



Oral History and Folklife Research, Inc.

AN INTERVIEW WITH WAYNE WILCOX

CONDUCTED BY

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KJL Wayne, do you mind if I ask what year you were born?

WW 1953, as a matter of fact, I'll turn 60 in September.

KJL OK, born the same year I was. It was a good year.

WW Good year, very good year. End of the Korean War.

KJL So you grew up during a time when the sardine factories were in pretty full swing.

WW Yeah, it was in decline.

KJL Oh, it was in decline then.

WW It was slowly declining as my parents always said, my father. It was after World War II they really started going downhill. And by the time I became--be aware of what's going on, five or six years old, it was declining. Even my mother said the factories would eventually--It wasn't like it used to be before the war. So things were declining, The Eastport waterfront was really deteriorating. Especially like the '50's, early '60's. I could see where there used to be former glories, see the walls all caving in--kinda sad, you could see where things were just slowly declining with the business.

KJL Now, did your parents work in the sardine factories?

WW My father worked for American Can for fifty years. He retired from Lubec, he retired from there in 1973. My mom worked her whole life in the sardine factory, and my grandmother worked in the sardine factory until--They used to live in Calais, they came down here during the Depression in 1929, because there was no work in Calais. All the work was in the factories, along the coast, so that's why we moved here. But my mother dropped out of the 8th grade to work in the sardine factory to make big money.

KJL When did you start working in the sardine factory?

WW I graduated in '72. I worked in the summertime. I worked in '71, I worked in the shipping room. In '72 I worked in the packing room. In '73 I worked in the packing room. I worked three summers down at Jim Warren's, which was B.H. Wilson's Fisheries. He bought that sometime in the 1960's after [Burpee] Wilson retired.

KJL Now, you say you worked in the packing room. Were you packing fish?

WW No, no, I was one of the gentlemen who--one of the guys that dumped cans on the belt, picked up trays, and cleaned the place after the factory's done, and basically just looked after the packing room.

KJL Now the packing seemed to be pretty segregated. It was only the women who did the actual packing, is that right?

WW Well, actually, some men did it, but a lot of the men didn't have dexterity, but there were some men that tried it. Some of them as a joke, but they tried, but they just went to work as a regular laborer in the factory because they didn't really have the speed, but once in a while a male would come up and try, but it was 99.9 percent female.

KJL It was just a matter of the dexterity?

WW Yeah, yeah. As a matter of fact my grandmother was a--she was such a fast packer, she worked with [Burpee] Wilson, B. H. Wilson Fisheries in the south end that Jimmy Wilson bought later, 'cause he lived right around the corner from it. She was so good when Burpee Wilson opened up a factory in Grand Manan, New Brunswick, he took my grandmother over there to train the ladies there because she had such dexterity packing fish, and she was a good packer. So she was over there for like a month, training the ladies in Grand Manan.

KJL Now, the Peacocks were telling me about--what was it--an annual competition?

WW There probably was. He was more into that than I was, but his whole family was in the sardine business, he was--that was his family. I heard [] the sardine queen, the Rockland Festival. He could tell you all the details on that. I'm not surprised.

KJL Yeah, they mentioned Rockland, yeah

WW Yeah, not surprised. The Maine Sardine Queen, I heard about that. [] The time he came up with the promotional film, how to cook with Maine sardines. The Maine Sardine Council put those--It's kinda neat, it's a neat color film. I was watching it some, somebody had a copy of it, just--1950's, like, "Oh, sardines are wonderful, you can make casseroles." Oh, you gotta be kidding me. There was something with the Sardine Queen, you know.

KJL This is a film?

WW It was a film, yeah, made by the Maine Sardine Council, promoting sardines. They actually had a cookbook, how to cook sardines, it was [] I didn't know this.

KJL Is this film available anywhere?

WW I can't remember where I saw it, but I saw it somewhere, yes it's around somewhere, I know there was copies available, you might want to check into it, but it had all the music and it was a real Hollywood set type, 1950-ish color film promoting sardines, eat more sardines. It was the neatest thing Maine Sardine Council.

KJL You were telling me something interesting last night about the seasonal aspect of the labor, some of the packers during the off season would go down to Avon, Massachussets?

WW Okay, this is how it worked up here in the Eastport and Lubec area, being on the American-Canadian border--and a lot of the locals would do this, they would come up here for the season, or come over from the other side, and pack fish, and do their thing between April-the Spring and the Fall, and [when] the season ended, a lot of them went down to Massachussets and Connecticut to work in other industries.

Now where I got this from is from my first girlfriend's grandfather, who was born in 1900 in Eastport, and he told me they were living in Massachussets []. He was telling me what they used to do, and her father told me the same thing, he said--this was, I was living in Boston, Massachussets at the time, and at one time it used to be the shoe capitol of the world. They made shoes. There was a big leather industry down there during the '20's and '30's and '40's, that time period.

And he told me--her father told me that up in Avon, which is next door to Boston--it's a small, sleeper community, and Boston's a good sized city down there--he said back before the war all the Eastporters used to come down after the--a lot of them came down after the season and get jobs in the shoe shops and the leather goods places down there and a lot of them lived up in Avon and this was a little place there called "Lower Eastport," and I never knew anything about that, and I knew a lot of people used to go out of state between seasons. He said, "Yeah, a little place in Avon called 'Little Eastport' and that's where they all kind of congregated and when the spring came, they all moved back to Maine to work in the sardine factories.

He told me stories; his father told me stories about so-and-so came down and did the work down there, and the man, the boss said, "Will you not be here for the summer work?" and he said, "Nope, going back to Eastport to go work in the factories again," so there was migration back and forth. And a lot of the local people settled in Massachussets and Connecticut [] so it's like a diaspora, type thing. After the factories kind of declined, a lot of them stayed down there, so that's why there's a lot of connections between Massachussets and Connecticut, because that--they could have used the steamship lines running at the time, too. a lot of them [would] jump on the steamship and run down to Boston and--that's how her grandfather got down there. He would go down there and get a job with the [] Corporation []. That's why they stayed there.

KJL So this was before World War II?

WW Yes, in the 1920's, yeah. This was very common for the Depression. they used to do that. This is what the old timers told me. I'm like--I couldn't believe it, but that's what really happened.

KJL Or was it before World War I?

