



Patricia Nick Gross

Interviewee: Patricia Mary Alice Nick Gross
Date of Interview: June 25, 2004
Interviewed by: Ginger Nieman Corson
Transcribed by: Donna Williams

Qt: "...2004. My name is Ginger Nieman Corson, and today I have the privilege of interviewing a well-known figure around Shady Side, Pat Gross. Welcome, Pat."

PG: "I'm very glad to be here. How are you?"

Qt: "We're doing great. We're so happy you could meet with us today."

PG: "And I'm happy to come and share."

Qt: "Can you tell me your full name?"

PG: "My full name is Patricia Mary Alice Nick Gross."

Qt: "OK."

PG: "And I was named for my maternal grandmother, and Nick is my maiden name. And Nick also is a family name in the Shady Side area. My Mom was a Scott, and that also is a name that you hear all the time. In fact, there's a Nick Road and a Scottown Road, so we are very happy about that."

Qt: "Very good, very good. And when's your birthday?"

PG: "My birthday is January the 25th."



Qt: "What year?"

PG: "And I was born in 1934."

Qt: "Were you born in Shady Side?"

PG: "I was born in Shady Side. My grandmother was a midwife, and her name was Hattie Taylor Nick, and she helped to deliver me."

Qt: "No kidding?"

PG: "Yes she did."

Qt: "Oh, that's awesome."

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PG: "But my mama always wanted a medical doctor there, so she had a medical doctor there at the birth of my siblings and me."

Qt: "Do you know what the doctor's name was?"

PG: "I don't remember but it probably was Dr. Hugh Ward, but I'm not sure."

Qt: "OK, all right. Tell me your parents' full names."

PG: "My Mom's name was Ruth Viola Scott Nick. My Dad's name was Grover McCall Nick."



Qt: "Now was McCall a family name?"

PG: "I don't know that either, but I don't think so because his mother's name ...she was Hattie Taylor Nick and Taylor was a family name."

Qt: "OK. Now were they born in Shady Side?"

PG: "No. My grandmother, Hattie Taylor, who was the midwife, was born in what we called 'on the Highland'. She was born...I don't know if it was in the Lothian area, but we called it the Highland. And they migrated here, from what I can understand, from like a farm area. I don't know if it was Calvert County, or Lothian or whatever, but they migrated here from some place else."

Qt: "And, who was Hattie married to?"

PG: "She was married to William Nick, and they had a house that is right up the road from here that is when you go...leave where Leatherbury's Store was, and you don't go a stone's throw up the road, right on that curve back in there is where she lived. In fact, there was a lot of property there that was owned by the Nicks, and before they cut the road through there, there's a road on the other side. And that used to be the old road, and my grandfather had a store that was right there on the corner, just above Columbia Beach's Road. And we used to go to that store."

Qt: "So, there's that little triangle that's kind of cut out in there..."

PG: "Right."

Qt: "...so it was down Columbia Beach Road?"

PG: "No, it was more this way where there are two houses in there now on that little strip of that triangle, and it was right through in there."



Qt: "OK. There's a lot of new construction going on right in there?"

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PG: "Right."

Qt: "So, is the old house still standing?"

PG: "Well, from what I can understand from my uncle, the old house that we remember when we were children and we went to visit Grandma is still standing. As I glance over there I see the people doing something to it from time to time. But they had a house prior to that that burned, but this house that I remember is still standing."

Qt: "OK. So Hattie was your...?"

PG: "My father's mother."

Qt: "Your father's mother. So who were your mother's parents?"

PG: "My mother's parents were Mary Alice Scott and Henry Scott, and they lived in the property that is on South Creek. And my Mom...her parents' house burned, so she and my Dad built a house down there, which is still there, that we grew up in on South Creek. And all around the South Creek area is where Scott family ...where many, many Scotts lived around there; and until recently, that property still belonged to the Scotts. But as of right now, I think our property is the only Scott property and a little bit further down South Creek that is still in the Scott family."

Qt: "And what's interesting is when you look at where West River Road is, where this property is that you're talking about, and you look at Scottown Road and that sort of thing, you think that they're really far apart. But when you look at it on a map, they probably actually almost meet at South Creek, don't they?"



PG: “Yes, well, because when you go down Scottown Road, you can’t get to the water on the road, but you can walk all the way down and you will be at South Creek. And like I said, Scotts own all of that property around there. And I had an Uncle Britton, who was kind of at the end of Scottown Road, and his granddaughter lives in that house, Dorothy Foote. So she lives in that house, and they had a graveyard, which all family people had, and that’s at the end of Scottown Road.”

Qt: “Now I actually just found that graveyard, like in the last couple of months.”

PG: “Oh, all right!”

Qt: “My sister and I went on like a little mystery trip and drove down there, so the road kind of forks there. Actually, it splits off in three directions right there at that cemetery.”

PG: “Right, if you keep straight ahead, that’s where you’ll go where Uncle Britton’s property was, and you go right on down to South Creek Road. If you turn to the right, the graveyard is

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on the left as soon as you make the hard right. And then Carol Matthews, whose grandparents were a Scott, Nick Scott and Musora Scott, that, like I said, the Scotts owned all of that property. Then next door to that, Uncle Charlie Scott and his property was there. And then Uncle Bernard...well, he wasn’t really our uncle...we called him Uncle Bernard; but he lived there, too, and he was the son of a Scott. Like I said, all of that property that was on the shore, because right next door to us my grandfather’s brother lived, who was Uncle Tom Scott; then on the other side of him was Uncle Dick Scott.”

Qt: “Wow! And they probably had no idea what they had back then [laughing] having all that property down there.”



PG: "Right, right. No, because that property didn't become popular until people started wanting to live on the water."

Qt: "Sure."

PG: "Years ago people didn't want to live on the water because there was no [someone sneezes in background and someone else says 'Bless You'.] road down there, so if you were given property you were given property that was back; or if you bought property...so, the Scotts bought all of that property that's back there now."

Qt: "Wow. Now did the Nicks have a little congregation of...?"

PG: "Yes. The Nick's property, right where I told you that my grandfather lived, well then go down next and Uncle Vonell lived there. Then right across the road, Uncle Jerome and Aunt Carrie lived. Like I said, when that new 468 came through, that split that property because all that... you see that little triangle?"

Qt: "Umm humm." [Replies in the affirmative.]

PG: "all of that was together and so then the old road came on the other side what's that Bay Breeze...I think that's Bay Breeze Road, and the Crowners owned the property on the other side. So the Nicks had the property to the right coming out of Shady Side and then the Crowners. And like I said they put the new road in and that split the property of Granddad."

Qt: "So where did the old road go?"

PG: "The old road evidently came around where Bay Breeze Road is and connected...you see where Columbia Beach Road is...?"

Qt: "Umm humm."



PG: "...came around and curly-qed to the right and then went back, I guess, into there and then it could've gone into where Nick Road is now because that property was cut in half, too. And then the Nick property went all the way up to the beginning of Nick Road, because to the right of Nick Road are Nicks; and to the left of where William Nick lives because all of that

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property belonged to the Nicks. So property that faces Columbia Beach Road belonged to the Nicks also. They have since sold it, but Helen Nick still lives on that road. And so that property also belonged to the Nicks."

Qt: "OK. Now where did the Nick family come from."

PG: "They are the ones I told you that, basically, my grandmother came off the Highlands....we call it the Highlands."

Qt: "OK."

PG: "And my grandfather. I'm not sure but I used to hear my Dad say 'they came here', and I don't know if they came from Calvert County because a lot of people came from the Calvert County area, so I'm not positive. But I know they didn't always live here because they were in Baltimore, too; because my Dad was born in Baltimore."

Qt: "OK."

PG: "So until they came here and settled permanently, they may have moved around."

Qt: "So I guess my question should have been then 'where did the Scotts come from?'"

PG: "The Scotts were...from the deed that we were looking at, they are pinners evidently were slaves of the Weems, because on the deed that we have, Fernando Weems...old



Fernando Weems' father, deeded the land to the Scotts...to the two brothers, Henry and Tom Scott..."

Qt: "Wow!"

PG: "And so all of that land at one time belonged to the Red Top Farm that's down there. In fact the Red Top Farm ran all the way down because I'm trying to think what that road is, because Judge Hazzard lived on that road at one time. And it's a little below ... I don't know if you know where at one time where W. M. Thomas lived, but he lived down there. There was a saw mill down on West River Road on the right-hand side?..."

Qt: "I've heard about it."

PG: "All right, there was a saw mill down there, and then next to him there was another Scott that was Dorothea and Dennis Scott. She was his daughter; he had two daughters. OK. Like I said, when they purchased the land from the Weems', they gave them all the back land because you couldn't get to it and so, therefore, their land was out there. So, like I said, the old deed that we have that's written in that beautiful script, the land was sold to them by the Weems'."

