

Name of person Interviewed: Capt. Samuel Cottle [SC] and Gloria Cottle [GC]

Facts about this person:

Age (if known)

Sex [SC] Male [GC] Female

Occupation

If a fisherman (if retired, list the ports used when fishing),

Home port Point Judith, Rhode Island

and Hail Port (port fished from, which can be the same) Point
Judith, Rhode Island

Residence (Town where lives) Albion, Maine

Ethnic background (if known)

Interviewer: Janice Gadaire Fleuriel [JGF]

Sound technician: Olivia Paiva

Transcriber: Janice Gadaire Fleuriel

Place interview took place: New Bedford Harbormaster House

Date and time of interview: Saturday, Sept. 27, 2008

INDEX (minutes:seconds) / KEYWORDS

KEYWORDS: Wakefield, Rhode Island; Point Judith, Rhode Island; Clamming; Quahoaging; Oystering; Dragging; Trap fishing; Swordfishing; Boat sinkings; Rescue at sea; Albion, Maine; Russian fleet; South American competition; Government involvement; Wooden hull boats; Deer Isle, Maine; Changes in boat construction; Superstitions / beliefs; Whistling on boats; Women on boats; Unexpected catches; World War II; Quonset, Rhode Island air base; Newport War College; Fishing family experiences; Fishing wives; SMAST; U Mass Dartmouth; University of Rhode Island

[Start of Interview]

[00:00]

GC brought up in Wakefield, Rhode Island, married SC after high school; GC's father doing clamming, quahoaging, oystering; SC earliest memory of great grandfather, involvement; SC involvement with fishing through his grandfather;

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SC fishing with grandfather (cont'd.); SC Dragging summers during high school; SC first boat at age 20; SC first boat sinking; SC second boat/dragger; SC grew up Point Judith; SC grandfather did trap fishing; Trap fishing species; Trap fishing dissipating; SC dragging sites; SC swordfishing; Swordfishing technique; Swordfish migrations;

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Swordfishing(cont'd.); Story of first boat hitting submerged object, getting rescued; SC getting good loan from bank for next boat; Live in Albion, Maine;

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Enjoying Albion; Enjoyed the performance of sisters singing at the festival; Other types of fishing SC did—trap, scalloping, seining; South American competition; Moving to Maine '66; Presence of Russian fleet; Fisherman's coop board of directors, unsuccessful meetings go get government support for industry;

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Russian fleet presence (cont'd.); Changes SC has seen—marketing, vessels; Lack of government support for fishing; Wouldn't encourage young men to get into fishing as a business, owning boat; U.S. too lenient in support its fishing industry with rest of world; Story of unsuccessful meeting for industry support with U.S. Asst. Secretary of Interior;

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Lack of government support for fishing (cont'd.); Today's fishermen need government to give freedom to fish, not financial support; Changes GC has seen—shellfish availability, boats and how they're cared for; SC's sixty-five foot wooden hull boat; SC would only have a wooden boat; GC at home while SC at sea; GC hard time adjusting after SC retired, home all the time; SC's son fishing with him since age six; Son's disappointment when SC retired for health reasons, not old enough to get his father's vessel; Hard for SC when had to sell boat; Story of buying second boat/Dorothy and Betty from Deer Isle, Maine;

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Buying second boat (cont'd.); Didn't change name of boat when bought it because registered with Navy; Navy having access to all vessels over certain size during wartime; Superstitions they've heard of; Didn't believe in the superstitions, knew others who did; Story of a captain who designed a hatch that opened half up/half down; Reason for no whistling on boat / story of teasing a captain using whistling to mimic sounds off Block Island; Views toward women on boats;

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SC doesn't think *Hungry Ocean* book was a fair portrayal of the industry; SC's book *In Danger at Sea*; Unexpected catches; Story of bringing up an airplane in net with uniformed men still inside; Story of bringing up a torpedo in net;

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Telling GC he lost boat (cont'd.); GC working well with SC's fishing life; SC not telling GC a lot of the scary stuff; Stories of colorful characters SC knew growing up; Nicknames; "George the Guinea" taking a hunk of the Thanksgiving turkey before their meal; SC going with his grandfather to take Pussyfoot Gardner to doctor because his foot hurt;

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Pussyfoot Gardner doctor visit (cont'd.); Presence of poor and disabled people when growing up / helping them because no public aid; Story of Fish Fish, who was legally blind and always asking where his lobster pots were, spotting a submarine periscope and alerting Coast Guard, who sunk the sub; Newfoundlander who always corrected SC's pronunciation of Newfoundland; Story of old man SC feared growing up because the man never talked giving him his boat before he died, because he liked that SC never talked much;

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Story of boat gift (cont'd.); SC enjoyed the characters he grew up with; Activity as coop director; Story of meeting with Asst. Sec. of Interior; Story of officials from India on his boat, one exclaiming that small shrimp they tossed back could feed his family;

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Story of wealthy Newport man who developed flat paint developing baking flour using whole fish, trying to get coop to help government allow its production; Festival can portray industry in better light, show the good fishermen do; Government lack of support for industry; Fishermen need to organize, hiring spokespersons, and advocate for industry better;

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Fishermen need to organize (cont'd.); More recent industry support by some scientists; GC thinking "new world order" Bushes talk about won't work at state, community levels; [End of interview]

TRANSCRIPT

[00:00]

JGF: OK. This is Janice Fleuriel. It's Saturday, Sept. 27th, 2008. We're at the Working Waterfront Festival in New Bedford in the Harbormaster's House. And I'm interviewing Sam and Gloria Cottle for the oral history interviews. And if you could just say hello and your name, then we'll see how it sounds.

GC: My name is Gloria Cottle.

SC: And I'm Captain Samuel Cottle.

JGF: Captain Samuel Cottle, OK. Alright. We're good to go then.

Normally what we like to start off with, is just to ask you if you could give a little bit about your personal background, maybe family ethnic background, and involvement in fishing. Do you want to start Gloria?

GC: Oh, OK. I was born and brought up in Wakefield, Rhode Island. Which is just several miles from Point Judith. Which was a very large fishing port. And..., I met Sam in, in high school. In our senior year. We happened to take the same..., course I guess it was in law or something. And we started dating that month. And, we were married after graduation.

JGF: OK.

GC: And it's been fifty-nine years. I won't say *long* years [laughter]. It has its ups and downs. But fifty-nine years.

JGF: That's wonderful.

GC: And we always have a big lobster dinner, generally, when we have our anniversary, but. I got the flu this year [laughs] and we didn't go.

JGF: You'll have to take a rain check, maybe.

GC: Oh I feel like down here is my seafood dinner.

JGF: Oh, that's good.

GC: Yeah.

JGF: Is your anniversary right around now?

GC: Yeah. Well, in August. Yeah.

JGF: Oh, OK. Great, that's wonderful. So now did your family have any fishing connections?

GC: No, not with the industry. No. We lived several miles, you know, from the fishing industry. And my father used to do, you know, clamming and quahoaging and oystering and everything. Because it was just so tremendous. I mean, he used to talk about when he was a little boy, in Point Judith, that he would—his mother would send them down to get oysters for oyster stew. And they would bring home three oysters...

SC: Mm.

GC: ...because they were so large you only needed three oysters for a family oyster stew.

JGF: Wow.

GC: So we can see how things have changed.

JGF: Yeah.

GC: And he said when flocks of ducks would go overhead, that it was like, not—you know, really daylight. It was so dark. There were *so* many ducks going overhead.

JGF: Wow...

GC: So, he saw a large change in his generation. And we've seen a lot of...

JGF: Yeah.

GC: ...a lot of changes in ours too.

JGF: OK. We'll get back to that for sure. The change topic is always an interesting one. 'OK. Captain Cottle.

SC Well, my earliest memory was around five years old. And, my great grandfather was racing with me down to my grandfather's house, because I won [laughter]. But he had fought in the Civil War. He bore a flag in the Civil War. And if you remember your history, the boys that played the drums and carried the flags were right out in front of the troops. They were the first ones into fire.

And so my great grandfather had been in, and so.... It just boggled my mind to think that I've gone from that period of time to today. Just all in my lifetime.

And, so I've been involved with the fishing through my grandfather, the fishing industry, pretty well all of my life.

I first went to sea when I was six weeks old. And my mother says I loved it because as soon as I got out in the waves and the wind, I fell asleep. And I stayed asleep until we come to the dock again [laughs]. And so...

