ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

An interview with
Joseph (Joe) Joaquin Azevedo, 1906-1983

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Oral History Interview 1 on the Fish Packing Industry

INTERVIEW WITH JOE J. AZEVEDO

I will attempt to tell you all about the tuna packing industry in San Diego, its inception, the beginning of it, and tell you all the dates that I can possibly remember; things that happened, how they happened, and why.

Dad, mother, my sister and I left New Bedford, Massachusetts the latter part of 1913. We settled in San Diego and after a very short time dad decided he wanted to live in Point Loma. We came to California principally because of the bad weather in the east, the bad winters and the warm summers, too warm. And we heard so much about California, what wonderful country it was, and we found that it was all true when we arrived here. But dad came out here principally to pack tuna, to pack fish; not just tuna, but fish. His education was very limited, so what he learned he had to obtain from books. He made up his mind that that was what he was going to do. He obtained all the information he could from Washington, from the Bureau of Agriculture, on the packing and canning of tuna - the cooking times, the retorting time, and the labeling and all the processing of the tuna itself.

He read everything he could find -- every book, everything that was possible to obtain he obtained it, studied it very thoroughly, and decided to build a small shed in the back of the yard. He had built his own home on Byron and Evergreen Street. (And, by the way, it is still there today and it looks pretty good.) He built a small shed in the back and that was going to be one of the first fish canneries, the first tuna packing cannery in San Diego. It wasn't very large, of course. He put a boiler in the back on the outside in case of any trouble, and if it did blow up, the damage would be slight being on the outside of the building. At least he though of that. He obtained an old sink and on this old sink he put a steel plate with bolts and wing nuts and he had his steam piped into it. And that is where he cooked the tuna as he received it from the fishing boats. The time for cooking the tuna was two hours and fifty minutes. And after the tuna was cooked, my mother, Isabel Azevedo, took the tuna and cut it to the right height.

Dad had made a calibration on a piece of board and each section of the tuna was set onto this board and being calibrated. The knife would come down at that particular point and cut it just to the height of the can. All the cans were the same height; that is, the quarter-pound and the half-pound cans. After the fish was cleaned, my mother scraped away the bloody meat and all the other meat that was not completely white. Then the fish was cut and put into the cans individually. At that time we used a very good grade of olive oil. I remember the name; it was called Reumberto. It was imported from Italy in six-gallon cans. Today, of course, that particular type of oil, or any olive oil, is almost prohibitive in price. And a pinch of salt was added to each can as mother packed the tuna into the cans.

Dad then took each individual can and placed it into this one single-spindle sealing machine, pressed his foot down and the spindles would rotate, rolling the seal over the top of the can and sealed it. Then those cans were placed into a retort and were retorted for three hours and fifteen minutes. So you see it requires two cookings of tuna and processing it for the market from the time it is raw and has to be cooked.

Then after it is placed in cans, it has to be cooked again to take out any impurities that might have gotten into the fish or the can from the time it is cooked until it is sealed. of course, after each can is sealed, it is placed into its container and is then ready to be labeled. Labels can be put on from either broker or your own particular label, and our label at that time was the San Diego Packing Company.

The labeling, of course, was all done by hand. In those days they had no labeling machines like they have today. And then after they were put in the boxes they were ready to be shipped. The cans at that time, the little quarter-pound cans, retailed for eight cents on the market. The half-pound can sold for fifteen cents in the market. So you can see the difference in the price -- almost tripled or more from what we used to pack it for, and what it is today. Dad was in this business there in the small cannery for just a short time. And at that time I must add something here. Our fish was brought from the fishing boats to the cannery in our little backyard in a two-wheeled steel wagon. I remember it had tires on it like pneumatic tires, and it was pushed from the wharf, from the dock, down at the waterfront, up to our cannery in our backyard, and then it was processed there.

Well, as I said before, dad was there a short time and he decided he was going to build a larger plant. Business was picking up a little bit. He could see the possibility that the market for tuna was good. His product was a good product and it was well packed. And he decided to build another cannery and he obtained financing. He had some money of his own, of course, in starting this. But he had to obtain more money and he built a larger plant just east of the Kettenberg Boat Works, which is still there to this day.

