

Reel 132A and B

This is a rambling talk by Captain Paul Myra, Lunenburg, master rigger. It goes on and on and he often changes the subject in the middle of a sentence, but it is all interesting and authentic. He has a curious way of speech which may be seen from this perfectly natural monologue. This reel, and reel 123, were recorded in one evening. There are two chanties here.

7-8 Whiskey for my Johnny, sung by Skipper Paul Myra; this is the usual tune, but some of the words are new to me.

15-17 Bluenose Song, sung by Skipper Paul Myra; this is a parody of the chanty Blow Boys Blow, with words to suit the international schooner race in which she was the winner. Should be good in a broadcast with its local flavour.

Shortly after this song he tells of his rum running experiences.

This chanty here was among the old riggers when they all wore slushhorns(?) in their belts. That's to keep grease into it, for lanyards or any kind of a sh<sup>o</sup>p that you use fivers, because if your fivers was hard and you put a little shortenin' on it, it would soften it up. Fivers is like lanyard ropes and different kinds of ropes, that you rove off on a lanyard on a ship.

Question: What are fivers?

Answer: A rope is made out of fibres (it sounds as though he says fiver all the time) small fivers, point yard, that's well, tarred mainilla or probably hemp; now to-day you can't get it because in the last war manilla fell, why your fivers fell, just the same as your wires. You can't get no wire to-day. See I'm not frightened to tell this, 'cause I know.

Question: You used to have rope in the navy that floated.

Answer: That's right.

Explanation by Col. James; Like certain manilla fibres and the whole large rope would float on the surface of the water.

Answer: You see in the navy they multiply by three, but I stuck some just a short time ago in Stadacona where my son-in-law was teachin'. What he's teachin' to-day, why I had forgot, because in the first thing he had so many inch in diameter shears, to lift one ton and a half. Well I lifted 21 ton which is ~~22x2xgraxxovvexx~~ putting 38 degrees over, pick 'em up over the 7 inch hose, and dropped it over the 7 inch and 11 feet from the deck to the ~~kixxxx~~ keelson. So therefore I did multiply by 3 on breaking strains (or sprains) or lifting strains, I used my head. Like on my fall was 4 stranded 3½ inch rope. 4 lays (or layers) each one of them lays had 32 strands into it. 32 in each. Each one of the 32 had the fiver spun like wool had counted to 105 to ablut 95 heads.

Question: Where did you learn all this?

Answer: I learnt it by meself in the wharf; when I had nothin' to do I'd go down and I'd open my rope up. Then I'd try the thr<sup>e</sup>d, see that's the fibre, ~~ixixxutxmxxfingxix~~ round my finger. If I cut my finger, it's good; if it was bad it was no good. Then you don't multiply nothin' at all. That's the way I figger. I think I beat anybody in Nova Scotia on liftin' in rope without power, without engines, I don't know. If anybody wants to come back at me they can. If any sailor wants to come back at me that he can beat me makin' knots or doing hitches or workin' on a draft or anything doin' riggin' of a ship, - anything belongs to a ship. I don't mean ~~shackle~~ turn here on your boats to-day. You got no riggin' to do. Therefore now like the Bluenose; I take the Bluenose riggin' in the loft, make my draft, - make my own drafts always - and cut, took it down, put it aboard. Everything had to fit. But I was very keen on my circumference, diameter on the mast, the height, the rake, the width of the ship, what rake she had back, where her swifters come. And I have a draft now, that was poor Guy Tanner's. That was the Frances Geraldine. Before she was finished in the keelson or ~~the~~ deck was laid, or any post (?) or any stem or any stern, after I knew the length of her, then I built my draft. I built the whole draft. The sails onto her, everything. Captain Guy went up and he looked at it and I says, "How do you like that?"

That's the way I'm goin' to stand my mast." In the Bluenose I shifted her mast unbeknownst to Angus about 9 inches on her mainmast. I thrued her formast with a twine spring(?) with a weight onto it. Just meerly put it a weeny bit back. Probably aloft - she had an 82 foot mast, and a 96 foot mainmast - my mainmast oh I hung back because I was used to goin' across and I used to plumb my boats that I sail, which I never did no steerin' on the Bluenose, but I did rig her three times. Now people says I didn't. Well I'll tell you. I did not rig her the first time. Tom Mader rigged her in Mahone Bay. But she carried away her riggin' off of Sydney and I left Lunenburg to go down to rig her, and it was a very quick job. Then when she went to Chicago I'd taken out her mast - topmast - and made a gang o' riggin' for her and rigged her all over for little or nawthin'. To-day the same job they couldn't get it done for fourteen, fifteen hundred dollars and I did it, I think I got \$144, but I went in debt on it.

Question: How many helpers would you have?

Answer. I used to have from 5 to 6. I worked as high as, that riggin' when I started first, when rum runnin' was on in Lunenburg in 1925, I worked as high as 15 and 16 in day shiftin' and night shift.

Question: And when you were rigging did you sing?

Answer: Oh yes, we always sang in heavin' on the windlass.

Question: Well now, will you sing this song that you weren't able to finish on the other tape?

(Angus, referred to above, is Capt. Angus Walters, of the schooner Bluenose.)

