



**Capt. Neal Groom**

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**Interviewee:** Capt. Neal Groom  
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**Interviewers:** Ginger-Linn Corson & Capt. Howard Shenton  
**Videographer:** George Daly  
**Transcribed by:** Donna Williams, February 2006  
**Oral History Coordinator:** Mavis Daly

[Interviewer is sitting across from two men who are seated on a sofa across from Ms. Corson.]

Qt: “Welcome. Today is the 25<sup>th</sup> of November, the year 2000. We’ve all had our Thanksgiving dinners two days ago, and we’re anxiously awaiting the outcome of our Presidential election to see who’s won, whether we’re going to have a President Bush or a President Gore. My name’s Ginger Corson, and I’m here today with Capt. Neal Groom and Capt. Howard Shenton. And we’re going to be talking about early days of Shadyside. Capt Neal, tell us where you were born and what year you were born.”

NG: “Born 1911 in Middlesex County, Virginia.”

Qt: “What was the name of the town in Middlesex County?”

NG: “Wake was the local post office that I know of...”

Qt: “Wake? Wake, VA? OK. What year did you come to Shady Side?”

NG: “It was either 38 or 39 I don’t remember but I do know I run oysters the first year to Baltimore. We got here right at the beginning of the oyster season, and then I run tomatoes for two summers, but I was working at the experimental station when the Japanese hit Pearl Harbor.”

Qt: “The experimental station – what’s that?”

NG: “Up in Annapolis in the government ? center? “

Qt: "Is that on the Navy base"?

NG: "Across the river ...?North of Dever ??

Qt: "OK. Is that where they call the octopus towers"?

NG: "That's the North Center and I worked at the experimental station right across the river from Annapolis where the ships come in. I don't know the name of it."

[Capt. Shenton interjects: "Ask Capt. Neal to explain about running oysters to Baltimore, what it entailed, like, where did he get the oysters, who did he take them to, crate them to, and so forth."]

Qt: "OK, can I go one step further back from that? How did you know Mr. Halleck"?

NG: "Oh, I'd met him...I'd run a boat in Virginia, see, and the old man died and I didn't have no job, and, well, one of my friends knew Capt. Bern."

Qt: "Capt. Bern Halleck"?

NG: "Uh huh. And he was going to hire a man to run her, and I'd like to have a job, and I come up here for \$18 a week."

Qt: "\$18 a week! OK. And you came up here buy boat"?

NG: "Yeah. I come up here on the deck"

Qt: "On the deck? What kind of a car was it"?

NG: "A Ford."

Qt: "An old Ford. OK, and what was the name of the boat you came on"?

NG: "Thomas F. Jubb."

Qt: "The Thomas F. Jubb. And that was owned by Capt. Bern Halleck"?

NG: "Uh huh."

Qt: "And how All right. So you came into Shadyside...were you alone? Did you have any family with you"?

NG: "No. I brought my wife up after we got settled, you know. It wasn't real quick. Cause if I was here on Friday night or Saturday night, I'd go home. It would take about two hours."

Qt: "By boat"?

NG: "No."

Qt: "You would drive then"?

NG: "I would drive a car ... every chance...."

Qt: "All right, so you started working for Capt. Bernard, and you were... What would happen when you said you would run oysters to Baltimore? What does that mean? You'd get oysters from where"?

NG: "Right here in the river."

Qt: "You'd catch them"?

NG: "No, I didn't catch them...I bought them."

Qt: "OK. So you were the man on the buy boat, when the oystermen would come in with their catch, and then you'd take the buy boat and just drive on up to Baltimore"?

NG: "That's right."

Qt: "And who would you see there? Where would you go in Baltimore?"

NG "What ..Back Basin."

Qt: "Back Basin"?

NG: "Killion was the man's name we run the oysters to and ...

Qt: "Do you remember how much you got for a bushel of oysters?"

NG: "When I come here they was 40 and 60."

Qt: "\$40 and \$60 a bushel"?

NG: "No, 40 cents and 60 cents a bushel!"

Qt: "A bushel? Wow! [Laughing] And what was the differentiation? Was one small oysters and one was large oysters"?

NG: "It was the foolish thing you ever heard. The location. At Cantler's Bar up there, they had a nice old round oyster. They paid 60 cents on them. And the most out of...looks like to me...come from Hawkins ?? Point, when I was down the Bay here ...and I paid 40 cents for them."

Qt: "But they didn't like those oysters"?

NG: "No."

Qt: "Were they ugly"?

NG: "No, they were pretty oysters!" [Laughing]

Qt: "But they weren't nicely shaped or something"?

