Nancy Solomon: On May 19th, 1987. George, if you could tell me a little bit about your boat?

George Streit: I came to Freeport in 1940. I didn't have this boat, but I had a sport fishing boat called the *Tiger*. I sailed for big game fishing – marlin, swordfish, tuna, things like that.

NS: How did you learn to fish? How did you get started in fishing?

GS: I've always been fishing as a kid. I always had a little boat, then a bigger boat then a bigger boat.

NS: Did you grow up around here?

GS: I really came from Queens. I've always loved boating and fishing.

NS: Your father used to take you fishing?

GS: Yes, we used to come out on a train and take a trolley all the way down to the waterfront on Woodcleft Avenue and rented a rowboat. In them days, I think we paid $2 for a boat rental with a pair of oars. There were no motors then.

NS: Was this like a gunning boat or a Garvey?

GS: A rowboat.

NS: It was just a regular rowboat?

GS: A rowboat. I was only a kid, but I sailed most of the beach clubs at Atlantic Beach. Then I decided to come to Freeport in 1940 with my boat. I sailed out of Woodcleft Avenue with (Ben Eldridge?) with the (*Ampersand*?) and (*Julianna*?) and Captain (Bell?) and all those fellows all doing sport fishing.

NS: What do you mean by sport fishing?

GS: Well, fishing for giant tuna, marlin, swordfish, that's called sport fishing.

NS: How come?

GS: Because you have to go out on the ocean. It's a special type of fishing. You have to have a good boat to go on the ocean, and you have to go way out and look for these fish. You have to have big rods and reels and carry enough line to fight four, five hundred, thousand-pound fish.

NS: Had you ever done this before when you started sport fishing?

GS: No, I started fishing little by little, this and that, and then doing all kinds of fishing – handlining, fishing way back with a Seabright dory.

NS: Did your father do this with you?

GS: No. He loved fishing, but he never was a fisherman. He was a cabinet maker. He never really wanted to be a fisherman. But I just loved it. There was other things I've done besides fishing.

NS: Like what?

GS: Well, I've worked ashore. I worked ashore on different things. I was working before World War II on a bomb site. I was working on a (computer end?) at a (Bombe site?) before World War II, and then I traveled for the Navy Department starting (defense points?). I go back quite a ways. But I always loved to get back on the water again.

NS: What kinds of things do you like being a fisherman?

GS: Well, I haven't done too much sport fishing anymore. Now, I got into the clam business, hydraulic dredging for sea clams that the fisherman need to fish with and different things. So, I don't know how it is, but anyway, I got into that with this boat in 1946 and started dredging clams.

NS: Did anybody teach you how to do all of these things?

GS: No. I really didn't even go out with anybody, but I just heard that there was pretty good money in it, and I like to go – it's like prospecting. You go in the ocean until you find these clams.

NS: How could you tell where there were clams?

GS: Well, I generally tell with a depth recorder.

NS: But before there was a depth recorder?

GS: The depth recorder tells you the contours at the bottom. When the bottom has a slight rise to it, you're more apt to find clams on a little shoal. Because the sea comes down and then hits that shoal, it sets, and then you have a bed of clams.

NS: Was there always a depth recorder?

GS: Oh, yes.

NS: Are there other ways of telling where there are good clams?

GS: Well, the only way you could tell is that you've got to just have this big dredge. It's a big iron dredge that goes on a cable that you lower down in the ocean floor. You lower that down, and then you turn the water on. So, there's a big 150, two hundred feet of hose that goes down, and a bunch of jets where you jet these clams out. So, you drop it down, and you tow it for a

couple of minutes. Then you lift it, and you see what's in there, if there's shells in there or clams in there. That's how you find them. You run along and drop it down, make a chop, look at it. If there's nothing there, then you drop it down again and run along, drop it down on the ocean bottom again, and take a cut in the bottom. It cuts about eight inches deep.

NS: So, there was not one person that said, "Well, these are where clams are, and these are where clams are," the way fishermen…

GS: Well, these clams are on natural beds, and they're only mostly in the ocean. Most of the clams are cleaned out around the inlets here, so we have to go all the way down to the Rockaways to get clams, which is about a two-hour ride.

