

An Interview with **Louis Sacks, Jan. 22, 2008**

Re: Our Place/ Fishing Club Project

Sponsored by: Shady Side Rural Heritage Society

Interviewed by: Barry Kessler

Transcribed by: Christina Davidson: Dec 2008

Q: This is Barry Kessler. I am about to tape an interview with Louis Sacks for the Shady Side Rural Heritage Society. Today is Tuesday, January 22nd, 2008.

... So you were starting to tell me a little bit about your father – what kind of person he was.

A: [Sacks] My father was... well, he had had a very hard childhood – his father passed away when he was 13, I believe. He was the bread-winner for his mother and his sister – living on a farm on the Eastern Shore. So he had to move his sister and his mother ... at first I think to Baltimore, and then he got a job in Washington when he was --- I'm not sure exactly at what age, 15 or so. Started working at S. Freedman & Sons – through a friend of a friend – and he worked very hard, obviously. He finished high school at night – did all of high school, obviously. And went to law school at night, while he was working full-time, six-days a week. So he never really finished his childhood – he was very stoic, quiet ... very strong, \_\_\_ this is what you do, you know. He didn't like to talk about feelings. He was a fine man, very quiet man, never raised his voice even to his children. But he was kind of hard to get to know on any sort of emotional level.

My mother had four brothers – the Kamerow family – and she's kind of the opposite: she's very talkative, very emotional – she did all the crying and the yelling for everyone else in the family. Everything was good – it really was.

I'm sure you are aware of the Brandeis Club that he was a member of since childhood. I think that's where he met the Kamerow family, probably, was at the Jewish Community Center in Washington DC. – where my father and my Uncle Stanley, at least, managed to get scholarships from JCC so they could go to law school. Met my mother, obviously... trying to think, I don't even know what year they were married... probably 1938.

Like what happens with a lot of kids, I never really learned to get close to my father. He was always an authority figure that I was frankly kind of afraid of. I was the opposite. I was kind of a quiet kid and if you yelled at me, that was it – I was quiet. [laughter]. Which wasn't a good combination, really, looking back long-term. We never really had any problems. I think of them very fondly. He certainly provided well for his family.

He and his best friend, Stanley Kamerow, they always lived next door to one another. Or the last house they had there was one house in between, owned by a best friend. But they still had an intercom wire going between the two houses. So I was very lucky – I got to grow up with Annette, who is my age, and Phyllis, who was my sister's age. Our yard had one fence around two houses in Silver Spring. That was really nice. We were always in each other's houses – like best friends but better than that.

It was a wonderful childhood in a lot of ways, and every weekend we would go to Shady Side. I have fantastic memories of many, many fantastic memories of that. It was just like a vacation – a real vacation every weekend. Out on the water, we'd play, I'd take friends once in a while and go out on the boat. They always had a boat – since they got married they always had a boat, starting with a rowboat. And every several years or so, they would buy another used boat... a little bit bigger. So, for me, some of the story has to do with a boat. As the years went by, my parents gradually spent a little bit less time at the club at Shady Side and a little more time on the boat. Especially since

eventually the boats had air conditioning and they were very comfortable, and occasionally they would spend nights on it. But they always went to Shady Side on weekends.

Q: During the winter, before it was time to go down to Shady Side, what did your father do for relaxation? He worked very hard, obviously – what else did he do?

A: That's an interesting question. He... I don't think there were other hobbies that he had, except for his boat at Shady Side. We often visited relatives that we had, on weekends. Back then, people didn't have air conditioning and going to Baltimore to visit relatives in Baltimore – we did that fairly often back then. Most people visited a lot more than we do today. You didn't really have television yet or any of those kinds of things, so ... The boat was enough of a hobby for him. He would sometimes go down there in the winter and fix things or whatever on the boat. He was a mechanic. That's where I get the mechanic...

Q: How do you think he got interested in the idea of a boat in the first place? It's not a typical thing.

A: Well, he was born on the Eastern Shore on... like a farm. His father was a lawyer but he also had a farm. I'm not sure to what degree they lived off the farm or not, but to some degree they did – they had goats and horses and I'm not sure what else. There's a picture somewhere of my father with a goat. So, his father always had a boat. Right behind his house was a creek with their boat on it. So he always loved boats and I've always loved boats too. You know how that goes...

