

Name of Narrator: Jim Dickey (JD)

Interviewer: Dr. Jennifer Sweeney Tookes (JST) with the permission of Jim Dickey for the research project “Boat Stories”

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

Others present: No others were present.

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Context for the interview: Dr. Sweeney Tookes interviews Jim Dickey, a local shrimper.

General Description of Contents: Dr. Sweeney Tookes talks with Jim Dickey, a local shrimper. He tells us about his time on his boats that he named after his children. He also discusses the importance of communication among shrimpers.

00:03

JST: There we go. All right, so this is an interview with Mr. Jim Dickey on January 28th of 2022. And this interview is being conducted in Brunswick, Georgia, and it's part of the research project and the interview collection titled Boat Stories. And I am Dr. Jennifer Sweeney Tookes conducting this interview, and Mr. Dickey has kindly agreed to be here with us today. And so I'm gonna start off just asking you to confirm that you're happy to sit here, and you know you can leave any time you want.

00:36

JD: Yeah, I'm glad to be here.

JST: Thank you, sir.

JD: Glad to, all right.

JST: Good. Um, so my first question is sort of an easy one. I'm wondering if you can tell me about your current, or the most recent fishing vessel, or fishing boat that you were on? What its name was? If it had other names before this one? What can you tell me about that vessel?

00:53

JD: I was on a boat out of Fernandina, the Captain- Captain Mama.

JST: What is the name of it?

JD: Captain Mama.

JST: Captain Mama? And how long did you run that boat?

JD: Oh, I- I was just on there with them for a day trip, but I have, you know... My- my last boat I run was a turtle boat for Bill Harris, Lady Susie Two.

JST: And how long did you run that for?

JD: Oh, for about three or four weeks, a turtle job we did.

1:22

JST: Okay. Can you run me back then, some... through many of the boats that you've been on?

JD: Uh. Oh, Lord. It's... We had a boat name Lisabelle. My daddy had in his lifetime, 25 boats. Uh, not all at one time, but in a lifetime, so a bunch of boats, Lady Belle. I had a boat Erika and Derek. There was, uh... There's so many of them, I can't think of them, Dickey Boys.

JST: Which ones did you spend the most time on?

JD: Uh, the Lady Belle and the Captain Dickey and the Erika and Derek. I owned it for 16 years, the Erika and Derek.

JST: Okay.

JD: Got out in '92, sold- sold out. So-

JST: You... And who did you sell it to?

2:10

JD: A guy at, uh, Fernandina, Fernandina Beach.

JST: And what kind of boat was that?

JD: It was a shrimp boat, 62-foot shrimp boat. Then I went into doing this University of Georgia, you know part-time for 'em, catching sea turtles and stuff. So.

JST: Whenabouts did you do that? What were the years on that?

JD: Uh, from '90... '92 to, uh, 2002 at the university. Then I became a, uh, marine endangered species observer. I worked on dredges and, uh, I tagged the turtles and- and captured them. You know, I tag them, re- relocate 'em. We watch out for manatees and whales and different stuff. So I've done that since 2004 til now.

JST: Wow, that's been a while, then?

3:06

JD: Yeah.

JST: So thinking back to those three boats that you mentioned, I wonder if you can tell me just everything you remember about them? Their sizes? What they were made of? Who ran them?

JD: Yeah, a 73-footer my dad... my daddy had .My, desco shrimp boat, 73-footer. The boat I owned, the Erika and Derek was 62-foot, smaller boat. It'd do the same thing as the bigger boat,

just, you know, smaller. That's about agile... average size back in those days. From 2000 now, they big 'ol steel boats. People got them up to 90-footers now. So they're small boats now compared to what it used to be.

JST: Were they wood or fiberglass?

JD: Free... Uh, my... These boats are wood. Most of the people get fiberglass or steel. You can't get insurance on a wooden boat hardly. So that's what dad went to and all.

JST: So when those boats were running then, they- they didn't have insurance? They couldn't get insurance?

JD: Oh, no. Oh, we had it, but most people didn't. People that's got wooden boats now don't have. Not really, couldn't afford to pay for it, you know? Yeah.

JST: What years do you think it- it was that those different boats were... You and your family were running those?

4:22

JD: Oh, boy. Let me think, 80s and 90s.

JST: So which one? Were they all at the same time?

JD: Yeah, all, you know, same.

JST: All right, so you said that those boats have all been sold off, though-

JD: Oh, yes.

JST: To someone in Fernandina.

JD: Yes, ma'am.

JST: Do you have any idea where they are now?

JD: No. It's most of them, people run them down and sink them or just get rid of them, you know?

JST: Really? So you spent about how many years, then, on the Erika and Derek? Was the one you owned, correct?

JD: 16 years.

