

Name of person interviewed: Wayne Whalen [WW]

Place interview took place: Fairfield Inn, Working Waterfront Festival

Date and time of interview: September 28, 2013

Interviewer: Markham Starr [MS]

### **Abstract**

Wayne Whalen who helped restore the F/V Roann (a wooden Eastern Rig) talks about his life long involvement with the fishing industry as a fisherman, lumper, and machinist. He also discusses changes in the industry from the 1950s to the present, particularly with regard to technology and the transition from wood to steel and Eastern Rigs to stern trawlers. He also talks about the future of the fishing industry.

### **Demographic information**

Sex: Male

Age:

Ethnicity: White

Occupation: machinist

Born: Philadelphia, PA

Homeport: Cape May, NJ

### **Key words**

Role

machinist

General Social and Cultural Characteristics

Social networks (family, friends, neighbors, co-workers)

Social and Cultural Characteristics of Fishing

Life aboard an Eastern Rig

Shoreside businesses

Gear and Fishing Technology

Other gear and technology

Boats, ships, vessels

MS Ok and what is your name?

WW Wayne Whalen from Cape May, New Jersey. And I also volunteer on the ROANN, as a volunteer which we've been working on the boat for the last eight years and we're also, with other volunteers, and in Cape May I have a metal fabricating business which I've donated and made a lot of stuff for the ROANN that was in dire need of repair or renewal so it's been interesting working with everybody and to bring the project along and finally get it here to New Bedford which is a, was a big struggle, but we finally made it and it's very rewarding to do that, you know?

MS Are you from New Jersey originally?

WW No, originally from Philadelphia and my Aunt and Uncle lived there and my Cousins which were commercial fishermen and that's how I have such a contact with these commercial boats. My father, my grandfather have the metal shops. Seemed like they were always making something for my cousin's two boats. It was one thing, then mufflers, tank, whatever. We're always around and involved in it and happy to be so and enjoy doing it and being part of the fishing community and supporting it and going out with my cousin on several trips, he had three smaller boats like the ROANN and then eventually got into the hundred foot scallop boat. So it was kind of interesting to bring the boat from Bayou La Batre to Cape May and get the boat outfitted and get into the scallop business. So it was a learning experience right there and grow with the industry down there as the industry changed from less fishing more into scalloping. And as the scalloping progressed from actually nothing in Cape May, my cousin was the first boat there, scalloping, and continued on. But now it's a whole fleet of scallop boats. So it's been really interesting.

MS Now, so was your grandfather and your father in the metalworking?

WW Between the three of us we got a hundred fifty years, three generations. I grew up in a metal shop. And in those days it wasn't what you wanted to be. This was what you're gonna be. You're goin' to the shop. Like as kids at 10, 15, "Are we gonna be here long dad?" "No not really, see you at six o' clock." The day went fast. So and then as a youngster you say, "I'm not doin' this kind of work." And then first thing you know you get interested and you can make this for your friends and do that first thing you know, you were dragged into it. "This is pretty good". You develop the skills and keep on learning. You're still learning in any craft. So it's been an interesting career that way, making things for fish boats to crosses and steeples and all kind of fabrication. So it's a wide variety. So it's been good.

MS What percentage of your work do you think is involved with fishing? What percentage with shore...?

WW I would say Cape May about sixty percent, so it seems to wind up on fish boats, there's always something as you know they're always wearing something out or busting somethin' or doin' somethin' or a new thing comes in with the fishing industry's rules and

regulations when then now they need this or now they need that. So you quick get together something that's going to work and then first thing you know it turns into a regular monthly project of supplying this or for the fishing supply, like Sea Gear which has been so generous on the ROANN donating stuff. So you're always making something for them. Well they need this, they need that. Towing signals is a big one. If you don't have the proper one, the observer can't come on the boat. So it seems like you're always making towin' signals. A towing signal is something diamond shaped that hangs in the rigging. It signifies you have fixed gear in the water. Nighttime as fishermen know its the green over white signifies night time. The towing signal in the daytime which you can see is up in the rigging that means you have fixed gear. And it seems somehow that they're always losing, which is a good thing for me. So there's always projects like that going on. Somebody's re-powering. Now the engine mounts are not the same, you have to have that all re-changed. You're always doing something for them.

MS How big is the fleet in Cape May now?

WW Well we have three big docks, so I would say you're at approx, rough estimate of at least a hundred boats. And a lot of times as you know, New Bedford is the king as far as scalloping and fishing, and a lot of times Cape May has beaten out Gloucester and come second. They do poundage across the dock at the end of the year. So we've become quite a scallop port because it seems some New England boats come down for closed areas and visa-versa. So it is really doing pretty good and then I think the advertising in more of the scallop industry, I think people are eating more scallops than earlier because they didn't know what they were. Everybody said it was cut out shark and all that, well that went away and they finally figured there really is a scallop, you know. So the, it's been a good thing that way. Years ago when they had the scallop festival over in New Bedford/Fairhaven, each boat and broker would donate a bag. And that bag went for advertising, not only for the fair. And that was in the 50s, 56, 57, right between the two bridges on the park there. A dollar and a quarter, all you could eat till you fell off the seat and somebody would take your place. And that was kind of interesting. Like half of that money went like I say for advertising to build up the industry because people typical Friday, just eat fish, and "What's a scallop?" So as they got more awareness, people said "These are really good!" and the more people started eating them, the industry grew. The price also grew with it. So it's kind of interesting that way. The history of that.

