

GRIER DERRICKSON
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Interviewer: Anne Whealton
Interviewee: Grier Derrickson
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(TAPE SIDE A – 1st Side):

Anne Whealton: Testing 1, 2, 3. Hi. My name is Anne Whealton and I am doing an interview this afternoon, it's two o'clock, at the Chincoteague Island Library. I am doing an interview with Grier Derrickson for the Chincoteague Island Library Oral History Project. And it is a bright, beautiful summer day and we are enjoying it and Mr. Grier has just come in from being out on the water and he's full of good stories and things to teach me and tell me.

Anne Whealton: All right. First of all, Mr. Grier, tell me where and when you were born.

Grier Derrickson: November the 27th, 1919, here at Chincoteague.

Anne Whealton: Okay. Now where were you born, which part of the Island, up the neck?

Grier Derrickson: North – north end.

Anne Whealton: North end.

Grier Derrickson: Up the neck.

Anne Whealton: Up the neck. All right, good.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh.

Anne Whealton: Okay. And can you tell me a little bit about your life when you were small and a little bit about your family history on the Island?

Grier Derrickson: Yeah, I'd be glad to. Really it is hard for me to remember much back before school days.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: When I first came to school in the Chincoteague High School – or Elementary School.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: In 1919, when I was born, I guess it was probably, I think I had to be seven years old when we were allowed to go to school.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: Or required I guess. Before that it was just a matter of rompin' around with one or two neighbors on the north end. And most of them are deceased by now.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: But in those days why we didn't have any – any blacktop roads, it was a sandy road with oyster shells.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: You've heard that before probably.

Anne Whealton: Oh yeah, I've seen pictures from Rosalie. She has pictures of the old roads.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh, yeah. And it was might difficult to ride a bicycle on it. I had a bicycle for Christmas along about then, but one – I remember one time I got stuck in the – in the sand and oyster shells about half-way between where I lived and what we called the creek.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: It's a creek section there.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Have you – do you know where the creek is?

Anne Whealton: Oh yeah, uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: It's that little waterway that goes through that settlement there, about half-way between town and the north end.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh. Some people say they used to live in the creek.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah.

Anne Whealton: (Laughing) Some people lived up the creek, some people lived in the creek.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah. Well really, I guess it's – the identification of it is Lewis Creek.

Anne Whealton: Um-hum.

Grier Derrickson: Lewis Creek. But my aunt kept a country store up there at the time and she sent me to town on my uncle's bicycle.

Anne Whealton: Now what was here name?

Grier Derrickson: Lottie.

Anne Whealton: Lottie.

Grier Derrickson: Lottie Derrickson.

Anne Whealton: Lottie Derrickson, okay.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh. And her husband was named Clarence, my uncle. Where we used to call Turkey Hill is not too far really from where Rosalie lives.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And I was coming to town, you know, on this errand and anticipating what I had to do for my aunt and not realizing that this bicycle I was on was not a coasting type, where you can stop peddling.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And it was what we call a make and brake. The things kept goin' – the peddles kept goin' around whether you did or not.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh (laughing).

Grier Derrickson: (Laughing) And that threw me off. You know, how it would do – it caught the back of my leg on one side and bent . . .

Anne Whealton: Flipped ya?

Grier Derrickson: Bent the bicycle up, the fender parts, you know. And that was a bad journey.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: But as a child that was one thing I remembered.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And I didn't get to come to town much until – until I started going to school.

Anne Whealton: Really?

Grier Derrickson: Yeah!

Anne Whealton: And so you stayed up on that end?

Grier Derrickson: Yeah! And it was just a few friends that I had.

Anne Whealton: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

Grier Derrickson: Yes. I had – I had two half's, a brother and a sister.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: And a whole sister, Alice, and she married, her husband was Charles Lee Watson.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: Of course, her first marriage was by a Jester and had two children by Jester.

Anne Whealton: Now were you the oldest of all the children or were you the youngest or in the middle?

Grier Derrickson: Of my family . . .

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: I was the youngest.

Anne Whealton: The youngest. Okay.

Grier Derrickson: They always let me know that.

Anne Whealton: (Laughing)

Grier Derrickson: That was . . .

Anne Whealton: Was that a good thing Grier?

Grier Derrickson: They always said I was Mom's pet.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Anyhow, I was the only boy child. Alice and I. But we enjoyed livin' and we were – we enjoyed the Bay.

Anne Whealton: I was gonna say, did you spend a lot of time on the water?

Grier Derrickson: Yeah, we lived at Blake's Point until I left to go into service.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: And we were – summer days like today, we'd be testin' the water to see if it was warm enough.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh. And get in already, huh?

Grier Derrickson: Yeah.

Anne Whealton: Did you have a little boat or anything?

Grier Derrickson: Yeah. Pop always had . . .

Anne Whealton: A little scow?

Grier Derrickson: My Father always had boats of all kinds because he, in the wintertime he guided for - we called 'em sports.

Anne Whealton: Right, like Bill did for the hunting lodge up at Popes Island, right, same kind of thing?

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh.

Anne Whealton: Is that what your Father did?

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: Yes. And he had two floatin' shanties, they were houseboats.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: And each of 'em, well one of 'em had a couple staterooms in it.

Anne Whealton: Wow.

Grier Derrickson: Which would – well they were just throwed together.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: They wadn't elaborate, but they were private.

Anne Whealton: And they were floating shanties?

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh.

Anne Whealton: Really. Okay.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah. And had a hallway and the front end of the shanty was a place where after the supper meal all the sports would go there and play poker and they would drink right much. And . . .

Anne Whealton: Now who ran – who had this place?

Grier Derrickson: Well . . .

Anne Whealton: I know Black and Decker had Pope's Island or whatever . . .

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh.

Anne Whealton: The people from the Al Decker.

Grier Derrickson: Well, this was owned and when the huntin' season was over, the floatin' shanty wasn't used much. It was brought back to a harbor mostly.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: We did use it sometimes for pleasure, the family would.

Anne Whealton: Now who owned it? Did you all own it?

Grier Derrickson: My Father owned it.

Anne Whealton: He did own it. Okay.

Grier Derrickson: And he owned two floatin' shanties, but this one was named "The Agnes."

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: And the people who would come down owned Coard's Marshes at the time.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Presently I think Donnie Thornton and the Collins Family owns Coard's Marshes.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: But they would take it up there and they had a little place they would pull it in where they had dug out into the Marsh and had a walkway and they'd hang their fowl on the side of the shanty.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And, of course, in those days I believe the winters were much colder.

Anne Whealton: I do to.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah.

Anne Whealton: Yeah, I'm sure.

Grier Derrickson: And they'd just hang – hook 'em underneath the bill and just let 'em stay there.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And usually it was on the cold side and the shanty was where very little sun hit it so they would be down for a week, sometimes two weeks. But they said it's like beef, the ducks aren't good until they're cured. Well, really, I thought they were almost rotten. (Laughing)

Anne Whealton: (Laughing)

Grier Derrickson: Yeah.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah. Putrid.

Anne Whealton: How about that.

Grier Derrickson: They had to be, you know. But I don't know, people just have a taste for things like that.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: But anyhow, I would participate as I got maybe in junior or senior high. On occasions I would get to go up there if some of the sports would bring some of their children it would be a special occasion, I'd go maybe for a day or a night.

Anne Whealton: Now on Sundays I know Rosalie talks about a lot of times people went from one end of the Island to the other end of the Island to go visit their people.

Grier Derrickson: They used to visit a lot.

Anne Whealton: So did you get a lot of people that came up to visit and your Mom made a big meal on Sunday?

Grier Derrickson: Yes. Yes. (Laughing) Yes, they had more time it seems like then. Now – now the pace of life is such that when you are not out either to church or on some business about town, the television and, of course, computer, like Hal. Mr. Halligan.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: He's on the computer all the time probably.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: That consumes people's time now. But there was more time for visiting and it was a great deal of pleasure in visiting people and having those to come see us. I remember one time, you're a Whealton aren't ya?

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Well, that run across my mind before I came down here.

Anne Whealton: There a lot of Whealton's up your way.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh. Well, descendants . . .

