

Barcat Skipper

"Elmer Crockett talks in a voice seldom heard in America these days. We owe Larry Chowning our gratitude for what he has done to catch the words for all of us."

-The Washington Post

Tangier Island lies in the Chesapeake Bay about midway between Tidewater Virginia and Virginia's Eastern Shore, about ten miles below the Maryland state line and about forty miles above Cape Charles. Since Tangier was settled, nearly three hundred years ago, most of the men who have lived there have worked the water, and to a large extent that is still the case. Until recent years, the islanders lived in remote isolation. They were an independent lot, self-reliant, and not infrequently rather eccentric. The tales in this collection are true. For the most part they recount events in the life of Elmer Crockett, born on Tangier in 1903, who has shared with Mr. Chowning the reminiscences of his lifelong occupation as a waterman. A few of the stories involve earlier generations of Crocketts and the accounts, handed down, have become part of the island lore. Sometimes two or more events have been woven together, sometimes names have been changed, a little poetic license has been taken, but - all in all - the tales are true mirror of life on Tangier Island.