

**A.L. QUICK**  
**Oysterman - Eastpoint, FL**

\* \* \*

Date: January 12, 2006  
Location: Dock at Steamer's Raw Bar - Apalachicola, FL  
Interviewer: Amy Evans  
Length: 1 hour, 30 minutes  
Project: Florida's Forgotten Coast

**[Begin A.L. Quick]**

0:00:00.0

**Amy Evans:** All right, this is Amy Evans on Thursday, January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2006 and I'm in Apalachicola, Florida, on this boat ramp here next to Steamers Restaurant with an oysterman by the name of A.L. Quick. We met over here the other day. And you stay over in Eastpoint. Is A.L. Quick—is A.L. what you go by, or what is your given name?

0:00:26.5

**A.L. Quick:** Yeah.

0:00:28.3

**AE:** Your whole name?

0:00:28.7

**ALQ:** I forget. **[Laughs]** A lot of people call me Al.

0:00:33.9

**AE:** Yeah? Do the A and the L stand for anything?

0:00:36.9

**ALQ:** Not that I know of.

0:00:37.5

**AE:** Really? Okay. Could I ask you to state your name and your birth date for the recording here?

0:00:44.4

**ALQ:** A.L. Quick, February 27<sup>th</sup>, 1940.

0:00:50.9

**AE:** Okay, and were you born in Eastpoint?

0:00:52.0

**ALQ:** I was born in Wewahitchka [Florida].

0:00:54.9

**AE:** And when did your family—or when did you move down to Eastpoint?

0:00:58.7

**ALQ:** Oh, God, that's so long ago, I forgot—can't remember the date. Well, I'll put it like this, I've been here ever since I was nine years old [1949], and I'm sixty-five now.

0:01:13.0

**AE:** All right. And what did your family move down here for?

0:01:15.7

**ALQ:** Well, mostly to work. They hadn't never worked the seafood 'til they come down here. We—we worked in the crab house, shrimp houses, stuff like that.

0:01:31.3

**AE:** So [there was] just more opportunity here on the bay back then?

0:01:33.7

**ALQ:** Yeah, yeah.

0:01:35.5

**AE:** So—

0:01:36.1

**ALQ:** Well there was actually more jobs here back then, see. Yeah, you know, we—we moved down here and my baby sister, she went to the first school in Carrabelle [Florida]. [*Laughs*]

0:01:58.1

**AE:** The first elementary school or high school or—?

0:02:00.3

**ALQ:** No, it was the first—first grade—she ever went to. I didn't—I didn't finish school; I ain't go no education—can't read and write. But so far I've made it. [*Laughs*]

0:02:17.2

**AE:** So you went straight to work then as soon as you could get out there on the water?

0:02:20.8

**ALQ:** Well I—I started oystering when I was seventeen years old. I've been doing it all my life just about. I quit school when I was sixteen and started working the next day after I quit school.

**[Laughs]**

0:02:32.9

**AE:** Did you quit school so you could go to work?

0:02:35.4

**ALQ:** Well, yeah, mostly.

0:02:38.9

**AE:** But before—before you went oystering, you were working in the crab houses and whatnot?

0:02:41.8

**ALQ:** Yeah, yeah.

0:02:42.6

**AE:** How—at what age did you start working?

0:02:44.7

**ALQ:** Well I was sixteen when I quit school and I—I started working the next day after I quit school.

0:02:52.1

**AE:** But were you working in the seafood houses prior to that while you were in school—when you were in—?

0:02:58.3

**ALQ:** No. No, I didn't work when I was going to school. But I had asthma all my life, and the doctor kept me out of school for two years, so I didn't get to go to school. So I figured what the heck, if I ain't going to learn nothing, I might as well quit, you know. So that's what I done. I quit and started working.

0:03:17.2

**AE:** You had asthma you say?

0:03:17.5

**ALQ:** Yeah, I did have.

0:03:19.5

**AE:** That kept you out of school that long?

0:03:20.7

**ALQ:** Yeah.

0:03:21.2

**AE:** Man. So when you started oystering, did you have your own boat or were you going out with somebody else or—?

0:03:28.6

**ALQ:** Well, yeah, I had my own boat. And I—my brother-in-law, him and I went oystering together. We was working at a place down here called Eddie Amison's place at that time, and we worked for about six months together and then we—he started working with somebody else. I finally worked by myself for a while, and then my dad worked with me and then he—he got where he couldn't work, so then I had it all by myself again. And then after—after I got married and—and my son came along—well, I got two sons—and when they got big enough to work then we—me and my oldest son worked together for about three or four years. He decided he wanted to get married, so he married and moved to Tennessee, so that left me by myself again.

0:04:30.9

**AE:** So when you say you were working out at this Eddie Amison's Place was that—does that mean you were selling your oysters to them?

0:04:38.4

**ALQ:** Yeah, yeah, I was catching.

0:04:41.4

**AE:** Okay, okay. And so can you explain to me how that works when an oysterman takes his catch to a certain seafood house? What that relationship is like or how it starts or—?

0:04:51.4

**ALQ:** Well what dealers do, they—like if I catch like I'm doing now, if I catch, my wife [Gloria Quick] shucks [at Lynn's Quality Oysters in Eastpoint, Florida] They pay us twenty-eight dollars a gallon like that. If I don't—if I just catch bags, they don't pay but twelve dollars, so I make—I make more money letting her shuck for me, see.

0:05:15.0

**AE:** And she shucks at a seafood house?

0:05:16.4

**ALQ:** Yeah.

0:05:18.7

**AE:** And then how do you decide which—which house you're going to work with?

0:05:21.9

**ALQ:** Well, I guess, you can work with any of them as far as that—you know. I have worked—I have worked for several different people during my lifetime. I worked—well, the first man I

ever oystered for was Eddie Amison's, and then I went to—when my brother-in-law quit—then I went back to Eastpoint and I—I worked for a fellow named Frank Segree. I worked for him for several years and then I—he finally got sick and—or he couldn't run the business no more, and then I finally got out of that part of it and went to work for Joe Barber. He run a crab business. I got a job working in what they call a raw house, you know—[a] crab house, cooking crabs and having them picked and all that stuff. I toted garbage and waited on tables—the tables where the ladies picked the crabs out. What I done, I took them out of the cooler and carried them there and put them in—they had in little baskets. I took the little baskets in there and set them on the table and they—they picked the meat out of it. That was the part I done—helped cook them; I had to help cook a lot of the crabs. Most of it was brought in. Or they'd bring them in raw right out of the water, you know, and then—then we'd have to put them in a big steamer and steam cook them, you know. And then we'd take them out of that and put them on what we call a cooling table that was a big old wire looking table upside the wall. We'd dump the crabs on that 'til they'd cool, and we'd clean them. We'd back—pull the claws off of them and back them [take the backs off] and put them in little baskets. And then put them in the cooler. And then the next day we'd carry them in there and let the women pick them—pick the meat out of them.

0:07:24.8

**AE:** Now is that something you do in addition to oystering, depending on the season or the weather?

0:07:28.9

**ALQ:** Well in—back then, they mostly run the crab houses in the summertime, and then they'd run oyster houses in the wintertime. You know, we'd change seasons up. But now for several years they've—they've run a crab house year-round, you know, and quit—you know, a lot of people quit oystering. They started crabbing and they—they got where they just run them year-round. Both of them, the oyster houses and the crab business at the same time.

0:08:04.1

*[The dock's caretaker approaches us, and we all chat for a bit. Recording is stopped for about four minutes.]*

**AE:** [To dock caretaker] Hey, how are you doing? *[Recording is paused]*

**AE:** *[Recording resumes]* [To A.L. Quick] Start over again. Okay. You were talking about compasses now.

0:08:09.2

**ALQ:** There's a place down here they call Eight Mile that we used to unload at. We went across the bay to a place over there call Paradise Flat; it's an oyster bar. That's slam across the bay on the outer side. And went there one morning it was foggy, a lot foggier than it is now. You couldn't see nothing out there, hardly. He said, *Daddy where are we going to oyster?* I said, *Don't look like to me we're going.* He said, *Yeah, we're going.* I said, *Just tell me how we're*

*going to get to Paradise Flat. He said, I'm going to stand up there by the cull board and whichever direction I tell you to go in, you go that way. You drive the motor. I said, All right. He got up there with the compass in his hand, you know—standing up there. We—me and him, a couple days before that we had put a white board down, marking—marking a place on the—on the bar over there, the oyster bar. If I hadn't moved the boat one way or the other when I got over there, I'd run straight into that board. That's how straight he had me going. I said, Man, if I had been doing that, I'd have made fifteen circles before I ever found the bar over there. [Laughs]*

*Me and my brother-in-law one time, we started at Cat Point; that's that oyster bar over there next to the [St. George] Island Bridge. We started out there—I got out the compass, and I had—he had a boat, and I had a boat. Well, I had a compass on my boat; he didn't have one. After I left the beacon light like that red pole [points across dock to a red pole in the water], you know, I couldn't look back and see it. I was lost. We run and run and run and directly—he done like this [waves both hands in the air] for me to stop, you know. So I stopped, and he pulled up there aside of me and he said, *Where we at?* I said, *Out here in the bay somewhere.* He said, *Ain't you watching that compass?* I said, *Yeah, it's made a complete circle.* [Laughs] He said, *Give me that thing and let me find the Cat Point oyster bar.* Well, it had two little screws in it, you know, that you could take it off the bracket. So I took it off the bracket and handed it to him and I said, *You know the way to go to Cat Point?* He said, *I'll find Cat Point; don't worry. You just follow me.* I said, *All right.* So he started running, and I followed him. And in a few minutes we run up on Cat Point oyster bar, and there was a light pole—they got a power line that runs across the bay down there. We come up to the first pole and he said, *Do you know which one of these poles it is?* I said, *No, I don't.* He said, *I want you to follow this power line back down to the beach down yonder and then count them poles back out here to me.* I said, *Why do I got to do that for?**

*What do we care what pole we're at?* He said, *I want to know what pole I'm at.* So I went—I run the line, you know, all the way back to the beach, and I turned around and started counting the poles back. And when I got there to him I said, *You're at the twelfth light pole.* He said, *My God, we're halfway across the bay already!* I said, *Well, I can't help that—we were in the middle of it to start with.* **[Laughs]** He—he said, *From now on, I'm going to take the compass and you can follow me. I ain't following you no more.* He said, *We made a complete circle.* I said—. **[Laughs]** I kept watching that compass, you know, and—and it—I knew my boat had to have been turned because that compass was sitting still, you know, but I kept watching it turn complete circles. **[Laughs]** I don't know where I led our—**[Laughs]**.

