

Interview with: Junio Filippini
English is Second Language
Occupation: Janitor
Port Community: point Judith
Interviewer: Kate Yentes
Interview Location: Kate's office at NOAA
Date: 12/16/09
Name of the Project: Oral Histories Project
Logger/Transcriber: Kate Yentes
Interview Duration:0:54:17

Interview

00:00

KY: I want to thank you for coming today and agreeing to do this. We are going to start just with the survey that has general questions about management and your well-being when you were fishing and then an oral history that just asks some general questions. If at any time you want to turn the recorders off just let me know and I will turn them off. There is no right or wrong answer so it's just your basic, your gut instinct when I ask you the question. Alright, there we go, okay. So you live in West Kingston correct?

JF: Yes.

KY: Okay.

KY: Um when you were fishing did you have any other occupations, any other jobs?

JF: Like what?

KY: You could have been in construction or another job or did you just fish?

JF: Yea just fishing.

KY: Okay.

JF: It was my life.

KY: Has anyone else in your family fished?

JF: Oh yea.

KY: Yea how many?

JF: Not here is Brazil.

KY: Oh in Brazil okay.

JF: And my dad from here, he was a lobsterman.

KY: Oh your dad was.

KY: How many generations of your family do you think fished?

JF: All of them.

KY: All of them?

JF: Yes.

KY: So cousins, uncles, everybody?

JF: Yes.

KY: Did you have any women in your family that fished?

JF: No, not really fish it is a different kind of fish.

KY: Okay. Like did they help out with the boat?

JF: Yea.

KY: Okay.

JF: Now it is getting harder and harder for fishermen. You know because some place they go, some place like Georgia they can not keep the fish. They are getting bigger and bigger the places they can not go fish.

KY: And how old are you?

JF: 27.

KY: And how many years of education have you had?

JF: Electrician school.

KY: Electrician?

JF: Yes.

KY: Did you go to school over here or in Brazil?

JF: Over here.

KY: Over here.

JF: I went to Brazil little bit not too much.

KY: Okay. Did you go to high school here?

JF: Yes North Kingstown High School.

KY: Oh okay. Did you just take the electrician courses or did you do any college courses?

JF: Yes I went for free to CCRI, because I played soccer there.

KY: Okay. How many years did you play soccer there?

JF: A year.

KY: A year okay.

JF: It was my dream that one.

KY: To play soccer?

JF: Yes.

KY: What do you currently do now to earn money?

JF: Custodian in school South Kingstown high school.

KY: And have you done anything else to earn money since you left fishing?

JF: I went to the ferry boat, the New London Ferry.

KY: Okay.

JF: Then after that I started custodian.

KY: Were you the operator on the ferry?

JF: No I would tell people to come in with the car, parking the cars.

KY: Do you have any plans to return to fishing in the future?

JF: No.

KY: And why not?

JF: I want to retire earn my own money. It was hard work not making anything. You can never know if they are going to change the fishing, then all the fishermen are not going to have business.

KY: Would you advise a young person to enter fishing right now?

JF: No.

KY: No.

JF: Nope, nope, no way!

KY: And why is that?

JF: Because how the government is doing it, taking stuff away from the fishermen, especially the older fishermen you don't have a way to own a job, like find a job because the ocean is big enough and with the right stuff they can go fishing because they making the government...

KY: Like the sectors?

JF: Yea, they can not go over there and go fish, and how much fish they can catch.

KY: Would you still fish if you had your life to live over?

JF: Yep.

KY: And why?

JF: Because I enjoy, I enjoy the ocean and all different, catch all different kinds of fish. And feel peace over there.

KY: That is what a lot of people are saying, that it is so peaceful out there.

JF: Yes, There is peace over there, which is why I love it over there.

KY: Okay.

[0:18:16]

KY: When you were fishing did you ever pull up anything weird?

JF: Yes.

KY: What kind of stuff?

JF: Oh everything from the big ship.

KY: you pulled up a...

JF: Stuff from the ship, just they throw away garbage.

KY: Oh okay.

JF: We find bags, shopping bags, everything.

KY: Okay.

KY: What regulations do you think had the greatest impact on families? So I guess you could say the catch limits because then the families couldn't ...

JF: Yea it depends on what they were going for you know. Like over here they are going for fluke, flounder, yellow tail all different kind of fish. They have the limit to catch on how much they can keep.

KY: And what regulations were hardest on income when you were fishing?

