



Interview with Burt Isaksen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fisherman Oral History Project*, 2010.63.9
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

Narrator(s): Burt Isaksen

Date: 18 November 2016

Interviewer(s): Jeffrey Kahrs

Interview with commercial fisherman Bert Isaksen about his life and career as a longline deckhand and captain and Alaskan crab deckhand, captain, and boat owner in Bristol Bay, Alaska.

Keywords: Fisherman, Alaska

Transcriber's Note: Areas of uncertainty have been marked with an asterisk (*).

[Statement begins]

Jeffrey Kahrs: Um, the interviews will be put together and archived at MOHAI. You know MOHAI, Museum of History and Industry?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: We'll do the interviews there. I'm sure you could. You must know the Deep Sea Fisherman—

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Of the guys down in Ballard.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, I know. I used to live down in Richmond Beach for many years.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right. Of course, you know Svein.

Burt Isaksen: Oh yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Do you know Tom Samuelson? He's with the Sons of Norway Lodge.



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Burt Isaksen: Yeah, but you said Svein. Was Svein Nyhammer?

Jeffrey Kahrs: Svein Nygaard.

Burt Isaksen: Oh. Oh, Nygaard.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, yeah.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, yeah, he's the one who told me to come talk to you. Anyway, I started—I was over in Istanbul for many years, and so we decided we wanted to go, come back home, and so we did. Then, I had done some work, oh, years ago, twenty years ago, for the union, for their 80th anniversary. I interviewed a couple of the old timers there who were . . . had some really good, interesting interviews, like Jimmy Clark, who had been in the dories in the '30s in Newfoundland. He was a Newfie, so he's a Newfie. That kind of thing, yeah, nobody, I don't know of anyone who was in the dories per se anymore because that generation's—

Burt Isaksen: I don't think there's many of them still living that fished in the dories.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, I don't even know if there's any.

Burt Isaksen: No, I don't think so, either. That's years ago, though.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, that's a really long time ago. The whole thing is that I started doing that, and then I went away, and then when I came back, it was the 100th anniversary of the union. One of my best old friends is a member of the union, so he said, "Oh, you wanna write a book for the 100th anniversary?" I said, "Oh yeah, sure." So I wrote a book for the 100th anniversary, and when I was there, I interviewed all these members of the union and things like that. So from that—I've always been interested in history, and I don't know why, maritime history, even when I was young. The sea interests me. I started doing this, again because, well, some people have been doing it now. Some people did it, like the Kvichak, they were very well organized. They have a really good guy up there, Toby Sullivan. He's done a lot of this work, but for the most part, it's not so well organized, though the Nordic Heritage Museum in Seattle has done some work. I applied for a little grant, it's not much money, but it's enough to pay for the gas and give me less than minimum



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wage for my time, that kinda thing.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, oh, wow.

Jeffrey Kahrs: And so—the project’s actually finishing up because I’m running out of time. I have about twenty interviews, maybe twenty-five, and I’m going to turning them into the Museum of History and Industry, and if I can, I try to get them a little package of things. You know, like—I asked you about the photographs if you have any, but if you find some, if you talk to your granddaughter and she knows where some are or something, I’d love to have it because what I’m trying to do, my ideal, is to have some photos, do the interview, I’ll take some pictures of you here eventually, too, just because then you’ll have a file on the person, a little history.

Burt Isaksen: Sure, sure.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, I mean, it’s hard because, to be honest, fishermen, they just

Burt Isaksen: Disappear.

Jeffrey Kahrs: They just disappear, they do. They don’t have the normal sense of time that nine-to-five people do, you do this, and you do this. I’m trying to get photographs from them, they say, “Yeah, yeah,” and then they don’t call me or this.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: I’ll go to, uh—actually, after we’re done, I’ll head on over to a Fish Expo, is this week.

Burt Isaksen: Oh, yeah, yeah, that’s this week, yeah, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Let’s go ahead and start, Burt. Let me turn my phone off, here.

Burt Isaksen: Okay.

Jeffrey Kahrs: This is Jeff Kahrs, and today is the 18th of November, I believe. Yeah?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, that’s right.



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Jeffrey Kahrs: It's about ten o'clock, a little after ten o'clock in the morning, and I'm talking here with Burt Isaksen.

Burt Isaksen: Right.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Burt, just a few preliminary questions, what year were you born in?

Burt Isaksen: I was born in 1928.

Jeffrey Kahrs: 1928, okay.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, in Norway.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yes. How old are you now?

Burt Isaksen: I'll be eighty-nine in January.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Okay, good, good. Yeah, very close to Svein's age, actually. Nygaard, very similar.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Where were you born in Norway?

Burt Isaksen: On the West Coast of Norway. It's a small city close to Olafsen.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Olafsen.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Is it North or South of Bergen?

Burt Isaksen: North of Bergen.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oh, okay, alright. Now, when you were young, was it a small town that you were in?

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Burt Isaksen: Well, it was a small village, probably a hundred people, hundred twenty people living there.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right. Were they all related to each other?

Burt Isaksen: A lot of them, not all of them, but quite a few were related, yeah, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: What were the main industries?

Burt Isaksen: Well, it was fishing, and then they had a small farm. We had three, four houses, and a few sheeps and stuff like that. That's what's the main thing.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, so what would you say was the average income of somebody in a little village?

Burt Isaksen: In those days?

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, in those days.

Burt Isaksen: Oh my gosh, I couldn't even begin to think, but it wasn't very much.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Of course.

Burt Isaksen: I doubt if they made a thousand crowns a year.

Jeffrey Kahrs: How much is a crown versus a dollar?

Burt Isaksen: At that time, it was seven crowns to a dollar.

Jeffrey Kahrs: That was about two hundred dollars a year.

Burt Isaksen: About. That was probably the maximum, very maximum.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Was your village in one of the fjords?

Burt Isaksen: It was upon an island on West Coast facing the Atlantic, where I come from, that side of the island.

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Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, so a lot of seafaring, I presume.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, by tradition.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Did the boats that people used, someone once was describing, John Sverre Andersen, who had been the skipper of the *Arne*, once described a—a otring*, I think he called it. I presume it means eight rings.

Burt Isaksen: We used a lot of rowboats. We call them faering, we called them.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah.

Burt Isaksen: There was two sets of oars. Most of the time, we used it for fishing locally, see. And then, uh—I had a few—that's a fisher boat from Norway.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Okay. Oh, here, let me go ahead so I can show the camera.

[Burt is showing Kahrs pictures]

Burt Isaksen: Sure, sure. That was my dad's fishing boat.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oh, this was your dad's fishing boat?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, and I start fishing there when I was a youngster.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oh, that's a pretty nice boat, though, isn't it?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah. It was a nice boat at that time you know...

Jeffrey Kahrs: Go ahead and turn it up a little bit there, just so—oh, there we go. Very good. And, and uh—that's a regular—well that's quite a large boat.

Burt Isaksen: Well, it's probably sixty-some feet. I'm not sure, though.



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Jeffrey Kahrs: It's a schooner, schooner-rigged.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, like the schooners, not the same in design, but the schooners down in Seattle, sort of. You can—

Burt Isaksen: They're a little different in the stern.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, a little different.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah

Jeffrey Kahrs: There's still that stern house. The house is kind of similar. You could see the influence on the architecture.

Burt Isaksen: There was a thirty horsepower, one cylinder diesel engine in that boat. That was not too much power, that's for sure.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Did you guys use a little bit of sail power occasionally?

Burt Isaksen: Oh yeah, you always had sails in case it broke down or something.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, of course, not just a stabilizer sail. You were really sailing in the wind.

Burt Isaksen: No, the sail he has now on the back there, that's what you use when you're drifting with herring out in the ocean with herring nets to keep the boat straight. See? Then, the bow was hooked up to the nets.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Well, I know how a seine, how a seine works, and usually, herring, for me, has always been seine.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, right, right.

