

## Cork McGee

Interviewer: Charlie Petrocci  
Interviewee: Cork McGee  
Transcribed By: Shirley Fauber  
Library Number: 98-04-027

---

(Tape Side A)

Charlie Petrocci: I am sitting here with Cork McGee on Chincoteague Island. Cork, tell me a little bit about – about who you are, name and date of birth and where you were born and so forth.

Cork McGee: Carlton “Cork” McGee. That Cork was layed on me as a baby I guess. I don’t know who give it to me but I’ve had it all my life.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And I was born February the 11<sup>th</sup>, 1931, right here on Eastside. A clam’s shell throw from here. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) Okay.

Cork McGee: And my whole family was born right here, right in this neighborhood.

Charlie Petrocci: All of the McGees were born right . . .

Cork McGee: No, well, my Father was born down on – we call it Ridge Road, Snotty Ridge. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: Snotty Ridge, okay.

Cork McGee: Yeah. He was born there and when he was a baby moved over to Assateague and lived there for seventeen years.

Charlie Petrocci: Ah, okay. Okay.

Cork McGee: Then they moved back over here on Eastside.

Charlie Petrocci: What year did he move out of Assateague?

Cork McGee: Uh – I don't know.

Charlie Petrocci: This is because you weren't – this was before you were born?

Cork McGee: Yeah, he wadn't but seventeen when he moved off there and come over here.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh, okay.

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: All right.

Cork McGee: Now his family – all of his family lived over there.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: That little village, you know all about that.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, right. Did he tell you stories about the village?

Cork McGee: Right at that time I was so young I didn't really pick a whole lot of it up.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Yeah, he told me different stories about how they lived over there. He said when he first moved there they just had dirt floors. Didn't have no wooden floors. I forgot how often he said my Grandmother would take the sand out and wash it and put it back in the house.

Charlie Petrocci: They washed the sand?

Cork McGee: Yeah, take the sand out and wash it in tubs.

Charlie Petrocci: Geez.

Cork McGee: Or buckets or whatever.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing)

Cork McGee: And they'd wash it and put it back in the – back in the floor.

Charlie Petrocci: That was beach sand then?

Cork McGee: Uh- yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Amazing.

Cork McGee: They lived just down below – there when you get – when you make that sharp turn like you’re going to Tom’s Cove.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: In the woods where that little water hole is, well it’s a road on your right.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Goes all – goes out to that ridge of hills. He lived right on that ridge of hills.

Charlie Petrocci: Um.

Cork McGee: Right down to the foot of it.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay.

Cork McGee: Then they moved up – next – to a \_\_\_\_\_ there and moved up next to the – just right where the foot of the bridge goes ashore.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh. I know where you’re talkin’ about.

Cork McGee: That’s where.

Charlie Petrocci: Now his Father, your Grandfather, moved over there with him?

Cork McGee: Uh- no.

Charlie Petrocci: He was on his own?

Cork McGee: Oh, my Grand – yeah, my Grandfather was over there. I mean he over there with ‘em, the whole family moved over there at one time.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay.

Cork McGee: Yeah, all that was born.

Charlie Petrocci: Now your Grandfather was born where?

Cork McGee: He was born up in Delaware.

Charlie Petrocci: In Delaware?

Cork McGee: He was – Dagsboro, up in that way is where he come from. Don't know much about my ancestors from up there, don't know much about.

Charlie Petrocci: Um-hum.

Cork McGee: Never heard much about 'em. I don't know – I know we got relatives up there somewhere, but . . .

Charlie Petrocci: No idea.

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: What about your Grandmother, do you know anything about your Grandmother?

Cork McGee: My Grandmother, she was born and raised here on the Island.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay. What's her maiden name?

Cork McGee: Andrews.

Charlie Petrocci: Andrews?

Cork McGee: Um-hum.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay.

Cork McGee: Yelp.

Charlie Petrocci: Are there many Andrews left on the Island?

Cork McGee: I don't think it's a lot of 'em left on here right now.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay.

Cork McGee: No, I don't.

Charlie Petrocci: So she's from here. And then your Gandfather - Grandfather moved down from Delaware, met her here?

Cork McGee: Yeah, here on the Island, yes.

Charlie Petrocci: Now what about your – your Mother, where was she from?

Cork McGee: Mom was raised right here on the Island. She was a Williams.

Charlie Petrocci: A Williams? Okay.

Cork McGee: Yeah. Yeah she is relatives to all of the Williams on here just about. They had a big family.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: You've heard talk about Jim Williams?

Charlie Petrocci: Right.

Cork McGee: Well, it was they're – he was her brother.

Charlie Petrocci: Awe, okay! Okay. All right.

Cork McGee: And that was a big family too. I think it was about fourteen of them. Mom and 'em and their family.

Charlie Petrocci: Awe, that was a big family. Let's back up on your – on your grandparents, what kind of work did they do when they moved down?

Cork McGee: They worked on the water.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay. And so that is what he did living in Assateague Village?

Cork McGee: Yeah, worked on the water.

Charlie Petrocci: What – what was he doing on the water?

Cork McGee: Clamming, oystering, fishing, doing first one thing then the other. In fact, he worked aboard – Daddy worked aboard one of them menhaden boats when – when they lived over on Assateague.

Charlie Petrocci: At the fish factory?

Cork McGee: Over to the fish factory, yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Ah, okay.

Cork McGee: And he said they would come in and sail right up to that fish factory. Them steamers or ships whatever they are.

Charlie Petrocci: Right, uh-huh. Okay.

Cork McGee: And he said he worked – I don't know how long he worked 'ere, he worked 'ere a good while I think.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh. Okay. So that was your Grandfather?

Cork McGee: That was my Father – my Father did too.

Charlie Petrocci: Your Father did?

Cork McGee: Yeah. My Grandfather, I remember 'im, but I don't think he had a whole lot a ambition. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: Ah, really. So you do remember him a little bit?

Cork McGee: Yeah, I remember 'im, that I do. He used to give me a lickin' once a while. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing)

Cork McGee: 'Course I didn't do nothing to 'im. Me and Russell Fish. You knew Russell didn't you?

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Well, I thought a lot a 'im.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Me and him put some old – some tar around the old toilet hole (laughing) and on the door knobs and stuff and he got fast up in it – stuck up in it. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) So you put tar on the toilet seat?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) That's great.

Cork McGee: And on the gate – buttons on the gate and that kind a stuff.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh. (Laughing) So he gave you a good lickin' for that?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: That's funny.

Cork McGee: But I could get away from 'im though, if I could see 'im comin' for us, we could run away from 'im. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) Oh.

Cork McGee: We were ornery.

Charlie Petrocci: So he was – he was a waterman.

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: And your Father, what did he do then?

Cork McGee: Daddy, he was a waterman. He done a lot a huntin'.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Now when you say hunting, was he a – did he kill the – sell birds, kill, or was a guide?

Cork McGee: He sold very few. He used to kill mostly just for the eat.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay.

Cork McGee: Very few – I don't remember 'em – he'd sell to some – a small few.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: But not too many. He done a lot a lightning.

Charlie Petrocci: Ah!

Cork McGee: Daddy did.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay, for what? What was . . .

Cork McGee: Ducks and geese. Geese mostly.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay, at night?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay.

Cork McGee: Geese and brant.

Charlie Petrocci: All right. Was he – did he use a punt gun or battery gun or just . . .

Cork McGee: Just an old double barrel.

Charlie Petrocci: Double barrel shotgun?

Cork McGee: 12 gauge yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay.

Cork McGee: Yelp.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay. What about any other game, did he shoot any deer or . . .

Cork McGee: He never killed a deer in his life.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh really? Huh.

Cork McGee: The only thing he shot was birds and waterfowl.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay. Okay.

Cork McGee: Yelp.

Charlie Petrocci: Shore birds?

Cork McGee: Shore birds, yes.

Charlie Petrocci: What – which species?

Cork McGee: All – all species.

Charlie Petrocci: Yellow-legs?

Cork McGee: Ever thing down to the sanderling.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh, they killed them too did they?

Cork McGee: Yeah. Them little sanderlings are good. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) I betcha they were.

Cork McGee: Blue heron. I've eat a many blue heron when I was growin' up.

Charlie Petrocci: Have you really?



Cork McGee: Yeah, I have.

Charlie Petrocci: (Inaudible)

Cork McGee: Used to. I could find an old turtle bring one of them home.

Charlie Petrocci: How do they taste?

Cork McGee: He was good then. You'd eat anything then. Mom was a good cook. She could cook an old snappin' turtle or anything and make a good Sunday dinner out of it.

Charlie Petrocci: Did you – did your Dad turtle once in a while? What do they call 'em here?

Cork McGee: Terrapins.

Charlie Petrocci: Right, but when they – when you go out and you catch 'em, what do they call that?

Cork McGee: Mungeon.

Charlie Petrocci: Well, mungeon or turklin' right?

Cork McGee: Turkling, yeah, turkling.

Charlie Petrocci: Turkling, yeah, yeah.

Cork McGee: Yeah, he used to bring 'em home and used to catch 'em.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Now my uncle – I had one uncle that – that man he – that's all he used to do near about. He would take me with 'im for I begged 'im.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: He'd go on the Refuge. His name – his right name was Elwood, but they called him Shan.

Charlie Petrocci: Shan?

Cork McGee: Shan. Shan McGee.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay.

Cork McGee: Now I stuck to him pretty close.

Charlie Petrocci: And that was your uncle then?

Cork McGee: Yeah, on Daddy's side.

Charlie Petrocci: All right. And so he was a hunter and a trapper and a . . .

Cork McGee: Well, he didn't do much trappin'. But he done a lot a proggin' you might say of shootin' birds and ducks and . . .

Charlie Petrocci: Proggin'. Now what's proggin'? Explain what that is.

Cork McGee: That's goin' through the marsh and pickin' up anything you seen.

Charlie Petrocci: You call that proggin'?

Cork McGee: (Laughing) Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Now when you progged, was that – were you scullin' and proggin' or . . .

Cork McGee: No, that was . . .

Charlie Petrocci: You could prog from . . .

Cork McGee: Any kind a way.

Charlie Petrocci: I never heard of that.

Cork McGee: Be in the marsh a walkin' and anything you seen you picked up if it was eatable.  
(Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: Okay, so that's called proggin'. (Laughing)

Cork McGee: Yeah. I've heard that – Old Man Wolff will tell you what it means too.  
(Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: Okay. All right, that's funny. All right, good.

Cork McGee: He could – of course, I learned how to do it too, but you could – in the winter the diamondback terrapins was – they were a delicacy.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And he learned me how to go in the marsh and sign 'em.

Charlie Petrocci: All right.

Cork McGee: Find certain – certain size hole in the thing in the mud and, you knowed just where they were and just take a stick, a long-handled stick, and just punch down and you'd hit 'im.

Charlie Petrocci: Now what time of year was this?

Cork McGee: It was in the cold winter.

Charlie Petrocci: In the winter?

Cork McGee: Yeah, they'd be down in the marsh.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Or in the mud and he always left a hole for to breathe.

Charlie Petrocci: Huh!

Cork McGee: You'd go along and when you find 'im, you'd . . .

Charlie Petrocci: Was it like a thumping that you found with that shell?

Cork McGee: Yeah, just sound like – you know something hollow.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay.

Cork McGee: And that was for the diamondbacks.

Charlie Petrocci: Right, right. And what did you do, how did you get him out?

Cork McGee: Just take your foot and dig 'em out or take your hand and dig 'em out.

Charlie Petrocci: Your foot . . .

Cork McGee: They'd be about maybe six or eight inches deep.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Yeah – used to catch a lot of 'em like that. We used to eat a lot of 'em.

Charlie Petrocci: Now how did you – how did you – did you all cook 'em in those days?

Cork McGee: Well, we'd clam and then they'd make a – well sort of a stew.

Charlie Petrocci: You clean ‘em alive or did you kill ‘em first or . . .

Cork McGee: You know a good big – good big pot boiling – throw ‘em in it. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: Alive – throw ‘em in alive. Boil ‘em alive, okay.

Cork McGee: That’s what most of ‘em done.

Charlie Petrocci: All right, so that would kill ‘em.

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: And then you’d take ‘em and then what do you do?

Cork McGee: Then you cut ‘em outta the shell.

Charlie Petrocci: All right, take him out or cut him out? Let him cool off?

Cork McGee: Take the skin off. Then just as soon as you put him in boilin’ water that side skin will ruffle right up and you can pull it right off.

Charlie Petrocci: Awe.

Cork McGee: You cut his toes off, toenails, or toes off, and take ‘em outta the shell, they’re delicious.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh, I’ve had terrapin soup. All right, so how did the – how did your Mom cook ‘em – did she . . .

Cork McGee: She’d make – sometimes a potpie.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh.

Cork McGee: Put potatoes and dumplins’ in ‘em.

Charlie Petrocci: All right.

Cork McGee: And used to do the snappin’ turtle the same way. Used to clean him up and fix him up like it.

Charlie Petrocci: Which was better?

Cork McGee: I thought the diamondbacks.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh, the diamondback are better huh?

Cork McGee: But maybe it was imagination, but the snappers was good too. Somebody knows how to cook 'em.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah. Now how did you – how did you all catch the snappin' turtles?

Cork McGee: Just mungeon 'em.

Charlie Petrocci: Now mungeon is – is . . .

Cork McGee: Same as proggin' about – just about. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: Okay. All right. Same as proggin'. But you didn't get 'em in the winter then?

