

Name of Narrator(s): Thurmond (TK) and Marie (MK) Kern

Interviewers: Amber Chulawat (AC) and Sierra Sutton (SS) recorded this interview with the permission of Thurmond and Marie Kern for the research project “Boat Stories.”

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

Transcriber: Sierra Sutton

Date of Interview: November 12, 2021

Place: Brunswick, Georgia

Duration of Interview: Fifty-four minutes and fifty-four seconds (54:54)

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: The interviewers speak with Thurmond and Marie, a married couple.

General Description of Contents: Thurmond Kern and Marie Kern talk about their history with shrimping and the boats they have spent time on and owned over the course of their lives.

Thurmond tells stories of his experiences and trips he has taken for fishing excursions. The couple also discusses the fishing industry, how it has changed, and how they see it going in the future for their area.

AC: So, this is an interview with, and if y'all can state your names?

TK: Thurmond Kern

MK: Marie Kern

AC: And it is November 12, 2021. This interview is being conducted in Brunswick, Georgia, and is a part of a research project and interview collection titled "Boat Stories." The interviewers are Amber Chulawat, Sierra Sutton.

00:00:23

SS: If you guys would like, would you tell us about your current or most recent fishing vessel?

TK: Lady Raven is ours and named after my granddaughter. And we keep her..

MK: Locally.

TK: Locally. We don't go nowhere. In and out every day. What else you wanna know?

AC: How long have you had it?

MK: About three years.

TK: Probably two or three years, three years.

MK: Goin' on three years. He went to retire, so he sold the other boat. He didn't like retirement, so he had to go get another boat.

TK: Yeah, I've owned five or six boats over the years. This is the last one we bought. But you piddle with it. You know, we just day fish, we don't go nowhere we just stay right around here. We should travel all the time, but we done got too old for that. But now, we just hang around. But, the fishing is so bad, this is bout two years when that old ship sunk on down here. I probably make our living right there. Y'all need to ask some questions! I don't know what to do!

SS: Well, I was just going to let you keep talkin'! [Laughing]

AC: What were the names of your other boats that you mentioned?

TK: Had the Wawee, that was the first one I had. Then I had the Little Andy, that's the second one.

MK: Cap'n Jack.

TK: Cap'n Jack, had that, and then we had the Miss Marie. Then we had the Warrior. It used to be the Red Tomater but I changed it to Warrior. We got the Lady Raven. I thought I was gonna retire, but I couldn't do it. Too much in your blood.

MK: Salt.

00:02:42

AC: Do you have any memories on these boats?

TK: A bunch of them. A bunch of cruel ones, deadly ones. [Marie laughing.] I fell there about three years ago?

MK: On the boat?

TK: Yeah, shoved a piece of pipe, one inch pipe in my back. Went alone took out seven ribs and it almost hit the dust, but we survived it. So, we still kickin'. And it's like a season, the ship HAS destroyed us, but we in and out every day we fish my friend Jake, in St. Simons all the time. September on, and they got, we leave the dock, in forty-five minutes we draggin', we make a two to three hour drag, and we come on back home. But without a ship there, you can't turn nothin'. And we got so many out of state boats, that drag 24 hours a day offshore and that kills the little man anyway. So, we need to get that limit, that twelve mile limit on closure. Have y'all been taught that?

AC: We touched on some of that. We touched on some of those topics, but this is about you..

TK: About me?

AC: Yeah, we're interviewing you right now. [Laughter]

TK: Interview her, [gestures to Marie] Put up with me.

MK: You the one with the boat, and you're the one that goes out there. I don't do that. So, you talk.

TK: But that' all, there ain't much to say but the season and the 12 mile limit. It close at night time, but they drag around the clock. But we don't want, whatever, we stay in shore and beaches and like where our ships at we don't all get nowhere very far from the land. Bout four or five mile, but that's it. We come on back home. Every day we go like clockwork. Get up at 4:30, go fishin', come in. Seven days a week.

00:04:56

AC: Do you have any other memories associated with these boats?

TK: Other memories? With the Cap'n Jack, I had a fella call me one day and I was at home and he called me early that morning and said, "Thurmond, the boat sunk." I thought it was the Cap'n Mack, when I got to the dock it was the Cap'n Jack. It sunk, so, right there by the university. I lost that boat, we had to crush it. Pick it out with a crane, carried it to the bank, and they chopped it up. It was 72 foot, they chopped it up, hauled it off. That was the only one we ever lost, but

other than that, we've been pretty good. We've been lucky. Over the years, we ain't had too much trouble. Have we?

