

Interview Log

Interviewee: Catherine Ennels **Tape #:** OH143

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BEGIN SIDE A

C.E.: My name is Catherine Ennels.

K.F.: Okay.

C.E.: My middle name is Virginia.

K.F.: All right. What's your maiden name, Catherine?

C.E.: Huh?

K.F.: What's your maiden name?

C.E.: Kane.

K. F.: King?

C.E.: Kane, K-A-N-E.

K.F.: Oh, okay. All right. Now where were you born?

C.E.: Madison. Madison, Maryland.

K.F.: Madison. Okay. Where exactly is that?

C.E.: About 12 miles from here.

K.F.: Now I was told that you had worked in several of the seafood plants in the area. Can you tell me which ones you've worked in?

C.E.: My first one, I was a teenager under my mother and my daddy. But I worked at -- I learned at Kent.

K.F.: On --

C.E.: Kent Narrows it used to be then.

K.F.: Okay.

C.E.: And then, I don't know for sure. I think the next --I don't know whether the following year or whatever. Oh, but let me tell you about Kent Island.

K.F.: Okay.

C.E.: I don't think back this way. It's right on the water and it otherwise, you know, had boardwalk and everything. At that time, the rain would come up so if you had chickens or anything, you had to put `em up high or something, and you had to get up high yourself because the tide would come in so high, you know, right on the water.

K.F.: Right.

C.E.: I said, you know, you stop to think about all those kind of things like that. But they stayed down there, you know, stay down there come back home weekends,

K.F.: Oh. So you would live down there and then go back to Madison?

C.E.: Yeah. Until later years moved here and I've been here ever since.

K.F.: Okay, okay. Now where did you stay when you were down on Kent Island?

C.E.: Oh, they had apartment for you to stay into, little tents or whatever you call it.

K.F.: Can you describe those for me?

C.E.: Huh?

K.F.: Can you describe those for me, what they looked like or where they were?

C.E.: Just was a long place, and each one of `em had their own, of course, at the house or apartment or whatever. And you go in yours and I go in mine.

K.F.: Right. Okay. Now I forgot to ask you what year you were born in.

C.E.: Oh. What year I was born?

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.E.: 1919.

K.F.: 1919.

C.E.: September 28, 1919.

K.F.: So about how old were you when you were working down there?

C.E.: I don't know. I know I was teenager 'cause I had never shucked no oysters then. I was learning.

K.F.: Okay.

C.E.: I was telling the girls last -- yeah, this morning or last night, one or the other, that I didn't know. I maybe would learn how to shuck, but at some -- when I first started off, I was shucking oysters and putting 'em right down where you put shells at.

(Laughter.)

C.E.: I didn't know about -- I mean I caught on right quick. See the shells go down in the hole, and the oysters go in the bucket that you shuck. But I put the oyster and the shell both in the hole. I'm telling you. It's something else up there. You have to laugh about those things, you know.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.E.: And after I learned that, I think I was still young then, left over Annapolis.

K.F.: Oh, okay.

C.E.: What was I gonna tell you? Anyhow, they had a great big, great big building, and they had the cookstoves in there, and the heaters in there. Everybody had their own room. Everybody was in this great big building. But each one had their rooms. And we stay over there 'til the weekend, as long as you want to stay and come on back home. And at that time, they was paying cash money. You go up there, they put you, or whatever, they wasn't paying by the pound then, they was paying by the gallon.

K.F.: Right.

C.E.: And when you come down away from there you hear ding-a-ling-a-ling, put your money in the bucket. When you got through, you had your money.

K.F.: That day.

C.E.: That day, yeah.

K.F.: Oh. So you didn't have to wait 'til Friday or pay day or anything, you got paid that day.

C.E.: Huh-uh (negative). No. Got paid every day.

K.F.: Wow. Now how many plants would do that? How many?

C.E.: That's the onliest one that I know of, yeah. But that was basically my daddy and my two cousins. They had both, all of them had their wives, you know. It was a big place. And my daddy, he was a fast shucker anyhow. But they were slick. They would take so much of the money out for the -- carry it in the house and hide it. So that evening when they went out, if you had a girlfriend or somebody, you could treat 'em, you know.

K.F.: Right. Right.

C.E.: And the wives thought they were giving them all the money, you know. They'd laugh about that.

(Laughter.)

C.E.: But them three, them three stuck right together, my daddy and my two cousins.

K.F.: Okay.

C.E.: Then after that, we come home and pick crabs, shuck oysters, pick crabs, shuck oysters.

K.F.: So you worked all year round then.
C.E.: Yeah. For about 13 years, I worked over Bellevue.
K.F.: Okay.
C.E.: Before that though, I went in St. Michaels.
K.F.: Which plant in St. Michaels? Do you remember?
C.E.: It start with a G. He died, the man that was running it.
K.F.: Was it Colburn and Jewitt, or Harrison and Jarbo?
C.E.: No, not Harrison and Jarbo. Right in St. Michaels. Oh, what was his name? We stayed there a long time shucking oysters. And he was the boss, and they had the one they say about the shucking and all that, his name was George Waters.
K.F.: Okay.
C.E.: He passed too, but his wife is still living.
K.F.: Oh, she is?
C.E.: Rosetta Waters.
K.F.: Rosetta Waters. Does she live still in St. Michaels or --
C.E.: Yeah, Uh-huh (Affirmative). She's feeble now though.
K.F.: Okay.
C.E.: She was so glad to hear my voice.
K.F.: Yeah?
C.E.: Yeah, `cause we worked together a long time. Then we left from there, let's see, picked crabs, skin some -- way back there, you know, skin tomatoes in the summertime.
K.F.: Did you do that also?
C.E.: Yeah.
K.F.: Okay. Now what was the season for skinning tomatoes? What time of the year would you start that?
C.E.: I think we start probably about June when it gets hot, you know, the tomatoes commence turning.
K.F.: Right.
C.E.: But before -- when I left from there, I guess between time, went to Bellevue, and I worked there about 13 or more years. See `cause they worked in crabs and oysters. And when I pick crabs all summer, and time they say shuck oysters, I forget about them crabs and go shuck oysters. Because one thing, picking crabs is not -- I don't like that smell. `Cause you sure got to pull them clothes off when you come home. But shucking oysters, you can put on -- I mean keep `em on `cause you know you ain't gonna smell any.
K.F.: Really?
C.E.: Huh-uh (negative).
K.F.: Now I haven't been in the shucking houses, but I've been in the crab houses, and I know that smell.
C.E.: How about it? Uh-huh (Affirmative).
K.F.: So there's no smell then with the oysters?
C.E.: No, Huh-uh (negative). You can put on the same clothes, go up town, anywhere you want. Nobody know that you been shucking oysters, unless you got some mud on you.
K.F.: Right, right.

