

Interview with Mary Brown

Occupation: Wife of Commercial Fisherman

Port Community: Point Judith, Rhode Island

Interviewer: Azure Dee Cygler

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Oral Histories Project - NOAA Social Sciences

Logger/Transcriber: Angela Wilson

INDEX: (minutes: seconds)

Cygler Home, Narragansett, RI

[0:00]

AC: For the record, my name is Azure Cygler. I am interviewing Mary Brown. Today is the 6th of December 2011. And we are at my home, 86 Mumford Road, Narragansett, RI. And, Mary if you could just start by saying you looked over the release form and agreed to do this interview.

MB: Yup, I've read through it, signed it, and agreed to conduct this interview.

AC: Excellent, and if you could state your full name and your address.

MB: Mary Brown. 35 Erica Court, West Kingstown, RI.

AC: And you are related to fishing, part of the community, part of the fishing community?

MB: I am married to Chris Brown.

AC: Okay. And his home port?

MB: Galilee, RI.

AC: Excellent. And his vessel's name?

MB: The *Proud Mary*. Which is different from last time.

AC: Yes, you'll tell me a little bit about that I hope. Chris is in a sector?

MB: Yes, he is.

AC: Which sector is that?

MB: Um, am I supposed to know the number? (laughs)

AC: Sector five?

MB: Is it sector five?

AC: Yes. Sector five. If you don't mind me asking how old you are for the record?

MB: Fifty-two.

AC: Perfect. Fifty-two years young. And so we have the pleasure of interviewing you for the second time almost exactly three years ago. So we have a lot of the information about your history on file. It would be preferable to just breeze through some of that and get to other questions. But, just to give a general context, if you could just describe how you came to be here in Rhode Island and how you and Chris met, and how he sort of started his involvement in fisheries. Just a brief overview [of] family structure as well, kids...

MB: Sure. I moved here when I was in high school. So Chris and I met when we were in high school back in the seventies. He was actually involved in fishing at that time. He's been involved in fishing since he was a little boy. So, we dated for years and were married in 1984. [We're] still married. He's been fishing out of the Point [Judith] since then. [We're] married, three grown children now.

AC: Their ages now?

MB: Maggie well [she's] just shy of twenty-seven. Christopher is twenty-five. And Sam is twenty-two.

AC: Last time we spoke, I believe one had just sort of dabbled in fishing here and there in the summer.

MB: Sam, the youngest. Yes, because Christopher was probably playing baseball at the time, so he wasn't involved that much. Sam was going out with Chris, but he really gets sea sick, which is kind of a blessing. But they are both involved in the new business that we started.

AC: Okay. Tell me a little bit about his fishing and his business.

MB: Sam's fishing or Chris's fishing?

AC: Both, if you could. Your family's involvement in fishing throughout, what fisheries, where they fish, that kind of thing.

MB: Chris is typically considered a day fisherman. So he fishes, considered locally. He'll get up typically between four or five o'clock in the morning, makes a day trip. So, he'll be home by five, six o'clock at night. And that is a typical day for him. Groundfish is what he usually catches. And he has one crew member. Dean has worked with him now for quite a few years so they are comfortable with that arrangement. It's just one. He's had the boys go out with him occasionally over the summer. But neither one of them are going to follow in his footsteps as

far as fishing, fishing a vessel would go. The fishing industry has become quite important to them, but not so much the actual catching of the fish.

[04:21]

AC: Are they helping him manage the business?

MB: They are. They're both, it's funny. Chris started this small business with one other fisherman and it actually started with fluke. But [what] the sector has allowed him to do is to catch fluke more economically, predictably. And what they are doing is selling that fish to local restaurants. What they do is, they sell the whole fish, and the uniqueness about it is that they sell the whole fish and it's not only fresh fish but it has traceability. So each fish is literally a QR (Quick Response) code. So you can go to the restaurant and the restaurant will have the QR code and if you scan that on your app on your iPhone or smartphone, what will come up is this fish was caught by captain Chris Brown on the *Proud Mary* on this day and they'll tell you where it was caught. And this business is called Wild Rhody.

AC: Wild Rhody. And it services just Rhode Island?

