

Name of Narrator: Lindsey Parker (LP)

Interviewer: Samantha Sheppard (SS) and Megan Bull (MB) with the permission of Lindsey Parker for the research project “Boat Stories”

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

Transcriber: Samantha Sheppard

Others present: No others were present.

Date of Interview: November 12, 2021

Place: Brunswick, GA

Duration of interview: One hour, thirty-four minutes and fifteen seconds (1:34:15)

Repository for the recording: The recording has been uploaded to the NOAA website.

Context for the Interview: Student interviewers sit down with Lindsey Parker, a long time member of the commercial fishing community.

General Description of Contents: Lindsey Parker discusses his history as a commercial fisherman in Georgia. He outlines various projects he’s been involved with while working at the UGA Marine Extension and tells stories of his friendships he’s created with others in the fishing community.

0:08

LP: All right

SS: Alrighty

LP: Yeah, go ahead with your, Lindsey Parker.

SS: You've done this before.

LP: Yeah, I think so, couple times. Go ahead.

SS: So this is an interview with Lindsey Parker on November 12, 2021. The interview is being conducted in Brunswick, Georgia. This is part of a research project and interview collection titled "Boat Stories". The interviewers are Samantha Sheppard and Megan Bull. And just so you know, you can stop or take a break at any time, and Dr. Tookes already did your informed consent.

LP: Right.

0:47

SS: Yeah, alright. So we were wondering if you could tell us about your current or most recent boat?

LP: The most recent boat that I have, was Captain on is the Georgia Bulldog. I was Captain of the Bulldog for 36 years. Yeah. What you want to know 'bout it?

SS: Did you have other names before this one?

LP : Other boats? Yes. I guess I got on the Georgia Bulldog. The boat prior to the Georgia Bulldog I was on was the Morning Star owned by Robert Knight here in Brunswick. And yeah, Morning Star was pretty, well brand new. Robert Knight had had the boat built and he outfitted it, rigged it and I was, I assisted in the rigging and putting together of the Morning Star as well as another one of his boats the Captain Dave and yeah, eventually after a while, he allowed me to run the boat and prior to that I was on the Southern Comfort was my first boat that I'd ever run. And it was a small boat 671 for power. And uh, old, not in the best of shape, it finally got dismantled over on Hoover's Railway here in Brunswick and disposed of. I saved a few parts off of it but not many and yeah, that was that was it yeah those are the three boats that I've run.

SS: Alright. Did the morning, did you name either of those boats?

3:02

LP: Negative, no, I was not in not one of responsible for naming either one. Robert Knight had a boat named the Evening Stars, possibly why he went with the Morning Star. And the Southern Crown I'm not sure who named it because it was named long before I was around. I didn't, I came into the fishery somewhat later than a lot of your interviewees because I had never stepped foot on a shrimp boat until I got out of high school. Got out of high school early in 1975 and went crabbing with Robert Knight and that's where I learned my fishing, or a lot of my fishing, and yeah, went from there.

SS: Were you mainly looking for shrimp or what were you looking for?

LP: Well actually, when I started, we were catching crabs in the sound. In the winter, that's normally the year of shrimpin' back then was shrimp from the spring until the fall, December 1, they closed up everything and they often opened the sounds for trawling for crabs. And so if you wanted to make some money you go catch crabs for this crab factory.

SS: Alright. What has your boat been through in the years you were on it?

4:46

LP : Been through a lot of things. I guess. The Southern Crown, I wasn't on it very long. I guess one of the funny stories 'bout it, scared the shit out of me. I neglected to tie down the outrigger. In my, my inexperience showed, I failed to tie down the outrigger. And one morning while trawling on the north end of Jekyll, the, and making a turn that was apparently harder than I should have turned. And the outrigger flew up to the top of the mast, which caused the boat to seem like it was going to turn over. Fortunately, it didn't, and I live to tell about it. But it scared the daylights out of ya, all of a sudden you, you're sitting, a little bit listed because of the turn, and then you get a lot listed because of that turn. And you have that long outrigger pulling you down. But I was very fortunate in that it did not pull us down and sink us. Morning Star, I wasn't on it a real long time, because the opportunity to get on the Georgia Bulldog came up, for a funny stories. I don't know I remember any funny stories on the Morning Star. I guess I was on the Morning Star when we were going to get Cubans out of Cuba in the Mariel Boatlift. And I remember going down there and, and it being a very, very tense time of a lot of people's life. We went down and I think the boss man had arranged a trip to Mariel to pick up relatives of some people and we were, we talked about and thought about suitcases full of money being carried on to the shrimp boats and handed over to the shrimpers for making trips to Cuba to pick up people and guess we had a trip 'bout arranged we went and got six, seven hundred dollars worth of

groceries. And we're sitting at the dock, getting ready to throw the lines off and Jimmy Carter come on the radio and said if you haven't gone to Mariel, don't go because ya' ain't gonna get back and we ain't gonna let you come back and so forth and so on. So we had a big grocery bill and nothing to pay it with. So I forget whether we even went and tried to make a dollar in Key West. I think chances are we just headed back to Georgia and made up the grocery bill with the upcoming trips, the upcoming season. And it wasn't too long after that the opportunity to assist the original Captain on the Georgia Bulldog by filling in for him while he had to be away that had occasion to temporarily run the Georgia Bulldog and circumstances as they happened. The circumstances allowed me to eventually become captain of the Georgia Bulldog. And we did all kinds of fun stuff on the Bulldog.

