

Thomas Aquila Williams: Pass me a pencil.

Carrie Kline: Counting down here. Six, seven. Ready.

Michael Kline: Maybe we can start off. If you would just say, "My name is."

TAW: Sure. My name is Thomas A. Williams. I live and have an office in Callao, Virginia. This is Northumberland County. My office is on U.S. Highway 360 that runs from Reedville, Virginia to Danville, Virginia, passing through Callao. Since it's an even number, it's an east-west highway. My home is at Lodge Landing, a former steamboat landing. That is two miles from Callao. The mail was brought in by the steamboats back in the past century. Each steamboat landing had a post office. There was no post office at Callao because the steamboat didn't come. We got a new post office here, and the person that was going to be their postmaster was Mr. Callaway. But he didn't want to be postmaster unless we named it Callaway. So, that was agreeable. We just wanted the post office. So, the application was made. Since there was another Callaway out near Roanoke, Virginia, it was turned down. Then he marked through the W-A-Y and put an O, and that was approved. So, we pronounce it Callao after Mr. Callaway. We do not say Callao, we say Callao. So, here I am in Callao that has had a post office since 1893. We recently celebrated our hundredth anniversary. During the anniversary, I made up some cups and put on it, "1893 to 1993, a hundred anniversary of Callao," and a little statement about how we got our name. I want to give one of those cups to your museum.

CK: Thank you.

MK: Very much appreciate it. Well, we never ask people of their age, but maybe you would tell us your date of birth.

TAW: Oh, I would be pleased to tell you my age. I'm seventy-eight. I'm the youngest of five children. I was born August the 25th, 1925. My mother and father were married in 1913, and there were five children. My oldest brother was (Victor Ellis Williams?), named after my father. My next brother was (Hatten Williams?), and he was named after my grandfather. My next brother was (Oliver Edwards Williams?). That was named after my grandmother. My sister next to me was (Grace Merrill Williams?). She was named after my mother. My name is Thomas Aquila Williams. I was named after both of my grandfathers. My mother's father was Thomas. My father's father was Thomas Williams, and my mother's father was (Aquila Hatten?). I was named after my two grandfathers. Since Aquila is a rather unusual name, even though it's a biblical name, I go by T.A. Williams.

MK: Can we pause the cameras a second, please? I have got to slightly...

TAW: I need to move forward?

MK: Sitting down.

CK: You are sounding great.

MK: You are sounding good.

CK: Looking great in these cameras, too.

MK: These microphones are just slipping down, down, and down.

CK: You probably need to keep your foot on it as well.

MK: No, I do not need to do that this time.

CK: Do you not?

MK: No, it is leaning against the desk. It is perfectly set up if it would just stay up there.

CK: I could give you these headphones, I suppose. We have to count down again. Counting down.

MK: All right, sir.

CK: We are not running yet.

MK: Why do you not start out by telling us more about the place you were raised and the family and the community around?

TAW: I was born in Edwardsville, Virginia, which is in Northumberland County. Edwardsville is a small community in the southeastern part of the county. It was named at my great-grandfather, (Henry Pagett Edwards?) and his son John Henry Edwards, who was the first postmaster. My mother and father bought this property at Edwardsville, which was known as the (APA Fairfield's Racetrack?). It was never used as a racetrack to my knowledge. They bought this property and built a home there in 1917. They had married in 1913, and their first child was born in Ophelia, Virginia. My next brother, Hatten, was born in Edwardsville. My next brother, Oliver, was born at Edwardsville. My sister, Grace Merrill, was born in Edwardsville and I was born in Edwardsville. We were all born at home. The attending physician was (Dr. Llewelyn Hudnell?) was a local physician. I attended Fairfield's High School. We did not have buses in the county of Northumberland until 1931. The day I started school was the first day we had buses. So, my older brothers and sister walked to school. When I started school, was the first day the bus came. I went to Fairfield and there was a high school there from 1914 until 1930. In 1930, they discontinued the high school and just had a grade school. So, I went to grade school there from 1931 until 1938, seven years. Then I went to Haynesville High School. In 1940, my mother and father bought a home in Reedville, Virginia. So, by living at Edwardsville, you had a choice of going to Haynesville or Reedville High School. So, the first two years I went to Haynesville High School. Then after mother and daddy bought the home in Reedville, I then went to Reedville High School. In December of 1940, my parents moved to Reedville. That's where I lived until I got married and moved to Callao. Reedville is a fishing village. It's the number one capital of the menhaden fish industry. Often, Reedville, Virginia will have the largest tonnage of fish landing of any other port in the United States, right here in

Northumberland County. So, consequently, it's well known and it's on a small peninsula. All the homes have water in the backyards and all the homes have water in the front yards. Reedville is interesting because –

MK: Water in the backyard and in the front yard?

TAW: Water in the backyard and front of the house because the street went down the middle. So, if you stand on the front of the house, you see the water across the street. You can see, standing in the back of the house, you see the water. In the back it was just a small peninsula with a street down the middle. Everybody's home has water adjacent to it. In 1950, they put in a new water system in Reedville. Since the homes were so close to the highway, and U.S. highway requires a sixty-foot easement for utilities, they took U.S. 360 out of the highway system and put it in as a secondary road. Because on a secondary road, you only need a forty-foot utility easement. So, now the lower half of Reedville from the church down to the end, is a secondary road. So, U.S. 360 now stops halfway into Reedville. We have a lot of Victorian homes there. Prior to World War I, Reedville was the richest town in the United States per capita. The people made more money per person than any other place in the United States. It was like the gold rush of California. We had this menhaden fishing that was very profitable and they made lots of money. But the people were very religious and very good people, and they put it in their homes and factories. So, they just kept building more and more factories. So, not only was it the largest port for tonnage of fish, but they were very, very wealthy and they used that money very wisely. So, Reedville became a very beautiful Victorian town. When I went to school, we had four high schools in the county, Haynesville High School, Callao High School, Wicomico High School, and Reedville High School. But the year before, we had five high schools in the county. Fairfield's had a high school until 1930. William Tuck was the first principal at Fairfield School. The reason I tell you this is because he later became governor of Virginia. The first principal we had at Fairfield's was later governor of Virginia. When I went to Reedville, when I finally moved to Reedville in 1940, I noticed so many women involved. We had the four high schools in the county then. All the high schools had men as principals except Reedville. Her name was (Carrie Lee Park?) was our principal. The land for the school at Reedville was given by Mrs. Morris. Her husband had died, and Mr. Morris and (Mr. Toll's?) owned land together and they divided it. After Mrs. Morris got title to part of the land in Reedville, she gave this land to her trustees so that Reedville could have a high school. So, the land at Reedville was given by this lady. The principal was a lady. Evelyn Knight, one of the girls from Reedville, would sing with big bands and have hip parades. Often, you would hear on the radio, "Evelyn Knight from Reedville, Virginia is number one again this week." So, we've had lots of women from the Reedville area to go into national celebrity. Ms. Aleta McNeal, after her father died, she became president of McNeal-Edwards, one of the largest menhaden fisheries. This lady, president of the company years ago. So, I spoke to the sixtieth anniversary of Reedville High School graduating class. For the first time in my life, I highlighted some of the outstanding women of Reedville and the county and what it had meant to our area. Do you have any other thoughts that you'd like me to give?

MK: Well, I was interested in your parents. Your dad, what line of work did he follow?

