

## WESLEY LASH

Interviewers: Brandon, and Cooper

Date: November 1, 2005

Location: Lash's Boat Yard

Transcribers: Cooper, Brandon, and Sally Merrick



*Wesley Lash was born on August 4, 1945, and has lived in Friendship for 60 years, where he and his wife Cynthia have raised three sons--Wesley, Sean, and David. He has two grandchildren. While he claims his occupation is making fiberglass dust, he is known to build fiberglass boats as well. In his spare time he has been observed carving miniature half-hulls and small birds. He is currently serving as a town selectman.*

**Q: What is the name of your business?**

A: Lash's Boatyard.

**Q: Where are you located?**

A: In Friendship.

**Q: When did you start building boats?**

A: 1964.

**Q: How long have you been in business?**

A: 21 years.

**Q: Who taught you how to build boats?**

A: Several people.

**Q: Can you tell me more?**

A: Well, there's several people--uncles and my father--and just about everybody that worked on boats that I was associated with helped show me what I was supposed to be doing.

**Q: Why did you choose this occupation?**

A: It chose me, I guess. It's just something I've always liked doing.

**Q: Why did you choose to locate your business in Friendship?**

A: Family.

**Q: What do you do?**

A: As little as possible and still get paid for it. I do everything that's supposed to be done on a boat. Right from. . . anything--that's from putting the engine in, putting the shafts in, fibreglassing. If it's a wooden boat, what it requires to do.

**Q: How many employees are there in your business? What do they do?**

A: Five, and they're all required to do different jobs; different skill levels have different jobs. Some of them just fibreglass; some of them fit wood.



**Q: What kind of training or skills are necessary?**

A: Manual dexterity probably is the main thing. If you don't have that, you can't work.

**Q: Do you have any special license for your work?**

A: No.

**Q: What kind of equipment or tools do you use?**

A: We use saws, planes, grinders, woodworking tools--all kinds--and fiberglass tools.

**Q: How many people or customers do you serve? In a year, say.**

A: Six or seven.

**Q: Describe a typical workday from beginning to end.**

A: You have to give each employee a task for the day and make sure that they do it properly.

**Q: How many hours do you work a day? How many hours do you have off?**

A: I start at 6:00 in the morning, and I get through at 4:00 in the evening.

**Q: Do you have any days off?**

A: Saturday and Sunday sometimes.

**Q: Is there a particular time of year when people order boats?**

A: Not really. I guess I always seem to have a backlog, so it doesn't make much difference.

**Q: What is the busiest time of day or year for you?**

A: The busiest time of day is probably the forenoon.

**Q: And year?**

A: Spring because everybody outside wants to get going, too.

**Q: What do you like most about your job?**

A: Lunch.

**Q: Least?**

A: I guess when you're working on a fiberglass boat, the least liked job in the building is grinding the fiberglass. It's itchy, miserable stuff.

**Q: If you could change anything about your business, what would that be?**

A: Oh, I don't think I'd change too much. Slow down, maybe.

**Q: What are some of the advantages or disadvantages of working in Friendship?**

A: For me, the advantage of working in Friendship is that there's not really any full-time boat builders in this area, and I think that might help me a little bit. Disadvantages--I don't know of any.

**Q: Describe some memorable experiences related to your work.**

A: About three years ago we built a wooden boat, and two of my uncles came and helped us work, and I guess that probably was one of the most memorable occasions.

**Q: Has your business changed over the years?**

A: Yes, you've gone from wooden boats to fiberglass.

**Q: Do you advertise, or do people find out about you by word-of-mouth?**

A: You do a little bit of both.

**Q: How do you price your boats?**

A: Very carefully. (chuckle) You try to give somebody a good, fair estimate, and that's about all you can do now, things change so quick.

**Q: How long does it take to build a boat?**

A: About four months.

**Q: What kind of boats do you build?**

A: Most of them are commercial fishing lobster boats.

**Q: What is the most popular kind of boat?**

A: In this area that would be it. That's all.

**Q: Do you build a boat from scratch or do you finish the hulls?**

A: Done both.

**Q: What is the biggest boat you have ever built?**

A: A 71-foot wooden swordfishing one, when I worked for my father. The biggest one in here's been 48-feet.

**Q: What is the smallest one?**

A: The smallest boat I think probably has been eight or ten years ago I built a dory. I guess that was the smallest boat.

**Q: Do you ever keep a boat you've built?**

A: I've only had one.

**Q: What kind?**

A: The little lobster boat that I have outside.

**Q: What was the longest time it took you to build a boat?**

A: When we used to do wooden boats, most of them took a year to build.

**Q: What was the quickest time to build a boat?**

A: Six weeks.

**Q: What is the strangest order for a boat that you have ever gotten?**

A: One time we built a gill netter for some guy in Rhode Island, and it was an odd looking thing. It took a lot of thinking, but it worked.

**Q: What is the hardest thing about building a boat?**

A: Getting paid.

**Q: Is a boat ever dangerous to build?**

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A: Yes, boat building can be dangerous because you have the chemicals, and you have tools that you have to be very careful with. It can be quite dangerous at times.

**Q: Have you ever gotten hurt building boats?**

A: Superficial.

**Q: How many boats have you built?**

A: About 125.

**Q: How do you feel after finishing a fine boat?**

A: Got another one to go.