

Interview Log

Interviewee: Jim Richardson (JR)
Interviewer: Lila Line (LL)
Speaker: presumed to be JR's wife
Speaker2: another speaker, unidentified

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of Tapes: 1
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Topic:

Theme:

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BEGIN SIDE A

LL: Holiday has a show in Easton, if you know who he was.

SPEAKER: Well, the old-timers took their time and (inaudible).

JR: Well, these didn't ... they have a shop in St. Mary's.

LL: Oh, St. Mary's.

JR: Yeah.

LL: Yeah.

JR: I ... because St. Mary's had a (indiscernible) ...

LL: See, I'm in love with him.

JR: They told me that they had a bunch of plans of windmills down there. Well, they did, but they were going to let me see some of the photographs. And when they brought out an album of a windmill, a whole album of windmills, all in this very neighborhood taken by Rob Thompson (phonetic), who lived next door to us. And I said to the gentleman who was curator of the albums, I don't know what he does, but anyhow, I said to him "This is some of Mr. Rod Thompson's work, I knew him well" He reached over and he took the album that I was looking at, brought it to him and closed it up, took it, went into another room and never came back.

LL: Really?

SPEAKER: That's when they wouldn't show you the plans for that windmill down here.

JR: Wouldn't show me anything.

SPEAKER: Remember that? You wanted to rebuild a windmill

JR: I wanted to make another one in the place of the one that blew down in 19 ...

SPEAKER: Yeah. I thought they showed you, I thought they showed you the pictures of it, but they wouldn't ...

JR: I saw this many photographs. I guess I went through that thing for a dozen or so pages before I got smart. If I would've just kept my mouth shut.

LL: Yeah. Haven't you heard ... live and learn, live and learn.

JR: Yeah.

SPEAKER: Talk too much, huh?

JR: But you wouldn't think that that would get the man, would you?

LL: You never know.

SPEAKER: That wasn't nice. You know that he wanted to see the plans, and they wouldn't show it to him. But I thought they didn't object to you seeing the pictures. When was that? That was a long time.

JR: When we were building that thing. I don't know, 15

LL: Now I don't want you to stop your work because I remember your saying people come down here and they stop your work and you won't get the boat done because they stop your work. So while we're here, why don't you ... I'd like you to work. And we can take pictures while you're working.

JR: I've got to go underneath of it. That will be a difficult place to take any pictures.

LL: I'll go underneath with you (laughter).

(Off record.)

JR: ...15 years. Don Moore (phonetic), the country doctor, said it's the last ... better call her son in that we've been (inaudible). Well, called Wes in. He came in, he took a look at his mother and (indiscernible). He went out and got garden tools and put him out to (indiscernible). ... in the meantime and found out ... I don't know, but anyhow...figured out where he had been, and she followed him. They left. Now if you think you're going to put me in that ... you've got another thing coming to you.

(Laughter).

JR: ...you know (inaudible).

SPEAKER: It's not the will to (inaudible), but it's the will to show them.

(Laughter).

LL: And the weeds grew up again, and he had to go clean it up all over again, all that work.

JR: He was...because he was her oldest child and the only son. But, I don't know, there's a lot of things that went on ... many times she would like to have seen him when he wasn't here.

LL: Yeah. Was that your mother's sister, did you say?

JR: My mother's oldest sister.

LL: Your mother's oldest sister.

JR: There were seven of them.

LL: Good heavens.

JR: All milliners.

LL: Seven sisters, and they were all milliners?

JR: Yeah.

LL: Where did they live?

JR: Wherever, on (indiscernible) or something to make hats.

LL: Oh, that's interesting.

JR: That's how come they married all over.

LL: Yeah.

JR: One of them in Highland County, Virginia. She was the last one to go. It was never all ... everywhere. One could make a hat out of that grapevine.

LL: No kidding.

JR: Yeah. Well in those days, you know, they sent the girls out. Right down (indiscernible), there's a place ... in Corsan's store (phonetic), they called it an apartment, but anyhow, there's a place up there, and those girls came down from Baltimore and ... many hats all of this county. And they came along with barrels of ... all the material was shipped in barrels. Straw and (inaudible). Mother was an excellent seamstress, and of course they picked that up, you know. And she could put anything on a sewing machine and sew it.

LL: Just like that.

JR: Yeah. Take a bunch of goose eggs and sew it all together.

(Laughter).

LL: Where were you working when ... you've done such a lot since I was here. It seems like you really ...

JR: I'm pulling up these seams. And what I'm trying to do, I'm going to put them inside and out, what I'm trying to do is get tight enough so that might float it.

LL: That's a good idea,

JR: You see, I can't sink the engine.

LL: Yeah, you don't want to --

JR: ...take three months, at least, to (indiscernible).

LL: Oh, boy. It's been five years. Why don't you go ahead and work and, you don't mind if we talk to you when we work ...

JR: Well ...

LL: Do you?

JR: Well, we've got a comfortable place. Shall I bring it around?

LL: No. I'll bring it around. You sit down and do some work, and ...

JR: I've already got one thing to do ...

LL: Okay. You get with it, and you know, and I can put this right down here by your feet and see if I'm going to catch what you say.

JR: Get that stool.

LL: Okay.

JR: The rocker's right there.

LL: If my brother wants the rocker, he can get the rocker. I hear some people, some art people came down last week, and the man who's teaching it, from West Virginia, told me that he really wants to do your portrait.

JR: (Laughter).

LL: Everybody wants to do your portrait. I said ... well, he's got such an interesting face.

JR: Crazy people. They're getting crazier all the time, aren't they?

LL: They are, they are. I don't know why. You're not that good looking.

JR: That's right.

LL: You know, I mean you've got pretty teeth, so what can ... you know.

JR: Something worthwhile. I've got the ... you know, Marilyn that you ...

LL: Marilyn, yeah.

JR: Marilyn's working in Easton at the moment. She loaned me the Watermen.

LL: Just The Watermen, The Watermen, the book by Michener?

JR: No, no.

LL: Which one? The pictures?

SPEAKER: The picture book.

JR: No, no, not in the picture book.

LL: What was it?

JR: It has to do with all those silver dollar people that ... graduates.

LL: Oh, okay. It was Watermen by Randy Peffer.

JR: I don't know. He's a Pennsylvanian.

LL: Pennsylvania or New York?

JR: I thought he said he was going back home to Pennsylvania.

LL: Okay. And did he talk about Bart Murphy and ...

J.R: Yeah, yeah.

LL: Okay. That was Randy Peffer. And he wrote Watermen. It's a book, Watermen, about Bart Murphy going up to Baltimore and ...

JR: Isn't that what I said, the Watermen?

LL: You said The Watermen. It's just Watermen.

JR: Forgive me.

LL: You're forgiven.

JR: I thought that was ... that must've been a waste of time on ... part.

LL: Yeah. Well, it didn't sell good, and it didn't get good reception down at Tilghman at all.

JR: ... was just so coarse.

LL: Yeah, yeah. It really was. It didn't get much interest.

JR: I could see it.

LL: Yeah. And Marilyn loaned it to you. Did she like it?

JR: She said I would not.

LL: You read it, parts of it.

JR: I read it pretty well because I guess I've read everything like that pretty well through except Michener's book.

LL: Yeah.

JR: I ... the last chapter. Never have finished it, and don't know whether I ever will or not.

LL: And you did the same thing, didn't you?

SPEAKER: Same thing.

JR: But if you're going to take eastern shore men to Washington, mix them up in Watergate, you've got something very uninteresting. That just couldn't be.

LL: I met Michener last Saturday, last week. He was down here a few times, wasn't he?

JR: Oh, yeah.

LL: He did ... you were his boat builder in Chesapeake.

JR: (Laughter). I don't know about that.

LL: Yeah, I think so.

JR: But I took he and Mrs. Michener through the marshes.

LL: Oh, did you?

JR: Yeah. Well, I say I did. Mother and I. She ...

LL: Oh, she's lovely. She is just so nice.

(Off record.)

LL: This is picking up real good.

JR: Mr. ... What kind of Holt is he? Ryan Holt? The artist over there at the Royal Oak?

LL: I don't know. I don't know a Holt over there.

JR: Well, I'll have to look again. They had all of those women down here the other day.

LL: Oh, yeah. Bill Bill

JR: I came here, and they were all supposed to be going home. Here was two cars. Hey, what's a matter with you girls? Keys are locked up in their trunk.

LL: Oh, in their trunk.

JR: Well, okay. And they had already found the number of the keys and everything, because they had registration in the car, and they were going into town to have keys made, which they did. Got off late. Well, the next ... oh, one of them left a bunch of her stuff. So the next day, two ...

(Off record.)

JR: ... locked her keys up in the trunk.

LL: Again?

JR: Not the same woman, but they were well-aware of what had happened the day before, and still ...