Whiskey from an old tin pan,  
 Whiskey, Johnny O,  
 Whiskey from an old tin pan,  
 Whiskey for my Johnny O

2

Whiskey gave me a broken nose,  
 Whiskey O, Johnny O,  
 O whiskey gave me a broken nose,  
 Whiskey for my Johnny O.

3

Whiskey made me wear old clothes,  
 Whiskey O, Johnny O,  
 Whiskey made me wear old clothes,  
 Whiskey for my Johnny O.

4

Now whiskey from that old slush horn,  
 Whiskey O, Johnny O,  
 O whiskey gave me the broken nose,  
 Whiskey for my Johnny O.

Sung by Max Skipper Paul Myra, Lunenburg, and recorded  
 by Helen Creighton, June 1954

Question: How many would sing this chanty?

Answer. Well, if we had like me father that he had as high as 28 men at times that they did all the riggin' and they'd all get down - everything was done by heavin' the windlass, just the same as we didn't have no power when we put the 21 ton engine in, we hove it with the windlass by hand - so therefore we'd sing chanties, but when I put that in, the rest of the boys couldn't sing. So I stood back behind and they was all - a lot of the skippers was livin' then, that was in '42 - a lot of the skippers was standin' there and I was singin' all alone standin' on the engine as it went up, givin' orders to go ahead and hold, avast heavin', so then I used to sing it all alone. But when I started we had a few fellahs, Kenny Spiedal and Ross Knickle, a few of the old timers that went to sea, they used to help me out. But like I say, it's very hard to sing a chanty alone. Now in the Bluenose, like Frank Risser, Leo Corkum and \* Angus didn't sing, he never sang, Captain Walters - well anyway we had alot of good singers aboard. I remember in the Thibault race they gave us a fight up to Boston. We had I don't know how many traffic cops ahead of us. We had the Thibault bunch, Ben Pine's crew, and also the Bluenose crew and we sang chanties, but they couldn't sing it. But we, Roger Conrad and like I say the other fellahs, everybody helped in, but we was takin' a geezer. We was takin' a little drink.

Question: Is a geezer a drink?

Answer: That's what they always call it, a little geezer, and therefore we did a lot of singin', and we knew the songs at that time. They'd always look to Paul to lead the chanties.

extra vs. on reel 122B  
 I love whiskey and whiskey loves  
 me

Now some people says I didn't, but I did, and Frank knows that I did lead the chanties. If I didn't start it, they wouldn't sing.

I went on the coast in 1946. I meet a man, he's with the government to-day in Ottawa I guess, McDougall. He was out to Jasper for 32 years, and I went takin' a round trip from Halifax out to Vancouver, Seattle, a triangle course Seattle and Victoria. I went to Chilliwack and Abbotsford and up McKenzie and down the coast and when I came back I made a little mistake by an old legion member in Victoria, to the gate. The fellow was in the first world war and I got talkin' to him, and anyway, I made a mistake in my ticket and when I come over to Vancouver - I just caught the train - and when I got on the train I hauled out my envelope and I looked at my ticket. I only have a ticket from Montreal to Halifax. So he says, "Well you'll have to go off the train." I says, "That'll be the foggy Friday." I says, the fellow that bought my ticket was from Halifax and looked after my sleeper because I had the job to go out on the Pacific coast and therefore, I said, the Department of Fisheries looked after my sleeper, in Montreal to Winnipeg, and from there to the coast. And I said, I don't know that I'll have to get off, so when we got to Jasper I had to go to the station, see. I said, "You know better than I do. Why don't you call up Victoria? I'll pay you whatever it is. Call up and see if we didn't make a mistake in the ticket. I guess it's my own stupidity." He said, "Well, you'll have to get off." I said, "Probably I will," so anyway I went in and this Mr. McDougall he was tendin' the races and the Thibault race and also the Columbia race and when I went in he looked at me and he says, "Is your name Paul Myra?" I says, "Yes." He says, "You don't know me, do you?" and he had a - one of these cowboy hats on, real wide hats. So I says, "No sir, I don't remember you." He said, "Do you remember the day in Gloucester when you come down and told Angus to give you a little drink, and he said, 'You red son of a gun, why you want a drink?' I said, 'We got to sail ~~xx~~ the day after to-morrow and the crowd is gettin' so they say the time we get that mast fixed up why, it's goin' to take 3 days. Harry Christian in Boston, the rigger, he wanted 3 days to do the work. One day to take the mast out, one day to do the repairin' on the mast, and another day to put it in, and I said no. This has got to be done to-morrow. I said that's what I come here, handy-man and rigger. So I said, "Don't you worry about it. Give me a drink." He said, "Where are you goin'?" I said, "I'm goin' over to the yard and get the cheeks made that held the trestle-trees up." So he gave me the drink. So this McDougall he had a bottle to give the boys a drink and he fell in with Angus - Captain Angus sometimes he looked at a fellah racin' and other times he wouldn't, because he was pretty Angus at times. Pretty good skipper, the best. We had 32 skipers, and I don't think there was another man that we had out of Lunenburg could do what Angus Walters did. He was a real fighter. Lots of people said that he had a dirty disposition but in racin' you got to be yourself. He had a lot to put up with. When you carry around about 32 skippers aboard of a boat, and this fellow wants a say, and that fellow, wants a say and the other fellow wants a say, why one master is enough. Where to-day you got ships, everybody wants to be master, so what's it come to in fishin'?

Salt fishin'.

Question: Well now what happened in Jasper?

