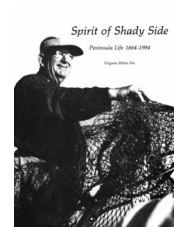




Interview of Ginna Fitz
Interviewed by Ginger Corson
Date of Interview: April 25, 2002
Oral History Chairperson: Mavis Daly
Video by George Daly



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Interviewer Ginger Corson: I'm Ginger Corson, and we're at the Salem Avery house today with our special guest, Ginna Fitz, who's our local author and historian, and today is April 25, 2002. Well, thanks for joining us today, Ginna. I'm going to pop over here [she moves to chair facing Ms. Fitz].

Ginna Fitz: Well, it's just a pleasure and privilege to be here, and I just find it amazing that all of this is now here because when it started out, it was nothing. So, it's the fact that there are so many wonderful people who put so much time into it. So anyway....

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Sometimes they need a start, and I understand you were responsible for a lot of the 'starts' around here? [Chuckles]

Ginna Fitz: Well, I think it's because I was a newcomer, and I had moved here in 1980 from the suburbs of the Washington area. And my husband and I had been here because

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we had been sailing on the Bay for many years, but we kept looking for a house here and we found the one I'm living in now, and so that's the beginning of our life in Shady Side. Carl and I are members of the Episcopal church, and we went to a great big church in Annandale, huge; but we went to the local St. John's church when we got here, and we walked into St John's and just a handful of parishioners, and they all came and practically hugged us, "Oh, we're so glad to see you." So Carl and I felt so welcome and happy here in Shady Side and the St. John's people did that for us, but then St. John's was struggling. St. John's Women's Group really wanted to raise money to help the church, and so I made the mistake of suggesting, "Why don't we have an historian come and talk to us about Shady Side, you know have a dinner and have everyone that's in the village come." And that was a fatal mistake because they all looked at me and said, "Ginna, you can write it, can't you?" So I ended up writing the history of Shady Side just because I opened my mouth and said give me a nice thing to do. So it was written with the help of a grant from the 350th Anniversary Celebration of the Founding of Maryland, and so they had grant money; so they gave grant money for the book for me to write it. So that's how the *Spirit of Shady Side* got started.

And then it went on from there to meetings at St. John's Church, which then, the Sunday school rooms were too small, we had more and more people come. Of course, the most important person we had was Miss Ethel who, I think, everyone who sees this tape will know who Miss Ethel is. She was the 'grande doyen' of Shady Side. She was 94, I think, at the time that I met her, but she really was a marvelous person; so she was part of our group. So we just got started that way, and, of course, we never thought about a museum like this; but as the years went by, everything started to change in the group and so now we have this Captain Salem Avery Museum, and lots and lots of members and lots of activities, so I just shake my head and wonder how people could do these things, because, you know, this is a tremendous community outreach, this Museum, and all the activities that are carried on here. So, I'm just tickled about it.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Good. Now I want you to give us a little history about you and your husband and him being in the service and you know, kind of give me a little outline here, and I'm going to run over here and get your book and a newspaper. So you go ahead and talk.

Ginna Fitz: All right, I will talk because Ginger and I were talking just now before we started, and she mentioned living in Panama, and I said "Ginger, you lived in Panama? And, I told her, " I lived in Panama, too, in the 1950's for four years." My two daughters who were born there because my husband was an Army officer, and he was going to the Panama Canal, so we lived at Ft. Kobbe, Panama and, I believe, Ginger, you said you lived at Ft. Stewart?

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Ft. Howard -- Howard Air Force Base.

Ginna Fitz: Howard Air Force Base in Panama. So you see that's part of my history,

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though, is that I was an Army wife and I married Carl and then moved all over the country with him; and then as the years went by then and we settled in the Washington area, and Carl got back here to his first love which was sailing. So, we bought a 25 foot sailboat, which was too small, then we got a 33 foot sailboat, which was a racing machine, [[laughing]] and so we raced up and down the Chesapeake Bay, and then we ended up here in Shady Side as a result.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Now, you just knew of Shady Side from the water then?

Ginna Fitz: From sailing up and down West River. We had our boat up at Hartge's, which is a yacht yard here on West River, so we just sailed back and forth up along here. We just love it here.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: You mention two children?

