

**BAYSHORE CENTER AT BIVALVE
DELAWARE BAY MUSEUM
ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPTION**

DATE: June 3, 2003
TIME: unknown
SUBJECT: SALT HAY ROPE MAKING MACHINE
NARRATOR: Owen J. Carney
LOCATION: Shipping Shed, Bivalve, NJ

ATTENDEES: Deb Slating, Museum Curator; Meghan Wren, Executive Director, Bayshore Center at Bivalve
TRANSCRIBED BY: Patricia Moore, Volunteer Delaware Bay Museum
DATE: September - October 20, 2022

ACCESSION #: 2002.05
CATALOGUE #: 001

SUMMARY:

Owen Carney began telling his family story of how they became involved with the Salt Hay Rope Making machine now currently in the possession of the Bayshore Center at Bivalve. Most of his story is describing how the machine looked and how every moving piece worked to make rope. He describes how his father worked for a cast iron pipe company in Camden, NJ and how salt hay rope was used in the making of cast iron pipes. Owen explains how after his father left the company how he obtained one of those machines and brought down to his property in Port Norris. Owen also learned from his dad how to operate the equipment and made rope part time after he retired from his job with the State of NJ. Mr. Carney also shares his story of going to Washington DC in the mid 80's to demonstrate the salt hay rope making process at the Smithsonian Institute Folklife Festival held on the mall, where he demonstrated making rope on his machine. He was very proud to be a participant at the festival.

Interviewer ([00:00:01](#)):

We are recording today with Owen J Carney, owner of the salt hay rope making equipment, which he has donated to the project. Today is Wednesday, June 3, 2003.

Carney ([00:00:20](#)):

Will you hold that? Is it okay if you take this? Now Bob sent you this letter that you were referring to in there.

Carney ([00:00:33](#)):

Uhhuh.

Slating, Deb ([00:00:34](#)):

And what's in the letter?

Carney ([00:00:37](#)):

Well, he told me that I was going to, he's going to ruin my vacation. <laugh> the fact that they asked in (closing). You know, I never did this really for a living. I never made, I only tried to stave off starvation after World War II and for not too much money prior to World War II.

Slating, Deb ([00:01:07](#)):

This was sort of on the side?

Carney ([00:01:09](#)):

Well, I graduated from high school in 1938. See, and then I started learning to make a rope with my father and,

Slating, Deb ([00:01:24](#)):

Owen Carney?

Carney ([00:01:25](#)):

Yeah, Owen Carney Senior. And it took a long time to learn this stuff. Cause you just can't slow these machines down and you're constantly breaking the rope, you know, as you're making it. It just snaps in two. If anyone has learned to spin on a spinning wheel, same principle, actually the same principle with the standing wheel or spinning wheel. Or in fact, I've have a book on spinning wheels and they've actually made spinning wheels that looked just like that hay rope machine, only much smaller run with electric motor on 'em. And as you were making them the principle of the two strands, like belts, on a spinning wheel is the same thing. It's constantly pulling away from you and putting it on, what is it? a bobbin? Mm-hmm <affirmative> yeah. With the hay rope machine, the principle of the bobbins turning slower than the outside shape that's spinning around, that pulls it away from you. They had the wheel on the far end of the hay rope machine had a belt around it attached to a pedal where you were sitting and you would push on that pedal and the speed of the machine and the speed of the spool weren't the same. If you weren't touching that brake pedal, it would be the same. But as you tap that pedal, it would slow up the spool enough to take the rope as you were making your way. It was just sort of a handy way of putting the rope in a spool form so that you could just take the machine apart, drop the spool on the floor, tie it up. Like you saw in that picture.

Slating, Deb ([00:03:28](#)):

Mm-hmm <affirmative> mm-hmm

Carney ([00:03:32](#)):

My father had told me, and this was his trade, he'd been at it since he was a young man, that for making delicate course, they made very thin hay rope out of straw or anything. And they would do that by a man standing there with, if you might say, a twist drill type of machine with a hook in it instead of a drill. And they'd start this on here. And as the man was turning the twist drill, the other rope maker was making the rope and this guy was backing up.

Slating, Deb ([00:04:18](#)):

Huh? Oh,.

Carney ([00:04:20](#)):

If you've ever seen a rope walk in the beginnings of a Manila rope, that's how they did that. They had an apparatus that hung on their shoulder, came out like this, that was full of hemp. And they had a boy turning this big wheel with a belt to a small wheel with a hook on it. And that's how they made that single strand of hemp that looked like what binder twine you know?

Slating, Deb ([00:04:53](#)):

How about that?

Carney ([00:04:54](#)):

And they would make it in great, big, long lengths and bundle it up somehow or another. And it had to be long. And then they they'd finally wind up with a rope that big.

Wren, Meghan ([00:05:07](#)):

So you're saying your dad, when he was doing this for a living, he would make different dimensions, all the way down to-

Carney ([00:05:16](#)):

We made from quarter inch up to one inch in diameter.

Slating, Deb ([00:05:20](#)):

And how were these ropes used?

Carney ([00:05:26](#)):

Oh, there was foundry core rope, just as Bob has explained it, it was wrapped around a core bar covered with the clay and worked to the exact diameter and shape and size of the pipe that they were going to according to cast and put in an oven to bake. Brought out and erected vertically in a casting pit, you know, a found casting. Founding has a casting pit that runs from one end of founding to the other. I'm talking about something that might be 300 or 400 feet long, but they would sit these core bars up, clamp a mold around them, which was probably, and center the core. And here's this open space for molton iron to be poured into. And it's a whole row. They come up with an overhead crane with a ladle of molton iron and start pouring it. And, of course all the fireworks started. As I mentioned before, this hay would burn out. And the core was made out of a solid piece of pipe itself, you know?

Wren, Meghan ([00:06:48](#)):

Oh, the core wasn't clay,

Carney ([00:06:49](#)):

The core inside basically was another piece of pipe. Okay. See. And inside of this hay and clay that was wrapped around on it.

Wren, Meghan ([00:07:00](#)):

So first it was solid pipe. Then it was clay. Then it was wrapped with salt hay rope.

Carney ([00:07:04](#)):

No, they'd take the pipe. And, it was on a bar like this, and then they had a bar through here and they had spokes in here, see. This could have been a six foot inside diameter plate. It could have been a one foot, and they put this in a lathe type machine and the core maker could control the speed at which this was turning very slowly. He'd start rope on it, but he'd start on there and put rope on it. A level, you know, sometimes, maybe one layer, imagine a lathe and plaster wall. That's the way it finished. And this hay was, it was wrapped on tightly, but not too tight. There was little spaces in here so that when they started shoveling this clay material on it with probably wooden spade out of a, out of a wheelbarrow or something like that. They could actually work it down in here and then put another layer on it. And, uh, just like, he's a Potter, he's, he's a Potter making, you know, on something on this with a safe for me. And it comes out smooth. Mm-hmm, <affirmative> very smooth. And, uh, with the old type, uh, cast iron pipe, they had bell housings. And that was where it would come up, uh, in this shape, up here, say, yeah, like that..

Carney ([00:08:44](#)):

And, um, and they'd once he got that finished, they'd pick this whole thing up with the crane and put it in a large oven, bake it, and it'd come out hard as a brick.

