

Assessing Vulnerability and Resilience in Maine Fishing Communities

Garry Libby Oral History

Date of Interview: October 7, 2011

Location: Port Clyde, Maine

Length of Interview: 01:38:30

Interviewer: CT – Cameron Thompson

Transcriber: NCC

Cameron Thompson: To start, can you please state your name, your birthdate, and place of birth?

Gary Libby: My name is Gary Libby. My birthdate is 4/26/58. My place of birth was Camden, Maine.

CT: What's the current address?

GL: My current address is 799 Port Clyde Road, Port Clyde, Maine.

CT: So, how long have you lived in Port Clyde?

GL: Let's see, thirty-five years.

CT: Why do you live here and not someplace else?

GL: Because it's closer to the fishing grounds in the ocean. I moved down here right after I got out of high school because I decided to become a fisherman. This is where the fishing boats [inaudible] from. So, Port Clyde was a logical choice.

CT: So, we'll get more into your fishing experience. But first, I'd like to get some background information. Can you tell me a bit more about your family? Do you come from a large family?

GL: No. Well, my family is my mother and father, and I have one brother. He also used to go fishing. He's a council member now and fish processor and that sort of thing.

CT: You were born in Camden. Is that where your family is from?

GL: My mother was from Camden. My brother was born in the same hospital two years prior to me. So, I'm the youngest.

CT: Can you recall where your family is originally from, or can you track that?

GL: Yes. Well, my mother's side, they lived in Camden in Lincolnville area. My father was from Thomaston, but his grandparents were from South Warren. They were farmers. So, becoming a fisherman was kind of a normal thing to do. If I wasn't a farmer, I guess I was going to be a fisherman.

CT: Your wife's side of the family, is there any experience in fishing?

Kimberly Libby: Absolutely not.

GL: No. She's from Cincinnati, Ohio.

KL: Fun fishing –

CT: [laughter]

KL: – on the riverbank.

CT: What about any other aspects of the fishing? Do you help out with disorganizing or –

GL: Yes, I do.

KL: Oh, I do the books now. I used to go to quite a few council meetings. I got tired of watching paint dry though.

GL: [laughter]

KL: I field calls from people like you.

CT: [laughter] I appreciate it.

KL: I'm so glad.

GL: I also do a lot of work going to the council and that sort of thing. I belong to the Shrimp Advisory Panel, which I've got a meeting a week from tomorrow. I'm on the Groundfish Advisory Panel. We've got a meeting the first day of November down in Plymouth. I also work with a group that's trying to protect forage fish. All my jobs pertain to fishing. I lobster and I groundfish. I used to clam dig when I was 12 years old. I guess that's what got me started. So, a little brief history.

CT: Well, we'll get into that very soon. Just to finish up on your family though, you have some children then?

GL: Not of my own. I've got stepchildren. When I got married, I picked up five kids. They all seem to like me all right.

CT: Yes [laughter].

GL: So, they let me stick around.

CT: Would you want any of those children to be involved in fishing?

GL: I have one. My oldest stepson, he goes out on the boat with me most of the time. My brother-in-law's going with me, this trip. So, they switched off. But my son-in-law has been going with me for eight or nine years now.

CT: Stepson not son-in-law.

GL: It's not son-in-law, stepson. He's been going a while, so he's got –

CT: Do you expect that to continue or any other kids to get involved?

GL: Well, my other stepson because the rest are daughters. We did have one son that passed away that was fishing too. But he's deceased now. But he's with me in spirit each trip. My other stepson is a landscaper.

CT: He has no desire to go fishing.

GL: He doesn't want to fish. That's why he's a landscaper. He has his beekeeper on his own. He has his own chickens, grows his garden. So, he's more of the farmer type than the fishing type.

CT: So, we're also interested in the broader community. Can you tell me about the community here when you first moved or maybe when you were growing up? So, actually sort of backtracking a second, when did you move here?

GL: I moved down here right out of high school in Port Clyde. I lived in Thomaston throughout school. I lived in Thomaston all my life. When I was twelve, I started digging the clams. That's kind of what got me into fishing because I enjoyed the freedom of just going down and working when I wanted to and things like that. But then when the opportunity came to go groundfishing, my father purchased a groundfish boat. It was basically my opportunity. I was interested in it because I was doing a type of fishing already. I started going with a fellow that lived down here in Port Clyde. His family had been in fishing for years. I gained a lot of experience by going with him. From there, I've been going ever since. That was thirty-five years ago when I started going groundfishing.

CT: But maybe you can speak more about the area growing up.

GL: The area?

CT: Yes.

GL: The area in Port Clyde when we came down here thirty-five years ago, everybody in town knew each other. Well, it's kind of the same now, it's there are different faces to it. I've known a lot of the people that were here when I first came. Some of them are older, some of them have passed away. But it was always a friendly community. People help one another here in Port Clyde. It's a little different than most towns. Someone gets in trouble or say the house catches on fire or something like that, usually the whole town turns out to help out. Everyone that's there supports one another in this town. That makes it unique. That's kind of how it was since I've been living down here. It used to be a little tighter because there was a few less people. It was pretty much all fishermen then. Now we have a few people that don't fish, but they do support fishermen. They've moved in. Some of them are retirees. When I first came to town, there was absolutely no retirees. If there were any retirees, they were retired from fishing. But now, we have people from out of town that come and buy up shore properties and things like that. But for the most part, the core of the fishing community has stayed pretty tight knit.

CT: How was the overall economy in the community at that time? What were some of the major sources of jobs in the town?

GL: Two major sources of jobs. Well, it's more lobstering now, but it was lobstering and groundfishing then. It was before I came down here, there used to be a herring factory down here where they brought herring in. But that burnt in the late [19]60s. I was still in school then. So, that part of the community was gone by the time I got here. It's mainly lobstering and groundfishing. We do shrimp in the winter too. So, it's a fishing village. It's pretty much all fishing. There are a couple of stores from here. Here in Port Clyde, there's one in Tenants Harbor. There are restaurants in the summer. There's a small one down behind the store. There's another one up off Marshall Point Road, which is more of a local watering hole than anything. Oh, I'm going to say twenty to twenty-five years ago, that opened up. They've got their liquor license. So, it gives a place for people to go that want to go out and socialize like that. We don't actually go over there that much because the beers cost me less sitting right here.

CT: [laughter]

KL: [laughter]

CT: So, how important was fishing to the community then?

GL: It was pretty much the lifeblood of the community. I think it still is. It's changed a little. I think the main income comes from lobstering now, not so much groundfishing. We're down to four groundfishing boats. Well, five if you count Travis because he unloads in Portland a lot. Because the fishing has changed because of the new rules and the federal government. Still fish is pretty much what supports this community.

CT: So, getting into your experience in the fisheries, can you just list off the different fisheries you've participated in? So, you said when you were twelve you were clamming?

GL: Yes, I was a clam digger. I did that at summers because I was in school. Then after that, I did it for a couple winters and saw what little money I made. From there, I did do a little in-state inshore scalloping in the state waters. I have gone on the bigger boats for a trip one time with a friend of mine, been to Georges Bank. Did groundfishing, almost nineteen when I started that. Been doing that. Went on deck for, I don't know, it wasn't that many years, five or six years. Then me and my brother were taking a boat together. So, we were pretty much both in charge of the boat. We fished together for quite a few years. I don't remember the number. But I've been captain of my own boat, I'm going to say now for about fourteen years, something like that. So, I've been in charge of the boat that I run. My family has three boats in town. Two of them groundfish. My nephew is on one now. Like I said earlier, my brother is a council member. Also, the shrimp. I can't forget the shrimp. The shrimp is my favorite fishery. We used the Nordmore grate. Now we've cleaned the fishery up. We've got a sustainable stock right now it seems. Plus, I lobster. I've lobstered since I was eighteen. Not every year, but I laid off because lobstering got poor and went groundfishing. So, I always fished. But then I kept buying my license. My wife said, "Why are you wasting money buying that license?" I said, "Because in fishing you may never know what's going to happen." So, I kept that license up. In recent years,

groundfishing has gotten worse and lobstering has gotten better. So, now I have my own little boat. I fish about four hundred traps right now. If groundfishing declines much more, it'll be more traps and less groundfish. I have to do a bunch of part-time jobs to keep myself going. There's shrimp in the winter, and I always look forward to that.

