

Name of person interviewed: Manuel “Manny” Vinagre [MV]

Translator: Joe Vinagre [JV]

Facts about this person:

Age: 69

Sex: Male

Occupation: boat owner, retired fisherman

If a fisherman (if retired, list the ports used when fishing),

Home port: New Bedford

Residence (Town where lives): New Bedford, MA

Ethnic Background: Portuguese

Interviewer: Markham Starr

Transcriber: Laura Orleans

Place interview took place: Fairfield Inn, Working Waterfront Festival

Date and time of interview: September 26, 2010

ABSTRACT

Manny Vinagre began working on the water from the time he was 8 years old in Buarcos a village of Figueira da Foz, Portugal, unloading sardine boats. His father, grandfather, and uncle were all fishermen. His father was lost at sea while on a Gloucester dragger. Manny fished for ten years as part of the Portuguese “White Fleet” dory fishing for cod off the coast of Newfoundland. He provides much detail about dory fishing as well as describing several close calls. He later went on to be a draggerman and boat owner in New Bedford and still owns the F/V SEA SIREN. He describes several close calls while dragging.

Index

Keywords: Figuera da Foz, Portugal, White Fleet, Gloucester, dory fishing, cod, sardines,

000-3:00 b. 12-17-1940 in Buarcos, Figueira da Foz, Portugal.

3:00-6:00 Father, uncle and grandfather all fishermen. Father died at sea on Gloucester dragger

6:00-9:00 Memories of father

9:00-15:00 Memories of father. Size of codfish in old days. Manny describes his first fishing job, unloading sardines at the age of 8; attended professional fishing school in Lisbon.

15:00-18:00 Fishing with “white fleet” (dory fishing off coast of Newfoundland) for ten years

18:00-21:00 Describes everyday life of dory fishing

21:00-24:00 Food, cod splitting, baiting hooks, etc.

24:00-27:00 More on dory fishing

27:00-30:00 Story of being 12 miles away from the mothership

Tape 2

000-6:00 Describes how they were paid

6:00-9:00 Size of dories; describes close calls, getting caught in 80 mph winds

9:00-12:00 Story of waiting out a windstorm next to an iceberg and operating in fog

12:00-15:00 Use of conch shell and compass to navigate in fog

15:00-18:00 Story of captain sending crew out in dories w/out a rest and how they caught nothing

18:00-21:00 Describes incident w/ rogue wave while fishing in modern day dragger

21:00-24:00 More on storm

24:00-27:00 More on storm and rescue

27:00-30:00 Another storm. Describes philosophy of going out in bad weather when other boats are tied up so as to beat the rest of the fleet and get a good price for the catch.

Tape 3

000-3:00 Story of grandfather who lost his arm when a grenade landed on the deck of his boat

3:00-End Manny’s children and grandchildren (not in fishing industry)

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MV I'm gonna try to gonna make, was my best

MS No, no it'll be great. This is wonderful. We really appreciate you coming down. Ok so the questions what will do is he'll turn it on and I'm going to ask you

MT It's on.

MS Oh ok. I'll ask you to just state your names because I don't want to mispronounce it and I know I probably will so...Alright, why don't we, we'll start now. I'm Mark Starr and I'm here at the New Bedford Waterfront Fishing Festival in 2010 to interview Mr. Manny Vinagre and his cousin

JV Cousin

MS Cousin Joe Vinagre is here to help with translation and Manny may either answer in Portuguese or in English depending on what he feels comfortable with. So if you could tell me your name and where and when you were born, what year.

MV My name is Manuel S. Vinagre. I born in Portugal, 12-17-1940. I got 69 years old.

MS Now was your family in fishing when you were born?

MV All of my family was, our family, now it's a big family, all of them is fishermen. I am proud to be the last fisherman of the family. So now that our family is, it's a little short. It's, my cousin, my brothers get two boys or whatever and the family is going to be real short.

JV In the fishin' industry

MV In the fishin' industry

JV In the fishing industry. It's not, our family's extended, but as far as fishing, he's the last person to be in the fishing industry. We have a lot of boys, but they have gone into law and science.

MS Now you're, what town in Portugal were you living in when you were born?

MV I born also on the Figuera da Foz, the middle of the country

JV Buarcos

MV Buarcos

JV Buarcos

MV A little village in the middle of the city. But it all the history, it's almost the same. It's gonna be linking one for the other.

JV It's well, it just a little point, it's like being from South Dartmouth vs. New Bedford.

MV Yes.

JV We're connected and yet there is a pride separation there.

MS What type of fishing did your father do then?

MV My father? My father is works with seiner for the sardines in the,

3:00

all the dragger, it's just a little dragger. You're gonna push the net by hand in the, with a jaw, jaw bone. So after that they go the merchant...

JV Yeah merchant marine. Our, like I said, our grandfather was a skipper on the seiners, on the sardine seiners in the early 1900s and Manny's father graduated out of the fishing into merchant marine, so most of his marine life was on merchant ships rather than fishing. Whereas my father was fishing all his life until he retired from early age of 9 being with our grandfather. You know they had to be engaged in something. But no his father didn't do much fishing.

