



Date of Interview: November 10, 2001

2001.020.003

Interview of: Robert Bast

Interviewed by: Ginger Corson

Transcribed by Donna Williams, January 26, 2004

I'm Ginger Corson, today is November 10, 2001, and thank you for joining us today. And today we're going to be talking to one of our locals, Bobby Bast. Welcome, Bobby. Thank you so much for joining us today. Now I'm going to scoot over here real quick. [Ms. Corson moves to chair in front of Mr. Bast.]

Q. OK. Can you tell us your full name and when and where you were born?



A. My name is Robert Frederick(?) Bast, I'm 64 I was born in Cedar Point in what's now called West Shadyside in 1935 in November.

Q. November what?

A. November 13th.

Q. Oh, OK, so 'Happy Birthday' in a couple days.

A. I was born on Miss Ethel Andrew's birthday.

Q. You sure were, son of a gun. And tell us your parents' full names.

A. Well, that would be Jeanette Bast and Edward L. Bast; the "L" is for Liam.



Q. Where were they born?

A. They were born, my Dad was born right here at Cedar Point, where I was born. My Mom was born down in Shadyside off of Parish Creek.

Q. Do you know is the house still standing where she was born?

A. Yes it is. I think Mrs. Wood owns the house now.

Q. Really? Down near by the boatyard?

A. Right up from Backyard Ducks(??)

Q. OK. How about your grandparents? Did you know them at all?



A. I knew my grandfather Lee, Bob Lee, Capt. Bob Lee, and my grandmother Lee, and my grandmother Bast, but I did not know my Grandfather Fred Bast, they called him Capt. Fred Bast, because he passed on before I was born. [Doorbell rings in background.]

Q. How about your grandmother Bast? What was her name?

A. She was a Phillips from Tilghman Island She was born on Tilghman Island, she was a Phillips from the Eastern Shore.

Q. Do you know her first name?

A. Her name was Molly, Molly Phillips.

Q. How did those two get together?



A. I guess them 'ole sailboats just could go any where, you know! [Laughing.]

Q. OK, and then your Lee grandparents - do you know where they were born?

A. My Grandmother Lee was a Phipps, she was born in Deale. And my grandfather Lee was born right here by the oyster house, used to be they had a house there, where the oyster house is now? near? Leatherbury's. That's where he was brought up ?.

Q. All right and your grandmother Phipps, do you know her first name?

A. Her name was Lottie, Lottie Lee, Lottie Phipps Lee.

Q. When you were growing up, did you have any aunts or uncles that lived near by?

A. Yeah. My uncle's name was Charles Bast and Edna, Aunt Edna Bast; used to live down on Cedar



Point (??)

Q. OK, how about cousins?

A. Yes, Grant Bast, and Cecelia Bast were their two children, they were my cousins. Now all of the rest of my people lived in Baltimore, Annapolis, Eastport and Baltimore. They all kind of moved out of the area and went that way. I had very few relatives right here related to me like aunts and uncles.

Q. All right. Tell me about your brothers and sisters. Can you kind of name them all for me?

A. Well, the oldest was Raymond, the next would be Walter, which he's deceased; then it would be me, then my brother, John, and my sister Elaine Catherine.

Q. Where do they live now?



A. Well my sister lives in the old home place where we were all born and brought up.

Q. On Bast Lane?

A. On Bast Lane. My one brother lives in Galesville and my other brother lives in Upper Marlboro.

Q. Now the first brother, is he still living, Raymond?

A. Yes.

Q. And where does he live?

A. He lives in Galesville.

Q. Oh, OK. Do you have any idea how long your family has lived in the area?



A. Probably, they were here when the indians were here, I presume. One side of the family anyway, the Lee side.

Q. The Lee side?

A. They were here during the edge of that time.

Q. How about the Basts? Do you know when they came to Shadyside?

A. I really couldn't tell you. I do not know. They did not settle here first; they come from another area way back.

Q. All right, and did you have any animals, livestock, crops, anything like that that you remember your parents growing when you were growing up?



