

**JEANETTE WHITE PHIPPS
KATHRYN WHITE EWELL
September 15, 2007**

Interviewers: Lisa Broliia and Janice McKinnon
Transcribed By: Shirley Fauber
Jeanette White Phipps Jeanette White Phipps
Kathryn White Ewell Kathryn White Ewell
Library Number: 07-09-057

Tape, Side A (1st Side):

Lisa Broliia: September 15, 2007 at 6175 Maddox Boulevard, with two members of the Chincoteague Island Community Heritage project. Myself, Lisa Broliia, and Janice McKinnon - with two Island residents, Jeanette White Phipps and Kathryn White Ewell to do an oral history interview.

Lisa Broliia: Let's go ahead and get started by talking a little bit about your early life. For example, talking a bit about your family background. For instance, talking about your parents and about their generation. What were your parents' names?

Jeanette White Phipps: My father was James E. White and my mother was Sally Ellen Holloway White.

Lisa Broliia: And where were they from, were they from Chincoteague as well?

Jeanette White Phipps: No. My Father was born in Delaware and my Mother in Maryland. She came here as a bookkeeper to Mr. Jester that had a seafood business and she was his bookkeeper until she met my Father here on Chincoteague and they were married. The house where they were married is torn down and gone. It was the old Jester house. It's a motel there now, the Lighthouse Motel.

Lisa Broliia: Lighthouse Motel.

Jeanette White Phipps: It was a nice big house there and that's where she was married in.

Lisa Broliia: And did you know anything about your grandparents?

Jeanette White Phipps: Yes, I know my grandparents; my Grandmother lived with us for a while and she lived until she was ninety-four.

Lisa Broliia: Oh wow.

Jeanette White Phipps: And she wasn't all gray then.

Lisa Broli: (Laughing)

Jeanette White Phipps: But anyhow, she stayed with Mother part of the time and part of the time with another sister Mother had in Maryland.

Lisa Broli: And did you have a large extended family here on Chincoteague, cousins, aunts, uncles?

Jeanette White Phipps: Well yes, my Father had a sister, Aunt Annie Hickman, her name was.

Lisa Broli: Uh-huh.

Jeanette White Phipps: And she had children. And then he had another sister, Molly, and she lived here on Main Street and she had a son – two sons – but one of 'em got killed. And besides that most of my relatives lived away. My brother – my father – yeah?

Kathryn White Ewell: Don't forget Daddy's pet name for Mother. When I was growin' up he called her cutie. (Laughing) I always liked he called her cutie. Our Father always called our Mother, "cutie." When he first met her he remarked that she was really a cutie. So they courted and got married and all his life he called her cutie. And when I was growin' up I thought that was her name and you spelled it with a "Q." (Laughing)

Lisa Broli: And that was Kathryn. And did you celebrate holidays and have a lot of traditions that involved your extended family?

Jeanette White Phipps: Well, at – way back when I was a child, yes we did. And I remember on Halloween ever body would dress up and we'd all go downtown and see ever body. Women, men and children all dressed up for Halloween. That's when I was small. My brother is three years younger than I am and he would be in the baby carriage and I'd walk beside the baby carriage. I guess that was before Kathryn was born.

Lisa Broli: So the whole Island celebrated Halloween together?

Jeanette White Phipps: Yes, they did. Of course, Chincoteague used to be slighter – little communities. It was Deep Hole, and up the neck, and the creekers, up the creek, and down the shore, and the town. We lived in the town. Of course, I lived on Cropper Street where I was born.

Lisa Broli: What would a typical Halloween costume be?

Jeanette White Phipps: Well they'd dress up all kind a way. Ghosts and pirates and everything. Even grown people, grown men, they dressed up to. Until some – one man got murdered,

stabbed to death, and they quit having ever body to have Halloween like that. That's when they stopped having Halloween. Except for the kids, of course. The kids would grow up and we use to run around and ring doorbells, but we'd run when they'd come to the door. We didn't get any candy.

Kathryn White Ewell: No trick or treat.

Lisa Broli: So it was more trick than treat?

Jeanette White Phipps: Yes. More tricks, yeah. And I remember when the fire company was organized I was four or five maybe that old when Bill Lewers, he was a fireman, and after the old Atlantic Hotel burned down, that was on Main Street, 'cause my brother and I used to walk on the foundation of it when we'd go through town.

Lisa Broli: What is located there now, where was that?

Jeanette White Phipps: I can't – I can't tell you exactly.

Kathryn White Ewell: It was the Russell Hotel, but that's gone. Used to be the Russell Hotel there . . .

Jeanette White Phipps: That wadn't the Atlantic Hotel.

Kathryn White Ewell: Oh no, that was – excuse me.

Jeanette White Phipps: She don't remember that. She is five years younger.

Lisa Broli: She's a very young woman.

Jeanette White Phipps: If I would ride through town, I could show you where it is, but I can't – I can't exactly tell you.

Lisa Broli: Was that on Main Street?

Jeanette White Phipps: It was more – right beside I think the Jess – the house that – Watson House.

Lisa Broli: Okay.

Jeanette White Phipps: That's still there.

Lisa Broli: Okay.

Jeanette White Phipps: It's a few of the houses – used to be some houses on Main Street years ago.

Lisa Broliia: Okay.

Jeanette White Phipps: But it was close to that 'cause we walked on the foundation of it when we were going through town.

Lisa Broliia: Okay.

Jeanette White Phipps: And the town was entirely different than it is now!

Kathryn White Ewell: The Watson House when you come off the bridge Jeanette?

Jeanette White Phipps: Yes.

Kathryn White Ewell: The Watson House when you come off the bridge is right in front. And Watson's Drug Store and well, I don't – everything store – was right as you came off the bridge to the left. It was right there on that corner. And that building is still there.

Jeanette White Phipps: That was an ice cream parlor on one side and on the other side men hung out and smoked their cigars and all that kind of stuff. And they had ice cream. My Father, when he'd go down he would smoke his pipe with 'em and then he would bring a quart of ice cream home.