Anne Whealton: Were, that' what I'm sayin', there were, yeah.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh. Well, they are from the D. J. Whealton family.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And they moved down to North Carolina, Morehead City in that vicinity. And I remember one occasion my Mother's, I guess cousin, my Grandmother was a Whealton.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: She married a Peterson.

Anne Whealton: What was her first name?

Grier Derrickson: Hester Anne.

Anne Whealton: Okay. Hester Anne.

Grier Derrickson: Hester Anne. And she married a Peterson who came here from Denmark.

Anne Whealton: Wow.

Grier Derrickson: He came from Denmark. I might get off on a tangent.

Anne Whealton: That's okay, I'll bring you back. (Laughing)

Grier Derrickson: (Laughing) Because . . .

Unknown: Don't worry about it.

Anne Whealton: You're okay.

Grier Derrickson: My Grandfather – see – anyhow, it was important to me as it crossed my mind to mention that because of your relationship into probably the same Whealton family.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah. These people that were descendants of my Mother, cousins I believe they were, they married – it was on their mother's side – married a man by the name of Seaman and he had a thriving popular restaurant in Morehead City.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: And they came up to visit. Well, it was summertime and they hadn't seen me, my Mother's eyeballs (laughing), and I was to bed. But we all, as soon as it got warm enough, we'd go barefoot.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And we always had a place outside the back kitchen outside a platform where Pop always had two or three buckets of water to wash your feet in and that was one thing that if my Mother wadn't home, that I had – I was compelled, or supposed to be, so it wouldn't get here sheets dirty.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Make sure you wash your feet if you don't get a bath. Well, after dark you see, the water got chilly and I didn't want to stick my feet in that cold bucket of water.

Anne Whealton: It wasn't as inviting was it?

Grier Derrickson: No! Well, she was gonna show her baby boy off and I was to bed and she brings her friends up to the bedroom. I was – I don't remember it except the story that I'm tellin'.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And she throws the sheets back and there I lay with two paper bags the color of this tied on to my – one on each foot.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Do you have any idea what that was for?

Anne Whealton: Huh-uh.

Unknown: Because you didn't wash.

Grier Derrickson: Huh?

Unknown: Because you didn't wash.

Grier Derrickson: Because I didn't wash, that's right! (Laughing) I didn't wash my feet! And that embarrassed her and I've never forgotten that story as a child.

Anne Whealton: Well, I have to ask you. Do you know how to scull a boat still?

Grier Derrickson: Beg pardon?

Anne Whealton: Do you still know how to scull a boat?

Grier Derrickson: Scull, oh yeah.

Anne Whealton: I was just wonderin'.

Grier Derrickson: (Laughing)

Anne Whealton: Elvie taught Natalie how to scull when she was little.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh.

Anne Whealton: That was the first thing he taught her how to do, row and scull.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh.

Anne Whealton: Yeah. You still remember?

Grier Derrickson: Oh yeah!

Anne Whealton: Did you spend a lot of time scullin' boats out there?

Grier Derrickson: Oh yeah, you had to scull when you come to deep water.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And we didn't row much.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: Didn't row a whole lot.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: But you had that one oar you poled with.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And they had what they called shovin' paddles and they had a regular oar which had the bottom part was flattened out like, you know, an oar is.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: But the shovin' paddle is pretty much straight, but it did taper and flatten off like an oar, but they were used to push boats. And you could push 'em pretty fast, you know, it was exercise.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh. It's good and you were probably in good shape too.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah!

Anne Whealton: And used up all that energy as a little boy.

Grier Derrickson: (Laughing)

Anne Whealton: And by the time you got home you were tired.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah.

Anne Whealton: Now, can you tell me, since you lived through the depression years, what was the depression like? Do you remember anything of that period?

Grier Derrickson: Well, that's what drove me away from Chincoteague.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah. I don't know whether Rosalie's – yeah, her husband, Bill, Bill Savage, and a dear friend of mine, he and I were up at Pope's Island Huntin' Club.

Anne Whealton: Right.

Grier Derrickson: In the summertime.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Clamming.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And we were up there because it's right on the Maryland/Virginia line.

Anne Whealton: Right.

Grier Derrickson: And there was more clams over in Maryland than it was on this side.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: So we would go over there and we never did get caught by the – by the officials.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And that was my last trip before – before I entered into the service because clams in those days were two cents and a half each.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Two Dollars and a Half a thousand. And the horse flies were bad and the mosquitoes terrible. And it wadn't no future.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: No future here. Very depressed area. And my uncle was in the Coast Guard and that was a steady income. He was a surfman at the time. Of course, that – that rating phased out when all the lifesaving stations were demolished – not demolished, but disbanded. And anyhow, that was the influence to get me in the service because I was lookin' for a place that would give me some income, but mainly, a roof over my head and three meals a day and a sea bag full of clothing.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And that satisfied me very much – to commence with. And the Coast Guard was very good to me and I think I reciprocated.

Anne Whealton: Now do you remember how the depression affected people on the Island. Do you remember anything about that time period?

Grier Derrickson: Yes. Well, we were all poor.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: But some were more thrifty and more energetic and better ideas about - just like I never did have to worry about my clothing or food. It was always there. But some people did. Some people did . . .

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: But they lived on really – it was very few- but what had clothing and – but it was tight. It was tight livin'.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: But that's what drove me away from Chincoteague. Was no income, nothing to look forward to.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Even though in those days the oyster business was good.

Anne Whealton: It still stayed good during that time?

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Anne Whealton: During the depression? Really?

Grier Derrickson: Yes.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: And they had market to – the northern markets.

Anne Whealton: To New York?

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And – you go back far enough – we didn't have the bridges.

Anne Whealton: Right.

Grier Derrickson: And we had the barges . . .

Anne Whealton: That was 1922 right, when the bridge came over?

Grier Derrickson: Was it '22?

Anne Whealton: Was it '22?

Grier Derrickson: I was thinkin' . . .

Anne Whealton: Or was it a little later?

Grier Derrickson: I was thinkin' a little later. I was thinkin' about '27.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: I was thinkin' that, now I could be wrong.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: I think it was about '27.

Anne Whealton: Okay. Because the depression was early '30's right?

Grier Derrickson: Well, the real depression that I remember was '28.

Anne Whealton: '28, okay.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah. When Wall Street crashed. Wadn't it '28?

Anne Whealton: Right, when it crashed.

Unknown: Actually it was a little later.

Anne Whealton: Yeah, I thought it was the early '30's.

Unknown: The economy started going down in '28.

Anne Whealton: Right, after that.

Grier Derrickson: And it crashed I think . . .

Anne Whealton: So actually do you think that because of that though it spurned a lot of people to try different occupations? Because I know that you were a master of many occupations.

Grier Derrickson: (Laughing)

Anne Whealton: (Laughing) It got people to be creative?

Grier Derrickson: Well, I didn't become creative until after I got out of the service really.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: And it was then that I started hopscotchin' around about.

Anne Whealton: And that's why you are so famous. Everybody I talk to when I ask them about you, they say, oh yeah, he's done this, and this, and this.

Grier Derrickson: (Laughing) I bet, yeah, yeah.

Anne Whealton: What were some of your occupations?

Grier Derrickson: Well, when I first got out of the service my brother-in-law and I . . .

Anne Whealton: Now who's your brother-in-law?

Grier Derrickson: Charlie Watson.

Anne Whealton: Charlie Watson, okay.

Grier Derrickson: He was Alice's husband.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: Well, really, that wasn't the first thing. When I come home I didn't have any place to live so my – I had another brother-in-law by my half-sister. They had been – in those days that was, let's see, '37 and '45, after World War II was over.

Anne Whealton: Right.

Grier Derrickson: I came – I got out of the service right after about ten years, nine or ten years service.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: And I came home, I had enough of the service and I came home and my half-sister's husband owned some poultry houses. That was almost the beginning of the poultry industry on the Eastern Shore.

Anne Whealton: Oh really?

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh. And this whole Island was saturated in short order with small five thousand and ten thousand houses.

Anne Whealton: So it started out with you – your . . .

Grier Derrickson: I didn't have nothin' to do with it.

Anne Whealton: You don't know when it started, okay.

Grier Derrickson: I only participated in it.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: But was long about – I'd say in the 40's when it was introduced here to Chincoteague by one man or two that came down from Delaware. And Mr. Lev Lynch. Levin Lynch was one of the first people who had a poultry house on – or broiler house – on Chincoteague.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: And that turned out to be very profitable for – and people got so excited because it was – some of 'em were makin' more money than they ever did in their life.

