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## Abbott-Jamieson, Susan ~ Oral History Interview

Ruth Sando

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Voices from the Fisheries  
166 Water Street  
Woods Hole, MA 02543

# **Interview with Susan Abbott-Jamieson by Ruth Sando**

## **Interviewee**

Abbott-Jamieson, Susan

## **Interviewer**

Sando, Ruth

## **Date**

June 24, 2016

## **Place**

Phone interview

## **ID Number**

VFF\_SP\_SAJ\_001

## **Use Restrictions**

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## **Biographical Note**

Dr. Susan Abbott-Jamieson is a retired anthropologist with the Social Sciences Branch of NOAA, where she worked as the Senior Social Scientist in the Office of Science and Technology in the National Marine Fisheries Service. She joined the Air Force after high school, and later received a B.A. from Idaho State University and a Master's and Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. She conducted ethnographic field research among Kenyan farmers for her Ph.D., and in Appalachian Kentucky coal mining towns during her career in academia at the University of Kentucky. She began working as the first non-economic social scientist at the National Marine Fisheries Service headquarters Office of Science and Technology in Silver Spring, Maryland in 2001, and retired in 2011.<sup>1</sup>

## **Scope and Content Note**

Interview contains discussions of: anthropology, fisheries anthropology, social science, fishermen, fishing communities, fisheries management, National Marine Fisheries Service, social impact assessments, oral histories, Hurricane Katrina, applied anthropology, Deepwater Horizon oil spill, NOAA, Local Fisheries Knowledge Project, Voices from the Fisheries

Dr. Abbott-Jamieson discusses her varied responsibilities working as a social scientist during her ten year career with NMFS. She began in a newly-created position after NOAA received funding

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<sup>1</sup>I was the first in the Office of Science & Technology, not the first in the agency. See Trish Clay's and my article on the history of social science at NOAA/MMFS. Peter Fricke was in the Office of Sustainable fisheries on the management side of the house when I was hired, while I was on the science side. Patricia Clay was there before me too, but technically she was just a guest since she was employed by the Woods Hole Science Center.

to hire social scientists, and remarks on the agency's initial hesitation to accept non-economist social scientists as necessary and useful, something which remains an ongoing educational effort.

She discusses her experience working during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, which severely damaged many fishing communities along the Gulf Coast. Her department had recently completed a major project that gathered data about fishing communities around the country, baseline data which was useful to have when writing social impact assessments and documenting recovery after Katrina. Her and her colleague's work became seen as useful in a way that it hadn't been before.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Abbott-Jamieson started the Local Fisheries Knowledge Project to engage young people and get them involved in fisheries science, as well as a way to do outreach in fishing communities and present a more favorable image of NOAA. She brought the program to Maine high schools and taught students how to interview and document the lives of people working in marine fisheries in their communities. This later became the Voices from the Fisheries project, a collection of oral histories relating to the fisheries accumulated in an accessible online database. Lastly, she discusses the lessons she's learned and the importance of social science in an agency that truly "manages people, not fish".

### **Indexed Names**

Acheson, James

Curtis, Rita

Clay, Patricia

Gautam, Amy

Fricke, Peter

Hall-Arber, Madeleine

Holliday, Mark

Ingles, Palma

McCay, Bonnie

Murawski, Steve

Pedersen, John

Pinto da Silva, Patricia

Richard, Schaefer

Russell, Suzanne

Van Willigen, John

### **Transcript**

**(interview audio begins about 1:30 in)**

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<sup>2</sup> Narrator's Note: It wasn't just my work, but the combined work of all the social scientists who were staffing the agency's science centers. We had developed a program of primary and secondary data collection, and its products were what was proving useful.

**RS:** Okay, so now we'll be recorded until the end.

**SAJ:** Okay, very good.

**RS:** So, this interview is being conducted as part of the Voices from the Science Centers project funded by the Northeast Fisheries Science Center. It's also part of the Voices from the Fisheries project that's supported by NMFS Office of Science and Technology. I'm Ruth Sando, and today I'm speaking by phone with Dr. Susan Abbot-Jamieson who is in Kentucky. We're meeting on June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at 10 a.m. Dr. Abbot-Jamieson is a retired anthropologist with the Social Science Branch of NOAA, where she worked as a senior social scientist in the Office of Science and Technology in the National Marine Fisheries Service. She has a B.A. from Idaho State University and a Master's and Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. So, thanks Susan for agreeing to this interview, and I'm sorry we're not able to meet face to face.

**SAJ:** Oh, that's okay. I look forward to it.

**RS:** Okay. Well, knowing that you retired a few years ago, which year did you retire?

**SAJ:** I retired in February of 2011.

**RS:** 2011, okay. So, it's been about five years.

**SAJ:** That's correct.

**RS:** Let's start with what your last position was before you retired, your most recent responsibilities. How would you describe your role at NOAA at that point?

**SAJ:** Just before I retired? I was the—my title was Senior Social Scientist, and I was located in the Office of Science and Technology in the National Marine Fisheries Service headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland. My position, which was the same title I had the entire time I worked for the agency, was charged with—I was kind of like a national program, in charge of a national program in the sense that it was my job to coordinate with the social scientists—non-economic social scientists—that we hired, that had been hired in the six fisheries science centers. And then there were also a few, or one I guess, in the southeast regional office. That was the one exception, everyone else were located in the science centers. So, my job was to coordinate, to get everyone cooperating together as we carried out our mandate to conduct non-economic social science research on fishing communities and so forth—fishermen affected by fisheries management regulatory action. And so, we had a budget, I worked under an economist, Rita Curtis, who had taken over the job as the head of our particular subunit in the Office of Science and Technology. We had annual calls for proposals for research from the regional science centers, and we would make decisions about who to fund, and then we would have prepared guidance beforehand about the areas of research that would be particularly useful to everyone in getting the kind of information people needed to carry out our mandate—you know, to do the kind of social science research that we were supposed to be carrying out. And that research was to support the management functions of the agency. So, that's kind of the job—now, that was

kind of the central part of it, but we also, I was also expected to do outreach in developing relationships with academics who were involved in doing fisheries social science research because the agency often would collaborate with such individuals who could actually conduct research we were interested in doing; we would provide the funding and they would conduct the research because with our small numbers, we couldn't do all the research ourselves. A lot of it was conducted by contractors and many of those were academics. So, also we had internships and things in the office, so we would get both undergraduate and graduate students come through our office, and we would have them working on projects that we had, to advance their training. That was another aspect of what we did. We also collaborated with other sub-divisions of NMFS as required to both carry out research, and also just in the kinds of functions one does within the agency to keep the agency functioning smoothly. So, I was also involved in that kind of activity. That is, I think, a pretty accurate overview...I also would be—if one of the regional science centers was getting ready to replace someone on their staff of social scientists—I would often be asked to serve on the selection committee. The final decisions were always under the control of the staff in the regional science center, but they would ask me to help do the review of candidates and participate in those kinds of activities as well. We also did some of our own research, time-permitting, and so on, and I would go to professional meetings in my specialty area and make presentations about that research and sometimes publish things as well. There's a lot of collaborative activity going on involving all of us around the country. We would have workshops to discuss new directions, for instance...So, that's an example of the kind of stuff we would do.

**RS:** It sounds like the whole time you were there, there was a pretty big network of specialists in your area and fisheries in general that you were consulting with and collaborating with. Was part of your task to build up that network, or was it already pretty much in place?