MB: Providence and Boston. They are up to like sixty restaurants. It is so cool.

AC: Does Chris or Sam literally deliver the fish in a truck?

MB: Literally, it started with Chris Sr. and his partner, Steve selling just a couple boxes of fish. What it is, is the chef's cooperative in Boston. Did you read the article in the Globe a while ago about how some fish in restaurants, they are selling fish that were mislabeled or they didn't know what it was? Some of the chefs are really so aware of the importance of locally caught fish and organic and support that sort of business. We're looking for ways to serve fish that they, could be serving and knowing where it came from so they got together with a couple of chefs in Boston and that is how it started.

AC: That's incredible.

MB: Yeah, it's really cool. So Chris would literally catch the fish, put them in boxes and go up to Boston. Now it's grown a little bit more. He's kind of stepped back and Christopher Jr. and Sam have kind of taken it over, designing a website, and the sales. It's kind of cool.

AC: Are there special licenses they must have?

[07:04]

MB: You have to technically go through a processor to make it legitimate, if you will, so they do work with one of the processors down [at] the Point. But the boys will literally be there to

watch whatever comes through the doors. Our boys will deliver, so they have a refrig[erator] truck.

AC: You guys had to invest and purchase the refrigeration and the truck. So that was a little, maybe risky, at the beginning did you feel, were you kind of nervous about their success?

MB: Yes. Not at all, because I have to say I have never dealt with chefs before. Unique.

AC: Such artists I'm sure.

MB: Yes. So for them to get a whole fish, they're just so excited. Cause they use every part of the fish. They don't mind filleting it, they don't mind cleaning it. Stocks, yeah, you'll have to check it out online. We are on Facebook. And the website, Chris is just going through the website to make sure it is all accurate.

AC: That's Wild Rhody dot com?

MB: Yes, for the website it is LLC.com. The website is limited right now, but it will be attractive soon and the whole story.

AC: Wild Rhody LLC dot com

MB: Yes, he is actually going through proofreading the info on the sectors because he wants it right. He wants it right on there.

AC: So, that seems like another great example of his foresight.

MB: Absolutely, because what it allows him to do is to really have control of when he's going out, what he needs to get and the pricing is predictable. It takes a lot of the guess work out of it. So, that's definitely an outcome of the sectors.

AC: Okay.

MB: Absolutely.

AC: Are there other boats that provide boats for Wild Rhody or just Chris?

MB: He has a partner, Steve. Do you know Steve Arnold?

AC: Yes.

MB: Chris and Steve are the founders of Wild Rhody. They do have a couple of boats that sporadically get involved, but the component Trace and Trust, which also they have a really good website. You might want to check it out. That's the actual software that provides the

actual traceability component. And they are trying to look into coordinating up and down the east coast. You know, Wild Rhody south, Wild Rhody north, to provide fish on a larger scale. So, it's kind of cool.

AC: Hopefully your website has made edible Rhody, or maybe it's a part of that?

MB: Yes, it has.

AC: That seems like the same sort of crowd that would respect your business idea and promote it.

MB: Quite a few restaurants, it's funny how they're selling as far as the Wynn Casino in Las Vegas. They are selling Wild Rhody fish, but it's almost... some of the restaurants are almost too close; they just don't get the concept. It's fascinating just to watch the boys take off with it.

AC: Has adding this extra business element brought you into fisheries more than ever before? Has your role changed?

MB: Me personally?

AC: Yeah.

MB: It has because it's... I mean the whole business is run out of the house. Sam is at the dining room table; Christopher is upstairs at his desk. And it's just so funny because the chefs will call and Sam has to call the boats, "What are you catching? When are you gonna be in? Can we get the fish for 'X'? This amount of fish for this day?" Not that I have made any phone calls or written any emails, but I am so aware of every component of the process. I could probably do it and I actually, I joke with the boys. It's like, "Ok, guys when June comes, move over".

AC: That's right, I was just going to say, once you are not working full time I'm sure....

MB: Because we are actually looking into space down [at] the Point. Because it's got to the point where do we have to process the fish ourselves. Maybe we will be talking to supermarkets, and they want filleted fish.

AC: Fascinating.

MB: It is absolutely fascinating. I never would have thought.