0:11:38.4

**AE:** Were there—are there a lot of oystermen who do go out like days like today [the bay was covered with a thick fog]?

0:11:43.1

**ALQ:** Oh, yeah. Yeah, them guys there got GPSes [Global Positioning Systems] on their boats. That's a little thing that's—what you do is it's like a calculator and you punch in whatever place you want to go out yonder and it—it instead of it being a thing that goes around like a compass, it's—puts a straight arrow out there like a road you follow, and if you get off of it there's a little arrow that comes out on the side of it that points whichever direction you've got to go to get you back on the road again. It's like—like a highway you know.

0:12:18.4

**AE:** Do most oystermen use that or is that something just—kind of a few invest in?

0:12:22.7

**ALQ:** Well, most of them use—use them.

0:12:26.4

*[Caretaker of the dock approaches.]*

**Male:** Uh-huh, they got a map on them, too.

0:12:29.1

**AE:** But you said—

0:12:30.1

**Male:** It's got—one of these guys had his over here the other day and they said he had a map to show exactly where he was at.

0:12:37.6

**AE:** But you said Mr. Quick you drove all the way out here this morning and—and looked at the weather and you didn't want to go out in it.

0:12:44.3

**ALQ:** Yeah, I drove down here. There wasn't nobody—no trucks or nothing down here when I got here before daylight. I was—I was trying to see that island over there and I couldn't see nothing. **[Laughs]** I said I ain't going out there in that. **[Laughs]** I just turned around and went back to the house. I told my wife, I said, *I can't go oystering today*. She said, *That fog ain't lifted?* I said, *No, it don't look like it's going to lift either*. Now if the tide is high, you know, where I can go out that end down yonder, I—I can look at the beach, you know, the beach line and go to an oyster bar. But if I got to cross the bay I'm lost. **[Laughs]** I—I can't navigate with a compass. I could if I wasn't argued with you know—the compass is right because it ain't going to point with one direction. But I get to arguing with that thing, and I get lost out here. I can't maneuver with them.

0:13:37.7

**AE:** Well tell me about—

0:13:38.1

**ALQ:** My son—

0:13:38.8

**AE:** Tell me about all your years out here. You have pushing fifty years on the water oystering right?

0:13:43.9

**ALQ:** Well fishing and shrimping and stuff like that altogether, you know.

0:13:49.2

**AE:** Well tell me about—tell me about oystering and being on the boat, and tell me what that's like.

0:13:55.0

**ALQ:** Like being on the boat? Well to me it's fun. I mean, I get pleasure out of it, you know. It's hard work and all but to me it's—well you—the one thing about oystering or crabbing or shrimping either one, if you own your own rig, you know, to do it with, you're your own boss. Like if I was to come down here and the sun is shining, [it's] a pretty day and I—I've decided I

don't want to go out there and turn around and come back to the house, that's my business. I can do that because there ain't nobody out here that can tell me what I can do and what I can't do. That's one—one good thing about oystering or fishing or whatever you're doing like that—crabbing or whatever. If you want to do it, you can go do it; if you don't, well you ain't got to. I mean, you don't make no money but it—you know if—if you want to go out there and turn around and come back home, that's your business. I have been out there when it would be a pretty day or sunshine(y) day—I have went to the oyster bar and throwed my anchor overboard and decided that I wanted to go home. I pull my anchor up and go to the house. I tell my wife, *All right, honey, you ready to go? Where are we going? Going fishing.* **[Laughs]** It's you know—you mostly your own boss. That's what I like about it.

0:15:19.7

**AE:** Make your own choices?

0:15:20.1

**ALQ:** Huh?

0:15:20.4

**AE:** Make your own choices?

0:15:22.2

**ALQ:** Yeah, right.

0:15:23.7

**AE:** Well tell me a day when you're out oystering what it's like if you're out by yourself and you're tonging and kind of a schedule, if you keep one, of how many you tong, and then when you cull and how long you sit and do that.

0:15:35.6

**ALQ:** Well, now it's just—like in a situation like that—it's just according you know how—how thick of oysters you're in. Now, I can tong that cull board up on my boat there—if I'm in thick oysters, I can round that cull board up in about fifteen minutes—just stack—just every oyster I can stack on it. But if I'm in scattered oysters, sometimes it takes thirty minutes, sometimes an hour, sometimes an hour-and-a-half to get a cull board full of oysters. Well, then I got to sit down and cull them out, you know. Our law says a three-inch oyster [is a legal-size oyster.] Well, these boys don't catch three-inch oysters. They throw in there when it comes just about—some of them. I try to stay in the law, anyway. Now, if I don't, my wife is going to get a ball bat [*Laughs*] and work me over the head now, because she don't like shucking little oysters. I try to catch them, you know, three inches. That's the law, and that's the reason I don't catch as many oysters as a lot of these other guys do. They go out there, and whatever they throw on the cull

board, if it's a live oyster—if it ain't that big [holds fingers about an inch-and-a-half apart] around, they throw it in the bag. But in—in the long run, over the period of years, I've seen our bay go downhill ninety-percent. What I mean by that, when I first started oystering, you could take St. Vincent Bar—it's a bar that's right straight across that way toward the island over yonder. And I've seen—I've seen a man and his two sons go over there and catch eighty and ninety wheelbarrows—I'm talking about wheelbarrows just stacked—all they can stack on them—eighty and ninety wheelbarrows a day. You can't do that now because there ain't no oysters there like that.

0:17:29.4

**AE:** Why do you think that is?

0:17:31.5

**ALQ:** They go out there and haul them off.

0:17:35.3

**AE:** They just over—over fish?

0:17:36.0

**ALQ:** This young—this young bunch is oystering them. They go out there and throw in everything that's coming to them. But back then, they didn't do that, see. They—they caught a legal oyster and if they didn't, they got a 200 dollar fine. Well back then 200 dollars was a lot of money. I mean now—nowadays it ain't because there's some of these guys—I mean, that boat right there [points to a boat docked near the shore], he unloaded a while ago. He—he'll probably have close to 300 dollars worth of oysters. I've seen some of these guys go out there and catch enough oysters to make 2,000 or 3,000 dollars a week. Well my son—I got a—my young son in Eastpoint, I've seen him go down there to Indian Pass and him and his wife, if he didn't catch 200 bags—I mean 200 dollars worth a day, he wouldn't even go out there. He'd catch anywhere—I've seen him get a payroll of 500 dollars a day, they'd make. Of course, I ain't never made that kind of money. The most I've ever made is 900 dollars in one week. But they can make that in a day.

0:18:45.1

**AE:** So why—what are you trying to say with why you're not—why you haven't gotten that many oysters? Because you take out the small ones? And they're—the small ones that they're bringing in are adding to their catch?

0:19:00.2

**ALQ:** In other words, it's just like you and I are planting your garden and, you know, a pea patch growing up, and then you run out there and—plucking all the peas off the vines and not leaving nothing, see—taking their seed. That's what they do with them.

0:19:14.7

**AE:** I see. I understand, okay. [*Recording interrupted as some people approach and need to ascend the steps the interview is taking place on. Recording is paused for about two minutes.*]

Okay, so we were talking about the legal size of an oyster and you were—you were doing the analogy of a garden when it grows. So you're saying that since people are bringing in the small oysters, they're not leaving anything in the oyster beds to grow a new crop in that part of the bay?

0:19:37.3

**ALQ:** Right, right; they're stripping the bars. Well I've—I've noticed it down through the period of years, you know, as I've been oystering, that the bars I used to go to and catch five wheelbarrows a day by myself, it takes me all day now to go out there and on that same bar—it takes me all day, and then I go out there and catch five bags on count of that, see. It's just like taking—taking—going out there and planting a seed, and then going back and pulling it out of the ground before it ever comes up.

0:20:12.4

**AE:** Do you think there are things that are happening alongside of them being over-harvested that are hurting the bay?

0:20:19.3

**ALQ:** Yeah.

0:20:19.7

**AE:** Such as?

0:20:20.4

**ALQ:** Well, now they used—this last storm we had, we didn't get the full impact of the hurricane [Hurricane Dennis in 2005], you know, itself, but we got the—what they call the outskirts of it. And it done a lot of damage in Eastpoint and also some damage here because it destroyed mostly all these docks, and a lot of the oyster houses and things in Eastpoint it destroyed. But the—sometime, you know, the—the hurricanes have something to do with it, too, because they—they'll either uncover the oysters, or they'll cover them with sand and kill them. I've seen that happen, too, you know. And the DNR [Department of Natural Resources] has always got their nose stuck in something they ain't got no concern about. But it ain't now way you can do nothing about that, because the State [of Florida] backs them up whatever they want to do, you know. But I feel like in my heart, you know, if they can get away—just get out of Franklin County and leave our oyster bars alone, the God Almighty will take care of them. That's

what I—the way I feel about it. Any time man sticks his nose in something that nature has got anything to do with, they're going to mess it up anyhow. **[Laughs]**

0:21:40.3

**AE:** Well can you tell me a little bit of the geography of the bay and what the different bars are and where they are?