Qt: "Oh, that's awesome! That's awesome."

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PG: "Yes."

Qt: "Now, do you have a copy of that?"

PG: "Yes, yes."

Qt: "Oh, that's great! We'd love to get that on film."



PG: "All right then, I will check with my sisters, and if it's OK, I'll see that you get it."

Qt: "OK. That would be great. Well, if nothing else, I'll just video tape it."

PG: "Right."

Qt: "Well, normally, I ask about aunts and uncles that live nearby, but I think you gave us a bunch of them. OK, brothers and sisters?"

PG: "I had three brothers who died as babies and I have two sisters now: Barbara Johnson and Elaine Brown. And Elaine is married to Rosco and they have four children, a set of twin girls and a boy and a girl. And Barbara is married to Jimmy, and they have two girls, and they both have their own businesses...their husbands do. Jimmy has 'James Johnson Hauling', and Roscoe has 'Roscoe Brown, Sr.'...I guess he calls it 'Enterprises'. So, and Roscoe lives out near Franklin Church...it's right next door to Franklin Church, and..."

Qt: "Is that down Deale-Churchton Road?"

PG: "Right. And then Jimmy lives right ...diagonal to what used to be the old Crandall's Store...that old building that was up there. That used to be a store, too, that we used to frequent."

Qt: "Sure."

PG: "So he has James Johnson Hauling."

Qt: "So that's kind of kitty-corner from Dent Road?"

PG: "Right."

Qt: " where it intersects with 468? OK."



PG: "Right."

Qt: "Now, how about your husband?"

PG: "My husband was a waterman, James Rodney Gross, Sr., and he went on the water all together in 1967. Prior to that, he worked the water in the winter time oystering; and then he worked in the spring time pile driving...worked for somebody else...like he worked for

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Crandall, he worked for Smith Brothers. And then he went all together for himself in '67 and he was pile driving. He also clammed, and he also oystered, and he had several boats. The first boat he had was the '*Bonnie*', which was the fastest boat on the Bay."

Qt: "There you go!"

PG: [Laughing!]. "And then he bought a boat called the '*Alma Gala*' from Mr. Roland Scott, which was beautiful. And then he bought the '*Puddin*', from Harry Manifole? in Deale; and that boat J. R. worked in after his Dad died, and up until last year, or the year before last, J. R. worked that boat, 'cause his Dad died in '92, and so he took over working that boat. And so Rodney did a little bit of everything on the water. He loved the water, and so... his Dad was a waterman. Dad also did work on lawns and that kind of thing; but most people in this area, when the water season was over, prior to his going strictly on the water, did other things...they also went ...Rodney also went to New Jersey, before I married him. And they would go to New Jersey and stay for, I guess, about six weeks after our oyster season was over at the end of April. And they would work on dredge boats there, and they would catch oysters in the ocean, which he said was very dangerous..."

Qt: "Oh, I'll bet!"



PG: “Because he said the current ran so fast down there. And that’s what he did. And a very, very good provider...a very good provider...worked all the time and was really a family man...interested in his children, and interested in their welfare and every thing.”

Qt: “Now, what were his parents’ names since we’re...?”

PG: “Ruth and Earl Gross. And she was a Holland first, and she grew up in Churchton. She was born right across the creek from us. They had a family home that’s right across the creek from us and they just recently built a house over there. They’re expanding...what is it... South Creek View? And so I didn’t even realize...one time I went down that road just to see the houses that they had put down there; and while I was standing over there, I said, ‘That’s our house across the creek there’! [Laughing.] And so, his Mom was reared right across the creek from us. And then his Dad...I never knew exactly where his Dad’s house was but right where Kim Holland lives now, which is a house that, I guess, it’s on the right-hand side and not what they call a dead-man curve, but there’s another curve up there. And you come up a little farther, and this guy has built a house. And you probably saw a tarp on the roof there. Well, any way, he has built a beautiful house on the rise that is there. And all of that at one time was Holland property and right across from there, there used to be an old house that belonged to their father. And that house I guess, if it were still standing, had to be now almost 200 years old, because I’m sure Rodney’s grandfather would be way up in the hundreds, and so all of that land, and that road came through and split that property [Chuckles] when it came through, because it...right there in front of her house, there is a piece of land...I guess it’s about 50 feet wide, and there’s a ditch there. And when she bought her property, she bought that strip of land; and I said ‘Well, why would you have to buy that strip of land? Isn’t that going with your land?’ And she said ‘no’, and the road came through that split that land right beside her house. So that, road evidently, coming into Shady Side must have been curvy, like

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many of the country roads were because you see evidence of the fact that the road was...and then they straighten it out, you know, where the road was and everything. And they straighten it out and there are big ditches down there.”



Qt: [Laughing] “There sure are.”

PG: “But they had enough property to give each one of the boys eleven acres of land...”

Qt: “Awesome!”

PG: “...over there, right there on that 468, and I guess it’s about two miles from where Smith Building Supply is coming into Shady Side, where all of that property is. And that belonged to Holland.”

Qt: “Wow!” [Laughing.]

PG: “Yes.”

Qt: “Tell me about your children.”

PG: “My children. I have five children. I have three girls and two boys, and my oldest girl is Radena Ruth; and by the way, both of... all of us...all of the sisters named their children for my mother, and I named...Radena both of our Mom’s and grandparent’s name, Ruth, and so her name...so she’s named for the paternal and maternal grandmother. And she lives in ... near Randallstown in Maryland, and she has two daughters. And her oldest daughter, is Anita, and Anita will be a senior at, I think it’s Virginia University, but I know the university is down in Virginia; and Deena finished Bowie State, and then she got a fellowship to go to Madison, Wisconsin, where she took her Master’s. And then she was working for a company, and they phased the part of the company out that she was working for for the Choice Card. And so, after a while...after her second child was born, which is also a girl, Courtney, who...I think Courtney will go into her junior or senior year in high school this year. And after that, she decided she wanted to be a stay-home Mom. So she stays at home and she says her husband says: ‘What do you do all day long?’ And she said, ‘I’m trying to take care of your business.’, because he’s in the hauling business. He has a ten-wheeler, so he hauls



everything. And I said to him, 'Well, you know what, I read a survey prior to you're buying your truck and it said if you want to get into the moving business, get a truck so you can move dirt.' And I said, 'Every where you look, they're moving dirt and stones and everything.'

Qt: "That's the truth."

PG: "And then I have 'Tweetie', we call her Tweetie. Her name is Patricia, and she lives in Chesterfield, Virginia; and she went to Virginia Union University. And they both finished Southern High School. And she was working for a company also that decided they no longer wanted to be in business, and that was Reynolds Metals, which had been in business, she said, for years, and years, and years. And now she is teaching adults at...well it's a high school, and there are adults that had some problems; and so she's teaching them. And she has two

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children. She has a boy who is brilliant. And I'm not just saying that because he...because they discovered that he was really capable. He was in elementary school, and they wanted to skip him, but she didn't want him to skip, so she skipped in school. So that said to me you must have had some problems that you don't want him to skip. But that's...he has a lot of social skills and all. His friends are older, so he wouldn't have any problem, but anyway, she didn't want him to. Then they had him to take a science test and a math test, and he was in the 90th percentile for the County first. And then they had him to go to the State; and then they had him to go for the whole United States and he stayed up in the 90th percentile."

Qt: "Awesome!"

PG: "And he's very, very subdued. He isn't a person...if she didn't tell you, you would never know from him, and he is just as sweet as he can be. And then she has Taylor, whom we all spoil and Taylor will be, I think, fifth grade this year, and she does very well in school, too. And then her husband works for the government down in Virginia, and his name is Rick. One time, I called him 'which-ma-call-it', and he said: 'Mom! You can't think of my name?' I said, 'I'm getting to that age.' [Laughing.] And so... but very nice, and like I said,



Radena's husband, we call him 'J.B.'- his name is John B. But God sent me two wonderful son-in-laws and I am just so grateful that they are so good to my daughters, 'cause that is a true blessing."

Qt: "Good. Yes, they're hard to come by for some reason." [Laughing.]

PG: "But they have been wonderful and are wonderful husbands. And he, Tweeta's husband, was born in upstate New York, and she stayed up there for a while before they moved down to Virginia. And then there's J.R. who is my first son. I always wanted to have a son for my husband, so I named him 'Junior'. And let me side-track for a minute. When I went to Africa as a missionary and I was telling him about my children, and they said, 'Why would you name him after your husband?' And I said, 'Well, that's a custom in our country.' And they said, 'But he'll never have his own name.' And they said, 'We never name children in the family somebody else's name. Everybody should have his or her own name.' And, I said, 'Well, that's your culture.' You know, but I'd never thought about it.