MK: No.

TK: You can talk, too. What do you think about fishing life? [Laughter]

MK: Just keep going.

TK: I'm about burnt out right there.

MK: You got how many more minutes?

TK: How many more minutes? Fifty minutes?

AC: Yes.

MK: That's what you started with. You've talked about four.

TK: Can you add that all up by about five or ten? That's be forty minutes, fifty minutes.

AC: We're gonna keep you with us until you get tired of us.

00:06:36

TK: I don't know what to say, I mean this year the sharks have been really terrible. They just eat us up, I mean, I'd've put four nets on the load and they just destroyed it. That's somethin' gotta be done about that, too. They will just eat a net to pieces. You take it up real slow, you turn around in a circle, they eat the whole bottom out of a net, the wings out of a net.

MK: They're trying to eat up the shrimp and fish and stuff

TK: They're eatin' 'em. They bite the bag, you lose your drag. There's somethin' gotta be done about that. Y'all gonna stop that?

AC: Well, I don't know if we can... Someone can.

MK: Well, it's going on the computer so somebody can see it.

TK: Somebody can say, "hey, I need to stop the sharks." They sharks, they's terrible.

MK: They only way they gonna stop them is to let y'all have a gun.

TK: There's a fella aboard this year, but in a month a buncha sharks, this isn't a story, this is true. The boy fell overboard, and a dolphin got around that boy, believe that or not, now I think it saved that boy's life. They got the boy back on the boat. He didn't get bit.

MK: He didn't get eat.

TK: Eat, swallowed 'em, yeah. Fifty minutes?!

00:08:12

AC: You can discuss more memories you had on the boat. Any tales you got, any favorite memories y'all have. If you know of any of his memories, you can prompt him.

TK: I don't know, I've got all kind of memories. Y'all know Lindsay Parker, you know him? He fished with me for years. I was runnin' the Bulldog at one time and Lindsay was on the Mornin' Star. And I got tired of running the Bulldog. And I called Lindsay to come give me a break. And Dave Harrington was over the university, but he worked there he was a big big fellow. Well, I never come back. So Lindsay got my job. And that's what happened to Lindsay. Lindsay a good fella. That's one of my boat memories. But, I don't know. Years ago, we'd fish up and down the beach, just over in the gulf, when I was younger I'd stay gone for three or four years over in the Gulf. We'd come back home and have it started back here again. That's when we got the Cap'n Jack when I come back home and started fishing back in Georgia. Up, down the beach in Key West and back and I got rid of the Cap'n Jack and got I got the uh..

MK: Miss Marie

TK: Miss Marie, and I just stay home. And then I sold that boat, then I got the Red Tomater. Kept it a while. Then I sold it, went to retire, and I couldn't retire, so we got the Lady Raven. And I'm still back at it again. I'm gettin ready to retire again, but I ain't comin' back fishin'. It's just too hard because of the big old factory boats are here dragging around the clock and stay off shore. They got the sound closed. We used to drag the sound all the time, we used to catch conchs, but we caught all the conchs up so there ain't no more conchs. Then we'd crab a while, and then there ain't no more crabs

MK: Well, why don't you go sharkin'?

TK: I'd love to go sharkin', they didn't put a limit on it I probably would.

MK: They're endangered. You can't

TK: I would say somethin' bout the government, but I ain't gonna do it, what's the word for it?

MK: The less you say about that the better you're gonna be. Nothing.

TK: How can anybody talk fifty minute?

MK: You normally talk more than that.

TK: But, Marie, you gotta be nice here. Conversations ain't very nice.

00:11:25

SS: We could talk about your most recent boat and what kind of boat it was. Was it wood hull, fiberglass...

TK: This last one I got is wood fibreglassed over. I got 8 55 cumpers in it. And we just got it off the railway, it'd been on the railway 14 days. Put another shaft in it and another wheel. Repower the bottom of it, it was three and a half we put it back to a four and a half, got more power now so we done all that now we won't put a bigger run in the shrimp and ain't there ain't none. What you gonna do about that? You can't tell me somethin'?

