

Interview with Dave and Judy Dutra

Narrators: Dave Dutra, Judy Dutra

Interviewer: Markham Starr

Location: New Bedford, MA

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Project Name: The Working Waterfront Festival Community Documentation Project

Project Description: This project documents the history and culture of the commercial fishing industry and other port trades. The project began in 2004 in conjunction with the Working Waterfront Festival, an annual, educational celebration of commercial fishing culture which takes place in New Bedford, MA. Interviewees have included a wide range of individuals connected to the commercial fishing industry and/or other aspects of the port through work or familial ties. While the majority of interviewees are from the port of New Bedford, the project has also documented numerous individuals from other ports around the country. Folklorist and Festival Director Laura Orleans and Community Scholar and Associate Director Kirsten Bendiksen are project leaders. The original recordings reside at the National Council for the Traditional Arts in Maryland with listening copies housed at the Festival's New Bedford office.

Principal Investigator: Laura Bendiksen, Laura Orleans

Transcriber: Laura Orleans

Abstract

On September 25, 2011, Markham Starr interviewed Dave and Judy Dutra as part of the Working Waterfront Festival Community Documentation Project. Dave discusses his experiences in the fishing industry, noting the ways the community and opportunity has changed over the years. He speaks of his family's history with fishing and his earliest memories in growing up by the water in Provincetown, where he's fished since the age of 10. Dave describes the boats he's run, including the *Wildflower* and the *Richard & Arnold*, and reflects on the increased regulations and the impact it has had on his livelihood. Dave and Judy both reflect on the freedom they had in the early days of fishing and how it has changed over time. Judy discusses her motivation for writing the book, *Nautical Twilight*, which is a memoir of their fishing experiences. She shares her anger and frustration at the changes in the industry but also highlights the wonderful times they had and the strong sense of community among fishermen.

Markham Starr: I'm just going to start off. I'll say a little bit and then we'll ask you to repeat who you are and then we'll swap. Ok, so, I'm Mark Starr and we're at the Working Waterfront Festival in 2011 in New Bedford and I have — this is Judy and Dave Dutra here. So even though I've just said your name, could you just tell me your name and where you're currently from?

Dave Dutra: My name is Dave Dutra. I'm a commercial fisherman out of Provincetown, Massachusetts. I think the term is long time fisherman [laughs] 'cause unfortunately we're not seeing a lot of young faces anymore. That's part of our problem. Where do we get, well, I guess it's self explanatory, it seems to be that we've lost a lot of the interest in fishin'. Men and boys have been directed in other avenues. This is a tough racket. It's a tough life. You gotta love it. It ain't really about the money. It seems. 'Cause we've certainly been through some awful hard times. But it surely is, you gotta love it. There's a lot of sacrifice in the business now to stay and for young guys to get into it. I don't know how they do it. I give 'em all the support I can. The only thing I got left is what I remember that is not, it is not the same fishery my wife and I started in forty years ago, that's for sure. But we're still at it. And mostly because they've destroyed, it was never our fifty year old boat that we bought. It was about the permit that came with that boat. That was your taxi, I'll use it as a taxi cab medallion in New York City. I'll never forget the old timer tellin' me, "Oh buy that she got the permit. With that permit, when you retire, you're gonna be able to sell it off a pretty young guy on the deck and he'll be able to step in and continue on." We they devalued the permits, they've taken away the ability to make any money. Both our sons have been pushed away from fishing. One is a natural, thank God for Mass Maritime he's got a good job in the real world with the oil industry, but that's because he could not stay on the boat. He would not be able to survive. I think the only reason the *Richard & Arnold* and we survive is: one, vocational education taught me to turn wrenches and weld and two, I'm a stubborn bastard. And I keep that old girl goin' one way or the other. And as those photographs show, the last two years, the old girl ain't made enough money to paint her bottom. And that ain't right because there's certainly plenty of fish.

MS: We're gonna jump back in time.

DD: Sure.

MS: Can you tell me when and where you were born?