CT: So, what other jobs do you do?

GL: Well, like I said, I've been going to some management meetings. That's kind of a job, I guess. I go and I do some speaking at the council meetings pretty much to support our fishing group here in Port Clyde. Everything that I speak about is to support groundfishing or support lobstering through herring. Because I think the herring, and now menhaden, has become a big issue. I think those things are important to have someone who actually uses the stuff for bait. Because I think I'm the only one that really goes to those meetings that's a lobsterman. Most lobstermen think that they're pretty much protected by the state. But the federal government has quite a lot of say in a lot of the things they rely on. So, being a lobsterman and relying on it for a big chunk of my income now, I think it's real important that I keep my ear to what's happening in herring and lobster bait issues and things like that, along with the groundfish.

CT: So, you first started clamming when you were twelve, but you went out fishing, what, when you were eighteen?

GL: About eighteen I started.

CT: Was that with the boat your father bought?

GL: Yes. That was the *Hilder and Helen*. That was a 42-foot, little dragger. We used to day fish on that. We didn't go out and stay overnight. Fish were closer to shore back then. It was in the late [19]70s. By the late [19]80s, we had to start staying over because fish were harder to come by and we had to stay out longer. By early [19]90s, we had bought another boat that was a skipper. She was a 54-foot, not a 42, so we moved up a little bit. Quite a lot bigger boat. Me and my brother both went on that for a while.

CT: Was that so you could get farther offshore? Is that why?

GL: Farther off and be safer at sea. The other boat, we were in some weather with that boat that if we had the 42-footer, we probably wouldn't have come home. But we don't fish in that weather anymore. I don't, especially at fifty-three years old, because I don't like bad weather anymore. Seen enough of it. Don't care if I do it again. So, I'm really good at picking the times when it's nice like this weekend.

CT: Yes [laughter]. Well, why don't we just get into that more in detail. I'm going to sort of try to tease out some more information on each of these industries that you worked in. But you're talking about groundfishing then. So, you had the 42-foot dragger in late [19]70s and went to the 50-foot dragger in the mid-[19]80s. What was the season like when you first got started in the [19]70s?

GL: In the [19]70s, oh, we fished from late March into mid-July. The guy that was taking the boat back then also lobstered. Kind of does what I do now. I guess it's the old school way. He fished in the spring. We made pretty good money at that. Caught a lot of fish close to shore. I didn't have to go that far. Then when the lobstering started, everyone would set traps, and we'd haul into the fall like now. We go right up until about Christmas. With him, I didn't shrimp very much because he didn't shrimp much. He stayed home and worked on gear. Then shrimp went down at that time in the late [19]70s. So, the shrimp stock was in hard shape and had needed to be rebuilt. It did rebuild. Because later on, when me and my brother were going, we kind of went together on that 42-footer. That's when we really started to get shrimp experience. We did that pretty much on our own.

CT: So, on that 42-footer, would you use that for lobstering in the summer as well?

GL: No.

CT: Did you do any lobstering in the summer?

GL: Yes, I had my own small boat just like I do now. I have a 30-footer now. Back then I think I had a 27-foot boat, and I lobstered. I think I had two-fifty or three hundred traps years ago. Then I went into the groundfish because the lobsters petered out. I didn't do lobstering for a few years. But I kept buying that license that I got in trouble for. But I'm not in trouble anymore.

CT: But you use the same boat for shrimping?

GL: Shrimping and groundfishing is the same boat. Now, I don't even go on the 54-footer anymore. I have a boat that's actually less tonnage. It's a longer boat. It's not as wide. But basically, it's a longer, smaller boat, if that makes any sense.

CT: All right. Yes, I get what you're saying.

GL: Yes. So, it's about the same size. It's a 57-foot boat overall length. That's the boat I'm going out on tomorrow. We do shrimp and groundfish. That's the one me and my stepson have been going on now. That's the *Leslie and Jessica*, which is the boat that me and my wife have pretty much taken over. My brother runs and keeps the books in the other boats. But the *Leslie and Jessica* is basically my groundfishing and shrimp boat. I have a little 30-foot lobster boat that I lobster off of. We do all right in the summer with the lobsters. Most of the time I go by myself. Sometimes I get my brother-in-law to go and give me a hand. This time of year, when the days are getting shorter, I need a little hand. He's been helping me a little bit there. So, we're pretty family orientated with the fishing. Because the other boat, the 48-footer that we have – because we sold the 42. Now, we have a 48 which was built in [19]98. That's the one my nephew sails on. The 54 only shrimps now because we sold the groundfish permit. Because my brother wasn't fishing it, and he thought best to sell it. It might have not been the best, but it doesn't matter now. He shrimps on that. I shrimp and groundfish on the *Lesley and Jessica*, which is the 57-foot boat. We're getting ready to take off about 1:00 a.m., and I won't get to where I'm going until probably 8:00 a.m. We'll set, and we'll tow for three days around that area and hopefully catch enough fish to pay the expenses and put some money in our pocket. It's not

very easy right now in groundfishing, especially in the fall. The fall is a hard time for us because we have lighter gear. We have to go a longways and burn a bit of fuel. So, it's a summer fishery now. We don't do as well up in the Gulf of Maine as we used to in winters.

CT: So, how has that changed then since you started in the [19]70s? They're all close to shore. Then did you see a decline in the stocks close to shore?

GL: Yes. The stocks are pretty much close to non-existent near shore.

CT: So, you got the next boat, the 54-foot boat.

GL: Yes, to go farther out. The 57 was the same, to be out farther. We each had our own boats. We had three boats and three captains. We still have three boats, but only two are in groundfish. So, the other permit is actually part of our sector, which is another part of groundfish. It's the management part. That's cooperative group of fishermen that I belong to that pool our catch together so that we can trade and lease to one another to keep each other out on the water longer each year. It's got to the point where we're going with catch histories that we're low in some stocks, and we never even get near catching our limit in others. So, it's a balancing act to try to stay out on the water and try to put enough money in together to cover our bills each year.

CT: So, since these three different boats, has the gear changed that much with groundfishing or is it still basically the same?

GL: It's basically the same. The gear we use now compared to what we did back in the late [19]70s is more effective. We have a perfected net. We tow better doors. We used to tow the old wooden doors, which were okay for shore water and where we fished. They worked all right. We used to build our rollers out of birch trees out of the woods. We'd cut the birch trees and drill holes in them and run wire through them and use those. We'd have to make a tow with them before they soaked up. Because once they soak up, they'd be the bottom part of the net, and we'd have floats on the top. But now you buy rubber cookies, and you run chains. So, it's a little heavier gear. But we've lightened that some here in Port Clyde compared to a lot of folks. So, it's more effective. We tow a different style net here. Everyone in town tows the same net basically. We all do pretty close to the same when we go out fishing. There's not a lot of difference. But we catch mainly flounders here, we always have. Not so much of a cod fishery here. We have codfish in the spring and early summer, but they disappear. They always have. It's more of a Cape Cod thing getting codfish all the time.

CT: So, why is the gear lighter and you use different nets? What's the main difference there?

GL: Oh, the main difference was just the chains and the nets' design now. We used to have run top and bottom legs. Everyone in town runs a one-legged net, they call it. All it is, is the top head rope out of the neck comes down to a single point where you've got that piece of mesh in there where there was a hole before. That makes it a little more effective. The main thing that it actually helps to catch is the flounders and the monk fish, which are a high-value fish. So, monk fish are important to us, and flounders are important to us. Flounders are down right now. If we could get flounders out, I got one species of flounder they allow me to catch a lot of them. We

have a hard time locating them. I did see one thing at a management meeting last week, that they've done some studies on Georges' yellowtail where some of the livers looked like some disease was in them. Because they're seeing recruitment into the fishery of small fish but never seeing them legal size. I think, in my personal opinion, I have nothing to back it up, but it looks like that might be happening with the dabs that we catch too, which actually call place. But that's more studies and more science before we can prove anything on that. That's part of my management work that I do.

