

Clarence Benjamin Rowe: I don't know if it's the big stores or anything like that. So, that's what we do. We stay here and just do what we want. You got something on the floor there, brother.

Michael Kline: Yes. I will pick that up in a little bit. Yes. I am counting down now. Let us see. Where are we today? What is this place?

CBR: It's a country store. It belongs to C. B. Rowe and Son, and I'm the owner. I'm C. B. Rowe, Jr. It goes by the given name of Buck, Buck Rowe, that's all.

MK: Where are we located here? What is this community called?

CBR: It's called Bena, B-E-N-A. That's all at the crossroads of the highway, which is the Guinea Road and Mark Pine Road. We're located here. We've been here since the Civil War. The store was built after the Civil War for two native sons, and then it was converted over. It's been here ever since. Then my father bought it in 1929 or 1930. He bought the whole column, and it's been here ever since in the family. Then one day he said he wasn't going to work anymore. He gave it to me that's what I wound up with it.

MK: Wonderful place.

CBR: Yes. It's all the floors. Five floors in here.

Carrie Kline: Today is the third of November, I believe, 2003.

MK: Third of November 2003.

CBR: 2003, that's correct.

CK: Your date of birth?

CBR: My date of birth? October the 7th, 1920. That puts me, what? Eighty-two, eighty-three, which is...

CK: Eighty-three.

CBR: Eighty-three, and I already had it. That's what eighty-three is.

MK: How does it feel?

CBR: Fine as God. Can't be any better. I get up and work every day, eat and sleep, and go home when I want to. That's all I do.

MK: Well, why do you not start out by telling us a little bit about your people and where you were raised?

CBR: I was raised right here. I lived in a road one mile down the road here in the dwelling. Then I went to the school, Achilles School, one mile down 216. I stayed there until I finished school. Then I made my life here with my mother and my father. Then after the war, I built them a new home. Then supervised the building of the firehouse. Then later on, I built me a brick house on the corner lot that my father gave me, and I've been here ever since. That's where my home is. I raised my family there until they all passed away. My wife is deceased. My mother and father are deceased. My daughter is in Sander's Nursing Home with Lou Gehrig's disease. Sixty-three years old. I have to feed her soft diet. I practice it all the time, still is. So, I'm still kicking about. That's the way it is.

MK: So, you grew up an only child then?

CBR: No. I had a sister. She was older. Now she's deceased. She's dead.

MK: Who were your parents? How did your father come to choose this place?

CBR: Let's see. He was a merchant clerk at Achilles, one mile below here, with a man by the name of Ben Rowe. He stayed there until the family dissolved. Then after that, he went in business with his uncle, Minor and Rowe. Then he left and came up here in 1920 when I was born. He established this business here because the store was vacant. It was given to some of the – well, I don't know exactly how you term it, the spin-off of the family from the Civil War. So, that was over with in 1865. So, they were older men that had settled here. They went in business here, and they stayed. Then my father finally came up here from Achilles, and then he went in business here when he bought this collar in the crash of the Depression, about 1929, 1925, [19]26, [19]27. Then he stayed here until he died. He was here the whole time.

MK: What do you suppose attracted him to the mercantile business?

CBR: He got a job as a clerk. He was able to figure, percentage, able to count without a calculator, no end machine. He had a piece of pencil and a piece of paper, that was all. That was what they had. They had everything. They had a mill. They had a gristmill. They had liquor. There's a liquor jug up there on the shelf. I saved that. They had lumber. They had dry goods and dosages and groceries. So, they made it. Finally, they were farming. They had lots and lots of land. They raised livestock. They had pigs. They had fowl. They had some beef. Of course, they had all the seafood they wanted. Seafood was abundant. So, they lived off the land. That's what they did going back. So, that's what brought the story on. They owned all this land around here, practically every inch of it. That's what they lived off.

MK: So, your dad farmed as well as running...

CBR: Truck farming and raising some grain then they had poultry. See, they raised poultry, too. They had eggs, and they had chickens of all kinds. They had ducks. They had turkeys. They raised everything on the farm that could be raised. Great neat operation. They made everything fine. They lived high. They lived better. They didn't know what – I don't guess what a Depression was hardly. Because they had so much everything of what you call ready to hand stuff of everything that they raised on the farm. They just had it, that's all. Management was

number one, saving was number two. You had good seasons, see? You had early spring, then you had the summer, and then you had the fall, which was the harvest season. You prepared all that yourself and your family for winter. Because winter set in about, what? Middle of November, Thanksgiving, then there was November, December, January, February, and March. They were idle months. You couldn't work. You couldn't work outside. So, you prepared, and I guess you'd call it, you're prepared for the winter. They had their own wood. They had their own timberland. So, they had their wood stoves. So, that's the way they operated. They had a good life. Everybody had the same life. All of us lived about the same lifestyle.