DD: I was born in Hyannis, Mass and moved right into Provincetown that first week [laughs] on Pearl Street. I grew up on Pearl Street with 27 other kids. I guess you could call us a gang. It was a great place to grow up. Provincetown then was a real serious fishing community. That was our industry. I lived on the deck of a trap boat when I was ten, twelve years old, watchin' them haul tuna fish over the rail, fillin' it with mackerel. My mom worryin' sick that they weren't going to sink comin' home. 'Cause we put a canvas, a canvas cover was all there was between you and the bottom. But that was the life. That's what everyone did. There was, oh God, there was twenty traps that I

remember. There are none anymore. The last one was in probably the early '70s. There were trap boats everywhere. There were [skows?], there was places they pulled the poles up on Commercial Street with a horse and team. It was a hell of a great ride. I mean it, the dunes were, you didn't need a drivers license to be out on the dunes, course that's national seashore now. Had to be done. I understand. Provincetown to grow up was real serious community. There were three new car garages there. There were bowlin' alley, pool room, dances Friday nights, church. Churches all over town actually. It was, every grocery store, mom and pop to the A & P delivered groceries Friday onto the boats. Most boats had four men at least, at least two, but mostly four. There were fifteen trailers a day, minimum goin' up and down the town pier. It was business. There were thirty homeless men that sat at the head of the wharf. They lived in cars out at the dump and in Colonel Corns. And seafood packers would come down, the old man would come down in his car and he'd point, "You, you, you, you, you come on down, I got work. We gotta boat comin' in." It may have been from Boston, it may have been from Portland. It may have been from Gloucester. It may have been from Provincetown. It may have been from New Bedford, Rhode Island, you never knew. But a lot of New Bedford boats came in and out of Provincetown. Provincetown's fleet was successful mostly because where we were it's seven hours from the city of New Bedford by water, steamin'. So when the wind blew hard, P-town boats found the lee somewhere. We were able to go when the New Bedford boats couldn't leave the dock and we were able to get in before them. So once in a while you'd have a real bonanza. It was how you were able to get that little bit ahead.

MS: And so your father fished?

DD: My father, my grandfathers, right out of the Azores. I tired mechanics but it didn't seem to make me very happy. I know enough to be dangerous is the word, the term goes. I can make anything keep goin' but I'm not a professional. But I can keep an old boat goin'. I've done a few. And I do love what I do. And it's very difficult to swallow what's happened between trackin' devices that I had to pay for myself between people I don't know that look like homeless people that are living on my boat for the day. How would you like to have somebody you don't know hang out all day with you?

MS: Your grandfather, what kind of fishing was he doing?

DD: He did dory fishing. He did dory fishing, Grand Banks. I'm an inshore fisherman and I, I don't think it was necessary to go that far. I made a living. I never expected to get rich. But we always made a livin'. We were able to go from scallops to chasin' flounders or goin' for cod fish or maybe you'd go fluke fishin' and then there's squid. I mean there was always somethin' for the small boat to do. But as this time has gone on, all of those little niches have been taken away. You know our boat, at it's age had a full time scallop license. That license today I understand is worth a million and a half dollars. Just the license. Where's mine? Two fellow come down the pier back in '92 I think it was said, "You have to make up your mind. You're either a dragger or a scalloper." "God! We're P-town. We do everything." "Nope, you've gotta make up your mind. I'll tell you what we're gonna do. We're gonna give you a license for four hundred pounds a day." "Wow." Geeze if I could catch four hundred pounds in a day, two

