

Name of person interviewed: Bob Quinn [BQ] Helene Quinn [HQ]
Samuel Quinn Russo [SQR]

Place interview took place: Fairfield Inn, Working Waterfront Festival

Date and time of interview: September , 2012

Interviewer: Madeleine Hall-Arber [MHA]

Abstract

Bob and Helene Quinn and their ancestors have lived and worked on Eagle Island in Penobscot Bay Maine for generations. Bob got his start working on a pumper in the sardine industry and eventually began lobstering. Bob is now passing the torch to his grandson Sam, who is eagerly embracing a life at sea.

Demographic information

Bob Quinn
Sex: Male
Age: 74
Ethnicity: White
Occupation: Lobsterman
Born: Camden, Maine
Homeport: Eagle Island, Maine

Helene Quinn
Sex: Female
Age: 68
Ethnicity: White
Born: Rockland, Maine

Samuel Quinn Russo
Sex: Male
Age: 12
Ethnicity: White
Occupation: Lobsterman
Born: Camden, Maine
Homeport: Eagle Island, Maine

Key words

Role
Commercial fisherman (captain, crew)
Family member

General Social and Cultural Characteristics

Family, family roles, family organization

Social and Cultural Characteristics of Fishing

Socialization/ training to be a fisherman

Gear and Fishing Technology

Other gear and technology

Boats, ships, vessels

Seine

Pots and traps

Business and Economics of Fishing & Other Maritime

Family involvement

Species type

Lobster

[00:00]

MHA: As I said, I am Madeline Hall Arbor, I work at MITC Grant and I'd like you to each introduce yourself to the mic.

SQR: He's not so good with mics.

BQ: I'm Bob Quinn, from Eagle Island, one of the Eagle Islands in Maine and...

MHA: Okay.

HQ: And I'm Helene Quinn, Bob's wife of like 46 years I think and also from Eagle Island and grandparents to...

SQR: [Inaudible] I'm Sam Quinn Russo. Bob and Helene are my grandparents. I live on Eagle Island for most of the year and in Camden in the winter. Been homeschooled for a few weeks now. A few weeks before school, I made the decision to stay out on Eagle for most of the year. And I lobster with my grandpa.

MHA: Okay. So, I'm gonna go around and ask you each to tell me when and where you were born. And where you grew up.

BQ: I was actually born in Camden, Maine in July the 13th, 1938.

HQ: And I was born in Rockland, Maine, just a little south of Camden on April 12th, 1944.

SQR: I was born in Belfast in April 4th of 2000.

MHA: Okay.

SQR: 8th. Fourth month. 8th day.

MHA: [Laughs] So how did you two meet?

HQ: Well I say that we were born married. [Laughter] I think that he, well he's 6 years older than I we...I was 8 years old I think. I went to Eagle Island because my aunt lived there. My, my family grew up on Eagle as well as Bob's did. And he threw white jellyfish at me or something so that was it. That was...my fate was sealed. [Laughs]

[Laughter]

MHA: Do you have a different story Bob? [Laughs]

BQ: Oh I...I guess I can't totally refute that I, yup. What did I...okay well she grew up, as she said, her father came from a Eagle Island family and wanted to farm and to be a commercial farmer but he had to move to the mainland where it was better farming and so she grew up on a dairy farm there and of course she came back to the island to visit in the summers and...

[03:00]

So one of our, my cousin and I were, were always there summers and now a safe harbor from teasin' the girls and pullin' their hair or whatever. We could always run behind the barn to the manure shed in our bare feet and get away from 'em. But we had our comeuppance when we came to the daughters of the dairy farmer and they didn't hesitate when we got to the manure pile.

HQ: Can't scare us. [Laughter]

MHA: So, so were you on Eagle Island, you know you grew up there and you spent....

BQ: I was on Eagle Island when school was not in session. But I went to school, through the school system for the, through high school in Camden when we lived there. In the winter and all my school vacations...yup I was back at the island.

MHA: So how did that work? Did they have, did your family have a house in both places?