MS Are there many draggers down there?

WW Quite a few, but like everywhere, they've, when their day's are up on scalloping, then they'll switch over to fishing to keep the crew there. Not so much if they're making a lot of money with this, because of the regulations and what have you, but it pays for the fuel, keeps the guys busy and you don't lose the crew until the scallop season opens again. Otherwise you lose a good crew, sometimes you don't get 'em back. They drift off to another boat and whatever. Sometimes fishermen, what they'll do, if they have a merchant license they'll go on tug boats and you dont get 'em back for a year or two. So it's kind of important to keep good guys together. It's hard to get a good shucker, that can produce the meat in the bucket that's what it's all about.

MS You said you've been out on fishing trips.

WW Oh a lot of times, I used to fill in once in awhile. My cousin would be short somebody and "Can you go?" "Yeah." I substituted engineer and fisherman too, fill in, mostly engineer. Then you would have to come up and help out, especially now with a seven man crew compared to those days it was twelve, and you had a full time cook too kept you busy for two shifts. Used to work watches six and six, now that's unheard of with seven men. They work 20 and four. So it's a different story now. But yeah I would fill in when he, my cousin had three small boats like the ROANN and rides away with the big one. So I went out on fishing trips, day trips with him when they were day fishing the summertime. Then when he got the scallop boat then I would fill in there, like ten days at a time. And I wanted to go too for the experience, and see what it was all about. I'm glad I did that.

MS How old were you when you started going out?

WW Oh, sixteen. And that when you need to help out, pick all the stuff on the deck, sort it out, put it down below, bring him another cup of coffee. Typical fishermen in them days. When they sailed out you had a bunk full of Camels and twenty cans of coffee. And if nothing else, you run low, they'd flag a couple fluke up. You know what I mean. It seemed to be the realm in those days.

MS Could you describe, so the first ones were obviously Eastern rigs.

WW Oh yeah, yeah.

MS Could you describe the difference in how the nets are deployed and how you would deploy a net off an Eastern rig?

WW Well naturally an Eastern rig with the galluses on the side, the net goes over the side and everything when you set out the doors, the ground cables go down the doors go down and the naturally as you know is to keep the mouth of the net open, you know spread it and a lot of people last me on the ROANN, if it's a beam trawler, you know. It's not, it's an otter trawler. And being as everybody knows this from years ago up in the Boston fleet, the beam is actually a beam of wood or steel or whatever between the net to keep it apart, which they've done away with, and that's when you went back to the otter net and the doors. And an Eastern rig, you know everything, it came from the west coast, the seine boats, way back it migrated here to the east and then they finally figured out it was much easier to bring the net up a stern ramp with the reel which they could store it on reel compared to the Eastern rig, hanging it or keeping it on the side. And you never have so much physical labor on the western as you do the Eastern where everybody's on the rail and you bring the net over the rail then you get your bull line tied in, whip it and start lifting your bag and getting it aboard. It's really much safer with the western rig. And at that time too the west coast boats got this design to the East coast, there was a switch over from wood into steel. And it was a lot easier to make a steel boat with a steel ramp

than it was wood. So and you'll see some wooden ones converted over. But they never seem to be very successful due to the wood error of caulking and this and that. So at that time things were slowly leaving the wood and getting into the steel, the boat with the drums and the best part with the western rig you could make a fluke net off of the drum, put it aside and put a sea bass or pogie net on, or a squid net. So there was availability and at the same time hydraulics was coming in, no more of this stuff by hand. You had hydraulic power, it was more affordable, cheaper. Years ago, when anything new comes out, it was very expensive. Now it's much cheaper, things are more easily available than in the older days so its been a big turn around through the industry. Same with horse power, engines, more efficient, easy to replace pumps, the whole thing. And I'm also glad to see more safety and survival come into the industry which is great for the fishermen and their families. People are more aware of this and more training which is great. I've been saying this for years. That should take place, which it is.

MS Did the cheaper engines and gear come about after World War II? Was that part of the...

