

## Interview Log

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|--------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Interviewee: | Tom Parks                       | Tape #: (n/a) |
| Interviewer: | Virginia Jenkins                | # of Tapes: 1 |
| Date:        | December 2, 1999                | # of Sides: 1 |
| Location:    | Bechtel Corp., Gaithersburg, MD |               |
| Topic:       | Workboat Foodways Project       |               |

Corresponding Photography Log #: 1124.1

Comments: Phonetic Spellings: Bronzo Parks, Theodore Seefus  
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**BEGIN SIDE A**

V.J.: Okay. Start by telling me your name, and where and when you were born.

T.P.: My name is Tom Parks, and I was born in Cambridge, Maryland in 1945.

V.J.: Okay. And your grandfather owned Rosie Parks, is that correct?

T.P.: Right. My grandfather was Captain Orville Parks who owned the Rosie Parks. And it was built by his brother, Bronzo Parks, my great uncle.

V.J.: And your father sailed on it, and you sailed on it?

T.P.: Yeah. My father did for a short span, and I dredged on it as well with my grandfather for -- the last year I dredged was the Winter of 1969, 1970.

V.J.: How long did you work on her? How many years?

T.P.: Just that one full winter.

V.J.: One season?

T.P.: Yeah. Otherwise, mostly during school vacations and school breaks from the time I was in, say, the fifth or sixth grade. I'd go over Christmas week for a time, things like that.

V.J.: Where did you sail out of?

T.P.: The boat was kept in Cambridge, but when we dredged, we dredged all over the bay. We had a bay dredging license. So at the beginning of each year, we would start up at Love Point at the upper end of Kent Island, and we would dredge the upper bay until it got cold in the winter and the ice started to form. Then we would work our way south. We'd dredge as far south as Solomon's Island. And then try to work our way home and into the Choptank River generally in February to early March. And then we'd work out of home for the last few weeks of the season. So typically most of the season we were away, we'd leave home on Monday mornings about 3:00 or so and come back home on Friday night and just stay on the boat all week.

V.J.: How big a crew was it?

T.P.: We had a crew of six. My grandfather and I, and a cook, and three other men who worked in the middle of the deck with us.

V.J.: What was the cook's name?

T.P.: His name was Artie. He cooked for us probably for about 15 or 18 years.

V.J.: Do you have his last name?

T.P.: No, I don't. It's been 30 years since we were dredging, and I was trying to remember all the names the other night but I'm not quite sure what his last name was.

V.J.: Was this a black man or a white man?

T.P.: He was a black man. He was an excellent cook. He was well known. He used to make homemade bread every day. He was quite a good cook.

V.J.: Was it oven bread or stove-top bread?

T.P.: No, it was an oven bread.

V.J.: Can you tell me what a typical breakfast might've been?

T.P.: Well it varied day to day. But you may remember, you used to be able in the stores to get, for instance, boxes of salted cod fish. And so some mornings for breakfast we would have those with eggs and bread and probably some bacon or sausage as well. And other mornings, he would just have maybe bacon or sausage and eggs. Occasionally we might have pancakes, but very seldom. Then he'd also make oatmeal occasionally. My grandfather used to like that quite a bit. So it varied day to day, but generally breakfast-type items.

V.J.: And what did people drink?

T.P.: Mostly coffee. It was pretty cold out there, so coffee was fairly popular.

V.J.: What did people put in their coffee?

T.P.: I guess mostly just sugar and cream. Some of the guys used a lot of sugar and no cream, but just a mix.

V.J.: Was it canned milk, or --

T.P.: Yes. Canned evaporated milk. 'Cause we really -- well we had an ice box on the boat, but it was just ice, so we really didn't carry a lot of fresh milk or that type.

V.J.: What did you carry in the ice box?

T.P.: Generally we would just keep the meats in the ice box. We would generally go to the grocery store every Saturday morning to buy the groceries for the following week. And typically, it would run us about maybe 100 to \$110 for groceries, and that would be for starting on Monday mornings breakfast through lunch on Friday.

V.J.: Where did you shop, in Cambridge or --

T.P.: Yes. Generally, we would shop right there in Cambridge at the Colonial Store at that point was the grocery store in town.

V.J.: Did they deliver to the boat?

