

Josh Wrigley: This is an interview for the Maine Coast Oral History Initiative, to be shared jointly by the Maine Coast Fisherman's Association and the Island Institute. The date is September 18, 2013, and I am at Atlantic Edge Wharf in Boothbay Harbor, Maine, with fisherman Kelo Pinkham. The subject of today's interview will be his memories of his fishing career and how the fishing industry has changed.

Kelo Pinkham: So, where do you want to start?

JW: Well, how about with your name and maybe date of birth?

KP: Kelo Pinkham, 8/13/59. [laughter] Indian in a Western movie. That's where the name came from. I hear it's Polynesian.

JW: Which movie?

KP: I don't know. I've never seen the movie, except I met one other guy who's two days older than me from Kittery, Maine, who has the same name. Same movie, I guess. [laughter]

JW: Must have been a good movie.

KP: I guess.

JW: Where are you from?

KP: Right here, Boothbay Harbor. I grew up right there. You could see the house from here.

JW: Just up the way there?

KP: Just the other side of the Catholic church, yeah.

JW: And you're a fisherman?

KP: Yeah. You can see my boat if you walk out to the end of the dock. [laughter]

JW: What gear type?

KP: Groundfish, shrimp. I've gone scallop-dragging. I did scallop diving when I was in high school until I was old enough to get a work permit, and then I worked here. [laughter]

JW: Here at Harbor Bait?

KP: It was the Boothbay Freezer then. The last time I punched a time clock was thirty-five years ago, right here on this same dock. It wasn't Harbor Bait then. [laughter]

JW: You said before when we were talking that it's been in your family for several generations, right?

KP: Yeah. My father eventually got so he managed this place. My mother used to manage the shrimp crew and the whiting crew. At least one of my sisters worked here part-time. My father got my grandmother a job here cleaning toilets. My grandfather used to cut – back then, it was big cod fish. When they sent them to New York, they cut the heads off. He was retired, but he used to cut the heads off the cod fish for the tongues and cheeks.

JW: Where was that?

KP: Oh, right here.

JW: On this wharf?

KP: Yeah, it was a bigger building back then. But yeah, several of my uncles worked here on both sides of the family, my mother's side and my father's side, at different times. Two of my uncles fished on boats that fished off this wharf back when it was all draggers back then. Then,

they eventually bought lobsters, too. Back in the '50s, the whiting dried up to the western, and a lot of the Italian fleet from Gloucester came up here and went whiting fishing. Whiting was big up until almost the '80s. For half the '60s, all during the '70s, they did 100,000 pounds a night or more here – processed whiting from – I don't know. They started in June. Probably some years, it ran right through until October. Then, they did whiting in the summer, shrimp in the winter, and groundfishing in between – most of what the draggers did.

JW: What brought the whiting in so close?

KP: I don't know. I assume it was just natural fluctuation in the winter. During the '50s, the shrimp pretty much disappeared, and then they came back gangbusters in the late '60s and the early '70s. But when the shrimp disappeared, the whiting showed up, so I assume it was warming. The feds say the whiting population in the Gulf of Maine is up right now, and it's down to the western.

JW: How far offshore?

KP: Oh, it'd start right in the Cuckolds [ledges in the entrance of Boothbay Harbor]. The guy I bought my boat from used to live over in Georgetown, on Bay Point, and he used to go down at night and dip them off his wharf. He had a spotlight, and they'd come up under the spotlight, and he'd dip them for lobster bait the next day. So they were pretty close to the shore.

JW: Was that during the same era?

KP: Yeah. Yeah. No, we'd start right at the Cuckolds, tow around Seguin. It was mostly inside the three-mile limit where we went whiting fishing. Occasionally, I go over towards Monhegan or Pemaquid Point, but mostly, it was right out here, right in the mouth of the Sheepscot River. You got to ask me questions if you want me to talk. [laughter]

JW: You mentioned before about the O'Hara fleet fishing for redfish.

KP: Yeah, they did that right up until even after they passed the two-hundred-mile limit. We still had a redfishery in the Gulf of Maine. We used to call it – O'Hara was on the council then. We called it O'Hara's lawn because from basically right outside of Boothbay Harbor here east, you could tow smaller than five and a half-inch cod-end. Everyplace west, you had to tow five and a half-inch. The reason for it was so they could go redfishing, although I considered redfish at the time more overfished than anything else out there. But when my mother first came down here seventy years ago and worked on redfish, when they'd come through the scaling machine, they'd still be [inaudible]. So, obviously, they weren't catching them very far away from here. But they eventually cleaned them out. I know in the springtime when the shrimp started moving offshore, a lot of times, they'd come in with half shrimp and half redfish. But there was no grates back then. You were allowed to keep anything you caught.

JW: A grate was a bycatch reduction device?

KP: Yeah, Nordmore grate. When we first did the grate, we were allowed ten percent bycatch of groundfish, as long as you had the grate on. We used to get it mostly in blackbacks and yellowtails because they'd go through the grate. But nowadays, they've pretty much disappeared. I don't know why, either.

JW: The blackback and yellowtail?

KP: Yeah. From the time I got out of high school in '78 through the mid-'80s, we fished for blackbacks and yellowtails, mostly blackbacks. You got a few yellowtails up on the gravel around – right from the Cuckolds to Reid State Park, down around Seguin, we'd do that from August until – oh, right up until Christmastime some years. Right up on the beach – two fathom of water, three fathom of water. By Christmastime, you'd be up off in twenty-five or thirty-fathom of water. But when we went to the six-and-a-half-inch cod-end, that pretty much was the end of that because our blackbacks don't get that big up here. Plus, nowadays, there's so much lobster gear there that you'd never be able to tow a net anyway.

JW: What type of fish is a blackback?

KP: A flounder. A winter flounder. Yellowtails are flounders, too. But they say Seguin's the farthest place west for any amount of yellowtails in the Gulf of Maine. You get a few in other places, but they're more of a warm-water, sandy-type species. They like the sand and the gravel.

JW: Is Seguin south of here?

KP: Yeah, Seguin Island, right at the mouth of the Kennebunk River. There was also a blackback fishery to the west of there, but we just didn't usually go there. We went from here around Reid State Park, Salter Island, and Seguin. That was kind of fun because you're right up on the shore.

JW: So most of your fishing at that point took place within state waters?

KP: Yeah, you'd get done shrimping in the spring. Like April or May, we'd start groundfishing, catching cod fish and haddock, pretty much right around the three-mile line, right up until the Cuckolds. And then the dabs would come in, and we'd fish dabs May, June, July, pretty much inside the three-mile limit – Damariscove tow, river tow, Tom's rock, around Seguin down on the sand. Then we'd go back outside a little bit and catch a few hake and gray sole and cod fish – smaller cod fish, market-size cod fish – until the blackbacks would hit in August, and then we'd stay there until pretty much Christmas, and we'd go shrimping. That used to be the year, pretty much. [laughter]

JW: How large were market-size cod fish then?

