

Interview Log

Interviewee: Ernie Bowden Jr., Barbara Bowden, Sam Swift

Tape #: MAAF/VA/KF/FT/1.19.303/601

Interviewer: Kelly Feltault **# of Tapes:** 1 of 2

Date: 1/19/98 **# of Sides:** 1 and 2 of 4

Location: Ernie and Barbara's house on School St., Chincoteague VA

Topic: Gill Netting, hunting, meat curing, fishing regulations, Barbara's role in Ernie's business

Corresponding Photography Log #:

Comments: File name: vaft303.doc. *Italics* indicate song title, book title or emphasis; "quotations" indicate direct transcription; [brackets indicate additional information not on tape].

Barbara Luehning has Ernie's son (also named Ernie) in her class and over heard him talking about how many pounds of fish his father caught the week before. We inquired about who was the president of the Waterman's Association on the Shore and learned that it was Ernie III's father, Ernie Jr. I met with Ernie Jr. and his wife, Barbara, a week before this interview to collect some leads on other watermen to talk with. Ernie recommended Sam Swift for hunting and trapping but never mentioned that he gill netted as well. Sam Swift took part in this interview, since he and Ernie met with a Merrill Lynche rep just before my arrival. After the representative left the interview began.

Ernie also dredges crab in the winter, but told me that as of 1/27/98 crab dredging in the winter in Virginia would be illegal. Unfortunately we did not discuss crab dredging during this interview.

SIDE A

[the clicks in the background are the claws of Ernie's dog, a black lab with arthritis]

Sam: discussing how he smoked the deer meat [I ate some of this on my first visit to the Bowden's home]; make a brine with salt and water, enough to float an egg; for every pound of salt use 3lbs of brown sugar don't use aluminium pot; meat must float; soy or teriyaki sauce, wine, soak for 5 days, smoke for 6.5 hours; uses hickory but usually uses myrtle, family used myrtle; smoking fish too; how that is done, filleted and soaked for 24 hours; what fish he likes and why; Bluefish doesn't dry out; takes deer meat to railway everyday, good with crackers and jalepeno cheese

Ernie: explains that pound nets on the western shore are fish traps on the eastern shore drift gill netting; anchoring shad and drum nets only; Sam's boat built in N.E. 30' Sisu; Ernie built own boat, 41' built in yard, wood and fiberglassed over, white

cedar and oak, cut down own trees, some mahogany, cut at sawmill, stored for a year to dry out, then built; help from older man who had blueprints in his head, how National Geographic did article on Chincoteague and talked with this man; all ideas and notes written on a board, ply wood, Wilbur Wimbrow or "Shreeze" Wimbrow; family built boats on island for over 100 years; Winbrow boats had a cabin on it forward;

Seasons: rock starts Feb. 1 and goes to end of year but only allowed 324 fish so if catch that many by June you're done; trout April 1 ends may 14 back Oct. 7 out Dec. 17; only ones that have seasons, flounder goes on a quota 2 different systems: in shore and off shore quota; VA's in shore fishermen never get cut off, but off shore which is out of state boats do get cut off; quota on black drum but never hit it 121,000; rock is 1,700,000; flounder is 3.5 million; starting a quota for sea bass and porgies, first year of that but really for off shore fishermen; they fish 10 miles or closer mostly; sea bass are 20 miles or further off;

Shad fishing: anchor nets; description of fishing the nets for shad; float to top and fish from top down; 8-16 feet depending on depth of net, early march-10th of April; then trout and croaker fishing with drift nets; fish on bottom; longest net they can have is 1200 feet, can have multiple nets; both have 5 nets must be set individually;

Croaker fishing: look for marks on bottom with depth finder; run them out and go to other end to start fishing them, eat sandwich first sometimes, get primed to start working; fish the nets and get your limit, sometimes 2000 lbs.

Weather & fish: rock needs to be extremely rough weather to catch them, "If you can stand up fairly easy in the boat you're not going to catch any. You catch most of your rock when you're holding on to things to walk. They like white water, they move alot when it's rough. They're a predator fish and they like to hide in places and strike out to get the bait during rough weather. They like it real rough."

Sam: setting the nets; in Bay set with tides, in ocean set or run off with wind; "turn them around by the time the next tide changes or double weight them we call it" won't catch fish in the bay until a certain time with the tides cause that's when they make their move; spot only gills on the tide, trout on a certain phase of the tide, bay have to deal with lots of sea nettles, mud, grass, and junk; ocean is clean fishing without any tides; ocean works with the wind

Ernie: "and there's no typical catch. Everyone asks what is a typical catch, and there's no such thing as a typical catch. It runs from boy I wish I'd stayed home and watched TV today until how in the world am I going to get these on the truck to carry them."

Sam: "You are calling people to come help you take them."