Q: Tell me about a typical summer weekend, when you would... what your family would do to get ready to go to Shady Side and how you would prepare and arrive for the weekend.

A: Well, to tell you the truth, I was a kid and I didn't pay much attention to getting ready – it was just time to go – usually Saturday morning, and I'd get in the car and go. It was always done for us. My mother had already packed food and whatever, and I think we kept some clothes down there – I'm not sure how many, but there wasn't much to it. About an hour drive – but there was no question, we were always going to Shady Side every weekend. Which was really great in most respects, occasionally, I remember ... we would ask if I could stay home and do things with my school friends or whatever, but nothing was more important than Shady Side and the boat.

It was great. I used to love to walk around that area. There was a boatyard right close by on Muddy Creek, where they kept their boat for the earlier years... then we'd always walk... I'd walk to the boatyard.

Q: When you first got to Shady Side ... imagine... let's say that I am one of the friends that you were bringing to Shady Side for the first time... what would I see, what would we do, when we first pulled in?

A: What I remember was the muddy driveway driving in, which I loved. Nice messy puddles that you could splash around in and get yelled at for. [laughter] My friends were always confused about what was the backyard and what was the front yard... because the front yard is, of course, faces the water. And if you live on the water... no one quite understood that because the door on the parking lot was on the back. Anyway... just to get out of the car and go run – that great big yard on the water was so much fun just to run and play in. So many trees and the big old swings, that I think are still there. And I am so grateful that the place has been preserved now.

And going for walks... it was safe to just take off. There was no worry and there weren't that many roads that you could get lost... so you could go anywhere you wanted. Or we'd walk over to Muddy Creek and borrow Capt. Bast's rowboat. I think I only did that a few times myself, like twice,

but the point is, we would get a boat somewhere and go fishing – just my friends and I. Or we might go fishing with my parents – that was a lot of fun too. And also, there were a bunch of other kids my age – they were all girls, actually – except for Ronny. But we were all friends. Just hanging out there was fun.

Q: Tell me about that group of friends then. Who were they and what kinds of things did you do while you were hanging out? Just think back...

A: Well, to a certain degree the girls stayed among themselves more than with me. But, what did we do? To tell the truth I don't remember all that much that I did with the girls, except that we were friends and sometimes we would play ball or ... eventually a swimming pool was built and everybody was in the pool. A fairly small pool. When I was really young, we used to swim off the pier in the river, and it was wonderful. I always liked that better, but eventually it had too much seaweed... it overgrew too much, I guess... or pollution or whatever it was. And then, we used to go into the water with a great big, long saw and cut down the seaweed. I felt like a big guy because I was allowed to help saw. [laughter] Because you couldn't bring boats up to the dock anymore either, with all that seaweed fouling up the prop or whatever.

But I would often go out on some small boat – sometimes by myself – just to fish for little spot or whatever ... right out there in the river/ creek. Those are some of my fondest memories, really. Just interacting with the water. I think I liked different things about the water than my parents, to a certain degree... maybe just because of age, I don't know. But I liked the delicate things – the sounds, the feel of things... being close to the water... delicate things I guess you could say. My parents were more... by comparison, more into relaxing, having things easier on a boat – a large boat. Going places that are farther away on a boat. And I love those things too, don't get me wrong.

We played volleyball and we had... can't think of what you call it... where you have a birdie... badminton, right. And there was an old hammock between a couple of trees... there was always something to do. That and the swings. We played board games and card games.... we did a lot of that with the girls. And there was always a carnival at least once during the summer in Shady Side somewhere. We used to go to a restaurant that had a jukebox – the name of it slipped my mind.

Q: Was it Ada's (?) Country Kitchen?

A: Yes! Ada's (?) Country Kitchen, yes.

Q: Your mother mentioned it, so...

A: Oh right... I thought it was so cool. In those days, High-Fi's, so to speak, because nobody had one, so the jukebox was just awesome! [laughter] So we'd feed money into that thing and dance. I loved that.

Q: I think Annette or your sister talked about singing along with the jukebox...

A: Yes, that was true...

Q: I don't know if that was something you did too?

