

**Name of Narrator:** Jimmy Moore (JM)

**Interviewer:** Freddy Lee (FL) and Kassidy Gunn (KG) recorded this interview with the permission of Jimmy Moore.

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

**Transcriber:** Freddy Lee

**Others present:** No other people were present.

**Date of Interview:** November 13, 2021

**Place:** McIntosh County, Georgia

**Duration of Interview:** Fifty nine minutes and thirty six seconds (59:36)

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

**Context of the interview:** Student interviewers sit down with Jimmy Moore, a retired local fisherman.

**General Description of Contents:** Jimmy Moore discusses his history of working on fishing vessels. He tells stories about his close relationships with other members of the commercial fishing industry. He also outlines the changes he has seen over the years in the industry, and how he is amazed by all the advances that have been made in relation to fishing vessels.

0:00:01

FL: This is an interview with Mr. Jimmy Moore on November 13th, 2021. The interview is conducted in McIntosh, Georgia. It is part of the research project and interview collected titled, 'Boat Stories'. The interviewers are Cassidy Gunn and Freddy Lee. But before we begin, do you still consent to being interviewed?

JM: Yeah, I've signed all that for that lady a while ago.

FL: If you feel uncomfortable or anything, just let us know, or any questions that you feel uncomfortable with.

JM: I appreciate that.

FL: Thank you. Could you please tell us about your current-

JM: The first thing I need to tell you, is I'm deaf, I got a hearing aid in both ears, and you need to talk louder. And I would feel better if you had that off so I could hear ya. Now excuse me, go ahead.

FL: Could you please tell us about your current or most recent fishing vessel? The boat, the name of it, any prior names?

JM: That's the one I owned for twenty years and I sold it to Bill. I now own half of a boat named Brenda K with Bill. He owns half of it and I own half of it.

FL: How long have you been on your current boat for?

JM: I'm not on the boat, I just am part owner.

FL: So you wouldn't necessarily have a role as captain or striker?

JM: Uh, I haven't been either one for twenty years. I been retired.

FL: What kind of boat is it, the material that it's made out of, is it similar to other boats here in Georgia?

JM: Yes, boat I got now is Saint Augustine trawler.

FL: What material is it made out of?

JM: Fiberglass. The boat prior to that was the Captain Merritt. And it was the same Desco boat.

FL: What has this boat been on the years you were on it, or before your time. Where was it mainly fished?

JM: I don't understand, say that again.

FL: Where was the boat mainly fished at?

JM: Anywhere from Virginia state line, round through Texas.

FL: What would you say makes that boat really special? If you had to point out one really great characteristic about it.

JM: That I got it paid for. Is that an answer enough for you? I'm serious! That was a special day to me when I got it paid for.

FL: Could you tell me about the people that worked on the boat?

JM: That work on it now?

FL: Yes sir.

JM: Boat I got now, got a young feller on it and his name was Blake and he's doing a fine job. Uh, and Bill and I both are very pleased with him.

FL: How long is the boat?

JM: Seventy five foot.

FL: How many strikers are on the boat?

JM: Two. Normally if you can get two people that want to work anymore.

FL: So far, what would you say is the funniest memory that's happened on the boat, since you've owned it?

JM: Hard to say 'cause everything we do, we all, all of us are happy go lucky people so we laugh a lot. I don't know really how to answer that, uh..Bill's a good person to own the boat with. And this young kid is really enjoying working with us and so we're all happy go lucky of course and every day changes. Somebody could get mad for some reason but that hasn't happened in two years with us so I think it's going to be the best. I think everyday's happy. That's a poor answer for you but that's the truth.

FL: How would you describe his personality? Is he just like uplifting, getting everybody like..

JM: The captain? Is that what you're talking about? The captain?

FL: Not just the captain, but just like the overall crew, you guys mentions happy go lucky.

JM: Bill's like a son to me, and the captain, him and Bill are very close friends, he's impressed me so I'm impressed with both of 'em. 79 years old, it's easy to impress me. [chuckles] You liked that answer didn't you?

FL: So before this boat, you said you had that boat, were there any previous ones before those two? What were they called, if you had any.

JM: Okay, let's see. I had a boat named the Kathy, was a boat built in Holden's Beach, North

Carolina; had a boat named the Lindy, was built in Holden's Beach, North Carolina, and I had a boat named the Cindy, which was built in Holden's Beach, North Carolina. I was at that time from South Port, North Carolina, and me and my dad were in that together so we built three boats up there. I always wanted a Desco boat so I bought it. Then Bill wanted a Saint Augustine trawler so we bought that one.