Lisa Broliia: So that's where the men in town would hang out?

Jeanette White Phipps: One of the places, yes.

Lisa Broliia: Where – where else would people hang out?

Jeanette White Phipps: Well, then it was another little shop around there that men stopped in and got coffee and the man made oyster stew. And just simple things like that.

Lisa Broliia: Was there any drinking establishments?

Jeanette White Phipps: Well, no. It was illegal to drink then.

Lisa Broliia: Uh-huh.

Jeanette White Phipps: But there were a few bootleggers on the Island.

Lisa Broliia: That is what I was wondering.

Jeanette White Phipps: In fact, it was one that lived next door to my . . .

Kathryn White Ewell: There was two down our street.

Lisa Broliа: Two places to drink?

Kathryn White Ewell: Yeah, they were bootleggers. And ever once in a while they'd get raided and oh that was an exciting time.

Lisa Broliа: Who would they get raided by?

Kathryn White Ewell: The Revenuers.

Lisa Broliа: From outside of the Island?

Kathryn White Ewell: Yeah, uh-huh, yeah. And that was an exciting time. And there was a little jail down our street. As you were going down Cropper Street heading east right on the left was the jailhouse and the bootlegger was right across the street from that. And you went a couple houses and there was another bootlegger. And that was big business. (Laughing)

Lisa Broliа: And so this was something everybody knew about?

Jeanette White Phipps: Yes. And there were ones scattered all over the Island. There was one at Deep Hole. Most of – they would just sell drinks.

Lisa Broliа: Uh-huh.

Jeanette White Phipps: And 'course it was illegal and they weren't supposed to do it.

Kathryn White Ewell: Was that the Virginia Inn?

Jeanette White Phipps: No, that was a roadhouse I guess you would call it. We're jumpin' ahead.

Lisa Broliа: But – but would only men go to these establishments?

Jeanette White Phipps: Yes, yes, just men, uh-huh.

Lisa Broliа: And was there ever any tension between wives and husbands because husbands would go hang out?

Jeanette White Phipps: No, there didn't seem to be.

Lisa Broliа: It was all right?

Jeanette White Phipps: They had children and we were friends with the children.

Lisa Broliа: Uh-huh.

Jeanette White Phipps: And once in a while we'd go home with 'em, but when we did there was nothin' sold or nothin' like that.

Lisa Broliia: Uh-huh.

Jeanette White Phipps: Until we left.

Lisa Broliia: Uh-huh.

Jeanette White Phipps: And anyhow that was before the water tank that was in town was built on our street. I remember that bein' built. I know you don't even have a picture of that, but it was . . .

Lisa Broliia: No, no. Tell us about that.

Jeanette White Phipps: I remember when they put water on the Island. Before that we had cisterns. On our house we had a cistern that hung on the wall outside and pipes run in.

Lisa Broliia: And where did the water come to go in the cistern, from rain?

Jeanette White Phipps: Yeah, from rain, yes.

Lisa Broliia: And that's the only way you had water?

Jeanette White Phipps: That's – well now some people had . . .

Lisa Broliia: A well?

Jeanette White Phipps: A well, but they got so that they said that the water wasn't safe to drink or anything so they didn't use that any more.

Lisa Broliia: Ahh.

Jeanette White Phipps: And then when I was little they dug – I remember 'em diggin' all the trenches and layin' the pipes and everything. But before that the man that lived next door to us, a Mr. Baker, Joe Baker, he put a windmill up with a tank up there. So we had runnin' water before they put the town water in. And so we had a bathroom. Wadn't too many bathrooms on here to start with.

Lisa Broliia: So you had one of the first bathrooms?

Jeanette White Phipps: Well I don't – among the first, not the first.

Lisa Broliia: Well you must have been very proud of that.

Jeanette White Phipps: Well, it's a – we used it. We were used to it I guess. In fact, the first one that we had was on the back porch and you sit down on it and the tank would fill up and when you got up the water would run out and flush.

Kathryn White Ewell: It would flush automatically.

Jeanette White Phipps: Uh-huh. So had that first. And, of course, then Mother had a bathroom put in upstairs.

Lisa Broli: And how did you do – tell us more about your childhood home, about the house itself.

Jeanette White Phipps: Well, we lived on Cropper Street. That's where the firehouse is.

Kathryn White Ewell: 13 Cropper Street.

Jeanette White Phipps: Yeah, it was 13 Cropper Street at that time. Of course since then they've changed the numbers and everything.

Kathryn White Ewell: Tell about the thirteen's involved with our house.

Jeanette White Phipps: (Laughing) In our house, when Mother and Daddy bought it was Thirteen Hundred Dollars is what they paid for the house. And it had electric. A lot of the houses on Chincoteague didn't have electric then.

Lisa Broli: So about what year would it be?

Jeanette White Phipps: Well.

Lisa Broli: How old were you?

Jeanette White Phipps: I – probably – I might have been five, four, five or six, I don't remember exactly.

Kathryn White Ewell: You always lived there didn't you Jeanette?

Jeanette White Phipps: Yeah, I was born there in the house. And it – it's a hard job to remember everything.

Lisa Broli: Sure, sure.

Jeanette White Phipps: But anyhow, we had three bedrooms upstairs and a bath and a livin' room and a dinin' room and a kitchen and a little back kitchen. My Mother had that built on to put laundry tubs in when we had town water - that was her washing machine.

Lisa Broli: And how – okay. She did – what kind of washing machine was that, how did she do the laundry?

Jeanette White Phipps: It was an old Maytag.

Kathryn White Ewell: Ringer.

Jeanette White Phipps: And it was round with a washboard. It looked like a washboard. It had an agitator that come down and swished around and that cleaned the clothes.

Lisa Broli: Uh-huh.

Jeanette White Phipps: And then it had an electric ringer. After the wash, she had two laundry tubs so she'd put 'em in one tub then the other. But that's the way she did her washing.

Lisa Broli: Did she ever have anyone help her?

Jeanette White Phipps: Oh yes.

Lisa Broli: In the home?

Jeanette White Phipps: Yes.

