

Matthew Barr: Well, Mr. Bradshaw, we appreciate you doing this with us. Tell us a little bit about where we are standing here.

Harvey Bradshaw: Where we are here is the Grant Cemetery. My mother was a Grant, and this is her family cemetery. Benjamin Lindsey Grant came here in the early 1800s and is the first Grant buried here. The entire family has been in Onslow County for twelve generations since 1691. Those who migrated to this part of the county bought land here, farmed and fished over on the beach, and buried their dead here.

MB: All right. So, now, as we have talked about, this documentary is about Sneads Ferry, fishing town, also farming. Can you talk a little bit about what it was like growing up here in Sneads Ferry? So, you were born here in Sneads Ferry?

HB: Yes, I was born here in 1932 in my grandmother's house, which is about a mile or so past these woods. My grandfather had a farm there. His brother had a farm right up this road, and his brother Gus had a farm at the end of this road. The three brothers had a good deal of land. I was born here before we had electricity in my grandmother's house. There were no paved roads at all east and south of Highway 17, which was the main north-south route from Norfolk, Virginia down to Wilmington. For instance, I was a mascot for the graduating high school class in 1937. There were not enough vehicles to take people to graduation. So, they sent the school buses around the normal routes on the dirt roads to take us all out to graduation and to take us home after the ceremony took place. There was mostly a farming and fishing, oystering, clamming, shrimping community with five or six families that lived right down in this triangle. We knew everyone from Fulchers Landing up to what is now Surf City. There were no bridges over to the beach at all. You had to go to the beach by water after they dug the intercoastal waterway in the late 1920s.

MB: So, I think you have already given us a little feeling about it. What was it like as a kid being here? Did you go fishing? Did you say that some of your family were fishermen?

HB: Yes, they were. My grandfather was a farmer and fisherman. He died when I was three and a half. He's buried right over here. I remember attending that ceremony February 29th, 1936. But he and his sons and his brothers farmed and fished. Mill Creek, where Grant's Oyster House is now, is where we normally kept our boats and went out Mill Creek through Alligator Bay and over to the beach. Family owned a lot of the north end of the beach and ran cattle over there in the wintertime as part of their means of livelihood. But they raised tobacco, corn, peanuts. They had orchards. We had peaches, apples, pears, grapevines. Then you caught a lot of things. Everybody clammed and fished and caught crabs during the mild weather. It was just -everybody had those things. Even though there wasn't a lot of cash money, my family, we had plenty of food, plenty of clothes through those depression years of the [19]30s, approaching World War II, of course, which we got into in 1941.

MB: Well, tell us a little bit about your personal story. You grew up here?

HB: Yes. My mother had been working in Atlanta. She was one of the few people in the [19]20s that had gone to college as a woman in those days, although three of her brothers went to

the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. But she had gone to college, gone to Atlanta, met my father, married him. He died of rheumatic fever before I was born. So, she came back to my grandmother's home. I was born in that house. We had Dr. L. D. Bryan here who was a legend in Sneads Ferry. In the early days, he drove a horse and buggy to visit his patients. He made nothing but house calls. He would come to anyone who needed him. He came and delivered me. He delivered lots of other children in this community. He lived down near where the high-rise bridge is now over to Camp Lejeune. So, I was born there and grew up in my grandmother's house. As the only child at that time, I was pretty spoiled probably. The Yopp family were our nearest neighbors. The Yopps are still here in all means of livelihood. They own the Yopp Brothers marina up here. Right at the end of this road, Liston Yopp, his family still sells vegetables on the corner that they grow themselves. That's a German name. They're of German extraction. But I've never been to any other place where you have Yopp families, Y-O-P-P. But they're prevalent here just like the Grants and the Everetts and many others are.

MB: All right. So, you grew up here. Do you have, I am sure, fond memories from boyhood? What was that like?

HB: I do. For instance, one summer, it was dry. Our barn was maybe a hundred yards down the road from our house. We had a great, exciting morning once. An alligator had come out of the swamp and was crossing between the house and the barn looking for another wet place to live. My grandfather thought it best not to let him get to his new place since alligators eat pigs, and we were raising pigs as a cash crop. So, much to my mother and grandmother's dismay, I got to observe this alligator as he was defending himself between our house and barn. So, alligators then, they still live here. This is the northern range of the American alligator. We had lots of rattlesnakes. You'd always hear snake stories. In those days, we had lots of what we call polecats. Everybody else calls them skunks. They're all gone. The only skunks we have now are two-legged skunks around here. I don't know where the skunks went. But we had all kinds of wildlife. Bobwhites, just like you hear calling over here right now, quail. Whippoorwills, I'd sit on the front porch with my uncles and watch the whippoorwills dive for insects and make a boom when they flatten out at the bottom of their dive. Might be one reason I got interested in flying at an early age and later became a pilot in the Marine Corps.

MB: Well, take us through. So, you went through high school here?

HB: I went to the first grade here. I was mascot for that graduating class we mentioned. Then my mother married a farmer up in Pitt County near Greenville, 90 miles away. I moved up there and lived there, grew up there, went to Greenville High School, and got the Naval ROTC scholarship and went to Chapel Hill where my uncles had gone to college and then went in the Marine Corps out of that program. But I came back every summer. I worked here. I fished on the beach for mullet, pulling a seine, where you take the net out into the ocean on a rowboat with four oarsmen and make a semicircle with the net and then pull it in. The old-timers remember catching 40,000 pounds of mullet in one haul. The most I ever caught was 11,000 pounds. But it was an interesting thing for a boy to do. You'd go over at 3:00 a.m. You fish all day. You come back that night. Your aunt and uncle feed you some really good food. It's a nice way to spend time when you're 18 years old. But that still goes on right over by Topsail Reef and St. Regis at the north end of Topsail Island. People still fish in that way. They have an outboard

motor now instead of oars. But that's about the only difference.

