

Interview Log

Interviewee: Lester Mayne (L.M.)

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Interviewer: Shelly Drummond (S.D.)

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Theme: Rock Hall, recreational use of the bay

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Digital Photos: Swan Creek Marina landscape shots in September and candids of Mr. Mayne after the interview.

Slides:

Field Notes: I interviewed Mr. Mayne (pronounced Main) on the porch of his home in an attempt to catch some of the halyard clanging of the marina in the background. Instead I got wind in the trees. Mr. Mayne is an ordained minister and talks candidly off the tape about the importance of a church that teaches people respect and love for each other and Jesus. He sings in an African American choir.

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BEGIN SIDE A

S.D.: This is Shelly Drummond of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum. I'm here with Bud Mayne of Swan Creek Marina, and today is November 5th. We're outside of Rock Hall, Maryland. Okay, and I'm going to have to – I think that'll be okay. I'll see if – I may have to suddenly put a windshield on this. We're going to wait for that truck a minute. Actually, I'm going to pause.

(Off record.)

S.D.: Tell me about the early days when you first came to Swan Cove.

L.M.: Well we moved here in the 50's, and my father moved here to – my father moved here because of his health and because he was going into the real estate business. And some friends asked him to put some slips in so they could come on weekends and whatnot. Then it mushroomed into a marina.

S.D.: Did you come to the creek before you bought land here?

L.M.: Yes, we used to come anchor on our boat on weekends.

S.D.: Where are you from?

L.M.: I'm from Pennsylvania.

S.D.: How many boats used to anchor here?

L.M.: One or two.

S.D.: Tell me what it was like at that time, what you remember the land looking like and the boats on the water.

L.M.: Well the land hasn't changed a lot. The border has. I mean there's probably more, well there are more boats in Rock Hall than people. So that has changed the looks of the place. But the land is basically what it was.

S.D.: What kind of boats were on the water then?

L.M.: Mostly power boats. Anywhere from small cruisers up to larger cruisers.

S.D.: So what was here when your parents bought the land?

L.M.: -- well the house was here, and that was it.

S.D.: Did people, what was people's response?

L.M.: It was rough when we moved here at first. Not so much for the kids but from the adults. Kind of viewed us as outsiders and put us through some paces.

S.D.: Did – how big was the first pier that you put in?

L.M.: I think it went out 100 feet. I believe there were about 16 – 14 or 16 slips.

S.D.: Did you have to go through any –

L.M.: We went through permit process. Later as I expanded I went to – I mean I was given a hard way to go going through permits. Pretty tough battle getting permits for anything.

S.D.: What are some of the hardships of getting permits?

L.M.: Well it was just mainly dealing with the people I had to deal with. The health department, I had to deal with the county, the local government, the county government, the state government and the federal government. And by the time they got through passing you around, you knew you were in a battle, and they did not give permits out very easily.

S.D.: When – did it ever become easier, or like what changes have happened over the years in permits?

L.M.: Well all of a sudden, they opened up permits to the boaters readily. I mean there's so many boats in the haven now you can almost walk around the shore on boats.

S.D.: What are the laws regulating how far your pier can go out?

L.M.: Well, basically, they say – I think it's 25 percent of the waterway is the maximum. But they've allowed people to go out further than that.

S.D.: Has there been any conflicts as a result of that?

L.M.: Some, in some places of the county there were. There's been conflicts up at Warton Creek over moorings. I think Davis Creek has had some, a little bit of conflict. And I believe in one of the marinas, I won't mention the name – but they conflicted with the regulations of how far they were allowed to go out. And it just was overlooked.

S.D.: How many slips do you have now?

L.M.: I have about 110 slips now and 30 some moorings.

S.D.: How about the people? How have the people changed over the years?

L.M.: The boaters have changed considerably. Usually, our customers would come down on a Friday night, and by the next morning, they were going somewhere for the weekend, out sailing or cruising or whatnot. Now they're mainly used as cottages. We still have some good sailors that use their boats a lot, but most of them are fox sitters.

S.D.: Can you tell me the difference between a ma and pa marina and a yachting center?

L.M.: Oh, there's a huge difference in the personality of the way it's run. We get comments here about people enjoy it because it's friendly, they can talk to somebody that cares. And your yachting centers tend to have a lot of managers and people that care about their job, but they don't put into the business what the person that owns it would put into it.