JF: When I was fishing?

KY: Yes.

JF: It was fluke and monkfish when I was fishing.

KY: And it was...

JF: and whiting

KY: And it was a limit on how much you could catch?

JF: Yes.

KY: Okay.

KY: And you said you are currently a custodian.

JF: Yes.

KY: And did you need any additional training to do that job? No, okay.

JF: No because I knew a lot of stuff before. I do anything people tell me like paint house, build deck. And I background landscape.

KY: Oh, Okay.

JF: It is my background, landscape.

KY: And you said you've painted before?

JF: Yes painted people's house and inside building deck and built ponds.

KY: And making ponds?

[0:25:22]

JF: Yea.

KY: How long have you been at that address?

JF: 3 or 4 years.

KY: Where did you live before that?

JF: North Kingston.

KY: And how long have you been here...

JF: United States?

KY: Since you lived Brazil?

JF: I came here in 94, what is it 16 almost? I was 14 years old, no 12. I was 12.

KY: So you were born in Brazil.

JF: Yes.

KY: And what was it like living there compared to living here?

JF: It was very good over there, when I lived there. Fresh fruit, the people were really friendly you know talk, not like over here people are snobs.

KY: Okay.

JF: Really snob.

KY: What are some of hot topics in the fishing community right now? Do you know of any? Like a lot of people are talking about regulations or...

JF: That is what they are talking about all the time. See it is not only here, it is not because people catching a lot of fishing because everything changes in the ocean because I talked to my friend in Brazil and the fish is not good over there too. Because the eel you can catch is not, you know shrimp having babies they can not go fish at all.

KY: Oh when the shrimp are having babies?

JF: Oh yea and if the fish is small they can go fish, can not go fish. If you go fish there is a big fine and they put the boat in jail and that in Brazil is what they do. If you don't pay they keep.

KY: Okay they have real stringent regulations.

JF: Yea. Not like over here, when the shrimp are ready then they...

KY: They let them go.

JF: When the shrimp are big you know. And over there it is really bad, it is not just over here.

[0:28:57]

KY: Okay and do you live with your mom?

JF: Yea, she lives with me exactly.

KY: Okay and is anyone else living in the household?

JF: Yes.

KY: Who else?

JF: My wife.

KY: And how old is your wife and your mom?

JF: My mom is fifty, mmm fifty/fifty-one.

KY: Okay.

JF: And my wife 23.

KY: And do you have any children?

JF: No.

KY: Okay.

JF: Not yet.

KY: And when you do have children do you think they will want to go into fishing maybe?

JF: I hope not.

KY: You hope not? Okay. So you don't think there is a future ever for fishing, or just not currently?

JF: I don't know maybe it will.

KY: When did you get involved in fishing? Like when was the first time you went fishing?

JF: Over here or over there?

KY: Just the very first time.

JF: Wow the first time I went fishing I was 8.

KY: Wow.

JF: With my grandpa. He took me fishing.

KY: What kind of fishing did you guys do together?

JF: Well it is called weakfish. Have you heard of that?

KY: No. weak?

JF: Weak, yea that is the name they call it over here weakfish, I don't know why.

[0:30:34]

KY: Um weakfish...

JF: There are a lot of fish that they don't have over here.

KY: Okay.

JF: Mostly [XX0:30::43]

KY: Okay.

KY: Did you also, you said you dad was a fisherman?

JF: Yea, my dad and my uncle, brother.

KY: Did you guys all work together?

JF: No.

KY: Or did you all do different types of fishing?

JF: Different.

KY: Okay.

JF: Same kind of fish and different cause they have their own canoe and everything, boat.

KY: And what kind of boats do you have in Brazil are they the...

JF: Um dragger, really small than here it is like the wood boat you have in Point Judith, real small.

KY: Oh okay.

KY: Have you ever had like, were you in the harvesting of fish or processing, or basically just a fisherman?

JF: Fishing.

KY: Just fishing, okay.

KY: Can you describe a typical trip when you were fishing? Like what time did you guys get up in the morning, or how long were you out?

JF: Over here?

KY: Yes.

JF: Sometimes we get out of here at 3 o'clock

KY: In the morning?

JF: Yes.

KY: Okay.

KY: And how long did you guys usually stay out?

JF: 5 days or 4 depends on what fish we were going for. If we fish for white we go for 3 days, squid I think we can go 4 or 5 days.

