

Interview Log

Interviewee: Janet Nordhoff

Interviewer: Julie Broadbent

Date: October 2011

Location: Outside of Janet Nordhoff's home, Rock Hall, Maryland

Topic: Women's work, Rock Hall, working on the water

Transcriber: Julie Broadbent

Comments: Janet asked that large sections of this transcript not be used so therefore I have edited them out. Future research may not use the recorded sections Janet has removed.

JN: I'm done salting the shop [unintelligible].

JB: Yeah.

JN: And in order for me to get it started I have to go underneath and hit the starter and solenoid for her to connect. I don't know what happened to make it do that but that's what it is doing so it is in the shop.

JB: That's crazy.

JN: Yeah, I mean it was running absolutely perfect and then turned it off and the next morning I went out there and that is how it was.

JB: Uh-

JN: So got it started and it was fine. Turned it off, started it back up everything was great. Then a little while later wouldn't start the same thing. And it's been doing that the last couple of days and I said no you can't be doing this so it's in the shop. So this morning like I said I have been doing bait jars to go in eel pots. That's clam bellies which is really nice.

JB: Where do you get the clam bellies from?

JN: New Jersey.

JB: You drive up to get them?

JN: I used too but now I have a guy that drives for me.

JB: Oh nice, okay.

JN: I used to have to go a lot further. I used to have to go to Cape May.

JB: Oh wow.

JN: Yeah about three hours. There was an old Gordon's fish packing place, Gordon's seafood, and these people got that now so...

JB: Oh okay. That's nice.

JN: Its closer, a little closer maybe a half hour but it still takes about three hours from here to get to there because when I would go before we rented a building up Hacks Point and we would leave from there. My sister would go with me so I didn't have to go by myself up there. So that what's I've been doing filling bait jars to get that out of the way.

JB: Do you fill bait jars every morning?

JN: No not every day, everyday something different. Yesterday was a really easy day. All we did was take that truck up there. It wasn't really hard work wise. The rest of the day was just maintaining everything and trying to get everything straight for today. I don't know maybe three or four times a week. I'll fill bait jars and then I help them unload the bait, fourteen 55 gallon barrels of bait and then we bucket them up in five gallon buckets, dump them down in the trough here and then we use the buckets to bucket them up and then he puts them in the freezer so they will freeze. That's how we do that.

JB: The bait you use for cat ish?

JN: Huh?

JB: Do you put them in frozen in the catfish pots?

JN: Uh-huh [affirmative].

JB: Oh okay.

JN: Yea, you dump the whole bucket into like a bag that looks like net and they'll suck it out of the net. If not the pots have bigger mesh it would just melt and wash out of the pot.

JB: Oh okay.

JN: You have to restrict it so you don't just throw it away. Make them work a little bit for it. [laughter]

JB: How often does he go out to cat fish?

JN: He goes every day, just about every day. Right now the bottom fell out on the market because now there are more people getting into it because crabbing sucked. So the market fell out so no one wants fish now.

JB: Got it, is it because of the weather this year has been funny kinda wet and rainy?

JN: Well it messed up the crabbing for the boys that have been crabbing because usually October, November is when they are doing good you know and that's when the crabs are at their best it always has been like that but yeah. It messed them up. So have to find something else to go into until they can go rock fishing.

JB: Does your husband do crabbing at all during the summer?

JN: He used to and he went a couple of times this year but usually in the summer you really can't do what he does cat fishing because he has them in holding pens. Like he'll fish and then they go into holding pens until you have a sale and like sometimes they have a big tractor trailers tank trucks come in and ship them out live. They will go to the dock and load the boat up. You know it has air and water and then weight them up and put them on the tank truck and it has air and water and they carry them away. They carry them everywhere. They stock fish ponds with them.

JB: How do you find the buyers for them?

JN: I don't know. He has been in it for forty year so you know he has such a good product people find him most of the time.

JB: Oh okay.

JN: Yeah so that's how that works. If you have a good product people are going to find you. If you have lousy product they aren't really interested in you but he has to go the extra mile to take care of them, you have to, you know.

JB: Are the pens are they in the Bay?