NS: Did you ever talk with other clammers about where those things were, or was it pretty secretive?

GS: Well, if you find something, that's what I say. You just don't tell everybody, because you tell one, and he tells somebody else. The next day, you go there…

NS: There is nothing.

GS: The place don't last long if you got half a dozen boats there, where if you have a place that you find, then you can work there for months and get a good day's pay out of it.

NS: Was there ever any spying between clammers?

GS: Oh, yes. There's always somebody snooping where the grass is greener. So, they see how fast you catch them, and the next day, they're over there again getting closer and closer and closer. So, that's what happens. It's always been that way.

NS: Who were some of the other clammers in this area?

GS: Well, there's Freeport Clam. Freeport Clam, he does food and bait too, but mostly food. But there isn't too much of that around. They have limited how much they catch, and most of those areas are closed right now. They will be open later on, and they open up in June.

NS: What kinds of different ethnic groups were doing clamming? Do you know if they were Italian or Irish or Slovakian?

GS: It doesn't seem to make any difference. We've got all kinds of – I don't know what nationalities that are doing it.

NS: Well, when you started many years ago.

GS: Years ago, we had like thirty boats. There's none of the thirty boats left. There's only, like I said, maybe about three or four boats.

NS: Were there any particular groups of clammers – a group of, maybe, say, Italians, a group of Irish, or a group of Slovakian clammers?

GS: Not that I know of. I think there was all kinds of young fellows working on the boats – Norwegians and Irish – I don't know. There didn't seem to be one kind of nationality that loved to go…

NS: Were they all pretty good at what they were doing or was there some who were better than others?

GS: Well, it's like everything else. There are some people who have an interest and a knack of doing something. They could go out on their own and they catch what they want. They don't worry about anybody else.

NS: Who were they? I know you were one of them.

GS: Then there are people that just love to follow you all the time. In other words, they have no incentive to look for clams or do anything. They just want you to find them, and they want to go over there and take them.

NS: So, who were the real good ones, the ones that people followed?

GS: We don't have too many around here anymore.

NS: But back then.

GS: See, like now, the company boat like the Freeport Clam, if he has two or three boats – well, those fellows stick together, young fellows, and one follows another. Still, there's a – I don't know what you would to say. Sometimes, they get mad at one another too by their taking away some of the clams that they found. One looks more than the other, and the other one just follows the other one around. So, there's always an argument here.

Female Speaker: Bill Granau was the name of the guy that owns Freeport Clam. I don't remember there ever being thirty boats around. When the heck was that?

NS: Well, say, thirty, forty years ago, who were the big-time good clammers?

GS: Years ago, there was only a couple of good boats. That was the *Nellie* out of Point Lookout. That was Doxsee's boat. The *Nellie* was one of the largest boats. Then there was the (*Howard E. Harris*?). That was another sixty-some-odd-foot boat. There wasn't very many big boats in those days. All were private boats. Anybody had a boat, they put an A-frame on it – so, that's the way it went. Years ago, there were so many little boats.

NS: Were some of those people really good at what they were doing?

GS: No, they weren't, really. They were fishermen. In other words, a fellow had a private boat,

and he had a boat where he used it for pleasure. Then he heard about there's money to be made. So, he put an A-frame on there, and then he got his son and they did it the hard way. They didn't know what they were doing, but they made a couple extra dollars. So, all those fellows, when the clam business got slow, they got slow, and they were laid off. A lot of them quit because there wasn't enough money in it, when the clams started petering out. They were there when the clams were thick and they were all over the inlet. They didn't have to travel far, and the boats were small. But as the clams got thinner, you had to travel far. Then the bigger boats took her down there and catch the clams. They'd come back if it was very rough, and they could get home, where the little boats took a chance, but they might get swamped on their way back.

NS: That is a real different approach to clamming.

