



NEW BEDFORD FISHING HERITAGE CENTER

Date of Interview 2/13/17

Bendiksen, Kirsten ~ Oral History Interview

Fred Calabretta

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Background

Name of person interviewed: Kirsten Bendiksen [KB]

Facts about this person:

Age 67

Sex Female

Occupation Gear manufacturer bookkeeper; wife of former fisherman & owner

Residence (Town where lives) Dartmouth, Massachusetts

Ethnic background (if known) Norwegian

Interviewer: Fred Calabretta [FC]

Transcriber: Millie Rahn [MR]

Interview location: Reidar's Manufacturing, New Bedford, Massachusetts

Date of interview: February 13, 2017

Key Words

Fishing, Norway, gear, nets, family business, industry

Abstract

Kirsten Bendiksen talks about her work in her family's business, Reidar's Manufacturing, a gear manufactory/support industry in New Bedford, formerly in Fairhaven. Talks about her Norwegian immigrant heritage and marrying a Norwegian fisherman, and later starting their busy gear shop, one of the few left to serve the industry. Kirsten works as bookkeeper in the business, which also employs her husband and their two sons and other workers. Talks about work in the shop, serving the industry, contrasts fishing industry in 1960s with today's industry with more fishermen from Maine and Virginia and elsewhere working out of New Bedford, and how she hopes that industry will revive so that more young people will be attracted to it—and that there's an industry to hand on to future generations.

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[00:00] Intro; born December 21, 1949 in New Bedford; grew up in Dartmouth, where she lives now. Mother's family came from Norway in late 1800s/early 1900s. Father immigrated from Norway c. 1937. Met Reidar, whose family immigrated from Norway in 1950s, at a Norwegian Christmas party, who was also a fisherman. They married in 1970. Tells anecdote about Reidar's last trip before their wedding, when he pulled up an active World War II bomb in his nets and had to have Coast Guard deal with situation.

[05:08] Talks about life of a fisherman's wife with a young family, and how they eventually started their own gear company on the Fairhaven waterfront and moved the shop to New Bedford four years ago. Also discusses Reidar's life as fisherman and length of trips, affects of no sleep on health, being away from family for so long, and how he invented some gear and got patents and was able to set up shop, fishing as needed until income stabilized.

[10:24] Talks about her day-to-day work as bookkeeper at shop, pros and cons of owning a business in the industry.

[14:58] Talks about staffing issues outside family; not enough fishermen know how to mend nets these days; staff come and go; many don't stay long enough to learn the work. Talks about learning bookkeeping and other business skills after high school and contrasts skills needed (e.g., shorthand] with those needed today when using computers. Talks about working six days a week with husband at shop; sons there at least five days/week; sometimes more. Discusses how business has changed as ground fishery has changed. Scallopers doing OK, but many ground fishermen have gotten out of the business and no young blood coming along to take over.

[20:15] Talks about interaction with fishermen in the shop and one the phone; contrasts how that has changed from past, when there was more of a community and people socialized more. Also more fishermen were locally-based; now that's not always the case.

[25:32] Talks about how stresses of working fishermen are passed on to their shop, as fishermen need to maximize their time fishing, due to regulations, etc. Again, contrasts how things used to be and how they are today. Have long-time customers they want to continue to serve and how pressures of the industry affect people on land and out working.

[30:03] Talks about hopes for industry to revive and thrive again; that there is a lot of fish in the sea, and how healthy fish is as a food. Likens fishing to farming the sea.

[32:13] End of Audio

[00:00]

Fred Calabretta: Today is February 13th, 2017. This is an interview for the New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center, funded by an Archie Green Fellowship from the Library of Congress. As part of this project we're interviewing shore-side workers in the New Bedford/Fairhaven fishing industry to record their stories, document their skills and knowledge, and better understand their important role in the fishing industry. The recording and transcript will become part of the permanent collection at the Library of Congress. I'm Fred Calabretta and today I'm speaking with Kirsten Bendiksen. We're at Reidar's in New Bedford. Do you give us permission to record your story?

Kirsten Bendiksen: Yes.

FC: Just to start, if you could just give us your full name and your date and place of birth.

KB: Kirsten Bendiksen. I was born in New Bedford December 21st, 1949.

FC: And grew up in New Bedford?

