

INTERVIEW LOG

Interviewee: Lola Line

Oral History #200

Interviewer: Jackie and Wade Murphy

Date: April 1992

Location: Unknown

Topic: Cruising
Rebecca
Oystering
Miss Kim

Comments: Taping abruptly stops.

Documentation:

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Lila Line: ...Cruise ship. I heard about this. That you took some people out.

Wade Murphy: Lila, I haven't done this yet. I'm not certified.

LL: Well, okay, you have to be certified to take people out.

WM: Right. I haven't started it. Hopefully, next summer in '93, I'll be able to start doin' that. That's my only hope of keepin' Rebecca maintained.

LL: In working condition and keep her going. What kind of cruise would you do? What kind of cruises?

WM: Well, all kinds. I've got plans for daily cruise, weekend cruise, whatever the people...you know, it'll be all different. It'll be several different ways to be able to do it. You'll get some groups that wanna go overnight and I can do that. But, it's still gotta be certified. You know, that's the main thing, it's gotta be...you gotta be certified to be able to do this.

LL: And do you have to buy a license and all of that.

WM: Oh yeah, you have to buy a license and you have to be licensed and take tests to be able to get certified and then the boats have to be certified if you wanna to take over over six people. Up to six people, you can take six people on an uncertified boat. But, over six people, the boat's gotta be certified by the Coast Guard and it's somethin' to go through, but it can be done. It's possible to do it.

LL: And if most of the skipjacks do that, that would be a lot of people cruising out on the Bay.

WM: It'll be...a lot of 'em won't do it, but some of 'em will, and I don't know, it's gonna be a new game, really. I don't know how to explain it, but...

LL: You could go in from what---from April, May, June.

WM: Probably go summer months from May until November, probably. And I think that it'll work out.

LL: I think so too. I really do.

WM: But as far as the oysters, I can't say how the oysters are ever going to come back again.

LL: Yeah.

WM: I've seen times, Lila, in my life in the last 35 years...while I've had my own boat for the last 27 years, 28 years, and since I've had my boat, I've seen times when I've caught, where we have 1,150 bushels before we had a limit.

LL: A limit of how many bushels?

WM: Right now the limit's 150 bushels a day.

LL: 150...

WM: ...which we never get, but before we had a limit, we could catch a boatload. There wasn't any limit. And I have caught as many 350 bushels in three hours and I've caught as many as 10 bushels all day long from sunup to sundown. I've seen 'em plentiful and I've seen 'em scarce different years. It used to be like cycles, nature, but now we're not fightin' nature, we're fightin' a daggone disease. I've sold oysters for \$2 a bushel and I've sold 'em for \$32 a bushel. It used to be supply and demand, but since the last couple of years, these buyers, these packers, have gotten together and the watermen will not stick together. If the watermen would stick together we could demand...I mean, we're the only group of people that when you go in a store and you get ready to buy somethin', the storekeeper tells you how much he wants for it and when we sell somethin', the buyer tells us how much he's gonna pay for it.

LL: Can I use that?

WM: Sure.

LL: Okay.

WM: And that's a fact. I mean the buyers tell us how much they're gonna pay us for our product, but if we go to a store, the storekeeper tells us how much we're gonna pay him and as long as you can't put a price on your own product, you ain't got much of a chance.

LL: Yeah, you really don't. I never thought of it that way, but that's the way it is.

WM: That's the way it is.

LL: I never heard you...I've always heard you being very positive. I mean even last year, optimistic.

WM: Optimistic, always.

LL: Last year and then two years ago or three years ago when we went to Bill Barrages (ph) and he was telling you, "Yeah, it'll turn around," and you said, "Sure, it'll turn around." Did you ever hear that tape? Did you ever run it. I sent it to you.

WM: Never have.

LL: I sent it to you.

WM: You did?

JM: Not the tape you didn't, but you sent pictures.

LL: I sent the tape. I mailed the tape to you.

JM: I don't remember getting the tape.

WM: I may have, I don't remember it.

LL: Yeah, I mailed it to you. I talked to you and I said I'm going to mail it to you and I did mail it.

WM: Well, I don't remember it.

LL: It was just last year.

JM: We may have, and he probably listened to it and if you sent it, he probably has it.

LL: It was last year when I called and I sent it. Gee, I hope it didn't...but, anyway, I did send it. If you need to go again, I'll go.

WM: If you have got another copy of somethin', 'cause I don't remember it. I may have gotten it, but I would like to have him on tape, because he is 90 years old now.

LL: Well, if you need to go again, but I know I mailed it.

WM: Well, I'm sure you did.

LL: I mailed it. Whether or not you got it...

JM: I'll have to look. I don't remember.

LL: Anyway, it might surface. Anything I didn't ask you...I thought that you stayed up...you leave your car up at Tolchester and I didn't realize that you stayed on the boat. I just thought that you were paying motel stuff.

WM: No, no.

LL: And your crew, you all stay on the boat?

WM: The crew, well half of 'em drive home every night and half of 'em stay at a motel. I'm the only one who stays on the boat.

LL: Okay, well that's where I heard about the motel.

WM: Some of the crew stay, but it's a place you know to get a shower and a place to get clean.

