

Victoria Barret: Okay, so this is Victoria Barrett. I am a student at Georgia Southern, and I am here with Mr. Johnny Bennett conducting an oral history interview as part of the Fishing Traditions and Fishing Futures, oral histories of commercial fishing in Georgia. So, I have already received your permission to record this. But if you do not mind repeating just real fast that we do have...

Johnny Bennett: No, I don't care.

VB: All right. So, I have got a couple questions just to guide us through. But anything you want to tell me, we really want to hear the stories you want to tell. So, just to start us out, where and when did you grow up?

JB: Right here in Brunswick, Georgia. We all shrimp, fish, our whole family's had for generations.

VB: What was that like?

JB: Like it was. Back then, it was nice. It ain't now. [laughter] Ain't nothing like it used to be. There used to be so many fish houses and shrimp boats [inaudible]. They used to sell, I think they sold 3800 lots, Now they only sell about 180. So, it ain't no more fish houses for right now. They ain't but one in Brunswick, Georgia, city market. The rest of them was closed down.

VB: They just went out of business?

JB: Yes. Well they ain't no more shrimp like they used to be. Not like they used to be, they wasn't. All Sounds was open, everybody caught shrimp. Since they closed the Sound, it's hurt us. They say it ain't, but it is. Like me and Brian talked about it, he says it ain't the same. If you don't keep your yard clean or your garden, you ain't going to grow nothing. Our Sounds is full of grass and trash now. That's the way everything is. It's just about to quit. [laughter] Crabs, there used to be plenty of crabs any time. But they ain't hardly nothing like it used to be. All the crab houses, Lewis crab factory, the Walton, all of them just closed down. Gone. When y'all first come in the road, you see that where they got that place cleared out before you get that seafood. That was Lewis crab factory. Ain't no telling how many boats he had. But everybody was over there. They just sold all their jelly ball plant and all that. They sold all that. They sold. They ain't got but see, one, two fish houses, all they got left now. They just sold the jelly ball place. That was a shrimp place. They sold Skippy Seafood. I forgot the other one, the other side of the bridge. They just closing them all down. It's just getting worse and worsen every year. We try to get them to open the Sound like they used to do, but they won't do it. They can't fish, don't want it open. That's about all I can tell you about it.

VB: So, when you started out, you said now everything is kind of failing. There are companies closing down. But when you started out, what was it like?

JB: Beautiful. Everybody caught shrimp. Then they closed Sound. Then they opened it up for two or three days out of the month. Still, we caught shrimp. But since they closed it completely, it's getting worse every year. I don't know how you would say it. Say if you've got 3,800 people

eating out of the same plate, now you've got 180. You should catch more, shouldn't you? But it's getting worse. It's working backwards. Ain't no fish. A lot of the sport fishermen wants it back to clean it up. There are so many sharks. They made them quit shark fishing. Next month, when they come up, we go out there to dry, y'all should go out there and see the sharks. We didn't let some of them people out of where y'all go to school at. Some of them say there's a shortage of them. [inaudible] bushes out there. You don't see the sharks out there. That's about all I can tell you about that. It is just getting worse every year. [laughter] I see that storm come through the last two years. We had no fall shrimp, just about quit.

VB: At all?

JB: It wasn't worth dragging on. We ain't have nothing like we usually do right here at Saint Simons and Jacob. Between there, that's what we call Snag Alley and Saint Simons. I used to kill a shrimp there. Everybody wait on low water. There ain't no shrimp there now. They try to say it's to put [inaudible]. We had two more plants when they was open, when the Sound was open. They went out of business. They ain't nothing. See, when you come across, before you get through there where the new jailhouse is before you get to the thing that was Allied Chemical. Then we had Dixie O'Brien that made paint right there on Seventeen. All them places going out of business. Ain't hardly nothing like it used to be here.

VB: So, you are telling me some of the negative things that have changed over the years. Have there been any positives since you started?

JB: No.

VB: It's just downhill?

JB: Downhill. In the last, I want to say, about ten to fifteen years, everything's gone downhill since they closed the Sound completely. That's what I say. There's a lot of them says no, but it is. If you don't keep your yard clean or your garden clean, you ain't nothing going to grow. Your grass won't grow, or your garden won't grow. If you don't keep it clean, they ain't nothing going to grow. That's my opinion. But they say no. [laughter]

VB: When you go out on the on the boat, can you tell me like what a like a normal day would be while you are out shrimping? Like, when you get up, what you do during the day, what you do at the end of the day.

