Christina Package: Do you mind if we start with your background and how you got into the fishing industry?

Ted Painter: My father fished here out of Newport. Well, go back. I'll just start it and then come forward. He worked in the mines in Juneau, Alaska, (Morning?) Mine, a little gold mine up there. Then went to Sitka, worked on an Air Force Base, Japonski Island there. Then him and another guy got a boat, went fishing out of there. It didn't work out, so he sold his share to the other guy and moved down here. So then he bought a small boat down here, fished it out of Depoe Bay for a few years, and then bought the boat we took to Alaska called a (Uyak?), and he pitched that out of here from about probably the early '50s. He didn't take – he took that boat to Alaska again, fished it southeastern for Dungeness into Ketchikan. They were actually fishing Canadian waters at the time – it was allowable – and delivered back to Ketchikan. So then he came back from that, and then I was probably nine, I started fishing with him in the summers, fishing salmon. I'd make a trip when school wasn't going on, whatever, in the winter, on crab – Dungeness crab out of Newport. Then we'd fish salmon and then go tuna fishing when the tuna showed up. Then it seemed like – and so I worked along there, and I got a couple of beach jobs, and then kept going, being drawn back to the fishing. Anyway, that's how I got started. Do you want me to continue on into Alaska?

CP: Sure. Yes.

TP: Okay. So anyway, in 1962, a guy by the name of Roy (Puford?) was going to take a process boat to Kodiak Island and station it out of Uganik Bay and process Dungeness crab. Nobody'd ever fished Dungeness crab up there until that time that I know of anyway, commercially. So anyway, every year down here, it seemed – here of the Oregon coast, it seemed like you'd get fishing salmon, then you go tuna fishing, then the canneries go on strike. So then you'd sit, and maybe you'd come off strike and maybe you wouldn't. So he decided in '62 he'd take the boat up there and try the Dungeness up there. So he did. I didn't go that year; I had a beach job. The next year in 1963, I went up, fished the summer – I was still going to school – fished the summer there, and then I fished – the previous summers we were just fishing Dungeness crab, but king crab was just coming in at the time, there in Kodiak and also at the Bering Sea. So probably it was 1965 or six, we actually bought some king crab pots, took them up, and started fishing king crab along with fishing Dungeness. At the time, we'd get bairdi tanner crabs as a byproduct and thinking, "Boy, they should be worth something. They're pretty good tasting." So we ended up – it probably wasn't for another eight, ten years though, before actually, it started taking the bairdi tanner crab. So we fished king crab and Dungeness up until that time. We're just on a small boat, the sixty-foot boat called the (Uyak?). Then, in '69, we bought another boat from a guy up there, our first steel boat with the (Uyak?) [inaudible]. It's a boat called the [inaudible]. It was a seventy-two-foot steel boat. Man, it was like a castle compared to what we'd been on. We fished Dungeness with it, and also rigged it for king crab. So whatever season was open, we were fishing it. And we kept bringing it back down here and fishing some in the wintertime, the start of the season, fish for a while, and then go back to Alaska. In '69, '70, '71 – what?

CP: Dungeness down here?

TP: Dungeness down here, yeah. Yes. We fished in Oregon, Washington, and then go back to Alaska and fish for king crab in the fall. Then, in probably about 19 – well, 1974, we built a boat, actually, in this building we're talking in here, a boat called the *Buccaneer*, and it was seventy-six-foot, and that's my boat. My dad was still [inaudible] hiring age at the time, and he ran it for another couple, three years, and then let another guy start running it. Anyway, I had the *Buccaneer* at the time, from '74 until '79. You want to upgrade, and you're doing okay, we were doing okay, and saved a little money ahead. Finally, we ordered a boat called the *Trailblazer*, my brother, myself, and my dad. That's a picture of it up on the wall there – from Bender Shipbuilding in Mobile, Alabama. So by the time we were done in the shipyard, and the boat was done, I figured out it wasn't going to work with my brother and I on the same boat. So I ordered another boat called the *Alaska Trojan*, that's it right here.

CP: How big is that one?

TP: At the time, they were a hundred-and-seven-foot when they came out of the shipyard. Since then, we've added twenty feet to it, so now it's a-hundred-and-twenty-seven. So from that time on, '79 on, we were full time in Alaska. We weren't coming back here to fish Dungeness or salmon or anything. So fished that until – well, by that time they were buying bairdi tanner crab and king crab and we were [inaudible] in the Bering Sea for herring up Kodiak, upper Bering Sea. Whatever we could do to make money. Then they closed the season at Kodiak for king crab and ended up – we rigged the boat for halibut. So everybody was saying, "Oh, it's too big a boat for halibut and blah, blah, blah." Anyway, another guy told me that – good friend of mine – he fished halibut. He said, "Hey, that boat's not – anybody can fish halibut; the boat doesn't matter." So he said, "You'll do fine," and helped us out, and lined up what we needed to do. So anyway, rigged for halibut. So then we fished halibut. In – I'm trying to think – early '85 to late '84, there was a charter that Fish and Game put out there at Kodiak for – it was interisland king crab charter to determine is there crab out there or not crab? So we had the interisland part, and I took it just for – basically for fuel costs. We weren't making any money off it. Part of the deal, I got to put ten pots wherever I wanted to put them, and they put their fifty pots wherever they wanted. So, the first two days, we caught one crab, and that's just what we figured. I said, "Well." We were so supposed to be over to another bay, [inaudible] Bay the next day. I said, "Well, how about laying down through this stretch here? This time of year, sometimes there's crab in here." "Yeah, we could do that. We got to go over a certain time." "Okay, we'll pick them early and be over there." Anyway, we pull the pots the next day, and there was anywhere from small crab to the – they were chockablock full, number one, a seven by seven king crab pot – chockablock full just on an overnight soak. There's anywhere from small crab females and up to twenty-pound crab in that pot. It hadn't been opened then, for three years, I think, of the season. In every pot, the same. I said, "Well, here's your crab." "Well, yeah, this is some." I said, "Hey, let's go over to Raspberry Island and put them through there, because this time of year years ago, the crab would all move into these bays." "Well, we haven't got time, we can't do that." Anyway, I could see it wasn't