AC: We're just here to ask you questions.

TK: Then ask me one.

00:12:18

AC: Which one was your favorite boat?

TK: Cap'n Jack

AC: The Captain Jack? Why was that?

TK: It was a pretty good sized boat, I stayed on it the whole time back and forth, we'd take it to the Gulf, Key West, and back here.

MK: And it was named after his daddy.

TK: And the Miss Marie was named after her. And the Lady Raven is named after my granddaughter. And the Red Tomater was named after I don't know what. Must've been that movie. The Red Tomater. You need to talk Marie.

MK: You doin' okay.

TK: But the main thing I can I can let you know if that ships in a way, if you can't fish there, you won't never fish there, you live the way I live. They never clean it up. They pile tons and tons of rock round that ship where that ship lay, they just drag it right there, bout trat it that ship there. 15-20 baskets a drag. Now they get a little rock.

MK: You shoulda brought Johnny with ya [talking over one another].

TK: Didn't y'all interview Johnny Bennett a while ago?

AC: We weren't the ones that interviewed him another member from our group did.

TK: Johnny Bennett? We couldn't stand us together, so they went and interviewed him.

MK: They learnt that a long time ago. Not to put you two together

TK: That ain't very nice. Ask any more questions?

00:14:13

AC: How'd you start fishing?

MK: He's third generation.

AC: Third generation

TK: Yeah, I'm third generation. I went fishing my daddy. I know I was in a dropboat when I was born.

MK: Dear, God

TK: I stayed on a boat all my life. 78 years of it. Time to quit ain't it? I don't know if it's time to quit or not. Got a few more years left, so I'm gonna keep tickin at it anyway. What else, now?

00:14:52

AC: Did your father have a boat? What was the name of that one?

TK: Rosewell. He had a couple more, he had more named the Mike,

MK: Swansboro

TK: Swansboro

MK: That's his last one.

TK: Swansboro was his last one. He had more. That was the old days when they had old gasoline motors in 'em. You take a motor out of a car and throw it in the boat, when you want to throw the other motor away, you gotta throw it overboard. The gasoline motor going.

MK: It was old.

TK: Old. So, my daddy fished all his life. He retired, but granddaddy was a fisherman. Then we're gonna

MK: Carry on.

TK: I'm about carried out.

MK: I don't know what it is.

TK: Now, any more questions?

00:15:54

SS: I have a question about the boats that you've had. Did they have any other names before you had them?

MK: Oh, yeah

SS: Do you remember what those were?

TK: The Cap'n Jack was the John B. But the Wawee was the Wawee and Little Andy was the Little Andy, and the Miss Marie I don't remember the name of that thing, somethin'.

MK: I don't remember it either.

TK: But, the Red Tomater was named after the Atlanta, not the Atlanta, but the Football team. Alabama?

MK: The Bama Boys.

TK: The Bama boys, that's what it was. I mean, we'd had the Red Tomater, Then I sold it to John Todd and he named it the Warrior. It's still floatin'. All of 'em still floatin' but Cap'n Jack. Don't know what names they're called now.

MK: But it didn't when you owned it.

TK: No.

MK: Well.

TK: Waitin' on you now.

00:17:07

SS: Do they have the same names now as they did when you said some of them are still floating? Do they still the same names or have they changed?

TK: Well, the Red Tomater, it was the River Red, the boy that bought it from me. And he just sold it the other day and they named it somethin' else, I don't know what it is now. But, the Cap'n Jack is sunk. I don't know what else.

MK: And the Po'boys is the Warrior.

TK: Yep, it was the Poor Boys, it was another name too. But now it's the Warrior

MK: Every time you buy a boat, it changes hands, they change the name

TK: And Lady Raven was uh..

MK: Twilight

TK: Twilight. When they built it we named it Twilight and it was thirty somethin' years old I reckon. It was still named the Twilight, but I named it to Lady Raven. They all got mad in McIntosh because I changed the name of the boat. Oh, well. Drop another one on me.

00:18:22

SS: Can you tell me about the people who worked with you on these boats?

TK: They all dead. They are all...

MK: Well, not Johnny Bennett.

