Jim Toteff, Jr. and Joe Lindholm

Transcript of an Oral History
Conducted by
Anjuli Grantham
at
Larsen Bay, Alaska
On June 13, 2015
(With subsequent corrections and additions)

Kodiak Historical Society

About West Side Stories

This oral history is part of the West Side Stories project of the Kodiak Historical Society. West Side Stories is a public humanities and art project that intended to document the history of the west side of Kodiak Island through oral history, photography, and art. The oral histories chart the personal stories of individuals with a longtime connection to the west side of Kodiak Island, defined for the scope of this project as the area buffeted by the Shelikof Strait that stretches from Kupreanof Strait south to the village of Karluk. The project endeavored to create historical primary source material for a region that lacks substantive documentation and engage west side individuals in the creation of that material.

The original audio recording of this interview is available by contacting the Kodiak Historical Society. Additional associated content is available at the Kodiak Historical Society/ Baranov Museum, including photographs of interview subjects and west side places taken during the summer of 2015, archival collections related to the west side, and journals and art projects created by west side residents in 2015.

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Note on Transcription

After the initial transcription was completed, a second transcriber performed an audit/edit by listening to the oral history recording and verifying the transcription. The following transcript is nearly a word-for-word transcription of the oral history interview. Editing is intended to make the interview easier to understand. Bracketed words indicate they were added after the interview. The use of […] indicates that something that was spoken does not appear in the transcription. Often, these are false starts. In some cases, it is information that the interview subject retracted later. The original audio file is available for listening.

Citation

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Left cover photo: Jim Toteff, Jr. photographed by Breanna Peterson for West Side Stories, P-1000-7-704.
Right cover photo: Joe Lindholm, photographed by Anjuli Grantham for West Side Stories., P-1001-1-81.

Oral History of Jim Toteff, Jr.

JT: I don't own the land, but I sell the fish to the company, so yeah, you can build.

AG: Great! So this is all Icicle property, huh?

JT: Yeah, but when I built it, it was owned by a man named Alan Beardsley, and before he bought it I was a part owner in Larsen Bay.

AG: Oh. Okay, great. Well, let's start from the beginning before we get ahead of ourselves because this is all great stuff. I started recording. This is Anjuli Grantham. I'm here with Jim Toteff. It is June 13, 2015, and we are sitting at Jim's place in Larsen Bay. This recording is part of the West Side Stories project. Jim, could you maybe begin with a basic introduction? Your name, where you're from, your birth date, and some information about your family?

JT: My name is Jim Toteff, Jr. Born in 1948. My father was a fisherman and his father was a fisherman. So we'll start out at the very beginning. My grandfather was born in 1892 in Bulgaria. When he was fourteen years old his dad put him on a boat for America. Wasn't a very good time to be in Bulgaria because there was Balkan Wars that were just gonna happen any day then. So he landed in Baltimore, Maryland. Took him two years to make it to the west coast. He went to work at a logging camp in about 1906. After three or four years of doing this, he met a commercial fisherman and he started gillnetting on the Columbia River in about 1914. World War I came along. He enlisted in the army and when the war was over he was granted citizenship. Grandpa went back to fishing, married my grandma in 1920, bought a house on the Columbia River in a little town called Kalama. It's where I still live. My father was born in '25 and he began gillnetting in his late high school years. My grandfather had a fish trap on the Columbia River and they were outlawed in about 1934 and so he just gillnetted after that. To supplement his income, my father came to Kodiak Island to purse seine as a crewman in 1944 and he told me that he learned how not to do it this year. The guy he was with was not a very good fisherman. He stayed home a year and the following year, with help from my grandfather, he built a brand new seiner for Kodiak called the *Theresa T* in 1946. And he fished the *Theresa T* until 1957 and during this time he fished for Alaska Packers Association and he was the first purse seiner that Alaska Packers ever hired. Prior to '46, all their fish were purchased from their own fish traps. Okay. Dad had a second seiner built in '57. It was a Hansen wood boat. It was named the *New Theresa*. And my first year seining was 1963 as a half-share deckhand and I crewed with my father until [the Marine Corps in '69]**.** [1970] was the first year I was a captain of a boat. It was an old wooden piece of crap and we lost her on the maiden voyage up the middle of Shelikof Strait and I, along with my three crewmen that I had, owe our lives to the Coast Guard. We were picked up by helicopter out in the middle of Shelikof on our way to Cape Igvak. So that was my first year. The very following year Alaska Packers built three brand new fiberglass seiners and they offered me one of them if I wanted to fish it for them which, punk kid with a brand new state-of-the-art seiner in Kodiak, I jumped at the chance because after we lost the boat in Shelikof, I leased another boat from Alaska Packers and out of the forty-some fishermen that Alaska Packers had, I think we finished up about number twelve or thirteen on the list. So we did extremely well in the short while that we fished. I fished the *Pintail* [the boat APA built for me] until my wife and I built our first seiner that we owned in 1977. Was named the *Rhoda Je-Anne*. It was a Hansen boat. Thirty-nine foot. We had our second seiner built in 1987. Excuse me, 1988. It was a Le Clercq forty-eight footer, and the following year we had another seiner built. All of them named *Rhoda Je-Anne*.

Jim Toteff, Jr. at the Larsen Bay cannery, P-1000-7-705.

AG: There so many possible directions that we could take this. So I'm struck by the fact that your grandfather started gillnetting 101 years ago. So your family's been engaged in commercial fishing for that long. For you was there any question about what career you would choose?

JT: None. (*laughter*) Fisherman or bum. Nothing in between.

AG: And it's a very small line sometimes, huh?

JT: When I was a junior in high school I was full-time gillnetting on the Columbia River which meant I missed an awful lot of school. And the little town of Kalama, the schoolhouse faces the river and the kids would all say, "There goes Jim drifting down the river," and the teachers, one of them in particular, she gave me zeros. But the truth of the matter was when I was a senior in high school I was making more money gillnetting than what the teachers were making teaching school, but I was blessed with some very good teachers in the profession that [came] before me.

AG: You said your grandfather had a fish trap on the Columbia. Did those fish traps differ from the ones that were in operation in Alaska?

JT: Really not. They're pretty much the same. It was a pile driven trap.

AG: And you must remember seeing fish traps in operation up here?

JT; No, fish traps went out with statehood and I came to Larsen Bay every summer with my mother after I was born in '48. Every spring I would come up until I started school. So there was five years that I came up and spent the summers and I can vaguely remember, probably when I was five years old, of going out with my dad and the superintendent of the cannery here on their pleasure boat. I remember we went over to Spiridon Bay to check the trap, but I really can't remember.

AG: How was it that your father transitioned from being a gillnetter to a seiner?

JT: Gillnetting back in the '40s on the Columbia River wasn't very profitable. The runs had been beaten down, overfishing. Many, many causes, but he met a man that was a gillnetter that also fished Kodiak, Alaska, and he pointed him toward another man and that's how dad got his first job. And he saw that it wasn't that difficult and presto.

AG: […] How did he get connected then with the APA?

JT: Well, because he had a brand new boat and APA needed fisherman. He fished one year for another cannery and I don't know, I think it was out of Carmel which is in Halibut Bay. There used to be a cannery there and I'm not really sure. I know that […] the second year though he fished for APA.

AG: Was this the first time then, you said it was '48, that your dad made it up here or that was the year you were born?

JT: That's the year I was born, but my father started seining his own boat in '46.

AG: Okay.

JT: And I don't think he sold his fish that year to APA. I think it was the next year. So '46, '47, one of those two years would have been his first year selling to APA.

AG: How would you come up every summer when you were just a child with your mother? Would you fly or what was that journey like for you?

JT: We flew and I remember, probably the time when I was either four or five, I can remember the plane. Single engine on each side I think. DC-6 I think maybe they call them. Think they held about thirty, forty people. And then after I started school I never came up again until 1963, and that year I think we flew on a Connie, a four-engine prop plane, and it wasn't long after that, I'm gonna say 1965, I think they had jet service. Boy that was special.

AG: What do you remember about before you started school and spending time in Larsen Bay? Do you have many memories?

JT: Yeah, I do. […] The population of Larsen Bay was much larger back then and Karluk, also. A lot of local people worked in the cannery, but there was several boys and girls my age. Bobby Carlson, I remember him, and Herman Carlson. I remember Charlie Aga and Jimmy McCormick, and oh there was just a lot of colorful people. And then one of the other seiners, Irvine Taylor, had two boys, Bruce and E.J. They came up so we palled around. But it was just a fun time in a young kid's life.

AG: Could you describe the home that you stayed in?

JT: It was one room. Probably sixteen by twenty building, maybe not that big, but it had a bathroom. I remember the sewer system was simply the pipe came out of the toilet and aimed toward the ocean and down toward the little water mark is where everything ended up. Not up to today's standards. Had a coal stove, I remember. Had a coal bin and you put some kindling and paper and some kerosene and put some coal on top of it. I remember there was a big salt water marsh just behind our little house and it had stickleback in it. They're little fish about three or four inches long. And I had hip boots. Imagine a four or five year old kid with brand new hip boots. I was happy and we'd catch stickleback. Not very many. They were pretty fast. Lot of fun memories.

AG: Was your dad able to make it home most evenings?

JT: No. Rarely. He'd be home once every couple weeks for a day or so.

AG: Were there other families that came up to stay at the cannery over the course of the summer?

JT: There was two other families. Snook Taylor and Irvine Taylor. Irvine Taylor stayed in what is now called the Spider House [...] just across from my cabin, and Snook Taylor lived in the little cabin right next to us. So we were next door neighbors. And Snook had three children […]. One was the same age as me and two others that were younger, […] so we had playmates.

AG: And I know I'm asking from a time when you were such a small child, but I know that the APA really hadn't had a purse seine fleet for that long at that point. Was the fleet decent sized at this point or what was the fleet like? Do you know?

JT: It grew rapidly, but at that time I don't think there was over maybe twenty boats fishing for APA, but […] in the early sixties when I started crewing there was I know close to forty boats that fished for APA. Probably eighty percent of them were company owned boats, or the biggest portion was company owned, but some of the boats were privately owned like my father's, Snook and Irvine Taylor.

AG: So could you maybe describe the advantage or disadvantage of being an independent fishermen like your father was versus having a company boat?

JT: Well, if you ran a company boat you had to pay a big lease, probably fifteen, twenty percent, I'd guess. If you owned your own boat you […] had to buy the boat, the upkeep, the insurance and all that goes along with owning a boat […]. The runs weren't all that big back then and fish were cheap. There wasn't a lot of money being made. Well, I guess it was to them, but in our standards. My father's first boat, the *Theresa T*, she was built in 1946, cost five thousand dollars. And at that time a seine skiff consisted of basically a dory with oars. He said the next year, his second year, he got a five-horse Johnson outboard and they were walking in tall cotton. From there he went to a twenty-horse outboard and then the power skiffs and the rest is history. They pulled their nets in by hand.

AG: Do you remember when people first started using the block?

JT: Well, my fist year crewing, 1963, we had a power block and I think my father had only had it for maybe two years. They were just invented. […] They pulled their net in by hand before that and it was labor intensive. But nets were smaller. Stronger men were hired. Different time.

AG: Larger crews?

JT: Muscular.

AG: That's still the same number of people, huh?

JT: Yep.

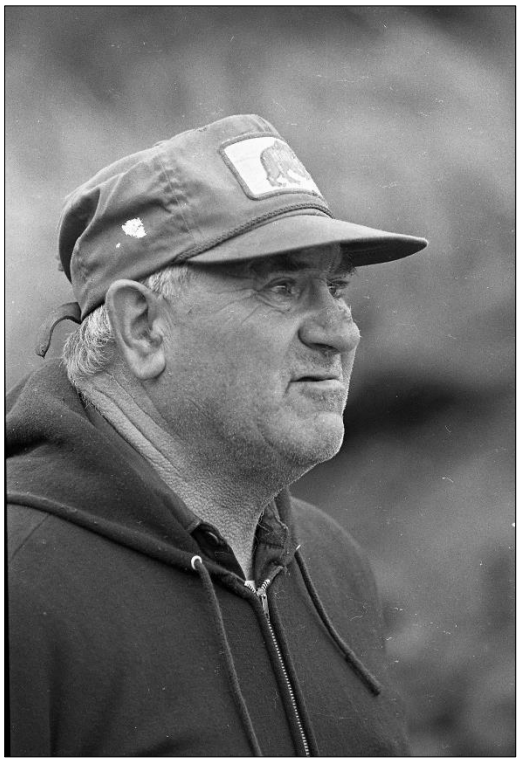
AG: Wow. […] So was it because you were independent fishermen that your family was able to come up then and live in Larsen Bay during the summer?

