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-May 2015

TMP-026

Interviewee: Edward and Louise Diggs

Interviewer: Jessica Taylor

Date: June 28, 2014

ED: Her middle name was Lane, and my middle name is Lane, My son that lives up here, his middle name is Lane, and his son's middle name is Lane.

T: Is that L-a-n-e?

ED: Uh-huh.

T: Okay. Well, let me introduce you real quick. I'm here with the Diggs family in Hudgins, Virginia and it's June 28, 2014 at 4 PM. Sir, can you please state your full name?

ED: Edward Nelson Diggs. Named after Nelson [inaudible 00:35], who was a movie star.

T: Really?

ED: No. He was a . . . [Laughter] I can't think.

T: Okay.

ED: I know . . . He was in the Royal Mounted Police in Canada and I'm named after him.

T: Why are you named after him?

ED: 'Cause my mother wanted to.

T: Okay. When were you born?

ED: I was born here in Mathews County, Peary Post Office down the lower part of the county.

T: What date?

ED: August the 25th, 1927.

T: Okay. And now I'm going to introduce your wife. Can you please state your full name?

LD: Louise Owens Diggs.

T: Okay. And where were you born?

LD: In Redart, in Mathews County.

T: Okay. And what date?

LD: May the 10th, 1932.

T: Okay. Did you all attend school together?

LD: No.

T: No? So, where did you go to school, ma'am?

LD: I went to school . . . I started at Cobb's Creek, then I went to Lee Jackson, then to Mathews High School, where I graduated.

T: Okay. And what about you? Where did you go to school?

ED: Well, I graduated from Mathews.

LD: He went to Winter Harbor.

ED: To Winter Harbor.

LD: And New Point.

ED: Went to Winter Harbor six years and went to New Point one year. Then I went to the high school.

T: So how were your high school experiences different from one another?

ED: Well, I was suaver than she was. [Laughter] I guess I've made a little joke.

T: Do you want to answer that more constructively?

LD: And spell constructively. [Laughter] I don't know. He's five years older than I am. So, that makes the difference. He went with me more when I was in school. I started dating him when I was fifteen. And I played basketball and he would take me to basketball. He also helped me with my school lessons. We learned the preamble to the Constitution together and those kind of things. But, I don't know much about his high school.

T: Okay. What was high school like for you?

ED: Well, it was easy, really, because we had a shop teacher and he was very fond of me. And a friend of mine was in most classes together. So, we rather enjoyed that. At that time, the girls at school had to take shop and made things out of metal cans and we had to cut the cans open for them and help them make what they had to make. We did that instead of doing what we were supposed to do. I took mechanical drawing and all kinda drawing like that in high school.

T: Did you find that useful?

ED: Yes.

T: Okay. Did you have something to add, ma'am? Okay.

LD: [Laughter] No.

T: Okay. What about your parents? What did your parents do?

ED: Well, my parents was a carpenter or a boat builder. We built houses and boats mostly. And I learned the trade from him. I'd tell people that I'd do sawdust. When he was sawing something then, you didn't have any electric tools. When he was sawing with a hand saw, I'd stand on side the bench and blow this dust off them all so we could see it.

T: What was it like learning a trade from your father?

ED: What was it like learning a trade from my father? Well, it's very good 'cause hen we's gonna build a boat, the first one I built, had a V-bottom, Wichita dead rise. You have to chop the dead rise out with an axe. He wasn't really left-handed, but he chopped left-handed. If he'd chop with a hoe or something, he'd chop left-handed. So, to work on the dead rise, you have to chop one way. So, I could chop better on one side of the boat and he could chop better really on the other side of the boat. So, he said, you work on that side and I'll work on this side. That's what we did. Course, I was learning and he already knew how to do it.

T: When did you know that you wanted to follow him into the trade?

ED: Well, when I graduated, of course, he wanted me to go away to school and learn maybe an electrician's trade or something. And I said, no. I don't want to. I want to stay and work with you. So, that's what I did.

T: Why did you want to do that?

ED: 'Cause I was born to do it.

