



City of Alexandria
Office of Historic Alexandria
Alexandria Legacies
Oral History Program



Project Name: *Alexandria Legacies*

Title: *Interview with Dee Campbell*

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Location of Interview: *Dee Campbell Rowing Center, Alexandria, Va.*

Interviewer: *Alice Reid*

Transcriber: *Alice Reid*

Abstract: *Dee Campbell had a long and distinguished career coaching rowing in Alexandria City's high schools, starting in 1959 when he became an assistant boys' coach at what was then Francis Hammond High School. He eventually became the girls' coach at T.C. Williams High School and held that post until he retired in 2005. He spent his boyhood on Prince Street, and the Potomac was always a major force in his life. He describes himself as a 'wharf rat' as a child, living the life of Huckleberry Finn. He learned to row at Old Dominion Boat Club after World War II and competed when club rowing was a high-profile sport on the Potomac, drawing rowers from as far away as New York City to compete in regattas such as The President's Cup. Campbell remembers getting girls' crew established at the new T.C. Williams High School when female rowers had to keep their clothes in a drawer in the microfilm section of the Torpedo Factory and their boats on racks outdoors. Known as the Dean of Girls' Scholastic Rowing, Campbell saw many changes in rowing in the City, including the construction of the Alexandria schools' new boat house, now the Dee Campbell Rowing Center.*

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Dee Campbell in front of the Dee Campbell Rowing Center, 2007

Introductions

Alice Reid:	Can you please state your full name, Dee?
Dee Campbell:	DeArcey T. Campbell
AR:	And do I have permission to conduct and record this interview?
Dee Campbell:	Yes, you do.
AR:	Thank you. Where were you born, Dee?
Dee Campbell:	Alexandria, Va.
AR:	What date?
Dee Campbell:	Sept. 28, 1925.



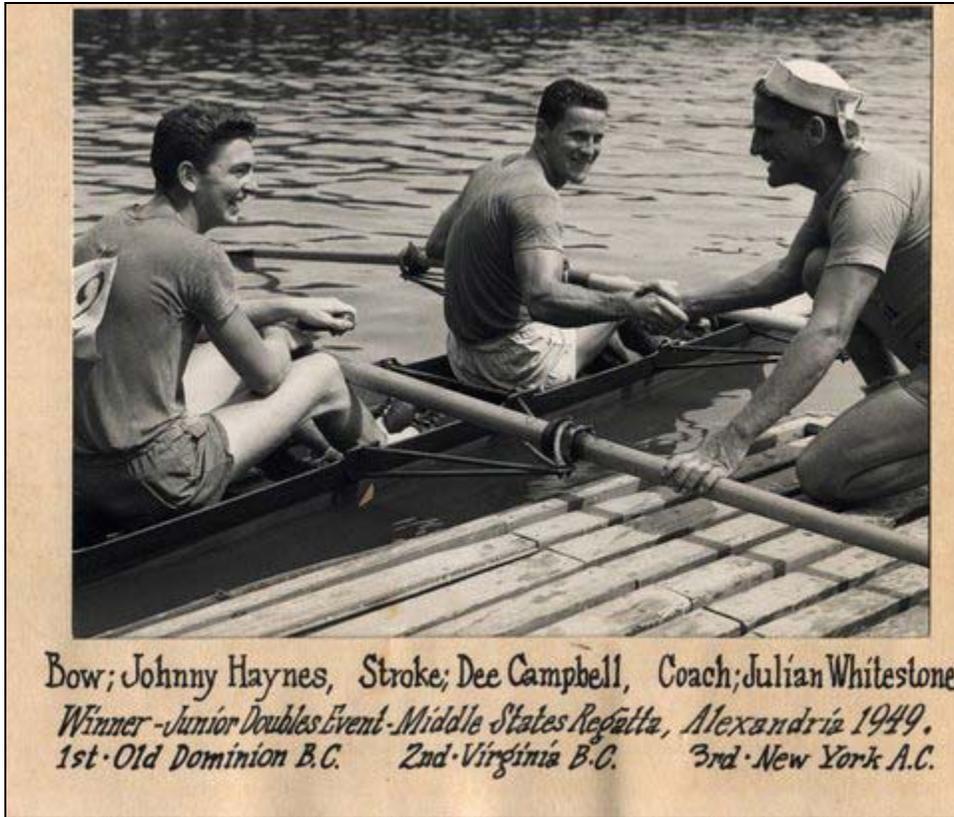
Dee Campbell with a single over his head in the 1940s