JB: Well, we pull everything out and start. We just leave the dock. Time we get for the bridge, we pull the net and doors out. Not like right now, if it was open. See, they got it closed for 25 miles. But when it's from 3 miles, wherever you want to dry, we pull everything out. We get the 3-mile line. Then we start dragging. You drag for two or three hours. Then you take up and put it back out. If there ain't nothing, you come back home or anchor up.

VB: But if there is some?

JB: You drag till you get tired. Then you come home, or you anchor up that night and go to bed.

VB: What do you do with the shrimp and everything when you get back to the dock?

JB: Sell them to the fish house. That's all you allowed to do. You can't sell nothing to nobody. They ain't but one fish house. They control it.

VB: Who controls it?

JB: The fish house over there. [laughter] You can't sell to the public. They don't like you to do it. They say it's cutting their throat. But most times, I come in every day and go out. A lot of them anchors up, like my grandson and all them boats over there now. That's what they do. They stay anchored out. We come in every day with fresh shrimp. We do. A lot of them boys over there, [inaudible], they do the same thing. Some of them anchor up. Some don't. You get old like us, it's time to go home. [laughter]

VB: When you go out, maybe how many people are on the boat with you?

JB: Two or three, that's it.

VB: Is it less than it used to be?

JB: No, it's the same thing. That's normal. Some of them got four, but especially one that stays on a long trip. But I don't do it no more. I'm tired of it. [laughter]

VB: So, earlier, before we came in here and started the recording and everything, you were talking about how you used to have five boats. Now you have two.

JB: Yes.

VB: So, can you tell me how you ended up having five boats?

JB: You buy them. Fishing for a while, I helped my brother buy one. I got my daughter one. We sold them all. It was just mostly family doing with them. Between me and my brother, said he had it. I bought him one. Two or three of them, and we sold them. We sold one last year. Last year, the older boat, and we sold it. I bought the *Flying Cloud* from (Bubba Truck?), and *Dory*, if I had it. I'd been on it since I was sixteen years old, off and on it.

VB: So, was it your dad that taught you to fish?

JB: Yes. He and daddy went bait fishing with my granddaddy. He was born on Jekyll Island. He never come to Brunswick till he was 21. All the McDowell's in the business, that's about all that was done, is trout fish. Granddaddy McDowell was born in 1893. I don't know when his daddy was born. But that's what they done on Jekyll Island. They took care of – they were care keepers over there. That's when John D, Rockefeller and all them was over there. That's a long time. [laughter] I don't know if y'all ever heard of him.

VB: Can you tell me a little bit about him?

JB: No. He's a millionaire, he was, on Jekyll Island. You have to go there and look that up. They wrote a book about him. Then we took a bunch of people to cook shows and all that.

VB: All right, so we have talked about your thoughts on how the fishing community is right now. What do you hope to see in the next generation?

JB: I hope they open the Sound back up and clean it up. They said no, but it is. When they closed the Sound, the river's just closing up with mud filling in. It ain't helped keeping the channel dragged. We did dredge, moving the sand in the Sound. All they care about is them ship over there, them car ship. That's it. They dredged the channel for them. They don't care nothing about Jacob Creek or nothing like that. It is just about filled all the way in. You can't hardly run in and out. The boats can't. Willy's tug barges, they quit because they wouldn't let them dredge the creeks back out no more, intercoastal. They said the black snails were killing the little black snails. There's a whole bunch of stuff y'all need to check in on. All the state and game fish, and a lot of them boys over there, Dominic and Billy Reddick, Jim Page and all them. They all went with us conking. Ain't no more conch around here. They killed them off with that dredge pumping the sand up on the beach. Said they going to renourish it. [laughter]. I didn't see where it helped nothing but make sandbars. What did y'all want to know? You tell me how sand going to stay up here with water. Like from here, say, this is the beach. Beach falls off like that. How is sand going to stay up here when water pushes it back off? They claim it was going to make it stay there, but it won't. The tide and the hurricanes and stuff, it pushes it right back away, back there in the sea. The [19]70s and [19]80s, we got more for shrimp then than we do now. There's a lot of difference compared when I was young to now, until you get old. Sometime we have to sell them for 80 cents a pound.

VB: It used to be.