When he built this cannery he started small. He had one machine for sealing, but it was a four-spindle sealing machine. That means, of course, he could put the cans out much faster and do a better job. Today, the machines they have put them out at a terrific rate of speed and they are sealed in a vacuum. In those days, the old days, they were not sealed in a vacuum; they were sealed in the open just exactly as the first machine that he had for sealing them was. But in this particular case it had four spindles instead of one.

The cannery prospered and grew and he reached a point at the San Diego Packing Company where possibly at one time he had as many as 325 or 350 people working there. The majority of them, of course, were women who were cleaning the tuna that was brought in from the boats, and the packing of the tuna was also done by women. It was all done by piecework. They were paid so much for each tray of tuna that they cleaned, and then the packers were paid for each tray that they packed. I don't recall what the price was that they received at that time, but it was a very small amount. Your fast packers, or your fast cleaners, could make pretty good money. In those days they could make eight or ten dollars a day. In 1914, 1915, 1916, and 1917 that was pretty good money.

Dad had that plant for some time and he added to it. It kept growing. But we ran into a problem, the tuna was going farther south. In the old days the small boats, they were, oh, 30, 35 feet long, would go just a little outside of Point Loma. Within a few hours they were back at the cannery with several tons of fish, depending on the size of the boat. And, as I say, the tuna began to go a little farther south. They kept moving out. It got to the point to where they moved so far south that the small boats could not get down there for it; it was too rough; it was too long a trip. Something had to be done in order to obtain the fish as it went farther south.

Dad had an old friend of his, Mr. M. O. Medina, who is still alive today, and the two of them got their heads together and decided they were going to build a large tuna clipper. Well, there were none around the coast at that time. This was a 110-foot boat. It was to be called the *Atlantic* and the cost was $82,000. It had a 300-horsepower Union diesel engine in it. The cruising radius was very good compared to the other boats. I don't recall just how far she would cruise, but she would go for two or three weeks at a time -- go way down south and come up with full loads. She carried 80 to 100 tons each time on a full load and that was pretty good because tuna at that time was selling for around $280 a ton. And that was good money. The *Atlantic* was very successful.

I recall, as a boy, watching and seeing that most of the Portuguese fishermen at that time were hesitant about spending any money like that (that was big money) on that type of a boat. It was a big investment; it was a big gamble. But Mr. Medina and my father went into this business. They built the boat and in a little over a year's time that boat was paid for. It was clear.

Well, when the Portuguese fishermen could see the possibilities and saw what happened, they couldn't get down to the Campbell Machine Company fast enough to build boats. And Campbell had more boats than they could build. All the Portuguese were getting into the act. They were building them and they had to be a little bit larger than that one. one, a little larger than the next one, was 112 feet and they kept on going up until over a period of a few years, they were building them up to 128 and 130 feet long. And that was a pretty good-sized clipper. They were all making money. This type of fishing was known as pole fishing. In other words, they had a heavy bamboo pole, two to two and half inches in diameter and the line was heavy. The line was to be the exact length of the pole. The hook was a very large hook with no barb. Now this was for catching the smaller tuna. When I say small, I mean fish 25 to 30 pounds, up to 50 pounds, 60 pounds.

But tuna run in schools, and these schools, as a rule, will run the same size. In other words, if you run into a school of tuna and they are 25, 30, 35 pounds, that length and that weight, most of them will be the same size -- they do not mingle. You never have the small tuna mixed with the large tuna. As a rule you don't, I say. Sometimes you will find that, but as a rule they are either small, medium or large. Now for the larger tuna, more strength is required to bring these fish into the boat.

Then they had what we call a two-pole line which is two poles attached to the one line and so on until we get what they called a three-pole fish. When you get up to a three-pole fish, you have a fish that weighs 180 to 225 pounds and it takes three men to bring it in. When these clippers were built they were built so that the men would fish off the stern. Later on someone got an idea to put racks, steel rack, across the stern and across the sides of the stern. That way the men could stand right in the water, possibly half way up above their ankles to their knees they would be in the water. And that way

they were right down close and they could bring the fish into the boat much easier, especially the larger fish. And it became a little simpler and they could catch more fish and bring them in.

