

**Interview with Rodman Sykes [RS]**  
**Occupation: Fisherman**  
**Port Community: Point Judith, RI**  
**Interviewer: Azure Cygler**  
**Date: November 18, 2011**  
**Catch Share Oral Histories Project – NOAA Fisheries**  
**Logger/Transcriber: Elizabeth Wetterhahn**  
**INDEX: [minutes:seconds]**  
**Northeast Safety Training Company, Narragansett, RI**

Interview

[00:00]

[Started recording in mid-sentence.]

[Interview with Rodman Sykes, fishing out of Point Judith, RI, on the *Virginia Marise*. He is in Sector 5. Date is 11/18/11 at NESTCo (Northeast Safety Training Company)

Building on the docks in Point Judith, 55 State Street, Narragansett. He read and signed the release form.]

RS: ... and he had three sons. One was a boat builder. One worked in the mills in Peacedale. The other one, my grandfather was a fisherman. He had three sons who were all fishermen and two daughters who are Virginia and Marise, my mother and my aunt. And that was my grandfather's original boat, the *Virginia Marise*. [It was] built in 1932. And he had the boat until 1958. He sold it to his son, my uncle Joe, who had it 'til 1960. He got drafted in the Army and he had to sell it to another local fisherman. And last year we got it back. We've restored it and have it back. So it's still in the harbor and we're still fishing with it. It's going to be 80 years old next year.

AC: Oh wow.

RS: So how I got here was, I grew up on the docks, ever since I was a little kid. I worked with.... My grandfather fished 'til he was 85. 84, 85. And my uncle, I worked with my uncle Joe. And then I got different jobs throughout the port. And then in 1984 I bought my own boat, the *Deborah Leigh*, which is a 75 foot, 74 foot wooden stern trawler. And then in 2006, because of the difficulty to maintain the wooden boat, to insure a wooden boat, the fact that it was getting old, even though it was well taken care of.... I went down to Florida and bought a fiberglass boat. 68 foot fiberglass boat. [I] brought it up here and I put the... took all the gear off my boat, the *Deborah Leigh*, and sold that as just a bare boat. And then I changed the name to the *Virginia Marise* because my aunt, when I bought the boat, died that year.

AC: I see.

RS: The same year that I brought it up. And after that, then I started working with that boat. And this boat I've had since. And the *Deborah Leigh* went up to Maine and burned up. That's, that's what I'm doing now.

AC: The boat's in the water?

RS: Since 2007. Yeah, the boat is tied up now. Down by Champlain's. In fact, I have the same dock that my grandfather had, down behind Champlain's Seafood.

AC: Oh wow.

RS: That's the one that my grandfather, my uncle... 'cause that was the original, where the original docks were. All the stuff was, like a sand bar. That's where they tied up. So I was able to get that dock back.

AC: Excellent.

RS: I stuck at the same I dock I used to run up and down when I was three years old.

AC: Did you have to fight to get the spot or did they recognize...?

RS: No, my uncle had it and when he took his boat, the **XXX**, he took his boat, he tore it apart and he got out of the business. And the dock was available. A couple of other guys wanted it, but they put me at the top of the list.

AC: I would hope so.

RS: Been there ever since.

AC: Okay.

RS: So that's pretty much... high school education. South Kingstown High School.

[03:13]

AC: Now URI (University of Rhode Island)?

RS: 1975.

AC: Did you do some classes there or you just...?

RS: No, I went to URI....

AC: The local...?

RS: I went to a football game there. I only live a mile or so away from URI. I go to the basketball, football games. My wife graduated, she has two degrees from there.

AC: Okay.

RS: And I did go to the fishing school for a week and a half. And then I determined that I could learn more from the people down here. I was learning from these guys. And I didn't have to take English classes, which I wouldn't have passed anyway. So I did make an attempt, to please my father. My father was stark broke and he thought I could do better. He said "You'd make a lot more money a lot easier than you're going to." I said "Yeah, but I didn't get into this for the money. I got into it 'cause it's what I wanted to do".

AC: Yeah.

RS: So....

AC: Now for the type of fish you've been catching, have you targeted the same species throughout time?

RS: Pretty much. We've changed with the time.

AC: Yeah.

RS: And we would go for what was available.

AC: Okay.

RS: When I first started, we did a lot of whiting fishing.

AC: Okay.

RS: Squid and butterfish, things like that. A lot of small mesh fishing.

AC: Yeah.

RS: And now I'm basically, I do as much large mesh as I can.

AC: Okay.

RS: I do some of that because you can't do it all large mesh because of the restrictions, but....

AC: Okay.

RS: Right now we do a lot of skate for bait fishing.

AC: Okay.

RS: That's kind of a bycatch, but we save them instead of throwing them back because we have the market, but we do a lot of that.

AC: Okay.

RS: And there's the fluke....

AC: So trawling throughout, ever tried gillnet?

RS: Well, we've done a lot of, not in the last couple of years, but we've done a lot of tuna fishing.

AC: Oh.

RS: We used to, in the '80s and '90s, pretty much all summer, yellowfin, bigeye, swordfish with rod and reels. We still go swordfishing every year, we harpoon. We have one trip a year, traditional swordfish. We're the last one's to do it. We've been doing it for, well, I did it when I was young, and then I didn't do it for a few years, and now we do it again.

AC: And you'll catch one or two?

RS: Well, we got five this year.

AC: Five?

RS: We were happy with that. We go all the way to Georges Bank, down the southeast part. So that's what we do. And we spent a lot of time working for AT&T in the '90s. On the cable patrol, which is working with the cable ships as they install cables to the cable break. We were kind of between the company and the fishermen. We let the fishermen know we were coming, they were coming to put a cable in, or repair one. Ask them to stay away, ask the lobstermen to move their gear.

AC: And what was the motivation to do something like that? Was it...?

RS: Well, it was....

AC: Supplemental income or was it...?

RS: Supplemental income. The money was good and it was an easier thing to do. It wasn't hard on the boat. We [were] not using a lot of gear, we weren't using Days at Sea, things like that, you know. Cause it was just the beginning of the Days at Sea. And we spent a year, almost a year and a half in Florida.

[06:22]

AC: Okay.

RS: Down there doing it. But a lot of it was the cables come out right over here in Green Hill, some in New Jersey, some off of Long Island.

AC: Interesting.

RS: And Florida. And we were all up and down the coast just riding around.

AC: The '90s you said? The mid-'90s, that was when you started?

RS: We started in 1991, I think. Our first job, and it went 'til... we haven't had a job since 2002, I think.

AC: Okay.

RS: 'Cause they don't seem to worry about them anymore.

AC: Okay.

RS: They put a lot of cables in in one period of time. Now it's, if one breaks, they just fire up a new one, I guess. They haven't called me in 10 years, so I don't know. I guess they don't need us anymore.

AC: Some sort of submarines or some kind of crazy device?

RS: No, it's all fiber optic cable. They have the submarine to fix it, but they needed us too 'cause they were busy. They needed us to patrol around, make sure nobody got it before they got to it.

AC: Clear the gear, that kind of thing?

RS: And clear the gear and keep the draggers away 'til they get the job done. The one in Florida, we worked for AT&T and they had sold all their cable ships so they had a breakdown there off Vero Beach. A cable come out of Vero Beach. They didn't have a ship to go fix it, and the other companies own the ships now and they were going to

charge them a ton of money, so it was cheaper for them.... They had to wait 'til a ship happened to be in the neighborhood.

AC: I see.

RS: To fix it for them. And it was supposed to be two months. It ended up being 15 months. We just waited down there.

AC: Vero's not a bad place to hang out.

RS: We were kicking it in Cape Canaveral, Florida which is a wonderful place to hang out.

AC: Certainly, certainly. Especially if it happens to coincide with New England winter.

RS: Yeah. Well, there were stormy days, too.

AC: Yeah.

RS: It was a good experience. [I] met a lot of people. The shrimpers were pretty tough characters. But they eventually got to like us.

AC: Good.

RS: Most of them.

AC: Are you doing any cooperative research projects with the government these days or...?

RS: Yeah, we do.

AC: Trawl surveys or anything like that?

RS: Haven't done much of that lately. Well, we got a 4 day, fourth time in a row. We had a shadow trip through the observers, helping [to] train observers.

AC: Okay.

RS: We do a lot of work with URI graduate school with mud sampling, water sampling. We take a crew of students and scientists out in Rhode Island sound, in Block Island Sound. Once a month in the summer, with this big piece of equipment we drop down and get mud samples.

AC: Oh, cool.

RS: And then we get water samples at the same time. And we've also been doing some work with the Navy, with some sound experiments, which is top secret so I have no idea what they're doing. They just tell us they want to hear the sound of a boat dragging and hauling the nets and to determine what sounds we make so if they hear us, they'll know whether or not....

AC: They can tease out...?

RS: A German sub and....

AC: Its danger and...?

RS: Russian sub or whoever it happened to be.

AC: Right. Now since 2004, you've had the *Virginia Marise* since then, right?

[09:16]

RS: 2000, I had the *Deborah Leigh* up to 2007.

AC: Okay.

RS: That's when.... I bought the *Virginia Marise* in 2006. It was up here for a year before I switched it over.

AC: Okay.

RS: I was constantly working on it.

AC: Now do you own...?

RS: And fishing the other boat.

AC: Okay. You own your own boat outright or do you make payments?

RS: I still have some payments on it.

AC: Okay.

RS: Nothing major.

AC: Okay. Now the Drone's Club, I know that's where Lisa....

RS: Is that where she went to?

AC: Yeah, you guys were there. It was June, so....

RS: Oh, and my wife was there.

AC: Yup, Christine was there.