GS: To me, they weren't really commercial boats. They weren't built or designed commercially. They just did it. So, the hard way to carry clams, they'd put them on the bunks where you had places where you could lay down or sleep in a boat. They just threw the clams on there and stacked them on there. They didn't care. They were making money, so that's the way they did it. It was, like I say, all told, about thirty boats.

FS: I don't remember that at all.

NS: Can you tell me a little bit more about your first boat and what it was made of, where you got it?

GS: Well, the boat that I put together was a government hull right after the war. I decided I'd go in the clam business. So, I bought the hull, and I had my brothers and my wife and they all worked on it, kind of repaint it and caulk it. We put the decks down and put the engine in. We got it running, got everything together, the mast and the bow.

FS: It was unfinished. What they call the stays over the side were still – there was no capping on it.

GS: The same boat. Then I went out and started clamming. Well, at the beginning, like I said, it was strange that you get out on the ocean and you look for clams and you don't know how it works, because I didn't work on a boat. I just went and put the boat together and went out there and worked. But the boat had become such a good, efficient boat that there wasn't very many boats around that could match it for its size, catching clams.

NS: So, a boat had to be pretty big in order to make it out into the ocean.

GS: Yes. So, it's forty foot long…

NS: Were there any other things that a clamming boat had to have in terms of construction or design?

GS: Well, it's a very heavy boat. You have to have a pretty heavily built boat to carry the weight, because we carry anywhere up to six to eight tons of clams. It's a lot of weight if you

don't have a boat that's put together strong. Of course, this was built by the United States government, and it was all heavy oak. That was really what –

NS: Did you ever build your own boat?

GS: Build it?

FS: Yes.

GS: No, but we put this boat together. In other words, it was just a shell. So, I had to put two-by-threes of lumber down for decking, and I had to put the capping on in oak. Of course, by the time you got all the rigging on it, it took me about six months of steady work on it to get it running.

NS: Did your father help you set up your cabinets?

GS: No, my father wasn't around.

FS: He died during the war, in 1944.

GS: He died during the war.

NS: Was it hard to learn to do all that woodwork?

GS: No. Somehow – I don't know what it is. I'm like a jack of all trades. Between the machinery and the woodwork, I've always been handy and like to work with my hands. I did most of my own welding and everything and put bridges and stuff together, which is half the battle. If you break it down and you've got a welding machine, you can weld it up and you don't lose much time.

NS: Would you say that most fishermen had those basic skills, or did a lot of them spend their money asking somebody to do with it?

GS: Well, there's a lot of fellows who have portable machines that go around and do this and do that, welding for you. Some people, like the other company, if they've got two or three boats, they always got somebody that's a welder and they get a welding machine. So, they do their own welding so that they save all that time waiting for a welder to come and fix what they need to be fixed.

NS: Did you ever do any clamming in the bay?

GS: Now?

NS: Yes.

GS: No, I never worked in the bay. I always worked in the ocean. I never knew what a clam

looked like when I went out in the ocean.

FS: You're not allowed to use power in the bay.

NS: Yes. I just was thinking about the guys with the clam rakes.

GS: You see, this is an entirely different operation. This thing here, if you did this in the bay, they would lock you up. You catch a bushel a minute. In some areas, you would catch more. So, it's done with power, with water pressure, and in a big manifold with jets on it. It just jets them out.

FS: It's like a big chain sled with a big bag on the back of it. Then across the front is this manifold or whatever the holes at the – there's a pumping engine on board that pumps water down and blasts out the clams as it rides along.

NS: What were some of the scarier parts about being out in the ocean?

FS: Well, we had our bad days sometimes with these big heavy swells. When you get a storm at sea, you get these big heavy swells. When they go across the inlet, they break. They'd break, so you have to – well, a lot of times, we used to figure out what the tide was going to be, and stay out a little longer and wait for the tide to change so the inlet wouldn't be so bad to get in. That was the only thing is getting through the inlet sometimes when you've got a big heavy swell in the surf.

NS: Do you remember one time particularly dangerous or scary for you?

