

INTERVIEW LOG

Interviewee: Marion Clark Marshall, Jr. ("Junie")

Oral History # 72

Interviewer: Richard Dodds

Date: June 4, 1990

Location: Unknown

Topic: Topics discussed included his growing up in St. Michaels, the family business, log canoe racing, seafood industry. Junie owns the log canoe *Rover*, the house that he was raised in being moved to Trice (ph) Field.

Family lost general store in 1936 from too many people having lines of credit (\$45,000 on the books), depression, layout of business and geography.

Comments:

Documentation:

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BEGIN SIDE 1

Richard Dodds: ...I've been trying to get some of the older residents from St. Michaels down here to talk a little bit about things that the Museum might be interested in and it ranges from some of the old buildings and the people in town here to leave boats in the shipyards and so on. And a couple of people said well you've got to speak to Junior Marshall (laughter). I think people think you got a lot of tales of stories or something, I don't know. Junior, what is your full name to start off?

Marion Clark Marshall: Marion Clark Marshall, Jr. Now you see, can you cut that, we don't have to do that. Anybody that calls you Marion when I see them, when I went to school, of course, you had to tell (unintelligible), but everybody called me Junie and I've been Junie ever since.

RD: Is that right?

MCM: Yes, half the people didn't know my first name which is very well with me (laughter).

RD: So, you prefer to go by Junie.

MCM: Junie, yeah. As long as everybody knows me by that anyway; locals anyway.

RD: Yeah. Were you born here in St. Michaels?

MCM: Yes, on Water Street.

RD: On Water Street. Which house was that?

MCM: The house has now been removed. It was taken to Tricefields to put on to another house there to make it, oh what, somewhat historical value.

RD: Right. Is that the house that sat right next to the one on the corner?

MCM: It was right along side of Miss Fairbanks.

RD: Oh, okay.

MCM: The whole house now is gone. I mean the little house that between Ed Burns and Miss Fairbanks is where I lived and the little old stairway to the second floor would just fit little people...my father-in-law, because if it hadn't been, we'd never got up the stairs...very, very small.

RD: The house is still there in Tricefields.

MCM: Yeah, it was built on to this other house.

RD: When was this house moved, do you remember?

MCM: I would say probably in the 70s, I'd say.

RD: Nineteen seventies, yeah; just was pretty recently.

MCM: Yes, pretty recently.

RD: You were born in St. Michaels, you said. What year may I ask?

MCM: 1925.

RD: Oh, you're not that old.

MCM: No, hell, no.

RD: Has your family been in St. Michaels for quite a long time before you were born?

MCM: Oh, absolutely, yes.

RD: What did your father do?

MCM: My father was a farmer and his father and they lived down Pea Neck and they used to farm where Mr. Etter (ph) used to have his boys camp, Whisker Hill (ph).

RD: Did he farm all his life?

MCM: No, no. He stopped farming about the time just after World War I and he opened up a grocery store which now is across the Maryland National Bank. It is an antique shop now.

RD: I'm trying to remember what's the name of that store now?

MCM: I don't know.

RD: There are so many of them, I can't keep track of them.

MCM: No, that's true.

RD: But, it's the one across from the Maryland National Bank.

MCM: Yes, and that store right there now is a cinder block store, but the one he opened was wood and it had three steps up because as you saw the other day, you see what would happen? See all the stores those days had (unintelligible).

RD: I've heard that, yeah.

MCM: They knew what was going on. Wasn't (unintelligible).

RD: Was it a single story building that he had built?

MCM: Yes. And all it had was a front, you know, the store front, like you see in the old Wild West, you know, that's the way it was here.

RD: Yeah. Basically, it was a grocery store, what you would call today.

MCM: Yes, absolutely. Yeah, he sold bread, mild, you know and spiced ham and hot dogs, tobacco – chewing tobacco. Had the old cuttery and all that. That was one of my jobs to cut the chaw – two cents for a (unintelligible). Oh, yeah and in the tobacco room he had a great big pump on a barrel a 55 gallon drum of molasses. After November, I couldn't pump the molasses; I wasn't strong enough or big enough to turn it (laughter).

RD: Is that right? When did you start working in the store then? You must have started pretty early.

MCM: I started as a kid delivering groceries or getting what I could and one of my jobs was when I was about 10 years old was (ph). My father had chickens in the back; had a chicken yard. Aside from cracking the eggs, though, if somebody wanted a chicken, a baking chicken, I had to go out and get that sucker. So I got to chop his head off. That was something.

RD: Was your father pretty successful with his store?

MCM: Up until the depression and during the depression like other people, his customers couldn't pay and he was as generous as anybody. He either had children or whatever taking care of the father and mother and my father went out of business I think it was it 1936 and at that time he had \$45,000 on the books. Now with \$45,000 cash in those days, he could have bought everything, land included on the farm from here to Tilghman's Island. But, that's the way things were. Nobody had any money.

RD: It was all in the books.

MCM: That's exactly the case.

RD: I'm sure he never got a lot of the money back.

MCM: You've got to be kidding. There was only one person that I could think of, there might have been others, but one in particular, a boat builder eventually, but he was just an ordinary guy at the time, you know, but since now, you've got probably some records in there now... Sam McQuay (ph), yes. Sam McQuay (ph) was the owner. He paid off his father's bill.

