



Date of Interview: February 23, 2002

Interview of Joyce Brown Thompson  
Interviewed by Ginger Corson  
Transcribed by Donna Williams, January 4 2004

Q. My name is Ginger Newman Corson, and today is February 23, 2002, and today we have a special guest in that she is a little younger than our normal guests, but she's going to talk about her memories of her folks who lived and grew up here in Shadyside. And I'd like to welcome Joyce. Could you tell us your full name?

A. Yes, Joyce Brown Thompson.

Q. And where were you born?

A. I was born in Washington, DC and as a baby lived on Shadyside Road, we called it Churchton but it was on Shadyside Road.

Q. How did you all wind up in D.C.?

A. Well my mother was there in the hospital.

Q. Oh, ok, so it wasn't like y'all were living there?



A. No.

Q. OK. So your parents were living in Shadyside..

A. Yes.

Q. And went to D.C. to have you. What are your parents names?

A. Martha Simms Brown and Clark Young Brown. His nickname was 'Squeeze'? Brown, and most people know him by that. When I say 'Clark' Brown, very few people know him by that.

Q. Your aunt was from what area?

A. She was from Jewell, Maryland, which is the southern part of Anne Arundel County.

Q. Do you know how they met?

A. Actually, I'm told that my father knew her brother. She had lots of brothers and that's how he met her. And he said, he was at, I think, a ball game or something and saw her and he said she was the prettiest woman he had ever seen, and she was quite beautiful, and he began courting her.

Q. Good, good. Well that's neat. Now do you have brothers and sisters?



A. No, only Tom.

Q. How about your Dad. When was he born?

A. He was born May 21, 1903.

Q. And he passed away?

A. Yes. He passed away in March of '96, so he was 92, soon to be 93.

Q. And he had brothers and sisters...?... Mary??

A. Yes. He was the oldest of 14 children born to Grace Gross Brown [tape skips 'a beat']. Then there was my Aunt Gertrude, and my Aunt Evelyn and my Aunt Gloria, and my Aunt Blanche, and my Aunt Hilda, and my Aunt Magdeline, and my Aunt..., let's see, one other one...

[Slight pause as interviewer stops for a coughing spasm!]

A. [tape continues] Now Olivia, Mildred and Marie. My uncles are Benjamin, and they call him 'Son Boy', he lives on Shady Rest Road; Guy, they call him 'Cuffie'; and Uncle Vincent, and they call him 'Boy'. And so now, alive, I have three uncles and three aunts out of fourteen. And we're always saying, my cousins and I, that we're really blessed because we still have, at our age, six uncles and aunts. And that's a blessing.

Q. And do they all live in Shadyside?



A. Well my Aunt Gloria lives in Baltimore, but everyone else is in Shadyside and Churchton area.

Q. How about your aunts, their married names?

A. Oh yeah. My Aunt Gloria is a Davis; my Aunt Magdeline is Nick; and Aunt Hilda is Holland and her daughters, Gertrude Foote and Yvonne Matthews live in the immediate area also.

Q. Yvonne Matthews, what's her husband's name?

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A. Preston Matthews.

Q. Is that what they call him?

A. Yes.

Q. OK. Yvonne Matthews...sounds very familiar...

A. She's been quite active in the ? Center. She's an educator, she was a top ? educator.

Q. I think she might've been my teacher!

A. She very well may have been She taught in Shadyside.



Q. OK. Have you ever counted up how many cousins?

A. [Laughing] No, but let me say that all of my relatives had at least two or three or four children, other than my parents who had me, my Aunt Blanche who had one, and my Aunt Gloria had one. she's dead

Q. OK. In as far as your uncles go, were any of them watermen?

A. Oh yes, absolutely.

Q. And, did they crab, oyster, clam?

A. They oystered. And my family: my father, my grandfather, I'm told that my paternal uncles, they were all watermen. So watermen have been in our family for generations, absolutely.

Q. Now let's get back to your father. Do you know who his parents were?

A. Yes, Benjamin and Grace Brown.

Q. And they were both from Shadyside?

A. Shadyside Road, yes.

Q. What was Grace's name?



A. Gross.

Q. Do you know anything further, grandparents?

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A. Yes. Her father was John Gross and her mother was Elizabeth Gross, and she was formerly a Coate before she became a Gross.

