



## ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

An interview with  
George Norman Zeluff, 1920-2000

December 10, 1988



[MP3 Audio File](#) [Length: 01:58:17] (54.1 MB)

**This interview was conducted by:** Robert G. Wright

**Transcribed by:** Elaine T. Valerio

**Edited by:** Thomas E. Walt

**Final typed by:** Polly Baker

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### PREFACE

George Norman Zeluff is a native San Diegan who loved fishing and decided that his career would be in the fishing industry. He was fascinated by ocean fishing and in his early years had some interesting experiences as a commercial fisherman in local waters. Most of this fishing was for swordfish and rock cod.

Early fishing was done in bait boats and Zeluff got his first opportunity on the Atlantic. He signed on as a member of the crew for one dollar. The ship went as far south as the Galapagos and Zeluff had his first experiences in three-pole fishing.

There were many experiences both in fishing and in boat operation. He purchased his first boat, the Esperanza before he was twenty years old. Later he graduated from the California Maritime Academy and became an officer on a troop ship during World War II. Then, after the war, back to the fishing business. There were many boats and interesting experiences in George Zeluff's forty years in the fishing industry.

Thomas E. Walt, Editor  
February 11, 1992

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## **INTERVIEWER'S NOTE**

This is an oral interview with Mr. George Zeluff in Point Loma. Mr. Zeluff was in the tuna industry for years. He owned his own boat. I believe he was skipper. The date is December 10th, 1988.

**ROBERT G. WRIGHT:** Mr. Zeluff, what is your full name?

**GEORGE ZELUFF:** My full name is George Norman Zeluff. And I was born in 1920.

**RW:** What month and date?

**GZ:** May 8th, 1920.

**RW:** Where?

**GZ:** Would you believe it, out on Point Loma, Fort Rosecrans, 462 Rosecrans Street. I was born in a home and during those days, 1920, no one had, or very few people had, doctors, so ...

**RW:** Hospital care?

**GZ:** They had a midwife. My mother did and it was interesting, I guess it went on for hours but I finally popped out and that was the story of my birth.

**RW:** What was the - oh, yeah, you gave the address of it. That was your family home then, right?

**GZ:** Well, it was a large three-story or two and a half-story with an attic room.

**RW:** Is it still in existence?

**GZ:** Yes, at 462 Rosecrans. And during those days there were no street cars, there were no buses. Everything came later. And the road right on Rosecrans was not paved on either side. And the big thing was, this was a little fishing village and some of the Portuguese who lived around us had their own vessels during the early years or during the early times of this period while I was growing up. And, of course, you got to know them and you played with them and you played marbles and you played tops and you played football and baseball and everything else and a lot of those fellows went on to fishing at an early stage of their life. Well, it intrigued me. I was fascinated by going out on the ocean on a fishing vessel to catch fish. And

I could hardly wait and the time came first when I was - I met on the beach a fellow by the name of John Lindall. He took me out and I learned about the ocean and all the ramifications of sea lore, how to tie knots and at that time of my life I had excellent eyesight. And among things that he would do, he had a little fishing boat that looked like, well it looked more like a yacht. And it was called the Monsoon and I was one of the guys who would come down in the morning and if they were going out during a certain time of the year, why we'd go after swordfish and we'd harpoon the swordfish and I was a spotter. I would look to see the fins sticking above the surface or maybe you might see them right along side of the vessel. And we'd have to swing around and turn around and get the man out on the plank in the pulpit and ...

**RW:** That's in the bow.

**GZ:** Yeah, right. Off the bow. And he'd throw the harpoon and most always he would harpoon the swordfish.

**RW:** This was for commercial fishing, wasn't it?

**GZ:** This was commercial fishing at that time. I was ten or eleven years old at this time.

**RW:** I was going to ask you your age.

**GZ:** And I would become extremely interested with this man and all the sea lore that he taught me, and then during this winter time he would use the same vessel and he would go out to fish rock cod or a bottom fish and he would ask me to go along because he didn't have anyone around, you know as a partner or so on. So I would go out with him and we'd catch the bait and we'd cut bait and we'd fish. I still remember some of those places. They're still there today. And I can remember the bearings which we would use to place ourselves on those rock piles or little rocks where the fish would live.

**RW:** Do you remember, you say, do you remember the bearings for sure right now?

**GZ:** Absolute.

**RW:** Off hand, why don't you give us one.

**GZ:** Well, there's one - it's interesting, this is a secret now. There's one bearing that I use with the lighthouse and the round mountain in Mexico. Our lighthouse out there on the end of Point Loma and the other bearing is a mountain behind La Jolla and it come up to a little notch near Mt. Soledad and when that goes right into the notch and the lighthouse is on the round mountain, right in the center of the round mountain, you're on one position or one place where you can catch rock cod.

**RW:** Yeah? That round mountain is not Mt. Soledad, but when you're at sea ...

**GZ:** No, no, no. We're talking about Mexico.

**RW:** Oh, Mexican.

**GZ:** A round mountain in Mexico. You know the table mountain down there?

**RW:** Yeah.

**GZ:** Well, it's right near, right along side table mountain.

**RW:** So you line the lighthouse right underneath that round mountain?

**GZ:** Um-hum.

**RW:** I see. Okay. Then you would ...

**GZ:** Ganyons. We'd have about 25 hooks on a ganyon (gantline?) and a window weight on the bottom and a long line that would allow you to go and reach the bottom.

**RW:** Yeah. So you'd set more than one line, though.

**GZ:** Oh yeah.

**RW:** Used one that had about 25 hooks? That's a lot of work.

**GZ:** Oh yeah, but no, not necessarily. It was a fun thing. And we'd go on weekends because naturally I was going to school. And he had several places out there, but that's just one place. And we would go from one place to another; each weekend we'd go to a different place and catch the fish. And then he had a - well, it was not a relative, but it was a very good friend that had a truck, kind of like an open truck and we would put this fish that we caught and it wouldn't be an awful lot, it would be like 300 pounds or something of that nature and we'd only go out - well, we'll say we'd leave around six o'clock in the morning and come back before the sun went down.

**RW:** Your parents approved of all this?

**GZ:** Sure. Absolute.

**RW:** It was a good healthy living, that's for sure.

**GZ:** You better believe it. That whole bay was our play-yard. I had a little skiff. First I'd start finding these skiffs during the storm when they'd come southeast and skiffs would go adrift and they'd wash up and I'd take over and claim them. But always the owner would come by and reclaim them saying, "That's my skiff and I want it back." Well, what the heck can I say, so I'd give it back to them. And then one day John had a punt; John Lindall had a punt in his front yard; he had a little place that was right on the waterfront down there on Kellogg and right on the water's edge and it was this punt, was made out of redwood, so during the wintertime - or during the summertime - it would develop huge cracks between - you know the wood would

**RW:** Shrink up, I guess.

**GZ:** Shrink. And so he gave me a bucket of tar and he says, "George the best way to stop this from leaking is to put the tar in and then put it in the water and the lumber will expand and thereby make it watertight." So sure, I used that punt for several years or a few years. We had more fun. I'd go

over to North Island, this is during the early days, and I'd load that thing up with wood, driftwood, that was laying along the beach. And I'd pull it back and my dad, who was a Master Sergeant in the Army, so you can see there was no connection with fishing with him, and my mother was born in National City in the 1800s.