CT: So, are you worried about the stocks now then? What do you think is going to happen?

GL: I don't have any idea what's going to happen unless we get the stocks back and incomes up a little bit. It's hard in this economy when they require us to pay for all of the observers that we're required to take now and all that stuff. If we have to pay for that out of pocket, we're not going to make it on our sized boats. I don't think anyone's going to make it. But I am working on another project this year, which is I have cameras aboard my boat which record when we haul back, and ninety minutes after we disengage the hydraulics, they record. So, they show what we're doing and what we're discarding. That instead of a person will be more cost effective for us. Maybe we'll be able to stay in business long enough for the fish to return, I hope. But I don't think that's going to be set as much for me as it will be for future generations, which I hope we can preserve it for. Because the cost of an observer – I just went at that last council meeting again. We got the number that it costs right now for one day at sea for an observer is costing us as taxpayers, not just fishermen but everyone in the northeast, it's 700, and I think they said nineteen. It's around \$700 a day every day an observer is on my boat. I'm going to bring one with me this time. Another guy that went out this morning had one because I see the car down there. I talked to another guy that's going, and he's got one. So, we have observers on all three boats out of Port Clyde this week at \$700 a day. We're all going to fish about three days. So, it's costing the American taxpayer \$7,000. That's going to be a big chunk of the stock from the three boats. So, that would be a third of the income probably. If we can each get \$7,000 stock while we're out, we're going to be doing good. So, that's going to be really cost prohibitive to stay in business if that happens.

CT: Sorry, what would be cost prohibitive?

GL: Paying for observers.

CT: Right. Are you afraid that's going to happen in other words?

GL: I am worried about that, yes. That's one of the things I'm most worried about. That's why I volunteered for the pilot project to put the cameras on the boat, so that we could possibly lower that cost. If we could cut that cost in half, then that might be enough. I know there's going to be a cost because there's a cost for in lab. Obviously, they've got to insure these people that go out on our boats with us, in case they get hurt, or we get lost at sea or some horrible thing happens, which I'm going to try to avoid as best I can. Because I want to come home just as much as anyone else. That's always a possibility when you're out there. So, you always have to keep that in mind, and that's part of that cost. That \$700 a day, that's a big thing.

CT: But you're doing something about it. You're going after this camera program. How did you find that or get involved with that?

GL: Well, I went to a council meeting. I get a lot of stuff there. I met some people, and they said, "Do you want to have cameras on your boat?" They explained the program to me, and they said, "We'll pay you a stipend." I said, "Sure."

CT: [laughter]

GL: Anytime I get a stipend, I'm for it. Because we can use any little thing we can get. Plus, I think they can be effective on small draggers. They have used them on longliners and factory ships, where they have conveyor belts to discard all the fish. But I've rigged up a discard chute. They are supposed to come down and rig me up another camera. It's kind of slow. It's through Archipelago, which is a British Columbia company. They use them up there in Canada. So, Canadians seem to use a lot of stuff before we do in America. As a shrimp fishery, we have a Nordmore grate too, which separates the finfish from the shrimp. It was designed in Norway originally. The Canadians adopted it into their fishery before we did. Now, we have it too. The Canadians are MSC-certified because of it. But the MSC certification hasn't happened in America. But a good chunk of our shrimp product has been going to Canada. So, it's coming back as MSC-certified. With the free trade agreement and NAFTA, we have to compete against that market. That's not helping that either, I don't think. That's another personal opinion. I don't have the numbers on that.

CT: So, getting more to that market side of things, I'm going to just want to know the changes that have happened over time. Where were you landing your fish originally in the [19]70s, and where did you take them to market?

GL: In the [19]70s, we used to sell to independent dealers more, opposed to now. Now, a lot of our fish go to the auction, which that's where all the independent dealers show up and bid on that fish. It's a regular auction. If they see a lot that they like, they break that fish down into 300-to-600-pound lots. Sometimes a little small if you end up with less than 300 on the end of your poundage. But they bid on separate lots, and you get different prices for each one, but usually fairly close. The small dab price never varies but a few pennies. I think we make out a little bit better that way because we get to buy bidding against each other. Another thing we're doing here in Port Clyde which isn't being done in a lot of places is we have our little processing facility. That's owned by the fishermen here, which I'm one of, and all of us that sail out – well, not all of us. But three out of five fishermen that fish out of here groundfishing belong to the Port Clyde Fresh Catch. We are attempting to market our own product. We have done it for a couple of years, and it's been a struggle. The biggest thing we're having problems with now is collecting money from restaurants that have closed. There are some other problems. My brother has been doing a lot of that. To get paid on the other end, it seems to be one of the difficulties. Another thing we did for marketing – let me tell you about this one. My wife started this actually, and I helped her. But it's called the Community Supported Fishery, which is modeled after community-supported agriculture. It started up at the church in Rockland. The Universal Unitarian Church were the first customers. We brought them shrimp the first time. They bought the whole shrimp. We had no processing facility. They bought 5 pounds a week for a twelve-

week program. We had thirty-five people. But from there it's expanded. I'm not exactly sure how big it is now. But now it involves fileted fish if you like it. I don't even know if we send whole ones out anymore, but it is still by a prescription. They're getting ready to start up the new shrimp one. A lot of people like their shrimp meat and their fish fileted. So, we moved into that because we have the facility to do it now. When we first started, we didn't. That's why we did whole everything. When we first did it with fish, it was all whole fish, which was quite unique. We did filet demonstrations with that, showing people how to filet a fish, which that's another whole art that a lot of people don't know. You just go to the fish market and buy your filet, go home, and cook it. Well, we filet them. We handed out recipes. We didn't filet them all. We showed the demos. We got people cutting their own fish, and we gave them recipes and pretty much showed them how to cook it. Most of the reaction was, "I've never had a fish that fresh." But when you're getting it straight off a boat, people aren't used to that.

CT: So, how are these things done then? Is a lot of your landings going to these places? Is this where a lot of the money is coming from?

GL: No. Very low landings go to the factory down here. I'm going to guess. My brother will give you a different figure. But I think we're selling maybe 10 percent of our whole catch there, and the rest goes down to the auction. So, the auction's very important to us. It's good to have direct marketing and especially the CSF. That's extra money. That's a prepaid prescription. So, you get the money up front before you go out and catch the fish. So, that gives you some money to work with, to set things up, and keep the plant running. It's buildup capital, so we can get things lined up. If we need stuff, we can buy them. That all helps there, where it's upfront, and it doesn't really bother us to hand out. Because the way he does it is he doesn't actually pay the boats upfront. He collects the money and when – whoever that sells the CSF. We usually divide it up. We come in, and they get a CSF a week. Everyone's got a pile of shrimp on their boat. Well, the CSF probably can consist of – I'm going to just throw out 500 pounds as just like a flat rate figure. We got 500 pounds sold in CSFs this week. We got five boats. We all sell them a hundred pounds. You get paid back a hundred pounds at a slightly higher rate than the others. It doesn't sound like a lot. But over the course of the year, it can add up to quite a bit. Especially with fish, there's less of us doing fish, so we get a bigger market share of it back to each boat. That's the original intent of a CSF. Same way with processing your own direct market in fish, that's the intent of it. Lately, it's been a little tougher. We had to cut payment because we paid the boats 5 or 10 cents over one year. Boats may get out better, but the plant was going under. So, we cut into the boats a little. The plant is still having a hard time. So, it's a small business, and it's in a bad economy. So, it's struggling right now. But I'm hoping that it pulls out of it. But that's part of business. If we make it, we make it with it; if we don't, we don't. Same with the fishing.

CT: So, you've been talking a bit about shrimping as well throughout this. So, maybe we can get back towards that.

GL: Shrimping is a big piece of our income. Actually, I'd say now the way fishing has become, it's at least half or maybe more of the income with the boats. It's a big piece. The best part of shrimping up here is January and February. Those two months are probably the highest income months with the boats that we have all year. Groundfishing goes a little longer, so we probably

stock as much with groundfish as we do shrimp. But it's stretched out more. So, when shrimping is going on, we're fishing pretty hard. We're fishing like you would imagine someone who would fish all-the-time fishes. We don't miss many days. Wind blows a lot in the winter. It's cold. None of that matters. We go out there because that's what we have to do to make that. Because it's a small window of opportunity. With groundfishing, the opportunity window is slightly larger. It's not as hectic, especially fishing under sectors. But shrimping, it's close to the shore. I come home at night. I don't have to stay out offshore.

