

Name of person Interviewed: Carol Brown [CB] and Pamela Brown [PB]

Note: Discussing fishermen Frank Brown Sr. and Jr., CB's father-in-law and husband;
PB's grandfather and father

Facts about this person:

Age (if known) CB: 70; PB: 44

Sex Female

Occupation Fisherman (Frank Brown Sr. and Jr.)

Home port: Gloucester (Frank Brown Jr. and Sr.)

Hail Port: (port fished from): Gloucester, Rhode Island (Frank Brown Jr. and Sr.)

Residence (Town where lives)

Ethnic background (if known)

FB Sr. and Jr.—Portuguese; CB—Irish; PB—Irish/Portuguese

Interviewer: Janice Gadaire Fleuriel [JGF]

Transcriber: Janice Gadaire Fleuriel

Place interview took place: New Bedford Harbormaster House

Date and time of interview: Saturday, Sept. 23, 2006

INDEX (minutes:seconds) / KEYWORDS

KEYWORDS: Gloucester; Rhode Island; Portugal; Azores; Trawlers; Draggers; Eastern Rig; Fishing vessel construction; Georges Bank; Dual engine wooden schooners; Dory fishing; Virginia; Cape Cod; Superstitions; Regulations; Communications; Fishing family life

[Start of]

- 00:00 JF introducing tape; Carol's background, born Lowell, 100% Irish; Married husband, his father was fisherman, he also—100% Portuguese;
Reading her write-up about Frank Sr. (father-in-law): coming to this country from Pico Island, Azores, sister here and married to boat captain; Getting married, having children, building boat; Remarried after first wife died, had more children; Highliner; Frank would turn off lights when fleet got to fishing grounds, move to own spot, never talk on radio about fish he was catching;
- 05:01 Frank Sr. impeccable dresser, always went out fishing in suits; Bringing Stetson hats on boats, stomping one and letting it blow off to sea when something went wrong; Smart though limited education, able to retire to house he built in Florida age 50; Honest captain, didn't take more share than should, so always had good men and good twine men; High expectations for self and men
- 9:36 If dreamed of deceased first wife Olivia while on boat, would move boat even if meant waking crew or in midst of good catch, would often catch better, dreams important in Portuguese culture; Never talked on radio about fish, other boats would share where catches good, they didn't like him much for that but reason he as a highliner
- 11:20 Frank Sr's. early attempts to come to U.S. from island in Azores; Family and village gave money at age 17, he paid back and sent more money/clothes after came to U.S., thread and yarn for women; Sister's family's boat, Emelina[?] Gulat, being restored in Essex, Mass.
- 14:00 Pamela reading her account Frank Sr., more detailed of CB's above; Includes dates of immigration, marriages to both wives, of boats built, one named after each wife; First fishing was dory trawling on Little Ruth out of Gloucester; Boats he built were dual engine-sail schooners, wooden;
- 16:35 PB reading continued; Catch amounts 1st boat's 1st launch; 1st boat one of earlier draggers, Frank pioneer new method, no longer sending dories off main boat to fish by hand lines; Dragged fall to spring from VA to north of cape, following fish; Dragged day and night;
- 19:40 FB's summers swordfishing; Selling first boat, having next built; Dates or retiring and then moving to Florida;
- 21:25 PB's research methods for Frank Sr. story; Now working on father's fishing experiences, wants to get accurate before shares; Dad's best friend lost at sea