[Capt. Shenton interjects: "What they were...with the price of it was that in most cases, the buyer would have some one that would shuck them and see the condition of the oysters, whether they were fat or lean. And if the

oysters could be fatter on one oyster bar, maybe where the tide was stronger, and so that's what determined the price was the condition of the oyster, and whether it was fat or lean.”]

QT: “So it was actually the inside of the oyster that counted. It didn't matter what the outside looked like”?

[Capt. Shenton: “That's right. When a bushel of oysters shucked five pints, six pints or eight pints, and that buyer pretty well knew that before he purchased these oysters. And what Capt. Neal did, he would charge the freight for taking the oysters from West River to Baltimore. So much per oyster”

Qt; “So where did your buy boat sit when you waited for the men to come in.”

NG: “We just waited. We didn't catch any oysters.”

Qt: “But were you at a dock when the men came in with their...”?

NG: “We anchored in the Creek.”

Qt: “Parish Creek”?

NG: “Yes. We didn't have no kind of wharf then. But when we got a run down to Solomon's Island ? towards ?? ..at that time, we had plenty of oysters. It looks like every other day I'd go down there with 1800 to 2200 bushels oysters. Then I, in the spring of the year, after the oysters, I'd run seed oysters from down the James River up to Croom's Island, when Warren Denton canned a lot of oysters on his side(?) ”

Qt: “Warren Denton”?

NG: “Ugh huh. Right where the bridge goes across from Benedict to Horn (?) Point, I planted oysters right there. He had to dredge them up to build that bridge.” [Laughing]  
“Yes sir, the Patuxent River was a good oyster river.”

Qt: “The Patuxent was...what do you think made that a good oyster river?”

NG: “The tide...the tide runs so strong.”

[Capt. Shenton: “Probably a good growing bottom for the oysters.”]

NG “Yeah, that's right. Harmon (?) Point was a good, hard bottom.”

Qt: “They need a hard bottom”?

NG: “That's the best.”

Qt: “Do they like sand or mud at all”?

NG: “No, not that...See, it wasn't wide enough for the wind ... you don't know sea .. just a small shop?, we'd call it.”

[Capt. Shenton: “What Capt. Neal is telling you is that a packer like Warren Denton or Woodfield up here at Galesville, they get big contracts to supply shucked oysters to go to chain stores like Safeway or Giant; and in order to make that supply or keep that supply going, they have to have so-called unlimited access to oysters. So

they buy these oysters in the spring of the year, really when the price is low, and put them on leased bottom, bottoms that have been leased from the State. And they're usually in sheltered areas, as Capt. Neal has told you, where they can go there and dredge them and take them up any time that they need them. Otherwise, they wouldn't be able to fulfill these big contracts that they have."]

NG: "Warren Denton, he shucked for Safeway."

Qt: "He did? So he not only bought the oysters from you, he had the shuckers and canned them and all that sort of stuff and his plant was where?"

NG: "Still there, still working. 'Course, but Warren Denton been long gone."

Qt: "Where's his plant"?"

NG: "Croom's Island."

Qt: "Croom's Island . Now did any one else work for you on your buy boat"?"

NG: "Yeah, that old colored boy... Zachariah is what we called him. Isn't that something? I can't even think of it. He was from Washington."

[Capt. Shenton: "I never knew his real name, but they called him 'Zachariah'".]

Qt: "Did he live around here"?"

NG: "Yes, it was four or five brothers."

Qt: "Now when you first came here, where did you live"?"

NG: "Oh I lived on the boat until I found a little house that my wife and I could live in. We rented that for \$10 a month."

Qt: "Whom did you rent from"?"

NG: "Warren Crandall."

Qt: "Warren Crandall? And where do you live now"?"

NG: "Down on Atwell Road down by the...you know where the laboratory is down there"?"

Qt: "Used to be Chesapeake Instrument Company"?"

NG: "Uh huh, I'm right next to it."

Qt: "Who did you buy that house from"?"

NG: "Leonard Rogers."

Qt: "Oh, he was my great uncle."

NG: “Yeah, that’s right. You’re so right. “ [Laughing]

Qt: “Well, the only reason why I’m not related to you is because you came from Virginia, ‘cause Glorious is my cousin.”