8:57

Yeah, what can I say? State budget has its advantages and our research objective allowed for it. We were heavily involved with, the boat was originally intended and purchase for a project in utilizing shrimp boats for other fisheries because it was the shrimp fishery was considered over capitalized by some experts somewhere or another not even sure what exactly over capitalized means to myself but the experts felt it was and they were they needed money making ways offseason so we were using the Georgia Bulldog to try other fisheries that fisherman could make money in in the offseason or even during the season. And those fisheries were long lining Snapper Grouper fishing period. With hook 'n line, trawling for snapper/grouper species and trapping, offshore trapping for either fish or crabs. I guess the crabs came up later. But yeah, as a relative newcomer to shrimpin' I relied a lot on other fishermen's experience. And yeah, we tried all those fisheries and we were successful in some. Most of them never accounted to much. Far as particular funny stories.

11:12

Oh yeah, that's hard to say, we had the opportunity as a state boat, that one time they called us to retrieve a whale a, right whale, picture might still be out there in the hall, where we indulged in the whale fishery. Hahaha. No, naturally, whales are you know, illegal and everything but DNR had found a Right Whale offshore carcass. It turned out it was a full grown male. It turned out his name was Lindsay and the DNR boat George T. Bagby had found it offshore around Sapelo lav bottom somewhere off there, off of Sapelo Sound and they got a rope on his tail and started towing it in but due to weather and I don't know how hard, they kept losing it. The rope kept

breaking or something kept them from getting it. They called for our help. We went out, put a line on it, got a line 'round it's tail, and towed it into Sapelo Sound. Got a local fisherman, Bobby Todd, to ride with us from the sound into, what's that, uh, Harris Neck Wildlife Refuge up in around, in McIntosh County, I guess it is. To where they pulled the whale up on the bank and carved it up and hauled it away or carved it up and buried it for the Natural History Museum, the museum in Athens so they would have the Right Whale carcass eventually. And that was one stank animal. It sure was, it was terribly stinky. Because as we, you know, offshore you have your outriggers down, inshore you raise your outriggers to get into creeks and get to the dock. And so we got in the sound and we started up the creek you know with outriggers catching something on the bank. So we raised outriggers, and we had to pull the whale up alongside of us and for maneuverability and stuff and so we had to Right Whale tied alongside and we were coming up the Creek and lo and behold there's the power wire going to blackout into one of them places one of them uh, non-land, well, one of them islands that ain't got no roads to it. They still had a power line across the river, to Creek, fairly close to where they want the ramps there at Harris Neck and fortunately, with the Right Whale alongside I was able to swing around and avoid the power wires. But for a little while they're that whale right there alongside of us and I had a gas mask and that was the only way I could cope. But yeah, almost getting the power line and a stank whale and it being named Lindsay, it was kind of funny. It was a male a full grown male. And yeah, that was funny we didn't learn that its name was Lindsay until a few weeks later but yeah when that was known they spelled it different anyway they used an A and I use a E so it wasn't Lindsey anyway.

15:33

Other funny stories, I dunno how funny these stories are interesting now it's always something new turtle excluder device testing that was always something new and different not knowing what exactly you are going to come up with the video that we developed and watched while we were trawling with TED's and Bycatch Reduction Devices were it was very interesting because yeah you shrimpers since they've been trawling for the most part they see the gear up in the air and they put it in the water and they pull it and they tune it and they're damn good and all our video work with divers and cameras it always amazed me at how well fishermen, some fishermen at least, could interpret what the gear was doing on the bottom even though they never saw it operating on the bottom they just had an intuition and yet it worked out well. That they

were often spot on as far as what they thought was going on down there with the nets. Other funny stories, oh goodness, I ain't much for funny but yeah going into strange ports not knowing your way, not what knowing exactly what to expect, trawling for turtles up in the what is it? Is it Delaware Bay that Norfolk sits on? Anyhow, I think it's Delaware Bay. We was up in 2001, September 2001 trawling for turtles in the Delaware Bay, wherever the, the ship channel end in Norfolk, Virginia is wherever that is and maybe it ain't Delaware Bay, maybe its some other bay. The bay that goes all the way up there to Baltimore. Anyhow, we were trawling for turtles in there, in the dredge channel and tearing up gear right and left and finally we caught a turtle or two and Septem.. Uh, 9/11 happened, and we were trawling in the channel and all the military helicopters, airplanes, boats that were around and comin' and goin' and watching the TV of towers fallin'. Yeah, it was, it was different. But yeah, just dr-ridin' the intercoastal up to there was an adventure and experience because the Intercoastal is generally, they warrant like a 12 foot working depth of the Intercoastal, but then they got the tides that come and go and they haven't maintained the intercoastal so driving a boat with a nine foot draft up a ditch that supposed to have 12 feet in it. It's challenging, and I was very pleased that we did make it up that way. But around every turn there might be something new and they're often is finding your way up these little creeks that some of these boats go, creeks you wouldn't, you would physically not be able to turn the boat around in the creek because the boat is longer than the creek is wide but people's ingenuity and skill can carry 'em up the creek and get them to a dock and and go and come everyday. Their capabilities are amazing. And let's see funny stories. Yeah, some of 'em could be embarrassing to some people, so yeah. Let's see. I need prompting. Think of something that we might, uh, tell me another story.

21:21

SS: Do you think you could talk about the people that you work with on the boats?