JT: My father was a very good fisherman. Not bragging, but he caught more fish than most of the fishermen, so therefore his abilities were in demand. Just like many other fishermen that were better fishermen, they're gonna be in demand and they're gonna get some perks, like a house to live in, maybe free fuel, maybe an airplane ticket. But on the other side of the coin you have to deliver your fish to this one company and you weren't getting paid very much, and I don't know what the companies were making. Anyhow, the better fishermen got perks.

AG: I see, and were most of the seiners from Washington or were they local seiners that you remember?

JT: There was several seiners from Larsen Bay and Karluk.

AG: Who were they?



Eddie Paakkanen P-779-14-15.

JT: Well, there was Charles Christiansen. He lived in both Karluk and Larsen Bay. He was a postmaster for awhile and I think he ran the store in Karluk for awhile, but he was a very good seiner. And there was Jimmy McCormick from here in Larsen Bay. He had the boat, the *Honker*, which was a Larsen Bay APA boat. There was […] Fred Katelnikoff, can't remember the name of his boat. Eddie Paakkenen, he was a real colorful setnetter from across the bay over here. He was a funny guy. And there's other setnetters here in the bay. Jake Aga and Jake Laktonen. Charlie and Alberta Aga that lived next door right over here. He had a little jitney seiner. It was a family operation, his son and a couple daughters and wife, but Charlie had what we called the rec hall. When I came up in'63, he'd just opened it. And what the rec hall was, a building probably fifty feet long or forty feet long and twenty feet wide with a pool table, and a juke box, and a bed sheet on the wall for movies. Couple times a week during the summer we'd have movies on a real projector and when there was no movie he had Bingo. And everything was good unless his generator ran out of gasoline. Then the lights went out. Things were pretty primitive but a lot of fun. Charlie could play the accordion and he only had four fingers on one hand, but he could make that accordion play. And he's one of the reasons that I took up playing the accordion.

AG: What a great instrument, by the way. I spent some time, not a lot of time, in Argentina and I love the use of the accordion in the tango. It's so great. So was there something that made APA boats distinctive in their appearance?

JT: They were black and orange. Different companies had different color boats. APA, black and orange. There were what they called the Kadiak boats. They were red and black. There was Uganik boats that were green. I think green and black. There was a Park's boat from up Uyak. There's a Park's Cannery up Uyak Bay here and they were white. You knew by the color who it was.

AG: And was there some sort of naming convention that APA boats followed, too?

JT: They were mostly named after birds. The *Albatross. Arctic Tern. Honker. Parakeet.*

AG: Oh, I remember hearing about the *Flamingo*.

JT: […] The flamingo wasn't an APA boat.

AG: Okay. It just happens to be a bird.

JT: It just happened to be […]. The fiberglass boat that APA built for me was the *Pintail*, and that year the two other boats they built were the *Eider* and the *Merganser*. Charlie Christiansen's boat, who I mentioned earlier, was the *Sprig*, which is the same bird as the *Pintail*, just different name for the same critter.

AG: Who owned the gear?

Larsen Bay Seafoods sign near mug-up line, P-1001-1-22.

JT: I can't answer that. I would bet APA. I bet APA owned everything. Now mind you this was before permits, so anybody could fish that was able to run a boat.

AG: Because it seems that sometimes that relationship is characterized as kind of like an overlord to underlings in which you know the cannery owned everything. Was that the sense at the time? It was some sort of injustice or did people even think about it?

JT: I don't really think they thought it was an injustice. A lot of the company fishermen, oh they were millworkers from down south, there were laborers, or had off-season work, just something they could supplement their income. Bristol Bay, I think in the early days, might have been a little different, but here in Kodiak, I don't think there was any animosity. I'm sure there was over the price of fish over the course of the years, but that's still the case today.

AG: Definitely. […] Was the appearance of the cannery compared to now much different?

JT: No. Changed very little. The carpenter shop's a little bigger than it use to be. The springhouse where the Japanese egg people worked is the same as it was then. The little house that me and mom stayed in before I started school is still there. Dexter [Lorance], our cannery foreman, he lives there. The spider house over here where Irvine Taylor lived, it's still there. The village back in the '60s was different because it was all the old village. The new houses didn't get built until, I might say, the late 70s would be my guess. There was no airstrip until I'm gonna say '70s. Sometime in the '70s. APA sold to the [Koniag] Native Corporation in […] I'm gonna say three. '74? '73 […]? One of those years right in there, and the Native corporation owned it until it was purchased in [1980] by myself and about fifteen other fishermen. Gary Wiggins, who was a superintendent, between us fishermen and Gary, we had forty-nine percent of the cannery or roughly my share was two percent and the other half was owned by a company called UniSea, a crab company from out west, and we operated the cannery '81, '82, […] '83, '84, '85 and […] just before the '86 season we sold it to Alan Beardsley, a grocery store owner from Kodiak. And I hit it off good with Alan from the very start and Alan owned the company outright until he sold to Icicle Seafoods about eight years ago.

AG: What did you call the cannery when you owned it?

JT: We called it Larsen Bay Seafoods Incorporated.

AG: And what did the Native corporation call it?

JT: Kissy. K-I-S-I. Kodiak Island Seafoods Incorporated. That's what the Natives had and then we were Larsen Bay Seafoods and Alan Beardsley named it Kodiak Salmon Packers.

The APA's purse seine fleet on the marine ways in Larsen Bay, P-779-14-14.

AG: And what was it called when the APA owned it?

JT: APA [Alaska Packers Association]

AG: Just APA, yeah. Larsen Bay. I, for the first time, recently came across the Diamond K[S]. Before I didn't know 'cause, you know, I knew about how every cannery was related to this diamond sign, but I was looking through some archival documents. It said Larsen Bay Diamond K[S] and I was like, "There we have it."

[…]

AG: […] Now we have that kind of chronology, but maybe we can back track to 1963, your first season fishing up here.

JT: I was a half share deckhand.

AG: How old were you?

JT: Probably fourteen. Let's see, fourteen, fifteen. I was born in January '48. Fifteen, I guess.

AG: And which boat was that and who were you fishing with?

JT: I was fishing with my dad on the *New Theresa*, thirty-eight foot Hansen wood seiner. And that was the first time I ever went in a bar, 1963, the year before the earthquake. We were in Kodiak. We'd been fishing on the east side over in Ugak Bay and we come to Kodiak and the guys said, "Come on, Jim. We're gonna go up town," and we went to the B&B. Fifteen years old, I walked in with the rest of the guys and climbed up on a bar stool and the bartender says, "What do you have there, sonny?" and I said, " Beer." (*laughter*) Yep. It was a different time.

AG: Would you deliver all the way over here?

JT: Tenders. They would send tenders all around the island. The best tender that APA had at that time was the *Ptarmigan*, big wooden boat. I think it was an old sardine seiner. I think I made fifteen hundred bucks that year.

AG: Not bad.

JT: Now then the next year, 1964, I didn't come to Alaska because I'd started gillnetting on the Columbia River. Nineteen sixty-four was the last year that the gillnet season ran June and July and part of August on the Columbia River. After that it was shut down. So I stayed home and gillnetted. Then the following year, 1965, was my first year as full share. I was skiffman and it was a decent season. I know I went home after the 1965 season, I'm gonna be a junior in high school when I got home, bought a brand new 1965 Mustang, four on the floor, 289 four speed, God that car was sweet. I remember friends of mine, I lived in a little bitty town, and I was brought up different. I mean, I know dad always taught, you never buy anything, you save up for it until you can afford it, then you buy it. You don't go borrowing. And one of my friends asked, "Well, I bet you the payments on that thing are pretty high," and I looked at him kind of funny […], I says, "There's no payments. It's paid for." Twenty-eight hundred dollars, brand spanking new. Wish I still had it. Then the following year, 1966, was a pretty good year. That was the most fish that I'd ever caught, and we fished Red River, we fished some of Karluk, we fished all over. 1967 was an extremely poor year. We came up and fished reds in June, and I remember we had about seventeen thousand reds, which was the biggest June season that we'd ever had. Then we use to go home for the Fourth of July and come back up for humpies. Well that year, 1967, the humpy season never opened. There'd been a bad winter or something. Fish and Game just didn't open it. […] Kukak Bay did open and Red River did open in late August. I'm gonna say the twentieth of August or something like that and our boats were in the water, so we had to come back up and we went to Red River and there was nothing. We went to Kukak and I think we got about a half a load of dogs and that was the end of that year.

AGL I'm wondering because it's a couple of years after the '64 earthquake and tsunami, did you see any changes within either the fishery or the landscape from when you were here in '63 and when you returned in '65?

JT: Well, the city of Kodiak dramatically because the town had been devastated and it was being rebuilt. As far as Larsen Bay, no. Probably just the city of Kodiak. The new boat harbor.

AG: And the fishing seemed about the same?

JT: Yes. I don't think the earthquake affected the fish. When was it, March? Probably the little smolts were crawling out of the gravel already or about then.

AG: Yeah, the only thing that I can think of is the subsidence impacting the river systems.

JT: No, I know that some parts of the island sunk. I think other parts raised, but no, I don't know of any effects to the fishing.

AG: Who was superintendent out here […] in the early '60s?

JT: Well, let me see. When I was a kid, like before I started school, I think the superintendent […] name was Vern Helicor. I know he was a friend of my father's. And then the superintendent in 1963 might have been Gary Wiggins. '63, 65', I'm gonna say is Gary Wiggins. And in 1970, a man named Wayne Woods was brought up from California. See APA, the parent company California Packing Company, DelMonte, sent one of their men from the vegetable division up to run this cannery. […] He knew nothing about salmon and I remember going to the mess hall one day and they were

Larsen Bay cannery mess hall, summer 2015, P-1000-7-692.

cooking red salmon and Wayne Woods, here is the new boss, he's going through the chow line and he asked the cook, " Well how do you tell the difference between a, like a red salmon and a king salmon?" and the retort was, " How do you tell the difference between a string bean and a carrot?" (*laughter*) That's the gospel truth. Wayne Woods was only here for one or two years. I think one, and he was replaced by the cannery foreman who was Bob Gorton. And Bob Gorton was here for several years. I think during the time that the Native corporation owned it. I think they replaced Bob Gorton after a few years, and I think Bob went to southeast. And I like Bob, he's a nice guy, and he married one of the local girls from Larsen Bay, one of Jimmy McCormick's daughters and I think they still live in southeast. Tommy Johnson, he'll probably know more about that than I do.

AG: Great. I'm curious about the set up of the cannery. When you were here […] was it a time when it was still segregated?

JT: You mean like the Filipino bunkhouse and Chinatown? Yeah, there was a lot of Filipinos early on, but now when I started crewing in '63, the fishermen all stayed in the bunkhouses and at that time we stayed in what we called Chinatown. It's the building just over here on this side of the cannery, and it was basically Columbia River fishermen that stayed downstairs in Chinatown bunkhouse and it was Seattle, a lot of Tarabochias, stayed upstairs [Mike, Jack, Dominick and a lot more].

AG: Tarabochia?

JT: /Terabosha/. Some of them call it /Taraboshia/, some of them call themselves /Taraboochi/ and some Tarabochia [the most common]. It's all spelled the same.

AG: Are those?

JT: Seiners.

AG: Oh okay.

JT: They're fishermen from Puget Sound.

AG: Oh okay.

JT: It's a pretty common name in Slavonian.

AG: Oh I see. So it's a family name?

JT: Yeah.

AG: Okay. Okay.

JT: Yep. There was Mike and there was Jack and there was Dominic and there was a lot of Terabochias.

AG: And where did the Asians stay?

JT: There was no select Asian group at that time. I think it was a mix and they stayed in the bunkhouses next to the cookhouse in that area.