WW It went on before World War I and after World War I and before World War II, because her grandfather was born in 1900, and this was like '78 and he was retired, and he was telling me back when he came down to Boston in the 1920's that's what they used to do, and her father told me about people coming down from Eastport, settling in the area, working there just for that season, and then going back up for the sardine season. That's the way it way, just going back and forth constantly and everyone accepted that. Not everybody, but a large group of people did that. And from the other side, the Canadian side, like I was telling you last night, [] came over from Back Bay, I thought he was from Eastport, but he was from Back Bay. A lot of people came over from the Canadian side and a lot of them stayed there. They just didn't go back after the season ended.

KJL Back Bay?

WW Back Bay New Brunswick, Pennsfield, St. George, right up back of Deer Island. So when you think of the sardine business here in Eastport as opposed to what--Stinson's down the coast, Lubec was the same way. But up here in the border area you had this--especially before Social Security came in effect in 1936 and all the laws came into effect, we had a lot of people come from the other side, the Canadian side, working over here [] everybody. Sardine camps, that's where the sardine camps came from. The factories--kind of like the company store. They provide the housing and you work at the sardine factory during the season. Some people stayed there year 'round. My people moved down from Calais and they wound up on--they wound up living in one of the little [] My brother was born in one of the sardine camps. My brother was born in [] camps. That's a sardine camp. That's about fourteen feet wide. The first floor was a big room. Upstairs was six rooms, up and down, that was it. And they stayed there year round. And when they got a little bit of money, they moved up the street--Eagle Street and rented a house, and that's where they lived there. Then they went down to Pleasant Street, which is the south end of town, down by Burpee Wilson's down there, and they lived down there.

And then my grandfather worked for the shipping room down at Burpee Wilson--this was after the war He was in the war and get out. He wanted to buy a house, and Burpee Wilson gave him five hundred dollars to buy a house, where I'm living at now. And Burpee Wilson was--Juanita Hood down on Dawson Street, there's a big house. He did the same thing--he did that for the employees. They paid him back, out of the wages. But they lived in the sardine camps for a couple of years before.

KJL Burpee Wilson was one of the packing companies?

WW Yeah, he owned B H Wilson's Fisheries. He started it. He had a big sardine factory, smokehouses, and everything down there. He was into everything. He was a very nice guy. I still see him riding around in a big black Cadillac, smoking a cigar and--a nice guy. He gave my grandfather enough money enough to buy a house. He did that for all the employees. If they wanted help.

KJL So he's still living?

WW I'm still living in the same house, yeah. My grandfather bought in 1940. Oh, Burpee passed away, no. Burpee passed away.

KJL You said you still saw somebody riding around--

WW Oh, when I was a kid growing up, I'd see Burpee riding around town with his big black Cadillac, and he was smoking a cigar, Burpee Wilson. I can't think of his real name, I know know, it might have been Burton. We always called him Burpee Wilson. But because of his generosity, you know--matter of fact if you look at my house today, you look at all the shingles on there. That's the same shingles that was on the B H Wilson's Fisheries factory the day it burned. My grandfather was the head of the shipping room, and Burkey had leftover shingles from the factory. My house actually has white clapboards, but the house was in such bad shape, he just put his god awfully ugly colored shingles--that's what my house is. You look at it there, those are the same shingles that B H Wilson's Fisheries are. Every time I look at it I think of Burpee Wilson. So I've got a connection to the sardine factory. I got the same shingles. They've been there for like 60 years.

KJL So, was B H Wilson the first factory you worked in?

WW The only one I worked in, yeah. There was two at the time. There was Wilson's and the Riviera up here, they put up tuna fish and shrimp and everything else. They worked basically year round. It wasn't so much sardines, but mostly tuna fish. It was called the tuna factory. And there was Holmes', which was down right by the--downtown by the Coast Guard station, where the Coast Guard station is now, and B H Wilson's Fisheries, Jimmy Warren. Jimmy Warren bought that in the early 60's, and his wife, Meredith McCurdy from Lubec--McCurdy Smokehouse, McCurdy Sardines, the Peacocks--they're all related. So when Jimmy Warren married into that, he--and the Warrens are all like--it was a big family thing, all cousins like Bob Peacock [was] showing me a photograph and stuff, he was showing me this person, "Oh I know that." They were all related, they were all intermarried, they were all connected, both sides, Eastport and Lubec. It was kind of an interesting situation. Both families had--they all had factories in each town. It was kind of interesting.

KJL And the first job you had there was in the packing room?

WW In the shipping room.

KJL In the shipping room

WW That's where I made--the only day I got one day overtime. The sardine factories did not have to pay overtime because the Sardine Council, they had so much pull in the legislature. They got a law passed saying that agricultural workers and sardine company people, they didn't have to pay overtime for.

KJL And this--

WW It was perishables.

KJL This was in the '50's?

WW After World War II, some time after that. It's still on the books.

KJL Now, if you were born in 1953, it would have to have been in the '60's?

WW No, no, the law was pass sometimes in the 40's and 50's

KJL Okay.

WW They got it passed so they wouldn't have to pay overtime because it was perishable. So I worked one day overtime, 1971. It was the last of the Air Force order--government. They were packing ovals, and I helped load up a tractor trailer from the shipping room. I wasn't supposed to really do that because I had a working permit, I wasn't supposed to work overtime, but the boss said, "Aw, hell, go ahead." That was the only day I got overtime in the sardine factory. I worked 'til like eight o'clock that night.

Normal day down there--the shipping room was interesting because you had--when the cans came out of the retort you had to let them cool off and you had to pack them in the cartons, put them in boxes, basically, and ship them out. So it wasn't too bad. It was kind of a clean job. Upstairs in the packing room, twelve hour days wasn't uncommon. That was a normal day. You'd be up in the morning, twelve hour day, straight pay, no overtime, so I was making minimum wage.

KJL Was it straight pay, or piecework?

WW No, it was straight pay. The laborers, the men at the factory got straight pay. And the only way you would make a lot of money, if you were working the retort, cooking the cans. They worked god-awful long hours. No overtime, but they made, you know--Sometimes they slept right there because they had to cook the cans and we had to-- In the shipping room we had to,

when the cans came out we had to be there to unload the retort to get them to cool off the next day so we could put them in cartons, pack them in cartons. And the sardine--the packers, they were long gone. So the fish would come in, the packers would pack them, they'd go home, they'd get cooked, and they'd go down to the sealing department where the sealing girls would work the sealing machines, and they'd work long hours, seal that one batch up, and then they'd go into the retort to cook; the closed cans would be cooked, and then they would go home. The sealing girls worked long hours after everybody else because they were still putting the tops on.

KJL Women worked the sealing machines?

