

**RUBY BRASURE**  
**September 18, 2006**

Interviewer: Margo Hunt  
Interviewee: Ruby Brasure  
Transcribed By: Shirley Fauber  
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(TAPE SIDE A – 1<sup>st</sup> Side):

Margo Hunt: Right now I'll start talking. This is Margo Hunt. I am at the home of Ruby Brasure on Cleveland Street in Chincoteague, Virginia. This is September 18, 2006. And we've come to ask Ruby a few questions. Good morning Ruby.

Ruby Brasure: Good morning Margo.

(Tape Stopped)

Margo Hunt: Good morning Ruby. Tell me – tell me where you were born.

Ruby Brasure: I was born on Chincoteague.

Margo Hunt: Where?

Ruby Brasure: North – South Main Street.

Margo Hunt: And where in South Main – what's there?

Ruby Brasure: The house that I was born in is still there I think, but it's been remodeled and it's been moved out. It was back farther than, you know, it wadn't right on Main Street. It was in the back like and it was sold and moved out.

Margo Hunt: House moving is a big thing here isn't it?

Ruby Brasure: Yes, but that's been years ago . . .

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh.

Ruby Brasure: That that was done.

Margo Hunt: And was that a little neighborhood all of its own?

Ruby Brasure: Yes, uh-huh.

Margo Hunt: And what was the – did it have a name?

Ruby Brasure: No, I don't think so.

Margo Hunt: But did you have a store?

Ruby Brasure: Oh yes! Yes, there were several stores and the one that that house was close to was Andrews' Store.

Margo Hunt: And what else did you have down there that made it a little community?

Ruby Brasure: Not anything that I can think of.

Margo Hunt: And where did you go to school?

Ruby Brasure: Well when I first started school I went to what they called a pay school.

Margo Hunt: What's that?

Ruby Brasure: Well she had a little room on what is now Beebe Road. And she had children from the first through the sixth grade I think it was. And, you know, she taught us accordingly.

Margo Hunt: It was a one-room school house?

Ruby Brasure: One-room school house. Well, it wasn't – it wasn't a public school. You paid to go. 'Cause my Mother didn't want me to come up town to school you know.

Margo Hunt: Because it was too far?

Ruby Brasure: Yes, she thought.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh.

Ruby Brasure: So then I think in the third grade I started at the elementary school, which was a wooden building that's – I don't know that that – it's either been moved or destroyed. It was in back of what was the high school.

Margo Hunt: I see. Well did you like that elementary school, how did that work out?

Ruby Brasure: No, I didn't like it. I – she paid a lot of attention to some children and some she didn't. She'd say, "Now do you're a,b,c's." Or do this or do that. And if you did it fine, and if you didn't fine. So my Grandmother and Grandfather Beebe lived over on the, well in the summertime they were over on Assateague and they lived – he was a watchman for Bunting's

Oysters. And my Grandmother stayed with him, but she come home and got me. She asked me what did I learn and she asked and I hadn't learned anything. So she takes me with her over to the beach and what was Sharrack's House. And she – it was a great long kitchen and a great old big table and she'd stand me to the head of the table and she'd be to the other end and ask me all these questions. Well, my brother was – he went to school, you know, before I did – and he said x, y z stove pipe when he would say his a,b,c's. (Laughing)

Margo Hunt: (Laughing)

Ruby Brasure: So she'd get me to say my abc's and I'd say x,y,z stove pipe. She said if you don't stop that you're gonna get it. And I think I did, I think I got a good whippin' for sayin' it 'fore I stopped.

Margo Hunt: So she was giving you tutoring really didn't she?

Ruby Brasure: Yes, she really got me started.

Margo Hunt: And that was before you went up to . . .

Ruby Brasure: Before I went to the elementary school in town.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh. And that was in the third grade?

Ruby Brasure: Third grade.

Margo Hunt: Then did you stay at the elementary school even though you didn't like it to well?

Ruby Brasure: Oh, I liked the elementary school! Yes, I stayed in that.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh.

Ruby Brasure: Uh-huh, until I finished school, you know, went through – we had eleven grades at the time.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh.

Ruby Brasure: We didn't have the twelve.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh.