TAW: My father was a fisherman. He was a pound net fisherman and he put his nets out in the

Potomac. He would start the 1st of February and he would fish until the last Monday in May. The shed season ended in May. He had a partnership and most of my father's businesses were with partners. He would leave the last Monday in May and go on the menhaden boats as captain of one of the menhaden boats. For a while, he was the owner of one of the menhaden boats. But he would fish for the menhaden from the last Monday in May until Thanksgiving each year. It was about six months that the menhaden fleet would fish. Then he was free in December and January and he would get ready for his businesses. My father had many partnerships. He had lots of stores and mills and sawmills and farms and fishing operations. Often, I would hear him say that he didn't remember a day when he wasn't looking for a partner. I sat in on one of his meetings where he was making this partnership and they were in our living room. My father had a rule that you don't ever repeat anything unless you have the same conditions. The same people have to be in the room, it has to be in the same room, if you want to repeat anything that was said. So, that didn't apply if you died. But anyway, some of the things that my father said to the new partner, "Number one, whatever you're making, and I don't know, your salary doubles when we go into partnership. Number two, within five years, I want you to start buying out this partnership. I'm putting up all the money now, but in five years, I want you to start buying it out. In ten years, I want you to own all of it. This is not a partnership for me to do well with. This is a partnership for you to do well and for the community to be better off." So, my father had many, many partnerships. Even though he doubled the wages of the partner, one of the partners said to me later when I was – it was a country store and I was helping him at Christmas time. He said, "Your father didn't tell me that I would go to work real early in the morning and work late in the afternoon." He said, "When I worked for another employer, I would go to work at 7:00 a.m. and get off at 5:00 p.m. Here I'm opening a store at 5:00 a.m. so that the people going to work can stop and get gas and buy supplies and so forth. It's very seldom that I get out of it until 9:00 p.m. So, even though my salary was doubled, I had so many of these extra hours." I said, "Who decided on these extra hours?" He said, "I did because your father had said, "If you have a problem, come to see me. I'll be home every weekend. But if you do come to see me, I've selected the wrong partner. I want you to make all the decisions. I don't care what they are. But if you have headaches or you can't sleep, you come to see me and I'll work with you. But if you do come to see me, I've selected the wrong partner. At the end of the year, I'll come into business and we'll make an inventory. We'll put money in the business or we'll take it out. I'll give you my thoughts of how you should change things or what you're doing good or what you're not. But I want you to run it without me in any way, shape, or form." My father was also anxious for us to go in business with him. My three older brothers, he had offered opportunities for them to go and they didn't. So, when I graduated from high school, he pleaded with and begged me to go to work with him, and I did for a year. He was real good to me. The first day we went to work, he made me a partner. I said, "Dad, I thought you looked at people for one or two years before you approached them?" He said, "Son, I've seen you all your life." So, he said, "I want you to be my partner." So, after a year, I went to college and then law school and my father retired. That was the story of that. My oldest brother was a civil engineer, he went to VPI. My next brother also went to VPI and he was involved in insurance. My next brother was an accountant and my sister was a schoolteacher. I'm an attorney. It's been a wonderful life that we've had. My father got to the third reader in school and in the day, he couldn't get his master's license until he was twenty-one. The day he was twenty-one, he was in Baltimore waiting for the office to open so he could take his application for his master's license. He had served three years as a pilot on a vessel and had it certified, he had his health certificates. So, he went in

when they opened the door, the day he was twenty-one, and instead of him getting a thousand tons master's license, they gave him ten thousand tons. He was just so pleased that they thought so well of his application. So, even though my father didn't get to but the third reading school, my mother was a schoolteacher and he would work every night when he was home in November and December. Work on his books and do as many things as he could to help with his formal education. But I think he did a lot on the vessel because every week he'd come home, he'd always take each child in the living room and ask you three questions. Then the next week you would give him the answers. So, every weekend we had three answers for daddy and every weekend we'd get three questions from him.

MK: What were some of those? Do you remember them?

TAW: Yes, I remember some. He would ask questions like this, "When I cut out fishing in November, I will take you to Richmond so you can buy a present for your mother for Christmas. What counties do we go through when we leave Reedville and go to Richmond?" So, the next week I would give him the counties that we would go through, Northumberland, Richmond, Essex, King and Queen, King William, Hanover, and Henrico. Three or four weeks later, he would ask you, "Those counties that we go through, what are the county seats of those counties?" Then the next Sunday, I would give him the county seats. But most of his questions were navigational questions. "We'll leave Reedville and go up to Annapolis on our fish boat. I want to take you with me son. What lighthouses will we see when we leave Reedville and go to Annapolis?" So, I would then name the Great Wicomico Light and the Smith Point Light and the New Point Comfort Light all the way up the bay until we got to Thomas Point as we went into Annapolis. Then three or four weeks later he said, "By the way, those lighthouses that you told me about when we went to Annapolis, how tall are they? How much are they above sea level?" Then you'd look up the charts and give him the height of each of the lighthouses.

MK: Those were all working lighthouses then?

TAW: Yes. Then three or four weeks later, he would say, "What is the sequence of those lighthouses?" When it's on five seconds and off three seconds, when it's on four seconds, and then some would be flashing every seven seconds. So, then you would also give him the sequence of each lighthouse. He would ask you to give him rules of the road. One of the rules of the road that my father liked so much were the three Rs. He said, "Grandmother taught you the three Rs when you went to school. I want to teach you the three Rs of navigation. When you went to school, grandmother said, "Learn your three Rs, reading, writing, and arithmetic." Now, I want you to learn the three Rs of navigation, red, right, return. So, when you go in the Atlantic and you come back and come up the bay, all the red buoys are on the right and then you right in the channel. When you get to the Potomac, come up the Potomac until you get to the Yeocomico to come home and all the red buoys are on the right. So, if you learn your three Rs, you can go into any body of water and you know where the channel is. If you go to New York and you go up to Hudson, you don't have to worry about are you in deep water. Put the red buoys on your right when you're returning. If you're going back towards the ocean, then the red buoys will be on the left. So, you can always know where the channel is by your three Rs, red, right, return."

MK: He had you thinking, did he not?

TAW: Yes, he did lots of things. One of the things he would like to do each week was give you a little formula with numbers. He liked numbers very much so. Also, as we got older, I remember him telling me, "Son, tell me something next Sunday that you have never read and you have never heard. I don't care what it is, but make sure that you have never heard it and you have never read it and tell me something." So, I put a yardstick up in the yard and I put bricks around it. Then I lined it up with the corn house and the barn and the garage because I wanted to get the yardstick perpendicular to the earth. Then I measured the shadow of the yardstick and it was twenty-two inches. Then a little later, I measured and it was twenty-seven inches. As the sun goes down in the evening, then the shadow gets longer. In the middle of the day, the shadow is real short because the sun is so close to being overhead. So, when the shadow got thirty-six inches, then I knew each item was one foot for each foot of shadow because the yardstick was thirty-three feet and that was thirty-six inches. So, then I measured the shadow of the barn and it was forty-seven feet. So, Sunday I said, "Daddy, the barn is forty-seven feet tall." He said, "How do you know?" I said, "I measured the shadow. When the shadow of the yardstick was thirty-six inches, the barn shadow was forty-seven feet. So, each foot of shadow had to be one foot of height." He liked it.

MK: I bet he did. I bet he liked that.

TAW: Yes.

CK: Do you still remember the names of all the lighthouses up to Annapolis?

TAW: Most of them. It was interesting to know that each week you had to do things on your own. One of the things that he required, that you don't discuss your questions with other members of the family. But I could discuss the questions with other people, but not the fact that you had been asked this by your father. In other words, if I went to the library and said I wanted to get this information or what have you, I could discuss it with the librarian. I couldn't tell her why I wanted it, but I could discuss it with her.