S.D.: What – when did you first start seeing yachting centers in this area?

L.M.: In the 80's. They built rapidly in the 80's. The 70's, the 70's and 80's were a rapid growth period for the marinas.

S.D.: What was the response of the town?

L.M.: Well the town has changed dramatically. The people that live here now, a good majority of them are outsiders. I mean I was called an outsider. They're from other parts of the country and they've moved in. It's changed a town a lot. It's helped the tax base of the town. It's hurt the locals because the locals now have a hard time buying property, which keeps climbing up, escalating. And but the town's alive now. I mean Main Street in the 60's was dead. It was maybe one or two stores on the whole street open. It's changed somewhat to the good and somewhat to the bad.

S.D.: Tell me a little bit about your working dock and who docks there.

L.M.: Well over at the working dock, we keep that primarily for watermen that don't require the services that the yachters require. We give them slips that are much lower rate. And it helps them.

S.D.: Whose idea was that?

L.M.: That was mine.

S.D.: Was it for permits or just –

L.M.: No. Actually, when I bought the point in '74, I bought it as a yard and to build slips over there. And I got permits for 340 slips. And then through different circumstances, I never continued with the building of it. And the dock that was there was there when I bought it, except I extended it. And he decided to give that to the watermen.

S.D.: Did anybody talk to you about that?

L.M.: I would have different people, different watermen come and ask me if they could tie up somewhere, and that's the way it started.

S.D.: Tell me about some of the experiences between recreational cruising and the watermen.

L.M.: Well the feelings there have eased considerably. But there was a tremendous amount of friction during the pleasure boating, fishing pleasure boaters and commercial watermen. They were both throwing daggers at one another, blaming each other for different things. Sometimes you'll find a sailboat sailing through a chum line and that causes friction. So the commercial men and the recreational boaters do not – they're not compatible, but now there's not as much problems. I know the commercial watermen have put crab nets in the channels which we've taken, you know, we've hauled boats to get them off the props and out of the rudders and whatnot, and that's been a hindrance, and that's been a sore spot.

S.D.: How about yourself? Have you ever gotten into a –

L.M.: I've gotten into conflicts fishing, and I've gotten into conflicts racing sailboats. (Laughter).

S.D.: Can you share a couple of those stories?

L.M.: Well there's a big bay out there, but if you catch a fish, it becomes a very small area, and you get crowded with boats, and they'll come in and cut across you and cut your lines. I've had some angry words with the fishermen out there doing that. Sailing, the same thing. A sailboat does have the right of way. However, a lot of sailors take advantage of it and push it. And that causes friction between the powerboat and the sailboat.

S.D.: Does the sailboat have the right of way when it's running a motor?

L.M.: No, it does not, only under sail.

S.D.: Why do you think sailboats go as close as they do to workboats?

L.M.: Well if they're tacking down bay and they're on a certain tack, they don't want to get off that tack to, you know, clear a fishing area. They'll just sail right through the area. And they figure it's their right.

S.D.: What's the difference between the character or what kinds of things have you noticed between recreational fishermen and sailors?

L.M.: Oh, there's a huge difference. They don't think the same, they don't boat the same. They don't do anything the same. I have about a dozen fishing boats here now, but years ago, I took away all fishing boats from here and we were all sail because of the conflicts and, you know, the early morning engines running and different things like that. The mess sometimes after the cleanup. But today, I don't find the conflict – most of our fishing boats now are smaller outboards so they don't make as much noise. And they usually go out, they're even going out later now. They don't come in that early and go out.

S.D.: What do – did the recreational fishermen just take their catch home with them or –

L.M.: Mostly, yeah.

S.D.: Do you think they sold it?

L.M.: I had one fellow here that was in the fishing business. I mean he made a business out of it. He would come down with 12 dozen soft crabs and all kinds of eels and clams and, you know, he went out there and spent two or three days fishing without coming in. And when he came in, he came in with a boatload of fish. And he had a trailer, he'd take them up to P-A and sell them.

S.D.: How about the first pier? Let's go back to that. How did you get the pilings into the first pier?

L.M.: We actually borrowed a pile driver. **Tom Melvern's** rig was here then, and for some reason, he was sick and he didn't have any help, so we borrowed his pile driver and started driving piles.

S.D.: And what was it like at that time?