0:06:00

FL: So was fishing and shrimping in your family?

JM: My father started shrimpin' when he was 14 in 1932.

FL: How did he get started?

JM: Well I wasn't there. I'll try to answer that. I'll try to be honest! He and his, he had three sisters and a brother and his mother and father separated. About a year prior to that, they had built something you'll have never heard of. They built a home from Sear's Roebuck. You've never heard of that have you? Back in the tens and early twenties, you could order out of Sear's Roebuck catalog a house prebuilt, and they would bring it to your house on a tractor trailer and set it up. And the payments on that house was something like, uh, \$20 a month. And my dad had to make \$10 a month and his brother had to make 10 to make the house payments, 'cuz his mother and father separated. And uh, so then he went shrimpin for uh, somebody out of Fernandina Beach, named Hardy, the Hardys. There they had, I think Louis was one of the brothers in South Port. And he, the second year he shrimped, he became captain at uh 18 or 19 years old for Mr. Hardy, and it was just in his blood and he couldn't quit and he did it for 58, 60 years. And he and I, I just took over from him, went on with it.

FL: So for your father, it was a means of living to make the house payment with his brother.

JM: Probably. And to feed his sisters. Back then they had what you call a general store back then and you could buy clothes and everything, she's laughing, she knows what I'm talking about a little bit. I think the mother was making some money there to feed 'em but daddy, he and his brother were making sure that house payment. In the early 20s, late teens, \$20 a month was a lot of money and you go waste that on your supper tonight but back then it was a lot of money, I'm not picking on you. Prior to that, you see, when his mother and father first separated, he got a job at the fish house in South Port and his job back then, they didn't have a fuel hose on the dock. They had engines that didn't burn a lot of fuel. And his job was carrying five gallons of fuel down to each boat and fueling it up and he would get twenty-five cent. For carrying a five gallon

drum carrying it down, and dumping it in the boat, back, and filling it back up, made a quarter. That's how he started out first before he started running a shrimp boat. Of course, he's done river shrimping I'm sure prior to that. But I don't know, like I say I wasn't there.

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

JM: I look at it and I'm amazed at the things that have changed, yes I really do. I cannot begin to tell you how much people, well I'll speak for myself. I can't tell you how much I am amazed at things like Dave Herring and Lindsay Parker and the University of Georgia have done for this shrimping industry. Nobody can appraise them enough, I'm just telling you. And the net man down there and all, that was amazing to me. And North Carolina had one, too. Um, tell you a little interesting story. Do you wanna hear that? Are you enjoying this or you wish I'd shut up? Okay. I do not remember exactly when, but my dad was hired by the University of North Carolina and NC State to do some research for the extension department in North Carolina. And he owned a boat named The Penny. It was a 61 foot shrimp trawler built in St. Augustine. Had a 13000 caterpillar in it. That was a long time ago. Uh, I do not remember when he bought that boat. Uh, my sister's 83, and her name was Penny so it must've been, maybe one or two years ago, uh so you can figure that out. But uh, his job was to, they put a man on the boat with him. And if he was running anywhere and that man said stop and put the trinet down right here, we want to see whats on the bottom here. He had to do that. But he was being paid well for that, and so he would do it. And he, he said at times, he would look at the man and say, you gon' tear it all to pieces. [makes clapping noise] Put it down. And he said I tore up about a hundred trinets, because I had to put it down when the man, he said after a while, they started realizing there was no reason to put it down if I said that. but, back then they didn't have a fathom meter, and I'm giving you a little bit of history now back then, do you know what a sounding ledge is? Back then, shrimpers didn't have fathom meter, and they had a piece of lead that was about an inch and a half in diameter and the inside of it was hollow, up about 2,3 inches in it. And then on the top of it it had a loop where you tie the line on it. And that line, every five foot, had a red ribbon on it. And that throw that out in front of the boat and let it hit the bottom until the boat got right over it and they'd know they were in five foot of water, ten foot of water, or wherever. But, when it hit the bottom, it would catch either sand or shells, or mud in it. And they look at it the mud and its muddy bottom, or shelly bottom, and thats the way they did things. Thats the way I