A. Always had a garden. We always raised chickens and ducks, and I raised pigeons as a young boy. I think I brought half of the pigeons from Annapolis and then my pigeons would pick theirs up, and it would be 100 of them. [Laughing.] And all of a sudden they would come in and another leader of that flock and would take mine away, they'd be gone probably a week and I'd say, "Well, I lost 'em all this time." After a while, here comes a whole bunch back; it was quite a game, it was wonderful. A real...animals that I remember.

Q. [Laughing.]

A. It was wonderful

Q. Did you have any pets other than pigeons?

A. Oh, yes, always had dogs. Always had an 'ole dog there that just loved you and wanted you to pet



him just an old family dog.

Q. Describe for me the house that you were born in, the structure, how many rooms it had, what the floors were made of, anything you'd remember that was in the house, things that were on the wall, things you know your mother had sitting out?

A. Well, it was a 4-bedroom house. It had a living room, dining room, kitchen, bathroom, closet, of course, whatever, and four nice bedrooms. It was very well made. It was all made out of pine and fir, mostly. And the outside shingles (??) were poplar. It was just very homey. What we had, we didn't know at the time, was all antiques. Know what I'm saying? And when we got a little older and more modern stuff started coming in, furnishings of all kinds, electrical appliances, all the rest of it was thrown away. Well today it was quite something, wish we had it all back, right? But it was quite homey and it was very nice.

Q. Now do you know who built the house?



A. Yes, my Dad built it.

Q. Your Dad built it? OK. And didn't your grandfather Frederick live right next door?

A. He lived next door. He had a large home there, he had about a three and a half story house and raised six children, or seven children, I believe. I don't know exactly. It was a very nice house.

Q. Can you name any of the other children besides your father, Eddie, and your Uncle Charles?

A. Well, there was my Aunt Ellen, my Aunt Stella, 'course Aunt Bertha, Aunt Elsie and Aunt Ora. Of course they married. One married Apples(?)/ Atwells, the Atwell (?) family; the others married into Dintey's (?)/ Gimbey's(?), Dintey's Point in Annapolis, she married into that family. And the other one they was also Atwells. That's all I know about them.



Q. OK. So there was a lot of girls and only two boys?

A. Yes, that's right.

Q. Now what kind of amenities do you remember having, indoor plumbing, electricity, gas, phones, tv?

A. Yeah. We had all those things.

Q. OK, soon as they came into being, you had one?

A. Soon as they came into being, we had 'em. We had what you'd call 'the unflushable toilets', back yard, up there in the back, way in the back, a 'privy' for several years, you know, until plumbing and all comes into being, and electricity, 'course, did not come in here until 1938.



Q. OK, that's interesting; I did not know that date. Now today we have a trash truck that comes around twice a week. When you were growing up, what did your family have to do with garbage?
[Laughing.]

A. Well, there really wasn't that much of what you could say was garbage. Actually, the only thing you had to get rid of was metal cans and bottles, that was the problem. Well, we would have a big trash pile; everybody had one way off somewhere. They had a community one at one time, near the marsh(?), and you'd go down and throw all kind of things in there, and let it burn, and it would burn it's self off, you know. And to this day, I guess all of it's still in the ground here somewhere, but that's how we got rid of it. And the paper and stuff like that, there wasn't that much of it. We didn't have the packaging you have today. You know, we're really wasteful. We have this size box for an article this big [shows height of something very tall using his hands]. Yeah, you know, we can throw it away.

Q. [Laughing.] That's true! Now were there any special items in the house that would stand out in your mind, like a favorite possession of yours?



A. Possession of mine?

Q. Nothing jumps out at you? Describe the surroundings of your childhood home. What type of road did it have? Was it fenced in? Were there lots of trees?

