

An Interview with Gordon Foer, January 29, 2008
Re: Our Place/ Fishing Club Project
Sponsored by: Shady Side Rural Heritage Society
Interviewed by : Barry Kessler
Transcribed by: Ann Sparrough and Mary Srnech 2012

Q (Barry Kessler) This is Barry Kessler and Gordon Foer. Today is January 29th, 2008. We are preparing to record an interview for the Shady Side Rural Heritage Society, for the Fishing Club Project.

A (Gordon Foer) This is Gordon Foer speaking to Barry Kessler from Charlestown, Rhode Island, where it is bright and sunny today and still a bit chilly.

Q: Gordon, I'm wondering if you could tell me just a little bit about your family, because they've been involved in the Fishing Club for a very long time.

A: Alright, yeah, they have been. I have been going down there since I was a baby, and I know that my father started going down to Shady Side when he was a kid. I'm not exactly sure what age, but if I remember correctly, he was ... he would go down with his, with an uncle, I think who was a member, and ... I haven't heard too much about his early days down there actually. But, what I do remember, right away is some pictures on the wall that were in the boy's dorm ... um two that I remember in particular, but they go back even further to when Samuel Gompers- who I'm sure you've heard about so many times now- I mean, the first president of the AFL/CIO, used to come down to Shady Side where his brother was one of the early members and so I remember a photograph of a whole group of men from that time, standing near the telephone ... I mean near the flagpole, out near the water. And then there was a big cartoon of somebody fishing ... I don't know if it appeared in a local paper or some caricature artist drew it. That's probably still there at Shady Side in the archives now. But anyway, those are just some early memories. So my father was the one who was going down there as a kid and then we went down there as often as we could during the summers and occasionally during the winters. So Shady Side has played a big part in my life.

Q: What kind of a person was your father?

A: He was a pretty gentle guy. He was ... probably more liberal than a lot of his friends ... and um, she, my mother actually played more sports than my father did with us, in general. But, you know, he was tied up at work quite a bit of the time, building up his jewelry store chains with another Shady Side member, Art Sheinbaum and um. So spending weekends with him down in Shady Side was very important. He was a good storyteller, so he was always telling stories – whenever we had any family events, or if he led a tour, sometimes he was a tour leader on overseas trips with, I guess with Brandeis Club members, and I was told he would stand up in front of the bus with a microphone and give a play-by-play report of what's going on where they were going or telling stories. And they called him 'mussel mouth Mel' I think ... And he and my mother, were very close and used to do a number of activities together, like, at the Temple, at Orkodish. They were in plays, seems like, on a fairly regular basis. I would go there to watch them in rehearsals and then go to see

their final performance. Um, he enjoyed messing around with engines and mechanical things. You know, he didn't know a lot, he was never like formally trained, I don't think, in mechanics and electronic stuff. But, he had a good basic knowledge and he would be tinkering around on our boat. He was very proud of himself when he could fix some problems with the engine. And I remember spending a lot of time with him on there, on the various boats that we owned, varnishing and sanding and scraping and fixing things um, so, um.

Q: How would you characterize your father's friendship with Art Sheinbaum and perhaps as well some of the other Brandeis Club members?

A: I would say yes, he did, he had Brandeis Club meetings very regularly and occasionally they were at our house, as I guess they made the rounds. They moved from one person's house to another, um they always seemed they like very, you know, the guys had just all known each other since they were kids and so they'd always check in with each other to find out what's going on with each other's families. It was very relaxed and they would play cards. And you know as a kid I didn't hang around those very much, So I don't know what else they did, but he sometimes got together with ... Yeah, I guess, there were so many people involved. Um I think his closest friends were Murray Atkin and Flo Atkin. And my mom and dad and those two did a lot of things together and took some trips together. They went down to southern Florida and rented a houseboat, I remember, for a week or more and toured around the back waters of the Everglades and I think they'd gone over to Israel and maybe to Europe, couple of times with them and Murray had a boat over at Selby Bay and we would meet up with them sometimes on the water, tie the boats up together and you know anchor and hang out on each other's boat and I'm sure my siblings talked about how my father and Art, his partner, from Mel/Art Jewelers owned an old wooden boat; that one must have been about 35 feet long something like that 38 feet. Paul knows all these kind of statistics, so if he ever hears this so I'm sure he'll be correcting me but they owned that boat, it was called the 'Mel-Art' just like the Kamerow's and Sack's owned a boat called the 'Sak-Kam' and, um, so they had the boat for many years together, I think they probably owned two together and the second one, which I kind of grew up on eventually sunk during a very icy winter that the ice just damaged the hull and it sank and that was it we ended up getting a much smaller speedier boat, still all wood, um that we just bought as a family and that was called 'Foer Fun'. I remember spending a lot of time on trips down to Shady Side trying to come up with, um with alternate names for what we would call the boat, we had a lot of fun because our family's full of punsters, particularly my mom, who was into crossword puzzles a lot too, so at Shady Side I remember her sitting around the pool with her crossword puzzle books or doing the ones in the newspaper. And I would get involved in that sometimes and my father would, they were both very good with words and my mom was very good with numbers too, I remember, um and uh ...