started out learning before I started shrimping. Of course, my daddy was under these, I remember I bought a plotter one time and he said what the hell is that thing? And I said its a plotter, how much does this cost, and I think I told him \$3000, I don't remember. And I thought he was gone have a heart attack, you wasted our money for that stupid thing. 'Course now, they wouldn't even go shrimping without one anymore, you know. But he thought that thing was stupid. And, reaction to that is this: them old time fishermen knew where the muddy bottom was better than these do now, now they've got computers and stuff that are getting pretty well where they can tell it by the line on the meter, back then they knew it anyway. Its, its fascinating. And thats why I'm telling you, its fascinating to look at the changes in all these years. I'm not being cute, I'm being serious. Its just..Bill wants me to see, we bought this boat two years ago, the Brenda K. And we named it after his mother, or for his mother, she hadn't died so not after, for. He wants me to go shrimping and I said son I'm 80 years old, I ain't going out there and roll and toss, all I can do is walk up them damn stairs, you know I can't hold on to a rail of a boat standing outside, you know. But anyway, he's hellbent that I'm going, so. I'm going, whether I want to or not one day anyway. I'll shut up, I'm sorry. But that's what y'all wanna hear don't it?

0:15:19

FL: You mention that Captain Lindsay was very influential. Can you elaborate on that? What he did.

JM: Anything Lindsay did was fantastic for the fishermen. And I'm not trying to whitewash him now, I'm serious. He and Dave Herring were tremendous for this industry. Uh but, where I got closest with him was, we did some net fishing, did you know they did that? They pulled a hundred foot net for snapper and grouper and stuff like that. And Bill might have it, cause I gave it to him when he bought that boat because we did it on that boat. But Lindsay, lets see if I can remember, gosh, it was me on the Captain Merritt, Georgia Bulldog with Lindsay. There was two men, do you know where Bryan Fishermen Co-Op used to be? In Bryan County up there, the fishermen formed a co-op, funny stories about that. I'm sorry it didn't make it, but you take 20 people and put them together, its hard for anybody to work with 20 people. And it didnt turn out to be real successful but, uh we were fishing out of there and there was two boats there that got involved with it. And then there was one or two others that went sometimes, I don't know how, I didn't know it was happening. And I was rigging up the trinet on my own. I went up to Bryan fishermen co-op, 'cuz the manager's name there was Paul Johnson at the time. And Paul said

why don't you get in touch with Dave, and so I did and he said well, we'll help you rig out, I said I'm already rigged out. Which saved them some money, which I'm sure they had a grant for it, to save them some money. And so I became part of that group. Lindsay and them, I mean, if you thought you had a problem and told them they would come walk through, I mean everything. It was like a tutor would be for y'all in school. And I mean, but, a A+ tutor, I mean both of 'em was just wonderful. I have nothing but wonderful words for either one of 'em. See you couldn't pull a net off each outrigger, you had to pull one net and you had what we call a david, that you hung over the side of the steel doors. And the steel door was so if you hit a piece of rock, the door would do that [motions with hands] and move over, see and then it'd level back out. I'm serious, y'all need to ask some of 'em around this boatyard down there, they can explain that better than I could 'cuz they got pictures of it. That girl's got my book that had pictures in that that might help you too, but uh. I don't know how to explain it any better than just tell you they were fantastic. Lindsay and mister..both of 'em, and the net men, they were just unbelievable.

FL: So what Captain Lindsay more like, lack of better term, like a supervisor that you would go to if you had questions?

JM: Well, he was captain on the Bulldog, he was doing the same thing we were. And uh, we weren't the first in it, there were some other boats doing it. But, see I, I don't know the whole story so I can't tell you but when I built this boat, I put a real big winch on it so I could pull as much as two miles of cables on each side. And I was thinking of doing some red shrimping, red shrimping I never did it, well I did not, but not on that boat. And uh then, we were fishing for fish, we were dragging off there uh, we were seven hours outside of Bryan fishermen co-op, right offshore. And, [mumbles to himself], that's what happens when you get old, you forget all this damn good stuff you learned when you were younger. Uh, but we were dragging off, four hundred foot of water, and uh young lady I'm not being ugly now but there was a place off there that had two big places like this, they call it Dolly Parton. You know what I mean, that's as far as I'm going with that. I wanted to drag in between 'em, because you could see fish swimming around on it. By then I had a fathom meter , and you see what we thought was fish. You can catch good fish at, and Lindsay kept saying Jimmy you brave if you try that, and uh right at 'bout the time we were getting ready to go shrimping again, I said if I tear it up it ain't no big deal, you know I'm gonna go through there and work and have a hell of a trip too. Had a hundred boxes of fish that trip in three days. And I said, I mean it paid off but, Lindsay was not in the position I

was, he couldn't tear up the University of Georgia stuff, I mean that was my damn net if I wanted to tear it up, I would tell them fuck ya. And so I tried it in between there and uh, it paid off. That was just fun to do. It was challenging, you know. I meant, no offense.