Slating, Deb ([00:08:55](#)):

See, and then they would pour, then they would

Carney ([00:08:57](#)):

Put this, then they would stand this upright Uhhuh, upright like this, see right. Uh, with the shape and then outside of it, outside of it here, see, there's the core, then here's the, or core, then here's the bold here. Say, oh, this is kind of wild. But then, uh, this portion here is all open. See that's where the, you know, it actually looked like something like this looking right straight down from overhead. And this is where they poured the hot iron. And this, uh, you know, was, was, this was in two pieces. See this, this piece, this mold mm-hmm, <affirmative> two pieces mm-hmm <affirmative>. And then what practically set immediately. You just knocked these apart, you know, with pins that were held together with pins or clamps, and that would fall off and this original core bar right here mm-hmm <affirmative> because the Hays been now gone mm-hmm <affirmative> just hook onto it and draw it. Right, right on, up and out, all it was left was the finished pipe with a layer of clay stuck to it inside it mm-hmm <affirmative> and they took care of that with sledge harbors. <laugh> one, the there's

Wren, Meghan ([00:10:21](#)):

So many steps. It seems like pipe should have been worth about the same as gold, all that,

Carney ([00:10:26](#)):

All that work, this type of pipe. And I'm speaking of the time when there was either this pipe or, or wooden barrel type pipes, there was no, uh, no bent corrugated steel. There was no welded steel pipe. Uh, there was no concrete. This was all before all of that. And, uh, this went the way of all other procedures. When someone said, let's take this core or mold the mold, the outside shape and lay it horizontally. And then with some sort of material spread on inside, stop sticking, stop it from the Molton iron, from sticking. And we'll spin this horizontally. And as it's spinning, we'll pour the Moten iron in there and centrifugal force will take care of all this procedure. See of make it a accord. And that's the only thing to save the cast iron pipe, uh, from extinction.

Wren, Meghan ([00:11:39](#)):

Hmm. What year roughly would that have been?

Carney ([00:11:42](#)):

I think it was sometime in the twenties. They decided they, they, they developed this, but it wasn't, uh, years for much longer because then, or much later the, uh, this type of a cast iron pipe, the old way you probably had inch or two inch walls in it. And it would last forever been. It's very common as I understand it when I was, I don't know when they, if they're still doing it or not to dig up this piece of pipe, it became too small for the area and put it over in the pipe yard. It may have been a hundred years old when they dug it up and, uh, replace it with larger pipe, but then put, need this somewhere else. Just go put it in again. It seems to, that has a, uh, a property that wouldn't rust forms on it. It's almost like a protective coating. Yeah.

Wren, Meghan ([00:12:48](#)):

Just keep eating away.

Carney ([00:12:49](#)):

Now. Cast iron pipe is about that thick it's uh, you know, you can't believe it was so, so thin, but the municipality still like the, the, uh, long lasting properties of cast iron. And, uh,

Wren, Meghan ([00:13:10](#)):

So when, but if the centrifugal force in molding, it horizontally was coming in in the twenties, but they were still making it this way some oh yeah.

Carney ([00:13:21](#)):

Someplace still making this other car, it took, took quite a while for it to catch on mm-hmm <affirmative> and, uh, you know, I guess maybe the industry's almost like the American medical association. They'll keep cutting hearts open and putting pipes in there, uh, long after, uh, you know, we have other alternative methods. I'll probably get a contract put out on this. <laugh> well, it's almost the same as any, any other business people hate change? Who moved my cheese? You've read that one.

Wren, Meghan ([00:14:03](#)):

I don't know if I read that one.

Carney ([00:14:04](#)):

One, but by Johnson, you know, Johnson. Yeah. Yeah. Who moved my cheese? That's great. Were you going to ask me a question?

Slating, Deb ([00:14:12](#)):

I was going to ask you if you could, uh, diagram, um, the placements of the different pieces of equipment, um, so that it could be operated again.

Carney ([00:14:30](#)):

Oh, well now in this hay road plant up here, you have a picture of, right. The electric boaters were up in the rafters and the belt from the electric boaters to the shafts with the, step pulleys and the clutches and everything were hanging from the rafters. And we had a long, uh, a long bar that hang down alongside the machine and we could work it this way. You know, all the, uh, work, the clutch to start the machine and stop it from the floor and it was all hanging up there. Now, when I worked at behind my house, I put all that stuff on the same level and, uh, worked just as well. But, uh, that, you know, that big 100 foot long building was 50 feet across that had a lot of rafters in it and would hold all that stuff.

Carney ([00:15:35](#)):

And when they first, they first started operating that, uh, plant in 1907, the electric motors at the time were so they threw so much fire sparks and everything around when they started them, that they had little brick building. And I think today, if you go up there where those houses are sitting on Memorial avenue, you'll see the remains of that little tiny brick room that was sitting outside of that shed or that, that plant, that wooden building. And that's where the electric motors were in there. And they had a shaft on the electric motor that came right on through the side of the wooden building. And, and rode and drove pulley. And shafts up over overhead from there. And then when they got suitable motors that, uh, didn't throw much, they just built a platform up in the shaft or in rafters had them up there out, out of the way.

Slating, Deb ([00:16:42](#)):

How, Hm. How, um, so if can you document then on this paper, um, how you had it hooked up at your house?

Carney ([00:16:52](#)):

Oh yes.

Slating, Deb ([00:16:53](#)):

Can, can you draw?

Carney ([00:16:54](#)):

Yes. Yeah, I had, this was my shop up like this and, uh, I put two big, two or three big, heavy beams right across here

Slating, Deb ([00:17:12](#)):

On the ground or over

Carney ([00:17:13](#)):

Well, probably it was all just, we could have been on the ground, but I might have had a rock or two under keep it up off the, but what I wanted to do was, uh, and I don't even know how to build a, uh, or draw an electric motor, but I'll, I'll start here like this. And, uh, and here's a, uh, shaft for the electric motor with a pulley out here. See, now let's see. I, and my machine was, let's see, how, how did I do this? Oh, then I, I fitted a shaft right here, and this was a small pulley. Uh, this was a large pulley right here. See, these were the same pulley that, and motors that were down in the, uh, the big building you were up talking yes. Down on 16 or that, where I used to live in that old shed down. Yeah. I was in that. I was in that old, well, you would probably are these motors and all this other stuff is gone now.

Slating, Deb ([00:18:17](#)):

No, it's well,

Carney ([00:18:19](#)):

Is it sitting in there? We

Wren ([00:18:20](#)):

We have some of the pieces.

Carney ([00:18:22](#)):

Oh yeah. Yeah. Okay. I'll show those to you. All right. Now I had this enclosed like this, yes, like, like this, of course I had to have hangers here and hangers here, you know, a hangers. These are bearings for the, shafts see, and this was a belt here. And, uh, there was floor under this, this, this motor was five horsepower and it was the old century motor, and the very heavy, extremely heavy. Uh, now here's my machine out here. And once again, I don't know whether I could really draw this thing or not, but this, this is the brake belt, and this is the machine here. And, uh, here, here. Okay. And this is a sort of a outside shape. This is a, a spool in here and it comes out here. And then there's a, what I'm trying to build to draw a step fully here. See.

Carney ([00:19:34](#)):

To control the speed. And uh, this break apparatus came around this machine here and came up here to a little pedal. And I sat here on a little stool. Okay. Now on this machine, here was the clutch at another step pulley see, wait, this would I, and I, I can't tell for sure whether it was bent like this, you know, different.

Carney ([00:20:14](#)):

Here. And this was a belt over here, and this was a clutch right here, but I'll just say that it had a, uh, had to handle the stuff up, but I could pull it toward me to engage it or push it forward.

Slating, Deb ([00:20:34](#)):

And you did that from sitting right there?

Carney ([00:20:36](#)):

Yeah. So I could reach right over there. There was a belt here and by moving, uh, no, I believe this, these, these are just about the same, uh, because I would need this to go on this to make it slow see. And, uh, and then I would, yeah, I, I don't know, but anyhow, I'd sit here and the rest of this thing is all full of hay. See here.

Slating, Deb ([00:21:05](#)):

Oh.

Carney ([00:21:07](#)):

And, uh, I'd have to wet the hay over overnight. so it would be soft and pliable and then shake it out. Just like, uh, there are roll line machines, get little balls of, of wool. So that you get the tangles out of it

and hear through affirmative> yep. That's exactly the same principle. I just didn't realize this. When I learned how to make it, it was almost, you know, and always wanted to wished I knew how to run a spinning wheel. Well, after I went to Washington, I, uh, with the National Folk Life Festival it dawned on me, hell, you damn fool. You've been spending all your life and this is the same principle.