Anne Whealton: Wow. I know Rosalie's Dad had a poultry farm.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh, yeah, yeah.

Anne Whealton: Yeah.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah, Claude Merritt, he had 'em.

Anne Whealton: Yeah, uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah, that's Rosalie's Dad.

Anne Whealton: Right.

Grier Derrickson: But anyhow, from that – and at the same I went up to Ocean City and there was a – there was a (pause) he was a sheriff of that county, I don't know if that's Worcester . . .

Anne Whealton: Worcester County. That is Worcester in Ocean City.

Grier Derrickson: or Wicomico. I don't know, one or the other.

Anne Whealton: Anyhow, he had some cattle on the beach and a man by the name of Bounds, together those two had cattle on the beach and I went up when they were doin' the pennin' to sell off the calves and I bought, I think it was about twenty calves.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And they were – didn't cost much, you know, still. We hadn't really come out of the depression. But that was the turnin' point in the Franklin Delano Roosevelt, he put a chicken in ever pot . . .

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And a car in ever garage didn't he.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: That was the turnin' point and the United States hasn't stopped since – to where we are today. It's just been up, up, up. We have some glitches along the way.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: But it's nothin' but been prosperous ever since.

Anne Whealton: Now can you tell me about either your pig farm, I've heard some funny stories about your pigs. (Laughing)

Grier Derrickson: (Laughing) Well, I got this poultry house from my brother-in-law and I didn't have it too long before, well it was a short while after that, yeah. One of the houses, it was a ten

thousand house and a five thousand and one end of the ten thousand I decided to raise these mink.

Anne Whealton: Oh, you're doing the mink first, okay.

Grier Derrickson: (Laughing) Yeah, yeah. Of course, I did get these cattle from up in Ocean City.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: The calves, and grew them up and I had some ponies.

Anne Whealton: You did?

Grier Derrickson: I got some ponies.

Anne Whealton: Did you ride?

Grier Derrickson: Yeah, had a ridin' pony.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And I got them from Mr. Clarence Beebe.

Anne Whealton: Awe – we know them.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah.

Anne Whealton: That's Elvie's uncle.

Grier Derrickson: And I kept them for a right good while.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Until I moved out of the woods up there where Bob Halligan lives. But anyhow, following that you asked about the minks. It was durin' that time, yeah.

Anne Whealton: How did you get into mink farming? How does somebody ever?

Grier Derrickson: Well, the last tour of duty I had I was in the – out in the state of Washington and they – out there it was popular – mink farming was popular out there.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: As well as silver fox farming.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And I knew that we had some natural mink here in years gone by, but not many. But it was conducive to fur-bearin' animals in the wintertime. They produced . . .

Anne Whealton: There were some natural mink here?

Unknown: Yeah.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah, uh-huh.

Anne Whealton: How about that. I didn't know, I've never heard anybody say that.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah. Well, there's an island in Northampton County, Mink Island.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: On the ocean side.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And I don't know how – it must a got it's name from a population of mink down there. But there wadn't many mink around.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Anyhow, it seemed to be profitable, or I envisioned it being profitable, but it didn't, it didn't work out.

Anne Whealton: What do you do to have a mink farm? How do you even – what do you do as a mink farmer?

Grier Derrickson: Well, you have – first of all you got to get some stock.

Anne Whealton: Okay. And where did you get that from?

Grier Derrickson: So I bought – I bought some – it was a man – I learned that there was a man in business in Cambridge, Maryland.

Anne Whealton: Oh yeah, I have friends in Cambridge.

Grier Derrickson: And also I had – I had been readin' up on it and I got some addresses of people in Webster, New York. So I got two different strains from different people.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: For crossin' them and I started with them. But I know sooner got started and got – pelted out a few – maybe a year or two after I had an increase with young – young animals.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: But that – that didn't last very long and that's one reason why I been in so many darn things. I don't – if it's not profitable I soon get away from it.

Anne Whealton: Now where did you sell it to?

Grier Derrickson: Well . . .

Anne Whealton: I know in the 50's, my Mom had all kinds of mink stoles.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh.

Anne Whealton: And fox and everything.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh.

Anne Whealton: And we still have 'em.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh.

Anne Whealton: But then – where did you sell 'em – where did you send them to?

Grier Derrickson: Well, I – I would execute 'em, I guess.

Anne Whealton: Right.

Grier Derrickson: I used an electric shock that gave 'em instant death.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And I pelted 'em, and refrigerated the pelts until I accumulated a few in the winter months.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And I sent 'em to New York and had 'em made into neck pieces.

Anne Whealton: Yeah, that's what we had.

Grier Derrickson: And sold every one here.

Anne Whealton: Did you really? Oh, you sold 'em all here on the Island?

Grier Derrickson: Sold 'em, every one here.

Anne Whealton: How about that! That's really neat.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah.

Anne Whealton: So you brought 'em back instead of sending 'em away?

Grier Derrickson: Yeah, uh-huh.

Anne Whealton: That's really neat!

Grier Derrickson: Yeah, yeah.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And I remember – the people I sold 'em to, Roy Twilley. Do you remember Roy Twilley?

Anne Whealton: I've heard of Roy Twilley.

Grier Derrickson: Well, Roy's mother, Ms. Flossie, she was my Mother's cousin.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: First cousin. So I sold her one and I sold a Hudson up in Deep Hole area one, and quite a number. Quite a number.

Anne Whealton: That's so neat!

Grier Derrickson: And Elizabeth got a neck piece and a stole-like.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And I don't think she called it a stole, but it was two or three, two in the back and one in the front.

Anne Whealton: Yeah, uh-huh. We used to – my Mom, they put 'em in our closets.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh.

Anne Whealton: And I can remember as a child lookin' in there and having those eyeballs look at you, thinking oh my goodness! (Laughing)

Grier Derrickson: (Laughing) Yeah.

Anne Whealton: But it was very popular.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah.

Anne Whealton: I mean – all of the women wore them to church and to different occasions. . .

Grier Derrickson: Yeah.

Anne Whealton: When they were dressed up.

Grier Derrickson: They sure were dressed up with mink.

Anne Whealton: Oh, that is so neat!

Grier Derrickson: And, of course, then, of course, that was an industry in itself and I knew little – very little about the genetics – the technical things about mink farming.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: But there was people that were getting into it and I tell you the reason why I really got out of it. And I pelted 'em off that way, in neck pieces. We had just finished World War II, a few years had gone by. And – and the market, Russia, one of our allies during World War II, they were – they were exportin' furs to the United States and they had what they called a kolinsky, which was a – it wadn't a mink – but it took the place of a mink.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And it drove our markets right down. And New York was the most popular place for furs seemed like. And they were – they were – they could take that and sell it. It's illegal, but they are doin' things – instead of selling kolinskies for a mink (and that would be in '48 or '50, 1950), now you got these people that are absconding with people's savings through the stock market.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: You know. It's always people doin' something illegal.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Well, anyhow, that was the episode concerning my mink farm. I didn't stay in it long enough to – well, if it wadn't profitable I got out of it.

Anne Whealton: So what did you go into next?

Grier Derrickson: I had these cattle. And I raised chickens. And that put food on the table and clothes on our back.

Unknown: Were you married now?

Grier Derrickson: Oh yeah.

Anne Whealton: Were you married at the time?

Grier Derrickson: I got married in '41.

Anne Whealton: Yeah, and how did you find your bride?

Grier Derrickson: Well, she was my school sweetheart.

Anne Whealton: She was?

Grier Derrickson: Yeah.

Anne Whealton: From elementary school on?

Grier Derrickson: Yeah – well, no.

Anne Whealton: From high school?

Grier Derrickson: High school.

Anne Whealton: What was her maiden name?

Grier Derrickson: Russell.

Anne Whealton: Elizabeth Russell?

Grier Derrickson: Yeah.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah, and she's still with me.

Anne Whealton: Awe.

Grier Derrickson: Still with me.

Anne Whealton: That's precious.

Grier Derrickson: And here she is.

Anne Whealton: Awe.

Grier Derrickson: This is the only thing I brought is a picture of her at – with a mink.

