pay." Well, I didn't look at it as a week's pay.

JM: Did you live in Newport?

AB: I bought a house in 1957 up on Manning Terrace, off Eustis Avenue. In 1968, we built a house in Portsmouth. The rest of my family still lives in Bristol.

End of Interview #1

Second interview with Anthony Bucolo, conducted by Jennifer Murray on June 10, 1987

MURRAY: Just a few questions about your family that I forgot to ask last time -- Was your grandfather or your father's stepfather Bucolo?

BUCOLO: No. My father's father was Bucolo. As I explained, he died the day my father was born. When my grandmother came to this country, she married a man by the name of [ ] Caruso. For years, when my father first started -- in fact, until Normie Brownell died a few years back -- he always called my father Caruso. But my father and uncle were Bucolos. They have two half-brothers that are Carusos. One died, and the other is still in the fish business.

JM: How about your mother's family? Were they Italian, too?

AB: Yes. They were raised in Bristol. My mother's mother and father both came from Italy. Her father died when he was thirty-five. My grandmother had five daughters. She was like thirty-one or thirty-two. Two or three years later, she remarried. She married a butcher. So in our family, we had the best of both worlds. We had fresh meat and fresh fish.

JM: How about your wife? Where did you meet her?

AB: My wife originally comes from Warren. I come from

Bristol. The thing years ago was the Bristol boys and the Warren girls and the Warren boys and the Bristol girls. It was just tradition then.

JM: Did you know her before you went to college?

AB: No. I met her my freshman year in college.

JM: How many children do you have?

AB: Six.

JM: What are their names?

AB: The oldest one is Chris Ann; the next one is Elizabeth Ann. Then there's Mariano Stephen, named after my father; Michael; Lisa; and Amy.

JM: Amy's the youngest?

AB: Amy's the youngest.

JM: I didn't ask you what you majored in in college.

AB: Biology.

JM: Did that help you later on?

AB: The only thing that I could say helped me was I was the only one in the class that had an A in abnormal psychology. I think that background really helped me with the fishermen, because I more or less knew what their questions to me were going to be before they even knew themselves. A lot of people have asked me, because I have been known to have a very short fuse, how I get along with some of these guys that are similar, where likes repel and unlikes attract. It seemed that I

really fared well with people that were as high strung as I am. I just attributed that to the fact that, with my background in both psychology and abnormal psychology, I really, really, could get to them. It wasn't that they always saw my side. They just respected the fact that I was on top. They more or less came over to my way of thinking.

JM: Well, I would think that would be pretty important in a business like that.

AB: I guess it was. [chuckles]

JM: Someone had told me about the situation in the 1940s, where a lot of the bigger fishermen from Gloucester and New Bedford came down to Newport because they discovered that a lot of fish were in the Canyons off the Continental shelf during the winter. Did you know any of those fishermen?

AB: I know of a fellow by the name of Francis Foot. He was one of the first ones to come to Newport. He fished in the Hudson Canyon and got some real big trips of fluke. He took out at Tallman and Mack, knowing my father, because my father had just got involved with Tallman and Mack. He used to sell to him on occasion, when he had small trips, when my father was just buying fish from the local boats. When they started at Tallman and

Mack, Francis Foot. No, wait a minute. It wasn't Francis. It was Cecil Foot, I guess. There was a fellow by the name of Manny Ferris. But he was from Newport. They went to Tallman and Mack and sold. After two or three years where Tallman and Mack was just really a trap company, my father's partner said, "Look, it's just too much. If these boats come in the summertime, we're not going to be able to handle them. So let's just drop it." And they did.

JM: How about a man named Axel Weiderman? Did you know him?

AB: Axel Weiderman. I knew him very well. He had a boat named Elizabeth Ann. That's where the name of my daughter came from. I always liked the name. Axel Weiderman had the Elizabeth Ann. I don't recall what the name of it was before that. But he bought this boat and spent a lot of money refurbishing it.

JM: Here in Newport?

AB: Here in Newport. He did it at Newport Shipyard. He was one of the first from the Newport area to go offshore lobstering. What had happened was I had struck up an agreement with Axel. They went out lobstering, and when they come in, it was, I guess, November. He had asked his son to come

down to let me know -- because he was at Parascandolo's -- that he was in with lobsters. Now this was in the late 1950s. The son said, "Oh, those people go to Florida in the winter. No sense going down there. Let's call other places." Well, they called every hotel, every fish market, and everything you could think of, to sell these lobsters. I guess he had like twenty-five hundred pounds. When he got down to three or four hundred pounds, the father decided himself to take a ride down to just see.

He said, "This is what I got."

I said, "Well, wait a minute. I've got to make a few phone calls, and I'll give you a price."

I called three or four places. "Oh, we've got plenty of lobsters. We bought them off this boat."

So I turned to him and I said, "Axel, you know we have an agreement."

He said, "Well, my son said this and that."

I said, "Well, now, all of a sudden, after you sold seventy-five percent of the trip for the same money to the customers I was going to go to, you expect me to give you that money for what you have left. This stuff has been picked over." I

said, "You should have come down in the beginning."

That was my one and only confrontation with Axel Weiderman. After that, he didn't really do much. He died shortly after. I don't know if he ever went lobstering again after that trip. He used to take out at Parascandolo's, though.

JM: How about Pete Russell?

AB: Pete Russell. Great guy. Francis Russell. Pete worked for me. I guess Pete came when we had the Chris Ann. That was, oh, early 1960s. Then he stayed on with the Elizabeth Ann. I think he was on both the Crispina and Mariano Bucolo.

JM: Skipper?

AB: No. Pete was always the cook. Pete decided he was getting old, and he was looking for security in his old age. He decided to join the Merchant Marines. For about five or six years, every port that Pete went to, there was post card. I have an African head, a mask, made out of mahogany that he sent. I haven't seen him in the last few years, but we were always good friends. Pete was one real good fellow.

JM: Any one else like that, that you particularly remember?

AB: Well, Manly Gray. Of course, he was the skipper for me for about fourteen or fifteen years. He

took the Chris Ann, then he had the Elizabeth Ann. I actually designed the Crispina, and then he took that out. When we were having the Mariano built, whatever bugs we had in the Crispina, we took out on the Mariano. Because of his help, we gave him that boat, because he had it just the way he wanted it. He worked on that boat, I'd say, a year or two. There was too much pressure. The other fellow on the other boat was just making all kinds of money and going in the winter down to Corsair Canyon and places where Buddy had never heard of. I don't mean he didn't hear of them, but, I mean, he never would go that far to fish.

He got into a row with my brother one day. We had a little parting of the ways. Because of my friendship and loyalty to him, I said, "Look, you're not going to find a job that easily. Why don't you take the Elizabeth Ann?" I said, "We'll make a deal." I sold him the Elizabeth Ann, nothing down. Three or four months later, they lost her right here, right off here. That was something that should have never happened.

Oh, God, it might have been eight or nine years later. He come down and made a couple of trips with -- I don't know if it was Dickie Francis -- with somebody on the boat. We tried to

get him to stay, but he had had it. He didn't want to go fishing.

JM: It sounds like he was quite a fisherman.

AB: He was a great fisherman for this area. If that's all you knew was the Newport fishing -- They go flyfishing: butterfish, whiting, squid, scup, then a few yellowtails, then lobster fishing. You have lean years. When you're caught in a lean year, what do you do? These guys would like to spend a month painting the boat up and fooling with this and fooling with that. When you have somebody else who's going to the East'ard all the time, and he's coming in with twenty-five, thirty thousand pound of lemon sole and twenty thousand pound of cod and ten thousand pound of haddock, and you're sitting at the dock painting the boat up, it's just not good business. That's what happened.

JM: How does danger figure into that, and personality - the kind of guy who's willing to go further East?

AB: It's not so much that; it's just experience. You can take somebody that is a carpenter. You have somebody who does rough carpentry, who does the studding up. And then, you have somebody who is a finish carpenter. They're both carpenters, but

their skills and their expertise are different.

The fellows in the Rhode Island, Point Judith area, they always fished the Fishtail, Hudson Canyon, Block Canyon. As far as the East, they'd go to Vearches and stop. The fellows that came from Newfoundland and are in New Bedford, they were used to fishing way, way to the East'ard. That's all they knew. They left New Bedford and they steamed right down to Georges Banks. The Gloucester guys would go like to Northern Edge. But Buddy Gray -- Northern Edge was a million miles too far for him to go.

JM: And he was from Gloucester.

AB: He was from Gloucester, but he enjoyed fishing this way. He really wanted a small boat. He didn't want to be involved in a big boat. The Chris Ann was a small boat. It was nice, but we were looking for lobsters. It wasn't the type of boat to go lobster fishing. It was what he liked - go out to Block Island, yellowtailing then whiting and stuff. With Elizabeth Ann -- We bought that in the spring. They'd run to the Fishtail and in five or six days, they'd have five or six thousand pound of lobsters. And that was great. But after three or four years, that petered out. When we got the bigger boats, you

really had to go. That was his downfall. It's like somebody playing Triple A ball. When they leave the Pawtucket Red Sox and go up to the Red Sox, and they don't make it, they have to go back down or else quit. And that's exactly what happened. It was a little bit too much for him - the pressure. He didn't want to do it.

But he was a great fisherman and a great friend. He really was a very loyal person. I always got along good with Buddy and I always liked Buddy.

JM: Do you remember anyone in particular who was willing to go further than anyone else?

AB: From the Newport area?

JM: Yes.

AB: No. In Newport, in my time, you had Carl Johnson, who was an excellent fly fisherman. He always caught a lot of scup. But he fished Nantucket Sound, which is a few hours away. Johnny Francis, who would go lobstering. But, of course, John just made enough to make a living and that's all he was interested in.

Really, when it comes to offshore skippers, that's what you had. You had Buddy Gray, Carl Johnson, and Johnny Francis.

JM: How did Newport compare with Point Judith then, in

the 1950s?

AB: Actually, I didn't really get into handling fish until the 1960s. I guess Parascandolo and Point Judith were quite the rivals, because they both handled the same type of fish. Both Parascandolo and myself, when I got into it, our only wedge against Point Judith was we had an in with New Bedford for handling yellowtails. It was always a three, four, to five cent difference in price than what we could pay the boats and what they would be paid in Point Judith. And that's what attracted quite a few of the Point Judith boats here. But, as years went by, they started making inroads. You know what they say about competition: It's the spirit of life but the death of profit. This is what happened. They got so close that it wasn't worth going away from home, as far as they were concerned.

JM: Tell me, in the 1950s, what exactly your business consisted of when you started out. Did you get into that right out of college?

AB: Yes. I graduated in 1956. I started in that fall. I got married and I started the lobster company on Spring Wharf. I bought from the local fishermen. About, maybe, 1961 or 1962, some of these Southern boats started coming up - just

fishing in the summertime. Buddy Gray was out there fishing with Elizabeth Ann. They were looking for a place to unload their lobsters. Buddy brought them in. At one time, we had a big vessel named the Admiral's Pride. There was the Elizabeth Ann. Carl Johnson had the Dauntless. A few boats out of New Bedford - very few. Then, all of a sudden, in the winter, I guess, of either 1962 or 1963, it was four or five boats landing on Block Island, Buddy Gray being one of them. He said, "Look, this is foolish. I'm going home to unload."

A couple of guys said, "Where are you going? What's the story?" And he told them the whole thing. That afternoon, three or four of these fellows come in, a thousand, two thousand pound of lobsters - not a lot, but this started more and more boats coming. By 1963, 1964, it was just impossible. I only had a small shop. I had to make sure that when these boys called, I had to have a place to put them. So we had dealers in Boston, dealers in New York. I'd make the phone calls, put the stuff on trucks, and sell them that way. There wasn't as much profit as tanking them, but it was a means of getting the stuff sold and not worrying about them.

By 1964, I <u>was</u> working at that time like from midnight around to seven or eight o'clock the next night, five or six days a week. I said to my wife, "I'm going to either die by the time I'm forty or I've got to do something." That Waites Wharf, property was for sale, so I bought that in 1965. By the spring of 1966, we were in business. At the time, you could see that the lobster population was dying out. I mean, we were handling a lot of lobsters because we were handling a lot of boats.

JM: And they were all offshore, right?

AB: That's all offshore. These per-boat catches were dropping down on a daily rate. In other words, if a guy was fishing in 1963 for a week, he'd have ten thousand pounds. Well, now, in 1966, the guy who fished a week would have six or seven thousand pounds. He had to stay longer to get the ten thousand pounds. And they all strived to have ten or twelve thousand pounds. That was their thing.

So I decided, when I built Anthony's Seafood, to designate half of it to taking out fish, because these fellows don't lobster year-round and this was before the advent of the offshore pot boats. I said, "We've got to make this a year-round business." And that's what we did. When

the lobsters really petered out in, oh, I'd say 1977, 1978, we were full swing into handling fish. That was the thing that saved us because I haven't seen more than a thousand or fifteen hundred pounds on a dragger since 1977 - in ten years.

JM: How about the size of them? Did they keep getting smaller?

AB: Yes. When they're really way offshore, I would say maybe seventy-five percent of the catch was from eight pounds, nine pounds, down. The other twenty-five were anywhere from nine to thirty. They were hard to sell.

JM: How did you sell those?

AB: Like I said before, I had made these deals where it was as is. The other dealers knew. Certain boats fished certain areas. So, if they bought everything, in the long run, they'd come out ahead - which they did. We knew that, too. But it was one of those things. You make a deal and it's a deal. If there are a lot of large, they missed out today. But next week, they might get a lot of small.

JM: What were the large ones used for?

AB: What they tell me, a lot of the Chinese restaurants use the real large lobsters. You have

to remember back when we started, these things were thirty or forty cents a pound. It was really no big deal. Toward the end, in 1976, 1977, when we're talking three dollars for these large lobsters, everybody was looking for the three to five, three to eight category that were used in restaurants. But somebody gets stuck. If we paid the boats three dollars and we sell them to somebody for $3.20 or $3.25, and they had to have a mark-up, you're talking an awful expensive lobster if somebody goes in and buys a thirty pound lobster. But, eventually, I think they got turned into lobster meat.

They came out of it. Don't get me wrong. The dealers that bought from us always came out of it. They cried a little bit, but that's the fish business. Everybody cries.

JM: What about the different groups of lobsters?

AB: There have been a lot of seminars about lobsters - size, their habitat, and whatever. I've read books where somebody says a lobster, in its time, never leaves a twenty square mile area. Before the State got involved, Pete Russell, that you mentioned before, would always take a dozen or two egg lobsters, put yellow propylene around their claws, and when he came into the Channel out here

around Castle Hill, he'd throw them overboard, waiting to see that if the next year or whatever, they would pick them up after they dropped the eggs. Nine times out of ten, they would pick at least one or two of those many that they had banded out there, the next year.

JM: That's amazing.

