

This interview is of Chris Jensen who is a Port Captain for Seaspan. The major themes discussed in this interview are Seaspan's history and its operations, ship docking, Chris Jensen's and his father's experience working with tugs, and the deindustrialization of mill sites along the Fraser River.

Interviewer: Kate Petrusa

Date: November 14, 2014

Date range: Late 1800s – 2014

Sound recording length: 53:48

Chris Jensen is a Port Captain for Seaspan and has been with the company since 1978. He was introduced to the waterfront at an early age because his father was also a tugboat captain for Seaspan. Jensen started off as a deckhand when he finished high school and received his tugboat captain's ticket in the early 1990s. Initially he worked as a riverboat captain based out of New Westminster and since then he has worked around the Port Kells, Langley, Surrey, and Vancouver areas. Today, as Port Captain for Seaspan he is responsible for tugboat logistics for the company.

#### **Section 0:00 – 10:06**

In this section of the interview Jensen talks about Seaspan's history and how its roots originated from Vancouver Tugboat Company in the late 1800s. In 1977, Island Tug and Vancouver Tug amalgamated with other tugboat companies, such as the Gulf of Georgia, to become Seaspan International. Since then the company has amalgamated with other tugboat companies and have acquired the assets of Rivtow/SMIT. Seaspan has a fleet of thirty-three tugboats. Currently one of the company's main businesses is ship docking, where tugboats move large ships in shallow waters. Jensen also describes his duties as a port captain, where he is responsible for logistical and daily issues, and runs many tugboats from his desk

#### **Section 10:07 – 15:15**

In this section of the interview Jensen describes the different departments within Seaspan that specialize in towing for certain for industries and commodities. He also talks more in-depth about ship docking, and discusses that he believes the general public needs to see both environmental and economic perspectives when it comes to coal transportation. He talks about the former Shell station in New Westminster that was used to fuel tugs, and pleasure boats, and explains why there are no more fuel stations for tugs.

#### **Section 17:45 – 20:43**

In this section of the interview Jensen discusses his and his father's tugboat background. His father was a tugboat captain for Seaspan until 1994. Jensen started off as a deckhand out of high school and accumulated his sea time and hours until he got his tugboat captain ticket. He believes that people should not be rushing their sea time hours in order to get their captain's ticket, as he emphasizes having experience is valuable in being a captain. He also describes the first areas he worked starting off as a riverboat captain on the Fraser River.

**Section 20:44 – 39:58**

In this section of the interview Jensen describes changes that he has witnessed on the waterfront. He states that today there is less business for tugboat companies compared to before because mills have disappeared from Queensborough, Sapperton, and the Surrey side of the Fraser River. He describes how Seaspan is trying to make up for the loss of business in different ways, such as doing more ship docking. He recalls when the tugboat industry was busier Seaspan would tow twenty-six barges a day but now that number has been reduced to four to five. He also describes the technological changes that have improved the size and power of tugboats. As the technologies for navigation systems have significantly improved, today tugboat captains focus more on work than on navigation. He shares and discusses old photographs of tugboats that he and his father worked on in Vancouver and on the Fraser River, and a clipping of a newspaper article that his father and his deckhand were in.

**Section 39:59 – 51:59**

In this section of the interview Jensen talks more in-depth about Vancouver Tugboat Company, discusses and shares more photos with the interviewer, and briefly discusses the relationship between bridge building and tugboats. He talks about a tugboat called *The Tempest*. His father was the first person to launch it and Jensen worked on the same boat for years until its retirement. The latter part of this section Jensen continues sharing and discussing old photos of tugboats and of the Fraser River.