Q: Tell me a little bit more about your mother now. What kind of person was she and what kind of friendships did she have, what kind of activities did she pursue?

A: She was very active, both physically and in the things she was involved in. My father was involved in a lot of jewelry organizations too. Go ahead, yeah so, my mother was quite active, not only in our synagogue, Orkodish, but also with the Washington Chapter of Hadassah, which she presided over, at least a couple of terms and um, I remember and she acted in the plays like I mentioned at Orkodish. She and my father were in a bowling league for years. Every Thursday night they would go bowling and I remember one of their team names was the 'Alley Cats' and um of course we had great fun coming up with different names, possible names for her teams, each year

their teams, and um to tell you the truth I can't remember who the other couples were who went to that, whether they were other Brandeis folk. I do remember sometimes going there on Thursday nights with Paul. You know we were still pretty young, but if we didn't have school on Friday it was a great treat to go to the bowling alley with them and, I, we would,, we'd often fall asleep at the bowling alley or on the ride home. It was in Wheaton, I believe, and uh that they had a lot of fun doing that, so they were in bowling league for a number of years. And they occasionally played bridge with different couples, um. My mother was pretty close with her brother, you know, Robert Segal, who lived in Silver Spring with his wife, Heny, or Henrietta who was from Homerville, Georgia, a little town in Southern Georgia that I visited, and spent, maybe a couple of weeks down there with them and their children Bruce and Ralph, and Ellen. And um my father was very close with his sister, his only sibling Betty Tevillev, who's now Betty Tevillev Robbins, who lives in Boca Raton, Florida, and they lived just around the corner from us in Chevy Chase. Aunt Betty and my Uncle Rube, and Uncle Rube and my father were good friends and you know our families often did things together, we usually ended up there at their house for maybe some family, Jewish Passover, from larger family events and they lived on Lavelle Drive and we lived on Glenmore Drive and we were literally, probably, a quarter mile apart, um I could cut up through our back hill, there's a big hill in our backyard on Glenmore Drive, and I cut up through there and end up at their house in just, you know, 5 minutes, um they had four children, Mike and Sue and Linda and Marilyn um, so I have a lot of fond memories too of hanging out at their house. I remember watching the Beatles on the Ed Sullivan Show at their house while my sister, Marilyn made me tickle her feet. Insert BK "You mean your cousin Marilyn." Oh my cousin Marilyn and so my parents, they did have quite a few friends and um so you know we had different baby sitters on um a pretty regularly.

Q: Did your Tevillev cousins and Segal cousins join you at Shady Side at all?

A: Yeah, they did but um not, not real often, I think. The Tevillev's had a place over in Bay Ridge across the water and we would go over there and see them on occasion. Um and I remember what going over there they had some area on the beach, which was shared with a bunch of other houses, kind of a cute little neighborhood, that they had some netting out there in the water, attached to like pier posts; that would keep the sea nettles out. And I remember going over there on the boat sometimes, and I remember we would go pole-to-pole and see if there were crabs and trying to catch crabs, you know, we always had a net with us. It seemed like Paul and I would crab any chance we got, um we would go down to the boatyard and we would be looking on all the pilings there to see if there were crabs clinging on to that, which they quite often did, and there would always be extra special if you found what were called doublers, which was a mating couple crabs where the female would be held underneath of the male and he would swim around like that. And um they always looked extra large when we found them on the piling um so. And then the Segals, I can't really remember them being down there that often, actually.