CT: So, how did you deal with the early closure this year though?

GL: I thought it sucked [laughter]. We could have fished another three weeks at least and probably had good fishing. I think we've got to manage it a little bit better. If we took days out last year and say we took two days a week off, we would have stretched it out another couple of weeks or so. We probably would have been in better shape. Maybe it would have only been another week, I don't know. But we've got too many people deciding that shrimping is a great fishery. Shrimping is okay for a handful of boats, but it's not a volume fishery. It crashed before, and it can get crashed again if we put too much effort into it. Because I'm on the shrimp AP, if you look at the amount of boats fishing on the shrimp even way back to the [19]60s, every time you have an influx of boats, you see a decline. When the less boats go, you see an increase. It's just pretty much effort is what will control the whole fishery. If we don't curtail some of the effort that we had last year, we will crash it. Then that will be another burden on the guys like me that groundfish and shrimp and depend on shrimp to support us through the groundfish season. Because without both, I don't think a lot of us are going to make it up here in Maine.

CT: So, what do you think needs to be done then to the shrimp fishery?

GL: Well, there's a talk of limited entry that didn't get on the Amendment 2 document this year. But we're going to take days out. I want to put triggers in with the days out. When we catch 25 percent of the catch, we take another one off a week. If it makes guys go out in bad weather and causes safety concerns, then they're going to have to make better decisions. When you manage fish, you don't really manage fish. You manage human behavior basically. You manage the fishermen. You get them not to go on days so the stock can support itself better, so you don't drop below the sustainable yield. You can go down to the sustainable yield. You go below that, and you're taking out more than can sustain itself. You can't do that. When that happens, stocks crash. Don't care what it is but shrimp, lobster, fish, doesn't matter, anything. Scallops did it before. They did the closed areas. They're doing well with that. That's area management, which is another thing that we tried to push here in Port Clyde. Before sectors went in, that was one of the options that we put on the table, where you'd take so many fish out of an area at certain times a year. You could stop fishing in those areas if you had to and control the catching of juvenile fish better and things like that. But the National Marine Fishery Service didn't adopt that. There was another thing that came out of that, and that was a point system that they came up with down in Gloucester, which probably would have worked too. But that was just a different way of having a quota. That's what we ended up with, sectors. We have a certain amount of fish for each permit. All the permits pulled together. So, you can easily trade amongst each other. Because you can trade within the sector without going through any other channels. When you go outside the sector, you've got to go through the federal government and National Marine Fishery

Service. But within our sector, we can just trade. I can call up Randy and say, "I need some grey sole. You want to trade me some cod with some grey sole?" If he needs some cod, he can say yes. One day, later we can have the trade done.

CT: How is that working for you then?

GL: The trading part, I like that with each other. I think it works okay. Part I don't like is the leasing, what I've seen in the first two years of sectors. It didn't get any better this year, which is one of the things I don't like about them is there's guys that don't really fish. They sit home with a sector outlet, that quota, I mean. There's a fellow in New Hampshire I know, and his analogy was the best one I've heard. He said, "They're a bunch of slipper skippers. They sit around with their cell phone in their ear and a cup of coffee with their slippers on. They're leasing fish to everybody. They're selling them for over market value sometimes." Like this year, hake was the fish. There was a bunch of hake around. I think they were feeding on all the shrimp that's out there. But there were a lot of hake available, and guys were catching a lot of hake. So, they were going out and trying to get hake. Well, I know it happened in Gloucester, and I know it happened in Portland some because we got a bunch of guys that were killing in that. They were paying over market value to get hake, so they could go out and catch codfish. Because codfish were high. So, they were losing money on the hake, so they could go fishing and catch cod, which I don't like that system. I think there should be enough fish to go around. Because that yielded obviously maybe those assessments. The hake came from somewhere. I like to see it balanced out, so there's just the right amount of fish for everybody. Now, that's probably asking too much out of the scientists. But if there was just enough fish, if everybody could have what they needed every year, that would be an ideal situation.

CT: How do you balance that out?

GL: Get better science, better understanding of what stocks do, and how they behave and that sort of thing. I think having the observers on the boats or getting the data in not just catch but what happens on the boats. The cameras are a good idea. That'll lower costs. The costs are going to eat us up, I'm afraid. That's the only thing I'm afraid of. If we reduce capacity like they're trying to do, that may do it. But that's the simplistic way if you ask me. I think keeping jobs going is the main thing. If we take away a whole bunch of jobs, like you get guys like me who's fifty-odd years old, and you don't train anyone up to go out there fishing – because what we do, some people say, "Oh, fishing is easy." It's not that easy. But if you lose a bunch of us experienced guys, if you ever do bring fish back, you're going to have to talk someone into going out and doing it to start with. Then they're going to have to figure out how to do it. So, it's not going to be learned from –

KL: A huge learning curve.

GL: You're not going to learn from your uncle or your grandfather or whatever. You're going to figure it out on your own. They're not going to be that good at it until they figure it out right. Unless the fish just come back so solid; they can catch them with a water bucket.

CT: [laughter]

GL: But I don't expect to see that in my life.

KL: Work on the cod in Monhegan.

GL: Well, they did it when the Pilgrims came over. They dipped the bucket and got a bucket of codfish [laughter].

CT: [laughter]

GL: I don't expect that's going to happen right now.

CT: So, we sort of got off it, but I would like to return to shrimp. We described the gear changes. Because I know, like you said, the grate got introduced.

GL: Yes. Plus, when I first shrimped back in, I guess it was late [19]70s, early [19]80s, we used to rig our nets up like a groundfish net. We used to dig up tons of lobster and [laughter] lots of little fish because we didn't have the fish separator in there and lots of starfish. I remember picking a lot of them up. When we started refining it, the grate actually helped a lot. Because we started moving offshore a little bit, and we interacted with a lot of skates which stove the shrimp all to pieces. It wasn't a very good product. So, then the Nordmore grate came along. Everyone was alarmed because you had to put a big hole in your net to catch shrimp. Well, a few of us worked at it a little. We said, "Well, if this is what we've got to do, they use it in other places, and it seems to work. So, let's see if we can make it work." Well, we did. I think we separated a ton of lobsters now. I think that's part of the reason why lobster stocks are doing so well up in the state of Maine because they're not being killed unintentionally by other fisheries. It cleaned up our shrimp product. But with our nets, with that foot rope digging like a groundfish net and pouring up all the flats and lobsters and starfish, if you were doing that, you'd fill your grate full of mud and starfish. So, nothing would go in. So, we had to devise a different way. Well, there's plenty of different ways. We fooled with the foot rope. What we do is we put a fishing wire on, and we rig it differently. We don't slack it back like we used to. We fish it even all the way across, is the way I do it. We put rock hoppers on, so we're not digging into the bottom as much. We're having less bottom contact. We are able to get up in the gravelly spots where shrimp live better. So, our catch per unit effort has increased over the last few years. I think that's part of it. Because we're able to access some of the sandy gravelly places that we wouldn't make it without other gear. We'd hang up or stave a hole in on that or something before we got up where we're going. Actually, the way the grate is rigged on now and the way it pulls when you tow it through the water, it lifts the bottom of the net up just slightly. So, you do get away with getting up in the gravelly places a little better. You don't really get up in the super-hot bottom because I've ripped up plenty of nets with rock coppers on them. But it gets you just that little bit more. The effectiveness is a little bit better, and the shrimp looks better. Actually, we did some tows way back, when we were fooling with this grate, where one of us would not use the grate, and one of us would, unless we didn't get caught doing it. But we had to do our own science before we could prove to ourselves that it worked.