MS And did your, did your parents come to this country or did you come by yourself?

MV No my parents is come for this country and then after they call me to come.

JV Come in '66, his parents came in '66.

MV Yes.

MS When did you come?

MV Uh, '72. 1972

MS And was that to New Bedford?

MV I was too straight Gloucester. All of my family lived there. So at that time, it's the, the Gloucester port is the, has a good in the fishing industry, but it's not my language. Most of the guys is Italian guys. So I'm gonna follow the, my language which is the Portuguese language right there, it's New Bedford. I had a lot of friends here and I recognized a lot of people. That's right this is the good thing to make a chance to gonna fish in here. That's why I come, I moved from Gloucester to here. I live only couple of months there.

JV I should note that his father was the first casualty of our family in the fishing industry. He died at sea.

MV He died at sea. He was overboard.

JV 1970 he fell overboard fishing off of an Eastern Rigger in Gloucester.

MV He fishing with Italian people

JV The crew, the crew, he was the only Portuguese on the crew and they caught him, they caught him right away. He fell overboard, fell on the net,

6:00

but apparently he banged his head on the side of the boat, 'cause he had a big bruise on his forehead

MV Yeah

JV And so. But he was caught and he's buried in New Bedford, in Gloucester.

MV So I look forward to going fishing with some people.

JV With people that he could communicate with that he alleges that his father's problem was mainly that he couldn't communicate well with the crew.

MV Few years later, few years later I was fishing with the Italian people here. They, his name is Marc Antonio. They calls Marc Antonio he's the captain. They passed away too. So I've come to work with them. Or he comes to work with me on the boat. So they know all my father's story, but he don't, they don't mention nothing for me, because they knows what I've been through. So now I want to know what happened. But something happened I guess. But it's gonna belongs to the past.

MS It must have been very tough on your mother.

MV Of course. My mother, since that time, she has Alzheimer's, poor lady.

JV Your mother is in her 90s now.

MV Yeah. And then, actually, she remember all the things, she cry a lot when she remember my father. She cry a lot. Even my.

JV Yeah. She's still dressed in black today. She's still in mourning for his past. He was a nice man.

MV It's a life anyway.

JV He was a lot of fun. He was an extremely humorous man.

MV I miss my father a lot. I told him I want my grandchildren, even my sons, that my daddy hasn't passed away, he passed away when I pass away. It'sgonna be the both, because he is still in my mind.

JV And he was a very humble person, but when you were around him, he was a wonderful guy.

MV Oh yeah. Nice man, nice man.

JV Lot of fun.

MV Too funny, it's a very tough man, but he's funny. He's tough for working, he's, he was a very, very hardworking man.

9:00

JV If you want to do some research, back into time that he was fishing, when they were unloading fish, I think National Geographic came by and took a picture of him holding two codfish with his arms stretching up and the tails were touching the ground. And he was a big man, he was a big man. And he was holding two codfish by the gills and both tails were touching the ground. That's when large cods were caught. And I'd like to get a picture of that, I've been asking, but...

MV My mom's got this picture.

JV Yeah I know. I had a great time with them and even back in Portugal, whenever, he was in the merchant marine, but whenever he was in town, the whole neighborhood, you could hear laughing all over the neighborhood.

MV All the time. Everyone like to be near him.

JV People hung around near him, he was laughing, you could hear laughs all around the neighborhood and you knew that he was in town.

MS You could tell where he was by the laughter.

MV He was a humorist man, humorist man.

JV Very, very funny.

MV Very funny.

MS Now when did you first start fishing? Or what was your earliest experience?

MV Oh...I don't remember my first one. I remember my first job, I remember my first boat. This is funny. I start as a boy eight years old. My first boat,

JV It's uh, ok in order to clarify that, we came from a mainly seining sardine port. But most of the fish was not unloaded on the pier, perse, it was loaded off barges or large boats, not flat barges, but hollow with a hole barges. And that was his first job was to work on one of those barges unloading fish from the boats.

MV Yes

JV The boats would moor out on the outside and the fish was

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Transcribed by Laura Orleans

MV A mile more or less to the beach

JV Yeah about a mile off the beach. And the fish used to be sold on the beach, on the sand, right on top of the sand. It was a closed area and it was auctioned. The fish was unloaded on sand on piles and it was actually auctioned cause...

12:00

MV Even the beach, even the beach, it was funny

JV It was an enclosed area, roped. It was roped area, and it was auctioned there. And obviously it was, there was a government representative and it was a government house actually right up the beach. So the government representatives were there. And so it was auctioned in public and that's how it was done. It was unloaded from the boats, from the fishing boats into barges, brought on to the beach in baskets, in woven type baskets and loaded on the beach in piles and then it was auctioned.

MS And you worked

JV Yeah that was his first job

MS So you worked in those open boats bringing the fish in?

MV Yes.

MS And you were eight? Or is that later?

MV Eight years old I started to work, eight years old. So I was working, well before the school for the summertime only because I was in school. But this is my first payment. Six escudos

JV Back in Portugal it was escudo, and he earned six escudos for that day.

MV Six escudos, half a liter of the wine

JV Oh yeah.

