

Natalie Springuel: This is Natalie Springuel from Maine Sea Grant with Corina Gribble from College of the Atlantic. We are at the National Working Waterfront Symposium in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Today is May 15th, 2018. Why do we not start with you stating your name and then spelling it?

Hattie Train: I am Hattie Train. Or I'm Harriet Train, but I go by Hattie. Do you want me to spell out both names?

NS: Yes, go ahead and spell them out.

HT: Harriet is H-A-R-I-E-T-T, Hattie being H-A-T-T-I-E. My last name is Train, like a locomotive, T-R-A-I-N.

NS: Great. Thank you. Tell us where you are from.

HT: I'm from Long Island, Maine, off Portland, right in Casco Bay.

NS: So, tell us a little bit about Long Island.

HT: Long Island, Maine is a small community that originally started as a fishing community. It's about 200 year-round residents. The population can swell up to 2,000 people on any given night in the summer. It isn't as predominantly fishing-based anymore as it used to be. But it's such a small community that everyone is either related or might as well be because you get to know your neighbors very well.

NS: So, it predominantly was a fishing community. What is the diversity now?

HT: Now I think there might be ten fishermen left on the island. It used to be almost all fishermen before my time even. But when I was little, we had a lot more fishermen than we do now. I'm twenty now, so that was probably fifteen years ago. We had more like twenty, twenty-five, maybe thirty fishermen, compared to the ten, maybe fifteen we have now.

NS: So, a big change. You yourself are from a fishing family?

HT: I am. I have at least three generations of fishermen on my father's side. Though, I guess, it skipped three generations on my mother's side. It goes back for probably ten generations of fishermen in Nova Scotia on my mother's side. So, the Gulf of Maine is in my blood.

NS: Absolutely. Yes. The importance of the work in waterfront is in your blood.

HT: For sure.

NS: Yes. So, tell us a little bit about your relationship to Long Island's working waterfront.

HT: So, I grew up on the island with my mother being a teacher. So, I learned a lot of the science behind what was going on around me. That definitely sparked a lot of the interest in

what was around me and pushed me to want to spend more time on the boat with my dad. My dad is a commercial fisherman, primarily lobster. When I was younger, he also would fish for shrimp, sometimes be an extra hand on a ground fishing boat, and would also scallop. So, I was exposed very directly to a lot of fisheries at a young age. At age eight, I got my own lobster student license.

NS: Eight?

HT: At age eight. That's the first time you can get it in the state of Maine, is age eight. You can get your student license. I had it as soon as I remembered my birthday. I sent it in. As soon as I turned twelve and I was old enough to be operating an outboard motor on my own, that summer, my father set up a little outboard motorboat. I was out hauling on my own. I lobstered as the stern man for my grandfather, through middle school. Then once I got to high school, I was the stern man on my dad's boat, which was a lot more difficult than my grandfather's boat.

NS: Why is that?

HT: He has a 46-foot Jarvis Newman, which is a pretty big lobster boat. He is one of the more predominantly known fishermen in the area and has one of the higher catch rates, I guess, than most. So, he works his stern man a lot harder than a lot of fishermen do. So, being a high school kid and on the stern of his boat as his primary stern man alone is not normal. Being a high school girl that I'm on my father's boat was a lot more difficult than I anticipated. So, I was very much so exposed to the fisheries aspect of the working waterfronts at a young age. Because that's what fishing is, is you rely very directly on your tie to the mainland and to your own home port, even though our home port was the island, not necessarily the mainland. Once I got to middle school and high school, I also had to commute by ferry because we only have an elementary school on the island. So, I also got a good taste of working waterfronts that way. Because every day, I would be on the forty-five-minute to an hour Casco Bay Lines Ferry from the island that would port in Portland. Then I would have to go to school from there. So, I got both aspects of the ferry working waterfront, as well as the commercial fishing working waterfront from a very young age.

NS: Very young age.

HT: [laughter]

NS: Great story. So, there has been changes in the fishing industry. What do you think people on the island – and we will start with year-round residents first and then go to the summer community – what do they value about the working waterfront?

HT: I think that with the year-round residents on the island, one thing that we see to be of value – I don't know if it's necessarily something they value, but to be something of value – would be to still – I'm realizing my answers are going to be a little weird here because it's an island, and our working waterfront is Portland.

NS: Yes, you have both.

HT: So, it's kind of weird answers here. But one thing that we see a value when we are commuting to Portland is getting to still have an input. Because Long Island seceded from Portland to be its own town in July of '93, which means they no longer get a say in any decisions that might be made by the city council or by any of Portland's immediate government-type decisions. But we still are very directly impacted by anything that is decided. So, anytime there's a vote – and it might be limiting parking access or increasing the Casco Bay Lines ferry tickets or limiting the amount of cold storage for the fishing industry on the wharfs or limiting the amount of berths for some of the fishing boats that can't fit on the island because you don't have much access to large berths on the island for a boat. It directly impacts us, and we no longer get a say in how to adjust the decisions being made in a way that it'll benefit us.

NS: Yes. How does the fact that your population swells in the summer impact the working waterfront?

