

Interviewee Name: Angela Johnston

Project/Collection Title: Frenchman Bay Oral History Project

Interviewers Names and Affiliation: Tiegan Paulson – Mapping Ocean Stories, Katie Culp – Mapping Ocean Stories

Interview Location: College of the Atlantic

Date of Interview: May 12th, 2023

Interview Description: Angela Johnston describes her twenty five years of experience working as a marine tour guide for Acadia Whale Watch, Acadia National Park, and the Bar Harbor Whale Watch. She's seen populations and hotspots shift and change over the last two and a half decades, and offers her insights here.

Keywords: Bar Harbor, aquaculture, right whales, whales, whale watch, Bar Harbor Whale Watch, whale watching, Acadia Whale Watch, Acadia National Park, Frenchman Bay, Inner Schoodic Ridges, Outer Schoodic Ridges, islands, marine mammals, lobstering, lobsters, lobstermen, whales and lobstermen, the Ballpark, fishing grounds, whale grounds, Grand Manan, orange sheath tunicates, ecological health, center of coastal studies, entanglement, whale entanglement,

Collection Description: Started in 2022, this project aims to document the lived experiences and observations of residents with extensive knowledge and history on Frenchman Bay. Stories and knowledge collected in interviews are aggregated to paint a comprehensive picture of the diverse uses of Frenchman Bay using maps, storyboards, and other public exhibits.

Citation:

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Transcribed By: Tiegan Paulson

TP: Tiegan Paulson

AJ: Angela Johnston

KC: Katie Culp

Length of interview: 1:09:01

START OF Johnston_Angela_05.08.2023

[0:00.00]

Tiegan Paulson: We are recording. First thing I'm going to need to do is get the levels set. So for that. What did you have for breakfast this morning?

Angela Johnston: I had a Kind Bar, a granola bar.

TP: Tell me more about that.

AJ: It was on my way to my annual drug test to be on the boats, and I just grabbed it out of my backpack as I was heading towards Trenton to be able to do that.

TP: Could you describe your drive?

AJ: The drive was pretty uneventful. Not a whole lot of traffic after 8:30 am. Also, going off the island in the morning is a lot easier than coming onto the island.

TP: That makes sense. Okay, we're set here. Okay. We're ready to start the not breakfast questions. Okay. Can you tell me a little bit about your background in the area?

AJ: Well, certainly, I first started to come to Mount Desert Island in 1990. I got my first job as a reference from a whole bunch of guys that I knew at school, University of Maine in Orono. They all graduated from high school here on the island, and they said, "We have a great place for you to work in the summer." And yes, I'm still here. But that very first summer in 1990 that I worked here, I worked for Ed [Edward] Blair, who was the chair of directors for College of the Atlantic and a huge sponsor for the research station out at Mount Desert Rock.

TP: What were you doing?

AJ: I was just cleaning and making food for him. But luckily, if we had all of our jobs done, he generally went out for a powerboat ride in the morning and a sail in the afternoon, oftentimes delivering supply with the powerboat in the morning.

[0:02:07]

He's like, "If you want to go, let's go." And that was my first introduction to [being] out on the water, Whale Watch and Mount Desert Rock.

TP: Speaking of Whale Watch, can you tell me a little bit about that and what you do on the bay now?

AJ: Currently I am a Whale Watch naturalist. This is my tenth year for the Bar Harbor Whale Watch Company. I started in 1997. I was hired by Toby Stephenson to be able to work on what was then the Sea Bird Watcher and the Acadia Whale Watch Company. So I worked for Acadia Whale Watch all the way until they closed and sold everything through the season of 2000. And then I took a twelve year hiatus. I was a park ranger at Acadia National Park. Me?

TP: Fascinating. What brought you to the Whale Watch now, the Bar Harbor Whale Watch?

AJ: After about twelve years working on land for Acadia National Park I really wanted to get back out onto the water, even though I did – several, actually – I had done all of the cruises that are offered as a Ranger. I really wanted to get back out onto the water. I also knew that [Zach Cliver?], who was the lead naturalist for the Bar Harbor Whale Watch Company since I had worked in the whale watch industry the Bar Harbor Whale Watch Company had changed ownership, and that also made it more interesting for me and I was more interested to work for Bar Harbor Whale Watch. The original owner was not an individual I would work for.

[0:04:00]

Once he passed and it was sold on [Zach?] and I were able to come to an agreement to come back.

TP: Working for the whale watch – What does that involve?

AJ: Basically for over twenty five years I've been going out onto the water going as far as twenty five miles offshore originally. These days we're going between fifty and sixty miles offshore. So taking anywhere between – I would have to say about 150 to 400 passengers depending on what boat we are and going out on to see the whales. [We] try to connect everybody to the incredible resource they are, what kind of incredible animals they are, and how important the ocean is not only to them, but to us.

TP: Do you do any tours in the bay?

AJ: I do, and one of the reasons I was originally hired in the National Park Service was that – as I had worked for Acadia Whale Watch, if we did not go out on a whale watch because it was too rough we oftentimes did a cruise around the bay. I started doing Bay cruises – also in 1997 – in

Frenchman Bay, and then even now through the Bar Harbor Whale Watch, I have done nature cruises. That's right around Frenchman Bay. I have also done Acadia by Sea Tours, which is at the front of the bay going all the way down one side of the bay and down the other to see different parts of Acadia National Park. I have also done lobstering. I started lobstering all the way back in the early 1900s as my father-in-law is a lobsterman out of Lemoine. I started going out with him occasionally in the early years and now I do the lobster and seal tours for Bar Harbor Whale Watch out on the bay as well.