CT: [laughter]

GL: The guy with the grate caught more shrimp every time. He had a better product. So, the light came on. Well, I guess the grate is working, and it is better. We have perfected it now. We put the hole on top. For a while there, we had the hole in the bottom to get rid of the lobsters, which works. But when herring's around, herring float up. With a hole on the bottom, they didn't go down at all, they went in. So, we were catching big piles of herring, and it was horrible. So, what we ended up doing is flipping it back around, dealing with what lobsters that go through, and letting all the herring out. Most of all the fin fish, the round fish, the little cods, the little haddocks, all that stuff goes out. We don't get oddly anything. Plus, we're rigged up. Now, a lot of us are rigging up with square mesh behind the grate. Then we're caught in behind that. So, what if you do get some small herrings or whatever, they can go out the square mesh. Plus, the grate I get out here in the yard that I used, and I've used in the last two years. I won't go with the other style anymore. The legal grate, you don't have this small bass basin in the bottom section. It's called the size-sorting grid or grate. So, what it does, it lets small shrimp out because there's no twine behind it. The shrimp come down with water pressure, and they hit the bottom of the grate. All the big ones bounce because the bass basin is smaller together. They bounce up, and they go through where the bass basin is slightly bigger. Well, those go into the caught end, and that's your catch. The bigger fish will go out the hole, it's just above that bigger bass basin. That smaller section lets out little small shrimp mainly. So, we're leaving those small shrimps on bottom. Hopefully, they're living when we're pounding them up too hard as they squeeze through them holes. They'll come back the following year, and they'll be bigger. The buyers will be happier. Because they don't want the little shrimp, and we don't want to kill the little shrimp. Because there are little shrimps the next year. So, they're doing stuff like that. That's extra. We're not required to do that. But I could see down the road in a year, maybe this year, I don't know. But they'd have to make a shitload of those size-sorting grids because most people don't tow them. There's only a few of those.

CT: Would you push for that though? Would you support that?

GL: Yes, I would. I've supported that grate all along. Every one of us here in Port Clyde have them. What it does – and it may happen this year – because they count the shrimp when they buy. So, if I sell them a forty-count shrimp, I can get top dollar. Or whatever the high price is, they're going to pay a top for forty. Then if I have forty-five in my shrimp, my shrimp for 1 pound counts out to forty-five, I get a little bit less. If they count to fifty, I get a little bit less than that and fifty-five and so on. Usually, we don't get any worse than fifty-five anyway. But that's without that grid. But I always get within the forty, sometimes even below forty with that grid because we're letting all that little stuff get wet. That's just a few of the things that we try to do as fishermen. I just went to the common ground fair. It was the 23rd through the 25th I think. That's what I did. I spoke up there and told them about the shrimp grid. We told them about another thing we're doing. The twine and groundfish is a Spectra twine. I don't have a net like that yet, but I want to build one in the spring. We've got some environmental groups that are helping us out. We got the Island Institute and the Nature Conservancy. They've bought some of this twine with a grant, and they're going to give it to us to build nets out of. What it does, it's a smaller diameter, and it saves fuel. We tow it through the water. My nephew's got one on his boat. Another one of our guys has got one because he did gear research with it. Fuel savings is quite a bit. My nephew is burning close to 2 gallons less an hour than I am. On a trip, that's

quite a lot of fuel savings. So, I think we're pretty much going to try to go to that style of twine to build our nets. It's going to save us fuel. That's going to be another. If we can save the fuel and lower the observer cost, then we can get ourselves back to where we got to be in groundfish. I wonder if it would work in shrimp, that type of twine. But you'd have to have it made. It's fairly expensive to have it made. So, it's more expensive than conventional twine. But with the help we get from some of our environmental friends because actually fishermen are environmentalists anyway. Just some of the stuff I've been telling you that we do extra, that makes me an environmentalist [laughter].

CT: Right [laughter]. So, yes. So, besides shrimp, also you do some lobstering in the summertime.

GL: Yes, I do.

CT: You have been doing that since the [19]70s since you moved here.

GL: Yes, off and on. Not every year. There are some years I took off. Because the crown fish was more lucrative in the early [19]90s, I didn't do it so much. But when it got back around two thousand, I started going again. I built it back up. Of course, I got rid of my boat and all my traps when we were groundfishing, thinking, "Well, lobstering is not that good. I don't need to do that because I'm out here making decent money on the groundfish boat." I didn't mind the work at the time. I was a bit younger too. But having that as a fallback fishery was good for me. I'm lucky that I can still go because it's hard to get a lobster license. It's not impossible but it's almost there. I got one guy in town that we know that used to lobster. He didn't do what I did. He didn't keep his lobster license up. Well, he wanted to go back lobstering. Well, fifteen years ago he did the two years' worth of apprenticeship program. Did his time, and he got his license this year. Took him fifteen years. So, you can get one. There's proof you can get one, but it's not the perfect program [laughter]. It isn't like you can just go out and buy a lobster license. Students can get a license. That's another problem with it. If you're under eighteen and say your father is a lobsterman, because that's what most of the students are. Sometimes it's not like that, but most of the time it is. They go with fish with one-fifty traps. When they turn eighteen, they're eligible to get a license and fish three hundred and then the next year, four hundred, the next year, five hundred, until they get to eight hundred. So, they can get in. But people trying to support a family can't, which I think is a flawed system.

CT: So, you got back into it though because did you see the stocks are doing well or why did you get back into it?

GL: Yes. Because groundfish stocks declined and lobster stock increased. I had the option to do it, and I needed the money [laughter].

CT: [laughter]

GL: There were a lot of factors, but the money was the main thing. I wasn't making it with the groundfish. I needed to make house payments and car payments and all that stuff and doing that little bit of lobstering. Because groundfishing didn't decline like, boom, all over. It's a decline

and a slow progression of less days at sea. So, I had more time to be on shore, didn't have a lot to do. So, I said, "Well, I should get a boat and set a few traps, see how I do." First year I got a hundred traps. I'm thinking it out, "Oh, well, maybe I can catch a crate of lobsters here and there." Then I started picking up 200 pounds out of two hundred traps. I said, "Well, if I get a few more traps, I won't be taking over somebody's business. I can still go groundfishing to try to support the family business, and I can supplement myself with my lobstering." Well, it's moved around. So, I lobster. So, a lot of times I groundfish now, I'll go out and make a trip. If we don't have that good of a trip and we have a lot of bills to pay like this time, I'm hoping we do well. But I don't get a check. I leave it in the boat account, and I go lobstering. I make my week's pay doing that because I'll be back this next week. I lobstered this last week. I've got a check coming. I'm going to go out groundfishing over the weekend. Best-case scenario, we'll do well. I'll get a check from that. Then I'll haul my traps, get that lobster check next week too. But if the groundfishing fails, I'm going to haul my traps anyway, and I'm going to get a check.

CT: But you don't put so much effort into lobstering then.

GL: I don't.

CT: How many traps?

GL: I fish four hundred. I could fish eight hundred, but I fish four hundred because I do that other job. See, the guys that fish eight hundred, they don't work through the winter. They work on traps, but they don't go out and get income. They only get income at best seven months a year. The rest of the time they're working on their stuff, living on what they've saved. For me, I don't. I'm not going to save as much obviously because I haven't fished that many traps. But I have this fallback fishery that I do. I do that. Hopefully, as long as we don't get cut off too bad on shrimp, then I'll be all right. Otherwise, I'll have to get more traps, and the boats fold, I'll try lobstering. I don't think I can get a job that easy at my age with no job experience except fish.

CT: How do you deal with the clients in lobstering then, such as 2008 and even this year, I think, in prices?

GL: Well, actually, I've supplemented where I do both fisheries. I've heard them say declines. But when I compare it to groundfish –

CT: Sorry, I meant price falling down.

GL: Oh, the price falling?

CT: Yes, in 2008 and this year.

GL: That wasn't that bad.

CT: No [laughter].

GL: [laughter] They should have been on a groundfish boat.

CT: [laughter]

GL: Actually, they would complain, "Oh, what do you think of that?" They thought I was crazy to get back in lobstering, some of them. I said, "All you've got to do is come groundfishing one trip; you'll see how good you've got it." Because lobstering, it was worse than what they saw prior to that because they had a big boom year and high price. It was definitely worse. But it was definitely better than some other fishing jobs out there. So, lobstering has been really good for folks for the last fifteen years. There's been some complaining, but if you compare it to the groundfish fishery, it's outstanding [laughter]. So, what I'm about to do this weekend is not going to be as good as what I'm going to do lobstering.

