

Interviewee: **Robert Calvin Magruder Sr.**  
Interviewers: **Ernest Demby, Julie Hawkins-Ennis, Linda Moore-Garoute, Noah Waters, Ryan Craun**  
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Location of Interview: **Eagle Harbor Community Center, Eagle Harbor, MD**  
List of Acronyms: **RM=Robert Calvin Magruder Sr, BC=Barry Jose Campbell, ED=Ernest Demby, JE=Julie Hawkins Ennis, LG=Linda Moore-Garoute, NW=Noah Waters, RC=Ryan Craun**

[Begin Transcript: 02:05]

ED: We'll start with your full name.

RM: Robert Calvin Magruder Sr.

ED: How long have you been from this area.

RM: Ever since I was a kid, starting when I was five or six years old, we've been associated with Aquasco, Maryland. My grandparents, my aunts, my father, my uncles, my aunts, they were born and raised here, many, many years ago, and I as far as I can remember when I was 7 years old, I started to remembering about Aquasco the old house right across the street, that I used to live in and go to the elementary school that Mr. Glascoe used to speak about. It's called the Knights of Columbus now. It was a little four room, school house and Ms. Brooks was my school teacher there. She taught the third and fourth grade and I think Ms. Adams was the principal of the school at that time. At that time, my Aunt, Matilda Glasco Garner was the principal of that school, but she passed away in 1954, due to an accident. She was on her way to Croom, Maryland to do some shopping and there was Mrs. Johnson the pastor, he was the pastor of Christ United. I forgot the name before it was called that, his wife, to do shopping and it was raining she lost control of the vehicle, my aunt passed, and she was the principal of the school in Aquasco. I remember when she retired in 1954 because they gave her a, first time I had ever seen one, a little black & white TV set. But we used to come here in Eagle Harbor a lot and Cedar Haven. We used to swim, fish, crab, in the water. There was a little jook joint, right at Cedar Haven side. It was a place where they used to party on the weekends.

RC: We've had couple of people that speak about that. Was it a brick building?

RM: Yes, I think it was a brick building.

RC: They said it was a brick building that everybody used to go to.

RM: Yes. Barbeque, party, dancing, and drinking. I was too young but my parents and my uncles, aunt patronized it. Also, when you first come into at Eagle Harbor, right there, there used to be a store, there used to be a general store there. I don't know if anybody can still remember that, but there used to be a general store. Right down as you come into Eagle Harbor pass the sign, there was a general store, right there, down that corner.

ED: What was it like being a child around here during those times?

RM: It was interesting. It was good times. My uncle Warren who lived right up the road has a horse called Mud. He planted Tobacco on my aunt's property. He planted Tobacco down the road on somebody else's property. He would take Mud I guess and Mud would plow the fields and come back with other machines and

dust the land, and we had to come out again and create holes to put the tobacco plants in, and we had to walk down the different aisles with this little plunger thing that you stick on the ground and pluck. You plant the Tobacco down. And then after the Tobacco would grow, we had to go out there and put down holes get the weeds around it, then as it got taller we had to tuck the Tobacco and then after we cut the Tobacco we put it on the wagon. Mud was pulling the wagon you know. And then take it and hang it in the Barn until it was time for it to be taken to Marlboro. Because that where the big barns at Marlboro. As matter of fact they had barn dances up there. That was the time I remember, I was a teenager then but anyway that's where we used to hang the Tobacco. At the end of Aquasco road, I forgot the name of the route, I forgot was it 373, or 295? But I used to call it Brandywine Road.

JE: Right, Aquasco 381?

RM: Was it 381?

JE: Aquasco Rd, and there's 381.

RM: Aquasco gets to meet up 383 or 283... whatever it is there used to be a big barn. I think its still there, a Big old barn. We used to hang the Tobacco in that barn too. And right across the road was Jean Grime's store. It's an old dilated building now. But prior to building that stood the IGA, it's where Jean Grime's store was at and we used to go to the store to get things like flour. My aunt used to make a lot of stuff, and you know all the things that were not made in the house. She can make soap, she canned peaches. We had three or four different acres where she planted corn, watermelon, cantelope, tomatoes. We used to take plant kale. We had to sow the kale seeds first. The plants spring up, we have to replant them. We plant sweet potatoes, white potatoes, we didn't go to the store for no produce. Then around the house, we pick black berries, water bucket full of black berries. Every time we picked black berries we got ticks. She canned that, black berries, kale. Everything and whatever you can eat, she canned. Out there we had a smokehouse. Cousin Bishop who lives right across from us, he would slaughtered the pigs during the fall. There was hams, any type of pork. They would take and hang in the smokehouse right outside their house. Hang the hams up the shoulders, all that stuff. If you wanted something to eat, a couple of shoulders, my mother would just say, oh go to the smoke house and get a ham or a shoulder. I don't know the difference between a ham and a shoulder. All of them look alike to me. We go out to the smokehouse and there they were hanging. Cousin Bishop when he killed the hogs, they sent us the guts, chitterlings, over the bush of a basket. We got our water from a pump or we still got our water sometimes from the spring that ran behind Ms. Maymie's house which was right down the round from us. We had to take and clean the chitterlings, but hey! If you want to eat them, you have to clean them. Then I went to school, like what I said I went to the old school. And Walter Falon was our bus school driver. He not only drove the bus but he also cut our hair. He had these little, you know, things you do like little of this to cut your hair. Your hair always got cluck nose the clippers. It wasn't too bad. We had the tobacco, the planting of the produce.

