

OH 442 - Harp, David W. audio only

JENIFER DOLDE: Okay. Great. So I'm recording. This is Jenifer Dolde.

DAVID HARP: [00:00:05] I got a little message here.

JENIFER DOLDE: Yep, I think to notify you that I started recording. So this is Jenifer Dolde. It's Thursday, May 21, 2020. I am interviewing Dave Harp. Dave, what's your full given name?

DAVID HARP: [00:00:22] David Warrick, W-A-R-R-I-C-K, Harp. So Warrick is a family name.

JENIFER DOLDE: Okay. Very good. And do you mind giving me your date of birth, for the record?

DAVID HARP: [00:00:36] Yeah, the Ides of March, 1947. March 15, 1947.

JENIFER DOLDE: That's so interesting. So let's just start with a little basic information. Can you tell me a little bit about where you were born, your life growing up, and your family, and all of that?

DAVID HARP: [00:00:55] Okay, yeah. I was born in Hagerstown, Maryland. My dad was a newspaper editor for the *Hagerstown Morning Herald*. And I sort of started as a photographer and a newspaper person when I was 10 years old, working, going into the newsroom there at my dad's newspaper on

Sunday morning after church. And he gave me little jobs to do. So I always say that I started my career when I was about 10. But I grew up living outside basically in Hagerstown, in Washington County. Spent a lot of time in streams.

JENIFER DOLDE: Right, right. Not so much in the bay.

DAVID HARP: [00:01:53] I have a brother, older brother.

JENIFER DOLDE: I'm sorry, you have a brother?

DAVID HARP: [00:01:57] My mother was Governor Lane's secretary. Governor Lane was a lawyer in Hagerstown. And he owned the newspaper. He and some other people owned the Herald-Mail Company. And he introduced my mother to my father. But she was his legal secretary, as a lawyer in Hagerstown. [But then?] he became governor.

JENIFER DOLDE: That's so interesting. Now, when your dad gave you those early assignments, what kind of things were you doing?

DAVID HARP: [00:02:29] Well, there's several things. One, the old *Associated Press* machines would spew out copy. They had these long sheets of paper. And if there was nobody there on the weekend, then they would just collect on the floor. But all these stories were coming out all through the weekend. So one of my jobs was to take them all and cut them apart into individual stories with a pair

of scissors. And the other job was to refill glue pots. They used copy paper. And it was long... I don't know if you know it, but it was long copy paper, about eight inches wide and several feet long, to do stories. And they would literally cut and paste paragraphs together sometimes. So that's where cut and paste comes from, I think, in journalism. And I would fill the glue pots they used to cut, to glue those pieces of paper together. And he gave me other jobs, just whatever, while he was getting ready for the Monday morning paper. I would go in for an hour or two and revel in being in journalism.

JENIFER DOLDE: Now did you eventually take photographs for him?

Or how did you get started taking photographs for more than just your personal interest?

DAVID HARP: [00:03:55] Well, the other thing about my dad is he was a pretty avid amateur photographer. It didn't have anything to do with his business. He never took pictures for the newspaper. So I grew up with somebody that always had a camera in his hand. I'll have to send you a picture he took of me when I was about, I don't know, seven years old. I have a camera in my hand, a plastic camera that I got from redeeming butter coupons. My first camera. And I'm sitting in the bow of a boat. Now, you could do that picture today easily. But my real decision to go into

journalism, I mean my absolute -- I always was interested in it -- was the day John Kennedy was assassinated. And I was a junior in high school. And school was out in the middle of the afternoon after they announced the president had died. And I walked about two miles... My phone's ringing, sorry. I walked about two miles down to the Herald-Mail Company. And I just called my mother and said, I'm with Dad. I'll be home whenever he comes home. And all that afternoon and evening, I ran photographs from, they had a Model One AP machine. I ran the photographs from there. I developed them when they came out of the machine and got them dry. And I took them over to the newsroom. And it was like being part of history. And it just got me really interested in being a storyteller, being a journalist. And I chose photography because writing was such a chore for me. My brain works better visually. So from that day on, really, I pretty much determined that I was going to be a photographer and a journalist.

JENIFER DOLDE: So that's fascinating about your little plastic camera. So your father gave you your first instruction on taking a photo? Was it the mechanics? Was it how to frame one? Did he... How did you learn that craft in the beginning? And then how did it evolve?

DAVID HARP: [00:06:18] I was more of a subject. All of our family, I have an older brother. And Mom and Dad and Joe would go out on boats, vacations and all that. But later on, there was a man named David [Cunningham?], who was the director of photography at the Herald-Mail. So he took me under his wing, and he taught me about, some about composition and using a strong foreground in photographs and filters. Filtering of photographs through things. And a lot of, just a lot about... And also just about processing and film. Of course, these were in the heavy-duty film days. And he gave me jobs to do. He taught me how to use the AP machine when I was probably a kid, long before high school. So you know, and then when I graduated... Well actually, when I graduated from high school, I was very fortunate that my dad was the newspaper editor. And I wanted to work there. So I worked as an intern in the summers, sometimes paid, sometimes unpaid. In high school and in college, a little bit more so in college even, where I was actually shooting for the newspaper. And I worked for, actually, my dad was the *Morning Herald*. And he later became the executive editor of both newspapers, was working for the evening paper more. But I was working for the morning paper.

JENIFER DOLDE: Okay, just so I'm clear, there's the Herald-Mail.

And then there's the...

DAVID HARP: [00:08:08] It's called the Herald-Mail Company.

They produce two newspapers, the *Morning Herald* and the *Daily Mail*. I think they've since merged as the Herald-Mail, the paper. But my dad worked for the morning paper most of his life. He was there for 55 years, basically in the same building. Started as a [cut?] reporter right out of high school and stayed there for 55 years. Never went to college.

