

William Crosby: No. They did the same.

Michael Kline: Did they...

WC: Boy, what are you talking about? I left my baby...

MK: Now, wait a minute. Wait, what does it say?

WC: [laughter] Oh, man.

MK: So, how were the men able to pull together on these...

WC: By singing. By singing. They said, "I left my baby standing in the back door crying." They wouldn't move their hands until they sing a bust like that. Then they start pulling again. They said – what else did they say? "Baby, don't go. Please, don't go." [laughter] They sing all these kinds of songs, and we enjoyed it. The yachts will be coming around just to listen to them. "I left my baby standing in the back door crying. Daddy, don't go." A whole lot of them I forgot because I haven't been over there a long time. They don't do that now. I know how because they got machines to do things. After they got machines to do things, they stopped singing to it. But before then, they'd sing everything.

MK: So, how would they sing it? How would it go? Pretend you...

WC: "I left my baby..."

MK: Start it again.

WC: "I left my baby standing in the back door crying. Said, 'Daddy, don't go.' Lord, Lord, daddy, don't go." That would be the end of that verse, and then from another verse, another verse. That's what you do.

MK: What are some more verses? Come on, come on, come on. You are doing great.

WC: Man, I don't know a goddamn thing. It's been so long. [laughter] I don't know a goddamn thing. Let me see. I know it's, "He left my baby standing at the back door crying. Said, 'Daddy, don't go.'" Then he said, "Evelina, she's got her money accumulator. Then they would pull again. Said, "Where'd you got that?" "I'd train her legs. Lord, Lord, train her legs." [laughter] They would laugh at that. It was fun though, that old thing. Boy, this boat be singing, a group of – boat be over here singing. That's how they made it, too. Hand be blessing up the net and all. They just made it. Then you go back aboard the boat and go in, then you'll coal a boat up.

MK: You coal a boat up?

WC: Coal it up. Let's put coal on a boat so they have some to run on. You see, I would coal up on my side, right-hand side. Somebody else coaled up on left-hand side. We had hauled coal in the wheelbarrow all night long until morning. That was a lot of work. But we'd do it, you see.

You had the coal in the wheelbarrow, see, so you could – well, that coal was everything then. You kept the lights in there and everything else.

Carrie Kline: What else they sing?

WC: Huh?

CK: What is another verse they sing?

MK: In your story, does – you know that, do you not? You told us a fib. You told us you could not sing.

WC: Me? I can't sing.

MK: You are a great singer, man. What are you talking about?

CK: You sing beautiful.

WC: No. I don't sing. Those boys could sing, though.

CK: What is another verse they would sing?

WC: Huh?

CK: What is another verse they would sing?

MK: You are doing great with the singing now.

WC: Let me see. What else would they sing now? We can find that out from Gilda Taylor, though, because he stayed with all this. I didn't do much singing because I was rolling the crab boat and doing different things. I never stayed on it much. Those boys from Massachusetts County, though, Lord, have mercy. They could sing. They were good singers, all of them. Bud Thomas and all of them were good singers.

MK: Who?

WC: A boy named Bud Thomas from Massachusetts County. They could sing, man. I never did do much singing because I wasn't even in that. I wanted to get somewhere out there, and I never bothered with that. When you're out on a job, you want to get off that job and get somewhere. You don't bother about that much. No, my Lord. But Gilda can tell you. Gilda will tell you what I was telling you about.

CK: What did it sound like some more, though?

WC: Huh?

CK: What did a little more of it sound like?

WC: Let me see. "Mama, Daddy," he said. "Daddy, you going to come home to see Mama?" Then, of course, he said, "Mama got a money accumulator," and all that old kind of crap. That was right crazy. [laughter] That was right crazy, I tell you. It's been so long since I've heard it now because now they don't do that. Because they don't even sing – not much singing on a boat. My boy, I doubt if he ever sang on a boat in his life. But we did it. We had fun. We had a lot of fun. What time is it?

CK: It is time for us to take you out for some lunch.

WC: Huh? Who?

CK: It is time for us to take you out for some lunch. It is twenty minutes past twelve.

WC: Twenty minutes past twelve? No. I don't want to go anywhere, hon. I don't want to go anywhere. I'm just here.

CK: Should we give you a rest?

