

Name of person Interviewed: Armando Estudante [AE]

Facts about this person:

Age: 50s

Sex: Male

Occupation: Captain/Vessel Owner/ Former Processing plant owner

Home port: New Bedford

Residence: New Bedford

Ethnic background: Portuguese

Interviewer: Millie Rahn [MR]

Transcriber: Sarah Smith

Place interview took place: Harbor Development Corporation

Date and time of interview: September 24, 2005

### **INDEX / KEYWORDS**

**KEYWORDS:** Portugal; scalloping; New Bedford; groundfishing; management; cooking; future of fishing; fishermen's wives; immigration; stock assessment

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[00:00] Came from Portugal in 1978; worked in fishing in Portugal; came to visit his parents who lived in Philadelphia; came to New Bedford to see the whaling museum; decided to move to New Bedford; many people from his town in Portugal lived in New Bedford; wanted to see whaling museum because he was a big Melville fan

[02:16] Parents were already in the US near Philadelphia; they weren't fishing; never thought of moving here until he came to visit; decided to stay for good and raise their children; have two children

[03:43] First started going to sea on merchant vessels; then worked on factory trawlers; before coming to the US was in charge of a fleet of boats for a company in Portugal; at that time Portugal was very different from US; here you had access to capital and could be an entrepreneur; his wife was in sales; here you can work for yourself, in Portugal they had to work for someone else

[05:38] Bought a house in 1980 and still live in it; bought their first boat in 1982; own their fourth boat now but only keep one to go fishing; never wanted to be a firm; just one boat with crew so they can take care of the boat; working in groundfishing and

scalloping; with days at sea have to have multiple groundfishing or scallop permits or both; they have had permits for both for the last seven years

[07:38] Go fishing out on George's Bank and Gulf of Maine; have fished from Maryland up to Canadian border; has fifty-two days of groundfishing to use this year; scalloping is doing well – it's a blessing; most of his crewmembers are in their fifties and have done backbreaking work scalloping; now scalloping is good and they can maybe save a few dollars for their retirement; there is justice because the crew is finally seeing decent money

[10:28] Most boats are newer; there are some older boats but those who have stayed in the fishery have taken care of their boats; boats are more seaworthy than when he started fishing; boats are better equipped for safety; Coast Guard does a good job of verifying boats are in compliance and are helpful

[12:20] A good fisherman is like a good cook – it's both science and art; there may be some innate ability to catch fish; if you just follow the recipe without any art it won't work most of the time; five of his crew members are in their fifties

[13:40] Not overly concerned with the next generation; the world is dynamic and you can't predict the future; not a lot of young people entering the fishery; one reason is that older people are finally making decent money and not retiring; believes the fishing industry will be alive fifty years from now; new people will come into the business; improvements in scallop processing will allow fewer people to fish and will make the work easier; this may not be the case in groundfishing; management and regulations have a lot to do with keeping the industry going; managers aren't doing a bad job – it's a natural process; if you look at Europe you can see the trends of where we're heading; must balance effort with the resource

[17:35] He's an optimist; owned a fish processing plant for ten years; dedicated to processing the July species; science said stocks of monkfish, dogfish, and skates were infinite, and then soon they were depleted; investment made in catching those species is lost; America has free enterprise and that's not unfair; heard a few years ago cod and yellowtail were being rebuilt, now told that's not the case; it's difficult to assess stocks – fish move around, you have to take new approaches; if the scientists go to the same spot for stock assessment they're not good fishermen

[21:55] Believes the stocks aren't as in bad shape as it seems; using very large mesh – should ask whether this is the right approach; eventually with trial and error we'll get it right; thinks there will be fishing forever, but maybe different styles; grandfather fished by handline; his great-grandchildren will be able to fish if they choose; wouldn't keep fishing if he didn't believe it; his children don't fish

[24:00] All his crew is Portuguese right now but not deliberately; had Spanish, American, Polish, Central American crew; one of the reason there are not a lot of new people in the fishery is because there is no more exchange of people, not enough

immigration; world has become more homogenous; some parts of the world still have people willing to come but it's difficult for them to immigrate after September 11; you need new blood; New Bedford was built on immigration; that will change

[26:57] Started cooking five years ago but couldn't cook at all; when scallops became more abundant he started cooking to free up the crew; make sure everyone gets a good meal to keep the crew happy; wife taught him to cook; learned a few good dishes

[29:40] Used to not cook anything but always wondered how to cook; reading a cookbook is really a science

[32:12] Making a traditional Portuguese fish stew with fish steaks, without bones, for the festival; when his daughters were a year old they would insist on taking out the bones in sardines by themselves; Portuguese fishermen make a chowder with fish heads in, but there are always some bones left, so he can't make that for festival

[35:13] Doesn't see Portuguese vessels out fishing; came from a town in Portugal with the largest long distance fleet, but now there are only a half dozen vessels because of regulations; they would not fish within our two hundred mile limit anyway; loves St. John's – been there many times

[37:14] Has made a good life and has a good attitude – you have to be happy and healthy; wife is great; children never gave them any problems; family is used to him going out to sea – thinks it makes for a healthy relationship; woman has to wear the pants when the man goes out to sea; fisherman has to have a competent wife to manage the household while he is gone; going out to sea lets everyone be what they are

[40:34] Every man on his mother's side of the family fished, some went to sea for up to eleven months; they would get maybe two letters in this time; woman had to be strong and be the head of household; people stuck together more then; his wife manages the household completely and he manages the business – it's what keeps the family together; it's a partnership