HT: It definitely swells because of the working waterfront. People love the idea of coming out to a small little island fishing community. They're able to see the fishermen coming in on their boats. Because we do have a lot of people that were part of that thirty, thirty-five, twenty-five, the larger number of fishermen that we used to have, will spend summer on the island. They might not be year-round residents anymore. They might not be permanent residents anymore. But they still spend summer on the island. They'll still moor their boats off the island. So, we have a lot of people that love to come up to the island because they can see the lobstermen rowing in. They can shoot a text or a phone call to a lobsterman that they know, while they're offshore and be like, "Hey, can you save me a dozen lobsters today?" They're able to get the lobsters out of the crate themselves. It's because of our working waterfront that we have the population swell so much because people want to see that. That's what people come to the island for. That's what people go to Casco Bay for, is for the fishing community and our working waterfronts. They love the idea of, let's take a ferry, or to see the way that we have Casco Bay Down the Bay Lobster. We have a place right on the waterfront near where the ferry lands in the area on our island we call down front. It would be the uptown part of the island, but there is no uptown downtown. There are two stores. One's only open a few months a year. One gas pump, our town hall, our community center, and our ferry landing dock, and then a dock where Cozy Harbor has an extension that buys lobsters right from the fishermen. People love to be able to just see that. They can see from the ferry dock and see where the fishermen are coming to sell. It's the concept of the working waterfront that is what draws people out to our island. That's what then increases sales of the lobster, and increases sales at the two little stores we have, and increases sales at the tiny little gift shop or of people that are selling artwork on the island, brings people to decide to maybe move out to the island full time and increase the taxes that might be coming into the island's budget and increase our school numbers. It all comes from the people that want come out to the island for that working waterfront aspect.

NS: That is really interesting. For you as a young woman who has been a part of this industry for your whole life, what do you think are the challenges for young people in general and young women, to get into working waterfront industries, whether it is fishing or other businesses on the waterfront?

HT: I think a lot of the issues across the board with working waterfronts is that there's only so much space. We keep trying to get as much as we can into that tiny little bit of space. It's happening with people wanting to build up hotels or build up restaurants. There are jobs there, but you're taking away the jobs of people that would be fish processing or a smack where you're picking up the lobsters. Or you're taking away other opportunities, though you're still giving new ones. It all comes down to limited space. So, it also comes down to the limited space in fisheries, where a lot of the issues are, there's only so many licenses that can be given out at a time. So, that's a big issue in the lobster industry in the state of Maine right now, is that people want to go into the lobster industry. Without the apprentice program or the student license program, you get put on a pretty long waiting list before you can finally get into the lobster industry. That's not just lobster. You have other fisheries where there's only so many licenses that can be given out at a time. You have the elver lottery that they've been opening up every once in a while because you can only have so many licenses. So, it all comes down to, there's only so much that can happen and that can be used, both space-wise and license numbers and allocations. It doesn't matter what it is. That's the biggest obstacle that people are seeing, trying to get into these types of industries that directly are connected to the working waterfronts, at least from my perspective. I know that going into fishing and fishing management and everything, as a woman, there has been a few issues of comments. I've learned that as soon as you're willing to kind of brush it off and throw it right back, it's not an issue anymore. If you see it as an issue, it's going to become an issue. But if you're willing to work through it and you see an obstacle, and that's not a problem. There's an obstacle. Let me just find how I'm going to get past this obstacle. That's been my experience so far, and I know a lot of other people that have been going through similar things that have seen it the same way. But with working waterfronts in general, it seems like our issue is just that there isn't enough space, and there's only so much coastline you have.

NS: Yes. Do you see yourself in fishing in the future?

HT: I definitely want to be tied to Gulf of Maine Fisheries one way or another. I don't necessarily want to be a fisherman. I would like to be in the policy or management aspect of fisheries. My major at University of Maine right now is marine science with a marine biology concentration and a double minor in aquaculture and fisheries because I want to work in fisheries management, long-term. I think that that would give me the best leg up going into the industry. As I've said to people in the past, I want to be able to work in a way where I can directly influence Gulf of Maine Fisheries and influence the communities similar to the one that I grew up in because I want to keep the fisheries sustainable and keep them going. A fishery is the entire livelihood of that fisherman. As soon as you take that away, you take away part of their identity. You take away part of who they are, as silly as it sounds, because most of them had backup plans. Even with the shrimp fishery closing for the last few years, some of my dad's friends were primarily shrimp fishermen. They also have groundfish permits or scallop permits. But the person they were changed when their fishery got shut down for more than a year. It's really hard to see that happen to people, to see such a provident part of the community and part of everyone's identity just disappear. I don't want to see that happen with these fisheries that I've grown up with and that I've grown to love. These people that I know and see as friends and family, I don't want to see them lose who they are because we can't properly understand what we're doing.

NS: Is there anything else you want to add?

HT: I can't necessarily think of anything.

NS: Do you have any questions?

Corina Gribble: I will just get you, after we wrap up, I want to have the location exactly where you fished, and your grandfather and parents fished.

HT: I fished primarily directly in front of Long Island, between Long Island and Little Chebeague, because that's where our house is. So, we live on a little bit of a hill overlooking the old cove. My grandparents are on the point almost in front of our house, with three sides of their house surrounded by water at high tide, also on the old cove. I would go out from the dock directly in front of the house and stay between Mariners, which is the ferry landing dock on the island, and Cleaves Landing, which was a former ferry landing dock and now is more of a beach down near the tip of Long Island near Chebeague. I would usually fish between Little Chebeague and Long Island within that span of area. My grandfather fished almost the same area. He fished a little behind Little Chebeague as well. Then my father fishes a much broader span. He usually avoids actually being in the bay as much as possible and fishes further offshore almost, in the federal permitted areas and behind the island between Long Island and Green Island a lot.

NS: Well, I have a feeling that Corina and I could keep asking you questions for hours, but unfortunately, we have to wind down.

HT: Yes.

NS: But that was great. Thank you.

[end of transcript]