RS: Alright.

AC: And so, does that still exist?

RS: Oh yeah.

AC: How is that running? Is there, are you in charge of the space?

RS: Well, it's pretty....

AC: Describe it to me.

RS: See, the Drone's Club....

AC: How does it...?

RS: You want to hear the Drone's Club history?

AC: I do, I do.

RS: 1938 hurricane, which is the famous one.

AC: Yeah.

RS: My Uncle Walter. His name was Babe Whaley. And his friend, Earl, used to gather wood off the beach, and they built a little shack, right on the dock, right at the end. The dock where I am now.

AC: Yeah.

RS: And they called it the Drone's Club for some reason. Still that; they're both gone, so I don't know why they called it that. And that was, they were only.... Let's see, they were born in 1921, so they were just teenagers. And they built this thing. And my grandfather eventually took it away from them and made it his own little shack and it ended up being... but they called it the Poker Shed.



AC: The Card Room, I was going to say.

RS: That's where they played cards on the windy days, but I think it was around 1967 that it kind of died out. Three friends of mine and I started the Drone's Club back up. There were four of us. Five of us, actually. And we lost one in Vietnam. But there were four of us. And we just got it going again. And in 1973, two of the guys bought the property at the corner there, where it is now. You know, over here, across from the Beach Club, where you come to detour your tent to come back around.

AC: Yup, yup.

RS: It's right there. It's those little cottages there.

AC: Okay.

RS: And so we moved the Drone, we started the, we took one of those little cottages that were empty and we made that our clubhouse. The Drone's Club. Put a little bar in there.

AC: Were women allowed? Or was it...?

RS: Oh yeah, oh we like women.

AC: Okay, oh yeah. Sure.

RS: We didn't let them join, but we always let them in. Most of them. Some of them we'd rather not see, but there were.... And we'd just, that was just a little.... And there was only a small group of us. And there were a lot of friends that, we never let anybody else join but we had what we called honored guests and exalted guests, things like that. And then I think it was 1987 when we started up what we called Old Timers Day, where we invited all the old fishermen, once a year. And we cook up a big... just to get them back together. 'Cause back then, they didn't hate each other like, you know. They raised families together, and it was really, really what they'd call a close-knit community. A lot of them lived right here. Now we can't afford to live there. You know, the rich people didn't want to live on the water back then.

AC: Yeah.

[12:32]

RS: The families' lived right on the dunes and in the little cabins over here or up Sand Hill Cove or Crater Island. And the, so they were all pretty close. So we always try to get them back together. Every year there's fewer and fewer of them, but....

AC: You're still doing it.

RS: We still do it, yeah. Yeah, this was the 15<sup>th</sup>, I think. 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup>.

AC: How many people were...?

RS: And that's held at the Drone's Club.

AC: Okay. So is this in the summer?

RS: And a small group of younger people show on up, but, yeah, it's always the Saturday after Labor Day. Wait 'til the crowds thin out so they have a place to park.

AC: Yeah.

RS: We don't have any parking there. So that's what the Drone's Club does. And other than that it's just a little place where we go when we get in from fishing. You know, we get together and we have one meeting a year, probably. We eat a lot of fish there. And that's also, the other cottage is where I keep all of my gear. All of my nets are there. That's where I work on my nets.

AC: Okay.

RS: You know, and....

AC: Your wife must love that the house has some backyard space.

RS: Yeah.

AC: She must like that you...?

RS: Yeah, I had a big junk pile at home. 'Cause I bought, one of the guys who bought it originally actually grew up there. Wayne Davis. And he wanted to get out, so I bought his share. So now I own a share for the past 10 or 12 years.

AC: Okay.

RS: Just on that back corner there. When you leave up here, well, you don't have to go that way, but if you go down through the village and by Champs and the road bends around and George's....

AC: Yup, sure.

RS: And then at the left is the big flashing lights and you have to take the detour.

AC: Yup.

RS: Around back to get back here.

AC: Sure.

RS: It's that corner.

AC: Okay, I'll look out for it. Now....

RS: It's just a bunch of little shacks.

AC: Yeah. I think I've parked there before.

RS: Not us though. We don't, it's the only place that doesn't have, on that whole strip, we're the only property that doesn't park cars.

AC: Gotcha.

RS: We don't want clutter in our back.

AC: Another hassle.

RS: Yeah. 'Cause we'd probably run into them.

AC: It'd be a mess. Now since...?

RS: They'd park on my nets and stuff. I've filled the thing up with so much junk that there's no place to park anyway.

AC: Okay. [It] saves everybody the hassle.

RS: Yeah.

AC: Now since sectors, over the last couple of years, has that changed the dynamics of the Drone's Club? I mean, is there more...?

RS: No.

AC: Are sectors using that space or are you welcoming that or is there some sort of, is there a different group of people?

RS: The Drone's Club?

AC: Yeah.

RS: No, it's always, still the same four members.

AC: Okay, so sectors haven't really...?

RS: I'm the only one that....

AC: Same four.

RS: ... fishes anymore.

AC: Wow.

RS: One of the guys has a little scallop boat over here. The other guy's a pilot. The other one's a lobsterman. And he's part swordfish and tuna. And he's also an aerial photographer. He does a lot with photography, but....

AC: Oh, wow.

[15:24]

RS: I'm the only one that still drags.

AC: Okay.

RS: And they're all three or four years older than me, too so....

AC: Okay.

RS: The guy that has the scallop boat, he was actually in the merchant marines for 40 years. And he retired.

AC: Okay.

RS: So he has his little scalloper. [He] goes out by himself.

AC: Get off the water....

RS: Yeah, yeah it gives him something to do. Or he'd be sitting in the Drone's Club drinking beer all day. We have to occupy our time sometime or we'd be over there, sitting there....

AC: It's just calling to you.

RS: Yeah.

AC: Now in, back in that first interview in 2004, remind me, you said you were down to a crew of three. Has that changed? So you still will work with a crew of three or are you...?

RS: Well, including me.

AC: Including you?

RS: Right.

AC: Okay, so it's the same today.

RS: Yeah, same two guys.

AC: Same two guys.

RS: They've been with me since, one since '84, the other one since '86.

AC: Oh my goodness. So they're in it for the long haul. So are you being approached by people to "Hey, take me out on your boat"? Are there guys who are trying to...?

RS: No, they pretty much, the guys here, the fishermen, pretty much know that there's, we're pretty well set that way, but....

AC: Gotcha.

RS: When this economy turned, people you've never suspect, coming down to the docks looking for work.

AC: Oh, wow.

RS: And just because....

AC: Experienced, or...?

RS: Not experienced....

AC: Retired or...?

RS: Just people looking for any kind of work.

AC: Wow.

RS: You know, people you know. I don't know what they, you know, just well kept people, you know. Clean cut guys just coming down, knowing they've got a family and they've got no job.

AC: Oh my goodness.

RS: "You got anything I can do?" You know? And I think a lot of times they were required at least temp and asked to just by getting there. Unemployment.... But there were a lot of them. A lot of them were sincere.

AC: Really?

RS: [They] needed work and they, they were hoping for anything.

AC: Yeah.

RS: You know? The basics of this business aren't hard to learn. As long as you're able-bodied and you don't get seasick, you know, a smart guy could pick it up real fast.

AC: I see.

RS: You know, so, but if some of those people, if I didn't have a regular crew, I would have.... And [if I] couldn't find one, I would have taken them because I, they seemed to be very trainable. 'Cause a lot of them would stick around and talk for awhile.

AC: Yeah.

RS: They were interesting.

AC: And local people or they were from all over the world?

RS: I don't know. There's been Polish guys, Russian guys....

AC: Oh wow.

RS: And the black guys from down south that used to go shrimping happened to be up here looking for....

AC: Oh wow.

RS: "I've been shrimping all my life and...."

AC: Right, right.

RS: I just don't have any place to put them. I had to explain that to them.

AC: And you've been able to keep your...?

RS: Guys from Gloucester.

AC: Yeah.

RS: Because it's better here.

AC: Yeah.

RS: New Bedford. Come down. I had one of the Pareces, one of the old Gloucester fishing families, down here, looking for work.

AC: Oh wow. And brought his boat or he was just...?

RS: No, he just...

AC: Wanted to crew?

RS: Yeah, wanted a job.

AC: Wow.

[18:16]

RS: I said I had a minute if I needed someone, but I'm overstaffed as it is, you know? [I've] got too many. There are three of us, but if one of us doesn't want to go or can't go for some reason, we just go with two.

AC: Okay. You can manage?

RS: Yeah, yeah.

AC: Does that put extra burden on you as the captain? I mean, do you have to, are you scrambling back and forth or...?

RS: No, when it gets to that point we slow down. So you just have to slow down, which is hard with the clock running now.

AC: Yeah.

RS: Everything has to be, it's really taking a very relaxed business and making us a bunch of mad men. Anyways. Did you hear that? Am I speaking too low?

AC: Got it. We got it. Picking up every detail.

RS: That's high tech.

AC: Yeah, well you know. Now the scholarship program that was something you mentioned back in '04.

RS: I did? Yeah, that's....

AC: Is that alive today and...?

RS: Oh yeah. This year we gave out, I believe twenty-two \$1,000 scholarships.

AC: Wow.

RS: To local kids.

AC: Okay. And is that run through...?

RS: It's its own company.

AC: Okay.

RS: What do you call it? Corporation foundation type thing.

AC: Yeah. Are you on the Board of that or...?

RS: Yeah.

AC: You serve as, you administer...?

RS: Well, we have a very informal committee.

AC: Okay.

RS: I do most of the organizing of the fundraisers.

AC: Okay.



