

Tim Thomas: I have researched the history of the fisheries of Monterey Bay for over twenty years. Who likes to go fishing here? Anybody go fishing? You? Where do you go fishing?

Female Speaker: Where is that? Sometimes we go to Moss Landing.

TT:: What do you like to fish for? Whatever can you catch?

FS: Fish. [laughter]

TT: Do you like to eat fish?

FS: Yes.

TT: Anybody? Yes?

Male Speaker: I go to – I think it is Lake [inaudible] and we get tuna.

TT: [inaudible]. Anybody fish down the wharf over here?

MS: Yes.

TT: Anybody?

MS: Yes.

TT: You have? There you go. What did you catch?

MS: Mackerel. [inaudible]

TT: Mackerel. Who likes to eat fish? So, I know that you've gone through this program that the country has in your classroom about fishing. What do you guys know about fishing in Monterey? It has a long history, probably longer than you think. You are standing at ground zero right now of the fishing history – fishing industry of Monterey right here. We got right between the two wars that we have here. Train stations play a huge role in the fishing story here. We got a little bike trail that we just walked across here, which was the old waterway from the old Southern Pacific Railroad off of a huge road. So, you know what, the fishery goes back even further than all of that, even further than those sardine days. I mean, the first real commercial fisherman in Monterey. I used that word, "commercial." You all know what that means? It's how they made their living with the native people, the Indian people of Monterey. They were the Rumsen people that would go – the native people of Monterey. We can trace the native culture into this area for about five thousand years. So, this site we are at right now was at one time – actually, this sort of beach area right here and then back over towards that building over there was all sort of a large fishing village site for the Rumsen people. So, if you think about what Monterey was like a thousand years ago or even five hundred years ago, it was a land of lots of little lakes. There was lots of freshwater. At least enough for this population, there were huge herds of deer and elk and tule elk, and grizzly bears. I have read accounts from early

explorers coming into the Monterey Bay area and they would talk about birds. So many birds they said, particularly in the fall months that they couldn't see the surface of the little lakes, that they could put their hand in the sky and actually got birds out of the sky. If they would look out into that bay and it would be so filled with seals, sea lions and Steller sea lions and sea otters, they actually thought that the bay was paid. That they wrote into their diaries that the Monterey Bay was like a brown cobblestone. At certain times of the year, waves would crash upon to the beach, pouring fish onto that beach. That's how abundant it was up there. [inaudible] there was not any real time of hunger for the Rumsen people. They go out into the bay in beautiful boats like this one, only bigger, made out of tule. Tule are these big, tall grasses you see growing around the lakes, the big, tall one. They go out and then would fish for everything that was out there, and they did beautiful little fish hooks out of them. Abalone, like this one right here, or they make the fish hook out of a mussel shell or they make the fishing line out of (stinging nettle?) plant. They would do crafts. They would do baskets. They would do spears. What I personally think is the coolest thing in the whole world, that they were the first divers going into the Monterey Bay. I mean, if you come down here on the weekend and walk on the waterfront here, this place would be filled with (water?) people. But the Rumsen were the first divers going into that bay. We know that because the burials will come out of the ground in recent years, and you cannot build a house along the Monterey waterfront without running across a Rumsen burial [inaudible]. The males have, what's known as, surfer's ear, which is the little bony growth that will grow over the opening of your ear if you're spending a lot of time in the cold water of the Monterey Bay. This makes a lot of sense, don't you think? If you saw an abalone – you all know what an abalone is? If they saw an abalone this big, they're going to dive down there and get it. Abalone plays a very important part of their life. They ate it. They used to [inaudible] which is the volcanic rock in other parts of California. [inaudible] point. You guys come here. Maybe you've seen this old movie called *Dance with Wolves*. Anybody see that? Yes, yes. You've seen that?

FS: Yes.