Lisa Broli: Was anyone hired to help her in the home?

Jeanette White Phipps: Well, she had – yeah, she always had somebody, maybe not all the time.

Kathryn White Ewell: Mother worked too though.

Jeanette White Phipps: Yeah. Mother was a bookkeeper really and once in a while she would work in the electric office or . . .

Lisa Broli: So she worked outside the home?

Jeanette White Phipps: At times, yes, uh-huh. And at one time she had her own shop in town.

Lisa Broli: Oh!

Jeanette White Phipps: It was a buildin' there, it's gone now, but it was where Mr. Joe Baker had a plumbing shop. Where he was a plumber. And the Bill Lewers I was tellin' you about worked for him. He came on here to work for Mr. Baker.

Lisa Broli: Uh-huh.

Jeanette White Phipps: And she sold wallpaper and all kinds of novelty things. And even white dresses for graduation and all kinds of little things in there she sold.

Kathryn White Ewell: And Bill met his wife – she worked for Mother. Nola Reynolds she was. And Bill worked next door for Mr. Baker and they met and Jeanette used to go with ‘em when they went courtin’ didn’t you Jeanette? (Laughing)

Jeanette White Phipps: Yes.

Lisa Broli: As their chaperone.

Kathryn White Ewell: Mother took ‘em to get their marriage license and remained friends all their lives. Remained friends forever.

Lisa Broli: Ah-hah.

Kathryn White Ewell: And the main thing I remember about Nola Lewers, she made the BEST apple brown betty’s you ever tasted in your life, oh they were great! I’m eighty-two and I remember when I was just a kid she used to make those, delicious.

Lisa Broli: Well that probably helped with her courting.

Kathryn White Ewell: Oh! Jeanette tell ‘em about some of the thirteen’s involved in our family.

Jeanette White Phipps: Well, I told you the house cost Thirteen Hundred Dollars when they bought it.

Kathryn White Ewell: That’s 13 Cropper Street cost Thirteen Hundred Dollars.

Jeanette White Phipps: Yes. And it had thirteen steps to go upstairs.

Lisa Broli: Uh-huh.

Jeanette White Phipps: It had thirteen light fixtures when they bought it.

Lisa Broli: Uh-huh.

Jeanette White Phipps: On the front porch they had a railing and each section had thirteen spokes in it.

Kathryn White Ewell: The swing had thirteen chain links.

Jeanette White Phipps: And the swing, yeah, we had a swing on the front porch with a couple chairs and that had thirteen. It was, oh, it was dozens of thirteen’s that we used to talk about and everything.

Kathryn White Ewell: Well didn't Mother and Daddy go together thirteen months before they were married?

Jeanette White Phipps: And they were married in 1913.

Kathryn White Ewell: Yeah.

Lisa Broli: Awe. (Laughing) But it doesn't seem like that gave your family bad luck or did it?

Jeanette White Phipps: What?

Lisa Broli: Did that give your family bad luck having those thirteen . . .

Jeanette White Phipps: No, no, that was our lucky number. We thought . . .

Lisa Broli: It was your lucky number?

Jeanette White Phipps: Yes, uh-huh, we thought that was good.

Kathryn White Ewell: I remember going to the races one time betting the number one horse in the third race and won. (Laughing) Oh me.

Jeanette White Phipps: I remember when they were building the water tank that we had on Cropper Street. It had big round sections of it and a bunch of us would get on one section and another bunch on the other and we'd rock it back and forth. And then when they had the stand pipe that it had in the middle, you know, for the water to go up, we'd crawl through that. And then I remember when they built the fire house.

Lisa Broli: Uh-huh.

Jeanette White Phipps: It used to be a field there that a Mr. Leonard had fishin' boats with nets and he would lay his nets out on that field.

Kathryn White Ewell: Bucky.

Jeanette White Phipps: Bucky Leonard, yeah. They live where the cable office was until recently; they lived in that house, right next to the American Legion building – which was an old garage. When Mother had her car she would have to take it there and it was Mr. Leonard, Arthur Leonard had the garage.

Lisa Broli: Oh, okay.

Jeanette White Phipps: And they had an old tank out front that you had to pump up to get the gas up in the tank and then have the hose and it would run out in the car. So my brother and I we used to like to pump it up for him.

Lisa Broliia: Around – how old were you when they first started having cars on the Island? Do you always remember there being cars?

Jeanette White Phipps: Yeah, there were cars, but there were just a few.

Kathryn White Ewell: Mother was a woman before her time really.

Jeanette White Phipps: Well, the man that lived next door, I think he had the third or fourth car on Chincoteague and when he got another one, Mother bought that. That is the first car she had.

Lisa Broliia: So your – your Mother was a very progressive woman?

Jeanette White Phipps: Yes she was! She was a – she was . . .

Kathryn White Ewell: She was smart too.

Jeanette White Phipps: Yeah. She was a record keeper.

Lisa Broliia: Did we get – what was your Mother's name?

Jeanette White Phipps: Sally Holloway White.

Lisa Broliia: Okay. We did didn't we.

Jeanette White Phipps: Yes, uh-huh. Her name was Sally Ellen but they called her Sally.

Kathryn White Ewell: We were some of the few kids whose parents had a complete encyclopedia. And that was Mother. I mean she – she educated herself. She taught herself everything. And I know when I was growin' up – even after I finished high school – I thought Mother was smarter than I was. (Laughing)

Lisa Broliia: Really?

Kathryn White Ewell: Yeah. She was a woman before her time.

Lisa Broliia: And where do you think she got that inspiration?

Kathryn White Ewell: From – well – she was livin' in Berlin, Maryland and this - what was the lady's name Jeanette that she went . . .

Jeanette White Phipps: Elizabeth Tilghman.

Kathryn White Ewell: Elizabeth Tilghman. She went to work for her at a five and dime. And she helped to educate – I think Mother quit school in the eighth or ninth grade didn't she?

Jeanette White Phipps: I thought it was the tenth grade.