AB: We got the State involved in that. But what happened was by the time they were trying to get back out there, a lot of these lobsters that were tagged were caught on Coxes Ledge by the local pot fishermen. That was something that should have never gone by the boards, but they let it go because they believed the same thing. It takes seven years for lobsters to be legal size. These lobsters have that homing device where they're going to go back offshore when they mature. What sense does it make the State of Rhode Island or the State of Massachusetts to spend a lot of money buying these egg lobsters to have them spawn here and then disappear? So whoever lobbied for that really did a good job. No money came, and the egg lobsters were -- I'm sorry to say, but most of them were brushed. That is really what killed the industry. It was "make a buck today; forget about tomorrow." But, again, the fishermen will

never change. Greed is a very difficult thing.

We bought a lot of these lobsters. I mean, I got into verbal disputes with game wardens and what have you. But my thing was: I didn't do it. I don't condone it. If I don't buy them, my competitors will buy them. They are going to hit the market. The damage is done. It's just a complete business transaction. I didn't go and examine every lobster. That wasn't my job.

The State tried. They could have done a better job. They made mistakes. They fined the wrong people. They got carried away. I called the lawyer and the lawyer said, "Okay. You explain the whole works to me." I explained the whole works to him. He went back to court, appealed, and got the money back. But this was something that shouldn't have been done. I even offered, I even told them how they did it, how they got away with it.

JM: How the people brushed egg-bearing lobsters.

AB: That's right. They just didn't listen.

JM: How did they get away with it?

AB: That's a... I wouldn't want to get these guys in trouble.

JM: Okay. Local people?

AB: No. It really wasn't the locals. It wasn't the

locals. The main one that got away with it was a fellow out of Gloucester. In a barroom, one of my men picked up the information. He gave it to me and he said, "What do you think about this?"

I said, "It sounds reasonable."

I told this to a game warden and he went back. A scientist at URI picked up on it. The guy come back and he said, "You're wrong."

I said, "What do you mean?"

He said, "What you told me they did turned the eggs from a dark green to white."

I said, "I didn't tell you to use that solution on the eggs. I told you to use it after the eggs were detached to get rid of the glue."

"Oh, well, they're going to scrap that idea anyway."

Thank God that this boat found out somehow or somewhere that somebody else was on to this. He never went lobstering again. He decided to go into the dope smuggling business. He got caught, and I think he's in jail today.

Back in 1975, I sat down with the head of the Game Wardens, Steve Fougere, and said, "Look, I'm going to tell these guys that you're going to be here and I'm on your side. We're both young. I want to be around. I want my kids to enjoy this

business. We're going to have to take these guys and say, 'Look, you can't do it.'"

He agreed.

I sat down with my men and I said, "Look, the brushing is out. You catch less, that will bring the price up. It will all average out." They agreed that if everybody caught what they should catch they'd go along with this. And they did. But as much as we tried, it was too late. Before you know it, like I say, by 1977 or 1978, it wasn't worth lobster fishing.

JM: What was it like trying to get everybody to do that?

AB: It was no problem. At that time, there were five draggers left. Everybody had given it up. The guy who finally went into the dope business was selling to my competitor and the other four guys sold to me. He wanted to sell to me, but his boat was too big and he couldn't get in there. I didn't want to be trucking them from Gloucester.

Like I say, he only made two or three trips. After that last trip, when I explained how the procedure was and how it was fool-proof, that was the last trip he made lobstering.

JM: Were there particular times of the year where Rhode Island lobsters were more in demand?

AB: Rhode Island lobsters were never, never in demand. What happened was, in the late 1940s, early 1950s, lobsters themselves were in demand. Rhode Island had a lot of clambake clubs and this, that, and the next thing. The lobsters shed in Rhode Island before they shed anywhere else. They start to shed the first part of June.

JM: I wonder why?

AB: It's something to do with the temperature of the water. By Fourth of July, there is a glut (used to be) of lobsters from Rhode Island. Now, the lobsters in Massachusetts and Maine were now going into the mud to shed. The clambakes, their biggest time is June and July. Lobsters, the year I started, were wholesaling in Massachusetts for a dollar and a quarter. My competitor at the time, Manchester, was selling to a guy who was trying to buy from me for $1.18. We were selling them at my brother's market in Newport, retail, for sixty-nine cents a pound because we were paying the fishermen forty cents, because that's all Manchester was paying. But he played the market. And that's how I got started. This was in the summer of 1956.

This guy said, "Gee, what are you guys getting for lobster?"

I said, "I'm getting sixty-nine cents."

He said, "What can you sell them to me for?"

I said, "We'll give them to you for sixty cents."

He said, "I'll take all the chickens you can get." We were carring them up and saving them for him. That's how I got started. It wasn't until a long time after, when Manchester realized what I was doing -- As the lobsters, in August, started to deplete around here and they were coming in by the truckload out of Maine at a cheap price, he kept raising the price here. And then he started dropping his wholesale price. So we, at one point, were paying sixty-five cents for lobsters landed in Rhode Island, and he was selling to my customer for sixty-five cents. I mean, it was no big deal; it was just good business.

I said, "Well, look. Don't forget I helped you out. When you were paying $1.18, I was selling them to you for sixty cents. Now I need some help. I need seventy cents."

And the fellow went along with it. Somebody come to me and he said, "You're way off base. I've got a friend in Maine. You go talk to him."

"I've already talked to him."

I went up there, talked to this fellow, and he said, "Fine. How many do you need? I'll start trucking them. I'll meet you. I don't want you in Maine, and I don't want to go to Rhode Island." We met half-way. We paid thirty-five cents for them. Until this day, he and I remain the best of friends. I bet you, I handled from Fred [Eaton] four to five hundred thousand pound of Maine lobsters a year up until 1977, 1978.

And then, when lobsters got high, the demand just wasn't there. I don't know where you can go and have a clambake today and have a lobster without paying like twenty or twenty-five bucks.

JM: That's right. You just don't.

AB: We used to sell to Francis Farm. They went completely to chicken. You can't blame them.

JM: Where did you car them up? Right off Spring Wharf?

AB: Right on Spring Wharf.

[end of side one, tape two]

We carred them up off Spring Wharf that summer and part of that fall. I guess that fall and all that winter, I sold everything out of the cars. I used to go in the skiff if somebody needed something. That spring, the spring of 1957, we built the little cinder-block [building]. I believe it was

twenty by thirty. It had twelve tanks in it. We expanded it and expanded it and expanded it until -- It still wasn't big enough. I mean, that wasn't the thing. That was, like I say, from 1957 to 1966, before we moved to Waites Wharf.

JM: How much did that property cost in those days, at that time?

AB: Waites Wharf?

JM: Yes. What was the value then?

AB: Well, we paid forty thousand dollars for Waites Wharf. I was highly criticized by every old-timer in Newport. It was a two-sided wharf with really no water. Over the years, between putting in steel sheathing and dredging, I know we spent about four hundred thousand dollars. So, really, when you come down to it, it was a very, very expensive wharf. I know Spring Wharf was sold twenty years before that. It was sold with a building, a business, all kind of fish traps, boats, and Festival Field for eighty thousand dollars. So I could see --

Cliff Tallman was the one who said, "You are completely insane." Well, it didn't work out that way.

JM: That's for sure.

AB: I bought it was because I needed it. I really

thought about it. A fellow by the name of Dave Rockland bought the Williams and Manchester Shipyard and built the Pier Restaurant. A very smart fellow. His personality lacked something, but he was very bright. We had had a few conflicts.

One day, I was over there talking to him. I said, "We have to bury the hatchet." And we did.

Another day, I went up to him and I said, "You know, I have a problem." We were building these two new steel boats. Or we were thinking about it. That's what it was.

He said, "Well, you have a bigger problem before that." He says, "You either buy that piece of land that you're looking at or I'm going to buy it. I'll give you six months." He said, "You go out and you take a ten-year mortgage. By the time you have that paid for, the place will double in value."

I took his word for it. In twenty years, it almost increased by -- I don't want to say a hundred percent -- maybe a couple thousand percent. But who knew? Back then, forty thousand dollars was a lot of money.

JM: Did you have any inkling that that was going to be such a good investment?

AB: I needed it. The whole thing was I couldn't continue to work from midnight till seven or eight o'clock every night for years and years and years. I mean, that wasn't going to be the thing. And you couldn't do a good job. It got to the point where you start shipping a lot of lobsters to the same people. They have the storage. Now, all of a sudden, you're paying for their storage. We could see it. Our thing was, back then, you make a nickel a pound. Well, you handle forty or fifty thousand pound of lobster, that was big money. One week, we handled eighty thousand pound of lobster, and we got three cents. The guy says, "Well, you made twenty-four hundred dollars."

"I don't count your profit; don't count mine." And that's when I said, "That's it."

He was the first one to say, "I hear you're building a new place. I guess we're out."

I said, "No, you're not out." I said, "But the next time you tell me I'm doing well, you're going to tell me what I'm getting for the stuff. Our friendship where I send you the stuff and tell you what I paid and you would give me a legitimate profit -- Those days are over. Now I will tell you, 'Here's what I paid and this is what I want.'" Because everybody knew what you paid.

Everybody knew. It was just common knowledge.

I said, "If you don't give it to me, I will put them in the tanks."

These Boston fellows were very good - so were the New York fellows. The only time I ever put lobsters in the tank off a dragger was if it was snowing. I would not send a driver out in the middle of the night with a load of lobsters. Usually what happened was, if you had a storm, you'd have two or three boats come in at one time. So you might have twenty-five or thirty thousand pound of lobster. But you had two weeks before they'd come back to get rid of them, so it was no big thing. So you waited for a nice day, you boxed them up, and you sent them out again.

JM: How do you keep them alive on the trucks?

AB: A lobster will live three or four days under refrigeration. We're only talking an hour and a half trip to Boston.

JM: Those dragger boats weren't ordinarily going out for lobsters in the winter.

AB: Oh, yes.

JM: Oh, they were? It was twelve months a year?

AB: No. They just went from like November to May. Then, when the water got warm, they couldn't keep them alive. And then fish was plentiful, so

they'd go fishing.

JM: During the 1960s, did they have much trouble with the foreign stern trawlers out there?

AB: Well, they did when they were fishing - not so much when they were lobstering, because the Russians weren't looking for lobsters. It wasn't until, oh, I guess, the middle 1970s when things really got a little hot and heavy with the Russians that when the fellows were fishing, they'd pick up lobster shells that had been cooked. What they did was, instead of chopping them by hand like we did, they put them on a bandsaw because the tails were cut right in half. The whole lobster was cut right in half and picked out nice and easy. You could see this from the shells they had picked up.

That was just before the two hundred mile limit. The Russians were already thinking of packing it in, because there was not enough to catch. That's why they took lobsters and whatever else came up.

JM: Were they processing them on the boats?

AB: Yes. They did everything.

JM: How did the amount of foreign boats out there affect your business, the fish business?

AB: It really didn't affect it that much, because

there was just so much fish out there. What happened was, these fellows just wouldn't be getting those big hundred, hundred and fifty, thousand pound trips that used to go into Boston. Something like that, we couldn't have handled anyway. On a good day, we could handle like a hundred and twenty, a hundred and thirty thousand pound of fish.

We did have boats that caught a lot of fish. One in particular was a little forty-five foot boat called the Lark. He used to catch thirty-five, forty, thousand pound of fish every three days, but he always fished in Nantucket.

JM: And he'd bring it right back in?

AB: He'd bring it right back. He always had the freshest fish. He made three trips every two weeks. He was like having three boats.

JM: And what were those?

AB: Mostly flounders and codfish. He was the best that ever came out of that area.

JM: There were no regulations at all of any kind?

AB: Not then. No. That wasn't until the late 1970s that they started with the regulations.

JM: When did you start in with wholesaling fish, too?

AB: Actually, we got into it in 1961, 1962, while we were on Spring Wharf. That was one of the reasons

for working around the clock. We had to be sure, if we bought any fish from any boats, we could only use the dock from like twelve midnight until eight o'clock in the morning, until the trap boats come back. So, whether it was fish, lobsters, or whatever, we had use of that dock any time from four o'clock in the afternoon until eight o'clock the next morning.

JM: How long did you do that?

AB: From 1960 to 1966.

JM: The graveyard shift.

AB: The graveyard shift. But, see, it was two or three shifts.

JM: Was there hope among the fishermen here for the Two Hundred Mile Limit? It took so long for that to --

AB: The Two Hundred Mile Limit was and is a very ambiguous rule. Okay? Nobody read the loopholes. They just thought, "Okay. We're going to have the Two Hundred Mile Limit. That means these foreigners are going to leave and we're going to have all the fish." Well, that's not what it meant. It meant that there were going to be rules, loopholes. One of the loopholes was that if a certain species was not caught up by the American fishermen and somebody in Washington sat

together with these scientists and the scientists said, "Well, there's," for an example "a hundred million pound of butterfish that has to be caught, that's out there to be caught. If this is harvested this year, you'll have a hundred million next year." What they're saying is: If the American boats go out there and only get fifty million, then the foreign boats can go out and catch that other fifty million. But nobody realized this. They left it up to a handful of guys who volunteered, like Atlantic Offshore [Atlantic Offshore Fisherman's Association]. I mean, this was a volunteer thing. They looked into it. But it was so complicated that nobody really got all the benefits.

It wasn't until somebody like AmFish got involved -- This was an Italian-American squid deal eight, nine, ten years ago. They wanted to take a boat from Italy, come over here, and hire some Americans so there'd be Americans <u>and</u> Italians on the boat. Well, there was a big stink about it. Then this one American partner who was involved in it said, "We don't even have to do this. We can take all Italians that come over here, because you didn't catch x-number of pound of fish last year."

This was when it was really brought to light. But until then, there were limits. It wasn't: Get out. That's what the feeling and the belief of the fishermen was. The Two Hundred Mile Limit meant there'd be no foreign boat within two hundred miles of the United States. That never worked out.

Now you can see it. Stocks are starting to come back - not real good. I think what's needed is maybe a two- or three-year moratorium on the whole works. But it will never happen, even with all these rules that were put down - yellowtail limits, this and that. Nobody kept the limit. There's so many ways around the limit. They caught all the fish they wanted to catch - those that were daring enough. Go to New Bedford. You could drop ten thousand pounds off to some guy that's sitting in a truck, and come to Newport and take eight thousand pound out, go back to New Bedford and take your seventy-five hundred pounds. So you've taken out twenty-five thousand pounds. It took you two days, but what's the big deal? It's better than going out there and coming in with seventy-five hundred pounds. That's what happened.

JM: What do you think the future of the whole

yellowtail fishery is?

AB: When they really were having these problems, back around 1979 and 1980, there were just so many yellowtails, there was no need of the limit. Things that you won't hear -- There was a scientific boat that went out. I don't know whether it went out from URI. I think it did go out from URI. They made twenty minute tows in areas never known to have yellowtail, and they were catching half a bushel to a bushel of fish.