MB: So, you graduated from Chapel Hill?

HB: Yes.

MB: Then you went into the ROTC?

HB: I went through under an ROTC scholarship. Then I was commissioned in the Marine Corps. Then I went to Quantico to basic school, went to Pensacola and Corpus Christi, Texas to flight school, and then back to Cherry Point for my first duty station in the Marine Corps. I retired from Cherry Point twenty-six years later in 1980.

MB: So, take us through some of your Marine Corps career.

HB: Well, in the early days, I went through the jet pipeline. But the Marine Corps, in its wisdom, decided twelve graduates coming out would be in transports for a tour. So, we flew what's called the Flying Boxcar, the C-119. I didn't like it at the time because it was low and slow. We called them trash haulers. But I got to go to Europe six times. I got to go to Panama and every city in the U.S. before I went overseas to Japan in 1958. After that tour, then I got back in the jets that I wanted to be in. I flew at El Toro, California for three years and then came back to Washington, D.C. I was at the Pentagon for a tour and then down to Quantico for school, back to Vietnam. I flew 306 combat missions in Vietnam in the F-4 Phantom. From there, I came back to Washington, got a master's degree in computer science that the Marine Corps sent me to get at American University, and eventually ended up overseas for the last time in Beaufort, South Carolina where I commanded an air group of six fighter squadrons and back at Cherry Point where I was the chief of staff when I retired.

MB: That is quite a career. Going back just to the Vietnam period, at three hundred, that is a lot of missions.

HB: Yes. Well, like my 103-year-old uncle over here, I don't drink, I don't smoke, I'm ready to go at 3:00 a.m. I think I flew three hundred missions in the Phantom quicker than anyone had ever done it. Because I love to fly. That was my business. I was the maintenance officer of the squadron. So, I got first crack at all the test ops after we performed maintenance on the airplanes. So, I did. But that was what I came in the Marine Corps to do. So, I was delighted to be able to do that. The F-4 was a fantastic airplane. It brought me home many times pretty well shot to pieces, but I never had to eject from one.

MB: It is pretty amazing to think that your family actually settled here in 1691.

HB: Yes. They came to Onslow County. They've been here over three hundred years and twelve generations. They're still here. There are children now, high school age and younger, who are named for the Daniel Lindseys and the Benjamins and the Carolines that are buried right over here from the 1800s in this cemetery. So, we've been here a long time, and we're still here.

MB: Speaking of that, I guess one of the themes of the documentary that I am trying to develop here is the idea that this town – and we can pick a number of towns. For one thing, that is a pretty amazing idea of your family having been here for twelve generations. That is unbelievable. I thought it was pretty amazing that my mother was born in California, and so was I. All I am saying, California is one of those states where everybody is from somewhere else like Florida. But twelve generations here. I think in some ways, these very sights remind me of a – it could be like a little village in Britain or someplace. It has that feeling because everybody seems to know everybody. These families, like the Yopps and the Midgetts and your family, the Grants, these families go way back.

HB: They do.

MB: Talk a little bit about that sense of community that is here.

HB: Well, when I was a boy here, of course, we knew everyone. It was a small community. My mother and my uncle carried the mail. They took me around with them as a child. But we knew everyone here, and everyone knew us. You have that small sense of community because we have a lot of people from Scotch and Irish and English. The Yopps are German, as we mentioned. You have that sense of ethnic similarity also. So, the churches here, we have the Primitive Baptist Church. It's called Yopps Meeting House now. It's the oldest building in Sneads Ferry. It was dated October 25, 1813, by Jeremy Yopp. That is still the centerpiece of our community. It's that old. That acre, people are buried there for the last two hundred years. I see two strains here. One is the farmers and the fishermen who make their living off the land and the waters of this community. They love it for that reason. The second thing, there seems to be a military tradition in this community. One of my ancestors went off and joined Wade Hampton's Cavalry in the Civil War and rode with them. We still have Wade Grants right here. One is down at Grant's Oyster House right now, 14 years old. He was the youngest freshman in the ninth grade this year at Dixon High School, which is named for my grandmother. She was a Dixon. So, we had the Civil War. My uncle Percy, right over here, left home and went and joined the Canadian Army in 1917 to fight in Europe against the Germans before the United States entered that war in 1917. He was thought to be lost at one time. Harold Yopp, my nearest neighbor when I was born, was killed in the World War II in Europe. So, there's a military tradition here and a living off the land and the sea tradition, I think, that unites it. Then our backgrounds, even the language here, the hoity-toity, got no clam, going to eat taters, that comes straight out of the islands of England. When you're isolated along the coast of America, that dialect and that brogue remains. It's still here among – and the Midgetts, of course, are famous rescuers and coast guardsmen and surf – take their boats out in the surf to rescue people throughout the history of the United States.

HB: Do you think there is still a strong sense of community here in Sneads Ferry?

