Transcript of interview with Eric Dow by Pauleena MacDougall.

Interviewee: Eric Dow
Interviewer: Pauleena MacDougall
Also present: Amy Appleton
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Note: This is the transcriber's best effort to convert audio to text; the audio is the primary material.

Pauleena MacDougall: This is Pauleena MacDougall. It is March 2nd and we are at the shop of Eric Dow and we are going to be talking about boat building. Well basically we are working on a project to have boat building demonstrations and information about boat building at the National Folk Festival this summer in Bangor and so we have been talking to different people to try to get some sense of you know the tradition. It's a big topic really. I mean there are so many people who make boats in Maine so we kind of focused in on Brooklin for the most part. There are a lot of folks who make boats in this town.

Eric Dow: Boat building capital of the world as the sign says.

P.M.: It appears that they maybe moving up to that to some extent.

E.D.: Per capita that could well be.

P.M.: Per capita right. How long have you been making boats?

E.D.: Thirty years. I started right out of high school. I went to the marine trade center in well it was Washington County VTI at that point. They had a boat building division. The school was head quartered in Calais but they had just taken over the old coast guard station in Lubec and set that up into a boat building program. A two-year program so I attended that and came back here and started right out. I was still young and didn't need to earn a whole lot of money, luckily because I would have starved. I was still single. This building was in the family. My grandfather had been a mechanic and this was his garage so it started out small and it's still that way really still just 3 or 4 of us working here.

P.M.: Let me first ask you a little bit about your training. Who were some of the teachers at that school? Where did they come from?

E.D.: There were two instructors. There was Doug Dodge. He is from Beal's Island. His family had been building lobster boats there for generations and he had grown up doing that. He had started out as a mechanics teacher at the vocational school and originated the boat building program there. It's not a widely known fact anymore that he had started that out. So he was one of the instructors really more of the shop instructor. He knew his profession so well that it was a

little bit hard for him to teach it. Things that just came naturally to him were a little hard to put across to somebody who had no idea what to do but still he was a good boat builder. I guess he's still in business. He worked there for probably seven or eight years and then went back to Beal's and went back into boat building again. There was a man named Earnie Bryerly and he was from England. He had come over, worked at Southwest Boat Corporations out at South West Harbor when that was still in business. He was the drafting, design instructor. He was a fairly noted boat designer and even after he stopped working there he was still very much in the design business up until his death a couple of years ago.

P.M.: So when you started out what kind of boats did you want to make? What kind of boats did you want to build?

E.D.: I started out building, well my first boat was a 20 foot power boat which I used to go lobstering in after I built it. The model is still [with me here] if you might be interesting in seeing that. In the classes that I've taught since then I teach half [036] model classes [?] and I've used that particular design as my beginning point for all the classes. This particular design Doug Dodge helped me with. I was still in school, I think in my first year of boat building school when I decided I wanted to build a boat similar to this. I let him win a few games of pool, got to be pretty good friends with him. He showed me the art of carving them all and building a boat from that which really wasn't a part of the program down there but it interested me.

P.M.: And that's really the traditional way.

E.D.: It sure is, yes. In fact I still have the working model. It's over in the other shop. The original model that I carved and took the information from, took the lines from, and built a boat from that.

P.M.: So you were basically starting with the lobster boat.

E.D.: Yes.

P.M.: Was there a particular style? I mean we are learning from Beal's so was your lobster boat style or design a Beal's boat?

E.D.: It certainly has that influence. Not that all Beal's Island boats are the same because at that point there were still quite a few wooden boat builders on Beal's Island. I'm not sure that there are any now because there are not that many wooden lobster boats. It has certain characteristics. I don't know if you are interested in that or not. The shape of the bottom especially where it has a little bit of a scoop and kind of a straight run up across the bottom is a Beal's Island characteristic. [Beal's] were all appearance really is taken from that. They built very attractive lobster boats. I'm still struck by them when I see one of the older Beal's boats. It's what I think a lobster boat should look like. Then I came back from there and started right out here, built this boat first. A friend that I had gone to school with teamed up with me and we helped each other build the first two boats. Then I started right out, I think I had my first commission when I was 21 and that was to build a friendship sloop, probably one of the better jobs I ever had.

P.M.: Well a friendship sloop is quite a bit different from a lobster boat isn't it.