Unknown: I got to see that.

Anne Whealton: Did you really?

Grier Derrickson: Did you see it?

Anne Whealton: Oh, that's so neat!

Grier Derrickson: She's in one of those catchin' cages.

Anne Whealton: Oh! That's so neat! Wow! (He's got a picture here of his bride with a mink in a catching cage).

Grier Derrickson: Yeah.

Anne Whealton: That is really neat.

Unknown: Has he got it dated?

Anne Whealton: And it's dated . . .

Grier Derrickson: Is it a date on there?

Anne Whealton: No.

Unknown: No?

Anne Whealton: Not that I can see. I don't see it on there.

Grier Derrickson: Note - Elizabeth D. and large adult male breeder, black Yukon mink, original stock.

Anne Whealton: Wow. That's so neat. Now what did she think of your mink farm?

Grier Derrickson: Uh – she didn't – she didn't – most of the things I've been delving in, she didn't – hasn't approved of.

Unknown: (Laughing)

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: (Laughing) But I think she liked that all right. It was just – I was makin' my main income from raisin' broilers.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: Because it was popular in those days.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: And you could get a nice little hunk of money ever time you sold your chickens.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And (laughing) and this was a sideline that I thought might, you know, work out.

Anne Whealton: Might catch on, right, uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: But it didn't. And the Russian's put me out of business. (Laughing)

Anne Whealton: (Laughing) All right, now what did you get into after that?

Grier Derrickson: Well . . .

Anne Whealton: I've heard about some famous pigs that you had.

Grier Derrickson: Well, before the pigs are about following – I – this same brother-in-law of mine, not the one that had the poultry house, the broiler house, but Charlie Watson, my sister's husband, he and I started, we went down to Carolina and bought a trawler and we outfitted it here.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And started sea clamming out of Ocean City.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: And we did it until the plant in Cape May – it runned us out a business too. They – they went south at that time, shortly after we got into it, and bought shrimp boats. And for some reason or other the shrimpin' industry went bad and for a period of time in Florida, and they went south and bought company boats and put workers on the boats and laid off independent boats.

Anne Whealton: Wow.

Grier Derrickson: So I came back home to Chincoteague. (Laughing)

Anne Whealton: (Laughing)

Grier Derrickson: (Laughing)

Unknown: (Laughing)

Grier Derrickson: He and I did. And we changed our rig over from a sea clam dredge to net fishin'.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: So we – trawlin' for flounder, just like they're still doin'.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Only it's more scientific now, with more equipment. And we pulled nets out here and caught flounders and what they called round fishin'. You hardheads and croakers and trout. But – oh! – and while we were doin' this – (it leads me - you know one thing leads to another).

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh. We hope so. (Laughing)

Grier Derrickson: (Laughing) It – as we would go daily we would be pullin' up tons of undesirable fish, mainly sea robins.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And I told Charlie, I said, look, we are not catchin' many good fish, but we're getting' tons of this trash fish, let's investigate that and see if we can't dehydrate 'em. So sure enough right there at Lake's Point, my Father, before me, had dredged into the marsh up where Blake's Point is and that's still there. So we put a little factory down there and got some – got somebody with trucks here, Walt Bowden, to go to Baltimore to make some phone calls and found some used cookers just like they use over here to the poultry by-product place.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And we started makin' fish meal.

Anne Whealton: Oh, that's a neat idea.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah.

Anne Whealton: That is a good idea.

Grier Derrickson: And all the trawlers – we bought their scrap fish.

Anne Whealton: That is neat.

Grier Derrickson: And that went until the '62 storm and that wrecked everything and put us out of business and at the same time our government financed Peru with this anchovy meal, fish meal.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And they flooded the market. That's the . . .

Unknown: Remind me never to go in business with you.

Anne Whealton: I don't know, he's done pretty good.

Grier Derrickson: (Laughing)

Anne Whealton: (Laughing) He has an entrepreneur's spirit.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah. But during the '62 storm, that was an easy way out. The Lord, I suppose, put us out of business to our benefit. So you have to look at something different. Well, that really, other than a depressed sort of state following that, I think that was probably about in the 70's. I don't know if I skipped anything in the meantime or not.

Anne Whealton: I still want you to get to the pig story.

Grier Derrickson: Well . . .

Anne Whealton: Have we gone by them?

Grier Derrickson: No.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: This occurred about the same time.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: I had the pigs at the same time – during the same – I never, I never had less than two things at any one time.

Anne Whealton: Right and if something doesn't work, then something else will.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh.

Anne Whealton: That's the same way Elvie is.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh.

Anne Whealton: If something's not in, then he can try something else, you just keep going until you make enough money to support your family.

Grier Derrickson: Right. It's foolish – I mean you'll starve to death on one if you don't find something better.

Anne Whealton: To back it up.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah. So you always find something better and even though it don't last very long.

Anne Whealton: Right, but it gets you through.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah. But anyhow, at the same time when I was gettin' – when we were fishin' really, John Machete – he's still livin'.

Anne Whealton: Oh yeah, I know Johnny real well.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh. Many a time he's brought me sharks, I mean tremendous sharks that were half as long as his boat!

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: I mean they were (laughing) . . . I mean he just had a little ole trawler and he'd come in with the tail hangin' out over the end and the head of the thing down in the cabin. And I'd take it, bring the dump truck down here and right up near where you got your house, maybe this side of it a little ways, I'd dump that shark. He was too big, I had booms to lift it and put it in. His tail would be hangin' out when I'd go up the street here.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh. (Laughing)

Grier Derrickson: (Laughing) You'd see cats and dogs and people following that truck. (Laughing) Oh, Lord. Anyhow, where were we . . .

Anne Whealton: I'm on the pigs.

Grier Derrickson: You – yeah. . .

Anne Whealton: I'm still on 'em, I'm still waitin'.

Grier Derrickson: All of this - look this is one – at that time I was following in the woods, the mother hogs, the sows, were havin' their pigs in the woods.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And naturally – and they would find a place to wallow out a nice big hole in the earth and quite often it would be snowin' when the pigs would be born. I soon saw that wadn't the right way to do it and at that same time other people on the mainland and all over the country were had firing houses where they'd put 'em up in a more efficient manner.

Anne Whealton: Right.

Grier Derrickson: Of production. So any how, while they were in the woods these fish – these extra fish was an excellent protein for 'em. And I was able to get corn, soybean and supplements, but the fish were excellent and they ate 'em raw, just like we eat raw oysters.

Unknown: Right.

Anne Whealton: Oh yeah.

Grier Derrickson: And like the Japanese like raw sushi.

Anne Whealton: Sushi, raw fish, uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Well, it was excellent. I'd take these, I expect six, seven, eight hundred pound sharks and dump 'em up and I'd have my hogs fenced off, you see, otherwise that couldn't a worked for 'em.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: They'd a just, you know, been a nuisance. You couldn't a worked for 'em if you didn't have 'em fenced off and then turn 'em loose into a feeding area. I'd take that shark out and I'd get my – sharpen up my ax and I'd slit him – I'd slit him from up under his gills, right on back just far as a I could – and just leave it open. Well, you know – now this was mainly for feedin' the old sows to give 'em protein. And amino acids, I mean everything – it was oils and it's surprisin' the nutrients that's in a raw fish.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And they didn't stop with just the flesh. Their – the internal organs is what they went for to start with. And – but it is illegal to do that any more.

Anne Whealton: Oh really?

Grier Derrickson: Oh yeah, you can't do it.

Anne Whealton: Hold on a second.

Grier Derrickson: Am I takin' . . .

(Tape Stopped)

Grier Derrickson: You want to continue?

Anne Whealton: Keep goin', yes please.

Grier Derrickson: This raw fish that I would feed to the breeding stock, the mothers and the adult male and females, I would – I would – well, I had to prepare it somewhat. You know you take a shark, he is so tough.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: They couldn't really get into that hide so I would – that's why I would slit it so that they could get to the fleshy parts and the very first thing that those – they'd line right up like a – say a seven or eight foot shark . . .

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: They would – they would line right up and empty the internal organs of that fish. . .

Anne Whealton: Wow.

Grier Derrickson: First.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And then there'd be enough animals around, it wadn't long before they would devour that whole fish.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And the hides, the only thing left, and they'd go runnin' through the woods draggin' the hide.