GS: Well, yes. A couple of times, say, the big breakers went right over the boat and swamped the boat. Of course, with a commercial boat, your decks are above water enough and they've got big doors where the water could run off. That's why I say a boat like that is different than some of the small boats that they use. If they've got a big dump of water, they sink right away. There's just no place to shed the water. But on a boat of a flush deck of this type and a commercial boat, you take the water on deck, but it goes out the scupper holes. So, you don't have to worry too much. But it's an eerie feeling when you see a big one come and just go right over the boat.

NS: What was the scariest thing that ever happened to you?

GS: Well, one time, we were coming in, and there was no jetties at the time, years ago. We had a heavy load of clams on. We came in, and the swells were very, very high. When we came in, a big, big swell sucked the water away, and the boat touched the bar. The boat stood there like that, and it just started leaning over a little bit. Then another great big one came along, just hoping that it wouldn't rise enough so it could go with the sea instead of having that huge wave go over you. So, the wave came along, and I just got underneath it and just lifted the boat like that, took me right off the bar. Sometimes, if the boat lifts fast enough, then the big breakers will go right over it. So, the trouble with those…

FS: It's the first time I've heard this story.

GS: Those breakers sucked the water away from you. So, you don't have any water under the boat, and the boat touches the bottom. So, that's the only thing you got to worry about. You got to have enough water so you can go with the sea. If you don't go, then the sea goes over you. But over the couple of times, we get near the bar where there's clams in tow, and all of a sudden, the tide changes. Then all of a sudden, a big breaker would come and goes right over the side of the boat. So, you get out of there in a hurry.

FS: I missed that.

NS: Was it hard to get in and out fast when managing…

GS: To get in and out of…

NS: If there was no water and you were coming across a sandbar.

GS: Well, that's why we got depth recorders, so we tried to stay where we had enough water underneath us. My boat didn't draw too much, four and a half feet, five feet of water.

NS: Well, did the older boats – were they designed so that they could go in shallow water?

GS: Some of the boats didn't draw that much. Some boats draw at eight feet of water. So, you need enough water underneath you.

NS: I mean, all kinds of things can happen on boats. Only a few really moved like this, and it was really funny it happened to you.

GS: When you're dredging in the ocean, there's so many hookups. In other words, you catch dead cables out there, sometimes live cables like this. Now, like I say, the boat lays over, and you've got to work until you get off the cable. Sometimes, you get stuck in a wreck. You get stuck in a wreck, sometimes, you can lose the dredge. There's many factors. I mean, it's just because there's no easy sometimes. You have your good days and bad days.

NS: How can you tell a good day?

GS: A good day is when you can get out in the morning. Everything goes great. You get down there. Then you start the pump, and the pump starts good and everything goes. Drop it down, and right away, your first tow, you're coming in, you're getting fifteen, eighteen bags. You do that. Then by 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., you're done with a hundred-and-some-odd bags. Everything went smooth, and you're on your way home. There are days where maybe the pump is failing or it's not running right or the hose got caught on something down on the bottom of the ocean and it got twisted all up and tangled. So, you'll lose the tow here and the tow there. So, instead of being done, normally, let's say, at 11:00 a.m., you'd be there until 2:00 p.m. trying to catch what you need the same amount that you'd catch at 11:00 a.m. So, that's the difference sometimes in good days and bad days.

NS: I mean, the weather, I know, has a lot to do with fishing. How did it affect clamming?

GS: The weather is another thing. I don't have that big a boat where you can work in weather like twenty mile an hour winds or so. Well, it gets kind of nasty. My boat is kind of low, and you start shipping water and you can't tow right. So, it's a time that we say, "Well, we're going to go." We'd turn around and go back in. We'd take what we got, and we say, "We'd better take that and be satisfied and go home." Then there are other days where the ocean is like a lake, and it's easy working. You tow the way you want to and everything. But the other way, the waves are just pushing you off, pushing you off, pushing you off. You can't stay on the clams.

NS: Well, which wind direction is the best and which is the worst?

