**Interviewee:** Jean Symonds

**Project Title:** Gendered Dimensions of Climate Change Impacts, Adaptive Capacity, and Resilience in Maine's Coastal Fisheries

**Interviewer(s):** Michelle Hanselowski and Ludwin Moran Sosa

**Date of Interview:** October 25, 2023

**Interview Description**: The interview with Jean Symonds provides insights into her experience as a lobster fisherman in Maine from 1972 to 2018. Symonds discusses her entry into the fishing industry, her role as a lobster fisherman, and the changes she witnessed in the industry and the village of Corea. The interview also covers topics such as navigating without GPS, her involvement in the Lobster Co-op, and her feelings about being a novice in the industry despite her forty years of experience. Additionally, Symonds shares her perspective on women in the fishing industry and her role as a nurse. The interview offers a comprehensive view of Symonds' personal and professional experiences in the lobster fishing industry.

**Keywords:** Lobster fishing, Maine, Fishing industry, Entry into fishing, Lobster license, Navigating without GPS, Lobster Co-op, Women in fishing industry, Nursing, Village of Corea, Sardine cannery, Women's roles, Apprenticeship program

**Transcriber:** Asy Xaytouthor

**Length of Interview:** 1:03:30

Michelle Hanselowski: [0:00:00] Okay, we are recording now. This is Michelle Hanselowski, and I'm recording Jean Symonds on the 25th of October. So, how do you like to introduce yourself?

Jean Symonds: [0:00:17] How do I what?

MH: [0:00:18] How do you like to introduce yourself?

JS: [0:00:22] How do I introduce myself? Well, it's Jean. That's it. [laughter]

MH: [0:00:31] And what was your role in the fishing industry in Maine?

JS: [0:00:35] I had a lobster license from the year of 1972 through to 2018. So, that's what I did. I lobstered.

MH: [0:00:52] And how did you get into that work?

JS: [0:00:55] I just moved here. Everybody seemed to be doing it. The children, when they'd come home, get in their skiffs and all – I just wanted to try. In those days – this was back in 1972 – one did not do an apprenticeship, which they have to do now. Because I'd been in the Army Nurse Corps for a couple of years, I was able to get a license in a year. So, I got a license, and somebody gave me some traps. I had a little rowboat, and I started. I always said, after that, I caught a disease, and it just grew from there to a lot of traps and a nice boat.

MH: [0:01:46] How old were you when you first started?

JS: [0:01:48] Let's see. I have to think about that. Probably about thirty-seven, thirty-eight, somewhere around there. I'm ninety years old now.

MH: [0:02:00] What was it like for you when you first started? Did it feel scary?

JS: [0:02:04] I loved it. It was different. I didn't really know what I was doing. It took me a long time. It was trial and error. I'm afraid that was my problem-solving ability for lobstering. I used to say it was like Christmas. What was going to come up in the package when I'd haul a trap? So, yeah, I enjoyed it right from the very beginning.

MH: [0:02:41] And what did an average day of work look like for you?

JS: [0:02:45] Well, I'd leave with the sun, usually before – I wanted to be able to see some. It depended on what year we're talking about. After a few years and more traps, it would be a full day. I lobstered by myself until well into the last maybe six or seven years. So I could stay out until late afternoon once I had a number of traps. That was it. Of course, being younger when I came home, I still had energy. But as I got older, the days got shorter.

MH: [0:03:41] Did you ever have a stern man?

JS: [0:03:44] Yes, I did. I guess maybe the last seven years, I had a stern person. Yes, I did. Yeah.

MH: [0:03:53] What was exciting to you about this kind of work?

JS: [0:03:57] Exciting to me about –?

MH: [0:03:59] This work?

JS: [0:04:00] His work?

MH: [00:04:01] No, about you lobstering. What [inaudible]?

JS: [0:04:04] Well, it was different every day, and there's a rhythm to lobstering. I liked doing something on my own. But every day was just different. I like being out there. I like being on the water. I like the other lobstermen. I enjoyed every bit of it except the fatigue. I would get tired, and then there were days when it was rough. My least favorite day was a foggy day. I did not like lobstering in the fog. I always felt like I never quite made it because fog days were – many times, I would come home mainly because it took me too long to find my traps, and then I wasn't sure I put them back where they needed to be, and I just was never comfortable in the fog.

MH: [0:05:08] How did you find your traps before you had GPS?

