

This transcript is of an interview with James M. Acheson conducted by Susan Abbott-Jamieson. It is for the Society for Applied Anthropology Oral History Project done in partnership with the Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky. Prof. Acheson is Professor of Anthropology and Marine Sciences at the University of Maine and is nationally recognized as an authority in fisheries and marine anthropology. Susan Abbott-Jamieson is a senior scientist with the Fisheries Service of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

A short bio-statement and bibliography is located at:

<http://www2.umaine.edu/anthropology/Acheson.html>

[Begin Tape 1, Side 1]

ABBOTT-JAMISON: I am with James M. Acheson. We are in Bangor, Maine, and the date is Sunday, February the 13th, 2005. Okay...Jim, could you just start out maybe by telling me a little bit about your early life, your background, your family background and . . .

ACHESON: My early life and background, sure . . . well, I was born in New Hampshire, so I'll never be a true person from the state of Maine, I only came here when I was three months old and that leaves a scar, as you know.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yes.

ACHESON: And...my father was in the hotel business, so up until the time I was about four years old, I grew up in hotels, which was a great place for kids.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah.

ACHESON: I mean you could ride on the laundry carts and they'd take you up and down in the elevator. I had this (Clears throat) kind of migration route where I'd go every day, out to, out to see the baker, and then down to see the butcher, and the bell boy and so on and so forth, so I had a wonderful time. And...but he ended up owning some hotels, here in the state of Maine, they were small commercial hotels, and...I went to school in Augusta, Maine, and...I went to Coney High School, and...then as an undergraduate, I started out at Tufts University and transferred over to Colby College, and...I graduated there with high honors and things like that, had a little anthropology at that time, but not a whole lot, but it was something that I kind of, you know, thought I'd like, and...so I was in the service...

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Which branch?

ACHESON: In the Coast Guard, and I always liked boats . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yes.

ACHESON: . . . to be perfectly honest with you, so I had a chance to, to go there for six months and . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: What year was that?

ACHESON: That was . . . that was 1960, no, '61.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: And did you get a commission, or were you in . . .

ACHESON: No, no, I, I just wanted to get in and out, and that was one of the smartest things that I ever did.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Okay.

ACHESON: It wasn't anything that I liked and I happen to serve with a very nice bunch of guys, who I still, still actually correspond with them.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Okay, okay.

ACHESON: . . .crazily enough, but (Clears throat), no I was in there. We had to serve eight years total, but the, the active duty time was actually six months, and the rest of the time I was in the reserve, and...that wasn't all that bad.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Where were you stationed during that time?

ACHESON: Well, actually I was...at...at...Cape May, New Jersey...

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Okay.

ACHESON: . . .for a while, and then we had to do, you know, ha . . . a month active duty. So I was on the USS Nunivak and I was on the Eastland for a while, and . . . then . . . then . . . I was on the Port Boston, went to Yorktown one, one time. I went, went to Burnt Island, Maine once, and . . . so I would serve on, on ships and you know, places around, and . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: What was your rating?

ACHESON: Oh, I never got . . . I think above seaman [Chuckling]. This was not something I, I had, you know, put a lot of time, I am afraid [Chuckles – Abbot-Jamison], because you know, I was in grad school, and, and that, that came first, so the Coast

Guard wasn't anything that absorbed a lot of energy and time. And . . . so I graduated in 1960 and didn't really know exactly what I wanted to do.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Was this your undergraduate program degree?

ACHESON: Undergraduate degree, right. And . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: From Colby College.

ACHESON: Yeah, from Colby, and . . . so I went in the Coast Guard. At the end of my service time . . . we got discharged about May 5th, as I remember, and we had, had some money, so it had to get spent. So we went to Washington, we went to Pittsburgh, we, we went to Miami, went to New York, and I got home, I think it was about June 1st, and I think I had about fifty cents in my pocket and, and I think I had to borrow some money over and above that. We had a wonderful time though. So I was applying, you know, for grad school, about, about the middle of July or so, and I thought I'd try anthropology, I'm not quite certain why, it just [noises]

ABBOTT-JAMISON: One course.

ACHESON: One, One course. But I'd had a whole lot of biology and . . . I had a whole lot of sociology and of course those overlap rather heavily with . . . anthropology. So I, I applied you know, at the University of Colorado, and they accepted me, and . . . they not only accepted me, but they gave me a TA. Well that, that decided it, so I went out there and . . . but the University of Colorado was very, very heavily into archaeology and, you know, and also the biological aspects of anthropology, and that, that's what that they really had. It wasn't that they had no social cultural anthropologists but . . . I quickly came to the conclusion that I didn't want to be an archaeologist. I didn't want to be a . . . you know, biological anthropologist, and I was interested in social cultural. So I started to apply to various places. And I applied, you know, at the University of Chicago and Rochester, which was a brand new program at that time, and Pittsburgh, and I got into all three. I guess there was another one there, there too, the University of North Carolina, and . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Chapel Hill?

ACHESON: Yeah, yeah, and . . . Rochester bought me, they came through with a three-year NDEA, you know . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Sure.

ACHESON: . . . fellowship, and . . . so I went there.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: And so what year was that?

ACHESON: That was, let me see, about '62, I guess it was.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: '62, okay.

ACHESON: Yeah, because I was '61-'62 at Colorado, '62 . . . on, at Rochester, and . . . I had a whole lot of work in economics at that time, and the economists were also in the same place, Harkness Hall and . . . I got to know them. So, I've been, you know, specializing in economic anthropology ever since, and I think if I were going to do it all, all over again. I think I'd might take two, you know, PhDs, one in economics, one in anth . . . I got quite enthusiastic about the stuff, and there is a lot to be done, a huge amount to be done, and . . . so I, I've been there, my PhD fieldwork was in Mexico . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Where, where in M . . .

ACHESON: In the state of Michoacan . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Michoacan.

ACHESON: . . . a little town called Cuanajo which isn't very far from Tzintzuntzan . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yes.

ACHESON: . . . where George Foster went, and . . . so I did, did a year there. In fact, it was a little more than a year, and . . . then I got a job here at the University of Maine, and . . . are you . . . you know, my degree came out in 1970, I got the degree, but I started working here ABD . . . and . . . so I started working at the University of Maine in 1968. In 1970 or so, I got working on the coast, at that, it was the labor . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Could . . .

ACHESON: . . . Department . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: . . . could you back up just for a moment? Who, who was your major professor at Rochester? Who was on your project?

ACHESON: He was a man named Robert Merrill, and . . . extremely unusual guy. He started out as a physicist, very strong, you know . . . science, science background. Then he took . . . a degree in anthropology from the University of Chicago. Then he decided he was interested in economics, so he took an economics degree from Chicago. He was the first editor of 'Economic Development and Cultural Change.'

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Oh, okay.

ACHESON: And . . . quite an unusual person, and . . . I learned a good deal from him. He was one of these unusual people who really had the capacity to help graduate students start to do it themselves.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yes.

