

Interviewee Name: Charlie Alley

Project/Collection Title: The First Coast – Jonesport-Beals

Interviewer(s) Name(s) and Affiliation: Galen Koch – the First Coast

Interview Location: Jonesport/Beals

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Interview Description: In this interview, Charlie Alley talks about the history of Jonesport, sounds that could be heard in the town when he was young, and notecards that he created to document the genealogy and important dates of his and other families in the area. He shares about his early days of lobstering, sharing and building boats with others, the death of a lobsterman, and how he found the boat he went over in. Alley also discusses changes in the range of offshore, prices of baits, tending traps, and the seasonality of the industry. Alley explains his participation in the co-op and writing his autobiography.

Keywords: Lobster, genealogy, boat building, seasons, offshore, clamming, co-op, industry prices

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Transcribed By: Galen Koch

[Beginning of Track 1]

[00:00:00.00]

Galen Koch: Basically, we'll just do exactly what we've been doing.

Charles Alley: You just tell me what you want.

GK: I'm just going to record it. First, you'll just say your first and last name.

CA: My name is Charles Alley.

GK: Where were you born and when, Charlie?

CA: I was born in Jonesport on Old House Point on January the 6th, 1935.

GK: Can you tell me —? You've told me a lot about this, but can you tell me a little bit about where your family came from and some of that family history? Especially, I want to know about Head Harbor.

CA: Well, my father lived in Head Harbor when he was very young, and his mother and father lived there in Hatchet Harbor. My mother's father and mother used to go down summers and camp in Hatchett Harbor. [00:00:59.06] And I was down there when I was a kid. I can tell you a story about down there if you want to hear.

GK: Yeah.

CA: [laughter] There was an animal that come down there and probably come down there over the ice when the ice would freeze. Sometimes it'd freeze, and you could walk to Head Harbor, and they called it a Lucifer. I guess it was just a bobcat. [laughter] Well, my father had bought some traps from someone on the other side of the island, and he and my mother was going over there and taking me in a baby carriage to prepare those traps. Well, when he went over, he sees some berries — I think they were blueberries. He went to pick some, and that thing jumped. And he took off back for the harbor where my grandfather was. My grandfather said he never seen a carriage go so fast. [laughter]

GK: And he was going out there to trap it?

[00:02:00.04]

CA: No, he was going out to repair some lobster traps he'd bought from a fellow that was on the other side of the island.

GK: Oh, that's great. Hatchet Cove, you were saying, had a bunch of different names? Was that you who was telling me that? Somebody called it one thing, and then another person called it another thing.

CA: Oh, yes. They actually called it Hatchet Harbor, and there was a reason for it. When you go from the road – you go up on the road across the island, you just go up in there a little ways, and on the right-hand side of the road, my grandfather told me that there was a rock – it's not an impression – it's bigger, raised up – of a hatchet. He showed me the rock, but that's been over sixty years ago – sixty-five. I could never find it because it's covered up with dirt now.

[00:03:03.28]

GK: It's kind of like the foot when you're going –

CA: Up in Bucksport, right. Now, it eventually became called – some people called it Church Cove, and why is that? Because the church was in that cove. A church and a school.

GK: So there was a whole village out there; it was a whole community.

CA: Roughly a hundred –between a hundred and a hundred and twenty-five people were there at one time. The biggest settlement was in Hatchet Harbor. Another one was Crow Point and sporadically different places. Some Cedar Cove – some people lived in that. Biggest percentage of the people are Alleys. They had a graveyard – on the northwest corner of the island, there's a graveyard. [00:04:00.00] And they're very superstitious people.

GK: How do you know that? Did you hear stories about it?

CA: I've heard stories about it. Yeah. Some of them I never wrote down. It's a job to remember them completely.

GK: Just bits and pieces.

CA: Yup. [laughter]

GK: Were they superstitious about ghosts or spirits or just in general?

CA: When someone's going to die, they say the forerunner's coming before they die. Elmer [inaudible] told me about a fellow that – usually, they sat up with people when they were sick, and they were going to die; somebody usually sat with them. Well, Elmer and this fellow that was a little strange, they sat up with this person, and Elmer said the fellow that was with him got so scared because he was afraid that the forerunner was coming. [laughter]

[0:05:03.0]

GK: He was going to see him or something?

CA: Yeah. And there was a – Elmer's father – my grandmother, when she was down there, she said his father was the best one for sickness on the island. He helped people's sickness. He was a very good man. Helped people, laid people out when they died, all that stuff.

GK: Was it different –? Have you heard stories of different kinds of medicine than we have now? Different ways of helping people? I assume they weren't taking them to the hospital all the time.

CA: No. [laughter] all I can think of – little funny things. Everyone used to go around with these rags around their heads soaked in vinegar. A lot of the women did.

GK: Why?

CA: That's supposed to make them feel better. They were sick, I guess.

[00:05:59.15]

GK: Oh my gosh, that's so funny. I wonder if it would work.

CA: I've never tried it. I never tried it. I got a thing that showed where a lot of the people have – I took and made a big piece of paper, tried to draw – I'm not a drawer, but I draw all the island around there, and I drew the coves and things. I sat down with my mother, and she told me where people lived best she could. I think she was born in 1916, and they left the island. The last person off the island was 1941.

GK: Why did they leave?

CA: Well, when they first started on the island, it was just as easy to live on an island as it was the mainland because everything on the mainland had to come by boats and everything down on this little island had to come by boats. But when they started coming by trucks, then people

realized it was easier to live up there; they wouldn't have to bring all this stuff down to the island and cart it up over the bank. So they kept moving off and moving off, and finally, they was all gone.

[0:07:10.4]

GK: When you were young or when your parents were – in 1916, the network of roads in Maine was really nonexistent. Was it hard to get from one place to another?

CA: They had roads. Of course, they're not as good as roads are now. They had roads; you could get places.

GK: But it took a lot longer.

CA: Yes.

GK: Somebody told me – I don't remember what they said – maybe a ten-hour trip to Boston to Deer Isle.

CA: My father used to drive when I was a kid to Boston, and it used to take him about eight hours from Jonesport. I think they've cut it down now, probably six and a half, something like that, seven. It's shorter.

[0:08:03.6]

GK: So the last person left that community in 1941, you said?

CA: Yes. They didn't have very many businesses there, just a very few. They had a small granite place. And at the head of Hatchett Harbor, they had a boarding house; that was for the people who worked in it. And on the eastern end of the island, they had a lathe mill. They sawed lathes. In those times, people fixed their houses up. They put lathes on them and then plastered them. I think it was around 1935 when what few was living there – they woke up one day, and there's these strange people there coming. [laughter] Come to find out, there was a boat that went ashore down on the eastern end of the island loaded with lathes. [inaudible] coming from Canada, I imagine. That was the people [who] got ashore and walked up there to the village.

[0:09:09.4]

GK: Oh, wow. That was a boat that was shipwrecked on the island, full of lathe?

CA: Yeah. The boat sank right there. My grandfather tried to get the wheel off of it. He did get it slung, and he started to go from that place into another beach and [inaudible] beach it, so he could tie it good. Lost it. [laughter]

GK: So you didn't live out, but you went out when you were a kid.

CA: I can't remember being there, no. I would be out there. My grandfather took me out around there when I was a kid. They had roads all over the island. At one time, there was a painter that lived on – I don't think he lived there permanent, but it was probably in the summer or something. He lived on top of the head. Jay Connaway, I think his name is, but I don't think he's real famous.

[0:10:13.4]

GK: But he lived out there on the island?

CA: Yeah.

GK: Can you tell me about moving the houses? Did a lot of people do that? Move houses from one place to the other?

CA: I'll tell you about that in just a minute. I'll tell you what my father said about those people down there. They used to go to haul, and [by the] time the rocks got warmed up, they'd be back setting on those rocks, with them [inaudible] sticks. [laughter] He didn't haul very long. [laughter] Yeah, they did take houses off of the island. My grandmother's house – grandmother's and grandfather's house. It was bought from a fella named Joe Kelley. My grandfather was a Kelley – some of his relatives. And he paid five hundred dollars for it in 1919 and moved it to Jonesport. And Ruby Kelley wrote a book about – this came from Big Sheep Island. Joe Kelley used to have his family on there in the summers, and he had a weir there. And Ruby Dobbins – well, she's Ruby Kelley, one of his children, wrote a book called *Sheep Island Chronicles*, about her living on there.

[0:11:38.6]

GK: She's not still alive, is she?

CA: No, she's dead. Let's see; I was trying to think of something else. Oh, now my father's and mother's house came from Head Harbor, and they only paid a hundred dollars for it. And it's a much better house than my grandfather had for that price money. And the fellow that he got it from was a Sawyer, and my father was named for some of his people; my father's name was

Simeon. That's not a very – it's kind of an odd name. So I think he owed my father good, and he let him use what they called a donkey; it was a make-and-break engine to haul it up. So he was [inaudible] okay.

