

Christina Pacakage-Ward: So, I guess if we could just start, maybe, with your background and how you got into the fishing industry.

Male Speaker: Well, my dad was a logger, and he quit logging in 1956 and moved to the coast [inaudible]. I was only thirteen at the time. So, I started fishing with him in 1957 and come up to the troll fishery and then eventually into the bottom fishery and then built my own. I started buying boats and then eventually built my own boat that I fished in Alaska, Oregon, and California, Washington. So, that's kind of what I did in the short capsule form.

CPW: So, what did you fish for down here?

MS: Well, here we started out fishing for salmon, and then we fished for all the bottom fish. We fished for tuna and scallops. A few guys that fish scallops down here. We fished halibut, black cod, about everything that's here. We fish crabs. Crabs have been one of our primary fisheries. Shrimp has been one of our primary fisheries. So, I have two boats in shrimping now and then I have a little one that I run for crabbing. Then just a little bit of tuna fish and stuff in the summer. But I kind of get off in the summer and then I work in the winter. I think I got one more winter. That's it.

CPW: You have the last dance, right?

MS: Yes. Yes.

CPW: Then what did you fish? Or what do you still fish for in Alaska?

MS: Well, they're going to – kinders. The skippers. Alternate skippers are going to be fishing tuna fish. We fished a little bit of salmon, but it was pretty scratchy. So we didn't stay out that too long. But he'll be fishing tuna fish. Then in the fall, we'll get ready and crab again.

CPW: Do you still fish up in Alaska or no?

MS: No, I haven't went back up. I built a boat to fish in Alaska and I fished up there for six or seven or eight years and then come back home. I want to be home. It'd been thirty some years and I really hadn't been home much. So, I decided I'd spend some time at home. So, I sold that boat in Alaska and went to The Gulf and bought a sixty-eight foot Gulf shrimper. I planned on just shrimping, but I should have known better. So, now we're back to crabbing again, so. I pretty much did that since – well, I started working in the crab business in 1966, and then I've been fishing my own stuff since 1970. In the crab business. So, newcomer.

CPW: So, you chose to stop fishing in Alaska just to be back home?

MS: Well, that was some of it. I had a son coming up, but he wasn't ready to take the boat. He just wasn't responsible and at that time it's hard to find somebody to run the boat. It was a really good boat. You want somebody pretty confident up there. You don't want some idiot. So, I just decided to take a little profit on because I built the boat myself. So, we built it pretty cheap. We built it up the river here and so, I took a profit and bought the smaller – it's actually the same size

boat, but it's not a West Coast built boat. So, it wasn't as big. It's setting down here now. I decided I'd just shrimp, and of course shrimp market fell apart. So, we had to go back to crabbing and shrimping. Then we do offshore tuna with it, too. We've got forty-day capabilities, so we can do that, too.

CPW: So, you were just up there for –

MS: Well, we went up to about eighty-one, and halibut fishing was really coming on. We fished the halibut, Dungeness crab, king crab, Tanner crab. So, we were pretty busy. I could do a lot of different stuff with that boat. So, we fished as far west as Atka Island out onto the illusion chain and as far down on the mainland is Yakutat. Fishing Dungeness down in that round Yakutat. So, we covered quite a lot area and then we come back in the winter sometimes and fish Dungeness. It just depended on what it looked like. They face that way six or seven years up there.

CPW: Why did you choose to go up there?

MS: Well, in 1981, that was El Nino. 1980, 1981 was El Nino years and it was really tough. We couldn't get any shrimp priced. There wasn't a lot of shrimp. The guys that stayed around might have had a 300,000-pound year. I just decided I'd had enough. I'd fished five fisheries that year and hadn't made any money. So, I decided, "I'm going to do something different." I had my brother. He was there with a seventy-eight foot boat already. I had lots of friends up there already who'd already been fishing there for years. So, I just brought up there and went to work. It kind of saved her because things were pretty tough around the El Nino years. We were still making good money up there and the guys down here were struggling, so. When things picked back up here, I just decided to be back here. In 1992, I had quadruple bypass heart surgery, so then I went back up and fished three or four weeks after I had surgery because everybody walked off the boat. So, since then I've had to change my diet and it's better to be home a little bit. I do better at home eating than I do on the boat. So, if I stay close, I'm better. My wife will wave her finger at me and make sure that I go straight.

CPW: Where did you deliver?