MK: You mentioned the Depression. Did your father – [coughs] excuse me. Did your father and mother carry a lot of the local neighbors during the Depression?

CBR: To some extent, no great deal. Everybody was self-supporting. See, you had the sale of grain. You had the sale of livestock. You had the sale of eggs. You had a sale of chickens. Then, of course, we had fish running over everywhere, and oysters were plentiful. See, all the shells, that's the reason why I left them as a memo. Somebody asked me one day, "Buck, why did you keep them?" I said, "Well, that was big money." There were the shells right there.

MK: Big money.

CBR: Well, big money, steady money, easy money. Came over to the York River. It was convenient. Very easy. She's seen all the oyster shells in her time.

Dianne Jordan: I've seen mountains of them.

CBR: Mountains of them, that's right. I had them right here by, see, I had three off your houses right here. I had two Blakes and Cooks. I had them all. See, they had over a hundred shoppers in them three houses. I mean, that's right. I mean, I had a good thing. They were good friends of mine. They looked out for me. Make sure that I got some of the cream. [laughter]

MK: Your dad must have had some help to do all that he accomplished, or did he do it all himself?

CBR: No. He had help. He kept a man, a clerk, hiding here all the time. Then he kept two colored men, Blacks, for butlers and working outside and helping him and do everything. Tending to the fire, making sure that everything was clean, cleaning the floor, and all that. He had help. My mother had help in the house. She had a Black lady come and cleaned and cooked some for her from time to time.

MK: But what about out on the farm itself?

CBR: That was mostly farm labor, but they used some – if anything they could get their hands on it. If a man wanted to work, he was willing to work, he could get a job. Then you had to pay him off with a little bit of cash and then anything that was on the land, he got his share of it and more besides. See, they raised big gardens, fall gardens. I think fall gardens were the biggest thing of all. See, they had their own turnips and cabbage and kale and everything. Carrots, root

vegetables, and turnips, anything that grew as root vegetable in the earth. See, they left it in the earth and covered it over with straw and dirt. They ate it, and it all went along because we didn't have any cellars here, see, like some people did in the highlands. What you call a root cellar, wasn't it? So, they kept it in the earth. The carrots stayed in the earth. The turnips stayed in the earth. The cabbage, they usually most of the time, they buried them in dirt, upside down. Put the cabbage head down in the dirt and put the root up in the air, like that. Kept it. So, they had food all the time. They had hogs and they had poultry. Then they had the water, had fish, and oysters all the time and clams. They had good clams there. So, they lived pretty good.

MK: So, it sounds like your dad farmed some on the shares with local families?

CBR: Not a great deal. Not a great deal. Truck farming was a big thing here in seasons. Because you had to have motor transportation to get it to market. You didn't have anything, but a horse and a wagon. That was all you had, and that was pretty rough going.

MK: So, you got everything for the store and everything that you exported from the farm went by horse and wagon?

CBR: No, to some extent. We had river steamers. Had river steamers that came over Norfolk and Baltimore to bring manufactured textiles. You had to go to the shore and meet the steamer whenever it came in, about twice a week or three times a week. They ran Norfolk and Old Point, and you could use Hampton and then they went to Baltimore. They brought back a load of goodies when they returned. I got some of the boxes here. Some on that top shelf over there I think came out of Baltimore.

MK: So, the steamers came where exactly?

CBR: River steamers, I called them, York River steamers. They were freight steamers bringing in supplies. They plied the two rivers. They plied the York and the Rappahannock and the Potomac and the James River to a certain degree. So, that's what it was. It was a white man who had taken over practically everything over in – well, possibly around Williamsburg and Jamestown. See, they ran the Indians off, see. They actually took their land. There's no other way to describe it, but they did. They acquired it and that's what it was. So, they kept it. That's why you hear these Indian names around here now. What is it? Wicomico, isn't it? Chesapeake. Let's see, I've got a history on a crab cup. Chesapeake Bay statistics, there it is, read it. Better than nothing, I can tell you about it. You bring anything?

