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Transcript of The Dory Derby Accident

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Title: Transcript of The Dory Derby Accident

Storyteller: Don Grotjohn

Interviewer: Stephanie Raso

Interview Date: 2011-07-01

Collection: *Launching through the Surf: The Dory Fleet of Pacific City*

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Transcribers: Stephanie Raso, Andrea Snyder, Mary Beth Jones

DON GROTJOHN: Ah, Don Grotjohn, Pacific City, Oregon. The history of my being down here began in about '68.

We used to have—uh—the Dory Derby, call it the Dory Festival now pretty much. There's a big parade that goes through town. It takes 45 minutes or an hour for the parade to go. Dozens and dozens of floats and dories and—. It's all around dories. Yeah, we have a mar—grand marshal and all that kind of stuff. Fun day, fun weekend.

Um, back in the '70s, when I first started to get involved, it was a lot of about racing, and fishing contests, everybody would race out, and so forth. And I participated in some of those. We had a variety of races that were involved, horse, uh, boats with under 35-horsepower, boats with over 35-horsepower, uh—around the rock and back, around floats, patterns. It got to be—to the point where it got to be dangerous; it became too competitive. Um—for instance, my boat got crashed one time out there, and I had to put a chunk back in the side. Uh—oh, I wasn't racing at the time, we were, we needed three floats out there to make a pattern for the boats to go around, figure eight patterns for the racers. So I was asked by the guy who was arranging the race if I'd take my boat and go out there and float, well we

only had two floats. He said, “Would you go float out there and be the third float?” Well, I said, “Sure.” [Laughs] So, I get out there and one of the boats came racing around and lost control and turned and skidded into the side of my boat. Knocked a big chunk out of it. And, uh, it was pretty funny because—it only broke it down to the spray rail so I wasn’t really taking water except when I pushed his boat off of my boat it came back up and so I quit taking water. But I had a couple of people aboard, so I immediately started and headed back for the beach, fast because I didn’t really want to be out there with a hole in the side of my boat. [Laughter] So Paul Hanneman¹ was announcing, and he’s the co-chair, and he was on the mic at that time and that was pretty funny because I was told later that as we came in he was watching with binoculars and he was on the mic and he said, “Clear the beach, clear the beach! There’s been an accident. There might be injuries. There might be deat—I mean there might be, there might be injuries!” [Laughter] And um, I have to restate that. What he actually said, “Clear the beach! There might be survivors, I mean injuries!” [Laughter] That’s what he said. And that was really funny. Uh, I was told later. Of course, when I slid up on the beach, I couldn’t even get out of the boat because a crowd all came in to look at the damage, so. But everything was fine. Paul in fact fixed my boat. He’s one of the local boat builders in those days. So he fixed it.

NOTES:

¹Paul Hanneman served as co-chair of the Pacific City Dorymen’s Association for many years and is one of the Dory Project’s storytellers.