TK: But, Johnny Bennett he fished with me when he was a jitterbug and Ronald Ray Bennett (?) worked with me, his brother and then I had a colored fella workin' for me, named Henry Bags. He was a fine fella. And now I have another one named Dogman. His name is Bobby Darcy.

Then I had another one named Duke, his name was Lionel Rickman. But he worked for me for 20 somethin' years he passed away and Dogman worked just about 20 years and he passed away. And Duke, he still livin' but, Johnny Bennett worked for me when he was a boy. Lindsay Parker worked for me for about four or five years, but I put him on the Bulldog so I wound that up with him. Now I got Adam McDowell and..

MK: Eddie

TK: Eddie

MK: Dixon

TK: Dixon. For now. I reckon they gonna retire too.

MK: All of ya need to.

TK: We're slowly fading out. There used to be a bunch of boats here at one time, about seven or eight, it might've been fifteen or twenty fish houses here at one time. It was a pile a boats here one time. And there ain't but I think

MK: One fish house

TK: Eight, maybe eight boats. Seven, eight boats are left here. Big difference ain't it?

MK: But you'll find that up and down the coast all over.

TK: Its everywhere. Most are fading out, in Georgia anyway.

00:20:31

MK: Building condos and things. Terrible. But, we're old, so, they're not gonna put us out of business our age is.

TK: I know we're gonna fade out all by ourselves ain't we.

MK: Right

TK: We going to go to the happy hunting ground?

MK: They don't want you

TK: I know they don't want me. I'ma be in an animation.

MK: He's got to be betwixt and between because you can't go there. They don't want him he can't go down there, they don't want him. So, he's gonna be in the middle

TK: Ain't that something? How bout you say about cha?

MK: That's good, that's good.

TK: Yeah, I'll be here for a long time to come.

00:21:18

AC: That kind of connects with some of the questions we have. So one of the questions that we have to ask is ‘How do you think commercial fishing is doing now and how does it compare from when you started?’

TK: Oh, it’s terrible.

MK: It’s awful.

TK: It’s awful. I mean, like I say, the factory boats, the freezer boats they go out there and drag twenty-four hours a day. When that row shrimp come, they don’t ever quit, you know? And we get up in the morning, boogie out yonder and they done drug it to death, and we boogie on back

MK: It’s hard to make a living right now. It really is.

TK: It’s hard for a decent man to make a living, but [they begin talking over each other] Big fellas, they’re doin’ good. Big factory boats. Cause they don’t shut ‘em down, they catch the shrimp, they clean the bottom up. They close it up as well about twelve miles out. I don’t know if there’s gonna be enough of the generation to come do it again or not. Another generation. All my kids quit. I have one in a tugboat business and he passed away and my other one, he quit, and he went into construction work. So, he’s out of it, so. But they fished all their life with me. But, his youngest boy, he’s, can’t remember, ‘bout five years, didn’t he?

MK: Before he started the school

TK: Yeah, before he went to school, when he got to go to school, he didn’t know what to do. I ain’t leavin’ daddy But, I’d probably think about it.

MK: It’s not an occupation I’d recommend.

TK: I got my kids out of it. I told them they got to do somethin’ else. Cause it got bad. And the help. There ain’t no such thing as help no more. Everywhere you look now, help wanted. It’s the same way with these boats. Help wanted. Can’t get no crew to do any a that. They don’t know what to do, they can’t get somebody to help with to

MK: It’s on a downhill slide.

TK: Whata ya say?

MK: It’s on a downhill slide.

TK: It’s been on a downhill slide.

MK: It’s bad. Okay next question. They’re out questions.

AC: No, we’re not.

MK: Oh, God

00:24:02

TK: I didn't bring my watch. How we doin'?

AC: I'm not gonna let you know. [Laughter] Cover it up, Sierra, don't let 'em know. Now, why do you continue shrimpin'? Why do you continue shrimpin'?

MK: Its in his blood.

TK: You can't get it out yer blood. I tried to quit one time, I went to work for my uncle, carpenter work. And I went down to St. Simon Pier to look around and them boats were draggin', and I went back down to carpenter work, and I went and got me a job on a boat. You can't get it out yer blood. Sure can't. I can't get it out a mine, no way. She can't get it outta her either. Can ya? Drop another one on me now.

00:25:12

AC: With your new boat, with your new boat, your current boat, how you likin' it? What sort of things have you done with it so far?