**RW:** What was your father's name and your mother's name?

**GZ:** My father's name was John Zeluff and ...

**RW:** He was stationed out at Fort Rosecrans then?

**GZ:** He was stationed at Fort Rosecrans. He was responsible for buying this home that I was born in, and he bought it from people that were either Hamiltons or something like that. I'm not sure. It was one of the early families around here that was up on top of the Point. And he organized and got that home - windows and everything in place - all the way down Canon Street to Rosecrans and out Rosecrans to 462 Rosecrans Street.

**RW:** In other words, this house was built somewhere else and

**GZ:** It was already complete. It was a home that people were living in.

**RW:** Picked it up and moved it down there then?

**GZ:** Now that was a hell of a project.

**RW:** Yeah, in those days, yeah.

**GZ:** You said it. It had a big steam truck, or steam like a caterpillar today, but it was a steam ...

**RW:** Tractor, yeah.

**GZ:** Tractor? And they put that thing on blocks and put wheels under it and got that off the foundation up there on top of the Point and brought it all the way around and put it back onto a foundation.

**RW:** Quite a guy.

**GZ:** Oh, yeah.

**RW:** What was your mother's name?

**GZ:** My mother's name was - oh dear - Norma.

**RW:** Do you remember her maiden name?

**GZ:** Rosemeyer.

**RW:** Norma Rosemeyer ... then they got married here in San Diego, obviously.

**GZ:** Yeah, they did. They got married in 1905.

**RW:** They sure took a long time to get - have you come around then.

**GZ:** Well, he was off - you know he was in 27 - he told me at one time - 27 battles and engagements. He was ...

**RW:** In World War I?

**GZ:** In World War I, overseas. He went to the Philippines with that insurrection and he was - well, he was in the Army for thirty-two years and then retired. He was a great guy.

**RW:** Sure sounds like it. Just for the record on this - bibliography here, we only have your father's name, your mother's name. Did you have any brothers or sisters?

**GZ:** Yes, I have an older brother, ten years older than I am,, and his name is John Frederick Zeluff.

**RW:** Is he still living?

**GZ:** Yes.

**RW:** Good.

**GZ:** Well, he's 78 now. So you want to know my sisters' names? I have an older sister, Frances, and she is living in Pacific Beach, and I have a younger sister. So there's four of us. Her name is Kathleen Wayne, married to Gordon Wayne, and they live in Wisconsin. Why, why did they move up there I don't know, but it's a gorgeous surrounding, you know, the whole area is just beautiful at certain times of the year.

**RW:** And your wife's name?

**GZ:** Is Frances Louise Fohey.

**RW:** And when did you get married?

**GZ:** Well, we got married in June of 1949 \*[June 29, 1947]

**RW:** I see. In San Diego I assume.

**GZ:** In San Diego.

**RW:** Is she a San Diego girl, too?

**GZ:** She's another native. You don't find them very often.

**RW:** And do you have children?

**GZ:** We have two. One is George Jr, and he is the skipper of a - he works for Sea Land, and he has one of those container ships. RW: Oh, he does? That's quite a job.

**GZ:** You'd better believe it.

**RW:** Where is he, on the Atlantic coast?

**GZ:** He went to pick up the ship in, let's see,, down in the gulf somewhere. He had to go to Houston,, and then from there he would go aboard the ship.

**RW:** And you had another ...

**GZ:** I have Shannon, and she's married to Bill Greenley, and they have two little girls. Gorgeous girls. Gorgeous people.

**RW:** You said that you went to school here. You lived on the Point then what school was out there then?

**GZ:** Well, first it was Cabrillo. That was a grammar school.

**RW:** It's still there.

**GZ:** Yeah. And then it was Point Loma High. And then, as I graduated from Point Loma High in February of 1938, why I wanted to go fishing the worst way. I mean on one of these tuna boats.

**RW:** Yeah, bait boats then.

**GZ:** Absolutely, they were bait boats and they also carried - they had refrigerations but they also carried ice in the hold and on this vessel Atlantic I got a chance to go as one of the crew, and do you know what I got - what I signed on for?

**RW:** I have no idea.

**GZ:** A dollar.

**RW:** You were desperate.

**GZ:** I was anxious to get out, and the first time we went out we went to Galapagos, and I've always been in love with Galapagos ever since. We went there and mind you, this is a vessel holding about a hundred and fifty tons, and we went to these different islands and those different places where the fish were, and we caught, we called threepole-fish. Of course, when I was first there they were having me pass down the (live bait?). That was the type of bait that we caught.

**RW:** You mean you cast it out?

**GZ:** Oh, sure.

**RW:** You were the chummer?

**GZ:** No, I was the assistant chummer. There was another guy that really knew his - you know - what they wanted and so on. I would just have a long pole and with a net on it, and I would pass - reach out and hand them live bait.

**RW:** Oh, you'd hand the chummer - I mean the bait to the chummer.

**GZ:** No. To the fishermen in the racks.

**RW:** I didn't think they did the chumming. I thought they did the ...

**GZ:** No. The chummer was on the bait box throwing out the bait but sometimes the men would use a hook and use a live bait to move it into the water around where the chummer was chumming with the other bait. The same bait. I mean, you know, the same class. And here comes a fish - they'd grab this bait that was hanging dangling from a hook. And some of those fish were like 75-100 pounds. They varied in that range. That was an interesting phase to watch those guys work in unison. Down here on Shelter Island you can see a picture of it.

**RW:** Oh, that monument that's down there?

**GZ:** And eventually they let me fish with them. Even though I was small, but they'd put me on the lead with these three poles. They'd put me - the smallest guy - and these Portuguese were well put together. They're strong. I always thought I was, too, and when we'd hook those fish we'd get them lined up, and one of the three men would say, "Now." And (grunting) we'd throw them over our shoulder into the boat - into the vessel.

**RW:** I have seen pictures of that, and I just - I'm just absolutely amazed how ...

**GZ:** Unison. It takes coordination. You got to be sharp and quick. You know, you can't just (groaning) - you know, I'm asleep. There goes a pole or there goes a school, too. Because when the tuna would take a set of poles they dive to get rid of this hook, and they take the school with them.

