

Interview subject: Bobbie Smith

Interviewer: Logan Collins and Blake Pavri

Project: Dock Stories

Transcriber: Blake Pavri

Primary Investigator: JST

Others present: N/A

Date of Interview: April 12, 2024

Duration: 57 minutes and 13 seconds

Place of Interview: UGA Marine Extension/Georgia Sea Grant, Brunswick, GA

[0:00:16](#)

BP: So this is an interview with Miss Bobby Smith on April 12 2024. And the interview is being conducted in Brunswick, Georgia, about the dock called Sapelo Shrimp, and it's part of the research project and interview collection titled dock stories. And the interviews are Logan and Blake. So tell us a little bit about your connections to this dock.

BS: I work there or I was in partnership with Bill Harris for 10 years. Last January, I sold my half to Bill.

BP: When did you first come to the dock or like when you started working there, something like that?

BS: Over 11 years ago, I just, we bought the dock with Bill. The dock was an old dilapidated, rundown dock and we brought it to where it's at now. And Bill has continued to build on it in the last year to bring it up toward a standard modern Ron's it whatever

LC: Since it was rundown, was the name always Sapelo shrimp?

BS: No it used to be Wards Dock. Mr. Ward, I believe, built it in the 50s and he passed away, really not sure, maybe somewhere in the 90s. I don't know exact dates on that. And Mr. Ward's family then sold a dock to a group of investors that was planning on putting condos there and that did not work out. Due to, the time we did not have county water out there and we didn't have county sewer so been on the water. There's not enough land there to put condos with all the utilities that it would need to run it is what my understanding was. Personally did not know that. That's just rumor was been told on the streets. I do know that we did purchase it from a group of investors and turn it back into a dock

BP: How long have you like connected to the dock?

BS: 11 years.

BP: 11 years. And what specifically was your role?

BS: I was half owner with Bill Harris. Obviously partnership with him is 5050

LC: What were some of your duties in that half partnership?

BS: We, the boats came into our dock. We unloaded fresh shrimp along with IQF which is individual quick frozen shrimp. We sold diesel fuel, oil and supplies to the docks. We would, once we unloaded them, we, if they had a buyer, we packed up for their buyer. If they didn't have a buyer, we did our best to find the highest price buyer that we could at the time to get the most

money for the shrimpers and we will package this shrimp up and whatever you know like sometimes they had been 100 pound crate sometimes it would be at 50 pound crate. If their IQS shrimp up they will be already frozen and put on pallets be 25 to 30 bags on each pallet would wrap them up and send them off to the processor.

[0:04:28](#)

LC: Is the dock similar to other docks operating in Georgia?

BS: I've never been around other docks. I mean I've visited a couple but never got into the how they operated pretty much

LC: Do you think there's anything unique about Sapelos dock?

BS: I think everything. I think that because of the renovation of the dock when we reopened it back up that we did some things that I would assume will be different. I mean we can unload fresh shrimp and freeze shrimp at the same time. We have a conveyor that brings our frozen shrimp from the boat up the ramp to where we take them off and put them on a pallet where, before we first started we had to do it manually like everybody else. We still have, it's still some manual labor but not as intense as it was

BP: And through the 11 years that you've been with the dock, what has the dock been through like stuff like casual- not casualties, but like-

BS: Praise God, we had no casualties

BP: Yeah. [laughing] Just like any kind of like repairments or anything like that?

BS: There's always repairs. Every year you gotta replace pilings. And due to the weight of the steel hull, we have a lot of steel hulls come into our dock or to Bill's dock now I should say. We had a lot of steel hulls come in and those boats weighed lots and lots of, have tonnage and then they're loaded with lots of shrimp and fuel and water and when they come in and they hit the dock, you know it causes a lot of wear and tear. Those steel hulls caused a lot of wear and tear on a wooden dock

[0:06:36](#)

LC: Can you tell us about some of the people you work with at the dock?