But I've been involved in fishing activity.

And I'm very actively involved as a paid fisherman. When I was eight my grandfather took me on, eight years old. And I made thirty-five dollars a week. And breakfast and lunch, and board. So that was fantastic pay for a young boy. And I was *really, really* proud. You know, I could walk on water at that time [laughter], you know. But it was a marvelous experience. I mean, he was perhaps the most outstanding person I've ever met in my life. Just, wonderful. And he was—he worked hard, which was good for me, because I needed that. And he treated me well. And he loved movies and so did I [laughs]. And so we saw all the old war movies, in World War II. [Laughs]

But it was just a wonderful experience. All of my history with my grandfather has been good.

[05:01]

JGF: That's great.

SC: And that had a good influence on my life. So, that carried over so that I tried to have a reasonable balance [chuckles] of that kind of mentality. I think I probably had been pretty hard if I didn't have that. But he was just a marvelous person. But then, when I fished with him, all through my high school and in the summertime's – and then when I was about fifteen or sixteen I went to dragging. Some friends of mine had some boats. And during the, off, school years, and in the summertime I'd go dragging. And I fished with different boats and got a good experience that way.

And then when I was twenty I took the plunge and I bought an eighty-three foot dragger. And so... Everybody thought I was a little bit crazy, but I thought it was alright. And we went fishing with that. And we did well. Very, very well. Until the boat sunk. We hit a submerged object coming home on a storm.

JGF: Oh... no.

SC: And so, the Coast Guard had to rescue us. And..., so that was an experience in itself.

JGF: Right.

SC: But then they brought us ashore.

And then, within six months—six or eight months, I bought a second dragger which was up here in Deer Isle. And she was built up there. And, I just—when I saw it, I loved it. She was a beautiful boat. And I fished her right up until I left fishing. I had serious heart problems and I had to come ashore.

JGF: Wow.

SC: But, we did well. It was a wonderful life for me. It was just the best I could have. And I've been very—yearning for it again [laughs]. But I guess I never will have it. But I enjoy being down here to see this, and, have a part in the program some, you know. So it worked out well.

JGF: Yeah. Huh.

So—this was—you grew up in Point Judith?

SC: Yeah.

JGF: What kind of fishing was your grandfather doing?

SC: He was a trap fisherman.

JGF: And what was that?

SC: Well, he would—he'd get, across the rotation of the species. We'd get, butterfish, and we'd get scup, and flounder, and bass, and things like that. It was—you know, off the bottom fish, mostly. And so he—and that would change. Then sometimes the cycle would start in again before the end of the summer was over. But that was basically what it was.

But he'd get—like squid was one. He would, you know get, thirty, forty, fifty thousand pounds of fish in one day. You know, whether it would—sometimes we'd have so many, we had to put them into a pound. Which was another piece of twine that was, bent on there. And we'd just put them in there to keep them live. Until we could process them and handle them. So, you know, he caught a ton of fish. But, it just dissipated, over the years before he died. There was no trapping in that area. There were some kids that wanted to get into it. Did it, half for fun. But there really wasn't any commercial use of trapping.

So. That's why I enjoyed dragging. Because I knew that was you go where they are and you catch them.

So I've fished mostly off shore, the continental shelf. And I'd fish anywhere from New Jersey to Nova Scotia.

And I'd do everything, from, catching, you know, flounder, and butterfish. And I'd go swordfishing. I *love* swordfish. That's my favorite species of fish. It's the most exciting thing I've ever done in my life. Harpooning.

JGF: You mean it's your favorite species to catch?

SC: Yeah. Harpooning. It's just—just wonderful.

JGF: Huh.

SC: And it was a really exciting thing.

JGF: Now how did—something in your bio about the elusive swordfish? So you weren't netting those?

SC: Harpoon.

JGF: You just had to see them and then...

SC: You can see swordfish without any fins sticking out. And you do that mostly with the shadow of the sun on them like that. But most of them—probably seventy-five or eighty percent of them—you saw, with their, their [horn] out, as we call it. The dorsal fin and then the tail. And they're like that, just at that angle. And they'd go this way, where in a shark—you can tell them in a minute, a shark flips a tail, like this. And the swordfish does—the swordfish tail is like that.

JGF: Side to side, like.

SC: So you can just see them going down. And then you come in on them and you got to get the son behind you. And then you can, harpoon them. And I've got as many as eighteen in one day. That was a fantastic day.

JGF: How much does, like, your average swordfish weigh?

SC: Well, they start in the early season at probably a hundred and fifty to two hundred pounds and by the time you end the season up to Nova Scotia up to eight hundred pounds.

JGF: Yeah.

SC: So it's not the same group. But they're moving on all the time. And the older ones come in last. And then when they disappear in Nova Scotia, the Mediterranean is the next place they show up. They go right across—nobody catches them until they go the Mediterranean.

JGF: Wow!

SC: Then they go their route down south, Africa and then South America coming up again. And so you can keep track of where they're coming. So around July, around July Fourth is when we start seeing them up off Block Island. But they're small. A hundred, hundred and fifty, maybe two hundred pounds.

That was an exciting way to make a living.

JGF: They grow fast then? Or...

[09:57]

SC: Well, yeah. And, some of that is movement. The bodies of fish, they, are small when it's gone. And in a week or two—they hold the ground just so long, and then they move on. And then the older ones are the bigger ones, heavy ones, they start coming in. They don't seem to hold the ground together.

JGF: Yeah.

SC: They're isolated, like.

JGF: Huh.

SC: At least that's our theory. [Laughs] And I'm sticking with it! [Laughs]

JGF: [laughs]

The harpooning technique... Somebody would just throw it from the boat?

SC: Well you have—Your boat is here. And you have a stand that goes out over the water, anywhere from six to twelve feet, depending on how a guy likes it. And, then, the striker would go into the stand with a pole of maybe fourteen or sixteen feet, depending how high off the water you are. And then there's a line that runs from the pole to the boat.

JGF: Right.

SC: And that saves the pole from going [laughs] somewhere. But then, the dart is on the end of that pole and that goes into the swordfish. And they call that the lily. And that goes into the swordfish. And then the fish takes off with a rope, separate from

the—what's on the pole. And then it has—when it gets out there maybe a hundred fathom—a keg goes overboard. And the keg tires the fish out. Then we bring a dory up to the keg. Drop the man off. And then he starts hauling him in. Once they start they've got to keep hauling. You don't ever slack it. Because if you do, you know you'd be there all day. Because they'll just build up their energy and keep going. So you just keep the strain on them all the time. Wear them out. That's really how you—just wear them out. Hopefully before you wear out [laughs].

JGF: Yeah...

SC: But it's—it's quite a chore. But by gosh I just loved it. Very exciting.

JGF: Wow. Wow. That's interesting.

And so now that you described it, it might not have been that accurate. But I just saw *Jaws* again.

SC: Yeah.

JGF: That's how they caught the shark, right? That sort of basic idea. They had kegs and a line.

SC: Yeah.

JGF: Well, I mean, that was film fantasy [laughs].

SC: I didn't... That movie was so far afield [laughs]...

GC: Yeah [laughs].

SC: ...I won't have any comments on that.

JGF: OK. [Laughter] No comparisons to make.

SC: No comparison. To *anything*. There's no comparison to anything with that movie. [Laughs]

GC: The quality of the fish is better, too...

SC: Oh yeah.

GC: ...when you harpoon them, because they're a very bloody fish. Almost like an animal. So when they're harpooned they bleed out.

JGF: Oh....

GC: When they're caught on a net of some kind, they do not.

SC: They drown with the blood in the system.

JGF: Oh... And then it can't get out.

GC: Right. And it has a bad effect on the body of the fish, you know.

JGF: Interesting. Huh.

So, the boat that hit the submerged object? Did you ever find out what that was?

SC: Well, no. We were in a northeaster. It was in a bad storm. And, the thing—realistically the thing that we hit was either a telephone pole or, some kind of a timber. That's going up and down like this. It would never have hurt her, if we hit a pole or anything laying down and just run over it. But this was going up and down with the sea. And so... And again it's just supposition. But it hit—it's a navy sub chaser is what it was in the war. And so it hit forward of the engine room. And, from the way the water come out it had to have punch a hole in the bottom maybe like that. That's why I figure maybe a telephone pole or something of that size. Just going up and down. It was coming up and we were going [laughs] down. And that's what that did it. I never felt it. Nobody did.