**RW:** Oh, wow!

**GZ:** Yeah, and that was bad.

**RW:** You're liable to be thrown over the side. Well, did it take brute strength, too? Or was it ...

**GZ:** It took a lot of agility and a lot of coordination, but you also had to be strong.

**RW:** Did you build up to it?

**GZ:** Well, no, I think I was always a good athlete. In high school I was a quarterback. And a little guy but I was agile, very agile and able - as a matter of fact I've got some ribbons that show how far I jumped, you know, in my class of track. And stuff of that nature. But back to the fishing. That was always my first love. That was one that I really enjoyed.



**RW:** Did you have any friction at all with the Portuguese or you know, you were sort of the "gringo" of the place?

**GZ:** I was kind of like the left hand or third person. I wasn't really part of them except they got to know me, and they got to like me. And when we were coming home on this first trip, to give you an example, they said, "George, you had to put out about \$25 for the boots and the oil skins and everything." And I did everything including help the cook in the galley, and they says,, "We'll pay you the \$25 that you put out for the boots and the oil skins and so on." So I was tickled. And they said, "George, would you consider going out with us again this following trip?" Because I was an asset to them, I'm sure, in various ways. And what the heck, \$25 - the shares during those days were probably around \$300 or \$350 a share.

**RW:** That was good money in 1938.

**GZ:** That was big money. Those guys raised families and everything. And they were all grown men and mostly married people. So - okay, we went out again and this time I made five trips on this vessel.

**RW:** On the Atlantic? It was a wooden boat, wasn't it?

**GZ:** Yes, it was.

**RW:** Remember the skipper's name offhand?

**GZ:** Yeah, Eddie Varley. I think he's still around. But he is, you know, I think he's in other businesses now.

**RW:** Oh, yeah, all these guys have gone on into many things. Tape 1, Side 2

**GZ:** Well, even Bill Magellan, he doesn't

**RW:** He plays golf, you know, he had a by-pass, about ten years ago.

**GZ:** Yeah, that slowed him down plenty.

**RW:** Yeah, that took him out of the business. Well, how long did you stay with the fishing then?

**GZ:** Well, okay, are we going to continue then? Are we still

**RW:** Yup.

**GZ:** I went from the Atlantic, the last trip I went on there, they (transferred) the whole crew with the exception of me to the Normandy, because there wasn't enough room, you know, it's just like no room at the inn. And they had this new vessel, the Normandy, and so there was a different skipper on the Atlantic, and after we made a trip out here to the Galapagos ... no, no, we went to the islands, about 900 miles south of here. One of them is called Sakora (?), and another one is San Benedicto (?), and the other one is the Clarion Island. Anyway, we went down here, and he was told - the skipper said, was told by the owner of the vessel, who was M. O. Madena, said, "Don't bring back any skipjack. Only bring yellowfin tuna." Well, we got out there among those islands, and what was really biting was the skipjack.

**RW:** It's hard to pass that up.

**GZ:** And so he came back with quite a bit of skipjack among other things, and I guess they got into it and whatever, but the end result - we lost all the skipjack. Now if you can believe that. We just lost it from - they said it was deteriorated too badly. Well, it was just that there wasn't enough market for it at this time, so ...

**RW:** So they used that as an excuse to - the fact that the market was not up for skipjack - so they used the excuse of rotten fish.

**GZ:** Right. To get rid of it. And they saved forty tons - we had about 40 tons of yellowfin tuna among this load of fish.

**RW:** Skipjack.

**GZ:** Yeah. And what happened was, I guess, the guy got, he was so frustrated, he said, "George, I'm going to fire you. Because you didn't pack that fish properly in the bins with the ice."

**RW:** That's a big lie.

**GZ:** Sure it was. In fact, some of the skipjack was better than the damn tuna that we had. I mean, you know, in better shape. So anyway, that's what happened, okay, so from there it was about August, and I got the idea I wanted to buy a little swordfish boat, all right? So that's what happened. I bought a vessel called the Esperanza from a Portuguese who was getting on in his age, and he says, "Well, I don't want to go fishing any longer," and so on. So we had a swordfish boat. Oh, a friend of mine who went to school with me at Point Loma said he wanted to get into the fishing business. He was just as crazy about fishing as I was, and he was another American guy. I mean, he was English and ...

**RW:** What was his name?

**GZ:** Wansley.

**RW:** First name?

**GZ:** John.

**RW:** John Wansley.

**GZ:** Yes. And we were always inseparable. We had skiffs, and we always did fishing in the bay and so on and spearing in the bay, and it was interesting fun life as we were growing up, and, but now he's dead. He hit a cow or a boulder down in Peru in the mountains. He was a curator of animals, and he would send them back to the zoos, mostly New York, but he was in that business, and anyway, back to what we did together. We bought this Esperanza, and so we had a fishing vessel. We used to park it right down there in front of foot of McCall Street, and we'd pull a skiff up on the beach, and we'd go out in the morning at this certain time of the year, which was June to like September, why we would row out in the skiff, start up the heavy-duty gasoline engine. It was a twelve horsepower Hicks, and it would go to-tunk, to-tunk, to-tunk, to-tunk, and we'd go on out the bay and go out looking for swordfish.

**RW:** How big a boat was it?

**GZ:** Oh, 32 feet.

**RW:** Just about right.

**GZ:** Yeah, yeah, for two people. And so - oh, another thing happened to us - a good thing. We caught enough swordfish that year, and we were getting paid like \$.07 a pound and \$.08 a pound for swordfish, which today is sold for \$2.50 a pound, or 3 a pound. Well, anyway we caught enough swordfish to pay for that vessel that year.

**RW:** Who did you sell the swordfish to?

**GZ:** We sold it to the markets down there in the forty thieves, or the seven thieves down there. Those guys down there near the foot near - it's a special area that they have right down there on the waterfront. It's near the tuna boat association, but it's actually, they have their own market arrangement.

**RW:** Was that on the Point Loma side here?

**GZ:** No, no, no, this is downtown.

**RW:** Down by G Street mole?

**GZ:** Near G Street. Near. It's a little further towards Market Street. Anyway, so that was the best thing that happened to us. We caught enough - we harpooned enough swordfish to pay for that vessel.

**RW:** I understand, you said that seven thieves, those are the different markets, and I assume that those guys cheated every chance they could.

**GZ:** Absolutely. They'd say ...

**RW:** Thumb on the scale.

**GZ:** Yeah, or they take out one of those balls you know that are underneath that type of scale so it wouldn't weigh the true amount. It'd weigh less. Oh, they had all kinds of tricks.

**RW:** You know what gets me, I found out the Portuguese would do to a Portuguese? I can see doing it to you, but they did it to their own kind.

**GZ:** Sure they did. Oh, yeah. Most of those guys are Italians. There's a couple of different guys, but, anyway, back to - that's true. They even will do this to their own kind.