JS: [0:05:13] I used a marker on the land. For example, at the Navy base, they used to be – they had a satellite tracking station here, and there used to be a big ring. So you'd put one of the mountains or the tip or tree or something on that, and that would help you. I'd jot things down, too. I had a little book. So I would mark my trap, my strings of trap where what marks I was using.

MH: [0:05:46]

JS: [0:05:46] Then, of course, as life went on, we had plotters and [inaudible]. It was wonderful.

MH: [0:05:54] Were you part of the Co-op?

JS: [0:05:56] Yes. I came in one day, and this was a long time ago, and the manager said, “Why don't you join the Co-op?” I said, “They're not going to take a woman.” He said, “Well, how do you know if you don't try.” He put my name in, and I got voted in. I did serve one term on the board for three years. I never thought that the men thought too much about it. And then, there was a meeting that occurred every year in Rockland, Maine. I went there because I was on the board, and they were all bragging, “We're the only co-op that's got a woman on the board.” [laughter] Anyway, yes, I did. So, the Co-op, I think, was a wonderful thing for all of us here. It really helped to give them more security, a fairer chance at a good price. It didn't always happen.

MH: [0:07:02] Why were you hesitant of joining the Co-op?

JS: [0:07:07] The only hesitancy – I didn't feel like I wanted to make any major issue. I lobster because I love being on the water. I happen to be a woman, which I'm glad for, but it was not – at that time, I didn't really think a great deal about that. I think I've lived most of my life thinking that if there's something I can do and I can learn – I've always just gone ahead and been involved in it, so that was my – but as the years have gone on, I'm more aware how important it is for women to know that they can, in fact, be involved in any aspect of this industry now. I think the most difficult thing for them is financially getting involved because boats are expensive [and] the equipment's expensive, but that's the major issue, I think.

MH: [0:08:26] What was the name of your boat?

JS: [0:08:28] I named it *The Finest Kind*. The fellows are all gone now. If you were on the sea [and] you happened to come across one of their traps that have been cut off, and you pulled it up, and you'd call them, and or they'd call you. Instead of saying thank you, they'd say, "Finest kind." But the younger generation don't use that word anymore. It meant all good things. It meant "thank you," "nice day" – all that. So, that was the name of my boat.

MH: [0:09:04] I want to move on to some questions about your background. So, where did you grow up?

JS: [0:09:11] I grew up in Redding, Massachusetts. At that time, [it] was certainly a small town. Now, it's a major issue of Boston. But we had a farm. I was a foster child, but was a wonderful family that I lived with, and I had a great childhood.

MH: [0:09:37] What did your parents do? Were they Farmers?

JS: [0:09:40] No, these would be my foster parents. My foster mother was just a housewife, and my dad worked as a janitor.

MH: [0:09:56] Do you have any siblings?

JS: [0:09:58] No

MH: [0:10:01] How did you end up in Maine?

JS: [0:10:05] Well, I used to – we used to vacation – when I was in the Army Nurse Corps and came home from Texas, we would pick up my parents and go to Belgrade, Maine. I had a friend there who owned a cottage on a lake, and she often wasn't there. Then, one year, I just thought, "I love Maine. Maybe it's time to purchase something." So, we came up this way and found some lots for sale up on the bay and actually ended up buying a lot up there, and that was back in 1969.

MH: [0:10:54] Who did you move up with?

JS: [0:10:56] My partner, who's no longer alive. Yeah. Dorothy Kemske, a woman.

MH: [0:11:06] Did you have any children?

JS: [0:11:08] No. One time, I was talking with one – it was after Dodie died- and I was talking to one of my lobstermen friends here. I said, “My one regret is I don't have any children.” He said, "What do you mean? Every kid in this village is your child.” I've seen them all grow up, but the village has changed a tremendous amount. The school bus doesn't come in anymore. It's all retired people, pretty much, or rentals.

MH: [0:11:45] You mean the village of Corea changed? What are some of the changes that you witnessed?

JS: [0:11:53] In the village? Well, number one, no children. So, I think there's one child right now, a little girl. Most of it is the properties have been sold to people from away like myself because I was originally from away. Then, now when COVID came, a lot of people put their property up for sale because there was this tremendous increase in buying. So, a lot of people sold and moved away, and the people who bought are using them as rentals, which I find sad. So, the community aspect has changed some, but there's still a pretty strong group of people that are maintaining the community aspect, but it certainly has changed.

MH: [0:12:57] What do you perceive as the community aspect of Corea?

JS: [0:13:03] What do I –?

MH: [0:13:05] What is the community aspect of Corea people are maintaining?

