

Jeanne Doremus: I am Jeanne Doremus. I am on the board of the Bayshore Discovery Project. Today, we are going to interview Myrtle Gordonier.

Myrtle Gordonier: Gordonier.

JD: Gordonier. I said it wrong. Gordonier – who has a historical association with the *Cashier*. With me today is (Bob Canula?), social studies teacher. He has been very active in educating high school students about the geography of the area, and also Bert Doremus, who is my husband and also active in the Bayshore Discovery Project. So, I am going to start off with asking you a little bit about your life and where you were brought up and how you became associated with the *Cashier*.

MG: Go settle down. I was born in Newport, New Jersey on the Landon Road in 1917. There was eleven of us children. After I became around eleven or twelve years old, I went to Dividing Creek School, Newport School, and Cedarville, all three of them, and graduated out of the school in eighth grade and never did go to high school. Well, when I became sixteen, I began to look at the boys. They looked at me. I eventually wound up getting one. His name was young Charlie Johnson Junior. Now his father owned the *Cashier*. I was only sixteen at that time. He owned the *Cashier*. He had brought it up out of Ocean City, Maryland into New Jersey. When he came up here, as far as I understood, he was a single person. But he married a woman out of Brixton named Gertrude Shaw. They had the one son which was the one I married, and she had died at childbirth. Well, after a few years, he had money for oystering, and going backwards and forth from Maryland, hired the Colored people that he knew having lived down there. He'd bring them up here and use them for the spring season. That was for oystering and what they called the season of the seeds. They'd go catch him up to Delaware Bay and take them down in the coal and plant them on their grounds that they rented off of the state. Now they had to stay on the ground three years before they were allowed to take them back up again and take them to market. Well, he owned this *Cashier*. He'd go get these Colored people and bring them up and have them work the boat for him. They stayed on the boat. You had to feed them. You had to take care of all their washings and everything. They stayed right there. Then when the two months were up, you took them back where you got them from, back down to Maryland. For some reason, they thought that it was a boat that was running slaves up the shoreline. But it never did. He was a man that took them back where he got them from, the Colored people. Yes, he had that boat for, I'd say at least seven or eight years before he lost it. Having borrowed a bunch of money, he couldn't able to pay. The oyster season wasn't producing as good as they had thought it would be. So, he lost the boat. The bank closed off and took the boat and took their home and took over the whole works that he had. That's how the state got ahold of the boat, was through foreclosure. Now, after they foreclosed it, quite a few different people, I think, owned that boat. But I couldn't tell you who they were for I didn't keep up with it. I was too young of a person to realize any valuation anyhow.

JD: Now when he had it, do you remember what shape it was in?

MG: Well, it was in very good shape. It had a motor in it. It also had sails in it. It had a mast in it. Later on in life, they took the mast out, put the regular diesel in. It had a great big, large

diesel that run the boat. But when it first was operating, it was with sail, which was quite the thing those days. That's been at least seventy years ago.

JD: Did he alter it at all, do you know?

MG: No, he didn't do any alterations that I know of, but they did after the bank took it over.

Male Speaker: That's when they took the sail.

MG: Then I understand that that is when they also put – what the hell do I want to say?

JD: That is all right. That is okay.

MG: After they took it over, they decided that they would put the motor in it. It was run then later, by motor. At that time, there was still a bunch of boats, about 500 of them, down to Bivalve that would go out every Sunday afternoon to go up the bay. This is bay season we're talking about. They would go up en masse with their sails and everything, and go up and park up at the Money Island. That's down off of Newport. When they parked up there at Money Island, they had to stay there a whole month. But on the weekends, they'd bring them down, load the boat with their groceries and stuff again, and go back up there again. It was a nice sight to see, leaving Bivalve, going out the Marsh River.

JD: Now, did you not tell me that he docked it at the site of Frank Wheaton's place?

MG: When he owned that boat, it was always docked in Marshalltown, in the river down there where Wheaton has now built a new home. That's where the boat was kept all the time. It was just a creek. It didn't have docks and stuff. It was just a creek where they put their boats and leave them for the weekend and stuff like that.

JD: Do you have any special memories? Did you take any outings on the boat yourself?

MG: Well, I went on it quite a few different times for boat trips and stuff when he did, but nothing special. No. We didn't do anything big there as I know of.

JD: Before your husband, did you know of any history of the *Cashier* before then?