Early Career as a Rower

AR:	Your name is on this boat house, which indicates that you are closely associated with rowing in this community. How did you come to the sport of rowing?
Dee Campbell:	When I came out of the Navy in [19]46, a friend of mine who belonged to the Old Dominion Boat Club asked me if I wanted to come down and row. I said, “Sure.” I hung around the river all the time. So I went down and Julian Whitestone and Jack Franklin were the coaches, and they put me in a shell and I did everything wrong. [Laughs.] And I caught I don’t know how many crabs. That term is losing control of your oar. And I swore if I could ever get back to that dock, I would never get into a boat again. And I was right back the next day. That’s how my career in rowing started.
AR:	So you rowed a single?
Dee Campbell:	Single, double, pairs, pair without, fours, eights, quads.

AR: Everything. And who was the other coach beside Julian Whitestone, again?

Dee Campbell: Jack Franklin.



Johnny Haynes, Dee Campbell, and Coach Julian Whitestone in 1949

1940s Rowing Scene on the Potomac

AR: So what was the nature of the Old Dominion Boat Club in those days? Was it primarily rowing?

Dee Campbell: It was part social and part rowing.

AR: But it wasn't sail boats or motor boats?

Dee Campbell: We had some boats that docked down there, that belonged to members, but it wasn't like some of these marinas or anything. It was strictly recreational boating and rowing.

AR: And did you race?

Dee Campbell: Oh yes, I raced in all those events, and it was Middle States Regatta, President's Regatta in Washington, July 4th Regatta in Philadelphia. I raced up in New York, Canada, St. Catharine's, Canada, Mexico City.

AR: Really? Mexico City? That's a long way to go. How did you come to

	do that?
Dee Campbell:	Well, it's a long story. Some Mexican friends came to Philadelphia to row, and they invited a few of us down to Mexico City for their nationals. Jack Kelly, myself, and two others from Philadelphia. We went down, or they went down first. And I drove down with a single on my car, and I drove straight on through because a friend of mine wanted to go down there and help drive. The car broke down—and I'm trying to think—in Laredo Texas. And he said he'd had enough of driving and he would stay there and get the car fixed. I had to take the train, and I had to leave my shell there on top of the car. So I caught the train down. It was an all night drive. I was met at the train station by Mexican friends and they took over from there. And we practiced and rowed. I was second in the singles.
AR:	So had you gotten the loan of another single?
Dee Campbell:	Right. I'd borrowed one of the friend's singles who lived there. And that's how my rowing days were.
AR:	Yeah! You did well! So you rowed with Jack Kelly?
Dee Campbell:	I didn't row with him. He rowed in other events down there. I could have rowed with him if he'd known I was going. But see, he's from Philadelphia, and I'm here. We didn't communicate. I rowed against him.
AR:	Who won?
Dee Campbell:	Kelly. Silly question.
AR:	Now, you mentioned several regattas, one of which was the President's Regatta on the Potomac. Where was that held? Where was the rowing course?
Dee Campbell:	It was between Memorial Bridge and the 14 th Street Bridge. And, uh, we placed the shells on racks and all up there at Haines Point.... The finish line was at the Memorial Bridge.
AR:	So you rowed upstream. So who participated in a regatta like that?
Dee Campbell:	Well, they had all the New York crews. We had Philadelphia crews and Baltimore Arundel club, and local up to Potomac Boat Club and Old Dominion.
AR:	Still, it sounds like rowing was a pretty big deal in the [19]40s.
Dee Campbell:	Oh yeah.
AR:	Not so much with schools but with clubs?
Dee Campbell:	Yeah, clubs.
AR:	And pretty competitive?

Dee Campbell:	Right. We had Virginia Boat Club from Richmond. And we used to go down on Sundays and row down at Richmond on the James River. We'd row down there and then they would come up here, and we'd all go to Potomac on weekends and Baltimore. We just traveled around during the summer.
AR:	On the weekends? Doing races?
Dee Campbell:	Right.
AR:	Sounds like fun. Now is it true that people used to bet on rowing races in the [19]40s?
Dee Campbell:	Not that I know of.
AR:	Was that earlier?
Dee Campbell:	Yeah, it was earlier. Professionals in England and all used to bet. But I don't remember people betting while I was rowing or just prior to it. It was done mostly in England and all. They used to bet and have professional rowers from Canada.