JS: [0:13:09] I'm not –

MH: [0:13:11] So you said there are still people trying hard to preserve community in Corea.

JS: [0:13:17] Yeah. Well, they've taken over the grange, for example, and it's called Seaside- something now. There's a group, and I think we'll probably have Thanksgiving there, and there'll probably be somewhere around sixty people. So there is that community. I've always known that in this village, you don't have to be alone unless you choose to be. If you want to be left alone, you'll be left alone. But there's always people that will be willing to come and help you. So, there's still a community aspect, but I miss the kids. [laughter]

MH: [0:14:04] Why are there no children here?

JS: [0:14:07] Well, it's primarily because people sold the property. I mean, if you look at this village in the harbor, there are some forty boats. How many of those fishermen or lobstermen live in the village? Probably four. They all live outside and in Goldsboro or beyond, but they sold their land. So, the issue of access to the shore has been an issue for a long time, and that's what happened. It's just different.

MH: [0:14:52] Can you describe any changes in the marine environment that you have witnessed?

JS: [0:15:00] Any changes in –?

MH: [0:15:02] In the marine ecology.

JS: [0:15:06] Oh, a lot. Oh, sure. Just the way we lobster has changed tremendously. But in terms of species – for example, urchins. I can remember when I first began lobstering, it was not unusual for me to get a trap that was absolutely full to the top with urchins, and then they became important for a product, and people started to dive for them. When I finished, I very seldom had more than a few urchins in a trap. Another species that I saw a major change in was cod fish. I used to catch codfish a lot, and it was only occasional. Of course, some of – and I don't know if this is true or not, but some felt that's one of the reasons that the lobster industry increased so that cod have to eat the baby lobsters. Anyway, I'm only repeating what I've heard about that. I don't know that to be true, but I do know, and there's also – I wouldn't be able to name them, but I think we've also seen some strange fish that we would not normally have seen up here. Certainly, lobsters themselves have increased tremendously, and that could be from somewhat from the cod, but probably more because of the climate change, the water being warmer below us, and they're moving to colder water because lobsters like the cold water, obviously. The new little crabs, those little green crabs, invasive species, up in the bay, they were really thick. Most of this happened within the last ten years of my lobstering, and I haven't – I retired when I was eighty-five. When I was eighty-five five years ago. So, I'm sure there's even more changes. Of course, our equipment changed, the type of lobster traps we use. You would think the lobsters would have been really depleted by the fact that we were able to get so much stuff that really made it easier for us to catch lobsters, like the equipment on the boats. But seems to be plentiful.

MH: [0:18:12] How did these changes that you observed impact your work?

JS: [0:18:21] How did the changes impact my work? Well, the changes I just – of course, in terms of the equipment- made it easier and safer. I had radar. I had a plotter. I had everything I needed to be safe there. As I said, I actually caught many more lobsters as these changes occurred than I had in the past. I worry a little for the future because if those changes happened that much in ten years, I can't imagine what will happen [inaudible] because I know that I hear that the Gulf of Maine is the fastest warming body of water there is, and that's where a lot of what we have comes from. So, it is frightening. I'm concerned. We haven't done anything to help with climate change, I don't think particularly. It's not high on the radar for some of our fishermen.

MH: [0:19:51] What do you worry about?

JS: [0:19:56] Well, I worry about – I mean, to me, climate change, and not just marines – climate change is so scary. It won't impact me at my age, but it will [impact] the two of you sitting here, and I know that. I just worry that we aren't going to make some changes quick enough to prevent some disaster. Of course, all the bad storms we're getting now and certainly the ocean is rising. I just want people to be more convinced and more willing to do some of the things we need to do. And yet, I make a pretty good footprint myself. I still have a gas car, and I have an oil stove furnace. So, it's not easy to change, but we need to change. Is any of this making sense?

MH: [0:21:05] Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. Thank you. Did any of the ecological changes impact your work?

JS: [0:21:17] As I said, it made it easier for me. But not really. I mean, I caught more lobsters. The tide was fine, of course. Maybe the fact that we had a lot of fog. But I'm not sure that was any different than it was fifty years ago in terms of fog and storms. I don't really know that, but certainly, we had a lot of fog lately. I mean, this year, look – I mean, of course, I'm not lobstering, but the whole month of June and July here, we hardly ever saw the sun.

MH: [0:22:07] How does fog impact lobstermen's work? How does the fog impact the Lobster men's work?