LL: Why would anybody put keys in their trunk to begin with? Why would anybody take their keys out of their ignition when they come down here? I guess to get their materials.

JR: They take the keys out of the ignition because the trunk keys and the ignition keys are both on the same ring.

LL: Okay.

JR: They go around there, and they take out all of this stuff. All this stuff. Well, of course, they're going to put it all back. So they do, and then they drop them in.

LL: Can they put the keys in the trunk?

JR: ... leave the keys laying there. When they get everything in, they shut the lid.

LL: But you know what I heard about you? I heard they came down here, and ... well, you can do it. I mean you take such better pictures than I take. I heard they came down here, and ... I want the whole roll (off discussion). What it is, I heard they came down here, and Bill said that you put your arms around two of the women, and he knew right off that he wasn't going to get those women away from here. (Laughter).

JR: I think some of them I have known, but one of the women that was ... I knew her husband's grandparents. So you know what I mean, if you're here and you don't know three or four generations ...

LL: Yeah, that's true.

JR: Well, I knew Old Man Bill Willey (phonetic), and his Molly, when I was a real young man. I even can see their horse right now.

LL: I knew somebody who knew somebody ... so you've been working on this for five years. You started it five years ago. You haven't been working on it for five years. You stopped to do the Dove.

SPEAKER: (Inaudible).

LL: Seven years.

JR: Seven years ago that I chopped this (inaudible).

LL: Really. They tell you you chopped it seven years ago.

JR: I haven't really kept that kind of ... and it didn't seem to be anything urgent until the Dove. When I got on the Dove and began to use up all my inventory and everything that I had saved up for this over the years, and I saw that I was ... two years on the Dove, and just a little ... and then I began to be alarmed. So, of course, I'm not taking out any more years and half years and all that stuff. But when I first started, it seemed like ... I purpose, in my mind that I was going to get ... I didn't have to do it long. I just wanted a boat of my own, and wanted to build one without everybody saying ... do it that way. I never did (inaudible).

LL: Is this the first boat that you built for yourself, the first big boat?

JR: This is one of the largest boats that I ... that's pretty good size. I built three large ones and this one ... you're not talking about (inaudible) because I didn't build them. I had ... people that would call (inaudible) built some nice boats. Still alive and still (inaudible).

LL: You're building this mostly by yourself.

JR: Yes. I'm going to Catherine's graduation, and I ...

LL: Oh, are you?

JR: Yes. I'm going to Maine, and I think we're leaving the 26th or the ... I don't know what.

LL: Of May.

JR: Uh-huh (affirmative).

LL: Oh. I'm going to Maine in July. You can wait up there for me. Are you driving up or flying?

JR: Well, no, I'm going with my parents.

LL: Oh, that's nice.

JR: My parents have a vacant seat in their car, called me up and told me that I might go with them.

LL: Catherine helped you on the bugeye for a while.

JR: Yeah.

LL: About how long?

JR: Fall semester.

LL: A whole semester. And she got credit, I heard.

JR: Yes, she did.

LL: (Indiscernible) helped Jim on his bugeye for, what, a whole semester, and she got credit.

SPEAKER: (Inaudible).

JR: She was in the area, but she didn't work on the Dove. She was over at Horn's Point working a project over there.

(Inaudible discussion.)

LL: ... and Jim's going to her graduation from college.

SPEAKER: That would be tremendous. If (inaudible) would be made aware of the fact that this is available to you ...

LL: I've got one ...

JR: It makes you kind of weak in the skull, but since Salisbury, you know, the measurement of it.

LL: What do you mean, since Salisbury? I don't know what that means.

JR: Well, Salisbury, they gave me the honorary degree.

LL: Oh, I didn't know that. Gosh, you're smart. You got an honorary degree from Salisbury State College.

JR: Sure.

LL: Of course.

JR: Yeah.

LL: You never told me you got it.

JR: I didn't know that you had any interest. It never crossed my mind or whatever.

LL: Well, sure.

JR: Yeah. I think a lot of (indiscernible) ...

LL: Oh, you have a degree. I don't have one.

JR: You do not?

LL: No, I do not.

JR: Well, look at me and see if there's any difference.

SPEAKER: He looks a little smarter than us ...Lila.

LL: You think he looks ... where does he look smarter?

SPEAKER: He looks a little smarter.

LL: Where? Oh, that little place on the back of his neck, it looks a little smarter.

JR: Well, it's not a recent thing I've had to discuss. You know what I liked about it most?

LL: What?

JR: I was the only one in Dorchester (indiscernible).

LL: That's most.

JR: And I think that they ... not too sure what I'm talking about. But I think, I'm telling ... (indiscernible).

LL: I think that's neat.

SPEAKER: That's tremendous.

JR: I like that better than the idea of having it because it's up there in the upstairs there in one of the drawers face down so that the glass won't get broken.

LL: Very funny.

JR: Well, I've also got a little ... I don't know what that was for either, it was kind of ... easier to tote.

LL: That's Virginia.

JR: That's Virginia?

LL: Yeah, they say tote in Virginia too. Would you believe that this was taken seven years ago? And you cut the logs yourself.

JR: Well, I bought the keel, bought the keel, it weighed 5 tons. But from then on, I was on my own.

LL: You bought the keel boards.

JR: No, I bought the piece of timber that made up the keel. That piece there, square it up 18 inches in its middle, and I wasn't equipped to move in September that, the ... nor did I know where to go find the (indiscernible), and I asked my friend, Mr. Davidson (phonetic), who ran the hardwood sawmill ... to save me a piece. He called and told me come on up, he had some he'd ... that I could select, I could take what I wanted, he'd saw the rest of them up. Have five ... otherwise, I'd have had a hard time finding a piece of timber that was square 18 inches in its middle ...45 feet long.

LL: It just amazes me that this big boat sits up here on these little pieces of wood.

SPEAKER: It's a good thing ... with us under it.

LL: Most of the time (laughter). I mean I don't know what you do first, you put the boat here or the wood here. I don't ... but I don't need to know that.

JR: Well, you've seen Birth of a Bugeye. You've seen the film Birth of a Bugeye.

LL: The one that was on TV?

JR: Yeah.

LL: Yeah.

JR: Well that showed that to be ... come over with that piece of wood first, and set it on these blocks, then you put the ends to it, and you begin filling its middle. And it shows that in that film.

LL: Well, I saw it, but I didn't remember everything. It was a while ago, and excuse, you know, I didn't get close enough, and I was listening to your voice. Different. All told, how many people have helped with the boat, the bugeye, offhand?

JR: A right many.

LL: Right many? And right now, you're doing it ... right now what?

JR: Right now ... the most help of all ... close friends, lifetime friends (indiscernible) and Harold Roy (phonetic). Harold Roy just completed the (indiscernible) for her. It's a beauty.

LL: Really?

JR: Yeah. (Indiscernible) was down for ... he made that, all the (indiscernible) ... we've been friends for 50 years.

LL: That's a long time.

JR: That's right. Harold came to us as a grammar school dropout.

LL: You're kidding.

JR: And he was tremendously successful.

LL: What do you mean he came to you as a high school dropout?

JR: I didn't say high school.

LL: You said grammar school.

JR: Yes. He had a speech impediment, and the kids would laugh at him when he went to recite. So by and by, kids would ask him questions and he wouldn't answer. That whole school was waiting for his answer, and they'd all break up. And it got to be such a problem with ... he called (indiscernible) school. She just didn't know how to handle it. And I don't know whether anybody would have or not. He said nobody likes to be laughed at. Don't like it. Doesn't seem to be able to get on top of this speech impediment, and so his mother will carry on with his lessons ... you don't have to go to school, we'll make an exception because as soon as (indiscernible). So they all decided, his parents, everybody decided that if he wasn't going to school, he wasn't going to run loose in the neighborhood. He could go to work. He was barely 14. And he had his own (indiscernible) at that time.

LL: And he came here?

JR: No, not here. I was ... I ran a place in (indiscernible).

LL: I see.

JR: And he came to work with us.

SPEAKER: Lila, look how close that thing ...

LL: Oh, that's all right. It wouldn't make any difference at all.

JR: Yes, it would.

LL: No, it wouldn't.

SPEAKER: It comes of the (indiscernible).

LL: That's okay. I don't care.

JR: Do you know my son-in-law, Jim Baker?

LL: Do I know what?

JR: Do you know my son-in-law, Jim Baker, that's on the phone?

LL: No, no. I said hi to him, but I don't remember if I've met him. Is that James?

JR: That's James.

LL: Oh, yeah. Is he working with you ... with the telephone company? I thought it was one of the telephone companies.

JR: No, no. He ... wanted to talk.

LL: Because when I called today, he answered the phone.

(Off record.)

LL: ... and visit all the time, don't they?

JR: Uh-huh (affirmative).

LL: I really kind of hesitated to come down, but I didn't hesitate very hard.