C.E.: And see when year before last now, Christmas, give us our Christmas present, our money, and they always make a big cookie, and they give that to us. They didn't tell us, and I think it was still for the year, for years, I be looking for to go back after Christmas 'cause we generally work up until March.

K.F.: Right.

C.E.: Come find out he closed up completely. Then I come home and draw unemployment. I was talking about going and picking crabs. One of my members go to my church, he told me come on, come on, come on go with us. There's plenty room there. You can ride with me. So I said okay. Oh, before that, Harten used to pick crabs, we used to always pick crabs for him.

K.F.: For who?

C.E.: For Harten in town here, in Cambridge here.

K.F.: Who is this? I haven't heard of him.

C.E.: I can't even think of his name. He works at Social Service now. He closed up his -- he used to shuck oysters way back there, but I didn't shuck them there then, but I worked in crabs. Used to have a big place for picking crabs. And I stayed there with him 'til he stopped.

K.F.: Okay.

C.E.: And then when the space would open up, I went to (indiscernible), I just worked there last summer. But he didn't do too much last summer.

K.F.: No?

C.E.: You got --that throws you back on your bills and everything, you know. And I left from there. Oh, I did just like I did before when the cool house opened up for shucking oysters. I didn't tell them nothing 'cause I didn't have no, I didn't think I had no business telling them. I was just going to another job, you know, the other job, what I always had been doing. And I had a little complication in that too. You left your job? I said no, I didn't leave my job. I said I just left from picking crabs and went shucking oysters like I always do. I said when I was in Bellevue when they start shucking oysters, I went right on shucking oysters. And I said I did the same thing. They act like I did a crime. And do you know, do you know when I started shucking oysters after -- when I left then for to get my unemployment or whatever, cool house, you know, shucking oysters, do you know I had to go down to the courthouse, I got the paper right in there, I had to go down the courthouse and sign just like I was an out of state person, and had to pay \$3 for that.

K.F.: Why?

C.E.: It's just been a complicated mess. I don't know why, but that's what I had to do. And in order for me to get a check just like anybody else did, after I went there and they asked my name and all that kind of stuff, and I had to pay \$3, and then before that, he was paying me just writing the amount of money that I had made on a slip of paper because I wasn't able to get the check like the rest of them 'til after I went and got that fixed up. Then after that, then I went on got the check just like anybody else. I said being 80 years old, I've been going through something.

K.F.: That's true.

C.E.: My child, she went and got me a paper for to get help. You know, it's nobody but myself, and to carry all the bills on and year before last now, this is an old house, and the

shingles that was on here when we first bought it, and they would begin to crumble, and the wind blow.

(OFF RECORD - TELEPHONE.)

C.E.: And I been after -- when I signed for my unemployment, at first they didn't want, they act like that I left from there and stole something or whatever, 'cause I had to go through that rotation. I said well ain't this a mess. I'm trying to do an honest job. I said I didn't steal nothing.

K.F.: Right.

C.E.: I'm just trying to make an honest living. But they act like I was trying to steal something, all that kind of messy junk. At this age now, I ain't got to go through all that kind of stuff

K.F.: Right, right.

C.E.: I done been through all that mess of stuff.

K.F.: Okay.

C.E.: So I'm still in the cool house right now. But I went in between time, I don't know what year it was, but I went to Grasonville picking crabs there.

K.F.: Oh, Grasonville.

C.E.: Oh, and I shucked oysters down to Sherwood. You remember --

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.E.: I shucked oysters down there. And one time, he don't shuck no more, do he?

K.F.: No, that plant is gone.

C.E.: He used to have his own big boats and everything, bring his oysters right there. That was a nice place. And he had crab pickers then, they was picking crabs, we was shucking oysters.

K.F.: At the same time.

C.E.: Yeah.

K.F.: So would they pick crabs all through the wintertime, or just the fall?

C.E.: Yeah, 'cause it was winter when we was shucking oysters.

K.F.: Okay. Well let me ask you who taught you how to shuck?

C.E.: I learned myself

K.F.: You taught yourself. Okay.

C.E.: See, I'm left-handed too.

K.F.: Oh, okay.

C.E.: Like one time we had teachers was teaching us different things, and teaching how to crochet. Now she said I have to show you, 'cause by you being left-handed, you can't do like I do. But I have to take it out and let you do with your left hand. See, that's the way I had to learn, that way.

K.F.: Okay. And how about crab picking? Did anybody teach you how to do that?

C.E.: No. The regular teacher, the one down there showed us how to cut out, you know, that piece out, get the lump, that big piece of lump, then go in there get the other part of it, went on about that.

K.F.: Okay. What are some of your favorite memories of working in the seafood industry?

C.E.: Huh?

K.F.: What are some of your favorite memories of working in the seafood industry?

C.E.: I'd rather shuck -- everybody says oysters are hard, stand up and everything, I'd rather shuck oysters than pick crab. Of course, one thing last week, we only worked two piece a day, and my employment, I get \$97, this is old money right now, \$97 a week. And so I said -- I say I don't want to go -- I want to start drawing my employment. I didn't go quite over it, but I made 40 some dollars one morning, and 40 some dollars the next, enough to make \$91. And see when you call for your employment, whatever pennies you have, you got to make that a dollar. So that made me \$92.

K.F.: Okay.

C.E.: I like to hit it, but I didn't. I mess around too a little bit. I went outdoors sat down, talk. It's a hard job. See with me shucking oysters, whether the oysters is good or bad, I have the same amount of shucking. Some people they slow down when the oysters is bad. But I shuck just like I do if they're good. So that's what -- and if they're little, you know, some people get squawking, these oysters are little, but if they're fat, they can up just the same. And I go right on shuck them just like I do the rest of `em. That's what makes me go up there like that. But some people slow down, all that, but I have the same speed the whole time. And the folks, they're good. At first when I started sitting down, you know, you'd get stiff. Have to get up, you get ready to carry your pounds up, get up and kind of stand there a few minutes and kind of work your legs so you can go with your crab meat. And then when I got standing on my feet, my leg got aching. The men that skinned oysters said that's all right. Said we'll carry `em out for you. So every since I've started shucking, and they said if you get hurting too bad, if they're ain't enough chairs down here, we'll get some more chairs, you go sit down. And so some of `em very seldom have to carry oysters up there to count, come and carry mine up and dump for me, tell me how much I got each time. So that's good.

K.F.: Who was the best employer that you ever had?

C.E.: Hayward Turner, that's Bellevue. Him and his daddy and his brother. His brother, he would talk, but neither one of `em were (indiscernible), but if you see him, you think he's the hatefulest man there ever was. But he'd do you any kind of favor.

K.F.: Really?