JENIFER DOLDE: Oh, wow. Wow. Wow, so that really did sow some seeds, I think, for you. It sounds like Mr. Cunningham was a big influence, as well. Really taught you the photography side of it, gave you the other option instead of being a writer. And so did you...

DAVID HARP: [00:08:57] When I went to college, I went to Ohio University. And I was going to study journalism there, because they had a very good photography department and a very good journalism department. And when I was in high school, I went out there for a journalism workshop. Got on a bus and went the whole way out to Athens, Ohio. And spent a week there and just fell in love with the place and decided that's really where I wanted to be. So when I graduated, I went out there. And I started thinking I was

going to major in journalism. And I took a first-semester course, and I felt like I could teach it. I lived it. And it just was not what I wanted to do academically. So I changed my concentration, my major to English Literature. And I still took all the photo courses and a lot of Earth science courses, and sort of put that all together as my major and minor areas of academia.

JENIFER DOLDE: Oh, so you took Earth science courses. That's interesting. So you already had an interest in that environmental, scientific aspect of it. So what inspired that in you? Was that something you'd always had?

DAVID HARP: [00:10:20] I'd always had it. I've always been curious about how things work. When I was a little kid, I would, when the old wind-up alarm clock would finally break, I'd take it apart and figure out how it worked. And never got it back together, of course. But I was always curious. And I think that's obviously one of the most important aspects of being in journalism, is being curious about how the world works, about how things happen. So I took science. My dad was an amateur weatherman. He just loved the weather. And I got that from him. And to this day, that's a major... I have five, six weather apps on my phone. And tides and all that. But I got into this professor, Dr. Wilhelm at Ohio University. And he taught

geology, meteorology, climatology, all, geography.

Everything he taught over four years, I took. It's one of those things where I just [glommed?] onto this guy. So Earth sciences were really... I was more interested in those than biological science at the time. And to this day, I use my meteorology in my work as photographer almost every... This morning, I got up. The first thing I did is check the weather. What's the light going to be like? What's the cloud cover? What's the humidity? What kind of visibility? There's so many aspects of it, how it works, how it fits into my career. So that was a very opportunistic, very opportune time for me to take those courses when I did.

JENIFER DOLDE: And in college, you were taking photographs for classes. Were you involved in the university paper or any other photography? Or was your summer internship, et cetera?

DAVID HARP: [00:12:28] I was always shooting. I just always had the camera. I took photo courses for four years. And the beauty of it, I could take whatever I wanted. Since it wasn't my major, I could just take the course I was interested in. And I was interested, of course, in more of the journalistic side than the fine-arts side of photography. Still am to this day. And I worked for the

yearbook. It was called *The Athena*. I shot the yearbook. And that gave me access to a really nice darkroom, so that's one of the reasons that I did that. And got to know people that went on to become very good photographers and journalists.

JENIFER DOLDE: So your connection to the water, like I said, you weren't right on the bay. But it sounds like you clearly spent time on the water with your family. Can you tell me a little bit about how, why that was, you enjoyed that so much? Or why that became such a focus for you later in your career?

DAVID HARP: [00:13:40] Oh, absolutely. My dad, he had a little old, I think it was about a three-horsepower Evinrude Outboard. And we'd throw it in the back of the car and go down to Conococheague Creek, which was near Williamsport, Maryland. Not that far from Hagerstown, right on the Potomac River. And we'd rent a little skiff, a little wooden skiff, and put that motor on it, and put her out. Most of the time the motor worked, anyway. And put her out into the Potomac, and we'd go finishing for bass and sunfish and all those kind of things. And the other thing we would do is my brother and I would build rafts. And we once built a raft with some small barrels as flotation. And we built this wooden raft. It was almost

like Mark Twain. And we got it in the back of the car and took it down there and put it together on the banks of the river. And we went out to this place called Duck Island, which was right off Williamsport. I mean, it's one of these little, tiny little islands in the middle of the Potomac River. And [inaudible] we launched this raft, and it almost immediately sank. I learned that I didn't want to be a naval architect. I didn't have that in me. But I did... The water was always, always a part of my life. I would go out with my friend, Phil, into just the little creeks and gulleys and streams around my house that were six inches deep. But water was always important to me. And the Potomac River, the Upper Potomac, we got down there a good number, good bit of times. [There was?] dam number four in Williamsport and dam number five. They were the old hydroelectric dams that, I think they're still there. But I don't think they function anymore.

JENIFER DOLDE: Wow, that's great. Well, I do think that...

Well, I don't want to go too much out of order. But I think we could talk a little bit about your early career. The Skipjack project happened fairly early in your career. But when you got out of college, what was your first paying job? And was it in photography?

DAVID HARP: [00:16:12] Well, it was the, I was the first full-time staff photographer for the *Hagerstown Morning Herald*. My dad had semi-retired by then. He was still working as the, I think they called him executive editor or something. They gave him a job at the Herald-Mail, but he didn't work at the *Morning Herald* anymore. So I was just the happiest guy in the world. Here I was, still living at home. I was just every day out on an assignment, shooting photographs for a story. And it's still, to this day, one of the two best jobs I ever had, two or three. I love what I do now, actually, with the *Bay Journal*. But the *Morning Herald*, I was there for a couple of years. I broke my leg badly skiing, and took some time off. And it was [inaudible] aside, but I was director of tourism for Washington County. Still shooting pictures and writing, mostly, in that job. But the *Morning Herald* job, sometimes I would just stay in until one o'clock in the morning to watch the press run, one or two in the morning when the papers are coming off the press. If there was a big story, I wanted to see how it looked. So that was a very wonderful beginning of a career as a photographer. I was very fortunate to have this connection. There's no question. Coming out of college, to have a job right away was really nice. It was 1969.