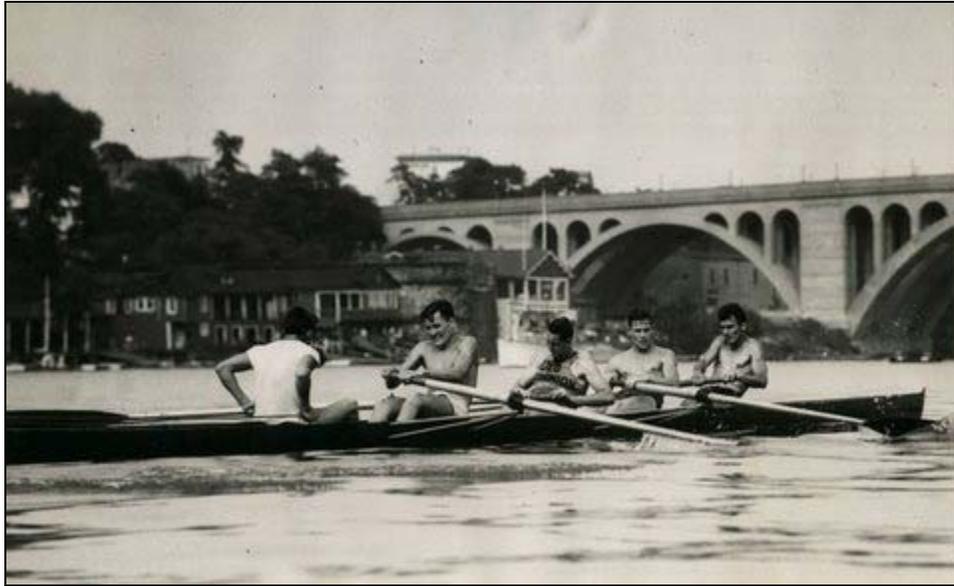


Dee Campbell and John Haynes at the Old Dominion Boat Club Doubles in the 1940s

Coaching the Boys at Francis Hammond High

AR:	So, you are on this facility's wall because you were a coach at T.C.
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	Williams, right? Tell me how you got into coaching.
Dee Campbell:	I was refereeing basketball up at George Washington High School.
AR:	We are talking about what time period here?
Dee Campbell:	My time period. It was [19]59 when I started.
AR:	During the [19]50s you were refereeing basketball?
Dee Campbell:	Right. So Jack Franklin came up and...
AR:	He's the same guy as the crew coach?
Dee Campbell:	Yes, he was at Francis Hammond [High School]. He asked would I like to help him coach. And I said, "Well, yeah," so we get together. He was the head coach at Hammond and I was his assistant. [interruption] George Washington started first. Franklin and Julian Whitestone were the coaches. I got dates.
AR:	Okay, good.
Dee Campbell:	Julian Whitestone was the head coach at George Washington [19]46 to [19]64. Sonny Weiners was head coach from [19]65 to [19]71. Now Sonny is the one that got me started after I came out of the Navy. So he'd been rowing. My brother had rowed while I was sunbathing on Robinson's terminal, down there watching them.
AR:	When you were a kid?
Dee Campbell:	Yeah. Uh, a wharf rat. And then they rowed out of Old Dominion Boat Club. And then Francis Hammond High School came into existence, and Jack Franklin was head coach from 1956 to 1966. And I was his assistant from [19]59, and I took over as head coach 'til [19]71.
AR:	At Hammond?



J. Ayers, J. Edmonds, B. Grant, W. Campbell, and M. Buroughs rowing on the Potomac in the 1940s

Rowing at Alexandria’s Three High Schools During the 1960s

Dee Campbell:	Right, at Hammond. And then T.C. Williams. At that time, both Francis Hammond and George Washington rowed out of the Old Dominion Boat Club. And then T.C. Williams came into existence. And Old Dominion said that’s too much, to have three high schools rowing, taking up so much space, and kids. So they moved to the torpedo plant, the microfilm section.
AR:	Who moved? The schools did?
Dee Campbell:	The schools. All the schools had to move out of Old Dominion, and they started at the Torpedo Factory. Kept the shells there.
AR:	And this was what year, when they were keeping the shells at the Torpedo Factory? Early [19]70s?
Dee Campbell:	I would say the [19]70s, probably the latter part of the [19]60s. And, uh, the head coach at T.C. Williams was Bill Burrus from 1965 to [19]71, and John Ferris, who had rowed at Hammond, from 1972 to [19]79. He was the head coach. And then John Butler, who had rowed at Hammond, from 1977 to [19]79, and then Bob Spousta. I’m not sure where he rowed from but he moved into town. He was from 1980 to [19]86 when the new boat house was built. And I was the head coach for the girls from [19]75 to 2005. And I coached at TC with some boys’ fours as an assistant and then became the girls’ head coach in [19]75.
AR:	So at that point T.C. became the one high school for the city?
Dee Campbell:	Right.