A: I don't remember if I actually sang or not. But I certainly enjoyed it.

Q: Do you remember the people who ran Ada's Country Kitchen at all, or any of the interaction with other, non-Fishing Club people, that you might have had there or similar places?

A: Not very much... frankly, I was shy and easily intimidated by adults for some of that period. I remember the Dunns next door that we were friendly... somewhat friendly with. Also back then in the 50s, maybe my family was more paranoid than some others, but ... I learned a feeling of being a little bit fearful of non-Jews, to tell you the truth. Keeping to ourselves... of course that's a classic situation for many, many, hundreds of years. So I pretty much kept to our crowd – I'm sorry about that now – there were very nice people down there, but if anybody was prejudice, I was – more so than they were, I think, looking back of course – but I was afraid.

Q: You mentioned the carnivals and that's another place that you would have encountered those local, Shady Side people. Tell me about what that would be like. 17:20

A: Well, I would always go with the other kids from our club, so I frankly don't remember much about anybody else there. I don't remember any problems with anyone. I personally never had problems with anybody that I can remember. I loved the carnivals... it was a real get-away. It wasn't the quiet get-away that our parents were looking for [laughter] but we had a great time. And once in while we'd do a drive-in movie... I remember, I guess on Saturday nights... which isn't done much anymore today, but it was great fun. 17:45

Q: What kinds of things would they have at a carnival that you would enjoy?

A: Just the typical things that they still have today... it was a small amusement park. Cotton candy and the rides and the contest where you tossed a ping pong ball into a glass or something like that and try to win a stuffed animal or something. It was great fun.

Q: So let's come back to the fishing club... imagine if you wake up, tell me about... you've stayed over night at the Fishing Club, you wake up in the morning... if you can tell me, where are you, what are you going to do for the morning ... how does that unfold?

A: Well first, that brings up dormitories... there was a girls dormitory upstairs and a boys dormitory downstairs. Of course there was just Ron Sheinbaum and myself and the old men... nothing derogatory intended... Danheiser and Goldberg...

Q: They stayed in the boy's dormitory?

A: They did. Well it depended on the weather... if the weather was good, they would sleep on the porch, just outside the boy's dormitory. I'm not sure why... if they preferred it or if they didn't want to wake us with their snoring, or what it was. But they were wonderful, sweet men. I remember Sidney Danheiser loved fish... and loved eels [laughter]... he was always bringing in eels. Goldberg also fished a lot. And Ronnie used to tell me ghost stories all the time... at night. He was a great story teller.... it was kind of scary for me but it was wonderful. It was somebody to talk to right there. I don't know where he got so many great ghost stories but he came up with them. I'm sure he made them up... he's a few years older than I am. But that was an important thing for me – I really enjoyed that. And in the morning... I had nothing planned. I'm an organized person but I had nothing planned [laughter]. ... except to do nothing basically. I could get up whenever I wanted as long as breakfast was still available. I would go out on the porch... if it was chilly ... and rock in a rocking chair for a while. I loved those creaky rocking chairs on the porch with the tilted floor. And depending on the weather... whatever it was, it was usually outside. And I would see what else was going on... were we going to the boat that morning, were we going fishing that day, were we... what plans did the company have... I'm sorry, the family have? It was usually just enjoying ourselves for the day.

Q: Now would you ever go fishing early in the morning?

A: Yeah. Usually it was my father, my Uncle Stanley and myself... on our boat. And I learned a lot about Bay fishing in those days ... trolled and bottom fishing, but mostly trolling for Rockfish. In those days we almost always caught fish ... and not a small number... go out on the Bay and find schools of alewives and troll around them and bring in fish.

Q: What would a typical catch consist of?

A: Anywhere from three to a dozen Bluefish and Rockfish...I guess, what I remember. Actually I never really learned to enjoy killing things, even though they were just fish. So I liked it and I didn't like it. But once they were ready to eat, they were ... nothing... it didn't matter what kind of fish it was, that fresh... it was absolutely delicious. And I remember at one point I inherited the job of always cleaning the fish when we got back. [laughter] And I figured ... I hadn't contributed anything else to the trip... so I didn't think that was so bad.

Q: Did you have your own fishing tackle box?