- weekend she was born, always heard about it on birthday; Grew up in suburbs, Chelmsford, other kids thought "commercial fishing" meant doing commercials;
- Didn't really know how father's fishing worked, not allowed on boats he was on because female, always thought he dropped a pole over the side;
- 24:06 PB would have liked see how fishing worked, but couldn't because female; Dad always home Christmas, Easter; Would go out on a Friday, no superstition about that; CB would drive him down to RI, 2 hours, sometimes get home and get call to go back and pick up, not going out;
- 26:15 PB's father had like 2 separate lives, never came home smelling like fish, kept oilers in trunk; Never went on their beach vacations, said wanted his feet on ground after looking at sea all around so much; Gloucester his world; In WWII, then flew twice more, age 68 to bury father in Florida, one more time to see Emily, father's 2nd wife; Then when back happy to have life be crossing back and forth over bridge between Gloucester and Chelmsford; Frank Jr. military police WWII, story of racial incident at an officer's club he worked in Germany; Always happy to be first mate, not own boats; PB has his Georges Banks maps with his markings;
- 30:00 Dad owned Cameron's restaurant with siblings, later a gas station, but always ended up going back out to sea; Pictures of Frank Sr's. boats;
- 32:40 Frank Jr. started facing regulations, Russian fleet issue especially, 70s; Frustrating way it destroyed livelihood for local fishermen; For them, it was beliefs, values, way of life; Frank Jr's. first love ocean, loved family took but...; Sometimes gone a month, if not great catch, unload and sell, call home to say going back out; Story of PB calling him ship-shore once old enough to realize he had dangerous job, there was a storm, convinced mother to call, PB asking Dad come home, when he got home said never do again, mainly because everyone out there would be listening in to their private business; PB never wants see movie *Perfect Storm*;
- [End of Interview]

TRANSCRIPT

[Start of]

[00:00]

JGF: This is Janice Fleuriel. It is Saturday, September 23, 2006. And I'm interviewing Carol Brown and her daughter Pamela Brown at the Working Waterfront Festival. And if I understand, Carol, we're going to talk first about your father-in-law's fishing experience.

CB: Yes.

JGF: Ok. And could I ask first of all for a little family history, Carol, of where and when you were born?

CB: I was born in Lowell, Mass., January 19, 1936.

JGF: OK. And then you, obviously married your husband, whose father was a fisherman?

CB: That's right.

JGF: OK. And what's your ethnic background?

CB: I'm Irish. My husband was Portuguese. I'm 100 percent Irish. He was 100 percent Portuguese.

[pause for cell phone]

JGF: ...read something that's been written up, it looks like.

CB: That's right.

JGF: OK. Go ahead.

CB: Captain Frank Brown, Senior, born to... I'm sorry, I had the wrong one.

[Paused/looking through papers she brought.]

OK.

My name is Carol Brown. I married Frank Brown. And his father, Captain Frank Brown, Senior, came to this country around age seventeen with a twenty-five dollar gold piece. Frank came from Pico Island in the Azores. His sister Mary married Captain Manuel Gulat[?], was living in this country when he arrived. She was the only family he had in Gloucester. Manuel Gulat was a very smart captain. He knew his trade well. He knew currents, winds, navigation. You must realize that at the time that they were fishing there was no radar, no depth finders, nothing, in the early twenties.

And Frank fell in love with Olivia Sears, and married, producing four children, Madeline[?], Louis[?], Richard, Frank, my husband.

Around age twenty-seven, young Olivia came down with a strep throat and died. Penicillin hadn't been discovered yet. Before Olivia died, however, he built a fishing boat, ninety-three feet long, with engine power and sailboat. And named her Olivia. He kept the name a secret from her until the christening of the boat, when he, threw back the covers and she saw what the boat had been named.

JGF: Oh, so it was a surprise!

CB: It was a surprise for her and she was quite pleased.

Frank remarried a few years later after Olivia died. To Emily, and named a boat after her that was a hundred and four feet long. The production from that marriage gave then three children, Robert, Olivia and Norman.

Frank Senior was a highliner, making some of the best money in Gloucester. He had the best of men on his boats. The best of twine and, men who iced the fish. Engineers. Cooks. They brought in the most—one of the most monies—of the fishing catch.

He lost—he was caught in a hurricane crossing the Bay of Fundy, and the Grand Banks, during one of the storms. He fished out of New York, Boston, Fulton Market in New York.