T: Okay. Is that what your grandfather did as well?

ED: No. Not my grandfather, but his brother. Grandfather's brother did work like that.

T: Where did your father learn the trade from? From him?

ED: No. He probably learned it the most from this man who was maybe his grandfather's brother. And he learned the trade that way.

T: Was there anything that you or your father did that were unique from other carpenters or shipbuilders?

ED: Yeah. It was unique that most carpenters don't build boats. [Laughter] And we did boats, so that was kind of different.

T: Why did you do both? Can I ask that?

ED: Well, to have something to do. Dad was in the service when I started. The service was a time when the country was—didn't have much to do at all.

T: What was the Great Depression like for you?

ED: Good, 'cause I had plenty to eat. We lived here in the country, so it wasn't like living in a city. My father owned some waterfront down where the oysters grew and all. So, we go down and pick up oysters to have oysters to eat. And then you raise things in the garden. So, we made out fine. But, not like the people in the city did.

T: So, what were your earliest projects like? What did you work on first?

ED: Well, I worked on boats first—small boats.

T: Who were your clients? Do they call them clients in carpentry?

ED: Yeah, we had clients all over. Even then, we would build like rowboats for someone in Richmond that rented them out to people. We'd build maybe twenty rowboats for somebody. But I built boats later on for people up in New Jersey and Connecticut: lobster boats, like forty-some feet long, for the lobster business. Gloucester, built some for them. And people in Norfolk, built boats for them. So I built boats all up and down the coast.

T: Can you walk me through—if it's not too extensive or exhausting—making through making a rowboat in the [19]30s? The technology of it?

ED: Well, the first thing to do, you make your stem. That's what—at the bow—you nail the sides to. You make the stem, then you cut out the sides, and you nail the sides to the stem. Then, you put a rope across the stern on the sides, pull it in a little bit, and put in a stretcher about middle way of the boat. Then, pull it in some more like we want it, the width that you want. That's where you start. I've got pictures out in rolls showing us building a boat, how you start it.

T: I brought a scanner, so that's great. So, how does the technology change from the [19]30s to your retirement?

ED: Really, boat building, not too much. Boats, like anything else, change. People get new ideas like, I want my stern different or something different on the boat. And what they use them for kinda changes, too. So, you change the way you build 'em according to what works good, for what they're gonna use them for.

T: So, you said that the way people use them changes? What do you mean by that? How are they using them differently?

ED: For the kinda work they do, to change your kinda work, maybe they're oystering and they want change to crabbing. Something like that will change.

T: Uh-huh. What about landside? How does the technology of carpentry and buildings change?

ED: In what lands?

T: Like as far as you said, carpentry, I'm assuming that means buildings, right? So, how did that technology change?

ED: Well, it just changes like anything else. Everything changes as time goes on. For different reasons, you need to change what you build some to suit your time.

T: Okay. So, as far as those buildings go, what kind of changes were you seeing as far as what people wanted?

ED: That's a hard question. [Laughter]

T: I know, I'm sorry.

ED: Well, we saw changes in dredging the crabs. They used to build mostly round-stern boats. They found out dredging crabs, a square-stern boat would hold the weight up better than a round-stern and they started making them square. Just different things like that have changed.

T: Uh-huh. Where were you getting the timber from?

ED: Well, used to be, years ago, we got all the timber from Mathews County, here. Back in the 1600s, I guess, and 1700s, there's more boats built in Mathews County than anywhere else, probably. Except one place up in New England, maybe, built about the same amount of boats as they did here. But, later on, we used fir. And that came from Oregon on the west coast. And that's what we used mostly later on, yes.

T: Why is that?

ED: Well, because we used to use here, they cut it all down.

T: Okay. [Laughter]

LD: I thought he used white cedar. I thought you used white cedar?

ED: Well, for smaller boats, we used white cedar. We get that from North Carolina.

T: So, what project are you most proud of in your life? Is that a hard question?

ED: Well, kinda hard . . . I guess the biggest lobster boat I built was the last one I built. And I was just as pleased with that as anything I've built.

