

Maritime Studies 4994W Oral History Project

The University of Connecticut

Recording Log

Interviewee: Len Sawyer, resident of Mystic, Connecticut, retired lobsterman from the long Island Sound

Interviewer: Jack Hobert

Date of recording: April 13, 2020

Recording format/notes: Recorded phone interview digitally, using one phone on speaker to talk, and another phone to record to the app "Voice memos". Recorded at my computer desk at home while on the phone. Phone interview necessary during Coronavirus, otherwise, it would have been a physical face-to-face interview.

Original Recording Length: 30 minutes, 43 seconds

Edited Recording Length: 23 minutes, 42 seconds

Location: My house in Mystic, Connecticut calling Len at his house in Mystic, Connecticut

Subjects/Topics: Lobstering being a Family Business and generational, stringing bait and lobster pots, lobstering time schedule, Lobstering exclusively in the Long Island Sound, working exclusively with his grandfather and hauling and baiting pots, uncle dying of asphyxiation on boat, weather unpredictability effect on lobstering, Building their own lobster pots, Poachers stealing gear, First-hand experience with Lobster shell disease, Trawling, Connecticut killing tons of lobsters with mosquito repellent in Sound & Monetary Compensation, catch regulations, trawling line length, bait fish, Fisherman wrapped up in gear story, Navy & Submarine story, buying bait

Time-Stamp	Topic
00:00	Introduction
00:24	Childhood/Early Life
1:11	Work life
1:51	Where they would lobster
2:19	Generations of lobstermen
2:32	Family Business
3:10	Day in the life
3:30	Bait

3:43	Grandfather and Len working together & additional family business history including family death of asphyxiation on boat
5:15	Len getting older & bigger and helping grandfather haul pots
5:28	Number of pots checked and trapped
6:05	Unpredictability of weather/Lobsters
7:42	Building own lobster pots from wood
8:34	Switching to wire lobster pots
8:46	Poachers
9:06	Wind can have effect on lobsters (unpredictability)
9:33	Lobster shell disease
11:17	Lobster die-off due to Connecticut spraying pesticides
12:40	Catch regulations & limits
13:12	Poacher story
13:49	Not enough state personnel
14:15	Fishing in New York State as well as CT (2 sets of rules and regulations to follow)
14:40	Trawling line story
16:07	Mother made netting for pots each day
16:26	Biggest Lobster ever caught
16:52	Retirement as Lobsterman
17:08	Schooling, getting degree, and teaching
17:33	Being a retired artist
18:09	Working at Mystic Seaport
19:22	2 Naval Submarine disputes
20:18	Submarine running through their gear story
20:50	2 nd Submarine story – almost flipping Len’s boat and killing him
22:32	Buying barrels of bait in New Bedford