

Interview Log

Interviewee: Colleen and Roy Saddler **Tape #:** MAAF/KF/FT2.8.99 325
Interviewer: Kelly Feltault **# of Tapes:** 2
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Crabbing, oystering, fishing, gender, waterwomen, tourism, trot lining

Corresponding Photography Log #:

Comments: Colleen and Roy work the water together as a team. Colleen's father was a boat builder, her mother crabbed. Roy's father was a waterman. They are fine interpreters of local culture and understand the complex issues facing small waterman's communities around the shore, and the importance of preserving traditional culture.

BEGIN SIDE A

K.F.: If I could have one of you just start off by just saying your name and the date followed by the other one. I'll let you decide who goes first.

R.S.: Ladies first.

C.S.: Colleen Saddler, February the 8th.

R.S.: Roy Saddler, February the 8th, 1999.

K.F.: Okay. Great. Colleen, where were you born?

C.S.: In Tilghman.

K.F.: In Tilghman?

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

K.F.: Okay. And, Roy?

R.S.: I was born Tilghman also.

K.F.: Okay. Can I ask what year you all were born in?

C.S.: I was born in '61.

K.F.: Okay.

R.S.: '53.

K.F.: All right. And I'll ask this generally, and you can answer it individually if you want to, but how did you learn to work on the water?

R.S.: Well, I was born and raised here, and I'd go out with my father when he, working on the water every day I got a chance, and just kept on and I just learned to love it. It was born right into me. And my brother, he was just the opposite. He's gone into a mechanics, but it's just something I love to do.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: And once it gets in your blood, it don't get out of it. (Laughter.) You can just try everything, I tried electrical work, brick laying, different things, and I've always come back to it. I'm just well satisfied with what I do.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative). And would you go out with your father like on days off of school, or just in the summer?

R.S.: Summertime, days I had off, weekends, different things. Of course, things are changed now. The laws are changed where sometimes they don't allow you to work on Saturdays now, but then you could work on Saturdays. And any time I got a chance, I was out with him, just doing everything I could do.

K.F.: And what did your father fish for?

R.S.: He fished for crabs, and he worked for a clam company, for soft shell clams. I done a lot with them, different people, crabs, oysters, the whole works. Mainly when you're a waterman, you have to do everything. (Laughter.)

K.F.: Okay. So he really worked the cycle, the seasonal cycle then.

R.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

K.F.: Okay. And how about you, Colleen?

C.S.: Well I crabbed with my mom when I was little.

K.F.: Okay.

C.S.: I loved, I just loved it.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: And then whenever I got an opportunity, I'd go soft crabbing. And then when I married Roy, well I think he knew that I liked working on the water, so that's when I started crabbing with him. I tonged with him. And then, of course, when we started a family, got a son, that held you know, that held me back from going out on the water for a while.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: And then I did go crabbing two summers by myself with my son.

K.F.: Okay.

C.S.: And then after that, then we just started going out with you. And this year, I started back tonging with him, culling oysters for him.

K.F.: Okay.

C.S.: And it is, it's no job better than being out there, seeing the scenery, you know.

K.F.: Now what is it that makes this job so special for you all?

C.S.: It's hard work, but you're away from all the hustle, the bustle, the complaining, the boss, the nagging, you know. They put expectations on you, but when you're out there, you put them on yourself, and you succeed, you know.

R.S.: I get the satisfaction of if I go out and catch my limit, I know I've done it myself. If I, whatever I do, I do it myself. And somebody hasn't made it for me.

C.S.: No one's helped you.

R.S.: No. No one's helped.

C.S.: It's just a sense of self-accomplishment, you know.

K.F.: Now how much does that sense of self-accomplishment carry over outside of working on the water? I mean is that something that you think about here at home too?

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: Oh, yeah.

K.F.: How does that filter in here?

C.S.: Well –

R.S.: It sort of takes – you take a little pride in things. When you're out there on the water, you take pride in what you do for a living, you take pride in your boat, you're keeping your boat up, painting it, working it and everything, and it sort of rides over when you come to your home. You take pride into your home. With all the time that you spent out working and making the money, you don't want to come throw it away. (Laughter.) You make sure it's going for good use, and things that you need and keeping things up.

C.S.: And it's, I guess it's little things too like when you have to work on your own motor, and you have to work on your own boat, you have to do the repairs. That, in turn, transfers over into your home. If there's things that need to be repaired, most people would call a repairman or a contractor or whatever to come fix something. We don't.

R.S.: You try to do it yourself.

C.S.: You fix it.

R.S.: And if you don't, then you call the repairman. (Laughter.)

C.S.: Yeah. But we'll tackle anything.

R.S.: Yeah. Try to.

K.F.: Okay, okay. So you guys have been working the water together for how long?

R.S.: Well you were 16, 17?

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative). What, about –

R.S.: It's a lot of years.

C.S.: -- 22 years?

R.S.: Twenty, 21 years between it, yeah.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: On and off, you know, when we can.

K.F.: Right. And how old was your son when you started taking him out on the water?

C.S.: Seven, eight.

R.S.: Yeah, but he was going in back and forth with us. He had just been born. As a matter of fact, me and my father, when my father built his own boat, and he helped me build my boat.

K.F.: Okay.

R.S.: We had built it right in the back yard. And we had the bottom all done into it, and we had the tarp over the bottom where if it rained, the tarp had water into it. So when he was small, she took him down, set him down there like a little swimming pool. (Laughter.)

C.S.: Put him in the boat.

R.S.: I guess that's where he got his first –

C.S.: Say this is where you're going to spend a lot of your time, in this boat. Get used to it.

R.S.: A lot of time. Get used to it. So I guess that's where it might've started. (Laughter.) He loves to go out.

C.S.: Yeah.

R.S.: He has a disability. He's blind. He has a disease, but he gets along. He just likes to be out.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: And he gets used to the boat, he knows where everything's at on the boat. 'Cause I try to –

C.S.: He knows the whole procedure.

R.S.: Try to keep everything the same place so he can know where everything's at.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

K.F.: So you guys crab and clam?

R.S.: Oyster.

C.S.: And oyster.

K.F.: And oyster.

R.S.: Yeah.

K.F.: Okay.

C.S.: Now he's fishing right now.

R.S.: Yeah.

C.S.: Which, of course, that's a man thing.

R.S.: Yeah. (Laughter.)

K.F.: Why is that?

R.S.: Well mostly it's getting up like 2:30, 3:00 in the morning, which will be hard for her to have to do being, you know, school and everything, his going to school and her – a lot of times, it's 5, 6, 7:00 at night we're getting home. It's just too much.

C.S.: Well not only that. It's the kind of job that – I mean I know a lot of women want to say equal, equal, equal, but there are certain things that separate the men from the women.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: And fishing's one of them. Now I do gear his netting for him. I do gear net.

R.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: But that's about the extent that I get involved with fishing.

R.S.: It's just hard work. And you have, most time you're having three, four men aboard the boat. So –

C.S.: Strenuous work too.

R.S.: Yeah.

C.S.: Pulling the net in. And, you know, you got freezing cold temperature, and snow and –

K.F.: Right.

C.S.: It's just not a place for a woman to be.

R.S.: Lifting heavy fish boxes.

C.S.: Yeah.

R.S.: So she takes a break when I do that.

K.F.: Okay. Now what's your yearly cycle as far as when you start, let's start with crabbing and go through.

R.S.: Most times, it's the middle of April before I start crabbing, and I go until the last of September, first of October.

C.S.: And you put your boat up on railway.

R.S.: Then I get ready to go tonging, oystering. It starts in – most of time, it's last of December, first of January before I start fishing because the weather, fish like cold weather. And far as catching the kind of fish that I'm doing, you have to have cold weather. And most of the time, it's January before you get that. Of course, this year's been a different year too.

(Laughter.) Times have changed.

C.S.: And you've got the forbidden spring where you go, I mean there's one period there where you really don't do anything.

K.F.: And what is that time of year?

R.S.: Well first of April till crabs come on.

K.F.: Okay. (Laughter.)

R.S.: Whenever crab decides to crawl, and most times, you're just biding your time in April and just waiting. And most times, it's like in the middle of May. So you're gone a month, month and a half of really not bringing any money in at all hardly. Just going out for something to do.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

K.F.: What do you all do in that month and a half?

C.S.: Well that's when he really puts his boat up on the railway.

R.S.: Yeah, get that straight.

C.S.: And does a thorough going over, painting the name, everything.

R.S.: Yeah, getting the crabbing stuff ready to go. Then most time when I do start crabbing, you go out four or five hours, and you see there's not going to be anything yet because crabs haven't started to crawl. So until the water gets warm again, then when they start crawling, then you can stay a little bit later hours. So –

C.S.: You take advantage of that time too, get stuff straight around here that you don't get straight.

R.S.: Right. Get time to do in the winter. (Laughter.)

K.F.: Right, right. Yeah, I was going to ask you how that works if you're both out on the water for most of the year really, then how does that work?

C.S.: Well like in the summer when we're crabbing, we get in, what, about 3, 2:30, 3?

R.S.: 2:30, 3:00 about.

C.S.: Yeah. And when it's grass-cutting day (Laughter), that's the day that's – but, yeah, we do, we take turns, you know.

R.S.: Most of that's done in the evening.

C.S.: Yeah, in the evenings.

K.F.: Okay.

C.S.: Wash the cars on weekends, Sunday. You know, of course, with crabbing now, you've got to choose either Sunday or Monday is the days that you're not going to crab, so he takes Sunday off.

R.S.: Sunday off.

K.F.: Okay.

C.S.: And I take Monday off. Just in case (Laughter) crabs are really biting, then I say okay, I'm going to take the boat. We're going to go. (Laughter.) But –

K.F.: Okay. Now do you both need a license to go out?

R.S.: That's right.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

K.F.: Okay, okay.