AR:	So you were one of a couple of coaches?
Dee Campbell:	Right. George Washington and Hammond became middle schools.
AR:	But they still had rowing?
Dee Campbell:	Yes, they all fed right into TC Williams.
AR:	Right, right.
Dee Campbell:	Another thing, when George Washington first started rowing—George Washington High School, not THE George Washington—when Hammond came in, they got some of the old shells from George Washington to get started. When T.C. came in, we handed shells down to T.C. Hand-me-downs. But we had a wonderful crew boosters that soon started getting equipment and everything. When the girls were getting a shell this year, the boys would get a shell this year. So that's how that got started. And we used to row for the city championship. At the three schools.
AR:	This is when they were all three high schools?
Dee Campbell:	Yes. And we used to row for the city championship and for the Oxford Rudder, this big rudder that they got from Oxford, England, and we used to put the plates on it, who won the city championship and all. And I'm not sure now whether I have it at my nephew's, or if Steve Weir still has it. I gave it to him to keep because it was just sitting around down there. I think my nephew has it. When we used to go up river, we didn't have trailers and everything. We lashed the shells together, sometimes have three or four eights and fours up on top.
AR:	Oh really, like a big pile of logs, on a barge?
Dee Campbell:	Right. We'd tow it up to Potomac Boat Club, and they'd do the same thing when they come down to row for the Virginia championship down here. There were just the two schools.
AR:	What schools were rowing out of Potomac at that time? Arlington Schools?
Dee Campbell:	George Washington was the first rowing school, then W&L [Washington-Lee High School, Arlington, Va.]. Charlie Butt, right. And that was the only school up there at the time, just the two of us. We would usually win the Northern Virginia championship, and then when we went up to Philadelphia, W&L would win everything. And Nationals. They were the dominant force.
AR:	Scholastic rowing was always a big thing in Philadelphia.
Dee Campbell:	Yes, yes.
AR:	And there was a Stotesbury Cup then, and you would go up there and participate?

Dee Campbell:	Right, right. And then wherever the Nationals would be held, we would go up there, and W&L would go up there. It was held at St. Andrew's, Delaware, and it would rotate around. It was held in Washington, but there're too many power boats up there now. The course isn't as good as some of these other courses. So they started rotating up to Camden, N.J., and up to Philadelphia, and St. Andrew's, New York, and then down to Orlando, so they rotated around. It's going to be in Tennessee next year, Oak Ridge.
AR:	What were rowers like in the early [19]70s? And you were working with girls then. You were working with girls' teams then?
Dee Campbell:	No, boys, all boys at Hammond. They didn't have girls' rowing then.
Girls' Rowing Starts at T.C. Williams	
AR:	When did the girls' rowing start?
Dee Campbell:	1974.
AR:	Were you the first coach of the girls?
Dee Campbell:	No. Another coach didn't get along with the girls, and the girls didn't get along with him, and I had the girls during the summer. I would coach summer crew. And we had a girls' crew that went over to Camden, N.J., for the girls' national junior championship, We won the 8-oared shell representing Old Dominion Boat Club. And the 4-man shell, or 4-woman shell, so John Ferris asked me if I'd like to take the girls over in [19]75, and I said sure. And that's where I remained.
AR:	So, [19]75. So you were one of the earliest scholastic female coaches—coaches of females—on the river. Did W&L have girls at that time?
Dee Campbell:	They started at the same time that we did.
AR:	I see. So you're sort of the dean of women's coaches.
Dee Campbell:	Some say that.
AR:	Yeah. Don't be modest. What were the girl rowers like then? Were they any different from the ones you coached in the 21st century?
Dee Campbell:	Well, I tell you. You didn't have much to go on. When the girls moved to the Torpedo Factory, they had some cabinets over there they kept their clothes in. They pulled a drawer out or something and put their clothes in. They didn't have lockers. And they kept shells on the side of the boat house.
AR:	They were second-class citizens?
Dee Campbell:	Well, no.
AR:	So everybody kept their shells out, not just the girls.
Dee Campbell:	Hammond might have had an eight out there, and George Washington

