



Chief Anne Richardson

Life Along the Rappahannock: An Oral History Project

*This interview series was funded in part by a grant from
The Duff McDuff Green Jr. Fund of
The Community Foundation of the Rappahannock River Region, and with the support of the
University of Mary Washington and other community partners.*

Interview conducted by
Woodie Walker
Aug. 21, 2017

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Since 2016, Friends of the Rappahannock has been interviewing individuals with unique knowledge related to significant events affecting the Rappahannock River watershed, and the communities that inhabit it. This project's goal is to collect and preserve significant and endangered oral histories of people living along the Rappahannock River, from the Blue Ridge Mountains to the Chesapeake Bay. These audio-visual documentaries will be available for generations to come.

Oral history refers both to a method of collecting information through recorded interviews of informed narrators with singular perspectives on significant historical events, and to the product of that process. Recordings are transcribed, and reviewed by the narrator, to provide researchers with primary source material. These accounts reflect the narrator's experiences, perspectives, and historical understandings rather than a definitive account of history.

Friends of the Rappahannock is a non-profit, grassroots conservation organization based in Fredericksburg, Virginia. It works to educate everyone about the river and to advocate for actions and policies that will protect and restore the Rappahannock River. This project is a collaborative effort with the University of Mary Washington Department of History and American Studies.

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Please cite this oral history as follows, contingent on any guidelines specific to a discipline or publisher:

Chief Anne Richardson, "Life Along the Rappahannock: An Oral History Project," interviewed by Woodie Walker, Aug. 21, 2017, at Kendale Farm, Port Royal, Va. Friends of the Rappahannock and the University of Mary Washington. Digital transcript and recording at <https://www.riverfriends.org/oralhistory/>, physical transcripts at the Historic Fredericksburg Foundation Inc., Central Rappahannock Regional Library Virginia Room, Fredericksburg Area Museum, and the University of Mary Washington Special Collections and University Archives.

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Chief Anne Richardson

Chief Anne Richardson is the fourth consecutive generation of her family to lead the Rappahannock Tribe, the “people who live where the water rises and falls,” and one of 11 such entities to be officially recognized by the Commonwealth of Virginia. During the pre-contact and early-colonial eras, the Rappahannock Tribe was among those affiliated with the Powhatan Confederacy. For more than three centuries, the Rappahannock people have been centered geographically in the Indian Neck area of King and Queene County, about three miles from the Rappahannock River, as the crow flies. During her interview, Chief Anne discussed her people’s spiritual relationship with the river, their physical connection to places like Fones Cliffs, and their feelings concerning recent conservation efforts, such as the removal of the Embrey Dam, near Fredericksburg.

[00:04] Woodie Walker: My name is Woodie Walker, and I am the community conservationist for Friends of the Rappahannock based in Fredericksburg, Virginia. This interview is part of an oral history program called Life Along the Rappahannock. It's a combined effort by Friends of the Rappahannock and the University of Mary Washington's Department of History and American Studies. I am joined today by Doctor Jason Sellers, Professor of History at the University of Mary Washington, and our program intern, Matthew Griffiths, also from the university. Also with us are our host, Hill Welford and Richard Moncure is not here today, but I was hoping Richard could be here, we'll miss you Richard. Our narrator today is Chief Anne Richardson of the Rappahannock Tribe. We are at Kendale Farm, the home of Mr. Welford, near Port Royal, Virginia. It's 5:30 p.m. on Monday, August 21, 2017 and it is important to note that we are recently today, just this afternoon, experienced a total solar eclipse, the first to be visible across the entire United States, from coast to coast, since 1918. It is an honor to be with you, Chief Anne, in this beautiful setting on the Rappahannock River on such a momentous day. Chief Anne, will you please tell me a little bit about yourself. When and where were you born?

[01:27] Chief Anne Richardson: I was born in Indian Neck, in King and Queen County, about 60 and-a-half years ago, haven't gotten to the 61 yet, to Chief Captain and Gladys Nelson, and I'm a fourth-generation chief in my family, and I have remained in that location my entire life.

[1:50] Walker: Thank You. Tell me about your family. I understand you're the fourth generation of your family to serve as chief of the Rappahannock Tribe. Tell me how that honor, that rank, is bestowed upon an individual.

[2:08] Chief Anne: Well historically it was hereditary ascension, which would have come through the line of the woman. As a matrilineal tribe, we had native women leaders for as long as we have been around, and they have been revered and celebrated as leaders. Right now, currently I am the chief, a female, and I have a male assistant chief, which balances out the authority levels for both sexes in the community, and really seems to work real well.

[2:47] Walker: Thank You. I read on the tribal website about land that you purchased in 1998 that includes planned housing, a retreat center, where is [3:00] this located and do you consider it the cultural center or home of the Rappahannock Tribe?

[3:06] Chief Anne: Well, Indian Neck is the home. After we were removed off of the river we were escorted into New Kent County at the time, because King and Queen didn't become a county until 1691, but after that then King and Queen became a county and Indian Neck and that general area in King and Queen, Caroline, and Essex is where our people settled, and I suspect that from the village up in this area people went, and from Portobago, they went west over to Central Point in Caroline County and then in Champlain in Essex County, and then over to Indian Neck in King and Queen.

[3:48] Walker: Tell me more about where Indian Neck is.