Ruby Brasure: But I graduated from eleventh grade.

Margo Hunt: Tell about your Grandparent's place, Beebe's Place, on Assateague. What was that like?

Ruby Brasure: Well, it wasn't their place.

Margo Hunt: Oh!

Ruby Brasure: It was rented from what was called Sharrack's. It was a real old place full of antiques. It was a lovely place. And then as the beach progressed you know, well at the first – at first there was a Coast Guard Station within walking distance, you could see it from where we were.

Margo Hunt: Is that the one we can see now?

Ruby Brasure: No.

Margo Hunt: No?

Ruby Brasure: No.

Margo Hunt: There was another one?

Ruby Brasure: Then, well the beach you know just kept growing and so they put the new one down on the point that you see now. Well after that was put there then we moved over because there was fish - fish factories and they had to close because the Inlet, you know, closed up so the boats couldn't get in and out and we were in one of the houses that had been part of the fish factory.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh! And what was it like being out there in the summer?

Ruby Brasure: It was lonesome. (Laughing)

Margo Hunt: (Laughing) I bet it was!

Ruby Brasure: And I used to – to pass the time I would row, you know, in my Grandfather's boat - would row the boat and things like that is what I passed the time with.

Margo Hunt: In the cove?

Ruby Brasure: Yes, uh-huh.

Margo Hunt: Did you ever row back to the mainland?

Ruby Brasure: Oh no! Huh-uh, they wouldn't let me do that.

Margo Hunt: You were too little?

Ruby Brasure: Yes. (Laughing) And the thing that I disliked about it the most was they – my Grandmother and sometimes my Mother would come out and my aunt, and we went clammin'. When the tide started to go down, you know, we went clammin' until the tide come up and there was no way you could catch any more, I despised it!

Margo Hunt: Oh no!

Ruby Brasure: Now I love to go clammin', but then I thought if I ever get too old for this - get away from this, I'll never do it again. (Laughing)

Margo Hunt: Have you ever spent much time off Chincoteague Island?

Ruby Brasure: Not a whole lot. We – during the war I stayed in Massachusetts, Hyenas, a while.

Margo Hunt: Awe.

Ruby Brasure: And then in Florida close to - now I forget the place we were in Florida. But we were on a beach because it was the only place we could find to rent you know.

Margo Hunt: And what took you to those places?

Ruby Brasure: My husband, he was in the Coast Guard. And his job would take him there. First, when the war broke out he was already in Iceland. And when he got home then naturally wherever he went I went. Because he stayed twenty-one months in Iceland.

Margo Hunt: Wow! (Pause) Without you?

Ruby Brasure: Yes. (Laughing)

Margo Hunt: (Laughng) Well, of all those places you felt most at home I guess at Chincoteague?

Ruby Brasure: Yes.

Margo Hunt: But you were always on the beach it sounds like.

Ruby Brasure: Not in Hyenas we weren't. We were – I was right in the midst of Hyenas, right across from the hospital.

Margo Hunt: Oh.

Ruby Brasure: And we lived in a what was the chauffer's quarters for the doctor that had retired.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh.

Ruby Brasure: The doctor lived in the house in front us.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh.

Ruby Brasure: And, of course, I enjoyed that, being away from home and it was – it was great the way they treated us and all you know.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh. What was your husband's job?

Ruby Brasure: He was – he was there in Hyenas to train the Army in landing boats.

Margo Hunt: Oh. Uh-huh.

Ruby Brasure: Now his rate wadn't that high, it was what was known as a Chief.

Margo Hunt: Why is he training the Army not the Navy I wonder?

Ruby Brasure: I don't know why it was.

Margo Hunt: (Laughing)

Ruby Brasure: Except that it was an Army base there.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh.

Ruby Brasure: And it was right funny because these, I think I'm right in tellin' you it was the Army, this couple lived in another, it was a double garage and then it was another place that the doctor rented that used to be his studio, and they couldn't understand, the wife couldn't understand what my husband was doing up there training them. And I said, "Well, I don't know," I said, "except I know that's what he's doin'."

Margo Hunt: (Laughing) And that's what he's good at.

