

David Nadolsky and Thomas H. Allum

Oral History Interview
Interview Number 1

Interviewed by Carson G. Prichard
May 18, 2021
David Nadolsky's house
Rogers City, MI

Project—Human dimensions of the Lake Huron salmon fishery crash: Using oral histories to assess the attitudes, values, and beliefs of anglers and non-angler stakeholders in Great Lakes coastal communities

[00:00:00]

PRICHARD: Alright so my name is Carson Prichard and I'm here today with Dave Nadolsky and Tom Allum at Dave's home in Rogers City. Today is Tuesday, May 18, 2021, and it's 1:35 p.m. So Dave and Tom, thank you for taking the time to participate in the interview with me. And before we begin, just for the recording, can you state, each of you that you do consent to participating in the interview and having the interview recorded?

ALLUM: I do.

NADOLSKY: Fine.

PRICHARD: Okay. So the way—I have an interview guide made up and it kind of bounces back and forth between—

NADOLSKY: That's fine.

PRICHARD: —questions for each of you and it kind of goes in chronological order, but just to start, I'll start with you Dave, can you just tell me a little bit about yourself?

NADOLSKY: I'm a retired pharmacist and businessman. I've been retired twenty-some years now, and I'm eighty years old. I've been a resident of Rogers City since the early seventies. About the same time Tom came up here, I came up here. And I started a business, and one thing led to another and I was involved in several other businesses. As far as my civic involvement I've been a member of many civic organizations from the Chamber of Commerce through Kiwanis, and the Masons, and so on and so forth. I also became involved in elective politics, serving on the city council prior to the millennium, and then I was the millennium mayor, and I served in that capacity for a number of years. Which, by the way, was at the time that a lot of the fishing enterprises were going on. So I had a hand in a lot of the infrastructure that we developed to accommodate the harbor and the roadways and so forth. And that's about it.

PRICHARD: Okay. What years, exactly, were you on the city council and then mayor?

NADOLSKY: I was on city council from '86—no, '96 until 2000, and then I became the mayor in 2000.

PRICHARD: Okay. Until—?

NADOLSKY: Two thousand and two.

PRICHARD: Okay.

NADOLSKY: Yeah. I ended my service on December thirty-first, and from the time of September eleventh, when the Twin Towers went down, I reactivated my Red Cross status, and so I went to New York City as a Red Cross volunteer, and I was there for two months in January and February, serving in various capacities, but primarily running a dispensary and a respite center, which was a converted motel at the foot of Broadway. (Prichard: Okay.) And since then, I enjoy hunting, and I don't go fishing because I get seasick. Although, every once and a while Tom will drag me out in his boat and we'll go across to the islands in Lake Michigan, and Lake Huron, and [Lake] Superior. I've got eight grandkids. And my family—I'm a widower a couple years ago—but my family resides very close. My grandson lives across the alley, my son lives two doors down and another son three doors down. I have a daughter that lives on a farm out by the golf course. So we're close-knit, and they've been very supportive in my time of need. I had a stroke in July last year, and it incapacitated me somewhat. But, I'm regaining strength and coordination, and that's about it.

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PRICHARD: So, your relation to the fishery is, you're not an angler yourself, but (Nadolsky: No.) it definitely played a part in, I'm sure, your—

NADOLSKY: Yes, and I've been involved with the Hammond Bay [Area] Anglers [Association] (Prichard: Okay.) and different events that they hold, and also different initiatives that they have had on the state and the federal level, dealing with the Treaty of 1863 [ed. note: presumably Nadolsky was referring to the Treaty of 1836] and the netting, particularly the marking on the netting. I went to the tribal negotiations and

attended those as a councilman and as mayor, in an official capacity. But as I say I was also involved in the infrastructure to accommodate the fishery. Huron Avenue was broadened to a doublewide street, and improvements were made to the marina at the lakeside, and the parking, and the fish cleaning station, and a new breakwall to increase the capacity of the harbor, and marking out, delineating the entryways and so on and so forth.

[00:06:13]

PRICHARD: Was the fishery—or, the fishing a major driver of the push to renovate the harbor?

NADOLSKY: Yes. We had heard of the horror stories over in Ludington and Muskegon and some of the things that had happened over there where the communities were just overwhelmed. And in preparation for that, with some state funding and [Michigan State] Waterways [Commission] funding and so forth, we were able to address those issues. Actually we overbuilt. But, in hindsight it was a very good idea. And of course the marina will be used in recreational boating as well as fishing, so it was a good plan.

[00:07:04]

PRICHARD: And Tom, would you mind giving a little background about yourself?

ALLUM: Yeah. My name is Tom Allum, and I'm a retired family doctor, and I came to Rogers City in 1970, when it was a fifty-bed hospital, and one doctor who was a surgeon, and didn't like to anything but surgeries. So, (laughs) me and another guy came up, and really (Nadolsky lights a cigar) fell into a great situation. And so I (Nadolsky sets lighter

down) was extremely busy, practiced in the same location for forty-five years, and then retired about seven years ago now. I've been involved with boating, and a little bit of fishing, but primarily boating. But I've always had a boat in the marina beginning in 1972. I bought a wooden Chris-Craft, thirty-four foot, that my wife and I, my kids, would take to Canada for a week or two in a summer vacation. And then in the fall we would set it up to go fishing out in the lake. The only real fish around was lake trout. And, they were fun to catch, it was something to do, you know? Eventually I tired of that. (laughs) Motor-boating is not very difficult to do. It requires no thought, really. So my wife and I bought a sailboat. And so for twenty-five years we sailed out of Rogers City. And we would take the month of July off, go across to Canada and spend three weeks living on the boat, and then come back. Always kept the boat here in Rogers City, and so I was familiar with the marina, and that aspect of life in this part of the country. Eventually the kids left, so I didn't have any free labor (Prichard laughs) to maintain the boat, and it became, just, more than was worthwhile. And so [I] sold the boat to my daughter who—we took it to Chicago and she kept it down there for a few years. I was without a boat for five years and then bought another one. It's a twenty-six-foot mini cabin cruiser that's trailerable. It sleeps three people. I've taken it to Isle Royale, across from Copper Harbor, all along the north shore of Lake Superior, across the lake here several times. And it's a multi-purpose boat. It's primarily for cruising and exploring, like to Isle Royale and things like that, because that's what it's setup for. But it has a cockpit like any other fishing boat and I set it up with two downriggers. So I do a lot of fishing in the last eight years—ten years.