ACHESON: And . . . he wasn't, wasn't so good at standing up there and expounding in front of a class. He didn't have a lot of jokes or anything, but . . . as far as, as really showing students how to, how to do it. He was, he was very good, I never really realized how good until I saw what other people got, but I used to go in his office sometimes, two or three times a semester, and we could start at one o'clock in the afternoon, and he filled every blackboard and I, I wrote, and wrote, and wrote, and wrote. And at six thirty his wife is on the phone, asking him to come home for dinner. I mean he was one of these, these guys that did . . . and . . . so he was, he was, he was quite good. He had, had a huge influence on me. The other person I think who really did is F. G. Bailey who had a course in, you know, in political anthropology from, and . . . I had been interested in the economic and the, and the political aspects of anthropology ever since, and . . . so I came up here in 1968, and I got the degree in 1970, and you know how the first two years are, teaching, and then I was . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yes.

ACHESON: . . . working on my degree at the same time . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Right, yeah.

ACHESON: . . . the first two years were pretty hectic, but in the summer of, of 1970, I got hired on the labor department grant.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Okay.

ACHESON: And . . . we were doing an unemployment study of Maine lobstermen, and . . . because at that time, you know, the National Marine Fisheries Service was interested in imposing certain kinds of rules and regulations or they thought they were, but really didn't have the capacity to do that at that time. But . . . they, they were interested and the question was, if they threw a whole lot of, of these people out of work, you know, where would they go? But I got, I got to interviewing a whole lot of, you know, people in the lobster industry and got kind of interested in certain things, most especially the territorial system, and I, I, you know, published two or three articles, one of them came out in *Natural History* in 1972 on this, on this topic. I found myself the world's expert for a complete lack of any competition [Phone ringing sound]—Hey, Anne?

THIRD PARTY: Yes, I will answer it.

ACHESON: Do you want to get that?

THIRD PARTY: Yes, I'll get it (unintelligible).

ACHESON: And . . . then about eighteen months later, I was, I got hired, you know, by the fisheries service . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah.

ACHESON: . . . down there . . . '74, '75.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Okay.

ACHESON: And . . . so I, I spent some time . . . in Washington, well, probably sixteen months total.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: So, why did you, you were, still had your position here . . .

ACHESON: Yes, yes.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: . . . in Maine? You took a . . .

ACHESON: I had a leave.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: . . . you took a, you took a leave of absence, so, for about sixteen months?

ACHESON: Right. I went down there in June . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Okay.

ACHESON: . . . '74 and came back in August, I guess it was, you know, 1975. I arrived when the Watergate scandal was coming to its, you know, fruition, so. I used to walk down you know, down, you know, Wisconsin every night, went over, you know . . . you know, by the White House in the executive office building. You could always tell if there was a fantastic revelation going to take place, because you could, could see the CBS van backed up to the west wing of the White House.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Of the White house, yeah.

ACHESON: That was the first clue that something was going on, something did go on and I thought . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Where were the offices located then?

ACHESON: The offices were up on Whitehaven which is off of, you know, Wisconsin Avenue . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Okay.

ACHESON: . . . just before Wisconsin meets, you know, with Mass [Massachusetts] Avenue.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Okay.

ACHESON: But . . . and . . . just a little, you know, north of I ["eye"] Street.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Okay.

ACHESON: That very, very short street. Nobody has ever heard of it, except people who, who know Wisconsin quite well. But I, I had an interesting time there, and . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Has anyone been in that a . . . there before you (unintelligible)?

ACHESON: No, I was the first anthropologist . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: You were the first.

ACHESON: . . . the . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Okay.

ACHESON: Yeah . . . I'm not quite sure I got, why I got hired, except I was hired by a man named Schaefer, Dick Schaefer, who was head of the . . . office, at, at that time it was F-3, which was fisheries management, and there were five of us in that office at that time, and . . . so there was Schaefer who was the, the chief, a man named Tom Leedy who was a general staff man, and you need those in Washington, somebody who really knows the pigeon holes and the paperwork, and the rules and regulations and the way to go with things, and then there was a lawyer there, Denton Moore.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Denton Moore.

ACHESON: And . . . he was in that office and I got a real . . . interest in some of the legal aspects of . . . international law, you know, aspects of resource management. Then there was another guy, I was trying to think of his name, and I can see him. He I didn't know as well. Those were the three people who I knew, and there were, as I say, five of us, and there were three or four secretaries, but . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah.

ACHESON: . . . they, they were secretaries, though.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah. So . . .

ACHESON: So that was, that was . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: . . . so you didn't, you don't know why, why Dick decided to (unintelligible) . . .

ACHESON: Well he decided that he was head of the . . . he was working in this state federal program.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Okay.

ACHESON: And . . . that was a, the first time that really the . . . NMFS [National Marine Fisheries Service] was going to work very, very closely with the states.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Oh, okay.

ACHESON: And . . . so that, I think all of the sudden he began to see that some of the people problems is they call them were . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Uh-huh.

ACHESON: . . . important, and . . . and I, I had that certain kind of reputation up here . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Right.

ACHESON: . . . in the northeast and so he, he decided he'd do it. And that was a one year appointment and temporary and, but at the time, in the spring, when they asked me to stay on, I really had kind of a hard time turning it [Chuckling] down, you know, to be honest with you, because . . . it was full time job and . . . you know, in the, in the service and in the, in, in the fisheries service at a time when some interesting things were happening.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Right.

ACHESON: . . . very, very interesting things that happened. The big thing that we were doing all that year was the state federal program, which was really an ASMFC program [Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission]..

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Hum, okay.

ACHESON: And, as you know, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Service . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah.

ACHESON: . . . you know, commission was formed to be as a contact to the states and formed in 1942, and then it was modified in '59, and then it was modified again about 1990-'92, or so, and . . . but this, this state . . . you know, federal program was the one . . . about we were really working with at that time. And the basic idea was to, to, to, to get all of the rules and the regulations at . . . the same in between the states. So in lobster management which I was, I was concerned with, the idea was to get, you know, all the

New England states and you know, New York, and New Jersey and so on, so forth, you know, to agree on about three things. One that we were going to have a three and a half inch minimum measure. And, and secondly there were going to be rules against exploiting bearing female egg, egged females, and then there weren't going to be any selling of lobster pot, or lobster meat because obviously you could disguise undersize lobsters if you, you know, had the shells off them.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah.

ACHESON: And . . . (Clears throat), so those were the, the three things and it seemed to make sense, you know, for the feds to have everybody with the same, same rules. So that was one of the primary things that we, we pushed, you know, in that year. But, I've never really quite understood exactly what the relationship was between the ASMFC which was the state compact and, and, and, and the MA, NMFS . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah.

ACHESON: . . . which was obviously . . . federal. And I asked people that, you know, about this, and they said, "well the ASMFC is one of those interesting kind of intermediate programs, some place between the feds and the state and, and there really hasn't been a lot of work on these things done," and there hadn't been at that time.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah.

ACHESON: So, he was, he was one of the major things that we, we pushed, how to get uniform rules in between the, the states, and we had some money to bribe . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah.

ACHESON: . . . bribe the states.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah, it always helps.

ACHESON: And . . . yes, and . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: How . . .

ACHESON: . . . there really . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: How successful do you think the effort was at that time?

