

Name of narrators: Hinton Arnsdorff (HA) and Traci Arnsdorff (TA)

Interviewer: Amber Chulawat (AC) and Sierra Sutton (SS) with the permission of Hinton and Traci Arnsdorff for the research project “Boat Stories”

Primary Investigator: Dr. Jennifer Sweeney Tookes, Georgia Southern University.

Transcriber: Amber Chulawat

Others present: Their 12-year-old son was occasionally in the room for the second part of the interview.

Date of Interview: November 12, 2021

Location of Interview: The UGA Marine Extension in Brunswick, Georgia

Duration of the interview: One hour and nineteen minutes. (1:19:00)

Repository for the recording: The audio recording will be uploaded to the website, Voices from the Fisheries (<https://voices.nmfs.noaa.gov/>)

Context for the Interview: Student interviewers sit down with Hinton and Traci Arnsdorff, a married couple.

General Description of Contents: The interview focuses on stories told by Hinton Arnsdorff involving the many boats he has been on in his life. He discusses his life and the many skills he acquired through shrimping. His wife joins in for the second half of the interview and discusses more stories and how shrimping impacted both of their lives. They talk about how they own an at home shrimping business where they catch and sell the shrimp they catch. Though Hinton does not shrimp frequently he still expresses the love he has for it.

SS: Okay, so this is an interview, what is your name again, sir? Can I get your name again sir?

HA: I can't you hardly hear you.

[laughter]

AC: You're fine! Can you just say your name for us?

HA: Hinton Arnsdorff!

AC: Arlighty! Thank you so much.

SS: On November 12, 2021 The interview is being conducted in Brunswick, Georgia. It is a part of the research project and interview collection titled Boat Stories. The interviewers are Sierra Sutton and Amber Chulawat.

AC: It nice to meet you! So, to start off, could you just tell us a little bit about your boat, your current boat, or previous boats that you've had?

HA: Have had a good many, run a good many. Uh, start with we had a little boat I think I was about 15 years old. Its name, it was the Bunny B. It was a 40-foot boat run it about two years and we sold it. Got the West Wind and I'd mostly run boats after that and I run the Grey Ghost and that's the boat I got now. I've had it I think 20 something years now. Oh let me think now, but I've read a lot of different boats if you don't recall some more names.

AC: We would love to hear all your boats.

HA: The Notre Dame, it sunk off of Saint Katherines. Ms. Kim it sunk- we sank it off of Key West. You know, sunk boat. What else?

AC: Too many to name?

HA: The name of the boat?

AC: How many did you have in total?

HA: Oh god, I can't even count them.

AC: That's fine!

HA: I used to- I'd run a boat until I'd get tired of it. Miss Kim, uh, Misty Dawn. That was my brother's boat, I ran that for a while. I should've wrote them all down when they were on my mind.

AC: Did you have a favorite boat among these ones?

0:02.55

HA: Yeah, like the Gray Ghost 'bout best, well the Gray Ghost was kind of an old boat. -It's just the way the boat handled. I just liked it. I think Ghost's 60- 65 or 66 years old still working. Pretty good for wood boat. Now that's a wooden built North Carolina boat.

AC: Do you have any favorite memories on this boat?

HA: Oh yeah, we've had all kinds of memories caught a lot of shrimp with the boat. We about sunk with the boat. Right went down with me one time. Hit the boat. The Gray Ghost has been sunk four times. And one time Bob Massey owned it and the coast guard, he pulled- got him in a speedboat and carried him out to the boat and it was Vietnamese running the boat, was buying the boat from him and he handed him the rope. He says it's down there, at the end of that rope. 40 foot down they had to get it up. We're still going you know. Completely sunk four times. Caught on fire one time too. We fixed it back up and going again.

[Laughter]

SS: Did the Gray Ghost have any other names before that one?

HA: Now like I say Miss Kim, we were prepping for Key West and one of my boys had been sick all night so he, we start running back to Key West was going in next morning. So he says if you gonna take you a nap, he had been asleep the whole evening all night, he says if you gonna take your nap I'll uh, I'll hold the wheel. I don't know how he done it, but he got way in shore right 40 foot of water and hit a sunk navy ship and it didn't go down because it's sitting up on top of it, so we got almost all of our stuff off the boat is the salvagers just come got it and carried it to Key West. We lost all our shrimp for 10 days work. We didn't get none of that.

AC: Could you tell us more about the people who are on this boat with you?

HA: Huh?

AC: Could you tell us more about the people who are on this boat with you?

HA: The people that was on?

AC: People you worked with.

HA: Don Moore was working with me and my dad was made, just made a trip was he just wanted to come down and he made a trip where he was on that too. Ray, his name was Ray Arnsdoff. He uh, he made trip with us. We didn't know what that was when we hit that thing it was like a bomb went off. It's ls like you making 14 knots and you (clap) stand just like that and it- If I look down at the hull I didn't see no water down there so back off of this thing. I put it in

reverse and slide over and that's when it fill up war it was gone fill up anyhow. Now I'm going to tell you some more stories I reckon.

AC: Yes please.

0:07.24

HA: We used to do a lot of draggin' illegal back in the days. We got caught for that about 10 times. You might got to let me rest a minute. Think a little bit.

SS: That's alright take all the time you need.