AG: […] Was all the food the same? 'Cause I know in some canneries there was actually white mess halls, Native mess halls, Filipino mess halls.

JT: It was all the same, but no, in '63 when we were living in Chinatown, that used to be the old Chinese bunkhouse and they had their own kitchen and there was still some of the leftover pots and kettles or woks or whatever they cooked with. It was, you know, just remnants. Use to scrounge around for artifacts and I think I've got one opium bottle that I found. It's a little vile.

AG: How did they get most of the cannery workers at that point and even fishermen? How did APA do its recruiting?

JT: I don't know. As far as cannery workers there was an awful lot of the women from Karluk that would come down and spend the summer. There was some from Kodiak. A lot of local, and as far as the seiners, there was probably more people wanting to run a boat than there were boats available, and maybe as a crewman showed more ability, he might be given the reins.

AG: It seems that there's a lot of connection between Larsen Bay and Karluk. Is it that most Larsen Bay people originated in Karluk? Is that the case or what do you think? 'Cause I know that before, that's where all the canning took place at Karluk and everything. I mean that was the center of the fishing world for so long.

JT: Karluk at one time was a big village, and you know there were seven canneries at Karluk [in the late 1800s]. When I started crewing, that was before the new houses were built at Karluk, but the church was still kept up and they attended the church. It was kind of fun because the river was different back then, a lot of erosion now and the mouth was different then. But sometimes at night, we seiners, we'd go in the river and we'd go up and tie up. And they had a rec hall, too, and I could remember fourteen, fifteen, sixteen years old going up and watching movies and kind of trying to sneak a glance or a favor from one of the local girls. And they were happy to see new people because Karluk was so isolated that I mean anytime a boat—. When we'd go on the river, the little kids would just coming flocking. I mean they […] were just a bunch of kids and they'd come down and get on the boat and dad would give them a candy bar, and just imagine these people are isolated and probably a lot of the kids had never been away from Karluk ever and so here come these new people with fancy boats.

[…]

Karluk beach seiners.

AG: So when you would visit Karluk when you were younger, did it still have all the built up cannery structures and all that?

JT: It had some. On the Spit there were several buildings, warehouses. There was a store and a post office […]. There was a couple houses to the left of the Spit, but the main village was across the river, and so across from the Spit, across the river, there was a bridge, a suspension bridge and that's where most of the people lived. There must have been twenty, thirty families. One of the first crewman that I hired was Herman Malutin.[…] He was Herman, Jr. His dad, Herman, Sr., was a captain of the beach seine operation. Karluk had a beach seine operation and it was basically the village. There might have been a dozen shareholders in it, and so they had several skiffs and they had an APA boat named the *Auk*. It wasn't a seiner. It was just kind of a big funny looking thing, but Herman, Sr., he ran that and so he would pull the seine out from the beach and tow it back in and then the skiffs would take over.

AG: And this was in the '60s?

JT: Yes.

AG: Would the APA tender go down and pick up the fish?

JT: Yeah.

AG: Okay.

JT: Yes.

AG: That's so interesting. So […] how was it to return back to Washington when you were still in high school at the end of the season? Was that an easy transition for you?

JT: Oh yeah. I played sports. […] I was excited to get home to play football. And we never stayed late back in the '60s because my father was a gillnetter also in the Columbia River and there was a very lucrative gillnet fishery the last half of August. So normally, sometime after that twelfth of August, we'd be flying home and gillnet the Columbia River the last half of August and then school would start.

AG: And you said that that really ended in what year was it that they ended gillnetting in the Columbia?

JT: I said 1964 was the last year they had a summer season.

AG: Okay.

JT: After that they always had some type of fishery in the spring or in September and October.

AG: And how did that change life for you and your family to no longer have that summer season?

JT: Well, a lot of the years with the summer season, which started in early June, my father wouldn't come to Larsen Bay until early July till the humpies showed up. But then […] after '64, he came up every June.

AG: Were there other families from the Columbia River region that would come up to Kodiak that you know of?

JT: Yes.

AG: Who else?

JT: Well, there was Snook and Irvine Taylor who lived in Longview, Washington which is about ten miles from us. Longview also had Willard Conley. Willard's boat was the *Patty Ann* in later life, but not this early, but I can't remember what the other one was. J.R. Taylor, Jeff Taylor, they all lived in Longview. Flelix Polasek lived in Longview, but he fished out of Alitak for Brindle. He had a Brindle boat and Ron Wika fished for Alitak and he was from Longview. I'm sure there's others, it'll take a little bit. [Also Rod Risley, Bud Lindwell, Earl Daniels.]

AG: And was there any thought from these people to maybe spend winters in Kodiak or was it always just a summer time operation up here?

JT: Well, […] the king crab fishery really got going in the '60s and […] Don Phillips got into the crab fishery for awhile and his brother, Gerald Philips, they fished some crab, but not very many got into the crab game, but there was money to be made in the crab fishery though if you got in early on.

AG: Did you ever crab?

JT: Never.

AG: Why not?

JT: My father didn't. Crabbing was a wintertime fishery. It was a dangerous fishery. There was an awful lot of the early crabbers they made a lot of money, a lot of them became alcoholics, a lot of them ended up in divorces because you're gone an awful lot. It just really gruesome fishery and to be good at it took a toll on you, and so I'm happy to say that I've been married for going on forty-five years!

AG: Congratulations.

JT: So being married to a fishermen is not easy. We're gone so much and it takes a special woman and a special man to make it work.

AG: Does your wife spend time up here?

JT: Oh yes. She'll probably come up and see Gina Johnson, go pick salmonberry later on this year. She used to spend all summer up here with the kids until the kids all got out of school and left the nest. And my kids come up to visit. Last year, son-in-law and grandson came up for a week and this year my daughter, Nancy, and her two children are coming up the end of this month to spend all summer.

AG: Great. That's so nice to be able to have a family here.

JT: I've had several people come up and visit. One of the marine science teacher when our kids were in school from our little town, she came up and spent a couple weeks here and had a great time. And I was worried, took her out seining, that oh, if we happen to squash a starfish or get a jellyfish that died for some reason that she'd get all upset, but she didn't.

AG: That's good. Well, tell me then about this 1970 season.

JT: That was my first year. I was a young punk kid and had three good crewmen and we just had an old piece of crap boat and we were going to Cape Igvak. I'd never been there before. It was June 20. You can look in the archives of the Kodiak paper and look at June 20. I'm sure that there's some article in there about the vessel *APA-8* lost off of Cape Igvak. And John Kuljis was a crewman, Ross Leroy was a crewman, and John Norgren. After we got back to Kodiak and after got all the paperwork filled out from the accident, we all flew home. And about the first of July, we're talking about a week after I'd been home, I get a phone call from a guy. His name was Bob Lowe and he says, "Jim," he says, "I've got a seiner and I'm looking for a captain and are you interested?" and I says, "Well, what kind of boat?" He says, " Well, it's over at Village Islands and I've got a brand new 453 Jimny I'm gonna put in it." And I says, "Well, let me get a hold of my crew. If they want it, you'll see." So I got ahold of my crew. They all said, "Let's do it!" I thought that […] made a statement right there. You get three guys that just got plucked out of the ocean by helicopter, they wanna— if you get bucked off the horse I guess you jump back on. So we flew to Larsen Bay. Now mind you when I lost the boat I had a brand new skiff that I owned, I lost it. I had a brand new seine that I owned, it's gone. But when I got back up to Larsen Bay there about the Fourth of July, piled on the dock right here at Larsen Bay is my seine. Well, about my seine missing forty fathoms. It had floated and a tender coming back from Chignik ran into the damn thing. Got caught in his propeller and anyhow they cut out, but winched the net aboard and brought it here to Larsen Bay. And they didn't know whose it was, but I sure knew whose it was when I saw it. So now I got a net, little bit shorter than everybody else's, but so Bob met me here and we got on the tender, the *Beluga*. It's an old scow. Davey Paulson I think was the guy that ran it. He was from Pensacola, Florida, but a good guy. So we take off for the Village Islands and when we got to the Village Islands, it was high tide and all that was sticking out of the boat, the *Michelle*, was the top half of the mast. She was sunk! So we waited for low tide, got in with buckets, and the boat it was a thirty-six footer, probably thirty-six foot long twelve foot beams, skinny. And we got it bailed out. Towed it to Larsen Bay. Well, we got a brand new motor to put in it, and got the motor put in, and I think our first fishing day was about the twenty second of July, and God was really smiling our way. There wasn't a lot of fish in 1970, but there was some, and if we loaded our boat a thousand pounds a set we'd have to unload every time we made two sets because the boat leaked bad. So what we had to do was load the boat

in one set and have a tender close by, and that's just what we did, and we had some really good days fishing. And I know the season ended up— Dead Man Bay down in the south end was gonna open and there's no way I could get there because […] there's so much water in the fuel tanks that we couldn't drain that we had to fish where it's calm, and the Shelikof's always rocking. So I got my dad to tow us all the way to Alitak, and he got us there and untied our towline and says, "Kid, I got you here, fend for yourself." So we went to Dead Man Bay and they'd moved the markers and by golly we caught some fish. And now it's coming time for the end of the season and we need a tow. […] Boats not gonna make it and everybody had quit, and my crew said, "Take the boat to Alitak. Let's just leave it there and fly home." But, no, I can't do that. So there was a tender for Uganik cannery called the *GW King*, and he felt sorry for us and he gave us a tow back to Larsen Bay. So we ended up that year out of the Larsen Bay APA fleet of about forty boats, I think we were number thirteen or fourteen, and with what we had to work with and when we started, the company […] I guess they just felt sorry and this guy needs a shot, so they built the *Pintail* for me the next year. And '71 was a horrible season. I think […] my crew made five hundred bucks. Boy, we had a fun time though showing off that boat.

AG: How many fiberglass boats were there at that point?

JT: Oh, I bet there was ten on the whole island. Maybe five.

AG: What made it superior to the wooden crafts?

JT: Oh, it's painted fancy and fiberglass, but now mind you, no radar, no depth sounder, the power block was hanging on a davit on the deck. […] There was no boom winches. Had a radio and a stove. The year before when I fished the *Michelle*, that boat that was sunk in Village Islands, it didn't have a stove. We ate sandwiches. Slept in raingear. This *Pintail*, I mean it was wow. We didn't catch hardly any fish that year, nobody did. Then the next year, we did catch a few fish. That's the first time I ever boat loaded it. It held about twenty-eight thousand pounds, and I leased that boat every year until 1977. In 1977 my wife, Rhoda, and I had the Hansen boat company build us a new fiberglass boat.

AG: How much would you lease the boat for?

JT: I think it was seventeen percent if they furnished the skiff, fifteen percent if they don't, but after a couple years, I got the lease knocked down to ten percent 'cause I was catching fish.

AG: Was your dad still fishing at this point too?

JT: Oh yes, my father retired after the '86 season. I never could catch what my dad did until I think 1980 was the first year I ever beat my dad, and it wasn't because he was letting me. But I was very fortunate to have a good teacher.

AG: In your father?

JT: Yes.

Larsen Bay cannery, P-779-14.

AG: Sounds like it.

JT: Yep. My father's last year was 1986 and that year was Alan Beardsley's first year here. Salmon prices were really low and a group of us decided to fish together. There was Joe Lindholm, Sr., Jan Messersmith, Anchor Lindholm, me, Jerry Everman from Kodiak, and my father. But Dad's getting ready to retire, he was sixty-two years old and he told us boys, he says, "Now, I quit at six o'clock in the evening. I get up early. But I don't care. I fish my way and I'm sorry, you're gonna have to put up with the way I [am]." "No problem, Jim." Well, see we split our fish, but at the end of the season when we divvied up everything, my father had all of us beat. So I mean he quit in style.

AG: Is he still living?

JT: No. Dad passed in '94, but […] I'm so proud of that man. All he ever did was commercial fish. He never crabbed. He gillnetted the Columbia and he purse seined. He didn't fish herring. He was very frugal. Believed in saving money. He didn't waste money. I mean he can buy a car, he drove a Cadillac, but he'd, you know, keep a car ten years. His equipment was good, but he didn't waste money frivolously. And he was one of the few fisherman that was able to retire and walk away, but things were changing in 1986. Old ways were being replaced by new ways, and he was a pioneer of the old ways and the new way was different and he wouldn't conform and the ways that he fished before, the young, the new crowd, wouldn't let him. So he basically said, "Screw it. I don't need this.