JGF: No... But you just finally figured out you were taking on water?

SC: Well, the men—during the watch, they’re checking the engine room and all the boat everywhere for water. And it was taking on a lot of water in the engine room. So they called me and we went right through the whole thing. And... That was interesting.

JGF: Yeah... Did that become a lifeboat situation or no?

SC: Oh yeah. Well... It was. I put the crew over in the dory. And I told him “Get away from the boat, because you get a vortex and you suck the dory right down.” So they got away from the boat and I stayed on it. Because it has an effect on insurance if you desert the vessel.

JGF: Oh...

SC: So I stayed right on it. And... The Coast Guard came around. By that time the boat was like that on the angle. And the Coast Guard come up. Went right up over the transom and the stern. Come right up. And I stepped off the deck of my boat onto theirs. And never got my feet wet. [Laughs]

JGF: Wow...!

GC: Fortunate.

SC: Yeah it was very fortunate.

JGF: And were they chancing that vortex at that point? The Coast Guard.

SC: No. No, they would back off. They had enough power to back off quick. Once I got on, they just backed her right off quick.

And then she went down just like this. And when she did—you see these movies sometimes. She fired a spew of water up there, probably fifty or sixty feet in the air.

JGF: Was that like tragic for you?

SC: Yeah. Oh yeah! It was my first vessel. You know, and I was doing good. I was making—in fact *so good*, generally a bank, even if they have confidence in you, the most that they would go would be twenty-five or thirty percent of the next boat that you buy. They went fifty percent for me.

JGF: Wow.

SC: So they were pleased with what I had done.

JGF: That’s great.

GC: Mmmm.

SC: So then I come up in Maine and bought my boat! [Laughs] The real boat.

JGF: Oh...! You have a—do you have a boat up there now?

SC: Yeah.

JGF: And you live in Albion [Al-be-un] is that how you say it?

SC: Yeah. Yeah.

GC: Yeah.

JGF: Where is that exactly?

[15:00]

GC: Right outside of Waterville.

SC: It’s right at heaven. [Laughs]

GC: By Colby College.

JGF: Colby College, OK. I sort of vaguely know that area.

SC: Yeah, well, where, [?...folks are from]. But from my... From my dining room table, I can look out over the hills of [?]. And I can see from Mount Washington, to Mount Sugarloaf.

GC: Yeah and Katahdin.
SC: Katahdin. Katahdin. So that's [?] Katahdin it's got to be a super clear day. But we can see that distance from my house. I just love it.
JGF: That's great.
SC: If I can't go to sea, I want to be where I am.
JGF: Yeah. Is that very close, then, to the ocean or no?
GC: Not too bad.
SC: The ocean. Why, yeah, we're twenty miles, twenty-five miles. But to tell you the truth I stay away from it.
JGF: Oh you do?
SC: Yeah I stay away from it. Because it's too much of a draw for me.
JGF: Oh... Like it hurts too much...
SC: Yeah.
JGF: ...to be close to and not be on the sea?
SC: Yeah. When you work on the water it has a tremendous effect on a man.
JGF: Yeah. Especially if you were on it from the time you could...
SC: Oh yeah.
JGF: Well the time you were like in diapers.
SC: Well my earliest memories was being at sea.
GC: One of the girls over there, that we heard just a few hours ago. She said, "A fisherman is born to walk on the waves."
JGF: Oh... Nice.
GC: And it never changes.
SC: Yeah that was nice.
GC: That was beautiful.
SC: The singers over there, have been excellent. The three women.
JGF: Oh yeah?
SC: *Excellent.*
JGF: Are they the Johnson Sisters? Chantey singers?
SC: I'm not sure.
GC: Oh not these were the ones that were [?].
SC: [?] like sisters. But, you know, there's quite a difference in age. But they were very, very good.
JGF: Oh. OK.
So your whole life as a fisherman was dragging then?
SC: Well primarily. Maybe a third was trap fishing. And I did do some scalloping with dredges in between. And I did some seining.
You know, I've been [?] everything. And I've had—We had a net that, if I stretched right out, in a straight line, it would probably go out there a half a mile. There was so much twine in it. Of course we didn't set it that way. We set it in a circle. But we had a lot of twine in that. So I did that. We got right in when the market changed, and the price of menhaden went down, in this country. And the price of oil went up in South America so they bought all the fish oil from South America. And then, so it reversed it.
And most of the fellows that I knew that were seining for menhaden just sent out of business.

GC: Within one month.

SC: We couldn't keep up with the price of South American fish. But that was my one experience outside of dragging. Dragging has been the primary thing that I did.

JGF: What year did you go out of it?

SC: Well, it was, '67, '8, something like that.

GC: We moved to Maine in '66. So it was before that.

SC: '66. '66.

JGF: So, when you were in dragging, what is still sort of a good thing to be in?

SC: Yeah we had—We weren't having a problem.

Although the Russians—I was on the board of directors for the fishermen's coop.

So I did a lot of work for them between us and Washington. And then I met with

some other people in New York.

And, the... The Russians just had control of the whole thing. The United States didn't do anything to stop them from coming in. And they practically took over the industry. Offshore. Not inshore, but offshore. Which is only three miles offshore, you know, really.

JGF: Yeah. Right. Right.

So by the time you got out they were still involved?

SC: They were coming in on more and more ships. Yeah.

One of the last trips I made offshore, they were really—From as far as you could see in either direction. Which is east and west because that's the lay of the land of the bottom. And they were big boats. And some of them were very... One boat was [?sunk]—[?]. You don't see it, it happens out of sight. But, you know that they disappeared when the Russian boat came in, so.

GC: They were factory ships, too.

SC: A lot of factory ships.

GC: They caught all size fish.

SC: With us, there were seagulls flying around all the time, because fish was going overboard. There was no seagulls around the Russian boats.

JGF: Oh they didn't waste anything?

SC: They didn't waste *anything*. Everything that come over the rail they did something with.

JGF: Hmmmm.

SC: You know. I don't know what they did. But they did it.

Seeing seagulls around the boats [?].

JGF: That's interesting.

SC: Yeah. It is a sure giveaway that they're doing something. [Laughs]

JGF: Now did you ever have to jockey for position? Were they ever like intruding where you already were?

SC: Yeah they were. And one friend of ours was rammed and sunk. I had a chance to talk with some of the Russian captains and their crew. And they says, "Come on on board. We'll show you our boat." I says, "No thank you." I didn't want to end up in Siberia. [Laughs] I says, "Thank you, but no thank you." That's the only relationship that we ever had. It was, you know, hostility. [Laughs]

[20:01]

JGF: Yeah...

GC: It was pretty bad. It was still the Cold War.

SC: Oh yeah.

GC: So there was a lot of fear.

JGF: Hmm.

GC: And a lot of tension between both countries.

SC: They... The citizens of the United States never realized how close it was to a serious problem. With Russia. I mean, real serious problem. Because they had, Russian submarines everywhere. And then they had, Russian, supposedly fishing. But they were military vessels. And then they had military crews out. And they were back and forth and down the coast and like that.

I'm sure the government knew about it. But the citizens never knew.

GC: He could tell because they were so low in the water. And yet, they weren't really catching any fish. They didn't even know how to set the nets.

SC: Yeah [chuckles].

GC: Yet they were very low in the water. So you could tell there's *a lot of* metal in there.

SC: It was really funny. The first time I saw that. In fact I stopped dragging, I just wanted to watch them for a while. And there was one man on the deck of the Russian. And he knew everything that the fishermen would know. But the others didn't know how to do anything. They were screaming and hollering at him, you know, to get the net over. Where, our men they don't even say anything. They just knew what to do.

And... So, you know that there's something wrong with a clue like that. So, the obvious conclusion is that they're not trained fishermen. They were, you know, military people if you will.

JGF: Yeah.

SC: But they weren't catching fish. Later on, they sent over their fleet and they caught a ton of fish. But, early on it was just military.

JGF: That's interesting.

GC: See, there was a few years before the Cuban missile crisis. Which brought America and Russia right to the point of World War III. So that's how serious it really was. So everyone [laughs] stayed away from each other.

JGF: Yeah. Fascinating.