WW Well, what happened was, what happened after World War II was a lot of surplus. So that give the fishing industry and boat builders and people having a boat, a real chance to have a boat built because you had surplus engines, surplus deck equipment and that was a big, big boon to the builders in Maine which Gamage, Newbert and Wallace, Snows, Eli Snow, which then could afford to build a boat fairly reasonable. And the, at that time was the real height of the Eastern Rig dragger, from the war on. That's when it really blossomed, from '45 into I would say the '80s. That was your real height. You were getting out of this schooner rigs which were, schooners were converted over to Eastern Rigs which worked ok, but never really did the job. And at that time you were getting the Gamage and them and with the Albert Con's design of the chin stern, get away from that sloping bow of the cutters and getting into a new design which did much better. And like I said the engines and all the gear was available, put it in and go. A lot cheaper than buying new stuff. And quality stuff that the government had made for mine sweepers and whathaveyou. A lot of boats too at that time, during the wartime had a wartime contract. So they really didn't build any new fishing boats, they had to be very careful. Typical example, the ROANN. The ROANN was really started in '45, but the owner said to Newbert and Wallace, don't finish the boat. And the reason why is the government took the boat for coastal patrols, but unfortunately the government people, Coast Guard, navy, didn't have the experience of runnin' wood boats due to the fact they kept them closed up and the rotted out. But they didn't use 'em. A wood boat has to be aired out. And swelled out with salt water, not fresh water. So a lot of these boats were stored and ready to go and they were never done, they were handed back to the owner and got paid for this, but the boat was junk, it rotted out, [needed] new decks, new whatever, you know what I mean. And mistreated that way, from lack of the proper knowledge with a wooden boat. So a lot of times they'd wait till right after the war and then they'd finish the boat. So that was another interesting thing. And all these small yards had small wartime contracts. Gamage had one for mine sweepers about 75 foot. And a lot of times what happened in that era when the war was comin' to the end, and you know they needed it, the boat was three quarters the way done. They'd built six of

them, they had one more, they said just keep it. So a lot of entrepreneurs at the boat yard said look, let's turn it into a dragger. And that 's what they did. Or they sold to a young fellow coming up at a reasonable price, we'll finish the boat and make it a dragger. So that was kind of interesting into what how it turned right at that point. And you had another thing I would say in about, the late 70s, maybe mid-70s you were getting into wood to steel and one of the best guys of that was John Gilbert. I used to call him Mr. Fishboat because he took damaged Newbert & Wallace and all that, from wood into steel and brought them along. And that was the era. And how that started was the engines and the winches were gettin' so big on these wood boats, for more power, bigger nets go longer, it was startin' to pull the boat apart. So they started making steel trunks, steel wheelhouses and the same with the wooden boat had a wood mast was getting shaky for lifting the bag of a load, they said, well let's make a steel mast. And then after awhile, John Gilbert says why don't we just make a steel boat and be done with it. And that's how he took 'em from that era. So a shipwright carpenter, he went and became a fitter and a welder. And they grew into that. And a lot of people don't realize that Gamage had built quite a few steel boats at the end with Lynwood, the son, for O'Hara. So that was kind of interesting how he took them from that era to this era. And they still did steel boats at Gamage on this side, repairs of wood on this side, two different ways. So that was kind of an interesting thing.

MS What years were the transitions between...

WW I would say in the 70s, maybe started somewhere in the early 70s, 70, 72 it started getting more and more. And a lot of boats and fishermen figured out "geeze, you know this is pretty good deal. They make tankers out of steel, why don't we make fish boats out of steel?" Less maintenance, easier to maintain, and then these shipyards had to slowly change over to sand blasting, painting, which, spray paint, which spray painting which never figured this out before. And then smart yards started going that way to get the business and keep the business. And then at the same time too, the new designs with Court Nozzles to make the boat have more power with smaller wheels, so that come in and the more efficiency, instead of having a loose wheel cavitating. So all those things kind of, and then your radar got better. Your accommodations got better, never had a head in an Eastern Rig, they were superstitious about having more holes and the boat, kind of sinking, you know, bucket did it. And that's out now today. So all these things were implemented as boats got bigger, stayed longer, fished harder. They could fish in longer weather now, a little bit of breezy wind, they had to come home. I mean we fished a scallop in 35 to 40, which in a small wood boat is like unheard of. I admit it that was gettin' scary, but my cousin said, "That's enough." But they hate to quit. As long as your on deck catching product, you hate to go home. You wanna make a trip. So it's kind of interesting that way, how those things progress.

MS And when did the Western Rigs start showing up on the East Coast do you remember?

WW The Western rigs, about the same time. 'Cause they implemented the stern Western rigs at the same time they started building the steel boats because it was so much easier to

make a stern ramp of steel than wood. Wood's a big deal, you know, supports, this, that, the other. You get steel, you know, you can weld it, you can do so much more with it in a faster time. And not everything has to be caulked and this and that. You know what I mean? So it really went much better, much quicker, and easier design and then they got away with the steel boats with the round chin stern, you know, got more into a square stern for the ramp which was easier again. A chin stern like is on the ROANN, there's a lot of shipwright work to bring it around. And it's not as efficient, but they were lookin' at the efficiency of the bringing the fish aboard that way which is much easier, so they sacrificed one for the other. And then they went in the steel boat from a single chine to they figured, let's have a double chine. It's a better riding boat, a little more work, but she handles better. Along come with that was the rolling chocks on the side. Then they figured if they had outriggers, with divers that would eliminate the rolling chocks to have a chance of the gear catching up on them so all this came about in the 70s with John Gilbert's designs and different people's input in the fishing industry. So it's kind of interesting how it came about.