MB: Yes. It's not as strong and clannish, if that's the correct word, as it used to be. But I remember coming back in the [19]80s. I had been away. So, I'm not a consistent resident. There's a slight difference there. Although I'm widely accepted, I do believe. But I remember when I came back. I was interested in the Shrimp Festival and the Shrimp Pageant and still am today. My uncle Sterling was chairman of that event in 1972. I asked his wife. I said, "Do we

get the Shrimp Queen from the Sneads Ferry School District?" which is small enough as it is. She said, "Absolutely not. The Shrimp Queen comes from Sneads Ferry, and I mean no place else." They are that strong about this as our community. When North Topsail Beach tried to annex us a few years ago, you would have had a war if they had tried to take this village. Because they do not want to be called North Topsail Beach. They want to be called Sneads Ferry. They even wanted to name the high bridge down here after Chesty Puller, a famous, highly decorated Marine who won five Navy crosses. This community said, "That's the Sneads Ferry Bridge; you name it the Sneads Ferry Bridge." They did. So, there's that sense of this is ours. This is our home. It's going to change some, but we want to keep some of the roots we've always had.

MB: That brings up the issue of ultimately Wilmington. You are moving up in Jacksonville, of course, the other bays, which is good, I think. Because otherwise, you can end up kind of – it is growing.

HB: It is. It's growing and changing. I don't object to that, that a lot of people see what we took for granted when I was a child here and what my ancestors took for granted, the water, the beaches, the woods, the land that's productive, the mild climate. Other people now are seeing that. Of course, people are moving here. But I think that's good. You have a wider variety of folks. You have opportunities to do things. You have greater cultural diversification. If you do it wisely and protect your natural resources and the wetlands and the things we have, you know, I think there's room for others to live here. It's changing, but the Riverview is just much the same as it ever was. The restaurants here and the people who grew up, they are very much like they used to be. I could go right out here now and buy a watermelon and some roasted ears of corn from Elizabeth Yopp, just as they were doing fifty, seventy-five, a hundred years ago here. It hasn't changed much at all. There's that.

MB: Well, that is good to know. Because we live in a world that changes so fast that that is hard to recognize. I think it is important to hold on to these things.

HB: It is. I didn't get interested in my roots. I didn't even know we'd been here three hundred years until I was 50, 60 years old. I just wasn't aware of those things. But now I see when I come out here to the cemetery. I see Benjamin Lindsey Grant and Daniel Lindsey Grant and James Benjamin Grant. Now I see young Ben Grant going to high school out here. I see three hundred years of tradition, you know, linked together. They know they're part of me. I know I'm part of them. They think about it earlier now, I think, a little bit. So, it's nice to have that because much of the earth is so mobile. Just like your folks in California, one or two generations is about as much as you see. But here, you still have a little enclave of families that call this home and feel that it's special. It's a good feeling. That's the reason I'm back here. I went all over the world and saw it all. I didn't see anything I liked better than the place where I was born and grew up. So, I came back. I have 180 acres out here on Everett's Creek, another old family here, and 65 feet above sea level, big trees, you know, and all the shrimp. One of my best friends went down one day and cast a cast net, caught forty-eight shrimp. He said, "This is where I'm going to retire." But it's nice, clean water. Camp Lejeune does a good job protecting the land they have there. It's a good place to live. Wilmington is a historic and nice city, Thalian Hall, those things to go to, the battleship. I served on the battleship my first summer, the Naval

ROTC of the *Missouri*. I fired a 16-inch gun. I thought at the time I'd be one of the last people to do that. They brought the battleship back in every war we've had since then. So, now a lot of people have fired 16-inch guns. Just in passing, a 16-inch gun fires a shell that weighs 2,600 pounds, about the weight of a Volkswagen, and you put 900 pounds of powder in, behind it in six bags. It can fire 25 miles. If you fired a 16-inch gun horizontally and I came by my F-4 Phantom, I could outrun that projectile to the target. It's pretty astonishing what technology has done for us. By the way, my uncle Gus over here, his father came home from the Civil War. He was born in 1870. He was living when man walked on the Moon in 1969. He spanned the Civil War to the Moon in one lifetime, pretty remarkable achievement right there. So, that's some of the roots we have in Sneads Ferry.

MB: That is amazing. Some of your relatives, they have lived a long time here.

HB: Yes. Uncle Gus lived to be 103. His son passed away at 75, and Uncle Gus was still alive. His brother Horace right over here lived to be 95. He was a state legislator. My grandfather, James Benjamin Grant, was chairman of county commissioners when the courthouse was built in Jacksonville in 1904 at a cost of \$24,000, pretty much what the carpet cost in the new courthouse. My grandmother lived to be 91. My Uncle Sterling is still alive here at 92. Uncle Dan was 91. Those are some long-lived genes. They have conducted a study of families at Sneads Ferry that have remarkable longevity. They don't know if it's the seafood or the salt air or the moderate lifestyle, but people seem to live a long time here.

MB: Oh, that is interesting. I had not heard about that. Simply trying to figure out, "Hey, what do they have got going here?" It is that good. Maybe it is everything,. Maybe it is the good seafood and the good air.

HB: Yes. One other factor, way down in the Balkans in Europe, there's some long-lived people there too. They found that family continuity was a key, being wanted and getting to live in your home when you're elderly where you grew up. Like we're taking care of my aunt and uncle now down on Charles Creek Road. They've been here all their lives. I think that contributes to long life, knowing you're wanted and that you're part of a family and that the ones you love are around you. That might be a factor as well as diet or climate, that kind of thing. Or genes. Genes are bound to be a part of it.