bucks a pound. Yeah I guess we'd get by, that'd be ok. So we accepted. Damn fools. We accepted. So there went one of the opportunities as time goes by. Eh, it's a lot of work puttin' on the rake. There ain't much scallops. Well, but it's ok, 'cause we're draggin' and we're still gettin' by and it's, it's ok. But then it started gettin' really difficult. The big boats started comin' near P-town and working out of P-town. So they became day boats and boy, once you see the difference between, you know, 250 horsepower and a 700, they make six swipes and I haven't got down the end of the tow yet. Don't go there anymore. No, that place is gone. I have to say, how is it that in all the years of the *Richard & Arnold* out of P-town, I fish the same place? The fish was always there. There was always enough when I started with the *Richard & Arnold*, it was ten basket tows for an hour. Come over this way it's fifteen. Then it got to the point, well, there was two bushels for an hour. Well now the government's stepped in and says you guys, we're gonna offer you a chance out. I decided to stay. Because you know what, half got out. It's gonna get better for me. The nets increased which was the whole problem to begin with. The whole answer could have been done quickly, but who could swallow a pill from two inch mesh to six inch mesh. So they made us buy nets over the years and of course everybody knew. We put a bigger mesh on. 'Cause I wanted to see tomorrow. I liked it. And I'm still gettin' by, wasn't catchin' much fish, but we're still gettin' by. The price was high, the fuel was cheap. We were able to survive. Again. We didn't make a lot of money. But we survived. We were still goin'. We still...and then I think I don't know what the next bomb was they dropped on, it might have been observers. They had to go fishing with you. That kind of really soured me. That was like a real intrusion on my life. Not that I was doin' anything wrong, but I feel that this whole by-catch issue, there is no by-catch. There's just not a place to put it to utilize it. So in reality, that to me was like I'm throwin' these skates overboard only because there's no place to put 'em. I wouldn't have to throw anything over that could turn into the money. Or that would be utilized. I don't like feedin' all these lobsters. By the way we used to be able to catch lobsters too. Can't have that anymore. Then they, I guess the worst one for the small inshore boat like Provincetown, that ability to sneak out on an October night or November night in back of the Cape when the wind howled and catch fish. When they closed the nights to the state waters, that was, that was a serious blow. That took a, took most of my fishin' effort away. So we turned to fishin' daytimes in state waters. Again more boats fell. I need to take a breath. Thanks honey. I don't wanna give up the title of your book. But you know it's gotten for us, it's gotten her so angry she decided from her memoirs that she was writin' for our family, we've decided that people have to know what's happened and why it looks, that boat looks that way. That boat should have chrome rails by now. But instead they've bled us every time you heal, they cut your heart out. Or, I think the fishermen's word is they've moved the goal post. And you could never catch up. You know. And probably today as we're seeing. Did I put in this, that in the beginning my boat made it through the Depression? Is that on?

MS: It's not on here.

DD: Well, my boat's old enough now, over 80 that she made it through the Depression. She made it through Prohibition. She made it through World War II. She made it through the Korean War. She made it through Vietnam. She made it with no fish. She made it with no scallops, but catch shares has put a stake through the heart of my life and my boat and my business. And I don't know if we're going to — I don't know. It's very concernin'

now. We're stuck at the end of the pier with an old boat on a string, with no money to do anything. Just barely enough to stay afloat. I can't carry this much more. I'm gettin' tired now. I want what my boat deserves. I'll use the term that Pat Kurkal used in the paper, "A boat's landings are its legacy." Now how come my boat after 80 years got nothing? It doesn't have enough to paint the bottom. I gotta stop. You know I'll leave it with a question.

MS: Could you describe for people that don't know, what catch shares are and how that was supposed to work?

DD: My first catch share meeting was in Plymouth. It was called a sector meeting. You gotta come and you gotta join, bring money, bring your checkbook. Bad taste right off the path. But I gotta go, because geeze everybody seems to, this is what they, what they're bein' forced to do, is what I learned. I sat at a table with twenty men who as I looked around and saw the coffee pots and this beautiful room I says, "Well, I wonder whose payin' for this?" But I didn't say much and I listened and there was a young woman, Community Advisor was her title. She was a Community Advisor. And she was runnin' that room, I won't say with an iron fist, but she had, definitely had control of the whole meeting. And forcefully sayin' we have to pick our board of directors today. We have to do this today. You have to sign this and give me five hundred dollars. Geeze, it was all comin' awful fast. I was watchin' them hell of a lot more invested than I have, bigger boats and bigger players really. I happened to see three players up at the north end of the table. They sat with their arms crossed, they never said a word, six hours I was in there and they never said a word. But the other men, they asked questions and they were always directed back, we gotta vote on this, we gotta get our members together. We gotta sign this articles of whatever it is. You gotta sign these papers. And I need five hundred dollars. Geeze I think it was after lunch sometime I finally had to ask the other men in the room, "Hey, you guys, I don't see anybody's wife here with 'em. I don't see no lawyers with you. I don't see your partners with you. I don't see, I don't even see a first mate in here. I mean I can't do this, fellows." No federal representation, no state representation. No wardens in the room. It bothered the hell out of me. I mean, wait a minute. Who is payin' for all of this. Anyways my last statement was I'm sorry guys I can't sign this. I aint givin' nobody money for fish. I just can't do this. Oh you're gonna be in the common pool. You'll be in the cesspool. You're going to die, blah, blah, blah. This was some young fellow from Maine. I didn't like him right off the bat. Doesn't matter who he was, I can't remember. But out of those twenty men, this old man was the only one that walked away. The next, I think it was the following year, bein' in the common pool, geeze, we got home from fluke fishin' with excitement in the air and boy this winter the codfish, boy last winter we were able to go, I could make a five minute tow and get two or three thousand of codfish. 'Course I could only keep 800 pounds, just throw the rest over. But compared to towin' twenty minutes and catchin' 20,000 pounds and killin' 'em, I got it down to five minutes. I only killed a thousand or two thousand pounds and gave those for lobster bait. Oh boy I was excited. I said this winter if we, they're gonna give us a thousand pounds this year. Boy this'll be great. I'll just make one tow, I got thirty days. I got thirty days, my eighty two year old boat here's got thirty days. Ain't I proud. How the hell I got that many is questionable. Anyways, we videoed it. We got it on film, the bag comin' over the rail, after a five minute tow, plus 800 we won't say how much more, but it was a good tow. And then this next year, 'cause I didn't join the sector I was like