Male Speaker: He's gone.

CBR: That's all right. He's all right. He's not going anywhere. Don't be late in the morning.

MS: I am never late.

CBR: Tomorrow's election day, man. Where have you been?

MS: Been to work.

CBR: I didn't ask you about work. I asked you where had you been.

MS: I've been to work. I've been home.

CBR: Been home. Okay. All right. No further questions. He won't talk. Go ahead.

MS: Talk to the man.

CBR: I'm talking to the man. I'm putting some news in the paper.

MK: Here you go. What were the different lines of steamers? What were the companies?

CBR: Chesapeake Steamship Company out of Baltimore, Maryland. Old Bay Line Steam Company, that's what it was.

MK: The one out of Norfolk was?

CBR: I think that was Old Bay Line Steam, Old Chesapeake, one or two. I can't remember them all, but there were two lines in here. See, one plied the river Norfolk, and then if that one went in Norfolk, the other one came into York River. The idea of the York River steamer was a two-way street, or two ways for the steamer. Number one, they're connected with the railroad out of Richmond to West Point. Then from West Point, the steamer took over and loaded and unloaded and went on to Baltimore that night. The one in Norfolk just made more or less every other day. But the other one that came in here and picked up supplies and brought back freight went to Baltimore this afternoon, just about this time, about 4:30 p.m., 5:00 p.m. He steamed all night long and put you in Baltimore if you were a passenger the next morning. Then if you wanted to stay over, you could stay over. If you wanted to return, you had to catch a steamer the following day, and he'd bring you back and put you on the dock. At Gloucester Point or Yorktown, we had two public wharves, one on each side of the river. That's what they called a freight warehouse, the one in Yorktown now. National Park Service is renovating it now for the Riverwalk. They say they're going to build it, but I've yet to see it. But that was the mode of transportation. There was no other way. Horse and buggy or walk.

MK: This was when you were a kid?

CBR: Sure. Yes. I was big enough to go where I wanted to go. My father would send me to the dock with the horse and wagon to pick up freight.

MK: What was that like?

CBR: Well, it was just work. That was all. You just had to go pick up the freight.

MK: Was it crowded?

CBR: No, no crowd. You had all day long to do anything you wanted to do. No, no hurry.

MK: So, you take the team and go down, what did you do?

CBR: Go down to the steamboat dock and get the freight and bring it back.

MK: What do you mean get it and bring it back? Did you load it yourself?

CBR: Sure, load it yourself, yes.

MK: What did the typical load consist of?

CBR: Well, it may consist of groceries, or it may consist of hardware, or it may consist of perishable items if it was in season. Then they shipped everything back by that steamer the following day. Like produce or even poultry, they shipped it on into Baltimore or Norfolk. They were the only two markets that we had, Baltimore and Norfolk. This was by water, no trucks. The railroad did come as far as West Point over to Richmond. He made connection with a steamer at West Point then that same boat would stay there and unload. Then he would bring the freight down the river to Yorktown across the point. That's where we got it, and we had to go down to the dock at the wharf and pick it up.

MK: How far was that?

CBR: Well, I'd say this one here going, I'd say three miles, four miles. Horse and wagon. Be gone all day. You had to leave early in the morning to get a load and be back by maybe dinnertime. If you get back by dinnertime and got unloaded, that was the end of it. You had unhitched the horse, put the horse in the stable, and waited until the next day.

MK: Then the next day you take your own produce and stuff?

CBR: Yes, do whatever I had to do. Just had to go that way. That's the way that things worked. The mode of transportation was either horse and buggy, on a dirt road, or either by water. That's the way it was. But that was a great thing. That steamboat was a great thing. Very beautiful.

MK: What do you mean beautiful?

CBR: Well, I mean, the way it was lit up, the way it was built. It was a beautiful ship. The ship was about a hundred-fifty- to two-hundred-foot long. It had about three decks on it. See, they had a stateroom on it for passengers. See, you could get a stateroom and ride to Baltimore and Norfolk, but you couldn't get back that same day or that same night. You had to stay over until the next day and catch it and come back. That's the way that was. So, it was about a two-day adventure.

CK: How many feet long are staterooms?