JS: [0:22:15] Well, it slows you down tremendously. Most of the lobstermen are very good in it, much better than I ever was. But it does slow you down, and it's fatiguing. There's something about it that's – your eyes, and you're just more tired in the fog. Even with all your equipment, you can make a mistake, and boats can come together. Accidents can happen more readily. So, fog is – yeah. As I say, I probably found it more difficult than most lobstermen did.

MH: [0:23:02] Did you ever consider working in the sardine cannery?

JS: [0:23:07] Working in what?

MH: [0:23:08] The sardine cannery.

JS: [0:23:10] No. Absolutely no. [laughter] No. Of course, we had the last cannery in the United States here in Prospect Harbor. No, but I do remember when I first came here, and we started lobstering, there was a little short bus that would come in the village and pick up almost all the wives, and they would go over and work at the cannery. They were called the fast packers.

MH: [0:23:43] And why was that not an attractive option for you?

JS: [0:23:48] Well, indoors, number one. I don't think I'm quite that agile with my hands, and I don't think I would like the odor either of constant smell of fish. I never minded the bait on my boat. But as soon as I got off the boat, I wanted to get clean right away. I don't think I would have enjoyed it. I mean, the thing that has probably brought me the most joy in my life has been outdoors. I'm not a good nester. I've been an outdoor person. I'm having to make a little adjustment now, but I'm still playing golf, and I'm still walking, so I'm grateful for that. But it's not anywhere near the amount that I'd like.

MH: [0:24:47] What are some of the changes you would like to see people make fishing?

JS: [0:24:56] Okay, number one, and this is one thing I would like to – I mean, this isn't the most important, but number one is everybody bring their trash home. I was always on the CB telling – "Bring your trash home." When I was younger, I would at least once a week walk the shore here and pick up stuff, so that's certainly number one. It would be nice, and I won't see this, but

eventually, I imagine there will be electric boats, and we'll get rid of diesel. There's not a single – you cannot get gasoline at the co-op. So, every boat in the harbor is diesel unless you're willing to lug your fuel, which is impossible, really, unless you have a skiff – something small. So, I'd like to see that change eventually. I guess I would like to see – I am very fond of the lobstermen. They've been my friend. They never made any issue with me out there. I mean, they were always there to help. If I needed help, it was there, and I was able to help, too, on occasion – help somebody get home when they broke down. But the fact is, I wish that I could bring them around a little more about what's happening so that they would be more willing to make the changes that are necessary. I think I said this to you the other day, "Change is inevitable; growth is optional." A lot of them still see the climate change, and they recognize it, but it's cyclic. I wish that could change. That would be the biggest one right there. There's a few of them who bring trash home at the end of the day or the end of the week, but a lot of it goes overboard.

MH: [0:27:15] What do you think should be the biggest priority for policymakers in Maine?

JS: [0:27:24] In terms of marine?

MH: [0:27:25] Yeah. If you could tell policy makers in Maine what the biggest priority should be to help fisheries adapt to environmental change, what would you tell them?

JS: [0:27:38] Let me think. I guess it would be the diesel fuel and an attitude change. But you can't make policy about attitude change, I know that. I think the Maine lobstermen have done a lot to conserve. The whole idea about punching the tail of the female, the minimum size, the maximum size. We, really, I think, have done a lot to keep the lobster available and growing, actually increasing. So, I think they can take some pride. They put exits in their traps so that small lobsters can get out. So, not all of them come back up and get thrown overboard. And that was the lobstermen's ideas themselves. So, they've done a lot of that policy. I know the biggest issue facing them right now is the right whale; on a personal level, that one's difficult for me. I want to see the species survive. I just want it to be fair to the lobstermen, and so that policy – that's an issue there. But I think mainly I'd like to see diesel boats [and] diesel fuels change and make sure that people can't pump oil out. I mean, all of that is protected in the boats now, but they can over –

MH: [0:29:53] Why is it important to no longer have diesel fuel on the boat?

JS: [0:29:58] No longer to have what?

MH: [0:30:00] Diesel fuel.

JS: [0:30:02] Because I think it's a major contaminant to the environment. I don't think there's any doubt. Our cars – that's why I'd like to see more. I think there will – I was reading or heard somewhere somebody is with the idea of electric boats. Yeah. So you probably know more about that already. That would be one of the things I'd like to see.

MH: [0:30:37] Have you noticed changes in culture within the lobster community?