going to go very good from then on. So I had this other guy in mind that was going to start coming on the boat and running, splitting up time with me. He was with us on the trip, and I say, "You got to." I called, and I said, "I can't handle this anymore if we aren't going to do accurate testing through all the bays to really determine is there crab or not?" As a fisherman, I want to know the resource healthy or not healthy? Anyway, they weren't going to do that, so I say, "I'm off here." I had a friend [inaudible] plane, who flew out and picked me up, and the other guy started running the boat. That was in '85. We were going to move the operation to the Bering Sea. They weren't reopening the season there for king crab. That's what came out of the study, and so I didn't – my wife didn't really want to live in Dutch Harbor, and so we put our house in Kodiak up for sale and ended up moving back down here in '85. The other guy went to run the boat, and the whole operation's been in the Bering Sea since then.

CP: So you're delivering to Dutch?

TP: We deliver to King – our main product, main plan at the time was King Cove, but that was with one of the boats. And then in 19 – hell, that was at that time. In 1990, we had another boat built, or I did, in Goose Bay, a boat called the *Kiska Sea*.

CP: I saw it the other day, I think.

TP: Yes. [laughter] Anyway, we had it built, and we'd lengthened the *Alaska Trojan*, the one we had that was a-hundred-and-seven-foot right here. So we lengthened it here, and put twenty-feet in it, and this guy that I brought on back when I told you, he started running the boat. I let him buy into the boat, and then he was running that boat, the *Alaska Trojan*. Anyway, we've been doing okay, so we ended up ordering this other boat. At the time, they were starting to think of a moratorium coming on, on boats. So I figured, "Well, the timing's right. We're going to fish the Bering Sea. Let's build one exactly for the Bering Sea." So we had the Kiska built. It was a hundred-and-twenty-five by thirty-four-foot beam. Anyway, at the time, another guy that'd been running another boat in the Bering Sea called [inaudible], a guy by the name of (David Capri?), he was looking for a boat to buy in on, so I let him buy into the *Alaska Trojan*, and the other partner, Mike Wilson ended up buying into the *Kiska* when we built it. Anyway, built that, and he went up with that. Some other friends came along and said, "Hey, what do you think? We're thinking about – we've outgrown our boat, and we're thinking about another boat. Are you interested at all in maybe going in on one?" He wanted to know first how the yard was that we'd just had the boat built at. I said, "No, it's a good yard. I like it. There's always going to be things that come up." But I said, "No, they'd be good to build your boat." He was going to build an eighty-five-foot boat. I say, "Well, why don't you build a boat for the Bering Sea? If the moratorium's coming on anyway, and you're going to be – and this is one of the things you want to do." "Well, we can't handle that much, price-wise." I said, "Well, I'd be interested in a little bit." So there were four of us ended up going together – a guy by the name of Dick Miller – I don't know if you run across Dick Miller, (Francis?) Miller, that group?

CP: No, I don't think so.

TP: Anyway. So Dick Miller, who had his own boat, he came in on it; a guy by the name of (Derrick Ray?), and Bernie (Brickholder?), and myself. We decided if we were going to do it, might as well – instead of the hundred-and-twenty-five, we added twelve feet to the boat, made it a hundred-and-thirty-seven by thirty-four, and (Derrick Ray?) ran that. So anyway, that leads us up to the moratorium that went in that year, and so we were under the time element. So the boat was all fine. Anyway, the moratorium did come in that year, so that ended the boats for the crab fisheries up there. So then the next – and we continued to do fine. We were delivering at the Pribilof Islands at the time to a plant there with all three boats. As time went along, the quotas dropped back off. It'd been [inaudible] three hundred million pounds for opies, which was the height of the opies. They started dropping off. So, at that time, they were thinking about rationalization. At the time, we weren't really for it, but as time come along, it's going to come anyway, right? So we finally got on board and said, "Hey, if you can't lick them, you might as well join them." So rationalization came about, and once it came about, what are you going to with the boats? Anyway, we ended up selling the *Siberian Sea* first, and that was four years ago, I think. Yes, I think it wasn't even the – four or five. Anyway, before rationalization fully set in.

CP: Was that 2005 that it was rationalized? Somewhere around there?