they say in this common pool, we got a notice right after Labor Day. I don't think the boat was home two or three days from fluke. Oh by the way this year, you can have one hundred pounds for your thirty four days. One hundred pounds, per day. I can't do this. I can't kill fish like this. I can't do it. It ain't good for my soul or my spirit. So last winter was one of the worst winters my wife and I ever had. There's are business sittin' at the dock. Fish jumpin' out of the water, nothin' wrong with our business, but only one boat out of Provincetown was able to go. And it wasn't ours. And I think that chafed me more than anything in the world. Watchin' that out of town, well, no, that was a town boat, the one boat that's won. There's only winners and losers now. There's nobody surviving. That one boat take out sixty boxes of yellowtail. Ha, ha. Only took us three tows. And it made me sick. Because it ain't right. It ain't American. And it needs to be changed. What can I say? I don't lie. I've lived this. My wife and I. My wife should be drivin' a Mercedes by now. Instead I drive a '96 truck with duct tape and balin' wire because they've bled us down and here we are, sixty-seven years old and I have to go fishin'? This ain't the way it was supposed to be. I won't say my son. I think he's made the right decision. But a young man should be on the deck of that old boat, learnin' his way. And he should have the opportunity through my license to be able to continue to bring up a family as good as I have and have the life I've had if he wants to do that.

What this has happened here, this ain't American. This ain't the way it's supposed to be. And I'm gettin' too emotional about it now. Because I'm mad. But my heart is broken, what they've done. And not just me. I'm a lucky guy. I still got, I can still do this. I've watched so many fellows, I've watched, I've lost so many friends because of the gnawin' in their heart and in their minds of what they've done to 'em. I buried more men last winter. I put my flag up on that boat over six times last winter. Those were young fishermen, a lot younger than me. Why? It ain't 'cause they ain't workin' hard or tryin' to make it. But they've invested, maybe they made a bad choice. But not like this. Not by not workin' hard. I mean hard work built the country. This ain't right. And it's gotta change or there will be nobody left to be on these boats to do it. Unless we're going to open up another factory, which that's how this started was get the factory trawlers out and it looks like, you know, we over capitalized again, we didn't put owner operator. We allowed it to become a tax credit. I mean we know the mistakes. Jesus. Ain't it time to do it right? To do it right for the, whose left stadin'? As my wife and I both say now, how come there wasn't a historic thing for the old boats, for the handful that are left? You think we're really a problem out there? I mean we've been doin' this the same thing, same place, especially this boat. There ain't no more left. What do I do now? Either give me more to catch so I can continue the tradition or this is just gonna be a tape and a recording and bitches 'cause that, they'll be no parades when the *Richard & Arnold* leaves town for the last time. No confetti, no parades, no bands. Just gonna disappear into the Nautical Twilight [laughs]. I don't know, I think that's probably pretty good. That's enough. I don't wanna get mad. We've had irreversible harm done to us, but not as much as some men. I've watched so many men and families 'cause of this that it's very heart breakin'. And we need to make the fisherman a hero again. You know. We need the Captain Courageous's out there again. Most people only understand the Deadliest Catch. Captain Sig's good photo, takes good pictures. Captain John. They're all high, I highly respect all of 'em, but those ain't the heroes.

It was their fathers that was the heroes. I bought my boat same time they bought theirs. Look at the numbers. How come I got nothin'? My sons running a hundred footer 'cause

I didn't work? No. No. Why aren't my sons involved? Because what they've done to us. Thank God they're not. I would hate to see them lose everything. 'Cause they went out and bought a nice boat to replace our old lady. The old lady's still goin'. She's still workin'. And I'm gonna keep her workin' as long as I can. I don't wanna say anymore. I've had enough. I'm gettin' too teary-eyed, pissed off inside [laughs]. How we doin' Mark?