C.E.: Yeah, `cause I went to him, I said okay, I said first time I ever get any money, but whenever I get a little squeezed, I'd ask him, I'd say look, I need such, such a thing, but don't take it out my check. When I get my money, I'll pay you. That ain't no problem. Go right in his pocket, pull it out and give it to me. And in the summertime, he'd have apples, pears, watermelon, greens, fish, anything at all, and put it up there, carry it home.

K.F.: Really?

C.E.: We didn't have to work for no fish, nothing. Apples, they grow their own apples, bring `em home and make, cook `em, whatever you want to do with `em. And -- greens, oh, he'd bring a great big bushel of greens. Take `em home, take `em home. Fish, and sometimes somebody was filleting these big rockfish, and you know, a lot of meat on that back bone, so we'd bring that home and put it on and smoke it down with some onions. You get some meat off that. So I miss all that. But the cool house, whatever you work in there, whatever you get, they give you a discount on that. But other than that, that was the best place.

K.F.: Yeah. What were the people like that you worked with in Bellevue, the other pickers and shuckers?

C.E.: Oh, everybody was cutting up and carrying on all the time. Just had a ball all the time cutting up, you know. Most everywhere I go, you know, very seldom you find some of `em kind of ornery or whatever, but most everybody was cutting up and carrying on. That makes the day go, you know.

K.F.: Yeah.

C.E.: Down here at the cool house, they've always got something going on. Somebody's got something going all the time. But that's the best, that's the best place, the only place.

K.F.: And you worked there --

C.E.: I talked to, I talked to daddy today `cause I hadn't heard from him, didn't know whether he was sick or not. But Frieda, she told me she worked down there to Buddy's, when she worked there, and so she's talking -- said no, he was down here and we was talking to him. So when I talked to him today, I said call, I said Frieda told me that you were sick. Said that you was down there and she talked with you. Said no, I'm doing all right. But he's got to sell the place on the count of get out of debt. The boys left him in a whole lot of debt. Got to sell it to get out of debt. And perch, you like fish?

K.F.: Yes.

C.E.: Oh, perch, beautiful ones now, and got a roe in `em. So he said they're gonna bring me some.

K.F.: Well what was it like when you were traveling around with your parents and working at different places, and living there for the week and coming home?

C.E.: What was it like?

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.E.: Well we didn't have no busses or nothing, go in cars, you know, everybody go in separate cars. And you'd have a store round there, you know, get short of food, you can go buy something to eat. Otherwise, it would be just like almost being home, but you weren't home. Yes, indeedy, sometimes you know when you by yourself and the television -- was it Sunday? I think it was Sunday, Sunday evening, I think it was. I'd been to morning service and all that, and after a while, she just went blip. I went, touched the button. I said uh-oh. I know my cable wasn't cut off But I think she's old anyhow. I mean the picture tube.

K.F.: Tube, probably, yeah.

C.E.: Wonder where you can get `em at. You know?

K.F.: I don't know. I have an old t.v. like that too, and somebody told me you can't get `em any more, picture tubes.

C.E.: Huh?

K.F.: That they don't make `em anymore.

C.E.: You mean tell me got to sit up there with nothing.

K.F.: Yeah.

C.E.: But she's real, real, real, real old. I got it in Sears Roebuck in Salisbury. And at that time, had to get three other men, two other men or three other men to help to bring it in the house, it's just that heavy.

K.F.: Heavy, yeah.

C.E.: So I can't say a thing about it 'cause she did her job. And I miss that too. Once in a while, I start go -- I have touched it once or twice to see whether it would come back on, but didn't even budge.

K.F.: Not moving.

C.E.: Huh-uh (negative). So now my children, my niece and nephew, I call them my children. I'm the onliest one, only niece and nephew -- I mean only aunt they got on both sides.

K.F.: Oh, okay.

C.E.: And year before last now when I had my anniversary, my birthday's September, and had groups come to me, I go sing, you know, and have groups come to me in November, the Saturday after Thanksgiving. And them birds brought me a brand new television for go upstairs in my bedroom, and it's the one that you can push the button. It says sleep. And whatever, the 120 minutes is up, she'll go off, cut off the set.

K.F.: Oh, wow. That's nice.

C.E.: And my anniversary, at that time, is 50 years old, that was black and gold. And so the girl made my robe, I got a beautiful robe was black and gold, and these bedroom slippers beside the television, they give me these gold bedroom slippers.

K.F.: That's nice.

C.E.: Yes, indeedy. So at my age now, I'm enjoying it. I tell them I'm high up on the horse, or mule or whatever. I'm just enjoying it too. To know that the Lord have kept me, you know, 80 years, and I can still get around and get on my clothes, cook.

Yesterday even I had some crackers, I ain't got sense enough to make a little bit of rolls. When they ended up, I told myself gonna make two dozen anyhow, end up making three, three dozen rolls. Most times, I make six to seven dozen at one time. Want to taste one?

K.F.: Really? Sure.

C.E.: You want some butter on it?

K.F.: No, that's fine. Oh, wow. Oh, that's a beautiful roll. These are good. Very good.

C.E.: Yesterday I made three dozen. One of the girls at the cool house, she -- all of 'em is very nice, you know. And she carried me when I had to go to the courthouse, she carried me to the courthouse then brought me on home. And they just, just catering to me and I do to them, you know. So I told her, I said you are so nice. I said I'm going to make you some rolls. So I got her some rolls already made up. And the preacher, we use his bus for transportation, you know.

K.F.: Oh, okay.

C.E.: And in the summer when we travel with the band, I travel with the band. Singing and praying band, you know. So we have to use their van to travel. And so each year he gives everybody that is the leader of a group or whatever gives them a trip. So we get a trip the 30th of this month.

K.F.: Oh, wow.

C.E.: All we have to do is pay \$10, and we get our food or whatever else is free. Then in June, the third Saturday in June, my -- Black Beautiful Senior Citizens, we take a trip to Dutch country.

K.F.: Oh, that's nice.

C.E.: And when we -- the Sundays that we're supposed to go, always call, you know, and tell them how many people we got and everything. I'm head of that too.

K.F.: Now what church do you attend?

C.E.: St. Luke Baptist Church.

K.F.: Is that here in Cambridge?

C.E.: Yeah, 712 Bradley Avenue. My pastor is Reverend Delly Dickerson.

K.F.: I think I know her.

C.E.: Oh, she's beautiful. Oh, she's just -- she's short.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative). Wasn't she the pastor in Bellevue?

C.E.: Yeah.

K.F.: That's how I know her.

C.E.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

K.F.: Okay.

C.E.: And the one they got now, she ain't proven up to -- they miss Reverend Dickerson. And everybody done fell in love with her. People from other churches --

K.F.: Very nice lady.