TP: Yes, yes. I lose track of time. But yeah, it could be, but that's – we sold it prior to it actually fishing the season on it, and kept the fishing rights, but sold the boat [to an] outfit by the name Aleutian Spray Fisheries. They'd just lost a boat to fire, and so they bought it to replace that boat as a longline. So it went into the cod fishery, catching and processing. *Kiska Sea* was fishing all the quota, at the time, made deals. If you're in a co-op, then you can fish other – you probably know all that. You can fish other product. So we were fishing our product plus our partner's product, and the stuff from the Siberian Sea. There was a little bit of grumbling from the crew and all that because of what we had to pay out to fish this other product. We had our own. We weren't charging them for the product the boat had, and they were griping about the [inaudible]. I said, "Fine. But next year, we'll just –" I don't remember if it was one or two years – no, just one. They grumbled about it, and I said, "Fine, we'll just tie the boat up this year, and we'll fish our halibut, and we'll let somebody else lease your product." So that's what we did. I was a little upset with them. Then, next year, or two years later, we went back fishing on the crab. I asked the partners, which one was my son, and Mike Wilson was also still a partner in there. I said, "What do you guys think about if I got a market for the boat?" "Well, yeah, we'd interested." I think Mike – I think I could keep the same crew, same skipper and all that, and I'll check on it. I don't know. "No, I'd be interested." So we sold that boat along with all the product we had for king crab and opies to Aleutian Spray Fish, the same one that bought the other boat. The same crew has remained on there. That was two years ago, I believe, and the same crew's remained on it two and a half. Anyway, same crew's remained on there. Mike Wilson's still running it. We have the other boat, the *Alaska Trojan*, when rationalization started in, we ended up taking it and fishing straight brown crab out of [inaudible] golden crab. We were fishing part-time out there, and we went to just full time. So then we've been fishing it really pretty steady

since ’94 on that golden crab, and with intermittent parts, we were fishing some brown or some opies and some king crab, and then bust out there and fish our golden crabs. So not it’s out there full time other than – got it down here now, but working on it. But it spends nine months up there, three months down here working on it. So that leads us up to now.

CP: Is there anything that you used to fish that you’re not involved in anymore?

TP: Pardon?

CP: Is there anything that you used to fish that you’re not involved in anymore?

TP: We aren’t involved now in the red crab fishery, or the bairdi, or opie. So we aren’t involved in those fishes now. We still have permits, actually for Adak red crab, but they haven’t had a season there, so we haven’t fished.

CP: I had a question somewhere in there, and now I forgot what it was. How old were you when you first started fishing?

TP: I was nine when I was –

CP: Wow.

TP: But then I went from that out of high school, then it was full time, and I’ve fished ever since then.

CP: With the species that you’re not involved in anymore, what’s the reason for that? Because you sold the boat?

TP: No, we sold the quota, and that was part of the deal. They’re going to buy the boat; they want [inaudible] quota, so we sold the quota and the boat.

CP: Why did you decide to get out of those particular –?

TP: You get to a point in life, and you start – well, even when I came down from Kodiak, I felt I was going to spend six months in Alaska and six months down here. You get down here, and the guy put on the boat was doing fine, so there’s no reason – I could have gone and [inaudible] fisheries, gone up and hit most of king crab, and hit opies for a bit if it was just money. But the guy, Mike Wilson, was doing fine, so I went back for two halibut trips, I think it was after that, and I even left enough stuff in Kodiak to kind of set up an apartment, but moved it all out later. [laughter] Anyway, you start thinking about you’re getting up – getting a little older all the time and what you want to do. And so it takes a certain amount of time managing the boat and crew. Then my son would have wanted to stay fishing. I wouldn’t have sold the – we didn’t need the *Siberian* once the rationalization came in. The product could be fished by the other boat or boats, and so got rid of it. Then the Kiska was really – if my son would have wanted to keep fishing, but he just had a new little one, and he wanted to stay at home more, so he said,

"I'm fine with it." The price at the time was fine. So you decide you don't know where things are going. Anything can change. Or, let's say you decide, "Oh, no, we got to rebuild something." The kind crab fishery in Kodiak – it never got opened back up. Oh, your coffee, I'm sorry – just one second. You look at Kodiak; we're supposed to have probably a three or four-year, five-year rebuilding program, and they haven't opened it since. So there's a little bit out there, the unknown, and you go, "Sixty years old. Should I sell out?" So, like I said, if the other guys would've wanted to stay with it and said, "No, we want to keep fishing," but I'd already had the whole deal about fishing other guys' product and what we have to pay him. Just said, "This stage of my life, I don't really need another hassle." So we still have the one boat fishing out there, and that's enough hassle – crews, skippers.

CP: When you fish somebody else's product, how much do they keep? What percentage [inaudible]?

TP: It varies fishery to fishery. [inaudible] ours is all there, but –

CP: I don't get to see them, but – [laughter]

TP: I would [inaudible] public knowledge [inaudible] how it goes. But anyway, it's the same outfit. That's where I send them. But when it started out, anyway, they were paying high as seventy percent to the person that was leasing them the product. If I'm fishing, then I'm paying out seventy percent for that product. The theory is you're getting thirty percent – you're already out there; you already got so much expense out anyway. So we're going to make a little bit on that, and then we fish the opies, and we'll make a little bit there. Opies at the time was fifty-five percent. I think those figures have dropped now maybe sixty percent for king crab, and maybe fifty for opies. I haven't been involved, so I'm not sure what they are right now. So that's what you're paying out for product. The brown crab – we pay less out of Adak. There's two areas for the golden crab – the eastern area and western area. We fished the western area. It's a slower fishery. The cost of producing the crabs is a lot more. The Adak plant's been a problem. We've delivered – this year, we delivered everything back to Dutch Harbor, so you got two days each way, and that's twenty-four hour days, and so you're burning up a lot of fuel just coming and going.

