

Male Speaker: Sorry, John, one camera took off and one did not. So, I need to match up the time codes.

Andrew Cesareo: Choice was made for you by the fish. The sardines were being seen around San Peter Harbor or Los Angeles Harbor and the islands at Catalina and Clemente. Gillnets, you couldn't catch sardines or macro or tuna with that type of a net there. So, as the time progress in the [19]20s, I guess in the [19]50s, through World War, they did a lot of gillnetting. But then they start buying the boats from up Washington. I think Washington used it for years. They also used the gillnetting. But purse seining was I think a better type of fishing because they could either see the flips of the fish. The fish would break water, or they would see them somehow, maybe the darkness of the school. They would go around the school to fish and that was their preference. You can catch more fish, I think more economy and a lot easier there. So, everybody, all the fishermen started going to the purse seining because they caught sardines. With the purse seining they caught mackerel, they caught tuna, yellow tail, barracuda, all sorts of fish. I remember when I was a youngster that my dad had the Cleopatra. They used to go out and load the boat, load the deck. They would call it deck load. They would have six-foot-high planks, and they would load it with sardines. They'd come in, unload it, and go out for another load in the same day. So, he did very well at that. He was a pretty active fisherman, did well with purse seining. I think the only ones that stayed gillnetting were the oh, I guess I would say older or men that want the fish by themselves. Or one- or two-men crew. I think that's one of the probably disadvantage. The purse seining would have ten-man crew, where the gillnetting had one or two, maybe three. So, there was more occupation for the fishermen. The boats were bigger. They could catch more fish. That's what really supplied the cannery. The sardines, the tuna. That was the big thing at that time.

MS: I hear people often say so-and-so was really a successful good fisherman. Essentially you are going out there with a net and you are catching. What makes a good fisherman, a great fisherman versus somebody who is not so good at it?

AC: That's a good question. I think that a lot of fishmen skippers get their reputation by the amount of fish they catch. The amount of trips they make to Mexico. There's one fishman that was here, Anton Misetich was a very good fisherman. But he was the hardworking way. I mean, if he sees a school of fish no matter what size he'd set for it. So, you literally learn to be a good fisherman working with a man like Anton Misetich. There was, I can't think of the other. (Marian Yazitch?) was a good fisherman, (Andrew Zabron?). These were kind of the top-notch fishermen. They were maybe the A scale. Then there was a B scale, which the men did well. Then sometimes there were the smaller lower-class fishermen. They were good fishermen, but a lot of times their nets were not as good. They were maybe weaker. They would catch a school of fish and the net would break because it was too much fish in there. So, I guess the reputation of being a good fisherman was the amount of fish you caught and the amount of trips you made to Mexico. Some boats would make from January to September, some would make five, six trips, seven trips. Some would make less. So, that's the secret. I think a big secret is having a good massman. That's the man that goes up in the crow's that's forty, fifty feet high. You look for the fish. A good massman will do a good job in catching that fish. Maybe leading the school of fish and catching it. So, that's the difference I think in the better fishermen and probably the worser. I fish with both there. They're all good fishermen there. Hardworking men.

MS: So, is fishing a way to make a lot of money? Is it a lucrative kind of business?

AC: I think it was lucrative in that, let's take the starting season would run from September to January. You fish five days a week. I think Monday through Sunday night. You loaded Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and I think Saturday. So, you had Sundays off. But the lucrative is if you caught a lot of fish in that month, you made fair money. Let's compare it with at that time, long summer we were making I think \$1, \$1.5 an hour. That means you made ten-hour day, you made \$15 a day. In fishing, I don't know exactly what they made, but I know that you could make anywhere, I made between five hundred and a thousand dollars doing what they call the darker the moon. That's the five days a week say for three weeks. When it's full moon, you don't go out looking for fish because you can't see them. You can't see that white spot, that is the fish running through the water there. So, I think that a lot of men fished sardines and fished part of its summertime. Then a lot of them were also longshoreman. They did some longshore work when fishing was slow. But I think the lucrative was if you caught a lot of fish in a short amount of time, you made more money in a shorter length of time.

MS: Let us talk about your own background growing up. What are some of your early memories of the port in the San Pedro? Your stories to tell about when you were a young boy and growing up?