CBR: The stateroom is about – well, the store here is forty-, sixty-foot. The steamer was all the way out to the main highway out there. Beautiful, beautiful thing. Beautiful lit up. Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful.

CK: Painted up in colors...

CBR: Painted up as best in the world. Painted white, had the nicest lights on it, and everything else. Named them after the city of Richmond, city of Norfolk, city of Annapolis, Maryland. They were beautiful steamboats.

MK: Those were the names of the boats that came?

CBR: Yes. They were the names of the boats, steamers. Passengers and freight.

MK: So, the staterooms were up top and then what was...

CBR: Second and third deck. Freight down below. You see, we exported cattle too, and produce and live poultry and all that. We shipped that by steamboat, steamer, too. They had cattle caves, they called it. The bulls, sheep, calves, we shipped calves all the time, baby calves. Shipped them into Baltimore and Norfolk. Great way.

MK: Did you ever get on the steamer or?

CBR: Yes. I rode the steamer. Yes, indeed. Yes, sir.

MK: Tell me the first time you remember ever.

CBR: Yes. I remember it was all right. I didn't care much for it. It was all right. I'd rather stay home. Traveling didn't mean anything to me. I would stay home. I'd rather stay home and do what I had to do. It was too much trouble, too much traveling. Go from here in horse and buggy and get down there and spend one day or one night and day. You gone, Brian?

MS: No.

CBR: Huh?

MS: No.

CBR: No. It was a lot of trouble. Just in other words, you just were figuring you blew two days. The day getting ready for it, traveled down there, then get aboard and scurry around, and then the next day you're lucky you'd get back home. You see, a horse and buggy aren't easy ways to travel in that day.

CK: Do you know a Captain Chapman?

CBR: Sure. I remember him.

CK: Jack Parker?

CBR: Sure, now I remember Parker. I remember Jack. He was a native from up across the county. Sure, he was.

MK: Tell me about him.

CBR: Well, I don't know anything about him. He was a native, he followed the water, and he finally got a job as the captain of the steamer. He was a native and he used to ply up and down the York River and catch big bait. If he came down, he'd see her, he knew who she was, knew who she was, knew who I was. If my father was lucky maybe to be down there, they'd chat a while. Well, my father lived in this end of the county, and Captain Chapman and they lived in the other end of the county. Wonderful times, I tell you. Good life. I enjoyed it. I had a good life. But we didn't do anything in the wintertimes, see. This was all early spring, summer, and fall. When the winter came on, we're secured in and stayed in. I didn't like any snow and ice and travel, so I stayed home. I had a nice, big home and everything was fine. If I stayed here with my father, we had a wood stove in here, a big wood stove in here. Kept that on and we stayed warm. When we went home, we had the same thing at home. Had a nice big home, plenty of stoves, wood stoves in every room. So, that was the life we lived.

MK: I bet this old store was a good place to gather in.

CBR: Yes, indeed.

MK: On a winter evening?

CBR: Yes, indeed, every evening. Yes, indeed. Yes, sir.

CK: What is that now?

CBR: He asked me about the people gathering in the evening and I said, "Yes." I said, "Yes. They gathered here getting the latest gossip from everybody." That's the original counter where she's at, right there, that's one of them. That's it, that beaded ceiling in the dining. Natural top, that's the same top. I think I put the top on there, the oak. The counter, that's oak, pure oak.

CK: What kinds of tales would they tell then?

CBR: Nothing but what happened that day, whether they were hunting or whether they were fishing, or whether they were oystering. See, they worked in the river. Every day if they could work, that was a good living. See, there was plenty of it, a natural. Had fish, clams, and oysters galore. They shipped some of those items that I'm talking about, like them oysters. They shipped them into Baltimore and Norfolk on them steamers. Some boxes there, I kept some of them in there for a while. Yes, the country life.

MK: Did the showboats ever come?



CBR: Showboat – Adam Floating Theatre came here. Yes, indeed. Wish I had a copy of the book, but I gave it back to Mitchell Dunson.

CK: What is this now?

CBR: It was a floating theater. They put on a play on the stage and then they had an orchestra with them. They came every summer, and they stayed either a week or ten days or two weeks. Then they moved on over – most of the time when they left here, they went up to Rappahannock River, and then they went up to the Potomac River. They played it, and then they returned and went back south for the winter. Adams Floating Theatre, there are some books out on it. I've had one.

MK: Did you ever see any of it?

