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With Wilfred Poirier, Lobster Buyer "J", . 3'- ?? - >"1 V - - " -" *1 " m ' ??' • ?-i-'i -.***; ' ' ??" -, '_ i jj[W*- A"" 'fe> ??pr'-. 'K' 'K?' 'R" Wilfred M. Poirier, D'Escousse: I was born in 1885. I could say I was born probably 8 or 10 years younger--! don't look 98, do I? I still go to dances, you know. I had 10 dances here two weeks ago. I was born in Poirierville, and I'm the only one left in that generation. I grew up in Poirierville. There was hardly any school in my days. We had a teacher--an old Scotchman, you know--as good as I am. But he loved his drink, and didn't give us any learning. What I learned, I learned at school in the United States at night. Not too much, but enough that I could do my business as a fish buyer. My first job, when I was about 13 years of age, I worked hard as a fisherman and on a farm--\$6 a month. That was in Pondville. The old man was a farmer, and he was a butcher. And I used to get up at half past 4 in the morning, go out fishing with one of his sons. When I'd get back, I'd have to clean the barn. I'd work till 5 o'clock at night. I wouldn't say they were my worst days. They were happy days. During that time--this is the best of all--I saved \$9.25 in those two years. I went to Boston. I paid \$9.25 for my fare--steerage, you know--I didn't have any money to buy a room or anything. I had an old suitcase, with two eggs--this is the God's truth--and a couple of molasses cookies. And I happened to be talking to somebody from Cheticamp, a Frenchman, same as I was--and the steward came along, all dressed up in uniform. He heard us talking French. He asked me if I was French. I said, "You heard me." He said, "Where're you from?" I said, "Little town they call Poirierville." He said, "I've got an aunt living in Poirierville." So I told him my mother's name. He said, "We're first cousins." And he asked me where my bunk was--I showed him. If I had anything to eat--I told him. He said, "You're going to eat with me from now on till you get to Boston." Two weeks after, I got a job on a hospital boat--\$25 a month and my board and bunk-- that was taking the sick people for a sail down Boston Harbour for 4 or 5 hours a day. It lasted 3 months. After they tied up, I went to a fish plant. \$13 a week, 10 hours a day--well, it was better than the \$6 I was getting in Pondville. So I worked there till November. Then I went back to Cape Breton, to Marble Mountain--where they used to get marble for Sydney, the steel work--and I finished up till late in December. And in the spring--! had just passed 16--I went to New York, Long Island, as a fisherman. My brother got me the job. \$40 a month--I thought I had struck a gold mine! Promised Land, they called it. Fishing the Atlantic Ocean from Delaware to Boston, all along the seacoast, and out at sea, you know. They called them pogies. Menhaden was the right name. They run in schools--sometimes you get a thousand barrel, 500 barrel--big school of fish. We'd land them. Portuguese used to take them (53)