E.D.: Completely different shape yes even though they were originally lobster boats.

P.M.: They were?

E.D.: Yes that's what they used to be.

P.M.: But no motors.

E.D.: Yes it was, I got a lot of my education just working on my own. The two years in school gave me confidence enough to start out and then realize that if I started a boat one way or another I would get through it.

P.M.: How did you get the lines for the friendship sloop?

E.D.: At that point I was working with another student who I had gone to school with so it was another friend. He was starting out in designing also. He was more interested in that end of things so he, Tony [Deiss], he's thirty years later still in the design business also.

P.M.: Does he live around here?

E.D.: No he lives in Rhode Island now but he has quite a name, quite a reputation of his own so we kind of started it out together that way and that was one of his first designs that was built.

P.M.: Are there other folks that went to school with you or that went to that school that are also making boats here in Brooklin that you know of.

E.D.: Yes Peter Chase was in that group and he works at Brooklin Boat Yard now and has for a number of years. There seemed to be quite a few in that particular era that started out on their own or have stayed with the business. Of course that was a long time ago and I've lost track of a lot of them. Wouldn't know several of them if I met them on the street probably now. There seemed to be quite a few out of a class of 20, a large number that did stay with it.

P.M.: Roland [Thurlow] went to that school too.

E.D.: Yes a bit later then me, not much, two or three years after that. Jerry [Stellmok] was in my class.

P.M.: That's interesting. I know those two guys because they've been down to the festival a few times. Let's see what else I want to ask you about. I'm trying to get a sense of the tradition of boat building here in this town and I'm sort of getting the picture that there was some lobster boat building here, the Day's.

E.D.: That would be nearly as far back as I would go. I remember when I was a little boy Arno Day owned what is now Brooklin Boat Yard and was building there. A small shop. An old wood frame shop.

P.M.: It's grown considerable since then.

E.D.: It sure has.

P.M.: And was that the main boat yard in the town or were there others still?

E.D.: Well there was that and Benjamin River which was also in the Day family. Arno's father Frank and his other brother who was also named Frank, Frank Jr. ran Benjamin River Boat Yard.

P.M.: So you never actually went to work for any of these guys?

E.D.: No I worked for Arno briefly. He had moved to Deer Isle at that point, had a shop down there and was still building wooden power boats and I worked with him. My senior year in high school that was the independent study program worked with him then and the following summer. Basically I've never had a real job. I think I worked one 40 hour a week for him but that was the only time in my life I've ever worked for anyone.

P.M.: Well when you went to school you learned this skill. You learned how to make a boat but how did you learn to do the business? Working, selling, figuring out how much money to spend and all that sort of thing.

E.D.: I just stumbled my way along. It wasn't taught. It wasn't really a part of the program at the boat school. I just started out in a good area. I had a good location. There was a lot of repair work and we still do a lot of repair work. There are a lot of boats in this area and by starting out small I was able to just work alone. There were years where there was just me working by myself with one helper. It does take a lot of work to keep two people going. I started building wooden pea pods, which are double-ended [Berlin] boats, a traditional old design. We'd build 4 or 5 of those in a winter and along with some repair work and that would be a winter's work.

P.M.: Are you still building the pea pods?

E.D.: We build them in fiberglass now.

P.M.: You do.

E.D.: We do some fiber glass work and we still try to stick with wood as much as possible but it's still the same design pretty much. I'd like to continue to build wooden pea pods but when I started out I think I sold the first one for $700 and you couldn't begin to paint one for that now. The fiber glass ones are about $2500 now and they take no time compared to a wooden would take to build. I don't know a wooden pea pod like that now would be in the $11,000 range. There aren't many people willing to pay that kind of money for a rowboat. They are very rare so we jumped up a step and we're building the Haven twelve and a half. It's a 16-foot day sailor,

sailboat, very traditional design. It was adapted by Joel White from the Brooklin Boat Yard. He took a Herrschoff design and based this on the Herrschoff style, which had been a very popular boat. Woodenboat magazine was interested in that project and did a how to build boat and fairly publicized the design. We went into that and it got the price where we could and still do produce those boats and are able to earn a living at it when you can build a 16-footer and get in the 30,000 range for it then the numbers work better than they would in a smaller boat.

P.M.: And do these days sellers have motors also?