BS: You're always closer to some people than you are other people. Bill Harris is probably forgot more about shrimping in my opinion than most people will ever know as far as shrimping goes. His shrimp, fresh shrimp, IQS shrimp, he knew the ins and outs. He could look at shrimp and tell you almost that's a such a such size and that's why a shrimper- I don't know if you ladies know about how they count shrimp, but they count shrimp and three, three pound five pound. They usually, we always did three pound. You put three pounds of shrimp in a thing and then you count them out. Like you take three shrimp and count as one each time and that's how you get your count of your shrimp. And Bill could almost look at 'em every time and say Bobbie that's gonna count such and such and I said naw Bill, and he was pretty well on it. And then you had Marty Collins. Marty's a great shrimper. You had Michael Verdun, another great shrimper. We had some really good- but you got really close to all of them. I mean, whether they were the captains, whether they were the boat owners, or whether they were just the deckhands. You got close to em. I always considered each one of them a person

[0:08:22](#)

BP: I'm very excited about this next question. Will you tell me the funniest thing that has ever happened at this dock in your memory? [Laughs]

LC: You can list a few [Laughs]

BP: We can be here all day [Laughs]

BS: The first time I ever saw anybody OD. I'm a very naive 63 year old woman at the time I was 53 I guess when I started. I was very naive. I've never saw drugs in my life, don't really know what they look like, but the first time I ever seen anybody that did that, they were laid out I was jumping about Tim put up in the sky with my 200 pound self. Jumping up and down saying you're not gonna die on this dock! You're not gonna die on this dock! You're not gonna die on this dock! You can go down the road! But I'm sure that was hilarious. And then one day we were sitting there when we first opened, I will never forget. I was sitting there beside the VAT. And this guy walked by, and had this real flowery shirt. I caught him Stitches. He had his real flowery shirt, Hawaiian shirt and my girls were sitting there and I said that guy has just took a shower in cologne. And that's just, [inaudible] And they all just cracked up and said Bobbie, that's not cologne. That's marijuana. [laughing] So I'm very naive- I was always very naive and stuff even... But they had respect. I mean, the guys, the ladies on the boat, there was a few ladies around. They had respect for us at Sapelo because they knew that Bill nor myself tolerated that, but I'm sure things happen. I know things happen when we weren't there. But if we found out about it oh, it was on then. Because Bill would sick me on em [laughing]

[0:10:30](#)

BP: You said that the guy that you were talking about with the marijuana smell. You called him Stitches?

BS: Yes.

BP: Is there a story behind that?

BS: Yes, Stitches was madly in love with some woman of the day. And she just turned him off. It's a [inaudible] said he was going to commit suicide. So instead of cutting wherever you could, I don't even know you would do that. He cut his arm 'bout halfway and went to the emergency room, came back all bandaged up so I said your name's Stitches from there on out.

LC: You said you get, you would be sent to be sicked on people. What did that look like?

BS: I'd tell em. We don't allow that junk here. If you got to do it you got to do it away from this dock or you get high on that boat where I can't see it or know nothing about it. We don't tolerate that on this dock here and Bill to this day still stands that ground. It's sad that, and it is not just shrimpers. It is our world is, as you young ladies know. So many people have and, I don't know the answer to that problem. Me fussing probably didn't do a better good and they [to hide it]

LC: So that was the funniest, but could you tell us about some of your best memories that you had on the dock?

BS: There is one more funny thing. It was this captain by the name of Johnny Roberts he's passed on now. My daughter is, was young or is young. So I guess she would be about 30 when this happened. She's about five foot one, maybe 100 pounds, you know, a really cute little girl

[inaudible] and you know just really cute young lady. Well Johnny Roberts had been in the year before. Before I retired. He's got, he was managing the dock here in the summer. She's a school teacher. And so Johnny had met Scotty. So he come the next year he was from North Carolina and he called me on the radio he said- or on the telephone and he said this Bobby I'm so excited to meet you. He said I know you're so beautiful because your daughter is just absolutely dropped dead beautiful. I see well thank you Johnny. That's so kind of you. Well when he got to dock he come trancing down the dock up there to the office and he swings the door open and I was the only person there. He said I want to say this Bobbie. I said I am Bobbie. You could have seen his face just drop and he turned several different colors because I was nothing of what he said so I always took that [inaudible] that joke about Johnny. And what was your next question? I'm sorry.

