

Interview with Jon Knight [JK]

Occupation:

Port Community: North Kingston, RI

Interviewer: Azure Cygler [AC]

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Catch Share Oral Histories Project – NOAA Fisheries

Logger/Transcriber: Caitlyn Lawrence

INDEX: [minutes:seconds]

Superior Trawl, Narragansett RI

Interview

[00:00]

AC: Okay, today is the 26th of October 2012. I'm here with Jon Knight at Superior Trawl in Narragansett. Jon, can you just say that you agree to do this interview?

JK: I agree to do this interview.

AC: In your own voice, super.

JK: Yes.

AC: And what's your business' name?

JK: The name of my business is Superior Trawl.

AC: Okay and if you don't mind my asking how old you are?

JK: (laughs) 52.

AC: Okay, just for context, good. And, if you could just start by telling me a little bit about yourself, how you came to be involved in the fishing business, maybe how you came to, to be here if you're not from here? Things like that....

JK: Actually I, actually I am from... I grew up in Narragansett, so....

AC: Okay!

JK: So my first jobs that I had was unloading fish at the, the old Point Judith Co-op down here, you know, at night. And pushing stuff, pushing a hand truck with

boxes of fish up onto the truck so.... So that was my first job as a 16 year old so.... And for college I left. I went to [the] University of Rhode Island, I shouldn't say I left, I went to the University of Rhode Island. I did a two-year degree in the fisheries program back when they did sort of an associate's tech type, type program.

So I did that, I came out of there and, and fished for on and off for like 4 years. You know, got married, which was the beginning of the end of fishing for me anyway. And the part about fishing I always loved, I always said that there was other guys that like dove into the engine room cause that's what liked, they want to be [near] engines, they want to be able to take stuff apart, whereas whenever I had the opportunity, I went and worked on the nets.

AC: Okay.

JK: So that worked as a good division on some boats so.... So from there, my first job out of fishing, I worked for a company named Jamestown Trawl, which was actually one guy and we worked in his backyard and we built some nets. He, we ended up, he grew bigger for a while, but that was my first job and I worked with him for a while. [I] went back fishing when it got slow. And then when that ended, I went to Trawl Works which is up the street. [A] company that was established in '79 or something like that so.... So I worked there for 9 years. Over the course of that, I went back to school, got my bachelors, mechanical engineering, degree. And then in '97, [I] started my own business. And, and so here I am. (laughs)

[2:36]

AC: And this is the location from the beginning then?

JK: No actually, originally my first location I worked from the, the North Kingstown, Rhode Island, the Sea Freeze building up there and my, my primary customer was the, the Goodwin's and the *Relentless* and the *Persistence*. And then from there I started spreading out 'cause they've had a guy go.... An influential person on my life though I've never actually worked for him is Paul Shuman, and he is the one that started Trawl Works with Bob Taber. They started that business together in '79. And so, when I started at Trawl Works it was 2 years after Paul Shuman had left there and he went and started his own business and one of his big customers was the Goodwin's. So when I left Trawl Works, I wanted to do something different. I wanted to do stuff more like what Paul Shuman had done.

So I went to work for the Goodwin's and they hadn't had a person there for like 2 years, so when I first got there, there was tons of work to be done. But

it slowly... you know, that started to, I caught up so to speak, you know. And as they still continued to be my, my better customers, but I started the branching out down to doing customers down in here. And then four years ago, when Chris Roebuck purchased this building, I made the, the move down here to be, you know.... I'm not sure it's been best financial thing. It's been better. It's fun. It just makes it more interesting 'cause you're in the heart of the beast so to speak. You're down here you're, you know, you're getting more fishermen coming in and out, which can be bad and good.

AC: For productivity?

JK: For productivity. But it certainly makes it a more interesting, lively type job, which is more important to me than anything else.

AC: It is?

JK: Yeah.

AC: Okay. And who are your primary customers?

JK: The, mostly the, the boats... and the local boats in the Galilee, you know, Point Judith area.

AC: Trawl boats?

JK: Trawl, almost solely trawl boats, yes.

AC: Okay.

JK: Yeah. And, yeah, you know, like I say the Goodwin fleet still is my major customers. I've also branched out more into like the Cape May area. I put a... that's been what made this one of my better years was [I] put a few trawls down at the... to Cape May. I've also done work as far as Wanchese (North Carolina) and as far north as Portland you know, so....

AC: Wow. And is that an active advertising that you do or it just spreads?