L.M.: It was pretty scary because none of us knew what we were doing, and the piles didn't go in very straight, so it was a mess. (Laughter).

S.D.: And you helped build this dock?

L.M.: Yes.

S.D.: What did you do?

L.M.: Just helped with getting the piles into the leads. My father ran the pile driver itself. I was pretty young then.

S.D.: How old?

L.M.: I think I was 12.

S.D.: Did – what did you do when you were growing up?

L.M.: Fished, crab, sailed, ran around in a bateau, worked at the marina. Didn't do much uptown because there wasn't a whole lot to do in Rock Hall. It was pretty laid back then.

S.D.: Did you have fun?

L.M.: Oh, I had a good time in the summers.

S.D.: What was it like having all the people coming in?

L.M.: It was fun because, again, during that period, we would go out on the docks at night, my sister and I. And we would get aboard – everybody would be together on somebody's boat with musical instruments, and we'd play and sing and have a good time. It was fun.

S.D.: Where did people come from?

L.M.: Mainly from Baltimore. And then people would come down from **Georgetown, Warton Creek, Fairlee Creek**. Again, they were mostly people that kept their boats here and lived out of state.

S.D.: Where are people coming from now?

L.M.: Most of our customers are Pennsylvania, some from New Jersey, Delaware.

S.D.: And where do they get like their supplies?

L.M.: They buy them all over. West Marine just opened up in Rock Hall. They go there a lot. There's a lot of places around now where they can buy goods at almost wholesale prices. So we don't try much in the way of selling.

S.D.: What services do you provide?

L.M.: We provide all the maintenance services, complete service to – from anywhere to scrubbing bottoms to varnishing teak, fixing engines, electronics, sails, whatever.

S.D.: How many employees do you have?

L.M.: Right now, I think there's 7 or 8 here.

S.D.: And how do you get employees?

L.M.: Employees are hard to come by. The labor rates in marinas is smaller than they can make in a carpentry business or plumbing business. So it's tough, it's tough to get them. And it's hard to increase rates, their labor rates, because of all the slack time you get. You've got to keep them busy year-round or they don't want to come to work for you.

S.D.: How about working on engines, and fiberglass?

L.M.: We have Rick's Marine over in the year. Most all the fiberglass – we sent one of our employees to diesel school last year, so he's now a certified diesel mechanic. We hire contract laborers to do mechanical work, and electronic work, sail making or sail repair. We do rigging here ourselves. So we do a lot of the services here ourselves.

S.D.: What is it that you think makes a good marina?

L.M.: The customers in it. That's, I mean this marina is so great because of the customers. They're a good bunch of people. And then we put a lot of effort into how we handle them, treat them, keeping the facilities clean. There's a lot that goes into it.

S.D.: What makes a good customer?

L.M.: His trust in you, his eagerness, friendliness, rather, with other customers. We have an association here which I started back in the 60's called **Swan Creek Sailing Association**. And we get together quite a few weekends for parties or rendezvous in different places.

S.D.: What do you do at a rendezvous?

L.M.: We'll sail over to another area in the bay and meet and have fun.

S.D.: So that would be the customers here at the –

L.M.: Yes.

S.D.: How about halyards?

L.M.: Halyards, you can hear some clanging right now. I tried for years to keep that from happening, and it was a losing battle, so now I learned to sleep with it, it puts me to sleep. It does bother other customers at times, and when somebody gets bothered, they usually get to their neighbor and say, hey, you need to tie your halyards off.

S.D.: Do you remember the halyard ordinance?

L.M.: Yes. (Laughter.)

S.D.: Can you tell me a little bit about that?

L.M.: Well they tried to enforce a law, which I also did. I mean I had a rule in my contract that, you know, you had to have your halyards tied off. If they weren't, I would charge you to do that job. And, you know, rules and people just don't mix. (Laughter.) It didn't work.

S.D.: Tell me a little bit about **Isabelle**.

L.M.: Isabelle was devastating. We had low winds. I think the top wind speed was probably 60 miles an hour. But the tidal surge was – oh, I'd have bet my life it would never come that high. And it devastated a lot of people in Rock Hall. We lost quite a bit. We're going to have to re-wire our docks this year. We weren't damaged anywhere near as much as most of the places.

S.D.: Did you have any problems with the boats?