T: When was that?

ED: 1983, I believe, I built. Is that right? [Laughter] I think it was 1983, last one I built.

T: Okay. And why were you proud of it?

ED: 'Cause it's pretty. [Laughter]

T: Alright. That's easy.

ED: Yeah.

T: What were the biggest challenges you faced as a boat builder?

ED: Well, the biggest challenges was, I worked at a railway, and we built boats and we worked on the boats at the railway. And doing both was a big challenge. Soon as you got inside the building, where we build the boats, you haul boats on the railway. You had some rotten wood in it, you had to stop and work on them. And that was kind of a challenge to keep things going both ways.

T: Yeah. Wow. So, walk me through a typical day of yours, maybe in the [19]40s or [19]50s.

ED: Well, a typical day, I'm one that always likes to get up early and to get to work early. Maybe you get to work at eight o'clock, always like to get done at like 7:30. And you had some tools dull, something you sharpened these. That way, you didn't have to do it on somebody else's time. Always had the . . . The one I was working for way out there in mine, more than my old ones. I always liked to please the people that you was working for.

T: What was it like working for the railway, instead of maybe working for yourself or working for another boat builder?

ED: Well, it wasn't too much difference. But, when you worked for the railway, you had another man that was in charge of the whole thing and lot of the responsibility. Like for getting lumber for the boat. This man would get the lumber, order it and everything. And when you build them yourself, you had to get the lumber yourself. Made it a little more difficult.

T: Did creativity or personal innovation ever figure into your career? Did you get a lot of license to be creative?

ED: I don't exactly understand that one. [Laughter]

T: I mean, I guess as long as your float, right, you can be creative about either the design or thinking of new ways to do things? And I was wondering if you did that, or adhered to the way that your father taught you?

ED: Well, boats, you always did things kinda the way your father taught you. But, as things change, you kinda have to do things your way. And when we were working for this man down at the railway, we were allowed to make the changes, instead of him doing it. We'd make the changes ourselves.

T: Did your father work for the railway, too?

ED: Yes.

T: He did? For his whole career?

ED: Yeah. Uh-huh.

T: Okay. What kind . . . Oh, sorry. Go ahead.

ED: I was just gonna say, we worked like ten years building just on our own before we started working at the railway. Then, we worked at the railway—my father—for the rest of the time. If I retired from the railway, I built my shop here. I've been working pretty well up to now.

T: What made your father decide to move from doing it on his own to working for the railway?

ED: Well, I say, sort of the reason for change because the railway, of course, sold things in the store like hardware and stuff. We'd have to go down there to buy some of this. [inaudible 21:23] up and down there to get something and he'd say, come on now and get down to this boat and hook the stern rig up underneath the stern or something like that, just so he'd get me to do it. Then, at this time was about the time that the war was over and people started getting new engines for their boat. He didn't have the men down there that was hardly qualified to put these engines in. My father and I would go down and make the bedding for the engine and set the engines and all. We did that a lot down there. Just in doing that and then the man down there had a hull in this boat that had worms in it and needed a lot of work done to it. And he'd get us to do this. And we just kinda gradually this way got to where we was down there full-time. Then, I got married and was building my house here. So, we kept on working down there. And my father, he moved out and he had to build a house. [Laughter] That way we were able to work down there, two things together, to work good.

T: What kind of person was your father?

ED: Smart. [Laughter] I never could understand how it is he went to school with the seventh grade and that was a one-room school. Everybody in the house, from the first grade up through the seventh grade, was in the same room. Maybe that made him learn more, I don't know. But my father, I never could understand how good he was on history and things like that. He was real good on.

T: Really? What kind of history did he like?

ED: Well, I mean, like the history of Virginia and even over in New York, too. He knew where places were and all that. And I never could understand how he learned that, in the seventh where he had school, like that.

T: You said he'd been to Europe?

ED: No. He didn't go to Europe.

T: Oh, okay. He just knew about Europe.

ED: Yeah.

T: Okay. That's really interesting.