**RW:** Their own family too.

**GZ:** Yeah. Let's see. Oh, well, then I was going along with this vessel and I decided I would fish some in the winter time with the rock cod or for rock cod, and then I decided well, this isn't too good. Here I'm just by myself, and something happened. One of the fishing vessels, it was a 38-foot vessel called the Lorraine, owned by another Portuguese family, and they decided when it caught on fire, the Navy put it out, and the people that owned it

decided they didn't want that vessel any longer, because it was too much to just fix it up, and so on, and the engine was baked, and it was pretty much of a mess, although the hull itself was not bothered. The main decking was all burnt and so was the pilot house, but the Navy did get it out before the hull got damaged. So my brother who was working up in Los Angeles, he was working in Long Beach building homes, came down, and he heard about this, and he says, "George, let's go buy that boat. It ought to be a fire sale type price." So okay, we went down there, and we saw the guy that owned it. His name was Culyetta and he says, "George, I think I like to sell this boat to you. All I want is \$400." Four hundred dollars! Well, what the heck, that was a good price, so we said, "All right. We'll get you the \$400, and that will be that." So that's what we did. And, we brought it back. We had to tow it back to the foot of McCall Street. And we cleaned it all up. We put new decking. I helped build a new pilot house. Every morning we'd go out there in the morning and, we'd - my brother's good at design.

**RW:** This is your older brother.

**GZ:** Right. And that's the only one I have. And he'd direct me, and he'd tell me how to do this and how to do that, and we both worked on that rig. We put a new house on it. We put new deck in it, and we got a brand-new Chrysler marine engine.

**RW:** You were still under twenty years old then, weren't you?

**GZ:** That's right. Now here we go. I'm - this is 1938-1939. We ran and we fished this swordfish again, and 1940 I was fishing with it out on Cortes bank during the wintertime for rock cod.

**RW:** Meantime this friend of yours -

**GZ:** Wansley, yeah, he was still with me. But he didn't have any of the ownership of this Lorraine, but, anyway, we went out there on Cortes bank, and the weather was terrible. It was awful. High swells breaking out around twelve fathoms of water and around that bishop rock, and he decided - well, we decided we'd better go and anchor in the southeast side of San Clemente Island. Well, what happened there. We lay there about three days waiting for this weather to let up, and we were just about ready to pull anchor and go back out to the bank when here comes a fourpiper along.

**RW:** That's a destroyer.

**GZ:** A regular destroyer. And I see 'em. They're just coming by outside of us. We were in a cove, called China Cove, and we were right up against the beach, and this four-piper all of a sudden I see 'em blow smoke straight up in the air and he says - so I see him set over a yawl. They had to row to get in to where we were, because it was too shallow for the destroyer to come in. Well, a "JG" (junior grade) was in charge, and there were about four guys and they came aboard, and they says, "Hi. What are you doing here? It's supposed to be restricted waters." "Well," I said, "we came in to get out of the weather." He says, "Is that it, okay?" "Yeah." "Well," he says, "I gotta take this report back to the captain." And so, when he did he says to pull anchor, and come out along side of us. And that's when he says, "Here comes the captain out there." Big red-faced guy, and he has four stripes on his sleeve, and he says, "Captain Zeluff?" "Yes sir." "I am placing you under arrest. Don't try to get away. Proceed around Pyramid Head to Catalina, the east end of Catalina, and we're going to take you in." Here I was just getting ready to go fishing again. So anyway, we had fish aboard and we did. We proceeded. And I says, "Gee whiz - we're only seven - " "Oh," he says, "What's your speed?" I said, "Seven knots is the best we can do." (Laughter) So he just walked away. So we went in, and, well, the Coast Guard came out and met us at just on the east end of Catalina.

**RW:** Is this Catalina Island, or ...?

**GZ:** Catalina Island, yeah.

**RW:** You had to go all the way from San Clemente to Catalina?

**GZ:** Yeah, and then to San Pedro. And so we get in there, and we're tied up along side of the Coast Guard in kind of an outer harbor, up around Cabrillo Beach. Okay, here's a couple of guys come down from the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation), because, you see, they were already getting influx of people leaving Terminal Island. All of the Japs - they were going back home. A lot of them.

**RW:** 'Cause they knew what was happening? Gonna happen.

**GZ:** They knew what was going to happen at this time.

**RW:** This is 1940?

**GZ:** I believe, yes. Maybe it was 1941. No, it had to be 1940. Well, February of 1941 then.

**RW:** Okay.

**GZ:** Okay, so I told John, "John, take the fish over to the fish market. You know those guys up there in San Pedro, and get rid of it. Sell it. And I'd appreciate it if you'd stay by the, you know, on the Lorraine, by the vessel. You know, as a safety factor."

**RW:** Sure. Meantime you're arrested.

**GZ:** I have been taken with these - oh, they came aboard, and they said there was another vessel with us, and it was a long-time Portuguese friend. He's now dead. His name was Mike Mendez. Anyway, so he says to both of us, he says to one of these guys, "Is your name Mike Mendez?" No, I says, his name is Mike Mendez. He was the skipper of the other vessel. "Oh," he says, "then you must be George Zeluff?" "That's right." He says, "Hold out your hands." Hold out my hands like this and they put bracelets on me.

**RW:** Oh, geez ...

**GZ:** That's one of those things. It was just one of those things where we were being interrogated as far as, "Do you have any Japanese friends? Do you know of any Japanese, you know ...?" They were trying to find out what my association was with Japanese. This had to be 1941. Okay, so we go, they take us up, and they take both of us and put us in separate rooms and interrogate us. "What were you guys doing out there?" "Well, we came in out of the weather. We were just anchored and ready to go out, and that's all we did. We just waited for the weather to pass, and then we'd go back out. And just at the time when this destroyer spotted us and put us under arrest, we were getting ready to go out fishing again." And what the heck was it now, so they held us there in the San Pedro jail all for about 57 hours. So you could see it was over the second day, and my parents didn't know anything about this, but here comes a guy who was associated with the Coast Guard. He was like an auxiliary, and he got permission through the Coast Guard to come up and visit us. And he says, "George I read this in the paper this morning. You guys are in the jail," and he says, "I can't figure out how come they put you in jail." I says, "Well, they claimed it's restricted waters." And they wanted to know what was going on, why we were there and so on. And among other things they asked me, "Would you do this another time if you under the same..." I said, "Under the same circumstances, absolutely. I thought it was expedient for our well-being, our life. We're in jeopardy, our lives were in jeopardy and so I would do it again."