CP: Didn't Adak Fisheries close down?

TP: They closed down.

CP: Is the plant still closed?

TP: Well, what happened – Kjetil Solberg's the guy that had the plant, he left owing us eighty thousand dollars, but he owed other people, too. Anyway, he went bankrupt and then bought the plant back. People that get burnt once, they probably aren't going to get burned again.

CP: So when he went bankrupt, that just meant he didn't have to pay you the money.

TP: Right. Right.

CP: OK, this is [inaudible].

TP: Along with a lot of other people. Along with a lot of people, and along with the native group out there. I don't even know what all he owed them, but I know he owed the four hundred thousand dollars on fuel alone out there. Anyway, so he's back in. I thought somebody else was going to pick up the plant. It's the ideal plant for us, especially. We save four days a trip – four days a trip by delivering there. We delivered a lot of product at Adak there for a long time. But it was always – it seemed to be always a hassle getting your money, and then the last we didn't get it. Anyway, I'm hoping that he's going to (starve out?) here sometime even though he has the plant back. He didn't have much – I don't know if he had any product delivered to him last year. He's kind of tied up in lawsuits on the plant. I just saw a little article in *Pacific Fishing* magazine. I don't know if you're aware of that one, but there's a little article in there on it. But they make the natives out to be the bad guys because they won't give them any fuel. Yeah, they won't because he went bankrupt owing them four hundred grand. I wouldn't give them any fuel either. So anyway, we're hoping that somebody else – and a good chance it could be Trident. They've looked at it. It could be somebody else, but Trident has definitely at it, but they're tied up in lawsuits up there right now, and they aren't doing anything. But we're hoping that that plant does get back open. It's ideal for us.

CP: Is it Trident, who's out in Dutch –?

TP: Yes. They're all over Alaska, Trident is.

CP: Yes, yes. I think I was thinking of St. Paul.

TP: Well, they're in Akutan. But they have plants pretty much all over.

CP: Yes, they're big.

TP: Anyway, we're hoping that things change, and we can complete our season. It wouldn't be near the fuel cost, and [inaudible] if we can deliver at Adak. Plus, the boat seems to get back out. If it goes to Dutch Harbor, they spend a little more time there. Adak – there's not much to do, right? They deliver the crab and go back fishing. But we could probably do it in half the time if we didn't have to – or close to it.

CP: Yes, four extra days.

TP: What?

CP: Four extra days that's a long –

TP: Ye, and you get – we're basically fishing – getting two trips a month, or not quite. So that's another trip you're gaining every month. Make eleven, twelve trips in a nine-month period. So it would really cut our time [inaudible] and help on the expense end. But eastern areas are a faster fishing area, and so I just – I was going to complete that. The guys there do have to pay more for the product they're fishing of somebody else's than what we do because of our cost. The problem with the Adak plant, they gave us a waiver this year, meaning National Marine Fisheries to deliver that product back to Dutch Harbor because if the Adak plant wasn't working – that was our problem. We didn't want to go deliver to somebody we weren't going to get paid from because they still owed us eighty-thousand dollars. We just weren't going to do it unless we had money upfront. And anyway. They never did get their act together anyway on being ready to go on the season. So we did get that waiver to deliver back to Dutch. So anyway.

CP: So do they have the [inaudible]?

TP: Oh, I was going to finish saying – they have almost half the product. They threw a little carrot for that Adak plant, originally, that you had to deliver half the product out there. It doesn't have to deliver to Adak, but west of a certain line which says the only plant there is Adak, right? So that's what we – that's why they have a little guarantee there. But like I told them, I said, whether [inaudible] or whoever picks it up, I'd rather see it go [inaudible] which you can deliver [inaudible] anywhere. But then that plant – we're going to deliver – as long as they're fair with the price, we're going to deliver there anyway, and we can deliver all the product there as opposed to haul –

CP: You could get paid. [laughter]

TP: Yes, as opposed to hauling it back. So I don't know what's going to happen in the future, but it would sure – it'd save a lot. So I was going around and around with Kjetil Solberg, and he's not good. He just a tough guy to deal with. What other questions you got?

CP: I'm trying to understand. It seems like so many people from down here fished up there. Was your dad originally from this area?

TP: From which area?

CP: From Newport or around Oregon.

TP: Well, yes and no. He started out in Idaho, went in the mines over there, went to Juneau, worked in the mines there, and then went into fishing. Then decided he liked that, so he moved down here and fished out of here for the next twenty years – fifteen or something. Then went to Alaska. But the king crab fishery just coming on, the price was only ten cents a pound [that] they were paying fishermen at the time, but there was a lot of crab. It's kind of like gold-mining or something; all of a sudden, you strike it rich. Here's all this product, and at the time was Dungeness crab was ten cents a pound also, but you catch king crab so much faster with bigger pots, and the crabs were bigger. So

we migrated into that fishery, and from that, you can go into bairdi. They finally started buying bairdi crab, and from there into opies out in the Bering Sea. So you start branching out when you have – when we first went up there, king crab season was open all year around. You can go fish them anytime. And then they changed it during the molting season so that you weren't getting a poor product and to protect the crab, which was good. So then they basically – the season was opening, I think in August at the time, and then they'd get back and further back to September and then October. Now it's the middle of September it opens and so until January 15th or whatever. And you can go catch your product whatever time you choose. But it's always easier to catch it when the gravy's there. So you still better be out there when the season starts, even though you don't have a time element now.