ED: Learned it in school.

T: Wow. What school was that?

ED: Frog Eye. [Laughter]

LD: That's what they called it.

T: That's what they called it? Was that the name on the front or is that just what they called it?

ED: Well, I don't think the name was on it.

T: Okay. What was his life like growing up? Did he tell you about it at all?

ED: Not too much. Course, he told me some things that he did. He went to work for this man that built boats. He was like probably eighteen, or maybe not that old, and he'd never built boats. Maybe he'd built a boat his self, a small boat. But, anyway, he went to work for this man who was a real old man then. And they

were building this boat maybe twenty feet long, flat-bottomed. Bottom up, you nail the bottom off. This old man cautioned him, don't drive in the nails out. Drive them down instead of going in the side. You make them come out on the inside. So, he was always looking underneath your boat to see whether he'd gotten any out or not. So, he looked over the other side and the old man had drove one or two out. And of course, he told the old man, you drove a couple nails out back there. And the old man says that was the first time he'd ever done that in his life.
[Laughter]

T: Wonderful. Did your father tell you any stories about your family? Maybe generations back or about Mathews?

ED: No, not very much. I told you about the Lanes, how we got that name. I don't rather know too much about that, I don't think.

T: When I came in, you said something about the Civil War. Do you know anything about Mathews in the Civil War?

ED: Well, I knew a little bit about the Civil War, like some of the old men that was in the war. My great uncle, he walked home from Richmond when the war was over. And then, he went home and sat down in a chair in the front yard, and that's where he spent most of his time. [Laughter] The war took all the pep out of him. I don't know much about time in between that, but I could tell you a great many stories about things that had happened in the Civil War.

T: Did any of them happen to anyone in your family or anyone you met?

ED: Maybe the distant family.

T: Would you like to share some?

ED: Do what?

T: Do you want to share some of those?

ED: Well, I really don't have any to share. Robert E. Lee was my favorite soldier, and I don't know whether you knew it or not, but he was in the war, I think it was in Mexico. I'm not sure. But, before the Civil War, he was in a war there. So, he was already a general before the Civil War and I think he was one of the smartest men in the Civil War.

T: Being smart is real important to you, huh?

ED: Yeah. [Laughter] Being smart is important to anybody, I guess.

T: That's fair enough. What about Mrs. Diggs? How long has your family been in Mathews for?

LD: All my life. We were born over on the next hill. That was our home place. And I'm eighty-two, so I've been here eighty-two years.

T: Were your parents from here?

LD: Yes.

T: And their parents?

LD: I don't know. My grandfather owned the place there, the whole place, this whole area. I had three brothers and my three brothers built on different parcels of the land. 'Cause I was the first one to get married, so I got the waterfront. [Laughter]

T: When did you all get married?

LD: 1950.

T: Oh, wonderful. What was courtship like in the [19]40s for young people?

LD: Courtship? Well, you did a lot of just riding around from this one place to the other. And course, he would pick me up and take me to the ball game. I played basketball, he'd take me to the ball game. Soon as it was over, he had a special place he'd park where we could get out quick and get down to when you came in Hudgins here. Right across from the church, that was a place called Sups, that you get milkshakes and all those things. So, we were the first ones. Most of the time we could get down there before anybody else could. He did a lot of studying with me, to do my homework and that kinda thing. Learned the preamble to the Constitution. My senior year, I went to school to play basketball and get out and get married. Things have changed now. Back then, I graduated in June, got married in July.

T: What was your wedding day like?

LD: What was it like? We were married at the parsonage, which is the big white house before you get up to the church, on the right. It was only my parents and his parents, and the pastor. And we were married in the parsonage. And then we went all the way to Richmond that night, stayed at the King Carter Hotel. [Laughter] Then we toured Lynchburg, the Natural Bridge and some of those places. Then we came home and back to work.

T: Were you working at the time?

LD: No. I didn't start to work until my first one started to college and my last one started to school. And I started working the school system.

T: When was that?

LD: What year did I start?

ED: 'Cause Andy was seven years old, and he's fifty now.