Kathryn White Ewell: Well, maybe it was, but anyway, she learned so much from this Elizabeth Tilghman. When Mother and Daddy's first child was born it only lived a few days. They named it Elizabeth Tilghman White.

Lisa Broli: Awe.

Kathryn White Ewell: And Mother said she learned so much from that lady. And I grew up thinkin' my Mother was the smartest person in the world. (Laughing)

Lisa Broli: And how many siblings were you all together?

Jeanette White Phipps: Well, there were five of us that lived.

Lisa Broli: Okay.

Jeanette White Phipps: But the first, her first baby died. It was a blue baby. Now days they could have saved it, by changin' the blood.

Lisa Broli: Probably.

Jeanette White Phipps: Yes. And well first it was my older – I had a sister older than I - about two and a half years older than I was. And then my brother, Julian, he's three years younger.

Janice McKinnon: He lives on Piney Island, huh?

Jeanette White Phipps: Well, Mother used to take us – you know where Ridge Road is?

Janice McKinnon: Yes.

Jeanette White Phipps: On the right side it used to be Rattle Snake Ridge, that's what it was called and it was just a path through there.

Janice McKinnon: Uh-huh.

Jeanette White Phipps: Mother had; of course, she had another car by then. And she used to take us on a picnic. And we'd spread our blanket right in the middle of the road and have our lunch and ever thing and then my brother and I would go pick little red berries, they called 'em t'berries I think.

Janice McKinnon: Okay.

Jeanette White Phipps: And that's Ridge Road now. On the other side it was Chicken City Road. And, of course, it's still Chicken City Road. But that was way back before there were any highways.

Lisa Broliia: So is that one of the things you used to do for recreation is go on picnics?

Jeanette White Phipps: Uh-huh, yes.

Lisa Broliia: What other kinds of things did you do?

Jeanette White Phipps: Well, a lot of people used to have birthday parties. We had a lot a those. Ever body had a birthday party.

Lisa Broliia: What were the activities that you would do at a birthday party?

Jeanette White Phipps: Well, we'd play spin the bottle and pin the tail on the donkey. (Laughing) And all kinds of . . .

Kathryn White Ewell: Post office. (Laughing)

Jeanette White Phipps: Well, that was spin the bottle.

Lisa Broliia: (Laughing) A version of spin the bottle.

Jeanette White Phipps: Yes. (Laughing) Whoever it pointed to got to kiss somebody.

Lisa Broliia: And did you go to the - to the seashore a lot? Would you go swimming?

Jeanette White Phipps: Well, we didn't have any beach on here or any place to go swimming, that was before the . . .

Kathryn White Ewell: I mean over on the eastern side.

Jeanette White Phipps: Well, it wasn't a beach; it was a place – a break in the marsh where we could swim there. They had a diving board there.

Lisa Broliia: And would you go there quite often or not really?

Jeanette White Phipps: Well, yeah, we used to go all summer.

Lisa Broliia: Okay.

Jeanette White Phipps: But before that when we were small we used to go down, right opposite Cropper Street is – was the government . . .

Kathryn White Ewell: Oh, slip . . .

Jeanette White Phipps: Yeah, government property. That's where our Father used to come in. He was on a lightship, the Winter Quarter Lightship – anchored out on the Winter Quarter Shoal out in the Atlantic Ocean.

Lisa Broli: Right.

Jeanette White Phipps: And they had a little place called the government house we called it. And we'd go down there – we had to jump overboard. We didn't have any beach to wade out, you had to jump overboard. Well, we'd catch lines from boats and things like that. So that's how we learned how to swim. And . . .

Kathryn White Ewell: I learned to swim in the slips. It was as muddy as it could be. And I learned to dog paddle. (Laughing) But she and Julian used to jump off the bridge. In fact, Jenny did too didn't she?

Jeanette White Phipps: I think once.

Kathryn White Ewell: Yeah. But Jeanette and Julian would jump off the bridge and who knows what was down there. They could – she might not be here to talk to you.

Jeanette White Phipps: Well, it wadn't as high as it is now. It was a smaller bridge, all wooden bridge. And I remember when they built the bridge that's there now. Of course, that was a long time ago. But anyhow, we would, we'd swim, we'd go down to one dock and jump overboard if the tide was going toward up the neck, we'd go that way until we'd get to the bridge. And then we had to climb up a ladder to a trap door that come up on the bridge. And it had a bridge sender down at the foot of it. Of course, when he saw us he'd start up there and we'd jump overboard and we'd go down to the next dock. But that's the way we went swimmin' then until they built the place over on Eastside that we could go there. Now that was the only – and then on the end of the Island, that was the campground down there and they built up over all that, but we used to go swimmin' down there too. It was . . .

Kathryn White Ewell: The only way we could go to Assateague was by boat and we used to go to Assateague by boat and walk over to the beach. And that was a lot a fun too. I stepped on a snake one time and I thought I was gonna die right there. (Laughing) Oh me.

Jeanette White Phipps: Yeah. Another thing the churches used to have picnics. We'd go on a boat, they'd have a monitor they called 'em then, and they would go from down the dock all the way over to Assateague. And then we'd have to walk across the beach from where we landed. And Mother used to bake a cake and have fried chicken and deviled eggs and all kinds of things. Make a big picnic lunch. And we'd go over there and stay all day. And comin' back they

always made lemonade on the barge where we were on. And they had ice cream. They were individual pieces of ice cream wrapped in paper. I don't think they make those any more. But that was one of the other things we had every year too.

Jeanette White Phipps: And then at the end of school lots a times we'd go over to Assateague on a picnic. Somebody had to take you over on a boat to the other side and then we had to walk all the way across until we got to the ocean. And sometimes we'd go up to the lighthouse and they would let you walk up in it then. We used to climb up to the top of the lighthouse.

Kathryn White Ewell: Did you tell 'em how Daddy lived over on Assateague?

Jeanette White Phipps: Yeah, our Father lived on Assateague. His father came here and was in the Life Saving Service before it was the Coast Guard.

Lisa Broli: Okay.

Jeanette White Phipps: And he and Daddy's mother lived over on Assateague and my Father did too. He only went to school two years as all . . .