So I named J. R. after Rodney, and he got the name J.R. I don't know how we got the initials, but somebody said, 'Well, you must've gotten it from the soap opera.' But the soap opera wasn't even on then, so we just decided to call him J.R.!"

Qt: "Oh, it was!" [Laughing.]

PG: "And he just loves the water. He loves to work. When he was little, all he'd talk about was to work. He never wanted to go to school, he just wanted to work with his Dad. And he - I have a picture of him when he was down the shore, and all he had on was a Pamper, down with his Dad in the boat. He just...every time Rodney would move, he wanted to go and work with his father. And that's right now. I oft times say to him, 'J.R., you know the Bay is dying.' 'I know, Mom. I'm going to get a job...I'm going to interview for a job.' That is just to appease me because J.R. is still working. And he has another boat now and I can't even



remember what the name of it...that he got a couple years ago. He brought the '*Puddin*'... and his wife's name is Vicki, Vicki Lynn, and they have a son, Eric. And Eric will be going to the middle school this year. He attended Shady Side Elementary School.

And then I have G.E. He's named after his fraternal and maternal grandfather. And Glover for my Dad and Earl for Rodney's Dad. And he, right now, lives at home. He was working for NevaMar. And now that I'm telling you, it seemed like all of the companies they were with closed up. Now NevaMar's closed up! [Laughing!] And now he's working for Domino's at their warehouse, and, like I said, he's at home. And all of the children are wonderful and so supportive of me and supportive of the community and everything. And they all belong to church. They all don't attend like I would like for them to do, but they all have joined church.

Then there's Joy. Well, Joy ...I said to my sister, Barbara, 'I'm going to have to stop saying this. Because I keep saying, 'Oh, I have the perfect family: two boys and two girls.' I didn't mean that, Joy, like I didn't want you! [Laughing]. And so Joy is everybody's joy. She is so precious. Right now, she works for Mills Corporation, and she recently bought a condo, and I was 41 when I had Joy. And so nobody told me I couldn't have any more children, I just thought, I'm too old. I have two boys and two girls, but she is the delight of everybody's life And she's named after my two sisters. Her name is Joy Elaine Barbara Gross...so for Elaine and Barbara. And I didn't say this, but Tweetie...Patricia, she's named after her Aunt Augustine. Her name is Patricia Augustine Gross, and they're all doing well. They all like to work, which is a blessing, and Joy is in human relations. She's the human relations person at the Mills Corporation, and she works in Virginia. So she drives to work every day."

Qt: "Now where do you live right now?"

PG: "I'm on Deep Cove Road."

Qt: "OK."



PG: “ 1141.”

Qt: “All right. And how long have you lived there?”

PG: “We’ve been there since December of 1960.”

Qt: “And when did you two get married?”

PG: “June 6, 1954.”

Qt: “Where did you live for those six years?”

PG: “Prior to that up to 1954 we lived in the house of a gentleman who was the nicest person in the world to rent from. We called him Bully Brown but his name is Vincent Brown, and

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we weren’t too far...I don’t know if you knew where Dewey Brown’s Hauling was or there’s a sign up there that says Brown’s Way now...”

Qt: “Yes, yes!”

PG: “All right. It was...you go back in that road maybe one tenth of a mile, and the house to the left ...because I told the children...I’m gonna ask...his daughter lives there... ‘I’m ‘gonna ask if I can bring them in so they can see the house’. I’ve driven past, so they can see where Rodney and I lived, but that’s where we lived when we first got married, and we stayed there for six years. And then we were able, with God’s help, to build our own house down on Deep Cove Road. And that property belonged to his Uncle Joe Holland...that we purchased. That was a part of his eleven acres.”



Qt: "Neat! Now the house that you grew up in on West River Road, you said you all still own that?"

PG: "Yes."

Qt: "Now, did you have damage there from Isabel? Hurricane Isabel?"

PG: "Yes we did. We had tremendous damage from Isabel. The only thing about it is because we were renting, we didn't qualify for assistance. And which is unfortunate because the house was still damaged, but each time...like they said...you had to live in the house."

Qt: "Oh, my goodness!"

PG: "Anthony Scott"

Qt: "I'm sorry?"

PG: "We rent to Anthony Scott...he's our renter."

Qt: "Were they displaced? Did they have to leave?"

PG: "They... I think his wife left, but I think he stayed there. And I don't know...he left any night at all, but I think she left for some of the nights. But they're back in there now."

Qt: "OK. Wow. Well that was certainly something in this area. Do you remember any other hurricanes when you were growing up?"

PG: "I remember water rising, and it probably was a hurricane, because I can remember our walking around out in our yard, and water will be like almost up to our knees. But it never got into our house. This is the very first time that water ever got in our house because now ... remember the end of Scotttown is a low, and the people down there would always get water in



their houses whenever, and usually would be in the summer time. And I can remember we would go up to Scottown Road so we could see all of the water that was there, but it never got **12.**

up to our house. It would be out in the yard...because right behind us, well it might be in front because some people call it the front of our house which is facing the fields. We always called the front that faced South Creek. Now right behind us, Weems own all of that, those open fields and everything that goes all the way over to Scottown Road, and water would come all the way up. But like I said, and we have another little house that's on that same property, and I don't ever remember it getting in that little house. So this is the first time in all the years that I've been living...unless when I was a baby and couldn't remember... Seventy years, I don't ever remember the water getting high enough. Well I know it didn't. It didn't ever get inside the house."

Qt: "And you figure it probably won't happen again for another 500 years."

PG: "Probably not."

Qt: "It was just a fluke how the tide and the wind and all that sort of thing...wow."

PG: "Everything worked to raise that water level so high. And to be so devastating because the debris that was left when the tide went back out, to get that all cleaned up was a really big job. In my yard, at home. I have pictures of my standing out in the water. And the whole time I was down Deep Cove Road, I don't ever remember water coming up in my yard to my patio."

Qt: "Wow."

PG: "First time...because we aren't that far from the Bay, but you have to come through the woods. And where J.R. was saying about trapping and everything was, they used to always



go over there because there are marshes over there and everything, and that water came all the way up through that woods, over those marshes ...”

Qt: “You had waterfront property!” [Laughing.]

PG: “I did!” [Laughing] Unwanted waterfront property! Yes.”

Qt: “Now when you were growing up, did you raise any type of animals?”

PG: “Yes.”

Qt: “What did you have?”

PG: “We always had chickens. My Mom used to sell chickens. She would dress them and sell them. And when we were little, we would have to go out and get straw when it was time for her to sell them, and we would put them in a coop, a fattening coop, and she called it cleaning them out; then she would only feed them corn. And then when they... I guess, some how or other, she would know when they were fat enough, and so then she would kill them and dress them and sell them. And then we had dogs – we always had a dog. And we had pigs, and it’s so funny how you know that they will be killed. Like people say, they had them

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as a pet and they would be so upset when their parents killed them. I never got upset, and we had them as pets and we used to smooth them down and everything, you know. And we were in charge of feeding them, and we loved them. But when it came time for hog killing time because there would be a day that it was, and they would kill them and I never felt sad about it because I knew that was going to happen, you know. And so we had them and they were the only...oh no, my Mom used to have ducks – she used to have ducks. And then she had Guinea-keets, we called them Guinea-keets. Only thing was they were so wild, they’d fly up in a tree and everything. And she raised those and she would sell, you know, them and we ate them and everything.



And that was another thing, when I was growing up and people would say they didn't have enough money to do thus and so, and I could never figure out 'how come we always had'...when we went to school, we always had...my Momma always had two or three dresses for us and shoes. I remember everybody had two pairs of shoes. You had Sunday shoes and you had school shoes. And I couldn't figure, 'Well, how come we had them?' Not until I got older did I realize my Dad worked year round. Most people oystered in the winter time, and then in the summer, after they came back from New Jersey, if they didn't have like a farm or whatever, they didn't do anything so then if you didn't save enough money, which I'm sure was almost impossible to do to carry you through the summer months. But we used to go over to Avalon Shores, and I remember when there weren't four houses over on Avalon Shores, and I'm sure those people owned a lot of land over there and we'd go over there when we were small and pick blackberries and sell them to Edward ?? takers. Then he would cut the grass for these people then as houses started coming in, he'd cut grass and he'd hire boys, and I said 'Bingo! That's why, because we had money year round'. But when we were growing up and children would say: 'How come your mother can buy you this? How can your mother do that? How can she manage to do this?' In fact some of the ladies would tell us, 'Your mother must be a good manager of money.' So they never figured it out either, [Laughing], but I figured it out, that's why, because he worked all year round.