JST: 16 years? So tell me about your time on that boat. What- what were some stories from that time? What did you go through? Where did you fish?

4:58

JD: Oh, well, we- we went from here to Texas a couple of times. We had a nice five or six day run just running straight over there. In a certain time of year, January or February, you can go around the- the West Coast of Florida, work your way on to Texas or what have you. Whatever you, you know, had to do, to make payments and stuff. So.

JST: So you were making payments on those boats?

JD: Oh, yeah, yeah. When they're new, you know?

JST: Okay.

JD: Five-six years, I guess you pay, you know, mostly what the payments are.

JST: And did you captain those boats?

JD: Yes, ma'am. Yeah, I was the captain.

JST: Were you... So tell me about your crew and your experience then as captain.

JD: Oh, I had a good crew. I had, uh, one black guy that worked for me 28 years, well, just me and him on that boat, that one when I first got it and all. So.

JST: What was his name?

JD: When I had it 16 years, but he... we... he was on the bigger boats when I run one for my daddy, so.

6:00

JST: So he was on which boats? And you were running which boats?

JD: He was on the big boats, the Lady Belle and the Captain Dickey and those boats, before I got the Erika and Derek.

JST: Okay.

JD: That's when shrimping, it was good. You know, the 80s and 70s and 60s.

JST: So was he the only person that stuck with your family for that long?

JD: Yeah, mostly. Yeah. Most of them don't keep a crew that long either, but he was a good one.

JST: What was his name?

JD: Rudolph Capers. He's a good cook, too. That's the best part. [Laughs] He was 10 years older than I was, but we made it happen

JST: Right. Tell me some of your memories from being out on- on any of those boats.

6:53

JD: It's good. Uh, and fresh air and all. You're your own boss. Everybody communicated back then days, too. So but now it's a lot different, cell phones and everything is a secret, you know. Uh, it changed. Uh, it was so much many... Uh, shoot. It's 300 or 400 licenses in Georgia back in those days. Now they don't even sell 100, I don't think. Everybody got along good and all. That was the good part. It's a lot different- different breed, you know, younger guys with.. and they got... Everybody has got their own little- little group and they'll hang out together and all.

JST: So back in those days you didn't see that? You saw people communicate more face to face, you mean?

JD: Oh, yeah, yeah. They got along together.

JST: Well, how would you do that out on boats? Tell me how... what does it look like?

JD: Well, you'd- you'd talk to them on the radio and all. But now, you don't even hardly... they don't even talk on the radio hardly now. Got the cell phone, they're texting, on Facebook, and all kind of stuff. [Laughs] Life has changed, but-

JST: So when you were on the radio back in those days then, were you able to just talk to with one boat? Or were many boats talking to each other?

JD: Oh, yeah. It was like we was just talking. Oh, yeah. We all talked.

JST: What was that like?

JD: It was like our own little group there, and you knew a lot of boats that come from South Carolina and Florida. And they- they get on the same channel, we and all, talk, you know. We all got to know each other. We know... We talked a lot to people and never seen them before. I mean, that's just... That's the way it was.

JST: Would you talk about what fishing was-

JD: Oh, anything. You know, about bait, whatever is on TV, and different stuff, and all. We... You'd tell people what you're catching and they'd tell you. But, you know, it's a little different now, you know?

JST: And you would tell them where you were catching? And-

9:00

JD: Yeah. Oh, yeah. I mean, now they got anything you... They can... They got those... Some of the... On the boats they got the... uh, in the channel, a identifier. You can tell where the boat is at, wherever. Or if he's sitting at the dock, and if he's got an apparatus on. You can tell how fast they go, anything, anything, where they're at. [Laughs] It's something.

JST: What do you think of that? What do you think of the- the new technology and the way they do things?

JD: I think it's good. Well, we use that in... with the dragging the channels with the turtles. You can tell where the ships at and they can tell where you're at. Before you could... You need... You might here them talking, but they can tell everything about you, but it's good, keep from running over each other especially at nighttime.

JST: Yeah. So as you think back on those boats, it seems like those where the three you spent the most time on over your career.

JD: Yes, ma'am.

JST: Can you tell me more about what sorts of things happened on those boats? You talked on the radios, you worked with crew.

JD: Oh, yeah, yeah.

JST: You know, what funny things happened? Or good memories?

10:16

JD: Yeah, if got bad weather, you go inside in the sound, anchor it. You tie it together and you cook and eat. Come dark, you go anchor by yourself and all, and everybody got together. It ain't

like that now. Well they got air condition, all that stuff now, washer and dryer. They got anything you want on a boat, cable TV. It didn't used to be like that, but.

JST: So what did you used to cook? Or what did you used to talk about?

JD: Uh, cook?

JST: Mm-hmm.