Kathryn White Ewell: He educated himself.

Jeanette White Phipps: He educated himself. He got to be Chief Engineer on the lightship. And when he retired and came home he had all these books and ever thing where he had learned all this stuff. So we had a good Mother and Father both.

Lisa Broli: Right. So tell us – you mentioned about school – tell us a little bit more about your school years.

Jeanette White Phipps: Well, I remember the first day I went to school.

Lisa Broli: My goodness.

Jeanette White Phipps: But I'm not going to tell you . . .

Lisa Broli: I don't want to hear that your memory is bad.

Jeanette White Phipps: It was an old wooden school back where the school is now on Church Street. That was – that was the high school.

Kathryn White Ewell: School's up the creek now.

Jeanette White Phipps: Huh?

Kathryn White Ewell: Well . . .

Lisa BroliA: But there's that old building – brick – here . . .

Jeanette White Phipps: Brick building. Well, it was a wooden building in back of that.

Lisa BroliA: Okay.

Jeanette White Phipps: And that's where we started, no, they had built the brick school in front of it and when I started school, of course, I had been to – they called it “pay school” back then. I went every day just like school from eight-nine o'clock in the morning until three-forty.

Lisa BroliA: About how many kids were in your class?

Jeanette White Phipps: Well – in the pay school?

Lisa BroliA: Uh-huh.

Jeanette White Phipps: Oh, it was about fourteen or fifteen, somethin' like that.

Lisa BroliA: Okay.

Jeanette White Phipps: And we learned to read and write and do arithmetic and ever thing. So when I started to the regular school I went up in second grade because I already knew how to read and write and stuff like that.

Lisa BroliA: Were there kids on the Island that didn't go to school? Maybe poor kids?

Jeanette White Phipps: No, no, I think must of 'em had to go to school.

Lisa BroliA: Okay.

Jeanette White Phipps: It – I think it was a law back then that you had to attend to a certain age. But . . .

Kathryn White Ewell: But back in our day there were only eleven grades of school.

Lisa BroliA: Okay.

Kathryn White Ewell: You had seven of grammar school and four of high. And – so we got out fairly early. We were seventeen when we graduated. Now they have, of course, they've had twelve years for years now. But I remember my first day at school. I went out and sat on the front steps and cried. I wanted my Mommy. (Laughing) And Jeanette knows somethin' about hers but I don't think she'll tell you about it. (Laughing)

Lisa BroliA: (Laughing)

Jeanette White Phipps: No, I'm not! (Laughing)

Kathryn White Ewell: If you turn the mike off she would. (Laughing)

Jeanette White Phipps: But anyhow we went to the old school and part the time we'd be in the old building and part the time in the new building. And – but – eventually they tore the old school down. It was an old wooden building, it wasn't very nice. But it had upstairs and downstairs. And I remember they used to have a little cabinet in each one of the grade schools. They had books there that they – ever once in a while they'd get you to read somethin' and then write what you had read. So I'd get books and read the whole – ever one of 'em in each grade I was. I was a reader. I always did read.

Lisa Broliia: Okay.

Jeanette White Phipps: And – but I read ever one of 'em. And in high school I know I used to make book reports for all the boys because they didn't read the books.

Kathryn White Ewell: That's the only time she cheated too.

All: (Laughing)

Lisa Broliia: It's okay by now. I'm sure they're not going to take away your diploma.

Jeanette White Phipps: No. It – but anyhow, we – I graduated in 1937 and got married in 1938. Because I didn't go away to school or anything.

Lisa Broliia: And your husband is from Chincoteague – was from Chincoteague as well?

Jeanette White Phipps: Well, his – he's – yes, he was born on Chincoteague. In fact, he was two years and a half older than I was.

Lisa Broliia: Awe.

Jeanette White Phipps: But his mother, like I told you, she came here and met Harry's father while she was here too.

Lisa Broliia: Okay.

Jeanette White Phipps: She was a school teacher. And we lived on Chincoteague for a little while and then he had a job with the gas company and he got – went – we lived in Snow Hill, Maryland, in Berlin, Maryland, in Cambridge and we were livin' in Snow Hill when he got drafted. So then we had to come home. He went – that was World War II.

Lisa Broliia: And that was only – well you would have only been married a few years?

Jeanette White Phipps: Seven years I think when he was drafted, yeah.

Lisa Broliia: So it was towards the end of the War when he got drafted?

Jeanette White Phipps: Well, no, it was in 1993 I think it was.

Lisa Broliia: 1943.

Jeanette White Phipps: He was drafted, yes. And . . .

Kathryn White Ewell: Not '93.

Lisa Broliia: '43.

Kathryn White Ewell: Oh, '43.

Jeanette White Phipps: '43, yeah. We came home in '45. Uh – he got rheumatic fever.

Lisa Broliia: Oh!

Jeanette White Phipps: And . . .

Lisa Broliia: And where was he during the War?

Jeanette White Phipps: Bambridge, Massachusetts, I mean Bambridge, Maryland, where he had his basic trainin' and started school.

Lisa Broliia: Uh-huh.

Jeanette White Phipps: And he got rheumatic fever.

Lisa Broliia: So he never went to Europe?

Jeanette White Phipps: No! No!

Lisa Broliia: Oh, okay.

Jeanette White Phipps: He was supposed to go on a battle ship, that's where he was assigned to go after he finished school.

Lisa Broliia: Uh-huh.

Jeanette White Phipps: But he got rheumatic fever and he was in the hospital a right good while and then finally they sent him out to California. They had a place out there that they built for all

the people that rheumatic fever and all the soldiers that were – were wounded overseas and ever thing. They all went there. They had a big hospital.

Lisa Broliia: Uh-huh.

Jeanette White Phipps: And then they built units for the – all the hospital units and ever thing.

Lisa Broliia: Oh.

Jeanette White Phipps: And he stayed there. I went out there with ‘im and stayed eight months.

Lisa Broliia: Oh, wow.