R.S.: Yeah. They've changed so many laws any more about licenses, and raised the fees on them.

C.S.: Yeah. Okay. Like when I go out oystering with him, I need a license to cull the oysters. But if he was to catch over his 15 bushel, then the extra would have to be put on my license, but in order for them to be sold, I have to pay a \$300 surcharge.

R.S.: Yeah.

K.F.: For what? (Laughter.)

R.S.: Well the \$300 surcharge was voted partly on watermen, they voted on it their selves, to help replenish their own oysters for seed program is what it was for in the spring of the year.

K.F.: Okay, okay.

R.S.: To help, that \$300 was supposed to go back into the seed program to put the oysters, the seed oysters back on the oyster bars. So that's where that come from mostly.

C.S.: Yeah. So, technically, it's saying if you're going to take any off of there to sell, then you need to pay your \$300 surcharge to place back what you're taking.

K.F.: Okay. Now when I talked with your mom, I asked her to describe mornings on the boat. I'm wondering if you guys can describe some of the mornings you recall on the boat.

R.S.: Mornings?

K.F.: Or what it's like to be out on the water at that time.

R.S.: It's peaceful. Very peaceful. Getting up early in the morning, nobody's around. Most time you're out there by yourself until everybody gets going, you know, then – but it's nice, it's real nice to see different sunrises and different things on the water, something different.

C.S.: Yeah, every day, every day changes. You know, you're not always in the same place all the time. The weather conditions are always different, the sunrises are totally different, the sky's totally different. You know, everything is just –

R.S.: It's a lot different, somebody hopping in their car and going to the same job every day in the same building. They're going to see the same thing every day. But most of the time we see something different every day. If it's a goose or a duck flying by, or a fish hawk on the beacon.

C.S.: Well just like this summer. This summer it was fine the first summer. I was able to see the porpoises.

K.F.: Really?

C.S.: Yes.

R.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: And they weren't no further from here to that cabinet from the boat.

K.F.: Wow.

R.S.: Every other year, she's been (Laughter), she's been wanting to see them, and the days that I see them, she's not with me. (Laughter.) This year, she was with me.

C.S.: Yeah. If I had to take a day off, go do something and come home and say I saw them, they were right by the boat.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: You just turn the motor off, and they'll swim all around you.

K.F.: Oh, wow. I didn't know they came up into the bay.

R.S.: Oh, yeah.

C.S.: It's a certain time during the summer that they'll come up. I don't know whether they're chasing some –

R.S.: Feed.

C.S.: Feed.

R.S.: Yeah.

K.F.: Yeah.

C.S.: They'll stay around for, what, a couple weeks and then they'll leave.

R.S.: Summer's like that, yeah, most the time.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: Then they're gone again.

K.F.: Okay.

R.S.: But it's pretty well a new experience about every morning.

C.S.: Well even every haul you go down your line, it's a totally different – I mean you can go down one time and catch five crabs.

R.S.: Yeah.

C.S.: And the next time, you can go down there and you catch 30 crabs, you know, it's just, it's a gamble. And that's what's so exciting is soon as you put the line up on the roller, you're thinking okay, now what is it going to be this time, 'cause it's always different.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative). Well can you describe that excitement of like, you all are trot lining I gather, right?

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

K.F.: Okay. Of what it's like seeing the line come up anticipating, and I know I've had fishermen say the same thing about hauling in the net, you never know what's in it. But can you describe that? What's that excitement? What is it about that excitement that -- (Laughter.)

C.S.: I'll tell you one thing that's exciting. You can always tell when a crab's coming up on the line because the line will go down.

K.F.: Okay.

R.S.: The weight of the crab.

C.S.: Yeah. And you're standing there, and you're thinking okay, you're going to come up here, but what gets you so upset is the fact that they'll start dropping off, and the line will start coming up, and you know that the crabs are down there, but they're just not biting.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: And that – and then when you're finished that haul, you think oh, well maybe they'll do it the next time. You know, you get excited, but then you get disappointed. How would you describe it?

R.S.: Well, I don't know, I guess I'm getting used to getting disappointed. (Laughter.)

C.S.: Yeah. This job is disappointing.

R.S.: Yeah. No, I guess it's hard to explain. And I've took some people with me that have never seen crabs done before, and they were, you know, and everybody's leaning over the washboard looking over the side of the boat, looking at that line, just waiting for a crab to come up. They're not looking all around at anything, just looking at that line. Just waiting for a crab. (Laughter.) But I don't –

C.S.: It's like knowing that the big mass of water out there has got the species down in there. You know they're there. You can't see them, and you know that you've used everything that you've got there that you're supposed to be using to be able to catch it. It's like somebody saying there's something behind this door, and all you've got to do is open the door and you'll see. It's –

R.S.: Well –

C.S.: The moment of – I don't know, it's very hard to explain. It's –

R.S.: To me, it's something that's supposed to have been, man's supposed to hunt for food to eat. And that's what you're doing with Mother Nature out there. You're bringing up Mother Nature's food in order to replenish yourself.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: That's the only job that I know of that's honest. It's an honest job.

C.S.: And there are good, there are good watermen, and there are bad ones.

R.S.: Correct.

C.S.: And it's like survival of the fittest.

K.F.: Now can you describe that a little better for me? 'Cause what would make good versus bad, and how do you survive?

C.S.: A good, a good waterman has an awful lot of determination, has – will put their entire heart and soul behind what they're doing. The bad ones will go out there and say oh, you know, so I might come out here and catch \$50 worth of crabs. So what? I'll quit 10:00 and I'll go home.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: And slowly through the process of the changes and the regulations and fees, you see some of the bad ones being dwindled out, because they don't, they don't have their heart and soul behind them, do they? I mean they'll just –

R.S.: Well it's got to a point now where you have to – it's just like with anything else with society, everything's so hard to keep going. You have to try to keep making money, keep making money. And it seems like now that you just can't make enough.

K.F.: Right.

R.S.: No matter how much you make, it's just not enough.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: And you have to work harder, and harder, and harder all the time to make, you know, just make ends meet.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: And it's so many people after things out there now, it's sort of dwindling down.

K.F.: Right.

R.S.: I mean at one time, you had all commercial, you know, watermen. It was just the commercial watermen went out, they caught it, they come sold it to the market, and the people went to the market and bought it. Well that's not what's happening now. Everybody's like you say development, they're moving around the shores. They're putting crab pots on the piers. They're getting in outboards, they're going out, they're catching all these crabs and fish, and then they have to go to market now.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: And people that I know that have weekly jobs, they work a 40-hour week, they put it in in four days, they work 10-hour days. So they put in four, you know, four days. The other time they got a license, they go out and crab. Well they catch crabs, they take them to the city. Most of them live Western Shore, whatever. They come down, they take them to the city and they sell two or three bushel, which is extra income for them.

K.F.: Right.

R.S.: And it's just –

C.S.: Like, for instance, recreational crab license is, what, \$5?

R.S.: Something like that.

C.S.: Which enables them to catch one bushel of crabs. But a lot of them are living on the water. They come out in their boat, they catch their bushel of crabs, they take the bushel, put it on their pier, they come back out, they'll crab some more, catch another bushel, take it into the shore, put it on their pier and they'll catch two, three bushel, take them and sell them, which is glutton, really. I mean you take all of them that's doing it, plus the market on their end –

K.F.: Right.

R.S.: It's just the people have got in this area, it's just – they've overrun the area. You can take a look around –

C.S.: A lot of people has got this thought that watermen are rich. (Laughter.)

K.F.: Right.

C.S.: They really do.

K.F.: They do.

C.S.: And if they would stop and just take in consideration all their hours, the wear and tear on their boat, the fuel, their food to go out there, you know, all the supplies that they need, the salt, their bait, their help. They're not doing it. I mean like for instance, now a bushel of oysters is, what, \$12?

R.S.: Fourteen, I think.

C.S.: \$14 a bushel.

R.S.: Fourteen on the average. Yeah.

C.S.: You go and see what they are if you go to a seafood market and try to buy them.

K.F.: Right.

C.S.: And they have no market. Tomorrow they don't want them. So, you know, it's, you've got your good times, but then you've got their bad, and then they equal out to a regular, middle class, average income is what it does.

R.S.: And if you don't save the good times and put away for the bad times, you're not going to make it.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: And that's another thing that a bad waterman will do. When he's making it, he splurges it.

R.S.: Spends it.

K.F.: Oh, okay.

C.S.: You know, like oh, I'm so excited. I got money, I got money, I got money.

K.F.: Right.

C.S.: Then all of a sudden when the bad time comes, he falls on his face.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: So you really got to know how to –

R.S.: Right.

C.S.: I don't know. It's strange how a lot of people think watermen are rich. And that's why a lot of them move in here and say oh, I can do that. I can make 3, \$400 a day. (Laughter.) No. You can't. (Laughter.)

R.S.: Don't work like that.

K.F.: Okay. Well let me back up to trot lining. Why are you guys still trot lining rather than potting?

R.S.: Potting has got so expensive.

K.F.: Really?

R.S.: The price of the crab pots have gone up, the material to make the crab pots, the buoys they put on the lines, the paint they have to use to keep them painted, and the help nowadays to get two or three people on a boat to crab pot, they don't want to – kids don't want to do it anymore.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: They want to come aboard the boat, and they want to make \$100, you know, just with nothing invested, they want to come aboard the boat and make \$100 or so. And you can't keep good help no more. And the boat traffic up and down the bay has got so bad that they lose a lot of pots. If you lose, you know, some of them's lost six, seven pots a day.

K.F.: Wow. That's a lot.

R.S.: You know, just by being cut off, by boaters going back and forth. And which most of the boaters try to avoid, I know, because they don't want to get it in their wheel, but accidents happen. Some boaters – plus pots being stole, it's just got so expensive.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: And to me, it's not worth it. And it's a lot of extra work to it.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative). Oh, yeah. Cleaning the pots and –

R.S.: Yeah, that's from sunup until – well, way before sunup until you go to bed at night.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: And when you trot line, when you get off the boat, you're done.