KP: Oh, the same size they are now – ten, fifteen pounds. We used to have a spring run of cod fish in the Sheepscot, Small Point mud, off Pemaquid Point that would show up every spring. That would be cut, gutted, and gilled. We tried to put two in a tray – get 110, 115 pounds in a tray, it would be two cod fish. So the dressed cod fish are running fifty to sixty pounds. They used to work on them every year in the springtime in the daytime. About the time I got out of high school, about the late '70s-early '80s, we started catching them at night. I assume we

caught up all the ones that were foolish enough to go to the bottom in the daytime, and the only ones left are the ones that went to the bottom at nighttime. So, for a few years, there was a big fishery that'd go out at night and catch cod fish at night.

JW: This was during the spring run?

KP: Yeah. That would be May, June, maybe into July. Every year was a little bit different. They used to say when the leaves on the tree were the size of a mouse's ear, the cod fish would be in the river. Or when the shad bushes would blossom. I can remember years that we'd had a couple of good weeks of fishing before there was any leaves on the trees. Other years, the leaves were fully out on the trees before we'd catch the cod fish. But the Sheepscot's been closed now. They put a spawning enclosure to protect the cod fish probably twenty-five years ago. There's no big codfish there now. I suspect between the rise of the gill netters offshore and us inshore – plus, there was a couple of midwater trawlers that worked on them for a couple of years. They'd come in next door there and bring in a couple of tractor-trailer truckloads at night. So that pretty much decimated them, I think. Plus, technology – we had better nets. We towed faster. We had more overhead. They had sonars. So we could get in the little cracks where they could hide before. When I was a kid, it was all landmarks. When we first went whiting fishing, there was only a couple guys that had radars. So you had twenty boats and two guys with radars.

JW: So you're still running with time and tide?

KP: Pretty much, yeah. I can remember stopping, shutting the boat off, and listening for the bell at the Cuckolds when it was foggy so you could find your way back into the harbor. When I first went Downeast fishing with Stanley, we had an old World War II surplus LORAN-A out of an airplane. Had a Briggs and Stratton out on deck. So, you'd go out on deck and start the Briggs and Stratton and a little oscilloscope on the LORAN, and you'd turn the knobs and line up posts and humps and little squares. When you'd get done lining up all these little things on the oscilloscope, you'd look at what numbers were top on the [inaudible], and that was your bearing. Then you'd do the same thing on a different chain. So it'd take you like five or ten minutes to

take a bearing. It wasn't like nowadays, when you've got the little blinking cursor on the screen all the time telling you exactly where you are. [laughter]

JW: Who was Stanley?

KP: Stan Coffin was the guy that my father said would pay more money that I went fishing with when I was eleven. Then, when I got out of high school, his father went lobstering for years, and his father had injured his back. So Stanley talked him into going dragging. He asked me if I wanted to fish with his father that summer, and he told me I'd make more money with his father than with him. So, I went fishing with his father. At the time, his father didn't mend very well and stuff, and I could, so it worked out well. I was supposed to go to college that fall, but I never did make it. [laughter]

JW: You mentioned before when we were talking that when you went out with Stan, he had warned you to stay away from the wolffish, right?

KP: Yeah. He said catfish because they bite. I thought the catfish was hake when we dumped the pile because the hake has whiskers, and that's what I associate with catfish, not those big gray things. So, I did stay away from those. I really was kind of ignorant, I guess, [laughter] but I was eleven, so I had a good excuse.

JW: How long did you wind up fishing with Stan?

KP: Oh, until I got out of high school. I went with him every summer, and I went with him a lot of weekends during the winter. You know, I'd go out shrimping on the weekends. When I was in eighth grade, my uncle Freddy was fishing with him at the time, and he wanted to go to a wedding. My father let me take the day off from school so I could fill in for Uncle Freddy. I made \$110. That was big money back then. [laughter]

JW: Was he a Coffin of the Coffin family on Nantucket?

KP: All the Coffins come from the Coffin family on Nantucket. He was an only child, and my wife actually was a Coffin – different Coffin family, but they had the same story. I think Stanley actually came from the Black wife, whereas my wife’s family came from the Indian wife, I think. But my Uncle Freddy ended up fishing with Stanley for a few years, and he always made fun of the Coffins.

JW: Why’d he do that?

KP: Oh, because Stanley had the large lips and came from the Black branch of the Coffins, I guess. My Uncle Freddy made fun of everybody, no matter what. But the funny part was I ended up marrying a Coffin, and my wife – some guy contacted her, and he was doing the Coffin family history. She gave him our history and stuff. And when he sent her a copy of the genealogy, he said, “You aren’t going to believe it” because there was more Pinkhams in the Coffin family, I think, than there was Coffins. Two Pinkham sisters had married two Coffin brothers. Apparently, Pinkhams and Coffins have intermarried for [laughter] as long as we’ve been here, I guess.

JW: Is the Pinkham family also from Nantucket?

KP: No. My grandfather’s grandfather came from Prince Edward Island. But I think he came from Maine originally, went to Prince Edward Island, and then ended up back here. My mother’s family – my mother came from Damariscotta Lake. Her grandmother came from Richmond. Beyond that, I don’t know.

JW: You mentioned before that your mother had worked filleting redfish.

KP: Actually, she worked on the bugging table. The redfish would have large copepods that used to stick out of them and make big red sores on them back then. So she worked cutting those out of the filets, which is why she won’t eat one to this day. I like redfish. They’re tasty. Originally, when she first was old enough to work, she worked in the alewives factory at



Damariscotta Lake up there. They used to put them in barrels and salt them. I think they did other things with them up there, but I can't remember. I'll have to ask here.

JW: What were the yellow eyes?

KP: No, other things. Alewives.

JW: Oh, alewives. Sorry, sorry.

KP: River herring.

JW: I misheard you. [laughter]

KP: River herring that were run up to Damariscotta Mills, and there's a spillway up there, and there was a power plant. They had big cages in front of them, and they'd run in – they'd basically just hoist them up and dump them out. And then at the top of the hill, there was a little factory where they processed them. So she worked there, then she came down here to work on the redfish and stayed here for the next eighty years. But she worked here on whiting. She worked here on shrimp. She worked here processing lobsters.

JW: How many packing facilities were in Boothbay at that time?