**SAJ:** No, it wasn't in place. When I was hired—I was hired in December of 2001 into a newly-created position. The position that I held had not existed before. It was right at the point when the agency had finally got some new funding to fund non-economic social scientists, and so they were hiring. At the point that I was hired, let's see, there was...hmm, one, two—I don't know maybe two or three other social scientists in the entire agency who were not economists.

**RS:** Wow.

**SAJ:** Peter Fricke—but he wasn't in our office, he was on the management side. Now he was the longest-serving, he had worked for over twenty years, but he was alone most of that time. And then Trish Clay, who actually technically was on the staff of the Northeast—in New England, up in New England in the Northeast Fisheries Science Center—but she worked out of the headquarters office. She was an anthropologist...Who else? I don't know that there was anybody else, maybe I was the third one hired. There may be another that I'm not remembering right now, but certainly I was the third, maybe the fourth, I'm not sure about that actual detail. But from that point on then, we had a budget. There had been—I think it was a million dollars of new money, and that had to pay people's salaries as well as provide research funds. But at that point there were very few people, so...Let's see, where were the next hires—maybe down in the Southeast. Not in the science center, initially, but they were unusual. The Southeast had their social scientists in what would be called the management side of the house, in that office. And then the

science center was down in Miami and they didn't have a social scientist there at first. So, someone was hired in the Southeast and then... Let's see, they hired in Seattle in the—I'm trying to, oh my gosh, it's been so long, the reorganization that went on—Alaska and the.. Seattle, and Washington and Oregon were all in one unit, and then they split Alaska off, they separated it off to be its own entity and combined Washington, Oregon and California into a management zone. And then there was the Western Pacific, which was out of Honolulu... Anyway, over the next four years, I guess, we finally hired at least one person in all of these places.

**RS:** Wow, so that was a lot of growth considering how low the numbers were to start.

**SAJ:** It was a lot of growth, and they added more people in the Northeast, and so we were busy hiring people, and then at the same time trying to figure out with each other what data was needed to actually carry out the functions of the jobs that they were assigning to us. We had no data, you know, to start with, very little data. So, we had to figure out if we were supposed to be assessing the effects of new management actions on fishing communities in a particular region, and fishermen, and perhaps the businesses associated with fishing. We had to have data to do those analyses, and we didn't even know—have a clear idea of what all of the fishing communities might be that would be affected. So, it was really starting from very, very limited informational base on the actual people, occupational groups, and communities that the Magnuson-Stevens Act said we were supposed to be paying attention to.

**RS:** Was that the impetus behind the hiring?

**SAJ:** Well, yes. There had been a struggle over many years to try to get the funding because the law said that the agency was supposed to be assessing the impact of management actions on these entities, and it wasn't just economic impact. They had been doing economic impact for a long time, because they had a body of economists employed by the agency who could do those assessments. But when it came to the slot where they were supposed to talk about social and cultural impacts, and that language is specifically in the legislation, they would just say, "No available data." That was accepted, for quite a while, but there came a point where a lawsuit was brought against the agency by outside entities saying that—opposing the non-collection of data. They lost the lawsuit, and so they had to do something about it. Well, in the meantime, within the agency, Mark Holliday and AmyGautam, who was an economist that he hired working for him in the same office that I ultimately worked in—in fact, Mark was the one who hired me, and he was a sort of...he wasn't a fisheries economist, he was more...he was a little broader than that in his training. But they struggled for quite a long time—it's a very complicated process to get funds because you had to go up through multiple layers of bureaucracy, the budget goes up through multiple layers of bureaucracy, and at each level things can get cut out and changed. It was a big, big struggle and it wasn't until, I think, Mark walked out and got put on the budget preparation committee at a higher level than his office and then he was able to put it in as a priority funding request—as a kind of line item thing, I think it was; it wasn't a part of another segment of the budget. So, they were...and it survived and the money was issued. Suddenly, there were resources. That was the way it happened—now, I think there was some other part of your question. If you repeat it I'll...

**RS:** No, I really was interested in the process of getting social scientists on board who hadn't been represented or represented well there. And it sounds like there were two big elements—one was the funding, of course, but the other was that lawsuit.

**SAJ:** Yeah, the lawsuit. And then—first of all, you have to recognize that the agency was a fisheries management agency, so that meant that the staffing patterns were predominantly positions for fisheries biologists and related specializations. And so, those people tended to not see what other kinds of social scientists might contribute to fisheries management as—they just didn't recognize it, it wasn't part of their worldview of fisheries, nor of their past experience. Economists were a little bit different, because back in the days before the National Marine Fisheries Service became the National Marine Fisheries Service, it had been the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, and it has always been—for many years, economists integrated into that because they were doing market studies and things to benefit the commercial fishing industry. And so, their function or potential function, and the kinds of expertise they could bring were in fact recognized and were part of the experience of fisheries biologists and people who had been working in the agency. But sociologists and anthropologists and so on were not part of the experience, and so they did not see what use they might be. But because the language was specific in the enabling legislation, and it went beyond economists, it specified that they must do social and cultural impact assessments in addition to economic impact assessments. And so, who does that? That was the issue. They didn't have anyone who could do that, nor did they seem inclined to contract it out to anyone [laughter], that didn't seem to be part of the deal because it just wasn't recognized. So, it was a big struggle. Once the funding was made available, it wasn't huge funding, but at least it was enough to get somebody into each of the regional science centers. In the case of the Northeast, more than one somebody because they used some of their own program money to hire people. Trish, for instance, had been hired before—she wasn't hired on...she had been hired because they—it just so happens, it depends on who's running the show. The people there thought that someone like Trish could be useful to them. So, it still remained a struggle, and I expect it's still a struggle today. The education of other technical specialists and so on as to the usefulness and need for these other kinds of people. I think Dick Schaefer—who was a fisheries biologist involved in hiring the very first non-economic social scientists just as the agency was getting separated away and transformed into a subunit of the newly created NOAA—kind of got into real trouble when he went to hire the first person, James Acheson, who was an anthropologist at the University of Maine at Orono at the time. He was called on the carpet by his boss and had to vigorously defend his hiring of such a creature [laughter].

**RS:** Really?

**SAJ:** He was going to firing him for doing it, you know, wasting the agency's money on someone who wasn't a biologist or some other equal thing like a lawyer.

**RS:** That shows how hard it was.

**SAJ:** So, there really was this mindset that this wasn't a useful thing to be doing. You started to say something and I overrode you.

**RS:** No, I just said that shows how high the bar was, that his job was threatened by merely hiring her.

**SAJ:** Yes, it was a very high bar. And so, he hired Jim Acheson and Jim said—who I interviewed, some years back, about his experiences—he realized, and prepared, one of the better things he could do while he was there in the very beginning, beginning to help figure out what needed to happen, wrote a working paper trying to demonstrate to other staff why hiring someone with his training would be useful for them, and helpful for them in carrying out their duties. And that had to be done over and over again, you know.

**RS:** Well, it sounds like there were two big challenges. One was the fact that there wasn't any data, as you said, but the other was a sort of internal education process with the other scientists.

