

**AUD_2014_0067A Thomas Galbraith 1993-07-11. Interview by Marguerite Holloway, July 11, 1993
Transcribed by Carla Lesh, Hudson River Maritime Museum, 2023**

Thomas Galbraith: On the short notice I haven't gone through everywhere yet.

Marguerite Holloway: When did you start fishing?

Thomas Galbraith: Probably in the late 1970s?

Marguerite Holloway: And who taught you?

Thomas Galbraith: We were always on the river. I grew up in Croton on the river. And my friend lived at Croton Point, my partner, Cal Greenburg. So we had access to the water. We always hung around, our passions then were duck hunting, pole fishing and things like that. And we always saw the commercial fishermen going out occasionally from Ossining. And we thought about it. Said, you know, we like the water and we like the time that we have out here, so let's give it a try. We got involved with Henry Gourdine, he was our mentor, showed us how to put the nets together. And gave us some basic tips on what to look for and how to handle it. And also, he helped us build a couple of boats. I've got a couple of pictures of the boats we built too.

Marguerite Holloway: Oh, that's great.

Thomas Galbraith: In fact, we're still using one, a 20 footer.

Marguerite Holloway: What were some of the basic tips that he gave you?

Thomas Galbraith: Well, he showed us how to sim net in, you know was basically, what size mesh to buy and how to put the net together. Because being novices at this time, you've have to learn the stitch, you'll have to learn the intricacies of the needlework and how to put it, how to sim a net in. And basically he taught us the fundamentals as far as how to rig the anchor line, which we fished with an anchor net. Basically, we had a working understanding of how it was done but he gave us the finite details. And he was I think, at the time, 80 something. I know he's going strong, he's got to be well into his mid-90s now. He was 81 or 82 when he showed us.

Marguerite Holloway: Wow.

Thomas Galbraith: And he, matter of fact, the first couple of years fishing we would meet him out there. He was still actively shad fishing then. Now I think he does it on a limited basis but he had a line above ours. We were south of Croton Point. A matter of fact, there's a picture of our shad line and our set up. This is the south end of Croton Point. If you see there's our jugs here, and that's basically where we fished.

Marguerite Holloway: How did you choose where?

Thomas Galbraith: Well my friend lived on Croton Point, we had access to the water at our dock which was on the south side of Croton Point. And from there we picked a spot that was fairly close to where our boat was, it was a couple of miles away. But also where no one else had claimed as theirs. So we were between DeGroats and Henry's line. That gave us space between them and we decided to try that spot there. It was a great spot. We had a little trouble with holding the bottom line because of rocks. We would slide over and get caught occasionally. We finally worked out a spot where we could be pretty save and secure in between.

Marguerite Holloway: How many feet of net were you fishing?

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Thomas Galbraith: Well, it varied. Our first years we fished about 400, 450 foot of net. And we were fishing monofilament, five and a half inch. And it was 208 which was, we went to a little bit heavier monofilament. But the first year we were using sort of light monofilament. We got about 2 years out of the nets and at that point they were beyond repair. So the next set of net we bought, we used a little heavier grade mono and we did fairly well with that too. I got a few pictures here of

Marguerite Holloway: How'd you do the first years?

Thomas Galbraith: Well we caught shad. Back then you couldn't help but catch shad. I mean they were very abundant. We caught shad and we dealt with I think it was a Fish [unclear] and he would handle our shipment for us. We would box it up for him and bring it up to him and then it in this [unclear] box and then he would take it to the City and then at the end of the year we settled up for what he got for his shipping and what we got for our catch. And I think we just about paid for our nets. We were happy to do it. Believe me, you don't become a millionaire shad fishing in the Hudson River.

Marguerite Holloway: Do you remember how much you were getting a pound at that point?

Thomas Galbraith: Yeah, I would say, at that time we shipped everything. We would ship the bucks and everything else. Somehow I remember getting off 8 cents a pound for the bucks, 8 cents a pound for buck shad and we averaged a high of maybe 25 or 30 cents and a low of 16 cents for the roe. And you know, what's amazing about it is

[TIME STAMP 5:00]

Thomas Galbraith: that Henry Gourdine had some old papers from the 1940s and maybe the 1930s. He had some invoices from when he shipped some shad back then. The price of shad was just about the same then as it was when we shipping in the late 1970s. And I was saying, the only thing in the world that inflation hasn't touched. (laughter) But you can't really get into it for a killing. We just hoped to pay for our gas and our equipment and have a good experience. And that's basically what we did. We had a real good time doing it.

Marguerite Holloway: Did you take time off from work?

Thomas Galbraith: Yes, I did. I would take my vacation and I would ask for a leave of absence from my job. Most of the time I could get it. So I had a good part of the spring off every year. We'd fish every day. We'd try to catch the tides and we did it pretty heavy. As you can see here there's a picture.

Marguerite Holloway: What do you do when you work full time?

Thomas Galbraith: I work for the phone company. I'm a manager for New York Telephone Company now. Then I was a craftsman, so they allowed me a little more leeway. Now, unfortunately they don't let me have a much time off.

Marguerite Holloway: When did you last fish a shad season?

Thomas Galbraith: I haven't fished in the last two years. I haven't fished in the last two years. My partner still fishes. He's retired now, that's Cal Greenburg and he's on the water at Verplanck. He rents a house that used to be Charlie White's house which was one of our business associates back then too.

Marguerite Holloway: Right.

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Thomas Galbraith: He's right there. As a matter of fact, he has access to the water. He still actively shad fishes and he does some sturgeon and crabs and so forth.

Marguerite Holloway: Were you not able to take time off, is that why or is because of the bass or?

Thomas Galbraith: Well, I guess the frustration of the bass in the nets. It becomes. The last year I actively shad fished, which was three years ago we would have to throw away, just on average, I would say maybe 800 pounds of bass to get 200 pounds of shad. And it became time consuming and frustrating and plus the fact that my job became more, much more involved and I couldn't take that much time away from it. We did, Cal and I did fish for a couple of years prior to that where we would go after work. We rigged up a system where we could lift the net no matter what time it was. We had a winch we built.

Marguerite Holloway: Oh really?

Thomas Galbraith: Hand crank winch which we would mount it on a block which would go on the front of our wooden boat. And we would get the jug line on it, wrap it and then crank the winch. When One guy held tension on the line, so we could get the bottom line. Because we had to get it up to, we couldn't wait for the tide. We had to go whenever we got there, at 5:30, yeah, that was our set time. So we had to fight the tide, but we still did it for about 5 years that way.

Marguerite Holloway: Wow. Was that successful?

Thomas Galbraith: Yeah, we did fairly well with it, yeah, we did fairly well.

Marguerite Holloway: Had you seen any other fishermen using that kind of technique?

Thomas Galbraith: No I don't believe I ever saw anybody use a hand winch to bring up. Most fishermen had the foresight and sense to wait until the tide slacked. We didn't have that luxury, unfortunately. [Side conversation about pets.]

Marguerite Holloway: So is Cal still using the winch?

Thomas Galbraith: No, with Cal now being able to go out whenever he wants he gets slack water and at slack water the line comes up real easy. But you know, if you don't have slack water, you're going to break your back or figure some way to get the bottom line up on top of your boat. Now we had, if you talk about volume I think our best day for shad was out of only 450 foot of net or so. And our best day was probably around 2300, 2400 pounds of roe. At that time, we'd stopped shipping the bucks. We'd throw the bucks back in the water so we just kept roe.

Marguerite Holloway: When was that?

Thomas Galbraith: That was probably about 1980, thereabouts.

Marguerite Holloway: And so after that, the rest of the time it was just roes you captured?

Thomas Galbraith: Well, that's the point, at 8 cents a pound, we had to pay a nickel to ship it. Now we're working on a 3 cent margin. And then we had to supply the cardboard box and ice, so if you stop to think about it, we weren't getting paid in the bargain, the money's going south instead of coming back to us. So it got a little silly. Other than if we'd have a special order, like the bait shop would want maybe 20, 30, maybe 50 roe to freeze them for bait. We'd sell them for a buck a fish or something like that.

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Marguerite Holloway: That's funny. Who would come pick it up from the Market?

Thomas Galbraith: We had a shipper back then

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Thomas Galbraith: Red. I'm not sure about the last name, I just know it was Red. And he came out of New Rochelle. He worked in the Fulton Fish Market. And he had a red, big van, truck like and he would come around and pick up from all the shad, well, some of the shad fishermen, not all of them on this side of the river. Then he'd swing down across the Bear Mountain and he'd pick up the Rockland side and then report to work in the morning. So this way it supplemented his income.

Marguerite Holloway: How much did he get paid for shipping?

Thomas Galbraith: We were a nickel a pound.

Marguerite Holloway: A nickel a pound, okay.

Thomas Galbraith: And that's been running constant since I've been you know, for the last 15 years as far as I know, that's the going rate, a nickel a pound.

Marguerite Holloway: And who sold it at Fulton?

Thomas Galbraith: We would deal through Carter's I've got a few, my records are in my office at my job. I know we dealt a lot with Carter and we've dealt with a few other people down there. What we would do normally was we would work a verbal agreement at the beginning of the year, are you going to handle our fish, they'd say of course. I'd say well, what's the going rate. They'd say, well, right now it's this. It fluctuated, I guess, supply and demand. And so I said, okay we'll stick with you this year, if you take care of us with the catch. We'll do the best we can. That's how we'd handle it.

Marguerite Holloway: So you would just work with on contractor?

Thomas Galbraith: I'd stay with one, but I've gone, over the years maybe three different business concerns in the Fulton Market.

Marguerite Holloway: How is it working with Fulton?

