

Interview Log

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Jim Richardson (J.R.)
Jane? (Speaker)

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BEGIN SIDE A

A.: I keep a library of it.

Q.: You keep some tapes.

A.: Yeah. I mark the subjeCt, and -- because they eventually start cannibalizing. But Jim Richardson is the last of his kind that I know of, and what he's doing is so special and so unique that I'm fascinated by it, and want to make a record of it. He and -- there were many of his, many boat builders at one time on the Eastern Shore, as we all know, and he's the last of them, really. I can't, I don't know anybody who would have the know-how at his command to do what he's doing, or the skill. The only young man I know who would be capable of such a thing, as far as I know, is Ed Farley (phonetic), and he hasn't got the wherewithal or the time, and he may not have the knowledge.

Q.: It's interesting that you mention Ed Farley rather than Tim Stones (phonetic).

A.: Well, I think the two of them, between them, could turn one out if they could work together, but I hadn't thought of Tim, but I would imagine so. Of course, it's always the heroic aspect of what Mr. Richardson's doing because, let's see, he's now 76. He's been working on this thing since he was 70, and people his age, as he's pointed out to me, generally don't undertake projects of that dimension under his circumstances, which are meager. And I don't know what kind of resources he has to work with in terms of money, but that's quite an undertaking, and a very expensive one.

Q.: Actually, he has been working on it for six years full time. He started it six years ago, approximately. He took off two years to build the Dove.

A.: Right.

Q.: And then he took off a year, or six months or so, to do the mast for the Constellation.

A.: Did it really take him that long?

Q.: I don't know. He said it took him a while.

A.: I'm sure it did.

Q.: So he didn't get back to this -- I had when he got back --
- going back to you said he's
special, what do you mean by his being special?

A.: It's hard for me to describe. I haven't been able to do it in print, but the -- it is a combination of knowledge and skill and specialized craft. He works virtually unassisted, which takes a certain amount of courage when you're dealing with something that complex and that physically strenuous. I don't know his family situation as well as you do, but I don't believe he has the most favorable family circumstance. I believe his wife is an invalid.

Q.: Uh-huh (affirmative).

A.: And requires a certain amount of attention from him. I believe he has a daughter who lives with him, and her whole family, right?

Q.: At the moment, yes.

A.: Husband and children?

Q.: Yes. They're getting ready to move out.

A.: I didn't know whether that was a good situation or not. And the feeling I got was that he has a good many other concerns pulling at his ankle, and not just that boat that he has to think about.

Q.: That's right.

A.: And so he's working against the odds, and against time just on the face of it. And there's so many personal circumstances that I don't know about and would not care to write about that make his undertaking even more heroic. Maybe he keeps his sanity by working on the boat. I don't know. Maybe things are so difficult for him that the boat allows him to escape, like I used to mow grass to get out of the house.

Q.: Uh-huh (affirmative).

(Off record.)

(Jim Richardson now being interviewed:)

Q.: Now I'm recording, and I'm hoping that this is the right way to go, and I'll know in just a minute whether this is.

(Off record.)

Q.: Really?

J.R.: She'd gone down to the circle, and -- was coming back the other side of the street.

Q.: And you remember the ladies in their electric cars?

J.R.: Certainly.

Q.: In Washington?

J.R.: Certainly.

Q.: I don't remember that.

J.R.: Well, you don't remember 50 years ago, is your problem.

Q.: That's right. I was only nine years old.

J.R.: (Laughter). Oh, me.

Q.: Washington was a beautiful town.

J.R.: Oh, it was. I'll tell you.

Q.: And the blossoms, all that up and down 16th Street, you know those cherry blossoms, and the apple blossoms, magnolia blossoms. It was beautiful. It still is beautiful. It's still a beautiful city if you don't have to smell the fumes.

J.R.: Oh, it's beyond (indiscernible). Youngest sister lived on the end of Pennsylvania Avenue. Well --

SPEAKER: Married to a doctor.

J.R.: Yeah, that's right. And the doctors office was in what would have to be the basement here, but it was only in the ground three steps because you went up that high on the porch to get into the house proper. Well, anyhow, we lived out there, and his was the corner house in the pie-shaped thing. Well, they had what they called a rose garden. It was big around as from my feet to your feet. It was every bit of five feet across -- circle. They can only let rose bushes get that high, you see, because if

they didn't, they'd make a woods out of their circle. But anyhow, they did. It was cute. And by and by, they had moved. Said where are you moving? Well, it's getting to be a run-down neighborhood. And I thought to myself Benny's (phonetic) making not a lot of money. There's nothing a matter with Pennsylvania Avenue where they were. Lila, I couldn't find the house. And I said to him, I couldn't remember the number -- wasn't the number this? Wasn't it at the end of the street? And her sister said yeah, yeah, it's still there. I went out and I looked again, and I found the number on the post of the porch, post went across, kind of spiraled across (indiscernible). I could not believe it. Half of the balusters were knocked out of the porch rail. The little hedge that Benny had there was about that wide, about that high, just high enough for the dogs to stop by, you know, perfectly square, perfectly level. And over in there was his rose garden, five or six rose bushes set around this circle. You could almost move around it with your (indiscernible). In the place of the rose bush, and in the place of the whole little corner there with grass and everything was nothing but a dustbowl. The heads only had a few almost dead pieces stuck here and there, and sometimes two pieces. And you just couldn't believe it.

Q.: When did you go to Washington? You said you went to Washington, and you worked at the -- at Washington Sanitarium when --

J.R.: No, I didn't. My sister was --

Q.: Okay, she was there.

J.R.: You've heard of Cafritz? He got to be -- or what do you call him, Cafritz?

Q.: Oh, okay.

J.R.: He got to be a great man, and he did a hospital over in southwest Washington.

Q.: Right, yes.

