



NEW BEDFORD FISHING HERITAGE CENTER

Date of Interview: June 23, 2017

Moniz, Joe ~ Oral History Interview

Fred Calabretta

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Background

Name of person interviewed: Joe Moniz [JM]

Facts about this person:

Age 61 [born 1955]

Sex Male

Occupation lumper

Residence (Town where lives) Acushnet

Ethnic background (if known) Azorean [Portuguese]

Interviewer: Fred Calabretta [FC]

Transcriber: Millie Rahn [MR]

Interview location: Bergie's Seafood, New Bedford

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Key Words

Bergie's, Sao Miguel/St. Michael, Flores, soccer, lumping, fish lumper, pens, ice, pitchfork, totes, hold, shaft, haddock, cod, flounder, Jimmy Dwyer, hatch, winch, scallops, skate, yellowtail, peewees, auction, draggers, [Len Ferrara?], Steve [Lacone/Lacombe?], [Gima Tomaza?], shovel, Portugal, farmer, squid, skate wings, monkfish, pollock, hake, sea dabs, redfish

Abstract

Joe Moniz first came to the States as a soccer player. Later he emigrated to New Bedford from St. Michael in the Azores, where he'd been a farmer, as were most of his family. He's been a lumper for many years, although he started out in construction for five years before lumping. He talks about the work of a lumper and the process of unloading boats, changes in the industry and in boats and technology and its effects on the job, changes in kinds and hauls of fish, and his love for the independence of the work.

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[00:00] Introduction. Emigrated from San Miguel in the Azores; came from a family of farmers. Became a lumper in 1991.

[05:13] Says lumping is “one of the hardest jobs on the waterfront.” Usually works with a partner lumping and describes process of lumpers’ work.

[10:20] Talks about working with different captains, different kinds of fish, no dependable work schedules.

[15:04] More on work schedule, lumpers’ tools and skills, early days when there was a union.

[20:27] Discusses more about working with a partner and how they unload boats.

[25:07] Talks more about unloading boats, dealing with the ice, likes and dislikes about the job.

[30:07] Talks more about changes in the industry and lumping over time, likes/dislikes of job, how he schedules his work day.

[35:00] Talks about working construction in Concord, Mass., before becoming a lumper, and how he can’t see himself retiring, because he has to stay busy.

[36:10] End of audio

[00:00]

Fred Calabretta: And I just have to read this introduction part here, okay? Today is June 23, 2017. This is an interview for the New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center, funded by an Archie Green Fellowship from the Library of Congress. As part of this project we're interviewing shore-side workers in the New Bedford/Fairhaven fishing industry to record their stories, document their skills and knowledge, and better understand their important role in the fishing industry. The recording and transcript will become part of the permanent collection at the Library of Congress. I'm Fred Calabretta and today I'm speaking with Joe Moniz and we're at Bergie's Seafood in New Bedford. Do you give us your permission to record your story?

Joe Moniz: Yeah.

FC: Okay. To start, if you could give your full name.

JM: I'm Joe C. Moniz.

FC: And your date and place of birth?

JM: 7/26/55.

FC: Born here in New Bedford?

JM: No. I was born in the Azores of Portugal. The Azores. They call it the island of Sao Miguel. From Azores.

FC: That's where you grew up?

JM: Yes, it is.

FC: Maybe a little bit about your family and when they first came over here?

JM: My, all my parents died. My father, my mother. My mother-in-law and my father-in-law all died. My mother-in-law and my father-in-law, from the island of Flores, one small island in the Azores. My mother and my father like me are from Sao Michael. They are all passed away.

FC: When you first came over here, did you have family who were working in the fishing industry?

JM: No, no, no.

FC: No?

JM: First time I came here, I came to play soccer. I used to be a soccer player. I came over here in '77. A matter of fact, 40 years ago, on May 31. After I go back, because at that time, I'm in the army. The last month I supposed to be in the army, I came over here to play soccer. I go back on June 29th, just for a visit, you know, just to play soccer. The time I came over here, '82, for

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good, to stay, I have an old brother already here. That's the one called us. I have six brothers, all boys. My older brother call us, I stay over here. Since then, I never go back. I go back, you know, vacation and stuff. That's it. To work in this kind of job, I start January 11, 1991. It'll be 27 years.