CT: So, you're talking about lobstering being outstanding compared to groundfishing. So, my question is, why do you go groundfishing? Why don't you do more lobstering?

GL: I guess it's the same idea as why I kept my lobster license. You want to have a backup fishery. It's been the family business, and we still owe some bills. Right now, what I'm doing this last month and this month and probably the next month, I'm making about a trip a month to cover the bills. For income, I'm lobstering. Right now, with lobstering these are the best months of lobster around here. August, September, October, I do the best with my little 30-foot boat. So, I am actually doing more lobstering now than I do groundfish. That's what keeps the bills paid right now. We weren't making it groundfishing. I did okay groundfishing. We do all right. June, July are usually pretty good. August is all right. So, I'm splitting off a little bit in August. But September, things start to drop off in groundfish. That's why I am hoping to catch enough to make the bills this time. I have to make a payment by the middle of the month. It's due now. It's not past due, so that's good. But that's how we live in groundfish. We live from check-to-check, bill-to-bill. That's what sucks about it. You don't really save any money at it. So, that's why the shrimp is so important to the groundfish fleet. A lot of people don't realize that. Without one or the other, I don't think we're going to make it anyway, no. I won't be groundfishing if everything falls apart. The cost of going groundfishing out is more than income. It is now at times. But I can still get a check to the guy that goes with me. Actually, I had one of the guys on a phone call last night. We had a conference call. One of our fishing groups we belong to is a nonprofit because it's for management. It's an advocacy group. They go out, and they do that. They're trying to get 501(c)(3) status so they can get grants to help do that. One of the guys said, "Can I get a 501(c)(3) for my boat?" Because he's not really making money. He's doing the same thing I'm doing. He's going out and covering his bills and paying his guy to work with him and probably putting all his check back into the boat just like I do. There's a lot of guys out that own boats right now, especially our size. So, it's not a rosy picture yet. Hopefully, it'll get better. We're hoping it'll get better. But I don't know, we'll see. I'm worried about the observer patent more than anything, having to pay for the observers. I think that will be the end if that happens to the family type fishermen, I think, because they showed the statistics at the council meeting. The ones that it impacts the least, the boats that make, what was it, five-to-eight-day trips. So, the guys on the bigger boats bringing in more fish, larger net stocks and stuff, the observers affect them less. Because the observer cost is lower. Like I said, the gillnet guys, they go out for half a day to a day. It's affecting them the most. It affects guys like me next that go for a three-day trip. Then the guys that go for longer, it affects least. I think

the three to five, it affected a little less than us. Then over five, like eight-day trips, like the real big boats that go out, they get the least impact with having to pay for an observer. They're going to chew us two guys at the bottom. That's pretty much all of our sector too. We've got gillnetters, and we've got short trip boats, I guess. So, hopefully, we can get that cost down so we can all stay in business. A lot of guys still have passion to want to go fishing. I think a lot of it's got to do with passion, why we stay at it. I don't know why else anyone would stay at it at this point. It's not for the money now, once it was. Once it was decent money. Made more than most people did on the shore. That's why you went off there and did it [laughter]. But right now, the guy that's a plumber or a carpenter is making as much or maybe even more, and he's not taking that risk of being out there and hauling back at midnight either. He's asleep at midnight. I'm out on deck [laughter].

CT: Sorry, I don't want to cut you off.

GL: It's fine.

CT: I do want to steer this interview away.

GL: I'll let you. I'm rambling anyway. I have a tendency to do that.

CT: So, I'd like to get more at a community perspective.

GL: Community.

CT: So, I'm wondering how's the infrastructure in Port Clyde?

GL: It's poor. There is one guy with a trucking business we always used to truck our fish with. But his cost is fairly high, and our income is fairly low. This is through a co-op and Port Clyde Fresh Catch. I guess it belongs to Fresh Catch now. We have a truck. We bought a second-hand truck, a box truck, so we can haul our fish to the auction ourselves. The ice plant still runs in Rockland, but not to blow aboard boats anymore. You have to go up in your truck and pick up the ice. My stepson went up in his pickup, made two trips in his pickup, and we got the ice. The fuel truck is still there. The fuel company still comes down, and he comes and brings the truck down and puts the fuel on the boat. Then after we make the fishing trip, we come in. My brother's grandson who wants to be a fisherman at sixteen, that's all he wants to do with his life, so there is recruitment. He comes down and helps lump next to nothing, which is helping take the fish off the boat. We put them in the truck. It's our own truck. We own our own trays because of the co-op and Fresh Catch. I drive the truck after I catch the fish.

CT: You drive that to?

GL: To Portland, to the auction, and drop the fish off. So, the infrastructure is pretty much collapsed in Port Clyde. There's not a lot there. It's pretty much we do all of our own work on the dock after we get the fishing trip in. Do it prior to getting the stuff ready. We have to do it when we come back in. We don't hire anybody to do anything anymore. We build our own nets. If I'm going to build a net, I go out and get a ball of twine. TNC is helping us because they're

buying the twine, them and the Island Institute. But we just get a big ball of twine, dump it in the door yard. I grab the little piece of paper out with a net plan on it, grab my little knife, stack counting meshes, and cutting. Cut the pieces out, put them all together the way they go, and build a net. Build the rollers ourselves. Do all that work ourselves. We buy materials. We still have Hamilton Marine, and there's a guy down in Saco I got some twine off of. I think it was Saco or Scarborough. I think he's in Scarborough.

CT: Did you always have to do this or –

GL: We started building on nets when fishing started to get worse because income was lower. We used to hire our network out too. But we've shifted into doing everything ourselves. We've built nets from scratch. We rig up grates. We do all of our gear work, everything. Me and my brother even put new heads on my engine not this last spring, but the spring before. He'd been to biotech school and took diesel mechanics because I wouldn't be able to do it without him. We tore the engine down in the engine room and rebuilt it ourselves.

CT: Is this a saved cost then?

GL: Yes. We do the labor for free. We only have to buy the parts. So, I did a head job on the engine. That's the top half of the engine, not at the bottom. It's not a whole pull out of the boat and do the whole engine. We rebuilt the top half of the engine for about \$3,000 where it would probably be \$10,000 if you hired somebody. So, it's a big cost savings for us being able to do that ourselves. We couldn't afford to probably do it any other way at this point.

CT: Do you consider this place a fishing community today?

GL: Yes, it's a fishing community. It lobsters more than it fishes. But we land fish here around in Port Clyde of some sort. If we're not groundfishing, we're shrimping. When that's not happening, there's lobsters coming to the dock. So, there's always fish coming in, in Port Clyde. Fishing is thriving actually mainly because of lobster. But there's also other products coming in. Now, we have the little plant there that is processing fishing. People in town, if they want to get fresh fish, they can go right down there at any day of the week pretty much, except maybe Sunday, walk in and say, "I want some grey sole." They'll sell it to them. It may be frozen, or it may be fresh. But they'll sell fish to anybody, and they're doing crab down there. So, you can get fish, and you can get fish from fishermen. Fish are coming in not on a daily basis, but on a weekly basis, there's some fish coming into Port Clyde. So, it's a fishing village.

CT: Overall, do you think the fishermen in this port are doing better or worse than twenty years ago?

GL: Lobster wise they're doing better. Groundfish-wise, they're doing worse. Shrimping, they're probably doing slightly better or probably a bit better. Well, I don't know. Twenty years ago, we were getting an awful lot of money for shrimp. Shrimping is probably pretty close to the same.

CT: Do you feel the fishing community here is resilient? As in they've been able to respond and

cope with changes?

GL: Yes, very much so.

CT: What do you see as the major strengths of the fishing community?

GL: Just community value, everyone treating everyone else with respect and looking out for one another, small town stuff. Same thing the farmers do out in the Midwest. When their friends run into hard times, they all pitch in to help him out any way they can. That's what happens here with the fishing, people help each other.

CT: Do you consider the community here to be vulnerable?