KP: I don't know. When I was a kid, there was four places that bought shrimp [and] two places that bought groundfish. This place and the place next door both bought groundfish. But this place and that place – Robinson's Wharf bought shrimp. This place was the first – when I was a kid, they used to handpick them, basically. They hired a bunch of women to peel the shrimp by hand. Then George (Lewis?) got a peeling machine to mechanically peel shrimp, and that was on this wharf here. That was the first one in the United States. When it came, it had meters on it, and they rented them by the hour from the Swedes. They kept having trouble with it and having the Swedish technician over here, and George finally got mad at the guy and kicked him out. The guy said, "There's nothing you can do. I'm the only technician. You got to have me

back.” George said, “You’re not coming back. I’ll buy the machines.” The guy said they don’t sell them. I don’t know what he paid for him, but by the next day, he owned them.

JW: That was here right on Atlantic Edge Wharf?

KP: Yeah. So they had the two shrimp peeling machines then. They used to cook them, peel them. They went through a little IQF [Individually Quick Frozen] tunnel, basically, blew them up in the air – used nitrogen somehow to quick-freeze them. Then they would box them up, and then they’d run them back through the line again and pick out the different size grades and different curly-ness of the tail and pick out the bits and pieces and that kind of stuff. So they originally went through the peeling machine, went through a line, and the women would pick out any ones that had shell on them or any pieces of shell or anything that was left in them. Then they’d be boxed up in fifty-pound cartons. And later on, when things slowed down, they’d take them out of the fifty-pound cartons and put them in six-ounce packages or eight-ounce packages or whatever and grade them then for size. That was a big thing for a few years.

JW: How much faster did the machine process the shrimp than the people who’d been picking them before?

KP: Well, the women were – a really good woman could pick 25 pounds of meat an hour. Most of them picked fifteen to twenty, whereas they could do a couple hundred thousand pounds a day with the two peeling machines. They ran those at least two shifts a day, sometimes three shifts a day. They had to shut them down for a couple hours and clean them. When they first had the peeling machines here, they peeled year-round for a couple years. They got shrimp from here in the winter, and they shipped them in from Gloucester in the summer. Basically, they caught them down there inside of Jeffreys Ledge, Jeffreys Basin, that way. So for the first couple years, until the shrimp pretty much collapsed in the late ’70s, they ran those peeling machines year-round.

JW: Who were the big shrimp buyers at that time?

KP: When I was a kid – well, I guess I missed a step there. After the hand pickers, which was mostly a local market, the shrimp disappeared in Norway, and the Norwegians and the Swedes came over here. They bought whole cooked shrimp, and they supplied cookers to all the boats. Most of the shrimp were cooked on the boat because they wanted them live when you put them in the cookers so the tails would curl. And they used to put this red dye in them and dye them bright red. That's who paid for having that place next door built. So, for a few years, they went to the Swedes and the Norwegians, and they were a whole cooked in the shell, dyed red product. Then, it was the Japanese market later on. That was a big market.

JW: When were they selling to the Swedes and Norwegians?

KP: I would say that would be the early '70s, probably. Maybe the late '60s. But by 1973 or '74, they had the peeling machines. [RECORDING PAUSED] So, the peeled shrimp went to the Japanese. It was about the mid-70s, I think, when the Japanese really became interested in buying shrimp from Maine. They started buying tuna fish. They started buying shrimp. I don't know why – whether it was the advent of better shipping or what it was. Then, for a few years, we sold shrimp to the Japanese back after the peeling machines left this wharf here, and shrimp kind of disappeared in the late '70s. I think 1978 or '79, they actually closed shrimping for a year, and then they opened it back up. But it was two or three years after that before shrimp really came back, so there was any amount out there to catch. At the time when we started shrimping again, we were still selling most of the shrimp to the Japanese. They would come down, and they'd pick them up out of the tray, and they'd be wiggling, and they loved them. They'd snap the heads off, take the shells off, and eat them right there.

JW: So you'd seen a decline in catches leading up to 1979?

KP: Of shrimp?

JW: Yeah.

KP: Shrimp disappeared in the '50s. They came back in the '60s. For a few years, they were real thick. There was probably thirty draggers here in the harbor that went shrimping. Some of them were –

JW: What years were those?

KP: Oh, like '69 through '74, probably. (Lee?) and (Tibbets?) had the *Winthrop* (sp?). That was 138 feet. He went shrimping. (Giggy?) Balzano had the *Lady of the Gulf*. She was like eighty feet. He went shrimping here out of the harbor. There was boats as small as twenty-five feet that towed a little shrimp net that fit in a fish tray, but there was boats up to a hundred feet that went shrimping. At the time, everybody wanted to go in the Sheepscoot. This was the hot spot for shrimp. It was better than down Portland way.

JW: What did people say when they closed the shrimp in 1979?

KP: Well, there wasn't much to say. There wasn't any shrimp out there. [laughter] Even when shrimp came back – I mentioned when I was in eighth grade, I went that day for my uncle, and we had 1,100 pounds that day. That was the biggest day that Stanley had all year shrimping that year, although he started shrimping that year in November and fished probably until the end of April, pretty much any day they could get out. But there was just no big amount. I went shrimping for four different winters off and on while I was in high school with Stanley before I saw a three-thousand-pound day, let alone a three-thousand-pound tow.

JW: What was the average tow?

KP: Oh, a hundred pounds an hour was considered good fishing back then. You only fished them in the daylight, so you'd get ten, twelve hours of fishing in, so a ten or twelve hundred pounds. Two hundred pounds an hour was big fishing. A lot of years that I've gone shrimping, two hundred pounds an hour was big fishing, up until they came back here five or six years ago. And then, for a few years, two hundred pounds an hour was a small tow. But you had to have two hundred pounds an hour to make any money. [laughter] We went from getting – I think I got

as high as \$1.60 there one year. Actually, last year, at the end of the season, I got \$2.15, I think, which is the most I ever got.

JW: What was the lowest it ever reached?

KP: Oh, when I was in high school, they were around twenty-five, thirty cents. But about five years ago – I guess five or six years ago right here, we were on a quota, like three thousand pounds a day, and we were only getting a quarter for them. Basically, every other week, I just passed my check to my fuel buyer, and I went by myself. I couldn't afford to take a crew member. It was only a few of us fishing, because there really wasn't much market. David Oshier was going. I was pretty much the only one going out of the harbor here. I was selling to Eddie at the time, and he'd tell me before I left in the morning if I had a market for 2,500 or 3,000 or whatever, and if there was a market for more, he'd call me during the day and tell me. Basically, if no one was catching anything, or it was rough, and no one got out, I had more market. If it was good weather, then I had limited market. One day, we set out in John's Bay, and we slowed down, we thought we had shrimp traps, and we hauled back, and we did have a couple shrimp traps, but we had about 1,500 pounds of shrimp in the belly of the net, and I'd figured there was no shrimp in the cod-end because of the traps. We got the cod-end up, and we had a couple thousand pounds in the cod-end. Well, I only had market for 3,000 pounds. So, by seven o'clock in the morning, we were back here tied up to the wharf. Whereas a few years before that, we'd been rubbing our hands looking at a 10,000-pound day. You felt kind of silly coming back and your day all over at seven in the morning. The next winter, I had my son with me. We were on quotas that year. I think I watched Rachael Ray every day that year during shrimp season because we'd be in and tied up and home. That's about when I'd be eating my lunch.