MK: That was the rule.

TAW: Yes.

MK: Great stuff.

TAW: Yes. Most of the mathematical questions would be along lines like this, if you multiply two numbers and it's only one number between the two numbers, square the middle number and subtract one, and you have the answer. For example, four times six. That's only one number between four and six and that's five. Square five. Five times five is twenty-five. Minus one is twenty-four. Therefore, four times six is twenty-four. So, if you have a number like twenty-nine times thirty-one, it's only one number between twenty-nine and thirty-one and that's thirty. Thirty times thirty. Three times three is nine. Each thirty has got a zero. So, thirty times thirty is nine hundred. Minus one, 899. So, you know instantly that twenty-nine times thirty-one is 899. So, if you have a number like nine times eleven. It's only one number between nine and

eleven, and that's ten. Ten times ten is a hundred. Minus one, ninety-nine. So, nine times eleven is ninety-nine. The reason I give you this last one, so you see it works on every combination. Anytime you have just one number between the two numbers you're multiply, square the middle number, and subtract one, and you have an instant answer. Forty-nine times fifty-one. The number between forty-nine and fifty-one is fifty. Fifty times fifty. Five times five is twenty-five. Each fifty has got a zero. So, fifty times fifty is 2,500. Minus one, 2,499. So, forty-nine times fifty-one is 2,499.

MK: Works every time.

TAW: Every time.

MK: Wonderful. Can you describe your father's fishing boat?

TAW: Yes. My father's fishing boat was about one-forty to one-fifty feet long. Its tonnage was about three-fifty tons. It had a pallet house and a galley and sleeping quarters in the front of the vessel. It had a large mast and they called it [laughter], a crow's nest. In the mast, they would go up and sit at the top of the mast because you can see down deeper in the water if you have height. In other words, if you are standing alongside the water, you can only see down the water a very short distance. But if you'll get high, then you can see things down ten or fifteen or so feet in the water. So, they would sit up at the masthead and look for these fish. Then in the sun of the vessel, was where they carried the fish. Then the lower back of the vessel was the engine room. Also, they had sleeping quarters for the engineers and other officers of the boat. The main crew slept under the galley down in the lower part of the vessel. The captain and mate and all, had their sleeping quarters in the front of the boat. In menhaden fishing, you have a long net. It's just one net, but you have two boats that carry it. Half of it it's in one and the net goes around the stern of the boat on the deck, and half is in the other. So, when you see a bunch of fish, you go out and take the two boats and go down and they're tied to each other. Then when you see the fish, you just open them up. Half the net is in one boat, and half is in another, and then they come together. After boats come together, they drop a heavy weight and that takes the net down to the bottom. So, then you pull that line together at the bottom and then you got corks at the top. So, you have the fish in the net if they didn't go real quick and you got a lid holding them down. After you get to the bottom, pull together, then you pull that lid off. Then you pull the net in and the fish are in the net. After you get the fish in the net close together, you get the steamer. Fish steamer would come alongside, then you take and pull the net uptight and you bail the fish in. Now, they have a system. They motor the boats on a speed boat, pull the net uptight and they pump them in. They put a big hose over and they just sucked the fish in. But when I was small, they had a big fish net that they would dip down. They would raise that fish net by a Dunker engine and then bring the fish over the fish hole. Then turn loose the bottom of the fish net and they would fall in the fish. Usually, a good set of fish would be one to 200,000 fish. Most of the boats we carry about four to 500,000 fish. So, now the boats will carry three or four times that. Most of the boats now carry from fourteen hundred to 1,700,000 fish. 1,400,000 up to 1,700,000. In fact, they had one boat that would carry over two million fish. So, on Monday night, all of the boats came in loaded. Tuesday, all the boats were at the factory loaded with fish. They had fourteen million fish at the factory on Tuesday this week.

MK: Could you tell me about the crew on your father's boat?

TAW: Yes. My father was captain and he had a mate. He helped with the going round the boats. My father would be in one purse boat and the mate would be in the other. They had the crew aboard in those boats to pull the nets in. Aboard the ship would be a pilot. There were two engineers. The engineers were not hired by the captain. They were hired by the company. The company hired the engineers to take care of the engines and so forth. You had someone that looked for the fish with the captain and mate. The captain and the mate and what we called a striker boatsman, the one that when you found a bunch of fish, he would take a small boat and go off and stay with these bunch of fish. Then the captain and the mate with these purse boats would go and he would tell them when to open up the boats and they would go around the fish and come together. So, [laughter] you had about twenty-five men in the crew. You had your striker boatsman, you had your mate, and your pilot. So, it was around thirty to thirty-two people on the boat. That would be the crew and the engineers.

MK: Who were those people?

TAW: They were local people. My father had the pound net fishing in the spring starting in February. Then he went aboard in the last week in May. His partner would be his mate on the menhaden boat. So, his partner would take off the nets, which would take two or three weeks after my father left. My father each year would get some younger person to go mate for two or three weeks until his regular mate come aboard. It helped young people to, maybe the next year or two, to get a job with someone else because they had been mate for a while. So, he helped many people get jobs as mates. Usually, a person would work in the boats for two or three or more years and then go mate. Then later after his mate, would go captain.

MK: Were there Black men working on the crew?

TAW: When I was young, practically all the crew was Black. The dry boatmen would sometimes be white and sometimes Black. Practically all the captains, it was just, I would say more than ninety percent of the captains were white. The captain, the mate, and the pilot, and the engineers were white. But the crew and the cooks were usually Black. Now that has changed a great deal. We have lots of Black captains. It's changed, just changed a great deal. In fact, one of the people that lived at Edwardsville where we lived, his name of the family was Winston. He was the kind of person that when I was small, did many, many things that so many colored people didn't do. Number one, he had his own fish traps. Most of the people that worked on the fish traps were employees. He had his own traps and he employed white and colored people as employees. His son was captain of the menhaden boats. His daughters were not only school teachers, but they were superintendent of schools. It was a colored family. I heard him say more than two or three times, "I'm just so lucky. But the more I work, the luckier I get. The more I work, the luckier I get."

MK: What did he mean by that?

TAW: He meant that if you get up and work, it's almost anything you can do. Everything just comes to you if you just get up and work. It doesn't make any difference what color you are, was

his idea. Just get up and work. It's true. His son became captain and I saw him on the boats. His daughters weren't just teachers, they were superintendents of schools. So, many of us can do so much more if we just work. For example, my father started every day of his life at 4:30 a.m. My father had a similar philosophy. The more I do, the luckier I get. This man here at this store standing there at a picture here, I got in my office, they went in business. His partner bought him out in ten years, just like my father had asked him to. There he is. He was in that business for forty-nine years. No, fifty-nine years. For fifty-nine years, he was in that business. It was Williams and Edwards, became a very, very successful business. Yes. But my father had lots and lots of partnerships.

MK: Back to the boat for just a minute. How long would they be out on a trip?

TAW: They would usually go out, and often if they were fishing in the bay, they would come in at night, they'd fish for the day. But if they didn't get a load, they would often stay out and come back the next day. But often, if they went up the beach, they would be gone all week. I can remember on more than one occasion when my father didn't come home for the weekend. He'd be up the beach and he didn't even get to fish. So, he would stay in New York or some harbor for the weekend and then he'd fish down the beach the next week.

MK: So, up the beach meant...

