

John Kochiss: Today is April the 16th, 1977. I am at the home of Mr. John Tucker and his sister, miss...

John Tucker: Mildred.

JK: Mildred Tucker. We are at...

JT: 75...

JK: 75.

JT: Atlantic Avenue.

JK: Is it West Sayville?

Mildred Tucker: West Sayville.

JK: West Sayville in New York, yes. Now, let us start right from the beginning. Where were you born, and could you tell what year?

JT: I was born right here on August the 5th, 1898.

JK: Oh, boy. You were born...

JT: I worked on the bay all my life in oyster business and clam business.

JK: You are a bayman?

JT: Yes.

JK: As long as you are here. Did I understand you are eighty-something?

JT: Eighty-one.

MT: Eighty-one.

JK: Eighty-one. What year was that?

MT: Yes, 1896.

JK: 1896.

JT: We're all two years apart.

JT: Two years apart. Oh, my God.

MT: We lived here all our life.

JK: How does it feel living in the same house and all of that? Do you get tired of it? Or do you get so that you love it so much that you would never leave?

MT: I would never leave.

JT: There were three sisters married. The oldest sister is married, but the rest of us all stayed single. We all got along. We all lived here all our life.

JK: Well, I am single, and I have a twin brother. We are both single, in fact. I am enjoying it. My brother and I get along.

JT: Yes, me too. I never had any [inaudible] about getting married. Well, I am happy now, and I was happy years back.

MT: We always got along together, and we're very happy.

JT: There were four of us who lived here.

JK: That is good.

JT: They passed away.

JK: Oh, there were six in the family then? Or four all together?

JT: There were six girls and four boys, wasn't it?

MT: Yes.

JK: How many of the boys are living?

JT: Just me.

JK: Were the others baymen?

JT: There were three girls in Patchogue, married. There's only one there. She's eighty-four.

MT: Yes.

JK: Your brothers, were they baymen, too?

JT: Yes.

MT: Yes.

JT: He was in business with me.

JK: Oh. Now, when you were a boy – or let us go back. Was your father...

JT: My father's name was John, too.

JK: He was a bayman.

MT: He was a bayman.

JT: He could tell you about all those oyster sloops years ago when they used to have these little hand dredges. There was a law that you weren't allowed to dredge if you have any private bays. You weren't allowed to do at the town border. The town of Islip wouldn't let you do it. You just tong your oysters.

JK: Even on your own beds?

JT: Yes. He said one time that he had a piece of ground, and he said it was on a slab. They had a terrific storm, and the oysters all washed off, the nice hard bottom down into the mud. He said the oysters were that deep down. It had washed down. He says, "I wasn't allowed to put them dredges in there because [inaudible] put them back on there." He says, "I wasn't allowed to do it." I said, "Why didn't tong them? You got oyster tongs." He says, "I never thought of it." [laughter] [inaudible]

JK: Now, he leased his own land?

JT: Yes. I did, too. Well, I had about a hundred acres that I leased from the town.

JK: Now, you are not supposed to use dredges on that?

JT: It was later on they laid the law that you could do it.

JK: Now, at that time, where did you use the dredges?

JT: Well, we used to have these little sailing sloops. It was a sail.

JK: Oh, I see.

JT: There was no power then.

JK: But you could use the dredge on a sailboat?

JT: Yes. Yes, afterwards [inaudible].

JK: Oh, afterwards?

JT: Yes. They have to – makes you go do it after a while.

JK: Now, when you say after a while, what years?

JT: I wouldn't know. I wouldn't know exactly because that was in his town.

JK: Oh, in his town?

JT: That was before mine. I never did any of that.

JK: So, what about the boats that – you told me that he sailed the *Still*?

JT: Yes. That was the large sloop that Rudolph, the oyster dealer. That's what he's talking about that Rudolph, his grandfather. Well, he had this large sloop. He used to sail that from here, with oysters and the clams. He'd take it to Fulton Market. That was before the trucks arrived. Then they used to go back with a load of coal or feed or whatever, flour in barrels. He used to sail that boat.

JK: What was the full name of that boat?

JT: *JH Still*.

JK: Oh, the JH.

JT: Yes. That's the name of some man in Fulton Market now. Yes, that must be the son that owns that now.

JK: In fact, I met him.

JT: I used to ship oysters to him. Boy, he was some good customer.

JK: When you say he went to the food market, you meant he went to those oyster barges?

JT: Yes, they did. They have barges there then.

JK: Did you ever go in them by any chance?

JT: No, no. I was too young then.

JK: Do you remember the *Still*?

JT: Well, she was quite a big boat. She must have been close to a hundred feet long, I imagine. No power line. We used to go through the inlet [inaudible]. We had to just go out on certain tides. But now, they have these diesel engines, they go right on out. They don't stop or anything.

JK: How long did it take for a round trip? Do you know?

JT: Boy, I wouldn't know. A week, I guess.

JK: A week?

JT: Yes. The time they unload it and the time they put the other stuff back.

JK: Did that boat do nothing but ship goods, or did it also tong and dredger?

JT: I don't know how they disposed of the things, but I suppose certain people want to get me this or get me that say. Then he had a pole here that he used to bring a pole.

JK: It was not really an oyster sloop then?

JT: Well, he used it for oysters. He used to run oysters in that. He'd go to Connecticut and pick up oysters with it.

MT: It was really an oyster sloop, but he did this other on the side.

JT: Well, he did that before he run the oyster seed.

JK: Now, did he dredge from that or tong from that?

JT: No, no. That was too big.

JK: Oh, that is what I meant. He did not gather any oysters from that?

JT: Just crates. Just crates.

JK: Crating?

JT: Yes. Yes, he was too big for anything like that in the bay here.

JK: Were there any other boats like that in the bay that shipped like that?

JT: Oh, yes. There was a man across the Merrick Road. He had a beautiful sloop, nicer than the Still.

JK: Do you remember the name of that?

JT: I know the name, but I can't think of it.

JK: Oh, the boat?

JT: Yes. His name was [inaudible]. Then there used to be quite a lot of coastal schooners in

Bayport and Patchogue. There's two or three from Bay Shore. They used to all run and carry the oyster seeds from Connecticut.

JK: If you think the name of that sloop as we are talking...

JT: Yes, I'm trying to remember it. I'll tell you.

JK: Yes, that would be interesting to know.

JT: I used to know it because it was a lovely sloop.

JK: Do you remember a sloop by the name of (*Phoebe Cocklin?*)

JT: I heard that there used to be oyster dealers with that name on Bay Shore.

JK: Your father freighted. He leased some land, and he tonged.

JT: Well, he only had one piece of ground. That was four acres. He never got one in Port. But my brother and I, we started with one piece of ground. It was handicapped because we had oysters on the ground, and we wanted to get oyster seed and transplant and do things. But we never had a ground. I had a fight because these shippers down here didn't want me in it. I used to have to buy all the ground. My people had one, two, three pieces of ground. If you want to sell that ground, if you retire or if you pass away or something? Well, they always promised me. That's where I've got some lovely grounds that way. That's the only way I can get it. They wouldn't sell me any down there. They don't want me in it. But I kept getting it until I had about 100 acres. I had some of the loveliest ground in the bay.

JK: Well, I will get back to that. But going back to your father, how did he gather his oysters from his ground? Did he have a little...

JT: Well, years ago, they used to oyster set. All over the bay, they used to set naturally on all different things. They used to go out. They were allowed to go catch them. Then they resell them to the dealers, or else they'd put them on their oyster ground and let them grow. But when we first started in the oyster business, the whole Patchogue area, that was like a dead area there. That was just a whole mass of oyster seed that sit on natural beds there. My brother says to me, he says, "What do you think if we start the oyster business?" He says, "We can catch all the oysters we want for our days' worth. We'll take them and plant them on the ground and sell them at the port? We got a dollar a bushel. We'd still make good money." We got the [19]38 hurricane, and it broke through down it. It killed every oyster down there. That was the stagnant area. That's what they loved there.

JK: Did your father use that area, too?

JT: No. No, that was Patchogue. The one we had was Islip Town.

JK: How did he gather his oysters? Did he tong them?

JT: Yes, he tonged them.

JK: From what kind of a boat?

JT: Well, it was an old-fashioned sloop like I was telling you.

JK: Oh, so he had his own sloop besides the *Still* that he sailed?

JT: Yes.

JK: What did that sloop look like?

JT: Well, it was a lot like the ones that's over to the museums.

JK: Oh, like the *Modesty*?

JT: Yes, on that time.

JK: It looked like the *Still*, but it was smaller. Is that right?

JT: No. I'd agree with small, but three times smaller.

JK: It had a main seal and a jib?

JT: Yes. Main seal and a jib, yes.

JK: It had a top slot?

JT: No. No, top slot. Just the main seal and jib.

JK: She was maybe 30 feet long?

JT: Thirty, 35.

JK: Thirty-five?

JT: This other boat that was [inaudible] the boat.

JK: Was the boat built lovely?

JT: Along Patchogue. (Hewitt Conklin?)

JK: That is the name of the boat?

JT: No, that was the fellow that built it.

JK: Yes, Hewitt (Conklin?).

JT: Yes.

JK: What was the name of your dad's boat?

JT: *The Nellie Hayes*.

JK: *The Nellie Hayes*.

JT: [laughter]

JK: Do you know how the name got Nellie Hayes?

JT: Well, something with the oyster dealers in Sayville. My uncle takes [inaudible], and they had her built. I always said to my father, I said, "Why does this boat got six large cracks?" The plank joined one another. I said, "Why does this boat got six big seams?" He says, "Well, I'll tell you." He says, "They're all out of green plank because they're seasoned." He says, "Those planks got seasoned."

JK: Was that oak or pine?

JT: It must have been oak, yes. He says, "It wasn't seasoned. It was all green oak." He says, "Of course, they nailed it onto the timber. Then it all slumped. See?" He bought it [inaudible].

MT: Well, why did it get the name *The Nellie Hayes*?

JT: Well, I don't know. [inaudible] must have gave it. [inaudible]

JK: You say your uncle was BB?

JT: BB Brothers.

JK: They had it built.

JT: Yes.

JK: They named it then?

JT: They named it *The Nellie Hayes*. I wonder where the name came from. My father would know, but I wouldn't.

JK: What color was the boat? Do you remember how he painted it?

MT: It was black.

JT: I guess it was black. They painted it different colors. You remember.

MT: It was black. The Nellie Hayes was painted in yellow.

JT: They had all that – the cut [inaudible]? The fancy vine under there that you see in old-fashioned boats. They used to take pride in painting that all yellow.

It was nice.

JK: What were the decks painted? Do you remember, or the cabin or anything?

JT: A lot of the fellows that used to put tar and oil on the deck [inaudible].

MT: It was gray.

JT: But he put paint on it.

MT: Yes, he painted it.

JK: I see.

MT: It was gray.

JK: Was there any trim on the boat besides that yellow?

JT: No. The boat was painted one color, black. Then the rail would have a different color.

JT: What would the rail be?

MT: The cabin was white. The cabin was white.

JT: The cabin was white. The rail would be – mostly, they used to paint that black, a different color from the boat.

JK: Well, if the boat was black, then this would be another color?

JT: They'd have another color. Mostly, when I was on the bay, it had a black rail.

JK: It was the rail and the whole side was all black?

JT: Yes. Like with the rail around where you step on.

JK: These bars would be what color, the mast and the boom?

JT: Well, they used to varnish them sometimes in mostly white. They paint it because I used to paint them.

JK: Like, the boom and the gap would be white?

JT: The masts, we used to have to scrape that twice a year with – take a sickle, a straight piece of sickle. You go up there on a [inaudible]. I used to do it, but he got too old. I used to have to scrape the mast and make it nice and bright. Then we had a mast steam. We used to go and [inaudible] the mast. I used to have to go up afterwards. Then it would all look beautiful, nice and golden.

JK: You also have the hoops going up and down.

JT: Yes. The hoops would slide up and down, too.

JK: Was it tacky throughout the summer?

JT: No.

JK: It dried like varnish.

JT: It dried a couple of days, yes. But still, it would be greasy like [inaudible].

JK: It would be greasy?

JT: Yes. You wouldn't put a lot on it. You just take a little on your hand, and you go up and down the mast with it.

JK: On the bare mast?

JT: Yes.

JK: Bare wood?

JT: Yes. It would be small because you scraped this thing. You wouldn't get no schooners or anything in because it was scraped, and you wouldn't rub too hard with it.

JK: Where the boom meets the mast.

JT: Yes.

JK: How about from there, from the saddle down, is that painted?

JT: Yes. That was scraped too.

JK: All the way down to the deck?

JT: Right down to the – where they used to rest on.

JK: Oh, the saddle?

JT: Yes, the saddle. Then they used to have these – what do you call the things that goes around the mast?

JK: Thin rail. You mean the [inaudible]?

JT: They held the boom to the mast. They used to have a little rope that went around the engine.

JK: Oh, the joist?

JT: Yes, joist. That's it.

JK: What about from the saddle down? Is that painted white?