Cork McGee: Not very often, no.

Charlie Petrocci: So mungeon – mungeon – I don't even know how to spell that.

Cork McGee: (Laughing) I don't either.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) That's great! Mungeon and proggin'. All right. so mungeon – you said – if someone came up to you and said "Let's go mungeon" or "What have you been doing," "Well I've been out mungeon," - you would assume what?

Cork McGee: That we'd been out lookin' for anything we could find that was alive.

Charlie Petrocci: All right, so that's similar to proggin' then?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: It doesn't just mean turtles?

Cork McGee: No.

Charlie Petrocci: You could munge or prog turtles?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing)

Cork McGee: Find a turtle, or find a – rabbit or anything.

Charlie Petrocci: Anything – that's great! (Laughing) That's great.

Cork McGee: (Laughing) Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: All right. So people in those days pretty much took advantage of what was around then?

Cork McGee: Yeah, yelp! Yeah, you didn't turn down much.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, yeah. I would think . . .

Cork McGee: You'd eat just about anything that crept or crawled.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Were things seasonal, you know, some certain times of year you expected, you know, if you knew it was spring or fall, you expected to be eating these kind of things?

Cork McGee: Well, yes. See, of course, fish you'd eat them any time you could get 'em, but most times in the spring and through the summer was the only time you could get fish then.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh, okay.

Cork McGee: And clams and oysters, you'd get them through the whole year round.

Charlie Petrocci: Right.

Cork McGee: You'd eat them all year round. And your ducks, ducks and geese, waterfowl stuff usually started in the fall, early in the fall.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And hunt them 'til they left and went back north.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Same way with Shore birds, you'd - do them same way.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And, yeah, we had certain seasons. I mean just like – just like your ducks and stuff, you'd eat them in the winter and . . .

Charlie Petrocci: What was the most desirable duck that you thought was in the area?

Cork McGee: Well it used to be black ducks.

Charlie Petrocci: Black ducks, yeah.

Cork McGee: That's what it seemed like ever body sought after mostly.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay. Brant?

Cork McGee: And pintails. Pintails.

Charlie Petrocci: Pintails, okay. Did people eat Brant and snow geese in those days?

Cork McGee: Uh – Charlie – they've never – I've never known anybody to go crazy over brant, not in my day. I've heard Daddy say that they used to . . .

Charlie Petrocci: Used to.

Cork McGee: That they were one of the best birds there were – there was.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, huh.

Cork McGee: But snow geese they never were too hot.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Until these late years that they started usin' the cornfields, they've been all right.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Okay.

Cork McGee: But used to – they just called 'em bald brant.

Charlie Petrocci: Bald brant. (Laughing)

Cork McGee: (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: Bald brant.

Cork McGee: Bald brant, yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Now who – who taught you how to hunt?

Cork McGee: Uhhh - I followed along with Daddy some, but really – the really main – the main man that I really started out with and stuck to 'im was my wife's step-father, Charles Clark. You've probably heard of him.

Charlie Petrocci: Charles Clark?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay.

Cork McGee: Me and him hunted more – I hunted more with him I guess than anybody, probably than anybody else around.

Charlie Petrocci: Um. He was good?

Cork McGee: Yeah, he was. He was 'bout good as I ever hunted with.

Charlie Petrocci: In those days you hunted out of blinds or did you?

Cork McGee: No.

Charlie Petrocci: Kind of work along . . .

Cork McGee: Not too much.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay.

Cork McGee: Crawl down on 'em certain places. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: Oh! You crawled – okay.

Cork McGee: Take a wind – wind northwest or somethin' or another, you'd get down in the bushes and crawl in on your hands and knees to 'em.

Charlie Petrocci: So – people didn't hunt from blinds much in those days?

Cork McGee: Not a whole lot. Not too much. Now always – ever since – ever since just about that I've been big enough to hunt and go on my own, I've had a blind in Tom's Cove.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Somewhere in that vicinity where I got that one out 'ere now.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And uh – there's always been a blind or two out 'ere, Andrews, my Grandmother's brother . . .

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And his – his boys used to have a blind out 'ere.



Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh. Okay. So most – most of the people on this Island then were hunters, most of the men?

Cork McGee: Most of ‘em, yeah. Most of ‘em done – done a little bit a huntin’.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay. And most of the sons learned from the fathers?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Were guns passed down too?

Cork McGee: Well, whatever they had. They didn’t have too much. Daddy – Daddy never had much of an old gun.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: You could – they used to call, when you shake ‘em like ‘at – they’d rattle, they would say call the chickens with ‘em. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing)

Cork McGee: You know slug shot ‘em and they’d break down and ever thing else.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, yeah. Now say somebody didn’t hunt in the area, how did they get – or they didn’t – prog . . .

Cork McGee: Proggin’ or mungeon’?

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, if they wanted turtles and they wanted ducks and they wanted these things, how did they get ‘em, did the neighbors sell ‘em or was there a market in town?

Cork McGee: They would – no, wadn’t no market, not that I know of.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Well, if somebody wanted – was able to buy ‘em and wanted a pair of ducks they’d buy ‘em from somebody that was huntin’ or trappin’.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay.

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: So you knew who to ask.

Cork McGee: Yeah, oh yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: There was always somebody around?

Cork McGee: There was always somebody to – that you could sell a couple to.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Pick you up a dollar or two.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, okay, okay. Now the women, the men were primarily the hunters and so forth - were there a lot of gardens around here in the old days?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: People grew their own food?

Cork McGee: Yeah, just about ever body had a garden and raised a couple pigs and young chickens.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: I started out just as soon as I got married I started out – I used to raise my own pigs and I had chickens.

Charlie Petrocci: Huh!

Cork McGee: And raised scoby ducks, turkeys. I had ever thing back here.

Charlie Petrocci: And – and they were for eatin’?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: All of ‘em?

Cork McGee: Eatin and sellin’ to help me out on my – on my livin.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Poor - poor livin’ back in ‘em days but it helped out big.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh. So you killed a few chickens when you wanted . . .

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: What . . .

Cork McGee: All the eggs I wanted, didn't have to buy no eggs. And I raised me a – go to the dairy and you could – buy them calves, bull calves, for Five Dollars a piece.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh – Five Dollars!

Cork McGee: Them dairy cows.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, yeah.

Cork McGee: You'd bring 'im home and raise 'im and feed wadn't – didn't cost hardly nothin'.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah.

Cork McGee: And raise him up and keep him and always had one come off for each year for quite a while there.

Charlie Petrocci: And then you butchered him?

Cork McGee: Yeah, butchered 'im myself.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay. Now what did you do, pull – hang him in a tree?

Cork McGee: Hang 'im up. That pine tree right 'ere.

Charlie Petrocci: Awe, okay.

Cork McGee: Used to – still an old block and tackle up 'ere I think, where I used to hang 'em.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) Is it really? Okay. So that was real common in the area, people would butcher . . .

Cork McGee: Yeah, well . . .

Charlie Petrocci: Pigs?

Cork McGee: Yeah, they'd butcher their pigs. I went around, Old Man Wolff done it for a while there and then I went around too and – different places, anybody had pigs and wanted 'em killed.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah.

Cork McGee: I'd go around and butcher 'em for 'em.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh. So when was that – what time of year did they do the butchering?

Cork McGee: They usually started in – not – most of ‘em wouldn’t start ‘til December – ‘til the weather got good and cold.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: To keep your meat.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay. So – well you had - there was – when you were growing up, there was electricity on the Island or was?

Cork McGee: Yeah, but I remember when we didn’t have none.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh really, you didn’t have any electricity?

Cork McGee: That I do. Used kerosene lamps.

Charlie Petrocci: Did you really?

Cork McGee: When I was growin’ up, they certainly did!

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing)

Cork McGee: No inside water. Had an old pump out in the yard.

Charlie Petrocci: How did people get water around here, was it wells?

Cork McGee: Had – most ever body around here had an old outside hand pump.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay. Just pump it up?

Cork McGee: Yelp. Pump your water up. Sometimes that was yellow, looked like iced tea. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: The iron?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Looked like iced tea. (Laughing) And so every night you – the family lit the lamps then?

Cork McGee: You filled – filled your lamps up with kerosene before dark.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And sometimes a lot – I remember when we didn't have no screens.

Charlie Petrocci: On the windows?

Cork McGee: In the windows. And Mom wouldn't have no light, wouldn't have no light in 'ere, if you did you pulled the windows down and you sat there, afraid mosquitoes come in on you.

Charlie Petrocci: Right.

Cork McGee: Man! You talk about mosquitoes then, you could hear 'em comin'.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) Could you hear em'?

Cork McGee: (Laughing) Especially at sunset – you fix of it. Good Lord have mercy! (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) So you could hear the mosquitoes trying to get in your house?

Cork McGee: Yeah. See we lived right up the street here, right out along the marsh.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: We were right out in front of the marsh there.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: We lived right next door to Bill Tom. You know where Bill Tom lives?

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, yeah.

Cork McGee: Well I lived next door to him.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay.

Cork McGee: That's where I was born and raised.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay. So at night, what did you – what did people do in the old days for entertainment if you had no t.v., no electricity?

Cork McGee: Just sit around and talk. People would gather, have a certain place, sometimes you'd go together, all the people would go together to a certain place.

Charlie Petrocci: Where – where did that happen?

Cork McGee: That was just somebody – friend’s house or somethin’. Sat on the porch and talk in the summertime.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And that’s ‘bout all there was to do, wadn’t nothin’ else to do.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Then the carnival – when the carnival opened, that’s been goin’ on ever since I can – ‘fore I can remember – and in summer you would go ‘ere.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay.

Cork McGee: Once in a while – you didn’t go ‘ere too much ‘cause we didn’t have it to spend.  
(Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) Now how many in your family – how many brothers and sisters did you have?

Cork McGee: Three sisters and two brothers.

Charlie Petrocci: What – what were their names?

Cork McGee: Shirley, Ruth and Louise.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And Elvin, they called him Gump, and Nelson, he lives over on Assawoman now.

Charlie Petrocci: Gump and Neldon?

Cork McGee: Nelson.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh, Nelson.

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: That was your other brother. Okay. Are they all still alive?

Cork McGee: No! Gump, Elvin, died four or five year ago, he had a heart attack.

Charlie Petrocci: Um.

Cork McGee: And the rest of ‘em’s livin’.

Charlie Petrocci: Are they?

Cork McGee: Uh-huh.

Charlie Petrocci: All your sisters and your other – okay.

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Your sisters are on the Island here?

Cork McGee: Two of ‘em.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: One of ‘em lives over at Atlantic and the other one lives – my brother lives to Assawoman.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay.

Cork McGee: Louise Tull down here, Eddie and Louise – she is my sister – one that owns the campground down ‘ere.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh. Awe, okay. Okay. All right. Now when you guys were kids growing up, what did you do for fun in the area? What was – what was the entertainment?

Cork McGee: (Laughing) Well nights when I – after I got up a little bit – first beginnin’ of my teens, we worked on people nights.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh

Cork McGee: Saturday nights most entertainment was goin’ – turnin’ over old outside privies, pushed them over. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) Pushing the outhouses over?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Is that what people had around here, outhouses?

Cork McGee: Yeah, ever body had them.

Charlie Petrocci: No plumbing?

Cork McGee: Well I guess some people on here had 'em, but most people like us that were – we didn't have it for a long time. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: Okay. And what else . . .

Cork McGee: Pushed 'em over, and I don't know, just gang get out and go – most time we would go to Assateague. If we – on a weekend, Saturday or Sunday and didn't have to go to school.

Charlie Petrocci: Now a lot . . .

Cork McGee: Just go there and play.

Charlie Petrocci: So you guys had access to boats when you were young?

Cork McGee: Yeah, we'd have to pole over 'ere.

Charlie Petrocci: Did you pole over, you didn't have outboards?

Cork McGee: No, didn't have no outboards or nothin'.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay, so you poled the boat over.

Cork McGee: Uh-huh.

Charlie Petrocci: What kind of boats were they?

Cork McGee: Just – just a regular old bateau or scow.

Charlie Petrocci: Little bateau or scow?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Now were there boat builders on the Island who built or did families build their own?

Cork McGee: Yeah, there was people on here who built – Ira Hudson – Ira Hudson, he built a lot a little bateaus and people was crazy over them.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh. Were they?

Cork McGee: They were easy to pole and they wadn't very big.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.



Cork McGee: And let's see – good lands I don't know who all built 'em.

Charlie Petrocci: So when you got over to Assateague. What did you guys do over there?

Cork McGee: Just go 'ere, old dwelling used to be 'ere. That was the main place we would go to. And go in 'ere, all over the roof and ever where.

Charlie Petrocci: Scott's?

Cork McGee: Yeah, worked on Mr. Scott.

Charlie Petrocci: That was Scott's house. Well, he was gone when you were over there?

Cork McGee: Yeah, but see the old dwelling was in between the lighthouse and that stone house. It was a big – it was about thirty rooms in it I think, like a hotel.

Charlie Petrocci: Really? Huh.

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: And when did they fall down?

Cork McGee: They tore that down, good lands Charlie, I don't know what year it was now.

Charlie Petrocci: Fish and Wildlife tore it down?

Cork McGee: Yeah. Cal Twilley – he used to be a feed – used to sell – had a feed store up on North Main Street.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And he owned it and they tore it down and that's part of it up 'ere now where that feed store used to be.

Charlie Petrocci: Taylor Street?

Cork McGee: Just up above Reggie's motel.

Charlie Petrocci: Right. It's that big, looks like corn . . .