TAW: They would go up to as far as Long Island. I don't remember my father going beyond Long Island. They would go south as far as South Carolina. I don't remember my father going any further south than South Carolina along the Atlantic coast. They would fish through Chesapeake Bay up to Smith Point. Maryland wouldn't allow purse netting. So, you couldn't fish up the bay beyond the Potomac River. Where Maryland and Virginia divided, is as far up as you could fish. When you fish the coast, you would go up the Eastern Shore of Virginia until you get to Maryland. When you got to Maryland, you had to get offshore three miles because the state claimed the coastal waters three miles offshore. Then after you got past Maryland and Delaware, then you'd come in and you could fish again. But Maryland wouldn't allow fishing in the Chesapeake Bay or off its shore in the ocean.

MK: So, these big fishing boats, one-fifty feet long, that is a pretty good-sized boat.

TAW: Yes.

MK: Menhaden fishing boats, they worked in pairs?

TAW: No.

MK: Is that what I understood you said?

TAW: No, it's just one boat. But each boat had two purse boats. They were on the stern of the vessel.

CK: What is a purse boat?

TAW: Well, a purse boat is a small boat that's like a canoe. It's sharp on both ends. It's about thirty feet long. Usually, they would carry fifteen or twenty people if you needed to, and the net. So, they would have engines in them and they would get to the fish and they would go around the fish and come together. After they'd come together, they'd pull the net in and they would then get the net uptight. Then a big boat would come over and come alongside the net and then pump the fish in like they do now. But we used to bail them in. Now years ago, when I was very small, they didn't have engines in the purse boats. They had oars and the man would roll the purse boats around the fish. But they've gotten rid of the oars and got motors in them. They've got rid of the purse nets. I mean, the dipping nets. Now they pump the fish in. Also, they've got rid of pulling the net around by hand. Now that's done by power. We call it the power block. So, they have eliminated about ninety percent of all the labor with engines now. It's very little that you do by labor.

MK: But when you first remember it, there was still a lot of handwork.

TAW: Oh, there was a great deal of handwork. Yes.

MK: These men all had to pull together, right?

TAW: Yes. They would sing too. One of the principal books written on menhaden is *The Men all Singing*, I think is the name of the book. It was so much easier to pull together. For example, if you had twelve men in each purse boat and they would all go over and they would sing. Then on the verse, they would all pull. Then they would sing, and you wouldn't pull.

MK: Just give me an idea of what they would sing or what the songs were called?

TAW: Well, they had different songs. I didn't work in the boats, but it would be songs where you would have, "Mama's got a new boyfriend," or what have you. They had all kinds of songs that they would sing. Then they would have the verses and pull the nets together.

MK: So, they were singing about...

TAW: Different things, yes.

MK: There would be a song leader, do you think?

TAW: Yes. Oh, definitely. Definitely.

CK: What is that? I am sorry?

TAW: Definitely. Yes. There would be a song leader.

MK: Do you remember who any of those were?

TAW: Well, [laughter] they now have what they call the chanters. C-H-A-N-T-E-R-S, chanters.

They go around now and they will sing to groups. Each year, we have a day dedicated for the fishermen before the boats go out in May. They will meet and they will bless the fleet before they go fishing each year. On one occasion, they asked me to speak on that occasion. The chanters will come and they will sing four or five of their old songs at this dedication ceremony.

MK: Has that ever been recorded?

TAW: Oh, yes.

MK: Those are available, those recordings?

TAW: Yes.

MK: Well, I am sure we could devote this entire interview to menhaden fishing. We are also interested in the wider questions of travel, and I guess particularly steamboat travel. Could you address that a little bit?

TAW: Sure. I would like to say one other thing about just menhaden fishing that should be part of what I've said. That is, now instead of finding the fish from the vessel, they have these fish spotter planes that fly over the area. They will find bunches of fish and they will tell by radio the captains that there's a nice bunch of fish on your starboard about half a mile in front of you. So, they will get over to the fish. The captain won't see the fish, and he'll put down his boats and he says, "All right, turn your boats a little to the port or a little to the starboard." They will do what the spotter says. Then when he gets up to the fish, he'd say, "Open up." So, they don't have to tell them where the fish are and they go around and they drop their (tom?) and pull together, and they don't see anything. Nothing whatsoever. The airplane spotter sees it all. Then after the fish begin to come together, they'll start spraying water, and then they'll see them for the first time as they get them close together. The boats are much larger now, and the nets are much larger. It's not unusual now for one boat to catch three or four times more than they used to because they had smaller boats and smaller nets and what have you.

MK: I am sure that is the case.

TAW: Yes. You had some other questions about steamboats?

MK: Yes. Tell us about your earliest recollection of steamboat travel.

TAW: Well, my earliest recollection of steamboats was my father would often talk about steamboats. My father was a fish trapper on the Potomac, and he would take his fish each day when he started catching fish. About the 1st of March, he'd take them into Coan River and he would take his fish to Walnut Point. Then later they had financial problems. Then right across from Walnut Point is Lewisetta and they bought fish too. So, he took his face to Lewisetta. So, his nets were on the Potomac about eight to ten miles down from Coan River. He would fish and take his fish up to Coan each day. My father would tell me that the steamboats came into Coan from Baltimore and Washington, and they would go to Coan Wharf. Coan Wharf was named after the river, and the river was named an Indian name, Chickacoan. Then they shortened it to

Coan. So, the steamboat would go to Coan, and then it would go to Bundick right across from Coan. In fact, Coan and Bundick, you could almost talk between the two. They were so close together. The steamboats would turn around, they had to be very careful because it was so close together. It was deep water there. They had a little ferry between Coan and Bundick. If you were over at Coan, if you wanted to go over to Bundick, you could go on the ferry. Then after the steamboat left Bundick, it would then go to Lake, which was a large tomato canning factory. They had a steamboat landing. Each of these steamboat landings now had a post office, Coan, Bundick, Lake. Then they would leave Lake and go to Walnut Point. Then it was at the entrance of the river, and they would go to Cowart, which was another steamboat landing, and then Lewisetta. After they left Coan, and the steamboats would come down from Baltimore, they would go to Maryland first over in St. Mary's. Then they'd come from St. Mary's over to Coan. Then when they left Coan, they would go to the Yeocomico River where I live now on the Yeocomico. They would go to Kinsale. Kinsale was quite a shipping port, and it had been well recognized as a good harbor and a good shipping port. It was recognized in many ways. In fact, they had planned that Kinsale back in colonial days, be fixed as a city at the same time Philadelphia was, to name the streets and so forth. Kinsale didn't develop like Philadelphia, but it was on the drawing board. After it left Kinsale, it would go to Lodge Landing. I will say this in all seriousness, that's where I lived and I always thought it was Lodge. But in doing some research, the steamboat landing was Lodge Landing, not just the word Lodge. Also, it would go to Mundy Point. So, it was three steamboat landings that the steamboats would go to in the Yeocomico. Now the lower part of the county, the Great Wicomico down at Reedville, it was a different steamboat that came into there than the steamboats that came into the Potomac. It was a different line. There they would come in and they would go to –

MK: Do you remember the names of the lines themselves?