And of course when these fish, tuna, are brought in, they are dropped onto the deck of these vessels. Most of the time they will squirm themselves loose from the large hook, which, as I told you before, has no barb on it. They do, however, have a man whose job is to watch the fish when they are brought into the boat and are boated. If they cannot get them off the hook his job is to hit them over the head enough times to either knock them out or kill them immediately and then remove the hook and throw it back in the water again.

Now you may wonder how these fish are kept around the stern of these vessels. Well, to begin with, all tuna years ago were caught with live sardines. The boats would usually get these live sardines in the evening, at nighttime. They would put their nets out and when they put these nets out to catch sardines, they had a net that was almost half a mile long or longer.

The nets were dropped into the water and at the end of this net was secured a barrel with a light on it so that they could see it at night. They would drop it in and then circle the sardines where the school of sardines were running. They would circle the school, bring the nets together, start hauling that net in by hand, which was a tremendous amount of work. It was hard, back-breaking work. And they would haul that net in, bring the sardines in, and there would be two or three men with net scoops and they would scoop them out and put them into their bait tank.

This bait tank was near the stern of the vessel and it had fresh water, or salt water, but it was circulating water running through that tank so that the water was circulating all the time. Then the live sardines were put in there and they would stay alive for a good many days swimming in that tank. It was a large tank in the big vessels. When they ran into a school of tuna there was a man who sat up on top of this box and he was called a "chummer." His job was to scoop out the live sardines and toss them out over the stern of the boat. And of course as these live sardines swam around the water, the tuna, being in that particular area, when they stopped the vessel, would go for the sardines. The reason they would go for the barbless hook without any bait on it is the fact that the fish were actually going crazy out there trying to catch these live sardines. And most of the time a hook would very seldom ever touch the water. A tuna would jump up out of the water and snap that hook. They would jump at anything. And that's the way they boated their fish and brought them in.

Well, there were a lot of things that had to be done there, too. In order to bring this fish in, if they were out for several weeks (which they were), a way to keep these fish fresh had to be devised. But all the tuna clippers used in those days, and even before the clippers were built, was chipped ice. This ice was purchased on the dock, usually at the foot of Broadway. Mr. Lawrence Oliver had a place there and he would crush this ice in a crusher (put in blocks and crushed) and then it would run through a flume line down into the boats, and they would put the ice down into the holds. And as these fish were caught they were thrown on deck. When the school was fished out, when they were gone, then the men had to go to work and ice these fish. They were put into the holds and iced. The ice was packed around each individual fish. That was a lot of work and it was cold work, and it was hard work, dirty. And that's the way they were put in there. Today it's a different story. I'll tell you about that later. Each fish was packed in separately and when the holds were filled they returned home. The ice took up quite a bit of room, so that meant that if you could fish without having to have ice in the hold you would have been able to bring in more fish. And that's what they devised later on. But in those days they were packed in ice, as I say, and brought in.

When the holds were full then they were ready to come in, with a full load or part of a load -- whatever they had. They tried to stay out there until they could get a full load, naturally. In those days a crew on a boat like that varied. The Atlantic carried a crew of around eight men. The new boats today carry a crew of 18 to 20; they are much larger vessels. They go farther south, much farther south, but we'll get to that later on.

These vessels had radios aboard and they could keep in touch with their families. They could also keep in touch with the Coast Guard if there were problems of any kind, or keep in touch with other vessels if they wanted to advise them of any schools of fish that were running in any place where they had already loaded up themselves and were ready to come in. If fish were still available in that particular area they would usually call these other vessels and let them know where they were located so they could come over there and fish, too. This was done at all times with these boats. The men had to work together because they had to live together and work together. That was the only way they could do it in harmony. It was a dangerous job; it was dangerous work. They kept going farther south all the time and getting in some very rough seas. You find that at certain times of the year they run into those Mexican chubascos and that's very, very stormy weather -- very bad high seas. Sometimes the men would go a complete day or two days without having much to eat or drink, it was such rough weather.

Today they have other ways of communicating and finding out where these chubascos are striking and when this bad weather is coming up, and they can usually avoid it and be in another part of the ocean. I want to tell you also about the way the men are paid. Men on fishing boats, the tuna fishing boats, the clippers, have always worked on a share basis. A new man starting in would usually start in at a quarter share and he'll work his way up, possibly in a year's time. Sometimes, if they are real good and can prove that they are good fishermen, get along well with the crew and everyone, within six months or less they are put on a full share. But they must prove themselves first before they are put on this full share.