T.P.: Oh, no. No. We just would deliver -- we'd take it down to the boat on Saturday, go ahead and pack it in the ice box and load it in the cabin area there so it would be ready for Monday morning.

V.J.: What was a typical lunch?

T.P.: Well a typical lunch, a lot of days the cook would make maybe bean soup, or oyster stew, or meals of that type 'cause he had to make items that he didn't have to spend a lot of time in the cabin, 'cause he had to work on deck as well with the rest of the crew. So generally what we had was myself and three other men working at the center of the deck, two on each dredge. And then as the cook had time, he would come up and work on one side with us as well. So he would try to come up with meals that would allow him to spend the majority of the morning on deck. And my grandfather would then keep an eye on the stove in case there was anything to watch.

V.J.: And for dinner?

T.P.: Dinner typically we had a pretty full meal. Some nights we might have things like pork chops or we might have steak. And then they would have potatoes and a vegetable of some type. My grandfather always had a big garden, so he would generally bring things in like kale or turnips or some of the other items that could still be growing in the late fall to also use for some of the meals.

V.J.: Did the cook make dessert?

T.P.: No, typically not. We weren't into big desserts or anything at that point. Nothing fancy. Just some plain solid meals.

V.J.: And bread?

T.P.: Yeah. Yeah, he would bake fresh bread and things of that type.

V.J.: What did you put on the bread?

T.P.: Mostly just butter. It was just nothing fancy. It was more like just a pan-type bread, I guess you could say.

V.J.: Like a biscuit?

T.P.: No, more like a cornbread, but actually it wasn't. It was just regular, regular, I guess, flour bread. But he would do it more on a sheet pan.

V.J.: Any snacks? Treats?

T.P.: No. Typically, we worked right through. There was no stopping during the day in between meals or anything because there was no time. We had to be out dredging by sunup, so we would have breakfast on the boat about an hour before sunup, and then push on out of the harbor to where we were going to dredge so that as the sun came up, we were able then to start work because you're restricted. You have to have all of your oysters sold and off the boat by one hour after sunset. And so as the days got shorter in the winter too, you had to be ready to go to work first thing in the morning as soon as it was light. And then you had to just work straight through. There really was no time for a break or anything of that nature.

V.J.: In the evening after dinner, what did people typically do?

T.P.: Well my grandfather and I would sit around the cabin if we were anchored out somewhere, and just talk a little and maybe listen to the radio. And the rest of the crew had some bunks up in the forward part of the boat just ahead of the main cabin, and they would sit in there as well and talk, or if we were anchored -- if we were tied up in a harbor somewhere, they might go ashore, or visit with the crews on some of the other boats. Some years we'd tie up at Chesapeake Beach at the Rod and Reel Club. In fact, the last year I dredged, there were like 27 Skipjacks in there at one point. So they'd all get out in the evenings and visit the other boats and talk a little bit. Not a lot, though, 'cause you had to be ready to get up fairly early to go to work the next morning.

V.J.: Did you all eat lunch together, or did you do it in shifts?

T.P.: No, we all ate together. Because you wanted to be dredging with both dredges, and so you really -- you didn't work part time. Everybody just took a quick lunch together, and we would just let the boat lay up head to the wind and go down below and eat lunch, and then we'd go back to work.

V.J.: Did anyone say grace, ask a blessing?

T.P.: Yes, my grandfather would.

V.J.: All three meals?

T.P.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

V.J.: Can you describe the galley, the cabin, for me on the Rosie Parks?

T.P.: Sure. The way the cabin was set up, as you came down the steps, the bunk on the

port side was for the cook, my grandfather's bunk was on the starboard side, and mine was under the stern. You just lifted the steps out. So I had a bunk in the stern. And then next to the cook's bunk on the port side against the forward bulkhead was a regular four-burner gas stove with an oven that he used for cooking all the meals, and then next to that we had a tap for water that would feed back into the cabin from one of the water barrels up in the hold. And next to that was a small kerosene-fired oil heater to heat the cabin. Then the cabin was lighted. We had an electric light in the ceiling which we would use during the meals in the evening, but then we had a kerosene lantern up on one of the shelves that we would then use during the evening so we just didn't run the battery down. And we had a large marine radio that we would use just to catch the weather for the following day. That was always quite important, so we would listen to the weather in the evening and first thing in the morning just to see what type of a day we were going to have.

