

Interview Log

Interviewee: Mary Harding

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Interviewer: Shelly Drummond

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Topic: Bronza Parks, *Lady Katie*, *Martha*, *Rosie Parks*, Boatyard, Dovetails, Spicers Lumber, early yacht building, skipjacks, Wingate Volunteer Fire Department, ambulance, Spark Woodland, Lois Woodland, Theof Spicer, Willis Windsor, *Stanley Norman*, Lasbury Lewis, Bobby Powley, Tom and O'Neal Dean, Orville Phillips, Crepo, Charles Parks, Wingate Ramblers, Monel Steel, Carlton Windsor, Levi Phillips, Vanderscoot, Kingdon, Jimmy Richardson, Harvey Hurley, Clarence Jones, Phillip Todd, Dr. Swing, Joe Brocato, George Robinson, Theodore Cephas, Lev Richardson, African American caulker.

Corresponding Photography Log #:

Comments:

BEGIN SIDE A

S.D.: Okay, this is Shelly Drummond, and I'm with Mrs. Mary Parks Harding, and she is Bronza Parks' daughter, and today is February the 24th (sic), 2002, and we're in her kitchen. We're in Cambridge. Mrs. Harding, if you would, please, tell me a little bit about where you were born.

M.H.: I was born in Wingate -- where the boathouse was, and now it is located behind the Lakes and Straits Fire Department (phonetic). So whenever you're at that Lakes and Straits Fire Department, you just look toward the east, and you'll see the house that I lived in all my life.

S.D.: And so the house was right next to where the boatyard was that your dad had?

M.H.: Yes.

S.D.: What did your, your dad was a boat builder. What did your mom do?

M.H.: My mother did not work until after my dad's death. His death was kind of a shock to her system, and Spark Woodland, who has the Dorchester Seafood, came and asked her to come work for him. He said I really need pickers, and my mother went to work at his crab house picking crabs. And she did it only for a short while, but we give him the credit for having gotten her back on her feet.

S.D.: Tell me a little bit about the house. Describe the house, and the boatyard and the relationship between the two.

M.H.: Well they're probably about between 3 and 4 hundred feet -- I'm sorry, between 3 and 4 hundred yards between them. And then there was a field where we had a garden, grew our crops and all. But when I was born, the house was built by my father, and there was one room down and one room up, and it had another room built almost like a lean -- not a lean-to, but just an additional downstairs room on the back end of the house. Then it was in later years that I guess as he got the money, he kept adding onto the house that made it the size that it is today.

S.D.: What did he use that first lean-to or the lean?

M.H.: Well it wasn't really a lean-to. It was a house, I mean another room that had a slant on it, and that was our den, our living room, because prior to that time, we used our kitchen for everything downstairs, and then the bedroom upstairs. And then as children came along, he kept adding onto the bedroom.

S.D.: How many children were there in the family?

M.H.: Five.

S.D.: And are you the oldest or --

M.H.: No, no, no. I have an older sister who is now -- she was born in 1920, so this summer, she will be 82. Two years later, well more than two years later, the next sister was born. The oldest one now lives in Florida, and the second one lives in Aiken, South Carolina, and then my father said he thought his world had come to an end. He had two girls at one time, and he had prayed for boys. (Laughter.) So I have a twin sister. And then five years later, I had another sister born. And she lives in Milford, Delaware. My twin sister is deceased.

S.D.: I'm sorry.

M.H.: She died about six, about seven years ago.

S.D.: Did you all, as -- did you all stay in the same room up top until, or how many people stayed in one room?

M.H.: You know, I can't remember when they built the additional bedrooms, but at one time, it was mother and dad, and the four children. My little sister, I think, came along after they built the additional bedrooms. And I think we all -- it doesn't seem like we could have, but I think we all stayed in those, in that one room in the beginning.

S.D.: Yeah? How did he -- do you remember how he built the new room, where he got the lumber and stuff from? Do you remember the building, the additional rooms?

M.H.: Oh, no. He bought them from some of the supplies, probably Spicers Lumber. He bought most of his lumber from the Spicers. Every now and again he had to go into Baltimore, and I remember that I drove a little truck in a couple times to pick up lumber for him, and that was at McLean Lumber Company in Baltimore. But most of his lumber came from Spicers.

S.D.: So you drove the truck sometimes. How old were you when you were driving the truck?

M.H.: Probably 18.

S.D.: Driving a lumber truck.

M.H.: Well it was a, it was like a ton and a half truck, but it could carry, you know, whatever he needed at that particular time.

S.D.: Tell me about the garden. Where was the garden located?

M.H.: Between our house and the boat house, and we grew different types of greens, like kale and collards. And lima beans were a staple. Potatoes. Sweet potatoes, onions, and things of that sort. But it was a pretty good size garden. We had a horse, and my father plowed the land with the horse, he or one of the fellows who worked for him, plowed the land walking behind the horse with a plow to plow it.

S.D.: Did your mother work in the garden some as well?

M.H.: Oh, yeah. We all did. We all did.

S.D.: Okay. Well tell me a little bit about the boatyard.

M.H.: Well the first boat that my father built was built in the yard up by our house. Dad had built a couple skiffs for people that wanted them, little rowboats. And every time somebody saw one of them, they wanted one, and he built it for them. But then, it must've been in the late 20's or early 30's that I recall the first one being built in the yard. And I can't even recall now who that was for. But -- I'm sorry, I forgot the question.

S.D.: It's okay. You're talking away on good stuff. So --

M.H.: Okay, okay.

S.D.: You're talking about the boats.

M.H.: And my -- the boathouse is no distance, a long city block from the house. And as a matter of fact, my father took a half hour for lunch when he had quite a few people working for him, he would just walk up to the house. Mother always had his lunch sitting on the table. Generally a bowl of some kind of soup, and I can't recall his eating many sandwiches. I don't think we had sandwiches at home much, but she had his lunch sitting on the table so he wouldn't lose time, he'd come up to the house and eat his lunch and then go back to work.

S.D.: Were you -- what did he do before he built boats?

M.H.: He -- well he, at one time, he and my mother's brother, Willie Lewis, who owned the *Martha* that's over in the Maritime Museum right now, the two of them had a seafood packing house. And it seemed that, I think they quit that after two or three years because they just didn't make enough money for them. But my father also worked on the water.

S.D.: So it was working building the skiffs and having requests --

M.H.: That led to the other vessels. Uh-huh (Affirmative).

S.D.: So tell me what you remember again about the boat that was made in your own backyard.

M.H.: Well I remember that was a draketaile, you all call them draketails, we call them dovetails. And but, you know, I can just recall being around there when the men -- and men would come over and take a look at it and hang around and talk whenever they were off, and just visit and look at the boat. But I can't recall much about the size of it. It was probably like 35, 36 feet. It was a good-size boat.

S.D.: And was it built on supports or did he start it on the ground?

M.H.: Oh, he started -- there might've been some support under them, but they were built upside down. He shaped the boat to what they called the stem, the bow stem. And then he had a keelson made from a large tree, and they used broad axes and adzs to hew them down to get them square, and they put them on the bottom of the boat, and then put the bottom on, the bottom planking on the boats. And then he -- they turned them over. They put like large tripods up with blocks and falls, and raised the boat up and turned it over out there in the yard, and that's the way he turned them over all the rest of his life.

S.D.: Where did he get the big log that he would start with?

M.H.: Spicer's, almost all of them came from Spicer's Lumber Company. An interesting thing is he always said that I was the only boy he had. My sisters were a lot more feminine, and they didn't want -- and my father would send me back to the house to get a bow of ribbon in my hair so people wouldn't mistake me for a boy when I went places with him. But I many times went in the woods with him, in the forest, to pick the trees that he wanted, and he would go in. And there were a couple of those Spicer men. It wasn't the Spicer's Lumber as it is today that I recall. The first one that I recall was Mr. Theof Spicer. And he was a brother to Arthur Spicer, I believe. But my father would go in and put, and I can't recall what he used, but he'd make a big X on a tree that he wanted, or some kind of big mark on the tree. And then the Spicers would go in, cut the trees down and deliver them to him.