[0:12:30.8]

GK: To haul it up?

CA: Oh, they brought it in. You know where the marina is?

GK: Yes.

CA: The [inaudible] over there towards that little wharf [inaudible], where you had your – met you the first time there. They put it on the barge, and then they'd bring it into shore. They had a lot of what they call [inaudible], poles, and square pieces of wood to lock it up. It was a straight shot from there right up to where both houses went. The houses weren't there then like they are now. So straight shot, and they took it up there. Now, there's still another house on the point, but those houses were made larger after they got up there because they were very small on the island.

GK: Okay.

CA: There's still one place on the point that's got a house standing that came from down to Crow Point there.

GK: Where's that? Which house is it?

CA: Well, you know where Old House Point is? You go right almost to the end, the last house on the right, and there sometimes will be a big dog chained out there, and that came from Crow Point. (Bertie L.?) Alley's house.

GK: Did they have foundations, or were they just sort of set on rocks?

[0:13:57.7]

CA: Sometimes, they'd have little square rocks. Probably they got [from] the granite place, they've probably. They weren't up very high to show – most of them was something like that. Very small. People didn't have much money down there.

GK: Yeah. So you grew up in one of those houses that came –

CA: From Head Harbor.

GK: – from Head Harbor. And what was it like? You were on Old House Point at that time.

CA: I lived on Old House Point all my life until I moved up here.

GK: To Mason's Bay. We're in Mason's Bay.

CA: To Mason's Bay, right. Yeah.

GK: What was it like down there when you were a little kid?

CA: Old House Point?

GK: And Jonesport.

CA: Oh, used to have a lot more – the house that came from Crow Point – they lived there for a while. The man was in the Coast Guard or might have been – he was either in the lighthouse service or the Coast Guard. The lighthouse service became the Coast Guard, and a lot of people – (Cecil Kelley?) was in the lighthouse service, and he retired from that. Her man was a lighthouse keeper, and he lived up quite a few years. He tended the light up on Seguin. You know where that is?

[0:15:27.3]

GK: Yeah. An island, right?

CA: Yes, it's an island in the mouth of the Kennebec River, one of those rivers up there, and all of his family lived up there in the summers when they were up there. And then he come down – last time was down to Libby Island. That's eastward of us here. He owned a place up above us there that – some of the people moved from Head Harbor, and they moved into those houses when they come up.

GK: Those houses on Old House Point?

CA: Yeah. Now the only one – there's two of those. One on top of the hill that didn't come from Head Harbor. That's tore down. I tore that down. My mother is still there. My grandmother and grandfather's that's tore down, and I had that tore down. Well, it was getting such hard shape; it wasn't worth repairing.

GK: Were they built to last? Were they built pretty well?

CA: Well, they weren't – a lot of them was built out of lumber that was picked up adrift. You might have – for a stud, you might have a two by three, or a two by four and a half. You never knew what's going to be studs for the wall.

GK: It's whatever you've got. Whatever you found.

[0:16:56.3]

CA: Whatever they picked up. Whatever they picked up. [laughter] And my grandfather said none of them never had much wood. They burnt wood, of course. In the winter, you'd see them going out in the woods before dark, backing out a tree for wood.

GK: Wow. Was there any sort of sawmill out there or something?

CA: Oh, no. They'd just go out in the woods and blow down. They'd take it.

GK: Just take it and chop it up?

CA: Yup.

GK: Sometimes people have mentioned – I'm probably getting ahead of myself, and maybe this isn't right, but a mill or something nearby here. Was there anything like that? I don't know why someone was mentioning it. It could be that it's way out in Jonesboro or something.

CA: They have had little, small ones, but none big, no big ones. Years ago, they used to take – in the wintertime, they'd go in and cut wood, bring it out to the side of the river. And when it comes spring, they'd push it off the river, and then it'd float down the river. Well, usually, you had your mills alongside the river. Sometimes you'd work with mill power. They'd get the power by the water, work the mill.

GK: Rushing by.

CA: They had one over in Whitneyville.

[0:18:22.7]

GK: Maybe that's what it is. There was a mill nearby.

CA: Yeah. St. Regis was the name of the company when I was a kid.

GK: So you were saying the houses on Old House Point, there were a lot from Head Harbor.

CA: They came and lived there, yeah.

GK: And so when you were little, were there a lot of families living there? Was it kind of busy?

CA: Yeah. There was always kids to play with. Now there isn't hardly a kid on there. Maybe one. No.

GK: Yeah, that's a big difference, it seems.

CA: Oh, a lot different.

[00:19:00.10]

GK: Are they just more spread out now, the families? Because there still are some young families in Jonesport, it seems like to me.

CA: There's some, but Jonesport's population has gone down.

GK: Do you know what it was when you were a kid?

CA: Oh, sixteen to eighteen probably. Now it's probably fourteen [hundred]. Of course, in 1925, it was more because, in '25, Beals was set off from Jonesport. Beals used to be part of Jonesport, and Jonesport used to be part of Jonesboro at one time. Jonesport got set off in 1832, I believe it was, and Beals got set off from Jonesport in 1925.

GK: Two separate towns.

CA: Yup. And if they hadn't got the bridge, a lot of the people on Beals would have moved off. They had a ferry, but it was very good.

GK: Was it just one of those little flat ferries?

CA: Little barge [inaudible] lobster boat pushing it – tied up to the side, pushing it. There's a lot of tide there where they had it. A lot of tide because [inaudible] bridge, by the bridge. And that was just on the shore from the bridge.

GK: So would you have to wait for a certain time when you could go back and forth if the tide was running wrong?

CA: No, I think they went – I guess they went – I don't know if they went in every kind of weather, but they went fairly good – I guess they just went right back and forth just as soon as they had people. Then they had a lobster boat that just you'd take passengers. While they used to have three factories here, and all the whistles were different. When they'd blow a whistle, if it was one, it's of the factories – one meant something; that was for someone's job [inaudible] people come work. Probably two was another set of workers because you don't need them all at once. And they'd come over on the ferry. Uriah Beal had the ferry when I was a kid.

GK: Uriah. That's an amazing name, too. So many cool names.

CA: I think they was good at making up names on Beals Island. [laughter]

[0:21:28.3]

GK: Do you remember hearing those whistles?

CA: Oh, yes.

GK: Was that a thing?

CA: You could hear them all over town on Beals Island.

GK: Wow.

CA: That's how they signaled the people to come to work.

GK: Oh my gosh. That's amazing. They were probably pretty loud.

CA: Yeah, they were. They had to be. They had to be pretty loud.

GK: And the three factories – there was Underwood's.

CA: Underwood's is where the Coast Guard is now. Middle Factory is just a little ways below the co-op. They buy lobsters there. And then Charlie Stevens, which is tore down now, but it's in the mouth – you know where the end of Old House Point is? You just keep going around, go right up in, and it's on the northern side of the creek. Old House Point at high water is a peninsula.

[0:22:21.3]

GK: Right.

CA: Surrounded by water on three sides.

GK: Is that over near –? Was Charlie Stevens near the Sawyer house where the historical society is?

CA: You know where the post office is?

GK: Yeah.

CA: You take the road before you get to the post office going uptown. You take that road, keep right on going towards the shore, and it was right there on the shore.

GK: Gosh, maybe we should just go for a tour of town.

CA: Well, you'd learn a lot.

GK: But not now. I know.

CA: You'd learn a lot.

GK: That would probably be the easiest way to do it.

CA: You could get pictures that way, too.

GK: I know when Greta's here. She'll be here tomorrow.

[00:23:02.28]

GK: Well, anyway, we'll talk about that after. [laughter] So there were the sounds. I'm so curious about that and other sounds that might have been in town that aren't there anymore.

CA: Now, I don't know – the historical society had it on a float; it was one of the whistles that they used to have in one of the factories. Now, where it is now, I don't know. Bill Plaskon could tell you. But they had it on a float.

GK: I'll have to ask him. I should write that down so I don't forget. May I have one of your pens?
Just a pen.

CA: You want a pen or you want some paper?

GK: Just a pen. Thank you.

CA: I can give you some paper, if you want it.

GK: That's okay. I've got this.

CA: I've got some right there.

GK: Thanks. Nice note cards.

[0:24:07.3]

CA: Yeah. That's where I got my names and people on upstairs.

GK: Your names for what?

CA: Let me just take one. I'll show you. I have people's names right there, and if I know where they lived, I put it there. Over here is where they were born. Over here is a mother and father. Over here is the date they were born, and over here is the date they died if I have that information. Here's who they married, the date they married behind there, and if they was married more than once, I had M-1, M-2, if they married – M-3 – according to how many times they was married. Then I have the children down here. I have all the children, and I have the date they were born and died if I had it, and who they married, and the day they got married, the date. I go down there, and I turn them over. I don't have a lot of it, but if they're buried in Greenwood Cemetery, I have that. Over here, what they died of, if I knew, and where they died.