V.J.: And where did people sit when they went down to eat?

T.P.: Well we had a folding table, we had a card table that you would put up into the cabin, and then the cabin had basically a locker all the way around, so there was seating already built into the cabin for the whole crew as they came in.

V.J.: Where did the cook keep the provisions?

T.P.: Well there were some lockers built into the cabin underneath the seating area. There were some sections that came out, and he would keep the canned goods and things of that type in there. There was also a small cabin built into the after bulkhead where he could store some other products. And then, of course, as I said, the meats were up forward in the ice box.

V.J.: In the hold?

T.P.: Yes, it was.

V.J.: You mean up forward?

T.P.: It would've been in the hold.

V.J.: And you said you kept -- the water barrel was in the hold as well?

T.P.: Yes. Keep it from freezing.

V.J.: Where did you fill the water barrel?

T.P.: We would fill that at the end of each week when we tied up right from wherever we were tied up at shore.

V.J.: And the propane tanks?

T.P.: There were two propane tanks. They were mounted on deck just ahead of the cabin. And so as one would run out, then we would just quick take it out and exchange it on a weekend in Cambridge so we always had a spare on board.

V.J.: Who did the washing up after meals?

T.P.: The cook did the washing of all the dishes and everything.

V.J.: And how?

T.P.: Well he would just draw some water there in the cabin and heat it on the stove in a large pot, and then wash his dishes there.

V.J.: What kind of equipment, utensils did the cook have? Pots, pans?

T.P.: He had a pretty full range. I mean he had all your standard roasters and other pots and pans both for the oven and the top of the stove. Pretty much heavy-grade commercial type things. Nothing fancy.

V.J.: Frying pans?

T.P.: Yeah, he would have his frying pans, and he would have some roasters if he made a turkey or something, for instance. He had all the roasting pans to do that, and he had his

regular pans for baking his bread, anything else he had to make, larger pots for soups and stews, things of that nature.

V.J.: Where did he keep all these?

T.P.: He kept those -- well the bunks in the boats were quite large, and some of that he would store down at the after end of his bunk area, or also at the bottom of the stove, or in some of the other lockers there too.

V.J.: Were there any decorations in the cabin? Calendars, things like that?

T.P.: There might've been a small calendar, but that's about it. Really wasn't a lot of room to be honest.

V.J.: What about floor covering? Was there anything on the floor?

T.P.: Yeah, there was a sort of -- a linoleum floor was down.

V.J.: Can you tell me about the bunks and the bedding, how that worked?

T.P.: Yeah. Basically under the two side berths, they had basically a single bed mattress. Under the stern, which had more area, I actually had a double bed mattress under there. So you would have your sheets and your bedding. The thing you had to be careful of is you didn't want to sit up abruptly during the night because the deck was only about maybe two to two and a half feet above your bunk, so there wasn't room to sit up under there at all. And it was quite cold under there as well, because even though the cabin was heated, the openings for the bunks were fairly low down, and so you didn't get a lot of heat back under your bunk areas. You could generally see your breath at night in your bunk. So there wasn't a lot of room to do much. I used to joke that the highlight of the week from a hygiene standpoint was Wednesday night when I would change my socks. But that was about it.

(Laughter.)

V.J.: What were the sanitary arrangements?

T.P.: Well really we had none on the boat, as such. If we were tied up somewhere where there was a restaurant nearby, then, you know, we'd make use of those facilities. But otherwise, there were no sanitary facilities on the boat.

V.J.: Use a bucket?

T.P.: Yes.

V.J.: And for personal washing, did people, you know, wash, bathe?

T.P.: Well we didn't have anyplace to take a bath or anything of that type, but you could heat some hot water there to wash your hands and face in the mornings and things of that type. But, no, there weren't any bathing facilities 'cause we didn't bathe during the week.

V.J.: Can you describe the forepeak for me?

T.P.: Well basically where the crew slept on our boat wasn't so much a forepeak area as it was -- it was a section there, it was an after hold right at the forward wall of the aft cabin where the crew had three bunks built into that area, and then they also had a small kerosene stove which heated that for them as well and a kerosene lantern for lighting. So they were just at the forward part of the cabin. So in the morning as we got up in the after cabin, we could just rap on the wall and wake them up as well so that everybody was up and ready for breakfast.