MS: Oh good, good. Would you wanna talk — I worked at Mystic Seaport for 20 years so I'm very much into history and early history and the early part. Would you wanna talk anymore about the early part in Provincetown growing up? You growing up and getting involved on the water?

DD: Well I never expect that to come back. The traps and —

Judy Dutra: What it was like...You know the first time you went fishing with Raymond on the —

DD: Oh, Jesus, I can't remember that. I went, I started out on trap boats with, up on the old timers would take us when they'd get the mackerel really heavy or the tuna, they would put us kids in the dory in case the big ones went down on the way in. I mean it, they were awash. Every, you know, four times a day sometimes. It was, we had seven freezer plants in Provincetown. I think there's just a, the Coast Guard Station's sittin' on the last one that was operatin'.

MS: Was your dad a trap fisherman?

DD: My dad did trappin' but he owned a small dragger from his, my grandfather. In other words he married my mom, her father owned a dragger. He took it over. It was called the *Fanny Parnell*. I believe she's on the rocks of No Man's somewhere. But that again is another story I don't know much about. But my mom, my dad died in, I was a year old when he died. So I never really knew him. But I knew of him through other men. Brothers all died so I'm the sole survivor. And I don't know why he let's me keep goin', I fish alone. I have for, what, 25 years now. I like workin' in his garden. It's a nice place to be. Easier than drivin' to anywhere, you know. The old times, let's see, well, like I say there was freezer plants everywhere. The ice, before me, I don't remember the ice bein' cut in ponds and stuff out of the back roads, but they used the fish trays on the dirt, the sand roads and it was called tin pan alley from where the ice was cut out of the pond and slide on the tins that they used in the freezer plants to slide the ice down. And then they'd wash 'em up and you know they'd be the trays that would hold filleted fish. They filleted stuff, they froze stuff. There was a, I mean, it was called Railroad Wharf. The train went to the end of the pier. I mean it was prosperous. Well yeah, I started fishin' first after vocational school I worked in the garages. I tried that for awhile. But I guess the call of that water was too much. Anyways I started with Ray Duarte on, Ray Duarte was a young fellow, a little younger than me, a little older than me I think. He, his family lived one door down from me. They had nine, he had nine brothers and sisters. Fishin' father was on the *Charlotte G*. They were hound dogs of the fleet. They never missed a day. They went every day. But each boat again supported you know how many people. It's just amazing how many boats and how many men actually were workin' and every day. I don't ever expect that to come

back that well again. But we certainly could use quarter of that, you know. The *Jenny M.* that I started with Raymond on, he needed somebody that could keep the engine runnin'. Christ, we thought we was an off-shore boat. It was 47 feet long, it was three guys. I was the engineer. I mean it, again, the *Jenny M.* at that time I think came out of New Bedford. I think it belonged to the Gilly's. T.T. Gilly's family, the Avila's I, believe. It was Western rigged but over the rail. In other words. There was two galluses on one side, but it had the pilot house forward. But you still made the circle. It wasn't a stern trawler, never would be. It didn't, Raymond got out of the business and moved to, into management of the co-op that we tried to get goin' to again save the fleet. You know we all better get together or we're all gone. So that worked for awhile and then it got sold off internal problem. Fishermen are hard to get more than three in a place you know without a fight. That was one of the problems with our co-op was the boats were getting, you know, the real good guys were getting more power and bigger boats. They wanted more money. And the word shack was a, that's truly what caused the fishing crisis I believe is there was too many cheaters.

And so over the years we just watched our fleet just start to melt away, you know. As I tell most people, most of Provincetown's fleet is right inside the point there. Between the breakwater and the point. They're all there. They're in wet storage because it just didn't pay to own 'em anymore. Again they had three men crews, lot of men don't wanna work like I do by myself. We've been able to do it because, hey if I have a good tow, I don't set out again 'till I get cleaned up. And if I have time I will. The greed part to me is, I just need enough now. I never got rich doin' it. I never planned to get rich. It's just a job I like doin'. So I'm blessed and we've been really fortunate in all these years. Oh, Mark, I don't know how much more I can go here.