So... You—I don't know what kinds of changes you might have seen in the time that you were fishing. You know, certainly people who were in it from the time that you retired until today have seen them. Did you see a lot of changes?

SC: Yes, a tremendous amount of changes.

JGF: Yeah?

SC: In *everything*. Every aspect. [Marketing] of fish. The types of vessels. The lack of response from the U.S. Government, they never helped the American fisheries *at all*. And any money that we got we got from our own efforts to go out and find a bank that would work with us.

And... I never encouraged any young men to get in the fishing business. Because, I could just see on the horizon it was going to be a real difficult time. And it is today. It's eased up a little bit from what it was when I was right at the peak of my fishing. But it was just not a healthy place to be, you know. Political wise.

And... I would never encourage a young man to get into the business for buying a boat or building a boat. I just wouldn't do it. It was nice if you wanted to fish. But use somebody else's money.

But that's changed to a degree. Not a *great* degree. But to a degree [laughs].

JGF: To a degree. That's interesting. So are you..., very up on the regulations they're dealing with today?

SC: Yeah. Quite.

JGF: What do you think of those?

SC: Well, I think that the United States is always getting the short end of everything. They always do. They just yield on everything. I wish they'd take a stronger stand, but, they never will.

GC: Tell them about when you spoke—about your trip to Washington.

SC: Yeah. [Laughs]

I was on the board of directors of the Point Judith Fishermen's Coop. At the *time*, we were [?] the value of that coop—The United Nations made a comment that we were the most organized and the best run fishermen's cooperative in the *world*. And that was right in little Point Judith.

So I was fortunate to be on the board of directors for it.

And... So we were having a lot of trouble with the Russians. And so the coop sent me down to meet with the Assistant Secretary of the Interior. We wanted the Secretary but we couldn't get to him. So we got his number two man. And, so he was very kind, very courteous to me. And I was explaining the whole process and what was wrong, why I was there. And he says, he says, "I can appreciate how you feel," he says, "but we don't care what happens to the industry in this country." He says, "One military missile in Iceland is of more value to the United States government than our fishing industry on both shores. East and west." He says, "We're not going to do a thing." And so he dismissed me.

And it was a very—I was very disappointed to that point. And they've never changed. To my knowledge, they've never changed.

GC: Yeah, they wanted—See all their, the other countries were being financially backed by their countries. But The United States never backed...

[25:03]

SC: Never. Anything.

GC: At that time anyway.

SC: They had no support from them at all. And to my knowledge, not even today. You'd have to talk to some of the young fishermen to find out for sure. But from my experience... And as I advanced in age and experience, the government never changed. They were always very—they'd always drag their feet about it. They'd never cause a problem. You know? With anything else they'd just go bombing right through it, straighten it out. But they didn't do it here.

GC: And they're not asking—the ones today are not asking for financial help. They just want the freedom to fish.

JGF: A little less involvement by the government.

SC: Yeah. That's right. Just keep out of the picture.

JGF: Or more rational or something. Yeah.

SC: You know, we'd be very happy if they just kept out of it.

JGF: Right. Yeah.

Now you had mentioned earlier, Gloria, that you said you saw a lot changes, too. Are there any others that we haven't hit on? From when your grandfather was oystering?

GC: Yes, that's true. Because, we used to go quahoaging and clamming and oystering. And there was more and more protection, which I appreciate. But, there was less and less clams and quahoags and so forth. I see a difference there. Of course the boats themselves are so—they're so different. We—how big was the Dorothy and Betty?

SC: She was sixty-five feet. A big sixty-five feet. [Laughs]

GC: Sixty-five feet. Wooden hull.

JGF: It was a wooden hull boat?

SC: Yeah. Oh yeah! I would never have anything else.

GC: Beautiful. Very seaworthy. That type of boat. You know you could make a yacht out of her, she was so beautiful.

SC: A beautiful boat.

GC: And then you see everything different today. And they used to take care of their boats. Just beautifully. And it was a good way of living. You know, he'd be gone, maybe anywhere from three to seven days, maybe.

SC: Mmm.

GC: And, if a hurricane came along maybe he had to go up to Newfoundland [laughs] or somewhere up there.

SC: [Laughs]

GC: But most of the time it was within a week. And you just lived around that. It made me learn more to be independent, which I wasn't at the time when we got married. And... And so I learned to be independent and it was when he came ashore later after his health broke down, that I found [laughs] it more difficult to adjust [laughter] to him being home. You know, breakfast, and dinner and supper, coffee breaks.

SC: [Laughs]

GC: And no car of my own! It was [laughter].

SC: [Laughs] That was a hard thing, no car of her own.

GC: [Laughs] So that was more difficult. But it was very good because, I learned to be more independent. And to be Mom and Dad for both the kids. A boy and a girl.

And... And we had to pull our weight at home, you know.

SC: By the way, I took my son fishing with me since he was a little boy.

JGF: Oh...

SC: Six years old, I think it was. And, he was great. A great kid. And he was the most disappointed when I had to come ashore. Because, historically, the father passes on the vessel to his oldest son.

JGF: Right.

SC: And he was the only son but oldest. And he was expecting that vessel would be his. And he would have—learn as much as he could between that point and when he was mature. And, he felt horrible about me having to come ashore. But health-wise, I had a number of heart attacks. And I just couldn't go anymore.

JGF: Yeah. How old was he then?

SC: I don't...

GC: When you stopped fishing?

SC: When I had the heart attacks.

GC: I don't know, he was around thirteen I believe.

JGF: Yeah? And then you stopped fishing around that age?

SC: Yeah.

JGF: Yeah. That's too bad he wasn't old enough to do it yet.

SC: Yeah. Because he doesn't understand the seriousness of the problem, you know. Because I didn't belabor the point that I was sick, you know, near to death. I just didn't—I wasn't going to do it anymore.

JGF: And then you sold your boat?

SC: Yeah. And that was a *hard* thing.

JGF: I bet.

SC: It was a *hard* thing.

GC: She was a beautiful boat. No matter how you looked at her.

JGF: Was that the Dorothy and Betty boat?

SC: Yeah.

And [?Elmer Gross] it was funny... [?Elmer Gross] was up here in Deer Isle. And after my first boat sunk the bank says, "You go, you get fifty percent of whatever you find, we'll go fifty percent." Well that's unusual. Banks very seldom went over thirty-five percent. But they said, "You've done so well in such a short period of time," that they'd be willing to go fifty percent. "So whatever you buy," you know, "we'll pick up fifty percent of it."

So... We went—Gloria and I, frequently we'd take little trips and go in different directions. This one in particular, we ended up in Deer Isle. And, we drove down on the docks. And here was this *beautiful* dragger, sixty-five feet long. Just come off the runway of the shipyard. *Totally* painted and varnished. And, a brand new RADAR. They'd never used it. You know, and I went aboard and I said, "I've got to have this boat." [Laughs]

[30:12]

GC: [Laughs]

SC: So I just [?]
—I told Gloria to stay in the car. I wanted to make a quick run [laughs]. A getaway if you will. And so I talked with Elmer Gross, a wonderful man. And I says, "Elmer, if you were to sell this boat, what price would you ask?" Well he threw a figure out and I put my hand out and I shook on it. I said, "I'll be up here Friday with the money." Pulled my hand back and took off. And I said to Gloria, "Get in the car. We're out of here." [Laughter] I didn't want him to catch up with me and say, "I don't want to do it." [Laughter]

So, by the time we got home, which was maybe a day, day and a half. Phone was ringing in the house. And I knew who it was. And I picked up the phone and I says, "Hi, Elmer." And he says, "I don't want to sell that boat." I says, "Elmer, you promised. You got to hold to it." He says, "Yeah, I will." I mean that's the old-fashioned way. A handshake was a commitment to build a business, you know. No, sixteen lawyers involved. And he shook my hand. And he held to it. He sold it.

GC: He had another boat so he wasn't completely alone without work.

SC: Oh yeah. He wasn't, you know, hurting, but. But it was a beautiful boat. He loved it.

JGF: So was the boat already named when you got it?

SC: Yes. And very seldom does a fisherman change the name of a boat. Not because of superstition but because of cost.

JGF: OH that's right, because it's registered.

SC: It's registered in the United States Navy. So... A ship of anything over I think it's thirty feet, maybe thirty-two feet, becomes, when you buy it automatically becomes the government's vessel. And so during a time of war they can take that vessel.