BQ: Yes, they did. My father made the decision in 1941, 'cause of the war and to go to Camden for work. Previously they had run a boarding house and rented out rooms and things in the summer. He'd done various kinds of fishing and working for the summer

people and that all slowed down, actually in the depression and was pretty hard times on the islands so, in the wartime they were hiring at the shipyard in Camden and he moved there and bought a house right, right beside the shipyard. My sister still lives there.

MHA: So how did you get involved in the industry? In the fishing industry?

BQ: I guess that was kind of a natural evolution from summers on the island and just, fishing....yup.

HQ: It was pretty much a way of life you know for generations. And it was a self sufficient lifestyle for the island people.

[06:00]

They did everything, you know, farmed and fished but the war sort of changed the economy and that, it didn't work. The island communities left primarily, although the older generation, the older folks stayed put. And my uncle, my, not not his that wrote the poetry but my uncle Clarence Howard was a fisherman as my, as much as my father was a farmer. So he, he went off on his own and was very innovative in that early industry and you know he developed a pot hauler and you know things that you know kind of in his way revolutionized lobster fishing. And he became quite a big person, stop twine herring. How do you say that? It's a herring fisheries, yeah but he used stop...

MHA: [Inaudible]

HQ: Yup and shut off coes [ph] and, and so the families all worked together you know. Even I can remember my father and brothers going to be a part of the crew for Uncle Clarence and his whole family worked because they were already you know fishermen. And they had boats and his father went south and brought a pumper up from the Gulf coast and they sailed up and down and the coast. And Bob was you know, he he was just out of school or still in high school when we went with his dad all up and down the, the coast of Maine. These small little harbors that you know, not my uncle's crew shut off but fishermen did and they needed some way to pump the fish out of the seines and this was my uncle's or your father's boat I guess, I mean it was all part of the same outfit then.

BQ: ...was shared.

HQ: Yea shared. And named the Burl. And Bob should really talk about this part because you know this is, he lived this you know.

MHA: Yeah. So how did you like it? You were, you were just out of high school or just about to get out of high school.

BQ: Well yeah although of course summers, I you know, I went, you know, while I was still in school I forget how, probably prior to high school was the very first years and

when I, you know, when I could when there was room or whatever I would get, I would go. Yeah it was, it was a fun time really and I look back on it and of course you, I don't know if anyone realized it at the time and 'specially the kids and I think back on it now because that, because that particular part of fishing was, as that developed and ended in my lifetime and not a whole lotta years of it at that.

[09:00]

You know the, the way of the sardine industry had been building, when she spoke of her uncle he, he started his market for herring was selling it for bait and then the canneries, there was more and more sardine canneries along the coast of Maine up to as many as 30 in probably from the 50's and maybe for 25 or 30 years. And it was, it was big business. There was a couple hundred boats that the carriers that transported the fish from the fishermen to the factory and we were the go between in that. And our market, we were not paid by anyone other than, we'd, we removed the fish from the twine, the nets that they were caught in and put them into the carrier that took 'em to the factory and in the process we collected the scales that came off the fish and processed those scales to a certain, to the initial stage of processing. And and sold that to another company and that was, they were used, the product that we got from the scales, for cosmetics.

HQ: Lipstick. Nail polish. The iridescence. Yeah, isn't that amazing, yeah.

MHA: It's amazing. How did you process them, what was the first step?

BQ: Well well we put them in, they had large wooden tanks with metal augers in 'em which rolled them over slowly and, and worked a whole mass of 'em around in a solution called solvasol [ph] which was very close to a clear, high test gasoline. And that washed the, the essence so-called which was the color, off. The actually scale itself was a by...wasn't used, it was waste. It's just a clear, it was a little bit, a little thinner, a little bit like your fingernail would be. And that, that was a waste product once that was washed off.

[12:00]

Then the, the solution with essence from the scale was pumped off into tanks and allowed to set. And it was a little heavier it would settle to the bottom of the tank and you could pump the solvasol off and that went through 2 or 3 stages like that. And then once we got that as pure as we could get it, as little of the product solvasol left on it, we would it into barrels and then we shipped that, and I never did see the, the plant...it was down Eastport, called the Paste Pearl corporation that we shipped it to.