JK: Never. Never done advertising, other than when people really like want me to advertise. (laughs) They come to me more. I, I, it's word of mouth. It's like people know who I am, they want to come. I probably could do more on that. Probably, [it's] just not me. You know, the whole business end of things is not my, my forte by any means. I just want to, I like to be on the floor working or at my desk designing stuff. I'm....

[5:18]

AC: Okay.

JK: You know, the hours spent doing paperwork are hours lost, I mean so....
(laughs)

AC: (laughs) Hopefully you have a good team then that can support that element.

JK: Unfortunately not, but yeah that's....

AC: Do you, how many people work for Superior Trawl, would you say in total?

JK: Four, five people. I've got a part-time secretary then I have four guys on the floor other than myself.

AC: Okay. So you....

JK: That's the level I've been keeping it at for almost 3 years. Obviously in the early years, it went up and down. A lot of times it was just me, but....

AC: Okay. And you said this has been one of your better years, can you describe kind of where you were before and how you got to this better year?

JK: It's, I was, yeah, I mean, the... the previous six years, actually last year Cape was pretty good too. Eight years ago, I was going along doing my standard, you know, gross stock that I do almost every year for a while. And then we had that, the first year of sectors made people very nervous. Everyone was nervous. We also had a slump in the, in the squid at that same time. It was sort of a perfect storm of economic downturn. So like in '08, '09, I'm trying to remember when sectors started.

AC: May 2010.

JK: May 2010, so it was '09 that the, the feeling in this port was just like nothing I have ever experienced. Everyone was just so down, like it was, you know, [I] even had a friend of ours went to, went to the doctor. He said, "Oh, you know, I [have] got my chest.... I'm not feeling good, you know, my stomach." The guy says "Well, you must be a fisherman. I'm seeing a lot of you guys." 'Cause the anxiety of the sectors and the fact that, for this port, that squid had had a lull at the same time. It was, it was like the worst, I mean, I made a comment in some interview that I did that Bob Taber likes to bust on me about that I didn't really see that I would survive through that summer. I managed to survive to that summer. And then, so sectors didn't turn out to

be, well, you know, '10, in '10 they didn't turn out to be the disaster that we thought they were going to be. Since they've never... we've had other stocks. But the thing about this port is we're really not locked into groundfish. One of the, it's been one of the strong things about the port of Galilee. I say Galilee, many people think of it as Point Judith.

[07:34]

AC: Sure.

JK: My... Point Judith is where the lighthouse is.

AC: Yep. (laughs)

JK: (laughs) But many, the, that's what's been the strength of this port is our diversity. Our guys go from... we'll fish.... They used to work Georges Bank and you know and even the Gulf of Maine. We worked those areas, but we also had our local fishery. And then we'll work as far south as, as, you know, North Carolina. It's a very diverse fleet. I think it's been part of the reason that this port has survived, has weathered all these.... There's been attrition, but still it's been one of the reasons why this port has survived, is that diversity, you know. So then squid has come back. We've had, I want to say two full years of decent squidding. You know, with, with peaks in there at times. But it's been, you know, and that's become, you know, that is the bread and butter to this port now they've taken butterfish away. [That's] something I could rant on about too.

AC: State, is butterfish state managed?

JK: No. It's a federal, it's from the Mid-Atlantic Council. Yes. So....

AC: Federal. It is federal. Okay. Got it, that's right.

JK: And that's one of the things that is locking up the squid. [It] gets so complicated, but in like, in retrospect to butterfish, I guess we could... I've launched into that now.

AC: Sure, sure, go ahead.

JK: In the late '70s right into the mid- to late-80's, butterfish was the number one dollar product in the state of Rhode Island. [They] beat lobsters out [at] that time. And lobsters had always been the perennial biggest money maker in the port. And then the, the stocks started to deplete. The, the fish got smaller. The, the, it was largely an export market to Japan, almost exclusively.

And the, the bottom fell out on the yen in, whatever year that was, '88, '89, so that kind of fell off and those guys stopped fishing them. So, so then for a number of years we didn't land them any. So then NMFS (National Marine Fisheries Service) in their ultimate wisdom, "Well if you're not landing them, they must not exist anymore. It's a data poor stock." So they set this quota on it that's like unreasonably low and for a while we didn't care, but now they're coming back, so it's become a bycatch issue.

AC: I see.

[9:45]

JK: When there weren't as many, you avoided them; you didn't, or you didn't care about it as much. Now you [have] got more observers. All of the sudden it's, "Oh we've got this bycatch." Well of course we do, they're coming back, you know. And that's... so, we should be, they should be allowing us already to have had a directed fishery. Probably should have started allowing it two years ago but there's still no directed fishery allowed. And there's also a bycatch cap that if in the squid fishery, if you catch 'X' amount of butterfish, they can actually shut down the squid, which they did in the first trimester of this year, despite all the science behind it. So it's a very frustrating....

