

Westergard, David 210713 0026 EDIT

JENIFER DOLDE: Introduction, and then to say this is Jenifer Dolde. It is Tuesday, July 13th, 2021. I'm speaking with... I'm in Maryland and I'm speaking from Nova Scotia. David, would you give us your full name and also your date of birth, please?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:00:21] My name's David Westergard. Born in November 1950.

JENIFER DOLDE: And David, tell me where you were born and about how you grew up, your childhood.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:00:38] I was born in New Jersey and grew up mostly in Bay Head, New Jersey. I'll tell you I was introduced to boats and boatbuilding at a very young age, whether I did participate in that or not. But I didn't... I was there as an observer. Always around boats.

JENIFER DOLDE: Tell me a little bit... I'm going to prop this up a little bit... tell me a little bit about... who were you observing boatbuilding and how did you get your hands into it for the first time?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:01:19] I was observing Hubert Johnson Boat Works. We lived on a boat for part of the year, and we were tied up right next to a small... well, I don't know how small it was, but there was a boatbuilding shop there.

And they had a showroom, like a car showroom, but they only had... they had their Jersey sea ships in there, and they were building [00:01:43] motorboats. Yeah. I don't know when I actually started building myself, but my father had rebuilt a couple boats, and I was always hanging around there at that time.

JENIFER DOLDE: So you said that you were living... you and your family were living on a boat.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:02:05] Yeah, in the summers, we lived on a boat.

JENIFER DOLDE: What was your father's occupation?

DAVID WESTERGARD: Oh, he was a... built golf courses.

JENIFER DOLDE: Okay. And what... so he's... you said he rebuilt some boats. What was his connection to the water and to boatbuilding?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:02:31] Oh, I don't know, other than just having a... going fishing [inaudible]. And we would travel on the boat in the summer. And sometimes, in the winter, we went down as far as the Bahamas. And in the summers, we might go up into Lake Champlain or up the East Coast, New York Harbor a lot.

JENIFER DOLDE: What kind of boat was it? Or maybe there were various boats, but...

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:03:00] Yeah, various boats, but they were motorboats.

JENIFER DOLDE: What size?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:03:06] Sixty-five feet, one of them. The other was maybe 42 feet.

JENIFER DOLDE: Wow. And how many family?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:03:19] Five kids.

JENIFER DOLDE: Okay. Wow. So even at that size, it was a full boat.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:03:26] Yeah, it was a full boat. [inaudible] with the old man.

JENIFER DOLDE: So without needing to pinpoint exactly a date or anything like that, what is the first memory you have of something hands on with building or working with the boat? How do you remember getting started with that?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:03:50] Oh, when I was in high school, I had found an old boat washed up in the slums somewhere, and I tacked it together and had a rowboat for a while.

JENIFER DOLDE: Just a rowboat?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:04:06] Well, it was a little more than a rowboat. I think it had a little sail on it, stuff like that. And then, actually, when I was still in high school, one year, my family had... we were moving to Maryland, and I was... I think I was in tenth grade or something. I was

left in St. Michael's. No, it was Oxford, actually, on the family boat to take care of for the summer. And I had all projects I was supposed to do on there to keep me off the streets.

JENIFER DOLDE: The streets of Oxford. I know it well. So... well, that's quite an adventure for someone in... are you the oldest? Were you the oldest in your family?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:04:49] No, my sister's older than I.

JENIFER DOLDE: Okay. So why were you elected to stay? Did you ask to do that?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:04:58] I'm sure I would've asked to do it. I didn't know if I was... I think I was just relegated to it, actually. Because that's... they knew that's where I was happiest, and just might be more trouble than whatever if we were in Annapolis, running around downtown Annapolis. And the old man liked to keep somebody on the boat in attendance. So I was sent over there.

JENIFER DOLDE: And the rest of the family was at home?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:05:29] I'm pretty sure they were at home, yep. My sister might've been starting her first year in college, but I don't know about that.

JENIFER DOLDE: So I... this may or may not been... was this your first exposure to the bay? I'm guessing no.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:05:46] Well, it could've been, yeah, because, I mean, other than traveling through it on several occasions on the boat, no. Yeah, actually, it wasn't because we did go up and down the bay several times before moving there.

JENIFER DOLDE: Yeah, that's what I suspected. So between the first times, and especially spending a summer there, and we're about to have another 95-degree day here, what were your impressions of St. Michael... or Oxford, the bay region, when you first encountered it?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:06:25] Well nothing like it... what it is now. That's for sure. I mean, back then, especially the place we moved to on [Temp?] Point, it was full of crabs, soft crabs. Didn't have that many classic motorboats running all over the place. It was quite a beautiful [inaudible]. Very nice place to spend a bunch of years as a kid.