[0:25:23.1]

GK: Wow. Do you have these for people that you knew or just in general? Is it a genealogy type thing?

CA: I started out just getting my own family, but it snowballed. My wife – she's got some people down in Prince Edward Island, and they did some genealogy on her family. She says, "Why don't you do it on your family?" So I went, and I started, and it ended up – I got I don't know how

many people. I got them over in Harrington, Cutler, all over here. I just tried to get the most prominent families.

[00:26:10.16]

GK: What are some of those last names that you have in your family? You've got Alley and Kelley.

CA: Alley is probably the biggest amount of cards I've got in any one family, and they all came from two people: John Alley and Tryphena Heath. They had twelve children. Now, I'm not sure but I think they was born, some of them – because they kept coming down the coast, and they ended up on Beals Island. I told you where the house was. You turn and go down to the back field. The first house on the right as you turn, that's where they was; that's their house. And there's twelve. And I go back through five of them.

[00:27:00.12]

GK: You go back to them through five –

CA: Five of the children.

GK: Interesting. It gets all mixed up. [laughter]

CA: I don't know of anyone – I probably got the – well, this stuff is on genealogy on the historical society. There's a lady come and put it – I just have it on these cards. She put it on the computer.

GK: That's great.

CA: She started doing some of her family, but she couldn't get it figured out. Trouble is she didn't have the dates, and a lot of the time people's names are the same.

GK: Right.

CA: So she'd come over and get a box of my cards and go home and do it, bring them back to me, get another one, until she did the whole of them. And then (Donnie Woodard?) did a lot of it too. So he's got a lot of his. He's gone through the cemeteries in town, and that's on the computer down at the historical society – all the cemeteries, where they are. They're even going around – and some of it – there's been a fellow going around taking pictures of the cemetery stones in the

lot, where it is. So you just go down to the historical society, and you can find out if you're buried in Jonesport pretty much.

[0:28:14.1]

GK: Wow.

CA: But poor (Donnie?) did an awful lot of work on that stuff and, of course, he's not very [well].

GK: I know. It's really sad.

CA: It's too bad. People work all their life, save, try for your old age, for something – you may never know whether you'll even be there.

GK: I know. It's really sad.

CA: It is. I feel sorry for him.

GK: Why is it important for you to do that kind of thing and know that about your family?

CA: Well, to give my kids – they can find out where they – if they want to go back. The thing of it is, it's a job to get young people to join the historical society. You don't get interested until you get older, and when you're younger, you don't have the time anyway. My oldest boy's got three kids, and he doesn't have time enough for nothing. He does a lot with his kids. He takes them to practice, ball games, and all that.

[0:29:19.5]

GK: That's a second full time job.

CA: It is. It is.

GK: Yeah. But when you grow up in a place like this, it's significant; you could probably visit where a lot of those names and family members are. You can see where they lived. Maybe they weren't all in Maine, but a lot of them probably were, which is kind of unique.

CA: I know where my grandfather was brought up, what house, down Kelley's Point. He left school at fourteen.

GK: What did he do?

CA: He was a lobster fisherman. He did anything he could to make a living – lobster fishermen. He dug clams. He even used to cut bushes on the side of the road for the state in the summers. You know how they do it now with a tractor? He's done that before in the summer. He used to go handlining some summers; that's catching cod and pollack and selling them. He did anything he could to make a living. It was so years ago you couldn't make a living just lobstering. You had to do a lot of other things, but now some people make a living just lobstering.

GK: Is that because you couldn't catch enough lobster, or there wasn't enough demand?

CA: Well, they never caught the volumes of lobsters. They never went so far offshore. Lobstering's altogether different than it was when I was a kid.

GK: When did you start?

[00:31:03.02]

CA: I went with my grandfather when I was very young. My father used to drive a lobster truck to Boston, and my grandfather lobster-fished, so he'd start taking me with him. I'd go with him picking wrinkles in the summer sometimes. He'd give me so much for a ten quart pail full of them. [laughter] And then I used to go with him, and he'd give me what he'd get out of two or three traps, and I used to bait the pockets and band the lobsters for him.

GK: That was when everything, the equipment, was all totally different, right?

CA: Oh, I guess it was. The first boat he had – not the first one, the one that I went with him first, I think he paid six hundred dollars all set, engine and all.

GK: Wow.

[00:31:59.09]

CA: Of course, it ain't so big as these boats now

GK: Do you know how many feet that boat was?

CA: Yeah. Thirty-six feet long. She wasn't very wide though, probably eight, eight and a half. One day, I was with him. Of course, I wasn't very big, and he's hauling this trap up. Looked on top of it, and there's a great big two-pound lobster. He says, "Grab it!" I didn't dare to. He

reached down and grabbed it, and the lobster grabbed him with the other claw, and he went like that, lobster let go, and the lobster went right off the other side of the boat and went overboard.

GK: Oh my god. Was he hurt?

CA: No, he didn't get hurt. They can hurt you, though, if they get you right. Yeah.

GK: Has to be just the right – they have to have just the right grip, though, on you, right?

CA: Well, those crusher claws, if they get you, you'll know they got you.

GK: Have you ever been snapped?

CA: I haven't been bit by one of them because they're slower than the – the other one's (picketer?) and that's quicker.

GK: Picket?

CA: With the picks on the end. And if they get you, you grab it, and you get scratched. Sometimes you get mad, and you kill them. [inaudible]

[0:33:16.2]

GK: It's like a wasp. It's like getting bit by a wasp; you just kill them. So you started with your grandpa on that boat?

CA: Yeah. I started with him, and I stayed with him until I got out of high school. Then I got a small boat, and she wasn't very big. She wasn't very able. I used to have to put a trap on the bow when I was [inaudible] all around all day. And one of our neighbors had a little bit bigger outboard. He says [inaudible], "You take my outboard before you drown." I took his and used it that fall, and then I had one built on Beals Island. I had an outboard built about sixteen feet long. I used that for a few years. Then my father wanted to get back into lobstering. Well, I was going to have a big boat built anyway. So I had a big boat built, and that was about '57, 1957, along in there. It must have been a little bit before because the bridge opened in 1957, and I used to have to go over. I couldn't go across the bridge to go over to get to see the boat on the island, used to have to take another boat. I got that, and I didn't go in that for a couple years after I had it. I let him use it. I'd go in it in winters; we'd go offshore. So I wanted to go in my boat, so I built him a boat – had him a boat built.

[0:34:49.3]

GK: How did you have all the money for that? You were working and lobstering?

CA: I was cheap. I saved my money, and I didn't buy things until I had the money. I didn't borrow.

GK: Who was the boat builder that you were using over on Beals?

CA: Mariner Beal, a fellow they call "Lovey."

GK: Lovey?

CA: Someone said they didn't see anything "lovey" about him. [laughter] You'd go in there, and he'd play all kinds of tricks on you. If he was painting on the boat, he'd just [inaudible] take the paintbrush [inaudible] give you a swipe when he went by. [laughter]

[0:35:27.8]

GK: He was a prankster?

CA: Yeah.

GK: Played pranks?

CA: Yeah.

GK: Now, were there a lot of different boat builders to choose from?

CA: Yes. More on Beals than there was in Jonesport. One family had as much as four or five boat builders in that family. I don't know how many, but quite a few over there. We interviewed some of them for the historical society.

GK: And how did you pick Lovey?

CA: Well, I picked him to build my outboard first. And he built my outboard, and I was satisfied, so I got him to build my boat. If he had fiberglass boats, I'd probably get – my last fiberglass boat, I'd have got from him. But I didn't. I wanted a fiberglass boat [inaudible], so I didn't have to bring her ashore and dry her up and paint her every summer.

[0:36:20.0]

GK: You would have to do that with wooden boats?

CA: You'd have to bring them up, clean them, paint them. Every summer, you did that to them. It's foggy in the summer. You get them on the bank. You may have them there a week before you can do a thing to them.

GK: Wow.

CA: I had the second fiberglass boat in Jonesport.

GK: What was the name of that boat?

CA: The *Donna Faye*. That's my sister.

GK: Oh, nice.

CA: Well, then I changed it afterward and put (*Abby O?*).

GK: What year was that, that you got a fiberglass boat?

CA: 1974, I believe. Yeah. Come from New Hampshire.

GK: Oh, it did? Down in the Seacoast? Were they making it there?

CA: Newington.

GK: Newington. I don't even know where that is.

[00:37:15.09]

CA: Well, it's not too far from the shore.

GK: But was there anyone making them on Beals at that point?

CA: I don't think on Beals, but there was some in Maine. One of the first ones was Webbers Cove – made the first ones. And the first fiberglass boat here came from Webbers Cove. It was Bud Smith. He had the first fiberglass boat, and it's still around. And my fiberglass boat is still around now. I gave it to my son.