[3:51] Chief Anne: Well, as the crow flies you know we have to look at things from that perspective and know not roads, but as the crow flies, we are three miles, Indian Neck is three miles, from the Rappahannock River on the east side. So, the Treaty of 1677 declared that there would be a three-mile buffer zone from around the native lands to the settlers, where the settlers were. And so that is the three miles to the river that's around our community.

[4:24] Walker: And that is King and Queen County?

[4:25] Chief Anne: King and Queen County.

[4:26] Walker: Wow, Okay. How many people are considered as members of the Rappahannock Tribe?

[4:33] Chief Anne: We have about 300 members right now.

[4:40] Walker: I've read that the official name of the tribe is United Rappahannock Tribe, but I've also seen it simply as the Rappahannock Tribe. What is the proper name that you wish us to use?

[4:51] Chief Anne: The Rappahannock Tribe. We changed our name in like the early '70s or something, simply because I think it had been united because people were being gathered from all the different places that they had been scattered to up north and everywhere, and that was a better name that described the tribal people and the community. But after we got everyone back, so to speak, it just became Rappahannock Tribe.

[05:23] Walker: Okay, thank you, I just wanted to make sure, you know, with the transcripts and our written stuff, I want to make sure I use the proper name. So, I've organized my following questions into two general areas of interest. The first concerns the pre-contact era, before English colonists and people like John Smith visited your land. So, I want to start there and I want to talk to you about Rappahannock tribal culture and history. And where I want to start is, What is the meaning of the name Rappahannock?

[05:48] Chief Anne: The word Rappahannock means, [05:59] "the people who live where the water rises and falls."

[06:03] Walker: And that's interesting because I've seen other things and I want to make sure that I understand that, you know, from your perspective.

[06:11] Chief Anne: And from my perspective it's really indicative of the historical continuity of the tribe. There are times when we rose into power for purposes of war, or for purposes of survival, or for purposes of fighting for our rights, and other times we flowed and ebbed, so to speak, as a community and just peacefully lived among ourselves.

[06:42] Walker: Did your ancestors call themselves Rappahannock, or is that a name that the Europeans gave to them? I'm just curious.

[06:49] Chief Anne: Well, you know, in my lifetime everybody has called themselves Rappahannock, but who knows? I think that in the early narratives this river was called Pispitumic. But when the English came, of course, they called us Rappahannock. And they also said that this was the Queen's river. So that was interesting.

[07:11] Walker: The Queen of England at the time?

[07:14] Chief Anne: I don't know, because interesting, because as Strachey is describing this, he talks about the Powhatan River, which is the James, being the King's river. And then he talks about the Pamunkey River being the Prince's river. And then he talks about the Rappahannock being the Queen's river, so whether he was talking about native people and those ranks, and that's what I suspect.

[07:42] Walker: Interesting. So I've read of Cockoeski and so the 1670s, and a leader of, I'm trying to remember which tribe she was with.

[07:57] Chief Anne: Pamunkey.

[07:58] Walker: Pamunkey. The Pamunkey, okay. And someone referred to you as the first female chief of a Powhatan-affiliated Algonquian tribe here, since Cockoeski.

[08:09] Chief Anne: Well, actually, Beverly stated that there were two queens on the throne at Rappahannock in 1705.

[08:18] Walker: Okay. Oh, I like this, this is interesting, good stuff. And Beverly, historian writer?

[08:25] Chief Anne: Yes. Historian.

[08:31] Walker: Okay, do you think... when we think about the name Rappahannock, people who live by the river that rises and falls. Are there deeper meanings, associations with that that you feel like, how does that, you know, as far as the name itself, are there other connotations to that your people talk about?

[08:56] Only the fact that we were scattered in so many different places in so many different times [09:00] on migrations and that the people scattered to three different communities, then people scattered north during the Civil War, then people scattered north in the early '20s to get away from all of the racial prejudice that was here. And so I just feel like, you know, over time we have risen and fallen as a tribal group of community people and I think it's really interesting now that, you know, in George's time, he was collecting people and trying to get people back that had been scattered from the Civil War. And then, during the '20s we were getting people

back that were migrating out in the late 1800s and the early '20s and tribal people migrate to certain places and cities, certain communities in cities, where they lived together communally almost like they did here. It was really interesting to see how the migration patterns have been and then they would work and send money back to Indian Neck to pay for lobbyists and lawyers and people that were fighting for our rights as native people here. And so it would have been something that probably historically would've been done. They would divide up and pool their resources to fight for everybody. So I thought that was really interesting, and that's something that came into contemporary times probably from historic times.

[10:35] Walker: Thank you. Please describe the areas of the river where your tribe lived during the early 1600s, when we're thinking about that contact era, where were the Rappahannocks located?

[10:51] Chief Anne: Well, they said they were all over Warsaw. But I think that they were probably other places and I think that, you know, Hill was asking earlier about where, you know, where were we at on Cat Point Creek, probably all over the creek, but it was a king's town and then we had Accapataugh Beach which was the home of King Accapataugh. And then there were other places as well, Nandtaughtacund on the south side, Papiscone on this side.

[11:24] Walker: So, obviously, so habitation and use of the river on both the Northern Neck side and the Middle Peninsula side.

[11:31] Chief Anne: Yes, yes we have documentation of a palisaded fort on the south side. And during this project that we are working on now, we're hoping to find the exact locations of these places.

[11:45] Walker: And that is the Indigenous Culture...

