

## HARLEY WALLACE

Interviewers: Suzanne and Kristy

Date: September 30, 2003

Place: Harley Wallace's home

Transcriber: Eleanor Barlow



*Harley Wallace was born on May 21, 1951, and has lived here all of his life. His family has lived here for four generations. He has two children and one grandchild. Harley has been lobstering for 46 years, and he has performed just about every laboring job except raking blueberries and digging potatoes. His hobbies include hunting and fishing.*

**Q: Tell me, Harley, have you always lived in Friendship?**

A: I've lived here all my life so far.

**Q: How many generations of your family have lived in Friendship?**

A: Three or four.

**Q: How many sisters and brothers do you have?**

A: Three sisters, one brother.

**Q: How many children?**

A: Two children.

**Q: How many grandchildren?**

A: One grandchild.

**Q: What is your occupation?**

A: Lobster fisherman.

**Q: How long have you been doing this work? Since you were. . .**

A: Six years old.

**Q: What other jobs have you had?**

A: Just about everything you can do on the ocean.

**Q: What are your hobbies and special interests?**

A: I like hunting and fishing.

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

A: 1957.

**Q: How long have you been doing this work?**

A: About. . . well, I'm 52 now, and I started going with my father on the boat at about six.

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

A: I liked the job.

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

A: I'm the captain.

**Q: What do they do?**

A: Just haul the trap and set it back.

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

A: Yes.

**Q: What's his name?**

A: Doug Wilshire.

**Q: What does he do?**

A: He bags the bait, then he puts the bait in the traps, and he bands the lobsters.

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

A: Yes.

**Q: How many generations?**

A: Four.

**Q: These are questions about your lobster boat: What is the length, kind (fiberglass or wood), color, horse power, diesel or gasoline?**

A: She's 34-feet long. She's white, and she has diesel, and she's fiberglass.

**Q: What is the name of your boat and why?**

A: *Miss Kristin*. Named it after my daughter.

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

A: Fathometer, radar, compass.

**Q: Safety equipment, hauling gear, propeller cage?**

A: Yes.

**Q: These are questions about your traps: Describe your lobster traps, size and weight.**

A: Four-foot wire traps.

**Q: Color?**

A: Green.

**Q: Are they all green?**

A: All but one.

**Q: I don't dare ask what color that is (giggles).**

A: It's a yellowish-greenish color.

**Q: Describe how you set traps. How do you know when and where to set them?**

A: I wait till Bill Rourke comes in--I see where he fishes--then I start setting.

**Q: (giggles) Do you move them during the season? If so, why? Where?**

A: Yes, I move them. . . different locations. Top secret.

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

A: Five days a week.

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

A: Buoy color.

**Q: What color are your buoys?**

A: Orange and green.

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

A: They work pretty good, pretty good.

**Q: What are they made of?**

A: Spunjacks [styrofoam].

**Q: Have you ever used something else?**

A: Glass bottles.

**Q: What happens if you haul a glass bottle, and you don't stop it? Stop the hauler?**

A: It breaks.

**Q: Could it cut through your oil pants?**

A: Yeah.

**Q: Have you ever had that happen?**

A: No.

**Q: What do you use for bait? Where do you go to get it? Please be specific.**

A: Herring, redfish, pogies, and I get it at the Friendship Lobster Co-op.

**Q: This is describing a typical day of lobstering: What time do you go out? When do you come back? How far do you go in a day? How many traps do you pull in a day?**

A: I go out at 5:00, come back at noon, haul a couple hundred, and go four to six miles.

**Q: Do you ever come back before noon?**

A: Once in a while.

**Q: Describe what you do when you catch a lobster. What lobsters do you have to throw back? And please explain the v-notch lobsters.**

A: You ask too many questions at once.

**Q: Describe how you catch a lobster.**

A: You haul your trap up and take it out of the bay.

**Q: What lobsters do you have to throw back?**

A: V-notched ones, egg ones, short ones, oversized ones.

**Q: What size do they have to be for keeping?**

A: Three and a quarter inches.

**Q: Explain the v-notch ones.**

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A: V-notch ones have a v-notch in their tail.

**Q: And that means?**

A: The right flipper beside the middle flipper.

**Q: Do you ever catch any oversized lobsters?**

A: Yes.

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

A: Codfish, flounders, stripers. Throw them back overboard.

**Q: How big do lobsters have to be to be thrown back?**

A: Over 5 inches.

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

A: Friendship Lobster Co-op. Somebody in Boston determines the price.

**Q: What is the normal haul for a day? Do you get them really bad or really good?**

A: Time will tell.

**Q: I don't believe it. Can you tell any stories that are good for keeping, good for knowledge? We need knowledge.**

A: What's the question?

**Q: (giggles) Can you tell us stories on tape that are knowledgeable?**

A: I've caught a couple of blue lobsters and yellow spotted ones.

**Q: Have you ever been in a hurricane or a big tidal wave?**

A: No.

**Q: How does weather affect your fishing? Do you go out in thunderstorms, rain, snow, sleet?**

A: Yes.

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**Q: Do you go out in fog when you can't see your hand in front of your face or the nose on your face?**

A: Yes.

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

A: Well, we've got automatic haulers now, winches, wire traps instead of wooden ones, styrofoam buoys instead of wooden ones.

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

A: Getting paid.

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

A: Not getting paid.

**Q: How come you don't get paid?**

A: If you don't go.

**Q: Well, you have to go. Do you get fat checks or small checks?**

A: Just little ones.

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

A: Takes longer.

**Q: Do you enjoy lobstering?**

A: No.

**Q: What kind of problems have you experienced: your boat breaking down, going aground, losing gear, or other accidents, or all of the above?**

A: All of the above.

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

A: Not catching any.

**Q: (giggles) Not catching any. I could remember those times. Describe your most**  
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**memorable time fishing.**

A: When you do real good.

**Q: You have no memorable times fishing?**

A: It was pretty fun the night we got 5000 pounds of shrimp.

**Q: Do you usually get that when you go shrimping?**

A: Don't go shrimping no more.

**Q: Let's stay on the topic of lobstering. Do you lobster in the winter?**

A: No. Did for twenty years, but I don't any more.

**Q: Why not?**

A: Too old.

**Q: That's my father's excuse. (Harley chuckles.) How do you eat lobster? Do you have a favorite way of preparing it? Do you eat it with its shell on its back? Do you eat the meat?**

A: I eat the meat.

**Q: Do you eat the vein in the tail?**

A: No. Won't hurt you, though.

**Q: Do you have anything that you want to tell us, in addition?**

A: Not really. I'm retiring when I'm 80.

**Q: (giggles) That's what, twenty years?**

A: Umhmm. (a smile in his voice)

**Q: (laughter) Thank you for all your time.**

A: You're very welcome.



