



**Kevin Godsey  
Godsey Seafood  
Mathews, Virginia**

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Date: May 20, 2018  
Location: Kevin Godsey's home, Mathews County, VA  
Interviewee: Kevin Godsey  
Transcription: Shelley M. Chance  
Length: Forty-seven minutes  
Project: Tidewater Foodways

JT: This is Jessica Taylor and Patrick Daglaris with Kevin Godsey. It's May 20, 2018 and we are near Bethel Beach in Mathews County, Virginia. Kevin, can you say when and where you were born?

[00:00:17]

KG: March 9, [19]72 right over there.

[00:00:20]

JT: Okay, what does right over there mean? [Laughter]

[00:00:24]

KG: A little ways that way, a quarter of a mile.

[00:00:26]

JT: Quarter of a mile, okay. All right. And what were your parents' names and occupations?

[00:00:31]

KG: Jimmy, commercial fisherman, and Gloria, housewife.

[00:00:36]

JT: Okay, and do you have any brothers or sisters?

[00:00:38]

KG: One brother.

[00:00:39]

JT: One brother, okay. What does he do?

[00:00:40]

KG: Works at NASA.

[00:00:42]

JT: Okay; I actually didn't know that about you.

[00:00:43]

KG: Yeah, yeah. He's a computer engineer over there.

[00:00:47]

JT: Wow; okay. And how did you become a waterman?

[00:00:50]

KG: Just started doing it when I was a kid, stayed on the boat. Summertime I lived on the boat with my father, all summer was out of school.

[00:00:57]

JT: Okay, and when was the moment that you decided to become a waterman? Can you like think of a specific moment?

[00:01:06]

KG: Just couldn't imagine ever doing anything else.

[00:01:09]

JT: Okay.

[00:01:10]

KG: When I grew up.

[00:01:11]

JT: Okay, but your brother decided to do something different?

[00:01:13]

KG: Yeah.

[00:01:14]

JT: Okay. So, you specifically—you crab and oyster, right?

[00:01:20]

KG: Crab, oyster, and fish some.

[00:01:22]

JT: Okay, and what does your year look like as far as the seasons go?

[00:01:25]

KG: You mean how good this one has been?

[00:01:28]

JT: No, like a typical year, like when do you start crabbing—

[00:01:33]

KG: Start crabbing when the temperature hits around the fifties. It could be March to April. Crab until September and start catching spot and then around November start oystering, and also rockfish in January.

[00:01:47]

JT: Okay, and has that changed from your dad's generation?

[00:01:50]

KG: Yeah, we used to always crab dredge in the wintertime.

[00:01:53]

JT: Okay.

[00:01:54]

KG: And they outlawed that in around 2000.

[00:01:56]

JT: Okay, and how has that affected you?

[00:01:58]

KG: It really didn't because the oysters came back. If oysters hadn't come back we'd have had a problem.

[00:02:05]

JT: Okay, yeah. And I understand you're kind of involved with aquaculture a little bit, right?

[00:02:08]

KG: Um-hm, just started in the last few years.

[00:02:10]

JT: Can you talk a little bit about that?

[00:02:11]

KG: It's kind of unbelievable what they've done. They've got several different strands of hybrid oysters that are sterile and so they will grow extremely fast and they won't get poor in the

summertime. Like a wild oyster will get poor because they're spawning, and these don't. And it's amazing with how far they've come with the technology with those.

[00:02:31]

JT: Okay. Can you talk a little bit more about the technology and how it's affected what you do every day?

[00:02:39]

KG: Well, it used to be the oysters. Three years you'd be lucky to get an oyster to market size and now the farm-raised ones we can grow them sometimes twelve months.

[00:02:49]

JT: Wow.

[00:02:50]

KG: Yeah.

[00:02:51]

JT: Has that affected the amount of money you can make doing this?

[00:02:53]

KG: It's helped a lot but it seems right now that it's so many people getting in it, it's so big, the market is going to have to catch up.

[00:03:01]

JT: Okay, okay.

[00:03:03]

KG: They're getting a little bit harder to get rid of.

[00:03:05]

JT: Can you walk us through a typical day during the oystering season?

[00:03:09]

KG: Oystering season usually don't start— we can't start until sunrise, so work—if I'm tonging for wild ones I work until about 12:00, 1:00 and quit, and then farm-raised it depends on how many orders I have for what I'll go for.

[00:03:22]

JT: Okay. Where do the orders come from?

[00:03:23]

KG: Right now, I'm mainly selling here to Sea Farms, a wholesale place in Mathews.

[00:03:28]

JT: Okay, and where does their stuff end up?



[00:03:29]

KG: He boxes them and sends them all over the country.

[00:03:32]

JT: Really?

[00:03:33]

KG: Um-hm.

[00:03:33]

JT: Okay. Is it frozen after—?

[00:03:35]

KG: No, he'll box them in a hundred count boxes and send them to places. The farm-raised ones all go raw bar.

[00:03:43]

JT: Really? And the wild ones don't?

[00:03:45]

KG: Some do, but more of the farm-raised. The wild ones will do more during the wintertime, will go to raw bar.

[00:03:51]

JT: Okay. So, after you have the orders and you're going through your day oystering, what happens next?

[00:03:59]

KG: I usually get in—we're time restricted by the health department. In the wintertime, we can work all day long. In April, May, we have to have them in refrigeration by 11:00. And then June and July and August we have to have them in refrigeration by 10:00.

[00:04:14]

JT: Okay.

[00:04:15]

KG: Or we've got several other ways now. I've got an ice permit where I can go any time with ice or I've got a GPS tracker I can put on the boat and they can track me to see that I'm not out over three hours.

[00:04:26]

JT: Wow. When did you start using the GPS?

[00:04:27]

KG: I just got it. I haven't programmed that stuff.

[00:04:30]

JT: How do you feel about it?

[00:04:31]

KG: It's fine. It's giving me some extra time if I want to go in the afternoon.

[00:04:34]

JT: Okay. I imagine the refrigeration regulations are different from your parents' generation?

[00:04:40]

KG: Oh, yeah. Yeah, quite a bit, which they never oystered other than in the wintertime.

[00:04:45]

JT: Okay.

[00:04:46]

KG: This is a new generation that will eat oysters other times a year. Before, nobody would ever eat an oyster if there wasn't an R in the month. And now they'll eat them any time.

[00:04:55]

JT: Really?

[00:04:55]

KG: Uh-huh.

[00:04:56]

JT: Is that for health reasons I'm guessing?

[00:04:58]

KG: Yeah, yeah.

[00:05:00]

JT: Okay, okay. Was that everywhere here, the R in the month thing, or—?

[00:05:05]

KG: Yeah, oystering just completely shut down once the R was gone.

[00:05:10]

JT: Hm, okay. I had never heard that, have you?