AG: What was the way that he fished and how did that differ from the new crowd?

JT: He fished Karluk River, and he started fishing Karluk River with oars and the skiff and he learned how to read the wind and the tide. [….] And there wasn't that much competition, but there was some. People learned and, […] they got better and better, but then my father and I, Jerry Gugel

was the first to ever have a jet skiff, my father and I were the second, and this was revolutionary to fish the shallow waters around the mouth of Karluk River. But pretty soon everybody was getting them and where we had fished pretty much exclusively by ourself, now there's a whole fleet that's moved in and they started making it a, what do you call it, a hook haul, a spot to take turns. And we never took turns because the tide's running hard. […] It was a new set of rules that was being adopted, and so he moved to some other place and he just got disgruntled.

AG: And he was in a position to retire anyways.

JT: Yeah. And like I say I'm so proud of him. He amassed enough assets that my mother, just passed away a year and a half ago, and she was well provided for.

AG: Did she work as well?

JT: No, housewife, but she did come up here a few years in the '70s and '80s and stayed for a few weeks. And my dad had a room above the office over at the cannery and so mom and dad would stay there and she worked in the mess hall.

AG: Were there some lessons that maybe you learned from your parents about their relationship as fisherman and wife that has helped you and your wife?

JT: Yeah 'cause mom and dad I think […] they'd been married like forty-seven years before he passed, so they made it, good role model. I wish I would've saved a little more of my money over my lifetime as he did, and I've done okay. It's been a wonderful life and great place when I was a kid and my kids here. I've got five daughters. Everyone of them has worked in the cannery over there. They started in the slime line and advanced. My youngest daughter probably worked in the cannery the longest, and she ran the egg house. She spent a couple three years as an underling and then she was foreman of the egg house for several years […]. It's probably been eight years since she quit.

AG: So I'm curious back in 1970 when your vessel was going down, did you have a radio? How did they find you?

JT: Yeah. May Day! May Day! May Day! Had an AM radio. One of the old AM that's not a single side band, the old AM radio. […] We left Karluk in the evening, oh probably eight o'clock, headed for Cape Igvak which is, I think, it was gonna be an eight hour ride or something like that. The ocean was smooth. We didn't have WBH-29 Kodiak. We didn't have Peggy Dyson or if we did I didn't know what channel. So we left, and running with another boat, the *EJ Bruce*, and we got out in the middle and running the compass course. We had a compass and chart. […] I knew how to plot a course. And the wind come up all of a sudden and it went from nothing to probably blowing twenty-five in the course of a half an hour. The waves started to build. The *EJ Bruce*, I flagged him over and we were gonna talk over what we were gonna do. […] We're gonna have to do something. Well, I'm bow into the swell and he came up to me stern into the swell. First thing that happened, he took a wave over the stern of the skiff and within seconds his skiff was swamped, hanging off the stern. He had a brand new skiff. It was an inboard/outboard which was something new at that time. I had a brand new power skiff with a propeller. And anyhow, the wind is picking up and he's trying to lift the skiff back up on deck and things are swinging and banging and somebody's gonna get hurt, and he's not gonna get the skiff up. I mean it's not gonna happen. I see the end of his net's fell over the back of the boat because of the skiff wobbling back and forth on the line. Now if he gets net in the propeller, now he's really gonna be in trouble. Anyhow, they let the skiff go and he started jogging into the swell and that's the last I saw of him. I don't know if his radio didn't work or what, but anyhow the wind started getting foggy and sea spray and he's gone and we're alone and I feel deserted, but what do I do about it? And so we're just basically going into the swell. We're headed

pretty much the right direction, and we took a big wave and the engine died and I don't know what happened. We had a Crusader gas engine, six-cylinder gasoline engine, and put it in neutral, started it back up, fire it up, put it in gear, engine died. We got something in the propeller. What had happened is up on the flying bridge we had a big coil of purse line, and when the wave broke it had washed over the top and this big wad of purse line fell overboard and went in the propeller. Freak accident. So anyhow, now we're sideways in the swell, rocking and rolling. Big sea. We've gotta get out of the trough somehow. So let the skiff back a little bit and threw the end of the net overboard and started paying out net by hand. And we'd run a line up to the bow, fastened it on the cleat, and tied it on the middle of the seine. So pretty soon when half the seine pays out, the lines gonna come tight, gonna go up to the bow, and now we're gonna be hanging on the seine as a sea anchor. So now we're bowing to the swell. So we're at least better than what we were, and then that's when I get on the radio and by golly the Coast Guard came back. And I told them where we were and I said, "I think we're about twelve miles off of Cape Igvak." And I didn't know what they were gonna do. Nobody had survival suits back then. Well said, "We're gonna send a helicopter." Now in the meantime, my dad and the rest of the fleet, they're fifteen miles away anchored up over on the mainland, doing all they can to hang on to their anchors, and they're scared to death for us. And I can remember talking to my dad, I mean they can't come out. I mean […] the weather's just horrible and the Coast Guard better hurry up. And we'd lost a window and we're bucketing and there's ketchup and mayonnaise all over the galley. It's a mess. And we get another call from the Coast Guard. It's a C-130 and he says, "Will you start transmitting? We've got a radio direction finder. We can home in on you." So I started talking and we could hear him. We could hear him up there. I said, "We hear you." And then they sent two helicopters and when they got there the boat's still floating, we're upright, but I mean […] pumps are going, we're bailing as fast as we can and […] we got minutes left. They can't drop the basket down because of the rigging on the boat. So we gotta get in the skiff. So we all, brand new skiff, we all pile in the skiff. And I'm at the wheel and we're going up and down, and we get over by the basket and John Norgen was the first guy, he was the oldest guy on the boat, good man, a seasoned crewman. At the time what was I? Twenty-one, twenty-two. John was probably in his later forties, and he got in the basket and here come a wave so all of a sudden he's six feet under the water and next thing you know he's ten feet out of the water and up he goes. And now then Ross Leroy was the second one up. And we're bailing out in the meantime. John Kuljis was the last one to go up. Now that I'm alone down there, who's gonna steer the boat for Jim so I can get into the basket? But I can remember I was calm. Now wet, soakin' wet, and blowing sixty or seventy or whatever it's doing, but I knew that I'm not gonna have all the time in the world because now nobody is bailing, and the basket came by and I jumped and I got my elbows locked over the rungs of the basket. And that's the way I went up [legs kicking]. Whew. Thank you, Lord.

AG: So it sounds like it was a lucky seine, actually.

JT: Like I say, we got the seine back.

AG: You did, and it was the seine that you were able to use to turn it into the sea anchor and it made it a successful season in the end.

JT: See what happened when the boat went down, it ripped the cleat off the boat and or before or something, but I don't know where the boat went or my skiff.

AG: Gosh, and that's around the time of limited entry, too.

JT: Limited entry I think was '74.

Seiners tied to the cannery dock, P-779-10-42.

AG: Okay. How did that impact you and fishing out here?

JT: Limited entry was based on a point system. You had to have, let's say twenty points. For every year you crewed you got a point. For every year you ran a boat, you got two points. If you were a gear owner you got a point. Well, I made it. You needed twenty, I had twenty, but it was no big thing. We knew you could buy and sell them and they were cheap. […] And there was probably ten people, at least ten, in this village that had permits, but then after about three, four years, permits went up to thirty thousand bucks. And the limited entry was put in to protect the fishery for Alaskans, but kind of the opposite thing happened because an awful lot of the local people, when permits got up to thirty thousand bucks, they sold them to basically people in Puget Sound and Oregon and wherever. So the captains from Larsen Bay went from many to very few.

AG: Did that happen quite quickly?

JT: Yeah.

AG: Were you able to see that impact in the village?

JT: Maybe I shouldn't talk.

AG: That's fine.

JT: We can talk about that later.

AG: That's fine. Yeah, I know that limited entry is really in the end one of the more controversial moments in fishing history in Alaska.

JT: Kodiak did not need limited entry 'cause we had limited entry without it in the fact that it's a very difficult place to fish, it's an expensive fishery to get into, only the strong survive. So we had our own limited entry. The Kodiak permit right now is the cheapest seine permit in the state by a wide margin. It's a pretty difficult place to fish. But yet on the other hand, the top seine fisherman producer in Alaska normally comes from Kodiak. It's because there's opportunity here, but the people that are really in the know, there's good things can happen to them. Whereas an area like Prince William Sound, where their permits are very expensive, the fish are very easy to catch and it's very easy to be average in Prince William Sound. I mean, a first year spud farmer could crew one year and they could basically be average 'cause it's not that difficult. Kodiak, uh-uh, different. It's such a big area and we have weather, run timing. […] And you can't go to college to learn it either.

AG: It's true it's just experience, huh? So what else makes fishing in Kodiak different from elsewhere?

JT: Well, it's a longer season. Well, I don't know if it's longer than other ones, but we have multiple species. We have sockeye, just like, well, my friend Mitch Keplinger. Do you know Mitch? Two years in a row high boat from Alaska.

Oral History with Jim Toteff, Jr. and Joe Lindholm

(*Knock at the door. Joe Lindholm, Jr. enters and a brief introductory conversation ensues).*

AG: Do you live in Kodiak the rest of the year?

JL: No.

AG: Where do you live?

JL: Anacortes, Washington.

AG: Oh okay.

JL: I take my boat up here every year from Anacortes. I fished out of Larsen Bay my whole career and then I take back to Anacortes and we outfit it for crab, and I go down to Newport and fish Dungeness there.

AG: Oh okay.

JL: And I've got a little boat, but it keeps me busy.

AG: How is it that you decided to fish out of Larsen Bay if you started here? When is it about?

JL: You know we like here. This is the banana belt. It truly is. Shelikof can be wicked, the wind blows from Cook Inlet towards Chignik, or from Chignik towards Cook Inlet. It's nasty out there, but in here there's a couple of mountains here. The weather stays out in the Shelikof. It goes by. This is the banana belt of the island. It is literally. You'll get, you know, "How come there's no planes today? Oh, towns fogged in. It's nasty. It's icky." We're like, we got a bug problem out here 'cause it's nice, and then you wonder, Alitak. Well I've been to Alitak a lot. Go down and chase humpies, back when they had sufficient reds on the beach to handle a lot of boats. I hate to say this, but it's the armpit of the island. It is terrible down there. I mean it just puts me in a bad mood when I get south of Low Cape. It's not good. […] The weather's bad, the fishing's temperamental, but

sometimes it's really good. It seems like the fisherman down there are cranky. Everybody's not jovial, but you get up here, smiles, laughter, high fivin' white guys, and for years and years this place hired the best lookingest girls to work in the cannery and it was nice [for] a sailor to come in and, "Geez these girls are pretty." And times have changed now. They've gone international. I mean […] they started hiring from the Philippines and then they started hiring overseas like Czechoslovakia and Poland.

JT: Turkey.

JL: And then they got some Jamaicans[…]. I don't know what's going on. And now the trend is been like Micronesian and they're good hard workers.

JT: I had two Micronesian crewmen. I've still got one.

AG: Cool!

JT: Good workers.

AG: Huh.

JL: But I ended up in Larsen Bay. It seemed like a community, a family. The people that work here— if you've got just a normal thing that needs to be fixed, when I say normal a little welding, "Here, I bent my anchor. I need aluminum rib put on a boom." You know the welder here, we know him by his first name. You just pull up, he pulls the welder out, "Zzzz." You might get charged. He might have worked on your boat for four hours, but you got charged an hour. A lot more reasonable than town. Every time I go to town, no offense to Kodiak, money makes the world go round, but you just pull into town, thirty-five dollars to tie up per day. Just tie up. You wanna take a shower? Bring your wallet because it's gonna cost you.

AG: And find a place.

JL: Well, they used to have Ernie's Laundromat. Now it's turned into someone's nail salon. I mean, bring your wallet, go get a room at the Shelikof or the Best Western, whoop, bring your wallet or your credit card because it's gonna cost you.

AG: Yeah.