FL: How big was that net?

JM: How big was what? Hundred foot. Had a hundred foot, spreading at about seventy feet. Had uh, round things cut out of tires and then they'd cut a hole in the center and cut a notch it in, and you put that on a chain for a roller, so it wouldn't wear out and you pull that and then you had to have a piece of cable, a shackle in that chain where it would break if it hung up, 400 foot wire is hard to make a piece of chain. It was fun to do, it was experimental to me you know, it was. But like I said there was one or two fellas in Shem Creek up there in South Carolina that was doing some of it, But I'd always wanted try it and we was gonna try to do it in South Port, off of where I lived in North Carolina. Snapper fishermen, hook and line fishermen, they didn't like what we were doing cause we would raise the price for 'em and I understood that. Theoretically, there were some threats. Like, I'll sink your boat if you don't stop it and stuff like that. Nobody ever had that done but it was some rough talk with it. Talk's cheap. Doin' it is expensive. Talk's cheap. But what's really interesting to me is two, three years after we did that and that one particular place, boys that were fishing out of there, out of Charleston who worked off there, they said, you know you musta helped us some and what we decided me and the fishermen talking, we were draggin that net and of course it broke up some of the bottom but they thought it made it more feed for the fish because a year later they were catchin more fish than they were before. So you don't never know what gonna happen when you try to experiment stuf, it's fun to do though. And uh, that that, I could tell you one or two more stories or things but I don't know who's going to hear this or want that done, you know what I mean. And if you turn that off I'll tell you one right quick. Ask me the next question.

0:24:39

FL: So was that a one-time thing, the fishing or did you do fishing, shrimping and crabbing?

JM: Well, you see back when you wouldn't catch many shrimp in January, February, March. Of course the one thing you were fighting was a lot of weather sometime. With that boat, you could handle the weather. With the St Augustine trawler, you can handle the weather. The Bulldog and some of 'em, it was kinda rough on them. They one time it had gotten nasty enough, there was five of us out there and we're all draggin' around same place, and they left and ended up going in



the Cape cause the northeast wind blew them out that far down and I said, "Hell, I can go back to Richmond Hill." Those boats there were wonderful weather boats but boy every time they go through water, you'd see water wash up on there and everything. That's what that boat did. You could go, it didn't pound, it didn't hurt the boat. I come home, I didn't go to Cape. And that's why I admire that boat so much. Get out there that far, you get some bad weather, you want something that's good under you. I remember that particular time more than anything.

FL: You said it was that boat that had 100 foot net, was it just that one net or how many did you have on that boat?

JM: One net. Couldn't pull but one hundred foot net. And it stretched out behind ya, it would be longer than this building behind ya, you know? From the door's back. But another interesting thing is when you picked the net up, clear as gin. The water out there, clear as gin. And it take about thirty minutes to pick up and put back out. But once that bag was floatin', you could tell you had over two, three red snapper cause it was startin' to glow red, I don't know how to explain it, you could just tell it. And when I pulled between them two, man that thing was red as a fox's butt. And when we picked it up we had couple hundred pound o' red snapper. Two or three of 'em were big enough, two of 'em were better than twenty-five pound. I could see some of them boys being mad about what we were doing. Oh we catch pogies, grouper, everything, you name it, we caught it.

FL: Did the fish ever break the net, because grouper, they get pretty big in age don't they?

JM: It was braided nylon, it was a strong net.

FL: You mentioned that the water was super clear so over time, what changes have you seen in the water or the weather years later?