GS: Well, I always like, with my fishing where I go, northwest wind. I get a northwest wind. I can work with a twenty to thirty mile an hour wind because I work closer to the beach. When you work closer to the beach, there's not that much sea. But if you get it out of the southern quadrant, like a southeaster east wind, it's bad. Northeast brings on swells, and southwest winds – all of them kind of winds there, if they're of any strength, will give you a hard time with a boat, forty foot.

NS: So, basically, the only one that is really good for you is the northwest.

GS: Well, we generally go out early enough in the morning, because in the morning, a lot of times, it's quiet. If we get out there and it's blowing and it's nasty, we turn around and come in. But sometimes, you get out there, and you can work and work and work. Then it starts getting nastier, so you throw the dredge on the deck, take the clams you got, and you start back home. It's not too bad riding sometimes, but when you got to work in the sea like that, and the boat is rolling and doing this and that – and so, it's hard keeping your footing and shoveling and stacking. So, it makes it hard work. At the end of the day, you're tired.

NS: It seems like it is a real hard way of life.

GS: Well, some people, they get on a boat – like I said, you hire somebody (you enjoy?) he'd just say, "This is the hardest work I've ever done." But when you're used to it – I have been doing it for many years. I didn't think it was that hard. I had my hard days sometimes.

FS: You used to go out alone, too.

GS: Plenty of times, I went out alone and caught 150 bags, myself which was eighty-pound bags. I'd stack them. So, it's not all that easy. But like I said, sometimes, you have to work, really, to catch them.

NS: What do you like most about being a fisherman?

GS: I always loved this – not really loved it, but I figured it was like prospecting. You could go out there and you could go digging here and digging there, and you'd catch a couple of clams

here and a couple of clams there. You're always waiting to hit the pot of gold. Then all of a sudden, you come up, you make a chop in the bottom. You come up, and you got two, three bushels in a minute or two. "Wow," right away, you say, "That's it." Then you go ahead and you get a range on it and put a buoy down, and you start dredging. It doesn't take no time to get a boatload when you hit a virgin bed, and that's what makes it interesting. You never know when you're going to hit something like that. It's always interesting to find them.

NS: Had you ever worked inside, like in an office?

GS: Well, I worked in the city years ago. I worked in the city and I worked in construction. I did that for a while, and I'd get back on the boat again. A couple times, I wanted to sell the boat. But then my wife said, "Oh, don't sell it. Hang on to it." It always seemed to come in handy. When things got slow ashore, I got busy on the ocean again.

FS: You used to work with sprinklers one time. You did lots of things. Worked for a hardware company. Worked for the World's Fair in 1949.

GS: I worked for (Eiffel?) Corporation during the thirty-ninth fair, and I had charge of all the machinery and all the displays going in for Eiffel Corporation. So, I've always been mechanically inclined.

NS: But it is different being outside on the water.

GS: But I always liked the water. So, that's why I say it was healthy and fresh air and quiet. There was something about the ocean, and you get used to it. It was just like another world. But I don't know. I think I had a pretty good life on the ocean, even though I didn't do it steady every year, after year, after year.

NS: Did you ever try bay fishing just in your spare time?

GS: Bay fishing?

NS: Yes.

GS: Oh, yes. I did a lot of bay fishing.

NS: Yes, I bet you did.

GS: Yes, when I had a charter boat, I always sometimes had a charter for the day. Sometimes, if I didn't have a charter, I took friends out or something and we went fishing for flounders or weakfish and stuff like that.

NS: Did you ever make your own rods and lures or any of those?

GS: No, but my brother did that. I have a twin brother, and he used to make all kinds of rods and stuff like that.

NS: Does he still live here?

GS: Huh?

NS: Does he live around here?

GS: He lives in Freeport.

NS: Do you think he would mind if I called him?

GS: I don't know. But he didn't do much fishing. He's in the outboard business, and he just repairs outboard motors and stuff. He used to sell them in the city. But he didn't do much fishing like I did. I've always been on the water. He's never really been interested too much in that. He liked to go flounder fishing or go out to the Peconic Bay and fish for porgies and things like that. He used to do that. But other than that, he hasn't been doing much. I've always loved fishing.