LP: Oh, yeah. Characters all em. Well, yeah. I mean, there are a lot of characters on the shrimp boats. Very good characters and some bad characters. But yeah, there's lots of real good characters. Some that have a checkered past. Some I can't tell what all they've done, cuz I don't know. But uh let's see? Yeah. I ain't, I'm not sure how good at this interviewin' I am. Let's see, one time we caught a Mola Mola. By accident, or on purpose, I forget which it was, but we were trawling and Mola Mola is called a ocean sunfish. They might be called Ocean perch or something, but, it's a sunfish. In any case, is this weird looking critter that's five feet long and

eight feet tall and about a foot, foot and a half thick that you got to see a picture of one to even think you could tell but just seeing that on deck was quite amazing you know, there's nothing we could do with it. We caught it and fortunately, I think we were able to put it back overboard without fatally harming it at least and so I feel confident that it lived to tell the tale of its encounter with extraterrestrials. But yeah, and the critters we catch often comment about the, all the crabs and stuff in the showcase out here that you know Mother Nature, I mean no science fiction films ain't got nothing on Mother Nature. Because she's got some strange damn critters running around in the oceans and in the rivers, on land too because yeah, I guess what bring it to mind was one of them science fiction pictures where they had the big roaches and we were doing some deep water work on wreck fish. Or maybe we were still working with the golden cow fish. But we got these Isopods offshore there that were six, eight, ten inches long. Armored critters. I think they're still in the case that there would hope they are but one of our past employees mighta grab it. But yeah, they're real live critters. Even though we've got a few other critters in that case we had taken the claws off of mantis shrimp and put them on Rosy Lipped Batfish to give them ears, and or seahorses. We'd catch a seahorse every now and again and drag it out, put the mantis shrimp legs on it. And it was, uh, I don't know, just funny sea creature. But it was made up. And we tell people that we caught it up around Three Mile Island. Lets see, funny stories, I remember catching an anchor one time and putting it on deck. It was quite a challenge if the anchor was eight or ten, eight, good eight feet long and caught by the net and we managed to get a line around it somehow and put it on deck. Funny stories..

SS: So you were the captain of the, you're the captain of the Bulldog.

LP: Right.

SS: Can you talk about your role on the Morning Star and the Southern Comfort?

26:08

LP: Yeah, uh, Southern Crown.

SS: Crown

LP: And I might have said comfort, I drank a fair amount of that. But it was the Southern Crown. No, I guess one of my funny stories was on the Southern Crown was the outrigger jumping up on me and that was scary. One day, I think I was out in my boat was one of the smaller and it wasn't in the best of shape. You know, you get your jalopies and you got your Ferraris all decked out. Mine was down towards the jalopy end, it had plywood patches on the

hull. And one day, I went fishing, thinking I was tough and the boat was tough and it was a little rougher than I should have been out in and on the way out one of the plywood patches came off and fell behind me said “huh, thats a piece of plywood floating by” and I realized that it was my patch and got back to the dock and made sure my pumps were running and yeah, we didn't sink. But lets see on the Morning Star, I wasn't really on the boat for terribly long. A few years. I remember, yeah that's funny. Mr. Knight had gotten a contract with the National Marine Fishery Service. It was in the early days of Turtle Excluder Device testing. And we were testing the NMFS TED, the Swiss watch I was telling y'all about out back. And so we had a TED on one side and nothing on the other. And yeah, the NMFS guys kept the gear in tip top shape. And I was just to go out and do my thing, catch shrimp, log any problems that I had with the TED, and fish the way I would normally fish. And I remember, the only turtle that we caught, or maybe, it probably wasn't the only turtle we caught because we had a pretty good many at loggerheads around here, but the only turtle that we caught in the NMFS TED was a little Kemp's Ridley turtle. And I was real proud of that because they were, at that time they were experimenting with six inch bars and six inch bars allowed a little dinner plate sized sea turtle to go between em, and now that they illegalized six inch bars and the maximum they said is four inches now, which some of the little dinner plate turtles can just squeeze through, but it's not a common occurrence. And not many people use the maximum bar spacing anyway. But that was funny. Because uh yeah, we were testing TEDs.

29:59

I remember going down to catch rock shrimp and doing tolerably well with it. One time rock shrimp and I put all four nets. You know, we're pulling, you're pulling two nets on each side of the boat. And you want to keep 'em on each side of the boat, part o' that is for balance, so that you don't turn over. You don't want to put too much on one side, not on the other. But every now and then do-do happens and all four net, I might not have been pulling but two nets, but they all got together, tangled up. So when that happens, you have to bring them aboard on one side. And the only place you've got to hold up is from the end of that outrigger. So getting all that mess onto the boat and straightened out can be rather challenging. And it normally doesn't happen when it's a nice calm day. It's always rough. So do-do happens more when its rough and I can remember that do-do of having both rigs on one side. And it being rough as the dickens and having to get it aboard and it was tough, but we did it. Let's see what else did we do on Morning

Star? I mean, we, scallops were big. They were catching scallops right and left and that was the only people in the industry making money. And oh, yeah, y'all outta go try scallopin'. So Robert spent a bunch of money buying a couple of nets and we rigged up the Morning Star to go scalloping. We went down to Canaveral. Robert wasn't with us on the boat, I guess I wasn't captain that year, that time. But yeah, we went down to scallop and the scallops dried up. That and/or we did not have our stuff, right and we rode down there and missed around two or three days or nights and days and nights and wound up coming back home and selling those nets and licking our wounds, and deciding that yes, we'd stick with shrimping, and not these new fisheries because we hadn't done, we had failed and yeah, that that was just an expensive lesson. Rock shrimp were something of the same thing but it was more familiar to us and made a few trips at that. Yeah, just you can't put it in words some of it. I mean, it's just amazing what people can do.