Ernie: "I've got the record, 165 boxes over 16 thousand five hundred pounds. Yeah I had to give them away I had nets all over the western shore, everywhere. I give rigs to different people cause I couldn't handle them. Its just too hot in the summer. You get past 4000 lbs in the summer and you're going to have marginal quality fish, the amount of ice it takes, and the longer you're there even if you had the first ones iced up, if you're there til way after dark the first ones are going to be melted."

Sam: "most of us, if we know we're going to catch a lot of fish, we try to cut it off at

30001bs, that's about as much as you can get with ice and all that"; "and there's some people that try to catch"

Ernie: "just hogs and don't care about the quality of fish, but that's going to change this year. The HACCP [pronounced Hassip] program that's taking over this year. Ha7grdous Analysis And Critical Control Points"

Sam: explains--seafood industry and other food industries implementing this, seafood industry the first, has to do with the temperature control and freshness; no contaminants on or near food; "it's just common sense that tells you that you don't store toxics next to your fish, but the government has decided that we don't have common sense, so"; explains that the processor is now responsible for everything, not the fisherman or the truck that is delivering, nor the retail store; USDA inspectors inspecting fish now;

Ernie: making buyers more careful about what they buy;

Sam: Fulton Fish market in NYC story; HACCP people disgusted; just started on Dec. 17; how there aren't any coolers or cooling capacity in the market; fish sold by lam;

Ernie: most of our fish go south; trout, bluefish, shad go north and the rest goes south; majority of what they catch is croaker and spot; go to Carolina; Ernie has own local clients plus sells to distributor

Sam: Northerners eat northern fish: rock, shad, trout, blue fish;

Ernie: nets, monofilament, rotate what they're fishing so trading nets in and out; more disposable, get new nets quite often, very selective; catch a certain fish and weight by size of net; example: catch croakers @ 1 lb each use 3 and 3/4 inch net or a little bigger; 13inch net gets a black drum catches a 38 lb fish;

Sam: harder to get fish to swim into the net than you think;

Ernie: "I've been sitting in fish, and know that I'm sitting in fish, people are around you hand lining them, pulling them in on a line and reel just as hard as they can, and you pull your net in and you've got 3."

Sam: "Fishing is never as it seems. Everyone's under the impression that if you put the net in the water it's going to catch fish. Well that is the idea but that's not how it always works. These people with the bunker boats you hear every where you go, they're out here catching the last croaker or they got all the spot or trout they round up all the rock. A fellow told me the other day who worked on one for 15 years that the only way they got fish to eat was buy them. They couldn't even catch a decent fish to eat, occasionally they'd have enough to eat for the whole crew." More on the image of net fisherman and environmental issues: ducks and porpoises hung in nets, how that is untrue, caught maybe one a year

Sam: where they get their nets; have to look at treaties and laws dealing with textiles, nets considered a textile; treaties with Pacific rim nations that US wouldn't produce gill nets; how they pay textile taxes on nets imported; import from Mexico now because of NAFTA, japan couldn't ship here because not part of NAFTA so moved operations to Mexico, getting better net; still have to hang net into the ropes, all you get is a bundle of webbing; how every many meshes deep you get it and comes with a selvage to hang ropes "And Barbara here can whip one together in about a half hour."

Barbara: No, I don't think so.

Sam: Not too many people do it anymore, Barbara does it, Bob Latchie hangs nets, woman in Bloxom has people working for her

Barbara: you hang it different ways depending on how tight you want the webbing and if you want the fish to gill in easily

Sam: fish are built different, sizes, so webbing must be hung different for diff fish; shad are thin and don't move so webbing has to be thin; discussion of how many feet per webbing for the line;

Ernie: # of corks per feet, leading on bottom; leading and corks for diff fish; discussion of how have to mark net with flags now and types of flags; license tags on all nets now; will confiscate your nets if not tagged;

Sam: remembering that used to use Clorox jugs to mark nets, everyone used them, so many more people on water now and things have to be marked and regulated; helps fishermen more than anybody; sport fishermen still don't know what they're looking at;

Ernie: "When I was Ernie's age [his son Ernie] my neighbor and I used to go out flounder fishing rod and reel fishing in the afternoons. If we saw 10 boats we saw alot in a day's time. Now anything less than 10 of them trying to run over me I'm well satisfied before the day's out. There's no requirements on a boat except having enough money to buy it, it's not like a car where you have to have a license or test." Started when about 13, part time claming oystering etc. And full time 23 years ago

Sam: worked water all his life, except few years he worked at Dupont; days off out on water with a gill net fishing on any river, made more money on his vacations than did working; how he bought a boat on money made on a two week vacation; paid in cash; boats got more expensive but fish didn't; 35cents a lb for rock; catching 1200 lbs a day;

Pricing of fish and the market: Ernie: "A man down here had the perfect theory. He said, 'They get their money in and they throw their money up in the air and what ever sticks to the ceiling they give to the fishermen. And they make damn sure they wax the ceiling the night before.' And I think that still applies."

