

Vanishing Culture Project
Tidy Island Museum Tour Oral History
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Interviewer: MJ – Michael Jepson
Transcriber: NCC

Female Speaker: In the burial grounds, we have two marked Indian burial grounds from the Aboriginal period of, I think it's AD 800. That's where they found a lot of skeletons. Part of our museum is dedicated to the Indian culture, the way of life before the white settlers came in. Then the other side of the museum is dedicated to the original settlers, the white settlers on the island. There are a lot of photographs from the store of the artifacts there. Maybe we'll move on before the garbage truck gets here [laughter].

FS: Those lilies.

Male Speaker: That was –

FS: Do you know the name of them? It's a type of lily, isn't it?

MS: Yes.

FS: It's a lily. But no, I don't. But this old lady that used to be in Cortez, she always had those lilies. When anybody was sick, she'd pick the blooms off. They were so fragrant.

FS: They're very fragrant, right. They drop those nice, big seeds. My daughter likes to come out here and pick one up when we walk out here to the bay, and she drops it in.

FS: Oh, that time?

MS: Right here, are they?

FS: Anything over here then.

Michael Jepson: You said it reminds you of who, Doris? Aunt Molly?

FS: Yes.

MS: Aunt Molly, I remember her very well.

MJ: You do?

MS: Yes, I sure do. That was when there used to be an old railway on that dead farm on the property up there where Mount Vernon. They used to come across that with a horse and wagon. She did, her and dad.

MJ: They would?

FS: Where Mount Vernon is?

MS: Tell them about it, baby.

FS: Well, when I was a kid – Mount Vernon you say is about where we lived?

MS: Yes.

FS: We used to come over here in a horse and wagon at low tide. We'd come over here and have a picnic and go swimming, watch the porpoises. I don't remember ever seeing but one old house over here then.

MJ: Really? What year?

FS: I was about what, seven?

MS: Yes.

FS: Six and a half or maybe seven.

MS: Well, Grandpa Bickford was down here way before that. They got married in 1909; I believe it was. Barbara, I think, has got all the papers to what grandpa and them talked about. So, they got it all wrote down somewhere in some book.

FS: Out here at Tidy Island.

MS: But they lived right here.

FS: No kidding.

FS: Oh, yes.

MS: Right at this point.

FS: Right. Because this is why –

MS: She used to tell me about, Grandma Bickford did, about going out there where the big, black mango was and fishing out there for redfish with a hook and line.

MJ: Oh, really? [laughter]

MS: She'd throw it out and catch fish.

FS: That's why this museum was set up here. Because I believe it's a site of where the –

MS: Right. There's a lady that lives in town there, Bessie Brown, that used to live here at the same time.

MJ: Bessie Brown did, right.

MS: Yes, and Gus Cole lived here at the same time. He moved to Gasparilla, and he owned all

that island when he died.

FS: Oh, Gasparilla Island.

MS: Yes, Gasparilla Island where he moved when he left here. Grandpa Bickford left Fort Myers and homesteaded and the farm down here.

FS: Well, do you think this is what it looked like?

MS: Yes.

FS: Because that was the intent was to make it –

MS: Well, I really don't know exactly what it looked like because that was all gone when we moved in.

FS: Well, they recreated this.

MS: He used to tell me all the stories about when they lived here. There were two or three houses here. Gus Cole lived in one and Grandpa Bickford down lived right along this section like closed tenure. I don't know exactly what was that.

FS: You're making [inaudible].

MS: I wished I'd have got that all on tape. I could have but I had one. He used to tell all those stories about fishing out here. In fact, we got a picture I think at the house where he was mending a net. It looks like it took right across there. You can see the island there.

FS: No, they don't.

MS: I'm sure it's Grandpa Bickford doing the mending. It was right along in this wrong edge of the water there. Looked like about around in that corner there.

MJ: So, you'd have expected to see this site more cleared?

MS: Well, Bessie Brown can tell you if you could ever get her over there. She lived here. She can tell you right where it was at, where the houses all were. The houses sit right in here. But I don't know what position they were in because that was before my time.

FS: I don't know what shape she's in now. A few years ago, they said her mind was really clear with details from years ago.

MJ: Rosalie, when you would come to picnic here, was there a road to the island?

FS: No [laughter].

MS: Come across the furrow there.

MS: There was no road.

FS: No. We came in a horse and wagon when the tide was low. My sister would get out and play in the water [laughter].

MS: What's happened is that they built this other road in there. It used to come right across through the swamps.

MJ: Oh, it did?