Thomas Galbraith: Well, our contact is really minimal because we'll call to set things up in the beginning of the year. Maybe a couple of calls about the price, what's the price of shad this week and other than that the checks come and our invoices flow back that way. We would just send down the paperwork on the box, each box, a box of 50 pounds iced, and then we would take it from there and they would send the checks back a week or so later with their amounts coinciding with ours.

Marguerite Holloway: How did you first make the contact with Carter?

Thomas Galbraith: Through Henry, we were looking for a connection and Henry suggested we try Carter. His invoices when they come back, I should say with his checks I don't have one with me right now, it's Carter's Fish Company or whatever it is and it says America's First Industry.

Marguerite Holloway: That's great.

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Thomas Galbraith: Fishing. Here's a picture of a wooden boat and our operation a little bit. Page through. You can see our procedures.

Marguerite Holloway: How long did it take you to built the boat?

Thomas Galbraith: Probably about a month part time, working weekends on it, things like that, And a couple of days during the week at night, we'd work on it. We built two boats. We built a 16 footer wood and we built a 20 footer. The 16 footer we wound up being a little too small for our needs, as far as capacity. On page 2 here I'll show you what we mean by capacity because you'll see the boat filled above the seats with fish. And we've had as much as 3000 pounds of fish in that boat and we were able to handle it.

Marguerite Holloway: So then you would switch to the 20 footer?

Thomas Galbraith: Yeah, that's when we went to the 20 footer.

Marguerite Holloway: Where is your 16 footer now?

Thomas Galbraith: We sold it. And it's not used for commercial fishing, some guy just chooses to putt around the river with it now.

Marguerite Holloway: Henry helped you with the boat?

Thomas Galbraith: Henry helped us with the boat, yes. He gave us the basic necessary. My partner's very handy as far as woodwork also, so he had a pretty good idea. But Henry, when it came down to some of the final design helped us out and guided us in the right direction.

Marguerite Holloway: That's great.

Thomas Galbraith: Like I said, this is a picture here of one day's catch coming back in. I've just guessed quickly it looks like a about a 1500 pound day from the number of boxes. I can't remember, at one time we switched to 65 pounds per box, we figured we'd get a little bit more longevity on the boxes would go a little further. If that's right, it would be closer to about 2000 pounds, but 50 pound boxes would be about 1500 pounds.

Marguerite Holloway: Can you remember what your best season was? And did it fluctuate a lot or did you usually get about the same?

Thomas Galbraith: No, no there were good years and then there were leaner years. I remember the first probably about the third year in, somewhere around 1980 or so 1981 it was one of the peak seasons for us. The recent times, it seems to be much more difficult for us to catch a pile of fish. But we would go out then and we'd come back with 1000 pounds. 1000 pounds was a poor day. Now if we get 1000 pounds, go back three years ago, if we got 1000 pounds it was a great day for shard. Now the numbers seem to be diminishing rapidly.

[TIME STAMP 15:00]

Marguerite Holloway: Is it the population of shad is declining? Or is it because there are so many more bass you catch less shad?

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Thomas Galbraith: I think it's a combination of both, but I really think that the population of shad is declining. Now I don't know whether it's because of it being their habitat off Newfoundland is being disturbed or they're being overfished commercially in the ocean before they get here. But the numbers are precivably diminished.

Marguerite Holloway: Since when have you marked

Thomas Galbraith: I would say in the last 7 years or so a state of decline. I can't speak for this year but my partner tells me that it's not even that, it's worse than the last time I fished for them. So it's something that's on a decline. But as far as best year, I would say probably in the early 1980s for us, the early 1980s. Well, if you say best year, if you talk number of fish or if you talk dollars and cents then it depends what the market is paying. Because now, as there's less shad I guess it's everywhere because I understand the price is up considerably. So what you do catch is much more valuable but you're catching less. So you know, it's a trade off. The most we ever got paid for shad was we were in real early one year. And it was before we had, it was a late Easter and we had fished Easter week, prior to Good Friday. And I guess the market for fish was very big. And we got 60 cents a pound. It was in the 1970s one time for shad that was an astonishing figure for shad.

Marguerite Holloway: Did you miss it this year? Not going out?

Thomas Galbraith: Yeah, of course. I'm looking forward to being able to have a little more time away from my primary job which is getting crazy right now. I guess with the way business is. We were downsizing and you've got to really be on the ball and perform or they're going to send you for a walk. Longevity and seniority mean nothing anymore. Especially if you get in the position where you don't have a union to protect you. So you've got to, it would be impossible to take a month off a job now, at this point in time.

Marguerite Holloway: What do you miss most about fishing?

Thomas Galbraith: I love the river I grew up on the river as a kid in Croton. I had my first boat when I was 9 years old and I've had a boat continually since in one form or another. I love being on the water at first light. I'm a river kid. I just like being out there. The thrill of seeing the fish come out of the water and the excitement of the day and the camaraderie and friendship that you form with your fishing partners. I look forward to doing it again in the future when I have a little more opportunity to spend some time with it.

Marguerite Holloway: How has the river changed since you've been out there since you were 9, that's a long time.

Thomas Galbraith: Okay, how has it changed?

Marguerite Holloway: Yeah.

Thomas Galbraith: Well, I would say that of course there's a myth that always goes about look at the Hudson River, it's so dirty. You know, my friends come over and say, I can't believe you want to go out here. Look at that water it's so green. Well, that's one of the biggest mistakes people make. I say that's green because that's healthy. That's how the whole ecosystem starts is with this green soup. You don't understand, this is the flow of life right here. This is where it's at. This is not dirty, this is nature. If you

were here 500 years before Columbus it would have looked like this if we were lucky. That's exactly the way it is. As far as perceptively cleaner? No, because what we do have now is chemicals of course. You can't see them or realize they're there unless you test for them. So it's hard for me to perceive the water becoming cleaning, or cleaning up but like I said, what we're dealing with now is chemicals that we can't see or actually realize they're there until it's tested for them.

Marguerite Holloway: What's your feeling about PCBs? Do you think they're a health hazard or do you think that the ban should be lifted?

Thomas Galbraith: I really don't know. I'm sure they're not good for you. I'm sure that given a choice, I would stay away from them or anything that's associated with them. But whether they're as dangerous as we've been led to believe, I'm not sure. Whether they were used as a political ploy to stop the fishing for bass. I have a strong feeling they were. Because any time the fish would come to the point where they would meet the requirements, then all of a sudden the requirements go lower. So I don't know, it's hard to say. But definitely that shouldn't be there.

Marguerite Holloway: Did you ever fish for bass? Or did you come into it after the ban?

[TIME STAMP 20:00]

Thomas Galbraith: I came into it after the bass. But of course all my associates they had fished for them prior to it. And when you're shad fishing, you can't help but catch bass, especially, well, we were in deep water, but if we had a windy day the day before, it would rile the shore lines and we would be picking bass out the next day. Invariably, every time the wind blew we had a heavy load of bass out there.

Marguerite Holloway: Did you know anyone who was doing black marketing in bass?

Thomas Galbraith: I know of some individuals that were involved in that, yes.

Marguerite Holloway: How did it work? You don't have to mention their names.

Thomas Galbraith: How did it work?

Marguerite Holloway: How did it work, yeah, did they sell it to Fulton or was it a small scale operation just locally?

Thomas Galbraith: I'm sure they were shipped. I'm sure it was shipped. Because at the time there were other states that were, where it was legal to deal with bass.

Marguerite Holloway: So you could send it from New York to somewhere else?

Thomas Galbraith: Or you could say it was from the Sound. Only the Hudson River was closed.

Marguerite Holloway: Was it a majority of fishermen or was it a minority?

Thomas Galbraith: I'm not sure how wide spread it was. Let's say it was very tempting when you had a dead fish in your hand that you knew somebody would pay you \$2.50 or \$3.00 a pound for. As opposed to throwing it over to wash up on the beach and have to live with the smell, as opposed to put it in a box with some ice on it. It became a very tempting situation. And I don't think anybody would feel at that point in time, it became very difficult to throw that fish overboard.

Marguerite Holloway: Did you ever had any encounters with the DEC or?

Thomas Galbraith: Yeah, we've been checked out on several occasions. Usually once a year they would come over to us. We also, we didn't talk about this, I used to, after shad season, we fished sturgeon.

Marguerite Holloway: Oh, okay.

Thomas Galbraith: We fished the same line, of course with different net. Much heavier net. And we fished for sturgeon. Well one time, I was in Chicago on a business trip and my partner and we were fishing sturgeon and my partner Cal got sick. And there was a lift period still in effect. And so he didn't get out to get the net off on a Friday. [Discussion of household cats.] We were talking about the DEC and any encounters. I was in Chicago on a business trip and my partner was sick, had the flu. He couldn't get out to get the net off for the lift period. So Saturday was a nice day and of course, I guess the DEC decided to go out for the ride. Saw our net on during the lift period. Took the net, confiscated it and it happened to have two fish in it then also. They confiscated the fish too.

Marguerite Holloway: Two fish.

Thomas Galbraith: Yeah, two sturgeon. So that was one of the run ins we had with our DEC officials.

Marguerite Holloway: Did you get the net back?

Thomas Galbraith: No, never.

Marguerite Holloway: Really?

Thomas Galbraith: I called them later on. I explained the situation. My friend had made a call to the local Game Warden's house and left a message that he couldn't get the net off because. I'm not sure if he ever got a hold of him or not. But he made an attempt to let him know that he was sick and he couldn't get the net off. Now I can't recall whether he got a hold of him or left a message or he wasn't home.