HA: I get a little bit shaky. That's what happened with the Gray Ghost, I had to get off the boat. I was down there working on a mount for it. I just couldn't do it, I started out in the engine room and I fell out. And when I woke up, I had a colored boy name's that, he worked for another man, I called him and he come help me out of the hole. I ain't been back in no engine room since. That's when they said I had Parkinson's. I'm trying to think of some more tales to tell you. Yeah I run the Missy, the Kim and Kelly, - shoot what was the name of the boat I run, I can't even think of them all.

[computer sound]

HA: Is that the break off? Break time.

[laughter]

AC: If you need a break that's fine. If you'd like we can go cycle back to the beginning, you said you started fishing when you were 15?

HA: Mhm.

AC: Do you want to tell us more about that, your beginning experience?

0:09.50

HA: Well I started, well uh, with a shrimp boat. Then I worked...then back into the shrimp boats, speed boats. Speed boats, you know that's called outboard rigging you know? Most all shrimpers started out shrimping with outboard. You go from outboard to shrimp boat, get tired of that you go back to speedboat shrimping. I started on a boat named the Kary Joe, first boat I ever went out on Kary Joe. That was in Rabbit Hill, Georgia. Have you ever heard of Rabbit Hill, Georgia? It aint even there no more, they done put so many houses and changed the name of the place. It was up the Ogeechee River. Took about, probably about three and a half hours, or four, three and a half good hours to go to the fishing grounds from where we're at up in there. But you-good place for wood boats, because there weren't no barnacles that grow on the boat. No

worms, nothing, it was good. It was a long ride but you would go out and make about five, six sized boats, whatever the size of boats you had. Small boat go out, stay for three or five days and come back in. Catch the tide in, you caught the tide out. It's -it's right out in Richmond Hill. The Kary Joe was a North Carolina boat. Now I was working on it boat with JM Sykes. He died a couple months ago, cancer. And I worked on the Joanne, I worked on it for a while. You just jump from one boat to the other. The CM, all them was at Rabbit Hill. Sometimes we- we got more back in them days for shrimp than what we get now. I go buy shrimp even when my boat ain't fishing. If he is not fishing, I go buy shrimp from another fella out there, I'll go buy shrimp from him and I sell shrimp. You gotta do something, you know? Keep me busy. We got a twelve year-old and I got a forty-two year old. I got a daughter who's forty-two. And this ones twelve. Alright I'll quit for a while now.

AC: You need to take a break?

HA: yeah. I get shaky a little bit, I get shaky now.

AC: That's ok we can pause the recording until you feel ok to go again.

HA: Huh?

AC: We can pause the recording until you feel ok.

HA: Ah ok.

0:13:50

HA: We made a trip on the Bulldog.

AC: How was that trip?

HA: We could've caught a lot more fish, but he didn't wanna catch so many and then we'd move. Catch some- there's plenty of fish out there then. There's still plenty out there. Now I think the black gill is hurting the shrimp. There's a lot to do with the shrimp and the shrimpers and they don't know what it is they say.

TA: Do y'all have certain questions for him?

AC: We have a guide but, it's mainly just having him talk about anything he wants to talk about- he really wants to. So, to build off of the black gill have you noticed any other differences in the environment of shrimping.

TA: Environment of shrimping. Any other things?

HA: Yeah, every time- like that ship sunk, you know that's gonna hurt the shrimp. All that moves up and down the coast.

TA: And then them building all them all these homes on the coast.

HA: Yup yup more of them, well the oysters isn't no good, so you know the shrimp – it does something to the shrimp too. The oysters, you can't eat them with septic tanks running off into the river. When we started first started shrimping, fuel was like uh twenty-five cent at Rabbit Hill. And we went to Sunbury. There were more boats at Rabbit Hill that it could handle- the dock could handle. And there was a wood yard right up above it and there were logs floating in the river and all ya know? And you were scared you would hit one, you had to shine a spotlight all the way out of there. They'd fall in the water all the time. But went to uh- Sunbury, Morgan's dock and diesel fuel was twenty cents then. That was a long time ago now. Cause you aint -I know you- y'all don't have no twenty-cent fuel.

TA: I don't even remember twenty cent fuel.

HA: Huh?

TA: I don't remember twenty cent fuel.

HA: Well, you didn't care! It was something you just had to have on the boat. It didn't really matter what it cost. You go out there and catch twenty-five boxes of shrimp, that's profit you know? Keep the boat, boat itself in good shape. Now you barely can work on your boats in the winter, cause you know, money, you know. Fuel and oil and all the stuff you had to have. Look at that squirrel crawling. It's right there in the corner.

[laughter]

HA: Now what's another tale I need to tell y'all about.

AC: Anyone you can think of, we'll listen.

0:17.51

TA: What have you told them so far?

HA: I told them about the Miss Kim, we sunk it. I told them about the Gray Ghost, sank it four times and the Vietnamese handed him the rope.

TA: And it's burned twice.

HA: Yeah. That's a tough old boat.

TA: He's run lots and lots of boats.

HA: Yup.

TA: And he's been all over.

HA: Yeah, I've been to Cuba too. Went to Cuba.

TA: On the shrimp boat.

HA: Huh?

TA: On the shrimp boat.

HA: Yeah. Found at least thirty-seven families. People came to get- that went over there to get the families and bring them back on my boat. Well on the Bobby Two (II) the boat that I run. They didn't get the family- they got- some of them got the families but some of them didn't. They loaded us down with jail- people come out of jail and all that you go. I had 266- aint that what I told you? 266 of them. That's what my fine was. \$266,000. (chuckles) They didn't get- they actually didn't get no get a dime of that though. I stayed tied up in Key West for about seventeen days. Glad to get away from there.