TT: So, that's about Indians in South Dakota. It's on cable TV all the time, so you can't miss it. So, if you watched the film closely, you'll notice there's all this abalone in the clothing and [inaudible] that the Indians in South Dakota are wearing. As far as I know, there is no abalone in South Dakota. It's got to get there some way, right? So, it's going on these trade routes, a lot that starts here in Monterey. Here is the best part, is that the word "abalone," which is a universal word today, it's used all over the world, that word comes from the Rumsen people. It comes right here from Monterey. So, the Rumsens had a word for the red abalone, which is the predominant abalone in that bay and the largest of the abalones in that bay. They get pretty good size. That word is *aulun*. The linguist who's a scientist that study languages – I think is a cool thing – they actually traced that word abalone, all the way back to that word *aulun* that starts here in Monterey. Now, it's kind of overcast here today, a typical Monterey day. I think it's so cool that the Rumsen people actually have a song that they would sing to get rid of the fog. I mean, if it is really foggy, you cannot go fishing, right? I'm not going to sing it for you. That's not going to happen. But knowing I was going to do this today, I got into my time machine, I went back a time and I actually recorded them singing that song, right? So, I thought I would play it. It will get rid of the fog and it would be nice and sunny for the rest of your time here in Monterey. Let's see what happens. I hope this works. I don't even drive a car. So, let's see if

this does what it's supposed to do. [foreign song playing] It does. What that song is saying in Rumsen, it is telling fog to go home out there. Telling the fog to go home because a pelican is out there and he is beating your wife with his wings. That's what the song is saying in Rumsen. So, as I mentioned, this train station is very important to Monterey fishing. Why is the train station important to fishing in Monterey? Yes?

MS: [inaudible].

TT: What?

MS: Well, transportation.

TT: Transportation. Exactly. Transportation. So, let's back up a little bit. So, I mentioned Rumsen people who were fishermen in the 1770, this became part of Spain, right? Spain settles here for a lot of political reasons, and I won't go into any of that today. But Spain settles here. They weren't fishermen. They didn't understand how to utilize this bay. They thought this was going to be like Spain. They're going to raise barley and they were going to raise wheat and all kinds of things here. Well, that didn't work out too well. In fact, there's a famous story of Junípero Serra returning to the Carmel Mission in 1779 finding his soldiers was starving to death, living on chickpeas and goat's milk, right? I mean, I just described this (cute, probably abandoned?) place to you just a few weeks ago, right? I mean, that was like this gigantic safe way that was fully stocked, only they didn't have the key to get in. They didn't understand how to utilize this place. So, they weren't involved. They would have the Rumsen native people go out and hunt for them and fish for them. That's how they were able to survive here. In fact, the first cannery – anybody know what the first cannery was in Monterey? Most people don't know this one, but the first cannery actually was in Carmel Mission. It was around that same time. At 1779 or so, there were huge run of [inaudible]. They would come in thousands. So, all these native people come down and get the [inaudible]. Junípero Serra actually have them taken out of the river and into the mission where they're putting in barrels of salt and shipping them down to Mexico. So, that's where the first cannery was. So, in 1822, Mexico declares independence from the Spain and we became part of Mexico, right? So, they opened the ports here. That's one thing they did but they weren't fishing either. They didn't understand how to utilize the bay. They weren't raising [inaudible]. Those Californians who have been there are going to raise beef. That's what they did. They were not going to be fishermen. Then we went to war with Mexico in 1846. Gold were discovered on the American River in 1848. They signed the constitution here in Monterey in 1849 in Monterey or – California became a state in 1850, and Monterey went to [inaudible]. Literally, it was referred to in the press in those days as Rip Van Winkle town. But a couple of cool things happened. One of them in particular is a small group of Chinese fishermen arrived here in the early 1850. In fact, two families sailed across the North Pacific [inaudible] pushed all the way across. The Chinese used to refer to that as the black tie or the big drain. That comes out from in their [inaudible] pushed them all the way down the West Coast. These two families eventually ended up at Point Lobos. Anybody knows the Point Lobos? You've been up there? You also go up there because Point Lobos is the center of the universe, right? So, you're at Point Lobos, looked around and saw nobody was fishing. The reason nobody was fishing – this is where this comes into play is because there was no way to get fresh fish to the big market in San Francisco. The railroad haven't arrived here yet. The

Chinese who understood the technology of drying their fish, would dry all of their fish. Then once a month, they told the Chinese gentlemen to come down from San Francisco and pick up all those dried fish and ship them back to China and other parts of Asia. They were also selling fresh fish to the large or to the small community here in Monterey. In 1874, this key right here, this keychain [inaudible] Monterey forever, switch lock key to the Southern Pacific Railroad. This is the key there, turn the lock that pushed the track that brought the train right here. Now, you've got a way to get fresh fish to the markets. You said transportation, who's on the train?

MS: People.

