

Name of person interviewed: James Lawler [JL]

Place interview took place: Fairfield Inn, Working Waterfront Festival

Date and time of interview: September 29, 2012

Interviewer: Madeleine Hall-Arber [MHA]

Abstract

Born in a small Newfoundland village, James Lawler started crab fishing in his youth, eventually becoming the owner of a ship yard. James unique perspective on Canadian fishing licensing and regulation provide an interesting narrative throughout the interview.

Demographic information

Sex: Male

Age: 52

Ethnicity: White

Occupation: Owner, Marine Service Center

Born: St. Johns, Newfoundland- Canada

Key words

Role

Shoreside business owner/operator

General Social and Cultural Characteristics

Community (structure and organization)

Social and Cultural Characteristics of Fishing

Fishing territories

Gear and Fishing Technology

Pots and traps

Boats, ships, vessels

Business and Economics of Fishing and Other Maritime

Business and economic effects of regulation

Shoreside support services (docks, repairs, etc.)

Fisheries Management

Permits/ Licenses

[00:00]

MHA: I'm gonna ask you to say your name for the microphone. So, what is your name?

JL: My name is James William Lawler.

MHA: Okay, and when and where were you born?

JL: I was born February the 26th, 1960 at St. John's, Newfoundland Canada.

MHA: Okay and is that where you grew up?

JL: Yes I grew up in a little fishing village, 'bout 60 miles south of St. John's in a place called Renew's, Newfoundland.

MHA: I think I've heard that name. Can you talk a little but about the neighborhood and your, your community? Your little fishing community, what it was like?

JL: Basically it was a small fishing village, where it was mostly cod traps and hook and line fishery. Done mostly from, in my generation, done mostly from smaller, open boats. Approximately 30 to 40 feet boats, right. Prior to, prior to that there was a schooner fishery too. We would, would dories, long line fishery that they go off to Grand Banks. They'd fish in schooners with dories. But that was a little bit before my time. In my grandfather's time anyway.

MHA: Yes, okay. So are you from a family that was involved with fishing for several generations?

JL: Yes I am, yeah I go back generations. Our, our family, the Lawler family is always involved in the fishery.

MHA: So, did your father fish?

JL: Yes. My father fished. Most of his life he fished as a fisherman, but he also done some other work too. When the fishery was slow or whatever too. To keep the family, to keep the family in food and supplies.

MHA: Right. Were you affected by the moratorium? The cod moratorium in there, in Newfoundland?

JL: Yes we were. It's kind of a, it's a little strange what happened with the cod moratorium. We were very fortunate, [coughs] excuse me, in Newfoundland with the moratorium. The cod stock started to go down and things started to get very slow in the fishery, but at the same time the cod stocks were going down, the crab fishery was coming on stream, which was new. The crab was new to the, to the island. And it only really started in the 80s, mid-80s. And as the cod stocks were going down, the crab was

increasing. So it was only a year or two beyond the moratorium when the crab started to really pick up. And crab as you know is a very valuable seafood.

[03:00] So it really saved a lot of Newfoundland, a lot of Newfoundland outwork [ph] communities.

MHA: So which kind of crab is it?

JL: It's snow crab.

MHA: Oh of course, yes. And did, who, who picked the crab? Who, when, who, the men I assume harvested it? And were there traps?

JL: Yes, it's all done with, with traps. It's, it's a different trap than a, it's kind of a coned shaped trap. It's round, but it's cone shaped. It's, it's not the same trap that they use for the Bering Sea crab. They use big square, different traps.

MHA: Right.

JL: But these are cone shaped traps that they, and they stack very easily. But they, they take up quite a but of space on a vessel and you need a fairly big boat for it. And they, they fish from 20 miles out, according to the size of the boat and the quota you got, but they fish from 20 miles to 220 miles offshore.

MHA: So it's deep-sea, some of it.

JL: Yes it is, yup yup. But it's, it's been a very lucrative fishery for, for Newfoundland.

MHA: And you mentioned quota. Is that how it's controlled?

JL: Yes it's...well there's an overall quota which is divided up among, among the boats. There's so many boats in the, in the certain fleets and there's 3 sectors. There's inshore, there's mid-distance, and then there's offshore. So each sector has, has a "x" amount of quota which is divided up among the vessels. And it's controlled by the Federal Department of Fisheries. They manage the quotas. But each boat, the offshore quota for the offshore fleet...they have approximately 225 to 250 thousand pounds of crab right? So when you take that and you multiply it by, it goes anywhere from 2 dollars to as high as 4 dollars per pound, and that's only the crab. Plus they have a shrimp quota too. So they have another probably 350 to 500 thousand pounds of shrimp which on top of the crab, it makes for a very good living, right.