Chowder clams been the same price for 20 years, 5 cent; aquaculture bringing down clam prices; VA biggest aquaculture state so controlling the price; NC and FL starting "to come off" with crops; how money went further and fish prices haven't kept up with inflation; other influences on the market: people on the go and not interested in fresh fish, needs to be microwaved,

Ernie: "if it weren't for ethnic groups you couldn't sell fresh fish." Mainstream population not buying them, buying your yuppy type fish: orange roughy etc., but not the pan fish we catch; only minorities eat what we catch; main catch is spot and croaker and it's a pan fish for minorities and they mostly go to NC and down south; blacks eat mostly spot and croaker; local people will eat them; what spot and croaker taste like; image of fish on the market; word croaker not exotic enough.

Regulations: over regulated; how regulated fish have been taken away from them: rock, grey trout: never went out on bay for them until last week of May and now season ends may 14; made a lot of money in May and June on bay off trout but not

anymore; how if net is full of croaker nothing else will swim in it; can't fish off shore;

[Ernie really gets going on this hot political issue, and shows why he is the president of the association along with his knowledge of details and regulations]

incidental takes of marine mammals, must turn yourself in if you catch one, harbor porpoise population very high in their area now; animal management and population control issues; new regulations because of NJ catches on porpoises; how this will affect prices of tuna fish; government and special interest groups; get the whole story

END SIDE A

BEGIN SIDE B: MAAFIKF/VAIFT/1.19.303/601

Atlantic Marine Fisheries Commission: Mid Atlantic region for these porpoise regulations is NY to NC; endangered species and marine mammal acts

Sam: theory on animal rights and population control of animals; over populated species and nature will eliminate them

Ernie: designating some fish as game fish and then they are no longer available to commercial fishermen; coalition on Atlantic coast and they can't vote on the status of rock, northern states declared it a game fish and now can't change it; VA and MD are the nursery area for rock; anybody with a coast line gets a vote and it doesn't matter how long your coast line is; MD NC and VA have more coastline than the northern states but it doesn't matter; set up so that 2 delegates from each state, NC MD and VA have one recreational and one commercial, up north its 2 recreational reps on advisory panel; and so they sway the vote towards the recreational side;

Ernie: forms you have to fill out everyday: how much net you put out, where you fished, time you leave time you get back, hours you worked, what species you caught, how much each one weighed, and at end of month you fill out a bigger form; send all of it in; areas you fish;

Ernie's involvement as president, federal level and state level; seafood council; how quotas are set; benefits of keeping records;

Barbara fills out the forms: thinks that 50% of the wives do this for their husbands; does the monthly report; can tell you what he caught on June 28 1993; keeps tracks of # of days you worked; keeps records for business expenses

[Ernie has gone off to get a file and returns, opens the file and picks a day]

Ernie: August 1997 gives list of the lbs of fish he caught that month; also helps VMRC know what is being caught when and they have no idea about fish and their seasons; story of December trout fishing as important and VMRC not believing them; now they know what a day is worth when they start making restrictions; now have to wait 2 years for a commercial fishing license; now have limited entry too, can't buy a license to crab dredge or drum fish; also if you have a license you have to go out every so many days or you lose it; Ernie went 178 dollars in the hole last year by dredging crabs when they weren't around, just to keep his license;

How people used to jump in and out of the commercial fishing business, land workers would go down to local hardware store and get supplies to peeler pot or gill net when the prices were high on fish; done away with opportunists

Less than 1000 watermen in the state, 3000 in the association, 2600 that actually work, less than half that are full time; lots of retired people

Weather: best would be some wind but not alot, if its too still the water gets so clear that they can see your nets and you don't catch them; 10-15 mph; in spring want it from the S or SW warm up water bringing things up the beach, in fall want it NW except for striped bass want it NE for the roughness; and they are fast they'll be in NY today and here tomorrow; when they move they move; trout loaf along; weather really affects us because we fish in shallow water;

Big Trawlers: ruination of fishing; knows I trawler in Cape May NJ who catches more trout than all the gill netters in VA combined; discussion of where fish are in water in relation to who catches them, trawler or gill netter; trawlers less restricted;

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission: history and purpose; at first had no real power just advising states; then NJ tried to declare striped bass endangered species; ASMFC gave charter to ban fishing for striped bass; history of ban; return of bass even before the ban; Feds gave them control of state fisheries; typical civil war, N vs S; North has no fish left due to big trawlers, bigger fish migrate north smaller fish head south; shrimp industry siding with Yankees and FL siding with Yankees for recreational fishing;

Story of Ernie and VA legislator amending new law by ASMFC and recreational fishermen; requesting input and advisory panels; how this will ultimately hurt commission; how commission is following NE agenda; how it is too political and not based on science; how commission has more power without any checks or balances, not under the Feds or any other agency;