Q. Do you know how long your family has been in Shadyside?

A. Well, when we were doing a family reunion, we traced it back to my great-grandparents and we didn't get any further than that, and that was Joe Brown and Molly Holland Brown.

Q. And what year was that, do you know?

A. It was in the 1800's because my grandfather was born in 1880.

Q. OK. All right. Well, that's neat. Now your father, 'Cloose', did he always earn his living on the water or did he do other things during different times of the year?

A. Different times of the year, now what he did, a lot of the men, the local men who were watermen, would go down to New Jersey, or up to New Jersey, but they would call it 'down to the shell pile'. And they would work on big ships on the water there and they would be watermen there. And I don't know whether they were oystering, I think they would be oystering but it was at an off-time of the year because it wasn't when the men here would be oystering. I'm thinking it may have been either early spring or early fall, but I'm not quite



sure of the time frame. But I remember my father and the men packing up and going off to, they called it 'shell pile', to go to work, and then they would come home after a period of time.

Q. But they did oyster here also?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. Any memories you can recall hearing stories about oystering around here?

A. Oh yes. They, oysters were plentiful, at the time. They used hand tongs. They didn't do the hydraulic rigs as the men use now. And I remember them getting their hand tongs ready for oystering, and I remember as a child my father would come home from oystering and my chore was to turn his gloves. Now the oyster gloves were these big, black rubber gloves, and they were made with cloth inside, so you would have to turn them inside out, and all this cruddy old water and mud from the oysters. And we would turn them inside out, and then put them beside the wood stove and they would dry, so the next morning he would have dry gloves to go oystering. And I also remember him telling the story of my great uncles, Silas? Gross and Clark Gross. And there was a time when they were out oystering together, and usually they did it in pairs to a boat. And a big storm came up and they were lost for, I guess, a day and a half or something, and the storm actually blew them over to the Eastern Shore but they were found; but I can remember my Dad said how he was just really horrified thinking these two brothers were lost out there. But they were found.

Q. That was scary.



A. That was real scary. Lot of goods stories about catching lots and lots of oysters, and my mother waiting for the big pay off, [Laughing] because when the oyster season was good, we got many things. That was always fun. The other thing he did, he planted tobacco. And he planted the tobacco, we called it 'over on the hillside'; but basically, if you come into Brown's Way where we lived, and you go back past the seamstress's house Katie ??, and go all the way back in that road where Dewey Brown and my Uncle Dewey, which was Dewey Brown, Jr.'s father lived, and go all the way back on the hill, there was an area where my father and grandfather planted tobacco. And as children, I can remember doing things, and my father had a big old barn on the other side of our house. And so when the tobacco was ready to cure and hang in the barn, he would do that and then he would strip the tobacco and I would help do that. And we would hang it, and once it cured, we would take it off to the tobacco house and sell it. And that was always a highlight, too, it was more money coming in for the family. So he was a waterman, he did some farming, I would say part-time farming and he did a lot to serve his family.

Q. Did he ever clam?

A. Never clammed, to my knowledge he never did. He also crabbed, so that once he came home and retired he would go out in the morning early to crab. He had a little rowboat and he would go out, he would actually take it down to West River, on West River and he would go down there early in the morning, about 5 o'clock. It would hardly be light, and he would leave and go down, and he would come back and he'd say "there's nothing more beautiful than being out on the water when the sun rises". He loved the water. I think that's where I got mine from, I just love being on the water. I can go down to the City Dock and I can stand there. Sometimes I'll ask Junior and RosaLee Gross if I can come down to their house and just go down by the water. It's so calm, don't you think?





Q. Oh, yeah, I love it. I totally agree. You know when your father would crab, how did he do that?

A. With a line.

Q. Trot line?

A. Trot line, yes. He would bait his line. In the evening when he would come back, he would clear it off and he would circle it. What he would do, he had a big tub and he would put it in the tub as he would bait it, and put it around like that [demonstrating with her hands], and then, in the next morning, he would go out, he would lift it out in the circle, take it down to the shore, put it in his boat, and as he went out, he would lower it over the side of the boat, and he would just sit there and wait. And then after a point, he would pull it in and take his crab net and scoop up his crabs, and pull it in and do that until he would catch crabs. And when you were doing that crabs were a lot more plentiful than they are now, I mean a lot more

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plentiful, and they were larger than they are now. He never sold them. He always brought them home, and he would cook them and share them with his sisters, who lived next door, and, of course, us. And I can remember after my Mom died even, and my father would be crabbing, and I moved back home to take care of him. It was really funny, because my daughter would call and say "what are you doing?" and I'd say, "I'm making crab cakes" [Laughing], because my father would have another two pounds of crab meat he'd picked out. And we'd make the crab cakes and we'd put them in the freezer and have them during the winter.