FC: Where was that?

JM: Over here. Lumping. Fisher lumper. That was my job since '91.

FC: At that time, you're working on call and when the boats come in --

JM: Oh yeah.

FC: They call you?

JM: They call any time. No time, no hours, no days, no nothing. Now it works a little bit better. You know why? Because cell phones, the boats call us a day in advance, sometimes two. Now it's better than years ago. A lot of times years ago I take a shower, my wife says hey, another boat's coming. I have to stop the shower, go back again.

FC: So, you didn't know until the last minute?

JM: No, no. I'm over here now with you, the boat can call. But now the last five or six years, that's better, because again, they advance to us anyway.

FC: They can give you more warning?

JM: Yes. They say Joe, I'll be in here. Let's say today's Friday. I'll be in Sunday. You know already, anyway. Some boats still have that thing from years ago. May call you like this morning. I have a call from Charlie at four o'clock in the morning. I say I can do. I call another two guys. I have a few boats. More than 20 boats anyway.

FC: But usually you know more ahead than that?

JM: Yes. Because I have, every boat I have, I have his number. I can call them. I call the boat and say, hey, Joe or Tony, you know, Alan, say what day you think you're going to come in? In two or three days I know. You know what I mean?

FC: Yes, so you can plan.

JM: No surprises. Not too much now, you know what I mean? That's why I call them, yeah.

FC: That must have been hard.

JM: Oh, yeah.

FC: You're in the middle of something and somebody calls and says I'll be there in three hours.

JM: Oh, yeah. Like today. He says, hey Joe, I need a lumper. Him, he just called me. I have no time for that. I know a couple of guys live over here. I live in Acushnet, around eight miles from here. I know a guy called Bobby. He just live across the street. I call him, he came down.

FC: So he was able to do it?

JM: Yeah.

FC: Can you describe your job and the work you do?

[5:13]

JM: One of the hardest jobs in the world, oh yeah. Now, you go down on the boats, some boats easier than other ones, you know? Some boats have the high pens like this. Most ice. You have to take all the ice out, too, anyway. The ice and the pens of the fish. The ice, just the pen ice, that won't stay on a boat.

FC: So, the first thing you have to do is get the ice out of the way?

JM: Yeah. Some boats have, 90 percent of the boats have the boats, they call the boards that you call the [unintelligible] house. You have to break then down to start doing the, you know, before I can do fish to come out.

FC: How do you get rid of the ice?

JM: In the baskets. The same baskets bring the fish up --

FC: Bring the ice up?

JM: Yeah. You have to call all the time. You have to say to the guy in the hatch. He says ice. The guy to lump, he knows what's going on.

JM: And the ice just goes overboard?

JM: Yes.

FC: And the fish, when the fish is in the pen, it's loose, so then you put it in totes?

JM: Yes. No, I use a pitchfork. A pitchfork. You use them to fork them inside the basket. Everything on your body you use them to do that kind of job. The thing is you never stop one second. We never stop. Never. Ice have fish, not fish have ice.

FC: So it just keeps moving?

JM: Yeah, that's it, man.

FC: When you're using that pitchfork, you've got to be careful because you don't want to hurt the fish. I mean, you don't want to damage the fish.

JM: No, no, don't want to rip the fish. If the fish becomes ripped, you know what I mean, Bergie is going to say hey, I can't pay you a regular price for the fish. I have experience. It don't happen.

FC: So, you've got to go fast, but you've got to be careful?

JM: Oh, yeah. I have experience enough for that.

FC: Is that the hardest part?

JM: Oh, yes, one of the hardest job on the water, this one, oh yeah, tough. Tough, man.

FC: I mean, if it's an average-size boat, how long does it take you to offload it?

JM: Let's see. Depends if you have different kinds of fish, it takes more time. Like I do a couple days ago. What was it, Friday? Wednesday morning I came over here to take a boat for a Lightning Bay, a boat from Rhode Island. Just haddock he have. Just take me to take 17,000 an hour and a half. Because it take me an hour and a half, because I know the job. If he comes a guy don't know too much, it going to take more time, you know what I mean?

FC: Yup.

JM: That's why. One kind of fish is faster.