And we would row over to Avalon Shores from our house in boats. We also shopped over at Galesville at that little store. And that little store still there because when I go over to Pirate's Cove, and I pass this store and I said, 'Looks like that store when we used to get coal' when they stopped using wood and started selling coal could buy coal in bags. And we would row over there and get the coal and put it in our boat and then row back home. And we would also do the same thing when we would go down...we used to call him Capt. Gustav, and we would ride down there in the boat.

And we would soft crab. I just smile when I see in the grocery store they'll have jumbo softcrabs, and I said, 'Do you believe that? We consider them little. [Laughing.] We'd throw them back.' But they were, I know, from tip to toe, they would be at least nine, ten, eleven



inches. And when you softcrab with a net, all you do is go around, if you hit them, 'cause they'd be on the bottom cause at that time, they were at their weakest because the crab that comes out...you probably know that...can hardly move once he sheds, he is so weak and got to spread his little legs and things out. And if you hit 'em, they would come right to the top of the water and you reach in and get them. And they lay on the bottom and they would be black.

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And then my Dad would go clamming, I told you, and my Uncle Dick, some time we'd right there at his property, he had a piece of land that jugged out from his land. We called it Cousin Dick Point. Well, right there, there was a sandy bottom. You would be walking in mud and trying to trudge through, and right there step up on this sandy bottom, and right there my Dad would, at low tide, he would take a bucket and a shovel and you'd stand there and you would see all this water bubbling up, and he would dig in there, and there were clams. And he would dig clams, and we called them mannose, and my Mom would make stew and everything out of them. And we would go crabbing, of course, we swam every day; we went swimming every day. We would haul the seine and we would...and there's an art to that, too. My sister Barbara used to fuss all the time. I would fall down [laughing], when we went crabbing, and all the crabs would get loose, because once you fall down with the seine, it would go down in the water. And so she would always be outside. And when you haul a seine, you start off with the person outside...had to be farther ahead than the person who was on, you know, the inside. Or sometimes the person inside would be farther ahead, and so when she would make all the crabs go in, then on your end then you would lift it up together.

And same thing with my blackberries. I always would turn them over for some reason, and Barbara and Eli did so well. [Laughing]. But we would haul seine from our house all the way around to Capt. Gustav's. Then we'd go on the other side where those houses are at South Creek View. That area in there where I told you my husband's parents lived. We would haul seine over there. And one place over there was a hard bottom that you could step up on, and it wouldn't give way.



But we had a wonderful childhood. Our Mom used to bake all the time. We just had so much fun. She baked bread for us, like you see this fried bread that they talk about all the time. In fact, St. Mary's Church used to sell it. Mama used to make that all the time. And then you just take light bread and fry it, and it would be so good. And when I hear people rave about certain kinds of things, I say, 'well, let me see what this is'; and when I taste it, I say 'Well, that's the kind of bread my Mom used to make, you know, and fry it. And when we were home, my Mom used to play games with us all the time, and she was so smart. We used to play Dominoes. She always knew what everybody had in their hand. [Laughing]. I don't know how she knew. And we would play and she ones you put down, maybe three dominoes in there, she would figure out what you were going to play and whatever. But this is it. We had lots and lots of fun, the three of us growing, you know, up together We just had lots of fun."

Qt: "Now I'm interested in this seine net. Is this something that you bought or something that you made to crab?"

PG: "I don't know... I know...I'm sure they made them because they didn't buy that much stuff that they used and I'm sure they made it. They had two poles and they hooked the net to the pole, and you put corks on the top of it so the top part would stay up. And you ran a chain on the bottom of it and pull it along."

Qt: "So was this for soft crabs, or hard crabs or both?"

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PG: "Whatever got in there."

Qt: "Wow! Now how long was it?"

PG: "Hmmm. I guess maybe ten feet."

Qt: "And it would take maybe two or three of you to pull it?"



PG: "Two of you."

Qt: "Two. Now how often did you do that?"

PG: "I can't even remember cause like I said, we were always out on the water but I guess if we decided one day we wanted some crabs, we'd go out and, you know, pull the seine."

Qt: "What was the strangest thing you ever caught?"

PG: "Actually, well it wasn't...things weren't strange to us [Laughing], because we no, we had seen...like I see people walk in the water now and they're afraid of the snakes. And I say, 'Well, it's just a black snake. They live there, so they are harmless'. But you'd catch eels, sunfish, crabs and we used to fish off our pier because Hardheads, at a certain time would come. People call them Croakers now. But they would come up in South Creek just like out in the ditches? Now they don't clean the ditches out now, but we would cod fish in the ditches...we would catch in the ditches; but they used to be so muddy and everything... but big fish. We were talking about that the other day. I wonder if any more ever come up in the Chesapeake Bay, and after a big rain, and the ditches were swelled and you could go out there and you'd see them swimming on the side of the road in the ditches."

Qt: "A Codfish? Oh my goodness!"

PG: "They called them Cod; it might've been Cobb but it sounded like Cod to us. And people would catch them."

Qt: "Wow."

PG: "And eat them. And speaking of my Dad, my Dad used to crab, and he had a trot line, and we used to bait the trot line for him and everything and he would go out and crab."



Qt: “What did he use for bait?”

PG: “Eel, most of the time he’d use the eel because eels were plentiful in South Creek, too. You could catch all kinds of things there...big eels. And then we would go out fishing. He had a boat he called *Pond Horse*, and we would go out nighttime and fish. Of course, we would fall asleep all the time. My mother would have to bring us in the house. But those are the kinds of things we would do and we’d stay out late at night and then come right back. And then, you didn’t come up to your pier in the big boat. They always...and the oystermen

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who sold to Capt. Gustav, all of them, like I told you...[There is a pause and some sort of glitch in this part of the interview.]...lived around the shore and everything??, but everybody had a rowboat and everybody had a stake in South Creek, so

[This interview on DVD appears to have either stopped or there was some sort of malfunction. After 10 minutes of trying to fast forward through the glitch and not seeing or hearing anything, transcription ceased.]

Part II: June 25, 2004

The second DVD of the interview with Patricia Nick Gross began below:

PG: “... in the water and boil all of the salt out of it or it would be too salty. It was...”

Qt: “Now tell me a little bit more about what you would see on the West River. Did you ever see any steamboats or the show boat they would talk about?”



PG: “No I never saw it. Now I think I was too young for that, but I heard them talk about the *Emma Giles*. I used to hear people talk about that...that they would go by horse and carriage or by boat and go over there. And I remember my father would talk about what they would bring and anything you wanted. It was just like a floating store and animals and everything. But I don’t remember ever seeing it. But I’ll tell you what we did do. When my Mom...I told you she raised chickens? You ordered chickens out of the catalog, and they would come to the post office, and the old post office was right across from Andrews Hotel, right there. And when you would walk in there, you would hear all of the chickens [Laughing], and they would be in boxes with holes in them. And when she knew that they were due in, she would send us and we would walk from the school down there and pick up the chickens and take them back home. But unbeknownst to her, when we were little, because if she was at work, we would take the top off and go in the living room and let all the chickens out. [Laughing]

Qt: “Are you sure you got them all back in there?”

PG: “And we would look out and we could see her coming because, even though we were off of West River Road, you have to walk I’d say almost a quarter to a half mile back to the creek. And so we’d see her coming and so we’d catch them all and put them back in the container. And that was the same thing about cats. She never liked cats inside but we could have...we had a cat ‘Midnight’, the prettiest black cat had one little white spot under her chin. And when Mama would come home...we’d keep it in the house all day long, and she’d come home, and the cat would be at the door and was trying to get in and she’d say, ‘Now why would this cat be trying to get in because this is an outside cat?’ And she’d be all around her leg, trying to get in. [Laughing]. And, of course, we’d look at each other, you know.

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But, yes, she would order chickens, and she sold eggs also, and she always ordered Leghorn chickens. ‘Cause I saw one of those... where was I? Oh, down to Benjamin Dennis’ and they have chickens down there. And she always ordered Rhode Island Reds...she would buy for



the meat; but Leghorns, they were egg-laying chickens. They were like a speckled, black and white kind of chicken. And we would have to collect the eggs, you know, and people would come and buy them. And my Mom used to do people's income taxes for them. She was very enterprising."

Qt: "Good."