MS: Now the mine goes all grewed up across where they used to come across. It was flat rock. Of course, they've dug this thing around with a drag line all the way around the island. That cut off where they used to come across. But they didn't come across where the road comes now. It goes back from their farm down through there.

FS: We used to come over here on those skitters.

MS: Grandpa told me that.

MJ: You'd come over on the little skitters?

FS: [laughter]

FS: Yes, tie down the cars.

FS: [laughter] Yes.

MJ: Yes. I was going to say you have to tell us what skitters are. Because people who listen to this may not know what they are.

FS: We know, don't we though?

FS: Yes [laughter].

MS: That looks like one of the old cisterns that was right there at the house.

FS: Yes. Sure does.

FS: They were out here when we used to come down.

MJ: Oh, they were. So, the cisterns are still here from the original place.

MS: Yes.

FS: Yes.

MS: This has got to be it, the cistern.

FS: I saw her quoted in your newsletter too, right?

MS: Yes.

MS: Mr. Taylor has Taylor's Boat Works since 1923, Boat Works down on the water.

MS: We've only got one downstairs that's full out now [laughter]. We've got four more [laughter].

MS: We were telling you about Goose's Fiddle plan.

FS: Right. Which one's Goose? You're Goose.

MS: I'm from the Cortez Grand Old Locker [laughter].

MS: He's the original.

FS: I'm the one.

MS: I'm the last one of the original.

FS: Really? Did you have a whole band there?

MS: Well, dad and two or three brothers played. In fact, there was about five of us. All of us played something.

FS: Just for their pleasure of all protests.

MS: He could blow the jug and then put cellophane over the pocket comb and old juice harp and all of these types of things.

MS: Me and my brother Ted and Charlie, he had an old Stella guitar flat top. This fellow came down from Anna Maria down and got us to go down to fire points at the old Rich Seed, I believe they called it at the time.

FS: Seeds. They still.

MS: They had a \$10 gold piece for the big prize. That was back during the Depression. We got up there and I had some water in a little, old vinegar jug. They said, "Boy, what are you going to do with that jug?" I said, "As soon as I drink what's in it, I'm going to blow it."

[laughter]

We took first prize.

FS: Did you drink that vinegar?

MS: I drank.

FS: [laughter]

MS: It wasn't just water.

FS: Oh, yes.

MJ: What did you do with that \$10 gold piece?

MS: [laughter] My mother kept that for I guess fifteen years. My brother Ted got loaded one night and stole it from her and went and bought a Moonshine with it.

[laughter]

That's what the \$10 gold piece was.

FS: Tell him where the jug is.

MS: I don't know who's got it.

FS: The green jug.

MS: Who's got it? You got it?

FS: I do.

FS: Oh.

[laughter]

MS: She's got the green jug.

FS: Oh, my.

MS: The state of Florida up at White Springs presented them with their highest award for his contribution to folk life.

MS: That's right.

FS: That's wonderful. Well, it's great to have you out here.

MS: I'm proud of it out here.

FS: I'm sure, and you should be.

FS: It's JC's jug, but I got it for safekeeping.

[laughter]

FS: Did you play the spoons?

MS: I never did, but I had some of my brothers who did.

FS: Right. That's a fun one too.

MS: I play the jigsaw [laughter].

MS: Some of the grandkids now.

MS: Yes. Richard's got a grandkid who can play.

FS: Little tiny door.

FS: Right.

MS: How about that.

FS: It does look authentic.

MS: They fixed it up right.

FS: They did.

MS: I'd like for Bessie Brown to come on because she used to live on it up in here.

FS: Well, that'd be nice too. We got to arrange for her to come up.

MS: Yes, she'd be nice.

FS: I don't know. I've never met her.

FS: I can remember me and the kids we would go to the beach.

MS: Goose could be able to pull this file up here when I spoke to him.

FS: [laughter]

FS: Fred would drive that over by the state.

MS: I've seen him before.

FS: The truck went on it.

FS: Yes [laughter].

MS: That's something.

FS: Oh, my God, yes. How about that?

MS: Yes. I sure would like to see Bessie come over. She was getting way on up in the edge. She must be eighty-something.

MJ: Is she?

MS: The last time when her brother put away Dick, she had a sharp mind at that time. I hope that you all can get them before.

MJ: Actually, we should do an interview with her too.

MS: Yes. She was a Thigpen when she lived here.

FS: She was Thigpen?

MS: Yes.

FS: Oh, see, that's right. Because I knew somebody was living in Bradenton that was a Thigpen.

MJ: Right.

FS: So, she was a –

MS: There's a Thigpen.

FS: Yes, there's a photograph over here.

FS: So, this is in Florida.