NADOLSKY: He gives most of the fish away. (Prichard laughs)

ALLUM: And I don't really like to eat (Prichard: Oh, okay.) fish very much, (Prichard laughs) but it gives you something to do. (Prichard: Yeah.) Like this morning, I woke up at five o'clock—well I'll tell you a story. (Prichard: Okay.) One day last week, I woke up at six o'clock, and that's late for me. I grabbed a cup of coffee, threw on some clothes. I live a mile away, I drove down to the marina. Hopped in the boat. Went out to Calcite, about two miles away. Within a half hour I had my three fish—that's the limit on lake trout. Came back, tied up the boat, went over to the fish cleaning station, cleaned the fish. By that time it was eight o'clock. I drove up to the clinic where I have some people that are anxious to get that fish, so I dropped them off, came home, got in the shower, got cleaned up, and I was sitting down at my breakfast table having breakfast at nine o'clock. So that's my kind of a fishing day, okay?

NADOLSKY: And actually he had taken his bowl of Cheerios with him—

ALLUM: (laughs) That's right.

NADOLSKY: —but he was so damn busy pulling fish out that he never had time to eat his cereal.

ALLUM: Yeah, I keep my cereal—like this morning I had my breakfast out on the boat. So anyway, I really like to fish. I enjoy the culture of the fishermen down there which is a different culture than sailboats. And, I just enjoy it. My wife doesn't enjoy it, she won't go. My grandkids will occasionally go. But the way that boat's setup I can do everything myself and it's an escape, you know?

NADOLSKY: Are there any charter fishermen still down at the harbor?

ALLUM: There's one who came back two years ago. (Nadolsky: Okay.) And he doesn't really promote it that much, but he takes maybe three or four charters a year.

PRICHARD: Does he trailer up here—he doesn't have a slip?

ALLUM: No, he keeps a boat in the marina. (Prichard: Okay.) When I first came to Rogers City the marina was much smaller and there was probably sixty or seventy slips. And when I had the wooden Chris-Craft it was full all the time, and none of it was for fishing boats. There wasn't one fishing boat there. Who's the guy that—Percy Heward, remember (Nadolsky: Yeah.) Percy? Percy Heward was a commercial fisherman and then he got out of the commercial fishing but he still had a twenty-foot metal boat, and he would go out fishing for himself recreationally. But he was the only real fisherman in Rogers City in 1972. (Nadolsky: Huh.) Guys would go out there with trailerable boats, but the harbor really wasn't used for fishing at all.

NADOLSKY: We had been the home port, though, for the Vogelheim family, which was a commercial fishery. And they went back to the Prohibition days when they used to go over to Canada and pick up rum and cover it up with fish and then take it to Detroit. But they were not in existence when (Allum: No.) we came up here.

ALLUM: If you've got time I can tell you a story about that, that I heard from some Canadians.

PRICHARD: (laughs) Okay.

ALLUM: Now I'm not saying it's about the Vogelheims, at all, I'm just saying it's about some sort of—because there were lots of commercial fishermen, but they tell a story

about the *American Girl*. And the story is that the *American Girl* was a tug from, probably Rogers City, used to come over to Blind River, and load up with whiskey. And they were heading back and they got word, somehow, that somebody, the Coast Guard was out or whatever. So they went into a small bay over there and they lowered the wooden crates of alcohol to the bottom, shallow water, and attached each one to a string and then to a net float that floated just on the top of the surface. And they emptied their load and then headed back to Michigan. Unbeknownst to them, in the bushes over there were some kids who were watching—Canadian kids watching, What the hell is going on here? Well they got in their rowboat and rowed out there and found out what it was and told somebody. The guys from Blind River came back, picked it up, took it back to the Blind River, and sold it to the *American Girl* the next time she came over. (Prichard laughs) Now whether that's a true story or not I don't know, but I've heard it a couple times.

[00:15:14]

PRICHARD: When we had spoken on the phone earlier, you talked about in the early seventies there not being hardly anybody that fished, but you recalled yourself being out there I think, and there were salmon porpoising and they were all over but nobody knew how to catch them.

ALLUM: Nobody knew the techniques, how to fish for them. And they'd only been around, what, probably five or ten years? I don't know when [Howard] Tanner—

PRICHARD: Sixty-seven was—

ALLUM: Sixty-seven?

PRICHARD: —or sixty-six, yeah, was when they were first stocked. Yeah.

ALLUM: Okay, so they were out there and people knew how to catch lake trout because we had been doing that. Lake trout was easy, you lowered your cannonball to the bottom, raised it two turns with your hand-operated thing and you just trolled around, because the lake trout are always on the bottom wherever it's cold, forty-five degrees of water. These salmon were swimming on the surface in higher levels, but that's when they're getting ready to spawn, and their appetite diminishes then. And you'd see them jumping out there and some of the guys said, "I'm going to bring my shotgun out there with some buckshot. Maybe I can get one that way." Because they would jump right next to your boat.

NADOLSKY: The local boys snagged them out of the rivers, and when I first came here, the fellow that I bought the store from lived on Linden which is a street that the Trout River runs next to out to the lake, and I saw three boys on bikes and they had two salmon on each handlebar, and the fish were dragging (Prichard laughs; Allum: Yeah.) on the street and they were riding home.

ALLUM: It was quite a problem with the salmon running up the Ocqueoc River. Swan River, where they plant them, is inaccessible, you can't get there, because it's in the plant. But they would go up the Ocqueoc as well, and up this Trout River. And they were just there and they were going to die, anyway, and people would go out and snag them with what they called the Ocqueoc—the Ocqueoc some kind of lure, I can't think of it right now—Ocqueoc Wobbler or something like that—which is a giant treble hook with a big chunk of lead (Nadolsky laughs) welded around it, (Prichard: Yeah.) fifty-pound test

line, and they'd throw these things. And I went out there one time with them just to see what was going on. It's exciting to catch a thirty-pound fish, but that's not really sport, (Prichard: Right.) that's—. One time my partner, Jack McNeil and I, it was at lunchtime on a workday, we heard that they were running so he and I went down to the mouth of the Trout River, and we're standing on the beach there, and watching these salmon come running up, and the Trout River's only about that deep in the fall, well they—

NADOLSKY: They looked like *Jaws*, they're dorsal (Prichard: Yeah.) fins sticking—.