GK: I'm writing Bud Smith.

CA: I told him if he would stay with me until I got done lobstering, I'd give him what I had. So I gave him my boat, and I got a wharf, and that's between the two boys. I ain't made it over officially, but it's theirs, and what traps I had and buoys. He wanted a newer boat after a while, so he sold the one I gave him and then bought a newer boat. He got a real nice deal in it. The fellow he sold it to used it a couple years. He parted the mooring and went in on the bridge, and it sunk.

[0:38:30.8]

GK: Woah, really?

CA: They towed it up into a cove above the bridge, and my brother-in-law makes fiberglass boats, and the insurance company gave him the boat. He took it, and they said, "You can have it." He's fixed it up now, so it's still going.

GK: Wow.

CA: The engine was all right. So he just patched it up. Probably [more] rugged than it was when I first got it.

GK: Wow. How did it get loose from the mooring?

CA: Parted the chain.

GK: Parted the chain.

CA: I don't know how good it was.

GK: I heard a story about a boat – that happening the other day to a boat in the harbor here.

CA: You probably heard about the one that went – they couldn't find her!

GK: Yeah, they can't find her.

CA: They found her now.

GK: They did? Where was it?

CA: Way offshore, off Milbridge.

GK: Oh my gosh.

CA: I guess it didn't hurt her hardly a bit. Scuffed her up just a little.

GK: Amazing.

CA: Well, the fellow that see it – I don't know who it was. They was fishing off [inaudible] way off. It went off, and there she were. He put someone in her, started her up, and took her in.
[laughter]

GK: That's so funny. Because I imagine if you saw that, it would be kind of eerie to see a boat out there just floating along.

CA: Floating away.

GK: Eerie.

CA: Yeah, it is.

[00:40:00.06]

GK: And you would be – I would be worried, but I'm sure maybe they had told people that this boat –

CA: Well, you do get worried when you see a boat staying in a position for quite a while and not move. We had that happen to us once.

GK: Really? What happened?

CA: Well, my youngest boy was with me. We was hauling to [inaudible] to what you call Mark Island, hauling some traps, and this boat went out by us, started hauling on – we couldn't see him hauling; he was around on the eastern side of the island. And we hauled all of the traps up. Then we was going out to Black Rock, which is outside Mark Island. Went out there, and this boat was there. It just stayed there. So I went up alongside, and I put Brian in – that's my youngest boy. No one in her. Fellow had fallen overboard.

GK: Oh my gosh.

CA: So I went back. We called the Coast Guard, and they come down. We went back and started hauling traps of his to see the last one he baited. We found the last trap he baited; then, we told them that that's probably where he fell overboard. They never found him. The Coast Guard [has] a way of doing searches. They'll make a grid, and they'll search this grid and that grid. The thing of it was, they took the grid way up to Mason's Bay, which an Olympic swimmer couldn't swim up in Mason's Bay if the tide's coming out of that bay. They were just wasting time there. But there was a scallop dragger, a few years later, dragged up a bone on the northward side of that island, and they had the DNA, and that was his bone.

[0:41:44.0]

GK: Woah.

CA: Who did it was – you know Ernest Kelley? His boy did it.

GK: Oh, wow. The one that I see at Byron's sometimes?

CA: No, not that one. It's a different one. It's Ernest Jr.

GK: Because he's got four of them, right?

CA: Oh, you know.

GK: I talked to him the other day. He's great.

CA: He's a character.

GK: Yeah. He just tells stories. They just rumble out of him.

CA: I could tell you stories, but I wouldn't want it going there.

GK: [laughter] I can pause it for a second.

CA: If you want to pause it.

[Recording paused]

[0:42:19.7]

GK: The boat out there – do you feel like when you're out on the water –? You're all competing with each other, but you're also all looking out for one another.

CA: You look out for one another. If someone gets in trouble, anyone will go help you. If you're in trouble, they'll get you before the Coast Guard will. If they're close, they'll come right around.

GK: Do you have stories of people being rescued and not dying at sea?

CA: I towed someone in from about ten miles offshore one night. And guess who it was? Ernest Kelley!

GK: [laughter]

[00:43:00.14]

CA: I was alone, too. I used to go alone. I never had anyone with me except sometimes in the winter I'd have my father with me. And I was hauling off that – where we called the Church Ground, and [inaudible] (Smith's Reef?). He called and said, "My engine stopped, and I can't get her going." It was getting quite late in the afternoon, so I took a left and went down, towed him in. It was after dark when I got to the co-op. The only thing – what was the matter? It was some little thing. It wasn't (points?). Condenser, I think it was, had gone. Some little thing. Wasn't hardly a thing for that long a tow. But Ernest would have done it for you.

GK: And you've got to do that when you're out there.

CA: Oh, yes. Everyone helps everyone else.

GK: So you said one of your first boats you were going – were you going offshore pretty early before other people? Was it the same offshore as now?

[0:44:02.9]

CA: No. People didn't fish offshore all summer like they do. Offshore's usually about three miles out, outside of that. I didn't used to go off until first of November probably, start taking traps off. Now they keep them off there year-round.

GK: Yeah, it's so different.

CA: Oh, it's different. And there's so many more lobsters off than there was when I fished. When I fished, you got two or three hundred pounds; that was a good haul. Now, it's nothing to get a

thousand pounds. The ones way off can get two, three, four sometimes, even more sometimes. They make a lot of money, but they spend a lot. Those boats are expensive.

GK: Yeah, I know. The debt. A lot of debt.

CA: Yeah.

GK: When you were fishing, did you have much debt or were you –?

CA: I didn't because I didn't buy stuff until I had the money for it, [laughter] but a lot of people get rope and things at the dealer. The dealer's let them have that. And they take it out of them in the fall.

[0:45:12.4]

GK: Oh, they charge it –

CA: Charge it, yeah.

GK: Even things like the rope when you were fishing, was it different? It was a nylon [inaudible].

CA: It was different. There's two kinds of rope. Nylon's just come in as I was starting. They had two kinds. They had what they call sisal and manila. Sisal is a poorer grade; it wouldn't go a whole year. And if you've got manila, you might get a whole year out of it and you might not. And you had it in your heads and your traps, too. And when fishermen come home in the fall, a lot of them had to bring a trap or two in and put new heads in it on the mooring, take out the next day because the heads let go on the trap.

[00:46:03.01]

GK: Right. That was a fiber? It was a fibrous rope?

CA: Yeah.

CA: I don't know what they –

GK: Something natural, though.

CA: Something natural, yes. Probably the older people – now, my grandfather fished a hundred and thirty traps. That was a big game then. And if he got a hundred pounds, he was getting a good haul. He was one of the better fishermen. But when they come home, they had to go round up the bait because the dealers didn't have bait; they just started getting it just after I started a little while. They'd start getting bait on the wharf, and you buy it from a dealer. But then you had three factories you could go to if they was running, and then [if] people had weirs, they'd bring up some in the dories, and you could buy some out of those people, or sometimes, someone would have a little sardine boat, would get some, come up, you'd go alongside them, and get you some. So they had to get their own bait, and they had a lot to do after they got home. They worked just as hard, but it was a different kind.

[0:47:17.9]

GK: Did your grandfather ever catch his own bait? Was that a thing people did sometimes?

CA: Okay. They used to in the spring. They used to have what they called a (spud?); it was a board about that long, probably that wide, and you have tines down in it. You take it, you go off in low water in the cove, punch that into mud. Once in a while, you might get a flounder or a sculpin, and that's what they baited with in the spring.

GK: Wow. There was that many flounder and sculpin?

CA: Yeah. Where my wharf is we used to have what they called a bait shed, and they used to put bait in that. When someone come up with a dory load of herring, and didn't have any market for it, he'd bring it in, then salt it all in that bait shed. Then he'd have that when bait was scarce. He could go in there and get some usually. But they didn't use the volume of bait they do now. Two, three, four cans is maximum. Now, some of the fishermen take thirty, forty.

GK: Yeah. Ernest was telling me about how much a hogshead is.

CA: A hogshead. That's how they used to sell them.

[0:48:34.3]

GK: Right. What was it? Something like –?

CA: Now, let's see if you know how many there is in it.

GK: Thirty-four –

CA: Thirty-five bushel.

GK: Thirty-five bushel.

CA: Seventeen and a half five-gallon cans.

GK: Seventeen and a half. I got to write it down. I was at Luke's Lobster, and they've got those five-gallon buckets of herring. I don't even know how much they're going [for]. I don't even know how much they are. But expensive.

[00:49:05.26]

CA: At the co-op, a five-gallon bucket of herring is twenty dollars.

GK: And this was –

CA: Probably a little more down to –

GK: Yeah.

CA: Let's see. A bucket of pig hide – sixty dollars a bucket [for a] five-gallon bucket. That's more expensive than herring, but that stays on longer, so in the long run, it just don't cost much more.

GK: You can stretch it out a little bit more. Yeah.

