



NEW BEDFORD FISHING HERITAGE CENTER

Date of Interview May 28, 2017

Esteban H. Ruiz ~ Oral History Interview

Corinn Williams

Esteban H. Ruiz Interview by Corinn Williams *Workers on the New Bedford Waterfront*. New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center. May 28, 2017

This oral history was produced in 2017 as part of the *Workers on the Waterfront Oral History Project* conducted by New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center with funding from an Archie Green Fellowship provided by the Library of Congress.

New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center
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Background

Name of the person interviewed: Esteban H. Ruiz

Facts about the person:

Age 59

Sex: Male

Occupation: Boat Mechanic/Welder

Residence (Town Where lives) New Bedford

Ethnic Background (if known) Guatemala

Interviewer: Corinn Williams

Interview location: Community Economic Development Center, New Bedford, MA

Transcriber: Joselyn Feliciano

Date of Interview: May 28, 2017

Key Words: Immigration, Welding, Boat mechanic, Safety equipment, seafood, MIG Welding, ARC Welding, Guatemala, America, family

Abstract:

Esteban migrated from Guatemala to America and has resided in New Bedford for twenty years. He learned how to weld and work on motors in his homeland and carried these skills to New Bedford. He is a boat mechanic insuring that the fishermen are able to fish in a safe vessel. He has two children and would like to continue the American dream by passing his skills to his children in hopes for their success.

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[2:26] Esteban migrated here from Guatemala on August 4th 1997. Discusses trades in Guatemala like automotive repair, welding and agriculture.

[5:00] Learned trade skills in Guatemala at uncles mechanic shop, discusses journey from Guatemala to New Bedford. Employment in seafood processing and welding opportunities in New Bedford, MA.

[10:04] Worked in seafood factory driving forklifts and some mechanic work, found more stability welding fishing vessels, specifically scallop boats.

[15:00] The process of repair of fishing vessels, metal rot, the dangers of unseen rust out on fishing trips, vessel maintenance.

[20:00] Discusses exterior maintenance, details on how to repair damaged metal on a boat through welding. The form of welding and safety procedures to avoid injury i.e.: proper uniform and equipment, the dangers of not following safety regulations.

[33:00] There are four welders and painters in his work crew who are American, Guatemalan, Portuguese. Importance of teamwork, mechanical work on boat motors. Outsourced electrical boat work. Work conditions in bad weather, full time position all year long.

[40:00] Works in a fleet of over 30 vessels, retirement, welding as a family trade, family values, economical contrast from Guatemala and America, path to citizenship.

[51:32] End of Interview