R.S.: Yeah.

C.S.: Other than fueling the boat up.

R.S.: Right.

C.S.: Other than that, you're done.

R.S.: It's less expensive, and I don't have to worry about getting some boy up out of bed to come work with me. (Laughter.) I just tell her to get up. (Laughter.)

C.S.: All right. All right.

R.S.: But everything's just go so outrageous. The price of the bait that they use for them has got so high. It – I don't know how they –

C.S.: Well just like when you, there was no other bait but eels. Eels got so expensive.

R.S.: Yeah.

C.S.: Now you're using bull lips, and pig tongues, and chicken necks, and –

R.S.: Yeah. Every farm animal there is. (Laughter.)

C.S.: Even the pigs.

K.F.: Okay. Can you guys – are there special names for areas that you like to go set your lines?

R.S.: Yes, pretty well, I do. I usually start out in the Broad Creek area, you know, in the spring of the year, 'cause that's where most of the crabs are at. And then eventually when they move out of the creek, I usually crab at Cook's Point or Todd's Point in Dorchester County over in that area. Then sometimes late in the fall when crabs sort of go up the bay, I might go to Eastern Bay area, St. Michaels area, up that way. But that's the major areas I stay in.

C.S.: We were all over the place this summer. (Laughter.)

R.S.: Everybody's looking for crabs.

C.S.: There aren't any to find. (Laughter.)

R.S.: But they have so many things after them. With the predators in the bay, I see double heads, what do they call the? Skate. They're getting thicker and thicker every year, and they just eating everything in the path. I mean now you got rockfish coming back which is eating them.

C.S.: Yeah. The moratorium they put on that, they really invented a –

R.S.: Yeah –

C.S.: -- vicious cycle there. Whoever just thought that out really didn't think the big picture, you know.

R.S.: Messing with Mother Nature again.

C.S.: And you cannot mess with the food chain cycle that you're not going to throw something completely out.

K.F.: Right.

C.S.: And they did it. And they don't want to admit to it. Oh, no. Make a man say I made a mistake because they're not going to do that.

R.S.: But it's a little bit of everything that's contributed to it. But a crab can come back in a matter of no time. It's not like an oyster, you know. One year you got paid, next year you got – I've seen it years and years before just like everybody can tell you about the rockfish, they've seen it years before and it used to be scarce, and all the sudden they're back again. It's just Mother Nature's cycle of it. If you had every species in this bay that was supposed to be here at one time, they wouldn't have no food for anything. (Laughter.) Everything wouldn't have enough to eat. It's just the way it works.

C.S.: I mean it used to be an abundance of bluefish.

R.S.: Right.

C.S.: Well you very seldom ever see a bluefish now. It used to be that there was an abundance of hardhead, and then the hardhead left. Well they were coming back, you know. So they do, it runs in a cycle. Then somebody might recognize and get in a panic and say oh, you need to do something about this before it's time, and that's what alters everything.

R.S.: Yes. Well it has to be restrictions on things. I understand that, or things would go crazy. But you can't go all out and change one species. That's my opinion.

C.S.: Yeah. Well look way back when your father was fishing, or those old people were fishing. I mean they were coming in with three, four, five tons of fish a day.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: I mean that's a lot of fish.

K.F.: That's a lot of fish.

C.S.: Well you would be locked up in prison.

R.S.: Well, yeah.

K.F.: Well I guess the question today too is would you be able to sell five tons of fish.

C.S.: No.

R.S.: Did the man nowadays – well –

C.S.: Publicity.

R.S.: Yeah, in a way, I blame the media. They've got misled about certain things, and naturally, when you put things on the news, everybody wants to hear bad news, because that's what sells. And they have put things about the fish kills and all this stuff. I mean they've had fish kills for years, since way back when.

C.S.: Yeah, that pfiesteria stuff, that's always –

R.S.: But they blew it out of proportion. I mean it killed us in our fish industry. Nobody bought anything. We got down to 50 cents a pound for rockfish last year. It was terrible, for rockfish, the state fish, 50 cents a pound.

C.S.: And just like –

R.S.: People just weren't eating them. They were scared.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative). And then when the bad stuff come about oysters with dermo and MSX.

R.S.: Yeah.

K.F.: Right.

C.S.: I mean we live off of seafood. I mean that's part of, I guess, the hunting aspect of what he does. I mean if he goes crabbing, he brings crabs home, we either eat them like that, or I pick them, or we make crab cakes. There are some people that are on medications that do have health problems, and I'm not saying that there may not be some type of an allergic reaction to seafood that they're eating, but the first thing they want to do is they want to blame it on that due to either misleading information, or not educated enough to know about the seafood.

K.F.: Right.

C.S.: And they want to blame it on something, and I understand that. But all the people around here that's lived, that's eat seafood for years upon years, no one has ever gotten sick and died or ill from eating seafood.

R.S.: The only thing that hurt us, and like in the oyster industry, the oysters that they brought up from down south, Florida, Louisiana, which you cannot take an oyster out of warm water and

leave it on a truck for two or three days or whatever, and get in the shucking house and leave it there for two or three days and expect, you know, to travel all that far and expect not bacteria to catch in. But they take them off polluted grounds there and everything. The State of Maryland, as far as health-wise, you know, as far as the oysters and seafood that comes out of the State of Maryland, very strict. But things that come in from other states to me, they need to go over the whole thing.

K.F.: Right.

C.S.: See, there can be oysters, oysters from down south can come in here. And if they are shucked and put in a can, they will say Maryland oysters.

K.F.: Right.

C.S.: Well that's exactly why they can't tong for oysters in the summer, because the water's warm, the bacteria count's high, and nobody around here, even the watermen wouldn't even think about eating an oyster in the summer.

K.F.: Right, right.

C.S.: And these people are getting hold of bad seafood.

K.F.: Right.

R.S.: And, naturally –

C.S.: They want to say Maryland oysters.

R.S.: They say well, we just don't have to eat it. Simple. 'Cause seafood's not something that people have to have, you know. It's more or less a luxury.

C.S.: But it's not like that they couldn't purchase it like an everyday food product either.

R.S.: No.

C.S.: But it's – I don't know. Greed too. A lot of people want to make so much money on the other end.

R.S.: Yes.

C.S.: By the time it changes hands –

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: It's outrageous. I couldn't go to a seafood place and spend 30, \$40 a dozen for crabs.

C.S.: Huh-uh (negative). (Laughter.)

R.S.: Couldn't do it.

C.S.: And see, that's why a lot of people think watermen are rich.

K.F.: Right.

C.S.: Because in the summertime, average price for a bushel of good crabs is like, what, \$30, average.

R.S.: Average, yeah.

C.S.: But you have all these people saying they want like \$120 a bushel up the city.

R.S.: Yeah.

C.S.: Well, you know, you change from the boat to the middle man, to the supplier, to the consumer, you know. That's why –

K.F.: Adds up.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

K.F.: 'Cause everybody's got to get paid.

R.S.: Right.

C.S.: Problem of it is everybody wants so much added, you know.

K.F.: Right.

R.S.: Much money.

C.S.: Instead of just settling and saying, yeah, I can make an income by putting this much money on, again, greed gets in money exchange. (Laughter.)

R.S.: I'll say again it cost a lot to run things anymore.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: Everybody wants to get paid, have to get paid, you know, a lot of money to make it.

C.S.: Yes, but again, like I said in 1975, oysters were selling for \$15 a bushel. Here it is 1999 –

R.S.: Still 15.

C.S.: And look at how much cost of everything has gone up, and you're getting \$14. What's that tell you? You need to make a job change, don't you? (Laughter.)

R.S.: Very unlikely. (Laughter.)

K.F.: Well let me ask you about trot lining then, setting your nets. Are there special markers that you have either on the land or wherever you have – I know some of the watermen have told me well I always set my nets at such and such a hole, and I line up with the two pine trees. (Laughter.)

R.S.: That is what they really used to do, the old timers, and different things like that. They used to say well I had this tree on this or that. And sometimes now they'll go back and say well that's not the same mark. Well that mark washed away. (Laughter.) But now they've come out with electronic equipment called Loran's.

K.F.: Right.

R.S.: Which you can go right to where you want to go. If I got, if I'm laying my trot line out on – say like that, I can punch my numbers in, and I can go right to where I want to go. If it's to a beacon or wherever, on the edge of a oyster bar or whatever, most of it's common knowledge. In other words, the edges are different places where oyster bars, or outer hills or whatever. It takes a lot of years to get to know that. And to know, you would know the Chesapeake Bay like you would know, say, Easton, the streets in Easton.

K.F.: Okay.

R.S.: You would know the whole Chesapeake Bay and Choptank River, wherever you work, you would know that as well as you would to get in your car and go up the road and know different streets. Because there's a lot of different things on the bottoms. There's, well, a lot of different hangs that you would get into, like old sunken boats or something that would be laying there. But most times, if I'm just crabbing an area, or I'm tonging or fishing or whatever, I've got a separate book with this Loran I keep all my numbers down into. When I want to go back, I punch it in and go right back there.

K.F.: Okay.

R.S.: So technology age. (Laughter.) The old time –

K.F.: Sounds like a combination of learned knowledge –

R.S.: Right, it is.

K.F.: And technology.

R.S.: Yeah.

C.S.: Takes a lot of years of experience doing work.

K.F.: Well now how did you learn about these sites?

R.S.: Mostly going and –

C.S.: Trial and error.

R.S.: Yeah. (Laughter.) Like fishing. When you set the fish net out and it drifts down and you get hung up, you know it's not, you know, you punch your number in with your Loran, you don't go back there. You either go on one side or the other, or you talk to old timers, say, well where was this shipwreck at, you know. And they'll say well it was here, like in nine foot of water, close to this certain buoy. Well you don't get there close to it (Laughter), because you're going to lose your equipment.