And then you know, a lot of people when I talk to don't realize that, how big butterfish.... Butterfish built this building that we're in now. [They] built the building next store, built the *Relentless* and the, and the *Persistence*, those boats. 'Cause they had smaller boats when they first started doing it. But it was, it was the butterfish money that launched all this, like most of the old, the new co-op, they call it the 'new co-op', but now it's... Sea Freeze has bought that recently too. But, I mean, that was all built on butterfish money back in the, in that era so it's....

AC: So people think Galilee and squid, it wasn't, it's not historically...?

JK: It, it was butterfish. And it was interesting, we built our nets to catch butterfish and then we used those same nets for squid. See now I build a different net, somewhat subtle different net now than I used to, because now we're targeting squid more, squid and whiting more. Whereas we built, we built the butterfish nets then if we happened to catch squid, well that was all set and good, but it wasn't, it wasn't our main priority. [It's] pretty interesting.

AC: Wow. That is.

JK: Yeah. And it's, it's, you know, and the fact they're not letting us start to try to rebuild that market it's, we're talking millions of dollars you know. You know, but... it's a struggle.

AC: In sectors....

JK: That's, that's really not an anti-sector thing actually. That's....

AC: Right, but sectors, butterflyfish, well their not allowed, you can't fish for butterflyfish at all, so they're not managed under sectors.

JK: You know, it's a very small but yeah, right. No, it's not managed under [the] sectors system, no.

AC: You get no... okay.

JK: Yeah, which could be another nightmare. But it's another one of those things that they should just, they should let, let you go catch actually. Just like....

[11:50]

AC: And you've seen, you... guys, they're, they're catching them? They're present in the ocean? You just....

JK: They're there. They'll, even the research vessel the *Bigelow*, has caught more butterflyfish than ever.

AC: Wow.

JK: Well they [have] got a better net too than they did before, but they're catching more butterflyfish, historically more than they ever have you know.

AC: Yeah.

JK: Well that was one of the frustrating things about the butterflyfish thing is 'cause a lot of fishermen like to cry about bad science and all that, but it, and this is a classical example of what happened. The assessment guy from the Science Center went to the Mid-Atlantic Council, gave his report saying we should, there's plenty of butterflyfish. I'm paraphrasing quite a bit.

AC: Sure.

JK: He slipped the word 'uncertainty' in, which he, I've spoken to him about and he's like "'Cause it is a data poor stock. It's a hard thing that something that

only lives a year, a year and a half to have certainty in it.” So... he said that, but the SSC (Science and Statistical Center) came out and said “Yep, we should approve it.” The Mid-Atlantic Council went to the regional office and said “Yes, it probably should, we should be doubling the quota on butterfish” and then they said, “Nope, it’s a data poor stock. They don’t have overwhelming... the word uncertainty is still in there” and they went and they hit it with the status quo. ‘Cause that’s just the way the law is written. So their hands are somewhat tied too, but even their own science is telling them there’s more out there than there’s been in a long time. Just... some of that happened with the, with the new, the change of gear on the research vessel too.

AC: Okay.

JK: Which was something I...

AC: You were involved in?

JK: ... I involved with yeah so.

AC: Okay. Did you ever go out on the boat?

JK: I’ve never been out on the *Bigelow*.

AC: But just... okay.

JK: It’s hard to give up 13 days. I’ve got to give those guys a lot of credit.

AC: Yeah. Go ahead. [In reference to phone ringing]

JK: I’ll let someone else pick it up.

You’ve got to give those guys a lot of credit on the *Bigelow*. It’s really the, the fishermen that work that and the people that... they’re very professional. And fishermen like to.... Having been on the boat and toured the boat, you realize how professional the NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) people are, the, the people that work for the Science Center on the boat. It’s like, it’s a very professional thing. It’s just, it’s what they’re trying to do is a nearly impossible task. They’ve got to, got to, they’ve got a better piece of equipment than they ever... the old net was as horrible a net as I’ve ever seen. So the new one is good, but because there’s this, they want to keep the timeline going. They, they should have just admitted that there was a break, the timeline was broken, [and] then went forward.

AC: Start a new timeline.

JK: So now we've got a better, we've got a better tool, a better stock assessment tool, but we're actually getting more uncertainties because we don't know how that fits into the timeline. So, so going forward I think we'll have some better numbers and a better feel for it 'cause....