ALLUM: —they run up there, and it was just fun to watch them. And we were standing side-by-side like this in our suits and ties, and one of the things ran up right on the beach between us. I reached down, picked it up, and threw it into the river. You could catch them by hand.

NADOLSKY: We used to use a smelt net out at my hunting my camp. My camp is on the Black Mallard River which is the next river up from the Ocqueoc north. And you'd just go near a gravel shoal and put the net down flat and wait for the female to come over and then you could pick them up. And we'd throw them back in.

ALLUM: The local kids would be down snagging in the harbor, (Prichard: Really?) and number one, it was closed to fishing, and number two, that's an illegal method of fishing. And it was a real problem because they would be down there before anybody was around in the morning and then afterhours at night when it was nearly dark. And my kids were— my son was maybe thirteen or fourteen at that time, and he wanted to go snagging with his buddies and I said, "You know, that's really not an ethical way to fish." Well it was a

difficult couple conversations we had. And I think eventually he stopped going for those guys. But it was really a hassle down there at the harbor.

NADOLSKY: What I want to know is how many fingers you stitched back up from fileting, and how many hooks you took out of noses, (Allum: Yeah.) because—

ALLUM: Yeah, or ears. (Nadolsky: Yeah. (laughs)) Yeah. It was a lot of that business. And I think I talked with you on the phone the other day about how sometimes that was overwhelming when they had these—even today when they have that summer festival thing—for the healthcare community, it's overwhelming because people would come in, they'd come in afterhours because there's no emergency room around. You'd get a call, somebody wants to be seen. Well, so you go up and meet them at the clinic, open the door, go in and turn on the lights. You have no way of identifying who they are, making any records. How are you going to take their payment? You don't even know what the payment would be.

NADOLSKY: They're inebriated.

ALLUM: Yeah. Yeah. So it was just a hassle, you know?

NADOLSKY: The motel owners had it pretty bad, too, because the guys used to bring the fish in and clean them in the bathtub, and it looked like a slaughterhouse, you know, in there, in the morning. (Prichard: Yeah.)

ALLUM: Yeah, it was overwhelming on a weekend, or during the salmon festival.

(Nadolsky: Yeah.) There was no place to park. I remember when—if I wanted to go down to the harbor I had a little two-cycle motorcycle I would ride down there, because

you couldn't take your car down. Remember, I had a boat there now. I'm paying \$1,500 a year to keep my boat there, and it would be nice to be able to go down and see it, (laughs) but you couldn't even get down there.

NADOLSKY: But the kids made a little money off it. The wrestling team used to go down and check the coolers and stuff onboard. And then the cheerleaders handled the weigh-ins and so forth. And it was a big deal. The community came down. We had a portable trailer there. The parking lot was full. (Allum: Yeah.) The food concessions were all making money, and Kiwanis was selling donuts, and so on and so forth. Good times, (Prichard: Yeah.) you know?

PRICHARD: That was for the tournament—the Rogers City Salmon Tournament?

NADOLSKY: Yeah, they've got a couple tournaments now, but they aren't anything like it. Although they still do the portable trailer and weigh-in, so people come down and watch for a little while.

ALLUM: The tournaments were—it's interesting, I can tell you a bit about that. The tournament back in the day was a big money-making operation. I don't know how many—five hundred boats? (Nadolsky: Yeah.)

PRICHARD: Three-fifty was how much (all three talking at once)—yeah.

ALLUM: —and was more than the city could handle, really. But there was a lot of money to be made there. And if you recall, whenever there's more money than people are accounting for, sometimes it disappears into the cracks, and I think that happened on a couple of occasions. (Nadolsky: Yeah.) As the thing kind of died down, then there wasn't

money to be made, and it wasn't promoted as much and there weren't so many fish so everything kind of smoldered down. So the city still tried to maintain a tournament. I think there was probably a few years there weren't any tournaments, but then the city restarted a one-weekend tournament. And it was poorly run, poorly attended, poorly promoted. There weren't many fish around. But they tried, you know? But then a local group called the Fat Hogs—half a dozen guys that used to go out on the same boat and drink beer—they said, "Let's restart the tournaments." They've done a really good job. (Nadolsky: Yeah.) Volunteer effort. They're not in it to make money, they're just in it to have a good time. And now they're up to, what, forty boats or something like that?

NADOLSKY: Yeah. In the old days they used to do a Le Mans start. A running start. And they'd fire off this—

PRICHARD: Well Mike [Peltz] said he was the one who fired the shotgun.

NADOLSKY: Yeah, he used to be down there officiating. And that was quite a—you know, nothing but assholes and elbows, (Allum: Oh yeah.) and people running all over the place.

ALLUM: It's a miracle nobody drowned, you know?

NADOLSKY: Yeah. Yeah.

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PRICHARD: I read, going back around the time where they really started stocking fish in the Swan River that the mayor at the time, Fred Lewis, had appointed you and nine other

people I think to a fish committee, (Nadolsky: Yeah.) to identify the impact that the stocking of that huge number of fish might have on Rogers City. So I was wondering if you could think back about those meetings and what you remember from that time period, and—

NADOLSKY: Yeah. Well we had not only local meetings but we tried to involve people from the west side of the state that had experienced some of that before, so we had them come over or we would go over there to see it firsthand. And they were very productive meetings. And you had a sense of foreboding because of the huge impact that it could have on a community. But it did get us off our butts and we took the initiative to seek funding to get infrastructure improvements. We had to work with MDOT [Michigan Department of Transportation] on the roadway, we had to work with fish and wildlife, the [Michigan State] Waterways Commission. There were things about rates being set because the temptation was to gouge these fishermen as much as you could. You know, all those kind of things. Plus, to have ordinances in place that prevented people from camping down there, having campers and stuff in the parking lot. And so, yeah, they were very productive meetings. And as I remember they lasted a couple years or something like that. And we reported back to the city council. The city engineer who took the initiative—we hired a design firm to do the harbor and so on.