[0:13:27](#)

LC: No, it's fine. Your best memory that you've had on the dock

BS: Spending time with my girls. Spending time with, we made some really good friends. Ricky Skinner and Peggy next door, they had the dock next door, Skitters Seafood, and I didn't know anything about nothing about nothing. I mean, I didn't even know one shrimp from another shrimp or how you count a shrimp and [inaudible] I've got to tell you I'm allergic to shrimp so I couldn't touch them. So Bill was out on the boats ramp and because we're just started I mean you know he had to be out there catching shrimp. He had to you know, feed his family. Well, here I am trying to unload a boat I had to call Peggy Ricky to go there and help me, tell me what I needed to do. So you met some great people. And I would say overall I made some true friends through the way and you have very few friends but I can honestly say that the Skinners are true friends of ours. There's a there's three boats at Southport, Florida that's owned by Gerald Nixon, the forgiven, the redemption, and the lady Denise. He is a pastor and he's always been there for us as well. Good memories, a lot of good memories. You just tend to forget the sad things and only remember the good things. Because there was so many good things to remember.

[0:15:15](#)

BP: You said that you spent time with your girls. Can you elaborate a little bit more on that and like what you did specifically with them?

BS: Of course I can! I am more happy to do that! Them girls learn how to pack shrimp. They learn how to get ice out of the ice freezer. They learn how to lift boxes of shrimp and stack them on top of pallets and then take and wrap those saran wrap around the pallets. Those girls learn how they bleach things down and scrub them down.

BP: Manual labor [laughing]

BS: Of course! I realized shrimping wasn't for them

BP: That was gonna be my next question

BS: We tried to, I always said we were a very family oriented dark. Bill has three grandchildren. At the time I only had one granddaughter and I consider her my daughter because all my children were fairly close to the age. [Inaudible] my granddaughter is another story but she, they all, I mean they were little and they would have to go down there that box it and pull that ice and that ice and shovel it on the ice and the shrimp

LC: So they grew up on the dock?

BS: 10 years. And when, Scotty was actually a school teacher at the time and then I've got one is a cosmetologist. One is a nurse and one that's a groomer and my granddaughter which I also consider is my daughter is cosmetologist. The funny joke about my daughter, it has nothing to do with shrimping, but she was a junior in college. She came home one night she says do you don't have to go to college? I said, No. [laughing] No.

LC: Do you think having them be around the dock for that long had any impact on just them?

[0:17:38](#)

BS: Yes, I do. I think it taught them a lot of good moral values. They would see I mean, you could hear people say duh duh duh but until you actually see and see the impact of negativity. It doesn't always register. I was, I had lived such a sheltered life up until I was 53. I had no clue. So my girls were exposed to it and seeing me. I mean, even though they were, [Scotty] would have been 9 when we first started and then Jennifer would have been 12 13. Then Maria would have been 14. And Peter would have been 16 17. So yeah, I think that because of what they saw, I mean I could preach it all day long. But until you actually see it, it gives you a different understanding. But I've always taught my girls that there's three things in life nobody can take from you. Number one is your salvation. I love the Lord, don't mind telling you that. Number two is your education and the third thing is just as equally as important. But your name will take you a lot farther than your feet ever will. I met a guy last week. And he said I've heard so much about you I was gonna drive out to the dock to meet you. He's a boat owner, does very well. And I'm like, why would you hear about me? He said everybody talk because if somebody calls me and I can help them and I know is for our [fake] is for a good reason. I'm going to do what I can to help em. And I've tried to instill that into my children but sometimes you got to be hard hearted and say no, you're going to do something wrong with this. So no, I'm not helping you. It's very hard because I'm not that kind of person.

[0:19:50](#)

LC: You said negative energy and that makes you think, what was the atmosphere of Sapelo's dock?

BS: At our dock? Lots of laughter. We had lots of laughter. I mean, the only time there wasn't laughter was when somebody had, didn't think Bill was there. I was there and they'd done something dumb and I had to go down there witnessing it. That was negative energy.