LD: Right. So, then that would be . . . But, we had five children. He did a lot of the work. I mean, he worked overtime. He'd work down there and then he'd work for somebody else later. I used to tell him—gotta get this in there—your church comes first, your work comes second, and I get the little bit of time that's left over. And he'd tell me, he said . . . Like he told you before about him going down and go to work, he'd go a half an hour early to go to work. And I'd tell him, I says, you're gonna work yourself to death. All those men are gonna come and tell me how good you are and how nice you are, and they're gonna forget about me. But now, those men bring us crabs, and oysters, and fish. And he'll tell me, you see, they're looking out for me now. And I just thought that was special, because we do appreciate them.

T: Uh-huh. I noticed you know about shipbuilding. Were you involved in the business at all?

LD: No. No more than helping him. I've helped him build boats here.

T: Really? What do you do on the boats?

LD: Just hold things for him or just whatever. Sometimes he'd need somebody to just be there to help him get something straight and that kind of thing. I did more helping him do the model boats. Since he's done boats, he's done models of the boats that he built.

T: So, how did you get to learn about shipbuilding over time? Did you talk about it together?

LD: We always worked together. We've always been there for each other.

T: That's wonderful.

LD: I'd help him and he'd help me. And it still works.

T: So, what was it like raising children in Mathews?

LD: Well, I think Mathews is one of the greatest places there is. It's just . . . I don't know how to say it, but I mean, they had the freedom to be a part of the community and do things. This son used to crab around the shore. He still loves the water and he still comes and goes and actually picks up crabs around the shore and those kinda things. And it's just a place where you—and it's getting not as good now—but as a place that you never worried about locking your doors. Worried about somebody taking something from your shop, that kinda thing. It just was an ideal place. God's country.

T: How does being from Mathews kind of color the way that you see things outside of Mathews?

LD: Well, I really don't know. I've been here all my life, and it's just the place to be for me.

ED: I'll say, I was in the army for a year or so and we went took basic training down in Alabama. Anyway, then when I went overseas, I went to San Francisco. When I came back home, they started letting the ones that weren't in the regular army, sorta let them out first—the draftees. So, my father's brother was a lawyer, and my father got him to write a letter to see if I get out a little bit early. And so, they did let me out a little bit early. But anyway, we came back home from Korea and we came the northern route, which is up close to Alaska and came down to Washington state. What I'm saying, I've seen a lot of the United States and all and Mathews County is the best place in the whole world. [Laughter]

T: What about it makes it the best place in the whole world?

ED: Really, truly, it's 'cause you were born here. [Laughter]

T: Wonderful.

LD: But I think also that the people are so friendly; you know each other, you know the whole community. You share with people and that kinda thing. In the cities, you don't know who your neighbor is.

T: So how did the community bond together when you all were kids and young adults? Were there events or places where people would congregate?

LD: We had a post office and store and people would go there, especially on Saturday night, and get your groceries. Everybody. The men would sit and talk,

the women would get together, and then the children would all get together and play. And we used to . . . My mother and a group of the women were quilters, and they'd get together and quilt and the children would play under the quilts while they were quilting. And those kinda things. And we didn't go when we were young people. Now, young people would take off here and go to Norfolk without thinking about it. But we never went out of Mathews when we were young.

T: Wow. Do you have anything to add to that? How the community bonded together when you were a kid or a young adult.

ED: I was just thinking. Oh! I know what I was thinking. We had a fairground here. You know what a fairground is? Where they have horse races, but they're speed cart racing. They wasn't riding the horse's back; it was a speed cart. I thought that was really interesting to go there to see the horse racing. That was one thing we did as a community.

T: Where was that?

ED: Where was it? It was up here at Hudgins. Well, the other side of Hudgins. It's hard for me to tell you where it is. It's up the road here about three or four miles where they had the horse racing.

T: That's wonderful. Well, I wanted to ask you also about buildings in Mathews, since they just finished that architectural survey. So, what were—when you were children and young adults—the most historic places in Mathews?