Carney ([00:21:58](#)):

So yeah, here, I'm sitting here, as you see in the picture looking this way, and this thing is rolling along and, and this is the way you would set the whole thing up on a, on a flat piece of right here on this floor. He wanted to, if it was heavy enough to hold the machinery, then you could, if he left the room here, and here's where I used to stack the spools right in here, as I was making them, I only had a room for maybe 25 or 30 spools, but then I rarely ever had an order that was any more than that you see in that Atlantic City thing, I had it stacked over, over here on my side porch, but I just, I think that was probably for a hundred spools or more was a unusually large order for me. And, uh, of course at the same time, during the day I was working for the state of New Jersey in, in the local property tax bureau division of taxation, I was a field man out in the countryside, and then I'd do this nights, weekends because my younger brother had this, had this whole operation going, but he was killed in an accident and, uh, in 1962. And so I was the only one around knew how to do it. So I built the still shed, my backyard and continued, certainly didn't make any money.

Slating, Deb ([00:23:25](#)):

Was your younger brother killed in an accident at the, um, rope making?

Carney ([00:23:31](#)):

Oh, no, no, no. He was helping, uh, uh, on construction job and, uh, a load of steel slid off of a job in Millville there at the library and hit him, uh, see, he was just doing this part-time also.

Slating, Deb ([00:23:49](#)):

And what was his name?

Carney ([00:23:50](#)):

Gilbert Carney.

Wren, Meghan ([00:23:53](#)):

Okay. Was that the year in 1962 when the, um, factory shut down or had it been operational? I mean, when it,

Carney ([00:24:02](#)):

It was operational all the way up until 62, when, uh, the other partner, my father decided to demolish the building and, uh, that's when I moved down behind my house and, uh, incidentally, uh, my brother Gilbert was Penny Berries, uh, a father.

Slating, Deb ([00:24:28](#)):

Oh,

Carney ([00:24:29](#)):

You know, Doug Berry, Doug Berry's wife. Doug Berry's wife. Oh yeah.

Slating, Deb ([00:24:36](#)):

Oh, how about that? So she's your niece. And she's Mike's cousin.

Carney ([00:24:46](#)):

Yes. Hmm. No say cousin. Yeah.. I guess so, huh? Yeah, sure definitely. Yes. And my niece, yes. Uhhuh. And she has a sister, an older sister, Catherine.

Slating, Deb ([00:24:59](#)):

How old was Gilbert when he was killed?

Carney ([00:25:02](#)):

36.

Slating, Deb ([00:25:03](#)):

Oh, dear.

Carney ([00:25:07](#)):

Those kids were very small. Very small. Yeah. 62. I think it was. Yeah. Did I say that? You said 62. Okay.

Wren, Meghan ([00:25:16](#)):

So he was in partnership with your father still at the

Carney ([00:25:19](#)):

Time? No, I, no. I, I worked with him. My father died in 52.

Wren, Meghan ([00:25:24](#)):

Oh

Carney ([00:25:25](#)):

See. So, uh, and by that time, when I, after the war was over, I came back and just, and I didn't take me over a couple of weeks to realize that there was just wasn't enough business for three of us sitting there making rope. So I found other jobs. I went from what even tried oystering. I found out that you need a lot of know how to get, to add a lot of money to get the oyster business. So that only lasted one spring. And then the next thing I knew I was working, working at this job and that job and, uh, fooling around for about 10 years. And then I got a job with the state. And

Wren, Meghan ([00:26:11](#)):

What types of things did you? 10 years? Number years.

Carney ([00:26:15](#)):

Oh, service stations over in, uh, air work, re uh, cleaning airplane, engine parts. And, uh, then I worked with the Robin's brothers. That was a very interesting thing at a shucking house and boats and all that stuff in, and I was there for six years and, uh, then I found a job. <laugh> a real job.

unknown ([00:26:43](#)):

I'm just curious. And I don't work for the IRS, but how long would it take to make a spool of the rope? And then you, you don't have to answer this, but I'm just curious how much it would cost to buy a spool of rope back in those days. I mean,

Carney ([00:27:06](#)):

I think I would sell probably a spool of one inch, which is the quickest and easiest, right? For about \$4.50, maybe, and then a spool of the quarter inch for \$10 or \$12 something, \$10 to \$12. And this would take an hour to make, this would take, uh, three hours to make. Of course I that's pretty small for what I called three quarter inch. And then there was three quarters and five eights and half inch and three eights here. I made those six different, uh, sizes, but most of the time was either this or half on half or, uh, I don't know. Maybe I've got too many here, one inch, three quarter, oh, this is five eights. This is half inch. Yeah. This is three eights and one quarter

Wren ([00:28:21](#)):

And the most common were the one inch. The Half.

Carney ([00:28:24](#)):

Yeah, this is, yeah.

Wren ([00:28:27](#)):

Mm-hmm

Carney ([00:28:27](#)):

I, uh, uh, so now you're thinking, yeah, I think, uh, my gross for a year would be 3,600 or something like that. So you could, it is a good way to starve to death. You all know Mike? My son might, it said, dad, I don't, like he said, dad, I only parts of that thing. You were just wasted your time out there. Ah, but that's the way it is. You find guys working at jobs, that, uh, they just don't make anything, but they, they, they, you know, yeah. I had, I probably felt like it was my duty since I was the only one left, but all of this is today. They don't make pipe like this anymore. And they've been started using this as events for special castings. You know, there's even bed this hay right down to the point where, uh, like, like, uh, it's, they're gonna make a casting. They've already made this strange looking core, you know, can you imagine what it's like building, uh, casting the case for an automatic transmission or something like that in order. Oh, and I was out in, uh, Johnstown, Johnstown corporation and they, they used to order a lot of the small stuff and uh, took me all through the, the foundries. They said, this is the largest Foundry under one roof in the world. And they have everything in there. And he said, you see that right there, that's a new transmission for general motors, which just cashes up, you know, things like that. You know, maybe a lot of secret stuff too. See, uh, and they were, they were fooling around with this rope, just llaying it, and leaving it, lay there. And it was all tangled up and everything. He said, have you got any ideas about how we could keep this rope from getting all tangled and falling apart? You know, as you're pulling apart, it's wildly you say, I said, yeah, you see those big drums you have over there. Like there's paper, drums, chemicals, and stuff. I said, do a little experimenting with dropping one of those

spoons right down in that. And then just start pulling out from the inside, just like you would've any kind of bundle of stuff. And you'll find that it will stay in the shape until it's practically that thin on the outside, you're pulling it up from the inside. Oh, was that the way all these years? Theyd never thought about that. <laugh> I thought it came to me very quickly because I was making, uh, I was making baskets and wreaths out of it for Christmas, you know? And there I am standing there making making the wreath and they're making a re uh, that's probably that, that much, you know, these old straw reefs that you buy, I was making hay re out that, you know, and, and me, I was trying to get it out from the outside when I started just like anybody, the dumb person. And then I figure, she said, I wanna be an easier way, but it makes the difference by way it's twisted, whether it's sitting this way or inverted to come out the way you want it. How about that? And whether or not you're lefthanded or right-handed. Oh, see. So it's an experimenting thing.

Slating, Deb ([00:32:08](#)):

So that you indicated when you making the wreath, that it would be something in the diameter of About...

Carney ([00:32:16](#)):

In various, various diameters, this one see probably maybe 50 strands of this smaller stuff to make enough. So you had some body to it, then wrap it with Raffia to hold it in shape. Mm-hmm <affirmative> then I started selling baskets of it, you know, coiled baskets. Yeah. Lot of hard work<laugh> but, uh, of course.,,,

Slating, Deb ([00:32:42](#)):

Do you have any left?