JD: Oh, yeah. We cooked. We ate better on there, I think, than I did at home. But you can't go to store, you know. It's different!

JST: Had to be more creative?

JD: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

JST: So if you think back to some of those meals, what sorts of things would people cook? What sorts of conversations?

JD: Well, we hardly ever ate shrimp because you see them every day. You don't want this kind of stuff. I didn't, you know, steak. You know, chicken. You know, you don't want seafood. Once in a while you'll want it, maybe once or twice a month. But that something you see all the time, you got access to.

JST: Tell me some of your favorite memories from being on those boats. What are some things that stick out to you in your memory?

JD: I guess I carried my son with me one summer. Now, he was trying to... I didn't really want... I was just letting him get a good taste of what shrimping was and all. I'm glad he went to college. We... That's when... That's when... you know, before I sold my boat, Erika and Derek. So, but that was good, you know?

JST: You have just one son?

JD: One son.

JST: Okay. I didn't know if you had sons named Eric and Derek, maybe.

JD: Well, my daughter was but.. .

JST: Okay, okay. So taking your son out was a good... a good memory?

JD: Oh, yeah, during the summer.

JST: What are some other... Were there any funny stories? Anything that you still tell to your grandkids?

12:24

JD: Uh, I can't think of none right now. [Laughs]. We had a good time. That's-and that, the fella that worked with me so long, we had a good time then, even though I... I had a real good time with him, so-

JST: Because he was a good cook.

JD: Oh, yeah. Well, he was good worker. He... We knew what we was gone... whatever move we was going to make, we had it down, nobody knew nothing. He's just that good. We got along so good.

JST: Where is he now?

JD: He died, oh, about 20 years ago, but

JST: I'm sorry.

JD: Yeah, oh, yeah. But he was good... He was in his 80s when he died, so he had a good life.

JST: Mm-hmm. Um, so thinking about... You know, you talked about vessels and fishing now and what it looks like and how people do it, and then back when you started fishing. What do you think are the biggest changes you've seen?

JD: Well, they got the big 'ol freezer boats now, they stay out 30-40 days. But shrimp, uh, we stay out 10 days, about the most we'd stay out. So, had to ice you know. Had to ice your shrimp down. But now they freeze them, quick freeze them. It's a lot different. And you still got people, these local boats go out every day and come back in. Whatever, you know. That's- that's whatever their preference is, smaller boats. We called them day boats. They'd go out one day and come back in.

JST: So the length of the trip and the size of the boats?

JD: Yeah, oh, it makes a difference. You get tired of coming back in. I did, but you got... I ain't got but a couple of days, you know. You moor on a fishing ground, you ready and all, youknow. But sometimes you have to run two, three hours to get to the docks, so it's just easier to drop the anchor. The wear and tear on you, you know, and everything.

JST: Right, right. Why did you start fishing? How old were you? What made you start shrimping?

14:45

JD: Well, my daddy. My daddy, my uncles, my brothers. I had two other brothers shrimped, my... two... three uncles that shrimped, my daddy. He had all the boats or had good captains. We were just brought up in it. He had a shrimp dock for years, so I work- worked there first, and we packaged shrimp and all or... where I live in St. Marys. So, you... then you'd get on the boat and you gradually would go up, you know?

JST: What was the name of that dock?

JD: Dickey and Sons Seafood.

JST: Dickey and Sons? Okay. And so you had other- other kids, other young men with you that were also packing shrimp and- and-

JD: Yeah. We had different people. We had boat owners, you know, local people. You could pack them and had as much 20-something boats tying up there at one time, you know? St. Marys, that was a good bit, three different docks they have. They must have had 50-60 boats, but it was three docks, you know, at like one time. Now they... I think there's about three in the county now. But you know, but.

JST: Where did all those boats go?

JD: People just got out of it.

JST: And what happens to the vessels when that happens?

JD: Well, they sell them and get out of the business. We were back then, you were the wooden boats. Now you... nobody hardly wants one, you know? They'll keep and all that stuff, too, so.

JST: When you think about that change from... you said it was mostly wooden boats that you grew up with.

JD: Yes, ma'am.

JST: And now it's mostly steel boats.

JD: Yeah, steel and fiberglass.

JST: Steel and fiberglass?

JD: Mostly.

JST: When do you think that started changing?

16:32

JD: Around, uh, 2000, I guess. Some people got boats, steel boats older than that now. About 2000 and... A lot of them went from ice to a freezer boat where they could go out and- and just catch them rock shrimp and different roe heads, and different... and then go off different places and they just stay out there.

JST: Mm-hmm. But the three you mentioned weren't steel boats, correct?

JD: No, no. These were all wooden boats.

JST: So why did your family decide not to make that same transition?