NG: “Yeah, you see, the two years I worked on the boat, I didn’t get to know the families. Now like the Niemans and Crandalls ... see I knew all them because I bought oysters from them, but the families I never knew until, oh, after I went to work for the government. See, when they had the draft, I was the first number come up in Shady Side, and I was too old for combat. So they told me I had to get a government job. So I had to get off the boat. Capt. Burroughs came by the house one morning and made Janey mad because I didn’t come see him the night before. ‘Cause she wrote to the Naval Academy and got an application, and it took three or four before they’d make me ? eligible?, And then when they called me, they told me I had to get off, you know, and get a defense job. So, it didn’t worry me any. I hated to get off the boat, though, you know ‘cause people I had growed up with and met all over the Chesapeake Bay, I was ‘gonna miss all that.”

[Capt. Shenton: “Capt. Neal, tell us some of the other things that you freighted on the job besides oysters. That you ran ...tomatoes?]

NG: “Stones!” [Laughing]

Qt: “Stones”? [Laughing]

[Capt. Shenton: “Well, I thought...I was thinking about stones, and that’s an interesting thing because the stone that they freighted was used to prevent beach erosion. People would buy the stones.]

NG: “All around the shore...every where.”

Qt: “The big stones?”

NG: “Well, they were big to me. That old Italian we dealt with in Baltimore, he said ‘25 to 35 pounds is a one-man stone’, and he said one of the ...the colored boys up here, they can carry three or four of them one-man stones’ and he thinks they all ought to be that big. And if you take a whole load to ? ? Manny ?? little stones. Now them ? full stones, like one-man stones, they took up a couple under their arms and up and drop ‘em off wherever they want ‘em.”

Qt: “He didn’t know what strong men we had in Shady Side.”

NG: “That’s right.”

[Capt. Shenton: “The way they did it, as I understand it, was that Capt. Neal would bring the stones wherever to where they were supposed to be placed. Then they would take and use a lighter, in other words, they would take a smaller boat to take them off the big boat and take them in shore to where they were to be placed to do what they were intended t do.]

Qt: “Sure, so it’s technically what I’m thinking of as rip-rap.”

[Capt. Shenton: That’s the right word.”]

NG: “That’s exactly right.”

Qt: "And they could get pretty awkward."

NG: "Yeah. We got some big stones 'cause (?) Waxton breakwater you know like at, you know, Beverly Beach, and they had to be 5 or 600 pounds."

Qt: "Wow."

[Capt. Shenton: "Well, tell us about running tomatoes, Capt. Neal. Was that a good freight or was it ..."]

NG: [Laughing] "I enjoyed it."

Qt: "Where did you get the tomatoes"?

NG: "Over at Eastern Point, Chestertown and Rock Hall."

Qt: "So the farmers would just bring their tomatoes down to the dock"?

NG: "In baskets. So we loaded the baskets on the boat and I'd take them to Baltimore. It was the (?) Gibbs Packing Company that I run to. But I also run tomatoes on the other old boat that I run down in Virginia before I come up here."

Qt: "Any other type of freight that you carried on that boat"?

NG: "That one in Virginia, I carried everything, but the jib I never I did make a trip of wood from Annapolis to (?) Ocean City, New Jersey. And I went down to Tappahannock, that's on the Rappahannock River, and loaded wood and carried it to Sparrow's Point."

Qt: "What did they use that wood for, do you know"?

NG: "Cooling steel."

Qt: "Cooling steel? Wow, that's interesting. I never heard of doing that before. I want to ask about the oystermen that you would buy the oysters from. Can you name some of them"?

NG: "Yeah. Well, there's Capt. Avery's family, Roxie, and Lymon (?), Jack, Ed - I don't think he ever done much oystering. Then Johnny Grinder, Charlie Bast, Capt. Yoder(?) Turner, I know you can't remember him."

Qt: "No, I don't know him."

NG: "And I... the Lintons...there were two brothers. I can't remember their names."

Qt: "Was Jacie one of them?"

NG: "J.J. was the son of one of them."

Qt: "Oh, OK."

NG: "And (?) Bart Arthur (?), Hammond (?) Davis, Capt. Will Crandall, Lerch Crandall, Capt. George Proctor and all the Proctors."

Qt: “Who would you say was the biggest character? Who would you have the most stories to tell?”

NG: “[Laughing] That’s a good one!! [Laughing]”

Qt: “I have a feeling I know who it would be”!

NG: “Yeah, I’m sure you do.”

Qt: “I’ve heard some pretty good stories about Capt. Charlie. Did you ever hear the story about Capt. Charlie when her got caught by the crab when he dropped his pipe down in the bushel basket”?

[Capt. Shenton: “No! I never heard that one.”]

Qt: “You never heard that one? Did you ever hear it, Capt. Neal”?