[0:06:07]

TP: Cool. I'll have to ask about lobstering in a minute, but a question on tourists. What are the hotspots? What do you like to go to?

AJ: Certainly, we'll start with the nature cruises in the bay. The Porcupine Islands are certainly a big one. The bald eagles' nest that is on Sheep Porcupine. Working with the National Park Service and Acadia National Park I've also been able to see the documentation of the eagles' Nest being there since 1965. There is a very long status of that particular nest. You get to see not only that in nature cruises, but we also have [lobster] traps that are right behind Bar Island. If the eagles are around, we often visit the site as we go out to Egg Rock, [which] is another big part [for sightseeing]. Egg Rock has not only our lobster traps, but also we go out to see the seabirds, including the gulls. Anything else that's out there – the harbor seals and gray seals – and talk about their natural and cultural history as well.

TP: Okay.

AJ: There's a lot more of the bay also. We also look at Ironbound, in particular Ironbound Island, which is privately owned but is a conservation easement island for Acadia National Park. The Bar Harbor Whale Watch Company, their nature cruise, goes right along the east side, which has a peregrine falcon nest. Oftentimes since I've started in between the park, and then also for the boat company, I report all of the peregrine falcon sightings that we have so that the park staff and the wildlife biologist at Acadia National Park has an idea of what's going on with that particular nest since they don't get out there very much on a boat.

[0:08:05]

We also spent a lot of time on the nature cruise going all the way up the coastline, all the way from Bar Harbor all the way down to Otter Point. And so continue with that. A lot of Acadia Information, waves, islands. Also our lighthouse cruises – particularly in the fall right now – will

continue around Otter Point going all the way over to Great Harbor, going down Sommes Sound. If the weather is good, going all the way out to Great Duck Island and back.

TP: What kind of – have things changed in what you see on these trips?

AJ: One of the things that has not changed is the rocks. The rocks are pretty much still the same. The lighthouses are always right there. They're exactly where they're supposed to be. But basically everything else around it has certainly changed. Sometimes a lot of the trees – what trees blow down, which ones stay up – that has always been kind of fascinating. Also what we see when and where has certainly changed over time since twenty five years ago when I really started spending a lot of time on the bay. When it comes to whale watching, whales – I mean typically we would only go twenty five miles offshore. There were no lobster traps out there. The whales – you could see as many of five different species, just for baleen whales. Then you could add in the toothed whales and you could have porpoise and dolphins and you never know what you could find out. We always called the Grand Slam of a whale watch when we saw minke, humpbacks, and fins, and a right whale, and Atlantic white-sided dolphins. That was a grand slam out there.

[0:10:07]

And all in one trip, not just in a day or whatnot, just literally all in one trip. That used to happen. I haven't had a grand slam in quite some time. I would probably say easily, probably about nine years.

TP: How common was it?

AJ: We could do it two or three times a season. Back in the mid 1990s, it had to see all four species and then the odontocetes with it. The right whale is certainly the hardest one to find these days. What's interesting is that the general population of North Atlantic right whales is probably the same today as what it was in the mid 1990s, it's just that it increased and then decreased over those many years. But we had a much better chance of seeing them back in the mid 1990s even though the population was about the same, about 350.

TP: What kind of things – whales have gone up and down.

AJ: Yes.

TP: What other kinds of things have you noticed shifting since the 1990s? Routes, wherever –

AJ: One of the biggest things is where lobster traps are. That's because back in the mid 1990s you would probably see lobster traps during the summer going only as far as maybe fifteen miles offshore. Nowadays we see them up to thirty. The feeding grounds, which was known as the Ballpark – it's the inner Schoodic Ridges – the fishermen always originally called it the Ballpark because that's where they could hit a home run coming home with fish.

[0:12:08]

It's no wonder if they hit a home run, well then the whales would be there too. Twenty five years ago we spent most of our time at the Ballpark. Probably over ninety percent of the season would be right in that inner Schoodic Ridges – the Ballpark area. There was not a lobster trap to be found in the mid 1990s. Nowadays when we go out that whole area is just littered with what traps. I would probably say that with a visual scan – with the trawls that are out there in that far out, they are fishing trawls – you'll probably see a good twenty five to fifty traps that are out there. If not more, depending on the exact month and timing and what the lobsters are doing. I have to admit, if I was a whale, I wouldn't want to be in all that rope anymore. At the same time, the fish aren't necessarily there either. These days we end up going up to Canada. We go to the Grand Manans banks, they're our most reliable place to see whales these days. In the last, I'm going to say six years in particular, I would probably say we spend less than twenty percent of our time in the ballpark. Some years we're lucky if we ever see a whale in the ballpark area. So things have – I consider that things have changed significantly, but the lobster traps and the whales, even though humpbacks in general have come off the endangered species list – there are more of them. There's definitely – they're just not there anymore.

[0:13:58]

They still come through, which is really interesting. The other thing that's really intrigued me over the years is [that] back in the mid 1990s you would hear a rumor of a whale being entangled. In the last six years, four of those six years we have literally come across an entangled whale. That's one of the other really big changes I have seen. Whereas they used to happen but you would never see it, now there's a good chance every year that we will find a whale somewhat entangled.

TP: Have you come across – have you been there?