JN: He has had them where they are in the Bay but see they are not protected there. So you try and get them up in the river or up in the creek but it is going to have to have flow to keep them alive. Where they are not going to be hot or anything but if you get them out in the Bay where there is all that traffic, and ice. Come winter would just rip everything down. Like up there in Turner's Creek he has his pens up there and what he has to do would be when the weather would get so bad and it would freeze. Up there the water is fresher so it freezes first. You know it does not have as much salt. And being in the creek in a closed area like that and right inside there it would freeze up and he would have to go all winter long. He wouldn't be able to go fishing but he would have to have his boat there and he would have to break a track of ice out to the pens every day, every single day. A lot of times once they got out there the pens are froze up and you can't ram them with your boat because the pens will be torn down and then you'll lose your fish. So many a day they'd have to go out there with chain saws and cut through a foot of ice to free up the pens and then try and get the ice out from inside the pens. Because you know what Rick's pound nets look like.

JB: Mhm.

JN: A crib looks almost like that. It doesn't have a hedging or anything but it's up on stakes and it's up in the air. So you can imagine trying to get the ice out from the inside, rough job.

JB: Rough job yeah. Does he do it all by himself?

JN: Sometimes he has help.

JB: Oh okay.

JN: Another guy will help him but like one time we went down to his mom's. His mom, she just passed away but her place is down on the water and right when he would go perch fishing or rock fishing in that creek. He'd have to bust a track and keep a track open to the river. He would be coming back in after being out there and it would be starting to freeze over and he'd want to back in. So he would be headed out to break again the next day and the ice would be so thick and he would have poles and he'd be trying to push the ice away and like stack it up and you know try to push it under another piece of ice or over. Of course I was standing on the dock, I'm in so many clothes and coveralls, you know. I looked like a polar bear or something and I am out there on the end of the dock and I have the pole I didn't have a nail or anything in the end of it to stab it to try and hold it better and that pole slipped and when it did I went right overboard and he is coming backing in. All I can think of is that he is going to grind me up in the wheels you know and I threw my arms out like this to catch myself. I went in but I didn't get my head under.

JB: Hm.

JN: I was really concerned about that because I was afraid I wasn't going to come up. So he had to fish me out. Make fun of me.

JB: Oh my God that must have been so cold.

JN: It was cold but it had happened so fast that it was just like done you know and of course I could have never got up by myself but he hauled me out of there.

JB: He saw you back there, swimming.

JN: He had to keep his eye on me. He can't replace me. He got to keep his eye on me. Then one day we were out there, it was froze and there was a semi track there. We were there at the dock to the boat and we looked out there and there was a deer out on the ice. She was trying to get to the other side because they are used to swimming across that creek. She was out on the ice. She had two little babies with her.

JB: Oh wow.

JN: What they were doing, she went down through the ice. We saw it and they were trying to get up on her back and their hooves are like sharp as razors. We got in the boat and we got out there and we were trying to help them you know. Her back was all bloody from their hooves trying to get up. They got up through her but then she couldn't get up. She was getting real weak, being so cold and tired. He got the boat over there to her and he had one hold of her and I had a mop off the boat and I stuck it under her rear end and pried down on the washboard to lift her butt up and he is hauling on her too until we got her on the ice and then they crossing the creek. Well she plopped several times before she got to

shore because she was so exhausted and her legs went out just like that and she would fall right down on the ice.

JB: She just spread eagle on the ice. Oh no.

JN: Then get them spindly legs back up and get them babies to shore. It was really something but we felt so good that we could help her. We do dumb stuff like that.

JB: That's not dumb. [laughter] Did you ever see Bambi where Bambi is ice skating?

JN: Yea, that is just what it looked like too. That's pretty funny. I stink, I stink. Can you smell it? [clam bellies].

JB: Not at all.

JN: Oh you can't?

JB: Nuh-huh.

JN: God, I can get you a chair.

JB: I actually like sitting down here it is comfy.

JN: Okay.

JB: Surprisingly enough it's comfy on the gravel here.

JN: On the stones.

JB Why were you going out on the boat that day when it was all iced over?

JN: Break a track.

JB: Oh, to break a track so you are going out to help out with that stick?

JN: I did that from the dock that day. I wasn't going out on the boat that day with him. I just was helping him on the boat overhaul net and stuff. I won't go out when there is ice out there. I can't stand it. It's nerve-wracking. Cause that boat, it's just crushing and crushing, beating and banging. Oh my nerves can't stand that. I will do anything but that.