CA: You don't have to throw it away; you just keep adding on top of it, and sometimes you put herring in with it. Now, Brian never used any herring at all. All he used was strictly pig hide. He did just as well as any of them. And Jason used pig hide and herring. He liked for me to go with him because I jammed the pockets good. [laughter] Well, I was helping him until it got so I couldn't go with him for a while.

[0:50:11.3]

GK: You would like to still go if you could?

CA: I'd love to go. I don't like to just sit around doing nothing.

GK: You like to be out there.

CA: I always worked. I don't mind working. I used to dig clams a lot. I didn't mind digging clams. That's hard work.

GK: It is hard work.

CA: You've tried it?

GK: I've tried it. It is hard. What else did you do? So you were lobstering. What was a typical year like for you?

CA: Well, after I got started lobstering – of course with wooden traps and everything, you lost traps and things, and we built traps in the winter. We knit our own heads and built traps in the winter and repaired – I didn't repair many when I first started, but when I got older – I've been in it a while – I used to repair traps. [inaudible] a little building on my wharf. I'd go down there and work every day in the winter, repairing traps. It'd take me all winter to get them repaired.

[0:51:19.6]

GK: You're repairing the wooden [inaudible]?

CA: I did it first with just the wooden ones. The last of it was wire.

GK: When was that? When did that shift happen?

CA: Now, there's a piece today in the paper. A fellow just died that was the one that first made the wire traps. It's in some local papers. I might have burned it. In the '70s I believe he started, but I think he improved it a lot after that. And I can't remember. It seems to me his name was Knott, K-N-O-T-T. But I'm not sure.

[00:52:02.23]

GK: Yeah. I'll write it down and look it up.

CA: I tell you – look it up. It's one of the magazines. I think he built Riverdale Wire; it's good quality wire.

GK: Was it coated?

CA: His was coated. First ones I bought weren't coated, and they weren't very good fishers. I got them from – well, it was across the road from Moody's Diner. Do you know where Moody's Diner is?

GK: In the Friendship area?

CA: Yup. In Waldoboro is Moody's Diner. He was just a little ways from that. I didn't care for them so well, but then I got some. I got them made around here. I never made any wire ones. But my boy, my youngest boy, he's got stuff – he makes his own now. He buys kits. They're cut, but he's got (air guns?). He's got cutters. You just press them a little, and they'll cut the wire. If you don't, it's very hard to keep cutting it by hand. He's got benders. He's someone that whatever he wants, he gets to work on gear. He's got the best set of tools around.

GK: That's great.

CA: And he can do just about anything if he wants to put his mind to it.

[0:53:23.6]

GK: They have traps on the wharf that you were on, too.

CA: Yeah. One of them has one side, and one has the other. Now we each got a float. You've probably seen those two floats up in the cove. Those are my boys. I had one, and I gave it to Brian, and my other boy had one.

GK: If we go for a drive, I need you to just show me exactly which one it is. I think I know.

CA: It's over towards the campground, up in the cove.

GK: Oh, it is. It's right across from me at the shipyard.

CA: Yeah. You can see it probably from your thing.

GK: Yes, I can. I certainly can. Someone came in. Should we pause for a second? ... [Recording paused] You were telling about a typical year. You were mending your traps in the winter.

[0:54:24.6]

CA: We also usually had a few traps offshore we tended once in a while. Then my father and I – we went together in the winters, but you didn't make much. After the middle of January, there

wasn't hardly a thing offshore. Then it would come spring, I'd set some more traps inshore. My father used to drive a lobster truck for (Burt?) [inaudible] down in Newfoundland and pick up lobsters.

GK: In Newfoundland? Oh my goodness.

CA: I could have gone anytime I wanted, and I wouldn't take the time; I was too busy catching lobsters. [laughter] I've never been to Newfoundland.

GK: Never? I would like to go.

CA: I've been a lot of places, but I haven't even seen all the state of Maine yet.

[0:55:16.1]

GK: What were you doing –? How would you make money in the winter if you were working on your traps and you weren't catching anything?

CA: You used up the money that you earned in the fall. That's why fishermen got a good handle on money. You've got to save your money when you're making it because you know that period is coming. In the spring sometimes I'd start clamming, too. When I didn't haul, I'd go clamming.

GK: Is that the only other fishery that you dipped into, or did you do some other things?

CA: That's the biggest part of it. I have dragged a few scallops, but hand dragged. I never had a winch or anything. I went a little bit of shrimping, but I didn't do much of that either. There was shrimping here for a couple, three years, and then there's still shrimping up around South Bristol and those places, but they disappeared here, and you couldn't get hardly any. Now my boy's got the very finest kind of shrimping gear. When he bought his boat from – [inaudible] South Bristol. She has shrimping gear on her, and he's got the finest kind. The fellow that had that boat built – he [inaudible] the very best of everything in her. And he's got that at home. He used it the first year he come down. There wasn't any shrimp. He tried it just for the fun of it. He didn't do much at it, but he's got the shrimping gear at home over in the building I got. What else then? I have set a few trawls before, offshore. Caught a few halibut. Never caught as many as my boy has. He's caught a lot of halibut.

[0:56:54.0]

GK: And that was with the line with a hundred hooks on it?

CA: Yes. Oh, I did work – I helped build up a weir. [laughter] I was part owner of it. Actually, I was part owner of two, but we never ever got enough money to pay the expenses for building them up. They did good in the late '40s, this weir. This is a (Cecil Kelley?) weir. You've heard of (Cecil?) before?

GK: Yes.

CA: Well, I used to go down to his camp before I got married. Oh, he always wanted to build those weirs up. Finally, I said, "If you want them, I'll help you build them up." And before I knew it, I was into both of them. And that was a lot of work. It was hard work.

GK: How long did that take, and what did you have to do?

CA: Well, where it went down – so we had to put all new stakes in. Put ninety stakes in – had to drive them. I think the most we ever got in one day was eight or nine because it was hard driving. You pound them with that thing, and you could hardly see them move.

[0:58:11.6]

GK: What are you pounding them with?

CA: Pile driver. You know what a pile driver is?

GK: No.

CA: [laughter] Okay, it's a [inaudible], and you got – on one end of it, you've got these big things, and you've got tracks, and you got a big weight that'll go in those tracks and go down.

GK: Does it look like this? It goes up and then it goes down.

CA: Yeah, because you have it in there. It goes up and down and up – you got a little motor.

GK: Right.

CA: It hauls this cable on it. Hauls it up, and you release it, and down it goes, *bang*. You haul it up and *bang*. Well, it takes a lot of time. It's dangerous work. My job was up there holding the top of it. You have a thing you put over it so you keep it in the trap, and I was up there watching that, and (Cecil?) – he and I did a lot of it. And then his brother he was in on it too – Arthur. He was working in Massachusetts, but he'd come down when it was summer. He'd always come

down and work on it. We built that, and I – the hardest work I ever did for nothing. Never made anything.

[0:59:37.6]

GK: Was it kind of fun? In a way?

CA: In a way. (Cecil's?) fun to be around.

GK: I know. I wish I could have met him.

CA: You would have had fun. You can look that book up, *Salt*.

GK: Yes, I did. I found it.

CA: Oh, you did.

GK: I mean, I found the online –

CA: Where you can get it. I got one somewhere, but I don't know where it is. Upstairs somewhere.

[01:00:05.18]

GK: Yeah. I went to Salt for school, and it's the same school that produced that magazine.

CA: Oh, that's a school?

GK: Yes, it was a magazine from the students at the school.

CA: Oh, I didn't realize that.

GK: And they also had the recordings of Avery Kelley that I heard. It was a Salt student. He came here – I just found those again. He came here, and he did a story in 2002 about the Liar's Table.

CA: Who did that?

GK: This guy Scott Gurian from Salt in the early 2000s.

CA: Which restaurant was he in?

GK: I think he was in Tall Barney's. Is that possible?

CA: Yes. Do you know where Tall Barney's was?

GK: I don't. I think somebody told me, but I forget. Which house was it in?

CA: It's tore down now, but you know where the Camden National Bank is? Right across the street. That was Tall Barney's.

GK: Did you spend a lot of time there?

CA: I never ever went in it. Yes, I was in it once or twice.

GK: You never went in it?

CA: Yeah, I've been in a few times. If you want to turn her off, I'll tell you another story about it.

GK: Okay.

[1:01:23.8]

[End of Track 1]

[Beginning of Track 2]

[00:00]

GK: – a little bit about starting the co-op and why that was something that you got on board with.

CA: Didn't Stevie tell you that and Sonny?

GK: [laughter] Yes, but not your perspective. They did tell me, but I'm just wondering what was going on for you as a fisherman before that happened and why it was something that you wanted to do.

CA: Well, a few reasons. Stonington always got more for lobsters than we did.

GK: And they had a co-op before you did.