AJ: Yes, I have been there when we've come across an entangled whale. That is not a fun thing to interpret to the guests. We are also one of the only whale watch companies – the Bar Harbor Whale watch Company, now – it's the only whale watch company in the state of Maine that is part of a program called Whale SENSE. And Whale SENSE is a cooperation with whale and

dolphin conservation, NOAA, and then also Stellwagen Bank. And now there's a couple other groups that are kind of getting into it, even just as of this year. They require – to be a part of the Whale SENSE program – they require that you follow a rule of 'sense.' Sense being that you are sticking to all of the guidelines from NOAA, that you are educated not only in the Whale SENSE training but also in many ways of identifying whales, their natural history, and their cultural history. Also making sure that we notify any – if any animal is in danger or entangled or dead or any of that we report a lot of that. We notify authorities, especially if they need help.

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We also make sure that we set an example and that we encourage stewardship. Being part of that as well, if we do find an entangled whale we need to stay with the whale as long as possible. When you have anywhere between 300 to 400 passengers there's only so long you can stay, but what we hope to do is get as many photos as we can, be able to provide that information, get on with NOAA, with the disentanglement team. There's a small group out of Maine and the Marine Patrol. There's a much bigger disentangle team out of Provincetown and [the] Center of Coastal Studies. If we can find another boat to take our place, that's one of the most – the preference is until the disentanglement team can get there.

TP: Do you have experience with disentanglement teams?

AJ: Only through conferences and basically talking to them. Going down to Provincetown. We would go down for a training in Providence for whale watch naturalists, down to the Center of Coastal Studies every year up until COVID hit. Now it's been virtual every single year. There's always – the disentanglement team is always giving an update on what's going on and basic training of how to be a level one reporter or responder to take the photos, do the reporting, [and] get it started as much as we can. Disentanglement is much more of a general theme nowadays than what it ever was before.

[0:18:04]

TP: Shifting over.

AJ: That's okay.

TP: Do you have family who work on the bay, or have worked on the bay?

AJ: My father-in-law is a part time lobsterman at Lemoine – so where the Skillings River comes into Frenchman Bay. [He] has been doing that for a little over thirty years and still has a

commercial license for up to 300 traps. I've learned a lot about the different creatures, the different animals. It's always been interesting to see over the years is, "Okay, where'd the urchins go?" That was one of the first things. The urchins were gone early in the 1990s with all that fishing that came in. [We] used to catch a lot of urchins. As a matter of fact, my mother-in-law harvested close to fifty or sixty of them to make candles for our wedding, just out of the lobster traps. You can't find urchins in those traps anymore. You get a lot more green crabs, but you're still getting a lot of rock crabs, Jonah crabs, which is good because we will harvest those as well as lobsters. Yes, there are some of us that prefer crab meat over lobster.

TP: [referring to tapping the table] Something that – can I ask – you didn't have to move off –

AJ: That's okay. No, this is so I can not do that. [both laugh] The other thing that's been really interesting with my father-in-law being out on the water – since he's in Lemoine, he has always tried to get out to the Porcupine Islands, basically out on Bar Harbor.

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Over thirty years, he never has been able to. His traps are always cut, so he is always inshore. After thirty years, he finally gave up.

TP: [It] took thirty years –

AJ: Yes, to give up.

TP: Why did you want to get there?

AJ: More lobsters. What they're finding now is most of the commercial lobstering these days is all more offshore. So what's interesting is, him as a very small, more for fun than true commercial profiteering [fisherman], he's doing great because all the big commercial ones are out there [offshore] so there's not as many traps in the inner part of it. At the same time, [in] the middle of August when it's the hottest, it's a little harder to find those lobsters. But he can't get out further than basically the inner part of Frenchman Bay to the Skillings River.

TP: You mentioned that you had worked for him – with him? [handling noise]

AJ: I just went out and helped occasionally, yes.

TP: Was that – what did that involve?

AJ: Going out with them, he would pull the traps, we would bait them, we would pull everything out, we would measure the lobsters. [We'd] pick the biggest crabs to stay with us. I was always looking to see what other creatures were in those traps, whether it was a [sculpin] or a flounder or urchins or sea stars or crab hermit crabs or whelks. Sea cucumbers were always fun. A variety of all those different creatures as well.

[0:22:03]

TP: Can you tell me about your perception of the Bay with these different experiences you've had?

AJ: Certainly there are a lot of changes that have been going on. It is definitely warming, and I'm seeing a lot less sea stars, seeing a lot less of the critters. The urchins are gone mostly because of the fishing, but I don't see them coming back either. Do you want me to stay within the Bay or even offshore?

TP: We can move offshore a little bit.

AJ: Okay. One of the things that I have seen of both the Bay and offshore is that in the nineties we would see the fishing boats come in for either urchins in the bay or offshore, and the environment would recover very quickly. The fishermen offshore came in, the purse seiners came in, even when the mid-level trawlers came in, overnight they would wipe the whole area – that we would venture for with Whale Watch – clean of all fish. And originally it would take two to three days for the environment to readjust, for the fish to come back. What I see now is I don't see the sea or the Bay recovering. The Bay is not recovering from the urchins, It's getting warmer and warmer, things are changing. Even for seeing a lot of the different harbor porpoises, I see them much more towards the front of the bay off towards the gulf versus all the way inshore.