Carney ([00:32:43](#)):

Oh, no. I don't have any left there around town. I've sold a few and I gave it a lot of away. They're probably in, if you, uh, visit houses, you'll see 'em around. They're nothing fancy. I got that from the coil baskets of, uh, the Charleston, South Carolina, uh, people, uh, there's a woman by the name. I know Taylor or something down there. I traded her some BA you know, Raffia, basket, not a Raffia, but a, uh, sweet grass, sweet grass basket for one of my hay root baskets. Oh. And I gave her something else. I just gave her one of mine and she sold me one of her baskets long time ago, uh, with a little bit off it was \$65. But it's a beautiful basket. You've seen those re there's a sweet grass baskets in South Carolina. Yeah.

Slating, Deb ([00:33:39](#)):

What year did you, did you make the baskets?

Carney ([00:33:48](#)):

I don't know when. Maybe in the eighties? Yeah, possibly in the eighties. Okay. After I retired from the, from the, uh, state, but that was another thing I just thought about doing. And then now I was still having a little bit of business, but business is dwindling off to nothing. Yeah. And just about 19, when I finally decided to fly, to move to Florida permanently, I left 50 spools thinking that maybe that Canadian company would want 50 spools of inch. And, uh, those 50 spools of rope, if you've been around the town, like said when Todd bought that house, he cleaned that out and there were spools of rope laying

all over the town. People were, who were just sitting around, were sitting on the spool for rope. Did you ever see them? Mm-hmm well, that's where they went. There's

Slating, Deb ([00:34:55](#)):

Just the one that's still on the machine.

Carney ([00:35:00](#)):

Is there really?

Wren, Meghan ([00:35:01](#)):

Well, years ago he gave us one for the museum. So we also have one in the museum.

Carney ([00:35:04](#)):

Okay. Alright. They sort of, they're not dry out, you know, of course you, you could renew them by throwing a bucket of water off. Oh yeah, yeah. Or turn the hose on it because that's what we used to do when we shipped it. We would have in that, in that large building, we would have hundreds and hundreds of spools in the stock room. And, uh, when we got ready to ship, uh, we'd just sit 'em out on a platform. And, uh, and maybe three or four high, just turn a hose on them. Wet. 'em not too much because after all, uh, shipping gets more expensive when you have more weight but it would make them look nicer and fresher

Wren, Meghan ([00:35:56](#)):

You said that the, um, your dad died in 1952.? Yeah. And your brother died in 1962. Which year did you say that the rope factory was demolished?

Carney ([00:36:11](#)):

What, when, what year?

Wren ([00:36:13](#)):

When was it demolished?

Carney ([00:36:15](#)):

Demolished. Oh, it was just about after 1962.

Wren ([00:36:23](#)):

And was, was your brother still working there when he was working? Is that where he, is that where he,

Carney ([00:36:29](#)):

No, he was doing, he had, he had a full-time job. He was just making rope part-time. Uh, in fact he was working on a construction job with, up at the Millville library.

Wren ([00:36:45](#)):

And when he worked, when he did it on the side, did he do it at his own home?

Carney ([00:36:50](#)):

No. He used the big building.?

Wren ([00:36:53](#)):

And did it, was it when your dad died? Did it stopped being in production regularly? When, when did it, I guess you said it started in 1907?

Carney ([00:37:02](#)):

Well, no. When my father died, I think at that time my brother was working there full time. See with him Uhhuh. Yeah. I'm not positive about that, but, but, uh, yes.

Wren ([00:37:15](#)):

So somewhere between 1955 and 1962, your brother had stopped doing it full time. And that's when it stopped being in production full time at the factory?

Carney ([00:37:26](#)):

Just business, just wouldn't wouldn't, you know, you could make a living of it.

Wren ([00:37:31](#)):

Yeah mm-hmm did they, did they have employees there? Was it a or just the two of them or, and you sometimes, or, I mean, did it take more than the two of them to keep the factory going?

Carney ([00:37:45](#)):

No, they could. They, the two of them could keep it going easily. Yeah. Right., there was never any extra people working there. And you know, when the, uh, plant was first put up, since this was the only way that could make a pipe, you know, they needed a core, core rope and, you know, they made core rope out any grass available with any length. Out in Colorado, they made it out Prairie hay and somewhere off in Florence, New Jersey, they made it out of Excelsior here. They had probably, it was a large corporation and they had a, had some, some way with wood that they, that some other portion of the corporation had that. And, uh, they, they made it out of Excelsior. And then they, a lot of places, they always use fresh hay from a field. In fact, I used a lot of fresh hay. when, it became, uh, difficult to get salt hay, huh? These hay farmers out here, they, uh, they used to, when I was a kid and up until, um, you know what some, well, sometime after world war II, they would cut their hay and let it cure in the field in winrows. And then there's rakes to rake it up, make wagons out there and pitch it up and bring it to the hay yard up on high ground and make those, uh, stacks seven, 800 feet long, maybe 15 feet high. And if anybody wanted baled hay, they'd put a baler alongside the stack and pitch it bad down there and, and make up the bales. It was all loose high.

Wren ([00:39:48](#)):

Is that how you took it loose?

Carney ([00:39:50](#)):

We had to have it loose. Yeah. I tried to, I tried to make it out of Baled and it was all so jammed up and twisted around and everything that took forever to break it apart. Oh,

Slating, Deb ([00:40:02](#)):

Did you prefer one over the other?

Carney ([00:40:05](#)):

You mean the kind, the hay type of hay types of hay. Oh, I definitely want loose hay.

Slating, Deb ([00:40:11](#)):

Um, I mean, salt hay versus the hay, the,.....fresh

Carney ([00:40:15](#)):

Oh, the fresh hay and so forth.

Slating, Deb ([00:40:16](#)):

Fresh. Yeah. Regular.

Carney ([00:40:17](#)):

Once you got accustomed to it didn't make any difference. In fact, I, uh, over in Vineland they have on Sherman avenue and I think it's Sherman. The Vineland city has a place where they raise hay on some sort of land that has been recycled where it comes out of the sewage plant or something for several years. I used to go over there and get one of those. I only had one boat trailer and I could go over there and get one of those great big round bales, Uhuh, and tie it down and come bring it home. And I could probably make 25 or 30 spools of rope outta each one of them. And I'd go over there and get it. Huh? Because it was impossible. I've been known to go along the road. <laugh> where they're cutting the shoulders. It was beautiful stuff. Then I would just take an old boat trailer and put some sticks on it and make a, make a rack on it. I take it home. Wet it, make the rope out of it. Nobody ever complained.

Slating, Deb ([00:41:22](#)):

If it, couldn't be too green. Could it?

Carney ([00:41:27](#)):

Oh no. You don't want it green. You want, you want it cured in the sun. See, yeah, because if you made it out of green hay, they would keep shrinking and shrinking and shrinking and they would have no strength, you know? So you want to, you just didn't want any deterioration or whatever you might call that. Uh, I even went down one time and Mike was telling me the Cape May Courthouse the agricultural farm, they had down there and we were out there with shearers, like this cutting weeping love grass, which is just as tough as, uh, almost hemp, you know, but, uh, we didn't do that anymore. That was just too hard work and everything else to get that he tells me there's a patch of weeping, love grass down in Barry Town road, somewhere that, that, uh, that Ricky, I think planted, but, uh, I'm not in that business anymore. So I probably wouldn't even be down there looking at it.

Wren ([00:42:36](#)):

Was the, uh, reason, I mean, with salt, hay, just cheaper than O other hay back when that was used in the factory. Is that why.

Carney ([00:42:43](#)):

Why the factory was put down here because the abundance and the availability of salt, hay and up in, uh, places like Phillipsburg with a Warren Foundry up there, they always used straw. You know, they'd buy from farmers out of the field up there.