JENIFER DOLDE: So that summer you were taking care of the boat, did you have specific projects, or it was just general maintenance? There was nothing major you had to work on?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:07:06] Just general stuff, yeah.

JENIFER DOLDE: And in the meantime, the family was preparing to move full time? That's the summer that they were preparing to do that? Is that correct?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:07:15] Right. I think we had already moved in the spring or maybe in the winter before, and they just didn't have time for the boat that year, so I was sent over there.

JENIFER DOLDE: So then you finished...

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:07:25] When they moved, I didn't...

JENIFER DOLDE: I apologize. Go ahead.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:07:28] Go ahead. No, no. You go.

JENIFER DOLDE: I was going to ask, so you finished your high school years where? Locally, here in Maryland?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:07:40] Yeah, at Queen Anne's High School.

JENIFER DOLDE: Okay. I'm not familiar with Bay Head, but was that a different experience, more rural? Tell me what it was like to enter this...

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:07:54] No, no. Less rural, like a summer... it's the Jersey Shore, right? Think of it like that. Maryland was very... quite rural at that time. They had just finished the Bay Bridge. Actually, they were starting on the second Bay Bridge not much later. So yeah, there wasn't... a lot of people were moving to Ten Island and Baltimore at that time, but it was still quite rural.

JENIFER DOLDE: So did you enjoy, as a young person? Was that a... what kind of transition was that for you? Was it easy? Was it challenging?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:08:33] Oh, no. It was very, very easy. Very easy [inaudible]. I much appreciated living there than anywhere else I had lived previously.

JENIFER DOLDE: Very good. So going back to learning hands-on skills and things like that, and I suspect we're getting... well, no, we're not quite the time. How did you learn woodworking? Did you... did someone teach you, or was it observation?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:09:03] Well, I would say it's a lot of observation. And as far as boatbuilding goes, as a kid living in... next to the boatyard, I was always peering through the window as to what they were going... what they were doing in there, the smell of the cedar they were using, and the oak, and everything. It was just a very attractive thing, and I'm sure I learned quite a bit about it by just the observation. I don't remember... well, I don't want to say that.

JENIFER DOLDE: So you graduated from high school. What was your next move after that?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:09:53] I went to school for a year in Virginia [inaudible]. I just went there and went surfing.

But then the next... as soon as I got done with that first year, I got on a schooner and sailed south, and I spent a couple years down south sailing, so at the West Indies, and into South America a bit, and west to Central America, and came back to Maryland at a certain time. That's when I started working for Mr. Jim.

JENIFER DOLDE: All right. That's great. So how did you connect with this schooner?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:10:42] Well, just through the family connections. I spent a lot of... we were on the water all the time, and there was a schooner going sailing, and I wanted to go. It was a charter schooner. It was 70 something feet, and ended up doing a couple charter seasons with that captain, learned how to sail and run boats on my own.

JENIFER DOLDE: What was the name of the schooner?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:11:11] [*Shearwater?*].

JENIFER DOLDE: Very good. So you said that that was... that directly preceded your time with Mr. Jim. Tell me about how you got connected with him and maybe at what stage because there was other things happening. I know [*Maryland?*] *Dove* was in the works.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:11:33] I just wanted... I wanted to build boats, so I... and I just went straight down to see him, and he hired me on the spot.

JENIFER DOLDE: How had you heard of him?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:11:47] He was fairly renowned on Chesapeake Bay, and I heard there was this *Dove* going on, and I wanted to be part of it. So I just asserted myself and started working there same day I showed up.

JENIFER DOLDE: That's a familiar story that I've heard. So was... at what stage was... had the project just begun? Do you remember the time period or the date?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:12:12] Well, they were still setting up frames. So it was... the planking had maybe started a little bit, but they were still putting up frames and putting the [inaudible] on, and bending interior pieces, and...

JENIFER DOLDE: So as... when you first got started, what... just from a... I don't know... a new boatbuilder perspective, were you reflective on that? What was your... how did you feel about being part of the project? Because you were one of the people who seemed to have really sought it out. Not everyone was in that situation.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:12:57] What do you mean reflective? Was I grateful to be there?