Ginna Fitz: Three children.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Ok, you actually had three children, but two were born in Panama.

Ginna Fitz: Two were born in Panama. My son was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico. So, we moved around a lot.

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Interviewer Ginger Corson: Ah, my daughter was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico. [Laughing] So, I think we have a lot of parallels here. So, you retired in the DC area?

Ginna Fitz: Well, he sort of semi-retired; he retired from the Army but then went to work for the Department of Defense, and he had a PhD in physics; and so when we were in Albuquerque, he was working on the atomic bomb program and did a lot of research about that. And then the Army, well I won't go into all of the places he went. He worked for the Defense Department here. He was one of the architects for 'Star Wars,' which still hasn't gotten going. So he really is very technically oriented, but sailing was his love. That's how we got here.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Wonderful. So, you were driving around Shady Side then? Is that how you found the house that you're in now?

Ginna Fitz: Well, Carl would be busy working on the boat, and I'd leave him on the boat and I'd drive everywhere around here, just poking my nose into various places to find a house.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Now where are your children living?

Ginna Fitz: One daughter lives in Baltimore; the other daughter lives in Alexandria. And our son lives in Florida.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: OK. Now, this is one precious piece of paper here, [handing newspaper to Ginna] I want you to hold it up [Ginna holds up newspaper] so that we make sure we get it in here, and that is dated November 1984, when your book came out.

Ginna Fitz: I'll have to tell you. I was at the local library and the librarian came up to me and she said, "Ginna, have you seen today's newspaper?" And I looked at it, and there I am -- right across the front, practically cutting off the masthead! [Laughing] But it says here that *Ex-Swamp, Book Puts Shady Side on the Map*. So, a lot of people, for instance, I think Gloria Shenton, said, "I didn't know I lived anywhere important." [Laughing] And this is the book, *Spirit of Shady Side*, [Ginna holds up book] which was the result of a lot of help from a lot of people who live here. I could never have done it because I was a newcomer but someone, for instance, Woody Avery, who is the grandson of Capt. Salem Avery, drove me around Shady Side in his pick-up truck, because he knew everybody; he knew all the houses. And my husband, Carl Fitz, rode along with us, and Carl was a terrific photographer, so Carl took the pictures for this book. And Woody introduced us to everybody. And then I spent a lot of time at the Hall of Records, looking up various things, because Shady Side had a much more complicated history than I had any idea about. It started in the 17th century, so I had to go to the Hall of Records and various things like that. So it was a combination of lots of help from people who had lived in Shady Side all of their

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lives and then just going back in the records.

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I have a Masters degree in history from George Washington University. And, of course, they showed me how to do research; so this book is a product of a lot of help from -- not the professors -- they didn't know about this. But, they really worked up my term papers and were critical, and I got mad; but I went ahead and corrected them. So, you've got so many people in your background to help you. That's the way I feel about this book.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Well, I want you to tell everybody why you agreed to do that. You told me a couple of minutes ago. I love that.

Ginna Fitz: Well, when I was at St. John's Church, and I had said, "you ought to get someone to tell us the history of Shady Side," of course, I ended up doing it, but I really did it because I thought it couldn't be anything much. [Laughing] And I started looking things up and it started at the 17th century, which is why I had to go to the Hall of Records. There was a lot of technical stuff and that's why my degree in history, which was mainly American history but also English history, and I was specializing in 17th century, so I was right at home in the beginning of this, but I wouldn't have taken it on if I'd known it was so complicated.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: How long did it take you to compile that book?

Ginna Fitz: Oh, I guess about six weeks.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Really?

Ginna Fitz: It wasn't very long.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: That's incredible!

Ginna Fitz: Well, of course, you see, writing history has changed with the computer, and everything was on the computer and my husband, of course, Carl is very good with the computer, and he could format books, and he's helped other people formatting their books that they've done for the Society. But, Carl took pictures and formatted things, you know, without Carl, none of this could've happened.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Well, good, good. It's good you had such a good comrade there. Now I want you to tell me a little bit about this book also. Want me to take the other one?