A: Yeah. I had my own rod and reel and tackle box and I probably still have the same stuff in my basement [laughter]

Q: So tell me what was in your fishing tackle box?

A: Mainly all different kinds of sinkers and extra line... a knife and all kinds of little spinners and little pieces of brass connectors for rigging up different kinds of lines. You might have a weight that hangs off the line that can slide up and down the line... it wasn't usually very complicated but I enjoy that kind of thing... and different kinds of lures for trolling. There was typically some kind of spoon or, what did they call those things, a rubber snake thing... I forget what they were actually called but they worked.

Q: If I were coming fishing with you ... let's say for the first time, and I don't know anything about fishing... but you wanted to quickly bring me up to speed, so that I didn't seem like a fool in front of your father...what could you tell me about how we're going to go fishing on the Bay... off of your father's boat?

A: What would I tell you? I would probably already talked to you about it before you got there... but really it wasn't that much to tell. We would obviously have an extra rod and reel, already set up, and I might show you how to tie the knots and put things on the line and tell you why we're circling where we're circling and .... about how much weight you would put on to make it go so deep or not too deep. But basically I would say this is all you have to do... hold the rod and reel, you know, and enjoy yourself... and watch the other lines around you. I remember one of the boats had a least ... I think two of them had outriggers so sometimes there were a lot of lines behind the boat, and when the boat makes a turn... sometimes they would cross, but it was no big deal.

Q: And how long would we typically be out there on the water?

A: It was probably just a few hours... seemed like more than that to me, but I guess two or three hours, I don't know, I'm not sure.

Q: Let's say we now come in and get to that pier down at the Fishing Club... what are we going to do?

A: What are we going to do? Well, except for the very, very early years, my parent's boat was too big to bring to the Fishing Club itself. You would either go into Muddy Creek right there nearby or later to the Selby Bay Yacht Club, not far away. But... we would have the fish in an ice chest and bring it back to the club.

Q: And when we get the ice chest full of fish to the club, what are we going to do with it?

A: Either my father, or Stanley or myself would have to go... outside there was a great big, I think it was brass or some kind of metal covering on a big old table that was slanted with a hose next to it... so all you had to do was clean the fish. I'm sure you don't need the details of cleaning fish, but I learned how to basically clean fish ... I never learned how to filet, but ...

Q: So you're going to clean the fish and then what?

A: Give them to my mom and disappear and do something else. [laughter] As fast as I could. Wash my hands VERY well... the worse thing about cleaning fish is the stink you have on your hands for a while... but it comes off.

Q: How long would it take you to clean a whole catch like that... a few dozen fish?

A: Well, we rarely had a few dozen... might be a dozen. That would take a good hour or two, for me... I wasn't very fast at it. I was very careful [laughter] but I didn't mind that much. I felt good about being able to do it, being as young as I was, doing something for my parents generation... at least something. And I knew they were going to taste good... and I would get one, so it was wonderful.

Q: How was your mother likely to cook those fish, if you can remember that?

A: That's a good question. I think they were just lightly ... they would put some kind of a flour, light... sprinkle some kind of oil of some kind and I guess they fried it.

Q: But that would be dinner that night most likely?

A: Yes, But what I remember tasting ... my favorite food down there was this coleslaw my mother made, that was her mother's recipe, and I still love it to this day ... and so does she. No mayonnaise, just a vinegar and water and sugar mixture... I think it was actually one to one to one... and a few spices with cabbage and carrots and a few things like that. It's so easy to make, it's amazing... but no mayonnaise or anything like that... so it's very easy to make.

Q: Did your mother actually make that at Shady Side or... (yeah)... she didn't always just bring it with her, she would prepare it there? ... (Oh...) but you would eat it there...(yes...).

Any other foods while we're on that subject, that you can remember eating at the Fishing Club?

A: Well, a lot of the members liked scrambled eggs with lochs... that's something I learned about down there. And I didn't like it when I was younger, but I gradually learned to like it. [laughter] That was one of the things we all ate down there together. And I remember we had a really ancient toaster.. . one of those toasters where the sides come down... it's shiny chrome... and you put a

piece of bread right .... pretty much right against the heating element and close the sides... and it worked wonderfully. Actually I still have one like that at home ... somewhere...I'm not going to plug it in though...[laughter]. I just have memories of little things like that, that make me feel good.