BS: Not real often, but it did happen from time to time because people have that mindset or of that mindset and you can I mean, you could preach all day long. Did it make them a bad person? I don't think it made them a bad person. I just think they got on the wrong track of life. And didn't know how to get on the right track. I think that some people will eventually overcome it, but it's far in between. It's just that

LC: You talked about the drugs and stuff, but was there anything else that would kind of get you on that bad list or the no no list at the dock?

BS: If you took something that didn't belong to you. I would give you the shirt off my back. And Bill will give you the shirt off his back. But if you stole something, it was on. I mean, one time

some ding dong stole my van because, I don't know, they stole my van and rigged it. That was, so anyway he ended up paying for it because he didn't have a driver's license but anyway. And just don't pick with me. I mean, if you want something, ask for it. If I can't give you that particular thing Imma help you get something of equal value or better. And Bill felt same way. Bill and I, I think Bill and I had a very good working relationship and we both agreed on stuff like that.

BP: What other things that people steal besides a van? Because that's pretty big.

[0:22:05](#)

BS: Well that's because he needed to go get something he knew wasn't allowed to have at four o'clock in the morning. I mean, like they would. There's a lot of shackles and just things that goes on boats that they could take and steal, you know kinda stick in their pocket and go sell it on the street for whatever. Yeah. Stuff that did not belong to them. Sometimes they would pick up shrimp, I mean, we, Bill and I also took a great deal of pride when and I'm sure Bill still does that we were the eyes and ears for the boat owners because most of the boats were owned by someone other than the person that was a captain and the crew. So you would have people who steal shrimp off the boat and you'd have to report that you know, we've had to call the police because they had took shrimp and we had a camera system set up so we would have [Inaudible] and I wouldn't have problems and just like that, but [ya know, horribly]. But there are, I mean, this is a hard job. Where were those guys will come in and they will be tired and you know and I understood that and they would want to go to McDonald's or they would want to go wherever. But you, it's just like, it was just like family. They were all family. We were all you know. You might not agree with everything. Everybody in your family says there's some that you'd rather talk to and not others. But at the end of the day you told all of you joke do you smile? Do you know?

BP: Would you describe it as a tight knit community then?

BS: Yes, yeah. Sapelo Shrimp company to my, in my opinion, was a very tight knit community. I mean, if you dock there you were part of our family.

LC: How many boats would you say dock?

[0:24:27](#)

BS: I would say we probably had, trying to think. You know they didn't all come the same time and some would come this year and wouldn't come for several years and then they come back and some would come maybe once or twice that would never come in. So I'd say we probably service between 75 and 100 vessels.

LC: Is that at a time or just over?

BS: No. Over the 10 years. Now you would normally have, what they, we would try to stagger it out because they knew that if they all piled in the same time you can only unload max two boats at one time. And we only tried to unload one boat at a time but sometimes it will get in a pinch and we were able to unload because we had the fresh on this end of the dock and the frozen this end of the dock. If we could find enough dock labor, because my girls grew up and they all went away. And so then we had to find dock labor to go help us. And it's very hard to find dock labor

because it's just day laborers because you don't have enough work to sustain a workforce or at our dock because we're really small

LC: How many people did you need to work? Is like the dock labor

BS: on a fresh boat you would need a person to run the bucket that would the bucket is a big stainless steel tub. They would go over there to the boat they would shovel, the people on the boat would shovel the shrimp into the bucket. That guy was [around] to the dock was swinging it back around, dump it into the VAT then you would have somebody running the scales to check you know to make sure you had whatever amount you would gonna pour that whatever you're pouring them in was correct. And then you would have to have a couple more people to stack so you would need, on a fresh boat you need about four good laborers. I mean, most time Bill was there doing it. So, but you'd need two extra people off the street and a minimum, three will be great. And then when you're doing freezer boat you got to have one down on the end at the dock where they took the winch in [is on ARM] and you'd sling it out there into the boat. They would go down, it would go it would be there they would hook the line to where the bags on it and they would reel it up to swing it back, put it on a conveyor belt and it would roll it up into where they were stacking about 40 foot up the dock and you would need one on the winch and then you would need at least at a bare minimum two good stackers. But three preferably and four with a [padre]. Some boats will come in you know sometimes you'd have 500 bags sometimes you could have 900 to 1000. So as a coordinator, many shrimp was on the boat and it wasn't every day that you had a boat

[0:27:53](#)

LC: What did that look like there in the days of the dock that you didn't have a boat to unload?