NS: When you would go out in the bay, what was that like compared to going out in the ocean?

GS: Well, right now, it's worse than it was years ago. The bay is so crowded with boats. It's sort of aggravating because there's so many idiots that's running boats today. They don't know enough to slow down when they see a boat at anchor with people in there fishing for a little sport for the day. They have to rock and roll everybody around and swamp some of the small boats. But in the ocean, when you go, you don't have that.

FS: I have the *Tiger* when the Freeport Tuna Club when the – United States Tuna Tournament in 1940.

GS: Yes. In 1940, I sailed to the Freeport Tuna Club in the Atlantic Coast Tuna Tournament, which involves boats from all over. To go in the tournament, we sailed out of Jersey, and we came back with first prize at the Atlantic Coast Tuna Tournament. But that's 1940.

NS: When you would go bay fishing, was there somebody who taught you the tricks of bay fishing?

GS: My dad used to like to go fishing in the bay. So, little by little, you picked this up and picked that up. Bay fishing is kind of simpler in a way than sport fishing. Sport fishing, you have to troll bait and skip baits. There's tricks in presenting bait for sword fishing, for tuna and stuff.

NS: What are some of those tricks? I am not trying to steal your secrets. I am just curious.

GS: No, I haven't been fishing for so long at that. I would love to go out again and try some tuna. But I had as high as fifty-six tuna in one day. I don't know where my write-ups were. I'm just looking to see if I could find them.

NS: What were some of the tricks that you had to do to know your catch?

GS: Well, in chumming for giant tuna, you have to have the proper hooks. We used to camouflage the hooks. We made up different kinds of bait, what we called chum ball, little groundfish. You put the hook in there with a little piece of cork, and then you wind it with silk thread, the color of the flesh of the fish. Then you throw the little ones in there, and you throw this in there. That's the way you catch sometimes tuna that way, because a lot of times, if it just goes down too fast, they won't touch it. It has to just go down like the other regular ones, the stuff you throw over for the groundfish. If it goes down too fast to spot, they know right away there's this hook in it, or something makes it go down so fast. So, those are the things. It has to go down…

NS: Is there a special way you had to throw it then?

GS: A certain way, it has to go down. How you're doing that is putting a little slot in a piece of cork, and you put the hook in there. Then you hold that, push that into the meat, and then you wind that silk around there until it holds the meat pieces together. Then it hides the hook. That's what you have to do. Of course, you could see the big fish from the time – they'd come right up. They'll come right up to the bait like that and look that way and turn away.

FS: One time, we were out as a family years ago, and we heard this big noise. It was a school of whales spouting, and they came up. But one came right along and rubbed right against the boat. It was about sixty feet long, full of barnacles. We could just put our foot out over the thing and touch it because it was rubbing against the boat. My sister (Rhonda?) got scared to death and ran inside. I thought it was exciting.

NS: What other kinds of things would you have to do to get other kinds of fish?

GS: Well, when you go for marlin, you have to skip a bait. So, we used to have these big outriggers that went down. They lowered down off the side of the boat. What we used to use a lot of times were squid. Squid is a whitish looking fish with tentacles. You have to put the squid on there so that it was out of sight, and then you'd tie it on so you don't see the hook or anything. Then the squid is towed with the outrigger way off the back, and you have to get it where you see the first wash of the boat. You let it back and let it back so it jumps. It jumps off the wave. It keeps jumping off the wave, and that's what attracts the marlin. Now, the marlin comes along, and he sees the squid. He comes along, and he hits it with his sword. They've got a pointed thing that sticks out. Well, he comes along and he hits it. When he hits it, he knocks it out of a clip that's in the outrigger, and then it's slack. So, you slack on the reel right away. It's just like he killed it. It's going back. Then you just count one, two, three. By that time, he makes a rush, and he grabs it and swallows it. Then you hook him. Then once you've got him, then he sails out of the water, and he's jumping all over the place.

NS: Did you ever have one you landed on the boat very much alive?