JB: Some of them will get 5 or \$6 a pound. I could see two or three years ago, we got 80 cents a pound for a shrimp with a head on. I bet y'all don't have to sit here. Y'all can't buy them that cheap. I think we got a – let's see. This winter past, we got \$1.54 with a head on, Key West shrimp. They get more for them. That's them, Key West pink shrimp. They horrible. Now they catching shrimp over there. They killing them. I think Mike got – they said he had 800 bags this trip. I don't know how many boxes that is, but they doing good over there in Florida on the other side, not this side but Gulf side. They killing us right over there.

VB: So, one of the things that we are kind of curious about is, is what kind of things do you think could change in the future? Beyond federal regulation and beyond state regulation, what are things that we can do on the ground to change the future of fishing?

JB: Like I said, you got to open up Sound. See, they don't want open them, period. Why can't they open them and just experiment with certain ones? You can't just have one year. You going to have to have four or five years or six years just to drag. Let them drag 225 to 250-foot. They have to clean the bottom back up. I ain't going to say the name, but I know some people that do stuff. When he drags a certain area, the shrimp show up thicker, like bait boats. They used to

could drag anywhere they want to. But they can't now. They got certain areas they can drag. You go to certain places, there ain't no shrimp. Where they used to drag that, you can go catch shrimp there. But you can't no more. That's just the rules they got.

VB: So, where did you used to shrimp? You are talking about shrimping within the Sounds. But when you were young...

JB: We sailed right here on the other side of the bridge.

VB: That is where you used to shrimp when you were younger?

JB: Yes. Cumberland, Satilla, Georgia, Saint Simons side, Frederica, all of them, Mackay, all that used to be open. But you don't see no more boats like you used to. Everybody's getting out of the business. Just quitting. It can't make a living.

VB: You mentioned one of the boats that used to have for your daughter, and you also mentioned your grandson. How do they feel about the future of fishing or what are their –

JB: She quit 'cause she wasn't making no money. So, my grandson, he said he going to stay with it for a while. He could have got a good job, but he likes shrimping himself. He quit. He could have went with a railroad (C&H?), but he didn't want to go. He runs the other boat for me. He'd be 21 next month. That's April. Next month, he'd be 21. In May, I'd be 65. That man just walked right here, he'd be 75. He's still shrimping. Tammy, he's fishing. He lives in the Cape. I don't know how old Tammy would be. [inaudible]

VB: But you have been doing this for 50 years or so, huh?

JB: I'm born and raised on the boat. That's where my daughter was – [laughter] you don't need to know that part. See what she called it, where she was at. Her mama used to work with me.

VB: Does she still?

JB: No, we got a divorce. I ain't seen her. She lives in Florida now. But my daughter, she used to fish with me. She just quit about four years ago, five years ago. She cleans houses now, motels, and stuff. She's always been with me. She quit. My brother, he quit. I think he's 68. Oh, he quit. My baby brother, he done it for a while. He didn't like it. His wife didn't want him to shrimp fish. So, he quit. He worked at CPAC.

VB: At CPAC?

JB: Yes. Let's see, right before you get to I-95. It'll be one, two, three red lights. Then you turn right and go down there and CPAC. They used to mess with shrimp. I don't even think they messed with them no more.

VB: So, you said your little brother did not like it. What do you like about it? What do you enjoy about shrimping?

JB: What I enjoy about is they just fun. You're out there by yourself with two or three people. You ain't got 900 people telling you what to do. Not like if you go to school, you've got whole lot of teachers. But if you get along with your boss, man, all you do is clean the deck and you get through. You just sit around and watch television and do whatever you want to do. It used to be a good life. But it ain't no more. Some do real good. Some don't. But it ain't no shrimp like it used to be. (But really?) Parker does, he's got that piece of paper, what y'all need to get. I had people come from Panama City right there at the dock last year. Want to know how come there were no more fish houses here? You know the State of Georgia was at one time the shrimp capital of the world. But it ain't no more. Darian, Valona, Saint Mary's, anywhere you want to look, you've seen both. Billy Burbank used to build so many nets. [inaudible] went out of business, too. Just for South America, they used to build 400 or 500 nets a year. But it ain't nothing like it used to be. North Carolina, they got their sounds open. They do real good every year. They kill shrimp. I think last year was the most shrimp they ever caught him in history, they recorded. Sure, all them shrimp come out, some of them boat get 500 baskets a day. They round here with all the boats. When I rode shrimp season, that's when we catch a lot of shrimp, what you call raw shrimp. They come from everywhere. They dragged this place to death. Never shut them off, 24 hours a day. Unlike Bruce over here, our fish house, they record every shrimp that we catch. They have to send a thing in the state game fish. But the boats fishing from out of state, they don't have to unload their shrimp here. So, I asked them, I said, "How y'all know how many shrimps we had this year?" They don't because they haul them back to Florida or South Carolina. So, how many shrimp they know that come out of Georgia? They can't prove it. That's what they call the baby shrimp, the mama shrimp, the raw shrimp. They haul them off by the tons. So, you don't know how many shrimps was in the State of Georgia that year. So, they ain't really got a record of it. Because they pay more money in Florida for them and boat to take them back. So, you figure \$50 or \$1 more pounds at 100 or 200 boxes, that's a lot of money. A lot of stuff they could check on, but they don't.

