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**Transcript of DARE Interview (1966): Port Clyde, Maine; Primary Informant
ME017 (Tape 0650-S1)**

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INTRODUCTION: The following was recorded from Dictionary of American Regional English tape zero six five zero, side one.

5 FIELDWORKER: This is a recording of Cole [beep] made at Port Clyde, Maine, on May twenty-second, nineteen sixty-six by [beep]. Now uh, could tell us how they go about seining, the fish, and what fish they go after?

10 INFORMANT: They're sardines, they go after sardines. And we catch a few mackerel with the sardines, but, uh, mostly we ca-, they're separate, and we catch pollock besides sardines. And uh, these fish are, uh, have to be in a cove in order to catch them. We don-, unless we use a purse seine to catch them outside, take them in. And most of the, uh, fishing is done at night, instead of in the daytime. The only thing you can catch in the daytime is mackerel or pollock. Can't catch sardines very well—we have caught them before now, we've caught them two or three times, but most of them are caught at night. And, you, most of your fish w-would, uh, it's sardines that we go for, you don't go for mackerel much.

FIELDWORKER: What kind fish make sardines?

15 INFORMANT: Herring, small herring. [blows nose] And the big fish, they use for, for uh, bloaters and other, use for bloaters, most of them.

FIELDWORKER: And what's a bloater?

INFORMANT: Big sardine. Sardines which is about ten, twelve inches long.

FIELDWORKER: And they can them?

20 INFORMANT: No. Well they smoke them. And then they strip them out and then they call it smoked stripped fish. It's used in the sardine market like, but not in the can. They're not canned up that like the other sardines are. But most of these, uh, seiners catch sardines, they catch them in the night. They use an aeroplane just before dark, just before dark when they're bunched up where you see them down there? Today? And that's the way that uh they, uh, see them in the
25 night, uh, just before dark. But after dark where they spread out and they're white, instead of

being black. They're black in the daytime and white at night. The difference in the sardines. Wait a minute now. Now your s-, your seines are, all right, there you go. Your seines are, uh, most of them are eighty fathom long, s-six to seven and eight fathom deep, caught in the depth of water, use the size of the twine you need, and the length you need of the twine, and most of them we, 30 we have a few hundreds and a, and a few eighties, but most of them are all eighties. We got two sixties. But we use mostly all eighties, but uh, you're purse seine here is, uh, fifty. Fifty fathom, and it's about eight fathom deep, so it reaches mo-, most places, goes for the small and the big too. Only using one purse seine for the whole outfit.

FIELDWORKER: What's the difference between the purse seine and the other?

35 INFORMANT: One's a stop twine and one's a purse seine. One has rings on it, and the other has just leads on it to (shut) off with. And the other has a rope (so it), purse line rope and rings on it in order to bring it up. And as you purse it up you pack it up and make them in.

FIELDWORKER: Mm-hmm. And these leads hold the, uh, seine down {at the bottom.

INFORMANT: Down at the bottom}, yeah.

40 FIELDWORKER: And these rings close up when you want to, uh—

INFORMANT: Yeah, bring it up, yeah. We don't have so many, much leads on a purse seine as you do on a stop twine. Stop twine or a pocket's lead is a lot heavier, in order to hold it. And then you have four kegs on it for the corners, which are twenty fathom apart. And those seine, uh, those, uh, kegs you have the four kegs at the corners you can go to so the wind blowing a different 45 way you can tie on a different side to come up to unload the boat. Either way you want to.

FIELDWORKER: How do they get these sardines into a boat?

INFORMANT: Sucker, sardine carriers. We call a carrier and a carrier comes out and she has a sucker on her, and she, she sucks the fish out, saves the scales and the s-, uh, sardines go in one way, the water goes out another, the scales go another. So they get the good thing out of the 50 scales, used to get as high as fifty cents a pound. But right now I guess they're around ten cents.

FIELDWORKER: What do they do with the s-scales?