V.J.: And how is that laid out?

T.P.: Well they had three bunks in sort of a U-shape. As you climbed down into the hold there just in front of the cabin, there would be a bunk on either side, and one bunk on the forward end of that area. And then that was closed off. And then ahead of that was

the main hold where we would've stored our extra dredges and extra rope and things of that type.

V.J.: Who bought the groceries every week?

T.P.: Generally what we would do is my grandfather would pick up the cook, and sometimes my grandmother would go along, and the three of them generally would go to the grocery store. And the cook would've made a list on Friday afternoon as we were pushing back into the harbor of what he needed for the following week. So the three of them would go to the grocery store, pick out all the groceries, and then take them down to the boat and load them aboard the boat.

V.J.: Do you remember a favorite meal, or a disastrous meal particularly?

T.P.: I think particularly by the time you'd worked all day, any meal was pretty good at that point, especially the hot meals on the really cold days. And sometimes you'd get some different specialties that maybe some of the crew liked, that maybe weren't your favorites all the time. Sometimes the guys would want something like pig's knuckles or things of that type, so you'd see those out there as well. But generally most of the soups and the stews were quite good. And when the cook would make the steak or the pork chops and some of those other items, he did a nice job with them.

V.J.: Did he cook chicken?

T.P.: Occasionally, but not too often.

V.J.: Some people have told me they thought chicken was bad luck on a boat.

T.P.: We rarely had it. We might've had it a couple times, but not that often. Most of the guys probably thought they got chicken enough at home probably, so they were more for the heavier meats during the week.

V.J.: Were there any beliefs about things being bad luck?

T.P.: Not too much. My grandfather had a few from years back. He always thought it was bad luck to have a boat that had any blue paint on it. That seemed to be about the biggest thing he had. Other than that, he didn't seem to get too excited. But I believe the museum probably does have most of our stoves and our other cabin equipment still, hopefully, in storage. And if they wanted at some point, I'd be glad to come over and help them with the layout and put it back in shape.

V.J.: Wonderful. Thank you. That would be great. Did crew members have alcohol on board?

T.P.: No. No, we didn't allow any alcohol. And you didn't want anybody who had a problem with that during the weeks because it was hard work, and it's dangerous out there as well. You wanted everybody to be in pretty strong shape.

V.J.: Trying to think if there's anything else. You mentioned kale and turnips. What other vegetables might there be?

T.P.: Other than that, those were about the only ones that were pretty much fresh at that point that you could still get out of the gardens as you got into the later part of the year. So other than that, typically then you were more into canned items that you might have at a meal: peas or green beans or things of that type. But there wasn't a lot of room to keep a lot of fresh vegetables on the boat either. So it would just be more the thought of bringing some things out of the garden as they were available, and then just using the rest pretty much canned goods.

V.J.: Did you bring preserves, jam or fruit, things like that from home?

T.P.: Sometimes. My grandmother used to preserve quite a few items. She'd do a lot of peach preserves and plums, things of that nature. So occasionally, there'd be a few jars of

that on the boat as well if somebody wanted to put that on their bread. But the group typically wasn't big on sweets or things of that nature. So there would be canned fruit and things of that type for them as well. And those were always quite popular.

V.J.: What about molasses?

T.P.: Yes. That was well-liked. And some of the guys would put that on their bread maybe in the morning a little bit, or even put it on their fried eggs. But they didn't put it on their salt cod fish.

V.J.: How was the cod fish fixed?

T.P.: Typically, the cook would take it out of the boxes the night before and wash it off and let it soak some to get some of the excess salt off. And then he would -- he would just cook it up in the morning with the eggs. I think he probably put it in the fry pan, but I think he probably steamed it more than fried it. I think it was more that he would just steam it. Then occasionally he'd make home fries as well to go along with that, and then the eggs.

V.J.: Sounds good.

T.P.: Yeah, wasn't bad. Got us off to a good start.

V.J.: Ever make codfish cakes?

T.P.: Not that I'm aware of Typically he just took them as they came out of the boxes in the fillets and used them that way.

V.J.: Did they have other fish on the boat?