L.M.: Not one boat got a scratch on it. And, you know, we have a good record of that. We've had a lot of hurricanes through here, and we've never had a boat damaged from a hurricane or any storm.

S.D.: How do you think that compares with some of the other marinas in town?

L.M.: They're not as fortunate, mainly because – or maybe because they don't take as much time preparing the boats for the hurricanes and rely on their customers to do that. But we are well-protected. It's just a great spot.

S.D.: How did your parents choose this spot?

L.M.: Well we used to come in, like I say, on weekends and anchor, and look in here and see how – we liked the whole creek, you know. Everything was pretty. But when my father got ready to move here, he found this place on the market and immediately bought it.

S.D.: Was there any restaurants in town at the time?

L.M.: I can't remember. There were just a few bars, I believe. My mother started a restaurant in the 60's or in the 50's right after my father started expanding the docks, and that drew in transit business on weekends.

S.D.: By that you mean –

L.M.: Well we would draw people from other parts of the bay to come in and use the slip for the weekend, have a meal. It helped the pocketbook.

S.D.: What did she cook?

L.M.: Her – well she cooked a home-style dinner. And she had oven-fried chicken, she had shrimp boats, which she created, which was a large jumbo shrimp with, stuffed with crabmeat and crabmeat wrapped around it with the tail sticking up. She called it a shrimp boat. She did crab cakes, which were famous, steaks and fried chicken. The oven-fried chicken was famous. She would lightly fry it in the pan, and then wrap it in foil and put it in the oven for an hour and a half. And it was delicious.

S.D.: When – do people still get together on each other's boats?

L.M.: Quite a bit, yeah. But we mostly meet on shore now. I mean there's a dock out there, the head of a dock, we call that the Lizard Lounge. And we meet there a lot. We have parties over in the yard, parties here under the tree.

S.D.: Do you have regular customers that have been here almost all that time?

L.M.: I think my oldest customer has been here 28 or 29 years, since I've owned the place.

S.D.: And do any of them live in Rock Hall?

L.M.: We have several customers now living in Rock Hall that have moved from out of state into Rock Hall, and still keep their boats here.

S.D.: Do they live in town or –

L.M.: Most of them live right on **Walton Avenue** (phonetic). They wait for a property to open up and they'll buy it. We have some living – we have one in the haven. They're scattered throughout the town.

S.D.: What about the time period when the condominiums first started coming in?

L.M.: The condominiums were a big boon doggle failure. I don't even think, until about 3 or 4 years ago, that they even finished all of them. They couldn't sell them. At that time, there weren't as many people trying to buy property here. Property values were lower. It was a good time to buy. And that was in the 70's, late 60's, early 70's. By the late 70's, it was hard to buy property in Rock Hall for a decent price.

S.D.: Why do you think that changed?

L.M.: The outside interests, people moving in. It really started to become a large retirement community, which was bad – the community. And people just loved the town and wanted to move here for retirement.

S.D.: Was there anything – what were some of the factors that you think affected that?

L.M.: The detriment of the town? They didn't have a large enough income to support the town. They were buying property when it was cheap. So it was affordable to them to do that, and it kind of lowered the tax base in Rock Hall.

S.D.: What do you think is happening now?

L.M.: There's a lot more money moving into the town. Properties are very high right now. I think they're inflated. But again, the town doesn't have to worry about its tax base. I wish they'd leave the marinas alone.

S.D.: What do you mean by that?

L.M.: Well my real estate taxes are based upon my gross rental income. There's no other business in the world that's tax based like that. And I pay much higher taxes because of it. And I'm also charged 3 percent slippage to the town itself, and I pay \$25 a year for each slip. It's just taxed, and taxed and taxed.

S.D.: Is it the same tax for the watermen's slips too?

L.M.: Yes. But, again, it's a percentage of how much they're, you know, taking for the slip or getting for the slip.

S.D.: Can you tell me a little bit about the slip costs? Maybe not yours, but just in general.

L.M.: Slip costs, and it's been a long while since I've put too many slips in, but I would say a slip now would cost about 3 to \$4,000 to put in.

S.D.: And how much is rental?

L.M.: It's a good return. We're getting up to \$3,500 a year for this slip.

S.D.: And how about a place like **Osprey Point**?