MS: In Alaska? Well, we delivered mostly in Kodiak. We did work to a processor over in icy bay a little bit. Not very much. Early on, I delivered to a processor on the south end of Kodiak. One of my friends from Newport that had a processor up there. Lyle Negus. And we fished to him a little bit, but after that, we were pretty much fishing to Alaska Fresh Seafoods, which was owned by a bunch of Newport people. Four different partners that owned it. Wilbert Hall was mixed up in it. Then John Hall, Ted Painter, and the guy that runs the plant. They all owned it. So, that was a good spot to fish because I knew everybody and they paid well. It's a good plant to work for. I did work for King Crab a little bit, but not too long. Only about three months and moved again.

CPW: Do you know how long they owned the plant for?

MS: They still own it. Well, they bought it long in the heyday of the King Crab. I would guess

they must have bought it – not way back – but like 1976, maybe 1977. Somewhere along in there. He was right in there beside the big – there used to be a big ship there. That was all Alaska, and that was owned partially by Wilbert Hall from Newport here.

CPW: Oh, wow. Okay.

MS: He was right in there. Just a little clap. I can't remember what the name was. Forest Alaska Fresh. Right on the edge of town. It was quite a few plants there at that time. There was [inaudible]. They run shrimp. The Mooneys come along and they bought a plant at East Point. It was quite a few plants. Even Kalakala, which was a ferry pulled up on the beach out there to give some Cove. That was New England Fish Company's at one time. That was their plan. Then they went broke. I fished for them for seventeen years down here, and then they went broke. So, I don't remember who owned that one. But there were quite a few plants.

CPW: That's interesting that that ferry was up there. Because that's in Seattle now.

MS: Yeah. Yeah, they drug it down. I was going to redo it. I don't know if they ever got it redone. It was a mess. They had holes drilled in the sides of the pipes running all over because it was pulled up on the ground there.

CPW: Oh, I didn't know that. My grandma loves that ferry for some reason. I'll have to tell her it was a process.

MS: Yeah, that's what it was. New England Fish Company. In fact, one of my friends that comes down and runs the fish plant down here. He'd worked on it when he was a young guy, when he first started with the New England Fish Company.

CPW: Did you spend much time in Kodiak?

MS: Well, when we're fishing there we usually come in and call home because that was the only way to get through, really. Then, we'd get back on the boat and get back out of town. We just stayed out of town most of the time. That way we didn't have problems. Well, the crew I had, they weren't really drinkers or wild anyways. But we were there to make money. I got all kinds of relatives in Kodiak. I got two nieces and my nephew was there for a while. Then my brother also lived there for a while. So, I've got all of these up there. There are a lot of Newport people in Kodiak. There was at one time, there's not as many now.

CPW: It seems like there's quite a connection. Why do you think that is? Just because the plant was up there or?

MS: No, no. It's because the Newport fishermen are very energetic and they're real good at getting on top of things early. They do a really good job of figuring things out. The Newport here started the joint venture. Barry Fisher and those guys started the joint venture with the Russians and stuff like that. They're just real innovative. Wilbert Hall. He was a real leader. He bailed out of here probably in 1962 or 1963. He took his little boat, Little Sea Breeze. It was about a fifty-footer. He took it to Alaska and fished king crab with it. He just gradually

started building until he built a truck tremendously between him and his son.

Burn was my age. No, just real innovative fisherman for a small town. I mean, even the distant water fleet. We got a pretty good distant water fleet that works up there. There's some that have never come in here, they're still in Seattle. But Wilbert's boat is the bigger boat that stays in Seattle. But we got the eighty, ninety footers here. Some of them are here right now. They're going to be fishing whiting, but they are shut off for a while here because they didn't like the size of the fish.

CPW: Do you know when it might start back up?

MS: The 20th.

CPW: The 20th?

MS: Yeah, I have to go look again. The 20th. Yeah, that's really most of it. Newport's just been really innovative. We built the shrimp sorter. We had a guy that was kind of like Gyro Gearloose. He was just kind of a half-assed genius. We turned him loose and said, "Here's what we need." We gave him \$10,000 and he made the shrimp sorter, which was really a piece of work for us. We were really fighting trying to get the by catch out of the shrimp product. Since then, we've made all kinds of changes, and we've kind of gotten to where we don't catch much of it now. But, when we first started, we had overhang nets and everything, and, boy, we caught a lot of overburden that we didn't want.

CPW: Were you involved in the Joint Venture?

MS: No, I wasn't. I didn't want to get into that. I didn't care for the fishery. My fishing, I don't want a mothership to tell me when I'm going to fish. If I don't like the weather, I'm not going to fish. I just don't think it's safe. I'm going to do it my way, and I'm not going to be told when I have to fish. It was always that going on. If you didn't fish, they'd get somebody to replace you. He had to put a lot of money in the boat, and I didn't see any end to it, and that's kind of the way it's still going. They'll get the boat and then the boat is going to be bigger. So, they widen the boat. Well, now we don't have enough horsepower. So, they change the motor. Well, the winches aren't big enough, now the net's too small, and it's just an ongoing thing. They make money, but they pump a lot of money back. I just didn't want to get caught up in that. We were doing fine. I was happy with what we were doing.