S.D.: I know, I've heard some discussion of the quality of wood coming out of Dorchester. Do you remember any talk about that?

M.H.: I don't remember about the quality of it. I know he could walk into the woods and find trees just the size he wanted, and he taught me lots of things about geometry, you know. I could get answers to geometry in school that other kids couldn't, but I couldn't do it the way the teacher told me. But I recall my father lying on the ground. He was just six feet tall, and he'd lie on the ground, and I would hold the six-foot ruler up by his feet, and he would look up and judge the distance that the tree was -- measure it accurately, really, you know, from -- you're talking about a right triangle, and he was getting, that's the way he measured the height of the trees.

S.D.: So he would lay on the ground, and where would you hold the --

M.H.: I would hold -- he would lie on the ground like this with his head back. I held the ruler up by his feet. And he would look over it and sight up to the height.

S.D.: Okay. And his head was at the tree? No, the ruler was at the tree.

M.H.: No. The tree was way over here somewhere. He measured this distance to be able to determine, you know, like the hypotenuse of a right triangle.

S.D.: Okay. So the tree was a good distance away, and he would walk away and then lay on the ground.

M.H.: Exactly. What he thought -- I guess he could judge it pretty well, but here is the tree, and my father would be lying here, and I would hold this ruler here, and then he could sight up to over the ruler to get -- to determine based on the distance that he was at the base, he could accurately measure the height of the tree. [There is a fieldnote sketch of the measuring we talk about in the digital documents accompanying this OH- SD]

S.D.: That's amazing. What other tricks of measurement did he use that you remember?

M.H.: You know, I don't remember now, but he told me how I could -- when a truck came to deliver lumber, how I could stand there and measure -- I could come close to getting the number of board feet on the truck because I knew the size of the truck, and the width of those boards. But I don't recall. You know, I don't know if they were just like, you know, and it's a bit unusual, but my father finished the eighth grade in school. And so he just knew a lot of arithmetic. He knew how to do those things.

S.D.: Okay. Tell me more about your involvement, the things that you did to help your father as he was building the boats.

M.H.: Well there were the things that I did by myself, but all of us, you know, my twin sister and -- my other sisters were older, but my twin sister and I both polished brass on the yachts, fancy yachts and fishing vessels that he built. And we also could put -- there was something we did with the plugs in the bottom of the boat, and I don't know whether we put putty in them or what we did. I just don't recall. But I know we polished a lot of brass, and I know it had to be done right.

S.D.: How about your mother? Did your mother ever help?

M.H.: I don't recall her ever being in there working, you know. And I guess with five children, you know, with the washing and everything, she probably had a lot to do.

S.D.: All right. Let's go back to the early days of him building the boats. Was there ever like an off season? Did he build a boat during a certain time of the year or --

M.H.: He built boats when he got orders for them. They had all sorts of stories told around about how he came into the lumber for the three -- how he came to build three sailboats at one time [Lady Katie, Martha Lewis and Rosie Parks-BS], but none of that was true. My father built the boats when he got the orders for them.

S.D.: And you said that you'd seen as many as 15 boats in progress on the boatyard?

M.H.: Right. And that was a lot. But they were, they were in progress at about the time that those three skipjacks were underway. They were built outside of the boatyard. And at that particular time -- well when my father first built the boathouse, it was 50 feet long. And then as he came to be building more boats, he added another 50-foot extension. In later years, another 50-foot extension. And then he added 50 feet beside that. So I think that's correct. So he ended being able to build like four vessels inside the boathouse.

S.D.: Do you want to get a glass of water or something?

M.H.: I'm going to get a throat --

S.D.: Okay, sure. Let me pause this.

(OFF THE RECORD.)

S.D.: Okay. We're back again. We took a little break. So tell me about the boathouse. Were most of the boats built inside the boathouse? But the skipjacks were built outside, I've seen a picture.

M.H.: Oh, yes. They were built outside. They were built between the boathouse and the house, right out -- but I don't think you could say that most of them were built inside. I guess most of them probably were built inside. But when you mentioned the lumber a while ago, when the trees were cut, of course the lumber was green, it was alive. So my father stacked them up with little separators in between, little board separators in between, and they stayed in the yard at least two years, I'm sure, getting cured. They stayed right out in the weather. And so he had lumber stacked up outside, and some of the larger boats were built outside, or he finished them outside after they were turned over and moved out.

S.D.: Did you, did you ever want to build the boat as well?

M.H.: No, but I wanted a boat. But I finished high school in 1944, and about that time, my father had promised us a speedboat, you know, a little boat that we could play around the water in. And I'll get back to that being around the water in a minute. But then during the -- that was during the war, and he could not build any pleasure boats, so I never did get my little speedboat. But -- I forgot what I was going to say.

S.D.: Oh, no, I was asking you about building the boat, like I know you said you'd done some of the plugs, and some of the interior --

M.H.: Just little pick-up things, and pick up nails and things like that, we did that kind of thing around the boathouse. My younger sister, when she came along, things were a lot better, she didn't have to -- we always thought that she was a little bit more of a princess than the rest of us. And but my father had gotten a band saw that was the first mechanical tool he had of any kind, and I can't remember that year either, but everybody came to look at this band saw. It was a big thing, and he could split the boards open and do lots of things with that band saw. But then when he was able to get a planer and a joiner, that was really big time for us. And my little sister and Shirley Wheatley, who lived next door to the boathouse, would play for hours with these big, long, curly shavings in their hair, and they clipped them to their hair like they had big blond curls hanging down from the top of their head. But it was a fun place to play. The smells were nice, and there were no mosquitoes inside the boathouse. The boards were treated with pine oil and all, and if you've ever been to Wingate, you know what mosquitoes are, almost all year round. But inside the boathouse, the windows could stay up all day long, and there were no mosquitoes inside the boathouse. So it was a fun place to be for lots of reasons. And all of the men knew that they had to watch out for the children around. And they didn't seem to mind. We knew what the rules were. There were things that we could be around and things that we couldn't. But my father loved children, particularly little boys. And I think at some time, every boy in Wingate worked there doing something. If he wanted a job, he might've only gotten 10 cents an hour, but let me tell you, dad found him a job picking up nails, or stacking up lumber and things like that.

S.D.: How many people -- we talked a little bit about some of the people, you've mentioned some of the people that worked there, how many people worked there?

M.H.: Well that, too, varied. He had -- I would say most of the time, maybe like six or seven. But when he had lots of boats under way, there were more people working there. I've known as many as like maybe 14 people that worked there. Then when dad saved his painting, putting on the prime coat and things like that on the lumber for days when it was windy and bad and the watermen couldn't go out, some of those fellows would come there and work putting the coats of paint on the boat inside and out. So, you know, they just worked on like an occasional basis, and they were not regular employees.

S.D.: So it was a way for community members, when they weren't able to be on the water, to come in and --

M.H.: Yes, if he had the work for them to do, they did.

S.D.: When -- now I'm assuming that there would be some money, and then you know, when the boat was finished, that's when money would come in. Was there ever, do you remember times, like ways of filling in between the boats being made?

M.H.: No, I don't. I never knew -- I think we were probably, that we probably didn't have much money, you know, with the five children and all, but if that's the case, we never knew it. I thought I had a rich life, you know. (Laughter.) And we didn't, but it was a time like after the Depression when there were big financial problems with a lot of people. And my father and mother, if there were any adult problems like that around, we never knew about it.

S.D.: Do you remember any sort of trades going on, like vegetables for work, or --

M.H.: Huh-uh (negative). Sometimes when they had lots of eggs or chickens, I know they sold them, but that was -- and we had our own pigs, but I can just remember that sometimes they sold the eggs. But that was not many. You know, we had two small little chicken houses, I mean little chicken houses. So, no, I don't recall anything like that. But it was -- the lifestyle was kind of nice. My father, at that time, did not hunt. Lots of the men did. So Mr. Willis Windsor was one of the people who did lots of gunning for ducks and geese and so forth. He had lots of children too. And whenever we killed the pigs and all, we gave them, Mr. Willis Windsor was one of the first people that got the fresh meat. We had no way of keeping it too long. So he shared that with Mr. Willis Windsor's family. And when Mr. Willis Windsor went gunning, we were the first to get a bag of ducks or something. See, there were no limits on them then. People just kind of supported each other that way. I don't mean that they were sitting around just waiting to help somebody out, but there was, there was a closeness in the community.