JL: Oh you wanna go to lunch? Welcome to Henry's. It was a fifty dollar bill just to sit down. Where here we can have mug up and didn't need a wallet. It's that kind of community. Carpenter shop, we got a guy that smokes some of the best smoked salmon.

JT: You know Dexter?

AG: I need to meet him.

JL: Oh.

JT: Well, he's—

JL: A plethora of knowledge there. Anyway, couple king salmon, slide over to that guy, and then you know after he smokes it, he gets enough smoked salmon stacked up, pretty soon you know he's ahead at canning. So he's canning it at the end of the season. Jim and I, if we don't come out of here with no fewer than a dozen or twenty cans of this delightful stuff—. […] The laundry, bring it up to the lady, put a couple beers in the bag, she'll put a little extra Downy on it or something on it.

AG: Softener.

JL: It comes back folded, fifty cents a pound. You can't do this in town. In town you have to literally stand there and watch the clothes go round and fold them yourself and consume half a day. It gets done here. So why do I like it here? Yeah. The moorage is free. Free ice. The welding is reasonable, not that we need welding all the time. Town's expensive. […] It's like going to Vegas. They tip you upside down and shake you until, "Yeah, we got all the pocket lead out of him." Okay, go out fishing again. It's a lot more reasonable here, but furthermore location, location, location. This west side of the island had three key elements to the red fishery that we like to do, but Karluk is a power house on this island. It is the main power house run. Then we had the Ayakulik which is further south. That's nine hours to get there from here. From town we're talking the opposite end of the island. It's nineteen to twenty hours to get from town to the Ayakulik. So those guys gotta be committed to go down there. For me and Jim it's nine hours. Those are the two big red power houses on the island, but then on a normal year, early June, we get to intercept the Chignik run over on the mainland. It's only about five, six hours that way. Then later in July, we get to intercept fish going north to Cook Inlet straight across, or sometimes the fish ricochet off this side of the island which, it's a rarity, but they do like a pin ball machine. They bounce up Shelikof. They're trying to the Kenai or Anchorage or wherever they're going, but Jim and I are doing our best to make sure there's a few less that make it there. So we're in the location of where sockeyes are. Town, they've got the hatchery. They've got Cape Barnabas not too far, and Chiniak, of course, which is a pretty gosh darn good cape. And it will be open this next duration. It hasn't been opened yet. So location was key not to mention I got lockers here free of charge.

JT: And I think he's gonna buy this place from me when I quit here in the next couple years.

AG: Well, it's a lovely place to be.

JL: Can you beat this view?

AG: No.

JL: Well other than the commode sitting up on that pile.(*laughter*)

JT: Before Icicle bought it there was no junk. It's Icicle moving all this junk.

JL: Yeah.

JT: Were they working on my skiff?

JL: Yeah.

JT: Good. Good. Good.

AG: Are you nervous about the sale?

JL: What sale?

AG: Of Icicle?

JL: Well, I'm concerned. […] I don't know if I'm gonna be wearing a Silver Bay jacket or a Trident hat. I don't know who's potentially gonna buy. I know that they've had people waltzing around down here measuring the dock, measuring this. They're painting all the fire hose things to come up to OSHA code. I mean—

JT: Oh.

JL: Oh yeah.

AG: I thought they were just bored.

JL: There is boredom, but they're doing things to come up to code, like for instance, your boat needed the Coast Guard sticker for insurance reasons. Right now they're putting things on the code […], getting things up to code so whoever buys it all the little fire hazard handrails are done, nails are pounded in so the dock doesn't tremble under your footstep, and yes, Jim and I have been fishing partners and friends for a long time. Both of our families and I know he doesn't wanna fish forever although he's going to remain fishing, he just may not be running a seiner. He likes his jet boat at home. He goes over, slays the trout. He lives on the Columbia River, so I pity the salmon in that creek.

JT: Joe's dad and me were partners for about fifteen years and he bailed from Kodiak and he's over in Prince William Sound now.

JL: Liking it. Call him slipper skippers. He wears his slippers outside of his wheelhouse. He comes out and he's got his hydraulics stand on deck, just points. Runs his hydraulics. Rolls the fish aboard. […] He doesn't go on deck anymore. And then he points, they winch up the skiff—

JT: That should be illegal.

JL: He turns around and sits back in his helm chair and then tear off and go bang out another set. Jim and I are two of the very few boats left on this island that don't have top houses. We got our chin in the wind. Everybody's got top houses. Even a thirty-eight footer throws top houses on to stay protected and uh.

JT: I don't want one.

AG: Why?

JT: I fish different. I hunt fish. […] I'm not a turn taker. […] Do you know anything about seining? You go to a spot, there'll be three or four boats. They go to a spot and they take turns. Everybody gets half an hour turn. I go find my own spot. A lot of time just not very good, but sometimes it's really good.

JL: And I concur. Like this guy's taking off right now in the harbor. There's no fewer than five that have left before him, if not eight. They're all going out to Rocky Point.

JT: To wait. To jog all night long.

JL: Till noon tomorrow because he knows he's not gonna be first because […] I know of five that have left already that are sitting out there waiting and they're gonna jog in this wind and the light caps. Jimmy and I are gonna have a drink. You can have one with us later.

[…]

JL: So these guys are gonna wait, but Jim and I were talking about the top house. They impair your vision. You're in the confines of something. They've got wire waves and they've got window framing between the windows. […] You get too comfortable. You get complacent. I'm gonna take up my turn. […] My turn is coming up in about an hour. Maybe I got my little bay bunk, I'll take a nap. One of the crew can watch and tap me on the shoulder five minutes before it's our set. […] I wouldn't be a fisherman if that's the way I had to fish. I would not be a fisherman. I would pick a different profession. I like to hunt, like Jim. I've learned from him, and we go. We have spots, places where fish like to congregate or concentrate and we find them. Unfortunately, there's not a whole lot of fish, so it's really difficult to see 'em. I mean, usually we see fins or jumps or something streaks in the water, something that gives you a tell-tell sign. There's no sign. I mean, there's no sign out there so you gotta throw your net out and just test the water.

AG: I think I saw one jumper off of Mission Beach the other day. I was like, " What was that? Was it a whale?" I'm, "Oh gosh, it was just a jumper." (*laughter*)

JL: […] When Jim and I go to the south end of the island and they're gonna have like an inner Red River opener, this is where your boating skills, years of knowledge and practice and boat handling, seamanship, can come in handy. It's gonna get congested. It's gonna get crowded. But the fish are gonna get spooked.

JT: There's gonna be a big school up.

JL: There's a big school.

JT: And you're gonna have to have your ears and eyes and everything.

JL: We don't necessarily need our nostrils, but all your other senses better be working right and I mean in a full vision, swivel head. And boats have to do a ballet. I mean they're not sports cars. And somebody's gonna try to get inside maneuver. A lot of us make right-handed sets. So somebody's trying to get onto my flank, what we recall in driving school, your blind spot. They're trying to blank you. They're getting on your inside and they're behind you and they're watching, but they know that you're not gonna be able to get inside of them, but you gotta do maneuvers, so we got bow thrusters, horse power.

JT: I think I had the first bow thruster of any seiner in Kodiak. Our last boat when it was built in '89.

JL: No. Your last one was '91, wasn't it?

JT: '89.

JL: '89?

AG: That's the one that you drive now [*Sea Star*]?

JT: Um-huh. I had a boat built in '88 and it had a thousand horse power General Motors diesel. It sounded like a locomotive. It made so much noise that after the season I had to get rid of it. Either gonna replace the engine or sell the boat to somebody and build another boat, and I was fortunate that I knew a man that was in the market for a new boat, his dad.

AG: And he knew of the engine?

JL: It was a 1292-Jimmy. Two stroke. You know they're loud.

JT: So anyhow, I was able to fish the hull, the boat that I really liked. Fish it for one year and build another carbon copy, but tweak things. This should be here, this should be here, this should be here and one of the things is a bow thruster. Now every boat has a bow thruster.

AG: What's a bow thruster?

JL: A propeller on the bow that's recessed into the hull. So you gotta tube. It don't make it go any faster.

JT: But you can steer it.

JL: By golly, I can have a couple cocktails and come to the dock and land perfectly. It's just nice.

AG: So.

JL: It will move your bow side-to-side. Most boats, when you're operating a boat, it's kinda like a shopping cart in reverse. You're pushing a shopping cart backwards. […] The rudder is located in the ass end of the boat, the stern […].

JT: If a boat is dead in the water, if you're not moving, you can't turn. The only way you can turn is put your boat, start your propeller, and go through the water and have your rudder turn. So you're gonna travel through the water to turn, correct? With the bow thruster—

JT: So, one of these Red River wild openings when there's all these fish and all these boats, I can do this. If somebody comes up on me, they can't 'cause they have to go through the water to turn. So just tremendous advantage.

AG: What was your inspiration for including the bow thruster?

JT: Because […] I'd heard about them and read about them and […]

JT: They were just invented within a couple years of that and they were expensive. It was another probably fifteen, eighteen thousand dollar add-on to the boat.

JL: Um-huh. […] Well, I bought mine down at Fish Expo, sixty-five hundred or seventy-five hundred dollars for the bow thruster, twelve inch, came with a power blast tube. Seventy-five hundred bucks, but now we gotta put it in the boat.

JT: Yeah and you gotta cut—

JL: Another sixty five hundred dollars to cut a hole, have the glasser come in and do all this and get everything installed and all the hydraulics mounted. I don't wanna tell you what the new hydraulics cost, but I thought I needed to power this thing, but the ones I've put in were wrong. They're on the shelf right now. Maybe you and Jake want some old hydraulics. I had to go buy new hydraulics after that, but my wife says, "So this bow thruster thing that you just had to have," she goes, "I think you're into it twenty-eight thousand dollars now with all the hydraulics and the—." I says, "Yeah, but I'm a lot cooler," and she goes, "Yeah. Mama wants a new car." (*laughter*) So. But having the open bridge, the bow thruster, the tools necessary, being mobile.

JT: For the way we fish.

JL: We go down to Red River, very rarely, very rarely do we […] fail. Ultimately, […] if I said nine out of ten times we're gonna score. Not gonna be the biggest score, he's gonna be the biggest. We're gonna score […] and everyone says, "Oh you guys are just lucky." Well, we're opportunists and we use our senses and we use our open bridge, yeah. When it rains INDECIPHERABLE with our shoulders hunched and others are sitting in their climate controlled top houses with their windshield wipers on and we're out there hunkering down going, "You know, I guess it ain't meant for sissies."

JT: In '89 when I had this boat built, very very few boats had top houses. All these ones that you see, most of them are all add-ons. I mean it's just, there was—

AG: And you can tell, too.

JL: Yeah. […] Some of them look like a bad hat.

JT: But one thing I will pride myself in is that we built a new seiner in '77, and in '88 and in '89. Didn't fish crab, didn't fish herring, those boats were paid for with salmon dollars. There was very, very few seiners built in '88 and '89. There was a few in '89 because '88 happened to be pretty good year in Kodiak, but the rest of the state, no. But in '89, there was a thing called the Exxon Oil Spill. Many fishermen got charters to go around and polish rocks. I didn't.

JL: I didn't. It was my first year of fishing here.

JT: There was a lot of people that made a lot of money on an oil charter plus they were paid. We got paid for not fishing, but they got double whammies. The oil charter was way more money than what

Anti- Exxon graffiti on a cannery warehouse, P-1001-1-74.

they'd make salmon fishing. But what happened now, you've got all of these average fishermen and even less than average fishermen, that were given oil charters. Now they've got enough money to build a new boat or a down payment on a new boat. So now then, presto, come 1990 and '91, all these guys got better boats than Jim. Well, now they got to pay for them and a good lot of them went belly up, but the boat stayed. It's just a new owner stepped in, but the boat's still there. So the oil spill hurt Jim bad because if it wouldn't have been for that there'd have been an awful lot of state-of-the-art boats that wouldn't have been built.

JL: Right.

AG: It's interesting to think of the fact that you know of course Exxon Valdez, I think it transformed a lot of things, but then also the physical fleet.

JT: Uh-hum. I mean most guys […]well, at least it enabled them to get a boat, but for Jim, it's— I'd have been way better off. I mean.