[00:05:12]

PD: No.

[00:05:14]

KG: That's how it always was done here.

[00:05:15]

JT: Huh. So, during the months with an R in the month when your dad was oystering, what was his typical day like?

[00:05:25]

KG: Oh, they had done a lot of patent tonging years ago. And they'd also done a lot of dredging. They dredged a lot of seed out of James River and brought up here and put them out to grow out to big oysters. That's what they'd done more than anything.

[00:05:35]

JT: Why did they take them from James River?

[00:05:37]

KG: James River never would grow a big oyster but they had unbelievable amounts of little oysters. And they would dredge—catch the little ones and bring them up here and put them over and they'd grow out to big oysters.

[00:05:48]

JT: Okay, and when did they stop doing that?

[00:05:48]

KG: They still do it some now but in a small way.

[00:05:52]

JT: Okay. Do you remember when they started doing that?

[00:05:55]

KG: Uh . . .

[00:05:56]

JT: Before your time?

[00:05:56]

KG: Before my time like quite a bit. I did hear that Billups, one of the big ones up there, he got extremely wealthy from buying seed during the Depression and after the Depression the oyster prices rose and he got very wealthy. [Laughter]

[00:06:10]

JT: So, what kind of people would make it big in oystering? Like, what were some of like their innovations or like their ways to do really well in the market?

[00:06:21]

KG: What do you mean?

[00:06:23]

JT: Like, during your dad's generation?

[00:06:24]

KG: Some of them even actually in the [19]50s ended up with some automated boats that nobody had to touch anything.

[00:06:31]

JT: Okay, and when did that—that's in the [19]50s?

[00:06:35]

KG: In the [19]50s and it died again in the mid [19]60s. All of them just . . . all died.

[00:06:40]

JT: And why was that?

[00:06:42]

KG: Disease, some kind of disease got them in the mid [19]60s and just wiped them completely out.

[00:06:48]

JT: Okay, and how did that affect people here?

[00:06:49]

KG: Tremendously bad for a while. [Laughter] But I'm sure they went on and started doing something else. They went crab dredging. There was a lot more things to do at the time.

[00:06:58]

JT: Right. Did your dad ever talk to you about like the collapse in the [19]60s?

[00:07:01]

KG: Yeah, he said he was figuring on retiring in the early [19]40s and be rich and they all died.

[Laughter]

[00:07:07]

JT: Wow.

[00:07:08]

KG: They went out there and seen them. They were running out of the shell where they were dying, so they got everything they could and sold it to Campbell's Soup to make cans of oyster soup.

[00:07:20]

JT: So even though they were dying—?

[00:07:22]

KG: Yeah, they tried to save what they could at the time.



[00:07:25]

JT: Hm. Did that make the collapse worse or did that just kind of—?

[00:07:28]

KG: They were all going to die anyway so it didn't . . .

[00:07:30]

JT: Okay, and how did they come back? When did you realize that they were going to come back?

[00:07:34]

KG: They came back in the late [19]70s and early [19]80s and died again around the late [19]80s; around [19]88, [19]89 they all died again.

[00:07:42]

JT: Is it more of a cycle?

[00:07:44]

KG: Yeah, they've come and gone quite a few times.

[00:07:47]

JT: Okay. Is there any way to predict that?

[00:07:50]

KG: No, it makes people get nervous after they've been alive for a while. [Laughter]

[00:07:55]

JT: Wow. So, what happens to the crabs that you harvest here? Where do they end up?

[00:08:03]

KG: Most of them go to Richmond to different seafood markets but some go to a picking house on Gwynn's Island.

[00:08:09]

JT: Okay.

[00:08:10]

KG: Where they pick the meat.

[00:08:11]

JT: Okay, and how long has that picking house been there?

[00:08:13]

KG: Probably in the [19]40s maybe, [19]40s, [19]50s, I'm not sure.

[00:08:20]

JT: Okay, and in the markets in Richmond, do you know which specific markets they might be?

[00:08:26]

KG: Well, the ones I sell to?

[00:08:26]

JT: Um-hm.

[00:08:27]

KG: I go to one called Sea Farms, Ocean World, Seafood World, John's Seafood, Sim's Seafood, and Catch of the Day.

[00:08:35]

JT: And you take it there personally?

[00:08:38]

KG: Um-hm.

[00:08:38]

JT: To each of those places?

[00:08:39]

KG: Um-hm, yeah.

[00:08:39]

JT: Okay, and what's your relationship with those folks like?

[00:08:43]

KG: It's good, good. They're all Korean. All the Koreans run all the seafood markets in Richmond for some reason.

[00:08:48]

JT: Interesting.

[00:08:49]

KG: They're good to deal with.

[00:08:50]

JT: How did you get involved in that, establish relationships with them?

[00:08:53]

KG: Just started going up there years ago, about probably twenty, twenty-five years ago, and just started going to some stores and they were all friends and kind of end up going to another store.

[00:09:04]

PD: What was your incentive for doing that?

[00:09:06]

KG: Price.

[00:09:08]

JT: And what's the difference?

[00:09:09]

KG: Tremendously different than here local.

[00:09:13]

JT: Wow, okay. Hm. So, how has what people want in seafood changed as far as like the end-consumer, like the person that actually eats—?

[00:09:24]

KG: The one thing is with the oysters how they want them year-round now. That's unbelievable what that's changed into. And the oysters, too, have gone from—everything was shucked and fried and now the raw bar is passing the fried oysters, because that was pretty much the only way anybody wanted one was fried.

[00:09:42]

JT: Um-hm. What about crab?

[00:09:43]

KG: It hasn't changed a lot other than the female market in the country has probably gotten a little bit better because most Asians would rather have females than males.

[00:09:54]

JT: Why is that?

[00:09:54]

KG: If you get the female in the spring or in the wintertime they have eggs in them and they like the eggs.

[00:09:59]

JT: Okay, okay. Do you like the eggs?

[00:10:01]

KG: Yeah, I do. And the female has a little bit sweeter taste, I think.

[00:10:05]

JT: Interesting, okay. So, how about people's patterns of eating locally here as far as seafood goes, like in Mathews and Gloucester and . . . ?

[00:10:14]

KG: It's probably changed a lot because years ago, before my time, when everybody salted a lot of fish to have to eat all winter, and nobody does that anymore.

[00:10:22]

JT: Because of refrigeration?

[00:10:23]

KG: Not many people even freeze them anymore, what it used to be.

[00:10:27]

JT: Okay.

[00:10:27]

KG: Everybody salted herring and spot to have to eat the next winter.

[00:10:32]

JT: Okay.

[00:10:33]

KG: And that's changed.

[00:10:36]

JT: Okay.

[00:10:36]

KG: And all the old people used to eat fish for breakfast, salt fish. I never have. [Laughter] I never have got into that but . . .

[00:10:44]

JT: How would they prepare it?

[00:10:45]

KG: They'd fry it.

[00:10:45]

JT: Fry it, and what did they serve it with?

[00:10:47]

KG: Probably cornbread.

[00:10:50]

JT: Okay, okay. So, your typical day crabbing, can you walk us through at least the morning part?

[00:10:58]



KG: In the summertime, probably get up around 3:00 and start about a quarter to 4:00 or something like that and get back in 11:00, 11:30, something like that.

[00:11:07]

JT: Okay, and then you'd drive what you have to—?

[00:11:10]

KG: Go to Richmond every other day.

[00:11:11]

JT: You go to Richmond every other day?

[00:11:12]

KG: Um-hm.

[00:11:13]

JT: What do you do with it in the . . . ?

[00:11:15]

KG: Keeping it in refrigeration.

[00:11:16]

JT: Oh, okay.

[00:11:18]

KG: Yeah.

[00:11:18]

JT: So, how has your refrigeration technology here changed over time? When did you first start doing that?

[00:11:24]

KG: Twenty, twenty-five years ago.

[00:11:26]

JT: Okay, wow. So, with your dad?

[00:11:27]

KG: Yeah, yeah.

[00:11:30]

JT: Okay.

[00:11:30]

KG: And back to the herring, one thing you ought to read sometime about the herring, they sold the scales. And it was a guy up in I think it was in New Hampshire—not New Hampshire, it was

up north somewhere and he had done something with the scales to get the mother of pearl look out of the scales to make jewelry. And the guys around here would keep the scales and send up there.

[00:11:53]

JT: We've heard that before; yeah. And who was keeping them to send them up there?

[00:11:58]

KG: I'm not sure, but it was one or two herring canning places here. And I guess they kept the scales off because they canned the herring roe.

[00:12:06]

JT: That's right, okay. Were you involved in herring at all?

[00:12:11]

KG: No, unh-uh.

[00:12:12]

JT: No, okay. And that's not something that happens a whole lot anymore, right?

[00:12:15]

KG: No, it's nobody really fishing for them anymore. It's limited now if you can even keep any now.

[00:12:21]

JT: Really? Why is that?

[00:12:22]

KG: I'm not sure, just foolish regulations.

[00:12:25]

JT: Oh, foolish regulations, okay.

[00:12:26]

KG: Virginia is pretty bad, like shad. Shad is legal to catch in every state on the East Coast as it migrates up the coast except Virginia. And, as soon as it leaves North Carolina, they can catch and sell them. When it gets to Virginia we can't have them. When it gets to Maryland they can have them again.

[00:12:39]

JT: Okay. [Laughter] Well talk a little bit about the regulations. How did your dad feel about regulations on seafood?

[00:12:46]

KG: You got to have some, and they had it pretty easy, laidback. Very little.

[00:12:52]

JT: Okay. Okay. And I know how you feel about regulations, but how do you feel about regulations?

[00:13:00]

KG: You need some but a lot of the stuff they'll pass they don't enforce and I don't know. They do some foolish things. [Laughter]

[00:13:11]

PD: I wanted to ask: you were talking about the oysters coming and going. It's kind of been cyclical for a lot of years. Was that always the case even in your dad's time, before your time, or was that something that's been more of like a recent development?

[00:13:24]

KG: I know in the [19]60s when they died it was one of the biggest I've ever heard of. I'm not sure prior to the [19]60s.

[00:13:30]

PD: Um-hm, because I'm just wondering the role regulations or the population changes in the oysters, how that affected the industry I guess in those older times.

[00:13:37]

KG: Fish is a lot the same way, croakers. They got filthy rich here in the [19]40s during the war. The prices went way up to feed the troops and I'm . . . some of the stories is unbelievable, lighting fifty-dollar bills to light cigars in the [19]40s here. I've heard my dad say one guy set—he just got back from Kentucky and said he lost fifty thousand dollars that weekend on the horse races, and that was in the [19]40s.

[00:14:03]

JT: Wow.

[00:14:04]

KG: And most all of them went busted because all the croakers disappeared in the late [19]50s and they were still living the high life. And a lot of them lost everything they had.

[00:14:14]

PD: Wow.

[00:14:14]

KG: So, a lot of the fish have come and gone. The croakers are getting ready to go again it seems.

[00:14:18]

PD: Um-hm.

[00:14:19]

JT: Did the bust affect how people consumed after?

[00:14:24]

KG: Before my time, but I don't know.

[00:14:26]

JT: You don't know, okay.

[00:14:28]

PD: So, how easy was it for people to adapt or change industries? If you're crabbing and then having to switch to oysters or shad, like how easy was it to make that transition?

[00:14:37]

KG: Not much. They had to probably change some things on the boats. Most all the boats were open boats for hauling freight and stuff, and then once they started dredging oysters the dredge nets would deck them over so it wasn't a lot.

[00:14:49]

PD: So, it seems like then the watermen were able to maintain work as these fish populations changed. But what about like the packing houses and different things? You've mentioned there was herring, the scales. It seems like those distributors or packing houses are the ones that maybe . . . were they affected more or . . . ?

[00:15:06]

KG: Well, probably if they were doing fish and all of a sudden, the fish dipped they might have started becoming a shucking house or a picking house to pick crabs. So, they probably converted over to do something different too.

[00:15:17]

PD: Could you talk about some of the big operations that were here or are here across any of the—?

[00:15:24]

KG: Billups up there was probably one of the biggest oyster places here in the county. And the Philpotts, he was extremely big, he done everything, freight. And across from Food Lion if you go up there—I didn't notice it until just a few years ago—it's a big Texaco sign made into the brick wall in the little store across, and that was his gas station he had there.

[00:15:44]

PD: Wow.

[00:15:45]

KG: And he was very generous. I've heard my dad say several times he was just a little kid and my grandfather was hauling I think bricks from up Chickahominy River down to Philpotts, and when he got done working for him at the end of the season he said, "How many children you



got?” And he said, “I’ve got one son.” And he give him twenty dollars, and this was probably in the late [19]30s.

[00:16:02]

PD: Wow.

[00:16:03]

KG: So, that was a lot of money.

[00:16:04]

JT: Wow.

[00:16:04]

PD: Where was Billups’s operation, because I know—?

[00:16:07]

KG: Down at Williams Wharf.

[00:16:08]

PD: Okay. So, not far from Philpotts then, too.

[00:16:11]

KG: No, straight across the river, yeah.

[00:16:12]

PD: Okay, all right.

[00:16:14]

KG: All the way straight across the river.

[00:16:15]

JT: Huh. So, I also wanted to know about like what your family cooked at home when you were a kid.

[00:16:24]

KG: Hm. Chicken and steak. [Laughter] Oysters, fish.

[00:16:33]

JT: Okay. Anything like special recipes your parents had or . . . ?

[00:16:37]

KG: I was thinking about the other day, you sent some things like that, something you looked forward to. I always wanted oyster dressing for Thanksgiving. That was always a big thing, to have oyster dressing.

[00:16:44]

JT: How was that made?

[00:16:44]

KG: It's regular dressing but you pick little oysters to put in it and you use what we call the liquor out of the oysters, the oyster's juice, and put it in with the dressing.

[00:16:53]

JT: By regular dressing you mean like from the supermarket?

[00:16:57]

KG: No, it was homemade but stovetop I guess in a way.

[00:16:59]

JT: Okay.

[00:16:59]

KG: And just add oysters.

[00:17:02]

JT: Okay, and that was a special thing?

[00:17:03]

KG: Um-hm, always had that at Thanksgiving.

[00:17:04]

JT: And what do you have it with?

[00:17:05]

KG: With turkey and everything, just didn't have standard dressing.

[00:17:10]

JT: Okay. I've also heard of a thing called clam pie.

[00:17:12]

KG: Uh-huh.

[00:17:13]

JT: What is that?

[00:17:15]

KG: I would say it's something like . . . just a pot pie with clams in it.

[00:17:20]

JT: Okay. I thought maybe it would be like an apple pie but—

[00:17:24]

KG: No, no, no.

[00:17:24]

JT: Instead it would have clams. Okay. Have you ever had that?

[00:17:26]

KG: Yeah; yeah.

[00:17:27]

JT: Have you made it?

[00:17:27]

KG: I haven't, my mother has.

[00:17:30]

JT: Oh, when your mom makes it what does she do to make it?

[00:17:33]

KG: It's been a long time since we've had it. We also make clam fritters and—

[00:17:37]

JT: Okay.

[00:17:38]

KG: With clams.

[00:17:38]

JT: With clam fritters, is that more of a common thing?

[00:17:41]

KG: Yeah, we probably used either clam chowder or clam fritters was made the majority of the time.

[00:17:45]

JT: Okay.

[00:17:46]

KG: With clams.

[00:17:47]

JT: Have you made clam fritters?

[00:17:49]

KG: I haven't. Mama has, yeah.

[00:17:52]

JT: Do you remember what her process was with clam fritters?

[00:17:54]

KG: Not really.

[00:17:55]

JT: Okay. What about clam chowder?

[00:17:58]

KG: Everybody had their famous one that was much better than everybody else's. [Laughter]

Everybody competing with the clam chowder, who had the best.

[00:18:06]

JT: Okay, fair enough. [Laughter]

[00:18:09]

KG: And everybody always had the New England style. I've never had the Manhattan style.

[00:18:12]

JT: What differentiates the New England style?

[00:18:16]

KG: The one is—New England, I guess, is milk and water when the other one is tomato-based.

[00:18:21]

JT: Interesting.

[00:18:23]

KG: Uh-huh, and I've never had the tomato-based one.

[00:18:25]

JT: Okay, but everybody here does the—?

[00:18:26]

KG: The New England style.

[00:18:27]

JT: The New England one, okay.

[00:18:29]

KG: Um-hm.

[00:18:30]

JT: Hm. What do you cook at home here?

[00:18:33]



KG: Go to Hardees. [Laughter] No, the most average stuff: pork chops, chicken, fish, shrimp.

[00:18:42]

JT: Okay. When your parents would get ingredients like for a dinner, where did they usually get it from?

[00:18:50]

KG: It was an A&P grocery store here.

[00:18:52]

JT: Okay, like the entire time you were growing up?

[00:18:54]

KG: Um-hm, yeah.

[00:18:55]

JT: Okay. Did they ever talk about country stores or anything?

[00:18:58]

KG: There was a tremendous amount of country stores here.

[00:19:00]

PD: Were they still around when you were growing up or—?

[00:19:02]

KG: Just one.

[00:19:03]

PD: Which one was it?

[00:19:04]

KG: Morris Flippin's store, it's about a mile up the road from here. That was the only one that was still open.

[00:19:12]

JT: We passed Morris Flippin Road—

[00:19:14]

KG: That's it right there.

[00:19:15]

JT: Okay, all right. And that was his name, Morris Flippin?

[00:19:18]

KG: Uh-huh, yeah.

[00:19:19]

JT: Okay.

[00:19:19]

PD: Do you remember anything about the store, going in or . . . ?

[00:19:22]

KG: I remember going there when I was a little kid but I believe he had passed and somebody else had opened it. It didn't last long.

[00:19:29]

PD: Well, do you know what were the main goods that someone would purchase from him?

[00:19:34]

KG: I think he carried meats and everything. He carried everything. There's one at Beaverlett also. I don't remember what the name of the store was but there was one there.

[00:19:45]

JT: But you didn't really . . . it sounds like it was kind of distant for you, like you didn't really go there.

[00:19:50]

KG: Yeah, yeah.

[00:19:51]

JT: Okay.

[00:19:51]

KG: I have them here. I don't know if you've ever seen these?

[00:20:00]

JT: These are the tokens, right?

[00:20:03]

KG: You went with eggs and they owed you money and they'd give you a due bill to bring back.

[00:20:09]

JT: And it's called a due bill like d-u-e?

[00:20:12]

KG: Um-hm; that's what I've always—

[00:20:13]

JT: Okay.

[00:20:14]

PD: Wow.

[00:20:16]

JT: So, we're looking at tokens for ten cents that are little—

[00:20:25]

PD: So, a lot of them are the T.B. Hudgins Store in Port Haywood and then the E. Sadler & Co in Beaverlett.

[00:20:31]

KG: Okay.

[00:20:33]

JT: Where did you get these?

[00:20:35]

KG: I have no idea. I bought this stuff so long ago and this was . . . I don't know if you've ever seen one. At one time, too, oyster shuckers and stuff were paid with tokens to buy in the country store in their own store.

[00:20:46]

JT: In their own stores?

[00:20:48]

KG: Uh-huh.

[00:20:48]

JT: So, it was like a script kind of thing.

[00:20:50]

KG: Um-hm.

[00:20:50]

JT: And what were these called?

[00:20:51]

KG: All as I've ever heard is tokens, seafood tokens are what people call them now.

[00:20:55]

JT: And they were paid with these?

[00:20:57]

KG: Um-hm.

[00:20:58]

JT: Okay. Have you ever been in the—?

[00:21:01]

KG: Um-hm.

[00:21:02]

JT: Okay. Where was this store that they—?

[00:21:04]

KG: That one was Hampton Packing Company.

[00:21:05]

JT: Oh, okay. So, that was in Hampton.

[00:21:07]

KG: Um-hm.

[00:21:08]

JT: Okay.

[00:21:10]

PD: I wanted to ask: do you know anything—because you said the country stores are before your time primarily . . . did your parents or your father ever talk about them or maybe the relationship to the watermen in terms of supplies, or did they sell any of the seafood themselves or . . . ?

[00:21:25]

KG: You could actually carry crabs to the country store and they had freight trucks that would come around and pick them up.

[00:21:31]

PD: Oh, wow.

[00:21:31]

KG: And my dad always laughed at . . . we'd call them gall bushes, the little bushes going around the trees and stuff. Around the shoreline, they would stick them in them crab baskets and wet them to help keep the crabs alive. And that's how they shipped them up there.

[00:21:43]

PD: And that one that was down the road, was that the closest one that you know of or was there—?

[00:21:48]

KG: There was one right up here on this corner.

[00:21:50]

PD: Okay.



[00:21:50]

KG: Yeah.

[00:21:51]

PD: And do you know who owned that one?

[00:21:53]

KG: Charlie . . . I think Charlie Hudgins I believe was his last name.

[00:22:00]

PD: Okay.

[00:22:00]

JT: It's like a good bet.

[00:22:02]

KG: Yeah, because I was asking a neighbor here Gaffney but other than that I always heard there . . . it was one old lady, the last lady, she run it, she was extremely religious and she wouldn't sell cigarettes but she'd set them on the counter with a jar and you could put your money in it and take the cigarettes. She wasn't selling them herself. [Laughter]

[00:22:20]

JT: Do you remember any other stories like that from the Hudginses or the store at Beaverlett or anything like that?

[00:22:27]

KG: It was always weird, the store right out here on the corner you come by, it was one right across the road from it and I mean they were everywhere. And it was kind of weird to hear the stories but the people would always shop at a certain store and they'd—sometimes they'd walk past three or four stores to get to the one they wanted to deal with because between here and Bethel Beach was three, four stores just from here to . . . that's within two miles. There's four stores.

[00:22:51]

PD: Wow. And do you know did they sell different supplies? Is that part of the reason— or were there different reasons you'd go to different stores?

[00:22:57]

KG: Just friends with a different person.

[00:23:00]

PD: Yeah.

[00:23:00]

KG: That's who they bought it from.

[00:23:00]

PD: And we've heard before that a lot of the watermen or men in the community would gather at the different country stores—

[00:23:07]

KG: Yeah, I've always heard in the late evenings everybody went to the store to hang out.

[00:23:10]

PD: Did you ever hear why or some of the stories that—from those meetings or . . . ?

[00:23:14]

KG: Just they went to have a good time, carry on, joke. Yeah.

[00:23:21]

JT: When the A&P opened, when was that? Was that in the [19]50s?

[00:23:26]

KG: I'm not sure how long that had been there.

[00:23:29]

JT: Okay. Did you ever hear about like things that the A&P carried that the country store didn't?

[00:23:34]

KG: Not really. One of the things I remember, they were unionized and a lot of people really liked working for A&P because they paid such good salaries at the time.

[00:23:43]

JT: Yeah, okay. So, as maybe like young people would do that or—?

[00:23:47]

KG: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

[00:23:48]

JT: Oh, okay. Any stories from friends that you had that worked at the A&P?

[00:23:53]

KG: No, not really.

[00:23:53]

JT: Okay.

[00:23:54]

KG: No.

[00:23:54]

JT: Okay.

[00:23:55]

KG: The main thing I can remember is how good the coffee smelled with—they all had the coffee grinding machines at every checkout counter.

[00:24:00]

JT: Oh. When would your parents go to the A&P?

[00:24:04]

KG: That's one thing that has really changed now. It seems like everybody, whatever they're going to cook that night, they stop at the grocery store on their way home from work. And back then, people went either once a week or once every two weeks and bought all the groceries for that two-week period or one-week period.

[00:24:18]

JT: Really? Even fresh produce?

[00:24:20]

KG: Um-hm. Yeah, they never went to the grocery store no more but that one time. And now, everybody will stop every day to pick up what they want for dinner.

[00:24:29]

JT: So, your mom planned meals?

[00:24:30]

KG: Um-hm, yeah.

[00:24:31]

JT: Okay, hm.

[00:24:33]

PD: Did you notice changes or were there things that changed with the A&P store in terms of food, like were there things that just weren't there before that people were able to access easier?

[00:24:45]

KG: Not that I remember.

[00:24:48]

JT: I realize now that you do a lot of like outreach with kids and you go to the schools. What kind of information do you want them to know about the seafood industry and about the Bay and generally?

[00:25:06]

KG: Just explain to them . . . when I usually do the thing at the school it's just oystering is what I do and just teach them how we caught them and how they're still caught today is all. And let them play with a set of shaft tongs.

[00:25:18]

JT: Oh, really?

[00:25:19]

KG: Uh-huh.

[00:25:20]

JT: What are their reactions to that?

[00:25:22]

KG: How hard it is. [Laughter] And it always amazes me, I always ask every little group that comes through do they like oysters and it amazes me how many little kids today love oysters, because I didn't want them when I was a kid. [Laughter]

[00:25:33]

JT: No. You didn't?

[00:25:34]

KG: Unh-uh.

[00:25:35]

JT: Why not?

[00:25:36]

KG: Just didn't want them. [Laughter]

[00:25:37]

JT: Okay. So, when they see how hard it is to get oysters and they see how oysters function and all that kind of stuff, what do you want them to know about like the people that harvest them?

[00:25:53]

KG: Just explain to them how it's still done that way and it's hard work and what it takes to get them.

[00:25:59]

JT: Okay. So, what do you hope for the future of the seafood industry?

[00:26:05]

KG: Just that it'll keep going like it's going. [Laughter]

[00:26:11]

JT: Okay.



[00:26:12]

KG: Pollution is a big deal now because sometimes we'll have red tide in the Bay real bad and I think that's affecting stuff a tremendous amount.

[00:26:20]

JT: Do you remember when you first saw a red tide?

[00:26:22]

KG: Hm, maybe ten, twelve years ago.

[00:26:29]

JT: Um-hm, and what was your reaction?

[00:26:29]

KG: It doesn't look good, and some years it'll smell real bad too when you're going through it. We had a real bad place here about five years ago, the whole Bay. It was hard to find any good water.

[00:26:40]

JT: Wow. When you talk to other watermen about it, what's your consensus?

[00:26:46]

KG: Well, they have a little bit more trouble with the rivers and stuff than we do so some—it didn't kill everything when we had it but some places it'll kill everything. When it comes through all the fish— the fish in the crab pots or crabs—it'll just kill everything in the pot.

[00:26:57]

JT: Um-hm.

[00:26:58]

KG: It wasn't that bad here. But that fall that we had all that—we always have spot that come in the Bay in September and October and we didn't have any—very few that fall, and I think it affected it a lot for not having them.

[00:27:12]

JT: What's your sense of what's causing the red tide?

[00:27:15]

KG: Just runoff and . . . in the country for some reason everybody wants to go to every coast.

[Laughter]

[00:27:23]

JT: Okay.

[00:27:25]

KG: Everybody wants to live next to the coast.

[00:27:26]

JT: So, population density is that . . . okay.

[00:27:28]

KG: Yeah.

[00:27:29]

JT: So, not farms, you know . . .

[00:27:31]

KG: I don't think so. The farms—we've come so far with technology, they can sample a field with GPS now and program the tractors and everything to know where to put fertilizer. So, they're not putting a tremendous extra amount, I wouldn't think.

[00:27:45]

JT: From your perspective, what's the solution to the problem?

[00:27:48]

KG: Got to get rid of some people. [Laughter]

[00:27:50]

JT: Okay. [Laughter]

[00:27:54]

KG: I don't know.

[00:27:56]

PD: Could you talk a little bit about what you've seen in terms of how many like watermen are out there, the ships—since you've started or maybe in your like father's time and how that's changed?

[00:28:08]

KG: Like Davis Creek down in New Point here, when I was a kid and into the early [19]90s and in the wintertime it was unbelievable what went on there. It would be probably eighty, one hundred boats in there, crab dredging in the wintertime and that was a big business for Mathews. It would be 10,000, 15,000 gallons of fuel sold there, and now that's shut down and it's maybe one to two full-time boats coming out of there, and that is unbelievable what that has done down there.

[00:28:36]

PD: Wow.

[00:28:37]

KG: And I caught just the tail-end of seeing all that.

[00:28:40]

PD: So. what's your current—do you have anyone working with you, any crew members or—?

[00:28:46]

KG: Just by myself.

[00:28:47]

PD: Okay, and has it always been that case or—?

[00:28:49]

KG: No, I usually had pretty big crews of people.

[00:28:52]

PD: When did that change? I guess like year-wise or when did you start with the—?

[00:28:57]

KG: Well, everybody always used a bigger boat and now we've all—a lot of them have gone to small skiffs and it's a lot less upkeep and it doesn't have to have a crew, and that's changed tremendously.

[00:29:06]

PD: And I was wondering, too, what—you've talked about the changes in the populations. What do you see the current populations for crab and oyster— are they more or less than I guess when you started or . . . ?

[00:29:22]

KG: I'd say probably a lot less.

[00:29:24]

PD: Less?

[00:29:25]

KG: Um-hm.

[00:29:26]

PD: And do you think that they will be able—like, will they return? Is it cyclical? Do you see having a future as like big as it was then or—?

[00:29:36]

KG: I doubt it, and I don't think it will be nobody crabbing because the average crabber in Virginia is sixty-two years old now. And there's nobody young. I'm the youngest person at forty-six that's doing it.

[00:29:47]

PD: So, what made you—because all those watermen had children too, I imagine, and there were different—what made it something that you got into and maybe wasn't something everyone else got into?

[00:29:58]

KG: Just more and more moved away to different jobs and to stay here in—Mathews is turning into more of a retirement community. People come here to retire and it's not—most everybody else has moved away to other jobs as far as local people.

[00:30:12]

PD: Um-hm.

[00:30:12]

KG: Yeah, we're sitting on land here that's been in my family over three hundred years, so I guess I had to stay.

[00:30:17]

PD: Wow. [Laughter]

[00:30:19]

JT: That's exciting. Honestly, that's so cool. Do you feel an attachment to this?

[00:30:26]

KG: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[00:30:27]

JT: Because the house is new, right?

[00:30:28]

KG: Um-hm.

[00:30:29]

JT: Yeah, how does it feel to see the land change so much over such a short period of time?

[00:30:37]

KG: It's pretty amazing to—I don't know if the land is sinking. Some people say maybe sea level rise, but the flooding down here I really don't think it will be inhabitable fifty to a hundred years from now. Because when I was growing up, very rare did we ever see tide on the land down here. Now, it's just a common occurrence now.

[00:30:56]

JT: Uh-huh. Well, how do you plan for the future?

[00:31:00]

KG: I won't be here in fifty years. [Laughter] Well, if I am I'll be old enough, I won't care. Let it come.



[00:31:05]

JT: Okay. [Laughter]

[00:31:08]

KG: But it didn't just start happening because down towards Peary, and even when I was a little kid, it's a marsh grass place there that still has corn rows in it that you can see. They're a little bit harder to see now, so it didn't just start happening.

[00:31:21]

PD: I think the easy example is like New Point, I guess the lighthouse where you—they even have like the photos when you go down there, like the land changing. Are there other areas you can think of that are noticeably in your time that you've seen just change?

[00:31:36]

KG: The beach up here from Bethel Beach on down, that is washing and changing so fast it's unbelievable. Maybe fifteen years ago a big bell buoy broke loose in a storm and come there and went on the beach. And now, I fish inside of that buoy and in like ten years that buoy is several hundred feet from the beach, so it's several hundred foot of beachline that's gone in that little bit of time.

[00:31:57]

PD: Wow.

[00:31:59]

JT: We've talked before about the folklore associated with places and the problem kind of is that if Toothache Point is underwater it won't be Toothache Point anymore. Are there places like that that come to mind where they were a place but they aren't anymore?

[00:32:16]

KG: Right down the creek here is a little—we call it a seine house, so it's just a little building they kept seine in for fishing pound nets—they built boats there. And now, that's turned into marsh. You can see that.

[00:32:26]

JT: Really? Well, who owned it and worked there?

[00:32:30]

KG: Eldridge Diggs had owned it and that's where he kept his pound fishing. But he also built a lot of boats there back in the [19]30s and [19]40s.

[00:32:37]

JT: Um-hm. I've also noticed there's like old pound net stuff out in the Bay sometimes.

[00:32:42]

KG: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

[00:32:42]

JT: Do any of those stick out to you? Do you like ever go by something and see like, oh, that's Eldridge's pound net?

[00:32:50]

KG: Well, there used to be some tar-pots down here in the marsh where they tarred the nets and about the last one probably disappeared eight or ten years ago.

[00:32:56]

JT: Who did that there?

[00:32:58]

KG: I'm not sure. That was down in Peary. So, I'm not sure who had it.

[00:33:02]

JT: Oh, okay. I wanted to ask about the oyster cans, too. We're sitting in a room with about three thousand oyster cans—not really; it's probably maybe like a few dozen of them. Why do you collect these and where are some of the canning houses that they're from?

[00:33:23]

KG: Just in Mathews you have Billups, Adams, Callis, Cuthbert & Hughes, and I think that's it. Horn Harbor Brand is I think the only Mathews one I don't have.

[00:33:40]

JT: Okay. Why don't you have that one?

[00:33:42]

KG: Just ain't been lucky enough to find one.

[00:33:43]

JT: So, these are rare?

[00:33:45]

KG: Yeah, that one is—the Horn Harbor brand is extremely rare.

[00:33:48]

JT: And why do you collect these?

[00:33:50]

KG: I don't know. It got big in the mid [19]90s. People went crazy looking for them and I just got the bug and started looking for them. [Laughter] And maybe bought too many.

[00:34:01]

JT: Do you know a lot about the process of canning these oysters? I mean, we were talking about the different forms, and can you talk about how the cans themselves have changed over time?

[00:34:11]

KG: It hasn't changed a—the only thing that's really changed a lot here recently, they used to always pump air into them to blow them up so they wouldn't take as many to a can. [Laughter] And now, they soak them in ice water and they will drink a lot of water up, so they don't have to put many in a can.

[00:34:25]

JT: Okay.

[00:34:26]

KG: The can thing changed tremendously because before it would take a tractor trailer load of cans, and now since plastic ones slip inside each other, probably one tractor trailer load is thirty tractor trailer loads of cans.

[00:34:38]

JT: Really?

[00:34:38]

KG: Yeah, so that made a big deal.

[00:34:40]

JT: You were talking also about like the handles and the holes in the bottom. Can you say a little bit more about that?

[00:34:45]

KG: Uh-huh. The one with holes in the bottoms, I was told they packed ice in a can and that was to drain out, and the ones with the bail handles, they call it, was before World War II when steel—they needed steel after that and they cut back on them, the bail handles to save steel.

[00:34:58]

JT: And there are also a lot of different sizes as well.

[00:35:00]

KG: Uh-huh. Half a pint, pint, I think. I don't know if it's in here or not but I've got a couple half gallon ones, too. They're pretty rare.

[00:35:08]

JT: Wow. Do single houses make multiple sizes or would they usually stick with one size?

[00:35:16]

KG: They done multiple sizes and also you'll find cans. Each person has a VA number assigned to them from the Health Department, and a lot of shucking houses would shuck for other shucking houses when they got jammed up and they used—you'll see different numbers on

different companies. You would see a Billups number on another company's can, because he shucked for them but he had to put his number on there.

[00:35:37]

JT: Interesting. Have you seen the logos change over time?

[00:35:41]

KG: No, I think everybody now is pretty plain. Back then some of them got into a lot. One of the most expensive cans—I don't have it—it's called a Saddle brand and it was a guy towards Tappahannock that thought so much of his bird dog, he had a picture of his bird dog put on his oyster can. [Laughter]

[00:36:00]

JT: That's really neat. The process of actually canning the oysters, is there something special to it that's different from canning other seafood?

[00:36:10]

KG: Not really, unh-uh.

[00:36:12]

JT: Okay.

[00:36:13]

KG: They do freeze a few now where they didn't before.

[00:36:15]

JT: Why did they change that?

[00:36:18]

KG: It's just they probably didn't have freezer space and stuff around here to do anything like that. And now, they have a way—they freeze them in plastic like a Ziploc bag.

[00:36:28]

JT: Okay. So, once the oysters are shucked, what's the process of canning them?

[00:36:33]

KG: They soak them in ice water and then put them in a can and ship them.

[00:36:37]

JT: That's it?

[00:36:38]

KG: Um-hm.

[00:36:39]

JT: Okay. [Laughter]



[00:36:39]

KG: That's all.

[00:36:42]

JT: Okay.

[00:36:42]

KG: And the shucker has to be very good so he doesn't cut the oyster because if he cuts it, it won't soak up water.

[00:36:49]

JT: Hm. You collect a lot of historical artifacts. Why do you do that?

[00:36:56]

KG: I don't know how to explain it. Just, when I was a kid, I started liking old things. And just thought it was kind of neat and . . .

[00:37:04]

JT: Um-hm, and they're all local though. You don't have like Mesopotamian artifacts.

[00:37:06]

KG: No, no.

[00:37:08]

JT: Yeah. So, is there anything special about Virginia artifacts or Chesapeake artifacts to you?

[00:37:14]

KG: Just mostly the more local stuff, you know a little bit about the company or the artifact or whatever, more information about it and it makes it kind of neat to have.

[00:37:23]

JT: Yeah.

[00:37:28]

PD: I was wondering if you could talk—because I know you're saying the workboats have changed, the size and things like that. But the tradition of just fishing in Mathews, you had like the boat builders and things like that. I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about what you know about some of the big names in the county or . . . ?

[00:37:47]

KG: I caught just probably the tail-end of the boat-building. It was still going on a lot at Horn Harbor with Edward Diggs building boats in the [19]80s. He was building one right after another as hard as he could go but around [19]90 or something it was probably his last one. And so, I really caught the tail-end of that. But back in the [19]30s and [19]40s, and I mean back in the 1800s it was even Mathews was a huge boat-building place.

[00:38:10]

PD: Um-hm, and I know Willard Norris is another big one.

[00:38:15]

KG: Yeah, he was in Deltaville.

[00:38:16]

PD: Deltaville, oh, okay. That's right.

[00:38:20]

KG: Uh-huh. Yeah, I actually had one of his boats at one time.

[00:38:21]

PD: Okay. So, what kind of boat do you have now?

[00:38:24]

KG: Just skiffs.

[00:38:25]

PD: Just skiffs, okay.

[00:38:27]

KG: Yeah. Right down here at Eldridge's seine house they've built some big boats there.

[00:38:34]

JT: Yeah. Sorry, I meant to ask about the crews that you had because I don't think we talked about that, or was that your dad that would have—?

[00:38:41]

KG: They always had crews, yeah.

[00:38:42]

JT: Yeah, where would they hire folks from?

[00:38:44]

KG: Mostly local, local people.

[00:38:45]

JT: Local, okay. And would that be a career for those folks?

[00:38:49]

KG: Um-hm, yeah. Um-hm.

[00:38:51]

PD: Were there certain meeting places you would go to? Like, was it a country store or was there areas you know? How would you get the word out?

[00:38:57]

KG: Well, pretty much everybody knew everybody and they knew some—if they wasn't on a boat with somebody else, they would go talk to them.

[00:39:02]

PD: Uh-huh.

[00:39:02]

KG: And you talk about cooking, they done a tremendous amount of cooking on the boats back then. Not today.

[00:39:06]

JT: Yeah. Well, what have you heard about that?

[00:39:08]

KG: Well, the blacks done most of the cooking. And I was thinking about it the other day, like about Indians with fried—fried bread was a big deal on the boats. That's what they cooked. They didn't do rolls or biscuits, they done fried bread.

[00:39:22]

JT: Do you know the process that they would go through to make fried bread on the—?

[00:39:27]

KG: I think it was mainly just flour, sugar, and water.

[00:39:29]

JT: Okay, and in like a cast iron skillet?

[00:39:32]

KG: Um-hm, um-hm.

[00:39:33]

JT: Okay.

[00:39:35]

KG: Yeah.

[00:39:35]

JT: Okay. Why do you think that was what they did specifically on the boat?

[00:39:40]

KG: I guess maybe back then breakfast was probably a pretty important thing on a boat and they'd have fresh fish and—

[00:39:48]

JT: So, that's why they would eat fish in the mornings?

[00:39:50]

KG: Uh-huh.

[00:39:51]

JT: Okay.

[00:39:53]

PD: So, what was the size of the crew then in your dad's time?

[00:39:57]

KG: On the crab dredge boats they just carried—it was the captain and two people. And oystering, they probably carried four or five people, and fishing pound nets they probably had six or seven people.

[00:40:11]

JT: When automation came along and the crews got smaller or when there were these collapses, how did that affect people that didn't have their own boats and were crews?

[00:40:20]

KG: Like I said, it's usually always something else come along and replaced them. When something got bad there was usually something else to go to.

[00:40:27]

JT: Would people go to—?

[00:40:28]

KG: Well, just in my time here recently when crab dredging stopped, everybody that used to crab dredge wondered if oysters have come back. So, everybody that crab dredged, they're jumping and going oystering.

[00:40:36]

JT: Uh-huh. So, was the assumption like with things like red tide and things like that, are people thinking like something else will come along?

[00:40:45]

KG: Yeah; we're wondering—the oysters have been around back now for eight or ten years and everybody is wondering if something happens to them right away what's going to come next.

[Laughter]

[00:40:52]

JT: Yeah. Is there a sense of what might come next?

[00:40:55]

KG: Not really, just hope.



[00:40:58]

PD: Are you worried about living out the rest of your career being able to make it out?

[00:41:07]

KG: Yeah, kind of wondering what will happen.

[00:41:13]

JT: Do you want to sit for thirty seconds and—?

[00:41:16]

PD: Sure.

[00:41:17]

JT: Or did you have any more questions?

[00:41:19]

PD: I was going to talk maybe, if you could, talk a little bit about just growing up and like when did you get into working with your dad?

[00:41:28]

KG: Back to the food thing, I was thinking the other day, I don't know why I can remember this so good, I probably wasn't seven or eight years old. I lived on a boat with my dad in the

summertime a lot and we were doing purse netting and catching menhaden. And you got to remember, we tied up in Carters Creek by Christ Church and the boat next to us was cooking fried hard crabs. And I can remember that just as good as anything in the world, they were eating fried hard crabs and that's the first time I had ever seen them or heard of them.

[00:41:51]

JT: Wow. Well, why did that stick with you?

[00:41:53]

KG: I have no clue. [Laughter]

[00:41:57]

PD: How old were you?

[00:41:58]

KG: Maybe seven, eight, nine years old.

[00:42:01]

PD: And were you already working on the boat or were just on the boat?

[00:42:02]

KG: On the boat and I was doing little things, run and get something or something.

[00:42:07]

JT: What was your working relationship like with your dad?

[00:42:09]

KG: Good, good. Yeah. Like I say, I lived on the boat all summer instead of staying at home. My school break and summer break I stayed on the boat.

[00:42:17]

PD: Um-hm. Did you get an impression—because you mentioned your brother found a different career. I guess what inspired both of you? Because it seems like you seemed very passionate about it, like that was what you wanted to do. Was that kind of like a family thing? Was there an expectation on you to become a waterman?

[00:42:37]

KG: I don't know why I just got into it more as a child than my brother did. I don't know why. And he had a couple friends that went to NASA at the same time, so that probably had a little bit to do with it.

[00:42:48]

PD: Um-hm. And during these I guess peaks, because I know some of the other jobs are like the shipyard, like ship-building and different things like that. Were there ever any points in your career where you thought of getting out or maybe trying something else?

[00:43:04]

KG: No, not really.

[00:43:05]

PD: Okay. So, you've at this point been undeterred, like this is what you're doing?

[00:43:10]

KG: Yeah, exactly.

[00:43:11]

PD: Um-hm. And did your mom have any role in like assisting your dad in fishing?

[00:43:19]

KG: Helped work on gear some and make crab pots or something like that.

[00:43:23]

PD: Um-hm. And so, she would make some crab pots, too?

[00:43:26]

KG: Um-hm.

[00:43:27]

PD: Okay. Where would you get the supplies? Where would they get it then?

[00:43:32]

KG: Here locally there's a place called Ocean Products or I. P. Hudgins's store at New Point. I didn't think about that. That was a big, big local store when I was growing up and it was amazing. He was such up-to-date on shoes because the whole—everybody in the county, that's where we went and got our school shoes was I. P. Hudgins's at New Point.

[00:43:51]

JT: Where was he getting them from?

[00:43:53]

KG: I don't know, but he was up-to-date on it. I remember we got the Kangaroos that come out with the zipped pockets on the side of the shoe when we were kids. [Laughter]

[00:44:03]

PD: So, even the crab pots, was that another like tradition that was passed down? Like, you made your own, you didn't buy them?

[00:44:09]

KG: Yeah, I still do make a lot of them. Yeah, I. P. Hudgins, that store hasn't been closed tremendously long and that was an old country store. He was somewhere around ninety when he died and he's told me he started working in the store when he was twelve. So . . .

[00:44:27]

PD: Wow, that's a lot.

[00:44:30]

KG: That was an old country store that had been here a long time.

[00:44:33]

PD: Wow.

[00:44:35]

JT: Wow. Besides shoes, what other dry goods did they sell there?

[00:44:39]

KG: He sold pretty much everything, clothes, everything. He got the franchise on crab pot wire back in the [19]40s and made a fortune because he got paid for every roll sold in the country, his franchise on it.

[00:44:55]

JT: Wow. Hm.

[00:45:00]

PD: I'm wondering because it seems like in terms of that equipment a lot of it—there's people here whether they're building boats or getting the tools or hardware to make the crab pots and

things like that. So, there's always been the reliance on a supplier who can give that to the community. So, you mentioned you had like I. P. Hudgins. You mentioned the Ocean—

[00:45:19]

KG: Ocean Products.

[00:45:20]

PD: Ocean Products, and how long has that been around?

[00:45:23]

KG: The Ocean Products has probably been around since in the [19]50s. And they're still pretty big. They do a lot of government contracts. They've got a lot of patents on helicopter slings that they fabricate.

[00:45:39]

PD: Um-hm. And so, before that time, I guess how would people get materials to make those things? Was there another store that—?

[00:45:47]

KG: It was one down in Peary down here, Grayson Armistead. There was a little store there that sold fishing supplies.

[00:45:55]

PD: Hm, okay.

[00:45:59]

JT: So, we have to sit for thirty seconds. Get ready.

[*END OF INTERVIEW*]