MB: Yes. You mean like those people that live out in not Eastern Europe but in actually a part of Russia or what used to be in the Soviet Union.

HB: Yes.

MB: These people, a lot will live a hundred and some of the oldest people on earth.

HB: Yes, yes.

MB: They all seem to like yogurt quite a bit. But I think that family thing is very important because of the psychological aspect. If you look at our culture, so many old people feel isolated and lonely. So, you lose the will to live.

HB: I think that's absolutely true.

MB: You get depressed.

HB: Because my uncle Sterling broke his hip a few years ago, and he had to have it replaced. They put him in a home for rehabilitation. He was there thirty days. We went every day to see him. The one conclusion the whole family came to was he's not staying here. We're taking him home and taking care of him. He's at home today. That's the kind of thing I'm talking about. I think that's bound to make a difference in your will to live. That will to live is strong, both in a survival situation in war or at sea or in just an elderly situation where you either want to live or don't.

MB: Going back to a different thing, I think it is interesting the idea of being both like a fisherman, farmer. Like you farm part of the year, then you fish. You harvest the land then you harvest the sea. Most people think of farming, and they think probably of Kansas or inland. They do not think of farming right by the sea. What were some of the crops?

HB: Yes. In North Carolina, we don't have the vast expanse of prairie under cultivation like they do in the Midwest and so forth, but we do have smaller farms tucked away. Just like you see, there are sandy hills here and here and down to the water. You leave the swamp and wetlands. But we would raise sweet potatoes, beans, corn, also white potatoes or Irish potatoes. We had a potato house where we kept them stored for the winter since you didn't have refrigeration, didn't have electricity. We had a spring house where you kept milk cool. You milked your own cows. You raised your own pigs and butchered those. I taught my sons that when they grew up just to see how. Everybody goes to the Food Lion now. They think it all comes from there. But it doesn't, you know. It comes from the land. So, you can farm during the farming season. Then the mullets start to run in the fall here. So, you can go out and catch those mullets, like I described, the 11,000 pounds. Then right on up until Christmas, the weather and the ocean are mild enough so that the fishing is good and the floundering. You can go out here and gig for flounders and crabs and clams all summer. You can fill up the year with things. Of course, the commercial fishermen here take their boats and go on down to South Carolina and Marathon, Florida to shrimp and fish in the middle of the winter when the conditions here are not good for that. But right here, you can cover your bases all year round with both farming and fishing to make a living.

MB: So, is there still much farming around here?

HB: Small farming now, that has dwindled steadily. Tobacco, as you know, has its problems and is dwindling. Tobacco used to be a cash cow. We didn't grow much of it, but we grew enough to make a few dollars. Whereas we ate the corn and the beans and fed the livestock and raised hogs and cattle and other things. You see the herd of goats right over here that some people are keeping now probably just for fun. But between livestock and row crops, as we call them, peanuts. My grandfather planted his peanuts so precisely that he could plow this way, this way, and diagonally and never have to use a hand hoe to hoe them. He did things like that. His barn, he built his barn with pulleys and steel rollers so that a big hook would come down, take

the hay off the wagon, lift it right up through a trapdoor to the loft, and run down the pulley of hay to the back of the barn and drop it on the pile and come back. He didn't have to do it by hand. You had people who did remarkable things. My grandfather built a bridge over Mill Creek in three weeks with his 16-year-old son that it took the highway department six months to replace a few years ago. He built it with a mule and one boy, 16 years old, and a block of lava, just like these trees have, to drive the pilings in the mud. But they did remarkable things is what they had. They had a grist mill to grind grain on Mill Creek. All they had to buy was salt and coffee and sugar, spices, and grease. We called it lard in those days. Although you render your own lard when you kill pigs. So, you were pretty much self-sufficient in those days. You had, we call them feather beds. Your mattresses were filled with goose down feathers that you picked off your own geese. We raised turkeys, geese, chickens. We had all those things, eggs. It was all right there on the farm. You had a big family to harvest all these things and to cultivate them and to take care of them. So, my grandmother had eight children. The story is told that she had one and went and milked the cow that night after having the baby that day. Now, I don't know if that story is true or not, but I heard that story. She was tough enough to do it. She broke her hip once. The doctor said, "You'll never walk again, Ms. Grant." She said, "Watch me." She walked, you know, walked the rest of her life, lived to be 91. So, you know, I have some pictures of her that I took when I was about 12. She's a remarkable lady. Of course, her son is 92 now and still kicking on Charles Creek Road. He's a man who operated a backhoe so precisely he could go in his wife's garden and dig his potatoes with the backhoe. He wasn't much for hand work, but he was great on a backhoe. His backhoe is sitting in his backyard today, even though he's 92, and his Ford pickup truck. He likes Fords and Mercurys, and Democrats. He has never voted anything except the straight Democratic ticket in his entire 92 years of existence on this Earth. But when the red tide came here and destroyed the scallops and oysters in 1987, the representative in Washington asked him to come to Washington and testify before the committee to get small business loans for the fishermen who had been ruined by that natural disaster. I took him up there. He testified before that committee. They called him Mr. Sneads Ferry in those hearings. But that's the kind of people you have here. They care about this community and what goes on here and maintain those traditions, like thirty years of the Shrimp Festival, you know. Bernice Guthrie and those folks have worked hard for thirty years for Sneads Ferry to have a little unique festival of its own that thousands of people come to see every year. That's part of us now. I drove my GTO Convertible in the parade one year, only year it ever rained. During the parade we had the top down. I had my uncle Sterling in the back as an honorary former chairman. But that's one thing that ties us together now. The school, named for my grandmother's family, the Shrimp Festival, and what we do and who we are, I think is what binds us together.