JD: What other boats did you fish on?

DD: Oh, God. There's so many been through the *Menco*, I ran the *Menco* for Dean. We ran our own little *Wildflower* we built from nothing. The *Wildflower* was a boat I found in the woods and that was, that was when a guy workin' on deck could find a boat in the woods, get it fishin' in his spare time, buy a license or get a license and go to work. If you made it, you made it. If you didn't, that was just the way it is. Too bad. But you had the opportunity to try. Now, there, that opportunity's gone. First off it takes you, we'll just use if I were ready to do this. Say sell my permit. So let's say I could get a hundred thousand dollars for my permit. So that young fellow's gotta get somebody to help him get a hundred grand to buy it, then he's gotta go get another hundred grand to put a decent boat under it. Then he's gotta go get another hundred grand just to add to the fish that he would be buyin' with my permit and I think that's quite a big chunk for a parents or grandparents to help grandchildren or sons with. They can't use the *Richard & Arnold* because they can't insure their investment. So where do we go? [laughs] Do I have to keep doin' this 'till I'm a hundred? One day I call the coast guard 'cause she ain't gonna make it no more? Or are they gonna give us a chance to, I still got a few more years left. I wanna put that young kid on the deck and show him you can do it. This is easy if you're — today, when I started you, it was fish around. Then it got to the point you couldn't catch nothin' no matter how good you were.

We trimmed all the edges of the rocks and we didn't have electronics like they do today, you can't you couldn't pass a card to somebody and say, here just take the boat. Back then, we were fortunate in Provincetown. We had the monument. And if you put the monument on the station or you put the monument on the white roof, or you put the monument on the edge of the hill, or you put the monument on the path, you were able to get by without breakin' the net. Might get the day out of it. But if you moved 27 fathom you're all done. Twenty-six ok, keep that monument right on that buildin' don't get off there you're gonna rip...that's how I learned. Scalopin' you went to the south in twenty minutes you threw an oil can overboard. You went from south from that threw another oil can then you went east you threw another oil can. Pretty soon you had you're compass all drawn out, which one's the best tow, that one to the south. Now you used to carry a lot of empty oil cans or lobster pot buoys you know, the lobster pot buoys weren't as easy to see as a five gallon oil can. And what the hell you didn't, you weren't gonna bring it in anyways, right? [laughs] Oh it's changed so much. Seals, we used to get five dollars a nose for the seals. Now they can eat all day long undersizes, oversized nights. Ain't no regulations for them. Christ we'll maybe go seal huntin' I think he'd do alright. Ah, it's just it goes on and on. Whales are takin' over. Nobody talks about that stuff, you know. But I have to make fun of it or I get so angry that I don't want it to kill me. I stay around just to haunt everybody. You know. And we're seein' the pier in Provincetown go from fishing to transportation to frolicin'. It's the fishin' industry is bein' asked to step aside we got a boat comin' in now. Where before, when it was a fishing community, police cruisers stopped, "I'm sorry the pier's closed right now, the boat's comin' in; there's trailers movin' down there." You know, it was no place for playin' down there. You held to your little kid so he didn't get run over by a truck or a guy runnin' by with a hand cart full of fish. There was a lot of, 24/7. The town was alive. Taverns did good. Everybody did good. Fishbucks was goin' through the town of Provincetown. One man, Matt Costa, in my world he was Santa Claus. When we went whitin' fishin' he bought every lobster and every boat had two barrels a day. And he paid us in cash.

Again comes the word shack.

Eventually the guys who took the cash couldn't prove when it came time to, 'bout the license. Would you take a Corvette or a house in Florida, no we need landings. Damn. You know. But we were, we played by the rules. One of the biggest mistakes it seems to me 'cause I've watched the cheaters really go here to hell [inaudible]. But I, I'm not angry. I just probably didn't have the courage to cheat. I didn't feel it was necessary. We had enough. We were getting by. We weren't, we never did look for the new steel boat. We never did look to put a bigger engine in. I was content. Again, my wife ain't drivin' no Mercedes. It's still been the greatest life a man could live if you love it. You have to love it. I keep lookin' at those guys out there. Those guys are gone too. You know. Those are the men out on the bowsprit of a big schooner. We need to, everything now is on a computer. It's on a disc. You could run my boat today if you took this card out of my thing and show you where you wouldn't rip the net. You'd be able to go all day without bustin' a mesh. But before that, was a whole different story. And I use Provincetown again. As you enter our town there's a nice four by four sign there with a bunch of fellows with needles on the end of the pier. Well that's kinda like that history up there. There ain't many fellows left that know twine, splicing. Provincetown we had a marine store you could get nets and bellies and wire and now you can't even buy a shackle in Provincetown. [laughs]. Unless it's chrome for your fence or