HQ: Probably went to Paris.

BQ: And I didn't see the, any of that process beyond that.

MHA: So how long did this businesses continue?

BQ: Well it's, it started in the late 40's. And it continued really until the death of the sardine industry in the east coast of this country. But the actual pumpers, they were called, and there were not many, her uncle had 3 at one time and I, there were only 1 or 2 others on the coast besides the ones we were running. It was pretty short. Late 40's. You see, prior, prior to this invention of this pump as a way to transfer the fish, it was, had to be done with a large net which was hoisted up off from the sardine carrier and you had to scoop it in and they used tackle and rope and a winch to, to hoist the fish up and swing it over and dump it into the hold of the boat. It could take, depending on the size of the boat, it could take you know several hours to, to load one of those boats. And, of course it was a lot of work. And then they had to get the net, you you would have it laced on, connected to the boat, one side or the seine. You had to take that off and a loaded boat go out and bring another one in. And if you had fish leftover in the seine, it was to hold up the weight of 'em while you changed boats and connected again. When, when we got the pumpers, we would tie the boat to the twine and then the carriers would just dock along side of our boat. We'd put the hose in and, and we could load a boat in 20 minutes or a half an hour.

[15:00]

MHA: What a change.

BQ: So if they had a lot of fish we could clean out their fish of, what the fishermen had got even if it was 3 or 4 boatloads. And that, then freed them up to fish again the next night before they would, they would put their nets back in the boats and wait, if more fish would come to the cove. So it, it speeded it all up and it, but what happened was, right away the men that ran the boats, the carriers who were the ones that had to bail, we always said bail but if technically it was called brail, you know. But in Maine we have a hard time with "r"s so it's a lot easier, bail. And, so, and that's, so the boatman caught on right away to the idea of these pumpers. Along with this whole thing came the marine radio telephones where you could talk from boat to boat and the boats could also call back to their factories. And they would say, well we're, you know, they've got fish here and we could get a trip of fish but the tide's too low and, and it might rile up the mud. So we'll have to wait. But what they're really waiting for was us to get there with the pump. They didn't want to have to bail the fish by hand, they wanted the pumper. So, and that was fine and it was good for us and everybody was happy. Except the factories, see. That went on for quite a while but they, they caught on. And they wanted, of course their schedule, they wanted fish in there at a certain time of day to have it so they could call the women to do the packing in the morning and the whole thing was all keyed up. So, through the years they began to install their own pumps on the carrier itself. So then they didn't have to bail the fish, they could pump 'em right in. And they gave the crew on the carriers either all of the scale money or a percentage of it and it would equal to be as much or more than they had been getting paid just for freight on the fish. So then our good friends the fishermen, they didn't want any pumpers. There was a few, as it tapered off, this is a 20 year progression.

[18:00]

And near the end of it, the last years that we went, there was really one, one crew on one boat and they, they didn't want to mess around. They didn't have the processing. The only processing we did on the boat was the extract the water from the scales as much as possible. So they, they didn't want to have to deal with that. They liked, they get the fish and we'd take care of the pumping and the scales. So we, we would just chase them around wherever they would call, they found fish someplace. We go and pump for 'em. And that, that's sort of how it, it ended. But there was fairly loud discussions. [Laughs] Various places and as that was takin' place because also the fishermen who, if they had a large body of fish and as I had said before, they wanted to get those into the boats and gone, that's what they get paid for, as quickly as possible. And if they had the boat, there to pump 'em, then they didn't have to bother with lacing on their twine and takin' it off, and getting' another in to do it all do it much quicker. So the fairly independent fisherman could do that but there wasn't many. Most of 'em were really owned by the factory. And they, they called the shots. So.

MHA: So that pumping system, I assume that's what is, it's it's probably a variation on that that's used now, right? They pump from the big boats into the holds?