PG: "Dad made a good living...a wonderful living, too. But she was always in to some kind of business. I guess she was trying to devise some kind of way...and I remember when I was also growing up, the War was going on and it was rationing...and sugar, you couldn't get sugar unless you had a ration coupon. And then they would pay you back in chips. For instance, if you got a 5-pound bag of sugar, and you had a coupon that was worth 20 chips, and you gave it to him. And the sugar costs five, and they'd give you these little red tokens. That would be your change so you could...and also with it, you could only get a certain amount you were allotted like. And the same thing for shoes, you were only allotted so many pairs of shoes or so many tires or whatever. And I can remember my mother... and children don't see this kind of thing. It's just that you reflect back...never bought herself any shoes. She always, evidently, because like I said, she always wanted us to have two pairs of shoes. And so she evidently took her coupon and got shoes for us. Yes."

Qt: "Wow."

PG: "It was in...that was the time and I still ask for War Bonds when I go up to the bank now and the woman looks at me so funny when I do that, but [A slight glitch in the DVD here, but it seems to pick up immediately.] called them. That's what they were..."

Qt: "Sure."

PG: "...when we were coming along. And everybody in school bought stamps, and you put them in this little book. And when you got them filled up...I don't know whether it was \$10 or \$5, then you got take it and get bonds...well, the teacher took it 'cause there were no banks



around here then, and then she would send away and get the bonds for us and they would give us another coupon book and then we'd put all those little stickers in there and..."

Qt: "Was any of your family sent to War?"

PG: "Pardon?"

Qt: "Any of your family sent to War?"

PG: "No, not in my family."

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Qt: "That's good."

PG: "but Nicks went to War. In fact, Uncle Marin...Nick had seven sons, and I think all seven...no, five of them, because I think the two older sons didn't go in; but five of his sons were in the War at the same time."

Qt: "Oh, wow."

PG: "Yes. But actually we didn't have anybody in my family to go to War because my brothers didn't live to adulthood."

Qt: "How about aunts and uncles? Anybody involved in it?"

PG: "Yes. My father's brother was in World War I, and I think he was the only brother...used to call him Uncle Funk, but his name was William Nick."

Qt: "How did he get that nickname?" [Laughing]



PG: "I have no idea. None at all...because he's buried at St. Matthew's Church, and every Veteran's Day, they put the flags on and they put a flag on his grave. But he was the only uncle I had ever went in the service."

Qt: "Do you remember the river ever freezing up that you could walk to Galesville?"

PG: "Oh, yes, most definitely. The river...that creek would freeze and you could skate...I never learned to skate, but people would skate from Galesville, right over to where we were, and from our house, right around, you could skate down to ___?___ you could skate on the other side...that little... I don't know what that is that comes up past Avalon Shores, and you could skate all the way around there, and it would stay frozen for months in the winter time. And I could remember we would go to school, and your nose would feel so funny when you'd suck the air in and we couldn't figure out...I figured that out too as I got older, the hairs in your nose would freeze. [Laughing]. So that's what that was, you know? And we just couldn't figure, well what is going on here? And we didn't miss any time out of school. You went to school if snow was up to your knees, and we would come home and ice would be there and we would stomp on the ice until we got our feet wet, and then we'd go home in the evening time, but we wouldn't go home. Now you'd go all through the woods and all around just walking so you'd walk on the ice and then you'd stomp on it; and when your feet got wet and got cold, then you'd go home.

And I remember when we would go to school in the morning when snow would get down in your boot, and the teacher would let you take your...well we would put all of our boots outside because you had galoshes then that fitted over top of your shoes. And she would put all our shoes and our socks...and we had a stove in our school that had like a black sheet around it, and she would hang all of our stockings on there; so they would be dry by the time we got home in the evening time."

Qt: "Who was your teacher?"



PG: “My teacher in first, second and third grade was Miss Burrell; and my teacher for four, five, six and seven was Miss Wiseman. And we had...they started a Girl Scout Troop and I think the girl’s troop was 53.”

Qt: “You remember the number?” [Laughing]

PG: “Yeah. I think it was Troop 53. I know it was a lower number – 43! That’s what it was. It was Troop 43, so we were the 43rd troop. And so she, Miss Burrell, started that, and then Miss Wiseman had the Boy Scouts. And then we had a band, had a choir all of that in the school. And we would sing and they would play. And like I said, we had first, second and third in the primary. The school had two rooms in it. And it had what we called a science room...we used to call it a science room, which was in between, and it had a pump in it, and you brought your own cup to school to drink out of. Every body had a cubby hole, and so the teachers would put your names on the cubby hole and you kept your cup in there. And it had a pump and a sink.

And I can remember that the dentist would come ever so often to the school and pull your teeth, because I can remember my permanent teeth had not come and I had two teeth up front that were decayed, and I remember he pulled them and didn’t give you anything for the pain or anything. And I’ll not forget, I screamed and he pulled the teeth out, but he’d set his chair up in there and anybody...he would inspect every body’s teeth and if you needed your teeth pulled then he’s pull them. They didn’t fill...

They would give you... they would vaccinate the children at school and everything. And then when winter time would come...like we had two bathrooms outside. In the middle we had a coal house and they would bring soup down...I guess from the Board of Education...we never knew where it came from, but ever so often, you would have hot soup that they would serve you. You’d eat it along with your lunch that you had brought from home. You couldn’t buy lunch, everybody brought his or her lunch. And I remember their bringing down like apples, and we would put them on long pieces of newspaper and spread them up on top of the



coal house and let them stay up there until they dried and got real sweet, and then we'd eat them. They'd bring prunes to the school. They were always bringing food to the school for the students.

And I can remember Miss Wiseman...we had 4th grade sat near the window, and 5th grade, there were double desks...we had our desks. They were screwed to the floor so you didn't move them. And we had an ink well to the right and a pencil sink right up at the top of the desk. And they had a double desk in the middle and then 4th and 5th grade and then 6th grade had a single, and then all the way to the wall, the 7th grade. And I can remember, I used to be sitting in school, and there was this boy who was real, real smart, and all I could think about was, Oh I want to get over there and sit in his seat on that side next to the wall. [Laughing]. But, yes, we went to the 7th grade. And then, for our graduation, the grade under did all of the ceremony and then the grade that was graduating just sat there and indulged themselves. And then you had like all of the schools on the southern end to come together at different places,

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because the year that I graduated was the first year they started graduating 6th grade. And we were supposed to go to Bates High School the next year. Well, they were adding on to Bates High School so I didn't get a chance to go, so I had to stay down Shady Side another year, but it made me graduate the same year my sister Barbara graduated. And so we did something based on the American flag, and I can never forget there were three of us: Roberta, Rosetta and me, we were all Nicks...we were all related. And we had so many speaking parts but we just learned it and went right on through it on flags. 'Cause I remember they played John Philip Sousa's March, you know, and we were just marching. And we had all these poles and everything, but I loved school.

I used to love school. I couldn't wait to get to school so that I could learn and I think one of the things is, and this is one of the things I said they need in schools now, they really...it would be really fun if they were to have two or three grades. You learn so much when that teacher is teaching that other grade, especially...and I just couldn't wait...the incentive to get to the next grade. 'Oh, I can read that. Oh, I can do this.' Because I can remember in the 4th



grade, we read the novel, Robin Hood. It was a big green book and every day we read a part of it, as the literature class. And then we would get....then we read Treasure Island, which was a little book. When the kids talk now...what do they call them? Chapter books. We called them novels when we were reading. But you read a little bit and you discussed it, and I enjoyed that so much and I thought, OK.

And you knew what you were going to do in math. Like now they have a little bit of math and everything and they probably did then, but the emphasis was not there. And in the 4th grade, we did long division because we had done short division in 3rd grade. And then in the 5th grade, you knew you were going to do fractions. In 6th grade, you were going to do decimals. And in 7th grade you knew you were going to do percentages. I guess I always liked discipline, and I thought 'I can't wait till I learn how to do fractions.' And 'I can't wait till I learn how to do decimals.' And then the relationship between the three...I think she did it in the 7th grade. But yes we stayed in elementary school up through the 7th grade. And we had that same teacher, and I just dearly loved her. Miss Mary V. Wiseman was her name; and Miss Burrell's name was Lillian Burrell. And Miss Wiseman would drive from Annapolis every day, and Miss Burrell would ride with her. I don't think Miss Burrell ever learned to drive. Miss Wiseman was very forward and very much into children's education. And I remember my Mom saying that ...I don't know if the teacher and her were talking about going to college and she was telling her she didn't think she would probably ever be able to send us to college, and the teacher told her, 'You never know when that time comes.' Thank God, we all got a chance to go to college.

