

Fishtales
Saturday, September 29, 2012
Working Waterfront Festival

Interviewer – Markham Starr
Interviewee – Nancy Quintin

MS So I'll ask you a few questions first.

NQ Yes.

MS Alright. Ok, so. Can you tell me what your name is?

NQ Nancy Quintin.

MS And are you from around here?

NQ I am. I live in New Bedford. I have all my life. I'm actually first generation here. My family's from the Azores. My father was an Azorean whaler. So yeah, so I'm the daughter of an Azorean whaler, so my maiden name was Machado. So I do speak Portuguese fluently, grew up not speaking any English, was mainstreamed into regular English speaking classes in fourth grade. So. No, if you learn a language before the age of 12, you don't have an accent. So which I did, so I was able to learn English before the age of 12, so I don't have an accent.

MS So in the Azores, they went whaling with long boats from shore?

NQ Correct, yes they, right they didn't have the main ship. It was the wooden boats which I actually sail and row here through the Azorean Maritime Heritage Society. I'm the Vice President of the Azorean Maritime Heritage Society and I feel privileged that I am able to row and sail the boats that my father would actually go catching whales in. So granted we don't have the challenge of a whale here, but it's wonderful to know that I am following in the tradition of that so.

MS Did you ever talk to him about his whaling?

NQ Oh I did. Oh we talk, oh he tells us, he's got some funny stories to tell. But what's wonderful is a local production company here in New Bedford has just produced a documentary called The Last Azorean Whaler which they interviewed my father and his brother, my uncle, who were both whalers in the Azores and now I think they're just looking for funding for some, for some major translation and to put it together. It was actually shown as a trailer at the last movie that was premiered here, the Whaling City. So it was a trailer, so it was really wonderful to be able to be sitting at the Zeiterion Theatre and all of a sudden you see my father up on the screen so it was really, really fun.

MS Wow. Oh that's great. And what was your story?

NQ Well, my story is I'm married to a captain of a scalloper, his name is Tommy Quintin. I've been married 21 years. So as the wife of a scalloper, there have been some funny things that have occurred throughout the years. So one of those funny stories is that when I was pregnant with our daughter, our daughter, she'll be 20 in a couple of months. So he called from the boat, now obviously we, the onset of technology, we didn't have cell phones back then. So we, he had to use what was called the side band radio. Now the side band radio as you probably know is the tool that all the fishermen use. So when he would, anybody would make a call, whatever station you were on, everybody else could hear the conversation. I was pregnant. He called home to find out how I was. Now he did not want to know the sex of our child. I did want to know the sex of our child. And just prior to the phone call, I had my, you know, monthly doctor's visit. I happened to be put into the room with the ultrasound machine. The doctor came in, asked me how I was doing. I said "Fine." He said, "Oh, look we have the ultrasound machine. Would you like to know the sex of the child" Of course I said, "Yes!" I wanted to know. I was, the temptation was too hard to resist. So when he called home and asked me how I was doing, I did not want to keep that from him. And I said I'm doing ok, but what I want you to know is that I did find out the sex of the child, but I'm not going to tell you because I know you don't wanna know. And I haven't told anybody else. So I'm the only one who knows. And he proceeded to say, "Oh my gosh, I can't believe that you went and did that, well, now you ruined it for me, now I know what the sex of the child is." And I stood there holding the phone thinking to myself, this man is nuts, how can he even know, I didn't tell him. And he's going on and on saying "oh my goodness, now I know I'm having a boy." And at that point I kind of crooked my head and said, "How is that possible, you weren't even there!" Now just as a primer, we are having a girl, that's what the ultrasound showed, but yet he was going on and on saying "Oh my goodness, I'm so happy, I'm gonna have a son" He's going on and on and I'm thinking, what, it's insane. How can he possibly think this. Well, in his mind, he had heard that the only way to clearly determine if you were going to have a child was if the stem was on the apple, if you know what I mean. So now keep in mind that the entire fleet is listening to this conversation. So he's going on and on. Of course me, being fully hormonal, being, you know, eight months pregnant I think is when this phone call was made, seven or eight months pregnant, and I was like "I'm not going to tell you, I'm not going to tell you I know you can go on and on." He says, "It's ok, you don't have to tell me. Oh my gosh, a son, a son, I'm so proud, my first child and it's going to be a son." It got to the point where I just couldn't take it anymore and I said, "No. You're not going to have a son. You're going to have a daughter. So there, so stop your shenanigans of like raving, rants and raves of having the proud, you know father of a son." And he said "How is that possible, that can't be. I can't be having a son. I says you are. I said when we went looking for the, to determine the sex, it was as if she knew what we were looking for. We could clearly see the lips." I heard a moment of silence on the other end and he said "Well how on earth can you tell the sex of a child by there lips?" I said "Honey, you have to think outside the box. The other set of lips" There was silence on the other end and he went, "Oh, oh, oh okay, okay." As you well, and everybody else heard that story as well. So that is one of funny tales from being a fisherman's wife of 21 years. And every time I

tell that story, everybody cracks up laughing. It's a crazy story, it's a funny story. So. I mean I have tons of stories, but I thought that one was the best one.

MS We haven't heard one like that yet.

NQ No. [laughs] Well there you go. I'm glad I was able to entertain you for a few minutes this afternoon.

MS I remember Kirsten Bendiksen

NQ Oh yeah, 'cause you know I know her well.

MS They were talking about announcing over the radio too, the birth of I forget whether it was Tor or I think it was Tor.

NQ Well, my husband and I we, Laura had approached us in May about doing a presentation on the American Cruise Line Cruise ships that come into the Port every week and so since May, Tommy and I have been, we came up with a presentation that we do, and we, it's not weekly, but you know, every other week or every couple of weeks we come in and we go onto the ship and he gives kind of the story, the perspective of the fisherman being out to sea, the industry and I give the family perspective of what it's like to be married to a fisherman, what happens at home when he's gone. And it's been very successful. People have been very receptive they always come at the end and saying how entertaining it was and how informative it was and thanking us for coming out and sharing our lives. And you know we're just a small representative of so many families that are here. It just happened that you know we were just selected to be the ones to come and tell the stories.

MS That's great.

NQ Yeah. So which is good yeah.

MS Well thank you.

NQ You're very welcome. You're very welcome.