TA: He's mostly shrimped here in Georgia though.

HA: yeah.

TA: Tell them your favorite your favorite shrimping place.

HA: Hm?

TA: I told Bradley out in the hall. Where was your favorite shrimping place?

HA: Saint Catherines Chanel. I drove in Saint Catherines Chanel all the time. That's pretty much all I remember.

TA: You don't- you remember more.

HA: Well I've done told them a bunch.

TA: Ok.

SS: Do you mind my asking why Saint Catherine's Chanel was your favorite place to shrimp?

HA: Gotta know why?

TA: Why it's your favorite place to shrimp.

0:20.35

HA: It was a bad drag- a lot of people didn't mess with it. Didn't drag there cause it would tear up nets and stuff. Was rough on the equipment.

TA: Not a lot of boats drove there.

HA: I would go over there when the tide wasn't running so hard and work in peace and I stayed in that channel. Might be what gave me the Parkinson's.

TA: I don't think that's what gave it to you. Well if you got questions for him that might trigger him.

AC: I was wondering who originally taught you how to shrimp.

HA: Who really taught me how? Well like I say I started out with J.M. Sykes and Roy Sykes. Mike Kasey.

TA: Your daddy shrimped.

HA: Well I taught him.

AC: You taught him?

HA: Yeah, he was a pipe fisher, Ima pipe fisher too. I've done that in the wintertime some. And- you learn- you learn a lot every time. You- You always learn still right now today I still learn.

TA: And he- we've survived with shrimping because he can do his own work. He can weld on the boat, he can sew nets. He can do just about anything he needs to do to fix the boat. Even he and I rebuilt an engine one time to save money. Ain't that right?

HA: Yeah. Me and her stayed on the boat when we had eighty-five mile per hour winds that night. In a little old creek, tied up to a small dock I put the anchor down in the marsh and dropped it down and covered it out there. Stomped it down and pulled the boat away from the bank ya know to keep it from tearing the dock down. She didn't like it that much but I wasn't gonna stay down there by myself.

TA: The wind rolled me out of the bed.

HA: Huh?

TA: The wind rolled me out of the bed.

HA: Yeah that boat was jumping around pretty good.

AC: Do y'all have any good memories together with the shrimping trips.

HA & TA: No.

TA: I mostly stay home. I get sick. I would stay with him on the boat if he was just staying at the boat. I did go with him- he caught my hair on fire one time.

AC: How?

TA: He threw a cigarette, and it went in my hair and caught on fire. The boy who was on the boat with us, John, he doused me out with the deck hose. I wasn't happy, so yeah.

Ha: I thrown it over and the wind threw it back.

TA: We babysat the boat- I can show y'all some pictures. We babysat the boat during hurricane Irma. Now he stayed on the boat during hurricane Matthew, but he (her son) was little, so I left. But I wanna show you- remember Irma was the one that had the super big tide and surge with it.

HA- I couldn't even get in the boat.

TA: We couldn't get to the boat and we were steady- we were in the truck- and we were steady backing up and I told him what do we do when we run out of places to back up. Here we go. Let's see if I got a better picture. Ok, Heres the boat. The grass the marsh, racky, I guess we call it. Let me find the...

0:25:30

[she shows us images of a flooded dock]

SS: Oh wow.

AC: So, it was completely flooded?

TA: Yeah, it was up over the rails of the dock so we couldn't go back to the boat. All that is in the parking lot. And that's a picture somebody sent me of their- that's a friend of ours that shrimps. That's his ice bin floating and that was at Sunbury.

SS: Oh wow.

HA: He lost all that.

AC: How has these hurricanes affect you and your shrimping?

HA: What did she say?

TA-: How did it effect - How does hurricanes affect our shrimping?

HA: Well there wasn't no- I don't know what did that year but we didn't catch nothing after-after that. Not enough to pay for fuel.

TA: Sometimes it can be really good after a hurricane. Depending- I think it depends on the direction that the hurricane's coming out of. Some years it can be really good and some years its just nothing after the hurricane.

HA: Yup. We didn't do nothing. We couldn't- you could put over on your drag and try to bog, nets try to bog down, I've done washed the top layer of mud off. Y'all have to put my stuff together, I think.

[laughter]

TA: I mean- what do y'all edit it or how are y'all gonna do it or do y'all know? Do y'all have another question for him?

SS: I do. You mentioned earlier about out water rigs and you spent some time on some of those.

HA: On what?

SS: Out water rigs.

HA: Speedboat rigs? Yeah yeah. I've speed boat shrimped off and on all my life.

SS: Could you tell me more about those?

HA: Yeah, just you- doors and your nets all in the boats and you throw it out. Make a living doing it but gas is so high now and you know. Boats burn a lot of gas doing that. I've done it- its fun. Drank a lot of beer out there riding around. But there's a lot of people still do it. Coming back to it seem like to me. Getting more and more of them I reckon.

TA: Well, I think its cheaper for them to run the little boats than it is –

HA: Somewhere to tie up cause there ain't. You see this used to be all shrimp boat docks. Now you see what's here.

TA: Limited areas to tie up. With smaller boats you can take them in and out or find a marina or somewhere that would take you.