JENIFER DOLDE: So you worked there from about '69 to '71 or so?

DAVID HARP: [00:18:05] Yes, '71, '72, I think. And then I worked in that tourism job. And then I moved to Annapolis for the state division of tourism for about a year or two. And that's, I think that was in, yeah. That was about the time I got into the Skipjacks. Because I was in Annapolis. I was living near the bay. Of course, they were all over the Eastern Shore. But I was starting to get out a little bit more. And of course, Skipjacks were the icons of Maryland tourism. Skipjacks were symbols for that in those days. And I just lost my thought. I was...

JENIFER DOLDE: Well, we were just talking about, I think, I'm trying to get the time frame in mind. So Washington County tourism would have been maybe...

DAVID HARP: [00:19:06] Oh, okay. Yeah.

JENIFER DOLDE: Seventy-three. And then you worked, went to Annapolis tourism in '74 or '75?

DAVID HARP: [00:19:15] Yes, that's exactly right. Because Barb and I were married in 1976. Tomorrow is our forty-fourth wedding anniversary. And that was right before it was... It was January, February of 1976 that I actually was going out with the Skipjacks. And we were married that May. So that was sort of just a personal documentary project that I wanted to do, that I just got this idea and

just decided I was going to do it. And it was the perfect time. I was free. I could just go and do it whenever I wanted. I could take the time off to run and do that.

JENIFER DOLDE: So the tourism job was flexible? Is that, you were still working for them?

DAVID HARP: [00:20:10] Yeah, well, or I could just take time off. Yeah. I don't remember whether it was company time or vacation time. But it wasn't that many days, really. It was over about a two-week period that I did most of it. I looked at the dates I had on some of the negatives. And it was very intense. Short but intense project. And I think it was, I finally published a couple of them in *Modern Photography* magazine then, then put them away for 40 years.

JENIFER DOLDE: So if you could look back a little bit, tell me about... So obviously, you said you were photographing Skipjacks, icons of Maryland, certainly a focus for tourism. That sowed the seed. So how did you reach out? How did you make the connections and hook up with the crew? Tell me about how you got involved and which vessel or vessels... I think, was it just one that you went out on?

DAVID HARP: [00:21:15] No, it was... I'd have to look at my notes. It was the [Rebecca Ruar?]. [Emerson Todd?] was the captain. The *Ellsworth*, [Norris Lewis?], the Lady

[Katie?], I'm blanking on the... I'll think about the captain. He's still alive. The other ones are gone. But basically, I just drove around and went to the harbors, went to Tilghman Harbor, went to Cambridge Harbor. And walked around and started talking to people. And literally knocked on the hull of a boat, and the captain would come out if he was down below when they were at dock. And I said, I'm a photographer. And I'm really interested in photographing what you do and the Skipjacks. I'm really interested in the bay. Can I go out with you? And I remember Emerson Todd said, well, you know, it's going to be cold. And it's dark when we leave and dark when we come back. And he was right. We had left at four something in the morning, I think, to start out. And I would leave, let's see. I guess I left two or three in the morning to get down and [meet the?] guys. And then spend the day out there. Get in about four o'clock. They would offload, and I would drive home. I don't think I could do that today. That's a younger man's job. But I went around Cambridge and talked to some different people. And they would recommend, you ought to see Captain So and So. And some of them, most of them were fine with it, ones that I could link up with. Nobody ever said, no you can't go out with me. They were very nice. And the people on those boats,

the crews were just so interesting and just visually stimulating. I mean, these faces. And they're mostly African American guys that were in their sixties, maybe even older. Some of them were older than that, probably. And then the captains. I learned a lot about how they divvied up the catch and paid everybody. But what I didn't realize at the time is it was the end of the sailor and Skipjacks. It wasn't that many years after that, the eighties really, that it was almost over. And by the nineties, it was... And of course, [MS, SMX, and Durmo?] and things like that hastened to the end of it. But it would have happened anyway. Getting crews, dredging oysters is tough enough. Fishing oysters under sail is even more difficult, because you have to have the crews that are trained. You have to have captains that know what they're doing. You'd have boats that weren't really made for the long haul. They were built quickly and made almost to be disposable, some of them. I don't know. It was an education.

JENIFER DOLDE: It sounds like it. So you hit on this before I was even thinking about talking about it. But you made the point that the vast majority of the crews were African American, were Black. Captains were typically white. Were

there other crew members? What did you observe about the interactions between captain and crew at that point?

DAVID HARP: [00:25:03] The boats that I went out on, it was almost like family. Everybody knew what to do. There was no... I don't know. For all I know, these captains were just terrible racists. Who knows? But what I observed was that they were all friends. They cared for each other. There were white crew members and Black crew members. The white crew members were considerably younger. They may have been related to the captain. I don't remember. I don't have all their names, but actually, I'm going to go down to Tilghman and try to find some of their... I have the names of the people on the *Rebecca*. But anyway, it was business. They knew what they were doing. They'd done it forever. They didn't need to be told, except throw the dredge over left. Throw the dredge over right. And then hit the button and push the lever and bring it up. But they knew intuitively what to do. I never sensed any bad blood or somebody yelling at somebody else. It was a very nice time for me, just to be, just those long, long days. Cloudy, cold. And then I also went out one day. And I didn't remember this until I looked at these negatives. I went out with the Marine Police one day, sort of hitched a ride with them to be able to use them as a photo boat. And

I looked at this one. This guy's in a tie. He has on a necktie. That's the uniform they had then, police uniform. And it was an old, wooden boat that the Marine Police used. And there's beautiful old wooden cabin cruisers they were running. But they were very helpful, too. And I think I went out in a smaller boat with one of them once. That was a little bit later. That wasn't during the black and white. It was probably, maybe five years later that I got back out. The photograph of the bow spread of the *Rebecca Ruar* with the icicles hanging from it, that was me from a police boat.