Jeffrey Kahrs: On a trawler like this, I don't know quite how you guys would catch herring. You didn't have a skiff or anything.



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Burt Isaksen: No, no, you drift for them. You had probably ten, fifteen nets tied together on a long cable and then had the floaters. You kept them, and then you adjusted them with rules for how deep you want to go, or shallow, at certain time of years, you have to go deeper or shallower. See?

Jeffrey Kahrs: Sure, sure.

Burt Isaksen: Then, used to then had a big cable, took that in with power, and then the nets came in on the side, and here were lined up three, four guys, just shook it, the herring out of that.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Uh-huh. Were they like gillnets?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, right, right.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Shackles of gillnets.

Burt Isaksen: Sure, sure. That was how it worked, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Okay. Of course, gillnets in those days were cotton.

Burt Isaksen: Exactly. I remember that.

Jeffrey Kahrs: It was a lot of work to maintain.

Burt Isaksen: You bet you it was.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, yeah, I'm sure it was. Bluing stone, you had to make sure the rats didn't chew.

Burt Isaksen: When I first started in the Bristol Bay, then we had cotton nets.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oh, wow. Okay. Well, that's - that's - really fascinating, actually. Well get back to that. Let me go back to the chronology a little bit so we don't get too far out. Now, you was raised in the village there, and in the village, how old were you when you first started fishing?

Burt Isaksen: Oh, probably twelve, thirteen years old when I started fishing with my dad on that

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boat.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Ah-hah, okay. You went out with him, and you were fishing. What kind of fish? Obviously, herring.

Burt Isaksen: Well, herring and codfish. Set net for codfish.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Set net for codfish?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: So would you anchor the nets on the bottom?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Okay. I know this form of fishing. You anchor the nets on the bottom, and then the cod would get caught in the net, right?

Burt Isaksen: Right, right.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Did you ever do any long lining there?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, we did some long lining for shark. That was big fishing for several years back then, just during and after the war, see.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yes.

Burt Isaksen: We'd never eat the shark in Norway, though, but we shipped it to England, and then probably used it probably for fish and chips. That's what they told us. We had to skin it and then ship it to Newcastle.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Uh-huh. Which port in England would you ship it to?

Burt Isaksen: In Newcastle was where the shipment—

Jeffrey Kahrs: Newcastle, yeah, yeah, yeah.



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Burt Isaksen: Newcastle, yeah. Then, they shipped it all over the country, I suppose. I don't know.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Were they also going for the livers, the shark livers?

Burt Isaksen: Not we, on my dad's fishing boat, but some did. Some did.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right. That was a big business in Ballard. I was just curious.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah, yeah, they did that for a while, some of the guys, though.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, before they had, I think, artificial vitamin D, is it, I think for sight, night vision, things like that.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah, right, right.

Jeffrey Kahrs: You were about twelve years old, then, when World War II broke out.

Burt Isaksen: Well, yeah, I was twelve years old, yeah, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Could you describe a little bit about what was that like?

Burt Isaksen: Well, it didn't affect us. Well, of course, the food was— it was kind of tough because you couldn't buy anything, clothing and all that stuff, but we were more or less self-supported. We had the fish there and had a little farm. You had the potatoes and vegetables and milk, so we didn't buy very much. Flour, we had to buy if you could get it.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Mm-hmm. Bread was the hardest thing to get?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah. We did grow some wheat on the farm where they come from, and we dried it up to flour.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Sure, of course, you had a mill.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah. The war, I mean, wars aren't always tough for everyone. Were you going



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to school during the war, too?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, we went to school, and we missed about half a year because the Germans took over the schoolhouse.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, they invaded.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, and so nobody went to school there. That was about six months we lost, one year, that's all. Otherwise, it was normal.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Some areas of the country were hit much harder.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, right, right, much harder.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oslo, yeah.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Did you remember anything about the resistance or anything on the island, or was it just pretty much away from everything?

Burt Isaksen: It was just the same old thing. You see that a lot of young people— they took the boats and they went to Shetland, and then they joined the free army over there, or the merchant marine—

Jeffrey Kahrs: They went to the Shetland Island?

Burt Isaksen: Shetland Islands, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, off Scotland there.

Burt Isaksen: Right, and a lot of fishing boats that went over there, the youngsters, young fellow, and they joined the merchant marine, or they went into the Navy or whatever over there.

Jeffrey Kahrs: That's what they would do, then, they would just leave and go on over, sail on over to the Shetlands, and join up with the Royal Navy, or the Merchant Marines, or something.



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Burt Isaksen: Yeah, exactly, yeah. It was quite a few of them that did that, though.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, I'm sure there was. They knew the sea, and they wanted to fight, so they'd go. Sounds like young men to me, yeah.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: When the war ended, you were seventeen, eighteen years old.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: You graduated?

Burt Isaksen: Well, if you call it that. (Laughs)

Jeffrey Kahrs: For lack of a better word.

Burt Isaksen: Most of us, we had only the grammar school, and seven years was required. I did go through grammar school, and one year in a little high school. Then, I kept on fishing for a few years, and then decided, "Well, this is my future here," so I went in the Merchant Marine.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oh, so you were in the Merchant Marines?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Were you an able-bodied seaman, then?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, right, and I was a lot on a Norwegian ship at that time, and that was the mostly income for young fellows because you couldn't make a living where we came from with all those kids, big families. So a lot of youngsters—they went into the merchant marine, including me. That it was for several years, five, six years, and then I decided that I'm going to America.

Jeffrey Kahrs: You're gonna go over to America, huh?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah.

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Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah. What year did you come to this?

Burt Isaksen: 1952.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Did you come directly to Seattle, or how did you get here?

Burt Isaksen: I came on a Norwegian ship—in fact that’s a picture of it—and came— we stopped in Halifax, and then to New York, and then I took a train out to Tacoma.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oh, so you were on a passenger ship?

Burt Isaksen: Right, right.

Jeffrey Kahrs: This was the ship that you were on, yeah?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Alright, show the camera, there. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Hey, you did pretty well, then. That’s a nice way to come into Canada. I mean, you weren’t—

Burt Isaksen: Well, we stopped in Halifax for a day or so, and then we went to New York, and then I left there and took a train out to Tacoma.

Jeffrey Kahrs: You went to Ellis Island, then? Did you—

Burt Isaksen: No, no, no. No, no, no.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Well, show the camera that. That’s kinda fun. That’s okay, don’t worry about Burt there. Okay, you didn’t go through Ellis Island?

Burt Isaksen: No.

Jeffrey Kahrs: When you came into New York, you had your Norwegian passport, you showed it to them and they just said, “Okay, see you later.”

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, that’s right.



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Jeffrey Kahrs: I think immigrating into America was easier then.

Burt Isaksen: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. There wasn't too much struggle. It took only about three months from when I applied until I got the permit.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Wow, yeah, not too long.

Burt Isaksen: Not very long, no, no, no.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Okay, so you came to Tacoma. How did you know you wanted to come to the states? I mean, to Tacoma. How did you—

Burt Isaksen: Well, I had an uncle and aunt in Tacoma, and they more or less had sponsored me.

Jeffrey Kahrs: That's right, there was a sponsor program, right?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, you had to have somebody sponsor you, and I did, see. I came there in the middle of May, and a week later, I went to Alaska.

Jeffrey Kahrs: A week later. Okay, where was your first destination in Alaska?

Burt Isaksen: Gillnetting in Bristol Bay.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oh, so your first stop was Bristol Bay. What year was it?

Burt Isaksen: That was in 1952.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Jeez, '52. So, you went up to Bristol Bay. What was it like going up to Alaska? I mean, you'd been in Norway, but it was still something else.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah. Well, I liked it and I liked fishing. So I told—my cousin was a Superintendent at Tacoma Boat at that time, and he and all those fisher skippers, about thirty in wintertime. He tried to get me a job, but that was easy because they want to hire me because then I figure I would get the job next winter when they come home. I'm busy now.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Hi, kids.