MB: Very well put. So, you will be at the Shrimp Festival this year?

HB: Oh, yes.

MB: Is this not the thirtieth?

HB: This is the thirtieth anniversary. It's been going on for thirty years. It's evolved from – it used to be down near where the high bridge is now. We had a parade of boats. That's one thing I miss. The shrimpers and the fishermen used to parade by in their boats. Since we moved and



have a new building, the site is not near enough the water to have the boat parade near the Shrimp Festival grounds. But we still do have the festival and the ball the week before and the Shrimp Queen and all those things that have become a part of it. It's the busiest weekend of the year here, the only time you'll ever see a traffic jam in Sneads Ferry probably.

MB: Well, we are going to be filming all of it back this Sunday. They are going to pick the queen, I guess.

HB: Yes. They select her. Yes.

MB: I went to the meeting on Wednesday night. I said, "Well, you cannot really actually film the actual interviews, but everything besides around that."

HB: Yes.

MB: So, we will film that this Sunday. That should be fun.

HB: I think a lot of the former queens are coming back for this one too. I know I saw Dina Whaley here this week. You know them if you've been around for a long time. I think she lives in Tennessee, but, you know, she comes back to be a part of the festivities years later. Like the class that I was a mascot for, graduated in 1937, they come to the clam digger once a year in April and have a meeting. They're down to about five or six people left alive now. But they come every year and get together and meet and talk about the old days and laugh about me falling asleep on the stage the night they graduated. Because my grandmother made me go to bed at 8:00, and this graduation was later than that. I nodded right off sitting in my little chair on the stage at the high school. But they still gave me a motor wind-up motorboat as a gift when I left. So, they're special people, you know. They're approaching 80 years old now and still get together.

MB: That is great.

HB: Yopp's Meeting House, there's a really dedicated group preserving that, put a new roof on it after the hurricanes came and, you know. So, we try to preserve the good things that come from the past and accept the new people. We've got some great new people who've moved in here too. They're part of us now. Of course, the base has been here since 1941 or so. It's part of our community too. My aunt Edna Murrell worked at Camp Lejeune thirty-four years, longer than I was in the Marine Corps. I was in there twenty-six plus four in college makes thirty. She's got a plaque on her wall that says "faithful service" for longer than I had. You know, she supported her family by working there. A lot of our people have done that and still do. Quails getting close.

MB: It sounds like those two aspects, the military, is a very important part of this culture.

HB: I think so.

MB: And the farming and fishing.

HB: Yes. Both, in a way, farmers and fishermen are notoriously independent. You know, they are strong-willed people who don't want to have a boss. The military would seem to be the opposite. But the military is also a dedicated life where you are willing to risk all that you have for other people. There's a lot of that in the farming, fishing, I think in the military tradition too. You know, that's why this is a free country. This is why we're not in England today, is because some people are willing to say, "Hey, we're not going to pay that tax. We'll fight you first. You're not going to let us be represented in your parliament." That spirit is in farmers, fishermen, and military people, I think. It does seem to be compatible. Although at first look, you'd think they seem to be vastly different. But my cousin married a Marine right over here. He's buried right over here. We've had him for – since the revolution. We've had military people from this community go and serve. Just like my uncle who went before the U.S. was involved in the war, he felt that strongly about it. So, yes, I think that's one of the things of which we can be proud is we love the land and the sea and our country. That's pretty much Sneads Ferry in a nutshell.

MB: So, did you have relatives who were really mainly concentrated on being fishermen?

HB: Yes, I did. My uncle Sterling ran a crew every fall over at North Topsail Beach that fished for mullet over there. This crew would be fifteen, twenty, twenty-five people depending on him for a livelihood. It's done by shares. You know, the captain gets two shares and right on down to a 14-year-old like me who got half a share for being over there and for pulling the seine in. Sometimes you wait three days, don't catch fish. Then, all of a sudden, when they start to run, you'll be there from dawn to dark pulling that seine in. He did that every year. The Yopps had a crew right down the beach. We had a crew at the north end. Mr. Dick Owens was our wave-off man. He'd sit on the dunes. He could see the schools of mullet come out the inlet and start down the beach. He would wave his hat, which means put the boat in the water. They're coming, boys. We'd put the boat in the water and surround them. Sometimes it'd take two or three hours to pull that rascal in. If you've got ten thousand pounds of fish in that net and the tide's going out, I've seen us hook a tractor to one end of the net, and it'd pull the tractor right out in the surf and bury it up to the axles in sand. We had to cut the rope to get the tractor out. There's a new movie out, *Perfect Storm*. It'll tell you something about the risks of people who fish for a living. On our own scale, that's what we do. We lose people in this inlet and every year, you know. It's a dangerous occupation. You have the storms, the hurricanes, the tides. But that's what people here, they accept that challenge. Yes, I had fishermen and always have. Junior Grant runs Grant's Fish House down there to this day, you know, where everybody brings their catch in. He's the middleman that sends it on to the consumer. But his father did that, his uncle before him, his grandfather. We've been doing that a long time.

MB: It is a dangerous profession.