FS: That's where they have the Thigpen history.

FS: That's a Mr. and Mrs. Thigpen and Lola Bennett.

MS: Mike, it had that kind of barbed wire around the newer farm.

MJ: I've never seen it [laughter].

FS: Yes, that's about fishing.

MS: Bessie was married to the one they called Jack. Everybody had a nickname.

FS: Right, a son.

MS: Yes.

FS: Then this is Neil Cornelius Thigpen and his daughter Daisy.

MS: Well, see they lived here before we ever moved to Cortez.

FS: Oh, here's Jack Thigpen.

MS: That's the one they called Jack. That's it.

FS: Right. Jasper Jack Thigpen.

MS: Yes, that's him. That was the one Bessie was married to at the time they lived here. Let's see. Old man, Gus Cole lived here too. He moved from here. He tried to get Grandpa Bickford to go with him. They were both living here. Old man Gus Cole wanted to get grandpa to go down to Gasparilla with him. He said, "I'm going further down." So, he went down to Fort Myers and what they called homestead at the farm building. Old man Gus Cole stayed right there in Gasparilla. He owned an IGA store, owned a bunch of stuff there. If you had to make it to Gasparilla at that time, you had to go through him to get here.

[laughter]

Now they should have that in there somewhere.

FS: Well, they don't have a very complete history, I don't think, of –

MS: I think Bessie could –

FS: They could fill that in for you?

MS: Obviously, I think she could fill it in for you if her mind is still like it was last time I saw her. She's a fifth cousin of mine, Bessie.

FS: Well, let's look out here. There's a good trunk.

MS: Oh, good [laughter].

FS: Yes. Mama had a second.

MJ: Your stuff that was probably used by people you knew.

MS: Well, it could have been, yes.

FS: His may though. That thing was eating up with Fairmont. Most of the way he made his living was hauling. He'd cut wood for the steamboats.

FS: Steamboats.

MJ: This was Mr. Thigpen, right?

FS: Yes.

FS: Was that Mr. Thigpen who did that?

MJ: That was Mr. Thigpen that cut for the steamboats?

FS: Yes, Neil on for the steamboats.

MJ: Doris, do you remember seeing –

FS: Oh, there is the mistletoe [laughter].

MJ: Do you remember seeing this boat?

FS: No, I don't. But I guess it was just a little bit. It was very, very talked about the mistletoe.

FS: See now this Sarvaris.

FS: Yes. John Sarvaris owned all those boats. He was a very –

FS: See, Sarvaris? Sarvaris was where the lumber company – the house that he had on the end along Lake Key was where grandpa's lumber company build his house.

FS: Oh, it did.

FS: The one we had that was torn down.

FS: From John Sarvaris?

FS: Yes.

FS: He was a wealthy Italian.

MS: All that time there.

FS: So, we lived in that old house. Come from Sarvaris along the south on the north end there.

FS: I didn't know.

FS: Yes. Well, I hated to tear it down.

MS: I heard they're being brought back to town.

FS: Have you?

MS: Yes.

FS: Then families living along shores, including Gus Cole, Walter Howling, M.V. Eastman, and Ira Bickford.

MS: They all lived here.

FS: You knew that.

MS: Yes. Grandpa Bickford told me. I wished I would have had a tape recorder to tape all the stuff he told me about living over here.

MJ: Goose's first wife was a Bickford.

MS: Yes. So, Maita was a Bickford.

MJ: Yes. It was her.

FS: Is that Ira Bickford's daughter?

MS: Yes. My wife was his daughter, Beatrice. Because they're all dead now. But I think maybe Barbara may have the stuff that she wrote down, Beatrice, her mother wrote down. That was our Bickford's oldest daughter. She had a bunch of that stuff wrote down. If you could get ahold of that, it would be nice to go in this.

MS: To go in.

MS: It's all from what Grandpa Bickford told her and grandma. They lived right here, right close to this.

MJ: So, who was Mr. Grable? He was a postman?

MS: Evidently, he must have been the one that bought the place. I don't really know.

MJ: You don't remember him delivering mail?

MS: Don't know. That was before our time. We didn't come over here.

MJ: Oh, that was nineteen. Okay, I see.

MS: 1921 when we moved.

FS: He sells the island to Roche and Colson for \$3,500. Then from 1913 to the sixteen, no definitive proof of people living on the island. Commercial fishermen probably continued to use the shoreline shacks. Then later it became heavily used for picnicking and camping. So, is that your recollection?

MS: Right, it was.

MJ: Was there no one here? I thought there someone homesteaded or had a chaperone here.