Ruby Brasure: And so she asked her husband and she come back and apologized to me. She said, "You're right, that's what he's doin'." Well, they knew all this about boats, but they just, you know, they had these landing boats that the front let down.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh.

Ruby Brasure: And that's what they were doin', showin' 'em how to get, because that's what he had done in Iceland.

Margo Hunt: Well, were those the same boats they used to land in the Normandy invasion?

Ruby Brasure: Probably did.

Margo Hunt: Did he have anything to do with that?

Ruby Brasure: No, he didn't have anything to do with that. When he came home from Iceland, I don't know how far the war had progressed, but – and he did tell me but I forgot how many was in the convoy that he come from Iceland in and only half of 'em got back.

Margo Hunt: Oh my!

Ruby Brasure: The rest of 'em the sub's got.

Margo Hunt: Oh really?

Ruby Brasure: And when he come home it was just like this – he couldn't hold a glass or anything.

Margo Hunt: Oh dear.

Ruby Brasure: Now then they didn't take their clothes off, you know, or anything comin' home.

Margo Hunt: Oh dear! Shew! So what year – what year did you get married Ruby?

Ruby Brasure: '36. 1936.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh. And how did you meet this guy?

Ruby Brasure: In school.

Margo Hunt: Oh, he was – he was actually living here on Chincoteague?

Ruby Brasure: Yes, yes.

Margo Hunt: He was – was he a Chincoteague person?

Ruby Brasure: Yes, uh-huh. He was raised on Chincoteague. Except like I tell you, he was on North Main and I was on South of Main. And until he walked in that classroom in the eighth grade, I didn't know him.

Margo Hunt: You weren't allowed to go up to North Main?

Ruby Brasure: Well, we were allowed, but we didn't have cars, very few cars, and we just didn't do it.

Margo Hunt: Because walking – was walking the main transportation?

Ruby Brasure: Yes, yes.

Margo Hunt: Did you have bicycles?

Ruby Brasure: Well, I never had a bicycle.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh.

Ruby Brasure: I think my brother did, but I didn't.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh. So the only way you could get up to North Main would have been . . .

Ruby Brasure: Would a been to walk.

Margo Hunt: Yeah. And that's a – that's a good walk. Where did he live on North Main?

Ruby Brasure: He lived on the south side of what is now the High School.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh.

Ruby Brasure: And he had a – they had a tall house and see we were married in '36 and they give us – we were married in May and they gave us a shower, his Mother did, in September and the house went over and his sister had come from Philadelphia and the baby was killed. And so then they built – the Red Cross built 'em a house right next to, well I think – now I think they put it on this side because the house went into the house next door. Only thing that they damaged was a roof I think.

Margo Hunt: Well what kind of a storm was that?

Ruby Brasure: It was a hurricane.

Margo Hunt: The hurricane of '36?

Ruby Brasure: Uh-huh.

Margo Hunt: Oh, well tell about that!

Ruby Brasure: Well, I don't know how much I can tell you about it. (Laughing)

Margo Hunt: Well, the house went completely over?

Ruby Brasure: The house went completely over.

(Tape Stopped)



Margo Hunt: Ruby is showing me some pictures; this is Margo Hunt, of this hurricane damage in 1936. One house is still clearly there, that was before the high school was built. And – but her husband’s house, the house he grew up in?

Ruby Brasure: Uh-huh. This is the house he grew up in.

Margo Hunt: Just really ruined. It was on its side, put on its side.

Ruby Brasure: Right. The wind did it I guess.

Margo Hunt: And then the Red Cross built a new house for them?

Ruby Brasure: Uh-huh.

Margo Hunt: Amazing! Isn’t that amazing?

Ruby Brasure: It is amazing.

Margo Hunt: I don’t think they would do that now.

Ruby Brasure: People talk about the Red Cross but they come here and they did wonders, they really did! They fed people.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh.

Ruby Brasure: And they – they give ‘em – replaced things for ‘em. And you would be surprised when the people come, if they didn’t offer ‘em the very best they would argue. They wanted the very best flooring put down, linoleum if their linoleum was up you know.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh.