The boat itself comes into several shares, whether it's paid for or not. There are several shares taken out for the boat first -- that is the first thing they do. The other thing that they have to do is to take out their expenses, food, oil, all equipment that has been purchased before they leave port. That has to be divided; first, it must be paid for. The skipper gets several shares, then comes the engineer who gets more shares than the regular crew (possibly two shares or three); navigator gets two or three shares. So the low man on the totem pole is your crewman. He is the one that does most of the hard work and gets one share. That's what they work up to is the one share, and that one share can mean quite a bit when you get a full load, and you can make a lot of trips in a year's time.

When these vessels leave port each man, of course, has his own job to do. Until they reach the fishing banks, they can more or less take it kind of easy. But once they get into the fishing banks, they have a man up in the crow's nest. Now this was years ago. Today they are doing it electronically and with a lot of sophisticated equipment which is very useful and helpful in catching fish.

But in those days, the man up in the crow's nest had to keep his eye peeled for schools of tuna. They can be seen for a long distance. The minute he would spot a school of tuna he would holler down to the men, tell them about where the fish were running, and they would swing the boat over to where the school was. And the minute they got near the school of fish, the tuna, the chummer would start tossing out his live sardines. And that is the way they brought the fish to the stern of the boat and kept them there until that school was fished out. There were times they could put aboard 15, 20, 30, 40 tons of fish before the school was gone. Other times they might fish for a half hour and get a ton of fish, or a ton and a half, and they would leave. They were very unpredictable.

Now, I want to tell you some other things about the vessel. They also had, even in those days, a radio man and when they ran into a school of fish (tuna) everybody pitched in. I mean the cook was there, the engineer was there, everybody that could, dropped everything they were doing to fish that school, because the more they could get aboard, the sooner they would get home and the more money they could make.

So it was up to everybody that could possibly fish to get back there and get going on it and bring that fish in, and they did. They made a lot of money in those days and they are making a lot of money today. They made a lot of money in those days with a lot less equipment than they are making today, in comparison. I've tried to give you a general outline of how they fish, the way it is done, etc. Now, let's go back to the San Diego Packing Company again. In 1917 dad had an opportunity to sell the plant in Point Loma to other interests and he wanted to expand. He had an opportunity to build

another plant in San Diego. This plant was built in 1917 where the Westgate California Corporation is today. It's at the foot of Crosby Street. And that plant was built with more elaborate equipment, better equipment, newer, new ideas in canning fish, not so much in the packing and the cleaning, but more in the sealing of the fish and warehousing it.

Dad built that plant in 1917 and sold out the other one and things prospered quite well. We were in the war at that time. After we entered the war dad packed considerable sardines. Now the packing of sardines is considerably different from the packing of tuna. The people who fished sardines in San Diego in those days were the Italian fishermen. Portuguese fishermen did not fish for sardines; they were strictly tuna fishermen.

And for some reason or another, I don't know why, today everybody is in the act. The Portuguese are fishing the tuna, the Italians, the Slavs, Japanese, you name them, they are all in it -- all for the money of course, naturally. But in those earlier days it was just the Italians who fished for sardines. Dad had several boats fishing sardines and he packed them at the same time he was packing tuna; they were packing both. Now, he was offered a bonus by the United States government for any shipments that he could get out of sardines to be shipped overseas to France to feed our troops. This was not a fancy pack, of course; it couldn't be. They were the cheaper grade of sardines, little larger grade, and they were just put in with cottonseed oil.

At that time we were not using the other type oils such as soybean that is used today. But in those days they were not using soybean oil. Most of it was olive oil and cottonseed. Well, the cottonseed was a cheaper oil and so a small amount of cottonseed oil was put into a sardine can; it was sealed and shipped overseas. The faster he could get a carload out the larger his bonus for shipping them over there for feeding the troops. And he did quite well on that, too. The cannery prospered and did quite well.