MV But I don't drink, I bring the wine for home.

JV The crew was also paid in wine portions. So in addition to the six escudos he also got a half a liter of wine.

MV Half a liter wine [laughing]

MS Eight years old

JV It was part of the

MV Eight years old I don't drink. I bring the drink, because it's not allowed for me to drink.

JV And he didn't turn out to be an alcoholic, so you gotta put everything in the proper perspective.

MV It was my...

JV Yeah youth, it was part of his youth.

MV It's, I get old...

JV You started rough.

MS And then how about, what was your next job in fishing when you got older?

MV Well after that, after that I continued on to little draggers like my father did before. And then after I work then to the fifteen years old or sixteen, sixteen years old. After that I ??for the professional fishing school in Lisbon I go up there, the professional fishing school. After that.

15:00

After that Figueira da Foz, I go to the big boat, fishing in the Terra Nova, in the ??

JV The white fleet

MS Wow

JV Off Newfoundland

MV I fishing there, ten years.

MS Now were those on sailing vessels?

MV Yeah. No the mother ship it gets a big motor. So before that, I saw many boats like that, like the CHRISTIE and GAZELLA. I fishing the same time to the GAZELLA I saw many times the GAZELLA fishing together. You know GAZELLA? Yeah.

JV But his work was done on dories

MS Right, right, so

JV He rowed a dory out on the open sea with a box of hooks and bait and that's how he did his living for ten years.

MS So you were out on a powered ship, no sailing. And you'd go over to the Grand Banks with dories?

MV Yes only, the motor sail, the motor boat, it's a big boat, it's 200 feet, 200 something feet.

MS And how many fishermen would be on board roughly?

MV 80, 80 fishermen. Every single boat get the men. We was 107 people on the boat including the Captain, first mate, engine, first engine.

MS And how many dories did they carry?

JV He said 80. The total crew was a hundred and seven, but out of dorymen, out of each on that particular boat that he was on that was 80 dories.

MV 80 dories.

MS So could you describe when you're fishing there, what your typical day when you're fishing would be. When you got up, when you baited.

JV translating in Portuguese

MV We start fishing, we wake up 4 o'clock the morning, after that, you're gonna eat some, most of the time its coffee, its bean soup or something like that. Then we go to the freeze to cut the bait to go out fishing.

JV You gotta cut the bait yourself.

MV Of course.

JV Each fishermen has to cut the bait.

MV Their own bait

JV That's why the old saying, you either cut bait or fish

MV Then we go, well every fisherman choose your best place or the good place to go, you know it's a fisherman's life. They have to choose the best place to fish.

18:00

JV The fishing ground.

MV The fishing ground.

JV Each fisherman picks their own, by intuition. They sail away. And it's on the dories, the dories have a sail.

MV So sometimes we gonna row, sometimes we gonna sail to more fast. So where you gonna be exactly, the place that we think to go fishing, we put the anchor and leave the longline, the longline by the wind. We spend almost an hour and a half to put the longline out. You have a lot of hooks, it's a, the hooks is strange...

JV How many?

MV It all depends the fisherman. 1200 hooks. But some other fishermen, all depends. It's not equal. Once some fishermen is gonna more tough or the man is greedy all depends. Some fishermen is more greedy than the others. So the greedy ones like I did,

JV He was...

MV I use, I use a lot of hooks. Don't matter the weather. Believe me or not. I put my own line out with 30 miles wind. Out, put out. And then I don't know. If you want to pick up the

JV line

MV I don't know if the weather is gonna be worse or good, or better. I don't know so...wind is uh...

JV Challenging

MV This is going to be a kind of fishing. Go out fishing and choose the place like I said, like I said. And then, but it's funny, we got a lunch box to eat. A couple of pieces of fried codfish and a thermos of coffee, and that's it, a couple of pieces of bread or something like that. We spend 12 hours out with a piece of bread and two fried codfish

JV Fillets

MV Steaks or fillets. So after that, most of the time, that's why I say it all depends the fisherman, most, many times, I bring my lunch box the same way, like we

21:00

JV That he took out.

MV I don't take,

JV He never

MV It's just too take, to catch the fish, this is my hobby, it's my life. I forgot about the

JV Lunch

MV for the lunch. Many times I spend 10 hours, 11 hours without eat, without a break, nothing. So after that, even the work we get out that, when he comes the mother ship, we unload the boat to the mother ship and then after you gonna eat something is go back to work for to split the codfish

JV Cause he was a specialist in splittin'

MV You split the codfish

JV You get additional pay

MV It's nothing

JV Not every fisherman did what you did.

MV No not many. We got one. Manny Silvia's the champion of the split of the codfish. I did that, but I'm not strong enough.

JV It takes

MV I'm not strong enough

JV It takes great strength

MV I'm not a big man so when he have 22 years old, I'm skinny like a pin.

JV Ever see splitting cod with a bent

MV I did that actually. When my boat bring the cod fish or give to me. I split here, and salt the codfish for myself.

MS So when did you bait the hooks? Did you bait them on board or were you baiting them as you put out the line?

