

Transcript of OH-00090

Joseph Francis Stine

Interviewed by
John Wearmouth

on
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Typographic Note

- [Inaudible] is used when a word cannot be understood.
- Brackets are used when the transcriber is not sure about a word or part of a word, to add a note indicating a non-verbal sound and to add clarifying information.
- Em Dash — is used to indicate an interruption or false start.
- Ellipses ... is used to indicate a natural extended pause in speech

Subjects

Oystering
Crabbing
World War, 1939-1945
Fishing boats
Fish hatcheries
Dredging (Fisheries)
Education
Rural Conditions
General stores
Genealogy

Tags

Watermen
Rock Point (Md.)
Wicomico River (Charles County, Md.)
Cobb Neck (Md.)
D-Day, 1944 (Normandy invasion)

Transcript

Joseph Francis Stine [JS]: I've got a brother that lives on the Eastern Shore.

John Wearmouth [JW]: Oh for goodness sakes. Well I'll get this started. I'll put some introductory information on it. This is John Wearmouth interviewing Mr. Joseph Francis Stine at his home in Newport over the Stine General Merchandise Store, grocery store right in the center of the old village of Newport. The day is January 13th 1990 and the interview is part of the Charles County Community College Oral History Program. This is one of a series of interviews we're doing with the watermen of Charles County. Mr. Stine is a native of the 5th district Cobb Neck, was born at Rock Point August 2nd, 1912 and has been a waterman nearly all his life. If not all your working life [have been] a waterman. And your father was before you.

JS: Yeah.

JW: What was your father's nickname? What did people—

JS: They called him Yuck.

JW: Okay. Yuck Stine. And at the college we have a very beautiful photograph taken of your father on the bow of his boat by the federal government about 1937 or so. So and I will take with me some photographs of you when this is over. So We'll have you and your dad photographed at the college. Okay and you are retired now?

JS: Yeah after I [retirement].

JW: Okay.

JS: Really I had to cut it out I mean about three years ago.

JW: Okay so your dad's name was Joseph?

JS: Yeah.

JW: Did he have a middle initial?

JS: No.

JW: Okay. And he came down from the Baltimore area?

JS: Yeah.

JW: Of Maryland with brothers including Benjamin and what were the names of some of the others who came with him?

JS: Tommy and Will and Gus. [Gus don't like inaudible Uncle Gus we called him]. And that's about it.

JW: And their parents were born and raised in Germany? I understand your grandparents.

JS: I think so yeah.

JW: So these people were born I suppose most of them in Baltimore. Do you know much about where your father was born?

JS: No.

JW: Either Germany or Baltimore.

JS: Well I think he was born in Baltimore.

JW: Okay which in those years at the turn of the century had a very large German American population. So a cousin of yours, Harry, says he thinks that the Stine family came from Northeastern, Northwestern Germany originally. Bremen, Bremerhaven, that area. We'll probably never know for sure. And the name was spelled how originally?

JS: I'm not sure but it may have been I think they said it they call them [Stony] [inaudible] [Stone]. I'm not sure.

JW: Okay anyway as you were christened Stine with today's spelling? Is that on your birth certificate?

JS: Yeah.

JW: S-T-I-N-E. And it's possible that the old German spelling was S-T-E-I-N?

JS: I don't think so.

JW: Oh really huh?

JS: I don't think so. The reason they had two spellings of it was that they were two of my aunts had boarding houses on Rock Point and one of them decided to spell it S-T-E-I-N so it would—they could recognize one from the other one.

JW: Oh I see. I see.

JS: And—

JW: So two of your aunts were business women at Rock Point?

JS: Well they ran boarding houses. You know back in those days most of a lot of people had ran boarding houses. In other words for feeding more than anything [inaudible phrase]. That was the reason for that. And one of them—Course after that one of my cousins he always—she spelled her name S-T-E-I-N I don't know for why [inaudible] cousins.

JW: How many children were there in your family? How many brothers and sisters did you have and can you give us the name for the record? Starting with the oldest and going right through the youngest.

JS: Well my oldest brothers name was Aden. He got killed in an automobile accident. Back in those days why they used to have trouble with the cars the wheels when you would make a turn they would lock sometimes and that's what happened. He was making a turn went down on what you call Crain's Highway. Turned down to go toward Rock Point and they were making the turn and [inaudible]—

JW: So he was very close to home when it happened?

JS: Yeah, yeah.

JW: What kind of a car was he driving?

JS: He wasn't driving my cousin was driving. Eugene Johnson.

JW: Was it a rear wheel that locked?

JS: No the front wheels. See the front wheels would lock. When you turned, turned sometimes [they would lock]—

JW: Oh wouldn't come back.

JS: Wouldn't come back and they just flipped over and killed them. Killed them dead. He was—I think he was about 28. I know I was real small when it killed him. And then I have—he was the oldest brother. And then I'm next. And then I have one named James. And he was next. And one named Charles. And then both of those [inaudible] Charles Stine. And that's the brothers. There

was a four sisters of us. There was Eileen and Hilda and Cecilia and there was only two I meant three sisters.

JW: So in the family there were how many?

JS: There was seven all together.

JW: And how many are living today?

JS: All are living except the one—

JW: All are living?

JS: I am the oldest living one.

JW: That's quite [a record]. Okay how old were you when you began to take an active interest in what your father was doing for a living? When did he first start to give his boys certain responsibilities in connection with what he was doing to support the family?

JS: Well we worked on the water all the time. I mean we worked right on the river oystering, crabbing, fishing.

JW: How old were you when he began to let you go out with him regularly?

JS: Oh I quit school when I was 14 and went to work on the river [then regular]. And I went oystering, crabbing, fish.

JW: So we're talking roughly about what 1927 or 28?

JS: 1927, 28 yeah. Yeah and I...I remember when he used to catch soft crabs and try to push net. [One of them caught] at a push net and a board about that wide.

JW: About three feet wide?

JS: Like three feet wide and we took a limb off a tree down there and made a bow out of it and tacked it each end to that board. About that wide and put net in it and took a long pole about maybe five foot and run down the center of it. That's what we used push and catch the soft crab in.

JW: So it was a shovel type operation wasn't it? You actually shoveled them up?

JS: Yeah. And we one day—I mean you talking about catching crabs—we caught 33 dozen one day my wife and I.

JW: Oh for heaven's sakes.

JS: And brother in—law and myself. 33 dozen soft crabs. That's a lot of soft crabs.

JW: What kind of money were they bringing at that time?

JS: About 25 cents a dozen.

JW: But that was considered a pretty good return?

JS: Oh yeah in those days yeah.

JW: Okay. I think I better say on the tape right now that Mr. Stine's wife Olivia is sitting here ready to correct her husband if he goes off the deep end or to lend a helping hand. She's been pretty close to the river herself. Haven't you? And what was your maiden name now?

Olivia Stine [OS]: Hardesty.

JW: You were a Hardesty. Olivia Hardesty. How did the two of you get together? Where did you meet?

JS: Well my cousin Raymond's wife and my wife are sisters. So he and his wife got married first and we—and that's when we how we met.

JW: Oh for goodness sakes.

JS: Yeah and well the [safe] part of it was, we were going together. Started going together and we couldn't get married because of the—we didn't get married on account of World War II starting. So it wasn't easy. We couldn't see the sense in that. And but—

JW: So what year did you get married?