RC: Seems like you didn't have too many reasons to go outside of this area?

RM: I didn't. I always did in this area, was really go to school in Aquasco, but mainly played outside till it got dark. Then we sit on the porch sometimes and watch this power plant back in the 50's. We used to watch the logging trucks come up & down the road. That was something we did. Just watch the trucks come up & down the road with logs. But we heard a couple of people go killed down here. The building of this plant. My cousins, they live down the road here, all the McGruder's, we have the Savoy's, we have the Pinkney's, we have the Ford's, the Savoy's. I went to school with all of those people back in those days. It was ok, we used to go down here, like what I said, we go swimming, in this water. We used to crab in this water. We used to fish in this water.

ED: Do you still have family still around here?

RM: Yes, I got my uncle, Gusty Brooks, he just lives right across the road. He's been here all his life.

JE: Augustus Brooks, right?

RM: Gusty Brooks. Yes, Mr. Brooks. He's right up the road. My cousins, most of them moved to Brandywine. I got cousins from Waldorf. But actually living here in Aquasco, the only relative that I have is Mr. Gusty Brooks.

ED: What was religion life for you? Go to church?

RM: Yes, we had to go to church. Wasn't no messing around. I got baptized right out there, all my brothers and sisters got baptized. I was trying to remember the name, there used to be a name before Christ United, United Methodist was it? Or was It Christ United.

LG: John Wesley?

RM: John Wesley, that's what it was. It was John Wesley, it's called Christ United now. Every Sunday we have to go to church. Church wasn't bad. We only have to be there for an hour.

RC: Right

RM: Not like now, you have to go to church for two to three hours.

ED: Some churches, some of them, all day.

RM: Yes, but John Wesley, the church. I went there, six to seven years old. I went there for many years. Like what I said all my brothers and sisters got baptized right there and the pastor was Rev. Johnson. He was the husband of Mrs. Johnson, who was with my Aunt when they travelled to Croom, Maryland. Yes he went to church, every Sunday. We had to go to church. But the night before he took our bath in the kitchen. They had all the metal tub, water. We have two types of stove, the wood burner stove and she had propane. That's how she cooked all the time. We had to go out chop wood and bring it in and have these little plates that we take off and put the wood down. So you cook food. But it was alright. Most important thing I like about Saturday night my Aunt made rolls.

JE: Yes

RM: The yeast rolls, My God, that with some blackberry jam.

LG: Did she used to broil them too? And put the butter in between. My grandmother used to that, there must be something here.

RM: Yes

LG: My grandmother used to, it must be something here.

RM: Yes, it is a process that they did. And then she would cover the rolls with a towel and in the morning they rose up and ready for the oven.

JE: My grandmother called them chef hats.

RM: But you're telling me something good.

LG: Did you try to get that recipe? You mentioned about Rev. Johnson was your preacher, well he was also the preacher of Asbury, I think he had 3 churches in this charge, but used to be called Woodville charge.

NW: That's my godfather.

RM: Rev. Johnson?

LG: Really?

RM: Rev. Johnson was your godfather?

NW: Because my dad was Rev. Waters.

RM: Okay, you know his son Earnest Johnson? And her daughter was Madlyne.

LG: Gwen.

RM: Was it Gwen?

LG: She was the music teacher at that time.

RM: Because he had two sons and 2 daughters.

LG: Yes

RM: I went to school with all of them, no not all of them.

LG: Now they raise cattle in this area.

RM: Really? Wow! Earnest Johnson, I haven't seen him for a long time.

LG: It is funny how through religion we know each other.

RM: Connection

LG: Because our preacher, preached 3 different churches.

RM: No I didn't knew Rev. Johnson, wow! Well I know John Wesley, I know we were there every Sunday, No ands, if's, or but's about that! No, I aint going to church today! "Oh, yes you are!." But like what I said, Saturday night, we took our baths in the kitchen in the metal tub. My aunt made soap. It was a good life, it was interesting.

ED: Is there anything that really sticks out to you when you think about those times?