FC: It's faster. Now, if a boat has, say, has haddock and cod, is it already sorted on the boat?

JM: One pen have the cod, one pen have the haddock. Everything's separated, yeah.

FC: So it's already separated?

JM: Yes. Some guys, let's see if we have 500 pounds cod, you have no room for the 500. He put them in the top of that haddock or the top of the flounders, you know what I mean?

FC: Just to fill that pen?

JM: You call it a shaft.

FC: What does a big cod or a big haddock weigh? How much?

JM: Let's see. You don't see too much real cod now. Years ago, you see them. Now, you call them almost large. You don't see too many whales now. The biggest one I get, one is 58 pounds, years ago. 58, yeah.

FC: Are you working alone usually when you do this? By yourself?

JM: No. I work this one Wednesday alone because chap, last minute, he have to work over here. I have a partner with me, Steve Lacone. He's a lumper too. Seven years with me. He have 27 years. I going to make 27 years. He came over here young. He's younger than me, nine years.

FC: You've been working together for a while, so you know what to --

JM: Yeah, the last five, six years me and him work together. Because the guy who used to work, Jimmy Dwyer, he's retired now. That's why Steve, Joe, and me, because I have most of the boats, you know what I mean?

FC: Yeah. And when you're doing this you're working with the boat crew too, because they've got to --

JM: The crew, the crew, a lot of times, 99 percent of the boats just call lumpers for the hold. A few boats call hey, I need a guy to dump a hatch and winch, you know what I mean? Sometimes. But 99 percent just guy for the hold.

FC: And the boat crew does the rest?

JM: Yes.

FC: You're really not doing anything on deck or on the pier? You're in the hold pretty much?

JM: [laughs] I'm a hold man. Oh yeah, I'm a hold man. I work all those years in the hold, you know?

[10:20]

FC: You're working the same boats pretty much, the same captains?

JM: Yes, same captains, all those years, yeah. I take a lot of scallops too. Scallops are more easy, the fish, because it comes in bags. But some boats put them on the ice, too. The worst part to break the ice is hard.

FC: The scallops, they're probably sorted by size, too, right?

JM: Yes. They come right in bags called 10, 20s, U10s come out separate, yes.

FC: And you're handling those bags by hand? No pitchfork for those?

JM: No, no, no, no, no. Yeah, faster too. Because you pull them three bags in one second, to pull them just 160 pounds. To pull 160 pounds in a basket, you have two, three scoops, you know.

FC: A lot more handling.

JM: Yes. More work. Scallops are easy.

FC: You said you use a pitchfork. I mean, is it just a regular three-pronged --

JM: Just my pen. Three-pronger. A four-pronger is good for the haddock. If I knew the boat I'd have the guy bring the four-pronger.

FC: Why the difference?

JM: You know why? The haddock much smaller. Smaller. Flat fish, three-pronger I use better. You could use four-pronger on the flats, but three-pronger is the best one. For skates, for everything. For the haddock, no. The haddock, not too good.

FC: If you're working with flat fish, they're pretty small, right? I mean, they --

JM: Yes, flounders are big. They got flounders, you could call black flounders. Some ones seven, eight, nine ten pounds. Oh yeah, fat. Yesterday I take a boat, Sasha Lee, they had a few flounders. Big ones.

FC: But if the fish are smaller are they harder to handle? You've got to be more careful with the pitchfork?

JM: No, no. Same thing, same thing.

FC: Same thing?

JM: Yeah, same thing. Yellowtail, dabs. Sea dabs? Flounder now it comes no more peeweese, because the peeweese are the small one, no more that, because that's regulations, that's better now. You don't see, probably you see one or two peeweese in seven, eight thousand flounder.

FC: Yeah. Now, when you're doing this, are you wearing coveralls?

JM: Yes, yes, I wear the oils and stuff.

FC: And gloves?

JM: Oh yeah.

FC: Rubber gloves?

JM: Yeah. I put the linings inside too, because I have arthritis and before I don't use them, I start using them. No, just now for a few years. You know why, because you get sweat. The linings are good.