Of course, when they published this, all the fishermen said, "Well, we're trying to tell you this. I mean, you're making us go out there."

I sat down with George Mendonsa one day and he's talking, "Oh, gee, you know, a guy should have these rules."

I said, "Hold it. What if they put rules on scup? That's your bread and butter. You can only catch five thousand pound of scup every day."

"We can't pay expenses."

I said, "Well, fine. These fellows come in with seventy-five hundred pound of yellowtail."

"Yes, but you're paying them a dollar a pound," he says. "Fine. They made seventy-five hundred dollars."

I said, "But I get five cents a pound. How

can I operate my business with five or six boats coming in a week with seventy-five hundred pounds?" I said, "Even if I get ten cents a pound, that's seven hundred and fifty dollars. You think I can operate a plant like this on seven hundred and fifty dollars?"

He said, "Well, I didn't look at that side."

And that's what happened. A lot of people didn't look at that side. Everybody that did anything illegal was forced into it. It was a matter of survival. I mean, all these places in New Bedford - people that do fifteen or twenty million dollars worth of business. Now you're telling them they're going to do about a million. You just can't do that.

But there were plenty of yellowtails. This is what happens. Scientists are human. They give it their best shot. They were way off on the yellowtail. Now it became a political thing. And that's what the fishermen said: "Is this just a job to get the game wardens down here every day to check us out?"

With this, they decided, "Hey, we'll catch x-number of pounds."

There is one guy who went to court several times. He said, "I have no qualms. I'll go out

and catch twenty-five thousand. I'll take out eight thousand pound a day. Does this make you happy? You want to be legal? I'll take out what I can take out legally. If I get caught, fine." He says, "But I don't think they have the right to do this."

A lot of people challenged it. Nothing ever came of it. Every time these guys got caught over the limit, it was no real big deal.

JM: What happened to them?

AB: They went to court and went to court. They finally paid a couple hundred dollars or something they were supposed to pay. Then the Federal Government checked on them. What they did was they harassed them. But I don't think it ever really cost them any big money.

JM: How does technology figure into all of this - the efficiency of the nets and fishscopes?

AB: The last eight or nine years, it really has played a big part. There's a fishscope that came out. It's a color job. It doesn't show the actual fish; it shows certain colors. Once you get used to it, you can say, "This figure is such and such type of fish." You take the Point Judith fleet when they go butterfishing. They'd go out and tow in certain areas and tow and tow and haul back and

never find anything. Now, what they do, is they go out and they put the machine on. They might go twenty-four hours or thirty-six hours never putting a net overboard. Then, all of a sudden, they see a school of fish. They set and it's there. I mean, it's really something.

Before the fishfinder, the Germans had an Atlas Workie that we used on our boats. Unless you were accustomed to it -- It was a paper machine and a flashing unit which would show something. All the Boston and Gloucester boats used it for haddock. I explained this to you a few days back, in our last conversation, where I had one captain who wouldn't use it. He took an ex-captain up from Boston as mate. The fellow showed him how to use it. The boat alongside caught five hundred pounds and he caught five thousand pounds.

The technology really has done a lot for the business. I think without it, there wouldn't be as many boats and there wouldn't be as many people fishing. There's no way they could afford it - especially when we had the inflated price of fuel a few years back.

JM: What about the stocks? How are they withstanding that kind of efficiency?

AB: They seem to be. The last couple of winters, these fellows really did well, butterfishing. Not only that, with the technology, my son-in-law's boat is down in Mississippi. They've been fishing in the Gulf of Mexico, catching all kinds of butterfish. Nobody ever thought of going butterfishing down there. First of all, the water is so warm, they couldn't keep them. But he's on a fish processing boat. Within an hour after the fish are on deck, they're frozen. So it worked out.

There you go, talking about technology. Now a boat can go out there, catch fish, sort them out, package them up, blast freeze them, and have them in a freezer in less than two hours.

JM: Are those mostly exported fish?

AB: Those fish are then exported to Japan.

JM: Was there big growth as far as boat building after that Two Hundred Mile Limit was passed?

AB: There was. This has always been a thorn in my side. What happened was we took a pie and said, "Okay. This pie is just so big. This is all you can have." Fine.

Then Uncle Sam said, "Well, wait a minute. We're going to subsidize you guys." Okay.

What they didn't say was, "We're not going to

make that --" They gave you the idea that because the two hundred mile limit was going to go into effect, the size of the pie was going to get bigger. The fact of the matter was, after all these boats were being built, they come in with all these regulations and they took and they made the pie smaller.

I like to use this little analogy where we have fifty guys in a room and we have a jar of marbles. Throw the marbles on the floor. Everybody's going to get one or two. But if it's you and I, we're going to get a lot. This is exactly what happened. Only the government said, "We're only going to give you half the jar to start off with" or "We're only going to allow you to pick up one marble." This is what happened. You had government money. You had a lot of boats being built. You had the hope and dream of free enterprise out there in this Two Hundred Mile Limit. What happened? Everybody's got all these boats. The government turns around and puts all kinds of regulations. The foreigners were still out there because of the loopholes.

A lot of people have suffered greatly, financially, because a lot of people have lost boats. A lot of people don't want to attest to

this, but people have lost their boats. And people are still losing boats. The only reason they haven't lost more boats in the last couple years is because the interest rate has come down. If we were still in seventeen, eighteen, percent interest rate, there wouldn't be much fish coming into this country because these boats would all be tied up.

JM: Because they can't meet their expenses.

AB: They can't meet [their expenses]. As it is now, I have two (what we call) real good size boats. Both skippers do well, but our mortgage is at prime, and they really have to scrape to pay the mortgage.

JM: Do you think the government shouldn't provide any investment incentives to the fishing industry?

AB: Well, it's kind of late now. I mean, they should have said -- What happens in this government is you have a bunch of committees. The left hand never knows what the right hand's doing. So we've got the left hand: "Let's appease the fishermen. We're going to give them the Two Hundred Mile Limit."

The right hand turns around and says, "Okay, fine. They've got the two hundred mile limit. Now we're going to give them subsidies to go build

these boats."

All of a sudden, the right foot comes in and says, "Well, this is fine. But we need regulations."

All I'm saying is this all should have been done at one time. They should have sat around and said, "Hey, look. If we give them a subsidy, they've got to be able to pay this back." If they didn't give them the subsidy, these guys wouldn't have to go out and buy all these boats. Who gained? Who really gained? The banks? The shipyards?

The shipyards were really going down the tubes in this country. That was the government's way of helping the shipyards. The banks were making all kinds of money. The crews were making all kinds of money. It was the investor. A lot of investors went in. You had doctors and lawyers who had money that they wanted to invest. It was a great investment. If you had two hundred thousand dollars, Uncle Sam gave you ten percent investment credit. So you got twenty thousand dollars back off your income tax, which, to these fellows, was big money. And then, you could depreciate the boat quickly.

In that situation, it could work. I've

always said this. People have come up to me: "Why don't you build more boats?"

I said, "I have found a better vehicle to make money faster with my money than in a fishing boat." I said, "If you have a half a million dollars and you want to get fifty thousand dollars investment credit, you will end up with ten percent on your money. Do you want to take that chance, when you can go buy a municipal bond and get ten or eleven percent, tax free?" This is the crap shoot that you have to take.

I know lawyers who have gone into it. They think it's great. Well, come to find out, yes, it's great for one guy. It's like a general partnership. I mean, the general partners always make. It's the limited partners that take it on the chin. This is what happened. A lot of partnerships formed to buy boats. In the beginning, it was fine. It will always be fine if you come up with the money up front and if you have a skipper who's going to go partners with you. Okay?

The last two boats I bought, the skippers are partners. The problem was we got a hundred percent financing. That's what makes it so damn tough to pay it off. Both skippers make all kinds

of money.

JM: How much can skippers make now?

AB: I would say anywhere from -- now, I'm talking good boats -- sixty to a hundred and sixty thousand dollars a year. I know one of those freezer boats. My son-in-law was telling me the other day the engineer made eighty-eight thousand dollars last year. So, if the engineer's making that, you know the skipper's got to be making a hundred and twenty or a hundred and thirty thousand.

JM: How did all of that (outside investors coming in and going in on boats) change the whole nature of the fishing industry? Or did it?

AB: What it did was it just created more boats. That's all it did. You took a guy that went mate with somebody for a few years and you said, "Here's a new boat. Give it a shot." A lot of these guys just got lucky. They hit it.

Their biggest problem today is finding guys to go, because everybody wants to be a captain. With the technology and everything, it's no big thing. You get a North Star Loran. If you know how to read a chart, you turn around and say, "I want to go to Georges Banks. These are the coordinates." You punch them in. The Loran will say, "Okay." You head in such a direction. All

of a sudden, after twenty-four hours, the thing will say, "Stand by. We're almost there." And all of a sudden, you're on -- It actually tells you. It's in a digital letter: "We have arrived."

The challenge really is taken out of it. The technology is so great. It's almost like the America's Cup. Everything is with a computer. You still have to go out and do it. I don't want to take anything away from these fishermen. They still have to go out and put in their time - buck bad weather, good weather, fish being there, fish not being there. But with the aid of technology, it isn't as difficult as it was twenty, twenty-five, or thirty years ago.

JM: Where are most of the people coming from who go into it now?

AB: Actually, it's just younger guys going up. The job market the way it is, they hear about the fishermen making all kinds of money. They go for one trip as a shacker or half-share or something. There really isn't that much to learn. A lot of people are fishing on easy bottom, so they don't have to worry about tearing up. Today, you really don't have to know that much about gear if you're fishing in Rhode Island. There are several places over in Point Judith. If your net gets ripped,

you get a pickup truck, you throw on the net, you bring it over to this young girl, and Judy will fix that net in a couple of weeks for a couple of grand, and you're ready to go fishing again. Although, you have other nets on the boat.

JM: Where before they had to know --

AB: Even today, in New Bedford, if you don't know how to mend, your chance of getting a job is very, very difficult.

JM: Because they go further?

AB: No. It's because that's the way they were brought up. They make the nets; they fix them. They never heard of taking a net off the boat and sending it to somebody to fix.

JM: So it's more traditional in that sense.

AB: That's right. And what they do do is, because they're union-minded, all this work is done going out and coming in. See, when they make a trip in New Bedford, you get your three to four days off when you come in. The Point Judith gang, they love to hang around the boat. They come down the next day, take the net off, and bring it over to Point Judith. That wastes a day. The next day, they'll do something else. Then, all of a sudden, it's time to go fishing again.

JM: They're not union over there?

AB: No.

JM: Your boats were?

AB: My boats were union, but they're not.

JM: They're not now?

AB: No.

JM: How did you learn about boat building and designing boats?

AB: What happened was the two boats we built, Blount Marine had built one. It was called the Captain Bill III. She wasn't quite the boat everybody thought she should be. After that, they built another one called the Seven Seas. She was better. But she did have a few flaws.

My thing was -- These boats that came from New Bedford in the wintertime and in the spring, they flooded the whole hold. Especially in May, when they were still doing well lobstering, they were throwing twenty-five, thirty, thousand pound of fish overboard. So I said, "This is foolish." I said, "Let's build a boat big enough where we can hold sixty, sixty-five, thousand pound of fish in one hold, and then take the next hold and flood it. But flood it in a way that the men can work." These other boats would flood the whole hold. Guys would be out to sea, blowing a gale of wind, trying to walk on two-by-twelves with four or five

feet of water in the hold. If they slipped off the two-by-twelve, then they got soaked. I guess the biggest trip Felix might have had was fourteen thousand. We handled that comfortable. The guys could walk in the slaughterhouse. It was no problem. In the springtime -- Not the spring, but like May, they'd go down to the Shoals and get six or seven thousand pound of lobster and have forty or fifty thousand pound of fish.

JM: Cultivator Shoals?

AB: Cultivator Shoals, around Half Moon - in those areas. Where the other boats would either have the thirty or forty thousand pound of fish and no lobsters or just lobsters. We really had the best of both worlds. In order to get the size boat I wanted, Luther Blount had to go bigger than the Seven Seas. It just happened that way - that that was the right design. Of all the designs that he had, the two Bucolo boats, till today, are probably the most seaworthy boats on this coast. They had the right length, the right beam. Everything just worked out perfect.

JM: Are they fairly identical?

AB: Yes. One of them has just a little more ballast than the other.

Talking about fellows that went fishing,

there was another fellow that was with Buddy Gray for twenty years - not with Buddy Gray, but in my employ. He was brought down from Gloucester by Buddy Gray. His name was Millard Campbell. He fished --

[end of side two, tape two]

He fished on the Crispina long after Buddy Gray left. He fished with Felix Bruce a good ten years. The question would always come up: Which boat is better?

He said, "I don't see any difference." He had been on both boats, both with Buddy Gray, with Felix, with other fellows. He always shifted from one boat to the other.

Felix always said the Crispina was better. He said, when the Mariano went out, she was already loaded. That's the appearance she gave. Well, she had forty thousand pound more ballast in her.

JM: It must have been good in bad seas.

AB: No, they were both about the same. The reason for that was -- It was actually Blount Marine's fault. When they built the Crispina, they wanted to keep her high. So, when they put the cement in for ballast in the fish pens -- Your fish pen, the bottom is supposed to be flat. Well, you

couldn't tell them anything about fishing. They knew everything. That was one problem we had with them.

JM: With Blount?

AB: With Blount. They put the cement in and they had it come to the skin of the boat. It made it very difficult when they were lumping the fish. So, when we built the next boat, Buddy said, "No way. It has to be up. We don't care how expensive it is." They never could understand that. I mean, they gave you a price. They wanted to live by the price. They were going to do exactly what they wanted to do. But we fought and we got it.

What they did was they evidently ordered too much cement, so they went over each pen and just kept adding it so they wouldn't have to throw the cement overboard. It added forty thousand pounds more into the boat. So she was always down a little. But compared to the Seven Seas, she was high, and to the Comerant, which were boats similar to ours that Blount had built - one before and one after. Even though the Mariano was down a little bit, she was still a better sea boat than the other two.

JM: What kind of equipment are you talking [about] on boats like that? How much is invested in that?

You have your Lorans. You have...

AB: Well, here you go again. Some boats have seventy-five to a hundred thousand dollars in electronics. It all depends. On the Bucolo boats, they have a North Star and then they have another Loran. They have one radar, a couple sound machines, a radio. They might have thirty thousand dollars. But they're the bare -- Oh, I'm sorry. They have a fishscope. But today, now, you take the new boat that we have - the Seafarer. He has the colored chromoscope; he has two radars; he has two or three VHFs; he has two Lorans. Now they have a plotter. They all have that. Of course, they have the TV and the VCR and all that stuff, too. But it all helps. See, the fellows from the old style, they were glad to have one of this and one of that. The Gloucester guys -- I had a friend of mine who was lost at sea. He had seven VHFs. I said, "What do you need these for?"