HA: Yeah, I've tied up here many a time to come in here. I don't think- I didn't see a shrimp boat down through there. Theres none here except for this dock right here. There used to be the City Dock up there. On up. That's what we called it, the City Dock. I've come in here a good many times. But uh, I know there more boats you get on the coasts, the more pollution you're gonna get. The more houses- more boats, more houses. Richmond Hill has sure changed. I looked at it the other day, went down through there where its called Rabbit Hill. I- you can't- I couldn't even figure out where it was at. I know its right down one of them roads. All them houses I don't know to get to it now. Have to put the boat in the water to see Rabbit Hill I reckon. Speed Boat. But I've had a good time all my life doing it. I go to work, I couldn't wait until shrimp season come back in. What else you want me to talk about.

0:30:50

TA: Whatever else you wanna talk about.

HA: Huh?

TA: 2001 he went back to shrimping full time. He got the Gray Ghost and we went back to shrimping full time. And we full timed until 2018 when he got Parkinson's.

HA: Breathing that stuff in them plants. I was ready to go. I stayed in the hospital- I stayed in the doctor's office more than work so I went shrimping full time and that was it. That's about all I know for right now.

TA: Anything you want to ask him you can ask.

AC: So, I was wondering, from the years you started back fishing from 2001 to 2018 did you notice any changes over the year. I know you mentioned the building of houses and the decrease of people shrimping. Could you go more into detail about that?

TA: More detail about when you started back. The difference.

HA: Oh oh, yeah.

TA: Well we were fighting with imported shrimp when we came back.

HA: Yup.

TA: Shrimp prices were probably actually less when we started back than they were in the 70's and 80's when he shrimped full time.

HA: Yup. And just like I say, just hard to make a living. We didn't tie up to the big docks and unload for packing price. We tied up to small docks where we could take our shrimp and sell them. The last dock we tied up to was a restaurant and the people wanted the boat there. When they come- when I tie up the boat, come to start unloading the shrimp, the people- the dock was just full of people. And I left, that business is gone. It ain't got no business there now, have they?

TA: Very little.

HA: Yeah. But there's something all the time, you know stopping you from doing this or doing that you know that's what made me leave the last dock I was at. And that he- that boy runs the boats wherever he wants to.

TA: We're at Valona now.

HA: That pretty much skips it over, you know?

SS: So, when you think about the future of commercial fishing in Georgia, do you think it is going to be based off boats like the Gray Ghost?

HA: No. They make a few more years out of that, there won't be nowhere to tie up. I don't know what they're gonna do with 'em. Cause that place, Valona where that boats tying up now, it used to be ten docks or more and now I can't call but like two or three.

TA: About two, I think.

HA: All they've got to do is come in with these houses, start with these houses, and these people sell, they're ready to get- a lot of them are older than me. Or my age or older.

TA: I think it's going to be left to the steel hulls. The big boats that travel.

HA: The big boats that can run back down and come out here and stay a month.

TA: And run back to Mayport, or run back to another big shrimping spot. You know, that they can unload.

HA: I got a cousin, he said he shrimps over here in Georgia. He's carrying his shrimp all the way around Fort Myers to unload the shrimp. Shrimps in Georgia, Carolina, and all around and then he goes all the way to Fort Myers to unload shrimp. That's a long ride for me! Ain't nothing to him! He just goes and fishes til' the night end. Take up the next morning, run four or five hours – ten hours, get into the docks so you can stop fishing at night and keep going. I ain't going to fish like that. That's not my- that ain't it. I ain't in that kinda- I ain't gonna stay on no boat no more.

TA: He used to stay five to seven days but when he went back in 2001, he started doing basically day trips. Home every night.

HA: You know, we bring shrimp in and keep fresh product.

TA: Cause we sell shrimp at home.

HA: Sell them right there at the house. Yup.

TA: I would have to put limits on that though. Cause one year we sold like six thousand and some pounds on Christmas Eve night, in the yard. And I had people there for Christmas, so we all worked shrimp that night. So that's when I told him family come first and shrimping come second. But that's not always the way it works [laughs].

HA: We made good check.

TA: Yes, nice Christmas Check.

HA: Alright, ask me something else.

AC: Let's see.

HA: Now that shrimping's pretty much over with around here, I'll tell you. It's cause we gather all that bunch of sail boats out there. Pull them out and pile and start that..

TA: I mean but, our customers still want that fresh product. The ones that know what fresh product is.

HA: Yeah.

TA: Cause I'll have customers call me back and say 'What did you do to the shrimp and why are your shrimp different than everybody else's? Why do they taste different? Why are- No preservatives, coming and going every day, they're fresh. I mean that's, ya know, where we make our living. We like fresh product.

HA: Yup. Now people don't care. They don't wash their shrimp and they put that sodium bi sulphate on it to make it- preserve 'em. Embalming fluid I call it. I don't want none of that on the boat. Big boats like I'm telling you them freezer boats, they have to have it to keep the shrimp froze for thirty, forty, fifty days. It ain't for me.

TA: You got another question for him?

0:39.05

SS: I would like to know more about what it was like- what it is like to run the shrimp business from your home.