CPW: I mean, do you feel like people here from Newport are still going up to Alaska to fish?

MS: Well, we got our fleet, but not as much. No. Well, you got all the area closures, IFQs, and all the rationalization. Different stuff. If you don't have a piece of paper, you don't fish. So, it pretty much kills any incentive for young guys. They can get on deck hands, but there's not the money they used to be. Although, still the drag boats, probably, their deckhands make over \$100,000 a year. Even now. But the big money is gone. So, we lose some of our gene pool. There are good kids. We lose those. But, when you start adjusting and making all these rules, you're always going to rule somebody out that you didn't want to.

CPW: Well, I guess – I mean is there anything you'd like to say about that time in Alaska?

MS: No. We really enjoyed it. We were there. I'm glad we went when we did because I got to see Alaska. Granted, it was inhabited, but it wasn't anything like it is now. We're all sports and we hunt and fish. Of course you couldn't get a better place. We did a lot of that and I really enjoyed it. We still made money, so that was the good part. They were good enough to let us in and work, so I felt really, really happy they did. I could have stayed there, but it was starting to stretch me out and I needed to be home.

CPW: So, basically, I just want to make sure I understand correctly. I mean, you just have to go up there and get a permit basically in order to –

MS: It was even permits at all. You bought your license. You bought all the licenses for different fisheries. It was \$1,800, \$2,000, by the time you got King crab, Tanner, Dungeness, Halibut, and a boat license. So, it was some money. But I didn't mind it because if I can catch something, that's the end game. It's to catch something. They had it, so I don't mind paying for it. Now, there's actually been a lawsuit. Now, they won the lawsuit, and they're going to give some of that money back to us.

CPW: Wow.

MS: I kind of felt like, well, that was all right. I mean, living there and I didn't have a problem with it, but I guess I'll have to take the money.

CPW: [laughter] Darn. Let's see. I don't know. We kind of just blew through everything I had to ask you here. But I guess I'm just interested in how the fisheries have changed you and why people went up there. But you've kind of already covered all that.

MS: Well, fisheries changed a lot from the time I started it. We had long seasons, and all you had to worry about was getting some ice in the boat and going fishing. Ice and groceries. Now, we have so much regulation. We have a lot of the activists in the Greenpeace and the Greenies, which is fine. I mean we're all environmentalists. The fishermen certainly are. But we don't get much credit for what we do, and that's the part that really aggravates me because we've made a tremendous amount of changes and they just look at us and we tell them about this. We'll sit down and cite all these changes that we've made, and we don't get any credit for it. They say, "Okay." That's it. But we still want to do this. Our sanctuaries, we're talking about this marine reserves right now. I've been on boards for those. The people, a lot of them, it's about emotion. We present them with a set of facts and they don't look at the facts. It's just, "We want this." We can't convince them that, yeah, we're willing to do some of his, but at some point we have to have a stop because we've got wind energy, we've got oil exploration, we've got marine reserves. Pretty soon we don't have a place fish. They don't seem to get that. They just don't understand. They think, "Well, you're just going to go fish." It's not that way. There's some really good spots and then there's – but you can't eliminate any spots because you don't know that next year that's not where they're at. If there's anything that you learn over years and years of fishing is that you don't know very much. Even for all the time you spent out there, my whole life was spent out there, and I'm still learning. Every year I learn something. That's not book learning,

it's hands-on. That's just what we have to live with. We just have to figure out how to live with environmentalists. Somewhere in here they're going to have to cut back a little bit. They're going to have to reel themselves in. I don't know how we're going to get to that point, but if we're to exist, they're going to have to reel back. Well, if they're going exist. I mean, you can't just quit cutting trees and stuff. I mean, we need all these natural resources, and that's what they are. They'll grow back. That's what a natural resource is. Long as it's taken care of, it'll keep coming back, but that's a hard thing for us to get across. A good example I use at the marine reserve meetings. We have these people that say, "Oh man, the reefs will just be so good if we just leave them alone." I try to explain to them when I started fishing in 1957, there was a guy named Freddie Robinson. He had a charter boat. Good friend of ours. He'd been fishing a couple of years. He was fishing on the rockpiles, and he fished on the rockpiles his whole life. Now, I've been fishing fifty-three years. There's two boys in Depoe Bay. Their name's Robinson. That's his sons, and they're still fishing rockpiles fifty-three years. Now, if that doesn't indicate that we're not killing the species. Yeah, it may be [inaudible], but we're not killing it. Because, otherwise, they couldn't be there fifty-three years and still be fishing. That's the best example I have. I don't know. We have a lot of stuff coming at us.