TAW: Yes. The Potomac River line came into the Coan River that went to Coan and Bundick, Lake, Walnut Point, Cowart, Lewisetta. Also, in the Yeocomico, Kinsale, Lodge, and Mundy Point. Now, that was the Potomac River line. Now the Piankatank line that went into the Great Wicomico River down at Reedville, that would come down from Baltimore. The first port would be Mila. From Mila it would go to Tipers. Tipers was a creek right across from Glebe Point. When they first built the bridge there, it was known as Tipers Bridge because it was named after the creek. Glebe Point was very well known because each of the churches that we had before we got our independence from England had a Church of England. The ministers didn't have any salaries or much money, so they set aside Glebe lands for the ministers. They could live on the Glebe lands or rent the Glebe lands or what have you, so they would have some livelihood. So, we have Glebe Point that was set aside for one of the ministers for the Church of England. So, right across from Glebe Point over to Tipers was the ferry. Then they built this bridge down in 1933, and it was a drawbridge. They would go to Mila and Tipers, then to Blackwells right across from Tipers. It's just up from the bridge, so it was very near the bridge, Blackwells. They would leave Blackwells and then go into Cockrell's Creek. It was a place that isn't very well known, but it was known by the boating people, Tims. It's where Fairport is. They would also go into Reedville, and then they would also go to Fleeton. That was in the Great Wicomico. That was known as the Piankatank River line. Then you had another line that went down into Dividing Creek. That would go into Hardings, Ditchley, Waddeys. Then the line that went into Indian Creek was Barrington. So, you had Indian Creek with a steamboat

landing in Northumberland County, Dividing Creek with steamboat landings in Northumberland County, Great Wicomico with steamboat landings, Coan River, and Yeocomico River. So, we had a lot of steamboats that came into Northumberland County. We would have steamboats two or three times a week, and they would come in and they would come to the landings and they would go to Washington. Then when they came back from Washington, they would come into the landings again. Most of the freight went from here to Baltimore. We got it from Baltimore, and we would ship a lot of our freight to Baltimore. We had a lot of tobacco in the area years ago. We had a lot of farm animals such as cattle and calves. The first time I ever went to a steamboat landing was with my brother. We went to Blackwells on the Great Wicomico River, and we took a calf. I remember I told my mother when I went back home, but my father didn't come home until weekends, that it was the biggest rope I'd ever seen, was this line that tied up the steamboat. I don't remember the details of it, but I do remember my father taking me in the living room and closing the door and telling me not to get upset. He just wanted to tell me something that was very important. That that wasn't a rope that I saw on that steamboat, it was that line. He certainly wouldn't want me to say if I came down to his boat, "Pass me that rope and I'll put it around that piling." "That's a line that we tie boats with. It's a bow line, not a stern line." So, he corrected me for saying that was a rope. That's the only steamboat I ever remember. The steamboat stopped in this area in February of 1932. I don't know, but I think it was in the summer of either 1930 or [19]31, that we took his calf down to Blackwells. But that was the only steamboat I saw. Years later, I would see the floating theater come, and they would come to some of these steamboat landings. There was a big theater where they would tow around with tugboats. It was like a big barge with a theater on it. It would seat about seven hundred people, and they had quite a show. They would stay for a week. They would come into Reedville or other ports, and they would stay for a week. They had living quarters aboard the floating theater. It was quite a musical and quite a show. I didn't go, but I remember. That was up until about the late [19]30s that they had the floating theater to come. The last of the steamboats that we had in our county that was for passengers was a line that ran from Bundick to Philadelphia. That was in about 1936 or [19]37. They tried to start this line up to run. They had the canal from the Chesapeake Bay to the Delaware Bay. These steamboats could go from Bundick up the bay and through the canal, and then up to Philadelphia. That ran for about a year or so, and it wasn't financially well. But it was the largest steamboats that we had at any time. The steamboats that we had prior to that were not as large as some of those that ran from Bundick to Philadelphia. But it only lasted about a year, and that was around [19]36 and 1937. Walnut Point had a freight line. They would go to Baltimore with their freighters, which they had, and pick up freight and bring it down. They would deliver freight in this area by trucks. They did that in the late [19]30s and [19]40s until other freight lines like Bristol and Wilson took over the lines. They'd bring the freight all the way from Baltimore by truck instead of bringing it part all the way down. When the line ran from Bundick to Philadelphia. (Sayers?) would send a line of freight down. They would send this freight down to Bundick, and then trucks would pick it up and take it into their warehouse in North Carolina. But later they found out that it wasn't much difference in picking up the freight with trucks in Philadelphia and taking it all the way to North Carolina. So, they didn't find it to be so profitable to take it halfway by boat. I guess the thing that [laughter] fascinated me more than anything else is the passenger steamers that ran from Washington to Norfolk. You would see them when I lived at Edwardsville. When I lived at Reedville, I'd go down to Chesapeake Beach and you would see...

MK: So, you were talking about the big passenger steamers.

TAW: Yes. The big passenger vessels would go from Norfolk.

CK: I am sorry?

TAW: The big passenger vessels would go from Norfolk to Washington. They ran after the steamboats and you could go to Washington and get on these passenger vessels and go to Norfolk. I didn't do it, but you could do it. I did go when I was in both Baltimore and Washington and go on these steamboats for an excursion for the evening. We could go out about 6:00 p.m. or 7:00 p.m., and they would go out in the bay and just cruise around. We'd come back about 10:00 p.m. or 10:30 p.m. and they would have a band. It was quite a nice evening on these retired steamboats. Washington had them and Baltimore had them. Both of them had them. But now, the steamboat landings and the steamboat docks and the markets have changed both Baltimore and Washington, and you just don't have it anymore. You wouldn't see the situation it was when it was very active up until the [19]30s. You take this area here where we live. When you wanted something, you went to Baltimore to get it. If you want to go to hospital, you went to Baltimore on a steamboat. If you want to go on a honeymoon, you got on a steamboat and you would go. But then in 1927, they built the bridge across the Rappahannock from Richmond County to Tappahannock. After this bridge was built in 1927, people then would go to Richmond and do their shopping by automobile. Up until 1927, getting to Richmond would take a couple days. You'd get on a steamboat and go to Fredericksburg, and then get on a train and go down to Richmond. So, several of the ladies and men that went to college would spend two days going to and from college. If they went to, say, Blackstone College, which was a well-known woman's college, and many of the people in this area went to Blackstone, they would get on a steamboat and go to Arlington or Fredericksburg. If they got on a steamboat, they went up to Potomac. They would go to Arlington. Or if they went up to a steamboat that went up to Rappahannock, they would go to Fredericksburg. Then take the train down to Richmond or Petersburg and then get on the bus and go to Blackstone. So, it was quite an ordeal to go to college. But after we got the bridge in 1927, people changed their way of shopping and so forth. From then on, they would do their shopping and buy their clothing. Now, a lot of the local stores had most of these. In other words, some of the stores would advertise that, "We will give you good fitting clothes." They would measure people, and they would send off and get them made in Baltimore. You could buy a suit of clothes in lots of the local stores. Most of the local stores that did this. We had several in this county here in Callao, Lottsburg and Haynesville and Reedville and Wicomico Church and so forth. They would have a two-story building. Upstairs were the clothing and other merchandise. Downstairs for the groceries and other items. So, you had had that. But after the bridge was put in, in twenty-seven, people then started going to Richmond.

MK: Preferred Richmond to Baltimore?

TAW: Well, it was quicker. See, in three hours you could drive from here to Richmond.

MK: Take you all night on a steamboat.

TAW: That's right. Then it would be the next day. So, it would be quite different. They didn't know anymore, and they didn't have any more up until the bridge. But as they once got to the bridge, they could see they could do it all in one day. In the morning they could go to Richmond and shop, and in the evening they could come home. One of the things that I noticed so much about the steamboats is some of the rates they had. For example, the fair if you wanted to go one way it was usually around three to \$4. A fair would be 396 or 324 or two-sixty in, depending upon. So, you could get on a steamboat and the fare one way would be less than \$4.