[12:25]

AC: Is this something that Chris and your boys created in a way, sort of keeping your family's... diversifying your income and having a suite of options for the future? Was that a big part of

this, or was there a bigger vision of promoting this great concept to the world? I mean Chris is certainly a visionary. He seems to look way out.

MB: He certainly is.

AC: Was it strictly business or was it kind of sustainable seafood promotion?

MB: Both. It started so small. He and Steve would go to these restaurants. They almost came looking to the fishing industry, "We need this, what can you do for us"? And then, one of the gentlemen that brought the "Trace and Trust" component was looking for someone who was going to take this and run with it. "I have the software, what can you do with it?" So, just the logo being responsible, sustainable, is just dovetails. It is what he wants to do. He's got to sustain this fishing stock so it's just worked out really well.

AC: Amazing.

MB: And the boys, Christopher went to school for one thing and Sam for something else, but [this] has somehow brought them together. And Maddie is just kind of now toying with the idea of getting involved.

AC: 'Cause she was getting her master's.

MB: She has two master's in advising and counseling. So she teaches at CCRI and she's an advisor there. But her strong suit, her bachelors is in public relations.

AC: Well, there you go. There is a spot opening at Wild Rhody, Erica Court, right there.

MB: But she's like I don't know... Christopher, Sam... so it could possibly.... She's trying out that idea.

AC: Excellent. Amazing. It never ceases to amaze me, your family. And I guess just, there is this element and there's fishing and now there is Wild Rhody and like you were just saying Chris is in Washington. Has his involvement slowed down in terms of management and councils and meetings? How is that affecting your family and you, your relationship, stress-wise or how do you cope with it all?

MB: It's funny, not funny, ironic. Last time I saw you, his involvement was significant, but it was often very negative. He was just trying to determine how he was going to be involved and still fish, what the future of the fishing was and I don't know if you remember, at the time he was just recently diagnosed with type two diabetes and the more I've learned about that disease, a lack of sleep, stress, the way you eat, his schedule it was like the perfect storm. I don't know how he could have avoided it. So getting a handle on that, and now his involvement is as great if not greater, but it is much more positive. You still have those nay-sayers. No doubt about it. Nasty, nasty nay-sayers. But, for the most part I think he feels he's done something good and

he's got a lot of support now. A lot of other people are saying the same vision, if you will. It makes it easier. And his fishing is more controlled. It's not like you just gotta get out there and catch as many fish and kill as many fish as you can. You go out there and you are productive. You catch what you need. You know what you have.

[16:46]

AC: There's some predictability.

MB: Predictability. And you don't have to go when the wind is blowing. You don't have to go when the prices aren't what you they could be or should be. So it's more sane. It's safer. It's just....

AC: Strictly due to sectors because of the quotas?

MB: Absolutely.

AC: And is he a member? You were mentioning how all this involvement, even though now it's more positive, there wasn't any compensation. It wasn't like he was getting any stipends to go to all these meetings. Has that changed at all with sectors?

MB: No. Not really. But, the benefits have far outweighed the, you know.... And now we are at the point now where he... we went to a dinner on the Cape in September with the EDF (Environmental Defense Fund).

AC: Who loves Chris, because he's been such a huge, you know....

MB: But it is something we did together. Literally, it was the first time that we had gone together to a meeting, to a dinner and it was kind of neat to meet [people]. I had heard the names and now I saw the faces. It was very positive. It was awesome. And now we hope to, once I have my schedule freed up, when he has to go somewhere... like, I could fly down to Washington with him Thursday, next year. But that is what we are looking forward to, to be able to kind of do that.

AC: And there are West Coast trips because there is a lot going on with gear and things, gear research.

MB: Yes, absolutely. Yep. Up north, the Gulf of Maine and all of that kind of stuff.

AC: So it sounds like maybe even, has it brought you closer in terms of..., 'cause I remember before you mentioning it was nice, he would be away because you had your rhythm.

MB: I raised that family by myself.

AC: We love you here, but don't mess with our system.