CPW: Yeah. Does it seem like they have a misunderstanding of what you are out there doing then?

MS: Well, that's what a lot of us have said as fishermen. We think a biologist, or anybody that's going to be associated with the say, it's timber, whatever, farming. That when they come out of school, they should go and have an internship. If it's on a boat. We got people that would take them and go out and see what this is all about. Just go and see what the fishermen are doing, and the loggers, and the farmers. I think that's a real eye opener because they come out of school and they've got their school education and it's pretty much pointed one way. Everything is bad. Everything's going sour. We have to change it. Until you reeducate them – and some of them will never be reeducated. They can educate us. I'm not saying we have all the answers, by any means, but they've got to meet us part way. This can't be totally one way. Everything works for them and against us. You know, they can put an injunction against the logger, but he can't put an injunction against them. I think that's wrong. I think if they come in the logger should be able to say, "Well, why can't I log this timber sale? You show me vital data on why I can't log it." Then I think we'd have more balance. Because they're all donations. They got the Packard Foundation, Pew Foundation. Pews and Packer gave a lot of money at Sun Oil. I'm not sure down the road there isn't something in the background there. I'm just paranoid to think these marine reserves, possibly, it's Sun Oil or somebody. I don't know. I don't what the heck it is. Just a fairer balance. That's what we ask for. We're not really getting that right now.

CPW: So, they're just going ahead with the marine reserves?

MS: No. No, we've put together some committees. We gave them two little marine reserves, and we said, "Well, study these." We got together. Depoe Bay has an area up there and they studied for two years. Our group in Newport, we said, "If Depoe Bay is happy with it, then we would support it." Because it's their little area. Then there were the redfish rocks at Blanco. They gave them that one and we talked with those people down there. "Are you happy?" "Yeah." The fisherman, everybody, said this is something we can do. So, we've given them two

areas and now they come right back and now they want three more. One of them was going to be like twenty miles long right through our best crab grounds. They always want to shut it off. I mean, this is grounded. I got it. It produces some serious amounts of crabs in the first six weeks. There's millions of dollars coming off that ground. I don't know. That's what we fight all the time. I'm still willing to give them a little bit. We got a couple of proposals going for small areas that they can study. But what I'm afraid of is if we give them their small areas, they'll turn around and come back. At one point they had nineteen or twenty reserves they wanted to put on the coast here. Well, that just pretty much took the coast. They just can't understand that we're really mobile and we move a lot. We have to. The fish aren't always in the same spot, or whatever you're trying to catch, and you just have to move around and get them. That's hard for them to understand I guess. They have visions of these things that we see in California and Hawaii where they're swimming around in the colored fish and everything. It's all around them. Well, that isn't reality. You can't see the bottom here. There's very few days that you really get any visibility at all down there. They're certainly not going to be swimming down there in [inaudible]. It's not going to happen. Yeah, it's way too deep. But that's the kind of stuff we deal with. We've got three different women down here that have bed and breakfast in this particular area where they want the Marine reserve. They said that'll help their business. That'll be ecotourism. I can't put together what are you going to do? I mean, you can look out at the ocean. Nothing's going to change out there. You can look out. It's still there just like it has been. So, you want to just lock this area up so we completely lost it? For what reason? That's the kind of stuff we have. One lady in Florence runs a tanning salon and she said it'll help my business. That's the kind of stuff we deal with. We're going, "Yeah". We're pulling our hair out. If you've got a good argument, let's have it. But don't give me that your tanning booths are going broke. Because you're taking us out of business. We're here and we've got the numbers to prove we put money in the community. I don't know what it is. I've heard all kinds of numbers here in Newport, but it could be forty, fifty million dollars to Newport fleet. That's part of it. Then, the draw. The tourists love to come and see the fish boats because you can go look at Reeds Port, Garibaldi, or Winchester Bay for that matter. They don't have the fishing fleet. Yeah, they still get the tourists, but they don't get it like we do. People love to come here and go down amongst the boats and see them. It's a working waterfront, even though it stinks like fish once in a while.

CPW: Are they still talking about the wave parks and all that?