[11:49] Chief Anne: Landscape Project.

[11:49] Walker: Landscape Project. I've seen some of that. I was looking at some of it online yesterday. I think it's amazing.

[11:56] Chief Anne: It is amazing.

[11:58] Walker: I'm anxious to see... when I have time to look at the whole report. But I think it's really, really amazing [16:29] that you're finding so much and documenting this history.

[12:06] Chief Anne: Yes. Very important.

[12:07] Walker: Don't let it get lost.

[12:09] Chief Anne: Don't worry.

[12:09] Walker: Right, right. Speaking about that because it kind of ties into this question, were there particular areas of the river or geographical features like Fones Cliffs, or maybe the fall

line in Fredericksburg, that held special significance for the Rappahannock Tribe? Do you know of places that were special?

[12:31] Chief Anne: Yeah, we do know of some places, there were sacred places on the river that were used for burial grounds and for worshipping, and that kind of ceremony. And then there were places that, you know, that we gathered food, and we were cyclical people, so we flowed with the cycles of the river and the seasons where the fish, certain fish would come in and then you'd have certain foodstuffs that would come in. And so, you know, it was much like a farm. But that's how the people lived, along those lines.

[13:12] Walker: I'm curious, I've been examining the fall line of Fredericksburg, the fall line at Hunter's Island. I've been examining that for a history project this summer, and I'm wondering, Is there any tradition that you are aware of, of the Rappahannock Indians, the tribe, being active that far up the river? Was that too far?

[13:39] Chief Anne: I don't think so.

[13:42] Walker: Must have traveled. Yeah.

[13:44] Chief Anne: Yeah, I think we traveled everywhere. I don't think that there are limitations to where we were. In the early records they recorded a town called Rappahanna and Tappahanna on the James River.

[14:01] Walker: On the James River?

[14:02] Chief Anne: At Jamestown.

[14:03] Walker: Right, okay.

[14:04] Chief Anne: And then, Christopher Newport describes this werowance, this Rappahannock werowance who met him, and he went to his town. He describes all that he was wearing, how he treated him when he went there. So, you know, I don't think that we're limited to any geographical space. I think that we were people who moved according to what resources were, makes perfect sense that we would do that. In the summertime we were on the river where we could fish, swim, and eat oysters, and all the things that you do in the summer, like everybody else, and gather the food things that come in and out. In the wintertime time we were back inland away from the storms of the river and the bad weather.

[14:55] Walker: I think it's interesting like, as a student, I'm learning about trade patterns and we see things from the [15:03] oceans like the Pacific Ocean being found on the plains.

[15:08] Chief Anne: Right.

[15:09] Walker: So, things were moving a long ways and to think about the Rappahannocks being affiliated with the Powhatan Confederacy, speaking a similar language or the same language. Obviously, there's a lot of movement and it's not really that far to Jamestown from here.

[15:25] Chief Anne: It really isn't, as the crow flies, you see, and as the rivers go, because they were the highways. And we know that there were at least three dialects here of the language.

[15:39] Walker: Tell me more about that.

[15:40] Chief Anne: Well, I really don't want to talk about it because it's a real bad word that has survived and I don't want it on my YouTube video. But I will tell you, if you cut it out.

[15:55] Well, we'll come back to that. Let's come back to that. So three dialects. So that's still, as a student, I learned these people spoke the Algonquin language, whereas this other group of people may have spoken a Siouan-based language. So it's interesting to me to think about, that as the crow flies, it's not very far to the James River, but there would have been different dialects amongst some of the tribes. And I've read there were more than 30 Algonquian tribes in this region?

[16:29] Chief Anne; Yes. yeah. And you know people of today, scholars even, assume that if a tribe speaks a certain language, they all speak the same. But that's not really the case. Different tribes and regions have different dialects.

[16:48] Walker: And people from the United States have different regions have different accents and uses of words. Okay, very interesting. So about that, that leads me to, tell us about the relationship of the Rappahannocks with other tribes along the river. What was it like in the 1600s? You had allies? Maybe you had enemies. Tell me about what was that like?

[17:20] Chief Anne: Surely, we had allies and I would imagine that the Powhatan tribes were all allied together. And then we had enemies, as well. The Susquehannock out of Pennsylvania were fierce warriors that come down and infringe on our hunting grounds and cause skirmishes. And then also once we had been moved to Indian Neck, which was our winter hunting ground, it was recorded that the Seneca came down and seized our fort. And Colonel William Byrd had to come and negotiate a treaty so [18:02] that they would let our people go. And so we were really up on the front of the Virginia frontier for all of the warring tribes that were coming down trying to get territory and hunting and fishing.

[18:17] Walker: I don't want to lose this point. I want to make sure I understand about Indian Neck. Tell me, Indian Neck was, tell me about Indian Neck and when your people went there. I want to make sure I understand more about it.

[18:37] Okay, well it looks like, according to record, we were at Portabago Bay, which is where all of the tribal groups from our tribe came and all the different towns and people came in, maybe other tribes from up north, we don't know, but it was like a contemporary town, so to speak. And once we were moved out of there by order of the Public Council we were escorted into King and Queen, where we are today, through Essex County it says, into New Kent County which is today, Indian Neck. And we were in 1683, the 1677 treaty was ratified to include the Rappahannock town. Reservation.

[19:31] Walker: Okay, so it's been there since then.

[19:33] Chief Anne: It's been there since then.