HQ: No that's what, that's one way that the industry was, was obliterated because the progression from that system was to go to purse seining. Which, they caught the fish off-shore. And that broke up the schools of fish, they didn't come in to the coves to spawn and that, that was a huge change in the industry right there. But I also wanted to have a little foot note about the scale part of the, catching the fish. The way they did and the pumping and everything but because they used ash baskets, handmade by the native American tribes in Maine, Mic Mac tribe. And they were, they had hundreds of 'em. Beautiful, handmade ash baskets. And they, the scales went into those and then the water drained out and then whatever was left was, you know, what they processed beyond that.

[21:00]

And I, I remember from my child[hood] my mother had ash baskets and we used them for laundry baskets. We used them for laundry baskets. They were beautiful. I have one now that was unused that I still have but I don't, I don't use it for anything 'cause I don't want it to be destroyed. But they would just, and you, and you think of the people who participated in that industry, tangentially and all, and all of that just went away you know in that brief time. It was, I, I went with him when I was first married 'cause they were still shutting off fish you know, but it was, I don't even know how...well the sardine carriers came and pumped the fish then And we just shut off...

BQ: Actually the pumping was done after that. I went stop twining, went catching the fish 'cause we were done with pumping...

HQ: ...yeah, so it just...

MHA: So you then at some point switched to lobstering I gather?

BQ: Yeah, it coincided with that a little bit. Lobstering. I started going winters, because the herring was seasonal from spring to October or so. And I started lobstering, winters. I was, I was a little bit of a procrastinator then I guess and because I always had this cloud hanging over me of, we was in the draft in those years so I knew that I was gonna get drafted and some, some guys got drafted fairly in their teens. But and I, I always felt like that to get a boat, and this gear and money and all that invested and then I'm gonna, what am I gonna do, I'll get drafted and that just felt like the end of the world, and the draft was 2 years and it seemed like forever and... But it went on and on and I didn't get any draft notice and so I did get a boat and I did get traps and started to build up gear and I went fishing winters when we were, while we were still pumping actually. Of course then, I guess it was only probably 2 winters actually, then I got drafted. And right at the end of it, I was 23 when I got drafted and all that. My father went, he was hangin' on, trying to hang on pumpin'. He did go in fact after I come home, 3 years later, we went one more year. But that's the year we went with just that, that 1 boat.

[24:00]

They had sold, she had mentioned a boat called the Burl, that was a bigger...she'd been sold and just had one of the smaller boats and we fished for these, Clyde and Milford Peabody from Eastport Maine. And they were diehard herring.

HQ: Herring chokahs they're called. [Laughs]

BQ: Yup, herring chokah, yup that's from those boats, families of them, [inaudible]...

MHA: So did you use herring as bait, when you started lobstering?

BQ: Oh yup. Yup, we did.

HQ: And still, it's the best, I-I guess it's the best there is. We still...you know, prefer it over other...

BQ: You can catch lobsters on anything as long as it's herring.

MHA: [Laughs]

BQ: You got [inaudible]

HQ: Herring [inaudible] [laughs]

[Laughter]

BQ: Oh there's other things but you know, the herring is and see that? That's another byproduct. When we had the sardine factories, course they, they cut off the head and the

tail. That's what the women did you know the back with scissors and they, and put the sardine in in the can. Well the heads and tails were cut off. We called 'em cuttings and that was all lobster bait. And went right back where it came from without the middle. That's how...

HQ: [Laughs] Yeah.

MHA: Sustainable use.

HQ: Yea really it is. And this, and again the purse seiners, when the schools come in on shore, they come in to spawn. It was, it was just...we think of it as the biggest tragedy ever because when the purse seiners destroyed or interrupted that process in the herring an they caught them when they were full of spawn and then they wouldn't keep. You know, so they were, they were...

BQ: There's no market for 'em. They sold them for fert...

HQ: No market, went, fertilizer, cat food, dog food, whatever. Just to unload [inaudible] and it decimated the fish, and that species particularity. And there were other you know losses too, in other species. They would catch anything. So.

MHA: So what must you think about the midwater trawlers and pair [ph] trawlers that are out there now.

