

Fishtales, Saturday, September 29, 2012
Working Waterfront Festival

Interviewer – Markham Starr
Interviewee – Cindy Follet-Guldemon

MS And I'm gonna ask you your name even though I know your name just so it's on here

CG Alright

MS Ok what is your name?

CG My name is Cindy Guldemon. My maiden name is Follet. That's my fishing name.

MS And where are you from?

CG I'm from, originally from Wakefield, Rhode Island

MS And you're from a fishing family?

CG I am. My family has been fishing since the 1950s. My father was a fisherman. My three brothers are all commercial fishermen, captains of boats out of Point Judith, Rhode Island.

MS And when did you first go out on a boat fishing?

CG Um, oh I've probably been out, when I was old enough to be safe on a boat, probably when I was 12 or 13 was the first time I actually went out for any amount of time and then as I got older I would go out on a regular basis with my father in the morning when he went seine fishing off of the coast of Wickford, off of Rhode Island. And then as I got older he would be fishing in Maine and my brothers would be fishing out of Maine and I would drive up there to go fishing with them on their boats. I didn't do it as a regular occupation, but I had a love for the sea and bein' out there with them.

MS And do you remember your first trip out, not a day trip, your first overnight trip?

CG I remember one, I don't think I can recall my actual first trip, but I do recall one being on my father's boat, the Cindy Bet and we were fishing in Maine I believe it was off the coast of like Rockport and the, when they went seining the mother, the boat I was on was the mother ship and the men would, when they spotted fish, the pilot spotted fish, the men would all get off the mother boat and get into the seine boat and a skiff and they would surround the fish. This pilot would guide them to surround the fish so they could take in the slack and make the fish nice and tight to be able to suck it up onto the boat. Well I would stay on the mother boat and watch the fathometer to see what the depth, how the depth of the water was because you were so near the shore so anyways I would get to move the big boat around and the pilot would talk to me and I can, I'll never forget

seeing the first time I ever saw a whale, a whale spout in front of me and there was no one to tell except the pilot and I'm on the radio saying, "Art, Art, just saw a whale!" So that was an exciting trip for me. But I loved being at the wheel. I wanted to be a fishing woman, but they did not want to steer me that direction. So that's kind of my one of my exciting trips fishing.

MS How about a sea story. If you told a sea story what would it be?

CG If I told a sea story it would be more of a classic fishermen's daughter adventure story because I like to be on boats and I ran boats and decided I wanted to go to Block Island by myself on a boat with a friend. So I rented this, like a 25 footer boat. I asked this guy if I could rent his boat for \$20 and it was back in the 70s and he says, "Yeah I guess so." Says "I just had a new engine put in it" I'm like "Ok" The name of the boat was BONES. So I, my boyfriend who was a fisherman, he came with me at the time and another girl, we took it to Block Island, spent the night and there was kinds of stuff goin' on over there. There was all the boats were docked alongside of each other and I had to bring the boat back the next day. Well I had so much fun that I dropped those two off and I got my other girlfriend Colleen and said, "Come on, wanna go back to Block Island with me? There's all kinds of stuff goin' on out there." Here I was only supposed to have it for one night. So she said "Yeah, ok." So she hopped on. We followed the Block Island boat out, never thinkin' anything, never thinkin' about fuel or anything and we get out there and I was supposed to, I should have already turned the boat in, here I'm second night and then we ended up stayin' a third night. So we partied out there with everybody and had a great time. The next day we had to leave. Well she was very, very hung over so she couldn't do much but lay down in the little bunk that was there. And we started cruisin' towards Point Judith. And we ran out of gas. So I'm like, ok. I'm wavin' down some boats. So a boat came and said, "Ok we'll tow you, but we gotta tow you towards New Harbor 'cause that's where we're goin'" And I've never been in and out of New Harbor and I didn't really know much about New Harbor at all. I said. Ok. So they started towin' us around and now this is in the waters, some of the roughest waters in, on the east coast, is between Block Island and Galilee. So they towed me around and the Coast Guard boat comes out and gives us fuel. So they said "Do you have a funnel?" I said "No." but I used my hands. So they brought the fuel through my hands into the boat and they gave me some fuel. Then we go to start the boat up, and the battery's dead. So when we ran out of gas, I must not have turned the key off. So now the Coast Guard has to tow us into New Harbor. Well I was supposed to be, it was the last day for registration at nursing school that day and I had to be there at like supposedly 3 o'clock. It's already one o'clock now. So they're towin' me. So they charged my battery. I called the school and I said "I'm in Block Island, I ran out of fuel. I'm gonna try to get there as fast as I can." They say, "We'll be here 'till about 7. You gotta be here today." So it was pretty stressful. So we get back in the boat and we're headin', I didn't know how to get back from New Harbor to Point Judith, so I asked somebody some compass bearings and they said yeah you stay on, I think it was 20, 25, 21 or I forget exactly, so that's all I had to rely on was the compass and it was cloudy and the wind had picked up and I stood on a cooler to see over the windshield because the waves were comin' up over the windshield and I dodged 'em up and down, up and down and she's still layin' down there. And you can hear water in

the bilge sloppin' around and when I pressed the bilge pump, I don't think it was workin' so who knows what was going' on with this boat that rented for \$20. And I cruised and cruised and cruised and finally I could see Mantauk and it was like the best feelin' in the whole world. I thought Oh my God, just get me home. And we still had to go all the way down Salt Pond, dock the boat got in the car, ran home, got the money for school and I look like a ragged woman with the salt hair, you know the salt blonde hair all stickin' out and got in the car and drove to Newport and turned in my money, but that was quite an adventurous weekend, yeah.

MS Did he ever loan you his boat again?

CG I don't know. I don't even think he knew that I had it for three days.

MS Probably just as well

CG yeah. But the first time I was gonna take it out, the first date that we had set to go out in it, was a kind of a stormy day, my brothers are standin' on the dock down Point Judith, they were fishermen, and they're shakin' their heads, their goin' "you shouldn't be goin' out there." I'm goin': "I'm goin. I'm tellin' you I'm goin'." "I don't know you're crazy. Dad's gonna be pissed off at you." So I get out inside the breakwall and it was really sloppy, I had to swallow my pride and turn around and come back in, so the next time I made up for it. But that's just some of the little adventures that we used to have. Couldn't have if you weren't the daughter of a fisherman. Yeah. So that's my deal.

MS Alright