NEW BEDFORD FISHING HERITAGE CENTER

Date of Interview: July 7, 2017

Smith, Lukas ~ Oral History Interview

Laura Orleans

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Background

Name of person interviewed: Lukas Smith [LS]

Facts about this person:

Age 24 years Sex Male
Occupation Wire Splicer
Residence
Ethnic background (if known)

Interviewer: Laura Orleans [LO]

Transcriber: Tracy Gillen [TG]

Interview location: Northeast Trawl, New Bedford, MA

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Key Words
splicing, vise, dragger, swivel, soft eye, hard eye, thimble eye, tuck, swivel, twister, heart, spike, marlin spike, stays, turnbuckle, outriggers, scallopers, trawler, eye splice, cut splice, press, coiling machine, reel, junk wire, winch truck, knuckle boom, net drone, end frame wire, fathoms,

Abstract
Lucks Smith, a 24-year-old male, has grown up around the fishing industry. He grew up in New Bedford, went to New Bedford Vocational School and recently graduated from Massachusetts Maritime Academy. He has worked as a wire splicer for his family's business, Northeast Trawl, since he was about fifteen years old. He explains the technique of splicing, the various tools, equipment, and the winch truck used for splicing. Lastly, he discusses his view of the waterfront community and his pride in his role in the seafood industry.

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[00:00] Intro; Lukas Smith is a 24 year old male who works in his family business Northeast Trawl splicing wire with his father. He discusses his father's background in the industry at Bruce's Splicing and Rigging, growing up around the business, and learning to splice from his father.

[5:35] Discusses the process of splicing.

[10:13] Continues to discuss the process of splicing, discusses the tools used to splice and his father's technical skill. Describes different tools used to splice wires. Explains the different wire sizes and different types of splices and how the wire is used on a fishing vessel.

[14:57] Continues explaining how wire is used on a fishing vessel. Talks about his studies at the Greater New Bedford Vocational Technical High School and the former commercial fishing major that used to be offered there. Discusses the lack of knowledge of the fishing industry that his peers have. Describes a dangerous situation he and his father were in while splicing.

[20:16] Describes the equipment in the shop and his role in setting up the equipment when they moved into the shop headquarters.

[25:18] Describes the winch truck and the knuckle boom that is on it. Also discusses his role in the family business.

[30:00] Talks about his studies at Mass Maritime. Discusses his desire for his father to hire a younger person to help in the business when he and his brother move on. Considers the importance of his role in the fishing industry.

[34:37] Explains his view of the waterfront as a community and the role of the Fishing Heritage Center and the Working Waterfront Festival in educating people about the fishing industry and supporting the industry. Discusses his pride in his work and his family's business.

[38:15] End of audio.

[00:00]
Laura Orleans: Okay. Today is July 7th in the year 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 are 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 am Laura Orleans and today I am speaking with Luke Smith.

Lukas Smith: Lukas.

LO: Lukas. Okay. At the Northeast Trawl and it's a little bit after 2:00 in the afternoon. 2:20-ish. So Lukas, do you give us permission to record your story for this project?

LS: I do.

LO: Now I realize we just established your name but if you would just introduce yourself.

LS: I'm Lukas Michael Smith. I was born in February 21st, 1993 in Norway, Maine. And I've worked here since we started the business.

LO: Okay. So, born in Norway, Maine?

LS: Yes.

LO: Tell me about how your family made it's way to New Bedford. How did long did you stay in Maine?

LS: We were already here. My parents were at a christening and they got stuck up there because it was a snowstorm and then I guess I decided to come a little early. So.

LO: Well, that makes for a good story.

LS: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

LO: And when you were born, the date?

LS: February 21st.

LO: So let's see, you grew up in and around the fishing industry? Or tell me a little bit about how, your memories as a child.

LS: Okay, well, my father had always worked at Bruce's Splicing and Rigging for maybe twenty-eight years, I think it was. And that was my entire childhood. It always seemed pretty cool. My brother and I, we'd get to go there every once in a while, like I don't know, if my

mother wanted to talk to my father or something and we'd go down and you know, we'd get to, not really play on the big trucks but we'd go and see him and he'd be like don't touch it, you're going to get all greasy. But we, we'd always go to see Betty Ann, who was the secretary there and she was always very nice to us whenever we'd go. I didn't really, we didn't work or anything but we'd just kind of witnessed what they did. Or we'd bring, we'd go to B.J.s and get food for the place and bring it there. One, I remember one time that we did get to go down to the pier and you had taken a net off one of the boats and I think it was, maybe it happens all the time but you guys were a little worried that it was too much weight for the truck so. But that was my first encounter I guess of seeing what he did.