**RW:** Now was San Clemente a Naval Base, like it is now?

**GZ:** Yeah. But it didn't have anything on it except, I don't know.

**RW:** They used it for bombing practice.

**GZ:** I think they did. Yeah, all right, to continue, so they take us up to Los Angeles proper, and we're going to go before a judge, a federal judge, and he says - well, the deputy that was with me - there were some funny things about it. I gotta tell you this. We went before this judge and he said, well the deputy says, "I think he's going to let you guys go. I says,, "Why not?" I mean we weren't doing anything except protecting ourselves. So he said, "Well, we're going to let you go. There's nothing - we're not going to hold you or anything. But don't let us catch you out there again, you know, in those restricted waters." I said, "Well, okay, now where are we going to go? Are the deputies going to take us back to the vessel?" And they said, "Well, we hadn't . \*\* " They looked around at each other. "We hadn't planned on that." I said, "Well,, I don't have any money. How am I expected to get from this building down to the Coast Guard in San Pedro in outer harbor? I don't have any money." Well, one of the guys came up with a couple of bucks. He says, "Here, take the train." You know, there was a red streetcar out there. So that's what we did, and we got back to the vessel, and so that botched that situation. I brought the vessel back. Wansley was up there seeing one of his girl friends that was going to USC (University of Southern California), and so here I'm stuck. I bring the vessel back here to San Diego. In the meantime, this must have been 1940 because we were fishing in 1941 in the summertime of 1941, and here comes a guy - and we're up off Point Doom. You know, it's up there by, a little bit above Santa Monica Bay. And they said we've been trying to get a hold of you guys for a long time. There's a May Day out for you. The Navy wants your brother, and I said, "Well, how soon?" "Well, as soon as you can get there."

**RW:** Meantime, you're out at sea fishing?

**GZ:** So we go back home, and my brother gets - he joins the Navy.

**RW:** They called him into service.

**GZ:** Yeah.

**RW:** I'm getting close to the end here.

**GZ:** All right. Well, anyway, so what we did, I figured I didn't want to run the vessel by myself any longer.

**RW:** And this friend of yours didn't?

**GZ:** No, he wasn't going to come with us. So we decided to sell the vessel. Because my brother was going into the service and now I had to make arrangements for myself.

**RW:** On the Lorraine?

**GZ:** With the Lorraine but we decided to sell it and we had no problem selling it. So what happened was a friend of mine by the name of George Cowen had just been accepted into California Maritime Academy.

**RW:** This is a continuation of the George Zeluff ... yeah, go ahead.

**GZ:** Okay, well, as I say, a good friend of mine who I have known since our teen age ...

**RW:** What was his name again?

**GZ:** George Cowen. And he was just accepted into the California Maritime Academy,, and he told me about this,, and I said, "George, what does it entail to get into this academy?" He says, "Well, there's a physical and a mental examination, and it covers mathematics and history and English and your background - your abilities. And you have to have a high school education - diploma." Okay. So what I did was go down to a place called Borden. It's a prep school, and I took all those subjects, and the next time around when they were accepting another class, why, I took the examination. And I was accepted because there were 300 and some odd of us that - 375 that took the exam, and 57 were accepted, so from all over California. So, anyway, that's where I went and I spent - it was a shortened - it used to be and it still is - it is now again a fouryear course. But here two and a half years later after I went through third class, second class and first class, why they had cut it down and done away with some of the subjects, and I came out a third mate after graduation, we took the exam. And I had a commission as an ensign in the Navy, Naval Reserve. So, immediately after graduation I got a job with the American President Lines as a junior third mate, so I sailed with this Captain Amen on the USS - the Johnson - President Johnson for American President Lines. And I stayed with them all the time that I sailed in the Maritime service.

**RW:** In the meantime, while you were in school the war started.

**GZ:** It did. Right. I was accepted in 1943.

**RW:** You went in in 1943?

**GZ:** In December 1943.

**RW:** What happened between 1941 and 1943?

**GZ:** 1941 and 1943. I fished the Lorraine.

**RW:** Yeah, but you were saying that you were fishing the Lorraine during 1940 and 1941. That was the impression that I got.

**GZ:** Yeah.

**RW:** And then you went into the academy. That's the impression I got. Before the war started.

**GZ:** No. Let's see, well,, it had to be December 1942. It could have been I was accepted there.

**RW:** A year after the war started.

**GZ:** The same ...

**RW:** I could understand your problem because it's difficult to remember exact years let alone months.

**GZ:** Well, I was accepted in December.

**RW:** But you didn't get drafted. You were draft age, too.

**GZ:** Absolutely, and that was another story. I had to go down before the draft board and say, "Well, I'm taking the examination for the California Maritime Academy, which I think I'm very well qualified, and I believe that it will be better for me to go and become a merchant officer when I complete this." And so let's see ...

**RW:** Was the Johnson - you were on a troop ship?

**GZ:** Yeah, we carried troops. We carried around 3700 troops.

**RW:** This was in the Pacific?

**GZ:** In the Pacific solely, and we went to lots of places. Millen Bay, but it was a big island. I interrupted you. What did you say?

**RW:** I just wondered what is it called now? I mean then, then.

**GZ:** Well, New Guinea. And we went to various ports up there, Hollandia, and we went to Majoro and we wound up - now this was a continuous sailing.

**RW:** Yeah, in those days.

**GZ:** And we wound up in the Philippines, in Manila. We went to Banderas Bay or something like that. Different ports where we would pick up and let off troops.

**RW:** Were these Marines or Army?

**GZ:** It was mostly Army. We had a - on board the Johnson we had a Major who was in charge of his troops. We had Marines, we had - as a matter of fact, we even took Red Cross gals, workers, you know that would go out into the Pacific at that time.

**RW:** Was there ever a threat from submarines or planes or anything?

**GZ:** Yeah.

**RW:** You were attacked then?

**GZ:** Right. One time they just missed us with a sub - with a torpedo, and another time it was a carrier - a couple of kamikazes came in and created all that damage to the superstructure of the deck and burned a lot of airplanes, and there was some loss of life. But they were right near where we were anchored. Why they didn't hit us, I don't know. But there were only two, and they came from - oh dear, what's the name of that island - Rabal, yeah Rabal. I think it was Rabal. They put themselves together, and they loaded up with gas and everything, and they ran their airplanes into the hangar deck.



**RW:** Yeah, well, a carrier was more of threat than a troop ship.

**GZ:** I imagine. So that happened. Anyway in 1946 I went back to my first love. I decided I'd go back and start fishing again. And although there was good opportunities in the Merchant Marine and, or I could have gone in the Navy, but here we'd start all over again, you know, as an Ensign and so on. But I decided well, I had gone on the Johnson enough time to be chief officer, so I had to make a decision, and the company said, "We want you to sail as second officer on the General Gordon." It was being reworked to carry passengers, and it was a big ship.

**RW:** You were only 26 at the time. You did all right in your years.

**GZ:** I got around, didn't I? Anyway, and not married yet. Okay, well, I never had been one to date too much. So anyway, here I come back, and my brother had already served enough months or whatever it was - years and I think it was about three years he had to sail or serve in the Navy in order to get released and the war was over. You know this is 1946. In 1944 I graduated from the California Maritime Academy, and here it was I'd sailed and kept moving myself up from third mate to second mate to chief mate, and so it was in March of 1946 I decided I wanted to go home and see if I could get into the fishing business. So, okay, we go back home and my brother said, "George, there's a boat called the Italo Balbo that had a - it was rammed out on the nine mile bank outside of Point Loma, and it almost sank, but they towed it in, and it's in a shipyard now. Would you be interested in going in on it with me to buy it and run it? Work it?"