**SAJ:** That's right... That's right. Very much so.

**RS:** Possibly more difficult [laughter].

**SAJ:** Ah, yes [laughter].

**RS:** Well, you said that your role all along was very collaborative. Which of the--

**SAJ:** Yes, I guess the way I envisioned it—I couldn't possibly do... It was a new position, so it was up to kind of create the position, what it should be, because it hadn't existed before. So, it was clear to me—first of all, I must also point out that I did not have a fisheries background myself. I came out of academia, I had had a career at the University of Kentucky and I had retired from there and then I had gone off to a very different thing for a few years in business having to do with chocolate, and that didn't have much to do with fisheries. So, I had thought they probably wouldn't be interested in me because I didn't have that particular kind of experience. They hired me, I think, because I had been a department chair and I had a lot of experience successfully working with... in that kind of role. I also had research experience working at the community level. I had done field research in Kenya for a year, out in a village working in an agriculturally-based community. And I had done research in Appalachian USA, again, in coal-mining areas where you had single-resource based communities. It wasn't a big leap to go from that kind of community to a fishing community where the dominant industry is commercial marine fishing and not much else supporting the economy. So, they're parallel, you know, in these kinds of places. There are differences, of course, but they're also parallels. So, I had a clear understanding of what it takes to go out and do community-based research, so that was attractive to them. They said, look, you can learn the fishery stuff [laughter]. So, it was a very steep learning curve, particularly the first year you both learn a great deal about fishing, commercial marine fishing in this country, and also to learn about this federal agency, because that's a whole different world in itself. Just learning the language of the federal agency, speaking in acronyms [laughter]...

**RS:** Well, let me go back to—you mentioned your background in anthropology. Just say a little bit about how you got into anthropology and your early disciplinary focus.



**SAJ:** Okay. Well, gosh, I don't know... I mean, I got interested in anthropology when I was a teenager in high school. A couple of teachers I had had lived and worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Alaska for many years in the 1930s and 40s, and all of their tales of living out in isolated areas and things just really intrigued me, and I did a lot of reading of things—like Margaret Mead and so on—and just determined that that's what I wanted to do, was become an anthropologist. I figured out that anthropology would allow me to have those kinds of experiences, and decided that's what I was going to do. I joined the Air Force when I graduated from high school so I would get the GI Bill. Spent four years in the Air Force as a way to pay for college and then went straight through my Ph.D. majoring in anthropology, and doing anthropology all the way through. So, it was—I guess I would have to say it was a fascination with other cultures and other peoples, other cultures, and a desire to travel and go to unusual places at someone else's expense [laughter] that initially led me into anthropology. It was an excellent choice for me. I mean I really did enjoy doing those kinds of things. Then I wanted to teach, and so I—a university career at that point would allow me to do all those kinds of things. I, you know, I suppose over the years my interests broadened, clearly. I realized I was more interested in live people than dead people. I initially thought archaeology would be what I would do, but I began to realize after archeological field school that that was not what I wanted to do. I wanted to be involved and interactive with live people, and so that's when I, before I left for graduate school, I made that decision. I was very interested in medical things—I don't know, I guess not unlike a lot of people in anthropology, I just had quite broad interests, and anthropology seemed to be the discipline that would allow me to do lots of different things, focused on the study of humanity and the way they organize themselves and live. I was able to kind of combine my interests in things like psychology and history and sociology and all those things under the umbrella of anthropology.

**RS:** What are some of the places where you've done fieldwork?

**SAJ:** I've done field work in Kenya, in a village—Kikuyu village. I was there for about a year and a half. Then, I have done comparative research on some of the focus I was interested in, comparative child-rearing and family structure and function and subsistence systems. So, I did some similar things in eastern Kentucky, in coal camps, in coal mining areas. I published on all that—all that work has all been published. I've also spent time in West Africa, Ghana in particular, and then since I joined the—when I went to work for the agency, then I got involved in some other things having to do with oral history and doing, after Katrina, doing, overseeing some of the research that we did on post-Katrina and the Gulf. So, I guess those are some of the major things.

**RS:** You know, you're mentioning work on post-Katrina issues. Using that as an illustration of how an issue gets to the top of the list and gets funded, how did that happen?

**SAJ:** How did that happen? Ah, ok

**RS:** Approval process? Assignment?

**SAJ:** Well... Katrina, yes. Of course, Katrina was this massive, massive hurricane that impacted large swathes of the Gulf Coast of the United States... terrible devastation not only to New Orleans, but other areas. It impacted commercial fishing because it wiped out or severely damaged several commercial fishing communities and aspects of the industry, the processing industry and so forth. So, that was immediately of interest to the agency. It impacted the stuff we were doing. There was money that Congress—because of the widespread devastation, Congress immediately went to work in putting together special money to help with the cleanup of the Gulf and to study the impacts of what had happened and do a whole variety of things. So, in that process, the agency happened to get a tranche of that money—a portion of that money, and so it was in the agency they called for proposals for projects to spend some of that money. And so I responded to that, along with Palma Ingles who was the social anthropologist located in the Southeast region. She had done research, and that was the part of the country that she was focused on because of where she worked in the agency. So she and I got together and wrote a proposal to do a social impact assessment on the specific communities, fishing communities, impacted by Katrina. Now, it so happens that this hurricane—I think it was 2005, August, the end of August 2005—that we had just completed... See, at that point, I had been at the agency, what, four years, about four years. We had just finished—our first major data-generating project was to, in each region of the country, to identify the subset of communities that were most heavily involved in commercial fishing. And that had been a big project and we had published descriptions of those places, the subset of those places that were of most interest. And the publications for the Gulf of Mexico has just recently been finished and been made available, so we knew which communities, we could identify that subset of communities that we wanted in each of those states—Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana—that we wanted to go into. We had baseline data on them, and we wanted to go into them and find out what state they were in.

**RS:** It was like a before and after.

**SAJ:** It was like a before and after because we had the before. And it turned out that our data, because it had just so recently been completed, became of great interest, those baseline studies, to people in Congress, because they didn't have similar information on all the communities. So, it became—it suddenly got noticed because of its usefulness and the circumstance. Anyway, so we were given money to—we hired a contractor. We ourselves personally could not go in and do all of this—we hired a company that specialized in this kind of research which happened to be owned by and run by an anthropologist. They went in and visited that subset of communities that we specified three different times over nine months, beginning about a month and a half after the—a month to a month and a half after the hurricane hit. Then a few months later, and then nine months afterward so they could document the recovery in each of those communities—or lack thereof, because in some cases, there wasn't much recovery—and write up a big report on that. So, that, suddenly, I must say, this horrible tragedy of Katrina, which was so awful to so many people—in a way, it was good for us because within the agency, speaking narrowly, because suddenly we were seen as useful [laughter] in ways we hadn't been perceived before because it was highly visible, and it was visible to high-levels of management that we had something to contribute that was immediately useful to a lot of people. So that was a big plus—I'm sorry to say it, it came at great cost to a lot of people, but we were able to go in and do

something very useful because we had just finished this other long project, putting together these basic descriptions—identifying and then putting together these basic descriptions of all of these locations, and we were able to do some kind of ranking of most important to less important of these kinds of fishing communities.

**RS:** So, the follow-up study really—

**SAJ:** You know without that basic data, without having that basic data set, what they would have been able to do, they would have still done a social impact assessment, but they wouldn't have had that systematic, consistent, basic data on each of those communities. That's another aspect—it was like the same stuff described in each of these locations: What was the fishing infrastructure that was there? The basic descriptions of the communities, the population of the community, how many people were working in fisheries? What were the fishing industries or businesses that were located there? ...the information about the landings, the catch and the landings and so forth for each of those communities. So, all those basic forms of information were laid out and they were the same for each of those communities, so that meant you could really do a comparison across the communities that was reasonably sensible and accurate, and you could document the speed and or lack of recovery over a nine month period.