L.M.: It cost them a lot more to put their slips in. When I say for each slip, I'm not including all the land improvements you have to do and the bulkheading and the dredging. That's not included in that. If you don't have a natural spot to put the slip in, then the cost of that slip will – could go 10 times what I said.

S.D.: And was this a fairly natural place?

L.M.: This was very natural, yes. We've never had to dredge here. It's a plus.
(Laughter.)

S.D.: Did your parents know that when they moved here?

L.M.: I don't really think they thought that much about it. I mean they knew there was good water in the creek. Of course, you know, some are anchoring here. But again, they bought the place as a residence, not to put a marina in.

S.D.: And they just –

L.M.: And that just, like I say, mushroomed from why don't you put some slips in.

S.D.: How many slips were originally – tell me a little bit about the – from having one friend stay and –

L.M.: Well all of our, I think initially, if I remember correctly, initially we just had weekend people coming in for dinners and to say hello. And after he started putting more slips in, we started renting to summer people, just summer slips. And if they stayed for the winter, that was fine, but there was no lift service here, there were no toilets and showers, there was nothing. The wiring was homespun wire run from – run on 2x4's nailed to the piles. It was pretty crude.

S.D.: And tell me a little bit about the difference between Hurricane Agnes and Hurricane Isabelle.

L.M.: Hurricane Agnes was also bad for the bay, but that happened from a lot of fresh water in the bay and bringing tremendous amount of silt and debris from the rivers and dams and whatnot. And there were boats damaged from tide rising too high, but that was, again, from the

fresh water instead of the wind drying the water up the bay. This was a wind-driven tide, and it gave us a lot more water.

S.D.: What do you think the long-term effects on the bay?

L.M.: I don't think the bay is going to be hurt anywhere near as much by this one as she was by Agnes. Agnes dumped feet of silt into the bay, and just tremendous amounts of silt. And our creek doesn't have as much water in it now because of it.

S.D.: Do you – how about the places that have the dredge?

L.M.: Most of the places that have had the dredge have had the dredge more than once. So we have an expense, an ongoing expense, which doesn't give them as much profit.

S.D.: How many marinas or public docks or gassing stations were there at about the time when you first came in the 50's?

L.M.: Well there was no marinas when I came in the 50's. There was – Rock Hall Marine Railway had a yard and a couple of slips, but they weren't trying to do any type of marina business. And everywhere there were docks, they were pretty much for the watermen. I can't think of anyplace where they had, where they were out trying to rent slips to boats.

S.D.: So were some of the first recreational vehicles docking in the area, were they docking here?

L.M.: Yes. Initially, I believe we were – well as we started attracting boats into the area, the other places started putting in more slips where they had the watermen, **Edwards Marina** around in the Chester River, **Stanley Vanzant**, the **Crouch Marina**, they were both in **Long Cove**. There was a marina built where **Art Willis** is now. The **Arbor** (phonetic) boys built that.

S.D.: What about Hills?

L.M.: **Hills** was, again, a yard, and mostly for watermen. And then they started putting in slips for boaters as well. And the area just kept growing with recreational boats. It mushroomed.

S.D.: Did – what did people in the town say when –

L.M.: About the amount of boaters? I think most of them were happy. A lot of them didn't like the change that was coming around, and I don't blame them. You know, they were here. But, basically, I just, as the thing evolved, as everything started evolving, I think it became easier and easier to move into Rock Hall and be compatible with everybody here.

S.D.: What do you think makes Rock Hall so attractive to recreational boating?

L.M.: The water, the services. Competition is very good. As competition comes, it just keeps attracting more boats, and it attracts more people who want to work on boats. It's really helpful.

S.D.: Have you heard about the marine trade school?

L.M.: Yes, I have.

S.D.: What do you think about that?

L.M.: Well I hear they're having trouble trying to get it off the ground, really. And there's, I think there's more than one outfit trying – ABYC is trying to put in a school, and I think they're having troubles. That's where we sent our fellow last year. They come around and do class work from in – they did up at **Haven Harbor**. We sent our fellow up. They've sent around lift operating instructions and schooled them for that. I think it's healthy. I think it should be done in the high schools as a vocational education. There's a lot of industry, there's a lot of boating industry here now and it needs to be addressed.

S.D.: How do the people that work at the marinas now differ from the ones, your early employees?