Because when I was younger, we all got jobs. We all wanted outside jobs out of the home...a house job. And I can remember I used to baby sit my first cousin's children. And baby sit...like I was telling you, Mrs. Helen Nick, her young child. And then I used to work...I went to work for a man who had been in the Navy, and Daddy came home one day and he would say... because he was over on Avalon Shores and he would be down on Captain Gustav's, and people would come and want to know if you had anybody who could work. So I remember I was eleven that summer and he came home, and he said, 'I got a job.' And I said, 'I want it, I want it!' because my sister Barbara was already working over at Avalon



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Shores, and he told me it was down Cedarhurst. And the man came and I went down there. Now that I think about it, he had all of these white shirts, and she wanted them ironed because he had to, you know...he was retired but he worked at the Naval Academy. And I look back on those shirts now and later on she started putting them in the cleaners, and I said, 'I guess so, when I think about how those shirts looked [Laughing.] that I ironed at eleven years old'. And I made \$2.00 a day when I first started out, but it was so much fun. In fact, she later bought that restaurant that was down there. She used to live down on Cedarhurst on the last...I think it was Pine Avenue, because that was the last street then. And you talk about, did I ever notice the flood and the hurricane. Now, I do remember when I was down there, she became so frantic one Saturday when I was down there. And like I said, because I was used to the water coming up, I mean, I couldn't figure out why? She had a house in Washington, too. And she said, 'Pat I've got to go.' And I said 'Why?' And she said, 'the water is rising. And I said, 'well, what difference does that make?' And she thought, I guess, you'll mind.' [Laughing]. Well, like I said, we were so used to the water rising but when it rose, it came all the way up that road and past her house. And I just walked on home that evening and it never occurred to me what was happening that I should be afraid of. And this is what I tell the children. Unless it's something unusual that you've never experienced, you really don't get frightened about it if you've never been hurt by it. But I can remember that.

And I worked several other places, in fact, I worked and sent myself to college. And I was working...during the day I worked when I was younger and teen aged, and I don't know if I was getting ready to go to college or...when they first built those houses up near South River Bridge, I think because all of those houses on the left hand side as you're going toward's Annapolis, that land was clear land."

Qt: "Behind the old police station?"

PG: "All of that land was clear, when I was growing up. And they built these houses and the girl that used to live in Avalon Shores...think Daddy got me that job, too. Guy was a



policeman. His name was Gresher. And they bought a house up there and I went up there to work and keep their son. He grew so fond of me...well he didn't see nobody but me during the day when... they would get ready to go to work, he wasn't up, and I can remember the father...he got so upset one day. He was going to show him off to Leatherbury ?? ? And ? Steve was there, and some other guy. He learned to walk when he was nine or ten month's old, and he was going to show them how his son could walk. He put that child down and he wouldn't move. He wouldn't do anything. [Laughing.] So his wife's name was Wanda, and he said, 'I don't know'; and she said, 'well, I'm going to ask Pat to come in the room'. As soon as I came in the room, here he comes flying on those little legs. And I just loved him so much. His name was Joey. In fact, I kept two Joey's, one down in Cedarhurst and one from Avalon Shores. Well we did...Mom always instilled within us, and Daddy, too, the necessity to work for what you wanted, you know? And that was a good thing. And all my kids work, praise the Lord, so..."

Qt: "So when did you start teaching?"

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PG: "I started teaching in 1957, and my first school was at Friendship, and that police station is down there now or it's the South County... I don't know what it's called. But the reason I know there's a police station or room or whatever...because I was riding one day, and I said to the children 'I'm going to take you to see the school where I started.' And this policeman drove up behind me. Well I didn't know it was a police room back there, so I got out and I said to him, 'I'm showing the children', because I thought he may have thought I was just up there because there was a building there and nobody lived in it. And I said, 'I'm showing the children where I used to work' and everything. So he said, 'OK', and then he called for backup. And I later learned that when it had been abandoned, people used to go down there and do all kinds of things. I guess he thought that we were there and then when he found out 'well, you really did teach here' and everything, he said, 'Well, you all can go ahead', you know, 'and look around' [Laughing] and everything. And I stayed down there for ten years



and then at integration I went to Tracey's. Because I said to them...they said, 'Pat, where you going?' I said, 'I'm going to Tracey's. That's where they're sending our children. I'm going right up there to Tracey's so they'll see a familiar face.

And I stayed at Tracey's one year, because I got pregnant with JR, and Mrs. Hopkins, she just wanted me to come back so badly. But then I left there, and then I was assigned at the old Green School, I called it, here in Shady Side where Miss Nowell was the principal. My first principal was Dorothy...she got married...what was her married name? Camper, but she was a Dorothy Taylor when I first went down there. And then I left there, and like I said, I went to the old Green School, under Mrs. Nowell; and then from the Green School I went to Shady Side...the new Shady Side, in '71 because I was at Friendship from '57 to '66, stayed there '66 to '67, then the old Green School from '67...then I...every school I went to I told them I got pregnant, don't move me any more! [Laughing]. I had G.E. when I went to the old Green School, and then because I had Tweety down in Friendship. And then I went to, like I said, the new school, and then they moved me to Crofton, and that's where I got pregnant with Joy while I was at Crofton, and I was there for two years. Then I came back to Shady Side School, and that's where I finished up there, and I worked for 35 plus one years in education..."

Qt: "Wow!"

PG: "...which I dearly, dearly loved, and I was telling you about going to Africa. During the time that I was in high school, I went to Bates High School. And during the time that I was in high school, a lady came there and she was from Africa. We had an assembly, and I remember her putting this animal skin up and I don't even remember what kind of skin, but I was so impressed that she talked to us about Africa, I said 'I've got to go there. I've got to go.' And then, as the years went on, it went off my mind, I had my family and I had my career and everything, but I was at a church conference one summer, and they always had missionaries to make reports, and this missionary was reporting, and right away it popped back in my head. You know how they say 'God has his time table'? Well, it popped into my head, and I said to my girl friend, 'I wonder how I could get to go to Africa?' And she said,



‘Well, I can put you in touch with somebody who is with the Board of Global Ministry.’ Sure enough, I went over and talked to her. And, lo and behold, I knew the lady because she was the wife of a former district superintendent of mine. And I said to her, ‘I want to go to Africa

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and do missionary work, but I don’t want to have to through all that long training.’ She said, ‘Oh, we have short term.’ I said, ‘Amen! Three weeks. So she said ‘I’m going to give your name to them.’ So she gave my name to them. I waited, I twiddled my thumbs and waited so I said, ‘he should be getting in touch with me.’ I’ll bet I hadn’t said that, went down to the mailbox, and sure enough because someone had called me prior that they usually do it in stages for sending you out material, and after you read the first packet, and answer all the questions send me the big packet, you may not want to go. And I said, ‘Send me the big packet and the little packet; I already know I want to go’. Well, some of the questions that they had on that...and maybe that would have repulsed someone else...might have stopped them from going, but it didn’t stop me. And they wanted to know: ‘Would you be able to hold people in your arms if you knew they were going to die and they were just skin and bone? Would you be able to pick up a child who was covered with flies? Would you be able to work with children who had scabies in their hair or sores all over their body. But then the death and desolation that was there because of the civil war that was in Buhrundi...and I know you saw the pictures on television of these little children just dying or being displaced from their families. But then I looked at all the pictures they sent us and brochures and everything so that we could get a look at them and old people that were there, and I called them and said I’m ready to go.

But then you had to get all these shots that cost a small fortune, I told Joy. But Joy came home one day, and I don’t know to this day where she found this flier, and it had all of these diseases listed on them that were prevalent in Africa. She said, ‘Mama, get every shot you can get because they have all of this stuff over there. So I got my shots, got all straight, they sent me my passport, sent me my airline tickets and everything and boom, they broke out in a civil war again, and they were afraid to let us go because I was supposed to go that December and I usually have the family down in December for Christmas. So I had Thanksgiving and



Christmas all together that year. Well, I left there after they said that they were fighting, and I said, 'Oh my, does that mean I'm not going to get to go?' And then the guy called and said they were going to send two groups, so I would get to go with the next team. Thanks be to God! Ready to go again that snow storm of '96 came and we couldn't get off the ground that Sunday. In fact we couldn't get to the air port. So he called and he told us that he would get in touch with us. Well we were supposed to go to Kennedy Airport and we...all the missionaries were to get together and talk. Well then he had to...and I never had heard of a telephone conference where you could hook up at least 20 people, and you all talk at the same time. So he did that, and we all talked and introduced ourselves and everything, and one of my questions was...they told you how much luggage, but you know how women are [Chuckling], I said, 'you said we could bring two pieces of luggage. Could I just bring one more piece'. And he said how big it is, and I told him, and he said, 'Oh, yeah. You can use that as a take-on bag.' Here are these other women now, chiming in on my question saying, 'yeah I need to take my stuff in another bag, too.' So he said, well, he had to tell them they could bring theirs. [Laughing].