MB: It has brought us together in a good way that.... Now, Chris is obviously very intelligent and motivated and hard working. But there was always, because he didn't go to college, I think there was always like a little, I don't want to say animosity, but it was hard to relate on some things, because he just didn't understand. He was just never exposed to a lot of those forms. And now that he is, he appreciates it. And now that our kids are through college, we just are communicating at a different level. Does that make sense?

AC: Absolutely.

MB: It's not just talking about fishing, it's other aspects of it.

AC: And he sees, probably, the product of your encouragement for your kids to go to college. And all the things you do, which is raise three amazing people that have benefited in some way from their college experience, whether they are using it directly or not. It is a holistic element, education.

MB: It's a learning process. You've probably interviewed many fishermen and very often it's "My way or the high way." And he's learned to listen. And his communication skills have really developed and have just....

AC: So that's not just with industry, but you are saying on a relationship level that has trickled into your life. Because a better communicator in one aspect is a better communicator across the board?

[20:40]

MB: Yes. Absolutely. 'Cause you can't go to a meeting and say it's got to be this way or no way at all. Everyone has a story. If they go there angry, if they go there whatever... if you are open-minded enough to listen to them, you can figure out why they are saying what they are saying.

AC: So it sounds like three years ago to now, would you, it's hard to tease out, there are so many elements of life, but would you say your life things are better or things are worse overall?

MB: Definitely better, overall. No doubt about it.

AC: That's great. Now, does he knowing more, yourself and Chris both, knowing more about managing diabetes, is he able to kind of still be active and evolve but also say "I need to not be that out and crazy?"

MB: He has finally learned to say, "No. I can't meet you there, I can't do this." Sometimes he's like "I just have to go fishing. I just need to go," which is one of the reasons he went because he likes to be off land.

AC: He mentioned that, that it was “alone time”.

MB: Therapeutic. Absolutely. And I think the most negative aspect of his existence right now, and I see it [with] the boys too, are the cell phones. It’s like, turn them off. Just turn it off. It’s okay if you don’t get that phone call.

AC: And emails. I’m sure he gets a million of them.

MB: All the time. All the time. The boys, the chefs, 12:30 at night, ‘cause that’s when their day ends. “Oh Sam, can I have ...” But I think that that is hard, to not have an office. To say, “Okay, the office is closed.”

AC: Working at home must be tricky. My husband [does] the same thing. It has been very difficult to say “Okay, when do you stop working?” You are always at the office.

MB: Or I’ll get the phone calls at the house that say, “Mary, I called Chris, but his voicemail is full.” First, he may not know how to empty it, but I’ll take the message. But he has managed his health better and now too you have to set an example for the boys, and the girls. Maggie’s, you know.... So that’s better.

AC: And they are healthy. No health issues. Excellent. Now Mary, how over the last couple of years since sectors began, let’s look at that sort of time scale, time frame, have your life plans changed significantly? I know you are planning to retire.

MB: Or, not work.

AC: Yes, not work at your current occupation. Retire is not a word that is going to fit your family any time soon. So was that decision, or maybe other decisions in your life, on the bigger scale, moving or relocation, or any of those kinds of things, were those made because of changes in the fisheries or because of other things?

MB: Sure, well, um...

AC: In whole or in part.

MB: Right, my decision to not have to work fulltime next year definitely is because of the sectors. Chris’s income is more predictable and it’s going to allow us to get our own health insurance. Things are just better. He has that confidence, if you will. One of the biggest reasons I went to work is for health insurance. It was just... we didn’t think we could take it on on our own. But now, it’s like, we can do this. The kids are all older. We thought they would be out of the house (laughs), which is fine, but that’s where we are. I hope the expenses will go down very soon. Who knows?

AC: And you plan to stay in Rhode Island and keep this business?

MB: [We] plan to stay in Rhode Island. Sometimes he threatens to go elsewhere because he feels, and I don't think it is just exclusive to fishing, some Rhode Islanders are pretty stubborn and close-minded, very narrow, narrow thinking. And you know what I need, to go somewhere where they are more progressive in thinking. He'll get more support, even more than he has now. He can go to California and they are all about it. They know exactly what he is talking about. Or he can go to Washington, and they get it. But, the Rhode Islanders, they are sometimes hard to....

AC: He's in the trenches here. He's working on the ground in the trenches. It is not as rewarding as... yeah.