	might have had an eight. And they moved over to—they had insides and all down at T.C., down at the Torpedo Factory. But we didn't have a lot of lockers and all, so the girls were second choice. They didn't hardly have any place to dress and all. It was pretty rough. It's not like this boat house here [at the foot of Madison Street].
AR:	What kinds of girls were drawn to rowing in those days? It's a hard sport.
Dee Campbell:	Yes, when the girls first started, they were more, I guess you'd say, feminine. Their upper bodies were not as strong as their legs. They'd never participated in anything. And so they had a hard time building up their strength. But then, like, if I want to be competitive with other schools—Philadelphia and all—they had been weight-lifting. So we had to get weights. We had the apple cans filled with concrete, and sandbags. You might have seen some of those up there. You put sand in some of these inner tubes. That's all we had to work with.
AR:	Let me get this straight. For lifting weights you used applesauce cans filled with concrete—and you put a pole between them?
Dee Campbell:	Right, right.
AR:	And then you took old inner tubes and filled them with sand, And what did you do with those?
Dee Campbell:	Well you put them around your neck and all and do squats and all. [At this point one of Dee's former rowers who happens to be in town strolls up and greets us. She joins us.]
AR:	This is Amanda Hart, who rowed for Dee in [19]97 and won the triple crown. Which means you won...?
Amanda Hart:	Stotesbury, U.S. Nationals, and Canadian Nationals.
AR:	Fabulous! Fabulous! That's great, Dee.
Dee Campbell:	During the [19]90s, for 10 years, we were ranked number 1 or 2 in North America.



Dee Campbell in Mexico, 1950

Campbell as Coach

<p>AR:</p>	<p>That's All Right! Well, Dee, you mentioned one of the coaches in the [19]70s who didn't quite get along with the girls. And you were asked to be a coach, I'm assuming, because you had been able to get along with the girls who had done so well during the summer. What was the secret to getting along with the female rowers? Amanda, what is the secret? Cause he pushes you, right?</p>
<p>Amanda Hart:</p>	<p>Yes, he was a very very hard coach, and he made us work very hard. But there was such a legacy here that we wanted to do well because they'd done so well in the past that we wanted to continue that. We weren't just rowing for ourselves. We were rowing for Dee. We wanted his crews to continue.</p>
<p>AR:</p>	<p>But that wasn't true in 1975. There wasn't a legacy. You had to build that. So how did you do it? What was the secret of connecting with these girls and getting them to lift their weights and do their squats with the sand bags?</p>
<p>Dee Campbell:</p>	<p>I fed 'em real good. We went to Generous George's, ate pizza and all.</p>
<p>Amanda Hart:</p>	<p>And candy in the locker.</p>
<p>Dee Campbell:</p>	<p>And candy in the locker.</p>

AR:	You kept candy in your locker?
Dee Campbell:	Oh yeah.
AR:	What kind?
Dee Campbell:	M&Ms and everything.
Amanda Hart:	Jolly Ranchers.
Dee Campbell:	Sometimes they'd bring their own candy and put it in a can.
AR:	So you started doing that early in your career. That was the secret? Like in 1975?
Dee Campbell:	I chewed 'em out, but I also rewarded them. I didn't hold a grudge or anything. You know, if I was mad at them today, I'd come in off the water or something. We didn't get along all the time. [Laughs with Amanda Hart]. Just a third of the time.
AR:	What qualities did you, or would you today, look for in a rower and particularly a female rower?
Dee Campbell:	6 foot or better. Weigh about 170 pounds.
AR:	But there were obviously a lot of women, including this one [turning toward Amanda] who didn't fit that model.
Dee Campbell:	Oh, no. But you asked me...what would you look for. That's what the colleges look for. If you pass under that door there, keep going. But if you have to bend down, we can use you. I was out-beefed plenty of times out there with crews who were bigger than I was. They [T.C.] were just in good shape. And wanted to win. They had killer instinct.
AR:	How did you develop that? How did you encourage it?
Dee Campbell:	I guess it's monkey see, monkey do. From year to year. They just wanted to win. And they were willing to train and sacrifice.
AR:	You had a couple of—you had at least one Olympian.
Dee Campbell:	I had Linda Miller—she rowed in the Olympics—and Charlotte Hollings. She won the world championships in a four. She stroked a four in Germany for a bronze medal. And then up in Indianapolis I think she rowed bow in a four that won the world championships.
AR:	And Title 9 came along while you were a women's coach. Did you see rowing change? Did it become more competitive for women at that time?
Dee Campbell:	I don't think so. Most of these kids, they had sisters and all that rowed. Word of mouth. I used to put pictures up in the trophy case of what they'd won and individual pictures and all to try and recruit. And more people would see it and say, "Oh, they won a gold medal up there. I think I'll try crew." And it built up from there.