**RS:** Well, given the great value and utility of that kind of information, how did you decide to disseminate it?

**SAJ:** Well, because it was government, it was public—it became public information. The basic report—actually, there were two...there was a confidential report. There's another aspect of the laws of this land, and that was that because of privacy issues, when you had a very small community with just a couple of people engaged in fishing and so on, you can't report at that level on that community because people who were interested would be able to identify the individual businesses and entities you were talking about, and the law prohibits you doing that. In those cases, you kind of combine them with other communities so you get a larger "N" if you will, of what you're talking about so that people's privacy is more likely to be protected. So, anyway...The point, I guess, I'm making is that the confidential report would retain that individual-level descriptive stuff because it wasn't distributed to the public, but it could be used in-house by people in the region who had to—who were concerned with management issues. And then we wrote another report that was made available to the public online, you could go online and download it, and that one didn't have—you rolled things up enough that people would not be able to identify individual firms. So, one thing is that the whole report is available to the public, it's still available to the public—I think you go online to the Southeast Center, and you can download that report. And then, also all of us who were involved in it at different times have given public presentations about it. For instance, John Pedersen—who's Impact Assessment, Incorporated, the company that we contracted with—certainly gave papers at the professional meetings and published a paper, and I gave talks and a paper with my colleague Palma Ingles as coauthor. And so we would make presentations at professional meetings and publish publicly available papers and journals and things, and then there would be working papers that were made available—and as I said, the original report was made available and is still available for downloading. So those were the kinds of things that we did to make the information available to

the public.

**RS:** What was the reception by the states that were affected?

**SAJ:** Well, I think we also met with and talked to people in the states' marine fisheries management entities, whoever it was in the individual states that were involved, which did that kind of work for the state... The states also do freshwater fisheries, so we would deal with the people with the marine fisheries. All of this—they also provided some information and were doing some of their own assessments on the inshore impacts because our agency only deals from—what is it—two miles, three miles offshore to two hundred miles offshore. Some of the fisheries which are conducted in that inshore zone are the responsibility of the state, not the responsibility of the federal entities, agencies. So, they provided—they were doing their own reports and assessments and we had access to those, and they had access to what we were doing, so there were certainly discussions and sharing of information. The fisheries commission people, the management for that region as well. Everybody was, you know, up to their eyeballs trying to get stuff done. I mean, it was very, very intense and some of the state agencies like Mississippi—I remember when we met with them, Palma and I, months after Katrina, a lot of those people's houses had been destroyed and they were working out of temporary quarters and trying to do their job and trying to put their personal lives back into some kind of semblance of order. So, things were very difficult, and they'd have, you know, the oyster fisheries had been wiped out again, and various other kinds of issues going on. Anyway, it was very difficult for everybody.

**RS:** Well, it certainly is an example of applied anthropology [laughter].

**SAJ:** There's no question about that. A very applied anthropology. Then, the next big disaster that came along in which we got some funds, extra funds, was the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, and that comes along just a few years after Katrina. You know, that Gulf Coast... I don't know how many other hurricanes came along as bad as Katrina, but they had additional hurricane damage before Deepwater Horizon came along and then there's all that effect on the Gulf Coast. Again, as people are aware, it affected several states, a wide area. It involved—of course, Congress and so on got much involved in it. There were funds, as with Katrina, provided for a variety of activities including research associated with that, trying to assess the damage. It was a little bit different because... because we're dealing with oil damage—there actually was an office in NOAA, it wasn't part of fisheries, who is charged with doing any assessment to the natural environment, damage to the natural environment, when it's caused by oil spills and things like that. So, in this case, initially we were asked—there was going to be a whole lot of money available—we were asked to submit proposals for research and I got together with our people in the Southeast and said, let's—I don't know, we prepared, I guess, about five different proposals and I was assigned to a committee. It was a kind of NOAA-level committee... I can't remember. It wasn't just our office, several people came across from higher levels and in the end, though, we were encouraged to submit proposals for all kinds of impact assessments—which we did, economic impact and a variety of others—in the end, they didn't fund any of those, except there were two that were funded. One that I had put together to do oral histories—to get someone to go out and collect oral histories of the experiences of fishermen and a variety of people involved in commercial fishing across the affected region, and to document their experiences through oral

histories. And the other one had to do with health effects, but it was study at the county level, comparing across counties, and that was a different unit that got that funding. So, I think that we had another oral history project that we can talk about later that I was involved in, that has been quite popular in the agency, and I always thought that oral histories were seen as non-threatening [laughter], as interesting and somehow non-threatening, and so they were okay to do in this awfully politically complex situation of this oil spill, ongoing oil spill. They could fund the oral histories and that didn't seem threatening, but they didn't want to fund the economic—any research that was going to produce dollar sign, dollar-associated damage assessments, which, you know, the economists would have been looking at impacts on income and all kinds of stuff like that. Because this other entity were the ones who would be developing the costs of this spill, and the damage assessments that BP and others would ultimately have to pay, and I suspect they didn't want competing values with dollar amounts attached, so they just didn't fund any of that research. But the oral histories, they were willing to fund, I'm happy to say. It seemed to be coming out of these horrible disasters, you know, one a natural disaster, the other a man-made disaster. We ended up being able to provide research and so on that was very useful to the agency, and it's stuff that they would not have been able to do if they hadn't had non-economist social scientists working in the agency.

**RS:** Let me ask you a question about—you had mentioned that you had just finished a big baseline study before Katrina, which was '05. Do you feel like—to what extent was the research affected by these disasters sort of changing the direction you would go in? Or were you able to continue to build on baseline, collect baseline information?

**SAJ:** Well, let's see, there was a switch that occurred... What we learned was the baseline, finishing that first major data assembly, it was a data assembly project really because we used secondary data that—although site visits were made to some of the locations. We learned that that's static data, okay, you can't... people had databases, obviously, that they created from which they wrote these vignettes, these descriptions of each of these communities and so on and what have you—but the data itself was kind of a baseline, it was kind of frozen in time. But obviously fisheries are dynamic and changes are going on in these communities. So, people began to realize—those who were having to provide information to the appropriate people in the agency who were trying to devise fisheries management plans, and approve those devised by the entities that do that, that's another aspect of this complex organization. But at any rate, the point was they always needed more current data—or the most current data. So, this big discussion ensued amongst us as to how to do that, and it began to emerge that what people really needed were databases that could be updated and that would give them the current kind of information. And there was a point at which it began pulling away from the idea of—initially we thought, well, every five years we should go out and do something like that, every five years we should be going out and updating the basic data files and so forth and people realized that that was not really what should be happening—that they needed to have datasets on different dimensions of these communities and things and they needed to be constantly renewing those through whatever data sources we could tap into. People decided they would not be producing a new, a subsequent set of descriptive, you know, books if you will, on these places—that that was not the productive way to go. In the meantime, of course, people were doing research on different subsets of areas of interest because all of the regions are not the same, the fisheries aren't the same in each

region. So, everybody had some unique problems or areas of emphasis that were more important in some areas than in other regions of the country. So, people need to have the freedom to develop those kinds of datasets and so on. Each of the regions began to diverge a bit in the kind of emphasis that they were pursuing. At the same time, there were changes in the way the agency—I'm not sure of my memory, it's been five years—there were changes in the way that were mandated at the higher levels and, I think, changes to the law that said that the approach to management was going to change. And so, that meant that there had to be changes in the way—in the kind of information people were collecting and how they were going to do that. There were changes enforced by—I guess forced, I don't know—they were a product of changes in the way the agency was going to be asked to conduct its' management activities. So, you know, the whole process was moving in some different directions at the time I left the agency, retired.

**RS:** I had wondered if the fact that the agency was so used to the methods of biologists and marine scientists and economists who do rely on large databases and then pull from that, and they update and replicate it, that there would be an expectation that somehow the non-economic social scientists should be able to accumulate the same kind of data.