AC: I remember when I was young, I guess from ten to about fifteen, I used to go down to the SP Slip, which was I guess Southern Pacific Slip is where the boats tie up right now. My memory was that I used to go down and watch the fishermen hang their net which hanging means they put the nets together. I used to help them do that by threading needles. You used twine to sew the nets and to put them together. I used to thread the needles for them. Then other times I would go down to the fish market and watch the small boats come in, barracuda boats. I would help them unload. They'd give you one or two fish and you'd make two or three dollars doing that. Then later on, when I was about thirteen, fourteen, four of us had a skiff and we had a little net. It wasn't called a purse seining, but it was a net that you set around and you keep pulling the fish until you get to the bunch. That's what I was trying to think of. The bunch of the sack is where you bring the fish up to the surface. I remember we used to go on the other side of Terminal Island and we'd be fishing all night Friday night. We'd catch maybe a hundred pounds of Kingfish. They used to call them shit house shiners. That was a nickname for them. If you want to use that name in it. Then we would catch maybe a hundred pounds, take them to the fish market and sell them maybe \$20, \$30 worth. For four guys, that's \$5 apiece. That was a good little Friday night living there. That was one of the things we did.

MS: So, you were fishing...

AC: Okay, let me turn this off. Let's stop.

MS: So, just within the harbor you were starting to fish and making a small living off.

AC: That's right. In my early days, there was four of us. We used to go with a skiff that I had. I think my dad gave it to me and this net that someone gave me. We were youngsters and we did

this, I guess it was a preliminary of being a fisherman there. I know that there was four of us. It was Pete Bostitch, myself, Tony Deliva, and Mario Deliva. The four of us we used to go out every weekend. In fact, once we went to Carabela Beach, which is the beach near the breakwater, and we set the net from the shore. We made a circle. Then we brought the net up on the beach. The first time we went there, we caught a hundred pounds of croaker, which is kind of a small sea bass. That was interesting. That was a good load there. We went back to the fish market, sold it, went home and cleaned up. Of course, you get little smelly with the scales and the fish there. But that was the beginning of our fishing life I think, because we all became fishermen later on.

MS: Tell me about the market. You mentioned your father having this crew of Japanese fishermen. Did he speak Japanese or how did they work together?

AC: No, he didn't. But the men spoke English. Excuse me.

MS: You said the Japanese fisherman?

AC: The Japanese fishermen, if they didn't speak English, they had a sort of a head man, deck man. He would tell them whatever orders that my dad wanted to give them. But when they were fishermen, they really knew what had to be done. Now, in the bait fishing, the white star became a tuna clipper. They would go down the Magdalene Bay, I think it was Magdalene Bay or different bays in Mexico to catch the bait. That was I think the setback in bait fishing. You had to look for bait and fill up your bait tanks before you could go out to catch the fish. Then they would go out to the different banks, Uncle Sam Bank, Morgan Bank, Cabo San Lucas. There's a Gordon Bank there, I think. They would look for the school to fish and start throwing the bait out towards them. Then the fish would be kind of frizzy. They'd be flying back and forth through the water after the bait. Then the men would – depends on the size of the fish. If there were say ten-to-twenty-pound fish, you would use one pole per person. As the fish got heavier, say fifty to sixty pounds, they would need two poles attached to one line there. Then as the fish got even bigger, say a hundred and fifty pounds or bigger, then he would need three poles. The idea of three poles and the leader, they would be barbless. They would just be a straight hook with feathers. I think the idea is, as you throw the bait out, the fish would run alongside the boat, you'd have your hook down there, and as they hook on the men would lean back where there's poles and the fish would be helping you get the fish aboard the deck there. Because the tails as you pull them out of the water, the strength of the fish with the whip of the tail they would pull them aboard ship there. So, that's where the bait fishing was. I remember that when I went out with them one trip, the Japanese crew members on the deck they would have their little, I guess, a cooking pot where they would cook their rice and they would cook their fish. If they had tuna, they would like to eat raw tuna, which would be like sashimi there. They would eat out on the deck. Or I know my dad, my brother, the engineer and the cook, they would eat inside the galley. Unless the weather was in Clement then the crewmen would go inside. But they loved to sit on the deck and eat their rice and the fish there.