J.R.: Well, I worked for him. He was a contractor, and he built row houses on one of the avenues where I worked -- was named after a state. If I said Florida, that wouldn't be right.

Q.: Pennsylvania, Massachusetts?

J.R.: But it was the same one that ran out to the hospital, Walter Reed. You know out there on --

Q.; That was Georgia Avenue.

J.R.: Georgia, okay. Well, we were well out into the city, and he built row houses there, whole blocks of them. And I went there as a teenager. I don't know why they thought that my sister would need company. She didn't need my company when she was here, but anyhow, they sent me up there. And we were all standing up in front of the sample house, and he said "Who here can build us, make a transom doorframe," and I hold my hand up. And he said over again -- "Can any of you men build a transom doorframe?" Nobody said anything about it. And he said "Is the kid only one can make a transom doorframe?" And he said "Kid, do you know how to build a --" I said "Yes, sir." "Let me see your tools." I went and got my box, took it off my shoulder, set it down there on the step and opened it up, looked at it. He said "What's your father using this morning?" I said "He uses his own." (Laughter). I thought this is the most foolish talk that I'd ever heard. I didn't know that you had to be (indiscernible) and all to be a carpenter. And he said "Go into the basement of this house, I'll come see you." He came there, and he said where did you work before you came here, and I said I worked sash and door mill. He said okay. Well, I bet they sent me 100 doorframes, already made. All I had to do was nail the mess together. And cheap. I've never seen anything like that where we worked. If you got an order for -- well, if you were going to do a house, you know, there'd be 25 or 30 frames, window frames, different sizes. There'd be several doorframes, different styles and all, and then there would always be a fun door frame. Sometimes it would be transom, sometimes it would be sidelight. Sidelights -- sidelights as far as the doorknobs go -- you've seen those kind.

Q.: Uh-huh (affirmative).

J.R.: Well, when we got an order like that, I'm talking about us boys, we were apprentices, you went in the stable, you got your mule. You geared her up, you put her -- you went out and you got your lumber.

Q.: That was in Cambridge.

J.R.: Yeah. You hauled all that stuff in for the mill. You ran it, you put your mule back in the stable where it come from so the next man would -- you know. Well, but the third one in a bundle, all knocked down and cheap. Never saw anything like that. So I stayed in that basement and put together the doorframes and the -- they called them mantles. We called them selves. They went into the mantle shelf, we called them. Not mantles, you know. No (indiscernible).

Q.: Really good.

J.R.: Yeah. They're supposed to be nice houses on that island. It really costs enough money for those places.

Q.: I want to get back -- your parents sent you because who was over there? Which one of your sisters?

J.R.: Sarah.

Q.: Sarah was there.

J.R.: My oldest sister.

Q.: Well, did you --

SPEAKER: She was in training.

Q.: She was in training at the same time. Did you live with her -- you didn't live with her.

J.R.: Heck, no. Nobody lived there with any nurses.

Q.: I didn't think so. So but you had to be -- your family, your parents thought you should be in Washington because she's in Washington.

J.R.: I lived on Florida Avenue, which was almost the corner, which was almost the corner of Carroll and the hospital grounds.

Q.: Okay. And you're a teenager.

J.R.: Yeah.

Q.: How did you feel? You said earlier about a country boy being in Washington. How did you feel about that?

J.R.: I just --

Q.: Did you stay for a while?

IR.: Yeah, I stayed the summer.

Q.: Just a summer.

J.R.: Yeah.

Q.: How did you go there?

J.R.: It was hard. We could, we could get on the train and go to Betterton and go across to Baltimore and then over on the cars. If we could get to Annapolis, we could ride up, I don't know how far we went, and then change and go over. Like you would be going through Columbia now, you know.

Q.: On a train?

J.R.: Yeah, well, over electric cars. You remember those things went along with a pole up in the back of them, and fire flying out of the wire as you went?

Q.: Oh, no. Like a streetcar?

J.R.: Yeah, that's what I'm talking about.

Q.: Streetcars. I didn't know --

J.R.: Yeah. Well, sometimes there would be three or four of them bolted together.

Q.: Oh. You took the boat from Betterton over to somewhere.

J.R.: You'd take a boat from Betterton, you'd go into Baltimore, see. Then you'd get on this electric car. Well, you wouldn't go on a train. This thing ran all the time. You just get on it and go on out through the woods over there.

Q.: And so you worked just one summer there, that was enough.

J.R.: Yeah. I hated it.

Q.: Did you?

J.R.: By and by -- by and by, I seen that Henry Extrum (phonetic) lived out on -- out there in the -- well, by and by, his brother got an Indian motorcycle, and he used to like to come out here. My mother was a good cook. And he'd drive me home, and he'd stay here Saturday and Sunday. And it was a gravel road between Tacoma Park and Annapolis. You'd get on a ferry there, you see, and come over here on this side. But there was no way to connect the ferry over here because we didn't have a bus service or anything that would take us over here, put us on the ferry on this side. Had to go there in the car.

Q.: But he had a motorcycle.

J.R.: Well, the next one had the motorcycle. He'd ride me home for his two days' meals, I suppose. He liked it here.

Q.: Yeah. That sounds good.

J.R.: But it was a gravel road, and we called that road -- I'm sure running along the same road there right now, we called it the Defense Highway. And in Word War I -- took that gravel road straight to Annapolis. I'm sure it was all the way there, but it wasn't a nice gravel road like it was, you know. I guess -- Joan, what am I talking about, it was just about halfway in between the two World Wars, wasn't it? I was 16 or 17 then.

Q.: Make it 16, it's easier. Take 16 away from 76, and what have you got.

J.R.: What are you talking about? What year was it?

Q.: What year?

J.R.: Yes. Start the other way. Start from 1906 when I was born. 1906 and 10 is 26. Then so that would move us up into the very first 30's, wouldn't it?

Q.: The early 30's.