PRICHARD: Would that have been Rob Fairbanks, (Nadolsky: Yeah.) the city engineer? (Nadolsky: Yeah.) He's somebody I'd like to speak to, but—we can maybe talk about this after the interview, but Frank [Krist] had given me a number for him, but it was no longer his number I don't think. (Nadolsky: Yeah.) But Terry—I spoke with Terry Ross on the phone and she said well you would know how to get ahold of Rob.

NADOLSKY: Yeah, she had retired—she was the first female city manager we'd ever had. In fact, first female in a position of authority. You know, the local ministers, and the school superintendent, they were all male. All late- and middle-aged male. (Allum: Yeah.) And Terry came in just full of piss and vinegar, and she was a great city manager.

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PRICHARD: But you never fished for salmon, or that was never—? I was just kind of curious why you were chosen for the fish committee. Was that just basically because of your role and involvement in the community?

NADOLSKY: Oh, I don't know, you wear many hats. They probably picked me because I was an influential citizen or some damn thing. Represented the business community and had involvement in political—I was chairman of the planning commission then, I think, so it fell within the framework of that. And I think we handled parks and rec at the same time, they weren't separate commissions. And we were also forming a downtown development committee [called the Downtown Development Authority], so it all kind of fit together. And I don't know whether I was on all those commissions or not, but I could have been. But we did due diligence, and thankfully we overbuilt. And it didn't cost us much because a lot of it came from grants, engineering studies and all that kind of thing. So, department of commerce, economic development were key components of the things, but also natural resources. We had a fellow that had been from here, local newspaper editor that had been the chairman of the Natural Resources Commission for seven governors or something (Allum: Yeah.) like that. He was like a lifetime—

PRICHARD: Harry Whiteley?

NADOLSKY: Yeah, Harry Whiteley.

ALLUM: Having his funeral Saturday. He died last fall, age of a hundred. (Nadolsky: Yeah.) They're having a—

NADOLSKY: But he was very influential. I remember going into the commission meetings in Lansing, and getting up to make a presentation and—what the hell was the guy? He was a provost at Michigan State [University]. Anyway, he said, “Don't bother with all that stuff. Harry, this is okay with you?” Harry said, “Yeah.” He said, “I make a motion, we accept the (unintelligible),” it was all done and over with. That was the way things worked back then. (Allum: Yeah.)

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PRICHARD: How well did things play out with respect to your planning and anticipation of the impacts that the fishery would [have] had? It seems like it went pretty well. I mean there were—

NADOLSKY: Yeah, as I said we overbuilt. But we didn't—we did in reality, but we didn't in theory because we saw firsthand what happened in Muskegon and Frankenmuth [ed. note: presumably Nadolsky meant Frankfort] and some of those communities. And we went hand-in-glove with many state agencies that were either funding it or taking part in the studies. And had the fishery continued to grow we'd be undersized now. As it turned out, it was just about right, because recreational boating continued to grow when the fishing was diminishing, so we had just as many if not more boaters over here

(Prichard: Okay.) and the harbor was always full and launches going on and so on and so forth. So, no regrets. I think we did a good job, and the proof is in the pudding.

ALLUM: The pudding—the pudding that's left for us today is not what it was before. You're interested in Dave's work with the harbor—the harbor down there is one of the best in [the] State [of Michigan], okay? Anybody will tell you that. It's got lots of room, easy access from the waterway, clean water. It's a nice town, you can walk uptown. So it's really a nice, pleasant spot. But, Dave mentioned that the recreational boating increased and it's true it did, but then like a lot of things it cycled back and so for the last twenty years, recreational boating has really been down.

NADOLSKY: That's tied to the economy, isn't it? And purchasing boats?

ALLUM: I don't know what it's tied to, because I've been involved with it intimately. My read on it is the—back in the, before World War Two, when after World War Two the dream was, if you were successful, to get a nice sailboat, sail off to the North Channel—are you familiar with the North Channel?

PRICHARD: Lake Huron? Yeah. Yeah.

ALLUM: That's probably the number two cruising spot in the western hemisphere. You can put it in perspective.

NADOLSKY: The landmass is the Laurentian Shield so it's all red granite in big, high piles. But the islands are limestone, so they're white limestone. And it's quite a contrast, visually.

ALLUM: The way to get there, traditionally, was to come up the lake from Detroit and Bay City, wherever you lived, come up and stop in Rogers City, and fuel up, and get more liquor, whatever (laughs) you needed, and then it's a straight shot across the lake—it's thirty-two miles of water, another fifteen miles to get around the corner to clear customs at Meldrum Bay. So Rogers City was the jump-off spot for any cruisers who wanted to go to the North Channel. Hardly anybody would go up the east side of the lake in Ontario because there's not many facilities there, and they're few and far between. That was a big boon to the boating community and the harbor. About twenty-five years ago they built a marina at Presque Isle, which is actually shorter to get to Meldrum Bay (Prichard: Oh, okay.) by a distance of about thirteen miles. So you might say, "Well, thirteen miles, what is that?" Well if you're in a sailboat that goes six miles an hour, add two hours to a long day. So that cut a lot of the business for the harbor, (Prichard: Yeah.) gasoline sales and so on. But then it was another cultural thing. A lot of the people that came after World War Two and people in my age group, they kind of grew out of sailing. You get old, it becomes too hard. Your kids are not interested anymore. They're interested in kayaking, parasailing, waterskiing. Different kinds of water activity. So you hardly ever see young families coming by with boats anymore like there was thirty years ago.

NADOLSKY: For a while the harbor was our front door rather than being the backdoor, and we got a number of residents here that were retired Flint or Detroit executives that came up and purchased houses, they got big bang for their buck. They could leave their boat in the harbor. They might have fished, they might have just recreational boated. And they were excellent citizens for the community because they came from that post-World

War Two generation where they believed strongly in civic involvement so they became chairman of this, and the chairman of that, and even though they weren't working, because they were retired they had a lot of spare time on their hands and they were valuable members of the community, to churches, you know, everything else.

ALLUM: I used to tell people that—they're trying to recruit business for the marina, but also people for the city—that they should advertise that. You could sell your home—where your [Nadolsky] son is selling down there now—and get \$500,000 for that house. Come up here—you can buy a house anywhere around here for \$100,000. You can buy a sailboat for \$200,000. You've got \$200,000 left over. You've got a house, you've got a sailboat, you can walk to the sailboat, ride your bike, you don't even need a car. What could be a better place to retire? But, the people that would like to do that kind of disappeared. They became kayakers or whatever, so I don't know.