LO: Sure. And I would think, I mean as a young kid, trucks are pretty cool.

LS: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. It was pretty cool.

LO: So, even even just that aspect of it.

LS: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

LO: So, at what point did you sort of transition into doing some work in this business?

LS: I think I was probably about, maybe fifteen.

LO: Or maybe not even paid work, I don't know.

LS: Yeah. No, that was when we had first started to learn. Actually I remember us, he didn't work for Bruce's anymore. And you were working, he was working for the company in Rhode Island, and he had just some wire laying around and we had a vise, and everything and he actually had the whole set up so that way you could put it on the truck and that was the first time I had ever got exposed to splicing. So.

LO: So this was at home?

LS: Yeah, in the driveway at home. Yeah.

LO: And you were about fifteen you think?

LS: I think so, it was probably about there. It was definitely either just before high school or freshman year of high school, somewhere around there.

LO: So did your dad kind of show you what to do? Or just kind of give you the materials and say see what you can do?

LS: Oh yeah, you definitely can't just hop into splicing so I watched him a lot because he would do, the one boat that I remember, it was The Seal. It's not The Seal anymore, it's The Hustler. But we used to, I would always tag along when he'd go and he'd put the eye splices in for The Seal. So I had a little bit of an idea as to what it was. I mean I would just stand there and watch

but you know, it was cool. And then when he started to teach us, I, some of it came back but it did take maybe two years to actually grasp the whole concept and be able to do a splice and pretty much do it on my own. I mean even today I still need some help when it comes to the splice. I mean just the other day I crossed two of the strands, I mean the splice came out but it didn't, it wasn't as easy as it should have been. So.

LO: So tell me, is it more that it's physically challenging or is it sort of, I don't know, more the engineering but the design of it?

LS: Both. It depends. You know if you don't have a good breakfast and you go out and you got to do two splices or something it's going to be a little harder physically, but mentally just, I may have, I mixed up two of them. So, I mean, it's just. But you learn.

[5:35]

LO: Maybe take me through the process since you're newer to it. I mean in talking to your father it's so second nature to him. It's like since I'm a lay person and know nothing, describe to me sort of from beginning to the end. How do you?

LS: The process of a splice?

LO: The process of a splice.

LS: Okay. Well, you take a particular length of wire and you run it through, there's a, there's a vise at one end that holds the wire, and you run it through the vise and you make a loop in the wire. Whether it be, it's for dragger, you'll put a swivel on it before you do the splice and you could, it could either be a soft eye or a hard eye. And a soft eye is just an open bend with no thimble in it but a, I don't know if it's actually called a hard eye but it's thimble eye and a soft eye, I believe is what they're actually called. So, a thimble eye has a thimble and a soft eye is just an opening. You put that on the wire, you have your loop, you tighten up your second vise, the one that you actually put the whole assembly in first and then you put a little bit of a bend in the wire so that way it's easier when you go to lay your tucks. And then you tighten up the vise on the end. Then give it a good bend so that way it's already got a good bit of stretch in it and you want to take, you want to take the end and push against it so that way it will open up so you can get each strand. But I forgot to say, was that the vise at the end you actually have to take a turn out of it. It's called a twister. So you take a turn out of it so that way it's even easier to put the tucks into the wire. So once you've opened up the wire you want to separate all the strands and the heart and you want to take the one wire that is closest to the part that is stationary that you are going to be putting your tucks into. You want to put that off to the side because that's going to be your first tuck. And then you take the other five and you put them on one side and then the heart goes with them. When you go to do your first, your first tuck is actually backwards as opposed to how the rest of them go so what I always do is I take that one piece of wire and I lay it so that way you can see like where it wants to go and then you go two back from that and that's where you put your spike. And your spike goes opposite, your spike goes opposite and you put the, the first tuck comes in and up through the wire as opposed to over and under. So, you do one tuck on each, one tuck on each wire and after you put the first tuck in for the first