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Burt Isaksen: I got the job there on the on a power scow going up to Alaska.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, okay. Oh, power scows. Yeah, I remember the old power scows. They were just a big square scows there, yes.

Burt Isaksen: Exactly.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Well, that's pretty early for, uh, Bristol Bay. Now, there was a horrible storm there in Bristol Bay in '54, '56, something like that, do you remember that? A lot of boats were swamped, a lot of people were drowned.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah. You see, I fished there for two years, in '52 and '53 in Alaska, and then I got drafted US Army, so I missed two years then.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, okay.

Burt Isaksen: I think that was—those things happened, but when I first got out there, they start with power boats then, so they convert a lot of sailboats into power boats.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, right, right, they were still sailing.

Burt Isaksen: Oh, yeah, yeah,

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, when you came up because it was illegal to have power there for a long time for those Bristol Bay boats.

Burt Isaksen: Oh, sure because when they got up there, then I told my boss that I want to go salmon fishing, so he arranged this, so I got together with a native up there. He was a skipper, and I was a boat puller*, and we had sails, but you also had a Johnson Seahorse kicker mounted on the side.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, so an outboard?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, yeah.



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Burt Isaksen: Mounted on the side.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right.

Burt Isaksen: There was no cover on top, and if you got too much spray, then they conked out. Then we had to use the sail. Then, we had a ... what do you call it, a shove pin made out of brass, so in case you hit the sandbar or something, those break instead of the shaft going up. Well, I didn't figure that one out. I said, "That's a nuisance with all those pins breaking all the time," so I had one made out of steel, and it broke the shaft going up. So the rest of the season, we had to use the sails.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, I guess you learned your little lesson. There was a rea—yeah, those things're annoying, right?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, right, right.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Well, so that must have been pretty hard work, though. Did—tell me about using the nets in those days, too. You were sailing much of the time, you had an outboard, the nets were made out of cotton. It must have been a very intense process in fishing, yeah?

Burt Isaksen: Well, I didn't think it was all that bad, but you know, you had to bluestone those nets every weekend, and at that time, they set the openings before we left Seattle, actually, so we used to fish—they closed up on, I think then it was in the middle of the week for one day, and on the weekends. Otherwise, it's wide open for fishing, bigger—

Jeffrey Kahrs: Fishing out there every day of the—

Burt Isaksen: Right, right.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Wide open, huh?

Burt Isaksen: Wide open, more or less.

Jeffrey Kahrs: How many hours a day were you usually fishing?

Burt Isaksen: Well, as long as it was open we fished.



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Jeffrey Kahrs: I mean how many hours a day. I mean, you must have fished eighteen hours a day.

Burt Isaksen: We were out there all the time. Then we went in and delivered to the power scow every so often, and then we kept on fishing. We slept on the boat there. He had a—we put up a tent on the bow so you could sleep there and wake up. You had a—we called it a Svea stove, so you could make coffee.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Uh-huh, okay. Is that S-V-E-A, little gas stove?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, little gas stove.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah. Otherwise, all the food was cold?

Burt Isaksen: Well, we got it from the cannery before we went out fishing.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, but you guys weren't cooking steaks or anything out there?

Burt Isaksen: No, no, no, no. Just coffee.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, just coffee.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Now, did you—how-how—those early Bristol Bay boats, were they thirty, thirty-five feet long, usually?

Burt Isaksen: I think they were around twenty-eight, thirty feet, thereabouts. There was a lot of them when I first got up there, a lot of boats, and then they stopped converting them, you know. They put in a little porcelain gas engine, and that's what they did to that conversion I had, too, in time.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Sure, sure, but when you came out, there was no covered deck or anything. It was all open.

Burt Isaksen: Oh, no, no, no, all open, yeah, yeah.



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Jeffrey Kahrs: Rain, or if there was a squall?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, it was wide open, but you had that tent in the bow. The only trouble there, to put up that tent, you had to take down the big mast and use the sailing. That was kinda tough when there was choppy weather, but we managed somehow.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Mm-hm, yeah. Yeah, the mast was on stays like this, versus the drop down.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. You had to lift it up and lay it down on the side.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, you had to bring her out in position, tie her down, and pull back.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, right, right, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Okay, so—what—that's a—I mean that must have been—you were a young fellow, so uh, not so tiring for a young guy of twenty-five.

Burt Isaksen: No, no. I didn't mind at all. I liked it.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah. Then you went in the army for a while. What was the army like?

Burt Isaksen: Well, it's really there, you know. They give you all kinds of BS but I did fine, but met a lot of nice people there, and helped me learn the language, too.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oh, it helped you learning English?

Burt Isaksen: Right, right.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Now, were you living in Tacoma when you were fishing in Bristol Bay?

Burt Isaksen: For a while, yeah, I lived there, but in the wintertime, I was on drag boats out here on the coast, and we fished shrimp down at Westport. I was always busy doing something fishing.

Jeffrey Kahrs: You were always working?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, more or less, yeah.



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Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, so you were living on the boat, more or less?

Burt Isaksen: More or less, yeah, different boat.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah. Were you saving any money, or were you just having a good time?

Burt Isaksen: No, no, there wasn't much saving. (Laughing)

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, you were having a good time, huh?

Burt Isaksen: Having a good time, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: When you were off the boat?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Then, you went to the army, and you came back in, I guess it's about 1956, yeah?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, in the end of '55, I came back.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, right, okay.

Burt Isaksen: I think it was. I got in in '53. '55, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Did you go back to fishing Bristol Bay?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, right, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: And had the fishery changed much between 1952 and '56?

Burt Isaksen: Well, there were more power boats. This was a few that was special built for power instead of all the sail boats that were converted.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right.

Burt Isaksen: It was a little tense system, but I still got one of the conversion one. We leased them from a cannery call Nakeen up there, and we paid \$150.00 a season to lease them. We came over



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there, that's in Naknek [unintelligible] we came over there in spring and picked them up, and then we had to bring them back in the fall again and paid \$150.00 lease for a year.

Jeffrey Kahrs: One hundred and fifty dollars for a year.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: How much did a boat gross in 1956 on average?

Burt Isaksen: I'm not so sure. You see, Alaska Fishermen Union, they had control over Bristol Bay for years, more or less—

Jeffrey Kahrs: Alaska fishermen?

Burt Isaksen: Because you had to settle the price before they release the scow to go to Alaska with supplies. You see?

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah.

Burt Isaksen: That was settled, and I think we got forty-seven cents, if I remember right, per fish.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oh, right, it was by the fish, right?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, right, right, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: So that was Alaska Fisherman's Union?

Burt Isaksen: Yes, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, and they were a salmon union, right?

Burt Isaksen: Right, right.

Jeffrey Kahrs: And were they—did you think they were very effective?

Burt Isaksen: Well, it seems like they had a lot of control at that time.



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Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah.

Burt Isaksen: Then, only freezers got to come into the Bristol Bay, and that eliminate a lot of it.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Okay, the freezer boats?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, changed there. People started selling other places.

Burt Isaksen: Sure, sure.

Jeffrey Kahrs: You stayed in Bristol Bay, then, after 1956. You were in Bristol Bay the whole way until you retired?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, every year.

Jeffrey Kahrs: What was your final year in Bristol Bay?

Burt Isaksen: I think it was '03.

Jeffrey Kahrs: 2003?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: You were a fisherman to your seventies, I guess, yeah?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Okay, so between the time you retired and the time you started, you must have seen some great changes in Bristol Bay.