MB: Yes, it's very frustrating.

AC: But he has a calling it seems like, to do this, is that what you would...? What is his motivation? Is it a love for the resource?

MB: I think a multifaceted calling might be a good term for it. He sincerely wants to keep the fisheries healthy. It just makes sense. You overfish, there will be no fish to catch, plain and simple. I mean that was just like basic, and it is amazing how some people don't get that.

AC: It seems to have taken a lot of years for that to even start to become....

MB: Right. You know, I mean if you're a lumberjack if you cut down all of the trees and you don't replant.... And he wants to have that impact on the industry. When he is long gone he wants to know that he had a positive impact on it.

[27:33]

AC: Now has all of this involvement in sectors brought you closer to any fishermen or their wives and families? Has it expanded your social networks into the fisheries more? I remember last time you were saying there wasn't a lot....

MB: To be perfectly honest with you, no. Ironically, the families that we were involved with years ago, most of them don't have the same outlook. They have definitely taken the path of resistance, if you will. Significantly. They judge, they think that some of the things that have been said, they think Chris is lining his pockets with the government's money. Amazing stories. He [is] doing well, but he's not a millionaire. He's not making you know... we are comfortable. We are paying the bills. But they think any sign that he's doing okay; they think that someone is paying him off. Someone is... it's like are you kidding me?

AC: And these used to be friends.

MB: Friends, and relatives. They still are relatives, but not good healthy relationships at all.

AC: So you have distanced yourself?

MB: Yeah. You have to, you know. But we have gotten to know other people in... through the government or the chefs... other people that appreciate and see the good in it. That it's positive. You, for example, which is awesome.

AC: Well, thank you. Different walks of life in a way maybe?

MB: Right. There's like a bunch of us.

AC: I threaten every once in a while to go back to California. This place doesn't change... the good and the bad right?

MB: Right.

[30:02]

AC: Now, see it's such an interesting... you have such an interesting story. I'm trying to think back to three years ago as well. So health insurance, you will pay directly once you leave in June?

MB: Yes, that may be Wild Rhody versus the boat. I don't know where we'll go with that. I don't know if that makes a difference. Technically, it would be us on paper.

AC: Gottcha. Corporations. So Wild Rhody is an LLC. And then the fishing portion of your businesses are...?

MB: A corporation.

AC: Now boat insurance, is that something that you will maintain? Has it been an easy thing to maintain? Is it a big expense?

MB: I think it is a significant expense. But his track record has been.... It's like car insurance, you don't have accidents so it's reasonable as it can.... Honestly he hasn't really said too much about it.

AC: So it hasn't been a burden that you know of.

MB: No. And we got the other boat.

AC: Right, tell me a little bit about that?

MB: About the *Proud Mary*? He changed the name of the boat after me, which is bizarre.

AC: I can't image.... He does not seem fond of you at all [joking]...

MB: So that was hard when we got rid of the *Grandville*. That was really hard.

AC: 'Cause he scrapped it right?

MB: Oh my gosh. Yeah.

AC: Was that a symbolic gesture for him?

MB: No one else was going to have the *Grandville*. He built the boat. He was there when it was built. He was young. That was his baby. You know. To this day I'm kind of like I can't believe he doesn't have it. It was just that significant.

AC: Is it because he wanted a bigger boat, or a different style?

MB: No, actually it was a smaller boat.

AC: So this new *Proud Mary* is smaller. So more....

MB: Fiberglass, so less maintenance. The *Grandville* was all wood and the upkeep was significant. So, he went to Canada and bought the boat in Canada, the new one or the newer one. He had just gotten to that point where the expenses to maintain and the upkeep was just not doable. It was just not practical.

AC: How long did it take him to scrap the *Grandville* and get the *Proud Mary* working? Was it years or months?

MB: It was, well, that was interesting. I'm trying to think how long we had both. I think it was a six month turn over, when he brought down the boat from Canada. Of course, everything was rigged differently up there. So he had to take things off the *Grandville* and try to save what he could mechanically, equipment-wise. And then for a while he wanted to fish both boats. That was a little hairy. To have two boats, one captain. Which boat are we taking? And I think part of it was just a process for him to let go. Like okay. 'Cause he just knew that other boat inside, outside, upside down everything about it. And then he was ready. Sam was with him. It was in the summer. And literally, he brought it, had it hauled out and torn apart. Yup, that was crazy.