JS: [0:30:43] Not much. Not much here. That's a great question. Really, not much. In terms of other groups of people moving in this area, it's pretty much the same families that have been doing it for a long time. But, in terms of the culture of how they do it, it's changed in terms of most of the younger men go way offshore now and fish trawls and do not fish the way we did with pairs of traps. They have I don't know how many on a trawl. I've never been out with them on the trawls. I've thought about going just to experience how it's done, but I haven't. Yeah. So, as far as that kind of a culture, that has changed. In terms of bringing different people here, no.

MH: [0:32:03] When you first started lobstering, were you the only woman on the water?

JS: [0:32:09] In this harbor, I was the only woman who had her own boat, but several of the wives went with their husbands. It was not unusual for women to be on the water. I kind of receive a lot of credit for that, which I don't think I truly deserve because I think women have been doing some aspect of it since the beginning. I just happened, in this particular harbor, [to] be the only woman that had her own boat. But not so now, which is nice. In fact, I sold my boat to another young woman when I stopped. Yeah. So, there's, I think, four or five women here in the harbor now who have their own boats, and most of them are mothers, which is amazing for me that they manage their family and that because I've never had to do that other than a few golden retrievers. [laughter]

MH: [0:33:15] And the other women that were lobstering with their husbands back in the day, who was taking care of their children?

JS: [0:33:23] Well, I think most of the time, the children were in school. We didn't have childcare. Absolutely no childcare. It would not have been any mother that had young children like they have now. So, yeah, they were older women. In fact, one of them is alive now. She's a hundred. She lives next to the co-op, and she went with her husband for years and years.

MH: [0:33:57] Do you know what her name is?

JS: [0:33:58] Oh, sure. Morna Briggs. She's a hundred years old, and she'd love to talk to you.

MH: [0:34:07] We would love to interview her. Are there any other types of changes that impacted your work that you want to tell us about?

JS: [0:34:21] That impacted the work?

MH: [0:34:23] That impacted your work.

JS: [0:34:28] No. I said it made it easier. I'm trying to think. Physically, I didn't – toward the end, I began to have some joint issues which impacted my work, and in fact, I've had four joint replacements over the years, and I'm sure that all came from being out on the boat. But that would have been the only thing. Age impacted it certainly. I'd start out again at 4:30 or whatever in the morning. I always loved that. But by 11:30, 12:00, that was it for me. No longer days. So, age impacted my – yeah. Of course, I got teased for being out there being so old. But that was all right.

MH: [0:35:38] Were there any other lobstermen the same age as you?

JS: [0:35:44] Yes. Well, there was one. He, unfortunately, has died. [Harold] “Babe" Crowley was a year older than me, and he stopped before I did, but we stopped at the same age. So, we were teased about being the old people out there. I mean, some of the young ones would come down when I was working on traps, getting them ready, and they say, “I don't want to have to do that when I'm as old as you are.” [laughter] Of course, they don't now. Anyway, everything has changed in terms of how – they don't work on the traps the same way, and they seem to buy new traps every year and sell the other ones.

MH: [0:36:40] What was your relationship with other lobstermen in the harbor like throughout the years?

JS: [0:36:53] In the what? In the harbor?

MH: [0:36:55] Yeah.

JS: [0:36:55] Yeah. Well, it was good. As I say, I always had – I always felt supported. I think there were a couple of reasons why they accepted me even though I was from away. We opened the little store down here on the wharf for years, and also, I was a nurse. That was my beginning. So, if there was an issue, I would go and help out. Maybe it's because I needed so much help, I don't know, to begin with, but they were really – I mean, the first five traps that I was given was given to me by a lobsterman. Another lobsterman gave me five old wood buoys that I painted, and that's how I got started. I'm sure maybe they thought it would be a passing fancy, but I always felt supported. I just really did. I have no idea if maybe a couple of them might not have felt that way about it, but it never became an issue. I owned this land and always opened it to anybody who needed to use it – the launch area and the wharf, which I am now – it's going to another lobsterman now, but it was always open for people to use. I'm sure it was a give-and-take. You pay it forward. In fact, somebody said to me – one of the lobstermen, who was over one evening last weekend said, “How lucky we were that you and Dodie bought this piece of land because had it gone to somebody else, that might have been closed off." Access to the shore is vital, but it's still open, so that's good.

MH:[0:39:07] Last week, you said you just sold a portion of your land.

JS: [0:39:12] I just what –?

MH: [0:39:13] You just sold your portion of your land.