Works with NC watermen's assoc. Often; not really MD says that Larry [Simns] only shows up for the rock fish meetings, no ocean fishing; Ernie is chair of Gray trout [wheat fish] panel for ASMFC, MD NC VA drive things and NJ in with us; MD not interested other finfish

Sam: something about MD VA state line, fish don't really go up there in fishable numbers [what about the Patuxent etc. fisheries?] MD fish for catfish and perch which we don't fish for;

Crabbing: VA and MD mortal enemies; MD mad about dredging in winter; Smith Island sued the state of VA and caused hard feelings; they can crab here but we can't go into MD; exempt oysters; people in Crisfield are great but still friction between Smith Island; used to be that VA could start crabbing when ever felt like it in spring, MD could only start on April 1; Smith Islanders would come to VA's Bay waters with 1200 crab pots a piece whereas VA crabbers had 75 or 80, "So the whole Bay you couldn't a drowned, if you fell over [board] you would have been on a crab pot. You could walk home on crab pots." Share more in common with NC than any other state, lots of rural communities; both have same fish at diff. Times of year; same type of gear used; gill nets; NC efficient and can trawl net within state waters; real strong association NC Fisheries Assoc., 8000 members; 10th generation criminals on the shore; joking about being indentured servants set loose;

joking about across the bay the guinea men's family tree looks like a totem pole-- no branches; talk of Clinton's current situation and Hillary;

Sam: strange things that happen when you're fishing; story of a meteorite going overhead one night, huge and close; fishing gets monotonous so the strange things stick in your head; water spouts by the boat, lightening striking you; story of 4 water spouts hanging in front of Sam as he set out nets; then a 5th and then a 6th that took their net up;

Ernie: sometimes water spouts will rip down the Bay 20 mph headed for Tangier, other times if its calm they sit there, seen one sit for over an hour; can see them from Rt. 13 too; freaky things of nature and the idiots you see out on the Bay; "you just think how in the world can people be this dumb." Story of guy who heard on radio that they were catching a lot at #3, meaning the buoy marker, but guy tied up to Ernie's net flag that was marked #3;

[Barbara and little Ernie suggest the story about the lady he met at the railway]

Ernie: "oh, yeah. I was down there, I come back from the railway getting my boat painted and stuff and this woman, man and two children came up to me to the harbor and said, "Did you catch any fish' -and I get all kinds of dumb questions anyway-they said, `Did you catch any fish?' I said, `No I just got back from the railway.' They said, `oh' and they stood there and talked for a little while and they said, `Where'd you say you were?' I said, `I was at the railway, I didn't go fishing today.' So that woman hung around and talked 4 or 5 more minutes and I was telling the little kids to get them a star fish off the boat or something, you know. That woman said, `Look, I don't mean to be prying in your business or nothing but, uh, where in the world did you take your boat on a train?' She thought I put it on a train. I said no you pull your boat up out of the water so you can paint it and stuff. She thought you carried it somewhere. I get questions like that."

Story of surf clammer getting lost and trying to find Ocean City but ending up in the Bay
[continued MAAF/KFNA/FT/1.19.304/602]

END SIDE B
END TAPE

Interview Log

interviewee: Ernie Bowden Jr., Barbara Bowden, & Sam Swift
Tape #: MAAF/KF/VA/FT/1.1^{9.304/602}

Interviewer: Kelly Feltault **# of Tapes:** 2 of 2

Date: 1/19/98 **# of Sides:** 3 and 4 of 4

Location: The Bowden's living room on Chincoteague Island, VA

Topic: Memories Ernie and Sam have of fishing, strange things you see on the Bay, hunting stories

Corresponding Photography Log #:

Comments: File name: vaft304.doc. This is a continuation of file vaft303.doc, tape number MAAF/KF/VA/FT/1.19.303/601. *Italics* indicate song title, book title or emphasis; "quotations" indicate direct transcription; [brackets indicate additional information not on tape].

Barbara Luehning has Ernie's son (also named Ernie) in her class and over heard him talking about how many pounds of fish his father caught the week before. We inquired about who was the president of the Waterman's Association on the Shore and learned that it was little Ernie's father, Ernie Jr. I met with Ernie Jr. and his wife, Barbara, a week before this interview to collect some leads on other watermen to talk with and Ernie recommended Sam Swift for hunting and trapping but never mentioned that he gill netted as well. Sam Swift took part in this interview, since he and Ernie met with a Merrill Lynche rep just before my arrival. After the representative left the interview began.

Ernie also dredges crab in the winter, but told me that as of 1/27/98 crab dredging in the winter in Virginia would be illegal. Unfortunately we did not discuss crab dredging during this interview.