0:21:48.3

**ALQ:** Well there ain't too many as—as far as the names of the bars, I can't tell you too much about that because I don't know that much about them, you know. But I do know where they—now we got some bars down this side of the bay on this—the mainland side that's called Shell Lumps, but now that's bars that the State planted, see. They carried a barge load of shells there and blow them off the—the barge with water—with a water force, and what it does, they take the shell like that [picks an oyster shell up off of the ground]—the dry shell and any—anything that—that spat catches on when them oysters are spawning, it grows a little oyster on it. They'll grow on pilings. I don't know whether you've seen them on these pilings or not, but some of these pilings up and down this beach, you know, has probably got little spats on them where they grow—started—a little oyster started out—sometime it will be that big. *[Holds fingers about an inch apart to illustrate.]* You won't even think it's an oyster 'til you really look at it close, you know. And then they—they—the State—like I say, the State plants—plants several bars down the bay and then they—they go out there—they—they got places like Eastpoint Channel. See,

that's supposed to be what they call polluted water. In other words—well, a certain time of the year they let the men go out there and tong those oysters up and put them in—in a big old plastic looking cooler or whatever you call them. I call them like a box, you know, and they haul them out to the main part of the barge and dump them out in—in water they claim that's clean water. And, of course, [*Laughs*] I ain't never seen polluted water—saltwater, no way. But that's what they claim. But they—they take the oysters up, you know, and—and re-transplant them. And that helps some. But what good is it going to do for you to go out there and plant a bar with big oysters that big [*holds hands about six inches apart to illustrate*], and then them boys go out there, and the first two or three months they haul off everything and don't leave nothing but shells.

0:24:00.9

**AE:** Oysters about as big as your hand you're talking about they get?

0:24:05.0

**ALQ:** Yeah, well the next time—if you're here when I go out again, I'll show you some like I catch.

0:24:12.2

**AE:** Okay.

0:24:15.0

**ALQ:** I guarantee you won't find no more on these—on these boats down here like that.

**[Laughs]** Of course, I have to see, on count of my wife shucks them, and she shucks on one of them shucking machines. Have you seen one of them?

0:24:24.6

**AE:** Yes, sir.

0:24:26.9

**ALQ:** And she uses one of them, and she's left-handed of all things. I call her an odd-ball, but

**[Laughs]** I can't say too much about that because both of my sons is left-handed, too, see. And but she shucks with that machine and—and, if you get too small of an oyster in it, if you don't—if you ain't real careful how you stick it in that thing, it will snatch it in there and break. Well, she's had her finger broke and all this part of the meat [*points to the outside of one of his hands*] cut out of it on count of them. I used to shuck one of them when I was shucking. I shucked with one of them machines, and I've had my thumb knocked numb, you know, where I'd stick it in there too far and it would knock my thumb out. But now, some of them ladies got their fingers completely cut off by them, you know. Like they have somebody—certain people that sharpen the teeth on them and they—they—after they get them sharpened, sometimes them ladies will

stick an oyster in there a little too far, and it will grab their finger. There's a couple ladies over there that I know right now that—that's got their fingers cut clean off by them. They're very dangerous.

0:25:47.4

**AE:** So are you saying you catch the bigger oysters so that they're easier for your wife to open?

0:25:51.2

**ALQ:** Yeah.

0:25:53.1

**AE:** Really?

0:25:53.7

**ALQ:** Well if she—she's got less, you know, well I don't know you'd put it. I reckon you'd have to say, if she's got a bigger oyster, then she don't have to stick her hand in that machine so far, see, to crack it.

0:26:12.2

**AE:** But that then affects what you bring in. Couldn't you bring in more if you weren't concerned about getting just the big ones?

0:26:18.0

**ALQ:** Well, yeah, if I done it like the rest of them I'd—I'd probably catch a boatload, too. And half of them don't cull the mussels off of [the oysters]. They bring them in with mussels on them—burred up and everything else. What I mean by burred up is, like if two or three oysters is clustered together like that [*gestures with hands to illustrates multiple oysters clustered together*] they don't knock them apart. They just throw them in the bag like that.

0:26:39.5

**AE:** And you take your time out when you're out there, and you really cull them and clean them up?

0:26:41.9

**ALQ:** Yeah, I try to. Well, I don't single every one of them up, you know, because you take two oysters that will be in your hand, and if you hit one trying to knock it apart, see, you bust one of them. So I'd just rather leave it—leave the two of them together or three of them together. I have

caught them three together like that, and I'd leave them together, but I'd knock the mussels off of them where she can see what's she's doing.

0:27:07.2

**AE:** Where does your wife shuck—what house?

0:27:09.3

**ALQ:** She shucks at Lynn's Quality [Oysters in Eastpoint, FL].

0:27:11.5

**AE:** Okay. I spoke with Lynn yesterday.

0:27:13.6

**ALQ:** Was you?

0:27:14.0

**AE:** Yeah, she was over in Apalach for a meeting, and she and I met up at the Red Top Cafe and talked for a while.

0:27:19.4

**ALQ:** Oh, yeah.

0:27:22.8

**AE:** So has—has your wife shucked most of the whole time? Is that what she's done for a living?

0:27:28.0

**ALQ:** Yeah, she—she shucked—well me and her has been married forty-two years, and I think she started trying to learn how to shuck before our first son was born. He's forty years old—will be pretty soon. And she's been shucking ever since, you know.

0:27:47.7

**AE:** What is your wife's name?

0:27:51.0

**ALQ:** Gloria.

0:27:51.5

**AE:** Gloria. And your sons' names?

0:27:53.0

**ALQ:** One of them is named Andy and the other is named Randall.

0:27:57.8

**AE:** Andy and Randall, okay. So when you're out there on the water and you're—you're tonging, and then you sit and cull, is there one thing you like doing over the other, or you just like it all?

0:28:09.1

**ALQ:** Well, if I had my choice about it, I'd rather cull than to have to [tong], you know, because that tonging is hard on you. It gives—it gives your arm—my arms, I've got arthritis in my shoulders, and all I've done it so long—so many years, I've about wore my arms out doing it. **[Laughs]** And I can't hardly do it no more, you know. Of course, when I was a young man, it didn't bother me. I mean I—I'd go out there and work from sun-up to sun-down. I've been on the bars when—way before it would get daylight and have a cull board of oysters tonged up, and

when it got light enough [and] I could see how to cull, I'd start culling. And worked 'til it got dark or I couldn't see how to cull them, you know. But I can't do it no more. [*Laughs*]

0:28:55.7

**AE:** I bet it's kept you in good shape, though.

0:28:56.8

**ALQ:** Oh, yeah.

0:28:56.8

**AE:** All that hard physical labor.

0:28:58.2

**ALQ:** Well, according to what the doctor said, you know, the exercise that it give you—I know it don't—you know, it don't exercise your whole body, but your shoulders and all working all the time they say that—that reflects your heart, you know. It keeps your heart going good. And yeah, so that's the reason I'm in as good as health as I am. [*Laughs*]

0:29:22.2

**AE:** Well when you pull up—when you pull up a bunch of oysters with your tongs to bring up onto the boat, about how much does that loaded set of tongs weigh, do you think?

0:29:32.3

**ALQ:** Oh, God. Well I—I use sixteen [toothed] head—some of these guys use eighteen. If you feel them tongs slapped full the weight of the tongs and the—the oysters together, I imagine they weigh close to a half a bag, so that would be about thirty pounds, I imagine. I've had them filled so full I couldn't even hardly pick them up. [*Laughs*]

0:29:59.7

**AE:** Do you—what length are your tongs that you use?

0:30:01.4

**ALQ:** I got ten-foot [tongs].

0:30:02.9

**AE:** Ten-foot?

0:30:03.0

**ALQ:** Ten-foot handles, um-hmm.

0:30:06.4

**AE:** Have you had different lengths or sizes over the years, or is this just what you prefer?

0:30:09.2

**ALQ:** Oh, yeah, well I have—I have worked sixteen-foot handles, but they'll kill you. **[Laughs]** I mean they'll wear you out in a day's—you know, using that deep for having—tonging in that deep of water, but—I have done it, but I don't—I don't think I want to do it no more. Now I use fourteen [foot tongs], you know, in the summertime up there around Apalachicola Bridge; that water is deep up there. Well you can use twelve-foot handles, but if you use them up against a piling under the bridge, where I usually work most of the time, you're bending over like this, you know, *[stands up and bends at the waist, leaning over towards the ground to illustrate]*, and I'd rather use fourteen-foot handles because you stand up straight, you know. But now some—some places—going to the Island Bridge down there—and those places out there the water is twenty-foot deep, and I ain't going to go in there and get no oysters out of there. That's too much [than] I can handle. Now if they let me dredge, I'd go dredge them, but I ain't going to tong them.

0:31:10.9

**AE:** Do oystermen tend to own a few sets of tongs?

0:31:14.9

**ALQ:** Oh, yeah.

0:31:16.7

**AE:** To have those choices?

0:31:18.4

**ALQ:** Well now, we—my handles—I let the guy cut them out, you know, and build the heads, but I go—I go find my own boards, you know. I get my own boards, and if I want a set of handles made out of them like that, well then I carry them down there to the shop and let him cut them out and rout them out round, you know, on one side, and then I carry them home and put my own rivets and stuff like that in them.

0:31:45.5

**AE:** Who makes the handles and the heads for you?

0:31:47.9

**ALQ:** Well, there's a guy in Eastpoint. I don't know what his name is. He—the guy that used to do it sold his place out to another guy. I don't even know what that man is now.

0:31:59.5

**AE:** The Goldens over there in Eastpoint [Goldens Net Shop]?

0:32:01.2

**ALQ:** Ma'am?

0:32:02.1

**AE:** Are you talking about the Goldens in Eastpoint?

0:32:03.6

**ALQ:** Well, Charles Golden was doing it, you know, but he's sold his shop to some other guy [Lee Monroe]. The man I bought them heads from here about two weeks—two or three weeks ago, he built them. I don't—Charles used to build some good heads. That set that I broke, he built them, and I used them about five years.