LL: Why do you go up... like you're here, you came back here last night did you?

WM: Oh, Friday night.

LL: Oh, Friday night you came. I wish I had known, but then you go back Sunday to check your boats out.

WM: I just went up to check her out to make sure everything was okay.

LL: What to do you check her, for what? To see if something's working?

WM: You never know that...well, we're probably 60 miles by air and you never know if they have a storm there that you don't have here.

LL: Oh, I see.

WM: And you just make sure that everything...plus you wanna check to make sure..well there's nothing you can do, but sometimes you get ripped off. Some people will steal your radios and whatever and just go look in the boat, you know.

LL: Yeah, so the days that you don't go back and forth, you go back and forth and so the days that you come home, what time do you leave here in the morning?

WM: I leave here 3 o'clock in the morning, 3 or 3:30, and it takes two hours to get there and get the boat ready. I leave the dock around 5:30 and we usually get....on Mondays and Tuesdays we get back

in...we're allowed to work to sundown which is close to around 5 o'clock now and we usually get back to the dock around 5:30, 6 o'clock. The time we put our oysters out and the nights we drive home, we're 7:30, 8 o'clock. It's usually 8 or 8:30 when I get back home.

LL: And so you go right to sleep and get up at 2 o'clock in the morning then leave at 3.

WM: And get back up at 3 o'clock the next morning and go again. And it's getting old.

LL: I imagine it's getting old. I imagine it's real getting old. So, if you don't oyster starting January for instance, what will you do from January until May. I know you always have plans for then.

WM: I won't do anything but just tanker around on the boat and worry myself to death that it's gonna to be some crabs to catch in April or May.

LL: You have another boat, *Miss Kim*, is it?

WM: Yeah, I got *Miss Kim*, my work boat that I had built 20 years ago and she's still...you know, no problem on that...there's not much maintenance on.

LL: So you always have something that you can do...you can work on the boats.

WM: Sometimes it isn't making money, but you can keep yourself occupied...

LL: That's what I mean, you can keep occupied, because otherwise you're so used to working and pushing, and going, and doing, you can't sit.

WM: And I do a heck of a lot of readin'.

LL: Oh do you?

WM: Yes, I do.

LL: Oh, that's what I wanted to know. You do, don't you.

WM: I read a lot.

LL: Yeah. What kind of books do you read?

WM: Mostly about the Bay really. I love the Bay and I read about boats and the Bay and especially old stories.

LL: Yeah. And, how about...did you get to see Tom Horton that day that I didn't go into see him and I knew he was there.

WM: Yeah. I went to see him. Yeah, I got to see.

LL: Was there a long line of people?

WM: When I got there, there wasn't any people at all.

LL: What time did you get there?

WM: I guess it was 1:30 in the afternoon. He was leavin' at 2.

LL: That's about the time I was there and I kick myself for not going in because I know him and I've seen him. Have you got his new book?

WM: I haven't got it yet. He's got me a copy in his home to send to me and it's all signed up there. He had forgotten to bring it with him and he said, "Well, I'm not gonna give you one of these because I've already got one written with your name on it," so, I haven't gotten it yet, but it's got a couple of pictures of Rebecca in there.

LL: Oh, yeah. So, he'll send it to you.

WM: Oh yeah, he'll get it to me.

LL: Who do you think is the best writer right now about the Bay.

WM: Uh, I'll tell you, it's a couple of books being written right now about the skipjacks.

LL: Uh, huh.

WM: Chris White is writin' and he's doin' a pretty thorough job. Do you know Chris White?

LL: I know the name.

WM: He is doing a pretty thorough job. He's writin' a book about the skipjacks and he's got two people from Tilghman that he wrote about and two people from Deal and it was myself and Stanley Larmer (ph) from Tilghman and Stan Daniels and Art Daniels from Deal.

LL: I know them, yeah.

WM: And he's gonna...and this book...it's just about finished.

LL: Oh, good. And it's with pictures or photographs.

WM: There's not many pictures in his book

LL: Is it a history of the skipjack?

WM: But it's a history up until this last year. He hasn't been out with me this year, but he went with me like last year every week at least once or twice a week and he went with my other two boats at least once or twice a week.

LL: I think he wrote another book, the name is familiar.

WM: He wrote another one about wildlife, I think.

LL: You said somebody else is writing a book now.

WM: It was a lady. Do you remember that lady, I don't know if she ever went on with the book or not...was writing a book last year, or startin' to write a book?

JM: Um, it seems to me like you told me the book, but I don't remember her name, though.

WM: I can't remember, but it wasn't about me.

JM: She just called you, didn't she?

WM: It wasn't about me.

JM: Didn't she call you not long ago? Oh, you mean the one that took Billy to the (recording stopped).

WM: There's one...well Chrissy (ph) is writin' two books...one about the skipjacks and another one about the Bay.

LL: Where does he live?

WM: In Annapolis.

LL: In Annapolis.

WM: But he lived in Tilghman for one year. He took a year...he come to Tilghman for one year and lived here. (tape stopped).

LL: (unintelligible) is okay and Ray Saunders did the color photograph.

TAPE ENDS HERE