ACHESON: Oh it wasn't at that time at all. With regards to lobster management . . . Maine was our focus, because Maine had a higher . . . as you know, minimum size of the . . . New Hampshire and the state of Massachusetts and also Rhode Island, which meant that those states could sell undersized lobsters, or lobsters which were illegal in Maine could be sold, you know, by those states. So one of the things that would happen is,

certain number of lobsters that were caught in Maine waters would find their way into New Hampshire and sold there, and . . . so that Maine was all, all for this ASMFC and this state federal program, because they really wanted to have all the states with an equal . . . size limit and . . . Maine all, had a, had a strictly enforced, you know, prohibition against taking egged females and so on and so forth, and . . . so you know, the state of Maine was all, all . . . all, you know, for this. The other states were not, because it meant that they had to bring up their, their size limit, and that meant that they were going to be at the same kind of disadvantage, you know, selling their small lobsters as the state of Maine was. So there was a lot of foot dragging and this went on for two, three, four years and, then of course, in the year I was there, they had a very, very large thing that was happening, was planning, you know, for the FCMA [Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976].

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yes.

ACHESON: And . . . that was, that was the big thing. And that was happening right down the hall, on the third floor of Whitehaven One, and . . . the guy who was in charge of that was Bill Rice . . . from the University of Washington, and he had a sidekick who I used to ride, ride the bus with, but I cannot remember the sidekick's name to save my own soul. He had a great big bushy beard, a very nice guy, and every once in a while, he'd kind of hint at a few things that were happening with regard to, you know, the FCMA, and the way this was coming along. But they, you know, kept us under wraps quite, quite well because they were long negotiations . . . at that time, I mean, people coming in from all the states and begging for the stuff and the other thing and, and . . . so . . . we didn't really find what, what, what specifically was going to be in that bill, until sometime around February, I would say, you know, the year I was there. And then it went to the congress and . . . there was a house version of the bill that came out, which was H.R. something or other, and I can't remember. Then the, the, it went you know, the senate . . . and, and the senate version was S-ninet . . . S-ninety-four-two-sixty-five. And that is the version that ultimately really became the FCMA, I mean, and, and they had, they had a conference between people . . . in the house and, and in the senate. But it was the, the senate version that was primary, you know, kind of a template for what we think of now as the Fisheries Conservation and Management Act, and . . . that was an interesting process to watch, I used to go up on the hill, when I had some work at the Library of Congress up there, and . . . I used to go over there every once in a while, watching the debates on, on things, and that was quite interesting. But, but the real, real work in the congress was done in a conference, and you never did quite find completely why they did exactly, you know, what they did but, that was the other very, very large thing what was happening in the year, the year I was there. And once the FCMA went through, or were going to go through, it was going to recognize that this state federal program was going to be clipped and . . . that would give, you know, control over lobster management and a whole lot of . . . you know, from the three miles out to two hundred miles, would go to the federal government, and they had a regional council system, and . . . so anyway, those were the, the two large things that happened in that, that year, and, and they were quite, quite large. There really hasn't been anything, I think, that happened . . . in the fisheries service that quite takes the same place as the FCMA. That,

that really was the legislation that gave the federal government power to, you know, manage all of the marine resources from three miles out to two hundred miles. Prior to that time you had, had some state rules, but the federal government really didn't have authority to do, to do too much.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: No.

ACHESON: It was armed with nothing more than gentle persuasion and facts, which every once in a while the states would (unintelligible).

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah, yeah.

ACHESON: And you had ITNA, of course . . . The International Treaty for the Northwest Atlantic. But by the early 1970s, it was pretty well . . . understood that it failed.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: That's when the Canada and . . .

ACHESON: That was with the twelve signatories . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Oh, okay, it was just across the North Atlantic . . .

ACHESON: . . . the International Convention for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries, or the Fisheries of the Northwest Atlantic.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah.

ACHESON: And . . . and the United States was in that, Canada, West Germany, Poland, Spain, Portugal, France . . . East Germany, Russia . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Iceland?

ACHESON: . . . The Soviet Union . . . twelve signatories and who broke down on enforcement issues. It had, had rules, you had a quota . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Oh.

ACHESON: . . . and people were supposed to abide by the quota, and, then it became quite obvious that they weren't, like Spain, for example, and . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yes.

ACHESON: . . . there wasn't much that you could do about it.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Right, right.

ACHESON: If you have a rule and it's not an enforceable rule for all practical purposes, you, you don't have a rule, and that's what, what happened there. But, the PFCMA, I think, along most of the Atlantic coast is met of the kind of interest that, you know, in other stuff, met by the industry with . . . more than a little acceptance. They were very, very interested in the . . . you know, in the FCMA and the reason was . . . this was going to give, you know, the federal government of the United States control over up to, you know, two hundred miles, and . . . that was going to allow the federal government to chase all of those foreign fleets who were wreaking the stocks, and they were at that time. The idea that it would also give the federal government of the United States the power to enforce rules on the domestic fishing industry didn't hit them as well, that sense immediately, you know, what happened on that at the time, and the results, as you know, a tremendous amount of conflict . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Right.

ACHESON: . . . and especially here in New England . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Right.

ACHESON: . . . where the process . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Why do you, why do you think more, do you think it's more in New England? You said, especially here in New England?

ACHESON: I think so.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: . . . then in other regions in the country. . .

ACHESON: Yes, yes.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: To what do you attribute that?

ACHESON: (Sighs) First of all, you got more fisheries, the New England Fisheries Management Council manages twenty-one species, and then it's generally a small boat fishery, so that you've got hundreds of guys in this, in this industry and it isn't like for example, you know, the tuna industry on the west coast, you're dealing with corporate presidents and only a few of them, and for reasons that I, I can only make a stab at, the acceptance of the federal government, federal management, just isn't accepted here as it is elsewhere, and I think, part of that, are the ethnic groups involved. You got Italians, in Gloucester, and Portuguese, you know, in New Bedford, and . . . peasants and, act like peasants on (unintelligible). The government is out to do you no good, and . . . you really want to be quite, you know, suspicious of the government because everyone knows it's controlled by a bunch of you know, city people and, and . . . I mean you've heard it all, I'm sure . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yes, sure.

ACHESON: . . . that stuff, and . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Sure.

ACHESON: . . . from Banfield and Sydel Silverman.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah.

ACHESON: It's all (unintelligible) with . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yes.

ACHESON: And . . . I think there is something in this . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Uh-huh.

ACHESON: . . . I really do, and the idea that they might strongly influence our legislation. Not really seem to come some proof of it, and (right?) here in the state of Maine and the lobsters. You don't have any lobster legislation at all which really, really hasn't been put forward, and lobbied for, you know, by the industry, and . . . the fishermen here have had an enormous influence on the legislation, and then the perspective that's good legislation and it works and they like it, and if you break their laws, you got trouble. That's an unusual attitude [Laughing].

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Right, yes, yes. So when you finished your . . . year in Washington, did they then bring in anyone else after you?

ACHESON: Yeah, the person who they brought in was Raoul Anderson and he was at the University of Newfoundland, and I understood that he was going to be there as, you know, my replacement permanently, but somehow he, he just seemed to stay, stay the summer, and . . . I never understood exactly, you know, what happened there, mainly I thought it was a permanent job, Raoul may have thought it was a summer job, but he didn't stay too awfully long. Then, Peter Fricke got hired, but not immediately. I think there was a year or two hiatus.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Mike Orbach . . .