C.S.: And there's a certain crab lay at Cook's Point.

K.F.: Right.

C.S.: And the first time he found that lay or that hang, Cobb knows what it is, it's like, what?

R.S.: I got no idea what it is down there.

C.S.: Whatever it is, whatever you get hung into it, you might as well forget it. You've got to cut the line. But now he's gotten to a point now where he knows that he can go so far to a certain step to get over around it so that he doesn't get hung into it. And he doesn't even have to punch it in. He knows exactly where that hang is. So –

R.S.: It's just getting used to it. Just like a woman in a kitchen. She can get used to knowing where everything's at in a kitchen, and just experience, mainly. And you never stop learning. (Laughter.) Never stop learning.

C.S.: And see, that's what's another thing interesting about when I work with him. It's a lot of things that a lot of people would assume, oh, this is how this is done. And he's taught me a lot, a great deal. Things that I just – a lot of the little things really mean a lot to make the big picture. And that, it's really interesting.

K.F.: Can you give me an example?

C.S.: Okay. Like for instance, when we were tonging this year, he's got a depth finder, and he would know when, by looking at that, when he's on oysters, when he's on shell, if he's on hard bottom, if he's on soft bottom, and I could never figure this out. And every once in a while, he would say okay, now see, we're getting ready to come up on what they call like shell kill or shell part, and then you can just see underneath the bottom what it looks like until you can really see where the oysters are at.

R.S.: The depth finder shows the oyster bed up, is what it does.

C.S.: Yeah.

K.F.: Okay.

C.S.: Another term, crossways. That's a bad time to be tonging.

K.F.: What is that?

C.S.: It's when the tide is going one direction, and the wind's going another direction, and your boat don't want to stay still long enough in order for you to be able –

R.S.: Tide's pushing one way, wind's pushing the other.

K.F.: Okay.

C.S.: Let me see. Well when I first started culling oysters – no, when I first started tonging with him, he was patent tonging.

K.F.: Okay.

C.S.: Hydraulic tonging.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: Which the oysters that you're on when you're patent tonging are a lot easier oysters to cull than hand-tonged oysters.

K.F.: Why is that?

R.S.: Well hand tonging, most the time, is done around these creeks where you have a big spat catch.

K.F.: Okay.

R.S.: And nowadays where your patent tonging is where they've took seed and they've planted and it's grew.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: And most of the stuff grows, what they plant there is big enough one year, which hand tonging, you got all different size oysters, little ones, tiny ones. Everything's hung together. And but most of the times, patent tonging, everything's pretty clear. It's a bigger oyster that's grown, you know, for three years, what it's supposed to go.

K.F.: Right.

R.S.: 'Cause they try to put so many on one bar one year, so many on another and, you know, try to rotate so these oysters will grow different, you know, times.

K.F.: Right. Oh, okay. Huh.

R.S.: But it's just a lot easier to cull with patent tonging.

C.S.: And that was another thing that he got me used to on how to cull hand-tonged oysters. You know, when I first saw this mess, I thought oh, it's going to take me forever to get used to all this, 'cause all that's got to be knocked off.

K.F.: Right.

C.S.: So that was another thing. Or like crabbing. You know, you're trying to shoot up to the line, and you're crabbing, you got to compensate for the tide so that you don't get the line in the wheel. You know. Those kind of things. I don't know. It's just, it's a lot of things that the little things that would be very meaningful for somebody that really didn't know anything about it other than oh, yeah, you go out there, and you got a pair of tongs, and you just scrape and you rake the oysters up. Huh-uh (negative). Oh, no. It's more to it. It's more to just going out there and laying your line out and crabbing. Because like Roy said, when you're laying it on an edge, you've got to make sure that when you've got it there, you say okay, well when the tide starts coming up, it's going to sweep so far up, but I don't want it to go too shoal.

K.F.: Right.

C.S.: And then when the tide goes down, I want it to sweep down in the deep but I don't want it to go too deep.

K.F.: Right.

R.S.: It's just like --

C.S.: You know. It's an art. It's really a knowledgeable art on knowing what you're doing.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: It's just like crabbing down the trot line. When you're crabbing down the trot line, the trot line's got to be going just right. If your boat goes off, your trot line goes out, your crabs are going to drop off.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: If your boat goes over your line, it's going to come up underneath the boat, and your crabs are going to drop off again. So everything's got to be just right, and to me, just being brought up

around it, it comes naturally to you. But a lot of times when I take somebody with me, I'll say, you know, go ahead and steer the boat. She was one for one thing. Took her a while to catch on.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: You know, to steer to, you know –

C.S.: Yeah. Steering with one hand, dipping with the other, making sure the speed of the boat's going right. And, of course, if you've got four or five crabs that's coming up together, and the line starts going down, you don't want to keep the boat going fast.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: So you've got to slow this boat down.

K.F.: Right.

C.S.: You've got to be a very coordinated person, believe me. You really do. (Laughter.)

K.F.: Well I was going to ask you both about what your roles are when you're on the boat, or your job. And then I've been asking people about the physical motion that you have to do on the boat, and also the crab pickers too because there's a lot of different physical activities.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

K.F.: And I've had people say that sometimes the motions are almost like a dance.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

K.F.: So I'm wondering if you can describe to me your different jobs you have on the boat, and then what these motions are.

R.S.: Well my job is getting the line in the water. Try to be where the crabs.

C.S.: Well most of the time, like when we're putting a line over, he's up in the cabin, he's looking at his depth finder, he's looking at his Loran, he's looking at his compass. That stuff. When he gets where it's supposed to be, then that's when I'm back there watching the line to make sure it's not tangled.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: You know. We both have like a combination job with doing that.

R.S.: She makes sure the line goes out straight with no tangles into it.

K.F.: Okay.

R.S.: If one comes into it, I have to stop the boat.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: Get it out.

C.S.: Okay. Now we've got the line overboard.

R.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: Well we take turns.

R.S.: It used to be that I do all the crab dipping. That I dip all the crabs and steer. Then she got so that she wanted to dip some crabs. So I steered the boat while she dipped. But after a while, she got accustomed to steering the boat and dipping the same time. So every once in a while, she'd want to dip some crabs, so she could steer the boat down the line and dip.

C.S.: And you'll cut up the bait, and I'll cull the crabs off.

R.S.: Right.

C.S.: So we, we really work –

R.S.: Most times she culls all the crabs because I cull them better than she does. (Laughter.) So we just let her –

C.S.: And, of course, when we bait up the line, he gets half the line, I get the other half the line.

R.S.: Right.

C.S.: Time we get in –

R.S.: We're all done.

C.S.: -- the line's baited up.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: And then with tonging, well he tongs, I cull.

R.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: But I did go tonging the other day by myself.

K.F.: Oh, you did. (Laughter.)

R.S.: Her and my father.

C.S.: I wanted some oysters. So, of course, like I said, he taught me how to get the tongs up there. I've watched him, I know how to work his tong puller. So –

R.S.: But it's sort of like, I mean even when it's rough, I mean some people have been aboard a boat where they can't stand up. They got to hold on to everything. But you get accustomed to just moving with the boat. It's just like you're born with it.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: And you're rocking. If you're lifting a bushel of crabs up and you're moving, the boat's rocking, you sort of just go with it.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: And carry to the other side of the boat. But other people have a hard time getting used to that, and being able to adjust to it.

C.S.: Or getting seasick.

R.S.: Right, right.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: That's the strange thing about our son. He's blind, and he's never been seasick in his life.

K.F.: Really?

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative). And I, you know, that amazes me because they always said you always should look at what's making the boat rock, or you'll get seasick.

K.F.: Right.

C.S.: But he has never been seasick.

K.F.: Oh, my gosh. (Laughter.)

C.S.: But, yeah, we work good together.

R.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: I mean we have now – every once in a while, I've got a couple little disagreements. (Laughter.)

R.S.: It gets interesting sometimes.

C.S.: We're making up parts -- (Laughter.)

K.F.: Let me ask you what some of the more unusual things you've seen are out on the bay.

R.S.: More unusual. I've seen different kinds of fish that I've never seen before that really, I didn't even think was in the Chesapeake Bay.

K.F.: Like what?

R.S.: And I brought them into the DNR officer. I've caught one particular thing that looks like a double head or a skate, but it sort of had feet on the back of it, and I didn't know what it was. And two other, or three other fellows were fishing with me at the time, and nobody knew what it

was, nobody's ever seen one. And we brought it into the marine police, and they looked it up or something. They had some kind of fancy name for it. It was in the same kind of family as the double head or the stingray, but it weren't supposed to be in this area.

C.S.: Yeah. Now how about that one fish you caught that one time looked like it had human denture teeth?

R.S.: Oh, yeah. Had big teeth. I don't know what kind that was. (Laughter.)

C.S.: Oh, it did. It looked like somebody stuck false teeth in this fish's mouth. Had human teeth. I mean God knows where that thing comes from. (Laughter.) I don't know, what?

R.S.: Well we've seen the eagles dip down. I've seen them dip down catching fish. I seen yesterday a bald eagle.

C.S.: You've seen deer swimming, haven't you?

R.S.: Seen deer swimming. Yeah.

K.F.: Really?

R.S.: Yeah. Swimming in the water. Of course, the porpoises. I did see some whales when the whales were up here. That's been --

C.S.: Yeah.

R.S.: Holy mackerel. That's been, what, 20 years ago?

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative). It's been long. Yeah.

R.S.: Yeah. They come up, I think, about two years. They were off Sharp's Island is where they were at. First ones I've seen there. But I haven't seen them since, which is very unusual.

C.S.: But I don't know if we've got anything else like – anything else unusual to you?

R.S.: Nothing unusual. Sad boaters running into beacons. Different things. (Laughter.) That's pretty well an everyday thing.

