

My Life on the Water

By: Captain Herbie Sadler

I didn't become a waterman by following my father's footsteps like most watermen. Even though my father was a waterman, he never taught me how to be one. Instead, I found my love for the water when I was 12 years old. I worked cleaning fish for Mr. Stewart, and he paid me a penny for each one I cleaned. I knew from then on that I wasn't going to do anything else but follow the water.



The water was my first love, until I met Gladys. I would sweep outside my house on Compromise Street just so I could see her as she walked back to Eastport. In 1928, I married her, and now she is my partner at Sadler's Seafood. I built the store myself, and we sell crabs, oysters, and fish there. I take great pride in my crabs. I wouldn't ever put one in our pot unless I knew it was good.

I only use trot-lines to catch my crabs. I'll set up my trot-lines, then I'll pick up Gladys. She'll sit on the back of the boat and fish and help me knit my nets. Sometimes, when I crab off of Horn Point, I let the kids sit on the boat and fish. They love hearing my stories while I salt my eels and bait my lines between trips. I always see a bit of myself in the neighborhood kids selling soft crabs, and I try to help them any way I can.

To get around on the water, I have two boats that Captain Rogers built for me. I use Little Hes for crabbing, and Big Hes for oystering. Oystering is hard work. Sometimes it's so cold that my gloves freeze to my hands. It's all worth it though. I love my home, and I love my family, and I love my work. I never want to leave home or the crab house.

I want to help in the war effort but I'm too old to fight, so during the day I oyster, and at night I go to Fort Meade to work on the barracks. I take the servicemen oysters which they love - they say it tastes like home!