MS: Now why would you go and do pole fishing rather than net fishing?

AC: Well, that was the style of fishing for tuna. Some of the fish, the big tuna boats from San

Diego, the Portuguese. They had big bait boats.

MS: Why not start again.

AC: In San Diego, the Portuguese had the bait boats. They were large tuna clippers. It was very profitable for them to catch the fish with the poles. We in San Pedro, we were more the purse seining fishermen. Then later on, as the years go by, in the [19]50s I remember the San Diego boats started converting to purse seiner. They all had larger boats, maybe a hundred twenty-five, a hundred fifty-foot boats. They started converting them all the purse seining, because I think that was the most profitable way of catching fish. You didn't have to go after the bait. You didn't have to, because if you didn't have any bait, you couldn't go catch any fish. A lot of times you get a load of bait and you start out to some of the islands like Socotra Island or Roca Partida, and your bait would die in rough seas. Then you got to turn it right around and go back and get some more bait. So, the profitable, the time element, I think the purse seiners became the fishing of the future there. Then in fishing with purse seiners, if we did find the fish by schools, we used to look for porpoise schools. Dolphin or porpoise. I don't know what it was, but the tuna would run underneath the porpoise. You'd look for a school of porpoise and you'd go alongside them. You run around the school of porpoise, and you can see the fish underneath. Tuna would shine. They would turn their bodies and you'd see hundreds of shining flashes which meant that was the tuna flashing under the porpoise. So, you would try to set around a few porpoises and catch some of that tuna. Now, the mistake that a lot of us made in the early days, we used to catch too many porpoises. Then you would have to sink the cork somehow, they had different weights that they would try to get the porpoise over because once the porpoise would get their noses caught in the net, they would die because they would drown. So, the idea was to catch the tuna with at least porpoise as possible and have different modes of operation to get that porpoise out of your net.

MS: Why would you not want to catch the porpoise too?

AC: Well, porpoise are mammal. They're not a fish. They're mammal and there's no market for that. You don't want to kill those. You want to keep them living because they would be the attraction of tuna. Now, I don't know whether the tuna travel with the porpoise because of maybe the plank in the water, the bait in the water. I really don't know. But that was our source of finding a lot of the tuna. But you would not want to catch the porpoise and kill them because that was your source of catching the tuna there.

MS: Let us go back to your young days in the 1930s. What are some of the other memories? For example, Terminal Island. What do you remember about Terminal Island in the 1930s?

AC: I remember they didn't have the bridge at that time. They had an auto ferry, the Islander. Then they also had a couple of small ferries that they took the cannery workers over there. That was a big operation. They must have about ten, eleven canneries. We used to go over there as a youngster and we used to go on the ferry with the cannery workers, and we used to walk to the cannery and mix with the sardines. My buddies of mine, the same four fellows. We used to separate Spanish macro out of the chute as they unload the fish. You can see every scoop maybe had maybe a hundred sardines, maybe four or five Spanish macro, where we would take the

Spanish mackerel and put them in buckets. Then we would take them in our wagons or bicycles back to the fish market. That was another source of making some side money. Instead of collecting bottles, we collected fish there. That was kind of an interesting thing. As a youngster, we used to watch the boats unload. Then I mentioned this Pete Bostitch and I, the boats used to come from Mexico, they have planked that separate sections of the boat into bends where they would ice the fish down. You put a layer of ice and a layer of fish and a layer of ice. So, in loading when you come back home, you unload the boat. They would take the planks out and we would wash the planks for them, scrub them down with a hose and a brush. Then this one skipper, Maryanne Yatich, she says, "You guys look too young and strong to wash planks, go down in a hole and help us unload this fish." So, we used to do that. They would pay us maybe twenty dollars to do that and all the fish we can carry. So, we carried a lot of fish in those days. We'd have our wagon, a four-wheel wagon and we'd go down and get, it'd be two tunas in each hand. That would be four each. We'd go back for a second trip. That would be eight more. So, we'd have sixteen tunas besides twenty dollars. We take that to the fish market. We go on the ferry boat with our wagon, and we go to the San Peter side. But those were the interesting parts of our youth. Watching the boats unload there and helping them.

MS: Were there special fish markets you would go to or somebody you would go to and sell your fish?

