that you are able to live in this county and able to do what you want. And you love fishing

and you can do that rather than if you had to still be working and living in the city. Right now, what do you think is the most important that you'll ever have?

PS: [Laughter]

BC: Okay, that's a hard question to answer. Okay.

PS: There are so many things that I am thankful for and grateful for. To pick out any one particular one would be --.

BC: Okay, let me go on to the next one. Have you done everything in your life that you ever wanted or planned to do?

PS: Pretty much so. Yeah, pretty much so. I really can't think of anything really that I wanted to do that I haven't did. I would say that I've had a pretty satisfying life.

BC: Now if you could go back and change anything?

PS: Oh, oh!

BC: Would you change anything? [Laughter]

PS: Oh, oh, oh.

BC: The road not travelled and all that.

PS: I -- I guess we all would do a complete 180 or 360 if we could go back. But than again, I was always told if you had your life over again you would live it the same way you already lived it. So I -- How much truth is in that I don't know. But if you add on to this know what you know now. Put those two together, then it would make a difference.

BC: Right, right. But then again if you had to do it over again, you wouldn't know it.

PS: You wouldn't know it so you would go back -- revert back to what I just said.

BC: Okay, and the last question. Can you share any old stories of what life was like for you when you were growing up.

PS: You mean like living conditions?

BC: No, like old stories about you life.

PS: Hmm.

BC: You know, like maybe you remember how on – always the Thursday after Easter, your family had this great big party or something. Anything, anything.

PS: I can't think of anything that would stand out. Because, I can recall back 20-25 years ago, my oldest living sister now. Every year that she – she would – Every year should would have Thanksgiving Dinner. We would go up there every year. I guess those were some of the things. I guess one of things -- I've lived a fulfilling life and don't have any basic complaints. I was just talking the other day about reorganizing the Jolly Gent's Sportsman's Club. That was probably one of the most fulfilling things. Ah, your dad, God rest his soul, I hope he's in heaven. He enjoyed that – we all did. We had loads and loads and lots and lots of fun. I guess that was probably one of my most fulfilling things. Of course every year we would look forward to going away to our –

BC: Down to Virginia.

PS: Yeah, and to New Jersey and Delaware. Every year we would go to different places. That was really something to look forward to. Other than that, I guess that was about it.

BC: Okay, on that note, I guess we'll end.

PS: I hope I was able to answer your questions satisfactorily.

Biographical Information

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Date of interview 10/28/1996

Date of Birth 3/4/1928 in Hollywood, MD

Education – Phyllis Wheatley Elementary and received a GED

Employment – Construction and Federal Government Supervisor of the Supply Department at Patuxent Naval Base

Retired 4/8/1983

Marriages

1st Wife – Hazel Tapp Scriber

2nd Wife – Diane Banks Scriber

Maternal Grandparents - Alice Poke Lyles and Edward Lyles

Paternal Grandparents – unknown

Mother – Nettie Lyles Scriber

Father – James B. Scriber

Siblings (in birth order)

James Edward Scriber

Mary Benita Scriber Kelly

James Sanders Scriber

James Victor Scriber

Virginia Scriber Chappell

Stransberry Scriber

Clarence Scriber

Douglas Scriber

Anna Scriber Adams

Nettie Scriber Stevens

Estelle Scriber Collins

Frank Scriber

Savella Scriber Anderson

Crawford Scriber

Philip Scriber

Spencer Scriber

Children (grandchildren)

Philip Scriber, Jr. (Philip III and Steven)

[recorder is shut off]

[End of Side 2, Tape 2 of 2]