He said, "I talk to seven of my buddies. I keep them all on different channels. I'm getting all the information and nobody else can hear it."

They're smart. I mean, there's no getting away from it. These guys are very "cunning" - is the word I want to use.

JM: Did any of your men ever get lost?

AB: No.

JM: No close calls?

AB: No. We had one fellow who drowned here in Newport while the boat was tied at the dock. He traveled up this part of town with a couple of friends from Parascandolo's. And that's where they found him the next morning -- overboard.

JM: When the two hundred mile limit was established, do you think anyone had any idea how complicated it was going to be to manage?

AB: No. What it was -- Here we go back to what I said before. There was just too many hands in it. Everybody had a different outlook. Everybody that wrote it up, evidently, had different input. Basically, the fishermen and the nation were under the impression that this was the end of foreign fishing. And it just wasn't. I mean, this was Congress' deal of: Let's keep the public quiet; let's keep the fishermen quiet; and let's keep good foreign relations. That's always been my complaint. I think this country has always been more interested in how everybody looks at us instead of what we're doing for our own.

Look at today. A couple of weeks ago [Ronald] Reagan says, "Well, we're going to stop the Japanese from doing this, that, and the next

thing." After three weeks, he's already conceding and giving it back to them.

This was the deal. Are we really going to fight the Russians on this? Are we going to fight the Poles? Are we going to fight the Italians? Are we going to fight the West Germans? Are you going to fight all these people? They didn't. The main reason is the vote. Let's face it. These Congressmen and these Senators all know that these guys are not going to come in on the 7th of November or the 6th of November, whenever it's time to vote, to vote for them. And that's what the game is -- "We do what we can for our constituents, but if our constituents don't vote for us, who cares? Who needs them?"

Politics is a very difficult game and it's a very deceiving game. We could go on with that for the next three weeks.

JM: That's for sure. [chuckles] I know.

AB: And the fishermen feel this way. It's not only me. I had to brainwash them into thinking they're not going to do anything for you because you're not going to do anything for them.

[They say,] "Well, I pay taxes."

[I say,] "If you have to." When you work for me, you pay taxes, because whatever you

get it comes out in a check and we take out the taxes. This is before they stopped. Well, now that they're independent contractors they pay their own taxes.

Politics is tough. That's what happened. It was a complete political two hundred mile limit. That's how this country is. Everything's political. The price of fuel going up from twenty-five cents to $1.25 in a couple of years. Ships sitting out there, loaded with fuel, no place to go. I mean, come on.

JM: Is there much enforcement as far as the quotas?

AB: Oh, yes.

JM: And mesh sizes?

AB: We literally lived with the game wardens.

JM: You did?

AB: One day, I just got hot and I said, "I can't take any more of this." I mean, these guys come in at eight o'clock in the morning and sit in my office till nine or ten. I can't carry on business. I know there was one guy who'd go down and tell Parascandolo, "Hey, you know so and so's up there with --"

I called the head guy and said, "This isn't fair."

He said, "Let him stay outside."

I said, "How are you going to tell somebody? It's freezing out there and it's nice and warm in the office."

JM: What about foreign competition? How did the subsidized Canadian fish -- Did that affect you at all?

AB: Yes. That killed us for years. What happens is, our deal with the boats -- a boat comes in -- whatever the New Bedford price is, we go as close as we can to it. If not, they'll go to New Bedford.

Say, for example, haddock was fifty cents in New Bedford. Well, it usually was seventy-five cents in Boston. What we would do, we'd pay that fifty cents today; we'd ship it to Boston tomorrow on tomorrow's price. Well, if there was no Canadian trucks or no fish in there, we might get seventy-five cents. Chances are there was a Canadian truck in there and that's all you'd get. You might get fifty-three, fifty-four. Then they take eight percent commission. You lose your box. We always lost. We used to tell the boats, "If you're going to go after haddock, go to New Bedford." We might have hit once in a great while that we ever get a break on going to Boston. That was because they were subsidized. They would send

the fish in open. Of course, that was another deal. You turn around and you pay a Boston boat seventy-five cents and you call all the customers. "Your filets are based on that seventy-five cents." They're buying from ours and everybody else were forty-five and fifty. So these guys got rich. But that's the name of the game. Everybody in the business knows it. If it wasn't for the Canadians, we wouldn't have that problem.

On the other hand, economically speaking, if it wasn't for the Canadians, haddock filet today would be ten dollars a pound. So you're damned if you do; you're damned if you don't. But it hurt me as a dealer.

JM: Was it fresh fish or frozen?

AB: Oh, it's fresh fish. They finally put in an anti-dumping law, which meant they just couldn't send fish in. There had to be a ceiling price on it. That was only on processed. This is how they beat it. It was only on processed fish.

What they would say was, "What's the price of haddock in Boston today?"

And they say, "Well, twenty-eight cents."

"Jesus, by the time I get it down there we're going to end up with fifteen cents." If we fillet the haddock, it's going to cost us forty-five

cents. If we put it in the freezer or even fresh -- They love to brine stuff up there. It lasts. The preservatives they have, the stuff lasts for a week or ten days.

What they would say was haddock fillet was probably ninety-five cents. Well, now they can make money. But once they establish a price for that fillet, this country has to give it to them or else it's called "dumping."

JM: What does that brine fish taste like?

AB: They say that there's supposed to be no difference. I don't know. I can smell it. I've never tried it.

JM: Do people go for that here?

AB: If you don't know any better.

JM: Do you think that this country is ever going to be able to catch enough fish to fill the demand so there won't be such a large trade deficit as far as the fishing?

AB: Well, here you go again. You're not going to break tradition. Boston would die without Canada, because there aren't enough boats going to Boston. Nobody wants to go to Boston. It's a constant source of supply. I don't think you're ever going to get away from it because of the variety of the species of fish.

Just like with us. We catch so much butterfish we have to send it to Japan. We're not going to sit here and educate the Americans on how to eat butterfish. Nothing against you, but the common housewife wants to go in and buy a filleted fish with no bones, ready to pop in the oven. Better still, let's get it from Sara Lee or Mrs. Paul, already cooked, and just put it in the microwave for a couple of seconds. With the butterfish -- I mean, that's a whole fish. It's bony. You have to know how to eat it. The Japanese, of course, they want to eat it raw. God bless them.

JM: Is there much of that left?

AB: Butterfish? I told you my son-in-law has just came from Mississippi.

JM: Down there. How about around here?

AB: When it gets to be about April, you don't see any more butterfish up here. But in the wintertime, our boats were coming in with forty or fifty thousand. Three or four years ago, they were coming in with a hundred and eighty, two hundred thousand pound each boat.

JM: And that's all exported from here?

AB: That's all exported.

JM: What about joint ventures?

AB: Joint venture is another very dangerous game. They pick and choose. Not everybody can do it. You get set up with a boat that's offshore. A fellow comes along and gives them his bag. They take it off; they weigh it up. You do this seven, eight, nine, ten times a day. At the end of the day, you go and a guy gives you a slip and says, "Here's what you caught." The checks are supposed to be here; the checks aren't here. It's a drawn-out thing.

The fishermen are very funny. They're not the most trusting souls in the world. Then they stop and say, "Gee, I really think I had a hundred thousand, but I'm only getting paid for seventy-five thousand. I'm supposed to get fifty cents; I'm only getting forty-five cents." Then the next day, they've got too much. They're loaded. It was always something.

I'm sure some of the joint ventures worked out well. But others -- I know our boat got involved in one.

JM: For butterfish?

AB: Oh, no. Squid.

End of Interview #2

Third interview with Anthony Bucolo for the Newport Historical Society, conducted by Jennifer Murray on June 17, 1987

MURRAY: You had said that you started out with your business for fish and lobsters because you knew the lobsters weren't going to last forever. And then, when they started to peter out or things got bad with the lobsters in the late 1970s, you were in full swing with the fish wholesaling business. What kind of volume, in general, were you doing per year at that point?

BUCOLO: Money-wise or poundage-wise?

JM: Poundage.

AB: I would say, in the late 1970s, we were probably doing six to seven million pounds of fish, and we were down to maybe a quarter of a million pound of lobsters, where before it was like a million pound of lobsters and three or four million pound of fish.

In 1979, I got hooked up with a group of Southern scallopers. Our job was to handle the scallops. We didn't want to go in and purchase them and market them. We just handled them. In 1979, 1980, and 1981, we probably handled like three quarters of a million pound of scallops a year, and the fish still stayed up around six or seven million pounds. The lobsters dropped down

to about a hundred thousand pounds.

JM: How did that change over the years?

AB: Roughly, that was the end of my era, 1981. After that, I just went in and oversaw everything. Everything was really on the decline then. The Point Judith boats started going back to Point Judith, New Bedford boats were doing better in New Bedford, and our own boats could do better going somewhere else. The market got so tough that by 1984, 1985, that was the ultimatum. Either we were allowed to fish somewhere else or somebody else is going to have to take the boats. When we sold in November 1986, we had one boat selling to us. The rest were all either in New Bedford or Boston.

JM: What was that boat?

AB: That was one of my boats. That was the Crispina. He was still fishing out here. They really weren't doing that much. Now he's also -- Well, he would have been in New Bedford now anyway, whether we were in business or not.

JM: Are there any Newport boats now that are --

AB: There are a group of boats that come from Long Island. I believe there's four of them. They sell to Parascandolo. But it's an on and off again thing. If they go groundfishing, they also

go to Boston. If they get heavy on yellowtails or flounders, they'll go into New Bedford. It was only like January, February, or March when they were catching squid and butterfish that these four boats plus two of my boats were coming into Newport for the simple reason that there was flyfish. The rest of the boats went back to Point Judith.

I know of one other boat that did come to Newport, but it was one of those things - "We're going to spite the Co-op; the cull is different." We've said this since I've been in business -- Our means of attracting other boats was the cull was better, the weight was better, and that made up for the price differential. Boats would come and they said, "Yeah, sure." Then, all of a sudden, they go back again.

I know one fellow that did come. I guess he landed two trips and he's back to Point Judith. That hour and a half ride, they just don't want to do it. I mean, they've got better things to do - be in a barroom or whatever.

But it's difficult. I think Parascandolo is in for some trying times. They've been at it a long time. I'm sure in the summertime, they'll get two or three rebel boats. I haven't seen any

yet. Where it's all family, they get enough to keep going.

JM: Now, how about your retail business? You opened that in 1970?

AB: In 1970. There again, anywhere between 1975 and 1980, that really boomed. It was one of those things. Everything boomed at once. It was like buying stocks in the stock market. Most people, if they can hit on sixty percent, they're happy. Everything we did was just a success.

Then, by the early 1980s, we had more competition or other markets opening. My brothers showed a tendency of getting a little sick of it and they let it go downhill a little.

JM: That was after your heart attack?

AB: That's right. That dropped off along with the rest of the business. I would say 1982 to 1985, we did maybe half of what we did prior to 1980. And if we did that, that was good. I don't believe we did half.

But that's the nature of the beast. Things turn. If you're not willing to turn with them, you're out of luck. And that's exactly what happened. I mean, there were other markets in town. I don't think they had to offer what we had to offer. But the Newport people in the

summertime wouldn't come down Thames Street during the America's Cup summers. That started, and all of a sudden, it was every summer. And now you have several new Super Stop and Shops, Star Market, and things like that, who have a very nice display case. If you're out in Middletown and you're at Stop and Shop, why should you try to come down Thames Street and waste an hour and a half? And that's what happens.

The fish isn't as fresh as ours. It probably doesn't taste like ours. But, at the same token, you get used to it. It's like anything else. You can take a pill and say, "That's awful." But if you have to keep taking it to make you better, you're going to take it. And that's what happened. You're going to waste an hour and a half or you're going to have something that you can get used to the taste [of].

JM: What are the major differences between the chain markets' fish and an operation like yours was?

AB: With us, we had fresh fish available every day. A chain, usually, if they're going to have a special, they will have it a week to ten days after they've purchased the fish. They have to be sure they have the fish in hand.

We used to sell to the A & P Tea Company in

Boston. They would buy their fish on a Monday or Tuesday. We delivered up there. You wouldn't see that till the following Wednesday to Friday for the simple reason it had to be distributed to all the stores throughout the Eastern Seaboard. They just couldn't do that in the matter of a day or two. They'll tell you that it's fresh caught every day. Well, the fish is fresh caught every day, but it's not brought to market every day.

JM: What was the pattern of the fish landing certain times of year? What was brought in?

AB: Well, in the wintertime, going back to the late 1960s, early 1970s, or during the 1960s, there was predominantly lobster in the wintertime. Okay? From May on, it would be flounders, yellowtails, codfish. Into the fall, it would be the same, because most of our boats came from New Bedford. And that's what they primarily fished on - lobster in the winter; and lemon sole, yellowtail, cod, haddock, and pollack in the summertime and fall.

With the 1970s came a lot of Point Judith boats. A lot of the New Bedford boats went back. Now we got into the butterfish and squid from November to March. Fewer boats went yellowtailing. Like I said, in the late 1970s, lobstering was over. Till today, this is what you

have. You have November to March, primarily yellowtails, mostly butterfish, squid, few whiting. Then, February, March, April, a lot of boats are on fluke, right into maybe May and June. Then you'd get whiting trips. Whiting has been very cheap the last few years, so that's out.

Right now, to bring it right up to-date, one of our boats in New Bedford yesterday had a trip of Georges flounders, few haddock, few cod. We had another one of our boats in Boston last Tuesday. He had cod, haddock, very few yellowtails, and a lot of pollack. We had another one that was in yesterday. He had the same kind of a trip.

JM: Are the flyfish that are caught by your boats mostly [caught] with the combination nets?

AB: Yes.

JM: What effect has that had?

AB: Really, the nets have all basically been the same. Whether they start off with the construction being nylon or the synthetic materials, it really doesn't have any affect on the catch. It's just that it doesn't wear out. Years ago, they were all cotton and they just wore out. The nylon -- You can't hurt it. There's polypropylene. The only problem they have sometimes with the

polypropylene is that it floats. They do get into a problem when they're hauling back. If the tide is running against them and there's no wind, it floats up and it does get in the wheel. What the New Bedford fleet calls a thirty-five or thirty-six net, which was made completely of nylon, I think still outfishes any of these other nets. Of course, in Point Judith, they're always coming up with a new design or whatever. They make longer sweeps because the boats now have more power. However, we just bought a new net that they're using now. It's a seventeen thousand dollar net, and the fellow says, "It's too big." So they're going to try putting more balls on it to try to lift it up off the bottom.

JM: It's too big for your boat?

AB: It's too big. The boat that was using the same net has eleven hundred horsepower; we only have eight hundred horsepower. They're still experimenting. Every day, these guys experiment.

JM: And that net is to catch those species of fish.