JS: We first we—when first we—I got in the army and then when I went in then decided. They were taking them in at that time right up to 50 years old, about 50 years old. It didn't make much difference. But after I had been in there a short time they decided that they were going to only take them in at 28. Anybody over 28 get out so I was over 28 when I went in just a little bit and they were going to give me—we were on maneuvers in the Carolina's at the time. So they said the first sergeant—our home base was Mead, Fort Mead. So they while we were on maneuver, saying we were on maneuvers at the time. So he decided that he would give me a furlough and let me come home. Of course he could've discharged me in the field so I had to wait. And I was supposed to wait until the company came back to me—

JW: This was the 29th division?

JS: Yeah.

JW: Okay. Maryland National Guard.

JS: Yeah and in the meantime I came home and we decided well we'll get married again. And I was home I think about maybe two weeks I believe. I think something like two weeks and been around to see my wife. She wasn't my wife then I mean girlfriend. And we were on the way back home when he came over and tells [inaudible phrase] that the Japs had attacked at Pearl Harbor. I said, "Oh, that let that out." Course they sent out notices to all service men no matter where they were what to report back to the base immediately. Well I couldn't go back to my base because my company was on maneuvers down in Carolinas. I didn't know where they was so I decided I wasn't going back until my furlough was up. Which I couldn't report back [inaudible] anyhow and I was halfway scared the whole time. I said, "[MP] might come along and catch me." And you can believe I didn't wear no uniform that time.

JW: No way. Your cousin Harry went in the army early too didn't he?

JS: Yeah he went in before me.

JW: [Inaudible]. So he's about six years younger than you as I remember?

JS: Yeah he's younger than I am.

JW: You guys were some of the first to be drafted.

JS: Yeah.

JW: I was drafted in 43. At that time they'd gone back to drafting anybody between 18 and 50. Because when I went in you were either very young or you were 50 or older. So that was quite a mix at that time.

JS: Yeah.

JW: Okay so between the time you left grade school did you go through all seven grades?

JS: No I didn't quite finish up the seventh grade.

JW: Do you ever regret that?

JS: Not really. Not really because in those days course it was all lamp light in those days and—

JW: Kerosene?

JS: Kerosene yeah. So many a night I had taken—I'd get a lot of reading all the time and I would I had read a novel through. Through the night.

JW: So you didn't stop your education when you left?

JS: No, no I kept reading and I was good—I was really good on Arithmetic. And I [know that the teacher inaudible the times called me back to school to show her how to do a certain problem].

JW: Who were some of your best teachers there? Do you still remember the ones that you really had the most respect for?

JS: Well quite a few. The one that I think that was really the smartest and taught children the most was [Neil Walton]. Was a man teacher.

JW: What was his last name?

JS: [Walton].

JW: [Watson] okay.

JS: His daughter lives up here now. Carol...Carol Rice is his daughter. Lives right up [inaudible phrase]. But he was really some kind of smart.

JW: Did he have good discipline in the class?

JS: Very good.

JW: Kids listened kept their mouths shut?

JS: Yes they did.

JW: Talked when he wanted them to?

JS: Yeah, yeah.

JW: That's changed a bit I understand.

JS: And one thing: he liked his whiskey on the weekend. He would get drunk on the weekend and sometimes he'd come into school and—

JW: Monday morning?

JS: On Monday morning.

JW: Looking a little bit grim?

JS: Well he probably wouldn't stay [over by now. He'd go away from there. He'd close the school down].

JW: How many of those children that you went to school with were born and raised right there on Rock Point? And what were some of their names? Some were relatives weren't they?

JS: Yeah.

JW: How many Stine's and how many Shymansky's. If you pulled them out of school what would be left?

JS: There wouldn't have been too many. Too many no sir.

JW: Any Lancaster's go to school with you?

JS: Yeah, yeah.

JW: Charles?

JS: Charles just a short while. And but the—one was named—one of them was named [Burnup]. He died young. He went there.

JW: Any other names that have sort of disappeared from the Rock Point area? Do you remember?

JS: Well I guess—

JW: Were there any [Norris's] going to school with you?

JS: Yes—

JW: Simms?

JS: Yes and I had a—one of my brother in laws went to school with me. Miles Norris.

JW: Miles Norris?

JS: Mhm.

JW: Any Johnson's in school then?

JS: Let's see there was...maybe Gilbert might have. Johnson. And—

JW: Now this was a segregated school. These were only white kids in that school?

JS: That's all.

JW: Where was the colored school for this neighborhood?

JS: Well it was right down on Rock Point there's the school—there's a little pond there between the school the white school and the colored school.

JW: They were that close?

JS: Yeah. Because in the winter time when it got a little snow on it on the ground why a hill came down from the white school and on the other side a hill came down from the colored school. And then the middle was this pond and then ice would get on that and we'd get on sleighs and what not and ride down of course.

JW: Like a big mass of salt and pepper going around there. Isn't that something.

JS: Yeah. We never had any—never did have any trouble at all.

JW: What were the names of some of the black families? Were there Butler's here then?

JS: Butler's no. Let's see it's kind of hard to remember them—

JW: Well we can come back to that later. Where was the school building standing is it still at the same place?

JS: No the school building was right in back of the old church—

JW: Okay how many feet away? 200, 300?

JS: About 300 feet.

JW: Okay.

JS: I think they moved the building though, the old building the school building, away after they stopped using it and moved it over next to the woods.

JW: Okay I think I know where it is. I think [Mooksey] lives there.

JS: That's right.

JW: [Mooksey]. I've got to pictures of it before it disappears.

JS: [Mooksey] yeah he's a nice boy.

JW: Yeah.

JS: [Mooksey] was and his brother is nice too.

JW: What sort of building was this? A frame all wood?

JS: Oh yeah all wood.

JW: Hard to heat in the winter?

JS: Not too bad. Not too bad. We had wood stoves and all. You fire them up in those days it wasn't too bad.

JW: So about what year did you leave school? 1928 or 27?

JS: Yeah. 28.

JW: Did your mother and father mind too much?

JS: No, no.

JW: Did they feel it was alright for you to leave at that point?

JS: Yeah, yeah.

JW: When you left school and began to get into working on the water how many of your brothers were already working on the water full time?

JS: There was only the one that—

JW: The older one?

JS: The older one yeah.

JW: Okay the one who was killed in the—

JS: The one who was killed in the accident.

JW: His name was Adrian?

JS: Aden yeah.

JW: Okay, okay.

JS: He had a ton of tough luck all his life. He had a boy threw an oyster shell at him and hit him in the eye and put that eye out.

JW: He was permanently blinded in one eye?

JS: Mhm.

JW: I understand one of Harry Stine's brother drowned out on the river?

JS: Yeah.

JW: Disappeared.

JS: He had a habit of sleep walking and his father was hauling seine and he went out and in those days to haul seine had two boats. You had another boat with a net or haul seine on it that you towed behind. So he went out and you anchored the one boat that had the most power into. In those days it was the old single engine motor. The old pop-pop things.

JW: [One-oner].

JS: Yeah [inaudible phrase] I think they're about a seven or a five I think. It was five horse power.

JW: About as much as a lawn mower today.

JS: [Inaudible phrase] anyway he, he left him on the boat while he went out and laid the haul seine out and when he came back to the boat he was gone. He had walked overboard.

JW: Just disappeared forever.

JS: And drowned. Of course he come back and his father went to pieces. [Inaudible phrase].

JW: And this was Benjamin, the father?

JS: Yeah. And he was really in bad shape. Then we went back over there and made a net out of the [gain].

JW: That same day?

JS: Yeah. And caught him that day in that net.

JW: What were some of the safety things that you father taught you right away? The do's and don'ts of working out on the water?

JS: The first thing we learned back in those days was we were—first thing we learned how to do was swim real early.

JW: Okay that makes sense.

