



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Narrator(s):** Gunnar Gudjonssen

**Date:** 23 September 2017

**Interviewer(s):** Jeffrey Kahrs

*Interview with Icelandic American commercial fisherman Gunnar Gudjonssen about his life and career fishing along the West Coast and in Southeast Alaska. The interview was conducted in two parts, the first on 23 September 2017 and the second on 28 October 2017. This is the transcript for the first interview.*

**Keywords:** Icelandic-American, fisherman

**Transcriber note:** This interview includes several references to Icelandic towns, words, and phrases whose spellings are unclear in the original transcript. Additionally, the Narrator tended to mumble, and the audio is unclear in many areas. Areas where a best attempt has been made to transcribe unclear audio are marked with an asterisk (\*). Areas where the audio was too inaudible have been marked as [unintelligible].

[Statement begins]

[Timestamp 0:00:00-0:00:30 unrelated chatter about the interview set up]

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** You were born in Iceland in 1939?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. And uh, you - you were saying you were born in a little village near—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Sandgerdi.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sandgerdi. Near Keflavik, right?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Pretty close to Keflavik.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** I think we flew—when I flew into Iceland, I flew—



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** You gotta go to Keflavik.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right, right. And then between Keflavik and Reykjavik there's the cemetery, right? Where they put the Christmas tree lights on them for the Twelve Days of Christmas.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So you went down there?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, yeah! No I was there for the Twelve Days of Christmas in 1988. I was there in the winter.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Wow, that's a long time ago.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Well, yeah, you're right. Not as long ago as 1939.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** So what was life like in the village? You said everyone was pretty poor in those days. Is that true?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** My father was a highline fisherman in Iceland. He came in, you know, I was just a kid about five years old. He gave the rope to me. Put the ropes around the hooks and stuff like that.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Was this ganging?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** You were ganging.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. That's how I started.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** At—how old were you then? Five?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Around four or five.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** What was life like then? You were quite poor. What did you guys eat for breakfast and lunch and dinner?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Lot of fish.

**Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen**

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, I remember that.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** A lot of fish.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** You ate herring in the morning for breakfast?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No, no. Not herring. We had .... You know, I mean I was five years old. I don't remember that too well.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Fair enough.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I don't remember that too well.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** You want a glass of water?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No, I'm good.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** You want me to keep on from there on?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Just to talk about your life in Iceland, why you came to the States, that kind of thing.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Anyway, I had a stepfather. I'm the only one. So I have step-, um ...I have my half-brothers and half-sisters. My father was building a house... I'm going to get a glass of water...

**[coughing]**

**[unrelated chatter 0:03:18-0:04:46]**

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Okay, I'm going to start in Iceland.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Why I left. So, I had a stepfather.

**Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen**

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** But I went with my father fishing about eight, nine years old, herring fishing.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And he really loved me and all because I was with his mom in Sandgerdi until I was five.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, I remember. So anyway, I went three or four times with my father. And I came to Hafnarfjordur\*, that's where they lived.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** What was this place where they lived?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** They lived in Hafnarfjordur\*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Hafnarfjordur\*.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Hafnarfjordur\*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And I used to come to them, and fish with them, and his wife told me to call him father.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay. Gunnar, "This is your father, you call him your father."

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I don't know what to call him the first time that I saw him.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Well, then I was five, I didn't pay attention. You know what I mean?



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Anyway, so—anyways, he— I was an engineer on one of the boats because that's where we have the last—there was two boats for herring—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** To start with. And we had to row sixteen people.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** So, there was no hydraulics.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No. They had to purse by hand and all that shit.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** So, it's a purse seiner boat.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Do you have a turn table on the back of the seiner?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Well, no. What you had is a boat—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And then you had two boats with the seins in it and they go around it.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, yeah. Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Real old style.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Do you understand what I'm saying?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure, sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I don't understand what I'm saying.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** You had two boats and the seins—



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. Yeah. And they were built that way. The plank and then there was like a—no, there was not just one, there was planks. You know what I mean?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** The nails come out sometimes.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** My father told me to go and get it in myself.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** He didn't want to let anybody else go. "You go." So, I don't know. This was a long time ago. It's hard for me to tell you.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Of course, I understand. It's not a problem.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** It's not a problem.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Is that going to be any good for you?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure. It's just a starting point anyway because—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** You go from Iceland and—I mean—one old guy I interviewed, Isaacson. He said that his village was so poor that—in the 1930s—that they boy saved for a year in a half, all the boys in the village, for a football, to buy a football.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** What time was that?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** That was in the 30's. That was in the 30's—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Oh, wow.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** So, it's really early.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** We were wearing shoes made out of innertubes.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Innertubes.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. We have to—they fix up shoes like that with innertubes.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** That's how poor we all were. We were pretty poor. My father was not poor. He made money.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** He was the top fisherman for six years in Iceland.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Wow, that's pretty good.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** For Icelandic, yeah. I was, what, thirty-something. Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Not kidding.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** No, I believe you of course.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** But anyway, so, I went with my uncle Seymour in an Icelandic boat. I went for a season there and then I came out to a school in Iceland.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** What school—what was the name of the boat again?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** *Islendingar*\*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** *Islendingar*?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** And was it also a seiner?



## **Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen**

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** It was built by my grandfather.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And then the kids. They built the boat.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** He was quite a man.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** He played an organ. Really tough guy. I loved that man.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, yeah. He played the organ, and he built the boat, and he was also a fisherman?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No, he um—then he was in Norfolk\*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** My, my, uh grandfather—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah, he was [unintelligible]. And I think they had twelve kids.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Twelve kids.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. They're all dead now.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** That's a lot of kids.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. And he played the organ—that's what my father's wife told me because she knew him well.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen**

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** She was [unintelligible]. My mother and her were from Norfolk\* and they went with my father, okay?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, I don't know why I'm going all the way there, maybe I shouldn't?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** No, it's okay. So, you were growing up and you were on the boat. And then you went to school you said, yeah?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah, I went to school in Iceland. And I went from—after I came out of school, I went on *Islendingar*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** *Islendingar*?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** *Islendingar*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** *Islendingar*.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** *Islendingar*. Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** *Icelander*. That's the name of the boat.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Alright. *Iceland*—what was the name of the boat in English?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** *Islendingar*... I don't know how you say it English. *Islendingar*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay. *Islendingar*.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** *Icelander*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay, *Icelander*.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, I was on there for, uh, we were fishing longline\* ... the wintertime, longline and nets, and .... You get them in the nets and get [unintelligible]. Then they went cut fish and stuff on—like this. We started like [unintelligible].

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. You were hand –

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Hand lining.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. We did that to start with.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Were you on the big boat when you were doing that or were you still doing it out of a dory?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. I was there for a couple of years.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** With a dory? Like you'd be off on a dory doing it or—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I think it was only thirty-some times\*, on the *Islendingar*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Anyway, I was in a newspaper in Iceland three times. What happened I was unloading a fish of [unintelligible]. Someone took a picture of me and then put it in an Icelandic paper.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And this lady in Germany saw a picture of me. She thought that I was her son. So, she wrote to this Icelandic—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Newspaper.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Newspaper and wanted to find out about me. They didn't know nothing about me, I was just getting the fish out.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, they had to come and find out where I was. So, they had to come with me and a paper. (Laughing) So, after that, found - they found out, then I had to come again and tell them I was not the one.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, you can get the paper probably.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah. Well, I have to get in the archives and—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** In Reykjavik somewhere.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. Then I was taking [unintelligible] codfish, it was big. *Real* big cod fish. Then they took a picture of it.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. Was like a three-foot cod fish or something?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Like five feet—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Wow.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Big, big, big cod fish. Anyway, and then I had— always by myself because my stepfather—I didn't get along with my stepfather too much.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, I didn't have a home really. I went to Gudjon, you know my ... my cousin, and I stayed with them, you know, off and on.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen**

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Lived on hard food, and little bread, and stuff like that. Hard food. And I wanted to just get out of there, get away from Iceland.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And I had my cousin to go with me to the United States.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Well, how did you get to the United States? Because, you know you had to have people sponsor—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Flew.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Uh, you, and you—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I-I did have my uncle Gus, he was in Kitimat. So, I went to Canada to start with. I was in Canada for four years, three or four years.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. Up in B.C.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah, B.C. Yeah, I was in Canada. So, I immigrate to Canada to start with. So, I slept in New York, Fourth of July. I think it was third of July—Fourth of July, we didn't know—there was nobody in town. 90 degrees and we had a box on the wall. We didn't know what it was for. It was the air conditioner.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** We didn't know. We didn't speak English, none of that stuff, you know.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** What was your first impression of New York?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** My whole life is like a picture, I'm not kidding. Just like pictures you know of.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I didn't think much of it, you know. I was told in Iceland that they had tigers, and lions, and snakes and shit and all that stuff. They didn't want us to go, okay?



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Really?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** They didn't want us to go from Iceland. They wanted us to stay in Iceland. So, me and Gus went to Canada, and we took a bus instead of a plane. So, we were on a bus—I think it was six days. Six, seven days and we came to Blaine\*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And we didn't know where we were going, they didn't know where we were going. We didn't speak English, just Icelandic. So, they got Giestly\*. He was an Icelandic in Blaine\*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** He came over and talked to us. And had us over night and he called us.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. Did you know Aether Westmann?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Aether Westmann?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah. He was a big man in Blaine.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Probably, I don't know.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right, right. Anyway, continue.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So anyway, so I got with Gus, you know. And my uncle Gus—and I stayed with him. And I was trying to get a job, but it's hard to get a job in Canada. I was going down a hill and I saw a lot of people. They were gonna go out and try and get a job—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And get this guy, and get that guy, this guy. So, I just went to work. I went all this [makes 't-t-t-t' noise with mouth] with every palm tree.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** With a jack hammer?

**Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen**

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Jack hammer, yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** This was in Canada?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Was it Vancouver?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah, Vancouver, Canada.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Royal Oak [unintelligible] we were close to Royal Oak. So anyway, I stole\* a job and I, um .... Yeah, yeah I did all kinds of things in Canada. I got married.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Uh-huh, to an Icelandic woman?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yes.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Judy was her name.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** What was her name?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Judy.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Judy.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I got a picture of her.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And I had two kids.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And I had two jobs—no, three jobs. It's hard to make money in Canada. And then this guy was—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** What year was this about?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** '60— well, I would say '59. So at '59 and '60. Yeah, '61 and '62.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And I was filleting fish with Dody and I was doing all—landscaping, doing fish, and—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Were you fishing in Canada too?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Oh, you couldn't go fishing.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** You had to be a citizen.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right, okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** To, uh, in Canada, had to be a citizen.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And I was not.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** And it was heavily unionized, I think, in Canada too.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I don't know anything about that.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.

**Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen**

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** But um, I remember that, [unintelligible] I was working in Horseshoe Bay. Horseshoe Bay was building a power plant in Horseshoe Bay. And I drank five gallons a day of water there because it was eighty-five, ninety degrees. In Iceland, you're lucky to get fifty, you know?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, this guy, he was Benny Longcott\*. Remember?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Who's this?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Benny Longcott.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Penny?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Benny.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** *Benny*.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. Longcott.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** How's his last name—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** You say it Longcott.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Longcott.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Longcott.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Anyways, he was fishing on the *Northern Lights II*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Alright.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** *Northern Lights II* is the first boat I ever fished on in the United States. So, he got me to get on the boat with him.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Because I was a good worker and I work hard.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** All my life. And um, and they liked me so much you know. A Dory\* in a— where do you buy the fuel and stuff? Fuel dock?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** The fuel dock, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. He sponsored me to the United States.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, great. Yeah, okay. You were already in America, but you were illegal?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I had to fill out all the paper, and stuff, and get that to go on. And he's the one that sponsored me.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay. How was his last name spelled?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Dor—the one that owned the fuel dock?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** No, the one who, uh, you fished with.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Ah, I don't remember.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Was he a Slav?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I don't remember the skipper's name (laughs).

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Normally second, I don't remember his name.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. That's okay. I can look it up and—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen**

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Try to figure it out.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And I was with him for a while. And then I went to a different boat because he had to have it fixed or something, so ....

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** What kind of fishing were you doing on the *Northern Lights II*?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Dragging.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Dragging?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Was it—it was off the coast and on a ....?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I was on a— you went all over the coast, forty miles, from Hecate Strait and going all those things, you know. You go inside, you know, from Hecate Straits inside—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure the—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Twice a month.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** You go all the way to Hecate Straits for perch, and snapper, stuff like that, you know.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Forty miles worth of blue cod\*, and petrale sole, and stuff like that.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure, sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Do you know about [unintelligible, possibly a name]?



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** No, I don't actually.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** He had the *Georgine*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** The *George*—?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** -Ine. *Georgine*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** *Georgine*.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** You don't know him?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** No.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** But anyway, I was with him.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I went from the *Northern Lights II* to *Georgine*, and I was there just for a little bit.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And, um, this, um, guy on the *North Sea* ... forgot his name all of a sudden. He was the Captain of the *North Sea* who was looking for a good worker.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. Was it a crab boat, the *North Sea*?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah. This was '66, about?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No, this was '65.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** '65.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Came and-and, um ... he was looking for a crew member, a good crew member.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Forgot his name, what was it? But anyway, so he came and we talked, you know. He said, "Would you like to go up to Alaska?" I said, "Yeah, sure," because he was paying good. He was a highline boat up in Alaska.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure, sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, I said, "I don't want to go unless you can get my father-in-law." Haftarssen\*. Haftarssen was my father-in-law. So, he got both of us and we went on board.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** He got your father on board too?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Father-in-law.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Father-in-law, right. And your father-in-law's the one who'd helped you so much in Iceland, right?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, right. Your wife's—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** He was in Canada.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah. How old was he when he took the crab boat?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Geez, I don't know. I don't remember. Twenty-something—I was twenty-something.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah and he was forty-something.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. Something around ... thirty-something.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Wow. That's, uh, tough being—starting crabbing at thirty-five, forty, or whatever.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No. I had nails in the morning in those days.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** You had *nails* in the morning?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** You know what I mean?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Breakfast.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah, nothing, nothing. I don't care what it was. Swimming or whatever in the water, we would do anything.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right, right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So anyway, so I was on the North Sea— the Jakubowski, that was the skipper. Jakubowski.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Jakubowski.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah, North Sea.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So I was with him, and we had three million pounds.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Of king crab?



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** What was king crab selling for at the time?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I believe at fifteen cents a pound, I think it was.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Wow. So, what was your share for that season?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I think it was \$23,000, around.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. Did you feel like a king when you came out with your share?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Ah, when I went to the United States I said I was going to buy it all. The crew and I, we were going to buy it all and see it all.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, right, sure.

**[Both laughing]**

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Tell the neighbors and stuff. You didn't get very much. \$10,000 was a lot of money and—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. And you could just buy a house almost with that, right?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** My first house, I bought was \$15,000, brand spanking new.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Where was it— where were you?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Lynnwood.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Lynnwood?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Wow.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I owned three houses in Lynnwood.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I'll tell you about that. Anyway, you want me to tell you a little bit about that?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure.

**00:24:39**

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Well, now I had four girls. I started with them in Ballard, you know, and then when we moved to Lynnwood and I bought a house in Lynnwood.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** That was when I was with Jakubowski.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And a brand-new car.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. What kind of car?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Um, a ... Dodge fastback. A Dodge.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** A Datsun?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Dodge.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** A Dodge?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, a fastback.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Dodge.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** One of those ones with the glass windows with no—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** It would come down like this.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, sure, sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Dodge Charger.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, you bought a Charger?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** (Laughs) so Jakubowski asked me if I'd ever had a vacation. And I never had a vacation. Didn't know what that was.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** So, how old were you?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Twenty ... what, three?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Twenty-three and you'd never had a vacation?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No, I didn't know what that was.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, he gave me \$5,000 and he said, "Well, take a vacation. Take the kids." So, I bought the car and my mother-in-law, she picked up the back and put all the kids in the back.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** They could sleep there and I drove to L.A. to listen to—do you call it? Mickey Mouse?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, Disneyland.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Disneyland.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Drove to Disneyland and showed— and that was really a lot of fun.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** What did you think of Disneyland?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I didn't think at all except that everything I did was good for the girls.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** So, everything was for the kids?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Everything. Everything I did. I took them over to the park and some of them were getting tired of the park. All the animal parks, you know, I wanted them to see things.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I didn't want to go to—different things, I wanted to—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** You mean the zoo? Take them to the zoo?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. I always took them to the zoo.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. So, you like the zoo too?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Oh, yeah. And, um, we had movies in the car, you know?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** What do you call those? Movies you can drive off, and you put the speaker in the car, and you'd see the movie.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right, okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Did that for the kids.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Wow, that was pretty fancy for those times.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** But anyway, so I bought the house there for \$15,000. And then I came back and bough a other house on the corner, beautiful house.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I forgot how much it was, maybe \$200,000, whatever amount.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** But it had like this, fast car going this way, and that way, and I did not like it for my girls and—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. You wanted to be somewhere safer.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. Dead-end street.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah. Cul-de-sac.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Play around. So, I did that and I bought that other house. So, that was the third house.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** So, you bought - had three houses now?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I sold them, bought the other ones.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right, gotcha.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** What do they call this? [Drawing on paper] The road ends there, and there was horses and stuff. It was good for the girls to be there.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Now—then after the *Daunt*—after the *North Sea*, I didn't want to go on the *North Sea* for some reason. I don't know why. Just don't know why. So, I quit *North Sea* and I went on the *Dauntless*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** The *Nautilus*?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** *Dauntless*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** No, the *Dauntless*.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, I was on the *Dauntless* for a while with— I forgot his name right now. And I was with him for, I think, a year and a half or whatever it was. And then I quit, and I don't know why.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** So how—I mean, were these all highline boats and—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** They were pretty good boats.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** *Dauntless* were pretty good.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** So, what were you making? How many pounds of crab were you catching and—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I have forgot, you know ... [unintelligible].

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right, but you made a good check out of them.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Oh, yeah.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah. And, um, do you have any interesting stories that you remember from those times because it's still pretty early? For instance, were the boats wood boats like old sardine seiners?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No, these were—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** These were steel boats.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** The *North Sea* was a wooden ... uh, wooden, um, uh, tuna boat.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, one of the old tuna boats.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** That was the first boat.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** The *North Sea*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Now the *Dauntless* was a steel—first schooner steel built here.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, wow. Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** He had a crane, rolled crane. (Laughs) The first crane—say, “Put me on a crane.” “You can have the crane.” So, I learned the crane you know.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** You learned to move the pods around. And so—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** How many pods could you put on the deck of the *Dauntless*?

**Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen**

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I forgot how many it was.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Fifty, or ....?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Something like that, you know.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I forgot. I think it was all seven-by-seven pots.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. So, they were the big pods by then. They weren't—nobody was using the small ones anymore.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Iceland [unintelligible].

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** You did? What do you mean? Explain for me.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Well, you'll come to that.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So anyway, I was with *Dauntless* and I quit them.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And I had good money on *Dauntless*, but I quit. *Dauntless* go to Seattle, and on the way up, get lost. Here's two boats coming down and I quit.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** So, the *Dauntless* went down?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** And then the boat before it, the—



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** *North Sea*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** *North Sea* went down. Did they both go down with all hands lost?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** The only one was the *North Sea*, a native that survived. [Unintelligible, maybe a name].

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** What was his name?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No, I don't remember his name. But he went up by Chirikov\* up there, Bering Sea, where Bering Sea starts. The *Northern Lights*, that's where they went up. They all died except for just one guy.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Wow.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Really good guy. I remember that and then I got this navy guy to go out on the *Dauntless*. He used to sleep in the snow, so he's used to the cold.

[Both laughing]

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** That's probably why he survived in the water longer.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Now the *Dauntless*, they all got lost.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Wow. Were they also up in the Bering Sea?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah, yeah. We were everywhere.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** We were in the Sand Point area, Unimak [unintelligible].