[14:35]

AC: Okay. And Jon, tell me a little bit more about, so since 2010, how have, has your customer base changed with sectors? Has it, how was that played out? How have your interactions with the fleet changed? Have sectors influenced that at all or is it just something that's happening amidst your life?

JK: It's, it's... it's just become.... Early, early in my, in this business, I would have said, probably 50 percent of my business was groundfish. Well that has tapered off even in the Days of Sea system, I was less and less all the time.

[brief interruption for someone asking a question]

AC: Perfect.

JK: So I'd already seen a lull in the, the amount of, you know, the percentage of where I was. More and more of my work was definitely the squid trawls and stuff like that. When, when we knew sectors were coming, well no one wanted to spend any money, 'cause it was doom and gloom, and it was the end of the world. So, so then I had a little bump like in, in '10 when guys started to make a little. I built a couple, few, more for monkfishing than anything else, but a few groundfish nets and then, and now I don't, I think it's been a year since I've built a net. And no one from this port, for next year, I doubt it.... I shouldn't say no one, but maybe two or three guys from this port will even bother going groundfishing other than locally catching the local yellowtails and going monkfishing, which has been a big, big part of what these guys are... their business plan going forward.

[16:14]

AC: Okay.

JK: So in terms of my business, I don't know, it hasn't really affected me much. You know. I suspect if they ever do start to give fish back, (laughs) which I'm very skeptical of, but if they ever do then I think there will be rush, 'cause everybody just has let their stuff go. It's, you know, good enough to let them...

AC: I see.

JK: ... you know, for the amount of time, most guys can't pull enough fish to get a trip to go up to, to, to go to Georges or something like that so....

AC: And your relationships, friendships with fishermen, have those changed? Have those relationships changed? Has sectors influenced that?

JK: I mean not, not me. It's sort of a, I've heard this comment before that, that I, I've sort of... there's like the two fisheries associations in Rhode Island. There's an alliance and there's an association. And one is just like rabidly anti-sector and the other is, I shouldn't say pro-sector, but is making the best of the system that they see going forward. And, so there's been some things but it's like, I'm sort of like the Geneva here. It's not uncommon to have the president of the sector here and have the president of the alliance walk in, you know. And then and we have meetings and they're mixed and matched and it's so, it's, it's been pretty good.

You know, I've found myself in some awkward situations. And we had the new regional director down here with the new head of The Science Center and two senators; our two Rhode Island senators were here for a meeting, a meet and greet with the new regional director is what it was all about. And, so it was weird. You know we were in here and talking and had quite, [a] pretty good crowd for fishermen, 'cause usually.... And so the, the anti-sector, you know, [the] Tea Party people established in the fleet here, come in with their signs and they're putting signs all over the place so it was a little, it was a little awkward at times, but you know....

AC: And how do you balance that? Do you just, do they see you as sort of a neutral ground and they...?

JK: They... yeah, apparently do, because you know I heard that they, you know, some of these guys that, that "You're having that meeting there? What's up with that?" You know? And yet, you know, the next day he came in, he ordered a net.

AC: Gotcha.

JK: You know, so it's been, it's, it's been a tough thing to stay neutral in that situation. Well, not really, I guess if you deal straight with everyone it's okay. I think that's the, that's the way I've worked it so....

AC: You don't treat someone different in terms of their business order, obviously then...

JK: No, no I..., no.

AC: ... because of their beliefs or their...?

JK: No I, no I don't.

AC: Yeah.

JK: No. I like that, there's good fishermen on both sides of the whole thing. And that's, those are the people I want to deal with, people that are being innovative and they're knowing what they want to do. And that's how the, you're not still in this business if you haven't continued to be innovating. It's not the old days where you just went out and did what you had to do. You can't, you can't. You've got to be innovative. You've got to be selective, you know. These guys know how to do that more, so that's and I guess that would be the biggest change in terms of my business in general sort of plays into sectors too. But, like, you know, even like four or five years ago, I spend much more of my time figuring out ways not to catch certain species. To be that, you know, that surgical, that surgical removal of fish from the ocean is a big, it's become what I've, my major thing.

And I spend a lot of time in co-operative research. And, you know, I think I put my time in doing that too, you know. Like , you know like the story that I always go back to is the Eliminator Trawl which is the, which was a net that we were using in the squid fishery, one that I had developed in the squid fishery. But one of things that we... and we, we developed it 'cause it caught squid well. But one of the byproducts of it was that it didn't catch the flatfish and those types of thing. So then we heard about this haddock, huge haddock year class, but that was going to be totally restricted by the catch of cod and now yellowtails, a new, the new choke on that thing. We said "Well, we should try this net to see if we can prove..." and then you know, next we went out to federal government and they generously, you know, spent over a half a million dollars, you know, proving the concept and so, and it did. And that was in '07, '06 I guess we did the work but.... And then, that's when we submitted that to the WWF's (World Wildlife Federation's) International Smart Gear contest and we, you know, we were lucky to win that in '07.