JD: He never did have a- a fiberglass boat, my daddy. My daddy got out about that... 2000, or something. My brothers, they- they had wooden boats. They never did have no... 73-footer is about the biggest they had. It did, you know... Did good with them when they had them. They'd keep them 20 years, or some boats... some boats are older than that around here. You got one that's 50-60 years old over at Brunswick now, old wooden boat.

JST: Which one is that?

JD: Uh, shoot, I can't think of the name of it.

JST: Who's boat is it? Do you know who runs it?

JD: Ross. Uh, shoot, Hamburger, we call... Ross. Oh, Lord, can't even think of his first name now.

JST: That's okay. I'll just ask for Hamburger Ross.

JD: Yeah, Hamburger. That's him. But, um, I think... I can't think of the name of the boat. It's right there across the street right over there.

JST: Okay. So thinking back over your whole lifetime now of being involved with vessels, whether it's, you know, at the docks with your daddy or on his boats or your own boats, or now

the vessels you're on, what do you understand about being on the water now? Or, um, about dealing with boats that maybe it took you a couple of decades to learn?

JD: Yeah.

JST: You know, what sorts of things have you learned over your lifetime?

JD: Yeah, that was... Uh, you know, how to keep them up and all. And you have to a lot of your work yourself to keep them up. Not like the engines, you get a mechanic, but other stuff. That's the only way you can survive. You can't afford to get somebody to come fix something every time, but.

JST: So you have to be your own mechanic?

JD: Yeah. Yes, ma'am.

JST: What else?

19:09

JD: Well, you work on your gear, your nets, fix your nets, they wear out. You work... You have four or five years of either repair them or- or throw them away and get new ones. But the best thing is to get you new nets. They make... they're worth the money, you know? Make... They make a difference when you're fishing, new equipment, you know?

JST: So you don't repair nets?

JD: Well, a little bit. Enough to get by to- to see... uh, til the off season. That's when you take them off, get them worked on at the net shops and stuff. You had the good stuff during the season. There wasn't no breakdowns. Sometimes you hang up and tear up the net and that's- that's nothing unusual.

JST: When you first started shrimping, did people replace their nets every season? Or do you think they repaired them more?

JD: Repaired them more. Now nets are so expensive now, you- you best learn how to repair them. I mean, they have so much difference and you try everything, you know. Compared to \$500, they want \$2,000 for a net now, real good. And I guess it makes a difference. [Laughs]

JST: So you'd say you've seen prices change over your lifetime?

JD: Oh, yeah. They change, but shrimp prices been about the same ever since we done it.

JST: So what's changed and what hasn't?

JD: Uh, right... Well, the price of fuel. You know, like anything else, like gasoline and the nets. That's about it for that.

JST: So just the gasoline and the nets? And you said shrimp prices?

JD: Yeah, shrimp prices been about the same ever since, from 4 to \$6 a pound for the large shrimp, but they haven't never been up no different hardly. They're about the same.

JST: Did that have anything to do with you deciding to stop shrimping?

JD: No, I just, um... I- I wasn't, uh, doing too good a couple of years so I just decided to try something different.

JST: Mm-hmm. So thinking back then, you've been on the water for... How old were you when you started?

JD: Um I don't know, 16. I've been around, you know, 50 years. So-

JST: Right. So what have you seen change over your lifetime then with the water or the weather or the sea creatures? Tell me what you've seen that's-

21:53

JD: It's all about the same now. Maybe the weather is a little bit different, but-

JST: How?

JD: Well, I mean, it's like we haven't had it cold like this... like we're fixing to have in two or three years. Back in the 60s or 70s, it- it- it's a difference in the cold back then.

JST: How so?

JD: I mean, it would be freezing and we'd be out there, but now it's a lot different with the climate, or, you know, weather change or something.

JST: So you think it was a lot colder in the 60s and 70s and..

JD: Yes, ma'am, mm-hmm.

JST: And now it's not as cold?

JD: No. It's not as cold. We didn't... I don't think we had a frost last year, yeah.

JST: Okay.

JD: We've already had one this year. Well, that's the way it is, you know?

JST: Mm-hmm. Does that change the- the sea life? Does that change how the-

JD: Yeah, it changes. Uh, when the water gets cold, they bunch up. Or they... when it's warmer, they scatter it out most of the time. But when it's real cold, they bunch up in deep puddles and-

JST: And that's shrimp? Or fish? Or-

JD: Yeah, shrimp. Shrimp mostly. Shrimp. We don't even catch fish like we used to. We used to catch a lot of spots and croakers and different stuff like years ago. You don't even hear of that anymore. We could... We get them. We couldn't drag 10 minutes. You know, fill up them bags with them. But now that's unheard of for some reason.

23:28

JST: Do you think it's... Why do... Why is that different, do you think?

JD: I don't know why? Why? I don't-

JST: Is it gear? Is the gear different? Or is the number of fish?