TA: Ok, that's me I guess. Um, I take orders. I keep a running list of people who want shrimp. Sometimes it can be like, you know, we do have a walk-in cooler. Sometimes it can be rough 'cause he'll say 'you're not gonna sell all them shrimp' and I'm like 'yes I am. I will sell them, I'll get them sold somehow. Don't worry' And, you know, typically I get them- they're gone in a day. I just- I have a running list like I said of customers. I have a old timey address book that I keep my customers names in and it does help that you call them. Now, you know, nowadays I've got customers that only want text. And I didn't'- I only gave into that probably two years ago. But before that I would call them. Everything was word of mouth. You know, it was- some days it was long days.

HA: They still call us regularly...just checking.

TA: Yeah. But you know some days, it was long. But its been worth it because we end up making more money because I sell them myself. And most of the time, like he said, we were at private docks. We stayed at his friends dock for a long time, then we stayed at the restaurant. So we didn't have packing. You know, if you go to a big dock you gotta pay packing. We didn't have packing cause we packed our own shrimp. Got an ice machine that makes our own ice for us so he'd haul ice back and forth to the dock.

HA: Put ice on the boat every morning before we left the dock.

TA: Yeah and he had good boys. I mean, he lost his best striker in 2015, which devastated him. You know, as long as we had good guys working, it was easy to do. Now-

HA: Now you can't get no help.

TA: Yeah. Now the boy that's running the boat now for me, he can't keep help. So it's a struggle.

HA: Can't get nobody to work, you can't work. Ya know?

TA: So, yeah I do believe that shrimping is a dying industry.

HA: Yup.

TA: But, you know, I say that but then its everywhere. It's not just the shrimping. I mean, look at the restaurants that can't get people- other places that can't get people. Its not just the shrimp but- you know shrimping is hard. Hard life.

HA: Hard work.

TA: Hard work. Yeah.

HA: Every time you get about where you know how to work these turtle shooters, there's pictures of them all around (in reference to the office).

TA: They change them.

HA: Every time you get to where you know one down pat and know just how to work that- make it work right, they change something else. That ain't their fault.

TA: It's a- you know, adapt to the environment. Cause I mean, my theory on that is everything in the ecosystem has its own place there. So, you know I, he probably- he has another opinion on that and I wouldn't get him started on that but you know I think that the turtles have their place. Now, I'm not sure about the sharks. Cause they eat you alive.

HA: Some pretty good gashes in your net when you take up; fishing offshore out there with them sharks. Lindsey used to bring me different kinds of shooters to try and he called me and asked me 'How you like that one?' Send me three more of them! [laughs]

TA: And that was another thing that help cause Lindsey would always kind of get us something. Ya know if we needed it. So, yeah.

AC: As a general question could you just describe – like, you said you'd take day trips? What were those day trips like?

0:44.21

HA: Well you'd ride out with the tide. When I was at Kilkenny I think it was like eight miles to fishing. I would start out in the creek, by the time the engine warmed up give it a little gas, it's time to slow down and pull the rigs over. Pull them over set it over board and drag. Stay until almost high water whatever. Well I wanna ride out with the tide now. .All the time, didn't get to ride the tide. We'd buck it sometimes when we was catching shrimp. You know, all day we'd buck it back in buck the tide back in. But eight miles ain't that far. You know, you could do that.

It's about half as far as they gotta run out of here, to get out to the ocean. When I got to Saint Catherine's, I was dragging.

TA: So it was a different time every day. Whatever- depending on what the tide was. Some nights it was really late nights and some days it was really early.

HA: Yeah.

0:45:40

AC: You mentioned how your boat caught on fire twice. Could you go into more detail about those two experiences?

HA: What now?

TA: The boat being on fire twice.

HA: Oh! I was welding in the rigging and the wind was blowing. Up at the top of the rigging I had my boy watching. He had the hose spraying it down. But I don't think the boat caught on fire from the sparks. When I struck- that boat had some bad wiring on there and I struck a ark up there on that rigging, it blowed the battery- a battery blowed up and that's what started the fire.

TA: And the thing that saved it was Ralph, that was when we were at the Bryan Co-op. Ralph called, he saw-

HA: He already, see he spotted the fire.

TA: Yeah, he saw it. He called the fire truck and they just happened to be around the corner. Because you know, the co-op was ten miles down the road up in there and they just happened to be around the corner.

HA: They was out on a test run.

TA: A test run. So they got there really quick and put it out.

HA: It didn't hurt much. Just charred a few things.

TA: And then the next time it was just charred again.

HA: Yeah.

TA: Wasn't anything major. And then when Bob Massey had the boat before us, he was letting the Vietnamese guys run it and they sank it right there in Skidaway. And the Coast Guard called and said you need to come; told Bob Massey 'you need to come'. It was still in his name and they handed him a buoy on a sixty-five foot line and said 'here is your boat, you have a day to get it up.'

HA: How big of a fine was it?

TA: \$250,000 or a day to get it up. So. He got it up!

HA: They floated it up quick.

TA: They floated it up pretty quick.

HA: Think he had every diver in Savannah working for him.

TA: It probably cost him the 250,000 to get it up but he got it up. And it was still leak- when he went to work on it in 2001, it was still leaking. He took it out and had to come straight back to the dock because something was going on and it was what? Pushing water whatever that?

HA: The shaft log. Coming out the shaft log.

TA: Yeah. Coming out the shaft log and pushing water back into the boat. So it was about to sink again but he got it fixed. Like I said, he can pretty well fix anything. Ain't that right? No?

HA: Huh?

