

## WAYNE HAVENER

Interviewer: Douglas  
Date: October 13, 2003  
Place: Wayne Havener's home  
Transcriber: Sally Merrick



*Wayne Havener was born on November 17, 1929, and has always lived in Friendship. His family has lived in Friendship for three generations, and he has three children and six grandchildren. He served in the Coast Guard for three years and has been a lobsterman for 54 years. His hobbies are reading and watching baseball games.*

**Q: When did you start lobstering?**

A: I started when I was about 15, a couple of years in a dory. Then I went in the Coast Guard for three years; then I've been fishing steady since 1950.

**Q: Why did you become a lobsterman?**

A: Well, I didn't like the Coast Guard; I didn't want to stay in there, and my grandfather and my father, I guess my great grandfather, too, went lobstering, so I kind of worked into it that way.

**Q: What is the name of your boat, and why did you name it that?**

A: The name of my boat is *Stephanie G*; it's named after my granddaughter. It was launched on her first birthday.

**Q: Could you please describe it.**

A: It's a wooden boat, mahogany planked and 36-feet long, and I've had it covered with fiberglass since then.

**Q: How often do you pull your traps?**

A: I let them set three or four nights; I have enough so that I can have three different gangs.

**Q: What is a gang?**

A: Well, that's about as many as I can haul in one day. It depends on the weather and everything; some days I can pull more than others. But I call a gang what I can haul in one day, probably 350. . . 200 traps, depending on the weather, one thing and another.

**Q: How do you tell your traps from someone else's?**

A: Each fisherman has a buoy that's painted their own color. Mine is green and white. Everyone has a different color so they can tell which is theirs. Plus that we have name tag on the trap, so anyone can tell whose it is.

**Q: What do you use for bait, and where do you get it?**

A: Oh, I've used a lot of different things. When I first started, we used redfish and herring mostly, and now I use mostly herring, sometimes pogies. And I get it from the dealer that gets it for me--from the bait truck that comes from Rockland.

**Q: Describe what you do when you catch a lobster. What lobsters do you have to throw back? Explain notching lobsters.**

A: When I catch a lobster, first I have to measure it, see if it's large enough, then band it, and throw it in my tank. And if it's got seeds on it, I have to notch the tail, so it can't be caught and kept, so that it can shed its seeds. And if it's too big, why, you have to throw it back. Sometimes you catch one that's too big--it can't be more than five

inches long on the shell.

**Q: What are bands?**

A: They're rubber bands that belong over the claws to hold them together so they can't bite.

**Q: What other kinds of fish get caught in your traps? What do you do with them?**

A: Oh, there are a number of different kinds of fish you catch. You catch flounder and mackerel, pollock, lots of different kinds. Some of them I throw back, and some of them I use for bait, depending on what they are. I caught a turtle once.

**Q: How does the weather affect your fishing?**

A: Well, if it blows too hard, you can't go, if it gets too rough and blows too hard. And it makes a difference if it's foggy; it slows you down. You can't haul as many traps as you can when you have a good day. So we like to see good days, calm and smooth, but then they're not all that way.

**Q: Where do you take your lobsters at the end of the day? Who determines the price that you get for them?**

A: I take them into the Friendship Lobster Co-op. They decide what the price is. The people they sell to really decide the price, and they pass it on to us. We get a bonus the end of the year besides what we get for our price each day we sell.

**Q: How has lobstering changed since you began fishing?**

A: Oh, there have been a number of changes. I started out with a boat that was about 22-feet long, and I progressed up to one that's 36-feet long. Each time--I've had four, I guess--each time they've been a little bigger and a little wider. And the bait is somewhat the same, but we don't get too much redfish now, and it costs so much I don't use it too much. And the traps are different. We used to use all wooden traps and build them ourselves; now I buy wire traps, all built. And electronics: we didn't have much of anything except a compass when I started; now we have radar, a fathometer, all kinds of electronic stuff to help to find your way around. And the hauler was much different. We had an old Model A Ford transmission with a niggerhead on top, and you wrapped the rope around by hand. Now they have a hydraulic hauler that you put the rope in it, and the engine hauls it. Now all you have to do is pull it on the block after it gets out. That made quite a help, changed things quite a bit, speeded things up.

Another big change is the prices of things. We could build a wooden trap for 5 or 6

dollars, and now a wire one costs about 50 dollars. And, of course, the price of lobsters has changed. The first year I went I think I got 20 cents a pound for shedders, and this summer I've been getting \$3.25. And at the end of the year there's a bonus based on the profits of the co-op.



**Q: What seasons have you fished?**

A: Well, I always used to fish all year round when I was younger, 'til the last couple of years; I only go 'til around Christmastime now. I start in the spring and go 'til Christmastime, and I may not even go in the spring next year. I may take that off, too. I'm getting a little old now, 74 years old, so I won't be going as hard as I used to.

**Q: What do you like most about lobstering?**

A: I like being out there on a good day and seeing the ocean and the sky. It's beautiful out there when you get a good day. Of course, I like to catch lobsters; that's fun.

**Q: What do you like the least about it?**

A: I think what I like least about it is cleaning my boat up at the end of the day 'cause I'm tired, and I don't want to bother with it. And I usually don't do a very good job (chuckle).

**Q: What kind of problems have you experienced at sea?**

A: I had one big problem one day; I had two traps on a rope, and I threw one trap overboard, and I got my leg caught in the rope in between the two, and my boat was moving in gear, and I couldn't get my leg out. I tried to get enough slack to pull my leg out, and I couldn't. I finally got back on the stern--I had a ride in sail then--and I had my arms wrapped around my mast, hanging on for dear life. I thought I was probably a goner. I prayed to the Lord, asking Him to help me, and I hadn't any more than gotten that out of my mouth, and a button popped off my oil pants, and my boot and oil pants went overboard, and I got out of it. That's the truth.

**Q: Describe your most memorable time fishing.**

A: That thing I just described to you I think is probably the most memorable. I know I'll never forget that. When that happened, it was November and pretty cold. I lost my boot and had to go home with just a stocking foot, my leg shaky, so I don't think anything can top that.

**Q: How often do you eat lobster? And do you have a favorite way of preparing it, like a recipe?**

A: Really, we don't eat it too often, probably eight, ten times a year maybe. Sometimes we just cook them and pick them out of the shell that way. We have lobster rolls, sautéed, you know, nothing real special, but they taste good most anyway, I think.