BQ: Yeah well you say, what, I'm out of thinkin' about it but the purse seiners have opinions about that. [Laughs] That's the next evolution see. Now they, they feel the pinch because the pair trawlers are doing a lot of...

HQ: I don't think am even up to speed on what they are, the pair trawlers. I can sort of vision.

BQ: Well there's 2, 2 boats. A pair of boats and it's the size of the net that they tow between them. And Sam and I went aboard boats here the other day to see the array of electronics that they have up there. And they can adjust their nets to, they can see the school of fish ahead of 'em. They know how deep they are, so they, they can adjust how wide the net is. How deep it is and they just.

[27:00]

HQ: Oh my God...so electronics now did, are doing to the industry what hydraulics did, you know, in that evolution with purse seiners.

SQR: Imagine what electronics and hydraulics would do.

HQ: Well they do use them all right now, it's true and...if you're doing it by hand you know, the pulling the seines up over the dories by hand [laughs]. What you got is music, right, 'cause sea shanties.

BQ: Yeah. Pretty much.

MHA: [Laughs] So did you ever go lobstering with Bob?

HQ: Oh yea. Not fulltime, but I would pitch in, pinch hit when at the end of the season when all the kids you know would have to go back to school and they would take it, and he needed to take up traps, when they would go on. I haven't done it so much lately because it's, a little strenuous. Heaving those wire traps around.

SQR: Arthritis.

BQ: Hands. So.

HQ: Yeah.

MHA: When did you switch from wood to wire?

BQ: Switch from wood to wire about, let's see....that's was when I got the [inaudible] so that was maybe, it was somewhere in the 70s. The early 70s. I bought my first wire traps. And I fished until the wooden ones were gone.

HQ: So that's another big change in the industry. Right? Not only from the wooden traps that were hand built to the wire traps that are factory made, but also now we have a trap limit in Maine. I don't know about in this area but you know, we, there's supposedly a limit for the number of traps that a fishermen can haul. But you know they find more ways to get around the regulations than there can be regulations. You know, it's....what a game.

MHA: So Sammy are you doing your apprenticeship now?

SQR: Yup. Been workin' on my apprentice, I've been working on my lobster license for maybe 2 years, a year and a half and you get a sheet and it doesn't, I don't think it matters how long it takes you but you have to get 250 hours on that sheets and then you have a month to get it to the warden and the warden will sign it and you have to get enough of those sheets filled out until you have 1000 hours and then you can get your license.

MHA: So how far along are you?

SQR: Um, around 250.

MHA: Good.

SQR: Maybe a little over.

[30:00]

HQ: One of the projects he did too, this fall, fishin' with his grandfather was to go and document all the different lobster, I don't know, whatever, you know to document the different lobsters: male, female, short lobsters, oversized. And so that's something that he will work up in a chart or form in percentages or something. So, yeah.

SQR: Homeschool.

BQ: Homeschool project.

MHA: That's great, that's great.

HQ: Yeah they are very interested in it. When we went to University of Maine, was it only the weekend or one week before we went up there...Bob was asked to be part of the entertainment. But in, you know, they were interested in his finding, you know, the result of that which we'll hand along to them once it gets all categorized.

SQR: I was unaware of that.

HQ: Now you're not.

BQ: It was on the lam about that, they wanted to see your data. Oh yeah.

SQR: Hope they can read my handwriting.

BQ: We may have to fine tune it.

SQR: Sheets look like some...

[START AUDIO 02]

[00:00]

SQR: ...like a pen exploded or something, there's just ink splattered everywhere.

BQ: Well it's a pretty hard environment. You use a little fine graph paper and you know...

SQR: Rolling around.

MHA: Right.

BQ: Yeah, a lobster's a lobster.

SQR: Getting splashed, pot haulah soaking you.

BQ: Lots of variations.

MHA: So can you read it though?

SQR: Yup.

MHA: Okay well then you're okay 'cause...

HQ: It'll be authentic with the bait juice and everything on it.

SQR: [Laughs] Not much, I stayed up in the pilot house. But then the pot hauler was a factor, splash you every now and then.

MHA: So what is your task when you're on the boat?