C.E.: Isn't she? And her husband just the same thing.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative). Beautiful family.

C.E.: Yes, indeed. Beautiful. And so -- and that girl can preach up something.

K.F.: She can.

C.E.: Yes, in deed. Preach up something. Some other people -- do you know one thing? I'm going to stay away from our church and come on down your church. Yes, indeed, she's beautiful. I think she's on her diet now, but I have made her that little bread pudding and rice pudding, I have made them bread pudding and rice pudding. But I think she's got, since she's got -- she said she's got to lose little bit of weight, so she's got to cut down on some of that sweet stuff But I imagine that's kind of a hard job for her to do, you know. `Cause she love to eat, I think, you know.

K.F.: Well when all your parishioners are such good cooks.

C.E.: Huh?

K.F.: When all your parishioners are such good cooks, you know --

C.E.: I'm telling you.

K.F.: Hard to be on a diet.

C.E.: Isn't that the truth?

K.F.: Well let me ask you if you remember any time the pickers or shuckers went on strike at any of the plants that you worked at.

C.E.: No.

K.F.: No?

C.E.: Huh-uh (negative). That was a blessing. Oh, let me tell you this. You remember Laura Mark -- Mark, in Baltimore?

K.F.: Okay.

C.E.: It's a big plant. I don't know whether they're still working under that same name or working at all, but at that time, they went on a strike. See it was a big plant, and was a lot of Germans there, and they're nice people to work with, you know, they'll do this for you and go get this for you, and just like they've been knowing you all your days, you know. We'd be still working -- told us to walk, you better come on get out of here. Said

we're on strike. We didn't know. But we got out of there then, 'cause if you don't come out there, they start throwing stuff at you, make you come out of there. You better get out of there.

K.F.: Wow. What was this plant? What did they make there?

C.E.: Oh, they used all kind of vegetables, put up the greens and stew beans, all that kind of stuff. And we was -- where I working at, we work in the canning department, you know where they're putting cans in boxes and all that kind of stuff.

K.F.: Oh, okay.

C.E.: And see when did they -- the greens or whatever cook, we had a break then, you know, 'til they got 'em cooked. When they got 'em cooked, then they'd come on back out, have to cap 'em and everything. Then we put 'em in boxes.

K.F.: So you worked in Baltimore then.

CE.: Yeah. Uh-huh (Affirmative).

K.F.: Okay.

C.E.: This little mess has been around, ain't it?

K.F.: You sure have. My goodness. Well let me ask you about working in St. Michaels. You worked at Harrison and Jarbo or Colburn and Jewitt?

C.E.: No, this is right in town where I worked at. Oh, shucks. Isn't that awful?

K.F.: 'Cause there were two plants there. There was Harrison and Jarbo, and then Colburn and Jewitt. And Colburn and Jewitt was owned by, I guess a father and a son, and they were African American. And Harrison and Jarbo were just friends, partners.

C.E.: Oh, ain't that awful. Worked there quite a few years, 'cause used to have a bus to go there.

K.F.: Oh.

C.E.: Just that many people. Most of the Cambridge folks run the oyster house.

K.F.: Oh, okay.

C.E.: Where we was.

K.F.: Oh, so they had a lot of Cambridge people.

C.E.: Yes. Yes, indeed.

K.F.: And there was a bus that went from here to there?

C.E.: Yeah, Uh-huh (Affirmative). Yeah, Uh-huh (Affirmative).

K.F.: Oh, wow. Okay.

C.E.: And the bus went -- the bus used to go down to Sherwood too. 'Cause we used to stop in Easton, pick up some of their pickers. Even stop in Easton and pick up some of them, you know, carry 'em down to Sherwood.

K.F.: Oh, okay. Now do you remember any segregation in the picking houses at all?

C.E.: No.

K.F.: No?

C.E.: Huh-uh (negative). We didn't have none of that.

K.F.: But there were white and black pickers working together.

CE.: Yeah, but we didn't have too many. Lately they have a great many 'cause those folks from the -- people -- I mean what is it? The Mexican people or whatever. But they're friendly too. But, boy, while you're picking, while you're picking one crab, they have three picked. I don't know how in the world they do it.

K.F.: They're very fast.

C.E.: Aren't they?

K.F.: They've very fast.

C.E.: You count 10 pound, they got 20. But they don't pick out like we do. They shove it out. And they don't have no knife like we do, have a regular table knife, one of them long blades. Go in there, shove that meat out.

K.F.: Now do you have Mexicans working at Cool Ice?

C.E.: No, I don't think so. I have never worked there, this is my first time working there, shucking oysters. But we had them to Vandyke's. And Clayton, he has a whole lot of `em.

K.F.: He does. He has like 25 or something, 30.

C.E.: And boy, can't they murder up a crate of crabs?

K.F.: Yeah, I was in there last summer watching everybody pick, and they were very fast.

C.E.: Yes, in deed. And what I like about `em, I said I thank the Lord for this, when they go, five, six, seven, eight or ten or fifteen all together. And ain't nobody (indiscernible) up nobody like that. `Cause while he's getting one, all the rest of `em can be on -- they'll kill you, but I said I'm glad about that, you know, `cause these people out here are terrible now, ain't they? How about the girl, 21, she's colored, he was too, he had a wife, got a boy or something, got a child, wasn't a boy, but he left his wife. And I guess back and forth or whatever you might call it, but they told the girl that, I guess -- I don't know what she told him, they told her she couldn't have nobody else, he'd kill her, and so he went on and killed her. He ain't got no bond, nothing else. He don't need nothing. Just go up and kill somebody. He had a wife, why didn't he go on and stay with his wife? But this mind can beat you up to do a whole lot of things.

K.F.: Yeah.

C.E.: What's in the heart, though. What's in the heart, that's the main article. What's in the heart. Sure will come out the mouth, won't it?

(Laughter.)

C.E.: Yes, sir. See several of our folks get for you one thing, before you can get your back turned, they're another thing.

K.F.: Let me ask you, why would you keep moving from one packing house to another?

C.E.: Well one thing, when we was traveling with different ones would carry us up the plant, they'd stop -- see they'd cut us off and you'd have no transportation. `Cause when we was going over Grasonville picking crabs, we was going in cars.

K.F.: Okay.

C.E.: And we'd pay `em so much a week or so much a day, whatever. And when they stopped, well, we had to stop too.

K.F.: Okay. So I'm not certain I understand. You were driving your own car?