NADOLSKY: You know, prior to this commission that you referred to just a minute ago, the Vogelheim family had been very influential in this town—number of mayors and successful business enterprise down at the harbor, so they owned beach frontage and everything else. And for a long time it was assumed that the harbor would expand to the north, rather than the south. And with that mindset, which in no small way was set by the Vogelheim family because they would benefit by it, the city explored that avenue. Well, we were all set to do a deal to acquire the Vogelheim property and expand the harbor to the north, and a local politician at that time was named John Pridnia. And he was from Harrisville, but he'd been working with Presque Isle and with Rogers City, and favored Rogers City because it had the rest of the infrastructure to support it. And due to the internecine squabbling of the Vogelheim family—first with themselves who they liked to

squabble with, but also with anybody else—over the price of the property, we lost that deal, and Presque Isle got the harbor expansion, and that just pissed people off to no end. And that's why that commission was formed. And the Vogelheims were taken out of the equation. And eventually the older members of the family died off and the next generation were not as astute businessmen and they lost the whole damn thing to bankruptcy. I mean it was five or six hardware stores, and do-it-yourself centers, and, you know, he had a finger in the fishing enterprises along with Lamb. (Allum: Yeah.) So that was quite a deal. And it was a big stink.

ALLUM: Last year—I think I mentioned to you on the phone, I'm a member of the Harbor Advisory Commission, and when we have to do whatever we can to do to make the harbor function, it's been a real—for the last twenty years or so it's been a drag on the community. It doesn't pay for itself and the city tax rolls have to support it.

NADOLSKY: Now, that money comes from the CDA.

ALLUM: Well I don't know where it comes from.

NADOLSKY: Well ultimately it comes from the taxpayers.

ALLUM: Yeah. But it's not—

NADOLSKY: It's an accounting—

ALLUM: —self-supporting. So it's only been in the last couple of years have they got some strategies to improve it, to make it self-supporting—and then a profit-generating—. Now it may be generating profit for the beer stores and the grocery stores, but I'm saying

from its own activities. (Nadolsky electronically adjusts his chair) They hired a new, better, professional-type harbormaster—

PRICHARD: Wayne [Saile]?

ALLUM: Wayne. (Prichard: Yeah.) They got this sling trailer that you've probably seen down there, this lifting trailer. (Prichard: Unh-uh.) Oh, I'll take you down there (Prichard: Okay.) when were done here and show you. So—timeout.

PRICHARD: Here, I'll [pause the recording]—

NADOLSKY: Go ahead, keep talking.

PRICHARD: Okay.

|00:41:04|

Nadolsky stands up, opens the door, and steps outside.

ALLUM: So we now can lift boats out. Now, I told you I had a sailboat for twenty-five years, but the only way we could manage those big boats was to get a crane from Calcite, and all of us became kind of experts at lifting boats up, and we got to as many as like eighteen or nineteen one year, lifting them out of the water with the crane. The wives would come down and scrub the bottoms and we'd set them in, take the masts down. It was an all-day operation. The city stored a—the city charged us, let's say, three or four hundred bucks just to store the boat through the winter. We split the cost of the crane, which was about a thousand bucks, and depending on how many boats we hauled out, it would cost us about \$100 to haul our boat out, and \$100 put it in in the spring, and \$300

to store it for the winter—\$500 for a forty-foot boat. You know, it would cost you \$4,000 (Prichard: Yeah.) some other place. Of course it was outdoors, storage. We had to do the work ourselves. There weren't even any mechanics around. But now, Wayne can handle all of those things, get the boats covered. There's a mechanic locally who can do the engine work, replace an engine, that type of thing. And last year, for whatever reason down at Presque Isle they were not selling gasoline. (Nadolsky reenters the room) I don't know if something happened with their pumps or their tanks or whatever, so people couldn't get fuel there. So last year was a—or the year before was a really pretty good year. Now last year was an aberration because there wasn't a lot of travel. (Nadolsky electronically adjusts his chair) But, actually in the springtime when big boats are being moved from Florida to the upper lakes here—professional, you're talking eighty-ninety-foot boats—we're one of the first places that has fuel available in the spring, so these guys will come in and get a thousand gallons. (laughs) It's just unbelievable. (Prichard: Right.) And Wayne, the harbormaster, has established a relationship with some of these captains, these delivery captains. So we're trying every angle we can to make it self-supporting and profit-generating. In the old days the harbor was completely full when I had a sailboat. There was a five-year waiting period to get a slip. I sold my cruiser—

PRICHARD: That was in the seventies when you—?

ALLUM: In the seventies. (Prichard: Yeah.) I told you I had that Chris-Craft. I sold that, and then I was going to get a sailboat. But there was a year or two lag there when I didn't have a boat but I paid for a slip anyway—

PRICHARD: Just to not lose your spot.

ALLUM: —just to hold it. (Prichard: Yeah.) Now—well, two years ago there would be 30 boats in the harbor which holds 130. In the last couple of years, a young group—well, probably not young—forty-year old local guys who have been employed a long time or had their own little business logging or whatever it is, are now buying thirty-foot cruisers and setting them up for fishing, and they're actually renting slips now. So, prior to this Covid thing, dock *A* was almost completely full of boats, before the Covid hit. One time in—and then they have one-month slip rentals, so you could get a season, a week, a month, whatever you want. And there was one time I counted about fifty fishing boats renting slips, (Nadolsky: Huh.) not going in off trailers. Well they probably came on a trailer, (Prichard: Right.) but then they rent a slip. So, it's really become a fisherman's port now. If you drive down there you'll see that most of the boats in the summer are fishing boats. (Prichard: Okay.)