AB: Most of these nets they can use for anything. The difference between a net they use to go to Georges is they have to use rollers on the bottom. Okay? If you were going to go yellowtailing, you'd just use a chain sweep. If you were going to go

flyfishing, you'd use a chain sweep and a lot of balls to keep the net up off the bottom. The foreigners (the few that are around) are all into mid-water fishing. That's another ball game.

Some of the fellows in Point Judith, in the fall, go pair trawling. It's on the same idea. They have the two boats towing the net. Because they can tow so fast, it's used as a mid-water trawl - it isn't a mid-water trawl compared to what the foreigners use, because they have all kinds of electronic equipment that raises it, lowers it, and what have you. These fellows are doing it on a rough scale. It has worked out. In the last couple of years, I guess they didn't do all that well. But there, for a while, pair trawlers did well.

JM: What are they going for mostly?

AB: They were going for scup.

JM: And how about the foreigners?

AB: What little you can find out about them now -- They claim to be after mackerel, but who knows? Mackerel, sardines, herring.

JM: What's the situation with the herring now, after they were fishing so heavily on it for all those years?

AB: They still claim there are a lot of herring out

there. One of the reasons, as we talked over before, if you don't keep the quotas, you have to let them fish on them. I guess up in Maine, where they did have a lot of these herring factories, because of the few years where there were no herring or that everybody was catching them, now the high cost of hiring people to do this work and it being so seasonal, it's not profitable. So I guess they're not doing it. Evidently, they're saying, "Okay. You're not using the herring, so somebody else has got the right to use it." That's the Two Hundred Mile Limit law.

JM: Do you think people are becoming more willing to eat a lot of different kinds of fish that they didn't really consider before?

AB: That is a new trend. For years, monk tails were thrown overboard. They were a delicacy in Europe. These fellows were talked into it.

I can remember one day when one of my boats come in and he looked at me. He had a trip of lemon sole. The lemon sole, yesterday, sold for a $1.90. Back this one particular day, it was thirty cents, and the monk tails were thirty-five. He said, "I'm getting more for junk fish than gold." The last I heard, monk fish to the boats are like $1.50 or $1.60 a pound.

They say it's real good. I've never tried it. From what I understand, it's like squid. It will take on a flavor. If you're going to mix it with something else, it seems to absorb that flavor. I don't know. For some reason, it doesn't appeal to me.

JM: Do you think a lot of people feel that way?

AB: Evidently not. There are a lot of people who like to try a lot of different things. I mean, somebody will go into a bar and they'll say, "What are you drinking?"

"I'm having a margarita."

"Well, gee, I'll try one of those."

It's the same thing. I like certain things and I stay with them. I'm not one of these guys that's going to go try all these different things.

JM: What other fish has that happened to?

AB: Squid. See, the Italians ate squid from Day One. I mean, we just love squid. The Spanish are big buyers; the Japanese got into eating the squid. It's like anything else. Once there is an abundance, you can create a market. As long as that supply is there, the market will flourish.

Before I even came to Newport forty years ago, they used to catch a lot of mackerel. There were a lot of mackerel seiners that came down.

They used to take out of John F. Mack's. I've heard stories where John F. Mack, on a Friday, would direct traffic -- this is Mack himself -- for his market. They'd sell seventeen, eighteen, barrels of mackerel retail. You couldn't sell a hundred pound of mackerel in the whole city of Newport today on any given day. What happened was, as the mackerel went away from the shore, the market fell apart. It's like anything else. You go to a store. "Do you have this certain detergent?"

"No, I don't."

You go next week. "Do you have this detergent?"

Now your clothes are piled up to the ceiling. You turn around and you get another detergent; you like it; and you stay with it.

This is what happened to the mackerel. What happened with the squid -- They've started to get more and more plentiful since the foreigners have left, because they were really fishing that heavy. They've come in closer and it's almost a year-round thing, where these guys can go out and continuously catch them. Like we discussed with these freezer ships, they go out and they chase the butterfish all the way down to Mexico.

They're on their way back up here looking for butterfish. If they don't find it, they will fish off Atlantic City on either the edible squid or the summer squid, which are used for bait. From what I hear, they're getting money for it. Evidently, somebody has found a way to prepare these where you can eat them.

JM: The ones that were used for bait?

AB: The ones that were used for bait.

JM: What's the name of those? There are two names.

AB: One's illex, and I think the other one is loligo. But it's like a piece of leather. Some people weren't even using them for bait. They have found something to do with this. Because I know one of the freezer boats was catching a hundred thousand, a hundred and fifty thousand, every two days and they were getting fifteen to twenty cents a pound for them. You don't pay that kind of money for something you're not going to use.

JM: Did they ever pull in anything really strange out on the Georges Banks?

AB: No. On Georges Banks, you're going to catch your yellowtails, flounder, haddock, cod, pollack. You get a few wolffish. If you go a little farther, toward the Northern Edge, you will pick up grey sole and dabs and some redfish. But other than

that --

JM: Are there many redfish left?

AB: No. That was another industry that was really over-fished. I don't know whether we can blame the foreigners for that or not. I just think that they caught so many of them. I think what happened was they were so cheap that people weren't into it. Now, I know if you go into a store and you see ocean perch, it's two or three dollars a pound. They say it's tasty. That's another fish I just can't get into trying. I know fellows that worked for me used to take it home all the time.

JM: And it's eaten as any of our fish are?

AB: Oh, all up and down the coast. That's right. Yes.

JM: Broiled or fried?

AB: Broiled, baked, fried. They're still catching enough of it. You can go anywhere up and down the coast and you'll see ocean perch in a chain store. But you can't see a lot of other fish.

JM: What about those stories about people who said they'd be shoveling the spawn off the decks? Did you ever hear about that with the redfish?

AB: Whether they spawn right there on deck?

JM: No - spawn coming out of the fish.

AB: I never heard that story. Redfish are caught in very deep water. Fish are just like a humans. You just can't bring them up from the depths. They get the bends. That's what happened. The pressure got so high on their body -- that transition from being down two hundred fathoms to the surface -- that, like anything else, it just blew them inside-out. That's the only thing I can think of. I have seen that happen with fish of that nature. You have redfish; scup would do the same thing if they were brought up. But they're the type of fish that would. That's about the only two that I know that I know of that would. They're the only ones that are real deep. Redfishing, they were in some deep water.

JM: When did you see that happen?

AB: I never saw it. Well, you see it when you're taking out fish. You see the spawn or the guts hanging out of them. Another fish is a dab. That happens to the dabs a lot.

JM: That's a sole, isn't it?

AB: Yes. It's a flatfish.

JM: How about all the environmental problems that have happened in this century? What effect has that had on the fishing industry - the pollution?

AB: You're getting into an area that is really

political, I think. My opinion is going to differ from somebody else's opinion.

I think the only effect it's really had is that the environmental agencies are scaring people from eating fish. Now you have the PCBs and you have this and you have that. Maybe we didn't have those chemicals in the water a hundred years ago. A lot of different things are attributed to raw sewerage. Well, you've had raw sewerage from Day One, and it didn't affect these fish. With the exception of chemicals that are dumped into local streams, I don't see where they really have an argument. I go along with that. If you had fish, like scup that you catch up in the Bay, or whiting up in the Bay, and they're here all the time, if we had big chemical plants dumping chemicals overboard, then I think that would be a cause of worry.

However, another thing is, years ago, Newport Electric Corporation had pumps that pumped saltwater in to cool their generators off. Every year, they would pump a solution in there to kill the mussels. One year, we had a batch of lobsters die. I said, "It's caused from this."

The scientists came up and said, "There's so many parts per thousand. If you take all the

gallons of water that are in this area where you are, it's impossible."

I was talking to my man in Maine. I said, "Gee, you know, I lost a lot of lobster. I'm going to need more."

He said, "God, I didn't know that was going to happen to you. We have red tide."

So it really wasn't the chemical in the water. It was the red tide that these lobsters had, coming down from Maine. So this scientist was absolutely right. This is what I'm saying. They poured drums and drums of this chemical. We were only a couple hundred feet away from the plant. And he said, "No." He was right. So here we go again. If this chemical was strong enough that, within a few feet of the mussels, it killed them completely and they're a very hearty animal, by the time it traveled two hundred feet in this thousands and thousands of gallons of water that it was diluted in, it had no effect on the lobsters, how can we say that these chemicals, unless they're very close and in a big abundance, are going to hurt the fish?

But that's my argument against somebody else's argument. I don't know if that will ever be resolved. My thinking -- Some of these guys

have to have a job. If they don't keep arguing, they're not going to have a job. They might be scientists, but they're also lobbyists at the same time.

JM: We talked about the subsidized Canadian fish. What about the American fish? What makes it so much more expensive to catch? What expenses do the domestic people have?

AB: They have a hundred percent expense. The Canadian government goes out and subsidizes the purchase of the vessel, number one. Number two, they turn around and -- We discussed the Anti-Dumping Act.

JM: Yes.

AB: They also have a ceiling price that has to be met. Going back to the redfish, I know this from firsthand information. Redfish was worth five cents a pound. Well, the dealers in Canada couldn't see their way clear at five cents a pound; although the government thought the boat needed five cents a pound.

So now, what happened was both parties were taken care of. They allowed the dealers to pay three cents a pound, and the government gave the boat the extra two cents.

For example, there were times where, say, yellowtail was three cents a pound. A guy went

out and caught twenty thousand. He had six hundred dollars. He might have had a thousand dollars' worth of expenses to get that. The government has never come in and said, "Hey, wait a minute. We've got to put a ceiling of ten cents a pound. If you dealers can only afford to pay three, we'll give seven."

They'll tell the farmers, because the dealers can't push potatoes, "Don't plant potatoes. Don't plant wheat. We'll pay you X number of dollars acre." They have yet to do anything to help the fishing industry. There have been numerous ways. They don't have to go into subsidizing the fish end of it. We asked for a subsidy on insurance. Within a few years, I think a lot of boats will go down the tubes, because there's no way they're going to help fight the insurance.

JM: What are you paying in insurance now?

AB: Our boats are twenty-five thousand dollars a piece. We've got a million dollars' worth of P and I [Personal and Indemnity] and only a hundred thousand dollars on the hull. Five years ago, it was twelve thousand dollars for three hundred dollars on the hull and five million on the P and I. You just can't buy it. They survey the boat two or three times a year and give you a list of

recommendations. If they're not done in thirty days, they cancel you.

JM: What kind of recommendations?

AB: Almost a complete overhaul of everything every time they come down.

JM: Who does that?

AB: We have to hire somebody to do it. It's really a very expensive thing. Another thing is the Coast Guard is continuously boarding the boats. They're looking for any little thing.

We just got a complaint the other day. Two of our life rings had lights on them. The third one, which we didn't even need, didn't have one. They are talking about fining five hundred dollars on that. I have to write back to them when I get some time this week, to challenge that. But they're making it so difficult.

JM: How can someone who owns his own boat, who's always out on trips, deal with that?

AB: They have to come in and tie up for a month to do all the work. Nobody can go fishing without insurance. It's not so much on the hull; it's on your P and I. Then again, on the hull, you have to have insurance because ninety percent of these guys are mortgaged up to the hilt. It's a no-win situation.

JM: Tell me how you got into the restaurant business.

AB: I had a couple of friends back in the end of 1979. One was a stockbroker; one had worked out at Raytheon for a number of years. They went into another business that really wasn't panning out, and they said, "Gee, you have all this dock space which you do nothing with. Johnny Mack's is going out of business and he used to do a big fish and chip business. How about if we take a small piece of land and we'll pay you rent and also take you in as a partner?"

So we talked about it. We went out and we got prices. All of a sudden, somebody called me up. There was a floating restaurant in Providence that was in financial trouble. Would I like to go look at it? I went and I looked at it. Come to find out, a friend of mine had leased it. The builder came up, and he had a mortgage on it. He wanted out. He wanted his money.

I said, first of all, the thing was a little bit too small.

He came back and said, "We'll find something, and I will build you something for X number of dollars."

This was roughly the same price as a land facility, one-third of what the seating capacity

would be, and at the same time, it was something that, if it didn't work here, we could float it somewhere else - where, if we had a land facility, you'd have to come in and demolish it and you'd just be out all that money.

It started off to be a small, family, paper plate type of thing. Before we opened, we got in with another chef who became a partner. He turned it around to what he wanted. Our biggest problem was that nobody ever adjusted the prices. The only advantage we had in the restaurant business was that there were a lot of tax loopholes that we took advantage of. We did have two or three good years. And then, again, toward the end, along with everything else, that started going downhill. All these red lights went up and said, "Hey, stop. Don't go past go. Just go." And that's exactly what I did.

JM: What is the Newport fishing industry made up of now?

AB: Right now, you have the two trap companies. I wouldn't think there's more than four or five draggers fishing out of Newport right now. There might be two or three day boats and four or five big offshore boats.

JM: Is there much for the day draggers now?

AB: I don't think in the last twenty years there's ever been really much for the day draggers - except in the fall when they were whiting fishing or early spring when they'd catch a few sardines. It's just one of those things. They make a living, and they're happy with what they're doing.

JM: What kind of living would they make?

AB: I haven't been into day draggers for about fifteen years, so I really don't know. I don't see them quitting, so I have to assume that they're making a living.

JM: How about lobsterboats? About how many of those?

AB: That, I won't even venture a guess. There are quite a few. I think there's like ten or fifteen offshore boats, and there's got to be twenty-five to thirty inshore boats. But, again, if the offshore boats sell here, I don't know. I know a lot of them still go to Point Judith.

JM: What is your involvement in Tallman and Mack now?

AB: I'm just a silent partner.

JM: That is one of the oldest commercial fishing methods. It depends on abundance. You had said that, in the last fourteen or fifteen years, the catches have really decreased.

AB: They really have.

JM: Why?

AB: There you go. Who knows? It's just nature. Way back (oh, I'd say) twenty-five years ago, a gentleman from Point Judith was sent over as an ambassador of goodwill to Russia. Somewhere along the line, he made a deal with the Russians. This was way before the Two Hundred Mile Limit.

[end of side one, tape four]

Before this area was saturated with the large vessels, he made a deal -- where there's a strip of land that comes off Long Island and goes straight out to Hudson Canyon -- that they could fish in there at a certain time of year -- roughly this time of the year, when the scup were migrating from the South up this way.

I've always felt (and I think George feels the same way) that this really broke up the migration pattern.

We had a fellow whose name was Jimmy Callous. He spent maybe twenty summers up here. All he did all his life was chase scup. He was the scup king. He'd fish all winter down in the Virginias and Carolinas, and follow them up Cape May and then up here, all the way into Nantucket Sound. He was the best there was. Toward the end, in the 1970s, he was coming in with whatever he could catch. I've seen him go out eight o'clock one

morning, call me up at ten o'clock that night and say, "I'll see you in the morning," and have thirty-five to forty thousand pound of scup. I think Jimmy hasn't been up here since -- Well, I know he hasn't been up here since 1975. But two or three years prior to that, scup was already depleting.

JM: Is he from the South?