JS: [0:39:15] Yeah, the only thing I own now – as of last Tuesday, a bit bittersweet is this house and the land that it's on, but it's time financially to pay taxes on stuff that I wasn’t using anymore. So, yeah, it's gone. But it's for locals. I mean, he's a local fisherman here.

MH: [0:39:43] How did people use your land before?

JS: [0:39:47] How did they use it? Well, everybody could use the launch to launch their – all the big boats go in and out right here. I mean, it doesn't seem possible, but it really is. And people stored traps on the wharf. It's been used. I always had electricity down there. So, never paid more than the minimum, so anybody could bring their boat in and work on a little bit. So, it was used a lot. That was fine. But as I say, I also received help. When I was fishing alone and trying to get traps on and off the boat, the old wood traps, there was always somebody coming down to give me a hand to get them off the boat or put them on. It works.

MH: [0:40:46] What are some of the other ways in which lobstermen supported you?

JS: [0:40:52] What are some of the other lobster –? What?

MH: [0:40:54] What are some of the other ways in which lobstermen supported you?

JS: [0:40:59] Supported me? Let's see. If I broke down, which I only did a couple of times, no problem, somebody would be there to haul me home. I got lost in the fog one time, and then, at that time, was not – the last boat I had, all I had on it was a compass. I didn't even have a bottom machine. I couldn't get out of – it was so thick. So, I hated to get on the CB and admit it. I was almost in tears because I didn't want to get – because teasing goes pretty good here. Anyway, so somebody had to come and find me and get me home. So that was one, certainly. Let's see. They've just always been good. When we had to go, we would go to get alewives at the stream, or we had to go to the old Sardine factory for bait; somebody was always there [to] give me a hand with the bait and stuff. But this Morna Briggs, I talk about, her son still lobsters here. Just as an example, Timmy found over the years, one or two of my traps that had been cut off, or the buoy was gone, and he'd call me on the CB and tell me that he'd found it, but that wasn't the end of it. He'd fix it up and bait it and reset it. Okay? Is that being helpful? Yes, I mean, it's a kind kind of thing. And teased, too. I got teased a little bit. Is it all right to tell this? Yeah. I fished pairs, two traps, and this was before cell phones. I hauled up this trap, the second trap, and in it was a huge, oversized lobster with gloves on it. What one of the lobstermen had done was put one of his fishing gloves on each one in a lobster band and replanted it in my trap. So, of course, I got on the CB, and I said, "Oh, my," and the response was, "It's going to be a cold winter; Jean's catching lobsters with gloves on." So there was that, too. I really had a wonderful time there. It's something I never expected to do. I'd never been on the water. As they say, it took me a long time to learn. I think it's so much better that they do have an apprenticeship for lobstermen now because I really was a mess out there for so long – trying to find my traps, trying to learn how to set.

MH: [0:44:23] How do you feel about the different licensing programs?

JS: [0:44:29] The licensing program?

MH: [0:44:30] Yeah, like the student program, the apprenticeship program.

JS: [0:44:34] Well, the student program, I think, is fine. It keeps the families going, too, and the generations. I mean, how many more [generations]? How many more are we going to have that we can keep doing this? But yes, I'm fine with that. I think sometimes we get a little tough on if

it still is – and I don't know this to be true, but most zones have a quota about how many have to leave before a new one can come in. I think the last time I knew here, it was three out, one in. I think that's a little – yeah. I think maybe that could be reduced a little, but it seems to be working. I mean, there's greed. What don't we know about that the bottom line isn't the most important thing? So, that's based on that, a little jealousy.

MH: [0:45:48] Is there anything else you want to share with us?

JS: [0:45:53] I can't think of anything else. I'm just glad that you're doing this. I hope we can find some help to slow the climate change down so that this wonderful way of life that I've enjoyed can continue because if we don't, it's not going to, I don't think. I hate to be a pessimist because, basically, I'm an optimist. But it's my biggest worry.

MH: [0:46:36] Do you think climate change is a threat to the lobster industry?

JS: [0:46:40] Yes. Very much. I think it will – I mean, our water's going to warm. So, what the lobster is going to always seek – they've tried lobsters in warmer water, and it just never has worked. So, the lobster is going to seek the cold water.

MH: [0:47:04] Do you think there's any way lobstermen could adapt to a different fishery?

JS: [0:47:11] Adapt to what?

MH: [0:47:12] A different fishery if they can't fish lobster anymore.