RS: We have a golf tournament every year, which is in September. We have a jump in the water on New Year's Day.

AC: Down at the beach?

RS: Right down here.

AC: Oh, down here.

RS: And we have, we put on a, we didn't last year, but what we call "Seafood Extravaganza". A giant fish dinner that the fishermen get together and cook for people. And that's really successful. [It's] up at the Elks Club in Wakefield. We do very well with that. And between those three things, and memorial donated, a lot of families that have benefited by that if someone dies, they put instead of flowers, send a donation to this charity.

AC: Yeah, I remember that for Scott.

RS: Yeah.

AC: Did the same thing.

RS: We get a lot of that and now we have the Memorial Foundation, which I'm also on that Board. Have you heard of that? We built the monument....

AC: Yeah, down at Camp Cronan, right?

RS: Yeah.

AC: Yeah, it's beautiful. They're just finishing up on the top of the hill over the summer.

RS: We spent a lot of money to make that nice. And we have a fundraiser in May, which we get about 300 people at Spain Restaurant.

AC: I've been to that.

RS: You've been to that one?

AC: Amazing.

RS: And that's our big fundraiser. We continue to raise money to maintain the monument now that it's pretty much completed. And we want to have money if

something happens to a family, to help them. If somebody dies at sea, or gets hurt real bad. We've handed out a lot of money...

AC: Wow.

RS: ... that way.

[21:23]

AC: Who's idea was that?

RS: Well, that started, one year we lost four guys. Bruce Loftes, Craig Wood, Stevie Follett, and there was one on oh, Phil Rhule. And we decided that, oh no, Phil came home later.

AC: Three years since Scott was....

RS: And Scott, was Scott that year? I think it was, yeah.

AC: Yeah.

RS: And I wasn't on the committee from the start, but they just said we should do something. The state, we worked with the state. They were very good giving us land. We weren't sure where to put it, but it worked out pretty well there. And we just started.... I started helping them with the historic thing, trying to talk to some of the old guys who remember some of these people that weren't on the Coast Guard rolls or anything. And we gathered up 56 names, just in this little port. And we've added 2 since. Phil Rhule and Paul Gorman. And it's been overwhelming that, the people who visited that this summer. It's such a beautiful, it's at the top of a, we couldn't put it up on top of that bunker. That would have looked too....

AC: Yeah, I've noticed that. That whole area is filled with a couple of....

RS: They would have had cones and we couldn't put it up top there because we, the Handicap Act said that because it was originally federal land, given to the state, given to us, we have to make it handicap accessible. Which would have meant a ramp that had to go all the way... it would be 1,200 feet to go all the way around and around.

AC: Yeah.

RS: Or an elevator. But an elevator wouldn't make it there.

AC: Yeah.

RS: So we put it down there. And then eventually fixed up upstairs and we, and you can see all the way up the Bay, you can see all the way down the coast, you can see Block Island.

AC: It's beautiful.

RS: And that came out pretty good. We've had weddings up there and stuff. People call up and, "Can we have our wedding up there?" Not the reception, but they.... "Go ahead." And the other thing we just did, we just, the Commercial Fisherman's Association, which I'm, I'm trying to think of my title. I think I'm the Treasurer, I might be, I'm the Secretary. I'm the treasurer of the other thing. And President of.... Anyway, we have a toy drive every year, which does real well. And we have, Glen Goodwin gives us a swordfish every year and we have a swordfish dinner up at the Elks, which raises money for heating oil for people. And we give \$500 grants to families that need, we fill their tanks for them. I don't know what \$500 is doing anymore but....

AC: Yeah, yeah.

[24:10]

RS: And just two weeks ago, one of our local fishermen, Kevin Gardner, has had a real rough time. He's got cancer now. And to help his family, we did the swordfish dinner for him. And 320 people showed up.

AC: Oh my.

RS: The Elks' Club seats 180. And we fed 320 people that night. And we raised a lot of money for Kevin.

AC: Excellent.

RS: And still enough to keep some for the heating oil, too. So we still have money for that.

AC: So do you think largely the people that are coming to those events are like fishermen and their families or has this like reached out beyond and...?

RS: It's reached out beyond because the golf tournament's so popular that just a few fishermen show up. The Seafood Extravaganza is more fishermen and the...

AC: Interesting.

RS: ... in the kitchen than there is in the dining room. They don't come to our stuff.

AC: Really? So it's...?

RS: You go on to these boats and ask them for a check. You've got to, to go actually do something. There's just a handful of us that do all of that stuff.

AC: So it sounds like...?

RS: But, you know, I can tie my boat up for this stuff, but they can't. You know, "Oh, I can't do that."

AC: Right.

RS: So that's just.... But I've been doing this for 30 years so, that's just what I do, you know? I feel that you should do things for the community that I've been part of all these years. And that's how the Co-op was started back, like I said to you before. And now the mind-set isn't that way anymore.

AC: Now you did, you mentioned that it was a certain type of person back then, in general, as well as...?

RS: In general, probably.

AC: ... in the fishing industry?

RS: In the whole world, not just fishing industry.

AC: And what would characterize that type of person?

RS: Well, when they started the Co-op, those guys, back in the '50s, it was more of a community.

AC: Yeah.

RS: Everybody was together, worked together. There were a few guys that wouldn't, but that wasn't started, it was started with the community in mind, not just for the individual. 'Cause the individual could have gone off on his own, you know, and done this or that. They wanted to make it work because the community, what it built into.... Then we had an engine shop and we had an electronics guy camped out here in the boatyard, across from two bulkheads over there, doing well. And it just grew into a community that started with just a few boats. And then the state came in and put more docks in and it just made it something. And the Co-op was a major part of that. The fact that everybody got together and they, they saw this. Like the politicians or the state people said "Oh yeah, look what these guys are doing." The most successful Co-op in the country.

AC: It's well documented and researched....

RS: Yeah. And we've got to, you know, do something for....

AC: It's renowned.

RS: So they put in all these docks and docks around there and it just grew. And it attracted other people. Not bad people, just... and the fishing got really, after the foreign fleet left and the fish came back real strong. And the butterfish and the squid and the fleet, and the government got into it, started giving cheap loans and, you know, amazing tax breaks, tax credits and all this stuff. Doctors, lawyers, all these people... businessmen. Seeing that, which was meant for the fishermen, jumped right in all of a sudden this fleet's overcapitalized. It's way bigger than it should have been, ever was meant to be.

And with that, URI educating captains and they're coming down and, you know, and it's just the way many businesses grow. But, in my opinion, this wasn't meant to be that way. It was meant to do what I, and many of the guys that are still here.... You get a job on a boat, you learn, you work your way up the ladder, you save your money, you buy your own boat... maybe from the guy you worked for, when he's ready to retire. That's not here anymore. These guys came in out of college and, smart guys. Became good fishermen, got the latest technology that all came over from Europe. Better boats, more power because the money was there to make them better. I could see it when I was young. And a lot of guys still don't agree with it... they just figure it's an unlimited resource.

[28:35]

AC: Yeah.

RS: It's a renewable resource, but it needs a chance to renew itself.

AC: Right.

RS: And it wasn't given that.

AC: Right.

RS: You know, they were putting.... Even the conveyor shaker machines so they could go through piles of undersized butterfish and just shake out the good ones. Instead of, you know. They were putting all these things on the boats. And they brought in a better product.

AC: I see.

RS: But that's just... it's, what do they call it, not advancement. It's modernization or....

AC: Yeah, yeah. The evolution or whatever.

RS: Yeah, it's just the way businesses go. It's not, you know, the farmers, the same thing. They used to pull the plow around with a donkey. And now they've got tractors, so....

AC: So you've seen...?

RS: That's only natural. Yeah, I've seen since the little tiny boats.

AC: So since then, has it been sort of a steady erosion of the kind of the values that you first saw when you started fishing, or has it been up and down, or you know, certain spurts of where that's come back? That sense of that way of life and that sense of community or...?

RS: No, I haven't seen it.

AC: Just kind of been on a slow, a steady decline...?

RS: In the old days, on a windy day we'd either be in the coffee shop or in the barroom, all dark and have a good time together. Or hanging around the docks, talking to each other. Now, guys come down, get their work done and... this place is a ghost... this used to support restaurants all winter.

AC: Yeah.

RS: Now there's none. Because there's fewer guys here, but they're also older.

AC: Yeah.

[30:09]

RS: We used to be, this used to be the youngest port on the East Coast. And we're all still here. Not all of us, but there's nobody come up behind us.

AC: There's not a lot of encouragement for children to get into fishing?

RS: No.

AC: People aren't getting....

RS: Anyone who reads the Providence Journal wouldn't want to get into fishing. Because they have probably one of the most misinformed people you can imagine. I save the stuff they write. It's terrible.

AC: Is it?

RS: They don't have any clue as to what they're talking about. They have no right to write what they do. But they do. And people believe what they read, so there are no new people coming into the... it's still a good living.

AC: Yeah.

RS: Still more than a lot of people are making.

AC: Right, right.

RS: You know, it's hard work, but it's nowhere near what it used to be. It's not even close to what it used to be, before we had conveyors and Eastern rigs and net drums, conveyors, hydraulics.... I couldn't do, physically do what I did, in my twenties and thirties before we had all that stuff.

AC: Yeah.

RS: We'd be all done.

AC: But it....

RS: We didn't even have rubber gloves until....

AC: Your hands became....

RS: Yeah, we used cotton gloves in the winter and as much as we could 'til they came out with the good rubber gloves. We could have two or three tows; you'd pick up a sculpin or a skate or something, but that was back when I was a teenager. But my uncles never had any of that stuff. But that's what they did. That was their living. That was....

AC: Yeah.