C.E.: No, no, no, no. We were driving other people. See the bus driver carry us to St. Michaels, he was carrying to Bellevue too, then Sherwood. That fellow, the bus -- every once in a while would stop along the road, it would be cold, sometimes snow and sleet, the bus would stop, run out of gas, and the boys had to get out and take cans and stuff, go to the closest store, walk, get gas. But we had fun, though. On the bus, we would have this aluminum foil. We'd take the aluminum foil and make little balls and throw it, hit one another upside the head with it. Sometimes -- stop that stuff, you better stop. We didn't

stop none. Kept right on, had them balls just a rolling. Sometimes throw `em, see our bus driver, he would -- he said he went to sleep. But sometimes you could look in the mirror and I'd look, his eyes go too, and he's driving, you know, he's driving.

K.F.: Oh, gosh.

C.E.: So we'd holler -- we ran. We ran them balls then. They wasn't no big ones, but you'd know when they hit you. You'd know, `cause aluminum foil, you know. And one, two times, we run off the side of the road. When you hear them stones, that would kind of wake him up a little bit, you know. One time, he run -- coming out of Bellevue Road, run under somebody's mailbox and knocked out that -- he was sleep just that quick, you know, but he'd say he wasn't sleep. But his eyes wasn't open. So I don't know, the good Lord just brought us safely though. One time, one, two times, stopped on the bridge before the old bridge, you know, came.

K. F.: Right.

C.E.: Stopped right in the middle part of the bridge. And the boys got out there, tried to shove it, tried to shove it, tried to shove it. Got it so far, then the bridge over there to going to Bellevue, one time she stopped right on that bridge. And some of `em know a little bit about wheels and stuff, they'd go down there, they'd twist this one and twist the other way, and twist this way, and she still wouldn't move. After a while, some of the folks that stayed over on Bellevue, they'd stop and carry so many of us to the oyster house 'til they got all us over there. Then after a while, they went back and got the car, bus -- six, then he'd come on over back to the oyster house. But we'd just -- he didn't have no heat on there like nothing.

(END SIDE A)

(BEGIN SIDE B)

C.E.: Two heaters, you know, is oil burning. And -- supposed to have them on the bus. Of course, go down -- you know that thing turn it open? But they have to keep an eye on it, you know.

K.F.: Right.

C.E.: And one time we were on our way home, I don't know what happened. Something wasn't right. And the police stopped us, and you talk about something putting out them stones, the police didn't get on the bus `cause he would surely smelled that perfume from the oil burner, but he got out and talked to him. But something about a light or something I think it was. So we got by that time. But we do have some times. (Laughter.)

C.E.: Yes, indeed -- (indiscernible). Somebody get talking about (indiscernible) it's nobody but you all. And we'd go round about that. And one lady, Miss Bessy Scofield, she was kind of a quiet type, you know. And you get throwing those balls and one of `em hit her or something, and somebody -- her some crows. You know crows?

K.F.: Huh-uh (negative).

C.E.: A bird, it's a bird, crow.

K.F.: Oh, okay.

C.E.: So she picked some feathers off the bird, and she thought Ethel Lee, thought Ethel Lee hit her with one of them balls. She throw those feathers in Ethel Lee's face. Oh my Lord, oh my Lord, I'm blind, I'm blind. Those feathers in her glasses. (Laughter.)

C.E.: She thought sure she was blind. And she was trying to -- what you call it, witchcraft, she dealt with the witchcraft, that's why I think Ethel Lee thought that she throw some of that powder or something. Oh my God, I'm blind, I'm blind, I'm blind. But the bird feathers, you know, got underneath her glasses. If we didn't have a time. I'm telling you, that powder or something. Oh my God, I'm blind, I'm blind, I'm blind. But the bird feathers, you know, got underneath her glasses. If we didn't have a time. I'm telling you.

K.F.: Now what about inside the packing house? Do you remember people singing hymns?

C.E.: Oh, yeah. But mostly our folks was singers, mostly. But sometimes they'd get to singing hymns. But most times, they would get their little booze and stuff and get out there, sassing and cutting up and telling all kind of tales, crying and laughing.

K.F.: Really?

C.E.: Yeah.

K.F.: While you were working?

C.E.: Both my cousins, both of them died -- one of him, his name was Eddie. Sometimes his brother, his brother was just as mischievous. And there was some -- just all of us cutting up, and he'd go in his bucket and get his sweet things out of there and eat `em up. Oh, somebody -- we'd go in there get `em and eat `em up, go in his dinner bucket. But -- if you aren't careful -- he'd still get a handful of oyster out of his bucket and (indiscernible). Just cut up and carrying on all the time. And when we was working over there in St. Michaels, our boss and his wife, they'd have -- they had a big yard, we'd all go over there and have a cookout. We'd have a wonderful time. Chicken and they'd have the homemade wine and stuff And the boys, get so high, two of `em got on the bench, lay on the bench and down on the ground they went. Everybody got laughing about that. We just had a good time, you know. Nobody would argue and fight. Sometimes somebody'd get arguing sometimes, but they'd soon cool down.

K.F.: Did you work with family members in every packing house that you --

C.E.: Huh?

K.F.: Did you work with other family members of yours in all the packing houses?

C.E.: No, no, no, no. Over to St. Michaels and -- wasn't too many over Bellevue. They was from here, but not my relations. Oh, when I was working over -- I can't think of it. When we worked, my mother, my mother and sister and myself, he moved -- he worked over there by that land over there in Bellevue, they used to have -- his oyster house, he'd be over there.

K.F.: Okay.

C.E.: You remember him? I can't think of his name now. But we worked over there until we moved over to the other place.

K.F.: Okay.

C.E.: But in the mean time, the tide would come up in there sometime and bring big muskrats in there, fish in there. And that's why my sister, it was a younger sister, and she's in between. I'm the oldest. That day we had a dinner to St. Luke and I stayed on with the dinner, of course my mother and my sister, they all went there, you know. After a while (indiscernible) sit down. I don't know -- my mind was running then. What done happened? Said your sister, she had one of them massive heart attacks. And said she was

falling, they heard her grunt, and she was falling. And they said they was throwing the knives and stuff away and grabbed her before she fell on the cement. And they carried her to the hospital. But when she had that special heart attack, when it hits you, you're gone.

K.F.: Okay, right.

C.E.: But she was gone before they even carried her to the hospital. Had to carry her to the Easton hospital. And, boy, that was a time. And everybody, always said everybody was just in a uproar. They didn't shuck nothing then, you know.

K.F.: Right.

C.E.: Of course, my other sister, she used to shuck oysters too. Over by (indiscernible). Down in Madison.

K.F.: Oh, okay. What plant was there?

C.E.: You know the Hamptons up Secretary?

K.F.: Okay, yeah.

C.E.: Well his brother run the oyster house at Madison. He died. And when he died, they closed it up. They got a seafood place now, I think. Used to shuck down there. But I like down there 'cause you shucked in them boxes, but whoever's carrying the shells, the shell would be all around boxes in the floor. If you buy a pair of boots, you'd cut 'em right up. Them shells and stuff, you walk around them shells and stuff, you had to be careful to throw yourself down. And I didn't stay there too long. But one time there it was ice on the ground, and he told everybody to be careful. And the -- it's outdoors, you know.