But that's one of those things about the regulations and that steel net was not in regulation at that point. We had proven, they had spent the money to prove it, and we were pushing to be it allowed to, at that point we were looking for access to other areas, 'cause we weren't into the allocation situation yet. But we were just looking for access into other areas and they still were not approving it for access in other areas. And if it hadn't been for

the WWF win, then it might never, I might never have gotten approved. I don't know, [it] probably would have eventually, but it was that, it was that political. 'Cause now all of a sudden, we had politicians here that were ready to come down and throw their arm around me 'cause now we have some, the environmentalist and fishermen can get together.... 'Cause I think they view that more as a head butting, I think our local politicians view that more as a head butting than it really is. I don't think we're as dramatically opposed on things. [We] definitely have our differences, we see the world differently, but I, you know, I think we're better. But here was an opportunity that they could get behind something that everybody loved, you know. So and that put a lot of political pressure onto that so then it finally got approved you know.

[21:48]

AC: And you have orders for that?

JK: (laughs) I've hardly sold any. I haven't sold many of them at all. I've done, I've done a few conversions from a squid net to, to that net. But it's not what guys are familiar with. And then the haddock fishery was, hasn't, you know we still only caught 5 percent of the Total Allowable Catch last year of haddock, which is like criminal, but [a] lot of that's more of access areas that they haven't opened up that types of gear, you know.

AC: Okay.

JK: So and it's, it's a, it's a, it's a swing and miss fishery. You've, you've... if you're going to go haddock fishing with an Eliminator Trawl, you [have] got to go get them. And if you go up and you don't have them, then you've, you've, you've got a fuel bill and nothing else so....

AC: I see.

JK: So it's a hard fishery to really, to rely on. You know, and the first, it's funny, the first March/April of the first year of sectors, my guys when we converted their squid nets and they went and did it and they actually did pretty well. [A] couple of my guys have, got almost zero allocation other than haddock, [and they] were able to actually make a little money and carry... it's really.... Two of the guys that got most screwed by the sector system, 'cause they got no allocations. You know, they had thrown their Days at Sea away. And so these two guys that had gotten the most screwed [it] happened, happened to help them the most in that first two, first two months. It wasn't a great thing, but it was fish they needed at the time they needed it so.... And now that they, now this year they won't even go do it 'cause there's just no haddock to be had so.... So, that's, you know.

That's, and that's my view on sectors. I think they're here to stay. I think they make much more sense in the Days at Sea system. The way it was implemented... like I can't believe no one got sued at some point. You know, these guys that... 'cause the currency prior to that had been Days at Sea. So these guys, the two, two particular guys I think are the, the sort of the perfect case of what went wrong, these were guys that bought boats that didn't have a lot of history, youngish guys, bought the boat they could afford, but they had the Days at Sea. And then all of the sudden they erase Days at Sea as a currency, right? Totally erased it and just went totally on history. Well they had no history, so they ended up with no fish. See and those were guys that, that, that just was, it's not what they had signed on for when they bought the boat. Days at Sea was the currency. If they had even split the way the allocations, worked with like Days at Sea had some level of currency and then your history was another thing, that would have been a much fairer way to go, but it's not the way that it went through. And I was at that meeting in Portland when that was voted on and it was highly contentious and I, I still think wrong, you know. But that's what I think, but other than that sectors it's, it's, it's a better way, you know.

[24:39]

AC: Okay. And where are these two gentlemen now.

JK: (laughs) They're making it. Actually one boat sank. His boat sank, so I mean he's actually, he's the gentleman that was in here a little while ago. So he's running a boat, another boat for downtime.

AC: So still fishing?

JK: Still fishing.

AC: Still fishing?

JK: Yeah.

AC: Okay.

JK: Yeah. And the other guy is struggling along. He's, he's always said, "I'm just, I'm going to keep swinging" you know. And he will, you know. He still hasn't totally paid down his bill from when he first bought the boat with me. But we've been working together and he's getting closer so.... Yeah, so, it's... so he's struggling but he's, he's still plugging away so....

