

Interview Log

Interviewee: Capt. Rodney W. Dize

Tape #: n/a

Interviewer: Frances Dize

of Tapes: 1

Date: 1979

of Sides: 1

Location: Smith Island, Maryland

Topic: Pungies & Schooners

Corresponding Photography Log #:

Comments: See fieldnotes (). Interviewer is listed on tape as Frances Dize. . Unidentified speaker listed as "Speaker".

Phonetic Spellings: Caleb W. Evans,

* Copy of original tape made by Francis Dize

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Phonetic Spellings: Caleb W. Evans,

BEGIN SIDE A

R.D.: He done pretty much on the water the same as my dad did other than this --

SPEAKER: Go back, go back.

F.D.: This is Caleb W. Evans?

R.D.: Oh, yeah. You'd have to get that -- or his age, you'd have to get that from Mable or his two (inaudible), but he sailed pretty -- he was a little older than my dad, but he was right -- older than my dad, but he sailed pretty much, my dad did, the same time he did on the Chesapeake Bay. The last boat he ever owned or named was the G. W. Glenn, G-L-E-N-N. I don't know what the initials were for. And she was, she was known as a square sail, round stem, Chesapeake Bay Bugeye. Now there's different types of Bugeyes, you know, along with the others. In his early days, his early days, he sailed schooners known as tungy, T-U-N-G-Y. But the learned people have changed that name to puggy, P-U-G-G-Y, if you've ever bumped into it.

F.D.: No, I --

R.D.: That's not necessarily right. The Puggy is not necessarily right because this tungy was original, T-U-N-G-Y. A schooner was a boat with what is known as a square or gaff rig sails on the mast, plus jibs, with (indiscernible). And the schooner had what was known as a waist around sides, started in the back went all the way back to to what is known as the taftway across the stern. Now a tungy is the same type rig almost, mast like with sails. But all -- let me finish the schooner. The schooner also has a centerboard for going against the wind. That's what that's for, and maneuverability, general maneuverability.

F.D.: Raises and lowers.

R.D.: All right. The Tunny does not have a centerboard. It's a keel job. And it's --the

schooner's draft is not always the same. When the centerboard is up, she draws according to what her hull says. But when the centerboard is down, she draws according to her hull plus the centerboard. See in other words, the centerboard goes down below the bottom. And also, the Tungy does not have a rail, a waist around it. It has to have a log and a -- like the Chesapeake Bay Bugeye or these skipjacks, like that. And, us locals could tell the difference whether it was a schooner or a tungy just as far as we could see it by its rig, the way it was rigged. In other words, a schooner's rig was run up perfectly -- always. But the tungy's rig, get what I mean, they called it rake.

F.D.: Rake?

R.D.: R-A-K-E. You know, the angle. In other words, they meant the angle of the mast from the keel up.

F.D.: Right.

R.D.: Let's see. The largest one of the -- see now you need some names. I'm trying to think, got to remember. I may have a long -- but anyhow, this Caleb Evans, he sailed in the Tungys as well as the schooners. There was always a kind of (inaudible). And always, don't matter where you were dredging, you see it was all sail in them days, you had to do it by power. Now they did have oars sometimes when you get real -- sometimes they'd try to get right into a harbor, some kind of a harbor somewhere for the anchor. Now that was generally the (indiscernible) whatever location --

F.D.: Is this when you were freighting too?

R.D.: Oh, no.

F.D.: You freighted at night.

R.D.: That's a different story all together. Whenever the weather was -- we sailed at night if we could. But the dredging was entirely different. Generally they caught the -- what they caught that day they put it out to what they called custom or -- to buy the oysters, whatever the boat was called. Now then the race was always on no matter where they were, from there to the harbor or the harbor out, you always race -- that's right, they petted on. And nothing was too strong because weather didn't (indiscernible) -- they could manage anything. Now they had respect for it. Don't get me wrong. They had respect for it. They knew what it could do if it wanted. They never bothered about the weather. Go out and look.