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure. So, you were lucky in a way. You had a good sense of when it was time to leave the boat.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah, it's not me. It was somebody else.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Someone was watching over you.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. I asked God "Do not have me read", because when you read you read, just, all kinds of things—men is not truthful.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** A lot of things, people lie.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, sure. That's true.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** But anyway. So, I was offered to have a salmon boat at Sand Point.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, okay. False Pass.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** North.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** That area?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Sand Point. Sand Point.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Just Sand Point then.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** A salmon boat.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** *Peggy Sue*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, I could have it. What happened to this *Peggy Sue* was this. It burned, so they shipped the engine to Seattle to have it fixed. The boat needed to be fixed up on the beach and I asked a guy if I could have it if I fixed it and put everything in it.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No problem, dummy. (Laughs) So, I fixed it, put everything in there, and then the boss—

[End of first audio file]

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** At Sand Point, wherever, there was a boss of the cannery.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** One night he came from the bar, and I'm still working on the boat because I worked at night when it wasn't too cold. He said, "Gunnar if you need something, here's the key to the stock room. You can just help yourself, write down what you take. Here's the keys." Pretty nice.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And I didn't speak English that well anyway. I still don't.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Well, your English is not bad. But when you come to a country for the first time, it's pretty hard.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I never learned it.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** No, I lived overseas many years. I lived in Istanbul for many years.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Oh, yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** I was teaching. This was after fishing. I fished some, but then I quit fishing, and I started teaching over there. And I tried to learn Turkish. It was so hard, Gunnar. I really am sympathetic because you know, I went there in my thirties, and the language is so different. At least with—I mean Icelandic is very different from English, but there's certain words that are similar, you know.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No. Icelandic is very old.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** I know it's very old.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** (Laughing) It's Norwegian.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** I know it is. It's Norse. It's old Norse.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I have a Norwegian with me saying, "Gunnar, you are the only one. I have not known any other Norwegian." (Laughing) So, I was at Sand Point, though again, like I said—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I was on a thirty—I think thirty-three, -five tons I think it was, something like that.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay. Was it a small seiner, like a—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Like a pocket seiner. Like forty—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** It's like the seiners up in, uh, in Bristol Bay.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, yeah.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** But now, they're so wide ....

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Well, now the gill netters up in—because it was a gill netter then, yeah?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay, alright.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** But it was over tonnage.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And a magistrate could see that, so I couldn't have it bought. I went halibut fishing on it by myself. By myself [unintelligible]— [to someone outside] Hey Bill! But yeah. It was quite a work, you know, to do that boat. So—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure. You put a lot of work into it.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, this guy Gene Paulson was his name, Gene Paulson—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** What year was this about?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** '60 something.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** '68, something like that?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah, something like that.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** I mean, in that area.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Gene Paulson was on harbor—a boss. And he was salmon fishing and two bit broke and hit his head. So, he had to— he was a big guy. Gene Paulson was a funny guy. And what happened— he had to learn how to read, and write, and—



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** All those things. And he was kind of funny afterwards.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** He wanted to drink, and I needed somebody for the boat. To be with me because now all of a sudden, I needed an American.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** They're all looking at me. Magistrate at Sand Point says, "Gunnar is okay," but they would yell at us, okay?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** The people were different. I got to know them all afterwards.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** But they looked at you as an outsider?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I didn't drink, and smoke or nothing like that. I never went to a bar or any of that stuff.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So anyway, I was looking for a guy to take a boat with me and to do some halibut fishing.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So I saw Gene. He fell asleep in the bathroom. We had a bathroom for people to go and take a bath.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** He was going to go there.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Like a bath house.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** That's what it was. I see these feet—big feet stickin' out. Yeah, it'd be good company. Somebody was telling me about this guy.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, I got him up. I said "Gene, I tell you, let's make a deal. You get fifty percent of the halibut, and I get fifty percent of the salmon. How's that?" He didn't hammer me. I had a (laughs). So, we made a deal. So, whatever we caught halibut fishing, he got fifty percent of it. So, we went inland. Beach seining.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, beach signing! Right, like in Bristol Bay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Beach. we go on a beach.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure. I understand, I've seen it.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Or a beach—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** They use it like this.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure, sure. When the tide is high, you set and— yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** But in those days everybody stole everything. We never made a cent that wasn't evil, nobody.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** What do you mean everybody stole—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** That's just the way they were.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** What do you mean everybody stoled everything?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Well, they'd just go and sit on the side or wherever. They find out about the—where the Fish & Game was.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, right. They'd find out what Fish and Game was looking at. And then they'd go set—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, we're doing the same thing.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I forget it, man. They had the plane going, the fishing plane.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, the plane. Yeah, sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I see this plane going and Gene is (chuckles)—[Gunnar mimics Gene's voice] "I'm game, let's go get 'em!" (Laughs) And then we'd go and set, you know, because the plane was going over by. (Laughs) [Mimics Gene's voice] "Let's go get 'em!." So, we went and got 'em. And it was fun to be with Gene. So anyway, I had this package of—I mean this guy had the *Katmai*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** The *Katmai*? Is that *Katmai* or—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, yeah. *Katmai*, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And it's Squall Harbor—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay, in Squall Harbor.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Ray Bias.

**Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen**

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Ray Bias.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Right, Ray Bias, okay? He said, “If you fix it and put a tank in or whatever, you can have the boat.”

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh. Now what kind of boat was it, the *Katmai*?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Oh, I think about doing a little freight and stuff for the cannery there.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, okay. So, it was a freighter. A small freighter then.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Something like that.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** How many feet? Do you remember?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Around 100 ft.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Wow. It was a pretty good size then.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Oh, yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Schooner.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Schooner? Right. Stern house.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** That was a pretty interesting boat.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Why do you say that?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Well, the timber—like fourteen feet, you know, I mean fourteen inches, really.



## **Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen**

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** The timber's in it.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Wow.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** In the bottom, you know.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** You can smell it. They sink it for—it's 1912 built though.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** They did sink it for one year.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Wow.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Military thing.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** To get rid of the worms and stuff, they sink it. Then you build it, take it out.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And you add some salt or something and the worms don't go in it.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. The salt gets into the wood and the worms don't want it.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Something like that.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** That's what it is.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** I understand, yeah.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** But they sank the whole boat then? Wow.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And then they raised it up and—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** What was it built for originally?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Um, getting bombs, you know, because they had no nails.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, they didn't—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right, there was nothing that could be magnetized.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Steel, sure. So, they get rid of these things. It was set.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Wow. It must have been a heck of a boat though. I mean, really, solid—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** It was strong.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** So, the *Katmai*, what did you do with it?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, I told my wife, you know, "I can go to Squall Harbor, I can get this boat, I can fix it, will you come with me?" Because I didn't want to leave my daughters here, and my wife, and everything for months.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, I said, "You come to Squall Harbor." She did come to Squall Harbor and the four girls. So I had them—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** You had four girls. Wow.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I needed a boy. I wouldn't be sitting here if I had a boy.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yep.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No way. So anyway, that was all okay. Now Ray Bias—so, I put a tank in the boat, and flushed it all, put a davit and block and all that.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Block and tackle.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Everything.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Because I knew about the pot launcher shit, and davits and all that stuff. Now my stepfather's an engineer, okay?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Carl Hansen. You know Carl Hansen?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** I've heard the name.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. Okay, he built all the power blocks and davits and that sort of thing...

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, yeah. In Seattle there, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Because I asked for it.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Because you asked for it?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I was the first one.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Wow.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. So, all of that thing came out of that long lining.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So anyway, here I am. I flushed it, and built a tank, and everything, and the *Katmai*—here we go. Got the pots, and stuff, and we did pretty good. Now Ray Bias, remember he had the salmon cannery, and he had some salmon oil. This oil dock going on. So, I put oil in the cod, and herring, and stuff to soak it up. And I got about 30 percent more crab.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Wow, so you put the oil into the herring, the salmon oil..

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Salmon oil goes up.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right, in the bags, in the bait. Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Like in the Bering Sea, then you ... throw the goddamn bait in the goddamn chopper, chop it up—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** In chunks.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And it was frozen. What do you think it will do? Float.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure, it's not going to stay there.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Now, we used to chop them in—chop it up and let it all soak. Then it'd all soak and it'd sink.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** All the oil floats. But anyway—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** So, you're launching—when you were on the *Katmai*, was it a real pot launcher like in the modern sense?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** I mean, it wasn't like a hydraulic pot launcher.

**Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen**

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No, it was not—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** It was all with pulleys and stuff, right?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** It was not born then.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** It was not born, but I-I had, um, I think a hydraulic on it. You dump it. Think I had hydraulic on it if I remember right.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** A hydraulic arm of some kind—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** To help out, anyway.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No, they didn't have that. We built that. That was when I had come to that.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So anyway, I was on the *Katmai* for a while.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** How many years were you running the *Katmai*?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I think about three years.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I'm not quite sure.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Now you were captain? Were you also owner or did somebody else own the boat?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No, just captain.

**Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen**

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** But you still made a pretty good wage off the ship.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Oh, yeah. I don't know. It was good. I had never went that way. I always wanted to be a highliner.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, of course.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Get the most crab.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. More important than the money.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I never saw it.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I lost the Oceanic, I just tell you about that. So I had a native from Akutan—because my carbon monoxide poisoning it takes me awhile to get the names.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure, it's okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I forgot his name, but we went up to Pribilof because his wife went up there. They were not talking, so I said, "Why don't you just go up to Pribilof and we go fish there?" And—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** What was that again? I didn't understand it. You were—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** The guy I had, the deckhand from Akutan?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** His wife went to Pribilofs.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** She was from Pribilof.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right, right.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** They were not talking, you know?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, there was a little problem there? (Laughs)

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Little problem. So I said, "Let's just go up there and then we go and talk to her." (Laughing) You know that. Problem we found out that we can't fish.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, yeah. We went there, and talked to him, and I heard this native language.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Oh, it was so beautiful. Oh, it was so godly, so simple, so unique, you know unique. Really unique.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. Did you ever learn any of it?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No, no. It was not for me.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** It's hard, I mean it's really—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** It was not for me.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Fishing was for me.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yes, I understand.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** But I also was a good person. I wanted them to get together. They were meant to be together.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right, right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And it ended that way. So anyway, I was, um ... I couldn't get any crab up there.

**Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen**

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** In the Pribilofs.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Now I know it but I didn't know then.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, of course.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. Now I really know....