AC: Was that sort of, do you remember that being a stressful period? Were you like "this was not a good idea?"

MB: This was bizarre. Yeah.

[34:02]

AC: Well you were going to go lobstering, as I recall. He was thinking about going lobstering?

MB: Right, because he was looking at a much smaller lobster boat. And he was going to do that. And maybe Sam was thinking about running that. 'Cause, he just knew. The writing was on the wall with the *Grandville*. The wood, safety is number one. And he could see that was coming down the pike somehow. Lobstering and Chris, I don't know, that is just not going to work out. And doesn't, sound marketing, and such, that's the way to go. So, he investigated a couple boats and found this one in Canada. Worked that out and that was kind of a crazy financial deal, because it was international. There's whole layers of things that it's like oh, oh yeah okay. And then you had to get someone to drive it to the boarder and someone else had to take it from the boarder to uh...It was crazy.

AC: Did you go with him on the trip?

MB: No, he had to hire someone to. I don't think Chris could bring it over the border. He had to hire someone. I don't know what the title of the person is that does that. And they had to bring it over the Canadian border into the United States.

AC: And then he picked it up?

MB: And he could take it down. Yeah, so Sam was up in Nova Scotia way. It was a crazy, crazy time. So we had two boats for a while. While he was redoing the *Proud Mary*, he was kind of moving away from the *Grandville*. So that was kind of hairy. It wasn't... it was busy stuff but you knew it was going to be positive, the outcome. It's like, you can't sell your house and you buy another one.

AC: The in between period. Absolutely.

MB: But it was so funny, ironic. I can remember driving home. I was driving home from Dave's grocery shopping. It was in the summer. And Sam had left that day to go to the boat yard with Chris and I knew when they were tearing the boat apart. I'm going to start crying. I'm sorry.

AC: It's okay. You could just read it.

MB: Well, I hadn't even talked to him.

AC: And they just had to do it...

MB: Well, I knew they were going to do it. Okay. But I wasn't sure... (crying.) I'm sorry.

AC: That's ok. It was like a family member, right?

MB: But so, I'm driving in the car and I said I'm going to call him to see what's going on. Sam picks up the phone and you could hear the back ground. It was just, I don't know. You just felt it. It was like so weird thing.

AC: You felt a connection to the boat beyond....

MB: Like, I knew I had to call. Like, I knew something was... you know.... Sam picked up the phone and he said, "Yeah Mom, they are doing it now." I was like, oh... (sighs.) He said, "I gotta watch dad."

AC: Was he okay?

MB: He was.

AC: He handled it okay?

[37:40]

MB: He did. And it wasn't like it was like a death of a family member or anything, it was just like, wow.

AC: Like kids going away to college maybe. It was very sad but there was new things waiting? But still, that is a big change.

MB: It was just weird, how the timing. You just sensed it. Anyway....

AC: Now have you been on the new boat, on a trip or a bay cruise or anything?

MB: I haven't actually been on the boat that often.

AC: Because last time you were saying the same.

MB: I get sea sick. So, I'm not one to go down there. Oh my god, I know where Sam gets it from.

AC: And it's a terrible feeling. I know exactly.

MB: It is, and there is nothing you can do about it.

AC: It's the worst in the world.

MB: When he's not fishing, he's not fishing. He's not on that boat. We don't spend any time down there. Whether that changes if we get space down there with Wild Rhody....

[38:57]

AC: Well, if you could Mary, this is wonderful; just tell me a little bit more about the sectors and about how it works from your understanding? And some of the pros, it seems like there have been a lot of pros for you guys, positive aspects maybe. Is there some negative, or cons, that you noticed, or things you think should be changed? Just an overview of your perception of how it's working.

MB: I have to say my perspective is probably very skewed in the fact that Chris is just so pro sector and he handles it so well. He really likes that he knows what he can catch. Like, he's responsible for 'X' amount of fish. And the group of guys in his sector are all on the same boat. He spends a lot of time reporting. He takes on that responsibility, chasing around everyone, what they caught, what they haven't caught, what's left. I have to say I could see where it would be a challenge for someone who wasn't business minded. As far as, like purchasing quota and that whole aspect. That's a whole other mindset and a whole other business skill, if you will.