JR: That's all right.

LL: Because I heard you've been having a lot of company.

JR: (Inaudible) nobody else does.

LL: And why should I be different?

JR: Yeah. And why not have friends ...

LL: That's all right. You know, I'm making a reservation, somebody told me recently, I don't know why, about ... that you wanted to go out on the bugeye alone and sail by yourself. I want a reservation. I'm telling you now, and I'm putting it on tape that I am putting in for a reservation. And I'll pay whatever it is, you know, whatever it costs at the time. I'll bring my own food, my blanket and my pillow.

JR: Is it going to be that spartan? It's (indiscernible).

LL: Yeah. Well, I didn't know that you were going to have blankets and pillows and things.

JR: I'm getting into it. I'm getting into the (indiscernible). See, before all I did was go out and get ... but I'm getting to the place now where refrigerators and ... galley gear and all of that is beginning to show its overhead.

LL: I didn't know it was going to be that fancy, like with refrigerators and clean linen.

JR: Uh-huh (affirmative).

LL: Things like that.

JR: How could I operate any other way?

LL: I don't know. You know, but I mean what's important, really, what's really important is you have a pillow, and a towel and, you know, and the stars.

JR: Well we get Paul Harvey soap. He doesn't like ... hear him going over that soap company is ... got it in their head now that they're going to put soft soap on the market. Well, Paul Harvey thought his wife had something new, but they've been using them ... in hospitals, I don't know how long ago ...

LL: That's true.

JR: When this mess hardens, after it's painted over, it'll turn the water.

LL: This will turn to water?

JR: Will turn the water.

LL: Oh, turn the water.

JR: Yeah.

LL: What do you mean, turn the water?

JR: Go through her. The water won't go through the seams with this stuff.

LL: Oh, I see, it'll turn away the water. You didn't say away, you said turn the water.

JR: That's right.

LL: So turn the water away, and the water won't go through the seams. That's good, I like it that way.

JR: And when it swells, it all comes poking out ... something soft (indiscernible).

LL: So now you're at the point of ... what do you call it when you're closing up the seams? You're not plugging them up. What are you doing?

JR: Pay up seams.

LL: Pay up seams?

JR ... why ...

LL: I don't know. And these are all wooden pegs in here, I see.

JR: Actually, not.

LL: They're not?

JR: They're plugs with a nail head.

LL: Oh, really? Okay. Well, what's next after paying her up?

JR: Soon as I get her jacked up and lined up for ... I'll put armature on, and that (indiscernible) towards the water. Maybe I'll get her on the fall. I hate to put her overboard in the wintertime, but better she would be in the water than up here jacked up. But there's so much to do.

LL: Is there? Well, you've got to ... sometimes you've got to gallivant. You're just going for, what, the weekend?

JR: I'm leaving to Maine ... till Sunday, and I'll be going to Mystic from Thursday until Sunday. Then I'm going to stay home.

LL: Well you've been staying home spells. You've been staying home a lot, except yesterday, didn't you go up down St. Michaels way yesterday to deliver a skipjack or something, somebody told me? This school that you're going to that she's graduating from, is that a boat building school?

JR: Have a name for them, but anyhow, is it liberal arts?

LL: Oh, okay.

JR: Is that what I was going to say?

LL: I don't know. Where did the boat building come in?

JR: They have a shop where they teach all this kind of thing.

LL: You want me to get up so you can move on? Is that Jane calling you?

JR: Who's calling?

(Off record.)

LL: You're doing all sorts of things today. Now you're doing something else. You already did ...

JR: This is the next, next phrase (phase?) of it.

LL: Next phrase (phase?) of it.

JR: Yeah.

LL: Okay.

JR: I had another word for ... you say now are we going off on this other phrase (phase?).

LL: I like that. I like that a lot. So this is the next phrase (phase?).

JR: Yeah.

LL: So you're doing something. You're putting some ...

JR: Well, this is copper paint.

LL: Copper paint. You do a little section at a time rather than do the whole ... you do one section, onto the next section, onto the next?

JR: Didn't I tell you? It's getting so flat down in the ... I'd have to lay on my back and I'm (indiscernible).

LL: Oh, you told me that.

JR: I just ... I can't do it. Acid? it would be folly if I'm going to jack it up as soon as I finish, so better I would jack it up and work more comfortably.

LL: How in the world do you get this thing jacked up?

JR: I was over in your area ... well, not really, I was in Royal Oak yesterday helping ... put it there.

LL: Okay.

JR: It looks better.

LL: Put it here. Just keep it here. I heard you were over my way yesterday.

JR: Yeah. I was over there helping Dan Stewart (phonetic). He has a 45-foot skipjack that's going to be right side up. She had never done it before, and they were going to make a ... of it, almost (indiscernible).

LL: How much does this weigh?

JR: It's been variously estimated between 35 and 45 ton.

LL: Thirty-five and 45 ton.

JR: Uh-huh (affirmative).

LL: So and you jack it up more. You jack it up with all these trucks?

JR: Jack it up until it'll run level after I do the bow. I figure the stern's got to go up at least two feet.

LL: I see. So is it trucks that come with jacks and things? You don't lift this up.

JR: No. I roll it under there.

LL: You roll it up.

JR: I roll it out how I want it. And then after that, why, jack the stem up and head her for the creek instead of running out across the road and all on skidways.

SPEAKER: Lila, he's going to have to (inaudible). I don't know if you get a bulldozer in here to do it or do it by hand. Cut the keel down so that it'll be flat the way ... slow and jack it up. But he has to build a way once (inaudible).

LL: What do you mean, build a way? Oh, build a way, a way to go. I don't understand ... okay, it's all right, you jack it up. But I don't understand who lifts this boat.

SPEAKER: He ... the way under it (inaudible).

LL: Okay, and what pulls it down to the water?

SPEAKER: (inaudible).

LL: You pull it. People pull it, or you pull it in trucks?

SPEAKER: No, machinery.

LL: Machinery pulls it.

SPEAKER: Isn't that right?

JR: Well, I ... that's the way (inaudible).

LL: I want to come when you do that so I can take some pictures of it, so keep checking with you.

JR: I'll ... the Philadelphia up there in history and technology, and that whole ... was supposed to weigh 60 tons, and I pulled her with just one jack. Had a fellow sitting in the stem running the chain jackhammer, Smokey, and people would see anything wrong, couldn't understand where the (indiscernible) was coming from, he's sitting there smoking a pipe.

LL: Oh, really? Well, when you're ready for that, you said about early fall or ...

JR: I don't know.

LL Keep in touch. I want to come down and take pictures.

JR: There's nothing to it.

LL: Okay, if you say so.

JR: I (inaudible).

SPEAKER2: Are you ...

LL: That's okay. You can come in.

SPEAKER: Jim ... better than I've seen it for a long time.

JR: That's encouraging.

(Off record.)

SPEAKER2?: LLuite? a few of them. Well, listen, you take care, Jim. The weather's getting better. My golly, you had a lot of winter down here, didn't you?

JR: Yeah.

SPEAKER2: Yeah, we did up our way too. [Is this a different speaker? It seems someone entered just above. This can't be JR's wife.]

JR: Quite rough.

SPEAKER2?: Sure was. Well, take care now. We'll see you.

LL: Bye bye. See all these little round pieces of wood here? They look like pennies. You think they're pennies all over the place. They're not.

SPEAKER: (inaudible).

LL: Yeah. So, Dick, you'll come back and take pictures when he gets ready to pull it down to the water? I'm going to be allowed to come out in the water when you're working on it, aren't I?

JR: It's going to be a while. Well ... tied up somewhere handy ... when I go inside of them. I would (indiscernible) might most of them put here on the railway ...

(Off record.)

JR: I'm real proud of you.

LL: Thank you. I'm proud of me too.

SPEAKER: Jim?

LL: Sir? (Speaker may not be JR's wife)

SPEAKER: She writes this story about all these women, see, but she don't have a centerfold in the book.

JR: No.

SPEAKER: And I said well if you had a centerfold in the book, what would it be like? She said they'd have nothing on but brass knuckles.

LL: I didn't say that.

SPEAKER: I said that.

LL: He said that. They'd have crabbing nets.

SPEAKER: Crabbing nets.

LL: Well, you can see through crabbing nets.

JR: Yeah.

(Off record.)

JR: She called me up ... she said (indiscernible) she said but, Jim, (indiscernible), and I said she don't know what that is, and don't you tell her.

LL: This boat is named after, and Jim's going to tell you. What did you tell me? It's a girlfriend of his ... you tell me, you knew. His father's girlfriend.

SPEAKER: A young lady who his father maybe (inaudible). What's the name of it?

JR: Jenny Norman.

LL: Jenny Norman. Are some of the Normans still around?