AC: Well, that's interesting. I would go mostly to my uncle. I had an uncle that had a fish market. His name was Paul Marinkovich. He had Pioneer Fisheries. We'd go to him and sell it. If he had too much fish, we'd go to somebody else or we would sell it to some of these they would have what they call fish dealers. They would be fish pedalers that would come with a truck and they would load it with say the bottom of the truck with ice. If they want to buy the tuna or the croakers or the kingfish, we'd sell it to them. But I think we used to have too much tuna for them to buy. We used to sell those to the fish market. That was a good. Sixteen tunas was a pretty good load of tuna there for a couple of youngsters.

MS: Now the harbor also had freighters and things like that. Can you talk about the kind of ships that were coming in and out of the harbor. Did you watch them?

AC: A lot of ships that used to come in my youth were Lumber Schooners. Where the Fort Portugal is right now, that was Ek Lumber Company. They used to come in with schooners from up north Washington, Oregon. They used to unload the lumber by hand. They used to stack them, the lumber up on under rope slings. Then they used to unload it onto the docks there. I guess Jitneys would take it away. That was one of the early things I used to watch them unload. Then they used to have a lot of the big freighters. They had the looking back freighters. Then the Mariposa and the Luling used to come in. It was the Matson ships from Hawaii. I remember watching them go in. Then as a youth, I remember the Catalina Vessels, the Avalon and the Catalina coming from Avalon. As they came through the harbor, we used to jump in the water and they would make a wave or a breaker. We'd swim out to the boat, and then ride those waves back to the shore. So, that was kind of an interesting interlude there. But in the harbor, I remember the big white Matson Liners coming in and the freighters. Then when I was in high school, I did some longshore work. I remember I went down the unemployment hall and I remember one time I got to work in Copra. Now Copra is broken up coconut, the meat of the

coconut. We used to unload that and they used to have these big suction pipes that used to suck the copra from the hole into the refinery there. Our job was what picks and shovels used to do. Keep that flow of copra to the bottom of the hole, to suck up that copra into the refineries there. That was one of the jobs I did. Then we also cut a lot of bananas. Bananas was a big cargo that a lot of young people in high school then in labor unemployment halls. When the banana boat came in, they have to unload those bananas by hand. There were stocks of bananas. You start in the first hole and you unload the middle and you start towards the wings and you carry the bananas to an elevator. I'm trying to think if it was canvas elevators. You put a stock in each opening and they would go up onto the dock. They would go onto elevators on the dock there. But that was my early experience with unloading cargo bananas and copra. I remember that when I was in high school there.

MS: Now, there is a famous street everyone talks about, Beacon Street. What can you tell me about Beacon Street?

AC: That's an interesting place there. I did a lot of things in my youth. I mentioned fishing and unloading cargo. But I also was a newspaper boy. I sold Times and Examiner down in Beacon Street. It was a lot of bars there. There was the Shanghai Red, the Bank of Fei, and Ocean Club. There was many. I think it must've been twenty bars. I used to go in each bar and sell newspapers and they never bothered me. But I remember the long shermans and the seamen used to have a lot of fights. That was an interesting part of it. Then if the fleet came in, that was another, a third party. So, there would be fights down at Beacon Street between the sailor or the longshoreman or the seamen. But every night I'd go down there and for about two or three hours, maybe a couple hours, I would sell newspapers to the seamen and to the sailors and whoever wanted to buy the newspapers. But it was a live section. I was kind of sorry to see it left, they tore it down. I think that it would've made an interesting place like Barbary Coast type of thing. Like North Beach in Frisco, they have that fishing wharf. I think that Beacon Street would've an interesting memory of the past there. It could have been there.

MS: Did you ever meet the Shanghai Red or see him?

AC: Yes, I did.

MS: Tell me about him.

AC: He was red headed.

MS: It is a Shanghai Red.

AC: The guy that owned the Shanghai Red. He was a red-headed guy, and he was tough. If you started a fight in his place, he'd boot you out on your fanny. So, he was kind of a peacemaker down there. But I think all the bars, the owners were strong men, good businessmen. I think they gave a lot of credit to some of them. When I say credit, I mean if a guy was Tap City with broke, they would let him say drink till payday came along. He just kept a record. I think that was part of the charm that these guys could go drinking down there, even though they didn't have a nickel in their pocket, they would be able to Shanghai Red or the Bank of Fei owner, I can't

think of his name at the moment, it slips me. But they were all good people. Then of course, they had a couple of cat houses down there too. I kept away from those. I was too young.