ACHESON: And then, you know, Mike Orbach, you know, came in, but I can't remember when.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Okay.

ACHESON: I would, I would guess sometimes around, oh, 1980 or so.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Okay.

ACHESON: And . . . possibly you know, a little earlier.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Okay.

ACHESON: And you've always, always had an anthropologist ever since.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yes [Laughter – Abbott-Jamison], right. So you left then and came back to Orono.

ACHESON: Back to the University of Maine, right.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Okay, and so, has your entire career since then been essentially here? Though, you . . .

ACHESON: Well, yeah, but now I've been elsewhere on leaves, and so on . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah.

ACHESON: . . . and so forth. I was in MIT for a year, Washington University in Saint Louis, then . . . out in Indiana University, 2000 and 2001, and . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: That was quite recent.

ACHESON: Quite recent.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Quite recently, yes.

ACHESON: That was the best leave I ever had.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Okay.

ACHESON: That was, that was good.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Why, why, why do you say that?

ACHESON: Well, I was in the Center for Economic . . . pardon me . . . I, well that was at the University of Chicago . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Okay.

ACHESON: . . . I was, at the Center for Economic Development and Cultural Change. No, I was . . . in . . . in an outfit out, out there, which was called a workshop and, you know, political field in policy analysis, and . . . and the [unintelligible] run that . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yes they have.

ACHESON: . . . they have about seventy-five other individuals in the university and around the world from several different disciplines. It's political science, and economics, and psychology, and mathematics, and history, and anthropology, and it's a wonderful place, it's an absolutely wonderful place, and they're doing social science, resource management stuff right on that cutting edge.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Okay.

ACHESON: And . . . you go to the Monday afternoon seminar, and you know, you're going to hear somebody who is really doing something in that field . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Okay.

ACHESON: . . . and . . . then there were about three other seminars, but they've always got . . . something, you know, going on, two or three, you know, seminars. So I went to the, I went to seminars, and I had a class, they, they had a class you had to have, Institutional Analysis. That was fine, I learned a lot, namely, you know, political science, and . . . I never had any poly-sci, so it was my first time really, really going through a whole lot of, far more books and articles, you know, on the cutting edge of political science. So I learned a good deal, but most of the time there, I just worked on my book.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Okay.

ACHESON: And I'd just hold up on the second floor . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah.

ACHESON: . . . over in an empty office, and then, and . . . there were two or three, one guy was, you know, (unintelligible) he was from, you know, Korea, there were two Chinese students, and . . . and I think I was the only, only American [Chuckling] there, and we all got to be friends and, and . . . but . . . they didn't bother me too much, and . . . I got a lot done. I started in on that book September 3rd, the first draft was done April 28th, I remember.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Which of your . . . writings, do you think have been the most influential? From your point of view, which ones do you think are the most important?

ACHESON: Well, I learned quite, quite early in life that you have a, you know, does not know. There was a thing that I put in, the Human Organization . . .

[End Tape 1, Side 1]

[Begin Tape 1, Side 2]

ACHESON: . . . you know, kind of revealed the wisdom at that time that common property resources were a problem, and you had Hardin who was arguing that the only way to manage it was kind of top down, maybe autocratic rule by the, by the government. You had a bunch of common property economists Scott, Gordon, (Shawn?) and (Carbunken?) these, these people, who were essentially arguing that the problem was a lack of private property rights, and the solution was in fact to have, having no property rights, and . . . what I did in that article was really show there is a third way, namely that you could have local level management . . . that can work quite, quite well, and . . . that was a sort of theme that we rode for about ten years.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Right, right. And you think . . .

ACHESON: And etiquette and . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: . . . do you think that eventually . . . they had influence people's thinking about ways to approach the management of the fisheries?

ACHESON: I . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: You know, there is a lot of talk now about ITQs, and . . .

ACHESON: Yeah, yeah, right.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: . . . you know, and so, it's essentially turning property, turning it into property rights, and . . .

ACHESON: Yeah, right, right.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Clearly there is a wave . . .

ACHESON: Right, right, right.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: . . . of activity going on in that direction.

ACHESON: Exactly. I think there was general recognition after a while, it was very, very slow to come, that everything that these fishermen wanted, it is not all foolishness.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Okay.

ACHESON: And at some of the local level management, some of the local, you know, knowledge stuff is not all that far, far wrong, but that these people would not really, and there was an attitude, I think . . . in the . . . in the NMFS, and I think you find it in an awful lot of management agencies, that the fishermen are just selfish greedy people who over-fish and put themselves really out of business just as fast as they possibly can, and they haven't got any interest in any kind of management, and they, they aren't interested in any kinds of rules and think all rules are going to violate them, or else even worse, go

to the legislature and you know, get some rule to nullify what needs to be done and if they can't do that, they'll innovate their way around it. And if that won't work, they'll just disobey it . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah.

ACHESON: . . . and I think one of the things that we've done, a bunch of us, we pointed out that this isn't true under a lot of circumstances. And I think we, we push the local level stuff, and the co-management stuff, you know, the Canadians that worked the co-management stuff, and the United States we have as much, it's up here in the State of Maine, where, where we had, have had an influence, especially with the, with the lobster, you know, the zone management law, which . . . frankly there were two or three of us who (unintelligible) . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Right.

ACHESON: . . . you know, and . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Okay, and who else worked with you on that?

ACHESON: What's this?

ABBOTT-JAMISON: On the zone management law, who else was involved there?

ACHESON: No, well, I was part of a, you know, committee . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: (unintelligible).

ACHESON: . . . but . . . you know, from the university, was Jim Wilson, and Pat Lide from the Maine Lobstermen's Association, and . . . three or four people of that kind . . . Jim what's his name, that dealt with the Lobstermen's Association, and . . . and the commissioner who was Robin (Aldin?) at that time.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Oh yes, uh-huh.

ACHESON: And . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Well, it sounds Jim like from . . . almost from the beginning, you've involved yourself in applied . . . anthropology applied . . .

ACHESON: Oh yes.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: . . . activity, you've been outside . . .

ACHESON: Right.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: . . . the academy. Now, during all of these years, there also has been a debate that's gone on about the relationship between applied anthropology and anthropology in the academy and there, there certainly are members of our discipline who think applied anthropology is not what one should be doing and others who see it as essential.

ACHESON: Yeah.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: So, over the years, how have you responded to that argument?

ACHESON: I just never have had a problem.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Oh.

ACHESON: Because . . . very fast, I realized that it was a silly issue, a silly question. Plus, you get involved, you know, you start out to read a whole lot of basic, you know, theoretical social science, and you get some ideas and that kind of swaps over in how, how rules ought to be propagated in certain kind of practical applied, you know, management things, and you tried the practical and applied, you know, management things, and sometimes they work but often times they don't. And that feeds back to the theory. Then all of a sudden you, you kind of have a different take on certain, you know, theoretical issues and what you want, what, you know, can't work.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Right.

ACHESON: And . . . so I just don't, don't see any hard and fast divide at all. One is a kind of test for the other, and we tried out a lot of things here, talked about an awful lot of things and sometimes you're brought up quite short by the industry, industry people: "well, we tried that once, but you're really talking about is, and it went to hell in a wheelbarrow because of such and such, so-and-so, and . . . often times right.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah.