HB: Yes, it is. Small boat, big ocean, high waves. Yes, indeed. I was on the *Battleship Missouri* when I was 18 crossing the North Atlantic. The bow is 55 feet above the ocean. I've seen waves roll right over that bow, smash the lifeboats on the deck, you know. That's kind of a miniature storm like the movie tells about, the perfect storm. But yes, it's dangerous out there. They're out there at night. They're out there with minimum net. Before we had radios and

precise GPS navigation, they were out there. But on the other hand, it's a challenge that some people accept, and some people don't. I've known those people all my life. They let me steer a boat out Mill Creek when I was 4 years old. That's just something we like to do. Later, I got to steer the *Missouri*, which is 45,000 tons. But it's more fun steering a little boat out in Mill Creek. Yes. So, that's what I do now.

MB: What about hurricanes? Because that has been a part of this story right here. There was one, Floyd?

HB: Yes. Floyd was really more devastating inland from the flooding. But the one – the benchmark hurricane for us was Hazel in October 1954, which we didn't have the warning we had today. Paul Merritt is buried right over here. His wife Helen, my cousin, were caught on the beach with that storm. They didn't know much about how severe it was going to be. No one did. They had a little skiff there and a little tackle shop. There were no homes over there at that time. This motor would never start, his outboard motor. But when the storm came and they ended up with the water rising through the building, and they were holding on to a tree on the highest sand dune over there, they said, "This is more serious than we thought." So, they turned the skiff over, pulled the cord one time, and the motor started. This man is a minister now. Billy Graham preached in his church in Georgetown later. So, maybe he had some special help. But anyway, that boat carried them across Chadwick Bay. When they hit the mainland right down here, my uncle Gus, the one that lived to be 103, drove right by and picked them up. That was Hazel who devastated everything from here to New England. Then in the last three years, we've had six hurricanes. Bertha and Fran were devastating right on up to Floyd. But we didn't have a bad one for thirty years. Anyone who's a fisherman, farmer, or even an aviator in the military, you know there are going to be some trying times. You accept the storms that come in return for the enjoyment of the pleasant times. But it is a risk. Aviators see it, I think. Fishermen see it, in particular. But I don't see anybody leaving because of it, any native, any native leaving. A lot of people who buy on the beach, which is fragile at best, some of them are moving to the mainland. But your natives, they had gone, they stay. Storms are part of living, I think.

MB: Well, I think that is really great stuff. Is there anything else that you want to add to what we have talked about here that comes to mind? Any stories or anecdotes, great sea stories?

HB: Oh, let's see. I can't think of a great one right off hand.

MB: Well, in terms of the future, I guess it will obviously continue to grow.

HB: Yes, it will continue to grow and hopefully, planned growth and growth in moderation. We can retain the good, the best of the old days, and improve it with the best of modern times. Everybody now has, of course, television and a dish or cable. We all have communications. We have cell phones. We have the highway system. We have all those things that we didn't have fifty, seventy-five, a hundred years ago. So, we have mobility, and we have communication. But still, it's nice to have a family to come back to. My family, a lot of them came back over Fourth of July here. It was pleasant to see them again, to see the twelfth generation, you know, now coming and learning about catching flounders in the river or catching oysters and clams down in the creek and going to the beach and enjoying what we do there. That's an attraction, a

lure that I don't think will ever go away, that ocean and the beach and the tributaries. So, maybe we can keep the best of that and incorporate it into the new world. Because this, after all, is the new millennium now. So –

MB: So, you had a big family conclave on the Fourth?

HB: Yes, we did. Some came from all around. My family from Seattle came in earlier in March. But we get together. Way back in the [19]50s, we used to all come. My aunt and uncle, who are now 92 and 89, they would have us all come. They have a big family. We still come and get together. A lot of the families here do that. A lot of them do it. The Dixons – my grandmother was a Dixon – they have a reunion every year at a different family member's home. Talking about story, my grandmother was one of twenty-two children. Now, one father, three wives, you know. Women often didn't survive as long as men because the rigors of childbirth and the hard work and the poor medical facilities in those days. But my great-grandfather had three different wives, twenty-two children. My grandmother was one. She's the one who milked the cow after having the baby, they say. But she was one of the first teachers here. The school was named for her. She and my grandfather were both teachers. You know, even here, tucked away, people understood the need for education and wanted their children to have a better life than they had and worked toward that goal. People still do that here. If you go to Dixon High School today, and you see the teachers out there and the administration, you'll see the way it used to be. It's not like a big city school at all. Everybody knows everybody. It's a one-to-one teaching situation. Those teachers care about what goes on in that school. It's been one of my pleasures to come back here and get to know it as it is now. The fact that it has my grandmother's name on it is the reason I write about their sports and their activities and that kind of thing. Because school, church, and family are three cornerstones of any community. Those are all strong cornerstones here.

MB: Okay. Great. All right. Let us walk around. I think what we will do is go over here.

HB: Okay. This is my cousin Eric Grant. My grandmother was a Dixon. He's named Eric Dixon Grant. His father is Sterling Dixon Grant, who was chairman of the Shrimp Festival Committee in 1972. Eric served in the Army in Korea when I was in Japan in 1958 and 1959 and worked – he was like his father in that he could operate heavy equipment. He helped build the hospital at Camp Lejeune and worked in northern Virginia with the Owens boys from here who went up there in the construction and did well. Now both have homes down on Bumps Creek. But Eric passed away of a heart attack at age 58 in 1992. His father is still alive and mother. They're 92 and 89, down on Charles Creek Road. But Eric sort of typifies – Eric was independent, never married, did exactly as he please. He set his sail the way he wanted to set it and didn't let anybody change his course. He is a remarkable fellow. He and I were pretty close in our growing up days. His older sister Betty, named after my grandmother, is my age. Eric is a couple of years younger. Tillie, his sister, and her husband Melvin Shepard Jr. run New River Nets today and are active in the conservation movement to help preserve our waters and wildlife. His youngest sister Jimmy is in construction down in Miami and plans to come back here one day and live. But that's Eric. He is a character. He and I are both car nuts.