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You just see the effects of that warming, and I don't see the environment recovering as fast as it used to. Even offshore, if the purse seiners, after the mid-level trawlers were restricted from the area during the summer, it would take a week or two for any of that area to recover so that we would even see a whale back in there. When it comes to seeing the whales, if you will, you might have a longer period before you saw them in that Ballpark area. You might have to go out to somewhere else, like the Rock [Mount Desert Rock] or Outer Schoodic Ridges. I'm trying to think of examples in the bay. Most of it has just been – I remember seeing a lot more sea stars and urchins in the 1990s and early 2000s than what I do now.

TP: What does – does recovery look like the same thing?

AJ: Nowadays, it doesn't. Originally it would recover and go right back to what it was previous – before what happened, before the fishing came through, or whatever. Now it's – things look different out there as well. Also, because of invasive species – you've seen the orange sheath tunicate come in. I remember when that first started coming in I was doing tide-pool walks for Acadia National Park. I was one of the early ones – I certainly wasn't the first, but one of the early ones – to get it into documentation that it was out at Ship Harbor. [We] started seeing it in other places and there's a lot of it now.

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You even find it growing on lobsters that you catch. That's all. Those invasive species are a whole other little take on things. I have certainly seen that grow into the Bay.

TP: Have the people in the Bay changed?

AJ: I wish I could say that the lobstermen have gotten more grumpy, but they're still just as grumpy as they ever were before. It is definitely – I see their place, where they want to see it as theirs. It is a very important harvesting, it is a very important fishery that they do, but the one thing that has not changed is they don't like to share. Especially as it gets harder. I don't blame them, but there's a lot of uses that's going on out there.

TP: Who is that? Who are the "uses" [air quotes] that are going on? You'd mentioned the whale watch company you had initially worked for closed down.

AJ: Yes. In the mid 1990s there were three whale watch companies in town. Now there's only one. I definitely see some younger fishermen coming in than what we had seen. It seems like most of them were at least [in their] fifties and older when I started. I do see a lot more young ones coming in, so that's kind of cool. Besides the boats, I think there are more demonstration lobster tours coming from a couple of different companies now. You also have basically at least three companies in Frenchmen Bay alone out of Bar Harbor that do bay cruises.

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You also will have the salmon pens that are in the inner part of the Bay. Our nature cruises only rarely go up to the inner part of the Bay, but especially in foggy conditions and such that happens more and more. There's a lot of beautiful things to see in that Frenchman – in the inner part of

the Bay, and not just in the outer, but we usually stick more to the outer. It's almost just a pleasure to go in and get to see the other things.

TP: Like what?

AJ: Ospreys nests. Eagles nests. The cultural history of going into Hancock Point and where the train used to be that came [and] met with the ferry that would come to Bar Harbor. Calf Island with its connection to Eliot, to Charles Eliot, and some of the other cultural history. It's really cool to see the old lobster pound in Sorrento. That's a whole other fun thing that we can talk about. We can't see any of those other old style lobster pounds toward the outside of Frenchman Bay, but it's really cool to go in there and see it in Sorrento. Those are all different things that are neat to see in that inner bay.

TP: Can you tell me more about those old-style lobster pounds?

AJ: Yes. Part of the [construction of the] original lobster pounds was a lot of wood in the area with webbing and around it so that they could hold whatever lobsters came in from whoever sold to that lobster pound.

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There's one really close to where my father-in-law comes in and out. Sorrento was the only one that I know of that I see that is still used to some extent, and I honestly don't know to what extent they're used to. There is still an old ['decrapitating'] one that is off of Partridge Cove in the inner part off of Lemoine where my father-in-law goes out, but you can still see all the posts. You can still see where all that original lobster pound stuff was. The birds are always a great example to see off over there. Both with ospreys and eagles – it seems like there's a lot more ospreys in the inner part of the bay and more eagles towards the outside, but what we're seeing is more and more eagles now as well. It's interesting to see the ospreys' [and] eagles' interaction because they don't get along so well. Eagles really are pirates. They're not the nicest of birds, and they will gladly harass an osprey to catch their food for them. As I like to say, "It's yeah, you know, it's just another way of bargaining off a fisherman for food." Maybe not the nicest way though.

TP: Yes. Where do people go now, if not pounds?

AJ: Just retail stores, almost. There's basically two in Bar Harbor. You have the old established Parson's [Parson's Lobsters] on Mount Desert Street, and the newer Peeky-Toe Provisions will also sell lobster straight.

[0:31:59]

Yes, we still tell the passengers and people on the docks, "When the lobsters are coming into the town pier go on up. And you can never know what kind of bargain you can strike with the lobstermen." It's like, yes, you can do that on pretty much any town pier all the way around the island. It's up to you whether or not you want to do that, but that certainly is something that you can try.

TP: That sounds like fun. Well, potentially.

AJ: Yes, it all depends on what kind of mood the lobsterman's in. Especially since it's just general visitors, sometimes they really don't want to have anything to do with the visitors if they don't have to.

TP: Are there other ways that the bay has changed?

AJ: I've been around long enough to be able to see – I don't want to call it extremes, but it's kind of like that. I was here in 1991 when all the pogies came in there alongside the shore with my in-laws living all the way into the inner part. It was the final end of millions and millions of pogies. I also remember the stories and seeing a little bit of the humpback off of Hull's Cove, almost right here. There was [lunch?] fishing, or lunge fishing of fin whales off of Otter Point. I do believe they had a killer whale out at Mount Desert Rock that year too. With the fish came and some of the whales. Even in the last couple of years as we have the menhaden coming back. Granted, the menhaden and the pogies are the same thing, but the menhaden are coming further and further north.