Burt Isaksen: Oh, you get. Oh, you bet. Oh, heck yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: I mean, it must have been quite incredible. Tell me a little bit about—now, you worked as a crewman a long time. Then, of course, you ended up buying a boat, a permit and all this—



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Burt Isaksen: Yeah, right, right, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: But as a crewman, I mean, right from when you started, 1952 with the two years off, just tell me about some of the changes, and how they went. I mean, did you even think about them when you were working, or did they just—

Burt Isaksen: Not so much, but I remember when we first got nylon nets up there. They were white, see, so the company asked us if we wanted a cotton net or a nylon net, and the old timers there wasn't too sold on that nylon, I tell you. Oh no, they wasn't uh—they was skeptical about that, but I said, "I'll take one and try it out," one shackle because I used three shackles, so I took one with nylon and two with cotton. I mean, the nylon out fished them ten to one, and you didn't have to bluestone them, and you didn't have to do anything with them. The cotton nets went rotten just like that. So the following year, it was all nylon.

Jeffrey Kahrs: When did nylon come into Bristol Bay?

Burt Isaksen: Must be in '57, '58, I would think, when they would start a lot with nylon.

Jeffrey Kahrs: When did you buy your first boat? Must have been before. Must have been—

Burt Isaksen: I first boat I bought, I think it was in 1960.

Jeffrey Kahrs: 1960. You didn't buy the boat, but—

Burt Isaksen: Well, I leased it from—I ran my own boats, but the company own them.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, yeah, yes, I understand.

Burt Isaksen: In 1960, I bought my own.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right. So you were using a company boat before then.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, that's how you could use the shackle of nylon, trying it out.



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Burt Isaksen: Right, right, right, right.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Now, do you have any stories of you as a young guy at sea, funny stories about your crewmen? A lot of the Norwegian crewmen on the schooners would have nicknames.

Burt Isaksen: Oh, yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Can you remember nicknames of any of the guys up in Bristol Bay?

Burt Isaksen: Well, (laughs) there was a different one they called Silver Nick, and another one, Crazy Herman. I don't know, there was quite a few different—

Jeffrey Kahrs: Crazy Herman. I think I've heard of Crazy Herman.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, somebody mentioned him. Do you have any stories of when you were a green, young fisherman, a story about a mistake you made, or something that happened to you? Think about something funny you did.

Burt Isaksen: I did a lot of mistakes, I know this, but I can't remember exactly.

Jeffrey Kahrs: (Laughing) I was just wondering. Sometimes, when you're on boats, you see some things that are funny, and sometimes tragic, too. Did you have friends who drowned in Bristol Bay?

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Burt Isaksen: Yeah, I had a couple over the years.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: It's a tough thing, yeah.



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Burt Isaksen: Yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Was that mainly the early days with the ... with the, you know, little sailing boats and things?

Burt Isaksen: Well, not necessarily from sailing boat, but there was accident happen, even one of the power boats out there drifting, and it disappear on a boat, and with the engine running. They went out and couldn't find him, and a few weeks later, drifted up on the shore, young fellow. That was the latest, probably in the middle '70s.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oh, okay. Do you remember what it was like, I mean, when a storm would hit you in Bristol Bay, and you had a mangily sail?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: What was that like?

Burt Isaksen: Well, you have to more or less drift with the wind. You know you couldn't—if it's too strong, you couldn't use the sail, either, very much because it wouldn't work.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, sure.

Burt Isaksen: You just have to get the net out and drift with the wind, hope for the best.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Did you drift with the wind very much? I mean, how long was—

Burt Isaksen: Well, it could be from hours at the time. Half a day or even longer.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right. What did you do when you drifted? You just sat there?

Burt Isaksen: Well, you sit there and have a cup of coffee, smoke a cigarette, I guess, and hope it will come down pretty soon.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, hope it'll come down pretty soon. Yeah, that's so true, yeah. Yeah, I understand. Okay, so you actually bought your own boat in 1960.



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Burt Isaksen: Yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Tell me a little about the boat.

Burt Isaksen: Well, it was a wooden boat, and it had a Gray Marine engine. I think it was seventy, eighty horsepower, something like that. I'm not sure. I had that for a while, and then after a few years, I built a fiberglass boat up in La Conner, and I used that the rest of my fishing time in Bristol Bay, same boat.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Well, now, usually with Bristol Bay, there's a limit on the length.

Burt Isaksen: Yes, yes.

Jeffrey Kahrs: What's the limit?

Burt Isaksen: Thirty-two feet.

Jeffrey Kahrs: So, some of the boats started to become pretty stout.

Burt Isaksen: Exactly.

Jeffrey Kahrs: The first boat you were on, though, the sailing boat, what was the width, the berth, the berth on it?

Burt Isaksen: The width on the boat?

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah.

Burt Isaksen: Probably ten feet at the most, I would think.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, something like that.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Then, when they started to build the wooden boats for Bristol Bay, what was the width on them?



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Burt Isaksen: Well, think they were a little wider than—they'd built a lot down in Seattle, LeClercq, had the shipyard down there.

Jeffrey Kahrs: LeClercq, sure, sure.

Burt Isaksen: He built a lot of those Bristol Bay boats, though, wooden boats.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, the wooden ones.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right.

Burt Isaksen: Then, later on, we started with fiberglass.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, of course. And the fiberglass were even wider, right?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah. Some of them were wider, and some—they built them as fishermen bought them and stuff like that. Their length was thirty-two feet. You couldn't go any farther. A lot of people—

Jeffrey Kahrs: The keel, right? The keel.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, yeah.

Burt Isaksen: No, that's overall.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oh, overall?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah. A lot of them, even the boat I had built, the fiberglass boat, when they start to enforce it, they had to cut off the bow a little, see? Because it was so many inches too long, so you had to take off the bow.

Jeffrey Kahrs: It had a little snub nose on it.



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Burt Isaksen: Yeah, right. A lot of them, they had to do that to you know. A few inches over. They enforced that for a few years, I guess, I don't know.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, sure. So, um—when you were fishing in Bristol Bay, I mean, there are different areas of Bristol Bay, like Naknek, and the different river systems. What were your favorite areas?

Burt Isaksen: Well, Nushagak is where I fished mostly, but I fished a lot in Naknek, Kvichak, too. because we used to start in Nushagak, then we transferred over to Naknek, and usually finished up there, stop the season there.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, right, right. Nushagak was farther out, so you got the fish when they hit first, and then you would move in?

Burt Isaksen: Well, no, that varies, though. Sometimes, you know, Nushagak was okay, but other times it wasn't really good. But the Kvichak used to be the best river at that time.

Jeffrey Kahrs: What's the name?

Burt Isaksen: Kvichak, the big river, we call it, the Naknek river and Kvichak. We always went over there and fished there most of the season.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oh, yeah, yeah. There are all different systems, I know, in Bristol Bay.

Burt Isaksen: Oh, you bet, yeah, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Many of them, so I think people pick favorites, and they find the one that they feel—

Burt Isaksen: Yeah because you have a transfer now. You have to wait forty-eight hours for transfer from one river to another. That keep a damper over the guys. You do that in the middle of a season, you might lose the few good fishing days, but that's a good omen, though, because now the boats are so much more powerful the past, that can move from one river to another as they open. I think that's a good omen, though.



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Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah. Well, that's good. You were working Bristol Bay, and it sounds like you made a pretty good living at it, and you got to know Bristol Bay pretty well over the years.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, right, right.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Uh, what, uh—how about for other fisheries? Were you ever a crab fisherman?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, I fished crab, too. The first year I fished crab was up in Adak in 1956.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Okay, let's hear a little about that because that's really early for crab.

Burt Isaksen: Okay, okay.

Jeffrey Kahrs: What was the name of the boat you were working on?

Burt Isaksen: *Astronaut*, and then we packed 50,000 pounds, that we could get 45,000 pound in the tank where you have water, and then it has what we call a dry hold.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah. Oh yeah, I know.

Burt Isaksen: Then we put 5,000 pounds in there, see?

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, right, just let me go ahead. No, no, no, feel free to lean over. I like that, actually. It's nice. So, so a dry hold—now, the crab, you were doing king crab, I presume.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, right, right.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Every day, you deliver every day?

Burt Isaksen: Every day.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Because they would die, so you had to get them—

Burt Isaksen: Well, not only that, but there was so much crab at that time, you filled up that little boat there in ten, fifteen hours.