LD: Mathews Courthouse. [Laughter] Everybody used to go there, especially on Saturday nights.

T: Really? And do what?

LD: And when we got older, just walk up and down the street and go in the stores. They used have the stores where people bought clothes and all that kinda things. You'd go there. I mean, I didn't do a lot of that because that kinda faded out as the time come on.

ED: People, a lot of them would go to the movies. Then, when the movies was out, then they showed a picture again. That was the main thing that we did at the Courthouse. Then you parked on the front street. On one side of the street, we parked one behind the other. So, sometimes we parked on the back 'cause like twelve o'clock before we get away to get your car out and get away. It was real interesting . . . I was just thinking of some things I did. [Laughter]

T: Like what?

ED: Well, like a friend of mine, we were like probably ten years old. And we'd go to Sibley's store, which is still there. It's still called Sibley's. And go there and buy one of these big drinks, like a quart or more drink, for ten cents. We tried to drink all of it if we could. [Laughter] Just things like that we did.

T: What about as teenagers? Did you get in trouble?

ED: No. I never have gotten in trouble, really. My momma said I was a good boy, I don't know.

T: Uh-oh. [Laughter] What about you? What did young women do on a Saturday night?

ED: She went to the Courthouse with me. [Laughter]

LD: We would . . . This was strange, too. They only had one car, so he would bring his mom and dad up to the Courthouse and put them out, then come get me. We'd go riding around somewhere, then we'd go back and pick them up and carry them home, then he'd bring me home. [Laughter] That's kind of a different kinda thing. Yes, but other than that and my first child that came thirteen months later, I was an old married woman then.

T: So, what about holidays like Christmas and Halloween, Fourth of July? Is there anything special that happened in Mathews or for your families?

LD: We used to always get together. Course, then, my whole family was here. My mother and father lived over here. It was easy for us all to get together. Now, our children are scattered, so that it's hard to get 'em together. But, we've had different things. Like Fourth of July, I used to always have a picnic on the Fourth of July. Anybody could come in the families. Our in-laws and all, they'd just bring a dish. And that lasted until about four years ago when I got so I couldn't do it anymore. Time takes care of things, changes things.

T: That's right. I meant to ask you about how the built environment in Mathews has changed over time. Have you seen historic buildings demolished, or new buildings, new houses, go up? That kind of thing.

LD: Well, now, the new houses that go up are so big. I don't know why anybody would want them like that. When they get older, they have to clean them unless you can afford someone to come in and do it for you. But—

ED: We just built a new courthouse, I mean, just a few years ago. Was a big change in Mathews 'cause the courthouse was down in Mathews itself. They moved it out and built a new court building and all that new. That was kinda different. Built a new post office and everything. Kinda changed things. So . . .

T: How did you feel about that change?

ED: I thought it was fine. [Laughter]

T: Okay. I've heard stories of hostility towards come-heres. How do you all feel about people that come here?

LD: That hasn't bothered me at all. I have had some of the best friends that were come-heres. I get along with most everybody and I'm just working in the school system and all. I worked in the school system for twenty-one years. The blacks—I got along with the blacks and all just as good as I did the whites. And some of them were my best friends. So, that really hasn't bothered me.

T: You kind of mentioned race relations a little bit. Were you a teacher during integration?

LD: No, I never was a teacher. I started out as a teacher's aide.

T: Oh, okay.

LD: Then, I went up to the little Cobbs Creek school because I could type and they needed someone as a secretary. And then, I ended up in the intermediate school as a secretary. I enjoyed it; I enjoyed working with the young people. Still see some of them that will say, oh Mrs. Diggs, I remember you in school. And I'd say,

now which one are you? Because I haven't changed that much, but they've changed. [Laughter] But then you enjoy talking to them.

ED: If it weren't for the come-here people, you wouldn't be here today.

T: How's that?

ED: 'Cause the come-here people have put me on the map. I mean, all the work I did, the regular people left here, I would just be an ordinary person. And now the come-here people think what I did was good and they picked it up and really put me up front, you might say.