MS Did steel ship building move south?

WW Yes unfortunately it did because the labor here was so expensive, they figured they'd come down. And down south you had the weather in your favor compared to New England weather. So they could build just about all year round except for couple rainy days. And when my cousin had this boat built down in Bayou La Batre, Louisiana, we went down to pick it up in January. I was so excited to see a big shipyard. I was so disappointed, a mudflat and a small crane and a small office. That was it. And a gang of weldin' machines. "Oh this is it?" "yeah". So that was a learning experience. But here recently now in New Bedford which the Fairhaven Shipyard starting to build more up here, and these fishermen finally they figured out it's just as cheap to have it built here because by the time they go down and look at the boat, it takes about a year, they're down numerous times, numerous equipment goes down to their favorite dealer, engines, all this stuff, sending a crew to bring the boat back and all this, it's just as cheap to have the boat built right here in the back yard, keep the work here, have their favorite Caterpillar, Lister dealer here and the pumps and people they know with service and no bringing the boat boat. They're right here, they can make changes as they see them, say "Look I want this in the galley or I want that in the galley." So it's really worked out better. And it gives local people work here. And they finally figured out now too with the age of plastic, make a cocoon over the boat, work inside just like any other place. So it's really worked out well. And some good Yankee quality which is really good.

MS Has the designs from the south to the north been different? It seems like you know you see a lot of boats that were...

WW No not really, because the people that have the boats built for the operation that they're doing, that were from here that had them built down south they want them built a certain way for the New England fisheries, from North Carolina up. I should say even Cape May up. But no that hasn't changed that way. And the designers that you'd have design even though it went down south even then was still the Gilberts, the guys from

Newcastle, Maine, still the good old Yankee designs here. Even though they went down south, they would build what they want. So that stayed about the same. 'Cause it seems to be in the fishing industry when you get a boat, I don't know what it is, past a hundred foot, it never works well. It seems to be a hundred or a little bit lower in 80s or 90s for a fish boat or a scallop boat seems to be the perfect size. If it gets too big, then the horsepower gets too big and it overshadows your fuel consumption, your handleability, maneuverability, everything to get into a port. It seems to be that's the perfect size. And the efficiency of new engines coming out of this tier four where they're more efficient. Your big enemy today is fuel consumption, you know with the price of fuel. So that's very important.

MS Has the infrastructure in Cape May disappeared at all? Is that still in pretty good shape in terms of support, ground support, you know?

WW It is, but what's happening now is, and it's happening here and happening every other place where commercial fishing is, you're losing the independent. Because what's happening now with the people that have the monetarily means to do this are slowly buying up a boat and the permits. So now you're having more corporate companies with twenty boats, ten boats. Down my way there's a couple great big players that have twenty boats, ten boats, a lot of connections. And what happens with that is they start hiring their own purchasing agent so the small ship supplier can no longer compete. Instead of buying one battery for your boat he calls up direct and says I need two hundred batteries, give me the best price. So that eliminates the little ship chandler and also starting to force out the small, independent guy. 'Cause he just can't keep up with all this. And at that point the guy may be ready to retire. So this is what's going on with the industry that way. After awhile it'll be the independent will slowly be gone. It'll be people with twenty boats, ten boats, whatever. And then they also get into the wholesaling and transportation, so it's a whole big, different industry now. And the licenses is so important. If you don't have the licenses, you're, the boat is nothing. And I realized this almost thirty-five years ago when they started regulation license with the off-shore clamming. It was just a question of time they would get to the scallop and the fishing which is a good thing in a lot of ways, because to preserve the industry and make sure you still have what the public wants as far as fresh seafood. One species or the other is not totally wiped out.

MS What was the, or is it now, the height in Cape May in terms of fishing would you say year-wise?

WW You'd have to give me what years you think and what areas you think it would be. I would say this, as far as the height of the scalloping, I would say right now, these last couple years or five years has been the height of it. As far as the fishing, its kind of declined, it filled in gaps in between when the, like I say, when they weren't scalloping they could go fishing, fill in to keep the men like I mentioned. So as the price went up, the stakes got higher, the licenses got higher and higher. It forced a lot of small guys out with small licenses and smaller wood boats or steel boats who were ready to retire. So it took them out of the picture and sold the stuff off. They were better to do that then to

have a new steel boat built with a 2 million dollars investment at sixty-nine or seventy years old. So that changed a lot of stuff too. And then with the newer young guys in the fishing industry, they have no clue of fishing on a boat like the ROANN and Eastern Rig, so they were brought right into the modern times. If the boat don't have a shower, they're not going. If it don't have a head they're not going. So galley and all, air condition and all those comforts, you know what I mean which was unheard of years ago.

MS Are there any ethnic groups fishing out of Cape May?