MB: All right. Maybe we can walk with you, and you can point out some of the markers.

HB: This row here, that's my grandmother and grandfather over there. Their children are down in this row. This is my uncle Percy. He's the one who left home and went to Canada and joined the Canadian Expeditionary Forces and fought in France in World War I and was gassed by the enemy there, much like the movie *Legends of the Fall*, and came back home and farmed what Chadwick Acres is now, raising hogs and corn and beans down right on the intercoastal waterway. I used to go down with him when I was a boy. In those days, a lot of the boats would stop and tie up overnight rather than motor and be just one captain. They'd invite us on board. We'd talk to them and have a meal with them. Uncle Percy eventually tired of that life though and moved up to Greenville and is buried up there near where my stepfather grew up. In fact, he married her niece. He stayed and took care of his mother, my grandmother, until she passed away at age ninety-one. He married for the first time at age 66, which is about where I am in life now, and I'm already a grandfather. But that was my Uncle Percy. He could curse fluently in five languages and had been around and seen most of the world. Now, Daniel Lindsey, next to him, is named for the first Daniel Lindsey Grant. Uncle Dan, two of his sisters died before the age of twelve of what was called a fever. You must remember in those days, without a lot of medication and one doctor here, Dr. Bryan, who came later, malaria and those kinds of things killed a lot of people. Pneumonia killed my grandfather. But Uncle Dan was put in a room to die when he was 12 years old. But he survived and later went on to Chapel Hill and became the first alumni secretary and organized that body, which built Kenan Stadium and many other things. Eventually, he went on. He served under three presidents of the university and went on to New York and lived down in Manhattan, Riverside Drive, for sixty years before he passed away. Next to him is my mother, who was born here and went to school and died up in Greenville. She's buried with my stepfather there. My grandmother, Bettie Dixon, and my grandfather, James Benjamin Grant, are those two stones over there. These stones are for my uncle Gus Grant, Augustus Merriman. He is the one that lived to be 103 and spanned from the Civil War to man on the moon. His son and daughters are buried there. His daughter Helen married Paul Merritts who was a minister. They gave the land where the Baptist Church is at North Topsail and the Surf City Baptist Church, and they gave their home to the church. He's a man – they were people who lived what they believed and left this world with nothing. But they gave it all to the faith that they had. He was buried just recently. He was 91 when he died. His wife, Helen, was also 91 when she passed away. So, this is my uncle Gus's area here. Then the first Grants, Benjamin Lindsey, who came here in the early 1800s, and the first Daniel Lindsey, whom this Daniel Lindsey is named for, are buried right over here. Then my uncle Horace and his sons are all in that row between the two large live oaks here. They're the ones, Clarence Wade was named for Wade Hampton, the Confederate cavalry general in the Civil War. We have three generations of Wades now, including one who's a sophomore at Dixon High School. One of the sad things is to see some of those children's graves who didn't live till the teenage years because of the prevalence of disease and lack of medical treatment in those days, which is very common. It's like the pioneer days. You just didn't have the facilities you have now. This is the whole Grant row here. Robert Allison here is a Marine who married my cousin Betty and died young and is buried in that grave. So, you have three branches here, the James Benjamin Grant family branch and the Horace Venton Grant branch and the Augustus Merriman branch. Three brothers, one home right up here, one home over here, and one home across from Liston Yopp where I was born. That home burned, unfortunately. We lost my grandmother's spinning wheel and the family Bible and all those things that are special to families. But the three

brothers farmed the land, fished in the river, sound, bays, and on the beach and raised their families here. They're all buried here on this hill with the live oak trees.

MB: Great. Okay. Moving on. Go ahead, explain a couple of these real quick. This is Percy.

HB: This is my uncle Percy Granville Grant. The Granville grant was one of the grants the king gave to the colonists here before the revolution. That's why he has that middle name. But he was the second oldest of my grandmother and grandfather's children. He was the one that felt moved to go and join the Canadian Expeditionary Forces and fight World War I in Europe before the United States entered the war. In spite of being gassed and having trouble with his respiratory system the rest of his life, he still lived to be 88 and married for the first time at 66, a woman twenty-four years his junior and lived an active life until he was 88 years old. He's a remarkable individual. He was one of the bachelor uncles who helped raise me in my grandmother's house when I was a small child here. He and my uncle Hubert did that. Uncle Hubert is buried over there.

MB: Okay. All right. Should we point out some specifics just really quick?