FC: What about doing it in the winter? Does that make it --

JM: It's the same thing. Same thing, same thing. The temperature, in the winter the you go down, the temperature in the hold is 17 in the summer, you get differences the time you come up. You see you're warmer, you sweat down there. Not too much the sweat. Chad, the next guy going to come, this guy sweats. No, I'm not much the sweat. Because Chad says, hey, Joe, I never see you sweat. I come over and you not sweat at work. He says one, hey, Joe, I think God make you just to be a lumper, he said, because he never see me sweat. Another thing, no, he said, to go down. That thing about the summer and the winter, the difference is in the winter you see the cold the time you come up. In the summer, like now, you're cold in the hold. You're coming up, it feels good. Yes.

FC: The fish hold temperature is the same summer or winter.

JM: Yes, the same, the same, yeah, same thing. That's why a lot of people say the guys don't know. You know some, says hey Joe, cold, huh? No, cold up here. That's why some winch jobs, I never take a winch job in the winter. Summer I take it. Just worked two boats on a winch job. [unintelligible], sometimes they'll have it, that's it.

[15:04]

FC: What's your sort of a normal work schedule? How many days a week do you usually work?

JM: Let's see. Sunday, you work every Sunday. Years ago, just Monday to Friday. No Saturdays, no Sundays. Now you work every day, man. Every day of the week.

FC: What time, usually? Start early?

JM: Yeah, like I said, you have no time. No time. Over here, this place is good because he take any time. The auction just Monday to Thursday. Friday is just scallops, because the auction, the scallops start nine o'clock. [unintelligible]. I got a call this morning, just eight o'clock he can't load scallops. No draggers. Draggers five o'clock or so. Five in the morning. If he comes any dragger after five, you can't take them out. You have to wait for Sunday. Sunday morning work start six in the morning. Over here, they take any time of day, any time of night.

FC: What hours are you going to work today?

JM: I have nothing. I have nothing today.

FC: Okay.

JM: I just came from the boats, you know, like I said, a slaughter house. Tomorrow I have a couple of boats to ice already. I have to build the boat, everything all set to ice, because you go to ice blend. Ice blend they put them on rollers You can come up here, you know wait, I have to wait for you to build a boat. The boat has to come over here to ice all set to ice. You know? That's why.

FC: So, you're doing that, too, for those same boats? You're loading ice --

JM: Yes. Any boats I unload the ice, I Ice the boat, yeah.

FC: Like now, what's the turnaround? How long is the boat in port before it goes back out?

JM: Some guys take two weeks. Some guys three, four days. Depends on how much quota he get, yes. That's why.

FC: It sounds like the regulations have changed things a lot.

JM: Oh yeah, changed.

FC: How's that affected you?

JM: Not much, because I have a few boats like I said. You know what I mean? The thing is they had lots of lumpers years ago. That job years ago and 40, 50 guys. Now just 12 to 14 guys, that's it. Lumpers.

FC: The scallops, that's gotten to be a bigger business.

JM: Oh yeah.

FC: So, you're doing more of that than maybe --

JM: No, I do more draggers.

FC: Do you?

JM: Most of the same. One or two draggers more. That's it.

FC: But when you first started, was there --

JM: Not much, because I'm new in this kind of job, he have like I said, they have 40, 50 guys that come before me. Oh yeah, you go look for a job, they hire you, they hire that guy because he already here, you know what I mean?

FC: When you started, with the union at that time?

JM: The union, yes, yes. Oh yeah.

FC: So, you'd call the union and get your job? Or they'd call you?

JM: I pay \$500 to go inside of the union at that time, yeah.

FC: How long were you in the union?

JM: Since January 11, 1991.

FC: Okay. You're still?

JM: Still, yes. Me and this guy Lacombe, yeah.

FC: How did you learn the work?

JM: That thing the pitchfork and a shovel, I use that in Portugal. I use that. Not taking fish, I used it for another, you know, like in the fields and things like that, I use them. The first time I work in the hold, that guy, he don't do lumping no more, Len Ferrara. He works for Woods Hole goes to Martha's Vineyard back on the job. First time I worked with him, he says, hey, man, you do this job before? No, why? You use the fork and the shovel like nothing. See? I never take fish, but I use that in Portugal. On the farms. I used to be a farmer, you know, potatoes and stuff. All my family are like that. My oldest brother, he likes fishing too. He has a small boat. Because over there they use farmers all the time.