T.P.: Very seldom. Occasionally, we might have some shad roe or something of that type in the early part of the spring if that was available. And occasionally, we'd have some oysters, but not that frequently, maybe once every other week. He might make some in a stew, or he might fry them once in an evening. But not a whole lot. I think the guys had seen enough oysters all day. They weren't keen on eating them too frequently. Every now and then we'd catch a rockfish in one of the dredges, and we might have that as well.

V.J.: How about ducks or geese?

T.P.: No, not really, 'cause that was -- I guess we probably never did have those on the boat at all. No.

V.J.: You mentioned turkey. Was that a special occasion?

T.P.: Yeah, they might fix one like the week of Thanksgiving or something of that type, or just before Christmas, we'd throw a big turkey on and have a nice turkey dinner.

V.J.: Did you do anything special on holidays?

T.P.: Typically we had the holidays off because there was no market to buy the oysters. We worked the days that the packing companies would be open. So if the packing company was going to be closed on Christmas day, which they were, then we would be home because you couldn't dredge anyway because you had to be able to sell your oysters the same day. And so we would have the holidays off from that standpoint.

V.J.: You told me on the phone that you had done some cooking on the boat.

T.P.: Yeah. We had, the winter I dredged, about -- I guess as we got into January or so, Artie wasn't feeling well for a few weeks, and so he stayed home. And so I stepped in and I did the cooking for a couple weeks until he felt better to where he could come back. That was interesting, that was a challenge to try to step into that quickly. But I'd had at least a chance to watch him for a good month or two. So I didn't really get into his home-baked breads or anything of that type. I came up more with some of the ready-made items out of stores at least to get us through until he came back. I don't think anyone lost any weight, so we were in pretty good shape. It was a little trickier, because then we were

one short on deck as well.

So I had to come up with things where I didn't have to spend hardly any time in the cabin for lunch so I could be up working the dredge forward, 'cause then there were only two of us on each dredge at that point. So you have to have two men all the time when you're working the dredges. We used to be able to catch our limit of 150 bushels a day by about 3:00. At that point, the oysters were a lot more plentiful than they are today. So we could get out early, pretty well be caught-up by three, then push on in, get the oysters sold and off the boat by, just by the time it got dark, maybe by 5:00.

V.J.: Why would somebody want to be a cook?

T.P.: Well you do get to spend a little bit of time in the cabin where it's a little bit warmer, and Artie was getting older too. He was probably about 50 at that point. And it's strenuous work working on deck all day. And so if you've got a person who has a good ability and enjoys cooking, it helps him from the standpoint of not having to do quite as much of the hard work up on deck.

VI: When you came into the packing house --

T.P.: We actually never went to a packing house. What we would do, most of our oysters were being sold into packing houses that were down in Virginia. So each packing house would have an agreement with a person with a large truck. And so we would have more or less just a verbal agreement maybe with a particular trucker, and we would let him know every day where we were going to be anchoring that night, or which port we would be coming into. So he would meet us with his truck as we came into a dock area. And then we would load the oysters off. He would have some metal tubs that were the standard bushel size. So we would shovel our oysters into his tubs, and he would keep count every day of how many oysters he bought from us. And then at the end of the week, we would then be paid on a Friday afternoon for what he had bought from us during the week.

V.J.: Did you keep in contact by radio?

T.P.: Yes. Yeah, we had our marine radio on the boat, and he also then had a radio in his truck so we could keep him informed in case the weather changed and we were moving to a different harbor, then he would know where to meet us

V.J.: Did the cook have to shovel out?

T.P.: No. By the time we were in at that point, the cook was generally below cleaning up and getting ready for dinner. 'Cause once we had shoveled the oysters off and washed the boat down, it was time for dinner then 'cause it was dark, and it would be maybe five or 5:30. So the cook would be down preparing for dinner while we were shoveling the oysters off. Another benefit of being the cook, I guess.

V.J.: Can you describe the plates and what you ate with?

T.P.: Typically I think we used mostly some of the metal plates, the baked-on enamel type plates which were very sturdy, and just normal heavy-grade silverware and things of that type, nothing fancy. And we had some good-size coffee mugs, some fairly heavy ones. We weren't any fashion statements out there.

V.J.: Anything particular you remember about being in the cabin, what it felt like, what it smelled like?

T.P.: No. I just enjoyed being with the whole crew, 'cause there were six of us. And they had some pretty good senses of humor and things, a lot of live conversation, and everybody was in pretty decent spirits, I think. We had a good solid hard-working crew.