JENIFER DOLDE: Oh, so later. A little later in time.

DAVID HARP: [00:27:41] Yeah. That was Kodachrome. That was a color shot. I don't know the exact state. I can find it. But I think it was in the eighties. That's when I was... And the eighties is when I was working at the *Baltimore Sun*. And that's where I really, really got into [page?] photography. We can get into that later.

JENIFER DOLDE: So you talked a little about Emerson Todd.

Whether or not you remember the names right now is fine. But do you remember any of the other characters or interactions you had with specific people during that time with the Skipjacks?

DAVID HARP: [00:28:21] Well, I just remember these, what I thought to be just beautiful faces and hands. And just that, these were hard-core guys. This is the only way they had to make a living. They were at the, probably at the low end of the economic heap. They were deck hands. I remember [Lewis Philips?] and the guy named Banks. Lewis Philips is the one, and I'm sure we'll have that photograph in the show. That'll be one of the few black and whites. He's the one with the thick glasses with the rubber band holding his glasses to his hat. And he was just, I don't know. He's just very interesting. There's a lot of time when you're just standing there, when the dredges are in, and they're pulling. And they're tweaking sails and all that. There's a lot of time just to talk about whatever. It doesn't matter. So I got to chat with him a little bit. I don't remember any details -- it was a long time ago -- of our conversations. But judging from the photographs, they reacted very naturally to the camera, which I loved. Once you're there, that's the beauty of being the fly on the wall. Even though here's this young white guy with a camera and fairly long hair, photographing them. But after a while, the camera just disappears. It's me and them. And I think you always try to get to that place in

photography, where the camera's invisible. It's not a barrier between the photographer and subject.

JENIFER DOLDE: I actually think that's pretty remarkable, because doing oral histories, I'm not a photographer. But people can be very self-conscious. Do you think that the fact that you were able to just become an observer, was that because they were at ease? Is that part of something that you worked to create?

DAVID HARP: [00:30:43] Well, I think that's all, yeah. I think that is important. And I think when I talk to students and teach photography, I tell them, it's not [break in audio] the photographer. And the camera's just an object that you use to get there. Obviously, technology is important in photography. You've got to do it, especially individually. But I don't care what kind of camera you use. Cell phones are fabulous cameras today. The cell phone that I'm using right now is a much better digital camera than my first digital camera, which was a Nikon. So yeah, I think it's always a goal for the camera just to be a tool but not the end. It's a means.

JENIFER DOLDE: Well, and does that go back to your self-perception as not necessarily an art photographer? Although your photos are artful, but as a documentary

photographer? Do you think other photographers would handle it differently?

DAVID HARP: [00:31:55] Well, I think, I don't know how you judge my ego. But there are some photographers with huge, huge egos. And it's about them. And they still make great photographs. But I think if you look at somebody like Ernst Haas or Cartier-Bresson or, who's the one that did the [mini mada?]? I don't know. There are a lot of great photographers of the early film days. Now, I think, who was it, Thoreau, that said, it's not what I see but how I see it. It's not what I look at, but... And I use, let's see. What are the four words I use? Look, see, observe, and discriminate. And they are four different levels of seeing. You look at something, and you see something, and you observe. And just subtly different. Discriminate, the final one, is, what's in that view finder? Do you want that telephone pole growing out of that person's head? Or do you want to move them over? Do you discriminate. You figure out exactly what you want in and what you want out of that frame. Now, to do it well, it takes a long time of doing it, of being a photographer, to the point where, again, the camera disappears. You're looking at that view finder. That's your universe. There are the four walls of your vision at the time. But it's just, you know, it's

just a perspective. It becomes a perspective. And whether it's a wide-angle lens or a telephoto lens or whatever, whatever view you have at the time, that's your universe. And what you see then is what can end up on the wall or in a newspaper or on the internet.

JENIFER DOLDE: That's probably a little difficult to teach sometimes.

DAVID HARP: [00:34:05] I'm sorry?

JENIFER DOLDE: I said, my guess is sometimes that is difficult to teach, that subtlety of...

DAVID HARP: [00:34:17] To teach?

JENIFER DOLDE: It's difficult to teach the subtlety of...

DAVID HARP: [00:34:22] Oh, yeah. Yeah, I think you can show somebody how to do it. And you can talk about seeing things and [how to have?] the perspective. The lens you use, not the physical lens but the emotional lens you use to make a photograph. Or how you approach a subject. You can approach a subject in a lot of different ways with different lenses and see things in a certain way that are totally different. That's why I say it's not the camera. It's the photographer that makes the photograph. Three or four photographers standing shoulder to shoulder -- I've seen this happen -- shoot the same scene, and it's totally

different. Or subtly different, at least, in each one.

It's amazing.

JENIFER DOLDE: So when you went out with the guys on the Skipjack, did you have expectations about what you were going to see? Was it shocking? I'm curious about what it was and how it was like for you when you first got out there, how the day went. Did you hit any rough weather, anything like that that you recall?

DAVID HARP: [00:35:49] I remember a lot of gray days. Just cold, damp, gray days. For some reason, I just hit those days. Of course, that's very moody, especially in black-and-white photography. And of course, shooting film is just so much more difficult than digital. Digital, you, much more sensitive. And with film, you had a lot more limitations. But I don't... Tell me that. Ask me that question again. I mean, I...