CP: The crew that has been on your different boats, where were they from? Were they from here or up in Alaska?

TP: Both normally because really it became an Alaska operation, which we – see, I moved up there full time in 1965 or early '66. So then we had a house up there, lived there, and so then it was – crews were more from up there. But we had crew members from down this area, too. Because you know people, right? You know this guy's a good guy, and you aren't going to have a problem with him, so you'd hire accordingly. But if there's somebody in Kodiak, and you needed somebody, then you get them there. But the whole thing has changed on crew members, too. We had a list of guys that went on the boat, and the crew members were very professional and stuck with it, and they were there year after year. We kept some up to twenty years. That guy, Mike Wilson, came out of high school and went to work for us, and is still working basically for us. He isn't anymore since he went on – since I sold the boat. But we have another guy that's on the *Alaska Trojan* now by the name of Ray [inaudible], came out of high school, and I knew his uncle, who lived up in Kodiak, and he wondered if I'd get him a job, well, we'll try him. Anyway, he's still with us, so that's been thirty years, something like that, twenty-five. So where we're at is where – but like now, we aren't living up there full time, and we lived there twenty years, then we moved back down here. So it's probably more because we do our work on the boat right here, and we need the crew to work on the boat because they know what needs to be done. So most of them are – not all of them, but there's more of them hired out of this area than say out of Alaska. But we aren't opposed to hiring anywhere if you got a good guy. Tell me that was a good man that's not a drinker or druggie or whatever. What else?

CP: You were saying there used to be a giant list of people, crew members waiting.

TP: Yes.

CP: Is that not this – is it like that still?

TP: No. No, it's not, and I don't really understand it. They make pretty – when you look at everything, they make pretty damn good money for – they don't have to have a college degree, even though we have some with college degrees. So even now, even

though it's not the derby style fishery, it's – you know how much product – once you go out and make a survey, Fish and Game, National Marine Fisheries – once the survey's done, you know how much product you're going to get. So it might take you a little longer, might cost a little bit more, or it might now. It might cost a little less because you catch them faster. So now it has taken that out where before you could go out there, and it was down to a three-day, four-day, five-day season on king crab, and you only had to miss about two different days – if you didn't sit around on the crab, and you're off a little bit, you might not get anything. The crew might owe money. I'll have to say it has straightened that part out. You know what you're going to get. So along with your product, if you line up a little bit more product, you basically – you figure it all that out, you just don't know exactly how long it's going to take you to catch it. I don't know why these guys aren't more professional, and it might just be the air, I don't know. I mean, the time period. Yes, I don't understand it. I really don't. We tried certain different things – had a deal. I'm changing it back this year, where we had a bonus system. The crew would jump in. So one of the skippers we had a few years back, he said, "Well, how about a bonus or something." I said, "Okay, we'll do a bonus, and we'll set so much aside, and the crew gets paid on that. If they work the whole season and come down, work on the boat, they get a bonus." Then it got down to where a guy would quit and then come back – "Well, why aren't I getting a bonus? I was there most of the time." You go, "No, here's the deal." We just had a little go-around with a guy this morning – "Why aren't I getting the bonus?" "Well, you quit. The boat was ready to go. Yeah, you worked in the shipyard, but the boat was ready to go, and you quit. Yeah, and you came back on, but you left us in the lurch. We had to go out and look around and try to find somebody to replace you." But before, you had a lot of people wanting to go fishing, and some would work out, and some wouldn't. It's the same – a lot of boats have a problem on this professionalism on crew members.

CP: I wonder why.

TP: I don't know. I don't know. Like I said, they're still making pretty darn good money. So I don't know, Christina.

CP: Could you talk a little bit about Kodiak looked like when you were living up there and fishing out of there?

TP: Yes. Kodiak was a good place to live. There were quite a few families that moved up from Newport, so we had our little get-togethers and dinners and one thing and another. There's probably twenty-five families that I knew of, maybe even a little bit more that all came out of this area. So, of course, I was a little younger at the time, and go down and have a few beers in the evening and on the weekend. They always had pretty good bands there in Kodiak, and everybody knew everybody, so it was kind of like a family deal. But, at the time, there weren't any paved roads. There was one paved road, excuse me, and the rest were all just gravel. So a lot of dust because they'd had that big volcanic eruption earlier in the decade – I don't remember the year they had it – which left a coating of dust on everything, on the trees – you can still pull up moss, and there'll be dust on them. Anyway, dusty, but just the way it was. So slowly they've been

paving, and today there's a lot of paved roads. Roads out of [inaudible] out to Cape Chiniak, forty-five miles, that was the longest road. And then there's a few little spur roads that are all gravel. There's one went out the other way, out to Monashka Bay – there were fifteen miles. So that was the total road system, the most of it in Kodiak. You had one went over to Anton Larsen Bay there. Up on top of that, before you break over the hill, there was an area, they had this – the military, at one time, had a little ski deal set up. So they had a rope tow, so you get on the rope tow – I didn't ever do it, but I was there when they had it. I just wasn't into skiing at the time. Anyway, they had their little rope tow, and you go up there and ski, and then we got into snowmobiling because it was something to do. So we'd go up to there and drop off the snow machines, and then go up the mountain. You go all over the mountains from up there if you had snow and the right conditions. That was the recreation was wintertime, snowmobiling, summertime, fishing – fish come in – up there, either they're there, or they aren't. When they're there, it's good fishing. You go fishing in different places – silvers or whatever you want to do. So that's the activity in the summer if we have time. Most of the time, we're working. I'm just talking about if we happen to have a little time period there, some of the things we'd do. There was a good school system there. We had kids. The school system was great. I think way ahead of the school systems down here at the time. I know they were because we brought the kids back down here, and they were way ahead of what was going on here. So [inaudible] on the school systems.