K.F.: Okay.

C.E.: And that wind blowing. And when we was working up Secretary, same thing. That wind outdoors, I mean --yeah, outdoors. And that wind would be blowing. A whole lot of times we'd hold our water or whatever 'til they couldn't no better do. And George Lee, he went out, I don't know whether he went out his truck to eat his dinner or what. He went outdoors. When you know anything, his feet slipped from underneath him, underneath the truck he went. He didn't hurt his self They always tell you when it's something slippery, don't try to catch up. That's when you do yourself harm.

K.F.: Right.

C.E.: Go with it. Whatever way it's going, you go with it.

K.F.: Right.

C.E.: Of course, that last sleet, snow and stuff we had, I went to work that Friday, and they had already cleaned a path out, and the old truck come along and pile some more stuff up there. I got out the car just as good as anything, come across the street back here in my own yard. And on this side it was snow, and if I put my hand down there, my hand would kept right on going, it wouldn't be no help to me. And on this side was some rocks. So every time I put my hand on there for to get some grip, and if I went up on one knee, the other knee would go down. And I was wrestling, wrestling. When I know anything, I sit down. And so my friend and brother across the street said people's going by, but they couldn't stop the car, you know, to help.

K.F.: Right.

C.E.: And so he said stay right there. I don't know when I'd got up if he hadn't come along. Every time I'd move, I'd fall right back down, you know. So he got a hold of my

hand and pulled me right on up and I come on in the house. For a while, I was kind of stiff.

K.F.: Yeah. Yeah.

C.E.: But each day would get a little better and better, just went on away. But one of the girls went by and she -- oh, my Lord, Miss Catherine, what has she done hurt herself. When she called me, she said I couldn't stop. Said because the bus and stuff was right behind me, I couldn't stop help you. And I said no, I didn't hurt myself, I didn't hurt myself. And her and I both got laughing on the phone. Yes, I'm telling you. I said wait 'til I got right home and go down. But that snow and stuff, ain't got no place for you to, anywhere you'd go down if you ain't careful. And in the years back when they had that snow, you know -- I mean the sleet on the street, that was a beautiful sight, wasn't it?

K.F.: Yes. I love it when it does that. It's so beautiful.

C.E.: It was beautiful. Wasn't it beautiful? And Jeanie, she was living then, I used to go down there and get my hair done. And had my little -- I don't know what happened to (indiscernible), I went down there, carried my little -- with me get my hair done. And they said when the girls come in the beauty parlor, said Catherine, be careful, I mean it is slippery out here now. It wasn't nothing but a sheet of glass, that's all. And I made out all right coming on with the fence, I could hold on to it. But the driveway, there you go. The first one -- didn't have anything to grab hold of Her and I both went down. And anybody come along, didn't have nothing to hold up, you know, every time I try to get up, I'd go right back down. And our good brothers and sisters come along in the truck said stay right there. Said we'll be there to help you. And they got us up and seen that we got in the house. We always send somebody along, you know.

K.F.: Yeah.

C.E.: So I been wonderful blessed, I mean wonderful blessed. I said I thank the Lord that in my traveling, I meet up with people, I meet up with some people I don't know their names, they don't know mine, we get cutting up talking about the Lord, about the goodness of the Lord or whatever, and it's just like we've been knowing one another all our days. I said, you know what, I said I told some of the rest of the girls, I said you know one thing? I thank the Lord, I said, ain't nobody that I hate. I said that's a big word to say. But I said ain't nobody that I hate. They might hate me, but that's with them.

K.F.: Right.

C.E.: 'Cause sometimes, you know, you speak to people or whatever. If they don't say nothing, you done your part. One time, mother and I said used to read the paper, you know, go to New York, Jamaica and all those places, you know, and you get nice jobs. And so, you know, say come on, let's go, her and I. Packed our suitcase and put our clothes in there, here we go. And you had to go to a big place for interview. And some of those girls in there didn't have a suitcase, nothing but a little bag with a little bit of clothes in it, you know. And they said those kind of people like that, when they go to work for those people, they stay on 'til they die, mostly. And so one didn't have no decent clothes on, they was very pitiful, and mother and I, we had on decent clothes, you know. So and come to find out they sent mother way over somewhere where she's at those tomcat, bobcats or whatever, you know, up in trees and stuff

K.F.: Oh, okay.

CE.: That's where she was. And I was on another part. And them people, they didn't care nothing about you. The day that you're off, they tell you go down this street and you get a bus and they carry you downtown. You're just standing didn't know nobody. And she was kind of funny first. She wasn't -- see I was the last one coming down, everybody else wash up, you know, of course I was the helper and everything. I come down, I said good morning. Before they'd get a mouth open. I guess sometimes they didn't. So (indiscernible) you own your own home? I said yeah. Well how come you, how come you come up here? I said mother and I, I said, we read in the paper that this is a nice place to find nice jobs and everything, and so we -- that's how come we come up here. And then one morning when I get ready to go out, I put on my rings and dress up, you know. So they picked, you know, she thought I was a bum, but I wasn't no bum though.

K.F.: Right.

C.E.: And then them special days, you couldn't use the phone. I don't think they used it either, their self or something, you know. And they cook a chicken, like today, they boiled this -- little small chicken, boiled this chicken and had these -- put a little, had a little center like to put that noodle stuff on (indiscernible). And that's all you would eat. And they give you only so much to eat anyhow. And so my mother called me and told me that she wanted to get away from there 'cause them tomcat or bob, them wildcats or something up the street and stuff And I told her -- oh, before I get that far. I went up town, I got off with the -- I walked around. I had to -- the first time, I thought they had post office, you know, where I could get stamps at. And so I went in, and they said no. The good Lord brought in this woman.

She said wait a minute, said I've got to go to work, but here's where a friend of mine. He'll tell you where you can get your stamps or whatever you want, and said I'll be back at a certain time. Do you know that woman come back and carried me to her house, fixed dinner, and got watermelon and we sit down and ate, talked, went on. She was a Christian woman. Lord just sent her right along. And before I got ready to leave from there, honey, we was the best kind of friends. Every time I go up there, we meet one another, you know. She carried me to the hairdresser where you go and get your hair done and all that, you know. I said see how the Lord works. And then mother and I got out here together after. So we was going to -- now. I forget what -- if you got sick, I don't know what you do, 'cause they had their own doctor, they don't tell you nothing about their doctor. And I said I ain't used to that kind of old junk. So we got our heads together, and I know one thing, we told them that we're gonna leave. You're gonna leave? I said yeah, we're going back home. So I met mother, and we went on, come on back home.