JB: Do you go out in the nicer weather?

JN: Oh yes I can go out on the nicer weather with him. Like I told you before, when I crabbed I had my own boat. We work better separately. You know you can only have one captain on the boat. You can't have two it doesn't work. So yea, I had my own boat.

JB: What was the name of your boat again?

JN: It was called Stormy but I was out there crabbing one day and I had a real close friend and I had just talked to him and he said... it was blowing and being nasty and stuff. I said "I think I am going to take up" and he said "I am going to make one more run then I am going in to" and I got half of my line in. Did I tell you that?

JB: Nuh-huh.

JN: I had half my line in and lightning struck and knock me down in the boat and once I got myself together and back up again I went ahead and got the rest of my line in and turned around to see where he was because he was at the other end of my line and I didn't see him and DuPont's dock was down there and I thought well he's gone in there for shelter and as soon as I hit shore and got tied up they came out and told me that he got struck by lightning and was dead. So I didn't crab for a long time after that. That was really hard. Then I took the name Stormy off my boat and then I didn't have a name on there after that. I just had flowers [laughter]. I thought that would be better.

JB: Yea, did you stencil the flowers yourself?

JN Yea, I have to do most of the work on the boat myself. My husband, he did put a new stern in it one year him and I but he'd be working too so he wouldn't have time to help me all the time but he would help me as much as he could. You know how it is. If there was any carpentry work stuff like that on the fiber glass. I mean I could do some of it but I would use west system because it is easier to work with but the fiberglass you have to be on the ball with that but he helped me do all that. He made my engine box and my floor boards for me and you know we work together doing something like that. He was a great help in making my boat as cute as it was but when he wants to use it I would have to let him use it and that's not good. You know we work hard out of it like when he wanted to use it for a tow boat behind him or something it wouldn't come back looking quite the same.

JB: Yeah.

JN: But yeah, I when I crabbed I enjoyed it but I won't do it again. I mean you know maybe just to play around and go out and maybe get a bushel to eat or something. I would do that again but I never would be able to my boat in shape enough. That's really, that's hard work when you have to do it every day. Cause everybody thinks you get you get in there, you bait your line up and you go crabbing but that's just not the way it works. You know you have to be sure you got your bags, you got your bait, it's salted. It's got to be done ahead of time. You can't go up there, I guess you can go up and buy bait that day after crabbing all day but you have to soak it in water or something like that to thaw it out. I mean you have to skin or it has chicken head on it you have to discard all that and pull all the fat off. They won't eat it if it has fat on it you know and then chop it up salt it down. Take care of all that. You got to be dedicated. It is a job you got to spend your time doing it and then you go out there and you work. When you come in you got to make sure everything is right for the next day get out there and you

don't have a basket top or you're out of baskets or you're out of gas or whatever.

JB: Did you have your own commercial license while you were doing this?

JN: I still have it.

[section cut]

JB: Okay, and the license includes the quota right?

JN: Yeah, so my license is a LCC and what I can do with that is go crabbing, trotlining, and if I wanted to have pots I could have fifty pots.

JB: Okay.

JN: That's all my license allows me to do and it cost sixty dollars a year whereas I could do just as well to go buy a recreational license. I'm not sure what they cost now but next to nothing and then you have no reports to fill out and you go out and catch a couple of bushel for nothing. So if you had any sense you would get a recreational license and the world is yours. If you are a commercial man like on TV you see how they are talking about the poachers?

JB: Yeah.

JN: I didn't get to see all of it, I wanted to see all of it but I just get so disgusted especially with Channel 11 because I really like Channel 11 but there is never a word ever that is positive when it comes to a waterman. It is always negative. You hear lots of things about the poor farmers and how there is too little rain or too much rain and they can't get the crops in but you never hear anything positive about a waterman. It is always they are a bunch of thieves. And granted you are going to have people like that. I think they might have overdone it a little bit. They were saying how 47% of the watermen are bad. You know that's what they say.

JB: Where did they come up with that percentage?

JN: I have no clue. I have no clue. That's pretty disgusting but anyway.

JB: So... that's an engine.