Jeffrey Kahrs: How big was the *Astronaut*?



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Burt Isaksen: I'm not sure.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Was it an old sardine seiner?

Burt Isaksen: No, it was a steel boat. It belonged to a guy called Lukita in Seattle. He had several boats, draggers and stuff.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Lukil?

Burt Isaksen: Lukita.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Was he a Norski?

Burt Isaksen: Well, no, we had several drag boats out there—

Jeffrey Kahrs: On the coast—

Burt Isaksen: *Western Flyer* was one of them and different things. He owned the boat, but he had another skipper that ran it, see. We were four guys, crewmembers, and we had almost a million pounds on that boat from the first part of January, then to March, and we got nine cents a pound for king crab.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Nine cents. That's pretty good for those days.

Burt Isaksen: No, that wasn't very good.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Well, 'cause—ya'know, I think of—nine cents a pound in 1956, well, you come out, and you deliver, and you're delivering 40,000 pounds, 50,000 pounds a day. Right?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Then, well, I don't know. It probably added up over the coming months.

Burt Isaksen: No, no, no because now a fisherman, you get eight dollars a pound for it.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, but they don't get 40, 50,000 pounds a day, do they.

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Burt Isaksen: No, no ... but it's still a big difference, though.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Really?

Burt Isaksen: It's a big difference, yeah, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Well, the crab was really different then. You do it just every day, right? You had pots out there.

Burt Isaksen: Well, you have pots out there, put you had to deliver at the mothership who take care of it, see? And they could tell you, "Well, you can't go out today because we have too much crabs," for example, stuff like that. You couldn't fish at night because you have no lights like they have today. Just in the daylight, you could fish. Usually, we got out there in the morning at daylight, and luckily, but the time it started to get dark, we had the load, see.

Jeffrey Kahrs: You guys were just doing pots. What was a typical crab—uh, king crab pot in those days?

Burt Isaksen: Well, they were not the big as they use today, and they had an opening on the bottom, which was a nightmare, but that's what they had.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Why was it a nightmare?

Burt Isaksen: Well, you know, it got all tangled up and all that crap. Not very practical but that's what we had.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Mm-hm. Did you guys use also—they used those set nets on the bottom for crabs, some of the guys, where they would anchor them, and they would catch crab like in gillnets.

Burt Isaksen: No, no, no.

Jeffrey Kahrs: You guys didn't do that?

Burt Isaksen: No, the boats were usually pretty well filled with crab, and—

Jeffrey Kahrs: Well, how many boats were fishing crabs in those times?

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Burt Isaksen: Well out at Adak that year, I think we were eight boats, if I remember right, when I fish crab. And they had two small processor tied in a place they called Finger Bay. There was big piece left over from the navy, so they were very tied up.

Jeffrey Kahrs: And uh So, seven cents. When you were done, you got your—

Burt Isaksen: Nine cents, nine cents.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Nine cents, I'm sorry. My fault.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Nine cents a pound when you got your settlement check. How much did you make for that season?

Burt Isaksen: \$8,000.00. I remember it well. I got paid \$8,000.00. At that time, I thought "I'm rich." That was in the middle of winter, too, you know, and that wasn't part of my Bristol Bay season, then the fish in the sound here too, so that was a good year, though, I think.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, so-so yeah, you did think you were rich when you were done, but you were working every day for three months, right?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah, yeah, I was.

Jeffrey Kahrs: More or less, more or less.

Burt Isaksen: More or less, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: There were eight boats out there. The average guys doing crabbing in those days, what kind of people were working those, pioneering those early crabbing opportunities?

Burt Isaksen: There was a lot of Norwegians fishing there because, like me, that's probably the only thing you could really do. (Laughs) The majority of the guys that fishing out at Adak at that time was Norwegians.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah.



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Burt Isaksen: Yeah. And later on, they all got their own crab boats and did real well.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, right. Now, the thing is, I'm wondering on deck when you guys were working on deck, did you guys use English as a language, or Norwegian?

Burt Isaksen: Well, that all depends on... we could use both English and Norwegian. Some of the guys talk with a big dialect, or some was a little better.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, it was hard to understand them, huh?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: They're from the way North or something like that?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, right, from different area of Norway. At that time, you could tell from - where they come from because of the dialect. Because you never traveled much in those days, they had their own little language everywhere.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Sure, sure, of course. So, um, so you were crab fishing. Now, 1956, this was pretty early, then.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: How did you get the pots on board? I mean it must have been—how many pots a day did you haul? Let me ask you this.

Burt Isaksen: Well, I think we had twenty-four pots total, and sometimes, we didn't have to pick them all to get the quota—or fill up a boat.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah. Sometimes, you have to pick them twice, maybe, or whatever.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Just depended on the day.

Burt Isaksen: Right, right, right.



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Jeffrey Kahrs: How far out at Adak were the pots?

Burt Isaksen: Probably an hour traveling. We fish mostly on the Pacific side, and the base was on the North side of the coast, facing Bering Sea.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, right, I've got you. Some days, you wouldn't even get through twelve pots, there was so much crap, they were so filled.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, twenty, twenty-four pot we had.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, twenty-four pots, rather. I mean, you would finish doing it over days; you had to dump them twice, just depending on the day. Do you still know any of the old guys who did crab with you?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, oh yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Well, who's still around?

Burt Isaksen: Well, (laughs) there's quite a few. Well, not too many around now, though, but there is some. Their sons have taken over.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yes.

Burt Isaksen: The old timer retired, or dead or their sons are—

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oh, they're retired.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: What were some of these families that were working crabs so early? Do you recall?

Burt Isaksen: Well, like u—the Hansen family and their two brothers. They had a boat, their own boat, and uh ... and uh ... son of one of them; he's the one who get the catch. Well, I knew him, too, but I knew his dad real well. He passed away, and his uncle is still living, and I know him.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, sure, sure. These are Hansen?



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Burt Isaksen: Hansen, yeah, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Are they out on Camano, or where are they?

Burt Isaksen: No, they live in Shoreline and in that area.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oh yeah, okay, sure, sure.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, around Richmond Beach.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, yeah.

Burt Isaksen: Svein Nyhammer is one that fished crab for many years up there, and he's still around. And then, well, Swansen, he's gone, but his son has taken over and operates big now, the crab boats. They have a lot of them. I know a lot of those guys still.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oh, I'm sure you do. I mean, you were all part of the same community.

Burt Isaksen: Exactly, exactly, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Now, was your wife also Norwegian?

Burt Isaksen: Well, she was born in Petersburg, Alaska.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oh, sure, sure. I know Petersburg, I know Petersburg.

Burt Isaksen: She was more or less Norwegian, though.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Little Norway.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, right.

Jeffrey Kahrs: What was her last name?

Burt Isaksen: Fensik.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Uh-huh, okay.



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Burt Isaksen: Her dad was from Norway, and her mother, I believe, was born in North Dakota.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Okay, sure. A lot of Scandinavians in North Dakota and Minnesota.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, exactly, yeah, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: And, uh—so Petersburg, she was from Petersburg. How did you meet your wife?

Burt Isaksen: They moved to Seattle, and they had, at that time, when I was young, they had what they call the Norway Hall down in Seattle, and then the youngsters, all the immigrants, from Scandinavia and Germany come there for Saturday night dance, and also American girls to look for a husband.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, yeah. Where was the hall there?

Burt Isaksen: That was down on Elliott Bay.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Uh-huh. Sons of Norway Hall.

Burt Isaksen: Sons of Norway Hall. That was the big, nice hall there, and big.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Was it the Reisberger Hall? At this point, I'm thinking it was on Danny. It's quite an old hall. It's not a Sons of Norway Hall anymore.

Burt Isaksen: No, no. They sold it out to Rainier Club, the last I heard, but it was a big place, you know. There were three stories, and big hall there, and it was a real nice place.