NG: “No, but I know he put the bow over his head to keep the rain off him and he had to lay down in the bow of the boat to ????? [laughing]”

[Capt. Shenton: “Are you talking about Charlie Bast?”]

Qt: “Capt Charlie Bast! Well, my favorite story that Dad used to tell was Capt. Charlie had dropped his pipe down in the bushel basket of crabs. So when he reached down to get the pipe, a crab grabbed him by the thumb. So he’s trying to shake the crab off, and it won’t let go. So when he tried to get it off with this hand, it grabbed this thumb. So he’s standing there with the crab from thumb to thumb. So, you know how he got it off? He bit it in the face! [Laughing]”

[Capt. Shenton: “With Charlie Bast, I would believe that!”]

Qt: “Isn’t that great?”

NG: “I would too!”

[Capt. Shenton: “So while we’re talking about him, the only thing that I can remember ... the thing I remember most about Charlie Bast was if you ever went hunting with him, you spent all the time looking for the game warden instead of hunting for whatever game you were after. He would never buy a license...would never buy the gunning license.”]

NG: “He had to hide his gun in the woods two or three times.”

Qt: “Do you have any stories about when the Bay would ice over?”

NG: “Yeah. Well you see, we had a couple of times when we were a long ways apart. Back in 1936, I was still in Virginia and I was running oysters over here to Tillghman’s Island, and I experienced a lot of ice. And with the (?) job (?) We got throwed up down (??) broker’s island (?). Any how, we ... the Bay was full of ice, and we come out in the Bay, you know, to look at it. It was all broke up. There was a little freight line running from Baltimore to Norfolk, and one of his boats was coming down, and we stopped him and asked about the ice up in the Bay, and he said ‘it’s just like it is right here’. [Laughing] And he could tell once you know it went down below Slack (?) Point. So we come on up to Annapolis, you know, going around the big fields of ice. It took us all day but you couldn’t jam her in that ice because she was a wooden boat.”

Qt: "Well, if you woke up one morning, and the creek was iced in, what would you have to do"?

NG: "Well, if these little tong boats could get out, you'd put four or five men on the (?) stern out, let the bow fill up, then they'd push on out. Make a lot of sea (?), break the ice up and push the ice out. But if it got the next three or four days old, then they couldn't get out."

Qt: "I remember hearing about having to wait for a Coast Guard cutter to come in."

NG: "Yeah, they sent one in the river, but they couldn't do us no good in a place like this, because the Coast Guard at that time were like ships. And after they got their little boat, then they'd come in and break it up. They had plenty of power. They broke about six or eight inches of ice, no problem."

Qt: "Did you ever do much fishing?"

NG: "No, not a whole lot."

Qt: "Any crabbing"?

NG: "No I don't think I ever done ... no, I never done no crabbing up here "

Qt: "You don't like crabs"?

NG: "No, I eat 'em, but I don't like 'em!" [Laughing]

Qt: "Now when did you stop running the buy boat"?

NG: "Well, 19 years old."

Qt: "That's when you started"?

NG: "No. I started when I was 14. I left home when I was 14 and went on the road to buy a boat. One thing led to another ..."

Qt: "Well, when did you stop running 'The Jo'?"

NG: "It was the beginning of oyster season ... because that's when I had to go to work up there at the (?) station. I .. You know, we got paid every two weeks, and at that time they were trying to get everybody to buy bonds."

Qt: "Buy bonds...savings bonds."

NG: "Yeah, 'cause I bought one every payday, every month or something and any how, when Levin Rogers inherited Capt. Jimmy Apple's property, he built a boat house and also his living quarters in one end. And we bought that little house from him, and,oh, we owned ... we bought it in the summer, I think, and we didn't get into there until, I believe we moved on Christmas Day, I mean Christmas Eve."

Qt: "Do you know what year that was"?

[Capt. Shenton: "It had to be during the War."]

NG: “It had to be... in the early ‘40’s.I can’t tell you whether it was ‘43 or ‘44 that we bought the house, and I had saved enough bonds to make a down payment, which was about \$700. We paid \$4200 for the house, and our taxes were \$42.” [Laughing]

Qt: “42. Can you name some of your neighbors that lived near you on Parrish Creek”?

NG: “Oh. The Rogers Family, Capt. Bob, Capt. Jim Apple, and the Avery family, Mrs. Avery and Lester ?? And that was all it was to it, Capt. ??, but it wasn’t nobody living in the old Avery home. I guess you’ve been down to the instrument company”?

Qt: “Yes.”

NG: Well that white house you see setting right across that little cove, that was the Avery home. Erwood owned it at the time, and Capt. Frank Wilde (?) bought it for Norman, if you ever knew Norman. I don’t guess you knew Jim and Jack?