JD: Just- just the... I guess the way the fish move around. So. And sometimes you had the big jelly balls, you know, different stuff. We had one year, two or three years they'd target jelly balls and making good money in Darien, you know. But now they- they don't fool with that now. I guess the market or something, some kind of reason.

JST: So you- you were jelly balling and now there's no market for it?

JD: No. Uh, they was... Uh, not now. In Darien. They did good for two or three years with it, off-season. Like January to April, off-season when there wasn't nothing else to catch. And they did good with them. They was processing them in Darien.

JST: Right.

JD: And I think they shut the plant down or something down there.

JST: Oh, I didn't realize that that had ended. Hm, okay. So having done this now, been on the water for around 50 years, you said-

JD: Yes, ma'am.

JST: When you think about the future of commercial fishing in Georgia, right? When you sit back and think, what will this look like? What- what do you think? What will be the boats that we see the most of? What do you think will be the strengths? What are things that worry you, big picture?

24:57

JD: I think the big boats. You know, they go in... They go as far as Virginia, now. Used to not go that far and all, but they've gotten the big freezer boats and all. You can't even find a crew hardly anymore to get people to work, just like anything else, I guess. Nobody is wanting to learn the business, fishing business, the younger people for some reason. But, well, it's not... the money is not there like it used to be, so you can't blame them for that.

JST: So what will it look like in 10 years? 20 years?

JD: I don't know. [Laughs] You can't hardly get no crew now. I don't know what it... I think up in Darien they're training some students or something. Uh, about the shrimp business, but that's first I heard of that in 30 years. They was trying to train people. But it's a good thing if they can do it.

JST: What do you think they should know, those kids that they're training up?

JD: Well, I mean, it's simple stuff, but they got to get out and see, have their on-the-job training. A book is good, but, you know, on the... on the job training is a lot... You know, it's different out on a boat in rough weather and all. It changes a lot of perspective of- of things. It gets where it... You know, it gets like that.

JST: Right.

JD: You get caught in weather. You try not to go out in the rough, but it happens.

JST: What's the worst weather you've ever been out in?

JD: Oh, shoot.

JST: Tell me about it.

26:42

JD: I think I was coming from Key West one time. Oh, God. [Laughs] It- it was nasty that... It usually takes you about 20 hours from Key West. It took me about 35, and you couldn't run hardly into this weather. There wasn't nowhere to go into, you know, any inlets or nothing between there. And it's get bad. Once you're in that you take it easy. You know, you're not trying to tear up nothing.

JST: When you say it gets bad, was it windy? Or raining?

JD: Oh, yeah. Windy, 30-40 mile an hour wind and 10 to 15 foot seas. That's- that's bad.

JST: And there was nowhere you could put in and-

JD: No. You could... There- there wasn't no inlets you could go into at the time, so-I think we did go into Cape Canaveral or something, but we were glad to get in there.

JST: I bet, wow.

JD: Yeah.

JST: And that's the worst weather you ever saw?

JD: Yeah, that's the worst. You get caught in it. Like I say, you- you're just trying to go out and in nothing like that. See, it ain't worth your time, tear up something, hurt somebody.

JST: Have you ever been injured doing... while you were-

JD: No, I haven't ever been injured.

JST: No? Or seen a bad injury?

JD: If there's bad weather, you keep everybody inside. You know? Tie everything down, you know nothing. There ain't no rolling around down in the back.

28:14

JST: Yeah. What's the worst injury you've ever seen on a boat, then?

JD: I've never seen no real injury.

JST: Good. That's good.

JD: Been lucky. I mean, yeah. You- you'd think more people would get hurt then there is, but-

JST: Right.

JD: Most of them got... You know, use your common sense, you know?

JST: Okay.

JD: You can get hurt now, if you don't pay attention, but you try and look out for everybody.

JST: Hm. So when you think about commercial fishing in Georgia right now, I know you said there's a lot fewer boats.

JD: Yeah.

JST: Do you think the people who are shrimping and are fishing, are they doing okay? What do you think is the condition?

JD: I think they're doing all right, the bigger boats, and they stay out, you know. And might have, but during the off season in January to the first of May or something. Some of them go. You know, go Cape Canaveral somewhere, North Carolina, different places. If they have to, you know, to make the payments and stuff.

JST: The people running those bigger boats, are they running them out of Georgia? Are these people you know?

JD: No, there are boats over here from Mississippi and all over here.

JST: So these are mostly non-Georgia shrimpers that are-

JD: There's a few, uh, bigger boats from Georgia. Most are Florida and North Carolina, Mississippi, like that.

JST: Mm-hmm. Who owns those bigger boats? Do you know?

JD: It's just people. Uh, the local people but they decide to just go get bigger, you know? Stay out longer, freezer boats.