Answer: Well McDougall, he asked me to sing a chanty and I said I'm away now, and I said no and I told him where I came from, from the ocean, and I said ~~All right, I'll sing~~  
~~youxaxixxxxxxone~~ I don't feel I can. Everybody's strange to me. Well, I said, All right, I'll sing you a little one, "Blow Me Down." He said, "No, sing the Bluenose Song. Did I sing that?"

Bluenose Song

Reel 132A<sup>B</sup>~~13~~

She's a Yankee ship and a Newfoundland master,  
Blow boys blow,  
She's a Yankee ship but a Newfoundland master,  
Blow my bully boys blow.

2

Blow to-day and blow to-morrow,  
Blow boys blow,  
For the more she blows is better for the Bluenose,  
Blow my bully boys blow.

3

Old Ben Pine he was a good old skipper,  
Blow boys blow,  
But the Bluenose she always went a little above her,  
Blow my bully boys blow.

4

Blow to-day and blow to-morrow,  
Blow boys blow,  
For the more it blows is better for the Bluenose,  
Blow my bully boys blow.

5

Now what do you think we had for dinner?  
Blow boys blow,  
Oh roast potatoes in a donkey's liver,  
Blow my bully boys blow.

X

Sung by Skipper Paul Myra, Lunenburg, and recorded  
by Helen Creighton, June 1954

There is more to the song. † It was made up in Gloucester. The singer says: Some of them is dead, but they never carried it on. They never followed it up, see. Question: Was it made up by some of the crew? Answer: By the crew, yes. Question: Did you help to make it up? Answer: I helped to make it up, yes. As we went along we just made it up in a way to say that -. Now Little Angus (Angus Walters) as they called the skipper, and the more it blows the better he liked it. The more it blows for me the better I liked it. I like to see it blow because she could stand the wind, and she was a freak anyway. Old famous builder you know, George Rhuland's the man that built her, Roué is the man that designed her, George Rhuland makes a mistake, and it's a lucky mistake. They put two more ribs into her from the fore riggin' to the bow and ~~the~~ made sheets onto her, and that I think's what made her sail because you take the Elsie, ~~the~~ the Mayflower, take the Shamrock, take the Thibault, take the Columbia which was the hardest race she ever sailed with, and I says to-day, if the Columbia would have had the same kind of crew as the Bluenose had, I believe the Columbia would have beaten her, because they could never come round when they sung out "Ready for stays," let her come up in the wind and they'd fall away in the next tack. It was always some hitch or other that they had to leave her come up in the wind again. In racin' in short tacks, that's where you lose so much. By the time you come down and then up

in the wind again to shake up all sail and stoppin' the headway she's got to have so much time she's got to have so much time to fall away then till she gets her full on, so therefore we beat her. But the Thibault, I'll swear to anybody that they told me on the coast, they even told me in Capetown in 1946 that Angus Walters sold the race. He did not. He did not, because he stood in off of Gloucester that morning, and I know it, he had the chart up by the binnacle. A lot of the crew they expected the wind up off from the nerrard, and it was breezin' up round noon, and instead of comin' from the nerrard it came from the southard. She's standin' off and we tacked ship and we went off. But as far as Angus is concerned why, no, it's nothin' like that at all.

Question: Are there many riggers?

Answer: Riggers to-day? The only riggers we have in Lunenburg is the fellers I trained. I trained a little boy that he deserves a lot of credit. He deserves more money than they're payin' him in the Lunenburg Foundry. That's Maurice Allan. Then he's got Bernie Allan with him. He's got some more boys workin'. There's a Conrod that Maurice has trained him now.

Question: What do they rig now?

Answer: Well mostly on a corvette if she comes in. There's not so much riggin' to-day, and there are power boats and he put up a stack the other day 55 feet stack, but he was with me puttin' up 82 foot stacks. I put the one up in Debert, 82 foot stack. 4½ in diameter in the bottom, 4 in the top, ¼ in -

Question: Do you do much work for the navy?

Answer: I worked up for the navy from the first of the war till 1943, but now I'm finished. I can't work no more.

Question: What about rum running?

Answer: I'm one of the leading skippers out of Lunenburg because I did things that I'm very much sorry that I did, but it wasn't my fault. I used to get up against some - when they'd say we're not going into it, they'd say get Paul. So I went rum runnin'. I only worked my business three months in 1925 and then I went in the Paloma and I worked the Nova Scotian coast right up from the Gulf of Mexico rum running. Every port along the coast, but I landed, which I thought I landed on Ellis Island in 1946 and I thought they had me on Ellis Island for rum running days. I wasn't worrying over it. Thanks. (That's for another little "geezer." He can be heard swallowing). You know they're liable to check on me yet, but I'm not worrying, but I tell ye I'm not worrying because I got a lot of big people behind me. But I will not give the people away. I'll just tell ye about myself.

I landed two loads out of St. Pierre and seven loads out at Havana, Cuba, in ten months, and never lost a case. But I'm not tellin' you anything about cutters or nothin' about anybody if I was in with them or I wasn't, but I had good luck. Didn't make much money. I only got \$200 a month, and that's a very small bonus, but I loved the sea, and I left my riggin' business under my father's care, and draftin', and good boys that I had in Lunenburg which I had good men.



Just at that time there was a little depression yet in 1946, and if it hadn't a been for rum runnin' I don't know what we'd a did in Lunenburg.