JW: She give any good shrimp recipes?

KP: [laughter]I don't remember. But she was more cooking back then. I enjoyed her more. But that's just what time we'd get in. One day, we set out, and we had a market for two thousand. It got to the point that we'd make our first tow, and we'd haul back, and then we'd decide how

long we were going to tow our second tow – whether we'd tow twenty minutes or half an hour or an hour. One day, we had market for [nineteen hundred]. We hauled back, and we thought we had [nineteen hundred]. We started steaming in. We had a market for two-thousand. We thought we had two-thousand. We started steaming in, and when we got them trayed up, we only had nineteen trays. So I was selling to Dave (Reingard?) then, right here where we are now, and I called him on the radio and told him I had nineteen trays. He said, well, [inaudible] been pretty good to you. I can probably get rid of a couple extra trays. You ought to set back out again. So, instead of going back where we were, we set out up inside the Cuckolds, and we towed twenty minutes, figuring we'd get another tray or two. We had about two-thousand pounds. So, I called Dave back up, and I said, "Well, I had two thousand." I guess we had 2,100. I told him we had twenty-one. He said, "That's good. I can get rid of the extra tray. I said, "No, we had twenty-one that tow." He said, "Well, what am I going to do with them?" I said, "I don't know. You're the one that told me to set back out. But it was a strange year.

JW: If you had an excess, could you find other buyers who would absorb that?

KP: Sometimes. For a few days, we had a market – we were getting for basically half what we were getting from (Millen?), and Dave said it was up to you. So we'd catch two thousand pounds for (Millen?), then we'd catch another two thousand pounds for this other guy for half the amount of money, which – I didn't really like the idea of it. It was money. I was there anyways. But at the same time, you're selling to the guy you've sold to for twenty years' competition for less money. So we did that for three or four days, then the guy stuck Dave for all the money. That was the end of that. [laughter] Not only did he stick him for the money, he stuck him for a bunch of fish trays.

JW: When you mentioned a little while ago that Stan had a season that ran from November to April, what did he think accounted for that long season?

KP: Oh, there was no set season back then. When I started fishing, if you could catch it and you could sell it, you could make a living on it. In the summertime, when dabs were plentiful, we didn't save a dab that was less than probably fourteen, fifteen inches long. In the wintertime,

when fish were scarce, you'd sell a dab that was ten inches long. When we were Downeast, and we were haking. We probably didn't save a hake that was less than two feet long. Actually, we put a six-inch cod-end on one year when we were down there catching gray sole because we were just getting too many hake. We didn't want them. They weren't worth much, and we put a bigger cod-end on just to get rid of them so we could still keep the gray sole.

JW: When was this?

KP: That would have been the mid-'70s – '74, '75, '76, something like that. Basically, there wasn't a lot of groundfish to be caught in November, and shrimp were, for some reason, just outside of the three-mile limit that year. So, there was a market for shrimp, and that's where the most amount of money was, so he went shrimping. We'd leave our shrimp net on in the spring and go a combination of shrimping and groundfishing. You might come in with two thousand pounds of shrimp and two thousand pounds of cod fish. There was no legal size on fish back then and no legal twine size. So when we got to the point when we weren't catching enough shrimp anymore to make it worthwhile, we'd switch over and put a groundfish net on. But I can remember one spring, we were catching about a thousand pounds of shrimp and a thousand pounds of groundfish a day. We lost our shrimp market, so we took the shrimp net off and put the groundfish net on, figuring we'd catch more groundfish. We were still only catching a thousand pounds of groundfish a day, [laughter] but we weren't catching any shrimp, so we didn't really gain anything. That's where the money was, so that's where he went. That's why we went blackbacking and yellowtailing in the fall because it was the shortest steam and more money. We could have been offshore catching dabs or hake, but you went where the money was.

JW: So that year that you encountered all those hake Downeast, was that unusual?

KP: No, there was always a lot of hake down there. Mostly, we tried to avoid them.

JW: Was that mostly white hake?

KP: White hake, yeah. The gill netters would work on hake down there. We used to laugh at them because hake was only two cents a pound, and they had to cut them and gut them. Gray sole are like a big nineteen cents a pound, and all you had to do was put them in the trays. So we couldn't figure out why they were gill netting instead of dragging and catching gray sole. That's like when I was a kid; I couldn't picture anybody getting out of high school in this town and going into lobstering. There wasn't any money in lobstering. It was a short season; they weren't worth that much. No one really made a very big living at it.

JW: You said before that there's a trajectory in terms of career – that young people would start out dragging and then at the end of their career turn to lobstering. Could you say more about that?

KP: Well, it's just my perception when I was young. All the lobster fishermen in town, or at least the ones I knew, most of them used to go fishing on the O'Hara fleet, or they were part-time lobster fishermen. People would retire from the Navy or something like that or retire from the Ironworks, and they'd go lobstering. It wasn't something that someone said, "When I get out of high school, I want to go lobstering." It just wasn't done. The kid that was in my class when I worked here after school nights – I used to buy lobsters from a couple of fishermen that would come in later, and there was a kid my age who went out and went lobstering after school at night. He caught ninety pounds one day in Linekin Bay after school. That was the talk of the town. That kid caught ninety pounds after school one night.

JW: How much did he make?

KP: I don't know what they were back then. A couple bucks a pound, I think. But I can remember over here years later when my wife's hauler broke, and I left – I fished at Wharton's in that cove over there. I fixed her hauler, and I told the lobster buyer – I said, "I'm going to go out and haul a couple traps just to make sure her hauler's working." He said he'd come out and yell at me when he got ready to go home. It was like after four o'clock. I never left the cove. I hauled a few traps to make sure her hauler was working. And he come out and yelled at me at five o'clock, and I had ninety pounds basically right there in that cove in less than an hour.



JW: That was unusual for the time?