KB: No. Grew up in Dartmouth, a neighboring town.

FC: Had your family been in this area for a long time?

KB: Yes. My mother's parents came from Norway in the late 1800s, early 1900s, late 1800s, somewhere in there and immigrated over. [FC checking recording]

FC: Again, your full name and date and place of birth.

KB: I'm Kirsten Bendiksen.

FC: Yes, that's good.

KB: I was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts, on December 21st, 1949.

FC: You said you grew up in Dartmouth?

KB: I did. I grew up in the neighboring town, Dartmouth. Yes.

FC: I had asked you about your family and how long they had been in this area.

KB: Yes. My mother's parents immigrated from Norway in the late 1800s, early 1900s, somewhere in there, and probably late 1800s, I think, to Dartmouth. My grandfather used to light the street lights by hand, so it was that far back, of course, and worked in the school system and everything as a janitor and all. So anyway, my mom was born in Dartmouth, so we've always lived in Dartmouth. My dad immigrated from Norway. Yes. 1937 or '38.

Interview with Kirsten Bendiksen, February 13, 2017

FC: So, Norwegian on both sides.

KB: Norwegian on both sides. Yes.

FC: When were you married and how did you meet your husband?

KB: [laughs] We were married June 6th, 1970, and we met at a Norwegian Christmas party at the New Bedford Hotel, so that was kind of neat and unexpected, but that was it. Yes.

FC: Was he fishing at that time?

KB: He was. He had immigrated over three years before we met and was fishing with his dad. His dad had immigrated over in the '50s, I believe. And then his brother, after he was done with school immigrated over, and then Reidar was home with his mom. And then after he finished school, the father brought both of them over and he went to fishing, yes.

FC: And so that's what he was doing at the time you got married?

KB: Yes.

FC: Yes, and he continued to do it. What was that like? I mean, obviously, he's gone a lot.

KB: Yes, well, I'll tell you one thing before you get that far even, the trip before we got married, he hauled a bomb up in the net from World War II and it was active. So, I was working at the bank in the city at the time and I kept hearing on the news that the Moby Dick was coming in with a bomb, and they had to stay. They wouldn't let them in the harbor. They had to stay on the outside and the Coast Guard went out and they had a crew that went onboard, got everybody off, and defused it. It was active. He thought it was a big rock because they get Volkswagen-size rocks out there. And he thought it was a rock and he went on the deck to look at it and it didn't look quite like a rock. The more he looked in the pilothouse and it was the bomb and he kept it in the fish just so, and then called, and got it in. So, I guess the fuse was kind of worn or something. He said it they had landed on that fuse, it just would have gone off.

FC: So, that's a close call.

KB: So, yes.

FC: That was the trip just before?

KB: Yes. When he came in, he was going to stay home because we were going to be having our wedding, yes. But, yes, that was my first experience that way. My dad fished also, but yes, that was with Reidar and me, yes.

FC: So, your dad was a fisherman, so you know something about the lifestyle?

KB: The lifestyle, being away, yes. Yes.

FC: So you knew what you were getting into?

KB: Yes. Yes.

FC: I mean, that's, it's still got to be hard, though. I mean, I think, like when they're out you've got to take care of everything at home.

KB: It is, yes. Sometimes you get a little impatient because you see people that say, oh, gee, I had to do this and I had to do that and I do this, and you think, you know, we had to do it all. I used to mow the lawn when the kids were taking their naps. I'd run in and check on them and go out again, because he wasn't home every weekend to mow the lawn. We were young and you just don't think of hiring people to do that stuff, either.

[5:08] KB: [continued] You do it yourself. It's when you get older you know. So, yes, it takes a certain kind of person. I remember we had someone visiting and I was out mowing the lawn and they went, she looked at her future husband, she said, don't expect me to mow the lawn. So, you know, you do a lot of things that other people don't do, but you have to.

FC: You have to.

KB: Yes. If the furnace lets go, you have to take care of it. You can't wait 10 days till they get home, yes.

FC: So, he was doing longer trips then?

KB: Yes. They were out for 10 days, home for three, and the three he was home he was usually down at the boat getting it ready for the next trip. Anything that needed fixing in the engine room or anything that needed to be done, so he'd leave in the morning after the kids went to school or when they were babies or before, and then come home in the afternoon and have dinner, and then he was always so exhausted he was in bed early at night, because you don't sleep much when you're out there. So, yes, it is a different way of life and a lot of people can't take it. Yes.