Q. Ah, that's always fun.

A. Yes, yes. And he would soft crab, we'd catch lots of soft crabs but I don't think people do that any more.

Q. Now how did he catch soft crabs? How did he do that?

A. I don't know I've never been with him to do that. I know there were times when we would soft crab, and we would just go out along the shore years ago, and we could walk along the shore and get in the grass and get them. But I know that he would get peelers a lot, and he would put them aside and they would shed, and then we'd have soft crabs. But I'd never really been with him or seen him do soft crabbing. All I know is he would bring them home and they were fun.

Q. How many bushels would he typically bring home?

A. Hardcrabs?

Q. Um hum.

A. He could catch a bushel, bushel and a half.

Q. In how long a span of time?

A. Well he would be out there in the morning, he would home early in the morning. He would go, as I said, sometimes he would go and it wouldn't be light outside.



Q. What did he use for bait?

A. I think he used chicken, and what else did he use for bait?

Q. Eels?

A. No, I can't recall

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Q. Mr. Handy used bull lips (??)

A. Really? Where did they get them?

Q. Off bulls (?) [Laughing] But it's so rubbery that the crab can chew on it for a long time.

A. Oh, interesting.

Q. But it's very fragrant, apparently, crabs love it. But I would think chicken would get pretty fragrant, too, after being in the water. Now did he have a particular place he liked to set the line? I mean if you had to go find him, would you know where to find him if he was crabbing?

A. Yeah. He would, at the time the Crowners, well she was a Wickes, Rachel Wickes, lived on West River, down right on the water, so he would take his little boat down there and he would leave it down there during the season. So, yes, if we had to find him, we knew we



could go down to Mrs. Wickes, James Wickes' house, and you could see him way out there. [Slight glitch in tape].

Q. What kind of a boat, did it have a motor on it or anything?

A. No, it was a rowboat.

Q. Now where did they live, the Wickes? Which road did they live at the end?

A. Well, if you go down West River Road, all the way down, and before you get to the end, you make a right and go around. I think Mr. Norman Hazard (?) used to have a home down there and they sold it. But it was down that area. I don't know who lives there now but the Wickes used to live there, it was originally the Crowner home place, and every since I was a child, they lived there.

Q. Earlier you mentioned the Heinrichs and the store. What do you remember about that area?

A. Oh, God! Well, when we were small, as I mentioned, my father used to keep his work boat there many times, and when we went down there we would go to the store, ice cream, they always had the ice cream that you dip and the hard candy, and it was always fun down there; the wooden floors, and the shelves with the food up on it, and you would have to get the long, like a long-handled arm that had a little grip on it, and they would have to reach up and get the food off the shelf. But that was always fun to do because when they were working on the boat, you could get ice cream from the store.



Q. Now, how long ago did that place close?

A. Oh my goodness, it closed when I was a teenager, probably, so I'm sure it's been closed more than 30 or 40 years.

Q. Do you remember any stories that your father or uncles or aunts would have told of early Shadyside, fires, tragedies, floods, snow storms, bay freezing up, things like that?

A. No. I do recall my Dad just talking about the snows they had when he was growing up, and he would always talk about the snow would be up to the fence line, and at that time a lot of people had fences. He talked about the snow being up so high that you could hardly get out of your door. And he always marveled at how the times had changed so that what we call a big snow storm with a foot of snow was nothing compared to when he was a boy, and how cold the winters got. He talked of how the bay, not the bay but the river would actually freeze over, and that people could drive their cars from Shadyside over to Galesville; and that was sort of hard to imagine, but he assured me that that happened. Sort of amazing.