[19:43] Walker: Wow. Tell me about the Powhatan Confederacy. We know so much about that. How did the Rappahannocks fit into that? And I wonder if did Powhatan had like a, I wonder if he had this overwhelming authority, he goes, "everybody does what I say," or if the tribes sometimes acted independently. What do you think about that?

[20:06] Chief Anne: Well just, so this is an interesting question because in reading historical accounts of our tribe and in leading today the contemporary tribe, there are character traits from history that have come through time that are still here, you know, which I think is really interesting. And so I feel that we would be more independent as a tribe simply because we are still that way. But I think we were allied with him and we could have been under him. We were certainly at Jamestown and interacting with the colonists when they came. And so you know whether this was the Queen's river because there was a woman chief here that was prominent, or who knows? But I think that this project that we have with Julian King is going to help tease a lot of that out [21:02]. So I hope to be able to answer those questions more completely. But we were certainly allies of Powhatan, if we were not in the Confederacy itself.

[21:13] Walker: Because Smith was brought here.

[21:15] Chief Anne: Absolutely, Smith was brought here because we think it was Samuel Mace, Captain Samuel Mace who came here in 1603 and met the Rappahannocks and came aboard. They made a feast for him and his people and he killed the king and kidnapped a bunch of men and took them back to England. And so when we went to England in 2006, we found documentation of these native men doing canoe demonstrations on the Thames River in 1603 in the winter. So you know, just to be able to go there and find that your people were there. My bucket list is to find what happened to them. If they ever came back.

[22:01] Walker: Right, yeah. There's some interesting things through my studies, I learned a story about a Native American from the Peninsula who was captured and taken away and spent years before coming back home.

[22:18] Chief Anne: Yes. So you know it it's interesting that Powhatan...

[22:19] Walker: Don Luis.

[22:19] Chief Anne: Yes, Don Luis, I know the story.

[22:22] Walker: Yes, so I was just fascinated by that.

[22:28] Chief Anne: It's highly possible because Opechancanough was a serious war chief. And he had a lot of knowledge and skill about him and how to train his men. But Powhatan was asking the English for... they wanted something from him. I can't remember what it was now. They wanted something from him and he says, "Well if you give me a carriage and horses like you carry your great men in England as my men have come back and told me."

[22:57] Walker: So he knew?

[22:57] Chief Anne: So yeah, he knew all about England, because his men had been there and come back and told him all about it.

[23:01] Walker: I think that's an interesting thing for people like me that are students today to realize that it did not all start the day that they dropped anchor at Jamestown. That was not the start of the day. There were a lot of things going on for a long time.

[23:15] Chief Anne: Before that.

[23:16] Walker: Right, and so I think that's really important and the more I learn about that, the more interesting I find it. So I'm going to transition a little bit, I want to talk about the river. I'm from Friends of the Rappahannock and we've been working for three decades as an environmental group trying to do good deeds for the river. We pride ourselves in saying that we work from the mountains to the bay and we really do, we try to have projects from the mountains to the bay each year, and we're lucky to have a presence in the tidal section with the office at Tappahannock and Richard Moncure is River Steward and people who support our kinds of work like Hill Wellford so [24:01] you know, we're here about the river and for this project I call it, Life Along the Rappahannock and I want to learn about people who have spent their lives along the river and how they're how they are connected and their communities. So tell me about how did the Rappahannock tribe use the river historically such as avenues for travel or food? Tell me about the river and your relationship with the river.

[24:34] Chief Anne: Well, we of course used it for travel, we used it for food, we used it for training our warriors. We used it to gather medicinals. We used it for the various seasons that came in. There would have been feasts and celebrations and ceremonies around various occurrences of the seasons and the river. And so it was a very focal point of our community. And even in contemporary times Landing was one of the places that our people frequented and when we did the ICL project we found that the places that we frequented on the south side of the river coincide with towns on the north side of the river, which we found fascinating.

[25:24] Walker: Which ties in with this question, we think about geopolitical boundaries. You know, this is my territory. This is your territory. Do you think the river functioned that way, as a boundary between, this is my side of the river and you stay on your side of the river? But apparently not.

[25:44] Chief Anne: I don't think so. Not at all. Because when the Nanzatico group was disbanded because of a false charge. They were brought up on charges of killing and burning a settler's home, which they found out later it was the Nottoway. They didn't even have anything to do with it. But Colonel William Byrd went in and took the young men to Jamestown and hung them in the town square and he bound out the children to English families in the local area and then the old men and the women were taken into slavery into Antigua, because his daughter's fiancé was the ambassador to Antigua. And so it completely disbanded the whole group, but my tribe grabbed a bunch of the people because I'm sure they were marrying back and forth and had kin on both sides of the river they took them over to our side of the river. And so when we

were escorted into what is now today King and Queen, they said there were now Nanzatico, Portabago, and Rappahannock, which is probably really accurate.

[27:03] Walker: Thank you [27:05]. Did your ancestors have a spiritual relationship with the river? And if so, tell me about that.

[27:16] Chief Anne: Well I'm sure they did. The river would have been the first place they would have gone in the morning when they got up. They would have gone out and taken their bath and said their morning prayers for our blessings of the river. We believe in blessing from the creator. And as the river is blessed then there is a bounty there, a harvest of food and things that we need to survive and we understood that life is not about us that we lived here upon a land that did not belong to us, it belonged to the creator, didn't belong to us, and our job was, as your job is, to be stewards over what the creator has made, and that was the way that we believed and still believe. This is why it was so foreign for us to understand people owning land. So Powhatan says, "Who can own the mighty sea or the stars in the sky? Who can own land?" It belongs to the creator.