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** But you were prospecting.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No, I tell you why.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Why?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, we had this, uh, Japanese or big ships. You know, they're half full of fucking crab, you know [unintelligible grumbling].

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** [Unintelligible] Catchers are all full. You couldn't get one, or two, or three at all.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Really?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** They're all full.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. The big catcher processors the Japanese have, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** They're all full. So, a lot of crab there. But they didn't go in a pot. But because I was cod fishing home in Iceland, I didn't know how to do that, clear 'em, and do this .... So, I said, "Guys, let's go to Squall Harbor, and get a king crab mesh, and go set some nets out."

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh nets, like the bottom nets.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen**

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** In the old style, 'cause in the 50's they used to do that, but then they stopped doing—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, we did that.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And the nets were full of crab. They were full. We put them on the table, but they didn't know—you couldn't clear them or put them in a tank, you know. These guys were just clearing 'em, and at noon, they'd cook them.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** All fat. You follow what I'm saying?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** They didn't need to have 'em alive for ten days.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** The Japanese—yeah, yeah, yeah. I understand. So, that's the thing. When you use the nets, of course you kill 'em. And so, you have to cook them right away.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** If you know—they didn't know how to clear 'em—I mean, the nets were full! The fucking nets are full!

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I never stole Japanese nets. I never believed stealing somebody else's thing.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** It's not a good deal. It's not good karma. You don't start that way.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** You don't do that. You don't fish on somebody else's thinking.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** You do your own. If you don't have your own, don't have it wrong.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So anyways, I went—my uncle Gus had the *Sea Spray*, brand spanking new Marco boat.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh. Now, your uncle Gus, this is someone—he's the one who sponsored you, right?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Now—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Well, that was the oil guy.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** That was the oil guy, okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. Uncle Gus had got—I lived with him then I got to Canada.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, right. Yeah. When you first came, you lived with Uncle Gus.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Do you have this so we can—do you have all this?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, that's why I'm asking to be sure, actually. So Uncle Gus, but he was in Canada and then he also came down to the States.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yes.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** And—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I was doing well and he wanted to do the same thing.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure. Well, why not? You see somebody doing really well.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah. So Uncle Gus got the great Marco—got a good Marco boat.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** He had a dragger, *Yule Queen*, *Yule Queen*, in the United States.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Uncle got a ship, I don't know. He didn't do very good. He thought he had a big boat, he can fill it up, and he never filled it up and whatever. (Laughing) Anyway, he had the *Sea Spray*, and I was coming from Pribilof, the *Katmai*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And some other guy from—I don't know this guy, you know—and the weather got to be around 100 mph winds out there.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** You know, you didn't have any weather forecast, nothing like that, you just go. (Laughs) We didn't have any computers or anything, you know.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** You didn't even know exactly where you were at, but on our radio—my uncle Gus, *Sea Spray*, brand spanking new boat, Marco boat, shit, they weren't going anywhere on that thing.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. The Marco boats were the best.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Oh for sure. So, they said, "Gunnar, you know, Jesus Christ, I hope you make it." So, this other guy, he was going to kill himself. He was behind me, you know, just livid behind me. He was going to kill himself.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Was he on your boat or—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No, he was on somebody else's boat.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I was trynna, you know ... you take [unintelligible] all the way, you know.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. You're bucking into it the whole way—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Oh, trying to.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Some waves we had to back up on. We backed off.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure, sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** He had to back 'em up, they were too big.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** (Laughs) We had to back up a little bit.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Green water coming over the house.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Huge waves.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Huge waves. Now, you didn't lose any windows or anything like that?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I had a schooner.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right, so it was all on the bow, sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Schooner's that way.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** All the American boats mainly—so anyway, I got to Dutch Harbor.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And sold whatever crab I had. And the other boats are still out there. I remember—I forgot his name, I don’t know—he had a nice boat, and I was just hoping he would make it. And he said, “If we go, I’m going to go first. I’m not going to have the wave take it.” He was going to shoot himself, he didn’t want to live through it. Anyway, that was a big, tough guy. (Laughs) So now, I’m on the *Katmai* and—I had some other boats at Sand Point.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** So how long did you have the *Katmai* for?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I think I had it for three years.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** And you did quite well with it, it sounds like it.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah. Do you remember any good stories about your crewman or—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Oh, yeah. I told you about the—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, you told me about Gene.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. Well, his name is not Gene—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** But you can call him Gene. But his wife—and they were not getting along.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, right. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** But afterwards, they got through it all.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** They got back together?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Oh, yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, good.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Beautiful people.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And she went to ... uh, whatever, Akutan.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Akutan, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** That's where they lived. I had the key on Akutan though. I bought propane, and from Squall Harbor I had toast from Ray Bias—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Toast, you know? The sort of thing with the toasting .... He had cases of toast.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Toast?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. You know, you put it in the ...in the sort of—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** You mean like a toaster? (Laughs)

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. He had cases of it, so I brought it to—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, you had cases of it. Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So I brought it to Akutan.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** It was like a Christmas with toasters.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Well, I just give it to the people. They said, "Gunnar, don't bring anymore toast. Don't do that."

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** "Don't bring anymore toasters."

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No. So I got propane and stuff like that.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** So, yeah.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** But I had the key up there at the bar.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. Well, you had the key to the cannery.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I never drank.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah. Why didn't you drink? So many—as you know—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I was thirty-six years old when I had the first drink.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right, but—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** But divorced.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. You were divorced when you thirty-six. Yeah. Well, it's hard for fishermen. I mean, you were—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I came on the *Oceanic* and you go through all these weather .... And Alaska—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Gulf of Alaska is not easy in the wintertime.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** No.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** You know, a eighty-footer would come in there in forty, fifty-foot seas.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** You make it home, you're so happy to be home. My wife came with a piece of paper and said, "This is it." I didn't even know.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Well, you know, it's a very hard thing when you're gone for the—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** She married my deck hand.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** (Laughing) She married your deck hand.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Barry Ohai [grumbling].

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** But anyway—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** It must have been pretty tough for you.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah, I didn't want leave because I love my girls.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And I knew when that happened, I wouldn't have them. They'd be gone.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right, sure because you were gone.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Your job took you away from the house so much.

**00:23:43**

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So I went up on the goddamn I-5, you know, bridge, you know?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I was just gonna jump down. Was gonna just forget about it.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** You were going to commit suicide.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Mm.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And a police car came down there. He said, "Hey, buddy. How are you doing?" I said, "I'm not doing so good." (Both laughing) So, he said, "Okay. You want to go

**Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen**

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

maybe have breakfast or something?" We went to—I forgot the name of it— down, down below, they're open all night. So, he took me and he gave me—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** So, in Akutan, yeah?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Huh?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** It was in Akutan?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No, here.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** It was here.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** It was after she gave me the paper.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right, so you were in Seattle then.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. I was gonna just forget about them.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** So where your girls living at that time?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Pardon me?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Your girls. Were they - also they - living in Lynnwood or—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Uhh, they were living ...Yeah. Somewhere in Lynnwood and they moved out of there. And I went to Kent.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** The Kent Valley there.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Kent.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I forgot the karma there in Kent.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, it doesn't matter.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** But I got to be the king in Kent.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** You got to be the king in Kent, why do you say that?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Well, you know, I uh .... Because I'm fisherman. Well, I had a lot of money. I bought the liquor and everything for the people. I didn't drink myself.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. But you were generous and—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Gave it to them.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** That's why I had done all my life, give it to people.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And I loved that.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Generous nature.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Oh, that's awesome. Awesome people too, help people out.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** [Unintelligible] You'd get sea storms and stuff like that.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, of course. No taxes.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** You'd get a fifth of ... whisky or something.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Or a dollar something.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Anyway, I don't know where I'm going on about boats because my brain is all screwed up.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** That's okay. No, you're doing great actually.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Are you remembering this?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** I don't have to, it's recording everything.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Oh, okay. Good. Okay.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** (Both laughing) I don't—you know what I'd—let me tell you what I do. I-I take this—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** And then I'll-I'll take from the video—I'll actually take the audio off it.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Right.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay. And when I take the audio off it, then I send it to someone to transcribe it.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** So, I don't have to write it all down. But I have—everything you say is then written down by someone else.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah, okay.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** So, it's really good. And in fact Gunnar, if you want any, like a transcribed, I can send you a transcription of it or—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** I can send you the audio visual, I don't care. You know, I don't—I-I-I don't think you lose—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No, no, I lived through it all.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah. But—I—okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** You want me to show you some pictures later on?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Later on. Let's do the pictures later on because I got the camera rolling now.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Anyway, so—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I went from the *Katmai* to the *Oceanic*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. Now, you—your wife and you divorced when you were thirty-six, about?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Something like that.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. And so, were you still on the *Katmai*?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No, I got rid of the *Katmai* and I bought the *Oceanic*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** *Oceanic*, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** From Carl Moses in Dutch Harbor.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** He owned that store, Moses Store.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And the guy owed him money in the store for grocery and stuff—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So Carl said, “You can just have the boat.” I had the boat for a year, without buying it.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Did really good.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Where you high lining then?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Oh, yeah. We went to Sand Point, Alaska and delivered them there.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** I heard you were a high liner for many years.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Oh, yeah. Many years. You know, I had 800,000 pounds at out of ... you know ... Sand Point there, yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** What year was that about?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah, I don’t remember. I um, they had it—you had Bering Sea, Dutch Harbor—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And Sand Point.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I got all three of them.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Permits for them, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Because I had one in Dutch Harbor because the guy didn’t go, something happened. So, I could go in there.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And I had 600,000 pounds out of there.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Now, what was it going for a pound in those days?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I can't remember.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** A buck a pound or—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I don't remember, honest.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** What year though? I can always look it up.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** You want me to call Pete and ask him?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, no. That's okay. But if you think about—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Pete was on the *Oceanic*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, he was?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. And we were in the Bering Sea, you know—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** We had all these big shots going by us, we were up by the rocks, you know. Fishing, filling up.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, yeah. Right. So, you guys were fishing—I mean, you were coming right on the rocks, coming up close.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Right by Chirikof.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** We were right there, close in, filling up you know. The guys were that close going in the Bering Sea. [Unintelligible] Behind like we were anchor up.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Because you don't have a guy come up the deck out in there.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Anyway, so I had the *Oceanic* there. Am I okay or do you want me to—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Keep going.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Alright. So, we would anchor up and we saw this bear. So, we shot two of them and one escaped. So, we followed him and—I gotta tell you about the bear because it's a pretty unique thing.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, we better go and get the other one. So, we went after the other one. He's going up the hill. The guys are going up the hill and I'm on a skiff with my cousin Gus.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And Gus couldn't get his skiff going and the bear turned around. And he's going after these guys.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I had one bullet. [Makes clacking sound with mouth] Killed the bear and he rolled around right where the guys were. So, we took the bear to the *Oceanic*—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Put him out there. We gave him a hat and cigar, the only bear.