MK: What year would that have been?

TAW: This would be about 1920. You had a lot of lines if you didn't go very far. Now, for your meals, breakfast and dinner was seventy-five cents each and dinner was a supper, they called it. So, it was breakfast and dinner. Dinner was called same as lunch. Then supper was the evening meal, and that was \$1. If you wanted to get a state room, they were from \$1.25 to \$2.75, if you wanted to get a state room. If you wanted to sleep in the lounges and so forth, which ninety percent of the people did, they would just have a big chair to sleep in. But if you got a state room, it was \$1.25 to 2.75.

MK: Do we want to just change tapes? You have given us a lot of information.

CK: Yes.

Diane Rabson: Yes.

MK: What do you think, Diane?

Diane Rabson: Yes. That is a lot. I have not stopped writing for one second. [laughter]

TAW: Oh, is that right?

DR: I see you have xeroxed several things.

TAW: Yes, I was going to give them to you.

DR: Oh, bless your heart. Which book did you find that stuff in?

TAW: I got it out of this particular thing out here. This is *Steamboats Out of Baltimore*.

DR: Is that by Burgess?

CK: Yes. It is Burgess and somebody else.

DR: Burgess and yes, somebody else?

TAW: Yes. Burgess.

DR: Well, that is a shame that he just died a few months ago.

TAW: Yes.

DR: Let us just move on now.

TAW: He had a grandfather that lived here in the county.

DR: Did he?

TAW: He used to come down and stay in the summer when he was young and so forth. I visited him several times when he was down at the museum at Newport News. Probably by far the best first person with steamboats and so forth. Even when he was young, he would go to Baltimore and take pictures of each steamboat and so forth. He had an interest at a young age.

CK: We can add on that.

MK: It has not been very easy for us to identify some of the people who might have crewed on like your father's boat or the steamships. Do you know of any elderly Black people who would have information or stories to tell about that?

TAW: Yes, I do. Charles Winstead. Charles Winstead knows the vessels, knows the companies, knows the captains, knows the crews.

MK: That is the one we want.

TAW: Knows the chanters and just very knowledgeable. Charles Winstead.

CK: Is this an African American man?

TAW: Yes.

DR: Here in Northumberland County?

TAW: Lancaster County.

DR: Lancaster County.

CK: Lancaster.

DR: It is okay.

MK: We will suffer through it.

DR: Yes. [laughter]

CK: [laughter]

TAW: Winstead, W-I-N. I had the opportunity to be informed a great deal by his father when I was young. Even after I got older, his father was real good to me. Winstead, Charles Winstead. Let's see here now. Here we have a Charles R. Winstead, 378 Taylors Creek Road, Williams.

DR: That is not very far from where I am staying right now.

TAW: That's right. Charles R. Winstead, 378 Taylors Creek Road, Williams. The telephone number is 438-6813.

DR: 438-6813.

TAW: Right.

MK: That is a great lead.

DR: Oh, good.

TAW: Yes. Let me give you some other leads.

MK: Would you be willing to call him and kind of encourage him?

TAW: Sure. Oh, yes.

MK: I think sometimes it is hard for Black people to get involved in these kinds of projects. But we certainly want to include their side of the story. But anyway, go ahead with your...

TAW: No, no, no. What I was going to tell you was, there are a few white people that are colorblind. There are a few Black people that are colorblind. If he saw a white person that needed help, or a Black person that needed help, I don't think he would take a second to decide what he was going to do. I think he would just help whoever needed help. It didn't make any difference to him whether they were white or Black.

MK: Well, we need help.

TAW: I understand that. But what I'm saying is it isn't everybody that thinks like that.

MK: No. You are quite right.

TAW: You know?

MK: You are right.

TAW: He's as comfortable talking to white people as he is Black people. Not everybody is like that.

MK: We would sure like to talk to him.

TAW: Yes. But I just thought I'd tell you that. [laughter] Let me see if he's home. Charles R. Winstead, 438-6813. I just have to think about it. So many people that you know are getting along in age and some of them have died that would know. But let me just think about it a little bit.

MK: Great.

TAW: There was a captain in the Wicomico area that would be good to talk to. I can't think of his name right now.

DR: I can call you back in a few days.

TAW: Yes. All right. Let me talk a little bit more. Put on another tape. Put on another tape. Let me get a drink of water.

MK: Yes. Do that. You need some water?

TAW: Miss, wonder if you would go get me another cup of water?

CK: I would be glad to.

TAW: I have a water fountain.

MK: Actually, Carrie, I will use this camera because I have got a really nice angle here.

CK: Tape should be behind you.

MK: Let me just fire up this one again. This will take just a second.

DR: This has been a really great project to work on. I have met so many people who know so much about just about everything we need for the archives. The nice thing about this, we got some money from the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities. We believe they will give us another grant in the spring. Because it pays for really good equipment, when we put this into whatever format we decide that we want to use, it is going to be something of really good quality for schools and libraries and researchers on the internet. This will be something that everybody will be able to use.

TAW: Yes. I'd like to change the subject for a moment, sir. Just listen to me for a moment.

MK: Yes, sir.

TAW: The little boy was visiting his neighbor and it was a second grader. She was sitting there

drinking water like I am. This neighbor said, "Randy, when you go to high school, you can take chemistry and they would teach you the formula for what you're drinking." He kept smiling. She said, "Randy, do you know the formula for water?" He nodded his head that he did. She said, "Randy, you're just seven years old. You're just in the second grade." She says, "You don't know the formula for water." He kept smiling. She said, "What is it?" He said, "H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O." She said, "Randy, that's not the formula of water." "Oh, yes. (Ms. Danning?) said it was H to O." So, he had learned his alphabet, so he started H and went to O.

CK: [laughter] H to O.

MK: H to O.

DR: H to O.

CK: That is great. I wish I could remember jokes. That is great. [laughter].

TAW: That's a child story.

MK: That is wonderful.

CK: That is a real child story. Yes.

TAW: Bear in mind, that's something that my mother said when I was little. You can tell a child story to anybody at any time without being embarrassed because children don't know anything but good things unless an adult has taught them something bad.

MK: That is right.

CK: That is what your mother said?

TAW: Yes.

MK: Your mother was right about that.

CK: She must have been wonderful.

TAW: Yes. Children don't know anything but good, unless some adult has taught them something bad.

DR: Like television.

TAW: Oh, I don't know. But anyway, it's so true.

MK: It is true.

TAW: They don't even know bad words unless some adult has taught them some bad words,

you know?

CK: Right.

TAW: Yes. So, this is the formula for water.

DR: H, I, J. [laughter] H to O. [laughter]

TAW: Yes. Tell me when you want to start.

DR: Do you want me to hit pause?

MK: No, we are going. We are rolling here. Matter of fact, we got that good child story on the recording.

CK: Oh, good.

TAW: Oh, yes. [laughter]

MK: This is tape two of November 7th. What would you like to talk about now?