[0:34:02]

Even in the last couple of years I've seen that the menhaden slash pogies – they're all the same thing – they're coming up to Blue Hill Bay but there's not a whole lot coming into Frenchman Bay. I have no idea why and I am curious, but I think, so –

TP: What year was it that the –

AJ: That all the pogies came in?

TP: Well and the killer whale.

AJ: 1991. Summer of 1991. August, I do believe so. Ask Rosie [Rosemary Seton] and Sean [Todd] if you have another chance to talk about them. They'll remember that year when the whales came nice and close. But with the menhaden coming up I'm not too surprised with the whales having a hard time finding food. They're really roaming, they're ranging in many different places. It's probably also something of which I have experienced out on the whale watch as well. We have a great connection with other whale watchers around the Gulf of Maine. We know that some whales in twenty-four hours can make it from Brier Island all the way to offshore Bar Harbor because of the connection of seeing what whales – it was a male humpback that made it in that area in twenty-four hours, which I'm not completely sure of how many miles [it was], but it's easily fifty. Somewhere between forty to sixty. They only – in general they usually go five to ten miles per hour. It's a pretty solid run. Sometimes we can also follow some of the whales that we will see as they – roaming throughout the summer. They'll be seen here, they'll be seen off in New Hampshire, they'll be seen down on the southern part of the Stillwagen. One of the things that they used to see is a lot of fidelity in the same places the whales would go every year.

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That fidelity does not seem to be the case anymore, or it's just a matter of shift and more research needs to be done. It's really cool, I've been wanting and trying to get into our boat records to see what has been the shift of what whales we are seeing between decades and or five years or what-not. There's also some of the whales that we saw religiously in the 1990s, and we had no idea how old they were. They might not be around anymore, but a lot of those big what we thought were older whales we don't really see anymore.

TP: What was growing up like?

AJ: I did not grow up here. I did not come here until 1990. So in 1989 is when I started school at the University of Maine in Orono. Before then, I traveled. I moved around a lot. I went to ten different schools before I graduated from high school. I ended up graduating from high school in Connecticut. But I'm originally from Nebraska. I've lived on both coasts, I moved to – [I'm] mostly a landlubber, but no place ever felt like home until I came to this island. And being out on the water, that was an extra little bit. My goal in life when I was younger was to be a zookeeper.

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If you happened to notice my license plate on my car, it says 'zookeeper.' I really wanted to work with the endangered species program, in particular the black-footed ferret in the Midwest since that's where I was originally from. I got hired to work at [Cheyenne?] Mountain Zoo in Colorado Springs where they had one of four breeding facilities at the time for black-footed

ferrets. I worked with them. But that was a challenge, so I went to primates. Then my husband – his family moved here in 1984, he graduated from high school here, convinced me to move back – and then one of my roommates from Colorado came out to visit and I went on a regular Whale Watch. Usually I would go out with Ed Blaire or I would go out for fun on another boat, but never really with a commercial whale watch. My friend came out, we went on a whale watch and I currently was just working in a small grocery store in Southwest Harbor. He said, "You know, you'd be really good at this job." Darn, I'm still doing it.

TP: What was it about this place that made it feel right?

AJ: I think that really it is the combination of everything that is here. It is the mountains and the oceans and the high points and the low points. It's that biodiversity. It's that diversity. It may not be the highest, it may not be the lowest. Some people might not consider it the most beautiful, but you get the best of everything that's around right in this area. That is what really made it feel like home.

[0:40:01]

TP: Do you think that's one of the most important aspects of the area?

AJ: Coastal living, definitely. My husband works for the Park Service. He has, since just months after I met him. Over thirty years now. We always say, "Okay, if we were to go to another national park, what are the things that are important to us?" Coastal living is one. He also wants a little bit of mountains, a little bit of trails. That's where he originally did his big stint, in Acadia National Park, working for trails for nineteen years before he went into facility management. Having that and being able to do a lot of things – I'm a birder by trade, before I was a marine biologist. Birds still play a really big part in my life. It has to have birds. It's like, "Well, if I really like doing the job I am, it needs to have puffins, It needs to have whales, it needs to have lighthouses. We figure the only real equivalent would probably be the Channel Islands or Point Reyes out in California. Maybe some Alaska things. But there's no other park that has everything that this area has to offer. One of the things that I really love about this area is the connection between the national park and the community. I think that is a very valuable thing for any community, to have a very protected area, but have a thriving community around it as well.

[0:42:00]

TP: What would you want for the future of the Bay and the community?

AJ: A balance. A balance where you could have fishing and you have your lobsters and you have a variety of different things that come up with those. You also have a protected area that people can come and, just as the National Park Service, be able to use but not hinder for the future. I would love to see all the wildlife just kind of continue, and yes, there is change always with everything but whale watching certainly – and the whales have been here for a long time. I would want that to continue. And the birds that you see there only offshore, the connection between offshore and inshore and the balance that has to have for everything to continue.

TP: Do you think that balance exists now?

AJ: No, I think there's a lot of controversy. My own personal opinion, based on what I know, is that climate change is really driving that. It's what really is driving the lobstering. The fishermen around here are just being hit from all sides, but with that change it also changes where whales are, how much they move around, and where their lines are. The threat of entanglement [is rising] because the lobsters like cold water and going further offshore – it truly is entangled.