A. Well, we didn't have fences. Fences were something that..you were true neighbors. The only thing you had was a metal rod drove in the ground with a rock over top. That was your boundary line. There was no fences. Today everybody puts up a fence so the next-door neighbor can't get your ??daughter?? [Laughing.]

Q. How about the road?

A. The road was gravel. This road out through Shadyside was gravel. Mostly gravel or dirt roads, and then, years later (?), black tops here and surfaced them(?)



Q When you were growing up, name some of your neighbors that lived on Bast Lane..

A. Well, there was, as a real young boy, there was the Basts, there was Dickson, Thomas, there was Trotts, Lintons, Niemans, Siegert and Howard. That's the families I remember. And, of course, the Owens/ Owings, Mr. Robert Owings, the elder Mr. Robert Owings.

Q. Preston's father?

A. That would be Preston's uncle.

Q. OK.

A. Wonderful man, great builder, wonderful builder. Built nice houses, today they're still magnificent. He was just a good builder. I missed a lot of the old (?) hands(?), you know, just talk to them, 'cause



they had so many things that they knew and they've seen this whole complete area differently than what I see, like I see it different than what you see. So, it was quite a thing to talk to them and to find out 'what did it look like when you were young? what was it like to be you?' That's what I wanted to know.

Q. Well, good!

A. Some of them put up with me, but some would say, "Young fella, you sure got a lot of questions." You know. Then I knew that they were tired of me asking questions. But the others would be glad to tell you, and it was beautiful, you know. And I'd always said "What was it like to be you, when you were little?" And they would tell me things then that they had, big trees that they had that I don't remember. The buildings that are long, long gone in my time, and they were just beautiful people.

Q. Now had somebody ever told you about there being an oyster house near where you were brought up?



A. Yes. There's an oyster house right down, 'course you don't know "Lewis' property", but it's right on the mouth of Ballast/ Fallows(?) Creek, that's right in front of the home place.

Q. OK, we always called that Deadwood Cove.

A. Well that's called Ballast/ Fallows? Creek.

Q. Ballast/ Fallows(?) Creek?

A. There was an oyster house right there, just on this side, the southern side of the Bast property there. That belonged to Mr. Linton, Mr. Jacob Linton.

Q. Really? Son of a gun!



A. Now that's what I was told, so that's all that I can tell you.

Q. OK, well that explains why we have so many oyster shells in our yard. [Laughing.]

A. That was not only a wonderful food, but it sure did make a difference between starving and a lot of (?) people, because oysters, back then, have been the staple of this bay. All of our days, let's put it that way, it's what brought us here, I believe.

Q. True.

A. It was always a market for it. You could always make a dollar, no matter how tough it was, you could always make a dollar on the bay. Now if you make a dollar, it's really tough now.

Q. Sure, not quite a dollar [Laughing.] How about church? Did you go to church growing up?



A. Oh, I sure did. I was a nuisance in church, especially when I was a little fella. [Laughing.] I can remember my Daddy now, grabbing me by the seat of the pants. I'm running up and down the pew, right? And he grabbed me by the seat of the pants and pulled me back and said, "Sit down, boy. I told you to be quiet." Well, I'd do that for a while and after a while, back up again I'd be going. This time, he'd really grab a hold of the seat of my pants and said, "I told you to sit down." [Laughing.]

Q. Which church was this?

A. That was Centenary Methodist Church.

Q. All right. Was there any particular minister that really impressed you?

A. Ugh, no, not really. They all preached their own way. They preached the Word. So, I had no qualms with them, and they were all great. Some were better than others, but as far as personality, I will say that I liked Edgar Long, Brother Edgar/ Edward Long. He was always active with the



community, whatever, and I respected him for that.