Ginna Fitz: Yes. This is the *Capt. Salem Avery House: Its History 1860 - 1990* I don't have my glasses on, [Laughing] so I'll have to try to figure that out. But the cover, my husband did this, Carl did it. It's a picture of the Capt. Salem Avery with his buy-boat, and all the oyster boats are coming up to the buy-boat with their haul of oysters. [Ginna holds up book.] So Carl took the picture and made it a wrap-around cover for the book.

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Interviewer Ginger Corson: Now what do you mean he did the picture? He drew that?

Ginna Fitz: No, he took, Woody Avery had the photograph on the wall of his house...

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Oh, it's a photograph - awesome!

Ginna Fitz: Carl took the photograph and through the magic tricks, he was able to do this.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: That's awesome! I have never seen that book, prior to Mavis [Daly] giving it to me, and I was very intrigued by all the family history from the very beginning...

Ginna Fitz: I'm sure you were. Anyway since you are very much a part of Shady Side and its history, I'm sure you would really appreciate a lot of these things. So many of the pictures in both of these books are pictures that people gave so that we could reproduce them and put them in the book. When I say 'we', I have to keep telling every body it was Carl and me. He was really the moving force. [Laughing]

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Well, people in the military have that ability, to be able to be a driving force, kind of an unseen driving force, because my husband was in the military also. So, who was your greatest collaborator as far as a source of information for your *Spirit of Shady Side* book.

Ginna Fitz: Ah, I would say Miss Ethel and Gloria Shenton, her daughter, were tremendous help, because I'd finish sections, take it to them, and they'd go through it and have me add things or take things out. But probably my main source was Woody Avery, because he was the essence of Shady Side, as far as I was concerned. [Laughing] But, he really was a marvelous person even though he certainly had never gone, I think he went to high school - I'm sure he graduated from high school. But people down here didn't get to go to school so easily. It was hard to get up to Annapolis; so he was just a very, very intelligent, knowledgeable man and he helped me tremendously. When he came to my house one day, he always arrived wearing a hat, and my mother said, "Oh, this is a gentleman."

Interviewer Ginger Corson: [Laughing] Because he had a hat?

Ginna Fitz: It was one of those hats, you know, the kind with a brim.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: I know exactly what you're talking about.

Ginna Fitz: And he always took his hat off when he came into the house, so he really was quite a personality; so it was really Miss Ethel, Glorious and Woody Avery.

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Interviewer Ginger Corson: Good. Now, unfortunately, neither [Miss Ethel and Woody Avery] of them are with us any longer so your timing on the book couldn't have been better, because they both had such clear, alert minds all the way to the end.

Ginna Fitz: Yes, Miss Ethel was 108 when she died, and she was still percolating and really was a very wonderful person.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Yes, yes. Now I have some questions here and I'd like to read you this one. Okay, from your research, the realization came that Shady Side has a wonderful history that must be preserved and, thus, the Shady Side Rural Heritage Society was formed on June 15, 1984, and you were the first President. Can you tell me what the meetings were like?

Ginna Fitz: Well, we met in a Sunday school room at St. John's Church, and there were six or seven of us, depending on that day, meeting in the little Sunday school room. And so we met there for a period of months, and we got bigger and bigger; so finally we ended up at Centenary Methodist Church, and everyone said that we've got so much material, and we've got it all in the trunks of our cars, why can't we find a central place, like a museum. So it kept going from there, and one of the prime movers of that was T. C. Magnotti, who became President after I was President, and T. C. sort of spearheaded it into a museum that we have right here, the Salem Avery Museum.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: And who were some of the other people who participated in those early years?

Ginna Fitz: Well, my Secretary was Jenny LeFevre -- she was wonderful. Gloria Shenton was the Vice President; and Barbara Owings. And I'll never forget Louise Houston, who was so important. There were just a number of -- Nellie Nowell -- so many wonderful people, many of whom are no longer with us. But Jenny LeFevre is still living right here in Shady Side.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Yes, and she's still quite an advocate for things she believes in?

Ginna Fitz: She's called the 'Agent Orange' lady because her husband died after - she was sure it was Agent Orange that caused his illness. So she travels all over the country and has friends all over the country who are trying to help make the government recognize that Agent Orange was something that affected servicemen; and the ladies told me that just a few weeks ago she got a letter from the government which says that "we agree with you." So she feels very good. It's hard to 'buck' the government [Phone rings in background.]