BS: There's always something to do. You had to make sure that the [debt] that everything was working like it should there wasn't a busted pipe there wasn't. The fuel system was working like it's supposed to be, you know, just cleaning the bathrooms or whatever you know, it was always something to do

BP: So what changes have you seen in the industry like in the water or the weather? Or sea life in general over the years

BS: I don't see as many boats. [I mean] I grew up inland. So I really don't know a whole lot about the fishing community. I would come down on weekends. And there used to be boats everywhere and they just kind of started fading away. So I've seen lots of and lots of boats kind of go away. You know, the older boats were just, it's hard to find crew. That's one of the biggest things that I see the biggest downfall. Is hard to find crew that will go out. On a freezer boat you're out about 30 days

[Interruption, phone was ringing]

BP: Make sure everything's recording still. Yeah

[0:29:48](#)

BS: It's very hard. It's very hard to get crew. It's a hard job. It's a very hard job. I mean, it don't look like it is that hard. And these little shrimp have little things on that'll poke ya, and they hurt. And it's cold and it's hot and you'd been up for 20 hours 23 hours you know you're just tired

you're ill, you'd been with the same people on a 80 foot, I mean 80 foot is not very big when you got three or four people on that boat together. You've got no place to kind of get out and get to yourself. So it is a tough job and it takes a special kind of person to do it

LC: Have you noticed any other changes in the water, water or the weather or the sea life or anything like that?

BS: I don't have an answer to that. It appeared to me that we wasn't, in some years you gettin more than you do other years. But shrimping is farming. It's just on the water versus on land. It's the only difference. I mean, you're like some years you got a great harvest of your wheat, your corn or soybeans or whatever. It is the same way with shrimping or fishing. Some years you have great years, some years is gonna, you know, just hit as the prices you know there again and it goes back then the price of fuel I mean that affects everything

LC: Going back to the dock, what hard times did the dock ever experience?

BS: Okay, you've got to be [honest] there's all collapsed and failure you know, it's, it was a struggle for the first few years. I mean, we have payments to make and insurance to pay and power bills to pay. I mean, it was a struggle and then I can't remember. I guess it's been about five years ago. I can't remember the exact time of this either. I call him [Iceberg Andy]. Andy had the ice plant outside of Ilona and all you would do if you had an [ice pay] you'd call and say hey Andy send me an, I need 10 blocks of ice or 50 blocks whatever many blocks by somebody wanted and a block of ice weighed 300 pounds. I [spent] it because when they and he says, Bobbie what you doing and I said I'm just doing whatever Andy, you know how things are at this dock. He goes well, I just want to let you know that I'm not gonna be doing ice year. I said hello, I know we got a bad connection Andy! He said oh no I think you are right, [he said] my system Andy said is old and he said it's just gonna cost so much to bring it up to date, need to get it to where it needs to be going he said someone needs put in a ice plant! Well that sounded so easy. Well it wasn't that easy. So Bill got on it and we already had a building there. So Bill said, Well, we're gonna order some icemakers I think he ordered two 10 ton. We already had like a six ton in there that we just made for packing regular shrimp, but we had to have ice that you could blow on these boats so these shrimpers could go out there. Well then Boones decided they would do the same thing which I mean, so with Sapelo Shrimp company and Boone Seafood had to jump on and get an ice plants put up to be able to for these people that was coming in April to have ice to be able to shrimp in Southeast Georgia. And that's a big thing. You got to have that [ice made] but your icemaker goes down? The whole world stops. If it's a [freezer boat], so that was a tough time, that was a real tough time. But with God's help, we made it through that.

[0:34:45](#)

LC: How did the addition of the ice plant affect the dock?