MS: Well, we've got one going in here shortly. They've built this humongous buoy that they're going to stick out there. It's going to go in off of Reeds Port. We're having trouble with those people, too, for the same reason. They want to throw something in and they don't know if it's going to work. They're just going to throw it out there and then if it sinks, it sinks. We have to deal with it. I was on that board. I was on the fine committee. We established the first committee on the coast. We actually had Lincoln County go to FERC, which is the governing body, for all this and say "We want to lease on that now." It just threw them for a loop. No one in the municipality ever did that. They didn't know what to do with this. You're supposed to get a response within so many days. They went on and on. It was over a year and they still hadn't given us a response. They didn't know what to do. Finally, they refused us. But they were going to give twenty-five year leases to these guys testing this stuff. Just give them a chunk for twenty-five years. We said, "Make them prove their stuff works." That's what we push for was a prototype test park in Oregon State. We've been working with Oregon State, and that's what

they're putting in. It's a test site. People will be able to bring their buoy here and test it to prove that it works and prove that it's not going to sink. Because there's no sense in putting something out there if it's not going to last through the winter and it isn't going to make them any money. I know they can make electricity with these machines. That's not the question. It's how expensive it's going to be. It's going to be so expensive. Unless all of our electricity just goes crazy, you could never sell it. Because all you have to do is lose one of those million and a half, two million dollar buoy. They have to go reclaim it. That's going to take a half a million dollars. Now the thing isn't working. They're not getting electricity out of it. It's a really hostile environment out there. I've been there my whole life and it's pretty tough to keep anything working out there. If they can keep it working, it's going to be expensive. Because maintaining it – you get a buoy that big, it's really a problem to maintain. Sooner or later you have to unhook it, tow it out of there, and find some place where you can work on it. They're still working on it, and that one's supposed to go in this fall. It was supposed to go in two years ago. If they can get it generate, they're going to say it's a success, then they want to put in, I think, ten, and then they want to put in one hundred after that. It would be like eleven square miles just locked up. I don't know. We've battled that one, too. It's been a long battle. The sagging economy has helped our situation because they haven't been able to raise money. But when they were getting that seed money, oh man, they were all hot for it. They were goofballing. The world had come up with some idea of how he could generate electricity in the ocean. There goes Wilbert Hall. He's ninety-one. Just sharp as a tack, and a fisherman most of his life. His brother Raymond is ninety-two. Both of them still have boats. Wilbert's probably got at least six, seven boats. Yeah, bigger boats. But you wouldn't know he had a dime. Just one of them kind of guys. Really nice person. He lives right up the hill here. I went to school with all his kids. They're all my age.

CPW: I left him a couple voicemails, but maybe I will try to call after this.

MS: He's a nice person. When you get an interview out of him, that's good. It's hard to say. He's really sharp. He's come up with a lot of stuff over the years, ways to do things. He was up there early in Alaska, he really was. Him and his brother started fishing, I think, at about, maybe, 1934, 1935. Somewhere out of Waldport. They were down at Coos Bay then back up Waldport and then they ended up here. Any he went from here right into Kodiak. Been fishing in Kodiak for years. He even had two boats in Russia for a while. On the land lease deal fishing king crab and [inaudible]. On top of the world, they had some pretty good fishing for a while.

CPW: [inaudible]

MS: Yeah, trying to think what the name of it is. It's up around the corner from [inaudible] there. Yeah, a lot of history when you talk to those guys.

CPW: Was there anything that you'd like to say about your fishing history here?

MS: No. Good life. Enjoyed it. I've got a son now. He's fourth generation, actually. He's thirty-seven. He's a really good fisherman. Better fisherman than me. Probably not better as far as taking care of all the equipment because I rebuilt everything of mine. For years, when we were poor and had poor equipment, you had to keep it all working. So, I worked on everything.



Whether it was rebuilt motors, or whatever it took, because you didn't have the money to do it. He's pretty lucky. All these young guys are pretty lucky because we've given them excellent equipment. But, he's a good fisherman and I don't know if any of his family will fish or not. He's got a boy, but I don't know that he'll fish. I don't know there'll be fishing. I'm pretty concerned about it because they're trying awful hard to get us off the ocean. Got those groups that just don't want us there. No matter whether we're sustainable yield or whatever, they'd just rather see us off of there. I don't know what that means. I guess you farm and import everything. It's importing and it just doesn't work. We're sitting there with all this situation now. That's, yeah, wow, there's a purse. [laughter]

CPW: Yeah, it's colorful.

MS: It's good down here. She's styling. Well, that's about all I got to say. Just waiting around to die and it's taking a lot longer than I figured.

CPW: Don not say that.

MS: I'm real careful in the ocean, but I don't worry about it. If I go, I go. I had a good time.

CPW: Okay, let us stop this guy.

[end of transcript]