MG: As far as I understood, it was built down in Ocean City, Maryland, back in 1858. That was when it was originally supposed to have been built.

JD: Did you have any children?

MG: I have one daughter. She lives over here in the high-rise. She's eighty-six years old, lives in the high-rise over here in Millville.

JD: Your daughter is eighty-six?

MG: I'm eighty-seven, so she's sixty-four.

JD: That sounds a little better. You know that? [laughter]

MG: She's sixty-four.

JD: Are there any pictures or artifacts?

MG: I used to have a lot of them. But I moved around so much, changed husband till three times. So, I don't know what went with them. I had them, but I don't know where they're at.

JD: Do you know anybody that we could contact for additional information?

MG: Well, there's a daughter. But she's been married. I think she lost her husband. She's a Michelle, Mitchell or something, like that's her name, out on the other side of Brixton. I think she's lost her husband now. But her name was Peaches. Then there was a son named Earl. He's somewhere over here on the other side of Vineland, but I ain't seen him for years. So, I wouldn't have no idea where he's at. But that was the two children that old man Charlie Johnson's, him and his second wife, had.

JD: I am a little confused because I thought he was your husband.

MG: Who?

JD: Mr. Johnson.

MG: Well, he was, his son. I married his son who has the same name.

JD: I am sorry.

MG: They both have the same name. Only I was married to the Junior. The old man was – it was about 40 years, big difference between us in age, because he had his first wife. He'd come up from Maryland. He married her. It was quite a difference in age.

JD: Anything else? I am going to ask Bob in a minute if he has any questions. But anything you want to add about the *Cashier*?

MG: None, because after I married him, we was married about 10 years, and him and I split up. What took place after that I couldn't really say.

JD: Let me pass this over to Bob.

Bob Canula: Where did you get your groceries from? Where did you get your food from at the time?

MG: You went to the grocery store. You had a slip of paper that the government allowed you to put the groceries on the boat. That was like having a grocery store. Only it was in Brixton that they bought the stuff. Just before you go over, let's see now the street, Laurel Street where the Criterion Theater is, whatever that street is in Brixton. On that end of the street was a great big grocery store that you took your slip there. They give you all the stuff you took on the boat. It was around 250 to \$300 a week.

BC: Quite a big back then. That was quite a bit of money back then.

MG: Because you fed them everything, whatever it was. You fed the on the boat.

BC: Did you ever go to Millville at all, or Vineland? How big were Millville and Vineland in this time period?

MG: No, I can't say I have.

BD: In that time period, you never went to Millville or Vineland?

MG: No. Vineland wasn't involved in it anyhow. It's just that the boy out of his second marriage, the boy moved over here somewhere in Vineland. He got up with a woman named Harietta. Other than that, that's all I know about them. He could even be dead today. I don't know. But Beatrice did lose her husband. She lived the other side of Brixton, out towards Deerfield area.

BC: What type of house did you live in at the time?

MG: What type of house did he live in?

BC: Describe your house for me. Your house.

MG: The house is still standing there. They just recovered it. When you're starting in Forest View, it's a two-story house. It's about seven or eight rooms. They just recovered the thing about a mile out of Newport, heading towards Forest View.

BC: Did it have plumbing and electricity?

MG: Oh, yes. You had all that stuff, went along with the house. It had a front porch on it. Like I said, now, somebody's bought the place and redone the house all over. It's a beautiful home down there on Forest View Road. I couldn't tell you who's got it, but I know they've just done it over.

JD: I am going to stop this for a minute.

MG: I'm sorry. I was born nineteen-nine.

MS: He would have been born in Forest View?

MG: He was born in Newport.

MS: Newport. You were married at age sixteen. So, that would have been 1933?

MG: Something like that. I mean, I was married up in Cedarville, in a church, believe it or not.

JD: No, I believe it. [laughter]

MS: Junior would have lost the boat about ten years later, something like that?

MG: He seriously never owned it. His father owned it. They undertook to take partnership into it. But before they got around to making everything legal, the bank took over.

MS: That would have been what year when you had been married about?

MG: I've been married about two or three years.

MS: So, it would have been around 1935, is when the bank took over.

MG: Something like that.

MS: Well, that is right in the middle of the depression. So, that is what it was.

MG: It was Depression year.

MS: It was tough times.