**RW:** Would you spell the name of the boat.

**GZ:** Yeah, I T A L O - two names, B A L B O. Italo Balbo.

**RW:** Is there an origin for that name?

**GZ:** Yeah, that's that great flyer that's from Italy. He was an ace or, you know, he was a good - he was some great flyer. That's all I knew about him. Well, anyway, so okay, we work on that vessel and, of course, it needed a new engine. Well, we got a six cylinder Jimmy to replace the heavy-duty engine that was in there, and it's about 55 feet, and it would carry around 20 ton of fish. So, boy, we thought we had a big job. We got a real tuna boat. Anyway, we found that we would work the peninsula, the lower peninsula here in California, and we could, yeah, we could catch some skipjack and tuna, but mostly it would be yellowtail and bottom fish of that sort down there off Maria Bay and Magdalena Bay, and that was about our limit.

**RW:** Your brother was with you all this time?

**GZ:** Yeah, he was the engineer and I was the guy that ran the : vessel as far as catching the fish.

**RW:** You picked up a crew?

**GZ:** Oh yeah, we carried about five guys total.

**RW:** And this was still bait boating?

**GZ:** Yes. So you're really moving up.

**GZ:** But it's been a long time and everything is passing us up. You know, size wise and every wise. Anyway, so we go and we pay (for) that vessel. Now I said, "Johnny, we've had this vessel," and I think it was about 1950. Yeah, it was 1950. I said, "Johnny, let's sell this vessel and we'll buy a bigger one. A bigger vessel that will have more capacity, carrying capacity." He says, "Well, George, I'm satisfied with what we have here." So I said, "Johnny, you want to buy my share?" We each had 50 per cent. He says, "Well, I don't know whether I want to do that or not. Why don't you see if you can sell it to someone." All right. I tried and I was never successful and finally he said, "Okay, I'll give you 'x' amount for your interest, and then I'll own it myself." I said, "That's okay with me." So okay, I go to - at this time C. Arnolt Smith was building a fleet of hook and line steel vessels down at San Diego National Steel. And he was putting them out like grapes. And so he had already had a couple or three going, and so in 1956 - no, wait a minute - I'm skipping an area between 1950. I went on a vessel, I was trying to get into the union down here.

**RW:** The fisherman's union?

**GZ:** And do you know that they would not accept me. They said, "Well, go out and get a job and we'll see if we can get you in that way." Well, every time I'd get a job with - one of them was Bill Magellan. He had a little tuna boat at that time, about 150 tonner. And he says, "George, I can't take you because they've got three guys down here that want your job." You know, as a navigator, paper captain. Because I had the credentials. And I would just be navigator and crew member, you know, but Bill said, "George, I can't take you because these guys -" And I went with a guy by the name of Roland. He had the Hornet, I think. Anyway, he said the same thing. He said, "There's three guys down here that want your job, and I can't take you out. Or otherwise they're going to blackball me:"

**RW:** Is that because you weren't Portuguese or Italian?

**GZ:** No. It was just that they didn't want me into that union at that time. So ...

**RW:** what was wrong with you?

**GZ:** I was too qualified. They said, "why don't you go and get your own boat?" I said, "Well, I gotta get into the union at this time." This is all I could think about. So I said, "I'll take any job that you got. And I'll go on it." Well, there was a little boat called The Senorita, and it was a hook and line, and it was some friends that I used to know when I fished swordfish, and he had a swordfish vessel, and they all lived down in Roseville at that time, and so they said, "well, maybe we can get you on here." Because nobody knew how to navigate among their gang, and the old man who was in charge of the vessel said, "George, we want you to go out there so these guys don't get lost." You know. I said, "Okay, I'll go, but I have to get into the union." So I saw this Mr. Silva,, John Silva, and this other guy, I can't think of his name now, but he was one of the people in charge or like an agent down at the fisherman's union. Walk over there behind the shed, and they made a deal for me to be accepted into the union,, and that's how I got into the union. So anyway, I went out. Now this is a cute story. We went out and John Silva says, "George, I think if you go out to the islands, you'll probably get those fish, you know, the hungry ones. You know the ones that want to eat." And so I said, "All right, we'll get some bait," and we go straight for Clarion Island, and when we get there there's lots of fish around but they're not hungry. They don't want to eat and we threw our bait away, because we couldn't carry too much. I think it was around 500 scoops or something of that nature, and so I said, "Well, we've got to go and get some more bait, because we only got about a ton or two ton of fish." During that time that we were out there at Clarion Island. And we ran across another guy, which was on our way back, in towards the mainland. And he says, he was just coming up, and he was going home with a load of fish, and he'd been fishing down there off ... You're probably familiar with that. Anyway, so I said, "Can we get any bait around there?" "No," he says, "Well, you can get a little kind of herring and stuff like that but not very much." So as we're coming towards the mainland, Josey Silva, one of the sons, heard on the radio through another Portuguese of lots of anchivetas in Banderas Bay. You know where Banderas Bay is?

**RW:** No, sure don't.

**GZ:** Puerta Vallarta. Right there. So we go straight for there, and we get in there, and there's three or four other boats. You know, catching their anchivetas and they're about this long. You know, they're just beautiful size. They're like little quarters.

**RW:** Yeah, about four inches or so.

**GZ:** Well, no, they were young. They were just little tiny things. You know, matured. So we go in there and we set our net and we get the bait and he told - now Tony Silva was supposed to run that vessel, and Josey was the older brother, and Josey said to Tony, "George is going to run the boat, because he knows about this porpoise fishing. And you're going to fish with me back in the racks, and we'll have somebody else chum." And we had, I think we had about seven guys on that vessel. okay, we go. I said - after we get the bait, I said, "Let's get out of here. We don't have to clear anything. Let's go." So we take off, and he says, "What's your plan, George?" This is Josey talking to me. I said, "We're going to go a hundred miles straight southwest to the Cape - and from there I think we'll swing south." So okay, we go out there,, and the first day we go a hundred miles, and we start south, and we were in green water all the time,, and then all of a sudden we come into this blue water, and here's a school of porpoise. So we hit it in its late. And we get a couple of ton.