|00:45:30|

NADOLSKY: We have a number of houses that had been purchased, also, in these blocks close to the harbor, and they are now rentals for, same reason, the fishermen. (Allum: Yeah.) I should mention because his name came up that Wayne Saile, the new harbormaster—he's not new now—but he's doing an excellent job. And that makes a big difference. You know, I've seen part-time harbormasters that were school teachers or something like that, and some of them worked out, and some of them didn't. It's a demanding job, especially in the summertime. But Wayne is doing an excellent job with public relations, and with the practicality of running the facility. He does a very good job. And he's taking over more responsibilities in the park itself, too, because the two are so intimately linked. See, the land portion of the park, of the marina, has developed at the

same time—or, no, after the harbor developed. So there was a new bandshell put up, the pavilion was improved and has a food concession in it. There are many events held there. Most notable, the weeklong festival in August, but there's a flag celebration weekend, and there are nightly band concerts on Thursday and Friday night all through the summer. The facility, the pavilion has a public eating area and a private [area] tied to the restaurant, and that's used all the time for picnickers and so forth. Plus there are a couple playground things that have been put in there and they're doing a new study to improve all that. There are recommendations being considered for the parking lot area—make it more green by boulevards that divide it rather than this vast wasteland of asphalt. Plus it has a wonderful swimming beach, you know, sugar sand and so forth. So that's coming along real well, too.

ALLUM: You know what, before I leave the subject of the harbor, I just want, for the record, you mentioned that you had engineering drawings for the harbor, and what they did, they reconfigured the floating docks inside, so the outside size of the harbor really didn't change any, it just was reconfigured into floating docks as opposed to stationary docks. But they did reinforce a breakwater. They put a breakwater out from the swimming beach, kind of straight out, to protect from the surge that would come in from the east wind, to make the harbor more calm, which ideally is a really great idea, right? But what they did, they extended the thing—it used to be like this, the mouth of the harbor was like this—they extended this wall like this, to protect against winds from this direction. But, it acted as a catcher's mitt for any waves and winds (Prichard: Oh.) that came from the north. So they had to come back, I don't know how many years later, and

put another buttress wall out here. So now, it's really nice and calm. But it was kind of a two-stage thing because of the engineering which wasn't quite right.

NADOLSKY: Yeah. Yeah. Well there's still two projects down there at the—one at the park, and where the pavilion is, you look to the west and you can see the big hill at the top where [US-] 23 crosses, and I always wanted to put a flagpole at the pavilion that you could see from that intersection with a big enough flag on it. (Prichard: Yeah.) That was \$15,000 back when I was mayor, it was probably a lot more, and Tom Moran was going to build the thing for us so it was probably 25,000 [dollars]. The other thing that I wanted to do was I wanted—see, this county has three lighthouses, and that's kind of unusual. Well I wanted to build another one at our harbor. You know these video rental places that have a glass lighthouse on the front of them, (Allum: Yeah.) and they illuminate it at night? That's what I want to put down on our harbor, (Allum laughs) just for show. Get your picture taken next to it. So, we'll see.

ALLUM: You were—one of the questions you had (Nadolsky lights cigar) asked—I assumed you were going to ask—is what's been the long-term—after forty years now? And I would hazard a guess it hasn't really benefitted the community, other than recreationally, much at all, (Prichard: Really?) because the community has really changed considerably since the seventies. Population has declined by 20 percent. Hospital's—

NADOLSKY: And that's mainly children—

ALLUM: —hospital's closed.

NADOLSKY: —you know, kids your age with families, there aren't the jobs for them.

ALLUM: There used to be shipping out of Calcite here. (Nadolsky coughs) First of all, Calcite employed about five hundred people at the mine. And then there were seven Great Lakes ships who, this was their home port. And each one of them had thirty-five crewmembers. And each one of those guys could have a family here in Rogers City. Well, the steamboats disappeared, I don't know, they were sold to somebody else, and they never came back here anymore to spend the winters here. So there was a big chunk of jobs there.

NADOLSKY: They used to do winter work, too.

ALLUM: Yeah they worked in the winter, reconditioning boats. The quarry then, because of mechanization and different techniques, they used to haul the stuff from where they blasted it to where they ground it up on railroad cars. But then they went to all these giant shovels. Now, they produce more stone with a hundred employees where they had five hundred. (Nadolsky: Yeah.) So, the community itself has really condensed, then.

NADOLSKY: And the demographics have changed. It's become an aging community.

ALLUM: Right. So, there weren't any really long-term economic benefits, I guess, of that whole fishing business. If there was a goal back in the seventies of using this to bolster the community, and ensure its future and so on, from that standpoint it didn't do that. Not because of a fault of its own, but because of—

NADOLSKY: Yeah, but you know with the next economic boom we're going to have another recreational boating boom, and it'll pick up.

ALLUM: It may.

NADOLSKY: And who knows what the DNR [Department of Natural Resources] has up their sleeve for planting fish. They were talking about, what, fifty-pound fish at one time?

(Allum: Yeah.) Genetic alteration—

PRICHARD: They did the triploid—

ALLUM: Triploid thing. (Prichard: Yeah.)

NADOLSKY: Triploid.

ALLUM: Well the last couple years it's been the Atlantic salmon, (Nadolsky: Yeah.) and people up in Sault Ste. Marie at the college have been—as you probably know have been planting a few Atlantics. And they would come down here and we'd catch them, and they're fun to catch. They don't die every year. (Prichard: Right.) They live for a few years. And they're really a nice fish. I caught a couple of them, but it was kind of by accident. You're fishing for [Chinook] salmon and they happen to come by.

NADOLSKY: Did you talk to anybody at the [Hammond Bay] Biological Station north of town?

PRICHARD: I haven't yet, no.

NADOLSKY: Well quite a few of them are German chemists because Bayer is the company that makes the poison. But that's an interesting—you know, you get the director, somebody that's American, and they might be able to tell you the effect of the lamprey (Prichard: Yeah.) on the fishery.

ALLUM: I think they've got lamprey under a lot better control. Back in the seventies when we would catch a lake trout a lot of them had lamprey marks on them, or lampreys themselves. Back in '08 when I started fishing again here, you'd probably get a scarred fish every time you went out. Every time you got five fish one would be scarred, either a fresh scar or old scar. But I don't think I saw any last year. I saw one this last—

NADOLSKY: Well they have these weirs, they've got one at the Trout River and one at the Black Mallard River and so forth, and those have been very effective controlling lamprey.