S.D.: How about repairs? Did your father do any repairs or maintenance on some people's boats?

M.H.: I don't recall that he did. No.

S.D.: Just built them.

M.H.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

S.D.: How about some of the people in particular that were the regular workers down there? Do you remember them?

M.H.: Oh, yes. I remember one in particular. That was Lasbury Parks who was a cousin of my father's. I remember him because he had a terrible gash in his foot from a broad ax, and we had to bring him in Cambridge to the doctor to even have some of the toes stitched back onto his feet. And 30 miles was a pretty good distance to travel because the roads were oyster shell roads, they were not well paved like they are now. And I recall

that dad let me ride in town with them when they came to bring him to the doctor. And there was a fellow, Bobby Powley, who worked with dad a lot as a carpenter. But I remember he and I were both on the back seat. I was a little kid, and we were holding Lasbury's head so it wouldn't flop about 'cause he kind of lost consciousness from so much bleeding. And so I recall him, and I recall Bobby Powley, and certainly Tom Dean and O'Neal Dean were two special people who were there for a long time. But there were many, there was a man named Phillips. I think his name might've been Orville Phillips from up at Crepo. But there were many, many people who worked at the yard off and on, you know. Maybe it wasn't a permanent job for them.

S.D.: Tell me a little bit about the accident that happened to Mr. Parks.

M.H.: Well my father cut his feet several times. Well, see, the men stood on this log when they were hewing it out to make it square, and make it smooth. And if an ax or an adz slipped, you know, that was a foot that got hurt. So the only thing I recall other than, the only one I recall other than my father, my father had a number of cuts on his feet, but the only ones I, over a lot of years, but the only one I recall was Lasbury Parks.

S.D.: Okay, let's stop a second.

(OFF THE RECORD.)

M.H.: There just were not many accidents around that I knew about. Somebody might get a mashed finger, but I just didn't hear about many accidents there.

S.D.: Well when that one happened, there was -- you said there were three people there that went to the hospital with Mr. Parks.

M.H.: They -- would you believe they did not go to the hospital? They went to the doctor's office. And the doctor worked on him on a stretcher right there in his office. And by that time, he was unconscious. This one particular one that I know about was unconscious, and they were afraid to give him any more sedation. And he worked on his toes sewing the leaders together, you know, in his toes and put them back together.

S.D.: How long did that take?

M.H.: But I can't -- oh, I don't know. See, I can't recall. But I don't think, and I don't know that they took him to the hospital afterward. We might have. He might have gone to the hospital after the doctor finished with him. But Dr. William Hanks here, who did lots of things in his office, you know, if the case were critical. So, but and I do remember that. And then in later years, I don't recall that Lasbury even limped. You know, he got along very well.

S.D.: So they saved all of his toes that way?

M.H.: Absolutely.

S.D.: Did they put them on ice to take them with them?

M.H.: Oh, no, no, no. They were cut and hanging like on his foot. But the way they tried to keep him from losing so much blood, that was the big concern, and the way they tried to keep him from losing too much blood, I remember dad sent me to the house and said, "Tell your mother to fill a couple dish basins with flour." And, see, we didn't have running water at that time. We had a pump. And my mother had dish basins that were pretty good-size metal pans, and she filled them almost full of flour, and that's what they packed around his foot to try to clot the blood so it wouldn't, so he wouldn't bleed to death. Interesting.

S.D.: Yeah, that is interesting. And so how long did it take to get to the doctor, do you think?

M.H.: Oh, I imagine at that time, it probably took an hour, close to it, because we had, I remember we had an Model A Ford, and I'm sure my father drove as fast as they could drive, but it's only 32 miles from the boathouse into town, but at that time, you couldn't drive very fast, and you didn't have cars that would go fast. So I'm imagining it was about an hour.

S.D.: Well do you remember any other personalities or any jokes or --

M.H.: Oh, there were some neat personalities, like Tom Dean and O'Neal Dean both sang. Charles Parks sang. There was a restaurant in Cambridge called Dayton's Restaurant. And Ray Dayton and dad sponsored those fellows to sing over an Annapolis radio station, and they called themselves the Wingate Ramblers. Now Scott Todd chides me for saying Wingate, but he says the place where Ms. Harding thinks she was born and raised was 'Windgate', but it was really 'Wingate'. So, but I was away for a lot of years, and people just didn't understand what you were saying when you said 'Wingate'. And they'd say what was that again? And when I spelled it, they'd say, oh, 'Windgate'. So I grew to saying that I was born and raised in 'Windgate'.

S.D.: When did you leave Wingate?

M.H.: Well I graduated from high school in '44. And then my twin sister and I went to Goldy Business College. It's now Goldy Beacomb, but Goldy and Beacomb were rival schools at that time. So we went to Goldy Business College in Wilmington, and I came to Cambridge, back to Cambridge in '46.

S.D.: Okay. All right, so how about some of the materials that you used and re-used? Like what kinds of re-used stuff do you think went on? Do you remember anything being re-used?

M.H.: I'm sorry. I don't know what you mean, Shelly.

S.D.: Something that, like was there a pile of stuff that they would use like for maybe for boat hardware, old boat hardware, putting new ones on the boats or --

M.H.: I think they all probably had new hardware when they were built. Lots of the boats didn't have much hardware except for the propellers. But, see, because dad built the rudders and all that were on them until the fancy boats came along. And they all had Monel steel, I remember Kingdon Hurlock had one. He was a tall man, and he had a fabulous vessel. And he -- all of the fittings on that boat were Monel steel. But most of them were brass. All the fittings and all were brass, and they were generally new. My father had a bronze plaque that said something like B.N. Parks, Designer and Builder. And I can't recall what else was on there. We had one of them, but my son has it, and I just don't recall the lettering. That was one of the things that we would clean up at times when we were polishing metal.

S.D.: How about in the Depression? You've talked a little bit about the Depression, things being different.

M.H.: Well it's just that things were not so plentiful for anybody. I can't recall any hardships that we had at our house 'cause everybody at Wingate, or Windgate, is a fishing village really, a seafood village. And everybody there, you know, we ate a lot of seafood and a lot of our own vegetables that we grew, and we had our own, like I say, our own pigs. But I never knew what it was like to have store-bought lunchmeats and all for

lunch. I'd see kids with a hot dog in their lunch box at school sometimes, or sandwich meat, and I'd think, gee, how nice that they had that when I had to take a pork chop from the pigs, you know. (Laughter.) But I cannot recall. My mother made lots of our clothes, as did most people, though, at that time. I don't know whether it was because of the depression, or whether it was just the time as it was progressing.

S.D.: How about, let's talk a little bit about what we call the folklore. Do you remember anything about the mast step, like anybody putting any coins on the mast step or --

M.H.: Oh, sure. They all did it. Well, see, there were only the four big boats had it built, and I can't remember Mr. DuPont's, you know, but I'm sure that was done there too, but yes, people -- they did put like a silver dollar under the masts of them.

S.D.: Anything else?

M.H.: I'll tell you something that you might find that's interesting, because I know my niece told me that Tom Dean had told her, he couldn't remember how the very first boats were hauled down to the water. My father's boathouse was like a quarter of a mile from, well that Wingate boat basin. Now was a wide ditch that was maybe 12 feet wide, and that's where my father launched the boats. He had to get a permit from the county roads to block the county road for a while to haul them down. But his very first boats were hauled down with like, by like three yokes of oxen. And they pulled -- my father called them rigs, but he went in the woods and cut black gum trees, very hard wood. And they were big trees. And put like an axel through the middle of them and those big rollers. And that's what they rolled the boats down on. He had behind the one that was at the stern of the boat, he had a long stem that operated like a rudder that he'd move from side to side to steer this mechanism as it went down the road. And Mr. Carlton Windsor had his yokes of oxen. And yokes, not yotes, yokes of oxen as he hauled them down to the water. And they locked the boat up along the shoreline of that wide ditch that I mentioned, and they waited for the tide to come in. When the tide came up high, they had shoved skids under it, little smaller poles with grease on them. And they had ropes fastened some way, I don't recall how that was, and let the boat slide down in this water at high tide. It was a big splash. And then my mother was involved. Her job was to catch the splash when it hit the water on the camera. By now, we had a camera. And she, her job was to catch the pictures of it as they went in the water.