TA: You can pretty well fix anything. Maybe not now but he could.

HA: Takes a little longer now.

[laughs]

SS: So what are some recommendations you have for the future of the commercial fishing industry?

0:49.22

HA: I don't see what they got now. Get a steel hull or get out.

TA: And make sure you got somewhere to go before you buy it.

HA: Yeah, a lot of them are getting rid of them just because they haven't got no where to tie them up. I told them that if I had no where to tie up I was gonna carry the Gray Ghost up in one of them creeks as far as I can carry. Just ram it up on the high tide, ram it all the way up on the bank, set fire to it and Ima jump off and run. Leave it right there, didn't I?

TA: Yes you said that [laughter].

HA: Well, if you got enough fuel in that them two tanks that's gonna burn everything up. There might be a but of iron left lying there but salt water take that over. At least the oysters would have something to hang on to. Theres been many a ones that've sunk up through here.

TA: Yeah, he spots them when we're going down 95 or whatever. You know, the boats that're in the creeks. He'll go 'theres one there'.

HA: Yup. Those wood boat days is gone. Them squirrels like to crawl across them shells I reckon (outside the window squirrels were crawling on the wall). It's coming back over. Alright ask me some more!

AC: Well it seems like you have a lot of fond memories with shrimping.

TA: Tell them about your big manta ray.

HA: Well I should've brought that picture.

TA: Yeah we should've brought it. I can upload it and send it to them.

HA: I caught a lot of them things. I caught five in one day off St. Augustine one time.

TA: But this one like, laid over the sides of the boat. And how wide was the Bobby Two(II)?

HA: I don't remember how wide it was but it was a real wide boat.

TA: It was a real big boat and the manta ray actually laid over. But the picture hes got its up in the rigging, he's standing beside it. I have to send it to you because its like-

HA: I know right where one of them stays all the time. I used to catch him every year. And If you catch him you feel him pulling the boat around you go ahead and take up right then and get your bags in. Easy now with it out of gear it'll slide right back out and his wings will be doubled up like that and he'd be inside the net. He will just ease him out of there. You keep dragging with him though you're going to kill him and then you ain't gonna get him out. He's gonna tear through and get out. If you just be real careful with him he'll ease right out of there. They come in after to eat on them fish in that deep water. When the fish stay out when nobody don't drag. Every now and then somebody drag off out there and every now and then somebody catch one or two. At least them turtle shooters shoot horseshoe crabs. We used to have to throw them things back over. Everyone of them. I've had as many as three hundred in one drag. You just got to go along, throw them off before you pick the shrimp up. And then they'll be right there, you catch them again the next drag. But that's something that don't hurt fishing I don't think.

AC: You mentioned earlier how you are always learning like every step you take. Can you explain more about that, what are some things you learned throughout the years?

0:54.38

TA: Things- you know you said you always learn something new all the time.

HA: Yup you learn something every day.

TA: Like what?

HA: Well... I ain't learned nothing today so far but I haven't talked in one of these (in reference to the clip-on microphone). I ain't ever had one of these on me. But uh-
[laughter]

AC: In association to shrimping.

HA: You learn-

TA: Well like, I know he had to learn how to sew nets.

HA: I knew how to sew nets from when I used to shad fish. I used to shad fish in the wintertime. You had to sew a good many holes up. When the sturgeons come up that river they go right on through your nets. The gar fish. You just pick up different things. Something you, you go out there and you just thinking back. You go well, I learned something new today.

TA: Well you've gotta be able to fix things and you've gotta be able to think.

HA: Yeah. And if you hear something, sounds funny you better go check it.

TA: Yeah.

HA: Something could happen.

TA: I mean he's shrimped, he's fished, he's crabbed he's done it all. He's not- he's a, I call him my well-rounded commercial fishermen cause he has done it all. He doesn't just shrimp.

HA: I picked oysters.

TA: Yeah he picked oysters.

HA: Too old for that now.

TA: He was crabbing when we started dating and I used to tell him that- or that he told me that I married him because he was a crabber cause I liked crab.

HA: [Laughs] She'd eat crab seven days a week if she could.

TA: Yeah.

HA: And they hard. You see how the crabs- there's no crabs. Not like there used to be. There just aint no crabs. Ain't no picking plants to pick 'em no more.

TA: And we think, you know, that's got a lot to do with the pollution. You know.

HA: The same thing as the white-black gill. Crabs get that black gill too. I've opened them and, you know, look at them. They get it. I'm sure fish- well fish move off and on, you know. They move in and out, but shrimp do too. I think shrimp get it from inside. Water gets so hot. The hotter the water temperature the more the black gill.

TA: Want some water?

HA: I don't know when I've talked so much. Last time I got drunk I reckon. [laughs] Y'all need to catch us about five o'clock in the evening when you're drinking a few beers then you do a lot of talking. [laughs] If I can think of them I can tell you some tales. You know we had to put boats up on the banks and work on them. Didn't have the money to fix them. Back in the old days you could hardly do anything like that.

0:59.11

TA: Yeah we laid the Gray Ghost over in the creek one day and I like had a heart attack. Cause it was like, it's very-

HA: It lays way over.

TA: [laughing] it lays completely over!

HA: Something you gotta do. Couldn't get on the railway.

TA: If you've got a leak and you can't get up on the railway then- cause we were like a month and a half out from the railway time. And he had a leak and he's like 'I've got to lay it over' and I'm like [sigh] ok. You just hold your breath. Cause it was like, the deck was like straight up.