Q: Um, when your mother was down at Shady Side or your mom in general, what were her relationships with the Shady Side people like? The other women, the other men, the other families?

A: Um huh well it was pretty comfortable, I mean I don't remember any tension or anything between any of the couples, that I recall, um. You know, we spent a lot of time hanging out there in the big room, in the evenings, in particular, and there'd be different activities going on. Some of the families would be playing Cribbage, or some other cards and some people would be sitting around reading books. Sidney Freedman was always reading science fiction books. We had a big table on

one side of the room that always had a big pile of science fiction books, paperback science fiction that Sidney had read and um, let's see...

Q: I guess I'm asking the question because your father had a built-in group of friends with the Brandeis Club, who were down there at Shady Side all the time but the other ladies were people that your mother had met, as an adult, and I'm just wondering were her friendships at Shady Side kind of um equivalent to the ones your father had?

A: I think she was particularly close with Goldie Sheinbaum, you know because of the connection with the Mel/ Art Jewelers, you know, Goldie being married to Art Sheinbaum. And uh she, I think she liked, you know, all the couples down there. I don't think she had any other particularly close; but just from the years and years of spending time down there they always acted very comfortably and um you know, we'd all mingle one way or another throughout the day either around the pool or lounging in those wooden benches we would put down near the water looking out on the water or playing horseshoes uh um my mother was probably one of the few women who did horseshoes regularly. And um so you know; they weren't her closest relationships but she was definitely friendly with all the women down there. Insert BK, 'OK'.

Q: Well while we're on the topic of your mother it reminds me of the kitchen. Many of the members of your generation have talked to me about the way their mother's prepared for the weekend and I'm wondering if you can remember any details or stories about that aspect or the work that was involved for the women during the course of the weekend?

A: Yeah, alright, um you know it was a very long kitchen, it stretched the entire length of the house, and there was a small, one level, I guess, that it was just the older part of the house there was a small ramp, maybe that's still there, I don't recall, but you had to walk down like a slanted part of the floor at for some reason as a kid that was a very interesting place and there were windows from some of the bedrooms that opened right up into the kitchen, so in the morning you know, one of them might open their window up. I remember Jack Kamerow would say, "Good morning", and we were eating breakfast or something. And, the stoves they were all gas and um you know we didn't cook many elaborate meals down there, I don't think, but um I know, some of the other families did, you know. I've talked with you. I know I've mentioned to you about the crab soup, I remember Lily Yochelson making um, it was not something she made every weekend but when she did make it I was sure to eat a few bowls of that and then you know we would ...

I don't know if we recorded this last night, Barry ... Insert BK "No we didn't record anything last night we just talked."

And um, we would sometimes buy a bushel of crabs and cook them up in the pressure cookers and usually there were a couple of families at least, involved in that. We'd put out big sheets of newspaper across the table and remember this was a narrow kitchen, so they had these long narrow tables, and there were chairs on both sides and you'd have to pull the table out from the wall to the middle of the dining area in order to make room for people to sit on the other side, it was very cozy. And you put a big pile of the cooked red crabs on the table and we would go at it and pick at them for, it seemed like hours. And the men would drink some beer. I think we figured out that water didn't help your lips very much. You know, your lips would be burning after awhile and milk would help drinking milk and so I'm sure it was a very kosher meal, milk and crabs. Um and, some of those were later night treats also, not so much dinner. The kitchen, it was like you were camping. It

was like you went to a cabin out in the woods, and you had very simple cabinets. And you know there was now quite a bit of grilling, somebody was always had a grill going. You know the Goldbergs cooked a lot of chicken out there on the grill and we sometimes barbecued chicken, or hamburgers, hot dogs. Uh the families, in fact, the Sacks and Kamerows seemed to eat together a lot. They were at one end of the kitchen and uh, the other families, if I recall correctly, tended to eat pretty much as families most of the time. Um and I don't remember Shabbat being observed in any special way by people, although, now that I'm thinking about it, I might remember seeing candles down at the Sack's and Kamerow's end once in awhile. But, I don't think we did that although at our home on Glenmore Drive we would occasionally light candles and say blessings. Um the Goldbergs were at the other end of the kitchen and that was like; it felt apart from the rest of the kitchen, 'cause most of the other families were kind of down toward the other end. We were right in the middle of the kitchen area. And each family had their own refrigerator, although, I think we sometimes had to share the refrigerators, You know, if we managed to fill them up, I remember going into other peoples refrigerators, maybe to borrow something that they had and maybe we didn't have and vice versa. And we cooked spaghetti down there regularly, and um, meat sandwiches. I remember my Mom would make sandwiches and bring them out to the pool when it was lunch time and she'd go into the house and we'd still be swimming and that pool was always freezing. I hate cold water. I don't go into very cold water today, but if you went swimming at Shady Side in that pool you had to go into very cold water and that surprised me too, because, it wasn't particularly shaded. But, so we would come out of the pool shivering and wrap ourselves in blankets or in towels, my Mom would wrap towels around us. She'd go into the house and bring out sandwiches and sometimes even soup and we'd eat out there around the pool.

