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Transcript of The Kiwanda Fish Company

Kristina Hogevoll

Martin Knopf

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Title: The Kiwanda Fish Company

Storytellers: Kristina Hogevoll and Marty Knopf

Interviewer: Whitney Weber

Interview Date: 2012-08-09

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Transcriber: Mary Beth Jones, Kathleen Spring

MARTY KNOPF: Martin Knopf, and we started fishing in about 1968.

KRISTINA HOGEVOLL: And, Kristina Hogevoll, and—my father¹ got his first double ender² in 1962. So, that, that was the first boat I went out on when I was 18 months old.

KRISTINA: I—I didn't fish that much. I was at the fish company, working very hard. [Laughs] Um, my, our—our family—m—my, my father fished, uh, when we still lived in McMinnville. And then we—my parents bought the P.C. Trailer Court in 1967. And there was a two-car garage, which was the fish company. It didn't even have a name, then, it was P.C. Trailer Court. But, that first year was one of the biggest tuna runs still in history out of P.C. I think.

MARTY: Mm hmm. [Overlapping Kristina]

KRISTINA: And we had, um—two—we had four feet of tuna by, I don't know, 15, by, I don't know how far back, and they, Bumblebee sent a semi truck to [Laughs] receive them, and they cut a hole in the wall. And we slung tuna for hours and hours, and it was, it was really interesting. And then in '72 my parents bought the fish company, which they named

Kiwanda Fish from Jim Imlah. I can't remember what he called it, but that was the guy who owned it before we bought it.

My main job—well I would pump gas, pack the little salmon bellies in ice, [Marty laughs] scoop, scoop, scoop, and, um, just many little odd jobs. We'd borax eggs, that we'd sell to the river fishermen in the wintertime. That was a very important job, you had to do that just so. I'd get up about three-thirty in the morning and get out there—open the door by four, turn on the li—the lights out by the gas pump, turn the gas pumps on, uh, start the coffee maker—and um. There were only a, a small percentage of fishermen that would, uh come in the mornings to, to buy herring and incidentals. And most of 'em were prepared at night, and they would just, go from their homes to the beach. But for the ones that showed up, some even gassed up in the morning, so we did everything, and it was in the dark—if they showed up that early.

Um, my parents were there, and, we would hire mostly young women. Teenage g—girls, um, from our high school, they're the ones that lined up. And, it could have been [Pause] because of—these guys. [Laughter] They were, you know, coming up, work, you know, bringing their fish in, but um, so it was mostly young women. There were some guys who would come in and they were like the ice shovelers. It was very physical work. And—

MARTY: [Overlapping] How many people would you guys hire?

KRISTINA: How many—um, at least—four, five, maybe a sixth one, you know, doing some part-time. There were two weigh stations; the boats could pull on two sides of the building so we could be weighing in two boats at a time if it got really busy. And so we had to have enough people to

cover that, and there was two people per station. And then someone on the gas, and someone in the tackle shop, and—. When it was—when there were a lot of fish, it was just very fast work, and we were lucky to, eat. So.

And my mother, um, Marlene³, always sent someone to the beach to make sure the last trailer was off the—off the beach. Everyone was in. Safely.

MARTY: And that, and it wa—

KRISTINA: [Overlapping] No matter what.

MARTY: And—and it wasn't just her people that sold to them, it would be—

KRISTINA: [Overlapping] All, all—

MARTY: [Overlapping] You know, she—

KRISTINA: [Overlapping] all trailers—

MARTY: She would—yeah—they were, they were—Kiwanda was helpful to all fishermen whether they sold to them or not, 'cause there's two other fish buyers.

KRISTINA: Yeah.

MARTY: And um, and on that subject, I fished up and down the coast also with my dor—this dory⁴ here. I had an old '55 Ford pickup with a camper, [Chuckles] and I pulled that up and down California and Oregon. And everything I owned was in that truck, and it was a great, great life really. [Chuckles] And, I got to experience a lot of other fish buyers. And, w—that's when I realized how special Kiwanda Fish Company and Pacific City was. Because we'd fish in other ports, and if you're not in by five or six o'clock, you have to wait 'til the next morning—

KRISTINA: [Overlapping] Mmm.

MARTY: —to sell your fish. And then, you're, you're tired, you know, you're also in disbelief. But you have to go find ice. Ice your fish. You can't go out first thing in the morning because now you got to wait for them to open. And that, that was something very foreign to us. It's like, "Well, we have these valuable fish, why, why would they not be open?" And I guess they wanted a life also or something, I don't know. [Chuckles] That's what made—that's one of the many things that makes Pacific City you know, so wonderful, is that everybody is looking out for each other. And you go out of these other ports, well you're just another boat out there somewhere. You know, no one knows you, you don't know them. You get on the radio and ask if they'll stay open, and, they may not, 'cause they don't know you. And so, there, there's a bit of that. You know, we were always happy to get back to Pacific City. We'd only fish other ports when, that's just where the fish were at the moment.

Notes

¹Jack Hogevoll.

²The double ender was named *Hogie*.

³Marlene Carter.

⁴The dory is named *Kisutch*.