

MATTHEWS, Sarah

1984.011.002

Date of Interview: September 27, 1984
Interview of: Sarah Matthews
Scott Town Road
Shady Side, Maryland

Note: Jean Matthews Johnson (JMJ) is Sarah Matthews' daughter and has several statements herein.

JL: Mrs. Matthews, were you born in Shady Side?

SM: Yes.

JL: Uh ... would you mind telling me what year you were born?

SM: 1900.

JL: 1900. Uh, your parents lived here in Shady Side?

SM: Yes.

JL: They did? Would you tell me where they lived here in Shady Side?

SM: Well, this is their home, right in Shady Side.

JL: This is their home we're in, right now?

SM: This is not their home, their home is Scott Town Road, down farther ... you know, where you ... Wilson Scott.

JL: Yes, ma'am.

SM: Well, that's my mother's home place ... the house before you get to Wilson Scott's.

JL: I see, uh, huh. Can you tell me if there were brothers and sisters in your family?

SM: Yes, I had brothers and sisters ... in my ...

JL: Would you mind telling me what their names are, please?

SM: Well, my brother's name was Wilson Scott and, uh, my sister's name was Lillian Scott and one sister was named Vernie Scott.

JL: Could you tell me what you and the other children in your family used to do for entertainment when you were little children?

SM: Well ... we used to go to, you know, sometimes we'd go to parties, the like ... to house parties or something.

JL: Uh, did you, uh, ... like to ice skate or did you, uh, like the water, or ...

SM: Yes, I used to like ice skating.

JL: Where did you used to ice skate down here, Miss Matthews.

SM: Uh, I don't know where you would call it ... we would just say we would go down the shore ... it

wasn't far from the house, just down the road, I guess you'd call it, uh guess you'd call it, huh um, for Scott's Creek, I guess. That's all I would ever call it . . . Scott's Creek.

JL: Did you used to go with a group of people...

SM: Yes, uh, huh.

JL: Could you tell me who some of the people you used to skate with?

SM: Oh ... well, I used to skate with my sister, sometimes ... and my brother, Wilson Scott, and Vernie Scott ... that was my sister, uh huh.

JL: Uh, could you please tell me what your father did for an occupation?

SM: What, my father worked on Weems' Farm and he used to work in the boarding house there, ... they had a boarding house, too.

JL: Could you tell me a little bit about the boarding house and what it was called and what it was like?

SM: Well, it was probably Weems Boarding House, uh huh ... and I used to happen in to help him to wait on tables ... they had boarders ... you know, boarding house, huh, huh.

JL: Do you know how long the boarding house was in existence.

SM: Oh, I ... I really don't know. I really don't know how long it was in existence.

JL: Uh ... could you tell me how many years you worked there?

SM: Well, I was ... just helping during the summertime, you know. You know, when they had boarders, I would help him ... just wait on tables and wash dishes.

JL: Uh huh, could you think of anything else maybe you ... you and the other children in your family used to do for entertainment when you were little ... or did you used to play ball or ...

SM: Well, we used to play ball, played caddy, [laugh] ... uh, huh.

JL: Huh, any other type of games?

SM: Well, that's the only game I ever played ... played ball and caddy, you know, that's the only games I ever, I used, to play when I was young.

JL: Uh, did you ... since you were born down here, I presume you went to school down here?

SM: Yes, huh, huh.

JL: Could you tell me where the school was located?

SM: The school was, uh ... I don't know where you would call this, uh,, . . .where would call that Jean, you know, by. . .you know where Cain's(?) lived on the corner. . . what would you call that?

JMJ: [background voice] Columbia Beach Road... .

SM: I guess that's what you would call it. . . .Columbia Beach Road, uh, huh.

JL: Could you recall who some of your classmates were?

SM: Well. . .Margie Thompson and Myrtle Thompson. . .Seama Dennis, Pearl Wells and Daisy Scott and Gladys Scott.

JL: Do you recall any of the young men who were. . .who you went to school with?

SM: Walter Matthews and Talmadge Brown, Gilmore Matthews.

JL: Would you also recall who some of your teachers were?

SM: Uh, one was Miss Midella and Mrs. Woodson, . there're the only two I can remember, right now.

JL: Now, I've got to ask you a very strange question. When you were a very small little girl living in Shady Side, who do you recall that you thought was the oldest person that you knew?

SM: When I was living in Shady Side? I think my, uh, my grandmother, I think.

JL: Anyone else out of your family you thought was maybe the oldest person living in Shady Side?