MHA: So how did they decide, since this was a new fishery, how did they decide who got the quota? Which boats got the quota?

JL: Well they went back to the...first of all, any boats, our vessels are done in size.

[06:00]

We have, our inshore fleet goes up to 34'11". Then we got another fleet that went from 35' to 45', then we have a fleet that went from 46' up to 65'. 65 is the maximum for our vessel length right? So boats in the past, that used to groundfish for codfish, drag or gilnet or hook and line, well they were put into...you know if you were 55', you were put into the large sector. So the quotas were divided up so if there was a 100 boats, and that they'd take the quota and divide it by 100, and that was the quotas that were, were given out right.

MHA: Okay interesting. So what was your first job in the industry?

JL: My fish job, I fished with my uncle actually when I was 6 years old. I fished inshore. We'd just go out for the day. You'd leave in the morning, sometimes before daylight. And you'd go out in a small boat, a 23' boat, and I'd fish with...summer, when you'd be out of school and I'd fish with him in the summer. And we'd come back in the evening and sometimes you'd have 200 pounds of cod, sometimes you'd have 600 pounds of cod but it was good back then. Even as a young kid, everybody was makin' money. There was, if you didn't go out in the boat you worked on the docks and the guys who'd come in, they'd paid you to unload the fish. Which I couldn't believe we did back then, we used to prong the fish up, driving the prong in through the fillets, it's hard to believe that's what we done but we did. And then once you had the fish off from the boats, you could cut out the cod tongues and we'd cut out the cod tongues and we'd sell those locally or bring them into St. John's and we'd also...if there was a lot of fish and the guys wanted to get back out to haul the traps again, we'd help out with cleaning the fish and they'd pay you and so on. We had it pretty good, as, as young kids back, back then.

MHA: When did that start falling off?

JL: I would think, probably in the early 80s. In the early 80s, right up to the moratorium in 1992, it started to taper off. The fish started to get very small. And like the size, we were much, we were always used to looking at big cod fish. You know, and then gradually everyone could see they just started getting smaller and smaller and smaller. And then, it went, it went on too long.

[09:00]

It should have been, it should have been shut down before '92.

MHA: But at least the crab came.

JL: We were, we were very fortunate that the crab came along.

MHA: So your community didn't face that forced move, I, I heard some of the outports had to move, the whole community had to move because there just was no occupation, there was no fishing.

JL: Well, some areas, some areas up Newfoundland are not good areas for crab fishing. So any of those communities that were adjacent to, those areas that were the crab, where there was no crab fishery, or the grounds were, were not suitable...those communities pretty well got wiped out. But we, we just happen to be fortunate enough that we were adjacent to, basically all the areas. The inshore, the midshore and the offshore was, where, where I lived in Renew area, all the best crab fishings areas were directly adjacent to us.

MHA: That's great. Yeah. So, is, is the habitat rocky? Is that was the crabs like?

JL: Yes, very mountainous. Rocky, rocky bottom. Yes.

MHA: So let's see. When you first started out, at 6 you said...[laughs]

JL: Yes at 6 years old when I...

MHA: And you were doing the traps for the cod, cod traps?

JL: No, no we'd, we'd jig fished then, with just a hook. Or a baited hook right, once of the other. I'd just do that in the summer with my uncle right. Now I wouldn't be out every day, if it was...if the weather was nice, he wouldn't allow you to go if it was gonna be a rough or tumbly day.

MHA: Good. So you're not doing that now. You're in, you have your marine service center right? How did you get involved with that?

JL: Well I went to...when I finished high school my father and mother there were always concerned about the fishery and they said well your gonna have to get a trade or an education and something else. You can always go back to the fishery. So I went to, I went to St. John's and I went to College of Trades and I became a welder. So I went to work then as a welder, in St. John's for a couple of years. Then eventually I went back up on the southern shore where I live, it's called the Irish Loop, 'bout a half hours drive from my hometown of Renew. When to work with a company up there for 10 years.