SIDE A

Sam: stories of comeheres trying to get around on the Bay when a squall is approaching, how they want to get to Reedville when they are in Onancock and the squall is coming from Reedville; how some people have been in the bay and wanted to get to Ocean City

Ernie: Remembers a guy who was in the bay and wanted to get to ocean city, "Well can't I get there going this way?" [Ernie points up the bay toward Baltimore] "Yeah, if you want to go through the canal and the Delaware Bay." "Well aren't I in the ocean?" "No, generally when you see land on both sides of you you're not in the ocean."

Sam: story of boaters coming up to him in a foggy hazy weather and asking where buoy

36 was, Sam checked his maps and told him, not far take about 20 minutes, went back to fishing their net and suddenly the same boat came speeding by him, another 20 minutes passed and the same boat came speeding by again, how they were going around in circles; steering by the compass and how easily they get out of whack; how they steer by the "rand" and can tell when the compass is out of whack, rand only gets out of whack when it's foggy or nasty, that's when you tell who can navigate

Ernie: "Around Chincoteague anywhere, 15-20 miles off, you can take me out in the ocean blind folded drop me off cover the windows turn the Larand off give me 5 minutes with a depth finder I can tell you where we are because I know the contour of the bottom everywhere. These people who've never been here and they'll do some of the strangest things. They're always in the biggest hurry in the world anybody can buy a boat, like I said, that's all it takes."

[This entire section of storytelling was to illustrate Ernie's point and make cultural notations of the diff. Between locals and comeheres]

Sam: Story of how it is really a circus, when he lived in DE and the gov't put a ramp in at Missapeague park on the inlet, a public boat ramp; something he and other watermen used to do on a blowy day when you couldn't be out was to get a case of beer and go down there and watch the idiots try to launch their boats and fish; it was a show, they'd break out fighting, had to have state police there; seen lots of people drive their truck with the boat on a trailer to the ramp & would untie the boat before getting to the water and always had to stop on the incline, so truck would stop, trailer would stop, and boat would keep on going and end up in the road

Ernie: always in a big hurry, how Cape Charles had a huge recreational fishery, story of how one trailer and boat was in the ramp and another pulled up and just pushed the truck trailer all of it into the water so they could unload;

Sam: Sport fishermen are the most aggressive towards each other and towards us

Ernie: a few bad commercial fishermen, but most will help each other out like a brotherhood; recreational fishermen are like dog eat dog; how they've had police down to the ramps on chinco.

Sam: sport fishermen go regardless of the weather, could be blowing a hurricane and still go out; how you can take some body fishing twice but the third time you take them they know more than you know; even if you go everyday, had this happen all his life; how much does this person know is what he thinks; story of taking a friend from Baltimore fishing who always brought along another friend who didn't know much about fishing in deep water, this guy brought a fly rod to fish for trout in the bay, 12-14 lb. trout in 60-70 feet of water; guy wondering why he isn't catching any trout and telling Sam that you catch trout on a fly rod, Sam says yes in fresh water but this is deep water and they aren't really trout they're wheat fish a member of the croaker family, guy didn't catch anything never would take a regular rod from Sam

Sam: How fishermen hang out at Davis wharf in the winter and talk about the tales that happened over the last year; why Sam likes fishing, own boss, likes fish; if you don't enjoy what you're doing you are going to be an unhappy soul

Ernie: "If you enjoy what you're doing you won't work a day in your life, if you don't

enjoy it you work every minute."

Sam: if they hadn't outlawed commercial hunting I'd been satisfied, I could have hunted part of the year and sold what I hunted and fished the other part

Ernie: trapping used to be a big thing here on the shore, muskrats, raccoons and foxes; muskrat more than anything; Humane society and PETA ended that; killed the market for it; when Ernie in school used to get \$7-8 a hide and then got down to 50 cents; now they are \$3;

Sam: talk of anti-fur and percentage of population against it; since stopped trapping the animals have died off due to rabies; never used to see a rabid animal until a few years ago, trapped and hunted on shore all his life and never saw them; father told him about rabid animals; whiped out the raccoon population;

Ernie: raccoon trapping was live trapping, using them to restock the North East; got \$15-20 per raccoon alive; used live traps; for muskrats used conibear traps, kills them pretty instantly, not foot traps cause you lose animals that way they chew their foot off and swim away; how muskrats destroy the roads with their tunneling;

Sam: story of trapping when he was young and went to Newburry's in Pocomoke, fur man had just come and paid them off in 100s and 50 dollar bills, back in the early 1960s; never seen a 100 dollar bill before; Sam wanted a fighter plane model to put together at Newburry's went in with a \$100 bill, model only \$2; lady rang it up and he handed her the \$100 bill and she looked at it then got the manager who held it up in the light and asked where Sam got the bill; said he earned it trapping; manager said kids not supposed to have this much money, had to ask Sam's mom; fur man only dealt in cash with \$100s; got \$250 for his furs; three hours a day trapping and made more money than his mom;