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Yes it is. Now, one of the things that I find interesting is although I was raised in Shady Side, I married a military man, and we've lived all over the

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place, so I would come back every summer, and when I first met Mavis a couple years ago and learned what the Heritage Society was doing, I actually had never been down here before because she had not....

Ginna Fitz: Oh, you mean to the Museum?

Interviewer Ginger Corson: To the Museum. I had not been 'physically' to the Museum, and she wanted to interview my father, who was a waterman.

Ginna Fitz: Oh, of course.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: And I immediately told her he was not going to do that because that just wasn't in him to do that. [Laughing] So she said maybe if you do it, he'll go along with it. So we went over the questions, and as it turned out he turned out to be quite a star on film.

Ginna Fitz: How wonderful.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: I treasure that so much. So that's how I got involved with the Heritage Society. But what I find interesting is that when it all got started how most of the people are what we would call 'foreigners' -- they were summer people who would come down here work the booths, who had moved in from out of town, and that sort of thing. What do you think happens when you move to a town like Shady Side that almost gives you the 'fever' of the people that are there, where you become one of them and want to know more than we know, having lived here all our lives?

Ginna Fitz: Well, I think part of it is 'you' 'I' -- I have to contribute to what they are doing, and then they work with you; but if you just sit passively in your house, you're not going to learn anything. But Carl and I really worked hard at St. John's Church, sort of, and that means that you are part of the fabric of the village. And the people in this village really, their church is very important to them. St. John's church has closed, but Centenary and the Baptist Church are still very important, and St. Matthews is important. And I know there are others - my mind is going a little bit blank.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: I think you covered it.

Ginna Fitz: The key is, you must give something to the community to be part of it.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: How did you find the people in Shady Side because I know moving around, you probably found, as I have, that there are different areas of the country or countries that have attitudes like "this is the way it's always been and we're not changing it brother," you know, just because we're not changing it.

Ginna Fitz: Oh, sure.

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Interviewer Ginger Corson: I found that, in particular, in the midwest; but the east coast really seemed to have a "we're not doing that" type of attitude, you know "it's been this way for a hundred years, and we're not going to change it."

Ginna Fitz: Well, I think part of it was, with my life, my father was a Navy officer, so when I grew up, I moved all over the country. And I went to five high schools and four colleges; I mean I had to adjust to various types of locations and people. So you just sort of get to know people and like them, and you don't have an attitude or anything. And so after growing up as a Navy junior, going everywhere, then marrying an Army officer, who also went everywhere, I didn't stand a chance of having an attitude...you know! You just like everybody.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: You found people open here?

Ginna Fitz: Yes, oh sure, but part of it is that you have to meet them part way. So that they knew I liked them and I knew they liked me, for instance, Woody Avery or Miss Ethel, and that makes a big difference.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Now I think that your being interested in them probably helps, 'cause you were interested in them -- you wanted their stories.

Ginna Fitz: Yes, but I find that I really like people. This is the way I was brought up. My mother always told me this. Mother liked people and so it's very important to really be interested, and show your interest in people.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Well good. Now you said this interview was unusual in that you usually conducted the interview rather than being the person being interviewed?

Ginna Fitz: Yes, I told Mavis I didn't know why she wanted to interview me because I really feel that everything I've done is sort of self-evident in the material in the book. But Mavis said, "Oh no, Ginna. We want to interview you."

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Well this gives some personality to the book, to get to know the "story" behind the story.

Ginna Fitz: Mavis and George [Daly] have really put so much into this Society, and I think Mavis and George are the ones that are making sure we're really doing these interviews.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Oh, yes, they're definitely the driving force with the recorded oral histories. Do you remember any of the earlier recorded histories?