[12:00]

And then my buddy and I, eventually started our own welding business, called Welltech Industries. That was in 1987 we started Welltech Industries. And in 1991, the year prior to the cod moratorium, the shipyard in Fernews came up on tender. The government was putting out proposals to lease or purchase. To lease actually. So we put in a proposal and we, we won the contract the take over the shipyard. Which we eventually purchased in 1995. But looking back at it now, I, we must have been young and a little

crazy. There was a, we knew the moratorium...the cod stocks didn't look, didn't look well but we were young and had an opportunity to get into this shipyard and we went into this shipyard one year prior to the moratorium. But we, we went through some lean days. There wasn't a lot of paychecks for a, for a while. We got through it and then crab fishery came onstream so, so that helped us. And the yard has been very busy.

MHA: So, for the yard, you're doing mostly fishing vessels?

JL: Mostly fishing vessels. I do some pleasure vessels, pleasure boats. But it's, I mostly service all the fishing fleet all over the Newfoundland actually. And after, a few years ago after that then I also go involved in the, in the pilot boat business. And that's a company called Southcoast Crewing so all the oil tankers that come through Placentia Bay, Whiffen Head and Come By Chance where the refineries are too. I, I got 3 vessels which I lease and I crew. Captain. And I bring all those vessels in. I, I put pilots on board. So we go out to sea. We meet the tankers, and we put the pilots on board. And they take the tankers up this narrow channel, up through 365 islands to take them in to, to the refineries. It's, it's pretty tricky business too. Going up through all those islands and it's a big fishing area also. So we're a little, a little concerned about that. If we ever do have a, always wondering about an oil spill there. With so much, so much tanker traffic it could, it could be devastating to the area.

[15:00]

But we, we all got our fingers crossed that there's nothing gonna happen there. Hopefully we everything stays.

MHA: So how do your pilots learn the ins and outs of the islands?

JL: Well the pilots don't work for me as such. They are employees of Atlantic Pilotage. But they go through rigorous training. They have a lot of sea time in, and they gotta have foreign goin' tickets but they also gotta be quite familiar with Placentia Bay. So most of those guys know every rock and island, they're pretty familiar with the area. So they go right on the tankers and navigate those big tankers up through, up through the Bay.

MHA: It's a challenge.

JL: It is.

MHA: So your task is to make sure that the pilots get on to those tankers?

JL: Make sure the pilots get on and then we take them off when they get to their location. But it's, sometimes it's pretty nasty. It can be pretty nasty weather when you're trying to get a pilot on, right. Because the oil companies don't want those big tankers just waiting around. There the money people, they want 'em in, offloaded and back out to sea for another load.

MHA: Yeah so they, do they have, have to climb up rope ladders or...?

JL: Yes they do. Yup, the rope ladders are, the boats are doing approximately 9 to 10 knots. Those tankers at that speed. And the pilot boats goes up along side doing 9, 10 knots. And the ladder's dropped down and they jump, jump on to the ladder. The pilot boat is brought in tight against the tanker and the 2 boats are steaming along and the pilot has to climb up the ladder on board.

MHA: And they're not small boats that they are climbing up on.

JL: No some of these are huge, super tankers. Huge, yeah.

MHA: Oh wow. So they have to be in good shape. [Laughs]

JL: Yes they do.

MHA: Okay. So have, has your...I wanted to ask how your community has been affected by all of this change in, in you know moving from the moratorium to the crab and, and now you're, you're you at least are diversifying a bit. How is the community doing? Is it, a lot of change evident?

JL: Well basically there's been a lot of diversification in the community too. There's still a lot of people, you know, involved in the fishery, but there's also a lot of people involved in the oil and gas.

[18:00]

And it's kind of a interesting what's happening here, now, it's...I get a little worried about it actually. Because there's more money, there's more money now than ever in our community but a lot of it is comin' from the oil and gas so it seems like it's getting harder to get a labor force, people to work in the fishery and work at other, you know, to get carpenters and general laborers and that around the community 'cause everyone wants to get this big money that's coming from the oil and gas. And with the oil and gas, there's other problems coming to our area now too. We, we've never experienced very little crime. Crime is on the rise. Drugs are becoming part of our, our society now which we, we never had drugs in our area. There was very little drugs in Newfoundland, but with the oil and gas; with prosperity comes all those other problems. So I'm not sure about the future where it's all going, where it's all gonna end up. 'Cause oil and gas is good, and it's good money but it's only, it only has a certain lifespan and you know, I, I can see Newfoundland being very rich for the next 30, 40 years, but it could come to an end too. So we could have our oil and gas gone. We could have our fisheries gone and you know, there could be nothin' to fall back on then.