Jeanette White Phipps: And then we came home in 1945. And that’s when he built this house. We – before it was a street or anything. He had the house almost built before they cut the street through. And we didn’t have electric for six months and we didn’t have runnin’ water. He had to run a pipe from where Wyle Maddox watered his horses and things, run back here until they put water down the street.

Lisa Broliia: Uh-huh.

Jeanette White Phipps: So we had to use lamps. But we brought water over from where my Mother was to drink. The water – the other water we used for bathrooms and stuff like that.

Kathryn White Ewell: But for some reason you had to name the street.

Jeanette White Phipps: Oh yeah.

Kathryn White Ewell: And she asked Wyle Maddox, says, “Do you mind if I name this street?” And he said, “No, go ahead.” She said, “Okay, it’s Maddox Boulevard.” So it was one house here and she named it Maddox Boulevard. (Laughing) Farsighted.

Jeanette White Phipps: Before it was done – before it was done we found out you had to have a permit from the OPA. And anyhow they sent us the papers and we filled ‘em out. And they wanted to know the name of the street so Harry said I’m gonna tell Wyle we want to name it Wyle - Maddox Boulevard, so that’s what they named it and ever thing. So – and we’ve lived here ever since.

Lisa Broliia: And it’s one of the biggest streets on the Island.

Jeanette White Phipps: More traffic.

Lisa Broliia: Yeah.

Jeanette White Phipps: I don't know if you were down here yesterday or not, but it was full a motorcycles.

Lisa BroliA: I did see that yesterday. Wow.

Jeanette White Phipps: It's – they have a meeting sometime in Ocean City and sometime up in Delaware.

Lisa BroliA: Uh-huh.

Jeanette White Phipps: And they say it's thousands come to it. We have a nephew, my youngest sister's boy, he lives in Florida now, but he rides a motorcycle and he comes up once in a while to some of that, yes.

Lisa BroliA: Huh. And about your children.

Jeanette White Phipps: I didn't have any children.

Lisa BroliA: You never had children?

Jeanette White Phipps: No. We were married for sixty-four years when Harry, my husband, died, but we had never had any children.

Lisa BroliA: Uh-huh.

Jeanette White Phipps: But I helped take care of my . . .

Kathryn White Ewell: She was everybody's mother.

Jeanette White Phipps: Yeah, well.

Lisa BroliA: Sometimes it happens that way now.

Jeanette White Phipps: Even the kids – like this is the first house they built. And then Wyle Maddox moved a house from someplace and fixed it up – it's down the street a ways, that was the second one.

Lisa BroliA: Uh-huh.

Jeanette White Phipps: And then right across where the lawyer's office is was the third house that was built on here. And gradually it filled up and ever thing. But we moved in here in June of 1946. And been livin' here ever since.

Lisa BroliA: Something I was wondering about is – at what time in your life did you notice that people from other places started visiting Chincoteague?

Jeanette White Phipps: Well, they always came on pony penning. See we lived on Cropper Street and they had the carnival right in the middle of town back then. It – they – the buildings weren't there.

Lisa Broliа: Uh-huh.

Jeanette White Phipps: The old theatre and all that, that wasn't there.

Lisa Broliа: Uh-huh.

Jeanette White Phipps: And they had carnival right in the middle of town so all we had to do was cut across from Cropper Street to cross the next street and we were at the carnival ground. And they had the horses there too, pony penning. They'd run all the way from where they swam over to the middle of town then they brought the ponies then.

Lisa Broliа: Okay.

Kathryn White Ewell: They started pony pennin' because of – when I was born – 1925 – is in celebration of my birth, 1925.

Lisa Broliа: Oh, okay, so it's all about you! (Laughing)

Jeanette White Phipps: They had so many fires. They used to have a big store on it they called it – it was the Whealton Mercantile Store. And they called it – we called it the “big store.”

Lisa Broliа: Uh-huh.

Jeanette White Phipps: And, in fact, I've got some furniture that come from it. My bedroom suite that was my Mother's, that come from the big store and I have that big lamp back there, that came from the big store too.

Lisa Broliа: Uh-huh.

Jeanette White Phipps: That was bought in . . .

Lisa Broliа: That's very interesting.

Jeanette White Phipps: We had – when we got electric – we saved all the things that you could still burn oil in it if you wanted to.

Lisa Broliа: Oh yeah.

Jeanette White Phipps: And so they had so many fires in town, that's when they organized the fire company. And they had a fire – carnival to make money to buy a fire engine. Back when I

remember they just had a little, one they pulled along, and had a pump you had to pump water. So between the big fires, the Atlantic Hotel, and the big store, and all the other buildings that burned, that's why they organized a fire company.

Kathryn White Ewell: Wasn't Bill Lewers involved in that Jeanette?

Jeanette White Phipps: Oh yeah.

Kathryn White Ewell: Bill Lewers was involved in that. And you used to go with him to the meetings didn't you?

Jeanette White Phipps: Yeah.

Kathryn White Ewell: Uh-huh.

Jeanette White Phipps: We organized the first carnival that they had.

Lisa Broli: And people would come from off the Island, would you call them tourists?

Jeanette White Phipps: Well, it used to be . . .

Lisa Broli: When did you start to use that word?

Jeanette White Phipps: Well, it – after people came for the carnival – so many people came on here for the pony penning, that a lot of the homes would rent houses – rent their rooms to people that came on here and that's why they called 'em tourists.

Lisa Broli: Uh-huh.

Kathryn White Ewell: My brother and I, one pony penning when I was little, my brother and I counted license plates from I think it was twenty-eight different states.

Lisa Broli: Oh my goodness.

Kathryn White Ewell: This was way back, maybe 1929 or '30, something like that. So we always had a lot a people for pony penning.

Lisa Broli: Uh-huh. And so you – you would use the term tourist even way back then?

Jeanette White Phipps: Yeah, that's when it started.

Lisa Broli: And then it just sort of grew from there?

Jeanette White Phipps: Uh-huh. Yeah, I remember when Margaret Henry bought Misty.

Lisa Broli: Uh-huh.

Jeanette White Phipps: At the carnival – at the pony penning, yes.