ALLUM: What they're doing, though, they're poisoning the streams. In fact, (Nadolsky: Yeah.) the [US] Fish and Wildlife [Service] people are here this week. (Prichard: Oh okay.) I saw their trucks parked over at the motel. And they come through every year and they pick certain streams on a scheme, you know, and go in there and treat them.

PRICHARD: Yeah. Yeah, I'm familiar with the general program that they do. (Allum: Yeah.) Different rivers are on different—

ALLUM: Yeah, different cycles.

PRICHARD: —two-, three-, four-year schedules. Yeah.

ALLUM: Based on—I don't know how you measure their success, but based on, what do you see on the fish you catch, I would say that—in fact, the [*R. V.*] *Tanner*—

PRICHARD: Howard Tanner?

ALLUM: Pardon?

PRICHARD: The old DNR Director Howard Tanner?

ALLUM: Well it's now a boat.

PRICHARD: Oh, the boat, yeah.

ALLUM: The boat is the [*R.V.*] *Tanner* now. (Prichard: Yeah.) He was out there setting nets. They do nets every spring to check on the health and status of the fishery. Well then they come in and sometimes they'll have three boxes of fish—you know, there's hundreds and hundreds of fish. They have no use for them, and so they'll get half a dozen of us local fishermen that donate them. We come in and clean the doggone things, and give them to Habitat for Humanity or some—the Presbyterian church had a food bank. (Nadolsky: Oh yeah.) They would take the fish and pass them on—

NADOLSKY: The food pantry.

ALLUM: —to poor people, or whatever. The last time I did that would be two years ago, and we cleaned fish for five hours probably, and I don't think we saw one (Prichard: Really?) that had a lamprey mark on it. (Nadolsky: Yeah.) So it's got to be a successful (Prichard: Oh yeah.) program by now.

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PRICHARD: So, I kind of want to go back to what you were saying about the legacy or the long-term impact of the salmon fishery here. And you were saying that, economically, maybe it hasn't had that much of a lasting impact. Or, it was more concentrated during when the tournament would happen or in the summer, but that's a relatively short period

of time, and people are coming in, but they're also leaving and not investing a lot of money, but they're—I just kind of want to, maybe, get more of a story there.

ALLUM: Well if you look at any one salmon tournament, 500 boats, or 350 boats come in, plus there's some boats here. And it's a big deal. They buy beer and go to the restaurants and things like that, so there's probably an immediate impact economically on the community. But then I don't know if they have more expenses, more police force overtime, stuff like that, I don't know, you'd have to balance that, you know? But once they leave, the next week there's nothing left there, okay. (Prichard: Yeah.)

NADOLSKY: Except these retirees, these guys that are retired in their fifties and sixties.

ALLUM: They're not fishermen, though, Dave.

NADOLSKY: Well they do come up for fishing. Guys like Dave Miller and so forth, that like to hunt and fish, and they come up here because they can do both of them. They can have a boat in the harbor and go fishing everyday if they want to.

ALLUM: I don't know that they have any boats in the harbor. I think the last one was the—I can't think of his name—. There's no real local people like that that have boats down there now.

NADOLSKY: Oh. Well.

ALLUM: I mentioned earlier that the forty-year old successful farmer from Moltke, runs an air conditioning business here in town, those are the people that are in there now.

PRICHARD: But if you go back to the nineties, or the eighties, would that have been different?

ALLUM: They weren't there. (Prichard: Okay.) No. It's become more like a social thing amongst fishermen. And since I keep my boat on dock *A*, that's the fishing boat dock, they're a different breed of people than the people with the sailboats and the fancy striped shirts and white shoes and stuff like that. Fishermen's shoes are usually (unintelligible) and they're covered with blood, you know? So, it's been a benefit for those people, and their families who can go out and have a good time fishing. But they would be here anyway, most of them. Even the retirees. (Nadolsky: Yeah.) I don't know that the retirees are coming for fishing. Interesting, there's—a guy came up from Ohio, some part of Ohio, I don't know exactly where—about a ten-hour drive from here, maybe, you know, ten-hour—and he comes up every year, name of his boat is *Buckeye Bill*, and he rents a slip for a whole summer. And he lives on his twenty-six foot boat. Uses the shower, and the—. He eats his breakfast on his boat and then he goes to the restaurant for lunch and dinner and he does that for six or eight weeks every summer. His brother-in-law came at the same time ten-fifteen years ago, and he and his wife bought a house in town. Turleys. Do you know who—I, you know, the Turleys. Bob Turley. And there was another guy, Joe, who came up from Indiana or somewhere and bought a house. But those are really the exceptions, and you know they were single guys that live on a boat, in a small fishing boat, in a sleeping bag for six weeks in a summer. (Prichard laughs) That's kind of an unusual situation. (Nadolsky: Yeah.) But, the guy, the one, Turley doesn't hardly fish anymore. He doesn't take a slip anymore because there's no more salmon. He hates to catch lake trout. He remembers what it was like in the old days when you could catch big

salmon. And there's quite a difference between catching a salmon and catching a lake trout.

NADOLSKY: Is it more of a fight?

ALLUM: Oh heavens, yeah. (Nadolsky: Oh.) When you catch a lake—if you're looking for lake trout you've got to watch the pole because a lot of times—like yesterday, I was out for two hours I never had bite. I pulled in my line, there's a (Prichard laughs) ten-pound salmon just hooked, swimming along—

PRICHARD: Lake trout, you mean?

ALLUM: Or, lake trout, yeah. They do that all the time. Whereas a salmon, if you catch a salmon you hear this hundred feet of line go off “zzz” like that. Sound like a buzz saw. And then you've got this big fish on and he's jumping around, as opposed to a lake trout that you have to just reel him up from the bottom. (Nadolsky: Huh.) So, that's a dynamic that comes in from what you're talking about. What is salmon fishing and why is it attractive? We don't have salmon anymore, so—

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PRICHARD: Was it real—how noticeable was the change? Because I'm familiar with the survey data, and there were, kind of maybe it was a longer-term decline in alewife and smelt, but then between 2002 and 2005 is where the surveys just really show that major crash in alewives.

ALLUM: And I didn't fish (unintelligible; Prichard and Allum speaking at same time)—

PRICHARD: Right.

ALLUM: —until 2007 so I wasn't part of that.

NADOLSKY: Well was that related to the zebra mussel (Prichard: Yes.) eating the phytoplankton?