Q: And then could you go right back in the pool?

A: Oh yeah, we did that usually and we also went into the Bay. We swam in the Bay quite often, also. I mean, there were certain seasons where um, the ah, where the Bay seemed to have an incredible amount of sea nettles. There were other seasons when there were very few, and I guess, I'm not sure, it had something to do with the salinity of the Bay or how much rain there had been or storms that had brought them up the Bay. Um, those were things that I heard back then. And you know when there were a lot of sea nettles, you didn't want to go in the water at all. I remember we used to spend a lot of time looking over the bow of the boat when we would um go out on trips and see who could find the biggest sea nettles or the biggest clumps of sea nettles, and we would sometimes follow enormous individual sea nettles, or it seemed enormous back then, individual sea nettles, and also groups of them. And you sometimes would go swimming and you'd get stung. So you would get stung and you would end of putting either meat tenderizer or, um I think, baking soda or other kinds of medicines that you can purchase 'cause it stings kind of intensely for an hour or couple of hours, at least, then it would gradually fade away and leave a big blotch, red blotch on your leg or your arm, and um ... So, we would swim down right off the pier in front of the Shady Side house and the water, uh even when the tide was in, the water probably came up to about my, maybe my chest when I was ten years old, twelve years old. And, when it was low tide, it would come down that much lower, probably a foot lower, something like that. And, I remember when the tide came up pretty high, we would go under the lower part of the pier. It was like a separate little extension you would step down a couple of steps onto, to get onto some of the smaller boats that were, you know, lower on the water. And um, we would go under there and there would only be space from the top of your head down to the surface of the water if the water was calm. But, when a wave came in, your whole face would go under water, and I remember hanging out in there with some friends I'd bring down to Shady Side. And uh, for years when I was younger, there was a lot

of seaweed. And, you know, I didn't like that when I was young, 'cause you didn't like to swim and get tangled in it, and you didn't know what was going to be in the seaweed. But uh, as I got old ... and then eventually the seaweed just kind of cleared out. I don't think it was because we swam there so much. I think the Bay just started losing a lot of seaweed for various reasons. But, I do remember spending a lot of time looking down from the pier, and you know, the water was clear enough that you could see crabs moving on the bottom, or some fish swimming by. Um, mainly smaller fish and minnows. Occasionally larger fish, and uh, quite often we would see the needlefish or we would call them gar fish. I don't know if they were true gar fish. But, so it was really a place of mystery for me as a kid just spending hours looking into the water and walking on the piers uh down at the boatyard or wherever we went to see what we would find. And sometimes when we were swimming, we would find ah littlenecks, clams, and we would bring them up and if we got enough of them we would sometimes steam those up. But, I spent most of my time on the pier doing crabbing where we would attach a fish head or a chicken neck or some other part of the chicken to a string, probably um twelve feet long. Tie one end of it to the deck and then drop it in the water. And you always knew when something ... You there? BK, yep. Alright. Um, and you could always tell when a crab had hold of it because they would pull it out slowly and then the line would become . . . uh and one person ... it was a two-person job, Paul or I would be pulling up the string very slowly. You didn't want to jerk it. And, then when it got close to the surface, you'd see the crab hanging on. The other person would swoop the net under it, and if you were fast enough, you could usually catch the crab. And, so we just spent hours doing that. And, you know a lot of times laying on my stomach on the pier looking down and then getting little splinters in there. Uh.

Q: Then what would happen to those crabs once you've caught it in the net? The next step is ...