[Ernie hands me a laminated \$1000 bill, no longer printed, Ernie has a substantial coin and currency collection]

Sam: how when he was a child there weren't any deer on the shore; used to stop the car if you saw one and then you would tell everyone and they wouldn't believe you; now you practically run over 2 dozen on the way down the road;

Ernie: never saw a deer on chincot., only last 8 or 10 years you see one on the island and now we have controlled hunts they are so thick;

Sam: hunting this year and the amount of deer he saw, saw 100 just on the way over here tonight, bunched up in the fields;

Ernie: makes a joke about how deer are so thick they are going to mate with people now; especially Sam

Sam: starts in immediately with story of friends being chased by bucks, run up trees or shooting a buck and having other deer chase them away from the carcass, starts in with his own story of being chased by a buck while wearing buck lure [this is a scent that hunters use to attract bucks, it smells like a doe in heat]; used to use vanilla extract and still does; found a set of buck tracks, wind blowing down the tracks took a few more steps and heard a grunt; looked up and here he comes trotting towards Sam wearing the doe rut lure; head straight out still trotting; Sam swung the gun off his arm and he stopped, 7 pt buck; not more than 30 feet; buck started pawing the ground and Sam said I don't like that and then here he come

Ernie: "well he had his mind on something and you kinda disappointed him Sam."

Sam: buck lowered his head and started charging, Sam flipped the rifle around and shot but kept coming; so fired another round and this time jumped out of the way because thought he would run him over, buck was that close; buck went down; happened so quick

Ernie: "And you'd never been able to deliver that fawn."

[Laughter from all]

Sam: put deer in the back of the truck and went home, looked at watch before leaving the house at 2:55 and returned to house at 3:17; wife surprised he was home, told her the story, around 5 called Ernie and told him, still excited; how foxes have stalked him in the woods and marshes; now he pays attention when walking and keeps track of where the wind is blowing, wife said he can't use the lure any more had to go back to vanilla

Ernie: "She's just afraid you'll find somebody better."

Sam: butchers own meat but doesn't make the hamburger, never buys red meat only eats venison, beef has no flavor; just like seafood, eat it 3 or 4 times a week; new study on eating fish and preventing heart attacks, saw that in an article and on the next page was another one about world's oceans over-fished.

Sam: tarsal gland on bucks; doesn't cut it out, tries to get them in an open field so he can drive the truck up to them and pick them up;

Ernie: used to castrate the bucks same as bulls when you kill them, try to do it when they are barely alive, prevent it from getting testosterone in meat and giving it a bitter taste; especially after rut season;

Sam: what really helps the taste is aging it; age it in a freezer;

Ernie: only thing you can eat right after you kill it is pork; beef cures from the inside out and pork cures from the outside in, gets stronger with age

Sam: killed hogs when young, so did Ernie; no more hog killings; everybody had hogs hanging in their yards

Ernie: 55 gallon drums with boiling water and pine shats in it, scald them with that after you kill them; turpentine helps the hair come off,

[I ask about the metal cones to scrape the hair off with]

Ernie: "Clam shells, we live here on Chincoteague, we had clam shells."

Sam: "we had what you're talking about, those scrapers."

Ernie: description of going to uncle's farm every year to help with the hog killing it was off the island and so did things a little different; explains steps: shoot them to knock them down but it doesn't kill them, then stab them through the heart by cutting an X into their chest with 2 quick stabs

talk about what people do with the blood, some discussion of different things made with the blood: sausage, pudding, drinking it

Ernie: the next night you ate tenderloin and the following night you ate fresh ham

Sam: well the next morning you ate the brains for breakfast; loves them used to get them at butcher shop; 2600 units of cholesterol in 3oz serving; making head souse or head cheese; Sam's souse had tenderloin in it; mom made it sour lots of vinegar;

Ernie: family used to eat that too, but he doesn't like it; clabbor was another thing they ate that he didn't like; put a little sugar on it; looks like 90 weight oil when you pour it out;

Sam: making butter when the chum was broke, used to put cream in court jars and sit in

a rocking chair and shake it; kids used to love to watch this; takes about 15 minutes; use unpastuerized cream; used the butter and eggs to barter at the store; how life has changed on the farms; not individual farms, Sam's brother tends hundreds of acres on many farms, how some people now sell on the side of the road but that's not all they can do, can't make a living off it; difference in farming to make a living and farming to live; in Sam's time saw these changes: kids would grow up and leave and the farms would be left with just the parents on them, would ask neighbor kid to tend it, rent out land to him; that's how Sam's brother got started, only one left on the farm and surrounding farms so began farming all those too

Ernie: how only thing his father's family bought was sugar, flour and yeast, and salt and pepper; salted fish down in winter and ate what you caught: fish, wildfowl, didn't eat beef; if you had a cow it was for milk;