Cork McGee: Right. That was part of the old – we called it the old dwelling.

Charlie Petrocci: The old dwelling that was the name of it?

Cork McGee: It had – I don't know how many rooms it had.

Charlie Petrocci: And that was only part of it?

Cork McGee: Had three – yeah, that was just a room, like just one corner of it.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: It was three stories.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, it's a big building.

Cork McGee: Uh-huh.

Charlie Petrocci: So you guys used to go over there and play huh?

Cork McGee: Yeah. Bust out window lights and all that kind of good fun. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) Okay.

Cork McGee: Mr. Bill Scott used to come up – he would hear us up 'ere and he'd come 'ere to run us off. He said he was – took care of it.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Or he said he was supposed to.

Charlie Petrocci: Old Man Scott. Is he the one they say worked around with no shoes on all the time?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Is that true?

Cork McGee: Yeah! He wore – most the time he wore – took an old rubber boot and just cut the – you know how it goes down 'ere . . .

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And just cut the foot off.

Charlie Petrocci: Huh.

Cork McGee: And I never seen no socks on 'em, always, I don't care how cold it was he'd always – his old big toes was stuck out through 'em and ever thing else.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing)

Cork McGee: He was tough.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah. He ran the store I think didn't he?

Cork McGee: Yeah. I don't remember when he had the store but I been to his house. Daddy used to take me to his house a lot a times.

Charlie Petrocci: Aren't there – Cork, aren't there some homes right along Eastside that are from Assateague?

Cork McGee: Yeah! My Grandmother. . .

Charlie Petrocci: Tell me about those.

Cork McGee: My Grandmother's house is up the street here and it's one, let's see, not quite in front of Clarence's outboard shop, it's the next one to the north of it.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: That was the church.

Charlie Petrocci: That was the church?

Cork McGee: They moved over, yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay.

Cork McGee: Yeah I remember when they moved that over.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Moved it on an old barge or monitor.

Charlie Petrocci: Huh.

Cork McGee: And then up the street further, my Grandmother's house, they moved that over.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: That's still up 'ere.

Charlie Petrocci: That's still there?

Cork McGee: Yeah, it's still in pretty good shape.

Charlie Petrocci: Is that the house she lived in on Assateague?

Cork McGee: On Assateague.

Charlie Petrocci: So she came over with her house?

Cork McGee: Yeah. They all moved over, that's when they left Assateague and moved over here.

Charlie Petrocci: What year was that when . . .

Cork McGee: I – I don't know.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay. I think – I think it was in the 20's.

Cork McGee: Probably.

Charlie Petrocci: A lot of 'em moved over in the 20's, yeah.

Cork McGee: Yeah, I imagine.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh . . .

Cork McGee: Now Aunt Suze, of course, she's gettin' – her mind's not just like – but she could tell you ever thing. She's got pictures and all that mess of ever thing near 'bout.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: But she's got so now she – she's 91 – she's gettin' a little bit bad memory.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Were there any good stories about Assateague when you were a kid? Ghost stories or shipwreck stories?

Cork McGee: They used – used to claim it was ghost. They said my Grandmother's house up the street here, said that was haunted. But I don't believe – I used to be scared of it sometimes, but . . .

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: I don't think there was nothin' to it.

Charlie Petrocci: They say – they said the house was haunted?

Cork McGee: They said the rockin' chairs would rock and nobody in it.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing)

Cork McGee: She had – she had a little room on the side. It was always dark in 'ere. Only had a little – one window in the end of it.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And the other end opened up in the kitchen and she had an old organ – one of them real old organs in 'ere and they said they had heard that play, nobody in 'ere, but I don't know about 'at. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, yeah. So there were – there were some folk stories about Assateague with ghosts?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Anything about shipwrecks or pirates that you heard of?

Cork McGee: No, never. I never heard much – nothin' 'bout that that I know of.

Charlie Petrocci: Um.

Cork McGee: I heard they used to have a lot of ghosts.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Okay. So that kind of – sometimes that – kept you out of there at night I bet?

Cork McGee: Yeah, we didn't – kind a felt funny when I was little goin' in that back room.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh did you – yeah?

Cork McGee: And even in the daytime. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing)

Cork McGee: That's where – that's where they layed my Grandfather out when he died, in that little room.

Charlie Petrocci: In the back room there, awe.

Cork McGee: It wadn't very – wadn't big as this room here hardly.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Might a been just a little bit longer, but it wadn't wider.

Charlie Petrocci: This is – here, yeah, yeah. Now as you got older, what did you guys do for social activities, meeting girls, going out for entertainment?

Cork McGee: Good Lord, I don't think I went to town hardly 'til I was about seventeen.  
(Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: Oh really? Was town that far away?

Cork McGee: No, I could – well I could run that far then.

Charlie Petrocci: Did you have a bicycle or horse when you were young?

Cork McGee: No. Daddy had three horses one time 'ere. And I never did ride a horse. Didn't have time to fool with it.

Charlie Petrocci: But he rode the horse?

Cork McGee: Yeah, Daddy he was, ever Sunday he could look forward to goin' over to Assateague and ridin' on 'at – take 'em over on the monitor.

Charlie Petrocci: They'd take their horses over?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: And go ridin'?

Cork McGee: Yeah, there was a gang of 'em. Sometimes they'd have to make two trips.

Charlie Petrocci: Ha!

Cork McGee: Wyle Maddox and all that gang.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah. And – did you have a bicycle or anything when you were a kid?

Cork McGee: No! I traveled on my feet.

Charlie Petrocci: You walked.

Cork McGee: I had an old boat and I'd pole through the marshes.

Charlie Petrocci: So most people would rather have boats to get around in?

Cork McGee: Yeah, little – just a little pole boat.

Charlie Petrocci: Well what about scullin'. Did you scull?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: I aint never forgot 'at either.

Charlie Petrocci: How to scull?

Cork McGee: It's been a long time, but I aint never – I still know how to do it.

Charlie Petrocci: They – let me see, what's the motion, what do you do?

Cork McGee: Just (pause while he is showing motion).

Charlie Petrocci: Back and forth.

Cork McGee: I could do it, you know, no problem at all, wouldn't even have to think about it.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) That's great! The town, there were different sections of this Island weren't there, they had different nicknames and things like that?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: And . . .

Cork McGee: Right. And if you met somebody from down south, they called in Snotty Ridge, might as well come out and just say it, when you find somebody down there you could tell the way they talked where they come from.

Charlie Petrocci: On the Island?

Cork McGee: Yeah. And if somebody up Deep Hole come down, you could call them Deep Hole Dippers.

Charlie Petrocci: Deep Hole Dippers?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) So . . .

Cork McGee: Deep Hole Dippers. And up the – up to South Main Street, they called them Mad Calf.

Charlie Petrocci: Mad Calf?

Cork McGee: Yeah. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) Mad Calf. So everybody – so you can tell the different accents on the Island?

Cork McGee: You could then.

Charlie Petrocci: The way they talked?

Cork McGee: That you could.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing)

Cork McGee: And Ticktown.

Charlie Petrocci: Ticktown.

Cork McGee: That was Willow Street.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay. That's great!

Cork McGee: And this Church Street Extended from where John Taylor – where that cutoff is?

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah.

Cork McGee: All the way over to Ridge Road, that was called New Road.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: That wadn't Church Street Extended then. It was just called New Road.

Charlie Petrocci: Um, New Road.

Cork McGee: When you said New Road, they knew where you were at.

Charlie Petrocci: Right, right. Yeah.

Cork McGee: And Ridge Road was Rattlesnake Ridge.

Charlie Petrocci: They called that Rattlesnake Ridge?



Cork McGee: Yeah. I remember when it wadn't – just an old dirt road you had a job to walk down it.

Charlie Petrocci: Huh. Now when you were growin up I guess a lot of these roads here were – were dirt?

Cork McGee: Yeah. This side was - here was stone. I remember when up through Chicken City was dirt.

Charlie Petrocci: Hum. Chicken City was dirt, okay.

Cork McGee: Uh-huh.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay. Yeah. Let's see, you went to high school. Did you finish high school up?

Cork McGee: No, I went to the seventh grade. Went through the seventh grade was all.

Charlie Petrocci: You got to seventh grade, okay.

Cork McGee: I hated ever day of it. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) All right. So you didn't finish eighth grade. You didn't . . .

Cork McGee: No, I went one day to the eighth grade and I – I thought to myself – I said "I'll not go another day."

Charlie Petrocci: Oh really?

Cork McGee: I didn't.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay. Tell me about that. What happened?

Cork McGee: I just didn't want to go. I wanted to be out, I wanted to go to work. That's the only way I got any money was go to work for myself.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Daddy had all he could do to feed the rest – feed the family and take care of 'em.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh. How – how did – so I guess that was common in those days, a lot of kids didn't finish school?

Cork McGee: Oh yeah, yeah. They wouldn't – there was a lot of 'em that didn't finish.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Yelp.

Charlie Petrocci: So what did you do then after seventh grade? You got a job somewhere?

Cork McGee: Went out on my own clammin' and it wadn't long – when I was – when I was twelve or fourteen year old, I caught almost just about as many clams as the grownups.

Charlie Petrocci: Um.

Cork McGee: I was signin' and then I kept right on workin' on the water year round.

Charlie Petrocci: And – and that was in your little scullin' boat, your little polin' boat?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay. So you . . .

Cork McGee: 'Til the outboards come along, then I continued right on workin' but.

Charlie Petrocci: So you were proggin' for a living?

Cork McGee: Yeah. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) So if you had a resume you could put you were a professional proggin'?

Cork McGee: Proggin', yeah. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) Okay.

Cork McGee: You ask Old Man Wolff about it, he'll tell you. He was proggin' and mungeon.

Charlie Petrocci: Mungeon' and proggin' I'll have to ask him about that. The – so you made good money, enough to buy shotgun shells and things like that?

Cork McGee: You could buy four or five at a time.

Charlie Petrocci: Ha.

Cork McGee: You didn't get enough to buy a box.

Charlie Petrocci: You couldn't buy a box, yeah.

Cork McGee: They were – I think, if I'm not mistaken, I think light-load, I remember when light-loads was two for a nickel.

Charlie Petrocci: Um. Geez.

Cork McGee: And heavy-loads was a nickel a piece, I remember that. And then they went up – I remember when they went up to eight cents, boy, you talk about – that was somethin'!

Charlie Petrocci: It got everybody shook up?

Cork McGee: You'd go to the store though, Harry Tarr used to run the store up here, and he had ever thing in the world and you'd do 'ere and tell 'im you wanted four or five gun shells and he'd open a box and he'd sell 'em, one or two, whatever you wanted. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) Yeah, yeah, they must be good memories for you.

Cork McGee: Yeah. I 'member – I 'member one time I – they didn't want me to take the gun, Mom and Daddy, 'cause I was too little, I was too young they thought.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: I was 'bout, I don't know, eleven or twelve. And I snuck 'er out and I found one gun shell. And I went and left – I walked up – straight up the marsh, wadn't no houses, wadn't a house on Piney Island and wadn't no road goin' crossed there then.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And I walked all up that marsh and I went up in Piney Island woods and couldn't find nothin' to shoot, it was in the spring, and on my way back down the marsh an old white egret jumped up. And we called 'em squawgins, white squawgins.

Charlie Petrocci: It was an egret?

Cork McGee: It was a white egret jumped up in front of me and man I cut down on him with that one shell and I brought him – I thought I had somethin'. (Laughing) Yeah, I 'member that just like it was yesterday. Stuck him down in my boots that way - couldn't see 'im.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) You hid him in your boot?

Cork McGee: Yeah. The only gun shell I had too. And I walked all over Piney Island just tryin' to find somethin' to shoot. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) So what did you do? You brought him home and what happened?

Cork McGee: I don't remember, I don't know if Mom cooked 'im or not.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: I don't remember what happened after I got 'im home.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh. Sounds like people ate a little bit of everything.

Cork McGee: Anything!

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah.

Cork McGee: I mean – I've eat a lot of blue herons and night herons.

Charlie Petrocci: Um.

Cork McGee: And these little blue – green herons, good lands.

Charlie Petrocci: Were they good?

Cork McGee: Yeah! When they got – when they got so - just got big enough, we'd go rob the nest and when they got big enough for to hop from limb to limb.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah.

Cork McGee: You'd take a – you'd take you a long stick and knock 'im right off the limb.

Charlie Petrocci: Awe! So you knocked the chicks off?

Cork McGee: Kill 'im, yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay.

Cork McGee: They were all feathered and ever thing, they just couldn't quite fly. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: So what did you do – did you collect those up?

Cork McGee: Get you enough for a mess and then you would bring 'em home and clean 'em up.

Charlie Petrocci; Clean 'em up and then cook 'em up?

Cork McGee: Fry 'em just like marsh eggs, you couldn't tell the difference. I've eat a many a one.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, yeah. So you knocked 'em off the nest.

Cork McGee: And then you could take a – had a little .22 rifle.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And boy you could take them – take that and shoot ‘im right outta the tree.  
(Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) That’s great! So you did a little bit a huntin’ like that?

Cork McGee: Yeah. Always after somethin’.

Charlie Petrocci: Always after something. Now you don’t – you don’t drive to this day?

Cork McGee: No, never driven.

Charlie Petrocci: You never got a car license?

Cork McGee: Never got a car license. I ought to have my what’s your name kicked for it.  
(Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: Now why – why did you never get a license?

Cork McGee: I don’t know. I just don’t know.