Lisa Broli: Um.

Jeanette White Phipps: And, of course, I remember when I – pony – yes – Misty lived a long time. I think she lived to be twenty-six years old. And I worked down at the Burton Campground for nine summers and I used to tell the children about Misty and where to go see her and ever thing. And boy they liked that!

Lisa Broli: Yeah.

Jeanette White Phipps: She was gettin' kind a old then. I think she was twenty-six, but she was a famous pony.

Kathryn White Ewell: And to add a little humor to it, when I was workin' for the government my supervisor said I had more grandmothers to die than anybody she ever knew. I had to come home for pony penning. (Laughing)

Lisa Broli: (Laughing)

(Pause)

Janice McKinnon: I was wondering about World War II and if that had a big change in the Island or was – in what way – people going out and coming back a lot?

Jeanette White Phipps: Well, they had a – an army base on here, that is over on Church Street Extended. And they did. And I know we had to – Harry got drafted when we were livin' in Snow Hill.

Janice McKinnon: Uh-huh.

Jeanette White Phipps: And so we moved home and then he had to go in the service. But they had a army camp. And then they built – started building a naval base over where it is now. They started it on Wallops Island.

Kathryn White Ewell: Wallops . . . (inaudible) air station.

Jeanette White Phipps: Yes, uh-huh. And it, I know I had a cat, when we came home I had a black cat named Blackie.

All: (Laughing)

Lisa Broli: Of course.

Jeanette White Phipps: And he stayed with my mother-in-law when we, Harry had to go to service and, of course, I left too.

Lisa Broli: Uh-huh.

Jeanette White Phipps: And he used to go over to the army camp and they'd feed him. And he was the biggest black cat you ever. (Laughing) But anyhow, that didn't stay open very long. That closed up and they left.

Janice McKinnon: I was wondering when the young men came back to Chincoteague after being away, if there was a change in their feeling about their careers or their homes or any changes in their outlooks on life?

Jeanette White Phipps: Well, my husband wasn't able to go back to his job. He worked over to the base before he was drafted. And – no – he came there afterwards. He didn't – he worked for the gas company before he went in the service.

Lisa Broli: Uh-huh.

Jeanette White Phipps: And he got his job at the base afterward. But then the naval place closed and NASA took over. And they took over the whole base and everything and he worked for them until he retired. So . . .

Kathryn White Ewell: It's funny though, our Father was in government, you know, the Lightship Service, and my brother was and I was. And Jeanette never did go in it did you Jeanette. But Daddy always told us, or he told me, says get a job with the government and you'll always have security.

Lisa Broli: And what did it mean to you, that kind of work, what work did you do? This is Kathryn.

Kathryn White Ewell: An auditor with Social Security.

Lisa Broli: Uh-huh.

Kathryn White Ewell: And I loved it. It was a nice job. But I eventually, I had so much on me, extracurricular activities, that I transferred here to the Naval Air Station. And stayed there a year I guess when I met my husband, that was the end of my career. (Laughing)

Lisa Broli: No, it was the beginning of a new career.

Kathryn White Ewell: A new career, right, yeah.

Lisa Broli: And what is it that – what is it – his work on the lightship, what kind of work was that?

Jeanette White Phipps: Well, they had to stay out there and it had the light on it so it could keep the boats off of the . . .

Kathryn White Ewell: Shoal.

Jeanette White Phipps: Shoal.

Lisa Broli: So it was like the lighthouse but on a ship?

Jeanette White Phipps: No, it was a boat. It was a lightship.

Lisa Broli: Okay.

Jeanette White Phipps: And ‘cause he . . .

Kathryn White Ewell: He was chief engineer.

Jeanette White Phipps: Yeah.

Lisa Broli: Okay.

Jeanette White Phipps: And it – during the War Daddy said they saw submarines, that was First World War.

Lisa Broli: Oh! Okay.

Jeanette White Phipps: And – but they didn’t bother them. In fact, Daddy said they would give ‘em fish. Said the submarines didn’t bother them so they didn’t bother the submarines. They never had any trouble with ‘em.

Kathryn White Ewell: Well, they weren’t equipped with fire power anyway.

Jeanette White Phipps: Not like it was in World War II.

Kathryn White Ewell: We heard a lot of interesting tales though. Daddy I remember one time told me that one mornin’ they got up and they saw boot prints all over the deck of the ship. A submarine – some of the men had come up on the ship. He used to tell us some great tales. (Laughing)

(Pause)

Lisa Broli: We're gonna switch gears for a second and just finish by talking a bit about the 1962 storm.

Jeanette White Phipps: Well, we were havin' a northeaster and the winds blowin' real hard and everything. And my husband come from, he was downtown, and he said, "Jeanette the waters comin' up over the docks and ever thing." He said, "We better move the cars to some place higher." So he went all around the neighborhood and over to Paul Merritt's and all of 'em on this street to tell 'em they better move their cars. And by the time he got home the tide had come in, was in the tailpipe of our – we had two cars then. And so they – they had to weather the storm. Well by five o'clock that afternoon it was – it had gone out, the tide had gone out, it wasn't in the house then. But we went over – we got in his boat, he had a boat here in the yard and we went over to my Mother's right across the yards and everything.

Kathryn White Ewell: Cropper Street.

Jeanette White Phipps: Cropper Street, yes. And we took all the things we had in our freezer and ever thing 'cause the electric went off and everything. So we went over there in his boat. And we had a dog, Mike, and he went with us. And he was on the front porch and ever thing. He–water came up in his dog pen and we had to bring him in the house. And he went all that . . .

Kathryn White Ewell: It didn't go in Mother's house.

Jeanette White Phipps: No. My Mother's house is just a little bit higher there and it came up to the edge of the porch but it didn't come in the house. So she had an oil heater, stove, in the house so she didn't have . . .

Lisa Broli: Did she have steps up to the porch?

Jeanette White Phipps: Yes, yes, it was four steps.

Lisa Broli: Did it cover the steps, the water?