RM: Yes, the times when my aunt went to the yard and tell us to go and catch them chickens. If you want chicken dinner for tonight, you got to go and catch one of them. Okay, we go out of the yard, try to catch a chicken. Once we catch a chicken, my grandmother will come out there and she would take the chicken. Once she sees the chicken, she started saying "Ring the neck, ring the neck." I said what are you doing with the chicken? "Ringing the neck" and then suddenly she popped the neck and the chicken going all around and the chicken will go running around and it will fall over. Alright, go and get the chicken. The chicken don't have a head on it. So we got to go and get the chicken and my Aunt would say, alright go to the well pump some water. Put the water on the stove. Let the water boil. We have to put the chicken down in half boiling water pull it out and pull all the feathers out. We had to do that. That was a kind of little disturbing, we feed the chickens, feed them every day, then we kill the chicken and eat the chicken? We have that same thing with some ducks. This is a true story here. The duck was our friends. We didn't think we would be eating ducks. We had 6 ducks. We feed the ducks every day. So this one particular day, we ate supper. We have breakfast, supper then dinner. In this one particular day, we were eating supper, and at the supper, I said, "I'm going to go and feed the ducks, so we go outside and feed the ducks. We're always counting the ducks, and one duck was missing. So we went on the side and stood still, Mrs. Glascoe, she was my aunt, married to Herman Glascoe's father. So when I told her, Aunt Glas, where can we find one of those ducks, one of the ducks is missing. She said son, Yall had that duck for supper. I said, What! How did that happen? Went out, killed the duck, pulled all out the feathers. They didn't tell us. But I thought when I was eating a drumstick, it kind of looked funny. But it was a duck. But hey, and the nighttime, the foxes and the weasels, trying to get in the hen house. We go out there in the next morning and find a couple of them, chickens. It wasn't every night. But the fox and the weasel it was always lurking around. Then we have to go out, and get the fresh eggs, we never go to the store to get eggs because we got chicken laying eggs. We got fresh eggs every morning. We got to go to the hen house to get the eggs, put them in the basket, bring them in the house. It was educational. My aunt would put the eggs to the light, and she could tell which eggs was fertilized or not, which means that egg we should take it back there let the hen sit on it until it hatch. She would do that. I tried to put the egg to the light, I couldn't tell, but she could. In Aquasco, they have a poultry, right down the street from Jean Grimes's store was this big poultry, and we go there sometimes and get 100 baby chicks. In a hundred baby chicks, half of them survive. They are all tiny weeny thing. But there was poultry, right there in Aquasco. Just before you pass Jean Grimes's store, the new store, now it is no longer down there because it is closed. But right pass I.G.A, on the right hand side, was a poultry. You go out, and get chickens and baby chicks and poultry. We used to go there with a crate and get maybe a hundred chicks and raised the chickens.

LG: Is it across from St. Dominic's Church?

RM: Yes it is.

LG: Next to it?

RM: Next to it, St. Dominic's church is on the right hand side. As soon as you go pass it. It is right on the right hand side.

LG: What is the name of the farm today?

RM: I can't remember. That was 50 some years ago. It used to be a poultry right there, where they used to raise chickens.

LG: So where was the Young's farm?

RM: The Young's farm?

LG: Yes

RM: In Aquasco?

LG: Yes, the Young's, next to Grimes's store, right after you pass....

RM: That's off of 283, 390, whatever it is.

LG: After the pass, St...

RM: Before you get to Christ United, the farm was to the right? You got to remember Jean Grimes, are you talking about the new store or the whole store?

LG: Between the two stores.

RM: Okay

LG: There's a farm that used to be back there, do you remember the farm?

RM: The name rings a bell. I am not familiar with it though. This was a long time ago, I am 72 years old. It is a long time ago. I remember the old store. The whole Jean Grimes's store. As soon as you leave out here in Aquasco, you look straight across. Soon as you get to the intersection, straight across you see this old barn, that used to be his store until they built the new I.G.A store, right down the road. Another thing, the bus. A bus used to come down here too. The school bus. And there used to be a store down here. As you come down here to the right, there's a grocery store.

LG: A white store? The white building...

RM: The white building was a store, a grocery

LG: Did you go down here to buy to the grocery store?

RM: We didn't come down here. We buy our grocery from Jean Grimes.

LG: What did you buy at the store?

RM: I didn't buy nothing, but I'm just saying, I'm making a point.

ED: There was a store there, right.

RM: There was a store there years ago, like the juke joint down there too.

LG: Juke Joint?

RM: Well I'm not going to say juke joint, let me rephrase that, it was a place for people to go and have fun. You know, get barbeque, dance, hand dance.

LG: Was there a pool table there too?

RM: I can't remember because I was not allowed to go there. I was too young. My mother, my father, my uncles, that's where they meet on Fridays night in Cedar Haven, just before they go down to the water. Where we go swimming, fishing and crabbing. Right about the corner, I'm going to say club, there was a club. They used to party down there.

LG: Right down at Cedar Haven.

RM: Yes

LG: It's a national camp park and museum.

RM: A camping park.

LG: It is a fishing area now.

RM: National camp park and planning, when I went down there last year to do some crabbing and fishing, the police went down there.

LG: It was a lot of fun back here, right?

RM: It was. The water was still muddy, it is not clear at all. But we was in that water. Trying to swim, floating and splashing.

LG: What about the wintertime? Did you come down here during winter months?

RM: No, we stayed away during winter time because sometimes that road, that hill, getting in and out here, it was rough getting out of here.

ED: Is there anything you would like to change around here?