MS: Mike Brian was the last one that I remember being on the island to stay. He raised ducks and chickens and stuff. He stayed here five or six, maybe seven years. I'm not sure just how long.

MJ: That was McBride?

MS: McBride, yes. He's the one that had a duck farm right on the two lots me and Ruby's got there.

MJ: Oh, I see.

MS: He had a chicken farm there as you come back from down here, ducks and chicken.

FS: This says that in 1927, the Thigpen Grable House was burned.

MS: It was.

FS: You remember that?

MS: I remember when it burned. But it was back in these woods, and you couldn't hardly see it. It was all run down. But it did burn.

FS: Then a collector named Montego Talent finds the burial mound and removes the skeletons and others started coming.

MS: I think it was kind of back inland, I think.

FS: Right, it's up there a little bit. We have them marked. They are two mounds, and we have them marked with little plaques.

MS: Now, there were some babies from I believe Eastmans and some more buried some babies up on the east end here. There used to be some ponds, an old cabbage pond. A little high part of land. Grandpa Bickford said that's where they're buried, up on the high part of that mountain.

FS: That's right. Next to that.

MS: They were just babies.

FS: You want me to go over there now.

FS: Well, in the [19]45, these people are selling the island. Bate sells to Murphy. Murphy sells to Johnson Sags and King acquiring the land.

MS: Right. Sags and Kings were the ones that owned it for the last time I remember when they started buying it for putting all this stuff on them. Sags and Kings I think were the last ones that owned it, best that I can remember.

FS: Well in [19]78, it says Sags and Kings sell the Gilbert Walters.

MS: Yes. That must have been the one they developed probably.

FS: No, Chastain bought it.

MS: Oh, he bought it from him.

FS: Walters, right, in [19]82.

MJ: Goose used to fish around this island so much.

MS: A lot of fish go around this island.

MJ: There's one part of that's called Goose's cut.

MS: Right around there before the first houses were built.

FS: No kidding.

MS: I got a story to tell you about. I was down the bay down there around long bar fishing. I'd never seen this island lit up. From down there, you could see Bradon beach. I went down there one night because I knew they were building all this, and they were going to put lights in there. But I went off down there one night. They had turned these lights on, and I didn't know it. I came almost to go on the ground trying to get in there. I thought I was going toward the island doors. I was coming up in there where the Whiteway lights were, around there.

MJ: Oh, the lights threw you off.

FS: Right.

MS: That's how it turned you around at night.

FS: It threw you off.

MJ: That's amazing.

FS: [laughter] So, all these names then there you remember them?

MS: Yes. By Grandpa Bickford there.

FS: There's a grown model right there. Just look at that.

FS: That raised bottom in it.

FS: What did you all do with your mother's?

FS: They're at home.

FS: At her house?

FS: Yes.

MS: She lived over that Mount Vernon?

FS: Now that wasn't sea walled or anything, was it?

MS: No, there was nothing. No seawalls.

FS: The ocean rolled right out in the farm just like out in the gulf [laughter].

FS: We were down on the hill a lot too.

MS: All this has been built since I've been a commercial fisherman, all them seawalls and all that stuff.

MJ: Is that how you built your sister's?

MS: Yes.

FS: So, did they grab here when they built up Mountain Vernon here?

MS: They were more oblong.

MJ: I guess they just reconstructed them. I thought maybe they were the original ones, but I guess they weren't.

MS: No one. They just found them there.

FS: They were found there?

MS: They might find some of it there enough to patch it fairly new.

MS: There was farming that went down there. They dug down from the tank. They did a channel up there.

MJ: Do you remember this big wheel?

MS: Yes.

MJ: Net spreads?

FS: That's nice.

FS: That's a big one. I've seen them bigger than that.

MS: There used to be a lot of them on this island.

FS: That's right. Didn't they call it Real Estate Valley for a while?

MS: Yes. People from Panama City, they came down and built one. Then Tink Fulford built one.

FS: Rattlesnake.

MS: We had one over on the island in front of the Coast Guard dock there that I went in the water bell.

FS: Well, that's good. Because I heard sometimes when somebody called it Tide Island.

FS: Because you can only get in here like that.

MS: Way out here in the background right there.

MS: The commoners weren't allowed down here couldn't see just the side of it.

MS: Doris probably would recognize in this.

MS: Probably the size of island. I found this photo of him.

MS: This is the type of the skipjacks you had. See how rounding that was in there?

MS: Yes.

MS: Everything around that was definitely.

MJ: Did your father ever build any skipjacks?

MS: Yes. But they went out. After the first few years, they began to get lighter skiffs and flatter bottoms.