GS: Well, one time, we had a swordfish. Oh, it was big. We generally tie it by the tail. We get

it up next to the boat and then tow it backwards. I'd tow it like that for a while, and then it kills the fish. We figured, well, it looked like it was dead. So, we started putting it on the gin pole and we started hauling it up with block and tackle. We got this big fish, which was about eight foot long, seven foot long.

NS: That was probably couple of hundred pounds.

GS: Then all of a sudden, we had it on deck. My party who chartered the boat, we had everything set there. All of a sudden, this fish started coming alive. It started bouncing and bouncing, shaking, and shuddering the boat. Sometimes, that happens.

FS: What boat was that?

GS: *Tiger*.

NS: When did that happen?

GS: I'm trying to think what year that was. On one of the charter trips that we had, that happened one time. We thought the fish was dead, but it wasn't. When you get something that big in the cockpit and it starts bouncing, it chops up the wood because they got a heavy bone sword in the front. That just chopped up some of the wood.

NS: We know how the fish felt.

GS: Oh, it got tiring.

FS: Must have been in the late [19]30s.

NS: Did you ever have fish in one of these waves come over, fish landing on your boat?

GS: No, I never had that. They say, "George wanted to get in the boat to eat the guy up." But I said no. When we fish for shark or something like that, we had them on until – we get to hook them and do this and that, but he never came after the boat. But if you get him on the boat, and you get your hand there or your leg there, you don't want to be very easy. If he gets a hold of you, he could do a lot of damage.

NS: Did you ever have an accident?

GS: No. No, I've always been careful.

FS: You rescued some people that were at a shipwreck.

GS: Oh, yes. Well, there was a couple of mishaps in the inlet. There was a boat, the *Chula*, went over – pitch pole had hit the bar. Like I was saying, it didn't lift off the bar fast enough, and the wave just took that boat end over end. There was three lost, but we picked up the mate on a chair. He was hanging on a chair in the water, floating. We rushed that in, got him in the

ambulance, took him away.

FS: Never heard this one.

GS: There was three fellows that were playing cards. I don't know what the captain was doing, but they should've had life jackets on.

NS: They did not?

GS: But they didn't. Whenever you get a sea that bad, they always say, "Put on the jacket." So, if something happens, you have a chance. But he didn't. They kept playing cards, and they didn't know what was going on until the boat went over. They couldn't get out of the cabin fast enough.

NS: They probably hit their heads and drowned.

GS: The Clifton Tuna Club came over to Freeport and chartered a boat called the *Chula*. I had movies on that too. I took some movies that this happened.

NS: Did you ever do duck hunting or anything like that?

GS: Oh, yes, I did duck hunting. I used to do that up by Fire Island. At Oak Beach, I had a little boat up in Oak Beach at a Coast Guard station.

NS: Was this a gunning boat?

GS: It was a gunning boat, and then we used to go over to the island. We had blinds built, and we used to go black duck shooting and stuff like that over there.

NS: Did you make this boat or did you get it from someone?

GS: No, I just picked up an old secondhand boat. I didn't make it, but we'd fix it up with weeds. We'd put those grass from the meadows in there, camouflage it. Then when we got out over to the island, over the island, we had a place there where we built a nice blind. We used to take a big, heavy rubber kind of top with us where we put it down so you wouldn't get wet. So, we went. I didn't do it that much, but we used to go out and do a little bit of duck shooting when the season was in.

NS: Did you make your own decoys?

GS: Yes, I made a mold out of aluminum. Like I said, I was a pattern maker, and I made patterns. I got castings made of aluminum this big, and I used to take ground cork and Weldwood glue and make a mixture. Then I used to take this and put it in there and hollow it out, take the excess out, whatever it was, and then just drop it down and then pull the mold apart. We always put stuff on the mold so it wouldn't stick. We kept putting them there and letting them dry. The bodies, I made them a little bit oversized black duck, because it's like an illusion.

The birds come in, and they don't realize that they're that close, because the birds on the water look bigger. When they look bigger, they think they're closer, things like that. So, I made them a little oversized. But I don't know. I loaned the thing to somebody, and I was telling him, "I wish I had that today, because all these duck hunters, I see them trying to get decoys and stuff for black duck and stuff. I used to make them so fat." It was a lot of fun.