TK: How I like my new boat? I must like it, 'cause I sure spent some money on it. But, it's alright. I enjoy it. Its old like me. I do like to take my time with it. But it serves a purpose, anyway. You can't find another one? You can't find another one better than that?

SS: Alright. Will you tell me the funniest thing that's ever happened on one of your boats?

00:25:56

MK: The funniest...

TK: Theres a bunch of them. I don't know where to start.

SS: Tell 'em all.

TK: I don't know. Cutting a fool with the people is one thing with my crew, I used climb up in the rigging, jump down in the rigging, jump down on the back. Play with 'em, wrassle with 'em. Always kept cutting a fool, keep the spirit up in 'em. But, we always cutting a fool, doin everything. Like, old Lindsay, my buddy Lindsay Parker. We used to put him in a chair and had a whip line hanging to the boon. Lindsay'd be in a chair, that boat'd get to rockin', it'll sling him out to the end a the out riggers. Then it'd sling him back and I'd have to grab 'em or it'd sling him overboard. But that was Lindsey, that was a good youngin'. Yeah, there're a bunch of stories you could tell. Cutting a fool and carrying on, runnin' aground.

MK: He met a bunch a people, too. All up 'n down the coast

TK: Yeah, all the way, meet different people. Get along with everybody. Had some bad seeds and some good seeds.

MK: Mosta them in his group passed away.

TK: They all gone! I'm last a the Mohican

MK: I'm not lookin' at chu.

TK: [can't understand] But it ain't that many old people left. I'd say, Bobby Waters. That's about it, ain't it? Reverend he's retired, he was out in his trucking business but he's out of it. I reckon Johnny Bennett's still...

MK: Johnny Bennett's still in it. And he'll die in it.

TK: He'll die in it. He ain't got no more sense than me.

MK: But he come from fishin' too.

TK: Yeah, he was raised in the fishin' business. He was born and raised in it.

MK: He sure is stiff right now, ain't he?

TK: All the people are gone.

MK: All the shrimp's gone too

TK: This is the worst year I ever seen.

MK: It's the year of the shark.

TK: The shark been killin' us for three or four years. And I don't know why they stopped catching sharks. Can y'all answer that question for me? Y'all answer a question for me?

AC: I'm not sure if I can answer that one. But

TK: I'm doin' my best to answer your questions.

AC: We can answer any questions after the interview, how about that?

TK: You gonna put it on the internet, on the computer so I can watch it? What chu gonna do about the shark?

SS: We'll find a way

AC: I can't promise you but we'll find a way

MK: I hope this is going to be edited.

AC: It can be

MK: They got to

00:29:46

AC: Do you have any memories with like the people that you met over the years that you want to discuss? Any?

TK: They all gone too

AC: The memories?

TK: They all gone too, they gone, I took my memories out.

MK: Think when you get old, you lose yer memory anyway.

TK: Yeah. It all fall out. But, I said, we travel all over east coast and the west coast.

MK: All the way down to Texas.

TK: Went to Cuba. Spent nineteen days in Cuba. Brought back 248 Cubans. That was quite a experience. They put me in jail, came and got me with a gun and walked me in Key West, and they were gonna lock me up for bringin' them Cubans back.

MK: Do y'all know what he's talking about?

SS: Yes, ma'am.

TK: That was quite an experience.

MK: Bet you even had a good time over there.

TK: I had a good time. We wasn't scared of 'em. I had my own gun, too, had my gun under the seat. When I left Cuba, I gave my gun to my other buddy, he had my gun, we come outta Cuba with 248 people. They told me to go anchor up, and it was loaded down. Come to the United States.

MK: Then the Coast Guard got 'eem, and had to turn him around cause the boat was in distress and he had to go get those people

TK: I got Cuban waters in United States and I got going on to Key West and I got a helicopter got on top of me told I had to go back get two more boats. I had to go back, and they were speed boats now, had to pull the youngins and all in their speed boat, it rocked. I went back in and got them and got them on the boat. We go on to Key West. That was an experience right there. Met all kinds of different people. Good people, bad people.

MK: Kinda hard to tell difference.

TK: We had prisoners on the boat. Old people. It was rough, we were coming back. Old people they ended up up on the bow, the water sprayed in over the bow of the boat, I had to get them to come inside.