Jeffrey Kahrs: So a dance, huh?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, and I was home for leave from the army because they told me, "If you don't take the leave, you're going to lose it," so I said, "Okay, I'll take it," so I drove up to Seattle. I was stationed in Texas at that time, drove to Seattle, and almost every night, I went down to dances, you know, and then met this lady down there, and we got to be friends, and I marry her.

Jeffrey Kahrs: One thing leads to another.



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Burt Isaksen: Yeah, right, right.

Jeffrey Kahrs: What year did you get married?

Burt Isaksen: 1955.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oh, okay, so, God, yeah, you married pretty much right after you, you uh, when you were in the army, still.

Burt Isaksen: No, just after I got out.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Just after you got out, right, okay. Alright, good.

Burt Isaksen: Thirty of December in 1955, I got married.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, okay, alright. Then, you were married for how many years?

Burt Isaksen: Fifty-five I think. She passed away in '10, '010, and she was seventy-five by that time. She was eight years younger than me.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, okay. Sure, sure.

Burt Isaksen: She got sick and—

Jeffrey Kahrs: I think it was quite common in those days, the men would go out in a way, and work, and this, and then marry just a little later than some of the people did, build up their money, make some money, and have some experiences.

Burt Isaksen: Now you're talking.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, yeah.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Well, okay. So you were crab—you started crab fishing in 1956. What were the boats like in those days? Because they must have been, well, primitive in some ways compared to



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modern boats.

Burt Isaksen: Oh, sure, but they did have a power block, though, so you could take your lines in. But on the boat I was, you didn't have what they call a coil or anything like that. You had to do it by hand, which was fine.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, yeah. Did you have to— like, you had a— you had a winch there, and you had to pull the block up by the winch, or how did you get the block on the board, I mean, the crab pot on board? Sorry.

Burt Isaksen: The big block is mounted on the side of the boat with a big wheel on, so you took a big rope and the wheel, and then coil it as it comes in. There was no hand power to pull the pot. When we set them, we didn't have a launcher or anything. We threw them overboard. Two guys threw the pots overboard.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right. That must have been pretty dangerous work.

Burt Isaksen: You never think about that, though.

Jeffrey Kahrs: I know.

Burt Isaksen: You just do your job, and that's it.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, that's so true, isn't it? You don't even think about it, you're just at sea.

Burt Isaksen: Oh, sure, sure.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah. How long did you keep crabbing for?

Burt Isaksen: Well, then, I quit after a few years, and I quit and concentrate on Bristol Bay. Then I bought a boat with gillnet on the Sound here for every fall. Then, I was on a drag boat on the coast on halibut boats and you name it.

Jeffrey Kahrs: What do you name—whoa, whoa, whoa, talk about that, what kind of dragging? Were you doing mid-water trawling, or—

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Burt Isaksen: No, bottom trawling, bottom trawling, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: For what kinda fish?

Burt Isaksen: For all kind, flounders, and black cod, you name it.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, whatever came up in the net.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, right, and have to sort them for species and size, with the flounders, you got a lot of small ones. You have to get them overboard, and the petrale, that's another flatfish we fish for. I didn't make much money on those drag boats, but I just had to do something.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Sure, you were keeping yourself busy.

Burt Isaksen: Exactly.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Was that out on the coast, then?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, that was from the coast, usually outside Vancouver Island, in that general area.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, you mentioned something about that. I mean, in those days, American boats could work Vancouver Island, I think because it was—

Burt Isaksen: More or less, yeah. Even when you got too stormy, we went in there in small bays, you know, and nobody bothered you.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, right, you just anchored up.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Even though the three-mile limit was there. It was like—

Burt Isaksen: I don't think they enforced it, though. You had a three-mile limit, but I'm not sure they enforced it or whatever. It seems like we fished that area when we felt like it.

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Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, and then quit whenever you felt like it.

Burt Isaksen: Exactly, yeah. We used to fish all the way up to Hecate Strait, which is north end of Vancouver Island. I fished halibut for—

Jeffrey Kahrs: Were you long lining for halibut?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Which boats were you on?

Burt Isaksen: Oh, I was on several boats. *Blue Washington* was one of them. In fact, that was the last one I fished on.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Which one?

Burt Isaksen: *Blue Washington*.

Jeffrey Kahrs: *Blue Washington*.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah. Then, *Luella* was one, and then *St. John II*. He was a guy from Petersburg, a very nice guy. I fished with him.

Jeffrey Kahrs: What was his name?

Burt Isaksen: I can't remember his name. Well, his boat was named *St. John II*.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Olsen, do you remember the Olsen family? Oh, he had a—his kids are on a bunch of boats now. I don't wanna say Mel, that was another old timer I interviewed many years ago, but what's his name? Last name's Olsen. Oh, it's okay.

Burt Isaksen: There's so many named Olsen, Hansen, and Jorgensen, you name it, so it's hard telling.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, yeah, I know. Yeah, it's terrible. Yeah, Olsen, Hanson, no, I agree. Yeah, so the guy was from Petersburg. Sounds like you—did you go up to Petersburg? Did your wife

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still have family up there?

Burt Isaksen: Oh, she had uncles, and cousins, and you name it up there, relatives. She did go up there a couple times, I think. That's all I remember.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah.

Burt Isaksen: She used to go to Norway. She loved to go to Norway, though.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Really?

Burt Isaksen: Oh, heck yeah. When I went to Alaska, she packed up and went to Norway. Yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Did you get—you must have had the chance to go back to the old country.

Burt Isaksen: I did go a few times when my parents were living, but after that, then— well, I did go back three years ago for a reunion.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oh yeah? What kind of reunion?

Burt Isaksen: My sister was ninety years old, and her son was going to throw a big party with all the family, and nieces, and nephews, and uncle and aunts and you name it, and he invited me, too. I wasn't going to go, but then I said, "Okay, I'll go, too." My son, he took me over there. I couldn't travel alone, though.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oh yeah, of course. Yes, I mean, you get to a certain age, it's just not comfortable.

Burt Isaksen: No, no, no. So anyway, that was very enjoyable. I had six sisters back there, and I met them all, and my nephews and nieces, and some of them I've never seen. It was really nice.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oh, sure. Were they still in the village, or were they—

Burt Isaksen: No, they scattered all over.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, yeah, all over.



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Burt Isaksen: All over the country, and some—

Jeffrey Kahrs: Outside the country?

Burt Isaksen: Outside the country.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Any of them fishing?

Burt Isaksen: Hm?

Jeffrey Kahrs: Any of them fishing? Any of your family in Norway still fishing?

Burt Isaksen: Oh yeah, yeah, there's several of them. My nephews are fishing. I think there's quite a few of them, but a lot of them, they get better jobs now. They're better educated. It wasn't that way when I grew up. Very seldom, we heard about the guy that went to college or university. It happened, but not too many, so it's all together different now, and you have mandatory twelve-year schooling. Plus, if you want to go to higher schooling, it's free. Schooling is free back there.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, uh, the universities are free, too.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, oh, of course, it's entirely different. Well, when you went over to the old country, I mean were you amazed ever at how much it's changed, how wealthy it is?

Burt Isaksen: Oh my gosh, you can't compare it. If it was like that when I grew up, I probably would still be in Norway. (Laughs) People were happy when I grew up, too. We didn't have much, but what the heck, when had a lot of fun.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah. It doesn't take a lot of money to have fun when you're young.

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Burt Isaksen: No. Money we never had, no. We were going to collect for a soccer ball, and it took us two years. That soccer ball was a dollar fifty in Norweg—American money, and it took us two years to collect enough to buy a soccer ball.



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Jeffrey Kahrs: How many boys were collecting money for it?

Burt Isaksen: Oh, heck, it must have been the whole village. Only youngsters go out in those boats, but you know there was no money. You had one cent here, and two cents there, and that was about the maximum you could collect from one guy or the family. It was not good.

Jeffrey Kahrs: It must have been quite the occasion when the soccer ball—when you guys bought the soccer ball.

Burt Isaksen: Oh, boy.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Tell me about that.