CP: Yes, that's surprising to me.

TP: They have a very good system, and I think it's still the same way, as far as I know.

CP: How long did you have the house up there, and was your family up there?

TP: Twenty years, we either had – we started with a trailer house, and then we had another trailer house. Let's see. Three different trailer houses before we finally built a house. But all told between the trailer houses and the house, we were there twenty years. I'm trying to think on the house – I can't remember. Maybe eight years or something like that. I can't remember exactly. The other thing – Kodiak, you're on an island, and you don't always get off or on when you want. Planes don't always come and go. You don't always have fresh things at the store – your milk and your lettuce and all that stuff because they came and went on the planes. It's like Dutch Harbor or any of them up there. You're limited on some things. Eventually, a plane gets in. [laughter] So you either came by boat or flew or ferry boat, I guess.

CP: Did you like living up there?

TP: No, for the time period, we did. It was good. Like I said, there were other people from this area. But other people we met. We met a lot of people. I probably knew most everybody in Kodiak at the time. Or most. Not all of them, but a lot of them. It's all changed now. You go up there now; I know a few people, but not near what it was. But no, it's a good place to live and raise your kids. But then everything changes as time goes along. Like I said, we felt we'd probably go back up there and spend half the time

up there and half of it here. Then you get into other things. Some other guys and I put in a development over in the Salem area, and tried that and did it all ourselves. It was interesting, but we didn't put in another one. No, it was good. It was just the jumping through hoops for the bureaucracy. Like a lot of things – "I don't know if I need any more of that." I'm just saying you get into other things and start doing other things. Down here, we got into snow skiing for a while and got into old cars for a while, and you'd go to the meets and so on. You just do different things. So the time period we were up there, Kodiak was great. But when we moved out, hey, life just goes along, and you take other turns.

CP: Do you think that Oregon fishermen are still – new guys are still going up to fish in Alaska?

TP: Do I think what now?

CP: New Oregon fishermen or guys from here just starting out are going up to Alaska to fish?

TP: Well, the difference – you got rationalization now, so you might have a crew member or a skipper that's going run somebody's boat, or somebody decides to sell part of their boat to have another guy run it, and they buy into it. So you still have that, the crew and skipper still that'll be coming. But far as just saying, "Hey, I'm going to go to Alaska and fish," you can't do it. Halibut went to the quota system, and you own the product and the rationalization on the crab and so on. Now to get into business up there, you got to put out a lot of money to get in business. It's not just the boat anymore. It used to be just the boat and the pots and that. I say, "Just." That was a lot. But now you got to buy the product to go fish there.

CP: Can you maybe talk about how the different fisheries have changed as far as how much a license cost when you first got in as opposed to –?

TP: Yes, basically. If I remember, a license down here in Oregon at the time was ten dollars for a commercial fishing license. I think the boat paid another – don't quote me – let's say fifteen dollars or twenty dollars for a boat license, and then your personal license is something like that. You probably know what they are today here, I don't know. But you get up there, and now your crew has to have licenses, and what are they? About a hundred dollars or something like that. Then your skipper, he has to have a license for the fishery you're in, and that's around six-hundred bucks other than we fish native product, also – CDQ [Community Development Quota], and that license is three-thousand dollars. Then if you have somebody else fish the boat, they got to get that. Like we have a different skipper come on, which we have, so then you got to buy another three-thousand dollars license. Actually, we're paying for all the – we aren't paying for the crew's license; we're paying for the skipper's license and for if you have to have one for the CDQ and that, then we pay for that. So it's not cheap. Then they had a buyout program in Alaska, and each fishery is different on the percentage, so you got to pay for that back, and to the government. Then you have the fee basically for managing us, and

that's a percentage. I think, between all the fees, we pay about nine percent. You can look on the (EERs?) when you get home, but you pay – I think it's about nine percent on top of whatever your other licenses are off your gross – not off the net, off the gross. That comes off – taken right off immediately. I'm going to get a little more coffee. You need a little more coffee?

CP: Oh, sure. Thank you. How old is your dog?

TP: (Duffy?) is – she's either eight or nine. We're going to have to get her birth certificate out to see. I know she's eight, but she could be nine. You silly dog. [laughter] We've been spending part of the year in Hawaii, and she goes over. The kennel they made her has – the one that will fit her fine, she can get in there, turn around, whatever. They're laying down anyway when they're flying over. Well, anyway, they made us get the big kennel, a huge kennel, because they said, "Oh, she could put her head up, and if it touches the top, then she's going to have to the big kennel." Anyway, that kennel's about three times more expensive to ship than the little one. We got a program figured out where she goes into Honolulu, and we have a gal pick her up. Then she can't fly over on the big island, Kona, and so she can't fly over on the regular plane that we fly over on, so she's got to go on the cargo plane late at night.