wire, then you put the heart into that one. So there's the heart in the first wire and then you do each and then each is the first one after your first tuck is you skip three and then you pick up three. So you pick up three strands with your second tuck. Okay. Okay. Then you drop, you drop one and you pick up two for the next one and then you drop one and you just pick up one, one, one, 'till you get to the end. And then when you get to the end of your doing one tuck for each, when you're on your sixth strand, that's when you start doing the, your six tucks for each. So you do, and then you just go backwards, until you get to, when you have two wires left and the heart you pick up the last two strands that are on your wire that you are going into and you run the heart backward through that. So you're just putting the heart in the center to build up your wire. Sometimes if you mess up you don't have to have the heart but that only happens to me.

LO: Many things, many questions come to mind. So, first of all, I do a little bit of knitting and it sounds, in some ways sort of like the ways that stitches are created when you're knitting an elaborate sweater; there are all kinds of ways that you're increasing, you're decreasing to create patterns. But obviously what you're trying to do is to create strength I assume.

[10:13]

LS: Yes, yes.

LO: So, six strand wire, is that always the case? Or typical?

LS: Yeah, yeah.

LO: And is that what that's called?

LS: Yep.

LO: So you have six strands.

LS: Six strands.

LO: And the heart is like the core?

LS: Yes, the heart is just rope that the wire is wound around.

LO: And it's actual rope?

LS: It's rope, yep.

LO: Like?

LS: Yeah, like regular, just regular rope.

LO: Like nylon or?

LS: It think it's nylon. Yeah. Sometimes there is a steel core, which makes it even, well I guess you could say even harder to splice but it's more, it's stronger.

LO: Sure.

LS: It's like another.

LO: And when you're talking about the sort of bending the wire, is that something that you're doing entirely by hand?

LS: Yes.

LO: Or are there tools that used? Oh.

LS: Yes. Everything is by hand. I wish there was probably a tool to do it but.

LO: Sounds like it's a lot of strength.

LS: Oh yeah. Yeah. I know my father's had carpal tunnel and he's had the surgery for it for both of his wrists because there was a period of time where he wasn't sleeping well if at all because of it so I'm sure it's probably very common with people that splice wire.

LO: So the tools, you mention the spike, which is I assume a marlin spike?

LS: Yes. Like this.

LO: Okay. Yep.

LS: You have a spike and then you have a hammer. And I use the hammer moreso than my father does but in the case where you can't get the end of the spike underneath the wire, there are instances where it's very difficult. Like when you come to, you have to pick up your last two strands in order to get the heart in, it's very. I struggle to push it in with my hands so I'll use my hammer. He will not all the time but…

LO: He's got a little, few more years under his belt.

LS: Yeah. And you know, he knows how to finagle the spike and even if I watch him still there will be ways where, he'll come to something where I know I'd have difficulty, whether it be pulling the wire through or just, you know, maneuvering the spike in a certain way or maneuvering the wire in a certain way. There's a lot of coordination that goes on.

LO: Sure.

LS: So, for the benefit of the listening audience that can't see, I see there are differing lengths of marlin spike and different, maybe different circumferences?

LS: Uh, yeah.

LO: Or are the same? Or different gauges?

LS: Well they all, they're for different sizes of wire. Say, if we're going to do an inch and an eighth splice we'll use the twenty inch but if it's maybe three quarter, maybe a little less or more we use the sixteen inch and then the ten inch would be more half inch wire, five eighths, something smaller.

LO: What's the most common wire size that you use, sort of typically.

LS: For a scalloper it would be the inch and an eighth and for draggers usually use seven eighths, one inch. So. But in my experience I've only just about spliced inch and an eighth, maybe one inch. Maybe once in a while you get a break and you can do five eighths or something but even that has it's difficulties because you don't leave yourself enough of an end so they don't, you can't fit them into the vise because the vise is usually made for an inch and an eighth wire, so.

LO: Yeah.

LS: But, they all have their quirks I guess.

LO: And tell me a little bit about the different uses of wire on a fishing vessel.

LS: Well, the normal inch and an eighth is used for the actual fishing itself but then you have, and that's inch and an eighth, a light, light lube, so there's a light oil on it. Some people use a heavy a dark lube, which I don't really know the difference between it, but some…

LO: And when you say used for the fishing itself, used for?