JENIFER DOLDE: Well, yes. I mean, you wanted to learn to build boats. What was your... your motivation was boatbuilding. Was it also any aspect of history or preserving heritage? Was that of interest to you?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:13:17] No, I can't say preserving heritage. But definitely, I... that's the kind of boat I wanted to build.

JENIFER DOLDE: Fair enough. Fair enough.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:13:27] And I just... I had an inherent understanding of the construction already. I just... it's something I focused on all through my youth. It's just... I was always reading books about it or whatever. And then again, the attraction of just those piles of wood that he had there or whatever, whatever state they were in, transforming them into a boat, learning how to work it. And he was very good as a teacher, in a sense. But he didn't get in your way. He just told you what he expected and what to watch out for, and go ahead.

JENIFER DOLDE: Well, I appreciate that comment because I've been trying to get at that a little bit from others, and they don't really remember. So would he show you things, physically demonstrate them? Was it verbal instruction? How was he as a teacher?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:14:30] Like I said, not a lot of verbal instruction. He would just... that echo is getting to me a little bit here. I kind of remember him saying that he wanted to avoid some part of this piece of wood, and he had the piece we're looking for, how to get around that flaw in that wood. And that's what I remember, having to work it out. But he never... he didn't stand over you. And if you made the mistake and didn't do it right, he'd just basically say it, call you out on it. Go get another piece of wood and try again.

JENIFER DOLDE: Now, that does sound familiar, not really with any judgment per se, but that's not right. Do it again. That didn't bother you? You appreciated that kind of...

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:15:26] No, not at all. I did... I liked... I preferred it like that. Because you did the thinking, and then you learned it after you made the mistake or whatever.

JENIFER DOLDE: I can try hanging up and calling you right back. Do you want to see if that helps with the echo? Because I do hate that when that happens to me. Do you want to see if that will work?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:15:48] Yeah, sure.

JENIFER DOLDE: Okay. I'll call you right back. Off-putting.

Well, you were telling me a very excellent description of

Jim's teaching methods. As you progressed through the project, how do... what skills do you remember acquiring that were the most useful, that were kind of exciting to work on, do for the first time, or parts of the project? Walk me through a little bit of that.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:16:21] Well, I think one of the things that I learned from there, being there, was that I already knew what to do. I just had never done it. And Mr. Jim gave me the opportunity to it. The self-confidence, I guess, would be his most... best gift to me.

JENIFER DOLDE: That's certainly a valuable lesson. What kinds of tools did you use perhaps for the first time or that you mastered on this project?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:17:04] Definitely the adze.

JENIFER DOLDE: Had you used one before?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:17:12] No.

JENIFER DOLDE: How are your shins?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:17:17] They're fine. I never hit myself with the adze yet.

JENIFER DOLDE: Knock on wood. Very good. That's a f... that's also a very familiar story. Did you own your own set of tools? Did you acquire tools? Or were you using his?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:17:30] No, we didn't use his tools at all. Or I didn't use his tools. I got my own tools. I...

at this time, I was also... I didn't work... I think I might've worked maybe three or four months one period for him. And then when I went back... or I came to Nova Scotia, and then I went back. I did another stint with him, maybe six months. But I had collected a lot of tools when I came to... first came to Nova Scotia because it was such a place... it was a place of many shipbuilding locations, and there were plenty of tools laying around and easily had. And I picked up a lot of tools right here.

JENIFER DOLDE: So we ta... I mentioned a few of the people that I've spoken with. Tell me about the other young people you worked with. Were you about the same age? Was everyone about the same age? Or were you slightly older than them?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:18:31] No, I don't think I was. I mean, there's Jim Elk, who I believe was the same age. I think Bill Slacum... he might've been a little bit older. There was another guy that might've been a bit older. I'm trying to remember who he was. But he sort of came and went. And June, she was more or less my age. Yeah, everybody was about the same age.

JENIFER DOLDE: So as you all...

DAVID WESTERGARD: [overlapping dialogue; inaudible]. He seemed quite old to me.

JENIFER DOLDE: Who was that last person you mentioned?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:19:07] Mr. Jim. He seemed like... I think he might've been in his eighties. I don't know if he's that old, but...

JENIFER DOLDE: Yeah, I think he was in his... yes, his late seventies. My understanding, though, is he's still... how was he physically at participating in the...

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:19:25] I don't... he was very shaky. Had palsy, whatever they want to call it. He would shake a lot. And he said he... if he took his medicine, he didn't shake, but he didn't feel good. And if he didn't take his medicine, he felt just fine, but he shook a lot. It was funny trying to watch him spiraling out a plank or the pair of dividers, making these marks. But it didn't hold him back. And he had quite a sharp tongue, and very opinionated guy.