INFORMANT: Make buttons. Buttons for the, uh, these white shirts, expensive shirts, they make buttons out of them. And the other fish that are, that are, uh, taken in sometimes, they just get the scales off them for the same purpose. That goes to fish meal, it isn't worth canning. But most 55 of the fish that they get are sardines and go to the factory, and there's very few that's (condemned). Unless they got red feed in them. Once in a while you get them that's had too much feed in them, you have to hold them over a couple days in order to get it out of them. Keep them in a pocket and they, the feed works out of them. And (xx), then they're ready to take out. They test them there before they take them, so that they know (whether) a fish that will pass the 60 inspector at the factory.

FIELDWORKER: What's this red feed?

INFORMANT: Feed that, uh that's stuff that they eat in the water. We call it red feed, which is in the sardine, it's in the poke of the sardine. And you get that out in the can (front blow), in the steam boxes, which you don't have that (xx) why they blow the steam boxes so they'll lose a lot of fish after, cans and fish too, everything.

FIELDWORKER: What's a steam box?

INFORMANT: Where they cook them. At the factory.

FIELDWORKER: Uh-huh.

INFORMANT: [cough] When they bring them in they, they put them into cans, they coo-, they pack them raw. And in the cans they put in the, they put them in the steam box after they pack them raw in the cans and, and run them in the steam box for about five to ten minutes, and then they put them in the (retoss) for fifteen, and that cooks, finish cooking them, after they're sealed up. The first time they seal them, they do it that way so the fish'll lay down better and the oil take into the fish better, cook five minutes, so that the oil goes in the fish better.

FIELDWORKER: What do you call the pocket of a seine? What is that?

INFORMANT: The pocket?

FIELDWORKER: Mm-hmm.

INFORMANT: A pocket of a seine is the, uh, after you run across a piece of twine clear across the cove, well you put a pocket on it, which is an eighty-fathom pocket, twenty-fathom square, with four kegs on it, so the carrier can come to it and take the fish up.

FIELDWORKER: And you drive all the fish into that pocket {(xx).

INFORMANT: They, they'll go in} themselves 'cause they think they're going out. (xx) put that on in the morning just before daylight and they all rush right that way, they (xx) up at the shore at all. Minute the tide turns, why, they, they turn. We generally get on just before daylight, so to have it ready for them because they think they're getting out and you put that on and they, they run right into it and then you take your other twine up and use it again the next night, (set), keep your pocket there two, three days, long as you've got fish there. If there ain't no fish, well you take it right back up again, after you get it cleaned out. After selling them to the factories, why you, get rid of those fish.

FIELDWORKER: What do they call the things that, those wooden things that hold the net up in the water?

INFORMANT: The floats?

FIELDWORKER: Mm-hmm.

95 INFORMANT: Those are floats. [cough] Those are floats. Uh, they're made in, some are made in Japan, and some are made here. But most of them are (that) foam rubber, (that) foam corks, they call them, which is a lot better than the other one. The other one used to be that, um, oh what kind of, I forget the name of it was now. But they ain't, they ain't no good, they're heavy, they get heavy after a while, soak, water soak. So these don't. You can use them year in, year out. You use some high as six years. Don't be trouble at all.

100 FIELDWORKER: Now how do they put these nets out?

INFORMANT: By a dory. They're in a dory and we use a outboard and tow them out. Except once in a while we do use a big boat, but very seldom according to how much we got to tow out, we got to tow out, uh, oh, six, seven hundred fathom, why, we use a big boat, but if we only towing out four, five hundred, why, we use a small one. Cause each time one gets out, out of the dory it makes it that much lighter and the other dory is dropped off, tied right on the twine and left right there, we get all through setting, then come along and pick them up, pick up your empty dories.

FIELDWORKER: About how many dories you use?