C.S.: That's another one of them odd species. (Laughter.)

K.F.: Well that's strange and unusual.

C.S.: Yeah.

R.S.: Running into the bridge. All kinds of things.

C.S.: Yeah.

K.F.: Run into the bridge?

R.S.: Oh, yeah.

K.F.: The Bay Bridge?

R.S.: No. This –

K.F.: This one.

R.S.: Tilghman Bridge. They run into that. I don't know how many people have run into that.

C.S.: Yeah.

(END SIDE A.)

(BEGIN SIDE B.)

R.S.: But it's a lot of pretty things out there at times.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: That's what makes it interesting.

C.S.: Yeah, but it's took an awful lot of people's lives too.

R.S.: Yes, it has. Yup. Sometimes careless. Sometimes people, accidents happen.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: That's the hazard.

K.F.: What happens in the community when somebody dies on the water?

R.S.: They all pull together.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative). Very totally in the community –

R.S.: Every one of them.

C.S.: -- when tragedy strikes.

K.F.: When's the last time that happened?

C.S.: Well there was a waterman, he didn't drown, down, but he got killed in an automobile accident just up the road here.

R.S.: Yeah.

C.S.: Had a new wife, baby on the way.

K.F.: Oh.

R.S.: Coming from work.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative). He was up the bay working, fishing.

R.S.: Putting in a lot of hours.

C.S.: Yeah.

R.S.: I think he fell asleep.

C.S.: Getting up like 2:00 in the morning and traveling –

K.F.: Right.

C.S.: -- for hours and working all day, and coming home late and – he just fell asleep.

R.S.: Of course, then there was Garland. His whole crew died fishing.

C.S.: Whole family.

R.S.: He drowned.

C.S.: There was five of them. Wasn't it? Uh-huh (Affirmative).

K.F.: When did that happen?

R.S.: That was in – golly, day, when was that, 70's?

C.S.: About '77, '78.

R.S.: '78? Somewheres like that.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: Plus they've had a lot more drown. Crab potter, he drowned. He was on top of his canopy by his self. That's what they thought, he fell off the canopy. That was at Poplar Island. It's been a few.

C.S.: And a lot of close ones too.

R.S.: Yeah. Well everybody --

C.S.: Just like there's a guy down here was laying his trot line out. Got it tangled, and the line, went back down, grabbed the line and one of the nooses of the bait wrapped around his finger.

R.S.: Cut his finger right off.

C.S.: And he said it was either I knew I was going overboard or I was going to have to lose my finger, and he gave it a yank, and his finger come off. But it's a lot of –

R.S.: They can be down each other's throat one minute, and the next minute something happens, and everybody pulls together. So –

C.S.: But, you know, you'd be surprised. There's a lot of watermen around here that don't know how to swim.

K.F.: That doesn't surprise me. I've heard a lot of people say that. And not just this water community too, but in New England –

C.S.: Really?

K.F.: -- they don't know how to swim either. In North Carolina, some of the watermen down there, they don't know how to swim either. Just never -- they work on the water, but they were never taught to swim in it.

R.S.: I can't imagine that, 'cause I always wanted to swim --

C.S.: Yeah.

R.S.: -- when I was growing up.

C.S.: But you always want to be prepared just in case something happens.

R.S.: Yeah, sure.

C.S.: I don't know. But it's quite -- I wouldn't be married to anybody else. I really wouldn't. It's just --

R.S.: Well you like doing it.

C.S.: Yeah, I do.

R.S.: I know some women are married to watermen that have never been aboard the boat.

(Laughter.) They don't want to be aboard the boat.

C.S.: They don't want to be aboard the boat.

R.S.: But we all enjoy being aboard the boat. We've got boat races in summertime; take a crew with us most the time going.

C.S.: But even like sometimes in the evening if we get done crabbing, and I don't have to cut grass, and we get dinner over with, I'll say, okay, Roy, I'm going out in the little boat, and I'm going soft crabbing. So, you know, so it's something that you just, just enjoy doing and being around. Of course, I don't like getting overboard. (Laughter.) My way of soft crabbing --

R.S.: She's got a fear of sharks. (Laughter.)

C.S.: I do.

R.S.: Never seen a shark since I've been on the water.

C.S.: Wait a minute. Now they have caught them.

R.S.: They have caught them.

R.S.: They've caught them, yes.

C.S.: They have.

R.S.: Yes, they've caught them. Yes. They're out there. But you know how Jaws has effect on people. (Laughter.)

C.S.: Just like these people that go swimming --

K.F.: I have the same fear. (Laughter.)

C.S.: But these people that are swimming with the double heads or the skates around them. If they only knew what those things could do to them. Not me. I'm going to stay on dry land, or a swimming pool that I can look down the bottom, say okay, ain't nothing in here.

R.S.: As long as you're in the boat, you're fine.

C.S.: Yeah. Long as I'm in the boat.

K.F.: Now are there any stories or jokes that are frequently told?

R.S.: Jokes? I don't know about any jokes. A lot of sayings, I would imagine. Different sayings that people say.

C.S.: That's caught me completely off guard.

R.S.: Me too. (Laughter.)

C.S.: Talk about drawing a blank. (Laughter.) These wheels are steaming over here trying to think. (Laughter.)

R.S.: Of course, every community's got its little accent.

C.S.: Yeah. Now do we have an accent to you?

K.F.: Not different than anybody else that I've talked to.

C.S.: Oh, okay.

K.F.: But if I went to North Carolina, then I would notice a difference.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative). 'Cause a lot of people have problems with us saying water.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: I don't know of any jokes.

C.S.: I don't know of any.

R.S.: Some I probably couldn't tell you. (Laughter.)

C.S.: Not over the microphone anyway.

R.S.: No. (Laughter.)

K.F.: Or how about any songs or poems or anything like that?

R.S.: Not that I know of. Maybe some of these older people could probably tell you.

C.S.: Oh, yeah. Yeah, I'm sure they could.

R.S.: Yeah. I know somebody you'd like to talk to. I don't know whether you've heard him or know him. Have you ever heard of Bill Cummings?

K.F.: No. Huh-uh (negative).

R.S.: He could really tell you something. I think he'd be a real big help to you.

C.S.: And he's a fabulous painter.

R.S.: Painter.

C.S.: Painter of watermen. Yeah.

K.F.: And where does Bill live?

R.S.: Bill lives right down on Main Street. You know where the Tilghman Country Store is?

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: He's the first, the first house past that on the right. It's right there alongside the telephone building's what it is. Just before you get to the telephone building. But his, he could tell you a lot. He's probably one of – well one of the oldest ones left around, I would imagine. Don't tell him I said that. (Laughter.)

K.F.: Okay. Does he still go out every day?

R.S.: He crabs now, yes. But he used to fish up until the last couple years. Matter of fact, he fished when I was with him last year. But he sort of got away from, you know, wintertime.

K.F.: Right.

R.S.: He'll tong once in a while when he feels like it.

C.S.: Isn't he William E.?

R.S.: Yup.

C.S.: 886-2279.

R.S.: But he has – he's a fabulous painter, and he's painted a lot of paintings.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: He's painted some for the governor. He's a real interesting fellow to talk to.

K.F.: Okay, okay. I'll have to give him a call. I guess Darren suggested I call Willy Roe too.

R.S.: I think you'd be more with Bill Cummins than I would Willy Roe.

C.S.: Yeah. Yeah. Bill Cummins is what you call a respectable waterman that not only respects his livelihood, but his fellow watermen.

K.F.: Okay.

C.S.: And he has been around. He can tell you –

R.S.: He's been all over.

C.S.: Yeah.

R.S.: He's been down – he's even been to Florida working on the water. He's had an interesting life. (Laughter.)

C.S.: Very. Very interesting.

R.S.: And he's a very nice person.

K.F.: Okay. Well what are some of the traditions, say, surrounding the start of crab season here, or some of the other seasons, some of the other special ways that people recognize, you know, the first crabs started moving or –

C.S.: Locust trees in bloom.

R.S.: Yeah, right.

K.F.: Locus trees.

C.S.: That's the first shedding of the crabs.

R.S.: That's one of the things. First shed of the year. And that's one of the old-timer's sayings, but you can pretty well go by it.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative). Uh-huh (Affirmative). When you see locust blooming, you know crabs are shedding.

K.F.: Okay. I don't know that I've seen a locust tree –

C.S.: Oh, they're real fragrant.

R.S.: They are.

C.S.: Big tree with white, look like white bell, looks like grapes hanging.

K.F.: Oh, yeah. Okay.

C.S.: And they're really fragrant smelling.

K.F.: Oh, okay.

C.S.: Usually like what, mid part of –

R.S.: May.

C.S.: -- May. Between mid-part, latter part of May. Yeah.

K.F.: Okay.

C.S.: Come up with that answer, didn't I?

R.S.: Yes, you did. Got your thinker on.

C.S.: See. (Laughter.) Always look for Locusts in bloom.

R.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative). But as far as the oyster season, it's just whatever anybody feels like they're going to make the most money at. Whether they're going to keep crabbing. Some years, I've kept crabbing. And other years, I figure it's going to be a good oyster season, and I'll stop crabbing. And when I'm not making much, I'll go ahead and go tonging. But sort of that time of year, you're into anything you can get, you can be crabbing, or you can be tonging. You can make a little bit of money at either one of them. But the spring of the year, you're not making nothing. (Laughter.)

K.F.: Okay.

R.S.: You're switching right over from winter to summer, and the only thing you've got to look for is, you know, the crabs. And until they start, you don't make any money. That's it. I've gone April and May and never made nothing. I mean not a thing. So, you know, when you figure it out and you add all that in, you've lost too much, you know, work.

K.F.: Right.

