Voices from the Fisheries
Oral History Database Project (VFF)

New national database is a central repository for consolidating and disseminating oral history interviews related to commercial, recreational, and subsistence fishing in the U.S. and its territories.
VFF Project goal

Make available to the public existing marine and Great Lakes focused oral histories and to inspire new collections

Origins

• Began in 2007, with NOAA PAIG grant, and NMFS/ST funds and IT expertise
• Partly outgrowth of Local Fisheries Knowledge (LFK) 2003-2006 Pilot Project
Project Staff and Partners

- Patricia Pinto da Silva (NEFSC) and I partnered with colleagues from MIT Sea Grant, Rutgers Univ. Human Ecology, & New Bedford, MA Working Waterfronts Project
- Jessica Bailey – Project Manager
Where are we now?

www.voices.nmfs.noaa.gov
We have:

• Launched VFF website and database
• Located >30 collections in NE region containing more than >4000 interviews
• Added >250 interviews to VFF DB for public use
• Digitizing >200 more for future upload
• Completed VFF DB Phase 2 improvements
VFF Handbook Completed

• **Audience:** Teachers, Other educators, Community groups, Individuals

• **Some topics covered:**
  - Getting started; Building partnerships;
  - Curriculum integration; Ethical and legal issues;
  - Recording technologies; Interviewing skills; Archiving;
  - Assessing outcomes

• **PDF available on VFF website at**
  www.voices.nmfs.noaa.gov
Challenges

• **Time and money – what else?**
  – Identification of additional collections – particularly in regions beyond the NE.
  – Assistance for collection holders
  – Funds for conversion where especially relevant collections are found.

• **Long term sustainability**
  – Who will continue this effort over time?
Wouldn’t you like to save a Voice from the Fisheries for the next generation?
Jonesport-Beals High School. ME students after an interview in Jonesport, ME.

Photo: Linda Church