JR: You know, I had hoped that when they put that in the Baltimore Sun, that I would get protest or some word from some of her people, but I never heard a word. Is it possible that she died in childbirth?

LL: Of course it's possible.

SPEAKER: ...she married (inaudible).

JR: Yeah, but I know what my mother's maiden name was, and you know what your mother's maiden name was. I thought sure some family would get in touch and say how dare you.

LL: But you have to stop and think. Maybe they don't read the Baltimore Sun every day. That's the day ... you didn't read the Star Democrat to see about me or the Banner that day.

SPEAKER: Unless they ... other places.

LL: They might have moved away.

JR: Yeah.

LL: But then they may not read the paper thoroughly. That was the day they went to the play and they didn't have time to read the paper and somebody threw it away the next day. But when the book comes out, maybe they'll see it in the book.

JR: Didn't get any response whatever (indiscernible) I'd like to know what it would be in ...

LL: That's interesting.

JR: My father had fond memories of her.

LL: Interesting how we have fond memories of the ones we don't marry very often, or just fond memories of somebody we loved. There was a ... there is a Stanley Norman skipjack. I wonder if that's the Normans.

JR: No, they're different.

LL: They're different. They're from down Deal Island, I think.

JR: Yeah, way down there. There's two Normans on the bay here. If you would say them, I would remember them.

LL: I don't know.

JR: I can't remember my own children.

LL: Well, I'm sure they'll tell you who they are if you ask them.

JR: When I do, I generally call them (indiscernible).

LL: Tell me why you decided to name the boat the Jenny Norman.

JR: Instead of Geneva (phonetic).

LL: No, just period.

JR: Well, I think it's self-explanatory, isn't it? Geneva is not a good boat name. And I wouldn't name it for one daughter and not the other, and I certainly wasn't going to name it Jan and Judith (phonetic).

LL: That's right.

JR: So I certainly wasn't going to do that.

LL: Okay.

JR: (Indiscernible) ... get involved in the family, I ...

LL: Yes, you did. Why must she have been named a girl? Are all boats female?

JR: No, no, no. Stanley Norman was not female.

LL: That's true. You're right. And the Sigsby isn't.

JR: Willy Bennett (phonetic) is not female.

LL: That's right.

JR: Colonel T is not female.

LL: And they didn't want to name it Jim Richardson because there is a Jim Richardson.

JR: I wouldn't name her that for anything.

LL: I don't really much blame you.

JR: There were people that named boats after themselves (indiscernible) named his boat (inaudible).

LL: That's true.

(Off record.)

JR: That's how long it would last.

LL: That's true.

JR: It wouldn't last 10 years. It was laid up ...

LL: Yeah, just like anything that's neglected doesn't last. You want me out of your way.

JR: No, I don't want to ...

LL: I don't mind, it'll wash off. Okay.

JR: No, it won't.

LL: It won't wash off?

JR: Uh-uh (negative).

LL: I'll back away from you.

JR: No, sit right still

LL: All right.

JR: I'm not going up there any ... I'll stand up here.

LL: Okay.

(Inaudible discussion.)

LL: I think they're uncomfortable because you are doing something that is totally inconceivable to them that a man can build this boat. It's inconceivable to me, but you know, that isn't why I love you. I love you because you have beautiful teeth and you hug good, but you know, but the other thing, it's unbelievable. And I think people are in awe. They don't know what to say to you. What do you say to somebody who can do something so, you know, so fantastic. And you wonder why people come to see you. It's because you can see that.

JR: It's not fantastic.

LL: Well, I said to my brother, could you do this? And he is a builder. I mean he builds. And my son too, builds houses and, you know, just because he wants to. And my brother said no, he couldn't build this. And I thought my brother was a genius. And now I realize he's not a genius. Because when he was a little kid, he was like 8 years old or 10 years old, he built these radio receiver sets. When I was about 3 or 4, I used to have to be in the bedroom, and he was in the living room, and I had to do this stuff. And he built an airplane, he taught himself to fly. Not a regular flying airplane, but the whole parts, the inside of an airplane. And he could just build anything. And he built model airplanes and model boats. When he was in the navy ...

(Off record.)

JR: ... a lot of time and money to build anything by plans.

LL: By plans?

JR: Uh-huh (affirmative). I lost work out of it. But ...

LL: You don't build things by plans at all.

JR: Sure.

LL: You do?

JR: Yeah. Sure just (indiscernible).

LL: Oh, okay.

JR: They would bring me plans and say I'd like to know (indiscernible) plans, one of our best marine architects, Mr. Holks (phonetic). And I knew Mr. Holks couldn't drive a nail into the ground, never had any shop experience, couldn't figure out his weights of material and that kind of thing, hadn't bothered to go and look, see what the old folks had used (inaudible). I used to say to them right off, I'll build you this boat all of the boats in (indiscernible). You won't be able to tell it, in this planet, but there will be differences in her (indiscernible). If I build according to these plans, they won't (indiscernible) and it'll cost you \$500. If you take my boat ... save their souls ... it'll cost you \$400. And I have had them pick up their plans, and get up and go home. Wouldn't talk any longer about it. Just thought I was out of my mind. Because you see, if you have plans and don't follow them, you get (indiscernible). Didn't have plans (indiscernible). And if you follow a man's plans who doesn't have any ... doesn't have any experience with the things, then you've got to run down odd material and all that stuff. And Mr. Chappell (phonetic) was a great one. Put the dimensions 5 x 7. Mr. Baker was another one. There's ... that's not the standard number.

LL: Are you ready for your seat here? Okay. Is this ... did you have a plan, do you have a plan for the bugeye?

JR: No. Who would draw them up? Where would you find an architect that would draw them up? Immediately, they would (indiscernible) Lizzy Tocks (phonetic), and I didn't want to build no Lizzy Tocks. I didn't want a double (indiscernible), I wanted a (inaudible). Had to do it on my little bugeye. What did he do? Got plans and (indiscernible).

LL: This skipjack out here, you built it 10 years ago.

JR: I think that boat's 20 years old.

LL: Twenty years. And you built it for a doctor?

JR: No, for a judge.

LL: Oh, for a judge. Okay. Does he still own it?

JR: Yes, he does.

LL: You said he does?

JR: Yes, ma'am ...

LL: Miss. I'm miss. You're talking to me.

JR: Yes, miss.

LL: Okay.

(Off record.)

LL: What's she doing here?

JR: She comes back here occasionally for a general overhaul. Not every year. When I was running the railway, she came back here every year. Once in a while now she'll go to ...

(Off record.)

JR: since she was here last, I'm sure.

LL: Who will go over her?

JR: Huh?

LL: Who will go over her?

JR: She's already been over. Tommy.

LL: Oh, Tommy. He wants his seat.

JR: Tommy ... no, don't.

LL: You don't want your seat?

JR: I'll tell you.

LL: You'll let me know. You're sure. I'll be the first to know?

JR: The second.

LL: The second, 'cause you'll know before me.

JR: (Indiscernible).

LL: So your son-in-law, Tommy, runs the ...

JR: He's running it over there now.

LL: Did you ever keep a count of how many boats you built?

JR: Uh-uh (negative).

LL: No count?

JR: Uh-uh (negative).

LL: Do you have any idea how many skipjacks you built?

JR: Uh-uh (negative).

LL: No count.

JR: No.

LL: Between 1 and 20?

JR: My children and I tried to count up the boats of any consequence that we remembered, and when I got off the next day, I thought of several that we had forgotten. Curtis ... Curtis put up in his shop, you know, this is my 50th boat.

LL: You didn't do that.

JR: No.

LL: You were so busy doing it, you didn't have time to ...

JR: I wasn't much for keeping count of different things. A lot of people know the years that they ... I never did go in for it. I don't ... I don't know what year she is to save my soul. Social security number. Why in land's name would I memorize that?

LL: What's the biggest boat you've built?

JR: I suspect the Dove for dead weight. We're not counting ... we're not counting war. We're talking about in our own yard.

LL: Yeah.

JR: During the war, we built (indiscernible).

LL: Were they wooden boats?

JR: Yeah.

LL: And that ... was that in Cambridge?

JR: (Inaudible).

LL: How much does the Dove weigh?

JR: Sixty tons, we thought.

LL: Have you gone over to see the Dove since she's been over there?

JR: Since, yeah, sure. But I haven't been over there the last year or two. I don't know (indiscernible) sprinkle it on the bottom.

LL: (Laughter). Thank you ... whenever you're ready, yell.

SPEAKER: Any time. I don't want to take you.

LL: No, I can come back.

(Off record.)

(SIDE B)

LL: Trying to get her back in commission.

JR: Uh-huh (affirmative). I can get (indiscernible) ... the bottom off of her.

LL: Really. For heaven's sakes. How did that happen?

JR: ... didn't want to spend any money on her.

(Off record.)

JR: (Indiscernible) ... Mr. Chappell sent. And the children were (indiscernible).