GL: Very. For groundfish, yes. Also, lobstering too because of the bait situation because we're looking at declines in forage fish all the way around, herring, and menhaden. I think down the road that's going to become an issue there. They're not going to be able to put traps out with no bait in them. So, things may have to change in that fishery too. I think that eight hundred traps are excessive, that's my opinion. I think it could cut that down. I think realistically on the shore that six hundred might be a better number to fish to try for a while, see how it works. I think you'd be putting less bait in the water. You have less problems with cutoffs and whale interactions because that's quite a few less traps. You've got seven thousand fishermen in the state. If you take two hundred traps from each full-time fishermen, you're reducing it by fourteen thousand traps, I think would be the number. It'd be a lot of traps anyway either way. That's a lot of traps to reduce. I think you'd probably catch just as many lobsters. They did a probe, I guess it was like a pilot or some sort of research program on Monhegan a few years ago. I think they're still doing it. They used to fish six hundred traps down there. They had just a seasonal fishery fish in the winter, six months a year. They fish started in December; I think it was. But I think they started on January 1st. January 1st to the end of June they'd go, I think. They decided to try three hundred traps because the guys for six hundred, they were a hard time getting out. It wasn't just small boats that tended to make it here. So, they said let's try three hundred. They all agreed to try three hundred traps, and they ended up catching more lobsters with three hundred traps than they did with six hundred traps. But that was a controlled area and a controlled amount of fishermen. I think there were eleven fishermen opposed to the amounts that are on the shore. That worked fine for them it seemed like. I'm thinking on the shore it might not work as well with three hundred. But I think a lower number than eight hundred, it would probably be all right. So, six hundred comes to my mind to try first. That would be a reduction.

CT: What do you see as the major threats facing this community? It doesn't have to be just a fishing community. It can be the community overall.

GL: As a community as a whole, there isn't a lot of threats. But if you add the fishing in, I got another concern that we haven't touched on, is we got wind power coming up in the next fifteen odd years. Ocean policy is about uses of the ocean and fishermen are one of them. If they cut into some of the fishing grounds, either with the wind farms or the cables coming in through the fishing grounds, that could reduce income for people both in lobstering and in groundfishing

shrimp. I see that as a potential thing that might make hardship if it lowers incomes because incomes we do okay, but we're not thriving. Yes.

CT: [laughter] Right. So, do you have any other opinions on what is needed to strengthen the viability of the commercial fishing here?

GL: No. I think we're doing a pretty good job as best can be expected. I think we have some pollution factors that aren't being looked at that may be affecting the nearshore fishery. Again, that's just my opinion. I have nothing to back that up. But I had a guy down Stonington, Ted Ames, one time, and we got on the pollution talking thing. Ted's a pretty famous guy. We got the McCarthy Grant for writing up about codfish spawning areas. I asked him what he thought about pollution along the shore. He said that he was always concerned that the runoff from the blueberry fertilizers might be having an effect on the nearshore fishery. I have to agree with him there that may be a possibility. It may not be, but that's something that probably should be looked at. I don't think there's been anything done. I know they are starting to look at bottom sediments now in certain areas instead of just water quality because they've always looked at water quality. But tides are strong down east, and they clear themselves pretty quickly. Some of that stuff ends up in the bottom, and that could be spawning areas and things that I don't know that much about.

CT: Who represents the interests of commercial fishermen in the sport?

GL: Fishermen themselves basically because we have the Port Clyde Fresh Catch. We're taking care of our own basically in this community. We do have another group that is helping in a roundabout way. It's called the Midcoast Maine Fisherman's Heritage Alliance. What they're doing is they raise funds from donation to help support the fishermen by giving them buck just to spend on the safety gear on their boat so they're safer at sea. Well, they don't just hand them over to you. What you have to do is you have to go out and do public education. I was at the fair this last weekend, and I was telling people about sustainability of fishing gear and things we're doing in Port Clyde. Some of the conversations got into big herring trawlers. Some of them got into, "Where can I get a fresh fish?" Things like that. We've done a movie. I've sat on panels after the movie that we made because we did make a movie a few years ago too about fishing in Port Clyde. When I do that, they give me a voucher for a hundred dollars for every hour that I sit, and I talk to folks. So, last year, I was able to repack my life, wrap and buy a new flag kit and rig my moorings for the vouchers that I got. So, that saved me money. So, they are supporting the fishing community by doing that. So, that's another group in town. So, Port Clyde has quite a few people that are concerned about the fishermen.

CT: Are fishermen fairly organized then?

GL: Yes. We're probably more organized than a lot of communities, and we get along better than a lot of communities. We have Midcoast Fishermen's Association, which is the group that talks to management and does that stuff, the non-profit. We have the Midcoast Fishermen's Cooperative, which is the groundfish boats in a co-op. That's where we unload our fish, have our trays, and all that stuff. We have Port Clyde Fresh Catch, which we just recently turned into an LLC with just a few of us fishermen that are left. There's another co-op in town which is called

Port Clyde Fisherman's Co-op. But it's a lobster co-op, which I belong to that too. That's where I sell my lobsters. So, there's four. Now they're starting a new co-op, which I don't belong to, which is called Mosquito Harbor Co-op. Because the guy who's starting it up is from over in Mountainville, which is the next little hamlet over which is still part of the same town. So, there's a lot of groups in Port Clyde. There are more groups around than there is independence to support fisheries.

CT: Yes. How would you characterize the relationship between fishermen within the community?

GL: Very good. People get along with the fishermen, the fishermen get along with the people. I think everyone in town likes fishermen, and most fishermen like everyone else in town. So, it's a close-knit community.

CT: Between fishermen, how are their relationships?

GL: Pretty good. You always get one guy that doesn't like the other here and there. There's some quarrels and such, especially in the lobstering part. But for the most part, I think they all get along pretty well.

CT: Are there conflicts between fisherman in this community and other communities?

GL: Not much. A little bit down on the Martinique line, those guys have a little trouble, fish farther out than I do. It's not Martanique, it's Martinique. The Martinique guys like to protect their line pretty strictly. Some of the guys get slack and slide a few traps over. There's one younger guy out there that I know, Ryan. He'll come up to them and let them know if they get over a dock or not.

CT: [laughter]

GL: But most of the time they say, "You're right, Ryan. Move them back." They get along okay. I don't think there's any real bad blood there.

CT: How has fishermen's access to the waterfront changed over the years here?

GL: In Port Clyde it isn't really. A lot of the communities along the coast, it has. There was one wharf, the factory wharf. We got it from out of town, bought. We used it for a while. He really didn't like lobstermen, but he let us draggers use it. Then all of a sudden, one of the lobstermen saw the wharf and decided, "Geez, that'd be a good place to load my traps." They didn't ask him. Well, he wasn't really happy. So, what he did was tear down the wharf [laughter]. So, that's one wharf we lost. But for the most part, the wharf we used to go off of too belongs to a fairly wealthy family in town. They've been in town a while, and they do get along with most people. But they own the wharf, and it's in bad shape. Fishermen don't use it anymore, and they once did. On the other hand of that one, we have a working waterfront dock which – the Port Clyde Fisherman's Co-op, which is the Lobster Co-op. It's confusing. They put their property up. They put covenants on the property, so we could have a new wharf in there. Groundfish boats

would have access to that wharf to unload shrimp and fish along with co-using it with the Fishermen's Co-op, which is the Lobster Co-op, to load and unload traps off that wharf on one side of it. So, we have a wharf that we can use, and supposedly, you're not going to get kicked off of. We do pay a small lease for it. But the lease that we get charged, isn't for profit, it pays the bills whatever the bill. If the lease goes up, that means the power bill went up. So, it's not like they're trying to get extra money off the groundfish boats. They're not. They're just trying to have it be a zero expense to them because if they're not using the wharf they don't feel as though they should put money into the wharf. They think the groundfish boats should support it, and it wasn't. They said they didn't want to give us a free ride. They wanted us to pay the bills, which is fair. So, I didn't see anything wrong with it, and I still don't. But we're getting down there now. The lease is split up between lesser and lesser boats each year. It gets higher. But it's still more reasonable and far more reasonable than where we were before.

CT: Besides fishermen, who else is using the water or dock space in town?