Anne Whealton: Wow.

Grier Derrickson: (Laughing)

Anne Whealton: That is amazing though idn't it?

Grier Derrickson: Yeah!

Anne Whealton: It is. Who would a thought, who would a figured that out? That's neat that you figured all that out though and takin' something that somebody's throwin' away or getting' rid of . . .

Grier Derrickson: Yeah.

Anne Whealton: You know.

Grier Derrickson: Well, yeah, I guess so. And look, I – I had the idea because when people first started in the poultry business here.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: The broiler business. Lots of people had these big hog pots, you've seen a hog pot where the farmers would kill their own.

Anne Whealton: Right.

Grier Derrickson: And boil their water in the pot and they used the water to scald the hair on the hogs, you know.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And get the hair off of the hogs. And they used to – well, anyhow . . .

Anne Whealton: I'm gonna flip you over right here, hold on a second, hold that thought for a second please.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh.

(END OF FIRST SIDE OF TAPE)

(TAPE – SIDE B)

Anne Whealton: Little bit over again, sorry about that.

Grier Derrickson: If you can remember just where we are now.

Anne Whealton: Yeah.

Grier Derrickson: It was about the feeding of the . . .

Anne Whealton: Pigs.

Grier Derrickson: Of the piglets.

Anne Whealton: Piglets, right.

Grier Derrickson: When they are nursin’.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: But I would like to inject this. It wadn’t long, you know, people are copycats.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And it was – others here that got the idea and I can mention some of ‘em. Two of ‘em that are still livin’ today, might be three of ‘em. It was three or four or five people got into this hog business. Kruno was one. You know Kruno.

Anne Whealton: I know Kruno, yeah.

Grier Derrickson: Uh, Lord, I just had three in my mind. Howard – Mitchell Howard.

Anne Whealton: Oh yeah, I know Mitchell, he lives up our way.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh. Mitchell. But he didn’t have any firing house, they just had a few that ran loose, didn’t have many conveniences for ‘em. (Laughing) And who was the other one – Kruno – oh, George Bowden!

Anne Whealton: Oh yeah, I know Mr. George, he walks on the trail with us too, yeah.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah, George Bowden. He always had some hogs and I think he still fools with some goats.

Anne Whealton: Yeah, he does, uh-huh, he does.

Grier Derrickson: (Laughing)

Anne Whealton: Now can you go back over the – can you go back over the two stories that I lost, one was on the shark, can you go over that again, and also the farrowing part about that. I'm sorry.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh.

Anne Whealton: 'Cause I lost that so we have to go over that again.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah.

Anne Whealton: Can you talk about the shark again?

Grier Derrickson: Well, the firing took place in the wood.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And the animals would - would make their own bed while they had a hole in the earth because of the warmth of the earth and it's cold weather. And they'd bring a certain amount of straw, limbs, and just anything.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: To make a bed for 'em. But mainly the warmth from the earth in the wintertime. But that – I could see that that wasn't the route to go and with a little investment I built these firing houses.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: To get 'em in out of the natural elements. And . . .

Anne Whealton: Can you describe them again for me?

Grier Derrickson: Yeah, I'll describe them.

Anne Whealton: Okay, please.

Grier Derrickson: The firing – the firing stalls were just – it was something like a hutch for rabbits, you know, only it was on a cement floor.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: With hot water pipes running in the cement to warm the whole floor.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: On temperature control, and the floor was temperature controlled, not the air.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh, just the floor.

Grier Derrickson: Just the floor temperature for the baby pigs. And it became necessary that the needle teeth of these baby pigs, the first week of their life, to just nip 'em off with a pair of pincher -pinchers, you know.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: It was a little small pair of pliers really and they don't feel it. And it don't hurt 'em. And later on, I never did get around to dockin' their tails because as they get older and concentration, just like chickens in broiler houses, you have to do certain things if you concentrate 'em for production like twenty animals to a small place to finish 'em out to what they call feeder pigs if you sell 'em at an auction for someone else to finish 'em, they are a feeder pig.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: No more than seventy-five or eighty pounds, they're gettin' a little large. Anywhere from fifty to sixty-five, seventy pounds would be idea weight to sell 'em for the farmer, as well as the buyer. And a lot of little things like that enters the picture.

Anne Whealton: Can you talk about those stalls again like you talked about?

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. The animals were fed, in other words they have a dung in place on the outside. The only way she gets in the stall is come in there head-on because you always feed 'em right up front.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: Right on the floor. And, of course, they back out for their bathroom.

Anne Whealton: Right, uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And – but along the way the baby pigs, they're encouraged by heat lamps and warmth on either side of the sow and – and that saves a lot of baby pigs. You don't lose hardly any.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Because as soon as they get their milk, she's in a lying position . . .

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And when they are finished they all stop at one time, she cuts the milk flow off I guess. And they rush back to a warm spot and she stands up.

Anne Whealton: How about that.

Grier Derrickson: And she . . .

Anne Whealton: And there's just enough room, you said, for her to . . .

Grier Derrickson: To lie down . . .

Anne Whealton: Just enough.

Grier Derrickson: To stoop down and then her feet flies under one side – under one way.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: And when she wants to get up she pulls her feet under and gets up.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: So it's – it works.

Anne Whealton: Pretty neat.

Grier Derrickson: And I believe I did get to the needle teeth has to be – and another thing that is essential, or it was in those days and I'm sure it hasn't changed, the fact that those baby pigs are born off of the earth, the natural earth, no matter where it is, they have to be administered iron shots.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: When – shortly after the needle teeth or within a week or two.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Because there is no way of feeding them the iron they need, whereas in the natural, like an animal that runs on a farm, they get enough out of the earth – iron.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah.

Anne Whealton: That's really neat, that is neat.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh.

Anne Whealton: So you had to give 'em that right away.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh.

Anne Whealton: How about as far as shots or anything like that, did you have to give any vaccinations or inoculations or anything like that?

Grier Derrickson: No, no vaccinations.

Anne Whealton: Like I know the broiler for the poultry and stuff like that . . .

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh.

Anne Whealton: They had people who had came around did all that stuff.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh. No, that's all the maintenance, I call it maintenance, that you had to do for 'em that I can remember.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: I never did anything different. Now – and I didn't ring their nose or nothing like that.

Anne Whealton: That's what I was going to ask you to, if you did that.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah, huh-uh.

Anne Whealton: No, so they didn't burrow.

Grier Derrickson: Huh-uh.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: See the size that run in the woods, they didn't care – it didn't matter, they ran right up there and rootin' where your house is, the whole north end. (Laughing)

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh, they were free. (Laughing) Like the ponies, they were free.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah.

Anne Whealton: How about that.

Grier Derrickson: And . . .

Anne Whealton: Now I also heard you were a plumber.

Grier Derrickson: Well . . .

Anne Whealton: Were you a plumber?

Grier Derrickson: Yeah, for five – no, not a plumber, I worked in a plumbing shop.

Anne Whealton: Oh. For Mr. Gene Wayne Taylor?

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh.

Anne Whealton: Did you really?

Grier Derrickson: For his dad, for his dad.

Anne Whealton: Right, for his dad, I know his dad, I remember him, yeah.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah.

Anne Whealton: So you worked over at the shop too huh?

Grier Derrickson: Yeah, I took Mr. Blake's place – do you remember?

Anne Whealton: I don't remember Mr. Blake, no.

Grier Derrickson: Mr. Blake.

Anne Whealton: Huh-uh. So do you know how – I guess you know how to do plumbing then too?

Grier Derrickson: Yeah, somewhat.

Anne Whealton: How about that.

Grier Derrickson: Some of that, especially since plastic come in.

Anne Whealton: Yeah, makes it a lot easier. (Laughing)

Grier Derrickson: (Laughing)

Anne Whealton: A lot more fun.

Grier Derrickson: Everybody – everybody put Elvie right out of business. (Laughing)

Anne Whealton: (Laughing) He's an electrician.

Grier Derrickson: Electrician, yeah.

Anne Whealton: He's okay, he's safe.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah.

Anne Whealton: Wow.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah, the plastic but ever – all the plumbers – well, no, there's still – they raised their prices and well, I don't know.

Anne Whealton: Yeah, that's another story. All right. Go back to your shark story because I think I missed that too when that wasn't recording.