RD: Is that right?

MCM: Yes sir.

RD: Now that's pretty good.

MCM: Yes. So the guy had some kind of backbone you know in those days. Sam was a good guy. I liked Sam and there were some other ones that I can't talk about – there's no need of it.

RD: What happened to the store after your father sold it?

MCM: He sold it to Frank Nickerson. My father didn't sell it. He owned the store through up until this fellow with this antique shop bought it.

RD: Oh, okay. So he just leased it.

MCM: Rented or leased it, correct. But, a guy by the name of Frank Wrightson (ph) opened the store later and then Frank Nickerson, then Frank passed away and Gary, his son, was working for Waverly Press. He still does as a matter of fact, and then this boy with his antique shop wanted to buy it, so my dad let it go, and of course, my father at the time was probably 88 or so, I think, so he didn't need it anymore. It was just a worry for him.

RD: Did your family live in that house on Water Street up until the time it was moved?

MCM: No, no. We moved in the house that my father's father lived in on Chew Avenue and at that time on the corner where the doctor's office used to be on the corner of Main and Chew Avenue – there's no doctor's office there anymore, but anyway, there was a guy by the name of Denny Harrison, who was a boat builder.

RD: A boat builder, yeah.

MCM: Yes, he was.

RD: I was going to ask you a little bit later about some of the boat builders I'm sure you ran into them quite a bit.

MCM: Oh, yeah. Captain Denny used to live down here where the St. Michaels Inn is and he built boats on the other side of the street where one of the policeman lives now – Tommy Johnson.

RD: He built boats there, but didn't he also build boats up by Chew Avenue, too? He had a shop up there, too, yeah.

MCM: Oh, yeah, yes he did. But his boat (unintelligible) is big. He didn't build many big boats. He just built 40 footers over here on Fremont.

RD: In back of St. Michaels Inn, on Fremont Street. In either case, I guess he had a job getting to the water.

MCM: No, not in them days. He had a couple sets of wheels and he just drove there and launch them overboard. There was no problem.

RD: Just rolled them up the street?

MCM: Just roll them up the street and let her go.

RD: I never knew him, or don't know very much about Mr. Harrison. When did he die, when was he active.

MCM: Denny Harrison? Oh, my land. I guess all of my lifetime.

RD: Is that right?

MCM: Yeah.

RD: Are there any boats around did you know that he built that are still in the area?

MCM: I have to look that up. I can't tell you that.

RD: I was just curious. It would be nice to take some photographs, you know, one that we can definitely pinpoint as being built by him.

MCM: No, I have to look that up, that's all there is to it. No use giving any false statements here (laughter).

RD: How about any of the old boat builders in town? There's a fellow that lived up here on the corner where the High's is now.

MCM: Exactly the case, yes sir. The old boy owned a shipyard – Jack Jones. Captain Jack owned a shipyard over there where the hotel is.

RD: Where the big hotel is.

MCM: Right on. His railway was just to the south of the hotel and he had a big capstan (ph) and he had a white mule that would walk around the capstan to drag the big boats up until later on. I think it was a Fairbanks Morse.

RD: You know, you hear about the horses at the railway over here where Higgins Yard is, but you don't hear much about the mule. That's the first I heard about the mule on the other side.

MCM: Oh yeah, the mule on the other side, yeah.

RD: That would have been, when, 1930s?

MCM: Oh, no, earlier than that – yes, it might have been the '30s when he still had a mule. It's a possibility, yes, might have had at that time.

RD: Yeah, and then he replaced it with a Fairbanks Morse, yeah.

MCM: And Captain Chat [Chat Jones] used to build boats by the way right here down the street right here.

RD: What did he do down there – mostly repair work, wouldn't it be?

MCM: Yes, that's correct, and of course, he could haul a schooner up over there.

RD: It was a pretty big railway then?

MCM: Yes, it was. See, there was at time -- well, up until the late 30's there were schooners that plied here.

RD: Do you remember any of them in the harbor, any particular ones?

MCM: Oh, absolutely, yeah.

RD: Any particular ones that you remember?

MCM: Oh, yeah, the *Florence*. She was owned by Will Roe and the *Anna Lloyd*. They went ashore right over here in front of the Longfellows Inn.

RD: I heard about that, not much, but I heard a little bit about it. That was during the "33...

MCM: During that hurricane, that's correct, yes.

RD: Whatever happened to her, did they get her off. They must have got her off eventually, or did she go to pieces there?

MCM: Well there was a little rock pile up there to start with and she was anchored over at Parrott's Point and she drug anchor and this was in September you see, the first part of September, and she had just a partial of a load of oysters. Well, she drug in there and she foundered right there and you couldn't move her – what are you going to do? Wasn't worth moving her as a matter of fact because she was old and pretty decrepit at the time, so all of us kids used to play on her, we could swim on her, yeah. (Unintelligible), we'd run and be Tarzan, you know. Great fun and then the next thing you know, Ed Buck, I believe at the time owned Longfellows' house and he also owned the land along side of the old *Anna Lloyd*

INTERVIEW ENDS HERE.