WW Yeah, they have a lot more, I would say like years ago you would have a lot more Norwegians or Swedes. It seems to be you have a lot of Mexican help on certain boats, fillin' in here and there. And it's hard to get good seasoned men that know the industry and have been in the industry a long time. You know what I mean? Net men that can, twine men you call [them] , that can handle a needle and put it back together, as well as go scalloping, good cutters, and then they have guys that are just cutters, never been on anything but a scalloper, that's all they know. But to get an all around man that can be in the wheelhouse, and go down and cut and mend, that's pretty tough today, not like years ago we had a good guy all around that could fill in cookin', go out and cut a piece of twine out of the bag, fill it right in there, that understood how the net and fishing worked, which is so important. Same with scalloping, believe it or not it looks like a big hunk of iron, but if it's not hung right, chains not right, the club stick and things are not just right, it won't catch the way it's supposed to be. So you really gotta know your business. It's not just navigating the boat and putting a dredge on the bottom. There's a lot to it, like any business, to be a highligner which takes years. So it's pretty hard to find guys of that caliber nowadays.

MS Very different though too is you know its more a push button fishing in a way, you still need somebody needs that knowledge, but on an Eastern Rig I imagine you really needed to know a lot more.

WW Oh absolutely. Usually on an Eastern Rig there you had some young fellows, but you had a couple older seasoned guys that would teach them and know the ropes and know what they're lookin' for. So you had to be more knowledgeable and the equipment wasn't so high tech like it is today it was easier to fix. Today you have these electronic engines, it shuts the whole thing down with a computer and there's nothin' you can do about it if you have the tech come out and check the computer and that's what went wrong with it mechanically you don't know what it was, it was just the computer. So you can have it. You'd go down with wrenches and tools and spare parts and make it work and get yourself home. Guys had a pretty good workin' knowledge of the equipment. They worked on enough of it, and they knew the boat. You weren't going from boat to boat like some of these guys are now. They're forced to do that. You were with a boat for forty or fifty years. If the thing creaked, you knew what was going on. Or if that pump was givin' you a hard time, you gotta rebuild it you know. You don't have that now. So it's just different in a lot of respects.

MS Could you, you also did some lumping, is that right?

WW Yeah. I helped my cousin out with that. We pulled into Fairhaven here or New Bedford and it was short a lumpers so a lot of times they'd say, "Geeze would you like to make some extra money, help out? We're short a guy." So you would go down and help lump the boat out and fill in. And there was always some interesting stories there of you know, who you were workin' with, you never know, what the outcome is. One thing, I don't even know the fellow, it's been years and years ago, somewhere in the 80s, that I filled in for him over here and my cousin's son-in-law's boat the NEPTUNE, and along with the JACQUELINE AND JOSEPH, and we were down lumpin' and I was a new man helping out and the fellow that was older than me said, "Geeze, I got an extra job I have to go to it." "And they says, oh what's that?" He says, "Oh well I work in a leather shop and this that and the other..." "Well that's great" you know "We'll get this job done and..." I says, "Where'd you learn that?" He says, "Prison" I said, "Oh that's interesting. What were you in for?" He says, "Murder". "No kiddin!" So, I said, " Well I'll finish up here, you can go home now. Don't worry about it, I'll take over.." So that's the kind of stories that was kind of interesting. You look back on it, and you have to laugh yourself. Another one, people get a big kick out of this, I went scalloping with my cousin, maybe the first time I was the green man, you know, the thirteenth man, you know. Had a swing watch in between, you know. So I'm learnin' to cut, I think I'm doin' a good job, and one of the old timers come up to me and says, "You see this shell? " There's a little bit of the meat, you know. He says, "That's my new Cadillac and swimming pool for next year, you gotta start cutting cleaner." And how they picked that up, they had a plotter in them days, so they could plot and go back over the same thing, like a lawn mower and they were pickin' up my old shells with this little ribbon of meat. So geeze I had to learn to really cut really clean and not leave that little ribbon of meat. He says, ""You add that up by pounds per trip" he says, "That's my Caddy". So I always remember that, I thought, this was interesting scenario. So there's some funny stories along the way.

MS No problems with lumping in a port like New Bedford? With the union or...

WW In them days, they didn't know, you know. It was, you know, they understood, that you couldn't get a guy, nobody could come down, it was short notice, they couldn't find anybody, go ahead, we gotta get this stuff off of here. You know what I mean? That was the case. So, but I mean you wouldn't do it on a steady basis, it was just a rare occasion you couldn't find anybody, it was right before Christmas, you know. So it was pretty tough, you know. Yeah, like I say some interesting times that happened.

MS Now were you, were you taking out up here a lot from Cape May, fishing? Or

WW Off and on, yeah, according to what they would, oh yeah, they'd travel. They went wherever the fish was, whatever was going on, it wouldn't matter, right back and forth. More so with the steel boats than the wood boats. I the mean wood would, but the steel boats could handle the weather better, like I say, stay a little longer, weather it out than have to run home or lay up underneath a beach, so they'd keep right on fishing, oh yeah. It was back and forth. In the winter you would see a lot of New Bedford boats, Fairhaven, down to the Cape May dock and visa versa. They'd get blowed in or, and

they'd pack out there and go out again, you know what I mean? So then the fish would be dispersed up to the dealer here or work a deal with a dealer down my way and Cold Springs Fishery, you know? Back and forth, whatever they worked out between the dealership.