WC: Huh?

CK: Should we give you a rest?

WC: No, dear. I'm going to stay here because I've got my wife in there in the bed, and she's quite sick. No, dear. I appreciate that, though, very much. I hope that what I've said may be of some help to you.

MK: Oh, boy.

CK: It was such a gift, tremendous gift.

WC: God bless you. Now, you're always welcome here, too.

CK: Thank you.

WC: You're always welcome here.

CK: Thank you.

WC: Because I love people. I think people – hey, who was that?

MK: William.

WC: Who?

MK: William.

WC: William.

Dianne Jordan: Would you hook the phone up in the back? I unhooked them so they would not ring while we are taping. I am afraid I will forget.

MK: Both of them?

DJ: I will do this one, you do that one.

WC: What?

DJ: Unhooked your phone so it would not make a lot of noise while we were taping. I want to hook it back up again. I do not want to leave here and leave it unhooked.

WC: [laughter] Bless you.

CK: Dianne, do another thing for us to turn the fridge back on, would you?

MK: I will do it. I know this one.

WC: But you all are wonderful people. Lord, have mercy. You all have made me go back long ways.

MK: Well, we are just thrilled to meet you and to get to talk with you.

WC: Well, I'm thrilled to have you, and you can come again.

MK: I am looking forward to meeting your sister and going to church with you.

WC: I want to. I definitely want to go to church with you. I want to meet the people there.

MK: Great.

WC: Yes. I want to meet the people.

MK: They have good singing at that church?

WC: What are you talking about, man? My sister used to sing on the choir, too.

MK: William, do you have a CD player here?

WC: CD?

MK: I was asking William.

WC: William.

Male Speaker: Hold up.

WC: You're talking about a...

MK: Play CDs on.

CK: Probably not.

MS: No. We don't have any CD players. It's a tape player.

MK: We got a tape we want to leave here for you.

MS: I can go bring my CD player in here later.

MK: Are you?

MS: Yes.

MK: Well, we are going to leave a CD of some church music we recorded over in Maryland, in Charles County, Maryland. We want to leave that for you and your wife to listen to.

WC: Bless you more. William will take care of that. [inaudible].

MK: If you have a CD player, it is a nice tape. They have a lot of old songs on.

WC: My radio doesn't want to play with it.

MS: I don't think yours does have a CD player on.

WC: No. Well, I'll get one then.

CK: How is your vision? Can you see well enough to sign this piece of paper Dianne's going to show you?

DJ: It is just giving us permission to let other people listen to this tape.

WC: Yes. I'll put my name on it.

CK: You can read it to him too.

DJ: Let me read it to you, and then you can just sign your name. I donate to the Steamboat Era Oral History Project and Talking Across the Lines the tape recordings, transcriptions, and contents of this interview, performance, or presentation. The materials gathered here today, their

contents, or their transcription may be used for books, articles, sound recordings, public broadcasts, workshops, lectures, scholarly research, other publication, or classroom use. Does that suit you?

WC: Yes. It suits me. Yes, sir. I'm all right.

DJ: You sign right here on this top line. Can you see it? Right there.

WC: I've got a feel for it.

MS: Right there in front of your finger.

DJ: Right there in front of your finger. Then I will fill in the rest of it. Down there.

WC: Why don't you go and sign it for me?

MS: No. You got to sign it.

WC: I got to sign it. What? Up here, where?

MS: Up a little bit more. Right there.

WC: Right there?

CK: It goes with that pen. There you go.

MK: What pen?

CK: It is a light pen.

DJ: This way, your grandchildren will get to hear this.

WC: What?

DJ: I said this way, your great-great-great-grandchildren will get to hear this.

WC: Yes, bless their hearts. [laughter]

CK: Is this good enough, Dianne?

DJ: Can you write his address and phone number for me?

MS: I don't know the address.

DJ: What is your address?

WC: You got to get it from the old shop.

DJ: How about your telephone number?

WC: Telephone number? You get that from the old shop, too.

MS: Here you go.

WC: What? You got it?

DJ: I got it.

WC: You got it, William?

DJ: I got it. Do you know what the telephone number is?

WC: Yes.

MS: 7049-435.

DJ: Tell me again.

MS: 435-7049.

DJ: 435.

[end of transcript]