Question: Did you have any very narrow escapes?

Answer: Yes, oh yes I did.

Question: Did you enjoy them?

Answer: I did enjoy it a whole lot. I loved it. I always liked something, you know, new. I had off of Block Island one time I was almost rammed. Then another time the Active out of Boston she picked me up. Then I was in a power boat. I went in Gloucester and comin' out of Gloucester I went over to ? shoal and the Active picked me up. He was a very funny skipper and he had a whole crowd of college boys on to her. So anyway he chased me. He chased me down. I'm runnin' over off of Yarmouth, the lightship off of Yarmouth. We get pretty near across, and my engineer, he did a dirty trick, which I never knew it, and the Active hauled up to me and he jiggered my flag off which was very dangerous. With a fish jigger. He come close enough and jiggered my flag off because I'm running my flag aloft that he wouldn't touch me. Then he jiggered my wireless off. So I run back. You see I had logs, and it gets thick in the Bay of Fundy once in a while, so I run back for the log, and I run back on the port side and he's on the starboard, two bows ahead. So when I went for the log, he fired a bolt after me, this nigger. So I says, "All right; that's fine." He didn't hit me, and I got the log. I was after the log and I got it but I could not pluck it from the socket it was into so I just taken the bight, hauled it up alongside, never looked at him at all, and first thing another bullet come over. Then they fired paint cans and old paint, broke all our windows out - accomodation windows in the pilot house. So after a while I said, "Well if this goes on I think after a while he's goin' to sink us."

So I thought about Billy Cleworth's accident that he had, and I thought, "Well, we have all rifles aboard, and if it comes to the worst, why -" He hauled the flag down. I didn't like the Union Jack to go over. I sailed under it all my time, all my days sailin'. I don't know but what if he'd a kept on, if the Boston boat bound for Yarmouth wouldn't a come on the same track - we were runnin' over to Lurcher lightship off of Yarmouth - and if she wouldn't a come along I don't know what would have happened because I think they was all drunk. We wasn't, so I started to pour the whiskey and give the boys drink. I said, "Get your rifles handy and if it comes to the worst, we'll all fire together. Whoever we hit, we're goin' to hit." That's put my hand to God. But the Yarmouth steamer come and he branched to the southard. We laid off at the Lurcher, we couldn't do no more, so he left us and another boat picked us up and took us to St. Pierre, but when he got to St. Pierre, the governor of St. Pierre would not would not leave him fill oil there. Take oil. Wouldn't

give him no supplies. We went right in to the dock. I tried to get him ashore in round, goin' round what they call the Reach(?) down through Columbia; it was a shoal there and I thought that he wouldn't but I guess he knew more than I did, so we didn't get him ashore.

Then I sailed the eastward out of St. Pierre. Now this one here, I'm not frightened to say it because it was nothin' to me at all. Every body knows in '52 I took a boat down and went in to see Eugene Faulky(?). I'm the fellah that carried the murderer out of St. Pierre. A murderer that shot a man on Sunday night and I took him out on Monday. I never knew he was aboard. Never knew it, and nobody of the crew. But I had my official log book made out, which run running you never use a log book, a day log, a scrap log. But not a 'ficial log book. An official log book means a lot. It governs everything to sea. So I fill out my official log book. I have 15 in me crew, four-master, power and sail. I get all my men to sign, if ye know it's a murderer on board say yes. If ye don't, say no, because this here will come back at us again and I'm the master. I'm just the same as the man that murdered if I carry him out, that I know about it. So everybody signed. Well the chief of police in St. Pierre - there was three of them - he demanded my p'pers when he came aboard, so I said, "Look, if I got a murdered on board, don't you dare to let me go out, because I don't know nothin' about it." But the Code Nord(?) was there. The Code Nord, she had a Greek on board and he was a supercargo, and he went to the café le France up to Joe's and shot this fellah three shots. I never knew nothin' of how what was done or anything, but they smuggled him down. We had the biggest ship in. Brings him down to the histin' engine room. Not the drivin' engine room. She had a little hatch, ahead of the wench(winch) ye see. That's in the histin' engine, ahead of the galley, and the forecastle. And that little hatch wasn't sealed. They got him down there. Took him down in the hole and they trenched him in the cargo. They taken off so many in the middle of the ship right between her mizzenmast and her foremast, and taken out one row on top. Then they just moved them cases, like here, they moved them out a little that they had an edge that this cases would go down to take four out. He lays down in that; just in 4 cases underneath of the top one. They lay that one down on top of that with the edge out. That could be tramped upon or anything. It couldn't go down through. It jammed itself. Then them cases they put back because of accomodation it was all on deck. They put that back in the ? of the stern, see, just? that nobody knew. It was nothin' to search. Nothin' in the hold but the cases and that you could have danced a jig. We had 27000 cases and you could dance a jig on the cases they were smooth. This one down in the stern, it just run down probably a little not right straight right to the bow. So they couldn't search under the chains, nobody. She was very easy to search, accomadations, the galley, the engine room, under the forecastle head, back in the poop, they overhauled that, so I said, "All right." Then I went back. The policeman gave me back the papers. I said, "Just a minute." He had two automatic revolvers, and if we had a tilted or anything he'd a got the works of her. He said he would. So anyway I went back. He gave me back my papers. I said, "I think to save trouble - this might come out any time and I don't know nothin' about it. I'm tellin' you I never knew a trick like that." I said, "in my life for money, never. So all the crew has signed he don't know nothin' about it." So I said to the super-

cargo, part owner, he was supercargo, and part owner, I said, "Murphy." A lot of them went by Murphy but he wasn't Murphy, at all, and I said, "Would you please sign your name?" "Listen," he said, "I've got nawthin' - " "You sign your name there because we can get in serious trouble over this."