TT: Now, you've got other folks coming to fish in Monterey, in particular the Italians. Not the Sicilian yet, but [inaudible] coming down from (Santa Fe?), coming down from San Francisco primarily to fish. They take it right here and they would ship it up to San Francisco. So, with that said, we're going to take a little walk and I want to show you the Sicilian fishermen. So, the Sicilian fishermen began to arrive here about after 1905. They fished primarily for sardine. So, while the fishermen were out fishing, the wives will hold these meetings. They were very religious events.

FS: Yes, I heard so.

TT: Santa Rosalia would protect their husbands and their family while they were out fishing. If you come to Monterey in the second weekend of September, they have now what's called Festa Italia, but it used to be called the Santa Rosalia Festival. They come and they do a blessing of the fleet and all that stuff, which they still do, although there isn't much of a fleet to bless off or anything. The wharf that was originally built in 1845, could you believe that? Originally, it was just sort of a rock, sort of cribwork set up there. Then later on, the Pacific Steamship Company came in and built the little wharf there. Then eventually, as the sardine fishery began to grow, the City of Monterey took over that wharf and really built it up. It wasn't what you see today where there's a lot of restaurants and market and tourist shops, but more fish markets and abalone protesters and all that kind of stuff. In fact, prior to World War II, eighty percent of the businesses on the wharf, eighty percent were Japanese owned businesses. Could you believe that? Yes, that's true. So, I'll get into that in a minute, why those guys were there. So, as I mentioned, this is sardine mecca right here. What do you guys know about sardine? Anybody like to eat them?

FS: No.

TT: No? Nobody likes to eat them?

FS: I do not even like fish.

TT: So, that's the guy right here. That's what they caught in Monterey. That's what they still catch from Monterey Bay right there.

FS: It looks like it.

TT: What do you think of that guy?

FS: He looked real.

MS: He is real.

TT: He looks real? Yes? He's not real. But he's big, isn't he?

FS: He is fat.

MS: Yes.

TT: Most people think of sardine, you think of those little fish, don't you?

FS: Those are anchovies.

FS: Yes.

TT: Yes, yes, yes. So, the truth is that almost all small silvery fish are referred to as the sardine. It's almost a generic word. What they catch in Monterey is this guy right here. This is known as a pilchard or the true sardine. Where we're standing right now, we're standing on the side of the old Booth sardine cannery. It was right here. Mr. Booth was in salmon business up along the Sacramento River in the 1890s. That was one of the salmon mecca up there. In those days, those guys were doing very well. So, all the salmon process would sort of form this coop of the Sacramento River Packers Association. So, around the same time, they began to make large landings of salmon out on this bay out here because of new technology that was brought here by sport fishermen. They're fishing those trawling line, which is a line with a lot of hooks on it. In fact, in those days, all the fishermen they've intended to fish in the same way. They fished with gillnets, which is a net you fit across your boat. Fish will swim into the net, they're caught by their gills, hence the name gillnet, which was pretty good for most things. But it wasn't the most effective way to catch salmon. So, in order to make ends meet, these Monterey fishermen would hire themselves out to these port fishermen who are now coming to Monterey and stayed at this fancy hotel called the Hotel Del Monte. They go take them out in the bay and showed them the good places to fish because salmon in the Monterey Bay with these port fishermen were very sophisticated. They have a lot of money. They are pretty smart. They are fishing with salmon with a trawling line and a rod and reel with a lot of hooks on it. This is a really effective way to catch salmon. So, our Monterey fishermen said, "Hey, we could do that," and they switched that technology. So, I have salmon landing record that go back to that time. You could see, in 1892, they caught five thousand pounds worth of salmon, and they switched to this new technology. In 1895, they caught ninety thousand pounds worth of salmon out of that bay out there.

FS: Wow.

TT: Well, that got the attention of those guys up along the Sacramento River including Mr. Booth. He came down, he goes, "Oh, man, this is great," and tried to get contract with these – the other fishermen who, at this point, were mostly Japanese fishermen. They said, "No, no, no.