Charlie Petrocci: But . . .

Cork McGee: Well, we never had no car. When I was growin’ up Daddy never got a car ‘til I was a teenager. He got an old car then.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: But I never had no car and I just didn’t – didn’t go nowhere for to use a car. All I wanted to do was stay in the marsh and in a boat or in the woods.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh. So you never had to leave – you never left the Island much then?

Cork McGee: No, very very rarely I ever left the Island.

Charlie Petrocci: Where did you go when you left the Island?

Cork McGee: Just right over on the mainland.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: We used – used to in the fall of the year we'd go over and get apples, bought apples from these black people that – there was an old guy that raised apples and pears and stuff like that and we'd go over – go over and for a couple dollars you could get a truck load near 'bout.

Charlie Petrocci: Awe! Oh yeah?

Cork McGee: You'd get all the stuff you wanted and bring that back home, but that's 'bout as far as we'd go.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: I 'member where it was. It was before you get to T's corner.

Charlie Petrocci: Awe.

Cork McGee: Where the old man – but that's as far as we got.

Charlie Petrocci: Ah – that was it. You didn't go any further?

Cork McGee: I don't know how old I was 'fore I went to Pocomoke.

Charlie Petrocci: You didn't – oh really?

Cork McGee: Yeah. (Laughing) It's hard to tell how old I was.

Charlie Petrocci: That must have been a big adventure for you to go to Pocomoke, yeah?

Cork McGee: (Laughing) I reckon'.

Charlie Petrocci: That's something. Now you talked before about the – the pork and the cows and the apples. There was no electricity, where did people store food in those days?

Cork McGee: They had an old ice box.

Charlie Petrocci: In ice boxes? Okay. And that would hold 'em, with all that meat and everything through winter?

Cork McGee: No!

Charlie Petrocci: Oh, it wouldn't?

Cork McGee: No, you didn't have nothin' to hold it through the winter. You salted it. Your meat you salted.

Charlie Petrocci: You salted it?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Awe, okay.

Cork McGee: You salted it down, smoked it.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh, all right, all right. So how did—where did people put that - in barrels or . . .

Cork McGee: They'd have a little house like this, well about half as big as this, and they'd hang it up.

Charlie Petrocci: Hang the meat?

Cork McGee: Hang the meat up in it, yeah, salted.

Charlie Petrocci: Salt the meat, so that's what you ate all winter long, or all year long?

Cork McGee: That's what you eat in the winter.

Charlie Petrocci: What about salt fish, did they make a lot of salt fish?

Cork McGee: Salt fish, used to. I done 'at, good Lord I done that for years after I got married. I'd salt about fifty pounds.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Each year, each fall and have 'em for the winter. Salt fish, spot and trout, anything you could get a hold of.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh, were some fish better when salted than others or?

Cork McGee: Uh – I guess trout was 'bout as good as any.

Charlie Petrocci: Salted?

Cork McGee: We salted – spot – seemed like ever body in the fall would get them big spot and they would – I believe it was more of them salted than anything else.

Charlie Petrocci: Now describe the salting process. What happens?

Cork McGee: Well, you just get you – if you could find you a little wooden barrel, most of 'em, or one of these stone crocks.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Don't – just clean 'em up good and clean the fish up good, we'd split 'em down the back and open 'em up so it was just two sides. The belly would hold the two sides together.

Charlie Petrocci: Take the head off?

Cork McGee: Yeah, take the head off.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay. Split 'em, and then you scale em?

Cork McGee: Yeah. Scale 'em. Have 'em all cleaned and ever thing.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay.

Cork McGee: And you'd lay – you'd put a layer of salt in the crock or barrel.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And you'd put a layer of fish, and a layer of salt, and a layer of fish. And in a couple days it would be just like you poured it – filled it up with water for all that water would come out of 'em and make a brine.

Charlie Petrocci: Right.

Cork McGee: Then go in there and get 'em – whenever you wanted a mess you'd go in 'ere and get 'em and put 'em in water, a basin of water over night.

Charlie Petrocci : Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And the next – you could eat 'em the next day.

Charlie Petrocci: Now how long did they have to sit there before you could start eating them?

Cork McGee: You'd eat 'em – awe, you could eat 'em anytime you wanted.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh, that quick?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Awe, okay.

Cork McGee: Just – that salt would usually – used to save 'em 'til the weather got bad.  
(Laughing)



Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh, right, right.

Cork McGee: When it got cold we had fish and then – we had all our eggs and like I said a while ago, had a pen full of chickens.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, yeah.

Cork McGee: And your hogs.

Charlie Petrocci: And you had vegetables.

Cork McGee: Yeah, raised your own garden.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: ‘Bout the only thing you had to buy was flour and stuff like ‘at.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, okay.

Cork McGee: You had your own lard. You made your own lard from when you killed the hogs.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh yeah, your Mother made lard?

Cork McGee: Yeah! I’ve done that myself.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh, have you? How did you make lard? What’s the process for that?

Cork McGee: When you killed the hogs you cut all the fat up, ever bit the fat.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And you cut it up in little pieces and put it in one of these old iron pots like I got there.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh, okay.

Cork McGee: And then you put in on a slow fire and just let it cook. You put a little water in it first.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah.

Cork McGee: And just let it cook and cook and take a long time, half a day or – no ‘bout a day.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Let it cook right – ‘til it started got to fryin’ like and then the grease would start comin’ out.

Charlie Petrocci: Right.

Cork McGee: And you’d have – you’d have a half of one of them pots or better full of just nothin’ put grease.

Charlie Petrocci: And then what did you do?

Cork McGee: Then you’d get you some of these – we called ‘em lard tins, they were 55 gallon tin cans – not 55 – 55 pounds.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And then you’d put that in a tub a water so it would cool quicker. And you had you a little lard press you turned by hand.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And squeeze that lard out – that grease out in ‘ere and when it turned – once it got cold it would turn just snowy white.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh really?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: So you actually put it through a lard press?

Cork McGee: Yeah, a lard press, yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay.

Cork McGee: Turn it by hand.

Charlie Petrocci: Huh. And that would hold up well through the winter?

Cork McGee: The whole winter. Yeah, that would keep for a long time. As long as you didn’t let the air get to it.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, yeah. So you had to seal it good.

Cork McGee: It would get strong if you – rank if you - if air got to it.

Charlie Petrocci: Rancid. Um, okay. All right. So everybody was pretty self-sufficient then huh?

Cork McGee: Yeah, most ever body.

Charlie Petrocci: Did everyone help each other out?

Cork McGee: Uh – yeah. A lot a people did.

Charlie Petrocci: Families?

Cork McGee: Yeah, just like you'd go to kill hogs, you'd have – be a whole crowd gathered in 'ere for to cut the meat up.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh, would there?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Was it multi-families then?

Cork McGee: Mostly families, yeah. The women would take care of cuttin' the meat up for lard and all that stuff.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And then we had a certain – most the time the butcher – when I was small the butcher would salt the meat. He'd kill it and let it cool a little while and that night he'd come back and salt it down. But I learned how – I done got so I do it myself.

Charlie Petrocci: Um.

Cork McGee: And . . .

Charlie Petrocci: Go ahead.

Cork McGee: And the – after they salt it down you just let it lay there until it took salt good.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And some smoked it. I never did smoke none I don't think.

Charlie Petrocci: So that was like a family affair then?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Whenever there was a hog butchering, people . . .

Cork McGee: When there was a hog butcherin' all the families would come in the neighborhood. Especially in the family – would come there and help.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, so it was kind of a big gathering then?

Cork McGee: And when they took that tenderloin out, that's the first thing they'd (laughing) - they'd cook that up and have a great big feast that day.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh right then, first thing that came out?

Cork McGee: Yeah. They talk 'bout it's not as good unless you let it cool out, that aint nothin'. I've seen 'em take it right out of the hog and take it right in the house and cook it. Boy, you talk about somethin' good!

Charlie Petrocci: I betcha it's good, yeah.

Cork McGee: Yeah!

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing)

Cork McGee: And they made their scrapple, made their own sausage.

Charlie Petrocci: Made scrapple?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay.

Cork McGee: They cut all the scraps and stuff up. The liver and . . .

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And stuff like that and then put it in the scrapple.

Charlie Petrocci: That was the scrapple?

Cork McGee: Uh-huh.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay. Sausage . . .

Cork McGee: You made your sausage, you grind your sausage up and mixed that and fixed that up.

Charlie Petrocci: Boy, you're making me hungry here. (Laughing)

Cork McGee: (Laughing) It was good eatin'. They talk about it's hard on you and kill you. People lived a long time back in them days.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, that's true.

Cork McGee: I've got two aunts and an uncle livin' now and one of 'em's eight – bout eighty-eight. And I got an aunt over to Greenback who's ninety-three.

Charlie Petrocci: Um.

Cork McGee: And then Aunt Sue is Russell – Russell Fish' mom, she's ninety-one.

Charlie Petrocci: Um – yeah, that's . . .

Cork McGee: Daddy was eighty-six when he died.

Charlie Petrocci: A lot of longevity in your family.

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: You've got something to look forward to.

Cork McGee: (Laughing) I had three or four uncles and aunts on Mom's side that lived to be over ninety.

Charlie Petrocci: Really, yeah. That's great. That's great. That must be this Island living over here.

Cork McGee: (Laughing) I don't know.

Charlie Petrocci: Now on Assateague they – I guess – were there animals still over there when you were growing up? Were there any wild – not nothing like wildlife, I'm talking about domestic animals?

Cork McGee: Not – only the ponies and cattle. They had a big herd of cattle on 'ere.

Charlie Petrocci: So there was a herd of cattle?

Cork McGee: Yeah, when I was growin' up.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay.

Cork McGee: Some guy from Ocean City and Wyle Maddox had cattle on there.

Charlie Petrocci: No sheep, no goats running around?

Cork McGee: Yeah, had sheep.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay.

Cork McGee: Yeah. Mr. Bill Scott had some and Norman Jones had a few.

Charlie Petrocci: And they just kind of wondered around?

Cork McGee: Yeah, they had to turn 'em out loose and let them get their own livin' and then go over and pen 'em up. Now I don't 'member – I don't have no idea how long it's been since they had the sheep penning, but they had a sheep penning just like they did pony penning.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: That was 'fore my time.

Charlie Petrocci: Right, right, yeah. Okay.

Cork McGee: But I still remember when – when they used to have sheep over 'ere.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh. Yeah.

Cork McGee: Up on the north end somebody turned out a load a goats up 'ere. And it was a load a goats up 'ere.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing)

Cork McGee: (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: Were they wild?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh were they?

Cork McGee: Yeah, they were wild!

Charlie Petrocci: No one hunted them or anything?

Cork McGee: I think somebody would go up 'ere and shoot one once in a while and eat 'im, a young one or somethin'.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah! Proggin' I guess. (Laughing)

Cork McGee: (Laughing) Yeah, proggin'. But that was about it. But now I really don't remember anybody livin' over 'ere except Mr. Bill Scott and an old guy by the name of Wash Elliott.

Charlie Petrocci: Was Bill Scott still there when you were little?

Cork McGee: Yeah! He was there for years 'fore – after I grew up.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh, he was?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: I thought he left in 1930's . . .

Cork McGee: The first pair of guinea birds or guinea fowl I ever had I bought from him.

Charlie Petrocci: From over at Assateague?

Cork McGee: Yes sir.

Charlie Petrocci: Um, um, um.

Cork McGee: Yeah. He caught 'em and sold me a rooster and two hens.

Charlie Petrocci: Did he? Wow.

Cork McGee: Yeah, I 'member that. He used to – he had an old bateau boat and he used to come over ever Saturday and row across the channel and get his – bring some eggs and chicken once in a while to sell and . . .

Charlie Petrocci: Was he single, did he live by himself over there?

Cork McGee: No! I 'member when his wife was livin' there with 'im. And after she died he lived quite a while after she died.

Charlie Petrocci: Um-hum. And he was the last person to live on Assateague?

Cork McGee: The last one lived on 'ere.

Charlie Petrocci: Um-hum. Did he have a nickname or anything?

Cork McGee: Uh – (laughing) they used to call 'im teddy bear on the beach but boy if – if youngsters called 'im that you'd be in trouble!

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) Teddy bear on the beach.

Cork McGee: 'Cause if he got close to you he'd probably hit cha and your parents would give you a good one if you got home and found it out.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, he was a husky fellow wasn't he?

Cork McGee: Yeah. Big long white beard.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh. (Laughing)

Cork McGee: Yeah, they used to have a – that was a good size house there. I call it a good size. It had a big open porch in between where the store was and the two-story house. It was a little two-story house, a room up and one down.

Charlie Petrocci: Was the store still there when you were a kid?

Cork McGee: The store was there but not – you know, he wadn't sellin' anything in it.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: The building was just still there.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: He had that for his kitchen.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay. It was his kitchen.

Cork McGee: There was an old wood stove in 'ere.

Charlie Petrocci: Um. Okay. Yeah, yeah, that must be . . .

Cork McGee: And his wife was named Mimmy. Aunt – we called her Aunt Mimmy.

Charlie Petrocci: Aunt Mimmy?

Cork McGee: (Laughing) Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) Oh.

Cork McGee: He had ever thing. He had turkeys and geese and chickens.

(END OF TAPE SIDE A)



Charlie Petrocci: When you were young you would go up to the lighthouse?

Cork McGee: Used to go over with 'im. Sometimes I'd go by myself, but most time me and Gene Merritt. You probably don't know 'im I don't 'magine. Anyway, he – we'd go up 'ere and help him shine the brass.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: That big reflector. That's the same one they got up . . .