RS: That's how they did it. But now it's much, physically, easier....

AC: Sure.

RS: The bigger boats, the outriggers are more stable. A study they did, 40 percent of fishermen's energy is used just standing up, just keeping your balance. And then you have to do the work. We could pick up all the fish, more fish than we pick up now, on our hands and knees. Now at least we stand at a conveyor and do it.

AC: Right. That's interesting.

RS: Those guys used to drag the ice. We've got the ice machines now. They used to get... the truck would show up with blocks of ice and they'd drag them down the dock in a wheelbarrow, you know. And chop them with an ice pick, back in my uncles' and grandfather's day.

AC: Give that to the new crew member to do...

RS: Yeah.

AC: ... or something.

RS: Yeah, what's wrong with that? But that's modernization.

AC: Yeah.

RS: You know... and it's good.

AC: Yeah.

RS: We're probably bringing in a better product, I guess.

AC: Preservation has improved?

RS: Plastic totes. We used to have wooden boxes, wooden fish boxes.

AC: How long would those last?

RS: Not very long... we were constantly nailing them back together and....

AC: Now....

RS: I didn't know I was that old.

AC: Yeah, no.... Hey, it's not old, it's wise.

RS: Yeah.



AC: You're not getting older, you're getting wiser.

RS: There's nothing wrong with it and we've still have good people there, they're all good people. It's just different from what it was, and the attitudes are different.

[33:05]

AC: Now someone I talked to said that there used to be a pride in being a fisherman.

RS: Yeah.

AC: [In] fishing and they said that that doesn't exist. People don't, maybe like you said, it's more of a business?

RS: Yeah.

AC: What do you think about the sense of pride? Do you see it?

RS: I don't see any pride. We don't see the, we don't see the public, the general public. You know there was a while that they thought pretty highly of us, but that's turned the other way. The environmentalists have turned the general public against us, and those people really don't know what they're talking about. They don't.

AC: Yeah.

RS: That's another subject, but I think those people, in papers like the Providence Journal, have done a good job of making us out to be villains instead of heroes. Not that we're heroes.

AC: I see, yeah.

RS: You know.

AC: It paints an inaccurate picture.

RS: Little kids say "Wow, there's a fisherman, wow." I had four drunken college girls come down to the dock, night before last. We get in the boat at 10:30 and they were all up to the barroom and I was in the, laying in the bunk reading and I heard this "Mr. Fisherman, Mr. Fisherman!!"

AC: No way!

RS: Yeah, they were all dressed up, out chasing boys I guess.

AC: Right.

RS: Upstairs at the bar. "Can we come on your boat?" "Yeah, all right." "Oh this is a great..." They're picking up the skates and taking pictures of themselves and hugging. "Oh yeah, you fishermen, you're all so wonderful!" So some of them think we're... of course, they were drunk. If they sobered up, they might have said "Who is that guy?"

AC: They say it's a truth serum, so maybe....

RS: Yeah, they were pretty comical.

AC: See, you've still got some good fans in the mix.

RS: Yeah.

AC: Now, another thing I learned recently, talking to a couple of guys, it doesn't seem like when you're done with work, and when you're done with your day of fishing, and like you said, you don't spend time with other fishermen as much....

RS: No.

AC: Did there used to be a time when you would?

RS: Well, yeah.

AC: Would you still consider some fishermen as friends?

RS: Oh, definitely.

AC: Is it more of acquaintances or...?

RS: I don't really have any enemies here. I have some very close friends.

AC: Yeah.

RS: But I haven't.... Let's see, no there's nobody here.

AC: So in your spare time, in your off time, you hang out with fishermen? Other fishermen? Occasionally or...?

RS: Not really.

AC: ... regularly? No?

RS: Well, I have a couple. Let's see, one of my best friends is still one of my crewmen.

AC: Yeah.

RS: We do fishing together and stuff like that. And I have some other.... I'm trying to think, what do I do with my spare time? I don't get a lot of it.

AC: Is there spare time?

RS: I'm a member of the Elks Club. I go up there and work with those guys. You know, some of the things that the Elks do is charitable stuff. But I only have one or two guys that I actually talk to about fishing, in the course of fishing, on the radio.

AC: Okay.

RS: Cell phones and stuff. The radios are pretty much silent now.

AC: 'Cause of cell phones?

[36:13]

RS: Well, we've cell phones, but they only work so much. Nobody, just nobody talks that much. But if I was to walk around the docks, I might get to this morning a little bit, talk to just about everybody.

AC: Yeah.

RS: It might not be about fishing, it might be about the football game last night.

AC: Sure.

RS: We were all happy with, most of us. But....

AC: So your social circles you think...?

RS: Yeah.

AC: ... are largely made up of fishermen or...?

RS: Well, the Drone's Club guys are my friends. My best, my closest friends. I guess you would say, yeah. I don't... I have other friends who aren't fishermen, but, I guess most of them are, just because I'm here.

AC: And your wife, would you say some of her friends are the wives of other fishermen?

RS: No.

AC: So that's a different....

RS: Yeah. Yeah, no she has other friends.

AC: Okay.

RS: Well, she grew up in Massachusetts, so she's still friends with some of her friends there. Other than that, some of the people she works with, but not any fishermen's wives, no.

AC: And did you say you have children?

RS: No.

AC: Oh, no children. Okay. Now one of the other things we're interested in seeing if, since sectors began, so since May 2010, you've been a member since then?

RS: Yeah.

AC: Okay. So since then, would you say your sort of longer term life plans have changed? For instance, your plans to retire or perhaps sell your house and move, or you know, those sorts of larger life plans... have those changed?

RS: Oh yeah.

AC: Due to sectors?

RS: Due to....

AC: Or other things?

RS: I don't blame the sectors, I blame the way the sectors have been operated by the... what National Marine Fisheries has done.

AC: In terms of the quota allowed or...?

RS: The shares, the fish, yeah.

AC: Okay.

RS: That's totally, in my opinion, taking my permits that were worth... pretty decent permits and made them not worth much. And then when you factor in the fact that there are no new boats anymore. So, my boat's thirty something years old, and its still well maintained, in good shape, as good as anybody else's but the value was in the permit, not the boat.

AC: Sure.

RS: And now its not. Neither one is worth much. They've, in my opinion, because the share that I got, they devalued my business by at least half.

AC: Wow.

RS: You know, I even tried to put it on the market. But what I thought my business was worth before this, to now....

AC: And were you counting on that sort of as a nest egg?

RS: Yeah, that was....

AC: For retirement or for...?

RS: Yeah, that was my.... sell my house, sell my boat. Move into one of these nice little shacks over here.

AC: Yeah.

[39:13]

RS: And a place in Florida or somewhere down south for the winter. And put that money in the bank. And what I've saved and what I've put in retirement accounts and my wife's retirement account. And we don't have any dependents, so it would have been fairly easy. Now, because when I bought this new boat, I re-mortgaged the house. I didn't finance the boat because interest rates were so much better, just because my house had so much equity cause it had almost zero mortgage on it.

So I did it that way, which the accountants, you know, recommended that was the better way to do it. And finance it long-term, because you could get longer term financing that way, and I don't expect to be in it that long, so you're just kind of renting the boat, you know. But before, if I sold the boat, I figured I'd have a little bit left over. But now, I can't see that I'd get much at all, and it's, you know.... Fred just sold his and

he said I can break even. So all the years that you've worked, it really wasn't much left. You know?

AC: I see.

RS: And now I have, and because of how they've discouraged youth there's no one but corporations and companies that are going to buy them, which is what they want.

AC: Can't hand down....

RS: I can't.

AC: ... or trade to a relative or a friend...?

RS: No, there's nobody.

AC: ... or a peer?

RS: I had two brothers and two sisters. And one brother is a graphic artist up in Providence, and the other brother is the dock manager at Handrigan's. I had, my mother had three brothers and between the three brothers, only two sons. And neither one of them are into fishing. So I'm the last one. Me and my last uncle and it's just 'cause he runs, he plays around with that little boat, I guess. The little 1932 one that he owned fifty years ago.

AC: Restored and...?

RS: So that's the story with my family. The two guys that work with me each had two sons and Jerry, his son's tried it but didn't really.... Well, one of them died, but I think he might have been a fisherman. But the one remaining doesn't really like it. And James' two kids never came near the place. I don't think they've, they might have come out with us once in their lives, and they're in their twenties now.

AC: Yeah. Just not...?

RS: Just....

AC: Not what they....

RS: Not what they wanted to do. And he never encouraged them to even try it.

AC: So are you going to put off your retirement, do you think? Or just sort of, did you have...?

RS: Well, it depends.

AC: I mean, for a year or...?

RS: Yeah, I [will] give it a couple more years 'cause I'm, I'll be 60 in August and I guess it depends on how things go. If things improve, well, I shouldn't say that because this has been the best year since I've had this boat that we've had. So it's not like we're going broke or anything. I'm not having financial trouble at all.

AC: Okay.

[42:21]

RS: I'm not making a lot of money, but I never did. I wasn't that type of fisherman.

AC: Right.

RS: I just fished because... money was never the thing for me, in this business. I did this because I wanted to. I've loved it since I was a kid. I was going out when I was five years old. It's all I wanted to, it's all I ever..., the only other thing I wanted to do was to play for the Red Sox and I just didn't make it. I didn't even come close.

AC: Choices. Me too, me too.

RS: That was the only other thing that I ever said "Boy, I'd like to do that."

AC: They missed out, the team, picking you up.

RS: Yeah.

AC: They did.

RS: I'd have fit right in in the ship.

AC: I was completely convinced that they were going to let girls play when I was little.