Q. Now did y'all do much swimming on the river?

A. Well, it was interesting because we played on the river a lot, and I can remember trying to learn to row. That didn't work out too well. We would go around and around in a circle [Laughing], not quite coordinated enough to get that going. One place that we went when I was a child was called Bay Shore, and Bay Shore was next door to Columbia Beach; and it was a small beach, but all of the Blacks, Afro-Americans, in the area would go down there to swim, and it was wonderful. My parents would take me, especially on a Sunday evening, and



everyone was there, and we swam and we just had a good time.

I think probably before I was a teenager, that place closed down, but as a child I remember that. Now I don't know if it was privately owned and the people let us do it, because I know the Dennis' owned a lot of land down there. But we did it, and it was wonderful, absolutely wonderful. And then Columbia Beach, we didn't go there a lot, but I remember my grandmother, Grace Brown, had a good friend. She was an educator from Baltimore, but she was an educator in our school system. Her name was Mrs. Jones, Sarah Jones, and she had a lovely home down at the beach, and I can remember us always admiring that home because it was so beautiful. She would come down in the summertime to stay down here. A lot of the affluent blacks had homes there, on Columbia Beach, from either Washington or Baltimore. And I remember as a teenager the kids coming down, the teenagers coming down from Washington and it was always fun because we knew they would be down for the summer so we would have fun things to do.

Q. Well, talking about land, how much land did your family own in that area, and how did they trickle down...

A. As I mentioned my great-grandfather, Joe Brown and Molly Holland Brown, his wife, owned land, and apparently they owned a lot of land. Probably, I think now the family has about nine or ten acres, but it was given to my grandfather, and then he gave land to my father

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and then to his daughters and the ones who wanted to build in this area. As I mentioned, some of my aunts lived in Baltimore and married people from that area, so they did not build down here.



Q. What kind of a work boat did your father have?

A. Well, I don't know how to describe it. It was a typical oyster boat at that time. And it had a small cabin, a motor, of course, an engine, I should say, and it was long enough for the oyster tongs. And it had a culling board where they would dump the oysters on the board so that they could cull them, take the better ones and throw the small ones out. In the summertime, it was enough room for us to play in when they would go out on the water and cut back the motor to see if it was ready for oyster season.

Q. Did he typically take somebody with him?

A. It was usually my grandfather. Then once my grandfather was deceased, I'm sure my uncles went. But I also know that after I married, my ex-husband would oyster with my father.

Q. And what was his name?

A. Jack Thompson.

Q. Is he still in this area?

A. Yes.

Q. He grew up here?

A. He grew up in Shadyside on Shady Rest Road.



Q. Do you have children?

A. We have one daughter.

Q. Is she still around here?

A. Yes, yes. Her name is Teticia/Patricia(?), and she married Cameron Minor. They blessed us with three grandchildren: twins, Tony and Tania, they're 13 now and Cameron, who is 9; and they're wonderful grandchildren.

Q. And they live in Shadyside?

A. They live in Franklin Manor. But they're close enough to love them and get hugged and visit me but then they can go home [Laughing]

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Q. [Slight pause in interview.] Tell me about Shadyside Elementary School.

A. Ah, wonderful memories. When I went to Shadyside Elementary School, it was two rooms, and we had the big stove to keep us warm. There was no baseboard heat or anything. And Mr. Chesterfield Coates, who married my grandfather's sister, they lived next door to the school, so he was custodian of the school. And he would make sure that the fire was warm when we got in in the morning. And we had wonderful, wonderful lessons. We had teachers, Mrs. Alice Holt Battle (?), who later became principal at the new Shadyside School, and Mrs. Frances Neal Brown were the teachers at the time. And Mrs. Brown had, first, second





and third grade - she was Miss Neal then. And Mrs. Battle had fourth, fifth and sixth. I remember May Day. We had May Day where other schools would come, and we would wrap a May pole, and we would have flag relays, wonderful games and wonderful inter-action with other schools.

The teachers, in particular, were wonderful. They not only taught us the academics, but they taught us how to dress, how to sit, how to stand. There was a fun game Mrs. Battle played with us, and it was called 'gossip', and the children would be lined up in the little chairs at the front of the classroom, and she would whisper in one person's ear at the beginning, and then we would pass it along. And, of course by the time it got to the last person, it was totally different from what she had said. [Laughing]. And the point was, you cannot repeat what people tell you. You have to know for yourself, so don't do the gossip deal, so we sort of remembered that, and we remembered how to sit, that sort of thing. They were just great teachers, just really good.