T: How do you feel about that?

ED: Well, I guess everybody likes to be up front some. [Laughter] I'll tell you this: there's not much to it. But anyway, my son, his wife was from Ohio, and he was going to Ohio. And for some reason, he had wanted to go up to Cleveland for something. And so, we went with them, went up to Cleveland. And this man right there in the neighborhood that had model cars and all this, and we just went there to see him and talk to him. 'Course introduced myself to him. And I said, I'm Edward Diggs. And he said, are you the Edward Diggs that builds boats? And I thought that was really something. I was in Cleveland and this man asked me, was I the Edward Diggs that built boats? But the way he knew—his brother, I don't know what kind of business he was in exactly—but he was in a business and he went up and down the east coast all the time. Of course, this man had heard of me going up and down the coast and mentioned me to him. That's really neat.

T: Wow.

ED: He knew where I was from.

T: Wow. Huh. Have they changed what you do—come-heres? Or, maybe, even the way you think about yourself?

ED: Not really. I mean, what did change, course, things I do, because they've honored me in different ways. I made like maybe thirty-five model boats. What's the—

LD: Maritime.

ED: Maritime Society. Down at the courthouse, they got everybody who I'd built model boats for to bring their boats up to their place. And they were gonna have a program that day. And I was invited to come to the program. When I got there and parked the car, we got out, and I went in, and there was everybody that I'd built boats for, all my family, everybody was there and everybody in Mathews knew it but me. So, they [inaudible 52:43] heard what was going on, I would have a look at something like that. I think that was the nicest thing that ever happened to me.

T: Right. Wow. Do you feel like residents here, that aren't come-heres, appreciate your work too?

ED: I'm sure they do. But, they wouldn't have done anything about it. Appreciate it, but that would have been the end of it.

LD: Like that, but I think it shows you what Carol, Melvin, David, and them, come and see you and sit and talk and bring you things.

ED: Yeah, I know.

LD: I think they appreciate you as much as anybody.

ED: Yeah, people come and bring me—different ones—seafood, clams, and oysters, and everything like that they bring us.

T: Has it changed your opinion of boatbuilding or your husband's career at all?

LD: No.

T: That's a good thing.

LD: Course, he's not able to do it anymore—that's changed it—but, I mean, we enjoyed doing it together and a lot of the men would have me to pose with their boats with him.

T: Wonderful. I should have asked this, but did you have a son or a relative follow you into the profession?

LD: No.

ED: No, not really.

T: Okay. Alright.

LD: They've all got some of his talents for working, for doing things, because you can see what they do, that you know they have got it from him.

ED: Yeah, 'cause Richard, he's rebuilt his house, made it bigger, did all the work in his bathroom, kitchen, kitchen cabinets, everything he's done. He's got a lot of talent. I don't know where he got it from, but he's got it.

T: Wonderful. Did you teach your children how to do things with their hands?

ED: Had to watch me. I think that's the best way to teach somebody.

LD: Well, all of them would go down to the railway times with you and you'd just go to do something, to be there. And when he was working up at his mother's in the garage, they'd go up there on Saturday and help him work and that kind of thing.

ED: Always had one of them help me and I got some pictures here of my grandson, who's in college now, helping me.

T: Oh, that's wonderful. So, I had some bigger questions about Mathews just generally. Are there buildings that were important, when you were children and young adults, that aren't there anymore?

ED: Yeah, well, they've had like three fires. Big fires in the Mathews Courthouse. All of them destroyed some buildings. I don't know how important they were to us, but it's been changes because of that.

LD: And of course, the grocery stores have come here with their big supermarkets and all that.

T: Absolutely. What about historic homes?

LD: I never have been really one connected with the historic homes.

T: That's okay.

ED: This one, I was telling you, where Doctor Lane lived, that's one historic home in Mathews. I'm sure it's some more, too, but that's all I can think of.

T: Okay. My last big question is about ghost stories and tall tales and that kind of thing. Are there any that you grew up listening to or hearing? I've heard Old House Woods twice today.

LD: Right, I was gonna say. [Laughter] We'd take meals when we'd go that way and say, you know where that is don't you?

T: What did you hear about it?

LD: I guess I heard it from him. You know all about the Old House Woods.

T: What did you hear about it?

ED: The Old House Woods? Well one thing I heard about it, 'twas a ship sailing around up in the air, would let down a rope ladder to come down. Then roll it out. But, I've heard a great many stories about ghosts. One time when we were dating each other, since I was down in Winter Harbor, said it had ghosts there. People from curiosity would just ride down there in an automobile. Always three or four cars in front of there. But, they found out that the boy that lived there, he was the one that was the ghost. And he'd do things and nobody knew he was doing them.

T: Where was that at? On Winter Harbor, you said?

ED: No, that was down in Winter Harbor, close to where you go down to Winter Harbor Beach. Not too far from there.

T: Okay. Any other ghost stories I should know about?

ED: No. I mean, I've heard a bunch of them, the old stories. Kinda forget exactly about them, but well . . . And I've heard of, what ya call it, where a group of people get together and—

T: A séance?

ED: Try to talk to someone that's dead. I've heard of having them. I don't know if I believe that. Have you heard of that, people doing that?

T: Séances? No, that's the first time I've heard of that. So, are there any stories about Mathews that you've heard about, maybe, the Revolutionary period or before that, the colonial period?

ED: No. None that I know of. Yes, I can tell you about one. The Civil War, this man that lived down close to Port Haywood, and the Yankees came by and stole his cow. I'm not sure exactly, but I think he shot one of 'em. They came down and took him, carried him up the road about ten miles or so, and they hung him, didn't they?

LD: They dragged him, didn't they?

ED: Huh?

LD: Didn't they drag him?

ED: Yeah, I think they dragged him behind a cart all the way up there. Then, they hung him I think.

T: Wow. That's an incredible story. Where did you hear that one from?

ED: Where'd I hear it from? I don't know. I've heard it all my life.

T: One of those things.

ED: People—one of those things you hear about.

T: Yeah. Can you think of any other anecdotes or stories you'd like to tell? Can you think of any?

ED: I'm afraid if I tell you something, it'll be a story.

T: I'm fine with that.

ED: I mean, might not be so. [Laughter]

LD: I can tell you this, he . . . That's not that, it's about him. We set four crab pots, because if you're retired you can set four crab pots. Well, he still—you probably don't know—sculls the boat out to the crab pots. I told him, I said, why don't you put the motor on the boat? He says, it's more trouble starting the motor than it is sculling the boat. [Laughter]

ED: You ever seen anyone scull?

T: Uh-huh.

ED: On the back of the boat, right on top of the stern, you have a piece of wood that comes up. Just a little knob up there like two inches tall, two inches big. And you have flat paddle about ten feet long. Six inches wide at one end and the other end, where you hold on, like you get your hand right like that. And you put that paddle on the side of that post and you go in like this into the water. Goes back and forth and makes the boat go ahead. You'll find out, like in Middlesex, maybe

people not only did that. But, Mathews County, go on the fish boat go out to the pound to get the fish out. They had this little skiff, they called a little skiff. But, they had a bigger boat where they would put the net in. You call that the fishing vat. This was a little skiff and if you're gonna learn to scull, scull in that.

T: Wow. That's incredible.

ED: And I know this guy, he was probably the best sculler there was. Anyway, he was a pound fisherman and he sculled his little boat all the way from [inaudible 1:05:13] Bay, where the pounds were, which was probably three or four miles all the way home. He sculled it all the way. At one point, someone he knew had a little outboard motor on the skiff, and he raced him. The one with the little motor had a hard time to beat him for a little ways. So, he's a real sculler. [Laughter]

T: That's wonderful. We're at an hour, do y'all have anything else you want to add? I don't want to keep you from dinner.

LD: No. That's it. No. I don't know of anything else. I'm gonna show you a book that I've got of his models.

T: Oh, great. You got anything?

ED: No.

T: Okay.

[End of interview]

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