MJ: I heard they used to use them, then they take the sails off. But then they'd use them for skiffs probably.

MS: Yes.

MJ: I wanted to see this picture of skiffs. Do you recognize that photograph? I need to ask you.

FS: Let's see if we can get that attached there. Unless we charge it strong.

FS: That's my own. No, that's major hall.

MS: Not too much.

FS: Let's see.

MS: The man in the button down south?

FS: Now I wish I could go. This might be Major.

MS: I know Major. He fished down in Fort Myer Beach with us several times.

FS: Oh, yes, Major.

MS: He lived right there.

FS: I bet I could identify every one of them if I could. That's Sid Guthrie right there.

MS: Kid Riley moved a house from here.

MJ: Standing with his hand on the post?

FS: This is Sid Guthrie. That's Bob Huerter's. That looks like major hall.

FS: A little boy on the end?

FS: I can't see it.

MJ: Who's the man standing on the bow? This one?

FS: Robert Whitters from North Carolina. I have several pictures of him. That looks like Charlie Lewis, is the best I can do.

MS: That's Charlie Lewis on the stern.

MS: With a hat on the stern.

FS: Oh, *Rosa L.* I have a picture of that boat out on the net spreads. You can clearly see *Rosa L.* I bet I could identify everyone.

MJ: We'll have to get a reproduction and have you do that one someday.

FS: No, I don't have one. We don't have one like that. I would love to get one of the Chap Thigpen. He was a character.

MS: Was there anything like this sailing out in the Gulf in the middle of the board?

MS: Just little smacks out here.

MJ: Is that a smack down there?

MS: We call them steamers.

FS: Smacks that the Cuban fishermen came up here to get.

MS: They were different in the shape and different lengths and different types of sails. Then they had their ice bins and hold their fish. Some of them had live wells, and some of them had ice.

FS: Now, even after the turn of the century, the Cubans came up to Cortez to get the fish. One night, there was a free for all out there, the Cubans and the Cortez sailors [laughter].

MJ: Oh, really?

FS: Really had a free for all. They had to call the town marshal in to quiet things down.

MS: Did you see the Spanish olive jar in the next room?

FS: In there? No.

FS: There weren't any houses at all out there. I was just sitting there looking into the bay.

FS: I'm looking mostly at the pictures. Where is that?

MS: It's in the corner here.

MS: It's over here.

FS: I think of this as a spot that we came across.

FS: To me, this would be very difficult to come out here for a picnic to get out to the water because the mangroves are so thick.

MS: Well, this was right on here.

FS: But down there, maybe it was not as –

MS: This far, this is all there was ever since I can remember, ever since [19]21 we moved over to Cortez. Then when I got big enough to come down here, that's always been drilled up from here and slapped on down there where the drag line cut into. In fact, it went all the way around. The Sags and them had that drag line cut through the drag line.

FS: In front of the island?

MS: Yes. Back down there you'll see where they went through the island and cut it off.

FS: You're right.

MS: In fact, I was fishing around there when they did that.

FS: Now why did they do that?

MS: I guess, so they could go ahead and fill it in or something. I don't know. They had it cut off across. Instead of going all the way around the edge of Manville, they just went across there. Because that was Manville swamps going down over there.

MJ: Now, I heard a story that Dr. Sags wanted to sea wall this entire island.

MS: He might have.

MJ: I heard that he talked to Tink Fulford and Tink told him that he shouldn't do that, that wasn't a good idea.

MS: Well, he did. He was a good friend of all the commercial fisherman and so forth.

FS: Oh, boy.

MS: He was a wonderful doctor, I'll tell you. A lot of them curse him, but I'm going to tell you

right now, he was a good doctor, a good surgeon. There was one fellow who went up there. I can't remember where he got his training at. But was it John Hopkins Hospital? Well, they trained him for surgery. He went up there to get his surgeon work done. They asked him, said, "What are you doing up here? You got the best one in the country down in Manatee County." He told them where he was from. They said Dr. Sags, he got his training right up there. I can't remember what. I saw him at John Hopkins, I believe. I'm not sure about that.

MJ: He's pretty well respected.

MS: Yes, he was. He was well liked. Everybody liked his wife too. They'd come in here.

MJ: Did Guthrie made his name written up here?

MS: I don't know. I made a Carl Breath and Earl Guthrie of Cortez.

FS: His parents used to live here.

MS: I'm going to have him right here in Cortez working for him.

MJ: Did you say you don't have a picture of Jack Thigpen?

FS: Just a moment, please.

MJ: You said you don't have a photo of Jack?

MS: I've never seen a picture of Jack Thigpen.