[Both laughing]

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And we got a picture some place of it.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah. Do you have a picture of that?



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, fantastic.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Some place. Pete was with me.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And we lost them, and Pete was there, and I saved his life. The *Oceanic*—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** What happened with the *Oceanic*? Now how many years did you have the *Oceanic*?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I think two or three years.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I don't know for sure.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** But anyway, Pete was with me, and Gene Paulson, Gus, and Lily, and me. And we were going—because we were going to Sonosky area. We shored up in Sonosky.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** In Sonosky?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah, I think it was—a check\* came in. I just bought the boat on a napkin\*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, this was the boat you bought on the napkin?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** The *Oceanic*?



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. We came in with a load. He had—I paid thirty percent to get the boat.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And the rest was—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Thirty percent down.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Thirty percent to Carl Moses, the rest was for me.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, I said, “Carl, why don’t I just buy you this boat?”

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, right. So, that was the percentage you were paying Carl for using the boat. Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Now how about crews’ shares. In the old days, crews in the 60’s—crews made Quite—did pretty well. They got six percent.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Oh, they got more than that.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Eight percent—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** But it’s slowly gone down every—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Well, I was not greedy.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** When we go to Sand Point—and I told the guys, “You can buy anything you want in the store and run it to the boat.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** “Right to the boat.”

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** It was a window boat. I didn’t know it was a window boat. Yeah, I knew that was a window boat. But they had whiskey. They closed it up and they had whiskey behind—every night they had a drink and I didn’t know that until later on.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So anyway—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** You could laugh about it.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Now Pete’s father was with me—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And he quit and I was just, uh, he was not on the boat. He got a different boat himself and—he didn’t want to go on—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, so he started working as a captain. Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Pete Durling ... whatever. But anyway, so I can tell you I lost the boat. How’s that?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay, fine. Why—uh, it sunk then?



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. Let me tell you all about it. Spruce Cape is the name of the bay we went up. So, Gus—

[End of second audio file]

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** He had the wheel watch. I took the first watch until dusk straight and then you have to wake somebody else to take—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure, wheel watch.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** He was always up all the time.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, I wake up [Gunnar makes a pounding, crashing sound] sound and Lily's away from the shoreline—reefs.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, reef.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** The keel is off and—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh god the keel?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah, keel.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Just ripped it off or—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Oh, yeah. They're both saying, "Oh, my God, there's rocks up there." And there was a bad wind, it was come more westerly.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** The more west, the more seas. And, um, Jesus Christ here we are, the middle of—away from the land.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Where was this?



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** By Spruce Cape.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** By Spruce Cape.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, here we are. So, I said, “Guys, you know, we have to send Lil’ first on a boat,” because I didn’t want two or three guys going on life rafts and then something happen to it. They all could have drowned.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, then I get Lil’ out there. We can pull it by hand and get a nice one.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Lily, what do you mean?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** That’s the crewmember.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Lil’ Jon.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Lily-jean?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah, Lil’—Lil’-y. Yeah. Little. (Laughs)

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh. Was-was that his real name?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Gudjon.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, he was another—was he a relative of yours then?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** He's dying right now, but anyway, so I sent Lil. I said, "Lil, you go on the life raft, and we have a rope on it. And you go in there first and make sure you get a hold of the guys, and then they come in. One at a time."

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Then one, two.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. One—get one in, one in—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Then pull it in.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, we pulled the back and it's getting more westerly, more seas.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right, seas are building.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** *Really* building, that's why I didn't want them to go. So, I'm saying, Gus his brother, I want them together in case something happens to them.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, he goes in and Lil' grabs him, you know, a big wave, you go like this [Makes whooshing sound, sucking sounds] and sucks everything in. So, Lil' grabs his brother and from now on, I got two of them. And they were pulling back in. [Makes sound with mouth] [Unintelligible] head up. Here, I got two more guys.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Now in these days, you didn't have a survival suit.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No, no. No beacon, no nothing.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** No beacon? Nothing.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** How about the life raft? Was it covered or was it just—



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No, no. Open.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Open life raft.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Oh, thank heavens. That's awesome. So, Gene Paulson and Pete—he can tell you about it. Pete can. Lil's dying.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, you said that.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, they didn't know how to swim. There's no way they could make it. They both die there on the boat.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So I said, "Guys, the only way we can do this we put a rope around me, the crab rope, and I'll swim ashore, and you can go by the rope."

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay because there was rocks, or an island, or something.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** They could be on a boat.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** They were still on a boat. The mast fell out, half of the boat went—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, it broke apart.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** It was breaking apart of the reef.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah, broke apart and stuff—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So—and the window was—and then I got her rigged and I was the last out of the galley.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Were you able to get off a Mayday?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No. So anyway, in the galley the water was going like this.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** My seat, like a check. So, I think that was 200,000 check to go to some sail, of the crab\*. I put it in my pocket. Why not? (Both laughing) If I make it and I had all these reels, you know, I had movies and stuff. I took them and put them in the goddamn life raft with Lil'.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Because I had them from my girls and stuff. But anyway, so I told the guys, "I'll swim ashore."

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** "With my poly line."

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** It was not as easy as you think it was.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** No, I thought it was really hard actually.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I'll tell you what. I learned that in Hawaii. You dive when there's the big ones.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** You let it go by.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And it pulls you out because you have a line, a poly line.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** You say, “Shit.”

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Because it pulls you out. [Unintelligible] [making a sea sound] rocks and shit fly out. Then I got the goddamn thing—pull you out again.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right, the poly’s floating. It’s pulling you back.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Pulled me off.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, I hollered to the guys, “When I come down, grab my arms.” So, I came in on one big one, and Lil’ and Gus had grabbed me.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. So, the guys in the raft had made it—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No, the raft was gone. They didn’t have a raft.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** So, they swam out to land—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I was trying to get the raft.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** All the ropes around the raft and I pulled them. They all left, they’re all gone.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** So, how did you have guys on the beach?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I told you this, I sent ‘em one at a time.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, right. I understand. Because the rafts were out, and you sent them out, and then you sent the brother out so they would be on the beach together.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I sent Lil’ first.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** To grab anyone that would make it on the raft.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Then I sent Gus, his brother.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Now then, I was pulling on—we were pulling the raft out, all the ropes went. Big wave took it all [Gunnar makes a sucking sound].

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. Everything.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And the raft disappeared.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. So, you got ashore, eventually.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, I had to get the poly line around me.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And get ashore, and they could tie up the poly line, and get themselves to shore.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right, then they could just—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. Because they didn't know how to swim.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right because they could get on the line.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** That's how we got ashore.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay, so you're on this shore. You had not contacted anyone. No one knew that your boat had—



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** We were five days on the shore.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Did you have any food, or anything, or water?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Let me tell you about it. So, here we are in snow up there. It's colder than shit. So, I said, "Guys, you know—my father lost sixteen guys, there's only two of them left, you know. He lived\* thirty. He told me what to do. So, let's get together, and hug one another, and get some rocks around, so we'll be warmer. Get together. Love one another."

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** (Laughs) Love one another.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** It's a lot warmer when you love one another.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, we did that one night. We dry up a little bit, still bad waves and shit.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** We began—I said, "Guys, I don't know. We have to get out of here. Nobody's going to find us. How are we going to get out of here?" So, we start walking up the hill. Further up you go, colder it got.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Of course, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, I said, "No, this isn't going to be good guys. We're going to have to go down again." So, we went down again and here we land in the goddamn thing where we build up. We're hugging one another and drying up, so we're getting warmer. And we hear this [Gunnar makes the crashing sound of waves] big wave—came over and just took all of us. Trying to hang in there, trying to stay in our place so we wouldn't float with it.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** So, it was a big wave that took you guys.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Took off. Now everything went—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Wow.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** All my films, everything went out. And we're all soaking wet.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, of course.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I said, "Okay guys, let's not give up now. Let's be together. We know what we need to do. Get the water out of our body. Try to get us together and build up something." We did. We were hugging one another. We were colder than shit.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, of course.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** It was colder the second day. Now the next day, it calmed down. We came down. It was 130-mile wind in Cold Bay. Hundred and forty, nobody was—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. Jesus.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** You need to go to the bathroom?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** I will, but I just want to check the camera here, to make sure we're doing okay. It's perfect!

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Alright.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, bathroom, I'm going to take advantage of it.

[Interview interrupted for a bathroom break 0:10:09-0:13:32]

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** [Unintelligible] *Peter Pan*, well there's the company, yeah?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah, no yeah. They named the boat *Peter Pan*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, they did.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And I had her. Remember, I was telling you about that.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, yeah. Briefly, but I don't recall all the stuff, you know ... just because I can't remember everything. I'm also getting older.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I probably should tell you about that. I lost it.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** But we're still—we're on the second day of—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Before you get rescued there on the island.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** And the waves just—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Come on over you.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Let me finish that off.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So anyway, so next day it calmed down a little bit and it was—you know those things to burn the ends—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, the like, line?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Starters? Those starters? You pull it, you know, and you get fire on it?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Are you talking about a flare gun?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. It's the guns you used to put on the ends of the ropes.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, right. Yeah, sure, sure to burn the-the-the, the burnt bitter end.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** To get the—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** To burn the poly.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Exactly. So, that was on the beach, and—oil, and shit, all kinds of shit on the beach.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right, of course.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, I said, “Lil’, we have to try to get some of this stuff and get a fire going to warm up your clothes, and heat up things, and we’ll get something going.”