S.D.: Was there any other ceremony to watch?

M.H.: Oh, no ceremonies, but everybody came around to watch it. That was a big thing. And my father needed lots of extra hands at that time when they got ready to launch the boat. And he had a fire siren. And I can't remember about what point this was, but it was a hand fire siren that he mounted inside the boathouse door. And when he was ready to launch his boat, he rang that siren. That was before the days of having a fire department down there. And people came from all directions. They dropped what they were doing and came to be there when the boat was moved down. There might've been some party behind the scenes, but I don't recall it until the later years was some of the wealthy people had their cocktails and things like that around. But I can't remember that, you know, as a younger person.

S.D.: And these later boats or yachts that you're talking about --

M.H.: Very fancy yachts. Well he built some yachts in the early years. I remember there was a very large food processing company in Cambridge here that was probably as large

or larger than Campbell's is now. And it was owned by the Phillips people. And dad built for Mr. Levi Phillips, that might've -- that's one of the first yachts that I recall, but that too had a high cabin on it. It was all mahogany. And now he didn't get the mahogany wood from the Spicers. He got that from -- he had to order that from some of those large lumber companies in the cities and all. But -- and I'll tell you something else about those boats. By now my sisters might've been in college. They were in college during part of it, and they went to school at Salisbury State Teacher's College.

S.D.: Okay, hold on.

(OFF THE RECORD.)

M.H.: Getting back to Mr. Levi Phillips' boat, you mentioned accidents a while ago. There was an accident on that boat when it was taken for -- they called it like a trial run. I called it a shake-down cruise. But there was a man, and his name might've been Twilly, but he did not work for dad, he worked for -- he was there for the Phillips to something about the motors that they had in the boat. And the shaft that was turning the propeller caught his pants leg and pulled his leg up against the propeller as it was -- I mean the shaft. And as it was turning, it did kind of burn or damage his leg in some way. Not a serious accident, but when you were out on the water and can't get anywhere, you know, anything's serious. But we went on some of those boats, my sisters were now in college, and we would sail down to the Salisbury, or motor down to the Wicomico River and park the boat and walk over to the college to see our sisters. So that was kind of a neat thing to do. My mother would cook chicken and pack lunches and all, and we'd go on the trip over to Salisbury. And it didn't take any time. Didn't take nearly as much time as it did to go on the, in a car along the road.

S.D.: And this was on, you called it a shakedown?

M.H.: I'm saying -- they're my words. Nobody --

S.D.: Yeah, but what, the trial run, this was for a trial run?

M.H.: Like a trial run. The boat was now finished, and my father was checking it out to see how it worked, if there's anything that needed to be done. And I remember this one fellow, I think it was Tom Dean that said this, Tom Dean or Ralph Ruark, one, who later became my brother-in-law, said that everything he did, he just did it halfway 'cause he knew dad was going to have him do it over again anyway. (Laughter.) But I can't recall which one said that, but I thought that was kind of funny. (Laughter.) It covered him and took care of the problem at the same time. But I remember one boat, they built some fancy cabinets and all inside of some of these boats, and the bunks and all, some of them slept a lot of people. I remember that one of Kingdon Hurlock slept like eight people very well. One boat that it built had a partition that came down in the middle that you could slide it, and it would become like a large dining room table, like a banquet-size table. Some of them, and I can't recall which boat this was, had -- over the engine house had a little mahogany table with a rim around the side so if it got rough, your dishes wouldn't slide on the floor, but that was a table where we could eat at. And they were, they were nice vessels, they really were.

S.D.: Who designed the cabinets and stuff? Did somebody ask for those? Was it the women, or the husbands, or --

M.H.: Who -- I don't know. I don't know. And it might've been that -- well when they gave the order, I guess my father told him what he thought would be nice in there, unless

they had their own ideas. Some people had things that they wanted on the boats, and I can remember my father saying I don't think that's right, and I don't want to put that on there, and he didn't do it. But some of those fellows, again like this Tom Dean, Bobbie Powley, Ralph Ruark, they actually built the cabinets, you know, did the fine work that was in there. But --

S.D.: So when people came to look at their boat as it was being built, did they bring their wives with them, or was it just --

M.H.: On occasion, on occasion. Lots of times, it was another man they'd bring with them. But, yes, some of them brought their wives. I remember one man named Vanderscoot always brought his girlfriend. He didn't bring his wife. (Laughter.) So, but and then it was usually my mother's job to have lunch for them when they came to look at the boats. And it was always on a weekend, you know. And my Aunt Iva, who was mother's sister, would come out to help her in the hot summertime. In later years, we didn't have to use a wood stove in the kitchen. And it was cooler because we had a kerosene stove. And they would fry oysters and crab cakes and things like that to have real fine meals for these people when they came from like Baltimore, Philadelphia or somewhere down to look at the boats.

S.D.: Did they drink --

(END SIDE A.)

(BEGIN SIDE B.)

S.D.: -- when they were doing --

M.H.: Some did. Some did. There's the one that I mentioned that always brought his girlfriend. I remember, he always, you know, was drinking. But I didn't, if that was going on, I didn't see it until later as things progressed, and you know, people did more partying and all. But in the early days, I never saw any of that.

S.D.: So it was an event for the people who commissioned your father to work, to build their boat. It was an event for them to come and see it.

M.H.: Oh, yes. It was an event for everybody to come see it. I remember a preacher might stop by and climb up on the boards and look over the boat. You know, people just like to see it. And I'll tell you something else. There was a man in Toddville, and I think Captain Jimmy Richardson who went with the fellow to show him the way when my father was killed, he was a friend of dad's. But one of the closest friends I remember was Mr. Harvey Hurley from Toddville who was also a boat builder. And like when they would get watermen who were off and couldn't work, they wouldn't have enough paint brushes for all of them. And they didn't, my father didn't have to be at home, or Mr. Hurley didn't have to be at home if dad needed him. If they had extra men working, they could just walk right in their shop and take whatever paint brushes they wanted and take them home for the men to use and then bring them back. They all worked together. You would've never known that he and Mr. Hurley were in a competitive business. That's the way they worked together.

S.D.: Did your mother cook -- you've mentioned that she made lunch for people during the later days in the yachts, but how about for the workboats, some of the dovetails.

M.H.: I don't recall that, I don't recall that. People, they were probably -- the dovetails, I believe, were all made for people who were nearby. They were not made for people out of town.

S.D.: So it was mainly out-of-towners?

M.H.: Oh, yes. The out-of-towners that she would cook for and all, because there were no restaurants. You were like 30 miles from a restaurant and things like that. So --

S.D.: I'm looking over some of my notes that I've written down here. Okay. Well tell me about do you ever go back to Wingate?

M.H.: I rarely go back now, but I did for lots of years. When my mother was still living there, even after I transferred into Baltimore with the telephone company -- see, in my job with the Bell system, I moved like five times to different areas. And but every single, and my father was now deceased. So every single weekend of my life, I came home to visit my mother. And that was a pretty good distance from Havre de Grace, or the Baltimore area. But I, it seems that I don't really have relatives there. I have some cousins, and they're, you might see this, the _____ that dad built for Mack Wheatley, his wife is my cousin, and she's like 91 years old now, and she still lives in the same house next to the boathouse. So on a rare occasion, I go to see her. And on a rare occasion, I go to the Lakes and Straits oyster suppers that they have at the fire hall. But I just, you know, I don't have things to go there for, and I don't go.