MHA: So when you, when you talk about the crime and the, and the drugs and all the negative aspects, is that coming in with outsiders or is it just the nature of the beast where

people in your own community who have grown up there are being attracted by these things?

JL: Well I, I don't think, I guess, well there is a lot of outsiders that have moved in there too, but you gotta remember that you know, you got a young kid you know, and he's 25 26 years old and he's bringin' home \$175 to \$225 thousand dollars annual salary. He's gotta, you know, that's a lot of money. A lot of money! So they're, they're buying big cars and boats, houses and it seems unlimited. And I guess with all, you've got so much money around I guess drugs and [inaudible] once the drugs come, the crime comes. So it's a little worrisome too, and I'm not sure where the future's gonna be.

[21:00]

MHA: Yeah, right. And how about the oil companies themselves...are they owned by local people? Or is it government owned?

JL: No. All the oil companies, they're all privately owned companies from all over the world and...

MHA: Okay so, yeah, but the big...Exxon and so on, and that kind of thing...

JL: The Exxons and the Shells...PetrolCanada and all those. They're all the big companies that are in there. Stat Oil just moved in. It's getting bigger and bigger. There's big fines, they're after fining more oil and gas in Newfoundland, there's gonna be some new announcements coming soon again so.

MHA: Are they doing that fracking? The hydraulic bringing out of the natural gas? You know what I'm talking about?

JL: No, no we're not bringing any natural gas in, in yet. We're still into the oilery. But they're talking about the future. We're gonna be getting involved in the natural gas also.

MHA: So do you have children?

JL: Yes I do, I got 3 children.

MHA: And would you like them to go into your business? Or into fishing? Or into oil?

JL: No actually I'm not encouraging, I'm not encouraging any of my family to, to go into the oil and gas, or my business. I'm a little bit concerned about the future of it and I'm trying to direct them in other areas. My daughter works for National Defense in Ottawa, so she's working with the federal government. I got a son in PEI, he works, he's got a business degree and a tourism degree. He works for the University of PEI. And my youngest son just came back from Afghanistan. He done, he done a tour in Afghanistan which was a little nerve wracking and, he ended up in the hospital for a few weeks but he's okay and he's back home. He's back in school doing his engineering.

MHA: Good for him.

JL: But...

MHA: So your advice to somebody coming up now would be to get educated, something other than fishing...in the fishing industry?

JL: I'm afraid that would be my advice but I, I still like to, I hope people are gonna stay into the fishery but it's gonna be a little more difficult. Right now, it's even, it's a problem now getting crews. You know, the guy that owns the enterprise and owns the boat...he's havin' problems now with crewing his vessels right, because a lot of the guys wanna go...they can make more money in the off shorery rather than go fishing so that's becomin' a problem.

[24:00]

And the other thing that's happening with our fishery and, I gotta a feeling it's happening here in New Bedford also. I don't know a lot about it but I, I got a friend here who I chat to pretty regular, and the fishery in Newfoundland seems to be getting more controlled by corporations. So the individual guy with that fishing quota and license, he's gonna be too small to make it. Everything seems to be taken over by bigger companies, they can afford the boats. They can take the quotas and combine 'em and you know use half the vessels. And, I'm not sure if that independent guy with that boat that he owns and that quota he's got...I'm, I'm not sure if he's gonna be able to make it on his own in his future. And I got a great concern with that. And I blame that on our, our government for allowing that. Because if someone steps out of a fishing enterprise, they're gonna retire and move on to something else. I don't think that should be sold. I think that license should go back into, into the government purse and then if there's some young guy wants to, or some young girl wants to get into the fishery, there should be you know certain task that they must perform and so many of these names should go into a drawing then and just license automatically goes to this person. I don't think any individual should ever own a fishing license. It's a public resource and you know, if you were given that license, yes you, you, you make a living from that license but at the end of the day, when you're finished with that license it should go back to the, to the government or to the state, wherever. I see that as, a big problem with our fishery and I think, I think it's a bit of a problem here in, in the United States also.

MHA: Yeah. Yup, it's actually a very challenging thing right now, 'cause we haven't had the private...the individual quotas except for a very few industries...or fisheries and those were mostly on the West Coast and in Alaska. But now it's, it is...I'm not supposed to give my opinion but...[Laughs]...sorry. Let's see, when you were actually fishing, did you ever have any interesting experiences? Anything unusual happen while you were on a boat?