RS: Yeah. Well, they might some day. But you know, money was never the driving force, and it still isn't to me. But they, it used to be that, not that many years ago, I couldn't wait to get up in the morning and go fishing. Now I wake up at 2:00 in the morning and say "What am I doing this for?" All of the things that they put us through: the emails, the phone calls, the paperwork. That wasn't there even ten years ago. Maybe it was. Not some of it. And if you forget one thing, what are they going to do to me? Well, probably nothing. But they could.

AC: There's a heavy hand waiting to...?

RS: The VTRs (Vessel Trip Reports), they've got to be postmarked by Tuesday for the week before. There's at least three times in the last two years, probably more than that, that they've been postmarked on a Wednesday. Now probably nothing will come of it, but if they ever wanted to get me, that's how they got Al Capone. They got him for tax evasion. After all the people he killed, that's how they put him away.

AC: Do you find all these regulations and rules that you have to abide by, is the fishing stressful?

RS: Yeah. Well, especially if you forget one.

AC: Yeah.

RS: We have to call the DM (Dockside Monitor) on the way in, we have to email on the way out, email on the way in from the VMS (Vessel Monitoring System). And I'll be up in the wheelhouse, coming through the gap "Did I do this?" 'Cause I don't have the best memory, you know. There's too many other... I have a very short attention span, which is probably why I'm so cheerful all the time. There's a good point, I have a short attention span.

AC: That's the better....

RS: And yeah, then I'll go and say "Oh my god, I forgot to call." 'Cause sometimes you do it with VMS and sometimes you do it, it you're not, if you're going certain places.

AC: Yeah.

RS: And that demarcation line, you know what that is? That's what turns the, well, if you're fishing inside of it, so you're never going to cross it, you have to call in.

AC: Yeah.

RS: So then you have to remember to call out when you get back in, but I've already, you know, when you're fishing close to home, you're picking fish right up to the gap. Running around 'cause it's usually just two of us, and tripping over observers. And they're asking stupid questions and.....

[45:22]

AC: Right.



RS: So I forgot a couple times to call out, 'til the next day. And boy, did that cause a commotion. They didn't threaten to arrest me, but "Oh jeez, you've got to send in a VTR for that second day." I was at the Red Sox game. "Oh, I see your boat was tied up, but the clock was running, so why don't you got you send us a VTR."

AC: Yeah.

RS: "Well, I didn't do that." "Oh, I see you didn't." "Well, why don't you fix it? Just forget about it, I don't care about the time." I figured it was my fault, I didn't call out. You can keep the time, just leave me alone.

AC: Just... right.

RS: Somebody's got to fix it, but I don't know how. I talked to four different people, as they kept shushing me, 'cause they didn't know how to fix it. So I fired through my other people. So they called me again last week "Well, you've got to straighten this out." And then finally I got to the right person, it was very simple.

AC: They just fixed it?

RS: Yeah.

AC: But with, when you're fishing with your, through your sector, it's the same rules? You have to call in and out?

RS: Oh yeah.

AC: Just like you would, so the only difference...

RS: It's still Days at Sea.

AC: ... of being in a sector...?

RS: Well, it depends because the way I operate, like I said earlier, we save a lot of, we save the skates.

AC: Okay.

RS: If I was just on a sector trip where I wasn't saving skates or monks or whatever else, there might be something else, you don't have to use the Days at Sea. You just go fishing.

AC: Okay.

RS: But we always... because we're catching them.

AC: Then you'd, I see.

RS: And it always at least pays for the fuel for the day. So, why not?

AC: Which is no small sum.

RS: And there's not a lot of market for it. There's only like three or four of us who...

AC: Okay.

RS: ... are in with the bait company.

AC: Yeah.

RS: And we're able to do that. But if we weren't, I'd still want to save the monkfish. You know, it's a catch-22 thing. You don't have to call if you don't want to, you don't have to use your Days at Sea. But if you want to save that, that, and that, you've got to use it. So what's that leave to save? The 900 pounds of codfish that you gave me for the year? You know? The 8,000 yellowtails that you gave me for the year?

AC: I hear you.

RS: I don't know.

AC: Now your sector, do they assist you with any services, in terms of making decisions like that about you know, how to best fish? You know what I mean? Do they offer some sort of support outside of just having this pool of quota that you guys...

RS: They don't...

AC: ... fish with?

RS: ... tell us how to fish, no.

AC: No. There's no advice or...?

RS: No. They....

AC: It's totally up to you...?

RS: Not at all.

AC: How you do...?

RS: They will help us if we need fish.

AC: Okay.

RS: To get it. You know, I thought with the fluke sector that our buyer might assist us with that, but he wouldn't have any part of it either.

AC: Okay.

RS: You know?

[48:06]

AC: So the benefits....

RS: ... calling me up saying "Why don't you go get us some fluke?" They're going to be good 'cause we can get all the fluke that we want.

AC: Sure.

RS: But he wouldn't do anything. So, at least not with me. I don't know if he did it with the other guys, but, there's never been any.... In fact, I think a lot of guys wouldn't like that anyway.

AC: I see.

RS: That's one of the things that some of us don't like about sectors. Well, I shouldn't say some of us, 'cause I haven't talked to that many of the guys. I don't like the fact that somebody knows what you're doing all the time.

AC: Okay. And that somebody is the sector manager?

RS: The manager. Maybe it's the president of the sector.

AC: Okay.

RS: Someone else who's watching over things. Making sure you don't screw up, usually, but, you know.

AC: Tell me a little bit more about the pros and cons. Are there both for being in a sector?

RS: Well, I thought from the start, like I told you, that sectors could be a very good thing, when we were organizing starting the fluke sector.

AC: Yeah.

RS: And one species' sector works very well. As far as, for me it does. It wouldn't for everybody, but for me it does because you can go catch the fish when you want, when you think the market is going to be good. You don't have to discard any fish, because you can bring them in. There's no 100 pounds, if I catch 110 [pounds], I can bring them in. Or 101, you know, without fear of enforcement jumping down your throat for being over by a pound, which technically is against the law, more than a pound.

AC: Yeah.

RS: And... where was I, I thought, yeah, I really thought that it would be a good thing. And when they got talking about the groundfish sector, it's so many different things. I just thought, well it could be a good thing. I had absolutely no faith in the National Marine Fisheries doing it right, or allowing it to work.

AC: Allocating you mean?

RS: Allocating....

AC: The initial quota?

RS: It was an opportunity, in my opinion, it was an opportunity for National Marine Fisheries to come right out to say, way before that, that they wanted to consolidate the fleet. They wanted to take 1,600 groundfish permits and get it down to 8 or 600. Remember that?

AC: Yeah, it was....

RS: So, alright, here comes a sector. A lot of us, a lot of people wanted the sector in New England. Pat Kurkul wanted no part of it. No way, we can't do that. I guess it was Lubchenco who kind of forced it down her throat. But when you think about it, it was a major opportunity for them to achieve their goal, because, you remember Briar Rabbit?

AC: Yeah.

RS: "Don't throw me in that boat. Whatever you do, don't throw me in that briar patch."

AC: Yeah.

RS: It's just what he wanted.

AC: Yeah.

RS: So, I have some different ideas. But once they got that, it started to happen immediately. They gave guys such a small allocation that they can't survive. The other option, the common pool... [is] impossible.

AC: Are there guys in the common pool in this port or...?

[51:15]

RS: There were. I don't know if there's any.... I know one friend of mine was in it and he had to get out. It didn't work for him.

AC: Such a small amount...?

RS: Small amount and the gear they made him use just didn't catch....

AC: Right.

RS: So you give all these guys.... Figure out a way to give the majority of guys such a small quota that they, it's not enough. And then you take on top of that what they call the assumed discards, which really hurts guys like me, because we handle a lot of volume.

AC: Okay.

RS: We'll bring 10,000 pounds of skates in. No groundfish. Zero, none. In the summertime, not even one yellowtail, not one codfish, nothing.

AC: So just skates?

RS: Skates, fluke, winter flounders.

AC: Okay.

RS: And some scup, you know, the cute little things. So the whole time that they're, you know, if we have an observer, it is what it is. But if we don't, they take a percentage of codfish, yellowtail, haddock. I haven't caught a haddock in five or six years. Dabs, [I] haven't caught a dab in ten years.

AC: But the records would show you caught some?

RS: Yeah. So I have to go buy some of this from somebody else, just to keep working. Just to keep fishing. I got seven pounds of haddock, I think. I got no white hake. I might have got ten or twelve pounds of dab in my allocation. Codfish, we got more codfish out here now, the last few winters than I've seen in 40 years. I've been fishing 40 years, never seen so many. I get 900 pounds for the year. So I have to go buy it from someone else. 900 pounds.

AC: Is that the leasing? Is that when you go and lease quota from other fishermen?

RS: Yeah.

AC: Okay, so you do that. Is that a nice option to have? I mean, does it work well?

RS: Well, if you....

AC: I'm not familiar with it.

RS: It's a gamble because, last year we paid 92 cents for cod and we usually get sometimes less than \$2, sometimes, so you're getting a dollar a pound. Sometimes you do better, but for what you have to go through to get them and, it just it didn't seem worth it to me. This year we're getting them a little cheaper, I think. We'll try it again, but it just doesn't seem.... If they gave us all a fair share.... It seems like some people got a lot.

AC: Is this based on...?

RS: So much that they don't even, they tied their boats up.

AC: Yeah.

RS: They just tie their boats up and sell them to people when they need them. So there goes their crew's job. There goes the... makes it about the insurance. They have to pay the crew, and the money just goes right into their pockets. But it doesn't come out of it, it comes out of other fishermen who have to have that to get by.

AC: I see.