JENIFER DOLDE: I'm just curious whether you had an expectation. How familiar you were. What, if you knew what to look for, what the day was going to be like. Did that help you prepare? Or were you taking it in and shooting the scenes as they happened? How much more [inaudible] did you do?

DAVID HARP: [00:36:41] Yeah, I had an idea of the process, certainly, of how they worked. I'd been on Skipjacks before. I'd been out on Chesapeake Appreciation Days, off

of Sandy Point Park. I'd been around [them?]. That's where I think I met Norris Lewis first time, who had the *Ellsworth*. So I had a pretty good idea of the process. But the minutiae of it and the subtlety of light hitting an oyster or wind across a sail or whatever, that just changed every minute. That's the beauty of being out for a long period of time. It can be boring, too. After a while, you start shooting the same thing over and over and over again. You start looking for new ways to shoot it. I even had once, on a real calm day, I learned about the [rigged mast?] on a Skipjack, because I had them haul me up to the top of the mast in a boatswain's chair to get a shot of the deck. And I wasn't calculating that the mast was [rigged?]. So I was up there just swinging back and forth. I didn't have a rope to hold me onto the mast. A sloop today, you can just go straight up. And you're right there at the mast. But with a rigged mast on a Skipjack... So that didn't work out too well. I didn't get much of that that day. But all in all, the crew, the captains were always very accommodating. We talked a lot. They wanted to know about me. I wanted to know about them. Actually with Emerson, I have audio of him. I interviewed him. It's very stilted interview [inaudible]. But I'll share that with you. But the same era. It was 1976, and his

wife had died. And he was still, he loved this boat. And he loved that boat. It was just his life. It was his office. It was his existence. And he finally sold it to [Weighty?]. But I don't think it came easy. I don't know if I've answered your question or not.

JENIFER DOLDE: No, you have. It's more I'm trying to prompt your memories. I know you've spent some time with these photographs recently and that you're probably remembering things you hadn't thought about in a very long time. So I'm just trying to get that memory flowing. I'm curious. It seems like it was a great experience. Why did the photos sit for so long? Why didn't you do anything with them?

DAVID HARP: [00:39:30] Well, I think, well, I got married in 1976. And my life changed considerably, for the better. My wife's not around, but I'll tell you... She's not in the room, but I can still say that. I had different priorities. I didn't really know how to sell them. I didn't know that there was a market. As I said, *Modern Photography* or *Popular Photography* magazine bought a few of them. I think it was a story about documentary photography. And I just, they were in a binder. I made contact sheets, and they were in a binder. I made a few prints. At the time, it was darkroom prints. And then

moved on to other things. And by 1980, I was working at the *Baltimore Sun* magazine. And I was back, I was actually back out with the Skipjacks in the eighties for the *Sun* magazine. I did a couple of different stories. Any opportunity to get out on the water on the bay. I guess it was about 1980 or '81 that I got assigned to do a story on Smith Island. And the writer assigned to it was Tom Horton. Well, I didn't know Tom Horton. So they said, well, go on over. He's a tall guy. Go over to the newsroom and catch up with him. And you guys can decide how you want to do the story. So I went over there. And somebody his desk was over, you know, it's over there. I went over, and he wasn't there. But there were a pair of size 15 green high-top sneakers, just full of mud, sitting by the chair. So I knew I'd found the right place. And finally, we got together. We met. We went down to Smith Island. We did, we shot the story. And actually, there's a photograph in the show, the *Nancy Ann* in the marsh that was from that assignment. That's still one of my photographs of all time. And of course, Tom and I then developed a friendship. And we learned, it was interesting. Because we learned early on that we could go off and do these bay stories, get out on the water, have these interesting experiences. And we could be gone for

days. And the editors didn't care, as long as we came back with material, we came back with stories. So it was great. Just go off and have a good time and have these great experiences and be out on the bay. I can't remember all the different stories we did. But the Smith Island one was definitely one of them. We did the Pocomoke River, I think. There's just a lot of different experiences. And then Tom and I ended up doing five books together and a bunch of films. And I'll see him tomorrow. We're still collaborating. And I think the beauty of that, as my wife calls it, my marriage to Tom is in the films and the books and all the things that we've done together, our philosophy has been that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. If you have good writing and good photography, or cinematography, video, or whatever, put it toward a product. But toward, in a project. Then it's going to be better than just the photography and the writing. That's what you ought to aspire to.

JENIFER DOLDE: Absolutely. I'd like to [talk?] some more about your relationship with Tom. You doing fine? Do you have a time where you need to knock off today?

DAVID HARP: [00:43:44] No, I'm good. I have, there are a couple of phone calls that came in that I have to answer.

I'll have to [inaudible] to. But I, we can keep going for a while.

JENIFER DOLDE: Okay. Yeah, take a drink. So we're only at 45 minutes. But I wanted, before we moved on to Tom and how you started that, more about that. I, was just occurred to me, were you familiar with Robert De Gast book, the oystermen book? As we were talking about your project, had you seen that? Or did you see it later on?

DAVID HARP: [00:44:19] I saw it later on. And I got to know Robert later on. I guess it was in the eighties. I'm not so sure. I don't think I knew Robert in the seventies.

JENIFER DOLDE: So his book came out. You didn't realize he had done a similar, spent similar time with the Skipjacks and the oystermen. And then you met him later?

DAVID HARP: [00:44:48] Jen, I'd have to think about that, when I met him. I don't... When was his oystermen book? Do you know the date on that?

JENIFER DOLDE: I was just about to look that up. I'm pretty sure it was, at least I think the images were taken in '78. So it was about the same time.

DAVID HARP: [00:45:15] Okay, so it was about the same time I was out there. Because I think it was in the eighties that... He was a, I mean, I always loved his photography. We became friends. We even collaborated on a project for

the *Pride of Baltimore* when they were building the *Pride of Baltimore*. He was doing a little book.