Qt: “Wilde No.”

NG: “They were Capt. Frank’s sons. But they were old people, a lot of them was good people. I’ll tell you the truth. They don’t come like that today.”

[Capt. Shenton: “Well let me say ... tell a little story here. Capt. Neal hasn’t spoken much about his family. But he has three sons and, of course, Capt. Neal has done a lot of mostly mechanical work the vital part of his life, and all three of his boys are very good mechanics and diesel and gasoline engines. One boy, I think, is teaching school down in Richmond, Virginia; he’s the oldest son. And the oldest boy is named Skipper, and I imagine, Capt. Neal, Skipper’s what, about 55?”]

NG: “I think he’s 60.”

Qt: “What’s his real name”?

NG: “Wallace.”

[Capt. Shenton: “It’s Skipper and Goldie and Billy Jo. Well, when they were little kids, Capt. Neal had them in the barbershop in Shady Side to get a haircut, and I happened to be there getting a haircut and the conversation got to dogs. And I said ‘the only dog that I would ever have would be a Chesapeake Bay Retriever’. So when I got my haircut and walked outside the barber shop, Capt. Neal’s oldest son, Skipper, was waiting for me. He said, ‘Capt. Howard, my old dog is ‘gonna have puppies. If she has a Chesapeake Bay Retriever, you can have her’. [Laughing]. So that shows you the spirit of the Neal family.”]

Qt: “That’s great.”

NG: “Amos had an old bird dog. It was red. What was it? I don’t remember what it was, you know whether it was a retriever, or a pointer or what. But he liked Skipper. He’d come home and stay with Skipper three or four days till Amos come after him.” Laughing

Qt: “Who was Amos”?

NG: “Amos Proctor. He lived down on the Bay Shore . Old dog, he’d hang his head and get in the truck with Amos. Next day he’d run out there to play with him I think they all had dogs.”

Qt: “All the boys”?

NG: “Uh huh. They ... and Cal Lumpkin,,he was my wife’s brother. Cal was his son And he had a way with dogs and animals, too, but Lois Halleck, she was at that time, she raised dogs, little dogs, and she gave Cal and Wanda one. I don’t know whether Billy Joe or Goldie that she gave the other dog to; but when they were puppies, they played together. Cal’s mother and father lived in the house down in the garage I had right down at the end of the road. And you know they went from one yard to the other. And that’s the way it was, and them two dogs stayed together until they died.”

Qt: “Do you remember the ‘Emma Giles’?”

NG: “Well I used to see her when I’d go to Baltimore, but when they cut her down and made a barge out of her, I used to see her any time, because they’d run lumber out of North Carolina. They had a little tow boat.”

Qt: “I didn’t know that ‘s what they did to the ‘Emma Giles’.

[Capt. Shenton: “Yeah, the last time I saw the ‘Emma Giles’, she was ... she came into West River under tow, she’d been cut down and loaded with lumber from North Carolina and on top of the pile of lumber was a right good-size skiff that they had brought in here for Capt. Ed Leatherbury’s son. And the old ‘Emma Giles’ ... they’d tied this barge up with a skiff on it to the old Shady Side Steamboat wharf where I had seen her come in, you know, when she was really running passengers and all, and it was really kind of a let down because she didn’t look like the ‘Emma Giles’. But anyway, they delivered that skiff to Capt. Ed Leatherbury’s son, and that was the last time I saw the ‘Emma Giles’.

NG: “The ‘Emma Giles’ had steel framing and a wood hull, so the last picture I saw was when she was wrecked.”

Qt: “Wrecked”?

NG: “Yeah, she was wore out...”

[Capt. Shenton: “The ‘Emma Giles’ had stopped running the passenger service and freight service in West River before Capt. Neal got here, I think it was around ‘32 when she stopped running in here, but it was really a let down to see her loaded with lumber and...”]

NG: “So many of them (??) Howard, they cut down. Now the pride of the lower Bay was in the tow (??)

[Capt. Shenton: “But I’m sure Capt. Neal saw her in Baltimore harbor when she was in her prime.”]

NG: “Yeah, when you see them old pictures of Bodeins they had the old ‘Louise’ and the ‘Dreamland’ and the ‘Emma Giles’ and there was one run over Rock Hall, I mean Tolchester, but I can’t remember her name. And there were boats that would run ... a ferry, from Baltimore to Love Point. We’d call her ‘Smokey Joe’, because she always had a black smoke coming out of both stacks.” [Laughing]

[Capt. Shenton: “Ask Capt. Neal about the ferry boats to Annapolis.”]