Ginna Fitz: Oh yes. Some of them were some wonderful people. Robert Atwell. Did you ever hear of him? I know you've heard of the Atwells, but Robert Atwell was a marvelous

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personality, and he would tell me things that were so foreign to me but meant something to

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him, about 'mortise and tenon,' the construction of a house. I took that down and didn't even know what 'mortise and tenon' was; you know it was in construction of the house itself. And there were just so many interesting people, and I interviewed them, and the tapes are all in the library. But I interviewed them 20 years ago, so I wasn't a sophisticated interviewer. There are techniques now that people are taught, and they're supposed to do things in a certain way. Well I just had people talk to me, and that was about it.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Well, that's fine 'cause the important thing is that we have those recorded histories because all those people are gone now.

Ginna Fitz: Yes. Well the way they would speak, Robert Atwell, would talk about his aunt, whatever her name was, who said "my eyes are poor, I can't see too well." And he said, "we'd be boys going by her house, and she'd have pies out on the window ledge, and we would grab a couple of pies, and she would see us. So her eyes were pretty good." Robert Atwell would just shake his head about his aunt's eyesight. "My old eyes aren't too good any more," but then they tried to sneak her pie, and it didn't work.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: I think you actually have a part of his story in one of your books.

Ginna Fitz: I'm sure I do. It's been a long time. I can't remember exactly.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Something about soft crabs, that somebody, Jimmy Atwell, had brought soft crabs to his house, so I specifically remember that one. Now, was Robert Atwell married?

Ginna Fitz: I simply don't remember now. The Atwells, I think, they were part of the construction of the Lerch house, which is right down here on West River, but they were noted as builders.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Yes.

Ginna Fitz: But I do not remember, I never met his wife, if he had one. Oh, he was considerably older. He was up in Annapolis in a retirement home when I met him, so he wasn't here in Shady Side.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Now what kind of dreams did you all have for the Society back then?

Ginna Fitz: Well, I'll have to admit that I was not a backer of having a museum, and Mavis probably remembers this, but I just shook my head, "Oh, that's such a big project, all the getting the mortgage," and so forth. So the museum grew out of the inspiration of some of the members, you know, people who can get things done: Mavis and T. C. Magnotti, and

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other people; and I sort of hung back, shaking my head saying, "Oh, my, that's such a big

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undertaking." But of course, you know, I'm delighted now, that it's worked. But it shows you one person can't do everything. You have to have a group of people, and various people have various talents, and you put it all together, and then you've got a society. And I'll never forget, when we started this Society, we had to figure out what the name would be. And this was when we were just about five or six people. And Gloria Shenton was sitting here so we were saying let's have it be the 'Shady Side Heritage Society'. And, Glorious really was determined, and she said, "You've got to say it's the 'Shady Side Rural Heritage Society'." So, we accepted that. But that's a long, long name for a small society. People contribute various things, so Glorious had her ideas about it.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: So the word 'rural' probably came from the old post office at the Rural Home Hotel?

Ginna Fitz: Right. And the beauty of this place is the rural simplicity here. And we have so many more people here now, but there's still wonderful rural simplicity here.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Now how did they come about finding this house?

Ginna Fitz: Excuse me a minute...[Interview pauses at Ms. Fitz's request. Question was not answered at this time.]

Interviewer Ginger Corson: [Interview continues.] All right, tell me a little bit about the other book that finally talks about Shady Side and Miss Ethel Remembers; how were you all involved in that?

Ginna Fitz: Oh, Mavis is the one who really wanted to get going on Miss Ethel's memories. And, so she spent, I don't know how many hours, interviewing Miss Ethel, and then they had to put it into book form. My husband, Carl Fitz, was very instrumental in formatting the book and really helping Mavis put everything together, very much as he did for me with the *Spirit of Shady Side*. So Carl Fitz is one of the unsung heroes of this Society. And the *Miss Ethel* book is a tremendous book, and it sort of brings out her memories of life in Shady Side when none of us were around, like people having to cut ice out of a pond and carrying it to a house. Things that...she was just full of wonderful stories. So Mavis was determined, this was determination, she was going to get that book out, and it is a wonderful book and it's something that anyone could get here at the Museum.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Now you mentioned that your husband was working?

Ginna Fitz: Yes, at the Institute of Defense Analysis, I think that was it. There are so many titles and acronyms in defense things. [Laughing]

Interviewer Ginger Corson: So he was singing in the choir?

