



Oral History and Folklife Research, Inc.

AN INTERVIEW WITH SUSAN KNIGHT CALDER

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

KEITH LUDDEN

WHITING, MAINE

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TRANSCRIBER: KEITH LUDDEN

Notes: Susan grew up in an Irish Catholic family. This transcript contains corrections, notes and emendations provided by Ms. Calder.

KJL I'm going to have to start over, because I forgot to push one little button there. I always have to double check it. so it is January 16th, and we are in Whiting. We're talking to Susan Calder and Suzie was the sardine queen in the 1940's. Suzie, do you mind if I ask what year you were born?

SKC December 29, 1929.

KJL Those were pretty hard times, weren't they?

SKC Yes, very

KJL Do you remember much about that?

SKC Yes, I do, you know.

KJL What can you tell me about that?

SKC Well, it would be such a long story, and probably unbelievable.

KJL Oh, I love long stories.

SKC (Laughs) Well, there was twelve children in the family, and of course I had a good mother and father, but it was still hard times, as far as getting food and clothing, and shelter, you know, and bedding, and of course I remember just a little that--didn't have any pajamas or anything, just crawl right in a grain bag or something. Well, you know it's quite impossible, but that's the best we had and we--well we didn't know any different either, we just learned to live with it.

KJL You crawled in a grain bag, you said?

SKC Grain, a grain bag. Yeah, you know, whatever we could do. Yeah, and then--of course the boys did too, there were seven brothers and five girls, and then when we got a little older, of course it was hard times--there was five of us girls in one bed, when we had a bed. And the boys all had a room and a bed, and a little cot. They used to--but it was, you know it was hard times, but we all went to school and we learned to read and write, and as we got older we worked. And the boys was always, you know, being around with my father and other people that did plumbing, and electricity and they could do all that, the boys. And I could do quite a lot of carpenter work, and doing the roof and all this and that. Yeah.

KJL You did carpenter work?

SKC Well, yes, my sister and I built this house over

KJL Your sister and you built this house?

SKC Built this house over, when I bought it.

KJL OK,

SKC Of course I went to beauty school when I got older had the money--and I earned good money then, but still it wasn't, you know, enough to do everything, so we had to do a lot of that. My sister, Roberta, she was a good--she could do anything--anything you wanted done--electricity, plumbing, anything.

KJL Plumbing, you said?

SKC Yeah, yeah.

KJL Forgive me, I forgot to explain to you, I am a little hard of hearing.

SKC Well, I am too.

KJL So please don't be offended if I ask you to repeat yourself.

SKC No, no, that's alright

KJL Wow, I haven't met very many people like that.

SKC You remember?

KJL Women of your generation who did carpentry, and plumbing, and things.

SKC Well, if you--If you wanted anything done or made, you do it, and that the way the people around lived. Not all women, you know, around did that that, but there was a lot of them--a lot of us, you know, we--well, we just was there, and I used to watch my father, and the boys, too, and anyone that did anything, and if you wanted anything done, you do it. And it didn't hurt us any, I enjoyed it.

KJL And when did you start working in the canneries?

SKC When I was sixteen. I think it was sixteen when they--that was the law, sixteen, yeah.

KJL Did you have to get somebody to sign off on that?

SKC Well, we had to get a permit from the state, or the factory did, I think. To show our birth certificates, and--yeah--which, you know, it was good, I enjoyed it, but it was hard work, too.

KJL So you worked full time when you were sixteen?

SKC Well we had to--yeah--when the factories--we'd have to wait until the boat come in with fish.

KJL OK, it was piecework.

SKC Piece--yeah, we packed fish in cans, see, and had to wait 'til the fish come in, then they'd blow the whistle, and we'd go to work. The bus would come out and get us, the truck.

KJL Now, which cannery did you work in?

SKC Peacock's, Unions

KJL And where was that?

SKC In Lubec. Just as you go in to Lubec. It used to be right across from Uncle Kippy's restaurant. And that's where the... [The factory was next to the water-SKC]

KJL Now, is that the one where there's a ruins now? [The building being referred to here was the old smokehouse, where they smoked fish to sell and send to market--SKC]

SKC No, that was over to Booth's factory the one, they turned into a restaurant.