CBR: Yes, I went. My mother took us. Yes, indeed. Yes, sir. We went. Went a couple of nights a week. Yes, indeed. Yes, sure.

MK: Your mother liked the theater then?

CBR: Yes. She liked the theater. Sure, she did. Pommels, yes. They were good. All of them used to go. In the summertime, it was easy traveling in. See, you didn't have any cold weather. They came in, I'm going to say July and August and September. They usually came in. They went south. They found a secure and went south. Because the winters here are kind of rough, snow and ice.

MK: Do you remember any of those productions?

CBR: Not hardly. I only remember the guy that was the head of it all, Charlie Hunter. He was married to the owner's daughter. Her name was Beulah Adams, and he named it Adams Floating Theatre. That was the name of it. He and she were the main characters. They ran the show. That's who they were.

MK: Did that include the minstrel shows of any kind?

CBR: Yes. They had some minstrels, but no Blacks. Couldn't have that then. That was a no-no.

MK: But in those days...

CBR: Huh?

MK: But in those days, they had it.

CBR: They did not. They didn't have many aboard. They didn't show any. They didn't make any remarks. Didn't have anything in their line of that drama. No, indeed.

MK: No reference to Black people?

CBR: No. Not at all. Not to my knowledge.

MK: Interesting.

CBR: Yes.

CK: No black face?

CBR: Not to my knowledge.

MK: Because that was very popular all over the country.

CBR: Yes. Well, minstrel shows were great. But we never did get into that. I never saw a real minstrel show. I saw the invitations and all. Never been in one. Well, they weren't allowed in school, see. The schools we went to were practically all, 98 percent, white, see. A few Blacks went to their own little school.

MK: That is right.

CBR: You've read all about it. You've read quite a bit about it.

MK: Well, in different places, but not here so much. I don't know about it here.

CBR: No. It hasn't happened here.

MK: You must have a pretty vivid recollection of the hurricane of [19]33?

CBR: I was, yes, sir.

MK: Because you were what? Thirteen years old?

CBR: Thirteen years old.

CK: When was it?

CBR: Hurricane and tidal flood, 1933, August. My father was brought here, and the skiff was tied to the back door of the store. The tide came up just even with the floor in the store here. It didn't come inside. The guy working for him had everything piled on the two counters. 1933, I think.

MK: What were you doing that day? Do you remember how the storm came up? What it felt like?

CBR: When we got up that morning, the tide was in the yard. So, Daddy told me to go turn the cow out. So, I turned the cow out, and then he told me to turn the pigs out. So, I turned the pigs out, and everything else. I turned them out. They were on a hot pile of manure, back on the log, and a pile of wood, and they stayed there. It was a terrible time. Floated everything away.

MK: A lot of wind?

CBR: Not a great deal. Nothing like it no more. I'd say maybe twenty-five, thirty miles an hour or something like that. Not a great deal of wind. We had a lot of wind in this one here three weeks ago. Northeast, we had plenty of wind. That's where all the trees that you see being hauled up and down the road. All that debris and all that crap up on that dump site.

CK: In [19]33, did you know it was coming?

CBR: Well, it came up at evening, early at night, about say 6:30 p.m. or 7:00 p.m., and it kept on coming. The next morning, it was worse. The next day, it got worse until 11:00 a.m. About 11:00 a.m., we had the worst thunderstorm that you've ever heard of in your life. When that thunder came about, the water receding, and one hour's time every drop was gone. It started late in the evening, and it had to rise all night long until the next morning, until 11:00 a.m. At 11:00 a.m. that day, had a boomer, no storm, just a thunderstorm. The thunder came, and the gray left out. The next day the sun was shining. I remember all of it. I had water all up to my waist and everywhere.

CK: What did the steamers do?

CBR: They stayed in the dock where they were tied to. Wherever they were tied up, they said, "Stay." They couldn't run. Everybody had a boat. If you didn't have it tied, they got away from you. See, most all of them boats, those work boats, those big boats, had what we call – you don't know what a spring line is, but they had spring lines on them, bow and stern, with plenty of play. I say play, well they had coils and coils of rope that they could stretch from here to the back door. Some of them could stretch from here to the sum of the road. So, they, what they called, ride it out. That's the only thing they could do. So, they had bow lines and they had stern spring lines on them. Some of them broke loose, some of them went up in their land. So, how'd they got them out? There was a CCC Camp at Fort Eustis. The Red Cross sent them over here. They cut logs and put them underneath the boats and put them back to shore and put them over there. That all came about.