Ruby Brasure: And I worked for ‘em some. One woman said, “And I don’t even have a grass cutter.” And I said, “Do you think anybody does?” And, “What would you do with it if you had it?” (Laughing)

Margo Hunt: (Laughing)

Ruby Brasure: And guess what.

Margo Hunt: She got one?

Ruby Brasure: No, I don’t know whether she did or not. I don’t know what they got. But I went – we decided we’d clean the garage out, our garage was up then and I went and started my lawn mower and it started. I said that dag-gone thing made a liar out of me. (Laughing)

Margo Hunt: (Laughing) Where did it hit worst on the Island, that hurricane?

Ruby Brasure: I think it might a been up North Main Street . . .

Margo Hunt: North Main?

Ruby Brasure: That it hit worst. I don't know about East side.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh.

Ruby Brasure: I think East side was another storm that hit bad.

Margo Hunt: Well how about on Beebe Road where you were?

Ruby Brasure: I was on Beebe Street.

Margo Hunt: Beebe Street.

Ruby Brasure: Uh-huh.

Margo Hunt: What's the difference?

Ruby Brasure: Well they've now – they've changed Beebe Street to another name now.

Margo Hunt: Oh!

Ruby Brasure: Because I don't know why – at the time that I was tellin' you its Beebe Road now, but it used to be something else. And why they changed it to Beebe Road I don't know. And I didn't know they were doin' it at the time or I would have complained.

Margo Hunt: (Laughing)

Ruby Brasure: I would have!!! I was raised on Beebe Street. See my Mother didn't like that house that I told you I was born in. So they built the house on Beebe Street. And that is – I don't know what it's called now.

Margo Hunt: It's down there. (Laughing)

Ruby Brasure: Yeah, it's down there. (Laughing) And, what was I tellin' you?

Margo Hunt: Let's see, you were tellin' me about the storm and whether it hit you down there. The hurricane.

Ruby Brasure: It didn't bother us down there, no.

Margo Hunt: So really . . .

Ruby Brasure: Not this '36 storm.

Margo Hunt: Really it North Main?

Ruby Brasure: I don't think. It might have, it might a been the time that the boat went into some houses up farther than where I was you know.

Margo Hunt: Is that the worst hurricane you can remember? Worst storm?

Ruby Brasure: Well, it's – that's the worst hurricane maybe that I can remember. But see the '62 storm was in March and that was the worst one I think we ever had.

Margo Hunt: When was the '36 hurricane, what month was that?

Ruby Brasure: September, but I don't know the date.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh. March can have some big storms I know.

Ruby Brasure: Uh-huh.

Margo Hunt: So that was a northeaster probably?

Ruby Brasure: Yeah, in March.

Margo Hunt: And that's when the water came over Main Street.

Ruby Brasure: Water came ever where.

Margo Hunt: Um.

Ruby Brasure: See I was livin' here at the time.

Margo Hunt: Um.

Ruby Brasure: And it was even back here. It didn't come in the house.

Margo Hunt: This is on Cleveland Street?

Ruby Brasure: Uh-huh.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh.

Ruby Brasure: But my husband was building, like I told you our garage was raised, it was a different garage than I have now. And he was building a boat for my daughter and his brother's son, building them a little scow, and he said, "Ruby, would you get up honey and help me get that boat out of the garage so I can put my car in there?" He said, "Because the tide's here, if we don't get the car in the garage she's gonna be ruined." And I said, "What's wrong with you, tide's never been back here." (Laughing)

Margo Hunt: (Laughing)

Ruby Brasure: He said, "But it's back here now." So that's what we did. We moved the boat and put the car in the garage to save her.

Margo Hunt: And was the car saved?

Ruby Brasure: Yeah, uh-huh. It went halfway to the wheels so we had to have the wheels pulled and, you know, re-greased and that was it.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh.

Ruby Brasure: And after that they evacuated. We had to leave.

Margo Hunt: Did you have any trouble evacuating off just one causeway and all the people on the Island?

Ruby Brasure: No. No, they seemed to have that pretty orderly.

Margo Hunt: That's good.

Ruby Brasure: Because the storm, the worst of the storm was over.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh.