TAW: I would like to talk a little bit about the fish factories that I would see when I would go out with my father. Each summer, my father would take me aboard the boat for a week. I don't remember just when I first started, but we would go down to Cubitt's Beach which was on the Potomac. I told you about the Potomac being owned by Maryland. He would drop quarters. We would be in the water, three or three and a half feet deep, and he would drop quarters in the water. I would go down and I'd have put my head under the water to get these quarters. I remember one time that I came up with five quarters at one time, and I did not come up to get air. I'd gone from one quarter to another quarter just looking for these quarters. When I came up and gave my father five quarters, he said, "Son, you've passed the test." I said, "Daddy, what is that?" He said, "You're no longer afraid of water, because if you were afraid of water, you'd get one or two and then come up." He said, "You got one or two and you just kept looking and you didn't come up to get air. You looked and you got five." So, he said, "I don't mind taking you on the boat now because if you fall overboard, you're not going to be frightened because you're not fearful of water anymore. You'll just swim on off." So, each summer my father would take me aboard the boat for a week and I would go with him on Sunday night down and get in a boat. My father had two bunks in his quarters. No one lived in my father's quarters except himself. The mate and the pilot all had room for themselves and my father had a cabin with two bunks in it. So, he could always take who he wanted aboard. So, I would stay in with my father's quarters. I would stay all week because my father would go down on Sunday night. Then my mother would go down and pick him up on Saturday afternoon. My father didn't have a car at the plant. So, we would go out and as we would go out, the fish factories on Sunday night would be all lit up, but you would see what they were. The plant that my father fished at was McNeal Dodson plant. The McNeal Dodson plant was on the western side of Cockrell's Creek. So, we would leave the McNeal Dodson plant. Right across from the McNeal Dodson plant was the Morris-Fisher factory that had gone to the business. Then there was the Reedville Oil and Guano

Company that was an active plant. Next to that was the Douglas Company. The reason why I remember the Douglas Company so well is because my father fished at the Douglas Company for a while. One of the boats that my father owned, Mr. Douglas and my father owned this menhaden boat together. It was a William Blundon. My father, while he was the owner of this boat, would go captain of the boat. They would fish at Mr. Douglas' plant. Another plant on the western side as we went out was the McNeal Company. So, when we would come back in and you could see them in the daytime as you came into Cockrell's Creek, on the western side of the creek, the first plant was the McNeal Company, and the next was at McNeal Dodson. These were all on the western side of the creek. The next plant was at McNeal-Edwards. So, the McNeals had three plants in Cockrell's Creek next to each other, and all were very active. Then after the McNeal-Edwards plant then was Tims where the steamboat used to come in. It didn't have a post office. It's the only place that I knew the steamboats would come that didn't have a post office. When they got a post office, they named it Fairport at Tims. Then the next plant was Menhaden Company. That was owned by the Jetts. The Jetts were very prominent and very well-to-do people. The next plant was the Edwards Company. Then up at Reedville, the plant had burned, and so that wasn't active. Then on the eastern side of Cockrell's Creek coming back out, the first plant was a Morris-Fisher plant that has a real large smokestack and is still there. I think to me, it's one of the most prominent things in Northumberland County. Of all the things at Northumberland County, I think that should be preserved, I think the smokestack at Morris-Fisher factory should be preserved. As the people would go on the steamboats from Norfolk to Washington, as they went up the bay, far above the tree lines they could see this big smokestack. So, they would look at that smokestack and say, "Yes, that's one of the fish plants at Reedville." So, consequently, even late at night, they would see the lights on the smokestack because you would have lights on to protect it from airplanes that were flying because of them being so tall. Then the Reedville Oil and then the Douglas Company. So, the plants that were active when I was a small child going with my father was at McNeal Company, the McNeal Dodson, the McNeal-Edwards, the Menhaden Company, the Edwards Company, Reedville Oil and Guano, and the Douglas Company. So, there were seven fish factories that were active and working when I would go with my father. Now, if the fish were off the beach or down the beach, they would leave early to get to them like they were this week. The fish were off the beach. My father would go down about 8:30 p.m. He would go down somewhere about a half an hour after sundown. He felt like it was still the Sabbath if the sun was shining. So, he would wait about a half an hour after the sun went down before he would leave home. He didn't want to do anything on the Sabbath. So, he would go down and go aboard. Then he would wait until after midnight. About five minutes after 12:00 a.m., he'd come out on the deck by his room on the second deck. The engineer and mate would be there waiting because they knew what time he'd come out. He'd want to know if the crew was aboard and if they had water and they had all the things they needed, oil and what have you. After they answered the questions, then he would say, "Well, are we ready to go?" He said, "Mate, get them in and let's go." But my father wouldn't take his boat out until after midnight, even though the other captains would. He just would not take the menhaden boat out on the Sabbath. So, they would then go and if he went up the beach, or if they fished in the bay or wherever they would go. If he fished in the bay, then he would come in at night. As they came back into Cockrell's Creek, there was a red buoy at the entrance of Cockrell's Creek on the Great Wicomico. Whoever passed the red buoy was the next boat at the factory to unload. At the red buoy, you cut your speed down to half speed. Coming into Cockrell's Creek, you always came slow. You didn't have any passing in Cockrell's Creek, you

could pass coming into the red buoy. But once you got to the red buoy, whatever boat passed the red buoy was the next boat that got unloaded. There wasn't any racing in Cockrell's Creek. So, consequently, you came in and each boat that would come into the factory. They had elevators to get the fish out. It was like a big ladder that would roll over. So, when you came in with your fish, they would have these ones from the factory to come aboard your boat. They would get in with these big forks and they would move the fish into this elevator that was just running. They would go in and the fish would fill up a big bucket. When they got a certain amount of weight on it, then it would dump. So, they measured the fish by the times that it is automatically dumped. So, if they had it sent for let's, say, two ton the bucket, every time it dumped, then it would mark itself up. So, you got your fish measured by the dumps as you unloaded. So, they would get the fish out and they would wash the hole down. Then as soon as you got your fish out, they would take the elevator out and you'd move away from the unloading platform. Then the next boat would come in. The captain didn't do that. It was the mate that was in charge of moving the boat at the factory. When the captain came in, he was expected to get his rest and be in charge of things. These decisions were made by the captain, all of them. So, consequently, the captain was the one that got his rest, was the one prepared. About 3:00 a.m., if they were fishing down the beach or off the beach, they would sometimes go out after they got the fish out. About 3:00 a.m., the captain would get up and the pilot would be in charge of the boat running down the beach. The captain would get up at 3:00 a.m. and let the pilot lay down and get some rest. So, [laughter] the pilot would stay in his bunk until he found fish. So, he would get some rest because the pilot had to work all day and then he'd have to work at night because you only had one pilot. The boat would run for twenty-four hours. So, you would try to help the pilot to get some rest. Also, when they had the boat running, the pilot or the captain or whoever was in charge, they would have someone to handle the helm, the big wheel of the vessel. So, the person or the crew would work for one hour in the pilothouse. So, they had one man in the crew come up on the aisle and then another man in the crew to come up on the aisle, and he wasn't worried about what he was doing. Very seldom, the man and the crew could even read the compass. You would tell him, "To port your wheel or starboard your wheel." One of the things that my father, I remember, of teaching the men on the crew, "Put your short words together and your long words together. When I say, "Port your wheel," left is a four-letter word. L-E-F-T. Right is a longer word. So, port is a short word. Starboard is a long word. So, when I say, "Port your wheel," it's to the left. When I say, "Starboard your wheel," it's to the right. Now when you see a light on a vessel, you wonder what side of the vessel it's on. So, put your short words together. Red is a short word. Green is a long word. So, when you see these lights coming, you know if you're seeing just red, it's on the left side of the vessel. If you see green, you know it's on the right side of the vessel. So, learn your short words, left, port, red. Your long words, right, starboard, green. So, when I say, "Starboard your wheel," turn it to the right and I want you to know this." I can remember my father going over that when a new man would be aboard and be in it's probably for the first time, that my father would tell him three times. My father was very, very convinced that if you heard something three times, you would remember it. He would bring a man aboard and he wanted to teach him to tie the lines. But he wanted to teach him to tie the line so if he wanted to slack the line, he would be able to do it. "Don't tie the line so it would jam." So, he would teach him to tie the lines and then he'd get ready to go to lunch and he'd say, "Henry, come here. I already told you that but let me go over it again." He would tell him again about tying the lines and get him to do it. Then in the evening, when we'd get ready to end for the evening, he'd say, "Henry, I've been thinking about this." So, he would get him to do it the