NG: “Well see, when I first come here they come into Annapolis, you see, and then they moved to Sandy Point but the year .. See I come up the year after...it must’ve been ’36 because, you know, when I was around Annapolis...so many people would move up to Annapolis so they could get out. And that year before I come

here, that old ‘John M. Zephyr (?) that run ... [phone rings loudly in background] ... and they... that run and ?? the skipper, ??he’d back right into the slip with that ? Zephyr ? and then let the tongers out, and that went on until the ice got rotted, ?? then there wasn’t nothing they could do, but he’d still break that channel.”

[Capt. Shenton: To understand what he’s saying, Ginger, when everything got frozen in down here they had no real ice breakers, most of the oystermen would go to Annapolis and work out of Annapolis; and the reason is the way the Severn River is located, almost east and west maybe a little bit more south of east, and the ice wouldn’t ... it would remain open. In other words the northeast wind would keep the ice out of the Severn River. So the boys would go up there so they could get out and oyster – on Hacketts, on Baleys (??) on Tolly’s Lumps, up there where the Bay Bridge is now. In addition to that, the ferry boats would run in and out of there to ... they were running then over (?) to Claiborne (?). And they’d keep a path open so the tongers could always get in and out. I don’t know what the schedule was, but they ran quite often during the day, andso it was really a benefit to the watermen to have the ferry boats running out of Annapolis.”

NG: “Well Captain, what old steamboat was it that they cut the top work off the bow and I don’t know whether she’d run from Baltimore or whether she run to Annapolis or not, but she used to run to Eastern Bay.”

[Capt. Shenton: “I don’t know which one that might be, Capt. Neal, but I know the watermen always thought the ‘John Dennis’ was a real icebreaker, one of the ferry boats that ran out of Annapolis. She could really break a lot of ice. Now ice is really very dangerous. You’re fooling with wooden boats in ice conditions, it’s very dangerous.”]

Qt: “When I say the word, ‘Koontz’s’ does that mean anything to you”?

[Capt. Shenton: “It means something to me. [Laughing]

NG: “No, I can’t tell you ‘cause I ..know and the river and the Bay was full of them, and rip tides, you know, would come down the Bay...” (??)

[Capt. Shenton: “No, she’s talking about oyster bar, Capt. Neal. She’s talking about ‘Koontz’. See the oyster bars here and around West River.”

NG: “I’ve had good oysters.”

[Capt. Shenton: “They were good oysters.”]

NG:: “Capt. ?? Smith said he worked on all three schooners and ?? lumber out there.”

[Capt. Shenton: “Yeah, Koontz was a very good oyster bar.”]

Qt: “I heard that you would catch brick when you would oyster out there.”

NG: “Catch what”?

Qt: “Bricks...from houses that used to be...”

NG: “I never, I don’t think I ever caught anything. I’ve got one stone that’s got a hole in it. I’ve still got that”  
[Laughing]

Qt: “Oh, no kidding. Did you ever hear about catching bricks out there”? [to Capt. Shenton]

[Capt. Shenton: “No, they wouldn’t catch bricks out there. The only bricks they might catch out there are bricks that had fallen off a barge that was hauling bricks up and down the Bay. In relation to that, the Thomas Lumber Company that was located up here in South Creek, that’s how they got their bricks here back in the old days. They’d come in by barge and they would bring ‘em on up as far as they could in West River, then they would link them off and take them to the lumber yard and it’s possible that they, some of the bricks, in bad weather, they could’ve fallen and rolled off the barge.”

Qt: “Now how would that oyster ground have gotten a name like that?”

[Capt. Shenton: “I haven’t any idea. See, they got ‘Wild Ground’, which is part of ‘Three Sisters Oyster Bar’, and Koontz also is part of ‘Three Sisters Oyster Bar’, but Koontz’s is on the north end and ‘Wire Ground’ is on the south end. And I never knew, and I still don’t know today, whether it’s ‘W-I-L-D Ground’ or whether it’s ‘W-I-R-E Ground’, and it’s the way I’ve always heard it. I thought it was ‘Wire Ground’, but that’s the local name for it, but it’s really ... the technical name is ‘Three Sisters Oyster Bar’.]

Qt: “And where’s that located”?