So we left...well, we were supposed to leave on a Sunday, by Thursday it had kind of cleared out and they had cleared the roads and everything, so we left for the airport...my sisters and my daughters. And we got there and I got all checked in, sitting on the plane, they won't let the plane get off the ground because the wings are freezing. So we all sat there and prayed,

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'Lord, just let them put whatever they need to put on there, and let us get out.' So, finally, I guess we were there about one to two hours and finally, we took off. And we went from there to London, and we stayed in London one night, and my missionary partner and I waked around in London. And I bought a newspaper, never dreaming I would need it when I got in Africa. And then they flew us to Kenya...pretty, beautiful country, and I kissed the ground when I got there because I had told one of the Bible class students that was what I was going to do. And one of the bishops met us there, and he told me, 'Welcome home.' And I said to one of the other missionaries, 'What did he say to you?' They said, he just said 'Welcome' to



them. OK? All right. My parents were descendants from Africa, so this is why he's telling me, 'Welcome home'.

So we stayed in Kenya...I guess we were there about three or four days, and we got a chance to visit the parks that they have there, the wild life parks. And they had this mound [describes size using her hands] that was right in front of the park. And I said to the guide, 'What is that?' And he said, 'there is so much poaching over there for elephant and everything, so when they would run up on an elephant that the poachers had not had a chance to get the tusks from them, they'd grind them all of them up and put them right there in that pile to say, we want you to stop, you know, doing this...because this is all we can do after the elephant is killed.'

And so after we left there, then we got our assignments, and I went to the Congo, which, at that time, was not called the Congo. Because I said to the guide who was there, 'I used to look at the map but it's not there; now it's Zayir'. And so he said, 'yeah, when this new president got in or something he changed the name'. Well, then we got our assignment. I went to Vera, which is a place in the Congo, and we were there for two weeks, and we worked with children. Then we worked with people who were in the tent area because the people we were working with were the people who were refugees from Rwanda and from Buhundi. And after we got there and had our assignments, I worked in a church; that's where we held the class, and the kids were just fabulous to work with. As soon as you walk in the room, some of the same kinds of things that we did when I was in elementary...I don't ever remember our getting to our feet when the teacher walked in your room, but I do remember our getting extremely quiet, and that's how they were.

And then when they...they didn't have a lot of supplies, and I took \$20 and I gave it to one of the teachers because he had been a teacher before he had gotten displaced...let me back up a little bit. The school got started as a result of someone from an earlier team saying 'all of these children are just walking around, nothing to do and running around and no family or anything', and she said, 'they have to have something to do', and so she started the school. And she recruited some of our refugees to be teachers. So I gave him this \$20, and I asked



him if he thought he could use it, and he said, 'yes'. And he went out and he bought enough books and pencils for all of the six grades. And he didn't have quite enough for all of the six grades, so then I gave him [excuse me] some more money, and he went out and got them, and they would write real small and real close together to conserve the paper. And I said to them, 'If you had one wish, what would it be?' And you can guess what it would be...they all wanted to come to America because everybody..."

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Qt: "I was going to say, I'd want to pack them all up and bring them home. [Laughing]"

PG: "Joy told me, she said, 'Mama, don't you bring any of those children home with you!' [Laughing.] I said, 'Joy, why would you think it?' 'Ma, I know how you are'. I said, 'Oh, Joy, they wouldn't let them come home with me, but they all wanted to come to America and I said, 'Why?' 'Everybody in America is rich, so we want to come over there so we can get rich, too.' And so there was only one concept I couldn't get over. All the teaching that I did and that was to make them understand 'cold'. I took my winter clothes because I told you how cold and snowy it was here? Well, when we got into London, we changed our clothes to spring clothes. I took my coat...I had my raincoat that had a lining in it. I took my pants there that next morning, and I said to them, 'that's what we have to wear because the weather is so cold. And I passed them around...all they were talking about how heavy they were. 'Who in the world would wear this?', they said. And then the newspaper I told you I'd gotten in London...front page had had 'the United States still snowed in' because it had snowed since I had come. And all of these mounds of snow...but the picture wasn't in color but I took the newspaper there and I was showing them. That didn't mean anything at all to them, nothing at all."

Qt: "Isn't that something?"

PG: "As they say, unless you can get in touch with the word or its meaning, and actually see it, the meaning on the page means nothing. You have to take something to the printed page,



and that was proof to me then. They had no idea. But we were in the tents a lot. ..most of the refugees were in tents that had been set up by non-government agencies and governments because the people in Zaire didn't want them there, and they were always trying to make them go back to their own country, but they were so afraid...in fact, we went to one of the wildlife places and it had like a little lake in between the people and the animals, and we saw all these things floating on there and we asked the guide, and she said, 'Oh, they were rafts that the people had made to get away from their country, and they would come at night. And I said, That? It doesn't look like anything but some tree branches put together.' And she said, 'That's what it is and they just hope it will float to a country that's kind of neutral.' And she said there were so many bodies that were washed up there because alligators and crocodiles...we could see them across, laying up on the shore and everything. In fact, one of the... he wasn't exactly a medical doctor, but he'd served as a doctor in the clinic, said that at night you had to be careful walking out around his house because the crocodiles at night would come up on the shore. I said, 'You wouldn't have to worry about me'! [Chuckles]

And when we first went there and we were at Kenya, and they were saying about they kept dogs on the ground to give them warning in case any of the animals got on the ground. I said, 'You don't have to worry about me [Laughing] getting out there! But it was very interesting and very rewarding, and I still write to some of the people, and that was in '96.'

Qt: "Are you going to go back?"

PG: "I've asked to go back, but they've never had a slot for me. I would love to go back over there. I would just love to see some of the children. Now my girlfriend, who was the

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missionary that was with me, she went to another part because she went on the border of Buhundi. I was on the border of Rwanda, and she has gone back a couple of times, and then they had to evacuate her because they got fighting again in the Congo, and they had to evacuate all the Americans. And there were soldiers walking around all of the time, just like you would be in a city and people would be walking around, there were soldiers that were



walking around all of the time. And they had told us never, ever, ever to be alone. You always had to walk with a partner. So at night they would debrief us and to see how your day was going because they said they had had a missionary who had gone when this first started and he had gone out to work, and he became so overcome with the devastation, he went in his room and would never come back out again, until it was time for him to go back home. And see those are the things they were telling us, and I'm sure they were telling us the worst-case scenario, so if you think you can stand this, you could come.

And they had tents, and I'll bet you those tents would run from here to like almost around to Galesville, they had all of the ...and then right in front of the tent, they had this big ditch dug and that's where all the human waste was. This was how...and so, you can imagine, if you were living there, and the greatest disease that I saw there that was making the people sick was the malaria fly, cause a lot of the people had malaria that were in the clinics and everything. And anything that we carried, like alcohol or anything like that, when we left they asked us if they could have it. So we just left...I left all of the clothes that I had 'cause I'd gotten them from Yvonne at the Lula G. Scott Clothes Chest, and I said... I left those over there and then I'd bought a pair of shoes, I left them over there; and then my sister's mother-in-law's had given me a straw hat because I didn't have a straw hat, so I left those things over there.

But when you go and see...when you see them on television, and once it goes off, it goes out of your mind. But when you go over there and see it, every time something comes on now concerning Africa, I'll switch to it and look at it because it's unbelievable how inhumane one person can be to another. I know that somebody wrote a book, "Man's Inhumanity to Man", that's how it is in the camps. [Telephone rings in the background.] A teacher was telling me the worst place in the world to be because at night these soldiers are roaming and stealing, killing and doing things. And in the day time, there's nothing for anybody to do. Nothing. So it's just a very bad situation, very bad."

Qt: "I'll bet it was good to get back to good old Shady Side?"



PG: “Well, I wanted to come back because I wanted to see my family but if I could have gone back that next day, I would have gone.” [Laughing.]

Qt: “Would you really?”

PG: “Yes but I just loved it, and the country is beautiful and I was telling somebody all the house plants that we have, they bloom...they grow right on the ground over there.”

Qt: “Oh, my goodness.”

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PG: “It’s beautiful country. And all the trees had flowers in them. It’s so pretty, it’s so very pretty over there.”

Qt: “So now that you’re retired, what do you do to keep busy?”

PG: “Ah! As everybody says, J.R., ‘Ma, you’re never home, you’re never home’. I said ‘well you all come when I’m not home. Or you call when [Laughing] I am home’, but right now I volunteer up to the food bank that’s up in Tracey’s Landing, and I go to Millenium to volunteer and to read scriptures to the people who are there, and whatever they want to do I just, sometimes, just listen while they talk, or I will tell them about my family and they, in turn, will tell me about their family. But it was the funniest thing about them, when I first went there, they were kind of stand-off-ish, and I guess because ‘I don’t know if I can trust you’, like little kids are when they first see you. And now, those people, when they see us coming in, their big, broad smile and some of them didn’t even speak. This one man, I thought he couldn’t talk, but now I discovered he could talk because, I guess, ‘you’re familiar to us now and you’re friendly’, but that’s basically what I do at Millenium.