That was the system. Regardless -- there weren't no weather reports in them days nohow 'cause we never had no communications. Possibly see a paper once in a while, whatever that said on it -- don't see a paper for weeks. And that's (inaudible). Down the ship channel when you bought your groceries, you happened to be to Solomon's Island, which was a big place. You know, I've seen masts in there just like a -- that many boats. I mean the size I'm talking about. And not to mention this (inaudible). And this one place, they furnished every one of them boats with supplies. Name of Cook Webster was his name. Right there where, what's his name, you've been --

F.D.: Solomon's.

R.D.: That was the kind of -- general store. Hipple his last name is, Gordon Hipple. He married the daughter of the fellow originated the hotel. Used to be a hotel right down next to the ship channel like store. Well they furnished that too, but it was always high (inaudible). It was a whole family of them Websters, and starting in Baltimore, and he wound up there. That weren't all, the business wasn't all there. He had businesses in Baltimore and everywhere. He was a multi-millionaire when he died. Well anyhow, that

was -- Hipple wasn't the name of the hotel. Recker was the man's name originally come down, this man's out on board of one of these dredge boats out of Baltimore, and he worked hard and saved every penny he got a hold of 'til finally he went ashore and finally started this hotel. And well he made it pay evidently 'cause he was worth a piece too when he died. Not quite as much as Cook Webster is, but they're right side by side almost right there. There was a (indiscernible) right between 'em was all it was. In fact, when he's got that store right there was where -- used to be. That's been filled in and raised up.

F.D.: Let's get back to Caleb Evans.

R.D.: Oh, Caleb Evans. Yeah, all right. In his Tungy days, that was the day most the -- was on, well he also had schooner days the -- was on too. The racing -- his Tungy was named James A. Whitey. If I've got the right one, he named two or three, but I think this was the one that the fugue was -- James A. Whitey.

Now in the same day, my dad dredged these boats too, schooners and -- well even the smaller boats too, real small. The Tungy my dad talks about the most, he was in others, he went in others, in fact that's what he started out with, his dad, his dad owned a Tungy. Used to hear him say she drew seven feet of water stark light setting still with nothing -- 'cause she's a keel boat. You see, she had to have a -- all in one. That was her maneuverable, maneuvering facilities rather, for that type sailboat was the keel. Well it still today in the yachts -- the keel. Between (indiscernible) -- which is the best, the centerboard or the keel -- that's just to give you an idea. Now then this -- I didn't want to make too much of a thing out of that, but this is part of a story.

Some boats will sail better without cargo than they will with it. Some will sail better with the cargo than they will without it. And -- oh yeah, John Thomas Marshall, you've got to get him into this, but he was dad's first class -- that's Earl's great grandfather -- his grandfather.

SPEAKER: His great.

R.D.: Not his great, his grandfather. His name was John Thomas Marshall. Now he sails Tungys too and schooners. The last one he sailed was Caleb Evans -- the Thomas B. Shaw her name was, I remember well. But I don't remember his Tungy. She was lost after he got out of -- right there (inaudible). They took the white fellow out -- put this colored fellow, and he lost it right there in the Patuxent River. Well anyhow, his Tungy's boat was named Stansbury. The name of the one my father talked about most was Moore and Brady, I think -- he always referred to it as Moore and Brady. But I don't -- it must've been a combination name, like one was -- part of her name was named for Moore, and part of her name was Brady, was the reason the 'and' got in there, is what I'm thinking. I'm not sure of that, but I think that's the right of it. I'm almost sure that's right.

Now none of this was ever told to me. I heard, I just picked this up, you know, as I went along. But like I said, you know, children are supposed to be seen and not heard. No disrespect to it on my part, but I just did happen to be one of them, and we listened, we really listened, especially if a story like that come up, you know, about these racing stories. They used every trick in the book. (Indiscernible). No blood-shed feud, let's say, or a family feud, put it that way.