LS: To actually hold, whether it be the dredge or the net.

LO: Yep.

LS: For say, stays, which are, they hold the arms or the outriggers and they hold some other. What else… I can't think of what else they hold but they are mostly stationary, they don't move. Those are just regular galvanized wire and they have to be exactly perfect to the length that they're looking for so you can't have any leeway. But they're usually used to hold things stationary.

LO: Is that, are those measurements pretty standard or do they vary a lot from one boat to another?

[14:57]

LS: I think they change from one boat to another but when they need to replace them it has to be exactly the same and there's even lengths of chain that will go into them and they'll put a turnbuckle on it so that way it always stays taut.

LO: What about, do you guys work on lobster boats at all or is it basically scallopers? Just wondering.

LS: I think it's, if they need cable maybe but I'd say most of the time it would be scallopers and the occasional trawler but it's mostly, I mean anything I've even done, really, has been for scallopers, so.

LO: Is there a type of splice that you, I mean do you do pretty much the same one over and over? Is there one that you prefer for some reason?

LS: Well, I'd rather do an eye splice than a cut splice because with a cut splice you have to do two instead of one. It's, it's not necessarily harder but it's just two splices. So it's an inch and an eighth which I don't think I've ever had to do one inch and eighth but it's I think it's usually seven eighths, three quarter, those are the kind of vessels they won't, they'll keep adding a little more, adding a little more. So you'll do a cut splice and then you'll put the new stuff on the bottom so that way they can use, they'll just keep using what they've got.

LO: Now if remember correctly you attended Voc?

LS: I did. I did.

LO: Yeah, and did you do anything that related to this while you were there?

LS: No, oh no, no, no. I know that in years past they actually had a commercial fishing program there but not in the time when I've been there. Actually when I go to the Advisory Council Meetings they still have a group of guys that come that are from the commercial fishing major.

LO: Do they? Interesting.

LS: I don't know what they can talk about since there's nothing that relates to that now.

LO: So they're faculty or they're alums? Or?

LS: They could have been people who were in the major when they were there. They could have been faculty. They could just be people from the outside industry that want to have some say but I don't know what they're having a say in since there's no major left for them.

LO: Yeah. And do you have any idea why that was discontinued?

LS: I think it just wasn't popular anymore or they couldn't see where it was going.

LO: Sure.

LS: I mean because they used to teach them, from what I've heard, it was the net mending. I don't know if they taught them splicing but they taught them about rope and net mending and anything pertaining to netting I'd say. I don't know if they learned how to make chain bags or anything like that. But I think it was more nets.

LO: Yeah. I just, it seems to me when I've talked to shoreside business owners and workers that there's a real lack of young people coming up who, you know?

LS: Yeah, yeah. No, there's definitely people of my generation that either don't have the work ethic or just don't know anything about the fishing industry. I mean if you're from New Bedford I would expect you to know about the fishing industry but I don't think there's an interest among young people.

LO: And it may be that there may be that there are some things that are super specific to the fishing industry and some things that are more transferrable? Like I interviewed somebody who is in a welding shop and he said he gets a lot of kids from Voc because they have had some welding experience. I mean obviously he teaches them the application that's…

LS: They have a skill that they could use in other places whereas in our, in what we're doing here with splicing there's no other real application aside from here unfortunately. So you don't see anyone that knows how to do it, aside from those people that have either learned through family ties or through having someone else that they know in the business.

LO: So I think when I was here last week, or whenever that was, there was a story that might have been told after we turned after the tape recorder off or at least you showed me on the truck kind of something that happened at one point when you and your dad were both splicing.

LS: Oh, okay.

LO: Double reel truck? You want to just share that story?

LS: Okay. Yeah, yeah, yeah. There was one time where were were both splicing and we have two vises on our truck. And it had been a long day. The two of us had I think, maybe done four, maybe not four apiece but four splices all together and this was our last splice of the day, well, hopefully. And I know he had come down to maybe one of his last tucks on his side and I was doing my tucks on my side. He's actually behind me and I'm not facing him so his glasses, his sunglasses actually came down in front of me and I turned around confused as to why his glasses came in front of me and actually one of the tails of the wire he had just, due to the physical strain of doing that many splices in one day had actually, he had happened to either let go or the wire slipped out of his hand and just barely nicked him in order to get his glasses off of his head and they landed all the way in front of me. There is a little, I guess, element of danger to what we do.