CA: But probably even before they got the co-op, they always got a bigger price than we did. Then some of the dealers would give some fishermen two, three cents a pound [inaudible]. Other ones, they didn't. Some of them would throw you down a bottle of [inaudible]. If you was a better fisherman, you might get a bottle of [inaudible]. So we got [inaudible]. There's four of us went to [inaudible] in Rockland. We had a meeting, and they picked four of us to go. That was Sonny's father, (Ozzie?), myself, Wendell Alley, and Ralph Alley. We went up to see Grossman; that was his name.

[01:29]

GK: Was he a lawyer? What was he?

CA: He was a lawyer. We see him and wanted me to come back alone. (Ozzie?) stopped – he and Ralph. I come back with Wendell. Still haven't got financing for the wharf from Union Trust Company. That was the starting of the co-op.

GK: Did it take a while to get fishermen to start becoming members or did it take off?

CA: We had quite a few people become members. Yeah. Firstly, of course, we didn't get so much money for lobsters then anyway. Of course, we couldn't pay much rebate then like they do today because we didn't make as much. [laughter] But that's how we started.

GK: When you started, was it all like the way it is now? Did you start to think of having the bait there and the fuel there and everything?

CA: Yeah, everything was there and was starting.

GK: That was kind of new?

CA: No that was before that. We'd had that.

GK: Oh, you did? Okay.

CA: Yeah. Before that, we had bait [inaudible]. Bait was a lot cheaper, though. The first bait, I think the wharf [inaudible] 35 cents a can. [laughter]

[02:52]

GK: Geez. A can, which is –

CA: Five gallons.

CA: The fuel was thirty cents a gallon, where I was selling in [inaudible] the co-op. And it stayed that way for I don't know how long. It never changed up or down. Kerosene. They sold kerosene same place – seventeen cents a gallon.

GK: I wonder how it stayed. It didn't fluctuate with market value the same way.

CA: They had these tanks. You know those big tanks down there? When they was filled up, they paid nine cents a gallon to fill them.

GK: Wow. Now those tanks are – they don't have fuel in them anymore.

CA: None of them has fuel anymore. No.

GK: Thirty cents a gallon, and it stayed the same. That's amazing.

CA: Stayed the same for ages. Long, long time. Yeah.

[03:54]

GK: Are you surprised at the price of bait now and the way things have changed, or did you see it coming?

CA: Well, we didn't see it coming this bad. It kept gradually going up. It took an awful big jump about two, three years ago. They're lowering the quota we can have. They're not letting the seiners catch so many, and that's probably – you can put it up more this year even.

GK: I wouldn't be surprised. Do you think it could get to the point where the cost doesn't make sense to use that kind of bait?

CA: It's possible. It's possible. Of course, they're worrying about having enough. I think there will be enough but it won't be all the bait – the kind they want all the time. It won't be all herring. A lot of people just bait their own herring, but there won't be enough herring around the (whole length of the coast?).

[05:00]

GK: What other kinds of bait can they use? Red fish?

CA: Red fish. They have different kinds that come from places – I don't know what they are. Different kind of fish. Of course, we got the pig. I don't know that – I guess they still have cowhide, but not too many people use cowhide around here. Sometimes they get a few flounders and haddock racks. Even skates they're bringing sometime. But never catch a thing on skates. No.

GK: I know. There will be a lot of different combinations, it seems.

CA: It is. Everyone will be different. Yes.

GK: You'll just have to work out what you think is the best one.

CA: Yes. The problem is there'll just be so much bait, and you have to take what you get. Lucky to get it. [laughter]

[06:00]

GK: So when the co-op started, it was in the same place that it's in now.

CA: Yes. Same place.

GK: Did it look a lot different?

CA: That wharf was not built ragged. (Cecil Kelley?) built that wharf, too. [laughter] It was built for a fellow named (Arnold Emerson?), and what it was built for – they used to bring boats loaded with herring, and then they'd pump them up into this trough and things. Then they'd go on trucks, and they'd truck the herring to the factory rather than wait for the – now Charlie Stevens's factory, you couldn't get in there [inaudible] tide got out. If they was in low water, you couldn't get into that wharf, pump them in – you'd have them down there before you could get into the wharf. [inaudible] that's the way we had strength in the wharf when first started – put more stuff under it. We've repaired it several times, but wooden wharfs go down. We did buy a piece of land to the east of the co-op a few years ago. It's part of the co-op now. There used to be another wharf there just east of that. When we bought it, it was still up, but it was in hard shape. The building fell down one day. [laughter] So we took it to dump. Lucky we didn't get – something happened; someone got hurt – would have been too bad.

[07:39]

GK: Yeah, it's a good thing to take those down before that happens. You were there when the bridge was built. And now they're redoing the bridge. I haven't even seen any drawings of it or anything of what the new one will look like. Have you?

CA: I probably have, but I don't know – if I've got it, I don't know where it is. I got a lot of stuff upstairs. I can find a lot of it. But I can't find all of it.

GK: Your upstairs sounds like [it's] got a collection. You've got a whole history of Jonesport upstairs.

CA: I got a lot of clippings. I got a lot of information on the co-op. A lot of information about a lot of things. [laughter] Yeah. Got quite a big room up there. It's messy. I've been playing cards instead of working.

GK: You haven't been playing cards? You've been up there.

CA: I have been playing cards. Winter time, I used to [do] genealogy things up there. You get a lot of information out of those obituaries.

[08:50]

GK: Yes, like who's related to who and where they all came from. I never even thought of that. Do you always cut them out?

CA: Yeah. Well, the ones I – I got a lot of notebooks. I got to get some more. I got them in notebooks and alphabetized. I can go and find them again if I want to. Takes a long time.

GK: Wow. Also, you told me you are writing your autobiography.

CA: I got some on it.

CK: How far did you get?

CA: I'm probably up to probably close to 1960. But what I've done – sometimes, I've got pieces right in the middle [that] should go somewhere else because I thought of something, and I skipped when I was writing it. So I had to put it right in the middle. I know it's in the middle, so it's alright. They want to interview me down at the historical society, but we've never done it. So I'm just doing this so the kids know it – the parents and grandparents. One of my grandparents I never see. He died before I was born – TB [tuberculosis]. He lived [in] Head Harbor.

[10:21]

GK: TB was his name.

CA: No. TB is what he died of. Tuberculosis

GK: Yes. I was like, that's a name that sounds a bit like a disease. What was his name?

CA: Just the same as mine. Charles Alley. That's who I was named for. My middle name's from my other grandfather, Leeman. Charles Leeman Alley.

GK: Did you hear stories –?

CA: No, Leeman Kelley. He was a Kelley.

GK: Did you hear stories about that grandfather that you didn't know? Did you have anyone who told you about him?

CA: Not a lot. I know about his father. His father, John Merrill Alley – Leeman Kelley, my other grandfather, said he was the contrariest [sic] man on Head Harbor. [laughter]

[11:21]

GK: That probably means he was pretty contrary. [laughter]

CA: That does. That does. [laughter] Yeah.

GK: The impression I'm getting.

CA: Yeah, he was contrary.

GK: At that time, when they were living out there, was Beals as populated, too? Jonesport and Beals? Was Head Harbor a bigger settlement than Beals at that time?

CA: No, it wasn't as big. Beals has always been bigger.

GK: So it wasn't the major settlement.

CA: No.

GK: It was just a spot where some people were.

CA: No, just a place. People lived there.

GK: It's Oscar who has the weir information, isn't it?

CA: Oscar?

GK: Oscar Crowley.

CA: You should have him in the car, too. So you go up to –

GK: West Jonesport.

CA: – West Jonesport, so you could take some pictures, and he could show you where the buildings were because he lived up there.

[12:36]

GK: He lived up there. I wonder how we could do that. That would be cool.

CA: He's not as old as I am, but he's crippled up quite well. He's got arthritis quite bad. He's been that way for quite a few years. This may be his last year, too.

GK: Oh, gosh.

CA: His mind's fine.

GK: His mine's fine. Did he work on boats?

CA: He has gone on with his father on a sardine boat before. His father used to run a sardine boat, and he's gone with him before. He's been with someone lobstering, and he's been lobstering on his own. As far as I know, that's mainly what he did.

GK: Really?

CA: His mother used to work in the sardine factory. Did you ever get the Smith lady interview? Florence Smith?

[13:37]

GK: No. I don't even think I had her – I had the name, but I don't have her contact information.

CA: Well, she don't live too far from Byron.

GK: Oh, really?

CA: She's getting up there in age. As far as I know, her mind's alright – last I see her. She worked in the sardine factory. There isn't too many left that worked.

GK: I know.

CA: She worked basically – last few years anyway – up to Stinson's, up Prospect. I don't know how many there is in the family. They all worked up there. Now, I don't know if they did or not, but someone said – I won't put this down. [Recording paused.]

GK: Florence.

CA: Florence Smith. Used to be a Manchester before she was married.