MV We put the bait, we cut the bait in this, most of the time its squid and mackerel and sardines. This is the three kinds of bait that we carry for fishing.

MS Squid, mackerel and

MV And sardines.

MS Oh sardines. Oh ok.

MV Sardine. So you cut em just like this. You cut em like this and then you're gonna put the bucket, the

JV A bucket, yeah a tub

MV A tub, put the

JV Your question, yeah, each hook is baited as it goes out.

MS As it goes out

MV So you go though the wind, you gonna put every hook, one bait.

JV See that, what he was saying, he anchors the line and then with the wind, he lets the wind pull him away and as he's being pulled away, he's hooking, and baiting

24:00

MV And then sometimes we put the trawl outside by the sail. Put the sail sometimes, the washing is very calm so we have the, I don't know sometimes, we have I don't know what's the wind come from. That's right that's why you gonna put up the sail, to draw the

JV the line

MV It all depends. This is the fisherman's greed. Sometimes we gonna put, I want it to be this way, I'm gonna put the sail, even though the wind, 20 miles of wind or something like that, so you have to gonna drive the boat like a, by the

JV You've gotta tack

MV By the trawl, by the trawl, drive the boat, even the sail is up.

JV You gotta do two things at the same time. You gotta bait and guide your boat in the way that you wanna go.

MS Hauling the fish back with 1200 hooks, is that, that must be a pretty good job to haul it all back in.

MV Yes. Sometimes this is very dangerous. In case there's gonna be a lot of fish, this is very dangerous. So we solve to gonna put the fish overboard, so that's why. So that's why many, many Portuguese guys is gonna...

JV Yeah they drowned

MV They drowned out there. Even we gonna lower the boat like this is out of the water

JV Just off the water, just a few inches off the water.

MV So sometimes the wind is come is a big wave, pstt. We can't move the in Greenland, it's very freeze, that's...

JV And you've got a small dory filled with fish, with just a little bit of water in it and you're done.

MS How long would it take you to pull all the fish back in after you set the trawl? How long does it take to pull it all back in and take the fish off?

MV Well it's maybe couple hours.

JV To bring the fish in?

MV To bring the fishin in and then put all the, it's a long line. It's more than mile, more than mile and a half.

JV Mile and a half of trawl, yeah.

MV Little by little, you put the fish on the boat and it's a couple hours, 2 hours and a half, all depends.

27:00

JV You got live, you got live cod on the small boat, how do you maintain the fish from bouncing on the boat?

MV The boat is gonna put the fish back, as soon as gonna take the fish, you gotta roll, rub, rub, rub,

JV Like a glove, like a glove

MV Like a glove to you know to don't cut the

JV The line

MV The hand you know.

MS And then did you, when you went out in your dory, did you only set the trawl out once per day.

MV Once.

MS Once.

MV Well most of the fishermen did it two times. But this is all depends the fisherman, what he decides to do. This is, it's, this is the model of the fisherman, because I'm gonna explain that. This is the mothership, they put all the boats out, most of the time, no most of the time, 99%, all of the dories is not to go against the wind, most of the boat, the dories is go this way and this way. So the captain of the boat knows where all the crew are doing and then after a couple hours, they, they pull em out the anchor and go. All the dories, to run the boat more easy. All the boats is right there and when

JV And whatever the dories direction, they go then a few hours later the mothership picks up and moves towards that so it will be easier for them to come to the mothership. So they don't have to, to bring

MV So some fishermen, like I did, this is my model to fishing. I have a good teacher, it's my uncle, he teached me.

JV Our uncle took him under his wing

MV So most, not most of the guys, few fishermen, those guys don't have afraid for their life, like I did, did something crazy. I was crazy of course. So I'm stay in the same position, and

30:00

I'm answering your question about how many times you gonna put the trawl out. So I leave all the time in the same place. So the mother ship right there to begin the fishing and they move back the wind once. And then after, like I said, some guys make two, and the mothership is gonna follow him. So do you imagine how far this guy is gonna be to be to front of the boat? That's right, it's too be, it's tough for the fishermen to stay in the same place, sometimes six, seven miles out of the boat. My far to be out of the boat is 12 miles.

JV At one point,

End of Tape

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JV One of the other boats called his captain to find out where are you? This is why. Cause one of your people is over here. And he was like 20 miles away from where his mother ship used

MV When I reached the boat the mate called me crazy. You crazy guy! You want to pass away! Go back to the water.

JV You wanna die, go ahead. 'Cause he was, the other boat, the skipper, recognized the fact that this guy was too far off 'cause you were with the other, where his boat was and you called his captain and he says, "hey where are you supposed to be? I see one of your guys over here...you're 20 miles away"

MV I'm not miss those times, but, all depends, but I'm proud of my life, that I did, believe me. I was a good fisherman in Portugal. I was a championship for the fishing in 1966. Nobody of my neighborhood in my city could catch more fish that I do.

MS Wow

JV Than you did.

MS Now were you paid by the fish, when you came back in your dory, were you paid by how much you caught or were you paid...

MV No this is another thing is when I began fish they pay us 20 escudos for the quintal, quintal means

JV It's a ton, half a ton

MV No it's 100 kilos.