Most of them had been with my grandfather, oh, 15, 20 years. And so he had a good crew that he could really trust, and they showed up, and they were hard working, and they seemed to get along well. It was a good crew.

V.J.: And their names?

T.P.: Well we had -- the others we had at that point, we would've had Theodore Seefus, and then we had -- I guess it was Artie, and John and Martin at the last year I dredged. So it was Theodore, Artie, Martin and John and my grandfather and I. And then some of the earlier years, we had a couple different crew, maybe 15, 20 years earlier, and I'd be going out with them when I was in the fifth or sixth grade. I know one year we were out was between Christmas and New Year's, and I was -- I guess I was 10 years old. We were dredging down at the mouth of the Choptank River, and one morning I woke up with a fever and found out I had Chicken Pox.

V.J.: Oh, no.

T.P.: So they rode me ashore in a skiff to some houses that were up on the shore down at Cook's Point so that I could call and have someone come down from Cambridge and pick me up. Well once we got there, it was snowing, we found out that the homes were summer homes and no one was there. So I guess one of the crewmen and I then walked up the road as far as we could until we found a general store where we could call and have somebody come down and pick me up. And so the rest of the crew went on back into dredging, and I went home.

V.J.: I had a question --

T.P.: At that point, we still had canvas sails on the boat. That was just at the point that people were starting to change over from canvas to dacron, so we were still using our heavy canvas sails that last winter. I could remember in the mornings when you maybe would get a light rain overnight and then it would freeze to ice, so you'd have to beat on the sails so you could actually get the sails up 'cause they'd be wet, and heavy, and frozen. And so that year was the year we started to measure the boat and went out and ordered some dacron sails to start using the following winter which would've been the Winter of 1970. The Winter of '69 was also the year the bay froze. We had started up in Love Point as always. And then one Saturday probably in -- probably early -- well I guess it was early January, we heard that there was going to be quite a change in the weather, and it was going down to something like five or six degrees on Saturday night. So we went up to Love Point Saturday morning and moved the Rosie Parks from there down to Chesapeake Beach.

And over that weekend, on Saturday night and Sunday, the entire bay froze up from the Bay Bridge north. So the rest of the Skipjacks that were at Love Point were all frozen in. So we were the only Skipjack that was out working the bay the following week because we had listened to the weather and gone back and moved the boat on Saturday while the rest of the guys had all gone home and came back Sunday night, found their boats frozen in and they were stuck. So they had to break out through the ice later the following week and get down to us. They had quite some experiences trying to get down 'cause the ice was quite heavy at that point. It had frozen solid, it was probably six or eight inches thick up around Love Point by then. It was a quite cold winter that year. We eventually had to go as far as Solomon's to get away from the ice, and worked out of there for a while until the ice melted enough that we could move back up the bay and dredge closer to home.

V.J.: **Do** you remember a wood stove on your grandfather's boat?

T.P.: No. We didn't have any wood stoves at all. Some of the other boats did. But we had already gone to kerosene. I'm sure some of his earlier boats obviously, earlier in the century, would've had wood stoves. But by the time the Rosie was built, it was 1955, and he had already gone to kerosene. It was easier to handle and everything, and probably less of a hazard, and so it worked quite well. But some of the other boats at that point still had wood stoves, some of the older boats. And they had forepeaks as well because that's how they used to be built. But the newer Skipjacks weren't built with a forepeak, they were just set up with the aft area for the crews.

V.J.: So you would keep the oysters on deck? You didn't put them in a hold while you -

T.P.: No, the oysters were just kept on deck 'cause you had to sell them everyday. There was no reason to put them down in the hold. You would dredge all day until you estimated you had your 150 bushels, and then you would push on in and sell them. And I think the state -- well the marine police used to watch what you were dredging to make sure you did not bring in more than the limit. There was an allowance, I don't know if it was 5 or 10 percent overage that they would allow you in case you mis-estimated how many you had on deck. Otherwise, they could give you a ticket and force you to go back out in the bay and shovel them overboard. They also checked typically every day, they would randomly sample a bushel of your oysters as you shoveled them into the tub to sell them to make sure there were no small ones mixed in. You were allowed 5 percent of the oysters could be under three inches. So they had a measuring tub and then a smaller container that if they could find enough oysters to fill that small container, then they would give you a ticket and also forced you to take your oysters out and shovel them overboard,

V.J.: Did you ever have to do that?