Charlie Petrocci: The museum?

Cork McGee: The museum.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay.

Cork McGee: Used to go up 'ere and shine that and in the winter – we'd go over there in the wintertime and go up that thing and it'd be hot up there.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing)

Cork McGee: But I've done it a lot a times. Used to stay there with 'im and he had an old single cylinder engine in a little Coast Guard boat.

Charlie Petrocci: Hum. He took you over?

Cork McGee: That's what we'd go back and forth over there in.

Charlie Petrocci: Did he pay you five cents, ten cents . . .

Cork McGee: No, no, it was just – we got paid by just gettin' to go over 'ere and up in the lighthouse.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay, so that was fun.

Cork McGee: Yeah, that it was. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: Were there any problems with birds hitting that lighthouse or anything like that in those days?

Cork McGee: You see – you could see some once in a while but I've heard Daddy say that he's seen brant and ducks, especially brants, find them a lot a times.

Charlie Petrocci: Dead?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Um.

Cork McGee: And birds – I've seen birds 'ere flicker and stuff like 'at dead.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah. Well, that would make proggin' easy. Just go around that lighthouse.

Cork McGee: (Laughing) Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) That wouldn't be too bad. All right. So now, teenager, you're growin' up, you get older, how old were you when you got married?

Cork McGee: Nineteen.

Charlie Petrocci: Nineteen. And where did you meet your wife at?

Cork McGee: Uh, let's see – she was workin' in a little restaurant over next to Bill – that little building right along side of Bill's Restaurant in town there.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay.

Cork McGee: We used – it used to be named the "Grill." "Chincoteague Grill."

Charlie Petrocci: Chincoteague Grill – okay.

Cork McGee: Yeah. That's where I met 'er.

Charlie Petrocci: What's – what's your wife's name?

Cork McGee: Lola.

Charlie Petrocci: Lola. And did you have any children?

Cork McGee: Uh – we got two. She had – she was married before – 'fore I met her and had one and then we've had – had one since.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay. Okay. All right.

Cork McGee: But we got two. She's mine just as much as the other one.

Charlie Petrocci: Good. That's great.

Cork McGee: I took her when she was 'bout three or four – two year old I believe.

Charlie Petrocci: She was two.

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay. And so your wife worked. How old was she when she got married – when you met her?

Cork McGee: Uh – first time?

Charlie Petrocci: No, when you married her, how old?

Cork McGee: Oh, she was twenty-one. She is older than I am.

Charlie Petrocci: So she's a couple years older than you?

Cork McGee: Yeah. Yelp.

Charlie Petrocci: All right.

Cork McGee: I told her she robbed the cradle. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: And what – what's your wife's maiden name, her last name?

Cork McGee: Daisey.

Charlie Petrocci: She is a Daisey huh?

Cork McGee: Yeah. Yelp.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay. All right. Let's see. Where is her family from?

Cork McGee: Right here on the Island.

Charlie Petrocci: Chincoteague too?

Cork McGee: Yeah. Her mother was a – her mother was a Birch.

Charlie Petrocci: Her Mom was a Birch?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay. All right.

Cork McGee: And she lives – she’s – this little white house – I used to live over – we lived here me and her, raised our family. We lived thirty-six years in this little house over here.

Charlie Petrocci: The one next door here?

Cork McGee: We had this little white bungalow.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh, okay.

Cork McGee: We lived in that thirty-six year. And she lived in it before I married her, when she was a teenager. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) So she lived there and then got married and still stayed in the same house?

Cork McGee: Yeah. We bought it and moved back in ‘ere again.

Charlie Petrocci: That’s great!

Cork McGee: Yelp.

Charlie Petrocci: That’s great.

Cork McGee: She lived on the Island all her life too.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh. And so now you got married, Cork, at nineteen. So what did you start doing as a living?

Cork McGee: Same old thing, workin’ on the water.

Charlie Petrocci: Working on the water. What – what brought the best money for you working on the water?

Cork McGee: Well, it wadn’t – I guess maybe in the winter, oysters.

Charlie Petrocci: Oystering?

Cork McGee: Got a little bit more for them. You could realize a little bit more out a them than you did clams.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: But it wadn’t a whole lot a difference until a little bit later when I started crab-pottin’.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Catchin' crabs and in fact when I started – when I first started seein' a little bit a light to the end of the tunnel I got a job on the Refuge.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh, you did?

Cork McGee: Yeah. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: You did?

Cork McGee: I worked over 'ere for about two year in 1963 – 62.

Charlie Petrocci: Ah-hah! And what were you doing then?

Cork McGee: Maintain it.

Charlie Petrocci: Maintenance.

Cork McGee: Runnin' – runnin' fences and farmin', first one thing then the other.

Charlie Petrocci: That was – you went over there the year that the bridge was built?

Cork McGee: Yeah. We first started goin' over in a boat and . . .

Charlie Petrocci: Before the bridge?

Cork McGee: Yeah, they built it while we were workin' over there.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: I liked it. I liked that job.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, uh-huh. Okay, so you did two years with the government?

Cork McGee: Yeah, about two year over there. And that's when I started – got paid at the end of the week. Now when I was workin' on my own you got paid ever day and you spent it ever day, what little bit you made.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) Yeah, yeah.

Cork McGee: And we got paid – I think for two full weeks was \$130.00.

Charlie Petrocci: Wow – that was good money back in those days?

Cork McGee: It was then.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah.

Cork McGee: And then we bought – went in debt for us an old car. That’s the first time I ever went in debt for anything in my life like that. Two Hundred and Fifty Dollars and I didn’t think we should – undecided whether to do it or not, ‘cause we was afraid we wouldn’t be able to pay for it.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh . . .

Cork McGee: Two Hundred and Fifty Dollars for an old Chevrolet coupe.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) A Chevrolet coupe, is that what you had?

Cork McGee: (Laughing) Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: A Chevrolet coupe.

Cork McGee: Green – green and yellow.

Charlie Petrocci: But you didn’t drive it?

Cork McGee: No.

Charlie Petrocci: Your wife drove it, Lola drove it.

Cork McGee: She drove it all the time.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay. All right, so that was your first car then.

Cork McGee: Yelp, that was the first one. Got her when we was livin’ over there and then after we got laid over there, all the – done all the work we – they had over there for to do – or the money runned out.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah.

Cork McGee: And I started catchin’ swell toads.

Charlie Petrocci: Swelling toads?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Now this has got to be . . .

Cork McGee: And that's – I made more money at that beginning with than I ever made on anything.

Charlie Petrocci: Catching swelling toads?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Now swelling toads is blow fish?

Cork McGee: Blow fish, yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Puffers. Blowin' puffer.

Cork McGee: And I caught fish for them and skin 'em. That was all skinned for twelve cents a pound.

Charlie Petrocci: Twelve cents a pound skinned?

Cork McGee: Yeah, all skinned.

Charlie Petrocci: Was there a lot of puffers around then?

Cork McGee: Good Lordy, you could almost shovel 'em up. Only used - most times used about twelve pots.

Charlie Petrocci: Um.

Cork McGee: And you couldn't keep 'em free just by the time you'd fish down one end and go back and fish right 'ere again.

Charlie Petrocci: How did you – what did you guys use to catch 'em?

Cork McGee: Crab.

Charlie Petrocci: Cooked crab?

Cork McGee: No, we just used raw crab.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh, raw crab. In what kind of trap?

Cork McGee: Crab pot, just like a regular crab pot.

Charlie Petrocci: Crab pot, okay.

Cork McGee: Then we got so we'd find out that you could catch 'em with a horse shoe crabs.

Charlie Petrocci: Hum.

Cork McGee: You could find them, get through skinnin' out and go put your bait out and I mean your fish out, your toads out, and you'd go back then and pick you up some horse shoe crabs.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: So I got so I said this aint nothin' so I built me a pen down on the marsh.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And I'd go catch 'em and I'd put me a hundred or maybe fifty, seventy-five or a hundred in 'ere.

Charlie Petrocci: Horse shoe crabs – keep in a pen down there?

Cork McGee: Yeah, in this wire pen, yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing)

Cork McGee: When I needed 'em I'd go in 'ere and catch 'em.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay, that made sense, that made sense.

Cork McGee: Chop 'em up, boy that was a nasty job.

Charlie Petrocci: Chop up horse shoe crabs?

Cork McGee: Yeah. I had me a board laid across the deck of my boat and use a hatchet and just chop 'em up, that mess flyin' in your face.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing)

Cork McGee: But I like to do that. That was – you knew what you were gonna do ever day and you quit – you were always through about twelve or one o'clock days.

Charlie Petrocci: What was the best time to catch swelling toads, what months?

Cork McGee: This time, just 'bout like now.

Charlie Petrocci: Spring.

Cork McGee: In the spring.



Charlie Petrocci: Not summer and fall?

Cork McGee: Well, we fished the whole – we fished just about the whole – the whole summer right on through.

Charlie Petrocci: Hum. Okay.

Cork McGee: We'd leave – they'd leave Tom's Cove. We – we'd start fishin' there. And then all of a sudden they would drop right off and you would have to go up the Bay to look for 'em.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh, okay.

Cork McGee: We'd find 'em up 'ere and be just as thick!

Charlie Petrocci: Did you – did people around here eat them?

Cork McGee: Yeah!

Charlie Petrocci: Now in the old days?

Cork McGee: They wouldn't eat 'em, they said they were poison or somethin'.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, why was that?

Cork McGee: I don't know.

Charlie Petrocci: They (inaudible) a lot in the old days didn't they?

Cork McGee: Yeah, they did.

Charlie Petrocci: By accident.

Cork McGee: You could do somethin' now if you could catch 'em.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah. So you did swelling toads and then – and then . . .

Cork McGee: And after I got through with that then I started goin' down to Wachapreague and Quinby wadin' clams.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, oh okay. That far?

Cork McGee: And I made – I guess really on the water I made more money then than I did on anything I ever done on the water.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: I worked hard but caught a lot a clams. There's a lot a clams down 'ere.

Charlie Petrocci: Went down . . .

Cork McGee: We'd go down ever day.

Charlie Petrocci: Every day?

Cork McGee: Go down in the truck, couple head of us, we'd go down in the truck and run back and forth ever day. Had a – rented – there to the last we rented a slip there in that harbor to Quinby.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And we'd - boat right down 'ere.

Charlie Petrocci: So you didn't sleep on the boat then?

Cork McGee: No, no we come back and forth. But I did sleep – used to go down – I spent fifteen year down 'ere.

Charlie Petrocci: Going back and forth?

Cork McGee: Fifteen year livin' board of a boat, I mean just come home weekends.

Charlie Petrocci: Fifteen years?! Now where – what boat was this?

Cork McGee: Good lands, it was all of these old down the Bay boats. The one they had to the Oyster Museum, I used to go down in her.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay, like a bay boat.

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay, down the bay boat you call em.

Cork McGee: Used to go down clammin' or in the fall of the year we'd go down, always get ready in October and go down seed oysterin'.

Charlie Petrocci: Um.

Cork McGee: Pulled a big barge behind ya.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, right.

Cork McGee: And load her and bring 'em up and sell 'em to the oyster planters.

Charlie Petrocci: So when you say you were seed oystering, you were just catching the little ones?

Cork McGee: Yeah, the whole clusters, yeah, just small stuff, little stuff.

Charlie Petrocci: And then you sold those to guys up here to plant?

Cork McGee: Bunting Seafood and it was several different – Jones Brothers – a lot a different buyers.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Okay.

Cork McGee: Used to come up and do that and I'd – I done that and run down clammin' and in the spring you'd – you'd always leave 'bout the 10<sup>th</sup> of March for to go down – start goin' down signing.

Charlie Petrocci: Um.

Cork McGee: Signin' clams.

Charlie Petrocci: On those big boats?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: And then you just stayed down there?

Cork McGee: Stayed right down 'ere. Sometimes – in the spring when you were clammin' you stayed two weeks.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh!

Cork McGee: You'd go down and sometimes if we got a little bit homesick we'd go in Willis Wharf and hitchhike up the road. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing)

Cork McGee: Done 'at a many a time too.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Go in on a – late Friday after we worked the tide.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah.

Cork McGee: And hitchhike – and stay in the harbor. A lot a times we'd stay right 'ere in the harbor 'til early Saturday mornin' and we'd get on the road.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh. So – so you guys – you went back home on Friday and when did you come back down on the boat?

Cork McGee: The next Monday.

Charlie Petrocci: Monday morning?

Cork McGee: Monday morning you'd leave early.

Charlie Petrocci: Bright and early.

Cork McGee: Yelp, you'd leave home 'fore daylight.

Charlie Petrocci: Before daylight?

Cork McGee: Get down 'ere so you could get – most the time you'd have to go down and get gas.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And then go on out in the Bay.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, yeah.

Cork McGee: Them boats wadn't very fast no way and they started slow.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah. And – now where did you sleep on the boat in the Bay or did you come back to the slip every night?

Cork McGee: No! You stayed out – anchored right out in the Bay and stayed right out 'ere.

Charlie Petrocci: Stayed right there?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: How many head on a boat?

Cork McGee: I think five was the most I've been down 'ere.

Charlie Petrocci: With five people on the boat?

Cork McGee: Yeah. That little tiny old cabin idn't big as nothin'.

Charlie Petrocci: How did (laughing) – how did you sleep in there?

Cork McGee: Boy that was bad livin'.