KP: That was really good at the time. We didn't realize how good lobstering was at the time. [laughter] More like it is Downeast now, I guess. Casco Bay was a big place to go lobstering when I was a kid. They used to call that the Bay of Pigs because everybody ran so many traps, and everybody wanted to fish Casco Bay. Then John's Bay was a big thing for a while. Now, it's pretty much Port Clyde East. Even Port Clyde fellows and the Owls Head fellows now say they're looking at Blue Hill Bay to be the next big lobster place. So the population's just marching to the eastern. Like I said, when we were groundfishing out of Jonesport in the '70s, a couple of the biggest lobster fishermen in Jonesport actually rigged up and went groundfishing when we were down there because there was probably six or seven boats here from Boothbay Harbor that ended up going down to Jonesport for four or five years here in the summertime because groundfish were scarce around here, and we went down there and worked on the gray sole. Since there was a buyer in town, there was boats in town, there was ice then, several of the lobster boats rigged up, and they would be out there groundfish dragging in June and July. They didn't used to get shedders back then until usually August. Like I said, a couple hundred pounds is a big catch – three hundred pounds. You had Benny Beal, who fished Grand Manan Channel, who caught a couple thousand pounds. He'd go out and stay for two days. But he was a breed of his own. He used to fish Georges back when the Russians were out there with lobster gear.

JW: This was before the Magnuson Act in '76?

KP: Oh, yes. Yes. And he fished Grand Manan Channel back then, and he had wire traps that had like sixty pounds of cement in the end traps, and they were like eight-gauge or something. The wire was almost as big around as my pinky. Hugely heavy traps. He had sixty-inch poly balls for pop buoys, and he had twenty-trap trawls. When the tide would run, it'd run those poly balls underneath. But everybody used cutting for lobster bait back then down east. That's all they'd use was cuttings – herring cuttings. We brought in hake heads, flatfish, and no one down there would buy them. They all used herring cuttings. Benny was about the only one that bought shack bait off us.

JW: Why'd he buy shack bait?

KP: I assume it probably stayed on better in the tide up in Grand Manan Channel. He also bought squid off us for halibut trawls. He did a little bit of halibut fishing. He would go into Canada and sell his oversized lobsters in Canada. He always had a pocketful of American money in one pocket and Canadian money in the other pocket. [laughter]

JW: Was he from Boothbay?

KP: No, no, he was from Jonesport. He used to fish from Jonesport to Georges, and then I think he's still going, but he was getting up there in years even then, even in the '70s. But he had about a forty-five, forty-seven-foot boat, had guy wires from the top of the pilot house to the bow because he pretty much took the pilot house off it out in the seas a couple of times. We used to call him our roving weather buoy because we'd call him up and say, "Benny, how's the weather?" And he'd say, "Oh, it's fine. Come on out." We'd come out, and it'd be rougher than hell. We ended up turning around and going back in. And we were in a forty-eight-foot dragger, and he'd be out there lobstering.

JW: Do you know how long it used to take him to steam to Georges from Jonesport?

KP: No, I don't. That was before my time. I just heard the stories from him. But I do know one of the guys that grew up on Beals Island and went – I think it was Avery Kelly, but I can't remember. Went lobstering his whole life, made a trip with Benny, and he came in, and he got off the boat and got down and kissed the ground, said he was never going again. [laughter] Because I guess it was a little different world fishing with Benny than it was lobstering in the reefs there.

JW: You mentioned a while back about – and this is going back earlier in the conversation – about the spring run of cod. I was meaning to ask if they were feeding or were they spawning?

KP: Oh, they were spawn cod. They'd be full of spawns. Up until probably the early '80s, there was always a spawning run of cod in the Sheepscot, like I said, and Small Point mud, Pemaquid Channel. I think up and down the whole coast. I know they used to go in Machias Bay. Some of the old guys – Myron McClellan used to, when he was a kid, fished over in the Sheepscot, and they had lobster cars back that. I don't know if anyone knows what a lobster car is anymore.

JW: What's a lobster car?

KP: Basically, it was a big floating wooden container that people would put their lobsters in when they didn't have much market, and they'd save them up and feed them until later on. Well, Myron used to go out and catch codfish after school on a hand line and put them in the lobster car and swim around until he had like a thousand or two thousand pounds, and there was a guy that would come pick them up, and buy them. But there was a spawning run of codfish that came up in the Sheepscot to spawn every year. Basically, what we caught were fifty, sixty-pound codfish. I think the biggest one I'd ever seen was 110 pounds gutted out.

JW: What was the perceived wisdom at that time about codfish spawning inshore like that?

KP: We used to think that the big codfish spawned inshore in the springtime, and the small cod fish spawned offshore in the winter. Because when we were shrimping, we'd catch small cod fish – five, ten-pound ones that spawned offshore in the winter. I don't know why these big cod fish – whether they just couldn't stand the pressure, and they eventually got wiped out between – for a few years there, there was draggers fishing the mud. We mostly stayed to the mud. The gill netters fished the bottom once the monofilament came along. There was a few people that gill netted with the old –

JW: You mean the rock bottom?

KP: The hard bottom. We can tow pretty much anything out there, but most of the time, it isn't worth it to tow the really hard bottom. The redfish boats used to. When I was a kid, they towed wooden rollers before we had rubber cookies and rockhoppers. You'd see the guys here. They'd

cut down maple trees, slice them into four-inch slices, and drill holes through the middle, and those were the rollers. They'd have six-inch pieces of maple trees or oak trees and drill holes through the middle, and that was the spacers. That's what they used to tow for the redfish and the shrimp in the springtime. The first time you'd set your frame out, it would float, basically, and you'd have to tow it a couple tows to get it to sink. [laughter]

JW: When did that practice die out?

KP: Oh, I can remember people making wooden roller gear – I never fished on a boat that towed wooden roller gear. We pretty much towed chain sweeps, which were basically a piece of rope with loops of chain off it and chain between the doors and the net. We used to tow straight wire whiting fishing and shrimp fishing. Groundfishing, we towed chain. It was, I think, 1979 and 1980 when we went to the first cookie gear, which were basically doughnuts cut out of rubber tires strung on a piece of wire between the doors and the net, which got you over a lot more bottom than just a chain did. Then we went to cookie sweeps – like four- or six-inch. Same thing – doughnuts cut out of tires. Some of the bigger boats had roller gear before then. Basically, it was when the Russians and the Germans come over here. They had the rubber roller gear, and we emulated them – had to, to keep up with them. In the '70s, I'd say there was a big burst of technology that came to fishing. We went to the sonar. You went from the LORAN-A to the LORAN-C. Then we went to plotters, so you knew where you were all the time. Once you got a tow down, you could go back and remake it. When I was a kid, everybody had landmarks. You'd line up a lighthouse with a tree or a yellow house with a forked tree or something, and that's how you knew where you were. They're pretty accurate, providing the weather's good and you're close enough to shore that you can see them. [laughter] When we were down in Jonesport, we'd steam two hours out in the morning by compass. Then we'd take a LORAN bearing to find out where we were. Then we'd steam around and look for towing bottom. It wasn't like nowadays when you leave the wharf in the morning, put the cursor in where you want to be, and set the autopilot and go. Now, the boat I fished on, the friends of ours – we were the first ones to have the old paper plotters. We had plotter papers of the tows, so we got a lot of the cracks and stuff down, which gave us a big advantage over the other boats who only went dragging part of the time. They didn't have the plotters. But plotters got cheaper.

