

PHILIP GENTHNER, JR.

Interviewer: Steven

Date: October 2004

Place: Their home

Transcriber: Peggy Simmons



Philip Genthner was born in Friendship on February 13, 1988, and has lived here all of his life. His family has lived here for three generations. Philip is a junior at Medomak Valley High School, where he is on the baseball and wrestling teams. He owns his own lobster boat, and his younger brother, Steven, who is his sternman, conducted this interview.

Q: When did you start lobstering?

A: I started when I was about eight.

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Q: How long have you been lobstering?

A: And I've done it ever since.

Q: Why did you become a lobsterman?

A: I like it.

Q: What is your job on the boat?

A: I'm the captain, and I own the traps.

Q: Do you have someone who lobsters with you?

A: My brother, Steven

Q: What does he do?

A: Baits the traps and bands the lobsters.

Q: Is lobstering a tradition in your family?

A: My father and my uncles are really the only people who have done it.

Q: Describe your boat.

A: Fiberglass, white, 360-horsepower, gas engine, 32-feet long.

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

A: *M-Crack-In*. Phil M-Crack-In, they call me on the shore.

Q: What equipment do you carry on board?

A: Radio, VHF, a radar, life jackets, horns, bells, flares, survival suit, fathometer.

Q: Describe you lobster traps, size and weight.

A: Four feet long, vary from 18 inches wide to 24 inches wide. They weigh about 20 pounds each, and the bigger ones weigh about 22 pounds.

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

A: I set my traps about 100 yards apart, not too deep, either rocky or muddy, and I just

push them over so they don't go upside down when they're going down into the water.

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

A: I move them, change them around to where the lobsters are. Usually in the rocks at the beginning of the season and then later on to deeper water. I pull them every three to five days. Buoys are different colors at the top floating on the water.

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

A: I don't use toggles.

Q: What do you use for bait?

A: I use herring, pogies, and flat and redfish.

Q: Where do you get it?

A: Off a bait truck.

Q: Describe a typical day.

A: I go about 3:30 in the morning and come back about 12:00 at noon. In the summer I don't go out very far. Later on in the year I go out probably 10 miles. I've hauled as many as 350 traps in a day.

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

A: When you catch a lobster, you have to measure it. If it's too small, you have to throw it back; and if it's too big, you can't keep it. When you notch a lobster, it means that it's had or has eggs, and no one can keep it.

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

A: I catch cusk, dogfish, sculpin, flounders, redfish, mackerel.

Q: What do you do with them?

A: I just cut them up and use them for bait.

Q: On a really bad day?

A: Twenty pounds out of 150 traps

Q: A really good day?

A: Five hundred pounds out of 150 traps.

Q: How does the weather affect your fishing?

A: I haven't seen very much difference; but when a storm comes, you don't seem to catch as many lobsters, and the storm moves your traps around a lot.

Q: How has lobstering changed since you began fishing?

A: Can't have as many traps as you used to. You can only have 800 traps. More lobstermen now.

Q: What do you like most about lobstering?

A: Coming in with a big catch and getting a lot of money for it. A nice calm morning when it's cool.

Q: What do you like least about it?

A: Fog. Hate going out in the fog.

Q: What happens when it's foggy?

A: You have trouble finding your traps; ledges come up on you quickly--you hit them if you're not paying attention. It's very easy to get lost or turned around.

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

A: My boat has broken down a few times. Had to call my dad on my radio to come tow me in. One time when I wasn't in my boat--I was lobstering with my cousin-- we ran aground with my cousin, and the boat filled up with water, almost to the point of sinking. We all had to jump in the water. It was close to sinking.

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

A: I've had quite a few people caught in my gear because they don't like it that I was fishing there. And they just probably don't like me. I don't care, but it kind of makes me mad. I've had 30 or 40 of my traps cut off. I don't know if it's the worst thing for me, but my brother doesn't like thunder and lightening very much. I have to bring him in every time. I don't really like it myself.

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Q: Describe your most memorable time fishing.

A: I caught 14 lobsters out of one trap, and they were \$4.00 a piece.

Q: Do you lobster in the winter?

A: No, I don't lobster in the winter, but when I get older, I probably will.

Q: What do you do in the winter?

A: I just get ready for the next year. I play some sports at school.

Q: How often do you eat lobster?

A: I eat lobster quite a bit, just when I happen to bring one in if I have one too soft to sell.

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

A: In a sandwich or just regular.