KY: Okay.

KY: And who decides where you are going to go fishing?

JF: The captain. Trying to figure out where the good fish is.

KY: Okay.

KY: What were your responsibilities when the boat was at the dock? Did you have to repair any nets or...

JF: Most like...

KY: When you were home you got to be at home?

JF: No we got there we had to take the fish out, the lumper will get there I guide the ropes that go up and do clean up the boat and then go home. Tie up the boat then go home.

KY: And how many days would you have between trips, to have time to spend at home?

JF: The most is when it is snowing maybe a day, two day that's it.

KY: A day? That is not a whole lot of time to recuperate.

JF: No.

[0:33:09]

KY: In your opinion what years were best for the fishing industry?

JF: The best? Wow it was all the way to 2005 it was good. 2006 is when it dropped. Is when I quit in 2007.

KY: It makes sense to get out the industry I guess if it is not going anywhere.

JF: It is not going anywhere.

KY: What is it like to be part of a fishing family?

JF: It's okay.

KY: It's good.

JF: Yes.

KY: Do you think it is any different than being part of a non fishing family? Were your relatives out to sea a lot so they weren't home or?

JF: No it was good because I knew they going to fish for the family, there wasn't another way and it is the easy way for them.

KY: What is it like being a fisherman with a family? So did your wife enjoy you being a fisherman or was she upset that you weren't home?

JF: She didn't like it to much. She didn't have another choice.

KY: Did you know any women that were fishing...

JF: Yes.

KY: Here? Were they on your boat?

JF: No different boat.

KY: I know you know Ellen because she gave us your number.

JF: Yes.

KY: Anybody else?

JF: I don't know the name, the lady's name.

KY: Were there a lot?

JF: I know there were 3 with Allen. And it is a young girl too, I see out in the boat fishing.

KY: Was the crew often the same or were there a lot of new faces every time you went?

JF: Only one person always one new face, not all the time sometime when they have a day off.

KY: So when you were fishing from you said 2000 to 2006 you pretty much had the same crew?

JF: Yea the same.

KY: And where were those guys from?

JF: One is from Connecticut, one is from its like in Rhode Island.

KY: How do you think women are viewed in the fishery?

JF: Like?

KY: Like are a lot of captains willing to hire them or is there kind of a bias against they can't work as hard?

JF: It is a problem because sometimes they can work hard but it is different.

KY: Okay.

JF: Some of them they are good workers but I never worked with any, I work with one person you know? It was like he could not do a lot of stuff we could do it.

KY: Things like what?

JF: If things are heavy.

KY: Okay lifting.

JF: And some guys are like that too. I knew a guy, we have two totes of squid one on top because they weigh 120 or 180 one totes, you have to put two on top and he couldn't...

KY: Okay so even the guy couldn't do it.

JF: Yea, he was a lobsterman.

KY: Oh.

JF: He was a lobsterman and I don't want to say the name.

[0:37:18]

KY: So would you want to be fishing today with the current regulations?

JF: No.

KY: And what does your wife do for work?

JF: She works in Belmont like prepare lunch or sandwich.

KY: Okay so she prepares food?

JF: Yes .

KY: And does she work part time, full time?

JF: Full time.

KY: And when you were fishing did you have health insurance?

JF: Yes.

KY: Okay was it through your wife?

JF: My own.

KY: Okay you had your own.

JF: I paid my own.

KY: Do you know other fishermen that have gone into the job you are doing now or did somebody refer you to this job now?

JF: I knew somebody in the job.

KY: Okay.

JF: Then I was looking for another job which is how I found that one.

KY: Okay.

JF: It was good.

KY: Do you still keep in contact with a lot of the crew you worked with?

JF: Oh yes.

KY: So a lot of your friends in your social network are fishermen?

JF: Yes.

KY: What are some pros and cons being involved in fishing? So what are some good things and bad things?

JF: The good thing, it doesn't have a good thing. The good thing is like the ocean, you get free peace. The bad thing you go and waste gas and not make money.

[0:39:21]

JF: Not only are you wasting time, you are wasting gas.

KY: What are some of the effects you have seen or felt on your family, or personally that are due to the changes in the fishery? So how did changes in the fishery affect your personal relationships?

JF: I wasn't catching fish, so we didn't have any money to travel, or to try to help somebody you can't because you have nothing.