JENIFER DOLDE: And from what I understand, some pretty interesting sayings. What do you remember about his sharp tongue or his poignant... pointed sayings?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:20:14] Well, I... he hated people from New York. If you were from New York, it was... he was always saying, "This guy is probably New York." He just hated anybody north of the Mason-Dixon line, I guess.

JENIFER DOLDE: Well, that might include you. But he didn't advertise that?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:20:36] That's why I tried to keep my...
where I was from... I didn't talk about it much.

JENIFER DOLDE: Sounds like he accepted you despite that.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:20:53] Oh, yeah. He certainly did. He
said many times that he couldn't have gotten along without
me, however that did... whoever said that to him or
whatever. But I felt valued there.

JENIFER DOLDE: That's important. Well, as a group, what was the
division of responsibility among the various people there?
How was the work structured? Did certain people work on
certain aspects? Tell me what you remember about how the
daily work was like.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:21:25] I... there were a couple girls
there, and the b... men or whatever, boys. And there was
no... I don't remember any gender bias in any of the work.
I mean, if you... we'd get stuck on one project, and you'd
have one or two people with you or something like that.
You'd continue until you finished that. You'd move on to
something else, and you might be do... working with
somebody different. It was more... to me, it was more that
you pursued what you wanted to do there. And there were
always menial tasks that you kind of participated in. It
wasn't the neatest workplace, by any means. They didn't
do... one of the things that was most bothersome to me

was... here I'm talking to you, but there were a lot of TV reporters and people coming around all the time, which, to me, was the most annoying part of it. I avoided them like the plague.

JENIFER DOLDE: My understanding is that Mr. Jim didn't necessarily like them coming around either, but he still indulged them. What was your observation of his interaction with them?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:22:45] I don't remember much about that. I remember him touting his... what you call it... down to earth, pragmatic wisdoms, little... that echo keeps getting me. I can't find the word I'm looking for. But little practical sayings he always said and he issued to them. They needed a... he was good at it.

JENIFER DOLDE: That's the story I hear from...

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:23:25] [inaudible].

JENIFER DOLDE: So you were saying that there wasn't a division of responsibility between the men and the women on the project. There was June. Who else do you remember? There was two... Kathy? Or maybe more than one Kathy.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:23:47] I only remember one Kathy.

JENIFER DOLDE: That was Kathy Moore?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:23:55] I can't remember her last name.

JENIFER DOLDE: Okay. That's fine. I've seen... so Jim Elk married a Kathy, and there was a...

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:24:04] Oh, that's right. Katherine. Probably Katherine, yeah.

JENIFER DOLDE: Katherine, yes. Perhaps she went by Katherine. Yes.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:24:08] Yeah. I don't know if she worked much on this project. I remember her coming around, but I don't remember her... what she was doing there.

JENIFER DOLDE: I see. As opposed to June and the other Kathy, who were more particip...

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:24:26] Yeah, they were hands on, June particularly. She had her adze, and her [inaudible], and all that.

JENIFER DOLDE: So you mentioned the tasks that were enjoyable, and then sort of the menial tasks. Which parts... which tasks did you enjoy the most and which did you dislike?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:24:49] I enjoyed the planking that... when we were planking and I really thrived at that. But then the planking... the wood that he was using was frozen and green, and the next year, when we went to caulk it, it was quite a job to caulk because the seams were... you could stick your fingers through them. And that was... it was all... yeah, there lots of not really the best

practices going on there as far as using the green wood.

It wasn't thoroughly seasoned. They could've done a better job. The boat would've last a lot longer if the wood had been seasoned.

JENIFER DOLDE: Yeah, I hear you.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:25:39] I think he was in it for the money, in a sense. He knew his days were numbered, and he wanted to get it done. He had a lot of... he wasn't a rich man, frankly.

JENIFER DOLDE: So that was a product... someone else mentioned the quality of the wood and was just saying it was local. I think the planking might've been from Spicer Lumber down in South Dorchester. So you... was it what was provided or that it was just not left to season long enough?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:26:22] No. It just wasn't... there wasn't... I don't think there was anything wrong with the oak. It was just green and frozen. Frozen. And then... it was good for something [inaudible]. But building other pieces out of it, it was not the most ideal. I would never have done it. Or knowing what I know now, I wouldn't have done it. I wouldn't have... I would've notched up the dryer or made sure it was dry. And yeah.