MJ: Here's this one. Have you seen this?

FS: I saw that. I never pictured him. I wonder where they got that.

MJ: We can probably get a duplicate.

FS: I wonder where they got the original. I'm sure that's a duplicate.

MS: Probably from Gertrude or whatever her name.

FS: Or Bessie maybe. Bessie, because she was married to him, Bessie Brown.

MJ: Do you ever use gourds like that for water?

FS: I haven't, but I've drank out of them.

MS: Bessie Brown mentioned it.

FS: Oh, yes, you're right. Maita, probably.

FS: I'm sure.

MS: That's my wife, yes.

FS: Well, I bet the Thigpen slept on corn husk there.

MS: [laughter]

MS: She really was.

FS: They never had anything like that.

FS: Barbara in there. Did she give that to us?

MJ: It looks pretty comfortable really.

MS: You're damn right.

MS: You come off this island, it's important.

FS: Now I have slept under those mosquito bars.

MS: To keep the horses in.

FS: [laughter]

MJ: I'm glad you had those, right?

FS: Pardon?

MJ: You're glad you had those.

FS: Yes, but oh, it was hot.

MJ: [laughter]

FS: No air could get through.

MJ: No air, right.

MS: Well, I brought him down here to the fountain not knowing me well.

FS: Oh, but where did the little come from?

MS: We were walking up through those woods, and he said, "Boy," said, "You found it." I

thought, well, I found this out.

[laughter]

FS: Oh, they were just about six in there. They weren't in here. Deliver by their –

MS: Heather was out, and he called it horse wire.

FS: – paternal.

MS: It looks like a hacksaw blade or a back saw blade. But it's twisted. I bet that was very effective.

MS: It was.

FS: Hall and Bob Whitters, I can't tell. That's Charlie Woosh. That's probably Captain Jim's fish house.

FS: That's not really wire, is it?

MJ: The *Rosa L.*, whose boat was the *Rosa L.*?

FS: It's quite different.

FS: Pardon me?

MJ: Whose boat was the *Rosa L.*?

FS: Oh, I believe it was Fred. Fred, his great nephew is a fisherman. They'd come to the picnic.

MS: Isn't that something?

FS: I'll think of it.

MJ: [laughter] Okay.

FS: That's something I don't care to have.

FS: I think mama gave them a piece of what they found.

FS: That might be the old sea walls and the student [inaudible].

FS: Can you see this?

MJ: I've never seen wire like that.

FS: It's not really even wire. It's more like the blade.

MS: That works in setting major holes in it.

FS: Daddy still has it. He has more of that in the house.

MJ: Oh, really?

FS: Yes.

MS: I knew Major.

FS: You want to see the other side now?

MJ: Yes.

MS: That corner right there.

FS: Is that just hanging on a wire?

MS: Yes.

MJ: I believe so.

FS: I wish we could get it to the window.

MS: The real ones are back in there too.

FS: Yes, that's what I was just looking for.

FS: Would it be permissible for me to look at it in the light?

FS: Oh, sure.

FS: It's hanging on a wire.

FS: Yes, that's fine. We wanted to make it a little bit easier.

FS: Oh, there.

MJ: Now let's start at the stern and start.

FS: That's Charlie Lewis.

MJ: Charlie Lewis. Then next to him is?

FS: I'll have to think on that. I think that's my uncle Clyde Fulford.

MS: I think it is too.

MJ: Third from the left.

FS: Now the next one, I'm not sure.

MJ: This one?

FS: Yes. But I think that's my grandfather there with that hat cupped up.

MJ: Fourth from the left, this one here.

MS: Captain Billy is who you're talking about? Captain Billy?

FS: He kind of looks like him. He was stocky.

MS: Yes, he was.

FS: Then the next one is Major Hall.

MJ: With that sweater.

MS: I knew him. I knew Major.

FS: Now this is one of my grandfathers.

MS: In fact, I knew Captain Billy.

FS: This is Uncle Willie Fulford.

MS: Yes, I knew him too. Tall man.

FS: He's a young brother to Uncle Clyde.

MS: That's Willie. I just told him that. You know Claude Moldy?

MJ: Yes.

MS: That's his daddy.

MJ: Oh, I see.

MS: That's Willie over there.

FS: Now this I should know him. Who in the world?

MS: I can't place him either. Sid Guthrie, is it?

FS: Oh no. That is Sid up there.

MJ: Oh, he's standing there with his hand across.

FS: See his big ears? Sid had big ears, jug ears. What is Johnny Pringle? She used to be, what's her name, Fred? Fred Taylor.