But I mean, you know, a whole lot of stuff, you better not fall for that stuff in the papers.

K.F.: Right.

C.E.: I mean because in the papers, it was just beautiful, you know. But you get there and see a whole lot -- and they had a special bank for you to go, like you stay out your lifetime to put your money in the bank and all that. And the fellow that, he said wait a minute, I got to do some cleanup before I -- and I sat down while he's doing his cleaning up, vacuum and all that. And he told me, said -- and I did finish up here. Said they ain't

what you thought they was. `Cause when you go down there, they want you to be there your lifetime slave for them.

K.F.: Right.

C.E.: And I imagine some of `em have a rough way to go. But I didn't go for that rough way.

K.F.: Right, right. That's interesting. So how long did you work at that job?

C.E.: Not long, honey. Got ourself away from there. Come on back home.

K.F.: So do you think you had more independence and made more money shucking oysters?

C.E.: But this is in the summertime, you know. We always made more money shucking oysters than anything else. If the crabs are good, I can make \$18, more or less. But with oysters, I have made, since it's been cool outside, I made up, we had three buckets, put the little one, the medium size, the big one in each bucket. And I've made 70 some dollars from 5:00 until 12:30, something like that. So I finally said I wasn't playing with them boys. And they were nice and fat too, you know. Seventy-some dollars.

K.F.: Now how did you save up to buy your own house?

C.E.: Him and I together.

K.F.: Your husband?

C.E.: No, my better half

K.F.: Your better half, all right.

C.E.: Him and I was a team. We did everything together `cause he worked for Alan Tyler, you know, the big company. And if he get home before me, he start the dinner. If I get home before him, I would do it. And when it's time to wash clothes, if he got home before me, he'd go wash the clothes. And whenever we go shopping or anything, he was a person like this. I know I never -- I'm not looking for nothing now, but in my traveling, he was a person just like -- I don't care where he carried you, he never said hurry up. And while he was living, I got a book where I went in -- starting in January, time for my anniversary in November. Be over 50 some places, I imagine. And he never said, make no difference how tired he was, he never said hurry up. And not only that, I mean he didn't carry me only. One of my friends of mine, when I lost my last sister, she taught me said now look, you lost your last sister, but you got another one. And her and I been, she's big sis and I'm little sis, and we've been sisters ever since. Now she (indiscernible), but he would go on and get her and carry her, her and I and anybody else that want to go. Sometimes mother and them would go with me. But she --

(OFF RECORD BRIEFLY.)

K.F.: Okay. Well you were telling me how you saved up to buy your own house.

C.E.: Well he would take so much money out his pay, and I would take so much out of mine. And that's the way we paid it. We had to pay for it too. Yup. I believe we were just a team work anyhow. He cooked, make pies and all that kind of stuff.

K.F.: Oh, wow.

C.E.: He cooked just as much as I did. They laugh, they were laughing at me Sunday night. I run, start the car up and run in my fence and had a big (indiscernible). Run into my fence and tore my fence down. They laugh about that Sunday night. I guess I had my license, but I just --old police hollered at me. They say, stop, put on your brakes. Don't you see that truck? And see that kind of -- I done draw, I done put in all the other places,

go around the waterfront. And I guess probably that truck, they're supposed to do that, you know, drive kind of slow or something. But I wasn't that close up on `em, so -- but they hollered at me. That just cut everything out then. That was just --

SPEAKER: What you doing, make a book?

C.E.: Huh?

SPEAKER: What you doing, make a book?

CE.: No, she's taping it all. I'm talking about all the good times we had shucking oysters and all that.

SPEAKER: You and who?

C.E.: Mel Carver, when Mel Carver (indiscernible).

SPEAKER: What is she, writing a book or something?

K.F.: No. I work for the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum.

SPEAKER: For the who?

K.F.: Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels.

SPEAKER: Oh, way down -- that's that place where Norsy was at?

C.E.: Yeah.

K.F.: We're doing a history of crab picking and oyster shucking from the crab pickers and the shuckers' point of view. So I've been out talking with all kinds of crab pickers and shuckers and all kinds of stuff .

SPEAKER: That's a job. I don't know how they do it.

C.E.: Crab picking's all right, but that smell.

SPEAKER: Sitting down so long.

C.E.: I know it.

SPEAKER: For young people, anyhow.

C.E.: What you looking for now?

SPEAKER: Relish.

C.E.: You don't see none in the refrigerator?

SPEAKER: Oh, I didn't look there.

K.F.: Well what about during like World War II in the 40's, what was it like working in the packing houses then?

C.E.: I guess that's about the time when I was in Baltimore then because the cigarettes and stuff was on strike. Stand in line and you get the worst kind of cigarette it was. But you had to get it or else if you wanted to smoke. Some of the cigarettes that I never hear talk in my life before, was Maple Dams and I don't know what they all was making up there.

SPEAKER: Didn't you just tell me on the phone you had a bottle of relish ain't never been opened?

C.E.: Well that's what I thought that was.

SPEAKER: Oh, Lord, Grandma.

C.E.: Got one? Oh, she's got one.

SPEAKER: Okay. How early I get off from work, think I'm gonna get ahead, stay home and rest, it just don't work.

K.F.: Never does.

C.E.: No. She thinks she's gonna rest? Huh-uh (negative). Something will come up. Carry that -- you gonna carry something to eat?

SPEAKER: Yeah, that's what I do, I called her. I said I ain't gonna be able to come today, I said but I'm gonna bring you something to eat, and I wish you want it. When I got off from work, I went straight in the house, I didn't sit down, kept right on going. I cooked ham, I bought you a -- got ham, macaroni and cheese, can of sweet potatoes, greens and potato salad, and biscuits.

C.E.: Oh, you got biscuits? I got some rolls. See that bag right there in front of you?

SPEAKER: Yeah, I see it. And I got potato salad. I went to the store once, come all the way back home, and didn't get no salad dressing. Thought I had some. So two trips to the store, and I still got to go around there and check out her plate. And I got a meeting at 6:00.

C.E.: Oh, my.

SPEAKER: So I still ain't got a day off

C.E.: That's the way it goes sometimes. I know it's a time, time I get in the house, got to go upstairs, change clothes, and there I go. You do more traveling if you had a car than some people with a car. She's always going.

K.F.: Can you tell me about some of the friends you've made working in the seafood houses?

C.E.: You asked about names. Oh, Lord.

K.F.: Or just friends you've made working in the packing houses.

C.E.: I can't keep the names in mind. A lot of people I know -- don't ask me their names, 'cause I don't -- and honey -- ain't important no how. Just the person that you know. I met a lot of church people, you know, but -- I know, and some I do know. But mostly I go by face. I ain't no name holder too much.