HA: Yup.

TA: What's the most shrimp you've ever caught?

HA: In one drag?

TA: Mhm.

HA: Fifty-eight baskets.

TA: Fifty-eight baskets.

HA: That's a short drag.

TA: What about the time that you went after it snowed?

HA: Yeah I made two drags for a hundred boxes.

TA: That was in '89. That was the year it snowed at Christmas. That was before y'all were born. [laughing] but see we remember cause it snowed at Christmas!

HA: That was on the Notre Dame.

TA: Yeah.

HA: I don't know what else to tell y'all!

SS: Well, earlier you said that if something sounds funny you should really check it out?

HA: Yeah, you'd be dragging and you'd hear the engine. The generator, I used to could tell when that thing was gonna shut off. Filter change, change the fuel filter. I could- I'd hear that

thing acting up. I'd be dragging and that thing would sound- just noise- sound change. So I'd better go down and check that fuel filter on that.

TA: And there's a certain sound when the blade pops off the propeller.

HA: Yeah. It done that- yeah we done that, we had to take up and come on- come to the dock.

TA: And then hes caught the, you know, nets in the wheel before. Tell her about the nets in the wheel.

HA: Yeah, we got... had to get somebody to pull me in didn't I? Yeah.

TA: Yes, somebody pulled you in.

HA: Oh yeah, engine shut off out there in Saint Catherine's. Lolly pulled me in. It wasn't in the wheel that caused it though. It got in the wheel after. Trying to get it back up, the engine shut off. Yeah. We had to pull all nets dragging behind me all the way to the dock. And then we had to get a diver down there cause I had got the cables in the wheel. Had to get a diver to come get the cable out the wheel before we could get the nets in. It was about a weeks work wasn't it?

TA: That's the only thing he doesn't do is dive.

HA: No I don't dive, I never did. My brother does but I never did. I don't feel right down there. I don't like to go under that water. Ask me something.

AC: What I wanna know is, how did you learn which sounds were associated with which problems?

TA: How did you- how do you know which sound goes with which problem.

1:04.24

HA: You hear that engine [imitates engine sound] changing tunes you better go down there and see what's wrong with it. Start looking at gauges and go down there and see cause somethings wrong. You just get used to that noise. You've been hearing that noise so much, if it changes, you're going to know it and that's about it. Theres something wrong when you hear it changing. Sometime you get all the fuel and it will have some of that old black, what did I call it?

TA: Algae. It's algae.

HA: Algae that's in the fuel and the fuel filters catch it. They says it's algae, but I think its old bunker T oil sitting in there and being in that truck. And instead of washing it out they just put-fill it fuel and pump it in on a shrimp boat. To get rid of em and wash it out.

AC: Earlier you mentioned how he's a well rounded fisher, could you tell us more about that and your other experiences?

TA: You're a well rounded commercial fishermen, tell them about your other things. Crabbing?

HA: Well I liked to do that too. It was the same thing as shrimp, the prices- you wouldn't get less and less every year. Just couldn't make it. Crabbing is hard work, you got to be in good shape to do that. Cause you got to pull about three hundred traps to make a living. I've got a cousin he's...I don't know how old he is, he's about sixty.

TA: Sixty-two I think.

HA: Yeah he tried crabbing and I don't think he put, done put about a hundred traps out. Shoot I told him I could pull that many by hand. I couldn't but I told him I could. Everything is hard work to this- in this business. I guess it must be easier on them big hundred-foot steel hulls.

TA: Well they've got more crew.

HA: Yeah they can get a crew. Make one trip anyhow. I just don't care for all of that. And you don't know you- them boats move around; they might be the ones that brings all that black gill in here you know? Diseases carry. All them years ago we didn't have none. Didn't ever see no black gill. 70's, 80's, 90's I don't remember no black gill. You can see it- you can look at them on the- in the pile. You can pick that shrimp up. He's been dead a while, you can smell it. He looks good but, you can smell that shrimp. He looks- He's been dead laying there you know. He didn't just die you caught him. Alright I'm about talked out.

AC: That's ok.

SS: I have one more question if that's alright? You both mentioned earlier that there are fewer crew men. Why do you think there are less of them sticking around these days?

1.09:32

HA: Most of them make one trip, that's enough for them. And you won't see them, 'I'll see you tomorrow!'. You won't see them.

TA: I think they don't realize how hard it is. What comes- How hard shrimping actually is. I mean-

HA: I hired one one time he come on the boat at Rabbit Hill and before I got to Fort McAllister, he was seasick. I had to pull up on the bank, that was before any houses were built down there. And I pulled up on the bank and let him off and he walked [laughs]. I didn't have nowhere else, I sure wasn't carrying him all the way back to that dock. I said 'You'll get a ride, somebody would stop and get you'.

TA: But yeah, I don't think they realize, you know, you've got to know how to set out. Like we had a young boy, he was very loyal to Hinton after we lost Joe in 2015. He was very loyal to Hinton but then everyday they would set out and do the same thing but he couldn't grasp it. You know, he- Hinton had to show him every day how to set out. And then, you've got to have that speed, you know, to pick up shrimp and pick em up fast.