AC: And have you, have you seen, sort of how people interact with each other in terms of their families? Has, has that changed? Has sectors, you know say, getting together, husband wife, you know, fisherman and his wife getting together with another fisherman and his wife or is that something that even if... maybe it never did exist, but has that kind of interplay between people, interactions changed at all since sectors? Has it influenced it at that level?

JK: I can't say, I can't say I've seen that. I mean, we have our annual, annual, we refer to it as "The Codfish Ball", which is some scholarship dinner or something. I forget what it is. I, I don't know that it's much different than it ever was.

AC: Same people attend?

JK: Same people attend I think, so, yeah, I mean, I, you know, there's, there's two of my customers that are cousins that, you know, don't speak to each other anymore. And that's been a, you know, that's sort of been the... from that, you know.

AC: And that's because of sectors?

JK: That's because of sectors yeah. One was, one is in the Alliance and one is in the Association and....

AC: And they're cousins?

JK: They're cousins. Yes.

AC: Related? So they have to see each other at, potentially, Christmas. Or maybe not!

JK: (laughs) They're probably not anymore actually yeah. I don't know if they did, but I mean. But actually I worked for one of them when I first came out fishing so. So now he'll be able to identify who I was talking about. (laughs) But he.... Yeah, it, it, it's a shame to see that type of thing go on, you know?

[26:44]

AC: Do you think that it's an adjustment. I mean obviously it's a huge adjustment to have [a] brand new management system, but do you think it's something that will, people will adapt and then friendships will be mended or is it like, is there some serious severing of...?

JK: That one's probably a hard break but, and, you know, there's, there's other guys that don't talk to each other as much. You know, it's certainly as much. And, no I don't know, time heals all but.... Yeah, time heals all.

AC: It's hard to, yeah it's hard to tell.

JK: (laughs) But you know, and then you know, and, and the system was sort of clicking along and looking like it was almost working and then all of the sudden we have these two huge cuts in cod and yellowtails going forward that's just crippling. So and that, that re-, that re-ramps up the pressure again, you know? But like I say, once we, for this port it's not as devastating because squid is going to be our.... And they should let us, you know, maybe just let us catch some more underutilized species, don't over think things. They're over managing them. Like not letting catch dogfish is just ludicrous, you know? And butterfish.

AC: Now is there, are there common pool fishermen in Galilee?

JK: Yeah, there are a few.

AC: There are a few? Okay.

JK: Yeah, there's a few, yeah, two or three anyway. Yeah. They mostly bait fishermen, skates guys. Yeah, there's still a couple that are....

AC: Okay.

JK: And they, a couple of them did it out of sheer stubbornness. They weren't going to, they didn't like the way the sector system was and they stuck with it even though it probably would have been better for them had they done that but....

AC: So philosophical opposition.

JK: And they stuck to it, I [have] got to give them credit for that too.

[28:30]

AC: Wow. And do sector fishermen and these few common pool fishermen is it just...?

JK: Not really, I think there's enough diversity in what they do, you know.

AC: ... decision to, they respect each other's decisions.

JK: Yeah, for the most part yeah. Yeah, I mean. Yeah, for the most part I would say so actually yeah. I don't think it's been that, as ugly as it could [have been]. I have, you know, I think in New Bedford it might be a different... but when you have other options, it's not as devastating.

AC: Gotcha.

JK: That's what makes this tick.

AC: Okay, Point Judith, Galilee.

JK: Yeah.

AC: Okay. And one of the things that this project wants to understand is, you know, health effects. Whether that's physical health, mental health and you said that, you mentioned that, that you'd heard quotes....

JK: Yeah the guy in the doctor said you know, "Oh, you must be a fisherman." He says "I'm seeing a lot of this lately." And it was just such an angst time. Everyone was, I know I was and the whole thing, everyone was, it was anxious times.

AC: Anxious okay. Okay.

JK: Yeah, yeah. So I think we were seeing that.

AC: Any other effects that you've seen in port related to that? You know marriage issues potentially, or I don't know, maybe not?

JK: We have seen, (laughs) we have seen a lot of, a sudden spat of those. I don't know whether that's that or it's just the age that we're all reaching, I'm not sure. (laughs) You know.

AC: Okay. (laughs) Sure. Relationships are hard no matter what your, industry you're in.

JK: Exactly, but we have had a sudden spat of, of, you know divorces. But I don't know, I don't know if it relates to that type of pressure or...

AC: Okay.

JK: It might somewhat. Especially in that, like I said that '09 was just such an economic.... I think that's, [that] creates pressure on a marriage certainly is economics and I think there was a definite economic impression is that...

AC: A fear of what might come with the sectors...?