JGF: Oh... Wow.

SC: Now they may or may not take you as the captain. But they take your vessel. And they used a lot—not so much in World War II, but in World War I they had a lot of them out there for submarines. But that's the old rules and regs and it never changed, you know. So, I knew that and he [laughs] knew that. So that's how it worked. But he was a real gentleman. And he hung to his word. And I knew he would. I knew he would.

JGF: Did you ever have any of those superstitions? Like not putting the hatch cover upside down?

SC: No. I don't have any superstitions.

But one skipper that I worked with, he used to—the hatches on the boat, so when you opened them up they automatically went [laughs] the opposite side. And he was the only one that could get away with it. Because otherwise the men would walk off. But this was built this way, see? And so they put up with it. [?]

JGF: You mean he hinged it upside down?

SC: Yeah. He hinged it so one half of it would be upside down.

JGF: Oh how funny.

SC: If you wanted to go below, you'd just open it up. And one half was alright and the other one's hanging up in the sky [laughs]. So you had no complaining, it was done that way.

But. Yeah, they had a ton of... You know, suitcases, and umbrellas, and suit clothes.

GC: Cooking stew.

SC: Yeah, cooking. You could never cook a stew on the boat. So Gloria got around that. She'd make the stew at home.

GC: [Laughs]

SC: And I'd take in on [laughs] the boat.

JGF: So you actually—you worked with skippers that had those?

SC: Oh...yes! Oh, yes. You never took pajamas aboard. You never took a black suitcase. You never took an umbrella.

GC: You can't whistle.

SC: Oh yeah, you can't whistle.

GC: But there's generally a reason for those.

SC: Yeah, that had a good reason. Yeah, if you—and we used to do this with one of the skippers I worked with. He would be concentrating on the whistle off of Point Judith. It would go [makes hissing/whistling sound]. And it would get louder and

louder the closer that you got. And we'd just increase the whistle and he'd always be moving his machine trying to find out where it was.

JGF: [Laughs]

SC: But... That was reason—there was a legitimate reason for that.

JGF: So they were using it for navigation?

SC: Yeah. We were just teasing the captain.

But most of those of things, they were so silly—silly superstitions.

GC: And no women on boat. I mean ,that is the biggest change, I think, there is. There's women, running boats, owning boats.

SC: What's her name that wrote—the girl from Maine that wrote a couple of books.

JGF: Linda Greenlaw.

SC: Yeah.

GC: Yeah. I mean you just didn't even *think* in that direction.

JGF: Right.

GC: Even if your family was in the industry. You just didn't think of it.

JGF: Right. Yeah. I know—last year our theme was women in the industry. Actually, the year before, I interview, this scalloper captain. And it's interesting mostly—*they* don't make a big deal of it, you know? You know, they just... The ones that said they felt like they had to prove themselves they felt like as much it would be about when they were greenhorns, like anybody else, you know?

SC: Yeah.

JGF: They'd get put through their paces. But... Interesting. Power to them!

SC: Have you ever interviewed Greenlaw?

JGF: No... I haven't... She was at the festival like, two or three years ago. She might have been a couple of times. And if she's been interviewed it wasn't by me. So, no, I haven't. I did read her... the one about... the one about swordfishing. Oh, *The Hungry Ocean*.

[35:00]

SC: Yeah. Terrible book. [Laughs]

GC: Mm hm.

JGF: You think so? Why? [?] Actually I've heard somebody else that didn't like her *All Fishermen Are Liars* at all.

SC: Yeah I didn't read that one.

JGF: Yeah I haven't read it either.

Did you think it didn't portray the...

SC: Yeah. I didn't think it was a fair portrayal of fishing and the industry. Not any particular person or *her* as a person. But I think she could have done a better job. And she'd been educated in that whole thing. She went to Colby College. And took all of that, degrees, you know?

JGF: Yeah.

SC: Yeah. I apologize I shouldn't have said that [laughs]. It's not a competitive comment [laughs].

JGF: You know, anyone who writes a book knows they're going to get critiques one way or another.

SC: Yeah.

JGF: You sort of put yourself out there.

Speaking of books...

SC: [Laughs] Yeah.

JGF: I know that you just wrote one that sounds fascinating. What's the name of it again?

SC: *In Danger at Sea*. I wanted it *In Dangers* plural. Because the description. [?] dangers at sea, plural. And...

GC: Yeah.

SC: So... The publisher just let me do with one, *Danger*.

JGF: Wow. Is that you? [talking about a picture on the book]

SC: No that's my grandfather.

JGF: I was going to say there's a vague resemblance, but it doesn't look exactly.

SC: My picture's on the back page. Inside.

GC: Yeah.

JGF: I know. It sounds like you have some wonderful accounts in here. And I don't know if there's any....

SC: Oh, it was fun.

JGF: ...that are in here that you want to share on the tape? Or if you feel like they're all...?

SC: Well, no, anything, at all, I don't know what...

JGF: Well you talked about the sunken vessel thing, like a close call.

GC: That was the first one.

JGF: Did you have any other close calls? With storms or things like that?

SC: [Chuckles] We had a few. [Laughter]
We had [?]

JGF: Oh [?] OK.

SC: They... One of the things—In fact, I just gave it over at the tent. We were dragging and we hung up [?], we hung up on something heavy. And so we brought the net up very slowly. And, one of the crew members had been looking over and watch for it when it comes up, so it doesn't go up through the bottom of the boat. And he stopped me and he says, "Come, look at this." And it was an airplane.

JGF: Wow.

SC: So, we brought it up very, very gradually. And there was three men in the plane.

JGF: [Gasps]

SC: And they were in their uniforms. Helmets and all the stuff, parachutes still on them. And it was two up in the top part of the plane and one was the gunner in the belly. And it was a PVT or something like that. I remembered what it was at the time. And so I stopped them and I just laid there and thought about this whole thing. And I told the boy, I said, "We're going to let it go." He says, "You're not going to bring it in?" I says, "No, the family, wives, parents, kids, grandparents, everybody, has already suffered the loss of these men."

JGF: Yeah.

SC: Nothing would be gained by it. And it was a long time that they'd been down there. And so I said, "No, we'll just drop it down." And I never notified the Coast Guard. They don't know to this day where it is. I know where it is. But they don't. And so that was one thing.

And weapons. I was concerned about weapons. Bombs and torpedos and all that stuff. But there was none, apparently, there, because I think they'd been on a

mission, with a German submarine. They used their ammunition up and they were coming home but ran out of fuel. Just simply ran out of fuel. And I didn't want to find out anymore than I knew, you know?

And then we picked up another one I talked about over the tent. We picked up a torpedo. And my bow was seventeen and a half feet. And this torpedo went out both sides [laughter] of my boat it was that wide. Or long. It was that long.

JGF: [Gasps]

SC: And so, the net was all wound up. And it was going to be a long time to get that net together. And so, they—I said, “Don't cut it. [?] Just roll the wheel, the torpedo wheel, screw. And take it off as much as you can, and,” you know, “you won't have to do so much mending.” And that's what they were doing. And so I called into the Coast Guard. But even during the war, they knew every ammunition..., missile, you know the weapon that the Germans had.

JGF: Yeah...

SC: They had them all. They knew them by numbers and all—I don't know how they get that stuff and you don't want to know [laughs]. But I called it in. And they called and said it was a German torpedo. And I says, “Fine. Thank you very much. We're going to be coming into the Point blah blah blah.” He says, “Oh, Captain,” he says—I'm looking out at the deck watching the men while I'm talking. And he says, “This torpedo is fired by so many revolutions of the screw.”

JGF: Oh God [laughs]!

SC: And here the guy—the guy's like this. And I said, “No! No! No!” “What?” He's like this! And he turned one more revolution. And so... [Laughs] And I says, “Stop! No more work, that's it.” And so, we could have been one revolution from blowing up.

JGF: Oh geez.