SM: I ... you mean the oldest person ...

JL: ... that you thought ...

SM: That I thought ... huh, huh ... well, I think, Betty Johnson, I think.

JL: Could you tell me where she lived in Shady Side? Do you recall where she lived?

SM: Jean, what do you call down there where Miss Betty lived? Huh??

JMJ: [background voice] West River Road ...

JL: West River Road ...

SM: Huh, huh ...

JL: How old do you think this lady was?

SM: Oh, I don't ...

JL: Do you think she was in her 80's or 90's or ...

SM: Well, I think she was older than that. My grandmother, ... I'm sure she was older than that.

JL: Uh, would you know, uh, when your father bought property in Shady Side, would you know ... did he happen to tell you what year he bought property in Shady Side?

SM: No, he did not.

JL: You can't recall

SM: No, I don't recall

JL: is there anything else you can tell me about your growing up at home ... something about your home life. Maybe something funny happened or something.

SM: I know he would ... when he would go to work in the morning, he would tell us, uh, some personal work that he wanted to be done when he come back from work in the evening.

JL: What would he tell you he wanted you to do?

SM: He would tell us to, uh, work in the garden, you know ...

JL: And I'm sure your mother made sure you did it.

SM: Oh yes, she did. Yes ... we did what he told us ... told us to do, when he come home in the evening, his work was done, what he told us to do

JL: And if it wasn't?

SM: How 'bout that!

JL: If it wasn't, what happened?

SM: He wouldn't spare the rod on you, I'm telling you.

JL: But it was usually done, though?

SM: Oh, yes, it was.

JL: Could you tell me if your father had any animals, like horses or cows or chickens?

SM: Yes, he raised chickens and hogs.

JL: And the ... the hogs were slaughtered in the wintertime?

SM: Yes.

JL: Could you tell me a little bit how they did it? I mean, you know, what after their hogs were slaughtered. You know, how he went about making his sausages and hams and ... could you tell me? Do you recall?

SM: Well, they would cut the hogs out and, uh, my mother, she would, you know, make the sausage meat and cook the fat, you know, and make lard.

JL: And she would keep the lard in big tins?

SM: Yes. Big boilers.

JL: And did your father also ... uh uh ... salt down some of the meat ...

SM: Yes, he salt the meat, he salt the meat down and also smoke the meat.

JL: And you all had to help him do this?

SM: Well, we helped mother ... you know, with the sausage meat ...

JL: Huh, huh. .

SM: Well ...

JL: go ahead, I'm sorry.

SM: Oh, but I say, he did the salting the meat down himself.

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JL: But, I have a confession to ask you. Did your father have his own secret recipe for salting down his meat? Most men did.

SM: Yes, he did.

JL: The majority of the men had their own secret recipe that they didn't share with anybody ... that's interesting to know.

SM: Huh, huh.

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JL: Huh, could you tell me what you recall of some of the stores that existed in Shady Side when you were a little girl?

SM: Uh. . .Crandell's store, that's right up Dent's Road and Owings; was in Shady Side.

JL: Do you recall the Heinrich ... or Hendricks?

SM: Mr. Heinrich's.

JL: Do you recall, uh, people sitting around the stoves and they're talking?

SM: Huh?

JL: Do you recall people sitting around the stoves, in the store, talking?

SM: [Laughter.]

JL: Would you happen to recall some of the things that they talked about?

SM: I really.. .I really don't know because I never.. .I never, uh, you know, whenever I come to the store, I get what I wanted and I didn't pay any attention to what they were doing.

JL: Well, I heard that they sometimes have a good time ... they sit there and talk and laugh.

SM: Maybe ... I ... well. I never pay any attention to anything like that.

JL: I see. Do you recall the Emma Giles?

SM: Yes, I do.

JL: Could you tell me ... tell me about your recollection of the Emma Giles?

SM: Well, I know we used to go to Baltimore on the Emma Giles.

JL: Uh, how much would it cost to go to Baltimore on the Emma Giles?

SM: Yeah [grumble] I really have forgotten how much it cost, now

JL: Would you have any idea how long it would take you to get from Shady Side to Baltimore on the Emma Giles?

SM: I guess you'd leave in the morning and I guess you'd get there sometime in the afternoon, maybe.

JL: Do you recall the Shady Side Beverage Company; that used to make sodas?

SM: I don't recall that..

JL: Do you recall a, uh, bake shop or little bakery in Shady Side?