AR:	When did you have the largest number of girls in the T.C. Williams program? And how many were there? Do you remember?
Dee Campbell:	Oh, I would say we've had at times maybe, say 105 to 110 girls, and that ranged from the eighth grade to the twelfth.
AR:	And that was both lightweights and heavies?
Dee Campbell:	Yes,
AR:	But you were the coach of the heavyweights, right?
Dee Campbell:	Right, Steve Weir, he graduated from Virginia Tech, and he came down and rowed with me for a practice. He was my coxswain in high school. And asked me could he help me. At the time I was by myself. And I said, "Be my guest."
AR:	And this was which high school? Hammond?
Dee Campbell:	No, T.C. He had coxswained at Hammond for me, and then he went on to Virginia Tech and graduated.



Homer Zink, Unidentified Rower, Jack Kelly, and Dee Campbell at the President's Cup Regatta in the 1940s

Boyhood as a "Wharf Rat"

AR:	I want to back up to the earlier time, again. You mentioned that you were a wharf rat. What did you mean by that?
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Dee Campbell:	I hung around the water all the time. I lived up on Prince Street.
AR:	What block?
Dee Campbell:	The 400 block, and we just would fish, do rowboats in the summer. [Rowers leaving the boat house interrupt to tell Dee the windows have been left open.] We just were out on the river all the time. That's why I say I was a wharf rat.
AR:	Okay I'm going to stop the tape for a minute.... I'm going to resume the interview now after a little break. We were talking about what it meant to be a river rat, in the 1930s, before the war?
Dee Campbell:	It was probably the late [19]30s.
AR:	You can repeat. You lived in the 400 block of Prince?
Dee Campbell:	407 Prince Street, and I just did everything like Huckleberry Finn, I guess—just hung around the river all the time during the summer, and we'd hook on to these sand barges going up the river.
AR:	What do you mean, hook on to a sand barge?
Dee Campbell:	Well you'd have these dredges and these barges filled with sand going up to Smoots [Smoot's Sand and Gravel], going up to Washington, and we'd row out and hook on to the back and get towed up to Washington, just sit on the barge and that was the way we spent the days.
AR:	And was the barge captain aware that you were doing this?
Dee Campbell:	Uh, I guess he didn't care. Wasn't too much he could do. He had about three barges behind him. What could he say?
AR:	And he was in a tug boat?
Dee Campbell:	He was in a tug boat pulling. We'd get off whenever we wanted to.
AR:	Did you stay in the little row boat or did you get off?
Dee Campbell:	We'd get on top of the barge there.
AR:	On top of the sand?
Dee Campbell:	Not on top of it. We'd just get on the stern end of it.
AR:	And the barges were coming from where? Where did they get the sand?
Dee Campbell:	I'm not positive . They would dredge and fill these barges with sand and take it up to Smoot's.
AR:	To Smoot's Lumber?
Dee Campbell:	Well, uh, You got me there. I'm not sure of the name of the place. I'm not really sure. [Dee subsequently established that it was Smoot's Sand & Gravel Co.]
AR:	Were they filling land?