0:27:45

JM: Georgia probably, this is a personal opinion, because y'all, the state of Georgia doesn't allow development on the oceanfront. We probably have the best suited place for shrimp on the east coast. Back when I was telling you my daddy was doing research, he went to Chesapeake Bay and pulled, he used the better of a hundred tris all over Chesapeake Bay when there shoulda been shrimp, but they never found the shrimp. Now with global warming and stuff, you've heard enough about knowing they catching a world of shrimp sometime up that way, when they come out of Chesapeake Bay. I know people up in Chesapeake Bay that pulling gill nets and catching a few shrimp in it. Big shrimp, but ain't that many of 'em gone be caught in the gill

nets, but they do catch a few. And uh, the, do y'all know what's going on now? There, there's folks up there 'round uh, the Virginia state line catching much as a hundred baskets in tow. Because they coming out of Chesapeake Bay and its illegal to pull anything other than a gill nets, and they just about stopped them in Chesapeake Bay. So its a nursery up there. [coughs] All of Chesapeake Bay is a nursery. And when them shrimp, when you can't pull the net nowhere, you inside of the three miles. Inside of the three miles you can't pull a net. So its a nursery that way, and when them shrimp come out, cross state lines right here, and when they come across from North Carolina its fair game and some of em are catching a world of shrimp, and uh this time of year, its startin' to make a move, and thats when we're moving. Does that answer your question? Go ahead, I'm listening to ya. Keep going.

FL: How do you feel about that government regulation, not being allowed to fish within the first three miles?

JM: That would ruin Georgia, because uh South Carolina and North Carolina because, there's, well in Georgia's got a little more outside of three miles, South Carolina doesn't have as much and North Carolina don't much at all because rocks. Florida starts to get a little bit more, too. See when I wrote this book, the net man in Georgia gave me this drawing. And there's three or four drawings in here, I don't know where the rest of them are, but uh, he gave me pictures like that, here's another one, that was one of them pulling two rigs in there's another one in here thats pulling four rigs. And the, there it is right there. And the net man, and he gave me those to put in this book. Uh, but but, you can look through that if you want. But uh, thats what I'm saying, the University of Georgia is fantastic for the shrimping industry, uh, I'm not saying that because y'all, I'm saying that because its true. Alright, he and Lindsay, Bill and Lindsay, they're like that, they're real close friends. Uh, like he's, we're worried about Lindsay because of his, the way he is, you know he's not doing the best in the world but, Lindsay was a wonderful man for the fishing industry and so was Dave. So, and again the net man I can't remember his name, so I can't tell you what his name was. I'm through, so ahead.

0:32:03

FL: So you feel the government aided you more than they prevented you from doing anything or harming.

JM: Ask me one more time.

FL: Like the government intervention, do you feel like they helped you, like helped you guys back in the shrimping industry..

JM: Well, when I put that big winch on that, see I don't know how to explain what was going on, but the Russians were coming closer and closer to, and so the federal government said if you put a big winch on it and try offshore fishing, we'll give you a tax write-off or whatever. I think they let me buy that winch, and I did not pay tax on it or something. I really, that's far enough back I can't remember, you play too many games to try to keep up with it all. But, I got a pretty good write-off putting that big winch on it and doing the fishing. You see, the University of Georgia had four boats was gone do it, and I got in to being the fifth one and it was no gamble to it. They woulda supplied everything for you, plus fuel and grocery. And so I handle the net and riggin' and everything and I had talked to them boys in Charleston so I knew how they were doing basically. But Mr. Herring would get information from, I remember no more I believe in this than I believe two and two is twelve. Uh, he said here is a picture sent to us by NASA and we think you can drag in this area. And I said where the hell did NASA get, oh they took it from outside, of the bottom of the ocean? You can kiss my ass, I ain't that stupid. I don't believe that, you know. But damn, some of it turned out to be the truth. One being the example I gave ya. It proved to be true. Because I tried pulling up on them things because I tear up every time I went and do that, but I was hellbent to go between 'em. You know what, and and I made it. Couldn't do it but twice 'cause Lindsay said you gone tear all your pieces up, but I had to try. I was a gambler. Okay. Uh. But global warming exists in my opinion, because I'm not a biologist or nothing else, but five years ago they ain't catch no shrimp in Chesapeake Bay, and now they catching when they come out of there, when they come out in such wads they roll the mud. You should see 'em coming down the beach. And uh, did you get Little Ricky out of Brunswick, Georgia? Can't think of his..nah, that's Darien, out there, yeah. Got a red shrimp boat. Uh, he's out there right now. Y'all've heard enough shrimp stories to know a hundred pound tow is a money maker. He made a tow the other day for roughly 1800 pounds and picked up and left it and gone somewhere else because he thought it was better. You understand what I'm saying? But he thought that the boy he was talking to was probably gonna have a fifty basket tow, instead of a twenty basket tow. And he could see, so. Go out there, you understand what I mean? Uh, they could tell because shrimp roll in the mud and stuff. How much it would take, I can't, you see me and Bill talk about it a lot when Bill started shrimping with me, thirty five or forty boxes