FC: When did he decide and start to stay ashore or work ashore?

KB: Well, as I said, you don't sleep a lot and he's very conscientious and he'd always be, even if he was off, his time off in the bunk, he would still hear everything, every little noise with the engine. If it just didn't sound right he'd wake up, so he never slept good. Never. Every trip. So, he'd come in, he was exhausted. And it kind of got to him after a while and he was seeing the kids grow up so fast and he just knew it was beating him up that way, and he says, you know, something? I don't think I want to be out there anymore like this, even though he loved it. Because it was affecting his health, you know? And he'd come home and he was just so tired. So, he invented some gear and got a patent on it. In fact, he was so clever, the patent department down in D.C. accepted his drawings. He didn't after to, yes, he's that accurate. And started making them in the garage and selling them to the different places and it just kind of grew. It ended up that we had to do a little more than that. He started making gear for the people and then it just kind of grew. We rented a couple of places of places first and then bought a building in

Fairhaven, which we outgrew, and now we're here. And then the boys, Tor always loved the industry. And Hans, too, but Tor has a really passion for it. So, they started working with us when they were very young, of course.

FC: How did you first get involved? Or, what was your, when did you start to have a role in it? What was your role?

KB: Of course, you support him. Of course, maybe it was sort of a mistake, I opened up a store at the same time that he started this business. [laughs] I don't think that was the right thing to do because I told him, this is too much stress, I said one has got to give up and I think it's more important that yours succeeds, so I just closed mine and started doing the bookkeeping. But at that point, I could do the bookkeeping at home and be there for the kids and everything. Then, he did have to make fishing trips to begin with, of course, to supplement the income. So, he'd go out fishing and I'd kind of sit at the shop and take the calls. And Tor could come from school a lot of times and help when he was in high school. After school got out, he'd come over. And he'd fill the orders that I had, if it was doing something with wire or something that I couldn't do. And then, we had an older gentleman who was retired that lived in town and it was something somebody needed right away, I would just call him and he'd come down. And sometimes he was just sitting there with me and we'd talk and everything and kind of be around for me. That's how it was to begin with. It was very, and then, of course, it started to pick up, yes.

FC: So, you were involved right from the beginning?

KB: Right from the beginning, yes.

FC: To where it is now, it's changed and it's grown a lot.

KB: It has.

FC: How has that affected you?

KB: Here? I know.

FC: Yes, and your schedule.

KB: [laughs] It's just, yes, I don't get much time. We're very busy constantly here. It's funny because I think back on the early years and I'd bring magazines with me because it wasn't that busy. You could do, catch, easily do the telephone calls that came in, but I had to be there. And now, I barely get done what I should get done in a day. It just flies. That's a good thing, but we are very busy and now I think I sidetracked from your question.

FC: Another question would be what's your schedule or what hours are you here normally?

KB: Well, we're here eight to five, Monday through Friday, and we used to be eight to six, because we had a welder that would come in after his other job, and he'd come in at three and

work from three to six, because he got off his other job at 2:00 or 2:30. We used to say, well, one of us will just stay till six with Bob, and the rest go home, but it didn't happen that way. We always had enough work that we all stayed, so we were doing eight to six for 10, 15 years. But now we do eight to five. And Saturdays, Reidar and I come in. Sometimes the boys come in, but they have small, young families, so we don't, you know. We come in and we're here eight to 12, but we never get out of here at 12. It's usually one, 1:30, two.

FC: So, you're here six days a week mostly?

KB: Six days a week.

FC: Yes?

KB: Yes. [laughs] But you do what you have to do. It's funny how some people say oh, it's your own business, you can do whatever you want. Leave when you want to leave.

[10:24] KB: [continued] But it's not always that way. When you want to take care of your customers, it's not that way.

FC: How long have you been in this building?

KB: This building we built was it three years ago this summer or four? I don't even know. Let's see, my son was married four years in April, so it would be four years this summer. Yes.

FC: I know they're probably all different but can you describe sort of a typical day like from when you come in in the morning and what your day is like?