A: We would try and catch enough. Sometimes, we would put them into a pot. Bill Goldberg or somebody might have a pot, uh a crab pot attached to the pier. Or a crab trap. And, we might put the crabs in there, or we would um. I think we eventually threw a lot of them because we might not catch enough in a day or so to cookem up. But, I remember sometimes just seeing some really large crabs and it would be so exciting. Having nets, it would be just so exciting pulling the crabs up. Fond memories. You know, a lot of my many memories of Shady Side, when I first started thinking about it

and recalling how I spent my time and what maybe impacted me the most, and I think a lot of it...at least at first thought, a lot seems like it was not really solitary, but of me like connecting with nature and looking for creatures, whether there were just hundreds of rabbits we would see in certain parts of the neighborhood or finding snakes and turtles and, you know, all the life in the Bay. Um, or waking in the woods around there. Sometimes I did it on my own. Usually, you know, my ah brother Paul, my younger brother Paul, would be with me a lot of those times in going down to the boatyard which had a lot more piers and walking along those and looking around and going into the big uh boathouse at Shady Side boatyard where my father and several other members kept their boats. And, occasionally a large boat was pulled out on these tracks and brought up under this enormous wood uh building where boats were repaired or painted and worked on. BK, A shed? What's that? BK, A shed? Yeh, a giant shed. I remember some old Coke machines there. They even seemed old when I was growing up. So, you know, full of antiques. Now they're all antiques - - fifty years old. Um, they're definitely antiques. And, ah, it was always interesting to see which boats were out there and how big some of them were. And, I remember some of the families that ran the boatyard, there were the Rhodes, Mr. and Mrs. Rhodes, and when they retired, they lived in a small house in the woods between the boatyard and our place. And, I would sometimes go there and visit them with my father. And, they were quite elderly when we did this. But, they had this cute

little house, and we would sit down there in their living room and ah talk with them and catch up. You know, a number of times during the summer. Okay, I'm going to switch phones here quickly...turn that one off ... can you hear it...Rhodes ... Jim Rhodes and his wife. And, ah they were very kind people. So, as far as the local families go, we knew the Rhodes a bit, we knew our neighbors on both sides of 'Our Place' pretty well. I particularly remember the ... um, now I can't remember their names ... it was not the Spitzes ... it was the uh ... can't remember the name right now. BK, Are you thinking about the Dunns? No, the Dunns were on one side, were on the left side looking at the water. The Andersons over there. And we gradually got to play with their kids ah quite a bit. When we were younger, we didn't hang out with them that much. There were a number of families in several houses on that side who, you know, were related. BK, Paul talked about Ray Pitch, I think. Ray Pitch was on the other side. That's it -- Ray Pitch, whose son played the drums I remember in the small little garage, small garage, out towards the road. And, ah they're a pretty wild family. Sometimes, they'd come over and go swimming with us at the pool. And, we would sometimes invite the neighbors from the Dunn's and Anderson side to come swimming in the swimming pool. They didn't have a pool, so they were always in the Bay. And, I think they liked being able to come over and swim in the pool sometimes. And, we would play uh baseball with whiffle balls in "Our Place" yard, and Frisbee, and the horseshoes, and football. You know there was, seemed like there was, always somebody willing to do something --sports or some game or other. And, I remember ah Jack Kamerow quite fondly who was a year or two older than me. He was ah quite a good friend. I didn't seem him outside of Shady Side, but we saw each other a lot of course during the summers. I had a lot of fun with him. And, um, uh, his the fact that the Kamerows moved over to Selby Bay, I think when I turned about, uh gee, I must have turned fourteen years old, fifteen. And, that was quite sad when they moved out. And, uh you know I missed them a lot. They really changed things for me there because Jack was one of the few ... Sorry, somebody's calling in on the phone. Okay. Now it's my cell phone ... okay. So um, Jack was one of the few kids who really just about my age who was still coming down there ah you know almost every weekend. Uh, and, then occasionally some uh, kids related to the Goldbergs uh, came. I guess like their grandchildren. BK, That would be Mark and Eddie Mench. Yeah, it was Mark and Eddie. Now, ya see, I'm really a bit confused now. Didn't they have a son named Eddie too?

BK, Yes. Okay. BK, There was Eddie Goldberg, who was the son of William Goldberg. And, then he, William Goldberg, had a daughter named Doris, Eddie's older sister. She wouldn't have been coming a great deal when you were there, but her children, Eddie and Mark, would have been coming with their grandfather quite a bit.