LL: Well, you can't blame the kids. You just blame ourselves for making mistakes, you know. I don't make mistakes.

JR: I thought they were old enough to know. But that's (indiscernible).

LL: You always think that, but that's not the way it works.

JR: No.

(Off record.)

LL: I know you're going to not like this. If you don't mind, I have to put it a little bit closer to you. You don't mind if I sit a little bit close to you. I'd put this on your shirt, except sometimes I'll turn it off, and then ... won't put it on your shirt.

JR: That's going to be ... maybe we can get it over quicker if it is.

LL: How can we get it over quicker?

JR: By getting tired of it.

LL: Oh, okay. My father gave away a lot of his medals. He was a track star. And he gave them away, and my mother gave them away, and everybody gave them away ... brother gave them away. They gave away all his medals ... had about three dozen left.

JR: What's his ... Army?

LL: No, he was a runner. He was a track runner. He was an Olympic track star.

JR: Why in the world did they give it away?

LL: Well, everybody said they wanted them, and so he gave them to them. I guess this is ... where are you at now on the bugeye?

JR: Chopping the foremast.

LL: Chopping the foremast? That's foremast, fore-mast.

JR: Front mast, the one up front.

LL: Okay. Is that the bow spread out there?

JR: No. The bow spread is a different thing all together. This has been on her for six months.

LL: Well the one I'm asking you is ...

(Off record).

LL: ... look like it was like a mast, but that's the bow spread, right?

JR: Yeah, well I never saw a mast horizontal. Most of the time, a mast ...

(Tape malfunction).

JR: ... made that one like that.

LL: Now you're working on the foremast.

JR: Uh-huh (affirmative). You've got to do the two masts and booms and the jib ... between now and April.

LL: What's that sigh mean?

JR: Beg your pardon?

LL: What's that sigh mean?

JR: That means (tape malfunction) ... the way I work.

LL: Are you saying you're not working as fast as you used to work?

JR: I work about as fast (tape malfunction) ...

LL: Is the keel all finished?

JR: Everything's finished in the hull proper. I still have the engine, I still have the cabins and all to fabricate, but the hull is completed.

LL: How long has it taken you?

JR: I don't know, to tell you the truth. Some say I've been on it seven years. But anyhow, however long I've been on it, there was three years out of it. I took off two years to do the Dove, and I took off another, I don't know, nine months or something like that, to do those spars for the Constellation.

LL: I remember that. So you have from now until April to do the ...

JR: The mast.

LL: The mast.

JR: It's only just a ... for myself ... I wanted to do it so I can get the dimensions for the sails over to (indiscernible) Curtis. And if he can make the sails sometime next summer, it'll get me that much ahead.

LL: Okay. Are those logs in the water in the front of the bug-eye, are they the logs that you're going to use for the ...

JR: No, no. They're all too small

LL: Okay.

JR: Have to have 55 and 53, and I like for the ... for them to hold their size halfway up anyhow.

LL: I know the boat's name is Norma ... what's the boat's name?

JR: Uh-uh (negative).

LL: No, it's not. What's the boat's name?

JR: Jenny.

LL: Jenny.

JR: Norman.

LL: Okay. I had a Norman somewhere in there. Jenny Norman. Now you told me where you got the name.

JR: Yes.

LL: Have you had ... what I would like you to tell is things that you have been doing that people cannot find in books, such as when you are building a boat, this bugeye or other boats, is there something you do that has not been written up in books that they can read?

JR: I'm not sure anybody can read whatever's put down, but if you've been fooling with boats as long as I have, there's innovations that go in it that nobody wants to write, certainly not designers and marine architects.

LL: Did you have a plan for the Jenny Norman?

JR: Yeah, between my ears.

LL: Between your two ears.

JR: Uh-huh (affirmative). I don't think that there's anybody, I don't think that there's anybody in the marine design business now that is any more acquainted with the bugeye per se than I am. We tried to keep them afloat all of my young life, and I've seen every part of them, and I knew their weak points as well as their good points. And that's something that none of the architects that are around now can say. They might know a bugeye when they see it and all like that. Well, they're not seeing and there's only one left on the bay with its rig in it, and that's over to St. Michaels.

LL: That's the Edna Lockwood?

JR: Uh-huh (affirmative).

LL: Supposedly built by John B. Harrison, they say.

JR: Is that what they say over there?

LL: That's what they say, but we don't have to go into that.

JR: Well they ought to know, because surely somebody had to document her, and she was built ... she was rebuilt down here at Hudson, Captain (indiscernible) rebuilt her when I was a young man. but I don't know who chopped their logs first. Probably Mr. Harrison did, but you know I never heard that before.

LL: Well, they had Mrs. Harrison there for the second christening and third, or whichever ... down there, his wife, his widow, I should say.

JR: Well, I suppose they have (indiscernible).

LL: So there's only one bugeye, and she's down the Maritime Museum, the Edna Lockwood. You know, she didn't do too well on her shake down cruise.

JR: Well, it wasn't like they weren't told, but ...

LL: Yours will be bugeye number two on the Chesapeake.

JR: Yes, Miss. Now I should hasten to say that there is another bugeye on the Chesapeake that is square transom, but she was built as a yacht, and she's a lot more slender than the workboats ... sharp and stubby and grubby looking, but they have a ... that was built for a yacht to begin with. Belongs to the Smith boys. And she's a yacht, not a real ... not in the truest final bugeye that would be built to work on the oyster runs.

LL: What makes your bugeye a true bugeye that she's going to sail good?

JR: Don't twist it.

LL: That's okay ... twist it.

JR: What makes mine newer than the Heather?

LL: Yeah, better.

JR: I didn't say better.

LL: I said better.

JR: Well, Heather is longer than mine, and nothing like as wide. But if you're going to have a dredge boat, you have to have a large deck, because the deck is ... working for them. It holds all of their gear, it holds their dredges, it holds their oysters. The deck is a working platform, and you can't have a narrow boat or a race boat.

LL: The skipjacks and the bugeyes that have been built in previous years and the skipjacks that are still working on the water, they're all wide for working.

JR: They're all wide, they're all flat, and there are ... those that have survived are made that way just for that purpose.

LL: Have you built your bugeye, the Jenny Norman, as a workboat?

JR: If I wanted to dredge the Jenny Norman, all I'd have to do is pull that cabin off of her forward ... the cabin's in the right place, pull the cabin off forward, take the engine out and put a few ... beams in, and the forward hatch can go where the forward cabin is. Have to put a little bit of (indiscernible) in there, but I would say that in two weeks, they could have her ready for her (indiscernible).

LL: If you say that there's going to be a motor in it, is the motor in the same ...

JR: The motor is in it. It's just not hooked up.

LL: So if she was going to dredge oysters, she would not be able to take the ...

JR: I'd have to take it out.

LL: Right.

JR: It's against the law to have a motor in a dredge boat.

LL: That's what I thought. And she's going to be, initially, a cruising boat.

JR: No, we'll use her for pleasure long as we have her.

LL: And, of course, I want this down on the recorder. I'll be on the boat when she goes out the first time.

JR: You will?

LL: Question mark.

JR: Okay. You be here.

LL: In time.

JR: You be here when she goes, and ... there's plenty of room.

(Off record.)

LL: ... I didn't get them. I missed the boat.

JR: We don't know whether anybody else's pictures (indiscernible) or not, but that would have to be on the downhill side to have gotten pictures like that. When I say the downhill side, on the low side. The other side presented a different picture all together.

LL: Who else took some pictures? Do you remember?

JR: There was a lot of Pamela's boy, John Meyers up in Baltimore. He's a good photographer, and he was busy as a bee with his camera.

LL: How can he got ... get in touch with? Is he with a paper or a magazine?

JR: No, no, no, no. He worked for the state, and happened to be here because he came to see when we were going to launch it.

LL: Oh. Wasn't he lucky.

JR: Just like the girlfriend that (indiscernible). She came here on her way from being somewhere down the neck. She didn't come down here because ... we didn't know ourselves, we didn't know ourselves until after 2:00 that we were going to put it in the water at 4.

LL: Okay. So John Meyer, M-E-Y-E-R?

JR: S.

LL: Meyers. Okay, and he is with the state?

JR: Yeah. I guess I could find his address, but hold ... for a while and I'll see how his, how his pictures come back.

LL: Okay. Anybody that gets in touch with you and says that they have pictures ...

(Off record.)

JR: ... kind of was set improperly. So we'll have to wait until she gets her pictures developed, see whether she has any pictures at all or not, or what quality they are, what they are.

LL: Okay. You said earlier that there were innovations over the years that you came up with that will not be in books?