L.M.: My early employees were watermen. And when the fish weren't running, they were eager to work ashore. But as soon as something happened out there, the fish started running or the crabs picked up or whatever, they were gone. (Laughter.) Left me in the lurch. I had a couple of employees that stuck with me year-round.

S.D.: How did they interact with the people from Pennsylvania and New Jersey?

L.M.: Fine. Of course, they were making their livelihood off of them. They accepted them more readily. It's a funny thing. If you're making, you know, if you're reaping a benefit from somebody, it's easier to get along with them.

S.D.: Are there any funny stories about just, I don't know, watching people try to eat a crab with a mallet or –

L.M.: Oh, yeah. I've seen people pick up a hard crab and stick the thing in their mouth and bite down on it. (Laughter.) And I've seen people take a mallet and pound them so you can't find any meat within the bone. The bone and the meat's all mixed together. I mean I've seen a lot of weird things when it comes to crabs.

S.D.: How did the people from out of town learn how to eat crabs or how to fish in this area?

L.M.: I think mainly just from somebody else showing them. Most of the people from Pennsylvania, when they cook crabs, they take the shell off and boil them. I think a lot of them have learned how much better they taste steamed, but before, they would boil them. If you go to a crab house, and for years if you go to a crab house, you'd have your mat in front of you with instructions on how to clean the crab. So just from that and experience.

S.D.: How about the resources in the bay, like the crabs, and the fish?

L.M.: It's sad. I'm hearing that there's no oysters this year. So few that it's not going to be feasible to go out there and make a living at it. The crabbing has decreased, the fishing's decreased, everything has decreased. There's a lot of pollution in the bay. And the bay doesn't look like, for a while, even in the – that started recovering and started looking better. And whatever happened, it reverted back to its polluted state again.

S.D.: What do you think some of the causes were?

L.M.: I think the two greatest causes are industrial and agricultural. There's a lot of fertilizers and nutrients being put in the fields that wash out right back into the bay. You can see the industrial waste. You just have to look across the bay. Baltimore is one of our largest contributors of sewage to the bay. They holler about boaters. If the boaters didn't do anything, go directly overboard, they couldn't put anywhere near as much into the bay as one little leak in Baltimore puts into it.

S.D.: Has there ever been a particular time when you noticed the pollution in Baltimore?

L.M.: Yeah, we sailed over there for a 4th of July. And I had a brand new Danforth that I put overboard. And when I picked it up the next morning, the galvanized was eaten off of it (laughter), so there was a lot of acid in that bottom.

S.D.: How do you recommend maintaining boats for the different kinds of boats that have been – like how has that changed from the wooden boats to the fiberglass?

L.M.: Yeah, we were mostly wooden boats. The maintenance was entirely different. The skills required by the workmen were entirely different. They were harder skills to learn than

they are today. It's easier to teach a guy how to buff out a fiberglass boat than it is to paint it or to caulk it or, you know, replace wood in it. It's easier for somebody to learn how to repair fiberglass than it was wood. So it's changed considerably in that respect.

S.D.: Who did most of your repairs on the wooden boats, the caulking?

L.M.: I had one person that worked for me usually that knew how to work on wood, and we did that.

S.D.: Did you ever communicate much with Stanley Vanzant?

L.M.: Quite a bit, yeah. Stanley and I were good friends. In fact, he worked on my bugeye. He replaced some deck planks on it.

S.D.: Do you have a story you'd like to share about with him?

L.M.: Well Stanley was just, he was just a friendly funny guy. He was easy to get along with. Not much bothered him. I like the way he worked on wood. He had a hatchet, and he would shape a piece of wood with a hatchet, and I was so enthralled with that that I started practicing it myself, and I actually built a couple of things that way. (Laughter.)

S.D.: What was his attitude about recreational boating versus workboats?

L.M.: Stanley didn't seem to have a whole lot of attitude either one way or the other. He was laid back, like I say. As long as the guy paid the slip rent, he was fine, no matter where he came from.

S.D.: What are some of his contributions to the community?

L.M.: Well he did a lot for the community. They have a statue of him up in town. It's a history on him up there people can read. But he was basically a boat builder. He built back tows, small fishing boats, and that was his main business.

S.D.: How about shanty boats? Did you ever see shanty boats in this creek?

L.M.: Shanty boats. I'm not familiar with the term.

S.D.: The little houseboats that get pulled out, they're like little houses?