R.S.: That you haven't made any money. Then when you average out that the rest of the year, if you're lucky and you have a warm winter, you know, most times, sometimes they'll start the first part of May, if you're lucky. Then you can struggle along till they shed, till the locust bloom.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: And another saying, every full moon, from that point on –

R.S.: Yeah, crabs shed.

C.S.: -- they'll shed. Prior to the full moon is usually when you'll catch quite a few doublers.

R.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: As far as any – let me see, about the oyster industry. It all depends on rainfall.

R.S.: Oh, yeah.

C.S.: All depends on –

R.S.: Hot summers.

C.S.: -- hot summers. You really can't even tell what the oyster is going to be like until you go out there and you try them. And they can be dead in one place, and alive in another. So you can't really tell a great deal about that, can you?

R.S.: No, because the state, we have a sanctuary down here off what they call Stone Rock down off Sharp's Island. And they tested them in September. The state went tested them, and everything was alive. Well we thought we were going to have oysters. We went down the first day of tonging season, first of October, everything was dead. In just that matter of two or three weeks. So –

K.F.: Let me ask a question now. What kills them?

C.S.: Depends on the salinity of the water –

R.S.: Yeah. Well like they say, MSX and dermo, if you don't, if you have a hot summer, most time that's terrible on them. Especially like this summer, and when you don't have any rain, it was last July until, golly day, four or five months where you had any amount of rain at all.

C.S.: Well it was the 4th of July weekend, remember?

R.S.: That was the last heavy rain.

C.S.: That was the last heavy rain until –

R.S.: Yeah. That will help. Fresh water, and a cool summer will help an oyster. That all determines what's going to happen.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: When you have your hot summers and low salinity, whatever, then disease just takes over. Right now, everything looks good.

K.F.: Right.

R.S.: Oysters are on a comeback. Well, you know they are because we can't sell them. (Laughter.)

C.S.: So many of them, nobody wants to eat them all.

R.S.: -- a good year. So everything right this moment looks good.

K.F.: Let me ask you a couple of equipment questions here. Where do you get your oyster tongs?

R.S.: I get my tongs made from Doug Raymond, Raymond's Welding right on Tilghman Island.

K.F.: Okay. R-A-Y-M-A-N?

R.S.: M-O-N-D.

K.F.: Okay.

R.S.: He's –

C.S.: Well –

R.S.: -- blacksmith. He does pretty well anything. He used to work on the water part-time. Now he's just into full time, doing things like that.

K.F.: Okay.

R.S.: But that's where I get most of my stuff made, right from him locally.

C.S.: And, of course, the shafts. There are very few that sell or make shafts nowadays.

R.S.: The oyster tongs, I mean that's mostly for patent tonging. The oyster tonging their self, you have to go to Bivalve and get them.

C.S.: There's actually a place called Bivalve.

K.F.: Yes. Now do you get them from the Messick Brothers?

R.S.: Right. Get them from them, or I get them from – oh, my, what's his name over in Bozman?

C.S.: Don't ask me. I can't remember what his name is.

R.S.: He's got a millwork place down by, does a lot of millwork. And really, this is the first year I've got any from him, but that's where a lot of them get them from. I can't think of his name.

C.S.: Won't even give the man credit where credit is due.

R.S.: Isn't that something?

C.S.: Shame, shame, shame. He's down there by Jack Guterman.

R.S.: Yeah. (Laughter.)

C.S.: Jack Guterman's neighbor. Question mark. I don't know.

R.S.: But I would say that's the hardest thing to get.

K.F.: The shafts.

R.S.: Is your shaft tongs, your wooden shaft tongs, 'cause not many people do that anymore.

C.S.: See they used to, but nobody wants to work nowadays. Nobody wants to do it.

R.S.: Well nobody knows how. They – all the old people that used to make them have died off. And their children or whoever never took it up.

C.S.: But, see, it's part of the, hey, can you teach me how to do that, just to have in reserve to say one day I might need to know how to do that.

R.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: Yeah.

R.S.: Now her father, when he was living, he made some for me.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: He was a carpenter.

C.S.: I just never got around to saying hey, dad, will you show me how to do that? (Laughter.) Taught me how to do everything else as far as carpentry work, but I just never did that. Who

would've thought that people would stop making them. Well your father could if he had, I mean – yeah. I think you could too, if you could get the lumber.

R.S.: That's the thing nowadays too is getting lumber. Good lumber. Everything's been made so quick. And with them, you have to have something seasoned.

K.F.: Right. Right. What are they usually made out of?

R.S.: Most of them's made out of pine. Pine and Fir.

K.F.: Okay.

R.S.: Pine are the heavier rakes for the light rakes, they're lighter power. But and other stuff I get, I just get local hardware stores.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative). Yeah.

R.S.: Fairbanks Tackle, Weimer House (phonetic).

C.S.: Lowe's, Lowe's.

R.S.: Lowe's. Good all Lowe's. (Laughter.)

C.S.: Wal-mart.

R.S.: That's clothes, dear. (Laughter.)

C.S.: But I tell you, when you grow up around this area, you got to learn how to do a lot.

R.S.: Sure you do.

C.S.: You really do. I mean even when you're a kid, you got to learn to pick a crab. You either learn to pick it or you just don't eat it. You know? (Laughter.)

K.F.: What about the net gearing, Colleen? Who taught you how to do that?

C.S.: Roy's uncle. He's an older guy that used to gear a lot of net. And, you know, I'm one of them inquisitive kind of people, I want to know how to do everything. So I asked him one day, I said show me how to gear a net. So when I learned how to do it, then I told him, I said well now I can gear your netting for you. So –

R.S.: You done it all. All but a couple boxes, you done it all this year.

C.S.: Yeah. Uh-huh (Affirmative).

K.F.: What time of the year are you usually doing that?

C.S.: Well this year was a little late, but they usually get their net, they have to order it, what, like –

R.S.: Yeah, we order it in the spring of the year, but it doesn't get here until early fall.

C.S.: Yeah, yeah.

R.S.: And this year, it was awful late getting in.

C.S.: It was really, really late. Usually they get it like the first part of September.

R.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: And you didn't get it till the first part of October, or the middle part of October.

R.S.: Yeah, it was later.

C.S.: Yeah. Which put things behind.

R.S.: Everything way back.

C.S.: And there's been a few people that gear net too.

K.F.: Right. Do you do it for other people too?

C.S.: Huh-uh (negative). No.

R.S.: Can't allow that.

C.S.: He won't let me do that. (Laughter.) You know –

R.S.: Then she wouldn't have no time for me.

C.S.: Give him a discount -- (Laughter.) But it's a time-consuming job.

R.S.: It is.

C.S.: I enjoy doing it, but I want to tell you something. You do not make any money at it.

R.S.: It ain't no money made at it.

C.S.: None.

R.S.: It's a lot of time for nothing.

C.S.: I mean what they pay you now is exactly what they used to pay women doing it 30 years ago.

R.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: And when they say they will pay you \$1 a cork, you've got to go 10 foot before you make a buck. And that's on both sides of the net. So --

R.S.: Somebody that's retired that don't have anything to do, you know, it's a nice job for them.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative). But he's just got me doing it keep me out of trouble. (Laughter.)

R.S.: Got to do it. It ain't nobody that does it anymore.

C.S.: Yeah, it's not. There used to be an older woman and man at Rock Hall that did it. Well she had a heart attack, and they stopped doing it.

R.S.: But a lot of them gear their own. Like I'll go out and help her. Fellow that goes with me, he comes and helps. So it's -- Mr. Bill taught you too a little bit.

C.S.: Yeah, Mr. Bill taught me a little bit.

R.S.: Bill Cummings.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative). Yeah.

R.S.: Just looking and learning.

C.S.: Yeah.

R.S.: Paying attention, and wanting to do it.

C.S.: There's a man down the island that still sews in what they call bags for dredges. And it's basically like macramé, but it's fascinating to see how he does it. And I told him, I said look, the next time you go to gear this bag in in one of these dredges, I'd like to know how to do it, 'cause I think it's only two people left on the island that know how to do that.

K.F.: I haven't heard of anybody who knew how to do that.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: Burt Murphy's the one.

C.S.: Burt Murphy.

R.S.: Burt Murphy and Russell Dize are the only ones I know of. I expect it's a couple more dredgers that know how to do it.

C.S.: I mean I think Russell knows how to do it, but Russell doesn't do it as much as Bart does.

R.S.: No. Huh-uh (negative).

K.F.: Probably does it for himself.

C.S.: Yeah.

R.S.: Bart does it for a lot of people.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

K.F.: Huh. Okay. And let me ask you guys what the crab and the oyster, fish mean for you all. I mean I know it's an income, obviously. Besides that.

R.S.: It's a whole way of life. It's just --

C.S.: Put a many meal on this table.

R.S.: Right, that's what it has.

C.S.: I mean because like in the summer, as we're crabbing, I mean we'll bring some home to eat, but what we have leftover, I'll pick and stick in the freezer. Towards the end of the season, really pick a lot to put in the freezer.

R.S.: For winter.

C.S.: Of course, when we're tonging, it's a lot of times we'll bring some home, shuck them and –

R.S.: Yeah, even for entertainment if you have company, you fix oysters, you know.

C.S.: Yeah.

R.S.: Half shell or whatever –

C.S.: I mean we've got a lot of luxury food that a lot of people pay a lot of money for to put on the table. (Laughter.) That's one good thing about it.

K.F.: That's true. That's true.

C.S.: You know, like if he's out fishing for rockfish, occasionally they'll catch a flounder, you know, bring it home, say you know, I'd like to have flounder for dinner. So you fix it.

R.S.: Have a variety of all different things.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative). Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: I don't know what I'd – I don't know what I would do without it, tell you the truth, with being around it.

C.S.: Yeah. You know how, I guess somebody has a pound of hamburger, it's only so much you can do with a pound of hamburger. With seafood, it's almost like endless of what you can do with it.

K.F.: Right.

C.S.: To make a different meal.

K.F.: Right.