JENIFER DOLDE: Oh, I didn't realize that.

DAVID HARP: [00:45:38] Yes, I have a copy of it somewhere.

But it's his and my work. Anyway, I'll have to show it to you sometime.

JENIFER DOLDE: No, I'm just curious. Because there are certain parallels. And of course, he's using a different type of film. But there's just a parallel there. And I wondered if... That's why I was asking you why they [sank?]. Maybe he got to it before you did or something like that.

DAVID HARP: [00:46:09] You know, he wasn't like my best friend. It wasn't like I saw him all the time. But we certainly were in the same orbit once in a while, and I would see him. And we had mutual friends. Richard Anderson, who did all the printing for his [inaudible] show, worked with Robert a lot. But by 1980, I was full-time Sunday magazine photographer at the *Sun*. And I knew I knew Robert then. We would interact occasionally then. But I was doing all kinds of... I was going everywhere, from Normandy to England and Australia, the America's [Cup?]. That was a fabulous job for a decade. Almost, we won a Pulitzer, a story I shot that, I didn't win a Pulitzer. There was a writing Pulitzer. But it was Alice

Steinbach's story about a blind kid who was mainstreamed in the Baltimore schools. I did a 10-page photo essay to go with it. So [I had?] great experiences there.

JENIFER DOLDE: So I would love to hear more about that, as well. So you talked about a couple of projects with Tom. Did you want to talk about some other more memorable ones? Because I know, with the *Sun* and then maybe moving into the book project, as well.

DAVID HARP: [00:47:53] Well, with the *Sun*, I had a really long leash. Susan [Bear?] was the editor of the magazine. And we had a very strong working relationship. It was great, for almost 10 years. I did stories like, well, certainly some of the Chesapeake stuff, like the rivers and all. But I went around... We were trying to figure out what to do for the one-hundredth anniversary of the Constitution, 1789. I mean the bicentennial, 1989, I guess, was the year that we did that. It was toward the end of my work there. But I went around the state and photographed people, did portraits of people who lived, worked, or played on Main Street. And it had to be called Main, M-A-I-N. All these little towns. And we called it "The Address of the American Spirit." And it was all black-and-white photography. And another black-and-white thing I did, which I loved, when they announced that they

were going to build Camden Yards, build the baseball stadium, I went in and knocked on doors of all the residences and businesses and places that were going to be torn down. And did photographs, again, mostly portraits, of people working in these different businesses. One of them was a photograph of a guy in the city of Baltimore sign shop, where they made stuff like One-Way signs. You know, they printed all that stuff there. And I did a portrait of him. I remember we put One-Way signs behind him. And one was going on direction, and one was going the other. And we later calculated that was left center field in the stadium, in the ballfield, where that was. And a fish market or a frozen fish place, a furniture place. All kinds of really interesting places that were gone, that were going to be torn down. So they're the kind of things... And then we did, of course, the America's Cup. Did a story about a sailmaker in Annapolis. Talked the editors into sending me to Australia. And they said, well, what's the local angle? So I said, I'll find one. Then I found this Larry Leonard, I think his name was, sailmaker in Annapolis that was making sails for one of the boats. So they said, okay. You can go. And we did a story on the anatomy of an international flight. I spent a week at

Heathrow Airport, what it took to get an airplane from Heathrow to Baltimore.

JENIFER DOLDE: Now, were most of these with Tom?

DAVID HARP: [00:51:00] No, these weren't. These were with all different writers. The work I did with Tom was almost exclusively Chesapeake Bay. And some of it later, toward the end of my time at the *Sun*, I was working, shooting, working with Tom on... I think he was, he had left the *Sun*. And he was working for the Bay Foundation down on Smith Island, where he was the educator for a couple of years. He took a leave of absence. And right after that is when we published *Water's Way*, our first book. That was about 1990.

JENIFER DOLDE: Okay, so *Water's Way* was first. What about, was *Swanfall* the second?

DAVID HARP: [00:51:49] *Swanfall* was something in-between, let me see. I'm trying to find... Here's the original, hardback version of *Swanfall*. I'm just trying to see what the date was on that. Excuse me. This was 1991. So yeah, it was right after *Water's Way*. And then after that, we did *The Great Marsh*. And that was from an experience we had kayaking across Dorchester County over three days. Our goal was to leave, go from the Nanticoke to, [well, a little Choptank?] without, basically without getting out of

the kayak. Even though we got out. We had to get out at night to camp. But we couldn't portage. We couldn't walk. And there were a couple of places, I remember, on the upper Blackwater River, it was touch and go whether we were going to get through it. We were literally pushing ourselves with our hands on the bottom to get through some of the shallow areas. But anyway, that sparked the second book, which I always loved. It's the only book we've done that's totally out of print. But it was a lot of fun doing it. And we went back then and photographed throughout Dorchester County. And after that, we did *The Nanticoke*. And then we did the Choptank.

JENIFER DOLDE: That did seem to, well, it's like you took the big picture with *Water's Way*. Then you went, and you've focused in on these geographic regions within those to explore them more fully. Was that intentional?

DAVID HARP: [00:53:54] Yes. Well, I think, yeah. I think we really wanted to do very focused books. And we also wanted to do books that were compiled from writing essays and photography essays. And to this day, I just have no desire to do a fine-art book, to do a book just of photographs. I just don't... I still, I consider myself a journalist. And to me, it's all about story. And whether it's an individual photograph or a series of photographs, it's like

going out with Robbie, Robbie, to go trapping. I went out with him and Sam, [his daughter?]. A picture of her, I remember, of her looking out the back of the pickup truck. And he's off checking muskrat traps and then going to his fur shed, where he was skinning the muskrats and [nutri?] at the time and foxes. And all the in-between. Just telling that story in either a linear or a non-linear way. But not just doing a photograph and saying, okay, that's it. So the hard part is editing, of course. Is taking that body of work. It's just like what we're doing now, you and I, taking a million photographs and getting it down to 50 or so.