JN: That is an old truck he has souped up. It sounds good.

JB: Yeah.

JN: If he can keep it running. [laughter]

JB: Ooh man. So where did you learn how to trotline?

JN: Well, my brother-in-law used to go out. He was just a little kid and I used to go with him. I would dip for him and stuff. I would help him chop the bait and all. Sometimes I would steer the boat and one day he said he had to go in. He was going to go in to get a cup of coffee and I said, "Oh that sounds like a good idea." We were close to his mom's. Once he got out he just pushed the boat off and he said, "You go make a couple of runs and come pick me up." So that's what I did and that's how it started. Like sink or swim [laughter].

JB: How old were you when this?

JN: I was like 18.

JB: Did you need a license back then too?

JN: Yeah.

JB: You did? Okay.

JN: Things were different back then. When I crabbed commercially, you would have to take off either Monday or Sunday, and I always took off on Monday because Sunday we were going to have friends to have crabs and stuff. So this Monday morning it wasn't a pretty day or anything and I said I'm gonna go out in the creek. No one is going to bother me in the creek. So I went on out there and I crabbed. So the next Monday came around and I did so well I thought I would do it again. There was this asshole guy down there and nobody likes him. He always starts trouble. He's been a streaker, he's been everything.

JB: A streaker?

JN: They found him at Washington College doing things to himself in public. I mean he's been caught there a couple of times doing that. They caught him down in Cambridge. But anyway, he called and turned me in. None of the other watermen would have done that because I wasn't out in the river. I used to crab in the river but I wasn't out in the river where any of them were crabbing or anything. I was all alone in the creek. I was bothering a soul and he called and turned me in and the water cops came and got me. My brother-in-law, my other brother-in-law he came over. He told the guy "Man, she ain't never done nothing wrong. She wasn't hurting anything." He said, "Don't go giving her a ticket." And he said, "If I had just come upon her. I would have warned her to go to shore and to not let me catch her again." He said, "But since I was called on it. I was told to come out here because they had a complaint." It cost me two hundred and ten dollars.

JB: The ticket did? For fishing on a Monday or crabbing on a Monday.

JN: On my day off.

JB: Yeah.

JN: Well, it was against the law. I was doing wrong but they would have never known about it if he didn't turn me in.

JB: Yeah, sure.

JN: Asshole but he has done that to a lot of people.

JB: Really?

JN: Yeah.

JB: Is he from Rock Hall originally?

JN: Mhm.

JB: So he grew up with you guys to?

JB: Is he a waterman?

JN: If Timmy needs net geared, I will gear his net for him. If he needed eel pots made, I'll make eel pots. If he needs cat fish pots then we do catfish pots you know all the repairs. He helps me sometimes. I mean it is hard for him to be working and doing repairs at the same time because he has quite a large job to do. He does a lot of it on his own without help. So that's totally uncalled for but it is hard to get decent help. That's the biggest problem. You have to have someone who is raising a family. Who this is what they usually do but anybody in that circumstance now has their own boat. So you just have to get what you can get and it's not always possible.

JB: How did you learn how to gear nets?

JN: He showed me.

JB: He did? He knew?

JN: It's all he's ever done

JB: Oh okay.

JN: He lived in Skinners Neck. When he was 7 years old they'd be working on the water you know.

JB: Mhm.

JN: It's all he's ever done. When we were really young we used to go muskrating. I used to go muskrating with him that wasn't a good job. You made good money but I was always stuck in the marsh because my feet would be stuck down in the mud and couldn't get out. He'd have to pull me out of the mud, get stuck in the muskrat leed [laughter]. That was some crazy stuff, like right now if he calls. He's called a couple of times today and he said do this or do that. But if he calls and he needs something I'll take it to him. I'll get whatever he needs or in case it is something for tomorrow, that's what I do. I geared net with Andrea for

years and I geared net for watermen. I did that until I had to go take care of his mom because she had Alzheimer. She just died this past year. I am back to doing this. It was a fun gearing with Andrea because all we did all day long was talk. Up and down the line gear, gear, gear, watch TV, have a cup coffee and just yak all day. We had a ball.

JB: Did you gear net for people outside of Rock Hall?

JN: Mhm.

JB: Up and down the coast and everything

JN: and she still does.