33:44

But yeah, with the Bulldog we did all kinds of crazy stuff, or different stuff with a shrimp boat, did geological surveys. One time, we, an F, some kind of military plane had gone down offshore and they wanted to find it and some salvage or we found somebody that wanted to go look for it with an ROV. Naturally a shrimp boat is, would not be what you would expect for a platform for something like the submersibles you see on online on TV shows where they got that they dropped this ROV's in water, the manned submarines. You know, they built a whole boat around a ROV. Well, they also got smaller ROV's. And they weren't sure whether we could fly it from the Bulldog but all the equipment that was required, it wouldn't fit in the wheelhouse on the Bulldog. So we well, I guess we didn't do any reconfiguration in the fish hold, but we put all the equipment and so we had operation central down in the fish hold which was just funny and yeah we never did find the airplane. But it was just amazing that we actually did we operated in an ROV off a damned oh shrimp boat.

35:54

Let's see what other funny projects we've been on. We set buoys for the Ocean Service, National Ocean Survey Service down in the Intracoastal going to Florida, where we deployed an instrument buoy, basically, where they were looking at tidal flows and fluctuations. So it had all kinds of junk on this buoy Doppler profiler, current Doppler profiler and this, that and the other and just dealing with all that high price, highly sensitive equipment was interesting. And then the video system we rigged up that was, I guess, probably the best, most fun thing they ever did

where we were actually watching videos in the wheelhouse of what was going on down in the, at the net. We put the camera down on the net, and watch it as we traveled and that's how we did a lot of turtle excluder device testing in the ending days. Last days of my career, but yeah, what else you want to know I don't know that I'm giving y'all much except running my mouth.

SS: It's okay. We enjoy it. You talked about your previous boats. What happened to those? What are they doing now?

LP: Okay, the final disposition, [door opens] sounds like we get a pause.

SS: Yes we do.

37:57

LP: Part Two, part two, Let's see what, you were asking about the disposition of those vessels at the time?

SS: Yes.

LP: Yeah, lets see, the Southern Crown it was an aging vessel and had plywood patches. I think a couple of years, I was still in town because I watched it be taken apart. But yeah, it got to where the cost of keepin' it going, keepin' it afloat and the money it was making was not enough. And to dispose of it, the motor was pulled out the rigging pulled off at the dock, and then it was put over on the dike we call Hoover's Railway. But it's a place you can drive to and pull the boat up and high water and the tide will leave it and we pulled it up, and as far as I recall, strip the remaining metal off of it and usable parts, the queal, the propeller, the rudder, all the underwater gear, and then it was cut up and either burned or hauled off. So it was totally removed. The Morning Star. The other boat was on. It was eventually sold. Yeah, it was sold. And I don't know how many owners it has had to be honest with you. But right now the last owner of it, I ran across up in Frogmore, South Carolina. And I forget whether they changed the name from Morning Star to Four Ladies or Four Sisters, or something like that, but it had been fiberglassed and improved. And yeah, it was still working. And I'm not sure where it might be now, I expect that it's still right up there in South Carolina, in the Beaufort area, which is where Frogmore is in the neighborhood of Beaufort. Then the Georgia Bulldog that disposition of it is still the same is still with the University of Georgia. For how long we don't know. Yeah, what else can we talk about?

40:49

SS: You talked a lot about TEDS and your involvement with those.

LP: Yep.

SS: Could you talk about, maybe, which type you like to use the most or the DVDs you made?

LP: Well, I guess of the, yeah, Turtle Excluder Devices are, yeah, environmental gear that are mandated. I'm a little bit partial to Sinky Boone's Big Boy TED. It's very, very similar to the main, mainly pulled Turtle Excluder Device, what they call a super shooter style TED, but yeah, I kind of like narrow barred, two inch bars on big boy TED. A lot of fellows these days are going to, a Bitty Burbank is putting out a TED. It's a fixed grid, fixed angle grid, they call it and basically it's a lot more hardware, but it goes in the net more consistently than an oval grid, because when they add that extra hardware, they give it a specified perimeter circumference where it sews in and the angle does not deteriorate as quickly or as much as a single grid TED and that's hard to explain, I'm not even in a try, but basically there's more framing there so they can attach it in the net better, more consistently. Beyond that, yeah, TEDs have not been a lot, not a lot of TED testing these days, as far as I know, but I'm not in it anymore. What else? In what I've already bullshit about you want me to expound upon.

SS: Yes, what is the longest time you spent working on a boat or the longest trip that you've taken on a boat?

43:25

LP: Guess the longest at sea period was probably an eleven, twelve day trip with eight folks on the boat offshore here. And we were trawling for fin fish and evidently we didn't do as well as we wanted to 'cause eleven day trip way long. And yeah, we would much prefer getting in sooner. But that was it away from the dock. The trawl film that we did back in 1984, where we took all the different trawl types that we knew of, or that were common in the fishery. We put all the gear that was common in the fishery between NMFS, and our net guys put together nets with different colored panels and went to Bimini in the Bahamas, for their clear water to film a shrimp trawl film to show fishermen what it looked like actually in use in, underwater. Like I say, I've always been amazed at how well fishermen had interpreted what the gear was doing on the bottom. Well, that trawl film basically confirmed what they knew, but it allowed us to watch it so that they could, in our minds eye, consider other improvements, which I'm sure there's been lots of improvements made, but no trial film made to exhibit them, but for that trip, we left Miami one day and I think thirty-one days later, we came back to Miami and checked back in. So we were away from the United States for twenty-eight, thirty days. Twenty-eight, twenty-nine, thirty

days. And I guess the funny part of that would be that, yeah, our customs declaration, prior to departure at the ship store we bought, I forget what it was, fifteen-hundred pounds, you know, it wasn't by the case it was by the pound and the weight of the beer that we loaded aboard the boat made a lot of people chuckle but it was close to fifteen, twenty guys going over there and everybody's got their taste. And no it was never, we never got carried away but yeah, it was a ton or two of beer and two, case or two o' cigarettes and that was kind of funny. But yeah, we went to Bimini and spent thirty days filming Turtle Excluder Devices. Another funny, all the gear that we had to carry over so that we could film it all the net sizes and trawl doors. We, the Bulldog could not make it to the dock over there. So it stayed offshore anchored up at an ocean and in order to work on deck, we really had to clear room on deck and so we went to it, we had we had a spot that we had a good range on it and we just dropped the trawl doors onto the bottom and left them so there were six or eight sets of trawl doors. We just dropped them on the bottom over there and every morning we would go pick up what we needed and drop off what we used the day before. And so that was kind of funny that the door shop, underwater door shop and oh that was that was another, that wasn't even funny that was scary.