They came along with plotters that could make grid lines, which we gridded our plots off so that if the plotter died, you could take the numbers from the LORAN and put your finger on the crosshairs and know where you were, which was good until some of the crew members stole them and sold them in the bars and stuff, and then all of a sudden, everybody knew where we towed. [laughter]

JW: Did that happen often?

KP: It only happened a couple times that I know of. There's a little competition between Boothbay and Five Islands. Down in [inaudible] shrimping, we had cracks that we were the only ones that towed – a couple of us. Then, all of a sudden, the Five Islands fleet showed up there one year, and they seemed to know all our secret spots. Well, it wasn't until a few years later that one of my friends from Five Islands actually showed me a plot and said, "Does this look familiar?" I said, "Yeah, it's my plot. Where'd you get it?" "Well, I got it from so-and-so, and he got it from so-and-so, who bought it in a bar." Then I knew why they all showed up and seemed to know all our spots. [laughter] Nowadays, there's no secrets. You can buy rec books, and everything's pretty much out there. I gave all my plots to the Island Institute. [laughter] But there's none of us left now, so it doesn't matter anyway. Pretty much everything's out there.

JW: How did you first feel the impact of federal fisheries management in '76, when they passed the Magnuson Act?

KP: When they first passed the Magnuson Act, they put a quota on codfish, and we were only allowed to catch like fifty pounds a day. But of course, we had no black boxes. We actually had logbooks then the first year, and then they went away for ten or fifteen years. The same boat I own now, the guy I fished with, I bought it out from him when he retired. We used to catch our codfish out in federal waters, and we'd just put down Bantam Ledge every day. That was the coordinates we fished at. [laughter] So there was federal quotas, but basically no enforcement. The first thing we had to deal with was twine sizes, but it really didn't impact us because we towed twine that was that big anyways. Then the next thing was, of course, having the wardens – the Coast Guard boarding you to check your cod-end and that kind of stuff, which was kind of

annoying, but really no big deal. It wasn't until we went to the days at sea that made a big impact. The first year I owned my boat, I had actually 210 days that year that I landed groundfish. Some of those were shrimp days.

JW: How were they divided up?

KP: What do you mean?

JW: Between groundfish and shrimp.

KP: When I first started my boat – shrimp season, I used to go shrimping about five months out of the year, until in the springtime, shrimp would move offshore, and groundfish would move in. When it got to the point that shrimp were farther offshore than the groundfish was, I switched over from shrimping to groundfishing. [laughter] So I did spend about five months out of the year shrimping and seven months out of the year groundfishing. For a few years, most of my income was out of shrimping. I made most of my money shrimping. Then it got so I made most of my money groundfishing. Then both of those kind of got bad, so I used to go lobstering anyway. My wife had a skiff she lobstered out of. I would [inaudible] days during the springtime until she got out of school, I'd set the traps and haul them in the springtime out of the skiff. Then, in the fall, once she went back to school or the weather got too cold for her, I'd haul them in for a while. Then it got to the point where there wasn't a lot of money in groundfishing, so I put up our hauler in my boat and went lobstering offshore. At the time, there was only five or six of us that had federal permits and fished outside the three-mile line. I don't know, twenty, twenty years ago, something like that. I was kind of a backward lobster fisherman. Everybody would bring their traps in in September or October. I'd set mine in September and fish until May. Then everybody else would put theirs over, and I'd bring mine in because then I'd go groundfishing. Also, during that time, we had a couple of years when we were only allowed to go shrimping five days a week, so that gave us two days a week to tend our lobster gear. A couple of years, we were actually making more money lobstering than we were shrimping. We made more money two days lobstering than we'd make five days shrimping. So, if it came

Friday, and it was going to blow Saturday and Sunday, I'd take Friday off from shrimping and go haul my lobster gear so it didn't sit two weeks.

JW: How far offshore were you setting at that time?

KP: We'd start at the three-mile limit and we'd go down probably another twelve, fifteen miles. It was a long ways at the time. These guys go much further than that now. [laughter] But at the time, like I said, there wasn't many of us there. I'd have a line of gear, and I'd haul it, and I'd move the whole line of gear over a quarter of a mile. The next time, I'd move it over another quarter of a mile, then maybe I'd jump it back. Six or seven years ago, I gave up fishing outside in the wintertime because there was just so much gear that you had no place to move it. You'd haul your gear, and you'd have to set it back in the same spot. It was worse than up inside in the summertime. All these young guys have bought – they've bought federal permits, and they've all rushed offshore now. Actually, the last couple years, I fished up inside in the fall like I used to in my skiff and let the young guys have the rough weather and the long steams offshore. [laughter]

JW: Do you remember encountering foreign processing vessels before the establishment of the EEZ [exclusive economic zone]?

KP: I never saw them when I was actually out fishing. I can remember going over to Ocean Point when I was a kid, and you could actually see the lights of the foreign boats out there fishing from the shore, sitting on Ocean Point. But they were pretty much gone by the time I started. By the time I got out of high school and started fishing full-time, that was just about the time Magnuson-Stevens took effect. So, they were gone then except for – I think there was a couple of joint-venture boats and stuff back then, but they didn't bother us too much.

JW: So, how do you think the approach to fishing has changed between your father's generation, your generation, and then younger generations?

KP: Well, it used to be you jumped into it and jumped out of it. People would go fishing if there was money to be made fishing. Groundfish boats in the harbor would go up and down. There might be twenty one year and ten the next year. If there was money to be made, people went. If shrimping was big, a lot of people went shrimping. If lobstering was big, if tuna fishing was big, that's what they went. Nowadays, we're all pigeonholed. When we first went with Magnuson-Stevens, when we went to Amendment 5, there was people that went groundfishing for thirty years that ended up without a groundfish permit because they didn't go in that five qualifying years. They told us, "Give groundfish a break." At the time, lobstering and tuna-ing was good. So a lot of guys – Walter Stevens, Jimmy – a lot of those guys out of Five Islands – had gone groundfishing every spring and every fall for twenty-five, thirty years. But during that qualifying five years, there was good money in tuna and good money in lobstering, so they pretty much went tuna-ing and lobstering and shrimping. So when they passed out the permits, they were out. Then we had people who – once we went to the days-at-sea – said, "Well, they'll give me eighty-eight days. I'm going to go every day I can." You had to use them up. They're the ones that won because people that didn't use all their days at sea – eventually, they cut back our days at sea, and if you hadn't used them all, you didn't end up with any. They tell us to ease up on the groundfish, but it's always the ones who kill the most who get rewarded. For a few years there, when cod fish was a concern the last time, we were basically catching a lot of flatfish, and we weren't rigged for cod fishing. To catch many codfish at the time, you needed a hard-bottom net, so we just stayed flatfishing. But a lot of the big boats that fished out of Portland would go out and fish eight or ten days on flatfish outside, come back up inside, put out a hard-bottom net, and make sure they had their five hundred pounds a day of cod fish they were allowed, which wasn't the idea of giving you five hundred pounds a day of cod fish. It was supposed to be bycatch. It wasn't supposed to be you fished eight days on flatfish and come in and fish one day directed on cod fish. But they were the smart ones because eventually we went to quotas, and of course, they had more cod fish quota because they'd come in and killed those codfish, where we didn't. [laughter]

JW: How have perspectives on the resource, on the ocean, changed on the Gulf of Maine here?