[27:00]

JL: Well I guess we had a few close calls with bad weather, you know, where we barely made it back to shore. We got caught in a few storms and couple of unusual things like, I remember one time when we were trawling to have, I had, I had a hook while we were setting trawls, shooting trawls had a hook stuck in the back of my hand and that was a little bit of a scare because you thought you could get pulled overboard. But one of the guys managed to cut the line and then, free it but no...other than a few bad experience with weather, you know, and anybody that's spend anytime on the water you, you know, you got, you got to learn to deal with that if you're gonna go on the water you're gonna run into some bad, bad storms and....Other than that, it wasn't too bad.

MHA: Did you have safety training in those days when you were first fishing?

JL: No. No safety training. The most safety training we got was when our parents weren't lookin' and the ice was in the harbor, we'd go up and...[laughs]...jumping from ice pan to ice pan and hope that you made it to the next one. No there was no regulated safety training.

MHA: I, I assume there is now.

JL: Yes there is, yup. Yes you have to, you have to have your survival training and survival suits and, and you do onboard training with the survival suits and you do regular, regular testing.

MHA: Now are, are fishermen in Newfoundland...are they, are the crew members also permitted? I know you have a permit for the boat and for the end quota and so on. Are the individual fishermen, do they have to have a license or a permit of some sort?

JL: Yes they do, yup. They are given a license to, to fish too. Some, some guys got what we call full-time fishing license. Some more guys got part-time license, where they can go and sign up at the department of fisheries, provided they have the training, that they can go out to, and part-time. But in the future you're gonna see a lot more part-time guys. Rather than full-time because like I say, a lot of the jobs are gonna be, seem to be going to the oil and gas.

MHA: So, what did I wanna ask....Oh how old were you when you stopped fishing altogether? Approximately.

JL: I would think I was problem 20 years old, yeah, when I stopped fishing yeah. But I did do some part-time fishing after that, with my, with my father and uncle right.

[30:00]

I did fish part-time but I was basically out of it when I was 20 yeah. I got into the welding business and once you started to work, there wasn't much time for the, for the fishing. But I missed it.

MHA: So do you ever go out just for fun?

JL: Oh yes, all, all the time. We gotta a recreational fishery at home right now and the cod fishery is open for 2 weeks at 2 different times throughout the year. You're allowed 5 fish per trip. And no, I still go out, still spending quite a bit of time out on the water whenever I can, yeah.

MHA: What did you like most about it? Being on the water?

JL: I would, I would assume that it's just a healthy, such a healthy occupation.

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JL: ...fresh air. Yeah the fresh air. It's a clean environment and you're kind of your own boss too. You felt, you felt like your own boss. You have to had freedom right, you come and go as you please. That's probably the best part of it I guess.

MHA: So in your...how many people work for you in your two companies here?

JL: I have approximately 25 people that work for me. It's only a small company but 25 people that work for me in both shipyard and, and Southcoast Crewing, the crewing business.

MHA: That's, that's a good number.

JL: Yep.

MHA: And what kind of training do they have to have to get a job with you?

JL: Most of the guys that work with me on the shipyard are either welders, ships carpenters, millwrights, and of course on the pilot boats, they're all trained captains, trained deckhands, engineers, so all personnel with me are fully trained.

MHA: How do you find them?

JL: I find them by advertising when necessarily but most of 'em is done locally right. Most of the guys know I'm in the business and so that the jobs...they know, you know the type of business that I'm in doin'. They come and drop off applications and whatever. But the same with our pilot boat business becoming a little more difficult now to attract captains and crew because a lot of those guys are going offshore so it seems like I'm getting some of the older, older guys that don't want to go offshore, into the supply boats that are for the oil and gas so, seem like I'm getting an older crew now.

MHA: Interesting. But they at least have experience, right? [Laughs]

JL: Oh yes, they are very experienced.

MHA: Just looking over to see what I've forgotten to ask you. It's a lot of the questions that they suggest that I ask are geared towards people who are active fishermen so. [Laughs]. I'm sure there are things I should be asking you.

JL: Well I'm not, I'm not an active fisherman but I've, I pretty well know the fishery inside out in Newfoundland, where I... 'cause my business where I started off fishing and even though I went into the welding business and the shipyard business after I, I spent all my life right around the fishery.