VB: What do you mean?

JB: Well, they ain't got no recording with them boats. They took all our shrimp from Georgia. They take them to Florida and sell them, or South Carolina, South Carolina boat. Our boats go down there and catch their shrimp and bring them back here. They ain't got really no recording how many shrimp they keep up with. [inaudible], everybody that catches shrimp, different places, they take them back somewhere else because they get more money. You can't blame them. Say, \$1 more a pound, you're going to take them wherever you get the most money. On a freezer boat, you can keep them as long as you want to. You freeze them. They haul them all over the place. [laughter]

VB: So, your boats, are any of them freezer boats?

JB: No. I got all ice boats. I think that's about it. Yes, that's all we got over our dock, ice boats. In Darian, let's see. I think Little Ricky's got a freezer on his boat. Big Ricky don't. Marty, he's got a freezer boat. But [inaudible] and Joe Garcia, he's got two freezer boats. Speedy got two freezer boats. Around here, most of them are just ice boats.

VB: So, you started out working on the boat. How did you end up with your own boat?

JB: You just work and save your money and buy one. Ray Stanford helped me buy my first one, city market. He helped me buy my first one. He did.

VB: When did you buy your first boat?

JB: Oh, hell, I don't remember how old I was. I think I was still in my twenties. I've been on that boat [inaudible] since I'd been 16. So, how do you figure that? All of us were born and raised on the boat. I'd raised my son and my daughter by myself on that boat door. Then I raised my brothers' boys. Then there was Jonathan and his sister and a pile of us.

VB: So, fishing and shrimping has been really involved with your family. Was it a community aspect?

JB: No, not all of them now. Granddaddy had sixty-five grand young'uns. Some of them still shrimp fish. Some of them don't. At one time, I had forty aunts and uncles.

VB: What was that like?

JB: We never had no family reunion, too many, I reckon. [laughter] But you figure, sixty-five, when he died, he had sixty-five grand young'uns, fifteen great grand young'uns. A bunch of more have been born since then on both sides. There was, I think, fourteen or sixteen on mama's side, and eight my daddy's side. Granddaddy, he had been places in where King Bay is now, a submarine base. That's where he had his – they run him off from there, the government did, and he moved on 303 where they built the bridge at. When they built the new bridge, he had to move from there. They run him to Fancy Bluff. Then he quit with it. [laughter] It's just been in our family for years. We got them scattered from Atlanta to Colorado, California, everywhere.

VB: But you have always been here. Have you gone out and fished in other areas, too? You have gone to Florida?

JB: Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina. I don't like nobody but Georgia [laughter] because I was born and raised here. Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, ain't none of it bad. I just, we come all the way, come back home. Last year, the first year I went to North Carolina and see her Sound, man, that's a big Sound. They said it's 30miles wide and 90 miles long, [inaudible]. But my uncle, he lived there for years. He came home this year or last year. That's where he lived at in North Carolina with his young'uns. I know a whole bunch of people from one end to the other. We used to crab in the Sound. They don't even let us do that no more.

VB: You used to crab?

JB: Yes. Dad crab nets with a boat. We caught plenty of crabs. That's right. Lewis crab factory was here. They bought all the crabs, and Wharton. They used to have them over there, and Darian. I think they say Pelican Point somewhere. They had them over there. You don't see no crab houses no more. The packing house, they used to make their own crab meat. They'd

peel them and everything right here. They did. But there ain't nowhere to do it no more. Everybody's going out of business.

VB: So, did you learn crabbing from your dad, too? Or was it...

JB: Yes, I just always been on the boat when you do a crab net, conk net. My daddy and them, they never done no conking or nothing, but I did. That's really fun doing that conking. But that's a lot of work.

VB: Can you tell me about it a little bit?

JB: Now you just drag conk nets in the same way you would shrimp net, but you didn't drag long. You dragged 10 or 15 minutes, you take up. You work, too. That's work. I think the best day I ever had was 500 baskets, made 17-minute drags.

