[00:00:04]

-Let's start a little bit with, first, if you can tell me your name.

- Interviewee Interviewee Interviewee.

-Interviewee Interviewee Interviewee, and how old are you?

-Ah?

-How old are you?

- I'm 92 years old.

- 92, and when is that, in what year, if you remember, or how old were you when you started fishing?

-Age: 8 years old.

-8 years old. And from what I understand, his father was in the maritime trade as well.

-No, my mom was from Rincón, from the Interviewee, and my dad was from Guaniquilla. His name was Aurelio Interviewee, my dad.

-And how did you learn to fish?

-All my life. I was born with my feet in the sea. Since I was little, because I grew up with fishing people, all my life [unintelligible].

-And when you started fishing, what kind of fish did you catch from the sea?

-I used to fish in the bay there: cutlassfish, Southern sennet, Mongolian drummer, barbu (Polydactylus virginicus XXXVIII\*), snook (Centropomus undecimalis XXI\*), whatever I could catch, to sell it for 3 or 4 cents.

-Where did he sell it?

-From a man who bought it here and took it to Cabo Rojo to sell it. With two birds on his ribs, carrying one skewer here and another here. I had to wait for him to sell it there, so he could pay me here.

-And how did you fish? Tell me a little about how it was.

-Well, I fished with sardines (herring), in a boat, I fished.

-Usual or…?

-Alone, alone.

-And he left in the morning, what time did he leave?

-I would leave at any time, I would leave at dawn, 2 in the morning, any time.

-And at what time did he return, more or less?

-I would arrive at least at 6 or 7 in the morning and he would already be here, that was when I was a kid.

-And then when you had your family, how did your work change?

-Well, I continued fishing, then I went to work on boats, dismantling engines and working with vessels, as a boy.

-And what kind of life did you have at the beginning as a fisherman, what kind of life?

-Carrying [unintelligible], carrying water, to go fishing.

-So, you were able to support your family very well?

-No, I was a boy, raised by my father's aunt. Because my father didn't even give me a last name. I'm listed as Juana Interviewee's son. I was 3 years old when she died of tuberculosis.

[00:03:06]

-Were you very young when your mother…?

-21, she died at the age of 21.

-And he grew up alone?

-I was raised by my father's aunt and a man called Pepe Barber, who was a captain (Hogfish, \*Lachnolaimus maximus XXXIV\*) of a ship and a schooner.

-But you were already earning your money at 8 years old?

-Ah?

-When did you start earning your own money?

-I was going fishing, I had to... no, I had to... I had to go fishing, so that they would give me the part that was mine, 1.50, 3 pesos.

-And can you tell me a little about whether you've noticed any changes in the maritime environment?

-Yes, and many.

-Can you tell me a little about the changes you've noticed?

-A lot of change. It's not the same. That's already going downhill. People lived off it, fish was sold cheaply, there was nothing else. But now, the sea is receding.

-The sea, what?

-Fishing is already giving way.

-So, there isn't that much fish?

-There is plenty of fish, but there is nothing to catch it with.

- I mean, I want to understand, there's fish, the same kind of fish...

-There are plenty of fish, but no one to fish them with.

-Is there no one?

-There's no one. There are no fishermen, it's just one, those who have come are dedicated to diving, there's no one... traps, which is what caught a lot of fish, I used to catch rough fish, no more, no more that.

-Did you catch a lot more fish in the past?

-Yeah.

-And where did you sell it in the past?

-There were 2 or 3 people who bought it and took it to San Juan.

-Saint John?

-To sell it there.

-And are there fewer fishermen now or are there fishermen who…?

There are fewer fishermen because so many have died. So, the ones out there don't learn to fish, they don't know how to fish, and they don't learn.

-Don't you know how to fish with a nose or…?

-He doesn't know how to fish at all.

-You are welcome?

-No.

-And how do you manage in life if you don't know how to fish?

-Well, they go diving there, they see a lobster, (Spiny lobster, \*Panulirus argus\*) they catch it there in that water, a conch, (Queen conch, \*Strombus gigas\*) well, that is their catch.

-Yeah. I mean, it's a different kind of fishing...