JR: Would not have been designed by a designer, would not be done by anybody that was making a living building such a thing as a bug-eye, but I remember the weak points, and I did my very best, my level best to circumvent those weak points until I could get a little better. For instance, this boat's stempost and horn timber are all in one piece. They're all chopped out of a tree, natural bends and all. Any other one that I've ever seen or anybody else has ever seen, they're in two parts, the horn timber and the stempost.

LL: Are you saying the horn timmer?

JR: Timber.

LL: Timber. H-O-R-N T-I-M-B-E-R?

JR: Uh-huh (affirmative).

LL: Horn timber.

JR: It's right ...

LL: Okay. All right. Well, that's one. Can you come up with more instances, for instance?

[unknown speaker] The for instances. ?

JR: I put this stag ... and this is more like deadwood, I didn't plank her clear back to her stem post. Might've been a mistake, but I let her chine one up there, deadwood. And the garboard strike didn't go all the way to the stem post like it does in all other bugeyes.

LL: The what strike?

JR: Garboard.

LL: Garbard.

JR: Strike.

LL: G-A-R-B-A-R-D?

JR: Yeah.

LL: Another word, S-T-R-I-K-E? Does it matter that it's Garboard Strake?

JR: S-T-R I guess, yeah.

LL: Okay, go ahead.

JR: That's the first piece of, that's the first piece of bottom toward the keel. You have a first, second, and third garboard on a big boat, but this is too little for that. Anyhow, on the old bugeyes, our fathers and grandfathers, they put a keel in them that was 8 or 10 ... more or wider than that, especially in the (indiscernible), but they never did have any thickness to it. And where the centerboard was, they brought their center-well logs down onto this gum keel. It was all all right for the first 50 years, but I had destroyed two bugeyes, and both of them were both in two at the aft end of the center well, which showed weakness there. So I ran my keel right straight to her. It's not only keel, it's keelson also. And the keelson in the old boats was put on afterwards. But this is all in one piece, and 18 inches thick from their worm shoe up to the centerboard logs. And I think that I've got a stronger boat at the end of the well than they have in that I don't have a dead end there of keel and keelson in that. Another thing I did, I put a hollow garboard in her. It ... concave and comes down and fastens flat lines to the keel and then rolls out and fastens flat lines to the planes, like all other garboards did. But they used to butt right up against the keel. And when you go ... caulking material into that seam, it would have a tendency to pull her frames out of the sockets in where the centerboard well. And after she was old, she leaked there. There wasn't anything anybody could do, and the more you worked on her, the worse she got, to make them tight anymore once they get started with (indiscernible). So I put a garboard in there that has concave in it that goes all the way around the corner of one piece, and I don't caulk against the side of the frame, side of the keel. That's two innovations.

LL: I assume that you found out all these mistakes, or I don't know what you call them, weaknesses over the years from working on other boats.

JR: Repairing them. No.

LL: Repairing. Bugeyes, skipjacks?

JR: We're talking about bugeyes now.

LL: Bugeyes only. Okay, we're not talking about skipjacks.

JR: Uh-uh (negative). A skipjack is another breed of ... when you begin to talk about what we were talking about.

LL: Okay.

JR: Because they're ... well, 99 out of 100 of them are what we call herringbone.

LL: We're not going to talk about skipjacks then.

JR: Uh-uh (negative). They're just a whole other ballgame.

LL: Okay, that's interesting.

(Off record.)

JR: No, I'll be glad to answer your questions.

LL: Okay. You gave me some innovations. Are there any others that you can think of with the bugeye that you did differently than other bugeyes?

JR: Yeah, little ... they're minor, they're not structural. This one is the only one on the bay, ever has been. Mr. Chappell said there were some built down Virginia that had the shelf as well as clamps under their deck, but I never saw one, I never repaired one, and I've never seen one with a shelf in it, but I had to have a shelf in mine because I built her alone, and it is a lot better. More work.

LL: It is more work.

JR: Uh-huh (affirmative).

LL: Building this alone ...

JR: For the most part, yeah. And this John Meyers that I was telling you about, he was coming ... he still, he come down and helped me. I put in a day now and a day then. And my brother got in with me last fall, and stayed with me till the night we launched her.

LL: So you had a little help.

JR: Uh-huh (affirmative). Yeah. I had a little help along.

LL: Mostly ...

JR: Oh, and I had that college girl, remember?

LL: I never did meet that one. Cathy?

JR: Yeah.

LL: I didn't meet her.

JR: She's a little princess. Going to smother on her own dust one of these days, but (indiscernible).

LL: Was she much help?

JR: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. She's excellent help.

LL: How long was she with you?

JR: One semester.

LL: Oh. Was she really excellent help during the one semester?

JR: Sure. She got credit, she got a semester's credit for working with me.

LL: I knew that when you went up to her graduation. I remember all that. Anything else you can think about with the bug-eye that ... and nobody's going to write about, you're not going to write about it, building it.

JR: Uh-uh (negative). Not going to write about it. It's not worth it.

LL: Okay. Well I ... if there's anything else that you can tell me.

JR: No, I can't think of a thing other than the pictures ... gone over.

LL: Okay. Then let's go away from the bug-eye for a minute. How about when you were building other boats? Did you use ... what I'm getting at is did you have plans or were the plans in your mind with them too? And can you give me some material on that?

JR: Well, certainly you couldn't be in business a whole lifetime without building some boats from plans because some people would think you couldn't build it unless you had their plans. And they would give an architect \$3,000 for plans, and it would cost them less than \$3,000 to build the boat with them, but they were better satisfied, and that's the way they wanted it, so of course, if they were going to be customers, that's the way you had to do it. And we've done boats and plans from all the architects that I know of ... with the exception of Mr. Stan Line (phonetic) and some of the later ones ... came out later.

LL: How do you (inaudible)?

JR: How do I what?

LL: How do you build a boat without plans?

JR: You're talking about ... when you say plans, you're talking about a whole set of blueprints, by somebody that never built a boat their selves. Aren't you?

LL: Right, right. That's what I'm talking about.

JR: Well, better you would say how do you build them with them. That's (indiscernible) my book.

LL: Yeah.

JR: That's all right. You don't have to put it in. But anyhow, these people, I'm sure, I'm sure, 99 percent of them never, ever, under any circumstances, worked in a boat shop, let alone serve an apprenticeship, let alone work at it and try to make a living with it. And their work reflects that kind of thing. And that's very difficult. When people would come here, skipjacks were very popular with us, right many years, 10, 15 years. And we built some real nice skipjacks like this one over in here. And anyhow, we had people coming here ...

(Tape malfunction.)

JR: We had people come in here with plans for these things, and I remember one or two instances when I wasn't as hungry as some other guys, come here and sit right here in my living room, go over the plans, look at it. I'd say to him, well ... and this one man I remember so well, I said well, I'll tell you what, I'll build you a boat from these plans. I don't remember the figures, but we'll just say for \$10,000. Or you take the plans back home with you, and I'll build you the same boat, the same boat for 8,000. He rolled his plans up and took them home with him, never did come back. (Laughter). Cost lots of money, cost lots of money to be mooning over that mess all the time. And they don't know the sizes of the scantling, you know, and have to go to work, get extra stuff and throw a lot of it away. You have to buy oversize. Mr. Chappell was a great one for calling something or other 7 inches or 5 inches. Don't saw lumber 5 and 7 inches. That's not the way it comes, unless if you have your own sawmill and you were going to sit down and get the whole ... lumber up yourself. It wouldn't be quite that bad, but it would still be a pain in the neck. You'd have to be into it all the time to remember what they had called for.

LL: I just think it's amazing that you've got it in your head, the plans in your head, each day. What I'm going to say is you know it's going to be a certain amount of feet long.

JR: That's right.

LL: And you know that one side's going to be the same size as the other side.

(Off record.)

LL: Give that to me again.

JR: I said plans won't help you make them the same dimension on both sides.

LL: Well, see, I'm not mathematical, and I just can't visualize ... paper and a pencil and you write something down, don't you?

JR: No, because then you'd always be mooning with that piece of paper instead of working.

LL: Okay (laughter). All right. Do you see my confusion?

JR: What ...let me get this straight before we go too far because I'm leading into a blind alley. For my boat, I cut a scale model of the thing, and I worked on that model whenever the spirit moved me, for a year or two. And I took it around to people that had worked bugeyes the greater part of their lives, and you got them to criticize it. But they didn't tell me what size to put this and how to make that, and how to do this or that, they just said looked like it would be all right, or when Mr. Chappell said ...I took it to three, I took it to three marine architects. They all three criticized it in the same area, and it bothered me. If one would've said it's too much or too little here, or too ... in different places, but they all criticized the same area. Two places they picked on. But when I took it to the dredge boat skippers, I took it to Captain Marvel, (indiscernible) Bill, and Bobby Roy (phonetic), and told them "What do you think of it?" And then, after they told me, then I would say to them, well, now the architects are criticizing it here and here. I said to Captain Marvel, "Captain Marvel, they're criticizing it, say it has too much flare." He said "You know it's going to be a lot harder to build." I said "Yes, sir." He said "Well, if you don't mind doing the extra work, you'll have a better boat." I put the thing under my arm and come home, went to work on it. Wouldn't you?