JS: We would—we used to have an old shuck house down there at the mouth of the creek, Neal's Creek. And the house was built out over the water?

JW: Is that what they now call Neal's Sound?

JS: Yeah.

JW: Okay.

JS: And they had a long walk that went out. Well you could drive right on it too. That they went out and got the oysters and brought them in off of that when they shucked them right out there?

JW: Is that anywhere near where [Tully's] Store is now?

JS: Yeah. Then anyway when they did that why a bunch of us used to go down there and swim. The older ones would be out there swimming sometimes and we'd steal out there and look, watch them. And first thing you knew they're on that walk and one of them two of them would steal around behind and catch us out there so we couldn't go back on. Of course in those days couldn't nobody see out there and we used to go in the nude swimming. So when they stole out on us and they got us out there at the end of the wharf we dove off and swam in. Because all you could at that time you could dive right in the water. Jump in the water off the end of that pier and even only have to go about seven or eight feet back up under that place and you'd be right back in shallow water. So—

JW: Was the water clean then at that point?

JS: Oh yeah, yeah the water wasn't polluted at all.

JW: What kind of a bottom? Mucky, hard, gravel?

JS: Well back in there it was hard bottom. Shells underneath of that thing but the shells had been dumped there. They would tell you you can jump over. Take your clothes off and jump over or you want us to throw you over. So you didn't have any choice. I jumped over myself right there'd be two of them out there one on each side when you jumped in the water.

JW: Probably some of them were relatives huh?

JS: Oh yeah. Older brothers [inaudible]. And they would—they would be there to catch us if we couldn't swim. But we'd all be paddling around a little bit before anyhow when they jumped over that.

JW: In all those years out on the water did you ever have to swim for your life?

JS: Well yeah. Well to tell you the truth this is something else. When I was real young, small, and couldn't swim, didn't know to swim, I could float. I remember one time I—

JW: You just found it out by yourself or did someone?

JS: No I fell overboard off of the [wood] pier down there. That's to say where the—

JW: Right at Rock Point?

JS: At Rock Point they used to have a big pole in the at the end on the wharf where they used to, had a [rotten] and tackle on it. And they had—they would hoist the barrels of crabs out of the boat up on the pier or the oysters either one, tubs of oysters. And I had it—it was tied. One end of it was tied so you could swing out on that thing over the water and come on back. So I was there one day and I swung out on it. I swung out and I slipped and I couldn't swim a stroke then and I was floating. When the [inaudible fellows was out] there buying my father was sent inside the warehouse icing down fish. In those days we sent all of our freight in those days was shipped by steam boat running from Baltimore to Washington.

JW: How old do you think you were at that moment?

JS: I couldn't have been much over eight, nine years old at the most.

JW: So we're talking about World War I period?

JS: Yeah. And when I— Well I tell you he went back in [Popo] went back in and got my father. He said, told him, he said, "Mr. Stine Jody is floating [around out there]." And he come out there and got me.

JW: Did they call you [Jody] even then?

JS: Yeah.

JW: So did they fish you out?

JS: Yeah my father come out there and got me, pulled me in.

JW: That must have been fun swinging around on that thing.

JS: It was I mean you could swing all—

JW: If you didn't fall off that would've been fun. How big was this warehouse operation? Was it a shucking?

JS: It was a warehouse that they stored anything in it in those days they used to—

JW: Who owned tobacco?

JS: It was owned by Lancaster's.

JW: Of course.

JS: And they had—they used to ship tobacco on the steamboat and put in them in great big houses. [What they called hot heads inaudible]. Packed in advance, send them on, roll them up on that, on that—

JW: And these were rolled up a gang plank by hand?

JS: By hand.

JW: And they weighed six to nine hundred pounds each.

JS: Yeah, yeah. And—

JW: How many men normally would it take?

JS: It didn't take too many two or three of them would roll it up on there on the board—

JW: And they didn't let it slip back on them very often did they?

JS: No, no, well they—one thing they always had one of them would be pushing something and they'd have a block—

JW: A block? Okay.

JS: For the [inaudible phrase] started to slip and they'd [plop] it on there and hold it.

JW: Where were—where did they load these ships? On the side, over the bow, over the stern?

JS: On the side.

JW: On the side. Do you remember the names of some of these steamers?

JS: Oh yes. The *Northumberland* was one.

JW: The *Northumberland*.

JS: And would you believe it now I saw that boat in England during the war.

JW: You're kidding.

JS: When I went over.

JW: How the heck did it get across the Atlantic?

JS: They...[go] across that somehow or another. And I say [inaudible]. One of them's name was *Dorchester* [two and three I guess on one side up there]. Of course and then they had what they called the Norfolk boat that would come in up from Norfolk.

JW: That was larger than the others?

JS: That was much larger.

JW: Yeah that was almost an ocean going size wasn't it?

JS: Yeah it was.

JW: I remember seeing that myself 30 years ago on its last run.

JS: Yeah when I went over—when I went overseas I went over on the *Queen Elizabeth*.

JW: Oh did you?

JS: She at that time she was a—the *Queen Elizabeth* was the second largest ship in the world at that time. The *Queen Mary* was a little bit larger and faster. They were so fast that the battle ships couldn't keep up with them so they—

JW: They didn't mess around with a convoy did they?

JS: No they couldn't—

JW: Just opened it up what 28, 32 knots?

JS: They opened it up and zig-zagged all the way cross the ocean.

JW: When I went over it was in a small convoy you know 12 knots. Sitting ducks.

JS: Yeah, yeah.

JW: It would take a good torpedo man to hit a ship doing over 25 knots wouldn't it?

JS: Oh yeah. Well at that time I think they claimed at that time it took them eight minutes to get a torpedo set on a target. I think at that time. I think that's what they claimed. That's the reason they zig-zagged all the way across the ocean. They went so fast a convoy couldn't keep up with

it. In fact the *Queen Mary* went across and one of them got in front of her and, one of the battle ships, and she cut it in half.

JW: Oh no.

JS: And the sad part bout was they wouldn't stop.

JW: They couldn't, could they?

JS: They couldn't stop to pick them up. Of course they put them—

JW: What did they get a destroyer?

JS: Yeah. [Inaudible phrase].

JW: So I suppose when you were growing up in Rock Point you never figured you'd get to travel first class to Europe like that did you?

JS: No I didn't. No I didn't. They claimed I think and you know if they ran straight across they could make it in three days.

JW: Were you still with the 29th division?

JS: Yeah.

JW: You went back and you finished training with them?

JS: Yeah.

JW: Did you hit the beaches at Normandy with them?

JS: Utah.

JW: Utah and you're still alive to talk about it?

JS: Yep. Utah beach.

JW: Were you hurt at any time?

JS: No I was lucky. And—

JW: Yeah there were a few didn't—

JS: And what kind of what made me feel bad was when we were going in before we got to the beach was I think the tide over there would fall about seven feet or more so we when we were going in I looked and there were three aviators that had been shot down floating on the water.

JW: What nationality did you know?

JS: No they were dead, they killed—

JW: I mean were they American, British—

JS: No they were Americans. Yeah. And I say when we went in we were supposed to have the air force bombing right in front of us. But the beach when we went in Utah lot it was foggy. That entire beach that we went in and they instead of going there they docked down a little farther and went on and bombed. When the British went in it.

JW: Did you cross—what sort of a vessel were you crossing the channel? What took you to the beach from England?

JS: From England we went in the LST.

JW: Okay.

JS: It had—well we had no trucks see. I was [in the] quarter master. We had our trucks and tanks on it and they just ran up to the beach and we sat there until the tide fell.