MK: What is CCC?

CBR: Civilian Conservation Corps. They built the Parkway Drive, and they built the Skyline Drive. Am I right? I think I'm right on that. You search history and see if I'm not correct. Diane, am I right on it? The Parkway, yes. Then the same crew, the same engineers, went up and built Skyline Drive. The bottom of the York River was sucked out by dredges and hand dredges, and that's the roadway of the Parkway today. Came out the bottom of York River around the shoreline, they built it all the way to Williamsburg. Then they built it a little bit more

from Williamsburg to York – I mean to Jamestown. But there isn't going to be any more Jamestown if they don't do something about it.

CK: You think so?

CBR: I know so. Erosion, no control over erosion, no breakwater, certainly. Water is man's worst enemy. You believe that Nate, don't you? It is. That's what the engineer staff told us. I didn't know anything about it until I talked to the guy that was an engineer on Niagara Falls, and then on the Hoover Dam, the Colorado Dam. That's what they claimed. That was man's worst enemy, nature. No control. Can't stop it. There's no pressure measure for pressure of the water itself when it comes loose. You've been to Niagara Falls, haven't you? You hear it all night long? You sleep in the motel or the hotel and hear it running all night long. I'd explore every inch of it.

MK: Wonderful place.

CBR: Sure. But I didn't see – I'd never seen the Colorado – I'd like to see that. But I didn't get that far. But I was like, "Unbelievable." The amount of water that comes over the falls.

MK: Did you see many strange people, strangers that you did not know getting off the steamboats or coming here to the store?

CBR: No. They were mostly locals in transit, that's all, local transit. Baltimore had a big hospital, John Hopkins. You either had to go there for major surgery, John Hopkins, or either you had to go to Norfolk. So, some of them that were high on the collar had people up there. They went to Baltimore. The rest of them went to Norfolk. Had a couple of hospitals in North. So, that's where they went for medical, surgery, and all that.

MK: Was that the primary reason for going to either of those places, do you think?

CBR: To some degree, but not really all. They went for visitation. They went to visit their relatives then some of them were seeking jobs to get to the city. See, it was good jobs around most of the cities. Richmond was full of tobacco. Norfolk was full of industrial for produce and the railroad was getting big time in there. See, there were two major railroads to – I don't say to fight each other, but Chesapeake and Ohio, the C&O, and then the Norfolk Western. Now, see, both of them had holdings in coal mines in Kentucky and West Virginia. So, then about that time, the export of coal started to boom. So, that's the reason why the day you were on one side of the river, I was on this side, and it was being brought in by rail. They owned the rail, and they owned the docks of the city. That was the reason for the coal mining that they brought. It's still running the same road if you get on a railroad track over Norfolk. You get on the one over in Williamsburg, see. It's still loading the coal pit that you can use now. So, they were exporting, and they were selling it, too. That was fuel, I guess, you'd call it. Nasty old stuff, but anyway. See, they ran the railroad on it. That's how they ran the railroad with the steam engine, right? They fired the boiler, produced the steam to run the railroad.

MK: To run the steamboats.

CBR: Run the steamboats.

MK: They burned a lot of wood though, did they not?

CBR: No. No. The steamboats burned coal. No. They burned coal. No. They had a coal bin because the coal bin was so easy to get to the dock. It was almost like you pulling up to that front door where that truck is. They put a chute down or put men down there and load the coal being on your ship. Then on the other side of the river, they loaded the coal carrier for the railroad. He fired the boiler with coal to produce steam to move the power of the engine up and down the tracks. That's where it all came about. A lot of people don't understand it today and the way that things work, but that's the way it was. So, they were adjacent to the coal mines coming into Richmond, Norfolk, then they had the boats and the steamers. They had to have coal in order to fire the boiler to build up enough steam to turn the prop, right?

MK: So, the railroads and the steamboats were interconnected?

CBR: Interconnected, that's right. See, the man that owned the C&O Railroad, Collis P. Huntington, see, he bought this railroad to Newport News. But he owned the railroad.

MK: He was connected with the Ohio River?

CBR: I don't know.

MK: Huntington, West Virginia.