MG: Yes, because I lived in Forest View Road, lived in a two-room house, a cell, him and I. Well, it was just two rooms. That was it.

MS: So, the slips that you took to get food must have been some sort of government –

MG: It was a government thing during the Depression that they give you a slip, like a cheque. You went to the store. That store covered everything that was on that thing and then sent it back in through them. That's how you fed your customer on the boat. Like I said, that grocery store ain't there no more in Brixton.

MS: Yes. Would have been like a big ship, *Chandler* I guess.

MG: Where the Criterion Theater is, you're heading down towards the end of the town, down that way. It's going to go down to Brandywine Creek or Newport or somewhere. When you got to the street height, you had that way to go back over the bridge. Or you went this way to going down towards Brandywine Creek or go to Millville. If you took the little side road that went around there where the Smith and Richards lumberyard is, in that corner was where that store was. Right now, I think it's a parking lot. I ain't sure, but I believe it's a parking lot. That used to be the grocery store, especially the meat where you can go your meats and stuff to take for

food. They did that every weekend, load stuff up for their groceries. Then when they went off the bay out of Millville, they stayed there the whole week, took their oysters, took them down in the cove, throw them off, and they had to lay there for three years for it to grow up. Because the oysters is about that big. When you get an oyster to eat, it's about the size of your hand. It takes around three years for it to develop to that size. That's where they go back in three years' time and pick them up, out of the cove, and take them to market. At that time, oysters were pretty expensive. But then they had a train that went into Bonville at the time, where the docks and the wharves are. This train was in there. That was where they put the stuff on the train. The train would take it to the city or the marketplace. You didn't have trucks pick them up at that time.

JD: Times have sure changed, have they not?

MG: Haven't they though? Yes, I don't know what else you want know.

BC: Were there any other industries in the area, other than oysters?

MG: Just foreman and lot of people have done a lot of tonging.

BC: What is tonging?

MG: Tonging is also catching oysters.

BC: But everything was primarily oyster. There was not any like grass or farmers?

MG: Not down there.

BC: How about Marsh Bay, did they cut that?

MG: They gathered hay down in the area and sold that. My dad was one of them hay outfits. Then they used to ship everything that they got on the train, put it on the train and ship it out. So, it went right to the dock.

MS: You paid to keep the ice from melting.

BC: Yes, for strawberries to stop stand from getting on strawberries.

MG: At one time, they had a restaurant down there, also had a hotel down there, besides all these stocks and stuff. They had a little building down on the lower end of the town that they had a speakeasy like thing.

BC: Speakeasy.

MG: Yes, at the lower end.

BC: Did you ever go to any speakeasies?

MG: Oh, I've been to a lot my think.

BC: Oh, did you have a good time?

MG: Yes. I had my share too.

BC: Did you have to give a secret word at the door?

MG: Not necessarily. If you knew Junior, that was it.

BC: Oh, if they knew you, you got in.

MG: Yes.

BC: You drank bathtub...

MG: That's on the same thing for excuse. They knew Junior got in.

BC: Bathtub Gin?

MG: Yes, I've had just about everything you can think of. Even east down in North Carolina, I've had to share.

BC: You have had to share. All right. In your opinion, in your years that you have been around, thinking back, what has impressed you the most about the change in science? Where have we come the furthest do you think? Medicine, technology, computers, science?

MG: You really want to know?

BC: Yes.

MG: Every ten years, I have to change husbands

BC: Every ten, you change husbands?

MG: Every ten years, I'd change husbands. When I was about ten years old, I went to Brixton with my mom. At that time, the train was still running in Brixton, had a big station there. In Brixton, just came into the streetlight and across the street now is the middle area is the license agency and stuff. That very big building there. Well, that had little small houses along there. People lived there. Well, my mom took me down. Mother wanted to get her fortune told, believe it or not. This woman read her cards. Then she turned around and looked at me. She said, "That man you're acquainted with," said, "you married, but you won't ever stay with him." I said, "I just kind of looked at it." She said, "No, every ten years, you'll change husbands anyhow." They did if it didn't.

BC: So, you have had four husbands?

MG: Yes, and all of them are dead.

BC: Each one of them passed away?