Question: They didn't find out that you had a murderer on board did they?

Answer: Well yes, they knew somethin' about it, but I didn't know nothin' about it; none of my crew. Anyway my mates all signed, so I got the policeman then, one policeman, and after I got him I said, "All right chief, will you please sign this?" He said, "me no scribble; me no scribble." I said, "Well listen I want you to sign this." Well, he signed it, so then I just put my name, Paul L. Myra, master of the schooner Eastward - she was called a schooner, she was four-masted and had power but she was called a ~~xxxxxxx~~ four-masted schooner. So we proceeded to sea. We got our decks fixed up and a heavy south-easter. We ~~xxxxxx~~ went out the eastern way, out around Dog Island, we hauled her up, put her on the other tack, a south-easter come up round takin' our ~~xxxx~~ very close, after runnin' up, a heavy sea on, ye get seasick. So my official log book - I had three on board - so this fellow was very foxy. He told me, he said, "Listen old man," he says - they call the skipper old man sometimes - he says, "Listen old man, would you burn that log book? We're out now, and dead man tells no tale." I says, "All right, that's fine. Sure, burn it. Dead man tells no tales." I went down quick. My writin' is not so good and my spellin' is very bad; I wrote a lot of these names down in another book and put it down very quick and I know he's seasick and I go out in the dining room in my cabin - she had a big cabin and it was no fire - fire in the fore-castle. Runnin' with a south easter I just turned a key with the hard coal fire at that time. Turned the key over to give the gas, see, to make 'em good and seasick. I didn't mind it. I never got seasick outside of when I was young. So then I said, "I'll show you. I'll show ye that I'm destroyin' the book." I show him the other book. He looks at it, I puts it in the stove, takes the fire poker, digs it up and I says, "Do you see it?" He says, "That's fine. That beautiful, wonderful, bouup, New York." Sick. So when he gets sick he gets good and sick, and that's a hard sickness, seasickness. So I went back in the aftercabin. I thought I'd have to move quick and I had nobody to ask to ~~xxxx~~ because if ye did, you might pay these fellahs money which probably he paid this man, this chief of police, a lot of money. I don't know. But I know I've never taken a cent which to-day they think I did, but I can stand to anything. Faulky knows it in St. Pierre - "

Question: When you finally arrived was everything all right?

Answer: Well I'll tell you this here first. So anyway we run out and the first thing bango. I look out of the fore-castle and she's goin' in to it and I'm keeping her off inside, and I have Scateri light on the port side runnin' a south-easter to catch a nor'-wester for to go on the American coast. And this feller comes out. Two automatic revolvers.

Question: The murderer?

Answer: Yes, he comes out of the hold. He shoves ~~xxx~~ the cases and out he comes the same ~~xxxxxx~~ place he went down. He's got these two automatic revolvers and he's shakin' and he's seasick she's tollin' and the seas has broken in over

the port side, and that's my glory and all the crew. I had a good crew of men. So he stands there. I run down and I told the supercargo. I says, "My God, come up. Here's a fellow with two revolvers. I said, "What am I goin' to do? I can't go in, liquor-laden. I can't go in anywheres. What am I goin' to do?" Put him down as a stowaway," I said. Naturally I have to. I didn't know nothin' about it, so I just put him down in the day log and ended him up as a stowaway. I told the mate - he was a skipper and he was a good mate - I said, "Mister, you mark that man down as a stowaway, that's all we can do." Well the supercargo said, "I wouldn't say nothin' about it at all. Don't say nothin'," he said. "I said, "That's fine. That's beautiful. We won't say nothin' about it." The log books, he thinks its gone. I go down and haul up the linoleum. There's a little hatch there, and the hatches is made with the combin' on that you couldn't go down through. I'd taken a hand axe, pried off the lower part of it, it's just thin, put the log book under that, put this place on her and nailed it fast. We went on the coast. We worked up a nor western and made out shot fair. Seventeen miles - we was nineteen miles off of Sandy Hook. Seventeen feet of water - seventeen fathom of water - The only thing we seen before we landed was the Bermuda steamer named the Bermuda, bound for Bermuda. When we seen her we hoisted our sails, started our engines, and left the anchor drag under the bow and lots of ships goin' out of New York and I said, "He'll think it's a freighter comin' up to Sandy Hook." So he went past us, we let down sail again, we discharged our cargo. I think we was something like 15 or 16 days gettin' clear of it, and we come back to Halifax and when we come to Halifax the company wanted to hire me for a thousand dollars a month and pay the interest on it and the wife and I and the children to go in the Halifax Hotel. So I said no. I said, "That's very good but," I said, "I'll tell you. I'm takin' the boat down." So this fellah he insisted that I wasn't takin' it down, so he avowed, "Now listen little fellow from Nova Scotia, if you don't do what us Americans tell yez," he says, "we'll do this - cut your neck." I says, "You will?" Just as quick as he had it out of the neck, I left-handed him under the jaw. Down he fell. Down he goes. The wife was there. She runs out and cries. So I said, "This is fine. Listen, do what I tell ye to do. Now then we'll make a proposition. If you pay me for two years one thousand dollars, not interest or nothin' and you deposit it in any bank in Halifax, then I'll figure the proposition. and I'll come out on top anyway. You fellows, you think you come out of the penitentiary and are supercargoes on these boats and you think we in Nova Scotia is frightened of you. No, we're not frightened of you, because when you get seasick we can use just as much as we can use if we want to, but it's no killin' blood in us people. You probably was in penitentiary. These people gets you for to come down here as a supercargo and you come down here and you get away with murder, but you can't get away with murder because like some of us. You couldn't do it with me. Now I'm goin' back to St. Pierre. If I don't go back to St. Pierre, there's a stain on me all my life. I don't know how long I'm goin' to live. I don't care much when I'm goin' to die, I'm ready to die at any time,