KB: Mine? Well, I come in. I answer the phone calls, I take the messages, and well, it's just the general bookkeeping. You know? I pay the bills and do the banking and on Fridays I do the payroll. That's what I've been doing today. If the boys need wire or something and everybody's busy, I'll hop in the pickup truck and go pick it up over in Rhode Island or something, but that's only if everybody's really tied up. And I do have a girl that comes in three days a week from nine to two, so those times I can leave and that's when I can do those things, you know?

FC: And she works like an assistant bookkeeper?

KB: Yes, she's very good. She's very helpful.

FC: So you have someone.

KB: And if I do have to be out or Reidar and I did go to Norway this past summer, then she worked. Not full time, but she came in every day, but she didn't work the entire day. Yes. So, it's a big help.

FC: How much contact do you have with the other people working here and people building nets?

KB: I do. Of course, I don't go out and work on the floor. I've been around it so long I feel like I could, but I couldn't handle heavy things, but I've listened so much and been around all the guys for so long that I can kind of help out with some things and go out and check, yes. And at least take messages if they need guidance, at least go talk to Tor or someone and go back on the floor, yeah, and tell them. It's pretty much...

FC: It's interesting that it's a family business so you have you, your husband, and then two sons all involved. What's the, well, I'll start by asking you what are the challenges of that? Are there some things about a family business that maybe aren't that easy?

KB: Well, when you disagree on things or have different ideas, sometimes it can get just like anybody, but when it's family you're more, I don't know, you're more vocal about it maybe. I don't know. Actually, I think we get along pretty good. No, I think we do all right for a family, really. There's no hard feelings. We don't get upset. We never leave angry at each other or anything. We seem to do okay. There are times, of course, it gets very stressful at times, and that's sometimes when you feel it. When there's a lot of stress or we're very busy or something wasn't made right and had to be redone and you get a little, you find a little bit of tension; but we don't hold on to it, though. We're fine. Yes.

FC: What are the advantages of a family business?

KB: Seeing everybody every day. Really. Yes. I'm just, I like to be with my boys. I do, yes. And you keep up. Well, one of the other disadvantages maybe I'll say is, both boys have families. And where we work together every day from eight to five and sometimes the boys pop in on Saturdays, and so when they go home they need their space and their time. And the same thing with us. We need our space and our time, because we have so little time. So, you want to see the grandchildren and the wives, but you want to see the whole family, but they need their time as a family, so you don't like to go in and you know, not that they don't want you to come. It's not that. Maybe it's just me, the way I feel. Like let them have their weekend. We'll see them again Monday, but then again, you're itching to see the grandkids, so I think trying to keep that distance can be, because of us being together every day long hours.

FC: Because you're seeing a lot of your sons, but not their families.

KB: That's right. That's right.

FC: And they're seeing, and the sons are seeing a lot of you.

KB: Yes, so for us to come plowing through and say hi. And it's fine. And then you have a tendency to talk business and you don't want to do that. You know? Like if it's a Saturday afternoon and we call and we want to pop in, it's always fine, but then we get there and of course something's asked about the business and then you get talking, and sometimes you don't want to do that either, but sometimes it's hard not to.

[14:58] FC: That's hard. My wife and I both work at the same place and you get home and you can't help but talking about it.

KB: That's right. On the way home in the car and when you get home and it's oh, please, let's let it go, so those things can be a little difficult. I mean, there could be worse worries in the world, but it's just, yes.

FC: But still, at the same time I would think you're working so closely with people that obviously, you know and you trust and that must be a really advantage.

KB: It is.

FC: Rather than somebody you just met a year or two ago or something.

KB: That's right. That's very true because Reidar and I have had a chance to go to Norway every year or every other year and visit family, which we used to do every like five years when the kids were younger. But now, that we're older, we want to go over more often and see our friends and family. So, we go and we feel fine because we know the boys can handle the shop. It's hard having two people out of the building that take care of certain things, but still, like you say, you can trust them. And they know what they're doing. They're very capable. So, yes.

FC: How did you, for one thing, how did you learn the bookkeeping and all of that?

KB: Well, hm, I did go to business school after high school. I took a two-year course in a year, actually, like they jam them. And then I went onto work at the Five Cents Savings Bank in the real estate department, which doesn't help here, I know, but I was always working with numbers.