Ruby Brasure: But they said it wasn't healthy because some horses were killed and there was a lot a chicken houses on here at the time. You know Chicken City Road was nothin' but chicken houses.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh.

Ruby Brasure: And all these chickens were dead and it just wadn't healthy 'til they got the place cleaned up. So we all had to leave.

Margo Hunt: Who cleaned it up?

Ruby Brasure: I don't know. (Laughing) Because I left and I went to Onancock to friends and then we'd come days to the Base to help with, you know . . .

Margo Hunt: To what's now Wallops?

Ruby Brasure: Yeah.

Margo Hunt: And was that kind of a shelter for some people?

Ruby Brasure: Oh yes, yes! A lot a people they took there.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh. So people got – probably took a couple weeks would it? Or . . .

Ruby Brasure: I think it may have. I do – I don't remember just how long I stayed with them. I don't think I stayed a couple weeks to Onancock, but they let us know when we could return you know.

Margo Hunt: Did you have any children Ruby?

Ruby Brasure: Not at – yeah, I had a girl at that time, Amy, was livin' – I mean Kay. (Laughing) Yeah, sure.

Margo Hunt: (Laughing) So did your child – your little girl went with you?

Ruby Brasure: Oh, of course!

Margo Hunt: Yeah. Wow. What – it must have been terrifying?

Ruby Brasure: Well, it didn't bother me for some reason.

Margo Hunt: Maybe that was your early days on Assateague that prepared you?

Ruby Brasure: (Laughing) I know as the tide, well that mornin' my husband had took – we had – he took the boat. We had a boathouse right next to the garage and he took the boat to go get his Mother and Dad. And Kay and I were on the porch and here come this man down the street just goin' like this you know. And she said, "Mom, look that man's drunk." I said, "No, he isn't, that's Grady Ross and he's tryin' to get home."

Margo Hunt: Shew.

Ruby Brasure: He had – he had a store in town and he'd been tryin' to get – save some of it you know. So when they got abreast us and I asked him did he want to come in, he said, "Not unless you've got some heat." And I had the oven on – that – we had a floor furnace and, of course, that was out from the water. And I give 'im some dry clothes and when my husband come back with the boat he took 'im home.

Margo Hunt: Well, where were your husband's parents?

Ruby Brasure: On North Main, right up here.

Margo Hunt: So they were in that house that was destroyed?

Ruby Brasure: No, not in that house, in the new one.

Margo Hunt: The new house that the Red Cross had built?

Ruby Brasure: Uh-huh. And a boat went in that and smashed the front porch.

Margo Hunt: The new house?

Ruby Brasure: In the new house.

Margo Hunt: Oh no! What adventures.

Ruby Brasure: (Laughing) This was in '62 from '36 to '62.

Margo Hunt: Amazing.

Ruby Brasure: So that's why she didn't want the house fixed up you know. And they – she bought the land next to Lillian, my neighbor, and moved it down here. So she spent the rest of her days that close to us.

Margo Hunt: Was this – it this higher ground down here on Cleveland Street?

Ruby Brasure: Yes evidently, uh-huh.

Margo Hunt: It's gotta be.

Ruby Brasure: Because they said it was the first time in that '62 storm, with all the storms we've had, it was the first time that the tide had ever come back here.

Margo Hunt: That's an amazing adventure. What – tell about your childhood. When you – when you – what was it like, what kind of games did you play, what did – did you have friends just in your little neighborhood?

Ruby Brasure: Oh yes, yes!

Margo Hunt: Not any other place on the Island?

Ruby Brasure: Not 'til we started school, no. Whatever that was – it's Beebe Road now, whatever it was then I had a friend that lived there.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh.

Ruby Brasure: And we were together every day you know.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh.

Ruby Brasure: So – and her aunt that lived with ‘em is the one that got me into – got my Mother to let me go to the third grade, you know, uptown and she saw to me gettin’ into the right room and everything.

Margo Hunt: I’ll bet you were a good student Ruby.

Ruby Brasure: Not too good.