BS: It gave you one more thing to worry about. More power that you had to pay. You, and you would now you go in there and you would scoop it out whether you had the, the ice makers I mean, I can't even begin to tell you what it is what what how much it costs. It was probably \$150,000 For ice makers. Bill what you had to do just - and we had a lot of it. Thank God for that. Then you had to get a forklift. Box, Excuse me, a bobcat to go in there and scrape the ice



out. And we would, you know, a scoop of ice is 450 pounds and then you had to do your math. Oh we put you know and you want to make it fair to everybody. But it costs a lot of money to make ice and it doesn't seem like it will cost a lot of money. But believe me when you got that power bill you went into sticker shock.

BP: You said that you bought 2 10 ton icemakers? What was the difference in price if you remember from the 6 ton to getting that 26 ton?

BS: I cannot remember. I don't remember. But it was quite a bit because they went up everything. This was during the time now. Thank God, I believe it was right before COVID, I believe if memory serves me right .Could be, time has a way of getting away. But things were [edging] up then. I mean everything was pulling up

[0:36:33](#)

LC: Was the dock impacted by COVID at all?

BS: No. We kept mowing right along. If you had COVID you'd stay away. Away

BP: So besides the ice that you were just talking about, did the dock have any other financial struggles? I think you mentioned that a building burned down or collapsed at the beginning?

BS: No, the building was the dock that we have.

BP: Oh, okay.Yeah. So were there any other financial struggles that the dock had?

BS: Just day, it was just day to day operations. I mean, it was just you know, there's, it's just day to day operations. I mean, it's just like at your house. You gotta pay power, you gotta pay water. You gotta pay property tax. You gotta fix anything that breaks down. And anything that has moving parts on saltwater tends to break down a lot quicker than anything. This back office [inaudible, laughing from everyone]. Then you've got you know, your insurances that you have to have

LC: What insurances are necessary for a dock?

BS: If you've got it finance, you got to have, just like you would have full coverage your, you know, your liability, your, if it burns down, wind and hail, flood insurance. I don't know if y'all know about flood insurance, but that will just definitely, flood insurance. So you got to have all your insurances. [And even if it's] not paid I mean even if it is paid off, you still need those have liability insurance you definitely need because anything can happen. And there's, you're on the water so you definitely need wind and hail

[0:39:05](#)

BP: Did it flood a lot?

BS: No. We will never flooded. We, are, Sapelo Shrimp Company never flooded. The water came up to where the walkways out on the dock. But we never flooded. Thank you Jesus.

LC: When you think about the future of commercial fishing in Georgia, what do you, what do the docks today need to be successful?

BS: Boats. Fuel needs to calm down. Process route needs to, and I don't know the answer to that the [price], the price of shrimp or the price of fuel because the shrimper gets such a small amount for the price of shrimp compared to what there are in retail. And you say oh that's not fair. But as we were talking earlier, you can't get anybody to do anything for under \$15 an hour today. And

you're lucky if you get somebody that either told you when you say you go pay them \$15 an hour because most of the time they're not interested. So, it drives- [I mean, the time it leaves] the dock by way of truck and it goes to a processor for the processor to be you know, process completely go through all those little hands and all those little people. Then you've got to put it on a truck and it's got to be sent to a grocery store and then it's got all these little people at the grocery store it has [inaudible] and all this adds up so that's what drives the price at are, that we see as a retail price. So I don't have the answer to that. Labor. You know, just get people to work.

BP: So, in the future when you think about future storms, hurricanes or unusually high tides, how do you think this specific dock will fare?

BS: I think Sapelo Shrimp Company will fare as well as anything else. I don't think it, you know, it's, Bill and I always maintained it and he's maintained the last year and a half to the standards that it needs to be [because you know] when it comes to storms, just [depends] if you get a direct hit because, but overall I think it's a good solid sound dock I mean.

[0:42:21](#)

BP: Is there any kind of improvements that you think could just make it even more successful?

BS: I think if we had mooring points placed out there where you've, I can't remember how I want to say 180 waterfoot [180 waterfront] and I can't remember if that's correct. But, you know, if we had some mooring points out there that the boats could come in, they can unload. If this patient, they going to be there for two weeks because they've been out for 30 45 days, and the crew wants to take off a couple of weeks. If we had mooring points out there that they could tie up to, I wish that somebody would help get those so the boats wouldn't have to be tied to the dock all the time rubbing on there, you know, even during storms that there was mooring points out there that was, they could tie those boats to those that would help the boats. It would help not put all that pressure on the docks. That's something that I have this real been really dear to my heart for a long time

LC: What are some recommendations you have for the future of the commercial fishing industry?