J.R.: Yeah.

Q.: So they were having -- they had cars there then. They had gasoline automobiles because we had an automobile.

J.R.: Well, the family had an automobile, but I didn't have an automobile as such of my own till I was 18. And, see, where I worked at the manufacturing company, I used to make the wooden parts for cars down there. If an order came in for anything for an automobile, they gave it to me because the boys hated to do it. And my bench was next to the boss's bench. It was easy for him just to throw it over, here Jim, you know. I used to make wooden wheels and stuff for automobiles that had been broke down or mashed up and all that kind of thing. And if you tell kids nowadays I used to make automobile wheels when I was your age, they look at you like you're crazy. (Laughter). But this automobile I had belonged to Dr. Smith. Jane, do you remember him?

SPEAKER: Uh-huh (affirmative).

J.R.: Dr. Smith. And he became intoxicated and sat his car and himself afire on the back seat. But he crawled out of the car somehow or another and onto the road, and he set the woods and the field and everything afire. And I got the car with the back end burned out of it and both wheels burned off of it. And I had to make new wheels and all that kind of stuff.

Q.: And that was your first car.
J.R.: First automobile.
Q.: What year was that?
J.R.: I don't know.
Q.: You don't know.
J.R.: Huh-uh (negative). I was 18, so 18-- 6 times 16 times 26,
so it wasn't 30. It was 20 that
we should've got there.
Q.: That's what I thought.
J.R.: Yeah. Because you see, in the next 20 years, that
would've brought me up to 26,
wouldn't it?
Q.: That's right.
J.R.: So it must've been something like 24 if I was 18.
Q.: About 1934.
J.R.: Uh-huh (affirmative).
Q.: So you're 18 years older than I am.
J.R.: Wouldn't be surprised if I wasn't 25, 30 years older than
you are.
Q.: You're 18 years older than I am.
J.R.: Well --
Q.: That's about what it is. That's all right. I'm 18 years
older than one of my former
boyfriends, than a lot of people, a lot of people. Eighteen years I mean,
gee, you were only 18 years
old when I was born.
J.R.: It was a Louis Overlund (phonetic).
Q.: Willis?
J.R.: Louis Overlund.
Q.: Overland?
J.R.: Overlund. There was an --
Q.: Overland, over-land.

J.R.: Overlund car. You don't remember.
Q.: Is it Overlund or Overland?
J.R.: Overlund.
Q.: L-U-N-D?
J.R.: Uh-huh (affirmative). And -- it was one, it was the first compact that we ever built in the United States as such. It was the best car I ever had. Ever. Never, ever expect to see another car that good again.
Q.: It was gasoline? Gasoline?
J.R.: Oh, sure.
Q.: The company you worked at in Cambridge that made the tires, the wooden tires --
J.R.: No, the wheel --
Q.: Wooden wheel, wooden wheel.
J.R.: Spokes.
Q.: What was the name of it?
J.R.: Cambridge Manufacturing Company.
Q.: Cambridge Manufacturing Company.
J.R.: Yeah. I worked in their carpenter shop, unless I was down to the railway.
Q.: So here you are.
IR.: Make spokes out of hickory.
SPEAKER: He's always been on the edge of things.
J.R.: She's right,
SPEAKER: He's never missed anything.
J.R.: Never got into the middle of anything (laughter).
Q.: You know -- you know Joe Valliant?
J.R.: Yeah, yeah, I know Joe.
Q.: He comes down here -- he was over last night.
J.R.: Was he?

Q.: Yeah. We're friends. He talked -- you remind me of my father, you remind me of his father, and it was the same thing with my father. He was always on the edge of something. And his father too. Although, luckily, his fathers father was in the middle. Joe was over talking and --

J.R.: I suppose that I knew his fathers brother. Or maybe -- I don't know. I knew Enis (phonetic) his father. And Enis is old enough to be this boy's -- I'd like to say grandfather. I expect he is, Joan. And I knew --

Q.: What's his last name?

SPEAKER: Valliant.

J.R.: I knew him when he first started fertilizer factory up at the head of the -- but I should have because I was with the manufacturing company.

Q.: I knew only his father, Noonan (phonetic), before I knew Joe.

J.R.: Now what's Joe's father's name?

Q.: It was Noonan.

J.R.: Noonan?

Q.: Noonan Valliant. Yeah.

J.R.: Huh-uh (negative). I don't think he ever-- he didn't ever come this way, so I knew their cousins.

Q.: Yeah. Plus, they own that property down at Bellevue, which -- where Joe lives now.

J.R.: What was it, seafood?

Q.: I think it was seafood, yeah, manufacturing, or canning.

J.R.: Canning house.

Q.: Canning house. And tomatoes too, or whatever, vegetables.

J.R.: Uh-huh (affirmative). That's the Valliants.

Q.: And then they have automobiles, somebody had an automobile. I don't know if it was the Valliants or on the other side in Oxford, a factory, automobile back then. I just -- well, when you said right on the edge of things, my father, too, was right on the edge of things. Never quite in the middle.

J.R.: She's the one put the ends to it. You know, a seaplane crashed out here in the back of Sandy Hill. And when they did it, it mashed this (indiscernible) off. Well, the hub of that thing was as big around as --
(Off record.)

J.R.: -- made out of 16 layers of black walnut. They brought a sheaf of papers into, into a shop where we work and asked Mr. -- her boss, Joan.

SPEAKER: (indiscernible).