[03:00]

MHA: What is the population approximately of your community?

JL: My community right now is about 420 people in Renews and my business, my shipyard business is about two miles away in a community called Fermews and that has a population of about the same approximately. Approximately 400, 420 people. Yep. So we're, we're one hours drive from the capitol right, St. John's.

MHA: Okay. My father used to go to St. John's, he was also in the shipping business but he, he, at that time he worked for Alcoa Steam Ship Company so he, he said it was very cold in St. John's. [Laughs]

JL: Yeah the winters can be cold.

MHA: So what, I've asked you a number of questions, but I'm sure there are things that I have missed. What would you like people to know about either Newfoundland, about your businesses, about fishing. People that... 'cause this will, this, these are oral histories that will be possibly listened to by people far away or they could be people, local people. So, what have I forgotten to ask you? Or didn't think to ask you? [Laughs]

JL: Well I'm not sure but if this is gonna be a part of history, I hate to say what I think it's gonna happen and, you know, with the fishery in Newfoundland which is gonna be sad. Which we've done for 500 years. I don't think there's gonna be anymore community fisheries in the future. I think it's gonna go by the wayside and it's gonna be big corporations that are gonna take over the fishery and our quotas will be, will be cut by those corporations. There will be no fishing as we've known it for years and years in all those little rural communities around Newfoundland. You know, that's the way I see the future. And I hope I'm totally wrong, but I don't think... I, I, I... this is the way I see the future. And these corporations will hire people to work on these factory freezer vessels. All the processing will be done at sea, the finished product will come in and be offloaded,

sent to wherever in the world. There'll be no factories, there'll be no online [onshore] factories.

MHA: Actually that was something I did mean you earlier. When, when the area did turn to snow crab who was processing it?

[06:00]

JL: There was a...the government also issued a number of processing licenses that's controlled by the Provincial government. But not all the fish plants got... 'cause like, you have to be adjacent to the crab or crab in your area. So a lot of it was political, it was who you know if you got a processing license. And at the time, I think there was probably maybe 15 licenses given out. We're probably close to 30 there right now, processing licenses in the island, right. Too many, there should not be 30 there, right. There's too many processing licenses but I guess it became political and...

MHA: That's quite a few for a relatively small community.

JL: It is. That's for all of Newfoundland and Labrador now. All of Newfoundland and Labrador.

MHA: I was going to say...[Laughs]

JL: No my, my community where I live doesn't have a processing license. There's no, or Fermews where my shipyard is too, but there is one in Aquaforte close by. It's only about 5 miles away. And there's another one in Cape Royal. I think we've got around 30 now all over Newfoundland and Labrador.

MHA: That makes more sense. Now, when it first started, was there any home processing for example...in Maine when they first started catching crab, the women, the fishermen's wives would process the crab. They'd cook 'em and pick 'em and then send them to a cannery and sell it by the...it's like piece work in a sense.

JL: No, under our government regulations that wouldn't be allowed for sanitary reasons and whatever. No the crab was all had to be processed in these licensed processing plants which were regulated by the government for regular inspections.

MHA: That's the way it is now also in Maine but when it first started, they, they were able to pick 'em...

JL: Yeah I understand that that's the way they did it in Nova Scotia too and New Brunswick but that was never the way in Newfoundland. We, we were a little later getting into the crab I guess and...

MHA: And by that time the rules had changed, yeah.

JL: Yeah.

MHA: So how could, how could Newfoundland avoid that future that you see?

JL: Well, I, I, I, I think the first way they're gonna avoid is to take back those fishing licenses which, like I said, nobody, no individual should own anyway.

[09:00]

Or no corporation should own. It should be only a permit given to any individual to go and fish. So that's the first thing you do, is take back the licenses. You know, it's gonna cost millions and millions to do that right now because you got a lot of those big, big companies that have owned a number of them. Now legally they're not allowed to be owned by a company or corporation. They're in individual's names but, I think it probably happens here also, so the first thing we gotta do is to get back control of those fishing licenses. Then we gotta work on the markets and government has gotta put an incentive in there for these young people to go back into the fishery. To make it worth their while to go into the fishery, back in, and that they can make an honest living, a decent living. As comparable, maybe not as good as the oil and gas, but it'll be a very good living and a very healthy living and it, it can sustain those rural communities. That would be our, that'd be our first start. And I, I think things could be controlled much better than. Quotas can be controlled. We won't have that same greed into the fishery that we have there right now. I think that would be the first start. But it'd be a big political commitment to do that and I'm not so sure if that's going to be [inaudible]. I'm not sure if any politician is gonna take that one on.