MS: But were there famous Madams, the names or famous?

AC: Yes. Millie was a famous madam. Her and her husband, I can't think of his name, but he owned one of the Goodfellow Grill. That was his bar. I remember seeing Millie and her husband go to Antes Cafe. Antes had a little cafe across from the hotel. They would be there every day for lunch there. I used to say hello to her. Then as I get older, I was in the Navy and then I remember coming out of the Navy, I met her and her sister and her husband on the ferry boat. They were going to Long Beach. I was going to Long Beach. I loved to go to Long Beach dancing. I used to go to Majestic Ballroom and the Cinderella. I'd go over there by ferry and I'd dance. It used to be a nickel of dance. I met, like I said this madam on the ferry. We went out. I think that night they said, "Would you like to come with us?" We went to the gambling ship. There was a gambling ship off of Long Beach. They took me out there and Millie's husband gave me \$500, says, "Go gamble and keep my sister-in-law company." So, we went gambling and drinking. I was eighteen years old because that was after I got out of the Navy. But getting back to Beacon Street, that was an interesting place. Antes had a restaurant there, there was a Greek restaurant. There was a lot of bars. I remember Ocean Club and many of them there.

MS: Not in Beacon Street, but there was a very famous place called Majestic Cafe.

AC: Okay. Majestic Cafe that was run by the Trainee family. That was on Seventh Street. That was a long bar and it had these wooden booths, those lacquered, the dark wood booths there. Their beef dips were excellent there. The Majestic was quite famous on Seventh Street. A lot of Longshoremen, a lot of fishermen, a lot of Pedro alumni used to go down there. Then in later years, they built the Trainers Cafe, which is now the Green Onion. They built that. That was part of I guess the Beacon Street rejuvenation or remodeling there. But the Majestic was a famous place, like I said. Then it became Trainees there.

MS: Tell me about the gambling ship that is sort of – was that the *Rex*?

AC: I think it was the *Rex*. I couldn't think of the name and you reminded me of it. It was anchored.

MS: You have to say the gambling ship *Rex*.

AC: The gambling ship *Rex* was an interesting thing. They had water taxis going from Long Beach Piers or from San Pedro out to the *Rex*. It was anchored, I think three miles offshore. It was anchored between the breakwater and horseshoe kelp. It was kind of an interesting experience for me. I had never gambled much before and I drink too much. But that was a real experience, especially when I had these few hundred dollars in my pocket. But they had crap tables go on. They had slot machines, they had roulette. I think that must've been the start of interesting gambling life. I'm eighty-three and I think from 1949, [19]48, I started going to Vegas. I love to shoot crap. I think that the *Rex* was my apprenticeship in gambling there.

MS: Well, describe the place. Was it fancy? I mean, we are going to change tapes. This is good.

AC: Maybe I never accepted a drink. I think that may cause a lot of long life, I think.

MS: Yes. That is what they say.

AC: Especially smoking.

MS: Let us go back to describe the gambling ship Rex.

AC: *Rex*, I remember leaving from St. Peter Harbor on a water taxi. I had mentioned, I was young, but I was twenty-one. I got out of the Navy and I was twenty-one years old. So, I think you had to be twenty-one to go on the ship. But the ship was kind of an old freighter that was really fixed up pretty nice. Inside they had lounges for relaxing. They had a gambling section. They had a restaurant on the ship. If you wanted to, while you were gambling, you could have food brought to you if you wanted to. They had poker games going on. But it was very nice. It was very flashy, kind of the fore running of I think Las Vegas there.

MS: Who would come there?

AC: You mean, who would gamble on the ship? You say?

MS: Yes.

AC: I think a lot of businesspeople from Los Angeles, Hollywood. In fact, I remember seeing some actors. I think I saw, what was his name? John Wayne. The guy that played *The Hurricane*, John Hall. I remember seeing him there. I think Dolores, she was in the hurricane, the actress there.

MS: Dolores del Río.