Sam: memories of father not eating beef because mom wouldn't cook it rare, had to have the blood running out

Ernie: "I'll tell you a story about a cow" [really a joke] 3 people are shipwrecked on an island, a bottle washes up with a genie in it, gives every person 1 wish; 1 person from France, one from USA, one from Russia; Frenchman wishes for vineyard and chalet on mountainside in France--poof he's there;

END SIDE A

BEGIN SIDE B MAAF/KF/VA/FT/1.19.304/602

American wishes for 1 million dollars and big ranch in TX--poof he's there; Russian tells genie that he never had anything growing up never had a cow, Genie asks if that is what he wants--a cow; Russian says no let me think, no I'd rather have my neighbor's cow die.

Sam: hopes he doesn't live to see fishing go the way farming has; how sweet potatoes and white potatoes were so big on shore, couldn't fall down without coming up with a potato; used to pick them up after the farmer was done, never bought them

Ernie: no such thing as the tomatoes have now, back then only raised them for canneries, how all shut down now

Sam: used to work at canning factories in summer time;

Ernie: everybody did, everyone on Chincoteague did

Sam: from the month of august was tomato time, and in spring would take off school and go pick strawberries for money; now no strawberry fields anywhere; 10 cent a quart; teachers knew that in May on certain mornings half the class wouldn't be there; now none; now its u pick in MD; everything has its day around here; now its grain farming, but the truck farming is going out; it's all going to Mexico now; NAFTA

Ernie: how NAFTA has hurt them [earlier said it helped them with getting cheaper, well made nets] S. America can supply fish cheaper; quality doesn't drive the US market, price does; story of friend who went to Africa to teach them how to fish and use trawlers, how he went to cash in \$500 at bank and got 3 sacks of money; "We're going to be in the maritime museum after a while. I don't know which one of us they're going to stuff. I'm kinda hoping him." More jokes about Sam's encounter with randy buck.

Sam: heard same story about fishing when he was 18: no money in fishing, don't go into it, it will be outlawed soon, fish are gone, over fished; went to work for Dupont instead; "well, everything that was gone then is back now [the fish] and what's gone now was around then."

Ernie: when he first started fishing you never saw a trout, a croaker, or any of that; now they are abundant, trout back; had never seen a croaker even after 3 years of commercial fishing; trout disappeared in 40s or 50s; came back in late 60s; he started in 1966; how used to go to Kenny Doughty's [now Ches-Atlantic] hucksters would match coins as to who got the trout, might have 20-30 lbs between all of them; more fish and more regulations now; eventually will clamp down on the big trawlers, probably soon; killing themselves; too big to operate; less now than back then too; chinco was full of little trawlers when he was a boy; flynet boats numbers are dropping;

Sam: How their equipment doesn't cost as much; boats not as expensive; don't get the volume and better off fishing on scarce fish;

Ernie: full-time watermen are history, part-time will continue; but nobody's coming into the industry; Ernie is one of the younger ones; attrition rate;

Sam: cycles of fish; abundance of rock but what good are they, so many they can't get enough to eat and are dying of disease; not like the stock market where it grows if you add more, no; once they grow and are over-populated they die; then they blame us for over fishing; never a disease

Kelly: Pfisteria questions

Ernie: all tests in VA said no disease; not many fish either; it was a hysteria; 20,000 fish that were very small

Sam: I know the guy who first started seeing this, he called and asked me what to do. I said he should call the biologist. Well, see, if we go to them with a problem the problem is us. Mostly VIMS, if it's not in their book then they don't know and it's our fault; or it doesn't exist; problem really started last winter, took it to the biologist and never heard back; then in the spring people started seeing more; then the news media got hold it; opinion of media and news; nothing going besides the Pfisteria so had to make it the big story; one statistic that the Post had never mentioned the Chesapeake bay unless an airplane had crashed into it or some other accident; reporters out looking for a Pulitzer prize; all articles were the same, just a different first paragraph; story of how guy in MD came home to 11 satellite up links in his yard; how reporters rearrange your words and turn them into lies

Ernie: approached by Post doing article on Becky Dunlop secretary of Natural resources in state of VA; was extremely good to commercial fishermen; she would straighten things out with VMRC with one call; wanted to do positive article on Becky but article mis quoted Ernie and made Becky look bad;

Sam: back to Pfisteria; lied about how you get the animal--not a disease, that was their first lie--really get it from contact with water, not seafood; but didn't want to hurt the tourist industry; watermen didn't get any reimbursement or coverage for money lost, but state employees will

Ernie: in study for Johns Hopkins; supplied control group for study on recovery from