**SAJ:** Yeah, okay, I see what you're saying. Yeah, you know... There's tension between the ethnographic approach, which, particularly in anthropology, the focus on the local community—the kind of research I had done, really, frankly, my dissertation research and so on, where I embedded myself in one community and learned a great deal about that one community so you get in-depth, you learn a lot of stuff, but you don't know how general that is across a whole variety of communities. So if you're charged with nationwide responsibility, which is what the agency is charged with, you can't just concentrate on one little community. That isn't going to work. You know, you really have to get information on a whole set of communities and be able to talk about what's the same and what's different amongst them and how they will be differentially impacted by changes in regulations. I mean, if you cut the amount of catch you're permitted and so on, how does that shift—how does that change, differentially affect fishermen in fifteen different communities? Or are fishermen in one community more concentrated in trying to catch that particular kind of fish? They're going to be more impacted than ones who aren't, you know, that kind of issue. So, that was why the first step was to go out and identify where these places are and what their profile is in regard to commercial fishing. Because the people in the regions who were asked to produce analyses to hand over to the people who were trying to figure out whether regulation A or version A or version B was the better one to pursue, because it had less deleterious impact on fishermen involved in that fishery—that was the kind of information they were being asked to produce by the people who were charged with doing the management. So, they really had to be able to do analyses across a variety of communities. Now, that means it would be bigger datasets. So, an economist, you know, that's the kind of research they've always done, is getting large datasets and then looking at patterns within the datasets. So, that's what the other social scientists were doing, too, And that's not—no, I mean obviously sociologists do that all the time, and certain kinds of anthropologists do too. So that meant that the people we hired were not people who only could do ethnographic research—although some may have been more comfortable with that or liked that better—they had to have a certain level of quantitative analysis skills and be willing to work with larger datasets in which you did cross-community as well as intra-community comparisons to try to assess what impacts, what the

impacts might be. I don't know, from my point of view, I was always—I understood that and I would always say to people that that's the kind of stuff that people have to be doing. So, I would say most of the people who were hired understood that and were perfectly okay with that, that that's what they would be doing. People also were free, to a certain extent, to identify particular problems within their region that they wanted to get more information on and which might lead them to actually go in to visit some of these communities and to make contacts with people and to do one-on-one interviewing with people, and to get that local-level experience and perception of the experience of people, which they then could use to illuminate what they were discovering when they were doing—identifying patterns, you know, at a higher level of aggregation of data and information. I think most people really felt you had to combine both those things. You needed to both get information at the individual level—maybe you had a subset of ten or fifteen fishermen or processors or whatever in a particular segment of the industry—and you would do intensive interviews with those people using the same questions or approach or get people to talk about the same set of issues so you could compare across those individuals their experiences, but then relate them to some other kind of information you were collecting about them.

**RS:** Well, I wanted to ask you about, you know, anthropologists' expectation of getting to go out and do fieldwork. How did that—were there any complication within NOAA or among fishing communities since there hadn't been a lot of anthropologists doing that? And I'm thinking particularly if people feel like they own a relationship with a community or with fishermen, you know.

**SAJ:** Oh, I know... Yeah, okay. I don't think there was. I think that the trust issue—I mean, after all, the agency has the ability to eliminate people's employment, in a way. Through strict regulatory actions they can take away the ability of someone to earn a living by saying, "We're closing down that fishery." Okay, so that means that there can be a lot of hostility, understandably, on the part of fishermen against the agency, because of that power the agency has over their ability to make a livelihood in some areas. So, you certainly would encounter sometimes, in talking to people, a distaste for the agency and a reluctance to talk to you as an employee of that agency. You had to work hard on your [laughter] your personal skills and your ability to convince people to talk to you even though you happened to be working for the agency. So, for those who have actually carried out their own research—as opposed to hiring a contractor and the contractor does that part of the work and they report back to you with their final product, of which people do a lot of that, too—but if you were carrying out your own, you really needed to spend some time developing relationships and overcoming the suspicion that you aren't going to be doing them damage in some way as a result of that. There's always this thing about protecting people's identity and so forth, but there's always that tension...there's always that tension in this research.

**RS:** Well, that goes back to your point about working for the government being kind of a learning experience [laughter].

**SAJ:** Yeah...yeah. But that's historically not an unknown tension in the field of anthropology. We're all taught basic field courses about examples of ethnographers who worked in communities in the Pacific, and then the Japanese came in and the war took over the community

and executed people because they said, "oh, you know, I was a friend of the American anthropologist." I mean, that kind of thing. So, one's trained to be sensitive to that and the need to protect the participants in one's research from possible reprisals and things. Obviously there are degrees of, depending on what you're doing—degrees to which that may become an issue and it just so happens that as an agency social scientist, you are working for an entity that has the power to affect people's—powerfully affect people's daily lives. So, that's just the way it is. It has some limitations.

**RS:** Well, I wanted to ask your thoughts also on—since you saw a sort of great increase in the use of anthropologists and their work at the agency, did you feel like anthropologists, or see that anthropologists were actually being able to contribute more and more to decision-making?

**SAJ:** Well, that's a good question. First thing, let me say, it's not just anthropologists, because some of the people are sociologists or had a more interdisciplinary degree—although probably, you know, percentage-wise, there were more fisheries anthropologists than fisheries...other social sciences, of other disciplines. But I just want to make that clear, that it's not just anthropologists who had been hired to do this kind of research within the context of this program and the agency. Okay, so that said...Say again, I'm sorry, what you want me to comment on.

**RS:** What your perspective was, over time, about their contribution to decision-making.

**SAJ:** Ah yeah, contribution to decision-making. Well, that's kind of a hard question [laughter]. Hard to know... You see, the decision-making process—the actual choice of management plans and so forth—is made by a quasi-governmental entity called the U.S. Fisheries Management Council who are made up of appointees by state governors and by representatives of the agency and the national—and the Coast Guard and all this kind of stuff. They have assigned—they hire, appoint committees to advise them on special topics, and in the end it becomes—it's a partially scientific, it's supposed to be scientific-based management. It is certainly scientific-based management, but it's also political. And so they take under advisory the kinds of reports that would be prepared by the social scientists in certain areas that they're asked to write reports on and make assessments of the impact of some specific components of the management plan. Then, they may accept those or ignore them. It's hard to say, to make a general statement, on this rather complex process that unfolds. There certainly were increased positive support kinds of voices, like Steve Murawski when he became—rose to a higher position as the administrator, senior administrator of NOAA—not of NOAA, of NMFS. He was certainly supportive of the social science, but I don't know what happened, you know; when he stepped down, it passed to other people and they weren't necessarily, have the same understanding. You'd have to talk to people who have been there over the last five years, I think, get their view on those things. What can I say, during the first nine years, there evolved a greater acceptance of what we were charged with doing, and what we could produce, and a recognition of its usefulness in some areas. But it's been a constant uphill battle, and there were a couple, particularly Katrina, there was a big bump because of Katrina and because of what we had at that point just before Katrina hit, and what we were able to do with that—the information we were able to provide. People recognized that, it got visibility—visibility it hadn't had before. Did that lead to more funding and more hiring? Not really [laughter]...Not really. It led to, I think maybe, sometimes there wasn't an



increase in that basic million dollars, but there was maybe a little more willingness—at least in some of the regional offices, to program some of their other money in support of these kinds of activities. Maybe a little more money in the budget coming from higher up, the money that was distributed out of the Office of Science and Technology to the regions. I don't know what those figures would be now, if you did an assessment of the amount of money that we had in the budget when I left and the—well, from that original million dollars, the inflationary differences in the value of that money then and the value of that money now, and has there really been an increase?...and my guess is, maybe not.