When Frank fished he would go out with the fishing fleet, position his boat at the edge of the fleet. He would turn off all his lights while the other boats had theirs on. And he would quietly leave the other boats without turning his lights on and sail to the fishing grounds, where he would catch all kinds of fish by himself.

JGF: [laughs]

CB: He never spoke on the radio about his position of where he was fishing. Or talk about his catches.

Frank senior was a young immigrant child who built two fishing boats, approximately ninety-seven and a hundred and four feet long, produced five children, retired at fifty to a winter home in Florida.

He was president of Our Lady of Good Voyage Festival.

JGF: Wow.

[05:01]

CB: I think he had a very productive... There's a great deal more that could be said about him. But I highlighted... He was a very interesting man.

JGF: Yeah. Did he tell—he must have been a storyteller himself. Did he tell stories?

CB: His son was the storyteller. My husband was the storyteller.

And he told me about his father.

And, the father was impeccable in his dress. And even going out fishing he would bring Stetson hats, maybe ten or fifteen Stetson hats. And if something went wrong, he would throw it on the ground and stamp on it and the wind would blow it into the sea.

JGF: [laughs]

CB: And he did this [laughs] it was a ritual. I don't know whether he dressed—put fishing pants on or, went out with his suit on.

But he was quite a—he was a very smart man with a limited education. But he certainly—I mean, we have American born children, American educated children, and how many of them retire at fifty to a house they built in Florida?

JGF: Exactly. Yeah. Wow.

CB: And live well.

JGF: Huh. So this is the picture then of Frank and Olivia.

PB: Yes. Their wedding picture.

JGF: Oh, and this is Olivia launching the vessel. Oh, that's so nice.

CB: She reminds me of Eleanor Roosevelt. The dress and [?]

JGF: Exactly. That's so beautiful.

JGF: Do you remember any other stories that your husband told? About him or...?

CB: My husband was a very interesting man. He was a fisherman.

JGF: Oh he was?

CB: He wasn't a captain of his boat. And he didn't build boats. But, he was a very strong, disciplined, thoughtful, caring individual. And, we're trying—because, he doesn't... I mean, he owned a restaurant and he owned a gas station. But like his father, he didn't build fishing boats, and bring in tremendous catches. So it's easy to write about the father.

JGF: Yeah.

CB: Whereas it's not tangible what you can write about Frank.
I mean, like, one time at the Officer's Club. One of the things—should I tell [asking daughter]? Or should we wait for later?

PB: We can wait. We're going to do one about him too.

JGF: Oh, OK.

CB: So that's about it for...

PB: Anything else about Grandpa you want to share?

CB: He was impeccable. His clothes. He had the children out shining his white wall tires.

JGF: Wow. I imagine his boats were kept that way.

CB: Kept in tiptop condition.
And the men who we worked with... Some captains take a larger share than they should. Anybody, any fisherman listening will know this. Not all fishermen are honest. But this man was very honest. And for that reason he got the best of men. And plus, another interesting thing he did. Was the men would be working very hard, four hours on, four hours off, around the clock. And they'd be coming home to bring the catch into port. And they'd be on the deck and they'd be mending nets and doing different jobs.

JGF: Right.

CB: And he'd walk among the men, the father would. And they'd say, "Hi Cap. What do you think of the catch?" And.... "You can do a little better. You can do a little more. You can do a little better." He never—it was always, "You can exert yourself more." And that's what was true of him. He always produced and did the best. And he expected it from his men.

JGF: Yeah.

CB: And, they made very good money with him.

JGF: That is great.

CB: Yeah. Very good money.

JGF: You said he had the best of men. And you mentioned twine men. Are they the ones who mend the nets?

CB: Mend the nets, yeah. They're very important.

[09:36]

PB: What about when he would dream of Olivia?

CB: Oh yeah. Another thing he did, his first wife Olivia died. He loved her very much. And... If he was out to sea and catching a lot of fish, and he dreamt of her, he would move. He would get up from his sleep and he would get the gang up and he'd say, "Move the boat."

JGF: Huh!

