Interview 10 Data Analysis

(Two-person interview) H=husband, W=wife

Theme 1. Fishing lifestyle

* H. Started fishing young—12 because enjoyed gillnetting with family and friends
* H. First buyer in Unalakleet was in 1955 or 1957 for salmon (a processing boat)
* H. 1965 went to Bristol Bay with college friend who had a boat
  + Exposure to bigger fishing
* H. Then trolled out of Juneau w/ a different college friend
  + Each had a skiff, jigged for halibut too, paying for college
* H. Sold skiff and returned to Unalakleet; fishing there since 60s and 70s
* H. Japanese boats came for herring run and took a couple years for Unalakleet fishermen to get geared up to fish for herring
* H. After herring season would go to Bristol Bay to crew for friend, then became a captain
* H. Also did crabbing 15-20 miles 70 miles out of Unalakleet
  + Used herring boat first 4-5 years, then bought a 32’ Bristol Bay boat
* H. Was a pilot, so squeezed in fishing, when retired, fished full time
* W. Fished 25 years. Stopped because her knees were bad and couldn’t move fast.
* W. Done all of the fisheries in Unalakleet except crabbing—had own skiff for herring and skiff for salmon
* H. 27:27 “Herring fishing brought out the women.”
  + Many had own permits and boats.
  + Lots of money brought them out. His mother in law fished into her 70s.
* H. When they first got married, they were fishing on one boat.
  + She was constantly on him, 29:15 “it’s time to deliver.” “We might sink is what she’s saying.” He jokes that he fired her.
* W. She said he didn’t fire her, she got her own boat.
* W. Too risky for both of them to be on the boat
* W. His back is bad. Told him to think of retiring (almost 80)
* H. 19:58 “Fishing is a lifestyle and it’s hard for me to put it aside, and that’s where I’m at.”

Theme 2. A family operation

* H. After 20 years, thought it was time to go home. Wife had a herring permit, so he fished as her helper for a while
* H. Bought his own permit, then they fished together with two permits
* H. Family joke: A couple years ago, he wanted to pull the nets in rough weather so fish wouldn’t spoil and wife kept saying, 8:49 “Let’s turn back, let’s go home.”
* H. He got close to the beach and his motor started sputtering; he fixed the problem and went back out.
* H. He wasn’t listening to “let’s turn back, let’s go home” because he was concentrating on driving in bad weather.
  + He finally hollered, “shut up.”
  + Then after they cleaned nets and returned home, drinking coffee, she calmly told him, “I’m done.”
  + H. After all those years, she retired from fishing. After she retired, their granddaughter said, Grandma is not going fishing. I’m not going fishing.” So he lost two crew members that day.
* H. Fished with grandkids and nephews after that
* H. Started training them young
  + H. First lesson was to try to keep them from getting seasick—let them drive boat
  + H. Grandson started at 10, nephew at 11, granddaughter at 8 (but paid at 12 or 13)
  + H. They enjoyed making money
  + H. Kids came to Unalakleet for the summer
  + H. Intention was to train grandkids and nephews how he learned, but not to go out when rough
* H. They made good money as a family
* H. 16-year-old great nephew is trained to operate the motor
  + H. Due to vision problems, he had to teach his great nephew to control the motor
  + W. Kids will spot and call out logs and nets
* H. Trains younger generations only within family because the parents should be involved
* W. 47:22 “Flotation. You have to… Nobody follows it.
* H. “It always depends on the family.”

Theme 3. Survival equipment and training

* H. Bought an aluminum boat from brother in law still fishing on
* H. 16:43 “It’s a safe boat out there, so I’m really happy with it. I operate within reason though. So when I see the forecast is going to get rough water, I’m always going out to pull out my gear.”
* Driving a skiff safely in the ocean is major safety factor
  + 22:29 “And there’s a lot of skill that’s involved with safety in the ocean, especially driving a skiff.”
* W. 24:07 “I think there’s an untaught safety about the wind and the tide that takes years to develop. So that you know what to do when it gets rough and where you can go for safety if you can’t make it into a harbor.”
* W. There are reefs and shallow rocks that should be marked on charts and with buoys but are not
* W. 47:22 “Flotation. You have to… Nobody follows it.
* H. “It always depends on the family.”
  + H. Makes everyone wear floatation—wears a flotation jacket, but has to take off when hot
  + H. Grandchildren can’t get in boat without one
* H. Inflatables are hard because cartridges have to be replaced regularly, you can’t carry them on a plane, and you have to pay hazmat charges for shipping them
* W. 33:40 “I would investigate the marine injuries that happen and what can be done.”
  + Heavy lifting
  + Injuries from equipment
  + Woman falling in fish bin and hurting back
* W. NSEDC sends out safety info and placards. NSSP offers first aid and CPR 20:38 “But I think that Fish and Game could do something a little bit of that and the NSSP could do better.” [with trainings]
* H. Safety equipment required for crabbing is expensive, but can save money if properly maintain gear
* H. Took training from the Coast Guard and his boat always passed exam with flying colors
* H. Should have some sort of communication (i.e., inreach). Especially younger generation.
* H. Younger generation uses GPS more
  + W. Training is needed in use of GPS devices and navigation (not as much for salmon fishing)
  + W. Story of son using an Etrex GPS for hunting group to get through snow storm
  + H. Useful for crabbing
  + W. Inreach saves him when he gets pinned under snow machine
  + W. Her fishing partner gets safely guided out of shallow water in Kuskokwim by calling his wife who was able to see his inreach location
* H. 65:56 “I should be able to drive myself home without any problems as long as I don’t have a motor problem”
* W. Equipment you should have: an oar, spare anchor, enough gas, a little water