GF, Right, okay, now. I remember Eddie Sr. coming down there on occasion. And, I don't know if he was in, was he in the military? BK, Yes, yeah. He was a helicopter pilot. Right, then I do remember seeing him not in maybe full uniform but maybe something related to the military. He always seemed very dapper. He's a really nice guy. Um, and then his kids...yeah, I mean Doris' kids, I uh, I did see sometimes down there too. Was one of them Paula? No, you said Mark and Eddie were her boys. Who was Paula? BK, That one I don't know. I don't know. Maybe that's coming from somewhere else. It's a long time ago, and I'm definitely entering the period of my life where I'm forgetting more and more things.

Q: Um, I want to go back to ... you talked a little bit about some Saturday evening activities, like sharing bushels of crabs or clams. Um, what about, and you mentioned a little bit about people reading ... um, what about the activities that you would do in the evening, and ah the other kids.

A: That's actually a good question. It's hard to say exactly how we spent our time. Um, sometimes we... I would just roam around and watch what the adults were doing. Or, although I never did learn how to play Cribbage. Um, I would read there. I would, even at night if there the mosquitoes weren't too bad ... which sometimes they were really bad, I would head out to the pier and, just you know, watch the lights out on the water or listen to the sounds of crickets chirping. It was a very vivid memory I have of being down there also, 'cause the house was so open. I mean, the doors were open most the time, except for the screen doors. And, sitting on the porch in rocking chairs...some of the women sat out there for quite a while rocking and just talking about who knows what. And, uh um, sometimes with the lights off. And, I think maybe I would play some board games sometimes with my brother and with Jack. Um, let's see.

Q: Were you interested in the adult's conversations for any reason?

A: Yeah, I mean sometimes, yeah, we would get into conversations, I would listen to them, you know. And of course, you heard people talking the usual about who was sick with what, and who had what operation, and you know what happened to so and so. Um, but, I remember learning about electricity a bit and electronics, a bit from Aaron Yochelson. And, he was my technical go-to guy. And I remember talking with them about their uh ... They had a laboratory I guess years before I was born that bred mice, or yeah, a facility that bred mice for laboratories. I remember them telling me about that. And you know, I'd hear a little bit about Mel/Art and what was happening with stores and expansion plans. Sports among some people was a pretty big deal. And, I remember we had a small black and white TV in the big room that sometimes worked well enough to watch a program on it. On Sundays it would usually be a Redskins game. And, I think we'd actually bundle up uh in coats, 'cause obviously those would be in winter or late fall. Um, sat listening to some baseball games, the Washington Senators, on the radio...um.

Q: What about politics? You mentioned your father was more liberal than some of his friends. Did that sort of stuff come up?

A: You know, it must have. But, offhand, I can't think of, you know, that doesn't stand out for me. But, definitely, I know Art Sheinbaum was very involved with the anti-defamation league ... Jewish issues, Jewish politics, Israel, anti-semitism, those things, they would sometimes come up in conversation. Um, you know, it ... they don't stand out as being a major topic of discussion. But, I do remember some talk about that. And, also plans for the house ... "Our Place" ... who needed to take care of what. Uh, there was always something that needed to be done down there. Uh, weeding around the swimming pool, which always had cracks in it, in the concrete, around, you know, the deck. Uh, uh, painting something or other, cleaning out the shed, uh maintaining the pool. I was telling you last night how there was a small ah cinderblock house or shed right next to the pool that always was making some kind of noise -- some hum, or scarier noise, but you get used to it over time. But, it was kind of mysterious and it always smelled a little bit of chlorine. And, occasionally, we would open up the door to it. They didn't want kids going in there, 'cause, you know, there was equipment, there was machinery in there ... not really machinery, but there was ah ... they had installed some I think special paint that might chlorinate the water ... uh periodically. I don't even know what all that stuff did in there, but we'd stick our head in and it was just kind of a very curious and mysterious place. As was Shady Side in general. The whole house, as a kid, it just seemed enormous. And, when the upstairs hallway was, you know, when they didn't divide off into those current rooms, uh that are up there...actually, I don't even know what that hallway looks like exactly now. But, in my day, there was probably five or six rooms I think on each side of that hall. Ah,