LL: Uh-huh (affirmative).

JR: That's what I did, because he hadn't done anything but sail a boat since he was a child. He did tell me it would do two things, it would make it a little bit drier, and it would set off rigging off a little bit wider and stay the mast up better. Of course, I knew that myself. (Laughter).

(Off record.)

JR: To have blueprints drawn up, something like that, it's possible that if the thing does well, I'm going to say that ... if the thing does well, and as a (indiscernible), I might possibly pull the thing up and take her lines off of her, and try to ... her plans if anybody wants them, give me \$10. You know what I mean, because all my whole life, I've been just like so many other people (indiscernible). If I had any inclination to give,

it was always free. But if this thing does work out, if I do have the lines taken off or if I take them off, and we do have the plans for it, then I'm going to charge for them.

LL: I don't blame you. How large is the scale model to what's ...

JR: It's a half-inch to the foot.

LL: Half-inch to the foot.

JR: Yeah. I would not have made it half-inch to the foot if I would have been a younger man, but the older you get, the less little tiny stuff you can fool with. You've got to have it a little bit more, you know, a little easier to get to, and the half-inch to the foot is so easy. When I started the thing, my model was 48 feet on its ... on its deck. Well, I made it to scale. I didn't measure this boat until I was getting ready to put cabins on. I had the deck all laid and I had everything all on it, but I was getting ready to put the cabins on, and I thought to myself, if I don't measure it, I won't know exactly what it is because you can't measure over the top of the cabin, you know, and certainly you can't go through them. And I stretched a steel tape down it, and she's 48 feet. So I felt right good. Wound the thing up and went back to work again. But you see, if I would've been working from blueprint, I would have measured that stuff a half a dozen times.

LL: Yeah.

JR: But I didn't care whether it was 48'1" or 48'6". I just wanted about a 48-footer. And I didn't bother with finding out exactly what it was. One time. I've never made it since, never made it any more. That's it.

LL: You have two cabins.

JR: Yeah.

LL: Two cabins. I'm assuming one is a regular cabin. If it's a working bugeye, it would be the kitchen and ...

JR: If it was ... if it was a working bugeye, the cabin that's on my aft deck would be the only cabin on it, but it would have a forepeak. And down in that forepeak, all the crew would stay, with the exception of the cook. On a dredge boat, the cook ... with the skipper and the mate.

LL: I can understand why.

JR: (Laughter). Well, he does.

LL: Yeah.

JR: And he preps his food in the after cabin. They don't do any cooking in the forepeak, although there's always a stove up there.

LL: But your other cabin, a regular bugeye does not have two cabins.

JR: No, miss.

LL: Your new one ... I mean the other one, the second cabin, is for what, sleeping over, staying out?

JR: That's right. That will hold six people.

LL: Okay.

JR: And you have a lot more equity. I don't know why. But people who buy boats are cabin happy. They want cabins. You have a lot more equity if you have a large, roomy, comfortable cabin, and they won't spend ... I don't think that they spend 5 percent of their time in there.

LL: Well, there's more equity, too, if you have a bathroom. Is it going to have a bathroom?

JR: It'll have two heads.

LL: Two heads.

JR: Yeah.

LL: I shouldn't have said bathroom. Excuse me.

JR: And we'll have a ... when you say bathroom, you're talking about tubs, and hot and cold running water, and showers, and full-length mirrors and ...

LL: No, I'm talking about heads.

JR: All right, yeah. So you have to have a head in each cabin because if I fix the aft cabin up for myself, I wouldn't want to be going into the fore cabin.

LL: Well, how many cabins are there? It sleeps six. How many cabins?

JR: The fore cabin is going to sleep six. The after cabin is going to sleep mom and me.

LL: So you're going to have a bath in each cabin. A head.

JR: Well, it'll be a head, and a sink. I don't know whether I'll ever have hot water or not. It's such a hassle.

LL: It's not really worth it. You can take a hot bath when you get home.

JR: Such a hassle.

LL: You said the electrician was coming today. Was the electrician for the boat, electrical wiring, or what?

JR: Well, I've come to the place now where I can close in on doing the joinery work in her, and I want to set up some machinery over here where I am that I left over in the other shed, and it wouldn't be practical for me to run over there every time I wanted, you know. So he's come and wired my shed, fixed me up so that I might have some of the essential pieces of machinery over here on this side where I'm going to work.

LL: Oh, I see. So it had nothing to do with the electrical wiring on ...

JR: On a boat, yeah.

LL: When you get to that point ...

JR: I'm supposed to figure that out. Tom says it'll take 400 feet of wire. Scared me so that I haven't got to it yet. But anyhow, I'm going to do it.

LL: Are you going to get an electrician to do that wiring or ...

J.R: We do it ourselves.

LL: You and Tom?

JR: Tom says he will do it for me, yes. But anyhow, yes. Some of ... maybe I'll hang it and then he'll connect it all up, these fuse boxes and all that stuff.

LL: Maybe we can get Geneva out there, see if she feels like doing some work. Look how clever she is. Here we are talking very softly, and she catches it. Says she's ready to get up and help you. Okay, that sounds fair. Do you call him Little Jim or what?

JR: We just call him Jimmy.

LL: Jimmy. Okay. Do you think Jimmy's going to be a boat builder?

JR: I wouldn't ... I wouldn't call his father Jimmy. His mother does, though.

LL: Oh, really?

JR: Doesn't she? Yeah, she called me one night and wanted to know if Jimmy was there, and I didn't recognize it as being Mrs. Brighton (phonetic), and I almost ... (indiscernible). I knew who it was ...

LL: I have this on. I don't want this on.

(Off record.)

JR: I know those islanders never did get a windmill, and look how simple it would have been. Trades ... (indiscernible). That boy could've made the windmill and it would've taken care of them.

LL: The thing is, you built the windmill without a college degree.

JR: Yeah, or plans.

LL: Right, or plans. And it's done ... these people came from an island in where, the South Pacific or where?

JR: No, no, no. They were government appointees. They were people that were commissioned to make a study of what could be done, because these islanders were dying with rickets on account of the ... you know, those (indiscernible) have been feeding them ever since the war, and they wouldn't eat properly. They didn't have, they didn't have anything to take care of what coconuts had done for them. Weren't catching any fish. They were eating tomatoes out of a can and dying.

LL: So the U.S. Government was going to help them ...

JR: Going to do something for them.

LL: ... by putting up windmills to ...

JR: So they could do their own aquaculture because they couldn't make log canoes anymore, and didn't know how to fish if they did.

LL: Okay. Where would the windmills fit into getting ... doing agriculture aquaculture.

JR: I told you, had to pump sea water over into this ... there's a lot of those, there's a barrier reef. Then inside, they'll be a lake, but they have to maintain a water level, they have to maintain a certain salinity if the fish are going to go and do anything much. So there needs to be sea water pumped into the back all the time.

LL: So they would use the windmills for pumps.

JR: That's right. And they would run the air compressor, which takes no power at all.

LL: So they came to see you.

JR: They came to see me.

LL: And they saw your windmill.

JR: I don't know whether they ... mother, you don't recall those people ever going out to the windmill, do you? I don't recall.

SPEAKER: (Inaudible) they been there.

JR: Maybe they had been there without me knowing it. I don't know. I don't recall.

LL: But they left.

JR: Well, they took me up Woods Hole. We went all around, and we saw a bunch of hippies up there that were engaged in aquaculture. And I was really enjoying it (laughter).

LL: The hippies or the aquaculture?

JR: The what?

LL: The hippies you were enjoying, or the aquaculture?

JR: I was enjoying the trips and what I was seeing about the aquaculture.

LL: That's something they do in China and ...

JR: Japan.

LL: ... Japan, but not here.

JR: How about Japan? First is ...

(Off record)

JR: Next are the pins ... in the floor are slats. Next are the fish. And they grow the best fingerlings of anybody in the world, and they send them in here in plastic sacks.

(Off record)

LL: And we could learn. But you've done all these things as gifts and haven't charged for. You could've been a rich man.

JR: I was ... I (indiscernible) to have a young woman's assistance. That was the year we (inaudible) and pitched it between September and Christmas.

LL: Have you built any other boats for yourself?

JR: A long time ago.

SPEAKER: (Inaudible). (Is SPEAKER Geneva, see next line?)

LL: Always had a boat going. You had a boat going all the time, Geneva says.

JR: Long time ago. When the children got in college and the press was hard, I didn't fool with any boats. I think Richard's (phonetic) was the last boat that we had ...

LL: Which was Richard's?

JR: Ritchie?

LL: Ritchie.