[28:19] Walker: Are there oral traditions you know, one of the things we look for as history students is oral traditions. Stories about where did people come from, you know, origin stories. I wonder, do the Rappahannocks have stories about... an origin story?

[28:44] Chief Anne: We really don't have an origin story, but there are some out there. I think there was one recorded concerning the Patawomeck. And it was actually a story that is depicted on Powhatan's mantle, if you've ever seen that. And so when I went to England and went to the Ashmolean Museum to view it, I told the story and spent the afternoon training the interpreters.

[29:17] Walker: I want to know more. Powhatan's mantle, would that be a like a robe?

[29:21] Chief Anne: That was a robe, that was a robe he would have put around his neck and would have flowed down. You know people question how many tribes he had. There are 32 rings on his mantle and it describes the Great Hare and the Great Deer and Man, which is the creation story of the Patawomeck.

[29:44] Walker: I've read Ahoni the story of the Great Hare and it's an Algonquin tradition. It's probably some sort of tradition there that passed on to the Rappahannocks.

[29:56] Chief Anne: Sure.

[29:59] Walker: Are there stories, oral tradition [30:00] stories, anything about the river? Maybe people, maybe even in your family that, fishing stories or the big storm, or maybe something that may have happened in the early 1900s or 1800s. I'm thinking of stories with the river.

[30:22] Chief Anne: Well, the stories that I know about the river is that you know, the herring were a very big part of our sustenance. And so there would have been much activity around the herring runs, which we used Occupacia Creek, which was full of herring when I was a kid. All the men in the community got together and came down, dipped herring and then they'd come

back and every little community would go together cleaning, salting down the herring, so that we could have it for the winter. And all of the families could eat well.

[30:58] Walker: But, the herring run has changed?

[31:02] Chief Anne: Drastically. It's very sad.

[31:04] Walker: So, first of all, when you salted your herring, did you call it corning the herring or did you call it just salt herring? Because some places around here, we call it a corned herring. Right, so it's changed?

[31:21] Chief Anne: That's probably an English term.

[31:23] Walker: Okay, yeah, okay. But the herring run is not what it was, even in my lifetime. That was a community gathering to gather the herring.

[31:36] Chief Anne: Yes, we did communal hunts in the early 1900s. They had an annual rabbit drive, when the rabbits came out. And then they had an activity around the herring, everybody would work, processing food to make sure that we had sustenance for the winter.

[32:00] Walker: I'm thinking of those days as more recently days, more recent days. You know, the herring run that maybe your grandfathers would talk about or you saw as a young child. Now, were there activities like that, communal activities around agricultural stuff? Did people farm together or work together? You know, "it's time to raise the barn, or get the corn in." I'm just curious.

[32:23] Chief Anne: Yeah, they did. They shared in food processing and food gathering and planting and celebration. You know, we held a Green Corn ceremony with the Piscataway Tribe, the whole time I was a child, until I got to be married.

[32:48] Walker: Is that still happening?

[32:49] Chief Anne: No, because of all the, I guess, political things that have happened with the tribes, kind of broke down, which is really sad. More Western thinking coming upon the tribes.

[33:02]

[33:04] Walker: Okay, lessons for us all. So let's move into the modern era, post-contact. One more question I think is important, it says, Are there community stories or memories about early contact with Europeans such as first encounters with people like John Smith or later explorers, traders and settlers. Once again, I've gone back into that oral tradition thing, I want to know if there's stories about you know, Smith coming here, the story that Strachey tells about, with "were you the guy who killed our king?" Are there stories like that amongst the Rappahannock people?

[33:52] Chief Anne: No, we've lost all those stories and the only thing that we have now are just narratives from those who were here that wrote them down. The oral tradition doesn't exist

anymore. Not in the sense, that far back. But we do have some things that were passed down about places that we've lived and colonial families that we interacted with or aligned with.

[34:20] Walker: So it seems, I'm just curious, there seems to be a lot of good data about the 1600s because the English were writing down things and at least there's something there we can, there's some documentation. But beyond that, once we get into the 1800s, there seems to be a you know, not much stuff about the tribe. Do you have stuff about where your people were and what they were doing? Family, just family stories, family genealogy?

[34:55] Chief Anne: Yes, we do. And we call that the Silent Years.

[34:59] Walker: The Silent Years?

[35:00] Chief Anne: Because it's the years that we went underground because of English encroachment and racial oppression. And so we hid out in various places and lived in communities that were kind of like this place, far away from the beaten path where everybody was at, doing commerce or whatever. Survival.

[35:26] Walker: The Silent Years. Thinking again in terms of relationships to the river, do people, many people, are there people from the Rappahannock Tribe who developed as fishermen, or working the river, harvesting fish or crabs?

[35:53] Chief Anne: We don't have a lot of watermen in our tribe. There used to be more when I was a young girl, men who fished all the time. [36:00] But to say they ever processed and sold commercially, that never happened.