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, yeah. Sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** But we couldn’t walk. Very limp from here to there.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** It was really hard to walk.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. You were really cold.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** It was so hard to walk. You’d just crawl.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Hard to get it going. So anyway, we scraped that up and we got fire going.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Gotcha.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** With all the junk, and buoys, and shit, and burned it. And then we forgot to burn them—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** You were burning the buoys?

**Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen**

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yep.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Wow.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Plastic.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, yeah. Anything to make a fire.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. There was wood there and shit from the boat. And that's how one of the crab fishermen was coming in—it was the third or fourth day, then he came in there and saw the fire. And he called the Coast Guard.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And the Coast Guard plane came.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, they spotted you.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Well, the guy—the crab fisherman—called them in Cold Bay because the weather was good.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And they came and got us. So, that was kind of funny and then we came and got

the Coast Guard plane.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** This Coast Guard guy looked at Gene, “Not you again!” (Both laughing) Because he had a boat lost before. He went after him before.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right, right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** “Not you again!” So, that was *Oceanic*.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Wow. So, the *Oceanic*—well, most important thing is you saved all the crew.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Nobody died.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** You know?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Nobody died. And *Peter Pan*, nobody died. That was really bad, *Peter Pan*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Well, what happened with the *Peter Pan*?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Well, it was just me and Dan, you know, on the *Peter Pan*—fishing, crab fishing. And we took an older guy with us because you can have two on deck, and one on the pilothouse, and got [unintelligible]. There were no piles—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** So, you were only doing three?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. We were doing two before when we came down. And there's [unintelligible] and things because it's cold and shit like that on the *Peter Pan*. I was stove tanked, you know, because I was out of fuel. So, I had the stove tank.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Put that in the—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** For the fuel oil.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. So, I put it in the main engine, come in—lost our rudder once.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** But you lost the rudder?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah, lost—I always made it somehow because I was gangster. When guys are trying to hide and go inside, I was going out. (Laughs) I'm a terrible guy that way. But anyway, for the last time on the *Peter Pan*, was this way: We hired this guy, little, skinny guy. We went to Chignik.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Chignik, yeah.

**Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen**

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Kujulik\* Bay.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Kujulik\* Bay means “Windy Bay.” Anyway, we went over there. There was a village over there and we had a once ... skin dive suit, one of them. So, we had to put the guy in the skin dive. He said, “You’re not going to be one of us unless you go and do this. You have to swim to the town and say hi to the people.” He almost died, that guy, because he was skinny.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** All the water went in there (laughing).

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** My God.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So anyway—so—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Was he on the boat when it went down?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah, there was three of us.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** So, you guys were in—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Kujulik\* Bay.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Kujulik\* Bay, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** By Chignik, not too far away.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right, yeah, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** That’s where I filled her up. Now it’s dark again, blue hundreds of miles, everything is blue. I came full board up to these full board, dropped the god damn hook and drifted off.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, I thought I could go to a different bay. That was a mistake a million times. Here I am and—I think we were all died and could have seen the people. We didn't have any no radar or anything like that.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** You had nothing?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No, no.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** In those days, there was radar and stuff.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** There wasn't any radar.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Why not?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** There was no radars.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** You didn't have like a Furuno or something?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No. No, radar.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Wow. So, you guys had a depth sounder, right?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** [Makes sonar sound]

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** That didn't work. Didn't work all the time. So, I went by the mountains and stuff. I could see—you have vision, you know what you're doing.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Could be dark and you still know where you're at.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Kind of funny. So, I'm going across the bay and it's blowing like crazy. I said, "Yeah, I don't know if I'm going to make it or not." I see this little mountain, the light comes,



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

and I knew in a second where I was. So, I jogged into, we went in, and it was not blowing as much. But we got a lot of water. Went to the beach and the boat went this way.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And we were sunk.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** You were taking on a lot of water, then.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** We went to the beach.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** What happened? Why were you taking on so much water?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** The weather was really bad.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. Was it the pumps or—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Ice. We had ice. That much ice.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Wow.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I used the pump for the main engine, I used it to get the water out of the boat. So, I went across. Try to get where it was calmer.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And I did, went up that beach. And I was hoping to get the boat this way.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, to do that, I would have to go ashore. And I went ashore, swam ashore.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, you swam ashore—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** From the boat again.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** With a poly line around your—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. This time I froze my hands. I froze them. It was much warmer in the water than it was up on—I'd come up and [Gunnar makes a crackling sound] be frozen.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** [Unintelligible] I'm sorry, my brain is a little screwy.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** No, it's okay. Doing just great. No—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, I put the line on there, tied her up—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And we put in a block up on the mast and pulled the boat over.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, right. Okay, on the beach then.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah, that saved us. It was blowing real hard and I went out to nail the door. That's the time I froze my hands.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Wow.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Came to the stove, put down the stove light, and the guys grabbed my hands off the stove because it just burnt.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right, right. You couldn't feel anything.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** No.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So anyway, we were two days there and I got the radio going somehow, everything going. And we called—another boat heard that and then came over and got us.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Took you off the beach there.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** It was okay.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Were you able to save the *Peter Pan*?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No, no, no.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** What had happened? Why had it started taking on so much water?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Well, just the weather. The wooden molds took over.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, it was a wooden boat. Okay, yeah, yeah. It must have sprung a plank or—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah, started going that way—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And breaking up, stuff like that.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right, it was a wood boat.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** What kind of boat was it? Was it a rolled seiner? Sardine seiner or—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah, that's what it was.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** *Peter Pan*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** (Laughs) *Peter Pan*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** For the—yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** What year was that about for *Peter Pan*?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** ‘60 something.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Well, that was in the ‘60’s.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I think so.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, it would make more sense. It was a wood boat, and they were still using the wood boats in the ‘60s.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Oh, yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** How about for the *Oceanus*? That was a steel boat, right?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No, wooden boat.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Was it also an old sardine seiner?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No. It was a crab boat unless they used it for that too.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Because a lot of those California sardine seiners—the sardine seiners went out in the ‘50s.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I don’t know what they used it for before, but it was just a crabber to me.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right, right. But it was forward house or stern house?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Forward.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** You know what I had that *Katmai*—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And I build the—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** What happened to the *Katmai* anyway? It was such a good boat for you.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. Well, I got the other one. *Oceanic*, goodbye.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right because you were just a skipper of the *Katmai*—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. And yeah, it was just like a picture. You just work and—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** I understand.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I had a lot of boats and I like to follow it all the way through, but my brain is not the best.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Well, most of our brains aren't the best at seventy-eight anyway. So, the—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Well, I was—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** You're doing plenty well. I mean, when I get the chance to put it all together, it'll be fine.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah, so—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Because I'll edit through—and get to the core of it.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah. So, don't even worry about that.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** It might be here, down there.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, yeah, sure. The thing is, it doesn't have to be in one order. It's just stories come up because I can put them in order.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** That's why I ask you about dates, like about the *Peter Pan*. Well, it turns out it was in the '60s and the *Oceanus* was later.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Do you know price? You can find out about the price.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah and I can ask the fellow who was your crewman. The guy who works at my condo—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** What was his name?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, shit. I don't even know. I don't. He just—we got in a conversation one day and we were talking about fishing because I was never a crab fisherman, but I fished for many years—seining and I had done long line.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** And so, we just had a chat about it and went on. So, okay. So obviously, you were—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** *Oceanic* is over with.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** *Oceanic* is over with. What year was that about? '75 something?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Something like that.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah. And so, when did you and your wife get divorced? What year was that?



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** It was after I was in—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Was it in the '80s?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I had the *North Pacific*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** *North Pacific*. What was the *North Pacific*? Tell me about that boat.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Well, it was—I had the—*Gerald* first? *Gerald*?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** *Gerald*?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** How's that spelled?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Well, what happened is—the *North Pacific* was a steel boat, nice boat. Magne Ness owned it. You know who Magne Ness is?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** I do know. He was one of the Karmoy guys.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Magne Ness ... Those guys .... Anyway, then I had the *Gerald*, I was doing really good in Dutch Harbor.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, they wanted me to take the *North Pacific*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Which one?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** *North Pacific*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** *North Pacific*, okay. So, what year was this about?



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Jesus, I'm all screwed up about the years.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** '80s? '70s?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** '80s.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** '80s.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I went to Adak.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. So, king crab started to fade there, 1981 I think was the last big year.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No, I think the season was open in Adak. We had an opening the Adak. All over there.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Alright.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And then you couldn't go in the Bering Sea.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. It went like this.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No, it was crab. They didn't find any crab.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right, there was—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Okay, let me tell you about this. So, I had the *North Pacific* and that's the time I had Barry Ohai with me. That's the one that got married to my ex-wife.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, Barry Ohai.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** He was with me. I took him on the *Bethel I*. Do you know what *Bethel I* was?



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Well, I know there's a town of Bethel.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** *Bethel I.*

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** I don't know the *Bethel I.*

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No, he started-started their king crab fishing in Dutch Harbor, Alaska.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And he was there and his wife on *Bethel One*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Magne Ness or—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Who is this?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** (Laughing) Hang on just a second.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I just said it a little bit ago.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sorensen?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No. Magna Ness and—hang on one second. All of a sudden, my brain went—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Well, Wakefield Fisheries was the first—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Okay. So, I had *North Pacific*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And I was taken out west.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And what happened is bad weather, very bad. We went into Finger Bay. We call it Finger Bay\*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Finger Bay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Finger Bay.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Everybody tied up in Finger Bay.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** It was bad weather, so I went out there, and I lift a couple of pots, and they're plumb full of crab.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** King crab?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Wow.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Now, I didn't want to let the other guys know that.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Of course.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, what we did do—we said we had problems with the main engine and get it started so I couldn't get out of the harbor. So, the other guys went out of the harbor and went someplace else to fish.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** We found it wasn't even—they were all over there, couldn't find any. So, you come out there and we—all our pots are full of crab. So much crab, they were just plum full. You're talking about 250 to a pot.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Wow, that's quite a bit.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** And this was in the '80s, so the price was high and the king crab was not very many.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** How long was the opening for? How many days?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I don't know. I don't remember that.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Fourteen days—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Because they got rid of me anyway. I'll tell you why.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, we come— what happened is there was a boat that left their pots from the year before in the shallows.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Because you filled up the boat in Adak and claimed it for the Bering Sea. Well, our guys did that. Do you understand where I'm coming from?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, if you're going to fill up your boat, you can't take the pots with them. You can't take those pots by the hatch.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. The ones that would open—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** The hatch is full.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** You have to throw them somewhere.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, you threw them all over. Now, I found them coming back. So, I said, “Hey guys,” this is one year because they broke off, a couple of feet broke off, this broke off. It was full of sand. So, I said, “Hey, if we get any, let’s take the weights off and put them in the lazarette so we can always give the guys the pot later on.”