C.S.: You know?

K.F.: Right.

C.S.: And it's really nice to know that you can go out, catch it, bring it home, prepare it, fix it, eat it.

R.S.: Especially after you've caught it.

C.S.: Yeah.

R.S.: It's not like somebody goes to the supermarket and gets a cow. He didn't, you know, (Laughter) raise that cow or whatever.

K.F.: Right, right.

C.S.: Don't get me wrong. I wouldn't want to go out and go raccoon hunting (Laughter), skin it and eat it 'cause I wouldn't want to do that. (Laughter.) But it's, well food, income. I don't know. What else would it be?

R.S.: I just love to be around it, I love to do it. Simple as that.

K.F.: Well let's talk about food for a little minute here. I heard one of you all makes really good oyster pie. (Laughter.)

C.S.: He makes excellent –

R.S.: I can make the pie, but I don't make the crust. I'm not very good at making the –

C.S.: I do the crust. This is where teamwork comes in at. (Laughter.) Again. He makes delicious crab cakes too.

K.F.: I heard that too.

C.S.: God. He does.

K.F.: Well let me ask you, Roy, what is the secret to a really good oyster pie? Not that I want you to give away any family recipes or anything, but –

R.S.: I use a certain kind of crab seasoning that I like. Most people when they cook seafood, or they cook oysters or whatever, they don't season it. I like my stuff seasoned. And everybody that's ate it loves it seasoned, you know.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: That's the main thing with me.

C.S.: A lot of people perceive that an oyster pie is basically like an oyster stew with crust on it. But their version of an oyster stew is dump the oysters in the pot, put some milk, put some salt and pepper and you got oyster stew. Huh-uh (negative). No.

R.S.: I like to cook it just right, too. A lot of people, they'll cook the oysters where they're not done just right, where the flavor don't go through it.

C.S.: Or they've cooked, overcooked them and they're gummy.

R.S.: Overcooked them or whatever, yeah. Yeah. You have to cook it just right. Everything –

C.S.: Well you – yeah.

R.S.: Well, yeah, everything has a certain time to it. And my crab cakes, it's just –

C.S.: And see, that really makes me upset because I was the one that started making crab cakes, and one day he's standing there saying what are you putting in there? Why are you doing this? (Laughter.) And one day, he said I'm going to make them. And believe me, he put the same stuff into them, but I tell you, he can make a crab cake. I got to hand it to him. I don't make them anymore.

K.F.: No?

C.S.: Huh-uh (negative). I just do not. I've tried, and I've tasted, and I'd say taste this. And he'd say nope, you need to do –

R.S.: Just getting the right amount of spices. That's all it is.

C.S.: It is. All equal ingredients of what should be. And if you lack on one, it just –

R.S.: Don't taste right.

C.S.: Throws it completely off.

R.S.: And having good crabs is another thing, with no bones.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: She picks crabs where she don't get a bone in her crab. I can't do that. And –

C.S.: So teamwork again. (Laughter.)

K.F.: Okay.

R.S.: When I bite down into a crab cake, I don't want to bite into a bone. You know.

K.F.: Right.

C.S.: And I'll tell you something else. A lot of people are very leery about freezing crabmeat. Because, and I will admit, eventually, after a three, four-month period of time, it gets an odor, like it smells like fish.

K.F.: Right.

C.S.: Well to make frozen crabmeat taste like fresh crabmeat, you just picked it, you put it in the colander, you pour milk over it and you let it thaw, and the milk removes all that, and it tastes like you just sat there and picked it.

K.F.: I'll have to give that a try.

C.S.: I will give you that secret. (Laughter.)

K.F.: I do need to try that. Because someone told me to run water over it.

R.S.: No.

C.S.: Huh-uh (negative).

K.F.: Didn't take out that fish smell that you're talking about.

C.S.: No, it's the milk. That's what you need to do.

K.F.: Okay. And how much milk?

C.S.: Well I just usually take the frozen container of the crabmeat and stick it in a colander.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: And when it starts thawing –

C.S.: Yeah, just as it starts thawing, then I'll just take the carton of milk just like this and just stick it back in the ice, you know, just let it sit there.

K.F.: Okay.

C.S.: And I guess it sort of acts like mayonnaise to fish, you know. You've seen fish being served where they've spread mayonnaise over top of it.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: Or how lemon is to a fish.

K.F.: Right.

C.S.: It neutralizes whatever's the content in the crabmeat.

K.F.: Okay.

C.S.: So –

R.S.: And a lot of times what affects freezing crabmeat is the kind of crabs you get before you freeze it too.

C.S.: Yeah.

R.S.: A lot of times, if you get a sook like in the fall of the year, it's got a fishier taste to it. If it comes out of a crab pot –

C.S.: Crab pot – crab pot crabs are yuck.

R.S.: Different taste than trot line.

C.S.: Yeah.

K.F.: Why is this?

R.S.: Because they're sitting in their crab pot all day, all night, they're eating on all rotten fish, you know. (Laughter.)

K.F.: Okay.

R.S.: When you catch a crab on a trot line, the only thing he's eat on is a little bit of chicken neck or something, and he hasn't ate no time on that.

C.S.: And you've caught him before he even gets a chance to really –

R.S.: But it's just a different taste to them.

K.F.: I also was told that the sooks taste better.

R.S.: Not for me.

K.F.: No?

R.S.: Huh-uh (negative).

C.S.: No. In my honest opinion, every seafood that I can think of, the smaller it is, the better the flavor.

R.S.: As far as flavor wise, yeah.

C.S.: Medium crabs, medium, you know, good male crabs –

K.F.: Right.

R.S.: Medium oysters, fish, whatever.

C.S.: People would be so much better off to go to a restaurant, that's if they're lucky to get what I consider a medium crab, than they would be a dozen good crabs. Because a dozen good crabs are going to get, the majority of them is going to be white crabs, and you're really not going to get your, the meat that you should be getting.

K.F.: Right.

C.S.: A smaller crab has a sweeter taste to it.

K.F.: Okay.

C.S.: An oyster, a clam, a fish, you know. They're all, the smaller they are the better.

R.S.: Of course, when you go out and buy something, you're looking to buy something big to try to get something for your money, you know.

K.F.: Right.

C.S.: But flavor-wise, the smaller it is, the better it is.

R.S.: Very few times do I bring crabs home that are big crabs. I bring a medium crab home. They have a lot better flavor to them.

C.S.: Like when they have Tilghman Day, well like they have the contest, they'll have a lot of people say to me well why do you pick the crab up? Why do you pick it up and drop it? It's a matter of feeling how heavy the crab is. You can pick a crab up and tell whether it's got a lot of meat into it or not.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: And I'm not going to stand there, I mean you know, the ones that are up there picking crabs, they know what they're supposed to be doing too

K.F.: Right.

C.S.: But you've got some of them up there that are like what are you doing? So you're trying to find the big crabs, and you set them down in front of you so that when the contest starts, you know you're going to be grabbing crabs –

R.S.: Get most the meat out of them.

C.S.: -- that's got meat into them.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: You're not going to go through a process and pick a crab that you're not going to get anything out of.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative). Do they have a picking competition at the Tilghman Day?

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: Oh, yeah.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

K.F.: And who usually enters that?

C.S.: Well –

R.S.: Her and a couple other fellows. Well –

C.S.: Yeah, it was a couple.

R.S.: Couple from down here. And once in a while, you'll have somebody from away from here that decides to get nerve enough to get up there.

C.S.: Well I do it for the \$50. (Laughter.) \$50 for first place. Doggone right.

R.S.: There you go.

C.S.: \$50 for, what, three minutes?

R.S.: Yeah. Three minutes of picking crabs.

C.S.: Can't beat that income, can you?

R.S.: Huh-uh (negative). (Laughter.)

K.F.: I take it you've won, Colleen?

C.S.: Yeah.

R.S.: Right many years.

K.F.: Okay.

C.S.: And one of these days, some woman that does it for a living will come down there and whip my butt.

R.S.: Yeah, but you can't have bones in it.

C.S.: Yeah, you do get penalized for bones.

K.F.: Oh, okay.

R.S.: So you just can't take and rake the crab, you know, you have to pick the meat out.

K.F.: Right.

C.S.: Yeah, I've seen a lot of women that when they pick, they just basically put their knife in the back of the backfin and scrape and get the bone and all.

K.F.: Right.

C.S.: Whereas down here, I mean you really get penalized for your bones.

K.F.: Okay.

R.S.: That's the way it's supposed to be picked.

C.S.: Or foreign matter, so to speak.

K.F.: Foreign matter. (Laughter.) Do you have your own crab knife?

C.S.: Yeah. Uh-huh (Affirmative).

K.F.: And let me ask you, do you cut it down, or do you leave it –

R.S.: She just sharpens it.

C.S.: Yeah, that's all I do is just sharpen it.

K.F.: Okay.

C.S.: A lot of people do. It surprises me they do cut their knife down. But I've got one of those when I shuck soft shell clams.

K.F.: Okay.

R.S.: Cut down.

C.S.: Cut down and rounded on the end.

K.F.: Okay.

C.S.: Yeah, he's even had me doing that making a living. Those things stink. (Laughter.)

R.S.: You know how to do everything now, don't you?

C.S.: Yeah, I do. I know how to clean fish, don't I?

R.S.: See, I knew you were going to have this interview. That's why –

C.S.: You taught me all these things. (Laughter.) It paid off, didn't it. Stardom. (Laughter.)

K.F.: Well then let me ask you, what do you think is the most important thing that you learned, either from your parents or each other, about the work you do?

R.S.: Respect the water, and respect each other. That's the main thing, respecting the water and taking care of it.

C.S.: The main thing.

K.F.: Or the most important for you.

C.S.: That he has taught me or my parents?

K.F.: Yeah.

R.S.: That you've learned.