[36:11] Walker: Something that I like to bring up is when we're thinking about oral traditions and those stories from the past. Tell me about the significance of the eagle, and maybe, you know, where we see the eagles today. They've made a dramatic comeback since the '70s. Fones Cliffs is just right across the way and it's such a beautiful place and such a great habitat. Tell me about the importance of the significance of the eagle and the importance of preserving that habitat.

[36:45] Chief Anne: Well, the eagle to us is a sacred bird and we believe that he is a messenger from the creator sent to give us messages to confirm things that we're doing and there is a major spiritual connection to them when we see them. It's like watching an angel come in. You're in awe of the majestic bird that comes in and you know that he's come to be with you. You don't just see them every day. There's a purpose that they have come to visit you.

[37:26] Walker: Would you use a phrase like, It's a sign?

[37:28] Chief Anne: Absolutely.

[37:30] Walker: So, do you have an eagle memory that happened to you?

[37:35] Chief Anne: Many.

[37:36] Walker: Tell me a good story.

[37:38] Chief Anne: This is really interesting. So, the place they call Belmont, I was there one day, I was coming down the road, I don't even know where I was going. I think I was going to Montross. And I was on this road and suddenly in front of my car there's this huge eagle and he just goes up the driveway and another one comes in and goes up the driveway and another one comes in it goes up the driveway and I'm just stopped on the road like this. Oh my god, I'm crying. And I call my assistant chief and I'm like what is going on here. And he says I don't know, I'm going to come over and we're going to pray about this and see what this message is. And so, we did. And then I had some friends come in from the Navajo Nation and a friend from Israel came. I have a ministry, as well. So, I have a revival in my center and I wanted those people to come there and pray because I still had not gotten an answer about these three eagles. And we were there standing on the cabin on [39:03] the front of the porch that looks out down to the creek and the man from Israel, had never seen an eagle before in his life. And he's standing there by the rail and two eagles come and they fly like right here in front of him, wingtip to wingtip, and you feel the wind brushing by and he just, you know, he fell back. He was just in awe of what had happened. And I just felt like this is our reconnection to the river that we're supposed to be back here. The creator is bringing us back here and that is what's going to eventually happen and it has. So, we know that they come to bring messages and to cause us to pray and to seek the message that is meant for us.

[39:58] Walker: Thank you for sharing that. That's really beautiful. I think there are majestic, too, and I think they bring me messages, too.

[40:08] Chief Anne: Yeah, they do. They speak to us if we have an ear to hear.

[40:14] Walker: That's beautiful. Thinking in terms of today still, the river has changed so much in recent years. Virginia oysters nearly went extinct a decade ago. And they're making a comeback today, striped bass and blue crab populations plummeted about the same time. I remember when striped bass, they were worried about pfiesteria and were we going to lose our striped bass and I love to fish.

[40:50] Chief Anne: And I love to eat.

[40:54] They're so good. But today you know, these populations are rebounding. We did save our native Virginia oyster, at least for now. There's improvements in the bay and crab populations are rebounding and striped bass are coming back. So there's hope. Are there community memories among the Rappahannocks about these changed ecological natures? I think maybe about that point about the herring is one of those but when we think about bird and fish, game populations, and vegetation, changes that you've seen in your lifetime and that people in your tribe talk about.

[41:39] Chief Anne: Well, we know that the early settlers recorded that there was such an abundance you can walk on the fish. We didn't have any problem eating. And of course oysters are our favorite and Rappahannock oysters are the best in the world and so, we still enjoy those very much. When the population [42:03] from the pfiesteria came to a screeching halt, there was

a group of us that went to actually Fredericksburg and did a ceremony of healing for the river to cleanse the river and to pray that the creator would come and heal the river. And, I saw one day in The Free Lance-Star, a whole two-page article on the river is now being healed and it went on to describe all the different things that are coming back to the river. So, yeah, it was very exciting for us.

[42:42] Walker: Tell me about the day that you went to Fredericksburg and that ceremony. I want to know more about that. It seems really interesting.

[42:48] Chief Anne: Well, we had a tradition of pouring salt in the water to cleanse and so we went and poured salt in the water and prayed that the creator would come because he created this river it belongs to him, not us. And so we asked the purification and healing and he did it.

[43:15] Walker: When was that time frame, Chief Anne? Was that recently?

[43:20] Chief Anne: Now, that was probably, maybe 15 years ago.

[43:26] Walker: Wow, so many good things. Chief Anne, I'm curious if recent events, relatively recent events, that have affected the river so, we're talking about the health of the river, the things that you've seen change in your lifetime. There have been recent events upriver that have affected the Rappahannock and things like the Embrey Dam removal, or the City of Fredericksburg establishing the conservation easement, where there's the riparian buffer on each side of the river. Do you have... being downstream, in the middle section of the river, are you connected? Do you feel connected to projects like that, that happen in the middle section, up there around the fall line?

[44:12] Chief Anne: Absolutely, very much so.

Three minutes redacted at the request of the narrator

[44:18] Walker: Okay, I'd like to discuss another issue that's happening more here is hydrofracturing, fracking. Are you comfortable discussing that with me, a couple of things about it?

[44:29] Chief Anne: Oh, I'm comfortable discussing it.

[44:32] Walker: So, it's raising concerns about potential impacts to the environment, in particular, the health of the Rappahannock River. Friends of the Rappahannock worked this year with American Rivers, a national group, and we explained to them some of the things that are happening here related to fracking. How many acres have been leased? 86,000 acres. The things that are going on with that. And the Rappahannock was judged because of the threat of fracking to be the fifth most-endangered river in the United States because of fracking proposed in the Taylorville basin. Local governments are working on this and they're talking about it. But I'm curious, what are your feelings about fracking and the health of the river?