HA: You've got to get them out of the sun. And I told one of them one time, I said uh 'I got you a tarp back there. When we get out we can rig it up' 'oh I don't need that' I said 'that ain't for you! That's for them shrimp. It ain't for you. I don't give a damn how much you stay out there in that sun'. Them shrimps got to get out of that sun, that tarp keep the shade on them, you know? He didn't care. He didn't want to use it, it was too much trouble to put up.

TA: But I think, they don't realize how tough it is and then a lot of people don't want to work now. And shrimp are an acquired smell you know. You smell very shrimpy like sometimes, you know, we will go in at night and take our clothes off and it's like they gotta go straight in the wash.

HA: And we wash them and take em back and hang them on the porch. And the next day. You don't smell it.

TA: I smell it, I smell everything.

HA: I've been in it all day.

TA: Well, he don't smell it and I'm like oh Jesus. I mean even like at the house when we're selling shrimp, we get very shrimpy. We all have shrimp boots and you know, we are the quintessential shrimpers you know, with our shrimp boots. And I wear my shirt that says salty and we don't worry about him because he lives the life and we just make ourselves look like we live the life. And I make fun of the, you know the logo, the salt life. I say y'all don't know what salt life is. [Laughs] You don't live it, you don't know what salt life is. Cause like with him, you know, he shrimped all his life. He's either crabbed, shrimped, whatever. And when he takes days off, he goes fresh water fishing because if he goes saltwater fishing he thinks he's going to work.

HA: That remind me of going to work going out there saltwater fishing in the ocean or beach or sound.

TA: Yeah so he wants to go fresh water fishing.

HA: I go fresh water fishing in Fort Stewart.

TA: Yeah. Anything else you want to know.

AC: Well I don't want to hold y'all.

TA: We're fine! We just gotta keep him talking a little bit.

AC: Did you think of anymore tales during the conversation.

HA: Any what?

TA: You got anymore tales?

HA: I don't. I don't know, I've told a pretty good many tales.

AC: Well if there's anything else you just want to add on, um, anything you wanna say about the future of shrimping to add on what you said or anything.

1.14:23

TA: You want to say anything else about the future of shrimping?

HA: Like I said earlier, I don't see a whole lot. You either get a steel hull where you can anchor out there in twelve foot seas.

TA: We are hoping to hold on for the next five years with the boat at least. But, we're not sure. I take it day by day and I just go with it.

HA: We will park in that little creek if we don't.

TA: Now you ain't supposed to tell-

HA: I about know right where to carry it.

TA: I think you'd be better off if you took it fishing.

[laughter]

HA: I don't know if i'll be able to, by the time the five years up, I don't know if I'll be able to get off the boat before I set fire to it. [laughing]

TA: [whispering] you ain't right [laughing].

HA: That's all I know to do with it!

TA: Yeah I mean like, with our little one, he's twelve. And we don't even talk to him, you know. He knows about shrimping and stuff like that but we don't talk to him about trying to make a living at shrimping. You know, cause we know it's a dying industry. It is! Its truly dying.

HA: Now my daughter...

TA: Now she wants to take over the boat and run it right now.

HA: She wants to run the boat. She wears her rubber boots all day. She calls them her Sunday shoes.

TA: Yeah, she has two pair of rubber boots. She has dress rubber boots and work rubber boots.

HA: If she's wears her dress rubber boots she's coming up there drink beer. When she got them other ones on she's coming up to work. [laughs]. She's forty... what? One?

TA: Four.

HA: Forty-four and he's twelve. I'm eighteen years older than her. That's how that happened.

TA: Thanks! [laughs] We might need to edit that one out.

AC: We can if you want to. [laughs]

TA: I don't care! I've heard it before, believe me. It's funny when we first had Bradley there was this woman who came down to the dock to get shrimp and she was like questioning Hinton about Bradley. And uh he looked at her and he said 'I- we had him when I was fifty-eight and he was all natural.' [laughs] I'm like 'that was a little too much information'. But you know, we have good loyal customers. I mean when you give them fresh product they come back. You know, I got one girl right there she just texted me. She's ready for more shrimp, she just got shrimp yesterday. [Laughs]

HA: Well they know it's getting close to the time. It can be over any day, you know.

TA: Yeah cause we don't , you know, we don't shrimp during the winter.

HA: I used to go to Key West every year and shrimped in the winter.

TA: But you ain't been to Key West in long time.

HA: No.

TA: He don't like to travel now he likes to be home at night.

HA: Yeah I like to be home. That shrimp ain't even good to eat no how. Know what they catching.

AC: Do you want your daughter to take over the shrimping boat?

TA: We don't care.

HA: If she wants to, she can do it. As long as you got somewhere to tie up. She knows where to go.

TA: She knows what she's doing.

HA: She worked on the boat before.

TA: She's worked on the boat. She's um- her momma's husband that passed away, he shrimped also and she traveled with them when she was young. Like, she would shrimp from here to Texas and she traveled with them. So she's been on boats, and then she's been on the boat with her

daddy. And you know like, days that he catches a lot and needed to pick them up, I just call her and tell her 'hey you need to go to the dock its time to pick up shrimp'. And she can pick up shrimp now, shes fast. So you know, it's a family affair... that I avoid. They laugh at me because when it's time to head, I disappear.

HA: She's got a big chair she sits in.

TA: I got me a little chair over here. I tell them I'm the boss, I mean I shouldn't tell them I'm the boss. But I will if I have to. Ok? Anything else.

SS: No?

AC: I think we're good.

TA: OK!