SQR: Well, if I'm not doing that I'll either band the lobsters and count 'em and put 'em in the barrel after we haul a string or I'll work the rail and pull 'em up over the side and rebait it. Take out any lobsters if they're in my half of the trap. Or crabs. Or whatever's in there.

[START AUDIO 03]

[00:00]

MHA: Okay. So you were, you do a lot then it sounds like. You do the whole range of activities.

SQR: Well somedays it feels like a lot and other days it kind of rolls together and it's done before you know it.

MHA: So what, so what made you decide to do that instead of going back to school?

SQR: Well I lobstered a little bit before, before I was homeschooled but this year, kind of was, I decided to try to make a little bit more money than I had been so I started lobstering with him and didn't get my own traps out until late so I didn't wanna have to leave after my traps had only been in for a week or 2. So that was another reason to stay.

HQ: Okay well that's a good perspective for him to have. But this, but this is the first time you know that he's been homeschooled and it was, I was very excited for it even though I have an education, for secondary education and worked in the school system for a while before we moved to Eagle Island but public education in, in... for a kid like him wasn't, I wouldn't say wasn't working. Of course it works to some degree but you know

I felt like, and his mother as well, we felt like he is such a hands-on guy. He's been interested in boats and engines.

SQR: Anything. If it has an engine I wanna know about it.

HQ: [Laughs] I told him always, he was gonna be in...he has drawn them too. Ever since he was just a kid. And I said, one day Sam you're gonna be building, designing these pieces of equipment. And he had no concept of that of course at age 4, 5 and 6. But you know now, I think, you know he's, he's onto that aspect and, and so the skills that he, he needs of course are math and all of that, but you know, he will get them more appropriately I think by having this hands-on experience. And being with his grandfather is invaluable. To have him work with his grandfather and, and learn all of the marine part of that industry that Bob knows because he's lived it his whole life. And the knot tying and all, just all these subtle things. And, and he wouldn't get it in a classroom situation.

MHA: Right.

HQ: He sure is getting it, you know, in this...and you know, just being with his grandfather I think is gonna be the best.

[03:00]

MHA: I want to ask you another thing, Bob, about that, about...thank you. I'm gonna, unfortunately we're gonna run out of time, we got started late but when you started lobstering, one of the stories that people tell about lobstermen in Maine is how territorial they are and how difficult it is to break in. So did, did you escape that because you were a local person and knew the other lobster guys or, how, how did you get your traps?

BQ: Yes, I think, I think that's somewhat true. For one thing, there were not you know compared to today, it was hardly anybody lobstering in the area around the island where we live. It's not, you know, in a high density area for lobsters or hadn't been. In recent years...

SQR: There's over 300 boats in Stonington.

BQ: Right. It's increased a lot with, first the whole body of lobsters has increased but there were only a few fishermen there. I, I did, course started fishing around the island. My cousin and I and we just rowed and they always figured we couldn't get in too much trouble and if we needed to come home we could row ashore anyway and walk home. But, it's, you know the island's a mile long and a half a mile wide so it's, it's quite a little row to go around it every day but we did. And, and it just worked out from there. When I started, as I mentioned about finally about the time the time I was gonna get drafted when I really started to go then I fished out of Stonington and I probably lost some traps out of that but I, I didn't feel...I knew a lot of the fishermen because of the herring part that I'd been in and the pumping of that. And either they were some of the ones who

caught the fish or often the lobsterboats would come to get bait and we would, we would pump the bait for them and it...there was a, it was an extra job to do that you know. And with her uncle, when he, the area or the island where he caught herring, was late in the year when the fish came there. Certainly in the August or September or October and something came up just recently and I was recalling that to her.

[06:00]

Course I can't remember it now but he, he never charged the lobstermen for bait when they'd come. We'd load some of their boats, I mean, 'til their eyes were bugged out [laughs] trying to get us to shut the pump off. It only took a few minutes and, they had all the bait they wanted. And you know, he never charged them for bait. He always felt bad because sometimes with the big boats, the carriers coming and going, they'd lose traps, they'd get cut off and so that was his way of giving back for that.