LO: I'm glad that he was wearing glasses.

LS: Yeah, yeah. No, he didn't even have a nick on his nose, so.

[20:16]

LO: And then after we finished the interview, you know that previous interview, you guys took us, took me on a little tour of the shop and showed me some of the machines. Maybe you can just kind of give me a tour while we're sitting here if you can remember the various…

LS: Okay. So, we've got, there's the two main machines that we have in the shop. We have a five hundred ton press and then we have a coiling machine. And we use the five hundred ton press to do machine splices, which is instead of a hand splice. Machine splice is easier to do but it's not going to be, for fishing applications anyway, it's not going to be as reliable due to the fact that when they pull the eye of the splice through the block it doesn't bend very well and through repeated use it will actually break. So, that's why a hand splice is much better than a machine splice, but for applications such as say the stays on a fishing vessel, those aren't going to be moving, excuse me, so those are going to be machine splices.

LO: And is that press something that was designed specifically for the application that you use it for or is it something that was adapted. Do you know what I mean, like?

LS: I believe it could have been adapted since it has different dies and you can use different for different size wire but the dies come out and actually I think the whole plate that the die goes in could come off. So you could probably use it in some other sort of squeezing application or metal work or something but for our application it does just fine for a machine splice.

LO: Sure.

LS: Then we have the coiling machine which, pretty self-explanatory, it coils the wire. We can actually put a whole reel on there, an empty reel, and then it closes up on it and we can take a whole reel of wire off of the truck and then with the use of the forklift you can flip it back on its side but so it, it pretty much does anything you ask of it to coil wire.

LO: So you coil the wire in order to transport it mainly, or?

LS: Ah, yeah. Most of the time if we're going to put it on a reel it's either new wire that, because some of our customers will take the wire and put it on their own boat themselves whereas, for larger applications, say inch and an eighth wire, we do the work but there was a gentlemen that was just here, I think he had five eighths wire or half inch and he takes the two spools himself. We give him a jack, we put the spool on the jack. He takes it to his boat and he puts it on himself, so. Some of the smaller guys still like to do it like that and it saves them some money as opposed to us having to bring the truck all the way out there, so. But in other instances we use it to take junk wire off the truck and then just put it off to the side until we can get some time to either get rid of it or cut it up because some places, in order to scrap it they won't take it on a full reel so it has to be in sections, so. And we can't get rid of it any other way, so.

LO: So the shop is relatively new that we're sitting in here.

LS: Yes, how long would you say we've been here? [Two years]. All right, so we've been here two years and I'd say we'd been over in the other place for five years and that's been our total, so seven years altogether is how long we've been open.

LO: And were you involved in setting any of this up?

LS: Oh yeah, oh yeah. When we opened up the first place I was rather young and I didn't know how to use the forklift or anything. I was there just to help more like pick up things or you know, little, smaller things but when we moved to this place I actually, we had rented a forklift for this shop and I unloaded the truck when it would come and then would drive back. Which, thankfully it's only two, three minutes away down the road so we were able to do it all ourselves. We didn't have to really, you know, pay a moving company or anything. They brought all the stuff here I unloaded it and myself and a friend of mine, we set up the rackings so that way once more things came through we could put the stuff, at least somewhat away just for the time being until my father could figure out what he wanted to do and how he wanted to space everything out. So it was quite a move. And we had to have another company come in and actually move the press because it's too heavy.

LO: How much does that weigh?

LS: I think it's about five thousand pounds. Oh, it's eleven thousand pounds. [eight thousand]. Eight thousand pounds? Eight thousand pounds. Final offer.

LO: Wow.

LS: Yeah. And our forklift can only lift about I think five thousand so we actually had to have a crane company come in and pick it up.

[25:18]

LO: Tell me a little bit about the truck too. Because that's not kind of your typical truck to have two presses.

LS: The truck, the winch truck, it's got custom made winches and actually both of the vises, that had to be all custom and it's got a knuckle boom on it.

LO: What's a knuckle boom?