Wren ([00:43:09](#)):

I think Mike was telling us that your dad actually came to this area after he was already employed or working with the Foundry and was their equipment. They sort of shipped it down or, or, I mean, it was sort of, uh, because of that, that your whole family ended up here. Is that, is that roughly?

Carney ([00:43:31](#)):

Yes. I, I think my father was, uh, probably working for the R. D. Wood Foundry, uh, in, uh, somewhere around Camden. And, uh, I'm, I'm sort of hazy on all of this. You see most large foundries had their own rope shed. They made their own core, core rope. Oh, they just now when I mentioned back there, the Warren Foundry in, uh, Phyllipsburg, they, made cast iron pipe and, uh, that's where my father came from that area originally. Whether or not he learned to make rope in that area. I don't know. Because he grew up in South Jersey over around Swedesboro and, uh, uh, as a sort of an orphan, you know, he, his father came to this country from Ireland and after spending quite a while here, maybe raising two families, he decided to go home and he wanted my father to go with him. Dad ran away, didn't want to go to Ireland. And he wound up down here as a, working on a farm in Swedesboro. And he always so was so, uh, uh, appreciative of the way those people, uh, treated him. He had to work for his living, you know, and all that. But one of the things that amazed me was, do you know how much it meant to a boy to have his own horse and carriage in those days how my father was born in 1875. So, and when he ran away, he was 13 years old. So that was 1888. Let's see there weren't about many model A's and, and cars around in those days. Those people gave him his own horse carriage for the weekend.

Wren ([00:45:43](#)):

Wow.

Carney ([00:45:44](#)):

And, uh, he always thought that was very appreciative of that. And then he learned to, uh, I probably left there when he was an adult and, he learned to make this rope,

Slating, Deb ([00:45:57](#)):

Um, I'm gonna stop you there. Now we're on side two. All right. Okay. Got lots of time now.

Carney ([00:46:22](#)):

Oh, not lots of time. All right. Well, uh,

Wren ([00:46:28](#)):

Was dad born in Ireland or in the

Carney ([00:46:30](#)):

Born 1875? Is this this diagram?

Slating, Deb ([00:46:39](#)):

Oh, that's oh, absolutely. Could I ask you to label a couple of things?

Carney ([00:46:45](#)):

Sure. Yeah.

Carney ([00:46:46](#)):

Let's yeah. Uh, clutch step and, and here's the, uh, HARO Mac (inaudible). Okay. You understand that now?

Slating, Deb ([00:47:25](#)):

Hay. Oh, plus (laughter) Okay. Mac fine.

Slating, Deb ([00:47:31](#)):

Hi. <laugh> all right. Would you like to go back and take a look at the, what we have?

Carney ([00:47:37](#)):

All right. You know, I probably getting you, you know, I'm repeating myself.

Slating, Deb ([00:47:44](#)):

No, you haven't at all.

Carney ([00:47:46](#)):

Well, my wife expects me home sometime around noon. Cause my main purpose was to come down here and tell Bob that he almost hit it right on the nail and, uh, and said it in, uh, this was the only thing I corrected the early nineties. Nineties. Yeah. Okay. <affirmative> yes. Thank you. I would like to see what you have here. Okay. Well, it makes it pretty nice.

Slating, Deb ([00:48:14](#)):

Mr. Carney, do you mind if I ask you, um, how old you are?

Carney ([00:48:19](#)):

81.

Slating, Deb ([00:48:19](#)):

You're 81. Mm-hmm

Carney ([00:48:21](#)):

<affirmative> all

Slating, Deb ([00:48:21](#)):

Right. What, what year were you born?

Carney ([00:48:23](#)):

21.

Slating, Deb (00:48:25):

1921.

Carney (00:48:26):

Okay. Yeah, I'll be 82 in October.

Slating, Deb (00:48:28):

In October.

Wren (00:48:29):

Were you born here?

Carney (00:48:30):

North? Yeah. Yeah,

Carney (00:48:33):

Right there. Uh, almost across from, uh, who's the guy that lives there. He's got a great big tree and his front yard. And you can't even see the house it's, uh, near, uh, the pizza place

Slating, Deb (00:48:49):

Dinos.

Carney (00:48:50):

Yeah. Across the road from Dinos.

Wren (00:48:51):

Dinos. I thought that was, um, Mrs. Kunkle (sp?) That lives....

Carney (00:48:55):

No, no, no. Uh, that's on somewhere. That's on down the street from (inaudible).

Carney (00:49:07):

Well, there's a, the Memorial island. There's a lamp house, which couple hours. And this is a, this is the house. Uh, next it's a double house, two houses. And it's a portion that's next to Kunkle's house. Hmm. Okay. Yeah. And I spent a lot of time. This is a, uh, for sure.

Slating, Deb (00:49:32):

Yeah. Don't let yeah. Stand on that. Mm-hmm <affirmative>

Carney (00:49:45):

Oh, how about that? Isn't that interesting. This has come out of the building. Didn't it? Mm-hmm <affirmative> because did you get the other one that's sitting on....

Carney ([00:49:57](#)):

Want price of WD 40 on this stuff? (Mr. Carney demonstrating where to put oil in the rope making machine). Or put it in here and see, oh yeah. See that's where oil went. Okay. But, uh, I expect, uh, yeah, lay oil. We get down through there. This thing is, you know, it's frozen. This was the one I took to Washington when I was in the national folk life festival. And I, that was a, a hot, but very interesting two weeks out on the mall. And I was staying in the, the Keybridge Marriot. Right. And I'd walk out of there just as clean as I could be in the morning and I'd come back in the afternoon and I am all dusty and sweaty and walk us through the, the, the, uh, the lobby and people were, I could don't know, but I could feel people looking at me wonder where that guy came from. Yeah, yeah. Yes. That, uh, well, you see, well, that's all got, but you see, is there, yeah, here here's that pedal see? And when you push that up, that strap is over that, uh, that over there, see that wheel, see that, see here, as you're making a, as you're making your rope inch by inch, just keep a little pressure on that. And that slows up this spool, that it takes it away from here. You're making it, you're ease. You pull back like this when you're, as you're, as you're making the rope, and then you sort of ease, you know, with a little pressure here. When you ease up on pulling back, it just goes away from you.

Wren ([00:51:45](#)):

So you'd be sitting on a stool here? Or bench. Yeah. A little, stool about this high, about 10 inches. Mike has it in his head. Oh, does he? Yeah. He has it in his house. Huh? There's a good stool right there. Yeah. <laugh> yeah. Just take it off of its stand. That would be alright. And you see, this is the, this is the one that came out from, did you get the motor too? Uh,

Slating, Deb ([00:52:11](#)):

This one over here?

Carney ([00:52:13](#)):

Yeah. You see how small that pull is and how large this is. Mm-hmm <affirmative> and that's the proper speed. See, and then that's the clutch right there. And I had a piece of bar or something to the top there, so I could just reach right over there. That was all, all right here. There was that little, the bar, keep me from getting tangled up in all that. So it

Wren ([00:52:39](#)):

So it was a wall you say between

Carney ([00:52:41](#)):

Like the wall? Yeah. Huh? Yeah. It was just sitting about this high,

Wren ([00:52:46](#)):

Well, like three feet off the ground

Carney ([00:52:47](#)):

Or so yeah. This, whatever. What am I talking about here? Oh, here. I'm trying to get, oh, this, right right here. Yes. That's it. That's still little about three feet high. And of course this was sitting right out in the main part of the shed of the machine and that's just spare pulling that had nothing to do with anything. Hmm. At,

Slating, Deb ([00:53:28](#)):

You know, what about the strap that's laying on top of it.

Carney ([00:53:31](#)):

That's another break like that.

Slating, Deb ([00:53:33](#)):

Oh, okay.

Carney ([00:53:34](#)):

Sure. It's amazing. You know, that thing right. There could be, uh, an original that came there in 1907 when they started that plant.