AC: The trading?

MB: Yes.

AC: So if he catches too much of one species, or if someone does in the sector, they can trade?

MB: They can trade or also if someone....

AC: Buy?

MB: Right, wants to lease their quota. You can go out and lease that quota and you can catch it, but you have to pay them a fee, if you will, part of that catch. So it's almost like stocks, if you will, you have to kind of have some looking into the future, what you might need. Can you afford to lease this quota or buy this quota from somebody?

AC: It's probably like Excel skills in Excel and other like computer, internet obviously to like probably go online and communicate with other people and fishermen.

MB: They don't feel confined at all that there is a set amount of fish, because he feels that if science has done well, that it's accurate. And okay, this is what we can catch and sustain the fishery. That's fine. That's never a question. But that whole concept that if someone isn't catching their quota but they would like to lease it to someone, that part of it.... Like Chris said, unless you are really are good, if you have the money, if you will, to lease that quota, you don't have access to that. Whereas if you were starting a new business and you needed to take out a business loan to rent a building, a bank would understand that. But that whole financing for the quota is just, banks have no concept what that could.... "How are you going to pay me back?" They don't get yet what that aspect is.

AC: It's a different set of rules. Fisheries has always been outside, everything about it, from other businesses.

[42:42]

MB: So I can see where someone who doesn't understand it would feel threatened by it and think it was too difficult to even jump in and join.

AC: So those people you think have just decided to go stay with the common pool?

MB: Yes. Yes.

AC: So they have opted that "this is not something I want to be a part of." Is it also an exclusion? Is there any exclusion? Can the sector say "this is who we want as members, and you we don't want?"

MB: I would imagine that there are some sectors that would do that? Chris opens it up to everyone, anyone.

AC: Does he manage violations within the sector? Maybe there aren't any. But is he the one, as the manager, who would go after guys who are not fulfilling the rules or complying?

MB: We haven't run into that. He really, on a weekly basis, or daily basis, depending on the activity level, will chase [you] down. You have got to. I've got to shut you off because you are roaming too close to.... But the group of guys are all like-minded. So they know before they start, this is what we are doing so....

AC: It seems like it is running quite smoothly.

MB: It is. It's cumbersome, the paperwork and it just brings... it's a smart man's game I guess.

AC: Some other folks have mentioned that. That predictability is great but you have to manage it a little better rather than this wild ride.

MB: Exactly, and that's what it is all about, managing. And also they are opened to being accountable and being observed and that's okay. It's not big brother looking at you, it's just, everyone has to be accountable. If you don't want to play by that role.... How's the science going to get better and more accurate if we don't have accurate information? There is no more hiding anything. There's no more under the table.

AC: Now, research... Chris was involved in some other government research projects I believe. Is that still happening?

MB: Yesterday was a research day.

AC: Doing?

MB: I'm trying to think of what the study was that he was looking at yesterday. I don't know if it was dogfish. There is a number of projects that he's worked on from different schools, different agencies.

AC: And he can manage to put those in amongst the fishing days?

MB: Yup. He's got two more. This project that he worked on yesterday, they've got two more days that they have to get in before the end of the calendar year. But again that is another piece. From the outside someone will say, "He's making a lot of money doing that." But it's almost like a part time job, if you will. If you're willing to bring someone out and help them out, if you will, they may pay some of the fuel bill or something like that, but it's....

AC: It's still a physical person on your boat, kind of getting in the way, not meaning to.

MB: Gathering information, you are very focused on what you are catching. It's very specific. You aren't going out there catching a regular day.

AC: I think it's under-appreciated that you have to shift how you behave, not behave in a sense that he is misbehaving. But you have to shift your communication, you are now talking to someone who is not familiar with your world and I think there is an undervalue.

MB: It could be a gender thing.

AC: Exactly.

MB: Sometimes I think, "Oh god, that poor girl."