AC: Dolores del Río. Right. I had to be reminded of that. There was a lot of celebrities. A few Asian people, Asian people liked to gamble. They were a few Asian people there. But I think mostly, I was dressed up in a sport coat, but there were some black-tie people coming aboard there. It was kind of interesting there.

MS: You know the owner is Tony Canero. Do you know about him or?

AC: I read things about it. I don't think I ever met him, but I remember reading the paper when they raided the place. He was aboard and they were throwing the slot machines overboard. He was pulling his hair out there. "What are you doing to me? Quit. That is expensive machinery you're throwing overboard." [laughter] So, I remember seeing pictures about him, but I've never met him personally there.

MS: Well, tell me that story again. They raided the place and you have to mention Tony



Canero. So, tell me the story again of how they had raided it and what did Tony Canero say and do?

AC: I remember they raided the Rex and the front page had a picture of Tony Canero pulling his hair out, watching him throwing the slot machines overboard. He says, I just imagine what he was saying. "What are you doing to me? Quit throwing those things overboard." But there was a picture of him on deck looking over the gunnel at the slot machines hitting the deep six there. That was interesting. But it was a nice ship there. Then there was another ship, I forget the name of it, that was anchored off of Redondo Beach, but I never did get out to there.

MS: Let us talk about your dancing career. Where would you go dancing and what was the music like and what was the environment of the some of the dance clubs you went to?

AC: Well, after I got out of high school, I never dated at all in high school. My dad was very strict about being home early, but on the weekends, I think that when I became eighteen, I went fishing, and that was my release of being tied up to the house. So, on the weekends, a bunch of us used to take the ferry over and the bus over to Long Beach, and we used to go to the Majestic Ballroom, and that was, I think Nicola Dan he bought tickets. So, I learned a jitter bug there. I learned to dance Foxtrot. Then I used to meet a lot of people there, and we'd dance all night. Then if I get tired swinging, I'd walk down a block and there was a Cinderella Ballroom, and it was just kind of a different atmosphere. They had this big giant mirror globe that would flashlights all over the ballroom and the women were all in evening gowns. It was kind of an older crowd. So, I learned the walls and tango there. I was kind of a young bucket that time. twenty-one years old. Well, actually, I was first started saying I was eighteen years old. But it was enjoyable way of entertainment. Dancing was very good.

MS: What about in San Pedro? Any places you would hang out there when you were?

AC: Yes, I did. I think this was after the war, they had the Slab Club, which was at 17th Palace Street, they had dancing's there every weekend. Then they had a place called the Starlight at 20th Pacific. It was kind of a meeting place, Pete Vitale and Ms. Harris owned the place, and all the locals used to go there. We used to dance and in fact, I met my future wife there. She came there with her, a couple of girlfriends, and we danced. I think that was a big attraction. She was a beautiful girl, but she was a beautiful dancer also. That was a Friday, Saturday and Sunday night dance place there.

MS: What about other places? Restaurants that you would go out for entertainment?

AC: I'm trying to think of restaurants.

MS: Pepe's is a place people talk about.

AC: Pepe's was one place. Olson's was a good restaurant. I remember when we first got married, my wife and I went there with our young children. We went to Olson's several times and Pepe's. There was a couple other restaurants around. Seagulls had a restaurant here. Then Bloche, these are two slab cooks. They were cooks from fishing boats. One was Seagulls, and

he opened up a restaurant at 9th Pacific and Bloche, which was Nick Orb, he opened up a restaurant at 6th in Gaffey. That was the San Peter Drive-in. Then later on, he built a restaurant in back called the Hawaiian Gardens. That was a nice restaurant, a good place to go dancing there. In fact, he used to have Jitterbug contests, drawn people from all over Los Angeles there. But there was some, I'm trying to think there was an interesting restaurant at 12th in Pacific. Can't think of a name of it. Then the Bowling Alley, that was at 14th in Pacific. I worked in the Bowling Alley setting up pins when I was young. I didn't let grass grow under my feet too much. I was busy a lot there.

MS: What about the red cars? Talk about those.