Wren ([00:53:47](#)):

Can you imagine that? Huh? How about that? Now? How many, how many of these were operational at the plant?

Carney ([00:53:54](#)):

When it started? There were five. Yeah. And they were, they were mounted on, on concrete basis that probably that deep into the ground. Wow. You know, right down into the ground and with anchor bolts coming up. So you could, yeah. Now when I, uh, I, I don't think that in my lifetime, I ever saw over two for running constantly day by day. You got a gold mine in here in nautical.

Wren ([00:54:33](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. So I guess that's a spare

Carney ([00:54:40](#)):

That spool there?

Wren ([00:54:40](#)):

There. Yeah. Well this one and this one, this is

Carney ([00:54:44](#)):

A farther clutch. That's there's wooden blocks in there where the clutch is

Slating, Deb ([00:54:50](#)):

Place. Really?

Carney ([00:54:52](#)):

Yeah.

Slating, Deb ([00:54:54](#)):

Huh. And is, are those spares over there too?

Carney ([00:55:00](#)):

Well, you see that's that's the end. That's the end of that one. That's the, wait a minute. Let's see those to break on that. That's just an extra one. Oh, all this stuff. He had a lot, they had a lot of extra spare parts from the other, other machines.

Slating, Deb ([00:55:16](#)):

Now this, this long, uh, shaft with this big flywheel is, is this in the diagram?

Carney ([00:55:25](#)):

That's it

Slating, Deb ([00:55:26](#)):

Right here. This whole assembly right here. Is this?

Carney ([00:55:30](#)):

Yes. Okay. But the hangers aren't that what this is resting on, right. Came up like this. Okay. And of course the plant hung down from the rafter and you see, this is their bearings right there. Their bearings. Sure. Yeah.

Slating, Deb ([00:56:03](#)):

What is this what's that

Carney ([00:56:07](#)):

This?

Carney ([00:56:11](#)):

Oh, that's a motor mount. That's the mount for that motor. See? So that you could tighten up and loosen up the belts and, and also to, uh, realign it so that it's in line with this. Otherwise the belt won't run it'll run off.

Wren ([00:56:37](#)):

Okay. So would you gather that all of this equipment is from 1907 or were some of the pieces replaced?

Carney ([00:56:43](#)):

Yeah. It was periodically... I am positive. They brought enough equipment to handle five machines. Huh? Yeah. And I think they probably immediately realized that they just didn't need five machines, but they had enough of 'em. So there was, uh, the JW Paxet Company heard that day.

Carney ([00:57:07](#)):

And these machines were made by Riley Brothers. And you don't write it down to R I L L E Y.

Wren ([00:57:15](#)):

How do I write it down?

Carney ([00:57:26](#)):

R I E H L E

Carney ([00:57:32](#)):

Riehle Brothers, Philadelphia.

Wren ([00:57:36](#)):

Huh. Now, is there much communication back and forth with that company and your family?

Carney ([00:57:45](#)):

No, this no, none, none whatsoever. And I doubt seriously since it's built so well and has lasted so long that they even expected anyone to call back and say, now the only thing we had a lot of was right in here, there was a little soft metal finger that, and I had, I had boxes of them somewhere and they would wear out was a little, little thing that came,

Slating, Deb ([00:58:21](#)):

Oh, that would run in this track in here.

Carney ([00:58:25](#)):

And that darn strip.

Slating, Deb ([00:58:26](#)):

Oh, oh,

Carney ([00:58:28](#)):

That shows a lot of wear. Here's the top of it right here. Okay. Now you may go back into that building behind. Oh. Up there Where the shed is and somewhere over on that far wall toward the east. You may find a box with a lot of these little fingers in there. Oh, now of course nobody's gonna be running them. So you don't need them.

Slating, Deb ([00:58:56](#)):

Well, we may, eventually we we'd like to run this.

Carney ([00:58:59](#)):

Yeah. Oh, you would like to run it?

Slating, Deb ([00:59:01](#)):

We'd like to get it running again.

Carney ([00:59:03](#)):

Well, you know, one of these would, for me working part-time and all that stuff would last couple years or more. I mean, it, it just, but if you were running this thing every day back and forth, you, of course oil's cheaper machinery. So you use oil on here mm-hmm <affirmative> and then started up and staying outta the way. When anybody was standing there getting too close. That's one of things that I had to worry about, uh, curious people come in and would stand, you know, particularly in some of these interviews off here, I had me a rope and here's a photographer. He's out like this. You know, he is elbows about that far. This thing spinning around.

Slating, Deb ([00:59:49](#)):

Now is this, is this what the hay would the rope would look like when you got done? Or has it come apart?

Carney ([00:59:57](#)):

A little? Well, that's loose up quite a bit,

Carney ([01:00:02](#)):

This right here, I don't want to undo it because you, you know, but that's, that's, that's about the way it is and that's good enough. That's good enough for the purpose that they used it for. They wanted it it's strong enough. And I, I, if I can remember correctly, when a core maker started this around a core bar, he would hold back like that. He had something in his hands, leather gloves or something, and he'd hold back and he'd wrap it on their tight because when you put the, uh, clay on there, and that was turning, if this hadn't been wrapped on there very tight, the whole thing would belly as it was turning around and plup. And you know, it just cut it loose and throw that away because it wasn't. And that's one of the things that the, uh, tags had on the back defects had several defects, a little breeding tag. I don't know whether any of those are left or around or not, but for the core maker to, if he rejected your spool rope, he could note why he rejected it. Uh,

unknown ([01:01:19](#)):

Now would you wet this now or no? Or would you just leave it alone to keep it from deteriorated?

Carney ([01:01:28](#)):

I really don't know. I would, uh, I would say leave it alone because if you melt inside

Slating, Deb ([01:01:42](#)):

That's salt hay.

Carney ([01:01:49](#)):

That's a piece of wire..

Slating, Deb ([01:02:07](#)):

Oh my Gosh. She's spinning it.

Carney ([01:02:11](#)):

You can do that with grass. Anytime. Anytime you see little pieces of grass about that long, just flip it up and get shake,

Wren ([01:02:19](#)):

Huh? Well, you've got the touch. Wow.

Slating, Deb ([01:02:24](#)):

Well, should we, should we walk you back in and we'll get a, a copy of that, uh, newspaper article.

Carney ([01:02:29](#)):

For art. Okay.

unknown ([01:02:32](#)):

Yeah, we don't want to get you in trouble.

Slating, Deb ([01:02:33](#)):

Yeah, we don't.

Carney ([01:02:38](#)):

Right along side, the ditch down there in the middle of the town. My best friend's father (inaudible) Here I go to the stirs and things like that. And here's a guard with little tiny bar of iron. You see it hot. (Audio very low quality not able to distinguish conversation.)

Carney ([01:03:01](#)):

Well, My shops where you get the horses shot, I always thought of blacksmith was a horses shoeer. I'd never heard of anything called farrier until long time. Later.

Wren ([01:03:14](#)):

Now, who was your friend and what, which (inaudible) was that?

Carney ([01:03:17](#)):

It was Paul Ken's father's.

Carney ([01:03:21](#)):

And uh, and I've seen him make hay wagons from start. Of course he bought all the spokes and parts of the, of the, of the wheel mm-hmm, but it was interesting to see them put a tire on a wooden wheel. They would build, make the tire exact shape or the exact size of the wheel. And you know, where you could get it on there. But the tires, the tire, the wheel would be set on a, on a rack, held stiff. This is a brand new wheel and then build a fire of coals in a circle and lay this this tire, you know, it is called a tire, even though it's iron.

Wren ([01:04:11](#)):

It's iron though.