Q. Great. What was your favorite part of church?

A. My favorite part of church? I guess it was when we were singing.

Q. I knew that! [Laughing.]

A. I love that, I love singing in church, and that was my favorite part.

Q. OK. Any particular hymn or Bible verse that was your favorite?

A. I guess they're all my favorite but..

Q. Nothing jumping out at you?



A. Nothing I can say right off. They're all important to me.

Q. OK, how about where did you go to school?

A. Shadyside Elementary School.

Q. And that was located where?

A. On Shadyside, 468 and Snug Harbor Road, I guess you'd say today.

Q. Where the Moose Lodge is now?

A. Where the "Mooooose" Lodge is.



Q. Well, describe the school for us, the building, the teachers...

A. The school had, we had four rooms in it. One was the cafeteria. The other two rooms were You want it when I was like, what grade?

Q. Pick one, I don't care.

A. You want it like when I was in first, second grade?

Q. Yeah.

A. OK, cause the school changed when I got into like the fifth grade. When I was like in 1st, 2nd , 3rd, 4th grade, it was three rooms, like I said: one was cafeteria, two were classrooms. The other one was whatever was left in the school would be in this room and was piled in that room, you know? And I believe it was 90 some of us in the school. And we had an outdoor privy, you know; we didn't have



an inside facility whatsoever. The water was out side with a hand pump, and you had to go out to the outside toilet, the unflushables.

And the teachers those days were very strict. They had the authority to paddle you; and like I was told, Miss Ethel made it very clear, 'You either learned to love, or you learned to fear.' And I said, "You know what, I'd rather learn to love." The schools were different, because the teachers had the authority; and your parents knew these people, they could trust them. They knew they could give them this authority, and they were like your parents. And if you did something wrong and they had to correct you, you'd never go home and say it, because you'd get it over again. And now that's the difference between the schools then and now. Today everybody wants to sue because they've touched their little child who won't listen. See we brought discipline to school with us. We were taught that at home. We brought it to school. Today, they won't bring discipline to school; they expect someone else to do it. Well, any way.....[Laughing.]

Q. Well, that's true, things have changed a lot. Was there any particular event at school that stood out in your mind? For instance, did you ever get out early because of bad weather or a particular



event happening in town?

A. Yeah , during the attack of Pearl Harbor, then some event that happened, you know, after in the Second World War, or some sort of a threat somewhere to our security, evidently. And we would get, like, half days off for some reason, but it had to do with that line.(?). Then other times, we'd get out of school to go around and collect metal and paper and string and whatever, that we were supposed to collect for the military so they could make whatever out of it.

Q. Really, wow? I never heard that before.

A. Yeah.

Q. Who was your favorite teacher and why?

A. Well, I had two favorite teachers. One teacher was Miss Chick(?) Now(?) The other one was



Mrs. Ethel, and which I loved her dearly. And I had another teacher that was my teacher for a while, but a lot of times she was a substitute teacher, and that was Mrs. Lorraine Newman. [Laughing.] And I loved her. She just, she understood us kids, you know.

Q. [Laughing.] Well, I know she loved you, too, still does! OK, what type of chores did you have to do before you went off to school.

A. Feed the chickens, feed the hogs.

Q. Hogs, wow?

A. We raised nine hogs every year.

Q. Didn't know that. Wow! And what did you feed them?



A. I don't know what all was in those drums to feed them, it was good for 'em, but it didn't look good, but it was good food for 'em. It was like minerals/ middling(?) and scraps of some sort. I don't know, corn, whatever, mixed with it, water, to feed the animals.

Q. Now how come it was specifically 'nine', was that just to feed your family or did somebody do something with them to sell?

A. No, it was just the amount that we would raise, that my Dad would raise. Cause my Dad used to give a lot of this meat to people that did not have it in the community. He knew that they did not have it. So he always had a lot of extra that he would give, make sure he had to give to these people to make it through the winter time. A lot of people don't know that.

Q. How about your brothers and sisters, did they have any special chores?

A. They all had to do the same thing, we had to take turns or work together.



Q. Any chores you had to do after school before you could play?

A. Yep. Cut wood, bring in wood, feed the animals again. Make sure everything was all buckled down, then you could go play.