FC: Your family, your relatives in the Azores, are farmers, not fishermen?

JM: No. No one. No one.

FC: But still, like you said, you knew how to handle the tools?

JM: Yeah, that's it. That's it.

FC: And you knew how to work hard.

JM: That's it. No, it's no problem like that. No, because I go in the hold alone, like I said, like nothing. I'm 62 years old. I'm the oldest lumper around, me and Gima Tomaza, the oldest one. Steve Lacone, my partner, are 52 years old.

FC: So you feel pretty tired at the end of the day? It's pretty hard work.

JM: No, no, not much. You know why?

[20:27]

Because sometimes like a couple days ago, couple days now, the beginning of the week, Monday, I work four boats. I start, as a matter of fact, over here, I already start four o'clock in the morning, I finished at six o'clock the next day.

FC: Just work right through?

JM: Yeah. I had four boats. They have between half an hour each one. Half an hour or an hour good enough. Like I said, them boats are hard to work and the other one is easy to work. The job no easy, because a lot of drag. A lot of boats have drag to do. This will kill us too. The drag.

FC: Most of the crews and the captains pretty easy to work with?

JM: Oh, yeah.

FC: Good guys?

JM: I know the good ones because all these years, from bad one, no, none was bad, you know what I mean? Because every company have guys tough, you know.

FC: Some are just easier to work with?

JM: If I can stay away from them, I just do my job and that's it. Not going to have no arguments, no nothing.

FC: And if you're offloading a boat, do you take any breaks at all?

JM: No breaks. I tell you, no, no breaks. You take a break, let's see, me and Steve Lacone work, sometime they put in three guys on our own. That's why I have this idea a few years ago, let's see a boat, like Wednesday, at the Heron? He have 42,000. That job called for four guys. What's four guys do another one? Are they going to look at each other? No work for four guys. Me and this guy Steve Lacone take 20,000 and another two guys come in, replaced me and Steve, they take the rest of the 20,000. At least you work two hours, I work two hours. Don't have to be four hours, four guys on a hold doing nothing, you know what I mean?

FC: Yeah.

JM: That's why, coming down, four guys, what are they going to do? I have this idea, this guy says, ah, but this is the best idea I see, yeah. Why you stay out five hours or six hours? Do your shit, you go home.

FC: Yeah and let somebody else get some work.

JM: Yes, that's it. That's why this is my idea, too, all the time.

FC: Let's see what else we have here. Do you get paid by the hour or by weight? Weight of fish?

JM: No weight, weight. Hour? Hour. Like that one, too, an hour and a half, I can take five, six hours.

FC: Yeah, yeah.

JM: No, it don't work like that.

FC: So, it's just the amount of fish you handle?

JM: Yes, yes. The more fast you go, the most fast, the money you make, that's it.

FC: When do you get paid? You get paid once a week?

JM: No. Let's say I work a boat today. You make the check today. You can pick the check for today or sometimes the boat don't sell all the fish the same day. They scratch, the price no good. You sit for the next day to pay. I go every Friday, sometimes 10 days.

FC: So, you get paid as soon as they settle with the auction company?

JM: Yes, That's it.

FC: Yeah.

JM: If he sells the fish every day, you have the check every day. But I never go. I go every week. Sometimes two weeks.

FC: When you're working, I mean, it sounds like you just want to get the job done?

JM: That's it.

FC: No time to joke around or --

JM: No, no, no.

FC: Just do the job.

JM: Don't play. I come down and work. That's it. I'm like this all the time. Everything I do, I have to do fast. Everything I do.

FC: It's better for you, the faster you can get it done?

JM: That's it, man. I'm not that thing, in my spare time, I can't work slow. I'm like that since I know myself. You ask that guy Steve about that, like a joke. Steve says hey, I tried to put Joe work slow because I can't hold him. No, I can't work slow. The ice company knows already. He

knows any time I unload, ice a boat, that machine, the ice has to come first. If it comes slow I'm coming up to say, hey, this too slow.

[25:07]

FC: How are you handling the ice? Is the ice in baskets?

JM: No. It's in the mound.

FC: Yeah.

