

Fishtales, Sunday September 29, 2013
Working Waterfront Festival

Interviewer – Markham Starr
Interviewee – Charlotte Enoksen

MS So even though I know your name I'm gonna ask you. So what is your name?

CE Charlotte Enoksen

MS And where are you from?

CE New Bedford.

MS And have you always lived in New Bedford?

CE Mostly.

MS Mostly. And are you from a fishing family?

CE Yes.

MS And you had a story you wanted to talk about or...a transition you wanted to talk about.

CE Yeah. I grew, fishing is all my family ever did. I mean generation after generation. And I swore I would never marry a fisherman when I was growing up. That just wasn't going to happen. And I guess it was about, I was married I think it was a year and my husband announced that he wanted to go fishing. And it did not make me very happy. So he had already scheduled like to take his vacation time and go out to sea on my brother's boat and then I felt well maybe he'll hate it. You know absolutely hate it. And he came in and he said that's it I'm gonna quit my job. I said, "Ok" But we lived in Brockton at the time. So the, he, he, and he went back out to sea, right? And he leaves me there. Well he came back and I had a for sale sign up in the front yard. And I said if you're gonna do this, I've gotta be back in New Bedford with my family. I said, because I know what it's like and you can't leave me here. I, you have to have the family. And then it occurring to me, like, I don't know how to be a fisherman's wife. I know how to be a daughter. And so, I forgot what it was I was gonna do. Oh I was waitin' for him to come in because I was gonna tell him something that had happened when he was out to sea. And my mother said don't you dare. I said, "well no, he's gotta know." She said, "You..." I said, "he's only in for five days. We've gotta deal with this issue" It was because my, our son was ill. And she said, "The first thing you need to know, is that you don't talk about anything serious the day they come in and the day they're leaving." So that leaves you three days. You have three days to deal with real life. But it was so true. And, because when they come in they're decompressing and you don't want to, this is a big issue, you can't give them bad news when they're headed out. It's gonna have to wait because if their minds

aren't present, they're going to get injured, they're going, they could get killed because of the danger of the job. And it was like you don't communicate. If you communicate with them while they're out to sea, you don't give them the bad news. They're the ones in harms way. And that's the one she drove into me. They're, he's in harms way, not you. And that, that stuck with me, you know. Even though I'm not married to him anymore, but I think about that with the servicemen and their families and stop and think.

MS It's gotta be hard for you though, to hold all that in when they come back.

CE But that's why you have family. I mean fishing families are very, very close. They have to be. It's survival. It's funny because the methodology changes, but the logistics of the family don't. I think it's the same as it was for my grandmother or my great grandmother and you know it's the same thing. It's still that, you gotta remember, they're the ones out there and yeah you're lonely and yeah you gotta broken car and your kid's got the flu and you just broke your ankle. But your life isn't at risk.

MS Great. Well thank you.

CE You're welcome.