JL: If all that new equipment didn't happen to show up. I mean there's still the cream rises to the top. The best fishermen are gonna have new boats. They're gonna or they're gonna have good equipment, but there was a whole bunch of boats that got pumped out and even if the fishermen that had the boat built couldn't afford the insurance on it or couldn't afford the payment on it and he had to sell it and he sold it to somebody for let's say seventy cents on the dollar or sixty cents or fifty cents […], he spent six hundred grand to build it, but he's selling it for two seventy-five or three hundred and some new owner gets it, well he can make three hundred worth and now that boat's in the fishery and it's doing better than the old wooden replacement or the forty-two footer that the guy use to have.

JT: A lot of these guys that collected a lot of money from the oil spill, if they would have went and bought a McDonald's franchise or a taxi cab business or something and kept the operation that they had, you know, but invested the money, they couldn't make it before so what made them think that they're gonna make it now? […]

AG: So what did you do in '89?

JT: '89, we came to Larsen Bay, tied the boat up and my crew waited. I flew home and of all places to go, middle of July, your dad was over in Oahu with the big boat. The big boat.

JL: Oh, the *Manakea.*

JT: Yeah. We flew to Honolulu for a week and visited his dad and took the kids to Hawaii. It's no hotter there in the summer than it is in the winter. I mean it's about the same so. We came home and I think we took another trip somewhere and flew back up to Larsen Bay about the twentieth of August and took the boat to Homer. Put her up for the winter.

AG: So what fueled your decision to not participate in the clean-up contracts?

JT: Well, first of all the local guys got picked and Exxon was just throwing money away. They hired many village people. You know Mike […] over here? Okay. I really like Mike's dad. Mike was a seiner early on. He couldn't make it as a seiner, but he's smart and he went and got a bunch of skiffs and he was getting couple thousand bucks a day per skiff. I think he had about six of them and I think for like three months chartered, Mike […] made a lot of money.

JL: Driving around the bay looking for potentially soiled birds.

JT: So that's what built the lodge. I hand it to Mike. I mean, businessman. He was opportunist, but why Jim didn't, I had a little bit of pride and I just […] wasn't interested.

JL: I was here in '89 and it was gonna be my first year of running a boat. I had a thirty-eight foot LeClercq. I built my own net. I bought a permit when I was out of high school. I was just graduating. So I had the permit, didn't have a skiff yet, but the boat came with an outboard. We show up and we wait and then we heard there might be an opening at the Kitoi Hatchery or something because I mean we waited and waited and I think we drank a lot of beer, but I tried to get a contract, but pretty much my thirty-eight foot boat with it's four crew members, or three crew members and myself, was not gonna be able to handle anymore personnel. So, if I wanted more personnel, I was gonna need more life rafts, survivals suits, all the stuff to be Coast Guard legal. And then they pretty much said, "Well, Joe, we'll put you on the list," and somebody else said, "Yeah Joe." That meant you're not gonna get picked 'cause they're gonna pick the local guys with the bigger boats 'cause by this time town is already said, "We don't wanna fish. We disbanded our crew and now we've taken our seines off our boats and we're getting ready for oil charters." So they're gonna put a bunch of totes out on the deck and go look for oiled beaches or stuff.

JT: When were you born?

AG: '82.

JL: I graduated from high school in '83 (*chuckle*). But that was back then and now Jim and I both watch the salmon fishery rise, you know prices, we've seen big runs, low prices. We've seen times when the whole state of Alaska seemed to be flat, not much fish, and Kodiak there's jumpers in every bay and it's good. We've seen Chignik nonexistent last year and they didn't get the fish until about July 22 or something like that. Might happen the same this year. It was touted to be a good year. They called me up, told me to get up here by the first of June. So I left my home May 17. It's a long boat ride. They didn't need me here by the first. I could've still been home now. I've got about as much enthusiasm on this next opener as a—. I could have stayed tied up.

JT: If it wasn't for this place that I'm sittin' in right now, I'd probably be home.

JL: Probably.

AG: Good thing it's another home, huh?

JT: Did you setnet at all?

AG: Just one season. When I was a kid my family would beach seine at Packers Spit.

JT: Oh, you're one of those hippy chicks.

AG: Well, children of.

JT: Children of.

AG: Yes.

JL: Packer Spit.

JT: I bet that was a lot of fun.

AG: It was.

JL: With the little tent up inside there on the grass?

AG: No, there were cabins actually.

JL: Oh you had cabins up there?

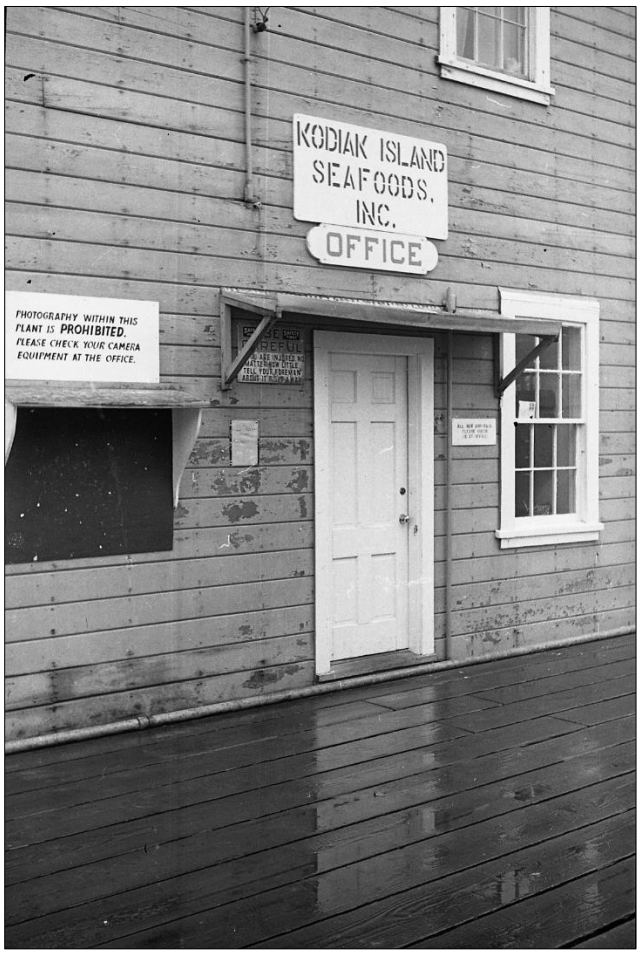
AG: Yeah.

JL: Okay.

AG: Like cabin cabins. Not like these really nice Uyak cabins.

JT: Well, then you've got a lot of west side stories that you can—.

AG: Somewhat. Somewhat. I mean my dad was out here fishing. He was in Uganik when I was born and found out I was born through a crabber. He told him to come to town to meet his new seven-pound eight-ounce redhead girlfriend. […] I'm curious about the transition from when APA owned the cannery to when it was Kodiak Island Seafoods. How did that happen, the end of APA, and what did that mean?



Cannery office when under the ownership of Kodiak Island Seafoods, P-779-14-16.

JT: I think it was the Alaska Native Settlement Act. Wasn't that the program that doled out all of the money?

AG: Yes.

JT: To the various Native corporations. So all of a sudden, Koniag, which nobody had ever heard of before—

JL: Is rich.

JT: Rich. So—

JL: See I didn't fish for them.

JT: They bought the cannery from APA.

AG: It was for sale?

JT: I guess. They bought it. And there was airplanes flying that year. […] Jack Wick was a dignitary and Jimmy Johnson was a dignitary […]. Both great friends of mine, but they went from being just a normal person to packing a briefcase.

JL: During that time, KISI—

JT: Kodiak Island Seafoods Incorporated. KISI.

JL: When KISI was here, wasn't that when Whitney-Fidalgo had the—

JT: Parks Cannery.

JL: The Parks Cannery. And I think at that time my dad fished down there.

JT: Um-huh. And I fished there for two years.

JL: And then after Whitney it turned into New England Fish Company, didn't it? Didn't they buy it?

JT: Nobody bought it.

JL: NEFCO.

AG: NEFCO is Uganik.

JT: Um-huh. Whit—

JL: NEFCO was in Uganik? I thought that was New England down there.

JT: See in '78, Pete Marangavich had been hired as superintendent. Pete Marangavich was […] the superintendent in '63, I think, but anyhow, how did this go from Pete?

JL: Oh, that was two years before I was born Jim.

AG: The APA sale?

JT: Yeah, okay. So in 1978, Pete was hired as superintendent and Bob Gorton left, and I remember Pete and Jack Wick, no not Jack, Ole Olsen, the pilot. You know Ole? From Kodiak. He was a pilot. Come to our house there in [Kalama] when we used to live on Ring Road and had this big program for bonus structure. Skippers used to get bonuses, some of them, and the producers got more. And running a company boat I was getting none, but as I went to owning my own boat, I got a thirty percent bonus under the table that nobody knows about. But that was common practice at that time, the better skippers got. And Pete had this really good program that he offered. If the case price of fish does this, I'm gonna get this. Anyhow, the season goes through and he reneges. And we still got a good price. I think humpies then were then forty-five cents or something, but there was a nickel or eight cents a pound that Jim didn't get. Now if things would have went the other way, I would have come out on the short end of the stick. So I mean it was a gamble either way. Well, it just happened it come out in Jim's favor, but he reneged. I got mad. This was after the 1978 season. I went to work for Whitney up the bay here. I was the only boat to leave and I told my dad, "[…] How can you accept this?" Well, it's because he had a room over the office and my mom could come up, and […] up there he didn't have that. I didn't have this cabin. I didn't have an apartment. So I went up there and I fished '79, '80, and '81 and after '81 Whitney was sold. Gary Wiggins, the superintendent up there, was looking for a job. This place was for sale and so in the winter Gary got ahold of me. This was in early March. And all of the salmon fishermen were in Cordova fishing herring, and Gary wanted me to fly up and have a meeting with your dad and Terry Kilbreath and Antril [Suydam] and the whole, the old Whitney fleet basically, if they wanted to go in partners to buy this place. They sold it cheap. I can't remember the selling price, but I think twenty thousand dollars represented two percent. I think that's what I put in.

JL: I thought the buy-in was ten thousand per fisherman.

JT: I thought I payed twenty, but anyhow whatever.

JL: You charged twice as much.

JT: That's why I left. Well, then we bought it back for the 1982 season, and the unique thing about 1980— was that the year you were born? The winter of '81, between '81 and '82, a man in Belgium died of botulism eating Alaska canned salmon. One man on the planet earth, but it absolutely devastated the Alaska canned salmon industry because a big lot of our canned pink salmon went to

Europe and so this market dried up. Well, Gary Wiggins, who was a good friend, smart man, always looked out for his own wallet, also, he had a son who was good friend.

JL: I was friends with him.

JT: Anyhow, we got this deal put together and Gary got ahold of a government agency to guarantee to buy a big chunk of our pack at a price that twenty-six cents a pound to the fishermen would pencil out for the cannery. So we go into the season, 1982, on strike because all of the companies in Kodiak, it would have been Ocean Beauty—

JL: CIP. [Cook Inlet Processors]

JT: CIP.

JL: Wards Cove.

JT: Wards Cove, APS, had no market. […] So there was no incentive to settle a salmon price. Well, […] me and Terry [Kilbreath] were on the board of directors and so we went to Kodiak negotiating prices with Jeff Stephan. You know Jeff Stephan? And we offered the fishermen's union twenty-six cents a pound is what Larsen Bay, and we will treat you as everybody, equally. They wouldn't vote on our price because for some reason, I don't know, there's some reason they wouldn't put it to a vote. And we told them now we've got skin in the game and this is like the fifteenth of July we're negotiating with them. There's gonna be a point in time we're gonna go fishing, but […] we wanna do this the right way. And anyhow they won't, nothing happens, nothing happens, nothing happens, they won't accept our offer. And on about July 26, we're going fishing, in which we did.

JL: We had a price.

JT: We got twenty-six cents. I think the other offer was maybe eighteen cents or something, and I think town […] might have settled on twenty-three cents or twenty cents or something, but we got twenty-six and there was some real bad hurt feelings because we went fishing during the strike and we were scabs. We all lost a lot of friends over this jealousy, but were we scabs or were we not scabs? Well, it's our cannery. We tried and we got a bigger price than what they did and we offered our price to them. So anyhow we went fishing and the town settled about two days later. And we went fishing one day and the canneries they're plugged. We fished one day and we're on limit. I mean, there was a lot of fish and it took many years for wounds to heal.