**RS:** Well, funding is always problematic.

**SAJ:** Funding is problematic. It determines what you're able to do. We had that awful recession in 2008 and that led to a decrease in funding and some restrictions on what one could do, and we were just beginning to climb a little bit out of that actually, when I retired. So, I was there—at the end of the time I served was when we went through a major national, global, financial crisis. That had a big impact on funding issues. Regardless of whether people thought we were doing the most [Laughter] wonderful stuff in the world, here was this big crisis, the financial crisis that just meant budgets were problematic for everybody. Separating those things now—

**RS:** Let me ask you about a slightly different topic. You had mentioned about doing a lot of outreach and going to conferences. What is your impression about the interest within the discipline of anthropology in fisheries?

**SAJ:** Oh, I think within the discipline of anthropology, there's quite a lot of interest. You go to the applied meetings and there will be lots of sessions that were fisheries-focused in one form or another. Not just all of us, because we had travel money, so everyone was encouraged to go and participate and give papers about what we were doing. And we would get together as a group and maybe even have a special planning meeting for our agency people as part of what was going on at the triple A [American Anthropological Association] because we could all get together, since we were going there. People who were in academic anthropology, working in different agencies and so on—I mean, in different universities—would also be giving papers, and some of these were people who were our collaborators, or people who got contracts to do research that we needed to have done, and others were not. They were people who were just interested in doing work. Fisheries anthropology in academia had had a blossoming back in the 1980s maybe, there was a period when there was quite a bit done. Then it seemed to kind of lose favor, probably because there wasn't funding. I mean, the availability of funding is what drives this stuff. No matter where it comes from, it has to come from somewhere. Then a resurgence—when we got really active in the agency it became the...NOAA particularly, and the National Marine Fisheries Service part of NOAA, had a substantial coterie of social scientists. So, when you looked across other federal agencies, we were high up there in terms of that kind of activity going on there. It gave us visibility amongst social scientists who were interested in possibly doing—working for the federal government.

**RS:** And you had mentioned earlier that you were able to have interns. Did you see an interest in working at NOAA and working as an anthropologist career-wise within anthropology?

**SAJ:** Yes...yes. Working—definitely there were those who got these...It was some anthropologists, but some of these interns were out of other disciplinary backgrounds. I forget the name of it. There's actually a program that brings in advanced graduate students every year, and they get to wander around and decide who they want to work with. It was kind of like a sorority or a fraternity rush, you know. They would come in and then everyone who was interested in snagging one of these talented young people to work with them for the year would make a presentation. They had sessions when you got up and made a ten minute, fifteen minute presentation to the assembled students, trying to convince them that you were the most interesting place and person to work with and you had the most interesting opportunities for them [laughter]. And then you crossed your fingers and hoped that you succeeded in attracting somebody. So, there was that source of potential people. And then there were others, too. There were even undergraduates we'd get occasional undergraduate students...Ph.D. students—I had one guy that we got through one of these programs who got his doctorate at the University of Georgia, but he started his dissertation research using, studying aspects of the agency. He invited me to be on his dissertation committee and ultimately he finished his degree and then ended up working not with us, but with another federal agency. So, we had those kinds of situations as well. People came in not just through this—this is terrible, I'm blocking the name of this particular program that—

**RS:** The internship program?

**SAJ:** Yeah, the internship program...But there were other ways that young people would end up coming and doing an internship—paid internship, not just unpaid internship.

**RS:** Well, it sounds like you were really able to attract the cream of the crop if you wanted to.

**SAJ:** Well, we were able to get some good people, yes...yes. You know it's—yes, I guess that's enough to say about that.

**RS:** [Laughter] Well, let me ask you a little bit about oral history. I know you started the Local Fisheries Knowledge Project. Say a little bit about the genesis of that.

**SAJ:** Oh, okay. Well, that began in the early—when I first was hired and trying to figure out what I was supposed to do that first year, I was listening carefully to people around me trying to understand everything that went on and who did what. I would hear these conversations going on, and one of these conversations was the one about how the fishermen all hate us, and that has to do with the regulatory power of the agency to affect them. Another conversation that was prevalent at the time had to do with recognition that a lot of employees of the agency—as all federal agencies—were getting older and were going to retire. Who was going to be hired to replace them? How are you going to recruit the next generation of fisheries scientists of all kinds, let alone social kinds? And managers. So, that was another big concern, was how to let young people know here is something you might think about as a career option. I was aware of projects that had gone on in Appalachia that had taken oral history work into the high schools and trained high school students to go out and document their own communities. I thought to myself, gosh,

maybe we could do something like that, where we would do outreach into fishing communities that would present a different picture of the agency than just people who come in and tell you you can't fish [laughter]. There are other aspects to this agency and what it does. So, an outreach function. And then also, a way to do that might be to work with youngsters at the high school level, teaching them how to document lives of people in their fishing communities, you know, going to fishing communities. And then in the same process, begin to expose them to career possibilities in the agency that for them, their futures weren't necessarily going to be actively fishing, but there are a whole lot of career opportunities that were related to fishing that would keep them in contact with the ocean and the fishing way of life, but doing other kinds of jobs. So, those were the kinds of things I was thinking about, and I talked to Mark Holliday about that—who was my boss at the time and had hired me—I wrote a proposal and he was interested. At that point, we had money to spend because we hadn't hired everybody and there were still these funds. I thought, well, I don't know—I mean, I don't have the contacts at the local level, so I need to find someone who does. I also talked to—not just to Mark, but the head of our office—thinking about where did he think would be the best place to go, what region of the country would do the most good for the agency. He said why either Alaska or New England because those are the areas where the fishermen are most reactive to what we're doing—we have a lot of trouble --regulatory, because they just don't like being regulated and it's a big issue. I thought, well, Alaska's a long way away—I'll pick New England because you can get up there more easily from Washington. And then I had a friend who was the head of a private foundation that did outreach into the public schools, and so I got a hold of her. I knew they had a program in New England and said, "Would you be willing to collaborate because we need to have someone who has contacts at the local school level and we don't have that." They got involved and we picked two high schools in Maine—Jonesport-Beals is one of them, and Ellsworth was the other one, which is near Acadia National Park. They both were interested, the high schools were interested, the teachers were interested, and they were actually really different high schools. One was quite small, like a hundred students, and the other one was like the county high school, so it brought in people from all kinds of small places and it had about 800 students [laughter]. It wasn't that big either, but nonetheless, it was bigger than the other one. They made it a project for the whole tenth grade for that year in the larger high school, and we began working with them to develop this thing. We'd train the kids and they would pick the people and go out and interview and document the lives of people working in marine fisheries in their communities. And that was the genesis of it, and it was working with those teachers that—again, it was just this kind of hesitancy because of the view of the agency as not a good agency. But it was when the teachers realized when we met with them as—we had a workshop—when we were able to get them to understand that they had control over this project, that they could decide what areas to explore with people and how to ask the questions and so on. What we would do is teach them how to do that. They had a lot of freedom in how to direct it --and suddenly they lit up and said, "This is great, we're going to do it." That was the beginning of the project, and it turned out to have this marvelous effect. People heard about it and lots of people contacted us wanting to do similar things in their community. So, it is something about going out and talking to people, and letting them tell their story, and recording it in their own words, and then making that available to the community—to the world. People love it [laughter]. They really like it. It was also viewed—had evoked this really positive response within the agency as well. It was this thing that people could be happy about, and point to, and it didn't seem to have anything to do with

regulating people, and it was seen as a very positive thing. So, it certainly had that effect of providing a different point of contact with the agency for fishing communities who decided to get involved in this project—

**RS:** Did the number of schools keep expanding?

**SAJ:** —A very different thing than telling them they can't catch fish, you know [laughter]. It ended up being carried on, particularly in Jonesport-Beals; they picked it up and did it themselves for a few years after we ended the pilot project. The pilot project was a two year project. At that point it was called *Local Fisheries Knowledge*, was I think the name we gave to the oral history project. It morphed into *Voices from the Fisheries*. After that pilot project ended, I continued to work with Jonesport-Beals for a couple more years. They continued to do it on their own and the local citizens got involved, and they set up a thing with the public library, and it became something very good for them.