Theme 4. Local fatalities

* W. H. Neighbor was on his way home from subsistence fishing and hit a reef
  + Going fast and boat instantly turns 90 degrees.
  + He falls into rail of boat and other passenger stabbed by anchor
  + He practiced safety all those years and was Fish and Game employee
* W. Need more markers for reefs and other hazards, but buoys wash away in storms
* H. Remembers in 70s three young fishermen overloaded their boat in big swells, boat swamped and they drowned (not wearing flotation).
  + State got stricter after that time period
* H. Most recent fatality was a local guy and his girlfriend coming home from Koyuk
  + H. Not paying attention to the weather and wind forecast
  + W. North wind at Cape Denbigh with high, dangerous waves
  + W. He tried to call his grandmother
  + W. Everybody searched for 10 days and couldn’t find him
  + H. Helicopter found girlfriend in PFD (died of hypothermia)
  + H. Console may have come loose when they hit a wave. Wasn’t secured to boat
  + H. When going with waves, that type of boat tends to turn immediately to its side when hit on side with a wave
  + W. Thought maybe the waiters pulled him down

Theme 5. Changes in ocean and fish

* W. 34:22 “We have seen enough over the years to know that global warming has affected the mass.”
* W. Used to have over two weeks of herring coming in and now gone in 3 or 4 days
* W. Pacific cod migrating north because Bering Sea getting too warm
  + W. Unalakleet fisheries moving north
* W. 4 years ago, first time they saw pinks drifting down dead because river was too warm
  + Sad to see all the humpies float by
* W. Over last 15 years have also seen birds die off and populations change
* W. 36:48 Yukon closed subsistence and commercial chum and king
  + W. Worried they will be next because they think their fish feed in the same area as Yukon fish
* Unalakleet fishermen used to be able to make a good living when she first started fishing in 1960-1964.
  + She used to see 100lb kings.
  + 38:09 “You never see that anymore.”
* W. 38:35 “I think that regardless of what is happening, the high seas fishery doesn’t report as much by-catch as they should. And I think the fish are also not coming back because they don’t have the feed that they used to have.”
* Wonders if young people are going to be able to make a living off fishing anymore
  + Wonders if salmon are going to die off because of global warming
* H. Silvers and chum were $0 in their books last year
* H. Next year there’ll be no pinks
  + H. Took a ride up river and no fingerlings (normally see many)
  + W. Maybe global warming causing increase in precipitation in fall and river is overfilled, causing eggs to wash out
  + W. Someone should monitor how much water in river systems and if it’s killing salmon
* Fishermen used to make $40,000-100,000 off salmon.
  + Last 5 years after Yukon and Northern Stone Salmon Disasters, fishermen are hurting economically
  + Some fishermen not even making $1,000 last year
* H. Last year, pinks did well and good prices (used to not be worth anything)
* H. People are selling their permits like when herring died off
* H. Bristol Bay doing well, maybe because they have Lake Clark and Lake Iliamna—cold and deep
* Snow in mountains north of Dillingham
* H. Climate change in Norton Sound is more dramatic
  + no snow and water temp zooms up as soon as snow is gone

Other:

* Physical effects:
  + H. 33:21 “For me it was very healthy. I think it was a healthy activity.”
  + W. “Except the wear on his back.”
* H. Salmon set netting, most go about 15-20 miles up north. 67:23. “So it’s a big move for them, but they know what to do.”
* H. Herring dangers (lasted 10-20 years)
  + Rough water (marginally) with west wind or south wind in spring Remembers when huge person fell overboard and needed to be lifted by a tender with hydraulics
    - Must have been wearing a PFD
    - 31:40 “Like I say, that herring, it was a driver.
  + Boats all following a tender breaking ice when a huge sheet of ice raises high out of water, lifting boats with it until they slide back into water
  + Tendency to overload boats to make more money