JK: What might, what [might] come, and you know their check, their paychecks were down from what they had been you know? And like I said, I think they've come back up some but....

[30:21]

AC: Okay. Cool. Is there any sort of thoughts that you would want to share for the record about your experiences overall in this industry? Or a particular event or story that comes to mind that marks your, your time in this great business?

JK: (laughs) I, I guess the thing that's the most remarkable thing is and it's, it's the, it's the, the hard work and innovation of fishermen is just, it just amazes me. It's what makes my job so much fun. 'Cause guys don't come in and want the same net that they always had.

AC: It could be challenging right?

JK: They want, they want to change it all the time. They're making changes constantly and I'm getting phone calls and "I did this and this happened." And it's their innovation and their ability to, to, to survive despite what many believe is a conspiracy theory or some type thing about the Federal Government is just trying to drag us out, you know. 'Cause they just seem to throw it.... I was always so skeptical about it but every time you look at these road blocks that get thrown in front of us again, you go "Geez, it's really hard not to believe there's something." I don't believe that's, I don't think they're organizing or.... But, but the fact that we're, you know, able to continue [to] survive despite, you know, some huge lapse in logic, you know, in the management scheme and, and the changes that have happened, you know but....

AC: And what does the future look like for you? Hold a crystal ball... for your business?

JK: (laughs) I, I think, I think the one thing I, the, that, that is telling and I tell it to people not related directly to the industry, I said "One of the, the most optimistic things I see is there's more fish around now than ever. I never remember this, being this many fish." We're not allowed to catch yellowtails

to any level, but these guys can go out and catch a boatload of them tomorrow. You know? You know, fluke are the same way, like butterfish, we can't catch them, but we could go fill a boat literally. I could send, we could send 20 guys out in the port; they'd be back in three days with a boatload of butterfish.

And it's those types of things that gives, that, you know some day we're going to get those back and so we have management issues of like the, the scavenger species that we need to like, be working on. We should be catching dogfish. We should be catching the skates and you know... at levels higher to try to develop those markets, consistent markets is a big problem. But, even those, you know, these guys could make money on those if you let them. If you let them do it and do it in a smart way. We manage things properly. There's just so much fish out there, more than, you know.... I, you know, remember when I, my first fishing job, we'd fish around the clock for fluke and if we had a thousand pounds at like 24 hours, we would just, we'd stay. We'd drill another 24 hours, you know. These guys go out and put a thousand pounds on and if they didn't it in two or three tows they'd be looking for a new net. You know, it's like. Those are just... those types of examples of, of squid. You know more squid this year than we've seen in a few years too so.... So there's, there's encouraging signs and that's probably the best thing is the fact that there are fish out there, it's just managing what's there correctly is going to be biggest challenge.

[33:38]

AC: So you think Galilee will always be here?

JK: It'll always be here, it's, it's, and it's... the interesting thing is that we've seen contraction in other places, you know, there's no longer really a fleet in Newport. There's no infrastructure there anymore. You see that in the ports like Portland that are really struggling in their, you know, their infrastructure. Mantauk no longer has a gear loft over there. There always used to be a gear loft over there. There's not one there so, we've become a hub. You know, this is the place where you can come to get your gear. There's actually two gear shops in Galilee which is, which is surprising 'cause the only other place I can think of on the East Coast is, there's two in Fairhaven, you know?

AC: Yeah.

JK: It's like, you know, it's like...

AC: Keep fishermen supplied maybe.

JK: Yeah, right, exactly, yeah.

AC: Be the next....

JK: Yeah, right and then, and this is where we have the ice. We have Rhode Island Engine, you know, we've actually become a hub.

AC: Interesting.

JK: And it's, yeah, I think it's, yeah.

AC: Will that serve to bring more people to potentially fish out of Point Judith is that...?

JK: We, we're seeing that.

AC: So it's, they're growing.

JK: We're seeing some of that. We're seeing some transient guys and we're also seeing some guys that have moved from Mantauk at least two guys I can think of actually moved.

AC: Moved here?

JK: Moved here. 'Cause this is, you know....

AC: Wow.

JK: This is where the, the fuel and the ice and everything is.

AC: Wow.

JK: So and then we're, and we're seeing the transient guys. We're seeing guys coming up from, from North Carolina. We had three or four boats, which is another groundfish lull thing that people worry about. 'Cause these guys used to go to New Bedford. They'd go up and catch yellowtails and, and do that in the summer when it was slow down there. But this year they came here and caught squid. And people worry about that kind of added pressure.

AC: I see.

JK: You know. We're all fighting for the same pie, piece of the pie so. So we're seeing a little, a little of that too.