In the meantime, Patricia Pinto da Silva, my colleague in the Northeast Fisheries Science Center in Woods Hole, got very interested in it—in expanding beyond what we had started. She was the one who really initially said "let's do something with this idea" and there are always, she pointed out, there are always oral histories out there that other people have collected. They should be housed somewhere to save them and be made available for the world to see, should they want to. She's the one who had that insight—I'm not the one who said, "Oh gee, there are all these existing oral histories." I had done this earlier project, and we had developed a database, and our idea was to make these things available to the world through an agency-supported database with a web interface. So, what Patricia did is say, "Hey look, we should be getting all these other people out there who have collected oral histories in fishing communities and with fishermen, and get them to give us copies of those—donate copies of those to make them available also through this web interface and be put in our database." I thought that was a great idea and so I began working with her, and then we got Bonnie McCay at Rutgers, and at MIT, Madeleine Hall-Arber, we all got together and had a long discussion at one of the applied anthropology meetings, and they were really enthusiastic, and so that was how that began, and then there was a lot of work—working with technical people in the agency. We had to figure out aspects, that we had to develop a web interface that would work with this wider purpose in mind, and work on the database, and a whole lot of work that was involved in that, that was carried out in headquarters where I was. And then contacting people who would put out the word. We knew there were people who had wonderful collections and seeing if they would be willing to donate copies of them, or subsets of them. People began to come forward and do just exactly that. So, that was how it got started. [Laughter] I guess one of the things I feel proudest of and happiest about and has clearly been a lasting contribution to the agency and beyond the agency is this *Voices from the Fisheries* project. And it's still going on, and that's great.

**RS:** And as part of that—I mean, I know you did the training for the schools, but you established oral history standards, right?

**SAJ:** Yeah. Well, we developed kind of informational sheets and things for the kinds of information on how to go about doing it... We wrote a *Voices from the Fisheries* oral history

handbook, you know—that was actually, the primary audience that probably we had in mind was teachers because we had a lot of stuff in it about how to train your students to do these things in classrooms, training exercises and so forth, but it's useful for others as well. That actually came directly out of the initial *Local Fisheries Knowledge* pilot project, that handbook, but then at the very end of that it was revised and eventually we called it *Voices from the Fisheries*. Its' genesis was it that project at the high schools. And then at the same time there was this other NOAA Preserve America thing got going. Now, that was not at our agency level—that was at the level of NOAA, that money. The people who were involved with that were very supportive of funding oral history projects within the agency to document the agency, not inside the agency so much as documenting within the agency. And they—usually with partnering with something outside the agency, they also had to involve someone in the agency in NOAA. So, they funded oral history projects, as well, and I think continue to do so. Of course, I haven't looked at their grant site for a while. But they had also been a supporter of projects that had been done, that have ended up in the *Voices from the Fisheries* database.

**RS:** Well, it is exciting when you see something that you started take off and take on a life of its' own, I'm sure.

**SAJ:** Oh it is, it's great [laughter]. It's great to see that.

**RS:** What did you—you know, in the process of going through all of this, which took a number of years—what lessons did you learn that you would think would be valuable to someone who might be starting out and trying to get something underway that they would hope to be permanent?

**SAJ:** Persistence. You have to have persistence. Nothing is going to happen quickly within a large institution. I think that's so whether it's a federal government agency or a state government entity or a university or any kind of large organization, nothing is done on your own. Everything is going to be a product of the efforts of a variety of people at different levels in the institution. So, you really have to think carefully about developing cooperative relationships with other people. It's just the way it happens. It's the way it operates. And so, the other thing is to think through as well as you can—with yourself and perhaps working with a subset of other people—exactly what it is you want to accomplish and then writing it out in very clear, *short*, statements [laughter]. The other thing is that you can't—you have to have your bullet points, if you will. I mean, you have to be able to present your argument in a very clear and concise way because that's the way things happen, and people don't have time to read great tomes of stuff. They just don't do it. So, you have to be able to distill what you want to do, and to have a few talking points, a few bullet points, and then you have to be persistent in presenting that message over and over again. I guess the other thing is you have to analyze your organization you're working in to figure out who the key people are who have the ability to move it forward, whatever it is you're trying to do, because just like with Mark Holliday getting, finally succeeding in getting the initial funding for the program that now exists as part of NMFS—the Social Science Assessment Program—you know, it took him about five or six years to accomplish that. It was just by being repetitive, repetitive, over and over again. But then in the end, it was getting himself appointed into a position of power, if you will, to be able to set the terms of the budget or

be able to keep it from being excluded from the budget when things were moved forward to the next level. And so, you really have to figure out how these things come to fruition, whatever it is. You have to get sophisticated about how the internal operations of any organization that you're trying to get to adopt something, and figure out how to move it forward.

**RS:** And I'm sure that takes a while.

**SAJ:** It takes time; it's going to take time. Nothing's going to happen quickly.

**RS:** How long do you think it took—?

**SAJ:** It's very rare, let's just say that it's rare that anything would happen quickly. It's dogged persistence and a clear vision of what you want to do, and then dogged persistence.

**RS:** How long do you think it took you to kind of figure out NOAA enough to be able to anticipate how things would turn out, or know who was key to things?

**SAJ:** Probably a couple years. The first year, you know, the first six months you're desperate because you're trying to understand it and it was—you know, yes, there was some overlap with an academic institution, but you have to master this whole new language, bureaucratic language. It was just like learning Latin or something because everything is conducted in the capital first letters of whatever the thing is you're referring to, whether it's NAGPRA or NMFS or NOAA or whatever it is. Whether it's the legislation that lies, underlies what you do, and gives you the power to do it, you know, the legal authority to do it, or whether it's all the names of all these other agencies you work with—you know, they're all referred to by these acronyms, you know, IFQs and IPQs and NOAA and NMFS and on and on it goes. Well, you've got to master that language and I'll tell you, it's one thing that Trish and I published when we decided to write a historical documentation of how it was [that] sociocultural analysis became part of the National Marine Fisheries Service. On the first page of that we've got an acronym list that's practically a column long [laughter] -

**RS:** I know it was very helpful to me!

**SAJ:** —of all the acronyms we used in this paper, because that's the language. It's elaborate, it takes a while to begin to not sit there saying, I don't understand what these people are talking about [laughter].

**RS:** Well, you know, I was wondering, too—being new to the topic of marine science, was there any training that you took after you started that was helpful, or was it just kind of learning as you went?