[45:22] Chief Anne: Well, my feelings about fracking in general - not just the health of this river, but everywhere that it's being done. I'm going to begin with a proverb that my dad used to say

all the time, and it's not all that great. It's not all that nice, but he would say it, he had these, we have these proverbs that are traditional in the tribe. People... there are little things that they give you and they are signposts to live by. And he would say, we would go out in the woods as I was a little girl and he would take me out in the woods and he told me we were going hunting but we really weren't because he didn't want to kill anything in front of me. But we would scout and so we go out and sit and watch, you know, and he would describe to me what was taking place with the animals as they would come in, whether they were mating, or whether they were building a nest, whatever they were doing, and he would talk about it on the way back about how beautiful nature was, because nature has been given to us to enjoy and to be a part, we are part of nature, but most people don't know it, but we are and it's a very delicate balance. So, if we go in and destroy the things that have been given to us by the creator, then we mess up the balance that is there and then all the things can't become as fruitful and productive as they should be. And he would say you know human beings are the only animals on the planet that poop where they eat. They're like pigs. And I thought, that stuck in my mind my whole life, you know. And so if you're fracking the ground that you're walking on, that you're planting, that your rivers are running on, what are you doing? You're destroying your own self. I mean, it's such crazy thinking. And yet for the greed of money, people will do anything, and they don't understand the treasure that they have already and what God has given.

[47:52]Walker: Are there efforts by the tribe to bring about awareness of conservation issues? You know, when we think about, whether it's fracking, or protecting certain areas. What kind of conversations are being held?

[48:10]Chief Anne: Well, you know, we speak on that all the time. But I understood with this project, and I go to Israel about once every other year or so, and I meet with government officials there and one of my friends in the government there created a program for the IDF and this is the the soldiers, the army of Israel. And it was called an immersion program, because the young kids coming out of high school, at 18 years old, are required to go into service for two years but they were coming in knowing nothing about their history or their heritage. And so he created this immersion program for them to be able to learn about taking them back to these places and telling them stories of the patriarch's road and the different things that happened for Israel and it indoctrinates these children. And it gives them a greater sense of belonging to the land. And so in my youth, my assistant chief and I sat down when I came back like a couple of years ago and sat down and started brainstorming what could we do to emulate that program for the kids who are now walking around with iPhones and iPads and everything is about me and they're off you know playing football when they should be at a powwow or a dance practice or drum practice they're off you know with so many distractions for them and so that's how we developed the Return to the River project before we ever knew we were going to get any land on the river, or anything else. But just to be able to bring our kids to these historic places and to be able to tell them the things that happened there and have them reconnect to the land and the river and to understand the traditions and the history of their people. This is going to ground them and we have this proverb that says, if you don't know where you come from you can't possibly know where you're going. And so this was an effort to get these children immersed into their culture and their history and their traditions so that they know where they come from and

that they could be focused on where they're going. And so when all of that began to occur we really began to talk about more of the ecological traditions of the tribe and being able to preserve and not take more than we give to the land or to the people or to the animals or anything. And so that whole reciprocity that we live by it is a mindset, a way of living, thinking. We wanted to give to other people because we realize it's not just our kids that need to know that, it's everybody's kids that need to know that because if they did we wouldn't be dealing with fracking and all this crazy stuff that's going on to make a dollar. And I don't have anything against money, but there is a way to make money. And there's a way not to make money. You don't make it at the sacrifice of your own self or your own family and that's what so much of corporate America has been doing.

[51:45]Walker: I want to know more about the Return to the River project. Tell me, tell me about that.

[51:51]Chief Anne: Well, like I said this came out of that visit with him and they took me on a tour of the whole program while I was there and we want to be able to immerse our kids back into the culture of the river. We've been removed off of the river for two generations. And these kids don't know anything about the medicinals that they can walk along the river and find and when they can find them. They don't know when the huckleberries come in or when the blackbirds come in or when the striped bass come up you know, they don't know any of those things and I realize I knew I remember it from being a child and going places with my dad because I went with him everywhere and but these kids don't know my daughter didn't go with me everywhere. She doesn't know half of the things I do. If she did, she'd probably say I never want to do this job you know. But so many of the children are now just you know their parents working in urban areas and they're running around doing what everybody else's kids are doing and when we have to pull them in for Indian school they don't want to come because they've got all these other activities that they want to do.

[53:10]Walker: So are you actively bringing the kids in for classes or field trips and things like that?

[53:16]Chief Anne: Well, we've had classes with them but we realized that sitting around listening to me or to my assistant chief or to or dance coordinator isn't really the thing that catches their attention. I want to instill passion in them for their tribe, for their land, and for their river. And you don't do that just by lecture. You probably already know that.

[53:43]Walker: Okay, that's interesting because I think you're right. We've got to keep young people engaged...

[53:51]Chief Anne: And connected.

[53:51]Walker: And connected to nature. And so you know Friends of the Rappahannock we work very hard at it. We have a lot of summer camps and 6,000 kids come through our facility each year. It's all about the children. So I think it's really wonderful that you guys are doing this, working at that. I read about a powwow on your tribal website, are you still... it was like in

October. Is that still something that you've brought back, there was a year where you may have skipped it or something but?