JB: Do you normally do that in the winter when the soft crabs aren't happening?

JN: Yea, in the wintertime.

JB: Okay. When the fish are really running?

JN: When the boys are making money then they want more net. That's how that works.

JB: How many like feet of net do you think you could gear a day with Andrea?

JN: Well we do a box.

JB: Oh okay.

JN: We do a box a day and I mean we leave early some days and it you know sometimes it depending on how full we make it. You know everybody you know, it a little different. Some of them just take the normal but my husband and a few other guys they want their nets fuller, it takes more net ties are closer therefor it takes more ties and it take longer.

JB: Hm.

JN: [unintelligible]

JB: Your husband also catches perch then?

JN: Mhm, in the winter.

JB: Oh okay.

JN: He does everything.

JB: He does everything.

JN: He has fikes. We work on fikes when he is fike fishing. And then that's when you got to put all those stupid tags on all the little tiny perch I was telling you about. How insane is that?

JB: Yeah when I went out with Rick [Morlock] we had to tag all the rocks and we caught, I guess it was a small catch, but for me it seem like a lot of fish. It was 300 pounds or so and you just tag all those fish.

JN: Yeah but you're talking a rock fish. I am talking all those little tiny yellow perch that are what ten inches or nine inches or something. Oh my God it takes forever to tag those little suckers. It's insane.

JB: He needs you out on the boat then just tagging all the fish. As long as there is not ice on the water I guess.

[section cut]

JB: Ok. When you were crabbing and he was also fishing or cat fishing. Did you ship to the same places?

JN: We just sold it to either Andrea when she had Annie J's Seafood or Danny and Rita. They have J and 1 seafood or years ago we sent it down to- you went saw Edna Marie Hubbard?

JB: Yeah.

JN: We sold to her down there. All over when Wayne Brady had Evan's had all that Rock Hall Seafood we used to sell there.

JB: So it's not really like a contract either to where you have to sell?

JN: No, either they will take them or they won't.

JB: Oh okay, was there any like shopping around who had the best prices that day?

[Section cut]

JB: Yeah.

JN: They asked me to sell to them I said yes I will sell to you this year. So that's who I sold to... fair is fair.

JB: Yeah exactly.

JN: You treat me right I'll treat you right.

JB: Sure.

JN: Timmy, he used to have to leave here and go all the way to Hacks Point where we rented a shed because he used to work right up there like five minutes from the beginning river and we did that for I guess up there at least ten years and paid all that rent out. I always wanted this piece of property here because this was just a lot, a vacant lot, but the people wouldn't sell it to me because years ago this lot, my lot, and the next lot all belonged to one person a long time ago and so they held on to this one lot for sentimental value. Well, every year I would watch this guy come down and try and cut this lot and it would get like this tall and he would come down and try and cut it and sometimes it would

rain and he couldn't cut it and it was just terrible. And I'd go to him every year "Aren't you ready to sell me that yet." Well, one day I was out here and not that guy but his brother was a well-to-do guy. He travels the world. He saw me outside and he said "I have a question for you" and I said "yea" and he said, "I would like to know if it is ok..." because there was like a little ditch that go between the two properties so the water would drain into the ditch.

JB: Right on the side of the fence there? Okay I see it.

JN: I paid a guy to put the ditch in but the man come to me and said "I want to know if it is ok if I spray this weed killer here for all the poison ivy and stuff" and I said, you know it was growing on the trees and stuff and I said "I really don't you want to do that." I said, "I have all these animals" and I said, "You are going to be poisoning my animals." I said, "They are going to walk through it. Get it on their feet and they are going to lick their feet and I am going to lose my animals because of it." He said, "Well, ok." A nice man, I understand. He said "I don't know what I am going to do." I said, "Well if you sold me the property you wouldn't have to worry about what to do" and he said, "You want this property? I said, "Yea, I've been talking to your brother now for thirty years trying to get it from him." And he said, "Well when I leave here today I am going to go talk to him." He said, "Now I will be back in touch with you tomorrow" and I said, "Oh that's cool." He called me up and he said, "I want to come down and talk to you" and I said ok. So he came down and he said, "What are you willing to give me for this piece of property?" So I told him what I was willing to give him and he said, "I am going to talk to my brother and I am going to call you tomorrow." He left, that night he called me up and he said "If you want this piece of property you can have it." I said, "Well let's get busy" and he said, "I will go to the lawyer tomorrow and get him started on the paperwork." So all those years I was fooling with the wrong brother. I thought taking to the brother who didn't have much, you know, he would be on the one who would want to get rid of it but no it was the one that had the world by the tail. He didn't want to be down here farting around with this little piece of property.