JENIFER DOLDE: Well, and he...

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:26:55] At the same, he was building his bug-eye in another shed. I think some of the best wood went over there.

JENIFER DOLDE: And he was also on a deadline, of course, too

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:27:12] Yeah, I'm sure there was... yeah, probably economic reasons and he had to get her in and get her done.

JENIFER DOLDE: So what was the setup that they had for steaming planks?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:27:27] He had this piece of a pipe on... I think it was on wheels. And he built a fire on one end and keep the fire going all night. The planks would be stuck in this pipe. It was the old way. It was effective.

JENIFER DOLDE: Sounds like it. What other kinds of jigs or methods do you all use that, especially knowing what you know today, really stand out as being... I don't know... innovative, rudimentary, probably both at the same time? But do you remember any other techniques or jigs that you used?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:28:14] No, just the standard shipbuilding practice. It's not that different in many places of the world. And a lot of pressure, and plants, and the jigs is made to handle any particular little situation. Yeah, sometimes, you just drill a hole in

something to pull it in and then plug the hole. Just regular, rudimentary, almost primitive ways of doing it.

JENIFER DOLDE: Very good.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:28:49] It's still done today, which I still use.

JENIFER DOLDE: What do... how about lifting some of those heavy timbers? How was that done?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:28:58] Well, they'd get under them and lift them. You might have a little something over the knot to help you hold it up, but we didn't... basically, getting it in there, getting the clamp on it, then working the other end in.

JENIFER DOLDE: So physically, the...

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:29:20] [overlapping dialogue; inaudible]. A lot of wedges.

JENIFER DOLDE: Wedges, okay. Anybody ever get hurt? Was it a... you know.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:29:34] No, I remember anybody getting hurt.

JENIFER DOLDE: Good.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:29:37] I remember getting actually... from these TV reporters, I... they fed me one time in the sense that I was working on a [scaffold?], and I just got back to them. I didn't want anything to do with them, and

they're going, "Excuse me. Excuse me. Your plank's about to fall down." When I looked down, I was just hanging on by half an inch or something. So I said, "Okay, thank you."

JENIFER DOLDE: You listened to them that time.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:30:02] Yeah, I did.

JENIFER DOLDE: I also understand school kids came through the site.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:30:10] All kinds of people came through. I don't really remember school kids, but I remember just different people showing up. Every day, somebody would show up. And like I said, they were more of a bother to me because I just wanted to focus on the work and not have to answer questions.

JENIFER DOLDE: So do you remember... were you present... so you weren't there for the keel laying. Were you...

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:30:42] No, I wasn't. I wasn't there for the keel laying.

JENIFER DOLDE: Were you there for the launch? Both the launch into the water and then...

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:30:49] I left for... I left before the launch. This was before the launch.

JENIFER DOLDE: How did... and...

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:30:57] I had a... I was moving between Nova Scotia, and I'd only go down there for the work with Mr. Jim, and I had a whole other life here in Nova Scotia, just starting up. I just built my own shop here and I collected materials, homesteading there.

JENIFER DOLDE: So how did you... what... I... well, don't want to depart too much from before we're done, but what did draw you to Nova Scotia? How did you get up there and what led you to stay?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:31:29] Well, after being at sea for a few years, I had a couple dollars, and I wanted to buy some land. And the land was going for a song here. And I bought a piece of land in a... on the water, and I still live here and live here on the same place. And this hasn't changed, and it's just I never could've made a more serendipitous but profitable move.

JENIFER DOLDE: And your first... you traveled up there? What... that's how you got up the... went to Nova Scotia the first time or...

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:32:02] I had come through one time in... I... one summer vacation, I drove up here, and went to through the land, and got fired up about it. Found out more about it, and within another... the next time I came, I said, "Do you want to immigrate?" I said... didn't know

what that meant. I said, "Okay." Boom. I was an immigrant. Never looked back.

JENIFER DOLDE: So you've been there quite a long time.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:32:33] Almost 50 years.

JENIFER DOLDE: Goodness gracious. One last thing. So you were new... relatively new to the Eastern Shore, the Maryland community when... right before you started this project. Do you have a sense of what people in the community thought about the *Dove* project? Because my perception of what people thought about it, the locals, the other boatbuilders, the other watermen, is a little different from the perception of outsiders, reporters, the state. What was your sense of how people regarded the project and what was going on at Jim's yard?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:33:13] I don't know anything about that. I was staying at my mother's house on Ten Island and I would drive down there every day. And I didn't know any of the local watermen there, and the watermen I knew on Ten Island didn't know anything about it.