MS Could you describe what a typical day would have been when you were sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, somewhere in that period, on an Eastern Rig, what was a day like?

WW Well it all depends on if you were summer fishing or winter fishing. Summer fishing, the flounder, fluke would come in for the warmer water and the fishing was close, so it was day fishing, so they would leave about 2:30, 3 in the morning. In them days the bridge to Cape May would open so they'd all be lined up and they'd be blowin' if the bridge keeper didn't fall asleep, they'd have to send somebody to get him up. And then you'd be steamin' out, off the front there and that's when the cook would have coffee goin' and have breakfast going. You could always smell the SPAM cooking, you know? Greasy eggs with a little diesel fuel in them, you know, that always helped, you know, on a Shipmate stove. And so you'd get out just about daybreak, you know and they'd set out, you know. But it was always interesting on an Eastern Rig compared to the Western Rig because they would swing the boat in an arc and fan the otter net out. And all you'd see is red floats, the doors hanging on the galluses and they would give a toot on the horn, that meant to the gallus guy, "let her go". And they'd cut her loose and the doors would go down, the net would go down, and you'd feel the boat settle in, you know. You used to feel that diesel pick up with the rpms start workin' you know. And then they'd have a towing clock they'd set the towing clock, you know, like six o'clock, so they're gonna tow for an hour, see what they got. So they'd set it for seven o'clock, you know. So meanwhile you'd go down and eat your breakfast real quick, get your oilskins on. An hour later, give a toot, time to haul back. Get the doors up, get the net in and then see what he's got in that area and then sort out what you have down in the bunker plates. If you have a lot of fluke, put the large fluke in one bunker plate, small one in another bunker plate, whatever you had, any by-catch, you know what I mean. And you'd get occasional lobster, that would be for lunch. And keep right on goin' that way and they'd head in about six o'clock. So if they had a good set, a couple good sets there and got early, they'd get in a little earlier and then what would happen would be at the dock, they'd radio in and have the ice carts there and the guys would pack you out. So you'd pack out, take on fuel, take on more ice, more grub, more stores, same thing again the next day, unless it blowed. Now if it blowed, then that was it, you were in mendin' nets, fixin' gear, changing oil, gettin' ready for when it stopped blowin' for a couple of days. A winter trip, that was a little hairy because we were all sure that's where the fish was. The fish was in short supply due to, you couldn't get out and the fish dealers were cryin' for whatever fish they could get, sea bass, pogies, you know and flat fish. And the price was sky high. So my cousin would watch the weather like a hawk, you know. And they'd get that little window time, a week time, five, six days. And they'd go out, fish day and night. And that would make a good trip. Then again, it would blow for two weeks so you weren't goin' out. So more gear work, more gettin' ready again. A lot in the coffee shop in the morning. You could cut the smoke with a knife in there, you know, but everybody's in there. Every boat guy you know, tellin' stories, whatever, talkin' gear, "Well I got this and

that" "Well I get twine here and tar there, and take the wings up I think you'd do better. "Alright" So that was it. Down to the boat, they'd get ready again, you know. If you had any welding or heister work to do, you'd have the sea gear people come by and put new wire on the drums or whatever that way, you know. So it was hairy because in them days they didn't have survival suits or anything like that or training. They just went. That was it. I once asked my cousin, he says, "Well you're that far out a hundred fifty miles out," he says "middle of January," he says, "you should take another gulp, 'cause it's all over" he says "there not chance of nothing, you know." And that's just the way it went. One friend of mine that fished on an Gloucester boat told me, he says, he was either down off of Cape May or having problems, it looked like they were goin' down, they threw the dory, they had two dories, through the one, he said, "We watched it go right to the bottom" And he drove it twenty years. He says, "Thank God another boat was along side us, 'cause we did lose the boat." He was just, "Thank God they were along side us," he says, "We'd have been gone cause" he says, "We were horrified to see the thing go to the bottom." [laughs] So looking back I saw those stories as funny you know what I mean, and another one, my other cousin fished on another boat called the SHARON ANNE, it was Ray Shaw, boat like the ROANN there, there's a funny story there. They have a hook up bock on the back with a pelican hook. So my cousin's in the wheelhouse and he's telling Ray, "Watch that bock," he says, "I don't like the looks of that" Just then the block come back and hit Ray in the head. Down goes Ray. Blood all over, he says "Oh God I thought Ray got killed." So they got [him] patched up, he's sitting up, he's conscious, they stopped the bleeding, this that and the other, he says, "We gotta go home." "You ain't goin' home" Ray was, "We're not goin' home, we're makin' the trip." He says, "Get the tar tape." So [laughing] So he got [inaudible] five days with this big thing of tar tape. So they go in, the doctor there, the local doctor says "When did this happen?" "Five days ago" He says, "Five days ago?" He says, "I'm gonna have to knock you out to get this tape off your head." So sure enough they gave him this sedative or something, he's half woozy there to help him out, he says, "Twenty seven stitches later, and the tar tape removed" [laughing] so that's the kind of stuff that you kind of laugh at going backwards. You know today you'd have the coast guard, the helicopters, you know. Think about it. And another one, he had another guy there that was on there. He says, "Got a loose tooth." And he says, "Hey I'm tired of hearing about this damn loose tooth." He says, "Get a piece of twine line, we'll fix this tooth." So he says, tie that around his tooth, it looked like a hawser line comin' out of his mouth, he said, "When this boat heaves you yell, I'm pullin'." So he says, "On the third heave", he says, "Out comes the tooth." He says, "That was the end of that hearin' about this tooth!" [laughs]. So that kind of neat when you think back about it. So did you never hear that stuff. Another neat story was my cousin got this new hundred foot scallop boat, right. So I'm engineer and his father-in-law and we're bringing the boat back the three of us. I'm engineer and his father in laws's [?] and cookin', right? So we're getting ready to go, we're takin' on stores, gettin' on fuel, you know gettin' on lube oil. So, I don't know why we did this, we're filling this grease gun in the galley, which we should have been out on the deck. My cousin comes through the companion way, and I don't know what happened with this grease gun, the thing, the top come off the thing came out, just then it squirted all over him. My cousin got grease all over him. He says, "this is a fine crew I hired to go with me, can't even fill a grease gun!" [laughs] That was a good one, you know what I mean? Oh gosh.

