

Fishtales, Saturday, September 28, 2013
Working Waterfront Festival

Interviewer – Markham Starr
Interviewee – Kathleen Reed

MS Ok so we're ready to start. I'm gonna start off with an easy question. What is your name?

KR My name is Kathleen Reed

MS And where are you from?

KR Uh, where am I living now or where am I from?

MS Yeah, where were you from originally? Where were you born?

KR Ok I was born and raised in Easton Pennsylvania, but I've lived most of my adult life in New England and most of that time in the greater New Bedford area.

MS And do you come from a fishing family at all?

KR No. I have no fishing background other than I like fish [laughs] and I like to be on the water.

MS That's a good start

KR It's a good start

MS Ok so what was your story you wanted to tell?

KR Well, for 23 years I ran a bed and breakfast in Fairhaven, Massachusetts, on the Acushnet River and it was called Edgewater Bed and Breakfast. And in those days, when I first came to this area in 1975, the fish auction was held in a little brick building down on the pier, I guess it's the Wharfinger building. And, you know, we were new to town so somebody said, you know they have a fish auction down there, it's really interesting and you know if you're quiet, and you don't make a big fuss, you can slip in and listen to it. It's very interesting. So I did, it was five o'clock in the morning and I came down and stood in the back, and it was silent, that's what I remember about it. And everybody was all nod a finger, nod a head and they would put up a blackboard saying like three ts of yellowtail and they'd name the boat. And people would bid. But it was all very quiet. And I just thought it was so interesting. So when I opened the Bed and Breakfast, guests would sometimes say to me, "Well, what is there to do in this area?" Now this was in 1983. So I said, well if you're really adventurous, and you wanna get up, and I could serve you breakfast at 4:30 or 5 o'clock or whatever time, and drive over to the fish

auction and it's something you won't see in another part of the country. So, every year I would get some guests who would choose to do that. And we would walk down, I would drive them over and we'd park and they'd participate in the fish auction. Now of course I understand it's all done very differently, hasn't been done that way for a long time, but it was something really, I think, unique to a fishing port.

MS Yeah that's great. 'Cause now it's really boring. They have computer screens and people you don't see are just clicking, yes, yes, yes, yes.

KR Right.

MS And it's really neat that you were sending people down there.

KR Yes, it was a tourist attraction.

MS Yeah

KR And you know I did call up, I actually spoke to, there was a person in the mayor's office in those days, I don't think the Director of Tourism had been hired yet, and I called him and I said, you know, do the fish plants ever let people in to, you know, see what's going on with the cutting of the fish and such? He said, oh I don't think so, but here's a number you can call. So I called a couple of fish companies and I said "You know, I have guests who like to go to the fish auction and I think if you would let them come in and they would love to see how the fish is processed and how it gets collected off the boats and everything." And they'd say "Well, it's a safety issue." But it is too bad, I mean there are lots of places you can go into a factory and see things being made and stuff. But anyway that's my fish related story

MS Well that's great. Thank you very much

KR You're very welcome.

MS I appreciate it.