Burt Isaksen: Oh, that was a big deal, you know. You see, that was the main sport back there in those days.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Sure, it still is.

Burt Isaksen: It still is, yeah, but ordinarily as a youngster, that's—well we, we played soccer, you know, and stuff like that.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Sure. What was it like when you—who went into the store? Who got the ball? Who had the honor the putting the money down and getting the ball?

Burt Isaksen: Well, I can't remember who it was, but there was one we had selected to write. You had to send for it to a company in Bergen or whatever, Norway, to get the money sent. It was a big deal.

Jeffrey Kahrs: You appointed a representative for the—

Burt Isaksen: I was not, no.

Jeffrey Kahrs: No, but you were part of the—

Burt Isaksen: I was part, yeah, right, right, right, right.



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Jeffrey Kahrs: When the ball arrived, that must have been a big thing.

Burt Isaksen: Oh, sure, it was a big thing.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Were you guys, like, cheering?

Burt Isaksen: Oh, there was cheering. We kept on playing as long as it was daylight.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, sure.

Burt Isaksen: We had a nice, big, beach, sandy beach out there, and that's where we played, on the sand.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Sure.

Burt Isaksen: We didn't mind. It was hard to play on the sand, but we didn't mind. It was a lot of fun, though.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oh yeah, of course. Yeah, well, when you were a fisherman, do you remember any good stories from your days at sea, like the soccer ball story from when you were young, like crazy crewmen?

Burt Isaksen: Well, I don't know crazy.

Jeffrey Kahrs: You don't have to use names.

Burt Isaksen: No, but there was some different things, you know. Some screwballs, too. You find them everywhere.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Screwballs?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, we called them screwballs.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Describe one of your screwballs, or somebody you knew or worked for you.

Burt Isaksen: Well They're different in many ways. Seems like they're ignorant, some of



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them. They don't know a thing about what's going on beyond their little—

Jeffrey Kahrs: Beyond their—

Burt Isaksen: Yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah.

Burt Isaksen: They have no idea.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Well, they never traveled.

Burt Isaksen: No, right, that has a lot to do with it.

Jeffrey Kahrs: When you come from Norway to the States, you know the world's a big place. You remember the Merchant Marine, too, right?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: We were talking about that. Name me some of the places you visited when you were in the Merchant Marine. We never really talked—

Burt Isaksen: A lot of places.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oh, sure, sure.

Burt Isaksen: The first place was Columbia, and then Costa Rica on the Caribbean side, and then it was back to Antwerp in Europe.

Jeffrey Kahrs: In Belgium, yeah.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, and then I got another ship, which I sailed for two years, and we were on—the first trip was to Baton Rouge in the Mississippi River. And then, Shanghai was the next stop, and then Manila, and Cebu on the Philippines, and then on to South America to Valparaiso. And then over to Santos in Brazil, and Recife, and over to North Africa, Alexandria in Egypt, and Oran in Algier, and Gibraltar, and all over, Canary Islands, we were there.



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Jeffrey Kahrs: So, uh, what were your favorites among your favorite ports that you really— well, let's put it this way. What ports would you never wanna go back to, and what ports would you, when you were young, always wanna go back to?

Burt Isaksen: Well, I liked South America, though, really. I wouldn't be crazy to go to Alexandria, and Oran, and those places. Gibraltar was a nice place, I liked that, and Canary Island, of course. Manila was okay, too, at that time. I don't know how it is now. This is many years ago, but it was okay. South America, Valparaiso was a nice city, and especially Recife in Brazil. I liked that city, though, right on the Equator, and really nice there, friendly people. I liked that, though.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Had a good time.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, yeah.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: (Laughing) A sailor's life, right? Coming into port.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah (laughing).

Jeffrey Kahrs: Letting off a little a little steam.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, that's okay, though.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Well, you were young, and when you're young, you got things to do.

Burt Isaksen: Oh, sure. I went on a tanker. The last ship I had in Norwegian fleet was an oil tanker. And that I didn't like, though. We went to Kuwait, and Russia, Persian Gulf, and then up and up to Montreal, Canada, and we'd load in twenty-four hours and unload in twenty-four hours, no time to go ashore or anything. I spent only year there, and I said, "That's it, no more." That wasn't better.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Wasn't worth the money.



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Burt Isaksen: It was a nightmare. Then during the wintertime, the north Atlantic is so stormy, sometimes really stormy.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oh, sure, sure.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah. It was a stupid decision to go aboard that boat, but I did.

Jeffrey Kahrs: You learn your lesson.

Burt Isaksen: You learn your lesson, yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: So okay, you got your own boat, and you worked all those years in Bristol Bay. I mean, it's a long time. I mean, about fifty-something years. What did you notice about the way you learned about fishing and the water as time went on? I mean, how-how you must have known a great deal about Bristol Bay?

Burt Isaksen: Well, you learn a lot as you go along, you know. You figure out the tide, and the sand bars, and all the stuff. It was like, where you think the fish will hit and vice versa. You have a good idea.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, right. Now, sand bars, is that a big problem up in Bristol Bay?

Burt Isaksen: It used to be, but now you have an instrument you can tell exactly, day or night, if you are close, or where it's about to be, within yards.

Jeffrey Kahrs: What was that like? You talk about sand bars and when you were out there without instruments on those early boats in Bristol Bay. I mean, that must have been—

Burt Isaksen: No, no, no instrument.

Jeffrey Kahrs: No instruments, right.

Burt Isaksen: So we had the If you come close to a sandbar, you either hit it, or on those conversion boats, you could go to both side and just back off because you never hit very hard if weather was nice. To find the depth, you use oar to put down. If you hit the bottom, you know there was a—



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Jeffrey Kahrs: You just use an oar to find the depth?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah. If you couldn't hit the bottom, you know it was fairly deep, and if it start to get shallow when you use the oar, then you could tell how much water you had.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Was there a keel—there must have been a keel on those boats. Those were the ones you were using the pins on?

Burt Isaksen: Yes, yes.

Jeffrey Kahrs: The pins would break and the keel would come up?

Burt Isaksen: You have boats—we call them loose heel, with a handle on top. You could lay it down,, push it down, or pull it up in the early days. I don't know what you do or supposed to do, but that's what we had, see.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right. You'll have to ask somebody other than me. I'm no expert on these skills. As Bristol Bay went on, of course, how many boats would be fishing Bristol Bay in 1960?

Burt Isaksen: Well, it being about steady, around 1,800 boats.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Eighteen hundred boats?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah, pretty steady over the years.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Where did most of the fisherman from Bristol Bay come from?

Burt Isaksen: Well, they come from all over the world. Some canneries—I shouldn't use the name—but the Italians, you know, they fish there. For some time, it was mostly Italians. For another cannery they were mostly Scandinavian, and so forth.

Jeffrey Kahrs: How about for the Slavonians?

Burt Isaksen: Slavonian, there were quite a few Slavonians there, too, yeah. Yeah, right, right, right.



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Jeffrey Kahrs: Well, they're net fishermen by tradition.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah. They were good fishermen, both the Italian and the Slavonian, nice fishermen. I knew a lot of them. Nice people, too, by the way.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right. Where were they from, generally?

Burt Isaksen: The Italian, mostly from San Francisco, in that area.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oh, right, yeah. There was that long tradition there of the boats, the Star boats they used to have, sailing boats out in San Francisco. I think that's when they started doing it.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: The Italians down there, they probably still do a lot of Bristol Bay—

Burt Isaksen: Oh yeah, there's a lot of them fishing here.

Jeffrey Kahrs: The children and stuff.

Burt Isaksen: The children, yeah. I knew a lot of old timers. Of course, they're retired or gone now, but I knew a lot of Italians there, friends of mine, in fact, that fished up there. You had people from Slavonia, like you say, and Croatia that I know, a lot of good friends.

Jeffrey Kahrs: A lot of Croatians.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, right, right.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Were they from—also from California, or from this area, or from this area?