CBR: Huntington, West Virginia. That was where the coal came from. Brought that down. See, natural resources were a great advantage to anybody if you had the know-how and had the money to put their equipment in. You had it made. See, the river was a cheap way of transportation. You think you come out of West Point or to Richmond by rail. You get on a steamboat, and you could come down the river. You could go to Norfolk, or you could wound up to Baltimore. If you had time and money, you could make it to Philadelphia. If you had sense enough and you were a sea-going captain, you could make it all the way to New York. That's what they did. Follow the river, follow the ocean. That's what they did. The waterways, it's a lot to it. A lot of people don't understand it. A lot of it, it's just too deep for them to comprehend what the mode of transportation was and how they were engineered to take advantage of all the natural resources that they had. See, the natural resources up and down the East Coast were just plentiful. They weren't landlocked. They were just flooded with everything in the world as far as natural resources were concerned. Coming in?

MS: I went and talked to the gang.

CBR: Who?

MS: Frank Jr. was out there, and Herman Paul.

CBR: Is that right? You learn anything?

MS: No. Only Frank had put a dish in his house for him.

CBR: He's a golf fiend.

MK: He likes to play golf.

CBR: Plays golf and plays in the tournament all the time. Where'd you all play? The neighbor of mine cheated him this weekend.

MK: Here.

CBR: Yes. He played with him. He got the clubs in the car and everything. He's all set.

MK: Ready to go.

CBR: He's ready to go. He hit the ball and then walked after, but I can't agree with him. I disagree. That's your cup of tea, and I got mine.

MK: When you were ten, do you remember about the age of ten?

CBR: Not too much.

MK: In 1930, what it would have cost to go from here to Baltimore on the steamboat?

CBR: No, I have no earthly idea.

MK: No earthly idea.

CBR: I had no idea.

MK: What about here to Norfolk?

CBR: No. I didn't know.

MK: We have not found any fair rate sheets anywhere.

DJ: Yes. I have seen some.

MK: Have you?

DJ: But of course, the difference is which line you are talking about. But we were in a period of time when we were seeing a lot of them.

MK: But I guess it was affordable.

CBR: Yes. Sure, affordable. But you couldn't do it often. You'd do it maybe, I will say once a month like that. There was no pleasure in going, riding the steamer. That was about it.

MK: No pleasure?

CBR: Well, I mean pleasure because it takes all the money that you probably saved, and times were rough. People didn't have a lot of money. They had to stay home. If they had to go on a trip like that, it was absolutely necessary, right? But it was a mode of transportation that was right here available. That was the beautiful part about it. Had no trouble going if you wanted to go from here to Norfolk, Old Point. Then the steamer that went to Norfolk went to Old Point Comfort then he crossed over. I think the same steamer now, I'm not sure about all this, but I think he went over to Eastern Shore. I think the railroad had a connection that came down Pennsylvania Railroad. They were the one that grabbed the front seat. They plied what we called the peninsula of Eastern Shore. That was the way that it worked. So, the waterways were very important.

DJ: Your produce came out from certain ports, did it not?

CBR: Yes, some of them.

DJ: Some from Gloucester Point?

CBR: Yes, same thing here from Gloucester Point.

CK: What is that now?

CBR: She asked me where the freight, the merchandise that we had for resale, where did it come – to what port? It came to a little place down here called (Seven Walls?), which was a private dock. A little steamer used to come out, what we called a rubber steamer. Then some of the larger ones would come into Gloucester Point. You had to go get it. You had to get a horse and wagon and go get it. There was one colored man that met this steamer every day or every other day and drove from here to Gloucester Point in the morning. You see, it's three miles from here to Road 17. Then there's another mile from Hayes' to Gloucester Point. So, that's three miles. One is four miles. Then he had to take the time to load up and turn around and come back. So, he'd be gone all day. He had to leave in the morning at daylight.

MK: What was his name?

CBR: It was a Hobday. I don't know. Charlie Hobday, I think, was his name.

CK: What was it?

CBR: Charles Hobday, H-O-B-D-A-Y, Hobday. It's a common English name.

CK: Well, that's off camera.

CBR: Hobday, yes. Diane is going to verify some of my – she's been reading a lot of history on that. Haven't you?

DJ: I read a lot, but I will never know what you know.

CBR: You'll never know? [laughter]

DJ: A lot of what you know has never been read.

CK: No.

DJ: It has never been read.

CBR: I was set back quite a bit for the school curriculum. They took geography out of the school.

[end of transcript]