in a week was *big* week. Ship, they're making tows up there that are 75, 80 baskets, which is 45, 50 baskets, I mean boxes, on a tow! I was with with a fella named Billy Epicoh who is dead down there at the Cape one time, had a 150 baskets in one tow and uh when they dumped 'em, it was so many whiskers in it, it stacked up like hay. They didn't fall out on deck, they just stacked up like hay. You ever seen a big tow of shrimp? A hundred pounds? The one that we just got, just give me a minute because I don't know how to operate this son of a bitch, pardon my French. And of course what I've done is gone the wrong damn way. Here's, here's that's the Brenda K. That's the boat I now own. [showing pictures] Half of it. I don't know if I own the top half, the bottom half, or the left half, anyway. That's, get away from me, how do I get rid of that? That's Bill talking over there right now, when he was running the Brenda K, when they had two tows, that's another one. I mean that was 3700 pounds of shrimp in two tows. I'm not lying with ya, i can prove what I'm talking about. And him and them three boys on the boat with him, they were the happiest people than sunshine, you know what I mean. Sorry, excuse me, go ahead, answer your question.

0:38:59

FL: You said that was 3700 pounds of shrimp, how many strikers would you need for a boat that size?

JM: There were four people on the boat.

FL: That's a lot. [Looking at pictures] Do you think that will continue? What do you think of the future of commercial fishing?

JM: There will always be shrimp to be caught unless they, pardon me, muck up the weather. I don't know what's gonna happen there. But there's always gonna be shrimp to be caught. When I was shrimpin', we used to shrimp from now on til Christmas, we'd be around down the beach, New Symrna, Daytona Beach and Cape Canaveral, ain't catch nothin' down there. And its because the water temperature was warmer this way and on up shrimp don't move that far up anymore. Don't ask me why, I ain't smart enough to tell you that but uh, they don't move that way no more. And uh, they will chase them shrimp down to uh, Chesapeake Bay, Virginia state line, down to the South Port, which is not far from the South Carolina/Georgia line, I mean the South Carolina/North Carolina line. They'll chase them shrimp right on down to them shores and then they kind of just disappear. I don't know what's gone happen. Uh, but this young boy we got is ambitious, he's a good fisherman, and he thinks on his feet. And we think he'll make a

good captain and uh I'm not gone be here a lot longer, I got a trip I'm a make, you gone make one too, donn't grin at me. You'll make one too, whether you like it or not, so will she. But uh, she might leave some tracks here. You know some children here, if thats what you want. But uh, they'll always be shrimp around. You know, thanks to things like the University of Georgia and North Carolina and I'm not excluding South Carolina, I never worked with their marine department, but I have worked with the other two. And uh, I'm sure, I know South Carolina and I know Florida's got one. I did a little bit of work for 'em. That was fun. Florida wanted me to pull some pipe, take shrimp nets off of the doors, you know what the doors are. And run a piece of pipe in between that chain and put it out and drag it. And them students were supposed to be whatever you wanted like a bunch of damn idiots, I mean doctors but they'd run along with it, these things in your ears, and I put it on that pipe and then they would say, well okay, my name's judy and its gone bend right here and "My name is John, no, it's gonna bend here!" and I'd think what in the hell are they trying to be able to tell where the weak point in the pipe was. I reckon biology, I don't know what the hell they were doing. All I know is they were paying me so I was doing it. And they send tractor trailer load of pipes down there to that boat and we took it out there and we put a piece on both sides and put the doors out and I finally realized shit, I can tell 'em where it's gone bend 'cause I knew where the bottom was. I learned from my daddy, I didn't learn from a damn machine, you understand what I'm saying? And they took the mark on it, you know how men are sometimes, there was a good looking little lady there. I'd say honey, come here mark right here and she'd say why and I'd say [taps on table] do what I tell ya! And she did twice and both times I bent it within two inches of that. She said how did you know that? I knew where that hang was and I knew where to drag to where that pipe to hit it right there and it bent. Oh she thought I was a sweetheart, she was looking good to her professor. You know she, and I mean, I said now we got to tell 'em what we're doing because that wasn't right, you know. He was getting to think she was a genius and she was pretty. But, I don't think she was smart enough to realize what I was doing, you know. Anyway, he did and he got a kick out of that. I did that one day. Y'all are laughing at me you think its funny! I can't help it, its just the way I live my life. Go ahead. You wish I'd shut up don't ya.