E.D.: We've built a couple with electric, the [ellco] electric power or they could have a small [outboard] also [which we'd fasten on a bracket] but primarily just a sailboat [?]. We've built about 40 of those. We are actually working on our 40th one.

P.M.: So there's a pretty good market for those?

E.D.: A small but steady market. We built 3 or 4 a year. The construction has changed somewhat. They were originally very traditional plank on frame construction. Now that's gone over to cold molded which is still a wooden boat but its center layers of wood that are bent over a form.

P.M.: Yes we saw that at the boat yard. Steve White showed us that technique and that seems to be what people are moving into. There's a lot more chemicals involved in that.

E.D.: Oh yes, propylene is smelly, dusty, dirty work. Not nearly as romantic as you'd think about it. If you're not breathing fumes then you are breathing dust.

P.M.: Well it sounds to me like Joel White had a tremendous impact on this area because everybody I talk to mentions him.

E.D.: Oh definitely. He produced a lot of very nice designs and especially for a builder like me, preferring to work on smaller boats. I build a lot of his designs. We manufactured the kits for the nutshell [pram] and the shellbacking, which Woodenboat sells. We did that for years and years, we built quite a few of them, finished boats to sell. I've done how to build books on his designs and even did a video of a nutshell years ago so directly or indirectly Joel's designs have been a big part of what I've done over the years.

P.M.: And Woodenboat magazine and also had an impact–and the school would you say?

E.D.: Yes I've done a lot of work for them over the years, teaching at the school and producing the kits, and a lot of other projects. They've hired me to build boats and do a how to build article on it for the magazine. I've done that several times.

P.M.: So it adds another dimension of work and opportunity for people like you who are making small boats and have your own business.

E.D.: Absolutely. They are again part of my ability to stay busy and have interesting work as the area that I'm in. I don't think the fact that there are ten boat builders in a small town hurts, if anything I think it helps by drawing people to the area.

P.M.: That's interesting yes.

E.D.: We all kind of have our niche. There's not a whole lot of direct competition between any of us.

P.M.: People are making different kinds of boats basically?

E.D.: Yes or if one of us is overbooked then we'll turn customers on to one of the other places so we all get along pretty well and help each other out when we can.

P.M.: Somebody was telling me that the school started having the students in the 7th and 8th grade build a boat during the school year a couple of years ago.

E.D.: Yes Brian [Larken] headed up that project. That's worked very well. My daughter was in that last year. She was as 8th grader last year. Had so much fun that she wants to build a boat with me now. Just one more thing to fit in the schedule but probably over April vacation we'll do that. Build a nutshell pram something like that.

P.M.: I thought that was particularly interesting because I don't know of any other school in Maine where the kids are making boats. Maybe there are some but I don't know any.

E.D.: I'm not aware of any either.

P.M.: It's kind of special about Brooklin that that's happening and the parents are quite enthusiastic about the idea.

E.D.: Yes it's a great thing for them to do. The boats they're building, they're not simple but they get an exposure and they don't go along very quickly but the students are learning a lot I'm sure. It's traditional construction to that's built with; the plywood boats are built with cedar boards. They have even carried it so far as to cut the trees and have it milled into lumber right from beginning to end. It's great.

P.M.: So they learn something about the tradition of boat building but what other kinds of skills you think they are learning from this experience of building a boat?

E.D.: You can learn whether it's a boat or what you're building you can learn how to work. It has to be a kind of orderly process. You have to be able to think not only what you're doing but what the next step is going to be so that you don't get ahead of yourself. How to organize your time. How to end up with painting at the end of the day so you're not painting at the beginning of the day and then your sticky stuff for the rest of the day. How to operate tools. My older daughter is out here working on this boat. She's, it's a job for her through the winter when there isn't a whole lot of work but she's learning what could be valuable her whole life I think as to how to

run a job and how to just be responsible for it. I'm trying to leave her on her own as much as possible, check in with her 2 or 3 times a day.

P.M.: How old is she?

E.D.: She's 21.

P.M.: That's a big responsibility for a 21-year-old. You started out at 21 right?

E.D.: At 21 I was running the business.

P.M.: It's kind of interesting to see the change, you know more girls are being involved in boat building now. Certainly a couple of generations ago they weren't involved at all I guess.