JST: But you don't know who's running those out of Georgia?

JD: No. Uh, shoot Doubley is up in, uh, Savannah.

JST: Oh, okay.

JD: Frank Doubley bunch, sons and all. He's got two or three boats that they... I'd say most of them are out of Florida and a few in South Carolina, bigger boats. A few in Georgia. Like I say, they- they come... some of them boats from Texas come over here sometimes when the shrimp is good and it's slack over there.

JST: Mm-hmm. How often does that happen? Aren't they leaving good shrimping behind in the gulf?

30:30

JD: Well, they... Well, they always hear about... You know... You know, you hear somebody catching good over here and all. They put it on the internet, you know, every day, about what big drags and all, you know. It's just, uh...[Laughs] It's always green on the other side til you get there.

JST: And you said you had fished in the Gulf as well.

JD: Yeah, a little bit, a couple years.

JST: How long does it take you to get over there?

JD: Probably from St. Marys, four or five days, around the clock just to get to Texas.

JST: And was it worth it when you would get there?

JD: Yeah, it was. But most boats... or a lot of boats used to leave here and got to Texas in the summertime because they're so much better, you know, shrimp is thicker, you know. It's a much bigger area to drag around the Gulf compared to here.

JST: What would make you decide to go?

JD: What you say?

JST: When you would decide to go over to the Gulf, what was it that- that made you think, oh yeah?

JD: Well, one day a lot of the boats that you knew was going over there, so you figure you'd give a try. And you did... you'd work your way back or whatever to be back in October or something when our season was good. So a lot of them did that every year for years.

JST: Really?

JD: Now, I think there's the ice that cost so much and with the fuel and all. And just wasn't worth the while I guess.

JST: Do you remember who else used to go over?

JD: Oh, yeah. The, uh, two other guys, Calvin Lang and, he had four or five boats. They'd go every year. He'd go over and ride out over there. Every year he'd go til the rock shrimp showed out, and then he just... he don't go, you know. He did that. So he didn't have to go no more. So you ain't hearing about leaving here and going over anymore. So.

JST: No, I haven't.

JD: No, that's what I'm talking about.

JST: Yeah. But you're saying, I mean, if it takes four to five days, it sounds like the price of fuel would not make it worth it.

JD: No, you got to make it worth your while.

JST: Right.

32:40

JD: But then you don't know then, but still, but it's just a gamble. So like fishing is a gamble like throwing a hook and line in the water. You don't know if you're going to catch something or not, so. [Laughs]

JST: What was that like, then? All those years that you did it? If fishing feels like such a gamble?

JD: It's just... It's just like playing the lottery, or used to that. I mean, it was a gamble. You know, you'd talk- talk to somebody and they'd tell you where they catching and now they're so different. You don't see boats, you better not stop there. It's like hook and line fishing, you see boats, a bunch boat gathered up, they can... they're not there for nothing, they there.. But if you don't see any boats, keep it going. [Laughs] Would you not... you know, common sense.

JST: Right. Was that- that feeling of gambling, is that exciting or stressful?

JD: Yeah, it's something but it's... it ain't... No, it's just you don't... You know, make a little drag. If there ain't nothing, then you pick up and go somewhere else.

JST: So it was... it wasn't a stressful feeling?

JD: Not really, no.

JST: Okay. I always wonder. I've always wondered that.

JD: Not really. You know, it's like rolling the dice, I guess, you know?

JST: Right. Hm. So when you think about the future of the industry, like we've been talking about, what are some recommendations or some ideas you have? You've been watching this for 50 years, so as you sit back, what is advice you would give?

JD: Uh, let me see. I guess, get... Whatever you mind, you know... you love it, that's all we ever done, most of the shrimpers. You got to love it. You can't... You have to love it to, you know, do that many years. Most of them like that had good success. You get a good captain, a good crew on your boat. That's the... that's the main- main part of it. They'll catch the shrimp for you.

35:00

JST: Hm, and if you're a young person who thinks it sounds appealing, how do you know if you love it?

JD: I don't know. They have to try it.

JST: Okay, okay.

JD: Some of them thing, you know... Hey, everybody is not cut out for just like anything else. Everybody is cut out for different things. I've seen them, they make one trip, if they last one trip. But, you know, they- they hear about the big money people make, you know. It's always the case. But they think there's work to it if you're making money. [Laughs]

JST: Not easy money.

JD: No, ain't nothing easy. It just sounds easy.

JST: So we're trying in this project to get an idea of what are some of the fishing boats, the fishing vessels that are sort of iconic for the Coast of Georgia? Which- which ones have been around for a long time? Or which boats did a lot of people know or have their turn on as captain or crew? Or, you know, have been bought and sold by lots of different people? You know, what are some of those boats that- that a lot of people are aware of and familiar with?