something. It's changed, you know. It's, we're the very few, there's I think there's five operational draggers left in Provincetown. Out of those five, three, two of 'em are in a sector. I'm one of the sector boats now. Not, I'm in a sector in Maine. Only because they said they got five million bucks they going to buy permits. "Oh, oh sorry, Mr. Dutra. Too bad. You lose. We're only buyin' forty five footers." I can go on and on Mark. You know, the latest one has been our scallop permit to lease off. Well I could have Athearn Marine down here lease it for me. So I said to them, why can't you lease my groundfish. Oh know that has to go through the sector manager. We can't do anything. So they've made it, put another guy in my fish hold. That's how I look at it. On my little bit of allocation I have, I'm waiting to hear from him what it's worth. Oh yeah that's a very good point. What they call our 80 year old boat and it's 19, our permit number's two four-zero-zero-nine-five. They call that an entry level permit. That's what they're tellin' me. My boat has got an entry level permit. That's eighty years of continuous fishin'. If we could just use the landings they sent us from '86 to '96 Jude [his wife] that was two point five million I think I was fishin' alone.

JD: No.

DD: No, did I have crew then? Well but if that time came, I would have something. I would have something to entice a young guy. "Look you'll be able to catch a couple of million pounds here." You know. It ain't enough, then you don't want to buy this boat. But it ain't hard to catch those fish today. You know. Again they went with the time frame that worked good for the young guys. Let's see the more you took, the more you got. Well, if that bein' the case, I want my history from 1924. How do you like me now? Maybe now I can build that big steel trawler. But That ain't what it is. I'm prayin' in some justice. I'm gonna hang on. I don't wanna take this license to the grave with me. But before a fat cat gets it, I will. I wanna see the young man on the boat. That's the opportunity for him and his family. He should have that same opportunity that I had. I've kept the boat in pretty good shape. And if I'm not allowed to catch somethin' pretty soon, I'm afraid I ain't goin' to be able to do it much more. You know as you see by these pictures, she startin' to look pretty shabby. Paint don't make 'em catch better. But that boat, somethin' about that boat, it's been able to survive eighty years. I think the boat could go, most of it's crew and captains are in boot hill. It'll probably be goin' when I'm gone too. Because the boat, boat never says no. It just keeps goin'. So you know what do we do now? That's the, I guess, Judy and my question is you know, where do we go now? We bought her with the intent that in thirty years of fishin' it would be our motor sailer. Guess what? The last fifteen years it ain't made me enough money to just barely keep it in fuel. So, it's either, it's either the time for them to change, there's only 700 licenses left.

JD: Less.

DD: Less than 700 federal permits for groundfish left. I'll tell you how it should work. I think this 700 guys total allowable catch, everybody gets the same equal pair. If you wanna sell it, good for you. If you don't, you keep goin'. You got enough to work on. I think that'd work out just fine. It'd give me a chance to get the hell out of this and see a young guy step in. But the way we're goin' is, one big boat's gonna have all of it. That's

the way it's, no question in my mind what I've watched. And them big boats are, they're probably bein' built somewhere already with speculation, 'cause speculation just push buttons, you make millions. But again, the real deals, and that boat was never, I guess when she was built she went to Georges swordfishin', but she certainly hasn't been there since I've owned her. She's been a Massachusetts pretty much all the time. Little Bank. I guess the word would be, we've been able to survive and make a decent living within fifteen miles of our home port. We didn't increase horsepower, we kept it owner operated, we enlarged our nets and we see the benefits. But we're not allowed to have any of it. Too bad again, you lose. So we need some justice and hopefully that will come. And hopefully I'll live long enough, you know. That's the next thing, Mark. That's enough.

MS: You wanna take a minute?

JD: I don't know if I can top any of that. No, he's got all of the history. I'm, I just was the partner.

DD: She heard all the complaining.

MS: Which is very important. I want to ask about your book though. One sec. Do you mind switching [adjusting seating and mics]. Well, lets just, we'll do a few minutes with you, Judy.