0:32:29.4

**AE:** Is that about how long a set will last, a good five years?

0:32:30.9

**ALQ:** Well some of them—some of them does, some of them don't. I guess it's just according, you know, [to] what kind of a strain you're putting on them and all that. I had in them things the prettiest oysters you've ever seen—a big old oyster like that [*holds fingers apart about five inches to illustrate*] whenever they broke, and it made me sick. [**Laughs**] I had to get them all on the culler, and didn't have no more [tongs]. I didn't have no extra pair at the house either.

0:32:54.1

**AE:** Well then, I was asking you the other day, when I ran into you on the dock, about all the oystermen leaving their tongs sitting on top of their boats here at the dock and them not being so worried about people running off with them.

0:33:05.9

**ALQ:** Well sometimes they get stolen, you know.

0:33:09.5

**AE:** But that's a pretty big investment for a—you know, a tool that you have to have to work the bay.

0:33:13.8

**ALQ:** Well if you—if you go to a—like that guy that I was telling you about that built them heads, if you go to his shop and buy the handles and the heads as altogether, it would cost you about 220 dollars, I imagine. But I found out it's—it's cheaper for me to buy the heads and the board, and let him just cut the handles out because he'll only charge you twenty-five dollars to cut the handles out. Well, then I can carry them to my house, see, and put my own fastener in it to hold them together, and I used stainless steel plates and he—he don't use that. He uses brass—but brass wears out in—in probably a year's time. The rivet wears out and wears the plates out real fast, and them stainless steel [rivets or screws], they don't wear out; you can just keep them. That's a set of some of them handles right there I've been using for five years [points across the dock to where his boat is]. They still got the same bolt in them, and all I had in them to start with—because they don't rust, you see. You get something that rusts, they—this old boy one time put [*Laughs*]*—*made him a set out of iron and put him an iron bolt in them. Them things didn't last six months before the saltwater eat them up.

0:34:31.6

**AE:** [*Distracted*] There's a dolphin out there [swimming in the bay close to shore].

0:34:32.9

**ALQ:** Yeah.

0:34:34.8

**AE:** Wow. Well I was talking to a—a tong maker the other day, who was telling me that the old style [tongs], where the—the handle meets the—the head, and you have that hinge there that's kind of like a sickle shape that brings them together. But they're used to be an old style, where it came together in the middle like that [makes drawing of the old-style tongs with part of the structure of the head blocking the center of the metal basket] and that was filled with wood.

0:34:59.1

**ALQ:** Oh, yeah.

0:35:00.0

**AE:** Do you know about those?

0:35:00.2

**ALQ:** Yeah, yeah. I know what you're talking about, yeah.

0:35:03.2

**AE:** Did you used to use those?

0:35:04.0

**ALQ:** Uh-hmm, that used to be the onliest kind of heads that were made back then.

0:35:06.8

**AE:** Yeah? Was there a name for that, or did they have a—call that part something?

0:35:11.7

**ALQ:** Lord, I don't know. I guess you could call them a Baltimore tong, you know.

0:35:20.9

**AE:** The new ones?

0:35:22.6

**ALQ:** Because that's—that's where they mostly shipped them from—Baltimore, Maryland—down here to the hardware [store]. You could buy them, but I don't know who come out with that—who come up with that [style of] basket.

*[Interruption. Recording is paused for about three minutes.]*

0:35:44.0

**AE:** So we were talking about the style of tong. Do you know when the—was there a year, maybe, that you can figure when it changed over to the open basket tong [style]?

0:35:55.2

**ALQ:** I'd say it would be way back about thirty or forty years ago because, yeah, I remember the tongs that was like that. We—well, what they done, they had to get two boards to make a set of handles, and they had to cut that curve in—in the wood itself, you know. And they was aggravating because, if you ever put a string on where that—you had to bend while—bend a piece of wood, they'd break because the grain—they had to cut through the grain like that you know—?

0:36:33.4

**AE:** On an angle, yeah.

0:36:34.2

**ALQ:** Well, the grain was running in that wood like that; it would split off real easy. So I liked—I liked that idea better than I did the—them kind. I liked the basket tongs better than I did [the Baltimore tongs with the obstruction in the head] because they—they're easier to dump, too.

0:36:53.0

**AE:** That makes sense.

0:36:54.1

**ALQ:** Because the way they had the handles—sticks down in the—the heads like that [blocking the basket area], the oysters had to fall over that [obstruction], see. It was like [you'd] take your tongs and stand them up like that end ways to dump them, and them oysters were up here on this part of these handles—the heads had to fall over that part of that handle, see. Like [with the tongs I use now, without the obstruction] they don't have to do that; [the oysters] just fall straight out. So the basket tongs, whoever come up with that idea, come up with the best idea. Yeah, I've used them kind of tongs. I've used them several years.

0:37:31.7

**AE:** Those calluses on your hands from tonging?

0:37:33.2

**ALQ:** [*Laughs*] Well, there's the blisters I wore [on my hands] yesterday. Yeah, my hands is rough.

0:37:42.6

**AE:** Because it's not convenient to wear gloves while you're out there because you can't handle the—?

0:37:47.8

**ALQ:** Well, I can't feel the [bay] bottom with them, you know. A lot of—there's a lot of people that use them but if you—if you use gloves—now, for my own self—you know, I can't—I can't feel the—the oysters hardly. It takes the feeling out of my hands.

0:38:07.8

**AE:** That cold wet weather doesn't take the feeling out of your hands?

0:38:09.4

**ALQ:** Well I've—I've had—I've had my tongs, and they'll ice up and pull them up out of the water because I still will be with my naked hands.

0:38:20.2

**AE:** Do you wear gloves when you cull?

0:38:22.4

**ALQ:** Oh, yeah. If you don't, you'll cut your hands off because—yeah, I—I use a glove on my left hand. I don't use nothing on this [my right] one. But I got a cull iron that's got a rubber handle, like a handlebar grip thing on it, that keeps, you know, the cull iron from messing my hands up.

0:38:43.8

**AE:** Did you rig that up or did—can you get them that way?

0:38:46.8

**ALQ:** Yeah, yeah, I—I made it myself. I use a file. I don't use a cull iron like some of these guys. That's why I found a twelve-inch file—if you cut that end off that you put the handle on—if you cut that [pointed end] off and round it and then—then cut the—the rough grooves off of the file and make you a kind of a smooth handle and then sharpen—sharpen the file out on the end that you're hitting the oysters with, if you sharpen it like a knife blade when you're culling them mussels—it slings that stuff away from you. It don't sling it all up in your face like a flat iron does. I've had them mussels go in my eyes, and them things will set you on fire when they do—make your eyes swell up and run water—get your blurry where you can't hardly see nothing. That happened to me sometimes, I'm telling you. **[Laughs]**

0:39:44.1

**AE:** So what gave you—gave you the idea to rig the file to use as a culling iron?

0:39:47.1

**ALQ:** Well the file is a hard metal. It don't—it don't chip and roll up like a—a piece of regular iron does. I've used—I got—I think I got two files right now that's—that I wore off, you know. I keep sharpening them every once in a while but—but they don't wear out like a piece of regular iron does.

0:40:13.9

**AE:** And the handle part—is that what—like a bicycle handle or something that you rigged on it?

0:40:18.6

**ALQ:** Yeah, it's a grip—what you call a handlebar grip. Take it off a handlebar of a bicycle.

0:40:24.9

**AE:** Do you know anybody else that uses anything like that? That sounds like a good idea. That should catch on.

0:40:30.1

**ALQ:** Not that I know of. Most of the guys use them bought cull irons that's got that—that's got a measuring [area] on it. I know you've probably seen them.

0:40:44.1

**AE:** I haven't seen a culling iron.

0:40:44.5

**ALQ:** You ain't seen one?

0:40:45.7

**AE:** No, uh-uh.

0:40:49.2

**ALQ:** Well, I declare.

0:40:50.5

**AE:** Do you have one on your boat, or do you take it home?

0:40:53.0

**ALQ:** No, I carry it home. I got a bucket [that] I put my gloves and all that stuff in. I just put it all in the truck.

0:41:01.4

**AE:** Well, I'll find you out here another day, and I'll get a look at your—your fancy culling iron. You were telling me you had your motor stolen from a boat once.

0:41:11.0

**ALQ:** Oh, yeah. Yeah, down at the Eleven Mile. I had a little fifteen-horse[power] Evinrude that I oystered with, and I had it on a different boat than that one [that I use now]. That's—that's a new boat there I've got—and I'm fixing to change again, you know. I got me one of them Carolina Skiffs, they call it. Those flat-bottom—there's one down here a little ways—one going down the channel there a while ago.

0:41:49.1

**AE:** How is it different than another kind of skiff?

0:41:53.1

**ALQ:** Well it looks—it looks like a barge. You ever seen a barge, how they're square on the front kind of? It's got a high break in the bow. That's what—that's what it looks like.

0:42:06.8

**AE:** So the—but this boat is a new boat, but you're going to change it out and get a different one?

0:42:12.8

**ALQ:** Yeah.

0:42:12.8

**AE:** How come?

0:42:15.1

**ALQ:** Well, it's bigger, you know. That boat there ain't got no—ain't got enough room in it hardly.

0:42:19.7

**AE:** How long have you had it?

0:42:21.6

**ALQ:** Oh, I've had it about—probably about seven or eight months—nine or something like that. And it—it's bad about rocking in a rough sea or something. It dips water over the bow and the stern because I got the stern cut down so low to put that motor on it. It's got such a V in the bottom of it like that [*holds hands up together to illustrate a V shape*]. When it's rough, it covers

the bow up, and also, when it rides over seas like that it [gestures to illustrate choppy waters]—it dips water in the stern, too. That thing liked to have capsized on me about two weeks ago. I looked back there, and the water is done coming up over my false floor, and I decided I better go home. **[Laughs]** If I hadn't, I'd have probably been swimming out.