PRICHARD: It's—

ALLUM: Multi-factored.

PRICHARD: —yeah, so there's—I think—and I'm speaking with Jim Johnson, the Michigan DNR retired biologist tomorrow, and the way he describes it is it was kind of a two-part story. One is you had salmon and it got to be an imbalance between the amount of salmon that were there and the prey that were there, but also, coming from the lower part of the food web, you had the zebra and quagga mussels filtering a lot more of the phytoplankton and it was creating less food availability for the alewives and smelt themselves. So they were getting pinched from the top and the bottom.

ALLUM: And I've heard stories that—when I first went down there, and got involved with this I kept saying, “Well, maybe they should plant alewives, you know?” What do I know? Some of the guys said, “Well the alewives are part of the problem,” because alewives have something to do with—if a salmon eats nothing but alewives there's something in that, some chemical that interferes with their fertility. I don't know—

PRICHARD: It especially affected lake trout. It was a—

ALLUM: More lake trout, was it?

PRICHARD: Yeah, they get a vitamin *B* deficiency. Thiaminase—there's an enzyme that alewife have. And Atlantic salmon and lake trout are especially vulnerable to it. But it causes what's called Early Mortality Syndrome, that right after the eggs hatch, the small, larval juvenile fish die relatively quickly after they hatch because they're vitamin *B-12* deficient.

ALLUM: So that's another factor, (Prichard: Yeah.) okay, so now you've got three factors, and there's probably more that we don't even understand, (Prichard: Right.) you know? When I look at the salmon I look at it like any other invasive species, okay? Whether it's—the alewife was one, and the—

PRICHARD: Lamprey.

ALLUM: —sea lamprey. Those are the big ones. And now we've got the mussels there. So, I think the salmon, the whole salmon thing was kind—when they look back at it two hundred years from now, they're going to say, “Well that was a blip,” because the alewives arrived, basically. That's kind of what prompted it. We had so many alewives. I can remember when I was going to school in Chicago, every morning there'd be windrows two-feet deep of dead alewives for five hundred feet down the beach, and they'd come in with big frontend loaders and scoop them up and carry them away. So I think it was [Howard] Tanner's—

NADOLSKY: You remember going smelt dipping when we first (Allum: Oh yeah.) came up here, too.

ALLUM: Yeah. Smelt was—I don't know if they consider that an invasive—

PRICHARD: They are invasive.

ALLUM: —they came up through the Welland Canal, I think. But they've been around a long time. Smelt have been here 150 years. Along, probably, with the lamprey.

PRICHARD: They actually got here—you know Torch Lake?

ALLUM: Yeah. Yeah, they planted them there.

PRICHARD: At some point in time they had tried to stock Atlantic salmon in Torch Lake. And they knew that Atlantic salmon in the Atlantic Ocean eat smelt, (Allum: Yeah.) so they also stocked smelt in Torch Lake—or no, not Torch Lake. Crystal Lake. In, what, (Allum: Benzie.) Benzonia, or yeah. And there's a connection between Crystal Lake and Lake Michigan and that's how smelt got into the Great Lakes.

ALLUM: If you look at it from the anthropological standpoint, which I look at everything—you know, the Native Americans were here for probably 8,000 years, maybe a little more. Primitive tools. But there were lake trout here. There were whitefish here. There were ciscoes. And everything kind of took care of itself, you know? I'm sure there were ups and downs and this, that, and the other thing. But, it's only since us white guys from Europe came along that the major changes have occurred in the lake. So like I said, two hundred, five hundred years from now, you look back at the Great Lakes, is it going to be like a zoo of managed populations of different things?

NADOLSKY: We haven't gotten the carp up here, I think the water's too deep. But, you know over by Garden Island and, what's the other island over there?

ALLUM: Beaver.

NADOLSKY: Yeah. That archipelago. There the water is shallow (Allum: Yeah.) and guys cast for them.

ALLUM: I just saw a carp in the harbor this morning, about this big. (Nadolsky: Yeah.) Yeah, they come in about this time of year and spawn.

NADOLSKY: Along the shoreline.

ALLUM: Yeah. So that, I don't know if that's of any interest to you at all, the big picture, the long-lens picture, but that's the way I kind of look at things.

|01:08:40|

PRICHARD: Yeah. So the legacy maybe of the salmon fishery in Rogers City, from your perspective, is more something like, Well that was an interesting, kind of cool thing to experience. But there's not so much a legacy of having to recover from that loss. It was more of a transient impact.

ALLUM: Well, I think if it was recoverable, it would be fantastic, okay? But based on what I read in the science I don't think it is recoverable.

PRICHARD: Right. But I meant maybe like the culture, or (Nadolsky coughs)—whatever benefits it brought to Rogers City, there wasn't a lot—I don't know how to say this, but because the salmon fishing went away it's not like it created this void in Rogers City?

ALLUM: I don't think so, because the people that are still here, there's a few of them that fish for salmon. Like I said, maybe forty boats on a good season. That's not a lot of people. (Prichard: Okay.) I don't think the salmon fishing is—if it were recoverable it would be great for people that like to fish, and it might be, again, great for the economy on a limited basis, but that's not going to do much for the employees at Calcite who don't work anymore, and the other employment situation. Dave and I were talking the other day and there's an old analogy of a circus coming to town. And with proper advance notice and so on, and posters on the telephone poles and so on, Big circus coming to town, everybody gets excited about it. And pretty soon you see the first elephant come, and the circus starts to set up, and it's fantastic. Best thing that the kid had ever seen. But then eventually the circus folds its tent and moves on to the next town, and the circus is gone, okay? So when I think of the salmon fishing, it's kind of that same analogy—it was great while it was here, but it didn't stay. And it would be nice if it could come back, but I don't think it ever will.

PRICHARD: Yeah, I guess—. We kind of covered a lot, a lot of the stuff I had planned on asking about so I don't know if there's anything that either of you have to add with respect to, just, the importance over time or the impact of the salmon fishery on Rogers City we can do that and, maybe, wrap it up.

NADOLSKY: I think you've done a good job covering it.

ALLUM: Yeah. Yeah. Sounds like you have researched your questions pretty well.

NADOLSKY: I really don't have anything to add. (Prichard: Okay.)

ALLUM: I don't either.

end of interview