TP: [inaudible]

CP: So the gal takes her to her place and puts her on that plane at night, so it works out. But anyway, she's kind of a half-Hawaiian dog.

TP: Traveling dog. [laughter]

CP: Traveling dog, yeah. But anyway. So expenses have changed a lot. You got the product that's guaranteed. Well, maybe. I started into if you have a rebuilding program, let's say – that was one of the things that – the unknowns. "Why'd you sell out?" Well, age, and think about your sons not wanting to stick with it, and one thing and another. Then if you have a rebuilding program, it takes five years, and you can't fish; you're just sitting. Maybe it won't come to that, but maybe it will. We've seen it before with king crab up there, where all of a sudden you're shut down, [and] you don't have a king crab season. Let's say opies and king crab goes down. Or what's the product worth? If you're in a rebuilding program, it makes the product – your product's going to fluctuate, depending on how much quota's out there each year as to what that product's worth. So those are the things I looked at, and then we decided to spend some time [inaudible] here over there in Hawaii. So it's not too bad.

CP: [laughter] Sounds pretty good to me.

TP: I'm just saying there's other things to do, and if you go to a warm area, it's nice when you know it's snowing or blowing or raining over on this side. A lot of things have changed – the licensing. You take ninety percent of your gross; figure it out. You have someday, the buyout program, it'll be paid off. I don't know if they got figured how fast

it's paying things off, but yes, it'll be paid off someday. I think that one alone is five percent. It depends on the fishery. Each one's a little different, but I think for ours, we're paying five percent. Then we have – the other thing that's new is the co-ops. If I join the co-op and then you get more latitude on fishing the product – other people's product, one thing and another, running through the co-op. So that's good, but it still costs money. They charge a fee for that, for belonging to the coop, and it's based on how much product you got and how much cash. So that's way different than it was. It's not a case of just going fishing anymore; I can tell you that. [laughter]

CP: Yes, it seems pretty complicated. [laughter]

TP: Well, it is sometimes. You're trying to do everything right, and I'll guarantee there's going to be something sneak up on you that even though you're doing it each year – I'm going to put myself a little list, you got to do this at this time, blah, blah, blah. But it seems to – something always comes into play that you aren't – creeps up on you and then you got some kind of problem. You're trying to do everything legal. It's always something. So what kind of response have you had out of the other eight people you interviewed?

CP: About the same.

TP: About the same?

CP: Yes.

TP: Are these people fishermen that have gone from here up to Alaska?

CP: Yes, or started up there.

TP: Okay, or started.

CP: Yes. Actually, I'm going to Kodiak in September for something else, but I'm going to try to talk to some of the people that live up there still that are from here.

TP: Well, that's a good time to be in Kodiak. I don't know if you're into fishing and that, but you can at least go – it's kind of neat. Have you been up there before?

CP: I have, yes, just once.

TP: Okay. Well, the fish are in the stream, it's kind of neat just to go out and see them, even if you don't fish. So a lot of the streams up there have pretty good runs for [inaudible].

CP: We went fishing when I was up there, but we didn't catch anything.

TP: Okay.

CP: It was still fun.

TP: Yeah. That's a good time of the year. Kodiak in September usually probably is a good time of year to be there if there is any time. Usually the weather's pretty decent, unless it's misty, foggy, or something like, but most of the time, it's pretty good.

CP: We've pretty much covered everything I've got on here. Do you think your experience has been typical, fishing up there?

TP: What's typical? I don't know. It's one of those deals that everybody has different experiences. A lot is based on – some boats aren't in as good a shape as other boats, so some of those people had – or they don't keep them up, or they don't stay on top of things when they need to be repaired. So everybody's got a little different experience depending on what boat they've been on. Some boats are way more seaworthy than other boats, but that's overall now with rationalization and all that, it's – before, you went fishing, you fished according to the size of your boat and what the weather would take, but you'd still probably push it further in the envelope than you have to now, because you can back off and say, "Okay, the weather's bad today. We don't have to catch them today," and let the weather come down. So that way it's a lot better. I don't see the junk running around that – the boats that aren't kept up and that near as much.

CP: Do you think those just aren't fishing anymore?

TP: I think a lot of them aren't. A lot of them – some sold to the buyout program; some are just leasing their product. You've probably seen in Seattle; there's a lot of that fleet. Some have been sold in the last couple of years, but a lot of the fleet is just sitting and deteriorating. Really, to put some of them back in shape is a pretty costly program. So I think, for the most part, the – on rationalization, it went approximately from three hundred boats, say, in the king crab fishery to seventy-five, eighty boats, whatever it is now. So you cut a lot of boats out. For the most part, I think most guys are making money, and with making money, you keep your boat up and – because you're still – like I say, you don't have to push it, but middle of Bering Sea, you're still there. You aren't going to run somewhere and hide, so you got to be able to take the weather. Insurance-wise, you don't want anybody getting hurt. You can't afford that, so you don't – as long as you don't take chances and fish according to the boat you got, for the most part, it's fine. A lot of people say, "Hey, that's a dangerous place. There's so many people getting killed off." I said, "It's only really as dangerous as you make it, and if you fish according to your boat and don't take chances – there can always be an accident." Somebody, even though they shouldn't do something – this is what we found. We've had a couple of accidents, but it was the guy's fault. Even though we're responsible, it was their fault because they got in between a pot they should never have done. They've been told and told, "You don't do this, you don't do that," and they still do it. Those are the things that shouldn't happen. Yes, it's an accident, but it shouldn't have happened. That's the other thing I was going to say. On boats we went to, we use to have house-forward boats. The original one, the Uyak, was house-aft. You're always looking down