JR: Our son that we lost.

LL: Oh, that was the ... oh, that was ... you built a boat for him?

JR: Uh-huh (affirmative). Hampton.

LL: Hampton. What kind of boat?

JR: It's an 18-foot One Design, which we had 13 in the fleet here in Cambridge at that time, and I was the smallest fellow in the whole out there. I used to go out with them all the time ... picking on me because I was little.

LL: Yeah, I didn't think it was little. They must've been big.

JR: They were big.

LL: Okay.

JR: I used to (indiscernible) with my tiller.

LL: So you had a fleet of them, sailboats.

JR: Uh-huh (affirmative).

LL: How big?

JR: Eighteen feet.

LL: Eighteen feet.

JR: Uh-huh (affirmative).

LL: And a long time ago, you built boats for yourself. These are some of them.

JR: I had a little ...

LL: I'll have to turn this off.

JR: When we built this house ...

(Off record.)

JR: Just couldn't stand the ... all day, day in and day out, but it was great fun. Now to lay up on the log and pant? I think I'll work into it though.

LL: You think so?

JR: I hope.

LL: I hope so too. It doesn't sound as if you have much more to do if you can get done what you want to get done between now and April.

JR: Well, certainly with ... it's a struggle. The (indiscernible) was ... that was a (indiscernible) because I needed somebody else. It was really terrible. But after that, I felt like I was over the hump because then we started on the back immediately, and gravitation was on my side.

LL: Did you do most of the planking by yourself?

JR: Yeah.

LL: By yourself?

JR: Yeah. Yeah. I had two planks in the boiler, two planks bent up on her, then I'd be getting another pair of plank out. Those were doing what they were supposed to, and that always kept me ... three pair of planks going.

LL: And you did that mostly alone?

JR: Uh-huh (affirmative).

LL: The (inaudible).

JR: Yeah. To hold it and ... some of the plank was 9 inches wide on the bottom, and 2-inch thick oak. And, of course, I ... between 12, 14, 16 feet.

LL: Where did you get most of the wood?

JR: We sawed it ourselves.

LL: Did you?

JR: Uh-huh (affirmative).

LL: Let it sit awhile?

JR: Well, the books all talk about that, but I didn't go fast enough for it to hurt. They build a boat out of half-seasoned stuff ... come out with a better boat. Seasoned oak is so harsh and so hard, and you can hardly ever steam it. Well, I was steaming these pieces four hours. If I'd have had fairly seasoned oak, I'd had to steam it all day.

LL: So will it ... what do you call it? Well, seasoned. It will season in place. Will it shrink or ...

JR: You saw a bottom, didn't you?

LL: Yeah.

JR: Those great seams in it.

LL: Yeah.

JR: Well, that's what happens if you don't get right on with your work. If I'd had a crew on her, yeah, we would've gotten overboard, and they would've slowed right ... and we would've gone right on, and ... but see, they were there for three hot summers. But then ... go for three days without pumping her. She's only been overboard, it'll be a week this Wednesday or two weeks this Wednesday.

LL: The 16th. December 16th. Wait, it was in the paper the 16th. It's probably the 15th.

JR: I forget. Is it two weeks this Wednesday, **Jim?** [possibly Jim Brighton, son-in-law]

SPEAKER: Yes.

JR: Yes.

LL: Okay. You've told me before ... I'll change the subject ... you told me how you came about working with wood. Your father was a cabinetmaker.

JR: They think it's in my genes. They do. My sisters were good carpenters. All of my brothers can carpenter great. They're as good a carpenters as I ever was. They work at it. Now (indiscernible), he's done a lot of nice work. And he and I did the inside of the church up there, and you can't tell what he did from what I did, unless his is better. But my father's people had always fooled around boats, in a shipyard and all that. But Pop wasn't especially keen about it.

LL: That's a story we'll take up next time.

(Off record.)

JR: I don't know what grade I was. Maybe 5th or 6th grade, something like that in ... school -- four people, what they did, and how they did it, and how they came by it and all of that. And one of the children said, "Mr. Richardson, did you ever do anything with wood other than boats?" I said "Yes." "What?" I said "I think I can safely say I've made one of everything that is wood." And after I left there, I thought to myself, that wasn't a very good answer. But I can't think of anything that we used that I have made sometime or another. But here I am, 76. Most times I'd made it or something, you know.

LL: Some people get to be 76, and they haven't made anything.

JR: Well, they weren't working at it, they weren't working at woodwork, you know what I mean.

LL: I know what you mean. You mean cabinets, and chairs and a house ... you built this entire house yourself.

JR: No. Family jumped in, helped me. Its walls are all poured concrete. They helped me set stuff ... but you know what I mean.

LL: Uh-huh (affirmative).

JR: We did the most of it, and I never lost a day from my work. Never took off a day from my work while I was building it.

LL: What year was that? What years were they?

JR: Damn if I know. Let's see ... we were in town, we were in town from '33 ... we were in town from '33 to '38 or '39, weren't we?

SPEAKER: (Inaudible).

JR: And I came out here a year or so before we left town. So it must've been around '35 that we started this thing. Never did finish it.

LL: Still not finished?

JR: No. Never will be.

(Off record.)

LL: But somehow you manage.

JR: Well, we tear it up faster than we ...

LL: Well, people like you are bound to tear it up.

JR: That's right.

LL: So you lived in town.

JR: When we were first married.

LL: And that was 50 years ago, coming up 51 next summer.

JR: I guess.

LL: Fifty years ago.

JR: It'll be 50 years ago next summer, won't it? '33 ...

LL: No, it was last summer. Last summer was your 50th wedding anniversary.

JR: Well, that's what I said, and they corrected me.

SPEAKER: (Inaudible).

LL: It was a mistake? Give me back my card.

JR: Well, yeah. Yeah, you sent me a card. But I ...

LL: Give it back. I'll send it next year. I'll use it next year.

JR: In '33, they told me that it won't be 50 years until next summer.

LL: Okay. You were married 1933. How did you two meet?

JR: Through mutual friends.

LL: Really?

JR: Yeah.

LL: Introduced you?

JR: Yeah.

LL: Really.

JR: I didn't pick her up off the street.

LL: You didn't. Was it love at first sight?

JR: I don't know. I rather liked her, I suppose, but I fooled with her for 10 years before she married me.

LL: You can't much blame her for that, can you?

JR: Well, she was advised not to do it (laughter).

LL: Was she? (Laughter).

JR: Said you'll always be poor.

LL: Really?

JR: So she was,

LL: So she was poor, like ...

JR: She was always poor. Never had any money.

LL: No money.

JR: Uh-uh (negative).

LL: But, you know, that's the way most people ...

JR: And never will have now.

LL: Well, that's how most people judge things, by money poor, money. But, you know, the real riches are not pieces of paper. You know that.

JR: Well, you know what I mean.

LL: I know what you mean.

JR: Struggle.

LL: Yeah, ...

(Off record.)

LL: ... not safety, safety.

JR: The toes?

LL: Yeah.

JR: Toes have got better on them.

LL: So they're safety boots?

JR: Well, you have to be might careful that nothing ever falls on your toes because if it did, that metal would cut your toes off.

LL: (Laughter). Do you ... little tiny plank up to the boat, that little narrow plank up to ...

JR: That's not a plank, it's (indiscernible).

LL: And you walk on that thing up to the boat. Do you do it fast?

JR: Come down faster.

LL: (Laughter). I want to get on, but I'm, you know, I'm afraid to go ...

JR: You're a girl. You're supposed to be.

LL: Oh. I'm glad you told me I'm a girl. I never would have guessed it.

JR: (Laughter).

LL: Thank you.

JR: I was kidding you.

(Off record.)

JR: ... Charleston. Was supposed to go down this companionway and go around with the guides and come out that companionway. Well, they were taking 15 in each group, the guides were. I had been down for a place called the Golden Eagle or the Golden Pheasant or the Golden something or other. And I saw this woman in there, and she was different enough if you saw her next day, you'd remember, oh, I saw her down there in the restaurant, you know. Well, she was in the guide's group. I saw her go down, and I went ... for something, and there was a vertical ladder. It came up out of a little square hole about that big (inaudible). She came, and she was just barely going through there. (Laughter).

LL: (JR?) And after she got that much through, her arms were still in. And I said to her, one more step and let me give you a hand because there's nothing up here that you can get a hold of. Well, she couldn't step up again, and I thought she might be stuck here, you know. Come to find out that she had been helping herself up with her hands, and soon as they got in ... she couldn't do it. I said "There's one thing for sure. You're either going to have to come up or go down or I'll go over to the Golden Pheasant and get your lunch and bring it to you. Either way." I wish you could've seen that woman look at me. She watched me after she got off the boat. She couldn't figure to save her soul how I knew that she was in Golden Pheasant, but I saw her in there.

(End of recording.)