FC: Oh, okay.

KB: Yes. And I always liked numbers and bookkeeping. So, I took bookkeeping courses and of course, that time was different. Of course, now it's computers what's been hard for me. I did learn QuickBooks and so I can do things on QuickBooks, but of course, I'm used to the old school, you know?

FC: Yes.

KB: Even shorthand. Who does shorthand today, right?

FC: Yes, yes.

FC: Yes, the whole computer thing, I mean, you see these seven year olds. I mean, I have to ask my nieces and nephews how to use this stuff, you know?

KB: Well I ask my grandkids. Yes. And more than once I've had to call my son in the middle of the night when I've hit, not the middle of the night, but in the evening, because I have hit the

wrong button and I can't find something on the TV, because I lost it totally. It's awful, and he can direct me over the telephone. It's like [gasps]. Yes.

FC: Because they're growing up with the stuff.

KB: That's right.

FC: That's the difference.

KB: That's right and it's moving too fast.

FC: Yes.

KB: So, we have a hard time. You can imagine years ago when the telephone came out, it was a big deal.

FC: Yes.

KB: But this is moving a lot faster.

FC: Speaking on sort of the technology, I mean, how has the business changed over the years since the two of you started the business? What are the major changes and the different aspects of it?

KB: Well, I think the major change probably everyone says is the regulations and how it's affected the industry. And young people don't want to come into the industry because of the regulations, so you're not getting young blood. And the family boats who had children that were going to eventually going to take over the boat, because, this is ground fishing now, not scalloping, but they figured they've had such a hard time of it that they encourage them to do something else, which they really, a lot of them would really like to follow through because they fished with their fathers in the summers and everything and they'd like to continue, but it just isn't worth it.

FC: Yes.

KB: So, that's kind of sad. It was a good industry and it could still be a good industry. Healthy and out to sea. Well, of course I talked about Reidar, but that was different. He was a boat owner and captain and had a lot of responsibility. But, I mean, as a crewmember working on deck, you work hard, but there's a lot of good benefits to it and it's just sad to see that happen. Then we worry if it ever does come back, you're going to have to start all over again to train people because there's just no young people coming up. The average fisherman today is in their 50s.

FC: Really?

KB: Yes.

FC: Yes.

KB: And it's a rough job for somebody that age. 60s and 50s.

FC: And it does seem like so much of it, you know whether it's on the boats or in an industry like this, I mean, so much of it comes back to the regulations, you know, and how it's changed things.

KB: And even it's one of the reasons we're so busy is because there's not many places around now that, you know, up and down the coast a lot of places have closed. And then again you haven't got the people that know how to do the gear, you know? And today a lot of the, the young ones that are fishing don't know how to mend nets or do any of that so all of the repairs come to use too, so we get an awful lot of work.

FC: So there is a lot of repair work?

KB: A lot of repair work.

FC: Yes.

KB: They bring the nets off the boat up here and we put them out in the yard and stretch them out and repair them and take them back down to the boat. Where years ago when Reidar was fishing, all the guys knew how to mend and they mended, they did it on the boat. Yes. So, there's a lot of differences. A lot of things that are different that way.

FC: How much contact do you have with fishermen?

[20:15] KB: A lot.

FC: Yes?

KB: A lot. But today a lot of it, they call on the phone and order and then we do it and then we deliver. But there are times when we have an awful lot of people coming in, a lot of walk in, because they want to talk to Tor and go over things and, you know, discuss a net.

FC: Have you gotten to know or known a lot of them over the years?

KB: Oh yes. It's a small community when you think about it. People from Maine down to Virginia, because it is a small community so even in that span of time, not time but the length of the coast here, there's not that many people that fish, so you know everybody, yes. And it's nice. It's fun.

FC: What about as far as the work here? Do you feel like everybody gets along pretty well and it's a good team usually?

KB: Yes.

FC: Yes?

KB: Yes, I'd say so. I'd say so. It's hard work. We've had a lot of people that have come and haven't lasted very long because it is, you're doing what they do out fishing every day, because you're hauling the same stuff and you're working with the same. So, yes, it's hard work. We have some days that aren't as busy as others, so you don't have to work quite as fast and hard, but it's hard work, yes.

FC: And people try it and realize that it's harder than they want to work?