Margo Hunt: Were you fooling around? (Laughing)

Ruby Brasure: No, I didn’t fool around but you know, school wasn’t important to my Mother and I did what I wanted to do. If I wanted to study I did, and a lot a times my Father worked on the water and he got up early and she wouldn’t let me stay up late to study. I hated seventh grade! Because we had all these assignments and I never could get to finish ‘em because my Mother wouldn’t let me stay up and do it. (Laughing) But I made the honor roll anyway that year. I had to have somethin’ to work for to, you know, that year they give you they had the honor roll so I worked for that. But other years I didn’t.

Margo Hunt: What did she think about school?

Ruby Brasure: She thought it wasn’t necessary. My Mother did.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh. Because she hadn’t probably gone to school?

Ruby Brasure: No.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh. And she was fine so why should you.

Ruby Brasure: “Well, all you’re ever gonna do is get married anyway,” she said, “So why worry with goin’ to school.” You know.

Margo Hunt: That was the attitude then.

Ruby Brasure: That was her attitude. It wasn’t my Grandmother’s though.

Margo Hunt: Yeah.

Ruby Brasure: See like I told you she was out to Assateague when – she would question people that would stop to talk to ‘em, when was school gonna start. And she come home from the beach

and got my books, you had to pay for books at the time, and whatever she felt like she could buy in the way of clothes, to see that I got started in school.

Margo Hunt: Good for her! She must have been a tough lady.

Ruby Brasure: She was!

Margo Hunt: And smart.

Ruby Brasure: Uh-huh.

Margo Hunt: How wonderful. Now she was a Beebe?

Ruby Brasure: No, she was a Taylor, she married a Beebe.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh.

Ruby Brasure: She married Andrew Beebe.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh. And what is that relationship with the – did they – were they the original Beebe's of Beebe Street?

Ruby Brasure: Yes. You know, well right on the corner of what was Beebe Street, was my Grandfather, Andrew. And next to him was Clarence, the one you know that his family is from Mississippi, and then next to that was Ralph, another brother, and next to that was Bert, another brother. They – it seemed like that the land, when the people got their land, they got this great big piece of land you know, and when they had children then they divided up amongst their children.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh. It was kind of a family compound.

Ruby Brasure: Uh-huh, yes.

Margo Hunt: I think that's great.

Ruby Brasure: And then when you went on the other side a the street, it was Andrews'.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh. And they could see the water from there?

Ruby Brasure: Oh yes, yes!

Margo Hunt: And that side of the – the bayside was never built on was it?

Ruby Brasure: No, huh-uh.



Margo Hunt: It still isn't.

Ruby Brasure: Huh-uh.

Margo Hunt: Which makes it nice doesn't it?

Ruby Brasure: Well there isn't enough land, you know, to build anything on. Yes, it does make it nice.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh.

Ruby Brasure: I hate these condominiums their puttin' up and hidin' all of our view.

Margo Hunt: Yeah, view is important here isn't it?

Ruby Brasure: Yes, it is!

Margo Hunt: Real important.

Ruby Brasure: We're not gonna have it though, you know.

Margo Hunt: I'm worried. There is still time. What – tell about – what kind of food did you have back in that – what did you eat, what did your Mother make, was she a good cook?

Ruby Brasure: No!

Margo Hunt: (Laughing) How about your Grandmother.

Ruby Brasure: My Grandmother was a good cook and my Father was a good cook.

Margo Hunt: Oh!

Ruby Brasure: But she didn't like to cook. I mean if she was gonna cook a piece of beef, you know, she'd put it in a pot and fill it right up with water so she could run around the neighborhood and talk and do like she pleased you know.

Margo Hunt: (Laughing)

Ruby Brasure: And it wouldn't burn of course, it would get done.

Margo Hunt: (Laughing)

Ruby Brasure: But now my Father was a good cook and if we wanted anything special see – sometimes he went what they called down the Bay and “You'll have to wait 'til your Father comes home if you want that, he'll cook it for you.”

Margo Hunt: Did he cook fish?

Ruby Brasure: Oh yeah. She cooked fish.

Margo Hunt: And how did you cook fish then?

Ruby Brasure: She fried 'em mostly.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh. And did he?

Ruby Brasure: Yes, uh-huh.

Margo Hunt: You didn't broil in those days?

Ruby Brasure: No, huh-uh.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh.

Ruby Brasure: Most of 'em didn't know what broil was.