JM: No, if it's in the mound, yeah, put the ice in the bags, yeah. Let's see, you put them five, six, seven baskets of fish. You're going to have some ice in the bags, and the bottom of the pen have ice. They put them in a bag like this.

FC: About a foot, yes.

JM: Yes, you have to take them out. You can't work better to work in the top of the ice and then down, no good. Every time you go in a pen, you take the ice out. Easy to do.

FC: Yup. So there's like a routine of moving the ice out of the way?

JM: Yes.

FC: Get to the fish?

JM: Yes, easy. Easy to do.

FC: Yes. And you've done it enough so it's --

JM: Oh, no. I know that job like nothing.

FC: You can do it with your eyes closed.

JM: Yes, that's true. Yup, yup.

FC: Is it harder to offload the fish or to load the ice?

JM: Yeah.

FC: Fish?

JM: Fish.

FC: Yeah, yeah.

JM: Fish.

FC: Let's see here. A couple more things here. What's the hardest part of the job? Or is there any part of it that you don't like?

JM: The hardest job like you said before, if you've got a captain or crew, you know, high all the time, or they want to make noise, I don't like that. This is the worst part of it for me. Know what I mean?

FC: Yeah.

JM: Argument. I don't like that. That's the worst part for me.

FC: Yeah.

JM: Nobody bother you, that's it, man. That job comes easy, yes.

FC: Just get the job done.

JM: It comes easy. Yeah, that's it, man.

FC: Yup. Have you worked for some of the same captains and boats for a long time? Stuck with some of the same people?

JM: Oh yes, yes. Long, long time.

FC: Yeah. So they know you and you know them?

JM: Yeah, yeah.

FC: That's a good arrangement.

JM: Oh, yeah.

FC: You know what you're getting into.

JM: That's true.

FC: Are there times when you got two or three boats coming in at the same time and they all want you? What do you do?

JM: Yes, you have to, let's see. If you use the two [unintelligible] you lost one boat. The three boats going one after one. The three boats I work two. I leave one for another guys, because I have the right to work on two, because I'm a boss lumper, you know what I mean? I can work two. A lot of times don't happen. I work one, I'm satisfied. That's why a lot of times, not a lot of times, I know the boats who's, I work by myself on one. I make the money on that one, and have

to go on the second one because I'm already make the money on that one, you know what I mean?

FC: Yeah.

JM: Let's say 400 dollars, me and you, comes 200 apiece. I make the 400 and have to work the second boat for another 200. You know?

FC: Yeah.

JM: That's what I do it a few times. If it comes, like you said, the three boats, yeah. A lot of times I work one, one or two, if it comes like that.

FC: The boats come in at all different times. It might be the middle of the night.

JM: Yes, like I tell you out there. The four boats I work in one day comes exactly time. We finish one, you have an hour difference. Another one, another hour. That's good.

FC: Yeah. You said you've been working with this guy Steve?

JM: Steve Lacone, yeah.

FC: Lacone?

JM: Lacombe. Yeah, he lives in Fall River. He's a lumper a long time, too. The skinny one.

FC: Yeah, so you got a good routine?

JM: Yeah, he's a nice guy, too. Nice and quiet. Like me, coming down work, that's it. It's good.

FC: No fooling around.

JM: Yeah, yeah, he's a good guy.

FC: Just do the job. What's the best part of it? The best part of the work, the job?

JM: The best part of me on this job, you know, because you know the job like, you know nobody bother. You come on down and you work, that's it. You don't have to punch card, none of, this is the best part of the job on this. You know your job. This is our job. A hard job, is our jobs, you know what I mean? You're not over there, eight, nine, ten hours, you know?

FC: People leave you alone. I mean, you're kind of on your own.

JM: Yeah, that's it.

FC: You like that part of it?

JM: Yeah. I like that.

FC: Yeah.

JM: There are guys known me for years, he knows. A lot of times I don't go on a boat, hey, where's Joe Moniz? [unintelligible] It's just play, you know?

[30:07]

FC: Do you ever have a captain who's looking over your shoulder, make sure you know what you're doing?

JM: Naw, naw.

FC: Maybe when you were younger/

JM: No, no.

FC: No? No.

JM: That's why I said about the [unintelligible]. First time I work with him, he says hey man, I think you do this job before. I said I never do. How come you -- Hey, I used to in Portugal, that's why I know. One thing I have, I work the two ways. Left and right, you know?