[TIME STAMP 25:00]

Thomas Galbraith: But he made an attempt, I know that. So anyway. At the time the net was up in New Paltz, so I called New Paltz after I got back. I explained the situation and I understand that you might have our net. And they said, well, we do have a net up here. I said, well, if we would be willing to pay a fine if that's what's required. Because the situation was beyond our control. But if it requires paying a fine well then, so be it. So I had talked to I can't remember the name at the time. I think it was Lieutenant Maybe a Washburn, I'm not sure if it was or not. They came back and told me, if we want our net, the fine would have been astronomical, somewhere about \$1000. At that point in time I said, well, I guess you guys just own a, you've got yourselves a net then. Well we know who you are. Hold on, I didn't say that was mine. I said we lost one. You might have it and you might not. I'd have to identify it. [laughter] Believe me I never went near the place to identify it.

Marguerite Holloway: How much would a net like that cost you?

Thomas Galbraith: It would cost us probably \$100 maybe \$150 for equipment. But then it takes a considerable amount of time to put it together. We'd have to sim it in bottom and top and get it ready, rig it out. Timewise it would take us a little bit of time.

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Marguerite Holloway: But not \$1000.

Thomas Galbraith: Not \$1000. I can't remember at the time the fine was astronomical as opposed to what I thought the value of the net was. So if you tell me I've got a \$25, \$50 fine I'd say okay, I'll be up to pay the fine.

Marguerite Holloway: So do fishermen often make an effort, if they can't get out there and lift it, get the net out during lift period. Do they often make the effort like Cal did to try to get in touch with the wardens?

Thomas Galbraith: Yes, if for some reason, you can't get out well then. There's only two reasons that I can see. One would be if you have weather wise. There are some days we can't get out there no matter what. I mean the waves are so large that it's not safe to make an attempt and that happens sometimes, we can't get the net off on a Friday. We have to wait until it calms down that next morning, Saturday morning or whatever and get out. And I said, my friend, he was ill that time. But that's the only two times that I can think of that we've ever had a problem that we couldn't get the net off during the lift period.

Marguerite Holloway: Right. Who taught you how to sturgeon fish?

Thomas Galbraith: Again that was a trial, a hit and miss trial period for us. We experimented and Charlie White basically was our mentor in that business.

Marguerite Holloway: Tell me what he's like, he was like.

Thomas Galbraith: Charlie was a real knowledgeable guy. He was quiet. And sort of withdrawn. But once he got to know you he couldn't do enough for you. You know, he was a real good natured fellow. He became a good friend. He gave us all the background and knowledge that he could on how to sturgeon fish. He'd been at it for a while. He helped us. As a matter of fact, I think he and Jimmy Blakely(sp?) even loaned us our first net. So we could get into it and try it. Because they had extra net at the time.

Marguerite Holloway: What kind of net did you use?

Thomas Galbraith: At that time we were using 14 inch, heavy nylon net. I can't remember the break test on it was probably about maybe 100 pounds. 90 to 100 pounds. And I don't recall the twine size exactly. But we had pretty good success with it, but we were losing some fish because they were busting through it. Big enough, strong enough that they were busting holes in it so that we have gotten the following year a heavier net and a little bigger mesh. We went to 16 inch and we got it up to around 150, 160 pound test line. So we used that.

Marguerite Holloway: Were you going after both the roes and the, I mean both the cows and the males?

Thomas Galbraith: We took both. Specifically we looked for the roe. And we released some males and we sold a few of them also. But basically we were looking for the roe fish.

Marguerite Holloway: And you processed the roe?

Thomas Galbraith: Yes, we did our own processing.

Marguerite Holloway: How do you do that? And how did you learn how to do that?

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Thomas Galbraith: Through Charlie again. And with his help. The first time, I remember the first time we put a net on for sturgeon, we put it on. I think it was a Sunday morning. Excuse me, it was Saturday night, Saturday evening. And we hauled it Sunday afternoon in slack water.

[TIME STAMP 30:00]

Thomas Galbraith: And we had two fish. At some point, this is great, this is easy. Hi, here we are, put the net in, two big sturgeon, 150 to 200 pound sturgeon. So that's great. Well, we found out they don't come up that easy, that quickly. But the two fish we got, we went up to see Charlie with them. Charlie was in a bar in Verplanck in fine shape. But he came out and gave us a hand with them anyway (laughter). He decided to come over and give us a hand and show us how to process it and the procedure to use. Then we went out and purchased the equipment which is some screens and then we had our own equipment.

Marguerite Holloway: And who did you see it to?

Thomas Galbraith: We dealt with Hanson Caviar, or hold on, was it Romanoff the first years or Hanson. I'm not sure. I think it was Romanoff the first year or so. Then Hanson bought out Romanoff or whatever. Since then we've been dealing with the guy from Hanson Caviar in New Jersey.

Marguerite Holloway: What year was this that you started?

Thomas Galbraith: 1978, 1977 somewhere around there.

Marguerite Holloway: Were there lots of other people, Charlie and who else were fishing for sturgeon?

Thomas Galbraith: At that time, Pop DeGroat fished, the boys didn't fish for sturgeon I believe. Pop DeGroat fished for sturgeon. Henry didn't fish for sturgeon at that point. A couple of years later he and Tucker got involved in a sturgeon enterprise for a couple of years.

Marguerite Holloway: How did that go?

Thomas Galbraith: Well, they caught a few fish but they had a little trouble processing the eggs I guess.

Marguerite Holloway: In what way?

Thomas Galbraith: Somehow they got sand mixed in with them one time, I wasn't around, I just hear through the grapevine that they didn't have a good experience. (laughter)

Marguerite Holloway: So there weren't that many?

Thomas Galbraith: And Charlie of course, and I think Jimmy Blakeley fished for them for a little bit. But there wasn't a lot of people that fished for them. Sturgeon fishing it's a lot of times coming up with an empty net for us. We had years, our best year we caught 16. That was one of the first years.

Marguerite Holloway: And how many months did you fish?

Thomas Galbraith: We fished from the end of shad season usually until we got the first hole in the shad net, then it was time to switch over. Usually that would be somewhere around May 15 or so we'd put the sturgeon net on. And we would fish right up until about July 4, right about the first week of July. We

could tell, when the net started growing green, it was time to come off. When it came up starting to look like it was growing algae it was time.

Marguerite Holloway: What was the size of it?

Thomas Galbraith; You mean the minimum size?

Marguerite Holloway: Yeah.

Thomas Galbraith: Four foot. But we used a big mesh, so we never had a problem with that. We never had a problem, we couldn't catch a small fish. Our fish had to be probably six and a half to seven foot before could catch them. Anything smaller than that got through the net.

Marguerite Holloway: How did you know where to set your nets for the sturgeon?

Thomas Galbraith: Well we used our same bottom line as shad. We had deep water. We had 45 foot on our outside anchor. And we used the same line. And we had up to about 30 foot on the inside. So we had plenty of water. We weren't that far off the channel. So we thought it might be a good spot. And it turned out that it was a good spot. I remember the one year. The one year that we got the 16. Charlie I think got skunked or maybe got one up in Verplanck. And in other years they did better in Verplanck than we did in Croton. But I guess it depends on the salt line possibly. You know, where the salt line in the river is. And I'm not sure if these fish have a homing device they come back to the same spot every year. I know after we caught the 16 we had a decline in numbers after that. We had years where we'd catch 6 or 7 and 4, If I remember. I remember one year we got nothing. Maybe about 5 or 6 years ago we fished the whole season and we didn't get a fish.

Marguerite Holloway: Was the weather different that year? Was there anything noticeable?

Thomas Galbraith: I couldn't perceive anything different in the weather, just our luck I guess that year. Or the salt line was way up the river or whatever and they ran the channel and they didn't come out. We were just off the channel and we didn't have the luck to find them. But we had some success in sturgeon fishing. And we also caught a couple of big ones. We had at least three fish that I can recall over 300 pounds.

Marguerite Holloway: Oh my gosh.

Thomas Galbraith: That's what I'm trying to find, picture of those. I think they're loose somewhere. But to the best of my knowledge and recollection. I know Charlie had never caught a fish over 300 pounds.

[TIME STAMP 35:00]

Marguerite Holloway: How'd you get it in?

Thomas Galbraith: You tie it to the side of the boat. And you tie it across the wooden boat. You don't tie it to one side, just on the because they're thrash and they might even pull part of your boat off. We tied them across the gunnels so in case they pulled they had to pull the whole boat. And then we would bring them up to our dock and beach the boat. We'd get a couple of ropes on them. Whoever was around for hands up on the dock we'd go with it. I'll explain the procedure if you want.

Marguerite Holloway: Yeah, I would love to hear.

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Thomas Galbraith: Sure. Once we got the fish up on the dock we would like to get it there as soon as we can because the caviar, the livelier the fish is, for some reason it seems to be the easier the caviar comes out, the better the quality. A dead fish sometimes the caviar is worthless. So preferably we get the fish to the dock and it's still alive and ready to go. Our first procedure would be take the hack saw and we would cut off the tail, just at the joint. And we'd let it pump the blood out all the blood out of the fish. We let it go for about 10 minutes.

Marguerite Holloway: Why?

Thomas Galbraith: Well, that would make the meat more palatable for whatever reason, less blood in it and plus we found it was easier for us to process the caviar that way. Then, after that we would take the fish, turn it over on the belly, slit the belly open and take the eggs out. Eggs into the pail, which we would start working on right away. Our procedure was, we would roll the eggs over a screen, which was large enough for the eggs to drop through and membrane stay up on top of the screen. So you would just get pure eggs dropping down into pail. And we'd discard what's left over on top. This takes a while. You've got to roll your eggs until they drop down through. And sometimes you can get as much. Well heck, we had some fish that had 40 pounds of caviar in it. At that point.

Marguerite Holloway: What was the price range you'd get per pound?