JD: Well, everybody, you know. Everybody, you know, they call them the high liners, you know? They get out and they catch shrimp all the time.

JST: Yeah, which boats are those?

JD: Well, a lot of different boats. A boat out of Charleston, Flying Cloud.

JST: The Flying Cloud. Do you know who runs that one or owns that?

JD: Yeah, uh, Bennett. Johnny Bennett.

JST: Okay. So everyone knows the Flying Cloud? That's an icon?

JD: Oh, yeah. That boat has been around since the 60s.

JST: Really?

JD: Yes, really.

JST: That's great. What else? That's a great-

JD: Uh, Doubly- Doubly Boys, out of, uh, Savannah.

JST: Do you know any of their boats?

JD: I can't think of the name of the boats now.

37:06

JST: Okay.

JD: And the Toomers out of South Carolina. They, uh... they got new boats, too. I mean, not new boats but newer boats. I can't even think of the name of the newer boat. I have to show that book we got I was telling you about. It's got things in there.

JST: Oh, I'd love to see that. So the Flying Cloud, though, you said has been around since the 60s?

JD: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

JST: Are they... Are there any other boats like that that have been around for a long time and everyone knows them?

JD: Oh, that little old boat I was telling about 60 years named the Bernice.

JST: The Bernice?

JD: Bernice.

JST: And who- who runs that or owns that?

JD: Ross, uh, uh, Hamburger, Bernice Two. I think the name.

JST: The Bernice Two? Okay.

JD: Yeah.

JST: So that one has been around for a long time?

JD: Yeah.

JST: Okay. Are there any up in Darien?

JD: Oh, yeah. Uh, shit, the Boones, the Boone family. They've been around forever, the Boones and the... Darn it, I can't think.

JST: Not one boat that comes to mind though?

JD: No, no.

JST: Okay.

JD: I can't think. There's so many of them Boones out there.

JST: [Laughs] Yeah, there are. There are. Well, I wonder if I could ask you a little bit more about the- the Lady, um... the three boats from your family?

JD: Yeah, yeah.

JST: Is that all right if I ask you some details about them?

JD: Yes.

JST: Because we're trying to... We're trying to sort of make a map of what we know about the vessels in Georgia and then where they are and what's still running and what isn't. And so you mentioned the- the Erika and Derek was your boat?

38:46

JD: Yes, ma'am.

JST: Is it E-R-I-K?

JD: E-R-I-K-A.

JST: Erika, I'm sorry.

JD: That's alright.

JST: And-

JD: D-E-R-E-K.

JST: Okay, Erika and Derek.

JD: Yes.

JST: Okay. And then how many years did you own that?

JD: 16.

JST: Okay. And you were the owner?

JD: Yeah.

JST: And did you captain it the whole time as well?

JD: Yeah, Mm-hmm. Owner/Operator.

JST:Owner/Operator. And you mentioned the gentleman that was your good friend that you-

JD: Yeah.

JST: Worked with on that boat. Do you mind repeating?

JD: Rudolph. Rudolph Capers.

JST: Do you know how to spell his last name?

JD: C-A-P-E-R-S.

JST: Okay. And when you were owning it and operating it, did it dock at your families dock then?

JD: Yes, ma'am.

JST: And that was?

JD: The... From '75 to '92.

JST: Okay.

JD: It was built in '75.

JST: To '92, you said?

JD: Yes, ma'am.

JST: And that was... you said it was Dickey and Sons?

JD: Yes, Dickey and Sons Seafood.

JST: Was it new when you bought it? Or did you buy it-

JD: Brand new.

JST: Brand new?

JD: Yeah.

JST: So it was the Erika and Derek when it was brand new-

JD: Yeah.

JST: When you bought it. And then when you sold it, you said you sold it to someone down in the Keys?

JD: No, somebody in I knew in Fernandina Beach.

JST: Fernandina? Do you know what they named it? Did they change the name? Or-

JD: I don't think they changed the name.

JST: Okay. But you haven't run into it again over the years?

40:26

JD: No, they, uh, took and sunk it, uh, carried it offshore.

JST: On purpose?

JD: Yeah. Well, you know, that's- that's the way they do now with that. They get them busted up or whatever.

JST: Really?

JD: That was... That's probably 10 years ago. But now they just take them and piece them out, take the motor out, crush them up, haul them off. That's the way they really do it, the real way.

JST: Okay. The proper way, huh?

JD: Yeah, yeah.

JST: And then did you make any major structural changes to it? You didn't put fiberglass over the wood? Or-

JD: No.

JST: Okay. And you said it was, uh, uh... it was not a Desco?

JD: No, ma'am. Uh, Sarris, Steve Sarris built it. Sarris, Sarris, S-A-R-R-I-S. Sarris Boatyard.