In the meantime the cannery in San Diego did well, but the one in Point Loma was not doing too well -- the one that he sold out, San Diego Packing Company. The original San Diego Packing Company, of course, was in our backyard and then he built the one next to the Kettenberg Boat Company, the larger plant. And after the sale of these other interests, they were not too well up on the packing of tuna and they did not have the proper financing. They couldn't keep up. They tended to get behind on everything and dad had an opportunity to buy that plant back again. So he sold out the Normandy Seafood Company in San Diego and went back to Point Loma and continued packing fish. Well, in the meantime those boats continued to get larger and the fishing business went on from there.

But since I told you about the sardine business, let's go on from here to the sardine business. The boats fishing sardines were smaller boats. The largest possibly was 50 feet long, 35 up to 50 feet. The 50-foot sardine boat was a good-sized boat, considered large for those days, and they brought in quite a few tons at a time. Of course their price was nothing to compare with the tuna, but it was another type of industry, completely different. They could go out and load up in shorter times and come back in. They were never gone too long. They were gone possibly just one, two, or three days, and they were back with a full load.

In packing sardines, there are different grades. You have the real small sardine which is the most tender, the best, then a little larger, then the real large one. Now the real small sardine is usually the fancy pack. And then if a broker wants them put into a fancy grade of oil, the Reumberto olive oil is used; and they are the boneless sardines. This is a very, very tedious task in removing the spine, as you can imagine, from a sardine. In being done, it takes a great deal of time and of course the price asked for that type of work must be much higher. But there was some demand for the fancy pack, as it was known, but not too much. They brought a great deal more on the market because of the scarcity and the cost of operating and packing it.

Now, with your regular grade of sardine, we have what they call a quarter-oil; that was the largest seller. Then we had the half-pound can; that was a little larger sardine can and a little larger fish. Then you had your cheaper grade which came in what they called a one-pound can, or the oval can. Now they were packed according to whatever the brokers wanted, either in mustard or catsup. They were not too popular.

But if people could not afford the better grades and had large families, they would always buy that particular brand and it gave them more for their money, and it worked out quite well at that. The biggest seller was the quarter-oil in regular cottonseed oil. The fancy pack, as I told you, was olive oil. And that business prospered quite well, too. In processing the fish, the only thing that has to be done after they have been cleaned and what they call gutted and the heads removed, is they are put into a frying process. The fish are always put into a crystal oil or a tasteless oil. The large oil companies handle it; the same oil that is used today and has been used for years is a mineral oil sold in drugstores. That is the type of oil the sardines were fried in. They are fried in that oil and after they are cooled, they are packed.

They come into the cannery in large quantities when they do get the large fish and a good many people are employed in processing these fish. They come in on large tables and come down through the flume line from the end of the cannery wharf. They are put up to the top and they come down on a gradual slope through a flume line flushed with water in about a six-inch line.

They come into the cannery onto these large tables where the women are standing, and are cut. At that time the sardine is beheaded and the gut is taken out; the belly of the fish is placed down with the back up and they come down with the knife cutting directly behind the head. And just before the knife touches the table, they draw the fish back to the left. That pulls the head out with the gut inside and is dropped into another section of the table below. And that all goes into the processing of fertilizer, called a reduction plant. It's a very fine fertilizer -- there is a big demand for it. It is a quite strong fertilizer, but there is a demand for it and there always has been. So all parts of the fish are used. Quarter oils in those days were selling for eight cents a can; fancy pack in the quarter oil were selling for sixteen cents. Most places were 14 to 16 cents. Now the half-pound cans were selling for 14 cents, that is, the regular pack. Your cheaper grade of sardine, which was the big oval can, the one-pound oval, either in mustard or catsup, was selling for ten cents. So you can see you could buy a great deal for a very little amount of money which we can't do today. Dad continued to pack tuna and sardines in the cannery for a good many years after that until the day that he retired.

Now I want to tell you about the larger boats. Remember, I told you that the fish were going farther south all the time and in order to go down and get these fish, naturally they had to build larger boats to bring more fish, to get down to them. They ran into some very, very heavy weather, bad weather, down in that country and the boats, if you recall my telling you, from the time that the *Atlantic was* built, which was a 110 footer, and they kept getting larger until finally to the present, the boats they are building are 210 feet long, up to 240 feet long. Now these vessels are costing a great deal of money.