WW Yeah, the machines were all automatic and they made sure they were getting the proper amount that was [tomato?] sauce ore mustard sauce, or soybean oil; make sure the cans were lined up. There was maybe a half a dozen that worked there, and there was a couple of guys that worked [] machines, had like three or four sealing machines down there. American Can owned them, so we leased them from American Can. Their machines. When they broke down, we had to call a technician up from Portland or somewhere to come up and fix them because our guy couldn't do it, which was more times than not, so... But they seal them and they go into the retort and they cook them and the sealing crew would go home and they--he basically slept at the factory because [] cooking sardines all the time in the retort. When they came out they called the shipping crew [] next morning. And there were some mornings some of those guys were there like one or two o'clock in the morning waiting for the retorts to come up. That's the way it was. It was interesting.

KJL Now, the retorts were like big pressure cookers.

WW. Big pressure cookers, Once they were sealed they had to be sure [] had to cook it [] so many degrees, steam pressure.

KJL This was the raw pack process.

WW Right, there was the hot pack, sometimes the fish would like [] My mom always complained because the cold pack--arthritis in the hands, it was terrible in the morning. And the hot pack--my father said when they went to the cold pack, it was cheaper, more efficient for them, but it was hard on the workers; especially the women--the cold fish. It was nasty.

KJL Why was it hard on the--

WW Arthritis. The fish was cold, everything was cold, the factories were cold. It was cold salt water. It was terrible. The hot pack was a little easier on them because the fish were already cooked, they just cut them, it was no problem. But then they switched to the cold pack, which I understand was cheaper, more economical. Then they'd pack them and they'd take them out to the cookers, steam boxes and cook them, and they'd bring them down to the sealing machines, that's where they put the tops on.

KJL You talked a little bit last night about union activity.

WW Okay, this is what my parents told me. The unions, they tried to get into--I don't know about Lubec but Eastport--they did come down and the old Eastport [] about people trying to organize unions down here. My parents, I said my father belonged to American Cannery, which was unionized. He wasn't a big union guy, but there was a need for them. And there was a need for unions in the sardine factories in particular because of the long hours and low pay and everything else. And there was no benefits. You don't work, no pay. There was no benefits, nothing. So every so often there would be an effort to get a union into Eastport. I remember my father and mother talking about people come down, they used to put on, down at the bandstand, and just try to get interested in the union, a rally going. And he said a lot of people in the crowd would basically just shout them down. They just--they didn't want them because a lot of the company owners didn't want a union in there. So they made it real bad for the union organizer. There wasn't really violence, but they really--they used to make noise and racket so it would kind of drown them out. And basically, my mom father said we were ashamed because they just acted like ignorant people. The union wasn't a great thing, but they kept the owners [].

KJL You said it was in the '60's the packers started to--

WW Yes

KJL --pull back a little bit.

WW Right, well up until that point it wasn't unusual--I remember as a little kid growing up, I hardly ever saw my mom during packing season, I was in kindergarten, I--summertime, she worked sixteen, eighteen hour days, she come home, go right back to work again. The fish are running, you pack. You worked or you didn't work. There's the door. It got so bad that they were working seven days a week, especially when the fish were running. The owners were just grinding them out. So sixteen, eighteen hour days wasn't unusual. Go home, get a couple hours' sleep, go right back to working again. That's the way it was.

So by the time I got around ten years old, this was in the early '60's, B. H Wilson began []. It wasn't so much a protest, but the women weren't going to work Sundays anymore. They'd work six days a week, so they started pushing the fish down the mush chute. The fish would come up on the belt and pushed them in--and it got to the point where Jimmy Warren, they couldn't get enough packers to come up--It was getting to the point where everybody knew it was going to decline and he wasn't going to push them and he agreed to not work on weekends, It was kind of like--It wasn't just Jimmy Warren, it was all over. They couldn't get packers enough, and people would just get fed up working six or seven days a week. It was just miserable.

So it was kind of like--in a way when that decline started noticing, the owners realized they can't push them--they can't push these women packers to a point where they just refused to work. It wasn't anything about unions, it was they were tired of working six, seven days a week.

KJL Now, why wasn't it an option just not to come in that seventh day?

WW Because they'd probably be fired, someone would take their place. It was really competitive, especially in the heyday, they glory days of the sardine industry. You didn't work, you were gone. Someone else took your place. That's how desperate they were for work around here. So when the fish were running, you worked. When the fish weren't running, you probably did other jobs, My mom made wreaths during the wintertime, drew unemployment, that's about it.

KJL So the only recourse was to push fish down the chum hole?

WW It got to the point where my mom said that's how they took care of it. They wanted to leave, so they just started pushing fish down there. A lot did, a lot didn't. It got to the point where more fish was going to the [mush] truck and to the fertilizer plant, like "What's going on here?" They knew they was really--it was getting to the point where there was only two sardine factories in town and there was really not enough packers, and they knew that. So whether it was an organized effort or not, I just know that my mom said they just got tired of it, and they just started pushing fish down the mush chute.

KJL Now, you called it mush?

WW It was called the mush chute. Like I said at the little thing you showed last night, there was two girls at a table and--you called it the chum hole, we called it the mush chute. We just pushed it down, it had like a continued water sluice that ran down, and outside there was a lobster bait truck from Jonesport--mush truck [] odors []. No, you don't smell nothing until you work inside the factory. Oh, man! The mush truck, we call it the mush truck and generally the guy from Jonesport, it was the bait truck, but we always called it the mush truck. He either sold it for lobster bait or they sold it for fertilizer.

Now, once in a while, the fish inspector, now the fish inspector--every boat that come in, they had a fish inspector [] all the fish, break their bellys open and check them. If they were full of feed, they'd reject the whole boat load. That's a lot of money. So that, automatically, they say, well we'll sell that to the fertilizer plant, like [] Corporation, or something like that, and they'll turn it into fertilizer. So they got their money out of it, but the next boat would come in, they'd say, "Oh, we can use those, and we'll pack those up, put them in [the pickling sheds], and that's how they did that, but a lot of the fish--it wasn't just sardines, sardines had a lot of ancillary businesses around here, you had the paste pearl, which grew off of the sardine plant, and you had the fertilizer plant like the [] Corporation, they turned the fish into fertilizer.

Past pearl--you know anything about paste pearl?

KJL No, I was going to ask you to explain more about that.