[0:43:57]

How do we try to – with climate change, and what you cannot change, how do you balance so that you have a thriving community that has all the above? Who knows what climate change [will change] and how much it will change here. But I would think that – you figure the area was all based on cod fishing. When the cod were gone they changed to lobsters. When the lobsters, if they go – it seems like there should be something else. Hopefully there is. Who knows what will come up. Or maybe climate change will not warm up so much that we will still have at least some lobsters. Having that balance is way off kilter right now. It's hard to balance all of the uses, even for people in Bar Harbor and the community. It's hard to balance all of the uses inside Frenchman Bay. Even with potential – when you consider the aquaculture that they want to bring in, how do you balance all that? It's not balanced right now, but things are continuing changing. They can balance and then they've got to rebalance again. Yes.

TP: Do you have any final notes to add to this before we move to a slightly different piece?

AJ: I don't think so. I think I got most of the general stuff of which I've been thinking about and how things have changed and what I experience. I've got most of that now.

[0:46:05]

TP: Awesome, thank you.

AJ: You're welcome.

TP: Well, we've got some charts – thank you Katie, you're on the ball – and we're going to try and do is take the charts and take the little list of places that we've talked about and draw where they are and that kind of thing so we can know what is going on here.

AJ: Okay.

TP: And also because I like charts. [paper unfurling]

Katie Clark: [unintelligible] ...this is going to sound great on the mic.

TP: Eh, we're fine. They're so curly. I'll put this down on that, and this one –

KC: I had one question about a place name. You said where you're finding a bunch of orange tunicates. I heard Shep Harbor?

AJ: Ship Harbor, over in Southwest Harbor.

KC: Ship.

AJ: Ship Harbor.

KC: Ship, okay.

AJ: Ship Harbor over in Southwest Harbor, down – let's see. I'm going to see if I can, in particular – here is Ship Harbor. That comes in here. So, orange sheath tunicate was right up in here. Orange sheath tunicate. Let me think about what year that would have been. I want to say that it was probably 2009 or 2010.

[0:48:01]

It was just one of those things that I had no idea what it was.

TP: Right here?

AJ: Basically at this little point that comes right out here. All right up alongside here and then into Ship Harbor. I'm pretty sure I have Ship Harbor right.

TP: Okat. This pen doesn't work.

AJ: Yes.

TP: Okay.

AJ: Yes, because here's [Lopez?] Point – well this is Bass Harbor, so Ship Harbor is right off over here.

TP: I'll mark that one.

AJ: Maybe it – well no, it's not there. It's here. Ship Harbor is here. Sorry about that.

TP: This?

AJ: Yes.

TP: Okay.

AJ: Literally this point right out here.

TP: Okay. Here we go. Okay, that's [unintelligible].

KC: Which one's Sheep Porcupine?

AJ: Sheep Porcupine is right all the way up in here – so this one is Sheep. With an eagle's nest is.

TP: That'll be two.

KC: And Bar Island?

AJ: Bar Island is there.

KC: Egg Rock?

AJ: Egg Rock is out here, [let me] make sure I get the right thing. This is Egg Rock.

KC: Ironbound?

AJ: Ironbound Island – here, in particular this cliffside here. I'm just going to put [P-F] for the peregrine falcon.

[0:50:00]

KC: Nice.

TP: Perfect. I'm going to put three for that.

KC: And then I have Bar Harbor.

AJ: Yes, Bar Harbor. Yes, basically right here. It's so funny because originally the first dock I went off is now part of the docks which is part of Harbor Place, at 1 West Street.

KC: Otter Point?

AJ: Otter Point is all the way out here. There's Seal Harbor, so Otter Point is right here.

TP: I'm going to put this Bar Harbor thing as four, and this is five.

KC: Great Harbor?

AJ: I'm going to consider that all up in here, because that's kind of southwest. Great Harbor is considered all of that area.

KC: Oh, okay.

AJ: That's what Great Harbor's kind of –

KC: Okay.

AJ: And in Northeast Harbor and Southwest Harbor, so this is Great Harbor – what I call Great Harbor. It includes both Northeast and Southwest [Harbors].

TP: Wow, okay. Six. Cool.

KC: Some Sound?

AJ: Yes, that's all the way up here.

KC: Great Duck?

AJ: Way out here – right there. I love going to the lighthouse out here, especially since they're starting to see puffins.

TP: I got to go yesterday.

AJ: Oh, you did go yesterday? Awesome.

TP: It was a good trip. That was my first time out there.

AJ: Oh, no, I haven't – I've been talking to John [Anderson] to get out on the island.

[0:52:00]

I don't know if it will be this year because I'll be gone for a lot of the summer.

KC: The ballpark, near Schoodic Ridges?

AJ: Yes, so Inner Schoodic Ridges – Let's see, this is the rock, correct?

TP: Yes.

AJ: It's most likely off in this area, would be the Inners.

TP: Here is – oh yes, it's actually marked. Inner Schoodic Ridges.

AJ: Oh, there you go. Inner Schoodic Ridges right there.

TP: So this...

AJ: You can see how there's all those contour lines. The ridges all come up and create upwelling.

TP: Oh, gotcha.

AJ: That's how come that is what's called the ballpark. Those upwellings created all the nutrients to come up to the surface, the phytoplankton, and then more plankton, zooplankton, and then so forth.

TP: Right. That'll be nine.

KC: Outer Schoodic Ridges –

AJ: – is then out here.