Grier Derrickson: The shark story.

Anne Whealton: Yeah.

Grier Derrickson: The feeding . . .

Anne Whealton: When Johnny Machete, the sharks that he gave you.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh, feedin' the shark to the – to the breedin' stock, to the breeders. It was something about raw fish and the liver and the internal organs – the undigested food is a source of microscopic whatever the sharks eating, or whatever a larger animal is eating, the undigested food is a concentration – we can't stand it, even to talk about it, but it's a concentration of edible stuff for animals.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: Like a hog.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Or anything that's a predator one on another. When one predator eats the whole animal of some other species, it's just like an oyster.

Unknown: That's right.

Grier Derrickson: (Laughing)

Unknown: How did you get the shark up the road?

Grier Derrickson: What's that now?

Unknown: How did you get the shark to where the pig was?

Grier Derrickson: I had a dump truck, had a dump truck and I loaded the thing with a boom, but it wasn't just shark. I didn't turn down anything big or small. I had 55 gallon drums that most of the boats would take and fill it, put 'em on the stern of their boat and put the trash in it and we just knocked two holes on either side of these iron barrels and put a couple hooks in it and set 'em on my truck. And I just dumped them right out. But only what they would consume in one meal.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: It wadn't nothin' left over.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And then later on I handled the same thing into the fish – into the dehydratin' plant. We didn't talk much about that did we?

Anne Whealton: Yeah, you didn't talk about that yet, no.

Grier Derrickson: (Laughing) Well, that's along the way. But it – it sort of coincided with the – with the pig operation.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Because I went to a place up in Cambridge, Cambridge, Maryland, is that where I got my pigs? I can't . . .

Anne Whealton: That's where you got the mink.

Grier Derrickson: The mink?

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Cambridge – yeah. I used to go for waste material to feed these hogs, the shoats that were out, saleable, I used to go to a plant that had waste material of briter which they would – it was Ice Landing. Where the devil was that place? You go up to Salisbury.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Nanticoke. Nanticoke, Maryland.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: On the Bay side and I would pick up a – I had a ten-wheel truck and I'd get fifteen or twenty barrels of edible stuff for hogs. A meal – the brittle like, you know, you get a fish portion or a fish stick frozen in the market?

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: That's what this plant did. He – they made fish sticks and they breaded 'em, but you know how it is when you're gonna bread an oyster, you have many of 'em, it soon won't adhere, it's got to be real dry to adhere – and they had barrels of it daily.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: And they had shift work even. I'd go there and get lots of that to feed the animals. When the cabbage out here on 13, I used to get truck loads of cabbage.

Anne Whealton: What, up in Westover?

Grier Derrickson: No, it was – down here where they have this flea market.

Anne Whealton: In Temperanceville?

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh, a little south of Temperanceville.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: But they don't do that now. See – I mean things come in they . . .

Anne Whealton: They go out, just like the tide.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah. (Laughing)

Anne Whealton: (Laughing) Comes in and goes out.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah.

Anne Whealton: But I have to say one man's trash is another man's treasure. You definitely worked that didn't you?

Grier Derrickson: Yes. Anything – and they loved cabbage, they loved cabbage. And so did people on Chincoteague. I'd bring truck loads of cabbage over here, any head of cabbage that fell on the floor in that plant went in the truck.

Anne Whealton: Wow.

Grier Derrickson: And it was leaves mainly, trimmed leaves off a cabbage before they put saran wrap or cellophane around it. And the trimmings is what I fed 'em. Good golly, see I used a lot of sweet potatoes from over to Hallwood. When they were cannin' sweet potatoes there, I had – I had three dump trucks. I kept two over there that I had a man that would take them trucks and put 'em under that shoot and I had one at home all the time. I'd go get one and bring one. And I had it pretty well timed accordin' to, you know, how much volume comes out of there. And he'd give me a call if the second truck that he had was bein' filled. And another thing about that, you learn, you innovate lots of things.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: The sweet potatoes – the sweet potatoes was one of the best nutritional foods that I believe I fed the hogs. It was all essential, all good. But the sweet potatoes, I could go there in the fall of the year when they dug the sweet potatoes on the Eastern Shore, that's out – they don't grow any sweet potatoes much any more.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Not on the Shore. But I'd go there in the fall of the year when they'd start – and they would start by truckin' 'em up from the south.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: From the Carolinas and Georgia. And canned 'em up here. And I'd get the waste and I'd dump these – I had cattle up there at the time and one episode there, I'll just inject this if I don't get off in the woods –

Anne Whealton: (Laughing)

Grier Derrickson: (Laughing) I had cattle there.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: These same cattle that I went to Ocean City to get. And they were, I mean this is probably ten years into – into havin' the cattle, and I got these hogs. Well, I had to keep the cattle separated from the hogs because of these sweet potatoes. But they broke through one time. But to give you an idea of how I stored these, I took these 55 gallon drums which I got from the cannin' factory. They used caustic soda to peel the potatoes. Before they canned a potato and cook it in the can, they pack it in the can and cook it in the can. They had - they cut the ends – they cut the ends off of the sweet potato, it was truck loads of trash. And small potatoes. They just throw them away too.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Well, this sweet potato proved to be a tremendous, I mean that probably was the source of my profit, just the sweet potatoes, you know.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: You know, you look at any one thing. Of course the whole thing, the fish was cheap, the sweet potatoes was cheap. And it did a good job. But I took the – with three dump trucks in the fall of the year and it was a seasonal thing of cannin' 'em see. 'Cause even in the south the sweet potato crop is finished and they plant something else. But when I – I could get 'em for about three months. I'd say September up 'til December. And I'd take these caustic barrels and fill them, make a pen, just make a pen of barrels with – where you could drive in.

Unknown: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Back in with a dump truck.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And dump it in there, one right after the other until you filled that whole pen full. And you'd think that that would be – they would rot and go away. Well, what happens with sweet potatoes, the element – I didn't cover it or anything – it would have enough rain, enough moisture and enough sunshine, something took place and they were wet when I dumped 'em in there.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: It made a crust over them with mold on it and sealed that top just like a tent, like a – what a they call 'em – an igloo.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: From all them barrels. I'd go in there with a front-end loader and had these electric fences where I had – showed – being grown up for market size up to two hundred pound – and I had electric fences with rubber on 'em that when you went on to the rubber it would stretch but it was still electric in there. I'd take this front-end loader and go in there and take – scoop it and go out and just dump it right on the ground, those darn hogs would eat that right up. Just like the fish.

Anne Whealton: Wow, idn't that something.

Grier Derrickson: (Laughing) And they wadn't fishy.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: See I didn't feed – anything going to market wadn't getting' no raw fish.

Anne Whealton: Right.

Grier Derrickson: But I did feed market hogs vegetables like cabbage and sweet potatoes and white potatoes, but that's a disaster. White potatoes don't keep.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: They just – they just rot away.

Anne Whealton: But you tried it?

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh. But – oh- one episode that happened. I had these cattle at the time and I kept 'em separated but they got in them sweet potatoes.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And you know they got drunk!

Unknown: (Laughing)

Anne Whealton: (Laughing)

Grier Derrickson: They fermented, yeah.

Unknown: I never heard a tale like that.

Grier Derrickson: They were – the only thing held them up was them pine trees.

Anne Whealton: (Laughing)

Grier Derrickson: (Laughing) They staggered from one pine tree to the other.

Anne Whealton: Oh my!

Grier Derrickson: That's the truth!

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Unknown: (Laughing)

Grier Derrickson: And – but they broke down a fence, got through a fence and then got over where these barrels were and they could reach over.

Unknown: Oh yeah.

Grier Derrickson: They had – and they eat them darn sweet potatoes and they got the colic and got drunk. (Laughing)

Anne Whealton: (Laughing)

Grier Derrickson: And it wadn't long after that – it wadn't long after that a fellow that used to run the Pepsi – Pepsi-Cola here, he was a Northampton man, tell you who he married, and he died after a while – Kenny Barrett's daughter. She works for the Baptist Church as secretary.

Anne Whealton: Oh yeah.

Grier Derrickson: Or did. Linda.

Anne Whealton: Linda, right. Linda Hudson.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh, Linda Hudson.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: She married that man. But I sold ever one of them cattle to him.