Charlie Petrocci: Was it? (Laughing)

Cork McGee: Lord.

Charlie Petrocci: That had to be.

Cork McGee: They had – we called it under the wings – they had the back in the after cabin, the cook – had the cook side.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah.

Cork McGee: That wadn't a very good place to sleep. Ever body tried to get away from 'at 'cause you had to get up mornin's and cook when ever body else be layin' back and you'd get – 'bout time you got breakfast done they'd start gettin' up then.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Cork McGee: But anyway, it was two back there and then up under where – on each side of the motor, we called it under the deck.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay.

Cork McGee: Boy that's a rough place. In the summertime it would nearly 'bout kill ya. No air or nothin'.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, the smell.

Cork McGee: Sometimes you'd go out on the deck.

Charlie Petrocci: Sleep all night on the deck?

Cork McGee: That old gasoline would kill you near 'bout.

Charlie Petrocci: What about the bugs?

Cork McGee: Knats, mosquitoes, near 'bout eat you up.

Charlie Petrocci: And nothing you could do about it.

Cork McGee: Daytime horse flies kill ya. Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing)

Cork McGee: (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: Doesn't sound like too much of an adventure.

Cork McGee: It was a bad job but – when I first started doin' it I sort a liked it 'cause we had – just as soon – I was young and just as soon as I got aboard – get aboard the boat and get somethin' to eat and get ever thing squared away I'd go fishin' or shootin' shore birds or . . .

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Doin' somethin' or 'nother. Proggin. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: Proggin, okay.

Cork McGee: And I always looked forward – if you got with a certain – with different captains – they would stop – on their way home stop Paramour Beach.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And turn us loose on 'ere for a day and we'd go – or afternoon or somethin' – we'd go ashore 'ere and shoot ducks and once in a while kill a deer.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh really? Okay. On Paramour?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, yeah.

Cork McGee: And I always looked forward to 'at man, I couldn't hardly wait. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing)

Cork McGee: I used to like that place.

Charlie Petrocci: Go back to hunt, yeah, yeah.

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: So – now what did you guys eat, what kind of food did they have on board there when you were there for a week at a time?

Cork McGee: We didn't eat very good.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing)

Cork McGee: We eat – took a few canned goods and that's all. Took a little bacon.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah.

Cork McGee: Eggs.

Charlie Petrocci: And that was it? That was it?

Cork McGee: That's all you had, you didn't have nothin' to keep nothin' with ya.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, yeah.

Cork McGee: If you kept some fish, you'd be all right. Shoot us some old shell ducks in the spring of the year.

Charlie Petrocci: Cook those up?

Cork McGee: Cook them up.

Charlie Petrocci: So one guy cooked – there was one guy there that was the cook?

Cork McGee: Uh – most time.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Most times. A lot a times you'd take turns.

Charlie Petrocci: Aha, aha.

Cork McGee: We had one guy during the trip would – if he decided he wanted to sleep on the cook's side he would cook all the breakfasts.

Charlie Petrocci: Um.

Cork McGee: But then when you're back to work, see you had a little small boat when you're clammin' that each man worked in a separate boat.

Charlie Petrocci: Um-hum. So – okay. So you had your own little boat?

Cork McGee: The first one aboard – yeah, you towed ‘em aboard and the ones you could pull you pulled them up on deck.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh! Okay. Okay.

Cork McGee: And the first one got aboard, he’d always cook.

Charlie Petrocci: Ah, okay.

Cork McGee: And when the rest come aboard most – lot a times had it all done.

Charlie Petrocci: Now how – how were you paid?

Cork McGee: You were paid for whatever you caught, the harder you worked the more you made.

Charlie Petrocci: So by the amount of clams you caught . . .

Cork McGee: Yeah, when you come in – come got to the boat you’d count ya clams and dump ‘em, they had that big hole in ‘em, you dumped your clams down in that.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay. So who – was the captain on board then – he counted them made sure you were . . .

Cork McGee: Uh – no, no. You had – just be – honesty.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay, okay.

Cork McGee: And it was very rare that, once in a while you’d get somebody would short count, but . . .

Charlie Petrocci: Oh really?

Cork McGee: Not very often.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing)

Cork McGee: And we’d had, you know, little tally sheets, you put down whatever you got that day.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And you had to pay a fifth of what you made for the rentin’ – for the boat rent. We called it boat’s part.



Charlie Petrocci: What did you – what did you call it?

Cork McGee: Boat's part.

Charlie Petrocci: Boat's part?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay, okay. So you had to pay the boat's part.

Cork McGee: A fifth of what you made to the boat.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay, all right, all right.

Cork McGee: See we – Buntin'[g] – William C. Buntin'[g] – he owned most of the boats. He owned a whole fleet of 'em.

Charlie Petrocci: Right. So that was for food and fuel

Cork McGee: Uh – no, you paid that besides your food and fuel.

Charlie Petrocci: Ahh!

Cork McGee: You paid – you – most time for your grub bill, each person, each man, would pay maybe Three or Four Dollars for a whole trip a piece.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh, that was it?

Cork McGee: (Laughing) Yeah. And your gas would run 'bout, somewhere 'bout the same.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Okay, okay.

Cork McGee: We had – we had 'em eight cylinder marine Chrysler motors in most 'em boats.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing)

Cork McGee: And – well, we didn't eat very good.

Charlie Petrocci: No, no, sounds like you didn't if you had to go out . . .

Cork McGee: Baked beans. We eat a lot a baked beans. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing)

Cork McGee: And sometimes they'd cook some dried beans.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh. So how many years, you did that for?

Cork McGee: Fifteen year, 'bout fifteen year.

Charlie Petrocci: Fifteen years! So that takes you up to about your thirties then maybe, late twenties?

Cork McGee: Yeah, somethin' like 'at.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay.

Cork McGee: And I decided – I come home one time and I was livin' in that little house over there and I told Lola, I said, "I don't intend to ever go down there no more long as I live." I said, "I'm gonna make it round here or we'll starve."

Charlie Petrocci: Is that what you told her?

Cork McGee: Yelp!

Charlie Petrocci: So that was it, no more down the bay?

Cork McGee: Never did, never went down 'ere no more.

Charlie Petrocci: Um. And – so what was the next move then, what did you do next?

Cork McGee: Just started clammin' and . . .

Charlie Petrocci: Up here?

Cork McGee: Yeah. And then it go so it wadn't too much goin' on around here and then some of the boys went down and struck some clams down 'ere and then I went down with them.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And I worked down 'ere, run back up and down the road 'ere for about ten more years.

Charlie Petrocci: Now where is this, back down the bay again?

Cork McGee: To Quinby.

Charlie Petrocci: Quinby, all right.

Cork McGee: And we'd go down ever mornin' in the truck and . . .

Charlie Petrocci: Oh, okay.

Cork McGee: Had outboard motors then, we'd sail in and out the – in the bays and thing, but we caught a lot a clams.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh, did you? Yeah, yeah.

Cork McGee: The one – one week there from Monday to Friday I caught – waded Seventeen Thousand Five Hundred.

Charlie Petrocci: Shew! Seventeen Thousand Five Hundred clams?

Cork McGee: Clams in five days.

Charlie Petrocci: You waded those?

Cork McGee: Waded 'em out with my feet.

Charlie Petrocci: And so you – wading is you walking and shuffling and . . .

Cork McGee: Just feel 'em out with your feet.

Charlie Petrocci: Did you wear socks or . . .

Cork McGee: Made – we called 'em moccasins – we made 'em out of cotton flannel.

Charlie Petrocci: Cotton flannel, okay. And you sewed those up?

Cork McGee: Sewed 'em up. My wife would sew 'em up for me.

Charlie Petrocci: Now why did you wear moccasins for?

Cork McGee: Keep from cuttin' your feet on the shells.

Charlie Petrocci: Stepping on anything?

Cork McGee: The best – the best clammin' – I could do better in old hard what we called rocks.

Charlie Petrocci: Um.

Cork McGee: Where they'd put – where they'd made oyster rocks years ago.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah.

Cork McGee: And they'd started sinkin' and settle in the mud.

Charlie Petrocci: Settle, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Settled in 'em and some of them rocks was loaded!

Charlie Petrocci: Were they?

Cork McGee: Yeah!

Charlie Petrocci: Ah! And did you ever run into any sharks or anything out there?

Cork McGee: Good Lord, I've had them swim by and all around ya.

Charlie Petrocci: The sharks?

Cork McGee: Yeah. I didn't like 'em, but I've seen 'em a lot a times. If you stayed in your boat ever time you seen somethin' like 'at, you wouldn't get nothin' done.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) That's right. Yeah, if they swim right by you.

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Yelp. Yelp.

Cork McGee: Yelp.

Charlie Petrocci: But no one was ever bit that you know of?

Cork McGee: Never known of anybody ever get bit.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, yeah.

Cork McGee: See, you'd be clammin' in the muddy water, the tide runnin' and the muddy water, I guess they figured it was a stingray or somethin', them old big sharks, in that shallow water, they'd swim right up in 'at mud.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh. Following.

Cork McGee: Sometimes you'd look behind – turn around and looked like 'at, you'd have to be hangin' on to your boat – and turn around and look like 'at and you could see his fin comin' through the water. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing)

Cork McGee: Be – take an oar or somethin’ and beat on your boat, most time he’d turn on – and boy he’d take out.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh, would he. Hum. Some big ones huh?

Cork McGee: Yeah, some right good size ones.

Charlie Petrocci: Um, um, um.

Cork McGee: I ‘spect some of ‘em were eight/ten foot.

Charlie Petrocci: Were they that big?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Ten foot long.

Cork McGee: Yeah, they’d come up in ‘em shallow bays.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, yeah, especially when – because they had their babies . . .

Cork McGee: And a lot of stingrays. I really – I really didn’t like the stingrays too much. They wouldn’t bother you unless you stepped on ‘em.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah.

Cork McGee: Just happen by accident step on one.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, yeah. Well they follow, I guess when you’re pushing mud around they come up . . .

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: And kick – they smell them clams you know.

Cork McGee: And after that, of course, I caught a few ducks there for – in the winter for a few years there.

Charlie Petrocci: Trappin’?

Cork McGee: Yeah, me and Russell done it.

Charlie Petrocci: Duck trappin’?

Cork McGee: Yeah, we done it for seven or eight winters there I guess.

Charlie Petrocci: And that was illegal, right?

Cork McGee: Yeah, it was illegal. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) Yeah, that's what I mean. That was illegal. Yeah.

Cork McGee: (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: You never got caught?

Cork McGee: No. No, thank the Lord we'd skim by and never got caught.

Charlie Petrocci: Now the ducks, did you take 'em and sell 'em or eat 'em?

Cork McGee: Sold 'em. We eat what we wanted, but we sold 'em.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: We were in it for what we could get out of it.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh. And that was baiting them with corn mostly?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay. Okay.

Cork McGee: Yeah, 'at was just 'bout – well, 'bout the best thing you could use.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And then they got – they got so strict – when they brought that little yellow airplane in, that was – that just about fixed things.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh, they had a plane come in?

Cork McGee: Yeah! One of them little seaplanes.

Charlie Petrocci: Um. Now tell me about when – when did you turn – when did you leave the water and get into carving, 'cause most people know that you're a famous carver.

Cork McGee: Well – uh – when I first started carvin' I carved for my own use. Carved some of them decoys up 'ere, made them in 19 – in '57.

Charlie Petrocci: 1957, that's forty-one years ago.

Cork McGee: Uh-huh. I made them and then I started a guidin’.

Charlie Petrocci: Right around then?

Cork McGee: Yeah, right around near ’57.

Charlie Petrocci: So you started . . .

Cork McGee: In ’57 is the first year that I ever guided and that’s the reason I made the decoys.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: I made a dozen black ducks and a dozen brant.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And some shell ducks and stuff like ‘at, makin’ dippers. I think I made a dozen dippers and that’s what I hunted with.

Charlie Petrocci: Um.

Cork McGee: Until – you know the odd fellers that I could pick up here and ‘ere. They were – you could find ‘em layin’ around ever where. Nobody didn’t pay no attention to decoys then.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. Now – go ahead.

Cork McGee: When the plastic decoys come out that’s when I – put the wooden ones away, or sold ‘em.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Or let ‘em, throw ‘em away or do somethin’.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: ‘Cause they were a lot lighter and they were cheap when they come out. You could buy a nice decoy for a couple dollars.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And I guided ever winter and then I would clam in the summer.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: That was after I quit trappin’.

Charlie Petrocci: So you still – you still were doin’ some clammin’. This is after – after your duck trapping.

Cork McGee: Yeah, yeah, that’s when I went in hard clammin’ then.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, okay.

Cork McGee: Had to. And then started guidin’ and that took care of ever – all of the duck trappin’.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: ‘Course I – when I was duck trappin’ I used to dredge oysters.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: I used to work for a guy that owned a shuckin’ house – oyster house down there where Lou Wright’s restaurant is.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: That’s where – that used to be a shuckin’ house.

Charlie Petrocci: That was a shucking house?

Cork McGee: I worked down ‘ere for a long time.

Charlie Petrocci: Um.

Cork McGee: And we would – dredge right out ‘ere in the marsh. Didn’t have no where to go hardly.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And so we’d tend to it – tend to our duck trappin’ stuff.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: But after – they got so they were gettin’ pretty strict.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing)

Cork McGee: And I figured it was a good time to get out of it. (Laughing)



Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) Good time to get out a duck trappin', that's right.