48:16

We were anchored up in the Bahamas overnight and you hear o' piracy in the ocean and you don't hear a whole lot about it. But you do hear about it. And one night it turned out it was the Bahamian authorities but a nice good sized vessel with very, very few lights came alongside and shine a light at us and we were worried, concerned for our own well being but it turned out to be just the government checking on us. Let's see ,Yeah, that was eerie. Let's see, come on guys, prompt me.

SS: What is your understanding about fishing vessels now that you didn't know when you started fishing?

LP: What do I know now that I didn't know when I started, to rephrase that question, everything. More I learn, the less I know. But yeah, all of the improvements that we've made over the years it would be nice to have all the improvements that we've made over the years rolled into one new boat, but nobody can afford one. Nowadays, the boats that are still making livings are your big steel hulls that are twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week working. Just a totally different, almost a totally different work ethic. Then the locals have, they want to get up in the morning, go fishing, or two or three days fishing, come back, relax a few days. Whereas

the boats that are making the money are those that are transient, and they go where the shrimp are best. And don't ever quit. They don't ever take a break. Although I prefer the shrimp off of your day boats over the freezer shrimp. And I'll let y'all prompt me s'more.

SS: How did you start fishing? And how long have you been doing it?

51:11

LP: I started fishing in 1975. And did I so because I was graduating high school. I graduated early, got out after the Christmas break. And so come January I didn't have anything to do. My Daddy asked me where would I like to go on to school and I said Daddy, I don't want to go on to school. I've been to twelve years of it and I want to go do something fun. And turns out I had a friend in high school whose daddy owned boats and so I went to work for Robert Knight and got into the fishing business and or the shrimpin' business, and yeah, it's, I'm still in the same neighborhood. And what was the other part of your question? How long I've been at it, since '75, and I only shrimp'd until probably '81 because then I went on the research vessel. So I'm not even a long time shrimper but I know a lot of them I admire a lot. And yeah, I still want to help 'em out all I can.

SS: Where you with Mr. Knight on the Southern Crown and the Morning Star?

LP: The Southern Crown was owned by a very good friend of Robert Knights, Joe Hale and so I was at the same fish house but when working on Southern Crown I was working for Joe Hale and although Robert was right there by us and then Robert had the the Morning Star and the Captain Dave and all and yeah then I was with him. Alone.

53:20

SS: What was your experience working with them? Was it different, was it?

LP: Well. [Golden Ray passes by the window] Wow, looks like they're going home. Sorry about that. Yeah, they rigged up for sea travel. Maybe they're going back out there to fish cars out the river. But, working with Robert was good. He could be hard to get along with but he had his head on straight. Joe, same way. They still had to pay the bills, so they still got grumpy occasionally. Stuff like that. But yeah, I enjoyed working for Robert and Joe. I didn't have a hard time at it at all. They weren't, they're not that hard to get along with, as far as I'm concerned. Was that anywhere near your question before I was so rudely interrupted by weeks 533? We've been watching them for two years. So yeah, the Golden Ray disappearance is going to be different. They might be headed back to Norfolk. But yes. More questions.

SS: Will, their disappearance affect fishing at all. [referencing Golden Ray]

LP: Not particularly. Their departure will, I don't even know how their arrival impacted our shrimp fishery. The presence of such major equipment and stuff usually comes with it. An availability of some things, you know that with them in town, you can do this, that and the other with them outta own, you ain't gonna get away with any of that stuff. But no, the, it just be less traffic on the waterways to be honest with you. I think the shrimp fishery was never closed on account of the oil spills from the Golden Ray. Although there were some. And there have not been massive reports of shrimpers catching tar balls and oil infected shrimp. So no, I don't think their departure will change the fisheries too much. It'd be less mouths around here that want to eat 'em because all them workers will be out of town, will be gone. But yeah, more questions.

SS: Alright, when you think of the future of commercial fishing boats in Georgia, is it going to be based on boats like the ones you've worked on previously?

56:46

LP: I think it'd be a combination. Yeah, I think your local guys like Hinton and Leonard Crosby and John Boy and all the fellows that's just dyed in wool, ain't never done nothing else, but that, if they can make enough money to maintain their facilities then it will continue and it will continue whether they do it or not. But, uh [phone rings] I ain't gonna listen to that, junk mail. But yeah, it's a good question with all the regulations a body can keep up with the regulations and everything else. Yeah, there's going to be a place for catching this seafood. How they're gonna be doing it could be different. I hear up in South Carolina there's an awful lot of, over the years it's been transitioning from mostly you know boats that stay in the water year round and have to be maintained in the water year round it's changing to a lot of the fishermen that are catching the shrimp up there are what we used to, woulda called weekend warriors that put their trailer their boats they put their boat in and out. That's Thurmond coming in, the Lady Raven. He's no local and he probably got some good stories. [phone noise] But anyhow, yeah they're gonna be catching the shrimp because they're just too good not to but how they'll be doing is a good question.