JW: And they dropped the ramp?

JS: Dropped the ramps and we ran off.

JW: Did you while crossing the channel did you pass close to any US Navy gunfire support vessels? Do you remember?

JS: Oh yeah. Oh yeah [inaudible phrase] powerful—

JW: What were they? Was the *Texas* was there.

JS: We had a couple of them there along and then things could—you talking about shooting. They turned [broad side] when they shot and it would shove them back the tide.

JW: Tear your ears up too.

JS: Yeah, yeah and they were, you talk about [shooting and they could shoot too] we had two artillery outfits with us and when they first got there [and the little old]—

JW: Attached to the division?

JS: Yeah.

JW: Okay.

JS: And too they had a little old Piper Cubs would run over, fly over the Germans and call—

JW: Spotters.

JS: Spotters yeah and they'd call in the coordinates and where the guns was at. When they called it in blam just like that they wiped that place out. They could drop them right in. They could drop that—I believe they could drop a bomb right in a water bucket. They were really some kind of good. They started shooting at the Cubs at first and when they found out what was happening,

they were knocking them out, so that they wouldn't that Cub could fly over it all day long and they wouldn't shoot at it anymore. They got scared of it. Course then the—

JW: The Germans now you're talking?

JS: Yeah the Germans were afraid to shoot at it. And they had a whole bomb—what's called was a buzz bomb they had. [I think it was slate the Germans were]. [I think most people were] I believe. And they had this old buzz bomb and that thing was, you talking about a noise, it would make all kinds of noise coming across. You could hear it and but they never could get it—you couldn't guide it too well. So it would land all of them—I never did hear one of them landing where any people was at. They always landing way out in the open space. But that thing kept a noise. It was a terrible noise.

JW: So what was life like for you Jody until World War II? Was it pretty much the same thing season after season?

JS: Yeah.

JW: How much of your income as a young man came from your water work?

JS: Well all of it really.

JW: Okay. So you were a full time professional waterman between about 1927 and 1941?

JS: Yeah except I went to—fish hatching, used to have fish hatching. I worked in it for several years.

JW: Where was that?

JS: It was at Bryans Point at first. Up there they used to hatch out—

JW: Bryans Point up by Accokeek? Okay.

JS: Yeah [just a remarkable]—

JW: Bryans Point Road.

JS: Yeah and we had a hatchery there and we hatched out yellow perch and shad. Big old, you know, the big type shad. Big [run] shad, [buck] shad.

JW: Where did your paycheck come from? State?

JS: Government, state government.

JW: Okay. Jobs hard to come by were they when you were coming along?

JS: Oh yeah, yeah, very. We didn't—we actually the Stine's just about ran that. All of the Stine brothers worked in that. [They did some come from one day had]—once we had one fellow come over there from Virginia. And he's kind of lazy so he didn't stay there very long.

JW: This was at the hatchery?

JS: At the hatchery yeah. Yeah we got rid of him in a hurry. And we had I remember I first went there I was to—went in the boiler room. I had the boiler room that day to pump the water. Had a big storage tank up on top of the hill and we pumped the water up into that to come back down into the hatchery.

JW: Gravity feed.

JS: Yeah and [inaudible] Virginia [boy who when he got letting off he say you had it harden] a place in the little bin in there and the boiler right in the boiler room that you we'd go out and all you had to do was take wheelbarrow and go out and get a wheelbarrow full of coal and dump it in there and you would have enough to last you till you went off. In other words, when you went off we always—when you got letting off you'd fill that bin up with coal so the next person come on didn't have to go out anymore until the end of the shift. And that fellow he never would. He wouldn't. He would burn that coal and leave it went off of his shift and not put any back in there. So we weren't long getting rid of him either. [Well that was interesting you know inaudible].

JW: What sort of a boat did your father own? Going as far back as your memory will take you.

JS: First—

JW: Who made it, how big was it, how was it powered?

JS: The first one that he owned was a sail boat, little sail boat. It was I would say about 20 feet long. And he had a sail they put up on that and go out on the [bar].

JW: What sort of beam did that have? Seven, eight feet?

JS: Oh yeah, yeah about eight feet. And when [of course] and when the wind isn't blowing enough to sail out there we had one old big real big oar. I think that was about 14 feet long that you could put in back of it and scull it.

JW: Oh yeah just move it back and forth and inch the boat along sort of zig zag.

JS: Mhm and you could get out—

JW: What got your father into oystering in the first place?

JS: Well—

JW: His father hadn't been a watermen. What forced [Yuck] Stine to go out on the water to make a living?

JS: Well I guess when he got married he moved down there and I think that's what happened. He went to work on the water for us. He did and another time in the later years he bought a, him and his brother then, bought a what you call a dredge boat that was about 70 feet long and went by sail too but you could put dredges on it and dredge the oysters up with that.

JW: That went under sail? That was sail power?

JS: Yeah, yeah. Had a one big sail on it. And then what we call a jib run down from the same mast that the sail, back sail was on, would run down to the bow. What they call they had a bowsprit on the bow.

JW: So it had a single mast?

JS: Had a single mast.

JW: Pretty much amidships and the bowsprit, jib, and mainsail.

JS: Yeah. And of course he dredged that and of course and then he had [with that] when he got home sometimes he'd take the, would take the boat, rowboat, he always trailed a dingy behind the boat and called it dinky. Just a little boat.

JW: Just pulled along with a line?

JS: Yeah towed behind it. And he and they would take that and when he got home he'd take that dredge and row it out, skull it out from the boat and drop it overboard in the river and then once they had the [winders] on the boat then that pulled it in and they would wind that dredge back in and they would catch oysters like that. Going—

JW: And that was legal then?

JS: Oh yeah. Yeah that legal in the Potomac River only.

JW: What was the dredge itself made of? Metal, wood?

JS: Metal. It's all metal steel.

JW: All metal. Pretty heavy stuff?

JS: Yeah it had a [bar] about like that.

JW: That's three feet long.

JS: Yeah about that thick.

JW: Inch in diameter.

JS: A little better maybe. And then they had the teeth about that wide apart. Like a rake.

JW: Yeah a big rake.

JS: Coming down—

JW: Was it tines curved or straight?

JS: No they were straight. Straight down.

JW: Straight down like that?

JS: From the bar.

JW: But they were this shape?

JS: Yeah.

JW: Sort of hooked.

JS: No they were coming straight down.

JW: Straight oh okay.

JS: From the bar.

JW: Oh okay.

JS: And you could pull that along like that. Of course they did sometimes need two men had a little—later years they had a small boat. I mean a boat behind them would have a small motor into it and they would push the boat with that and dredge some.

JW: Now how did you raise the oysters up? When you've got this dredge mechanism full of oysters you had some real weight in there.

JS: Well they had a winder.

JW: Okay. Mechanical? Like a reel type thing but mounted horizontally?

JS: Yeah.

JW: With a handle on it?

JS: There was a—you had a rope running from that from the motor back to where the, my father would be was set steering the boat, sail boat, and he pulled that rope and that started that motor up. And it [runned] pulled that dredge up on the boat.

JW: So the boat was not engine powered but he had an engine to bring to drag in the dredge?

JS: Dragged the dredge in yeah.

JW: Otherwise a man could do it?

JS: Not very easily. You could, two I mean, men could do it too because I—

JW: Two strong men could've pulled it out?

JS: Not that one itself but a smaller one.

JW: Okay alright.

JS: We used to have a—I used to go down there and do it at night in the motor boat. And we had two dredges on it. One of them was I think nine teeth into it and the other—

JW: How long would that be?