HB: So, we want to talk about Uncle Dan a little bit more. This is my mother's brother Daniel Lindsey who was the alumni secretary at Chapel Hill, the first one who organized the Alumni Association, of which I happen to be a lifetime member now. But he's a remarkable individual too. He survived the fever at age 12 and went on to be secretary to three presidents of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He left all his memoirs and those kinds of things to Coastal Carolina and Jacksonville and to the University of Chapel Hill. They dedicated a room in the new alumni building to him a couple years ago. So, he's highly regarded and was interested in education throughout his life, just as his mother and father were. His son Lindsey, another Lindsey, was active in the state department for a career and has retired out in New Mexico now. The next marker is my mother, Velma Grant Bradshaw Moore. She's buried in Greenville. She went to three different women's colleges and graduated back in the [19]20s when women didn't often go to college from this part of the country. She and my Aunt Edna Murrell both did that, became teachers, and lived long and productive lives. She was also an excellent horsewoman. She rode astride and thought it was sissy for women to ride side saddle as women were supposed to do - and those as ladies were supposed to do in those days. My mother would have no part of that. She said, "There are two stirrups on a saddle. I'm going to sit on the horse like you're supposed to sit on." But she was a remarkable woman who taught me a lot. As a matter of fact, we live so far out in the country up at Greenville that she thought I'd get a better education if I went to Greenville High School. She got special permission for me to go. So, I had to ride my bike 8 miles every day to get there. But it was worth it because I got a scholarship out of that high school to go to Chapel Hill to get a commission in the Marine Corps. So, these are my mother's brothers. Her and my grandmother and grandfather, James Benjamin, and Bettie Dixon Grant are buried right next to them. Then their children are right here in a row beside them. Uncle Gus's family back here and Uncle Horace's family over there. So, three branches of the Grant family tree under the spreading live oaks. They're already saving a row up here for me and my contemporaries for the future. So, we'll be right in front of these if all goes well. But this is sort of the centerpiece for the whole family. We all maintain it. We come out and mow the grass. In fact, my cousin Eric, who's buried right over there, when we planted that

dogwood tree, he put that rubber tire around it to protect it, so the lawn mower wouldn't mow it down when it was this big. Now, it's fifteen feet tall, and the rubber tire is still around the tree. That's one of those little things that happen, you know, when you have a family cemetery. Eric put the tire around it to protect it from the lawn mower. But now, Eric is gone, and the dogwood tree is still here with a rubber tire around it, probably forty or fifty years after he did that. But dogwoods are one of our favorites. My mother loved the longleaf pine. But dogwoods, azaleas, the live oak, these are all symbolic of the tenacity with which this community clings to life and enjoys life. It wouldn't be the same without the dogwoods and the live oaks and the azaleas, and the bobwhite quail that we hear here and the ospreys that fly and fish just like the people do. Then these cedars. You know, cedar is a very hardy tree. It can live over on the beach in the salt air where very few trees can survive. The cedars makes the best wood, you know, great aroma, keeps mosquitoes away, and makes good mantelpieces and cedar chests, keeps the moths out. We have lots of cedars here also. Live oak, cedars, dogwoods, and azaleas are what you find here pretty much. That creek right down there, Fullard Creek is the creek my ancestors sailed up and settled on this land right here within about a 3-mile radius of the headwaters of Fullard Creek. My uncle Sterling Grant lives right up the branch of that creek, Charles Creek, to this very day. He has a sawmill in his front yard out there with his Ford backhoe and Ford pickup truck and Mercury outboard motor. Farmed this land after that.

MB: It sure is pretty here. It is beautiful. Well, this is a nice angle here. These trees are incredible.

HB: Another small tie-in is Reverend Merritts here, his church in Georgetown, when Billy Graham spoke at Jeb Bush's campaign that made him governor of Florida, and now she's his chief of staff at thirty-five. So, Mr. Merritts hosted the Bushes at his service in Georgetown. My daughter-in-law now works for Jeb Bush. She's taking time off to have a baby in January though. So, she'll be ready to run his next campaign if all goes well.

MB: That is quite something.

HB: Yes. It's strange because I'm not politically inclined at all. But my son Paul has always loved politics, and his wife. They are both very involved in Florida politics. They've been to Kennebunkport and visited the Bushes there, that kind of thing.

MB: This tombstone here?

HB: This tombstone, this is my uncle Gus Grant's. There's one major tombstone for the whole family, and he's buried here, his daughter Freeman. By the way, Freeman Jr., whom we call Little Freeman, but later became Gus, he was a pilot in the Navy. He's retired out in San Diego. So, we both went to Chapel Hill, and both became military pilots. My aunt Kelly Freeman, my uncle Gus married Kelly Freeman, and she came from right over here, Freeman's Creek, which is now part of Camp Lejeune. Of course, at that time, it was not Camp Lejeune. But she's from right here. My grandmother, Bettie Dixon, came from right over here at Halls Run. So, the Grant brothers married ladies from within ten miles or so of them. It's interesting to me that the next generation, when they went to school, they went to college, most of them went to East Carolina. It was then ECTC in Greenville. They met people, and they married people within

North Carolina, but maybe 50 or 100 miles away. Then my uncle Dan, who went to Chapel Hill, married a lady from Georgia, Anne Majette Grant from Jesup, Georgia, and lived in New York. Uncle Stacy went to New York and lived. All these cousins and brothers, all went to New York for some reason. Thomas Wolfe, my uncle Percy was in college with Thomas Wolfe, the *Look Homeward, Angel*, *You Can't Go Home Again* Thomas Wolfe, not *The Right Stuff* Thomas Wolfe. I read his manuscripts back in the [19]20s when he was just becoming a well-known author. But they expanded their horizons. Of course, Uncle Percy went to France and fought in World War I. We had several people in World War II. Then I was in Vietnam, just missed Korea by being in college at the time. But we've expanded a lot, and yet the heart of the Grant family is still right here in Sneads Ferry. They're all descendants of these three brothers that we see here and their ancestors. So, this is our place and our home and the reason I came back.

[end of transcript]