**SAJ:** I would be handed manuals and say, read this [laughter]. You know, there were various things that I could read that would help me out in that regard. And the other thing was that they got me to do some visiting—you know, they had travel money so I went around to visit some of the regional science centers to introduce myself and meet people. Then I attended Fisheries

Management Council meetings when they were held closely, or the one up in New England that was always lots of fireworks going on. So, I began to develop some understanding of the different parts of the agency and how they functioned to conduct their job of doing fisheries management, as well as meeting people—putting faces to names. Reading management plans and reading other kinds of documents that were important to the mission of the agency so that I began to develop, you know, an understanding of how this all operated. So, it took a while. So that was just learning how the bureaucracy—what was the bureaucracy and what were its functions. What were the laws that gave it permission to do those jobs, in fact, directed it to do those jobs. And then reading ethnographies and things on fisheries that anthropologists or other fisheries social scientists had written, studies they'd done of different—like Jim Acheson's work on lobstermen in New England, Maine lobstermen, famous book you know. Reading those products by fellow anthropologists who had involved, their careers had been studying marine fisheries in some way, so I began to develop an information base about fisheries social science. There were conferences I attended, too. Actually, the agency underwrote the cost of a particular conference each year in which economists—mostly economists, but others would come together—would make presentations on the work they were doing. You got to meet people from around the agency and understand the kind of stuff that they were involved in and talk to them about it and hear their formal presentations on their research. That was another part of it.

**RS:** That makes me think of another question, and that is about information sharing. Did you find that you felt there was adequate information sharing, or that information was easily accessible while you were there?

**SAJ:** Gosh... Yeah, I think so. I didn't have a sense that people were withholding information.

**RS:** But it sounds like there were some structures in place, like that sponsored conference, to facilitate it.

**SAJ:** Yeah, that's right. No, there was an effort being made to—certainly in our areas. And the other thing is we all joined the National Marine Fisheries Association and they had a social science/economy section of that. That was a way to meet fisheries biologists and specialists from around the country, and we would attend those meetings, too. Some people gave presentations, formal presentations at those meetings. So, you began to learn about fisheries biologists and the research that they do. You know, and that was interesting—I always had an interest in biology growing up and I found it informative and interesting to learn about what they were doing and how they did it. All of that helps you talk to your colleagues who come from different disciplinary backgrounds. I mean, that's part of—is learning the language so you can learn to talk to them and not necessarily expecting them to know about you and what you do, but finding a way to talk to them on their own terms.

**RS:** It must have been a great change, coming from an academic environment to one in which people really didn't know what your discipline represented.

**SAJ:** [Laughter] Well no... I don't know, maybe. I didn't think so—I'll tell you one thing that was really nice about working in the federal government as opposed to academia was first of all,

there were more financial resources available to do things, and so it was very nice to be able to be part of the process of approving funds for other people to support their research, and then also to have some resources to do my own. Travel resources, so we could go to more meetings and things and talk with people as well as getting our groups together to have workshops to work on projects we needed to work on for our own work. That was great. And the other thing was to be in a position to be able to work on things that—you know, like Katrina. Here's this horrible thing that happened that affected so much of the country, and to be able to be involved in some small way of, in our case, collecting information that might help people in the rebuilding of the fishing communities. So, you could be down there on the spot within a few weeks of that disaster happening, and be there and see what was happening and how it was affecting people. That sense of being closer to the front lines of action as opposed to being in an academic environment.

**RS:** But was it also feeling like you could make a difference?

**SAJ:** Yeah...yeah, that's right. It was like the—actually, the oral history project, feeling like we were making a difference. We're out there doing something that really had a positive impact at a local level in the lives of some young people and other people and lives of the community who began to see their community differently as a result of introducing this program into that community and they took it over and did it themselves. I mean, it was theirs, it became their own thing. That had a very positive impact in that community.

**RS:** It sounds like it was positive internally, as well.

**SAJ:** Yes, that's right. That's right. So, those are all good things. That is not something—it's not that I couldn't maybe have done something like that. I mean the Appalachian oral history projects that inspired me to suggest this for NMFS within the fisheries arena, obviously those had had positive impacts in those communities, too, and I could have done something like that here. But this was just, you know, in a new environment, in different—a broader impact, perhaps...I don't know. And then after I retired, I helped in a couple of workshops—one in Florida, one out in Astoria and the West Coast, but one of my former colleagues had gotten money and was putting together—had put together a cooperative project with other agency people and non-agency people to do oral histories on the West coast...Suzanne Russell doing that. I was brought in to help with the training on that. You know, that's something that's extended beyond what I have done while I was working for the agency. So, there's a big theme in these kinds of projects is useful things to continue doing in different places.

**RS:** I'm sure that's very gratifying.

**SAJ:** It's very gratifying. Yes it is.

**RS:** Well, you've certainly had an interesting second career working with NOAA [laughter].

**SAJ:** [Laughter] Well, I've had a—I feel really blessed in a way. I had no idea what would happen when I hired onto that job, but it turned out to be a wonderful experience for me, and a great time because you're helping to start something that didn't exist before. You know, you get



to do so many different things. I think later it becomes sort of routinized, you know, for people. It gets established and people say, well, this is what this is all about is X, Y and Z. But starting out, it's like nobody knows what it's all about [laughter]. It's a series of decisions that are taken over time, and establishing that and it's sort of interesting because this oral history thing, which was just something that occurred to me, might be useful for outreach activities. And we did some job fairs in the high school and stuff, too, to present at least to that set of kids, here's some things you might think about to keep you involved with the marine environment. Who would have known that that would have taken off and become morphed into this *Voices from the Fisheries* thing, which has become this established program for the agency, and it links into things much broader than just the agency because in the country, there's been this big growth in oral history stuff. Since I've come back here, the University of Kentucky, where I have an emeritus status, has a very large oral history center—The Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, which is part of the library. One of my former colleagues, John vanWilligen, who started the oral history program for the Society for Applied Anthropology, is busy doing the oral histories of applied anthropologists around the country. John and I have collaborated and I'm just going on the board for that [laughter] for that program. Some of these fisheries anthropologists were interviewed for that collection, and so we're working out sharing those with the *Voices from the Fisheries* collection, as well. I guess the point I'm making is, is that there's been this big growth and interest in oral history just as an activity and a way to document local history of all kinds—whether the local history of a professional society or the local history of a town or a local history of fishing. This has really become something that you find going on all over the country. And National Marine Fisheries Service is right there in the middle of it [laughter].

**RS:** Well, thanks to you, actually.

**SAJ:** Well, me and some of my colleagues. But yeah, I mean, I started out and I had no idea—you just don't know, it sounded interesting at the time [laughter]. You have a limited view, you think, oh, this might have an impact, at least it's a pilot—we can see if it has the potential. And yes, it did turn out to have this really much greater potential that I could envision at that time.

**RS:** Well, our time is almost up, but I wanted to ask you if there's anything that we haven't talked about that you would like to include.

**SAJ:** Oh, my goodness... Well, I guess maybe I could just make a final statement and that is that I certainly hope the agency is able to continue and grow in the future, it's social science capability, because—I guess in the words of Dick Schaefer, who was someone who hired the very first non-economist social scientist back in the early 1970s, you know, the agency doesn't manage fish really, it manages people [laughter]. If you're managing people, then you have to have a capacity to understand those people and the things that they do that are of interest to what your job is. And so, it really is a critical part of what needs to happen with the agency, and I continue to believe that. It remains a kind of constant problem of convincing new people who think that fisheries is mostly about fish, that it's really very much about people. That is an essential ingredient of what happens with the agency, is managing people. And that's what the little part of it that I had something to do with, I hope made some contributions towards that goal of understanding that part of what the agency does, and continues to do. Anyway, that's it

[laughter].

**RS:** Well, I appreciate your time and you had a lot of interesting information, and I'm sure this is going to be of great interest to people.

**SAJ:** Okay, great. Well, I'm happy to do it.

**RS:** So, I'm going to disconnect the recording—I'm not sure if you'll drop off, but I don't think so, so hang on.

**SAJ:** Okay.