J.R.: Mulberry. Asked Mr. Mulberry if he could make it. He looked at it, and he looked at me, and he said yeah, and so he said we'll have to put it together with -- glue. And the man in uniform said well, all he wanted to do was to get the machine home with it. So he turned around and left. After he got good and gone, he took it and set it on my file. My file then was a piece of steel wire stuck up through a wooden block, and you just put your orders right on it like that. He stuck it on my file, and he says to me, look at it. I looked at it. I don't know, I've forgotten the dimensions of it, but that thing was as long as from my (indiscernible) to yours. The man could hardly carry it to save his soul. Well, when he come back, I said to him where in the world are you going to get walnut dry enough to do it? He said well I'll get it from Baltimore, which he did. He -- kiln dried, beautiful stuff, just beautiful stuff. So we ran it down and prepped it. And each one of those laminates was Supposed to move this way somewhat. And he said to me, watch what you're doing, he said, because if you don't get it right, the airplane is going to fly backwards.

(Laughter).

J.R.: So I thought to myself, she will? So what I tried to do, I tried to put it like, like I said, you know, carry it around like that. Then all I had to do was just clean it out to its edges because, you see, some smart engineer or somebody had figured out each one of these -- was so much, and he'd move it over 5/16" or 3/8" of an inch, and that gave him a picture of the thing. Well, of course, that doesn't hold out to the end, but we made it, and I said to him how are we going to balance it? Let them balance it. And I said no, we're going to screw it on to her right here and try to get her home with it. In those days, to transport an airplane, she had to be dismantled. They had her on -- in the field out there at Sandy Hill, and she was helpless. And to get her on the train to send her wherever she was supposed to go to, well,

I thought if they can get a prop on her, they could get going with it. And we made that prop, and we balanced it the best we could. And the last I knew of it, it was gone, and so was the airplane. I had a line there, but they only used it just for that one flight to get it where it was going. But I would really liked to have seen it on her because if it wasn't in balance, it would put an awful strain on everything on the thing. This windmill out here, if I would get one of those spars five pounds heavier than its opposite, every time she came over with a ton of pressure on this hold-down bolt, just give you some kind of an idea about what little bit it takes to make a lot of strain when you're -- but I'm sure that that whole engine didn't turn up anything like what it done nowadays. It never occurred to me, though, to ask -- hey, how about giving me a job in your propeller shop.

Q.: Oh, really?

J.R.: I didn't want to go anywhere.

Q.: You didn't want to go anywhere?

J.R.: No. If I had've, if I had've, I'd tried to gotten a job, you know.

Q.: Yeah.

J.R.: Somewhere or something. But that was the funniest thing in the world for my mind was to leave home. Want to go and make propellers for somebody --

SPEAKER: If you knew his father, you'd understood (indiscernible).

Q.: Why would I have understood if I knew his father? I'm sure his father was a peach, because he's a peach.

(Laughter.)

J.R.: Pop was a good man.

Q.: Like him, yeah.

SPEAKER: I don't know why in the world he ever stayed down here and married me.

J.R.: Married you? I know why I married you.

SPEAKER: Why?

J.R.: I told you once before. I was 26, and it was time to get married. You were 26, and you were finished your training. You had been making your own way --

SPEAKER: For 10 years.

J.R.: -- for 10 years. You had come from a family where there wasn't any funny stuff. Your father was a -- a man that was well thought of in the neighborhood. And he returned the same. I thought maybe you'd have some of the qualities of your father, and some of the stubbornness of your mother, which would have been perfect set-up. Well, you wouldn't marry -- I wouldn't marry an only daughter.

Q.: Oh, that entered into it too.

J.R.: I wouldn't do that.

Q.: You wouldn't do that.

J.R.: Huh-uh (negative)

Q.: Okay. But it's okay for Generva to marry somebody that's not real handsome.

J.R.: No, she was -- she was the oldest one of Lord knows how many. She had six or seven sisters, three brothers or four. What, George --

Q.: And she took care of them too.

J.R.: Well --

Q.: And she must've been pretty because she's still pretty.

J.R.: Her mother was busy having them.

Q.: Somebody had to take care of them.

J.R.: Somebody (laughter). How would you like to have been there Sunday morning getting them ready for church? Seven girls and three or four boys.

Q.: I think the girls probably the boys ready, and the older ones got the littler ones ready, or somebody did something. That's how --

SPEAKER: You (indiscernible) -- they'd be washed. I don't remember about washing. I guess we did that for --

J.R.: Yeah, she scrubbed them.

SPEAKER: And had it all lined up. And I was to come along and cook -- I was to come along and see --

J.R.: Got their hair all combed and set up.

SPEAKER: All in the back, you know --

Q.: You were doing that. You would dress them.

J.R.: Well, they worked on one, two, three. One, two, three, four, five. One, two, three, four, five.

Q.: And there were nine children?

SPEAKER: There were 10, weren't they?

J.R.: A whole lot more than 9 with 7 sisters. Let's see -- and then there was George, and Orville, and Flash (phonetic).

SPEAKER: And the other one, Lila, pulled his (indiscernible). He had a birthday the other day.

Q.: (Laughter). Someone has something going -- can't remember (indiscernible).

J.R.: I think, Joan, there might've been just three boys. George --

SPEAKER: Four.

J.R.: -- Roger, Orville -- Orville was the baby.

SPEAKER: Yeah.

J.R.: And there must've been six or seven girls.

SPEAKER: Seven girls.

J.R.: I wouldn't dare start naming them. But I do know you were the oldest.

SPEAKER: They began, the girls began to die. I (Inaudible).

J.R.: Five of them were nurses, and three of them married doctors.

Q: That's commendable. That's commendable.

J.R.: Well, their sister, you see, was in the hospital and like that, and --

O.: And she found the doctors for the sisters --

J.R.: No, no, no. They found their own. They're independent. They didn't marry any doctors around here. Benny, Benny lived in Washington, and Paul lived in Baltimore.

Q.: Did they ever come down here and have family reunions, everybody?

J.R.: Uh-hUh (affirmative).

Q.: You had a lot of those?