Now then, let's see. If I remember right, the boat Caleb Evans sailed to the Indies they

called it them days, her name was Virginia. Schooner boat this was. Now there's different types of Schooners, and that don't necessarily have to -- now the what he called, to us local fellows and old salt called the main top schooner, and they usually referred to them as a fore and aft schooner. That was a -- that meant a schooner with a topless on a main mast, a topless on a fore mast too. She was known as either a two-topless schooner or a fore and aft schooner. Now generally speaking, on 90 percent of the boats, this after topless, or the one that was on the main mast was taller, just a little taller than the one that was on the fore mast. The difference in the Bugeye. The Bugeye, the fore mast was always the tallest, the main was always the shortest. But in the right, generally the right position, like I should've mentioned the different one in the schooner.

Her name was the Virginia. Now he said -- he owned most every boat he ever sailed in 'cause he come from a family that had a buck or two, if you know what I mean. And he -- generally speaking too, his whole family did here. Finally come to his -- by the time he give way. Well anyhow, that was one of'em. Now then he owned another schooner. Matter of fact, I bumped into him one time coming out of Baltimore, and she rigged the -- first time I'd ever seen her since I was a little tiny kid. Just so happened I went close enough with the glasses I could read her name and I remembered it. Oh, she was something. The name was the Dernetta Ann.

F.D.: D-E-R-N-E-T-T-Y?

R.D.: No, I'd say N-E-T-T-A, if I remember right.

F.D.: Demetty.

R.D.: That's wrong. I-E.

F.D.: I-E.

R.D.: Her name, Dernettie Ann was her name. I seen it in on the boat coming out of Baltimore, right there off of Harris Point. Well, for no reason at all, I think -- the name. It brought back memories. Oh, brother -- my dad say so racing the other guy. You had to be careful if you didn't watch out, he'd beat you out of sight out there. She would sail.

F.D.: When they did this freighting to the West Indies, what did they mostly freight, fruit?

R.D.: I can't give you a good picture on that because the cargo was --if it was discussed, it was discussed in a way I couldn't get a hold of it. But generally speaking, fruit was the cargo. Bananas, generally speaking, pineapple, pineapples. But I think bananas got in there. And they sailed these schooners all the way to the Indies islands, whichever one they went to, probably Bahamas. I don't know if it was or not. They may have went all the way down to Cuba and -- I can't think of the name now -- anyhow, that's what they did. Now I don't know how long this went on. Possibly a very short time because of the nature of the thing. I guess you've heard of Hatteras history. They have to pass it there, and that's a graveyard for a lot of boaters. And that's necessary for them to pass the Hatteras in order to get to the Indies.

F.D.: How long would a trip like that take?

R.D.: Oh, generally weeks or something. I'd say, I'd say, putting it mild, a short trip would be the neighborhood of three, three to four weeks. There never was nothing said about cargo to the islands. May have been so, I don't know. Might have been on his own -- at that, you know -- traded.

F.D.: You'd have to have some money to start with to get involved in that 'cause you'd have to buy your cargo --

R.D.: Would require a full crew too. I know it was a full crew. Crews didn't pay much in them days. Matter of fact, in my dad's day, \$12 was considered a big price for a month for a man's wages. Matter of fact, the first mate, when it got raised up to \$15 a month was considered a real high-paying man, if you know what I mean. And you know what he was supposed to be? He was supposed to be as good a skipper as the skipper himself. In other words, in this dredging season, the captain never got out of his bunk until he got out there to do the oyster or dredge -- whatever you want to call it. That was supposed to be that hard.

F.D.: How would you feel about setting out to go to the West Indies for the first time?

R.D.: Maybe if I was young, 18, 20, 25, I wouldn't think nothing of it. But --

F.D.: Would you know the way?

R.D.: But knowing -- oh, I wouldn't be afraid. I could find the way. Not generally speaking, I don't know the way. But it wouldn't be no trouble to -- not with the facilities you've got today.