S.D.: Tell me about the boat names. Now I know that some of them, the *Rosie Parks*, the *Martha Lewis*, and the *Lady Katie*, what are, who are they named after?

M.H.: Well the *Rosie Parks* was named after my father's mother. But Uncle Orville actually picked out the name for it because he was building the boat for Uncle Orville. And her name was Rosina Parks. But everyone knew her as Rosie. So that's who that one was named after. The *Martha Lewis* dad built for my mother's brother, Uncle Jim, and his older son, Earl Lewis. He built it, you know, for a partnership of the two of them, and that was named after my mother's mother. The third vessel dad was building for a man who had a heart attack and died before the vessel was completed. And dad said that he's never been able to really own a boat that he built. Somebody would always come along, and they'd want the boat and he'd sell it. So he is going to keep this sailboat for himself. And if the times ever got slow, he would dredge it. And he did dredge it for a while after it was built. But when the boat was almost complete, I kind of snuggled up to him, and I said, dad, why don't you name that boat after your best girl. (Laughter.) Name it the Proud Mary. And he says, well honey, I already have named it after my best girl, but I've named it the *Lady Katie*, and that was my mother. That was nice, but Barbara Bachelder (phonetic) is Mr. DuPont's wife. That's who she was named after. The *Wilma Lee*, the other sailboat, the other skipjack, was built for a partnership of my Uncle Orville, dad's brother, and my Uncle Asbury, who is mother's brother. And the Wilma part of it was from Uncle Orville's daughter. And the Lee was Uncle Asbury's granddaughter. That's where that name came from. But they always said that next to a man's heart, other than his wife or girlfriend, was his boat. So they named the boats usually a she name, a female name. And they generally named them after the people that they were closest to.

S.D.: Now you were talking a little bit about the three sister ships. We call them the sister ships. The *Rosie* --

M.H.: I know they do. Uh-huh (Affirmative).

S.D.: That they weren't necessarily built together at the same time.

M.H.: Right. They weren't started at the same time really, and they were not finished at the same time, but they were all under construction at some point at the same time. There are many pictures of them side by side.

S.D.: All right. Let's talk a little bit about, I know your father donated land for the fire company, for the fire department.

M.H.: He donated part of it, and I know Mac Wheatley donated part of it to their, you know, the lots ran side by side. Yes, he did. And he took men off the job over there to do it. I remember one man who worked for him for a long time, for a lot of years, Clarence Jones. And if I thought about that, I don't know, somebody has pictures of when the fire house was under construction. And dad's over there. You see what they did in dad's boathouse. And if I could just backtrack a little bit, it was a vulnerable place for fires, you know, with all the shavings and the sawdust and all around. But so in order for my father to, I guess, pass a fire code or to get fire insurance, he had, I remember his sand buckets hanging all, like every 8 or 10 feet around the boathouse. And they were like a big bucket that might have held two gallons. And they had rounded bottoms in them. So they had to be hung up, and they were visual. And so he had, I don't know how many of those, around both sides of the boathouse in case of fire, you could dump sand on it. So but that was not the reason for the firehouse. Shirley Wheatley, Mack's daughter, had gotten married. And she and her husband were building a house near Crepo. And a man had crawled under the house, and he was -- suffered an electrical shock. Well it ended up he was electrocuted, but at the time they wanted to bring him into town, I don't know whether dad or somebody brought him into town, and my father said if we had an ambulance, we could've saved that man. So he went through the community.

Somewhere, either I or one of my children has a receipt book where many people, I, the community gave like \$2 or \$4 to contribute toward this ambulance fund. They got enough money together, and they bought the ambulance, and had that before they had the firehouse. The fire building, I mean the firehouse and the fire truck came later, but the ambulance was the first thing.

S.D.: You've talked a little bit about the oyster suppers at the fire house. How did those get organized? Do you remember?

M.H.: I don't remember all the people that were involved. Certainly, my father was a major influence in it. But I remember a man in Toddville named Phillip Todd who was always there helping make the crab cakes and fish cakes and things like that. But I don't know who was involved with organizing the fire suppers. But my father was a friendly man, and he had lots of friends, and I remember Dr. Swing, a dentist here in Cambridge, who was really involved with the fire department here, I remember his helping my father, you know, lay some of the groundwork to get started with, you know, the building and all. So they might've even had some of the suppers before the building was finished. But I know my father had a lot to do with it.

S.D.: About what year?

M.H.: You know, I can't recall. I would think, you know, it --

S.D.: Five years, maybe. Like a date, like in the -- this is the 50's?

M.H.: Well, yeah. My daughter was born in '48, so I would say mid-50's.

S.D.: Okay.

M.H.: Mid-50's.

S.D.: And you're saying that the men are the ones that did the cooking for the suppers.
M.H.: They did a lot. Dad and -- I remember Phillip Todd, well I don't recall that they fried the foods. Some of them did, but I remember mixing them up and getting the crab cakes all mixed up they did. I went, I recall one time -- and you have to consider the times with this. My father wasn't backward, but anyway, he was the kind of person that wanted us to always make a nice appearance and all. (Laughter.) One of my older sisters had made me a dress, it was like a -- we called them broomstick skirts, they were full, gathered skirts, and a one-shoulder top. And I went down all diked out to serve tables at a fire supper. And my father says, Mary, your Aunt Annie has been in that kitchen all day long washing those heavy plates. I really need you to help her out back there. And he stuck me back in the kitchen washing all those plates. I never did get out on the floor to wait on tables. (Laughter.) But the women waited tables. And, yes, I would say the women did most of the, most of the frying and all. But a lot of the men did fry the oysters and crab cakes.

S.D.: Did they do this together in the kitchen?

M.H.: Oh, yes. The kitchen was maybe, I would say -- the kitchen is no longer the kitchen that's there now. But it seems to me that they had three stoves. And that there was a blacksmith here in Cambridge named Joe Brocato. That was before the days of having to have stainless steel cookware. So he made large skillets that had high sides on them that would fit over all four burners on the stove. So they could fry lots of crab cakes and fritters in those big square skillets that were the size of a stove. So and then the women, you know, cooked the potatoes and made potato salad and did things like that, you know. They could make those up the day before the fire supper.

S.D.: And brought them in.

M.H.: And brought -- well, they probably made them right there in the fire hall. They probably worked almost all night long doing it to have it ready for the suppers.

S.D.: Did people come from all around the community or outside even?

M.H.: Oh, yeah. Oh, yes. Outside the community and all they came. And they were big suppers. They would serve maybe 500 or 600 people at a time. And they still do. They still do.

S.D.: What time of the year?

M.H.: Well you had the crab cakes during the oyster seasons, and the oyster fritter -- I mean crab cakes during the summer seasons. And you had the oysters during the winter season.

S.D.: So they have a --

M.H.: I think they could even get permits even in the later years to take oysters for something like a charity dinner like that. But I really think that maybe one of the first suppers they had they used Mr. George Robinson's crab house, I think. I might be wrong, but I believe that.

S.D.: Okay. I'm going to stop this right now, and put a new --
(OFF RECORD - PAUSE IN TAPE.)

S.D.: All right. This is Shelly Drummond again with Mary Parks Harding, and it is the second mini disk, I'm used to saying tape, that we've got. And what I'd like to do is talk a little bit, you mentioned a gentleman named Lev who was a caulker?

M.H.: Yes. I don't know what his job was on the skipjack. He worked for my Uncle Orville. But when these boats were under construction, he was the one who came and caulked the decks of the boats. And I just remember that they used, I guess it was cotton, and it almost seems to me, and this might not be correct, but it all almost seems to me that they used like a heavy grease in between their two, and they pushed these, and using something like a putty knife and a hammer or mallet, they packed this down in between the boards on the deck of the boat.

S.D.: And did he work at --

M.H.: He did the work at the boatyard, but he was actually, it's just like a lot of them. They had a specialty of their own, and that was a specialty for Lev. And I think his name was Richardson, but I'm not sure. But, yes, that was a specialty for him. And I think he caulked the decks on all three of those boats, that were the *Martha Lewis* and *Lady Katie*.