SPEAKER: Yeah, we kept up with --
Q.: Yeah, kept the family close.
SPEAKER: Uh-huh (affirmative).
Q.: That's good. Well, you have to, you know.
J.R.: Now Martin, he came out of New Jersey.
SPEAKER: No, he came from Washington.
J.R.: Honey, (indiscernible) find him.
SPEAKER: He's in a hospital in -- Washington.
Q.: That's the way to go. You know, maybe I should've been a nurse. But who says that, you know -- it's who you marry, not what they are, or not their profession.
SPEAKER: Yeah.
Q.: If they're nice charming people, and they're kind, and they call you Joansy and say, you know, this has been 15 years, it seems like 100. (Laughter). Stuff like that.
J.R.: Can hardly remember being single after you've been married 50 years.
SPEAKER: It seems impossible.
Q.: Yeah. I bet you had some girlfriends when you were single that you're not going to talk about now.
J.R.: Oh, we were all restricted. You didn't get around in those days like you do now. Parents had a --
Q.: I know.
J.R.: But until I was 18, I had my own horse. So that really pins you down to the neighborhood. But --
Q.: Somebody asked me, Joe asked me last night, he's seen the spelling of the Jenny Norman three different ways, and he asked me to ask you -- I was telling him J-E-N-N-I-E. Now what's the right spelling?
J.R.: I don't know what's right, but I think --
Q.: What do you think?

J.R.: I think we had it J-E-N-N-Y.
Q.: J-E-N-N-Y.
J.R.: Yeah.
Q.: Okay. Well, if you have it J-E-N-N-Y, you know what? I'm going to have it J-E-N-N-Y, because I figure that you're right.
J.R.: Well it's one less letter than I-E.
O.: Oh, that's sort of the reason that you're doing it. It's like one --
J.R.: Well, I think that's the way that she spelled her name.
Q.: That's the way she spelled -- yeah. Well, that's a good reason. But Joe Valliant said he -- I saw it G-E-N-N-I-E, and he saw it another way. So I wanted to clear up it's J-E-N-N-Y. And, of course, Norman is Norman, N-O-R-M-A-N.
J.R.: Uh-huh (affirmative).
Q.: Okay. And we were talking about that last night.
J.R.: That's already cut on the (indiscernible). I don't know how they're -- but I gave it back to the young man that did them for me, and he had them in his garage loft, or his workshop loft.
Q.: Oh, okay.
J.R.: Oh, that. That thing.
Q.: What? What thing?
(SIDE B)
Q.: Everything is in there --J.R.: Yeah.
Q.: -- but the kitchen sink. And the kitchen sink is in there too, right?
SPEAKER: Yeah.
Q.: I think I know what you found.
J.R.: I'm beginning to --
Q.: I think you -- the end of the other one.
J.R.: No, I --

Q.: I knew that's what you were looking for. And when I came last time, I said -- I bent down, you said we're finished with that.
(Off record.)

Q.: The date that you laid the keel for the Jenny Norman --

J.R.: I don't have any more idea about that than I do (indiscernible) because it wasn't just exactly like that. It's in the -- it's in the album. Oh, wait, wait. There's a picture of it. I mean both ends are on it at that time on the wheel. The Maryland Center of Public Broadcasting, they were here when I was setting one or the other ends up on it.

Q.: About what -- like about what year or what month? I don't have to have the exact. I am going to borrow the album again. I brought it back, remember?

J.R.: Yeah. You brought it back, and I don't think I kept it two weeks.

Q.: And somebody else has got it?

J.R.: Got it up in Baltimore.

Q.: Is somebody writing a book about it up there?

J.R.: No.

Q.: They're not writing a book. See, I'm writing a book about you, I hope.

J.R.: No, no. I tell you her name in a minute. You probably know her. I'll come across it by and by.

Q.: Okay. I really, I don't need the album now because when I looked at it, I went through and took some notes and all. Before I tie everything up, I would like to see it.

J.R.: I wouldn't have any idea what year it was that I brought that thing over, what I wanted to know. Because you know, Joan, I had it out there in the field in front of the shed. That's where I chopped it. I decided I'd get out of that, because of all the traffic and everything there, I wanted to be away from the swim of everything going by.

Q.: You started making -- for the Dove.

J.R.: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. I had a lot of frames in it before the Dove.

Q.: See, I'd heard that when I first came down here, that you had started a bug-eye.

J.R.: Yeah.

Q.: And I came down here in '78.

J.R.: Wait a minute, wait a minute. Here's what. Here's what. Here's what. I retired when I was 66, and I went up to Mr. Dickerson and said to him I need an oak log -- 42 feet long, 45 feet, something like that. And it's got square 18 inches halfway up it. And he says I'll have to hold some out and call you. I was 66 that year, and he sent me that log in the fall of that summer. I was still, I was still 66.

Q.: That was 1973.

J.R.: Well, now he sent it late enough, late enough that when it finally got here, and we drug it out on the field and dropped it. And before I ever got to it to lay it off or anything like that, it froze to the ground, and I couldn't move it. It was so big, I couldn't move it anyhow. So that was -- and that winter, I was 67 years old.

Q.: 1974.

J.R.: So you see, I must not have gotten that thing chopped and over on the other side until the winter was -- ground was solid enough and all that I could get that thing over there because it still weighed a ton. And I remember I cut the -- slot and everything in it right where it laid because I couldn't move it. The ground wasn't stable enough yet. So I must've been 77 when I took --

Q.: Sixty-seven, 67.

J.R.: I mean 67 when I took it over there. So if that's right, then it's been --

Q.: 1974.

J.R.: It's been something like eight or nine years ago.

Q.: So you started on the keel about 1974.

J.R.: That's as rough as we can get it in because the reason I know that -- I always said that I was going to retire soon when I got to 65. But I was hung up with a boat, and I didn't get her done, so it took me over into another year. And I remember distinctly that I tried to get on Social Security at 66. And then I came off of it to build the Dove. Never was able to get back on it anymore until I was 72. They couldn't get me straightened out with their computer. But I was already having so much trouble with the IRS.