AC: Well, the red cars at one time in San Pedro ran all the way past the depot up 14th Street and to Pacific, but I don't remember that too much. But the red car ran from fifth and Beacon between fifth and sixth to Los Angeles. Also red car also ran to long Beach. We used to take that quite a lot if we went out of town there. But that was I guess in the [19]30s. The [19]40s the war started, they took away the red cars, I think.

MS: Well, how did the war change San Pedro? It was a very different place during World War II and afterwards. What are the changes?

AC: I think San Pedro became a busy industrial port. Shipyards were being built all over. Cal ship was built on the island. They built liberties their ships. I think that's where NYK and Matson is now. Then the consolidated shipping was on B Street in Wilmington. Later on, they built the C3s there. Then there was a western pipe and ship. They built icebreakers. There was a lot of work. People were coming from all over the south, from the Midwest. They were coming to San Pedro. I remember the housing sections in San Pedro, the Channel Heights, there was three or four housing projects that a lot of people from out of state came stay there because that's the only thing they could afford at that time. But the Ship Barss was busy. Then the fishing fleet on I went fishing when I was eighteen on the Caesar Augusta with the Joanness family. They were a busy family in San Pedro fishing. Good reputation. We used to have to go fishing out through a gate. They had kind of a steel gate that the Coast Guard used to man and used to have to line up. Then the fleet would go out one time, then they would close the gate behind us. Then when we came back the next morning with our Lotus Sardines, they would also open the gate and let the boats end. That was kind of one of the, I guess hardships of fishing during the war. You had to go through the gates and you had to have your passports. Coast Guard license there. But-

MS: Why did they build the gates?

AC: To keep the submarines out of the harbor?

MS: Let us say they built the gates.

AC: They built the gate. Between the breakwaters, there was the steel gate and it would open up. They would pull it open with a cable or with a little boat. Then they let all the boats throw in a hurry, and then they close right away. That was one way of keeping ships out that they

didn't want. Our big ships would come through that same gate also. They would open it; the ships would come in and they'd close it. I'm trying to think, during the war I remember there was a summary cited out off of Point Furman. They claimed that they shot again a cannon towards the harbor. But I don't remember that. I remember I ran out there, and I don't remember if I saw it or not but there was a lot of excitement here. Also, during the war they had these airplane balloons, I guess balloons on wires that the army would put up to keep any airplanes flying low over the harbor. They had those all over the city on Terminal Island in San Pedro in Wilmington. That was sort of an interesting site. Now we have these big cranes that we see. At that time, we had these large balloons flying all over the city but they were stationary of course.

MS: Explain again why they built the gate. Why did they have to have a gate during the war?

AC: Okay, during the war, the harbors wide open and so the Army Corps or the Coast Guard built this gate running from the breakwater to the lighthouse. It would be a steel net all the way to the bottom with one section that was movable. To get out, you would have to come to this gate and they would say, "Where are you going?" By light speaker we say, "We're going fishing." So, they would open the gate and they'd let these, how many boats were there. They would let them out of the gate. Then they would close the gate right away. The gate was protection for submarines from coming into harbor. That was one of their protections. I think they also had a gate running from the far east breakwater all the way to the shore at Huntington Beach, I think, or Seal Beach. But I don't think they had a gate there as I recall. The gate was here at the main harbor there. You couldn't get through the gate unless the Coast Guard open it up for you there.

MS: In the [19]50s, after the war was a boom period for fishing. Then the fishing industry started to die off. Why did that happen? Explain it.

AC: Well, I think was fishing from [19]46 to [19]55, I think. Then we were having a lot of problems with imported tuna. The price of tuna was dropping, imports was coming in and the canneries were closing. I know that we picketed a couple times to stop the imports to do something, you. So, then they changed unions. A lot of the big boats quit the CIOs AF Avail, or it was called ILW thirty-three. I think they didn't want a union. They took their boats. They went to South America and picked up native crews down there. I think that was the start of the end, around [19]55 as far as I was concerned. That was my last year fishing. Then in [19]59, I became a longshoreman and that ended my fishing career. But I guess through the [19]50s, the boats were either fishing out of San Diego, converting all the bait boats into purse seiners. Then a lot of the fleets were going to other countries. They were going to Samoa, Puerto Rico, they fished out of Peru, Ecuador Costa Rica, also down there. But in the [19]50s, 1949 and [19]50, I went with the same Joanness family. There was six of us boats that went to Costa Rica and we fished for two motherships. One was called the Saipan, and one was called the Tinian. It was owned by the Clumber River Packing Company out of a Story Oregon. So, that was a good year for us. We fished off of Costa Rica. We'd go out, catch a load of fish forty, fifty tons of tuna. We'd run it into the Port Erena's and we'd unload it onto this mother ship, and we'd run out the next morning again. We loaded the one ship and we loaded the second ship up. That was a pretty good season. We made about \$15,000 for those five or six months. That was a good year for 1950.