[39:57]

SC: So... [Laughs]. We got into Point Judith. And it was a holiday. I can't remember which one, but there was a holiday. Everybody was quiet as a tomb. But at the end of the town at the end of the harbor was the..., the army engineers. They were doing some repairs and they had one of these big booms and everything. So I went—laid alongside of her and there was only one man aboard. Engineer of sorts. Drunk as a skunk. And I says, “Can I get—use your ship to get my torpedo from Point A to Point B?” “Oh, yeah! No problem.” So, we called the Coast Guard and the Navy, and they were brining a truck and a crew down to get it. So [laughs]. I didn't realize when I started this whole process this man was drunk. Because, you know, it takes a while to recognize this. So we put straps on it. And hooked it. [?] falls, you pick it up. And when he did, instead of just raising it up, he turned the thing at the same time so the big torpedo's going like this [laughs]. And he's going right into the..., the..., I can't think of the word. The..., holding up the dock, the piling, the piling of the dock.

JGF: Oh, the piling. Yup.

SC: And it went right into them. Bang! Like that. And of course that could have set off. And when if it did, it would [?] right out. I mean there was thousands of people on the beach. It would have just wiped them right out. And so [laughs]. He did that two or three times. And about that time, the Navy truck showed up and so he got it over

the truck. And then... [laughs]. I said to the guy, "Now, lower it very, very slowly." "What?" Boom! And he drops it like that. *Down*, it goes on the truck. And all of these things that—my stomach is just going upside down. Well, fortunately that was [?]. But we just—a *number* of these kinds of things, you know.

JGF: Yeah.

GC: He didn't always tell me about these things. You know?

JGF: Oh, isn't that a shame!

GC: [Laughs]

SC: We had a number of torpedos and bombs. And depth chargers that we've carried. You know?

JGF: Yup. It's *amazing* how many people have picked those up. Who would have thought there's *that* many down there, but.

SC: No... They *last* indefinitely. They're probably still down there, if you came across them.

Over the years... Well like in Stonington, fleet, they lost a half a dozen boats at one time. Lost a lot of men. Because they were dragging in the same area, very close. And somebody—they don't know who—but *somebody* got into these bombs and torpedos. And blew it up, and when it did, it sunk all the boats. And most of the men—There's a few survived and picked up the rest of them.

But... There was a lot of that after the war.

But gradually, we'd pick up the stuff or they'd get [?] the bottom of the ocean and covered up.

GC: See Point Judith is right near Quonset Point, Rhode Island, which was a very—one of the largest...

SC: Was *the* largest.

GC: Naval.

SC: Naval air bases.

GC: And there was the Newport—Right across the water was the Newport...

SC: War College.

GC: War College. You know?

In fact, I knew a woman whose husband was, I think a lieutenant colonel or something, in the Air Force. And..., she said that they *knew*, that the U boats off the shore had targeted their atomic weapons.

JGF: Oh...

GC: And some of them were going to be right there. Over Narragansett Bay, which would wipe out Newport.

JGF: Hmmm.

GC: And Quonset.

JGF: Wow.

GC: And all that.

So there was a lot of activity. And then they would practice, you know. You'd hear them practicing shooting and everything. So, there was—there's a lot of..., debris [laughs] down there.

JGF: Wow. So the time that he was out to sea, how were the communication options for like... Were you ever in touch with him when he was out to sea.

SC: Only by phone. We didn't have a radio at home. And I don't know if there was one that was available that would reach that distance. So we could call by phone. But we generally—I told her where I was going to be fishing, so she would know, she could get in touch with me through, just channeling it through different boats and whatever.

GC: Yeah. We had a ship...

SC: Ship to shore.

GC: A radio. And I could get on it, but. It—It's awful hard to hear..., hear their voices and everything. So I generally didn't do that.

JGF: I mean, I have heard like, fishing wives say that..., you know, even in emergencies they sort of felt like it was better not to because all the poor guy could do was worry.

SC: Yeah.

GC: Yeah.

JGF: Be out of sea and not be helpful and just worry.

SC: Yeah. That's very true.

GC: In fact, when he came home and the boat had sunk, I said, "What are you doing at home?" It was earlier than I had expected him and the timing was off. And..., he said, "I lost the boat." Well I thought he was making sort of fun of my questioning him during the night, you know.

SC: [Laughs]

[44:58]

GC: You know, be quiet until the morning and then I'll tell you why I'm in, you know.

SC: [Laughs]

GC: Well, then, when I—In the morning when we woke up I could see by his face that...

JGF: Oh...

GC: ...that there was a disaster there, you know.

JGF: Yeah...

GC: But...

SC: [Chuckles]

GC: Those are some of the things you live through. If you—If you..., if you said, "Don't go fishing" and "Don't do this," and, you'd not live your life.

JGF: Right. Right.

SC: Yeah. Gloria was exceptional in cooperating with me, you know. Because a lot of things, it was difficult for me to talk about. A lot of things were real scary to *me* and I knew what was going on. So I didn't want to stir anybody up. It didn't do any good. Neither one of us could do anything.

JGF: Right.

SC: The government could but they wouldn't, you know. So you just, let it set. Hope nothing happens.

JGF: Yeah. Huh.

SC: She's been a trooper.

JGF: That's neat.

GC: [Chuckles]

JGF: The other thing that I was reading in your bio about you, it said in your book that you have some accounts of colorful characters?

SC: Oh... God, yes.

JGF: [Laughs]

SC: I get into that. I mention two or three of them.

Pussyfoot Gardner. Down...Growing up, no man had a last name. No one.

GC: [Laughs]

JGF: OK.

SC: Because mostly a family problem is a police problem, so, whatever, [laughs] you know. "My name is George" and that was it.

JGF: [Laughs]

SC: So I grew up knowing these guys as Pussyfoot Gardner. Or..., whatever other ones I was talking about. George the Guinea.

GC: [?]

JGF: Nicknames were big [?]. And they were here too, I guess.

SC: Oh yeah. They were very big. In fact, if I said George Smith, no one would know who I'm talking about. But if I gave the nickname, everybody knew who it was, you know?

So that's the way I grew up. And it didn't bother me to even think about it.

But... We had... The one I mentioned... It was Thanksgiving. And my whole family's down at my grandmother's. And we had a huge big table. And everybody was sitting there. Within just minutes of sitting down at the table [?]. And, my grandmother had just brought out the turkey which was immense. And she was a big woman. [?] Set it on the table. And this fella' called George the Guinea—and that was his name, that's what we called him. And he came in. And my grandfather invited him to sit down with us and have a meal. Well my grandmother almost went ballistic.

JGF: Oh...

SC: And he could sense that. And he was very [?] [laughs]. And said, "No, no, Captain. I don't want to. Thank you, go ahead and enjoy your dinner. I'll have a piece of chicken." He didn't call it turkey. Grabbed the leg and ripped it off like that. Took the leg, the thigh and half the breast. [Laughter] And... And he walks out, and this big piece of meat is hanging down and he's chewing on it. And he thanks my grandfather, and thanks my grandmother. And she just grumbled. [Laughs]

Another one was...

GC: The...Pussyfoot.

SC: Yeah, old Pussyfoot Gardner.

He... [Laughs]. He come into my grandfather's and he always wore boots. *Always*. Knee boots. And..., he come in and, we were just getting ready again for a meal. Another big mea—just a regular meal. He says, "Cap, he says, can you take me to the doctor?" He was very calm and very quiet. And my grandfather says, "Sure, I'm just about to have a meal. Won't you join...?" "No, no, no. Go ahead. I'll sit here [?]." And he wasn't excited about anything, you know. He just... So my grandfather had a leisurely meal. And we talked and chatted. Finally got in the car, and I says, to my grandfather, "Can I go, Gramp?" He says, "Sure!" Because it was an experience to be around these guys and he knew I *loved* them. I loved all of

them. And so, we drove up to the hospital. It was a little hospital in Wakefield. And, he went in, and, my grandfather said he—George couldn't speak too good. And, so, he says, "Old Pussyfoot here's got a problem." And doctor says, "OK, what is it?" And he says, "My foot hurts." [Laughs] He says, "I want more information than that." He says, "It hurts!" "It's been hurting you for how long?" He says, "Well, a week, two weeks, something like that." So, they started to pull the boot off. And they *couldn't*. It was just, meshed in there somehow. And they tried. And my grandfather tried and he was brutally strong. And he couldn't get it, so my grandfather says, "I'll take it off." So he got out his jackknife and Vroom! like that. And when he did, and opened it up, the *putrid* air that's come out of that.

JGF: Oh...

SC: The nurses ran out gagging. They were just all upset. And, the doctor didn't like it but he was more used to it than the nurses. And, they pulled it off and the guy's feet—his leg, it was black as my socks.