KB: Yes, that's right. We've had a lot of that.

FC: Yes, yes.

KB: So the ones we have here now are doing well. Yes. I would say so.

FC: And everybody gets along pretty well --

KB: Yes.

FC: And works as a team and --

KB: Yes, I would say so. We're pretty lucky.

FC: Yes. When people have come to work in the business over the years, I mean, have they come with some experience or have they had to be sort of trained to do all this stuff?

KB: No, they've had to be trained.

FC: Yes.

KB: They had to be trained and of course that's what worries you all the time too because you spend a lot of time training. And then when they finally get the knack or you notice that yes, they're starting to pick up, we think we'll put them to something else now to learn one more phase of the industry, and then they quit. So then you have to start all over again.

FC: Yes, I mean, you've invested all that time and yeah.

KB: I know, I know. So that's hard because it's not like all these companies that have people they can send to help you. I don't know what they call them, but they have employees and people that they send, but this isn't the type of business you can just send somebody out to help us because they don't know what they're doing. It's different stocking shelves of something like that.

FC: Yes, it's so specialized.

KB: It's so specialized, yes. So that gets scary once in a while. That sometimes is some of the tension when we get slow on people, low on people, and people don't know what they're doing and then you have to, you know, try to find someone.

FC: Does sort of the financial side of it get tricky at times like if a fisherman is slow to pay o,r I mean, do you run into that?

KB: You know something? Well, there's fewer, so not so much as it used to be. We had a spell that was really scary to get paid, but it's not so bad right now. Because we have a lot of scallopers as customers too. They're doing fine. They're doing well. So they're able to pay for their bills. So that helps a lot. But it's been up and down, but I haven't noticed it as bad now the last year or so I don't think. Because a lot of people that were having a hard time of it are gone. They just couldn't do it.

FC: I mean, what from your standpoint, what are the toughest parts of the job or parts that you don't' like?

KB: Here at the shop? Well, the toughest parts of the job, for all of us?

FC: Yes.

KB: Well, I guess sometimes maybe it's the time people give you and you try to supply. Like they'll lose their net and they'll call up and need another net, but they've got to get out and they want it in a short time and it takes a week or two to make a net and then you push to try to get it done quicker and that can get stressful because they're calling all the time to check and see if the net's ready. [laughs] And it gets very, you know, because it's not something you just take off the shelf. You got to, you know?

FC: Yes.

KB: Sometimes that makes it tough because you hate to keep telling the customer you're not done yet and they want it and you only have a couple of people that know what they're doing with that and you're working overtime trying to get it done and you hate to charge overtime. That can make it kind of tough.

FC: Yes.

KB: Tough when you want to do well for people, you know? That gets difficult. But aside from that everything's fine. Everyone's always happy I think. [laughs]

FC: You know the business so well from being around it that it must be hard, too, because if someone needs a net, I mean, you know they can't work.

[25:32] KB: Well see that's the thing. That's what makes, I guess that's kind of what I was saying. That's what makes it difficult too. We just had a customer call up last week and, what,

they lose their net? No. Something happened to their net. They tore up and they wanted us to come up the next day and pick it up and fix it and bring it back the next day. And this is thrown in the middle of everything that we're trying to get out of here, which are other people's nets and things. So then you have to send a truck to Boston or Gloucester and get that net and bring it back and stretch it out and fix it and try to get it back up the next day, so you have to stop everything else that you're doing. So that's not always fun either because you're trying to get something else done for someone and you get stopped, you know?

FC: Yes, somebody else had to wait.

KB: That's right. That's right. And then like you said they want to get out again so you feel for them because you understand the job, so those are the things I guess that make you feel a little, not uneasy, I can't say uneasy, but you can only do so much.

FC: Yes, make you feel stressed or something.

KB: Yes.

FC: Probably even more so if it's somebody you know or somebody you've known for a long time or something.