third time. Then later the next day or later that evening, my father said, "Henry will never have any trouble with those lines because he's heard it three times." My father was convinced that if you told someone three times that they would remember it. Now, when they left to go out and look for fish, you would be able to [laughter] see these fish and menhaden will ripple the water and they will also make color. If they got a lot of fish, the water would look reddish. So, consequently, they'd see these fish and then they would say, "In your boats." Then these purse boats in the back of the boats would be tied up into the lines so you could pull them up and drop them down. So, they would let the boats down and the men would bring the boats around to the stern of the boat and then everybody would get in. Then they would go off to the fish and then go around the fishing and haul them in. It wasn't unusual to see eight or ten boats in one area where there would be bunches of fish, all fishing at one time. One of the things which was real good is you would get somebody in the dry boat or somebody on the boat that could tell the difference between the size of one bunch of fish and another bunch. One bunch of fish may have 25,000 in it. Another bunch of fish would have a hundred thousand in it, and to be able to tell the difference. This one person that my father had, a dry boatman, he was the one that would go off and go down and tell you where the bunch of fish is and how to open up and so forth. He was real good. Later years, not on my father's boat, but I fished on another boat when I was going to college, and he was dry boatsman. It was amazing how he would pick the largest bunch of fish when there were several boats in the area. He had a real good way of knowing and seeing the size of a bunch of fish. It was real helpful. So, consequently, fish were very valuable. They didn't pay the men or the boats were not, so consequently, as one of the owners, I say owners, one of the accountants that worked for Reedville Oil and Guano when they had opened up a plant in New Jersey. He was working in an accounting office in Atlantic City and he was doing the work for the company for this factory and he just couldn't get over it. They came up and opened up this company. The first season they made more money than what the whole company cost, the first season. When I was small, I remember my father saying that some of the people that invested in some of the fish factories this year are getting a hundred percent dividend. In other words, the dividends, if you had bought \$1,000 worth of stock, your dividend was \$1,000. So, it was a lot of money made in this many businesses if they caught the fish. Now, some seasons wasn't so good and consequently they had not done like some of the founders. So, they didn't have their money for the reserve, and a lot of the factories went under when they had a bad season. Well, menhaden was considered an oily fish, good for fertilizer, good for fish meal for the chickens and so forth. Perdue, for example, has this real yellow chicken from menhaden while other companies have a rare white chicken. So, consequently, Perdue uses a lot of this menhaden fish. But now, they find out that this menhaden has a lot of good food in it. So, menhaden has now been approved by Food and Drug as edible. It's been edible in foreign countries for many years. So, many of the fish products now from menhaden are being used in edible foods, especially as a substitute for butter and other items. The other night, Tuesday night, they had fourteen million fish. To give you an idea of what fourteen million fish is, a million fish is as you know, a hundred thousand. I didn't mean that. A million fish is a thousand. So, consequently, when you got a thousand fish, you are having somewhere in the neighborhood of six or seven hundred pounds of fish and a million fish. So, it's a lot of tonnage. For example, if the plant Monday night had not been workable and you had to move those fish, those fourteen million fish, into Richmond and put in cold storage until they got the plant to work. The number of tractor and trailers to have moved fourteen million fish would've been well over a hundred tractor and trailers of trucks going through Callao going to Richmond to take

those fish. Over a hundred of the largest trucks that can go. It gives you an idea of the fish at one plant in one day. It would've taken over one hundred tractor and trailers to have just moved those fish. So, it's not even people locally that can conceive, because they have many of those that can conceive the amount of tonnage that we have being brought into this county from fish. I would like to say that it went down from the people that founded it and started it, to their children, and they did very good. But by the time it got to their grandchildren, the third generation, they weren't too interested. So, consequently, there were a lot of sport fishermen, uninterested owners. The seven plants that we had when I was young, is now down to one. That one plant is not owned locally, but that's owned by people outside of Virginia, basically the ones that are dealing with the oil rigs and on the Gulf. So, consequently, if they don't make money, they're not going to keep even that one plant open. So, the menhaden industry has a poor outlook. When I was in college, I worked at a fish plant in Long Island, New York, real active. Now it's closed. Also, I worked at a fish plant in Lewes, Delaware. Right beside it, there was two plants. I worked at both of them. One summer I worked at a plant. Another summer I worked at the other. It was Lewes, Delaware. Now there is no fish plants in Delaware. The plants in New Jersey closed. So, consequently, Virginia, all of them are closed except one. It doesn't look good. Even the present articles in the local paper this week were articles of the groups that were against the fish plants. I mentioned to one of my good friends that lives in Reedville about all the boats being loaded Monday night. He says, "Oh, you could tell it. Boy, did they stink Tuesday." See? When I was small, you didn't see things like that. That smelled like money. It didn't smell like money to him, it was a stink. So, consequently, the population now looks at it a different way. The menhaden industry is all. Now my father was also a fish trapper for herring and shad and mostly shad. My father was a big shad fisherman. Now, it's very few shad left and the shad season was shortened. So, consequently, the fish trappers had so many when I was young. Now we don't have the fish trappers now. I've seen my father bring in two thousand shad a day. Shad was worth from, say, \$1.25 to \$2 a piece. My father was often at the fish dock in Lewisetta when he would have as many fish shad as all the other fishermen there. It was eight or nine trappers. My father was just very fortunate of having a good location for a pound net. He was off of Cubitt's Creek and the water depth went very shallow off of Cubitt's Creek for a long way. My father brought his net in to sixteen feet of water and carried the pounds out to forty feet of water. So, if the fish came up in twenty feet of water, they hit my father's net. If the fish came up in twenty-five feet of water, they hit my father's net. If the fish came up in thirty feet of water, they hit my father's net. If the fish came up in thirty-five feet of water, they hit my father's net. By him being on that point off of Cubitt's, he would often go to that trap and bail more shad out of that one trap five times more shad. If he had three other traps, five times more shad out of that one trap, than he would the other three. It was because of location. This is so true with the steamboats years ago. Why was Bundick and Coan Wharf such good steamboat lands? It was real deep water. So, they could come in there regardless of the high water or the low water, what have you. They had plenty of deep water in Coan River to come in and at Bundick and Coan docks. Later when these real large steamboats – and I'm going to give you a picture of one of these real large steamboats that ran from Bundick to Philadelphia – could go in because of the deep water. Location is so much in fishing. It's so much in steamboats in the ones that are successful. Cockrell's Creek is unnatural. It was deep water in Cockrell's Creek. So, consequently, the place where more menhaden factories were than anywhere else was Cockrell's Creek. That was some of the things I wanted to tell you because I wanted to tell you about the factories in Reedville.

MK: Excellent.

TAW: I wanted to say that I liked where I lived. When I was small, I used to hear so many nice things about Reedville and how Reedville after Franklin Roosevelt became president in [19]33, soon got its bank opened. When I went to law school, I met the president of the Federal Reserve Bank in Richmond. We have twelve federal reserve districts and one of them is Richmond. In the Fed Reserve District in Richmond, the president of the bank, he wanted to talk to me. I was socializing with him.

[end of transcript]