KP: Oh, there's definitely a lot less fish out there, and I don't know why because there's been – no one fished in a lot of these places for twenty years. Like I said, in the early '70s, when Stanley – there was Stanley Jr., who I first fished with, and Stanley Sr., who I fished with – his father I fished with afterward, who I bought out when he got ready to retire. When the young Stanley first got into fishing in like the early '70s, they told him groundfishing was done. It was over. Don't bother. But really, the '80s was pretty good fishing. Pretty much anybody could make a good living groundfishing, and a lot of people did. A lot of people jumped into it. But since then, there's been a lot of places – the Sheepscot River's been closed for twenty-five years for cod fish. The spring migration of cod fish hasn't come back. There's been no one fishing blackbacks and yellowtails up on the shore for twenty years, at least twenty-five years, and I guess the blackbacks have come back a little bit. We see them in the lobster traps. But no one can fish there anyway because of the lobster gear nowadays unless you have a fish trap or something like that. Even in the last six or seven years, there used to be a dozen of us out there, and I'm the only one left now. There don't seem to be the fish there. And I don't know why, because there's not the pressure. We used to fish, like I said, inside the three-mile limit on dabs, and there would be a dozen boats there. And we go back to the same little tows every day for two months and still catch two or three thousand pounds every day. No one's been there for twenty years, and they haven't come back, and I don't know why. I don't know if when we went to the cookie cover ground gear, we destroyed the bottom – as they say, clear-cut it – or what the story is. I assume it's probably environmental. They actually had a few more dabs this year, the first time in this area out here for probably ten years. But maybe that's the six-and-a-half-inch cod-end. I'm not convinced that's the best. I suspect we have a lot of unseen mortality with these large mesh nets we tow nowadays. I think a lot of fish – we herd them into the net and strain them through the net, and they come out the back side, they're tired and damaged, and they turn into dead fish, and we never see them. There's never really been much research done on what happens to these fish when we strain them out with these big cod-ends. So, it sounds like a good idea, but whether it actually is, I don't know. Of course, the other thing is every time we've gone up in the twine size in our cod-ends is because it's been a big year class of cod fish, and we wanted to protect them. So, to protect them, we'd gone up on the cod-end side. What we've done is we've strained out all the ones that grew the fastest. Basically, we're making fish that grow slower all the time. There has been research done on that to prove that that's the case.

So we really need to find a different way to catch fish. [laughter] Having been a trawl fisherman pretty much my whole life, I really think there's got to be a better way to do it. Either we've got to tow smaller twine and catch most of the fish when they're juveniles or early adults and let the bigger fish go, or we've got to find a different way to catch them. That might be part of the reason why there was big codfish coming in the Sheepscot. When we were first fishing codfish in the Sheepscot, I think the nets we had were very inefficient. They only opened up seven or eight feet high. The University of Rhode Island developed the URI high-rise net in the mid-'70s, and a couple of these guys from in town here went to that University of Rhode Island so-called fishing school at the time, and they came back with the URI high-rise nets. The boat I was fishing on, we were towing an old [inaudible] net, basically the same as the shrimp nets, and we were catching maybe a thousand pounds of codfish a day, which at the time was only like twenty cod fish. [laughter]

JW: When was this?

KP: That would have been like 1979, 1980. A friend of Stanley's had had a new steel boat built to go purse-seining and codfishing. They were towing right beside us, and Stanley built him one of the new URI high-rise nets, which probably opened up eighteen to twenty feet, as opposed to seven or eight feet. They were catching three or four thousand pounds of these big cod fish a day right beside us, and they were driving us nuts. Well, Stanley – young Stanley – was fishing offshore, flatfishing at the time, and he gave his father, who I was fishing with at the time, one of these URI high-rise nets that he built for himself. When he gave it to us, it was all stoved up. It was full of holes. We put it on, and the first tow, we had a couple thousand pounds of cod fish. His father called him right up and said you're never getting the net back again. On the way in that night, I started mending up some of the holes, and he didn't want me to touch it. "Don't mend it," he said, "it's fishing fine." He didn't want me to touch it. [laughter] We went to those nets, and we had some big tows on cod fish the next few years. We had a lot of three, four, five-thousand-pound days. We had a few ten thousand-pound days. We had at least one ten-thousand-pound tow. Young Stanley had at least one 26,000-pound night on the cod fish. So we definitely increased our efficiency by going to nets with more overhead. Whether we wiped them out, I don't know. Whether the groundfish will come back, I don't know. It's definitely

not fishing pressure because the fishing pressure is not there, at least not inshore. There's more boats fishing farther offshore than there ever was, but there's definitely less boats fishing up inshore. I got to go look at that seagull. I think he's still wanting my redfish.

JW: How has the town of Boothbay changed since you grew up here and have lived here your entire life?

KP: Well, when I was a kid, I think there was like four motels in town. The last time I tried counting was probably 10 years ago, and I think I got up to like 25 or 30 and lost count. We used to have a summer population that came because when they had the steamboats, there was a lot of them on Squirrel Island and those places. Most of them came and spent the summer when I was a kid. You didn't have a lot of people just coming for the weekend or coming for a week and that kind of thing. But back then, it was dragger fishermen in town, then it was gill netters, then it was draggers and gill netters. There was lobster fishermen, but most of the lobster was done inside the three-mile limit. It was wooden traps. It was twenty-five to thirty-five-foot boats. It was mostly a summer fishery. It wasn't a year-round fishery. There was only a couple people that fished year-round. For one thing, with the lobster traps – the wooden lobster traps – if you left them over all winter, in the springtime, the cusk would show up and stave your traps apart. So, it was a lot of bringing them in and drying them out.

JW: How would the cusk damage the traps?