AB: Yes. He's from Virginia.

This is a mystery. Why is there still scup? Evidently, there are a few that the Russians didn't catch in that period, and they just remember their route. How many years could this take to get this back? My dad's been dead twelve years, and we haven't really seen a good spring on scup in the last twelve years, I would say. I think George would concur with that. I'm not sure. The reason? Who knows?

The reason the company's still in business? Well, I used to get four or five cents a pound for scup. The other day, they got two dollars. It doesn't take as much. That's the nature of business. Somebody like George wants to catch fish. The price isn't the almighty thing. I was the other way around: You have to get a price for something. What is happening -- and it's happened

throughout the fishing industry -- is the price is the only thing that's keeping the people in business. But how long can the consumer support this high price?

JM: Does most of that fish go down South?

AB: It used to. There is really not that much fish to even talk about sending anywhere. You're not going to get past New York. New York is going to give you the best price right now. When it was fourteen, fifteen, even twenty cents a pound, then you could go South, because then they could sell it. But I don't think you're going to see too many of those poor colored people in Virginia and Carolina paying $2.50 a pound when they're on Welfare. And scup is the type of fish that if you get a third of what you buy that's edible -- it's all bone -- that makes an awful expensive dinner.

JM: Do people eat much of it up here?

AB: Not in this area. You will get a few of the Portuguese in Fall River and New Bedford area. They will eat some of it. But again, the New Bedford/Fall River area, everybody (whether they be Italian or Portuguese or whatever) -- The new generation is another story. They want it filleted. Everything has to be filleted. That's

why your yellowtail and flounder really dominate the market. These whole fish, you have to have specialized, certain areas. The Jewish people are big on scup. Again, there are a lot of people who've got to have the first scup of the season. Once you go past that first week, that's fine; they've had their fill. It's like waiting for opening day at the ball game. It's one of those things. They have to be the first one.

JM: Why do you think an ethnic group like the Jewish people would eat a lot of it? Do you know what that goes back to?

AB: No. It's just that they are big eaters of scup - in this area. I consider this area as New York, Philadelphia. They're the ones that will go into a retail store and buy it.

I'm not even thinking straight this morning. You have to realize that, according to the Jewish faith, they can only eat something with scales. These have mammoth scales. Maybe they think it tastes better or they're going to be more religious because of eating that. That's what it dates back to.

JM: It's kosher.

AB: It is kosher. Right.

JM: That's interesting.

AB: Yes. That could be. I'm just searching for a reason myself.

JM: With the property values so high now, where do they [Tallman and Mack] store the nets?

AB: They bought a piece of property on Mitchell's Lane in Portsmouth.

JM: It used to be right over at Festival Field, wasn't it?

AB: Yes. But that was a very expensive piece of property.

JM: I'll bet. What improvements have been made in the technology?

AB: They don't modify the nets that much, because everything works just right. They have been working. The hardest fish to catch were the striped bass. George has, for about thirty years, tried to change and modify. About three years ago, we sat down one day. He said, "You know, I've got it. We're going to catch a lot of bass this year." That's when they put the ban on. They did catch the bass. His complaint was: Thirty years, just like a scientist would be trying to look for a cure for AIDS or some other virus, he found the right method or the right modified net to catch the bass. And once he caught the bass, they told him he couldn't have

it. Hopefully, in a few years, that will change.

The only other thing that has come up is there is a new solution that they have been dipping the net in. It's an anti-algae solution. Every three or four weeks, they have to take all the gear out, and bring it out to the lot. That's the reason for the lot.

What happens is, if they allow this grass and algae to grow, it forms like a blanket. It's a deterrent for the fish. It's got to be cleaned. Now, with this new solution they're using, they can go almost a whole season without changing the net. It's very expensive, but, in the long run, they feel the labor that's being saved is going to be worth it.

JM: What do you think about that conflict between the sportsfishermen and the fish trap industry?

AB: I'll give you an illustration. Back, oh, God, it's got to be twenty-five years ago, this conflict was really hot and heavy. It was very political - politicians looking for a little kick-back from both sides of the party.

There was an explosion out here - a collision. Two tankers collided, and there was a big oil slick. I don't know if you were in Newport at the time. A Senator from Newport was

the head of the Senate Subcommittee on Fisheries. What he did was he called my father and he said, "Hey, you know, I've got an idea. This committee has to come down and a committee that is in Environmental Protection. We're going to come down and check the oil spill." He said, "I think maybe if you gave these fellows a tour of your operation and then took everybody out to dinner -- " It got to be a yearly thing of taking people out - spending two thousand dollars taking Senators out. It was our personal lobby at that time, when we had their hundred percent attention. But I don't know how much is accomplished with wine and dine.

So this guy come down. We walked with the Senators. We brought them in and showed them all the nets, and out to the field to show them the extensive field that had to be kept to keep this stuff going. Well, one guy said to me, "You know, as far as I knew, you guys went out with ten or twelve fellows. You went out there and stood there with scoop nets and caught this fish. We didn't have any idea of the amount of money and how extensive this whole business was."

Right then and there, that year, they killed this sportsmen's and the commercial men's battle.

Every year, there was this battle. That was the end of it right there. Everybody understood. But, on the other hand, the big battle was: Look, you've got maybe five or six trap companies. Maybe a hundred people's jobs are at stake. But when you talk about sport fishing, you've got hundreds of little bait shops, rod and reel shops. You're talking a lot of jobs. This is what it got down to. It was: Where do we get more votes? Once we put them to the task and said, "Are you really worried about votes? Is this the issue? Or is the issue commercial and sport fishermen?"

It got worse. Then it died for a while. Then, like anything else, when the scarcity arose, they got back into it. Our argument is -- and nobody's really picking up too much on this -- who is a sport fisherman? I don't know of one. Do you?

JM: No.

AB: They all sell their catch.

JM: Especially striped bass.

AB: What you have to turn around and say is: We have a battle between the net men and the rod and reel men. Now, if somebody put it in that context, I don't think anybody would support one group as opposed to the other group. But you hear people

say somebody's doing it for sport. Well, fun and recreation - that's what America's all about. These poor guys are trying to make a living. Well, that's tough luck. But that's not the case. These guys are going out and having a good time while they're making money.

I don't know whether I told you the story about a friend of mine whose son quit college because he was making seven or eight hundred dollars a night, catching striped bass in Long Island.

JM: No.

AB: He told his father at the end of the week, "I made more than you. What do I need college for?"

JM: And he did it with a rod and reel?

AB: A rod and reel - he and another fellow.

JM: Well, there was a considerable amount of that done off Block Island, wasn't there?

AB: There is. And it's being done in Massachusetts. It's being done all over. Yes, it is a sport. But it gets to the point where it is not a sport; it's a combination.

Let's go to Jim Thorp. He got five dollars for playing baseball one time. They stripped all his -- He became a professional. Once a sport fisherman takes X number of dollars a pound for

fish, in my eyes, he becomes a commercial fisherman. But here we go. This is one person's [opinion].

JM: They have a pretty powerful lobby, don't they - the sport [fishermen]?

AB: That's right. Because it goes back to how many rods, how many reels. Do you realize a company like Sears and Roebuck probably sells more rods, reels, and fishing tackle than bass we catch as commercial fishermen? That makes a pretty powerful lobby.

JM: How about the input that the scientists have made on that issue?

AB: Here we go again. I said this on other topics, when it comes to the scientists. They can say what they want, but the lobbyist and the politicians interpret it the way they want. They said that about the seventy-five hundred pound catch. I mean, there was more yellowtails to be caught five or six years ago than Carter had liver pills. But still, the government said, "No. You only can catch seventy-five hundred pounds."

We went out there and we showed the State and the Federal people last year, when there was twenty-five or thirty thousand pound of bass. They were all twenty-two, twenty-three, twenty-

four inches that we had to let go or we tagged for the State. Now they're talking thirty-three inches. You're talking fifteen, twenty, pound fish. Even the twenty-four inch fish is seven or eight pounds. Can you go into a market and say, "I want that fish." It's probably three dollars a pound. You're talking twenty-four dollars. By the time you fillet it, you've got three pounds. You've got enough to feed four or five people. That's a pretty expensive fish.

Maine's the only state that has a short and a large lobster. Rhode Island, Mass[achusetts], the rest of the states, we have a gauge. It has to meet that gauge or else it's short. Well, in Maine, they have a gauge that has two notches - one for short and one for too large. What they did was, the dealers couldn't sell the large lobsters back in the 1920s and 1930s. So they conspired with the scientists to say these larger lobsters, especially the females, are egg-bearing and they're more prolific than the smaller lobsters. Okay? And they passed a law. The law has been challenged, but never changed. The only reason that was put into effect was because they lobbied and they were so strong, the scientists went along with them. But it is a scientific fact

that the smaller the lobster, the more prolific it is. So there you go.

If you want to talk about scientists and lobbyists, it gets down to the point that somebody's going to say, "I'm the one that's paying you." It's too bad there aren't enough people that will stand up and say, "I don't care. I don't need this job. This is my finding, and I stand behind it." It's a tough world to get a job in. I'm glad I don't have to go to work. It's difficult.

There are cases and cases. We could go on for the next three years. Panels I've been on and different things. It all comes out after. I mean, when you're up there, nobody wants to rock the boat. Of course, I don't mind rocking it or jumping overboard or pushing somebody else overboard. But, as a committee of one, what really can you do? You have to sit back and say hey -- You can only fight, bang your head against the wall, so many times. Then you say, "Well, I'll do my thing and let the rest of the world do their thing."

JM: Do you think that's what happened to George Mendonsa?

AB: George and I talk about it all the time. What can

you do? You're going to go out there and take a chance loading the boat up with bass, then come in? You can't sell them. They've put such a curb on on it that you can't find somebody that will buy it.

JM: People are afraid to eat it, too.

AB: Well, no. That's a fallacy.

JM: You think so?

AB: Yes. You always want what you can't have. I was in a restaurant not long ago, and I saw bass on the menu.

JM: Really?

AB: That's right.

JM: That's good.

AB: No, it's not. You're not supposed to have it. You're not supposed to have it in your possession in the state of Rhode Island.

JM: What I meant by that was: It's good that people aren't afraid to eat it.

AB: It's like anything else. Let's get back to the ethnic groups again. If it wasn't for the Jewish people in this country, you wouldn't sell ten percent of the lobsters that are sold on a Saturday night in any restaurant. And they're not allowed to eat that. They'll eat scup Friday night to get the holy blessing. On Saturday,

they'll eat lobsters that they're not supposed to have. It's just something that they're not supposed to have. You always want what you can't have.

JM: Is there much conflict with the fish trap industry and sailing and yachting here?

AB: The problem [that] arises is there is one company out of the four or five that are fishing that, for some reason, has always done exactly what they felt like doing. If it was any of the other four companies, the Coast Guard would be on their back; the Navy would be on their back; the State would be on their back.

There are laws that say: You have a permit from April 1st to June 1st in a certain area. This isn't exact, but it's in that realm. It might be June 1st; it might be July 1st. And then, nothing can be there. Then again, like from August 1st to November 1st.

Well, I sail up and down to the islands all the time. I come by this trap that is not supposed to be there. The thing isn't even set the way it's supposed to be. It's supposed to be set North and South, and the thing is drifting East and West. I know that these traps aren't supposed to be there, but there are a lot of

people that are reading a book or something, following one of these coastal guides. Boom. Before you know it, you're right into it. Because it's right in line, coming from Cuttyhunk to the Tower. It's right in that line. It's not supposed to be there.

Years ago, I know a couple of Navy ships ran into these things. They sued, and evidently they got money. Maybe they're trying to catch somebody. But until somebody gets in there and causes a lot of damage to their boat and to the net, and they go to court and they prove that this is in the wrong spot at the wrong time, then maybe they'll do something about it.

JM: What is it set to catch?

AB: It's really set to catch nothing. Because it's not set. It's hanging on by a couple of anchors. Most of the time, it's not really the net; it's just a frame.

JM: In the fog, can you see it?

AB: No.

JM: Do they have to be lit?

AB: Yes. It has to be lit if it's a net that's fishing. He just has the frame in there. There's nothing. There's no lights; there's nothing.

JM: Now, that industry has been passed down through

families mostly. Do you think it will continue?

AB: You have to understand there is a rule, a law, that says: If a certain area -- Each of these areas, you have a license too. Okay? Everybody owns certain licenses. If, in a twelve month period, a trap has not been set -- a trap, a marker or frame, something to show that you are still interested in having that little square -- then you automatically forfeit your right to that, and somebody can apply.

The last company that went into business -- They bought their business from a family-owned -- It was a family-owned business for years. They went out there and they had this guy's rights. Another company was down the Sakonnet. They bought somebody else's company out, and they also bought the rights. But this fellow went to a lawyer and found out that, really, the rights that these other people bought, they weren't entitled to because nobody had set a net. He went out and he submitted an application, got the application, and got these permits.

It boils down to it really doesn't have to be a family handed-down thing. If there is a year missing in this hundred-year history of a certain family, and somebody else is on the ball, they can

get a permit.

JM: Are many people interested in getting into that now?

AB: Not really.

JM: Is there much conflict between the companies themselves - rivalry?

AB: Well, the only rivalry is the same nonsense. It's just one company that causes all the problems. They're never in the right spot. Nobody ever checks on the stuff. Of course, somebody like George, who's so precise, it really irks him. But it gets to the point if you say something, you're the bad guy. There is no real monetary loss. It's just something that shouldn't be, like anything else. If you drive a car and you come to a stop light and you stop, and you see another guy going through that red light, it irks you. That's how George feels about it.

JM: How about some of those people that you were talking about, that you're going to write your book about? [chuckles]

AB: Okay. Which ones are we talking about?

JM: Any of those that -- What is the way of life of doing that work?

AB: I think I explained this to you before. Years ago, in the trap business, it was all these older

Nova Scotia fellows who'd come down and spend the season here. Then, when the Mendonsas and my father took over the business, they wanted younger guys. It just so happened it was right after the war, and younger guys were looking for jobs. It didn't take any real talent or real trait. It was just: If somebody wants to put in an honest days-work for an honest dollar. It's something, I guess, that gets into your blood.

Besides the Mendonsas -- George and Manny and their sons -- there's three other fellows that have been there for at least thirty years.

JM: Who are they?

AB: Ernie Carlysle, Joseph Linhaires, and John Souza. Now, Joe Linhaires, he comes all the way from Tiverton every day. They go trapping in the morning. In the spring, when it used to be busy, they'd put in a long day. Then, the rest of the year, they usually get through eleven or twelve o'clock -- they all go lobstering. They can keep their boats there. George gives them free bait. It gives them a good year's work.

There are no particular type of people. It's somebody looking for a job. It takes a little beef, and that's all. Like I say, in the last few years, it's been a real piece of cake.

I'm going to go down, when I leave here, to get some fish. They'll be all done. I went down yesterday at eleven o'clock, and I was too late.