59:00

SS: Do you have any recommendations for the future commercial fishing boats?

LP: Not really. Finding good help has become the biggest problem in it and until there's more money in it until they're paying what the shrimp are worth, I don't know that I see that happening but yeah I'm not willing to make predictions. But I hope it continues.

SS: Are there any boats that you were on that were very special or unique to you?

LP: Well, I guess the Bulldog was kind of special because I was on it for thirty-six years and I feel like I maintained it tolerably well and improved it somewhat over the years and it's a shame it doesn't have more to do these days or it doesn't have more support but keep my fingers crossed.

SS: You had a lot of funny memories. Can you tell us about your most positive memory of being on a boat?

LP: Most positive memory, most positive. I guess it was positive that basically as my ol' boss man used to say all the TEDs that are certified in the world today, most of the testing, vast majority of the testing was conducted on the Bulldog and we've caught so many damn turtles that I feel like we already know that the turtles are coming back big time, strong and I love telling them turtle people how I look forward to having turtle on the menu because they are rebuilt. But I don't know that we'll ever see that because you got so many lovey dovey folks that oh that's not for food that's for us to admire in the ocean when God put it here to take care of us, but yeah. seeing it on our menu I don't know whether we ever will or not. Positive memory, yeah. All you girls, all the college girls that have had to entertain. That's always been a positive memory, dirty ol' man that I am. Uh, positive memories. Lot's, all o' it's positive I dunno, depends on what you call positive. It was very positive, our turtle research showed that there were magnitudes of magnitudes more turtles. What was it, ten years after Turtle Excluder Devices were mandated all waters year round in the United States within ten years, that there was an increase in numbers by an order of magnitude, which they tell me is something like ten times, but it's a pile more turtles than they thought there were. And that's, that's always been positive. And the fact that yeah, we're fishermen learned to use TEDs and are better with them than any government man ever thought, dreamed of. Most of the tricks or the expertises that I developed in TED's and I was considered an expert in TED's most of those experiences that I was able to relate to other fishermen came from fishermen. And I forget how you put it and I can't even sure I can spell it right, heuristic? Yeah, I mean, you get these guys talking together, and they figure stuff out. And they have figured TED's out. And it's good to get, that's part of what I did for a lot of years is just

share experiences from here with fishermen over in the Gulf and in the, South Florida and in North Carolina. And, you know, just sharing all the ideas that have come and gone around North Carolina, for example, now they're talking about closing up a bunch of areas, trawlable areas, and North Carolina is the last stand. And North Carolina has had TED's as long as anybody, Bycatch Reduction Devices for longer than anybody. And it has done more regulatorily to reduce bycatch in that sound up there than anybody in the country in any water body, but the CCA still wants to close it. So you know, it's oversimplifying it, but it's kind of like the fight between Republicans and the Democrats, the progressives and conservatives. And CCA just wants to close everything because they won't put everybody out of business and you got your fishermen that want to work. But you got these people that want to play and they don't want people working in their playground. And they're getting away with it and that's very disappointing that ain't positive that's rather disappointing. But yeah, what was the question?

1:05:54

SS: Just your best memory on a boat.

LP: Oh, I can't share that, too personal.

SS: Okay.

LP: But yeah. No, my whole career on the Bulldog was, there's cherished memories in all of it and all them projects that we did the longline in the submersible stuff, the people I have had the opportunity to interact and converse and share ideas with has been spectacular. And I'm among the luckiest people on Earth, as far as I'm concerned, because I've spent my 36 years of work doing something that I enjoyed. And here in retirement, I'm back here doing it, doing more. But yeah, it hadn't been worked. So yeah, it's, it's been all positive. Next question.

SS: Do you have anymore questions?

MB: I do. Earlier you were talking about when you were on the ship, for almost a month. What was that, could you talk about what that was like to live with people for a month?

LP: Yeah, well, it's yes. It's just like y'all at school. You got pains in the asses. And you got real good folks. And you got sloppy bastards. But you're limited. You can't get away from 'em because you're on a boat with 'em. So you, you get along. And yeah, you have to give a little bit and they need to give a lil' bit sometimes they don't. And so you just have to give all. And yeah, it gets small. But yeah, you're stuck on it. You get away when you can. And over there, you know, especially during the day, we had 10 to 15 guys on the boat, we didn't sleep but 8, so no

more than nine or 10 stayed on the boat sometime in the Bahamas, you sleep on deck on a cot on deck. So occasionally people did that. But we did have some of them had hotel rooms so that a number of folks got to go ashore every day. And so it wasn't as tense as 30 days on the boat with total lockdown. But yeah, these freezer boats, they do it all the time they'll, 30 days, they leave the dock they're not back for 30 days. And they'll have four or five head on there. And it's probably instances today where more leaves than comes back and nobody is the wiser. But yeah, you hear of stories of people just jumping overboard on the way back home for no apparent reason. And I have heard of that but I've never been subjected to it. My 11 day trip was probably the most tense because that was believed to dock and not come back 11 to 11 days later and I had a biologist, at least one biologist on it that did not want to be there. And so he was, he never sabotaged anything but boy he gave me some looks that would have killed me if he'd had half a brain but yeah and there maybe I was the asshole stayin' that long but yeah it can be trying yes to answer the question, it is very trying and it pushes your personal skills, your people skills. Fortunately I have lived through all my experiences and haven't had any, my people skills call somebody to kill me. Come on you got another question?

MB: I do.

LP: Go ahead.

MB: So I was wondering about your knowledge of other boats.