FC: They know, the captains know, that if they're working with you, you know what you're doing and they don't have to worry.

JM: That's it. That's it.

FC: They don't have to watch over your shoulder.

JM: No, no, no, no. Nothing. But the boats, like you said, I can build a boat with my eyes closed. I know the boats. I know that's it.

FC: Yeah. Is it any harder on the smaller boats because you don't have as much room to work?

JM: No, years ago, but those boats disappear already. You have one, a little bit, he comes with squid, but not too bad anyway. But I have one. Two friends years ago, two friends work like this all the time. Yeah.

FC: Leaning over?

JM: The only room you have to support your head on the hatch. That's it, man.

FC: That made it even harder.

JM: Oh, yes. That's the worst one I got.

FC: What else is different? Like when you first started, what else has changed from what it was?

JM: The time, that's the big change, like I said. Years ago, you come in any times, like now, any time, you know the boat going to come. Years ago, you don't know.

FC: You didn't know because you didn't have the cell phones.

JM: No, nothing, no. You never got something, the beepers and stuff like that. Why you have a beeper if you never beep me? Hey, I'm over here on the dock already, Joe. Hey, man. I used to live over here, just two minutes away.

FC: But the rest of it, the baskets, the pitchfork, the gear, all that's the same pretty much?

JM: Yes, the baskets now, better than years ago. You used to have the covered baskets, the small ones. Take more time to unload the boats. Now every basket 200 pounds, or 150 at least, anyway. That's better. More bigger, better for us. The fish come fast.

FC: But everything else is --

JM: Nothing changed for better the time, time-wise.

FC: The types of fish you're handling has changed some?

JM: Yes, changed too, yeah. Oh yeah. Years ago bring more fish. Oh yeah.

FC: And different types of fish?

JM: Different, yes. That time, years ago, the boats bring the skate. The skate wings, you take the skates at night time to pull the fish and the auction is the next morning. Yeah.

FC: What kinds of fish are you handling? I know we've talked about --

JM: If I can remember, the skate wings, monkfish, pollock, haddock, hake, sea dabs, flounders, cod. I said haddock already. Flounder I said. Red fish. Yup. [unintelligible]. That's it.

FC: Quite a few. The skates, I know sometimes the skates are used for lobster bait? Or are they using them for food?

JM: The skate's for lobster bait. The small ones coming, the boats, small boats bring it in barrels already. Yeah.

FC: Okay. So that's --

JM: Brings the whole skate, the small ones, yeah. That's what...

FC: And the monkfish? They're just using the cheeks?

JM: No, they caught the monkfish, you cut the monkey-tails. You cut the heads. Just bring the tail. Years ago we were using the whole thing, but I think the market don't buy them no more. All these fish to take out, that one's tough.

FC: Do you eat a lot of seafood yourself?

JM: Oh yeah, no seafood. A lot of fish I eat, yeah. Yesterday I eat the monkfish.

FC: Yeah, yeah. Is there any --

JM: I don't bring more because my wife says oh, bring some. I bring them. Hey, they're leftovers from yesterday. Hey, now you tell me to bring, I'm an easy eater. I eat everything. Everything. Any kind of food in the world I eat. I'm easy.

FC: So, you like the work? You like what you do?

[35:00]

JM: Oh, I like, yeah. I like. You know why? Because like I said, I like the work because I know the job. If I don't know, probably I don't like it, you know what I mean? I worked construction before I came here. I work in Concord, Mass., for five years. I stopped work there because the guys used to pay for overtime, two hours driving. The company stopped the pay. Said I'm not coming over here two hours driving if I don't get paid. Yeah, that's it. That's why I quit, yes. My youngest, though, I have two daughters. One going to be 29, another one 23. Six years difference. If you work construction, you'd already retired. You don't want to be retired. With that time, God knows I have to do, you know what I mean?

FC: What are you going to do if you retire? You can't sit around the house. You're going to get bored.

JM: No, I'm not that kind, no, no. No way, man.

FC: You got to keep moving.

JM: That's it, that's it. Oh, yeah. Keep moving.

FC: Yup. I'll let you get back, but --

[36:10] End of audio