Q. And what kind of games did you play when you were little and with whom?

A. Oh, wow! Played baseball, of course, we used to play a game called "caddie".

Q. How did you play that?

A. Well, "caddie" was a game that, I don't remember all the ins and outs about it, but you had a stick, a long stick, with a peg trimmed to a point on both ends. And you had a circle you'd draw on the ground. And you would hit the caddie, hit it up and hit it away, like a baseball. And you'd only get



three tries, and if you missed it all three tries, then it was the next person's turn. Then if you hit it, then what we would do they would say, "how many steps, or giant steps, or what do you think it would take to get to that?".. Understand what I'm saying? Then if they didn't (?) thank him, you'd go and do it over again. This went on and on and on.

Q. And who would you be playing with?

A. Probably Steve Trott, of course the Fords(?), Vergie Trott, Bobby Owens, my cousin, Charles; and sometimes David, David Linton. I forgot to mention David.

Q. Did you have a favorite toy?

A. Yeah, it was a, I guess you wouldn't call it a toy. It was an old crystal set radio, radio crystal set, tube (?) in the end(?). It ran on batteries, and it was one of my favorite toys. Trying to make this thing work, you know? Sometimes I would pick up things, but other times... You had the earphones



with aerials on it, you know, looked like something from Mars? [Laughing.] I loved that. It was a toy, but yet it was a learning thing for me.

Q. Sure, well that probably helped you be so handy now, because I don't know anybody who can fix something the way that you can. I mean you can fix about anything.

A. Well, I don't know, but it was quite a challenge. [Laughing.]

Q. Now what type of things did your family do for fun like go to the beach, the park, the movies, the zoo?

A. Go to the movies in Shadyside, the movie theatre right across from the Shadyside Market. And I would go, my parents would take us there usually on a Friday or Saturday evening. During the Saturdays they had, during the day, they had what's called 'serials'; and it was called either "Rin-Tin-Tin" or "The Rocket Man", and it cost \$.10 to get in and \$.15 cents for a soda and popcorn. And



you'd get a huge thing of popcorn, I mean, you know a huge round(?) container and that's what we'd do. And it would last about 15 minutes, then you'd have another serial come in behind that, two of 'em, about a half hour. Then you had to come back 'next week' and see what happened to Rin-Tin-Tin, you know. He was jumping from this train to another car, and it stopped right there. [Laughing.] It was beautiful. The first movie I'd ever seen there was a Tom Mix movie; it was a silent film. And then later on, they got the talking films. And the last film I seen there was called "Francis, The Army Mule", not the one where it talks, this is a whole different type movie(?). That was the last movie I'd seen there.

Q. And who ran that?

A. A Mr. Apple, not Mr. Apple..Mr. Bob Now used to own it and run it. And in later years before it closed, Mr. Mack Hambeck(?) was running it. I don't know whether you remember him? He was doing it for a while and then it just went out of business.

Q. That's too bad that it went out of business.



A. Yeah, it is now. There's a need there.

Q. Now did you ever have any shows out there, like live entertainment where....

A. Not that I know of.

Q. Did your family ever take trips or go on a vacation?

A. No, I don't think they ever had time or the money to do that. Everything came to where we were, you know. You had to live to your needs, we didn't live beyond our means. We didn't have credit cards and all those kind of things. You went with what you had in your pocket or in your bank. And you had to pinch pennies. When I come up, we were poor. I didn't know I was poor until I went to grammar school.



Q. How did you find out?

A. Well, after I went to grammar school, I'd see all these things and I didn't realize...I wasn't poor as far as I had food and clothes and warmth and all that. I mean they had all kinds of fancy toys and fancy clothes like I'd never seen before. I like, you know, it was a different world.

Q. Kind of frivolous to you?

A. Yeah. You know, it was outsiders that had these things. Different world. Showed me a different world.

Q. How about family reunions? Have you ever had a family reunion?

A. Yeah, we had a family reunion here about two years, I guess, about two years ago. It was great.



Q. For the Basts?

A. Yeah.

Q. You don't happen to remember how many people came, do you?

A. I guess it was probably about 45.

Q. OK. Who was the farthest one to come from?

A. I presume the farthest one away would be Virginia, from the state of Virginia.

Q. OK. Did you have any close family friends that would come visit, you know, you kind of felt like they were family but they were just really close friends of your family?