LS: A knuckle boom is a crane that essentially is all folded up. Say if we're going to go to Boston we need to take two reels of wire with us and we use the knuckle boom to pick up the two reels of wire and put them on the truck and then we tie everything down and when we get there we can use the knuckle boom to take them off because when we go there we also always have to take their old wire back so we don't have the room to take their old wire off and put these two reels of wire on the winches so in order to make all that happen we use the knuckle boom and then we've got both of the vises. Which allow us to do two splices at once if there's two people there working. And the winch, the winches allow you to take any wire off just about.

We were going to use it today to take off ground cables. I'm sure it has other applications as well. And then there's a flat bed truck which has two winches that can go on it and one of them is a larger winch which can be used as a net drone so if you ever wanted to you could probably use it to take a net off. I don't think we want to but primarily we use to, we use the winches that are off that truck to end frame wire, which is in, on scallopers they'll use a large amount of wire and they'll only use half of it to go fishing with. The winches will hold eight hundred fathoms of seven eighths wire. This is coming in from my sources.

LO: Yes, and a fathom being six feet.

LS: A fathom being six feet, yes. Anyway, where was I going with that?

LO: You were just kind of giving me the specs on how the winches, the roll up winches.

LS: I don't know, I lost my train of thought.

LO: It's all right. So, let me take you in a different direction I don't know if your dad wants to hear this part of the conversation but I'm curious, so this is a family business obviously.

LS: Yes.

LO: And it's a relatively new family business…

LS: Yeah, yeah.

LO: And I'm guessing as new businesses go that's always stressful and challenging and uncertain and the fishing industry being what it is, that's always in a state of somewhat unstable, so one question I guess would be, certainly I would guess your dad who's at the helm gets stressed out.

LS: Oh yeah, and it comes home too but we've all taken part in this for so long that I think we all have vested interest and we're all, we all share the stress I guess you could say. Especially when you work here. It's been a wild ride I guess starting out and not knowing if the people that he knew back in his days at Bruce's were going to come back to us, if they were going to stay with who they were with. So, and I can say I've been here for most of that, I have never been a full, full-time worker but I have the opportunity to come in during the summer or be it the winter so I've seen, I've seen the times when we've had nothing and been worried about when the next boat might come from and now I can say most of that has turned around.

LO: That's great.

LS: And it's always, you never know who's going to call next, so.

LO: And since it is your father, your mother and sometimes your brother too, do you get a time away from it. You know if you have Fourth of July picnic are you talking about this or are you talking about the watermelon? The fireworks?

LS: Definitely, well a lot of the family, not just the immediate family has taken an interest in what we do so there's always something to talk about and everyone's always interested to hear what's going on. So, I think it takes precedence most of the time as to what we have to say so. Which it doesn't bother me one bit I don't mind. I mean when I come home, say if I was at school, away at college for a while and I'd come back and I'd be like, who've you done, you know, how's it been, who've you been working on this time. So it's always been an interest to see it succeed anyway.

[30:00]

LO: Now you went on from Voc to Mass Maritime, correct?

LS: Yes.

LO: And just recently finished your program?

LS: Yes, yep.

LO: And what did you study there?

LS: I started out as a facility engineer and then I changed to marine safety and environmental protection.

LO: And does that mean that you will be pursuing a career that's not, not here?

LS: Yes, unfortunately. I'm, if I end up in this area I will most certainly still lend my time to help but my career goals lie elsewhere.

LO: And is there tension on that front?

LS: No, no. They absolutely want to see my brother and I do well and I, both of us don't have a career interest in splicing but it's been, it's been wonderful to learn something that not everyone knows and especially something that had come through family. Having our father teach us in the driveway how to splice wire has been pretty interesting so, and it's not a skill that, that anybody else that I know of or my age anyway, knows how to, how to use.

LO: So do you think that in time, your Dad will bring on another young person to…

LS: I hope so, I really do because he needs the help and I know he's reluctant to take it but he needs it. He's getting older, getting up on the truck isn't as easy anymore. So. He needs somebody but it's kind of hard to bring somebody in because there's not always consistent work. I know during the winter it's definitely a lot slower than it is right now during the summer so you've just got to find somebody who's going to be okay with there being some down time in the winter and maybe even having to be laid off but, I guess it's just the way the cookie crumbles.

LO: Let's see. What do you like best about the work that you do here, or the work that you, the environment, the work that you've done?