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Everybody—Cory Ness\* was with me. And pretty remarkable—I forgot the name.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Who was the Ness that was with you, which one?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Cory Ness.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Cory Ness.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And we all agreed on this. So anyway, I filled the boat with crab. I’m the only one that came home before Christmas with a full boat. Everybody else came at 2,000, 3,000 pounds or under two—

[End of third audio file]

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** One of those terrible years.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** You couldn’t find *nothing* and I caught a hundred and ten thousand pounds.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Price must have been really high too.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I don’t know

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Two-fifty a pound, something.

**Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen**

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I don't remember. We were in Adak. Going to unload there. They were going to have a shop there and all that shit but the government didn't want that so they cut them out of there. I'm trying to think of the name. I don't know why it went out of my mouth all of a sudden. He married my wife.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, yeah, I got his name earlier.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Did you? What's his name?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** I can't remember but it's on tape.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Geez, all of a sudden, it just left. But anyway—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** It happens to me too.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I should remember that (laughing).

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** I suppose. I suppose.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So anyway, I filled up the boat and stuff like that, so they all blame me for stealing these pots.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Really?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Well, they want their boat because you know I filled it up. Now they go fill up their boats because they found out where I was. And Gunnar Iltutto\*, I told him about where I was. I want him to get it. So, I said, "Gunnar, you know, I found this crab on this—" what do you call those guys on the back? You know those animals, what do you call them?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Which ones?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** They swim a lot on their back.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, otters.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Otters. He had a live king crab on their back. So I said, "Gunnar you got to look into this because he was alive this guy. You ought to set your gear there."

**Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen**

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Now who was this you told this to?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Gunnar Iltusso.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, another Icelandic.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No, Norwegian. (Laughs) I didn't have any Icelanders. Everybody Norwegian. (Laughs)

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Always four or five Icelanders.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I was always fighting these Norwegians because I always had more crab than they did. They didn't like that. So I stole it all after that.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** So they accused you of stealing the crab?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Everybody—I picked everybody's gear and I stole everything.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** It must have been a crazy time.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Well, they wanted the boat anyway because it could have made money, you know.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. So after you made all their money they took the boat away from you.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** So what did you do next, then?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I went to Dutch Harbor, Alaska. And I wanted to see, so I got the *Jaro*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** The *Jaro*. What is that, steel boat?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** The captain knew that I didn't steal the crab. The guy that ran the business—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** You just got lucky.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** He said “You can have the *Jaro*. Come up, have the *Jaro* and it’s no pots. Just eight by eights.”

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** ‘Kay. Those are big.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Let me tell you about that. “So Gunnar you take the *Jaro*. Take all the bait. I’ve got this extra bait so you can take it and dump it for me.” I said okay and dumped it off, but I kept a lot of it. That boat was really rotten. My—

[Cell phone rings]

[0:03:59-0:05:29 is a conversation between Gunnar Gudjonssen and the cell caller,  
identified as his girlfriend]

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** It’s yours.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Hello!

**Cell Caller:** How’s it going?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** It’s not going. I forgot the name of whoever that is—who married my wife.

**Cell Caller:** Barry Ohai

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah, I forgot that. Barry Ohai. I forgot the name.

**Cell Caller:** Well, that’s okay. How’s everybody? How’s it going otherwise?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Well, we’re still talking, they’re kind of taking the pictures of me, and I’m screwing up, but everything seems to be ok.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** He’s doing fine.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** He’s getting really tired of me, this guy.

**Cell Caller:** He hasn’t seen any pictures yet?



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No, he hasn't seen any pictures yet. So I'll talk to you later, sweetie.

**Cell Caller:** Okay [unintelligible] just give me a yell when you're done.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Alright sweetie. I will do that.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Is that your daughter?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Barry Ohai.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Barry Ohai. Is that your daughter?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No, my girlfriend.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, it's your girlfriend!

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. She's fifty-eight.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Nice! A man should ....

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Should know what the hell you're doing. (Laughs) Anyway, so I got the *Jaro*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, the *Jaro*. You said it was rotten.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. When we untied the thing the side of it fell off.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Geez! Was it a wood boat?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. So I said, "Gus,"—you know, Gus was with me—I say, "Gus, let's just build it out of steel." So, we build it out of steel and went on this journey for Dutch Harbor, Alaska. Let me tell you about it. I could only have eight by eights and I had—I think it was twenty-six of them. Eight by eights. I filled up *twice* in twenty-four hours.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Was this in Dutch Harbor?



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. I just went around the corner. I had 465 keepers in twelve hours. Four hundred-sixty something keepers, and still alive the guy to tell about it.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** It's like the old days. I was talking to one crab guy who had been crabbing out of Adak in 1956. In those days you would just go out for the day.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** In Adak '56 it was nothing.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Well, there was nothing there. I think Wakefield had the floating processor there and so—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** In the '50s?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** He was sailing on the Bering Sea—on the Bering Sea boat dragging for king crab. I know all about that.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** There was the other guys out of Poulsbo. They were doing that in '58. Yeah, Burt Issacson. I don't know if you know him.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Burt Issacson?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** He was mainly, uh .... He mainly did gillnetting, Bristol Bay—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** If he was any good I know him. (Laughs) Let's put it that way. I knew all the best guys.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** He was good. Burt—I think he got out of crabbing because he liked to spend more time —

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Magne Ness, Sorenson and the guy owns the fleet down there. He started—he was on the *North Sea* '65.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Does he have four or five boats down in Seattle now? I might have even interviewed him, but I forget his name.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** You probably did.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** He wasn't as fun to interview as you.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Huh?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** He wasn't as much fun as you are. He was—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** He had too much money. (Laughs)

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** He didn't really tell the stories. You know what I'm saying?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** He never had a boat that sunk. I lost one more.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, you told me you had three. What was the third one then?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** *Aleutian Star*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** *Aleutian Star*. Now do you remember what year that went down?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I don't remember.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** I can look it up. Don't worry. So what happened with the *Aleutian Star*? Was it a steel boat or a wood boat or—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No, a steel boat. A fast boat. Let me tell you about that. I traded with a guy and— what the hell do you call it—anyway I had a contract for a boat in Bellingham. Okay? And I traded this contract to this guy to get the *Aleutian Star*. I renamed it the *Aleutian Star*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** You had a contract?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I had a contract on another boat. And I gave him the contract and I got his boat, the *Aleutian Star*. And I was going give that to my brother. Fast sucker—fastest thing I owned.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** It was fast. Was it steel boat? Stern house? Forward house?



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Forward. So anyway, my stepfather Karl Hansen, he's an iron worker, and we fixed it up really good. But when you filled it up—the water. It went this way.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, that's not good.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And then we straighten up. Well, what happened, we had a fuel tank down below.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** (Yawns) Right, okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Just let me know that you're done. We can always come again.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** No. I want to get as much done as I can. And I'm enjoying myself, actually.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Oh, you are? Do you want donuts?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** No, I love donuts. I can have it, I just shouldn't. But right now let's finish the story of the *Aleutian Star*.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Anyway, I had Gus and Lil' and all this crew members with me and we fix it all up. We're ready to go up to Alaska.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure, sure, yeah. I think I will have a bit of a donut. Keep talking though. So you were going up to Alaska?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah lemme tell you about that. We fixed it up really good and the thing went fourteen knots.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah. Wow! That's fast.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So we had my sister and her child with me. They were going go up to Alaska with me. And we had Lil', we had his son—forgot the name of the son—and my brother Gudjon and another guy. We had eight or nine people on the boat to Alaska. What happened was this: Gene Olsen was my engineer. He didn't fill up the tank, so we had loose water. We didn't know that. When you are going you don't feel it.

**Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen**

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. I understand the problem though.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I never blamed anybody, but I asked God to let nobody die.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** What happened? Did the boat tip over or—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah, lemme tell you what happened. So we going through the locks and it was pretty— it was going like this through the locks. It was not doing the right thing. As soon as we came where there was no water—I mean it was all flat— everything was cool. Now the boat was perfect. And I did. I bought line from Iceland— special line, polyester line—stronger than any other line you can ever think of. So, I filled up the lazarette with line and all that stuff. So, we were really ready to go. So, I wanted to take it for a season and then give the boat to my brother. And build a new one up there. Bellingham. A One boats\*. That was the plan. So here we going, I got all these people with me. My brother, my sister— half-sister, half-brother— and her daughter. And Gerta\*, Lil's son. The boat goes on the side, goes on the side like that. And I had just fix these engines so if it goes on the makes side you lose the oil, [makes a popping sound], you lose the power. And that's the problem.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh. Did you have pots on it?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah, I have pots. I took twenty-some—around thirty pots for my uncle Gus. He was buying a boat, so I was going to take pots for him up there.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** What year was this?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I don't know.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** '80s? '90s?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** You will have it in the record, you know, about those years.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, it was the *Aleutian Star*, yeah. I can look it up, yeah.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So, let me tell you what happened. It goes on the side, okay. Everybody goes out and all this stuff. But Lil's son, Greta was asleep, so he don't know nothing about this. The door was open so it was flowing in. If the door had been closed it would have filled up the

**Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen**

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

tank and gone the right way. I went down to his room, there's no way I could do anything. It's too dangerous. So I'm going up and Greta is asleep. So, I asked for Greta, "Where's Greta?" "He's asleep down somewhere." They don't know nothing about it. So I went down to get Greta. Greta said "I never seen anything like it. Somebody grabbed me and I was just in the air." I was strong in those days. So I saved his life. I almost lost mine because the boat was going like this and the wheel and this shit. I just asked God—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Was this still in the Puget Sound?