[Capt. Shenton: “That’s right off Cedarhurst. ‘Wild Ground’ would be off Cedarhurst, and ‘Three Sisters Oyster Bar’ ... Here are the bars that are in that area: You have ‘Wire Ground’, then you come on up and you have the edge of deep water, and then you have ‘Koontz’, then you come on in and you got ... when you come in West River, you’ve got Sutton Island, then you got ‘Middle Ground’, then you have ‘Shocklers’(?), then they had what they call ‘Fer Bar’, which was down in the slew right off Idlewilde, right off Curtis Point. And so those were the names of the oyster bars, but on the chart all of those bars are known as ‘Three Sisters.’]”

NG: “They had to have a name and ... but I thought the ‘Wild Ground’ got the name from the oysters that were in deep water that they couldn’t catch ... shaft ... they just grew like there, all kinds of shapes ...?? shale ??...after they got ... till they broke ‘em up, thinned ‘em out, why then they started to grow good shape.”

[Capt. Shenton: ‘So then that would be ‘W-I-L-D’, but they pronounced it ... almost pronounced it ‘W-I-R-E’ ground.”]

Qt: “Well there’s a special accent around here among the oystermen, that’s for sure.”

NG: “Yeah. That’s right”!

Qt: “Now what did you do during the summer if you ran a buy boat for oysters, is that when you did the tomatoes”?

NG: “In the summer, I’d run tomatoes.”

Qt: “OK. So that’s what kept you busy”?

NG: “When I was able to do it ... I ... it looks like every 4<sup>th</sup> of July, I had to be up the road. I ran wheat and corn from down on the Rhappahannock to Baltimore, and I used to make a few trips to Richmond. But then you got ... well, I come up here in the summertime, it’d take a long time, though, to haul one of them wooden boats, you know, you got freight and wait (?) ...and the railway and all that stuff.”

Qt: “Now when you first moved up here, can you kind of describe for me what you would see when you drove into town, into Shady Side, when you like going to your house”?

NG: “Well, the colored people lived on this side of Thomas Lumber Company ... a few houses, and,...well,”  
[pause] .

Qt: “Did we have a fire department back then, you know, was there a building”?

NG: “No, that was made way late when they formed the volunteer fire department.”

Qt: “Well, Centenary Church was there, right”?

NG: “Oh, yeah, Rev. ? Culp was the preacher...there wasn’t nothing on the side of the road before ... nothing but Leatherbury’s Store, was it”?

[Capt. Shenton: “No, not much, no. Wasn’t anything there where the post office is now.”]

NG: “ ..colored people started after ??? store.”

Qt: “Crandall’s Store”?

NG: “No,

[Capt. Shenton: “Crandall’s store wasn’t there then.”]

NG: “Oh, heck! What’s in there? Some kind of framing?”

Qt: “Right, right - there’s a frame store there, yes.”

NG: “.. Cedarhurst Road, from there on out.”

Qt: “Was ‘Jim’s Country Kitchen’ on the other side of the road”?

NG: “No, not then no.”

Qt: “Was there nothing there at the time”?

NG: “Ada built that .... Ada Hall, but I can’t ...”

Qt: “Wasn’t she the local beautician, or something”?

NG: “And they had a restaurant, too, and then Woody Avery built his house there, then come on down and then ... did Irving Kirschner build his garage before Renno”?

[Capt. Shenton: “No, I don’t think so. It was around the same time, Capt. Neal. It wasn’t too much difference, I think. That’s where the gasoline station is now.”]

Qt: “The one right next door”?

[Capt. Shenton: “Yeah, I think so.”]

NG: "And after Renno was Christolph,(?) and that's his son that built the house right next to me ... his grandson."

Qt: "No kidding? What's his name"?

NG: "His name is Alan ... Alan Christolph."

Qt: "He lives here now? Because Alan was my age."

NG: "Yeah. His house is right next to mine."

Qt: "Didn't know that."

NG: "And there's a lady in the rambler ?... They tell me she comes from Kansas...but I've only met her; I haven't had a chance to talk to her."

Qt: "And then, what would you see when you turned the corner, to go ... like where the Moose Lodge is now? What would you see when you turned that corner"?

NG: "Oh, Lola ? Leatherbury's house, and St. John's Church, and between the ? store ? there .. Miss Marion Allison's place and had a post office in that, and then was Capt. Willie Crandall, and that store was there. Capt. Willie used to have a store ...a little grocery store, but that was there when I come here."

Qt: "What's there now"?

NG: "Nothing, but the old house is a wreck."

Qt: "Oh, ok, where Bowen's used to live"?

NG: "Uh huh"

Qt: "Right across from the Nowell's house"?

NG: "Yeah..."

Qt: "Or Donald's house...Sheckell's?"

NG: "It's directly in front of Carrier's (?)"