MK: Freedom

TK: Them old people wasn't.. we gotta go, come on

MK: That was their freedom

TK: Yeah. Goin' to freedom. Good people. Talkin' on me. I don't know what to tell ya. I mean I been fishin' thing a the past.

MK: thing of the past

TK: to old people it a thing a the past for us. Everything is like that ship in the way, that ship is killin' us.

MK: It's already killed us, oh well.

TK: We caught bumpers, car bumpers, grill, all kinds of stuff of that thing. Them others talked fifty minute?

00:33:30

TK: Ain't no way. I bet that Johnny probably could. I don't think a bunch of 'em did.

AC: Some of 'em did. Some of 'em talked for hours.

TK: We best ta be outta time, ain't we? Thirty-three minutes. [Laughter] I don't know.

MK: Where do y'all go to school?

AC: At Georgia Southern

MK: Yeah

TK: Georgia Southern? That's where my granddaughter gonna go. She was gonna go there.

MK: I wish she did. She stayed here in Brunswick. But she does her work from home.

AC: Are any of your grandchildren interested in shrimpin'?

00:34:17

MK: They better not be.

AC: I asked if any of your grandchildren are interested in shrimping...

TK: My grandson, one day I got 'em a pair a boots and carried 'em fishin', he said "pop, I like this here". What I done, I took his boots and threw 'em overboard. Then I never carried him back.

MK: He's fixin' to graduate. Accounting. Its no place for kids.

TK: No, I wouldn't want my... There a buncha bad people in it too. It ain't the people, it the people who've worked for 'em You can't keep nobody straight. They always messed up on stuff, most of 'em got a bad habit. Don't show up for work. I had one this mornin' didn't show up for

work. Paired up my other fella with a greenhorn. That wadn't too good. Too much fun today. Come in and just [claps].

MK: You gotta have good crew.

TK: Yeah, good crew. You ain't got a good crew...

MK: That puts a lot of pressure on the captains

TK: And my old people, I had them for 20 years they was ace. Number one. Never late, never done nothin'. Know what to do. This generation now, they be there today and gone tomorra. Am I done now? Y'all ain't treatin' me right, now.

00:36:07

AC: I'm sorry. We kind of touched on this already but I kind of want to pick your head a little more. So, we talked about the commercial fishing. So, what are recommendations that you have that you think would have for the future of commercial fishing? [phone rings]

TK: Don't go fishing.

MK: Turn your phone off.

TK: Might be Johnny. I don't know who that is.

MK: Turn it off.

TK: I would recommend nobody go fishing, I wouldn't. I mean it's a good life, you know,

MK: It was.

TK: But if you don't get one of them factory boats, them big old freezer boats you ain't gonna make no, you make a living but I wouldn't recommend nobody.

MK: You not gonna get a big boat

TK: Not my kid, no way.

MK: They too set in their ways now. Yeah, they wouldn't go anyway.

TK: I got mine out of it. But I can't get it out my blood. She can't get it outta her blood either. If I weren't fishing I sure wouldn't be satisfied. I couldn't stay home.

MK: There's not enough grass in the yard to keep him busy so he's has to go fishin'. How we doin' now?

00:37:55

AC: How long do you go fishin' in a day? Do you do day trips, or...?

TK: Day fish. I might make four hour, I might make twelve hour. If shrimps runnin', I might make a whole day, you know, but. Like today. Today I went out and I was probably gone about five hours. Didn't catch nothin. How do you like that?

AC: But that kind of goes with another question...

TK: Go ahead and drop it on me.

00:38:31

AC: Have you noticed any difference in the environment as you've been fishing? You spoke about there being less shrimp, do you wanna...

TK: The shrimp is nothing like it used to be. The sound, cause see, I used to drag in the sound and it had a big freeze and we had DNR close the sound up just a trial run and then the DNR kept it closed we never opened back up. We used to make a good living in the sound. But we kept the sound cleaned out cut all the trash out of it. Cleaned the mud out of it. And the shrimp can feed on it. Now its all growed up, it really hurts, the sound being closed. But yeah, it will never open back up. We need it to open it back up, clean it up. And like I say put a limit on that 12 mile night draggin', that would help a bunch. You gonna work on that?

AC:I'll let someone know. I can let someone know.

TK: Drop it on 'em, huh? I know we commin' to a close.