We got good contract with the market from San Francisco." So, they backed off. Then they actually built a ship right there in that building right over there. They began to experiment with this big sardine that were coming into the Monterey Bay. In between that time, the City of Monterey actually leases this piece of property to a guy by the name of (HR Robbins?). I've seen Mr. Robbins' lease and it says on his lease, "For the purpose of the sardine cannery reduction plant and (dance hall?)." So, Mr. Robbins wasn't a great businessman, who in 1903 took over this cannery, got these contracts for salmon and then began to fish for this guy. But this fish has actually become the largest fish of a single fishery in the history of the United States right there, huge fishery, lasting about thirty-five years. The truth is this fish never [inaudible]. People thought it was too oily. They didn't like it. [inaudible] little sardines and little fishes. So, I've actually seen the first national ads of these sardines. It appeared, believe it or not, in a series of robot catalogue in 1905. Mr. Booth's fish, he was advertising them as soused – kind of pickling spices they put on there – soused Monterey Mackerel because they're about the size of a mackerel. But even in 1905, the federal government said, "You can't do that. That's against the law." Those aren't mackerel. Those are sardines. So, they actually market this fish initially to the African American communities as salmon sardines because they're big. They market it to Jewish communities as herring sardines. They tried a lot of things to sell these large sardines. They used to produce these beautiful recipe books. I used to go down and get one at the cannery. You'd buy a case of sardines and they're [inaudible] inside the case and all these great recipes for sardine sandwiches, sardine rarebit. My favorite was a sardine jello salad that you make with lime jello, chili sauce, and Monterey sardines. Yes. I actually made it sometimes. It's actually pretty good. It's not too bad. So, it eventually becomes this huge fishery. So, how do you think that happened? Although, salmon was king and they were catching it over an average of a million pounds of salmon out of that bay every year. Salmon season in Monterey was May 1st through August 15th at that time. In 1909, the beginning of the salmon season, the Monterey Herald, the local paper reported at the end of that salmon season, that there were 185 salmon boats working the Monterey Bay, 145 were Japanese owned catching an average of a million pounds of king salmon. So, how did – it went from that salmon to this guy becoming the largest fishery of a single fish in the history of the United States? All that salmon, about ninety percent of it was going to Europe, going mainly to Germany. In those days, most of the sardines that we are eating in this country were coming from Europe, coming primarily from France. France was the big sardine producer as it turned in the last century. So, what happened in the world in 1914? Anybody know? Something really major happened.

MS: An earthquake?

TT: World War I started. It was like an earthquake. [laughter]

TT: It cuts off all that salmon going to Europe, all those sardines coming from Europe and they just switched and began to heavily fish sardine along the West Coast. This became a huge, huge industry. So, by 1915, there were two canneries operating in Monterey Bay. This cannery here, another one down in Monterey waterfront called the Cannery Row. They were big in the [19]60s. So, you have fishermen here. By 1919, the end of World War I, there were nine full-time canneries going to the waterfront here. Almost four hundred Sicilian fishermen here fishing sardines, big, big business. Anybody, you've been down to the aquarium? So, you all have been down there. That aquarium sits inside of a large old sardine cannery that holds this sardine

cannery. So, how did Cannery Row become Cannery Row? So, as this fishery began to develop, they actually wanted to build a cannery all the way along the waterfront here, all past the Wharf #2 down there. But the folks at the Hotel Del Monte said, "No, no, no. We don't like that idea." The cannery will go on the waterfront, then the tourist aren't going to come here. They actually petitioned to actually try to stop these fisheries from even developing. But the City of Monterey said, "No, no. There is money to be made here." So, they said, "All right, all you canneries can go way down there at the end of Ocean View Boulevard." That's how Cannery Row became Cannery Row. Mr. Booth could stay here because he was already here, and this cannery was here until 1941 when he retired. He died the next year and then the city tore it down on 1948, and this is all that's left. Don't you think should be something here to mark that occasion and what was here? So, here is your homework. So, you all have to write letters to the City of Monterey saying you need to put some interpretative signs out here talking about how important Booth starting the cannery. They do have this big rock here, but that doesn't cut, don't you think? I'm looking at rock. You need to have something to look at. That's enough of that. Repeat after me. You ready? *Baleia*.

Multiple Speakers: *Baleia*.

TT: Let's try again. *Baleia*.

Multiple Speakers: *Baleia*.

TT: Better. Who knows what language that might be?

FS: I forgot the name already.

TT: Anybody.

FS: It starts with an R.

TT: It starts with an R.

MS: African.

TT: African? No. That's kind of close, actually. There's a country next to Spain. It starts with a P.

FS: Portuguese.

MS: A P?

TT: Portuguese. So, what does it mean in Portuguese? Whale.

FS: Whale.

TT: Why do you think you've got to say whale in Portuguese here in Monterey? Yes?

FS: Because it's a whaling station.

TT: That's right. Do you think there are Portuguese whalers here?