LP: What boats you wanna know 'bout? Tell you what I can.

MB: Any boats you'll tell me about whether you worked on 'em or not.

1:11:03

LP: Oh, I mean the boat, the stories never end a lot of these boats been built in North Carolina. One built right over between Knight Seafood and right there at Knight Seafood on that railway or next to the railway, it's amazing how they put them together. Let's see, stories about boats. Y'all already interviewed the oldest wooden boat in Georgia, Andy Ross. I think it was built back 1942 and it's never even been fiberglassed, which is one one way that we preserve our wooden boats nowadays in these salt waters because the teredo worms are so bad. But yeah the Bernice, it was originally a tugboat. Then we had a boat here called the Agassi's one time. A man named Roy Purvis had, he bought it, it was a. some kind of a Coast Guard boat 110 or 20 foot and Roy, it was a surplus purchase. So it was already been scrapped by the government. But he bought it and he brought it down and tied it up down there at the city dock and he was going to go

shrimpin' with it. And I don't think he was ever successful making it into a shrimp boat. Not fully, but he had a lot of fun tryin'. I don't even remember what happened to the boat but that was an experience or a story about a boat. One of the boats that I worked on I think finally wound up sinking offshore bobbing around for a few days and finally settling somewhere out there where they found it but I'm not sure where it was. 'Casionally a boat will leave here on his way to the railway somewhere and it not quite making the trail so that's the disposition of some boats. They're being repaired and heading for the boat shipyard to be repaired but they don't make it and then sometimes some people point fingers at people like that thinking they did it on purpose and I don't know. What other boats? The old Dora F. over next door y'all interviewed him, Johnny Bennett and that's just an ol' workhorse he fiberglass it. It's been fiberglass so much that the wood has rotted out in the stern and he took the wood out and he still got the fiberglass back there so it's evolving into a fiberglass boat whether he knows it or not. And he's still working it, still making money with it. Let's see, yeah. Y'all not from here, but when I first came here when my momma and daddy moved down here from Atlanta they were building a boat out of a 341 that you could see from the road. And that boat was bought by a fella, a local fella, by the name of Buster Williams used to live over at Cherry Creek and he bought the hull and was gonna rig it up and I ain't sure what ever happened to that boat. I think that it was wound up sold and going to Louisiana somewhere because Buster didn't keep it long, he saw the writing on the wall with wood boats and he built him a steel boat and named the Little Bit and he's still working it up in North Carolina. But he is still local to Brunswick. Yeah, been a few yachts converted to shrimp boats that are still making ends meet. But yeah, another question I've rambled on as far as I can.

MB: Are there any particular boats that have really stuck out to you or any names of boats either?

1:16:32

LP: Not really. No I mean, there are some catchy names to boats. And you got to wonder about the story behind them. You know, got your catchy names, High Roller and High Stakes and Gambler and stuff and then you got your names, and you can wonder you know what was it a daughter, a wife, a mother or what? And you know there's a story there somewhere, and you got yer Evening Star's and Morning Star's and Nikka dema's {?} and characters and you wonder why they were given the name and you know that its somebody's mind decided that's what they

wanted. And so that's what it is. Because all it takes is you wantin' to do it and you and you have the right to do it. But yeah, some of the local favorites, the Dora F it's just been around forever. Up Hinton's way, The Gray Ghost and the Flying Cloud has made a move down to here and is belongs to Johnny Bennett now so it's starting a new life down here in Brunswick. The boats up in Savannah are disappearing. They had a big Thunder Bolt, and they had a big co-op in Richmond Hill that was, that university helped promote and put together but it went defunct. And all the boats that were centralized in that one location all disappeared. And there's more of 'em than we know still up in the rivers and creeks at private residences and stuff, and I don't know what DNR knows where they all are now or not. But but they're still around and I'm glad they are.

SS: Is there anything in particular you've noticed that makes a boat last so long?

1:19:14

LP: Somebody looking after it, taking care of it. I mean, fiberglass last longer, but you still got to have somebody taking care of steel is perhaps some people's premium material for boats, but it takes a lot of maintenance. Fiberglass, to me is the best but it still requires maintenance because you still get steel fasteners and steel and even if you go all stainless steel, you can still have corrosion. So people's caring for them is the biggest thing. Maintenance which quite often is neglected because of lack of money. That would be my answer to that question. Come on. Come on girls. Dig deep in that imagination.

MB: You talked about the Morning Star, the Southern Crown and the Georgia Bulldog that you've worked on. Have you worked on any other ships and what were your positions on any of the ships?

LP: On other ships? Well yeah, I have worked on other boats. I worked on, I guess the first boat I worked on officially was called the Popsy and it was named that because that was the man that owned it's name. And he was Popsy Jack and I think the name of the boat was the Popsy. I might even be disrememberin' that. L'see, didn't go into my longlining days. Worked on another boat, The Penobscot Gulf longlining for swordfish and it wa'a lil' 65 foot coastal oil tanker from originally from up in the Penobscot area and the man bought it rigged for longlining and he was among the pioneers of long lining for swordfish. Back in the mercury scare days when they told you not to eat swordfish because of their mercury content. Fortunately, we've lived long enough and they have figured out that yes in moderation swordfish is fine, especially if you're not