JST: Okay. And you said was 60-

JD: Two-foot.

JST: Two? Okay. And I would usually ask who could tell us more about that vessel, but probably just you, huh?

JD: Yes, ma'am.

JST: All right. And then you said your dad's two boats that we talked about were the Captain Dickey and the-

JD: Lady Belle.

JST: Lady Belle. Is it B-E-L-L-E?

JD: Yes, ma'am.

JST: Okay. And do you remember what year those were built?

JD: They were built in '70, I think it was.

JST: Both of them? 1970?

JD: No, it was '60, uh... '65.

JST: 1965, both of them you think?

JD: Yes, ma'am.

JST: Did he buy them both new in '65?

JD: Yeah.

JST: Himself? Wow. That's impressive.

JD: Yeah, Descos.

JST: Descos?

JD: Yes. Yes, ma'am.

JST: And you said those were 70-

42:16

JD: Three-footers.

JST: Okay. That's where I got the three from. And you said you ran both of those- At different times, right?

JD: Oh, yes.

JST: What... Do you remember about what years you ran those?

JD: Um, I ran them six... '70 to '74.

JST: Both of them? Or which one? The Captain Dickey?

JD: The Captain Dickey '70 to '74, I run the, uh... From '65 to '70 for Lady Belle.

JST: Okay. And your- your father was the owner then, right?

JD: Mm-hmm.

JST: And you were captaining? Or crew? Or-

JD: No, captain.

JST: Okay. Same on both of those, right?

JD: That's right.

JST: Okay. And then was Mr. Rudolph on that... on those boats with you as well?

JD: Yeah, mm-hmm.

JST: Oh.

JD: Yeah.

JST: Do you remember anyone else that was on those boats with you?

JD: Well, you just pick up a... Mostly me and him did it. Just two of us.

JST: No one else that was-

JD: Well, not particularly. You just get one for the trip or something. So-

JST: Mm-hmm. So would you call him then your striker? Or your mate?

JD: The striker.

JST: Okay.

JD: Striker.

JST: And that was also Dickey and Sons where it docked, right?

JD: Yes ma'am.

JST: Okay. And then what happened to the Captain Dickey? Where'd that one end up?

JD: We sold it to two or three different people. Then I think they went to the boneyard after, you know.

JST: Oh, really? Do you remember who you sold it to?

JD: Uh, Nat Wilson down at St. Marys was the Captain Dickey. And the Lady Belle, sold it to Jimmy Munn out of South Carolina.

JST: Jimmy Munn. Do you remember about what year that was around?

JD: Right after I got off both of them, I think we sold them.

44:09

JST: So you went off of the Captain Dickey on '74?

JD: '74, yeah.

JST: Okay.

JD: That's when I got into Erika and Derek built.

JST: Okay. And so you were on the Lady Belle until the Captain Dickey.

JD: Yes, ma'am.

JST: So you went off the Lady Belle around 1970?

JD: Yes, mm-hmm.

JST: And did- did y'all do any major changes to those?

JD: No.

JST: Did you... Okay. And what happened to the Captain Dickey? You sold it and then eventually it ended up scrapped, huh?

JD: Yeah Mm-hmm.

JST: And what happened with the Lady Belle?

JD: Well, he got it. He sold it. I don't know what happened after that?

JST: Who'd you sell it?

JD: Uh, Jimmy Munn.

JST: Oh, that's right. I'm sorry. You just told me that. Okay. It's so much fun to learn about these different boats and see-

JD: Oh, yeah.

JST: You know, that it went to this person and this person and this person.

JD: Just like that, yeah. And so I say, not many of them left.

JST: Right. Right. You know, we- we... This is... This is important, right? This is Georgia history.

JD: It's Georgia history.

JST: So it really is. Well, I have run out of questions on my list here.

JD: Okay.

JST: But what else do you think we should know? That's always my last question, what should we know about shrimping in Georgia? Or shrimp boats in Georgia?

JD: I don't know. I mean, it's- it's going to be around. You got... You know, people eat shrimp. That's a known fact. [Laughs]

JST: Right, mm-hmm. All right, then.

JD: Seafood is a number one thing sometimes.

JST: Yeah.

JD: Like I say.

JST: And it's better when it's coming off a boat here.

45:56

JD: Yeah, people... A lot of people don't know what good shrimp... you know, fresh shrimp are. You know, it's sad but.

JST: Mm-hmm, that's true. Well, I'm going to turn this recorder off then, but before I turn it off I just want to say, thank you so much.

JD: You're welcome.

JST: For sitting with me and answering all these questions.

JD: [Oh yeah, happy to help.

JST: We really appreciate your time.

JD: Thank you. Appreciate y'all too.

46:19

JST: Thank you. Let me turn this off then.