L.M.: Oh, a regular houseboat. Yeah, we've had a few in here. We've never – well we had one customer with a houseboat once, and that was about it.

S.D.: These were for working?

L.M.: No, these were pleasure boats, pleasure houseboats.

(BEGIN SIDE B.)

S.D.: How about hunting, decoy, waterfowling?

L.M.: There's, again, a conflict in Warton Creek with hunting, and I don't know where else it might arise. But Warton Creek has had to remove their moorings because of the people that own the hunting rights on the shore got them in court, won the case in court. It's a real conflict, because in September when the first duck season comes in, and it's only a week, I think, or two, but you can't have a boat on the mooring during that period. Well there's nowhere else to put the boats, so you can't rent moorings. So it's hurt some people's pocketbooks.

S.D.: Did anybody ever – did any of your customers ever come for hunting?

L.M.: We have some customers that come down and hunt in the fall, in the winter, but most of them are not hunters.

S.D.: Let me pause.

(Off record.)

S.D.: Okay, we're back recording again. Tell me a little bit about Rock Hall harbor and what it looked like.

L.M.: Rock Hall harbor in the 50's was all fishing boats, was big commercial fishing boat center. There were at least three or four crab houses or oyster shucking houses, couple of very tiny restaurants. **Hubbard's Pier** was there. That's one of the restaurants I forgot. And there was another very small restaurant right across from Hubbard's. Hubbard's was – Hubbard's has disappeared. They dug all the land out and built a marina there. And all of, I mean North Point, all of the places there have put in – there's very few commercial boats left in Rock Hall harbor.

S.D.: What marina was put in at Hubbard's?

L.M.: **Rock Hall Landing**. And then **North Point** and **Wendell Point**, they were actually two separate marinas that are now owned by one party. **Art Willis** was a new marina, **Polaris** was a new marina, which is now a state park. The place next to that was a new marina which they call Pruitt's now. So it's totally changed. I mean there's a few fishing boats left over there. Mostly it's recreational boats.

S.D.: How about the **Bay Side Park**?

L.M.: That was built supposedly for slips for the watermen to keep them in a slip. However, I think federal grants were used, and it's on a first-come, first-served basis now. So whoever gets their foot in the door gets a slip. So its original intention is now no longer what it was. They've put a large launching ramp in. They're supposed to enlarge the swimming pool, and they're looking for more property because they don't have room to park the trailers and cars that are bringing the trailer boats in. So it's done some good, and I think it's going to be a tax hazard for the taxpayers, other than that.

S.D.: How about the yacht club? Tell me a little bit about the early days in the 50's.

L.M.: The yacht club in the 50's was a great spot. It had world renown races. I mean, they were known all over the world. And we drew boats from all over the country, small boats. And it was fun. They had a good program there. And then later, it just petered out, and they've tried to put slips and moorings in there which aren't very successful. It's too rough. They have a long fetch coming in there. And so it gets rough in there. It's gone up and down over the years.

S.D.: And how about the – did you ever race in a race there?

L.M.: Yeah, my first race there was in a Penguin with **Bosey Walhan**. Sad to say, we came in worse than dead last.

S.D.: How many people in the area own Penguins?

L.M.: I'm not sure how many people in the area own them, but there were quite a few boats in the race. There were probably, just a haphazard remembrance would be 30, 40 boats, Penguins. There were Sunfish, there were Lightenings, Comets, Chesapeake 20's, and several other types of boats.

S.D.: How about – tell me a little bit about fishing, how the regulations have changed.

L.M.: Well I can't understand the change in the regulations. Now you're not allowed to keep the fish unless it's at least 18 inches, and then in the spring it's 30-some inches. It seems to me they're throwing away the fish that are getting big enough to spawn and have reached a certain maturity where they're not as endangered as being eaten by something else, and they've taken away the good tasting fish, the pan rock, and that doesn't make sense to me.

S.D.: How about among the states, the different –

L.M.: The states all vary. We seem to be getting the worst part of the rules.

S.D.: Do you like to fish still?

L.M.: I enjoy fishing. I just, it galls me to throw away a pan rock and keep something that I know is not going to taste as good (laughter).

S.D.: How about your daughter? When did she learn to fish?