[35:24]

AC: And there's no rules that say only these people can fish at this port? It's, it's free as long as they pay for....

JK: This... Yeah. It's, it's, yeah I mean it's sort of... where you can land and so forth and so on too. There's some of that, there's some of that type of stuff, yeah. Which is so complicated, I don't even get it.

AC: Got it.

JK: (laughs) Yeah. You know it's you know. People coming to me all the time, ask me about twine regulations and I'm saying "I don't know. And I'm not going out on a limb to tell you I think I know. So if you want to know, you come back and tell me what you want me to build 'cause I'm just not sure." 'Cause it's just, it's just so complicated.

AC: Right.

JK: The amount of paperwork. And they... and it's funny 'cause like, you know certainly my generation, we, we became fishermen because there was no paperwork. We didn't want to fill out paperwork. We didn't have to follow rules. We wanted to, you know, we, we got our own, we got to do our own thing, you know and that was beautiful. Those early years of fishing, we went and, and... there, was there times we abused it? Certainly. You know, I mean, I remember catching yellowtails with the cod and much smaller than is, than is smart. You know, but we'd, you know... so there was abuses, but I mean, you know economics sort of took care of some of that too. But for the most part, we, we avoided killing fish. We didn't like to do it, but there was abuses and things.

AC: But now... well this is. Any other thoughts or something I didn't ask that you would want to add about what you've seen in Galilee?

JK: I, just I, one thing that's [a] thing that I've talked about [a] little bit. Like I said, I'm dealing with cooperative research and, and, and I talked about the innovation in, in gear and that fisherman are always working on. And that's one of the interesting things about what happened with, when we went from a Days at Sea to the sector thing. Under Days at Sea, if you wanted to try a new piece of equipment, it better work the day, first day you go out. 'Cause you only had 28 days.

AC: Right.

JK: Then, and it didn't work, then not only did you lose your fuel, you lost that Day at Sea. So it, it really stifled innovation in a lot of ways 'cause guys couldn't, you couldn't risk. I had, you know, a friend of mine bought this, what I think crazy, but he bought this plate sweep thing to go out and try instead of rock hoppers. It's bottom friendly and it looked like a great idea but after the third tow when he had nothing, he had to put it on the deck. And it's still sitting up behind [the dock] now, just rotting away, you know, which is incredible. But, you just couldn't under Days at Sea.

So now, we've gone to a sector, now it's your own time. You've got your allocation. So it allows guys to be more innovative and, and to work with some things. I was talking with a fisherman today who's done some work in cooperative research and he said the funny thing about that is, it's harder for him to commit to doing cooperative research now. 'Cause before you had Days at Sea, you had 'X' amount of days, you could always fit your cooperative research anywhere you want it 'cause then you [have] got your Days, later on you can use it. Well now, under an allocation system, if I commit for the first week in November to do this project, and that happens to be the week that the squid are just like, they're killing them on Hudson and I've got, all of the sudden... you just, so these guys it's a barrier to doing cooperative research...

AC: Interesting.

JK: ... in the sectors, you know. 'Cause they want to, you know, they want to be able to be flexible. You know, I need to want to go do that when the time has come so.... So it's sort of an interesting thing.

AC: I hadn't heard that before, that's a very interesting angle.

JK: It's, it's, isn't it? Yeah 'cause it's, yeah, it's one that I, he came said to me and I was like "Wow, I never even, I never even thought about that." So he's been much more reluctant to do cooperative research. And this is a guy that did quite a bit of it out of New Bedford.

AC: Yeah, like it was almost a second fishery. It was almost another fishery for....

JK: Yeah, it was, yeah. And he was doing, yeah right exactly.

AC: Yeah, a research fishery.

JK: Now all of the sudden he's like "I'm not so sure I want to do that, 'cause I don't want to be, you know, I don't want to miss it if the haddock happen to show up and I'm stuck doing this crazy research of something."

AC: Yep. Hmm.

JK: And, but....

AC: Very interesting. Cool.

JK: I guess that's my, my comment on that.

AC: That's a great comment. No those are things that I would have never thought of...

JK: Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

AC: ... so that your perspective shares so....

JK: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AC: Great any other thoughts or...?

JK: I think that I can't, I'm sure, I'm sure I'll think of tons of things later.

AC: (laughs) Me too. Well Jon, thank you for your time.

JK: Yeah, no problem. It's always...

AC: And again, I'm with Jon Knight.

JK: Yep.

AC: Here at Superior Trawl on the 26th of October 2012. Thank you Jon.

JK: Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW

[39:49]