F.D.: No, I'm not talking about the facilities you've got today.

R.D.: I know. I know what you mean. Oh, yeah. I would've had a general idea of the coastline, you know.

SPEAKER: You and Dan, you and Dan together.

R.D.: Dan and I, as to the courses, I would probably had to figure them out as I went along, I mean to the best of my knowledge. There's a thing you have to -- on your way from here to the Indies to the pure line level like a lot of us are, compared to the people that -- that day what I'm thinking about. You have the gulf stream to buck. You must buck that the whole way from here to there.

F.D.: The wind's pushing you one way and the gulf stream's pushing you back the other.

R.D.: I used to have a -- on that. I don't know (inaudible). Starts out like this, as a river. Like a river within a river is what he's trying to get around to. But that's how he starts out. There is a river. Well anyhow, you're getting that part of it. Now then, this Caleb Evans, he dredged and traded pretty much the same as my dad did. Yeah, that's right, he did. The better -- gentleman, let's put it that way -- some names. Ordinarily put this here, well in them days it was railroad ties a lot of the freight was carried for the railroad. The railroad ties -- oh, it's generally oak about eight feet long approximately. And, oh, they run anywhere from 10 to 12 inches in width, but the only two flat sides were was the top and the bottom, the sides were the way the (indiscernible). They were made up that way. But they were squared up, the ends and the top and the bottom were. There were two sides of 'em were square that way.

F.D.: Who around here got the first idea to go freighting?

R.D.: Huh?

F.D.: Who got the idea first to go freighting?

R.D.: Oh, brother.

F.D.: From here.

(Laughter).

R.D.: Generally speaking, mind you. (Laughter).

F.D.: Now that took some courage.

R.D.: Huh?

F.D.: You've got to admit, that took some courage.

R.D.: All right, all right now. Well when they first started out doing this freighting thing, they had to have their own crew. And the story was this. You found somebody that had

something that he wanted to freight, which was generally a saw mill, you know, somebody that had a saw mill somewhere. And if it wasn't big enough for you to have more than one load, it wasn't much -- hardly worth your time unless you were in an idle season, you know what I mean. All right. What did they do? They went down and bargained with this man for to haul his freight, whatever, wood or whichever it was.

In them days, wood was a fuel, a real fuel. And it was cut in ways that it could be corded up and measured. And I don't know if you are familiar with the old size of the cord or not. But the cord of wood is 4 foot 4 inches long, the log was supposed to be, but 8 feet long your tier would be, 4 feet high. That was considered a cord of wood in them days. Your table would give you some of the cubic inches, and I forget what it is. Some places are 28 mixed in there somehow in this table. But now then, he had to go there with his crew, get them to almost down to the water's edge. And sometimes it wasn't a dock to land to. Most of the time it wasn't originally, you anchored the boat off. Sometimes it was loaded on a scowl, if you had one, or whatever you had to load it on or could get to load it on. Row that out to the boat -- or stow it up on the boat like you needed -- and then -- the destination supposed to be for this cargo, whatever, whatever he said and whatever he was supposed to pay you. It was a small -- thing.

Now then, now then let me get this in there, the dredge thing. That was, like you say, a hazardous thing to start with. And no possibility of much gain in sight other than what you could beat out of your boat -- whatever you could do in that sense, you possibly made a buck or two. And the necessity was feed the family, feed the family was the necessity part of it, of course. All right. Now then that got up after awhile 'til well it was -- but after awhile they got a little better facility for to do this thing, like better scowl -- stuff outside the boat. And eventually somebody got a -- you know, while they're loading, you know. And you start flat, you build up to whatever, whatever.

Now then, in my dad's day and my day, like I said, wasn't no way for him, even though he was good at it, the water business -- they call it (indiscernible), like earning his living. But there just was no money to be made. Matter of fact, I heard my dad talk about it many a times (indiscernible) for to feed 10 head of people. In other words --

(END OF RECORDING - mid-way through side A.)