

Fred Carter Interview Log

Interview for Calvert County Marine Museum Research on Seafood Houses

Interviewer: Carrie Nobel Kline, Talking Across the Lines, LLC

Also Present: Sarah Briscoe (mother), Ola Mae Carter (wife), Robert Hurry, Hanna Thurman

Location of Interview: Home of Ola Mae and James Carter in St. Inigoes, Maryland

Interview Date: 3-4-05

Track 8

- 00:05 Getting to packinghouse; 6:00 in the morning until 5:00; weighing came later – first shucked by the pot, then later used scale; dredging oysters
- 02:15 Started cracking claws –guys did that; 15-20 cents a pound, that’s what Mr. Davis paid; brought pillow to sit on; my highest –picked 125 pounds a day
- 04:40 If too much blood on your hands they made you stop so you didn't taint the meat; weighed out meat in five-pound increments; fastest picker got the money; fights broke out; when you wasn't in tobacco field you picked or cracked
- 07:07 Shuckers and crab pickers rode the open-backed truck in winter and summer; sat on benches on back of truck; cracked claws on iron bricks; solid steel knife; hands were all picked up
- 10:00 The meat comes out pretty, you can tell if its handpicked; back fin, lump meat – changed name; claw meat is darker, crab meat is lighter
- 12:48 Started out at Charles E. Davis then he sold it to Dick Lore; you don't have no big factory –a place of about 100-150 people; wet and damp all the time; trash cans; house man –went around with wheel barrow and dumped waste; in the early years guys and girls were separate –young boys and older women
- 15:57 Singing –church hymns and rock n' roll

Track 9

- 00:00 Discussion with wife Ola about singing –no musical instruments, just voices

Track 11

- 00:05 Name

Track 12

- 00:00 Charles E. Davis was largest packinghouse; other houses in County -7th district, Mr. Morgan, Copsey's acquired packinghouse from Morgan

Track 14

00:00 Boats coming in bringing oysters; the captain and the mickey –explains; Human Resources Department was called Water Police at that time; pay tickets from Water Police, had to throw oysters back out; culler’s responsibility; others would watch where they were thrown and re-harvest oysters

05:45 Human Resource guys got smart –found another bar to put oysters back; black and white guys worked; so many boats in one bar –all jammed in together

7:20 Some people went into same bar all year

Transcriptionist’s Note: “Although he gave verbal consent to being taped, he has up to this point declined to sign a release form.”