S.D.: Did he go to other boatyards as well, like --

M.H.: Oh, I don't believe he did. I honestly don't believe he did. I believe he was probably there just because of Uncle Orville's connection with the vessel. And then, you know, it spilled over into the other two.

S.D.: And so during the rest of the year, he was a waterman?

M.H.: He was a waterman, and then that was primarily in the wintertime on the dredge boats. And in the summertime, many times the people who worked in the -- on the dredge boats in the wintertime had a job farming, either their own farm, or working on somebody else's farm, or doing, working in a factory or something where they could be a part-time for the summer.

S.D.: Do you remember anybody else that had a specialized job that would come into the boatyard to do --

M.H.: No. I remember this Tom Dean who was a carpenter for dad. He also was a real artist when it came to painting and all, and he was the one who did many of the names on the vessels, he painted them with the gold leaf or paint, well however you apply the gold leaf to them. He did lots of painting of the names on the boats.

S.D.: The trail boards were the --

M.H.: I think that they were maybe made somewhere else, but I'm not -- I can't tell you who made the trail boards.

S.D.: Another thing I read that the owner always donates something to the boat as it's being built. Do you remember anything?

M.H.: Like, can you give me an example? I don't know what you're talking about.

S.D.: It was in an article that I read that Pete had given me where the owner of the *Herman M. Krantz* had donated, they had donated and he had the trail boards made and donated those to the --

M.H.: You know, I just don't know.

S.D.: Okay.

M.H.: I don't recall anything like that happening with the -- I think the *Herman Krantz* was either built on the Eastern Shore of Virginia or down around Crisfield or somewhere. And I can't recall that. I can't recall anything like that happening.

S.D.: Well another topic that I wanted to talk to you a little bit about is the lighthouse. Somebody had said that you remembered going to the lighthouse.

M.H.: Well, yes. Again, you have to think about the times. I don't even recall when that lighthouse was taken down. I don't recall what -- I remember when it was taken down, but I don't recall the year, but as children, you know, we did not get to do things other than around our own community. And earlier, I want to tell you with all the water that we had around us, we learned how to respect the water. And one thing was, the rule was you didn't go around it. So we did not get to be on the water or in the water like swimming and doing things like that around the river. We just were not allowed to do it. But when I mentioned that we used to drive -- ride to Salisbury on the boat to see my sisters when they were in college, well before that, on Sundays, we might go on a boat and go out to visit a lighthouse. And that was always an interesting trip for us. As a matter of fact, the fellow who operated the lighthouse, or who -- what do you call it, who was stationed there, he was glad to see people. And I think that there might have been a situation where he could've had his family visit him on occasion aboard there. But most of the time, the women were home with the children and all, they couldn't get to do it. So whenever we got to go out aboard the lighthouse, my mother would, again, fry chicken or something, and we'd take him something to eat, and he'd show us around. And I remember as children, we were always so impressed that there was no woman around to clean. And he was, he kept -- the place was immaculate. It was spotless like a hospital. And everything was so well organized and all. We -- that was a big trip for us. And I was trying to think, I don't even recall how we got from the boat up to there. I think there might have been a permanent metal steps going up, like a ladder, but I do not recall how we got up to it because there were rocks all around and all. But it was just a lovely trip.

S.D.: Was this the Hooper's Strait Lighthouse?

M.H.: Hooper's Strait. Uh-huh (Affirmative).

S.D.: And did you visit other lighthouse keepers or --

M.H.: Well, I can't recall. And there was one called Shark Fin Light -- and I don't recall whether that was a manned lighthouse. But I think it might have been, and I don't recall what happened to it. So I might not be right. That might not have been a lighthouse. But it seemed to me that there were two that we visited, but this Hooper's Strait was one that was more in the area than the one that, the one that we would visit. And we didn't go that often. But we went like maybe three times during the summer. That was a lot for kids who didn't get to leave Wingate.

S.D.: About what year was this? What time period?

M.H.: Well I can tell you, I was like -- when I first recall going was like from seven years old.

S.D.: Okay.

M.H.: On up. And I can't recall after that. And I would've been seven years old in '34, in 1934.

S.D.: What was the main reason for going? Did your father know the light keeper, or was it something that --

M.H.: Oh, he generally knew them. We did not know them, but he generally knew them. And I know the fellow who owns the *Lady Katie* now, Scott Todd. Well, see, he has, he had water, people in the water business on both sides of his family. His mother's people and his father's people. And some of those people, I believe the Elliots, were lighthouse keepers. And I've heard Scott tell some interesting stories about them. And you know

what, people laugh, but I believe it's all true because those people were powerful people in the community. If they didn't keep that light right, you know, people had problems going out on their vessels in the dark before day and all. But, you know, that's about all I can tell you about going to visit the lighthouse. That was a nice day out for us.

S.D.: Do you remember -- do you have a particular memory as a child, like looking at the lens, or going up?

M.H.: Well we went all over it. And we did see the lens. And they were operated by gasoline or kerosene, one, before they had the batteries. And I can't remember when they went to batteries. But all of that was a big deal with us. But see, seeing a kerosene or gasoline light didn't mean that much to us because we had them in our home. We didn't get electricity. We called it the high line. We didn't get that high line down all the way into Wingate until after around 1940. Now my father, and there were about five or six other businessmen who had their own power plants. My father had a 32-volt electric plant that had about maybe 18 very large batteries that were cased in glass. And that was his electrical system. It was in the, he had it on a wide platform in the back end of the boathouse, and that provided electricity when he got around to getting electrical tools. And I forgot to tell you that earlier when we were talking about mechanical things. But, you know, I would not have been impressed because of the fact that it was a kerosene light, because we had those at home. That's all we had.

S.D.: How about pictures on the wall?

M.H.: Of the lighthouse? I cannot recall that. I cannot recall pictures on the wall. I just remember so much that was white. And everything looked clean. Everything always looked like it had just been scrubbed or just been painted. But I just don't recall what was in there at that particular time. And I recall thinking about what it must be like during a storm to be there and, you know, to see the wind, and snow, and ice and just be surrounded by it and not be able to leave. Those were the things that impressed me.

S.D.: Do you have any stories about storms?

M.H.: No. Well we kind of took them all in stride. The storm of '33, in August of '33 I would've been like six years old then. But I recall, that was my first knowledge of a very high storm and high winds. And that's, for your information, Shelly, that's when the inlet at Ocean City washed out between Ocean City and Assateague. That's when that became a waterway there instead of land. It was a horrific storm. But we were remote at Wingate. Not many people had telephones. And we might have had one because there might've been like five or six, and they were all on the same party line at that particular time. But you just did all the, you just knew the things to do during a bad storm like that. I remember for days, seemed to me, that there were days that the water, you know, kept coming back up for a day or two after the storm, that water kept coming back up in your yard. Now I remember Hurricane Hazel well. My mother and father had Weeping Willow trees, maybe nine of those giant Weeping Willow trees in your yard. And I was working at the telephone company. And I remembered how they talked about the eye of the storm was right over South Dorchester at that particular time. And I remember how we had all the extra people on duty at the telephone company because of emergencies and all. And when I could not get gasoline, we were without electricity. When I finally got gasoline and headed to Wingate, I remember that my father was sitting on one of those trees that was felled in the yard. There were no trees around all these beautiful Weeping

Willow trees were gone. They were all lying on the ground. There was a boat smashed up into their porch. And everything just, I was devastated when I saw it. My father was sitting on one of those trees as I drove up. And this was like maybe three days later. And I, when I saw my father, I just burst out crying. And he said, Mary, darling, what is a matter? And I said oh, dad, I'm so sorry about all this problem. He said I thought you'd be laughing and so pleased that your family was all okay. So, you know, that's the way we lived. And I felt kind of bad that I was so devastated by the destruction. But my parents, during Hazel, had slime that was about an inch deep in their kitchen floor and the downstairs floors, because my mother and father had gone in the dining room. They had put big blocks up under their furniture. They had the furniture up high enough off the water that it didn't get any sofas or anything. And they had two sofas downstairs on the first floor, one in the den and one in the living room. And all of those, none of those things were damaged. But they had, earlier that year in the -- or maybe the previous year, they had graded their whole yard and had fertilizer in there and all. And all of this ended up in our house. It was really a terrible mess. But that's all right, they got it cleaned out. And during that storm, the house next door to us that the Powleys lived in, had water going in and out of their living room windows. And we could see it. And it moved their house right off its foundation. And I recall that when the storm really got bad and it looked like it was going to be worse, my father went to get them, those two people were older, the Powleys were. And my father went to get them, and he had them get down on their knees and crawl because the wind was so high coming over to our house.