[54:26]Chief Anne: No, we have not brought it back. We had two major sponsors of that event and we lost them because their focus of the corporations changed of their foundations and we have not reinstated that. But what we have done as we are doing a powwow at George Washington's birthplace on the river, every year in July, and then we do another one in Northern Virginia up in Great Falls, Virginia, in September. And so our dancers and the whole community goes out and sets everything up and have a powwow these places because we realized we do powwows [55:09] but we have difficulty getting people to come back to where we are located. And so we can have you know, we'll get five or six hundred people but it really takes more than that to really make a nice-sized powwow. And so we go out to places that are public where we know we can gather larger crowds of people.

[55:33]Walker: Good, good, I hope I can attend something like that some day soon. I think I'm going to wrap up with the ICL. Tell me because it's new, and it's fresh and it's doing such amazing things and we're going to document places where the Rappahannocks were. Tell me a little about that project and your role. How are you involved with that?

[55:56]Chief Anne: Well, it was really interesting that it was right after my conversation with my assistant chief, I do something called my mappings a lot. He's talking and I'm writing and seeing how all this is going to flow together and then I turn around to the computer and write a grant application, a proposal for a grant application. And about maybe a month later I get a contact from the park service saying they are interested in the possibility of doing this ICL project to map their territory and they send Julia King down for a meeting and I'm telling her about this project that we've just kind of come up with. And she goes "well let me have a copy of your proposal" so I give it to her. The Park Service wanted to copy of it. Then Joel comes in and he wants a copy. So now copies of this proposal were all over the place to help fund this, to buy canoes and camping equipment and build a lodge over near Fones Cliffs.

[56:58]Walker: Well, that's really exciting. That's very exciting. You know we planned this event for this interview for a couple of weeks. Is there anything I haven't asked you about that you would like to bring up or mention about the river, about your tribe, your people?

[57:20] Chief Anne: Well, that we are just blessed to have been able to return to the river and we know that you know it is the plan of the Creator for us to return and return our children to their heritage. We never know what the things that are being restored to us are going to do. Not just for us, but for the land and for the people that are around us. And you know that's what we hope to do, is to be able to teach young people about the way that we think and the traditional beliefs of the people because our Mother Earth is what keeps us alive and without her and defiling her will make people sick [58:08] they don't get that. And that's the one thing that we'd really like to teach younger generations of people so we don't have to deal with corporate takeovers of, and development of, places that are sacred or places that provide for us the things that we need as human beings.

[58:32] Walker: Thank you. Thank you for being here for us today. On behalf of all of us here today and Friends of the Rappahannock, this is a really amazing interview. And thank you again.

[58:46] Chief Anne: And thank you, the Friends of the Rappahannock for all the work that you do to preserve and protect the Rappahannock River. We appreciate it.

[58:52] Wellford: One thing that we didn't touch and I don't know whether it's necessary or not, but of course the recent event, where the chief appeared and was granted the land there on Carter's Wharf Road, and then they got on a pontoon boat that the Conservancy and U.S. Fish provided, and went down on a pontoon boat with the tribe and Senator Warner and his daughter and the pontoon boat went along the edges of Fones Cliffs and the eagles appeared. It's also that educational aspect. The tribe participated in that, and it was really a grand event. Richard and his children were there. Many people were there. Among the people who were there, the National Park Service was there, Joe McCauley, who was with the Conservancy, the Friends of the Rappahannock, former secretary of natural resources Tayloe Murphy.

[1:01:30] Walker: Chief Anne, tell me about the ceremony that occurred recently where some land was dedicated and set aside for the tribe in the Fones Cliffs area off Carter's Wharf Road. Tell me about that day and what happened.

[1:01:49] Chief Anne: Well, it was a very beautiful day. So Senator John Warner and his daughter, Virginia, donated the money to buy the land for us. And it's an acre of land on Carter's Wharf Road. And our tribe was so thrilled that we were able to get back close to the river. And so it was an opportunity to dedicate the land and to exercise traditional protocol of the tribe. And so we gave gifts, which is what we do. That's our tradition. And so when someone comes in to do something for us, we give gifts to them to acknowledge their friendship and what they have done for us and to solidify that friendship from time on. And so we have had bolo ties made up for all of the partners that have made possible that amazing transfer of land. Senator Warner gave us a piece of Fones Cliff in return and that was just thrilling. You know, he's such a conservationist and we really appreciate everything that he's done not only for us but for the Chesapeake Bay, and Rappahannock River and all the things that he's worked on over the years. And it was an opportunity to honor Joel Dunn at the Chesapeake Conservancy and the people at the Fish and Wildlife and the National Park Service and Hill and all the people who made it possible. And so our tribe was really moved, it was a very moving and touching dedication, that our people were, after 350 years, able to return to the river. Very significant day. And so as a part of that we went out into the river on the pontoon boat with Joel and Joe and all the guys from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife and the National Park Service, all [1:04:10] the partners were out there together and able to view the cliffs, that magnificent white cliff from the river view and being out there with tribal members and council members. And here comes the eagle, comes in and he swoops down as if to say, we're so glad you returned. You know, I felt like they called us there and then the Creator made it happen. And it was a very powerful day for us. And powerful in the sense that we were so grateful to all the people who made it possible.

[1:04:50] Walker: Thank you for sharing that.

Chief Anne: You're welcome.