AC: I know. And so you have guys that are willing to offer their second home, their boat, to this person, and I don't think that's appreciated by other members of the fishing community when they say oh he gets all the research or he's doing.... They don't realize it's emotional, he has to you know... it's a mental process he has to shift himself. It's a big deal.

MB: That is huge. Some guys just do not want anyone on their boat.

AC: They are used to having their own space.

MB: It's hard.

[47:45]

AC: Like I said, this is for posterity's sake. This interview is going to be available to your great-grand children, we hope. Is there a story or a memory or a thought about your life that you would like to sort of add it into this oral history? There may not be but....

MB: Other than I don't think I would do anything different, it's been interesting just to watch the evolution of the industry. As well as Chris, how he has truly evolved. I think he sometimes feels like he has to prove himself. Whether it's not going to school or his personal family situation that he wants to not only be successful within his family but within his industry. He works very hard at both to gain that respect, and he's earned it. I think not only within our household, but within the industry.

AC: A couple years ago you mentioned that you thought he felt responsible for the industry.

MB: Yes. He still does.

AC: There is just this responsibility that he has taken on?

MB: Right, that he has to make it better. Some of it is just so basic, that he wants to take care of it. Now, I think he's empowered on some levels that, he's got some allies in the government and the industry that, okay, we can make a difference and keep it healthy and keep it active and legitimate and all that stuff.

AC: So when you look down the pike to the future you seem pretty optimistic. You have an optimistic outlook on fisheries?

MB: I do. I wonder what will happen within our family because the boys will not, maybe they will, who knows. They may one day say, "I'm gonna run that boat." But if like Wild Rhody takes off, who supplies the fish? It's interesting. There aren't that many guys down there. I don't know how you infuse the industry with young people.

AC: And is that because the parents are not encouraging their kids to go into fisheries or because it's just not appealing regardless.

MB: With our family, I think the timing of it, you know. If I was a young family now, it might be different. Because I think it looks hopeful and it looks promising and safer. It's all those things. So you could see where someone might want to do that. Our boys grew up when it was tumultuous. You didn't know where it was going. There was some anxiety, some bitterness. My boys are not going to fish.

AC: So they didn't go out regularly? They didn't get hooked.

MB: Right. He said, "You're gonna go get your degree and then [fish] if you wanted to, but you're gonna get your degree first." Now, if they run Wild Rhody, they will always have to have fish.

AC: That is a whole other entrepreneurial take on fisheries with our very intelligent, this generation, Y and generation X getting into it.

MB: As well as the technology, improved technology.

AC: They seem to view things entirely differently. How can we use technology and the internet and our social networks to make businesses?

MB: Even on the boats with the computers and the designs of the nets. They are just fishing so much more efficiently. It's so different. They're not taking those risks. They don't have to go out there when the weather is bad and things like that. But I still don't know how you get the young people down there. We'll see, especially in Rhode Island. What other business do we have here?

AC: It's a tough place to stay.

MB: It is. It truly is. You have this community down there that you can build on.

AC: Has the docks changed in term of infrastructure that you've seen in the last few years. Have there been, are there few boats?

MB: There's definitely fewer boats, definitely fewer people fishing. Which some people will blame the sectors, if you will, but I think if you have fewer boats fishing more efficiently it's just like any well run business. You are going to lose people who don't run their business well. Whether it's a retail store or whatever. Unfortunately, it all gets thrown into this, "Oh, it's the sectors...."

AC: It's the biggest change in a while, so it's easy to blame....

MB: Yeah.

AC: Probably easy to blame.

MB: Blame, yeah.

AC: Very Interesting. And, any other closing thoughts or things I didn't ask that you would want to comment on.

MB: I don't think so, I just you know, I just see a lot of positive things going on and hopefully, in another three years or is this closing the book? Do you know?

AC: I don't. Hopefully this is many more to come over a wide range in time we get to speak with a lot more people. So another three years we'll be able to compare.

MB: Continue the saga.

AC: You'll be famous from this Wild Rhody concept that will have spread across the nation. Oh my. Well you've got that Wild Rhody LLC dot com.

MB: Yes, there you go, absolutely.

AC: A little plug. Well, thank you Mary very much for your time.

MB: You're welcome.

AC: Much appreciated.

END INTERVIEW

[55:31]