L.M.: She, at a very early age, started fishing. We started her out with a bamboo pole with a string on it and a bent – not a bent, but a safety pin. And she would bait that safety pin and pull fish out of the water with it. She's a great fisherman. A very lucky fisherman. She usually catches the biggest one, catches the first one and catches the most.

S.D.: What was it like raising a family here?

L.M.: It was tough in a way. Again, Rock Hall was still in a, in a position where I was looked at as an outsider, my kids were looked at as outsiders. It changed some, I mean there were some good changes up to that point, but it was still a little tough. The school was a good system. In fact, the elementary school was rated very high. They had a good principal. It was rough for the kids. I mean there wasn't recreational things for them to do. My wife and I started a cub scout group. We integrated the first, we were the first integrated cub scout pack in Rock Hall. I don't think that went over real big.

S.D.: Would you mind talking about that a little bit?

L.M.: No. At that period, the schools were starting to integrate. So the black kids were coming into the public school here. And when we started the – or I actually started the cub pack, I was asked to start it, I thought it only fair to include everybody. So we actually, made it openly known through Eadesville and different places where the kids were coming from that we wanted them in the cub scouts. And my wife's den was the only den with blacks in it. So it was, you know, there was that separation then that was truly felt.

S.D.: How did the kids take? Do you think the kids learned?

L.M.: Oh, the kids were much easier to win over than the parents. When you have prejudice, and you're taught to be prejudiced, even a kid has a hard time with it. It changes. Everybody changes.

S.D.: How about recreational sailors? Were there any African American?

L.M.: We have two boats here with African American boaters. Very nice people. They get along great with the customers here.

S.D.: Were the marinas ever segregated? Do you remember?

L.M.: Oh, I remember a period of time when if you were a Jew or you were black, you had to have your spot. I mean you weren't allowed, even the marinas wouldn't rent a slip to a Jew or a black.

S.D.: When did that start changing?

L.M.: That came about hard too. The – it didn't start changing until well into the 60's. I think our first black customer, not because we kept them out, they're just weren't too many black sailors in the area because they were shunned. And again, we only have two here now, so that's not a big percentage. We have quite a few Jewish people here now. That's changed considerably. I don't think there's a marina around that will keep a person out because of his religion.

S.D.: How do you think it was on the water? Was there any stories about people having problems on the water?

L.M.: Oh, yeah. When we started, when we started this marina, there were – my dad had some Jewish friends that had boats, so they started coming in. Word spread, so other people started coming in. And we heard stories from them that, you know, they weren't allowed

anywhere else. They were shunned everywhere. And their money is just as good as anybody else's. And there's just as many nice Jews as there are Irishmen.

S.D.: Was there a particular big story or anything that ever made the papers?

L.M.: I can't think of anything that ever made the papers. It was a subtle thing, but it was a very pronounced subtle thing.

S.D.: How about among watermen?

L.M.: That was never a problem that I knew of between watermen. The blacks and the whites have always worked well together on the water. Today with the integration at its stage where it is now, you find a lot of people actually enjoying each other's company in a recreational area in Rock Hall.

S.D.: Well do you have anything else you'd like to add?

L.M.: Let's see. No, I just would like to add that I'd like to see the industry progress in a good fashion, not over-billed. I'd like to see the industry increase in its labor pool so that – I'd like to see labor rates go up so you can pay somebody more. If I go into a car shop or a car dealership now, I pay \$75 an hour to get my car worked on. My top mechanic here I give \$55 an hour for. So big difference. So I'd like to see that part change. I'd like to see the taxes change. I think it's a very unfair tax. But other than that, I think it's a healthy industry and a very good industry. It's clean, it adds tremendous tax dollars to the town, wherever they're at.

S.D.: I noticed you don't have a lot of powerboats.

L.M.: No. We have probably, all together, 20 powerboats here in the summer. And I think basically because we have the deep water to handle the sailboat keels, I actually built sea dock for sailboats. You can get small powerboats in there, but basically, it's a sailboat slip. And birds of a feather flock together.

S.D.: How would somebody get a slip here if they wanted one?

L.M.: Oh, they'd come and inquire at the office. And if we have one available, we just let them know what's available.

S.D.: Do you have many slips available often?

L.M.: Right now, I think we have three slips open, which we thought were filled. And at the last minute, they opened up from boat sales or somebody new or something.

S.D.: Well thank you very much.

L.M.: You're welcome.

(End of interview.)