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JV a hundred kilos, 200 pounds.

MV One boat, one dory is all depends the captain. This is a long story I don't know if you got time to go

MS It's ok

MV They pay us 20 escudos a quintal

JV 100 pounds

MV 100 pounds a quintal, 100 pounds

JV discuss in Portuguese

MV no 100 kilos is 200 pounds yes correct. So few, not to many, several years later they give another,

JV bonus

MV no bonus, another

JV Increased pay

MV Hike, another hike in the contract. It's another hike, so . . .this is happened with all the fishermen until 2, one quintal, 100, they pay 50 escudos, 100 to 150 they pay 150 escudos

3:00

JV A hundred and fifty

MV No

In Portuguese

MV After that, 150-200, but it is hard to reach that level, 200, 200 quintas is a couple, is 4000 pounds. It's hard to reach for that level. So they pay 200, 200 escudos. No matter after that. If you got 300 or 400 they pay.

MS Oh. So a sliding scale.

MV Sliding scale. You gonna, they did that to force the fishermen to go hard. It's an incentive, yes.

JV It's a dangerous incentive because a lot of people tried to do that and they sank.

MS So how much weight could a dory hold typically I mean without being too dangerous? How much?

Portuguese

MV That's another thing, all depends the captain. Some captains

Portuguese

MV That's what I'm saying is 4 and a half

JV So you work your

MV Yes four and a half or five those pictures that you've got at your house of your uncle its get 500

JV I've got a picture of our uncle with a boat full and he's

MV I would like you to see that picture. I did that too many times.

JV I'll bring the picture later on, cause I have it in my car.

MV So it's four and a half. All depends the captain. Some captains, we have no scale in the boat, on the boat, just by eyes. They saw the fish that they bring in and one and a half...just by eyes. So some captains did when he come home did a 10 percent

JV Adjustment

MV Adjustment. So some captains give a 5 percent. That is we can now see, I know what's the percentage of my captain.

JV So the captains operated differently.

6:00

MV Operated different. That's right. That's right. This is not, but roughly, one dory load of fish is get, between 4 and 5, but more 4 than 5. Five it's very exclusive, those pictures that my cousin's gonna show you, this is 5. Or my mother ship. This is a 5. But it's very dangerous to bring 5 quintas in the boat.

JV It's a thousand pounds of fish in a small, little boat

MV In a small boat with 12 ?? 12 three in the bottom, four the side and one ?? It's only four.

MS How, do you remember how long the boats were? How long the dories are?

MV Yes it's more or less

JV 12 feet?

MV It's 4 and a half meters

JV Yeah 12 feet

MV 12 feet, 3-4 wide

MS Did they bring spare dories with them?

MV Yes. Yes. They get the, they get 80s dories, but they carry a spare boat just in case something

JV Breaks

MV disappears or breaks or because sometimes it's very hard to pull all the dories in the mother ship with bad weather, sometimes with 50 miles wind, 40 miles wind

JV You get banged up

MV Believe me or not I catch 80 miles of wind. I have couple of hours

JV He stood up against an iceberg for 2 hours under 80 mile wind and he

MV some guys, sometimes it's hard for me to explain that because I don't want those people to call me a liar.

JV No but our uncle was

MV Because it's hard to believe, it's hard to believe. But what are you gonna do?

JV Our uncle testified to that, that he was out there with that wind against an iceberg for two hours until the breeze...because he knew if he got away from the iceberg the wind would blow him away, away, far away where he would never be caught. But he was smart enough to just cut water. Him and a few other guys

9:00

MV And a couple of guys

JV That he advised to stick with him and they today, they still think that he's God because he saved their lives.

MV I saved their life

JV By advising them to stay with him

MV Those guys, if they go ?? psst pass away. That's why they call me, "Hey, Manny!"

MS Now, how about fog out there, how did you ever find the vessels or the vessel find you in fog?

MV Just by the little compass, no ??, no radars, no nothing, just the boat, the mothership says them to pull the boats out fishing, they...when you're gonna stop anchor the boat, they start to be alarm, BAAAAAH

JV There was a horn signal

MV A horn signal

JV That particular mother ship was a code that they knew where the mother ship was in case of fog

MV If they stay on the same place to anchor the boat, we gonna make a, I don't remember now, two times, BAAAH BAH. I know the boat is in the same place. When they go

JV When they go with the wind, if the mother ship moved with the wind

MV The wind, they do two signal, one big and one half. TAAAAAh TAH, TAAAAAAAH TAH We know, you know. It looks like a funeral. Everyone knows about the signal of the boat. So no matter, many times we go out fishing by the fog and come inside even the fog all day long, all the fog. But you get, but sometimes, this is a hard thing, sometimes you lost the signal, sometimes we lost the signal, so you gonna make a course, you gonna watch the compass to follow always the course, the fishing hard, so you have to gonna careful to take attention for the course. Sometimes you lost the course, what are you gonna do? Even the fog, in the middle of the ocean, without the radars, nothing, just gonna pull the line, what are you gonna do? What are you gonna do? We have nobody to gonna survive us, so that's why you have, the only point is the compass. Every single boat gets a little compass.