A. Yeah, I guess you're speaking back when I was a child or ..

Q. Probably go back to when you were a child.

A. Probably be some people, their name was Snell, Mr. and Mrs. John Snell. He was a military man, a navy officer, and they used to come down to our house every chance they could. They were just wonderful people, and they did so much for us, I just remember them always. Of course, they're all passed away now. They were just great friends, great people.

Q. Where did they come from?

A. They come from the Washington, DC area.

Q. You have any idea how your folks knew them?

A. My Dad moved his house. He bought a house back over on the field, and he wanted it down on



the waterfront on Avalon Shores. So my Dad moved the house from there down to the waterfront. That's how we got to know them.

Q. Oh, OK. Describe the personalities of your family members.

A. Wow! [Laughing.]

Q. Were they shy, quiet?

A. Well some were very shy, like me, and some were quiet, and some just had big mouths. [Laughing.] I mean some would just tell you like it was. I don't mean to put it so bluntly, but they were outspoken.

Q. OK.



A. I was the kind of person that was very bashful as a child, till I got older.

Q. [Laughing.] When you were growing up and you were sick, what did your family do? Was a doctor called or did you use herbs or any other special concoctions?

A. Well, we had to drink formulas of my grandmother and great grandmother, I presume, and these would either cure you or kill you, you had your choice. Because this was the nastiest things that you ever tasted.

Q. Oh my.

A. I remember they used to, when you had a sore throat, they would swab your throat with kerosene. That's quite a treat. And then the other one was, if you went to the doctor, you know, he'd sit there and went "Oh, yeah, ummm, ummm!". And you're like 'am I gonna die?' and 'How long have I got, Doc?' You know. But the old doctors were, they were sparse/ spartan(?) They had good common



sense. That's what they were great at. Because medicines in those days, they didn't have anti-biotics that they have today. And some things that they, there was nothing to it. In those days it would take your life, such as tic(?) fever. Then they had polio. Polio was horrible when I was coming along as a child. I just remember so many people that I remember that had polio and what it did to them. You know, then one day and it was over. But yeah, they had an old doctor that come around, and you'd better call him before you got sick because it would take him two or three days to get there, you know what I mean? But he was a great man.

Q. Did you know his name?

A. His name was Dr. John, used to live in Avalon Shores, great man.

Q. And when he came down, did he come in his car?

A. Yeah



Q. It just took him a long time to get there?

A. He just had so many people to go see, you know. He was the only one doctor with all these people. In those days, you know, I remember when Dr. Wilson, the woman doctor.

The only one to go to her would be the women, none of the men wanted her around, that was a no-no! And she finally, as years went on, they accepted her. She was a great doctor, she delivered me.

Q. Oh, no kidding?

A. Yeah, Dr. Wilson, and she was just a nice lady. She also gave me my vaccination.

Q. Sure. Neat. Were there any memorable traditions that your family practiced, like every Sunday you went out for ice cream? I know you told us about going out to the movies. Was there anything else?



A. Well, we probably, we used to like to have cookouts, you know. We used to call them 'weenie roasts' You know we'd have marshmallows and hot dogs and whatever. That was a lot of evenings in the summer time. In the winter time, it was all work; I mean it was tough times. When winter set in here, you was in! I mean, it didn't go away, and you had things that you had to do to survive. It was an every-day, ongoing, each and every day thing. Even children and grown ups, we didn't have time for all these things. It was all work. And then being on the water, making a living on the water, winter time was really tough on your body and your equipment because of the ice and breaking through the ice, going on and on, and the wind. It took its toll.