LS: I'd say, it's probably knowing that, we're the reason, well one of them anyway, why people have seafood on their table. If it wasn't for our splice, there wouldn't be a dredge to drag in the water, there wouldn't be, there would be none of that. So, the whole, everything behind what we do is to ensure that the fleet can do their job and catch fish or scallops or anything for that matter. So our hand splice and all those years of learning how to splice and all those years of working at Bruce's and doing all the work is to put seafood on the plates of people everywhere, so.

LO: That's a lot to be proud about.

LS: Yeah. Oh yeah, absolutely.

LO: Good, well, is there anything else you want to add that I didn't ask about?

LS: I don't know. I can't really think of anything. I know, it's been a wild ride, really. Coming from the smaller shop to this one, just seeing how the people have reacted. By people I mean the people that use us have either flocked to us or it's taken some time for them to come here but it's amazing to see the connections that he made thirty something years ago when he started, have come back full circle. And a lot of them are either or his age or maybe younger but to see them all come back and use us.

LO: And to what do you attribute that?

LS: Well, his hard work and work ethic have and have really shown and I think that's what people appreciate. I know the second somebody calls it's like, all right we're going to get that done. We don't have a whole lot of time to not get it done so it's not something that you just want to leave. So people know that the second they call it's either going to be within a day or two we are going to be either going to be starting or getting to the boat to do the job so there's never, there's never a lull of work.

LO: So responsiveness.

LS: Absolutely, absolutely. And then just them seeing his work ethic when he worked for Bruce's and I think that is what has brought them back.

[34:37]

LO: And what do you think about the waterfront just as a community? Do you have a sense of that? I mean you're young so you haven't seen a lot.

LS: I mean to me, to me it's a, everybody seems to know everybody, just about. I know a lot of the older guys anyway seem to know just about everybody. You could go down there and name a boat and they'll be like oh yeah, so and so's the captain or you know, you start telling a story about when they had this massive windfall catch and everybody knows it. My father would come

home and tell us stories like that of you know, maybe a one man show going out there and he caught all these fish and now everybody knows the story because he came in and he had this huge catch of fish and he didn't think he was going to get in the boat then he got in the boat. Or other instances where people, you know, had a whale caught up in the net or just all kinds of stories like that that get around and it's a good community to be a part of I would say because everybody seems to look out for each other.

LO: And do you have friends your age who have family that are in the industry as well?

LS: I don't think so. I don't think so. Not that I know of.

LO: Friends who fish, whose fathers or uncles?

LS: No. No.

LO: No.

LS: No, I can't think of anybody really.

LO: Yeah.

LS: Which is surprising because I feel like I would.

LO: So, do you feel like growing up did your friends sort of get it or have any clue?

LS: I don't think they knew. They didn't know what he did or what the business was like. It's definitely if you're a part of it, you know everything.

LO: Right.

LS: But if you're not you probably don't have the faintest of ideas as to what goes into it.

LO: Enter The Fishing Heritage Center, yes?

LS: Yeah. Oh yeah. Absolutely.

LO: No, I mean I do think that educating… It's amazing to me how little so many people right here in New Bedford, how little they know about, they don't even, many of them don't even know that we still go fishing, let alone the details that we're talking about.

LS: Well, I'm sure if more people came to the Working Waterfront Festival they'd know. Because that's almost like a party for the fishermen. We go down there and we could be standing there for hours and he just turns around and he knows somebody and he's got to talk to them and then he turns around and talking to somebody else. Drumming up business while we're there. We all make sure that we wear the shirts and you know, so we're noticeable when we're

there. But I know I haven't been able to make it I think for the past couple but I know in years past we would always go and check out everything.

LO: Sometimes we get rain like today which is not fun.

LS: Yeah. But yeah, it's an amazing community and it's been a big part of our lives, for sure, for sure.

LO: Well, thank you very much. I mean is there… Any last words?

LS: No, I can't think of anything else. I know it's having, having the family here and everything it's been crazy but it's definitely, the work ethic and what I've learned from being here has made me into a stronger individual and that work ethic is something that I can take anywhere I go and I am beyond grateful for what my family has taught me and for the trade that I know. Even if it's not going to be something that I'm going to continue in my own lifetime but I'm very proud to know how to splice and how my family has come to know about that throughout the years.

LO: Thanks.

LS: Welcome.

[38:15] End of audio.