JENIFER DOLDE: Did you and Tom go out together? Or was he...

DAVID HARP: [00:55:38] [inaudible]

JENIFER DOLDE: Yeah, exactly. That's very true. Did you guys go out together, for instance, when you would go talk to somebody like Robbie? Or would he, you would go out and shoot, and then he'd follow up with more of a journalistic-type interview?

DAVID HARP: [00:55:51] All of the above. Sometimes, I want to backtrack. Our methodology is, sit down. Okay, what do we want to do a book about? Okay, we want to do a book about this journey across Dorchester. Okay. Here are the stories within that book. Here is some of the subject we

want to cover. Sometimes, we'd be out together.

Sometimes, he would go off and do something. And then he'd say, Dave, some great photo opportunities here. Check this out. Or sometimes, I'd go off and do it and do the same thing. Hey, Tom. You might want to talk to so and so. So it's, again, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. And if we can get, if we can work that way all the time... We still work that way to this day. We collaborate. We're out the same time, or we're out separately. But we're always communicating. We're always talking about what one or the other needs to do to make that whole greater than the sum of the parts.

JENIFER DOLDE: It sounds like from that long marriage, career marriage, that you all have, you know what the other's interested in. You know when to make those connections. You can communicate with each other. And he picks up where you left off, and vice-versa. There's a lot of that experience with each other. And familiarity has made it a success for sure. I was curious whether, in meeting all the... You do a lot in nature. But obviously, you have to keep up on science. You had an interest in Earth science early on, but that science has evolved. Wondering how you kept up with that. And then, when you then meet people on the shore -- and I'm from the shore -- how do you meet that

challenge when you're trying to talk to somebody or interact with them? And you come to an impasse, a different of opinion about what's happening, the health of the bay, climate change, things like that. Has that become an issue? Was it an issue then? And is it more of an issue now?

DAVID HARP: [00:58:23] I think it's always, always been an issue. And I think there's a certain amount of diplomacy in what I do. If you go up and stick a camera in somebody's face without talking to them first, or without them understanding what you're doing, a lot of times that doesn't start well. And it doesn't create the right kind of atmosphere, environment for anybody getting anything done. Sometimes, I don't know how to say this. It's almost like an off-the-record thing. But I got a little tired sometimes. I can be out with watermen and had such a totally different perspective of the world that I just didn't want to go out with them anymore. I didn't want to spend a lot of time with them. Now, that's not always the case. In fact, it's rarely the case. But I got talked off a couple of boats, where they just said, we don't want to see you anymore. They didn't say it quite like that. But they didn't want a photographer out there that maybe had a different perspective than they did. I remember going out

with a guy on Smith Island who was a lovely guy. But he was a creationist. And we just looked at the world a little differently. And I spent a long day listening to his theory of life. And that was it. But I guess, and you were asking about this nexus of science and the watermen, climate change and things like that. We did film high tide in Dorchester. And we ran into people. There were certainly people that were denying. And you honor their perspectives. You disagree with them. I happen to be someone who really believes in science and the scientific method, especially when it comes to things like climate change or COVID-19. That you really have to honor the science. And all the people that have, thousands of people around the world that are doing research on those things, that are looking at it in a minutiae way, down to the small details. That they know something. And they've experienced something. And peer review and all those things. So I come down on that side of the equation pretty strongly. But I also love being in the marsh when the sun comes up and the dew is on the grasses. It's a religious experience for me. It's just a, life on earth is just a marvelous, beautiful place. And so it's understanding the science but also appreciating the beauty of nature. It's a nice, nice combination. And Tom Horton, I figured my

biology professor has been Tom Horton and Don [inaudible]. He was at the Bay Foundation for years. And Nick Carter. Just all these people that I've learned about all the different grasses and why they're important, and how the world works together. And of course, Aldo Leopold was a big influence, the writer Aldo Leopold. And people like Nick Carter, who was for many years at the Department of Natural Resources. People that I call a pure, true naturalist. To me, that's a badge of courage. That's not a badge of courage. That is a highest level. You can be a biologist, or you can be a zoologist. But a naturalist, to me, is somebody who just understands how all this works together. Maybe not in the detail of somebody who's a specialist. So these people I consider to be, people like Horton and Carter and [inaudible], encouraged me to be out there. Get out there. I can't make pictures of the bay by sitting here, talking to Jen Dolde. Not that I don't want to talk to you. But that's, you get the point.

JENIFER DOLDE: No, absolutely. I feel the same way. My daughter's in the sciences. She's studying botany. We share that passion. I just do it as a historian. And I'm not out in the nature, except in my garden, as much as you. But I really understand... I hear what you're saying about your religious and emotional connection to nature and to

the bay. And so when I think about that, so you're a professional. You're a documentary photographer. But you have this connection, this emotion for it. When you think about the bay and you think about the future, how do you feel about it?

DAVID HARP: [01:04:20] Cautiously optimistic. I have four grandchildren. And I think about them all the time when it comes to the future of the bay. One of my daughters is the chief program officer of the National Wildlife Federation. And her husband is an outdoor educator. He just went to a new job at [League for Cities?]. But they're both into outdoor... And of course Hillary, that daughter, was out with me a lot when I was out shooting. She wanted to go. I think we have to make choices in the next 10 years that are going to be difficult, painful somewhat. Maybe the, it's just like what's happening right now with covid as we speak. I think we have to live a little bit, learn to live a little bit differently, maybe a lot differently. We need to reduce carbon and do all the things that science tells us we need to do. And maybe just tread lighter on the Earth. That's sort of a cliché, but I believe it. I think we ought to be flying less, driving less, paddling more.