obviously none of them very large. And, there was a screen net that went over the tops of all the rooms. So, there was really no ceiling and no real privacy. The walls were fairly thin. I mean you could hear people snoring. Um, and if I laid in my parent's bed between them, which I remember doing some nights, if I couldn't sleep downstairs, I couldn't fall asleep or I woke up, I wanted to be with my parents, as a young kid, I would go up the stairs and get between them and I would hear the fan...you know, the small ah, the fan that ah kind of swipe back and forth across the room, directing the air in one direction and then, you know then another. And, listening to that fan, and listening to the masts and the rigging on some of the boats out on the water, would I don't know, just kind of a magical ..., and very calming, and you know, it would put me to sleep after awhile. And, I also remember, I could look down past my feet from up there on the second floor, and out on the water and see the running lights of boats, either blue or I mean maybe green or red, and knowing what side of the boat was pointing toward us. Um, so at the end of this long hallway was the girl's dorm. And, you'd have to go up a couple of steps and go through a smaller door to get into the girl's dorm, which had some bunkbeds like the boy's dorm originally had. And, ah, there were usually not as many girls staying up there, so occasionally there weren't any ... Paul and I would sleep up there. That was kind of special. It was just a very, you know, like a unique room in some ways, it felt very private. And, there were these two rooms further past that, right across a little, not a hallway, but some other stairs would come up from that end of the house. And so, out the other end of the girl's dorm, you would go past the top of that stairwell and straight ahead was another room, very small, and then to the right of that another small room. And., there seems like there weren't often people in one or the other of those rooms. And, I used to have dreams about Shady Side for years, where I would be exploring that end of the house. Before I would get ... I would find new hallways and new passages in the house that I didn't know existed. And uh, you know, I don't even think I saw every single one of those rooms ... the inside of all the rooms. Um, we would play sometimes ball up in that hallway I think, or something because it was a long narrow passage, where we could do some kind of activity like that.

Q: Did any of the people object to your exploration or activity in the house?

A: Um, I don't remember being called down from upstairs, but uh we were told not to run because sometimes it was fun to run up one set of: one staircase, on one side of the big room, then down the hallway and down the other stairs. And, I don't know what we did, but I do remember kind of running down that hallway doing that one hallway down the stairs, down the other hallway down the other stairs. So, that was when I was pretty young. And, I know we had some other paintings and artwork or stuff in that room, but offhand, except for 'Custer's Last Stand' picture from the Budweiser company. Other than that, I can't remember what the other pictures might have been. But that one I can remember standing in front of many times and looking at all the details in that picture. Uh, and especially right in the middle of it was Custer with ah pointing a gun at some Injun, and some soldier getting his head scalped by another Indian. You could actually see the scalp being pulled back and blood...it was a very exciting picture for a young kid and um, and that was passed around in our family for a while after we moved from Shady Side and I ... We just gave it back to the historical society, so hopefully, that'll be hanging up when we come down there for the exhibition. BK, We certainly expect so. Alright.

Q: Um, tell me about ... you talked a lot about exploring the water and the grounds and the fields, a little bit about exploring the house. What about exploring the neighborhood ... the Shady Side, the contact with local people or the sense of um where you were out there.