K.F.: Okay.

C.E.: But I guess -- just meet up with people and grab me and hug me, and I'll grab them and hug them. And we talk and talk about the Lord or whatever. And that's it. You know. And most of it, places for picking, for picking crabs or either shucking oysters, the biggest part of them was sitting with, you know.

K.F.: Okay.

C.E.: And some of 'em I know by name, and some of 'em I don't, and they cut up and carry on. One of the boys, now I don't know his last name. Brown, I think. I don't know for sure. When I ain't there, he's always wanting me to be there. When I get there, he always cause a fussing with me. I tell him shut up. And they chuckle, the men, when I tell him that, shut up. You got a rehearsal?

SPEAKER: Huh?

C.E.: Huh?

SPEAKER: Yeah, rehearsal at 7:00. I need your, I need your platter.

C.E.: Okay. Don't you want some of them rolls?

SPEAKER: I got some home. I hate to mix and run, but --

C.E.: Oh, yeah.

SPEAKER: I've got to take her her food.

C.E.: This my little Brownie. Eight years old. She's growing, ain't she?

K.F.: She is. Although, I think it's those shoes.

SPEAKER: Yeah.

C.E.: Uh-oh, she's got on heels today.

SPEAKER: Got them big shoes at the store. Wasn't satisfied 'til she got `em. Too big for her.

C.E.: Well that's better, her feet will grow to `em.

SPEAKER: She's walking like Frankenstein.

C.E.: You got -- you got that Census thing?

SPEAKER: Yeah, I got one.

C.E.: You didn't fill it out?

SPEAKER: Huh-uh (negative). When I get home, when I get done, I'll look at my mail. I got a whole lot of mail ain't even looked at. All right, Grandmom, I'll call you later.

C.E.: Okay.

SPEAKER: Nice meeting you.

K.F.: Nice meeting you too.

C.E.: What was I getting ready to say. Claim it's a penalty. You either go to jail or a \$5,000 bond if you don't fill it out.

K.F.: Wow. I guess you better fill that out.

C.E.: They got on there your phone number for you to call if you don't understand. I called this morning. Push 8, push 1, push 2, I kept right on pushing. I never got no answer yet.

K.F.: Well they'll probably send somebody around the neighborhood.

C.E.: Huh?

K.F.: They'll probably send somebody around the neighborhood, go door to door, help you fill it out. That's usually what they do if they don't get them back.

C.E.: But at this time, there's nobody to do that. And like the young folks, the next 10 years, they might have 20 more babies. Or that's what they do every 10 years.

K.F.: Yeah, yeah. Well what would you like people to know about oyster shucking and crab picking?

C.E.: Huh?

K.F.: What would you like people to know about oyster shucking and crab picking?

C.E.: What would I like for them to know?

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.E.: Just, I just love shucking oysters period.

K.F.: What do you love about it?

C.E.: I don't know. You can make money, you know, if the oysters are good. You got to be awful poor or awful bad for you not to make nothing. You see go on about quarter of five or something like that, be shucking oysters. Round about 12:00, 12:30, you've done 50, \$60, you can come on home. Of course, you ain't fit for nothing much when you come home but go to sleep.

K.F.: What time do you start work in the morning?

C.E.: About -- we leave home here quarter after four, get to the cool house about 20 minutes after four. By the time you get your apron and your gloves on and everything, might be 20 minutes of five or something like that. Shuck until about 12:00, 12:30. You're ready to come home.

K.F.: Oh, yeah.

C.E.: My friend say, she love money, money. Well bless her heart, she's shucking oysters two places. When she ain't shucking cool house, she's down to Buddy's. I think

last week or week before that, she worked every day `cause when she wasn't working here, she's going there working. But my cousin, before she got killed next door, she used to work like go shuck oysters in the morning, come in, get maybe one, two hours' rest and go that night shucking oysters. I said look, when the good Lord lets me work that day, I'm not going that night. I know, but one time she told me, I know, I got children. I said yeah, I ain't got no children, but I got bills, and I said when I work in the day, that's it. She says -- even when the bus would stop there for go down the road there, Tilghman's or somewhere, there she go, come back home, go to bed that night, get up the next morning early and go back shucking oysters on the day job. I just one day at a time. Well I guess might be time for her to go, but the boy shot her in the head. She was in the bed. He shot her in the head and killed her. Some of `em say I still think about her. I said you know I think about her. Every time I go out the door and look at the house, I know that's where she got killed at. But that morning, it was -- I was upstairs, you can even hear a noise upstairs more so than you can down. `Cause most times since they put these sidings on here, I don't know whether it's hardly raining down here, but I go upstairs, I can hear it.

K.F.: Right.

C.E.: And I keep hearing all this stuff, you know. In February, it was cold too. Said what is going on. I come downstairs, looked out there, a whole crowd of `em, made a little circle jumping up shouting or crying, or hollering or hooping, and I still didn't know what had gone on. And so someone come told me, said Molly got killed, shot in the head. And the fellow that shot her, after he shot her, they say he taken her out, taken her out her bed and carried her in the back room, and on that bed had a whole lot of clothes on it, you know, clean clothes or whatever, whole lot of clothes, that's where she put a whole lot of stuff on the bed, you know. He got them clothes up and put `em on top of her, covered her up with these clothes. When they let the law out, do you know anything about, this was early in the morning. It was round about 11:00 before, before I think before they found her.

K.F.: Really?

C.E.: Uh-huh (Affirmative). And, see, they had the dogs and stuff there investigating, all that stuff. And, see, at that time when the law and all that stuff got there, the children, nobody could go in the house but them. And so I opened up, I told them said you can come on over here. And other people's coming, you know, from different churches that know her and know the children, and it was a crowd there. Right up in the evening before they got things straightened out. All day long.

K.F.: Door doesn't want to stay shut.

C.E.: I know it. Down the bottom, it doesn't catch. Old as this house is, it begin to lean or something, because the door has got a gap in it between, and when that wind is blowing, you know it. But by the siding in the windows, there was a big load off `Cause before that, I had rags in the windows and the door and everywhere else. And it still was cold.

K.F.: Right.

C.E.: I said well, Lord, I said -- I talked to him, I said well, Lord, I ain't rich. This is just a need, I said, `cause them shingles begin to crack up and break up and bust up and everything. Reached over and they would crumble right up. And I think before he passed, he had the top fixed, you know, so it was all right. It's a scramble, but I'm making it.

K.F.: Well it's yours. That's what's important.

C.E.: Huh?

K.F.: It's yours. That's what's important.

C.E.: Yeah.

K.F.: Well that's all I can think of to ask you at this moment, unless you've got anything else you want to add.

C.E.: No, I don't think so.

K.F.: Okay.

(END OF INTERVIEW.)