ACHESON: So, I never have understood this, this kind of problem. But you're right, right from the start, when you've gotten involved, in a, in a whole lot of, you know, fisheries management plans, and implementation of legislation, and helping industries formulate certain bills and rules, and helping out some people in the legislature and appearing before legislative committee, always a stomach-churning experience, and . . . gets you right there.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Mm-mm. What was your, what has been your impression over the years of the way the management institutions have related to you, as a social scientist coming in?

ACHESON: Well . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: You know that you're dominated by people with other disciplinary backgrounds . . .

ACHESON: Oh yes . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: . . . with other priorities . . .

ACHESON: Oh yeah!

ABBOTT-JAMISON: . . . primarily in other marine, you know . . .

ACHESON: Yeah.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: . . . specializations so.

ACHESON: Well, I didn't, didn't feel that, well, at the time I joined, you know, the NMFS, they clearly didn't know who I was, and what I could do, or what my background was. I remember the chief who was Dick Schaefer taking me around, around the agency in the first three or four days. And . . . you get, he explained I was an anthropologist, people around: "an anthropologist? why are you here? What could you possibly do?" So you explain. and it, it, hardly ever happens to me. But for once the right words you know, sprang to mind, and I said, "look . . . I'm over in the office of fisheries management, and fisheries management is about passing rules, and the rules are for the people to obey, you know, not the lobsters and the clams. And you have to find rules that people are in fact going to go along with, and support, and they are not going to fight. Otherwise, in fact, you don't have a workable management plan." I mean, I didn't quite frame it that way, but that, that was the idea, and . . . and they understood that [Chuckling].

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Okay.

ACHESON: Usually somebody asked me something like that and I could think of the right answer three hours later, but, but the great, great ideas came to me on that occasion, and . . . well, even so, they, they really didn't have any idea who we were or what, what you could do. They thought . . . one, one, one thing were you were a people-people, so you know all about people, and the idea that you might have to do some field work and there is a difference between what a psychologist knows about people and what an economist knows and what a historian knows, and what an anthropologist knows, that did it, may resolve people-people . . . and wasn't worth too much you could learn what people-people do in the maximum of two weeks . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah.

ACHESON: . . . mainly different. I [Chuckling] remember, one time . . . there was this guy he'd been on the phone, he said, "I need to see you." He said, "I'm working with people out on the west coast in the tuna industry." That was his name, Tuna Bob, and . . .

. so he, it was the expertise in the agency, you know, west coast tuna. For some reason, they put him to work on the management of the blue fin, you know, on the east coast, so he came up with some rules. So he came to see me in the office and he says, (Loud tone of voice) “you know, people-people, and I am a fish people, and what’s the matter with these rules and they’re fine for the blue fin tuna?” I said, “well . . . do you know, what’s the matter with it?” He said, (Resumes loud tone of voice) “that people over at Stud’s office and Kennedy’s office, and when they find out who wrote these rules they’re going to kill me.” “What’s the matter?” He says, (Loud tone of voice) “I don’t know, you’re people-people, you know all about this, you tell me.” So I started asking him a few questions. “How many people would these people, with these rules, will throw out of work, you got to complete, you know, your moratorium”

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yes.

ACHESON: (Real loud tone of voice) “Jesus Christ, I hope it throws all of them out of work, the blue fin tuna is over it’s limit,” [Laughing] you know. He says, so . . . you could, you could began to see what the, what the problem was, and . . . “now, you be quiet. You don’t say you’ve known this or anything else.” But . . . I, I suggested doing what any social scientist would do that maybe we might want to interview the people in the agen . . . in the industry, and find out from their perspective, you know, what was the matter, and how they, how they sold the stocks and what kinds of rules, if any, they’d accept, and did they really understand the need for rules and regulations and what kind they, they might possibly support. “Well, we ain’t got time for that.” [Laughing] .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Well, it changed a little bit, but not completely [Laughter – Abbott-Jamison]

ACHESON: No, no, no, I’m sure. But I’m sure over the course of time you made some inroads.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yes.

ACHESON: Still.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah.

ACHESON: And really, the only kind of social scientist who don’t have much experience with were economists, and that was bad, because those economists all of the sudden have way too much influence, and . . . they were talking about blasphemy, things like, limited entry and . . . at that time that was an anathema, people in the fisheries though, they just didn’t want any kinds of rules concerning limited entry.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: When you say, in the fishery service, you mean the, the managers.

ACHESON: Yeah, yeah.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Oh really.

ACHESON: They . . . and the biologists, everybody. That is in the rule on the fish, or concerning the fish . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yes.

ACHESON: . . . if it's a rule concerning the people . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Right.

ACHESON: . . . I doesn't really have any influence at all on the exploitation rights, that's the idea, it was a brand new idea . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Okay.

ACHESON: . . . because ten years afterwards, the idea of limited entry, you know, caught on and now you can't, you can't manage to get them off it, but, but . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: No.

ACHESON: . . . and . . . then at that time, they were talking some quotas and boy they didn't want a quota system. Now ITQs [individual transferable quotas] are the thing.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yes they are.

ACHESON: So that . . . things have come the full circle . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Right.

ACHESON: . . . you know, especially on one-ended conference of ITQs.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: For instance.

ACHESON: Well, if you're going to do ITQs, it means that some one has to set the TAC [total allowable catch] . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yes.

ACHESON: Someone has got to set, for example, go to allow the catch.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Catch, right.

ACHESON: And . . . I guess you could do that, if you really had, had the models right and you wanted to constantly bring them up to date with an awful lot of (data?) find

(unintelligible) information. But . . . we don't have that information. So, consequently the postponement that they're going to get is in fact, you know, specifying the quota. And then, once you specified the quota, then you have a problem with who's going to get it? How're you going to divide this up? Are you going to have a lottery, are you going to have historical allocation? I mean, how are you going to do this? The large social problem, it strikes me, is that every time we tried this, this has happened in Iceland, you know, New Zealand, every place else, you get tremendous concentration of the industry, and . . . you know, do you really want to put a lot of small boats out of business and concentrate the industry in, Augusta, or some place in that country and . . . I think there is a very, very strong argument that, in fact to keep the small boats in the, in the industry. So those are the three, three problems . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Right.

ACHESON: . . . I, I see, and, you know, number and number three that I find are the most important.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: What . . . I, I'd like for you to talk a little bit, if you could, about the growth of fisheries anthropology. Now when you started in your career . . .

ACHESON: Yeah.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: . . . and got interested in, and, and very quickly got involved in doing fisheries-related research . . .

ACHESON: Yeah.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: . . . and then into the management type began to explore that in your applied work . . . what is your . . . view of how that area of interest has developed in anthropology?

ACHESON: Well, I, I haven't really paid a whole lot of attention, interestingly (unintelligible) . . . and then I'm quite surprised to learn that junior people saw me as one of the founders of the field and then and somebody who was instrumental in actually starting this, but . . . it's true, when I got going in the very early, early seventies, there weren't, weren't a whole lot of people. The people who were doing it, I think were quite established, were the people . . . in . . . you know . . . up in Newfoundland. There was . . . you know, Raoul Anderson, and Styles and Charlie Moss and . . . let's see who else was, was there a lot. There was a Norwegian guy, but they've had all that whole series of books, social and economic research . . . Firestone is there . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Paulson, was that the . . .