JT: Yes, it was painted like the deck. It used to have fancy plank in the middle. It was white up to the horn. Then each side would be the oil or whatever different paint you wanted to paint the deck with.

JK: How about the very top of the mast? What would that be?

JT: We paint that white.

JK: White also.

JT: Yes.

JK: So, you would have white up at the top, white down near the bottom, and in between, what's that?

JT: In between, scraped. We'd scrape it nice and bright.

JK: Scraped. The boom...

JT: It was nice. [inaudible] A lot of people would varnish them, make it more fancier. But when they used them every day for rough work, white paint was better for it.

JK: The gap would be the same thing.

JT: Yes. They had a jibboom on the station.

JK: That would be white, too.

JT: That would be white, too.

JK: The bowsprit.

JT: They only paint the end of that white or varnish. The black part would be black, like the rail. You see that would correspond...

JK: Oh, that would go up onto the deck.

JT: That would correspond. You see, if the back part of the horn would be painted black, then that would go right on back at the rail. That would be [inaudible].

JK: Oh, black, the same as [inaudible]?

JT: Yes.

JK: But the very end might be varnish?

JT: Yes. It's either varnish or paint it white. I did a lot of that. I used to paint all of that when I was young. It was nice.

JK: But the bowsprit was not all painted white then?

JT: Oh, yes, it was all painted.

JK: The bowsprit?

JT: Just the end, the end was painted white, maybe about three or four feet on the end.

JK: Then from that...

JT: It would be black.

JK: All black. Oh, did any of them have old varnish and then just the ends of the boom or the gap, white? Did you ever see that?

JT: No, I didn't.

JK: No?

JT: I know some of them used to have all the booms and mast white or varnish. Then most of them would, as I said, they put white paint on it.

JK: You anchored those boats, and you tonged from them?

JT: Yes.

JK: Did you ever see any of them using a dredge?

JT: No, I never did. They used to do it, though. Because I know a lot of these baymen from Patchogue, they used to come from there and get a boatload of oysters onto the bays and used to come here. Rudolph used to buy them, his grandfather.

JK: They used a dredger?

JT: They used to dredge it nice. [inaudible] Because we always wondered, "How do you fellows catch so many oysters?" They wouldn't say, but some of those baymen just load it with oysters. We'd move over a few feet, and the dredge would be full.

JK: What other colors did the boats have besides black?

JT: Well, they used to paint them very dark green. A new boat, if they didn't show the rust spots, they'd paint those white. They look lovely, the white ones. Yes.

JK: Newer boats you said?

JT: Yes. If your boat got kind of old and the nails in the boat would get rusty, it would all run down on the white. So, they painted only the dark green, so it wouldn't show, or black.

JK: Or black. So, we have white hulls. We have green hulls, black. Anything else?

JT: Green, yes. Well, they used to paint them gray, battleship gray.

JK: That is about the colors?

JT: Yes, that's just about what they used.

JK: Do you remember the names of any of these sloops, any others?

JT: Well, there were a lot of them, but I couldn't remember the name. *The Defiance*, she was a lot like the boat we had. My father had the *Nellie Hayes*, and then we bought this other boat. Her name was the (*Jennie Ockers?*). We had that boat for years.

JK: Was she a sail?

JT: Yes, they were all sail.

JK: Oh. Now, you must have bought it from the (Ockers?) family?

JT: Yes, I bought it from Alfred – do you remember Alfred (Ockers?)?

JK: No.

JT: Well, I bought it from him. They all had the old-fashioned sailing sterns on them. We had

all new sterns put on.

JK: What do you mean by sailing sterns?

JT: On the back of the boat. We call them sterns.

JK: But I mean, what do you mean by the old-fashioned?

JT: Shaped it different, took the old one off. Because when you have power, the old stern wasn't good, you see. You'd put a new one.

JK: Oh, I see. This is for power?

JT: You put different types of sterns on it, new style.

JK: Then you took your sail down?

JT: We took the –

JK: The mast down?

JT: – mast and everything off and used [inaudible] power. It was nicer.

JK: What about, by the way, the sails?

JT: We got two sails down in the [inaudible]. If they're any good, I wonder if the museum would like to have it.

JK: Oh, sure, they would.

JT: They would?

JK: Oh, yes.

JT: They've been in there long before my father died.

JK: You are kidding.

MT: Would they be any good?

JT: I always wondered. There might be a couple of holes into them, but they'd be all right [inaudible].

JK: Sure, they could [inaudible].

JT: I always wondered what I should do with it. If I was going to sell them to the shipyard or

whatever, give them to them because he covers boats over with them. But they got used to those. See, that would be lovely.

JK: Now, what boats did they come from, the (*Jennie Ockers?*)?

JT: Yes, (*Jennie Ockers?*), the last boat we had. Because she converted to power, so we took the sails off.

MT: She was a wonderful boat.

JT: Yes, she was.

JK: How big was she?

JT: She was 37 feet. That's the most wonderful boat. I don't know how many people recommended...

MT: A wonderful work boat.

JT: I never saw such a boat you can lay out there in all kinds of gales and wind. [inaudible] I never knew that she could carry so many oysters.

MT: It was a real warm day, and he had a load of oysters he had tonged. My brother [inaudible] was sick. He couldn't hold his head up. He said, "If I could only get someone to help me plant this load of seed." He says, "If I leave until tomorrow with this heat, it will be all warmed." So, I foolishly said, "Well, could I go instead?" I was a greenhorn on the bay. I didn't know anything. I said, "Do you think I could go?" It was blowing. Oh, it was blowing. I said, "You can't get anyone." He couldn't get anyone that will help him. So, Bonnie came in, in desperation, and said to me, "You'll go with me, and I'll tell you what to do. You do what I tell you, and I think we'll make it. We'll make it out on the bay." [laughter] I put paddle boots on, and I still don't have [inaudible]. The boat was loaded down, so low and the bottom was [inaudible].

JT: [inaudible]

JK: So, you would not get wet? Oh, my God.

JT: Yes. I was sorry that I didn't.

MT: If we got outside, he said, "I don't know whether we'd make it or not." But anyway, he said...

JT: He says, "Now, you do what I tell you." I said, "Because I was [inaudible]." She got [inaudible] to see. Well, she was wonderful. She did what I just told her.

MT: I did just what he told me.

JT: She steered. The wind was west, and the tide was running against the wind. You know what that is. [inaudible] I said, "Now, you do what I tell you." I said, "You go up against the wind and go to the certain edge of the lot." I said, "Swing quick. You watch your [inaudible]. Swing quick. Don't do it when there's a big sea." She went down before the wind. All the while, I was emptying these oysters out this bay. Of course, she kept coming up, see.

JK: Now, this was not on the sail.

JT: No, this was power.

JK: Power.

JT: Yes. Oh, I wouldn't want there to sail.

MT: That was fine. [inaudible] it was.

JT: Yes, I was frightened that night, too. I was [inaudible].

JK: When was this roughly?

JT: I beg your pardon?

JK: What years were these? Before the First World War?

JT: About seven years back.

JK: Oh, just seven...

MT: Oh, longer than that.

JT: Is it?

JK: Where is the boat now?

JT: I guess she's all worn out. The last time I heard was she was on the shore, in Bay Shore.

MT: Yes.

JT: When you pull the boat out on the shore, it was the old plank, they all fall apart.

MT: She was a wonderful boat, though.

JT: There are no other boats around anymore. They're all [inaudible].

MT: She [inaudible] so beautifully.

JK: When and where was she built [inaudible]?

JT: She was built in Patchogue, by, like I said, this (Hewitt Cocklin?)/ That was the man's name. There are quite a few boats he built there.

JK: Well, he built the *Hayes*, as well as the (*Jennie Ockers?*)?

JT: Yes, he built the *Hayes*, too. She was a big boat, the *Hayes*. She was bigger than the one I had. She must have been over 40 feet. Yes, those were the good old days. I was happy [inaudible] anything. I went on about my business every day.

MT: Well, you still do.

JT: Well, I'm retired now.

JK: By the way, when and where was your father born, and when did he die?

JT: My father was born in Bay Port. He died – what, it must be twenty years or more, is it?

MT: I wouldn't know about what the year. [inaudible]

JK: Well, that is all right. You say about twenty years ago.

JT: I guess it's about twenty.

JK: Do you remember what year he was born?

JT: I wouldn't know that. I mean, she would have it down in there.

JK: Was his father a bayman?

JT: I don't think so. I don't think he was.

JK: You people are not Dutch, are you?

JT: Well, we're Dutch descent.

JK: Oh, you are.

JT: Yes. My father was born in this country, but my mother was born, I think, coming across on the boat.

JK: Oh, really?

JT: Yes. I get angry when people say, "You're Dutch." I say, "No, I'm an American. I was born

in this country."

JK: [laughter]

JT: But we are really Dutch descent.

JK: Oh, you are.

JT: Yes.

JK: Now, on both sides then, your mother and father are Dutch descent?

JT: Yes, yes.

JK: Were most of the people on the bay – the baymen Dutch?

JT: Yes, from this town here. Otherwise, they used to...

JK: What about...

JT: They used to come all over Bay Port, Blue Point, Patchogue and Bellport and West Bay Shore. That was a different nationality.

JK: What was that?

JT: Well, I wouldn't really know. Irish, I guess.

JK: Really?

JT: Yes, Irish. I knew my cousin in Bay Shore was Irish. I guess it was all different nationalities.

JK: What about Patchogue? Was that Dutch, most of them?

JT: No, no. It wasn't Dutch. There weren't too many baymen.

MT: 1941, he died.

JK: When was he born? Has he given a date when he was born?

MT: Yes, 1857.

JK: Oh, my God.

MT: December 22nd, 1857.

JK: 1857. That was before the Civil War.

JT: Yes.

JK: He was four, five years old when the Civil War was on.

JT: There was no money to be made then. He used to tell me what he – \$2 a day, that's what they used to get in the oyster shops when they went down here to work. He used to make about \$1. He made \$3 high. He used to go around and spot the little beds of oysters and then anchored when he found them, anchor and catch them.

JK: He had a little slip then.

JT: Yes, he had a slip.

JK: That must have been another sloop?

JT: That was a catboat that he had at that time. [inaudible] her name was, wasn't it?

MT: Yes, I think so.

JT: Yes. That was a catboat that he had.

JK: That was when he was very young.

JT: Yes, very young.

MT: Yes.

JT: Yes. I guess that was before I was born.

JK: Now, why would they use a catboat instead of a sloop?

JT: Well, there were mostly old catboats when they built. They reconverted them into a sloop, put a horn in them.

JK: Then why would they convert it into a sloop?

JT: Well, I guess they think it was better. It had bows and more room. A catboat, it just got the mast way up in the bow. The sloop, whether they put a jib on them, they were better all around, I thought.

JK: The [inaudible] made, did it have a cat in it, in the boat?

JT: Oh, yes.

JK: Where [inaudible]?

JT: On the back end. On the back end.

JK: On the back end?

JT: Yes. It used to have hatches, a hole and it used to have hatches over, wooden hatches. Then they used to put whatever different things they wanted down in the holes. The cabin was mostly in the back.

JK: Did [inaudible] or...

JT: Well, I guess, no, I don't think so.

JK: What was the cabin for then, just to...

JT: Just to go down and keep warm in the weather and keep out of the rain and you put flows down in there.

MT: Well, when we were small – the men didn't work in the wintertime.

JT: No.

MT: Everybody was worried.

JT: There were no canals or basins or anything then. They used to pull all the boats out on the shore. Then the first ones that was lucky...

MT: [inaudible]

JT: The first ones that was lucky that would pull their boats out first, they'd be way up inland. The ones that was slow, it was on the last end where the boats would be just clear out of the water. That's [inaudible] because there were so many up ahead.

JK: These were all workboats?

JT: Yes, all workboats. They used to...

MT: The bay used to be frozen over. There was nothing they could do.

JT: They used to have raised pigs –

MT: People didn't provide...

JT: – and chickens. They used to make their own jelly and canned their own preserves. They used to get – maybe raised their potatoes, too, to a lot of people. They have these small

[inaudible].

MT: We have cooked eggs.

JT: They used to have that all down there.

MT: My father was a good provider in regard to that. I mean, we were all growing up...

JT: There was no canned food or anything like that then.

MT: He didn't work all winter. I remember that.

JT: They used to can their old peaches and whatever they want to do and make their own jelly. Then they used to have a bin down there, a wooden bin. You get about twenty or thirty bushels of potatoes and turnips, put them in [inaudible] of sand.

MT: They used to make [inaudible] and tons of pickles.

JT: They used to do that all.

MT: Then they have turnips and...

JK: When you say he, you meant your mother, too?

JT: My father.

MT: Well, [inaudible].

JT: My mother and father helped.

MT: But my father was very good then.

JT: They used to make their own sausage. Oh, what gorgeous sausage. Gee, wasn't that lovely? They used to get a half a cow. Then they used to raised pigs. Then we had to live on that during the winter.

JK: You had them right out here?

JT: Yes.

JK: So, you never suspected with all the houses around here?

JT: No. Well, they're not allowed to do that anymore [inaudible].

JK: Were there houses right next door to you or was it a big empty...

JT: No, it was all houses.

MT: No, there was houses.

JT: They've been all rebuilt and remodeled, these all little buildings.

JK: So, he bayed during the good weather. During the winter, he did not do that?

JT: No.

JK: He would work in the house?

JT: Yes.

JK: But he earned enough to be able to do that?

MT: That's right. We were poor. We didn't [inaudible] the kids are now. I think that was [inaudible] before and moved west, hand-me-downs because I was the last girl. He said, "I was hungry." Well, I can never remember being hungry, but he said he was.

JT: Yes, I was hungry when I was a kid.

JK: Really?

JT: Yes.

[end of track]

Mildred Tucker: He was always doing something.

John Tucker: But he knew how to make – they had those recipes for those old-fashioned sausages. Oh boy, was that sausage.

MT: It was wonderful.

John Kochiss: You said those were good days when you oystered. Now, what about when you were growing up? Did you hear him say the same thing about how oystering was, say in the 1860s or [18]70s? Was it as active then as it was later on, or more, or less active or what?

JT: Well, I think it was more active later on.

JK: Really?

JT: Yes, I think so.

MT: Well, when I was a child, what did they do with all those loads and loads and loads of

oysters that they used to go up with?

JT: Well, they planted those in the spring. They got the seed and planted it in the spring, and then they'd grow. Oysters grow like weeds during the summer months. Now, lately, it's all mostly pollution and they die off. They don't grow anymore. But oysters grew well. It was a gold mine. I can remember one of the shippers down there said to me, he said, "You know, that's a gold mine out there." I said, "Yes, it is." Because they used to have these big schooners come in, loaded with oysters and besides what they bought off the baymen from Port Patchogue. They used to grow like weeds, oysters. Then they used to have the oyster steamers go out. They used to start the 15th of August. That was early. Later years, they started later, but they used to start to catch these and the cooler it got, the more demand. That's where the oysters grow like weed. They'd plant these in the spring. Then catch them in the fall. There was good profit in it.

JK: So, you think it was more activity later on?

JT: Well, they did a lot of it.

MT: They used to ship all over the world because as a child, I would go to Rudolph's. We used to go over there. They used to play hide and seek with us. [laughter] We used to have a wonderful time. Then they'd have two big, large tables. They'd have that full of envelopes and advertising material. We used to go over and put it in the envelopes and lick the envelopes and put the stamps. 8:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m., we did that –

JT: Used to give him a [inaudible].

MT: – to get 10 cents.

JT: I never saw any...

MT: We thought we [laughter] had a gold mine. 10 cents, yes.

JT: I never saw anybody that was so terrible stingy as that boy. He left I don't know –

MT: We worked hard.

JT: – how many millions when he died, but boy, –

JK: Who is this? Rudolph?

JT: – was he terrible.

JK: Rudolph?

MT: We worked hard.

JT: Oh, yes. Cheat the poor baymen. He used to tell my father, "Well, I cheated him six or

seven bushels on a count," when they used to unload. He used to come in with these sloops loaded whole full of oysters that they caught. They used to sell to them \$75 a bushel. He used to sit there with a notebook and a pencil. "Well, we had so many." "No, no, no. You didn't have that many." [inaudible] He used to tell my father I used to laugh how he used to cheat the poor devils on a five or six bushel on a load.

MT: Can you imagine anybody?

JT: Boy, I couldn't. That was terrible.

MT: He had money to – he had a list of mortgages on his kitchen.

JT: Yes. He left millions when he died.

MT: From that plate way down here are the mortgages that he had on people's houses.

JT: He left it to adopted son, all that money. He died, and his wife died. Then he left it to this adopted son that used to run the business.

MT: George.

JT: He came from New York. George, his name was. He died. Then he left it to the two. They made a failure of it. They never run through a dollar. They were no good at all.

MT: They never had any dollar.

JT: Never had no business ability I guess.

MT: No business ability at all.

JT: That's the two that's left today, Harold and Arthur.

MT: I don't know you...

JK: You mean the ones we want to see?

JT: Yes, the ones you want to see. Hey, Mick, would you find his number in the book? I'll call him and see if he's home. He's kind of queer. He's just alive, but maybe he doesn't hear you too.

JK: Now, here in Sayville, when you were a boy, before you got into your own business, when you were working for your father, who were the principal oyster companies or oyster men around?

JT: Well, it was Hackley and Son. That was one. There was Lewis company. That was two. They were big firms. They had plenty of business and ground over in Connecticut and Rhode Island. Then there was Frank Rogers, like you knew.

JK: Mr. Duncan

JT: Yes. Frank Rogers and Sons. Then here in West Sayville, there was Frederick Ochers. There used to be two other firms, [inaudible] and Ochers, another Ochers. Then there used to be Vandenberg and Rudolph. Then the Blue Point. There was that big firm down there now. They were here. Then there were a few firms over in Bay Shore, Harper and (Still?).

JK: Oh, the (Still?) people from New York.

JT: Well, this was Lou Still. He had some relation to this one in New York.

MT: He had quite a business in the Bay Shore.

JT: Yes.

JK: They had steamers? Did they have steamers?

JT: Yes. Oyster steamers, yes.

JK: Now, when you say steam, you really mean gas engines?

JT: Well, they called them steamers. It's just an oyster steamer with a gasoline engine in, what they used to call them steamers. Yes.

JK: Did any of these big companies have sailing boats?

JT: No, I don't remember. They haven't any.

JK: Now, they owned their property – the ground?

JT: Well, they hired it just like I did from the town, so much in acres. You used to have to pay for that lease every year. They used to send you a bill. It was a little or nothing at that time.

JK: But they owned a large tract.

JT: You just had the ground to use. They used to renew the lease every year, but later, they give it to you every ten years. But we used to have to renew. Then we used to have to pay that lease so much we used to have Bay commissioners set from two different towns. The more lots you had, the more you paid, see. It was little or nothing that you paid at that time.

JK: Now, you paid to the town of Sayville?

JT: No, the town of Islip. We were in the town of Islip. Patchogue, see that's the town of Brookhaven. They had nothing to do with that.

JK: Oh, the town of Islip takes care of Sayville then?

MT: Yes.

JT: Yes.

JK: What other little places does Islip take care of?

JT: Well, I think it would go from Bayport. I don't know where the Blue Point – I think that was in Brookhaven Town. Well, anyhow, Bayport ran on west, up to the Babylon town. Bay Shore and Islip, East Islip, and Great River, and all that would all be in Islip town, see.

JK: Well, how many towns in the Bay then? You would have Islip Town and Brookhaven?

JT: Brookhaven Town. That's all. There's Babylon, west of the Bay Shore.

JK: [inaudible]

JT: Yes. That's Babylon town. We had on there too.

JK: So, there were three?

JT: Yes, three.

JK: Were there many oysters in Babylon?

JT: No. There were no oysters that way.

JK: Only up to...

JT: On the East End by Patchogue. Once in a while, we'd get a year, the oysters would set naturally in the West Bay that's around off Bay Shore there. But they would only last a year or two. Then they'd be out and all cleaned up. But they'd set every year there. It was wonderful.

JK: On the East?

JT: It was just a wonderful thing. The town used to rent it Patchogue, Brookhaven Town. They used to open it in May or close it in May. Then all during these winter months, you used to be able to go there and catch these oysters. Then they'd close it in May and even close until September. Then they'd open it again. You could go down there and catch oysters and sell them to the shippers. They used to make pretty good money.

JK: Would you call Ochers and Rudolph shippers?

JT: Yes. Yes. They shipped quite a few oysters.

JK: When you say...

MT: Oh, yes, they shipped.

JT: He had a gold mine. He used to call it the West Channel. That was a channel that run from Bay Shore right onto the beach and went on right up to ocean. He used to have a lovely ground there. The tide would run very strong. It was a gold mine for him, Paul, yes, where he made his money. His always used to be fat. This way, they'd be poor conditioned. From there, they'd be fat. Then he had a wonderful business.

JK: When you talk about the Islip town and Brookhaven Town, whereabouts did you go to get your license at the Islip Town?

JT: Well, now, if you were in Brookhaven Town, you'd have to go to Patchogue to the town hall there. If you were in Islip Town, well, then you'd go to Islip, to that town hall there.

JK: I see. Now, they would probably have old records that can go all the way back?

JT: Oh, yes. Chances are, you could maybe get some records there.

JK: Yes. I wonder whether...

JT: If you went down to Charlie (Hart?), his uncle used to be in the oyster business. He was a biologist from the Blue Point. Then he started raising these oysters himself.

MT: I don't know whether he'd have any records or not. You might get some at the town hall.

JT: Did you ever go down to that Charlie Hart, the one that gave the museum the building?

JK: I must have met him at one time.

JT: Yes. He could maybe give you some input. But he's pretty younger than me. He just came in it lately. I don't think he'd know anything about the old oyster business.

JK: Now, when you took a lease out, did you have to give the name of your boat or what kind of a boat it was?

JT: No. No. You just mentioned the size of the ground. It would be three, four, five, sometimes ten acres in one piece of ground. Then that would be on that lease.

JK: Would you get a chart of the...

JT: Yes, you have a chart. Every one of those pieces of ground was listed on there. I knew every piece. I knew even what the depth of the water was and what kind of bottom it was. If it was muddy, hard and gravel, or shelly, I knew all that.

JK: Do the grounds, the acreages shape changes, or do you –

JT: No, that stays about the...

JK: – stays pretty much the same. Are they all numbered?

JT: Yes.

JK: So you would know...

JT: They used to have all the old names on it. The people that used to have before, the ones that had their ground first. Then they'd get tired of keeping it up or watching on it and paying for the lease. They'd sell it to the shippers. They'd get all that money in. One time, they had that you were only allowed to hold one lot, even if you had fifty or sixty or a hundred or two hundred, you was only allowed to have that in your name, that one piece of ground. They used to have to get these old names from all the old people that sold the lots to them. They used to have that and all those different names. Well, now, they just did away with that. They put it all in your name. You own the whole thing. But you used to have to – if you had fifteen pieces of ground, you'd have to have fifteen different names for each one of those pieces of ground.

MT: That's why Rudolph came over here one time. I was only a kid, and I had to sign something about – he must have put my name on one. I was only a kid.

JT: Father's name was on one too.

JK: Are all these lots the same size?

JT: No.

JK: Same acreage?

JT: Yes. Different acreage in it. They go from three acres up to – well, I had one piece of ground. It was twenty-two acres. That was the biggest piece. They don't go no bigger than that. But they're all sized – it goes from three acres on up to eight, twelve, twenty, or whatever the acres are in it. But I had one piece. It was twenty-two acres. Great, big piece, a beautiful piece of ground.

JK: Who has it now?

JT: Well, I sold it to the three firms that's out there now, Park, Vandenberg, and (Schlagers?). They each took a certain amount of it. But that was a wonderful ground.

JK: Can anyone own, so to speak, any ground outright, or is it –

JT: No.

JK: – everybody leases it?

JT: It's all leased from the town.

JK: Including the big companies?

JT: You just hold it and pay for the lease on it. But they got a right to take it away from you anytime they feel like it, see, as long as you keep the lease up.

JK: You could have used the dredge or tong or whatever on your own ground.

JT: Oh, yes. We used to power all oysters out. We could go out there. With the power we had, we used to go out. In about an hour, we'd have a hundred bushels.

JK: Were there any grounds out there that were natural oyster grounds? They were public, I mean, open to anybody who...

JT: Well, it was all open bay around the ground. We used to have to put stakes down on each corner.

JK: Did you have to do this yourself?

JT: Yes, I did that. I used to pump the stakes down during spring.

JK: The town did not do it for you?

JT: No. No. We always got notice for us to do it.

JK: Is there a shellfish commission or anything like that in Long Island here that takes care of the shell fishers? In Connecticut, there is shell fishing.

JT: Yes. Well, it's the conservation department. That's what we have here now. They take care of all that.

JK: They do.

JT: Yes.

JK: Now, what about the regular the baymen now that go out for clams? Do they lease the ground too?

JT: No. It was all private, but they're all public where they go. They've been trying to break up these oyster grounds long before I retired. They were fighting. They're fighting it now. There was a piece in the paper that the supervisor of Islip town, he's thinking of considering someone to make them give up the leased ground and throw it over to the public. So, they're worried sick, these shippers, because they got a lot of money invested. They got clam dredges. They're

raising clams themselves now, seed clams. They're taking them out and planting them. They're worried sick, afraid they're going to take the ground away from them. So, I don't know how it's going to come out. But the baymen want a free bay. I think they got about two thousand acres there that is held in leases. The baymen want to break it up. So, I don't know how it will go.

JK: But they have their own public grounds.

JT: Yes. They had to go public.

JK: Well, were there not public grounds before? You said no.

JT: As long as I can remember, they had these leases. It was from the time I was a kid. Yes. Long before that. Because my father, he said to me that time when he had that piece of ground, and he all was standing in the deep. Like I said, you weren't allowed to dredge it. So, they got smothered and the mud got in there, see. But they never made any money. One would steal from another shipper. There were only four stakes or little four buoys. The ice runs, everything is underwater. What can you tell where you are? They used to go out. There was a little firm down here by the name of Wester Bay. There were four brothers. They used to have about four oyster boats. I know one fellow. I used to go on the steamer way before I got in business from the South. He says to me, he says, "You know, we had a piece of ground." He says, "It was loaded with oysters we had planted." It got late in the fall and he says, "We thought we'd catch these oysters up and have a little money for winter." He says, "You know, John," he says, "We went there," and he says, "There wasn't an oyster. Not one. Not a thing." I said, "Sure. Somebody came and got them ahead of you." He says, "Sure." That's what they used to do you know. It's mean, isn't it?

JK: Ah, terrible.

JT: That Rudolph – that grandfather, he was such a crook –

MT: [laughter]

JT: – that he used to go out with his oyster boat. Then they used to send the boat out right behind him and watch him. Because he'd steal so many oysters when he was out that they used to have to have a boat watching him all the time. That's where he got all his money. He was such a crook boy. That's the grandsons. Arthur and Harold now, but they never had no business because he never went up...

MT: Here's his number if you want to call him.

JT: I can see if he's there. You want me to call him and see if he's there?

JK: Sure.

JT: Or you want to stop? Do you want to stop and see if he's there?

JK: You worked for your father until what age?

JT: What was I? twenty-four, was it?

JK: Then you decided...

MT: Twenty-three, you worked for him.

JT: Twenty-three, yes. I worked for him until I was twenty-three. He used to give me \$1 a week at that time. But I was so poor. I said to him, "Listen, I can't stand this any longer. I got to work from the South. I got to make some money." He said, "Well, you'll have to pay the board." I said, "Well, I will." Yes, he gave me \$1 a week and boy was I poor.

JK: You went out tonging? Is that what you did mostly?

JT: Yes.

JK: Then what boat was he?

JT: When I first started going to the Bay, I went away on the watch boat to watch – there was all thousands of larks out in the bay. I went with him on the sloop with him. You'd have to sail nights – sail all night watching these beds because we were afraid of thieves. Yes.

JK: What sloop was this?

JT: I think that was the *Nellie Hayes* at that time, the one I told you before.

JK: You just sailed up and down?

JT: Yes. We sailed all around. Of course, we had to watch and see if it was there, but there was nobody around.

JK: Now, who paid you for this?

JT: All these shippers that had the ground. They each paid so much a month. We'd get so much a month. Then we were allowed to catch clams on the side. We made money that way. We did it for years. Then I did it for a while before I got busy in the South.

JK: Now, he did this just at night. But during the day, he would work his own ground?

JT: Well, he'd have to do it in the day too, work for him. Study every day for months, and he'd get paid at the end of the month. Well, he didn't have any ground at that time. He just worked for those. Yes. They had a gold mine there at that time. Oysters would grow. They were nice and fat and everything.

JK: So, the different companies would get together and pay him?

JT: Yes. The Union Oyster Planters Association. That was the name of it. He'd get a check every month.

JK: He worked at this for quite a while.

JT: Yes, he did. I couldn't say how long, but quite a while.

JK: Yes. But that was at more or less when he tended to retire then from the business?

JT: Well, no, he was quite young then, wasn't he when he was doing that?

MT: Yes. He worked for you before he retired.

JT: Yes.

MT: He would go out and saw the clamps and things for you.

JK: So, you got into your own business when you were that old. What was the first thing you did? Did you buy a boat? Did you have an oyster house?

JT: We were nothing but young boys, my brother and I, when we started in it. That was when I said the oysters was full of oysters in the Patchogue. He said, "Let's go down and start the oyster business." Then he was sorry he ever got into it. He always resented because [inaudible].

JK: Your brother, you are talking about?

JT: Yes.

JK: What was his name?

JT: Leonard. So, we went down there. We started to catch these oysters.

JK: What boat? What kind of boat did you have?

JT: What did we have? We had a sloop, I remember. Yes. I think it was *Jennie Ochers*, wasn't it?

MT: I don't know. I couldn't tell you that.

JT: Yes, I think so.

MT: I think it must've been the *Jennie Ochers* by that time. Yes.

JT: What do you call it? *Nellie Hayes*, she got old.

MT: Yes.

JT: He condemned her. He lied her in the creek here, and she sunk. We raised out, and he sold it to some firm. He'd already built her. Then he used it for quite a while. I thought she was really worn out. But he had her fixed up. Boy, it was some nice boat.

JK: Did he oyster with her?

JT: Yes. He caught oysters with her. He worked for the shippers and went out and had two men pulling oyster dredges. There was no power then. They used to catch a load and come in and they used to pay him so much a day for doing it.

JK: So, you had the *Jennie Ochers* then?

JT: Yes. That was the last boat we owned. Father had the *Maggie Mae*. He had a...

JK: What was the *Maggie Mae*?

JT: That was another very big, long sloop. He used to tell me how fast she could sail. There was no power. He used mostly all sail. But she got old. I can remember yet – I could see him yet where he broke her all apart and used the wood, I suppose, for firewood. He broke her all apart. He didn't bother to sell her or anything. I guess she was so old.

JK: Well, did he buy her after the *Nellie Hayes*?

JT: No. He had her before the *Nellie Hayes*. That was years back. Quite a ways long back.

JK: Where was she built?

JT: Oh, I couldn't tell you.

JK: What did she look like?

JT: Well, she was a nice, long looking sloop. That's all I know. Old fashioned sloop. She was long though. He used to say, these [inaudible] had this *Nellie Hayes*. He says he had a race one day from the West Bay. He says, "I beat them so bad." But she was very long. She could sail. He says, "I beat them so bad." He says, "It was worth talking about." He says, "That's how bad I beat them." So, it must have been some nice boat.

JK: Now, he tonged from her then?

JT: Yes.

JK: Well, when you had tonged, how did you tong? You just anchored by the bow or stern?

JT: Yes. You threw an anchor overboard when you got on your piece of ground. You threw

your anchor overboard. Then you could put your tong stand on the rail and put your tong down and go this way. You come up full of oysters.

JK: Then how did you shift your ground? You just shifted to pull up on the...

JT: Just when you got ready to go home in the afternoon, he said, "Just pull up your anchor." Sometimes you'd have to move your anchor a couple of feet because you clean up the ground, see?

JK: Yes.

JT: Then you'd have to move over a little bit and put your anchor down again.

JK: Well, did the wind not blow the boat around?

JT: Yes, it did. It was good when it was a little windy because it would shift the boat around, and you'd catch some more oysters. If you had a calm day where the boat would lay still, well, you wouldn't catch so many because you had to move around a little to do it.

JK: What kind of anchors did you use?

JT: Well, these anchors with the stock in at the time. Now, they have these catch anchors or navy anchors. But they used to have these old-fashioned anchors with the stock. [inaudible] was the name of the anchors. I don't know if you would know.

JK: Yes, I have heard of it.

JT: They use some wonderful anchor.

JK: Did you ever use sweeps or oars on the big sloops?

JT: No. Father used to have a little rowboat and a pair of oars. Then if there was no wind, and it'd be like in the afternoon, he wanted to get home. They used to put this behind the back end of the boat and then row with pair of oars. Of course, it would be hard to get it started. But when you got a little headway, well...

JK: You mean you would push the sloop?

JT: Yes. We'd put this rowboat in the back of the boat –

JK: Push it and row.

JT: – tie the stem to the boat. Then we'd row with a pair of oars. I did it quite a few times. You'd be surprised how far you can go. I mean, of course, it'd take you a long while to get headway in the big boat.

JK: But the stem of the rowboat would be touching the transom?

JT: Yes. You tie that with a rope, the painter, they called it.

JK: Just in one place?

JT: Yes, because when you row, you go against the boat. You wouldn't have to have any other [inaudible] out now. We used to even pole. We used to have a pole about 16, 18 feet long. Then we used to walk to the bow of the boat, shove the pole overboard, and then shove – you've seen them shove with the poles?

JK: Yes.

JT: One used to steer, whoever it was with you. They used to steer. He used to walk and shove this boat with his pole. [laughter] Didn't have many a time too. [laughter] Those are the days.

JK: You kept that pole on the deck sometimes.

JT: Yes. Keep an eye on it all the time.

JK: Did you ever have to shovel oysters off the deck?

JT: Oh sure.

JK: Now, did you have shoveling boards on the...

JT: We used to put all boards over the deck to protect it. Otherwise, you cut it all to pieces.

JK: Yes, and that was just around the hold and...

JT: All the way where you put the oysters, you'd have these boards.

JK: Would it be alongside of the cabin too?

JT: Well, yes. You'd put them on along the cabin too. You'd put them all over, you protect it.

JK: They were like glass.

JT: Well, it was about half inch boards, white pine, or some hard substance. I used to nail them down so they – sometimes, you'd shovel the tong in. The boards would move. Then it would be a mess. So, I used to nail them. But all the others did too. They used to cover all over those oyster steamers too – oyster boats because there's so much wear and tear that you wear your deck all out.

JK: So, he had this sloop that you are talking about. You had three sloops in your family then?

JT: Yes. Yes, three. We had the *Maggie Mae*, and...

JK: What color was she painted? Do you remember?

JT: I wouldn't remember. I was just but a little kid then, but I can remember, I was watching him break her up.

JK: Were they too small to go to New York with?

JT: Oh, no. You could go to New York with them. But that one, that big boat, that freight boat, that's the one he really wanted. She was quite a big thing.

JK: How many bushels of oysters would *Maggie Mae* hold or the *Hayes*?

JT: Well, it was all according to what size boat they are. You could put a hundred bushel in the hole where the hatches grew out of. Carry about a hundred bushel, maybe. Some more, some less.

JK: Would you put the hatches down and just the oysters on top? Never underneath?

JT: Oh no. You put them right down. There's a floor in the hole – ceiling, they call it. You let them go right down in there. Then of course, you can shovel them up. They put the hatches on to cover them over to keep the sun off. The spray come over because when you get down and you have a hundred bushel in the hole, that boat gets low. Then they'd put these hatches on that would keep the spray from going down the boat. Otherwise, you have to pump it all out.

JK: The people in Connecticut said that they never put the oysters down below because they would only have to shovel them up again.

JT: Yes. Well, that's a lot in that. But you have to do it now. You take a terrible cold day. You want to go out and get oysters. You put them on top of the boat because they freeze solid. When you put them down in the hole, and when you get the hole full, you put the hatches on, that protects them, see? We used to have big pieces of canvas. We call them hatch cloths. You'd put them over the hatches. It would hold them. You'd tie a rope around them and hold them down. That would keep from freezing. Otherwise, it'd be a mass of ice.

JK: In those days when you used the sloops, what was a typical day? When would you get up and so...

JT: Well, there's always one – if you were a poor life –

JK: [laughter]

JT: – they used to leave here at 6:00 a.m.

JK: How did you go? How did you get up the little creeks here? Did you pull your way through

or sail or what?

JT: Well, yes. We used to lower the sail down on the outside of the mouth of the creek. Then if the wind was there, you could come in with a little piece of sail, just enough so you could have steered away. But if the wind was against you, you'd have to shove with this pole. Like I said, take the sail down and shove along the bank with this pole.

JK: That was a common way of getting around.

JT: That was a common way of getting in.

JK: You had one pole or two?

JT: Well, you had as many you needed. Mostly, you used one pole. Sometimes two, but most of the time, one.

JK: By the way, why did you push the boat instead of tow it at the bow?

JT: Well, there was no power. How could you tow it? Sometimes, if the bank was clear, like now, here, you could take a line and pull along like they used to do with those mud-scow years ago. But with a team of horses or mules, they used to tow. But there was so many different things and obstacles along the bank that you'd be better with a pole.

JK: But I mean, you said that you put your little dingy in the back of the boat.

JT: Yes. Well, that was out in the bay when it had a lot of room. We could do that in the creek too. Come and...

JK: You rode though?

JT: Yes.

JK: Well, why did you not take a line to the bow spreads out to your dingy and just row the sloop instead of pushing it from the stern?

JT: Well, I don't know how you could do it very well.

JK: Because when you tow a boat, a disabled boat, you always tow it from the bow.

JT: Yes, I know you do, but there was no way of towing it. We used to have this rowboat, like I said.

JK: Was this a flat bottom rowboat?

JT: Yes. Regular rowboat.

JK: All right. Now, you would get out at 6:00 a.m., you say?

JT: 6:00 a.m., 7:00 a.m., it was always according to how you felt. [laughter] If it was a live wire, you'd go out early.

JK: All right. Now, you got out there. Then you would get out to your ground. You would just tong all day.

JT: Tong all day long.

JK: What about lunch hour?

JT: You'd have what they call a 9:00 a.m. lunch. That would be 9:00 a.m. coffee, a piece of cake or whatever you wanted. Then we'd work again until 12:00 p.m. and sit and eat our lunch. We never used to eat anything in the afternoon. We'd come home about 3:00 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 4:00 p.m. That'd be the latest. Then you'd have to take off whatever you caught.

JK: Oh, you would never keep it over overnight?

JT: No. Sometimes we'd leave them in the boat, but most of the time, we'd take them off.

JK: Where did you take – now...

JT: Well, if we didn't use them ourself, the shippers would buy them. We used to sell to the shippers.

JK: Now, you would have to unload it too, to the shippers?

JT: Yes. We'd have to shovel them out. If we had them in the hole, we'd have to shovel them all out.

JK: Would you shovel in the baskets or just shovel them up?

JT: Yes. Shovel in the baskets. Two bushels on a wheelbarrow, they used to take.

JK: Two bushels on a wheelbarrow.

JT: Yes.

JK: Were they two separate bushels or two bushel baskets?

JT: No, two separate bushels.

JK: Who would be tallying all this? Them? Those people?

JT: Well, you could kind of keep track yourself when you do it. But that's the way they do it.

They had three or four wheelbarrows with different men. Then each would have the two bushels on this wheelbarrow. They'd take turns. One would wait for the other. One would go in. The other would come and pick up. If he'd come out and the other would [laughter] go back in the shop.

JK: Oh, yes. You are talking about those oysters that would be shipped?

JT: Yes. When we went far South, well, we had our own oysters.

JK: They are very valuable.

JT: If you are around here in the morning, he goes down the shore every morning at a certain time. Lots of times, I open the gates here. He goes down. He waves at me. But I can't understand why Arthur don't.

JK: But does he walk down there?

JT: No. He runs down his car just that little ways.

JK: I think you mentioned the season for oystering, but you would start in the fall or the late summer.

JT: We'd start in September. The Brookhaven Town would let you catch the oysters off the public beds in September. You could work all winter until May. I think it was the 30th of May. They closed it during the summer months.

JK: But of course, as you said, the winter was so cold that nobody worked there. When it started to freeze up, nothing happened. Except, did they not cut through the ice?

MT: They did. Yes.

JT: Well, the shippers that had oysters out on their beds, they used to do that. But not the baymen. They used to...

MT: Not the baymen, but the oyster shippers would do that with a team of horses.

JK: Oh, I see. They were the company shippers.

MT: Yes.

JK: By the way, how old were these oysters that they shipped out? Were they different...

JT: They were about three years old. Three to four years old.

JK: Now, they call these Blue Point oysters.

JT: Yes.

JK: Where did they ship the oysters?

JT: Well, it's all according to what demand they had. They shipped all over the United States, and Europe.

MT: They shipped to Europe and all over.

JT: Yes. New York. All where they had demand.

MT: France and England and Belgium. I remember I used to see the addresses on the...

JK: They all shipped them in barrels.

JT: Yes.

JK: Double-headed barrels?

JT: Double-headed barrels, yes, once in a while, [inaudible].

JK: How big a barrels were they?

JT: Well, they hold about three bushels and a half at that time. I remember when I first started to work down here, Rudolph – and I don't know how many floats full of oysters he had. He says they're getting the kind of old. He used to put them in the floats. Then he used to have these oyster forks in the float when they call it. A float man. He'd go down with his oyster fork. He'd have to turn all these oysters over because the settlers in the water would make more down on them, see. Then you'd have to turn these oysters off or purify it. One time, when I first started to work there, I don't know how many floats full of these oysters there. He said, "I don't know what I'm going to do." I was out working on an oyster steamer at that time. He says, "I guess we'll have to take them out and plant them on the beds." So, we took them. I had a whole steamer alone. I guess about seven hundred bushel of oysters. We took them out on the bay. That night, we came in with some fresh oysters. He says, "Guess what?" I said, "Now what?" He said, "I got just a carload order." He says, "I could have used all those oysters you took out." That's the way things go. [laughter] So, we had to go catch more the next day again and bring them back and fill the carload order. They went mostly to Chicago, those carload orders.

JK: When you brought in with the sloop, going back to the other, and you sold the oysters to the shippers, did they put them in the oyster house? Or did they put them in the forks right away?

JT: Well, they were mostly all undersized. There was not sized up to a half shell size. They'd take them all out and plant them on the bay.

JK: So, did they put them right onto another boat?

JT: They put them on the oyster boat, the one they used to catch the oysters with. When she wasn't catching oysters, they'd put them on her. Then she'd take them out. They'd put a whole load on her. She carried about seven hundred bushel. They put them on her. There were all sizes. It was all really undersized. It was called oyster seed.

JK: So, your father used to get oyster seed primarily?

JT: They'd plant them all in the spring and leave them lay there all summer. Like I said, oysters grow like weeds then.

JK: Well, what about in the September and October when you were oystering, you would not sell to the shippers then?

JT: No. No. I never did too much of that. I went and got the bushels and sell them. We used to sell our own oyster ship right in.

JK: Well, I mean, going back to your father's daddy, when he did it.

JT: Well, he did it. He did that. He used to catch them, like I said, on the public beds and take them in there. They didn't pay you anything for them.

JK: I thought you said there were no such thing as public beds.

JT: Well, not public beds, but public grounds where they didn't have the – lease ground where they'd leave you go all around as long as you didn't go on the other.

JK: Yes, anybody can as long as you got a permit or something.

JT: Yes. Well, if you wanted ground, but the people didn't want any ground. They never bothered to get any leases or anything.

JK: Oh, you mean you can just go out there and get as many oysters as you want.

JT: Yes. When they want it when they were around.

JK: So, you would go to the public grounds, get oysters, and then sell them to the shippers?

JT: Yes. But I mean, when we started in ourself, we used to catch a load and take them out in the West Bay and plant them on our own beds. It was a lot bigger than father and the baymen. They never had no ground. So, they sold to the shippers. Then they'd take them out and plant them in the spring. In the fall, they'd be big enough to sell. Now, the oysters, there's so much pollution in the bay that I guess they're not going to bother to raise anymore. I know that Hart down there, he used to take them out. He says, "They died so bad." I say, "Yes. It's the pollution."

JK: What kind of pollution is it?

JT: Well –

JK: Chemical?

JT: – waste from boats and disposal things. They said it must be awful out in the bay now. There's so many boats. There wasn't too many when I got off the bay, but boy, he says, "You ought to go there now and see the boats that's out there."

JK: When your father was oystering in the early days, did they open oyster as much here, or did they ship them mostly?

JT: Well, they opened them. The shippers, when they bought oysters, they used to catch their own, and they used to open them.

JK: What did they do with the open ones?

JT: They used to put those in a five-gallon container, metal. Then they used to have a big, wooden tub with a heavy cover. They used to set this container with the oysters in this tub and put all cracked ice all around this container where the oysters were in. Put the cover down and ship it to whoever wanted them.

JK: Did they sell oysters around here very much to the people?

JT: No. They used to catch their own, the people. They shipped mostly all out of town.

JK: Were oysters a favorite food for people?

JT: Well a lot of people don't like them, but –

MT: Some people like them, but –

JT: – we always were fond of them.

MT: – others didn't. A lot of people won't eat their oysters.

JK: Even now.

MT: I think you have to develop a taste for them.

JK: But do they eat oysters here as much as they do in Chesapeake? The Chesapeake Bay, you can buy oysters...

JT: No, I don't think so. It's a big place down there for oysters.

JK: But even as far back as you remember, or even with your father, the eating of oysters was

not that big a thing here, was it?

JT: No. No.

JK: That is strange. You are right on the bay where oysters are. It was...

JT: Well, like she said, a lot of people don't like them, but...

JK: But why do the people down South not like them?

JT: I don't know. They never were –

JK: But they liked it.

JT: – much for that here. Did they?

MT: No.

JK: Can you say that oysters were popular around here because it was a means of getting money?

JT: Yes. I think it was a

JK: Making money.

JT: – livelihood of people.

JK: The livelihood. Yes.

JT: Their livelihood.

JK: Right. I see. How about clams, way, way back in time?

JT: There was a big demand for them too. That's what we mostly used to do during the summer months. Because oysters were out of season, then we used to catch clams.

JK: Now, they were on the muddier grounds.

JT: Yes.

JK: They were in different areas.

JT: Well, they sat all over though on nice, good, hard ground too.

JK: Right where the oysters would be?

JT: Yes.

JK: You would tong those. Or how did you get them?

JT: We had a lot of clams. We used to plant our beds with oysters. The clams would kind of come up out of the sand and get in with all these oysters. Boy, I used to catch some clams when I used to tong the oysters.

JK: Did you just eat those, or did you sell them?

JT: Well, we sold them too.

JK: I have seen pictures at the museum of Ochers and other places, the oyster houses. It shows them shipping clams and just clams a lot.

JT: Yes.

JK: They shipped a lot of clams too?

JT: That one firm, that Frederick Ochers, he was a bachelor. He used to just ship mostly clams. He used to have these floats in the basin.

JK: They did the same thing with the clams as they did the oysters.

JT: Same thing. They used to put those in there. They even stole them. They used to come there at night, see baymen, and steal them out of their floats. He caught them. He sold a lot of clams. It was the Jacob Ochers that was before the Blue Point had this business. He used to own it. He was the oyster king. He sold more oysters than anybody.

JK: Ochers was right where the Blue Points is now?

JT: Yes. He used to be in Oakdale. He used to be on Borriss' property. Then he chased him away.

JK: That is where he lived, you mean?

JT: Yes. He lived in that house on Oakdale where they got that – what do you call it now?

JK: Red crop blue something.

JT: So, he sold more oysters than anybody. He moved here with his plan, and he sold some stuff.

JK: Do you remember him?

JT: Oh, sure.

MT: Oh, yes.

JK: He was a big man, was he not?

JT: Yes. Well, he was kind of on the fat side.

MT: His brother, Fred, was big.

JT: Yes.

MT: He was a very big man. But...

JT: He owed him \$80,000, Fred Ochters. That was his brother. Jake's says, "He went and landed a lot of shells. Then he went and scoured with a dredge and made them right for an oyster set." Everybody laughed. All the baymen laughed at him. He says, "He's planting some of that ground and never heard tell of a set being on." Knew that darn fool. He got a bumper crop of oyster seed. He got oysters all of that ground. But they all laughed about it. He went to his brother. He says, "Now I can pay you back the \$80,000 I owe you." He says, "You keep that." He says, "But don't bother me anymore about borrowing any money to me." So, he gave him the \$80,000. He was always on the verge of bankruptcy. He was Fred Ochters, and the one who got this oyster set, that helped him out. He got to be well to do. Yes. He got some wonderful Southern oysters.

JK: Did you people save your shells and then plant them in...

JT: We used to do it, but there was years and years that we never had any sign of a set. Then we got disgusted. We never bothered.

JK: But what did you do when you had no oysters?

JT: Well, I used to put them all down on the road down there and build a road up.

JK: No, you said there was no set. But what did you do when you...

JT: Well, we used to buy it. We used to have to buy it all from the baymen that went down east off Patchogue. I used to buy the natural oysters. I used to get quite a lot from the...

JK: So, Connecticut.

JT: North Port. There were oysters over there with a fellow by the name of Kelsey. He used to have oysters. They used to bring me truckload after truckload. Then I went and got him a flour over in Bayville. I used to buy them from the Cedar Island Oyster Company. There was a fellow by the name of Mills. There were some wonderful people.

MT: That's what he had the day that I went with him, was, he had a truckload of this oyster seed.

JT: They were some wonderful people at mills.

MT: The day I went with him, he used to buy all these seeds from...

JT: I bought oysters from independent baymen from Greenport. I used to bring them down here with trucks. I used to get them all over.

JK: Did you ever buy seed from the natural growers in Bridgeport, Connecticut?

JT: No.

JK: Did you ever hear of it?

JT: No, I haven't heard of it.

JK: There is a piece of ground off of Bridgeport that is a wonderful natural growth area. They used to sell to the people in Oyster Bay. They sold to Greenport. I understand in the early, early days, sometimes they might even go all the way around and sell to the Great South Bay.

JT: Yes.

JK: But it was wonderful seed oysters.

JT: Yes. Is that why they called the Bridgeport bed?

JK: Yes. Have you heard that then?

JT: Oh, sure. Sure. I've heard of that. Yes.

JK: In what respect?

JT: Well, I don't know. I talked to different people. They said they're Bridgeport bed. I said, "Well, I never been over there to see or where it is, but I heard a lot about it.

JK: In fact, we have a summer cottage, and the Bridgeport bed is right in front of our house.

JT: Oh, wonderful.

JK: When I was a little kid, I would see the oyster sloops dredging for oysters.

JT: I tell you where I used to buy a lot of oysters too, Mansfield and Company. That was [inaudible]. They've got a plant now in East Marion. They bought that from their general foods. They have a very big plant. Now, they're in with Vandenberg. Now they call that the Long Island Oyster Farm. But now, this year, it's the first time I've ever seen that the oyster was very poor. They wouldn't even sell me any. I wanted to get a bushel to eat. Now, they're not fit to

eat. That's the first year in good many years that they've been poor. Otherwise, they're always wonderful.

JK: Now, back in, again, your father's day, most of it was shipping rather than opening oysters.

JT: Yes. Mostly shell stock.

JK: Shell stock. Yes. Did they ship shell stock when your father was a boy? Do you know?

JT: Well, they must have. Sure.

MT: I imagine so.

JT: Sure.

MT: Yes.

JT: They used mostly barrels, double-headed.

JK: When he sold oysters from his sloop to the shippers, do you remember how much he got a bushel for?

MT: [laughter]

JT: Not very much.

JK: Yes. That is what I thought. [laughter]

JT: I didn't know whether they – latter years, when I got so into it, they was paying \$1 a bushel. They were getting the growth on them during the summer months and selling them for \$3.

JK: It was the same prices.

JT: Because they made money. They made money. Sure.

JK: Now, they are \$17, \$18 a bushel.

JT: \$22 now.

JK: \$22?

JT: Yes.

JK: Oh, my gosh. Well, on the Bridgeport bed, the oystermen used to sell the seed for 50 cents a bushel.

JT: Yes.

MT: I imagine that's what my father got.

JK: Yes. I guess it was universal all over.

JT: Yes.

JK: Now, when you got into business, you had the *Jennie Ochers*. You got a piece of ground. You worked that. Or did you work on the public...

JT: No. There wasn't oysters on the public. We only had Patchogue. It was there until 1938 when the hurricane come there and –

JK: That was it.

JT: –wiped it out. Yes.

JK: So, you worked at *Jennie Ochers* until that fell apart or what?

JT: Yes.

JK: Or you sold it or whatever.

JT: I sold it just about when I got ready to retire.

JK: Did I...

MT: John, sit down. Sit down.

JK: Did you tell me what color the *Jennie Ochers* was when she was a sailboat?

JT: We had her mostly black –

JK: That is the black one.

JT: – because she got old. Like I said, the rust spots from the nails and the bolts, that would run down on the paint. It would be unsightly. So, we painted it black, and it didn't show so much.

JK: So, both of your boats were black?

JT: Yes.

JK: So, you had the *Jennie Ochers* until recently?

JT: Oh yes, until I retired about six years ago.

JK: You had her for many, many, many years then.

JT: Oh, sure. I must have had her...

JK: Do you have any photos of her by chance?

JT: Yes, we got photos of her.

JK: Would you have any under sail?

JT: Not under sail, no. Just got it with the power in. I think they're in here I think.

JK: What is this one?

JT: Yes, that's her.

JK: Oh, that is her there?

JT: Yes.

JK: Is that you?

JT: Yes.

JK: This is during the war then?

JT: Yes, I guess it is. Yes. I think it was during the war.

JK: She was thirty-seven feet overall.

JT: Yes. Thirteen-foot beam.

JK: Is that the original cabin?

JT: Yes. That's the way the head used to be. Yes. The cabin's in the back. Here's the hole here where they have the hatches on. We used to put a hundred bushel down in there. We'd put the hatches on and cover it over with the canvas.

JK: Then you put this on there just as a protection.

JT: Yes. That's what they called a potted house. We used to have windows in there. Then we could steer the boat.

JK: This is a typical little...

JT: Yes. That's a typical sloop.

JK: I mean, the rowboat.

JT: Yes, that's it.

JK: It is just regular flat boat. Were you in the Navy?

JT: No. My brother was. That's him here. I don't think there are any more pictures of the boat.

JK: Too bad you did not have it when she was under a sailboat.

JT: Yes. Like I say I got – I'm going to see if I can get those out some day when I come over with...

JK: What out?

JT: Those different things of sailors.

JK: Oh, yes.

JT: Maybe you could use them. See?

JK: Oh, yes.

JT: I don't know if there's any more pictures in here or not.

MT: I don't think so.

JT: No, just that one in the front.

MT: If you want to take it out, take it out.

JT: Would you want it?

JK: Sure. I could make a copy of it or have a copy made of it. Yes.

MT: I think you could [inaudible].

JK: Is this you?

JT: Yes. That's my brother and this is me. [laughter]

JK: Is this your father?

JT: Yes, that's my father. That was just before he died.

MT: It's just before he died.

JT: I used to have the most gorgeous hair when I was young. Now, I ain't got a bet.

JK: How old was your father when he...

JT: He was 84 when he died. He'd lived to be 100 if he took care of himself. Do you want to take that out for him, Mick, or you want to – that's the way all the bolts were. They had a bow spread on. The mast was here, then the jib and the sail. They converted it all to power.

JK: I will make a copy of it and send it back to you.

MT: Where's the one where it showed it in the creek? Isn't there one where it shows...

JT: Yes. I think it's in the back, Mick, where they took it from across the creek.

JK: Would that be the original [inaudible]?

JT: Yes. It got old. One was right at the end of the boat. We got all rot because the water runs under there. We had to put a new one in, but it's' the same kind – same thing.

JK: When was this taken? Around the time that it was in the 1940s? [19]43? That was when the other pictures...

JT: I was catching the culture or winkles at that time. They got how much? That must be thirty or forty years ago, isn't it?

MT: Yes. I think so.

JT: Yes.

JK: So, it was probably maybe in the 1940s.

JT: Maybe.

JK: When did you take the mast out of her? Do you remember? Was that before the war?

JT: Well, I think that we used it in the oyster business for a while. I guess that was on the first of it. Yes. That was before the war, I guess.

JK: You were 23 or so when you started with her?

JT: I was young. My brother and I were both young.

JK: You started in that boat, and you ended up with that boat?

JT: Yes.

MT: There's some of the storms that we had there.

JK: Oh, now, what...

MT: That's down on the shore here off the dock.

JK: That looks like a nice freighter or something. Do you know the name of that? Is that you?

MT: Yes. [laughter]

JK: Excuse me. What is that? It looks like a freighter of some sort with a mast.

MT: That's of the sloops, isn't it, John?

JT: A sloop? Yes. I think that's a big freighter that was owned in Oakdale by the name of (Burr?). Her name was the (*Olive B. Van Dusen?*). She used to bring oysters in the spring to Vandenberg and Son and all the other firms. She carried about 2,700 bushel. I think that's the boat – the oyster freighter.

JK: Was she a sailboat at one time?

JT: She was a two-mast schooner, coastal schooner. They took that.

MT: You want that?

JT: They took it all out.

JK: Yes. That would be interesting.

JT: This one.

MT: This one?

JT: Which one do you want? The one with the boat?

JK: Yes, the one with the boat. Right.

JT: They left one mast stand. They had a lovely schooner down off Patchogue too. Her name was – what's his name? Bishop. There used to be a railway down there. That was some relation to him. But he was with his father. When his father died then he had it all converted. He used to go bunker fishing in the summer with her and bring oyster seed to Rudolph. That was a great – what he called? They were...

JK: Would that be in 1947?

MT: Yes.

JK: This picture of you was taken out. There was a date above near it. Now, where was that? It was over here. Oh, here. Now, would it have been around 1943?

MT: Yes.

JT: It was quite a while ago.

JK: Yes. During the war. Where was this Van Dusen?

JT: That was taken on the West Dock. West Street.

JK: Oh, down here at West Sayville.

JT: Yes. Right where Charlie Hart's got his building and right from the same roadway the museum is. West Avenue. That was taken at the end of the dock, way on the end of the wall. It was made in there.

JK: Where was this picture of you in the sloop taken?

JT: That was taken right down by the shop – right ahead of the shop. I was catching winkles that year. I used to ship a lot of them in the market.

JK: How do you catch winkles?

JT: You have a square box with slats and a wall like that. You make a box about that wide and about that high –

MT: There's his boat.

JT: – and you have a square hole right in the middle of the top. These cogs, you fill it full of horseshoe crabs, chop them up with the bait. You put these on with a buoy line or the cork and then leave it overnight on the bottom. That's solid full. They crawl up the side of the box. They drop down in this hole. See? They can't get out. [laughter] \$8, \$10, \$12 a bushel, I got for them that spring. That was really good.

JK: Here is 1947 December. That's the *Jennie Ochers* also?

MT: Yes.

JT: Yes.

JK: Now, you cut the stern off of power.

JT: Yes. That's a new type stern we put on.

JK: You did not do anything—

JT: No.

JK: — else as part of the boat?

JT: I don't know how many sheets of copper I put on it. I had to have the [inaudible] rebuild. I was so tired of ripping sheet copper off and putting new back on [laughter]. I don't know how many times I did it.

JK: Could we copy this too?

JT: You've got to have it on you. Go out in the winter, the ice, you've got to have sheet copper on it.

JK: What was she made out of?

JT: She was made out of oak. Mostly all oak. Years ago, they used to sell that all out the hand. All that old plank and oak timber.

JK: There is a boat at your bow. Do you know what her name was, and what she was?

JT: I think her name — that's my boat here. This one is a boat almost like mine. Her name was the *Defiance*.

MT: Oh, that isn't yours?

JT: No.

JK: Oh, that's the *Defiance*.

JT: Chris Locker owned her. (Charlie Pep?) owned her first. Then Chris Locker bought her.

MT: Oh, yours is ahead at the shop.

JT: This is ours. I'm on ahead of the shop. This is a boat almost like mine.

JK: Yes. She even looks like it.

JT: This is mine here. Right here. See, I'm right along the shop here.

JK: Oh, so that's the...

JT: *Defiance*.

JK: *Defiance*. Well, she was a sloop of course at one time.

JT: Yes. She was an old-fashioned sloop too. They all converted into power.

JK: Oh, that is real good. How is that time here? No, thanks. I better not – if I start driving home...

JT: You've got to go drive away to Mystic yet?

JK: Well, I live in Bridgeport. So, I have to go all the way to – which is about 100 miles...

JT: How long would it take you to go there?

JK: Two hours.

JT: Two hours? Yes. It's quite a drive though. I don't like to drive anymore. I used to drive all over, but I got older. I don't care about driving.

MT: He's got an old 1948 Buick.

JK: Really?

JT: Yes.

MT: I think he's gone out with it. [laughter]

JT: I think I had sixty people.

MT: It's a wonderful addition.

JT: Well, I can't go anywhere. Well, somebody said, "You want to sell that car?" They even come up behind me and blow the horn.

MT: They stop us all over. They want to know if we want to sell it.

JT: Car is in wonderful shape. I mean, quiet and I took care of it.

MT: We go out and have dinner. People are standing all around it and shaking their head. One man says, "I had one like that."

JT: Well, it's pretty thirty years old.

MT: He says, "I never saw anything in such a beautiful condition."

JK: Is it out in the garage?

JT: Yes.

JK: I will have to take a look at it.

JT: She's clean it up. I've been all the winter long riding around with it.

MT: The girls next door clean it for us.

JT: She's going to clean it for me. She says, "I'll clean it all up and wax it for you." Everybody likes it because it's heavy and new types of cars, they ain't nothing but tin.

MT: It's got the original tires on it now.

JK: Oh, come on. Yes. I do not believe this. You are kidding. How many miles do you have on that car? 30-year-old tires?

JT: Well, it's got 30,000 miles. That's all I've gone.

JK: Is that right?

JT: When I go out with my brother's car – he had an Impala Chevrolet – I said, "Well, how about [inaudible]?"

MT: He'd take us around all over.

JT: He used to take us around. I didn't drive my car much.

JK: Did you buy a new?

JT: Well, she was a showroom car and practically new. Yes.

JK: Well, you keep your boats a long time and your cars a long time.

JT: Yes.

MT: We take care of things. We were told the value of things, which children don't know now anymore.

JT: No.

MT: They don't know the value of anything.

JT: I got things in that barn down below – that old barn. Like I said, there's two sails, is there yet. If I can get somebody some day to help me bring them out, I'll bring them over with a truck.

JK: Where were they made?

JT: I think they were made in Bay Shore by the name of Clemens, old sail maker. He was a wonderful sail maker. He made them.

JK: Where were most of the sails made?

JT: Well, Patchogue and Bay Shore.

JK: Just those two places?

JT: Yes.

MT: Now, Clemens and was that an old firm?

JT: Yes. He was a very old man when he died. He moved from there to here. He started up the business here, but I guess he got too old to bother. So, I guess mostly, I guess you can get a lot of it made down Patchogue now. They don't make them like that with that kind of canvas.

JK: No. Now, getting back to when you got into business, you worked your own grounds. What did you do with the oysters when you dredged them up?

JT: Well, we'd bring them in, unload the boat, and put them on benches. A very big cement bench in the shop. We lugged them all in the shop. Wheel them in with a wheelbarrow and baskets and throw them up on the bench. Then the next day, we'd stay in. We'd sort them all out, wash them up, put them in sacks. That night, when we came in to get them, or if we stayed in that day, we'd ship them out around 4:00 a.m. Reich Brothers from Patchogue – big trucking firm, they used to take them right to Philadelphia or wherever we wanted to ship.

JK: You got orders from all these different people?

JT: Yes. I had a standing order. Whatever I caught that day, I'd ship in. It'd be from twenty-five, fifty. Sometimes five, ten, or fifteen barrels, whatever we could put out, we'd ship right in.

JK: Where did you get your barrels?

JT: There used to be a big barrel factory here. They used to make them all lovely barrels. When the barrels burned down, then I guess they moved to Greenport.

JK: Did you double head them, or you put a can?

JT: No. We used to use all bag top barrels. Put a big round head on them and put – what do you call it? A nice cover on – waterproof cover, and ship them in that way.

JK: Did you take any care in packing them? Did you put them all upright, or did you just throw

them in?

JT: No. We just emptied them out of the baskets. Washed them, emptied them out of the baskets into the barrel. Then on the top, we faced them off so they'd lay right side up. They were all nice displays.

JK: But down underneath, they were anything?

JT: No. Just empty them in quick because you couldn't pack every one. It would take you a week to pack one barrel.

JK: I thought they did that with those that they shipped overseas, or they would...

JT: Well, the double-headers.

JK: Double-headed. Yes.

JT: The double-headers, they used to put them even full. Then they used to face them all off. It looked lovely. Right side up. Then they'd have this big, heavy iron that they'd ride the barrel. That would go down. Then they'd put the cover on. It would be solid.

JK: You mentioned once how you wash them. Then there was a...

JT: Like I said, they used to have those floats, those big bins, and then they – they were big spars from the coastal schooners. The mast was that big. They had very big spars from here to the fence out. Then they make these very big timber, fast them with timber. Then they'd have big, heavy timber on the floor, but they'd have cracks. But that was...

JK: Right on top of it. Right.

JT: – so the oysters wouldn't run through. The water would all come up so it would purify. Everything would be purified. Then they used to, like you said, fork them out.

JK: Would the forks not get caught in the slack? I mean, in the spaces?

JT: No. You'd have to learn that. It wouldn't be in a green fork couldn't do it. Because otherwise, you'd be putting a fork into these cracks [laughter] and then you'd have a mess.

JK: Yes. That is why I was wondering why you did not use a shovel.

JT: So, they have a man. They call him a float man. He knew just what to do. I used to do it too because I was tall. They used to put me in there sometimes.

JK: Why would being tall help?

JT: I beg your pardon?

JK: Why would being tall help?

JT: Because the water would be up to here. You stand in the water with boots on.

JK: Just a little bit above your knee.

JT: The long arms where I was good, see. A short man wouldn't be so good for it.

JK: Oh, he would be up to his neck in water. [laughter]

JT: That's the same way as going out on the bay and tonging the oysters. I used to have big, wide, long arms. I could catch oysters three times the oysters like an ordinary fellow could. I was wonderful catching oysters.

JK: How long were the tongs?

JT: Well, 14 to 16 feet in length.

JK: Oh, boy. Were they spliced together?

JT: Yes.

JK: Or one length?

JT: They'd have teeth about that long through oak. Maybe be about that long, the heads, they were tall. They'd have a brass pin, like a hinge, see? Then when you open that, that would go whatever way over you wanted to do it with your hands. This pin, sometimes it would get loose, you'd have to tighten it up.

JK: I meant the stales or the handles, they were 16 feet long. Was it in one piece or in two pieces.

JT: Two pieces. They had regular tong makers that fix those all for you.

JK: The tongs always had wooden heads?

JT: No. That was the old-fashioned heads. We used to use them. Then some man started up, and he made iron heads. Boy, were they wonderful. They'd catch ten times the amount that the wooden head would.

JK: Did it have a basket on the back too?

JT: Yes. Wire.

JK: Did the old ones have basket or something?

JT: Yes, they had too, but they were lights. See, they wasn't like iron. The irons would sink down. You'd almost just hold them, and they'd sink to the bottom. While the wooden ones, you'd have to shove down because they float.

JK: So, you were pushing down and then pulling up?

JT: Yes. Oh, they was no good at all compared to the iron ones.

JK: When did the iron ones come in?

JT: Oh, I could say twenty-five, thirty years ago, I guess.

MT: Or longer.

JT: A lot longer than that.

JK: Was that before the war?

JT: Yes.

MT: Yes, before the war.

JT: I know during the war that there was a scarcity of metal, and it was hard to get tongs.

JK: Did you oyster before the First World War?

JT: Yes, I think I did.

MT: Yes.

JT: We was just switching tether of going into the Navy. It was a draft at that time.

JK: Oh, you went into the Navy the First World War?

JT: We was just about ready to be called, my brother and I. We invested and joined the [inaudible] Marine. We were supposed to go, but we didn't want to go in the Navy. We were just about being ready to call when the war ended. But World War II, my brother had to go for that one. He was on a fire boat stationed in New York Harbor and Jersey. So, he didn't have to go across. But they didn't call me.

JK: So, did you use any shovels around your place?

JT: Oh, sure.

JK: What did you use the shovels for?

JT: We had a nice scoop shovel.

JK: What did you use those for?

JT: To shovel up the oysters into the baskets off the boat. Unload the boat. So, I was looking at one the other day in Central Islip. They had oyster shovels, aluminum. I couldn't get the galvanized iron ones anymore. They made aluminum. They were wonderful. \$15.50 they wanted for a shovel. [laughter] But they were improved. Those aluminums were lovely.

JK: So, you had one boat. You oystered, and you shipped most of the time?

JT: Yes.

JK: Oh, by the way, you said you separated them. Would you call it culling?

JT: Yes. Culling. We'd ship the small – they used to be small, half shell, medium, and box. That was those great big monsters oysters that they used to make for oyster sandwiches. But we only used to make two sizes. We used to make the small and the half shell together. We used to just ship the mediums. What was just now, once in a while, the box after the big ones. We used to throw them right in the mediums. So, we used to only make two kinds. Then they did away with those wooden floats. We used to have to make a cement tub that we invented ourselves. It would hold about thirty gallons or more of water. We used to have to put a little amount of Clorox in it to purify it. Then we used to dip the oysters in there in baskets and wash them nice and clean and then empty them in the sack or whatever, or the barrel.

JK: When did this ruling come in when they discarded the floats?

JT: The Board of Health made them do it. They didn't...

JK: Was this before the Second World War?

JT: It was long before World War II. Otherwise, they used to have more of these bins and the floats, I called it. We weren't allowed to do that anymore. It was more or less bacteria. So, they made them just take them off the boat and handle them up and wash them in these tubs.

JK: Your father did not have an oyster house of any sort?

JT: No. He never went into it. It was just my brother and I that started it. He used just to be an independent bayman and catch a few oysters. He used to go out on a boat with us and help us sort the oysters. In the fall, before it got too heavy a demand, we'd come out, go out and tong them. He used to stand in the hole and sort them out with their kind. When it got heavier then we used to put the dredges on and power them out. See, there was not too much demand in the fall. It's a little warm yet.

JK: There is always a demand in cold weather, is there not?

JT: Yes.

JK: Why is that?

JT: That's just good for them. They used to have these great, big freighting boats. They used to fill those full of oysters.

JK: Did they sail?

JT: Well, they had the sails off at that time. But they used to have them lined in the basin. They used to fill them full of oysters. So, if the bay grows up, then they had to fall back on oysters. The oysters keep when it was cold, boats. They used to cover them all with seaweed on the deck so they wouldn't freeze. Then they used to put canvas over the seaweed. Then if they were frozen over solid so they couldn't get out, well, then they'd fall back on these boats. Open them up and take the oysters out. Handle them up and ship them. They'd keep all winter long, those columns.

JK: On the decks of the boats?

JT: No, in the hole.

MT: No, in the hole.

JK: Oh, in the hole, you mean?

JT: Yes.

JK: I heard that they would keep a lamp burning that would be just enough to keep it...

JT: No. Like I said, the colder the bed – I've seen them. What they didn't use in the spring, early in the spring, they'd take them out. What they didn't use, and take them out on the bay. They'd be frozen in the rock as big as that table. But it didn't seem to hurt them any. They all lived.

JK: What else do you know about that oyster market in New York or the Barges?

JT: I know there was a bunch of gypsies there.

[laughter] When we first started in there, they certainly must've raised a devil. Yes.

JK: Well, have you been down there? Were you in that?

JT: No. I never went down there. I had chances to go, but I used to talk to a lot of them over the phone. So, they knew me.

JK: What are some of the names of these people that were in those barges?

JT: Well, there was Coastal Fish Company and (George H. Still?), and New Seafood Company. I used to ship to Wallace, Keeny, and Lynch. Oh, a lot I can't remember.

MT: Who is the one you shipped to in Philadelphia so much

JT: William (McLain?).

MT: – that came here?

JT: That's a big wholesale place, freezing now. William McLain and a fellow by the name of (Blazer?). He was a Jew but he was a white man. There was VAH Andrews and Company, and a lot of the other ones I used to ship to that I've been really condemned after a while. I just stuck to two or three of them. They gave me a standard price and I never had to worry about whether the market was up or down or not. I said, "Well, I want so much." I used to get a standard price. They'd send me a check every week.

JK: Did you always send in barrels? What about later when the barrel company burned out? How did you ship?

JT: Well, I shipped in sacks. Sometimes I shipped two bushels in a sack, and they were pretty heavy to lift. So, I just put a bushel in a sack and shipped them that way. They seemed to like them better too.

JK: What kind of sacks, and where did you get the sacks from?

JT: [inaudible] We used to get them to Riverhead.

MT: Siegel Brothers.

JT: Siegel Brothers, Riverhead. They'd furnish all kinds of sacks and bags [inaudible].

JK: Is that like a potato sack?

JT: Yes. A bushel in a sack. But I could have shipped two bushels in them, but they were so heavy to lift. I didn't go in for that much.

JK: Did you enjoy the oyster business?

JT: I loved it. I loved it. It was such a thrill in the fall that we used to go in the latter part of August, turn the oysters to see what they looked like. That was when they were just starting to show whether they'd be good or not, whether they'd be fat.

JK: Oh, you would go out and just check?

JT: We used to go all over all our beds and try five or six with an oyster knife. We could tell

right away whether they would be good or not.

JK: You always saw them as Blue Points?

JT: Yes.

JK: Because that has a name out on the country.

JT: That was the name. Yes. Blue Points, yes.

JK: Did you ever hear the so-called California Bed down west of here?

JT: I read a lot about Oregon – about oysters being there, about Oregon, but I don't know much about California.

JK: No. I do not mean that. I mean in the bay, west of the bay, or someplace here called a California Bed.

JT: There were names at that time.

JK: They named them like that?

JT: I wouldn't know about where they were.

JK: Do you know any other people who had oyster sloops and worked them and might be living today?

JT: I guess all the old hands all died off. All people my age, I guess I'm really the only one. A couple other ones around.

JK: Thomas Locker, I think, owned a sailboat at one time or another, did he not?

JT: The fellow that used to live up here at that little house at the fire department? His name was John. He could tell you. If he was only alive. Boy, he...

JK: John who?

JT: John Locker.

MT: Well, Thomas Locker, he didn't do any oystering.

JT: No. He didn't do much oyster business. He mostly worked as a watchman for the Blue Point. But he was in it all his life on the bay and different things, but he never was any shipper or anything. But he'd be smart. John, if he was alive, he could give you a lot of information.

MT: I guess they are all dead.

JT: Yes. They all died off. I'm really the only one around, I guess, that had business.

JK: Anybody remaining in John's family? I am thinking in terms of any photographs of his boats, any sail boat pictures that anybody...

JT: I wouldn't know whether he had any or not. I could ask Oliver. Maybe he'd know.

JK: Yes. They might know.

JT: That's his brother. He's retired too. I could ask him when I see him.

JK: Yes. That would be good. You can then notify me when I come over next to Mr. Duncan.

JT: I'll find out. Because he used to be on the bay and he's quite smart. Well, he was younger than me, but maybe he could get some information. He might have pictures of his brother's boat. That was a small one. Yes. I don't think there's anybody around that – not oyster. Tony Locker. No. I think they're the only two. There were all the young fellows who growing up, they don't know one end of the oyster from another.

JK: [laughter]

JT: A lot of them.

MT: [laughter]

JK: Did you like oysters to eat?

JT: Yes, I did. I loved oyster stew.

MT: My sister. I never cared.

JT: She had all the big oysters.

MT: I had a little oyster store. I loved them on the half shell when they're nice and cold with the river ice. But she loved oysters.

JT: I had eight bushel of shells that I had saved down in the back. The fellows said to me, "Do you want give me those shells? I've got some holes in my driveway." I said, "Go ahead." I had eight bushels of shells that we opened that we had oysters on the half shell. I opened four or five for lunch. So, this red sauce...

MT: We left them on a half shell and then...

JT: We ate eight bushel [laughter] with that.

MT: I'd fry them. She was nimble. She had two strokes. She'd be sitting there. I'd say to her, "Go and sit in there," because I'd have the windows – and she said, "I'm just going to sit here and watch you fry those." She'd go over to the stove and start to eat them. I'd say, "You won't eat any at the table. You won't eat any at the table." But she did. She'd even eat them cold on an oyster sandwich. I said, "How can you do it?" Oh, she says, "They're delicious." I never saw anyone eat oysters they she did.

JT: I'll tell you, if you want something delicious, you talk about steaming clams. Those little clams, you steam them out. But if you want something delicious, you want to steam oysters. We went down on the East Bay when they had all those beds down there full of oysters. We used to pick all the beautiful, round oysters out and ship them in the market. They were all crooked scraggs, I'd call them. Father, we got a big pot one day. We used to sort the oysters for him. He said, "I got a big pot." He says, "Give me a lot of those crooked oysters." So, he went and cooked them, steamed them, put a little water in the bottom of the pot and steamed them like he does clams. Boy, were they delicious, sweet, and tender. When you bake oysters in the oven, he used to have a big flat pan and put this oyster in the oven and bake them. Well, you more or less tough. But when you steamed them...

MT: I can imagine. I can...

JT: They're just as tender –

MT: Yes. They would be.

JT: – and juicy and lovely. But you don't want to steam them too long because they all dry up. If you ever get any oysters, then try that sometime, steam them. I love it.

MT: Do you like oysters?

JT: Yes, I do.

MT: So many people don't.

JK: Did your father like oysters?

JT: Oh, boy.

MT: Yes.

JT: Like I said, he used to be an oyster watchman. I used to be asleep in my bed in the side of the cabin there. He used to go drift across these oyster beds at night and tong a water pale. "What the devil are you doing?" He said, "Boy," he says, "I got some oysters." Yes. He'd sit there, open the oysters with a little vinegar pouring on the oyster and have a piece of bread with butter. [laughter] He sat there. He goes in oysters with his bread and butter. [laughter].

MT: Yes. Well, he was lucky enough to get a half bushel. We waited, oh, I guess a month for

them from the Blue Point stand here. Some fellow said, "I'll get you some." So, they were only giving him a half a bushel, but they were small. They were just what we liked. So, we had for several days on the half shell. We sent my sister in Patchogue some, and she enjoyed them. They liked them on the half shell too.

JT: Well, I've been honest and kind all my life. I still am trying to be honest and kind. But a lot of people don't think that way. If you can see the money that I lent out to people, and I never got it sent back. They don't owe me anymore.

JK: Speaking of – we talked about the Dutch before. I am probably going to ask the same question, but maybe you can help. Were most of the baymen or most of the people living around here Dutch when you were you...

MT: Yes.

JT: All the old hands before me, they were all Dutch people.

JK: Now, were they recently arrived Dutch, or they were here a long time before they...

JT: They lived quite a while here.

MT: Well, yes, some, and some came. Now, the people that live next door here, they came over...

JT: They came later.

MT: They couldn't talk that [inaudible 01:20:19].

JT: But they didn't know anything about oysters.

MT: He was evidently a fisherman. He looked as if he had been on the –

JT: Yes. He was a fisherman.

MT: – North Sea.

JT: He didn't know anything about oysters.

MT: They lived on the North Sea. He looked as if he was a rugged fisherman. When they came here, they were very poor. They had three small children. I remember my mother gave him a cradle. We used to send food over to them. He couldn't hold a job here at all. He just couldn't speak English. They went back to Holland. But most of the people here have been here quite some time. They all settled here.

JT: Now, why would they have settled here?

MT: Well, I guess everyone knew that it was people all here from Holland and just settled here.

JT: Was it because – were they oystermen back in Holland?

MT: I imagine so. Fishermen and oyster men.

JT: Oh, fishermen?

MT: Yes.

JK: So, they settled near the water here?

MT: Yes.

JK: So, would you say it could have been traditional?

MT: Yes, I think so.

JK: Were they related in any way to the Dutch of New York City, the people around here?

MT: Some of them, I imagine. Yes.

JT: Maybe some.

JK: You do not know for sure though.

MT: But I imagine so. I know our mother came over from Holland when she was three years old. My grandmother always lived in Sayville. My grandfather, his family was very wealthy. My grandmother used to tell me this when I was little. He came from the French aristocracy. They flew to Holland with evidently most of their money because she would go around with a big basket in Holland, different ones. She told me this later, that they moved apart too. They called her [inaudible]. She used to go around with a big basket and feed the poor.

JK: What did they call her?

MT: [inaudible]

JT: What does that mean?

MT: Mother (Burline?), that was her name. Their name was [inaudible], which was French. My grandfather was in Inwood. He got cold on the North Sea. I guess he evidently tried to work.

JK: He was a fisherman.

MT: Well, he had never worked, I guess in France. But when they went to Holland, I think he

tried to work as a fisherman, and he caught cold. He was never able to work after they came to America. He always sat in a chair. I can remember he had this awful cough.

JK: Why did he leave France?

JT: Revolution.

MT: During the French Revolution. They killed all the aristocracy. Yes. They got away to Holland with I think most of their money.

JK: So, you remember your grandfather telling you about this? Oh, and grandmother. Yes. Oh, I see. Gee, it goes way back to the French. That is a long time ago.

MT: My grandmother's father was a tailor to the king. He taught her how to sew. Oh, she was a beautiful sewer. She could line a coat beautifully. He was a sport. He would come home at 3:00 a.m. and knock on the front door with his gold-headed cane. My great-grandmother would have to get up and let him in. [laughter] My grandmother told me all this. I remember it all.

JK: That was your mother's side, did you say?

MT: That was on my mother's side.

JT: Now, what about your father's side? They were Dutch too?

MT: Well, I imagine they were, yes. I guess his parents were Dutch. But he was born in Bayport, my father.

JT: Now, what religion was the one that came from France? Was it Catholic?

MT: No.

JT: No.

JK: What would it have been? Dutch?

JT: I wouldn't know.

MT: My grandma went to this Christian church down here. Came here for years. Walked all the way from Sayville.

JK: What is the name of the church? Dutch –

JT: Christian Reform, is it?

MT: Dutch Church. They used to preach Dutch in the morning. She would always come down for the Dutch sermon, every Sunday morning.

JK: What denomination was it?

MT: It was a protestant.

JK: But I mean, what kind of...

JT: Christian Reform used to be the name. I don't know what it's called...

MT: Christian Reform, the name of the church.

JK: The Dutch around here, did most of them go to that type of church?

MT: Most of them went there and then to the one on Cherry Avenue.

JT: On Cherry Avenue too.

MT: The one on Cherry Avenue. That was the Dutch Reformed.

JT: Now, they named it the...

MT: Now, they named it The New Life.

JT: Yes.

JK: Now, you said that the people from Patchogue were not Dutch, did you say?

MT: No.

JT: I don't think there was any Dutchmen down here.

MT: No, I don't think so.

JT: There were all nationalities there. A lot of Irish went on up. I used to talk with them on the bay when I used to tong oysters. There's quite a few of them, Irish.

JK: So, about the majority of the baymen were Dutch?

JT: Yes.

MT: Yes.

JK: Could you give a guess as to what the next nationality might have been in...

JT: A small percentage.

JK: Oh, it would be very small?

JT: Yes. There was mostly people from West Sayville, Dutchmen, that went on the bay years back. Then there wasn't many from any other town much. Bay Shore, there was some. But my father would know.

JK: So, we are interested also in how the Dutch culture or whatever influenced the baymen, and what Dutch influence had in this area.

MT: Well, I guess in Holland, they lived on the North Sea, and they were all fishermen.

JT: Yes.

MT: Mostly lived on the sea all their life. I suppose when they came here, they did the same thing.

JK: Did you carry over any customs or traditions you recall? Are there any little things that are typically Dutch?

JT: No. I never went in too much for Dutch...

MT: Except the food things. We still cook a lot of Dutch food.

JT: We still make certain Dutch dishes. But likewise, if you ever want something good, you want to have Dutch lettuce.

MT: Dutch *sla* they called it.

JK: Dutch what?

JT: Boy, that is delicious.

JK: *Sla*?

MT: *Sla*. Yes.

JK: What is that?

JT: I don't know. In English, they call it Dutch lettuce, but boy...

MT: It's lettuce cut up fine. Then you mashed potatoes. You take sour pork. You dice that up, fry it out. Then you put vinegar in that when it's fried out good. Then you put vinegar. You put the mashed potatoes over the –

JT: Lettuce.

MT: – lettuce and then empty the other –

JT: All pork and the grease.

MT: – and mix it all up.

JT: The grease and the vinegar.

MT: Everybody loves it.

JT: Oh boy. They love it.

MT: They all say to me, "Oh, make some Dutch lettuce."

JT: My niece was here last night with her husband. We were talking about it and [laughter] I said, "Someday, we want you down for lunch, and Mildred will make you some." He was crazy. It is lovely and nice. You can make a meal of that because you have all this pork in it. You take your cup of tea or coffee and eat with it. You don't eat anything else.

MT: It's really a meal in itself.

JT: Yes. It's lovely.

JK: What else is Dutch? I noticed you have a windmill in the back of here.

MT: That's all Dutch stuff. That's all from Holland. Yes. All that too.

JT: How did you get it? Did you just happen to buy it or did –

MT: Yes.

JK: – they come with it?

JT: There used to be a store...

MT: There used to be a shop in New York. My sister, they used to go in for treatments. My sister was a nurse in New York, studied for years, thirty-five years.

JK: Oh, my gosh. A chuck full of...

JT: [laughter] There used to be a store...

MT: It's worth a fortune now.

JT: It is there until now. There used to be a store in New York. They used to buy that years ago, and it was cheap.

MT: They want a tremendous amount for it now. You can't look at it.

JK: Yes. Everything is hard. Well, you said that you did not have any affinity or yearning to learn about the Dutch or anything?

JT: No.

JK: You were [inaudible] in America. You are an American.

JT: I never went in for the Dutch. Like I said, when people say, "You are Dutch, I said, no, I'm an American. I was born in the United States. [laughter]

JK: What about the rest of the people there? Do you think they feel the same way, particularly the baymen?

JT: Well, I'll tell you, there isn't too many older people of Dutch descent on the bay. They mostly all died off and got away. There's all the different elements here now. Irish pirates, a lot of them.

JK: Yes. You hear that the Irish are always talking about going back to the good old side –

JT: Yes.

JK: – the old country. They have a link with Ireland. But would you say it is the same thing with the Dutch?

MT: Well, there was one man that lived up the street from us. We knew he was real Dutch. He always had this yearning to go back to Holland. Finally, he accumulated enough to go on this visit. He came back, and he said, "I was never so disappointed in my life. I was never so disappointed. Cold, I nearly froze to death." [laughter] He was disappointed in it. He says, "It wasn't what I thought it would be. It was cold."

JT: My brother used to go on a – before he got in business for himself, he used to go on his oyster boat for Rudolph. There used to be a Dutch fellow captain running it.

JK: What was the name of that boat? Did you tell me before?

JT: *Theodore Roosevelt.*

JK: Oh, yes, I have seen pictures of her. In fact, she was still around.

JT: She's at a clam dredges firm, Bay Shore border. They dismantled her and took everything off of her and ripped her all the way down to the waterline. Then they built her up again.

JK: Did they name her?

JT: She was the oyster steamer Rudolph used to dredge oysters with.

JK: Did he always have her, Rudolph?

JT: Yes. He always had her.

JK: He named her apparently.

JT: *Theodore Roosevelt*, yes.

JK: Was she built here or someplace?

JT: I think she was built here somewhere. Yes. I wouldn't remember where she was built. But this captain, he came from Holland. He had the job of being the captain and runner. He was a smart fellow. Then used to come home, nights, the brother, and talk about him. He kept raving about Holland. He says even the roses were so much sweeter in Holland than they were here. They used to come home, disgusted. Sometimes, I was going to say, "Then why the hell didn't you go back to Holland?"

[laughter]

MT: Well, some people say it's wonderful. I've always wanted to take a trip there, but I guess I won't anymore. But some people say it's affordable and others are disappointed.

JT: This girl across the street, she's going on a tour with a whole – I guess, what'd she say? Thirty or so?

MT: Yes.

JT: Well, she's going to Holland and all over. She's been two or three times. She says, "I'm going again."

JK: Did the church here hold the Dutch people together?

JT: Yes.

MT: Yes.

JT: Pretty good.

JK: They continue to speak in Dutch in the church?

MT: No.

JT: No, they don't anymore. No. Well, see, all the old hands have died off. It's all the children

now. They've got different ways.

MT: The pastor is still one of them...

JT: Yes. He is one of them.

MT: – for the young people here.

JT: Is he a Dutch extraction?

MT: No.

JT: His name is Pearson.

MT: Dr. Pearson. He still wonders.

JT: Wonderful minister. Yes. I used to work in the oyster shops down there years ago when I was a kid to learn a trade. When all these old Dutchmen were down there, I used to feel sorry for them. But all day long back. I don't know what they were paying. I guess about \$15 a week. That's what they were getting. They were contented and happy. They'd go there every fall. I don't know what they'd do during the summer months, but some would stay there and work the year round in that oyster shop. But...

[end of transcript]