But I am not trappin' myself, therefore I take it to St. Pierre, and you can't stop me, and if you do, then you're goin' to meet trouble." So I go up before I leave Halifax, take my log book up to Mr. Acker. Will Acker was the Collector of Customs for Halifax there. I tell Bill, I say, "Here, I want you to take a copy of this. I'm takin' the original to St. Pierre. I got quite a case. You take a copy in case that they would get it off of me and I have nothing' to show that you and the next man here would have this for to show what I have." I went to St. Pierre. I went down to St. Pierre. I hired George Corkum, Capt. George for mate, Hughie Corkum the policeman here was years before the masthead and I taken them with me, never said nawthin' to them, and when we got to St. Pierre why they took me to court. Went on the roads and they took me up to court. First day I didn't say nawthin'. I said, "All right. You go down to Mr. Lelion(?), you go to Legarcy's(?), you go to the Greeks," They left. "The story is about Jack and his glory. My story is well begun. Now I'll tell you the other one about Jack and his brother. Now my story is not done. So you fellows, you think you're smart, but you're not." I wouldn't talk. So we had an interpreter - French interpreter - I understand very little French, so I said, "That's fine; dismiss for to-day." Next day they come down again, done the same old thing, I said, "Put me in ? I don't care where you put me, but be careful!" I said, "Be very careful what you do to me."

Well at St. Pierre \* I knew everybody at St. Pierre at that time, and I said, "The third day, this is the day we will finish. I'm goin' to get drunk. I'm goin' to start to drink to-morrow morning, and when you come for me I'm going to be drunk, and I ain't goin' to spend a cent and I'm goin' up to Roly the butcher, goin' to Gassey's(?) goin' to Faulkey's(?), goin' to Mrs. Chiverie's(?) and I know all the places here and ~~ix~~ it won't cost me a nickle because you're all tied up in a knot." So I go back the next day and when I go back the next day I take my log book and I take it and show the custom house and I guess it wasn't long before they had them caught. When they come down for me I just got in. I'm pretty well zig-zagged like the Frenchman said, and I started to get cheeky. The policeman come to me, the chief of police, and he said, "Captain,\* where is the book that I scribbled in?" I said, "You might a come from Paris over here and thought you were smart in little French St. Pierre but you're not smart. There's where you burned yourself. You signed that 'ficial log book." He said, "Captain, you make plenty trouble for me." I said, "Thank you." When we went out everybody greeted me in St. Pierre. I went down aboard, we had a little time that night. I went down to Roly's, Roly the butcher, he had a supply shop. ~~ix~~ said a brokerage shop, I said, "Put everything aboard, grapes, wines, liquors, beef, olives, eve rything that he had in the store and the ship pays for it." Well I made money enought into her to pay, so we cleaned her out. We wouldn't go back rum runnin' into her again. I brought her back to Halifax and I paid off. I paid off. I got so much a month and a bonus. And I paid off. Still I went at rum runnin' after that. But my last trip - that's finishin' that, is it?

My last trip's to Malagascar. That's the best trip I ever had, because she had limbs on her that a lot of people didn't understand. I went into her as mate with Capt. George Corkum. He was mate with me in the four-master, I went with him in the , but as far as the rigger were concerned, I had everything in charge as far as the crew was concerned, and we taken her to Malagascar which they said we'd never get her there, - our road the way we went was just 10000 miles from Halifax - and we went down there pretty quick. We didn't use our yardarms much. We only had aforesail, lower topsail, and upper topsail, and our royal onto her. We bucked across from about 3600 miles - that's from Natal, South America - we ciled up and over to Capetown. That was about 3600 to Capetown. We lay there 10 days and then we went from there to Malagascar. But we laid in Malagascar too long. We had 6 or 7 of the crew had maleria. I didn't get it, thank God, and we lay there too long because it was too many people there, and they had nawthin' there.

Question: Did anything happen to make you tired of rum running then?