the crew, and it's pretty nice. You can see things starting to develop that – somebody's doing something that could be dangerous, and so you catch that. But if you're on a house-forward boat, a lot of that the skipper don't see. Unless somebody on the – one of the other crew says, "Hey, don't do that," or whatever – but that's the thing I've noticed on your house-aft looking forward, you also see the sea condition and what the crew's doing, and you're warned. You got a blowhorn and megaphone, and you warn them. You tell them, "Hey, we got a big one coming at us." The other thing that – lifting the pots aboard. Some crews shouldn't be lifting the pots aboard. Some people can't judge the roll of the boat. Let's say you lift the pot at the wrong time; the boat takes a roll this way – it's coming up this way. The pot swings out, and now you've got [inaudible] when the boat comes back this way, coming back. So the object is when the boat comes up like that, you're lifting the pot, it slides into your rack that holds it. Everybody's pretty much gone to pot launcher that holds your pot, and it's pretty safe. But on our boats, we have the control for the skipper, so we run the control. If you're the skipper, he runs the control to lift that pot aboard, and you can judge things when you get it there, too. Plus, it eliminates having – one of the guys can be doing something else as opposed to running the control for lifting it onboard. So those are all things that are good about the schooner style boat, house-aft boat. You don't have near the capability with the house-forward boat, seeing what's going on. So that's really why we went to all schooner boats over time there. We had three different boats that were house-forward between my brother and I and my dad and switched over to house-aft on all of them. What else? [laughter]

CP: I guess you already talked about what Kodiak was like. Is there anything that you'd like to say about your time fishing in Alaska?

TP: Well, fishing – it's a good way of life. It's probably tougher for the family because you're spending time away from home. But it also can be rewarding. You work hard, and you fish hard, and you got enough product, and like I said, it's changed. Before in the derby style, the harder you worked, the more you're out there, the better chance you have of getting ahead. So I'd say that it's not for everybody, on the fishing. We have women that call and [say], "My husband this, and he's not spending any time at home." But also if you fish hard or go into fishing, and you fish hard, and you save your money, it's still a good way to get ahead. But so many guys don't save their money. That's the problem. They don't pay the government on their taxes, and they spend money in the bars or whatever, and all of a sudden, they haven't got any money. But the ones that I know also that save their money, they can still get enough ahead to whether, if they can't – and maybe they're good enough where they're going to start running a boat. They're going to make more by running the boat. Eventually, they might buy into a boat. That way, it's still a pretty good way to get yourself ahead. But even if you save your money and you want to get into a business, you keep saving it, pretty soon you got enough to get into some other business that you're interested in that you want to do. So it's still good. But work's darn hard on a lot of hourly jobs to do that. Plus, you're still your own person, even the crew members. They're considered independent workers.

CP: Contractors, yes.

TP: Right. For the most part, you ask them – they got latitude. You ask them to do this, this, and this, and they do that, and then you can do what you want, at least on their time off. [laughter] But if you're fishing, you got so much gear to get through, and you do that. I still consider it's a good way of life.

CP: Is it pretty common then – there are a lot of things I don't know anything about, but I just assume one person would buy their own boat, but it seems like a lot of people go in together and buy-in.

TP: It varies. Let's say you, as an individual, can afford to – and the bank will loan you enough money, and you got enough to put down or whatever to get into a sixty-foot boat, and – this was before rationalization, you would say, then you didn't have to buy the product. So you may say, "Well, I can handle that, but really I can make enough more where if I had an eighty-foot boat or hundred-foot boat that it would more – and I'd feel safer on a bigger boat." So you might go to your buddy over here and say, "Hey, are you interested in going in on a boat and splitting time," or maybe the buddy just has some extra money to loan. So it's been both ways. But pretty much been – with family, we're partners. Eventually, like the *Alaska Trojan*, it went to – before I had somebody else buy in, I bought my dad out. So it's just me. But the other part of that is when I let, say Mike Wilson buy-in, then he's got incentive, too. He owns a part of that boat. He's got incentive to watch out for my interests the same as his. So that's probably a lot of the partnerships are based on that, where you let –

CP: The skipper or something.

TP: – one of your good guys buy-in. Yes, it's usually your skipper is what you do. We had that with basically every boat we've had. Let somebody buy in the *Buccaneer* that was built here. Same deal, let a guy buy-in, and eventually, he ended up buying us out. The same with the [inaudible]. A guy that had been working with us, and then he went to skipper, and then let him buy-in, and then he ended up buying the boat and the rest of the permits. So it's just a means of making sure you got somebody there that's looking out for your interests, the same as they look out for their own.

CP: Makes sense. I think that's all I had for you unless you want to say anything. [laughter]

TP: Well, I can't think of too much else. [laughter] Kind of brought you up through the years.

CP: Yes. Could you suggest –?

TP: Pardon?

CP: I'll turn this off.

----------END OF INTERVIEW----------

Reviewed by Molly Graham 8/4/2020