Q: Can you describe where you'd be eating a meal of scrambled eggs and lochs with toast from there...

A: I'd always eat in our end of the kitchen... we were at one end of the kitchen that was the full length of the house, as you know. Every family had a table and a refrigerator going up and down this really long, long narrow kitchen, which was originally a porch I think. And it was great fun, because everybody was in and out, but everybody was having breakfast together and you could talk to everybody else. You could see everybody else, talk to them or not... so it was a very nice kind of combination. And a lot of the adults were very, very funny. I remember Ron Sheinbaum's father was very funny and Mel Foer was very funny... they had me rolling on the floor sometimes. As opposed to my father who... liked humor but just wasn't a very humorous guy. He was very quiet... so I always enjoyed going down there and hearing the jokes and people making fun of one another was good. The men would pick on one another... I enjoyed that.

Q: ... In a kind of loving way...

A: Oh, absolutely. Every other man down there was my uncle and every other lady down there was my aunt and they always remained that way. Although now, I guess they're all gone... except for my mother and my aunt... Goldie Sheinbaum is still alive...

Q: She's not in great health, but... Would that include people like Sidney Danheiser and Bill Goldberg? Did you call them uncle or...

A: Yes I did. They weren't quite as close as the others, because the others... the Foers and Sheinbaums in particular, were very close friends with my father and my Uncle Stanley anyway. They were all in the ... that club that met every Tuesday... the Brandeis Club... I lost my train of thought.

Q: So that's why the men were so close to each other... that small group of them...

A: Right. [Pause] I remember that I was... at one point I was a butterfly collector when I was a kid. I used to remember the butterfly net [laughter]. These days I don't think I would do that because I wouldn't like killing things... but they are really beautiful. I wish I still had that collection, but I didn't take care of it.

Q: And is that something you pursued at Shady Side?

A: Yeah... and I had one friend at least who did the same thing. There were a lot more butterflies down there ... all the wild plants growing on the fences everywhere that they were attracted to.

Q: You were probably very small – but several people who were say, your sister's age, remember going to a beach where they saw signs about Jews not being welcome... or experiencing some very direct things... I wonder if there is anything in your memory at all about that kind of thing? ...

A: Yes. I remember how astonished I was. I can't remember the name of the beach off hand... it was a very well known beach and occasionally we would go to a beach.... and we went to this –

whatever this beach was – and it started to rain. I mean, we were on the beach without any problem, but it started to rain or hail or something and we tried to get under the cover at an ice cream place or sandwich place, whatever it was. And I think my sister had a Jewish star around her neck, and I remember this man saying that “you can’t stay here... you’re not welcome here.” He wouldn’t let us stay under his roof for the ten minute rainstorm. He shooed us away. And I didn’t understand that kind of discrimination until somebody explained to me what had just happened. And it was just jaw-dropping – kind of scary – no anger, no violence, nothing... but we were just sent away – not welcomed in his place of business. That’s how I remember it anyway.

Q: Was that the only time that something like that happened down ...

A: It’s the only one I remember.

Q: There wasn’t any other occasion when you felt.... it’s interesting how you describe the sense of being set apart, but there wasn’t any other episode or incident that took place?

A: No, not that I remember. Maybe there had been when I was too young to remember or something...

Q: When you were growing up in Shady Side, Ronnie Sheinbaum at least, was telling me about, and I guess you and he are about the same age... that he remembered Jerry Yochelson and Eddie Goldberg... and I wonder if you have any memories of them... growing up at that time?

A: Some. Not that many. I’m not sure why I didn’t see Jerry that much. I guess I saw his sister more than him... he was several years older than I was. He was friends with my sister I guess, who was older also... more than me. I remember liking Jerry a lot. He was in the Navy for a good while, on an aircraft carrier... and whenever I would see him, after he got back, anyway... I would always ask him about it. I was interested in that kind of thing. The Yochelsons were also very good friends in the Brandeis Club and I was fond of them.... but I didn’t have a lot of close interactions with Jerry, I’m not sure why.... but he was a little older and I guess I was intimidated.

Q: I’m wondering if you can tell me about the ....