12:00

JV He used a conch

MV Yes sometimes

JV As a horn

MV This is you know for the friend BWAAAA, this for a...

JV Yeah a teammate

MV a sea snail, but it's a big one

JV Yeah a conch

MV Conch

JV You know a large conch

MV Large conch, it looks like a trumpet

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Transcribed by Laura Orleans

JV I was in Hawaii they were selling those things there.

MS Now what was life like on the boat, on the ship when you were back on the ship you obviously didn't have much time to do much else

JV Translating

MV After that, if the fishing is good, we have to prepare the fish. Every crew is still working to prepare all the fish. And it all depends, sometimes you're gonna spend, keep working all the time without any break, ten hours, eleven hours, it all depends how much fish we

JV Bring in

MV Bring in. And after that, no matter the time, when you're gonna be done that, you go sleep only four hours, but since then, since then, the deck is gonna ?? they start to go. So sometimes you got to prepare your long line for the next day. Sometimes you lost one hour or an hour and a half to prepare the longline for the next day. But it's gone for your rest. He don't care about it

JV You got a four hour rest, but with his

MV Since that four hours, "hey get up" the guy is gonna make all the crew, you're gonna sail again! Once of my life I told my cousin already, once, this has happened once we, we make a good fish we load the mother fish, it's near Newfoundland, 90 miles off the Newfoundland and then it's almost time to go back to Portugal, almost

JV It's almost at the end of the

MV The, the trip

JV Of the trip. 90 miles off Newfoundland

15:00

MV Off Newfoundland. So we load the fish after we clean the deck and to be done, the captain ask us for the crew, hey, can you do me, not a favor, he don't need to be a favor, it's say yes, yes, yes.

JV Would you guys like to go out again?

MV He ask, you want to go out again? And pretty soon you go back to Portugal, what do you think?

JV Fishing was good

MV Nobody say nothing. He's got a lot of, all the power. He decides everything that happens. Hey you're gonna do that, that's it. No words about it. So, hey what are you gonna do? He's gonna look for one for the other, he take a lunch box, something inside, go back again. So we run out of luck, we don't fish at all, nothing, the fish disappear. We don't catch nothing.

JV They didn't catch anything.

MV Not anything. This is our luck

JV The fishing was good, they brought it in, they cleaned up the deck and he was greedy. He says listen, because you did so well, how about if we go out, it's the last, you know, we're almost at the end of the trip, why don't you guys go out again, you know. They went out and they caught nothing.

MV Nothing. That's why, it's my life.

JV With no sleep.

MV I'm not really what I did along my life. Even now, no, I'm proud of everything that I did, even now. I got a good life, I got a good family. I'm an honest man. Everybody makes mistakes, I did also. But it's not too many. I'm not smart enough to do anybody is not perfect. Nobody is perfect, but I try to gonna right the perfecting, but I'm never did.

JV He tries hard to be perfect but, he, even here as a boat owner, he owns Sea Siren, he has challenged the elements several times. And one time he almost got lost 'cause a tidal wave broke into the pilot house, flooded.

MV That's way back, it's

JV And he

MV This is my superstition

JV Yeah the most

MV My afraid

JV The most scary was that, the most scary point of his life was that

MV You know the tower, the one

JV They did an exploration tower out there when they were doing oil rig exploration

MS Oh yeah.

18:00

MV The tower, this is...

JV The state wires

MV The State wires gonna stay in the same position. Once is, even, even Thanksgiving Day, that's why I never did, I never go out that day. I'm not superstitious

JV Yeah superstitious

MV Superstitious

JV He's not superstitious, but he

MV Not superstitious by it's

JV On Thanksgiving

MV When I think about it because it's, we stop the boat because it's a lot, all the boats, they are stopped because there's a big storm with 60 miles an hour winds.

MS Do you remember which year?

MV Uh...it's

JV No its not 80

MV It's almost the 90s, 90 something, 93, 94.

JV No it was 80s it was in the 80s

MV No, in 84 was the Judy and Joe sank

JV He was partner on another boat, Judy and Joe that sank. And so that was after

MV After that, this is happened with Sea Siren

JV So late 80s

MV Late 80s, 90s or something like that

JV 86, 87

MV So we gonna stop the boat, so I told my brother-in-law, I was alseep,

JV His brother-in-law was at the wheel

MV Was on the wheel. I tell him, he's my mate, I tell him, "hey man, when you're gonna reach the tower, to near the tower, you put the boat in gear it's gonna toward the breeze. Maybe it's 15 minutes later when they start to rock the boat, to move the boat. It's I can't imagine over the boat, the big wave come to out the boat, maybe I don't know, I didn't see that. The boat is ice, I remember the boat is gonna be like this, almost the same, when he got out, imagine, on the ?? rails, against the water like that.

JV His bunker is in the pilot house and so the tidal wave came through, came through the windows, cracked the front windows. His brother-in-law who was at the wheel got hit with a fog vent on his face

MV Almost killed him

JV Knocked him on the ground, almost killed him. And he gets three feet of water in the pilot house, with all the electronics.