CB: He never—even if he was catching a tremendous amount of fish at that spot.

JGF: Did he feel like she was sort of warning him or something?

CB: We don't know. But some of the Portuguese people are very much into dreams, and.... Dreams are very important to them. They analyzed them, and... Not being Portuguese, not being brought up Portuguese, I don't know that aspect of the culture.

JGF: Yeah.

CB: But. Whenever he dreamt of her he would move the boat. And he would catch even more, where he went.

JGF: Oh! Interesting.

CB: Not all the time. But, a lot of the times.

JGF: Whatever it was about, he always came home from every trip. So.

CB: Yeah.

JGF: That was funny about him leaving with no lights on.

CB: Oh, yes! Yeah. And he never talked on the radio. All the fishermen talk, and they'll say, "I'm catching all kinds of fish and everything. Frank's father never did that."

JGF: No. No.

CB: They didn't like him for it [laughs].

JGF: I bet they didn't!

CB: Because he'd be catching all kinds of fish and they wanted him to share it with them. But, that was the reason he was a highliner.

JGF: Yeah. Yeah.

[11:20]

PB: What about... You know, coming to the United States and how he wanted to, as such a young child?

CB: Oh, yes!

In Portugal... I don't know how true about the beatings he got, but... His father [coughing/taking a drink of water]... At age thirteen, fourteen, he started becoming interested in making money. And on Pico Island, there was no money, very, very very sparse. So anyways, he would run away from home. He'd take a dory and go to the neighboring island and try to get to the mainland. Try to work his way on a ship to America. So this went on for three or four years, five years. When he became seventeen, eighteen, his father went to the people in the town of Pico, neighbors, relatives and that. And got up the money for his sailing to America.

JGF: Huh!

CB: And he said, "Don't disgrace me and don't hurt these people. Because they're giving you everything they have. Which isn't much, but it's everything they have. You pay this bill back as soon as you get there." So anyways he came to America and he sent the money back. Plus, through the years, he sent his suits. He was well dressed. Custom made suits, whatever. And he sent clothes, and money. And what the women wanted mostly was thread and yarn. And what they would do if the suit didn't fit any of their friends and relatives, they would take the suit apart and remake it. They utilized everything. They never threw anything out.

JGF: Interesting. Huh. So he kept his connections. So he was the only one from his family to come.

CB: No, he had a brother Louis and a sister Mary. The Emelina[?] Gulat, in Essex, Mass. That's under construction, I'm pretty sure, that's his ship.

PB: Restoration.

CB: That's his ship or his relative's ship. His sister's ship.

JGF: And when you said he built his boats, literally he built it or did he commission somebody?

CB: He commissioned somebody. It's all in the information Pamela has on him.

[14:00]

[Pamela taking mic to give her presentation now.]

PB: Hello. My name's Pamela Brown. I was born in Lowell, Massachusetts to Frank Brown, Junior and Carol Woods Brown. My birth date is December 29th, 1962. Frank Brown was born on Pico Island in the Azores in Portugal in 1897. He immigrated to the United States in 1914 at the age of seventeen and settled in Gloucester, Massachusetts.

Frank Joined the Portuguese fleet dory trawling on the Little Ruth out of Gloucester, Massachusetts.

Frank Brown, at age twenty-three, married Olivia Sears, age twenty-five. Olivia was the daughter and Joseph and Emily Alvarez Sears, of 5 Silver Court, Gloucester, Massachusetts. They married at Our Lady of Good Voyage Church on March 25th, 1920. They lived at 5 Silver Court, Gloucester, Massachusetts, in the house where Olivia was born and raised.

On December 21st, 1926, at the age of twenty-nine, Frank Brown became a naturalized citizen. At that time, he and his wife Olivia had three children, twins Louis and Madeline, age six, and Richard age three. They continued to reside at 5 Silver Court, Gloucester, Massachusetts.