[54:08]

RS: I tell you, I was up in Gloucester, I go up to Gloucester once a year, 'cause I used to fish out of there. Just for the weekend. My wife and I, we stopped and talked to the fishermen in the fishermen's bars that we drank in years ago. And one guy came in and he was just shaking his head. He said he just went out and said "I just paid \$1.50 for

codfish. I went out and made a trip, came in and got a dollar and a quarter.” Not counting his fuel....

AC: Oh.

RS: ... [or] ice. He said “The observer made more than my crew, by far.” The crew made nothing, the observer made their...

AC: Right.

RS: ... 5 to 600, whatever they make on a three day trip. I don’t know what they make. So that, that dividing of fish, like I said, some guys are going to make out at it. And you have to get the most you possibly, you’re going to pay something for the fish. It costs enough to catch them as it is. It costs a lot of money going off to catch fish. And then you have to pay for them on top of that. We had an \$11,000 day last winter, catching codfish. And I had to pay somebody \$6,000 up at.... And it was still a decent day’s pay for me and the guys, but....

AC: You still.... And then there’s your taxes, which I just learned for being a fisherman, your end of the year taxes are extremely high and....

RS: Oh, you didn’t know. We are self-employed.

AC: I just, well, you know I figured there’d be some avenues for write-offs and things and...?

RS: Not for the crew.

AC: There’s not. There’s just this giant burden?

RS: Yeah, yeah. So that’s my opinion on that. I don’t like having to buy...

AC: Right.

RS: ... fish because they gave it all to somebody else who doesn’t even go fishing anymore.

AC: Yeah.

RS: In the fluke sector, we traded back and forth but see, one of the original plans, see, they went 100% by history. And in that ten year period, I spent a lot of time tuna fishing and cable control. A lot of time. So I had no landings, because at the time they wanted us to lay off all the stuff, so I looked for other things to do.

AC: Yeah.

RS: And the guys who stuck with it made out big.

AC: Yeah.

RS: That was, they went with the history 'cause that was Jimmy XXXX, I think. But they, one of the original plans was take half and split it up fairly. And then go history with the other half. And then, you know, take half and split it up by, there's a word they use for it. Potential? Whatever it was, length of boat, horsepower, size of crew, type like that, you know? And things like that and gross tonnage, baseline type things. And then give everybody a fair share of, you know? You're not going to give one of these little tiny boats the same as the *Heather Lynn*. And then the rest you do by history.

AC: But that didn't fly?

[57:31]

RS: They wouldn't, they didn't allow that, no. The council didn't want it because, I don't know why. I used to go to the meetings and I just can't stand it anymore. People are just so arrogant. You know, it's hard for someone to sit there and watch these people up there. And Pat Kurkul. And they're all sitting there on their laptops. There'll be a fisherman get up, pour his heart out to these people "What are you doing? There are all kinds of fish out there."

AC: Yeah.

RS: You go to meetings though, you see that.

AC: Yeah, I do. [I] haven't been to any in awhile.

RS: You want to go up there and pull a chair out from under them or something.

AC: Yeah. Now did you ever sit on any...?

RS: Kurkul never listens to any of the fishermen. She just sits up there and...

AC: Right.

RS: ... scowl on her face. Glad to see her go. [She's an] awful human being.

AC: Were you a part of any of those, a council member or committee member or...?

RS: No, I've never.... I was on the Shark Advisory Committee for awhile but not the....



AC: Okay.

RS: Never even had a meeting. They never called me, so I don't know. Not that I remember anyway. There might have been, I've done a lot of things over the years.

AC: How does your insurance work these days, Rodman? Is health insurance still offered through the Point Club or...?

RS: No, I don't think so. I get it through my wife.

AC: Through your wife?

RS: And one of my crewmen gets it through his wife, and the other one doesn't have any.

AC: And boat insurance, that's just a separate?

RS: That's separate. If they get hurt on the boat, then they're taken care of. Anywhere else... I have an Aflac disability policy for my crew.

AC: Okay.

RS: That's just a little bit of money. They all pay their bills if something happens. But I don't think too many people have that.

AC: And that's kind of been, you've consistently had something along those lines?

RS: For the past ten years.

AC: Sectors haven't changed that?

RS: No, no they don't have anything to do with that kind of stuff.

AC: Right. They don't offer any discounts for you 'cause you're in a sector...?

RS: No.

AC: Or there's not some sort of group plan...?

RS: Not that I've heard of.

AC: ... that they help you with?

RS: No, none of that's been done yet. Well, the sectors are....

AC: It's pretty new?

RS: Are fairly new. We've had two very good managers. Meredith was great, and Dan's very good. We don't see Dan at all. Meredith used to come down all the time. But he's still....

AC: Up in Maine?

RS: Yeah, I think so. Do you know Meredith?

AC: I met her, yeah, once before. Under different context, but....

RS: We had her going away party at the Drone's Club.

AC: I'm sure she loved that.

RS: Yeah, she had a good time.

AC: She was one of the esteemed guests?

RS: She was the esteemed guest, yeah.

[60:17]

AC: I know we're, this is....

RS: Running out of tape?

AC: No, no there's plenty of that. I just don't want to absorb your day too much, so we'll, but this is fascinating. A little bit about now the infrastructure in Point Judith is, now there's only, you know, no haul out services from what I understand.

RS: Right, they're gone.

AC: Things have really changed a lot.

RS: Grocery store is gone. Well, its there but it doesn't have groceries any more.

AC: Yeah.

RS: The engine company is still there but, and they're doing okay, so they'll be there. But they had some pretty tough times. They had to lay people off. We still have.... The

Co-op is gone. And the business the Co-op was is almost nonexistent. What else have we lost?

AC: So how have you adjusted?

RS: The restaurants and stuff are pretty much gone.

AC: Right. Do you just travel to say New Bedford or Fairhaven instead?

RS: Yeah, I go to Fairhaven.

AC: Okay.

RS: 'Cause Promat got sold too, but I guess they're still going to devote some of that, but I never went to Promat since, it's only been, I've only hauled out twice since they left over there. I go to Fairhaven.

AC: Okay.

RS: That's one of things about the fiberglass boat I have now, you don't have to haul it out every year like the wooden boat.

AC: Okay.

RS: She's very low maintenance. What else do we not have?

AC: Have making those adjustments added a burden to you financially, or is it just pretty much the same, it's just troublesome to travel a little farther.

RS: Yeah, it's just, they do good work up there. It's just an hour and ten minute drive instead of a ten minute drive.

AC: Okay.

RS: The guys over here at this boatyard took care of my boat for, ever since I owned it. They took care of it like it was their own. You know, they took pride in making it look good and keeping it in shape. And they were good friends, you know. The guys up there I don't really know, but they still do a good job. It's just not, we used to enjoy hauling out, going over there, spending a week with those guys. Having fun with them.

AC: Yeah. They know what your boat needs next year probably, too....

RS: Yeah.

AC: It's a history that makes it easier for you.

RS: Yeah, they always looked forward to us coming over there 'cause.... But, you know, that's a different thing. The electronics business is still here, but he had to go right down to himself for awhile. Now he's got his helper back again. So it got to be a struggle for awhile. I think the squid showed up this year, everyone had a pretty good summer.

AC: Oh good.

RS: Around here, I think most guys did. I did. So that really helped.

AC: Okay.

RS: 'Cause the first two years I had that boat.... It's tough to get started with a new boat. They were pretty tough and now this year's been pretty good.

AC: Excellent.

RS: Not huge, but good.

AC: Okay.

RS: You know, so....

[63:17]

AC: Super. Now in terms of income, and it's really, it's fascinating that.... like you said, you don't do this necessarily for the money. It's part of who you are and what you love. But I think part of what NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) wants to understand is how income has changed. You know, whether it's increased or decreased and what percentage, for instance, you contribute versus your wife, and has that changed over the last couple of years since sectors began?

RS: It's, well, my income was up this year and it's still not like it was before sectors. 'Cause the other boat was paid for for years.

AC: Okay.

RS: And this one isn't. You know, it's a little more burden, but like I said, my income went up this year, but it wasn't because of sectors.

AC: Right.

RS: It was because of squid, you know? Squid showing up and catching some squid and catching things when everybody was squidding, I went whiting fishing. And did pretty well at it, while they were all squid fishing. I had it to myself, almost. But the sectors had no bearing on that.

AC: Okay.

RS: At all.

AC: Okay. And then...?

RS: It's hard to think of all the stuff.

AC: Yeah, I know. You're doing a great job.

RS: I can't remember what I did last week, let alone....

AC: You're doing great. And another, on this whole project, is understanding well-being, which is, you know, your quality of life. How you feel in general when you look at the big picture of where you're at in life, and where you're going. In your opinion, do you feel like that's better or worse, or the same? Or has that changed?

RS: As far as the future? Quality of life?

AC: Yeah. Well, for in the present and then just sort of your outlook for the future as well. Since sectors began, do you think they've enhanced or detracted from, or haven't really affected your quality of life and your outlook on life?

RS: I think they've affected it. And, like I said before, it shouldn't have. But the fact that I'm much more stressed now.... My wife sees it, because I've always been pretty easy to get along with, and I still am, but....

AC: Yeah, yeah.

RS: Someone that knows you that well can see that. And it's not....

AC: Yeah.

RS: And she says "Well take some Advil." And I say "Well, you don't understand." She doesn't understand.

AC: 'Cause she's not in it every day.

RS: I get up in the middle of the night 'cause I forgot to sign up for a groundfish day. And turn the computer on "Well, what are you doing? What are you doing that for?"

AC: Right, right.

RS: 'Cause if I don't, I can't go fishing in two days. 'Cause I forgot to do it, 'cause I had something else on my mind. And then the observers, just the observer situation puts a lot of stress on people.