GK: See if I can get her phone number. I'm not here for very much longer.

[14:38]

CA: Do you have a phonebook?

GK: No. Do you?

CA: Yep. I doubt if she's got one of these phones that you [inaudible]

GK: No, I bet she's –

CA: She's got the old-fashioned kind.

GK: – old-fashioned ...

CA: They make them small. You can't see them.

GK: Want me to look?

[15:46]

CA: I'll find it. Just a minute. I got up to Smiths [inaudible]. I don't find a Florence Smith. What was her husband's name?

[16:49]

GK: Is he alive?

CA: No. Sometimes, I look [inaudible]. Philmore. There it is, right there.

GK: Philmore.

CA: Philmore and Florence ...

GK: I'll give her a call. I might have to come back for that one.

CA: Yeah. Well, don't wait too long; she's old.

GK: I know. The pressure is on.

CA: Yeah. I don't know how old, but she must be ninety, I'd say. As far as I know, her mind's fine.

GK: Ninety years old. Ernest and his wife are up there, too. Ninety-two.

CA: They're doing good.

GK: They're doing good.

CA: I don't know if he'll fish another year or not. He didn't go so much this year as he usually does.

GK: I think he said not.

CA: Probably not. He always worked hard all his life, always doing stuff.

[18:05]

GK: Did you ever think that lobstering would be like it is now?

CA: Never. Never. Who'd ever think there'd be more lobsters now in the water than when you started. A lot more. Most of our fishing – if there's twenty million pounds about in the average year for the whole state – the last few years, they got up as high as 125 or 30 million. I don't think they got quite as much last year, but they got 110, 15 million. That's a lot of lobsters.

GK: But it's not as much of the other species anymore.

18:43

CA: No, there's not so much. There used to be quite a herring fishery in the state. Probably Ernest told you about that.

GK: Yes.

CA: [inaudible] today, before dark, you'd see those boats going down, towing these dories full of twine. They told you they go nights to hunt them up. So he told you more than I can.

[19:09]

GK: Yeah, that was great. We're going to talk again on Monday, I think, because we got sidetracked. [laughter] You get into these –

CA: [laughter] I know. You can't help it.

GK: – weave around. When you were fishing, did you still go really early in the morning?

CA: Yeah.

GK: Lobstering? What time would you leave?

CA: Probably just after daylight. Usually, that's the best time to go because it's calmer. Usually.

GK: That's what you're trying to get. That's why people like to go [inaudible].

CA: Sometimes you have to go fairly early to get the tide; it's slack. Because we have a lot of tide down here. I don't know about up around Stonington.

GK: It's not like it is here.

CA: If you don't, they'll be under.

GK: Right. They'll be under.

CA: And you can't haul them.

GK: And slack is the moment between the tides?

CA: When it's high water, you have slack just before high water or just after high water [inaudible], and just the same way on low water.

[20:19]

GK: When you were going lobstering, did you feel like you had a different sense of navigating and knowing where to set your traps? You weren't using sonar or anything like that, right?

CA: The only thing I had up until the last end of it was a fathometer and a compass most of the time. When I started in the outboard, I didn't even have that. [laughter] I used to go with the tide, how the tide was running on the buoys, or how the wind was blowing.

GK: And that's how you knew where you were going?

CA: When I was in the outboard, yeah. Now, these young fellows – you've got things now – you can leave and go offshore and come right back on that same track and not see a thing. It leaves a track where you've been as you go, that chart plotter. It's good. Brian's got a machine now that you keep going over it, it makes the bottom, and you shift over a little bit, and do it some more. He's getting all the bottom on one chart.

[21:35]

GK: And you can see it? You can see the –?

CA: See it [inaudible]. Yeah. When I used to go, we used to have to go by marks on land to find them. Somewhere near the bottom. Then you got your fathometer to tell what the depth is. You know what the bottom is, so it can help you.

GK: Right. You want to know the bottom because you want to set in this particular type of bottom? Some people like to set in a type [inaudible].

CA: Lobsters are in certain bottoms at different times.

GK: So you just have to learn.

CA: You have to learn. You can be not too far from them and not catch him.

GK: And did you pass that knowledge on to your children, what you learned?

CA: I think more so Brian and Jason because Brian was with me more. But he knows where I caught all my lobsters. He's even found some places I didn't fish, and he's done well. He's gone east a little further.

GK: Was the territory you were fishing part of the territory your family had fished before you?

CA: Well, my grandfather fished this bottom, but I fished a lot more bottom than he ever did. I had a lot more traps than he ever had. I had too many. [laughter]

GK: You had too many. How many did you have?

CA: I ain't going to tell you that.

GK: Really? Well, it's probably before regulations, wasn't it?

CA: I didn't do nothing illegal.

GA: No. Do you want me to pause it? [Recording paused.] I had it paused. When you were younger, were there as many dealers and buyers as there are now? Because it seems like there's quite a few.

CA: I think there's probably as many. Of course, they didn't buy as many lobsters.

[23:42]

GK: Yeah, there wasn't the volume that it is now.

CA: No. One of these dealers now would buy more than all of Beals put together – would buy in a day [inaudible].

GK: Amazing. That's just amazing.

CA: The co-op has bought, I think, five or six hundred crates before in a day.

GK: How many pounds are in a crate usually?

CA: Ninety.

GK: That's a lot of lobster.

CA: If it hadn't been for [inaudible] crates, they couldn't buy as many lobsters; they wouldn't have time. They're all the same weights. You don't have to weigh them up every day. They stack inside one another, so they don't take the room a wooden crate used to.

GK: Stevie was talking about that. How different it used to be.

CA: Oh, first thing you had to do mornings was weigh up the crates, and that took a lot of time. Now they just put the bait up. But that takes some time to put the bait up, too. They have to can it up.

GK: They would have to weigh every crate that they had down there.

CA: They used to. If you had wet crates and you come [inaudible] drying day, they'd dry out so you might have to weigh some of those ones again.

GK: Crazy.

CA: It was.

GK: It'd fluctuate because of the wood.

CA: Yeah.

GK: It's those little things that you don't even realize how much more efficient it is.

CA: Now we've only had – we've had three managers since we started. The first one we had – we relieved him his duties; we didn't fire him. We kept him on, but then he quit. Then we had [inaudible] was the next one, and then Stevie. Stevie's been there the longest. Stevie's done a good job. I thought marketing lobsters [inaudible], but he's very good at that. He's very good at marketing lobsters. Poor devil, he can't see very well. You probably noticed.

[26:03]

GK: At least he's got glasses.

CA: His mother and father is getting older. He watches over them.

GK: He's a very nice person.

CA: He likes to go on cruises.

GK: I know. He was talking about that. He was great. He was very nice.

CA: Yeah. Stevie's fine. I go up and talk to him every once in a while to see how things are going.

GK: You're still on the board for the co-op.

CA: I'm still the president. I'm still on the board. I should give up the presidency anyway. Let someone else do it. It's getting so I'm getting on. It ain't the same as it was in the downtown. Takes me twenty minutes to go down, twenty minutes to come back. They have got some younger people on the board, which is good. We got a mixture. For a while there, we had mostly all older people.

GK: Are you seeing some of the younger people starting to take leadership –?

CA: Yeah. Probably the two now that probably takes more leadership would be my boy and (Sonny?). The other ones are [inaudible]. Been through a lot during the co-op. There are ups and downs. You go home nights, and you don't sleep too good. That's the same way it is some [inaudible] take it too personally.

[27:48]

GK: Do you feel like it's in a moment right now where it's on an upswing?

CA: It's doing well. Got a lot of competition around things. That's why we have to be careful what we say and things, so we don't let out what our business is doing, what it's doing, how we do it, and that's why I said I'd vote [inaudible] Steve. Then I said, "Steve, you don't mind if this girl comes up and talks to you." He says, "No, she can come." So I told you – I run interference for you. [laughter]

GK: It would be pretty easy to figure out who the co-op was selling to for somebody else, probably, right?

CA: Yes. I'll tell you who we sold to.

GK: Yeah. Steve told me.

CA: Trenton Bridge.

GK: Yeah, Trenton Bridge.

CA: We have sold practically all of the lobsters to them for – it must be over twenty, twenty-five years.

GK: Yeah, that's what he said.

CA: We've done a lot of business. We've had a very good relationship with Trenton Bridge, both ways. If we have lobsters and Trenton Bridge wants them, they have them. If we have lobsters, we won't get rid of them – Trenton Bridge will take them. Always had a good relationship. The [inaudible] his people came from Jonesport before the one up there.

GK: Really? Wow.

CA: Yeah.

[29:26]

GK: They're just taking them and then selling lobsters to dealers? Or they're the distributors? They sell it to the restaurants.

CA: They've got a restaurant?

GK: They do?

CA: Yeah. Trenton Bridge has got a restaurant.

GK: And then they take more than that, and they sell –

CA: Oh, yes. They couldn't sell all that having that restaurant.