-That's the kind of fishing they do. They're here at 10 in the morning and then sell it for 8 [unintelligible] per pound.

-Is it harder to catch fish with a trap?

-More difficult.

-What do you need to know to be a good trap fisherman?

-Of course, he has to know, if he doesn't know... I mean, learning about the sea is required, because he has to start fishing since he's a child on the shore and he goes fishing out to sea and out to sea, until he's already fishing out to sea and learned about the sea, and he went with a person who knew about fishing and taught you how to fish, in those years.

[00:06:09]

-What is the most important thing the sea has taught you?

-To respect it, to take care of it, and to learn from it. When the sea is rough, don't go fishing. It's telling you not to go. If you go fishing, you could have an accident, you could sink out there. It's not conducive. To fish, you need good weather. And to know, if the weather's going to turn bad, 'move ashore, let's go.' If it's bad, don't go out there, but... It's telling you not to go, but that's part of... if the weather tells you not to go to a beach, then don't go because you'll drown. That's part of... people don't...

-Do you have a story that has stayed with you from your fishing career?

-Well, I had to work really hard. I went to school until fourth grade. Well, I fought, I struggled, I struggled, I fought ...

-When did you retire?

-Smoking?

-From fishing.

"I go there sometimes with my son, or my grandson, but it's not something that really interests me. I keep an eye out there to see if they go fishing, to see if they've arrived, how it's going, because if it's bad, I tell them: 'don't go.' If it's bad: 'come back to land.' I fished in La Mona, I fished in Santo Domingo (Blackline tilefish, \*Caulolatilus cyanops\*) when Trujillo was governing, with those who taught me to fish there in [unintelligible], I fished in Patillas, I fished in Salinas, when I was a kid, I was 19 years old.

–What kind of fishing did you do when you started?

-Anything that stings.

-Anything that stings… give me an example, some examples?

-I used to go fishing and catch whatever I caught and sell it on the shore, to survive.

-Were the fish bigger back then than they are now?

-There was too much raw fish.

-As?

-There was a lot of fish.

-Lots of fish, much more than now?

-Yes. Now, the business is selling silk snapper, spiny lobster (Panulirus argus), queen conch (Strombus gigas), and that's what's being sold now.

[00:09:03]

-No, but I mean in the water, from what you noticed, were there more fish in the water?

-Sure, because there weren't many fishermen. Now everyone goes diving and wherever they want. Those who don't know how to do it probably don't know how to swim and want to go fishing.

-So, there's more now?

-There are fish. But they're not fishermen, they don't know.

What do you think the future of fishing holds?

-You live your whole life off it, you live. If you know how to do things, you live off fishing, you live your whole life, your family lives, everyone lives. It's not about destroying fishing, it's about knowing how to live off it.

-Is there anything you want to say to the next generation of fishermen?

-Well, they have to learn to fish, stay away from the vices that harm them, start a family, have their children study, learn. [unintelligible]. If they learned to fish, they'll live off it their whole life.

-Are there many young people who are affected by vice?

-What vice?

-What vice?

-If that's what they earn, then they throw it away.

-What do they throw it away for?

-In vice.

-What vices are there here?

-Of everything there is.

-Of everything?

"They don't learn, they have nothing. When they're old, they have nothing. They have nowhere to live, they have nothing. They threw everything away. But since I was like that, without a father, without a mother, always me, I had to fight my way through life, and I did my part and went to school barefoot, and anyway, well, I learned mechanics, I learned to be a carpenter, I learned to be an electrician, I learned everything."

-Is that important for a fisherman's job?

-And I didn't go to school. But I'm listening to him...

-While you were working as a fisherman, did you also do other work?

-We had to do what we had to do.

-What jobs did he do? What else?

"I learned more. The thing is, I was more into fishing, because it gave me more. I had a trap, there were fish, I would go carry water from far away, pour it on my head, well, I had to get a little shopping there to eat. I slept on the floor. Shall I tell you the story?"

-Yeah.

-Not today, nothing's needed today... I have a good family, good children, my wife died 14 years ago. And I've been left alone at home, living in my house.

[00:12:04]

-Thank you very much for telling me a little about your life.

-Well.