Q. Now did you work with your Dad? He was a pile driver, right?

A. We done marine construction, and I done that from the time I was ten years old until I was probably 25, then I went into marine work, re-doing boats, whatever. I've re-built skipjacks, I've re-built old time, log-type of buy-boat, which we called bugeyes.



Q. The buy-boats?

A. Yeah, we called bugeyes, converted sailboats, converted into power, engine power.

Q. Now did your Grandfather Lee have a bugeye?

A. He had a sailing, a two-masted schooner. It was a very high quality sailing vessel. She was quite fast. It carried cargo. She wasn't a slow-type workboat. She was more sleek, you know, traveled the bay. It would make good time. The old bugeyes and pungies, and the old (?) beat bateaus(?), they were kind of sluggish because they were workboats. They had their purpose. They were beautiful but so many of them are just gone now, only a couple left. But I had the opportunity to work on several of them, to repair 'em and re-build. And I'm very, very glad that I was there at that time. If I hadn't of went into the marine work, re-doing boats and so forth I never would've had that opportunity. But it's something that I love to do, a trade that I learned from the old days (?) and from my Dad, and it was just a great time. Because we didn't have to worry about atomic bombs and whatever was going on.



We didn't have those worries. See what I'm saying? The only thing we had to worry about was surviving that day, and making a living and go home and be with your family.

Q. Do you remember any stories about old, old Shadyside that you were told when you were a child, things that you would've asked old-timers when you were growing up?

A. Well, like I say some of them would put up with me, and others would get aggravated because I was full of questions. Some of the elders, I call them the elders. Yeah, they used to tell me several things about certain things in Shadyside. When the pirates used to come up the river, and three, every year or probably around harvest time, like when the apples and pears and all would be ready to pick off the trees. And this elderly lady, I asked her lots of questions, and she told me this story. When she was a little tiny girl, she said three, sometimes four, of these three and four masted sailing vessels, which is like a brigantine or a frigate, and they would come up the river and anchor right off here right up above, right off of Tenthouse Creek, on this point, and they would stay there two or three days. She said what they would do, she was just a little girl, she remembers, they wouldn't let you go outside,



because they said they would kidnap you. So nobody could go outside, the children. They wouldn't let 'em out. So she said she used to go up into the attic of her house, and she could look out the window at night and look down over and see all the torches lit all around the ships at night. And you could hear 'em, she said you could hear 'em, you know, they were having a good time. They were here to get water, fruits, whatever they could get, wood. And then once they supplied their ships, she said one morning you would look, and they were gone. Just leave. Now that's what I was told, I'm only telling you what I was told, and I know this lady. She was telling the absolute truth.

Q. Wow, well...

[Slight pause in tape.]

Q. So tell me a little bit more about your grandfather and how they used to use the bay to make money, and some of the strange things that they might have to do.

A. Well he owned a couple of bugeyes, which a bugeye is a sailing vessel. It's like a schooner, not a



schooner, but a sloop rig. They're probably 65' long with a bow sprit probably 70' or better. One used to anchor right here, right off here [pointing out the window] of the museum, mouth of the West River is. And I brought an anchor here that was on the 'Gumbie', she was called the 'Gumbie'. You could buy oysters. And that anchor [pointing again] used to anchor right in that bottom, right out here, that anchor is well over 100 years old. I'd say it's 150 years old or better. It did, it served as an anchor to hold that vessel right out here in front of this building, which I think is interesting. Of course, he'd buy oysters from all the oystermen up in the Rhodes River, and also up here in the creek here. And some would come even from South River, 'cause he always got a higher price for the oysters, give a higher price for oysters per bushel than the other buyers. He was very fair. And when he would buy all these oysters, they'd be a day, maybe two days, depends on how it was going and how the weather was. If it was rough weather, it was slow, filling up, to get enough cargo to sail to Baltimore. So what he would do, say maybe a day's buy or two days buy of oysters out here in West River, which we call 'hanging on a hook', that anchor, we call a hook, they'd stay there all day until all the oystermen were through. And then he would take up and go home, or if he had enough a load of oysters, he'd sail to Baltimore, to Baltimore harbor, and that's where his market was. And he would probably be one to a two day



layover, wait, to get like 1500 to 2000 bushel of oysters, which is what his vessel would carry.