GK: And then processing, but there's not much processing – Sonny and I were talking about this [inaudible].

CA: Most of the lobsters that we go – they go down to Canada for processing. Did you want to know anything about any other businesses in town?

GK: I do, but I wonder if we should do it when we're walking.

CA: If you want to.

GK: What do you think? What are the businesses that are no longer around that were the most important when you're [inaudible]?

[30:37]

CA: The building's not there now. There was one little place [inaudible]. It was a small place, probably twice as square as this tabletop here [inaudible] (Flora Kelley?), and she had the great big candy case in there and sold penny candy. [laughter] We always remember that. They just took it down probably in the last couple of years. Byron's son lives there, and he tore it down.

31:07

GK: It was right on that main strip?

CA: Yeah. You know where the pond is?

GK: Yes.

CA: Before you get to the pond. It's up on top of that little hill. She sold other stuff, too. That was one. Then the Three Rivers. You know about that.

GK: Well, Ernest was talking about the Three Rivers, and that was –

CA: That's on the end of [inaudible] Point.

GK: They were doing a bunch of stuff in there, right? I think (Marilyn?) said she worked there.

[31:47]

CA: She probably did.

GK: Were they picking cockles? Was that there?

CA: They did pick a few. David (Scull?) got it, and Arnold Smith ran it for him. That wasn't the first one that built that. There used to be a sardine factory there years ago before my time. Then Oscar [inaudible] built it. He had tanks in there, but he never used them. I'm not a hundred percent sure the first one he sold it to. It may have been David (Scull?). They took him fileted fish, sold the fish, and they did pick out a few cockles for a while, not a long time. They smoked a few, not a lot. Now, Arnold was a very talented man. He could carve whales and things. Beautiful. He was the best filleter of all them down there. He was really talented, but he never made any money there.

[33:00]

GK: What kind of fish were they playing with?

CA: Codfish, pollack, mostly.

GK: So that's what Three Rivers was.

CA: I think he came from Maryland. Whether he had some kind of land farm or something out there, they called Three Rivers. That didn't come from here, but that was on his (label?). Then finally, it was sold. Ryan Geel had it down there for a while. He worked on cucumbers.

GK: Ryan Geel.

CA: Yeah.

GK: How do you spell Geel?

CA: I think it's just G-E-E-L. They just take a little piece [inaudible]; the rest of it's thrown away. David [inaudible] may have owned for a little while, too.

[0:34:06]

GK: You'll have to show me where that was. It was out on the end of Old House Point.

CA: Old House Point, yeah. And now Ralph Smith's got it. And he puts up mussels.

GK: Oh, Moosabec.

CA: Moosabec Mussels. That's where that is. He's had it for quite a while. Yeah.

GK: And was Byron's spot always a store? Or was that something different?

CA: Where Byron is?

GK: Yeah. I can't tell you everyone that's been in there, but I know it was Bill [and] two (Lampson?) boys. They ran it awhile. I can't remember his brother's name. I know Allen White was in there, and he did mechanic work on cars; he was in there for a while. I don't know that [inaudible] mother went in there. But then (Arnie Stanhope?) got it, and he ran it for quite a while. Now, it burned – I think it burned while Stanhope had it. I don't think it was burned when Byron – but Byron built it brand-new back up, and Byron's been running it for quite a little while

now. He's very nice. A lot of people wouldn't want the old people around there kicking around. They kind of seem to like to have us there; you feel wanted. Some stores you go in, they just want your money and kick you out. [laughter]

[0:35:37]

GK: But you go down there a lot and spend a lot of time there.

CA: I have [for the] last year or two. I never used to go in there at all.

GK: But it's a nice place to be.

CA: It's a nice place to be. I just as soon listen to people talk [inaudible] play cards. Sometimes I'd rather.

GK: You'd rather talk than play cards or vice versa?

CA: A lot of times, I'd rather talk than play cards. You learn a lot.

GK: I know. It's fun to talk. I know. I was wondering – I want to go in there and just record people hanging out in Byron's because there's so many good stories that are going on back and forth.

CA: I know.

GK: People start talking –

CA: Go in and ask them if you can. [inaudible] say no if they don't want you.

GK: I know. I probably will. Probably this week. Maybe I'll keep it running while I play cribbage.

CA: Okay. [laughter]

[36:40]

GK: [laughter] I like the counting. Because if you didn't know what cribbage was, and you listened to a recording of that counting, you would be like, "What are they counting?"

CA: "What are they counting?" Yeah, that's right.

GK: When the guys count it up, and they're, "Two, nine, fifteen," It's so quick.

CA: I know it. I'm not as quick as I used to be. When I went to school, the best thing I had was math.

GK: Really?

CA: And I can't figure like I did.

GK: I know. I need to get better because I shouldn't be losing it.

CA: No, I'm getting so old that I can't – I can't remember my [inaudible] –

GK: You have an excuse.

CA: I can't remember as well as I did. It's awful. [laughter]

GK: Is cribbage a game –? Did you play that when you were younger too? Was that a coastal town game?

CA: No, the only time I ever played cribbage before I played down Byron's was down to the camp, down Cecil's. I might have played one or two games – few games there. We used to go down there – I went down there when it was November, and we had a snowstorm. It blowed a gale. I had my boat there. Gracie and I – that's Cecil's daughter – we went out to see if we can see any deer; we didn't. But we come back and wanted to play cards. (Mathers Kelley?), Cecil's brother was there. There'd be a foursome; you could play Sixty-Three or play cribbage. I tried to get him playing; he said, "No, sir." I ain't wasting my time playing cards, and there he was just sitting up, chewing gum. [laughter]

[0:38:14]

GK: Just wanted to waste his time doing nothing?

CA: That's Cecil's brother. He had a little money. He worked all of his life, and his wife was a schoolteacher. They saved money. I don't think they ever put it in stocks. He had a lot of money. I think he just put it in interest. You still get more money, but not so much usually. So he used to come down on his vacation every year. His wife would like to go somewhere else, but he'd never take her. Always brought her down here. [inaudible] didn't get along with as well. As I said, saved their money. She had [inaudible]. She was going to the doctor to see about it. She went home, and she had a spot up here. When she went home, [inaudible] that was cancer. She didn't live very long. Spent all that time teaching school, saving her money, and never got a chance to

use it. There's one trip with her daughter in an airplane – some trip. She always enjoyed that, which isn't much to enjoy – one of them airplane flights.

[0:39:39]

GK: You just never know.

CA: Do you like to fly?

GK: I don't really like flying, but I think I would like to go up into one of those small planes just to look around.

CA: I've never been in a small plane. I've been in a big plane.

GK: No, I'm not really that big of a fan of flying. I have to do it for this other job that I have a lot, and I don't like it. I don't like it.

CA: Where do you fly to?

GK: I do this, but for an organization in DC that is focused on a very particular disease, so I interview people who have the disease. They'll fly me to New Mexico.

CA: Fairly long flight.

GK: I went to Iowa, and then I'll go to New Mexico.

CA: Ireland?

GK: Iowa.

CA: Oh, Iowa.

GK: I wish I went to Ireland.

CA: I've never been to Ireland.

GK: Me either. I would love to go to Ireland.

CA: I haven't been too much over in the United Kingdom. It's one place I ain't been. We've been a lot of places.

GK: Yeah, I know. You've traveled all over the place.

CA: We've been around the world twice.

[40:41]

GK: That's amazing.

CA: Last time we flew, we flew to Beijing.

GK: Wow.

CA: That was a long flight.

GK: Not that many people that I know in Downeast Maine have been around the world twice.

CA: Yeah. My wife loves it. She doesn't like flying, but some of the things we've seen – the day we got into Beijing, there were supposed to have been some people to meet us; they weren't there. There you are in that airport. We didn't know what we was going to do. Finally, we found someone who could talk to us – information – and they got ahold of the ones that was supposed to come pick us up. Finally, they did, but kind of a strange feeling when you're there, and you can't speak the language.

41:36

GK: Oh, yeah. It's a different kind of weakness because you can't communicate. Then you realize how important communication is.

[41:51]

CA: We was there the first night that they ever celebrated New Year's like we have it here.

GK: Wow.

CA: We were out celebrating in Beijing on New Year's Day.

GK: Did they have fireworks?

CA: Yeah. And they [gave] us a lot of stuff in a bag.

GK: Like favors?

CA: Caps and things like that. They had some of these round things with water in it and some little sparkles.

GK: Oh, yeah.

CA: And then we put them in our bag, and they took them back away from us.

GK: No. At the airport? Oh my god.

CA: But some of the other people see us, and they gave us some of theirs afterward.

GK: Oh my gosh. What if we planned --? I'm trying to think this through. I'm going to stop this for a second.

[0:42:56

[End of Track Three]

-----END OF INTERVIEW-----

Reviewed by Molly A. Graham 7/13/2022