JL: Oh there was some, like Jim said, the cannery was plugged. The tenders were plugged, the boats were coming in. We're full. Everybody's full. The tenders' full. What do we do with our fish? There were some not so thought-out moves that were made and my father was one of them. He's got a full boat of lots of salmon and there's an Ocean Beauty tender sitting there that doesn't have a fish on board. Our tender's full, won't take anymore, and there's other boats coming. They all got loads. We went to the Ocean Beauty tender. Bad. […] Now that's wrong 'cause that load of fish, that Ocean Beauty tender took it to town and everyone's going—

JT: Here come all the Ocean Beauty fishermen in town, see their tender coming in loaded with Larsen Bay fish. Not one of Jim's.

JL: Nope, Jim didn't do it. My dad.

JT: And there was about a dozen.

JL: Because he loads his boats so fast, he got to the tender first and got unloaded and partially it's his fault that the damn tender was full.

Larsen Bay cannery, summer 2015, P-1000-7-699.

JT: Now our fleet was split half at Red River, half at Karluk, and the boats at Karluk never sold a fish to Ocean Beauty. There was Ocean Beauty tenders anchored there, but we never, no.

JL: We were down at Red River.

JT: Yeah.

JL: And there's an Ocean Beauty tender there and I think there's a couple of town tenders there, but our tender was full and my dad looked around and he went, "Well that tender's light. Let's get these fish off so we can go catch more fish tomorrow." Wrong move. Really, really torked the guys off in town 'cause here comes their tender into town full of fish that they didn't catch, and the whole reason to a strike is to try to negotiate to get your price up to the company, but if the company's gettin' fish—.

JT: Our whole reason for going fishing was that we've got skin in the game and we're not going broke this first year. We've got payments in and we're gonna go fishing, but that did not mean sell fish to somebody else. No, that meant our operation. So anyhow, let's not go there anymore.

JL: Yeah, anyhow this took years to—. We kinda got a black eye on us because of that, but it took years to rebend. Time does heal most wounds and Gary Wiggins ran this plant as—. The skippers were ten or twenty thousand dollar part ownership in this. That was genius, got fisherman to buy in. We'll make a little plaque and put your name on a locker.

JT: We all got business cards. (*chuckle*)

JL: Business cards.

AG: Do you have any of those still?

JT: I think so.

AG: I would love one for the museum's collection.

JL: […] You felt kind of prideful 'cause you're part owner. There was no freezing. There was no fillet machines. They did roe and canned salmon.

AG: I'm curious, who was the government purchaser? You said there was some government agency that would buy the salmon.

JL: Who did Wiggins set up his—?

JT: […] Did it go to military? I don't know, but there was some government program that—.

JL: I mean here just recently the government was buying, when we had an over surplus of salmon, they'd bought a lot to ship it to third world countries as an aid thing, but the price of salmon was cheap then. The government would promise to buy five million cases or whatever they had going on. Unique thing about the canned salmon is it is canned protein, very, I mean I'd like to say similar to Spam. It's a protein meat in a can. There's no shelf life, it just lasts, and some of these places don't have much protein in their diet and so it proved to be okay. It's a staple in the south, you know, like everyone's got a few canned salmon in the pantry. You go to the Northwest, you couldn't get my wife to buy a can of salmon for nothing. She'll expect me go out and catch one.

AG: Well, I'm curious about that. How did you market the salmon? Your cans.

JT: Well now, I told you that the fishermen and Gary Wiggins owned forty-nine percent. UniSea owned fifty-one and they were the marketing end. Dick Pace was the president of UniSea and owned by, oh another fella, a rich, he was a Jew. Nice guy, but shrewd. I sold him fish on the Columbia River once and he really had a sharp pencil. I can't remember his name. InterSea. InterSea was his company.

JL: Inter?

JT: Intersea. Probably stood for International Seafoods[…], but there's UniSea and Intersea. Dick Pace was with UniSea and they were big out in Dutch Harbor.

AG: When did you stop fishing a company boat?

JT: 1977. Built the first *Rhoda Je-Anne*.

AG: And what inspired that move?

JT: Thirty percent bonus, no rent, price of fish was raising.

JL: Sure would be nice to not have a wooden boat.

JT: No, I had a fiber glass boat. The *Pintail*.

JL: Oh you did.

JT: Yeah.

JL: Nice.

JT: No it was—.

JL: But the [thirty-nine] foot Hansen was much nicer.

JT: And I had a single side band radio. I had a Decca 050 radar. It's a five-mile radar. I'd never had a radar before, I mean this was cool. What else? I had an anchor winch. Hydraulic anchor winch.

'Frigerator, hot water, with coils through the stove, and it packed forty-four thousand pounds of fish and sit just like this. You wouldn't wanna go across any swells bigger than this, but it would sit just level, forty-four thousand. I think the forty-two foot Delta's LeClercq, I think they packed about thirty-six, thirty-eight. How we doing?

AG: Oh good, I'm just making sure that it's still recording.

JL: Are you recording me?

AG: Yes, you'll have to sign a form. (*laughter*)

JL: Forgive me for swearing. No, but Hansen packed better. The LeClercq boats didn't pack as much, but when they loaded they were notorious for their sterns going under. Sometimes we had to drop the seine off to get to the tender and leave it just floating and get to the tender and get the fish off. And back then they didn't have pumps so it was pitching affair. You'd bring the brailer over, put your cotton liners on because […] you couldn't wear rubber gloves. You had no traction on the fish. You wear the cotton ones and you ring 'em out to the get the slime out of 'em and the next brailer would come down and pitch.

JT: You know how we did it when I started?

JL: Fish pews.

JT: Fish pews.

JL: Stab 'em. Wing 'em.

JT: Two men in the fish hold, each with a pew, you throw 'em up on deck. Two guys on deck would throw 'em onto the tender, and a tenderman, he's got the clickers. Humpy, humpy, red. Humpy, humpy, dog. Three different clickers.

AG: […] For a long time I know that you were paid per fish instead of per pound. Do you remember when that transition happened?

JT: Oh I think in 1965.

JL: I was just born. I don't know. All I remember is by pound.

JT: I think it was '65 and we were striking. We were in Kodiak. No, maybe it was '66, but we got, I think, twelve and a half cents a pound.

AG: You know I think that those are like big and understated moments in history. You know, to transition from being paid per fish to per pound. That's a big advantage for the fisherman from before.

JT: Well, not if the fish are little.

AG: Yeah. (*laughter*)

JT: Yeah and when it was by the fish, who's punching the puncher?

JL: Who's got the clicker? Click-click-click-click.

JT: And there was no refrigeration. The fish went from a dry hold to a dry tender. […] Ice wasn't involved in this operation. And then the fish got taken to the cannery and they were not iced down. Then they were cleaned and canned and nobody got sick and everything was cool.

JL: And back then you know there wasn't, like I said, there wasn't pumps. They had a mechanical conveyor belt-looking ladder that would cua-cua-cua-cua down into the hold of the tender and this

ladder would chu-chu-chu-chu-chu and these little buckets would bring up about four or five salmon and flop 'em over onto another conveyor belt. No ice.

JT: There's lots of conveyors in this cannery.

JL: Lots of conveyors, belts, driven things, grease that babbit bearing, that babbit bearing, make this shaft go round and round.

AG: When did that change?

JL: Well, when they brought the boiler in and decided that steam was—.You know they always had the boiler for the[…] , but it was way easier when the fish pump got incepted and now we can force fish through vacuuming and the pump changed everything.

JT: '82 was the first time I ever pumped. That was Gary's tender, the Seattle—.

JL*: City of Seattle.*

JT: Yep.

JL: And innovations like that change. You know for years they only had the pump. Well to be honest with you, where the fish house is now, use to not be there. That was where we use to park our boats. Was in this alcove. It was wonderful. It was buggy. You know because not much wind got there and the bugs were just—. But we'd just go dry, all of our fleet would just go dry and then the tide would come and we'd be floating again and happy. But then they removed us and they built the fish house. All this flying stainless. Alan Beardsley had it put in when he had the Kodiak Salmon Packers and uh.

[…]

AG: So Jim, tell me why you all decided to sell the cannery in '85?

JT: We didn't. I didn't. UniSea did. The very first year, I don't know how this— and I was one of the directors. But we all got a big bonus (*laughter*). We made a lot of money the first year with eggs and basically bought the place cheap. Made a lot of money one year and ended up owing some, and so UniSea made a good profit for the three or four years they were in it, and they wanted to sell it, and they were fifty-one and we were forty-nine. But now in the meantime, before the sale, when I left and I went to Whitney, I got an attorney and started some legal proceedings against these people to recoup.

JL: You're funny.

JT: No, no. What they owed me. See the reason I left was because they reneged on a contract.

JL: Oh yeah.

JT: I got a contract and it wasn't much I was wanting, five or eight thousand dollars, but it was the principle. But the sale couldn't go through until I withdrew my lawsuit, so which I did.

JL: Just to consummate the deal.

JT: I'd never sued anybody ever and haven't since.

JL: So then after UniSea and Wiggins sold, that was when Alan Beardsley stepped in?

JT: Yeah, and everybody laughed at Alan. They said, "Oh, he's a grocery man […]. How's he gonna make it?" But the guy was smart and hired good people to work for him and basically let Van [Johnson] and Dexter run the show. And Alan had a sharp pin. He knew that he had a market to sell a hundred and fifteen thousand cases of salmon and that's all and he'd order enough tin for that and

when they got that much fish, he closed the doors. […] There's a lot of years that Alan quit buying on like the twenty-third of August which kind of hurt us.

JL: Yeah. He'd make arrangements with Ocean Beauty to come in and take over the setnets, tender runs, and stuff like that.

JT: But Alan did good.

JL: Generally speaking, after they closed the doors our zeal for fishing went downhill.

JT: (*Speaking to AG*) Did you grow up in Kodiak?

JL: Well then you knew Alan. He had City Market.

AG: Yeah, I don't really remember very clearly. I'm curious when he bought it, why did the forty-nine percent of the former owners not try to chip in and still become a part of the new management?

JT: 'Cause some of the forty-nine percent wanted out. They wanted to sell and […] I don't think Gary had any skin in the game.

JL: I think he just took the money and ran and went roping. He's a cowboy, rodeo.

JT: […] Gary's president, and there was me and Terry and Dick Pace were directors.

AG: Terry Who?

JT: Kilbreath from Anacortes, friend of his dad. Good friend of his dad. Now we had to have tenders. So just so happened that Gary's son and Gary were partners on a crabber, so naturally he' s gonna hire his own boat which I could care less, but gotta have a tender, and then Gary goes and buys one or two. Bought that big *Santa Anita* and that scow. He buys two other piece of crap tenders by himself and then leases them to the cannery which, conflict of interest, well probably. I didn't care. I mean we needed a tender. Somebody's gonna have to supply the tender. But, I like Gary.

JL: I do, too.

AG: And this is Gary who?

JT: Wiggins.

AG: Okay. I see.

JT: Gary's still alive and Gary had a son his age that had diabetes and he died young.

AG: Where does Gary live?

JT: Seattle.

AG: Sounds like I should try to interview him, huh?

JL: I think he's […] still okay. His years, I know he's getting up there. I know my dad had dinner with him last year. […]

JT: He's gonna be in his late eighties I guess.

JL: Maybe he lives in Ellensburg now.

JT: Could be.

JL: I know he got into rodeoing.

JT: Doesn't his daughter work at—?

JL: I think she does. Works with Alan?

JT: Could be.

JL: Or the next lodge over.

JT: But uh.

JL: I think it's the next lodge over.

JT: Gary—.

JL: Gary's got a daughter named Jennifer.

AG: Okay.

JT: But Gary Wiggins would be a good person to interview because he was a superintendent here and a superintendent at Parks.

JL: Yeah.

JT: And knows a lot of fishermen and a smooth guy. He was—.

JL: He's a silver fox.

JT: He didn't have dirty under his fingernails. He was pretty clean.

JL: I was really good friends with his son and he passed, but Gary pulled me aside, says, "You are gonna say some words at the funeral." I says, "Course, Gary."