FL: What are some recommendations you have for the future commercial fishing?

JM: The worst part of commercial shrimpin' right now is you can't get crews. It's hard to get crews. And I am not against anybody, but the federal government needs to quit giving money to

people who don't wanna work so they can go back to work. Is that an honest answer for you? Thats the best I can tell ya. People need to go back to work. There's times when these boys won't wanna go shrimpin' and can't get somebody cause, oh I got to go, they got to go and most of them have enough money for drugs and alcohol and don't wanna go. That's the true story now. I'm sorry, but that's the true story. I don't know what their story would be, but thats the true story. We had, well the Brenda K went out, worked 3 days, and the crew made a little over \$1000 a piece, like 13-\$1500 a piece. They didn't wanna stay another day because they were wanting to come in. When I started shrimpin' shit, if I was making 4, \$500 a day, I'm wanting to stay shrimpin'. You probably like to be making 4,\$500 a day right now, I mean I'm not being smart aleck, I'm being honest. But now they can go get, what \$700 to not work this month. Its crazy. I need to help people. I, like, I bought several houses for some of my crew members, they paid me back but, but, you wanna make 'em, I bought several houses but I'm coming look at that house in a year and if its not being maintained, you gone get your ass outta there and its going back to me. Now, if you need a place to keep your wife and kids, I'll give you a place to live, but you gotta take care of it and if you don't, you gone move your wife and kids and its your fault, and I'll tell them its your fault. I believe in helping you, feed them kids, now if you don't take care of them kids, twice, I come after ya, third time you don't want me to come after ya 'cuz I'll..you just can't help it. Now, thats more than you asked for but the answer I can give ya.

FL: Those are all of the questions I have for you.

KG: So before you said, you had Captain Merritt, you had three other boats, the Kathy, the Lindy and the Cindy, are there any particular inspirations for those names or did you just name those?

JM: Yeah, my daddy was livin' then and I'll answer ya honestly. He was gonna build a shrimp boat for every grandchild. The three names were grandchildren. And it was taking him, uh, about a year to build a boat and my brother and sisters were having more babies than he could build boats and he had to surrender. Okay, does that answer your question? That's the truth, I swear it is. See the first boat, the Penny, was my daddy's boat, it was named after my sister. And then he said he didn't build enough boats so his daughter got it. Then he started to build for the children and couldn't keep up with them. And I told him, he's eating too many watermelon. He didn't believe me. [Laughter] I didn't mean to make you blush.

KG: You said that all the people on your crew were happy go lucky people, do you have any stories of what y'all did on the boats that were funny?

JM: I'm sure Bill probably could tell ya better than I could but I'm not around the boat a whole lot, so, so no. Bill's the boss. We own the same amount on the boat, a 50/50 boat. Crew knows it, I'm just there. You ask Bill if you want something. Cause two people can't run anything. Two people can't run this restaurant, can't do nothing. They gonna feud sooner or later. It's hard for man and wife not to feud, you know that. So, two people can't do it and I know enough to know that. Bill, you run the boat. But when they come in, like the other day, on that boat now coming in, I know Mr. Bill's got too much on his mind, but the deck, the hose that we wash the deck down with is in bad shape and I said okay, next time he came in he had another hose there. He said, you'll tell Mr. Jimmy, he'll get it for ya. Thats not true, but if you told Bill, but he didn't wanna bother Bill because he thought he had too much on his mind, but you know, that makes me the hero, I don't mind being the hero. Does that answer your question? It's just little things like that that would be funny to me, you know. Because I know as well as I know my name if they went and said to Bill, hey the deck hose in bad shape, he would get another one. And, but they think just because they went to me I got it quicker. Okay.

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KG: Before you retired, which boats did you spend the most time on?

JM: Probably that one. I've never been boat riding on the one we got right now. Bill is planning us having something for the family sometime or another, I said whatever. But, I'm like a bus driver, I don't wanna go on a boat ride, I don't wanna go a bus if I'm a bus driver, you know. I know what its doing,. I've probably worked on that one more than any other one. But when daddy was building boats, when they get the new one, I'd always get the new one but that's not always a plus. Because nothing's regulated, you have to adjust everything, you get a ton of headaches for about six months to a year. Until you get all the kinks worked out. So everybody used to go, 'It's a new one.', you son of a bitch, if you want it, you can have it. But they didn't want it, you see. No offense, but thats just the way it works, you know. Its just, thats what my job was, take the new boats and then as daddy got older, at that point we had five boats I think, I can't remember no more. And it was like the duckling mother and the little hens following, everywhere I went them other boats had to follow me. So, if you and I were friends down here in Georgia, and I'd come down here with five boats following you, you wouldn't want me to drag around you because you got five boats dragging around you. So it was kinda hard on my relationship with some of these people for a while. And uh, I said I got to resolve this, and so we