[66:20]

AC: Just having an extra body present or just...?

RS: Yeah, having to think about it.

AC: Planning for it?

RS: It's an extra, for one thing, I've never had any problem with them personally. They're all real good people. There was one, but he was an exception. He was just an idiot, he couldn't help it. California boy. Just was different than us I guess. But in thinking about, having to worry about another person. And tripping over them all the time 'cause most of them don't have experience on boats, it's just a job. They've been trained.

The ones that have been there awhile are pretty good that way, but there's enough to do, you know? You're walking around them all the time, you're keeping an eye on them all the time. You're always wondering where they are. If we're all in the wheelhouse, they're still out there working constantly. That's part of it. Having them call you, sometime two days ahead and go "Are you going fishing on Thursday? I'm supposed to go with you." I say "I don't know if I'm even going to be alive on Thursday, so call me on Wednesday around 6:00." But they have lives to plan too, so....

AC: Yeah, yeah.

RS: And you have to notify them 48 hours in advance if you want to go on a Day at Sea groundfishing, so they can line up an observer. But in the first year I'd sign up for a whole week, one day at a time, cause I'm usually back in every day. And they'd immediately tell you if you had an observer or a waiver. Now you have to sign up and they don't tell you 'til 24 hours, sometimes less. So now I have to say, now I have a waiver, I had a waiver for today.

If I go off fishing and I find fish 40 miles away, do I have to come all the way in to get this kid to go the next day? So that was.... And I finally find out that I really didn't, but I've got to notify this person so they're not sitting there 'til midnight, cause they could have

another job. 'Cause they've got to make a living, too, you know? And different things that the observers, sometimes we'll get one and we're day fishing. Different one, day after day after day. And they'll come down and do the same, go through the same routine, ask the same questions. They've got to check the liferaft and check the EPIRB (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon) and "Where's this?" and "Where's that?" and "Where's your flares?" Somebody just checked all that yesterday. So you take everything apart and show them around, and then they've got to measure the net, and ask the same questions about how long you've been fishing.

AC: There's redundancy.

RS: Yeah. And there are questions that they're required to ask by these geniuses at National Marine Fisheries Service that are so stupid. That totally destroys the credibility of the, like "How much do the doors weigh?"

[69:18]

AC: Right.

RS: It doesn't matter. It's the surface area that does the work. Doesn't matter what the door weighs. If they asked both questions, I might say well, they've got some reason. "How many cookies are in the sweep?" I don't know, I'm not going to count them. The sweep's 88 feet long. I don't know, what [does] it matter?

AC: Now does your sector, through your sector..., fishing with your sector quota, do you carry an observer more or less than...?

RS: More.

AC: Is it almost every trip that you go out? Or is it something that's...?

RS: They claim that it's only 40 percent for the year, but we've had it as high as 80.

AC: Yeah, okay.

RS: I mean, day after day after day.

AC: That's a considerable extra amount of time that you....

RS: Yeah.

AC: Okay. What do you think the future holds for Point Judith? Do you see, look down the line and see some light or see...?

RS: A bunch of us are going to be gone. When they, not next year, but the year after, when they decide that we have to pay for the observers, most of these guys will be gone. 'Cause that'll be it. Unless something else comes along so they don't have to go groundfishing. It's just, \$7 to \$900 a day for an observer. Right now, if we go out for a short day like we do, \$2000 day, pretty good, pretty good day's pay. We're all done by noontime. Take 900 off the top of that, take 4 to 500 for fuel. The observer's making more than the crew and the crew's making almost nothing. So if we have to start doing that, this crew... unless a lot of squid shows up, whiting or something else we can work on, it's all going to.... All those little allocations are going to end up in the hands of a few.

AC: Okay.

RS: Whoever has the money to buy them.

AC: Is that how...?

RS: I don't know if.... Oh yeah.

AC: Friends of yours?

RS: Well, there's already been boats, the Town Dock has bought a couple. There have been three or four boats that have changed hands. And a lot of it, with those guys, was just getting the opportunity to sell out and get clear of everything and just not have to deal with the nonsense that they're putting us through.

AC: So Point Judith was never all for, in recent history, a buy-out option? The government never, before sectors...?

RS: No, that whole thing was a joke. They bought out permits that weren't active.

AC: This was back...?

RS: They could have been....

AC: The first, but that was never an option, in recent history, to do a buy-out, prior to starting sectors?

RS: No, not that I heard of.

AC: Okay.

RS: A lot of us would have hung on just to see what would have happened anyway because....



AC: Yeah.

RS: They wouldn't have paid. They buy your permit, so then you have a boat. What do you do with it?

AC: Least valuable for your business.

RS: Yeah, and what do you do with a fishing boat but go fishing?

AC: Yeah.

[72:21]

RS: See, I can get some work with URI, get some work with the Navy, maybe get some more cable patrol work, go tuna fishing. I don't know, there's not much you can do with a fishing boat. They can buy your permit, then what do you do?

AC: Right.

RS: Now my uncle Joe, he has a guy fish just like him. He was an older guy, too. They had to buy out, they gave his friend \$45,000 for his permit. Joe decided not to sell and within a very short time his permit was worth almost zero because he had so... his landings were not that big, he fished by himself.

AC: Oh, I see.

RS: And it was, he got something for it, I think eventually because he had a herring permit, too. Less than half of what he could have sold it in the buy-out. He could have gotten the buy-out.

AC: Yeah.

RS: Just by the swipe of a pen. See you, Joe. Too bad.

AC: Right.

RS: See, these people making these rules, they don't understand how this business operates. And they are not in the least bit interested in learning. They get up at these meetings and say things that... and we look at each other. It doesn't make sense, but it does to them. And they don't have to. They're not required to do any of this, so....

AC: Right, right.

RS: That's why we're where we are.

AC: It's two worlds that are trying to...?

RS: Well they're not trying. They can't be. But this is a really different situation than.... We're a very versatile port. We do a lot of different things. We have a lot of different opportunities, different geographical locations that guys in Gloucester and up in Maine don't have. Scituate, Plymouth, places like that.

AC: The squid runs and...?

RS: They're pretty much tied to the groundfish.

AC: Yeah.

RS: We have the opportunity to do other things.

AC: Yeah.

RS: But then when you take away the groundfish part of it, it takes away the versatility of the fleet and we all go whiting fishing or we all go squidding or we all go scup. And then the market...

AC: Floods...?

RS: ... down it goes.

AC: Yeah.

RS: It's taken away the balance of this fleet, pretty much. But that's been going on since the Days at Sea started, and they just kept taking more and more and more away from us. When we were on the very low allotted Days at Sea, I didn't get a full compliment of Days at Sea because of all the tuna fishing and cable trawl I did. So I didn't get, so everything was, luckily we had some fish south of Block Island, just over the line.

We'd run out there, and just go over the line and set and tow and tow back, get back over the line, and go back home with whatever we had, because we could not afford, because we were on double time. Every minute was two minutes, every hour was two hours. And you just couldn't... and you haul back and, you know, as fast as you can, like a madman, get the net back in the water and tow back up. And at the end of the year, out of days, we've got to go pay somebody else who isn't using theirs. \$600 per day.

[75:39]

AC: Yeah.

RS: That's what I paid, as high as 650. Now they give them to you.

AC: Yeah.

RS: 'Cause it's a different situation. Which makes it a little more relaxing. We have to worry all the time just, you know, towing away from fish.

AC: 'Cause of the...?

RS: 'Cause I don't have enough to last the year.

AC: But the resource is a lot healthier, you say?

RS: Oh yeah. Yellowtails, yeah. And cod.

AC: Is that a natural rebounding or do you think regulations...?

RS: I think so.

AC: ... played a part in that? Or its sort of a mix or...?

RS: I'll give you an example. When I bought my first boat in 1984, there were very few flounders and yellowtails in this.... I used to fish down off the Vineyard. There wasn't hardly any south of the island. And there was no twine regulations. There were no Days at Sea. The boats were bigger, newer. Younger crews, whatever. Those fish came back strong, all by themselves. Now we've got, we don't even go down there anymore. I don't know what's down there. You can't afford the time. You can't afford the fuel. There's enough fish that we can catch, what they allow us, right out here. In fact, we have to, there's too many fish out there, for what they allow us.

Now they, it's going to be three years without a Winter Flounder, which was a staple here. It went from unlimited to zero, for three years, and probably four, maybe five. Everywhere we go, there's beautiful Winter Flounder. Over the side. They allocated I don't know how many millions of pounds. "Oh, we're going to allocate this many Winter Flounder." But they're going to be allocated as discards. If we're going to discard them, why can't we throw them in a basket? But if I go out there, not on a Day at Sea, or not on a Sector day, with too much mesh on, I can really kill all I want. [I] can't bring them in, but they don't do much about that. We proposed a raised footrope to get over all that stuff, but not too many guys use that. National Marine Fisheries talked to one of my friends up there. "What do you think of that?" He said "'Oh....'" She said "They're not going to approve that." He said "Why?" She said "'Cause industry doesn't want it."

I said "Well, since when does that matter? What the industry wants?" You know? But it was....

[78:20]

AC: I see.

RS: But all these observers that we take out there, they see all this. And you wonder if that information even gets used.

AC: Where's it going, right?

RS: Why are they taking haddock away from us when the observers see we don't catch any of that stuff. Assuming you're not discarding haddock just 'cause they don't have an observer with them.

AC: So if you could walk in and had the genie wish that was granted, anything that you wanted, in terms of management, rules, you know, there has to be one thing that we do and you're given the choice to make that rule, what would it be?