MG: Yes. One of them died of alcohol, drugged himself to death. Another one hung himself. Another one just recently died of cancer. He had cancer in his face. It took his jaw bone, took half his tongue and the roof of his mouth. He actually starved to death because he couldn't even swallow water. He couldn't talk to you. He couldn't swallow water. He couldn't do a day going thing. He died from out of, but the cancer was the cause of it. Just before he died, they had tried to put a thing in his NAPL going to feed him through that. He didn't last two weeks. Now that's what happened to my last husband.

JD: Oh, boy. Not nice.

BC: That is an awful way to go.

JD: That is an awful way to die.

MG: My first husband, he also died of cancer. It was a juncture on each person. He died of cancer too. He had cancer in his hands and stuff. From oystering in the salt water and stuff caused him to have cancerous things set up on his hands and neglect of taking care of the stuff eventually took him up. That's what happened there. Ben Loser, he drank himself to death. He went to drink rubbing alcohol.

BC: Rubbing alcohol?

MG: Rubbing alcohol. Run through a sponge and then drink it because he's dead. Sure.

BC: What do you think about computers today?

MG: Computers are too confusing. I don't know.

BC: They are too confusing?

MG: Confusing to me. I don't know nothing about them.

BC: You have never tried them?

MG: Never have. Don't own one.

BC: How about television? You like television?

MG: Oh, I've got television. Yes, but don't look at it too much. Too much messing around on the television. Don't matter the thing.

BC: What do you enjoy doing the most?

MG: What do I enjoy it right now? It'd be a good drink if I could get it.

BC: A good drink if you could get it. [laughter]

MG: Oh, yes. Good drink if I can get it.

JD: Let me see if anything about that.

BC: Well, in fact, going back to the boat, it had two masts. Do you remember seeing it had two masts?

MG: Yes, it had two masts. Like I say, I had the pictures of it, but I don't know whatever went with them.

BC: Do you remember how many men were worked the boat?

MG: He had five. I think it was a crew, the seven crew besides himself. It's like it took five besides himself.

JD: These were African American, you said? These were Black?

MG: The ones from Maryland were Black people. The other ones from up here was White. He went down there and got them because he knew them. They needed livelihood too. Because he got them and brought them up there, they thought he was a running slave ship that it never was. They were just help he used on the boat.

BC: The original Charlie Johnson Senior came from down there.

MG: Came from down there original.

BC: Ocean City, Maryland, and that...

MG: In that area.

JD: Do you know where he got the boat?

MG: No, I don't. I just know it came down that way. They always said that it was a bill.

BC: 1858.

JD: Did you know that the Bayshore Discovery Project is restoring it now?

MG: Oh, yes. I also heard that it had been cut off about 5 or 7 feet off the back end of it. Something go wrong and cut it short, the boat.

JD: Well, have we done it all? Do you have anything more, Bob, that you can think of?

MG: They also got me to go down to the Newport schoolhouse. They had some tapes and a bunch of kids there from school. They made up a whole paraphernalia of stuff they wanted to know. I don't know what they've done with it. But they had me come down there and do it.

JD: This was at Newport School?

MG: Yes, in the Newport School.

JD: How long ago was that?

MG: It was about a year ago.

JD: Did they ask you questions about the *Cashier* then?

MG: Oh, yes. That's why I was there. They had me answer some of the questions. They had some of the students now. I don't know whether it was just kids that went to school or whether it was the ones that were on that there in *Merriweather*, the other boat there that they used for a lot of the...

JD: Well, maybe we can get down there and ask who the teacher was and get some more information.

MG: Yes, because that's where it's from. It was a shorter one down there. I did have a telephone number. But I don't know what I've done with it.

BC: Did you ever get involved directly with the oysters, like shucking oysters?

MG: Oh, I've opened them many one.

BC: You have opened many oysters? Deep shuck.

MG: We even run our own store. We went down to Forest View. This is a later husband now. We opened up an oyster shucking house in Forest View.

BC: Oyster shucking house in Forest View?

MG: Yes, and opened our own and shipped them and sold them ourselves. I used to sell them \$2.75 a pint already shucked and ready down in Forest View itself.

BC: I assume you ate a lot of oysters?

MG: Oh, hell, I've eaten my share. Made a good many toys.

BC: All different ways. Did all different ways.

MG: All kinds of ways. Fried oyster is good. They're called Forest View fries.

JD: Forest View fries, I will remember that one.

MG: Hellen Springfield and Frank, of course Frank died down, but her and Frank used to run up a speakeasy down Forest View. They always served Forest View fries on the side.