ACHESON: German?

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Paulson, Paulson?

ACHESON: Yes, yes.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: He was act . . .

ACHESON: He's . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: . . . he is an Icelander . . .

ACHESON: . . . he is an Iceland, but, but, he wasn't, he wasn't the one . . . who was . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Oh, okay.

ACHESON: . . . who was . . . at Newfoundland, It was Cato Wadel.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Okay.

ACHESON: Yeah. And these were the people who, who were, I thought established and then I realized that they'd really only been up to this for about two, three, or four, four years, that's all, and they weren't, weren't really all that established . . . at all. As I look back on it, there is a person who really, you know, got a lot of ideas started was . . . a man who did his work in East Africa, and I can't think of his name [A. H. J. Prins]. He wrote a book called 'Sailing from Lamu'.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Sailing from Lamu.

ACHESON: Yeah. And . . . I met his son once.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Was a Brit, or was he an American?

ACHESON: I think he was an American, but I'm not absolutely positive of that.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah, I'm not sure who that is.

ACHESON: I can't think of his, his to save my, my soul.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Well, anyway.

ACHESON: I've got it in the bibliography. But that, that came out in the, in the sixties, and that would, that was really, had a lot of themes in there, but there again we sort of followed out . . . ever since, I think, and . . . then . . . let's see, in the early 1980s or so . . . I got together, you know, with a couple of people, more specifically Bonnie McCay and Fikret Berkes, and Dan Feeney and we put out two or three things, and . . . then we had, we had, had the volume that came out of the University of Arizona, you know, '*The Question of the Commons*,' and . . . that was in, it stimulated a lot of ideas too, but even so, you didn't have a whole lot of people working for the fisheries service, so, you know

. . . Peter Fricke was in there, office there . . . you know, Mike Orbach and, and that was about it. So it really didn't grow all that fast . . . through the, through the '70s and the '80s, at least. I think it was well up into the '90s when, when they really, really started to hire some people.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: What do you see happening now with the field?

ACHESON: Huh . . . well I see the same, same, same kind of split happening in the maritime field, that I think is happening in anthropology as a whole, mainly that are certain, certain people, I'm sure very well meaning people who are doing an awful lot of symbolic anthropology, I'm talking about for example, and on Gisli Palsson . . . who used to, used to do a whole lot of . . . you know, kinds of empirical work is now talking about imagery in Iceland and so on and so forth, and I hope this, this succeeds, but . . . I think that when you really stop and think of all the effort gets done, or put into, into these hermeneutic symbolic studies, over the course of the past twenty-five years, you got an entire generation of anthropologists trained in this field. But the result really hasn't been hopeful, and I hope that we can continue . . . a . . . harder more scientific, more empirical, you know, approach. Cause they're really starting to get to know something about that, I mean the people who have been studying, you know, studying the common pool, common pool resources and how to manage them, have really learned something, and . . . you can certainly see that in the workshop in political theory and policy analysis, at Indiana. And . . . here, here, I think is really rare that the real practical and, you know, theoretical advances have been made, and I hope that we don't . . . don't succumb to . . . if you want to do that kind of work, you got to work, you know, you have to learn, learn some economics, you got to learn a whole lot of oceanography, and, and, you know, biology, and . . . it's just a lot easier, I think for certain, certain, you know, younger people not to do that.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah.

ACHESON: I remember the first time that hit me. I had a student who I met, at Rutgers and had been working with Bonnie McCay, and then with another guy what's his name? (unintelligible) Pete (unintelligible) was her advisor. So she met me, I had several meetings and we were talking about fisheries and resource management, had a very, very nice, nice, you know, conversation. And then about a year afterwards she was in Time Magazine studying go-go dancers in bars in New York, and . . . so I happen to, you know, come across her again at several meetings and I asked her about this switching. "Seriously, you know, if you're really going to do, you know, ecological anthropology, you got to learn a lot of biology, and if you're gonna learn the biology you gotta learn some chemistry, and then gee, you can't read the chem without some math . . ."

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yes.

ACHESON: . . . that, that, that this is harder. So, I think that's part of the attraction of it.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

ACHESON: But that's where I see, see the basic problem. I, I think the . . . harder more empirical side of anthropology will get an awful lot of support from some practical management types, because I don't think there's going to be an awful lot of money to do fund . . . symbolic analysis in fisherman's dance in 17th . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Right.

ACHESON: . . . century Japan that [Laughter – Abbott-Jamison] I know, and it just isn't going to happen.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah.

ACHESON: And . . . so, I think that will level, tend to . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah.

ACHESON: . . . stem the tide some.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Well, do you think that that's happening throughout anthropology?

ACHESON: Oh! I think it's been the dominant theme for the past . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: No.

ACHESON: . . . ye . . . twenty years or so.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: No, no, I know the symbolic has, but do you think that there is, are signs of any movement back towards the more empirical . . . approach?

ACHESON: I don't know.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Do you see that going on (unintelligible)?

ACHESON: I don't know. There have been people who say they've seen the signs for a while. That goes back, you know, twenty years, twenty-five years, and . . . I've come to realize there is just a whole generation of anthropologists hemmed in, you know, symbolic anthropology that don't really know anything else and hence when they're going to get hired, that's what they're going to teach the students.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah, yeah.

ACHESON: So . . . I don't know.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: I can remember, I, I, hearing Jeff Johnson say on many occasions that . . . that there is a—I mean as you've pointed out, a whole generation who have no . . . background or training in quantitative . . .

ACHESON: Yeah.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: . . . methods, and, and are not really interested in getting it.

ACHESON: A horrifying mistake . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yes.

ACHESON: . . . but again, you know, the table really doesn't count, it's all stories, and . . . no, I was in one of those NSF . . . you know, methodology camps at the University of Florida where . . . Pertti Pelto is one of our . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yes.

ACHESON: . . . instructors and . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah.

ACHESON: . . . and Russ Bernard and . . . we had a wonderful time, but . . . I think they graduated about five to six, you know, groups and that was it, and . . . I don't know . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: They got through, now they're going again. Je . . . Jeff says they're doing it now at East Carolina.

ACHESON: Good, good.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah, yeah, they're still doing it.

ACHESON: Good.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: And they're . . . focusing . . .

ACHESON: Who is involved in that, Jeff?

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Jeff's still with the program, yeah.

ACHESON: This has an NSF funding?

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yes.

ACHESON: Good.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: You know it's two, it's two parts, now it's continued to see that it got funded.

ACHESON: Good, good (unintelligible).

ABBOTT-JAMISON: So it's still going on. I don't know what their application rate is, you know, how many they had to turn away, which is how many they're able to work in, but it's still is going on.

ACHESON: Yeah. I learned a good deal on my, and . . . they just crammed us full of stuff, you know.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: I know, yeah.

ACHESON: Three and a half weeks.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah, I did, I did one of the ones in Florida too, I was going to be the third round . . .

ACHESON: Yeah.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: . . . something like that. Well, what would you say are some of the . . . highlights of your career, or some particular . . .