NS: Did somebody teach you how to do that? Did your father do it?

GS: No. I went and took up a course in mechanical drawing and pattern making. I don't know if you know what pattern making is.

NS: Yes, my father was an engineer.

GS: So, you make a pattern of whatever you want – an engine or a piston or whatever it is you make it – and you make it out of wood or other material. You make it oversized according to the shrinkage or whatever metal you're using. You have to know all the different shrinkages of metal. Then you get the casting made, take it to the foundry, and then they'd make a casting, a duplicate of whatever you make in wood. That's what I took up. So, I just recently made a (tilarom?) out of bronze. I had made a pattern out of wood and had a casting made in bronze by Larry Johnson who makes the propellers in Freeport. I took it over to him, and he made me the casting. Everybody says, "Wow, what a beautiful job. Where did you ever get that?" I showed them the wood. I said, "Here it is in wood." The pattern, you have to make it so you can draw it out of the sand. You have to make tapers to it, and how you're going to pull it out and how you're going to do this and that. That's what you do when you're a pattern maker. So, I got that thing. So, it's always helped me a lot, what I had learned in pattern making. I took two years of that, and then mechanical drawing.

NS: Where were you born?

GS: I was born in Brooklyn.

NS: How old are you now if you do not mind my asking?

GS: Seventy-four.

NS: You look like forty-seven.

FS: It's a bit hard in January. He's lost about twenty-five pounds.

NS: Where is your family originally from?

GS: My family are originally from – I'd say Ridgewood.

NS: What country did they come from?

GS: Well, my father mother come from – they were born here.

NS: Your grandparents?

GS: My grandparents came all the way from Germany many, many years ago on a sailboat. I remember hearing the story of how long it took, months and months, and all the storms they got in to get here. But that's where they came from, Germany.

NS: Was anybody that you know of in fishing?

GS: No, I don't know of anybody, except my dad just loved to go fishing in the bay and stuff. He used to go on charter – go on a boat, open boat, where you pay $4, $5 to go out on. But other than that, I don't know anybody in the family that was a fisherman.

NS: How does it feel to be the first one?

GS: I don't know. I don't call myself a real old fisherman. I don't know. I've done so darn many other things. But I always get back to fishing.

NS: Do you think there is something special about fishing?

GS: Fishing is something that you really have to like. You like to have to get up in the morning early and get out. Like I said, you're in all kinds of weather. Sometimes, you say you want to give it up or you don't make enough money out of it and so on. Then all of a sudden, you get back in there again. But it's a hard life. The type of fishing we do isn't bad because we do daily fishing. In other words, we leave in the morning, and we come back in the afternoon. But there are fishermen that go out – not much in these ports, but in Gloucester and all those places, in New Bedford, they'd go out, and they go out for weeks. So, you're on a boat for weeks, and you…

NS: You do not see your family.

GS: So, you're eating and you're rocking and rolling. Of course, the boats, they're bigger, but you just do not go out and say, "Oh, we have got to go back in." When they go out, they stay out until they get a boatload. They call it making a trip. They make a trip. So, that is a harder life. If you read some of the stories of these people up there in Alaska and in the northwest, they lose so many boats and lives. Even the insurance companies don't want to insure them anymore. But they get into tremendous seas and gale winds and then they ice up and then they ice up and they capsize. So, it is tough. It is a tough, tough life. But our fishing is not too bad because it go out in the morning, and if it gets nasty, you come in. But if you have got a boat where you're off hundreds of miles, you figure out you might as well just stay there and see if you can outrun the storm.

NS: How many children do you have?

GS: We have two.

NS: Are they into working in fishing or…

GS: Oh, he loves fishing, yes. He goes trout fishing, stuff like that. But he does love fishing.

NS: Is that how he makes his living?

GS: No. He lives near Monticello where the trout streams are.

NS: I think that is about it. Tape is almost done.

[end of transcript]