A: Oh, sorry... and Mr. Goldberg was sweet, happy, friendly, loved everybody kind of a person... and he would always invite me to go fishing and invite me to help him cook... invite me to help him do anything... he was that kind of a... he was very personable. Although he was more elderly than my parents and it wasn’t too many years before he became less active. He was a real sweetheart. As I remember... everybody has different memories, especially from childhood.

Q: Yes... what about the Foer family, because they had some older kids and some younger kids. How did they fit in with your family?

A: It was really the older kids that I felt closer too. I guess they were closer in age at the time [laughter] which literally doesn’t make sense, but you know what I mean... Laura and Burt were good friends. I guess a little more so with my sister – Linda and Phyllis – than with myself. We did a number of things together as families and it was great. And of course they had the Mel-Art... the Mel... the Mel-Art which was our closest boat friends, by far. We also had some other relatives that ... out of Baltimore, with boats, and friends with boats. But the Foers and Sheinbaums on the Mel-Art was like... “what do you mean we’re not going to see the Mel-Art today... we have to see the Mel-Art



today.” You couldn’t have a day on the water without coming up next to the Mel-Art, and exchanging a person or doing something together. It was a real family affair.

Q: And those two boats were docked together or...

A: Sometimes. At Muddy Creek they were. Nearby. I don’t think the Mel-Art docked anywhere else. I don’t think they had the need to move on to a more luxurious kind of a boat like my parents did. They certainly enjoyed their boat and I always loved seeing them out on the water. And sometimes we would fish together...

Q: What about the... if you could tell me about the special holidays or picnics that took place during the course of the summer... remember any of those?

A: Well, I loved the 4th of July because in those days you could have your own fireworks... and we did lots of fireworks – not big dangerous ones, but it was just really fun... out in the front yard, near the water... we would set off all these fireworks. It was just beautiful. And they actually let the kids, to a certain degree, very carefully sneak up there and light things and run away [laughter] ... that’s what I remember anyway.

And also, my father every year for a lot of years, reserved a Sunday to have a company picnic for his company. I never heard yea or nay from other members down there whether it was ... whether they liked it or not... but I can’t imagine it was a terrible thing for any of them, because it was just a bunch of people – maybe fifty or sixty people – who would come down for an afternoon, Sunday afternoon, and he always hired a company to cook chicken on big open pits. And we’d play games... sack races and all sorts of things like that... all kinds of contests, swimming... it was wonderful fun. My father always cooked ... he was always involved in the cooking and everything like that. That was a real special thing because I got to see a lot of people that I wouldn’t see anywhere else. Actually, Sidney Danheiser was a salesman at S. Freedman and Sons. And I believe Bill Goldberg worked for a competitor, which didn’t make any difference... we were very friendly... it was just a coincidence. As far as holidays that’s all I can remember off hand...

Q: What about Sidney Freedman?

A: Oh yeah!... sorry. Well, Sidney was quiet. He worked for us. He had a son that was a good bit older and quiet, and a daughter Ellen... who was the same age as myself and the other kids down there. But I just don’t remember doing much with Sidney or the family, really... they had other issues in their family and they were very nice. I don’t know what else to tell you.

Q: That’s OK... just mentioning the Freedman picnic. Some people have talked to me about the day of the Freedman picnic... that it... the feeling of being at Shady Side was different. I wonder if you can compare a weekend when there was just, let’s say, relatively few people down there with one of those picnic weekends?

A: Well obviously it was much more... comparatively crowded... and a lot of planned activities were going on, which I liked. But obviously for the other members, it wasn’t the quiet Shady Side where they could just go outside and sit somewhere and read a newspaper with the breeze on their face and the birds chirping. I’m sure it was a lot louder, messier sort of day than all the other weekends during the summer for them... but I didn’t mind it.

Q: I think most of the kids just had a great time doing special games and special... what about the food? It sounds as though there were special foods for the picnic that ... and I wonder if there is anything that you can remember.

A: I just remember all the fried chicken... well it wasn't really fried... but all the chicken that was cooked on the great big open fires, hotdogs and baked beans and I guess it was some kind of coleslaw. We still have the same thing today at our picnics elsewhere. It was fun just to have that big outdoor picnic.