Carney ([01:04:12](#)):

Its not rubber. Look in the encyclopedia and it'll tell you. And it was always called a tire wasn't if Romans had it on a chariot, it was still called a tire. And a lot of people will put you down and say, that's a rib. Yeah. But it's not. But anyhow, you put it in this coal. So the heat heats the ribs, expand it. Then if you get three or four other men with Tongs and you raise it up, you put it over here on this or this wheel and the blacksmith starts pounding on it. And he has a bucket in his hands. So when it starts burning, he can sort of put the flame out. But he pounds that expanded tire on the wheel. Huh. And as it's cooling, it's getting tighter and tighter and tighter. And for year that's the word. You don't even have anything on it to hold it together. But once in a while, after a while, the wheel wouldn't part of the wheel shrinks and it gets flopping around. And that's when they started throwing holes through there and bolt it all.

Slating, Deb ([01:05:23](#)):

Okay. We got everything?

Carney ([01:05:35](#)):

Did you ever see a book on how they were made cathedrals?

unknown ([01:05:40](#)):

I have looked at a couple. Yeah.

Carney ([01:05:42](#)):

You know, when they had that wheel up there for raising stones up and two men were in it and walking around like (inaudible).

unknown ([01:06:03](#)):

We have that technology. inaudible.....

Slating, Deb ([01:06:20](#)):

Mr. Carney, would you sign that for, read it and sign it at the bottom?

Carney ([01:06:26](#)):

Yeah. What is you? It's alright to use whatever I've said.

Slating, Deb ([01:06:30](#)):

Yeah. Is it okay if we use what we've recorded?

Carney ([01:06:33](#)):

Yeah, I'm pretty sure not. Am I the E

Slating, Deb ([01:06:38](#)):

Interviewee? Yes.

Carney ([01:06:48](#)):

I don't use junior anymore.

Slating, Deb ([01:06:50](#)):

Oh, you don't? No. Today's date

Carney ([01:06:52](#)):

Is believe 6, 4, or 6 5...6 4. (referring to todays date) June 4 or 5?

Carney ([01:06:56](#)):

I think it's. I thought it was six.

Slating, Deb ([01:06:59](#)):

Three was Saturday

Speaker 12 ([01:07:00](#)):

One. No. Sunday was the first.

Carney ([01:07:03](#)):

All right. Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Monday fourth.

Carney ([01:07:05](#)):

You're right.

Wren ([01:07:10](#)):

Okay.

Wren ([01:07:14](#)):

Thank you very much. Thank you. Oh, do we have the, oh, I guess I'll making photocopies of the newspaper article. Yes. Yes he is. Okay. Yeah. So when you were, uh, working for Robin's brothers, did you say that you worked in the Shucking houses and the, on the boats? Or how did you Spend your time?

New Speaker ([01:07:40](#)):

I worked in the packing and shipping part of the, uh, of, uh, the, uh, uh, operation and then worked on the boats, uh, in, during the spring planting season and then worked on repairing and overhauling and painting the boats in the summer. And the shucking house, shucking house always got a new coat of paint off in the summertime. They had a hundred, I don't a hundred twenty six hundred twenty nine shuckers.

Wren ([01:08:10](#)):

Wow.

Speaker 3 ([01:08:11](#)):

We pack, uh, was it nothing, nothing for us to pack 2500 gallon of oysters a day

Speaker 12 ([01:08:17](#)):

25 gallons a day,

Speaker 3 ([01:08:20](#)):

Huh? 2,525. <laugh> not 25 gallons,

Speaker 12 ([01:08:25](#)):

Right? 25, 2500

Speaker 3 ([01:08:27](#)):

Gallons. A 2,500 gallons a day. Yes. Yeah. Wow. That's like pretty sure. I remember one time there was chucking oysters from, in the outer deep water, up above, on below the Northwest lines. On the other side, East Point and oyster came over this skimmer and I put on my hand, of course I was that time. I was snapping lids on too. You know, that's part of the packing, everything you couldn't see my hand.

Speaker 12 ([01:08:58](#)):

Wow.

Speaker 3 ([01:08:59](#)):

My gosh, I expect that that a lot of 'em are almost as big as that big oysters and the average customer wanted in, you know, about standards, selects extra select counts. He expected counts to be around ninety to one hundred in a gallon. I don't think he got 50. You know, they probably got a call from what the hell? Sorry. He said, how do you expect me to make any money? You know, paying you \$9 or something for a gallon of counts, which was the most expensive. And, uh, and I want to get a hundred, hundred oysters out of it, you know, because they put it probably New York or some place where they're so proud about the big fat fried oysters they had or whatever they used it for.

Wren ([01:10:00](#)):

You don't see 'em that big today. very often.

Carney ([01:10:04](#)):

No, all they're all little. I was just reading about this Cape May Salts mm-hmm

Speaker 12 ([01:10:09](#)):

<affirmative>,

Carney ([01:10:11](#)):

You know, a few years ago, you probably around on for every Friday night, you see all those trucks from Chincoteague Island. You know, they were taking those oysters down there and opening them up for, you know, rolls. When we loose, slipped a little bit more salted. So they tasted like Chincoteague oysters. <laugh> I was the amazed of how people from Salem County we'd go down. I knew some, all fellas over there, but I was working for the state. One of 'em was the county tax support secretary. So, uh, I see him quite often talk about this annual trip to Chincoteague to get the best oysters in the world. And, and, uh, I went to Chincoteague and I looked, and I saw how close that Chincoteague Bay or that water was from the Atlantic ocean. And I said, ah, all you need is salt and sugar.

Carney ([01:11:03](#)):

<laugh> you can fool the world.

Carney ([01:11:08](#)):

And they mentioned that in these Cape May Salts, but they down there they are better in saltier water. But you know, Norm Jeffreys did an awful lot of experiment anymore down there, tremendous amount. Did you ever pick up a tray of oysters that was laying in, on a rack under the water. Could you pick it up? They spit all over you when they come up outta the water. <laugh> water's fine. Everywhere. See they, yeah. I knew his son Norm Jeff erys was, you know, Norm Jeffreys.

Wren ([01:11:46](#)):

Well, I met him, I think once. I didn't know him.

Carney ([01:11:49](#)):

The old man, Norman.

Wren ([01:11:50](#)):

Yeah.

Carney ([01:11:51](#)):

Well, yes, he has a son. He's still alive he's down around Pleasantville. But we were friends.

Wren ([01:11:58](#)):

Is that Luther?

Carney ([01:11:59](#)):

No. it is Norman junior..

Wren ([01:12:01](#)):

And he's in Pleasantville now?

Carney ([01:12:10](#)):

He is. You ever get down route 40 and turn on New York avenue and go in there and then go down to the, the, the ball. Oh yeah. You know, and it's a place where there's a railroad and there's roads on each side. Mm-hmm <affirmative> mm-hmm

Slating, Deb ([01:12:24](#)):

<affirmative> yeah. That's like Harbor township.

Speaker 3 ([01:12:26](#)):

Yeah. Oh yeah, yeah. Yeah. He doesn't live too far from the Mays Landing. End of that road with that's on both sides of a abandoned railroad down in there. And over toward the south, he, he, I'm pretty sure he lives right along in there. Hmm. I don't know what his address is or anything, but you could probably find it from the phone book. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. And you could tell you a lot about the oyster

business. Oh. Because at one time they had dozen Al I think almost dozens of boats to dredge oysters. They had shucking house up in Greenwich.

Slating, Deb ([01:13:02](#)):

And what, what was the name of the shucking house?

Carney ([01:13:08](#)):

I can't remember unless it was Jeffrey, but I don't think it may not have been. Uh, but this Norman Jeffrey's father was always experimenting, always looking for some way. He had oyster beds all the way up Barnegat Bay and, and Egg Harbor Bay out here in this bay. And, uh, and he did a lot of shipping, you know, freighting and stuff like that. Yeah. And one time, just for, for the interest of it, how poor oystermen were during the depression, this Norman Jeffrey says, oh, his, uh, his, his father-in-law was Captain Smith Blackman, but you probably heard of him. Little short man had 13 children that didn't get married until his wife was 28, but they had 13 children, you know, we lived in the half house with them. So we heard a lot of stuff going on. Then I, worked for...