E.D.: That's true and they seem to do really well with their finish work, varnish work and painting. They just seem to have the motor skills that maybe men don't or something but they do, they just really take to that type of work. She's caught on really well too, to how to flow on a coat of varnish, which is not an easy thing to know how to do.

P.M.: What do you think drew you to boat building in the first place as opposed to some other thing? I mean you could have been a carpenter, a fisherman.

E.D.: I had no idea what I wanted to do when I got out of high school and I still don't really. If anything more interesting came along I'd probably do it and someday might. I finished high school and had no idea what I wanted to do. I had a friend who had graduated the year before and was attending this boat building program. He sent me up a catalog. There was a picture of some nice looking girls on the cover, which I never found in two years in Lubec. They just weren't there. And Lubec was a hard place coming from a small town and moving to an even more desolate place. Lubec for all its beauty is a very desolate place to live.

P.M.: So coming back to Brooklin was going to the big city after that right?

E.D.: Yes you come back to Brooklin on the weekends just to see what's going on in the world. You couldn't even get American T.V. It was all Canadian. It was like you were in a different country. I don't know. I just didn't know what else I wanted to do.

P.M.: And yet your brother is building boats too.

E.D.: Right. We started out at roughly the same time doing a different type of boat building. He's been fiberglass right from the beginning.

P.M.: Any reason that you were doing wood mostly?

E.D.: I wanted to be a wood worker and I'd still be happy with a project as along as it's wood working even if it wasn't boat building. We've done a few different projects. We did a project for L.L. Bean a few years ago when they did their major expansion in Freeport. We built an

[awning] that goes over their main entrance. It has a lot of compound curves that were supposed to remind people of a canoe. It didn't remind me of a canoe at all but it was a very interesting job. Held it here in the shop and then trucked it down and installed it. Sometimes I feel like I've gotten away from what I really want to do which is be a wood worker and now I'm an office manager, fiberglass worker from time to time. In boat building there's all different aspects. You have to be able to do a lot of different things to be a boat builder but the wood working portion of it, cutting and joining wood. I like to carve. Joe my head carpenter up in the other shop, his specialty is joining and joints to fit and he can do that better than I can. When it comes to shaping pieces and getting just the right shape sculpted in then that's kind of my specialty. That's why I like carving more.

P.M.: I noticed when you said that models look like it's the way you thought a lobster boat should look. I mean you had a sense of aesthetics about the boat, just something attractive that you're trying to duplicate in your work.

E.D.: Yes so much of building a boat is by eye. There was a guy here doing the lettering on the boat next door; putting the name on and doing the gold leaf coats last week and he put it in words just the way I would. "If it looks right, it is right." He was trying to explain some of the subtleties of laying out a name on the stern of a boat and the fact that it can't all be measured because of the different size of letters. You have to be set off a little bit more to one side than the other and adjust your spacing accordingly. When it's done right, it just, the whole job flows and if it's not done right people who don't even know will recognize that it's not right. It seems like if a job is done right people don't notice. If there is something imperfect about it, even the untrained eye can pick up on it.

P.M.: You mentioned that you were teaching how to make models.

E.D.: I've taught that class, the wooden boat schools ever since I've been teaching about 20 years.

P.M.: What's involved in making the model? What do you have to learn to make a model?

E.D.: It's, the way we do it, it's a pretty mechanical process for working from a lines drawing. You have a full set of plans.

P.M.: Isn't it kind of backwards?

E.D.: It's exactly backwards from designing a boat by carving a model yes. This is replicating a particular design.

P.M.: But if you were going to make a model without a drawing how would you do that?

E.D.: I've done it probably 5 or 6 times designed boats and built them from a model. That's really the only way I know how to design. You start out with a sketch at least. If you know the shape of the waterline or roughly what you want it to be you need the basic dimensions of the boat. You need to know what your length is going to be and what your beem, and pick up a few

basic points and that's how it was designed on paper also was to start very basic with almost a sketch and then refine it, and refine it until it becomes a design. It's the same process in wood. It's just working with a different medium. Where I would start with this line drawn out as well as I could get and then the shape of this one and sketch out a profile and start carving with it. Just cut those shapes and then start carving from there.

P.M.: The curves that you're interested those shapes.

E.D.: Yes.