110 INFORMANT: Well, we use, I use twelve, all told, keep different things in. I keep the pocket in some of them and I keep the running twine in the other and the purse seine in the others. Then we don't, we don't use, most generally, about four or five dories, is about what we use all the time. But, uh, ordinarily we have to have them different ways on, we have to use them. (It's often) times according to where we are and what we got, we may shut off two, three coves tonight and use more twine and then have to have four different pockets, so you'd have to have four different dories for them pockets. To keep the twine in, (xx).

115 FIELDWORKER: Generally, when you go out to set out a, uh, seine, how long do you stay away from port?

120 INFORMANT: Well, it all depends, uh, if we, uh, don't see no fish, we don't stay over two or three hours, but if we get, catch fish, well we stay with them till morning and run them in the pocket. Then call the boat and have them come take them out and we get home around noontime. Next day.

FIELDWORKER: What do you stay in overnight?

125 INFORMANT: In a boat, living quarters, we got a boat named The Crows. She's, uh, fifty foot, she'll sleep eight. And we use it for home. We have to have telephone, radio, hot water, and cold water (xx), a 'frigerator, everything, electric lights. And we got a aeroplane radio, walkie-talkies, and uh, sounding machines. And we have these little fathom meters for the small boats. Take care of them.

FIELDWORKER: What's this, uh, seine made of?

INFORMANT: Nylon.

FIELDWORKER: How long has it been made, have they been made of nylon?

130 INFORMANT: Oh, I should say now about ten years, not over that. They made some but there wasn't much account 'cause they didn't understand how to make them, how to tie the knot. But now they've got it down pretty good. The twine'll last. We had some of the first twine and it didn't last no time at all. But this now, the twine is good, oh they're good for five to six years, if they get any use at all. If they don't get any use, you can use them longer. But if you get any use
135 with them at all, you get about five or six years out of them. Some people get two to three if they use them a lot, you know, every day.

FIELDWORKER: And, uh, what were they made of before they came out with this nylon?

INFORMANT: Cotton. Cotton purse seine.

FIELDWORKER: And you'd have to let them dry then?

140 INFORMANT: Yeah, you'd have to let them dry and salt them and everything. You don't have to salt these at all. You can leave them out, wet or anything, put them in wet, rain don't hurt them, stay out all winter don't hurt them. Snow or rain doesn't hurt the nylon. The sun is the only thing that hurts it any to amount to anything.

FIELDWORKER: And now when you get holes in this, how do you repair them?

145 INFORMANT: Oh, we sh-, cut them, cut them out in squares, whichever way they are, diamond shape, whichever way they are, we follow the seam, cut them out, put them back in, patch them.

FIELDWORKER: And you—

INFORMANT: And then the hanging twine, if that's got down, we put them in. And if there's an-, then if there's any amount of big holes in it, we put a new piece of twine right in it and cut it out,
150 slap a new piece right in. From top to bottom. Whatever size is tore or in hard shape. But if it isn't in too hard of shape, well we mend it. Run it up and, what we call running it up, and then we, we put in square patches, lot of places.

FIELDWORKER: What do you call that needle you use? {Just a needle?

INFORMANT: Uh, a, t-t-} a, uh, twine needle.

155 FIELDWORKER: Uh-huh. And what kind of a knot do you make in these?

INFORMANT: Two half-hitches. Two half-hitches. Start with two half-hitches and then (xx).

FIELDWORKER: And what do you call that kind of a knot, uh, that kind of a rip where you don't have to cut out a piece to fit in there.

INFORMANT: That's a sew-up. Where you sew it up. Where you don't have to cut it out. That's
160 just a tear. That isn't to pieces, gone to pieces. Just a tear in the twine, you sew it right up. It's called a straight rip, right down the twine.

FIELDWORKER: Do they use different size mesh?

INFORMANT: Yup. These are inch-mesh now we're using for this size fish, for sardine. And when you begin to get up into mackerel, you use an inch and a half and two inch. And then cod fishing
165 they use two-and-a-half and three {(inch mesh.