MHA: Well that's great. I'm, I am really sorry to have to cut this off but somebody else is supposed to be waiting. Let me, let me make sure that they arrived.

BQ: Yes I'll follow up then.

[START AUDIO 04]

[00:00]

MHA: All right, so how many traps do you run?

BQ: 300 now that I fish, yup.

HQ: What is the trap limit now Bob?

BQ: 800.

HQ: 800, but you know some of them have sternmen that have a license and they double up on their, is that right? I, we don't know but it just seems like the regulations have backfired to try to reduce the numbers of traps fished because people, most of the fishermen had 300 or 400 traps that they fished and then they said we're gonna have a quota. How many were there that fished 1200 or...and then everybody moved to meet the quota instead of reducing. This is the way we, you know, felt about it, but never mind this year, it was an absolute boom of lobstering season. They were coming over the rail like crazy.

MHA: Right, wow.

HQ: Barrels and barrels of 'em. And they'd have to go in and sell and then go out again.

BQ: And the price went over the rail too.

MHA: [Laughs]

SQR: \$1.35.

BQ: Yeah I don't know that the consumer, probably at least in Maine, saw some of that. But I doubt how far it trickled out. See, you know, we we get it as low as \$1.35 a pound.

HQ: And we said many time, cheaper than a hot dog so here you go.

MHA: [Laughs]

SRQ: Yeah it was...hot dogs are \$2.95. Lobsters were a buck 35.

BQ: And they're only 2, \$2.50 now 'til the bulk, the bulk price. So even though we were catching twice as many, we were getting half as much or less than we had other years.

HQ: How was it here? In New Bedford, there's not a lot of lobster fishing here, right in this port.

MHA: No it's limited. Limited amount. [Laughs] So what effect do you think the rules on, on having to do an apprenticeship and the, well you already mentioned what you thought the effect of the trap limits were. How about the other rules. Having some limited access?

BQ: Some are good and, I feel that sometimes we initiate changes too quickly. An example of that which started at the end of wooden, course you can still fish wooden traps if you wanted to but I don't know anybody that does, but...

[03:00]

One thing that we agreed upon as fisheries I think the idea to...in the wooden traps, the space between the lathes, we increased that distance. And it let the real small, sublegal lobsters out. In the wire traps, it's a plastic vent that you put in. We call 'em vents. They can be either round or oval and a very specific size. And, and the idea was that the small lobsters wouldn't...the same ones crawl in the trap they had handled day after day and then you haul 'em on the rail you know and they're all snappin' and floppin' around so you lose claws, they get broken, they bite each other. And you get a lot of what we call culls, damaged lobsters. So and that worked to put this vent in. And in a year or two you cleaned up those, the damaged lobsters, you started getting a better quality of lobster. So you can say, well that worked. Well what else did that do? Well the first and obvious thing was that these guys that went all the time and they fished 150 traps and spent all that time picking out and measuring all those lobsters. And then they put the vent in and they get a few 1 or 2 small lobsters, but gee they were just counters. So they picked 'em right out. Well they were all done and in at 11 'o'clock. Well now what they gonna do you know. Well they built more traps because they could handle more traps, right? So

that was an unseen effect. Nobody thought about that. That helped build up the volume of traps that people fished. And, you need to take time, you know, to think through that. See what those things do. Now there's a lot of talk in Maine, of course this year about what are we gonna do about this glut of lobsters. So maybe a v notch generally, Maine instigated the v notch which is a way of marking female, adult female lobsters and so, and you can't sell 'em whether they got eggs on 'em or not. If they've got that, that v notch.

[06:00]

It took a long time and the idea was to increase a number of egg bearing lobsters on the bottom. And they also did a tagging survey and they found that lobsters that we notched for conversation, they didn't understand what that notch was about and the lobsters didn't and they crawled right down to New Hampshire and Massachusetts and right around in the hook there of the Cape and there was no v notch law there. So those lobsters were...but in spite of that, it did build our body of lobsters up. And now they're saying well maybe we've hit it too long. They had this conference this summer with dealers and scientists and everybody, what are we gonna do about this and, and that's what I'm afraid they're gonna do is they're gonna make some rash decision. Start changin' stuff too quick. We may never have another spring like this. We didn't have any winter. What's...you know, what regulation you're gonna make to control winter.