TP: Oh, then – actually do you want to put an asterisk next to that? We can come back to it and we can move the map. Is it – is it in a nice and easy spot? Not really.

KC: Grand Manan banks?

AJ: Yes, way out over there.

TP: Okay.

AJ: That would be to the east of the island of Grand Manan and outside of the Bay of Fundy. Grand Manan Banks is basically just before – the banks areas before you go into the Bay of Fundy.

TP: Gotcha.

KC: Lemoine and Skillings River?

AJ: That's going to go all the way into here. Of course, looks like – here's Lemoine, here's Raccoon Cove – he actually comes all the way into this.

[0:54:00]

I'm trying to see where the road comes through because Partridge Cove actually comes right through – it literally is right through here where it's marked off with the little MDI [Mount Desert Island] and places there, but it's right up there.

TP: I'm just going to put – 'X' marks the spot, ish, kind of. That's ten.

KC: Where are the salmon pens in the outer part of the bay?

AJ: The inner part of the bay. They are right – I'm not one hundred percent sure. I know they're in this area, I'm just not exactly sure where they are. I don't think they're off Stave [Island], but I don't think they're off Calf [Island] so they might be somewhere in between here.

TP: Are these current, or –

AJ: Yes, there's definitely some pens out there. I assumed they were salmon, but I may be wrong. I can't remember exactly where they're at, but they're in this area.

TP: Okay. We'll do a question mark.

KC: Then Calf Island also –

AJ: Which is right in the middle of it.

KC: Calf Island is a confirmed spot.

AJ: Yes.

TP: Salmon pens, eleven. Calf Island, twelve.

KC: Hancock Point?

AJ: That's going to be off over [unintelligible]. That's Sullivan, so it's got to be – it's right out here. I was right. That's Hancock Point. The old train station is over this way on that side of it, off over there.

TP: The train station [will] be thirteen and Hancock Point in general fourteen.

KC: Sorrento Lobster Pound?

AJ: Sorrento is all the way back here, so Sorrento and Sullivan – I can't remember, I do believe it – I can't remember if it's here or here. I am thinking it is here. Sorrento is such a small town, I'm surprised they don't have it though. Sorrento's right here, right there. There it is.

TP: Okay. And it's right up in Sorrento?

AJ: Yes, the pens are basically right in this little hollow there, I think.

TP: Sorry, where?

AJ: This little hollow that's right in Sorrento. If you were to go ahead, the main marina is in here. The lobster pound is just a little bit off towards this way.

TP: Can you mark?

AJ: Yes. Lobster pound – and Sorrento still works in a co-op too, which is always kind of interesting to talk about too.

KC: Partridge Cove –

AJ: – Is going to be all the way up in here, and I think Partridge Cove is also right around that 'ten' area. [referring to mark on the chart]

TP: Okay?

AJ: Because if you are, for example, if you are taking – I'm guessing that this is Mud Creek Road, and as you come on and Mud Creek Road, the estuary would be about here, and the cove is right through here.

[0:58:10]

TP: Right here, this?

AJ: Well that's – [Katie coughs] it's more into here. So where is this – I was thinking this was more mud creek road. I'm not used to looking at it on a map like this, but I know marble is over here. It literally is right up in this area.

TP: This is frustrating.

AJ: Yes.

KC: Parsons?

AJ: Well Parson's Lobster pound – although it's not truly a pound, but that's what they call it – is on Mount Desert Street, which is this one. I'm trying to think. They don't tell you where the golf course is. It's before the golf course, closer into town.

TP: Oh, the golf course. I think the golf course is here.

AJ: But Mount Desert Street –

TP: Is Parson's here?

AJ: Well that – that's not. That's not going into the park. Mount Desert Street – I'm thinking , if here's that – that would be this one and this one and this one. I guess it would be this one.

TP: This is probably something that will be on Google Maps too.

AJ: Yes, it's off of Mount Desert Street.

KC: It's on the Night Bus route [Editor's note: this is referring to College of the Atlantic's evening shuttle service].

TP: Ah, okay. Yes, we'll be able to find it.

AJ: They have had retail lobster there since. I'm pretty sure before I came here.

[1:00:00]

AJ: My sister in law dated one of the Parson's boys back in high school until his death. I don't know if you've heard of the 'Mark A.' lobster boat yet that was named after him. That was the Parson's lobster boat, the Mark A. was named after the son lost.

KC: We have Peaky Toe Provisions, which is –

AJ: – Main Street? So Main Street is what, here? This one?

KC: It looks like it.

AJ: Yes. So Peaky Toe Provisions is down over across – it's right next to Chocolatte. Yes.

KC: And then Hull's Cove.

AJ: Yes, up and in here. Hull's Cove...

KC: Blue Hill Bay was mentioned.

TP: Yes.

AJ: Basically, I would just call that the west side of the island [Mount Desert Island].

KC: Okay. Then Friar Island?

AJ: I'm not sure if it was Friar – Brier Island. Brier island is all the way –

KC: Oh, Brier.

AJ: – Brier, it's B-R-I-E-R, and it's all the way up off of Nova Scotia.

KC: Okay.

TP: We need to go back to that. Is that all it is for these? Hold on, before we ditch the page, let's run back to the wider map and catch some of the ones from earlier [handling noise, paper rustling].

[1:02:01]

Is this an okay orientation?

AJ: Yes. After working at Acadia National Park for so long I'm so used to reading maps upside down. It's really kind of an interesting life skill to have. Here's Frenchman Bay, here's Mount Desert Island. Here would be Nova Scotia. Here's Brier Island.