21:00

MV We have no electronics, no nothing. Nobody knows. I save only one radio, it's the VHF so they put it out, but it doesn't receive, so I don't know what's if the guys hear me or not, I'm excited to talk with somebody

JV He was calling

MV Mayday, Mayday, Mayday, but it's nobody answer. So I thought, I thought well I don't know I've lost my radio. But they, they listened. They called the helicopter. The Helicopter comes. But I know the bottom, I know all Georges Bank is gonna be in my mind. So I told the guys, put it in gear and go home, we gonna measure how deep we are more or less how deep, how many fathoms, 25, how many fathoms, eh. Just because I don't know if the Coast Guard if the helicopter's gonna follow us or not. So when they passed by with us, we gonna do the close "Hey!" So it's--but the worst part after that is

JV 'Cause you lost, he had no control.

MV The boat

JV Was adrift

MV The boat drift. The wheel

JV towards the cliffs

MV pass by the, too near the ?? Even a millimeter too close to one a clock. I hear the noise of the storm going against the tire, the tower. So when even is another big wave almost put the net overboard, too close

JV Another wave came on the side and pushed the actually

MV I got a guy whose gonna work with me those times

JV The dividers were steel were all bent

MV Believe me or not, this was my first time to lose control, it was, but it's not long. It's ten minutes or less than ten. I lost my control. I don't know what I did. So it's quickly I saw that hey, pull the net up. I turned the boat to the net, to the rotar, you know, so it's gonna turn, and when I saw available the flats of the tower, stay there, gonna put

24:00

JV Yeah he was, I saw the boat. I'm talking from experience when the boat arrived, the deck dividers were steel were all bent. That's the power

MV It's amazing, but it's true.

JV The power of the wave that came through to push the net to one side and bent all the boards on deck was powerful. And like you said, you know, seeing his brother-in-law almost dead, in the pilot house and seeing the boat going to drift towards the state wires of the tower was scary, scary day of his life there.

MS So you did get the boat back to New Bedford?

MV Yes, yes. And of course

MS And the Coast Guard didn't pick anybody off.

MV No. No.

JV One of the

MV They picked up my

JV They picked up his brother-in-law

MV My brother-in-law

JV But another boat that was in the neighborhood, came by and pulled him away from that.

MV My boat is the Judy and Joe

JV The Judy and Joe that sank, that's right

MV Before that sink,

JV Before that

MV The captain, the Coast Guard has made contact with me then to gonna, is gonna follow him until New Bedford.

JV But he was towed in by his own boat, by the other boat. He owned two boats at the time.

MV I was, I had a big trauma. The first couple of months, or three months or six months every, when I stay outside fishing, when a big wave comes against the boat CHO! It's still gonna pass by

JV It took awhile

MV After a year it was alright

JV But he's been challenging by the elements, every time the weather, and this should be noted, because there are a lot of his colleagues in the business that chastise him for being so challenging when the weather report says you know it's gonna be rough, he says, now is the time for me to go out because it will get smoother. That's his theory; it's tough now, but it'll get smoother and when it's smooth and I'm already fishing the fishing ground.

27:00

MV Once I leave out of New Bed, uh out of the dock with 20, 20 miles northeast wind, nobody is gonna leave out of the dock, but I'm gonna leave. When you reach the ?? buoy, the ?? buoy is the last buoy of the channel, when you go out, it was just a little wind is over 25 miles northeast wind, and then you go, keep going and then we decided to turn back, I can't handle, I can't enter the canal because the waves is not quicker, but it spend two hours or something like that gonna be, I can't handle. I'm gonna stay, too near that, to near three days with bad weather. It is another superstition.

JV And another scare.

MV Another scare.

JV He goes out in 20, 25

MV And then

JV When he decided to come back, it was too rough.

MV The crew, I don't blame them, the crew is afraid. I'm afraid too, but what are you gonna do. I can't go in. I'm not going to die, I'm not going to kill myself. No, no, I'm gonna stay. I'm keeping my job. If I own my job. I don't care. So I'm gonna stay there. We don't fish. We don't ?? So the crew like I said it's scared we're gonna stay there. So when the bad weather comes, the crew told me I promise the guys, hey, when the good weather comes, we are going straight home, I don't care about the fishing, and I don't care about nothing. After three days, the weather is starting to calm down, the crew, he man, what you gonna decide? What do you mean, you gonna stay there? I'm gonna stay fishing.

JV Go fishing! [laughter]

MV You gonna fish, you bring a good trip. So because we gonna stay there, maybe I had luck to catch the fish and come back before the guys. We're gonna sell the fish before those guys. We had a good trip.

JV So that was his theory. See we got out, nobody else will. We'll go out and then that's what he did. He decided to stay weathering the weather for three days, not he came down and he was already in the fishing grounds when the others were trying to make way there. So he caught a decent catch and he came back when there was no fish in port so he got a good price for them.

MV This is the

JV This is the whole theory of being successful, challenging.