**RW:** Not of porpoise, but the fish that were under the porpoise.

**GZ:** With the porpoise, yeah. Under, yeah.

**RW:** Because they school along with them?

**GZ:** Yeah, so it was too late to hit the school again, so we just drifted, and here we're going the next day we start out, and we start running south. Here we find another school, and we get four ton out of this one. We got two ton the first day,, we got four ton the second day. We have all this beautiful little anchivetas and the third day we get eight ton from this school that we found of porpoise that had fish with it. So this is the third day, the fourth day we get 16 ton. It's better fishing. You know,, the fish were hungrier or whatever. And the fifth day we got 32 ton. We filled the boat up. So now we don't have enough fuel to go home. So Josey gets on the radio, and he calls a guy by the name of Ralph Madruga, and he says,, "Listen, is there any chance to get some fuel from you?" And he told Ralph about how our fishing was,, and he says - Ralph says, "Stay right where you are. I'll run to you tonight (he was down off Telmo - Point Telmo), and I'll meet you in the morning and give you the fuel that you need to go home. So we didn't have to go to Manzanio or something like that. So that's what happened. We got the fuel, and a guy by the name of Mike Wells was on the - he was a navigator with Ralph Madruga - he was so excited. He says, "Hurry up and give them that fuel." With these big binoculars, you know, these Jap type binoculars, he says, "I can count five schools around here." Five separate porpoise schools. So it worked out both ways. So we went home. That was it on that trip. Oh, oh. In the meantime, Ralph asked me, he says, "Mike is going to go on a vacation or something like that. Can you come over here on the American Lady with me as a paper skipper and navigator?" And I said, "Well, wait till we get this fish off The Seniorita and we'll talk about it." So he was coning in - he came in just a week later, and yeah, we made connections, so I went on the American Lady. And that was Ralph Madruga was going, he was going to stay home and go to the old country or something like that, so they put a guy by the name of Erline Perrera aboard, and Erline couldn't - he couldn't catch fish. He just didn't know how to catch fish. So I sailed with him for the one trip - well, maybe it was two trips and another brother, a Joe Madruga, who had the Paramount said, "George, I'd like to take you on the Paramount with me. Because," he said, "I'm not going to be going all the time." And he said, "I want Richy - which is another brother - to take - you can keep it safe. Keep the vessel safe." So this is 1950. Late part of 1950. I go on the Paramount with Joe.

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## **Tape 2, Side 2**

**RW:** But you got married before that though, didn't you?

**GZ:** 1949.

**RW:** What drove you to that?

**GZ:** I found a gal that I was looking for.

**RW:** She must have been a winner then. -lust be a winner.

**GZ:** She is. She truly is. She's a great gal.

**RW:** Did you know her in high school?

**GZ:** No. She went to San Diego, and I went to Point Loma. But how I met her - that was a different story, but it was back in the early part of 1949, and I wasn't doing anything around the house, and my mother said, "George, why don't you go down to the San Diego Athletic Club? They have the - they call it the Modernaires - a bunch of gals, not married, that hold a - you know like an evening dance, for the armed forces." And I says, "I don't know whether I want to go." But I did, and that's where I met Frances. And well, I said, "I've got a car. Would you like me to take you home?" She says, "Well, I don't know. I don't think so." They were sitting with another couple at a table. And I said, "Well, who's the boss over there? I'll ask him if it'll be okay." So I went over, and she was saying, "Well, he wants to take me home." "Well." he says, "yeah, he looks okay. Why not?" Okay, so we go, and we stop for coffee at a place called Glenn's on University near where she lived. So, okay, we have our coffee, and we're talking about different things, you know, people do, and so, okay, she happened to mention, "I have to get home pretty soon because I'm teaching a Sunday School Class at the church that I go to." Well, I just happen to have a book of Bible stories. "Would you like to have it or use it?" Well, I think that really threw her. I think it did. Anyway, from there we met and saw one another, and she set the date for June 29, 1949. Okay, that's that on that story. But back to the Paramount. I lived with the Paramount for about, oh, I think around six years. And once in a while they'd let me run it. And we were mostly going to Galapagos, and I got to know pretty much about the islands there and how to catch fish around there and so on. And then I think it was 1956, I decided I better see if I can get a permanent vessel to operate - run. And so I went down to National Steel, and they said, "Yeah, we're building another one. It's call the Elsinore, and there are several guys that are qualified for that are already working in the company, but put your name in, and we'll see what happens." So they had, actually, I never found out in detail except that they had a board where these names would come up in front of. Then they'd make their choice as to who was getting the new vessel. Brand spanking new. All completely outfitted, and it had capacity of 350 tons.

**RW:** Was it still a bait boat?

**GZ:** Yeah, a bait boat, yeah. So here we go. Am I putting you to sleep?

**RW:** No, no. I'm thinking ahead a little bit.

**GZ:** Yeah, well, okay, here we go. They launched it in July of - no wait a minute - I think it was November of 1956. Yes, somewhere around there. Okay, so we go out, and it was called - this is called the Mary Barbara that I got on. Another brand-new boat. Built by, it was the same, you know it was the sister ship of the Elsinore and sister ship of the other vessels being built by National Steel. Okay, we take that out and we skin 'em. We really

knock the fish alive, and those other guys that were running vessels for National Steel at that time. It was a different name - the segment - National Marine Terminal. So, anyway, we were top boat in the fleet right there. So here it comes time - and there were some guys that had worked there for a long time, and they didn't like this little upstart coming in and catching more fish than they could and would. And they're changing over at this time - this is 1960 now. So we were high boat there during this period 1956 to 1960. And so they had to make a choice. Who was going to get to run the vessels - they were only going to change two at this time. One was the Elsinore. So I said ...

**RW:** Wait a minute. Change it to what?

**GZ:** Change it to purse-seiner from a bait boat. And so I said, "You know, Ed, I've been on a purse-seiner, and I know how it operates. And I think that I could do a good job." And he says, "Well," he said, "I didn't know that you knew about purse-seining." I said, "Oh yeah, back in 1948 I went out on the Sunbeam. It was a little vessel, about 150 tonner from " Pedro, and we didn't catch a lot of fish, but I saw how it works." And I said, "I helped them put the net together during the wintertime when they were getting ready to go out fishing." And I said, "I know exactly how a net is to be put together." Well, we had to make the net, as they're changing over the - putting the winches on and changing everything on the Elsinore. And as it turned out they said, "Okay, George, you have the Elsinore," and that's about the way it went. For 16 years. In 1968 I bought the vessel with another person. And we had other partners. So that's how we got to own the Elsinore. And because they took the bait tanks off, it would hold about 300 ton, and so that's how ...

**RW:** You increased the capacity.

**GZ:** No decreased.

**RW:** Oh, decreased the capacity.

**GZ:** Yeah, it was 350 ton at one time with the bait tanks, but then when they took the bait tanks off it was just the well down below.

**RW:** Okay, you need the deck for the net anyway.

**GZ:** Well, yeah. That's right. So that's what happened.

**RW:** What happened to the Elsinore? Where did she end up?

**GZ:** My partner, who I was with ...

**RW:** What was his name?

**GZ:** Phil Felando, Augie Felando's brother, who has the Tunaboat Association down there. He's the manager. Okay.

**RW:** I haven't been down there yet.

**GZ:** You haven't been down there?

**RW:** Not yet.

**GZ:** Well, anyway, Phil Felando bought my interest out, and he started running it, and he was another guy that couldn't catch fish. He just didn't have it in him, but he was Yugoslav, but he - and he messed up. One time they were coming down from San Pedro after off-loading a small catch - 27 ton - or something like that for their trip, which is nothing. Something happened to the vessel, and it rolled over and sank.