JGF: [Gasps]

SC: And... So, obviously he had this... What is it?

GC: Gangrene.

SC: Gangrene. Well, the doctor was getting—said, "We're going to have to take the leg off, the foot off, up to your head" [laughs] or something like that. My grandfather says, "Calm down." So he took a cloth and some medicine, alcohol. And washed his leg. Well the black come off the leg. And...

JGF: [Laughs]

[49:58]

SC: And he got down to the bottom of the foot, and there was a big black circle like that.

JGF: Oh...

SC: And so the Captain cleaned it out. And he says, "What is that?" George says—Pussyfoot, rather. He says, "I think it's a big bottle cap." He says, "One of them dropped into the boot last week or so." And [chuckles] he never took the boot off [Laughter] to take this out of his foot. I mean, you know... Almost, even a *kid* would know to do that. [Laughter] And so, the doctor says, "That's... We've got to take the foot." The Captain says, "No, you don't." And so my grandfather was very straightforward. Took his jackknife and he started whipping that right out. And—dig it out. And finally the doctor could see that he didn't need to take the foot off. So they got it cleaned out and took the thing out. It was a beer bottle cap upside down. Driven right into his foot.

JGF: Oh!

SC: So he cut out all of the—you know, stuff that you had to. And he got it... And he never lost his foot.

GC: [Laughs]

JGF: Wow...!

SC: But that was one of the..., character like that, you know?

JGF: But he had the nickname before this happened?

SC: Oh, yeah. All the nicknames—I knew them all by nicknames. I didn't know any of them by what their [chuckles] real name was.

GC: There was no extra money in those days, for..., to aid people who were poor.

SC: No...

GC: Couldn't really work, the jobs that were available. And so they just hung around where they could...

JGF: Get their food.

GC: ...live and everything. They didn't steal. They didn't cheat. They didn't hurt anyone.

SC: There wasn't one..., wasn't one problem, you know, "Take and keep the kids away from those guys." My grandfather let me go—I went everywhere with him, you know?

JGF: Yeah.

SC: And... The Captain figured I'd be [chuckles] I'd be pretty reasonable headed. I'd *stop* before it was going to get dangerous, you know?

JGF: Right...

SC: But... Some of the others—Pussyfoot and George the Guinea...

GC: Fish Fish.

SC: Pardon?

GC: Fish Fish. Yeah.
This guy had a terrible, high-pitched voice. And he was almost blind. He was legally blind.

JGF: Yeah.

GC: [Laughs]

SC: But he was..., had lobster pots. And he would go out and [?] had no idea where they were. And so, if we were dragging—in a number of times he come up to us when we were dragging, he says, [squeaky high voice] "You seen my pots?" In a really high voice.

JGF: [Laughs]

SC: And we'd say yes or no. Yes, they were over there. You know? And... So he would go off happy as a clam and eventually he'd find [squeaky voice] his pots. [Laughs] And... But, the funny thing about it, he became a hero. He was working off Block Island. And he was going from fish boat to fish boat saying, "Have you seen my pots?" you know? Well, he noticed, when he was looking for the pots that there was something on the water. And it was a periscope of a submarine. And so, he had—I don't know how he had the smarts to do this. But he just kept looking for his pots. And he would ask the boats, "Have you seen my pots?" And then, gradually, he acted like he normally did, and he [?drew us the whole thing and ended up going home]. And he got into the Point. Didn't use his radio. He got into the Point. Called the Coast Guard and told him exactly where the submarine was. And they went out and they sunk it right there. [Laughs]

JGF: Wow....

SC: It was a German submarine right off the end of Block Island.

JGF: Wow.

SC: And he was a hero as far as the Navy went.

JGF: Wow. Yeah.

SC: But he had the sense enough not use the phone. Because the Germans'd pick up on it and sink *him*, you know. But he did things like that. He became a local hero for that. And... Oh, I don't know. I can't remember all of them. There was—we had a

lot of characters. It was *beautiful*. And I—This..., the guy from Nova Scotia..., I can't...

GC: Oh, Newfoundland.

SC: Newfoundlander. Yeah. I can't think of his name. Just slipped my mind. But this fella from Newfoundland. And if you said, "Newfoundland" [no stress on "land"], [?] "Newfoundland" [stress on "land"]. And he would really stop me. He says, "It's Newfoundland." And I don't know how many times [laughs] he told me that in his life. But he was a real..., real clever guy. Although, you'd think that they were dense and..., retarded. But they had *brilliant* minds. A lot of them did, you know. And he had all kinds of, strange things, that he did.

But there were a lot of guys that I just, adored.

And, they were *hard* workers. They worked for my grandfather for *years* and *years* and *years*.

One of the nicest [?] that happened to me was... A very quiet man, I didn't like him because he was so quiet. And he was *stern* when he dealt with me. Well, come to find out, he called me into his..., house. And we had dinner. And he never talked and I was always a little bit afraid of him. And so he invited me in and we had a nice meal. And then..., he said, "I wanted to show you something." So he took me down to the dock and here was a beautiful little open cockpit boat. You know? About eighteen foot. Beautiful little thing. And he says, "This is yours." And I says, "I beg your pardon?" [Laughs] And he says, "This is yours."

JGF: Huh!

SC: He says, "I'm not doing well. Physically." He says, "I'm all—This is my last year with your grandfather." He'd been there thirty years or so. And he says, "I've always like you. You never talk much." [Laughs]

JGF: [Laughs]

SC: I didn't talk much because he didn't talk much! And so he liked that, in a kid, you know.

[55:01]

GC: [Chuckles]

SC: So he gave me this beautiful eighteen foot boat. I never forgot that. And he died shortly after that.

JGF: Wow...

SC: He knew he was dying, you see. He didn't tell me that. Maybe it was just—it's like he was leaving, you know.

JGF: Right.

SC: But those are the kind of experiences that I had. Just *marvelous* experiences. A lot of them were interesting and exciting. And always, you know, flavorful. I enjoyed them. I enjoyed the people. I enjoy people like that, anyhow. And these grumpy old people, I don't understand why they are like that. Life's too beautiful. [Laughter] But I can't... I just don't think of any others.

GC: No, those are the ones that I always remembered.

SC: Yeah.

JGF: Well I've kept you talking quite a while anyways.

SC: Yeah.

GC: [Laughs]

JGF: I only have two more questions.

SC: Sure!

JGF: If I could, and you know, for either or both of you. The first is..., is there anything I haven't asked that you might have liked to share more about? Or like the...coop? Did you have an active role in that that [?].

SC: Yes. That was a very proud moment in my life. My brother and I were both on the board of directors. My brother John, who's since died. And..., at the time, when I was on the board, the United Nations made the declaration, [?], that the coop at Point Judith was the best cooperative in the world.

JGF: That's wonderful.

SC: And it's just a little dinky harbor! You know? But we worked hard at it. We all did. All the fishermen. But if we were on the board and I happened to have the privilege of being on that, we just worked extra hard. And we did a lot of things.

JGF: Was it for marketing fish? Or other things?

SC: Well it was developing markets. And we had a salesman that did that. But it was our involvement with the government making decisions about fishing.

JGF: Oh, OK.

SC: And we were out in the forefront of that. And if it wasn't fair, we told them it wasn't fair. And we'd go public. And a lot of guys were very cautious about that. We would go public and they knew that. But they, they were very, very good. And... In fact, the coop sent me down as a representative of the industry to Washington. And I met with the Assistant Attorney General—is that right? No...

GC: Interior.

SC: Pardon?

GC: Secretary of the Interior.

SC: Yes, Assistant Secretary of the Interior. And..., I met with him and told him about problems in the industry. And, how the government wasn't helping our situation, and..., that we would appreciate some kind of an adjustment. And he said, [?] he says, "As far as this government is concerned, we don't care if the industry survives or not." He says, "One missile base in Iceland is more important to us than the industry—the fishing industry on both coasts."

JGF: Yeah...

SC: Well that was a kick in the head to me. And... And that's what they did. And that's why it went right down the tubes.

But we had, you know... I was [?] with a number of things as a board member. And, my brother was on the board. And my grandfather was on the board. And... I was on the board. And, several others of us in the family. But... It was a nice... I *enjoyed* that very much. It was a real privilege to be part of that.

JGF: Hmm. Was the—when had the coop started?