RM: Well, yes. I like to see more renovations of some of the houses down here. I'd like to see the store come back. The club come back. But there haven't been a lot of changes down here. I've been coming down here for years. It's like this community center, it is first time I have been actually been here.

LG: What did you think coming back here today? Did it bring back memories?

RM: I have flash backs now.

LG: Good ones?

RM: Yes, it is better be good, I was young.

LG: Bad ones?

RM: No, I said good ones. The only bad things I remember was a childhood when I was in Aquasco. When we were mischievous, rude or anything, my Aunt would tell us to get the switch. Go get a switch and bring it back, and we all got a little butts tore up. To discipline. That was paramount. Discipline was, yes, we had to

obey, no talking back. Those are some of the principles of life that was taught to us as young kids and teenagers that carry over into our adult life right now. And those principles, to be respectful, to honor and obey your mother, your father, your uncle, your aunt, your neighbor, all those were taught to me when I was a younger age and it carried it over. Now I teach them to my kids. I teach them to my grandkids, and I am thankful.

LG: Could you tell us, if you can remember, some of the stories you can remember about the work over here, the slaves coming in, did you hear any of those stories?

RM: I didn't hear any of that. I knew it was segregation down here. I knew that. I didn't truly understand that because I was young. I know that my Aunt used to work in California, she was a house maid, a nanny in California, until my aunt died. My aunt used to take care of my grandmother, her name was Sarah McGruder. And when she passed, my aunt came back from California to take care of my grandmother Sarah.

RC: And that's California, Maryland?

RM: No, California, the State of California.

RC: State of California.

RM: Yes, she went to the West Coast. She got away from the east coast and I know when she came back she used to go to work for Ms. Jane. Ms. Jane would come pick her up like a couple of times a week to go clean her house. Mrs. Jane come down the road with an old black jalopy. My aunt used to go to her house and clean her house. As far as slavery, I don't recall. I know there was segregation, but at a young age, I did not understand it. But hey, later on as I got in life as I got to pre-teen teenage years I knew what it is all about. I didn't experience it too much, because mostly this was black down here. All of Aquasco, predominantly black.

LG: Aquasco, was predominantly Black.

RM: Yes, the part that I lived in. Aquasco road, everything down, Savoy's, Pinkney's, the Fords, Contee's, McGruder's. I am trying to think of the Chesney's. I'm tryin to think of cousin Bish's last name. The Johnson's. Everything up and down Aquasco Road was Black. That I know of. That I saw of. But it was a good life. We ate three squares everyday. Everyday, breakfast, lunch.

LG: No one went hungry.

RM: No. We had plenty of food.

LG: There's farming, there's consistent farming.

RM: Yes, and Tobacco. There was a lot of Tobacco down here. The Pinkney's, the Savoy's, a lot of them raised Tobacco down here.

JE: So that was the money source for African-American.

RM: Yes, until my Uncle he got a job working for the government.

JE: Yes



RM: P.G., he did a lot of that, before he had a government job, that's what he did. Predominantly raised Tobacco.

JE: So African –Americans held on to the old tradition of raising tobacco crops?

RM: Yes

JE: After the Emancipation Proclamation of this area.

RM: Yes. I mean you can ride up and down in Aquasco back in the 50's, probably the early 60's. You can ride up and down from this plant down here, ride up to this road, everybody planted Tobacco on Aquasco Road. Uncle Gusty.

JE: Even when I was coming up. They were still planting in the 80's.

RM: They were still planting Tobacco.

JE: My uncle was just behind Wilmer's Park and that's the Wills, Lee Wills

RM: I knew Lee Wills

JE: Lee Wills. We were small and it was taller than me and we would run through it and you can smell it. It was so much Tobacco that you can smell that sweet smell.

RM: Right, only thing you have to be careful about, when the Tobacco got taller you got to be careful for the snakes.

JE: Oh really? We don't think about that now.

LG: Snakes in Tobacco?

RM: No, snakes had to be in the...

JE: In the gardens and stuff.

RM: Well in the field. You can come across the snake easily.

JE: Which makes sense. Since we've been doing this, I actually learned a lot and made me realized, African-Americans, I don't remember White's here when I was growing up. There weren't that many white's being in the area. We travelled.

RM: No

JE: And if they were here, they were friends but you knew them.

RM: Yes

JE: But you're right, we were self-sufficient, nobody went hungry, you were right. We three had square meals a day.

LG: If your neighbors didn't have any food, they had your fields.

RM: Right, and there's this right across the street from where the school was, there's this guy, Ted, can't remember if Ted was his last name. He had dairy cows, and we get there to get milk. My Aunt would churn the butter or churn the stuff on top of the milk, and she would get the cream and make butter, and all that stuff. But the milk it wasn't pasteurized straight from the cow. I'm trying to figure out what we did, she had a ice box.

LG: I think most of the ice cream came from Brandywine.

RM: Yes, I think so, but anyway, she kept the milk cold. There wasn't pasteurizing either, she would take the cream, churn it and make ice cream and make butter, all of that great stuff, she did all of that stuff. Like what I said, we went to Jean Grimes's store to pick the mail up. I remember our Post office box was P.O. Box 45. I know, so we got the mail. There was no mailman. Like the mail man just came down here, there was none of that.

