

## JAMES RICHARDS

Interviewer: Jimmy  
Date: October 2003  
Place: James Richards' home  
Transcriber: Jimmy



*Jimmy Richards was born on October 16, 1965, and has always lived in Friendship. He has two sisters, one brother, and two children. He has been a lobsterman for over 30 years and has also done ground fishing and scalloping. His hobbies include hunting, fishing, coin detecting, and Little League.*

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

A: When I was between six and seven years old, and I went with my grandfather Raymond.

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

A: The reason I started lobstering was so I could help my grandfather and pay for my own school clothes.

**Q: What is your job on the boat?**

A: I am the captain of the boat; I haul and set the traps.

**Q: Do you have someone who lobsters with you?**

A: My son Jimmy in the summer and my brother Normand Collamore in the fall.

**Q: What do they do?**

A: Put the bait in the bait bags, band the lobsters, clean the boat, and everything else that has to be done.

**Q: Is lobstering a tradition in your family?**

A: Yes.

**Q: Describe your boat.**

A: My boat is a 35-foot Mitchell Cove, fiberglass, white and Newport green with red copper, and it has a 260-Cummins diesel.

**Q: What did you name it and why?**

A: I named it *My Two Sons*. I named it that because it just seemed like a fitting name for my boat.

**Q: What equipment do you carry on board?**

A: Well, I carry a radar, plotter, color machine, VHF radio, stereo, cell phone, flares, life jackets, life ring, and all the other safety equipment--first aid kit and a full tool box.

**Q: Describe your traps.**

A: I fish all 22 1/2-inch by 4-foot lobster traps with three bricks and string mesh heads.

**Q: Describe how you set your traps.**

A: You set your traps when the water reaches a certain temperature. And I set my traps how my father taught me to set them.

**Q: Do you move your traps during the season?**

A: I fish the whole season basically the same, and I take the traps up when it gets cold.

**Q: How often do you haul them?**

A: I let my traps have a four or five night set.

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

A: The buoy color, and I know my traps because I built them myself.

**Q: Do you use toggles?**

A: Yes, I use toggles on everything because it keeps the rope down from hanging in the rocks. That is called a hung down trap.

**Q: What do you use for bait?**

A: I use herring, pogies, sucker heads, redfish, and I get it all from St. George Marine.

**Q: Describe a typical day of lobstering.**

A: When I get to the shore in the morning, I put bait aboard the boat, go to haul, and haul 200 traps most everyday through the summer and fall.

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

A: I take it out of the trap and measure it. If it is legal size, then I check it to see if it is male or female. If it is male, it can be put in the tank; and if it is female, then it must be checked for eggs and a v-notch. If it has eggs or a v-notch, it has to be thrown back. If a lobster has eggs and no v-notch, you are supposed to v-notch the second flipper from the right, and then return it to the water.

**Q: What other kinds of fish get caught in the traps?**

A: I've caught mackerel, pollock, cunners, sculpins, flounders, codfish, cusk, wolffish, dogfish, jellyfish, a sea horse or two, striper, rock bass, and eels. If they are alive, I release them; but if they are dead, then I string them on for bait.

**Q: Where do you take your lobsters at the end of the day?**

A: I return them to the wharf that three of us fishermen rent together. We take our lobsters out and put them in crates, and our lobster buyer comes and gets them.

**Q: What is a normal haul for the day?**

A: Around 300, 400, or 500 pounds.

**Q: What is the normal haul on a really bad day and a really good day?**

A: On a really bad day 100 pounds or less, and on a really good day I've had 1000 pounds.

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

A: The colder the weather gets, the less the lobsters crawl.

**Q: How has lobstering changed since you started?**

A: When I started, I was with my grandfather as a sternman; we hauled wooden traps. Now I go on my own, and I have all wire traps.

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

A: I am my own boss, and if I want to go, I go; and if I don't want to go, then I don't.

**Q: What do you least about lobstering?**

A: I like it all.

**Q: What happens when it is foggy?**

A: I turn the radar and plotter on and running lights, and then I go and haul my traps.

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

A: Everything imaginable, from being broke down, sprung leaks, wound up in a trap, and I have been run into. You name it, it's happened.

**Q: What is the worst thing that has happened to you while you were lobstering?**

A: The day that I was out lobstering and I heard over the radio about September 11th.

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

A: The first time I had 1,000 pounds was fairly exciting.

**Q: Do you lobster in the winter?**

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A: No.

**Q: How often do you eat lobster?**

A: Probably at least 30 times a year.

**Q: Do you have a favorite way of eating lobster?**

A: I like fried lobster tails in butter.