Captain Frank Brown traveled often to Essex, Massachusetts, to see his fishing vessel being built. Her keel was laid on March 9th, 1927, at the John F. James Shipyard in Essex, Massachusetts. On that day, the eighty-four feet hull of a durable wooden schooner began to take shape. When the fishing vessel was complete, its berth was 21.5 and depth 10.2, with two master sails and 150 horsepower engine.

On April 4th, 1927, Olivia Brown gave birth to her fourth child. And he was christened Frank Brown, Junior, named after his father. Frank, Junior would go up to follow his father's footsteps and become a commercial fisherman. That's my dad.

[16:35]

The fishing vessel was launched on August 27th, 1927 at 10 a.m. It was named for Captain Frank Brown's wife, Olivia Brown, who performed the christening.

On September 23rd, 1927, the Olivia Brown was hauled out on the Burnham railway in Gloucester, where she was fitted for dragging. On October 6th, 1927, her maiden fare brought 17,000 pounds of haddock, 12,000 pounds of cod, and 4,000 pounds of mixed fish to the Boston Fish Pier. By October 26th of that year, 1927, Captain Frank Brown and brought in over 170,000 pounds of fish, in only four fishing trips.

On April 22nd, 1929, at the age of thirty-four, Olivia Sears Brown died suddenly of a cerebral embolism at Addison Gilbert Hospital in Gloucester, Massachusetts.

Olivia was buried at Calvary Cemetery in Gloucester, Massachusetts on April 25th, 1929. At the time of her death, she had four young children, ages two through nine.

On April 29th, 1930, Frank Brown, age thirty-three, married Emily May Sears, age twenty-two. Emily was the daughter of Joseph and Emily Alvez Sears, and the sister of Olivia Sears Brown, deceased first wife of Frank Brown.

Emily became stepmother to her deceased sister's four children. The family resided at 7 Warren Street, Gloucester, Massachusetts.

And then, Frank and Emily went on to have three additional children.

The Olivia Brown was one of the earlier draggers. Captain Frank Brown, known as a nonconformist in the fishing fleet, was a pioneer of the new method which, during the nineteen thirties, entirely supplanted the old system of the mother ship sending out dories to fish by handline. Dragging was made possible by the availability of engines of increasing horsepower and compact size. Olivia Brown was upgraded from an original 150 horsepower diesel to 230 horsepower engine in the 1930s.

The Olivia Brown fished as a dragger from fall to spring, fishing off the Virginia Capes in the colder months and then coming north toward New York and ultimately to Massachusetts waters north of Cape Cod, following the fish.

Dragging was done day and night when underway, under engine, with a riding sail set as the Olivia Brown pulled her plate doors along the ocean floors, which kept the nets open.

[19:40]

Summers were spent swordfishing. Brown's Bank off Nova Scotia, and Georges Bank off Cape Cod were the waters where Captain Frank Brown maintained his record as highliner swordfisher.

In 1942, the Olivia Brown earned the name of King of the Draggers by breaking all existing records up that time, by stocking 124,000 dollars, with each member of the crew receiving 7,625 dollars for that year's work. In 1942.

In 1944 Captain Frank Brown sold the Olivia Brown to his first mate of twenty years, John Fergava[?]. The Olivia Brown was lost July 4th, 1953 while attempting to reach Halifax, Nova Scotia.

In 1944 Captain Frank Brown and others had a new fishing vessel built in Ipswich by W.A. Robertson, Incorporated. The fishing vessel had a 107 foot hull, berth 24, depth 11. It had 400 horsepower engine. Captain Brown's final command for his remaining twelve years at sea was the Emily Brown, named after his second wife.

Captain Frank Brown retired from the sea in 1952. The fishing vessel Emily Brown was sold to John Burke, then to Philip Felado[?], then to John Francis[?]. He and his wife Emily moved to St. Petersburg, Florida in 1955 and lived there until his death in 1968 at the age of seventy-one.

[21:25]

JGF: Wow! Now where does this, information—was it from, stories you heard, or did you have family documents?