MHA: Do you have any politicians at all that you could imagine taking something like that on?

JL: Oh yes, definitely. Actually, there's a very good friend of mine. He was the Federal Minister of Fisheries. That lived in the same community, Loyola Hearn, he's a, he's an ambassador to Ireland right now but he done a very good job when he was fisheries minister but you got so many bureaucrats there that, that operate within governments too. No individual can do it. You need, you need a full commitment from all parts of government too, to do something like this.

MHA: Yeah. Do you think the community itself and Newfoundland itself, do you think they're enough...is there enough population there that would see it like you see it as well? So they would encourage the politicians to think about doing this?

[12:00]

JL: Oh yes, there is, there would be a lot of encouragement there from the community, but you got, you got bigger corporations that have deeper pockets and, and then when you get oil and gas companies that are very rich. Well, you know, I'm not sure what way the tide is gonna go but where the tide is gonna go then...

MHA: [laughs] Well it's very interesting talking to you. I have never been in that area. I've been to Nova Scotia but not to Newfoundland yet. But I, I have some friends that have talked about it. So I would like to visit at some point.

JL: Nova Scotia is basically comin' into the same. Their oil and gas is just basically starting now too. They got a big fishery there too.

MHA: Right, I know.

JL: So Sable Island is getting up and going there now too. They're running into the same problems. It's good and bad, it's hard to, it's hard to know where to be. The oil and gas is good...it's bringing a lot of money into the economy but it's gonna take away a way of life and it's gonna dry up. There's only so much of that oil in the ground. It's not gonna be there forever.

MHA: Right. Yeah, you mentioned way of life, that's something ever since I started talking to fishermen, that people bring up. Do you want to talk about that a little bit? What is it that makes it special as a way of life?

JL: Well it's not a stressful occupation. Well the occupation, well the occupation could be stressful I guess could be stress if you want to make it...but most people that come from those small communities, fishing communities. There's very little stress. You know, it's the freedom you...you went fishing, you didn't really need a lot of money. You know, it didn't, it didn't require a lot of money to survive. People were happy and told stories and sang songs, and picked berries and grew their own vegetables and it wasn't like a hard work to do it. They loved it, loved it. To go out in the garden and you know, plant their vegetables and there was a time of the year to do that. There was a time of the year to cut the hay for the cattle and there was a time of the year to fish. And to put away provisions for the winter and now it's...sure we can't move now without a Blackberry hanging out of our side or a, right?

[15:00]

I mean, I had, had 3 text messages letting me know when this interview was. [Laughs] Was gonna take place...within one hour of our meeting, right. So, those, those ways...the freedom that we had back then is gone now. You know. Somethings we're doing I'm sure is much better than what we've done in the past but a lot of things are, it's not for the better.

MHA: Right. What brought you down to New Bedford?

JL: Actually I got a very good friend, Dr. Lenny Roche from...He was born and raised in New Bedford, but I consider him a Newfoundlander, right. His, his father was from, lived right next door to my parents in Renew's, Newfoundland and the guy has been, I think he's been back to Renew's every year for the past 55 years. He's never missed and

even though New Bedford is his home I think he feels Renews is his home too. And we, as a community, we kind of think he's a Renews man too. Right? So he was always good friends of...his father and my parents were always very good friends, even though his father was here in New Bedford. He left many years ago and came here as a fishing captain. And a lot of my family came to Boston and New Bedford area too, right. But he came home and he always told me about New Bedford fishing and we were always around fishing vessels. Like I'm, that's my, that's my love of life. Fishing boats and 'round wharfs and docks and looking at different types of fishing vessels. So every time Lenny we call him, Dr. Roche whenever he'd come to Renews, we'd go over to my shipyard and look at different boats. And he's say, you gotta come to New Bedford so I did 2 years ago, and I only got here for 1 day 'cause I had, I had to leave again. I came in to Boston, he came up and brought us down for 1 day. And I said, I'm coming back to New Bedford again. Soon. So we got our trip planned for next year again right now.

MHA: [Laughs] Good.

JL: I love it here. I love it here.

MHA: So, there's a lot of appealing aspects....yup.

[END INTERVIEW]