Wren ([01:14:18](#)):

Wait, you lived in the other half... they lived in the other half of the duplex that you lived in? Uh, is that what you said?

Carney ([01:14:23](#)):

No, no, no. That's where I was born. That was another duplex. The one I'm talking about is the one that's, uh, just before you get to Ogden avenue on the north side of the street, that double house, uh, next to the one on the corner of Ogden avenue, which used to be Union street.

Wren ([01:14:42](#)):

Ogden used to be Union?

Carney ([01:14:43](#)):

Huh?

Wren ([01:14:44](#)):

Ogden avenue used to be union street?

Carney ([01:14:46](#)):

No, no Union street is now an extension of Oden Avenue. Think now they've run around through that's section from Main Street to Brown Street was always Union. Oh, okay. Uh, uh, yeah, like where I live was Maurice Avenue. Mm. Uh, what was I saying?

Wren ([01:15:14](#)):

Rob Blackman?

Carney ([01:15:15](#)):

Yes. The Roberts brothers talked about the time they had a shucking house, right where the state police are now and that spot. And old man Smith Blackman pulled into the Port Norris oyster company was right across the street, up the river. And, uh, with load of oysters and they wanted to sell 'em they're offer 50 cents a bushel.

Slating, Deb ([01:15:43](#)):

A bushel?

Carney ([01:15:45](#)):

Yes. And the old man, just it's all he said. I'd say the ship was under sail you know, Ethel Linda Blackman, a big, I guess she, she was close to a hundred foot or more mm-hmm <affirmative>, he's sitting on a wheel box crying, you know, to think that that's all he could get for his oyster 50 sets a bushel, but it was during the depression I expect there was a glut on, yeah. I used to sit in that house by where I lived that other gentle, where I was born and it had a bay window in the front and there you could look right out the bay window, see the, the train station. And you could sit there in the evening, in the fall. And, uh, this train was coming up from here and it wasn't was, anytime you count over a hundred cars of cattle cars, but loaded with oysters. They weren't piled the ceiling. They were piled probably one or two bags high, but there were you shell stock.

Slating, Deb ([01:16:47](#)):

Do you know, do you happen to know, did they pack that in ice?

Carney ([01:16:53](#)):

Shelf stock? No, no. They just put 'em in there in bags. And uh, that's why that's the business about September? You know, you couldn't ship oysters in, in a hot summer. They would just would. Now my mother who grew up in a, uh, Newport Neck down to Gandy Beach mm-hmm <affirmative> she said every fall, just as soon as we got a real heavy blow from the Northwest at low tide, we could down in those creeks were all there. We put, you had muddied on all that mm-hmm <affirmative> but you could walk through, we would go get our oysters for the winter walk right out in those, uh, emptied creeks pick up oysters. Oh. And in a protected quarter of the house, you you'd, uh, pile those. You'd put down some hay, salt, hay, and you'd pile the oysters in there on the salt hay. Then you'd cover it with salt, hay, wet it good. Then throw Burla bags over them and to keep them from freezing and also to keep from drying out. We had, she said we had oysters all winter. Wow. We put 'em in hibernation.

Slating, Deb ([01:18:15](#)):

Huh? About

Carney ([01:18:17](#)):

That? They didn't know that, but that's what they were doing. Sure. Oh,

Wren ([01:18:22](#)):

Huh.

Carney ([01:18:22](#)):

You know, that whole area up there in the Newport Neck is full of Indian graveyards.

Wren ([01:18:29](#)):

Hmm.

Carney ([01:18:29](#)):

They couldn't bury them too low, but they always covered them up with oyster shells. you know, and then fill dirt off to keep the, to keep the, uh, you know, the environments from getting into the bodies. Now that's a another story, you know, because we knew a fellow by the name of Les Shepherd who lived on the road to Newport or to Fortesque and his farm was on that road that goes back there. Wasn't there a little restaurant that had a, it had plastic sheets hanging around as for walls. There was a restaurant down that road. Well,

Wren ([01:19:07](#)):

Newport house. You mean that you, they?

Carney ([01:19:09](#)):

No, this is on the way to Fortesque from Newport. Oh, and it's the first road that goes off to the right.

Wren ([01:19:17](#)):

School House Lane?

Carney ([01:19:18](#)):

No, I don't have any idea. But years ago there was a restaurant down there and it was so I, went by there one time,

Wren ([01:19:27](#)):

You mean once you got into Fortesque or on the neck area?

Carney ([01:19:30](#)):

No. It's before you get to the neck to the fork, before you get to the fork, just before you get to the fork's road, goes off to the right. Oh. And there was a restaurant in, okay. And this Les Sheppard, lived on that road. But he's the one that told me there were a lot of Indian graves there, down there.

Slating, Deb ([01:19:49](#)):

Did he say where exactly

Carney ([01:19:51](#)):

On who? Oh, I never got outta the car to walk around his farm or anything. And, uh, uh, this is just, he used to visit us here in Port Norris. You know, he was down, down here, this soda, you know, Jeffrey's soda shop or something or the Palmetto or whatever the Palamino, you know? So we...

Wren ([01:20:17](#)):

What was your mom's maiden name?

Carney ([01:20:20](#)):

Wood? Uh, her father was a carpenter and I think he finally wound up in, uh, in Bridgeton, but uh,

Wren ([01:20:35](#)):

What was her first name?

Carney ([01:20:36](#)):

Carrie

Wren ([01:20:39](#)):

With a C a R R I E. And the middle name was Fog, which is a family name? I have no idea who Carrie f\og was, but

Speaker 3 ([01:20:51](#)):

Yeah, but oh, uh, I have a great, great, great, great grandfather in the Baptist cemetery in Dividing Creek. His name was, uh, Robert Lake,

Carney ([01:21:12](#)):

No, no, wait.. Robert Lake was my great grandfather. He's in the Methodist cemetery. He was a ship captain sailed up and down. You know, the coast died in 1862 from the cold that he caught in Charleston. Huh. And, uh, but his father is built was, is buried in the Dividing Creek Cemetery. And we are such a prolific family. He was born in 1777. My father was born in 1875. And I was born in 8/19/21 and I have three children and one grandchild. So I'm telling you, we're going to populate this world. <laugh> if we keep going

Wren ([01:22:07](#)):

So the one who was born in 1777 was your great, great, great grandfather?

Carney ([01:22:13](#)):

Don't quote me on that, but he was my great grandfather's father. And I just right off the hand, I can't think of his name, but, uh, it may have been Robert. Yeah. But it was amazing to look at the, in the surrogates office of his estate, you know, all the divisions of land, that's the way they separated wealth back in those days. And in the work that I had with tax maps and all that stuff, you would see every once in a while, somewhere there was a division of law land and here's maybe a 75 acre track land split up into 20 foot strips all the way across it, whether divided and it was divided among his heirs and nothing was worth anything anymore. Mm-hmm, I've seen it over in Vineland and I've seen it in this municipality, but that's the way, uh, if you were whatever, uh, an executor or whatever they called them, or if you were going to divide the state up, that's the way you'd do it. That has nothing to do with a (inaudible - laughter)

Slating, Deb ([01:23:41](#)):

We thank you so very much.

Carney ([01:23:43](#)):

Okay. Um,

slaSpeaker 12 ([01:23:44](#)):

Taking this time and especially when you left Florida, you weren't planning on doing this. We really do appreciate.

Carney ([01:23:52](#)):

But I did bring that letter up. I went through that letter,

unSpeaker 16 ([01:23:59](#)):

You know, I really do. Thank you so much for sharing. That was good. That's just a little, thank you much. And I, uh, I did make a copy of your newspaper. Oh, did you? You've got the original, but we made copy. Well,