FIELDWORKER: It's all}, it's all just about the same principle?

INFORMANT: Yeah. Yeah. It is about the same principle. (Not much more with it). But they have, uh, different ways of using it. The drag nets use a different size twine and a different size mesh, which is called a bag on a dragger. And they have a belly and a top piece and two end pieces.
170 Made altogether different than our seine. But it's made out of the same twine, only it's built different. Like a truck would be alongside of an automobile, car.

FIELDWORKER: Do they have lights on the bottom of a {(drag net?

INFORMANT: No,} no, no, they, they have, uh, iron doors. Two doors. They drag them on the side and have, have chain on the bottom and floats to hold them up. Round floats.

175 FIELDWORKER: What do they drag for?

INFORMANT: Haddock, cod fish, gray sole, lemon sole, black bass, dabs. They get everything, lobsters and all. What else you want to know of?

FIELDWORKER: Well, now lobsters, uh, how do they get them?

INFORMANT: In the trap, most of them.

180 FIELDWORKER: And what's this trap built like?

INFORMANT: Oh, it's about three foot, four long and it's got, uh, two heads in one end, and a bedroom head in the other. And has a door on it, you open them up and they go into bedroom part, when they're, what they call a keeper's part. A lot of people call them the keeper, some call them a bedroom part. That's the kitchen wear you keep the bait.

185 FIELDWORKER: And these heads are the thing that the, uh, lobster goes through?

INFORMANT: Yeah, yeah. Some have hakemouths, some of them have funnel hoops.

FIELDWORKER: What's the difference?

INFORMANT: Well, the difference is that the funnel hoop is five inches, and the hakemouth is six. You can get a bigger lobster with a hakemouth than you can with a— hakemouth's in the bedroom of all traps, anyhow. After they go in, they can't seem get in and out, two meshes on
190 top which hold them from coming out, (fl-flop down).

FIELDWORKER: And, when you put out these traps, uh, how do you mark where they are?

195 INFORMANT: Well you, they're, you set them by, uh, you number your buoys, (they're) colored, everybody has a different color, about everybody, and everybody has a different number anyhow. But the color has nothing to do with it, what color you use, but it's, the color is to help you people find your own gear, (Rei), then what it would be if you didn't know where your gear was and you know how many you set in a string. You set them in a string of maybe ten or fifteen, that's the way they set them, some set twenty, some's as high as thirty in the string, according to where they are, how much room they got, how many there is around them. Ain't no one
200 around them, they set thirty in the string. [cough] If they're crowded in, why, they'll set ten or fifteen, some set as low as five in a string.

FIELDWORKER: How often do they check these traps?

INFORMANT: About every day or every other day anyhow. Yep.

FIELDWORKER: When they get lobsters, do they, uh, just take them right out of the trap?

205 INFORMANT: Yeah. Well they haul up the trap and when they haul up the trap they, the lobster, there may be one or two counters in it, there may be seven or eight lobsters in it, but the rest of them are small, short lobsters, so they have to heave them overboard, or two big or (punched). Seed lobsters has, uh, got a V in the tail. So that we all know that that's a seeder, she's the main lobster.

210 FIELDWORKER: And a counter is about how big?

INFORMANT: Well three and an eighth. Across his back. And the bi-, uh five and an eighth is the biggest you can take, that's the smallest you can take is a three and an eighth.

FIELDWORKER: What kind of boat they use to, uh, put these lobsters, uh, traps on?

215 INFORMANT: Well most, most of them use a, anywhere from a twenty-five to, to a thirty-five footer, that goes lobstering. Most of them are around thirty to thirty-two, but you uh, once in a while you get one that's got a bigger boat and he goes further off shore, the other fella, some go in the dory and some go in outboards. You see all kind of rigs hauling traps in. To be called lobster boats.

220 FIELDWORKER: What do you call these little things you put in the claws of a lobster to keep them—

INFORMANT: Pegs. Pegs, lobster pegs.