I can also remember when Churchton Elementary School was moved down to Shadyside, and I was going down to the fourth grade as I recall, and I was so looking forward to Mrs. Battle being my teacher that year. And then we got a new teacher, the teachers from Churchton, and Miss Julia Smith became my teacher and I was not so pleased with that. But later found out she was a wonderful teacher, wonderful lady. That was good, that was good. But Shadyside Elementary has good memories.

Q. Where was that located? I mean, it's still around, right?

A. Yes, it's now Lula G. Scott Center.



Q. OK Now, did your family go to church?

A. Yes.

Q. Which church?

A. They went to Franklin United Methodist Church.

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Q. Since way back?

A. Yes, as far back as I can recall back, and I began going to St. Matthews United Methodist Church here in Shadyside once I was married. Then after my husband and I divorced, I continued to go there. And that's where I worship now.

Q. Now tell me about any memories that would pertain to cars here in Shadyside.

A. [Laughs] Well, there's one particular one. My Dad told us this story. When he was a little boy, he and my Uncle Earl Grosse, they were about the same age. And they were down at the bogs(?); that was what they called the end of the turn from our house, down at Bogs? They were down there playing, of course it was a dust, dirt roads, and he said they looked up and saw something coming down the road. And it was blowing a horn. Well, he said he knew now it was a horn, but at the time all he saw was this horseless carriage. He said it frightened him so they ran up to the house. [Laughing] It was this horseless carriage coming down the road, and what they found out was, it was the first car that they had seen in the Shadyside area come down, and they said it was some sight. They were just mesmerized by it. [Laughing].



Q. Any idea who owned it or what kind of car it was?

A. No, I don't know. He talked often about Model T's, but I don't know if that was a Model T Ford or not, but I can tell you it left a lasting impression! [Laughing].

Q. Isn't that awesome? I mean because if we saw a horse drawing something we would think it was strange.

A. Absolutely, absolutely.

Q. Now the home that you live in now. Is that an ancestral home?

A. That's the home I grew up in. It's the home that my father and mother built, If I can recall, in the 30's. And my Dad told us this story of how, first of all, he borrowed the money to build this house. He said everyone said "he's never going to pay that man back", it was a man across the road, Mr. Thompson, Ollie Thompson, I think his name was, and my Dad said he was going to prove he was going to pay it back. But with the money he went to the sawmill and the trees were cut into wood for the house and the house was built. And he proudly told us the story of it, and my Mom just smiled when he said "And I paid him every penny back, and I paid it back in less time than they thought I would." So he was really, really proud of the fact that he had borrowed the money, had the trees cut and the wood cut for the house, and the house was built, and he paid back the loan.

Q. He can be proud of that.

A. Oh, yeah, especially in that day and time. My Dad, being the oldest of fourteen children,



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had a third grade education. And my daughter and I, Teticia, laugh now and say "Boy, if my Dad could've had an education he could've been a doctor or a lawyer." I mean he was so wise. I could take a calculator to count something, and my Dad would've counted it in his head and said " oh, that's so-and-so amount"; and we're like, "OK"! I mean he was just very wise, a wonderful man. I loved him..

Q. Where was the saw mill?

A. I'm told that it was up near the Swamp Circle Saloon, somewhere in that area, but I don't know exactly whether it was on the opposite side of the road or whether it was on the same side.

Q. There's a little tiny stand next to the old,old church there that says, like, Brown's Produce ?

A. Oh yes.

Q. Any relation to you?

A. Yes. That was my Uncle Son Boy, Benjamin Brown is his name, and he built his house on Shady Rest Road. But up until his health began to fail, he had that stand. It was a produce stand.

Q. Neat! How about any other homes that your father helped build?



A. Well, and I don't know if he helped build our house, but he was instrumental in getting the wood cut for it. I can recall as a child leaving Shayside Elementary School and being able to walk up the road to play with my friend, Cathy Bennett, who lived right at the corner of Nick Road and Scott Town Lane. And my Dad and my uncles, my Uncle Benjamin, my Uncle Melvin, my Uncle Vincent, they would all be down at my Uncle Guy Leon Brown's home, which is right on Nick Road, and they were literally building the home. And that was fun. Most people think their family's the best but I just thought my father and uncles could do anything. I remember them doing that, and I remember them taking engines out of cars, motors out of cars and re-building those and putting them back in, and they would have the cars run. Of course, I thought they could do anything.