pregnant or going to become pregnant. Mercury poisoning doesn't, Mercury generally grows out of you. They used to tell you that it never left your body but it grows out of you. But yeah, on that, on that ship, I was just a deckhand. Third, fourth mate, I was the fourth man on the boat, the least experienced of the crew. I did, I tell myself I did tolerably well because after a couple of trips, I think I went up one notch. And then at a later date, I was able to assist that Captain. I left that boat up in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, on account of my mama had another operation for a brain tumor, and they wanted me back home. So I left the boat but a year or two later I was able to assist that gentleman by relieving one of his other crew men down in Key West and finishing a trip for him, with him that he ended up in Pensacola, Florida where we were at the middle of the Gulf, catching swordfish. But yeah, I guess I went from third or fourth mate on that boat to second mate anyway in a relatively short period of time. On shrimp boats, there's generally a captain and a crew. Often there will be a captain, a rig man and a deckhand. And so I have acted in both those capacities as the most experienced rig man and the least experienced rig man on boats. The names, Miss WowWee, I worked on the and y'all may get to interview him, Thurmond Kern. The Miss WowWee, Morning Star. Two Morning Star's the original Morning Star and yeah, that's why they named where he named the Morning Star The Morning Star because he replaced an old diesel sales boat called the Morning Star with it. So he had two boats named Morning Star. I really haven't worked on that many books. Yeah. Fact of the matter is. Trying to think of others. But yeah, I worked for Thurmond for a while and probably went right back to work with Robert, when that opportunity arose.

MB: Do you remember the name of the ship you worked on in the I think you said the Penobscot Gulf?

1:25:43

LP: Penobscot Gulf?

MB: Yeah.

LP: The name of the boat was the Penobscot Gulf

MB: Okay.

LP: It originally, the boat itself was built as a coastal oil tanker for delivering oil and gas and stuff. And I was never in the Penobscot Gulf or in Penobscot Bay. He worked out of Woods Hole Massachusetts and so the Penobscot Gulf was the name of the boat, not where it work. We work from Woods Hole out to the Grand Banks. It was his normal area for swordfishing. Unique

experiences there. Yeah, one time it was, we were 24 hours from the closest land, period land, by our speed and everything, and there was a hurricane coming and it was gonna be there in 15. So there was no running away from it. And I remember battening down the hatches securing all the watertight bulkheads and every water tight, something that we had on that thing, and ridin' out two days worth of bad weather. Somewhere along that bad weather I remember, a sea of dolphins, you know porpoises and, as far as the eye could see, two, three-hundred yard wide school of dolphin, I mean, big, just thousands of 'em swimming in unison. They had someplace to go. And that was just amazing. Seem like as far as you could see nothing but dolphin jumping. Flipper. But yeah, never been to the Penobscot Gulf. Furthest I made it North with the Bulldog was the, whatever Bay it is up there and I came to Norfolk, Virginia, Chesapeake Bay. Chesapeake Bay. Yeah, that's the big one, Delaware is all around. But yeah, the Chesapeake Bay. Been as far North as the Chesapeake Bay as far East as the EEZ as the edge of the EEZ no wait a minute no I ain't been 200 miles off there. No, I've been out to 500 fathoms which is a mile, half a mile [mumbles] yeah I forget where I've been deeper than that as far South as the land between us and Cuba and as far West as the border of Mexico so that was my travels in the Bulldog Yep. To clarify that earlier point. Chesapeake Bay. Come on. Y'all can think of more.

SS: You talked about how you graduated early boating and fishing have any What was the motivation to graduate early?

1:29:20

LP: School was kind of boring.

SS: Okay

LP: I'd rather be out drinking and carrying on. Yeah no, I did well in my academic studies and yeah the motivation for getting out early was, yeah, I was done and now these people, I ain't got to come here every day and do what you tell me.

SS: So you never shrimped or fished before?

LP: Did some fishing, pole fishing with my daddy, never shrimped, never stepped foot on a shrimp boat before that time, but like I say I had a friend whose daddy had shrimp boats and had just bought the fish house so there was lots going on I didn't take me I didn't need much to live on the beer I drank and what food I ate and yeah they provide us lunch at work so you know we work for next to nothing, get a case of beer in the evening or on the weekend and he was good to go so yeah, it was easy time on life. Come on y'all can think of something else.

SS: Do you have any questions for us?

LP: What in the world are y'all doing it for? What drives you to anthropology?

SS: Me? Gettin' to hear stories like this.

LP: Okay

SS: You drive me here.

LP: And you?

1:31:17

MB: I'm interested in understanding people who I never would have been able to interact with or even hear of before joining this major.

LP: Okay good reasoning. Yeah, I mean, within every sect of people you got all the different kinds of people that you got everywhere good people, bad people, asshole. If it's banking, or fishing, or government you got crooks and assholes in all of it and damn good people. And yeah, learning to spot them damn good people can be difficult at times when they was brought up this way, that way or the other way yeah, we got this trial going on. And yeah, there's just ain't no way for it to end well, I hope it ends peacefully. But I knew some of 'em and boy did they step in some deep doo doo when they did what they did in and I feel for them because I don't know that they'll ever see the light of day again. But I'm just glad it weren't me. Thankfully it weren't me that decided oh you know go get your gun we're gunna go check on this fella I bet they didn't expect it to end that way either, yeah they almost didn't nothing happen about i, and I can understand the people on the other side sure feeling that was a wrong thing to do and I think they findin' out and they gon try and make it right there ain't no makin' it right though it's already wrong. C'mon. Use your imagination. You just come up with something I've seen the light go off.

SS: I think we're all done with the interview but if you want to keep talking while I take some photos of you.

LP: Oh you don't need no

SS: You can talk about whatever you want.

LP: No, I'd get arrested for talking [SS laughs] And my wife is probably waiting on me now.

SS: Alrighy.

LP: But I appreciate it.

SS: We appreciate you for letting us use your time.

LP: Yes, well wasn't the most opportune moment, but yeah anytime, anytime

SS: Absolutely.