**RW:** Wow. A steel vessel at that. Usually it takes something to do that.

**GZ:** And I've never asked him how it went, but that's what happened to it.

**RW:** You know there was a period there where I can recall that a lot of - there was a lot of controversy about fishing and so forth, and it seems like about that time half a dozen boats sank, and it was some thought that maybe the insurance ...

**GZ:** Were going to buy it. Yeah. Well I never knew what happened. Whether something let go. Now you figure that vessel was 20 years old. We were always - my brother was chief engineer on there. He came with me after a while,, he came with me in 1960. So he was just kind of like an assistant engineer. And when we bought the vessel he also bought into it, and he was a chief at that time. I-lie was chief engineer. And we lived together for a long time. And that vessel - I've got a picture of the vessel.

**RW:** I'd like to see it a little later. Did you retire from fishing after this?

**GZ:** When I sold the vessel?

**RW:** Yeah.

**GZ:** Yes.

**RW:** And you've been completely retired since 1978.

**GZ:** That was 1976. 1976 and 1977. They paid me two years for tax purposes.

**RW:** You've been retired ever since then?

**GZ:** Yes.

**RW:** You've had a full fishing life anyway.

**GZ:** Over 40 years. If you want to spread it out.

**RW:** The thing I'm curious about, why were you a better fisherman? You could get your load better than the other guys. How come you were a better fisherman?

**GZ:** Well, how do you explain that? How do you express that? A better fisherman. Some guys do and some guys don't and some guys never do.

**RW:** Well, I understand that the trick is finding the school.

**GZ:** Finding where the fish is at a certain time of the year.

**RW:** How they migrate around.

**GZ:** Sure.

**RW:** Now I understand that if you could find the log or porpoise or birds or something like this you'd find a school underneath them.

**GZ:** Sometimes. But yes, there's a certain amount of - well, there's a lot of expertise in it, but there's some luck involved. There is - you know - up here I can remember things for a long time with it has something to do a lot of different subjects but mostly fishing. I think that's my long suit.

**RW:** Well, starting at early childhood of course. But I think your luck was probably based on your ability.

**GZ:** That's right. You make your own luck.

**RW:** I think so. Most of the time.

**GZ:** Absolutely. You talk with Bill Magellan. He's another one. He was good. And let's see, I don't remember who you mentioned. Someone else. But regardless, they stand out above head and shoulders the normal skipper.

**RW:** What do you think caused the decline of the tuna industry in San Diego?

**GZ:** Oh, I think it was getting too expensive to put it in the can. In other words the price of fish.

**RW:** The cannery workers. They had to pay the cannery workers to do this.

**GZ:** That's right.

**RW:** It wasn't the porpoise problem?

**GZ:** No. Because the porpoise still carry the fish with them. Some more or less and there are certain times of the year that you have to go out in certain areas to find these mammals. Fish or porpoise. And you know by the movement of the fish. They will be coming through this area. And thereby the porpoise will pick them up and they will work together as they move through this area. Now there's certain time of the years when you go after, we call them school fish, because there's no porpoise involved.

**RW:** You know, the vision I have originally was that the porpoise problem, the porpoise kill was so excessive, and then they started clamping down on the local fisherman, which in turn killed the industry.

**GZ:** I don't think that has any real bearing on the fact that the industry was killed here. Because there are vessels that work out of Ensenada and they continue to work these porpoise and ...

**RW:** And kill them.

**GZ:** Yeah. They're probably not as conscientious as the American vessels, but - go ahead.

**RW:** I was going to go on into the future. Do you think the tuna industry is going to continue?

**GZ:** Well, here's the strange thing that happened. These fellows that are running these vessels and own the vessels have - it's like going out to discover new areas. And they're endeavoring to do that all the time. Now there is half of the fleet is in the western Pacific. And there's the other half in the eastern Pacific. The porpoise out in the western Pacific don't carry fish. Now that's a strange phenomena, isn't it?

**RW:** It sure is.

**GZ:** They work - the guys that are working out on western Pacific - in the western Pacific - work on what we call boilers. Fish come up in foam, you know, and they're eating stuff from around a log or something like that. They just come up, and they - and they just go crazy. And the fellows in the western Pacific have had to change their pattern of the net. They've had to make it much deeper. And gone to lighter webbing. But where the sack is - where they get the weight - where they roll all the way into - it's heavy. It's like 96 or something like that. And they've had to increase where they used to use, like, we'll say ten strips,, an unusual situation, you know. Ten strips. A strip is six fathom. So ten strips deep. That would be 60 fathom.

**RW:** Ten strips of ... ?

**GZ:** Webbing.

**RW:** Of the net going down and then all sewed together?

**GZ:** Right. I had 13 or 14 strips on my net, because I wanted to go deep, and I figured - I changed one of the strips, two of them, to a monofilament that wouldn't absorb the moisture or water, and it would allow the chain to drop quicker.

**RW:** But I thought the tuna were more of a surface fish.

**GZ:** Well, if you see the school, they're right near the surface, but let's take 50 tons of fish, they can't all be on the surface.

**RW:** That's true, too.

**GZ:** They're underneath one another.

**RW:** I thought airplanes was taking over as far as spotting.

**GZ:** Well, they do up around here. But down off the coast they've found that is not any - it's too expensive.

**RW:** How about in the western Pacific fishing?

**GZ:** Oh, they have their own helicopters. They carry their own rigs.

**RW:** That would pay off there.



**GZ:** It sure does. I've seen those guys work. And even on the eastern Pacific some of them, some of the vessels carried their own helicopters, and they can spot where the fish is within the body of porpoise. And so, therefore, they don't have to catch all kind of porpoise. They just kind of weed them out. They go after where the fish is. Because they can see it from the helicopter.

**RW:** It's interesting, sure has changed since you were there.

**GZ:** It has, yes.

**RW:** It has to.

**GZ:** It has. The fact that those guys have, like, 24 or 22 strips, you see they - what do they call that, the thermocline is deeper out there in the western Pacific, so they had to get down through that or under it or below it to stop those fish from escaping. What are you going to talk about?

**RW:** Well, I was just going to say thank you for the Maritime museum and San Diego Historical Society, because you gave a good interview, and they'll transcribe it ...

**GZ:** Kind of lengthy.

**RW:** It'll give 'em something to do down there.

**GZ:** They can cut it.

**RW:** They can edit what they want. And then they'll be indexed, and it'll be in the research library, and they'll keep the original tape, too. So thank you very much.

**GZ:** You're entirely welcome, Bob.

***END OF INTERVIEW***

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