Margo Hunt: Aahh! Uh-huh. And he was a waterman?

Ruby Brasure: Yes.

Margo Hunt: So did he bring you good fresh fish all the time?

Ruby Brasure: No, he didn't – he didn't do much hand-line fishing or, you know, he brought home clams and oysters.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh.

Ruby Brasure: And that was the staples that we survived on, was oysters and clams.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh. Well they have – they're very good for you it turns out.

Ruby Brasure: It turns out.

Margo Hunt: (Laughing) Yeah, that's why you're so healthy now.

Ruby Brasure: (Laughing) You think so?

Margo Hunt: Sure, sure. What kind of – what was the pay like back in then?

Ruby Brasure: Well, if you made Fifteen Dollars a week you had made a lot a money, you were happy.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh.

Ruby Brasure: But the bad part of it was when winter come and snow and ice, there was no work, so you didn't make anything.

Margo Hunt: You had to really know how to save?

Ruby Brasure: Well, they would buy what they called a barrel of flour to see 'em through the winter and they would raise a pig or a hog and kill that and you had that meat. And that was what you survived on really. And cannin' things that they raised in the garden.

Margo Hunt: Did people have a lot of gardens then?

Ruby Brasure: Yes, just about ever body had gardens.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh. I wonder why we don't have gardens now?

Ruby Brasure: I don't know. I hope . . .

Margo Hunt: We have a garden.

Ruby Brasure: We used to have one in the back here. (That's the mail). And my husband would say, "It's time Ruby to get the seed to plant the garden." And I'd go get it and we'd go out and plant it. He never did take care of it, all he did was help plant it. So I got kind a tired of it and I said to him one year, he says, "It's time to get the seed to plant the garden." I said, "Are you gonna take care of it?" He said, "Don't I usually?" I said, "No, and I'm not!"

Margo Hunt: (Laughing)

Ruby Brasure: But I went and got the seed and we planted the garden and nobody touched it and I never heard nothin' about a garden after that. (Laughing)

Margo Hunt: (Laughing) What was his name Ruby?

Ruby Brasure: His name was Joshua Edward. He was named after his dad. But we called him "Snip." Some kids at school nicknamed him Snip.

Margo Hunt: That's a cute name.

Ruby Brasure: So we called 'im Snip. His family called him Edward so that he wouldn't get mixed up with his dad. Then when he went to NASA they called him Josh. After he retired from the Coast Guard he went to work for NASA.

(Pause)

Margo Hunt: What kind of a boat did he have, did your Father have when he was a waterman?

Ruby Brasure: It was what they called a scow I think a scow boat.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh.

Ruby Brasure: It was, I don't know, he didn't make it but somebody – it wadn't a real big boat or an expensive boat, just something they could dredge oysters and clams with you know.

Margo Hunt: Were there people then who went out and did fishing for finfish then? Flounder? Or did they hand-line those?

Ruby Brasure: No, they – they would net 'em.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh.

Ruby Brasure: And I don't, probably went out, you know, out to catch 'em, I don't remember that.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh.

Ruby Brasure: But I remember 'em netting fish.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh. Did you – did you ever fish?

Ruby Brasure: Oh yes!

Margo Hunt: What did you like to fish for?

Ruby Brasure: Just so they were bitin', it didn't matter. (Laughing)

Margo Hunt: That's fine.

Ruby Brasure: Except flounder was a little – a little harder to catch than the croakers and others because you didn't realize that it was something nibbling on your line, they were sort of sucking, you know.

Margo Hunt: (Laughing)

Ruby Brasure: But I did right good at catchin' flounder.

Margo Hunt: Aren't they – they're hard to fillet aren't they?

Ruby Brasure: Uh-huh, yes.

Margo Hunt: Did you have to fillet them, clean them and fillet them?

Ruby Brasure: I had to help, uh-huh.

Margo Hunt: (Laughing) You couldn't get anybody to do that for you?

Ruby Brasure: No. And then this neighbors over here, they would go with us, the four of us we'd go. And I would eat the whole time I was fishing you know, and he worked hard. So – and I always caught more fish than he did. I don't know why you don't just send your line and stay home. (Laughing)

Margo Hunt: (Laughing) Oh Ruby, it sounds as though you had a really wonderful life then.