Qt: "Right."

NG: "Yeah. Miss Lucy/Usey ? told me one time that that store, educated them two children. Went in ?? and then. Did Murray buy that store building, because ..."?

[Capt. Shenton: "I think they did. I think that they bought the building and they moved it down next to Shady Side Market, and I think it's an apartment .... I think Richey lived in there for a while."]

Qt: "Oh, right next door to Shady Side Market"?

[Capt. Shenton: "Yeah. I think it's part of ? Willie Crandall and Miss Usey 's store?"]

Qt: "Ok, J. Paulis (?) owns that now."

[Capt. Shenton: "Yeah."]

NG: "Paulis (?) owns it all, and I think he bought the lot where Miss Mary's old store was; seems to me somebody told me that."

Qt: "Yeah, that's been nothing for a long time, that big corner there."

NG: "Yes. There was ? Nellie Jane's house, and Waley's old house and that, of course was on ? north ?? Road."

Qt: "Waley ? Wilby"?

NG: "No, Waley Crowner ...

[Capt. Shenton: "Waley Crandall."]

Qt: "Oh, ok, I didn't know him."

NG: "No, he was a colored fella; no, he's been gone a long time."

Qt: "And what was down Atwell Road, where you lived."

NG: "Well, where the school house is now was a Waley ?, the colored fellow, he was farming that lot when I come here, and ?? Oscar ? on the other side of the road?]

[Capt. Shenton: "Yeah, he owns over there at ... and he also owned a lot down on the shore there, I think ..."]

NG: " Yeah. That's that point of land over there."

[Capt. Shenton: "Parrish Creek"]

NG: "I don't remember who owns it just now because a man bought it, I guess more than a year ago, and he had, after he bought it, he had a stroke, and now it's for sale again. So I don't really know."

Qt: "And this is down Atwell Road? Straight down or down towards where you are"?

NG: "You see the gate, or the driveway come right out to Atwell Road right on the corner and Avery Road was next to it with a ditch between 'em. But now, after this man bought it and they sold them two lots out on that corner there, why they moved the driveway around to where the Avery Road comes right and goes to Hopkins Cove, and so I guess every week somebody stopped by my house looking for that number. Any where the four houses, now they got to put in a 10,000 gallon tank, and that 10,000 gallon tank is right in that old driveway."

Qt: "Where did your children go to school"?

NG: "Silver. ? Now, Skipper, he went right out here to Shady Side School."

Qt: "Did he? And who was his teacher"?

NG: “Oh, Ms. Wickworth ?? I don’t know what it is. ?? I believe Ms. Nowell taught Skipper. Now whether Goldie went there or not I don’t know.”

[Capt Shenton: “She might have retired. Ms. ? she might have retired by that time.]

NG: “When did she retire from the post office”?

[Capt. Shenton: “Who’s that, mother”?]

NG: “Uh huh.”

[Capt. Shenton: “Good golly, it was in the ‘50’s...it was in the ‘50’s...]

NG: “Was she still in that old building down there”?

[Capt. Shenton: “Mother and Dad were still living in the old hotel when the old post office caught on fire, and ...]

Qt: “Where was that post office”?

[Capt. Shenton: “It was right across the road from the hotel.”]

Qt: “What they call Miss Mary Nowell’s”?

[Capt. Shenton: “Yeah.”]

NG: “I first two years I was here they burned down the polling houses [laughing] if the election didn’t go through.” [laughing]

Qt: “Surprised they didn’t do that this year.” [Laughing]

NG: “Do you remember that Capt. Howard”?

[Capt. Shenton: “No, I don’t remember. Maybe I wasn’t here then. Maybe I was away in World War II. I don’t know.”]

NG: “That polling house was right across the road from the lumber company, right on that corner.”

[Capt. Shenton: “I remember that poll. That’s where I registered for the draft.”]

NG: “It was a polling house up there after you pass where you go in to Smithsonian.”

Qt: “Isn’t that called ‘Polling House Road’”?

NG: “Yeah, well, it’s on the left side there. Well, they burned that down the next year.”

Qt: “Well, any other special stories you want to tell us?”

NG: “I don’t know.”

Qt: "Well, I guess you must've loved Shady Side 'cause you sure have stayed here"?

NG: "Yeah."

Qt: "And two of your children live here now, right"?

NG: "Yeah. And Cal Lumpkin, he's still here."

Qt: "And they came up from Virginia also"?

NG: "Uh huh, yeah. If Janey was sick, Bobby ? ? looked out for the kids. Chris had two, Cal and ....."

[Tape abruptly ends.]