0:43:11.6

**AE:** And what boat did you have before this one? What happened to it?

0:43:14.9

**ALQ:** I had—I had a white—I still got it. I got a white fiberglass boat. It's a lot wider and more flatter on the bottom than this one and it's—I think it's about a foot-and-a-half or two foot longer than that one. It was a nice boat, but it—the stern board, I hit a—I hit a dry bar down yonder one day, and it kicked my motor up, and I didn't have it where it would come up. I had it locked down to the boat, and it torn my stern board up. So I—I decided I was going to put me a new one it, and I did, and it keeps leaking. **[Laughs]** I mean, I didn't help myself by doing it, you know, so it keeps leaking on me and I—I got—my friend give me that one, so I carried it home and put these decks and stuff on it. It was one of them, oh, bass boats, they call it. It had a steering wheel and a ride guide and a windshield and all this kind of mess on it. I stripped all that off. When I got through with the boat, it wasn't nothing but an empty hull then. And I put the decks and stuff like—like you see it now.

0:44:28.1

**AE:** But you don't have a doghouse on this boat [the small covered area on the back of the boat by the motor]?

0:44:28.6

**ALQ:** Uh-umm.

0:44:30.3

**AE:** Do you not like working with one?

0:44:32.4

**ALQ:** Well, yeah, they're nice, you know. Especially when it's raining or—. I like a doghouse, and I used to—I used to own a boat like that gray one right there with that cab on the front *[points to a boat that is docked near the water's edge]*.

0:44:53.9

**AE:** On the other side of that little walk path there? Yeah.

0:44:56.5

**ALQ:** I used to have one like that, and I had a sixty-horse[power] Mariner motor on it and that—don't never buy a Mariner motor. That's one of the sorriest motors ever built. That's what I got on that boat yonder, and that one gives me trouble all the time.

0:45:13.7

**AE:** So how come—is it just the time of the year that you're docking over here at this part of the bay? Because it's—is it convenient to get to where you're oystering?

0:45:23.6

**ALQ:** Well, there's actually better oysters, you know. This end of the bay [the west end] has always growed better oysters than that end [the east end, towards the bridge and Eastpoint]. Of course, there's more oysters over at that end, you know, as far as oysters are concerned but they—they don't grow as big and—.

0:45:40.1

**AE:** Like over at Cat Point and over there there's more but they're not as big? Okay.

0:45:45.2

**ALQ:** And East Hole. Well, we got a bar up there we call Porter's Bar, and then there's a place they call Green Point. Porter's Bar, Pelican Reef, Rattlesnake Cove, Platform, East Hole, Cat Point, and then all the bars out in the—out in the summer part of the bay, you know, around Apalachicola Bridge and all out through there. We work them in the summertime—three months out of the year or four months out of the year—and then they open the rest of them for the winter bars. But they—they used to be good oysters up there around the bridge. That—that flood we had about five years ago come down here, though. It killed a lot of the oysters. I mean there's shells up there right now you can tong up like that—it's just as black as smut. The oysters are done dead in it, you know—stunk. Oh, Lord have mercy. Pulling them things up out of the water with them tongs, it smelled like a skunk you was pulling up on your boat. **[Laughs]** You get a tong full and pull them up like that, they'd get to smelling so bad you'd drop them back overboard. That was some kind of chemical they said come down the river that year and it—well it—it didn't only just kill the oysters; it killed fish, it killed crabs, shrimp, even the bushes out in the river swamp where—out in the swamp. It even killed the bushes out in that swamp out there. I mean you could go up there and ride down one of the roads, and you could tell just as good where that water line went out the swamp. It killed bushes and everything; whatever it went over it killed. **[Laughs]**

0:47:45.0

**AE:** Man.

0:47:47.7

**ALQ:** It liked—it liked to ruin our oysters and the bars. That up there around the bridge, you know, and all that there that—some of the bars up above the bridge, it just totally destroyed them. But they're coming back, you know, a little at a time. I don't know whether it's going to get them to come back like it used to be or not.

0:48:11.6

**AE:** You think you'll stay oystering as long as you can?

0:48:16.6

**ALQ:** As long as I'm able to, I probably will. [If] this arthritis keeps bothering me, I'll have to get out of it, it looks like, and get me a job on the hill. I don't want to; I like to oyster. I've done it so much for so long, it's like home to me, you know. **[Laughs]** But I might have to get out of it.

0:48:47.5

**AE:** Do you have—do you have an idea of what the future of—future of the oystering business is for the bay?

0:48:54.1

**ALQ:** I don't think it's going to last much longer. All these people wanting to build these condominiums and stuff like that on the beach and all, it eventually will just close the whole bay up, I feel like.

0:49:07.4

**AE:** Do you know many young folks who are out oystering?

0:49:09.5

**ALQ:** Any what?

0:49:11.4

**AE:** Young folks—young men?

0:49:16.8

**ALQ:** I don't know them by name; I know them by face, you know, but I don't know them by name too much [*Laughs*]. I'll tell you something; the kids I used to go to school with and all is grown up, and some of them is done dead and gone and all—but I don't know—I don't know

one-third of them. When I went to Eastpoint, six months after I moved there I could tell you everybody and everybody's name and everything else. Now I don't know one-third of them.

Well, Eastpoint has done a lot of growing, though. It's probably—it's probably—I mean probably 3,000 houses there that wasn't there when I went there. Well it wasn't no streets up—up what they call the back part of Eastpoint up there. The back road. Well, they call it Escape Road.

There wasn't no houses or nothing back up there, when we moved there. There's streets that runs down through there now—they just went so far up there and you had to turn around and come back out the same way you went in because there wasn't a road for you to get out up there.

0:50:18.3

**AE:** What did you call them? Scabe roads?

0:50:20.6

**ALQ:** Well they call one of them Escape Road, you know.

0:50:22.0

**AE:** Escape Road—oh, I see what you're—okay—got it.

0:50:24.4

**ALQ:** And—but it wasn't—it wasn't nothing. Well, it was a road—there might have been a road there, you know, years and years ago, but it was an old dirt road—what we call a two-trail road, probably a horse and buggy went down years and years ago. **[Laughs]** I wished I'd have took pictures of Eastpoint when we first moved there to show people now what—what it looked like back then, because it's really doing some changing over the period of years.

0:50:53.4

**AE:** And [Hurricane] Dennis changed it quite a bit this summer.

0:50:55.3

**ALQ:** Yeah, well, this place right here has changed [*meaning the west side of Apalachicola*]. I can remember there used to be an oyster house right down there. And Eddie Amison's down yonder. And there wasn't nothing right in here; this was all woods through here [where Steamers Raw Bar is today]. There wasn't no houses built over yonder. Where you see all them houses and stuff over yonder, that was all woods. This place is terrible. **[Laughs]** I tell you, I mean, it was a town, you know. But I mean it just wasn't no population in here hardly. I don't know how they was—at least I was—when I first went to Eastpoint I don't know we—there was hardly 200 head of people living there in the whole of Eastpoint. But they had one old school bus that went to Carrabelle, and they probably about—I'd say about sixteen or seventeen kids rode it. It was one of them old kind of buses that had a row of seats down the middle, and then it had a row of seats down on each side like that [*gestures to illustrate two benches situated parallel to each other*]

coming down the bus. That's the kind of bus we rode when I first moved there. Now they got buses with seats on each side you know a row—and aisle down the middle. I tell you, about five or six buses now hauling them kids out of there. We didn't have no schoolhouse at Eastpoint; they had [a school] in Apalach and one in Carrabelle, and we had to go all the way to Carrabelle School because they was afraid that the old bridge that used to be across the bay, they had it condemned [it], and they was afraid the bus would fall in, get all the kids drowned. So they wouldn't let us come across the bridge. And the Carrabelle Bridge was in worser shape than that one was because it used to be boards—had an old board floor across it. You'd run across that thing [*boom—boom—boom*—made the awfulest noise you ever heard.

0:53:06.0

**AE:** You were talking before we started recording this that you went crabbing with Jerry Boatwright?

0:53:11.7

**ALQ:** Oh, yeah.

0:53:12.4

**AE:** A few times?

0:53:13.3

**ALQ:** Well I—I crabbed one year myself by myself, you know.

0:53:15.8

**AE:** Tell me about that.

0:53:19.0

**ALQ:** I—I done pretty good. It—well at times, you know, I guess just according to what kind of bait we used. And before we had our traps put—and I carried some across to the—what they call The Cut across over here at the island. I carried, I think it was eight of my pots over there, and I'd go over there every morning and pull them things, and out of all eight of them crab pots I'd get two boxes for that—100-pounds of crabs, you know—out of eight traps. And I had about ninety-five to 100 crab pots, where I had them up at the head of the bay up above [the] Apalachicola Bridge. I wasn't catching no crabs in them, hardly. Sometimes my wife would have to pay my bait bill. **[Laughs]** She didn't like that. She told me—she said, *You're going to have to get out of that crabbing business. You ain't making no money, man.* I said, *Oh, yeah?* She said, *Yeah, you're going to have to get out of that crabbing business.* *[Distracted by an oysterman hauling his boat out of the water.]* Let me go move my truck; I don't know whether that guy can get out or not.

*[Recording is paused for about four minutes as A. L. Quick moves his truck.]*

0:54:22.7

**AE:** Okay. So you were talking about crabbing a little bit.

0:54:31.1

**ALQ:** Yeah. At times—there's some days I'd go out there and I—I'd catch 400 or 500 pounds [of crab]. And then some days I'd go out there, and I wouldn't catch sixty pounds. And then some days I'd catch 200 pounds and stuff like that, you know—just different. I guess it was a difference [in] the way the crabs was running, you know—moving in the bay or something like that. Some days I'd be real good, and some days I wouldn't do nothing. Some—some days it wouldn't even pay my gas bill. **[Laughs]** My wife, she didn't like that; she told me she said, *You'll have to get out of that crab business.* I said, *Well, why? I like to crab.* She said, *Yeah, but you ain't making no money at it.* Well she was shucking oysters at that time, too, you know. Sometimes she—she would have to pay my bait bill because I wasn't even making enough money to pay my—the bill on my bait, you know—pay for the bait I was using. She told me to get out of that business. She didn't like that. **[Laughs]** Of course, I did. I enjoyed it. I'd leave the house at daylight every morning and start running my pots. By dinnertime I'd be back at the house, you know, and be through with it. I guess that was the idea that she didn't like because I would get through early and come home. She still was down there shucking oysters right on.