JM: They were all in and packed?

AB: They were all packed and gone home. Years ago, you'd go until five or six o'clock at night.

JM: Are there many younger men that want to do that - go into the trapping and do the lobstering, too?

AB: Well, I would say right now, in the trap company, if you take George and Manny and the three guys I mentioned out of the picture (because they're all fifty or better), the average age of the other fourteen or fifteen guys that they have down there might be twenty-seven or twenty-eight. So it is a younger crowd. And there are some of them that I've seen there for the last four or five years. It's a seasonal job. God bless America. I mean, these guys can work from April to November, and then collect until it's time to go back to work again.

JM: Are the crews better or worse now? Or the same?

AB: I'd say they're about the same. You look at some of them and say, "Boy, they would never have done this when I did it." But everybody feels things were harder way back when. They were, but who's to say? Maybe they would have been able to do it.

JM: What is different about now, that people say, "Boy, I never would have done that?"

AB: Now, everything is conveyors at the dock. Outside, there are winches in each boat. Thirty-five years ago, when I was trapping, it was all done by hand; everything was done by hand. The volume of fish was three or four times greater. You handled three or four times more product, all by manual labor. So it really has to be ten times harder.

If we live long enough to see it turn around, then we'll see whether these younger guys can do what we did.

JM: What effect is tourism and development having on that industry?

AB: I don't think it really has any effect whatsoever. I think tourism and development have played the fishing industry up. We see people come down the docks, stroll down. On a day during the America's Cup, where you supposedly had a hundred thousand people in Newport, I don't believe you would see more than three or four stroll down the dock to see what the fishing industry is all about. I just feel that they're like any of the other wharf watchdogs. They are using the fishing industry as a drawing card to make it sound like a

little, sleepy village. Newport now has gotten to be to the point where -- Who wants to go to Newport? It's so crowded. But if you take somebody from the Midwest or wherever, and you say, "This quiet, little fishing village. What a place to spend a couple of weeks in the summer." I think they're using it to promote tourism more than it being something that tourism really needs or really adds to. I feel it's a decoy.

JM: With the waterfront property getting so expensive, what do you think the future of their being able to make enough money to stay there is?

AB: This is something that we have been kicking around for the last couple of months here. Ever since I sold my property, we have been kicking it around. It's not really going to go anywhere. We had a bad year last year. If we have a couple more in a row, then I think it will be time to get to the round table and say, "Hey." You know my feeling. If you can get more interest on the money received than you can working, I think it's foolish to work. Of course, they're a lot older than I am, and they want to keep working. Fine with me. What I get out of that company, one way or another, is not going to be the difference between me eating and sleeping and whatever. What I got last year

was enough for me to go on vacation. That can give you an idea of what's happening in that company.

JM: Do you think that's going to happen to the fishing industry in general here?

AB: I don't know. I can only talk about Tallman and Mack. Rumors were that the Parascandolos were offered a lot more money than I was offered for my piece of property. I put it to them and so did another broker and so did other fish dealers: "If you can get that kind of money, why don't you buy Anthony's out? You'll have all kinds of money left over, and you can still run your business." They didn't even venture to make a move, so I think the figure they used was really exaggerated.

JM: What were you offered for yours? Can you say?

AB: The whole package, when the deal is complete, will be a little over three million dollars.

JM: Not bad for a forty thousand dollar investment, even though you put a lot into it.

AB: Well, there was a lot into it. That also included the restaurant, the trucks, and what have you. I would say we had a little over a million dollars invested over the years into it.

JM: Is there going to be any docking space for the fishing industry, do you think?

AB: No. We have the State Pier. I don't know what they're going to do from there.

JM: Yes. Do you think they'll keep that there - the State?

AB: I think they are committed, at this point. I don't know whether they're going to do anything more. They were asking for, I think, another million and a half to start fixing it up. People are starting to think. I was anti that from Day One.

JM: You were?

AB: Yes. Because the people down there don't pay anything. They pay four or five hundred dollars a year. That's like you trying to go up to Moorland Farms or one of these condominiums and get a five hundred thousand dollar condominium, and they say, "Oh, you're a nice girl, Jennifer. We're going to give it to you for five hundred dollars a year." Does that sound plausible?

JM: I guess not.

AB: Well, here we go. We have a three million dollar pier. They need to spend two or three million. I said this from Day One.

[end of side two, tape four]

You're going to end up with a pier that's going to cost five or six million dollars. The revenues on

it won't be twenty-five or thirty thousand dollars a year. That's very poor business, in my eyes.

Again, the thing I'm most against is a lot of boats that tie up there are not even from Rhode Island. They don't sell their product here; they sell it wherever they can get the most money for it. There always was enough dock space if somebody wanted to go fishing, lobstering, or whatever, and sell to a particular dealer. Parascandolo's has all kinds of wharf space. Well, Aquidneck only has limited wharf space. But we had all kinds of wharf space.

These fellows do not want to be committed. They want to be private businesses. Well, here we go again. Now the State's going to spend about six million dollars when they're done, for thirty or forty boats. Why shouldn't the State come back -- If the trap company has a bad year, Parascandolo has a bad year, Aquidneck has a bad year, or they need something -- they need their dock repaired -- Is the State going to come down and do the same for these fellows?

JM: No.

AB: Why not? Here you go again. Why are these thirty boats -- half of them out of Rhode Island -- Why should they be able to have all this cream, and

the rest not even get a bottle?

JM: Do the Point Judith boats all have to sell right there?

AB: No. Point Judith [boats] pay X number of dollars per foot for a space.

JM: Is it more than here?

AB: I think it's a good sum. But they can go anywhere they want.

JM: Do you think the fact that they have organized so well has a lot to do with how much money they've --

AB: Oh, definitely. That really is the fishing metropolis of Rhode Island. Unless you go over there, you just won't believe it. Of course, the State doesn't have the expense it has here. I mean, they have little finger piers, where two or three boats are tied up two on one side and two on the other side. I'll bet that when they get through with this, they probably will have spent more money to take care of thirty boats than the hundred and fifty to three hundred boats that they have over in Point Judith.

Newport should have had a State Pier going back thirty years ago. Like I said before, the State Pier helps only one buyer in the city. I don't think that's right. There's only one fellow that doesn't have dock space. He lures boats in

here because you can always go down to the State Pier.

JM: Who is that?

AB: That's Aquidneck. They don't have any place to go. What's at the State Pier? Ninety percent of them are lobsterboats.

JM: That's right.

AB: You talk about unfair competition. He's the same guy that goes out there and puts traps anyplace he wants. Nobody does anything about it. A very political town.

JM: It makes it interesting.

AB: But there again, nobody wants to challenge him. I'll talk about it. If somebody wanted to challenge, I would go in and be a witness. But it doesn't behoove me to get excited and go challenge something that's -- I've lived with it and I've made money, even with this unfair competition all my life. Maybe it gave us an added incentive to try harder. Avis always tries a little harder.

JM: Now, the way of life of working in the fishing industry -- What about the physical hardships in the demanding kind of work it is?

AB: The demanding work really is in management. The fishermen themselves -- In today's game, it really isn't all that physical. They go out there

with the aid of winches. It takes them fifteen, twenty, minutes to haul a trap. They load it up. That's all mechanical. There's one guy on the boat that really does a little more than anybody else. Then they come in, and it's all conveyored out. You have two or three groups of two younger fellows that dump these hundred pound tubs. When you're eighteen, even forty, and in good physical shape, and if two of you can't pick up a hundred pounds, you'd better see a doctor.

But the management end -- It's not only: Are we going to have a gang to go out fishing today? It's: When the stuff comes in, it's got to be sold. You have to chase the people that are buying to make sure they pay you. You have to answer to your partners; you have to answer to the stockholders. And that's in any business. You always see the guy out in the field lasts a hell of a lot longer than the guy behind the desk. It's not because there isn't enough physical exercise; it's that there's too much mental exercise.

JM: Has that gotten worse, that part of it, with the changes in the industry?

AB: It has gotten worse for the simple reason more and more people are going bankrupt. You have a local

company here that the main outlet they had went bankrupt. They're trying to collect over eight hundred thousand dollars from this guy. That's an awful blow. There aren't that many people that you know that can afford an eight hundred thousand dollar loss without going bankrupt themselves.

I think three years ago, somebody we sold to -- it was four major companies in New Bedford folded -- multi-million dollar plants. Of course, three of the four got out of the business completely and into something else. This one fellow, he's come back with another name and the whole works. Condominiums in Florida, condominiums here. Yachts here, yachts there. But that's, again, the American way. You have to stop and feel that that has put an awful mental strain on these people.

JM: What about the financial uncertainty?

AB: Now, it's down to the point where you really don't have to worry that much. You don't have that volume. You can go today, whatever you have, if you sell to five buyers, there's fifty-five really wanting to buy that product. So you go two or three days, four days. If the check doesn't come, you say, "Hey, wait a minute. I'm not selling to you, Jennifer, anymore. I'm selling to Betsy."

That's the way it goes.

JM: What kind of person do you think is drawn to that kind of work?

AB: What kind of work are you talking about now?

JM: What you did.

AB: Management?

JM: Yes.

AB: I don't know. Somebody looking for a challenge. In my case, I was oriented because that was a family way of life. I just wanted to do something different. That's why I went into the lobster and dragger business instead of the trap business. But most of the people I know that are in the business, they've all been in it because it was part of their heritage.

JM: Is that changing now?

AB: Well, here we go again. I'm just telling you about what I'm familiar with, the people that I'm familiar with.

Once in a great while, you get a flash in the pan that's worked for somebody and they want to try it. All a worker can see is the success of the person he's working for. They don't see the countless hours spent at the job. You don't put the job out of your mind as soon as you go home. It really is a twenty-four hour job. These

fellows that go in it, that have worked eight hours a day, and they go in it for themselves, after a year or two, when they find out that it's not all glory, they drop out.

JM: What does that family way of life have to do with being successful?

AB: Well, in the families that I know, everybody went into the business. Every one of the Mendonsas are in there. My father and uncle, they were in there. My cousin, who went to Annapolis, after twenty years in the service, he come back and went into the fishing business. My brothers, they were all in it.

JM: Parascandolos.

AB: And Parascandolos. It's the father, the five sons. There's ten or twelve nephews down there now. It becomes a way of life. They're with their family. They are making a good wage. It gets to the point where you don't really count the hours. Some jobs -- when you're working in the sweatshop, you're looking at the clock because it's hot, this, that, and the next thing.

It's a challenge. I mean, if a lot of boats are in, if you're a good manager, you turn around and use psychology. "That gang is going to beat you taking out" and "These guys really go to it."

The mental level really isn't that high, where they can really say, "Hey, wait a minute. These guys are playing games with us." I'm not saying that of everybody, but there are enough - especially the guys that work. They just want to push it out and push it out.

And then, you have another day where it's real slow. The guy hangs around and he's still getting paid. It gets to be almost a game. That's what holds everybody's interest.

It's just like the guy that's out there fishing. Today, you can go out and catch a hundred thousand pound of fish, but the next three days you might not catch five thousand. As long as you look at it as a game, it's interesting. It's almost a new thing every day. Like with us, it was either a lobsterboat in or we might have a lobsterboat at one door. There were days we had a lobsterboat at one door, a scalloper at one door, and a dragger at another door. It was just, "You two guys do this; you two guys do that; you six guys do something else." Everybody's -- Who's going to beat the other team?

I enjoyed it because it was a challenge. There was a lot of frustration and excitement. But that's part of any game.

JM: What is the role of women in all of this - the wives with their husbands working a lot of hours? And unusual hours compared to a lot of occupations.

AB: It has to be a real strong relationship. In my own case, we had six children, we were married eighteen years, and we hadn't had a vacation. There was a movie on TV one night, and it said, "Good-bye, I Love You." That was the name of the [movie]. I never saw it. I wasn't home. My wife happened to tell me about it. She said, "You missed a very moving movie. This man and woman were married for a number of years. They had a couple of kids." She said, "It got to the point that the father was the good guy because he came home and played with the kids a few minutes before he passed out, and 'Where's the dinner?' 'Where's the clean clothes?' The mother is the maid. Nobody really realizes it. All they know is Daddy brings home the pay. So he's the good guy." She said, "You know, I really got caught up in that."

What the woman did, she got up, she left a note telling everybody how she felt, and the last words were "Good-bye, I love you." She moved - in the same town, just across town. Then, after a year or so, they got it all together again and had

a different outlook.

Needless to say, we took a five-day vacation that year. [chuckles] But it was tough. The commitment was so great. My daughter's married to a fisherman. She's been married two years now. She's taking it very well. He just left yesterday. He'd been home for two and a half weeks, but now he's gone down to Mississippi to bring the boat back. We're sure we'll see him in ten or twelve days. Then, they'll go out fishing ten or twelve days and have their three or four days in.

I know a lot of women over in Point Judith, because of their husbands working for us. They seem to handle it very well. The women do a lot together. From what I understand, the divorce rate isn't that great. Evidently, it's something that the two people have that all this time that's being spent at the job isn't causing any hardship on the romantic side of it. Of course, most of these fellows do make a good living, so they're not worried about monetary value. I don't know of many of [the women] that go out to work. They do because of boredom, not because of financial necessity. I know a lot of girls -- Three or four hours in a doughnut shop

or a couple days a week as a secretary fill-in - that sort of thing. It does get boring. These guys can be out eight or nine days.

JM: What did you get from developing your business? What did you get from that that you wouldn't have gotten from something else you might have chosen to do? What was important to you about it?

AB: Financial security. That was point one.

JM: Did you ever have any idea how big it would get?

AB: Not really. But I was doing something I wanted to do, something that my family felt couldn't be done. There was nobody else. Of course, Aquidneck, they do a little bit of trapping. But we were the only ones that were full, a hundred percent lobster and a hundred percent fish. I mean, we really handled both - both of them being very touchy subjects, because when you don't own the boats, you don't know if they're going to come in or not. With the lobsters, you don't know if the water's going to get hot and they're going to die or the pumps go off. It was a very challenging [business]. Like I say, a boat would come in early in the morning. You had to get the fish out. Then you had guys who wanted the lobsters. All this had to be arranged the night

before or whenever, in a split second. It was a challenge.

JM: Why didn't your family think it could be done?

AB: Because it was such a difficult thing. My father always hated draggers. He bought from the dayboats, but the draggers are very temperamental. You base a business on having eight or nine draggers, and for some reason, one day, four of them decide to go to Parascandolo or go to New Bedford. I've been through all that. When I first started, I had ten or twelve customers. Then, one day a guy called up, "I'm not buying from you anymore." You feel your world is crushed. I've been through all that. Come to find out, two days later, he's calling back because the other guy he was going to go to doesn't provide the service that you did. Not only that, two or three other guys call.

Every time I had a door close, I had two open. Maybe it was skill; maybe it was luck; maybe it was a combination of both. I don't know.