Q. Wow!

A. So then he'd sail on to Baltimore which would take time some time because you didn't always have the wind in your favor. Sometimes you had too much wind, you know, but that's the way it was. He had no power. Everything was strictly sail. My Granddad was a hard-working man. He was a man that loved the bay. He respected this bay, and he worked those oyster grounds like a farmer would work his land. He would have certain grounds that he would leave lay for a while, like I said, move those oysters around(?) He always was working each one all the time. You see, he was a man that understood the bay, the same as all our people do. That's what we learned from him, our (?) people, our grandparents, and so on. He was a man, he was not educated, he couldn't read and write his own name, but yet he made a really great living on this bay. He also had a (?) tow nets, fishing. He worked the whole bay up and down the coast. He had one heck of a good business, and he always took good care of his vessels, you know, he respected them. Kept them all in top shape.



Q. And he owned several?

A. He owned two, maybe three, and he owned some other small boats, you know, 35' like that, and a lot of bateaus. That was (grandfather) Capt. Fred Bast, I'm speaking of. And my other granddad, Capt. Bob Lee, he lived down here on Parish Creek. They had probably three or four oyster boats, probably two fishing vessels that they would carry fishing parties through the summer time. You know, from the city people coming down, they would charter boats, like you do now. That's what I'm used to - that's what I know. I used to go with them, be like first mate, you know. I'd take the fish off the lines for the ladies, and whatever you had to do. Keep the chum line going, you know, that's bait you would throw over. You know, keep fish coming in. It was great times. There was times I would clean fish. I would get \$.25; that was big money; that was great. Boy, I was really in my glory when that happened. [Laughing.] Want you to clean fish and give you \$.25, that was something. That \$.25 looked like this big [shows large circle using his hands.].



Q. Now how about you and your woodworking? I know you were just incredible.

A. Well, I always look at a piece of wood as a gem. When you cut down a tree, it dies; but when you pick that tree up and turn it into something, you saw it into whatever you want, lumber or timber, and did that(?) into so many things. You can touch it and feel the edge, you can feel the grooves and the indentations of the wood. It has a character. It's alive, really, yet it's lost its life as a tree. But now it's down, it's come to life as a boat, as a table, as a chair, as a piece of furniture. It's come back to life again. And then you've put your character by shaping it the way you want, OK? And the older it gets, the more beauty it gets, if you respect it. But when you put your hands over the top of it, you can feel the edge, feel the indentations, the grain. It's just something that I love wood. So that's why I become a carpenter. You know being a carpenter, you can say you're a carpenter. I'm a wood mechanic. I'm not downing anyone, but the way they treat wood today as carpenters, I think a lot of them got their license from the Department of Agriculture - wood butchers. [Laughing.] But anyhow, yeah, that's, I can go into like a skipjack. I can get in there and start tearing it out and put back new wood, but it's the age. I can just feel the character of this vessel and the lives that it affected on the bay, you know?



Or a buy boat or one of our bay boats, bateaus like your Dad had. Also we did one for your Dad.

Q. You did? Oh.

A. Yeah, for the 'Cedars'(??) Nice, nice boat..

Q. Oh, OK. [Slight skip in tape.]for the bay freezing over?

A. Yes. Back when I was very young, I remember helping my Dad and the other men around the community chopping holes in the ice so they could get oysters. And they measured the ice, and it was 22" thick, that's right off of Shadyside.

Q. Off of West Shadyside?

A. That's true.

ORAL HISTORY
Bast Robert

Captain Avery Museum

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Q. That's incredible. I really appreciate you coming and talking to us today, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Thank you so much.

A. You're welcome. Thank you for having me.

Q. All right.

[Interview ends and tape ends.]