P.M.: But what I don't understand is how you could go from something like this to a boat and figure out how many feet, inches, whatever, how would you measure.

E.D.: These are to scale. This is one inch equals a foot so I could take any measurement from this model and take it up to full size.

P.M.: So when you build the model you have that in mind. You have that scale in mind?

E.D.: Yes.

P.M.: And you build that into your model.

E.D.: Right.

P.M.: Then you go from that to your…

E.D.: Right this model measures twenty inches long and everything is done to scale.

P.M.: And that is pretty much the way they have always done it?

E.D.: Yes they've all been scaled models. Even these large old sailing ship models you see in restaurants from time to time that were working models. They had to be to scale. You had to have some way for them being able to take the information from the model and work it up to full size so it would have to be to scale.

P.M.: Well that's very interesting. That's a fascinating part of boat building I think and if you decided well this boat isn't quite what I wanted. I wanted something that's whatever, longer, wider, different line to it then you'd kind of pretty much have to start over.

E.D.: Most designs are based on other designs.

P.M.: There are no radical changes?

E.D.: Not in the type of boats I build. I've made models before. I had a fifteen-foot version of this that I got the model all done and decided that it just didn't have enough shape up through the top. It wasn't wide enough. It was too straight up that way so I took it on the band saw and

sawed it right off, saved the bottom and glued a new top on it and carved again. So you can either start from scratch or redo any part of it until it's the way that suites you. It's really a process that you have to get into your mind and kind of know what you want. You're just putting it into wood. When I design by carving a model I just think of nothing else for a few days. I just get the whole shape as much into my mind as I can before I really get into the final carving stage.

P.M.: Do you have a lot of these models?

E.D.: Quite a few.

P.M.: That you keep.

E.D.: Yes sometimes we'll sell them because somebody will want them more than I do or willing to pay. I don't build that many anymore for customers. It takes me so long to finish one. It will be a side project on the end of the bench. Sometimes it will sit there months and I won't touch it. People tend to get pretty impatient with me if they waited for me to finish a half model if they want it for a present.

P.M.: But you have some of these around the shop that you could show me?

E.D.: Yes there's another one up here, which is covered in dust. This is a friendship sloop. This is one of the models that Wooden Boat Magazine sells the plans for to build models. The drawing have been redrawn specifically for model carvers so it gives more information than your regular set of plans would give. When I'm teaching the class I usually have one going myself. It's easier to show people how to carve a model if you're actually working on one yourself so this is the result of one of those classes.

P.M.: It's interesting this piece here.

E.D.: Yes a lot of detail work in this, which I enjoy doing the little joiner work. A completely different shape from that but still done with the same method. Then I have the whole set of working models over next door for this if you'd be interested in seeing.

P.M.: You're passing on your tradition to your daughters, do you have any sons?

E.D.: I have a son. He's 10.

P.M.: It's a little too soon to tell whether…

E.D.: It is but he's sports guy.

P.M.: What sports?

E.D.: Anything. When he was about 5 years old I had him down in the wooden boat with me. At that point he was pretty well set in sports. One of the students came up and wanted to make

conversion with him. He said so you going to be a boat builder like your dad? Do you build boats also? He said no I smash baseballs. So he pretty much decided at that point.

P.M.: He's going to be a baseball player. Maybe he'll be with the Red Sox.

E.D.: Well you never know. At some point I'd love to have him come in and get a project going.

P.M.: Well you never know. They go through a lot of changes.

E.D.: Right. From an early age I was always very interested in building things.

P.M.: You never did any fishing or sailing yourself?

E.D.: I went lobstering for a long time with my father. My father was a lobster fisherman and I started when I was 5 going with him in the summers. Went for 20 years retired when I was 25. When I really got started here in the shop, for a couple of years I'd continue to fish in the summers and work here winters. It just worked over to I was more comfortable staying in the shop. If fisherman then had made as much money as they are in recent years I probably would have thought more about sticking with it. It seems like in the early 70's there wasn't that much to fish for. It was a bare living like anything else you would do.

P.M.: Now where are you getting customers for these boats that you are building?

E.D.: They come from all over. We built for [Havens] last year and one stayed right here in this area, one went to California, one to Florida, and one to Japan. So they were all over the world.

P.M.: And do you market through the magazine or how do you market?