TP: Oh, okay.

AJ: Right here. And there's a whale watch with – kind of like a sister whale watch to us. We keep in close contact with them. The other one is actually Blue Ocean Society down off of Rye, New Hampshire. Here's the Grand Manan banks, right here. They have the southwestern and the northeastern.

TP: Where was the home run, the Ballpark?

AJ: The Ballpark would have been down off the Inner Schoodic Ledges, which would have been off here. Here's Mount Desert Rock, here's the Outer [Schoodic Ledges] and the Inner would have been on this side somewhere, right off or around in here, I think. [handling noise]

TP: Yes, put Outer as one here and the Inner as two.

KC: We got the Inner on the last map, it was the Outer that [we needed].

TP: Oh, okay. Yes, yes. Oh, I'm realizing, what are the routes you take?

AJ: Traditionally it would be right out from Bar Harbor right out to the Ballpark. The other one might actually see the fine details. You have a little – how the contour lines go, it almost looks like the shape of a hippo.

[1:04:08]

Kind of really kind of crazy in this. – like, sometimes where the nose of the hippo, sometimes we're at the tail, sometimes we're down on a leg. But when you're looking at it, especially on a big screen and really close up, you can kind of see the shape of a hippo. We oftentimes would go right out to the middle and work our way around to see if we see anything. If we don't, then we can check out the Outer Schoodic Ridges. Right off in between here is what we call the – eastern... east – it will come to me very, very soon, as soon as I'm done with this. There's Eastern Ledges that are basically right in between the Inner Schoodic and Outer Schoodic Ledges. When we are going to Grand Manan banks, we basically go out and we skirt – this might even be those eastern ledges – skirt them and then head out there. Basically to the closest part to us we're at fifty miles – five-zero.

TP: That'll be three. And then this – there's a little ledge in here?

AJ: Yes. Somewhere in between here. East.

TP: Four. Okay. You mentioned – maybe the other chart is again better for this, but routes in Frenchman Bay and down along the coast?

AJ: Yes. For the –

TP: Should we go back to the other chart, or is this good?

[1:06:01]

AJ: You can see it either way I suppose, but for the Inner Bay we would stay inside the porcupines and go around this way, get a little into Flanders. You can usually go in and around

like this and then back on up to Bar Harbor. That would be like the Inner Bay route. On the other one I could probably remember where there were some osprey and eagle nests that we always keep an eye on. I don't know if you need to know that much detail.

TP: You mentioned I think the southern part of the island while [you were] working for the national park?

AJ: Yes. I did a lot of – most of my tide pools were down here in Southwest [Harbor] and down into Ship Harbor. That's [Bounce?] harbor, so it's kind of up in this area. Tide pooling. I don't know – you might find it better on the other, I think we labeled it better on the other side.

TP: Five. Okay. Well, that's Great Duck.

AJ: For our fall tour we'd come in around this way and come all the way into Sommes Sound, about half way and then back out. Or we'll just scoot – if we want to get out to Great Duck we'll just scoot alongside here. Baker Island is also another place where I have spent some time. I haven't necessarily seen a whole lot of change, but I did the Baker Island tour with the National Park Service where the lobster boat out of Bar Harbor Whale Watch goes out to Baker Island.

[1:08:01]

I did that for six years. I would say the only biggest difference I'd seen is how tall the trees get out there.

TP: Are they bigger or smaller?

AJ: Oh, they're a lot bigger. They're not blowing down. However, the Park Service did go down and cut over one hundred trees and you could finally start to see the light house. It's funny too, because the lighthouse is in the middle, when they built the lighthouse on Baker Island there were no trees. All the trees have all been cut down. And so they built it on the highest point in the middle of the island. And then in the early 1900s, as the Gilley family went ahead, the later generations of the Gilley family donated it to Acadia National Park. They of course let all the trees grow and now you can't really see the lighthouse at all. If you were this way over here you can't see the lighthouse. You can just barely see the top of the light house from over on this side. And that's because of the clearing that they did. But [from] the type of Cadillac [Mountain], you can still see the light very well. For lighthouses, my favorite place to go is Cadillac. [handling noise] You can see all the way to Petit Manan, Baker Island, Egg Rock – you can see, on a really nice clear night, you can even see Mount Desert Rock from the top of Cadillac.

TP: Wow. That's fun. Okay, do you have any other last notes for us?

AJ: Not that I can think of right off. The only thing I can think of is [that] I work with another woman who has spent even more time on the bay than me. If you're looking for more people to do I would recommend her.

[1:10:05]

TP: [describing the scene] Both of us reaching for our pens. [laughs]

AJ: Her name is Ruth Hill. She started with the Nature Conservancy in the 1970s, particularly with the Eagle Project, but also with protection of the islands. When the Nature Conservancy got – what is it now, Long Porcupine? And also Turtle. And around the Bay, she has even spent a lot more time in the Bay than I have.

TP: Do you have contact information?

AJ: I do.

TP: That's – Yes. I'm actually going to turn this off before that. We'll handle this after the recording is over.

AJ: I can't think of anything else. Do you have any other questions for me?

TP: I don't think so. Thank you very much.

AJ: You're welcome.

TP: All right.

[1:10:59]

END OF INTERVIEW

Transcribed by Tiegan Paulson, 05/24/2023

Reviewed by Camden Hunt, 09/20/2023