JENIFER DOLDE: I know Jim fondly called the workers, the crew hippies. Not everybody used that term kindly. Do you think there was something unique or something about that group of people that made them suited for working on this?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:33:52] Yeah. If you s... want to them call them hippies, they were. I guess most of us were hippies. Of course, I wouldn't call Jim Elk a hippie. But Fred, he was definitely a counterculture guy, as was June. No, just people, kids... people looking for... they didn't want at the Walmart or whatever. Just an interesting project, and just a bit of a challenge, and hands on, and that's what it took. I don't know... I mean, I have... my shop now, I hire some occasional young person. And I find it's the same thing. They're... either you're driven to it or you want to do it, and that's the only reason that I was there because I really wanted to do it. I didn't have any clue of what other people, locals thought about it or even I... that I would've cared about what they thought. I... there was a guy here building this big project, and that was what attracted me. Nothing else.

JENIFER DOLDE: No, fair enough. Fair enough. So I am very interested in hearing about the arc of your career after that because you... you've gone on to do many amazing things. Can... tell me about, once you settled in Nova Scotia, how your own business and your projects evolved.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:35:31] Well, I remember this. I started building a double-ended boat, what they call the... a pinky here. It was basically more of a northern boat. I mean,

the Chesapeake Bay has double-ended boats. And I remember talking to Mr. Jim about it, and he's saying, "Well, why would you do that? Why would you do that?" What do you mean why would I do that? He says, "Well, you just lose a lot of room on the boat, being double ended." I said, "Well, yeah, but --," I said, "What I like to look at." He says, "Oh, yeah." He advised me on it. Let's see. It was about 30... actually, it was a 36-foot little boat I was building here when I wasn't there. And he took a lot of interest in it. Didn't like the double-ended part of it, but liked the... everything else about it. And after that boat, I just started building other boats, and I gradually went broke doing it. Went off back to sea again. And then when I had the money, I'd go and start another boat. And by and by, I built... I maybe built about a dozen fair-sized schooners. And I have one sitting here right now I can't sell. I've got to put money into it and sell it. But I would start as soon as I got... if I did sell it, I'd start building another boat, just because it wasn't making me the happiest.

JENIFER DOLDE: Yeah. So it's very much... it's a vocation.

It's something you're drawn to. It's the process itself? It's the design? Both? What is most rewarding to you in that... in the boatbuilding process?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:37:20] Well, I've never built a boat that was somebody else's design. I just... I know what I like, and I make models of them and just... I just liked to find out how that boat would go in the water. I prefer building what I want to build and what I see as... what attracts me, and not necessarily for a prospective buyer or client, whatever. And any time I've been commissioned to build a boat, it's always been my design that I would build. And so, people who like my designs have found me out and said, "Well, build what you want, something like that." Okay.

JENIFER DOLDE: Interesting. And do you remember... and you build full models?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:38:19] No, half models.

JENIFER DOLDE: Half models. Okay. What do you recall about the design of *Dove* and how... in contrast, how Jim built his boat? What did he use? Did he loft it? Did he lay out frames, patterns? The difference with...

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:38:37] He didn't do much lofting at all, and neither do I. He worked by rule of thumb. The beam is equal to the line by three or something, whatever his rule of thumb. He had a lot of... the Chesapeake Bay was a lot of rule of thumb. And the *Dove* didn't have any. The *Dove* was something totally out of his expertise or out of his

knowledge in boats. But it's still the knowledge he had. He could do that. The *Dove* was something completely -... might as well have been from Mars, as compared to Chesapeake Bay boats.

JENIFER DOLDE: Sure. Sure. And did you ever... William Baker, the designer, I know he was on site. Were you ever... did you ever meet him or were privy to their conversations about the design?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:39:36] No, not at all. Yeah. I didn't even... I don't know anything about it.

JENIFER DOLDE: Do you have a sense of whether the boat was built to spec or there was... well, you men... you said rule of thumb, so.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:39:53] [inaudible]. And not that anybody would ever know about it. In... to follow a set of drawings or something like that, even that size of timber and all that, you... there would be discrepancies. Surely, discrepancies. I would like to have seen it, though, after my... after I built a bunch of boats, just to see how fare it was and how... yeah, basically, how fare it would've been. I never did see the... the one time I did see it from a distance, it was... up close was... I don't know. There was too many people on board to look at the... at it critically.

JENIFER DOLDE: That was...