So we went ahead and wanted to put this building up so we didn't have to rent no more and the people over in that house tried to stop us. We had to go to the board of commissioners to get on this property. They didn't want us here and we had been here forty years and they had been here four and they tried to stop us from getting it because they said when we bought this place it was an empty lot and I said, "Did you think it was going to stay empty forever?" And he said, oh he is some sort of lawyer from Pennsylvania and he wrote this great big letter and sent it to the county and everything. Saying that we were in violation of all these laws, running a business in a residential area and how this was an extension of, all these long words. You know saying that we're wrong and we went in there to the commissioner and she told me and I said if you didn't want to be around watermen then you shouldn't have been moving to Rock Hall and he said you can't be having all that stuff. He didn't want the trucks here because I have two big trucks. He didn't want the trucks here. He didn't want eel pots, the fikes, crab pots, he didn't want catfish pots, he didn't want boats. He didn't want

nothing here and she said, "This is what watermen to do; they have this stuff at their houses where are they supposed to do with it if they can't have it at their house."

JB: Yeah.

JN: And she told him, "Well I'm sorry," and she said, "They are allowed to have one compressor" and there it is, that freezer. So here we are.

JB: You won.

JN: I don't even speak to him he is such an asshole.

JB: Mhm.

JN: Shame. I liked his wife I thought she was really nice and I still think she's nice but her husband is really a dick. I don't have time for that and I mean they only come down, I don't know, maybe a handful of times a year maybe two handfuls for the whole year.

JB: Yeah.

JN: Miss Shirley said they thought they might want to pick their house up, like they live in a mansion over there. We think we might want to pick our house up and turn it in that direction. I said, "Why would they want to pick their house up to look at my house?" You know, they can look at Miss Shirley's house all the entire time they don't have to look over here." Pick that whole frickin' house up. Give me a break. They called me up one night, Timmy and I were out, and we got home I don't know 12 o'clock that night, the dogs have been in the pen and the dogs had been barking. Well they are not used to anyone being here you know because this is when they first moved in, not long maybe the first year or so. We weren't there so they were not in the house and there was something going on over there so the dogs are barking. Called me up and left me a message on my answering machine that you got to stop those dogs from barking. They are interrupting our sleep. What it was is that they had been over to Miss Shirley's and they don't drink and they had a few drinks over there and got their snotties on and when they came back across the street and the dogs were barking they actually called up my house and told me that I have to shut them up. That's how we started off. So then when they tried to stop me from doing this I had no more use from them at all. Done.

JB: Yeah, so you are over here most of the time.

JN: Mhm, when I work on the cat fish pots I normally do that on the lawn. A lot more stuff for them in the shed over there and the eel pots are over there. [Unintelligible]

JB: Mhm.

JN: I am going to paint this. Definitely needs some paint.

JB: What exactly is this thing called?

JN: A forklift.

JB: It's a forklift, this is a forklift. I would think it would be a lot bigger.

JN: They have great big ones.

JB: Wow there it is. This is for moving bait then?

JN: Well, we did put a pallet of bait in there with it but like when the truck comes in to load the fish up. They have the pallets and take a pallet and put it up here and then we put the boxes on the pallet and ice in boxes and then ice the fish all down from the back of his truck that he just caught and then he will take this and go over and get the whole pallet of fish and put in the back with the big truck and then take them away.

JB: So you don't drive this thing?

JN: Yes, I do.

JB: You do.

IN: Sure. I don't load that truck with it but I use it around here. I'll move that over when we are getting ready to do the bait and move pallets. I'll go up and put pallets on the back of my truck with it if they have any movement I'll off load that. You know lots of stuff. I got it stuck by the tubs in the hole over here on the side and he left it sitting out here and when he left he said go ahead and put that back so I went and put it back and when I went to back up to get back out see only the front tires work these are ... just are...