Dee Campbell:	No, they would sell it.
AR:	Sell the sand? In Washington—Haines Point?
Dee Campbell:	It's up in that area where the Anacostia takes off. I don't know what they called it. This goes back a long time. But they had places up there they would deliver it. That's all I know.
AR:	And you guys would hitch a ride. What fun! What else did you do?
Dee Campbell:	Primarily just....We'd go over to the sand pile. This was before the Wilson Bridge was up. There's a cove right across the river. They had huge sand piles up there and we'd go over there and swim and spend the day and raid the little farm over on the Maryland shore, get carrots and everything. Just regular rogues.
AR:	You were just regular rogues. I love it! And when you went across the river, did you row in the little row boat?
Dee Campbell:	Yeah.
AR:	And when you say we, who all would hang out with you.
Dee Campbell:	There were quite a few people.
AR:	Neighbor guys?
Dee Campbell:	Yeah, from around Prince Street.
AR:	How old were you then? Were you a teenager?
Dee Campbell:	Yeah, I was anywhere from 11 to 14 or 15. Back during the summer in high school, it was part of my life, being on the river.
AR:	And you swam in the river?
Dee Campbell:	Oh yeah, it was clean then. You could take your row boat over there. They called it the "Little Susquehanna," and it was probably about 2 to 3 feet deep. And you could see the turtles and all swimming around on the bottom and all. It was just real clear.
AR:	And was this over at the cove across the way?
Dee Campbell:	I can't really recall where the Susquehanna was but it was just a little tributary. It's probably not there now. The way they've built up and everything. They've cut off going around the island over there. Used to be called Goat Island. And when the bridge came along, they separated it. We were over there from early morning until the sun went down.
AR:	Who owned the row boats that you used to take? Did you have your own, and kept it tied up?
Dee Campbell:	No, Rosie Hayden. He lived in the 100 block of Duke Street and kept boats at a little wharf down at the foot of Duke Street. They have a little park down there now. It's built up. There was just a little shack down

	there where we would hang out. And Rosie Hayden and Sinner Hayden [brothers known to Campbell only by their nicknames], they would let us use row boats to go out on the river and sometimes they would go out fishing with us.
AR:	Did you have to rent them?
Dee Campbell:	No.
AR:	They would just let you take them?
Dee Campbell:	They would rent them to people. But we were just real good friends. Sometimes we would go out fishing with them. But they were elderly folks. And we were impatient and just sitting there, and moving around, we'd get impatient. So they would say, "Get out of the boat if you're going to disturb everything." And we'd just get out of the boat. And you used to be.... You can't go straight across the river now 'cause it's flats. We used to go out there and run up and down there, playing football. Just about this deep, and I guess people passing by in their yachts would see us, and our row boats, and wonder how we could be running up and down in the middle of the river. So we knew where everything was because well, like I say, we knew where the channels were, the cuts, where you...we could row across or cut across where regular boats they would get stuck on these flats there. They wouldn't know how to get across. There were just certain areas where you can get across.
Potomac Ferries and the Wilson Bridge	
AR:	Do you remember when the Wilson Bridge was built?
Dee Campbell:	I can't give you the date, but I was living in Hunting Towers the day it was dedicated, and I can't really tell you the date.
AR:	Do you remember watching it being built?
Dee Campbell:	Oh, yeah, and I remember they cut the ribbon and all. Like I say I was living down at the center building there at Hunting Towers.
AR:	How did you feel about the bridge? Did you welcome it?
Dee Campbell:	Well, sure, It was a short cut. I don't know so much about it now. It's like a death trap. You get across you don't know if you got to around Washington or not to get back. I mean it's pretty hectic. No, at the time, it didn't bother me. I guess nothing ever bothered me.
AR:	Was there a ferry before the bridge? Was there a ferry that went across to Maryland?
Dee Campbell:	Up here.
AR:	Where was it when you say up here?
Dee Campbell:	When I say up here, King Street had a ferry. By the Old Dominion Boat

	Club that went across at an angle. They also had at the Torpedo Factory a boat that went from there over to the Naval Research Lab and took people over there to work and then brought 'em back to Alexandria in the evening. My brother worked over there. He was head of the glass department, making all kinds of tubes, whatever, in glass.
AR:	Yes, labs always had somebody who knew how to do that.
Dee Campbell:	When he retired, they brought him back for a number of years as a consultant. Even when he was living down at Front Royal, he'd come up and stay with his daughter or something and go over to the lab.
Career with Washington Gas Light	
AR:	Interesting. And how did you come to work for Washington Gas and Light?
Dee Campbell:	We go right back to Sonny Weiners again. He read meters for the gas company, and he was getting promoted to the inside answering complaints from people like you, and he asked me if I'd like his job. I was over at the Naval Research Lab. My brother had gotten me a job over there in a chemistry lab. I didn't know anything about chemistry. There was this huge tank of water that had this underwater jet, when they were coming up with this underwater jet stuff. And my job was to open the valve for the air and it would flow and break this thing, and then I had to take it over to the machine shop for repairs. And the chemist or whoever he was would go back into his office to the drawing board and find out why it broke and this and that. But that's all I would do.
AR:	You were bored?
Dee Campbell:	Yeah, wasn't I! So I told him, "Sure. I could get a job with the gas company reading meters," so I read meters for six and a half years, until I got tired of it, because it kept growing.
AR:	Were you reading meters in Alexandria?
Dee Campbell:	Yes, and I read all over Alexandria. All these houses down in Old Town, I've been to them all. And then I got promoted to leak locator, locating leaks, testing, and then I got to maintenance man and then I became a maintenance foreman for emergency work, and that's where I ended up. Construction, mostly maintenance—broken mains, broken services. Building all these new subdivisions and busting lines, right and left.
AR:	What's the most dramatic thing you witnessed in your job?
Dee Campbell:	I would suppose it's Magdalene Court, where they had an explosion which really started the gas company on safety-minded things. The man had gone out and came back and rang the doorbell or something. Gas had been leaking. Construction had broken a two-inch main, and it