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:40:43] I do know that there were lots of problems with oak and the green wood.

JENIFER DOLDE: Right. And so, that was years later. You left. At what stage did you leave the project for the last time?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:40:57] Just before they launched the boat.

JENIFER DOLDE: Yeah, I'm not sure what its future will be. And did... were you aware that the museum was building... a new Dove was being built? Had you heard about that?

DAVID WESTERGARD: Yeah, some guy called... contacted me and he told me about it. He was... he's environmental historian. I'm trying to think of his name. He lives up in... someplace just above Baltimore. I don't know. Somewhere up in there on the bay. And he was talking about how he goes down to St. Michael's and they were building a new Dove down there. That was about two or three months ago. But he had contacted me because of my... some wooden boat article on me and had mentioned Bay Head, New Jersey, and he was originally from there. So he was just talking about that. Then he went on about the Dove. So [inaudible].

JENIFER DOLDE: Sure. Sure. Have... you have not remained in contact with any of your former crew from that build?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:42:11] Well, Jim Elk I do.

JENIFER DOLDE: I talked to Jay Dayton last week. He was telling me about a trip. This has, I think, been some years ago. But you delivered a... you two delivered a boat somewhere in the fog.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:42:28] Jay Dayton?

JENIFER DOLDE: Jay was there at the build too. He was... the story he was telling me was about sailing or delivering the boat, necessarily sailing, in the fog. And that you told him something about throwing potatoes overboard and listening for a splash. And it was a great story. It would be a shame if you...

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:42:49] I don't remember.

JENIFER DOLDE: You don't remember it. Well, if you're a person who does things like that, then you probably have a million stories like that. That's so funny because he... it was... he remembered it distinctly. And it was... gave me a chuckle.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:43:04] In the fog, I was probably getting over some [inaudible].

JENIFER DOLDE: We've skirted over your work. You were telling me about the schooners you've built. What does the... I'm sure you could probably go on. What is the difference between boatbuilding as you experienced it in Maryland on

the bay and boatbuilding in Nova Scotia? I'm sure there's a world of difference.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:43:37] I would say not. I would say that, in... down in Maryland, it might be a lot hotter, and to woodwork so much in the summer, it'd be a much slower pace. Where here in Nova Scotia, you... it's a little bit colder, and you get on with it faster and harder. It's... Mr. Jim always seemed to have a lot of time, although he didn't let the wood season. But he always seemed to have a lot of time, and things went at a slower but... slower pace. The boats... most of the boats built on Chesapeake Bay are... have... are [inaudible] boats where... here in Nova Scotia, you have a certain size. They're mostly steam trains.

JENIFER DOLDE: And so, you've... The Dory boat shop, is that... that's a place that you have been involved with or are still involved with?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:44:45] No, I have... I was contracted to build those two schooners there that were built at The Dory Shop. I didn't have much to do with The Dory Shop itself. I just... I used the site to build those two schooners at. And my... I do have a shop in Lunenburg. It's at the old [Luno?] shed where I built the last couple schooners inside of that.

JENIFER DOLDE: Is that your primary shop or do you have multiple sites?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:45:18] Oh, that's... right now, that's... with the COVID, it's... the... I don't own that shop. I rent it from the government, and they have decided that I... there was such an attraction... the sho... the shed had stood empty for many years. It was the site where they had built the [*Edgerness Rose?*] and they built the *Bounty* in there, and the *Lunos*, too, there. And then wooden boatbuilding sort of faded away, and the shed stood empty. And then I got a contract to build a larger boat. I went there and got used to that shed, and it was quite in disrepair. And there was such an attraction from the building of that boat in there that they decided to fix it up in the government's own way and said would it be six months, and it's been two and a half years. So I've been basically out of there for two and a half years. And then with the COVID coming along and things, it's slow to get started again. So I've been down in my house where I have a shop, and I... it's about two and a half, three hours away from Lunenburg.

JENIFER DOLDE: I see. I see.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:46:30] But I do have a lease on that building for the next five years, and I got a small... one

of a... a [inaudible] fellow in there building a small, little design.

JENIFER DOLDE: So you have, I'm sure, over the years, worked with and mentored quite a few young people, much as you were mentored.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:46:55] Yeah, I have. I can think of four or five young guys who've come and gone from here. Not too many women.