Jeanette White Phipps: It come up over the steps, yeah, but it didn't come in the porch. Now we had a furnace that water come in in ever one of the little ducks and everything. It came in here.

Kathryn White Ewell: You had a floor furnace then didn't you?

Jeanette White Phipps: No, we had this heat.

Kathryn White Ewell: Oh yeah?

Jeanette White Phipps: Yeah, 'cause it came in all the ducks and everything.

Lisa Broli: Uh-huh.

Jeanette White Phipps: And so we went over there to my Mother's and it didn't come in her house so we stayed there that night. And the next day they told us ever body had to leave Chincoteague. They were gonna evacuate the whole Island after the tide went down 'cause they did a lot a damage on Main Street boats were runnin' into houses and everything. They tore a lot a houses down. And the water came up and it's – it's a cemetery over on the next street and they – some of the new graves – these caskets came up out of the cemeteries and were in the lot in the back of this house.

Lisa Broliá: Um.

Jeanette White Phipps: And so we had to leave and my sister that lived in Onley, she came and my Father and I and Mother went down to the Casis and we went to Onley to my sister's. And we had to stay there about a week. Well that was the week I was supposed to be installed as the Worthy Matron of the Eastern Star. But I was . . .

Lisa Broliá: Now what does that mean exactly?

Jeanette White Phipps: Well, the Eastern Star is an organization for women on here. It's like the Mason's.

Unknown: Ladies to the Mason's.

Jeanette White Phipps: Yeah, Ladies of the Mason's, yes, uh-huh. And, of course, you have to have a mother, a father, or a brother or a husband that belongs to the Mason's before you can join the Eastern Star. So, of course, my brothers and Father were Mason's, all three belonged to it. But anyhow, I was supposed to be installed as Worthy Matron.

Lisa Broliá: So it was your big week.

Jeanette White Phipps: Yes, it was! So I was down the county when I was supposed to be installed but we had – I was two weeks late before I got in. So after a while they let people come back on Chincoteague, but it was a lot a damage.

Kathryn White Ewell: I think you were taking your installation gown upstairs and downstairs weren't you?

Jeanette White Phipps: Well, I was afraid of pines – we had a lot of pine trees then in the yard.

Lisa Broliá: Uh-huh.

Jeanette White Phipps: And so I was afraid a pine tree would fall on the roof and mash it in and then I would bring it down and put it on the washing machine, then I was afraid . . .

Lisa Broliá: Of water?

Jeanette White Phipps: But any how, it . . .

Kathryn White Ewell: It survived.

Jeanette White Phipps: And I was supposed to have my installation at the firehouse. We used to have such a big crowd that it was getting' too big for the hall, it was where – over the post office – where the old post office was. It's a shop there now. That was the old Masonic Building.

Lisa Broliia: Right, I know where.

Jeanette White Phipps: Yes, my Father was one of the ones that gave money to have that built. And anyhow, he was a Mason all his life too. But anyhow, I – I had to have it in the hall because of the firehouse – the Red Cross went there and they were helpin' people. And a lot of people came on Chincoteague; some of the Mennonites came on Chincoteague and helped some people. Of course, my husband did it all. He had to wash the house out and this room wasn't on here then. I just had the dining room and kitchen and bedroom and bathroom and stairway that goes upstairs.

Lisa Broliia: Right.

Jeanette White Phipps: This has been built on since then. But it was a mess. Anyhow, I didn't get to come back, it was two or three weeks before I could get the house straightened up enough. My husband was workin' over to the base then. And . . .

Kathryn White Ewell: There's a funny story concerning the Mason's. My husband joined the Mason's and we had a grocery store and the two of us had a real good business and worked hard. Well, Jim would have to go out every night with this guy that was an official with the Mason's and learn all this stuff about the lodge. And he was so tired, he came home one night and he says, "I don't know why I ever joined this." So he asked his tutor, Ray, one night, why do I have to learn all this stuff. Ray says, "To keep the dumb-dumbs out." My husband never said another word; he went on and joined the Mason's. (Laughing)

Lisa Broliia: There's a lot of secrets and things that you have to know.

Kathryn White Ewell: Yeah, right, yeah, uh-huh. And, but Jim he was so worn out after work you know. And Ray says, "To keep the dumb-dumbs out." Jim never said another word, that was it. (Laughing)

Jeanette White Phipps: If you come back again I'll look up all those pictures and things.

Lisa Broliia: That would be terrific.

Jeanette White Phipps: And I've got pictures of the old buildings that's torn down. They had a Redman's Hall on here too, besides the Masonic Lodge. And . . .

Lisa Broliá: Is that another society?

Jeanette White Phipps: Uh-huh, yes.

Lisa Broliá: Okay.

Jeanette White Phipps: Yes, the Redman. And . . .

Janice McKinnon: The gravesite over here is the Redman's . . .

Jeanette White Phipps: Cemetery, yes, uh-huh.

Janice McKinnon: And that's the same organization?

Jeanette White Phipps: Yes, uh-huh. It was. And I – the man next door belonged to it. And he used to take me up to rehearsals. Of course, I was only two – maybe two or three years old. And all I remember is the officers had a big helmet with a red brush on the top of it and the rest of 'em wore just Indian suits. That was the Redman. Now I don't remember anything about what they said or anything.

Lisa Broliá: Okay, we are gonna jog your memory about that next time! (Laughing)

Jeanette White Phipps: But they used to have a lot more organizations and things on here than they used to have. We kept busy, pretty busy and everything.

Lisa Broliá: Did you?

Kathryn White Ewell: When I was comin' along, when I was in high school, they had two dance halls here. The Sea View Casino and The Pony Pines. And I'd rather dance than eat. A lot a times we'd go to The Pines and dance instead of eatin' lunch. Needless to say, I was thin in those days though. (Laughing)

Lisa Broliá: Well, thank you very much and we hope that we can visit you again soon.

Jeanette White Phipps: Well, my memory is not all that good. I can remember sometimes and sometimes I can't.

Lisa Broliá: I think you did a pretty good job, we appreciate it. Okay, thank you.

END OF TAPE.