GL: There's the mail boat that goes to Monhegan. But he owns his own wharf, he always has. He runs two boats out. Plus, he's leasing a building out to a fellow who's running a Port Clyde kayak company who takes people out on tours in the summer kayaking around the islands and stuff. He's doing all right. We have the town landing, which I've used myself to load a few folks on my boat and take them out for a lobster tour, which gets used by summer traffic basically. There are two other wharfs that are commercial, though they're lobster wharfs. The *Simmons* is, and *Linda Bean* wharf. Linda Bean owns the store wharf too, which that's where the Dip Net restaurant is. She owns the store, and she runs a wharf. You can gas your boat up at her wharf. But if you're not buying gas or going into her store, you can't tie up there. But the town landing is right beside it, so you can go there. That's about it. Most of the waterfront in St. Georges is owned commercial. So, you have access to a lot of it. There are some private wharfs around. But mainly they're used for fish by fishermen. There's a couple of people who bought up the shore front property that had a wharf. They tied either their yard or the little speedboat that they go out in the evenings and see the sunset and have a cocktail probably. That's about it.

CT: Yes. So, how important has tourism been to the community?

GL: Tourism is fairly important. It's a hundred percent important to the mail boat. They do have the mail contract, and they do take freight to Monhegan. But their main business is taking passengers. They run two boats a day, so that's large in tourism, and the kayak business, which has been around for – I think it was its third year this year. He's done well. That's all tourism. My lobster tour business is about taking tourists out and showing them how to beta trap and stuff. They seem to like that. That hasn't taken off real big. We were going to try to go off Linda Bean's store wharf, but she started bossing us around. We didn't want to be bossed. It was our own business. So, we opted out of that situation and continued to go off the town landing for loading only. We'd load the people. I do all the business on the boat. So, I guess that's okay. I haven't been approached by anybody and told me to cease and desist yet.

CT: You decided to do that on your own then?

GL: Yes. That was my wife's idea. She's always coming up with ideas how to just scrape a

little bit more money out of anyone walking by. Better watch out [laughter].

CT: Are there any other opportunities for fishermen to be involved in tourism?

GL: Not a lot. No, that's it. You either fish – the only ones doing tourism in fishing is basically the few lobster tours I do each year. A lot of the fishermen don't like to talk to tourists, they like it when they leave. But they do bring money into town. There are some gift shops downtown that I haven't mentioned. There's a couple. I don't really go into them.

CT: Are you one of the only people doing these tours or other people –

GL: Yes, me and the Codys is their last name. They've been doing those kayak tours. I'm the only one that's ever done a lobster tour because I actually have a captain's license to take passengers. So, I can legally take people out on a tour. Because you have to have a captain's license to legally take passengers. I can take them out on a tour. I basically just take them out. I take them out for two hours, and we haul twenty traps. Usually, I go out and spot a few seals for them. They love that. They take some pictures and tell them about Port Clyde and the community and fishing and whatever else they want to know about. What I don't know, I just give them a good story, and they love it.

CT: [laughter] So, how affordable is the housing situation in Port Clyde?

GL: Anywhere you see the water, it's not affordable. We never really saw the real estate crash in Port Clyde because the properties are basically a commodity. Because there's only so many shore front property. So, it didn't drop that much. Places away from the water like my house here, where you don't see the water, and we're tucked in the woods, they're more affordable. Houses like this aren't as expensive. It's still fairly pricey to live in Port Clyde. If you go up the road farther, you get up in south Thomaston say, it's not as expensive. It's quite expensive in places that have full-time fire and police too, which we have neither. We have a volunteer fire department, and we have the sheriff patrol, which is the county police. So, we don't really have a lot of that extra stuff. We don't have any streetlights. So, the affordability of living in the town is relatively cheap.

CT: What do you feel have been the most critical changes in the community since you lived here?

GL: Well, let's see. There hasn't been a lot. But lately, one of the things that bugs me the most, and it's probably just me and my wife, maybe it's one or two other people in town.

CT: [laughter]

GL: We've had one lady that's come to town and bought up a lobster wharf and a whole bunch of houses and increased some of the value of the houses so young people can't get places to live. She's not a very nice person. So, you started writing her name [laughter]. I didn't use a name.

KL: We didn't name any names.

CT: [laughter]

GL: [laughter] He started writing it.

KL: We didn't name no names.

GL: [laughter] Okay.

CT: Moving on. What do you think this community will look like in ten years?

KL: A harbor.

GL: It may be more tourism and a little less fishing. Like I say, if we have to pay for the observers, we may lose the groundfish boats. We lose the groundfish boats, we lose most of the shrimp boats. We have lobstering still. But it will turn to more tourism. Once my wife gets her cabins in the woods, she makes money from them plus the lobster tours.

KL: You got to make the money to make the money. That's the only problem.

GL: Yes. I think tourism. Port Clyde will always be a tourism place. I like to see fishing hang on. I think that's part of the attraction.

CT: You think fishing is part of what draws people here?

GL: Yes. A lot of people want to see fish. Well, I had some couple ladies, one from Texas and one from D.C. They were up together, and they went on a lobster tour. They've been here for three or four days. They were here for a week. They were like, "Well, we came to Port Clyde because we thought we could get fresh fish. Where can we get fresh fish?" Well, I told them about Port Clyde Fresh Catch. They went down and got some fresh fish. But they came to see lobster and to learn about fishing, eat fresh fish, eat fresh lobster. That's why they came. So, they come for fishing when they come to Port Clyde. That is one of the biggest attractions. So, if we lose it, we lose a little bit, but we're still going to have a scenic rocky coast of Maine. We'll have seals still.

KL: There's a mystique about fishermen. That's why the dead is captured so well. These guys are like the last of the cowboys. Rockstars, Dana Morse calls it.

GL: Dana Morse.

KL: Dana Morse, he said you guys are rockstars.

GL: Yes. That's my email address, Port Clyde Cowboy.

CT: [laughter]

GL: This is not my first rodeo [laughter].

CT: So, would you still go fishing if you had your life or career to live over again?

GL: Oh, probably. I'm not foolish.

CT: [laughter]

GL: I don't know. I'd considered some other things before I went fishing. Actually, when I was in high school, I thought about being a fireman. Actually, the type of fireman I wanted to be was a little more risky than just a regular fireman. I thought about being one of those guys that put fires and flies out and jump out of airplanes.

CT: A fire jumper?

GL: Yes. I thought that would be a cool job. But I never followed it up. I went fishing instead. If I had to do it over, I might think about doing something like that. Probably wouldn't have lived this long now [laughter].

CT: [laughter] But would you advise young men to enter the fishery?

GL: In groundfishing right now? No, I wouldn't. In lobstering, I don't see anything wrong with it if they enjoy being out on the water. There's some money in that still. Even with all the complaining, there's money in it. Fishing is a tough life. You've got to have passion to be a fisherman. If you don't have passion, you don't belong out there being a fisherman because that's pretty much what drives people to be fishermen. They love being where they are and working where they are because the benefits aren't great. You don't get any retirement packages or anything like that. You usually get arthritis eventually. But you do see a lot of awesome sunrises and sunsets. You've got to be an outdoors person to be a fisherman. You've got to be an environmentalist. But outside of that, if you've got passion, if you really want to be a groundfisherman and you've got the passion, you could probably make it work. My passion's wearing out on groundfishing, but I'm getting older [laughter].

CT: Well, what do you like most about living here?

GL: I like the community. I like where I don't have to go through rush hour every day to go to work. My biggest rush hour is getting bait out of the bait shed right now. I've been to the city. I go to the meetings. I've been to other places besides Port Clyde. There are people in this community that haven't. There are some people that never left town. A big trip is to go to Rockland, so they can go to the bank and buy some groceries. It's true, isn't it?

KL: Yes. I've dragged him all over halfway across the country.

CT: [laughter]

GL: Yes, we've been to quite a few places. I like traveling, and I like meeting new people.

That's why I don't mind doing interviews.

CT: [laughter] Well, I'm done with questions. But do you have anything else that you think I missed or anything you want to add?

GL: No. We covered it pretty well because I'm a good Rambler.

CT: [laughter]

KL: [laughter]

CT: Yes, you are. Thank you very much. I'm going to stop this.

[end of transcript]