LG: It was hard to get the mail around here.

RM: Yes, I saw the mail man here, coming a while ago.

LG: Because he's no longer coming around now.

RM: Really?

LG: Yes, really. It used be outside, the mail boxes.

RM: Yes. We used to go to Jean Grimes's store to get our mail from our mail box, P.O 45. Everybody's mail went to Jean Grimes's store. That's how we got our mail.

LG: How do you see this place changing in this whole Aquasco area?

RM: I saw the mailman now.

JE: No I mean changing to what...

RM: Evolving?

LG: How do you envision this place 25 years from now?

RM: Well I have already seen it change. If it continuous from what I see now, it looks modern. Look at this community center, nice deck out there. Over here to the right, there used to be a little pier, little broken pier. Now there's a pier you can go out fish and crab on it. That wasn't there before. I see it getting more modernized. More people moving in.

LG: What about Eagle Harbor being more open to the community, to feed into maybe?

RM: I think Eagle Harbor, it is a community within itself. I see it.

LG: But it's still a resort town.

RM: Yes, because I know back in the days there used to be, like this gentlemen over here, he's down here today but he said his house, he usually comes down on the warmer days. He lives in Capital Heights is it? The guy over here? Back in the day, a lot of people had houses down here just for the summer. I had an Aunt, cousin Ida.

LG: But do you think that could stay.

RM: Remain the same?

LG: Yes, remain the same, because are people are just so mobile now, you know, moving in and out all around the world.

RM: That's true.

LG: I mean this is a global society we are living in now.

RM: You're right.

LG: People coming down everywhere.

RM: Yes, So it's possible that in years to come, it will change. The diversity, different people coming down. I've heard now, a lot of Hispanics are moving in this area buying up properties. So I mean, that itself tells you it becoming more diverse.

LG: Do you think it's important to hold on to Identity?

RM: I think it is. I think it's important to hold on to our history, who we are, where we've been. Where we are going, what we are becoming. As far as...

LG: This town is concerned.

RM: Yes, Eagle Harbor.

LG: Or for this area, particularly this town.

RM: Particularity this town, Eagle Harbor, I have a lot of memories in Eagle Harbor. I think the school bus would come and pick up one student going to school, her name was Daisy May. I can't think of her last name, but I think, this was a long time ago, has been 50 years ago. I am not sure but I think her father owned a store. That was down here. I think she was his only daughter. On the route we would pick up everybody, the school bus driver. The Savoy's, the Pinkney's, The County, everybody in this road the school bus come pick up. Like what I said the school bus driver was Walter Fowler and he also used to cut our hair.

LG: You know, your name Magruder, has a long history In Aquasco.

RM: I know.

LG: It goes all the way back to...

RM: Alexander Magruder

JE: Yes, okay.

RM: Anybody and everybody, Alexander Magruder is one of the founding fathers of our name. And from my sister, this is my sister's book, not mine.

LG: It is beautiful.

RM: It is connected All the McGruder's are connected to Alexander Magruder back in the 1860's or something like that. But when I was riding on this road one day, many years ago, and I saw a mailbox that had Magruder on it, but it wasn't us, it wasn't my cousins. I guess I should stop and start knocking the door and sue whom this person is. I haven't gotten around that and I don't see the name anymore.

LG: But there's a Magruder landing up the road. Or they played an important role in the commerce of this area.

RM: Yes, the school bus. The school bus been coming down here since the 50's. I have a lot of memories of Eagle Harbor. Fishing, like I said, we used to pick a shang. That's when you got one end here and one end there, you got this long net and when person would go out the water here and one person stay close to the shore and we would grab for crabs, right out here. We've done that many times. Do you still do it?

BC: A shang

RM: A *shang*, yes. My Uncle Kenny boy always had a shang we always get that to their house.

LG: How did that get that name?

BC: *Shanging*, dragging it from one side to the other, swooping through , you get fish, toads, you get everything, you're *shanging* it, I used to say that when I was a child, well we had fun out there.

JE: How do you spell it?

RM: I have no idea. I mean, I can pronounce like "a shang", I mean...

LG: It has been passed down, you got used in saying it over and over.

RM: We used to do that, now we did that for many years until my brother fell into one of those holes out there.

JE: You keep talking about these holes.

BC: Holes are more on the point; the holes are part of this river because of the river's undercurrent.

RM: Yes

BC: When It happens, it pulls you under.

RM: Yes, we were crabbing one day, and my brother got pulled down to this hole, and he said that's it.

LG: Did somebody go down and get him?

RM: We didn't go far down, like when he was out there in the water, the water was just here (Pertaining to chest level), his head went down, he got the shang and pulled himself up, until he's on the ground again. But we kept on dragging for the crabs and fish. Man, we used to get a lot of crabs, but after that...

LG: You think the crabbing stopped, after that spill over the power plant, what do you think about that?

RM: About the crabbing?