00:39:45

AC: I'm gonna keep you going. You mentioned your favorite boat. When we were talking about your favorite boat earlier, what was so unique about that boat? Was there anything that you felt like made it stand out extra among the others?

TK: What boat I thought would be the best boat I had? Well, the one I made the most money on. That was the Cap'n Jack.

MK: Cause you had it longer

TK: I had it longer. I had it a good many years and make good money with it. I had a good life. I had a good crew. Made money. Everybody was happy. That's when we went up and down the east coast and went to the gulf and back. That's the one I made money with, Cap'n Jack.

00:40:39

AC: What years did you have that boat?

MK: Oh, gosh, I don't know

TK: God. I don't even remember. I don't remember when I got it.

MK: I don't remember the day, 'course I ain't got no memory either.

TK: I know when I got the Jack, the Cap'n Jack, it was named the John B. And I took it off the railway with it. Was in Saint Mary's. And we put it over board, and I went back the next mornin', there was a fire truck down there, I seen the fire truck but I didn't see the boat. Know where the boat was at? [points down]

MK: It was sunk.

TK: It sunk. It came off the railway and it sunk.

AC: Do you know why it sunk?

TK: Yeah. It'd been sittin' at the docks so long in the sun it'd dried by the sea net in it, and it had long outriggers, and that boat was leanin' a long time, and I picked the outrigger up and my high seam was over here when I picked the outrigger up, the high seam was right there.

MK: And it took on water.

TK: It took on water and it sunk. That experience. But the St. Mary's city department, they pumped it out, got it up for me, didn't charge me no money. They were nice to me. They feel sorry for me.

00:42:22

TK: You got another one?

SS: What do you understand about fishin' vessels now that you didn't when you first started fishing?

TK: When I first started fishin', everythin' was by hand. You pulled the nets in by hand, and you put 'em out by hand. We didn't have no winch. We pulled the ropes in by hand, the nets in by hand, doors in by hand, put nets up by hand. And then we went to rope rig, with a brass head you could pull a bunch of rope tow lines goes to the doors and the nets, but it had a rope, a big ol' long rope on it, 300 feet of rope, each side the doors. You put it in that brass spool and it take the nets up with the rope rig. Then we went to cable rig with a winch. Had the cable, double rig, four rig, that the way it was. I was the first one to ever pull four nets. In Georgia. The University of Georgia, they got me goin with pullin four nets. They did. Done good with 'em too.

MK: Cause there was shrimp.

TK: There was some shrimp, though. But, now there ain't no shrimp. Now, there's no shrimp, but there'll be some later on maybe. Everybody leavin' out goin' to North Carolina. They catchin' the shrimp, they bailin'. Know what that mean, don't cha? Know what bailing means?

SS: No, I do not. Can you explain it?

TK: They load the wagon down, they catch a bunch of ‘em,

MK: He’s not goin’ back to Carolina

TK: But I ain’t goin’ back to Carolina. I might fly over it in a airplane, but stay outta Carolina. I had some bad experiences in Carolina, I don’t like it. Do we?

MK: No. Okay, next.

00:44:44

SS: You talked about how you would go over to Texas. How would fishin or shrimpin in Texas compare to shrimpin Georgia?

TK: Well, we fished in Texas in mostly night time. In the mornin’ we’d catch white shrimp, then we’d drag around in Florida. But, see, I had a uncle, he run the fishhouse in Rander’s Pass {?}

MK: And Key West

TK: And Key West, he had two fish houses, he would manage them in Key West when he was in Rander’s Pass {?} and I fished with him in Rander’s Pass {?} and Key West. And then I’d crab for another fish house the King Shrimp Company, and I’d fish for him in Key West. But, that was an experience for sure. Pretty cool, but, I enjoyed fishin’ the gulf. The night draggin’. It was just, made good money. Had ta come back home and I mean help my dad and went back to Texas.

MK: Only in the car

TK: They did Key West, back and forth. Down the beach. Met a buncha people. Had a buncha friends. I know yer anxious to ask me another one. Lookin’ at yer book.

00:46:13

AC: Which boat did you take to Texas?

MK & TK: Cap’n Jack.