BS: Mooring points, mooring points [giggling], mooring points. I don't know because I don't know. Are you talking about boats? I don't really know anything like, I've never been on a shrimp boat. I've never been, none of my family ever shrimped or anything like that. As far as the docks go they mean, I just, I don't. I don't have an answer to that question.

LC: If you don't have any recommendations, do you have any knowledge that you would pass on to other dock owners?

BS: Pray. The funny story about [me being on a dock] is I would have never done it. I would have never done it. My husband decided that he wanted to own a dock and so he and Bill went into a partnership together and he went a different way. So anything, look at what other people were doing, you know. Or they say- you don't have to reinvent the wheel. But sometimes you got to paint the wheel. Does that make sense? I mean, fresh, you know there's always fresh ideas always every day. Every day our world is changing. People are coming up with different things of how to do things better. And so I would, I would be looking at what everybody else is doing

and say, Well, is this working or why is this working? Will it work for me? Or why is this not working? How can I improve that to work for me? And that's what I did. I mean [I told] everybody did Bill and I always agree on everything? No. Did it always work out right? No, I was a very, I'm very headstrong and I'll try anything that I think it's gonna work. I mean, like the conveyors I mean, you know, not very few docks have the system that Bill has where you have that little arm that goes out there they just drop the hook down the hole and pull the shrimp out. And put on the cover and cover it up into the building and then stack it on things. Very few docks are able and, I don't know. I haven't been to very many docks so I can't speak for any docks really. But I don't know of any docks or very many docks that you can unload a fresh shrimp and a freezer boat at the same time because fortunately we had enough space that we could have a fresh boat over here and a freezer boat over here, but you get enough people we can we do them both at the same time and have done it. Support one another. I, you know, encourage one another, support one another. It's no "I" , it's "We." Work together

[0:47:35](#)

LC: You said something about disagreements with Bill. Were any of those over the dock?

BS: Of course! I'm very headstrong and Bill knows- Bill has [forgot] more than I will ever know about fishing, about shrimping, and about all running the dock. And so yeah, I aggravated him so much about [laughing] this is hilarious. The VAT, the fresh water VAT sit on this side. We unload the fresh shrimp right here, which meant we didn't have enough room that we can unload a freezer boat down here on this other side. And I said Bill, if we just take this wall out! Bobbie. And that went on and went on for months. And finally one day I got a hammer, a sledgehammer, [inaudible, laughing] I have no strength at all and I was just to move out the way! [Phone buzzing] And so he took that wall down and move that VAT over and it was probably, it works so wonderful. But I can only give Bill credit for that. I can't even, I dream it up but he did it. I've been [inaudible] Bill did all the work you know, he just, I mean he didn't always you know just Bill was like a brother that I never had. I mean, I've just kind of I've stepped away and not really gone because I don't walk anybody to ever think that I'm trying to tell somebody how to do something. And I have a tendency to do that. So by staying away Bill and I have no problems. I feel like I call, I know Bill can call me and we will take care of whatever. But it's just best when you leave. And I was that way when I left, when I left the government when I retired. I walked away and I never went back. And it's not that I didn't like the people or did like my job. It was just, I'm very opinionated on everything. I bet y'all find that hard to believe! [laughing] Anybody that's talked to me for 30 seconds will find that hard to believe.

[0:49:48](#)

LC: working with Bill at the dock, do you have any good memories?