Answer: Oh, rum running? No, I'd like to go back at it again. As far as we're concerned, remember I'm not frightened to say it, more or less every big fellah had Lunenburg into it, Montreal was into it - we'll say right from Maine to as far as you go to Demarara, right round the whole continent, right to Demarara, South America, and I know it. I was there. They rum runned. They was at it, the big people. They hired people like me to make a goat of ye sometimes and pay ye small money. They made the money. They made the money. It's like the I'm Alone racket which I didn't like at the time that they said that Capt. Randall was drunk, down in there. I was shipmates with Capt. Randall. I'm in Capt. Randall's book off the American coast, exchanging some liquor. He's in the steamboat and I'm in the three-master. Then I was with Capt. Randall in the north, on an expedition. That was in 1948. He was supposed to take the I'm Alone, Robin, Jones, and Whitman, in 1948. In October, November, in 1948 she was in Lunenburg but he had no rum runnin'. He left up there, he and Kippo(?) brought her out. I took charge of her off of Chili and then I had to stay up to put the mast up at the Eskimo on the west coast. He brought her out. He arrived down in St. John's, Newfoundland around about the last of October. Then he come here. But in '49 he did take charge of the I'm Alone. She laid at Robin, Jones and Whitman till a feller in New York, they go out together, go to Montreal, ~~xxxxxxx~~ ~~Randall~~ ~~xxxxxxx~~ come back. I know Randall's history pretty good. The only thing on broadcastin' they did say about Capt. Randall being drunk. I never seen Randall - we had a lot of liquor in the north, and I seen a lot of liquor that we handled over on the coast, and I never seen Randall drunk. But when he got stubborn he was very stubborn. You couldn't change his mind.

Question: To be a rigger, where did you learn your trade?

Answer: I was master rigger and also master skipper.

Question: Yes, but where did you learn to be a master rigger?

Answer: When I started to carry my father's dinner. I was eight years old. My father put me on little shores, he used

to call them shores, all old whicker fellahs, and hard. Hard as nails. They drank a lot of liquor. They done a lot of work. They worked for nothin'. Ten cents per hour. Just imagine. They never used their voice(?) but over the knee, over the left knee. If he was left-handed, over his right knee. They could stick any piece of wire that was stuck, which Maurice Allan can to-day yet. So I come up then from - my mother died when I was thirteen. My father wasn't so good to me because he had that old rough sea stuff on him. See, daddy made 98 trips, shore trips, mostly West India trips. He used to do it, I think the best he ever done was round about a month and 2 days. But we had old Capt. Harry Burke, he did it in the Sceptre in '28 - made the trip to the West Indies, Puerto Rico, on to Turk's Island, back to Lunenburg in 28 days. That's a little brigantine. Well father, I think the best ~~was~~ ~~that~~ that I used to hear him tell the old fellahs in the loft here was a month and two days. He continually went as mate, mostly mate. He never sailed much master. He sailed to boats I think master, but he was a good mate. He was reckoned a good mate. He come to be a rigger in eighteen hundred and round about ninety-five, he come to be a ship's rigger. Well then the other fellahs that was in it seemed that he worked inside of them and the old fellahs that was in and had left the riggin' business gave it over to father. They thought ~~that~~ he was a little keener at it and could handle men different. My father was well liked in Lunenburg among the sea-going people. So I worked with him, but he never paid me. No. The other fellahs would get their ten cents an hour. They worked ten hours for one dollar a day. They used to say always, "Well, if a stevedore's pay is one dollar a day, what's a rigger's?" ~~So~~

Question: Is that a song or just a saying?

Answer: That is a little chanty, but I don't know much of it. But they used to say always, a stevedore's pay is a dollar a day, what's a rigger's? All the same. Now those men would work hard. They worked hard, and I think father rigged a boat, one of the schooners, for eighty some dollars. But he had so many new jobs, that probably he worked the new job in on the old job, because that's a trick. If you know business, why naturally you'll work that eighty dollars schooner in on your old work. See, rig her with your old work. At that time there was a lot of riggers. Well then I started fishin'. My first trip was with the Nova Zemby(?) in 1894. I was 9 years old. I was born in September '85, and '94, that would be 9 years, wouldn't it? That's right. So we had a lot of fishermen out of Lunenburg then. They would catch the fish, dry the fish on the flakes. Not on dryers like they have to-day, and then they'd put them into the market, lower them in and take them to Halifax to market, to sell 'em in the schooner. So Capt. Dick Silver, ~~was~~ the Nova Zemby, the first boat he ever sailed skipper, loaded up this boat and they hired boys. The younger you were the less you got. Well I went. I'm sure my pay was ~~\$1.00~~ one dollar and fifty cents a trip. That was in 1894 and I thought I had a lot of money.

Question: A trip would last how long?

Answer: Round about 10 or 15 days, because the old fellahs, they had a little money and they could go up around Halifax and give us our discharge and after we was discharged they would have a little time and then get a little supplies out of Halifax for home. You could buy very cheap.

Well, I come back then and I hired with a fish maker. Then at eleven I went to sea. I went troater (throater) on a schooner but I was wheeling fish and I never went to a doctor and my nose ~~was bleeding~~ used to bleed so bad and my father says, "Listen boy, you'll never be no good for nothin'." I didn't say nothin'. I had to answer him yes sir, no sir, in them times So I said "Yes, sir, all right, that's fine." I was frightened of my father see, so anyway it went on. My father would say, "Take my money." ~~So~~ He took my money. He kicked me in the backside when I was 22 years old, and then I knew more than my father did. I believe I did. I could do a days work and I did reckonin' of a boat and I had good books that they used to learn out of, ~~and~~ old Captain Brown's books, and I didn't sleep all my way ~~then~~.

Question: Were you able to go to school?