C.S.: God, I've learned so much from everybody. How would I say? Well I guess it's not really one thing in particular that any of them has ever taught me because I think everything that each one of them's taught me has been very important and has played an important part in my life of a daily thing that needs to be achieved, you know. Like he said, when I worked with him, you know, you respect your boat, you respect what you're doing, it makes you a better person, and I'm a perfectionist. You know, that's another thing that, that's a bad issue. I mean some people think it's a good thing. But it does make you a good person as far as your home is concerned, how you take care of things. My mom has had an important part on teaching me if you can't do a job right, don't do it. That was her motto to me. My father played a major role in a lot of carpentry things, taught me how to do quite a bit of that, which has helped me and helped you too.

R.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: I mean it's a lot of things out there that a lot of people could really learn if they just take the time to ask, and it will become important to know. Sometime in your life, it will become important. And I guess, like I said, it's not just one particular thing that either of them has taught me. I guess the combination of all of them has made me what I am, and that's – I guess that ain't too bad, is it? Sometimes it is, but not too bad.

R.S.: It's a lot of things you learn when you're working on the water. Not just working on the water.

C.S.: And I'm just the kind of person, a lot of women wouldn't think to say oh, how do you build that, or how do you fix that, or let me try to do that, you know, but I do. It's not too much stuff that I wouldn't try to do. It really isn't, is it?

R.S.: Huh-uh (negative). Nope.

C.S.: I mean just like this past spring, Roy and I got up on my mother's house and put shingles on her roof for her.

R.S.: I'll never do that again. (Laughter.)

C.S.: It almost killed us. But we did it.

R.S.: Yeah. Yes.

C.S.: I mean – I mean there are certain things that, it's nice to know things, and if you happen to use them, it's nice to know you know how to use them.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: If you don't, at least you can say but I do know how to do that.

R.S.: Or I've done that before.

C.S.: Yeah. Right. But just like just this year, hand tonging with him. I watched, I learned, and he knew that I wanted to know every intricate detail of what needed to be done, 'cause that drives me nuts. I want to know everything and how it does it. (Laughter.)

R.S.: And one day, she wanted to learn all this in one day.

K.F.: Right, right.

R.S.: Well she couldn't understand why I was trying to teach her over a period of time. You're not going to learn it in one day.

C.S.: But when you learn that kind of stuff, it sort of gives you the confidence enough to know. Just like last week, I can't dock his boat. Drives me nuts. I will get it, but I can't do that. But I could take his boat out, and that's why I asked his father to go with me. I knew that he had taught me enough that I could go out there, get that boat anchored, tong the oysters and come in. I surprised him too. He says you didn't fall overboard? No. (Laughter.) But he is, he's a good teacher.

K.F.: Okay. So you're really passing traditions to each other too.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative). Yeah. And no one to pass them too. (Laughter.) That's okay. Somebody'll come along one day and say I'll give you \$1,000 if you teach me how to do da-da-da-da. (Laughter.)

R.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: I think I know how to do that.

K.F.: Well I mean I'm trying to understand all these jobs on the water, activities on the water, and sort of, it's almost like you in one day want to know everything, and it's hard to explain. So it's even harder to explain just sitting at the kitchen table and not on a boat kind of thing.

R.S.: Right.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

K.F.: So it's been interesting for me the last year trying to understand.

C.S.: But, you know, you really can't fully understand unless you were to just come down one day and go to Fairbanks Tackle and say would somebody in this store just like to just take me outside the narrows here so I can see how tonging is done? And I'm sure somebody would do it.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: And until you're on the boat and actually see –

K.F.: Right, right.

C.S.: I mean it's just not the same, is it?

R.S.: Huh-uh (negative). Even know what it's to feel like to go out in the dark. Lot of people get confused, you know. When she started going with me, she says how do you know where you're going? And she said I can't see anything. (Laughter.)

C.S.: Because a lot of the beacons don't work, you know.

R.S.: It's just a sense that, like I say, experience again just knowing where to go. Then till finally she got used to it, and we'd be crabbing somewheres, and I'd say okay, which way do you go to go home? (Laughter.) Finally, she could finally tell me one day. But when you're out there and you're turning around in circles and going this way and that way, it gets people confused sometimes.

C.S.: And not to mention, a lot of times you're out there and you can be crabbing, and fog sets in.

R.S.: Right.

C.S.: And you can't see two feet in front of you. I'm thinking where's Tilghman, where's the buoys, where is this?

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: It's confusing until you go to it and do it.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative). But you got to do it one day. You've just got to get somebody to just take you out and say –

K.F.: Maybe you guys can take me out crabbing.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: Sure will. Be glad to.

K.F.: Okay.

R.S.: Be glad to.

K.F.: I've only, I've gone out with some net fishermen. That's it.

R.S.: Have you?

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

K.F.: So I haven't, I haven't been out crabbing.

R.S.: You're going tonging this week, ain't you?

C.S.: Yeah, I'd like to. Supposed to be pretty one day.

R.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: But you're probably busy this week, aren't you?

K.F.: Well it depends on what day.

R.S.: Probably Wednesday or Thursday, wouldn't it?

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

K.F.: Wednesday, I am busy; but Thursday I'm free. (Laughter.)

R.S.: There you go.

K.F.: Yeah, if you don't mind.

C.S.: Huh-uh (negative). What's your phone number?

K.F.: Here. Well, it's the museum number.

C.S.: Oh, okay.

K.F.: This number here. There you go.

C.S.: Okay.

K.F.: And –

R.S.: Give you some kind of an idea anyway.

K.F.: Yeah.

C.S.: Yeah.

K.F.: That would be good. Haven't been out tonging or crabbing yet. So –

C.S.: Well you got a little while to wait for crabbing. (Laughter.)

K.F.: Yeah, yeah.

R.S.: But you'd enjoy it.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: When the weather's right. (Laughter.)

C.S.: See what Roy was saying about how different his brother is from him, my sister's totally different from me.

R.S.: Right.

C.S.: She's more business lady, she's secretary for a law firm, she was born and raised around this area, but you get her on a boat, and you would think that she's never been on a boat before.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: So, you know, that's the difference in the two of us which interests we have.

K.F.: Right.

R.S.: That's just how some people grow up around the water, just like my brother. I mean he grew up the same thing I did. Not saying he didn't go out and work with my father too, but he just took another road --

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: -- is all. But he was subject to the same thing I was.

C.S.: But see, and we all get along. I mean we are a very close family. But when it comes to the jobs, that's when it separates from the extreme opposites. That's all right, because I don't want to be sitting there in an office building (Laughter) with a dress and high heels on.

(Laughter.) Just not me.

R.S.: And she don't either at times.

C.S.: No, no.

R.S.: Everybody has times at their job where they don't like. I'm the same way.

K.F.: What part of your job don't you like? Let me ask you that. I've heard the good parts. Now tell me the bad parts.

R.S.: I don't like pushing out in ice.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: Where you don't never know what's going to happen. And it can happen quick, very quick, anything. And then you get so you don't like, well, a lot of wind. Wind's bad. Wind and rain. And it's got so now that I know when I first started working on the water, you didn't have to work everyday. You know, if it blowed and rained, you didn't have to work, you know, you made enough the other days of the week. But it's not like that now. It takes so much to keep going and to pay for everything. You have to work at every opportunity you can work.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative). Whether the conditions are good or not.

K.F.: Which makes the job a little more dangerous.

C.S.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: Right. But I can appreciate the good days. I mean I have days it blows a gail and rains that I don't like. But when it's nice out there and it's pretty, then I really enjoy it. So it just makes you appreciate different things. And when things don't go right, if you tear a motor up or something, you know. (Laughter.)

C.S.: And it's a gamble too.

R.S.: Yeah.

C.S.: Sometimes it really breaks your heart when you stop and think all the money that they've invested into, let's just say fishing.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: I mean a lot of money, a lot of time. They get up 2:30 every morning. They get home at 5, 5:30, 6:00 at night, and they walk in the door and say well how did you do? We didn't catch anything today.

R.S.: It's disheartening at times.

C.S.: It is.

R.S.: But then at times, it goes the other way, you know.

K.F.: Right, right.

R.S.: It's not no guaranty.

C.S.: So when you take where you're not making any money and you're pushed to go out every day, and you're out there in conditions where they're dangerous conditions –

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

C.S.: Then that's when it sort of scares you. And if you don't really respect Mother Nature, she'll, she can take you.

R.S.: She can take you when you respect her. (Laughter.)

C.S.: No, but I'm saying sometimes you can really say oh, you know, I can take this chance, and I can do this, and I can do that because I've got a big boat, or I've got this, or I've got that. And then when you think that you're going to be able to do that, then that's when accidents happen.

K.F.: Uh-huh (Affirmative).

R.S.: But the weather's the biggest thing.

C.S.: Yeah. Yeah.

R.S.: When you're outdoors, you're dealing with that.

C.S.: And you get these old weather wrinkles, old rustic look. (Laughter.) Ain't enough Oil of Olay in the world to get rid of them all. (Laughter.) Sundry, and windburn and salt air.

K.F.: And what are your more difficult aspects of your part in this? Would it be the weather, or something else?

R.S.: Having my dinner ready on time. (Laughter.) Just kidding. (Laughter.)

C.S.: You know, I really like working on the water. It sometimes can become very stressful. Because like I said when I get home, I want all my little housework all done, I want my dinner done, I want all my little chores done. You know, I'm one of these kinds that wants everything nice and all neat little piles, and everything finished. And sometimes, it does get caught up with me, and I don't like to have to say oh, I need to neglect this. But sometimes you have to in order to keep up with it all.

K.F.: Right.

C.S.: But he has to deal with the navigations of the bad weather and stuff. I just feel like I'm in safe hands. If I'm not, I say give me that life ring. (Laughter.) I mean that really is mainly his job and responsibility, whether I'm on the boat or not. I mean, like I said, that comes –

(END OF INTERVIEW.)