T.P.: No, we never had to go out and shovel them over. In fact, I don't think we got a ticket for small ones. Occasionally my grandfather would get tickets in other years for dredging in areas that he shouldn't be dredging. 'Cause the bay is set up where you have dredging ground, tonging ground and things of that type. So if he got across a line into a tonging area occasionally, he would sometimes get a ticket.

V.J.: Anything else you can think of about life on board these boats?

T.P.: No, it was rough. I remember that winter I dredged, I think I started out and my waist size was something like 36. And by the end of dredging season, it had gone from 36 to 32, but I had gained 10 pounds at the same time. From working out there, you always figured you wouldn't have to go out and join a gym to get into shape at all or to -- the work was hard enough 'cause you spent all day bent over just pulling dredges, and picking the oysters out, and shoveling the rocks and the shells over, and pushing the dredges back in and handling the sails when the wind came up. You had plenty to do, and it was active.

V.J.: What did you wear?

T.P.: Well typically you would wear a pair of rubber boots, not any real large ones. I had some -- mine were maybe a foot and a half tall. You wanted something you could get off quickly if you fell overboard. And you'd wear a regular set of oilskins, the rubber pants and the rubber jacket. And then I would wear typically two pairs of gloves. I'd put a pair of white cotton gloves on, and then I'd put the rubber-lined gloves over the top to keep your hands warm. And then you have to watch it 'cause occasionally your rubber gloves, once you'd been picking a lot of oysters, you would start to get cuts and nicks in the gloves, and the water would start to get in and your hands would get cold. So you'd have to change gloves once every -- maybe every couple of weeks. The worst thing was

probably the rainy days on the bay 'cause then the water would run off your oilskins and run down the sleeve and run into your gloves. So about after a couple hours, your gloves are full of water too, and your hands are cold.

V.J.: Did you wear long underwear?

T.P.: Sometimes. Depending on the temperature you might. Yeah. It was interesting work. I was probably the only person on the bay that winter who had a college degree. (Laughter.) But I enjoyed it. It was good to work with my grandfather. At that point, he was about 70 -- about 73, 72, 73 years old. And, of course, he'd been dredging since he was 12, so he really knew the bay. Like -- well we could go anywhere in the bay, and he could tell you when he put the dredge down before it went down what the bottom would be, whether it would be mud, or sand, or rock. And he did it all pretty much by just looking at the shoreline and lining up some landmarks that he had in his head. At that point, we weren't into a lot of electronic equipment like the boats use today, the Loran, the GP S. So he pretty well had the bay memorized from having worked out there. He worked out in the bay 66 years. He retired at 78 when his health started to bother him. And that's the point at which the museum picked up the Rosie Parks.

V.J.: Was your father a waterman?

T.P.: He started doing some work on the water, dredging as well. And then he switched over and got a position with the Maryland Marine Police, the Department of Natural Resources. And so he was stationed in Solomon's Island. He was a police boat captain with the marine police for a number of years. And then he came out of that and went into the oyster propagation department where he was a field superintendent working for the State of Maryland. So he was responsible for going into Virginia at the end of the oyster season. He would buy back all the shells from the oyster packing houses, have them loaded on barges and hauled back into the State of Maryland to re-seed the beds. And so he was responsible for the seed -- for the shell replanting in the bay. And then he would also go out on some of the boats checking water quality or the leased beds as well and things of that type. We always thought it was good.

We thought he was replanting the oyster shells so we could go out and catch the oysters the following year. But he enjoyed it. So he worked on the water, yes, as well. And then he also had a charter fishing boat out of Solomon's that on the weekends and during the summer weekends, he would take fishing parties, which my grandfather did as well out of Cambridge. In his early years, he used a crab pot. Then he went into trot lining for crabs during the summer, and he would take occasional fishing parties. And then some nights in the summer, he would also take sailing parties on the Rosie Parks for church groups out of Cambridge, choirs and Sunday school classes and things of that type. They would pack dinners and go out on the Choptank and sail.

V.J.: Sounds nice.

T.P.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

V.J.: Thank you very much.

T.P.: Sure. Glad you could come by.

V. J.: Very helpful.

**(END OF INTERVIEW.)**