JD: That is yummy actually.

MG: That's when Hunter Mark was down there, that great big house that Jimmy calls – I got to see his right name. Tim? I can't think of the name Tim the time.

BC: Oh, well I can't either.

MG: That sounds like it. Jim Johnson Belle. Not in his name either. Jim Higby. Well, Jim is paralyzed. He had a stroke and paralyzed. He runs around in the seat. Somebody has to push him and stuff like that. He's still alive down there in Forest View. He has got three sons. He had a daughter. Let's see what else. Mid was the wife. She died I think, Mid Higby. They lived in the Hunter Mark house for a long time. Now the Hunter Mark house is when you get into Forest View over the bridge and go all the way down the end of the road. If you turn this away and get down, the first road on this side just goes back into Marsh at that time, way back into Marsh. If you turn this way, you went down Pennsylvania Avenue. It's the street I live on. That great big enormous house on your left was the Hunter Mark home. They were quite thin, quite familiar down there. The only thing is she could drive an automobile, but she couldn't back one up. If she had a license. No. She could drive down the road, but she couldn't back it up.

BC: She just kept going forward with it.

MG: It just kept right on going.

BC: What did you do for entertainment? Did you have dances? Did you have lunch?

MG: The speakeasys, you'd have a dance occasionally. You'd go to each other's houses and do a little drinking and stuff like that, socializing.

BC: So, it was basically just...

MG: Just family affair like that. You didn't really know them, but you went to their hats.

BC: When was the first time you saw a motion picture?

MG: I was about nine years old.

BC: Where did you see it?

MG: I saw it in Brixton.

BC: In Brixton?

MG: In Brixton. I think it was the Stanley Theater. Third time that I saw it.

BC: Do you remember the movie?

MG: Yes and no. It was a black and white movie.

BC: Was it a silent movie?

MG: It was a silent movie. Now, I'm trying to think what the subject was. It's been so long ago. It's been a long time.

BC: But they usually had dances and things like that with a lot of socializing.

MG: Just socializing what it meant too.

BC: You said Money Island. The boats stay out overnight sometimes, right?

MG: They stayed up for the whole week.

BC: Where did they store all the oysters?

MG: On the boat.

BC: Right on the boat?

MG: Right on the boat. Sometimes those boats would hold 2,000 or 3,000 bushels. Then when they got their load, usually, it was around 4:00 or 5:00p.m. They'd go down to the cove late in the afternoon. They take the trip down to the cove and shovel them all off.

BC: They would have to be shoveled off?

MG: They had to shovel them off on their ground. Then the grounds they rented off of the state, 50 cents an acre. That's what you rented the ground for. You never owned it. You rented it. Then when come time about three years later, you went back and picked them back up again. That's what they called picking them up.

BC: Shells?

MG: No, the oyster, the oyster with the shell and all on it. You went down there and got them and took them to market.

BC: Then the boats would drop off the oysters after they gathered them to the shop?

MG: They gathered them off the bay off Money Island and took them away down in the cove.

BC: That is where the shuckers were?

MG: That's where they had to go get the oyster and bring it back to Bivalve to shuck it.

BC: To shuck it, but they shucked the oysters in Bivalve.

MG: Yes. There they still have them doing it down there.

JD: They are still doing it.

MG: They still got it down there yet. John Newcomb put everything down there at that time, old man John Newcomb. He owned it.

JD: Was that Newcomb's market? Is that the same family?

MG: The whole works? There were two or three brothers of it. One of them was named Daniel. One of them was named Joe. I don't know what the other one. But one of them had the grocery store. But Joe Milham was fully involved in oysters. My uncle wanted some money one time off of him. He was a Democrat. So, Joe says to him, "If you want some money off of me, you're going have to change your politics.

JD: Oh, my gosh [laughter].

MG: So, he did. He changed. Tom King was his name. He changed himself over to Republicans so he could borrow the money off Joe.

JD: Oh, my gosh. That is an interesting way of buying a vote, is it not? [laughter]

MG: Yes. I'm not knowing about that. Tom King had been married twice. His first marriage, his wife died in childbirth. Then when he was about forty-five years old, he married my aunt, which was Julia Bateman was her proper name. We always called her Aunt Julie. When his first wife died, he was all hunting in the woods. He told us himself. While he was out there hunting around, a cat came up to him and just kept following him all over in the woods, that is scrawling on and crying all over the woods. He went home. His wife had died. He always felt that that was the cause of it. Anyhow, he told it that way too, that he always felt that was the cause of his wife.

MS: What did they do with all the shells after they shoved the oysters? What did they do with the shells?

MG: Big boils them down there today. Well, they grind them off and make shells to feed chickens. If they treat them to chickens, the chicken farm.

MS: That hardens the egg of the chicken. Just calcium.

MG: No, it gives it a hard shell. The chicken would eat these little pieces of shell. It would cause them to have a harder shell on the egg. Now that's what it was used for. Then a lot of it

was put on oyster. It was made into a fertilizer effect and put on grounds, used like a fertilizer put out on your ground. Then you'd plant things and stuff on it.

MS: You remember the horseshoe crab season?

MG: Oh, yes. I've done a lot of that too, messing around with them.

BC: Messing around with the horseshoe crabs. Were you afraid of them when you were very young?

MG: No. You wore rubber gloves. They bit the gloves instead of you.

BC: The little tongs in the front. But they are scary. Are they the first time you see them?

MG: They do when you first look around.

BC: Yes, I know. I was terrified of them the first time I saw them. I did not know what they were.

MG: Yes, I made a good many of them too. Also picked them out.

MS: For bait?

MG: No to eat.

JD: Horseshoe crabs?[inaudible]

MG: Here comes my neighbor.

JD: So, you know what I did? I came here without a pen. I left it in the car. Thanks. Where did you get married?

MG: Cedarville. Me and my husband married at Cedarville was in church north end ten. He's got it all on that.

JD: So, anything that you would have thought of since you guys talked? Is there anything you missed?

MG: We did all your questions. Plus, prohibition is speakeasy. I don't think we missed any issue.

BC: You thought you guys were going to bring her a high ball instead of ice cream. Very big disappointment.

MG: The one thing she wanted. You didn't bring it.

BC: When you say you ran away, and they got my eyes on the other side of the place.

MG: Yes, I ran away from the home. But I didn't marry down there. I came back. They brought me back then that night in Cedarville. I ran away from the home when I was sixteen.

BC: [inaudible]

MG: [inaudible]. Went down to Maryland. Please pick me up because I'm in jail. I stayed in jail, I think three days until Pop got down there and brought me back. So, then Lynn Johnson, he come up to my dad. He said, "Pearl, you better think of it twice before you have them locked up. They're young. You're getting older. You might need them before you die." So, they didn't push no charges. They dropped it.

JD: So, your husband's father went and spoke to your father on his behalf?

MG: He told him, "You're not going to lock me."

JD: How about that?

MG: I was only sixteen after all. Could have been in prison for him.

JD: How old was he?

Female Speaker: Tell Megan about the *Cashier*, people calling it a slave ship.

MG: Well, they did. The people called those slave ships.

FS: I mean, explain to her about that.

MG: Well, I said it wasn't a slave ship. He hired the men from Maryland to come up here and work on the oyster boat. Because that's what the boat was used for, oysters. At that time, it was sail, had sail on it. When they come up here, they would stay the whole time that they were up here for two months, they stayed on that boat. They ate, slept, and everything else on the boat, feed them all right there. When the end of the season was done, which was the last day of June – May and June was oyster season – then my husband and his father would get them back on the boat and take them back down to Maryland where he got them from. But in the meantime, they thought it was a slave ship. But it wasn't. They were to hire them to come up here and work. That's been a good while ago too. Well, what else you want to know?

JD: Well, gosh, I guess, I wrote up some of the questions. Did you hear anything about – maybe you already answered this – whoever had the boat before your husband's father?

MG: I have no idea. He was a young man when I know he had it.

JD: So, you do not know anything about what it did before or who owned it?

MG: I have no idea.

JD: Were you and your husband both from Cedarville?

MG: No, he was from Newport. We married in Cedarville, but we're from Newport. Newport Landing was where I was born. Charlie was born on the Forest View Road. He was an only child.

MS: [inaudible]

JD: That was the last that John had it.

FS: Was it 1935 that the elder Mr. Johnson had to give up the boat?

MG: He gave up the boat because the bank foreclosed. He owed \$50,000. He didn't have the money to pay it. So, they foreclosed and took his house, took the boat, took his – Cory had took the [inaudible]. So, then he went over to Morristown to live, the old man, Johnson. He stayed over there with a woman called Hadie Bradford. Rented him a room. He stayed over there. Then he went operating boats for men that would hire him to be captain of their boats. That was the rest of his life. That's what it did. That's old man Charlie Johnson Senior.