Naturally the larger we build them and with the cost, the economy today, and the sophisticated equipment that they have aboard and all the fine things they want and deserve on these boats, because they do work hard, and it's a risky business, they will run anywhere from two and a half to three and a half million [dollars]. And that's an awful lot of money. Of course it will pay for itself. It will hold a lot of fish, much more than the other boats would. The price has gone up considerably.

I want to tell you about this type of fishing. Remember I told you about the pole fishing. Originally, when the *Atlantic* was built and boats a little larger than the *Atlantic,* that type of fishing was all called pole fishing. Now, about 20 years ago, which would put us back about 1952 and '53, the fishermen decided they wanted to have what they call purse seiners.

Now purse seining, seining for fish, is nothing new; it's been going on for a good number of years, but not in the tuna. In catching tuna this was something different, something new. And it was a different type of fishing. It was the type of fishing that would be a little easier on the men because the machinery was going to do the work. Well, the men that had the boats that they had, wanted to make purse seiners of the present boats that they had. They had to square off the stern. They had to chop it off and square it off and that cost quite a bit of money. And they had to have extra rigging

for the purse seining. They didn't have to have the old bait box-type that was on the stern, which was actually in the way. There was no bait box there because it wasn't going to be needed in purse seining. And I'll tell you why later.

But the other extra equipment -- there was a large winch that had to be put on the boat, and there was a block similar to a block and tackle that had to be put onto the boom, on the upper part of the boom and cable was used instead of rope, line. All these things cost a great deal of money. So when they did convert the old type fishing boat to a purse seiner, they took a lot of time to do this work and it was a very expensive job. But it has paid; so far it has paid and paid well. A large roller is put on the stern from one side of the vessel to the other across the stern, and, as I said before, this type of fishing is altogether different. This fishing is done by nets, strictly by net. They do not catch any sardines before they go out and there is no chummer aboard. There is no box on there for sardines of any type and the deck is free and clear of all of that.

Now when they go out and find a school of tuna, either through spotting it or through their electrical equipment that they have aboard, the first thing that they do, of course, is to stop the vessel. A speedboat is dropped over; it's rather large, has a very wide beam, is a rather heavy boat and is quite powerful. This boat is dropped over the side and will circle around the stern of the vessel where the school of tuna has been spotted. And it will more or less make waves out there and try to push the fish into and around the stern of this purse seining boat so that the boat will be directly in the center of this school of fish. They will be all around the stern and around the boat. There are no sardines put into the water to keep them there. The minute that happens, then this speedboat with the net attached to it (the net is almost a mile long; some of them are longer and some are shorter, but pretty close to a mile in length) will circle this school of tuna and make a complete circle around the stern of the vessel and bring the net in on the other side and this is attached to the cable and pulled up over the block on the boom and pulled down. And then the machinery does the work.

The winch goes to work and pulls it in; it closes the net in slowly around the stern of the vessel until it is closed in pretty close, and the sack is drawn in (which is what they are called) and pulled in from the bottom. And it's pulled in and the fish are inside this sack -- they cannot get out. And they gradually pull this net in and the fish are dumped right into the vessel.

So you see the difference in pole fishing the hard way, and having the machinery do the work. The fish are pulled in by this winch and dropped into the boat, into the stern, and they are put directly into the holds of the ship. Now, another thing that's new, they are not using ice anymore. They are using a brine. The brine does not take up the room that the ice did and we don't have all that hard work of [packing] each individual fish. The fish are dumped into this brine. The brine is cold, of course. It has to be and they are frozen into this brine and are brought in this way. So the work is altogether different than it was before. It makes it much easier for the men, much lighter work. The type of machinery that they have aboard is considerably different, of course. If you recall, I told you that when the *Atlantic* was built (110 footer) she had a 300 horsepower Union diesel engine in her and that was considered a pretty good-sized motor in those days.

Well, these new boats that they are building have a General Motors engine in them and they have from 18 to 20 cylinders and develop up to 3,600 horsepower. The number of knots that they will travel are figured on what they call a shaft turn, rpm shaft turn. At 195 rpm shaft turn they will develop 15 knots, and that's pretty good speed for a boat like that going out for fish. Their fishing capabilities are greater. They have finer equipment aboard, of course, but their galleys are something out of this world. They are all stainless steel galleys and usually all-electric. The quarters for the men are fine sleeping quarters. Everything is much better for them and much safer as well.