BS: I have lots of good memories. We had a lot of good laughs, a lot of good laughs. Like I said, Bill was kind of like the brother I never had. He would say Bobbie, you do know that- and everything he told me about somebody usually was right. But I was always the person to get, to give the benefit of the doubt. And that's the reason I don't have anything today is because I will give you the shirt off my back. But I was a top, you know, some, whatever somebody came and

needed something and I would take my money, it wasn't dock money. I would take my money and I would do whatever. You know just there's just the way we did these a lot of times it would come from Sapelo Shrimp Company but would come out of my pocket because of whatever. But Bill and I had, I mean, his grandchildren were born while we were together at the dock, three wonderful grandchildren. His daughter got married. Yeah, we've had some good ups, some good downs. It's a good day on, so it was definitely like family. Nothing negative to say I mean, [laughing] he would probably like to string me up by my toenails most days but, it was okay. It was like brother sister. But you know we had each other's back. I mean it was, I didn't [inaudible]. I have to see something. Bill could envision things. Bill was envisioning this ice plan he was trying to tell me. I said I don't understand it. Well, what's so hard to understand?? I don't see no walls! I don't see what you're talking about. I didn't understand it! So little things like that. I mean just, kind of like the wall getting removed. Bill couldn't see my point of view and take the wall down. [Phone buzzing] But then once the wall got down, he did a fine job. And I give him 100% credit for taking that wall down and 100% credit for [fixing]. Because then there was this [Boone] thing that I couldn't understand this. I said Bill, I don't understand it. He said you will when it gets put up. I said okay  
[Phone continues buzzing and ringing]

[0:52:27](#)

BP: And so if you had any money to invest in the dock, what would you spend it on specifically?

BS: In stock or the dock?

BP: The dock. Sorry

BS: [If had any money,] Bill and I did a lot. A lot. Like we had two fuel tanks. We were able to bring in three tankers of fuel at a time. That was a good investment that we did. I would say putting in cold storage. I would say having a place to keep the product that's something that we lack that I see we lack here in southeast Georgia. I mean maybe there's plenty of cold storage out there that I don't know about. But that was one thing that you know, because all your shrimp come in at one time basically, right now all your [shrimp] could be 1000s upon 1000s of pounds of shrimp coming in. And you know, you can only process so many in one day. So they had to be kept- they gotta be kept cold. Cold storage would be, I think if somebody had the means to, the place to put a cold storage that will be a great investment

LC: Do you have anything else that we haven't talked about today about whether it's memories about the dock or advice or any anything you're seeing about the fishing industry and docks that you'd like to tell us about?

BS: No, but like we have covered it all ladies. It has been very good reminiscing over all the wonderful things. Walk down memory lane I should say this has been.

[0:54:25](#)

BP: Well, we wanted to say thank you. It was very lovely to hear from you actually. I enjoyed this a lot. [laughing from everyone] Yeah, we're gonna turn off the recorders now.

BS: Ladies y'all were great

BP: We try

BS: There's so many memories you know, and I'd like to say they were all great because you have a tendency, I don't know if you've ever lost a parent or, but now that I'm older and I've lost my parents, I only want to remember the good things. I don't remember that. I don't want to remember them telling me, no, not to do something because you're gonna get in trouble if you do do it. I probably did do it. I probably did get in trouble, but only [would want to] remember all the good things and it's the same way about the dock. I mean, it's the same way about my work career. I worked 34 years for the government. And I won't, and I have, I'm sure there was bad times in my life but I was spoiled. I was really spoiled. And that's the reason I act the way I do today. So spoiled.

LC: Is that why you felt the need to put the real work skills for your daughters on the dock?

BS: Yes. I grew up working hard. I grew up on a farm and my daddy had the cleanest onions in the whole wide world. We got off the bus and we [hoed onions] every day whether they needed hoeing or not. Then we got time between, now this was before the [inaudible]. So one day I was, we picked up my dad's friend and married young lady that had young kids because his wife passed away and I was taken to the ball field when we rode by these onion fields and these Hispanic people out there clipping onions. And I said you know I used to do that when I was y'all's age. I guess they were 10 11 12 years old. We didn't realize you were Mexican! Casper white here! But it's just funny how most a world was changed and your- ladies, if y'all remember anything about me, cherish every moment. Cause you're not promised the next one. And the only thing when you leave this world that you will leave behind is not money. It's your memories. Because I promise you, when I leave this world you girl's gonna say that Bobbie, we are going to dig her up and kill her! She's left all these memories behind but we sure did have a lot of good laughs. [laughs]

[Talking about separate project, talking about gift card.]

Ends interview

[0:57:13](#)