KB: Yes, a lot of our customers we've had for years and years and years and when they break down or something happens you want to help them and sometimes it can get overwhelming because we're a small crew and as I say only a couple people know the specific jobs so you can't just take anybody and have them go mend a net. So that's when those things --

FC: Do you run into the fishermen or see them outside of work and stuff? I mean, you and your husband? Some of them or --

KB: No, not very often. Years ago, years ago, it all sounds terrible, they'd all go to the bars, but it's not that they were alcoholics or anything, but you know, I always tell everybody there's two things: well, number one, is they drink so much coffee when they're out there to stay awake, and when they come in they don't even know what kind of time of the day it is. I mean, they don't even pay attention. They're just so tired and they're working 24 hours a day, so it doesn't matter if they're in at nine, ten o'clock in the morning and they still like to go have a beer and relax and talk to the other fishermen and just exchange stories and talk. There's not that anymore. It's not that way anymore and there was more of a community back then, really, and nobody did any harm. There was never any violence or anything, it was just some, you know, when I think back it was really a good time and there was nothing wrong. So what did you ask me? [laughs]

FC: I forget exactly what I asked you.

KB: I got a little sidetracked when I started to talk about --

FC: Oh, just about if you --

KB: Oh, see them outside of work, I'm sorry. That's what it was.

FC: Outside of work, yes.

KB: So then I guess that's why I brought that up. Then you would, yes, because everybody kind of communicated and you'd hear that so and so came in with a good trip today. Oh, geez, I haven't seen him for a while, so he'd go in and sit down with him and talk. There was more of a community. Today no, they get done and they don't have much time to fish. You know they're limited or they're only allowed so much fish and they get it all in one or two trips so they can't fish the rest of the year unless they go by quota, so then they go home and you just don't see them around the same. So, yes, there isn't the socialization there used to be, no.

FC: People just kind of go their own way, you don't really have that closer community here.

KB: That's right and now because of not having all the people that know the industry, a lot of captains and different people come from like up in Maine. They come down here and run boats. So when they get in, they get in a truck and go home to Maine until it's time to go out again so you don't see them again before they come down and need something to go out. So no there isn't that, yes, not like it use to be.

FC: Yes. What's the best part of your work? What do you like most about coming in here or being here or --

KB: What do I like the most? Oh, it's always, I guess it's going to be working with the family and the customers. You like to hear from different guys and when you haven't heard from them for a while and it's fun. Like I say, you know who they are even if they come from Maine or Virginia you know? Yes, I think that's probably the best part. Like in any job it's the communication and the customers. Like I say I enjoy seeing the boys every day and I like coming in to work with Reidar every day and going home. I do. [laughs] Sometimes I say, this is funny, sometimes I'll say I wish I had a little more time at home, but then give me a day at home and I'm wandering around wondering what's going on up here and kind of want to be up here. Isn't that terrible? But it's true.

[30:03] FC: You get pulled in both directions.

KB: Yes, that's right. That's right. So, no, it's good.

FC: That's interesting. Well, I don't want to take any more of your time but is there anything else you'd like to add that we should put on the record here?

KB: Gee, no, all I can say is I hope the industry comes back for the boys' sake, for the young people's sake.

FC: Yes.

KB: There is so much fish out there. We know that because SMAs has done, we've done nets for them, maybe Tor told you, with cameras and it shows to prove the fish. And we know from the fishermen when they come in what they're getting and there's more fish out there than you ever, than there was when my husband was fishing in the '60s because we haven't touched it and had such a small quota for so long. There's just so much fish out there.

FC: And they had to throw them back.

KB: And they have to throw them back. And it's good healthy protein and it hasn't been touched and hasn't been fed anything bad and it's just such good food for you and like I say, it's farming of the sea. We always said that you know a farmer you can drive by his farm and look and see him plowing the fields and you know what he's doing and you know your produce is coming from there, but the fishermen get on the boat and they go out and you don't see where they are, so people can't connect and don't understand how important it is. You know? Food producers is what they are.

FC: Yes, I mean, that's true because it doesn't, like you said, it doesn't happen close to home.

KB: That's right.

FC: People don't see it, they don't think about it.

KB: That's right, that's right. So I really hope it comes back because like I say the boys love it and I'm sure if anyone else learned the industry and got into it and it was decent paying and thriving, that they would love it because it's very unique and it's a great industry to be in, really.

FC: Yes.

KB: Yes, you know, we all love it and we have lots of good stories about it and yes. I guess that's what I would say. I hope it comes back for the sake of the young people and for people to get good protein, good fish, good food. Healthy food.

FC: Well, that's great. Thank you.

[32:13] End of audio