KJL There's one on the way, on this road into Lubec that's kind of in ruins.

SKC Well, that wasn't a factory.

KJL It wasn't, okay, maybe I'm not remembering correctly.

SKC Well, they tore this old factory down. It's the first one you come to and [Malcom Dodge] had a store right across from it, and down in here, over the hill was the factory, Union Factory. And Peacock owned that, R.J. Peacock. And he owned one down on Main Street, too. But I worked at Union. And when they kind of slacked off of that, closing the factories, I would go around to the different ones that had the fish and pack, like everyone else.

KJL OK, so how did they let the workers know there was fish to pack?

SKC Well, they would--they would blow the whistle in there, and the ones out here, they'd call people, and then they would pass the word around and we'd get right ready and go right down--they had a big--well, I'd call it a bus. It come out and got us. But when my mother worked in the factory, they used to have a pickup, and the women would get on the back of the pickup, rain or shine, and go to work.

KJL And when was that? Was that in the '30's or '40's?

SKC Oh, it was way back when I was a child, yeah, it would be, cause, see, I would go to work about '47.

KJL You started working about '47 in the canneries?

SKC Yeah, '46, '47. I'd be a sophomore. Sophomore year, yeah. And that's the way we had--and we used to have to have a net on our hair. And I should have got that picture out-- and, you know, for cleanliness is all it is. The state--we all had to have something on our hair. And the factories were clean, too. Yeah, they kept them clean, had a nice boss, and Mr. Peacock, he come in and walk around through. And he was a lovely person.

KJL Tell me about Mr. Peacock.

SKC Well, he was--this was old Mr. Peacock, and he was very well liked, he was just a fine gentleman. You never heard him--any foul language or loudness, or nothing, and he was just a very pleasant person to work for.

KJL What was his first name?

SKC Carroll.

KJL Carroll?

SKC Carroll. Yeah, and when I was crowned queen--there was seven factories--dwindled down to seven factories when I was there. So they picked one girl from each factory. And I was picked from the Union Factory. And when I got crowned queen that night, he gave me a hundred dollar bill. I'd never seen a hundred dollar bill.

KJL So what did you do with it?

SKC Well, I just had to spend it at home, you know, for different things that we needed in the house, you know. That's what we did with our money anyway, we didn't have any extra to spend on foolishness, or any thing that really needed, or anything. But that was quite a thing.

KJL And you packed the fish?

SKC Yeah.

KJL Tell me about how you did that.

SKC Well, we had cans, and the fish come down on the conveyor, on a flake. The flake was that big, probably, and they'd be covered with fish.

KJL The flake was kind of a rack.

SKC Yeah, and it had holes in it, so the water would drip down. But that would come down by us. See, there'd be packers on each side of the conveyor that brought the fish down. Well then we knew--there'd be two packers on each table, one on each side, and when we got done packing--packing that flake, got all the fish off it, we put it underneath the conveyor, and it would go down, and then reach up on the conveyor, both of us, and pick that flake off, and put it on our table and pack that again, see.

KJL Did you have something to cut the heads and tails off?

SKC Scissors, scissors.

KJL OK

SKC And you cut them and pack 'em in. Sometimes we'd have fish that we'd pack four in a can, and sometimes we'd have six, or eight or whatever. And then sometimes we'd have snippers, the little fellas, and we'd pick them up, and break the head off with your thumb, so--place them in there, in the can, and there was a hundred cans to a case, and it was quite a thing, get a hundred cans, well you got--oh I don't know what it was, 80 cents, or something like that

KJL Eighty cents for a case?

SKC Eighty cents for that case, for a hundred cans, see. Or 60--60 or 80 cents--been so long, and then they raised the price up a little bit in time to come. But--and then, we were all clean and everything, but we smelled just like the factory. Didn't mind it a bit, everybody smelled the same (laughs).

KJL so what happened when you got home?

SKC Well, that was it. You put on clean clothes, but you still--in our hair and everything. Got right in our skin, I think. Didn't mind that a bit, because everybody smelled the same. Yeah, quite a way to work but we ll liked it and had to.

KJL Did you have to protect your hands when you worked with the scissors a lot?

SKC Well, sometimes we'd cut our fingers, see, and then you'd go down to the little office they had and they'd bind 'em up again, bind 'em right up, so you wouldn't bleed,

you know, on the fish. Yeah, you know, we'd use our hands--fingers--couldn't wear gloves or anything, 'cause [you] couldn't handle the fish with gloves. most everybody had cuts. Some of them were deep.

KJL Was it pretty dangerous work?

SKC No. Well, no we didn't mind it. You know, everybody did it, and that's all there was to do.

KJL I imagine the scissors were pretty sharp.

SKC Oh, yeah, they had to be sharp, yeah, and they had left handed scissors and right handed scissors. Of course mine was left.

KJL You're left handed?

SKC Just with the scissors. Can't use the scissors in right hand, never could. So--and if your scissors got dull, they had someone there that would sharpen them. Take a minute. Sharpen them and give them right back to you. Yeah. So it was quite a thing.

KJL Now, were most of the packers ladies?

SKC. Yeah, yes, every one of them. The men handled the flakes and all that stuff and the boiler, and all that down where the machinery was to get the fish. They'd pick them up, too, when you got a case, they would--the men would come around and take--take them off of your table, that case, and put it on the cart, and take it down to where they would be getting ready to seal the cans. First they put in oil or mustard in the cans, whichever the order called for, then seal, then send down to the shipping room.

And then they'd go down--down in the basement with the stairs, where they would have to put them in cartons. Each one, each can would have a carton to put it in. And when we didn't--if we were waiting for fish or something, we could go down there and carton, put them in, and that was, I think sixteen cents a case, and when they sold them, see, there'd only be fifty cans in a case. And we had to have a hundred.

KJL I didn't quite understand that, I'm sorry,

SKC Well, when we packed, we had to have--pack a hundred cans to make the case. But when they got them ready to ship out to sell, they'd be down in the sealing machine, down in the sealing room. After they got them sealed, they'd go down--go downstairs where they had to be cartoned. Each can had to be put in a carton. And when we cartoned, we only had to carton fifty. See, they would get two cartons to our one packing . Yeah, we just had to do it, that's all.

KJL Did you do a lot of casing up?

SKC Oh, yeah, if--when we got done and we had to wait a little while for the fish, people would go downstairs and carton up, carton what there was. And sometimes they hired, you know, anyone that wanted to go down there, and put them to cartoning. and we would be still packing fish. Yeah, but it was a great experience when you look back at it--how hard and what we had to do.

SKC Well yes, well yes, and it's a good thing, because what else would you do? No other work. Yeah.

KJL What did you enjoy about it?

SKC Well, the people. The people was all sociable and good, and they were all good people and it was a good, pleasant place to work. Yeah.

KJL How many years did you pack?

SKC Oh, 'til I got out of high school. Probably five or six. I don't quite remember. Sixteen, sixteen--probably five years.

KJL About five years?

SKC Possibly

KJL OK, so you went on to something else after that.

SKC Yeah, just doing ordinary things. But I enjoyed it. Yeah, it was good. I think everybody enjoyed it, even the men, working by the hour. See, I never heard any complaints, not wanting to work. They had to at that time. Yeah

KJL Were you pretty fast at packing?

SKC Well, I was fast, but boy there was some that were faster.

KJL Tell me about it.

SKC Well, you could hardly see their hands moving, you know, they were real super. And of course they worked probably--they were older, and they probably worked longer than I did in the factory. And of course the longer you worked, the faster you'd get. And there were some that were real, real fast.

KJL Do you remember any that were particularly fast?

SKC Yeah, John Tyler's wife was. I'll show you. He's in that picture of Carroll Peacock and me on the float. And his wife, and her sister--there were a lot of them, Christine [Card] and--I don't remember, but there was a lot of them that was faster than I am, I was.

Yeah. But I did all--and beside that if you--you earned 299 dollars in that season--fish season so you could sign up and get unemployment. But I earned 299, a little over. And between 300 and whatever the next amount was, you'd get a little more. But the least you would get would be seven dollars a week on signing up--every week to get seven dollars. Of course there were some that would get more, 'cause they were faster. But I--that's all I could do. Because you had to earn two-ninety-nine, anyway. And then from 300 to four, or three-fifty, or whatever it was you--it amounted up to another few pennies, or a dollar, or whatever. But man, see, that was a dollar a day when you signed up and got unemployment. And that was great.

KJL Now, was the canning seasonal?

SKC Yes, they opened up probably April or--April or May. And then they were all done in October, I think. It was seasonal. I suppose because of the fish. Or it might have had something to do with the state laws or something, I don't know, but it was seasonal.

KJL So what did you the rest of the time?

SKC Nothing. Sign up for unemployment--oh, I forget how many weeks, we'd get--I would get seven dollars a week. I forget how long that would be. Probably six or eight weeks. It wouldn't be all winter, nothing like that, no. And of course you learned to live without nothing. A lot of people did. You'd just make what you had do, and that--and of course, nothing you could do about it, and we didn't know any different. Survived, that's all it was, and that's the truth. Thank God for that much.

KJL Now I heard a little bit about some of the practical jokes the women played on each other sometimes.

SKC Oh, yes.

KJL Was that [] in your cannery too?

SKC Yes, I do, but I don't remember any of them. But you know, that was good too for sociability and--take your mind off of your work and whatever, you know. It was a jolly bunch of people and good people.

KJL Tell me what the factory was like inside. What did it look like?

SKC Well, when you went right in--of course there were different parts, and there would be a bunch of tables going down here, and over in this part would be the sealing machine. It was separate, and the boiler where they had to cook the fish, they were in a separate part. We didn't have nothing to do with that. And they had a nice restroom over in here, and that's about it 'cause we were right out in the packing room, see, and then the rest of the rooms--wouldn't go in there, 'cause they'd be--the men would be in there working and I don't think they would allow anybody in there but the workers--that

hot water and machines, see. We didn't go in anyway, I didn't and I never seen any women go in. Nice restroom, and a place to eat, yeah. A lot of meals I got right off the flake. Those fish. Good. Yeah, that's true, yeah.

KJL Now why do you think the canneries declined so much?

SKC Well I think--I think it's because of this environmentalist, Those factories run forever and no one got sick or died or anything, and they had to change over to this stainless steel I think it was--no. They had to change over everything. Instead of having that wood that they'd made themselves, They built all that.

KJL []

SKC Yes, and where they had to smoke the fish, they'd come out on a--they'd smoked some herring, too. But everything had to be shifted over, just like the restaurants. They had to have a new sink and table and everything/ Was it stainless steel or,,,?

KJL Stainless steel?

SKC Stainless steel. And that cost a lot of money to shift over into something like that. And they just couldn't do it, I don't think. And it weren't necessary--look at the people, My Lord. I'm still living, and I'm 83. And I ate 'em a long time before that. But they claim that's what it was. Of course I know we gotta have this environmentalist laws and whatever, you know, but it was too bad.

KJL Now, did they pack a lot of fish for the troops during the '40's?

SKC For the what?

KJL Did they pack a lot of fish for the troops during the 1940's?

SKC Well, I don't know if they did or not. I never heard that they did, but no doubt that they did, see. Of course, we didn't hear all that stuff anyway. But I don't know if they did.

KJL You packed the fish raw, is that right?

SKC No, they cooked them then. They come out on this flake. They put them in the--in this big steam thing and they al these flakes would run by and they'd fill the flake full, and then the flakes would go out to the packers.

KJL I see, so they were cooked when you packed them.

SKC They were cooked, and after a while--I didn't work when they packed raw fish. I didn't--I was all done in the factory then. But they were all cooked. And then they'd be--sometimes there'd be mackerel on them and flounder on the flakes, and they were--they were good, too.

KJL What did you do with them?

SKC Eat em!

KJL I mean, did you have to pull them off because they weren't herring?

SKC No, but I'd have--and a lot of people--have them for dinner. You didn't pack them. We just took the fish and herring, but there'd be other things on there, too.

KJL So you could pull those off and have them for lunch.

SKC Yes, and they were good. Yeah. Yeah, it was a good place to work and everything, but back then no one earned a lot of money. Kinda too bad. Yeah.

KJL Tell me a little more about the busses that took you back and forth.

SKC Well, it was--he come out--way over to Dennysville--it's way over that way, and way up around Whiting and down in around South Lubec and Dixie, and pick up all the packers, and of course right down in Lubec and take 'em in. Of course, no one had a car, you know, very few automobiles. And if you had it you couldn't get the gas. Couldn't buy the gas. So they come out and pick everybody up. But way back when Mama went--she didn't pack much, but when she went in between kids, they had a pickup--a big bodied truck, and they put the packers on that when they come out around to pick them up, take 'em down.

KJL How long would it take the bus or the truck to make its rounds?

SKC Well, I imagine it would take a good hour and a half to leave Lubec, and come out and go way over to Dennysville, Edmunds, and then around Whiting and down over and into Dixie and back out to South Lubec, and I think he even went to North Lubec, so it would take most of an hour, I should imagine.

KJL So did you have to get up really early to catch it?

SKC Yeah, they would, see I wasn't on that big truck. When I went, they had a bus, like old--but it worked, yeah. come a long ways from a big bodied truck to a little bus.

KJL And did you have to get up pretty early to catch the bus?

SKC Well, it come right by your door. I lived out west Lubec. Out inTrescott, see, and they'd go right to the door and get the people, and deliver them back after they was done work, see, well it was good, otherwise they wouldn't have had any packers, see. It was good. I enjoyed it

KJL Now, you were the Sardine Queen in--was it 1940?

SKC No, 1949

KJL 1949. Excuse me, I'm sorry.

SKC 1949. In--at the Union Factory--Peacock's

KJL Now, was that part of a celebration of some kind, or

SKC Oh yeah, we had a big--they had a big celebration. I'll show you the pictures. We had a--down to the old town hall. It was up on the hill, where the old schoolhouse used to be. And they had a town hall there, and they made a nice stage in there, anyway. And then they decorated that. The women done good. It looked lovely, I didn't see it before that night. See, there were seven of us girls, and I didn't see it before that night, but it was all decorated and up on the wall it had--they took the cartons, the sardine can cartons and made, "Sardine Queen Ball." I'll show you the picture. And it was up on the back--well back of us girls, and flowers, and it was really decorated. And there we were, Yeah, I thought I would never get it, but I'm enjoying getting ready, you know, and I was pleased, of course,

And they had three judges. They had a--we all had to, one at a time, get up and answer questions--what you wanted to do and all such questions. And then these three judges--and they chose me, one of the seven of us--seven of us, yeah.

KJL So this was part of a ball?

SKC Yeah, then we had a ball after, a dance, Oh, yes.

KJL When did this happen--in the summer, or...?

SKC Oh, it was in August.

KJL In August, OK.

SKC Yeah. That's when they had the ball. Then the next year, in 1950, they had the nice parade, and I'll show you that picture. It's--and the old truck that they hauled the cartons in, the cans, and the sardines. They decorated that to the hilt and wasn't that lovely, Yeah. Beautiful!!

KJL How did they decorate it?

SKC With flowers, and crepe paper, and printed "Sardine Queen Ball" on it, and then I had to dress all up again. And it was good. I didn't see the parade because I was on that float.

KJL The parade was in Lubec?

SKC Oh, yeah! Yeah, yeah, in Lubec. The Sardine Queen Ball, and it was all Carroll Peacock's factory, see. Of course, they'd have money to decorate and do whatever they wanted. And my dress for that night, of the Sardine Queen Ball--Unobsky's used to be in Lubec. They bought my dress, and my shoes, and earrings and whatever--necklace--everything. They bought that [at] Unobsky's--Peacock's. I don't know how--if any other girls went down there or not, but that's what I did. And she had beautiful clothes. The dress was beautiful. Peacock paid the expenses

KJL That must have been fun.

SKC Yeah. Well, it was something different. Yeah.

KJL So how old were you then?

SKC Eighteen

KJL Eighteen

SKC I think I was eighteen, or would have been. I think eighteen. Yeah. And it was good. And all the merchants in Lubec--North Lubec and South Lubec--anybody that sold anything--groceries or guns, or whatever they sold would donate something to the Sardine Queen. And there was 25 merchants. There was 25 gifts there, so there was 25 merchants that donated. Imagine it.

KJL You made good use of that.

SKC Oh, yes. You know, that was quite a lot of merchants, then, in Lubec. Now there's not much.

KJL What was the town like then?

SKC Well, it was busy. They had a lot of stores, and Saturday night people would go in town to talk and the streets would be lined with cars, and they'd do their shopping, and talk and do whatever they had to do, and that was sociability, and that was their enjoyment.

KJL That was Saturday nights?

SKC Yep, the weekend, yeah, Saturday nights. Of course some--they had a bowling alley. Of course a lot of people would go bowling, and whatever else that they would do and once in a while they would have someone down at the bandstand to play instruments, so it was quite good.

KJL Yeah, I'm just going to check this a little bit. Yeah, there we go. So it was fairly lively on Saturday nights?

SKC Yes it was, boy, now--It looks like they take the sidewalks up, now. No one around--to what it was, you know.

KJL Now, there was more than one cannery in Lubec?

SKC Oh, yeah, there was the one up North Lubec, and it was Peacock's and Alco and Booth's. And Peacock had another one downtown. There was seven factories, and one my one, just got down. But there used to be twenty-five, they said, different factories around. A lot of them in Lubec, and North Lubec and South Lubec. I wasn't up to any of them.

KJL Now, did you watch the fish come in and get unloaded?

SKC Well, we could, but not good, see, because you couldn't go down there. But from the--from the window from where we packed out back, we could see them come in. But it would have been something to go down and watch them take them out of the boat and into the factory. But of course, I suppose that they wouldn't dare let people go down there. Might be kind of educational--and maybe the insurance wouldn't take care of it. But it would be something to see, yeah. But I never, never got to that.

KJL How many people worked in the factory?

SKC Oh, my Lord, it was--I [think it was] maybe sixty packers. There'd be enough tables there to hold sixty.

KJL Sixty women packers?

SKC Yeah, or more.

KJL Wow.

SKC Yeah, and there might have been more. I never ever counted them. But they could have been, because it was a long stretch, and two on a table. Not sure. Never, ever heard, nor counted them either. Yeah. So all good. I think about it a lot, but that's way back (laughs).

KJL Yeah, quite a few years ago.

SKC Yeah, quite a few. Yeah. As we got old enough, and the boys worked--my brothers worked in the factories, too, doing other things. They didn't pack, but they would work around, and there was always something to be done--you know, for the men to do. And they all worked. And Mr. Swigger, he was one--the boss of the packing room, Mr. Swigger. He was, he might have been fifty then, but he was a nice person, too.

Never heard him holler at the packers or anything. If anything wasn't just right, he'd tell 'em and--never had to say anything to me, but, you know, he was a nice person to have there. And it makes it easier if you've got someone like that working around you--this boss. You know you've gotta have a boss and--sociable and would speak, you know, have respect. Yeah, he was good.

KJL Sounds like everybody got along pretty well

SKC Oh, yeah, yeah. All the help did and all the--Mr. Peacock and Mr. Swigger and all the--every room would have a boss, out in the boiler room and all them--you'd have to have somebody to know what was going on, and how to work the machinery.

KJL There was never any union activity?

SKC Any what?

KJL Union activity?

SKC Well, for a while there they wanted to turn it into a union, tried to get it in--tried to get in but they didn't do it. We had a meeting, one meeting that I know about, at the Spruce's one night, and they thought that they would get it voted in, but it didn't go through, the union. Well it might have destroyed the factory before, you know, if they had a union and the union took over, and pricewise, but I don't know the meaning of it, but they didn't get it. Because those people that run the factories, owned them, knew what they could do and what they could pay and what it was all about. And a lot of these union people, they might not have known the results, or what it was all about. So it didn't go in. We were lucky to get what we got. So that was it. That was it for that.

Just like [] picked out that picture of me. I was standing out to my brothers, waiting for the bus to come ride--used to call it a bus. I don't know what happened to that. But it was a nice picture, I had my hat on, you had to wear.

KJL Do you still have that picture?

SKC Well, I've got it somewhere, and I'll try to find that, and have one made and I can send it to you if I can find it. But I went through all my pictures and got everything I could--that concerned the sardine--that's what I was looking for, the sardine queen ball pictures. But I didn't even think of that one.

KJL How many years did they do the Sardine Queen Ball?

SKC How many years they what?

KJL How many years did they do the sardine queen ball?

SKC Two years.

KJL Two years?

SKC Yeah, one before me, and that was Fostina Sawtelle. Fostina Sawtelle. And she lived over to Dixie. I was sick that year. Well, I didn't work very much that year. I had mastoid pneumonia, and I couldn't work. Not that it made any difference because she was pretty. She was real pretty. And then the next year they had it again, and she had her crown, but she crowned me when they--she was there, I didn't know. But she was there, ready to crown the queen that was that year. She crowned me, which I didn't know, but that's what they do anyway, you know, yeah.

KJL So did everybody turn out for the ball?

SKC Huh?

KJL Did everybody turn out for the ball?

SKC Oh yes, the place was packed. Well see, all kind of people--seven factories. Yeah, yeah. [Barrett Lewis] took the pictures. He was--I would say he was a photographer. They come out good, yeah. That's where I got my pictures, from him. He give them to Dr. McBride, and Dr. McBride give hem to me. But he had the equipment to take pictures. Yeah, yeah. When they had the bicentennial, I wrote to Fostina, and sent her some pictures, and things and the women wrote her too, called her--wanted her to come home for the bicentennial.

KJL This was in 1976?

SKC No, it was two years ago [2011].

KJL Oh, OK, the Lubec bicentennial

SKC The bicentennial, yeah. But, see, she wasn't well, and her husband isn't good at all, so she couldn't leave and come home. She wanted to, but she couldn't. I would have liked to have seen her.

KJL What were some of the other women like?

SKC Oh, the other girls, they were all good---nice looking and everything. They took some pictures of us all together, and oh, yes.

KJL Now, did you work in teams at the tables, or did you just work by yourself?

SKC Well, I worked with other women. Not any of them, because they were from other factories. They put you on a table, and you have your packer, yeah. And sometimes if some of them wanted to trade, change off your packer for some other packer, why you

could do it, you know. But I didn't see them ones, because they were from other factories.

KJL At the table, you had at a team at the table, is that right?

SKC Yeah, another lady. A table would be like this, and there would be a woman here and a woman here, two on a table, and then give you room, and there'd be another table right there, and two on that one. And sometimes if they were sick, or be at home, you'd be on there alone, and the only thing with that would be lifting that flake full of fish from the conveyor onto your table, but--well everybody did it.

KJL Usually the two of you would lift it?

SKC Oh, yeah, one on each end, because the conveyor would be here, and the table would be here, and we'd each take ahold of it from there, and put it on the table, which was easy, see. Those flakes was quite big--well, they looked big, you know, they might not have been too big, they might have looked that way.

KJL A couple feet square?

SKC Oh, yeah. Quite big. They looked awful big and heavy to me, you know, but they might not have been. Yeah. Oh, yeah. goodness.

KJL I wonder if there were times when you thought to yourself, "I can't look at another sardine."

SKC No. No. I knew they were good to eat, and we earned money. No. No, sir.

KJL Never got tired of it.

SKC No. No. No. 'Cause we knew what we were there for and it would help--we had to work, and that was--that was all there was. This has nothing to do with that, but sorta. I was--Dr. Crowe--he's the one that operated on my hip and on my knees and he mentioned something about the sardines, and I said "Oh, yeah, I was [at the] Sardine Queen Ball. Sardine Queen. And you know he got an awful kick out of that. He couldn't believe what it was about, and the sardines--he thought that I was the queen of the fish itself (laughs) Oh, dear, dear, dear! I had to laugh, and I didn't explain.

KJL Did a lot of the women have husbands that fished?

SKC Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. And I think too, the factories might have owned the boats, too, I think. They might--that's what I thought. And then they'd hire people to go out, and them people owned their own boats, and they'd go get the fish

KJL Bring 'em in on carriers?

SKC Yeah, they'd bring 'em right in, I suppose, and if one factory couldn't take them, they were busy, another one would, see? Yeah. They'd be tickled to get them. Oh yeah, they were always busy and--It seems like they all worked together and there was no bickering or anything, it seems to me.

KJL Maybe you could show me some pictures

SKC Oh, yes.

[The interview ends, but the recording continues as photos are scanned. There is some information about the photos recorded as they are scanned.]