MV This is good for the skippers actually this has happened to. So those guys that are gonna stay there fishing together. Hey it's supposed to be the price has dropped. And then we gonna sell the fish without no many fishes while the guys have a hunger to by the fish, to have a hunger to buy a fish, the fishes go up. That's is a

30:00

JV You know when all the boats come in and there's a fish glut, the price will go down. And his decision was, we'll be out there all by ourselves, we'll come back earlier than everybody else when there will be no fish in port and they'll give us a better price. And he got a good fish.

MS Well I think I'd probably agree he may be crazy [laughter]

JV He's very successful.

MV Actually I got, I have a lot of experience for fishing. But believe me or not, if I am young, I did the same like I did.

MS I believe it.

JV If he was young, he would do the same. And let me, let's if I may, let's go back to what we said earlier, our grandfather, he takes a lot after our grandfather. Our grandfather fished during the early 90s, 1900s, when

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JV In seining, they used to use grenades into the schools. They threw grenades into the schools and then the fish would float and they would catch it from there. One of the grenades was dropped on

deck and he was the skipper. And his first instinct was to pick it up and to save his boat. And in the process he lost his right arm and his right eye.

MV You didn't see him, but I lived with him. He's a nice man. He was a nice man. It's almost like your tall father. It's

JV My father was a short guy

MV Yeah

JV and my father took after, in stature, was like my grandfather. Manny's father was a taller person, taller and wider.

MV But he was a nice man, was my grandfather. He's a real nice man, he loved me. I'm the first grandchild. So he loved me. He's a nice guy.

JV But he was tough. That was one of the times that you know...and my obviously, I didn't live with him, I didn't know him, but the people that knew him and tell me the stories, not from my family, but other people, says your grandfather was the toughest skipper, even after with just half an arm

MV Half the arm and one eye. Sometimes...

JV With just a stump, he could turn a boat like nobody.

MV This is, I know that. So those times in the past is not hydraulics, just by hand. And then he with only one arm is gonna turn the wheel like, you know by the ?? side of the boat. [makes sounds of straining] It's a lot of strength. But he's a strong man. So he is a strong man to do that by ...

JV There were no hydraulics; they were all chain driven and even with a stump he could turn a wheel better than anybody, he could turn a boat on a dime like. And this is stories from people that told me about him, you know people that grew up with him who worked with him and they were always telling me stories about my grandfather, our grandfather. And so this toughness, it comes from that trunk. Yeah.

MS Well great. Well about out of time, but I really appreciate it and sometime were gonna have to find another four or five hours to sit you down and

3:00

MV Oh [laughter]

MS This was great

MV Yeah I got a, that's my life, its, I had a hard life, it's an awful life, but I'm proud to be all the things that I am. I have a family, like I said.

Interview with Manny and Joe Vinagre conducted by Mark Starr on September 26, 2010

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Transcribed by Laura Orleans

JV He's got a son whose a doctor, he's got a highly qualified doctor in western, Massachusetts. He's got a clinic. He's got his own clinic.

MS Do you have any grandchildren?

MV Yes.

JV He's got two with Harvard studies paid for.

MV Once I told my sons, I like you guys, even your mother, but too lovely, it's my grandchild! I'm sorry. I'm crazy for my boy.

JV He's got two boys.

MV They love me.

JV After you retired, that was his joy now of life is spending time with his two kids.

MV See this was another thing, I have not too much English. My English is very poor.

JV You're doing well.

MV I'm sorry that I don't speak better English than I am, but since then, I make retired, one son, he forced me to go to the school. I was six years on the school. That's why I write something and speak like you know. So they forced me to go to school because someday, I wish to spin all my stories for my grandkids. But it's impossible to do that.

MS Do they speak Portuguese?

MV No.

MS You've gotta get them speaking Portuguese.

MV No. My daughter-in-law also she is a doctor.

JV She is a doctor too.

MV She is the chief of

JV She's the chief

MV Saint Vincent in Worcester

JV She's the chief pediatrician

MV Pediatrician

JV Intensive care unit

Interview with Manny and Joe Vinagre conducted by Mark Starr on September 26, 2010

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Transcribed by Laura Orleans

MV She starts to be the chief that month, middle of that month. Is a nice lady, nice lady.

JV She is a wonderful lady.

MV A wonderful lady.

JV So doesn't speak English. She doesn't speak Portuguese

MS What does she speak?

JV She from a Japanese, well she's American born but her mother was Japanese, her father was a navy officer

MV French

JV Yeah but he was an American. He was an American of French descent, but he was an American officer and the mother was a Japanese lady. So she doesn't speak Portuguese, but she understands quite a bit.

MV But she told me many times, "Hey Manny, teach him Portuguese." This summer they was in Portugal and another couple. So my grandchild stay with me. So she told me, "Hey Manny, you teach him Portuguese a lot?" No, he's my youngest one. The guys got to got good Portuguese language.

JV The youngest one to learn.

MV The oldest, nothing, nothing

MS [laughing]

MV The youngest one, oh, if the guy stay with me a year...pst

JV He gonna learn Portuguese

MV Quickly

MS Well thank you very much! How do you say thank you in Portuguese?

MV Obrigado

MS Obrigado

MV Obrigado. I forgot your name

MS Mark

MV Ok Mark.

End of tape 7:13