JS: [0:47:14] Oh, yeah. Well, I see that happening a little. Like, Danny is doing lobster tours now. I don't know. I've heard about the blue crab possibly moving into Maine, and that could become a major industry. Yes, I think some would. But I also noticed that there's others that are thinking about off the water. For example, the sardine factory has gone through several different owners, and now a local group [owns] it, and they want to change the fact that they can do something other than connected to fisheries or water there to use the space, which is going to take a policy change. So, I think there'll be adaption away from the water if it changes a lot.

MH: [0:48:22] Do you think there is something that policymakers could do to support fishermen who want to branch into different industries?

JS: [0:48:33] Who want to –? Well, yes. I think there could be financial assistance, certainly, if people want to try new things. For example, the seaweed industry is growing here now, and there's a wonderful book by Susan Shetterly out – I think the lesson she's trying to show us is how to sustain it. I mean, we've done well with the lobsters, but I don't know – any of them – how to sustain this kind of industry. Look what happened to shrimp here. We don't shrimp anymore. I don't know if they've opened it up yet again or not. Scalloping has to be watched carefully. So yes, I think policies could be made, but you got to remember, too, the lobstermen don't like a lot of government interference. They are not happy about too many policies being made.

MH: [0:49:45] I think those are all the questions that I have. Ludwin, do you have any other questions?

Ludwin Moran Sosa: [0:49:51] I guess I'm curious if you know how you were perceived by the women of the cannery or just women around the area.

JS: [0:49:58] You're curious about how many women are what?

LMS: [0:50:00] I wonder how you were perceived by women working at the cannery or just women around in the area?

JS: [0:50:07] Perceived by –?

MH: [0:50:09] The women in the cannery, the sardine cannery.

JS: [0:50:11] I don't know. I never thought about that. I think when we first came here, some of the wives were a little concerned about two women because we ran a little store down here. We opened up a little store. I was lobstering, and we ran the little store. A couple of the wives weren't too happy about their husbands coming by, so there was probably that little bit. But I delivered groceries to them all. I learned it just takes time. It wasn't that difficult. Of course, I think it's because I ignore that stuff. It doesn't. I have always gone about my business, and I figure if I'm being kind to somebody, that's all I care about. So, I don't see myself as any great – I mean, I don't want this to sound too egotistical, please, because I'm not. But somebody would say when we first came here, "Well, you know they're such-and-such." I just ignored that. I always treat – I always felt it was how I related with that person that was the most important thing. So, it all came out eventually. All the men eventually had their own coffee mug up on the thing, and people were fine. But it just took probably a little time. But to tell you the truth, that just didn't pester me much. [inaudible] Do you have any –?

LMS: [0:52:17] I think that should be all. Yeah, thank you.

MH: [0:52:20] What was it like running the store?

JS: [0:52:23] What was it like?

MH: [0:52:26] What was it like running the store?

JS: [0:52:28] Well, that was busy. It was just a little old fish house that we fixed up. In the summer, we sold lobsters alive and boiled and had a couple picnic tables and stuff. So, summers were tremendously busy. But winter was pretty deadly. But I always said to Dodie, we got to keep it open because we – believe it or not, it was very busy, and I said, "We put this village through a lot during the summer; the least we can do is be available for them in the winter." So, other than Christmas, we stayed open. We ran it for about eight or nine years. Then I had a responsibility with my mom here. Then, I went back to – I got involved in teaching again, and I went up to the university and taught up there and lobstered in the summer and the fall. So, closed the store. But it was fun. I mean, I liked it until [I] kind of got bored in the winter. I got a little

bored. Sometimes, I'd get so tired of some of the tourists. Many laughs and stories about them. The tourist who says, “Oh, I think it's wonderful you all park your boats facing the same way.” Nothing to do with the wind, those kinds of things. So, we had some good times. I enjoyed running the store. I knew every single soul in the village and [inaudible]. Now, I don't. Every single one. So, yeah, it was fun. It was different. I've always loved doing different things.

MH: [0:54:28] What was the reason you opened up the store?

JS: [0:54:31] Because they needed it, I thought, and also, I needed something to do. We came up here, and I was going to – I was going for an individualized Ph.D., believe it or not, in Boston. We had everything all set up, came up here to the cottage, and I just didn't want to leave. I didn't go, and I needed something to do. I talked Dodie into opening a store. This old fish house – we rented it, cleaned it up, and fixed it up, and it was great. But as I say, I did eventually get a little bored and needed to do something else.

MH: [0:55:23] What did you do your PhD in?