Q. The home that you live in now, is there a lot of land surrounding it that's covered by trees or is it like farmland?

A No. There are lots of trees, there are lots of relatives who live there. Right now, in my grandparents home, my cousins Marshall, Junior and Cynthia, his wife, and Terraine (sp) and Sherrell (sp), they live in that home now. Directly behind me, Gertrude and Arthur Foote, the late Arthur Foote, live; she's my cousin. And then my Aunt lives to the back of me also, my father's sister. And then to the front is my other aunt, my Aunt Magdeline, and Marshall (?);

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so my whole family live in that area. To the back of us going down the lane, my cousin Katie, who's the seamstress. And then all the way back are the Browns, and that's Roger Brown and Dewey Brown, they were Dewey's children, Dewey Brown, Sr., originally lived back there.

Q. I want you to tell me about the fruit trees?



A. Oh, they were wonderful. If you go back that lane where my father planted tobacco, there were wonderful, wonderful fruit trees. I mean there were cherry trees that we would just eat and eat from. There were pear trees. Uncle Dewey, who was my great uncle, had pear trees and apple trees, and they were wonderful; and he just didn't have one or two trees, there were lots of them, and so we could eat those. My mother did a lot of canning. And we picked blackberries; and there were loads of blackberries then. They were big blackberries; now they're just little. But there are not as many fruit trees around just growing on property as there used to be. We still have a peach tree that my Dad planted, and it's in the back of my house, and every year it produces peaches. And last year the peaches were literally this big [indicating size with hands], and they were so sweet and so good, not a lot, it's a small tree, so you may get eight or ten peaches off it, but they were good.

Q. Awesome. Now when you were growing up, was it typical to have animals running around? Did your father have cows and chickens and goats, and things like that?

A. Oh, God! [Laughing] My grandparents, I can remember, had Guinea keets (?)peeps?. Do you know what Guinea keets are? Ah! Those little things would pluck at you. They were running around. But they also raised chickens, and I can remember them having the chicken coops, and they actually had the little heaters where they would actually get the small chickens. I can remember them having those. They raised pigs or hogs, no cows. But I do remember my Dad when I was in elementary school having a goat. And he tied the goat in the front yard, and, of course, the children teased me to no end. But no, those were about the only things that we had.

Q. OK. Do you have any memories of a movie theatre in town?



A. Yeah. There was, right down almost across from Cove Road. It's now a renovated house, it looks like a little school house. It has a bell out in front of it. A man would come down from Baltimore, I'm told he was from Baltimore, and he would bring movies a certain night of the week. And my Dad would take me to the movies down there and we would walk down from our house. And then sometimes if I got really tired, he'd put me on his back and take me back home. But there were benches, wooden benches with no backs to them, and the old wooden floor, and we would just enjoy this movie, "Charlie Chan", for example, those kinds of movies; some scary ones, too, like "Dracula"-type thing. They would bring those too. Then we also went to the movie in Annapolis, that was the Star Theatre in downtown Annapolis, but that's the only movie theatre I can recall in Shadyside when I was young.

Q. Where was the Star Theatre?

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A. The Star Theatre is down where the Arundel Center is in Annapolis, but it was on the opposite side of the street

Q. But it's not there any more?

A. Oh, no, it hasn't been there for years.

Q. OK. Tell me about the things you could hear when you would be laying in your bed.

A. Well, first of all, it was very quiet. There were certainly not as many cars on the road as there are now. You could sleep with your windows open with just a screen. And as I can recall, at night time just lying in my bed, and I could hear fog horns. The fog horns would be coming from the ships out in the bay, and I still love that sound. As a matter of fact, my



father also told a story of the ships coming down along the Columbia Beach area, and when the bananas would get too ripe, they would throw the bananas overboard, over in the water, and my father said you could get plenty of bananas. And to the day he died he loved bananas. [Laughing]

Q. No kidding! That's interesting.

A. Yeah, I used to love to hear the fog horns which may be one of the reasons I love lighthouses. And we go in search of lighthouses in the summertime. I pack my grandchildren up and we do day trips, just for the day, and we look for lighthouses. I love them.