PB: Family documentation. And I made copies of it. And I have pictures of the ship. And... You know, we just wanted to pass on the family history. It meant a lot to

my father. And... He was a wonderful storyteller and really brought everything to life. And... We didn't know my grandfather. I was born in '62 and by that point they were living in Florida. So it was basically information from my father. And, just, different writeups in books, which I gave you copies of.

JGF: Now you said, you're going to be coming back. Is that tomorrow, to do an interview on your father?

PB: No, another time. We really have to do some more research, to see, you know, which ships he was on. And.... You know, also, the different stories of...

JGF: Just to remember all the stories...

PB: Yeah. And to try to get it organized just in terms of some research with the newspapers. I mean... You know, one story that's important to really have accurate was that my dad's best friend, their boat sunk, the weekend that I was born.

JGF: Oh, my. Oh, and his friend wasn't saved?

PB: No.

CB: Everybody was lost.

PB: New York Harbor. So, it's important to, you know, really get that information right and accurate. Because, you know, every year, the celebration of my birthday I would also hear...

JGF: I bet.

CB: About the loss of his friend.

JGF: Right.

PB: Yeah.

JGF: Well you were probably a really good gift for him, then. Considering what else he had to deal with.

PB: Yeah.

CB: She has a sister. And the two of them, for him, oh.... They were the apple of his eye.

PB: Yeah. But yeah, we used to worry about him.
You know, growing up—because we grew up in the suburbs. We didn't grow up in Gloucester. We grew up in Chelmsford. So, you know, we'd say, "Commercial fisherman." They'd say, "Your dad makes commercials?" I'm like, "No. I don't think so." I always thought he dropped a fishing pole over the side of a boat. Because we were never allowed on the boats that my father fished on.

JGF: Is that because you were a female?

PB: Yes.

CB: And they had no bathroom facilities.

[24:06]

PB: Oh, no. Dad always told me that it was a superstition.

CB: Oh, that's right. The superstition.

JGF: Yeah, as a female, I wouldn't want to be on a boat that had no bathroom facilities.

CB: But I wanted to go see what it looked like and where he'd bunk. No. Nope. Nope. We could look at it. But, couldn't go near it. Because we were girls.

JGF: It's interesting to me. I know that—Well, I had one college professor who wrote a book called *Folklore and the Sea*. And that was a big one. But, that they—they wouldn't let women on but they would name the boat after them.

PB: Sure.
JGF: So the women are sort of with you in spirit. [laughs]
PB: Right. Right.
CB: When you think of it, the front of the boat, usually a woman's boat.
PB: Yeah. So...
JGF: So these were the old... Frank, Senior's boats were the old schooners with sails.
PB: Yes.
CB: And the engines. Dual.
JGF: Right. It was interesting to hear you talk about how he was, a sort of, frontrunner, what he was doing. Because of course, most of the people today, his was at that point—you know, they're looking back and that was the tradition and it changed to the metal boats. So, this takes it back another whole generation in a sense, which is really interesting.
PB: Yeah.
So, yeah... About the commercial fishing, thinking that he dropped a line over the side.
Dad was always home for Christmas.
JGF: He was?
PB: Yeah. They never went out for Christmas [to CB]?
CB: No.
PB: Christmas and Easter I think.
CB: Yeah.
PB: Most definitely...
[25:32]
JGF: Would he go out on a Friday? Do you know?
CB: Yeah.
JGF: He would? OK. Because that was another one I always heard. Some people wouldn't leave on Friday.
CB: That's right.
PB: Because you would drop him off.
CB: Yeah. I'd bring him down on the weekend. And they'd be going out on a Friday night. And I'd be going to Rhode Island. It would take us two hours to get there. Drop him off. Go back two hours. Then... Go back two hours. And I'd get a phone call saying they weren't going fishing. So I had to go back, pick him up. It could have been New York. [laughs]
[26:15]
PB: The other thing that was interesting was that—you know, it was like, two separate lives, that my father had. You know, we never saw him in his oilers or whatever they call them.
JF: You never did?
PB: No. No. And they would be in the trunk of his car. And he never came home smelling like fish. He always came home fully dressed, very clean, and, you know we would go on vacation, because my sister and I we *loved* the ocean, we loved swimming in it. My father never wanted to go to the beach. He'd, "Pamela, all I've looked at is water. Twelve days and twelve nights. I want my feet on ground. I don't *want* to go to the beach." So he would never vacation with us at the ocean. He