LG: Yes

RM: I might have had some effect to it. I came down here 5-6 years ago, I didn't catch nothing. But my man across the street said they catch crabs now. He said he always catch a dozen every time he comes out of that pier, where you need to get a key to get in to.

LG: This is Eagle Harbor.

RM: Yes, Eagle Harbor.

LG: They already have the area, now this is their part now.

RM: Yes, well I know for a fact that I'll be coming back out here to do some crabbing. I love crabbing. But yes, there's a lot of history down on here.

LG: Yes

RM: When I come to this area, I always think about my Aunts, and uncles where born and raised here. What they went through and I think about you know, the farming, the gardening because that's what we used to call it as my Aunt used to say, gardening. Go out to the garden.

LG: Yes

RM: Gardening, I used to say. All of this garden is just a small space, this is not a garden, because you have a half-acres, acres, where they plant a corn and we used to plant fig corn. A Fig corn is different from a regular corn. The fig corn you shuck that stuff to feed the chickens and the pigs. So they have an acre for that, and then maybe a half acre for the regular corn we cook to the stove and eat. But the fig corn gets real hard and you got to shuck it off the cob, and you feed the chicken and you feed the pigs.

LG: Now, do you still have the farm?

RM: My Uncle sold it.

LG: Wow, what year? In the 80's? 70's? 60's.

RM: No, it had to be the 80's. Yes, it was like what I said. It is right off the road. Before you get to, when you look at it, I am going to call it Brandywine Road, but I know there's another name.

LG: It is still Brandywine road.

RM: Still Brandywine road?

LG: Yes, Aquasco, from Brandywine.

RM: You make a left.

JE: Isn't that there's a Horse Head in Aquasco, further up.

RM: Further down right, but if you leave out here to go to Brandywine road? I want to say, second on the third building there's a new house, it is a fairly new house, I guess I haven't been here 10-15 years, the person who bought the property from my Uncle, built the new house right there.

LG: Is it near St. Mary's church?

RM: No. It is on Aquasco road. It is actually on Aquasco Road. Just like the 3<sup>rd</sup> building before you get to Brandywine road, left hand side. That was our property. And right across from that, was an open field, we used to go there to get pears, apples, peaches. Horses used to be running around out there.

LG: Trying to think about it where.

RM: Trying to think about what?

LG: Where's the actual landmark.

RM: I can't think of the landmark but all that I can tell you the 3<sup>rd</sup> house. Just before you get to the intersection of Aquasco and Brandywine road. When you go out here, Aquasco road, you are going up, Brandywine road you could either you make a left or a right turn, but I am talking about prior to getting there. You are speaking about where our property was, right? Do you know where the Chesney's lived?

BC: Are you talking about the house with the black gates around it? No?

RM: No, not that one. Do you know the Chesney's used to live at? The Chesney's all back out the road. That house just right before you get to the Chesney's. That was our property. Yes, before you get to the Chesney's, and the house across from that house is cousin Bishop's house. The one that used to slaughtered the hogs. Cousin Bish. I am trying to think about his wife's name. Ms. Maymie. I can't remember, it was a long time ago. But, Maymie Chesney, they had a long driveway that lead a long way to the back. And down behind their house, there's a spring.

LG: A spring?

RM: Yes, there's a spring back there.

LG: A little creek?

RM: Yes, a little creek, cool water, clear water.

RC: Do you recall why you're uncle had to sold his property?

RM: He didn't have to sell it. I guess he just figured it out that he had no use for it. Because he bought a brand new house in Brandywine and the land was barren, it was idle. There's nothing going on and he was paying the taxes every year.

LG: Was he also paying agricultural taxes?

RM: I don't know, he may have been, but I don't know.

LG: Yes, because somewhere or sometime long time ago they stopped Tobacco raising, because he couldn't raise Tobacco.

RM: You see this particular Uncle, never raised any Tobacco.

LG: Oh he didn't?

RM: He was in the military. When he came out in the military, he got a job at the Pentagon. The only person in our family that I know that raised Tobacco was my uncle Warren. Warren McGruder and his father.

JE: Gloria's Day?

RM: Gloria's father. You know Gloria? You know Cynthia? They're my first cousins. They used to live in a shack, well I'm not going to call it a shack, I shouldn't say that, but they lived in the woods. The shack up on the hill, right up the road here. No electricity, no water, none of that. It was a shack, like a one room shack, Yes. Gloria's, right before they moved to Brandywine. They lived twice in Brandywine because they actually lived where Gwynn Park Middle Schoolers is now. There used to be a cornfield, and they had a house. They had a house all the way at the end of the road. And behind their house was a spring too. Yes, that was my cousin Robert.

JE: You know this plantation, Gwynn Park? That's what has been called, it was Gwynn Park.

RM: Yes. I had me and my cousin Robert, why do you know my cousin Robert?

JE: The best hand dancer in around...

RM: He used to dance with two and three women at one time. I couldn't hand dance at all. He was bad. Now I had a bad experience, first time I have ever experienced this.

JE: We got this on tape now.

RC: I am recording stuff.

JE: Just a warning.