JD: Yes, I'm Judy Dutra, wife of David Dutra, he's been a fisherman all his life. I'm a registered nurse and I was a school nurse for over fifteen years. I started writing a book about ten years ago, but four years ago I started really getting serious about it, because I got so angry. I was so angry that I was writing what my husband calls, venting letters. I was venting all my anger. I was writing like crazy. I never sent any of the letters, but I did start putting things together and I said to myself, it wasn't all bad. I mean a lot of our life was just wonderful. We had such a good time. I did fish with David in the early years from around 1970 to around 1975-76. My first son was born in '71 and the second one was born in '82. And during that time I fished with David first on the *Wildflower* and which he rebuilt the whole boat stem to stern in our yard, and then after ten years of fishing with that boat, David bought the *Richard*, and well together we bought the *Richard & Arnold* and I fished with him a number of times, not steady because that became a serious business. But when we were fishin' the *Wildflower I*, the book *Nautical Twilight* is a memoir. It's our lives together, fishing. It's stories about fishing, about different people that have fished with us. Incidents that have happened over the years. Lot of fun time. Lot of fun people. Both the *Wildflower* and then the *Richard & Arnold* and then the last part of the book about how the decline, how it affected us personally and how it's changed the face of the American fisherman. I mean it's just changed everything from when we started in the '70s. We started when there was total freedom. You could go where you wanted, you could go out the days you wanted. You could target what you wanted. You could bring whatever you could carry or catch. And David is a good fisherman so he was able to make a good life for us. We were able to buy a home in North Truro at the time. Of course everything was a lot cheaper then, boats and houses, fuel. So we were able to have a good living. And I remember a Portuguese woman, Mrs. Agnes Salvador, her husband Louie, they had the *Shirley & Roland* and years ago she told me that if I married David and we had a fishing business, that

I'd never be rich, but I would never want for anything. And she also told me that it would take a great deal of faith because you can't have a guy out on the water all day and not know that, he's, in your heart, that he's going to come home at night. So it did take a lot of faith. But we've had a great life. I mean, I don't regret any of it. I don't regret the fishing and what we've done over the years. David's rebuilt the *Richard & Arnold* and, you know, hauled it out of the water. He's rebuilt rails, he's rebuilt the fo'c'sle. He put new sides on it. He did a new roof. He's done everything. He built the new hydraulics when they first came out he put the hydraulics on there.

He did all of that with help from Fairhaven, we had help from Harbor Hydraulics. We've always got our nets from the Levines over in Fairhaven. And he's, you know, he's been fishin' whether it was squid fishin' or fluke fishin' or yellow tails and flounder or cod fish up on the middle bank or scallopin' out on the middle bank or down below, off of Chatham, you know we've done all kinds of fishing over the years. And I've been aboard for many of those trips and the book, *Nautical Twilight*, is some of those stories about bein' aboard the *Richard & Arnold* and the *Wildflower*, 'cause that's you know, that's been gone for quite a long time. We sold that boat and guy took it away and that was the end of that. Both of my sons have fished aboard the boat. They were deckhands when they were very young. My second son who was born in 1982, he's a Mass Maritime graduate now, but he, he was aboard for the first time when he was six months old. And we took him on a fishing trip with my older son and a friend and we went fishing off of the coast of Martha's Vineyard near Menemsha. He's also been you know 'cause when I would go out I'd take the kids would come too and so it was always a fishing family. And my kids loved it. My son when he was in high school he fished every weekend, every holiday, summers. Our son Jackson he saved enough money to buy himself a car and through fishing and my younger son he was, he also was like a natural on the water. He after graduating Mass Maritime, he's on a hundred and eighty foot tug boat now in the Gulf of Mexico. Big boat. He likes his big boats now. And he's got a good career. But the family fishing, it was a great time of takin' the kids out and having them learn about handling boats and how to tie a bolan for a boat and how to set a net and they learned it all from David. That was a good experience for them growing up. I think. We were very fortunate I think. We had a wonderful time out there. And the book I hope will reflect that. Cause it certainly was not all bad. There were bad times, but there were a lot of good times too. And I hope that people will enjoy reading about it.

MS: I'm sure they will.

JD: I hope so [laughs]

MS: We'll wrap it up. Thank you very much. I really appreciate you coming in and doing this and coming down to the festival.

JD: Thank you.

-----End of interview-----
Reviewed by Nicole Zador, 1/14/2025