KY: Did anyone in your household experience any physical or mental issues when you were fishing? No okay. You are lucky you didn't have any physical. A lot of guys you know their backs or they may have arthritis or...

JF: Yea.

KY: Has anyone in your household experienced any negative stressors from fishing as a result of money problems or...

JF: Money yep.

KY: And are you aware of any drinking or drug problems that were happening in the fishing community?

JF: Yes.

KY: Was it prevalent? Like did a lot of guys have a problem or...

JF: Maybe they do always.

KY: Okay.

JF: I know them, I know, drunkie.

KY: Did a lot of guys have families?

JF: Some of them.

KY: Some.

KY: Are you aware of any family violence in the fishing community because of stressors?

JF: Yes, no.

KY: no okay.

KY: How would you say the fishing community is viewed from an outsider? So are there any biases toward fishermen like cause some people see a fisherman and think there is a drinking or drug problem or they have other biases.

JF: No.

KY: No okay?

JF: It depends on what person you are talking to, because every person is different.

KY: Right, well because you were saying there is a lot of snobby people around here...

JF: Yea.

KY: Do you think they have a negative attitude toward fishermen?

JF: No it is not because of the XX[0:42:21] its rage you know they don't care about other people, is why, is why they are really snob. Because they think they own everything, because you fish you are nothing. Is what most people are thinking.

[0:42:43]

KY: What have been some ups and downs in the fishing industry? Like when you were in it was it like really good all the way from 2000 to 2007 or was it up and down?

JF: It was up and down.

KY: And can you explain some of the ups and downs?

JF: It was

KY: Like when it was good versus when it was maybe bad fishing.

JF: Because every time we different places we go for groundfish sometimes it was good and sometimes it was bad.

KY: Okay.

JF: And squid is the same.

Knock at the door.

KY: Hi. This is Lisa this is Junio.

LC: Thank you so much for coming.

JF: Thank you.

KY: We are actually almost done.

LC: Oh okay great let me just put my stuff down.

KY: Yep sounds good.

KY: How about in terms of financial stability when you were fishing.

JF: Like?

KY: Were you able to save a lot or were there times when you weren't making a lot so you had to rely on savings.

JF: Both.

[0:44:23]

KY: Alright do you have anything else that you would like to tell me about fishing?

JF: No.

KY: What about fishing in Brazil because you said they were a lot smaller boats.

JF; Yea um they don't have it good over there too, it is small net too. Nobody is doing well. Like over there my brother get out what time...he goes at 5'0clock in the morning

get up come home the next day. Like he stay there for 2 day sometime come with like a little bit.

KY: How old is your brother?

JF: one is 17 and another one is 30.

KY: 30 okay. Do you have any other siblings? Like a sister?

JF: Oh yes.

KY: How many sisters do you have?

JF: From my mother and my father I have 1 and nine brother with me.

LC: Wow.

JF: And my mom with another guy they have 4.

KY: 4 kids?

JF: Yes. And my father with another woman has 9.

KY: That is a large family!

JF: Yes.

LC: Do you all get together at the same time ever?

JF: Yes.

LC: Wow.

JF: If I go back there everyone come together. Only my father, they live in a different place and the lady is a little devil. Like she don't like. Yes they are nice. The fish is not good over there. They hurt over there. I don't know if it is the fishermen or the change in the ocean the warmer.

LC: Where is this Junio?

JF: Brazil. Yes not good over there too. The water is changing or maybe God put in some places fish that people can't catch.

KY: Did you have any technology on the boat that helped you to find fish?

JF: Yes we did.

KY: What kind of?

JF: We have the GPS no not the GPS it is a different name that they call...

KY: Like a fish finder?

JF: Yes it is something like that, I don't remember over here. Over there we have to remind where we went. That's it.

LC: When you're over there?

JF: Yes. And over here you have everything.

LC: Yes you don't have to think over here.

JF: Yes.

LC: Well you do.

JF: Not too much over here you hit the number and it goes straight. You know over there you have to know exactly how far you went, because most of the fishermen there they look at the sky you know see the sun and the moon and the star is how my father taught me, always look for that and you know exactly which way to put it, the net. It was good. The old days.

KY: I don't have any other questions I don't know if you have any questions.

LC: Let me ask some questions if you don't mind. How much of your family is here?

JF: Only me.

LC: Only you, and your mother is here.

JF: She adopted me the lady from here, she adopted me and now she is my mom.

LC: Oh that's wonderful.