Thomas Galbraith: Well, we're not finished, the product's not finished at this point. After we drop it into the pail we've got to mix it with some salt. That depends how much the weight of the caviar is at that point is, how much salt we put in. The formulas varied a little bit, depending on who we were dealing with. And after we mixed the proper amount of salt on top of the eggs, we'd mix them by hand. And then it would go back over a smaller screen. Which would allow the moisture to drip off the salt brought the moisture out. The eggs would stay on top. Then after they'd drain then they would be in a plastic bag, back in the pail and that's the final product for us. And our prices varied from the high of \$50 a pound for top quality and grade. To a low of probably about \$25 or so.

Marguerite Holloway: Did you usually have high grade or low grade or well mixed?

Thomas Galbraith: Depended on who we were dealing with. Basically, I would say most of the time we were getting pretty mostly top dollar. And occasionally I would look at the egg and say this is great, this one is great too and all of a sudden one would be judged quality second grade and we'd get \$40 for that as opposed to \$50. I can't tell, can't perceive the difference.

Marguerite Holloway: Do you like the taste of the caviar?

Thomas Galbraith: Yes, let's put it this way, I enjoy it. Yeah, I enjoy it. Would I pay \$50 a pound for it? No, I wouldn't. I mean, that's wholesale for us. Can you imagine what they're getting for it. So I'm just saying at that point. But it was always nice during the season if you were going to a party or a house party or whatever, I would bring a bowl of caviar. And people would be impressed, until they found out I caught it in the river. They'd still enjoy it, it was great, it was always good for the highlight of a party.

Marguerite Holloway: Why do people have so much trouble accepting that the Hudson River has fish

Thomas Galbraith: There's a notion and a perception that anything out of the river is tainted and it's foul and the river is dead. You know, it's a cesspool. It's just been that way for years, they've always thought

that. But I used to store the caviar in the downstairs refrigerator here. At one point we were having a good year. Maybe had 5 or 6 fish, I had 150 – 200 pounds of caviar stacked.

Marguerite Holloway: So that was a good year?

Thomas Galbraith: Adequate year. We didn't keep it, we kept it for a week or so and then the caviar guy would come up and pick it up from us. Usually at Charlie's, always at Charlie's house, we'd go down and he would make an arrangement for a Sunday and come up and pick up everything. If we had a good week or week and a half.

[TIME STAMP 40:00]

Thomas Galbraith: It would pile up a little bit.

Marguerite Holloway: He never took the meat?

Thomas Galbraith: Yes, he did. He arranged for us to have – we would freeze the carcass. After the processing of the caviar, then we would take the head off the sturgeon and clean out the carcass a little bit, wash it all out. Then we would take that up and put it in Charlie's big walk in freezer. A big freezer box. Then they would come up and pick that up. A separate guy would come get that but it was arranged through Hanson sometimes or Charlie had some guy in the Market come up and get them. And we would get a low over the years of maybe 75 cents a pound, a high of maybe a buck and a quarter a buck fifty for the fish. At that point the fish would weigh anywhere from a small one of 70 or 80 pounds to a large one of 180 or 175 pounds or whatever it is.

Marguerite Holloway: Would you get a different price for whether it was cow meat or male meat?

Thomas Galbraith: No, no.

Marguerite Holloway: No, it was the same.

Thomas Galbraith: Same price.

Marguerite Holloway: Is there any difference in the

Thomas Galbraith: quality of the meat? No. To the best of my knowledge it's the same. It would be the same.

Marguerite Holloway: So If you got males you would sell them too for the steaks?

Thomas Galbraith: Yes. It really depends. We let them go on occasion. But there are times when we have sold them, the males.

Marguerite Holloway: Did you see a lot of short-nose in your nets?

Thomas Galbraith: No, we couldn't, again a short-nose are basically a much smaller fish. And if you have 16 inch mesh there's no way you could catch a short-nose in a 16 inch mesh net. But as far as short-nose I've seen them jumping at Croton Point. From the outside of where our nets are. And also in closer to shore at the change of the tide. There's quite an abundance of them down there. The only thing we ever caught in our sturgeon nets was sturgeon, of course, crabs occasionally would get tangled in there and bunkers. Bunkers would swim with their mouth open, they would get caught on the line, lip shot

around the line, some people would come up with bunkers. Not a lot, a lot of bunkers but you know, occasional bunkers here and there.

Marguerite Holloway: How many feet of net did you fish with the sturgeon?

Thomas Galbraith: We fished probably, let's see, over the years we started out small. We started out maybe 250 foot or so. Then expanded up to the point, we probably fished 600, about 600 foot of sturgeon net. We were having some difficulty, Charlie was still alive, it must have been maybe about 8 years ago or so. We were running low on net and we had to get some more net. We had a heck of a time finding net. Some company produced what we were looking for. It's fairly heavy duty and it's not a common item. So we used to deal through Nylon Net in Tennessee and I couldn't get anything from them. So I went out to somewhere in Michigan I believe and they had a special order for us. But the only thing is we had to buy I think 2 bales, a bale is 500 pounds each. So Charlie and myself and my partner and we kicked in for it and we bought the two bales. So we've got enough sturgeon net now to last us until the 21st century. But that's the only way we could get it.

Marguerite Holloway: Do you see more fishermen going into sturgeon fishing.

Thomas Galbraith: Yes, at the present time I think that the price of caviar is consistently high now. I mean at one time they would give you \$50 once or twice a year. The rest of the time they'd try to tell you were down to grade B or whatever it is. But now they're paying consistently high. And I think that's for a couple of reasons. I think there are less Atlantic Sturgeon, they're being over fished in some of the waters down south. And I guess the caviar market is a supply and demand and they're looking for it now. And they're paying a good price. Again I don't know, I've heard about them, they're fishing upstate, they drift netting but they're using fish finders and they're doing a job on them I understand, maybe 50 or 60 fish a season they might be catching.

Marguerite Holloway: Who, you know any

Thomas Galbraith: I don't know names, no. I had heard it at one of our Association meetings. That there was some outfit, or a bunch of guys upstate that were drift netting really intensively and using some electronics to locate the fish and then drop the net above them and really cleaning up. And so I guess, now you know that there are some regulations as far as tags.

Marguerite Holloway: Yeah, what do you think of the regulation changes? What are they?

[TIME STAMP 45:00]

Thomas Galbraith: The best of my knowledge is you're supplied tags, a limited number of tags. And there's a season that runs from May to June 15th I believe it is. I think the season is a little short. If what they're trying to accomplish is to preserve the species and cut down, I guess the wholesale taking of them by some individuals. If you're using electronics and so forth. I don't know. I guess that takes it out of the traditional fisheries, now you're into high tech. And I guess sure, if you came up here with a dragger and high tech electronics you could clean the place out, too. But if you did it like it's been done, in the manner it's been done for hundreds of years, well then I don't think you're going to have a problem of ever depleting the species. They were doing it before, traditional is just the way I think it should be done.

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Marguerite Holloway: So everyone down here has done it traditionally?

Thomas Galbraith: Yes.

Marguerite Holloway: And the most anyone down here has caught in a season?

Thomas Galbraith: The time we got 16. Now I don't know, like I said, Charlie's probably better at that or equaled that. But that was the best (blank space on tape for several seconds)

Marguerite Holloway: He fished with Jim McCarey this year?

Thomas Galbraith: Yes he did, the last couple of years he's fished with Jimmy. We've known Jimmy, as a matter of fact we sold Jimmy a boat and a motor. He was in need of a boat and a motor a couple of years ago. We had an aluminum boat, 16 foot I think Aeuronatic, then we sold him a Burke that we weren't using.

Marguerite Holloway: Is there a sense of resentment from the fishermen down around Haverstraw towards the guys up north who are, you know, really going after it whole hog?

Thomas Galbraith: Well, I wouldn't say a sense of resentment. I guess you could say that there's probably a sense of frustration of knowing that there's always so many fish to go around and if they do something blatantly like really deplete the stock then the State's going to react. And the only way it can react is by limiting the catch, or limiting a season. Maybe they brought upon us something we weren't really looking for.

Marguerite Holloway: Have you seen changes in the population of sturgeon since you were doing it?

Thomas Galbraith: It's hard to say. It's a seasonal thing. And we've had up years and down years but I can't really say that I perceive a big difference in the number of sturgeon that we've come up with.

Marguerite Holloway: Is there any river wisdom about when you catch them and when you don't in terms of what you were saying about the salt front, or about temperature. Is there anything, I mean I know that you can tell that shad are coming because of the forsythia.

Thomas Galbraith: And they're over when the lilacs bloom?

Marguerite Holloway: Right. Is there anything like that for the sturgeon?

Thomas Galbraith: As far as, no, I never heard of when the deer flies fly or something like that. Traditionally always at the end of the shad season for us, which is beginning of May and first week of May or so. Just after that, it's just about the time we start seeing the sturgeon. And we always quit right about the first of July. We quit at that time also for a second reason. Which is usually at that time we'd catch our first spawned out sturgeon. At that time we realized the run's over and we're just going to be going negatively now, because we're depleting the fish that are going to be coming back next year. So we pull off at that point.

Marguerite Holloway: Have you tasted sturgeon?

Thomas Galbraith: Sure.

Marguerite Holloway: Do you like it?

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Thomas Galbraith: Yeah, I like the sturgeon. Of course, the only way I've had it several ways. I've had it cut in chunks and rolled in breadcrumbs and deep fried. It comes out very nice that way. Of course, smoked is probably the best way. Cut it thin and you can have it that way. It's rich. You wouldn't want to eat a real lot of it. It's heavy, it's rich, but it's good.

Marguerite Holloway: Did you ever smoke it?

Thomas Galbraith: No, I never got involved in smoking. I never did, but I have friends of course that do it and I've supplied them with fish, a small male and they're reward me with part of the efforts.

Marguerite Holloway: They're such incredible looking fish. Did you ever see an Atlantic jump out? Or just the short-nose?