ACHESON: Gee, I don't know. I mean it [Laughing] . . . I got a large NSF grant out of the RANN program . . . research project in national needs, back in the late seventies at, maybe it was three-hundred and fifty-thousand dollars I guess that was a huge amount of money at that time, and . . . we . . . we did a lot out of that, that grant. I did a lot of work on, on Maine and Maine's . . . fisheries, Maine's laws and so on and so forth, and that was an important one. I guess the two or three . . . fisheries books, summarized a good deal about, about what I know. *The Question of the Commons* . . . broke some new ground and *'The Lobster gangs of Maine,'* did as well, a little more popularized book, it seems to sell however, and . . . and a new book I think . . . is, is in, in a whole lot of ways, you know, the best of the bunch, and then, this, this is a very detailed, you know, study, probably isn't going to sell as well, but I think in the long run will have as much influence as anything does. With regard to the Latin American stuff, probably the *American Anthropologist* article that I . . . and it's called *Limited Good or Limited Goods*. It is really an attempt to move forward Foster's theory and concerned economic development . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Right.

ACHESON: . . . cultural change, and I don't think anything I have done in the Mexican scene has been as important as that. I'm hoping that some of the game theory stuff that I'm doing now with Roy Gardner will, you know, have a, have an impact but, that so

few anthropologists really, really, you know, know anything about game theory and that, and I'm a little concerned about that, I'm not sure of how far it will go.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Do you think it might influence other . . . for instance in, in sociology, or areas people have other more rigorous anthropological training . . .

ACHESON: Yeah, yeah.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: . . . that they would be more susceptible, or more open to . . .

ACHESON: Yeah, I think so. One of the eye openers for me was, fairly recently one of my colleagues went around with just hunting up who got, you know, quoted in the citations that you write?

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Right.

ACHESON: . . . and . . . we had some fairly well known, you know, individuals on the Maine faculty, and specially in archaeology and, you know . . . Jim Roscoe is very well known, for what's he's done out in Oceania, and Henry Munson, you know, in the Middle East and so on so forth, and I came out ahead of everybody, you know, you know, by a long shot. And the reason wasn't that I was of so much interest as an anthropologist, as I was, you know, a social scientist, and . . . I never, I guess I knew that . . . people in economics, and you know, biology and who read what I did, but I never thought I was that, at that level.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Mm-mm. That's very interesting.

ACHESON: Yeah.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: That's proof that it's been an interesting commentary on the effects of doing work as you have done, outside the academy and, and the kinds of more general issues you've been interested in.

ACHESON: And then also the interdisciplinary emphasis . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yes.

ACHESON: . . . in a lot of my work.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah.

ACHESON: I've been working with economists and people out of poli sci and . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah.

ACHESON: . . . fisheries, and fisheries biology, and oceanography for a long, long while, enough of them [Chuckling].

ABBOTT-JAMISON: A . . . well and you, also your background, your training is such that you have a lot to . . .

ACHESON: Well . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: . . . training in some of those areas as well . . .

ACHESON: Yeah, I did . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: . . . coming into it.

ACHESON: I . . . I've got joint sociology and biology, you know, degree in undergraduate school, and . . . then . . . a lot of economic training . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yes.

ACHESON: . . . in grad school, a lot.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Well, what kind of advice or recommendations would you like to . . . to give . . . for anthropology sociology for doing a better job at educating new, new . . . effective applied and practical social sciences, some of this?

ACHESON: Well, I guess I would, I would urge people to get training in, in computer science and mathematics and, and some ancillary fields and especially economics and, and oceanography. What we are doing in resource management is by it's nature, interdisciplinary, and you really have to be able to talk to these people in these other fields. You're going have to know what their field as they're learning yours, I am afraid, and . . . one of the thing is, is the idea of field work, which I thought all anthropologists knew, that increasingly, and you're seeing a lot of people not doing any field work, specially in third world countries, and I think that's a great, great, great loss.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Really.

ACHESON: Yeah.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: So they're doing domestic dissertations, or . . . or they are not doing field dissertations?

ACHESON: A whole lot, whole lot of library . . . thesis, apparently are not, which I think is wrong.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Mm-mm. The, why is that? Do you think it's because funding isn't there, or . . .

ACHESON: Huh, I don't know. I'm not, not sure. Giving, I think, several of the people who I have met, who are doing this are older married women.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Oh!

ACHESON: And . . . empty nesters and now, they used to study art history, and now the new thing is anthropology, and so they're taking degrees in anthropology, but, but they actually have a husband who is a lawyer, or and . . . can't, can't really go some, some place . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Okay.

ACHESON: too easily, and when they do, encounter some problems and then . . .

[End Tape 1, Side 2]

[Begin Tape 2, Side 1]

ABBOTT-JAMISON: So, if you're, it's the importance to put on analyzing text then once you have the text, in the library?

ACHESON: I think that's right.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Okay.

ACHESON: And the other problem, maybe is that in a great swatches of the world very difficult to do field work in.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yes.

ACHESON: In Africa right now . . . hard, hard place to work . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Exactly.

ACHESON: . . . always was, but it's more so. How about the Middle East, you know, and India, and . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah, in fact even when I was in that . . . doing my dissertation research one of the fellows I was in graduate school with, he did his dissertation work in India. At that point it was already hard to get official permission. So, (unintelligible) in the '70s, so.

ACHESON: Yeah, yeah.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: That's another, another problem.

ACHESON: The world's changed, but, but . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Okay.

ACHESON: . . . exactly.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Have you had any major disappointments in your career early in the research things that you . . . thought of that way.

ACHESON: No, I haven't. The things that I tried to do, I have done. But you can have them, have them easily. I had a new NSF grant right, right now, it looks like it's going, going to come through, to study, you know, the management of the forest here, here in the state of Maine, here in the northeast, and . . . I'm wondering about . . . how well I'm going to receive, you know, be received by the pulp and paper company, who are . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Oh.

ACHESON: . . . are doing a whole lot of over exploiting, and . . . so I can, I can, you know, come across them yet [Chuckling] easily [Laughing].

ABBOTT-JAMISON: [Chuckling] Okay, okay. What are the challenges, the main challenges you see for the future of . . . application in the past history in anthropology and sociology?

ACHESON: Well, one of the serious problems that we have is we, we haven't really done any work with agencies and people in . . . various legislative bodies, too awfully much. What we call applied work is, is . . . doing a study, doing a report and that often times ends it, right, right there. If you really want to influence things, you better become an awful lot more active and that, and that poses some problems, because at that point you really, really stop being a scholar and you stop really being objective, then you start to be an advocate or a lobbyist and there is some problems there. So, I think what we do and how active we can be . . . is a problem, and if you really don't want to . . . enter in, you know . . . into this kind of arena, well I don't think you're going to be all that influential. You have to go on down to places like Augusta and talk to the legislators and you can talk, and talk, and talk, and talk, and talk and it just don't seem to do any good, and, and, and if there is anything that happens and then all of the sudden bang it does. And I think when it does, it isn't that you have been the silver tongued person who managed to persuade, you're just not going to win, and . . . there were a lot of people saying the same thing, and the time is right and they can see a groundswell of, of you know, support and in you come and just add you know, add something, you know, to this. But it's already there and . . . I think it's a mistake for applied anthropologists to think that they can remake the world . . . in and of yourself you're not going to do, do a lot to become part of a larger pool of individuals all of whom are shoving for the same thing, worked.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: How did you learn that?