RM: This was bad, I am walking down, what's the name of that road where Gwynn park was on?

LG: Ah Dyson Road.

RM: Dyson road! You know Dyson store too, right? Man, me and him was walking down Dyson road, was coming from Budegy, Budegy Sims? So you're coming from this area too, then?

LG: Of course I am.

RM: Then you know the one that shot his hand off?

LG: Who?

RM: Budegy's brother. He shot his hand off. Me and Robert was coming from Buddygey Sims house, walking down Dyson road, this was back in the 60's and this car was coming real fast and he said, he pushed me "jump on the woods, jump on the woods", why the hell am I going to jump to the woods for? There's a group of white guys, they stuck their heads out the window and took a gun and shot at us. And he said, "that's why we have to jump in the woods. I said "damn, I never experience this shit like that, excuse my language. I'm going back to DC (laughs) cause my parents were living in DC that time, we go down for the summer. either we go to our uncle Warren house for the summer or we came down here. On that particular time and it was a 1960' Chevy, I never forget it. It was green or white, I can't remember the occupants but I remember they were caucasians. I remember the Chevy, 1960 Chevy, I will never forget that. I'm in the woods and we jump in the woods on Dyson road and I see this flash. "Pow!Pow!" I said. Damn, he shot on us.

LG: I have a question. Because this area is historically known for many plantations in this area, you know a whole lot, how many black people acquired land? Was it from sharecropping or do you know? Because it seems many people have huge farms and lands and most black people wouldn't have any. We've heard one story about the relationship between a white guy and guess our black descendants so I guess he gave them lands.

RM: Maybe because some of our redemption slave, maybe or something.

JE: I think share cropper.

RM: Want to share.

JE: Yes wanted to share.

RM: Because you're right, a lot of people down here own land.

JE: Have lands, its not just a piece of a lot.

RM: No, a lot of lands.

LG: Yes you know the war, 1812, a lot of the British they destroyed a lot of the plantations back in 1812.

RM: Yes

LG: So you can imagine the 1860's roll around and then another war hit them, and the slaves ran away from the plantation and just left all these vacant lands and without slaves how do you raise back the tobacco crops? So what you do, just split them up and let sharecroppers work the land and the ones who could pay, or probably pay their way out because they knew other trades like carpentry. Blah! Blah! You know they can work really hard, families get together, families work hard buy land and more land. Now we're selling lands,



were giving away, were selling our land off.

JE: Right

RM: I know my ancestors , the property they had in Aquasco, I'm not really show how they aquired it, but I know its deeded. I know my uncle , he sold the land and it had to be deeded in order for him to sell it.

JE: Did he?

RM: Yes, you can't sell all your lands unless you have it titled on your names and deed it. So my Aunt when she passed the lands to my father , my uncle , my uncle Donald and my uncle Warren, but my uncle Warren have passed. The only two surviving were my father and uncle Donald. Cause you know , they didn't come down to do anything with with it because he was working in the government. My father was working. He was a concrete contractor so he wasn't doing any farming or raising tobaccco. All of it was behind and they moved on. My uncle he worked at the Pentagon, and my dad, he did other things. Plus , I don't know if they really – I guess they didn't feel like doing it . Because if they did, they could have done it any time, if they wanted to. But times change, people change.

LG: Yes

RM: Even the big old gardens need hard work. Like what I said to my Aunt, there are no gardens.

LG: These are fields.

RM: Right, fields.

JE: Big garden what?

RM: Yes, this a field! When you have half an acre of corn, potatoes you have to dig up, tomatoes, watermelons, corn, but hey it was agood life, we never went hungry.

LG: And your families never went hungry, that's the good part.

RM: No, always have food, always go to the pantry and open up and put out the jar of tomatoes and jar of string beans , they go out there and kill a chicken or something.

Crowd: Poor duck.

RM: I don't eat duck till this day. They used to hear them, they would hunt for rabbits with cousin. What are they doing out there shooting? Is it civil war again? Hunting. All of my aunts went back hunting.

LG: Said, another civil war.

JE: I could tell that you're a city kid. They called it going down to the country.

RM: I remember when 5 was one way. One way coming and going. There was no malls. No nothing. We had southern avenue, coming down five, that was it.

LG: Wait a minute , did you go to Old Brandywine Road?

RM: Yes

LG: Because that's how you get 5 on the old brandy wine road. Did you go down that road first?

RM: Yes , we have to come to down Old Brandwine road, we hit 5 coming down, there was no Clinton there was no St.Barber's.

LG: It was always for a TB .

RM: There wasn't Marlow Heights. There was no Clinton.

LG: It was always what? TB?

RM: TB is on the other side, by Accokeek.

JE: You have a TB because of the Revolutionary War. 13 original colonies and that one of the first.

RM: Yes , TB Maryland.

LG: Yes , TB Maryland.

RM: It used to be TB Maryland.

LG: Thomas Brooks, he was an indian fighter he use to kill Indians so that they could take the land.

RM: Yes

JE: So Clinton's called TB Brooks?

RM: No , TB was where 210 is.