Thomas Galbraith: I've seen Atlantic go up in the air too. I've never seen an 8 footer go up in the air. I've seen probably 4 footers in the air. I have a picture of a sturgeon if you want to look at one. Of course, you've seen them many times before.

[TIME STAMP 50:00]

Thomas Galbraith: I've got a picture of sturgeon here if you want to look at one. Of course you've seen them many times before. I've got a small one in here somewhere I think, come out of the net, I thought I did, these are in great order.

Marguerite Holloway: When you said there was an association meeting you mean the Commercial Fishermen's Association.

Thomas Galbraith: Yes, the New York State Commercial Fishermen's Association.

Marguerite Holloway: So did you go to those meetings regularly?

Thomas Galbraith: I've gone to the ones recently, yes. I used to go to them regularly, yeah, pretty regularly. They were in Rockland County and we got across every time we could.

Marguerite Holloway: Do you think the Association has been effective?

Thomas Galbraith: Well, I think it's helped get our point across. And it's given us a voice for some of our grievances, whether they listen or not, that's different. (laughter) But, plus it's an opportunity for us to meet our fellow fishermen in the river and we form a camaraderie and a friendship that way too.

Marguerite Holloway: Is it mostly people from this area?

Thomas Galbraith: There's people from this area, people from across the river and I guess from Ossining, Verplanck and pretty heavy across the river. Nyack and Haverstraw, in that area.

Marguerite Holloway: How many people usually show up for the meetings?

Thomas Galbraith: I would say 25 people on any given night. Depends on the issue, you know. If it's a hot issue then you'd get a few more people show up. But we used to have an annual clam bake and a get together. But like I said the bulk of the organization is on the Rockland side. Now we were members but the organization was probably largely funded by that side of the river.

Marguerite Holloway: What would some of the hot issues be?

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Thomas Galbraith: Of course the possibility or the efforts on our part to try to be able to catch striped bass again. You know, any time it looked like we might be able to reach the requirements PCB-wise, you know, this might be the year that we drop below the 5 parts per million or whatever they're looking for. And the opportunity might be there for us to be able to fish them next year. But when we hit 5, they drop it to 3, so.

Marguerite Holloway: Have you seen the attitudes of fishermen changing over the years as the limits are dropped and as the ban goes on?

Thomas Galbraith: There's a lot of frustration and there's a lot of anger with the State. There's very few people getting into it. I mean, I don't know any young kids getting into it at all. One time, I would say this is probably the only time in the history of the river that there's nobody interested in going into commercial fishing. Because there's nothing to be made there. I mean, you know, you want an experience you can have an experience but if you want a dollar, you're wasting your time. But I don't know of any kids that are coming in. And I really think that in the very near future there's not going to be anybody left. Because, let's face it, you know, there's a lot of people getting up in their Golden Years, that started us off.

Marguerite Holloway: What do you think it means when a river loses its fishermen?

Thomas Galbraith: Well, I think it loses a sense of history and I wouldn't like to see it happen. I mean, I think there's a real valuable product out there that could be delivered and people could both enjoy commercial success and the use of a good product. But certainly doesn't look like that's going to happen.

Marguerite Holloway: Do fishermen have good relationships with the environmental organizations?

Thomas Galbraith: I think, to the best of my recollection we've never had a problem with them. They've supported us somewhat in our plight. And I can't say that we've ever had any trouble, to the best of my recollection with any of the environmental organizations that are on the river. A matter of fact, they probably look upon us in favor, saying that you know, this is something that they want to help preserve also. But like I said, it's just becoming a concern that's not viable anymore.

[TIME STAMP 55:00]

Thomas Galbraith: And it's a shame, it's a real shame.

Marguerite Holloway: Tell me about Jimmy Carey.

Thomas Galbraith: Jimmy Carey. Jimmy and my father worked together on the railroad. So my father knew Jimmy. And I knew Jimmy through Charlie White and Jimmy's a character. Loves the river and loves to get out fishing. Jimmy's not a kid, I'm not sure of his age, but I've gotta say he's late 70s probably. And you know, he's amazing, he keeps going. I remember it was a couple of years ago we were hauling out, I can't remember, it was 100 pound boxes of fish, yeah, 100 pound boxes of fish out of a truck, Jimmy grabbed one picked it up and moved it around, still pretty good. Doing pretty good. He really likes to get out there and fish. Like I said, Jimmy's not there looking to make a killing. He'd do it for, you know, just for the experience. He really just likes being out there. It's good that he's with Cal right now, because, it's a lot easier with two guys. Especially with Cal being able to pull the line a little

heavier if it's got to be pulled. So it gives Jimmy an opportunity to continue doing what he likes to do. So it's really good, the two of them together.

Marguerite Holloway: Have you ever been in a situation where it was unsafe out there? Pulling something you couldn't pull or weather?

Thomas Galbraith: I've been out there in waves. When we were on the south side of Croton Point we had a good opportunity for a blow and when the wind is out of the northwest. I can't remember, we were in a 14 foot aluminum one year and we were filling up pretty well with fish. I looked at a wave rolling down on us. I went, Cal, I think it's time we went in. Let's just slip back in. Never to the point where we were real nervous but concerned. I think it's enough for today. We'll get the other side of that tomorrow.

Marguerite Holloway: You both were in agreement?

Thomas Galbraith: Yeah. But then like I said, that was with the aluminum boat. Then we got the 20 foot wooden boat and that could handle just about anything the river could offer us. We built it really high in the bow and pretty wide too. So we felt a lot safer in that when the wind blew pretty hard. Putting the anchors out. That's always a trip too, because we've done it several ways. We've hung them off the bow of the boat with ropes and we'd cut the rope and they'd drop on either side. Or we brought them out with floats, on a float and we'd kick them off by rocking the float and they'd tumble over. Never felt unsafe, but the consequences were there if you had the wrong rope and tangled, then you might have a problem.

Marguerite Holloway: Right.

Thomas Galbraith: Well anyway, here unsafe. Skinning sturgeon one time, Cal was working the belly up and I was holding the fish open. Had a filleting knife and it slipped through and it stuck me, One of those sharp pointed filleting knives and stuck it right into there. That was 10 years ago.

Marguerite Holloway: Wow. Eek.

Thomas Galbraith: That was the only thing.

Marguerite Holloway: That wasn't a dumb thing.

Thomas Galbraith: I think of all the years the only thing that ever happened that I can say that was an injury. Other than of course, the usual hands all chewed up from fishing spines and stripers being stuck all over you when you try to pull them out of the net. But that's the only thing I can remember that ever had an injury.

Marguerite Holloway: Did your family ever go with you? Did anyone else fish in your family?

Thomas Galbraith: No, no one else has ever fished in my family. I've had my girlfriend out. She usually picks a nice sunny day in shad season. She'd always go out and it was traditionally, she was lucky because the day she picked to go out would be a day like this, but it would be the beginning of May or whatever and it usually turned out to be our best catch. It was always a joke.

Marguerite Holloway: She must have been pleased.

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Thomas Galbraith: It was always a joke. I've had my daughter out there, one of my daughters, had her pick a fish. She got into it a little bit but that's it as far as family out there. I take it back, I had my nephew out once too. We used to call Fridays, every Friday Cal would have to take his mother shopping, I guess it was just set traditionally. So Friday, we used to have a guy that used to work for us.

[TIME STAMP1:00:00]

Thomas Galbraith: (name unclear) helped us out. He worked for us for a couple of years. And every Friday we'd call it kids day. We'd take a kid out with us, or I would take a nephew or anybody else who wanted to go out. Friday was kiddies day out.

Marguerite Holloway: That's great.

Thomas Galbraith: Have them come out and show them what the sturgeon line was like and what we went through and it was a visitor's day.

Marguerite Holloway: That's great. When was the last time you saw Henry?

Thomas Galbraith: Probably a couple, no, I take it back, this spring, I'm pretty sure I saw him this spring across the river. At an Association meeting. But I haven't been spending a lot of time down at Croton Point like I usually do. I used to take my large boat down there and spend a weekend or so. And I'll look around and see if Henry's doing anything down on his dock down toward Ossining. But I haven't been down there that way this year.

Marguerite Holloway: Did a lot of people show up for the meeting this spring?

Thomas Galbraith: Yes, it was well attended.

Marguerite Holloway: That's great. Were they discussing sturgeon?

Thomas Galbraith: Sturgeon regulations.

Marguerite Holloway: Did any of the guys from up north come?

Thomas Galbraith: There were two meetings and there was one held up north and one held down here for us. So basically the people in this area went to the one that was down here. I believe there was one up, I can't remember if it was around Hudson or somewhere else that had a meeting.

Marguerite Holloway: There's one other question I forgot to ask you when I was asking about the populations of sturgeon and shad. Have you noticed any changes in other species of fish, either increasing or decreasing?

Thomas Galbraith: Yes, that's one thing about the river, it always amazes you because you never know what's going to change in the way of fish or population of fish or species. It always surprises you. Just when you think you've got things figured out, things will change completely.

Marguerite Holloway: But specifically?

Thomas Galbraith: For instance, I can remember fishing as a kid for Snapper Bluefish and we used to fish quite a few spots for them. And they were pretty prevalent in the late summer. Never would ever think of getting a blue fish, a full size blue fish. Well, now, I haven't been able to find the snappers for the last

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couple of years, you know, tried to fish for them. But we're getting full size I'm talking 10 – 15 pound bluefish on a regular basis, off Croton Point.

Marguerite Holloway: Wow.

Thomas Galbraith: If somebody told me, 15 – 20 years ago that they caught a bluefish at Croton Point, I'd say, yeah, you sure it didn't have stripes on the side of it? But no, there are bluefish at Croton Point.

Marguerite Holloway: Wow. And those you can just catch, there's no limit?