ACHESON: The hard way. Nineteen, let's see, when, when was it, about '78 or '79, we were pushing . . . a bill down in the legislature, and I mean pushing the bill, we'd done some research and we'd interviewed a whole lot of people in the industry, and, but we felt that having a limited entry bill and . . . would be . . . an excellent idea in the lobster industry, and that . . . if you're going to ma . . . and if you're also pushing for a trap limit you're going to have, have a trap limit, which a lot of people wanted at that time, you're going to have to have a limited entry bill, because it, it really doesn't make any sense to have a trap limit, certain people take lobster traps out of the, out of the water, other people at, at the industry put those same traps, you know, back in. So these two things went . . . well together. And I guess we sort of knew that at the time. So we lobbied, and lobbied, and lobbied and we talked, and talked, and talked, and we did interviewing but it was really push for it, so I mean we were interviewing, but we also . . . we hired a guy named Bob Green . . . to do a whole lot of the interviewing, and, and, and . . . he was a good guy, and he and I have remained friends ever since, and . . . so we had the bill, Skippy Greenlaw who was out of Stonington at . . . he was in the Maine house for Stonington and introduced the bill, a man named Jackson from . . . some out of statesman from . . . the Cumberland area, Yarmouth. They were the two who, you know, had enough stuff in this bill, and he thought probably had it hooked, finally had, they had a strong vote, and it, and it passed, and . . . then the fishermen (unintelligible) who hated this whole idea, hired a lobbyist, a man named Brooks Brown, you know, from Augusta, who was a lawyer and pretty effective, and he got to work over the weekend and claimed that this was in violation of the 4th Amendment and equal protection under the law, how could you give a license to certain people with a common property resource and throw out of the people who had an equal right to use this resource out of it, this was just unconstitutional and if they got passed, it was not going to pass through, you know, the supreme court and, and . . . he had certain, you know, cases to show us. Of course at that time you had the Alaska law, which was the one (unintelligible), they had to take into account certain 4th amendment issues. Anyway, Brooks Brown he got to work over the weekend and Monday morning they had the vote and right down by five, five votes, and . . . that was an eye opener. We put a year and a half, two years into that thing and then, oh well, [Chuckles – Abbott-Jamison] we live and learn, we did learn [Laughing].

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Do you think that these . . . I think that can be taught in classrooms, or, or, or learning how the systems actually—the political systems—actually operate. What has to do by gaining experience . . .

ACHESON: Well, but I think, I think you have to have the experience of going out there and really, really talking to a whole lot of people, I really do. Besides it's fun.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah [Chuckles – Acheson]. Okay. Are there any words of wisdom that you'd like to share with junior colleagues who are considering applied work?

ACHESON: Don't be afraid to do it, I think. Then again, as I say, I just don't see this hard and fast line between making a theoretical contribution and making an applied contribution, there really isn't any reason why you can't do both, because one of them feeds into the other, and . . . I think that's very important to, to understand and realize all this business who look down on applied research is somehow underneath us . . . that's . . . that's foolish.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Mm-mm. What is the attitude of your university then toward this, your career, you know, they're . . .

ACHESON: I'm (unintelligible) . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: . . . they, there is always this concern too, particularly for people, trying to get tenure . . . a notion that if you, if you, obviously have to have the right sort of publications in the right . . .

ACHESON: Oh yes!

ABBOTT-JAMISON: . . . number of publications and so on or you'll be, you will not make it, so . . . how do you see applied planning within that, if someone could go off and doing . . .

ACHESON: Well . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: . . . applied work?

ACHESON: . . . whenever you take on any research grant, those there, first and foremost questions you ask, even though applied research, where are the articles coming out? Because if there aren't any articles from an academic point of view, there really isn't any thing written that you're able to put your hands on.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Okay.

ACHESON: And you really, really, really do need to, to have some academic output, more over in the applied field, and I, I discovered this quite obviously, I mean it, but if you have a white paper out and it's just by someone in Maine and it pertains to Maine, and it is on an issue in Maine, it doesn't help. If you're doing something and it's in a national recognized refereed journal, it does count. One time I was on Monhiga and I went out there Friday afternoon, I was going to stay until, you know, Sunday, Sunday night, we were interviewing (unintelligible), doing our usual things, and, and in New York Times, there was an article about the University of Maine geologist, a guy named George Denton who had been doing some stuff in Antarctica, and . . . granted he is a, he is a very good, good guy and funded year after year by the National Science Foundation and he is one of the people whose work always stand out. He got . . . his medal from geology, and if there was a Nobel prize; he would have gotten it. But how about on the (unintelligible) published four or five individuals over the course of that, that, you know,

three days, I happened to mention, you know, you know this guy immediate goal, you know, you know, why the work was important, but they know it was important, and it was in a national newspaper, in the New York Times and wasn't just some kind of local newspaper . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Right.

ACHESON: . . . helping up a local person, and all, I mean, it is, it is important in, you know, in the national arena, and . . . I learned something, something from that. You really want to gain confidence in a lot of people . . . even people who are non-academics, having a high quality, you know, refereed article pays big dividends. And . . . so I don't, don't see a whole lot of . . . conflict, but . . . there're certain people who do, they . . . and somehow, somehow seem to think that, if you get involved in economics, or economic issues and helping out somebody in industry, where you get involved, you know, with the legislature, that you somehow sully your pristine, your academic hands, this is a very, very bad thing that . . . and I have never, never, ever understood this attitude, I never have.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Mm-mm. Well, do you have any other reflection that you would like to share, a . . . anything that we have not talked about . . . that you think is an important point, you know, that's not about the development of applied anthropology, and or maritime anthropology, and any of the other issues we talked about, or any issue we've not talked about that you think should be brought up?

ACHESON: Not, not actually. Some, sometimes I find myself, with my nose is so close to the grindstone that I, I just haven't got time to . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah.

ACHESON: . . . lift my head with . . .

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Yeah.

ACHESON: . . . larger horizons, I'm afraid. Every once in a while I do, but . . . engaged right now in, in two or three projects, you know, the forestry project, and I have a history project comparing how the lobster industry (unintelligible), that has worked out so well, why the management of that industry has worked out so well with such fantastic support from the industry, is why and what's happened, you know, you have the ground fish industry, which is just a disaster area. One of the obvious questions there, what's the difference? Why has one industry worked out very, very well, managed to promulgate certain rules, with fantastic success and the other . . . so I've . . . now I have been engaged in straightening up my . . . my [Chuckling] this sort of thing.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: Well, I, I want to thank you for participating in this interview.

ACHESON: Right.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: And . . . as you . . . may know from reading this, they are going to be transcribed and they are going to the University of Kentucky Special Collections so they will be transcribed.

ACHESON: Sure.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: And they will, the transcriptions, will be available . . .

ACHESON: Good.

ABBOTT-JAMISON: . . . to anyone who wants to . . . do that, and they will . . .

ACHESON: Fine!

ABBOTT-JAMISON: . . . become part of the . . . archives. if there are any . . . I might as well turn this right now . . .

[End of Interview]