VB: So, why do you have to pull those nets up every 10 minutes instead of dragging?

JB: Because you catch too many. Yes. You get so many cones. If you drag them too long, you sand up, mud up, and it'll tear the nets up. There was always a bunch of ways to make a living around here, but they ain't no more. Ever since they pumped that sand onto Jacob Beach inside the channel, it killed all them big black mussels. That's what the conch used to feed on. They ain't no more of them. That dredge boat they got dredging out here now, what we call Snag Alley and the Saint Simons side, it killed that spot. We never could figure out what's wrong. This year when I was going out for the last two days, we got to fish around here. That dredge was dumping that mud in there where we used to drag out. It killed the bottom. But they say no, but it had to, because they used to be plenty of shrimp there, but there ain't nothing there no more. All the shrimp is gone. [laughter] I reckon that's what killed them.

VB: How long did you crab and conk?

JB: Just every year they let us do it in the wintertime. State and game fish used to open up and say we could crab. All our beaches used to be full of crab. I ain't going to say that's what caused all of it. But ever since they closed the Sound, ain't no crabs like it used to be. Anywhere you drive from Savannah to Fernandina, beaches and rivers used to be full of crabs. But they ain't nothing like it used to be. The crabbers, they have a lot of hard time selling their crabs now because they have to ship them to Maryland, everywhere up north. That's what y'all need to get. Some of them crabbers come in here, they could tell you about the crabs used to be here. [inaudible] That's the next fish house beside us. But they went out of business. Most crab, he caught us three, I think, three or four drags. He had 10,000 pounds of crabs. Y'all seen some crabs yesterday, didn't you?

VB: They kind of scared me a little bit. They started crawling around the deck. They were coming at our feet.

JB: Bite you too. You ain't got to worry about that. You see the one with the big brown eggs on the back? That's what you call a salt crab.

VB: The mama crabs?

JB: Yes, mama crabs. They used to tear the eggs off and sell them. But you ain't supposed to do it. [laughter] The game warden watches us for that now. But there used to be plenty of crabs anywhere you want to go. You could sit right out there and catch all the crabs you wanted. I think about four or five fish houses would be bait places around here now. That's the reason they closed the Sound. We give it to the sport fisherman. Ever since they took it from us and gave it to the sport fishermen, we didn't been [inaudible].

VB: Do you think that there is anything that could be done besides opening the Sound that would help improve the shrimping industry?

JB: Stop dragging on the road shrimp. Well, that's a proven fact. The turtles, the fish, shrimp, everything lays at night. If you drag 24 hours a day, how something got a chance to lay? Figure that out. They don't got a chance to lay, not dragging 24 hours a day. They don't care if them boats come from out of town. They don't care if they get 10 pounds. They're still going to drag. They don't shut them down. There are some big boats they got now and a lot like a big old house trailer. It's total electric. They got anything you want on there, [inaudible] machine, dryer, everything. They hold I think about 20 or 25,000 gallons of fuel. They stay gone for 30 or 40 days at a time. I don't think y'all would like that, stay on the ocean that long.

VB: So, is there anything that you think that people our age or people who do not live on the coast should understand about the history of coastal Georgia?

JB: You don't seem like it was. You'd see it different. Y'all could tell the difference. Y'all could. If you seen all the shrimp back then, what used to be here. It's just getting worsen since they closed the Sound. They say no. It's a proven fact. When they was open, there was plenty of shrimp. They closed it. It went down here. So, y'all figure that out for yourself. [laughter] That's the way I look at it. I know ever since they closed it, it ain't been no more good. If they just opened it up like it used to, two or three days out of the month to help clean the bottom produce. See, when the Sound was open here, all boats didn't drag the Sound. When there went no shrimp on the sound, everybody going ocean. When they were nothing in the ocean, it's too rough, everybody come in the Sound dry. I like our brownies. They don't. What we call the brown shrimp, we can't catch them here no more. Something's got to be killing everything. When they get right there to bridge, the rivers, the big boats and the state game fish boat that testing the shrimp, they said it was black gill what's killing them. But I ain't saying that's what it is. But they ain't got nothing to feed on like they used to in the bottom. Keep the bottom clean. If they got to dig through the bush and save them flowers out there, you got to dig through something that thick. How are they going to find something to eat? We ain't never had no sharks in this river right here. You better not jump overboard out here now. My grandson and Ben (Lord?), last year they were catching bull sharks off of this dock right here, 7, 8-foot long. If he comes in, they get him to show them pictures. I think Bruce and them got some of them right there where we caught them off the dock. Be working on the boat. They were just a hook with a rope on them. They take off with it. They'd be swimming all around the boat. I ain't never seen none to the last two years up here. That, I think, sharks got. They eat them nets up.