Thomas Galbraith: No limit. We even fished for them, a little bit one year. Probably about 10 years ago or so, 8 or 10 years ago, we started realizing there were quite a few bluefish. And in the summertime we put a small net, down off Croton, a 300 foot shot, and we've caught maybe 100 pounds a night or so. And 80 pounds another night. The price of bluefish was not overwhelming because I guess they're pretty easy to catch at that time of the year.

Marguerite Holloway: What was it?

Thomas Galbraith: Somewhere about 40 cents a pound I think we were getting. 40 cents I believe comes to mind. So we did it for a couple of days. We decided that was enough but we did fish commercially for bluefish for a little bit. As far as bass goes. I think that the population of striped bass is on a tremendous increase, tremendous increase. I said the last couple of years I did shad fish, it just got so frustrating that to get 100 pounds of shad we had to throw away 400 or 500 pounds of bass every day. At one time we didn't have a problem until the wind blew. When the wind blew and riles the shores up we'd get the bass out in deep water and we've have a lot of bass out there the next day. But it got to the point where everyday was a lot of bass.

Marguerite Holloway: And they were running in places where they hadn't before?

Thomas Galbraith: Yeah, they seemed to be consistently out in deep water. And of course we were using 6 inch mesh net trying to catch some roe shad and you know, we can't avoid catching the bass. There's no way you can avoid them. And it got to the point where became such a frustrating factor, throwing so many fish overboard, half of them are dead and you say, this is ludicrous. To go through this.

[TIME STAMP 1:05:00]

Thomas Galbraith: I hate to see this, you know, there's nothing you can do because no matter what you do, you're not going to bring that fish back and what we're doing here is just frustrating and ridiculous. So that's one of the reasons that I really backed off on the shad fishing. I know my partner he's still fishing a little bit for shad, but not a lot. He's basically now trying sturgeon. Because if you've got a good year for sturgeon you'll make a dollar or two if you're lucky.

Marguerite Holloway: Crab fishing? Do you?

Thomas Galbraith: I've helped my friend, I would take the summers off. After cranking up some time usually in March put the bottom lines out and fish right to July, I would say it was time for me to take a summer off. But my partner, he commercially crabs. Like I said, I give him a hand but I said that I was not, the second time I pulled a crab pot out I said I'm going to take the summer off, I'm going out in my big boat and enjoy life for the summer.

Marguerite Holloway: Is crab fishing fun?

Thomas Galbraith: Yeah, I would say it's an experience, it's a lot of work. Again there's only one way to make any money crabbing and that is if you have a good local clientele that will buy from you. If you try to go commercially I guess the price per bushel is so low that you're not going to make anything out of it. I mean, you'll make a few bucks, but it's not viably economically feasible way to go. I guess if you could get somebody that's interested in buying a dozen here at \$6 or (unclear) then you'd have a good supply and a good local clientele then it would be worthwhile, Plus if you had the time to be able to be on the water and nothing else to have to do. My friend still runs a couple of crab lines. What he always used, what I give him a hand with was on the South Side, no, excuse me, it was about the middle of Croton Point on the river side of Croton Point. He'd run anywhere from 16 to 24 or so overnights out there. It would depend on how they were running. He'd do very well. But I never really got involved on a full time basis with crabbing, other than give him a hand with it occasionally and of course, at least once a year we'd have a party at Croton Point, a crab roast where we would take a day and invite some friends down and I would take my large boat down there and Cal would come down, would have the 20 footer there and we'd haul the nets and we'd roast them on the beach, get a big pot, picnic tables and we'd all hang out and cook about 80 crabs or whatever it is, depending on how many people we had and everybody would have a crab roast. We always did that, once or twice a year we'd have that. Now that I think about it it's about time to start planning this years. Crabs are running pretty well I understand. Cal, I talked to him yesterday, he said that they're doing really well, doing pretty good. Then of course after that season they would start fishing a little bit in the fall for sturgeon again. I got involved a little bit in that, not a lot because at that time 4 foot was the legal size. The big ones were out of the river so you really didn't have the opportunity to catch a lot of fish. You got the juveniles that were just about ready to back out to the ocean for 7 years or so before they come back to spawn.

Marguerite Holloway: So you wouldn't get any roe at that point because they were spawned out.

Thomas Galbraith: No, you wouldn't get roe fish, you would just get, if you're looking for 4 foot size fish and, there wasn't a lot of big fish in the river at that time.

Marguerite Holloway: How long did they fish in the fall?

Thomas Galbraith: They would fish up to December.

Marguerite Holloway: Because there were no, the season had no limits, it was all open at that point, right? It's only this year that there's been some kind of regulation?

Thomas Galbraith: This year there's a regulation that you can fish from May to June 15. Prior to that, I think somehow I'm almost sure that December 1st, there was a season that all nets had to be out of the water, I'm almost sure of that. I know there was some cut off point. Like I said, I didn't really get involved in it because it wasn't a good time for us to really get involved. The market wasn't, there wasn't enough sturgeon of that size that we could catch legally to keep. So it wasn't a viable enterprise for us. But I know my friend got involved, just fooling around a little bit for something to do. I recall it was either December 15th, or December 1st that you had to have your nets out of the water.

[TIME STAMP 1:10:00]

Thomas Galbraith: I can't recall whether it was the 1st or 15th or whatever but there was a point in time where you couldn't fish continually. In the old days, just before I got involved in it when they could fish for bass they used to fish year round for bass and it was allowed. January or whatever, as soon as they could get boats into the water you could fish for them. But that was prior to my entry into the fishing business. Henry even tells stories of how he used to fish through the ice for them.

He would cut a hole and he would take a long bamboo pole to feed the line out to the next hole he'd cut, grab it, then pull the net underneath the ice, secure it on top of the ice, let it hang and he fished through the ice for bass. That was prior to our entry into the business. I guess he tells story about he had caught so many sturgeon, of course the sturgeon at that time weren't worth very much. I guess that he stacked them up for a windbreaker to block the wind. (laughter) Used them for a windbreaker. Now are you compiling this for a history up in, how many people have you interviewed?

Marguerite Holloway: Let's see, I have 36, 40 tapes so far. But I think some people have gone on to two tapes. So let's see, I'd say about 22 something like that at this point. I have a ways to go. (laughter)

Thomas Galbraith: Have you talked to Henry yet? He's a wealth of knowledge.

Marguerite Holloway: Yes, I've interviewed him many, I think I have the most tapes of him. And everytime I go through Ossining I stop by. I've interviewed Tucker and Jimmy Carey and Cal together. And the DeGroats. And yesterday Dennis Hardy. And Johanenson at Viking Boat Yard to get what he had to say. And then upriver Everett Nack, Parslow, Bleakeley, Patsman, I can't remember everybody now, Gussie Zahn.

Thomas Galbraith: Quite a few.

Marguerite Holloway: In Poughkeepsie.

Thomas Galbraith: Good, quite a few. Thinking back and talking about family. Cal's father was a fisherman.

Marguerite Holloway: But no one in your family?

Thomas Galbraith: No, no one in my family.

Marguerite Holloway: So you learned this all.

Thomas Galbraith: I learned this all basically through I would say Charlie White and of course Henry for shad, Charlie for shad and a little bit and sturgeon, and trial and error the rest. But we had a real good background of being on the river. I mean we were on the river continually. We didn't commercially fish but we were in boats, building duck blinds, pole fishing and we had a lot of experience being on the water and being in the river. So it was coming down green, saying I want to become a fisherman today It was a transition from something we'd thought about and say watching Henry go out in the duck boat and shooting ducks. We'd see him go out every morning. We said, you know, we out to try that some day. I guess maybe next year we'll get involved. Then, okay, are we still thinking about doing it, yeah, why don't we. So it took us quite a few years before we ever got involved.

Marguerite Holloway: Did you ever encounter big problems and you'd have to go to Henry for advice or was it small sort of things along the way? Nothing that really held you up.

Thomas Galbraith: He gave us a real good run down on what to expect and basically gave us a good hands on as far as putting things together. And after that I don't think that we really had a catastrophe that we couldn't solve. Of course we had the usual problem of the, we had some anchors dragging for us the bottom line. And they dragged together on us a tremendous amount of pressure. If you have a net full of fish and you have a down tide or an up tide or whatever, the pressure gets that is tremendous. And our anchors had dragged together quite a bit and so we couldn't move them. We had a heck of a time moving them. We had 25 horsepower on the back of we were using an aluminum boat at the time or the wood boat. I can't remember which. But we couldn't get them, we got up on top, we tried to drag them apart. And couldn't move them. But one of the DeGroats came down, they had the big white boats with the 50 horse on the back

[TIME STAMP 1:15:00]

Thomas Galbraith: And they dragged them and set them up for us.

Marguerite Holloway: Wow, how much did they weigh?

Thomas Galbraith: Well, they're car engines.

Marguerite Holloway: Oh my god.

Thomas Galbraith: Several car engines. At least three usually.

Marguerite Holloway: On each side.

Thomas Galbraith: Yeah, wow.

Marguerite Holloway: And then you grappled for the lines at the beginning of each season?

Thomas Galbraith: Yeah, what we would do is we would take out, usually one at a time, and have our line tied to it with a jug, drop it, come over with another one, drop it next to it so we could get the lines together. Put the three of them together and form a large loop and put the jug on that one. Then we would run our line across. We were using fishing 2000 foot bottom line. And we'd run it across so we knew how much we had and where would be a good spot. You want loose slack, you don't want a real lot of slack. Drop a marker, go back and bring the other anchors out and we'd put that side down and then we'd put the line together, weight it and set it down. Of course then we would come out, we'd want to put our net on, grapp up the line and work from there. Getting away from the anchors because, well a couple of hundred foot so you'd have some room to play. Because you don't want to get too close to your anchor, you can't lift your bottom line. And put a haul buoy on it there and work away from the haul buoy and then start putting net on. Start putting net. Then by the time we decided we were going to, we would make some mistakes in the beginning of our business. One comes to mind right now that you mention it. Henry had set us up and we were fishing, probably about 12 or 14 foot depth, 25 mesh or so at 5 and a half. And we decided, we're doing pretty good, you know, we're catching a lot of fish. Boy, wouldn't it be great if we went right to the bottom. You know, if we put 40 foot down, we've got 40 foot of water. That would be the answer, we would catch everything. Well needless to say, it became impossible to work because it's so big. The volume of net trying to get it across the boat. Shad only run the first 20 feet or 15 foot already. The only thing we caught was a couple of little sturgeon on the bottom of the net. So that was, we went to mass production, we bought all this net, and we decided

let's put 2000 foot out, we're all set. So we spent a good part of the winter up where Cal lived at Croton Point they had a garage the county, part of the garage was wide open. And we would go up there, almost every night for quite a while and we'd put nets together. And we had probably 12 or 14 of these 100 foot, at least 14 or so 100 foot shots of this real deep mesh net. We used it about three times and said, this is ridiculous. That's one of the blunders we sure made.

Marguerite Holloway: That's great. So what did you do with the net afterwards?

Thomas Galbraith: We wound up cutting it in half. Wound up cutting it in half. That becomes real time consuming and difficult. But that was one of the blunders that we made.

Marguerite Holloway: Did you tell Henry about it?

Thomas Galbraith: No, we wouldn't, at that point our pride got in our way. We kept that under our hat, we never let that one out. We told Charlie, I think that was as far as it went. (laughter) As far as it ever went.

Marguerite Holloway: That's great. Did most people use car engines as anchors?

Thomas Galbraith: There's two procedures. Well, actually, there's three. Some people use rocks, they find real big rocks, they build a sling around the rock. And that they use upper, around Verplanck I know they use that procedure a little bit and drag rocks out. We had access to some old engines and we would use those. We'd take the engines down in a pickup truck down to the water and got them out at low tide and then at high tide we'd get right up on top of them with the big boat and tie down right on top and drag them back out onto the water and rig them up and then kick them off and cut the line where we wanted to drop them. Then Charlie, I believe it was Charlie invented this, we got it from Charlie. I'm pretty sure it was his idea of driving the pipes, which became the real our real method from there on in. It was a procedure where we would build a drive hammer, which was a large pipe. And we'd set up an 8 foot piece of pipe, like off the top of an anchor fence, you know, the round pipe, we'd weld a T on it so we could tie a line to it. Set it up with the drive bar. This drive bar could be, it was about 40 foot high, set it straight up in the river and then pound it down into the mud. Set that down, 8 foot into the mud with the line on it and that was our procedure. We had a little trouble

[TIME STAMP 1:20:00]

Thomas Galbraith: Up to 30 foot of water we had no trouble, over 30 foot we had trouble driving. That's how we drove our inside anchors.

Marguerite Holloway: What was the advantage of doing it that way?

Thomas Galbraith: If you ever had to bring three car engines out into the river you would never have asked that question. (laughter)

Marguerite Holloway: So Charlie came up with that

Thomas Galbraith: Charlie invented, we got it through Charlie

Marguerite Holloway: And other people adopted it as well.

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Thomas Galbraith: I'm sure other people have used it now. As a matter of fact we still have the equipment and everything else. It's just long pipes together set up with a heavy hunk of steel on it, which would drive the other pipe down with a T bar on it.

Marguerite Holloway: And you would just use your hands.

Thomas Galbraith: Straight up and down and you would let it go all the way down. Two guys would pound up and down on it until you drive it down through the. What you would have would be like a layer of like silt and then mud. Once you busted that layer, it would sink right down. Once it got down into that square you're driving it down, until it sets, you can pull it straight up. But once it set you cannot get that out of the water. It's as strong as three car engines.

Marguerite Holloway: And so the rope stays down there.

Thomas Galbraith: Stays down there.

Marguerite Holloway: And you don't have trouble it being covered by silt or trouble grappling for it?

Thomas Galbraith: No because of course we take the, it goes across, the bottom line goes across. We have a line here from the pipe we'd just driven, we'd put a buoy on it. So then we put our line across we'd grab that buoy and tie and across we'd go.

Marguerite Holloway: And so you can leave it there all year round? People don't bother your buoy? What if you lose a buoy?

Thomas Galbraith: No, what we've done, we always did the bottom line underwater across weighted. We don't leave anything after the season. Because you'd never find it.

Marguerite Holloway: And then you'd go back.

Thomas Galbraith: Then go back with the grappling hook, we'd know where we are and grapple for it.

Marguerite Holloway: That's great.

Thomas Galbraith: If the trawlers or draggers haven't ripped it apart and that invariably seems to happen pretty regularly. So then at that time we have to run another bottom line. But there was one time, about 10 years ago that it seemed that they were continually going through there as far as either surveying or they were looking for plankton or whatever. They were dragging a sled, a heavy sled down through there and they were getting our bottom line just about every year.

Marguerite Holloway: DEC? Who was doing it?

Thomas Galbraith: I'm not sure if the DEC sponsored or whether it was, one time it was some guy from Con Edison was doing a survey I believe. They were coming through with a dragger and they were banging out bottom line almost every year.

Marguerite Holloway: And so you had to go out there and do the pipe every

Thomas Galbraith: Bang the pipes in, set it up again.

Marguerite Holloway: Wow.

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Thomas Galbraith: We invented a procedure where we had a buoy, a jug, a Clark's jug on the line that would stay down. It was off the anchors, if the bottom line was broken, it was close enough, it would pop to the top so we could find our anchors. Because at the point we were losing so much, if we had the bottom line weighted it would stay down. It was closed enough to the anchor where it would be underwater, we wouldn't have to worry about a boat hitting it. But if you broke the bottom line it would come up.

Marguerite Holloway: Good system.

Thomas Galbraith: It got to the point we were running out of car engines.

Marguerite Holloway: That's great.

Thomas Galbraith: We were running out of car engines, we lost our supply.

Marguerite Holloway: How much does a car engine weigh?

Thomas Galbraith: I'm guessing 800 or 900 pounds. It depends, we were using truck engines. We were using everything. It really depends a lot how much is left. Some of them with transmissions, some without transmissions, some without exhaust manifold. It all depends how full, what parts were left on it when we got it.

Marguerite Holloway: Your cats never go after the bird?

Thomas Galbraith: No, well we've had to move them.

Marguerite Holloway: You've got a fish tank and a bird cage and four cats it's like you're flirting with disaster.

Thomas Galbraith: We used to have them hide in here but he's gone to the ceiling for protection. (laughter) He's gone to the ceiling for safety. Well this morning they managed to pull the plug. This is the turtle tank here. I came out this morning. Sue called me from work and said you'd better go prime the pump because they managed to pull the plug on the turtle tank. They'll yank the electrical lines out. They're rip. Like I said the gray one and the black and white one I found last fall as kittens. The black one I thought. I was cutting the grass, it was under the grape leave out there I thought, oh gosh, another dead kitten, it was so small it wouldn't run, you know. So I said Sue come here take a look at this, I think I found a dead kitten. It's not dead, there it is. And so a day later she found the gray one.

[TIME STAMP 1:25:00]

Thomas Galbraith: Don't know if it was abandoned by its mother or what right down the bottom of the steps, the two of them have been with us since that was last fall. These two guys appeared, I had a box up here because there were a couple of mother's that were ready to deliver outside, in a box in the spring. And it's unusual because all the cats around here are usually greys or black and whites and these two guys were red. The two red boys, I'll keep those.

Marguerite Holloway: They're beautiful.

Thomas Galbraith: Two brothers.

Marguerite Holloway: Very mischievous too.

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Thomas Galbraith: Yeah, they're playful, they're playful.

Marguerite Holloway: So who else should I talk to?

Thomas Galbraith: Well, there's some guys that were minor players that used to get involved in it. There was, I think you've touched everybody that's really been in it for a long time. There's Bodace, C Bock that they fished for shad and they fished sturgeon I think a little bit. Charlie, you've spoken to Charlie. There was a guy that fished with Charlie the last couple of years of his life and then fished for a while after, he's over in Pennsylvania now. Jack, I can't remember his last name. That used to live in Charlie's house also after Charlie passed away. He might be worth talking to.

Marguerite Holloway: Okay, would Cal know his last name?

Thomas Galbraith: Cal would probably know how to get hold of him. As a matter of fact, Jimmy would know because that was Jimmy's partner before Cal. Now, I guess you've hit quite a few people though, right?

Marguerite Holloway: Yeah.

Thomas Galbraith: Now who is funding this project?

Marguerite Holloway: The Hudson River Foundation.

Thomas Galbraith: Okay.

Marguerite Holloway: It's supposed to be done in a year, it's been taking me about three.

Thomas Galbraith: They're out of Kingston?

Marguerite Holloway: No they're in New York City. But the tapes will go, there's a copy of the tapes I've done that are now at the Foundation which is in Manhattan. And then a copy is supposed to go to the Hudson River Maritime Center in Kingston. And I've copied them but I haven't delivered them to them.

Thomas Galbraith: I've been through the Maritime Museum. As a matter of fact I spent Fourth of July weekend in Rondout Creek. I took the boat to Rondout for the weekend. It's very nice up there.

Marguerite Holloway: Well, soon they'll have the tapes you can go listen. (laughter)

Thomas Galbraith: You must be getting quite an education, I guess, huh?

Marguerite Holloway: Yes.

Thomas Galbraith: There's some, what would you say, characters you could possibly say?

Marguerite Holloway: There are some wonderful characters. There are some wonderful characters.