Answer: I was able to go to school, but out in our section there in the Garden Lots it was very few that had education. I didn't go to school. I didn't like it and they couldn't keep me in school. I'd sooner have my neck broke than to go to school and father - I think I have marks yet from the strap that he used to pound me, and still I wouldn't go., so I wandered along to the fishin'. The navy, what they say about the navy to-day, join the navy to see the world. Well I joined it to see sea sickness, and I did get seasick. My first trip I went - when I come back I run away and went in the lumber woods. Then I was 12 and then I got very good pay. I got one dollar per day in the woods. That was what I had to work from about six o'clock in the morning until about nine at night. That was big pay. Then I went up and in the month of November and I stayed till the 4th day of June, and when I come out home I went up to my father's and father said, "Listen boy, I could have caught you if I'd wanted to." I said, "Yes sir." He said, "Where was ye?" I said, "In the woods sir." He said, "How'd ye like it?" "Fine sir." "Seventy men," I said, "and every man they liked me, and I liked them." And he said, "Now listen boy, we got our land here and we got a-" he had a lot of buildings, 2 cows and alot of hay. He was very fussy round the yard. He had the nicest home in the Garden Lots I'll tell you where it is now. You know where Art Lohnes' is now on the left. The next house was my father's home. Them times we had nice plum trees, apple trees, gages and gooseberries, and everything that you want. And then on the land that we had, we used to raise about everything that you have in Nova Scotia. So father says, "Listen boy, ever hear the Flying Cloud song?" I said, "Yes sir." "Well you know Brown, he bound his son to a cooper's trade; now you'd better get off your coat and go to work." "Yes sir," so I just picked up a small byndle and a big stick and I taken off and I walked out to LaHave River and I joined a ship out there for one year and I stood on my tip toes. I wasn't big enough, and I shoved up my shoulder. The captain said, "Hi, you're too small boy. Listen, do you know what you got to do?" I said, "Yes sir, that's fine. What must I do?" "You got to tie up topsails." "Yes sir, all right sir. That's fine." He said, "Do you think you can do it?" I said, "I'll try it sir."



"Did you ever do it?" "Yes sir, I did. Tied it up when I was eleven years old, and I can tie it up now, I've got some experience. Probably your mate can't show me nothin'." "I could splice rope at that time, I could make sail makin', sew with a palm, I could do knots that you ain't got two men in Lunenburg that could do to-day." Question: And how old were you?

Answer. Then I was 13. I come back see at 12. Then I was 13. I joined on for a year. She only made one trip. Went to St. Johns, New Brunswick for a load and we was going to Granada with lumber and we went to Barbadoes. In Barbadoes we loaded molasses there and come up to St. Stephens - St. Stephens across the bridge from Calais, and I come back. When I come back I went out home again. Father told me, "Listen Paul, what's goin' to become of you?" I said, "Don't worry father; don't worry about me. I'm a sailor now to-day. I'm ordinary. Next trip I'm going to be able." And as I go along I don't leave anybody beat me. When I go aloft I don't swear takin' in the topsail. I don't staff(?) a topsail. I know the clew lines, I know the bundlins(?) I know how to rig a topsail and if you think I don't, put me to work in the riggin' loft." "All right, come in." "How much money do you want to give me?" He said, "Listen boy, it cost a lot to ~~pay you~~ bring you up." I said, "Not so much. One pair of shoes a year, one little suit of clothes, probably cost about 5,6 dollars, and I worked when I wouldn't go to school. You put me at work and I did everything faithful for you and you don't trust me. I'm not to be trusted. I love the sea air. I love the foam of the sea. I'm never going to be, I'm never going to be drowned. I'm goin' just the same as you and I won't be drowned. You said that you wouldn't be drowned. I'm not goin' to be drowned. You stood on the foremast head of a ship in a square mast ship. You lit your pipe, sailin'. Some day I'll do it!" This is true. I'm not tellin' you a lie. So I said, "That's fine." I come home and I went with my father in the loft. Old Kenny Holland, he was a hard old rigger, old Danny Zinck, sailor Danny, Jack Hall, broke his leg down on the old stone in a little brigantine, I went in the loft with father. Well, he'd never show me too much but I used to sit round and I watched very close how to splice wire, so I come to be a pretty good splicer. Not the best, I wouldn't say, but anybody beat me ye had to go some. And then I used to pull fingers with Joe E. Smith. I started to pull fingers which my hand is crippled now probably a lot from pullin' fingers. I was pretty strong. Take a hold of a fellahs finger and if he resists you, you hold him, but I had no strength - my strength left me, see. I did so much heavy work that I always liked to work. When I was skipper, I was always in my overhauls. I loved my overhauls. I loved to work. I loved to see men broke in. I liked to see people make a success. I liked to see work go, and run a rattlin', run it fast. I never was hard to men. I sailed 12 different boats foreign. Not coast voyage, just foreign. So anyway, the whole thing boils down to my daddy, why he, when he died he was 93 and 3 months, just the day before he died he had taken a little geezer. He called it a geezer. He used to call beer, he used to say, "Boy listen, now if ~~Told~~ ~~my~~ ~~skipper~~ ~~Switz~~ ~~Mera~~, ~~Lunenburg~~ ~~and~~ ~~swizzled~~ by

Helen Creighton, June 1954. See also reel 123. ✓ / > >