started selling boats off. Then after daddy got out of it, I just wanted one boat, and that's when I got that boat, and that's when I got that young one. That story with Bill, like I told you about the boys and everything, when we hired Bill uh, Bill's daddy went with me one week to Pamlico Sound, you know anything about Pamlico Sound? Pamlico Sound is a place where you can drag 24 hours a day, six days a week, day and night. Bill, Bill and his brother were working with me and his brother wanted off so Bill said can daddy go with us? His daddy had asthma real bad. I said yeah, we'll just watch him, we weren't, we weren't catching a lot of shrimp and me and Bill could handle the back deck and he could've watched the wheel. I'm trying to remember, I think it was Tuesday evening, he said I wanna talk to you about something, Bill's daddy did and I said okay. He said uh, Bill wants to go shrimping real bad and I'm paying good money to send him to college, and he said you don't need a college degree to go shrimping. I said no, it doesn't. He said well uh, am I wasting my money? I said well I don't know what he's gone do, and he said would you sell him your boat? I said um, not really, he said you got it for sale, I said yeah, he said why wouldn't you sell it to Bill, and I said because I want my money for it that I think it's really worth. Why? I said cause I think it's in good shape, it's the same age as others that were bought cheaper, and I felt like I took damn good care of my boat. And I was very particular with everything. And I said well I want more money. The next day he said uh, would you sell Bill your boat if I told you I'd guarantee you'd get paid. I said how the hell can you guarantee me to get paid? He said I own a motel, a restaurant, and a boat marina, he said I make enough money to make sure the boat would be paid. And I said yeah. Yeah, this is a true story. I said yeah I'll sell it to him, later on he said well, if Bill stays in college until he graduates, I will send papers down there to you to sign that we will have an insurance policy for the amount of money, and we're talking \$400,000, insurance on that boat and if it sinks, you'll get the 400 and if Bill's paid ya some, you'll get it back to him, and you only give him what he's paid you, don't, don't. And I thought, this man forreal, I mean you don't run into a deal like that. And I said yeah, if that's what you wanna do. About six months later, Mr. Harris died. Had an asthma attack and died. That was about a year, a little over a year before he graduated. He went to school and graduated. So help me God, I was right down here helping Mike Phillip run this place and the boat was tied up at this dock right out there. And I had hauled it on the railway, ready to go shrimping the first of May and had moved it around here on the day before the first of May and got ice and stuff and tied it up over here. Bill graduated on the first of May, that night he walked to board the boat



about 10 o'clock at night. You got to sign these papers. From the day his daddy died until that day, nobody had ever mentioned that deal again. I didn't know it was going to happen, I mean I didn't have no, I knew what I promised him, and I do, and he did what he promised he would do. I said ol Bill, that boat's sitting right here at this dock. And I remember that next morning, they went out to go shrimping and I sit on that dock and watch them go out crying like a baby. I wasn't ready to sell my boat back then. Thats why I was asking, I was asking about 40 grand more than it probably were. He paid every payment. He did exactly what his daddy told him to do. And I admire him for that till this day. Does that answer your question?

KG: Yes, it definitely does. And how long did you work on this boat before you retired?

JM: About 14 years. Yeah.

KG: Which boat was your favorite?

JM: Probably The Penny. And only because it was the first boat my daddy owned. That was my daddy right there [showing pictures]. That was taken in the wheel house. And I go shrimping and picture myself in that boat. Uh, love that boat, it's got my daddy's name. Merritt. So, you know, it was between the two of them but thats where it was. That's me and my wife and we wrote that book, we did, I've taken pictures all through the years. We had 17, 1800 pictures and after I got off the boat, we got them pictures up in a room damn near this big and I laid them out on the floor, had everyone of 'em printed on a sheet of paper, laid it out on the floor and she said go up there and start with the oldest picture we got, and tell the story. And that's how that book came about. It's really not a written book, its a photo book of pictures, you know. Go ahead.

KG: I actually don't have any more questions, do you?

FL: I don't have any more questions.

JM: I hope I haven't bored y'all.