HQ: And water temperature.

BQ: So that had a lot to do with it. And so I hope that we keep cool, keep a calm head and let's see what...

MHA: So do you participate in any of the lobster zone discussions?

BQ: Well, I've no. I don't. I've tried.

MHA: How about you? Are you gonna?

SRQ: No I'll stay out of that.

BQ: He's never been in one of those meetins' anyways but boy it, it's difficult. I did go to the 25th anniversary of the Lobster Institute and read 'em some poems. [Laughs]

HQ: That was last weekend.

BQ: But they've done some good things there and one was we changed a measure. The length of our minimum measure because for years it had been too small and we were taking the female lobsters that were legal but they were not mature enough to reproduce. So we moved the measure up so that now even sub-legal lobsters, it gives them a chance for one molt and to, at least once reproductive cycle before they go into the pool. I, I

think that was a good move and that that has contributed towards the increase in the stock.

HQ: There are a lot of factors you know to be considered. The price of fuel and the cost of, of going...of being in the industry you think would reduce the number of fishing, fishermen but...

[09:00]

MHA: Well how about the young people...you're an exception from what I understand. Are there many young people coming in still?

HQ: Probably every fisherman's dread is that their son is gonna wanna follow the old man's career. Rather have 'em go get a college education, do something else to make money. But I'm not sure that that's where we're at at all. I mean I don't, I don't think so. But it is true that the entry into the industry is limited now heavily and, and what does that do to weed out the, the kids that have grown up in families that fish and it gives more control I think to the corporate fishery. You know, the, the...

MHA: Is there much of that in lobstering? The big boat owners? Fleet owners?

HQ: Well there's the...what is that called the...?

BQ: ITQ.

HQ: ITQ.

BQ: Individual Transferrable Quotas. And you've got it here in the fish, in the, well I don't know about scallops but in the ground fishery I think. So what it...it puts a value like on your license and the number of traps you can fish. And they divided Maine into zones already and to give the fishermen a vote on their zones and they've all but one, happens to be where we are fishing in, have closed the zones. And they have exit ratios so they, how many licenses have to leave a zone before a new one can come in. And it's, in some of the zones now they estimates it'll take 20 or 30 years for somebody to get to fish in that zone. But zone C where we are...

SQR: It's open.

BQ: I wasn't in favor of closing zones but when everyone else did, it's a funnel effect. And everybody that can go in the fishery is coming into zone C. Sam just mentioned a while ago that in a little town of Stonington Maine, that's you know...there's 350 lobster boats there now.

HQ: And actually it's the second largest landing on the, on the coast after New Bedford. Landing, so.

BQ: Value of...

HQ: Fish.

MHA: I thought Vinalhaven, Vinalhaven is not as big anymore.

BQ: Nope probably right behind Stonington...

HQ: No Stonington is, Stonington's out, well Vinalhaven is an island as well.

[12:00]

Stonington now has mainland access now with the bridge so that makes a difference. And I mean, but there are, there are huge landings around Penobscot Bay because it's, I guess the fishery is open there and...Stonington is huge.

SQR: I've never, I guess I've gone through the harbor once but I don't remember it. You just look down and the boats keep going and going and going.

HQ: New Bedford is impressive though. Man, I, I'm just...it's amazing. It's awesome, to use a, you know, overused word. But it is. To look and see the mass and the size of the boats in this harbor. I mean, it really is quite impressive.

MHA: Yes it is. I wanna, before, I'm not going to keep you too much longer but I did want to ask you, just a little bit...I understand that Eagle Island is, does not have a lot of the accoutrements of life.

HQ: No, I mean, Bob has really, he's kind of been the standard bearer for that. I have railed against it somewhat but I, but I've learned to appreciate it very much you know. We've kept it as it was. A 19th century lifestyle.

Interview ends here.