MS: Fred Taylor.

MS: May be one of the Taylors.

FS: Well, that boat though, the *Rosa L.*, that's who it belonged to.

FS: Good. Glad you came along.

MJ: This is the archeologist interpretation of what life was like when the Indians lived here.

MS: Boy, that's something.

FS: Now, do you all remember any Indians being out here?

MS: No.

FS: They'd all be long gone?

MS: They were long gone.

FS: When my grandfather first come to this area, his dad lived in a thatched roof house.

MJ: He did?

FS: What was that about?

FS: Grandpa Bickford.

FS: What did you say?

FS: When his daddy first came here, they lived in a thatched roof house. They didn't have a –

FS: Well, the first homestead were over Long Book King. It's an old town there.

MS: He lived up there what they called the Smith's Bay?

FS: Smith's Bay. They call it Victory's Bay.

MS: They called it Victory Bay back there when Grandpa Bickford's dad came to show there. He built a little hut in there.

FS: Over around Bishops, at Elk Man Avenue out there.

MJ: I wonder if they learned that building technique from the Spanish. The Spanish had a lot of thatched huts and homes around here.

FS: A lot of what?

MJ: Ranchos, they called them, the little thatched huts. Some were a tabby construction with thatch for roofing.

FS: That amazes me now.

FS: But wouldn't the Indians have done it First?

FS: Oh, sure, probably.

MS: Oh, yes. The Indians had all that stuff before.

FS: They figured that out a long time ago.

MS: Yes. They had everything under control with that kind of stuff.

FS: I'll have to I think later tell you about I called my sister about Dr. Moon Hall.

MJ: Oh, you did?

FS: I wonder if did they dig up any skeletal remains here of humans?

MJ: These are human.

FS: Oh, these are.

MJ: Actually, there was a skull there. Someone came in the museum and stole it.

MS: How about that?

MJ: That did happen.

MS: If it's the skull, I bet somebody took the body.

MJ: [laughter]

FS: Now Wyman said that whenever they would unearth anything, they always just covered them back up. They never removed them. But then I think it became popular to take parts of skeletons and stuff. Here's the map showing where we are, the homestead and then the girls and I went farther up the mountain here.

MS: Way back then they used tangents.

FS: Right [laughter].

FS: Just I get it. This is another day. Then right up here along the boardwalk is a shell den where there's a plaque that says the Indians have shellfish festivals there. Lots and lots of punk shells.

MS: There were shells a long way there. It was a longways down there, I remember that I used to come back to there. Some people have been digging there too.

MJ: This part here is the interpretation of how they think the Indians might have fished. You look at the bottom of the net, the shells were used for weights. The top of those pegs were the floats.

FS: Now, what were those floats made off?

MJ: I'm not sure. It looks like some type of wood. But I don't know what they would have carved with.

MS: Probably gumbo-limbo.

MJ: Gumbo-limbo, would that be real?

MS: It could be because Major used to make pop cars out of gumbo-limbo.

FS: Well, now Joe Warner told me that tree was not growing here until they planted them up at the Southern Monument. I was showing them.

FS: Oh, no, they're native.

MS: No. He's got to be alive there. Because I know that could be a fact. I've been to most of these woods, and those gumbo-limbo trees are up there.

FS: Oh, really?

MS: Well, that was the only thing.

FS: Well, I couldn't argue with him because I didn't know.

FS: I could find them in the show down there. They're native.

MS: Yes, they are.

FS: Well, I know they're native of Florida. But he said they grew down in the Thousand Islands. I was showing them a picture to identify. He said, no, it wasn't in Manatee County or in Cortez. He said, because they did not have those trees here.

MS: Well, I know when they put the solar monument up there and then things were there.

FS: Before was it this?

MS: I remember when they put the solar deal up there, and those trees were all the way there.

FS: Trees were there already.

MS: Well, Wayne and Corso will tell you the same thing. He was raised up down in the old stream down there.

FS: That's when they came up there.

MS: They were up on that island then when I was just a young boy.

FS: His artifacts, he found a lot of them up at the solar monument.

MS: There's a lot of gumbo-limbo trees. I found out something else, you can cut a limb off of it and put it in the ground and it'll sprout.

FS: It doesn't matter which part it is.

FS: Without any water?

FS: Any piece of it.

FS: Just cut it right off and without –

FS: Poke in the ground over it.

FS: Well, that's good to know.

MS: Yes.

FS: Cheap way of transplanting.

MS: You just cut a piece off and just keep it, and it'll come up.

FS: Well, you guys had that house up here.

MS: He must have known later in Cortez. She made pop parts for fishing. She wanted to tie.