Unknown: Drunken cattle to him.

Grier Derrickson: Right. (Laughing)

Anne Whealton: Oh my.

Grier Derrickson: Oh Lord.

Anne Whealton: Those are good stories. Those are really good stories, yeah.

Grier Derrickson: Well, I can back up - proof, you know, individuals that's still livin'.

Anne Whealton: That's really neat. That's really cool.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah, Lordy.

Anne Whealton: Now I heard you were in aquaculture too?

Grier Derrickson: Yeah, yeah. I suppose I was really you might say what little success I had at it – it must a been a success 'cause I still got some. (Laughing)

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And I hate to let go of it.

Unknown: (Laughing)

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Lou Wright's father-in-law, by the name of Kelly.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Was a farmer. And Lou Wright married his daughter (pause). I'm tryin' to get some dates – we don't have to have dates?

Anne Whealton: No, you are okay on that.

Grier Derrickson: That's more recent see, this episode.

Anne Whealton: Yeah.

Grier Derrickson: Lou Wright's father-in-law, by the name of Kelly, got interested in it and sent Lou Kelly up to Milford, Connecticut to attend a class that the Federal Government, the Bureau of Fisheries or – it was under the Department of the Interior.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: And the Fisheries were under, at that time, and still is I think, under Interior, like hatcheries and – but anyhow, they were – they were – they got interested in it. And Mr. Kelly and Lou Wright went to school and learned what he could about it and come home and where Lou Wright – you know where his restaurant is?

Anne Whealton: Sure, uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: The farm goes right down to Watts' Bay.

Anne Whealton: Right.

Grier Derrickson: They were really the people that – that got my interest.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: See everybody's a copycat.

Anne Whealton: Sure.

Grier Derrickson: Everybody.

Anne Whealton: Whatever works and then they keep trying it, yeah.

Grier Derrickson: But where they failed, I think I succeeded. They were able to produce through a hatchery a number – numbers of tiny seed.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: First the larvae.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Which swims to a stage where it metamorphosis from a larvae to a sedimentary type animal that falls down if it's an oyster, he's got to have something to stick on, like an oyster shell or a glass bottle or rubber tire or something that attracts him.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And gives him a rough surface. A clam, he just rains down like the rain and goes into the sand.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And his habitat is sand. Well, they failed when they made the transition from a controlled – totally controlled environment to the natural environment, and that's where they failed.

Anne Whealton: In the transition, uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Now that's overcome by all the people that's in the business today. They have learned to use netting and trays and bags and various things.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: During that small seed size. That was, and still is, for a person that likes to manually work, I don't know if a person has a – has the farming area, has the bottom to put the product into to let it grow, most of the bottom is suitable but some bottoms are more suitable than others.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Some locations are better than others.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Wherever the tide rises and falls. The closer you are to the inlet, the better. And mine is a right good ways from it, it takes me at least a year longer because of the natural foods that's in the water. There is more suitable foods that the clams require for growth, more near the fresh water comin' out of the Ocean.

Anne Whealton: Um.

Grier Derrickson: Anyhow.

Anne Whealton: Yeah, Elvie has one.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh.

Anne Whealton: He's got 'em up by Tom's Cove.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh.

Unknown: How many clams do you have out in here in your beds now?

Grier Derrickson: I – very few. Matter of fact I was just out there this mornin' and I've put some red flags up. I can't – nobody in my family is interested . . .

Anne Whealton: Oh, no.

Grier Derrickson: And I'm too old to – I'm still interested but I can't . . .

Anne Whealton: It's a lot of work.

Grier Derrickson: It is.

Anne Whealton: It is. Strom and Elvie have one together and it's a lot of work.

Grier Derrickson: If you don't care for 'em when it needs to be done, you lose your tide.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh. And you got some predators and you got the weather.

Grier Derrickson: Um-hum.

Anne Whealton: The wintertime.

Grier Derrickson: There's a lot of things.

Anne Whealton: There's a lot of things that come against you.

Grier Derrickson: A lot of things, yeah, it's tough.

Anne Whealton: But when you do good you do really good.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah, yeah.

Anne Whealton: You know.

Grier Derrickson: And it's a lot of fun.

Anne Whealton: Yeah, uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: It's a lot of fun. And anything that you're makin' money at is fun!

Unknown: That's right.

Anne Whealton: (Laughing)

Grier Derrickson: (Laughing)

Anne Whealton: That's one good way to look at it, you're right. Wow, that's great. Now do you any kids, do you have any children?

Grier Derrickson: I have one child.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: And two grandchildren. And that's it.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: And all my sisters and parents and my uncles and aunts, I have a cousin or two, I have some nephews and nieces.

Anne Whealton: I know the Lord's blessed your land too though.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah.

Unknown: Yeah, how did you get your land up there?

Grier Derrickson: Some of it was gift and others I bought.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah.

Anne Whealton: It's amazing to see how much it's worth now idn't it? Idn't that amazing?

Grier Derrickson: Unbelievable!

Anne Whealton: Amazing.

Grier Derrickson: Unbelievable.

Anne Whealton: Such a time as this.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah, gee.

Anne Whealton: And if the land . . .

Unknown: I remember telling him a couple years ago he should of raised the price, I won't tell you what I told him.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Unknown: But it's about double that now so (Laughing). It's incredible.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh. I have another question for you, do you have an immunity to mosquitoes?

Grier Derrickson: I think so.

Anne Whealton: I think so too.

Grier Derrickson: I must have. I've lived to be 86.

Anne Whealton: To be on that end, you're doing good. Now I have to say one thing too, I know a lot of people on the Island are like in their eighty's and ninety's. And I go back and I ask them, what did you eat most of your life.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh.

Anne Whealton: So I'm gonna ask you, what did you eat most of your life to live to be such a ripe age?

Grier Derrickson: Well, we always had seafood. And I love – dearly love seafood. I never – I never overeat and I always – my wife and I each are the last people to finish our meal.

Anne Whealton: So you eat slowly?

Grier Derrickson: Slowly. My children, they're just like a pig.

Anne Whealton: (Laughing) Well.

Grier Derrickson: (Laughing)

Unknown: (Laughing)

Grier Derrickson: I mean we are just half finished and they're . . .

Anne Whealton: On to the next thing?

Grier Derrickson: Yeah, yeah.

Anne Whealton: That's funny, because the people that I have asked that lived to be a long time, they eat fish. That's what they've said, they've eaten seafood most of their lives.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh.

Anne Whealton: And so that's – not only was it good for the pigs, it's good for the people.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah, uh-huh.

Anne Whealton: It's very nutritious.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah, it is! It is.

Anne Whealton: And - now down our way too on the southern end, a lot of the Chincoteague people . . .

Grier Derrickson: I meant to clean these glasses – that's the last thing . . .

Anne Whealton: Anyway, a lot of people on my end too, all have big gardens. A lot of the Chincoteague men still have the big gardens.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah.

Anne Whealton: Now how about on your end, on the northern end, do a lot of people do their gardens?

Grier Derrickson: Not any more. There is no people up there. The most of the places have traded hands to where it's – foreign element that's all over the Island that goes for.

Unknown: Yelp.

Grier Derrickson: And the . . .

Anne Whealton: Did you ever have gardens too? I mean did you – whatever you had, the waste from your animals, for your gardens?

Grier Derrickson: I personally, I always had just maybe like tomatoes.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Something easy. I never – I didn't like a garden. My Grandfather, good night, potato bugs, you used to have to take a yeast powder bottle – Rumford Yeast Powder bottle with kerosene in it and go knock those red potato bugs off of the leaves.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: To kill 'em. And – and them yellow bugs would get on your finger and I didn't like that.

Unknown: (Laughing)

Grier Derrickson: And I never liked – I never liked land farming – boy I dearly love water farming!

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah.

Anne Whealton: Well good. Because I was gonna say a lot of people down our way, they all grow their own food and can their own food. They still do it.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah.

Anne Whealton: Yeah.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah.

Anne Whealton: Well, that's good. Now the other thing too, as far as – I always like to ask, healing wise, medicines, what did you all use for medicines growing up?

Grier Derrickson: Oh well. (pause) We always had iodine for cuts.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And it wadn't no Neosporin in them days. Iodine and McCuricomb when it come on the market and I don't think you can even buy McCuricomb now, can you? I don't know.