TK: Then I run one when call up, the shrimp boat, that was the name o’ it. I fished it in Texas a lot. And fella sold it, but I got the Cap’n Jack, the John B. I kept it a long, a couple years, then I name it the Cap’n Jack. But, at the day of the dawn in Texas.

MK: After that there was some big ol’

TK: Big ol’ glass boat. Glass, big ol’ [can’t understand] boat, I brought over, yeah. Bought a buncha boats.

00:47:00

AC: Do you remember the experiences on those boats? Do you remember any of the experiences on those boats?

TK: No. We outta time, aren't we?

AC: You say that every five minutes. You been checkin' on that every five minutes.

MK: He's usin' up his time askin' about the time.

TK: That idn't bad. Our biggest thing, for us not for me, this is my last year, I'll be quit, but, if they don't open the sound back up and clean the bottom up, stop this night draggin, soon, it's gonna be over with with us. The little man. Now, the deep fella, he'll keep on goin'. You can't knock them down, you know, cause they got them big ol' boats and they gotta go. But, the little fella, bad time.

00:48:24

TK: What you gotta say? Anything?

SS: I mean I'm interested in the people you've met. You keep talking about how you've met so many interesting people but I haven't heard much about them. You haven't said much about them.

TK: I met a bunch of people. I mean good people, bad people, fightin' people, lovin' people,

MK: killin' people

TK: killing people.

MK: But, you meet all kinda people.

TK: Met all kind. We had a buncha people in Key West called the Dirty Bunch.

MK: The motorcycle riders

TK: Motorcycle riders. And they was kinda...

MK: They were good people though.

TK: They were good people but a boogry people. They were good, you know,

MK: They were daylight people. You didn't wanna mess with them in the dark. But they were good people.

SS: I know you've got stories!

00:49:46

TK: We met all kind a people.

MK: Yup, all up and down the coast.

TK: Yeah, some of 'em were good, some of 'em were bad, but they were good.

MK: And they went all these different places in packs. They did

TK: There was a pack a 'em.

MK: There was a pack of 'em, the boats that went, and they stayed together, they took care of each other.

SS: What were some of those boats? You said some of those boats stayed in groups?

TK: Yeah, we had a fleet to go with us.

MK: When he left here, they was a buncha boats, all together, and they'd go different places together. They'd stay together.

SS: Do you remember the names of those boats?

TK: Yeah, the Delores D, The Popsy. There a buncha 'em, I just can't think of 'em.

MK: What was Tammy's boat?

TK: Yeah, Outsider.

MK: Outsider, [begin talking over each other].

TK: Ocean Able, The Created. I don't know, I, Cecil or Mindy's boat. I can't remember that. There was a, the Bread Winner. Water Burger? I think Water Burger. What was,

MK: Mindy and Cecil? I don't remember.

TK: You know, I don't know, I can't remember. Oh, yeah, Playin' Dead. That count?

MK: All those people are gone too.

TK: Everybody's gone. Ain't any one of them alive.

MK: Tammy.

TK: Tammy's the only one livin'. There.

MK: Okay, time's up. He's got a crew member sittin' down at the dock waitin' to go home.

TK: He's waitin' for the truck

MK: He has to take him.

TK: I know we outta time now. Don't cover up that phone.

MK: Look at the bear.

TK: Oh, yeah. Is that a clock or a telephone.

AC: Phone

MK: It's just a cover on it.

TK: Say we got, seven minutes, eight minutes to go. I don't know what to. Ask her somethin'. She'll tell ya a story. Couldn't ya?

00:52:55

MK: No, my mouth hurts, I ain't talkin'

AC: Well, do you have any memories about him shrimpin and that sort of thing you wanna share?

MK: See what you did? Don't get me started.

TK: She got a bunch a memories.

MK: No, I don't. It got knocked out. But anyway, now we finished. Our time's up.

AC: Do you have any final things you want to say?

TK: I'm hard a hearing, what'd you say?

AC: Do you have any final things you want to say about the topic or anything?

TK: I'm done, I'm fine. Kill the sharks, get ridda them. That good, ain't it?

MK: That's a whole different situation

TK: I just think it's a dying breed but little man. The little man's everybody, the little man's gone. Like me, goin' outta business but the freezer boats. Ice houses getting ready to go outta business, because we got one ice house here. Our way is done. No ice houses, ice boats with their own freezer. And they ain't fit ta eat.