JF: Yes I was 12. All of my family is in Brazil, all of them.

LC: So did you this a little bit would be helpful for me to know since you're here, but you have family that fished?

JF: Yea.

LC: In Brazil?

JF: Yea all my family in Brazil, all of them.

LC: And how did you come here what brought you here?

JF: She went to Brazil the lady from here, she was a student from URI she studied all different animals and because I know the forest well I took her to see the animals like baby bird, snake, everything. I showed her and after that I would love her to come and the language was funny how they talk you have an ugly funny language and after that she love me to come and another kid, another brother, a friend he was a friend.

LC: He was adopted.

JF: Yes.

LC: Yes that's neat, but your family in Brazil are they all fishermen?

JF: Yes most all of them like 95%.

LC: Yes wow, and that's were you learned to fish?

JF: Yes watching.

LC: And if you don't want to talk about this again just say so.

JF: It doesn't bother me.

LC: It's just wonderful to have you here and I apologize that I wasn't here for a lot of it. Um but you talked about your experience here with what was the captain?

JF: Doug Minor.

LC: Who doesn't fish anymore he stopped as well?

JF: He stopped, everybody was only me and him stop because it wasn't [XX0:49:30]

LC: And so is the vessel you were fishing on, is that still going?

JF: Yes somebody a different captain.

LC: What's the name of that?

JF: The name of the boat is I think it is called [XX0::49:44]. Jim Fox owns that.

LC: Jim Fox and he still owns it?

JF: Oh yea he owns a big company everywhere. He owns the company Maine, North Kingstown, China, Japan, somewhere.

LC: Is it processing?

JF: Yes.

LC: So...

JF: He has a company everywhere.

LC: Yes. And it is for fishing processing?

JF: Yes.

LC: Yes.

JF: For all fishing.

LC: Do you know the name of the company by chance, can you think of it?

JF: I know it is Jim Fox.

LC: Okay.

JF: His name.

LC: Yes this will be...

JF: In Point Judith.

LC: Yep.

JF: You know next to the Coast Guard House.

LC: Ok.

JF: The not the Coast Guard, yes the Coast Guard you know the small where they put the boat?

LC: In Point Judith?

JF: Yea Point Judith that one there if you look at the building it is on the right that one says, I don't think it says Jim Fox it says different name.

LC: Yea that's we can sort of follow up on that.

JF: Yea he owns that and he owns the boat too, he own that one and he owns half of [XX0:50:46] I think maybe 2 or 3 boat half.

LC: And did Kate talk to you about if you know anybody else that has left fishing? That you can help us find? I know Ellen said immediately oh Junio...

JF: I know Doug, Doug Minor he left like he went tug boat.

LC: And so were you able to get in touch with him?

KY: No I don't, do you have his number?

JF: Not with me.

KY: Okay. Maybe you could call me with it if you don't mind. If you don't mind.

LC: Ellen gave us his name but she didn't and she gave us your phone number but she didn't have Doug's I guess.

JF: I have it over here.

LC: Only if you are comfortable.

JF: It's fine.

LC: If you think he would be alright.

JF: I don't know.

LC: Well we say Junio and Ellen both...

JF: Say Ellen. Because mostly he is not home, mostly he is like tug sometime he is not home all week. I don't know if now is long enough. Too much number to hit.

LC: Oh mine is huge.

JF: Yea because everything I lose it is why I put a pin number. It is 18605998865.

KY: Okay excellent, thank you.

LC: And aside from him anybody else on that boat on Jim Fox's boat that doesn't fish anymore or...

JF: I don't know, they went fish after we left, went to a different boat.

LC: If you think of anybody see this is the hardest part of this studying is finding and it is a very important part of it finding people like you that don't fish anymore.

JF: Yea most people want to keep fishing.

LC: Yea.

JF: Because a lot of people don't have another way to go maybe it why to. Because a lot of older people fishing now they can not go find another job because it would be hard for them. And sometimes hard for them their brain go in one shot.

LC: Well for you, you've grown up in a family of fishermen.

JF: Yea.

LC: Was there ever a thought that you would do anything else when you were growing up or did you know from a young age that you would fish?

JF: No. I knew I love fish but my brain was all about soccer.

KY: Yea he played soccer for a year for CCR.

JF: Yea and my reading wasn't good which is why I got out of there.

LC: So um are we done, should be turn it off?

END OF TRACK: 0:54:17