**00:16:00**

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I guess so. I lost my fortune. I lost everything.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** In the *Aleutian Star*?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** But I didn't lose one person of mine.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** And you had so many people too.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Now we didn't have any lifeboat. Nobody knew we were there. They had buoys and shit. Two and half hours in the water. That's about the most you can have and everyone start dying. Now I say God helped me. As soon as I said that—[pew!] I had a light in my eyes. That's funny because I could feel it, I couldn't do it. I was going swim to the lighthouse because the lighthouse—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Which lighthouse? Point No Point there?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I think so. I was going to swim to it and make it and tell them where everybody was. Because I'm a good swimmer—was a really good swimmer. And I could feel it, sinking, my feet was goin' and my arms were goin' and I said God help us. As soon as I said that I had a light in my eyes from a tugboat to Vancouver. I don't know how he could hear me. You know how he [imitates boat engine noise] I don't know how he could hear me. That was a miracle.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** He picked you up in the water probably with the light. So he picked you up and he went to where everybody was—

**Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen**

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** So I looked for my brother—I told him where my brother would be and stuff and they picked him up. And they called in the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard went and got all the other people. So nobody died. But I lost everything.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Really? It wasn't insured? The boat wasn't?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Not enough. Not enough for everything. But I lost everything, all the money in the bank, everything, everything. But I didn't care. I made a deal. I said "Okay, you don't have everybody die on me you can have everything I got." He took everything I got. He took it all. "Okay, go ahead."

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay, so you lost the *Aleutian Star* and that was your big investment. But you didn't stop fishing and working, did you?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Oh, no, no. But I had some pots in Finger Bay, I think it was. And somebody took them and start fishing them. I went to Kodiak and I picked up a boat there—I forget the name of the boat. I get the ... the name is not in there. So I fixed her up and got her for a crabber. I had all the pots. I was gonna go and grab the pots. They're all in the Bering Sea. Some of my own. (Laughs) If I would have taken the pots, they would have gotten rid of me. They would shot me. They would just [makes revolver with his hand and shoots]. And then I went to *Kona*. *Kona* is—that's when I got married. *Kona*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** The island? Out in Hawaii?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** *Kona, Kona. Kona*. That's a boat. I made it. Kim Body had it. A longboat—*Kona*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** K-O-N-A?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I had pictures—they all burned up on the *Juneau*. A lot of things burned up. All the tapes and all that shit burned up. Anyway I got a little carbon monoxide poisoning and shit. Anyway, so I built this *Kona* and I have pictures of it and all this shit. Build it, it was nice. I had two million pounds of tanner, not opilio, tanner. Two million pounds. And a hundred thousand pounds of king crab. And I came down and Kim Body wanted the boat.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** He wanted the boat back.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** He wanted the boat. So he talked because I was not a skipper and I didn't have paperwork for that.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** You had sea time but you'd never taken the test.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Never take the test. I don't read and write, right? They offered me that. They offered me a license. All you had to do was pay. I almost did.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Well, yeah, it wouldn't be a bad idea. I mean you have plenty of ability.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I got the guys to be a skipper.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Sure, they put in their time and did the test and—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah, give them the time and all that stuff you know.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** I had my sea time. I could have applied.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah, the guy got—he was skipper, not me. Asked me “Gunnar, you take the boat to Bristol Bay. Please? I dunno how to get there.” (Laughs) I say, “You know how to get there.” Anyway, so I got the call. I didn't have very long. But I had two million pounds of tanner. And a hundred thousand pounds, you know, and I made a lot of money. I could have paid a lot of people. I owned it. I owned sixty percent, something like that.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right, right. The *Kona*.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** And Kim Body was supposed to have half but he start telling people what to do. I said “Kim you don't tell the architect where the light supposed to be. (Laughs) That's their job. An architect is an architect, you don't argue with them.”

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Marine architects, that's their job. So you broke the partnership apart eventually

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah, and he got the boat. I guess. Magne, they couldn't have run their boats.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Magne couldn't?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No. I had Helga with me, the first time. She's here. I can show her to you. She's here somewhere.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Let me see.

**[Gunnar pulls out pictures]**

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** This is me when I was fifteen.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** (Laughs) Look at that picture. That's fantastic.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** This is my brother here.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** *Autumn Dawn*.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** This is me in Iceland. You know this guy. He died.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** It happens.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Nobody's gonna escape.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** No one gets out of here alive.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** But he was the second runner up, international. This is me.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** That's you?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** In Iceland. Right. This is in Florida.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh fantastic. Oh yeah! Tell me about Florida—the fishing in Florida.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I build a cannery. I spend about a million and a half dollars down there.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** For the golden crab, yeah?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** For the cannery.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** How did that go?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Nobody could fish in that. Nobody could fish there. Nobody. Fuck. The current is three and a half knots always. Very bad. You cannot fish that.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** It was very deep too.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Not so deep. Well couple hundred fathoms, you know.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah, but if the current's strong—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I fish all the way to Cuba. And I found tanner, beautiful tanner. Beautiful fishing, Cuba would be just beautiful because there's no current out there.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, you've got the Gulf Stream there coming up by Florida. That's what you were dealing with.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Up to four knots. This is my pot. I made this pot.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** You designed this?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. This is a longline pot.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. Longline pot fishing. You were telling me about this.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Now this is in Florida. This is shrimp tentacle. See them here. See how big they are?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** They're huge. Are they Langostino maybe?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Nobody know. You know I had big ones. These are small ones. I had big ones and my crew member ate them.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Well they look pretty good too. Is this Helga too?

**Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen**

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah. Then she got the cancer. In Iceland. She was a beautiful girl. I mean she was a good girl, a good girl. She was not just flunky girl. I have Barry Ohai in here. My wife and ex-wife and—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Let me go ahead— let me talk to you real quickly— oh! Tell me about the—okay, now when did you do the golden crab in Florida?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I forgot when I was 2000—it was 1995 I think.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right, and you did it for just a couple of years there?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No I was there for a while. I built a cannery and stuff like that.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** That's a huge investment.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Well, the guy I had with me—you know, I loaned people a hundred thousand here and there. I loaned them. I knew they couldn't fish it, I could figure that out. But they sold it on the side and shit and they never pay me anything. So I backed up two boats to come down there and do it. They were all willing to do it. But I had to—

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** What boats did you have down there?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** *The Little Giant*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** *Little John*?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** *Little Giant*. And the *Pacific Star*. I owned property down there. Three acres on the beach.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Nice.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Reid Shues—this guy here—Reid Shues, this guy owned it. He was doing the marathon.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Tough old guy.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Now he is. I went down there now and I didn't see him. But I got a crew member down there. Ross Thurgey.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Still?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Yeah.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** So when did you stop fishing?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I went to Juneau and I was over there about six years. So it was six years ago. I went with Greta. Seventy something years old.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** You were seventy-two then?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I'm seventy-eight now.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Yeah. So six years ago being seventy-two was your last year.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I think so. Seventy-three, something like that. We went to Iceland, and she got this cancer. I was there eighteen months.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** What year was that? Six years ago? Seven years ago?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Eight years ago, nine years ago. So, I wanted—because they have this this quota system.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** You qualified for quota?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I did. I had the biggest quota. I had fifty percent of the brown crab. I made the brown crab.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Tell me about making the brown crab because that was—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Well I had the *Pacific Star*, you know. I had the *Pacific Star*.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** What year did you start doing brown crab?



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I was doing brown crab beginning. They were doing single pod fishing.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** When was this? '70s? '60s?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I had Gene Olsen's boat for that. I owned the *Costa Glacier*. Do you know the *Costa Glacier*?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** No, no.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Spike, he's a guy who could tell you about that. So I had the *Costa Glacier* and stuff like that. And went brown crab fishing.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** There was no one brown crab fishing in those days.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No. My stepfather built a power block and a davit, and a line band. He built all that with his welding.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. You were telling me about that. So that you could go deep for a crab.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** They couldn't do it, the other guys. Kids, up in Alaska, Magne\*and someone else. You know wa—wa—[imitates their voices] "We tried it with the cable and it was really farting heavy and there was no way we could do that shit". Meanwhile I was picking up one after the other because we were doing it with my stepfather's buck.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Right. You got to have the right equipment to do it properly.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Got to have the right equipment.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** And so the brown crab—you got quota but when it came—

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** There was no quota.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** No quota for brown crab?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No, not in those days.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, not in those day. No, no, no. But when they instituted the IFQs?

**Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen**

**MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7**  
**Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant**

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** The *Pacific Star* is the most famous boat for brown crab. I have that and my wife. Stay at home now. We had two, two and half million pounds of brown crab. We had, I think it was like forty-five percent in Dutch harbor quota system, and maybe forty-five, fifty percent in the other places.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** That's a huge amount of crab then that you were catching out of the quota.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I tell you, if I would have gotten the quota system, they would have lost theirs.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Did you get any quota out of it?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Nothing.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Nothing? That's a shame.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** My brother get quota. Gerte\* has quota. I didn't have any quota.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Your brother now, he was also a seiner, right?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** No.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Who seined in Southeast?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** He does packs.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Oh, he's packing. Like salmon. With his crab boat.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I showed you the boat, didn't I?

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** I can't remember. Lemme, um ... first thing, I have to ask you—this form—because I want to take some of your images to put in your file, but I want to make sure it's okay.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** It's okay. No problem. You can have anything you want.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Well that's pretty nice. Thanks. Hold on a minute.



## Interview with Gunnar Gudjonssen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fishermen Oral History Project*, 2018.63.7  
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

---

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** I won't live that long (laughs).

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Maybe tonight.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** You might not make it.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** I may not. Maybe I'll get cut down on the road.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** You never know.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** You never know. That is true. One doesn't know. And as you get older in life you realize even more that one doesn't know. You know what I'm saying?

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Like Lil' is dying. Just two months ago they didn't know.

**Jeffrey Kahrs:** Okay, here. Owner—you're the owner. What's your name is there. Let me go ahead and fill it out, Gunner. Let me take care of that.

**Gunnar Gudjonssen:** Just put three hundred thousand—

[End of fourth audio file]

[End of first interview]