Cork McGee: After that – after they got all them boys that time. That's when I give it up.

Charlie Petrocci: What happened? They caught a bunch of boys, caught a bunch a guys?

Cork McGee: Good lands yeah! They caught – they rounded 'em up, it was an undercover agent come here and he lived up here in my wife's mother's house. She didn't know who they were.

Charlie Petrocci: Awe, and no one knew it?

Cork McGee: And he was doin' it too. He was . . .

Charlie Petrocci: Trappin'?

Cork McGee: Yeah. Charles was. (Laughing) And he stayed up 'ere and he was buyin' 'em from ever body, but it's just luck that he didn't – he didn't come to me 'cause if I'd a had 'em I'd a sold 'em to him I'm sure.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah. So he – they busted a whole bunch of people then?

Cork McGee: Yeah, a bunch, a whole load of 'em.

Charlie Petrocci: What year was that?

Cork McGee: Uh, good Lord. Must a been late 40's.

Charlie Petrocci: End of 1940's?

Cork McGee: Late – late – in the late 40's I think.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh. So by the 1950's then, '57 this is when you were out of that business and . . .

Cork McGee: Well I was still – still doin' it in the '50's. It was later than the '40's when they busted that bunch.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh, okay.

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay.

Cork McGee: Come to think of it I believe it was. Old Man Wolff, he can give you just 'bout the dates on it and ever thing 'cause he's got a good memory.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, yeah. So now you got into guiding?

Cork McGee: Guidin'.

Charlie Petrocci: Most of the sports that came down, the hunters that came down, came from where?

Cork McGee: I had 'em come just 'bout all over the country.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh, really?

Cork McGee: Yeah. The first – the first – beginning, the first party I ever took come from Newport News.

Charlie Petrocci: Um, okay.

Cork McGee: I took four head in a little thirteen foot boat and went all the way to Sheep Ridge, up by the Wills Hole. Boy there was stuff up there. We shot 'til you got tired about.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing)

Cork McGee: And I got Ten Dollars out of it. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: You made Ten Dollars, did ya?

Cork McGee: For four head.

Charlie Petrocci: For four heads.

Cork McGee: And I furnished my gas. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing)

Cork McGee: Had an old twelve-horse Sea King motor. And that was the beginning.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay, that's . . .

Cork McGee: 'Cause I enjoyed the huntin' part.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah.

Cork McGee: And I was crazy over that and I figured, just think, I got Ten Dollars for foolin' with that mess a stuff and most time I didn't get nothin'.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, okay.

Cork McGee: So I said well, and then they – they kept comin' back two or three times that year and some kind a way my name just got – got around and people kept callin', callin', 'til I built it up.

Charlie Petrocci: Um.

Cork McGee: And I went ever day – for years, I don't know how many years, I went ever day, didn't miss a day.

Charlie Petrocci: During hunting season?

Cork McGee: Durin' the whole huntin' season.

Charlie Petrocci: And you're still guiding now aren't you?

Cork McGee: A little bit. They tell me I can't – I aint got – they claim I aint got sense enough now for to do it without a license so (laughing) I guess I'm gonna have to quit.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh, you're supposed to have a . . .

Cork McGee: Captain's License.

Charlie Petrocci: Captain's License, that's right now.

Cork McGee: Yeah. All these years, I've done it forty-one year and now they tell me I can't do it 'cause I can't find my way up the bay I guess. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: So you . . .

Cork McGee: I've got some friends that, you know, that I take.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, yeah.

Cork McGee: Still got some, I just cut it 'bout half in two.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah.

Cork McGee: What I usually do.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah.

Cork McGee: And really, it's enough – it's enough 'cause I aint like I used to be no way.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, yeah, it hits ya. Now when did you start carving like this, fulltime, when did you start getting into this – this decorative decoy carving?

Cork McGee: Oh – Lord, I don't know. It must a been 'round the '60's.

Charlie Petrocci: In the 1960's?

Cork McGee: Yeah. It was in the late – it was gettin' along in the '60's 'cause I started – when I first started carvin' for to sell I used to carve miniatures.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh, miniatures?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: A pair of flyin' ducks for – let's see I think I sold 'em for Seven Dollars. I don't remember if it was a piece or a pair.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: For miniatures.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, yeah. Okay.

Cork McGee: And I kept – kept on doin' it and I still guided. And when I got through guidin' I'd start in carvin'. And I started goin' to the decoy show.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: The first one they ever – the first one that they had that I know anything about was down to Tom's Cove Campground.

Charlie Petrocci: First decoy show?

Cork McGee: It was called the Snow Goose – Snow Goose Decoy Show then.

Charlie Petrocci: Um. The Snow Goose Decoy Show huh?

Cork McGee: And the best I can remember, me and Tommy Savage was the only two Chincoteaguers in it.

Charlie Petrocci: Tommy Savage?

Cork McGee: Tommy Savage. And he got me to go. He come down and worried me to death. I didn't want to go. I said you can't – I aint able to make nothin'.

Charlie Petrocci: Um, um.

Cork McGee: And he begged me. He said, "I'll help you, help you price it, help you set up." And he said, "I'll help you the whole way, take you down there."

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: So after a while he talked me into it, him and my wife, and I went down 'ere and that first – the first night that I setup.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: I sold nearly Four Hundred Dollars worth of stuff, man I liked to fell out! (Laughing) I liked to fell out. And then – then the next day I made up and I sold Nine Hundred Dollars on that show.

Charlie Petrocci: The next day you made Nine Hundred more?

Cork McGee: No, Nine – No, Five the next day.

Charlie Petrocci: The total?

Cork McGee: Total – Nine.

Charlie Petrocci: Wow! Wow!

Cork McGee: And from then on I've never missed a single one. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) You were hooked after that weren't you?

Cork McGee: Yeah, both of 'em. The Eastern and the Deborah. They're the only two I've ever been too. I've been invited to, I don't know, a lot of 'em, but . . .

Charlie Petrocci: But these are the only two you do on the Island then?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: So you don't do any decoy shows off the Island then?

Cork McGee: No. Well, most time I don't have nothin' to do a show.

Charlie Petrocci: That's right, yeah, yeah. So now who – who started – who was buying your birds in the beginning?

Cork McGee: Mostly . . .

Charlie Petrocci: Who buys them now?

Cork McGee: Tourists.

Charlie Petrocci: Tourists, yeah, yeah.

Cork McGee: It seems like the same people each year come by. I have a lot a new ones, but same people come by they say they are collectors and they are collecting my decoys and they buy one or two birds ever year.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh. What – now if you described a classic Cork McGee bird, what is your signature bird that you are most famous for?

Cork McGee: I – I might say the marsh hen or rail.

Charlie Petrocci: The rail, really?

Cork McGee: And the blue heron.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: I . . .

Charlie Petrocci: But if you had to say one bird, what would it be marsh hen?

Cork McGee: Probably the blue heron.

Charlie Petrocci: The blue heron is the . . .

Cork McGee: I make three or four different sizes of 'em.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: It's hard to say between the marsh hen and the blue heron, they are 'bout – it's not a whole lot a difference in 'em in selling' em.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah. Well, of course, you have black crown herring too.

Cork McGee: Yeah. Also, I make some of them and they sell – usually sell pretty good.

Charlie Petrocci: How many birds – how many decoys have you made do you think up to this date?

Cork McGee: Good Lord, I don't know. Wouldn't even have no idea.

Charlie Petrocci: No idea. What do you think you do a year times how many years, no idea?

Cork McGee: I don't have no idea, don't even want to know. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing).

Cork McGee: No, I don't have any idea.

Charlie Petrocci: Um, um, um. Okay, all right, you got no idea. So now you obviously have a regular following of people that come in and look for your birds at the shows?

Cork McGee: Well, most time yeah, to the shows, a lot of 'em's the same people.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Cork McGee: But the shows are goin' down the hill a little bit ever year.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: They're not gainin' – gaining any.

Charlie Petrocci: No, it's not like it used to be.

Cork McGee: No! No! That it aint.

Charlie Petrocci: Not like it used to be.

Cork McGee: Last two or three shows – and I tell you somethin' else Charlie, if you go up 'ere and sell Eighteen Hundred / Two Thousand Dollars worth, people say boy you're makin' money, they don't realize it takes me from January, after the huntin' season goes out, all the way up 'til April.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And I don't – very – hardly ever sell anything right in that time.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And I just sit right here and carve and by time you figure it up it aint much.  
(Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: Yelp. It's a lot a – lot a skill in it.

Cork McGee: That it is. And it's time-consuming, but if I wadn't doin' that I wouldn't have nothin' else to do.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah.

Cork McGee: 'Cause on the water now, workin' on the water is just – I couldn't make it on the water.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Aint no way I could do it.

Charlie Petrocci: Who taught you how – how to carve?

Cork McGee: I guess I taught myself.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay. No – any influence from any other carver at the time when you started?

Cork McGee: Uh – I guess I hung out around Cigar's right much in them days.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: I guess – if anybody did I guess bein' around him probably is the reason I took it up.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh. So he's – not Ira Hudson and some of these other guys?

Cork McGee: No, no, that was too before my time.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, yeah, okay.

Cork McGee: And I used to go down Cigar's when he used to live down Snotty Ridge, he had him a little carvin' shop down there.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Me and him hunted a little bit together.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, yeah, I'm sure you did. So now your birds – you're doing three different sizes on a lot of these I see.



Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: But you're still – besides your carving now and the hunting, the guiding, you're still workin' on the water a little bit aren't you?

Cork McGee: No. No, I retired from the water. No water.

Charlie Petrocci: No more clamming, no more gill-netting?

Cork McGee: Just go get enough clams to eat and. . . .

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: I started to say oysters, but that's a rare thing now.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, yeah.

Cork McGee: No, I don't work on the water at all, no commercial.

Charlie Petrocci: Nothing, okay.

Cork McGee: Huh-uh.

Charlie Petrocci: So you don't have a commercial license any more?

Cork McGee: No!

Charlie Petrocci: Do you put a gill-net out any more to catch a few fish?

Cork McGee: I bought – I bought a commercial – I mean a recreation net license last year and got a brand new net and never even put it overboard.

Charlie Petrocci: You didn't even use it?

Cork McGee: Didn't even use it. I had – got all the fish I wanted to eat and the red tape you have to go through the mess now, they're right down breathing down your neck ever thing you do and I just said it aint worth foolin' with over.

Charlie Petrocci: What's – what's your favorite fish?

Cork McGee: Uh - (Pause)

Charlie Petrocci: For eating?

Cork McGee: For me for eatin' I like a spot 'bout as well as any.

Charlie Petrocci: You like spot?

Cork McGee: I like spot. Now my favorite fish of all is drum.

Charlie Petrocci: Drum?

Cork McGee: Black drum.

Charlie Petrocci: Black drum!

Cork McGee: Black drum.

Charlie Petrocci: Do they catch a lot of black drum out here?

Cork McGee: They used to but they don't catch 'em now.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, um.

Cork McGee: I've seen 'em right down 'ere to Wallops, you'd go sit 'ere late in the afternoon on a low tide.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And there wouldn't be over five or six or seven foot of water.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: You could hear 'em a drummin' under the boat.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh really?

Cork McGee: Man! You just – as fast as you could get one, hang one, you'd drop it overboard and get another one.

Charlie Petrocci: In the net or . . .

Cork McGee: No, on rod and reel!

Charlie Petrocci: Rod and reel?

Cork McGee: Yeah!

Charlie Petrocci: What – what did you use for clam – bait?

Cork McGee: Clam.

Charlie Petrocci: Clam, I answered myself. Okay.

Cork McGee: And then I – I tried clam – net fishin' for drum.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: All the way from Cobbs' right on up to Chincoteague.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Went down to Cobbs' Inlet and fished down 'ere, me and Charles Fish fished down 'ere a couple year.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: I mackerel fished.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh you – offshore?

Cork McGee: Nights, yeah. That was – that was maybe one of the worst jobs I ever done. I hated 'at.

Charlie Petrocci: When – you fished at night?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Why at night?

Cork McGee: That's the only time – you couldn't catch 'em in the daytime or they claimed you couldn't.

Charlie Petrocci: In a net at night. They come up . . .

Cork McGee: I guess – they claim they come up on top nights.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, yeah. So how – why was that job bad?

Cork McGee: Well seemed like ever time it was cold and ever time you'd have to leave at two o'clock in the afternoon and go out and 'bout time you set your net it would – most time breeze up nor' west and you . . .

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Boy she – I been out ‘ere and your nets freeze together after you get ‘em in the boat and it was just a bad job – shew!

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, yeah.

Cork McGee: Come in – I’ve come in and not even get to come home. Come in and pick – pick your fish out to the dock and get right ready and go right back to sea.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh. Umph!

Cork McGee: And another common job was sea-clammin’. I sea-clammed two years there.

Charlie Petrocci: Common you’re saying meaning . . .

Cork McGee: Bad. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: Bad, yeah, yeah.

Cork McGee: Yeah. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: Well sea-clam – did you do some sea-clamming too?

Cork McGee: Yeah, yeah, went aboard a sea-clam boat and clammed. Went ‘board of a dragger, I tried draggin.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh. You tried just about everything.

Cork McGee: Yeah, aint much I turned – aint much I didn’t do.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) I guess around here you had to.

Cork McGee: Yeah. I even worked in a hog house raisin’ hogs. I used to go up with Grier, used to go up ‘ere to Grier Derrickson's and help him out. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: Butchering hogs?

Cork McGee: No! Raised – whenever he – see he had like brooder houses up ‘ere and he raised ‘em.