FS: What kind is it?

MJ: Looks like deer to me. I think it's deer. But these are all some of the interpretation of the artifacts. So, you can smoke the dippers out of the conch shells. These are drinking cups. They think those shells down there were for beads, and those were net weights. You see how they took the shells and bored a hole in the end?

FS: They're nice. They're kind of –

FS: Strong.

FS: Yes.

MS: I don't know, but I think the Spanish people brought them pottery.

MJ: Pottery shirts down there.

MS: I don't know where they come from. I think the Spanish people brought that in. That's my idea.

MJ: But then this thing here is called an atlatl. It's how they throw the spears. They didn't use their hands.

FS: I could not see.

MJ: They would put the spear, the tip of it in there, and that would help them throw it further. They called them atlatl.

FS: My grandson found the most unusual Indian artifacts up in Fayetteville. I'd like for it to be identified as to what it was.

MS: I see they got the deal what they used to hold.

FS: Is that for Holland?

FS: Yes [laughter].

MS: The women use them to [inaudible] short hair. Maita had one or three holes in it. She hadn't gotten the book on it down there to, I forget what island it is down below. Remember that?

MS: You remember that shell we were looking at after?

MS: Yes.

MJ: Tough skin, you said the Indian bored a hole in it?

MS: Yes. You got the hook marks on it and the toes right there, and you're holding the handle.

FS: Trees that are sticking out. When we were kids, we played around the waterfront. Right on the very tip of it, it looks like a fountain pen. That's what we'd play with. We'd write with those, write in the sand.

MJ: Practice all your writing skills.

FS: He comes up to people. So, he's not astray because we've had some wild ones.

MS: I was out here on the dock.

MJ: Did you come up to Tidy Island to picnic at all? Would you remember that?

FS: No, we never came this far. Of course, the only way you could come would be in the boat, and we never did come. The only time I ever came was on a horse and wagon when I was a kid. So, mom had me dressed for Sunday school. He was a little veteran of the Civil War. He came along. No, his wife and daughter. The old man was living out here alone. He was sort of a hermit. The girl, she was retarded, and she yelled out at me, "Maita, you want to go see Papa?" I was, "Oh, yes." I crawled [laughter]. I don't remember ever doing that again [laughter].

MJ: What was his name?

FS: John Banister.

MJ: He was saying he thought it was Ironwood.

FS: I don't know.

MS: That may be Ironwood.

FS: Seemed like the bark looks familiar.

FS: You see all the common names that they called all this stuff is gone forever.

FS: It's what then?

FS: When a generation is gone, that's all. Unless you get a doctor, it's just gone forever.

MJ: Now wait a second. Say that again.

MS: [laughter] I got a picture of him at the house on the net where they had it spread. They had a regular net spread there.

MJ: Right here on Tidy Island?

MS: Right over there. That's what it looks like it was at. It's hard to tell. But from looking across the island, it must have been it.

MJ: This was who?

MS: This was Grandpa Bickford.

MJ: Grandpa Bickford.

MS: Yes.

MJ: You said he used to have a –

MS: A crooked stem pipe that he held in his mouth, and it'd come down on his chin. That's why he had to take his chin off, it had cancer.

MJ: Oh, really?

MS: Yes.

MJ: From the smoking that pipe like that.

MS: Smoking that pipe for all those years. The heat from that pipe and it's laying right on his chin, you could see the crease where it laid.

MJ: That's something.

MS: In that picture, he's got one hanging in his mouth. I'm pretty sure that it was taken right here. But you can see the island over there. This was the only channel they had back then.

MJ: It was?

MS: Yes, that Chesapeake Channel that was cut back there. I guess I don't remember just what year it was, but it must have been [19]20 something when they dug that Chesapeake Channel through there. This is the only channel there was. Well, those old steamboats used to come down through that. What'd they call it? 40-foot cut, I believe it was.

MJ: 40-foot cut?

MS: I think that's what they called it.

MJ: So, that's why he would have that wood cut for those steamboats. Because they had to come right past here then.

MS: William Pierce told me down below Long Bar down there in the bin there, they had a regular dock out there that took that wood out there to cut it and put it on that dock, and they'd come over and pick it up.

MJ: Oh, I see. So, he had to haul it.

MS: Down about what they called Harrison Rocks, just this side of that.

MJ: Just this side of Harrison Rock.

MS: That's what William Pierce told me. He said when he was a young boy, that's where it was at. Had the more steamboats coming in and pick up their wood to burn to get steam of it.

FS: Storage searching, where is she?

MS: I think she's making her way.

[end of transcript]