And then I’m on several different committees where I volunteer, like I tutor this little boy named Joshua this year, and I go down to Shady Side Elementary School and work as a tutor



and reading to anybody that the reading teacher assigns me. And I substitute all the time. I could substitute every day, but I refuse to substitute every day. I enjoy it so very much because you get a chance to get around to all of the grades and to work with all of the children. Plus you get a chance to keep up with the new techniques, keep up with the new strategies and everything. So it keeps you on your toes, and so this year I think I substituted more from January to June than I have in previous years, but I like that, too. And then I was on the Board of Directors for SCAN, but I told them I just think I want to be a member and a volunteer. And then I...”

Qt: “What’s SCAN?”

PG: “That’s this South County Assistance Network. That’s the food bank at St. James Parish.”

Qt: “Ah, got it.”

PG: “And that. And right now I’m going around visiting churches on Sundays. I visit all denominations, and so I keep quite busy just doing volunteer work and substituting. And then a former pastor of mine has impaired vision. In fact, I’m going down there today to read to him. And I do that also. And then we have a ministry called ‘Just Because We Care Support Ministry’ that I co-founded with the pastor at St. Matthews, the Rev. Roberta Matthews, and so we had a celebration on June 10th, so we send cards and we visit, and we fix dinner for somebody who’s sick and shut in, so we do all of that kind of stuff. So I am involved in quite a bit of volunteer work also.

Qt: “Umm humm.” [Replies in the affirmative.]

[Slight change in discussion?] There were... no body’s house was out there but Ginger’s grandmother’s house. The Seegarts lived there and then the grandmother married, and I forget what those children...I forget what her name was...and then Lynn Bussey, who was the



policeman, the only policeman in this area, lived right next door to them. [Someone in background is speaking.] Listen to me...I might have to come back another day, but I know he was the only policeman. And then right across from them was a lady who built the restaurant where Ritchie is now. It was called...I shouldn't have said that first. Country Kitchen. What was her name?"

Qt: "Hogg. Wasn't her last name Hogg?"

PG: "Might've been, yeah. Her husband was the taxicab driver. He had the first taxi cab person I knew of, and I had it...but what was her 'blank' Country Kitchen. Now she didn't call it Hogg, it was her first name."

Qt: "Iva? Emma? I'm A?" [Laughing]

PG: "What was her name? And I was going to tell you... I should have said her name first, but she built that. And where Grover is? You've probably all had that... by Floyd Compton. See those buildings were not along that line. There was a house that Doris Brown...I think Doris Brown is connected with this heritage. [Someone says something in the background.] But her family lived there, and then Woody Avery's house was there, and then you come down a little bit further. And then Main, where the laundrymat is? Where that house is, he built a house there. He was a plumber man, because nothing was on that road. Once we got out...and then where the doctor's office is, none of that was there. Now Jean Starr...we used to call her Jean Starr, Jean Leatherbury married Albert Jones. They built a house there."

Qt: "And that's still there."

PG: "That's still there. And...because when the post office left...burned down here...I think it burned down before, I mean after, they had built this post office here not too far from the fire department, before it went up on West River Road. It was right there across from the fire department."



Qt: “So, what did you say earlier about Woody Avery’s?...something about it burning down?”

PG: “Yeah. Woody Avery, that store that was there was Avery’s Store that Luther Leatherbury rebuilt on that land.”

Qt: “Where the Foam Mount Framing is, just right across Universe Road from Ritchie’s?”

PG: “Yes. And the people who lived behind there...Crowners? Ada! Her name was Ada. Ada’s Country Kitchen!” [Laughing.]

Qt: “I knew it was a terrible name. Ada Hogg! What an awful name!”

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PG: “Yeah. She was the one who built that out there, but that wasn’t always there. The Crowners who lived behind that framing place...they have three houses for sale now on Cedarhurst Road. That’s where they lived. That belonged to Margie Thompson’s family. She married a Scott, and that was her house. The lady...the mother that Crowner married... the man, she was a Scott, her three sons drowned.”

Qt: “Oh, no.”

PG: “And when they drowned, she kind of lost her mind, her mother. And then the lady who owned the house where Ada’s Country Kitchen is, she told me that her husband was one of those persons...and then they used to bring people’s bodies home, and you know, lay them out in the living room or the front room, and she said when they brought those three bodies there, she put her son, she had an infant son, in a wagon and put him down, and she never went back in that house again. And so then the Crowner’s boy. And then when Ada got that land or however, I understand it was a trade with the Leatherbury’s, and then they moved on



facing Cedarhurst Road that way [indicates direction with her left hand], and then Ada built that Country Kitchen right there.”

Qt: “So, is the house standing where those sons died?”

PG: “Umm humm.” [indicates yes.]

Qt: “Is that house still there?”

PG: “It’s one of those houses.”

Qt: “That’s for sale?”

PG: “Umm humm.” [In the affirmative.]

Qt: “Now how did they drown?”

PG: “A Noreaster came up.”

Qt: “Wow!”

PG: “Rodney said it was a very quick storm, ‘cause he said somebody else got drowned but it was overshadowed because these three Scott brothers were drowned. And when that Noreaster came up, the boat flooded and they went down.”

Qt: “Do you remember what year that was?”

PG: “No, but I can find out because it was Doris Brown’s uncles. Her mother’s brothers.”

Qt: “Wow.”



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PG: "And so the mother of those children kind of lost her mind. We used to call her Aunt Gussie cause when we were little, you didn't dare pass anybody's house without going in to speak to somebody who was old. It was impolite. You went in that house, you went in there and spoke to that old person. And that was another thing about my mother, now she never asked us if we had gone there, but she would say to us, 'How was Aunt Gussie today?' [Laughing.] And so, yes, but like I said, Lynn Bussey's house was there, Lorraine's house was there, Kirshner's Garage was not there, that store was not there, and there was a house that the man who was a plumber lived in...then Woody Avery."

Qt: "Stallings?"

PG: "That was his name, Howard Stallings. Yeah, he was a plumber."

Qt: "OK."

PG: "And then the doctor's office was built after... 'cause Weems farm all that land. He farmed all that land because he had said he would never sell the land in front of him because he always wanted to be able to see to the road...like where Dickey's house is? And everything, and all that was farm land, all down, like I said, all across because there was a ditch there. We called it a gut, and there was a little bridge over it that you could walk from one side of the land to the other. And he had a barn [excuse me] called a red top barn, because the house where...his land, like I said ran all the way down on that side, too, and next to his house was Ray's house. Did you know Ray Weems?"

Qt: "Was that Cindy's father?...Cindy and Carol."

PG: "Yeah. I know he was Carol's father. I didn't know the other children's names even though I went over there to iron one day. Because they had Ray and then Angela. Where Peggy Tucker is now that was Angela's house. The house next to that was the Kirschner man who built the garage. That was his house, that brick house where the Howards are living.



And then all of that land in between was vacant and then W. M. Thomas... 'cause Mr Weems and W. M. Thomas started, from what I understand, a lumber company, but it was down there on West River Road."

Qt: "Right."

PG: "And that's where that started at. And then when... I don't know what happened, but somehow or another, he had given him the land, you know, apparently they were partners and some how or other W. M. Thomas, the rumor says, that he somehow slicked him out of the land, and kept the house and everything and built W. M. Thomas Lumber Company where Smith Building Supplies. Originally, that was W. M. Thomas Lumber Company because I remember my sister used to work for the Weems. They didn't speak to them nor they were forbidden from buying any lumber off of them."

Qt.: "Oh!"

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PG: "Yes. [Laughing]. My mother always said, 'Still waters run deep'. They forbade their children. I'll bet you not one of those children ever bought anything from them. I don't know what they did after Smith Building Supply."

Qt: "Sure."

PG: "But Dickey is living in... and the children..." [stops to take a drink of water]

Qt: "I wanted to thank you so much for coming to talk to us today."

PG: "You are more than welcome."



Qt: “And we would love to see any pictures that you have or any old documents, that sort of thing. We can tack it on to the end of the tape.”

PG: “All right.”

Qt: “...start a new tape...”

PG: “OK” [Laughing].

Qt: “Thank you so much for joining us today.”

PG: “You are more than welcome, and it’s so good to see you again.”

Qt: “Good to see you, too.”

End of interview; end of second tape.