SM: No, a lot of areas in Shady Side had a bakery, you know. They had a bakery.

JL: Did they make all their things right there?

SM: I think so.

JL: You think so. . . . uh, Could you tell me, uh, what you remember of the Andrews Hotel?

SM: Well, I used to chambermaid down there, too, helped the chambermaid down there at Andrews' Hotel, uh huh.

JL: Uh, could you tell me how many rooms ... if you helped her, how many rooms were in the hotel?

SM: I ... I really couldn't tell you,- or have any idea

JL: But the people would come and they would stay all summer?

SM: Yes, uh, huh.

JL: Would you recall for me ... uh ... what would consist of a evening meal down at the hotel? What did they serve for dinner?

SM: Oh.. .what would they serve for dinner? I think they'd serve chicken, vegetables ... different kind of vegetables

JL: Okay.. .did they have, uh, young ladies who worked in the kitchen down there to help?

SM: Yes, uh, huh.

JL: Uh, do you recall the post office in Shady Side?

SM: Yes, I recall it, uh, huh.

JL: Could you tell me who the postmistress was then? Or was it a gentlemen?

SM: I think.. . . uh, I think Miss Ethel Nowell had the post office at that ... From that ... I'm sure, I think she did.

JL: Uh, when you were a little girl and you lived in Shady Side, here, was there mail then or do you recall when the mail did finally come to Shady Side?

SM: Well, we always, uh ... we always got our mail over to Crandell's Store. They always would, you know ... leave out ... put out ... put the mail in the bag and leave it over to the store.

JL: I see. . .uh, do you recall then when the post office was started in Shady Side?

SM: No, I don't. Uh huh.

JL: Speaking of the Crandell's store, could you tell me a little bit, maybe what the store looked like on the inside?

SM: Oh, he had a nice store ... that's where we used to do most our, you know, buying our groceries.

JL: Were there barrels of things sitting around and bags of things and so forth?

SM: Yes , uh, huh.

JL: Dry goods of any kind?

SM: No.

JL: Just. . .groceries?

SM: Just groceries, mostly groceries, uh, huh.

JL: I see. Uh, they have a big candy counter ... uh, most of the stores like that had a candy counter and children used to ...

SM: Well, they only had a ... had a counter, just one counter in the store.

JL: Huh, huh, I see. Uh, is there anything else you might like to tell me about your home life?

SM: Well, I guess that's about all, I guess.

JL: Did you help your mother do canning in the summertime?

SM: Yes, I helped her to can, uh huh, can.

JL: So your mother would have a big garden and you would have to help her?

SM: Yes, we had a big garden, yes

JL: And, uh, did she do her canning on a . . . on a wood stove?

SM: Yes, we'd can on a wood stove.

JL: Huh, huh.. . that was a lot of work.

SM: It was, it was a lot of work, it sure was.

JL: Uh, could you tell me what you recall of the hurricane of '33 that everyone said was so bad.

SM: Well, we were at church, at Franklin Church and then we came home, our house had split.. .our house had split apart.

JL: The one wall.. .outside wall came off?

SM: Yes, one part of it had split.

JL: Your father's house?

SM: No, not my father's house, I was living in my, uh ... I was living in my mother's father's home...

JL: Oh, I see

SM: ... at that time. Uh huh.

JL: Oh, I see. So, what did you do that evening?

SM: Well, we came over to ... we came to my mother's house and stayed with her.

JL; And how... but how did you protect what was in the house if the wall was gone?

SM: Well, we just left everything just like it was and came on over ...

JL: But it was repaired shortly thereafter.

SM: No, it was ... it wasn't repaired because, uh, we didn't bother about it any more. We just stayed with my mother.

JL: Stayed with your mother.

SM: Uh, huh.

JL: Uh, was that the only damage that was done down in this area, just to your home or were there other homes that were damaged?

SM: Well, there was plenty of homes that was ... there was a barn had to come apart and loads of things was all across the field, people's coats and things was all, you know, across the field.

JL: It lasted like two or three days?

SM: No, just that Sunday evening.

JL: I see.

USM: Uh, huh.

JL: Do you recall a gentlemen down here named Sylvester Brent?

SM: Sylvester Brent?

JL: His nickname was "Bess".

SM: Oh, he's dead.

JL: Yes, I know. Uh. . . and do you recall this gentleman?

SM: Deed I don't.

JL: Okay, I thought maybe you had known him.

SM: No.. .no.

