

## Muller Family

Date: December 14, 2015

Interviewer: Nancy Solomon

Informant: Muller Family: Larry and Alison

Location: Freeport, NY

### AUDIO LOG

1:00 – Island Seafood. Born into fishing business. Father and grandfather. Early memories as a kid. A lot of money for a kid. \$70 a day 40 years ago.

1:26 – Born 1956. Earliest memories with father. Treading a lot. In board garvey.

2:30 – Treading all day. Made no money on them. But had a lot of fun.

2:50 – Went to bay house. Catch killies. Explains how to catch killies.

4:01 – Explains how made his own traps.

4:55 – Clamming for a while until after married. Killieyng only when younger – until middle school.

5:21- Musseling later on. Made a lot of money with that. Only lasted for two years. Caught 60-70 bushels in five hours. Harvest mussel with tongs. Easy to do.

6:20 – Hide tide or low ride did not matter. Already in deep water. 15 feet deep. Went whenever you wanted.

6:42 – Worked for all the fish dock on Woodcleft canal. Captain Ben's. When they caught a lot of fish. Catch whiting.

6:55 – 100 boxes a day. That is 10,000 pounds a day. Every single day. They over did it. Caught tons of whiting. Now cannot catch one.

7:28 – Not one commercial boat left on Woodcleft Ave. when he was young, there was at least 20-25 commercial boats on Woodcleft.

7:45 – Worked on Northern Princess. Offshore. Worked for couple of months.

7:58 – Did not like to go offshore – go for a week at a time. Was not for him. Liked being home every night.

8:10 – Mostly everybody was family on the little boats. Did not need anybody else. Worked docks. Taking fish off boats. Bringing it to the market it. Selling it.

8:35 – Clarence on the Sturgeon – boat that sticks out. Was the best and still is the best. Young guy and hard worker. Caught a lot of fish.

8:52 – Tommy Legeary – worked with him on Northern Princess. Boat could sink so much fish on it. 80 foot boat.

9:27 – Describes work he did. Had to find the buyers. 10,000 pounds of fish.

9:47 – Finding the buyers. Would ship a lot to the New York market, Baltimore. Made calls every day.

10:02 – If they could not sell them, guys would not go out the next day until they were all sold. Worked out. But sometimes had load of fish did not know what to do with it.

10:49 – Worked for Captain Bens. Had the contacts. Worked 15 years. Early 80s.

11:30 – Uncle and father had a fish market. After Captain Bens – had 3-4 fish markets. Did not like it. Has to be outside. Father took care of inside of market.

12:30 – Father died. Could not find anyone to run it. Sold the fish market. Started doing wholesale.

13:15 – Formed Island Seafood. 1-2 years before leaving Captain Bens.  
14:35 – How Alison started in seafood industry. Born into it. Writing bills for dad.

15:18 – Put roots down. Settled back home right before Sandy. 3-4 years ago. Sister joined her two years ago.  
15:44 – Nothing happened to business. All in Farmingdale. Just no wifi / internet.  
16:05 – Moved business from Woodcleft Ave to Farmingdale. Not big enough. Fortunate. If not, would have been out of business.  
16:30 – Things he has in Farmingdale.  
17:50 – Kinds of customers. Do not sell to restaurants. Sell to distributors and fish markets. Do wholesale.  
18:20 – New Bedford fishermen didn't get hit that bad. Prepared for it. Did not lose any boats. Have big boats. Not little boats like around here.  
19:00 – Took them a good six months to start catching fish again.  
19:35 – Trying to get stuff back on track during that time. Helping other people.  
19:50 – Lost his house. Focused on fixing that. Stayed in same house. No electric. No heat.  
20:45 – Still lived in house. Had no place to go. No insulation.  
21:10 – Decided house was not salvageable. Shifted off foundation. Cheaper to move than raise an old house. Current house a prefabrication.  
21:38 – Worst two years of life for him, wife and daughter. Nothing but hell.  
21:46 – Lost a couple of dogs to fumes from the mold. Respiratory problems. Dogs died.  
22:56 – Right before Sandy business was at its peak. Put a lot of money into bay house.  
23:00 – Sandy took the bay house. Boat house gone. His house was gone. Lost everything.  
23:20 - Other fishing ports where they did business – same thing – had to get their act together. Get docks together. Get boats out to find fish. Took a long time. A lot of things never came back like mussel beds in Chatham – disappeared because got sanded over.  
24:21 – Very little spearing. Not too many killeys anymore. Flounders are nonexistent. Either dying off or took too many.  
24:40 – Striped bass and fluke came back strong. Because Put quotas on them and size limits. A lot took too many and never coming back.  
24:55 – Now do a lot of farmed fish. Farmed salmon, cod, tuna, halibut. Pretty soon everything is farmed fish. Not going to be fresh stuff.  
25:17 – If you want fresh fish - will pay premium for it. Not a lot left anymore.  
25:24 – When started business – flounder was main thing - flounder for life – now you do not even see it that much.

26:00 - Key differences between Sandy and some of the things that have comes before. The water. Never saw the water like that. It kept on coming.  
27:13 – Boats were the only thing that not a thing happened to them. Floating dock over a boat. Had to cut the dock. But no damage. Tied up boats like crazy.  
27:43 – Helped neighbor in the middle of the storm.

28:18 – What to do to tie boat up properly.  
29:06 – Not everyone on canal tie up their boats.  
30:45 – Bay house gone.  
31:35 – They find the bay house.  
33:20 – Putting bay house back in same spot. Cranes were too small to lift bay house.  
33:37 – Found one guy after a year to move bay house.  
35:14 – Mud sill foundation vs poles. Marsh decreasing. Poles more secure.  
36:13 – Lost 50 feet of marsh.  
37:03 – Water at bay house.  
38:10 – Alison’s responsibilities before and after Sandy.  
39:04 – Explains what it means to break everything down.  
41:47 – Seafood industry moves very quickly. All happens at airport.

42:40 – No labeling on shipments. Need to figure it out.  
44:30 – Did everything by hand. Now use computers. Phone is still best.  
45:33 – Works with some fishermen. Most gone or dead. They don’t pay.  
45:58 – Most of his product in Hamptons and NYC.  
46:20 – Provide them fishing gear.  
47:15 – Have their own trucking company out there. Guy doing it for 40 years.

48:00 - Explains what’s going to happen with bay house going forward.  
49:45 – Clamming changed over 20 years – almost nonexistent. Killeys gone. Little Spearing everything down.  
50:12 – Clammed as kids at bay house. Now just hangout. Clam at bay house for personal use and recreation. Only go treading.  
51:23 – Father made good clam chowder. Used to sell it at fish market.  
52:53 – Kids don’t like fish that much.

END