S.D.: I know the circumstances of your father's death. I didn't know if you wanted to talk about that some.

M.H.: I don't mind at all.

S.D.: Okay.

M.H.: Well, again, I was working. And the first knowledge I had of it, an operator on the switchboard, and you had to understand how those manual switchboards, how operators had to pay attention, but somebody turned all the way around to look at me. And I walked over to see, I said what is -- something, she said this is somebody on the line asking for you by name. I said then please just connect them to my telephone. And when I answered it, it was my mother. And she was sobbing. I really couldn't understand her very well when she said, Mary, Roe just shot your father, and your father's dead. And I recall saying what was that again, mother? It was all so unreal. And then she told me, and I said I'll be there as soon as I can. And then we left to go down there, and Sheriff Bradshaw met me at the door of the boathouse. And he said well, Mary, I really don't think you ought to go in there now. And I said, honey, you can't keep me away. I want to go in. But Jim Richardson, who was there with my father, had, you know, made him look better. He had him lying there like he was -- was sleeping, really. And he had crossed his arm up across his chest instead of having them hanging down and all, and he had -- really had made him look better. But by the time I got there, Willis Roe, the man who shot my father, had walked over to Mac Wheatley's house and told them that he had just shot Mr. Parks and he'd killed him. And mother found out because Jim Richardson ran up to the house. And she said he just looked almost like a wild person, you know, he was so distraught. And he says, Ms. Parks, I need to get to somebody, somebody on the telephone because Mr. Parks has been shot. And my mother heard the shots, but she

thought there was a man nearby who normally did some target shooting. She thought it was Mickey Parks, you know, doing some target shooting over that way, and didn't pay any attention. And she was sitting on the porch with my granddaughter, Candy, you know, letting her do her class work for the next day in school. And but then -- let me see, I don't know what comes next. The man stayed here in the jail. They wouldn't let me go see him. They said his attorneys had requested that nobody come see him. And, see, I knew Willis Roe. I knew him because I guess the most time I spent around him, I only spent a few time with him, maybe three times. But mother and dad had been attending a funeral over on Hooper's Island, and he came, and he was waiting for them to come, so I was there when he arrived. And I sat on the porch and talked with him for a long time. And I thought he was kind of, some kind of nut in a way. There was no -- I never felt bad about his being declared insane because he told me things that I later found out were big lies. He told me how he was a prisoner of war, and how he killed his guard and escaped, and all of that was a lie. He was, indeed, a prisoner of war, but he was liberated when they were liberated. But he -- anyway, they wouldn't let me see him, and he stayed in the jail. He was declared insane. And some of the -- it was an interesting trial, one of the most interesting things. Lots of psychiatrists were testifying. And what had happened, evidently, he had seen another boat he wanted. Dad was building for him a scale model skipjack. A beautiful little vessel, maybe around 23 feet long, something like that. All the decking was put in by hand. It was just a lovely thing. And he had seen another boat that he really wanted, and couldn't afford both of them. So I think he might have been just warped enough to think one way to get out of this would be to kill my father. The papers always said there was an argument over it, but -- and he did say that he thought my father was charging him too much money. And that was the reason for Jim Richardson being there with him. Dad says, well, you bring any boat builder of your choice to my shop, and let him look at the vessel. If he says I've charged you too much, then you and I can both make the decision now to go by whatever this person says. He said well that sounds all well and good, but I don't know anyone. Dad said I do. When you come down, go into Cambridge, go to any business you want to in Cambridge, and ask the people about the reputation of Captain Jim Richardson, and you go by what they tell you. So he did. And, of course, he naturally got an exemplary recommendation from all the people there. So that's why Jim Richardson was with him when he came down to the boathouse that day. And Jim told me later that he was sitting in his car killing mosquitoes so they wouldn't bite this city fellow going when they got ready to go back toward his home. And when he heard the noise from the first gunshot, he thought that it was -- well what had happened, let me backtrack. Roe had come out to the car, and he said no, he says I have to pay him such and such amount of money, I don't recall how much, and dad had taken a lien out against the boat, but he had asked the State's Attorney here, Bernon Maize, if he would hold up on the lien because the man was coming, he thought we could work something out. So after he talked with dad and he didn't get anywhere, he went out to the car, and Jim Richardson told me this, you know, I didn't know it for a fact. Jim said that he said, look, you and Mr. Parks both promised me this was not going to be embarrassing to me, and that you'd both go by my decision. And I've told you if I'd been doing this work, it's all handwork, it might would've cost you a lot more. And I don't, I think it's a fair price, and I don't think you could've gotten it for less.

And he said to Jim, I'll go in and settle up. And he turned and went in. And when Jim heard the first noise, he thought it sounded like two boards falling on top of each other. When he heard the second one, he thought oh, my gosh, I believe that was a shot. He jumped out of the car to go into the boathouse, and then the third shot rang out before it got there. So Roe had shot my father in the chest and shot him in the head. And as he fell back, he shot him in the back of his head. And he was standing there, and I don't know whether -- it seems to me that he might've handed Jim the gun that Jim asked him for it, he handed it to him. But I'm not sure. And then Jim went to get mother to call somebody. And in the meanwhile, Roe had gone next door. Jim had the keys, I'm sure, so he wasn't going to get anywhere. They were in Roe's car. So he ended up staying in the jail. Many of the people who testified were psychiatrists. Some of them, two of them I remember under cross examination, had admitted that they said they've -- that they told that he was insane because they thought his chances of getting out and getting rehabilitated would be better, something to that effect. I don't recall all of it. But I attended every day, you know, in the courtroom. And I sat right behind Roe. But because he was the one I would have, you know, he would have recognized me, and of course, he would have recognized my mother and my brother-in-law who worked with dad at the time, this Ralph Ruark that I mentioned before. But and the trial was held in Salisbury. His first attorneys were the Edward Bennett Williams people, who later owned the Baltimore Orioles in the way back many years ago. And very high-priced lawyers. And then he complained that they -- he felt they were all in cahoots with my father's family, and he wouldn't get anywhere. He wanted it moved. And when they moved it, he declared that he was a pauper. And I did try to research, and I was -- when I say I, my older sisters were out of town at that time. But my twin sister and I even went over around Annapolis to look at a summer home that Roe had over there, and tried to find out as much as we could about him, and what name it was in. I didn't want the Dorchester County to pay for his attorneys. But his house was in his name and his wife's both. And at that time, I don't know what it's like now, but at that time, they couldn't -- he could still declare he was a pauper. So he stayed in mental hospitals for about six years, six or seven years. And he wrote his own appeals. And this guy was a lawyer who never practiced law, but he did like some kind of proofreading for -- I'm trying to think of what it was. Some kind of governmental office over around Washington. I can't recall Library -- Congress, Library of Congress.

S.D.: Library of Congress?

M.H.: Yeah. And so, anyway, he wrote his own appeals saying that his penalty was unjust. Oh, and at that time, they could not prove that he came with the gun deliberately to kill my father. So the most they said they could charge him with was second degree. I think they tried for first and -- for that reason, he was tried on second degree murder or they found him guilty of second degree murder, which at that time was 18 years. And he did end up serving the maximum penalty. But I don't know where he is today. And he was a man, my father was 59 at the time. This man was about 40. From what I can recall, he would have been about 40. So he did serve his time, and I guess he got out or I don't even know if he's still living or not.