Q. What've we got here? [Ms. Thompson displays various photographs].

A. Well, as you can see by the hairdo, this is an old picture. [Laughing]. But this is me, this is my daughter, Teticia (sp?), that's my Mom, Martha, and this is my Dad.

Q. Awesome.

A. Yes. This is a family picture. And, this is interesting. This was taken after my Dad had had a heart attack, a mild heart attack. And we thought, 'we really don't have a family picture, we need to get one.' And so we took this picture, and this was in the '70's ,about three years later or four years later my Mom died in a car accident, wherein my Dad lived twenty more years after that. So it's amazing how that happened. [Ms. Thompson then displays another photograph] And this is a picture of myself and my youngest grandson, Cameron, and the twins, Tony and Tannia (sp?). [Another photograph is then shown]. This one you probably won't be able to see very well because this has a lot of old pictures on it.





And my cousin, Kevin, who is a computer whiz and also a free-lance artist, made this for me. This is called 'Brown Heritage', and it has pictures of my aunt and uncles, and my Dad and my uncle. They're very old pictures, my Uncle Melvin, when he was in the military, just lots of stuff here. Good old family pictures, so I love this one very much. [Another photograph is displayed].

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And we haven't talked much about my maternal side of the family, but you see this is a very old photo. This is my maternal grandmother, Odella Simms; she was from the Jewell, Maryland area. [The last photo is then displayed.] And this is another picture of my Mom; we call this the glamour shot. [Laughing] And you can see this is an old photo also. And this is Martha Brown. And that's all the photos I have; I have some small ones but we won't go through those right now. And then I have, and I know you probably can't see this, but this is my grandfather, Benjamin Brown, and this is a Coast Guard picture. He was the cook on the ship, and this was just beautiful. Can't see that very well, I'm sure.

Q. Was he in the Coast Guard?

A. Yes. [She displays a larger version of the same document.] And this is another version of that, but my cousins found these, and they ran them off for us. Yeah, good, good stuff. [She now shows a reunion document.] And this is from our family reunion, this is a brochure, This was our first family reunion. We had it at Lula G Scott Center in '93. A lot of the family have died since then but it was a wonderful occasion. And it was called "Family", and as you see, it's a picture of a boat on the water.

Q. That's awesome.



A. Yeah, that was good. [Displays another item.] This is something my cousins, Ramona Green and Barbara John, had made for my Dad who celebrated his 90th birthday. Talks about the top stories on May 21, 1903, and this says "Wright Brothers Carry Out Successful Flight at Kitty Hawk." [Laughing]. Lots of good stuff there, too.

Q. Well, to finish up here let's talk about you and what you're doing now.

A. Oh, ok.. I'm a social worker, I'm an adoption social worker in Child and Family Services in D.C., and I love what I do. And interesting enough, of all my cousins and my aunts and uncles, there were three who had one child, and each of those 'one' children, myself, my cousin Beverly, my cousin Malcolm, are all social workers. We're still trying to figure that one out, so we're going to get together and talk about that - what made us go into social work. For me, I think my mother did. She was always the 'giving one' in the family. She would go to her relatives in Baltimore and in Southern Maryland, and she was always taking food or clothes or something. And she was the giver, so I think maybe that's where I got that from.

My Dad was always the one who said, "You have to save your money; if you make five, save two, and your credit is the most important thing a man can have", kind of thing. So I think my ability to save and be frugal, some people may call it cheap, [Laughing.] But I think I got that from him. So I know they left me with a legacy, just living in this area has been wonderful.

I tell the story of how we used to always leave our doors open and not have to worry about

locking them. Well, we lock them now, but I still think it's a wonderful place to live: the water, the scenery, the people. I wouldn't live anywhere else. Shadyside and this area is just beautiful.



Q. Awesome, awesome. Well, thank you so much for sharing your story with us today.

A. Well, it's been fun.

Q. I can see you are truly blessed to have so much family around you; that's totally unusual.

A. Absolutely. Thank you.

Q. Thank you.

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