0:55:54.0

**AE:** Yeah, and tell me about yesterday or—the day that I ran into you down here you—  
[*addresses a man walking by*] how you doing? [*Back to interview*] You had some little pearls  
that you handed to me. How long—how often do you come across those?

0:56:13.1

**ALQ:** Well—oh, I don't know that—sometime they—them women will find them. It's  
according to what kind of oyster they're shucking, you know. Some of them Louisiana oysters  
they—they would—sometimes them women find them every day, you know, in them oysters [as  
they are shucking them]. Some—sometimes they find them three or four, you know, in a day,  
and sometimes they don't find nothing. Ain't no telling how long I've had them, which I gave  
you. I mean, you saw them stuffed in my billfold.

0:56:52.2

**AE:** When you're out there on your boat in the middle of the day, do you shuck some and eat  
some while you're out there?

0:56:58.7

**ALQ:** Yeah. Yeah, if I want to, you know. If I don't, then I just go on.

0:57:03.0

**AE:** Have you ever found a little pearl that way just while you're out in the bay?

0:57:08.7

**ALQ:** No, never got one out there. We got—we got what they call a pearl oyster that grows on Porters Bar, and it looks like angel wings. You open it up and she—some of them grows about that long [*holds his hands up to illustrate a length of about twelve inches*].

0:57:24.2

**AE:** A foot long really?

0:57:24.5

**ALQ:** Yeah, they—their shells is real thin, but when you open that thing up, it looks just like a set of angel wings. They're real pretty inside. And they ate the oyster in them that they grewed—they grewed a pearl that big [*holds his fingers up to illustrate the size of the pearl to be about the size of a marble*].

0:57:43.5

**AE:** Big as the tip of your finger?

0:57:44.8

**ALQ:** Yeah, I ain't found but one or two of them that had pearls in them. But they're pretty, them shells when you open them things and let them dry. That shell on the inside—outside is kind of a brownish looking color. And on the inside it's all different colors. It looks like a rainbow inside of it. And the light—when the light shines on it, that color don't never change. It stays the same.

0:58:13.8

**AE:** That's beautiful.

0:58:15.0

**ALQ:** Yeah, you ever seen one?

0:58:18.0

**AE:** No.

0:58:18.6

**ALQ:** I wished I had one. I used to have a set of them at one time. I tonged—tonged them up—up there oystering. I tonged them things up alive on an oyster bar. And then we got what they call a clam. Once in a while you'll tong one of them up out here sometimes. But Porter's Bar used to be covered up with them things. They'd—they'd—the clams would be—some of them would be that big around [*gestures to illustrate something about the size of a baseball*]. You can open them just like an oyster but them eyes in them things—them things are like trying to chew—chew a piece of leather—she's tough. You can boil them, bake them, you can cook them just about anyway you can think to cook them, and that eye stays tough right on them. You can't get it tender.

0:59:08.2

**AE:** Hmm.

0:59:08.7

**ALQ:** My wife cooked some one time, and she was going to make what she called clam chowder, you know. Well that—they do make it but in the restaurants sometimes and she—I got four or five and brought them home and I—I opened them, you know [**Laughs**] and carried them in there to her, she—she said, *What in the world are you going to do with them bloody things?* Well they look like blood, you know. When you cut one of them it—it is like blood in it, but it ain't. It's a type of chemical. And—and she asked what I was going to do with them bloody

things and I said, *I thought you were going to make clam chowder out of them.* Well, she boiled—what she does, she boils them first, you know, and then she chops them up in little bitty pieces. And then she puts bell pepper and onions and all different kinds of seasoning in them. And then she mixes up cornbread and puts that stuff over in it, you know, and stirs it altogether, and then she makes like a little hoecake about that big around [*gestures to illustrate something about six inches in diameter*]*—a corn bread patty, that's what she calls it, you know. And they are—they're delicious like that, but that eye, you cannot cook that thing and I—I believe because I actually boiled them all night, and they never get tender. She just cuts that part of it out, you know, and throws it away because you can't cook it tender.*

1:00:33.7

**AE:** Are there any other things your wife makes that are—?

1:00:37.9

**ALQ:** Huh?

1:00:38.1

**AE:** Are there any other things that your wife makes with this fresh seafood from the bay that are worth sharing?

1:00:44.7

**ALQ:** Well, she makes what you call an oyster gumbo. You ever heard of that? With rice and stuff like that?

1:00:54.6

**AE:** Yes, sir.

1:00:55.1

**ALQ:** She makes—she makes that. She makes—well, she don't make oyster stew. I do that myself. **[Laughs]** I make the oyster stew at the house. **[Laughs]** She eats it, though. **[Laughs]** We—we eat oysters just about any way we can picture them, you know. The best way I like them is take them—take a little strip of cheese about that wide [*about an inch wide*], and roll that oyster up in it, and stick a toothpick in it to hold it and put it in the oven, and just get it hot enough to melt that cheese on it a little bit. Oh, God, them things are delicious that way.

1:01:31.0

**AE:** What kind of cheese? Just like cheddar cheese?

1:01:32.9

**ALQ:** Well, that little flat cheese that's in the—you know, that you put on sandwiches?

1:01:40.5

**AE:** Uh-hmm, that comes wrapped? [American cheese slices]

**ALQ:** Yes, ma'am, yeah.

1:01:41.7

**AE:** Yeah.

1:01:43.4

**ALQ:** Take—take it and cut it in little—little strips about that wide— [Distracted by a shrimp boat passing in the bay.] The guy is going the wrong way to go shrimping. Fella, you need to be going out to the Pass the other way. [Back to interviewer] But anyway, you can take that oyster and wrap that—you ain't got to wrap the whole piece up in there, you know—just wrap it up enough that you can stick a toothpick in it, and put it on you a platter. It won't—it won't melt. You don't want to put plastic in an oven no way. But you can bake them—bake that oyster 'til that cheese melts on it—oh, God, that's scrump—delicious. Now what my wife does, she—she

takes them and fries them, you know—fried oysters and then wraps them in the cheese and then puts them in the microwave. That's the way she likes hers. I like to take mine raw and wrap that cheese around them and stick a toothpick in them and—and lay them there and let them get hot that way, you know.

1:02:51.4

**AE:** When you're out on your boat all day, what do you take with you to eat?

1:02:54.4

**ALQ:** I usually don't take nothing.

1:02:56.9

**AE:** No?

1:02:57.3

**ALQ:** I go out there where a couple days I ate—I ate most of my meals at suppertime.

1:03:03.9

**AE:** Do you eat a big breakfast?

1:03:05.1

**ALQ:** No, but I eat—eat about three or four cookies.

1:03:16.0

**AE:** Three or four cookies, you said?

1:03:16.5

**ALQ:** Yeah, I eat them peanut butter cookies, them little cookies that got peanut butter in them. I eat about four of them every morning with coffee. I drink a cup of coffee.

1:03:29.1

**AE:** Are you talking about the—like the sandwich crackers with peanut butter inside?

1:03:31.1

**ALQ:** Yeah, yeah.

1:03:34.1

**AE:** Okay.

1:03:37.1

**ALQ:** Well, now, I'll carry stuff out there, too, you know, to eat, like little cakes and things like that—little snack cakes. But I hardly ever eat them because I don't never take time to eat nothing. I'm usually working all the time and, you know, want to get what amount [of oysters] I'm going to get and get home. As far as if I eat anything out there on the bar, I usually wait until I get home, and she's usually got supper cooked or something.

1:04:05.0

**AE:** How long a day does she work shucking?

1:04:08.8

**ALQ:** Well she worked today 'til about one o'clock when she come home. She will probably shuck tomorrow 'til about one or two o'clock, and then she'll quit and come home again.

1:04:21.7

**AE:** What—how early does she start?

1:04:24.4

**ALQ:** Sometimes we start before daylight—about seven o'clock, you know. It will be daylight when they get down there [to the oyster house, where they shuck].

1:04:32.3

**AE:** Could she, if she chose to—could she stay late on a day and shuck extra?

1:04:36.5

**ALQ:** Well, they used—she stays, you know, as long as the other women stay down there. Most—most all the shuckers start knocking off about one or two o'clock, you know. That's usually about their working time. *[Laughs]*

1:04:50.6

**AE:** And then does she just shuck what you bring in, or is it all mixed up once you deliver it?

1:04:54.1

**ALQ:** Well she—she's—tomorrow she'll shuck—probably shipped in oysters, shipped out of state in here like Louisiana and Texas. She shucks oysters like that. She'll probably shuck them tomorrow all day. If I had went out today she could shuck mine, but I didn't get to go. She's going to have to shuck what they got down there.

1:05:18.2

**AE:** You think this weather will clear for tomorrow so you can go out?

1:05:20.7

**ALQ:** Are you going to come out down here tomorrow?

1:05:26.5

**AE:** I might come in the morning. I haven't been down here in the morning yet. I'd like to see everybody leaving out—about eight o'clock—seven o'clock, eight o'clock people come down here? Is that right?

1:05:37.4

**ALQ:** Well I was over here about six-thirty this morning but—but you ain't got to come that early. It wasn't nobody here but me when I got here. There wasn't no trucks or nothing. *[Laughs]* About eight o'clock, I imagine, would be about—.

1:05:56.1

**AE:** Yeah, well is there anything about oystering and being out on the bay that I haven't asked that is worth telling?

1:06:04.2

**ALQ:** I don't know, but I want to show you something about them shells that you probably didn't know. If I can get one to split like I want it. I got—I got a hammer out here in my truck and I'll see—I'll see if I can get one to split right. *[Takes a minute to go to his truck to retrieve a hammer.]* What I want to show you now—it ain't going to work. Anyway, maybe I can explain it to you better instead of trying to bust—what it is, these—these shells grows in layers, and sometimes you can take one and hit it with a hammer, and it will split, and it will separate, you know, in there *[showing the cross-section of all of the layers]*.