Up until the time I had the coronary, I had a real good time. It was hard; it was demanding. I did it. I was successful. I would have loved to have spent more time with my kids. I have devoted the last five years to my youngest child. But

there again, I see people out there who would like to do the same thing, but they can't afford it. And then again, if I hadn't had the coronary, I'd probably still be there, working ten or twelve hours a day. I feel that I would have done everything in my power not to let the place go. Even prior to the coronary, though, I always had in the back of my head that at [age] forty-five to fifty, it was time to retire.

JM: So that changed your life.

AB: Yes. It actually didn't change it. It just put me in a position where I wasn't going to back out of what my game plan was. I said forty-five to fifty. It just went a little over that. But the idea was there. At age forty-five, before I had the coronary, I started lining people up. From 1978 on, we've had people interested. It was not until last year that somebody came in and said, "Okay. This is what you want. This is what I'm going to give you."

My thing has always been: I don't owe anybody anything. So when I want to go, I'll go. But until I get my price, I'm not going to want to go. That's what it was all about. It's just a philosophy with me. I think it's a way of life. You really have to plan something. I mean, things

don't happen the way you plan, but you improvise. If you have to go out on a Sunday afternoon to a picnic and something comes in, well, if you get to the picnic at five o'clock instead of three o'clock, and your wife and kids are having a good time, fine. The commitment to the business was really a very, very large commitment. I don't know if many men who didn't have a wife that was as understanding as mine could have made it, because it was very difficult.

Again, the compensation was she had anything she wanted, but she didn't have a husband to go here, there, and everywhere with. We've changed that now. We've still got a few years, I guess. We hope, anyway.

JM: What did you like the best about your work?

AB: It was what I chose to do and I did a fairly good job at it. That was the reward.

JM: What was the worst part of it?

AB: The worst part was the hours that you had to put in - crazy hours; never knowing who's going to come in to work, who's going to come in with their trip.

I spent a night -- one of the hardest nights, I would say -- of frustration -- One of my very best lobsterboats had called up and we were all

set to go. It was going to be in at three o'clock in the morning. Well, I had the trip sold - the whole works. I brought five guys in at three o'clock in the morning. We kept riding out to the Ocean Drive to see if we could see the lights on the boat. This guy was always early. Four o'clock, five o'clock, six o'clock. Finally, at 7:30, I get a phone call. This fellow is on the other end of the phone, laughing, saying, "Do you know where your boat is?"

I said no.

He said, "Up on the rocks here in the Canal. It's in the Canal." [Cape Cod Canal]

I said, "Yeah? Isn't that nice." We had a deal, but somebody offered the owner a little more. The owner sent him to the Canal, and this guy didn't have the decency of calling me up.

I said, "You know, they're all drinkers on that boat. You do me a favor. You go out and get a case of beer and a bottle of booze, bring it out to them, and send me the bill."

He said, "For all you've done for me, I'll do it for you. But I will say it's for you."

Needless to say, when they finished unloading, they had problems. They had game wardens all over them all day. I guess they lost

a few of the lobsters. Well, that night, the captain called up and said, "You know, if I have to get off this boat, I will. We did something wrong, and we'll be back."

Not only was he back, but four or five years later, when I built my boats, he came and he worked for me for thirteen years.

There's always the story of guys that call you at two o'clock in the morning. They're broke down in the road. They've got to be in the market at four [o'clock]. Then you're on the phone, "Where are you? Let's find somebody nearby." It was always something. It really wasn't what you'd call smooth sailing. You always ran into a little puff of wind that you thought you couldn't handle. We got through it.

JM: What canal was that boat up on the rocks in?

AB: Cape Cod Canal.

JM: Cape Cod Canal. That's what I thought.

Well, I've asked all of the questions that I had thought of. What would you like to add? I'm sure there's an awful lot that I haven't known to ask you.

AB: That's right. Really, what you've taken on is a commendable job, as far as I'm concerned. There is an awful lot -- and I'm sure you've talked to

seven or eight different individuals. On certain issues, I'm sure we all concur - or the majority of us anyway. It's a fascinating industry. It was much more fascinating years ago - maybe because I was younger and there was more fish around. It's always been, with those that fish -- Primarily, they want to see the abundance.

Take George for example. He would just as soon see a hundred thousand pound of scup on the boat at twenty cents than twenty thousand pound at a dollar. I'm the other way around. But typical fishermen, they just want to see volume. If I was in that position where the catch belonged to me and I had to sell it, I would like to see it the other way around. As a fish buyer, we needed the volume, because we worked on pennies per pound. It wasn't a typical business where you say, "We've got a twenty percent mark-up." It wasn't that. Yellowtails, we worked on two or three cents. Finally, the last year, it was nickel. But if it was twenty-five cents a pound, we got thirty. If it was two dollars a pound, we got $2.05. So the percentages were bad. That also made it very difficult years ago, when I was trying to sell the business. No bank would ever back anybody, because it didn't come into the norm of

percentages that were what the bank was really looking for. They didn't care if you owned the place, you could make two hundred thousand dollars a year. That wasn't good, because you were doing four or five million dollars' worth of business. See, the percentage wasn't there. Fine.

It's true. I can see both sides of the fence. But it was a business where you really had to do a lot of work, a lot of volume, to make the money. And there are a lot of guys who did a lot of work and handled a lot of money, and never made any money. That's the other end of it. That's the tough part. I can say I worked hard, but I made it. That gives you a little more incentive to keep going.

JM: I guess it would.

AB: When things are going good, everything's fine. If they go bad -- But I guess that's what makes me different from a lot of other people. When it went bad, I never gave up. Like I say, it wasn't all clear sailing. But I always took a bad situation and luckily enough, I turned it around and made it a profitable situation.

I've always had good employees; I had good contacts. I think in all the millions of dollars that we handled, we had one account that went bad

for the tune of maybe two thousand dollars. But in an accounting situation, you really didn't lose the two thousand dollars. Because when something was worth thirty cents, he was paying fifty. So he paid enough bills previous to him going bad, that we still ended up making a profit on the guy even though there was a loss. In thirty years of business, one stiff for a couple of grand, that wasn't bad at all. But again, like I said, I enjoyed it.

I met a lot of interesting people. I made a lot of friends. I can walk down to New Bedford and have a million guys come and slap me on the back, "How are you?" or going to the Fulton Market or wherever. It's a feeling of satisfaction. That's the greatest feeling I have right now. I was always satisfied with the company.

JM: That's a big accomplishment.

AB: I guess it is. I don't know if I'd want to do it again. I definitely wouldn't do it right now. It hurts because I would have loved to have had my sons go into it. They loved it. But it's just not there. Maybe it's not there the way I want it to be or the way I saw it. There are guys that are still going to make a big living, but they're not going to do it in this town - I don't believe.

I don't see it. I think the way out is the way I took. Hey, a man's worth so much money. Take it. God bless you. [chuckles] Have fun. Do something else.

Fishing is just too tough. It's just too difficult. That's all I've got to say, Jennifer.

JM: I really want to thank you.

AB: My pleasure.

JM: It's been a fascinating couple of days.

End of Interview

Tape I Side I

Biographical Interview
- Bucolo's father's work in the Newport fishing industry

Mendonsa and Bucolo families buy Tallman and Mack Fish and Trap Company, 1945

Tallman and Mack Company
- Crews, 1945-1953 Experienced Canadians came to Newport to work the fish traps on a seasonal basis
- Account of room and board provided by Tallman and Mack Co.
- How and why Canadians stopped coming to Newport to work for Tallman and Mack

Father's work as a fish peddler

Summers Bucolo spent as a boy on Newport waterfront

Work as a young man at Tallman Mack Company

Workers at Tallman Mack

Work as a lobster dealer

How Bucolo's business grew

Seasonality of the floating fish trap industry

Extended family worked at Tallman and Mack Company

Detailed description of Newport waterfront 1945-1950

Greek lobstermen in Newport
- Legacy as mentors for young local lobstermen
- Use of catboats for lobstering

Newport fishing industry during the 1950's

Bucolo's experience handling fish and lobsters when he established his business on Waite's Wharf in the 1950's
- Changes in abundance of these species

Lobsters caught by offshore draggers, early 1970's

Sea scallops offloaded and handled, early 1980's

Bucolo's massive coronary, 1981

Belief in cyclical nature of species abundance

Depletion of many species since 1970's
- Comparison of 1976 scup catches with 1987 by floating fish traps
- Up until the past 15 years, more fish than nets could handle

Catch decrease/ land value increase/ economic considerations in the fishing industry

Draggers owned and built by Bucolo
- Skippers and crews and the nature of their lives
- Trips to Georges Bank

Tape I Side II

Highliners
Stern trawlers, side trawlers
Bucolo's draggers which were built with a split hold for lobsters
    and fish
Felix Bruce and his expertise as a fisherman
    Bruce's reluctance to use fishscopes-- fishing as an art,
        fishing as a science
Modern conveniences on draggers
Offshore lobster boats
Fishermen who committed suicide due to inability to keep up with
    boat payments
Services provided for boats that docked at Bucolo's wharf and wharves
    of other fish and lobster dealers
    Large munber of of transient boats came to Newport to sell
        their catch. Many were committed to certain docks. New
        Bedford and Point Judith competition became stronger and
        stronger over the years. Newport wholesalers could no
        longer lure boats back.
Dishonesty and cheating by New Bedford fish dealers
Integrity of Bucolo's operation
How fish prices are set
Bucolo's retail fish market
Breakdown of Bucolo's business, 1970's
Grounds fished by lobster draggers
Conflict between lobster draggers and lobster pot fishermen
Why Bucolo didn't want to be involved in offshore lobster pot fishery
Number of hours a day Bucolo worked to keep his business going

Tape II Side I

Biographical interview, contd.
Gloucester and New Bedford fishermen who came to Newport in the 1940's
    because of Newport's proximity to Continental Shelf fishing
    areas
    Large trips-- fish abundant in Continental Shelf canyons
    Memorable fishermen of that era
Different kinds of fishermen-- some willing to go further east than others
Offshore skippers in Newport
Rivalry and competition between Newport and Point Judith in the 1950's
What Bucolo's business consisted of in 1956 and how this changed
Comparison of lobster catch 1963 and 1966
How large lobsters caught offshore by lobster draggers were marketed
Lobster studies, tagging lobsters
The practice of brushing egg-bearing female lobsters and consequences
    this had for the lobster industry
    Greed of fishermen
    Bucolo's disputes with game wardens over buying brushed lobsters
Lobsters, supply and demand
    Different lobster groups at different times of year and how this
        affects marketing and prices
Lobster deals

Tape III Side I

Lobsters kept in lobster cars off Spring Wharf
Bucolo's business, 1957
Purchase of Waite's Wharf in 1966 for $40,000
    Highly criticized by every old-timer in Newport for paying so much
    How property increased in value
Foreign trawlers in the Northwest Atlantic before 200 Mile Limit was
    established and how this affected domestic fishermen
The 200 Mile Limit
    Ambiguities
    Rules and loopholes
    Stocks are beginning to come back, but depletion not prevented

Future of the yellowtail flounder fishery
    Restrictions and limits on yellowtail fishery
    People who were forced to cheat in order to survive
    Inaccurate assessments of yellowtail stocks made by scientists
Mistrust of scientists
Lack of enforcement of yellowtail limits
Technological changes in the fishing industry
    Technology, increased efficiency, stock depletion
    Fishscopes
Bucolo's opinion of whether or not fish stocks can withstand efficient
    fishing methods
Son-in-laws work fishing for butterfish in the Gulf of Mexico
    Technology
    Butterfish exported to Japan
Growth of boatbuilding after establishment of the 200 Mile Limit
    Effect on the fishing industry
Government investment incentives to the fishing industry
How banks and shipyards benefitted by the 200 Mile Limit
Outside investor's involvement in fishing industry after establishment
    of the 200 Mile Limit
    Government investment credits received by outside investors
    Partnerships formed to buy boats
    Boat skippers in investment partnerships
Amount of money fishing boat skippers make
How outside investors in the fishing industry changed the nature
    of the fishing industry
People who are attracted to the fishing industry (1987)
Boats built at Blount Marine, Warren, R.I.

Tape III Side I

- Technological equipment and modern conveniences on Bucolo's fishing boats
- Fisheries management and the 200 Mile Limit
- Politics and establishment of the 200 Mile Limit
- Fish quotas and mesh sizes
- Foreign competition: affect of subsidized Canadian fish
- Brine fish
- Trade deficit in the fishing industry
- American preferences for certain species of fish
- Domestic butterfish catch
- Joint Venture

Tape III Side II Blank

<u>Tape IV Side I</u>

- Volume of fish and lobsters handled by Anthony Bucolo in the late 1970's and early 1980's
- Bucolo's business in 1981
  - Everything on the decline by that time
  - Point Judith and New Bedford boats no longer found it profitable to sell their catch to him
  - Bucolo's own boats did better selling elsewhere
- How and why fishing boats bring their catch to different dealers at different times
- Bucolo's retail fish business
- Affect of tourist traffic on retail business
- Affect of supermarkets on Bucolo's retail business
  - Differences between supermarket fish and fish sold by a small fish market
- Pattern of landing of various fish species 1960's,1970's, 1980's
- Combination nets
- Use of synthetics in nets
- Specific nets for fishing locations
- Pair trawling by Point Judith boats
- Herring fishery
  - Maine herring factories
  - Herring quotas-- effect of 200 Mile Limit
  - Foreign fishing of herring in domestic waters
- Species of fish Americans are willing to eat has changed
- Mackeral seiners in Newport
- Changes in the mackeral catch
- Species caught on Georges Bank
- Redfish-- overfishing of
- Environment and pollution
- High overhead, U.S. fishing industry
- Bucolo's Newport restaurant
- The Newport fishing industry, 1987
- Bucolo's involvement in Tallman and Mack Company
- The floating fish trap industry

Tape IV Side II

Fish trap industry, contd.
Striped bass regulations
Lobster regulations in Maine
Conflict between fish traps and sailing and yachting
Fish trap industry regulations ignored by some companies
Memories of fish trap industry as a way of life
Tourism, development and the fishing industry in Newport, R.I.
State Pier, Newport

Tape V Side I

Dock space at waterfront fish wholesalers in Newport
Newport fishing industry compared with Point Judith
Working in management in the fishing industry
More and more people going bankrupt in the fishing industry
Working in the fishing industry because of family heritage
Family way of life and success in the fishing industry
The nature of work in the fishing industry
    Fish wholesaling-- frustration and excitement
Marriage and family life
What Bucolo liked most about his work
What Bucolo liked least about his work
Perceptions of occupation
Future of fishing industry in Newport

NEWPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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I have tape-recorded interviews with the Newport Historical Society, "the Society," and otherwise set forth and related episodes of my memories and reminiscences.

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DATED: June 2, 1987

[signature]
Narrator

Address

Jennifer A. Murray
Interviewer

Newport Historical Society
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