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Ginna Fitz: Singing in the choir, President of the Shady Side Peninsula Association and very active [Someone in the background says "hello"] ... 'cause he was very interested in the environment and preserving our waterways; and he also was in the Chesapeake Environmental Protective Association -- CEPA -- he was active in that. And also he was active in the West River Sailing Club, and he became Commodore of West River Sailing Club. So his work in this area was really quite extensive because he loved it, and he loved the people.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Good, good. What kind of project do you have going on now?

Ginna Fitz: Right now, I'm writing a biography of a colonial official in Virginia and I'm halfway through it.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Can you name him?

Ginna Fitz: Ralph Wormley, and the name of the book is *Lord of Rosegill* because his plantation on the Rappahannock River was called 'Rosegill'. And so I've done a lot of research. It's mainly 17th century history. He was a 17th century colonial official.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: And how did you come up with this project?

Ginna Fitz: Because I had already written a biography of John Locke, 17th century Englishman, who was a philosopher, but he was also interested in colonial administration. So when I was researching John Locke, I came across the Virginian, Ralph Wormley, and the two men were correspondents. After I finished, I did write a biography of John Locke. It is published, but not on the market at this time. And so I have that book, but now I'm working on *Lord of Rosegill*.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Ok. Now when you were doing research for the *Salem Avery House: Its History*, you were able to talk to people who had actually lived here or visited here in what is now the Museum?

Ginna Fitz: Yes. In one chapter of the *Salem Avery* book, is the story of the people who lived here, and they called all of this 'Our Place', and they were a group of Washingtonians, families who came here for the summer, lived here, sort of a community spirit, and they would share. They had one, long room as a kitchen, and each one would have a stove and cooking equipment. They put a swimming pool out in front of the house, and they really enjoyed this area. But I had to travel to Washington to talk to some of these wonderful people, many of whom are so much older now, because this was started in the '20's, I'm pretty sure it was in the '20's that 'Our Place' was started. And so there are many wonderful characters who still are around in the Washington area; so I traveled, interviewed and talked to them.

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Interviewer Ginger Corson: Now when you all acquired this place to be the museum, was it up for sale, or did you have to go looking for a place?

Ginna Fitz: I think Mavis would be much better able to tell you that. [Mavis, off camera, says: "It was up for sale, and Donna Ware knew of our interest in a building -- Donna Ware being the County Historical Sites Planner -- and they had to sell, they, the National Masonic Hunting & Fishing Club [laughing] had to sell to a non-profit. We qualified, and we bought it for \$90,000."]

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Awesome!

Ginna Fitz: But still, that was a tremendous responsibility for a small group to take on, so I really take my hat off to all of them.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: And they've done lots of wonderful things to raise money, and your endeavors, as far as the books go, have raised \$10,000.

Ginna Fitz: I haven't any idea. But I do know the main source of all funding, for instance, is Mavis and George will travel up to Annapolis and talk to various government committees and get grant money. Then there are many people in the state government and county government who come down here for functions. In other words, people like Mavis and George, have said, "Come on down to our meetings." So that's how the bulk of the money, Mavis, does most of the money come from grants or what? [Mavis and George, off camera, say: "What's the question? Bond bills, we got three bond bills total." Mavis, off camera, responds: "The first one was \$50,000 for renovation, which we added to a \$90,000 mortgage; then we got a second bond bill for \$100,000 and County Executive, Bobby Neal gave us \$70,000 of county money, with which we bought the annex, which was the small house and the parking area. And we got another bond bill for \$25,000, and George convinced County Executive, John Gary, to match it with county funds, and with that we built the addition, which has the library, a second bathroom and a store room."]

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Awesome!

Ginna Fitz: What about the shed for the boat? [Mavis, off camera, says: "Yeah, the boat shed came under the first bond bill and renovation money."]

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Now I see from my notes here that the \$10,000 profit came from the *Miss Ethel Remembers* book. [Mavis, off camera, says, "Correct".] Do you have any idea how much, I mean were any profits made from Ginna's books? [Mavis, off camera, responds: "No, I don't."]