LG: No

RM: Yes

LG: No, TV was where Three Rows Liquor is.

RM: We never called that TB Maryland.

JE: Yes

RM: I am going to read up on my history. I am going to challenge you on that one.

LG: If you go by, the restaurant, what's the name of that restaurant the one with sandwiches?

RM: Yes, I know that one

LG: One by the Blue church? Dyson store? The sign is there now. TB

RM: I always think, I used to think that TB, was over by Accokeek. I have to read up on that. I never knew that was TB. Cause my Aunt and my cousins would say where going to TB and TB was over by Accokeek, we thought.

LG: It's right after Accokeek Road.

RM: Yes, Three Rows Liquor.

LG: Across from the little church, the little white church.

RM: I know all that area very well.

LG: The New York Deli.

RM: Yes

LG: You'll see the sign, TB, the Indian fighter. Thomas Brooks, because Brook's is also named with one of the plantations here.

RM: Yes

LG: I am riding all the way home to check that out. Yes.

RM: On my way home, check out that. I got to confirm that.

LG: I'll give you my number.

RM: I got your number don't I? You go and write it down again. So that I can call you.

JE: Yes

RM: For TB. Oh that's where I had another bad experience too. Where the Three Rows Liquor store is. I'm going to tell you about the story before I leave. Since we classified that area as TB Maryland. We named it. I thought that was in Brandywine. But anyway, me and my cousin Robert again, we going up to the store. Now you remember John Dyson?

JE: Yes

RM: Old man John Dyson? We walked pass John Dyson Store. Now we're going to another store. It is Three Rows Liquor now, there's another store there.

LG: Oh really?

RM: Yes, Three Rows Liquor Store? There was another store right there. Go and buy sandwiches and all kinds of stuff. So we walked pass John Dyson's and we go to the store that is now Three Rows Liquor Store. I am going to the front door. My cousin said "You can't go on the front door." I said, the front door there, I am coming in front. "Oh we're Black, we got to go to the back."

LG: That was dueling law.

RM: Those were the words.

LG: We have to go to the back door.

RM: We have to go to the back door, yes. I never experienced that either. I mean I have been living down here in Aquasco my younger days since I was seven, eight whatever. I never experienced any discrimination down here in Aquasco.

LG: But you got the TB.

RM: I used to go to Jean Grimes's store. Go and get the mail. No discrimination.

LG: No discrimination.

RM: Not at all, I had to play black TB.

LG: It's a joke.

RM: I got to jump in the woods, and I have to go to the backdoor and then I experienced in the army too. Lake Charles, Louisiana. I was on leave, getting ready to Vietnam. Some of my buddies, said go to the next door hotel to get us a drink. So I go now, I am at the bar. I can remember there was four of us. The bartenders are all waiting all the way down at the bar, waiting on other people, serving all that stuff. Check on the time, 15 minutes had gone by, and I said "the hell going on here?" So I said, "Hey Bartender, can we get some service down here?" So he walks down and I'm sitting at the bar like this, and he placed his hand on the bar and the other and said, "We don't serve coloreds." I said What! I said "I'm in the army, getting ready to go to Vietnam. You saying you don't serve coloreds?" I started to grab his body to get his ass but my buddies pulled me back and told me it aint worth it.

JE: I see you got that some kind of rebel.

RM: I got McGruder blood in me.

JE: What the heck? It is funny that TB's not that far from here, right?

RM: No

JE: The difference, like seven mile?

BC: Brandywine

JE: Yes, Brandywine. The difference was that big?

RM: Yes. I never experienced any segregation the way I did because, the school.

JE: Right

RM: The school.

LG: And the churches.

RM: The churches. But our life was so relaxed. And it was so full of life that we didn't even think about discrimination or segregation.

LG: Maybe you know, maybe because it was two African-American cities down here too. You always felt like "Hey, I got a place."

RM: Yes

JE: A sense of place.

RM: True

JE: I am somebody too. I have my own.

RM: Yes, I never experienced that. Until I went to watch you call TB. I am going to check that out, right now? Because TV, where my cousin used to say, "Come on, we are all going on TB Maryland." I thought, it was like going to Accokeek But now you are telling me something different. Now I got to call Cynthia, I got to call Gloria, and I got to call Warren. You know Nathaniel and Wendell, too? You knew my entire family.

LG: Yup!

RM: You know my sister Pat? You don't know my whole family.

LG: I knew your brother Glen.

RM: I know you know Glen.

LG: Yes

RM: Glen know everydamn body.

JE: He was a cutie.

RM: Oh my God. Yes, It's all good.

ED: No more questions for you sir.

RM: I love Eagle Harbor. I always think about Eagle Harbor. I always think about Aquasco Road.

LG: Well thank you for coming.

RM: Yes, well my sister forced me.

JE: Ms. Mcgruder was supposed to come and she couldn't because she had to take care of her granddaughter.

RM: The grandkids. Yes. She can't go to my house yesterday and left this stuff talking about "You go see this lady right here. Make sure you go down there".

LG: Thank you for coming.

[End Transcript: 1: 10:53]