MS What kind of food did you eat during the day, so like in the winter on the longer trips what would you typically have?

WW Well it all depends like if it was a Eastern Rig there, you really had to have a guy that knew how to cook on a Shipmate stove, because if you didn't turn the roast around, it cooked one side and not cooked on the other. So some of them old timers were really slick, they could bake and cook, knew how to cook in rough weather. Put you know wet towels down to keep the stuff on the stove it didn't slide. And they would typical have your greasy eggs and home fries and SPAM and all the stuff that's good for you in the morning you know or sometimes they'd have salt mackerel, you know if the crew liked that. And then lunch time they'd have a flounder and fillet something up and then in the evening a roast or pasta. A lot of Italian boats actually had a lot of pasta dishes, you know. And it all depends if you're catching fish too. They're catching and really fishin' into 'em heavy, they'll just have sandwiches, or if it got really snotty and nasty, then it was strictly sandwiches, 'cause you had a heck of a time gettin' from the focsle to the wheelhouse. And then when you'd be fishin' you'd be joggin' into it. And they'd put a tag line up from the wheelhouse to the focsle so you'd grab onto or you were washed overboard. So and then naturally when you got the bigger boat you had a full time cook with twelve men so he would have regular meals 'cause you would have watches, six and six. So what I used to like about it was if you were on the mid watch, and you were shuckin' scallops, you were workin' all night long, about three thirty you could see the cook get up, lights go on in the galley, you're still on deck haulin' back, shuckin'. And about five thirty you feed that crew that's comin' on deck and you be ready, well before that about four o'clock you could smell the SPAM cookin' and the bacon and all that and by this time you could eat a horse between two bread wagons, you know what I mean. You've been up workin' all night, you know? And you'd get in, you'd have your coffee, your breakfast, try to get cleaned up, lay down, 'cause noontime, time for you again. Then you'd have a noon meal, same thing in reverse, you know what I mean. And this would keep going. And then about eight o'clock at night, he'd be done. Clean up the galley, clean up the head, that was his job, get his stuff ready for breakfast the next morning, you know slice the potatoes, pre fry his you know bacon and stuff, sausage, get that ready. And then the same deal again, you know what I mean. Now one time out there, this was several times, but one time in particular, they lost a dredge which is a big deal because with the plotter they could see about where they lost it so that means all the wire on the drums, the heister has to come off and be stowed on the deck and then the grappling hook. So you'd go up and down to get this piece of equipment and snatch on to it get it back on deck, splice the wire, put all the wire back on drum. So it disrupts the whole thing, but you gotta do it. You just can't. And sometimes you don't find it, you know. It gets hung up on a rock and parts it, you know. And then another thing too, you gotta watch you don't get hung up. I mean I've seen us stop a hundred foot fish boat dead in it's tracks, you get hung up on something, a rock, a wreck, whatever and try to get off it without losing the gear. So that's another thing. A lot of things to watch out for, you know and to be aware of you know. And usually those kind of incidents happen very quick. So that's why you had to be in the wheelhouse and be very alert to what's goin' on and what you're towing on the ocean floor, you know what I mean?

MS How many crew were on the Eastern Rigs?