JS: That one would be about like that. And then there was a one on the opposite side. The one on the opposite side was about that long. What would happen my one of my buddy's and I and well there was two buddy's. One of them was real close to me.

JW: What was his name?

JS: Morris.

JW: Morris?

JS: May's husband.

JW: Oh.

JS: He was and he—

JW: Simms.

JS: Morris Simms.

JW: Morris Simms right okay.

JS: He and I were really close buddy's. We worked together a long time.

JW: He's gone now isn't he?

JS: Yeah, yeah. He was a real nice boy I tell you that. And we pulled it by hand [that man would but the half were doing—we'd] run with motor boat till it got [inaudible phrase]. Two of us would get on the [Morris and I.] I was running the boat and I'd go up and help Morris to pull the big one up first and the other boy working with us was named John Harrison. And he would pull the light one up, smaller one up. And by the time we'd pulled the large one up Morris and I and dumped it. John Harrison would have the other one pulled up to the side of the boat. So I'd jump over there and help him to dump the boat and then we towed the drudges back and go on drudge again.

JW: How much weight would you have in the heavy one? The big one.

JS: Several hundred pounds.

JW: Three, four hundred pounds?

JS: Yeah.

JW: How much in the light dredge?

JS: The light one would have about half of that.

JW: So it'd take a good man to handle either one of them.

JS: Yeah oh yeah.

JW: Was this hard on your hands? Did you wear gloves while doing that kind of work?

JS: Yeah, yeah we had gloves on.

JW: How much did you weigh in those days?

[Tape Interruption]

JW: One of your contemporaries or peers, someone that you were actually born and raised with, your first Cousin Harvey and they called him [Shane]. How close are you in age?

JS: Not too much difference in age. Not too much difference. How old [inaudible phrase].

JW: You went to school together?

JS: Yeah.

JW: Went to church together?

JS: Yeah.

JW: Now were the Stine's a Catholic family for the most part?

JS: Oh yeah.

JW: Okay so you went to what's the name of the catholic church here at Rock Point now?

JS: Francis de Sales.

JW: Francis de Sales. Okay so you and Shane grew up together. How much time did you spend out on the river together working?

JS: Oh we went oystering together for a long time. We oystered.

JW: You were first cousins.

JS: Yeah.

JW: You got along pretty good like brothers?

JS: Yeah oh yeah, yeah we never had a problem. Never had a problem.

JW: Did you have any kind of rough experiences together out there working with the weather? Or running into people who were hard to get along with from Virginia? Do you remember some experiences you had that you kind of wish you could've gotten along without?

JS: Not really too bad. I mean people, we never had no problem with people from Virginia or nothing. Course they used to go out there from Virginia—they started dredging first at night and—

JW: In Maryland waters huh?

JS: Yeah but uh I mean the [world was there's] too. I mean the Potomac River is supposed to Maryland's but I never did think it that way. I always figured they had as much right out there as we did even though it was Maryland waters. But I remember one time we were—we used to go out there and dredge at night. And we were out there dredging this one night and the moon shined just as bright as day and one of the boats that my cousin—we usually tried to dredge close together so we could see each other you know. And if another boat came from another direction well we would get away from there and get away in a hurry. So this one particular time we were dredging there and one of the boats had—

JW: Were you in the Wicomico or out in the—

JS: The Potomac.

JW: The Potomac.

JS: Yeah. And this was happening on and we were at Swan Point that time and this one boat had drifted. Had gotten down a long ways away from us and we didn't miss it but all at once we looked down there and after you got down there and he decides to come back. And moon shined bright as day I mean you could see boats a long ways off—

JW: Were most of the boats painted white?

JS: Yeah the majority of them were. And this boat that had went way down there next thing you—instead of coming back up slowly after it got way down there he opened that thing up and come up there. Coming up running toward us and boy you talk about getting away from that everything started running. And after we got away from him far enough then somebody seen he turned sideways so he could see whose boat it was and—

JW: You weren't sure who it was? [When he came back wide open].

JS: No we thought it was police [who were sleeping]. Wide open we were thinking it was police—

JW: Lots of noise and lots of water.

JS: Yeah so and don't you think when we found out who it was we went back to him and—

JW: Tore him up a little bit?

JS: We told him if he ever did that again we were gonna sink him.

JW: Where was he from? Someone you knew?

JS: No he was from Virginia. But he just wasn't thinking you know. He got down there and he coming back that fast.

JW: So at this point dredging was not legal?

JS: No, no.

JW: Okay what the heck would they have done to you? What if the Maryland police caught you in the act?

JS: Well they could put a big fine on you and take your boat away from you.

JW: And did they do this once in a while?

JS: No.

JW: How hard were they?

JS: They weren't that bad on us. I know, remember one time I was out there dredging in the day time right out of Carrico's Creek and I mean I swear I kept my boat at night so I went out there in the day time. I looked and here comes a Virginia police boat [come a sail] and he's got a big boat and I'd open the whole thing open, wide open, of course at that time we were having a little problem with the gas too. It would get water and have a little water or something into it.

JW: What year are we talking about roughly?

JS: This I would say was in I don't know...

JW: Before World War II?

JS: No I think this was after. And this police boat was coming at and I the motor cut off on me from water into to it and the [inaudible phrase]. Bang, bang, bang and the funny part of it was when my boat cut off he cut his motor off too. He didn't want to catch me. And I been on it and accidentally [feed line that sand] and get it cleared out and would take off again. And I did that I'm not sure half a dozen times before I got close to the creek where I had—I had the creek up there at Cuckold's Creek it didn't have any channel in it then. It was just a nice place where the tide cut it out a little bit not too much on either side of that—

JW: How much water did you need?

JS: Well it was enough for us to go in there but you. If you missed the channel you'd run right up into about that much water. And you'd run ashore. So we were going in there and course once you started in there you didn't have any problem with police boat coming at you no how anyway because they were scared to go in there because of running aground. So we went in there and after we got in there then he cut off, went on back away but he really didn't you know. He didn't worry about catching us too much.

JW: Did you do most of your dredging at night?

JS: Most of the time we did but that one particular time was in the day time. Course at night when we were dredging at night we could run right on in that little narrow channel with no problem at all. I say Morris and I was together and John Harrison and we kept, there was a colored family living back in the creek there. We put, we bought all the kerosene he could use and give it to him just to keep a light burning all night when we were dredging at night in that window.

JW: Oh he was your light house?

JS: He was our light house.

JW: Did you ever go by the place where Captain [Ray Hayden] made his boats?

JS: Yeah.

JW: [Inaudible].

JS: Mhm.

JW: Did you ever meet him?

JS: Yeah, yeah I know him. Old man.

JW: What sort of a reputation did he have as a boat builder?

JS: He was pretty good. He was a good boat builder.

JW: Was there anybody else down here that built as good a boat as [Ray Hayden]?

JS: Yeah we had a fellow that lived right on Rock Point built boats. That time his name was Price.

JW: Price?

JS: And he could build them strong. Also, [Inaudible] Oliver built some too.

JW: What was his name?

JS: [Inaudible] Oliver.

JW: Oliver okay.

JS: He could build a boat or a house I mean the fastest you ever seen anybody build one. He—they'd start on a house here and the fellow with him and he would have that house built in a week.

JW: For heaven's sakes. Where did he live?

JS: He lived let's see now up there where Carson lived at. I don't think you didn't know him neither. Let's see now, back in there where they used to have.... I think there's a railway back in there now. He lived there and—

JW: On what side of Neal's Sound? This side?

JS: Yeah.

JW: Okay Harry was telling me about a boat builder that was down there by Furbush's house.

JS: Yeah.

JW: What was his name?

JS: Let's see.

JW: Your uncle Ben bought a boat from him.

JS: It was—

JW: Lived right at the end of Furbush Road.

JS: He I think he was a relative.

JW: Was he a Price too?

JS: Price yeah he was a Price.

JW: [Assuming that that was his name]. Did you ever order a boat built for you down here?

JS: I built one myself.

JW: Oh did you?

JS: A skip. What I call a skip. I built one with only let's see about—I think that thing was only 16 feet long. I built it wide in the back and my wife could get in there and set on the side of it and then it wouldn't go down. That side wouldn't go down then. It was I built it that wide that you know it just wouldn't go down. And at that time I only had a five horse power—

JW: So this was after World War II?

JS: Yeah I had five horse power outboard motor.

JW: Inboard?

JS: No outboard.

JW: Outboard oh okay.

JS: And that thing with that five horse power motor would get up and plane right off so she'd just be skimming right across the top of the water. The same as one with 25 horse power on it.

JW: Where were you living at this time?

JS: At Rock Point.

JW: Right at—in what house? Where you were born?

JS: I think let me see now...I think [they were inaudible] at that time. I think so. And that was the only one I ever built. But that thing was—it just wouldn't go down I mean till you put a powerful lot of weight into it.

JW: Was the average waterman before World War II making a better living than the average farmer down here? Do you consider yourself to be a little better off?

JS: There wasn't a whole lot of difference. I know I went farming for a while. And I didn't see a whole lot of difference in it. But I like both of them. I really did. I didn't think there was anything any prettier in the world than planting something on my farm—

JW: You enjoyed turning the ground over—

JS: I enjoyed turning the ground over. And well to begin with back then in those days we had a one horse, little old one horse cultivator. And had mule and you could take that mule and go down the row and work that little old cultivator right in between the plants in and out and down there there was. It used to be—I used to love to do that and set that—

JW: Where was—where was the farm? Did you own it?

JS: No. No. I—

JW: Close to Rock Point?

JS: No.

OS: [Inaudible phrase] did you know [Inaudible name]?

JW: Yeah, yeah.

OS: He's the one that used to [inaudible phrase] drive down, down that way. [Inaudible sentence]. [Inaudible name] [was the one that used to go see that]. [Inaudible sentence].

JW: From his place at Chapel Point.

JS: Yeah.

OS: [Inaudible phrase].

JS: He I guarantee you one thing. He come down and you would eat or he'd jump right down on the table.

JW: [He liked that]?

JS: Oh yeah. He was a nice fellow.

JW: What how long has it been since you put in a full season on the water?

JS: Well not too long.

JW: You still go out once in a while?

JS: Oh yeah, yeah. I go out there [when its]—

JW: Who's your crew now?

JS: I have to most of the time I go out now I go out and my son will go down there with me sometimes. Son we go down oystering. I can't see well enough to cull the oysters but I can still tong.

JW: You can still tong?

JS: Yeah.

JW: You stand in the boat or up on the rail?

JS: Well now the boat I work in we don't have any washboard on it so I just stand inside.

JW: So you're in the boat. And you can still haul up as much as you ever could?

JS: Well not quite.

JW: Tire a little quicker?

JS: No I have to take my time. See I have emphysema and that really works on you.

JW: Is your cousin [Shane] still going out there once in a while?

JS: No I don't think [he] goes out at all anymore. I don't think he does. He had a lot of crab pots but he [inaudible] but I think Elmer his brother fishes them. He just gets on [with them now and fishes them].

JW: Where did you get most of your oysters? What were the richest bars?

JS: Well I would say, [Starter's bar] up at the head of the river yeah. I know—

JW: What's the name of the bar?

JS: [Starter's].

JW: [Starter's] bar?

JS: Mhm. And I've been up there when they were really plentiful up there.

JW: About is that off the mouth of Dolly Boarman Creek or even up—

JS: Up farther yeah.

JW: Up beyond that near West Hatton?

JS: Mhm.

JW: Okay.

JS: We I remember one time that place was just full of oysters and I was culling at the time. I was always good culler and—

JW: What made you a good culler?

JS: Well I started off at it and there was one thing I always did when I was culling. I've never been arrested for catching little oysters. I mean and I could—when I was culling there was plenty of oysters. A lot of them I know [when started far out there] I seen them they would come aboard them and arrest 15, 20 boats up there a day on there. And they, he would, the inspector would come alongside me and get down there. He'd dig down in that pile and dig down in there and they'd dig up big hole in there. Of course they had a—the measurement was made out of a steel. Piece of steel about like that there with a handle on the end of it and the open out near the end. He would dig down in there with that thing and he couldn't find one in there in my pile of oysters.

JW: He couldn't find one under three inches?

JS: He couldn't find one under three inches. He did that and he was arresting them 10, 15 boats a day there and he came back and kept coming back for two weeks and that's time he culled down in. I mean he'd dig way down into them too and he dug way down in there and he found one that was just under the law but what had happened was the bill had broke off of that oyster and [inaudible] and he found that and he threw it up on [inaudible] that day and bust out laughing. Said, "I knew damn well I was gonna get one one of these days." I said, "Yeah but you didn't get but one." And he said, "You won't have any more problems out of me." But what I was doing. The rest of them down there the ones that was getting arrested they were trying to catch every one of them that was put up there on that board. And they would measure a lot of them and some of the times they'd slip in on them [inaudible]. But I didn't do that. Instead of doing that I didn't pick up anything but oysters I knew was plenty big because that was—

JW: So you had a good eye for it?

JS: Well not only that but what I was doing I wasn't taking any chances. Why fool with the small oysters measuring it—

JW: You were still getting a good catch?

JS: When I could take up—I was catching more oysters than the other ones were because I wasn't fooling with that thing at all. [Inaudible] I was had my hands going like that and I was just

throwing nothing but the big oysters in there. And finally when he got that one he said, "Now you can rest in peace. I'm not gonna bother you anymore." He says, "I know that you're not catching no small oysters."

JW: What was a good catch for you in those days? What time are we talking about? After World War II?

JS: Well yeah. I always, I said we caught them, had lot of oysters in that boat before and after. But we were always you know like I say I didn't fool with that measurement so you were losing time when you fool with measuring the oysters.

JW: You were really losing every way. Time and money

JS: That's right and I was beating it so I didn't have to fool with it. He saw that I was trying to catch none.

JW: What was a good catch for you? How many bushels?

JS: We have caught 80, 90 bushels a day.

JW: 80 bushels a day. And how many of you working the boat?

JS: Three.

JW: Three of you.

JS: I had—I had one [inaudible phrase] talking about that Elmer. I had when I was young Elmer was working with me. Elmer would just cull. When he—

JW: Who's Elmer now?

JS: Elmer Stine. He's [Shane's] brother.

JW: Oh I see okay.

JS: And that boy could cull an oyster. And I've had him culling for me out there. And like I say I was always fast, could catch a lot of oysters. And he and I have caught as many oysters in a day as three men in a boat right along. But he was a good culler and I like I say was a good tonger. And old Billy, Billy Rice, he had been out with us sometimes. [Inaudible] he don't know what happened to him [inaudible] but he can still catch oysters even as old as he is.

JW: How old is he?

JS: Billy Rice he's a youngster.

JW: Oh yeah I've already interviewed him. That's right.

JS: Yeah.

JW: Are you a member of the Watermen's Association now?

JS: Not really anymore. I don't go to meetings anymore. I used to but I don't bother with it too much. Once in a great while I'll go to a meeting but not very often.

JW: Who are some of the oldest still active oystermen? Like yourself and [Shane] sort of keeps in touch with things. Who else is still out there?

JS: Well I doubt if there's any more out there close to my age. Most of them now are younger.

JW: How often did your wife go out with you?

JS: Oh I don't think she—I believe she might have gone out that one time to catch [inaudible] or something other. Her and my cousin and I think my wife and her sister. [Inaudible]—

OS: [Inaudible] one time.

JS: One time wasn't it? You went out there.

JW: Did you kind of enjoy going out there once in a while on the water?

OS: Yeah [it was inaudible].

JW: That's good okay.

JS: She don't care too much for the water though.

JW: Ah, you good at shucking?

OS: Oh I can shuck from here.

JS: Yes she can shuck them.

JW: Without cutting all your fingers off huh? That takes some doing. It's not as easy as it looks.

JS: Well what she does most times though is take my oysters and put—dip them in hot water—get them in hot water there. She can open them easier that way.

OS: Easier to shuck them.

JS: Easier to shuck just dip them in hot water and they a whole lots easier to shuck.

JW: Just good hot—doesn't have to be boiling?

JS: No, no just real hot water.

JW: Okay what was the minimum equipment that you felt you had to have when you were a young man starting out? Say you were 18 to 20 making a little money. Starting with the boat, what would you have had to pay for a decent boat about 1930 to 35 that would've done the job for you?

JS: I don't really remember too much but let's see I bought several boats too but I had one. Let's see I bought one. I went and bought it—what was that place we went and bought they got that

boat [from]? [John] got it one, bought that one for 600 dollars. It was a used boat but I think that—

JW: Wood?

JS: Oh yeah all wood and had a...oh gosh a marine into it too. And [went there] [inaudible] actually dealt some with us. And run it down the bay and all down into Wicomico. We kind of—I bought that went up there and got that boat and I got gas for it. An extra tank, cans of gas and everything. And I run it all the way down the Bay. Down and come in the Potomac and come on in to Wicomico when the—when I got down to—

JW: How long—how long did it take you? That's a pretty good size trip.

JS: Yeah. I think...I don't quite remember now.

JW: Most of a day?

JS: Yeah it was I think it was Sunday when I was coming in. It wasn't so extra-long but anyway. That's time I got to the mouth of the Wicomico River I'd poured all the gas in and had the last of it in the tank and she started spitting. [Messing] that's coming in where the light's at coming in the Wicomico River so—

JW: That was the old [cop bar] light?

JS: Yeah. But we had the...John was a friend of mine and he got over the tank was on one side and he got over on the side that tank was in and so the last of it was drained down and out toward the bow of the boat and we did just made it in the creek and that was all. In Neal's Creek.

JW: Where were you keeping that boat? The near where Shymansky's is now near the bridge?

JS: I kept that where my cousin was living. My cousins living now really. Her sister's husband. Used to keep it tied up at his pier there.

JW: That's right on Neal's Sound?

JS: Uh-huh in Neal's Sound.

JW: This Chrysler Marine engine was it a V-8 or 6?

JS: This was a 6 in that.

JW: 6 okay.

JS: And—

JW: Proper water jacket designed for salt water use?

JS: Yeah and then later I bought one.... I bought one I believe I got that one from my son in law. That one was 39, 39 feet long with the Chrysler Marine into it and that thing was good.

JW: Was that designed for oystering?

JS: Yeah, yeah. Yeah it had a [pilot house] on it and stood up in front and stared and then a short—had a short cabin. Not cabin but a [short top] running back from where the cabin is. From back where you—not too far and so you could—

JW: Was this equipped so you could stay out overnight if you wanted to?

JS: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah.

JW: Way of cooking food and maybe taking a nap?

JS: Yeah, yeah [I knew].

JW: For what a crew of four?

JS: Well uh the three of us at a time. Of course unless it was in the summer time when we were hauling seine. We would go out and stay until oh a couple or so days until. We had a cook stove on it wood burning wood and they used to we used to make what we used to call a [honky-ponk]. Make dough up and put it in the little tin pie plates you know you used to see and put it in that and put it. And bake the whole thing and we cooked—

JW: What did you use ordinary flour or?

JS: Oh, oh yeah, yeah. We used ordinary flour and we I say we put in that. We used to cook one of those for each man. Of course when we were hauling seine we usually had six men then and then we'd cook one of them and throw an extra one in there sometimes, most of the time too, in case somebody wanted more than that. But when you ate one of them things you done ate something.

JW: Did you add anything to it like any meat or vegetable? Or was it all bread?

JS: That was bread. That was just cooking bread. We baked the bread. Course we ate a lot of fish because watermen, most watermen like big fish and there's altogether a difference in the taste of fish caught fresh right out of the water than is after—

JW: What was your favorite fish for eating out there?

JS: Well we liked rock fish. We used—back in those days you could catch rock about like that then were legal.

JW: Eight inches or seven.

JS: Yeah.

JW: Pan size.

JS: Yeah pan size. They were good. Course then we would sometimes cook catfish. Make a stew out of them. They were good.

JW: How about shad? Did you see some good shad fishing in your lifetime?

JS: Yeah but the shad it seemed like that once they—I told you about the hatchery. But once they did away with that hatchery they moved it over into Virginia and I think it lasted about a year and I think that ended it over there. They didn't know how to run it. But they were really good I thought shad must've been shad when you caught those. There used to be a lot of them too when we were hatching them you know in the hatchery.

JW: But they needed that hatchery huh?

JS: After that hatchery we weren't long getting rid of the shad. We were eager to see one then I think now but not like then. You could—I know—we had a little old [piece a]. When I was in the hatchery had a little old piece of gill net there. I and an older fellow he was right much older than I was and we used to take that thing little short piece of net and go out there in the river. Put it out and catch shad into it. He was worse than I was. Of course when the shad hits that gill net it'll start bobbing the cork. And we'd run right to that thing. Take that shad out [right].

JW: Oh that was fresh.

JS: Yeah. We'd take it out as soon as we got it. [And roast it].

JW: Where did most of your cash income come from? Crab, oyster, or fish?

JS: Well—

JW: Or did it change from one year to another?

JS: Sometimes it changed but most of the times it was oystering.

JW: That was your big cash crop?

JS: Yeah. That was. You'd get more out of it. I have sold oysters for 25 cents a bushel.

JW: Oh my lord in the what 30's? Depression years?

JS: Yeah in the Depression years and I have sold crabs for a dollar a flour barrel for male crabs and 90 cents for female.

JW: A barrel. How many crabs are we talking about?

JS: But at that time I was catching 14, 15 barrels a day. It was late in the year. I remember I was—we went oystering in those days the 15th day of September. We would go—

JW: That's when you started the middle of September?

JS: Yeah we would start oystering and I oystered. I crabbed the day before and I had made 14 dollars I think from the crabs that day before I went oystering.

JW: And this was good money?

JS: Oh yeah.

JW: This was considered a good income?

JS: Yeah and I went oystering and I made one dollar more the first [day I oystered]. One dollar. 15 dollars a day. But then I had—

JW: How were you—how were you getting the crabs then? Were you making your own pots? Were you using pots—

JS: I wasn't using any pots then.

JW: Okay.

JS: There wasn't any pots. You're using crab line.

JW: Crab line?

JS: Yeah you put a long trot line. In fact I got one now. I got two of them. I go down there in the summer time and I get somebody to go with me to dip the crabs. I can't see how to dip the crabs anymore. But we had a trot line and we made it put bait that with salted eel.

JW: With salted eel? Just a little chunk what?

JS: Like cut a little chunk like that.

JW: Okay about an inch and a half square.

JS: Yeah and—

JW: How and these were regular fish hooks?

JS: No it didn't have any hooks we just used the line. We had—you take the line and twist it around and make a slip body into it.

JW: Okay I see.

JS: Twist that and make a slip body in it and put that piece of bait in it and pull it tight on both ends.

JW: I see okay. Actually the crab provided his own hook didn't he?

JS: Yeah, yeah the crab—

JW: He grabbed the bait and hanged on.

JS: He grabbed the bait and hang on it. We'd go along. We had a roller. [Hang over the side] of the boat and the line would run through that roller.

JW: I see.

JS: And you dipped the crab up if he comes up off of there.

JW: And you removed him by hand? Just take him off?

JS: No, no, no just take the dip net. The dip net.

JW: Oh, oh, oh the dip net.

JS: And the well [inaudible] I've had them come up to that. I've seen them coming up to that they two or three at a time come up as the line was going through that roller and you running down with the motor boat. Running down and you come up through there. And you can see them coming up to grab that bait three of four at a time sometimes. Coming up after that one bait. Then again you wouldn't see them too often but.

JW: How much line did you usually let out?

JS: 10 pounds.

JW: 10 pounds of line?

JS: For one line and most times I had two. I had one of them out—one of them was made out of nylon cord, which is the first one that I got. Was one my nephew had sent me. Only at the time [in the air force]. And he had this nylon [which claims they had it in spools and that it] that it was on [inaudible phrase] that which come down from the parachutes and he parachuted down.

JW: Tough stuff.

JS: Yeah. So that was really tough. Course in the later years they started making it something common too. But for the beginning it was nothing but cotton. And it wouldn't last too long but that nylon lasts or years.

JW: When did crab pots begin to be very important to watermen? During your lifetime do you remember seeing more and more use being made of the crab pot?

JS: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. They got them up there now so quite a few of them are... My son in law has an awful lot, two or three hundred. He's got a—

JW: Does he make his own?

JS: Some of them yeah most of the time they do.

JW: How expensive are they now to buy?

JS: I think they run you something around 10 to 12 dollars apiece if you buy them. But it doesn't cost you too much if you make them. But he's got—he's got them on a line. So he's got on his boat—you know Freddy, Freddy?

JW: Yeah. Right.

JS: Freddy Robertson.

JW: Yeah.

JS: Well he's got a roller that he runs them right over on the boat. Runs the line over [until he got] [inaudible] to the crab pot. He just puts bait in with one hand and dumps crabs out with the other and keeps on going. He catches very many crabs. Course our grandson—one of my grandsons was had been working with him.

JW: I wonder where the average waterman today figures the most profit is? Is it still in oysters

JS: I would say yeah.

JW: Has it always been roughly about the same crabs running just a little bit less as far as incomes concerned to the average waterman?

JS: Well I say it depends you know if you really set up for the crab pots like I say Freddy is why there's not a whole lot of difference. He makes a lot of money into it.

JW: What's the toughest life as far as work is concerned?

JS: Well tonging would have to be the worst. Oystering. But I never did mind I always liked it. Of course after I got the emphysema why I couldn't do too much anymore.

JW: When did you start smoking?

JS: I started smoking when I was 17.

JW: And how old were you when you gave it up?

JS: Not too far back really.

JW: Five years ago about?

JS: A little better than that I guess but....

OS: 20 years.

JW: 20?

JS: I didn't think that—

JW: I just gave it up about five years ago.

JS: Well it's the worst thing that you can do.

JW: Yeah and I got to tell you I enjoyed it.

JS: Yeah well it was—

JW: It was killing us.

JS: Well I was working right hard at the time too. I was smoking three packs a day when I quit.

JW: Not filtered I suppose? What was your favorite brand?

JS: I smoked Lucky Strike's. And no I [won't smoke] filtered cigarette. But I was getting up that time of day. Let's say I would get up at four o'clock in the morning and go down to the river and I'd go out oystering with my cousins and come back in about three—

JW: Which cousin now?

JS: That's Raymond. The one that's married to my wife's sister. And we would come back in about three. I'd come in and eat something and then my wife and sister, my sister, was running the store during the day. And I'd come back and stay in the store 10, 11 o'clock at night and I was smoking too much really. But then I had the heart attack and when I did I quit smoking. And [inaudible phrase] just like that.

JW: Yeah I do too.

JS: And it was worse on me than it would've been on anybody else because I was right here in the store at the time. And I'd be down there they'd come up [or everybody's friends] you know, and they'd come in there and start smoking a cigarette and talk to me and for two years I'd go [deeply inhales] when they'd blow smoke right out.

JW: Inhaling their smoke.

JS: Yeah but I finally got rid of it.

JW: What influenced your decision to come into the store here at Newport? How old were you folks when you took on this?

JS: Well at first I wasn't anxious about it.

JW: Who's idea was it?

JS: This was mine I guess. I don't think my wife, unfortunately I don't believe. Of course she may have I don't know. I don't think so but anyway I figured that I had been well. [Inaudible sentence]. I used to come in here in the evenings sometimes and stay in here or on weekends I'd come in and stay.

JW: Who owned the store before?

JS: John Allen Hubbard.

JW: John Allen Hubbard?

JS: Yeah. And I mean he was the first one. And then he sold it. I stayed in here and I [inaudible phrase] come in and stay. He wanted to go on vacation something and stay a couple weeks or so. Then finally he sold it to Cooksey.

JW: Which Cooksey?

O: Wilmer.

JS: Wilmer Cooksey. And he did [buy it and we'd] come in and help him out. And he got so—he said more than once he said, "If I ever left it while he was in the store, you know stop coming to help him, he was gonna quit."

JW: Was he living here too over the store?

JS: No. He—I was—

OS: He was living in [Inaudible].

JS: Yeah.

JW: Where's that?

OS: [Inaudible phrase].

JW: Oh alright now I know.

JS: Finally I said, "Hey. A long time." He told me said, "Jody," He said, "I'll let you have the store." If you could just pay him for the stock that he had in here and take over the payments he was still paying. Mine from here on out. So I did. Paid him for the stock and then I went on after later years I went on and bought the store.

JW: What year was this that you began managing the store?

JS: I think I've owned that thing about 25 years [inaudible].

JW: What was your last—

OS: We run the store 25 years. [We've been out of it three years]. It would've been...61.

JW: Okay. How old is the building? How long has there been a store here out of this building? Does anybody know?

OS: I don't know.

JS: No I don't think they do.

JW: It's the only commercial establishment left really in Newport.

JS: Yeah it...it is some kind of old—

OS: [Inaudible phrase] a job.

JW: For heaven's sakes.

JS: Yeah and it—

JW: Did you have to do some work up here to make it comfortable for living?

JS: [Inaudible]—

OS: A whole bit.

JS: You know anything [can]—

JW: So this was like a warehouse when you—

OS: Oh yeah.

JS: Just one big room.

JW: Oh boy.

JS: I come in here and I made the rooms. Some my brother helped me a little bit sometimes but I—

JW: What are the dimensions of this building? Length and width roughly?

JS: I think I would say it's got to be at least 80 feet. I would say.

JW: 80 feet long?

JS: Uh-huh.

JW: And what are we looking at in width? 35 feet wide?

JS: Something like that yeah.

JW: There's a lot of living room up here if you can keep it warm in cold weather.

JS: Oh I don't have any problem.

JW: That's great.

JS: I got—I say the first thing I did was [inaudible].

O: With the wind blowing.

JW: Yeah.

OS: [Inaudible phrase].

[Tape Ends]