JENIFER DOLDE: And you think it can happen.

DAVID HARP: [01:06:03] I think it can. I just, I said I'm cautiously optimistic. And I think the cautious part of it is, it's an important qualifier. I don't think I could be doing what I'm doing if I didn't have some optimism, if I didn't feel that we could sustain it. But I think what's happening right now, at the very top levels of government, is atrocious. I don't think we can sustain that. I don't think we can have an EPA that is trying to kill all the regulations and all the things that... We need to be... We need to be held back from doing some of the bad things that we're doing. I think we need regulations in government to help with that. I don't think that's the answer, the only answer. But I think it's a big part of it. But I think if we can slow things down... I think the [COVID?] has been a real eye-opener for a lot of people, that there are things beyond our control. There are things that we cannot... There's this virus going around the world that nobody is immune to. And I think it's a, it's not a harbinger. But it is an example of something that climate change, that could be very catastrophic, that could be worse than anything we're going through now. And I keep saying I'm hopeful. But it's going to take a lot of work. And I try to... I love my kids. They lead pretty good, sustainable lives. None of us is doing everything we

should be doing, I'm sure. And I want to talk to my grandchildren about that as they, the time I have left with them, to do the right thing. Try to live sustainably and keep our systems healthy.

JENIFER DOLDE: Absolutely. Well so that leads very nicely into one of my questions, which is, since you do feel hopeful, how do you tie that into your continued work? What do you hope to achieve as you continue? You're not retiring, right? I hope not.

DAVID HARP: [01:08:55] No, I don't... When you do the kind of work I do, I guess you work and then you die. But no, I don't think I'm, I'm not retiring. I'm thinking about what I want to do a little bit more carefully. I work for the *Bay Journal* about half-time or whatever. I don't know how you ever can calculate that. But I work part-time. And I love that work because it gets me out. It gets me in a kayak [song?]. It gets me working a lot with science, with scientists, with policy people, which I enjoy. I hope to do... What, I'm kicking around another film right now. A lot of what we're doing now, I get tired of dealing with publishers. Film [break in audio] the documentaries that we're doing are very direct. You do them. You put them up online. You put them on the *Bay Journal* website. You put them up to Maryland Public Television. And they get to,

out to people. And they make a point. And it's very immediate. And we can raise enough money to do a halfway decent job. And working with Tom and with Sandy Cannon-Brown, the three of us, again, it's the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Sandy is the filmmaker that understands editing, understands production. I'm the cinematographer. She appreciates what I do. I appreciate what she does. Tom's the writer. And now narrator, a lot of our work. And it's been a, it's only been about four or five years at most, three or four years that we've been together. And it's been a real great experience. So that's one of the things I want to continue to do, are these short, five- to 60-minute documentaries that can be used in education, I would hope. Or just general public, to make a point. And we made a point about climate change in Dorchester County, that half the county will be gone at the end of the century. And I think those are important, it's an important mission. There are important things to say, to get out there. And it's interesting how more and more people are coming around to the fact that we do have a problem. I have a dear friend who is very conservative. He was my college roommate. And he never thought climate change was real. He thought it was just cycles that the earth goes through and all that. And he called me just

recently, recommending a book called *Less for More*. Or *More From Less, More From Less*. And I'm reading the book now. But I won't get into what the book says. But it says that climate change is real. It's a guy who is not a climate scientist who wrote it. He's more of an economist or economic writer. But Dick called me and said, you know, I believe climate change is real. I think humans are causing this problem. So I think more and more people are coming around to the fact that the science is solid. And if we say it enough times and we say it in the right way and we back it up with data -- go figure -- people will change their behavior. But it's the young people. It's the 20-somethings that I really, really rely on right now, that are maybe the next greatest generation. Who knows? But they're the ones that are going to have to live with this and do something about it.

JENIFER DOLDE: I have two in that age range. And I have, when I look at them, I feel very hopeful. So that's the good news. So I think there's more things that we've missed. And I think rather, I think we're coming to a natural, reflective end to this particular interview. And I think rather than go back, because we're getting close to an hour and a half, I have a list of things that I wanted to ask about. You may think of stories that are part of what you

talked about. And maybe just jot some of those down. I need to, the focus for the article that's coming up is actually purely on the Skipjack project. I thought that was a great way to focus it. I think we'll be doing more. And so I wanted to make sure I asked about that. I'm going to probably have our editor look at some of the photographs that we already have. And then I may need to get back to you for some identification. I'm not sure how many...

DAVID HARP: [01:14:28] Yeah, and also I want to get you better files, if you're going to print them.

JENIFER DOLDE: Absolutely. So why don't we do some preliminary... If you have suggestions of some of the best ones with the most, the ones that tell a story from that set... Now, I'm asking you to go from however many to two or three, which I know is excruciating. But I'm happy, I'm delighted if you want to give suggestions. But other than that, I might let Izzy -- who you've met briefly -- look at those. And then we'll ask for better files and all of that and some information.

DAVID HARP: [01:15:04] Okay. I might give you, I love the one of Lewis Philips, the portrait of him. And there are a couple of others, one of the Rebecca running with me when I'm out in the [bowsprit?], shooting back. And there are a

couple of others. I'm not going to dictate what you use.
But I just want to suggest that.

JENIFER DOLDE: I appreciate that. I'm on a deadline, and we've
been writing. So I'm actually, I'm going to stop the
recording right now, because we're into other things.

END OF AUDIO FILE