High gloss thing, you know. You smell, it smells terrible. Back in--right about World War II, there was a gentleman came over from Europe, he was a Jewish gentlemen. I think his name was [Mullen] but he came over and they had an extractor, take scales, herring scales, and they would extract that sheen, kind of a real multi colored sheen that's pretty, called pearl essence off of the herring scales. Well, when the Nazis were taking over Europe in the 1930's, he came over here and opened up a plant here in Eastport. Either Franklins, or--down here--he started the first paste pearl plant here in the country, and it. was a natural byproduct of the fisheries. It was a natural place for it. Ruth could probably tell you a little bit more about that, but he had a process where they'd cook 'em and extract all this shiny sheen material to get your fingernail polish, which smelled to high heaven, 'cause they used all kind of chemicals and stuff. And there was big bucks in that, so when the people brought the fish over to sell them, they had baskets and baskets and baskets of scales--fish scales, 'cause when they'd pump from the boat, all the fish scales would come off. And they never used to save them until this process.

And when the Canadians--mostly it was the Canadian fishermen who would come over here to sell them--they'd bring them over to a place like [Agenta] or Franklins or Murrow, and they'd sell th em big basket of fish scales--made more money off the sardines. So you had this ancillary business, and the fertilizer business grew up on the side of that. So this is before World War II, so you had a--It was a big market and big money into it. Unfortunately by the time the '70's and '80's roll around, my friend Mike Matthew worked up at Franklin. That was the last paste pearl place up in Maine. It was a natural product. They can synthesize it now, so that--they only had like two or three percent of the market, and now it was on the way out. This was back in the late '80's []. So now it's all chemical, it's all synthesized, all man made chemicals. They don't take--You'd probably find the exotic company that's taking and making it from the natural ingredients, but [] They had three plants in Eastport. That's all they made.

KJL And it was called paste...

WW Paste pearl,

KJL P-A-C-E? Now Pace was the...

WW Yeah, it came out like a paste, and when they processed.

KJL Oh, paste pearl!

WW Paste. Well, we called it paste pearl.

KJL Ok

WW Like the Franklins, the Jensens and a couple other places they had a paste pearl plant. It was the first place in the country that had the paste pearl industry, it started there, 'cause this war refugee from Europe came over and--I think he was from France originally. He came over and settled here.

It was interesting. They weren't just packing sardines. and the sardines weren't everything, when the market changed, and the paste pearl. Paste pearl and the fertilizer plants were really the last--really kinda getting in the middle []. They were still getting herring from up and down the coast and bringing them up and turning them into [fertilizer]. Toward the end they were taking all the herring catches and turning them into fertilizer, it was a big waste of--to me it was a waste of food source, but--or they turned them into lobster bait. So they made the money.

So, like the market was changing, the sardine business was going in decline and these other places followed suit eventually, but it took quite a while before they actually... It was an interesting business. More than just sardines.

KJL Now, I heard a little bit about kids would come and help their parents or grandparents pack.

WW Maybe before the work laws changed or something like that. When I was there, you needed a work permit. You might see some older kids, but they couldn't really work because it was too dangerous. I had to get a work permit to work in the shipping room. I couldn't work overtime.

KJL You could get a work permit when you were what--fifteen?

WW Fifteen, yeah. You had to get it from the school. So that was all kind of subtle, you know, but as far as bringing in little kids and stiff, I never actually saw it myself. Maybe some other places up and down the coast did that, but legally, they weren't supposed to. But it was an interesting--It was an interesting job []--low wages, no benefits. The socio-economic part, like I said, B. H. Wilson's--everybody lived in the neighborhood, they all worked down there, like I said last night, at Holmes' they all lived around Holmes. Around this area, they all worked at Holmes'--or, the Riviera, the tuna--my mom went up there sometimes in the winter when that was open. They packed tuna year round, and she'd work there. Maybe when the sardine business started, she'd go back down to Jimmy Warren's, down on the south end, B H Wilson, work there for the season.

I remember she used to come home from cutting tuna up, she had terrible--she had tuna bones in her fingers, it was terrible. My father would have to take them out, it was just nasty, take your fingers out and it was just--It was a real hard, hard work. It was piecework.

KJL Got tuna bones?...

WW Tuna bones in her fingers. I remember Mom had real nasty tuna splinters. Yeah, it was all nasty. She didn't like to work at the Riviera because of that.

And of course, with sardine packing, you had to worry about cutting your fingers because you taped your fingers up, like Jeannie said, and my mom came home sometimes with nasty gashes on her fingers. You got salt on them, you got salt sores, you had to be very careful. They had the cold on that because of the cold pack, the arthritis, her fingers would just--she retired in '95, she worked down at Holmes' when [] bought him out, so she worked up at Holmes. Her fingers were getting all crippled up with arthritis--real nasty--the cold was not good.

Now, at Jimmy Warren's for a while, some time in the '70's, they did try to stay open year round, but there was no heat down there, the factory was nothing but a big open--it was just nasty cold there. They would bring--a couple winters they tried, they brought a tractor trailer full, a tanker full of salmon from Newfoundland, and my brother was working there at the time. And they had to pump them in downstairs and break the ice up on them. This was winter time, it's like--it's miserable there in the summer time. In the winter time, they tried that thing one season, and the women just--"We're not doing this no more." It just didn't pan out because they tried to pack sardines year round. It was just miserable, just couldn't do it.

KJL Ok, let me see if I understand. The building was not heated.

WW Well, it was heated but it was basically just a big open draft [] There was just wind blowing everywhere.

KJL Ok, and they brought in fish that had ice mixed in with it.

WW They were from Newfoundland. They brought them in by tanker truck. I remember that, and of course, they'd freeze, and they had to pump them out, and get them into the pickling shed, and they had to break them up, they were basically frozen chunks and salt water and stuff, and they'd go upstairs, and the women--it just wasn't practical, for a lot of reasons.

KJL They had to break the ice up?

WW My brother had to break the ice up in the tanker so they could pump them out. You know, it's about zero, or eighteen below zero, and it's January. Well, they tried that once, and it just didn't pan out. Even with heaters going down there, it just didn't pan out. They tried at the Riviera. Like I said, the Riviera packed year round, they packed tuna, then they'd pack shrimp, did that for a long time.

KJL And was the building heated?

WW It was in better shape than Jimmy Warren's, put it that way. Holmes' was in good shape, but Jimmy Warren's--B. H. Wilson, especially that time period was basically falling down around you. they weren't putting any money into it. It was just, getting the money out the best they could. It was not a comfortable place to work.

Now I did--It wasn't all bad, there was good times. The best thing I remember about going down to Jimmy Warren's see my mom--I was a kid--you had to walk through the main doors, you walked through where all the [] were stacked up, brought the cans in from the American Can plant, and when they were packing mustard sardines, it just permeated the entranceway, and I--to this day I just love the smell of mustard. All you smell is mustard, it just--while packing mustard sardines. It just smelled so good. The other smell [was] this horrible smell, fish smells and stuff. When you first walk in the entrance way, all you smelled was this wonderful odor of mustard. It's nice, very nice. Stuff like that. I mean you had these socio, socio-economic people. It's like a family type thing, you're all friends, you all knew everybody, you're all in the same boat together. You weren't making much wages, but you just--it was like a big family in a way.

Another thing, I don't know about other fish factories, but down at Jimmy Warren's, B.H. Wilson's fisheries, on Friday afternoon, they never paid before twelve o'clock, because if they paid before twelve o'clock, a lot of the guys would go cash the check, and get drunk. That was happening right up in the '70's, right while they were [closing]. Jimmy Warren rarely paid before twelve o'clock. He knew what was going to happen on Friday afternoon.

KJL What was Eastport like during the '50s and '60's?

WW It was, uh--rowdy. It wasn't all that bad, You had WaCo, and places like that, you know, the beer places and stuff. You had your fights and stuff like that. Wherever you've got alcohol and bars, you're gonna have a fight. You had a lot of guys come across the line from the other side, buying stuff here because there was no bridge in Lubec. All the fishermen from the other side; weir fishermen and purse seiners from Grand Manan and Campobello, they come over and sell the fish in Lubec and Eastport, and they'd buy a lot of stuff, and take it back home. So the A&P was a big business here, all the grocery stores. We depended very heavily on traffic from the other side.

KJL Let me see if I understand. People would come over from Canada

WW Yeah,

KJL And buy alcohol

WW Sell the fish.

KJL Sell the fish, buy alcohol

WW Yeah, they'd buy alcohol and they'd smuggle it back, weren't supposed to, but they did. Or they'd stay at the local bars and drink. We've had some--I just remember so many different characters growing up. They weren't bad people, but, you know, the bars, and alcohol, there was always fights and stuff. There was always something going on.

KJL Now, this is something I've always wondered about, the generation before you--

WW Yes.

KJL Did you ever hear very much from them about smuggling during Prohibition?

WW Off and on--back of Deer Island, there's a place called Rum Row.

KJL Rum Row?

WW Rum Row. Prohibition, there's still people today that their grandparents, grandfather was involved, and they don't talk much about it. Once in a while they'll say something, they smuggled, they'd see other people smuggled, but it's still kinda kept kinda low, because there's still families that still will not admit to it, but during prohibition, they smuggled all the time, it just happened all the time. My father talked about over in Lubec, in particular. Campobello and Lubec were so close they just--but there's still families alive today that just, like I said, you don't--rarely will a family admit, "Oh, my grandad did." They won't admit to it, but like Lubec and Deer Island, I remember as a kid it was called "Rum Row." They were just waiting to smuggle stuff over, you know the tide was right, and you know, fog, and it happened. It happened quite a bit between here.

KJL But people are reluctant to talk about it.

WW For that reason alone. I looked into it, tried to do some research. I'd occasionally see something in the paper, someone being caught, something like that. But I knew there was a lot more going on than that, because just from anecdotal evidence, stories I heard, but once in a while you might hear somebody, "Oh my grandfather was involved," something like that. But they don't normally run around admitting to it.

KJL Now Deer Island is US territory or Canadian?

WW Canadian. Border []

KJL Canadian, OK. Yeah. OK. Yeah, those must have been interesting times.

WW From what I know, my father use to go over from Lubec, and go over to Campobello and drink over there, and come back drunk. He told me that. "Oh, that's interesting." He'd just take

the ferry to Campobello and they were there. They'd bring the booze back, so that [was] legal--alcohol over there, but not over here, so--Yep.

KJL Why do you think the sardine industry declined so much?

WW I'll tell you what my father told me, my mother told me, what some of the old timers told me. During--after World War I was kinda like the heyday of the sardine business, and it wasn't too bad, when the Depression came along, it kind of declined a little bit, but World War II came, and it really picked up and reversed itself. And my father said this, and my mother said this. I heard this from different people over the course of time that--yeah a lot of sardine businesses put up a good pack, but during the war they packed everything but the kitchen sink and a lot of them really shot themselves in the foot because the quality control was--they were packing everything. But there were a lot of good places that put up good fish. Unfortunately the reputation got around that Maine sardines were really--especially after the war, I think tastes were changing.

My father said a lot of it had to do with the Norwegian pack. Norway put up a better pack, had a better reputation; because our reputation during the war, people--"Oh, Maine sardines, Ugh! I got a case that was full of rocks, or something. You know it was just horrible, the fish were all rotten, something like that. But between that and tastes were changing--you weren't--not as many people eating sardines, that's why they came out with the promotional films in the 1950's, and the sardine cookbook and--try to get more people to eat sardines and people, "Oh sardines, I don't wanna-Ugh!"

So between that and changing taste and a natural progression and decline of things--It wasn't one thing, I was a combination of things. And now that Stinson's closed up, like I was telling you last night, I never thought I'd live long enough to see the sardine factory business completely gone. I always thought there'd be at least one factory somewhere--Eastport, Lubec, somewhere. I'm just shocked that it's just gone. It's the end of an era, really, you know, a hundred and thirty some years--Nothing! Like it never existed.

KJL Do you think it will ever come back?

WW I doubt very much, I doubt very much. If you go to like the IGA or a local store now, I've seen Beach Cliff everywhere, even after Stinson's closed up. "Oh, they're still putting them out! No, that's product of Poland. OK, fine." I'm looking and I see some more Beach Cliff, mustard, "Oh, they're put up in--New Brunswick." Probably Black's Harbor, the Connors. And the tomato sauce and soybeans being put up in Poland. Beach Cliff, and I say, "Oh, this is interesting." Now I see Bumblebee on it, so they [tagged onto] Beach Cliff. So they couldn't get the herring. They weren't sure of it, that's their official line, they couldn't get enough herring, so they decided to close the last sardine factory up in the country, but yet Europeans seem to be getting all the herring--they're doing fine overseas, but--Bumblebee's got contracts for overseas--I've even seen some of Bumblebee's products put up in Thailand. Interesting.

But, yet, they couldn't get enough herring because of the quotas, because--I just got my suspicions about it. It's sad to see Stinson's close, because they were a very modernized, up-to-date sardine factory, They were top notch. They weren't like sardine factories around here that I worked in that I know. They were a modernized, computerized, sardine factory. They couldn't make a go of it, there's something wrong. To say "We couldn't get enough herring, we weren't sure about it." I don't know, I just kind of doubt it. It was sad, very sad.

KJL You think something else was going on?

WW I just think it comes down to money, basically. They can get it done cheaper overseas, so they just, "Oh, yeah, the quotas are too much, we weren't gonna fight with them no more." Which I'm sure was part of it, but it's just sad to see such a long standing business be closed, then see them put them up overseas. That's what's sad about it.

It's like the last smokehouse over in Lubec, putting up kippers and stuff, Well, there was some big thing up in the Great Lakes, the whitefish, they were contaminated, they weren't cooking them long enough, so the government came up with new regulations, sanitary regulations, even though it was a different type of way to process and smoke fish. It got so bad, so expensive, McCurry's finally had to close up because they couldn't--they just couldn't meet the regulations, it was too expensive. But we still import the same type of stuff from Canada. So I think they just kind of over regulated a lot of it to a point they just got out of it.

And that's the other [problem/cause] of the declining sardine industry in Maine. DEP- Department of Environmental Protection came into vogue around the late '60's in the State of Maine. I don't want to live in a cesspool, nobody does, but the regulations were so stringent that the sardine factories had to like, have no fish, anything fall in the water. That's what fish eat. If you want to fish off a wharf of a sardine factory, that's where the best fishing is because the fish would come in to feed off of the pieces of fish that fell off the flaking machines or just fell in the water. But the DEP said, no, you can't have it, because it's polluting the water. Okay, fine, so they put all these improvements and expenses in the factories. Holmes' did that so the stuff wouldn't fall in the water no more. Okay, fine. Then they came by and said you can't have wooden pickling [shed] to put the fish in salt and brine to pickle them because the health--you know DEP stuff, health reasons, so they had to either put all fiberglass tanks in or all steel tanks.

Jimmy Warren's back in '75, '76, you know, they tried to keep up with the demands of the DEP and the EPA. It just got so bad they just closed, they closed the factory up and that was it. That's why B. H. Wilson, Jimmy Warren's plant closed up. Now Holmes', they put all the tanks in, did everything they were supposed to, then they sold out to that outfit from Houston, Texas, [Zapada], and yet the state DEP and the federal EPA kept coming down, "You gotta do this, gotta do this," and sanitary this and that, you know, stuff falling in the water, can't pollute, blah, blah, blah. It got to the point it was just so heavily regulated. That helped kill the business in Maine, too. That's why Jimmy Warren's closed down. I remember Jimmy Warren saying, "I can't--It's

so expensive to maintain what they want, I've decided to close my plant." This was back in '75, '76. I remember that. It was just too expensive. It wasn't worth it. That's another part of the reason why the sardine business died here.

KJL Now there were a lot of camps like this?

WW Yeah. That's Clark's factory by the way. At that time it was the world's largest sardine plant.

KJL Clark's

WW Clark's factory. Right down--where you were at the WaCo [Diner]. You go down that "C" Street, look here, it was right behind there by the Cobscook Seafood place. Yeah, I'll tell you about the sardine camps. Okay. This map here, this is the Sanborn Map. Seacoast is number 7. Those are all sardine camps, there. This is 1911. Now, a friend of mine, [], he's 89 years old. He used to live up in the sardine camps, 1920's, early '30's, and he used to tell me about life in the sardine camps, so I had a vague idea what it was, because my family's involved with it. He said, "Yeah, I knew your grandfather, Charlie [and your] grandmother, when they got divorced, your uncle and his father, Charlie came up and they lived in the same camp that me and my dad got out of because there were so many bedbugs in there. Your uncle and your grandfather didn't stay there very long, and he laughed. My brother said, "I didn't know anything about that." He said, "Yeah, it was horrible," he said. In this sardine camp.

Then I said, "Well, what did you do?" He said, "Yeah, we had running water." I said, "Running water?" "Yeah, I had to run out in the field to the community well." I said, "What did you do for sanitation?" "We had a pot. I had to dump that every morning." And up there it was all cliffs. And he said, "I learned the hard way." [] "I had to go up and dump the pot, and I dumped it and the wind was blowing and it came back at me, so I learned not to do that." That was life in the sardine camp. It wasn't--that's just the way it was. They had one room downstairs and one big room upstairs, and that was it. No running water, no sanitary facilities.

KJL These sardine camps, they were occupied as late as what, the '40's?

WW Right up to World War II at least, yeah. There's still a few around there. There's one right next door to me that they got down from the south end, they converted into a little house, it's fourteen feet wide, about thirty feet long. It's a house. My next door neighbor, Ross Matthews lives there, him and his wife. It's a little house. My uncle says they took two camps, two sardine camps from down in Bingville, down from one of the sardine camps--a lot was just tore down, but they took two of them and put them together and brought it up and put it on [] next to our house. It's long, but not very wide. And there's another place out by the garage, there's another--you can see it's a sardine camp. They made a house out of it, just like a little cottage.

KJL And where's that?

WW That's out by the garage, here when you come in on 190. It's a little house, about yea big. It's a unique little--It's only about so wide, and that was it. Where the chimney was, that's the center of the camp, so it's like--that was it. One room downstairs and one room upstairs.

KJL And there's an auto garage?

WW Yeah, it's right across from the auto garage, just down the hill, just down the hill a little ways. When you come into town from the right hand side. It's a neat little building. You can look around Eastport, you might see a couple more like that, because I suspect they were actually a sardine camp, and they made them into houses.

And wherever there was a factory, there generally was a--See this group worked at number seven, they belonged to number seven. This camp was Clark's. They worked over to here. My family was in the middle camp in 1929.

KJL Now, who's in this picture?

WW That's my mother.

KJL She's at the top

WW That's her friend, Emma. I don't know who [] they were friends, so.

KJL And what was Larry's last name?

WW I have no idea. This is what my grandmother left me and it's a neat photograph. [] blew it up for me, but--This was []. That's my oldest brother standing next to the track. That's the track, and right next--across the track is the camps. There was four of them. There was three red ones, which were still in existence when I graduated in '72. We used to go down and play on the beaches all the time, walk the tracks, go uptown, and the camps were still there. They were kind of dilapidated. We used to go in and check them--walk in, and they were built pretty solid, like, I was surprised they were in good shape. They didn't tear them down 'til sometime in the mid-'70's. They had a nice big, solid [walk?], and there were three camps, the middle camp where my brother was born. I didn't even know this book existed until my mother said, "You may want this."

KJL Okay, now the camps were near this railroad track?

WW Right over in here

KJL Okay,

WW Okay? See the camps right there? This is Larry standing in front of the camps, the tracks right here. You see that willow tree? It's still there. It's old and falling down, but you can't kill a willow tree. It's still there. That's where the camp was, the camp right behind it, and there's the beach. There's a walkway, there. And like I said, it was a--

KJL This is really interesting because you can still see the buildings, and there's the smokestack.