S.D.: Well I understand the community was devastated, that it was very --

M.H.: It was unreal. You could not get dial tone. Now keep in mind, you know, not everyone had a telephone the way they do today, but there were still lots of telephones there. And my father was a business man. He was a politician. He was running for County Commissioner's Office at the time of his death. But for all the rest of that day, and this happened in the early evening like after, late afternoon, I guess. And you could not get dial tone on your telephone. Everything was so busy. And it is the truth. People were devastated. My father was a person who knew everybody, from the first time you saw him, you felt very comfortable with him and all, and he was a jovial person. And my mother was always very quiet. And well there was a lot of power there, but she was just very quiet. And my father was loud. I think that's why I felt so close to him. I think I was the only child he had that was kind of loud and boisterous. And I think, I think we had a lot in common that way.

(END OF TAPE 1.)

(BEGIN TAPE 2, SIDE A.)

S.D.: How does it feel to have somebody like Scott Todd be the owner of *Lady Katie*?

M.H.: Well that's a biased question because I like Scott Todd, and I'm glad he's the owner of the *Lady Katie*. We sold it, you know, my mother needed the money, and it was sold at auction, and George Powley bought it. And I think in one paper it says that Gene Wheatley bought it. I don't know whether Gene ever did or whether it always belonged to George. But Gene worked the boat. Gene was always the captain of the boat. And but I was happy to see Scott Todd with the boat. And knowing Scott's family, those Elliotts, Mr. -- gee, I'm trying to think of Mr. Elliott's first name. His grandfather was a dear friend of my father. You know, way back as a child, I probably thought he was an important relative or something because he and dad were so friendly. And dad built boats for his father, for Mr. Elliott too.

S.D.: Is this Milford?

M.H.: Mr. Milford. He just died, and he was a boat builder too, later on, but dad built boats for Mr. Elliott. And they came to our house to visit to, you know, his family did. He brought his wife and children.

S.D.: Do you want to answer that?

M.H.: Please.

(Telephone - Off record.)

S.D.: All right, we can do -- we were going to talk a little bit about your mother and how she recuperated and managed after the family --

M.H.: Well it was very difficult for my mother. She must have fallen many times between her house and the boathouse trying to get to dad when Jim Richardson came up. She had bruises from her waist down on her legs like she might have really stumbled and fell so many times. And there was only maybe nine months difference in dad's and mother's age, and they were both -- dad was 59 and mother was going to be 59 the following September. But it was -- mother did pretty well for a while until maybe four or five months after dad's death, and then you could just see the change in her appearance and all. Her hair was no longer as soft and all. It became like more brittle. She started immediately to get wrinkles. And until that time, if you saw my mother with the five of us children, you probably would have had to look closely to tell who was the mother of all of them. But it took my mother a good, I think, two or more years to really get on her

feet. And my youngest sister, who was still in this area, still around home, she was married, but she was still in the area, she -- I would say was probably next, you know, she was probably the next most one to be affected. I recall that I called my sisters who were out of town. The one sister who lived in Aiken, South Carolina, told me later that I told her dad had been shot when I called them. And that they stopped everywhere from Norfolk on up and bought a newspaper trying to find out if dad was still alive or not. She said I did call and they couldn't get back through. The telephone lines were all very, very busy. And but they left home right away to come back up. And I guess those are things that you do. And I tried to do the best I could. And, again, my name keeps coming up. But all of us were very close all of our lives. But I was the one living here in Cambridge. My younger sisters still lived down below, and my twin sister lived in Cambridge at that particular time. But I was the one who did call Irene and Lasil (phonetic) who were out of town. I think it was probably -- there was so much resentment toward him. Well I resented. I don't think anybody ought to ever hit anybody else or do anything to harm them, but and that part was hard for me. It was a major loss for me to lose my father. But I think I was more the one who probably felt that he really was mental, that it was not a legal ploy that he got off on because I remember thinking well this guy is really a jerk. And I wanted to go ask him how he, why he did such a terrible thing. And when I told you I tried to visit him in the jail and they would not allow me to talk to him. But it was pretty hard on all of us concerned. And dad had a step-mother who was older. And I remember because of the -- two of the shots being in dad's head, I remember my mother at the funeral home would stay right there by his casket so she'd be sure that nobody touched his head or anything, you know, because she knew that the autopsy had been done. But there were many, many people. I doubt that there were many people in Cambridge and Dorchester County that didn't come to his services, you know. A big funeral service. And the people still talk about him today, you know. He was no saint, but he sure was a nice person, you know. He stopped to help everybody.

S.D.: You had mentioned that your mother got a job picking right after that to help --
M.H.: Well it wasn't right after that, but it was after, you know, I guess a year or so when it looked like she wasn't snapping back and doing all the things that she used to do, the Spark Woodland, who was a cousin to two of my brothers-in-law came, he said maybe Ms. Katie will come to work. And he came and asked her would she come and help him out. He says I really do need the pickers. And she says well I need a little tiny bit more time to get myself together because I hadn't thought about it. But she did get herself together, and she went down and worked at the crab house picking crabs. And I do believe that that was the start of the major recovery for her, you know, because if, very honestly, if we were walking down the street in Cambridge, and as friendly as my mother was, if she saw people that she knew, she'd kind of turn her head and be looking in a window because she didn't want to be faced with trying to talk to anybody. Not that she was just avoiding them, but she just felt she would lose her composure if she did. And she didn't -- just felt like she didn't have the stamina to talk with people about it. But in later years, she could.

S.D.: And working in the crab house and being with the other women --

M.H.: Made a big difference. She could interact with all of those people, and they're basically it's a jovial place to be, you know. Some women are singing, and some are, they

talk about everything under the sun. So that was, it really was, it was a good thing for her.

S.D.: Well I know you know that we've got the *Lady Katie* at the museum right now. What are your thoughts on the Save our Skipjack restoration project?

M.H.: Well, you know, I am not that knowledgeable about the whole project, but I do think that they are so very historic, and I do know even when those boats were built, they were worth what the season was worth. The seasons aren't worth that much anymore, you know, not like they used to be with the volumes of oysters limited and things like that. And I just think it's a fabulous thing. I like the restoration idea.

S.D.: Do these boats have special meaning to you?

M.H.: Oh, absolutely. And there was one thing I didn't tell you about my mother. When, at one time when I was younger, there were -- the oyster fleet in Wingate alone was like 20 or 22 boats. And my mother would stand up on the porch or at an upstairs window and look out as they came around the crab point and see, as each boat came in, my mother recognized every boat as it came in. And she's say well here comes Asbury or here comes Jim. Or here's Bronza coming in now, you know, when dad was on the *Lady Katie*. So, yes, all many sweet memories. And I've sailed on them. I've raced on the *Lady Katie*, and I've raced on the *Wilma Lee* off in that Deal Island race with my brother-in-law as captain of them when -- yes, they, all of them have special meaning to me.

S.D.: Did you ever go out with your dad on the *Lady Katie*?

M.H.: I have gone out with him, but I was on there more after his death. See keep in mind, the *Lady Katie*, I can't recall, she might have been finished in '56 or '57. See, my father was killed in '58. So I was not out on the boat much with him. Not that one. I was on some of the motor boats, sailing on Sunday afternoons and all.

S.D.: Well do you have anything else that you'd like to say, just something that you want people to know in the future about them?

M.H.: I just don't know. The only thing I can think about is if there's anything that the general public can do to help with the restoration of some of these vessels, I think it's so great. The *Martha Lewis* was restored by a neurosurgeon who -- she was dying. She was on a bank up around Rock Hall, and he had both the money, and the interest, and the time to become involved in restoring the *Martha Lewis*. Spent a fortune on it. And I just think not all of us, you know, have that kind of background so we can do it, but I think if there's any action that anybody can take that would help the restoration process, I think we ought to speak up and try to do it.

S.D.: Well thank you very much.

M.H.: Well you're more than welcome. It's a pleasure for me to talk about it really. And if you think of anything that I haven't stated clearly, you just call me up.

S.D.: Okay, okay. I'm going to turn off the tape.

(END OF INTERVIEW.)