Q.: That is not good stuff at all. It really puts you --
J.R.: Uh-huh (affirmative). Well, they contended that there wasn't anybody that could

handle -- they always said \$200,000, but the commission admitted themselves that they'd only sent me 190,000. But they always contended that I couldn't have handled that much money without keeping some of it for myself. I did some of it for myself to begin with. But towards the end, I had to go with two members of the commission and borrow money from the little bank in St. Mary's to pay my hippies.

Q.: I remember you telling me that one day when I sat down -
-

J.R.: Well, how in heaven's name are you going to get any money for yourself when you don't have enough to pay your help, let alone owing \$40,000 for stuff you were buying.

Q.: I know you were taken on that.

J.R.: It gave me a heart attack, and her blood pressure went clear out, and that was what she was doing with that stroke.

Q.: You started -- I want to get back to the bugeye. You started the bugeye about 1974. How long did you work on it before they came and talked you into getting onto the Dove?

J.R.: Onto the Dove. Well, I'm just guessing, because we set that -- we brought it over and set those ends up, and it was right out in the open. And I went to work immediately to get the thing ready so that one man could build it alone. I must've spent that summer on it because I remember they kept flying over me, and flying over me, and flying over me with the airplane, and I had already started this pole shed over the top of it. I was working out there in sleet and the rain, and I realized that day that I couldn't build that thing out of doors. And as soon as I -- began to plant those two little posts, it attracted the attention of the zoning people, and they kept flying over me and flying over me. So I had a good friend who had to do with assessments in the county (indiscernible).

SPEAKER: What was his name?

J.R.: You know him, Joan. You know him for telling him I was going to set the dogs on him if ever caught him on the premises.

SPEAKER: I don't remember his name --

J.R.: I'll tell you, he was Peter Tyler's (phonetic) brother. You remember Peter Tyler?

SPEAKER: (Indiscernible) yeah.

J.R.: They're but anyhow, I saw him and I said what can they do? I was determined that I was going to go in there and ask them if I could build a pole shed over my work. I was out of sight of everybody and on my own property, and it was -- that's all there was to it. I was just out of sight, but not the airplane. And he said two things they can do. He says they can threaten to make you pull it down, but if you don't pull it down, they won't come on the property and pull it down themselves. They won't do that because they could get mixed up in a suit. I said no, they wouldn't get mixed up in a suit, but there would be problems because I remember that Mr. Canar (phonetic) paid a lot of money for a combine, and he built a roof over it on poles. The zoning people said you can't put a roof over it. Oh, yeah, you can, he's already done it. Well they're going to charge him so much a day for every day that it was up there without a permit. Well, he said, it didn't make any difference to him how much they charged or what. I didn't -- we weren't going to give them anything. And they said well, we will bill you for so many times, and then after that, we'll come out and pull the shed down. Well, Mr. Canar, being a German man, and a good old soul, but anyhow, they finally came and said we're going to -- we're going to pull the shed down today. You want to move the combine out or will we? He said I'm not going to move the combine out, and neither are we, and he turned and went into the house. And when he came out, he had a double barrel -- shotgun that was made in 1902, and she had those great big hammers on her. And he reached in his pocket and he put a shell in each one of the barrels, closed her up, through the hammer back on her and he said to them hook onto the shed.

Q.: He said what?

J.R.: Hook onto the shed.

Q.: Hook onto the shed.

J.R.: Yeah, with their chains, he'd pull it down. And they looked at each other and they said you're threatening us. No, he said, I'm telling you to go ahead and hook onto the shed. Let's see how you get along with pulling down people's sheds. And they went somewhere, the back of the truck, and had a short little conference among themselves, and they got into their truck, and went back to town again and never came down to Mr. Canar's anymore.
(Laughter.)

J.R.: So I knew that story, and I knew they were not going to pull down the shed if worst came to worst. But the Tyler boy said to me, they'll worry you until, by and by, you will say something to one of them that you'll be sorry for, or it'll bring on something that will be unpleasant to you for the rest of your life. Won't bother them because they'll all say they were in the right. But, he said, it'd bother me. And as (indiscernible) -- well, I told him that it was -- and I was angry, and I went into the zoning board, and I said to them, I want a permit to build a pole shed over a boat that I'm going to build. Where do you live? I said you all know me (indiscernible), where do you live? I said I live in the next district, where the airplane's been flying over every Tuesday. What parcel is it on? I said I know that my deed's a parcel, I know that. But I'm going to tell you the truth. I don't care anything about the parcels. I just pay my taxes the first time I get money enough (indiscernible) -- you know what parcel it's on. You get out your scratch paper that you've been using with this airplane thing, and you'll see pretty quick where it is. They didn't want to admit, you see. That's against their rules. By and by, they call their head man, and he went in, they met him, had a conference, and he come back and he said it's parcel three. And I said it's a matter of complete indifference to me whether you give me a permit to build it on three or two or one or four. It just doesn't make any difference. I want a permit to build a shed. Well, I was very difficult to get along with, the way they told it. But I was wet and cold and angry. That was a winter, I must've been 67 that December because that was -- you see I had to wait until summer before I could move anything over there to get the ground. I hadn't established a way to -- anything like that, it was just the main ground over there at the site. It wouldn't have been sleeting in the summer. I wouldn't have been that uncomfortable.

Q.: You're right.

JR.: So it had to be the winter.

Q.: It had to be the winter.

J.R.: Yeah. And that was the winter after they delivered it to me when it froze in the ground before. So there's a whole year now has elapsed since I brought the keel over from where I chopped it and set it up, from where it was until Thanksgiving of this year.

Q.: Did you get to work on it at all before you took on the Dove?