Now, I am going to tell you more about some of the other things concerning the present-type ships that they are building today. These vessels going down south for fish are going down as far as South Africa. Naturally they are not coming back up here within a week or two and they are staying down there for greater lengths of time. In fact, a lot of these vessels are staying down there for a year, or be down there for two years.

What they do is, after they have been out fishing for a certain length of time and it's too long a time before the men can get back and see their families, they fly them home. They stay home for two or three weeks with their families and they are flown back to their boats wherever they are -- down below in Costa Rica, Puerto Rico, or in South Africa, and there is a lot of packing of tuna down in that country, too.

Other vessels are bring[ing] it up here to the canneries direct. Some of it is coming through from Japan into this country, caught in Japanese waters and caught in their own waters by Japanese fishermen. We are getting some of that fish in here now. In fact, it is being brought in by truck to the Westgate California Corporation, out of San Pedro, and it is brought into San Pedro from other ports, and it's turning into a tremendously large industry. In San Diego it is one of the chief industries. We have other industries, of course, but this business is more or less a stable business. However, there is a quota on this fish, on these large boats there is a quota, there has to be a quota. And when they have reached this quota in their tuna, the boats must come in and tie up until the end of the year, and then they start the new year again on a new quota.

Now, they usually come in around the first part of December and they tie up here. They get their repair work done, painting, everything that has to be done, and then after the first of the year, usually right after the new year, they go out again. So the more trips they can make and get back in, the more money they are going to make for the year. It's an industry that we need in this town and it has always been here, though it is considerably different today that it was years ago, like everything else.

I want to wind up this story about the fishing industry, the tuna fishing industry, and the sardine industry in San Diego, by telling you something else. It is not always easy, or safe, or pleasant, and in most jobs that we have, there is always something about a man's life and a man's work that is not so good. So I'm going to tell you the bad part of it now. The bad part of the whole business is the fact that these men are gone for a great length of time from home. They are not around their families; they have left their families and their homes; the kids are growing up. They don't get a chance to watch them grow up and play and the other things that we do throughout life. They are down there fishing to make a living. It's hazardous work and it's hard. But it's one of the things that is very, very hard to do -- to stay away from your home. It's hard on the family that is left here. The mother is the one that usually has to figure things out for herself, and it's a job they are not equipped to do. They have their problems like everyone else has, but in raising a family when the father is not in, it's pretty rough. They can talk to their husbands and the men will talk to them every so often. Every week or ten days they call home and the calls are run through a San Pedro station and they are telephoned right into the home, so that the women and the children can talk to the husbands and fathers when they are out to sea, no matter where they are. And so this is quite a nice thing. It's always been done that way, but more so today than it ever was before. But it's a hardship on the family; it's a hardship on the men as well as the women and the children. And that is one of the bad things. I don't know how it will ever be overcome. You can't be down there fishing and still be here, so it makes it a very, very bad thing. We have problems at all times. There are divorces; there are separations because the men are gone for long times. And it makes it awfully, awfully hard for the family.

Now in the old days I remember as a boy things were not only different in every other ways, but the women in those days were brought up a little differently. They didn't have things that we have today that catch the eye, and they were happy to stay home and take care of their homes and the children and keep them clean and send them to school, pay the bills, and take care of everything that had to be done up here, and they were happy doing it. But today the young girls are not the same type. And most of them are pretty young and they like to get out and see things. They have more things to do and places to go we know, and you can't blame them. They don't want to be stuck at home all the time with children; they want to get out and see things, too. The men are not always out at sea; they are in port down below there and they go ashore and have their fun, too. So the women feel they are entitled to it up here and I think they are; and that usually causes trouble.

We have had problems in the past and there will always be problems in that respect. But that's one of the things that goes along with this particular type of work. It's not pleasant, the money is good, but you always have this. If you can surmount this and work it out between the man and wife and

the family, a man can make a lot of money. And if he can invest it wisely and save at least part of it, he can get himself ahead quite well.

But it is not always too easy to save all that you think you are going to save and this creates a hardship. We hope that it doesn't spoil too many families, but there is always bound to be someone who is going to get hurt. I hope that what I've told you about the fishing industry has been of some value to you and I hope that in passing this on that other people will learn something about things as they were in the past and up to the present. I thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW
