

Fishtales, Sunday September 29, 2013
Working Waterfront Festival

Interviewer – Markham Starr
Interviewee – George Edwards Jr.

MS Ok So what is your name sir?

GE My name's George Edwards Jr.

MS Are you from New Bedford?

GE No I live in Mattapoisett. I was born in New Bedford and we moved out of here in oh I don't know I was in third grade or so I guess yeah.

MS And was your family in fishing?

GE Both sides. My mother's family and my father's family they were all commercial fishermen.

MS And did you go into fishing?

GE I used to do it summers 'cause the stuff I wanted, he says if you want it, you come fishing. And I, that's why I'm not a fisherman. [laughs]

MS Alright. And you had a story about your father.

GE Yeah. He was thirty-six, probably about thirty-six years old and he used to run a boat called the Deep Water, was skipper of it. And they were a hundred and fifty miles southeast of Nantucket Lightship. And they got hit with a wave that pushed 'em under, hit the engine and then they got hit with another one. And it busted everything up. And, in fact, the fellow in the pilot house got washed down, down the companionway, down in the engine room. The plates lifted up with all the water and they slammed down on him. There was nobody hurt bad. They found him five days later, they had given up the search, 'cause I remember Russians at that time were fishing off and the trawler had turned a Russian trawler had heard his SOS call and turned to try and go save him and their load shifted and they were in trouble. And they found him 75 miles off of Norfolk Virginia driftin'. The airplane, somebody out of Norfolk, some Coast Guard airplane flyin' their route come right over the mast. Their little wooden pews had a message in it with a cork and a big orange flag, I still got it home. They were droppin' out of the airplane and it said if anybody's hurt, put two men on deck, lay two men down on deck. if nobody's hurt, put one. I've still got that thing home somewhere. I don't know where. But I've got it home.

MS Wow!

GE It's pretty neat, yeah. But my mother's side, they were all from Newfoundland, Canada. She came here when she was 14. They packed, Bruce's Rigging down here. That's my cousin. That's his whole family, all, all fishermen. And he was still attached to the fishin' industry, you know?

MS So what happened with your father when they found him?

GE They dropped it. They called a, The Tamarora, I think was the name of the Coast Guard cutter that went to get 'em. And they towed 'em to Quick's Hole and then a smaller one went out and they towed 'em to Union Pier over the MacLean's Dock in Fairhaven and we were all waitin' for 'em to get in. It was pretty cool. The unsinkable Deep Water Boys it said in the Standard Times, yeah. It was pretty neat.

MS And then what, could you tell the part you told us out there?

GE What's that?

MS With readin' the paper?

GE Oh about the paper, yeah. Truman Taylor from the Channel Six News used to do the news broadcast. He'd come down out of the paper and said here George, handed it to me opened it up, saw his picture in the obituaries went "Not Yet" put it in his pocket and walked away. It was pretty cool, yup.

MS Do you remember your mother's reaction when she heard, first heard he might be gone.

GE Ohh. And her two brothers who were both fishermen kept telling her he's like a bad penny, he'll keep coming back. He ain't gone. It was pretty cool. You know he had friends that were run down with steamers and you know freighters and all...

MS So how long did he fish after that? Did he continue?

GE Till he was 68-69. Then he retired and became a professional witness for all these marine lawyers that do all these cases and all. He was having a ball until he died. But it was pretty neat. It's just I couldn't believe it when my wife says, look at that, you know, pretty cool.

MS Well great. Thank you. We appreciate you telling us.

GE Thank you.

MS That's great. That's a neat story too.