WW That's the smokestack, yep, and there's part of the train trestle. That went down to the [river] walk down there. This is going down "C" Street toward the American Can plant. There's my brother, and there's the track. And right here is--that's the camp, right next to the track. Literally alongside the track.

KJL This is the factory, here?

WW That's Clark's factory, yeah, and that's going down to the [river] walk there, and the double line's going down to "C" street. I've got picture somewhere that shows the train backing up, with the smoke coming out of it, and my little brother standing there. I can't find it, I've got it somewhere. But this is what my family gave me. This is what my mother gave me, so-It's really kinda--This is kind of a neat place here actually, but.

KJL I might go out and get the scanner and scan a couple two three of these if that's okay.

WW Sure, yeah, go ahead

(The interviewer leaves for a few minutes to get the scanner and set it up. The conversation resumes again at 53:47)

WW Yeah, this is a picture of my brother Everett--little Everett and big Everett [noise from setting up the scanner is obscuring some of the conversation]. This is August, 1936. I was born in July, so--Yeah the tracks are long gone, and everything's long gone. Kinda sad.

(Wayne leaves for a few moments. The conversation resumes at 57:08)

WW You're probably wondering what this wrench thing, all chopped up is.

KJL Oh, yeah,

WW That has an interesting story to it, which ties into this photograph, so--Like I say, I don't mean keeping you too long, but--

KJL No, no

WW You ask questions, I'll be happy to help you.

(Setting up the scanner continues)

WW Now, are you heading back to Augusta after this?

KJL Yeah, I've gotta make a stop in Orono. I'm going to try and make that before 4:30

WW Today? Oh, God!

KJL I may not make it.

WW If you want to--

KJL No, I can take care of that another time

WW It's just such a big subject. There's a lot to it. [overlapping voices]

KJL This is a wonderful photo.

WW [] My mother [] The things that she told me over time, I guess was part of her nature.

KJL Now, the one on top is your mother?

WW The one on top is my mother. The lady below is Emma--I don't know who that is, and Emma's boyfriend, Larry, he's holding them up. Must have been a pretty strong guy. I still have that--Holy mackerel, are they crazy? Unfortunately, that's the only photograph --I'm lucky, got just the names and a couple of dates here and there. I don't know half of them, that's the sad part about it.

That's kind of a neat photograph

KJL Yeah, it is. A great photo. It shows the camps, and it shows the stack for the factory.

WW Umm hmm. Like you said. And God knows what other people have squirreled around in family albums. That's just--you know. But at least you've got some of it, you've got an idea what it was like, so... But as far as the social cliques and stuff goes, they were very close friends, those guys, they worked together, drank together, partied together, celebrated together, you know, the birthdays and stuff. It was very--Over the years there seemed to be an ongoing thing, and it's kind of sad when you see the factories go, and families die, and move away, you see the relationships slowly deteriorate. And that's another part of the decline of the sardine factories. I could see that growing up.

KJL The communities becoming less cohesive?

WW You could see that happening. It's like a social-economic--It wasn't just a sardine factory, it wasn't just a place to work, it was a place to gather. I'm still friends--friends that my mom made friends with, their kids and grandkids are still friends, are still close allies, even though we live separately in different times and stuff. It's kind of sad in a lot of different ways. I suppose that's true of many industries, like the shoe industry in [Brockton] Mass., like the families all working together in the same place. That's the sad part, when you read books, you can't read that stuff between the lines, unless you actually knew somebody that experienced it.

KJL That's why it's good to do this kind of work.

WW That's why I'm happy to help you on it. And I know Buck and everybody else, if they get a chance, would be happy to talk to you about it. Stuff you can't get out of a book or a photograph. I can't believe I was part of an industry that's now a dinosaur. Didn't think I'd ever live to see that. It's like the fishing families, and seining, groundfishing. It's all going the same way. If it's a lot of work, I can make a photograph up to Wal-Mart and send it to you.

KJL This shouldn't take too long.

WW So you plan for this in a written format, or is it just going to be a verbal tape or digitized, or...?

KJL I'm sorry, pardon me?

WW Is this going to be digitized or a verbal format, or..

KJL Well, I'll put the materials in the archives at the Maine Folklife Center, and I may use some of the materials in another presentation.

WW Good. This is up at the University of Maine, up in Fogler Library, up there?

KJL Well, the Maine Folklife Center is separate from the Fogler Library.

WW But it's all the University of Maine system, yeah. That come out okay?

KJL This one looks interesting.

WW This one--go ahead and make a copy of that. It's not my photograph originally, but I got that from Pat [Ryer] the [] girl there. She sold insurance in Machias. What it was, her brother [Dave] Ryer, who worked with my father--very close friends--They were friends, basically, in Lubec. That's the American Can plant in Lubec. And that's where the punch press is, and all the

racket. This is where all the heavy machinery was. This is the cement part of it. And the wooden part of it, the older part of it became the warehouses and supply houses. This is where I went visiting my father, that summer, a miserable hot day, all the punch presses working.

KJL Oh my. Yeah, I can see people were at the--

WW Yeah, that was all cement and that part, they finally tore that down in 1970.

KJL It was open.

WW Well, no, it was enclosed, there was a road that went down that way, and there was a big water tower. There are other photographs of this nineteen-oh--this American Can plant, but that's the only one I've really got that has Pat in it, and Pat was Assistant to Dave Ryer, who made this from a--those guys, these guys are close, Dave Ryer and him. I got talking to her in Machias one time. I'm going like, I see the American Can plant--she had this picture on the wall, I'm going like "Pat Ryer. Are you related to Dave Ryer, that's my brother in law" "Really?" "Cause he was in the nursing home at the time, he was having all kinds of problems. Dave Ryer and my father were close. Oh yeah. She said, "You want a copy of this?" I said, "Can I?" She just passed away a couple of years ago. "Oh my God, thank you." I never had a picture of the American Can before. From Lubec.

[There is some discussion of the photos here, while the scanning is going on]

WW That's Clark's factory. And that's going down to the railroad walk, there, and that's going down C' Street tracks that way.

KJL If I'm real careful, can I put that on the scanner?