1:07:00.1

**AE:** Oh you got to—? *[Interruption. Addresses another oysterman walking by]* Hey how you doing? Did you have a good day out there?

1:07:14.1

**Male:** Yeah.

1:07:16.8

**AE:** Good.

1:07:17.1

**Male:** Tiresome.

1:07:19.0

**AE:** It sounds like every day.

[Back to interview]

1:07:21.4

**ALQ:** Anyway, I want to explain to you, I don't know whether you can see that with your naked eye or not—see that shell in the little layers?

1:07:28.5

**AE:** Yes, sir. Uh-hmm.

1:07:30.4

**ALQ:** All right, sometimes if you hit them with a hammer, and they'll split and this eye [meaning the dark spot in the shell where the spat or juvenile oyster originates] where it's at now, it will be way back down here [at the top of the shell on the other end].

1:07:42.0

**AE:** Oh, really? It will have started way up deep in the oyster?

1:07:46.3

**ALQ:** Yeah, sometimes they'll—that spat will be an eye way back here. It just—how that shell grows—that eye keeps moving out. If I could get that shell to split right through there, I could show you that other eye is under that and probably way back here.

1:08:07.2

**AE:** Wow, I would never put thought to that. That's interesting.

1:08:12.0

**ALQ:** Well there's a lot of people that don't know that. I mean, you know, and—and if I could find—if I could find me a—let me see if I can borrow an oyster from one of them fellows.

*[Mr. Quick walks over to a boat that is just coming in to dock, and a man lets him have a single oyster from his day's catch.]*

1:08:24.1

**AE:** *[Back to the interview]* Okay.

1:09:07.2

**ALQ:** Well this one ain't got it on but I—it's got just a tiny bit on it. See that little—little white spot right there on that shell?

1:09:15.1

**AE:** Yes, sir—yes, sir.

1:09:17.1

**ALQ:** Well now whenever they—in a certain [part] of the year, this whole thing right here will be white—a little white ridge [along the outer edge of the oyster's shell].

1:09:27.6

**AE:** Uh-huh, on that—

1:09:27.2

**ALQ:** —grows out on it.

1:09:30.0

**AE:** [That] curly [or wavy] edge, okay.

1:09:32.6

**ALQ:** It's—it's white. The—the shell itself will be white whenever—whenever that shell turns white out here on the edge of it there like that it'll—it'll—that oyster don't grow no more until the next year like that—that size. It'll—it'll—fills like shell on out 'til you can't see white—that little white bill on it. And that's as far as it grows in a year.

1:10:02.8

**AE:** Oh, okay.

1:10:04.3

**ALQ:** That's what we call a mussel. See that thing right there?

1:10:08.0

**AE:** That's attached to the [cluster of oysters], yeah.

1:10:10.1

**ALQ:** And them oysters—them oysters will be wrapped up with them—some of them. Your—your tong of oysters that big it will be that big around with mussels all around them. That's what I knock off of mine—that—that cull iron I was telling you about. If you're down here tomorrow, I'll bring it over here and show it to you.

1:10:26.8

**AE:** Okay.

1:10:28.9

**ALQ:** [Looking at the oyster again] That's what—that's what I was going to tell you that—you can see it back here better than you can the front side.

1:10:35.8

**AE:** Oh, yeah, uh-hmm.

1:10:35.9

**ALQ:** And when they're feeding—now a lot of people say, *Oysters don't eat*. Oh, yeah, oysters eats too. When they're standing up in that mud like that [holds an oyster up on end]—that bill is open. That—this part of that oyster will open up about that wide and—.

1:10:52.5

**AE:** Half an inch wide maybe, that is?

1:10:54.6

**ALQ:** Well, just according, I guess, [to] how big the oyster—but anyway, it—it'll open up when the tide is going and coming. If the tide is running and—either in or out it'll—it'll open up and

feed. What it does, it eats chemicals that's in the water out there. It runs through that—that part of that oyster right there, and it purifies. It don't make no difference what it does, you—you throw that oyster in a pot of pee, it will purify itself in twenty-four hours. It will open up in there—but whenever it closes back up like it's done fed all it's going to feed, when it closes back up then it'll—it'll purify itself in twenty-four hours. You turn around and eat it after you take him out of that. Now that's why I can't understand—just like the DNR [Department of Natural Resources] come to me up there at the bridge one time; I was up there oystering. [The area] above the bridge was closed [but] from the first piling back was open. Well I—I had my boat parked under the bridge like this up against the piling. I was tonging behind the piling right here—the first piling. The Conservation come up there and told me said, *You can tong that oyster up back there, but don't get up in front of it.* Well now what's the difference? The water that runs around that piling in the front runs in back of it too, right? Okay, this oyster up in front of it was polluted water. This one behind the piling was all right. Now what's the difference?

1:12:38.7

**AE:** I don't know how they could even think about drawing that line. I don't know.

1:12:41.5

**ALQ:** Well they do. I mean, that's just the way they are, honey. Whenever they close the bay up there above the bridge, they don't want you oystering in front of them pilings. You can oyster behind it from there all the way to the other edge of the bridge over yonder. But they don't want

you tonging in front of that piling because that's polluted water. It's closed. Now I don't—it don't make no sense to me, but I mean that's just the law is, you know. That's—that's the way they go.

1:13:12.0

**AE:** Huh. Well an oyster is a fascinating animal, I'll tell you.

1:13:17.6

**ALQ:** There's oysters in front of the piling as well as right behind them and all around them, you know—all around the piling there's oysters. But what I can't understand [is] why they don't want you catching that one in front of that piling, when the same water is running by that one as running behind it.

1:13:34.1

**AE:** Right. I don't know. I sure can't answer that. [*Laughs*]

1:13:38.0

**ALQ:** [*Laughs*] But that's the way they are. I mean, if they catch you up there tonging in front of that piling they'll—they'll write you a ticket.

1:13:42.8

**AE:** Yeah, a big ticket, too, I bet, huh?

1:13:44.9

**ALQ:** Well, about 250 dollars sometimes. It's just according to how many oysters you got when they catch you, you know. And—and another thing that I don't like is when they—when they catch you in polluted water, instead of them letting you go, they make you throw all of [the oysters] back. Yeah, it don't matter if you got twenty bags, 100 bags, or whatever. If they catch you in the polluted water tonging oysters, they make you throw the whole boatload overboard.

1:14:13.3

**AE:** Even if you for some reason didn't know that you were in polluted waters that day?

1:14:18.6

**ALQ:** Well they claim—

1:14:19.8

**AE:** Well how do you know—how do you know where they tell you? Does that change often enough that—?

1:14:26.9

**ALQ:** Well just like—just like [St. George] island, the bridge—now the old bridge used to be our boundary line, which they tore it out. The new bridge is our boundary line now. And when—when they open Cat Point again that—you can work on this side of the bridge, on that side of towards Eastpoint, but don't let them catch you over here on this side [which is the west side].

1:14:48.7

**AE:** And it just stays that way? That's just the rule, that you don't go on the other side?

1:14:51.0

**ALQ:** Right. They—they—well they got—just like down here—now all this part of this bay out here is closed right now, see—from here—from Eight Mile Ramp down there I was telling you about [down to thirteen Mile, which is thirteen miles west of Apalachicola]. You mind riding down there with me?

1:15:04.5

**AE:** No, uh-uh, no. I'd love to.

1:15:09.1

*[Recording is paused as the interviewer and subject get into subject's truck and begin their drive. Recording is resumed when they reach Eight Mile approximately five minutes later]*

1:15:09.7

**AE:** Say that again, now. We're down at Eight Mile?

1:15:12.3

**ALQ:** Eight Mile Ramp.

1:15:15.8

**AE:** And this is where a lot of people put their boats at different times?

1:15:19.4

**ALQ:** Well we used to—everybody used to unload here. What I want to show you—see that—see that white—white pole out yonder?

1:15:29.8

**AE:** I see a pole. I don't know if I can tell that it's white but straight ahead?

1:15:33.0

**ALQ:** Well, you see the black ones out yonder?

1:15:35.1

**AE:** Yes.

1:15:35.4

**ALQ:** All right, you see this one that's standing out here by itself?

1:15:38.6

**AE:** Yes.

1:15:40.4

**ALQ:** Right straight out here?

1:15:42.6

**AE:** Uh-huh.

1:15:42.8

**ALQ:** Now from there all the way to Eastpoint they got the bay closed. We can oyster from that pole to Indian Pass that way [to the west].

1:15:55.8

**AE:** Look at the sky over there. [*The sky is dark with thunderclouds*] Gosh. Wow, okay.

1:16:02.7

**ALQ:** That's a leased bar right there where them black poles are at out yonder; all that's leased area. In other words, a private man owns that.

1:16:15.0

**AE:** Right.

1:16:13.4

**ALQ:** And you're not allowed to oyster on that unless he tells you to.

1:16:17.4

**AE:** So are those posts—are they marking the outer edge of it or the—?

1:16:23.1

**ALQ:** Well, see the last pole way offshore out yonder?

1:16:25.5

**AE:** Yeah.

1:16:25.6

**ALQ:** That's where—that's where that side of it goes and—and this pole right here close to us and this one—this one out yonder. You can't see it. Back out there—See that right yonder by it?

1:16:43.4

**AE:** Yes. So that marks the edges of the—the lease?

1:16:44.8

**ALQ:** Yes, ma'am. And we used to unload right here. A bunch of boats used to unload down here. Here, and I'm going carry you down here to show you why—where I was unloaded whenever I moved my boat up there where I got it now, I used to drive all the way down there and unload.