RS: If it was a genie, I'd be playing second base for the Red Sox.

AC: Is there something you would suggest that...?

RS: Oh, yeah. Fairly divide the fish up and give us all a chance because...

AC: Okay.

RS: ...we're not getting a chance. They're giving the majority... maybe those people need that much too, but if fish is available for me to buy, obviously there's somebody who doesn't need it that has it.

AC: So the distribution isn't necessarily...?

RS: If you had... economically, if you had 100,000 yellowtails and 100,000 codfish, and you could sell them for 50 cents a pound to somebody else to go catch, why would you leave the dock? It's \$100,000. Not counting whatever else you could get.

AC: Yeah.

RS: And that's what I think they've done. I don't want to go racing around, constantly in fear of catching some codfish that I don't have, by mistake. Because last fall, when was it, yeah, about this time maybe a little later, they came through where

we fish right out here and they were getting thousands of pounds of these small cod. And if you had an observer, you owed for every one of them.

AC: So you couldn't...?

RS: Had to find them somewhere....

AC: Could you then, at that moment, call someone that you knew who had extra?

RS: You'd call a sector manager and say...

AC: And they would funnel it through?

RS: ... "Oh, I've got these, the observer saw them" or "If they're big enough, I'm bringing them in."

AC: Right.

RS: So now, you're under the gun. And this guy's going to say "Ah."

AC: Right.

RS: "You've got to have them, don't you? Well, I happen to have them. I want \$1 a pound."

AC: Oh, I've got you.

RS: I don't know that that's happened....

AC: So that's a personality thing.

RS: But it could, yeah.

AC: Hopefully you would have a guy who's fair.

RS: You're at the mercy of the person who was given, by the federal government, the rights to all the fish.

AC: Right. And then some of those people who have quotas, they're not even fishing?

RS: No, why go fishing? You'd be a fool if you had that much allocation, to leave the dock. But now, you've cost three or four guys a job.

AC: Right.

[81:17]

RS: You've put more pressure on the shore side facilities, 'cause you're not using them.

AC: Yeah.

RS: And the government that is so bent on creating jobs, they're destroying them in this business. Right?

AC: Yeah.

RS: Wouldn't you think? But that's, that's my opinion.

AC: Well, that's a valid....

RS: How many pages do we have left?

AC: We're good, no we're actually just going to kind of start wrapping it up if that works for you.

RS: Sure.

AC: I guess, one of the things we ask, to conclude, is if there's anything we haven't asked that you would have want to have added on your Oral History. A story, or something about your experiences, or history, or thoughts, perspectives that you would want people to know who read this?

RS: That's a hard question.

AC: Yeah. There may or may not be.

RS: Probably not. There probably is, but it'll never come into my head 'til probably a couple of hours from now.

AC: Well, maybe....

RS: 'Cause I don't even remember what I told you now.

AC: It's all good.

RS: I will say that this was a wonderful business to be in my whole life. But I've never been so discouraged as I am now. But I'm not that discouraged, you know? I'm still going to do it. I'm not going to... there's no other opportunity for someone like me anyway. [The] thing I said about us fishermen, we can do a lot of things. Plumbing, electric, carpentry, we can fix the nets, we can do engine work, we can do hydraulics. But none of them very well, just enough to get by. So we couldn't, if we went to any other business, we'd be starting at the entry level.

So no matter how bad it gets here, you're not going to go anywhere and make as much money. And even when that's not very good. And it depends on what you consider good. Some of the guys make a lot of money, but they really earn it, too, with what they have to go through to do it, but, I really don't want to do anything else. I'm really just hoping that it will get to the point, and I don't think it will, it's just the whole thing of what this could have been. It could have been great. Really, the sector could have been wonderful, the sector allocation. But it's not.

AC: Is there room for it to change in the next year?

RS: I don't see how it can because they've already given all these people this stuff. They're not going to take it away.

AC: Yeah.

RS: They've made plans.

AC: Right.

RS: I get such a small percentage of codfish. But they gave those codfish, the available codfish, to someone else. They can't give it to me now, because those people are naturally the ones with the money and the influence. And, you know, they've planned their business around it, and they're not going to, it can't change. I don't care what Barney Frank does or the jumping up and down. How can it change now?

AC: Yeah.

RS: Do you see how it could? I don't.

[84:16]

AC: Right, right. No, that's a good point. You can't....

RS: So that's, it is what it is. And that's what we have to deal with. I don't see what they can do to make, to straighten out what they screwed up. They can't. But, to them it doesn't matter. They're all set.

AC: They could just add some to each or...

RS: Not this, they don't have.

AC: ... put a couple of percentage...?

RS: Well, there's always a percentage. We have a percentage, but that percentage doesn't change. My percentage is so small, like my codfish. My yellowtail percentage will go up. My codfish percentage is so small that it'll never get, even if it triples, that's less than 3,000 pounds for the year. If it goes up ten times, it's less than 10,000 for the year. You can catch that in a day, or a week. It'd be too much work for a day. I wouldn't want to do that. I don't want to catch that many. But you know what I mean? It's just....

AC: It's a bind, right there.

RS: Yeah. They can't really, there'll never be that much fish that my percentage of codfish.... And if they ever decide to give us winter flounder back, and they don't give us at least pound for pound with yellowtails, we'll be out of fish in a matter of a month. We'll catch them up so fast that we'll have to either go buy it from someone else, who may not have them, or....

AC: Yeah.

RS: We thought we were going to get them back this year and then I talked to one of the other guys who said "No, they weren't going to give us enough." And I just said "Thankfully, they're not going to give them back to us." Because if they give us a small amount, that's worse than not giving us any. 'Cause now you can't discard them. And if you catch up what you've got, and don't have the money to buy some more, or can't find more, you have to stop fishing. You're all done. And the year starts, what May 1<sup>st</sup>?

AC: Right.

RS: The way we fish, I'd be out of flounders by Labor Day. Then what do I do? I put the fine twine on and do things I don't want to do. Kill baby fish.

AC: Right. Well, you've....

RS: The regulation, I'm 100 percent for regulations. I think most of us are. The mesh size was scary, but it's great.

AC: Right.



RS: I love it, you know. Let the little ones go. We don't want to catch things we can't sell. Like the guys say, we spent 30 years of our careers learning how to catch fish, and the last 10 how not to catch them. Because we don't want them, you know?

AC: Yeah.

RS: And we've put a lot of effort into a lot of things to do that.

[87:06]

AC: Is there a story you'd want to quickly share of a highlight of your fishing career?

RS: Oh....

AC: Or a moment in time that is particularly memorable?

RS: You know, you always ask this and I always say I have to be prepared next time. And I.... Next time I will be. I wouldn't even know what to say.

AC: No, that's Okay. Fred told us...

RS: Fred must have....

AC: ... had a very nice story about the Dykstra's helping him in his early part of learning how to fish and giving him a net and I thought that was a very nice description of how things kind of, used to be. He sort of summed up this giving community....

RS: Yeah.

AC: ... and a sharing of tight-knit element.

RS: Like what we started talking about. When I first started out, the guys, they were great.

AC: Right.

RS: You know, I could go to them, or they'd come to me.

AC: Did someone help you out in a time of need that you remember? I'm sure....

RS: No. Well, they probably came with, yeah, it was a long time ago. When I first started out, there was a great bunch of guys around then. And there's still a good bunch of guys. There's just a different attitude, you know? And probably the way that the country is now has forced that.

AC: Sure.

RS: It's just not... we do still have our bowling league that there'll be 30 or 40 of us at the bowling alley, bowling.

AC: Camdens?

RS: Yeah, we all go up there.

AC: That's great.

RS: We've all got our shirts and everything.

AC: Classic.

RS: Me and my crew started that 30 years ago. And we kind of got out of it and the younger guys took it over, what few younger guys there are. But they still do it.

AC: Excellent.

RS: That's the time we get together.

AC: Super.

RS: And, boy, do they love it up there. They sell a lot of beer that day. Those days. In the winter, sometimes twice a week, I'll go in there for lunch and the bartender will say "When's bowling? Are they coming in today?"

AC: All the suppliers.

RS: She's usually just sitting there by herself, you know. 30 guys at the bar. But that's about it.

AC: Okay.

RS: That I know of, as far as people getting together. John Dykstra would help anybody. He's an amazing guy. He's getting older now. Jake. I worked with the Roebuck's for a long time. Dave and Don, they're both retired now.

AC: Sure.

RS: And they were always helping, if I needed it. And I've helped out some of the younger guys myself.

AC: Well. You certainly have a reputation as being one of the kindest, most generous, easygoing guys in the whole port.

RS: Well, that's how I was treated.

AC: Yeah, you....

RS: They treated me very well, 'cause I was from an original family, you know? And they knew my mother and.... But it's been a pretty good life really down here. Like anything, you have your tough times, but you get through them.

AC: Excellent.

[90:18]

RS: It's just, this is, if I knew that at this point in my life it was going to be at 60 years old, most of the guys that were that age when I started didn't fish much longer after that. They, my grandfather kept going 'til he was 84 just 'cause that's what he liked to do. He just went out for a few hours a day. He had a little dragger. I don't think I'll make it that long. Anyway....

AC: Well, Rodman....

RS: Anything else?

AC: Thank you, it has been a pleasure. I'll just quickly restate for the record....

RS: You've got to listen to that whole thing and type it all out or do you have a machine that does that?

AC: This has been an excellent interview with Rodman Sykes, fishing out of Point Judith, RI, on the *Virginia Marise*. And he is in Sector 5. And this is Azure Cygler and Angela Wilson on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at 55 State Street, Narragansett. And thank you very much, Rodman, for your time.

RS: You're welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW

[1:31:22]