J.R.: Yeah. I worked on it real good -- but I stopped to build those cabinets for Mrs. Combs (phonetic). Do you remember, Joan? They were such --

SPEAKER: Yes.

J.R.: I got those things done and set them up there. I owed a debt of gratitude to Mrs. Combs, you know, I told you.

Q.: You did.

J.R.: She gave me an engine. Well --

Q.: The engine you have now?

J.R.: No. In the boat -- well, I was in her debt. There was no way in the world I could possibly have gotten a new engine. Somebody had done me a tremendous favor, and I had nothing like that in mind. But anyhow, I stopped and did that. That was my first interruption. Took me about two and a half months, or something like that, and then Joan and I were looking at the TV, and they showed in Baltimore a twister had come through, and all of the spars in the -- on the Constellation were hanging in their rigging, all like this. And I said to her let's chop those poles and (indiscernible) I understood that you could make so much money after you had retired without getting in any difficulty. Well, we make it all in one -- so we made up a four topmast. A top (indiscernible), a yard and the -- pole at that time. And we were a couple months or more making those poles. And then I went right back where I found her again though. Right back to work on the thing.

Q.: On the bugeye?

J.R.: Yeah.

Q.: Yeah.

IR.: But the only thing, every once in a while, I'd take off and do something like that. Well, I might pick up a dollar.

Q.: And when you're working on it for a while --

J.R.: I worked on it for a while steady, and got a lot of frames up on it.

Q.: You got a lot of frames up on it.

J.R.: Yeah. I had that thing two-thirds framed, or more, before I ever got on the Dove. But I was chopping the main mast for the Constellation when I finally got word, finally got word to start the Dove.

Q.: They approached you. The people came over and talked to you about the Dove?

J.R.: Oh, I'd been fooling with Mrs. -- Mrs. Barbara over that five or six years.

Q.: Okay. So you wanted to do the Dove. You thought --

J.R.: At that time, I was sick. I did not want to do it because the picture had changed in that many years.

Q.: Oh, I see. Five or six years before you were interested. But when she came along --

J.R.: After I was retired and was working on my own boat, and this mast for the Constellation was supposed to be side money. I didn't want to get involved with the thing, but I thought after fooling with her all of those years, that it would seem irresponsible on my part to say to her well, I was just fooling. I don't really want to do it. I didn't think that would look very well.

Q.: But the picture had been changed in those six years. You retired, so at that point, you really didn't --

J.R.: I really didn't want to do it. Mr. Baker wanted me to do it. There was two or three reasons. Mr. Baker wanted me to do it, and he told them to get me at whatever cost. But the price that we had talked about several years before is the one that she insisted that I had always told her that we would build it for. And I kept saying to her, but Ms. Barbara, the picture has changed. Well, no, but you told me about 200,000. Well, to do it, to do it for 200,000, I used a lot of my own inventory of every knee I had but one.

Q.: Every what you had?

J.R.: (Indiscernible) knees.

Q.: Knee.

J.R.: Yeah. And I had been piling up for this, for the Jenny Norman, for 12 years. And my whole inventory of lumber was gone by the time she left because she ran out of payroll, let alone money to buy materials to make the -- thing.

Q.: Did the Dove cost you money?

J.R.: Yeah.

Q.: You don't know how much, but a lot.

J.R.: Before I ever got the IRS off of my back, which must have been last year, I had already taken money out of my Social Security checks to pay the bill for whatever it was that they were attacking me about. And St. Mary's paid me 190,000 instead of 200.

Q.: And where was the -- I don't want you to talk about it if it bothers you.

J.R.: Well, I don't want it to go in the book either.

Q.: Yeah. Well, you will read, you will read the book before anybody.

J.R.: They have people over there, but I don't want you to go to that trouble, they have people over there that are on the defensive. I had a letter -- no, I had a newspaper article down there in the (indiscernible) with this. Had the Dove's bottom been properly painted with the proper antifouling paint, they would not have had to spend \$70,000 on her this winter. They spent a third to fix her, they spent a third of what she cost, a little more, because they wouldn't railway her last year. They left her in the water 22 months without painting her bottom. And --

Q.: If you want -- I'll leave all that out.

J.R.: No, I don't want that in the book.

Q.: But what I want is that you had started on the bugeye, and you worked on the bugeye for about two years?

J.R.: Looks like about two years.

Q.: And then you took off and you worked on the Dove for about two years.

J.R.: That's right, for 22 months.

Q.: Twenty-two months. And then --

J.R.: And then it took me the rest of the time to clear myself up, to get my machinery, get everything back again. I was surely two months trying to clear up so that I might get to work on the thing. So I was really off from her for two years.

Q.: And then for two years. So that was about -- you stalled back on the bugeye about 1980. About 1980.

J.R.: I suppose so.

Q.: 1980, '81, '82. And now she's in the water, beginning of '83. So you'd say three more years, about that you worked on her.

J.R.: Yeah. Well, certainly -- certainly, we will do well to get her straightened up enough -- here's what. If I can get the poles chopped between April and May, I will call down, and if he will make my sails between May and September, if I can get my hands on those sails in September, I will have all of her gear ready to receive them. I'm talking about the rigging setup and everything. But in the meantime, I want to get the engine in her next summer running because I will need that to handle the thing. Now if I can get that much done, then next winter, I will go inside her and then work in dead earnest in doing her insides. So that'll throw me over into another calendar year. And it'll surely take me that long to do her insides.

Q.: Well, I'm not going to bring my bathing suit over this summer yet to go sailing.

J.R.: No.

Q.: But I will, you know, when the time comes, I'll be sure. Listen, am I keeping you up? Is this a bad time?

SPEAKER: No, no.

J.R.: What happens is that all of this projection goes on if I live, nothing happens to me.

Q.: Well, we're all about in the same boat, excuse the expression, because we do that every day.

J.R.: Yeah.