MS: Are you sure it was 50,000?

FS: It might've been 5,000.

MS: Five thousand or 50,000.

MG: Fifty-thousand.

MS: Fifty- thousand he owed back them.

MG: That's how come he lost the boat. At that time, oysters was pretty big.

MS: It was business with lot of money.

JD: Yes, they were lots of money.

MS: Might had bought his own house beside the boat.

MG: They did. They took the whole work.

MS: Took his house too. Did he have a house too?

MG: Yes. I just said it. That house they just remodeled on Forest View Road. Well, that was his. That's where he lived when I married his kid's son.

MS: That was a lot of money back then.

MG: Oh, yes. Like I say, his first wife died in childbirth when she gave birth to young Charlie. Then he remarried a woman they called Beatrice. She had two children with him, Earl, and a young Beatrice. Both of those kids, as far as I know, are still living. One lives on the other side of Vineland. The other one lives over in the [inaudible] area, beach and stuff. But I couldn't begin to tell you their life because I don't know nothing about it.

JD: So, it would be Earl Johnson. Oh, I know Earl Johnson.

MG: Earl Johnson was his son.

JD: He lives out outside of Vineland, did you say?

MG: He lives somewhere out there in the Vineland area. He was courting around with a woman called Henrietta. Whether he married her or not, I don't know.

JD: You have all that.

MS: The daughter...

JD: Beatrice. But that one that is not Charlie's daughter. That is his sister.

MG: The daughter Beatrice is the old man's Charlie Johnson's daughter.

JD: So, it is Charlie Johnson's half-sister.

MG: So, it ain't her at all.

MS: Was she single, or did she get married?

MG: She just got married, but she lives somewhere out on the other side of Vineland, Brixton.

MS: You know her married name?

MG: Mitchell, I think it is. I'm not sure, but I think it's Mitchell. I heard she's lost her husband too. He died. Like I say, far as for Earl, I don't know what happened to him. He just was courting that woman called Henrietta. That's all I know.

JD: So, Earl Johnson would be another son of Charlie Johnson Senior who had the boat. So, did he...

MG: He [inaudible] to my husband.

JD: Did he ever work on the boat, Earl?

MG: No. There was kids. Just children going to school.

JD: Most of their crew came from Maryland you say.

MG: The three Colored people come from Maryland. The other ones come out of Bivalve. It took around five for a crew.

JD: Were the others White? The ones from Bivalve?

MG: The ones from Bivalve were White. Yes. The ones from Maryland was Colored people.

JD: Did they have a cook on board?

MG: Yes. One of them has to be a cook.

JD: Was that usually one of the ones from Maryland or the ones from Bivalve?

MG: I have no idea. I just know they got a cook. My dad worked as a cook on one.

JD: Did he?

MG: Yes, old man Luther.

JD: What is his name?

MG: Luther Weldon. L-U-T-H-E-R. Luther Weldon. That's also Senior. He worked as a cook on one.

JD: Myrtle, Could you please pronounce your last name again?

MG: Now?

JD: Now?

MG: Gordonier. G-O-R-D-O-N-I-E-R. French, Gordonier.

JD: Your maiden name was Weldon?

MG: Old man Luther Weldon was my father.

JD: Lots of Weldon around the water still.

MG: Yes, well, half of them relative to me. Old man, Frank Weldon [inaudible] dad's brother. They had fourteen young'uns.

JD: Wow. No wonder [inaudible] [laughter].

MG: Lot of playing around.

MS: You were one of eleven children, is that right?

MG: There were eleven children in our family. There's only two of us left.

MS: What number were you?

MG: Myrtle, Margaret Edmond. I was fourth one. The first one was also named Myrtle.

JD: Two Myrtles?

MG: Two Myrtles in the family because the first one died, which was my sister. Then when my time came along, grandpa made – he said he wanted a Myrtle in the family. So, he made me Myrtle again. I also have an aunt named Myrtle live in Philadelphia.

JD: How about that?

MG: 1990 years. Two, three Myrtles sitting in here. [inaudible] Is that about it?

JD: That is about it. You have done beautifully.

[applause]

[end of transcript]