You pay 6,000 or 10,000 for a set of nets. You got to sew on them every day that you fish. You got to sew certain time of the year. See, the shark fishermen used to make good money here. They don't make no more money because they shut them down. They ain't allowed to catch them. They ain't allowed to catch but thirty or something like that. That's it.

VB: So, you said every single day, you go out fishing, you have to sew up your nets. Do you kind of...

JB: Yes, I just own my own. I have to sew for my grandson. He's starting to learn. But a lot of fishermen can't sew. They have to hire people. Sometimes you come in here and you stay gone two or three days, you come in, you've got to sew that many days on the net, sew holes y'all can climb through them.

VB: So, there are people who, like at the fish houses, they just saw nets back together? Or are there a lot of people who know how to do that?

JB: Yes. There are people come down here and sew, make money. Sometimes they eat the whole net out of the lead line. There ain't nothing left. Y'all just got to go out there and let them show y'all one time. I don't know if Bruce Johnson has some pictures of them. They're all over the Facebook, people puts on there, the sharks. You wouldn't believe how many sharks are out here now. When we used to fish, once in a while, we get a bite. But now, you've got to buy shark-chafing gear. You've got to buy this to keep the sharks away from it. They say there's a shortage of them. I don't know how the hell they come up with that. I ain't never seen so many sharks in my life. Back then, we didn't have that many sharks. But now there's millions of them.

VB: Who taught you to sew and to fix your nets?

JB: From daddy, Captain Jack. My daddy could sew. My granddaddy could. I never did hang around daddy too much. [laughter] He drank all the time. We come in, we haul boogie. People want to pick it up and to learn how, but some of them don't like to sew. They ain't that many can sew now. A lot of young trout fishermen can't. They can patch them [inaudible]. [laughter] There was a man. Who the hell – I'm trying to think of that man's name, was in South Carolina, talking to him. I've forgotten the people's names up there. But anyhow, this man come in from fishing. I said, "What you got all them plywood patches on in there?" He said, "That's where the holes is." [inaudible] People who take nails and bend them over the hole and nail plywood on his net. Yes. I ain't never heard of this in my life. But he told us that about two months ago.

VB: But you are teaching your grandson how to fix them right.

JB: Yes. He's learning it, taking him a while. He gets into his cusses. It's aggravating. So you get some of them holes that you can climb right on through it. North Carolina is the same way. The sharks are getting thicker and thicker every year. But they say there ain't none. Like that blue shark boat we got down here, claim they ain't no sharks. Well, come on out with us. Let us push the trash overboard. You jump overboard and tell us that. They're running at the bottom of the boat. When you push the trash overboard and when you anchor up, there's so many of them want that food.

VB: I think we saw sharks yesterday...

JB: Yes, they starting to show up now. Just are. See, they're seasonal just like the shrimp are. Cold water, they go south. Warm water, they come back. Just like shrimp and turtles. Turtles, they go south when it gets cold. Everything comes back this way when it warms up. But North Carolina caught more shrimp they ever recorded in their life up there, last year, in that cold weather. We haven't seen the shrimp there. It's unbelievable. If y'all get tired of come over here, show you some pictures of them. Like last year, just wandered here, just went by. Well, it's still winter. But at our dock, I ain't never seen it. He took pictures that nighttime, swimming all over the top of the water right there at that dock where we tied up at. I ain't never seen it till he showed us. Uncle Ben seen it. Frank at the fish house, he come down and seen it. They was all over the top of the water swimming. I ain't never seen nothing like that.

VB: Why do you think they were swimming on?

JB: I don't know. I've seen it cold here before, coldest one has ever been, but they just come to the boats with all them lights on, swimming. Florida, that's what they do sometimes down there. They put a lantern in of them kicker boats. They put lanterns and lights in the front. They pushed them little dip nets and catch shrimp like that. They say it'll come to. I don't know. [laughter] I couldn't tell you. I know a mullet will. But shrimp, that's the first time I ever seen something like that.

VB: I think that that was about all I had in questions. Are there any stories that you wanted to tell us?

JB: No.

VB: All right.

[end of transcript]