Q.: But you're 18 years ahead of me in the boat.

J.R.: That's what we're talking about, see. If I was 18 years younger than I am now, I wouldn't be as apprehensive about each day.

Q.: Yeah.

J.R.: I figure like each day now is pure gift. I told you about Sam Rowhaun (phonetic). Sam Rowhaun says to me, Jim, do you say grace at your meals? And I said, you know, we were kind of brought up like that, Captain. He says me too. Says I thank the Lord for the food, and then I thank him that I'm here to eat it. (Laughter). Yeah, like that. Yup.

Q.: That's exactly where it's at. You're right.

J.R.: He was a great old gentleman. Really enjoyed him. He decided to die.

Q.: Some people do.

J.R.: Well, he came to Brook, and he said, Brook, if I got anything that you want -- and Brook said yeah, you got a lot of things that I want, but I don't think that they're transferable. What are you talking about, Brook? I'd like to have your know-how and all that stuff. That's all gone. He said I haven't got any more of that. And by and by, Brook says to him what brought all this on? Says I'm going to die. He left Brooks' and come over here, but I didn't know anything about this conversation over there. Well, he came over to see me. Hello, Captain Sam, how are you? Oh, I'm not so good, Jim. And I said that goes for me too, just barely making it. Well, he says, have you got all the tools you want? He was notorious for having all of the tools, all of them. You name it, he had it. Auger, whatever. I said -- I didn't know what it was all about. And I said to him, Captain, yeah, I got more tools now than I can handle. I said if I was a lot younger, there's a lot of things I'd like to have, I suppose. He says well, if I've got anything that you want, speak up. Well, an old gentleman like that, you don't say to him well, I'd like to have your this, and I'd like to have your that, and this, that. And I said oh, Captain, let's just each one struggle along with their own stuff that we've got. And I appreciate your offer, but no, I don't know of anything I really need. And I still don't. And he went on home, and he says well, Jim, goodbye, I don't know whether I'll see you any more or not. And there was nothing wrong with that parting. Not that unusual, you know. Dam if he didn't go home and die. Yes, he did. And it's bothered me ever since. I didn't -- it's a nice way to do it, but (laughter).

Q.: But he was going to be giving something, and he knew he was going home -- he was willing himself to die. Some people will themselves to live. Same thing. He had made up his mind, that was it.

J.R.: Well, his whole -- he wasn't in any great pain that we knew about. And he was fixed up at home pretty good. And they always told it more of a joke than anything else, but I know that he and his missus got along well, but she fixed him up in a room downstairs the last year or so because he let his dog sleep in the bedroom with him, and she wasn't about to have that. So they fixed him up a place to sleep downstairs so that he and the dog could roost in the same room. Now the dog didn't get in bed

with him, I know better than that, but I always thought it was a strange thing for old people to get attached to an animal like that. He took him wherever he went, had him a special box to sit on in the front seat so he could see out the window. (Laughter). Sat in the front. (Laughter).

Q.: I think it's cute.

J.R.: He would. And he never got far away from his heels. Whenever he got ready to go, he'd speak to him. Some kind of boy, it wasn't Billy Boy, do you remember what his name was, Joan?

SPEAKER: I don't know.

J.R.: He was a little Terrier, and Captain only had to speak to him but once.

Q.: Well, you do get attached to animals. Some people do (inaudible) -- good to him.

J.R.: Well, she had a reputation of being a good wife, a good woman. But I can see how, by and by, for he and that dog to go upstairs or get into the bedroom --

SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

J.R.: -- said if you want to sleep with the dog, you can sleep down here in your own room.

Q.: And that's what he did.

J.R.: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Q.: I guess I got that one taken care of.

J.R.: Do you have a -- have a thing on there that tells you how far along you are on the tape?

Q.: It does, but you see, I can't see it without my glasses, and I can sort of look at this, and I can tell how far it is. It's almost to the end there. And this will pop out, I think, but --

J.R.: That's what ours does. Ours pops up, I think.

Q.: Yeah, it'll probably pop out. But this is -- check it. It's clearer than the other one I had.

The other one, I put you on there, and it sounds like (garbled noises).

J.R.: Well --

Q.: Sometimes it doesn't.

J.R.: It's like you said before. I had no idea it was my voice when I heard it. I didn't --

Q.: Well, you sound a little different on the tape, but not a whole lot different. Me too. I sound like I'm from New York.

J.R.: Uh-huh (affirmative). I didn't think that I talked like that, but I must because they always record me the same.

Q.: Uh-huh (affirmative). You have a distinctive voice, and it's low, and a drawl. There is definitely a drawl. And you emphasize. I have so many lines under the words that you emphasized.

SPEAKER: (Inaudible).

Q.: Generva's getting sleepy.

JR.: Generva gets sleepy with the chickens.

Q.: With the chickens?

(Off record.)

(New speaker -- possibly same person as at beginning of tape).

A.: You get so dependent on the things.

Q.: I know.

A.: And it gets so you're not any good without them. And when I'm talking to somebody like Pete Johnson, I want to be scrupulously correct, because he speaks precisely, well I use the recorder and take notes.

Q.: Yeah.

A.: And more than once, he doesn't come through for some reason or another.

Q.: In the recording.

A.: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Q.: Yeah. I've had that happen too. Before you put the light down, I just want to make sure if I was picking you up.

(Off record.)

Q.: And wouldn't you say that's the -- this is the mike and this is what?

A.: The speaker.

Q.: Okay. You can just hold it.

A.: Sure, be glad to.

Q.: Okay. I only have one question, and I figure since it's you, that we'll go on with that one question.

A.: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Q.: Okay, this is picking up. Why were you interested in writing about Jim Richardson?

A.: Well, simply that he is the last of his kind, at least the last of his kind that I know of anywhere. And I thought before he was gone, why I'd --
(End of recording.)