Ginna Fitz: When it was first published in '84 in December, we'd just thought a thousand books would be fine. Well, within two weeks, a thousand books were sold so we had to go

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to the second printing of 2,000 books. And I'm not sure if we're going to a third printing or

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not. I don't know. You know, these are all things various people are in charge of certain things. I just don't know.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Well, I would certainly love to see all these books available because, I mean, more and more interest, I've never seen more interest from outside the local community, and really hope to get this place on the map as far as, like a tour. When you come to South County, you're going to come here!

Ginna Fitz: Yes, I think that's already in the works, isn't it Mavis...that this is part of a Southern Anne Arundel historical-type of map, isn't it? [Mavis, off camera, agrees.]

Interviewer Ginger Corson: To get back to "Our Place", tell me about the tie to the Gompers family?

Ginna Fitz: Samuel Gompers was the labor leader and so the Gompers were related to him, the people who lived, I've forgotten how many, but two or three members of the Gompers family. But it's amazing how this sort of organization would be part of oral history because Samuel Gompers is known everywhere from the old days.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Now being from Shady Side, I mentioned to you earlier that we don't think that far in the past, I mean, we think maybe the oldest person we know and the story that they've told us, but I was really shocked to learn about the Indians that used to live in this area. Can you tell me a little bit more about that?

Ginna Fitz: Oh, lots of them! There are people who remember and talk about the mounds of shells, almost mountains of shells that they remember along the shore when they were growing up, particularly across the river in the Cumberstone area, which is a marvelous resource of Indian artifact history. It's the people who are no longer with us, they told us when they were boys, they remembered how many Indian shells would be along the various shores. And I don't think, the Indians didn't leave anything as far as, there were no villages to see. I'm sure archeologists are going into that; I mean they know how to discover where there were Indian villages.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Do you remember the name of the Indian tribe that was here?

Ginna Fitz: I have forgotten, I'm not going to say because I cannot remember at this point.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: I want to say it's Quesnoi [pronounced: Con noy]?

Ginna Fitz: You're right; you're better than I am. Al Luckenback, who is the County Archeologist, is someone who has helped me a lot with the history of the Indians in this area.

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Interviewer Ginger Corson: Now did you get a feel for where those Indians came from or where they went?

Ginna Fitz: Well, I think...whatever I know; it's put in the book. [Laughing]

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Ok, because I know in our yard down in West Shady Side, you cannot dig because of the oyster shells.

Ginna Fitz: Oh, really?

Interviewer Ginger Corson: If you're trying to plow the garden, you're going to get hung up on oyster shells and old pieces of pottery.

Ginna Fitz: Well, that's where the Indians were then, and that's part of the beauty of this place is that people do know about their earlier inhabitants.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: How about the early English? So the Indians left, and the English came in?

Ginna Fitz: The Indians left, and the English came as indentured servants, many of them because they wanted to get their passage across the Atlantic so they agreed to serve as an indentured servant to get the money for the passage, and when they got here they were granted, say 50 acres, from the King, or from whomever held their indentures. So after they'd worked off their period of indenture, they were landowners. The first person here was Edward Parrish who did come as an indentured servant.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: And were you able to talk to any of their existing relatives?

Ginna Fitz: One of them, Barry Cornwall, lives here, on site of where the original Parrish grant was, and he is the choirmaster at Centenary Methodist Church. And he knows a lot of the history because he's a direct descendant of Edward Parrish, even though his last name is Cornwall.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: The name of the place where he lives is 'Parrish's Chance' and he's on Parrish Creek, so there is a lot of that Parrish name that comes up. [Slight pause in tape.] Ok, now tell me what you would like to see happen. You were such a strong force in getting things to the way that they are right now, whether you actively participated in it or just suggested it or that sort of thing. So what would you like to see happen now?

Ginna Fitz: Well, I have great confidence that it is happening, and it's occurring right now. We have so many new members and younger people who come in with fresh ideas and fresh approaches, and I have great confidence that the history of Shady Side, the story of it

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is going to keep on unfolding and new generations are going to be taking over.

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Interviewer Ginger Corson: Good, good. Thank you so much for joining us today. I've learned a lot, and I'm sure it will help with the "story" behind the stories that you've collected for us.

Ginna Fitz: That's wonderful, good, so glad to have seen you. And thank you.

Interviewer Ginger Corson: Thank you so much, Ginna.

Ginna Fitz: Thank you.

[End of Interview]

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