FS: [inaudible]

TT: Yes. How do you think they got here? In the eighteenth century, the nineteenth century, the whales and whaling products was something that this country really needed to have, the big whaling companies out of Nantucket on New Bedford [inaudible]. The goal on these three, four and five-year whaling cruises. Usually, the first place they went to were the Azores, which [inaudible] off the coast of Portugal to pick up these Azorean whalers who are known to this day to be great whalers. They have sailed on eastern seaboard and around the Cape Horn and all the way up to California coast, all the way up to Alaska, all the way across the Pacific to Japan. They wouldn't return to their home, Florida, until they filled the hold of their whaling ship with whale oil. It could take up to five years until you got home. Something happened in California in 1948. Gold was discovered on the American River. All these ships came into San Francisco. Let's say we are part of the crew of a whaling ship out of Nantucket. You have had the smell of dead whale every single day for the last two days and they told you there was gold up on the hill and will take them. What are you going to do?

FS: They'll find out.

TT: Yes. The heck with that whale.

MS: Those are gold.

TT: I'm getting some of that gold. That's exactly what these Azorean whalers did. But you know what, when they got up to those gold fields, they found out that it wasn't as easy as they were told. Well, they said, "The heck with this, I'd rather be whaling." So, they go back to San Francisco, but they have no money because they didn't get any gold and they have no way to get home because everybody abandoned their ship, so they're kind of stuck. So, on 1854, so seventeen of these guys, two come to pier in San Francisco, one guy goes, "You know, I'm going to go by Monterey. It sure looked a lot like home, and there were a lot of whales down there." They migrated down from San Francisco. They set up a whaling station right here and they began to whale what they called – they called the old fashioned – in fact, it used to be called the old whaling company that sailed out. These little, small boats like this one you see right here. Sixteen guys in a boat pushed off in the beach every morning and rowers sail out to the whaling grounds over by the Monterey Bay aquarium where would have blue whales, gray whales, and humpback whales. Can you imagine hunting these hundred-foot blue whales in a little boat like this one? This is what they would do, they would row out or sail out. They would see a whale, they would yell out, *baleia*. This guy fired his gun that's called a (Greener's?) gun because it's invented by a guy named Greener. It has a rope attached to the harpoon that was attached to the boat. This was not designed to kill whale, but in fact, was designed to slow them down. Now, if you were a whale and got hit with this sharp hard thing, what are you going to do?

FS: Run away.

TT: Oftentimes, those whales would turn and sink their boats or they would [inaudible] or dive to the bottom. This guy wasn't fast enough to cut the rope and got dragged down with them. But most of the time, the whale would start running to the [inaudible] dragging these guys behind him for hours at a time. All the people that lived in Monterey would line up along the coastline here watch these guys get dragged through the bay. They used to call that a Nantucket sleigh ride. Finally, the whale would slow down, and yes, they would kill it. That's what the name of the game, right? They hit with the long hand harpoon. Then the whale usually will sink. So, they'll put little markers out there because it will slope back to the surface in about ten days later. Anybody here ever raised goldfish? So, you all know how that works, right? So, which question, how did they bring it back in? So, they would go out to a boat. They would go back out. They would tie a rope behind his tail and they would tow it back to the beach. Can you imagine that? (This took all day?) into a boat. They got it back to the beach right over here in front of us, and they strip off the blood. That's all they want with the blood. They didn't want any other parts of this dead whale. So, you're whaling all day. But here's a picture of the whaling station where we are right here. So, you're whaling all day and you're (boiling blood?) all night, you're kind of hungry. So, oftentimes, these guys would make little (donuts?) and stuff they would cook up on the hot whale oil. After they stripped the blood off that whale oil – I think I've got a picture here where they are stripping the blood off those dead whales, right? Then tow the carcass of the whale back out into the bay here. The current being what they are in Monterey and just push the whale back onto the beach where the Small Craft Harbor is now. One time that peaked with literally dead whale and whale bones. Here's a picture of that beach right here at about 1874. You could see the railroad coming here. All these whale bone on the beach right there, right? So, you've got a beach full of dead whale, what else do you think you've got down there?

FS: It's not a good scene.

TT: Yes. It didn't smell very good either. You have big giant grizzly bears come out of the hills from behind that's here to go feed off the carcass to those dead whales because grizzly bears love to eat whale. I'd rather count the people who lived in Monterey in those days and they said at night, they could hear these grizzly bears walking their neighborhood.

[end of transcript]