Pfisteria; those people living on the Pocomoke river who were studied and had it are disgusted with the whole situation, won't participate anymore; so blown out of hand; just caused a panic; MD saying that chicken farmers caused it, well possible and they might be part of the problem but there are other causes: urban development and sewage plants; 1994-95 were very dry years and not enough rain to flush out the rivers etc.;

Sam: then in 1996 here comes the flush; so much rain that couldn't hold all the water and the sewage plants overflowed; one in Onancock did, river smelled like a urinal; occurred after the rains; water different colors and no seafood; Pocomoke is the longest narrowest deepest river in the country; in a dry year nothing flushes but with that rain it swamped everything, hog farms chicken farms sewage plants etc.; golf courses everything; yet Gov. MD points finger to chicken farms; but gave the sewage plants money to upgrade immediately;

Ernie: got a letter from Gov.' Allen about same thing; upgrade sewage plants and wanted watermen to support budget for this as part of Chesapeake bay restoration; compost sheds etc.; hog farms in Utah and manure;

Sam: hog manure and the amount of it they produce; problem with the chickens is that there is so many; Sam's brother tends 7 chicken houses uses better management practices with a horticulturist; use it primarily on corn land; it just causes hard feelings between everyone

Ernie: I want to point the finger when we know who to point it at; that's happened to us all our lives, we've had enough of it; so don't want to do it to somebody else until we know; not talking to press, directing questions to man in Gov.' office; VA made out better in the press than MD but still associated with the Bay; decimated Shell Town MD

Both talk about the hysteria of the media, international reach of the hysteria

Ernie: Barbara mentioned Pfisteria last week and I said we wouldn't know we had it, the main thing is memory loss and we can't remember nothing now and we wouldn't remember that we forgot everything; wouldn't know we had it;

Sam: had friends that had the memory loss; stories of friends;

Ernie: Dr. From Johns Hopkins said are they're all back to normal, Ernie said no they're no cause they weren't normal before;

Sam; some friends would forget a thought in mid-sentence or forget what they were in the kitchen for

Ernie: "It's called middle age"

Sam: yeah but this was constant

Ernie: "they were telling us all the problems before they tested us you know, and I said well let me ask you a question. I personally don't know anybody over the age of 40 that don't have memory loss. Do you know anybody that doesn't. I said I'll go in the shed to get a wrench and forget what I come in there for;

Sam: can't remember names, takes a good look at them but doesn't remember names

Ernie: says he remembers the Merrill Lynche guy's name because he's got a lot of his money; [talks to his dog Shadow]

both talk of their dogs;

Ernie comments that I sure have had a wide variety of information tonight questions about the project

Ernie's great great grandfather was captain Chandler, shows photo of him; Mom's side was from Germany, she was first one born in US in PA; Ernie part of the Chandler, Bowden, Pruitt line; long line of criminals that helped settle the shore

Sam: family tree, mother's side started in Kansas; ended up on shore; father had lots of kids, Sam oldest and born when mom was 42; mother from PA and moved into MD at age 2;

Ernie was 2 when moved back to chinco from PA; family ran a seafood company, uncle had a fish pound company; ocean fish pounds then and were big, none left now; then oyster company and seafood markets in PA; dad got seasick so drove trucks; but still loved the water and would go out even though got sick;

Sam: seasickness;

Ernie: older man who helped him build his boat, his father used to get seasick surf fishing from the beach; Assateague used to be a big red drum fishing area; but don't like to be disturbed so not there anymore; too many little tourist feet and too many ponies.

Sam: Chinco used to be like Tangier but even they are becoming tourist spot now; homes used to belong to watermen or people involved in the seafood industry, or merchants;

Ernie: oyster, clam and picking houses were everywhere, 12 at least now only 2; used to be 5 shucking houses within 500 yards of the house; Okie Taylor's and Tommy Mason's, WC bunting's, Shreese bros, John Joe Baker's, Thornton Bros., Watson's, McCreedy Bros';

Sam: Crisfield when he was young; shells and oysters all on trucks; African American community in counties worked there; year round employment;

Ernie: can't get pickers unless they are from Mexico;

Sam: welfare is the sad part; and that kind of work is not nice

Ernie: people don't want to start at the bottom anymore;

Sam: wouldn't mind shucking oysters for a living but not picking crabs

Ernie: I would starve to death doing that; record picker can pick 3-4 lbs in 15 minutes to win; story of how they went to a big meeting in Hampton; had old black lady picking crabs for demonstration; she picked and talked to them at same time, didn't look at what she was doing, like it wasn't nothing, two little hand motions and she could pull out the finger meat; showed Ernie how to do it; showed Barbara and it made a lot of difference in how we pick; we weren't doing it right

Sam: art to doing it; first wife's mother picked and showed him

END OF TAPE

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[when this tape ended Sam finished his sentence. It was I 1 p.m. and we all called it a night. They probably could have gone on for longer if it wasn't so late and they didn't have to fish the next day]