WW Well Eastern Rig it all depends, usually about four, maybe the hundred foot boat would take five or six, but that's pretty rare, because you're working on a man share so if you can work a little harder and cut a man out of it, that's more money for you. So four on the ROANN would be it, sometimes three, depended what they were doin' and what they're catchin and how it's been. So that's usually the way it worked. If you had a bigger boat goin' for red fish years ago you'd have six men. Boats a hundred and twenty-five foot forty bunker plates, you're goin' up the Gulf of St. Lawrence, 95 hour steam, you'd get there, you're gonna fill her. You ain't comin home till you fill her. And that's ocean perch which was a big thing for the government, especially service, you know they used that in the galleys. It was a nice white piece of meat fish, very edible. They're comin' back, they kind of wiped 'em out. But they are comin' back, so somewhat like the cod, a very nice mild fish, great fillet fish. So I'm glad to see the industry come back with that.

MS Were there many women do you know who were fishing out of Cape May?

WW No. I've seen one boat, the STAR OF DAVID had, it was a scallop boat, had all women. And I haven't seen it lately like that, no. I've seen 'em go cookin', but as far as on deck, very few. It's very physical, you know. And has to be a special individual to do that, be brought up in the industry.

MS So I imagine there's a lot less passing of boats generation--wise with the corporations taking off or are there still families that...

WW Well what you have, you won't have young fellows having the dream of a lifetime to have their own boat. But you will have guys, seasoned fishermen, running these boats for corporations. And they still look for good men that have experience, that know what they're doin' because they're gonna give them a percentage of the catch or do better than a normal person so they're making themselves a living as well as making the corporation or the dock owner, or the boat owner a good salary with it for his investment so it is still that way and you will have maybe father and son, but usually what you'll find, a father and son combination, the son's grew up in the industry with his father from early on. He just didn't decide to come down to the dock and "I'm goin' fishin'" And any more with the money aspect of what's involved in the fishing, it's very hard for a green person, for a green man to get on a boat unless he knows somebody or been around the docks or he [?] uncle and they know and he's established, you know. I had a young fellow come down the dock here the ROANN, this weekend and was lookin' for a job and I told him it was gonna be very hard 'cause you know nothing. "Do you know anybody?", he says, "well went to oceanography school." I says, "Unfortunately that doesn't count." So it's very hard to break in to the industry to get somebody to trust you and to work your way from a greenhorn to be a valuable man, you know.

MS Do you see the future in Cape May as all scallop, does it seem like the fishing industry there will hang on for awhile? Or do you think they're fairly endangered?

WW I think it will because you have a lot of big players with a lot of big interests and a lot of money like this Lund's Fishery is world wide and they're the biggest, I would say in the world as far as loligo and squid and other mid-water type fish. And they're into scallops and well broadened in a lot of aspects and so there's the Cape Atlantic Fisheries, the same way with Danny Cohen. They're getting to, they're smart and they're getting into the windmill business too at the same time, which is gonna promote fishing around the windmills as far as recreation, so there's a lot with that. Danny himself owns a lot of processing, even up this way, canneries, clam canneries. So they're well diversified and into a broad thing of the fishing industry, not just one thing which is good. And it keeps a lot of people working, a lot of employment, keeps it local and the spin off of that is a lot of small shops, like myself to keep 'em supplied with whatever metal services they need, twine, plates, you know. And naturally fishermen spending money keeps this thing as far as buying houses and new trucks, cars, so it's a big thing in area to keep everything rolling and keep it local as much as possible, same as up here. Everybody in their own community.

MS Are there clammers out of...

WW Oh yeah. Oh yeah. There's a lot in Atlantic City. There's LeMonica's there, processes a lot of clams. There's Sea Watch up here, there's Barney Truett's is one of the biggest ones up here and has boats down there. The processing, it's a big business with clams, yeah it's very big. And they go worldwide with the clams. And Sea Watch is his particular brand. LeMonica's can for different people, different brands, different labels. They're put in cold storage and then they're trucked out to wherever needed all over the United States or the world for that matter. It's either minced clams, chopped clams, clam juice, so it's a big business.

MS And is there anything you'd like to add, anything we didn't touch on that's important?

WW Uh, I would have to say, with the new rules and regulations, I think it's great. One thing that I would think that would be really very important that if you're on these boards and you're making these decisions, one of my important things is you gotta ride the boat. If you're on a board and you're on a scallop board, a fish board, mackerel, whatever, you ought to see for yourself to make an intelligent decision. So that means you pick a highline boat, middle boat, you ride. You see for yourself. Let the captain show you this is what we're up against. So when you get at the board table to vote, you have the intelligent decision to make and you've been well schooled in what the problems are. You cannot do it from a desk. And you should get out and talk to these fishermen if you're on these different boards for whatever, and talk to them, see their problems and then say look, I wanna ride. Ride the boat. And then you can see for yourself and make a good decision. I think that's SO important. Don't here from this one or that one, see for yourself and then you can make a good, honest vote, you know, for the industry, what's good for all. So that I think is very important, myself, yeah.

MS Good. Well thank you very much.

WW Well thanks for havin' me.

MS Appreciate it.

WW Yeah it's been great.