- would always stay home. And he *loved* Gloucester. It was really—it was his world. He enlisted in World War II. He was in the military police. He enlisted at seventeen. I have that paperwork for you. So he was stationed in Germany. And he came home. The next time he flew was in sixty-eight to bury his father in Florida. And then one other time to visit Emily. Before she passed away. He was *happy* to be in *Gloucester* and to just travel over the bridge to Chelmsford. That was his world
- CB: An interesting thing about the—his tour of Germany. He was an impeccable dresser. You know, spit and polish. And...so, he was in the security police. And during the Nuremburg trials, he was guard to Chief Justice Warren of the Supreme Court.
- JGF: Wow.
- CB: And, another episode was... at the officers club he was guard, or something at the officers club. And it was during segregation. And, a black officer—Two officers came in, one was black, one was white. They were British. And they came in and they went up to the bar and they ordered a drink. And there was some southern gentlemen sitting in the club. And they went over to Frank and they said, "Do you see that?" And Frank says, "Do I see what?" And he says, "I want them out of here." And Frank says, "I don't see anybody causing any trouble." You know, "What's your problem?" So, the black officer and the white officer knew what was going on and so they went over and they said, "We're leaving." He says, "But I want to say this. This black pilot, flies on my wingtip." He says, "We're both pilots." And he says, "He saved my life many a time protecting my plane." He said, "If he's not good enough to drink with, but he's good enough to die for me with." You know?
- JGF: Right. Yeah.
- CB: So... These are the stories about Frank. You know? He didn't build boats. But he did other things.
- JGF: Yeah, he certainly did it sounds like.
- PB: He was a good man.
- JGF: One of the things you talked about that I knew we hear from people [?], that with the regulations and the expense of everything that it's much—you know, I wonder if it would have been as easy for him to be a boat owner. You know, was there a reason like that that he chose not? Because I know today, for people to try to boat owners, if you don't inherit it somehow... Or, was he just not interested in going that route?
- PB: No. He was... He was very capable and very comfortable being first mate. And I actually have my dad's map of Georges Banks with his markings.
- [30:00]
- JGF: Oh, how cool! So that worked for him.
- PB: It did.
- JGF: It sounds like with my dad who taught for forty years, and he just never wanted to be a principal or whatever.
- PB: Yeah. And I think that also, you know my dad, you know, with his siblings, owned Cameron's Restaurant in Gloucester for a period of time.
- JGF: Oh. So he had enough...

PB: Yeah. But he'd—then he'd say, "Well, you know, I'll just make a trip. Fishing." He'd say, "a trip." Fishing trip. Then, you'd know, he'd be out all the time and so he was back out to sea. And you know the other time was when he owned the gas station. And "Oh," you know, "I'll just make a trip." Then he was just back out to sea all the time.

CB: He couldn't get up at eight o'clock and just turn it off at five o'clock.

PB: No.

JGF: No. Work was life and life was work.

PB: Yeah. And he loved—he would usually...

CB: He liked the fours hours on, four hours off.

JGF: Oh, he did? Yeah.

PB: And he was usually, you know, working at night. So, he liked that. Being out on the ocean at night.

But yeah, so we have some pictures here. And... This is actually a portrait of the Emily Brown.

JGF: Wow! So that's what they called the old eastern rig?
[paused for phone ringing]

JGF: Trawler? Dragger?

CB: Trawler.

JGF: Yeah. Which they talk about now, all the boats have switched to the western rig with the house up front and they fish off the back. I haven't been able to really envision eastern rig. So it's nice to see a picture of it.