KP: When you'd bring the traps aboard, the cusk would flap around in the back of the trap and snap the laths off because the laths would be worm-eaten from sitting out all winter. Then they came up with trap dip in the late '70s. I don't know what it was – kerosene and tar, and who knew what else they dipped the traps in. They wouldn't fish as well, but it kept the worms from eating them. Of course, originally, they had cotton heads. The sea urchins would eat the heads, and they changed the heads a couple times a year. Then, they went to nylon heads, which made the traps more durable. Then they went to trap dip. Then, they went to wire traps. It was probably mid-'70s, late '70s before there were any wire traps at all. When I first started lobstering, I still had wooden traps. Then, I had a few wire traps.

JW: How often would you have to re-knit the heads?

KP: Oh, they were nylon heads by the time I was a kid. But I can remember the old guys telling me about changing heads three times a year when they were cotton heads. They'd tar them. My grandfather used to build wooden traps in the winter in a little shed behind the house for some of the local lobster fishermen. They used to have little wooden bait boxes back then they put the bait in to keep the seals out. It was just a whole different world. So, Boothbay was shrimping, groundfishing, whiting fishing back then, a little bit of tourism. When my father managed the place, he used to – when the whiting would strike, he'd call up the unemployment office and say, I need thirty people. Send them over to me. They'd send him over thirty people, and they'd put them to work. But then it got so working in a fish plant was undesirable employment, so he'd call the unemployment office, and they'd say, "Well, we can ask them if they want to work, but we can't tell them they have to." Most of the people – there were still kids in town when I was in high school that hadn't pretty much been out of Boothbay Harbor. There was a lot of people here in the east side that worked within walking distance of the fish plants. There was a barber, a candy store, and two grocery stores all here on the east side. Like I said, there was like five different places that built wooden lobster boats here on the east side, and a lot of people still walk to work in the morning. That's what the town was centered around. Then we went to more tourism. Brown Brothers went from being a lobster dock to a motel, and they built it bigger, then they built it bigger, then they built it bigger. [laughter] Then they built the property across the road.

JW: When did the influx of tourists start to change and increase?

KP: It's been a steady increase my whole life, except for the last four or five years. The way the economy is, it hasn't been as good. Now, we have a lot of money people that come in and buy shorefront. Nobody really wanted to live on the shore when I was a kid. Most of the people who went lobstering when I was a kid had a piece of property on the shore. Either they lived on the shore and had a wharf, or they had a little wharf on the shore where they set their traps from and hauled their traps up. In the last – oh, I'm just trying to think of this. There's still a couple

lobster fishermen left that own shore property, but it's basically because it was their father's or their grandfather's. There's no way a young fellow coming up nowadays, unless his father or his grandfather's got a little money or they've been lobstering, can afford to buy a piece of shorefront. It's hard enough to buy a boat – a gang of traps, I mean. When you got to have six hundred traps, and they're pretty much ninety dollars apiece nowadays – just a guy yesterday putting new traps on – four ergo bricks, super fours, ninety-six dollars apiece. So, when you got to go out and buy sixty thousand dollars' worth of traps and fifty thousand dollars' worth of permit, and two or three hundred thousand dollars' worth of boat, you're not going to go out and spend the million dollars for a piece of shorefront and get back [inaudible]. [laughter] So, people come now, and they buy a two hundred-thousand-dollar house on the shore, rip them down, and build a million-and-a-half-dollar house on the shore. I mean, huge houses. Nowadays, if you got a house on the shore, you have to have a wharf and a runway and a mooring or two. Most of these houses are – just a couple people live in them. They might have a couple friends. Some of these houses people only spend two weeks a year in. I don't know where they get the money from. It's not from around here, that's for sure. [laughter] When I was a kid, Spruce Point was all log cabins. If you had a house up there, it had to be a log cabin. That's where most of the tourists were, up there. They weren't around the shore of Southport or around the shore in Boothbay Harbor and those kinds of places. They pretty much had their own little enclave up there, and that's where they were. Nowadays, pretty much any place you could see the water is not a native. It's a non-native, and it's usually people that are only here for a month or two at the most out of the year. Or they're from Massachusetts, and they come up for a week in the winter or a weekend or something over the holidays. So, I guess that's the big change. It used to be living on the shore was undesirable, and it was just a few people who needed to that lived there. Now, that's the place to be, and that's where the money is. Pretty much, if you work in Boothbay or Boothbay Harbor, you can't afford to live here anymore. Even the people that work at the DMR [Department of Marine Resources] lab or Bigelow, most of them live in Wiscasset or Nobleboro or someplace and drive half an hour, forty-five minutes, or an hour to get to work in the morning. I don't know. You need to prompt me. [laughter]

JW: Is there anything else about Boothbay that you think is important enough to put on the record here, or should we let it rest?

KP: I guess. I got fifty years of history up there, but what's important or relative –

JW: You've got a good memory.

KP: [laughter] I don't know. Like I said, we've gone through waves. Like Robbie talked about the pogies. I always heard about the lobster fishermen using pogies for bait when I was a kid, but I'd never seen one until I was a teenager. Then we had ten years we had pogies everywhere. We had pogies die in the harbor, and I'd haul my lobster traps, and they'd be full of dead pogies and dead lobsters. Now, they've disappeared, and they disappeared for ten or fifteen years, and we had a couple years that there was a few pogies around. A few guys made a little money at them. Then they disappeared again. The last three or four years, we haven't seen any ... So, it's cycles, I guess. Like I said, the pogies came. The pogies disappeared. The groundfish have gone through a couple of cycles. The shrimp have gone through a couple of cycles. Lobsters were big here for a while, and lobster fishing – the last five years, we've had a lot of people drop out in the harbor. Most of the ones that have dropped out have been the people that should be the heart of the industry – the young guys in their mid-twenties, early thirties, guys that had new boats, fished hard, and just the numbers haven't been there the last few years. So, they've gone on and done other things. We've got a few young people whose parents have a little money and a lot of older people like me who have been in it, I guess. [laughter] You know, different things. Worms was big for a few years. Clams were big. Research was big. I did some research for a few years. Because of the budget thing, that's pretty much petered out now. We just try to go with the flow. I'm looking at aquaculture right now. That seems to be the – hopefully, that's the next big thing. [laughter] Either mussels or oysters or kelp, maybe. I'm hoping kelp because shortest maturity time – you plant it in the fall and harvest it in the spring. Now, if we can just find someone who's willing to buy it, we can hopefully maybe do something with that. But right now, in this area, pretty much anything to do with fishing is not extremely profitable, which is why I'm working here at Harbor Bait. [laughter] I don't know. What else do you want?

JW: I think we covered about everything under the sun here, so thank you very much, Kelo. We really appreciate it.

KP: Okay. You're welcome.

-----END OF INTERVIEW-----

Reviewed by Molly Graham 1/4/2023