JB: They follow along.

JN: Those are power tires. So when I went off these stones to put it back I hit that soft and it was mud. She just sunk in the front so I couldn't get out. So I went over and got my truck and hooked up to her and I tried everything to pull the sucker out. She would not budge. So when he came home we had to take the tractor out. I started rocking her backward and forward and jumping up and down and stuff. We finally got her out oh and then he says, "You know I noticed it was really soft over there when I got that." Well when he got it, he had all the weight on here but when he emptied it out and I put the empty thing back there was no weight so when [got over there I just went. So when I move it the other day I put it right there on the edge of the stones so I won't get stuck again. Son of a bitch. But yea I am going to put some paint on her. She is in rough shape. I'm going to get a piece of like plastic across top to keep the rain off. We have two big trucks that have a big state body truck like Rick [Morlock]. I have a truck like that and then I have a refrigerated truck, a small refrigerated truck, a box truck. That's the one that is in the shop today and the other truck, a friend is using that but I'm glad that it's out of here because now I can put my forklift in there because usually I find it jammed in one place.

JB: Do you have a name that is on these trucks that's like your brand?

JN: No, I just need to have my DOT numbers and Nordhoff.

JB: Oh okay, just last name and DOT numbers. So how did you meet Timmy?

JN: I was in high school and he was dating my girlfriend and she was just using him because she was in love with her previous boyfriend and so when they broke up he asked me to go out with him and I said yes. And I did and that's what happened.

JB: While you were in high school you were like 16 17.

JN: I was 17.

JB: Yeah

JN: We got married when I was 18.

JB: You did?

[section cut]

JB: Did you know when met that he was going to be a watermen?

JN: Yes, but I had no idea, no idea what it was really all about. You know my grandfather did it but I was like a girly girl when I was 17 and 18 years old and when I got married and come down here. This was a whole different world. The very first year, we got married in October and my very first Christmas I got my very own pair of hipped boots and I was so proud of these hipped boots. It was incredible and I couldn't wait to tell my father and when I told my father he didn't speak to me. He was so disgusted. The last thing he wanted me to do was to become a woman in Rock Hall, not his daughter.

JB: Oh what did your dad do?

JN: He worked on the water for a while with his father but he was a captain of a patrol boat over to the Proving Ground, Aberdeen.

JB: Where is that- oh the military base?

JN: Mhm.

JB: Oh okay.

JN: Yeah, he had a big boat and he lived in Betterton and then he would take all of the men that worked in the area of Rock Hall, Kennedyville, all up in Galena. All those guys would ride his boat over to the Proving Ground because it was like an hour and twenty minutes or something by car and they could ride across the Bay in twenty minutes-half hour and in the summer it was wonderful. They would just play

cards and stuff going over and coming back and in the winter when it got bad and the boat came down here in Rock Hall and keep it down here for protection and they'd have to drive. So none minded in the summer taking the boat over and then he would dock his boat while he was over there and he was captain of the patrol boat for the rest of the day.

JB: But he didn't want you working on the water?

JN: No.

JB: Why not?

JN: He wanted me to be a girl. He wanted me to be a daughter he could be proud of you know. Not his daughter, he was pretty disgusted.

JB: Where there other daughters working on the water while you were out there?

JN: I think, you know, the only one that I really knew was... the woman up Rock Hall, Patsy Higgs.

JB: Oh yeah, Patsy Higgs.

JN: Oh and one more Witmoor, Pat Witmoor and she ended up moving to Kent Island. I think she worked on the water down there too with her husband, her ex-husband-

[Section cut]

JB: So when you were growing up did you ever take the boat and go over to the Proving Grounds with your dad?

JN: Nuh-huh but I had been in the boat but I had never been over to the Proving Ground by boat because you know you have to have the paperwork. That's all federal.

JB: Oh got it sure that makes sense.

JN: My brother works over there. He's been over there for years. Yep I have been down here all my life.

JB: Did you ever go crabbing while you were little?

JN: When I was still in school living in Betterton. We used to go down to the beach and there used to be bars everywhere down there in Betterton and stuff out on the wharf. And we would put lines off of the dock and many many a September I can remember we would be in school in September and we would come home and go down there and catch a bushel of crabs and have them for dinner. Years, years God that is a million years ago.