Ruby Brasure: Well, I had a right good life.

Margo Hunt: Yes, you have. Now you haven't retired.

Ruby Brasure: Well, sorta. I just work for Marsha.

Margo Hunt: Uh-huh. In Marsha Carter Gifts?

Ruby Brasure: Yes, uh-huh.

Margo Hunt: And you used to work there more days than you do now, right?

Ruby Brasure: Well, yes. But you see two summers I was sick. I had an operation two different summers. I had one in May and the other one in June and that meant that the whole summer I couldn't go over there. So these girls that filled in, they do it too now, you know. So she has all of us.

Margo Hunt: Well, she relies on you more than anyone I know.

Ruby Brasure: I don't know. (Laughing)

Margo Hunt: Yes, I know she does.

Ruby Brasure: She's one sweet person.

Margo Hunt: Isn't she wonderful.

Ruby Brasure: Um, she is that.

Margo Hunt: I know it. Can you think of anything that I haven't asked you about?

Ruby Brasure: Nope.

Margo Hunt: I have with me Lollie Willis who is our technical person too this morning. Lollie do you have a question for Ruby?

Lollie Willis: Well, just looking back on your life, do you think Chincoteague shaped it in a certain way or the place where you lived. How would you – just think about the meaning of living here, I mean to me as a newcomer it is such a unique place. And I'd just like to savor it somehow.

Ruby Brasure: I don't know how to answer that. I really don't.

Lollie Willis: Yeah, I can understand that. It's kind of vague . . .

Ruby Brasure: I think about it, growin' up and how things have turned out and I wonder how come I've – did turn out like this you know.

Lollie Willis: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Ruby Brasure: But I give a lot of the credit to my Grandmother.

Margo Hunt: And your church has something to do with it?

Ruby Brasure: Yeah, it probably does.

Margo Hunt: I know churches were very important to people who lived here, and still are.

Ruby Brasure: Uh-huh.

Margo Hunt: So that shaped your values didn't it?

Ruby Brasure: Probably did.

Margo Hunt: It still is a rare community where you can leave your car open and your house unlocked.

Ruby Brasure: I don't.

Margo Hunt: Oh no, Ruby.

ALL: (Laughing)

Margo Hunt: You don't any more?

Ruby Brasure: No, huh-uh.

Margo Hunt: But you used to I'm sure?

Ruby Brasure: Well, ever body did until after – what was her name, Dot somethin' that worked in what was then Pender's, she got murdered and nobody knew who did or how come, you know.

Margo Hunt: When was this Ruby?

Ruby Brasure: Um, I don't know.

Margo Hunt: Roughly.

Ruby Brasure: It's been a long time ago.

Margo Hunt: Like thirty or forty years?

Ruby Brasure: Oh yes! Yes.

Margo Hunt: Okay, she was murdered at a store?

Ruby Brasure: No, she was in her home. She worked in the store. She and her husband worked in the store and he passed away. And she still worked in the same store you know. And somebody went in – well, she didn't show up for work and they went to look for her and found her in bed murdered.

Margo Hunt: Oh my.

Ruby Brasure: But they never did know who did it.

Lollie Willis: It was never solved?

Ruby Brasure: No.

Margo Hunt: So we had that murder and one other murder not to long ago on the Island, but that is all that I know about.

Ruby Brasure: Now who was murdered not to long ago?

Margo Hunt: What was her name -?

Ruby Brasure: Oh yes, yes.

Margo Hunt: Sand – is what I want to say.

Ruby Brasure: Oh yes, the one that was delivering pizza?

Margo Hunt: Yes.

Ruby Brasure: I forget her name. Yes.

Margo Hunt: You know, considering these days, that is really not very many.

Ruby Brasure: No.

Margo Hunt: But aren't we lucky here to feel so safe.

Ruby Brasure: Right.

Margo Hunt: Really, very safe. Well, Ruby I've enjoyed talking with you very much. I'm – it's a pleasure to be with you and thank you for your hospitality.

Ruby Brasure: And thank you.

END OF TAPE.