FIELDWORKER: Make them yourselves?

225 INFORMANT: No, they come by the thousands. They're made over in Canada. Used to make them, years ago. But now they get two cents for pegging the lobsters, whereas you got nothing before. Same price. They give them two cents more to have the lobsters pegged, instead of having to peg them when they get in.

FIELDWORKER: And what are some other boats they use around here? Like the little one we saw in that shed there?

INFORMANT: [cough] Small boats that are used?

230 FIELDWORKER: Uh-huh.

INFORMANT: Oh, we use them to uh, uh, go from the island to go fishing, and different things like that, you know. But most, most of the [loud noise] small boat (xx), most of the small boats that are used here are, are (either) tender to go aboard the big ones with.

FIELDWORKER: And what do you call that little thing like almost like a canoe? Like a wa—

235 INFORMANT: Double-ender. Yeah those are a double-ender.

FIELDWORKER: Is there a wherry, too?

INFORMANT: Wherries, yeah. There's wherries, dories, and double-enders, and skiffs.

FIELDWORKER: Now what's the difference between these things?

240 INFORMANT: Well one's a flat-bottomed boat, which is a skiff. And a round botto-, a round bottom boat is a double-ender, both ends look alike. You can't tell whether you're in the the bow or the stern. And a wherry has a square stern and a peaked bow like a double-ender. And a dory is a flat bottom, but she is, uh, long and deep-sided.

FIELDWORKER: And you generally tow these dories?

INFORMANT: Yeah. We tow these dories with these outboards.

245 FIELDWORKER: How about these wherries?

INFORMANT: Well, no, those they row around. Most of them. Once in a while they have a small outboard on them, but they don't tow nothing with them. They just use them for getting aboard with and going from one island to the other, the cove, but they don't use them to lobster with much. Those small ones. Most all are big ones.

250 FIELDWORKER: And how do they get, uh, clams and scallops, things {like that?

INFORMANT: Well,} they have to drag for them the same thing as they do (for) with catching codfish and big fish and things. They drag (for them), but they have scallop nets, which the scallop drags are right 'round six feet long and two foot deep, with a net in between it. (That's the) drag to get scallops.

255 FIELDWORKER: And you have these iron gates?

INFORMANT: Yeah. Yeah. Chain with it, open up.

FIELDWORKER: Are there any different kinds of clams and scallops that they get, or just {one kind?

260 INFORMANT: Yes,} there's, there's quahogs. And there's hen clams. And there's, uh, river clams here. There's island clams, there's rock clams. Four or five different kind of clams.

FIELDWORKER: How about scallops?

INFORMANT: Well, scallops are, uh, about one thing, what they call a bay scallops, they're caught right here in the bay. Then there's the outside scallops, which ain't so sweet as the bay scallops are.

265 FIELDWORKER: And when they take these scallops in, do they just, uh, dump them in like they would the fish, and then..?

270 INFORMANT: No, no, they bring the scallops in they have to shell them. They shell them aboard the boat before they bring them in, throw the shells on the ground, see, and they bring in nothing but the meat. Which they bring them in, uh, well about five gallons to a bag, there's little white bags that they call scallop bags, and they put them in them. Five gallons to a bag. That's what (xx).

FIELDWORKER: Uh, back when they were seining years ago, before they had these carriers with the suckers, how did they get the uh—

275 INFORMANT: You hoist them aboard by nets, and used to put them indoors and bring them out and (skull) them out and bail them out, put them aboard a boat. It'd take them almost all night to load the boat, get it loaded, or all day, before you'd get a sardine carrier loaded, now you can load a sardine carrier in an hour's time, with these suckers. It does away with all that work and everything else. You just sit there and watch them go aboard. The other way there's four men working and takes anywhere from six, seven hours to load a carrier.