JS: [0:55:27] What did I get it in? Eventually, I did get one from Vanderbilt in higher education administration, but I'm not an administrator. I loved teaching, and I taught at UMaine in nursing and in women's studies. I lobstered every year. Except for the couple of summers I was at Vanderbilt, I lobstered every summer. I'd set up my schedule so my fall schedule was light, and I could fish into October, which is what I liked doing anyway. One year, I did go stern man with one of the lobstermen, and that was probably one of the worst decisions I ever made. Cold and an old wood boat. We’d go way offshore. I used to pray he wasn't going. [laughter] That was hard. That was not one of my smarter decisions.

MH: [0:56:39] Where did you teach?

JS: [0:56:41] University of Maine. Originally, before I came here, I taught at Georgetown in DC. But I didn't have a doctorate then.

MH: [0:56:51] How did those two different [jobs] connect for you, teaching and being a lobsterman?

JS: [0:56:59] Well, of course, again, I loved the physical activity. I grew up on a little farm. We didn't have very much, so I really needed to do a lot of work, and it was appreciated. My dad appreciated it. So, I learned that physical work could give you something positive. At least it made me feel positive. I think that was part of why I loved lobstering so much. Everybody thinks you have to be strong, but it's more you got to have stamina; that's what you really need for lobstering. So, that piece, I just loved it. I could not wait to get home, get out, and get on the water, and yet I enjoyed the teaching, too. The students were great. I felt like that piece of my life – I could make a difference. I think that's what all of us really want to do in life is to know we've made a difference. Out here, I felt like I was always the novice. Even though I did it for forty years, I always felt like I was a little bit of a fake. I know that's silly. So, I never really intervened too much in the politics of lobstering. I did serve on the co-op, and I did have a few – I found that very interesting. I was the only woman, obviously. I thought women had [difficulty]

making decisions. But I have to tell you, the lobstermen had – I couldn't believe it would take us so long to make a decision, but it did. But change, as I said – I'm rambling now. I got to stop.

MH: [0:59:07] No, it's very interesting. I want to hear more about what it was like being a chairman of the Lobster Co-op.

JS: [0:59:15] Being what? Oh, I was just on the board.

MH: [0:59:17] Yeah. So, what was it like being on the board of the co-op?

JS: [0:59:21] Well, I felt like it was my way of contributing because I was a member of the lobster of the co-op. But as I say, I got frustrated; we were discussing – we had this wonderful man who owned a lobster – the word just kept [inaudible]. Anyway, it's where he would buy lobsters in the summer and store them in the water – I'm trying to think of the word – and then sell them in January. But there's always a huge risk because they have to be fed. Anyway, he came to us and said, "I'll buy all your shedders until my thing is full, and I'll share in the gross profit in January." Well, we went round and round and round, and I thought, "Okay, this night, we're going to vote on it – nine of us, I think. Two could not make up their minds. That was the frustrating part for me. I was ready to make a decision, but they were good guys. Most of those that I served with are gone now. So, yeah, they were really great guys. So, I would share my opinion. I had no trouble sharing my opinion, and that was it. Yeah. But I was glad to get off the board. Three years.

MH: [1:01:20] And why did you leave?

JS: [1:01:22] You just serve a three-year term, and I did not put my name in again. That was enough. [laughter]

MH: [1:01:34] Do you feel like your opinion was well received?

JS: [1:01:37] That what?

MH: [1:01:38] Your opinion was well received while you were on the board.

JS: [1:01:41] Yeah. As I say, I didn't do a lot of that because I never felt like – I felt a little bit like I didn't know enough. Whereas at the university, nursing, or women's studies. I certainly felt comfortable. I mean, I didn't feel uncomfortable. I didn't mean that, but I just felt like maybe it was up to them to make those decisions.

MH: [1:02:16] Why did you feel like you didn't know enough?

JS: [1:02:19] Why did I feel that way? I don't know. I really don't know. I think it's because of the way I started, and it took me so long to figure out how to do this, to begin with. I depended on them tremendously, and I think it's probably all of those things. I certainly was well treated by them. It wasn't like I was being ignored. I think it's me. I didn't go to school for it. [laughter]

MH: [1:03:12] I wonder what it would be like if there was a lobster school. [laughter] Okay, I think that's all the questions that we have.

JS: [1:03:20] Well, thank you.

MH: [1:03:21] Thank you so much.

JS: [1:03:22] Yeah, I hope I've helped.

MH: [1:03:25] Yeah, it's been wonderful, really.

----------END OF INTERVIEW----------

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