Unknown: I don't know.

Anne Whealton: I haven't seen it out in a long time. I remember that.

Grier Derrickson: But they have so many antibiotics and Vaseline base salves.

Anne Whealton: Did you have anybody up the neck, like I know over on Assateague when I talked to Roy Jones, there were people who were good at mixing herbs and making different poultices and, you know, different things.

Grier Derrickson: Yeah, yeah.

Anne Whealton: Remember did they used to do that your way?

Grier Derrickson: Yeah, I got a story on that.

Anne Whealton: Okay. (Laughing) Good.

Grier Derrickson: (Laughing) When my Father and my brother-in-law, older sister's husband, every summer we would take one of these floatin' shanties.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And go up to the Maryland line and we'd – my Father – the clamming was always better on the other side of the fence. You know the cow thinks the pasture – grass is greener.

Anne Whealton: (Laughing)

Grier Derrickson: But it was really! And they would go over on the Maryland side, it was illegal, but anyhow, we would go up there for the whole summer and in those days the summertime you didn't sell many clams and no oysters in the summertime. But now you get 'em year round. The market is good, you know, pretty much year round. But in those days what clams you caught and you didn't have small clams, they were all what they call top necks or chowders. And they would – whatever they would catch they would bring home and plant the large clams until the winter and then sell 'em.

Grier Derrickson: Well, like I said back to the original thought – I was going barefoot and I stuck a nail in a board on the – we parked this floatin' shanty next to Toby's Island, up near Pope's Island.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Pope's Island Coast Guard Station was right on the Maryland line. And I was on the – I don't know – on the marsh and I stuck this nail in my foot. Well, my Father and I guess it was my brother-in-law took me to the Coast Guard Station. And this is – this is – I'm just tellin' it as it comes – they were lookin' you know – during that period of time, that was in the early '30's, late 20's. Well, maybe.

Grier Derrickson: Anyhow, maybe it was early 20's, middle 20's. They took – we went to the Coast Guard Station and they were searchin' for what they called, and I call it today, a cow-pone. You know what a cow-pone is?

Anne Whealton: It's . . .

Grier Derrickson: It's when . . .

Anne Whealton: It's manure right?

Grier Derrickson: Yeah, it's manure.

Anne Whealton: Cow manure.

Grier Derrickson: A fresh one.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Unknown: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: Now I don't know.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: I don't – you know penicillin is made from some kind of mold cow-pone.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: I don't know the process but it seems to me I remember readin' that. But I think they must do somethin' different now. But they discovered it that way.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Anyhow, they were lookin' for a fresh cow-pone. And I didn't – as I had got older I always thought – they couldn't find one and boy it pleased me. They were gonna put a poultice on my foot of cow-pone.

Unknown: (Laughing) You couldn't gone to bed . . .

Grier Derrickson: Huh?

Unknown: You'd a had to worn a . . .

Anne Whealton: Yeah, your Mother would have loved that on the sheets. (Laughing)

Grier Derrickson: (Laughing)

Unknown: (Laughing) You could a worn a bag.

Grier Derrickson: But this, I guess is probably seven, eight, ten miles from, well from the north end of Chincoteague, it's probably eight, seven or eight miles to Pope's Island. But we'd stay up there a week, two weeks at a time. And – but I can't remember – see now - people did use that as a drawing effect, a moist drawing effect.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And now . . .

Anne Whealton: Did you use a lot of baking soda?

Grier Derrickson: Well, my Father used a lot, but that was a bad thing to do. He had heartburn, indigestion.

Anne Whealton: Right, that's what I heard, they used a lot of that for indigestion.

Grier Derrickson: I've seen my Father take a teaspoon, and Mom always had a jar with bakin' soda in it, and he'd take that teaspoon and put that whole teaspoon and take a glass of water.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: I can't stand it stirred up in water hardly. But they tell me bakin' soda is bad, I mean it's - is it an alkali or it's just not good at all.

Anne Whealton: But they used that a lot of times didn't they?

Grier Derrickson: Yeah.

Anne Whealton: I also heard they had what was called patent medicine.

Grier Derrickson: Oh yeah. Yeah, like Geritol. (Laughing)

Anne Whealton: Yeah, they called it patent medicine instead of like when you, yeah. That's an interesting name for it huh?

Grier Derrickson: Yeah.

Anne Whealton: Lot of things that they had.

Grier Derrickson: Oh, yeah. Well, we used to have – they had balsam life and they had juniper tar and iodine and nighter and I can't think of 'em all.

Anne Whealton: Did you ever use poke weed for anything?

Grier Derrickson: What?

Anne Whealton: Poke weed?

Grier Derrickson: Yeah, I believe they did. We used to make a poultice out of – my Father called it old field mullet – and I know . . .

Anne Whealton: Roy Jones talked about that.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh.

Anne Whealton: Over on Assateague too, yeah.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh, old field mullet.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh. Now what did they use that for?

Grier Derrickson: A poultice like if you scratch yourself or step on a nail, everybody went barefooted and cut their feet on oyster shells and different things.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And they'd mix vinegar with it. And sometimes people would put pennies in there with the copper. I don't know why the copper was in there.

Anne Whealton: Yeah! Keep going. I've heard about that, go ahead, keep going with that. That's interesting that they would. I've heard that was used for cancer too, for treatment.

Grier Derrickson: Possibly.

Anne Whealton: Yeah.

Grier Derrickson: Well, they might a used it but I don't know . . .

Anne Whealton: There is four ingredients to it and then the person that was telling me thought of three of 'em and couldn't think of the fourth. Interesting.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh. Vinegar. Well, vinegar is not – is very good edible substance.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: Like on salads and it's – vinegar is healthy.

Anne Whealton: Uh-huh.

Grier Derrickson: And I got a book on vinegar. Have you ever seen that book?

Unknown: No.

Anne Whealton: No, huh-uh.

Grier Derrickson: You ought to have it in here. (Laughing) It's – it's good for everything. (Laughing)

Anne Whealton: Well it changes probably the pH inside your body too.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh, yeah.

Anne Whealton: Yeah. It has a lot to do with the environment, yeah, things – the way they grow.

Grier Derrickson: But – and there's other things they would use as a poultice.

(pause)

Anne Whealton: Were there any women up your way, 'cause I've heard there was a woman up your way who would go in and go out and pick what you needed and they had certain women who were good at using the herbs and puttin' it together.

Grier Derrickson: Oh.

Anne Whealton: Wasn't there a lady that was up your way? I'm trying to think of her name. I want to say her name was Lottie, but maybe not.

Grier Derrickson: There was one or two over the whole Island. But offhand I can't remember anybody on the north end.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: It might a been.

Anne Whealton: She was a small lady and I can't think of her first name. I want to say it begins with an L, I want to say it was Lottie, but I don't know.

Grier Derrickson: Did Oslee, I mean Rosalie, did she mention anybody like that?

Anne Whealton: Yeah, there is a lady. She said there was a small tiny lady and she was single.

Grier Derrickson: Oh, Sis Hope?

Anne Whealton: Yes! Yes!

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh, Sis Hope.

Anne Whealton: Yeah, that's it.

Grier Derrickson: She's buried right behind Oslee's house on that ridge.

Anne Whealton: Okay.

Grier Derrickson: Near the sanctified church.

Anne Whealton: Yeah. And she – what do you know – yeah, didn't she do something with herbs and she knew a little bit about the plants and different things?

Unknown: We need to wind it up.

Anne Whealton: Well, we are gonna have to windup. I just want to thank you Mr. Derrickson.

Grier Derrickson: Uh-huh.

Anne Whealton: For all the wonderful information. I tell you what, you must have been an avid reader.

Grier Derrickson: (Laughing)

Anne Whealton: Have you been an avid reader all your life?

Grier Derrickson: Not – well anything that's news worthy or scientific, yeah.

Anne Whealton: Well, that's a good thing for the Chincoteague Island Library then. That if people read more they are gonna be entrepreneurs just like you when they grow up.

Grier Derrickson: (Laughing) Well.

Anne Whealton: So I just want to thank you for everything. And thank you Mr. Bob Halligan for helping us. Thank you.

Grier Derrickson: And thank you.

Anne Whealton: Thank you.

(END OF TAPE)