	hadn't been repaired properly. Gas had gotten into all these houses. And the shock from this doorbell made an explosion that killed a couple of people.
AR:	Where is Magdalene Court?
Dee Campbell:	It's down off Wakefield Chapel Road.
AR:	In Fairfax County?
Dee Campbell:	Yeah. And that plus the one up off of Glebe Road, up in Arlington. I'd been locating some services in the area, and I just happened to pass this house, and they were doing a job there. And that evening, there was an explosion, blew the house apart. The only thing that was standing was this grandfather clock. Wasn't a scratch on it. Just standing up. Everything else, the walls and everything, was just gone.
AR:	So you had to come to the scene and repair it.
Dee Campbell:	It was too late to repair it. We cut the gas off. They had to build a new house. We had a couple of fires and all where some of the men were burned. It's been so many years. I can't think of all these things. But I was pretty lucky. Smelling that gas all that time, I could have been worse off.
AR:	Did they allow you to take off early to do your coaching? How did that work?
Dee Campbell:	I'm still getting my retirement. I really used to spend more time down at the boat house than at the gas company, repairing shells, doing everything like that. They were pretty nice to me. I don't think I could have worked anywhere else and did what I did. 'Cause 46 years coaching, 45 years at the gas company. They had to be happy with me. And my office at the gas company had rowing pictures all over the walls, so they knew what I was doing. The dispatchers covered for me all the time, 'cause I had radios and all. And I always had good crews that worked for me, and they knew what they were doing. I didn't have to stand over the top of them. Some people—it's just like coaching, in a way. If I'm standing over the top of you doing your job and I'm telling you, tighten it a little bit more. I mean they know what they're doing, so why should I stand there and dog 'em? Like I say, I had two good crews all the time. Those guys became foremen too. They were pretty smart.
Naval Academy's Boost for Scholastic Rowing in Alexandria	
AR:	Is there anything I haven't asked you about that you think is significant about your past as a crew coach, past as a rower, the development of Alexandria rowing?
Dee Campbell:	Well, I didn't mention when George Washington first started rowing, they'd got this old barge from the Naval Academy. It was water soaked

	and everything else, and at the end of the season, we used to dock it at the boat club, and at the end of the season, it took every boy that was down there rowing to lift it out of the water. I mean it was heavy.
AR:	Wooden.
Dee Campbell:	So we were pretty fortunate both at Hammond and at George Washington to get a lot of equipment and all from the Naval Academy. We got ergometers—older, not like those up there [in the boat house today]. And they'd help us repair some of the oars. We'd take them over to the Naval Academy, and they'd repair them, and we'd bring 'em back, and the boosters would give the coaches over there, \$50 or \$75 or something. They were real good to us.
AR:	So they did that because they wanted to encourage rowing?
Dee Campbell:	Well I guess Jack Franklin and Julian Whitestone knew Rusty Callow over there, who I got to know. And we used to go over and row against the lightweight plebes at Hammond. And we'd bet shirts. We beat 'em two years straight. And the next year we went over there, and the coach said, "We're not betting shirts this year." They wouldn't bet shirts. That's some of the competition we had. Not like going to Occoquan and having about 8 or 10 crews down there to row against each week. We didn't have anybody. It was either Washington and Lee or over at the Naval Academy or St. Andrew's. In the first year that we had Nationals, it was just St. Andrew's and us. That was in 1974. St. Andrews had beat us two times. For the Nationals, we beat them. That was the first national championship. And then we won it in [19]75, all those dates. Stotesbury, Nationals, Canadian Nationals....
AR:	Dee, I think this has been a really interesting interview. And I think what I will do is transcribe it and send it to you. [End]
	
<p><i>Dee Campbell in 2007</i></p>	