Q: On a quiet day at Shady Side, what would be your favorite place to be... by yourself or with somebody else?

A: We had this great big, round, heavy table in the big room that you could fold over, but you would rarely fold it over – it was always open for some activity or another. During the day, the kids would sometimes play board games or Bingo or something because... especially if it was raining outside. At night, the adults would play card games, poker, whatever around that same table. And if the weather was better I would... be outside either walking somewhere by myself, looking for birds and insects and just walking... [butterflies...] ... yeah.

Q: And in the evening, what kinds of ... did you enjoy games as well or ...

A: Yeah, to some degree. I wasn't a real outgoing social kind of person but I actually did play sometimes. Other times I would just sit and ... I really don't remember what I did except that I enjoyed myself. I played my harmonica a lot... that my father taught me to do. And I might whittle sticks or whatever kids do... I can't remember it that much anymore.

Q: That's OK. What about your parents. You said that adults in general played cards around that big table...

A: ... it was the men who played cards. The women would sit right nearby there or in the kitchen and chat.

Q: And your father was an avid card player or...

A: He was definitely a card player... I don't think it was so much because he loved to play cards, he loved to be with his close friends. But I don't recall their conversations or anything at this point.

Q: Some people have remembered the interesting interaction as far as differences in political philosophy among the adults... I don't know if that struck you at that time...

A: I've often wondered about it but I don't remember it. What you say doesn't surprise me because my father and Stanley were very conservative and, well, a lot of businessmen were conservative and Stanley was a lawyer, but they were just old fashioned and conservative, what can I say... I'm sure that at least the Foers and probably most everybody else there were all Democrats. So I imagine there probably had to be discussions but maybe at that time it didn't mean anything to me yet. So I just don't remember it.

Q: But in the 60s, of course, that's a period of great political ferment in America, and just wondered if ... where that as you were growing up in the mid 1960s... how coming from a background with, as you say, a very conservative traditional father, very old fashioned in many ways... how did that effect

you? This can go beyond Shady Side... obviously it didn't happen right there but I'm just wondering...

A: Frankly, at that age I just wasn't very sophisticated thinker for myself yet... and what my parents said I, to a large degree, kind of went along with... to tell you the truth. So I was pretty conservative too... right into college until... during the Viet Nam War at some point, I really turned around and became much more liberal minded. But, I don't know, I guess it was not just for the respect of my family, I just kind of took their word for it.. I was not very sophisticated for myself yet, at that time.

Q: I think few people would be...I'm just wondering, during the Viet Nam War, how did that effect your father, your parents in general... that you were involved with the military ...

A: You know, I don't remember them ever talking to me about it... not once. Maybe they did, but I don't remember it, I really don't. They were like that. They just didn't like to talk about things unless it was an absolute. For some reason, in my family... probably because of my father, you didn't just discuss things, especially if it might get emotional... if it's an absolute statement, a concrete statement, that's what you say. If it's an opinion or an open discussion or questions, he wasn't interested in that. It's just the way he was.

Q: The dinnertime conversation wasn't just sort of batting ideas around for the sake of discussion...

A: I wish it had been, looking back, but as I remember it, it wasn't. My sister might give you a totally different story, I really don't know.

Q: Let's talk just for a minute about how it came to be that your family was less associated with the Fishing Club over a period of time. What exactly happened there?

A: My only take on that is because they spent more and more time on the boat. If there were some kind of disagreements going on with the other members, I wasn't aware of it. My guess is maybe there were disagreements... My parents I don't think were involved, and I can't really speak for the Kamerows, my parents weren't involved with the renovations that were done to Shady Side.... at least actively involved. But they added the sliding glass windows and the air conditioning and I think they finished more bedrooms... I'm not sure why they weren't... I don't know why and have never even asked.

Q: But we do know they were spending more and more time on their boat ...

A: I don't think the club was air conditioned yet, when they had an air conditioned boat. That was pretty comfortable and my guess is that just because they enjoyed the boat more. Looking back, I'm sure it was more involved than that, but I don't know what it was... I was a kid and I didn't have curiosity in those areas, I guess.

Q: Well, you went off to college and into the Navy and then into business...in the late 1960s, mid to late 1960s...and at that point did you find yourself going to Shady Side ever again... I mean as a participant, once you graduated from high school or got into college?

