

John Bourke reminisces with Bernie Loveless and Mildred Finlon about riding the train into Chesapeake Beach.....

Mr. Bourke: So we got on actually at the terminal, at Bennings or wherever it was, Bennings or Seat Pleasant. Yeah, wherever that streetcar took us.

Mrs. Finlon: It didn't matter much where it was, just so the streetcar got you there.

Mr. Bourke: Yeah, yeah.

And let's see what else. And then the power plant, yeah.

Mr. Loveless: I might mention one thing about the power plant. That was what they called Bennings. And that's where you cross the eastern branch of the Anacostia River — at Bennings; and it was on the way. Yeah, that was on the way to the railroad station in Seat Pleasant.

Mr. Bourke: That's right.

Mr. Loveless: And you went by the power plant. And going toward Seat Pleasant it was on your left.

Mrs. Finlon: And you carried everything you needed to go to the beach — screen doors, plumbing, toilet seats, anything that you needed to take with you had to be carried on the streetcar.

Mr. Bourke: I see.

Mrs. Finlon: And my mother, who — we used to transfer at North Capital and H. And my mother was famous for saying, "I'll carry the transfers." Everybody else would have big suitcases and everything; Mother was carrying the transfers so we'd have them to get on the streetcar.

Mr. Loveless: If anybody lost the transfers —

Mrs. Finlon: Yeah, we had to pay another fare.

Mr. Loveless: — you'd have put another fare.

Mr. Bourke: To pay eight cents for one of those tokens.

Mr. Loveless: Yeah.

(Laughter.)

Mr. Bourke: Then I remember the whistle on the train. I was, you know, kind of little guy that I was I got a thrill out of that when they'd blow for the grade crossing, you know, and blow the whistle.

And another activity — we'd go into the restroom, and you can look down and see the ties, railway ties, going by. That was fun to do.

(Laughter.)

Mr. Bourke: But the thing I remember most — and it's sort of negative — is that — how dirty it was. It was absolutely the dirtiest train that you could conceive of because it was a short train. And the cinders would come right down into the cars, you know. And, of course, there was no such thing as air conditioning in those days.

Mrs. Finlon: No screens either.

Mr. Bourke: Yeah, that's right. All wide open. You had the windows all wide open.