Thomas Galbraith: Some strange individuals?

Marguerite Holloway: Yeah, there are some lovely, very, very striking characters. Both sides of the river.

Thomas Galbraith: Oh, yeah.

Marguerite Holloway: Up and down.

**AUD_2014_0067A Thomas Galbraith 1993-07-11. Interview by Marguerite Holloway, July 11, 1993
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Thomas Galbraith: Oh, yeah, yeah. They're a good lot. (laughter) So where do you live?

Marguerite Holloway: I live in Manhattan.

Thomas Galbraith: Manhattan.

Marguerite Holloway: Not a place like this. This is so beautiful.

Thomas Galbraith: It's rural.

Marguerite Holloway: It's wonderful. Have you been here long?

Thomas Galbraith: Since 1980.

Marguerite Holloway: Where were you born?

Thomas Galbraith: Croton.

Marguerite Holloway: In Croton.

Thomas Galbraith: In Croton. That's

Marguerite Holloway: That's right, you were saying you grew up on the river.

Thomas Galbraith: And Cal was born and lived in Croton, at Croton Point. So that's another reason why we knew that area real well. And I said as a kid Cal was a friend of mine since school and all our adventures took place, as far as hunting and fishing and things of that nature.

Marguerite Holloway: Is there a lot less access to the river than there was?

Thomas Galbraith: Well, I would say it's difficult. Unless you knew somebody or had an in somewhere to be able to get a spot to fish now. There's really not a lot of spots. And I'm saying our biggest, one of our biggest concerns, one of the easiest ways we got into it was we had ready access. Cal did because he had run of the place down at Croton Point and he had a spot for a dock and everything else like that so we could fish right out of there. But if you didn't have that, it would be difficult.

Marguerite Holloway: Do you think people used to be more open to having fishermen go on their land and fish? Or do you think that it's been developed and there's not as much access?

Thomas Galbraith: I'm not sure about that, it's hard to say. The railroad on this side of the river really limited access because of the way that the tracks. And that's been that way for so many years.

Marguerite Holloway: When did that come through?

Thomas Galbraith: In the mid-1800s I think, 1850. I always thought, wouldn't it have been great if they decided to take an inland route. Imagine what you could have as far as access to the water. And if you wanted a house that had an abutment, or rights to the river, it would be available to you. Instead of having a railroad track running right along. But unfortunately

[TIME STAMP 1:30:00]

Thomas Galbraith: the whole this side from New York to Albany, with a few exceptions, Verplancks Point being one of them, Croton Point being another.

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Marguerite Holloway: Because it goes in, right.

Thomas Galbraith: But they're locked access because of the railroad. Like I said, I often thought I wonder how nice it would have been if they decided to take an inland route and left me maybe 100 foot or so that I could have a shot from the house to the river. But that becomes difficult. I'd even settle for one with a view. (laughter) That's even hard. That's even hard. But as far as trade off, I'm very happy here. Other than I wish the river flowed right through here.

Marguerite Holloway: How long does it take to get to Cal's?

Thomas Galbraith: About 20 minutes.

Marguerite Holloway: That's not bad.

Thomas Galbraith: About 20 minutes, about 20 minutes.

Marguerite Holloway: That you very much.

Thomas Galbraith: My pleasure, any time. Any time.

Marguerite Holloway: It's really lovely.

Thomas Galbraith: It's hard to think of everything that I wanted to say. All the years and all the incidents that have happened. One humorous one that happened to Cal and I when we were down at Croton Point. We used to have an outside, a buoy marker on our net. And it was a large, round plastic jug. And it was just to mark the outside of our net where the anchor was. We were setting our net so we knew when we were getting close to the anchor. And we had like 4 or 5 of them that Cal found. Cal used to work in the landfill down there. And it seemed that every night, it was run over. We put another one on, came out the next night, run over again by a boat. So, you know it got to the point where once, I'd say well somebody run up the river, it's an accident. Twice, well, geez, what's going on? Third night, same thing. Somebody's using them for target practice. They're aiming for it

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Thomas Galbraith: Make it very easy to see. And well after about the fourth one we thought, what the heck are we going to do? This is getting ridiculous, we can't keep going through this. So we had one of those propane tanks, 20 gallon metal propane cans. We painted it Day Glo Orange (laughter) and put it where the buoy was. Needless to say we never had another buoy run over.

Marguerite Holloway: That's great. Did you ever find out who it was?

Thomas Galbraith: No.

Marguerite Holloway: That's great. That's great. You didn't feel like hiding and waiting to hear the crash?

Thomas Galbraith: No.

Marguerite Holloway: That's great.

Thomas Galbraith: We've had sailboaters run into the net on occasion, you know when we were trying to haul it in.

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Marguerite Holloway: But not on purpose?

Thomas Galbraith: No, just poor seamanship, I guess.

Marguerite Holloway: Nobody ever shot at you though?

Thomas Galbraith: No, we never had that problem, never had that problem.

Marguerite Holloway: That's very funny. Is there generally a very strong sense of camaraderie among the fishermen?

Thomas Galbraith: I would say so, yeah. We all know each other and we definitely help anybody out that needs a hand. And especially through the organization and a few of the social functions that we've had, like with clam bakes and so forth, that everybody knows everybody and we all give each other all the assistance they can.

Marguerite Holloway: That's great. Any other stories come to mind?

Thomas Galbraith: Trying to think of anything that.

Marguerite Holloway: That I wish I could have seen.

Thomas Galbraith: I'm sure there are others but right now I can't recall anything. I should have put this down, thought about it for a couple of days and put it down on paper. That's the only way to jog my memory anymore.

Marguerite Holloway: That's fine, I can come back too. If you think of things. Did I leave you my number?

Thomas Galbraith: I don't think you did. Any more interviews scheduled for today?

Marguerite Holloway: Up in Red Hook, Robert Bard.

Thomas Galbraith: You get north of here it's like a different. Like I say, this is like a dividing line. About Verplanck is about the dividing point. You have the people that fish south of Verplanck to Ossining and you have the people north of Poughkeepsie and that area. We have very little contact, other than occasionally at an organization meeting or whatever with the state. They're a group to themselves and we're a group to ourselves. Two different areas and two different schools of fishing.

Marguerite Holloway: Different cultures.

Thomas Galbraith: They fish differently than we do too. Up there they're all drift netters. And down here we all, it used to be stakes, before I got involved in it. Traditional way, years ago was poles and they would fish with stakes about 40 yards apart and string the net between the two of them. Then we discovered that the anchor nets you could put it down easier, put more net on with less trouble and that's the way we decided to go. As a matter of fact, nobody stake fishes anymore. I remember the last guys that I knew that used stakes. Henry always professed that's the way to fish. But even Henry had stopped and started to use anchor nets. Was probably Gino and Sammy, two guys from Croton.

Marguerite Holloway: What were their last names?

Thomas Galbraith: Sammy Colombo, he might be somebody you'd want to talk to. I'm not sure how he's doing. He had a stroke. I don't know whether his motor functions are better. They were a little

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diminished at one time. I'm not sure, I'm pretty sure he's doing better by now. I haven't see him in a couple of years, since I moved out of Croton. Sammy Colombo from Croton. He commercially fished for probably 3 or 4 seasons with Gino in Croton. Gardner, Gardiniere shortened to Gardner. Gino worked for us.

Marguerite Holloway: And they did stake netting?

[TIME STAMP 5:00]

Thomas Galbraith: They'd stake net.

Marguerite Holloway: And when was this?

Thomas Galbraith: Late 1970s. They stake netted just north of Croton Yacht Club. They ran a row of stakes right there and they fished there for several years, maybe 3 or 4 years together. They ran a row of stakes there. They're probably the last guys I know that stake netted.

Marguerite Holloway: In this area, right here.

Thomas Galbraith: They stake netted together. Then they gave it up and Sammy didn't want to fish anymore and Gino came with us. We've had him as a, he worked for us on a percentage basis, not as a partner. So we would take a partnership fee out and we would split the catch on a percentage basis. He worked for us probably 3 years or so.

Marguerite Holloway: That's great, I'll try them both.

Thomas Galbraith: Gino's a character, you'll like talking to him. He's a good guy.

Marguerite Holloway: How old is he?

Thomas Galbraith: He's probably, he turned 50 when he worked for us and that would have been 10 years ago. He's probably about 60-ish now.

Marguerite Holloway: And he'll be listed in Croton also?

Thomas Galbraith: Yeah, yeah. They ran a row of stakes in the late 1970s probably, right around 1980 they quite, or thereabouts. I'll try to think of anybody else who fished down that way when I was down there. I told you about Seebock, Hungarian. I don't know if you know him or not.

Marguerite Holloway: No.

Thomas Galbraith: No. I think he's in Pennsylvania now. He fished with Frankie Bodace.

Marguerite Holloway: Yes. Who's still around.

Thomas Galbraith: Yes, he's in Verplanck last I heard.

Marguerite Holloway: Yep, there he is.

Thomas Galbraith: As a matter of fact I think they fished shad this season together.

Marguerite Holloway: How long was Bocktos fishing?

**AUD_2014_0067A Thomas Galbraith 1993-07-11. Interview by Marguerite Holloway, July 11, 1993
Transcribed by Carla Lesh, Hudson River Maritime Museum, 2023**

Thomas Galbraith: Off and on probably since about the mid 1970s also. I know that Seebock worked with Charlie for a while. He helped Charlie out for a couple of years. Charlie showed him the ropes.

Marguerite Holloway: That's great.

Thomas Galbraith: I can't think of anybody else that was a character back in those days. I think that's probably it for fishermen.

Marguerite Holloway: Okay. Other characters (laughter) Okay great.

Thomas Galbraith: Good.

END OF RECORDING