MS: How did that work? You loaded up the mothership, the mothership went back to Oregon. Or how did that system work?

AC: We unloaded the fish. They weighed the fish as we unloaded it. They had this brine system on the ship. They'd brine the fish, freeze them, then they'd stack them up in these two big holes of a ship. They'd stack them up like cordwood and it'd take about five, six, seven thousand tons. I'm not sure the exact amount. We loaded the one up, and then it would leave and go up to Astoria, Oregon, and then load, and they'd pack the tuna under the Bumblebee brand. Then we loaded the other ship, and that would go back. Then that ended the season in Costa Rica. Then around the September, October, we went with the same two motherships to Galapagos Island, I guess Galapagos they pronounce it also. That's eight hundred miles due west of Ecuador. We loaded both ships full of tuna there also. I was on the Dolores Stem at that time. It was a different ship.

MS: Also, you said you went as a longshoreman. You began a longshoreman when the long shoring business was beginning to change, containers were going to start coming in.

AC: That's right.

MS: Talk about the effect of that.

AC: Like I said, after fishing at that time you had to be sponsored to become a longshoreman. So, I was a duty man for about a year and I met a fellow that was a longshoreman. He sponsored me. So, in 1959, I went into the longshoreman as an ID bee book, and they didn't have the containers. I think during that period, between [19]59 and [19]63, [19]64 is when Matson started the mechanization, the containers. That's when I think they signed a new type of contract using that container, mechanization contract to help the longshoremen in their retirement there in their pensions. That was the start of the containers there.

MS: So, all the many years you have worked as a fisherman and a longshoreman, do you have any other stories you want to share that you remember from those years that would help us understand Saint Peter and the Harbor?

AC: Well, I think longshoreman for the first five or even eight years before mechanization really came into it, it was hard work. You unloaded cotton or loaded out cotton, mostly cotton was mostly shipped overseas. That was a hard job. You lander them layer by layer in the hole. Then the last layer, you had had to stand them up between the beams. That was a hard job. You worked together. Two men would roll a bale of cotton, and then a work at paper. That was a hard job on the waterfront. These big rolls of paper, you would knock them down and roll them into the middle of the hatch, and you would send them out with these paper rigs gear. Then rubber was a hard job on the waterfront because it would be kind of stuck together. You need gear like ice picks to pull them apart. Then coffee bags. But then little by little it became the containers are the thing now. I mean, all the cargo is put in containers on the ship. So, most of the work now is done by UTRs. You drive the containers from the ships to where they stack them up, and then from the stack up, they put them on trailers that leave the port there.

MS: So, we are just about running out of time. Is there any other story you want to tell me that I have not asked about? Any for your entire life when you were young, or any other story you would like to share with me that I have not. Got to tell me?

AC: Well, I think I love San Pedro. I was born and raised in San Pedro. I went to San Pedro High School, graduated summer [19]42, went to Mary Star in my elementary grades. I think it's a nice town. It's kind of a melting pot. We have African American, Mexican, Italian, Irish, Croatians, Serbians, all nationalities. We had only the one high school at that time. I think growing up was a good experience for me. Three years ago, I became blind while I was working as a linesman. I was a dispatcher for the Lines Bureau. We would send men out to tie up ships and I start losing my eyesight. I had macular degeneration, so I was forced to quit. I had lost my wife eight years earlier. So, I kept working just to keep busy. But when I became blind, I quit. My new life is watching my grandchildren grow up and go into Vegas at Laufen and shoot some craps if I can. In fact, yesterday I went to one of the Indian reservations and spent the day, and it was kind of enjoyable there.

MS: Great. Okay, good. We are going to take a still photo of you. If you could slide your chair about two feet to the right.

[end of transcript]