JT: Tell her about driving his corvette when he's blind.

JL: Well, you know the diabetes got hold of him. He got in a motorcycle wreck, he lost his leg. So now his vision, but you know when they came out with that laser surgery he wanted to be the first in line. "Well, its experimental Gary, they don't know what they're doing. They're gonna put a laser on your eye." He says, "I don't care. I got to. I wanna see." Well they botched it. They lasered him and that eye's gone. So now he's got one eye that's all fogged over, one eye's gone, one leg's missing. I mean he's falling a part. Gotta test his blood everyday. Can't see what he's doing. He doesn't know what it says, ah heck with it, and he's falling apart, but he still wants to go out and have a beer. And he's got a sixty-nine corvette convertible and he says, " You know, hey Joe, you just bought this?" I bought a house that had a shop. I had a garage that had three bays in it and he says, "Can I park my car here?" "Of course, Gary." So he parked the '69 vet in there and walking by it he goes, "You know the keys are in it all the time, Joe." I says, "Well, I know Gary, but we gotta work on that motor." Well, he's like, "Well, you know, I'm gonna need your help. I can't see anymore." But he buys the cams, we get the pistons and put this V-8 together. It's a 350 and it's pipey 'cause the cam is. We had to get a bigger intake manifold, carburetor, but we get this corvette and I take him out. He's got long, not quite as long of hair as you, but he's got long hair, and we take him out and we're whipping around in this corvette and he's going, "Romp on it," and I said, "Gary, […] the light just turned yellow." He says, "Go for it. Rowwl!" We go flying through intersections and tearing up the town and he can't see. He can't see. He's literally, he's crying, his eyes are crying and he can't see, but he's just having a time of his life. I let him. I tried to give him the time of his latter years of living. And he had a speed boat called the Pachanga. Now that one had the 454 in it. I parked it in one of my garages. So we went out on a fishing derby with this speed boat. I knew I wasn't gonna catch a salmon. It was not meant to catch salmon. It's meant to pick up girls, but I'd take him out and it did seventy. Once again he's just crying and laughing. He'd go to hold the beer up and it just be flying out of his hands. (*laughter*)

JT: He was a neat guy. Gary, Jr.

JL: The superintendent's son. Anyway, yeah. I ended up storing his car until his death and then his sister asked if she could have it. Of course, I gave her the keys, and I felt that it should stay in the family. So they got the car, but the boat was long gone. It'd sold […]. I don't need a seventy mile an hour boat. Didn't have a bow thruster. (*laughter*) Anyway no, I'm not sure, but Senior might be living in Ellensburg or eastern Washington, maybe Wanatchee. I can't remember. I know he was enjoying the nicer weather and was still into roping.

The white house, Larsen Bay, August 2015, P-1000-7-236.

JT: Google it. You might find it.

JL: He used to smoke a big cigar in the back. He had the white house. He was smoking his cigar and he had the carpenter make, and it's still in office.

JT: Um-huh.

JL: He had the carpenter make a wooden cow head, steer head, you know like little bolts for eyes, and it's still in the office. I think it's in Carrie's office, but he would sit there—.

JT: He was a roper in college. He went to Washington State.

JL: He would play with his lariat—

JT: He was a roper.

JL: —and the chair and then he'd, you know, wiggle it or something and get the lariat off the horn, smoke the cigar, rope it. (*laughter*)

JT: And see then my wife came up the summer of '82 and we stayed over here in the winter house. She was up for a month. She fished on the boat, and anyhow, […] that's when I was an owner, and she got to be good friends with Jackie, and anyhow, Gary told Rhoda, "You know what you need. You should get a couple broodmares." Gary was into race horses. He'd had one really good one and he'd been on horses a lot, but "what you need is a couple broodmares for your girls to take care of." That's the last thing I need. Well, when we were down at Santa Anita with Gary and Jackie that fall, I bought three pregnant broodmares.

JL: And now Jim's a proud horse owner.

JT: I couldn't even spell horse and now I own three pregnant mares and if I'm gonna get in the race game, well, I better get a race horse so at least I'll learn a little bit, so I went partners with a fellow that I met that […] had a horse for sale and I bought half of him. Wild Cat Canyon. Do I have a picture of one?

JL: I know you've got Spring Chinook.

Dexter Lorance in the carpenter shop, August 2015, P-1000-7-470.

JT: Right there. Wild Cat Canyon. There's Shelikof Storm. There's Spring Chinook. There's Veronica J.

JL: Doesn't even know how to spell horse, but he's making too much money. He needs a tax write-off. So horses.

AG: Shelikof Storm, huh?

JL: Horses.

JT: Shelikof Storm. He was the best horse I ever had, and he made a little bit of money, but Veronica J is the one I made money on 'cause she won that stakes race and then I sold her. We bailed out after about six years in the horse game, and I'm not lying, we made a little bit of money, a few thousand. But it was his dad that says, "Jim, never invest in anything that eats while you sleep," (*laughter*) and boy, until we sold Veronica we were under water.

JL: You remember the good old days when Alan Beardsley had bought this cannery after Gary, oh even when Gary owned it, a lot of the people that worked here stayed here. The Dexter's have been here forever. We had a laundry lady named Cherokee Sue. Well she was the girlfriend of Tom Nelson, one of the highliner fishermen. Earl Daniels was an old timer who worked here. His wife, Margaret, had worked in the mess hall. My grandmother, who used to work at the Whitney place in the store, came over here to work in the mess hall, also, and there was Jim's mom, Theresa. You wanna talk about three hens […], too many cooks in the kitchen, or whatever the word is, these ladies, they chased you out of there if you had too much coffee, beat you out of there with a broom, and at the same time they were always welcoming you. "We got fresh pastries. Come on in, guys."

You know doling them out, and then Sue was there, so these were special elderly ladies that were always taking care of the fishermen.

JT: They're all in their sixties or seventies.

JL: All of them, or older, but they all had their family was on the dock, in the boats.

JT: Everyone of these women were pistols. I mean they were sharp.

JL: They were the bling for—. Were there aprons? They were feisty, savvy. I think in their younger years they had quite a time.

JT: My mother, his grandma, and Margaret. And Margaret was from Scotland and she spoke with a Scottish accent. Are you Scottish or Irish?

AG: I'm not sure. Either or both it's probably.

JT: My wife's part Irish.

JL: So one of the things about me staying here in this. […] It was like family. Like I said, the people have been here for so long. The history we had in the—. Like now they chase us out of the mess hall if we're there too much. We wear out our welcome. But it used to be we could at high tide, I would take my boat around and tie up to the mess hall. Our rigging was right there in the windows and they'd open the windows up and hand us pies and stuff. We'd go over to the laundry place at high tide, tie up, take showers and get our laundry done, and after Cherokee Sue wasn't doing laundry, there used to be some other prettier girls with the laundry ladies. They liked it when we hung out over there, but we had to get out of there before low tide you know and uh, but there used to be a lot of fun. It was just an entertaining, things that we can't do in town. We can't do this in town.

JT: I wish I had a tape recorder or a camera and for the last fifteen years just turn it on when I come up here in the spring […].

JL: GoPro. (*laughter*)

JT: There's been some really colorful people in our lives.

JL: One time they announced an opener. We're gonna go charging over to Zacher Bay or do something. I mean it's gonna be an opener. Everyone's kind of excited and there's a little bit of hubbub on the dock this anticipation of the we know it's gonna be a fishy one. This opener that's gonna happen tomorrow I'm not really excited about, but this particular openers are gonna come up and we're all a little—. We know the duration before was good. We know now it's been closed for two and a half days and there's gonna be a build up. It's gonna be excellent fishing. And old Tom Nelson with the *Kaia*, God I needed to go to the locker, and I had a motorcycle, XR-200, Honda, and I was hell on wheels around here, ride wheelies, and broke every safety violation around, and anyway, "Tom, I gotta go to the locker. I need some line. I gotta get some stuff for my dad's boat." I fished for my father then and Tom was like older and he was like, "Yeah. Okay, Joe. I'll take a ride." And I get him on and take off the bike, shift a couple gears, and up the ramp I go to the upper web loft to the where the lockers are. We parked the bike, I get in the locker, get what I'm needing, couple coils of rope and line, and Tom gets his stuff at his locker, I says, "You need a ride back, Tom?" He goes, "Huh. No. Not riding with you anymore." "All the same to me partner." So I throw the line over the handle bars, fire off the bike. In a motorcycle I had a peculiar fetish about it if something touched the throttle cable, pinched it slightly, it accelerated. So I go to round the corner to go down the ramp of the web loft. We're in the upper tier. I go to go down the ramp. I lean into it and the line shifts and it pinches the throttle cable and my handle, it accelerates, pops the

wheel. So I take off into a wheelie in an opportune time and off the ramp I go from the web loft, and I bail, I abort. I mean we're launched now and it's gonna leave a mark.

JT: It's gonna hurt.

JL: It's gonna. I mean we're coming down and it's gonna hurt and I go into a forward roll and I like this kind of hurt and I hit the dock on kind back of my shoulders and I crumble and like an accordion I crumble and then my hips hit and my feet come whipping down and they're the last thing to go splat. The bike miraculously gets hung up on some pallets and it's sittin' up there revved out, but nobody can get to it 'cause it's way on top of the pallets. Some forklift driver has to come up and get the forks, pick the pallet up, get the bike down, shut her off, 'cause the line's still got the handle bar pinched or whatever the throttle cable. I'm laying there on the dock and I'm having a moment of ouch. I wanna run it off, but I don't think I can run and I hobble to the men's room down at the corner. I hobble down there and I thought, "I can't believe that just happened," and the old boy Tom that said he wasn't gonna take a ride, "I knew better than to go with you, Joe." […]

JT: How many bones did you break?

JL: I broke two bones on my foot.

AG: Oh my gosh.

JL: I broke two bones on my foot, bruised my kidneys, liver, I don't, I mean I bruise.

JT: I thought you broke your arm, too?

JL: No, I broke my arm when I was wrangling with your crewmember, JB, over a case of beer one time. I broke my wrist. He got the better of me on that one. He tried some Longview maneuver on me and I went down to break my fall and I broke my wrist instead and, but no, I broke my foot. So I went to town. The guys were going out on the opener. I was gonna miss the opening. I had to fly to town. They wanted to put a cast on me. I wouldn't let them. "So what's the alternative 'cause I gotta fish?" and the doctor's like, "Well, we gotta cast your foot." I said, "What's the alternative? I gotta wear. I'm in the skiff so I don't need a rubber boot, but I need something, you know, a walking boot, something stiff. I'll try to protect it in plastic bags." Doctors going, no, you need a cast and like, doc, you're not really understanding me here. I need to work this summer so let's put it in a hiking boot and cinch up the laces so that […] I can control the swelling a little bit and anyway, that left a mark driving off the web loft and Dexter still talks about that, "I can't believe anyone lived." One time I drove the jet skiff, we have these fancy jet skiffs that went really fast, my dad had this one and I'm showing off with a friend, I'm coming around Frenchy's Spit, and I'm in really shallow water […] kelp on the rocks. There's under the skiff, the thing only draws inches when you're up on steps, and I'm coming right up to the Spit and I go to turn and parallel to shore and it's so shallow the water compresses under the skiff and just like a skimming board or a skipping stone, I skip sideways and next thing you know I'm up on the beach. But it's a jet, there's no propeller, there's no nothing, but I'm up on the beach. I thought well, I guess were gonna end in no harm, no damage done, everything's okay, just a little embarrassing. I didn't navigate that right. And right then out of the clear blue sky drops an airplane. It's my father and his buddy. They're flying in from town and they can see the wake of the skiff coming around Frenchy's 'cause the jets left a turbulent stream in the water where they'd been, and it drives right up onto the beach. […] The plane lands right about where I'm at, they jump out, I think I was reprimanded for five days on it. It was embarrassing.

AG: Better before there were witnesses, huh? Yeah.

JL: Thank God there wasn't Facebook back then 'cause somebody would've tagged it.

AG: Oh yeah.

JT: Are you getting some good stuff?

AG: I am and I think that my batteries says they're low, so I'm going to end it now before it just stops completely.

JT: To be continued.

[End of interview]