PB: Yeah. And this is the Emily Brown picture. And, there were actually—there's two portraits There is the Olivia Brown, which I have. And my sister has the portrait of the Emily Brown. And they were commissioned by a friend of my grandfather's. And then given to my grandfather. And then they hung—as a gift. And then they hung in the bar of Cameron's. So they were actually wall length.

JGF: Wow!

CB: They were long. Because in the bar, which women weren't allowed into but I was in it when my husband sold it. It went, like two stories. And this was cut for my apartment. When we got married. It was cut off at the bottom. There was a lot of ocean, sky.

PB: So...

[32:40]

JGF: The other thing I'm wondering is, did you ever hear, either through Frank Senior or from your dad about... Today, regulations are such an issue. Were they facing any of that?

CB: Just beginning to.

PB: Yeah. Dad would talk....

CB: The Russian Fleet was notorious.

JGF: Oh the Russian Fleet was there when he was...

CB: Yes. And, with the fine nets. Fine meshes. And catching everything and not—whereas the Americans, had the larger nets. The government controls that on us. And, they could only catch such as size. But the Russians were cleaning up the fishing beds. And that's why we have the problem today.

JGF: Yeah. And he was still fishing when that was happening.

PB: And, he really felt—My father really felt that it was heartbreaking. That their hands were really tied. That, there would be this *huge* ships, mother ships. And they would have the refrigeration. And they would be able to stay out there for months. And it was just—you know, taking away their life.

JGF: Yeah. Yeah. And now, was he still fishing after the put the 200-mile limit in place. Or had he retired?

PB: Dad didn't retire until I think it was like, eighty-six. Eighty-six. Yeah, so it was right around that time. But, you know, in the seventies, you know, he was just, so frustrated. Because, it's *not*, a *career*. It's a lifestyle. It's your belief system, it's your values, it's what you're expected to do. It's similar I think to agriculture.

JGF: So it's like taking away who you are.

PB: Yeah. That's all the—you know, that was really his first love. The ocean. He loved us, but...

JGF: [laughs]

PB: He had to go to sea. Well, you know, sometimes growing up we wouldn't see Dad for a month. If they weren't having a good trip, they would pull into Providencetown, unload. He'd call home, and then he'd go back out to sea.

JGF: Wow. Because this was during a time when it wasn't so easy for them to communicate with you, right? You couldn't really—

CB: Well on the ship to shore.

JGF: You could?

CB: Yeah.

PB: But he didn't.

CB: I didn't call him. He didn't call me unless there was a storm or something.

PB: But did he ever call?

CB: Yeah, he did call. He was home for your birth—that's right.

PB: I called—I called my father once. Remember?

CB: Yeah.

PB: Ship to shore. When I finally realized he had a dangerous job. See, we didn't know that he had a dangerous job.

JGF: Until you were about how old?

PB: Was I like third or fourth grade? Yeah.
And so there was a storm and I was upset. And I talked my mother into calling him, out to sea. And.... And he wasn't pleased about that.

CB: No.

PB: I mean, he was a gracious man.

CB: There would be all the other boats listening in.

JGF: Oh...!

CB: And she's saying, "Daddy! Daddy! come home! come home!"

JGF: And he was like his dad. He didn't like to talk...

PB: Well... And just, you know, all...

CB: Personal talk. Personal talk.

PB: Yeah. And so, you know, when he came home, he said, you know, "Don't ever do that again." But, you know.... [takes in a breath/sighs]

JGF: That must have been hard for you. I can see it in your face right now.

PB: Yeah.

JGF: It would be. Yeah. That's not like the rest of us who, you knew Dad was going to be home around four o'clock every day.

PB: No. No. I could never see that movie. What was that movie?

JGF: *The Perfect Storm*.

PB: The Per—no, no way. I never want to see that. All right. Well....

JGF: Thank you so much for coming.

[End of interview]