JB: Did you pick them or did you steam them and eat them that way?

JN: Yeah just steam them. Mom would pick the rest. It was great living in Betterton while I was there. They used to call us wharf rats because we weren't never home. We were always on the wharfs and stuff and like my dad, I told you how they play cards going across the Bay, he had a little box and my dad is, he was like fanatical. Everything had to be perfect ok? So his boat was always immaculate and stuff and he had this little box up between the bunks, had a bathroom up there for the guys, and had little tiny hooks on each side and you could unhook those little hooks and that door will come down and there would be all these quarters and half dollars was his stash ready to play cards and stuff. So when we ran out of money we would be into that little box. We like wouldn't go crazy but get a dollar or something from that change. My grandfather he used to rent row boats down there. He was real old. When he didn't work on the water no more he still had to be near the beach. So he would rent row boats to all the people that would come over like on the Bay Belle and the Gibson lines that come in here and being people from Baltimore and all just stay in the hotel and enjoy the beach and all that. He always gave us money. We would play all day, every day in the summer and when the Bay Be// when she would blow her first whistle, she would blow it at a quarter to four and that meant you'd better be getting your foot in the path and I lived all the way to the other end of Betterton and I had to walk all the way home. So by four o'clock when she did that second blow you'd better have your ass going up that hill or my mother would be down there after us. And I mean they had big dances on Wednesday nights down there and then of course on the weekend and we got to know all the people on the boats who came over every summer. It was a great way to live. You know being a kid. Go swimming every day. That's easy life when I was up there.

JB: Mhm.

JN: Then things have changed.

JB: Did everything changed when you got married?

JN: Yea, once I got married and moved to Rock Hall that was the end. That was the end of that. Down here, I worked in a restaurant and then when I got old enough I tended bar. I tended bar down it is call the New Yarmouth, it's where Fin, Fur, and Feather was, now the Harbor Shack, that back bar because they didn't have all that out front back then. So worked there and then when I left there I worked at Rock Hall Inn and they had a hell of a business up there and they had a big bar. Like up there now, well it's closed up, but the last owners that had it, they left the bar part here a little bit here. The bar used to go down here and all the way over here and all the way back to the other side and a shuffle board and this side had pool tables and dances and all that when I worked there. I made really good money and Timmy would come in there and drink and Mr. Peatjet, I worked for him, would give Timmy money and tell him to go down the street to the other bar. He'd say, "Here I'll pay you to go down there. I don't want you up here," because he wanted me up there with all the guys you know.

JB: Was it a big watermen hangout at that bar or was it?

JN: It was watermen but it was like everybody in town. If you drank you went up there and enjoyed yourself for the weekend you know. It was a good place to go and eat and everything, have a good time. You didn't hardly every have rowdiness or anything. He's got a picture in his shop [walking to the shop].

[laughter]

JN: It is cold.

JB: I think it is warmer then yesterday. Yesterday was real cold.
[laughter]

JN: Yeah mama.

JB: Look at that skirt. How old were you when you were working bar?

JN: I just probably, had to be twenty-one.

JB: Twenty-one, ok to serve. Did you work there for a couple of years?

JN: I worked there for a couple of years and then I worked at Rock Hall Inn for a couple of years at least.

[Section cut]

JB: Did you learn on the job how to fix things like this? Did you take any engineering courses?

JN: No

[Section cut]

1B: Oh that is muddy.

JN: Yeah it was terrible. I am going to have to get this out of there because I am afraid I if I didn't clean it up it would get rusted. I don't think I am going to get this thing painted. He wanted me to use spray paint but I am going to have paint everywhere if I use spray paint instead of a brush. You know slap it on there, cover all that and all that. I was asked are you painting it pink?

JB: Mhm.

JN: Have you lost your mind? No, I am not painting it pink. You can see it used to be yellow and then someone painted it blue but I think I am just going to paint it blue. So when it chips maybe it will chip where there's blue under it.

JB: There you go. Why would they think you were going to paint it pink?

JN: I don't know. I have had two or three people ask me if I am going to paint it pink. It is really weird.

JB: Do you have anything else that is pink?

JN: No, I do not. Who else are you talking to in Rock Hall?

JB: I am going to stop this real fast.