Burt Isaksen: Quite a few lived around here, too, in around Seattle area, but majority of those people, they lived in California.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Uh-huh, like San Pedro?

Burt Isaksen: San Pedro, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.



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Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, yeah. The Gig Harbor, I know a lot of the—

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, Gig Harbor, a lot of them. The seine people live in Gig Harbor, though. They like to go seining. I was seining with a guy down there for salmon out there on the salmon banks one year. Nice guy. Didn't make any money, though, but that's okay.

Jeffrey Kahrs: I think if you fish long enough, everyone doesn't make money sometimes.

Burt Isaksen: Well, some years, you make good and other years— you have some bum years, too, though.

Jeffrey Kahrs: That's right, yeah.

Burt Isaksen: Back in 1972, '73, I didn't make a penny in Alaska. In fact, in '73, I went in the hole, but then I had a gillnet boat on the Sound here, and I fished—after the season I fished on the sound here on Salmon Banks and out there, and I made good money here. That made up for what I didn't make in Alaska. Did okay.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right. Yes, I mean, what do you think your biggest year was, ever? You must have had one or maybe two years you really remember, that were incredible years, good prices, lots of fish.

Burt Isaksen: Well, there were several good years. I don't know. Money-wise I think, uh ... when I got into crab boat, I did the best money-wise.

Jeffrey Kahrs: When did you stop crabbing, 1960, about?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, but then we bought a boat, had a partner in the boat in '78, and, we had that for a few years. We had disagreements. We sold it, and then I got together with another guys, and we bought another crab boat we built over on Whidby Island. And then, well, we lengthened it a little in the back. It was a hundred and ... twenty-two, twenty-four feet, somewhere in there. We had that for several years. Then I made some money, but then we sold out. The partner wanted to sell out, I said, "Okay, get out of it. We're old enough."

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, right. You never got any of the quota for crab.

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Burt Isaksen: No, we sold that a couple years before. Shoot, if I knew that quota was coming . . . because we had a big quota, I would have hung in there, but we didn't know at that time. A friend of mine, he had— in fact, he lives on island here—he kept his quota, he sold his boat, and he has a check coming in every year, he leases out his quota. That's a racket, though.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah. Who's he? Who is this?

Burt Isaksen: His name is Leif Larsen. He had—

Jeffrey Kahrs: Leif Larsen.

Burt Isaksen: He had a crab boat, the *Scandia Rose*, one of the nicest crab boats up there.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah. There's some pretty nice crab boats, though.

Burt Isaksen: Oh, you bet.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Some of those big ones with the—

Burt Isaksen: You bet.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Stern houses, and really quite comfortable, and a lot of room for the pots on deck, and—

Burt Isaksen: Well, the one we had in Alaska, it was a nice boat, too. It was a nice crab boat. In fact, I have a model of it sitting in the front over here.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Burt Isaksen: You know what my son is doing? He fishes in Bristol Bay, too. I took him up there when he was nine years old, and he love to carve. He's always carving something on the boat, and then he got into— this is his livelihood.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oh my gosh.

Burt Isaksen: That's his livelihood.



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Jeffrey Kahrs: These are pretty beautiful.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah. He makes models for the rich people.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah. They make a boat and they want a beautiful model. It's worth a lot of money.

Burt Isaksen: Exactly, oh my gosh.

Jeffrey Kahrs: I mean, these things probably sell \$10,000.00, \$20,000.00 a piece, and stuff like that.

Burt Isaksen: Some of these rich people, they buy these yachts, you know, that's eighty, ninety, \$100 million.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, yeah. What's a beautiful scale model if you're putting out that kinda money? How much money for that?

Burt Isaksen: Peanuts. They call him from—he'll build boat for Australia, for Kuwait, and for Europe and South America, all over they call him, and busy like heck.

Jeffrey Kahrs: He has more work than he knows what to do with.

Burt Isaksen: Oh, heck yeah, he have all kinds of work to do.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Good for him.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah. How in the heck he got into it, I don't know because he don't have much of education. He went to high school, alright, that's about all, but he started this on his own, and he improves as he got along.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Well, he loved doing it. I mean, it's something that must have been with him from a really young age, and he didn't really wanna be a captain of a gillnetter up in Bristol Bay.

Burt Isaksen: Well, he's still fishing in Bristol Bay.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah?



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Burt Isaksen: Yeah, he has his own boat now.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oh, he does? Oh, okay. Well, okay, great. He does Bristol Bay, and in a good year he makes really good money. A few years ago, I think they had a really great year.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah. He had done fairly good.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah. There's Bristol Bay, and then he does the boat models.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, and he have a shop next to his house, and don't have to fight the traffic or anything. He's doing okay.

Jeffrey Kahrs: No, no, I understand. I mean, when you come out to Camano Island here, you say, "Wow, this is so nice compared to"—I mean, Edmonds is pretty nice, but—

Burt Isaksen: I should never have come up to Camano Island—

Jeffrey Kahrs: Why?

Burt Isaksen: If I had to do it over again.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Why?

Burt Isaksen: Because all my friends live in Seattle, Shoreline there, and I had a nice house down in Richmond Beach down there with a good view and everything. I should never have got away from that, but my wife, she wanted to get away from crowds, you know, and I said, "Okay."

Jeffrey Kahrs: You miss your friends.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah.

Jeffrey Kahrs: When they're close by like that, it's easy to visit and stuff.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, yeah. I talk to them, a couple, three of them. I talk to them just about every week.



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Jeffrey Kahrs: Svein, you talk to Svein about every week?

Burt Isaksen: No, I don't talk to him, but Ed Langesat* is one I talk a lot, too. He lives down in Richmond Beach there, and Hammer is another one.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Who is that?

Burt Isaksen: Einar Hammer is one of my close friends. He lives down in Richmond Beach. In fact, he lives two blocks—houses up from me, and he lives there.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Was it in Innis Arden? Were you in Innis Arden?

Burt Isaksen: No, it's down between Innis Arden and the old dock.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oh, sure, I know the area.

Burt Isaksen: Right down on there. In fact, the railroad tracks is down below, but on Camano we had a tremendous good view from West Point and up to North Point.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Right, right, right.

Burt Isaksen: It was real nice, though.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oh, yeah. What's going on back there. I ran out Hold on a second. I made a little mistake here. I hope I got most of this. Oh, shoot. One moment here. I've been having a little problem with this camera.

Burt Isaksen: Just don't plug that in.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Oh yeah. Let me see. It's been really frustrating.

Burt Isaksen: Oh.

01:18:24

Jeffrey Kahrs: Well, let me just check. I mean, I should have done this in the first place, but I



Interview with Burt Isaksen

MOHAI, *Commercial Fisherman Oral History Project, 2010.63.9*
Transcribed for the 2023 4Culture Collections Care Grant

thought, "Oh, it said 100 minutes," which should be enough time, but something's not working right, as good as you would like. Let me just check this here real quick. Okay, well, I think we pretty much have the interview. I don't know, can you think of anything, Burt, that you would like to close out with?

Burt Isaksen: No, no, you have got my history, and that's about all. Like I said, I've been in all kinds of fishery, and I have no regret. I made a good living.

Jeffrey Kahrs: You had a good living and a good life.

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, right, right.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, I was just thinking of whether there was anything that, you know, I mean, it's interesting when you interview the older Norskis because they live such a life at sea, but they're very modest about it, generally. Well, not everyone, but generally—

Burt Isaksen: Not everyone, no.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Or they seem modest about them, but if you were speaking to them, but if you were speaking to them, you would probably pick up who was the—you know what I'm saying?

Burt Isaksen: Yeah, I know, I know.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, but when the people—

Burt Isaksen: Everybody's different, so what the heck.

Jeffrey Kahrs: Yeah, that's right. Yeah, no, you're absolutely right. Okay. Well, alright, I'm gonna go ahead and shut it down here. God, I can't believe myself. Well, we got everything here, so I can always use this.

[Statement Ends]