JL: Uh, would you uh know of anything of the early boat builders that lived in Shady Side ... some of the gentlemen who built boats?

SM: No ... I really don't ...

JL: Okay. Uh ... would you mind telling me, ma'am, what year you and your husband were married?

SM: Uh, uh ... what year was that ... I ... [inaudible sentence].

JL: It really doesn't matter. Could you tell me what your maiden name was?

SM: Scott. . . Sarah Scott.

JL: Sarah Scott and could you please tell me your husband's name.

SM: John Matthews.

JL: John Matthews... .do you have children?

SM: I had eleven children.

JL: Would you mind telling me your children's names?

SM: My oldest one is Ellis Matthews. And Thomas Matthews. Custer Matthews and William Matthews and. . .Jean Matthews, Lucille Matthews, Sarah Matthews. . .Thelma Matthews.

JL: You were going to tell me the ... the three more names of your children.

SM: Uh huh.

JL: They are Alexander, Mary and Calvin?

A Alexander, Mary and Calvin.

JL: and Calvin. Do you have grandchildren?

SM: Oh my gracious, I couldn't tell you how many grandchildren I have and great-grandchildren. I wouldn't ... oh my gracious ...

JL: Mrs. Matthews, your daughter helped me, uh, in figuring up how many grandchildren are in your family. Would you mind telling me.

SM: 55 grandchildren, 90 great-grandchildren, one great-great grandchild.

JL: That's wonderful... .that is a grand family you have. It really is. When you have a family reunion, it must be some kind of reunion.

SM: I'm telling you.

JL: Uh, would you mind telling me what age you were when you were married?

SM: 18.

JL: You were 18. Uh, is your husband still living?

SM: No, he's dead.

JL: Could you tell me what ... what your husband did for an occupation?

SM: Well, he used to oyster.

JL: Do you recall the name of your husband's boat?

SM: Well.. .he didn't have a boat, he was working with ... um ... I don't ... I forgot the man that he was oystering with now.

JL: But he.. . that was his main occupation?

SM: Yes, uh, huh, oystering.

JL: I see. Uh, do you ever recall him saying what they used to get for a bushel of oysters when he first started?

SM: I don't ... I really don't recall that.

JL: You don't recall. Uh, could you tell me how many years you and your husband were married before he passed away?

SM: Uh. ... I guess.. .about 40 ... 50 years, I guess ... 40 or 50 years maybe, but 40 years, I'm sure.

JL: Huh, huh, ... I see. Was your husband's family from Shady Side?

SM: Yes. Yes. Joseph Matthews in Shady Side.

JL: Was his. . .did his father also work on the water ... or what did his ... your husband's father do?

SM: I think he worked on the water, I think.

JL: Uh huh. . .could you tell me. .uh uh, anything more about, perhaps, your home life, growing up ... well, what did you used to do for entertainment in your teenage years then, before you were married?

SM: We didn't do too much of anything before I was married ... we didn't do too much of anything. We didn't ... we'd go to parties or something like that, you know.

JL: Uh, but you really stayed at home and worked.

SM: Really home ... stayed right home mostly.

JL: Uh, so you really did not have a job before you were married except for what you told me earlier?

SM: No, that's right.

JL: . Uh. . . I'm sure your husband was very happy that you had eleven children....

SM: Yes.

JL: All of these children living?

SM: Yes, all but two ... two of my children has passed.

JL: Uh, which ones are they?

SM: Well, hum ... William Matthews, he was killed in an accident and, uh, Thomas Matthews, he was.. .uh, he was oystering and he got taken sick, you know, and he passed.

JL: Do you recall, uh, the day that the three Scott boys drowned on the water? They were all out on a boat.

SM: That, uh... .I can't recall the year but I know it was the 7th of April ...

JL: It was a sad day ... for everyone in the community.

SM: It was ... it was ... it really was.

JL: They said that a very bad storm came up.

SM: It sure did.

JL: Uh, Mrs. Matthews, when you and your husband were first married, where did you live in Shady Side?

SM: I lived with my mother.

JL: You and your husband lived with your mother.

SM: Yes.

JL: I see. Uh ... and then, later on, did you move into your own home?

SM: Well, um, I don't know how many years it was before we moved here ...

JL: In this house, here?

SM: Yes, uh, huh.

JL: You wouldn't recall what year you moved in

SM: I really ... I really don't know exactly, you know, what year it was.

JL: Uh, did your husband have this home built or did he purchase it from someone?

SM: He had it built.

JL: He had it built. And you raised all your children in this house?