Charlie Petrocci: Awe. Okay.

Cork McGee: Good lands, he had I ‘spect four or five hundred old sows up ‘ere.

Charlie Petrocci: Ump.

Cork McGee: And he had some chicken houses that he converted over to hog houses.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: I'd go up 'ere with 'im and help 'im up 'ere doin' things.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: I've done a little bit of ever thing.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Aint much I aint done.

Charlie Petrocci: Now you've seen a lot of change on this Island haven't you?

Cork McGee: Good lands it's hard to believe!

Charlie Petrocci: What is – what is some of the most – what is the most profound change you've seen?

Cork McGee: Well, the seafood places has gone. That's the – to me that's the biggest change and then the next is all these townhouses built up long the creek.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: I 'member when it wadn't – wadn't a house of no kind that you could live on – on that side of the road.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Wadn't no houses, nothin' but clam houses and oyster houses.

Charlie Petrocci: How many – how many clam and oyster houses were on this Island back in those days?

Cork McGee: Good Lord, I 'spect – I 'spect it was twenty, between twenty-five, likely.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: If you could figure 'em up.

Charlie Petrocci: That's a lot.

Cork McGee: Yeah, it was, Lord I don't know, five or six or seven right here on Eastside.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, yeah, yeah. So about twenty-five on the Island?

Cork McGee: I'll bet it was. I'll bet it was that many 'cause it was a lot of 'em on the Westside.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Did many blacks come over here and work in those days shucking?

Cork McGee: Shuckin' oysters. They come over here and worked.

Charlie Petrocci: And where did they come from?

Cork McGee: Come just from over the mainland. And not a whole lot of them 'cause most – when I was growin' up most of the shuckers was the local people.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, oh, were they?

Cork McGee: Yelp.

Charlie Petrocci: So the shuckers were local people?

Cork McGee: Yeah, local people. Then later on the – the local people did give it up and then the black people come over and started shuckin'.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Okay. And there were no crab pickin' houses here?

Cork McGee: No. Not on the Island here.

Charlie Petrocci: No. Just shell fish mostly?

Cork McGee: Just shell fish, oysters and clams.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Yelp.

Charlie Petrocci: So that – to you that's the most profound change then?

Cork McGee: I would say, yeah. All of the seafood businesses gone.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Yelp. Then all this other, these townhouses and stuff built up (pause) but losin' seafood is what – is what I see the most damage to the Island.

Charlie Petrocci: Right. Uh-huh. And what is your fondest memory about this Island? So if you had lived away from here, say you suddenly moved away from here, Montana . . .

Cork McGee: (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: And you – someone asked you, what is your best memory of this Island, what would you tell ‘em, what would you say?

Cork McGee: It’s so many of ‘em, it would be hard to say. I mean I don’t know, just, I liked ever thing about! Wadn’t only just one thing, just about ever thing ‘bout it I liked.

Charlie Petrocci: But I mean would it be – would it be the hunting, would it be the fishing?

Cork McGee: Oh, I would miss – I would miss the huntin’ more.

Charlie Petrocci: Would it be the people, would it be the – the, you know . . .

Cork McGee: I would miss the people but I would miss huntin’ more than anything else if I’d a had to give it up at that time.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah.

Cork McGee: I would a missed that more than anything else ‘cause I was crazy over it.

Charlie Petrocci: So the hunting is probably your fondest memory?

Cork McGee: I was addicted to it. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: During life, yeah, yeah.

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, well that’s good.

Cork McGee: I believe so. I really loved it! I liked to fish, but I’d rather hunt two to one.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh. And duck hunting is your favorite type of hunting?

Cork McGee: Duck and goose.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Okay.

Cork McGee: But now, last few years, I guess maybe my age, I like deer huntin'. I've always liked deer huntin' but I like it even better now than I used to.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh. Okay. And if you could change anything on the Island, what - what would you change?

Cork McGee: I'd change ever thing and put it back like it was fifty year ago if I could.  
(Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) Just like the old days, the hog killing and . . .

Cork McGee: (Laughing) Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Makin' your own . . .

Cork McGee: Yeah. We didn't have much money but we had a lot a fun.

Charlie Petrocci: Had a lot of fun?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And – and you knew ever body then. I could – you could leave here – I could leave this house back here and walk up and down the roads and not know ever body I seen near 'bout you know. You don't know nobody.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing)

Cork McGee: Aint many people that you know.

Charlie Petrocci: Good point.

Cork McGee: Next-door-neighbors, you don't. I got people that lives over on this side from Pennsylvania, real nice neighbors, but I, you know, just not well acquainted with 'em.

Charlie Petrocci: Um.

Cork McGee: Surrounded by 'em. (Laughing) But we got to have 'em now. If it wadn't for that we'd be a ghost town I guess.

Charlie Petrocci: Um. Tourism has certainly taken over.



Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: But so – in those days and you walked around and everybody knew each other.

Cork McGee: Yeah. If you seen a stranger, if you seen a stranger to appear up and you hadn't never saw 'im before, you'd either, you'd say he was some kind of law man, game warden or somethin' or bill collector. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: Oh. So not many people back in those days?

Cork McGee: No!

Charlie Petrocci: That came over here?

Cork McGee: No.

Charlie Petrocci: Um.

Cork McGee: Sometimes you could – I believe I could leave here and walk to town when I was in my teens – a teenager – and you'd be lucky if you met a car.

Charlie Petrocci: Umph. Not many cars?

Cork McGee: No, hardly none. I walked. My wife, when I first started courtin' her, she lived over on Jester Street.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And I'd leave Eastside and walk over 'ere ever day. Sometimes twice a day.

Charlie Petrocci: Because . . . (Laughing)

Cork McGee: But you know the way – most time the way I'd go – it wadn't no houses on Ridge Road or nothin', wadn't no houses back through there nowhere.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: I had me a – there was a little road 'ere and I had me a path. I put my hip boots on and make a straight cut through the glades.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) So you went to her house with hip boots?

Cork McGee: Hip boots on, that I did.

Charlie Petrocci: Now did that impress her?

Cork McGee: I don't know if it did. (Laughing) It must a done somethin' or 'nother, she hung on to me. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) It was – you must a been a sight though in those hip boots . . .

Cork McGee: Yeah, yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: To court your wife.

Cork McGee: And I'll tell you somethin' else and she – if she was out here she'd tell you the same thing. I'd come with a snappin' turtle once in a while in my hand. I'd catch 'im and bring 'im – bring 'im along the glade, cross the glade with 'im.

Charlie Petrocci: Did you catch 'im on the way over?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: You'd get a snapping turtle?

Cork McGee: I sure did.

Charlie Petrocci: So you did a little mungeon on the way.

Cork McGee: Mungeon on my way, yeah. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing)

Cork McGee: That's the truth. She'll tell you the same thing.

Charlie Petrocci: And you brought that as a gift or you took him home?

Cork McGee: No. Most time I'd take it home.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh did you?

Cork McGee: Yeah. Her grandmother was a real – a real nice person but she was a little particular on that kind a stuff.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) Oh.

Cork McGee: You go in. You go in her house with a pair of shoes on and when you got ready to leave she pulled that rug up and go wash it.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh did she, did she?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Clean . . .

Cork McGee: Clean, good Lord, she was too clean.

Charlie Petrocci: That sounds like changing the sand in the houses over there.

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah.

Cork McGee: Boy she was clean – the cleanest woman I ever seen in my life.

Charlie Petrocci: Um, um, um.

Cork McGee: She was nice. I loved her to death.

Charlie Petrocci: Did ya, yeah.

Cork McGee: Yelp.

Charlie Petrocci: But people have changed here now and . . .

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: They don't . . .

Cork McGee: They don't visit no more. Used to you'd – people – I've been here, of course I had a lot a birds and stuff and weekends, Sundays, Saturdays and Sundays, people would go back here from all over the Island lookin' at my birds and stuff.

Charlie Petrocci: So you've always had these pet birds out here?

Cork McGee: I had – I had just 'bout a - my own game farm here at one time.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh. What did you have?

Cork McGee: I had ever thing. I had peacocks, turkeys, guinea fowl, all kinds of different breeds of ducks.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: Swan. I had forty – forty some Canada Geese here at one time.

Charlie Petrocci: Did you really – um. What do you have out there now?

Cork McGee: I only got three swan and two snow geese.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh. Why, did you cut back for a reason?

Cork McGee: Uh, yeah, I cut back just a little bit – a little bit a trouble to fool with it and . . .

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh. Did you eat any; have you been eating some of them?

Cork McGee: Uh – not – I've not eat none, very few have I ever eat outside a ducks. I've killed some mallards and stuff like 'at. Scobie ducks, I used to raise them.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah. What about turkey, did you kill any turkey?

Cork McGee: Yeah, I used to eat turkey.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And peacocks, I used to sell them.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: I raised - I had a load a them 'til they got so they wanted to holler at the neighbors – got on their roofs a hollering or bawling. I had to get rid of them.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) So – so then – you still – well, you're not killing any more of those, so you're not living off of what your raising over here?

Cork McGee: No, no.

Charlie Petrocci: You got out of that?

Cork McGee: Don't hardly eat any ducks any more, just don't like 'em. I like a goose once in a while.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: I eat a lot a deer meat, I like deer.

Charlie Petrocci: You like deer meat?

Cork McGee: Yeah!

Charlie Petrocci: Were there deer on this Island when you were growing up?

Cork McGee: Wadn't – never - wadn't even heard of.

Charlie Petrocci: Nothing huh, um.

Cork McGee: I went for years and years over on 'at Refuge 'fore I ever seen my first Sika.

Charlie Petrocci: Really?

Cork McGee: See tracks, but I never could, never did run foul of any one.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing)

Cork McGee: It was a long, long time 'fore I ever done it. Boy when we found out how to hunt 'em, we used to tear them Sika's up. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: Good eating?

Cork McGee: But we found out – see where they were usin' most time you'd find 'em 'round 'em lakes.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh, right.

Cork McGee: Huh – that's – round water and stuff. We were huntin' – we'd hunt in the woods. You didn't see any.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: When we got see – huntin' 'round 'em lakes you could tear 'em up.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Yelp, that's – that's where they're at.

Cork McGee: Yelp.

Charlie Petrocci: That's where they're at.

Cork McGee: They're – they're good eatin' little animal too. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing) So the value system you think, compared to when you were growing up, has certainly changed today. Now the value system is more tourism?

Cork McGee: Oh yeah, sure! You didn't hardly – I told – used to tell people it was – it wadn't hardly a joke the way I used to tell it – that when we seen a stranger comin' in we'd go – when I was little I'd run 'round the house and hide, scared of 'im. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: Why, why did you?

Cork McGee: Don't know. Didn't see no strangers.

Charlie Petrocci: Just know one came over. Even with the bridge, 'cause you were growing up when the bridge was in place coming from the mainland.

Cork McGee: Uh- yeah. I 'member when there was old wooden planks for on the bridge.

Charlie Petrocci: Awe, okay. Did you ever see anybody going around in a horse and buggy?

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Horse and wagon around town?

Cork McGee: Well, let's see, sort of a buckboard.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Cork McGee: I don't remember ever seein' one with a top on it or nothin', but . . .

Charlie Petrocci: But a buckboard, yeah.

Cork McGee: Yeah, and they used to go 'round with horse and cart, some old guys would plowin' gardens for people.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh, okay!

Cork McGee: With a mule.

Charlie Petrocci: What about fish mongers, or maybe that was before your time, going around with a horse and cart to sell fish?

Cork McGee: Uh – I don't 'member with a horse and cart but I 'member an old guy that used to push a little hand cart.

Charlie Petrocci: Oh.

Cork McGee: And he'd go all over this Island. Mr. Bill Clark.

Charlie Petrocci: What did he do?

Cork McGee: And holler fish. He'd go to the fish dock when the pound boats come in.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And get some – he'd get some fish, what he thought he could sell that day and he'd walk all over this Island.

Charlie Petrocci: Pushing . . .

Cork McGee: Pushin' that. Had rubber tires on 'er. And that was – now that was a recreation 'ere, we had a lot a fun, worked on 'im. We used to follow behind 'im and he'd holler as hard as he could holler, "FRESH FISH" and we'd get behind 'im and holler "ROTTEN FISH."  
(Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing)

Cork McGee: Yeah, and he'd get after you. Yelp, he was – that was – we had a lot a fun doin' that when we were young, is [foller] behind 'im. (Laughing)

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, uh-huh. So you yelled rotten fish. . .

Cork McGee: Rotten fish, yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: Did he try to chase you or anything?

Cork McGee: Yeah he would.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing)

Cork McGee: (Laughing) He had a by word, he'd call you a "low down" I never heard 'im swear or cuss or anything, but he'd call you a "low down rascal" or somethin' like 'at.

Charlie Petrocci: (Laughing)

Cork McGee: (Laughing) A little short guy, wadn't big as nothin'.

Charlie Petrocci: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, you've seen a lot of changes in your time here.

Cork McGee: Yeah.

Charlie Petrocci: And things . . .

Cork McGee: And you talk about ice boxes, now they had a little ice box, was just about twice as big as 'at.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh, that cabinet?

Cork McGee: And never ever – it seems to me they come ever week. I don't think – they might a come ever day. I can't remember. Anyway, they'd bring – they had a ice plant over here in town.

Charlie Petrocci: Uh-huh.

Cork McGee: And they would bring it 'round and a truck would come 'round a haulin' ice and you paid ten cents, most time ten cents.

END OF TAPE.