WW Sure, go ahead. As you see, my mother and grandmother, over the course of time, they tried to take them out. My grandmother glued everything. [] I didn't even know it existed, "Oh, you might want this." "What?" So they just glued everything in there. They tried to get some photographs out, really ripped them, unfortunately. But that's the summer of 1936, and my brother was born in July, so it's probably August. And that's part of Clark's factory. Of course most people didn't know, and the camps were literally on the wrong side of the tracks. (Laughs) I tell people, Yeah, the wrong side--that's where my brother was born, right there. And actually the tracks was literally at their front dooryard. Can you imagine bringing kids up in an environment like that?

KJL You were on the wrong side of the tracks, huh?

WW Literally the wrong side of the tracks. And that's another story. That part of Eastaport was called--down below the bridge--there was a south end bridge there at one time, until 1940. Anything below the tracks, or the south end bridge was called Sodom.

KJL Was called? --

WW Sodom. Interesting story in its own right. B. H. Wilson's was in the south end of town, that was in Sodom. I lived just below the tracks, just below the bridge, so I lived in Sodom.

KJL Now, is there a story behind it being called Sodom?

WW It was so bad. All I know is that when the sardine business came to Eastport in the 1870's, the south end bridge was there since the British was there []. And that's really the south end of town. Now, where the term Sodom came from, I'm not really sure about it, but in the Eastport Sentinel, as I do research over the years and course of time, I come across the word "Sodom," "He was from Sodom, the south end of town, below the bridge." This is like in the 1880's, 1890's. Up 'til that point, that wasn't known as Sodom. All I know is that there was a lot of drinking, fighting, some murders down there. It was a real, real bad part of town, and it got the name of Sodom. So anybody from the south end, below the bridge, or where the tracks came in, below the tracks was from Sodom, because it had such a bad reputation. They had sardine factories down there, sardine canners, high transient population back and forth during the seasons. So I think from the 1870's and '80's, the reputation became--someone called it Sodom and it stuck because it was one of the worst parts of town. So even today, the old timers say "You're from Sodom," "Yeah, I'm down below the tracks." Below the bridge. So I'm literally from the wrong side of the tracks. And I'm sure if you go to other little towns, you'll probably find [] Bingville is located down there. I don't understand where Bingville came from, but--

KJL Bingo?

WW Bingville B. H. Wilson's fisheries was located near Bingville--which is in Sodom (Laughs).

KJL These are turning out nicely.

WW Good. Like I said, that's 1936. My father was like two months old at the time. After they killed the Quoddy Dam.

KJL One is marked 1938?

WW No, that was 1936. And one of them was Big Everett and Little Everett. I can look at that. That one there. That was 1936. Little Everett's only two months old. That's Clark's Factory, and that's the smokestack. And that's where the Maine Central Railroad Tracks.

KJL That's the gentleman with the cap and the baby.

WW Yeah, that would be Everett's grandfather. Everett []. He was working down at Burpee Wilson's at the time, right across from [] Cove. Burpee Wilson did that for his workers. They needed money to buy a house, he'd just up front and pay him back out of your check. That's the way he was, he was really a very nice gentleman, highly regarded.

KJL Was there any interest involved?

WW He just liked helping out his employees, he was a real good guy. He was a real nice gentleman, Burpee was. Like I said it was more family than employer-employee. It was just that type of environment.

KJL I hope I'm not keeping you.

WW No, I'm fine. I don't want to bore you too much.

KJL No, no! This is fascinating.

WW I figure when I'm dead and gone it's gonna be the end of it, so I feel like I'm the last soldier standing on a lot of this stuff because a lot of the older generation [] is in their '80's and '90's []. They're telling me these stories and by the time I get it and by the time I interpret it, it's gonna get watered down even more and these guys--"You guys should write this stuff down." John Brady was really good this way, he was the same age bracket. "John, you should..." He was telling me all these wonderful stories. I said "John, I'm not gonna retain half of this. I've got bits and pieces but you know all the little minutiae of everything." And he says, "Yeah, you're a historian." I said, "Gee, John, thanks, I'm just a poor interpreter." A poor storyteller, unfortunately. So after I'm gone, I guess there's gonna be nothing, I guess.

KJL Make sure I got that one. Yeah, I got that one.

WW It came out good, that's Everett [Flag] That's Everett's grandfather. Like I said, God knows, maybe Buck had some photographs of the mustard mill or something else..[] share it, what's the point of having it, right. If people want to talk, I'm happy to talk to them, unless their eyes glaze over [], we'll go to something else, we'll move on. I know enough when to shut up

KJL These are wonderful.

WW I'm surprised they even survived, I didn't know they even existed, 'til my mom said, "Hey you might want this." What? Sure. Like a lot of them I don't remember--I'm glad my mom wrote on them a little bit, anyway.

KJL Well I probably should get out of everybody's hair here.

WW Let me tell you quick, the story...

KJL Yeah I want to hear about that wrench.

WW This wrench, Dave [], Pat's brother did this. It says, "Howard's last mistake." My father retired 1973, when the American Can plant closed, and my father--they presented this to my father. My father was working on the sheer press machine. He worked in the punch presses and--look at the force that sheer press came down--look at the size of that wrench--snapped it, cut it in little pieces. And Dave collected those and saved those for my father and gave it to him as a retirement present.

KJL (Laughs) "Howard's last mistake."

WW Can you believe that. Look at the force that sheer press had on that. He said that []. Boom! chopped it right in pieces. That's the force that those punch presses had, when they were cutting out tin plates and aluminum plates, you know, for tin cans, and aluminum cans and stuff. It's just amazing. So that's my father's retirement present. Like I said, when I'm dead and gone, I don't know what will happen to it. That's from American Can. American Can don't exist any more. I assume they're still making cans in the country, but...

KJL Well, thank you, very much.

WW Well, you're welcome, Keith.

KJL I appreciate you taking so much time for me.

WW I hope I didn't bore you too much.

KJL No, no, no, no.

WW Like I said, when you come back again [] talk to Buck Suddy and []'s brother about the sardines and the mustard and stuff. It's such a big subject, but it's such an interesting subject, it's like--when you start talking to people who were actually involved with it, or family members, and they can tell you little intricate details and stuff.

KJL Sure.

WW But I think it's gonna be a wonderful project, and I hope you get another grant to work on it some more. Maybe someday I'll stop in at Orono and check on your project.

KJL Okay, ‘

WW Well, that's great, I'm glad you got that grant. I'm glad you're spending the time to do this.

KJL Yeah, it's been fascinating. Eastport's one of my favorite places to hang out.

WW Well, when you come back, hopefully the weather will be better and like I said, I don't consider myself an old timer, but I guess I'm turning into an old timer because I'm one of the last of that generation. My parents and grandparents are all gone. Yeah, I guess I'm gonna be an old timer pretty quick.

END OF INTERVIEW