SM: Yes.

JL: And if you had eleven children at home, I'm sure each one of them had chores to do.

SM: Yes, they did.

JL: It must have been very difficult raising eleven children.

SM: Yes, it was ... sure was but we, with the help of the Lord, we raised them.

JL: And ... and, uh, uh ... I'm sure that they all had to help you do all kinds of things.

SM: Oh yes ... they really helped, I say they really helped.

JL: Uh, I'm sure you had a garden, as well, to help provide food for them.

SM: Yes, we had a garden - and vegetables.

JL: And did your husband have any ... any livestock of any kind, I mean, like pigs or anything like that that he would slaughter in the winter?

SM: Well, uh, he didn't have any, but my son, he always had hogs ... he raised hogs.

JL: And that ... that did help some.

SM: Yes, it did, uh huh.

JL: Uh, could you tell me what your home life was a little bit like with all these children at home?

SM: It isn't any children here now, except for my son, he stays here with me ... my oldest son.

JL: Mrs. Matthews, we're ... [cough] excuse me, Mrs. Matthews, were all of your children born at home?

SM: Yes. All my children's born at home.

JL: Uh, was there a midwife that would come and help you or was, uh, a doctor came to help you with your children?

SM: Well ... we had a midwife.

JL: Could you tell me who she was?

SM: One was named Hattie Nick ... Hattie Nick ... no, the other lady was named, um, Josephine Saul, of course, they had been passed for years now.

JL: And they would come and help you with the ...

SM: Yes ...

JL: With the delivery of your children?

SM: Uh, huh.

JL: How long would they stay in your house ... two or three days after your children were born to help you?

SM: Oh, it was sometimes ... sometimes they would stay with you one week, you know.

JL: Uh huh, well, with you with a lot of children, I suppose they needed to stay and help you ... you couldn't do it.

SM: That's right.

JL: Couldn't do it alone.

SM: That's right.

[end of side 1 of tape]

JL: Mrs. Matthews, you told me at the beginning of the tape that you were 84 years old? Can you tell me your secret for looking so young? You do not look like you're 84.

SM: Well, I just take care of myself.

JL: And eat the right foods?

SM: And eat the right food and the Good Lord ... he takes care of me. I put my trust in the Lord and he takes care of me.

JL: Uh, what church do you go to?

SM: St. Matthews.

JL: St. Matthews.

SM: Uh, huh.

JL: Had you been going there for a long, long, long time?

SM: Yes, yes.

JL: Could you tell me about some of the socials that you have at church ... like, uh, social dinner or picnic or.

SM: ... they may have, uh, potluck dinner at the church.

JL: And everyone brings something?

SM: Everyone bring a covered dish.

JL: Uh, when you told me you have, uh, all these children and your great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren, have you ever had a family reunion?

SM: Well, I hadn't ever had a family reunion but sometime quite a few of them gets together, you know ... sometimes quite a few of them gets together, it's just the same as a family reunion.

JL: I see.

SM: Such a large family.

JL: It certainly is. I mean, you all get together ... you all have like a potluck dinner and everyone brings something ...

SM: Yes, uh, huh.

JL: I see.

SM: Uh, the 9th of September, they had, uh, get together birthday party for me.

JL: How nice. Could you tell me how many people attended your party?

SM: I guess there was around about 75, maybe.

JL: Was the party held here?

SM: Right in the yard.

JL: How delightful. How delightful.

SM: It was very nice.

JL: Uh, could you tell me any advice that perhaps your parents gave you to guide you through life?

SM: Well, they gave me a good example to go by and that's why I guess I ... I guess that's why maybe I am ... doing as well as I am in life.

JL: Could you tell me what that advice was?

SM: Well, love everybody and treat everybody right, with love.

JL: And they said then you would get through life fine.

SM: Yes, then I would come through life real good and have good luck.

JL: Is there anything else you would like to tell us on this tape about your family or your life in Shady Side?

SM: Oh, well, I just love my family. And they're all real good to me.

JL: Is there anything ...

SM: I have some nice children, they're all real good to me.

JL: Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your ... Shady Side that you might like to share with us on the tape?

SM: Well, I guess that's about all, I think.

JL: Well, we thank you very much, Mrs. Matthews.

SM: Okay, uh, huh.

JL: We really do appreciate it. Thank you kindly.

SM: Uh huh, well, thank you, if I have done any good, thank you.

JL: Oh, indeed, you have, thank you very much.

SM: Okay.