280 FIELDWORKER: And what were these nets like that they'd use?

285 INFORMANT: Uh, it was a bow net with a long stick on it where the bottom opens up. With a chain on it, opens the bottom up. When you fill it, why uh, you hoist, they hoist it in over the hatch hole and (they'd like) open up the bottom again, let that stick go, was on the end of the long pole, they'd let the lever go and it would u-unload the net and they'd close it up again, dip it down again, fill her up, and bring her up again and, and let her go again, and keep doing that till they got her loaded. That would hold, maybe a hogshead, that's around sixteen bushel and a half [sic], to a hogshead.

FIELDWORKER: And, are there other names for these fellows that have different jobs when you're out training? Or do you all—

290 INFORMANT: Well, one, one tends the cock, one tends the ledge, and the other fellow runs the outboard, and one fellow ties on the shore, tends the shore end. That's about all there is to it.

FIELDWORKER: But there's no different names for these fellows, huh?

INFORMANT: No.

FIELDWORKER: Do you have any nickname for a fellow who's just learning how to, uh, fish?

295 INFORMANT: No, we don't (xx) no nicknames for anyone (xx). They seem to get along all pretty good, everybody goes by their own name and then they know who to talking to. You don't, well you call them something else and they don't know who you're talking to, see. You get mixed up, you've all got to know your position. Each one has a position and they got it. You only got a job to do and it isn't a very long job when you're seining. You shut off a coal with, with a hundre-,
300 hundred thousand in it in, in twenty minutes, and then you shut it off with one thousand in it in twenty minutes the same way, don't take no longer.

FIELDWORKER: Generally what clothing do you wear when you're out fishing?

INFORMANT: What clothing? Oil clothes. Rubber boots. Most all the time we have to use them on account of the water, runs out of the twine at times when it sops around, then you need your
305 rubber boots on to get in and out of your dories. Because this, after a rain storm the dory's got quite a lot of water in them.

FIELDWORKER: And what do they call that coat there?

INFORMANT: Oil coat.

FIELDWORKER: Just an oil coat?

310 INFORMANT: Yeah.

FIELDWORKER: Do they wear pants like that too?

INFORMANT: Yeah, oil pants and oil coat.

FIELDWORKER: Some kind of a hat?

INFORMANT: Yeah, southwester.

315 FIELDWORKER: Uh-huh.

INFORMANT: Southwester, oil coat.

FIELDWORKER: Any gloves?

INFORMANT: Well, yes we use cotton gloves, nylon, cotton, t-, either one, doesn't matter which.

FIELDWORKER: Is there any equipment that you use, uh, we haven't mentioned yet?

320 INFORMANT: Not that I know of. Not that I know of, that's about all there is that we use (xx). Pair of rubber boots and oil coat is all a man has that goes aboard, southwester.

FIELDWORKER: Generally what season do you, uh, work?

325 INFORMANT: Well we get ready, we get ready in April. And these fish get here sometime in May but this last year they've been here this winter, all winter. But we didn't bother to catch any 'cause we wasn't rigged for it to catch them. We wasn't ready for them. This is the first year they opened up open season year round. They always used to open it up first of, the fifteenth of April to the first of December was closing. Now they've got it year round. But we don't catch fish until the warm weather, we don't try to catch them anyhow till last of May, first of June.

FIELDWORKER: And about what time do you stop?

330 INFORMANT: Oh. We stop about the fifteenth of November. Get r-, get the gear all in by the fifteenth. Cause we want to go gunning.

FIELDWORKER: And you say that you'd, uh, dip some smelts too?

INFORMANT: Oh yeah, the dip for smelts in the spring of year, up river here, few smelts. Make a dip net and dip them.

335 FIELDWORKER: How about alewives?

INFORMANT: Alewives, they get them too now, they get them now. But the smelts are all over with, the smelts have been over with now about two weeks, but alewives are still running. They'll run till maybe first of June.

FIELDWORKER: Mr. [beep] didn't have his glasses handy and couldn't read Arthur.

340