JENIFER DOLDE: Well, yeah, interesting. We do have several women working in our yard, and we are seeing apprentices assign on when it... so it's rather exciting. It's an interesting parallel to the *Dove* project. But it certainly is clear that the women working on *Dove*... that was a very unusual situation, especially for that time period.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:47:27] I believe it was, yeah. Yeah, it... yeah, I can't say Mr. Jim wasn't sexist, didn't have... he certainly gave sexist comments. I remember doing that. But they were unphased by it, and nobody took much stock in it or whatever. He was very much a racist guy himself, but that comes from the time.

JENIFER DOLDE: Sure. Sure. Yeah, the main comment I re... people have said is just about the young women lifting things, although June, apparently, could hang in with just about anyone.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:48:09] That's exactly right.

JENIFER DOLDE: Yeah. And I did also ask about whether there were ever any black boatwrights, and Jim's daughter, Judy, said she remembered a caulker. And pretty much universally, nobody remembers anyone from the black community working.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:48:33] No. There wasn't... a black fellow came around. He was a caulker. I do remember him. But I don't think he stayed. He just came and observed. It was from... I don't think he was an Ameri... I think he was somewhere down south. I don't know where he was from. And he gave me a couple tips, and he was... certainly knew what he was talking about. He helped me get... because Mr. Jim didn't really show you that. He just said, "Well, this is what you got to do and go ahead and do it. Kind of learn as you go." Who's leading the *Dove* project... the *Dove* build now?

JENIFER DOLDE: Our lead shipwright on the project's named Joe Connor. And he's not... I mean, most of crew have been to boatbuilding schools outside of the area. There's... and most of them have the... we now have a four-year accredited apprentice program credited with the state. So people can come in with very rudimentary or almost no skills, and we have a program to basically bring them up to that level

after four years and learning certain skills. So that's a fairly new development, and really...

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:49:52] Oh, yeah. How long is it built? How long do... is there a time limit on this thing or is it static?

JENIFER DOLDE: Yeah. Speaking of COVID, we are, I think... I don't know... maybe about six months behind, which is... they did continue to work during COVID kind of isolated and working in teams with each other. So they will... the boat will go into the water in November, and then the scheduled launch, fully complete, is March. So that's about six months behind where we expected. And this... as we culminate that, this exhibition will be part of that. We're at the stage where it doesn't look like that's going to happen on time. But I think it's like building a house. All of the sudden, it all just comes together.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:50:45] Yeah. And who's funding it?

JENIFER DOLDE: So this... the... it's a commission by Historic St. Mary's City and the state of Maryland. And so...

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:50:54] Okay.

JENIFER DOLDE: So we are... it's purely a commission project. And from our perspective, it's both the opportunity to do the build, but also to do it in public view and to continue these skills, demonstrate them for the public, which, to

your point about reporters and other people coming in, it can be a challenge to do the work.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:51:17] Yes.

JENIFER DOLDE: Yeah, to do the work that's necessary and also... so we have volunteers who help interpret, but it remains a challenge. But that is a pattern and a model that I think we would like to do going forward. We've done a number of restorations in public view. But I think that some new builds is... are something that we would like to continue doing in our shipyard.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:51:39] Oh, that's good. Yeah.

JENIFER DOLDE: Yeah. Well, David, I really appreciate you speaking with me under these challenges circumstances. As we wrap up, anything you would like to add, any particular influence of this time in your life on the rest of your life, or just anything you'd like to add?

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:52:03] Oh, like I said, doing that work with Mr. Jim certainly set me up as far as confidence goes. Not that I'm not a confident person. It certainly inspired me. I remember it fondly, and I'm glad that echo went away.

JENIFER DOLDE: Now, here we are at the end and it's ended.

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:52:32] Yeah.

JENIFER DOLDE: Well, very good. We... I will be sending some paperwork in the mail to you for... to ask you to return. And just let me know if you have questions. And also, if you... if we left out something, I'd be happy to reconnect with you at a later time. We will be inviting everyone to the launch. I imagine you don't get down this way. Or maybe you do. Do you come to... down here very often, to...

DAVID WESTERGARD: [00:53:01] No. I try to avoid it. I still have family on Ten Island and in the area. But if you could see where I am, you'd say why would we go... I mean, the Eastern Shore is beautiful, especially down in St. Michael's and all that. But if you could see where I am, you'd say, "Yeah. I think I'd rather not go." [inaudible] you have to do just to get there. The East Coast is basically paved.

JENIFER DOLDE: Yes.

DAVID WESTERGARD: Here, we still have... I don't see a house from where I sit here.

JENIFER DOLDE: Yeah, I hear you.

END OF AUDIO FILE