

## CARL SIMMONS

Interviewer(s): John and Cameo

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Place: Carl Simmons' home

Transcriber: Peggy Simmons



*Carl Simmons was born on June 17, 1927, and is the oldest working lobsterman in Friendship. He has been lobstering for 65 years. In addition to fishing, he has been a carpenter and enjoys hunting as a hobby. He has three children and six grandchildren.*

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

A: Well, that's a good question. Probably when I was 12 or 13 years old in my spare time. I quit school at 15, and I've been lobstering ever since.

**Q: How long have you been lobstering?**

A: Well, I guess it would figure about 60 years.

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

A: It was a family occupation. My father went, and I followed.

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

A: Hauling lobster traps. I do everything myself.

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

A: Yes, my grandfather went, my father went, and I followed.

**Q: Describe your boat.**

A: Thirty-four foot wood.

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

A: *Laurie Ann Ellie*, after my grandchildren, my granddaughters.

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

A: Just a fathometer and compass.

**Q: Describe your lobster traps, size and weight.**

A: Well, they used to be spruce wood, and now they are all wire, built by your father [Pike Bartlett].

**Q: Describe how you set your traps, when, and where.**

A: Well, through the years you just set around, you know where the bottom is around each rock; you know what time of year the lobster is going to be in a certain place.

**Q: Do you move them during the season? If so, why and where?**

A: Yes, you have to, depth of the water and such.

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

A: Well, we used to pull them every other day, but now anywhere from five to seven days.

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

A: Color of your buoy.

**Q: Do you use toggles? Explain how they work.**

A: You use toggles to keep the rope from tangling up. They keep the rope up off the bottom so it doesn't tangle in the rocks. If you've got 12 fathom of rope, you got toggles half way.

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

A: The lobster dealer supplies it. It's mostly herring. They do have redfish and pogies, but I use all herring.

**Q: Describe a typical day.**

A: I only pull 100 to 110. I don't go over six miles from Friendship.

**Q: Describe what you do when you catch a lobster.**

A: First, you have to measure it, make sure it isn't punched--no v-notch; then you band it and put it in your tank. We have a double-gauge measure. It has to be 3 3/4 inches big and not over 5 inches.

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

A: To my dealer, Ronald Simmons.



**Q: Who determines the price you get for them?**

A: Ronald.

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

A: That's a very good question. If you get a lobster to a trap, you're doing good.

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

A: If it blows too hard, it stops you. You can haul in fog, but high winds you can't.

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

A: About the only change is the traps have gone from wood to wire.

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

A: I guess you're your own boss.

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

A: I guess I can't think of anything that I least like. Just bad weather and have to haul, that's all.

**Q: What happens when it's foggy?**

A: It's just harder to find your traps.

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

A: Figuring out just where you were. I've run aground, broken down, had to be towed in. If your engine stops or you get wound up, you have to get towed in.

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

A: A lot of times in the fall after the inside fishing gets stopped, you go down river. We used to take 100 traps apiece and double up in the winter. Coming home one day with a load of traps, the engine stopped, and we couldn't figure out why. Water was up over the engine, and we had to dump the traps overboard. The Coast Guard came and towed us in. I guess probably that's the worst one.

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

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A: When you get a successful day, they are all memorable.

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

A: No, I don't like it, and I don't do it anymore. We used to.

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

A: Every good day in the summer. It's against the law to haul on Sunday in the summer from July to September. Other than that, you haul every day that you can.

**Q: Do you have a favorite way of preparing it?**

A: Just plain boiled.

**Q: What happened to your boat this spring?**

A: I had it home to put in a new engine and repair it. I had the stern of it hauled in my shop. I went to Union. When I came back, there had been a fire. My shop burned. The back of my boat burned to the extent that it couldn't be used this year. Brad Davis called me and told me they had his in the field, and I was welcome to use it. I've been using it all summer. The only trouble with it is the name of it is *Outlaw*. It was very good of him to offer the boat.

**Q: Have you ever ended up in the water?**

A: Several times. Rowing ashore one day, I got run over by an outboard motor boat and had to jump in the water. And I fell off the wharf, tying my boat.

**Q: I understand that you are the oldest lobsterman in Friendship.**

A: I'm 79.

**Q: How often do you go out?**

A: Through the summer, I try to go six days a week.

**Q: When do you get up to go to haul?**

A: Usually 5:00 in the morning.

**Q: When do you get back?**

A: That all depends, anywhere from 3:00 to 5:00.