SC: Oh, I can't remember. It was in the '40s. I think it was in the '40s. It was one of the first ones. And it was the most effective. And it was put—and the men, got involved, the fishermen got involved right away.

JGF: That's great.

SC: And no one had to take a long term, and be out of the industry, you know out of the business. They *all* took a job and did it very, very well. And... And they had a real pride in the whole thing. And we had people—I've had people on my boat, from the

government in India, and they have [laughs]. And they were all..., you know, dressed to the nines. And I had a deckload of shrimp. Not shrimp, but butterfish, and squid. And stuff like that. With all that ink from the squid. And, one of the guys was standing in the wheel house looking, and he says, "Look! Look!" I didn't know what he was talking about. He *jumped* right out on deck. And he went over to the net. And the fellas were washing down the net, with all of these—looked like miniature shrimp, and I guess they were shrimp. And... He took them off like that, he says, "Food! Protein!" And he goes like this. And it was all a mash. He says, "That's protein. I can feed my family on this." And we're washing it overboard. We had *no* idea. I mean, it didn't mean anything to us. But *now*, thinking back on it, it was probably a real *shock* to him. Because his family who was not in this country, was *starving* to death, and we're washing all this *food* overboard. So I mean, when you look at it that way...

JGF: Huh.

[59:48]

GC: Tell them about the time they came down with the cookies that were made...

SC: Oh, yeah. I'm trying to think of the fella's name and I can't. He developed the first paint on the walls. Remember the name of that? It was..., a special paint that was the first time that was like a flat paint. They never had one like that before. And he made a fortune doing that.

But he developed a process where he could convert, if you will, fish products—the whole fish, head, gut, and tail—into a process that you could use as flour. And so he invited the board of directors. We all went over to his house in Newport. Beautiful place. And he served us—he says, "I'm busy for a little bit. I'll be in half an hour." So, that was fine. So, he says, "We'll give you some refreshment." So he had tea and cookies. And I've seen all the movies where everybody in these houses had tea and cookies. So I said, "This is normal." So we sat there and of course I had my share of cookies. And...[Laughs]. When he come down he says, "Gentlemen, did you like your tea and cookies?" I says, "Yeah. It was great." He said, "Do you know that those cookies were made from fish?" And, he says, "The *whole* fish." See, the government wouldn't let you use the whole fish. They only used the body, process. You couldn't use the heads or the eyes or the guts or anything like that.

JGF: Yeah...

SC: But he developed a process where it was, pure as far as the quality of stuff. And, so he proved to us. He made these cookies and they were delicious.

JGF: Wow!

SC: And, he says, "I can't get the government going on this." He was hoping that the industry would be able to put some pressure on it. And, he says, "If you, the coop, can get this accepted, I will give you the patent."

JGF: Oh...!

SC: He says, "And you can feed the world." He says, "Do you have any idea how much money [chuckles] we're talking?" Because, you know, it was something that was so cheap, that, countries all over the world would be able to make this flour, if you will, into edible food.

JGF: Right.

SC: Well I was all excited. [Laughs] you know. Really, I didn't get excited most days. But... And the coop was very excited. But the government wouldn't have anything to do with it. Can you imagine? It just boggles my mind. That these men are so *bright* in so many things, they're so *stupid* in others.

GC: Mmmm.

JGF: Yeah... Like, so they want missiles in Iceland, but never mind feeding India.

SC: Yeah! You got it. See, they didn't care about the people in India.

GC: [?] sardine, which is the whole, the whole fish.

SC: Yeah. Yeah! That's right. You eat the whole fish in a sardine.

JGF: Do you? Yeah. I've never had one. [Laughs]

SC: Well some brands you don't. But most of them you do. And... I don't know. I thought it was a great idea. And I ate them. And I thought they were terrific.

JGF: Well, they'd be protein.

SC: Oh yeah. All—100 percent protein. And you could make them into, you know, flour for cakes or pies or cookies or doughnuts. All of the fattening things that...

JGF: Right. Or those of us who don't like gluten anymore, could have it. [Laughs]

SC: Right. But see they would no longer be fattening, either. You know, because of the makeup of them You could eat all you wanted to and not get fat from that product, you know. If you put chocolate pudding or chocolate frosting, then you'd get fat.

JGF: Yeah... Well, yeah, of course

GC: [Chuckles]

JGF: Well a little bit.

SC: What else have I forgot? I've forgotten most of everything. I know who *you are* every day.

JGF: [Laughs]

GC: I'm empty. [Laughs]

JGF: I guess I would just wrap up with... I always like to ask everybody, and I would hope that both of you might weight on this—What would you like the festival visitors leave the festival understanding about the industry?

SC: I think myself that the industry's getting a bad, bad... I don't know what the word is, but. The public does not understand where the industry stands, and the way the *world* is treating them. These men, as they [?], and my family, my brother and I, and my grandfather, and all of us that were in the fishing industry. Had no other *intent*, except, the industry to make it as good as we could make it. To benefit the *people*. Feed them for one thing. And then to make it better for all of us. And..., I think that they're getting a bad deal because the government won't stand up for [?]. I think it's just terrible. It's... It's... If you reverse the situation and did to the *government* what they're doing to the fishermen—and it needn't be fishermen, most of the industries got the same problem—then you'd know there'd be war by the government. Come right down on you. And I mean, I'm not just saying this from being grumpy. I've had a lot of experience with this, representing the coop. And I know the attitude of these government players. And it just *shocked* me, it really did. I was just too young and innocent [chuckles] to understand that government leaders would talk this way.

JGF: Yeah....

SC: And... But, that's really, I think the fishermen gotta' do a better job of organizing themselves. And get some—*hopefully* fishermen—but if not fishermen, people, not [?] but involved with the fishing industry, to represent them. And spend money. Vast amounts of money if necessary. To get *quality* people to go up and do that. Most fishermen—I love them all—but most fishermen are not able to do that. You know, they can tell you how to fish. They can tell you where to go to fish. And they can do it for you. But they can't talk to everybody. I mean I've been on board draggers and I know that. And..., we got some guys on the directors that they'd sit there for the whole meeting and not say a word. But you get them out and get a beer into them and [laughs] they'll tell you everything that [?] to say, you know? “So why didn't you say that?” You know?

[1:05:21]

JGF: So you need to hold your meetings in bars, then.

SC: Yeah, right. That's what we should have done. But... Yeah, I think that that's it. They need to accept the responsibility to be organized. To a better degree. I mean, they've got some good organizations. But, get people involved. *Young* people. You know, you've got some young fishermen—I was talking to a lovely young man in here, in the restaurant this afternoon. Tent, rather. And he's just a very bright boy. Someone like that would do well.

JGF: Right.

GC: There's a man...

SC: I don't know what the solution would be.

GC: There's a man in Maine that was on the..., channel 10, public channel. And he was a scientist and had been a fishermen.

JGF: Mmmm.

GC: And he did a very, very good—excellent job at presenting the problem.

JGF: I think that's sort of a hopeful step, maybe. You hear people in New Bedford now starting to talk very positively about the SMAST people at UMass Dartmouth. The scientists there, that really seem to want to understand fishing and take that into account.

SC: Yeah. The industry in Rhode Island now—I don't know anything about that. But the industry in Rhode Island had a great deal of hands-on relationship with the University of Rhode Island. But they didn't take *advantage* of it. They didn't say, “Look, here's our problem. Can you help us?” They just, you know, mumble about it and mumble about it. But, those guys aren't going to jeopardize their relationship without their being good reason.

JGF: Yeah...

SC: [?] Surprise, surprise, surprise. [Laughs]

GC: Well... Yeah, I think that the government's now looking at this new world order that they're talking about. They've done it since the father of this Bush. They've talked about a new world order. And they're thinking, if I *understand* it, that they want the dairy products and the lambs to come from Australia. And that will give Australia a job. And they want the fishing industry to come from Iceland and Canada and some of your—and that's *their* job. And they're supposed to give whole countries something to work at. But they forget that there's the inner

structure of each state and community and..., that it's got to be supported or there's nothing else.

JGF: Right. Right. Fascinating.

GC: Yeah.

JGF: Well, thank you very much.

SC: Oh, it's our pleasure. Thank you.

JGF: [?] last minute notification.

SC: Thank you for having us here and..., make a lot of hot air.

GC: [Laughs]

JGF: Oh, no. It's always fascinating.

[End of interview]