A: Well, besides the immediate neighbors, uh, maybe some of the adults had, you know, knew some of the other families or had met them somewhere, but I ... there wasn't much interaction with them. Uh, I mentioned the roads. Uh, then, there was the new family that owned the boatyard. And we'd only see them, uh you know, for business concerning the boat, but they were really nice. I remember they took an interest in Paul and me. And, uh I remember the father ... I can't remember their names offhand now ... I know Paul will remember their names ... ah, telling me I had a half-back leg. You know, I was probably ten years old or twelve years old, something like that. So, that was very uh good to hear that I, you know, had good strong legs. And uh, then there was some family, at least one uh black family that my father knew, maybe had worked on our boat some, or I don't really remember exactly. But, uh occasionally, very rarely, he would stop by there to find out how he was doing. And, I think he's the same guy who built a really nice model of a skipjack that my father bought, and that is now uh in Paul's house. And, we did see skipjacks out on the water at times. I don't know if you can see them out there anymore at all. There ... ah it was exciting to see those old skipjacks, uh. But, there was another family who stands out was, uh let's see, what is the name of the old man and his wife who lived right next to the Shady Side boatyard? BK, Ah, you're thinking of Captain Ennis Bast and his wife Alice. Sure, yeah, that ... quite terrible, I can't remember, other times I might be able to. I'm glad that you fresh in your memory. And, when I was young, he died when I was still pretty young, but I do remember going out on some like rowboat with my father and with him, and he liked to cuss every other word. He was just ... he was ... up here, we would call somebody like him who was real local and, you know, immersed in the old ways of talking and everything, we'd call him the 'swamp Yankee' up here in southern Rhode Island. Um, I don't know if we had a name like that for people like that down there, but he was a real old waterman and um a real crank, but my father just got a real hoot out of him and didn't mind me hearing so much cursing. Uh, he was, you know, very colorful in language. And Alice too ... I can vaguely remember her. Uh, so you know, and then I guess we would go shopping locally at Renno's and at the Shady Side Market. We would stop at Renno's on the way into town. It was just a little bit more outside of town. And, then if we needed to get something closer, we would go to Shady Side Market. And, they were just really classic local stores. You know, they were not, I guess they're what 7-11's eventually came to dominate those kinds of markets or ... But, Shady Side Market had a lot more food than that. And, even Renno's had a meat counter and deli in the back. And, uh I think some Indians as in from India. They eventually purchased Renno's, which was kind of a real sign of the times. Uh, much later, I think it was maybe after we had...maybe we were still going down to Shady Side, uh, and ...

Q: Could you just say ... I'm just curious ... obviously Shady Side and Silver Spring were not the same kind of place. Uhm, how would you contrast your life and say patterns of consumption during the week with the weekend?

A: Uh, well, once we got down to Shady Side, you know, we would usually stay there at the house. We wouldn't venture very far away normally, except by boat occasionally. We'd go across the Selby Bay. We would once in a while, it was very special, we would go eat at Pirate's Cove, which I think was over there at Selby Bay ... Pirate's Cove Restaurant. I you know, it was just so cool as a kid, taking your boat and docking up there at their pier and walking right up to the restaurant. And you know, uh, everything was simpler at Shady Side. I mean, in some ways it was ... you had to take down exactly what you thought you would need, uh, although we left some food down there during the week. We did have the refrigerator and the cupboard. Um, but patterns of consumption, I don't know. You think anything specific that might help me answer that?

Q: Just, you talked about shopping at the stores in Shady Side, as simple as they were. What kind of shopping would you do at home in Washington?

A: I don't remember going shopping, especially for Shady Side ... I don't remember that. But, you know, we would take down, you know, I'm sure hotdogs and, you know ... we would take a cooler with food ... it's not a strong memory ... and when we shopped down there, we didn't go shopping every time we went down there, I know that also. Um, but I think we would buy, we'd buy eggs, we might buy some meat and chicken locally...uh, usually a good question. I mean, I remember at, I think it was at Shady Side Market, they had an area off to the left that was mainly different kinds of consumer goods besides food. They'd have some clothes, they had toys, magazines ... and, I remember being kind of curious in looking through all that stuff, and maybe buying a toy there once in a while. Uh, and I remember going bicycling quite often, either alone or with Paul, and sometimes with my Mom and/or Dad...and you know, biking maybe a couple of miles in some other neighborhoods. And, there was one family that had peacocks in their yard. Uh, I could probably still find those places today.

Q: I'm just curious how, what you thought of Shady Side as a place outside of the Fishing Club or "Our Place". What kind of a town was it?

A: I mean, there was, they did have fireworks. I remember hearing fireworks shot on July 4th, although from the water, you would see that happening all over. Um uh, there were, there would be ball teams I guess. I remember when they built new fields right outside the Shady Side boatyard. And tennis courts ... we started using them on a regular basis. And, sometimes we'd drive down there. There'd be a lot of cars and people hanging out for what I guess might be league baseball games. And ah, I remember occasionally somebody running into ... there's a really nasty curve down uh, what they call it East-West Shady Side Road, just before you ... the last right turn before you come into "Our Place". There's a big tree, and I remember at least one time, somebody running into the tree. I mean, crashing into it...an ambulance coming. But, I remember there were some souped-up cars, and you know, it was, um you know, there was just one small town center. Down where we were, it was pretty quiet...it was pretty quiet. Uhm, so ...

BK, Good, um I want to take a break for a moment.

TAPE ENDS