A: I don't know ... I really don't remember what year it was at all, I just know that we gradually went to the boat more and more and the Club less and less, and it became just going down to the boat. We didn't go to the Club very often at all. But I can't tell you why, I really can't...

Q: ... or the specific time period... but during your college years, you were not far from your parent's home... would you go spend weekends with them on the boat? [yes...] ... continued to do that?... [Occasionally...] and can you tell me just... for the record, what kind of cruising you and your family did on the Sack-Kam... or you and the Kamerows did on the Sack-Kam at that point... from out of Selby Bay?

A: Well they participated in a lot... through all the years, once they had a real cabin cruiser, they would participate in things like navigation contests.... which were really neat. And when they weren't doing things like that ... in the early spring we would always go on a shakedown cruise – they would take the boat on a long trip up a river... they never spent much time on... and that was really fun. Just the men... would go out for a shakedown cruise weekend. But most weekends we would just go across the West River up to Half Moon Bay, they called it, and anchor for lunch or we'd go out ... just way out in the Bay somewhere. Occasionally we'd go all the way down the Bay to places farther away, but usually we'd just go out on the Bay. Sometimes up to Annapolis, drive around and we'd anchor. Sometimes we'd anchor near a beach and we'd go swimming and just have a delightful time.

Q: How many people did the Sack-Kam sleep?

A: I think they only slept four... as I recall. Even the biggest one, the last one they had, which was a 46-foot Hatterus (?) with a state room in the stern and another one in front... I just remember four beds. It just became more and more comfortable with more and more space in between and there was a lot of space up on the deck as well.

Q: So there was room for four to sleep ... that's your parents and the Karerows...

A: Yes... but it wasn't always... one family or the other would have it for a night, I guess, or if they went together, I guess the kids weren't with them.

Q: So you don't remember sleeping on a roll-out mat on the floor...[ no, I really don't]... because everybody was on board, I mean, both families over night, that wouldn't be a typical trip? [no...]. What happened to the Sack-Kam in the end?

A: Right after my father passed away, Stanley sold the boat. And I can't blame him. I was very tempted at the time, to make him an offer on it, but I wasn't sure it was the right thing to do for Stanley... all he would have had to say is no... but I didn't... and I'm not sure I could have afforded to keep it anyway, at that time.

Q: Do you miss the boat now?

A: Yeah. I will always miss that boat... all the boats. I remember every one of them in detail and how they worked mechanically and how they felt to me and how they felt to drive. The one I remember the most, I guess because I was younger and we had it a really long time and because it was really unusual... they had, I think it was 33-foot Wheeler (?), a very heavy wooden boat. It had a big cockpit up on the bow instead of the deck on the bow. It was a sunken cockpit with a long bench seat to keep the children safe [laughter]... we had life preservers on anyway... but it was just a lot of fond memories ... an old ladder going right up onto the bow and we had the best view.

Q: That's were the kids would be...

A: Yes, we would go up there and we would be safe up there because it was so recessed down in the deck. As long as they could see our heads they knew we couldn't fall off the boat.

Q: Some other Shady Side memories that people have brought forward are going out on the Sack-Kam and your mother and or Helen Kamerow having a big bowl of cut-up fruit. ..[yes...] And they talk about the hospitality that the mothers showed up there.

A: That's true, that's true... they took a lot of food out on the boat and it was an unending joke if you make any crumbs, Stanley will get mad [laughter]. You couldn't have potato chips on the boat because they make crumbs. I mean we did, but... it was a forever standing joke... he was the one who cleaned up... he was the one who cared more than anybody about getting every little crumb with a vacuum cleaner...

Q: What would make your father angry? Crumbs didn't bother him as much....?

A: Well, he didn't really show anger very often. But he also didn't tolerate imperfection or mistakes very well. He didn't like me driving the boat. He didn't like teaching me things. He was afraid I'd do something wrong and we'd crash the boat I guess... which is understandable, but he never got angry, he never raised his voice... but he also didn't share as much as I wish he had, because he had a lot to share.

Q: Looking back on the whole Shady Side experience, what is the... is there a specific memory that is the first thing that comes to your mind when you think about that place....

[film ends.....]