1:17:07.1

**AE:** So how come people don't use this space anymore?

1:17:10.2

**ALQ:** I guess one reason they don't use it is because they ain't got nobody to protect their boats here or nothing, you know. People—well me and my son used to unload there by ourselves, and we tied our boats to an iron pipe out there. One morning, when we come down here to go to work, there wasn't no boat out there. Somebody had used our boat and turned it loose—pulled the drain plug out of the back of it and it—we found it—I'll show you where we found it down here. It sunk up on the beach. Our tongs was gone. I had a—I had a flare gun and a rake, a brand new shovel, and let me see, what else did I have on there? Oh, I have—had a fire extinguisher—brand new fire extinguisher. All that stuff on that boat. We found the boat [and] it was all gone.

1:18:23.4

**AE:** So where you are now is a dock where you can pay two dollars a day is it, to keep your boat there?

1:18:29.7

**ALQ:** No, it costs me twenty-five dollars a month to keep it tied up there. It was costing me fifty dollars a week down at this place right here. Right here is where we found our boat. Let me pull over here where you can see. Found our boat right out there, sunk, with anchor inside the boat. Now whoever stole it didn't have guts enough to throw the anchor overboard or to stay in one place. They had the plug pulled out of the back of it, and it was slap-full of water. We went and reported it to the law, you know—told the law about it and went to the jail and reported to the law about our boat being stolen. We got out and got to hunting it, and that's where we found it. It had—somebody had used it to oyster on, I guess, or something. They just turned it loose [*Laughs*]. Instead of taking it back down there and tying it to the pipe, they just turned it loose and—.

1:19:26.2

**AE:** And took all your stuff?

1:19:28.1

**ALQ:** Yeah.

1:19:28.2

**AE:** Huh. How long ago did that happen?

1:19:32.1

**ALQ:** That happened about seven, eight years ago.

1:19:38.7

**AE:** So then you were saying down here it cost fifty dollars a week to keep your boat? Why so much? Just because they can charge it?

1:19:45.5

**ALQ:** I don't know. Well he had been charging us—he had been charging us 100 dollars a month last year. I don't know why he went up that high on it this year.

1:19:58.3

**AE:** And so this dock down here by Steamers [Raw Bar closer to Apalachicola], has that been open for a while, or did they just kind of—?

1:20:04.4

**ALQ:** Yeah, that place there had been open quite a while. Well that storm [Hurricane Dennis in 2005], you know, tore the dock up. I noticed they rebuilt some of the dock out there and all. But this guy down here, his dock is still tore up, and it ain't nothing but a ditch to go back and forth out through there, and when the tide is low, you can't hardly get your boat in and out. Maybe a lot of times—well, here about four weeks ago now, I had my boat down here, and I started to come in and unload, and my boat run up on the hill out there, and I couldn't move it. So I had to get off the boat—overboard in the water—and I had on a pair of old boots like these I got on now. I had on a pair of old boots, and I stepped overboard and I liked to—I liked to had the lockjaw. That water is so cold. I had to tote my bag off the boat and put it up there on the hill and get my boat up in that ditch it was so shallow in there. He won't have it dug out or anything. Just a mess is what it is.

1:21:15.3

**AE:** Are there any superstitions that oystermen keep or being on the water about the weather or—?

1:21:22.1

**ALQ:** Not that I know of.

1:21:24.0

**AE:** Good luck charms or anything?

1:21:27.0

**ALQ:** *[Laughs]*

1:21:26.4

**AE:** Rub two oysters together to get a good catch, I don't know.

1:21:29.8

**ALQ:** Well if there's anything to that, I ought to be the best catcher then. I don't know about that stuff. I'm not superstitious about things myself. Of course I know there are some people that—as you know, like my wife, if a black cat runs across the road ahead of you that means bad luck. And you walk under a ladder, something is going to happen to you and all that kind of stuff. I

reckon if you believe in that stuff strong enough, it will happen to you, but I don't believe in that crap, myself.

1:22:08.2

**AE:** Looks like a lot of boats out here.

1:22:09.1

**ALQ:** Oh, yeah. Let's go around here and let you see that ditch that I'm talking about that you can't hardly get in and out through.

1:22:29.4

**AE:** This is the part of the bay though that everybody drives to—from the Steamers [Raw Bar] dock?

1:22:37.4

**ALQ:** Well, I used to drive all the way from Eastpoint every night and morning down here.

1:22:42.1

**AE:** Yeah, well I mean with their boats, this is the part of the bay—of the bay that they're working right now?

1:22:45.6

**ALQ:** Yeah. Yeah, well, the tide is high right now, but that little old ditch right there that he's got—sometimes you can't even get—can't even get a boat out of there hardly. I mean, if that whole—I've seen that whole thing right there dry up.

1:23:03.8

**AE:** Wow. [It] looks pretty full right now.

1:23:06.4

**ALQ:** Yeah, the tide is high.

1:23:11.5

**AE:** And what do you call this dock?

1:23:14.0

**ALQ:** It's what we call Eleven Mile. It's supposed to be eleven miles from Apalachicola down here. Now I don't know where it is marked because I ain't never measured it on a mile gauge, you know. If I could come down here—. **[Laughs]** Maybe I should have—maybe I should have loaded my boat on the trailer this morning and brought it down here. Now these—you can't see the bayou but they—see that big old patch of trees that looks like a dark patch of trees right there, it's real tall? There's a bayou over there that goes up in that island, and that thing is loaded with oysters but it—they got it leased to a man. That guy down there at Thirteen Mile that runs that like—I can carry you down there and show it to you.

1:24:08.9

**AE:** Yeah, the—Tommy Ward's place?

1:24:11.9

**ALQ:** Yeah, somebody told you about that? But you can see buildings from here. I believe you can. Turn around. See down that way?

1:24:30.9

**AE:** The water looks pretty rough.

1:24:33.6

**ALQ:** No, you can't see the building from here, but see that little point right down yonder? It looks like it sticks out in the water? Right on the other side of it is where that oyster house is at. There used to be one right here but that—that storm tore it up, and they wouldn't let that guy build it back here. He made out like they wouldn't let them build it back.

1:24:53.4

**AE:** Hmm. What was that place called?

1:24:55.6

**ALQ:** Well, Eleven Mile.

1:24:58.0

**AE:** Eleven Mile?

1:24:58.2

**ALQ:** [*Laughs*] Yeah, that's called Thirteen Mile that I'm talking about down yonder. But now, it used to be houses down here. People lived—lived in them years ago down here. They had a—a little community down here.

1:25:20.6

**AE:** Yeah.

1:25:25.9

**ALQ:** Yeah, this—this place is where I had my boat whenever they stole the motor off of it about two years ago. You talk about a woman getting mad. That woman of mine went in there—ugh. Well I could have sued that old guy, you know. I could have made him bought me a new motor because he—the law—I went and told the law about it, and they asked me, did he charge me rent [to keep his boat at that dock] and I said, *Yeah, 100 dollars a month.* They said, *Yeah, he's solely responsible for anything that comes off—you know, that comes up missing off them boats.* They said, *He's responsible for them.* But I didn't do it.

1:26:09.3

**AE:** Yeah, because what's he charging rent for, if it's not some kind of insurance for the people who have their boats there?

1:26:13.3

**ALQ:** I don't know. I don't understand that. Want to go in here to that other oyster house?

1:26:20.5

**AE:** No, I don't need to go down there. I've been down there.

1:26:23.7

**ALQ:** Oh, have you?

1:26:23.6

**AE:** Yeah. I didn't know about these little inlets, though, these roads down to the water. This looks like something big, this development here.

1:26:36.1

**ALQ:** Yeah, well that used to be his land but—the Shellis' land—way down to that ramp down there—he sold it for 3,000,000 dollars. **[Laughs]** That land right there used to be his, and he sold that, and I don't know how much he got out of that—a pile of it, though, when they built that tower. [Short pause] My arthritis keeps bothering me. **[Laughs]**

1:27:14.4

**AE:** What is your—what is your favorite thing about oystering and working on the bay?

1:27:19.5

**ALQ:** Well mostly oystering, I guess, would be my favorite. The seafood, you know. Outside of deep-sea fishing; I love that. But I don't never get to do that too much. I tried to get my son—him and his buddies to keep their boats—they wouldn't do it. Well I think one thing that happened to my son, I think there was a couple of boats out there that sunk a while back, you know, and they—and I think that raw water and all kind of scared him. He—he didn't like it. His other buddy, he got into mullet fishing and he decided he want no more of it. So he just finally sold the boat and got rid of it.

1:28:12.4

**AE:** What are your sons' names?

1:28:16.0

**ALQ:** Andy and Randall.

1:28:20.4

**AE:** Andy and Randall, okay. Well is there anything that you'd like for people to know about what you do?

1:28:31.6

**ALQ:** Just work, that's all I can tell you. *[Laughs]*

1:28:37.5

**AE:** What about you know if oystering is on its way out, and the bay is not producing, and people aren't wanting to get out there as much anymore, is there something about oystering that you hate to see—besides oystering itself—but hate to see be forgotten?

1:28:55.2

**ALQ:** Well, yeah, I—I would hate to see the bay just completely close up, you know, because there's so many people that depends on making a living, you know. I mean, I have seen as high as 1,500 boats out on Cat Point at one time oystering. You could walk from one deck to the other, and you're about all the way across the bay, you know. It would be so many boats out there but they—the peoples quit oystering and got different jobs and things like that. Well there just about ain't no oysters here anymore. And these that is here they—like we saw down there while ago, they just—they don't care. They just hog up the bay and carry it off. *[Laughs]* You know, so yeah, I would hate to see it just completely close up, you know. But I know it will

happen one day. I—I figure it will last about another two years and that will wind it up—if it will even last that long.

1:30:05.2

**AE:** Only two years you think? Really?

1:30:07.4

**ALQ:** Well I don't know about it but, you know, it's the way I feel about it—if it lasted—if it lasted over that, it will surprise me.

1:30:21.9

**AE:** Well I sure thank you for sharing all this knowledge with me today. It's been an education. I really appreciate it.

1:30:28.1

**ALQ:** Yeah, well I've enjoyed it, myself.

1:30:29.6

**AE:** Good.

1:30:31.7

**ALQ:** [*Laughs*]

1:30:33.1

**[End AL Quick]**