E.D.: I don't do a whole lot of advertising myself. There's a company in North Port over near Belfast called Maine Coast BoatHouse and have done a lot of the marketing.

P.M.: OK so they take orders. Do they kind of take orders for a lot of boat builders for this area?

E.D.: For some other builder's yes. It works well. I'm not that interested in going to boat shows and standing there and talking to people. If somebody else like to do that, let them do that.

P.M.: Do you go to the wooden boat festival?

E.D.: I haven't in recent years. I very seldom exhibit at a boat show. The few times I have I just found it to be a lot of work and a lot of time spent for limited results. It takes a week to prepare for a show really to get everything ready to go. Then there's the time spent at the show and then time getting back into what you are doing.

P.M.: And you have a couple of people working for you now?

E.D.: Yes.

P.M.: Do they work full-time?

E.D.: Yes. Joe's been with me 18 years.

P.M.: He's the carpenter?

E.D.: Right, yes and then his stepson Lucan is considering he's only in his early 20's now, early to mid 20's, he's been here for a long time too. He started in high school, coming in afternoons after school and he came right here full-time after he graduated. There's a lot of experience there. Pretty much able to carry on any job on their own.

P.M.: I'm trying to think if I've forgotten anything. Amy Appleton: I was just wondering if there was anything specific about wooden boats that you thought was nicer than a fiberglass boat or if you thought they were about the same?

E.D.: Wooden boats you have to believe they are nicer. You just have to cling to that. We are working on a fiberglass boat next door, the sailboat that is over there is one of the [Bridges point 24's] that my brother builds and they are very nice boats. Fiberglass boats if you have a good design and they are well thought through and well constructed can be very nice but if I was to own a boat and could afford to maintain it, I would prefer a wooden boat. They just have a better feel, which is kind of a simple answer, but people are more romantic about it. They say that they have a soul that the glass boats just come out of a barrel but a wooden boat comes from a living tree. I tend to believe that.

P.M.: They'd be heavier wouldn't they? A wooden boat would be heavier than a fiberglass boat?

E.D.: Not necessarily. Any given design should be built to pretty much the same weight no matter what the material is. You might have to adjust the [ballast], the extra weight that you put in. If I was to take that Bridges point design and build it in wood, which I did once, I built the original wooden built that they took the mold from so it would have to come in very close to the same weight.

P.M.: Now what about maneuverability?

E.D.: That all reflects in the design more than it would in the material of construction.

P.M.: And durability.

E.D.: A wooden boat needs more attention than a glass boat especially when it starts to get some age on it. They really need to be kept up with and a wooden will last a very long time if it's well maintained. We work on wooden boats that are 50 60 years old and still going strong but they need to be kept up with and kept repaired.

P.M.: So it's pretty hard to keep the water out of them [depending] on how many layers of paint put on right?

E.D.: Yes certain things will deteriorate over the years. The fastenings, a lot of the older boats were fastened with galvanized steel fastenings. They are only good for 20 years or so before they start to give out but even bronze fastened boats, the bronze doesn't last forever. It deteriorates so usually the wood will hold up longer than the fastenings. The steam-bent frames in the traditionally built boat will give out after time.

P.M.: Do the cold molded boats have as much fasteners as another wooden boat?

E.D.: Now everything is glued together. For a boat that looks so similar from one type construction to another they are built completely different.

P.M.: So might they last longer?

E.D.: They will last as long as that glue holds together.

P.M.: And we don't know how long that is yet?

E.D.: We don't know how long that is.

P.M.: How long have they been doing that, the new way of building?

E.D.: Cold molded construction has been around a long time about 50 years any way, maybe longer. But with the popularity of epoxy, it's kind of picked up again of epoxy glue and resins really work well for that type of construction. I'd say 9 out of 10 of the Havens that we build go out as cold-molded hulls. If I was to have one of those, given the choice between a traditional wooden small sailboat and the cold molded, I would go with the traditional wooden boat.

P.M.: Still?

E.D.: Yes definitely. Most of the maintenance on a boat that size is in the varnish work and they have the same amount of varnish work. They are trimmed out exactly the same. The hulls going to need to be painted every year or two depending on how hard it gets used no matter what the construction material is.

P.M.: So why do you think people make that, use that method.

E.D.: I suppose the one advantage it has is boats can be left out of the water and live on a trailer and just put in when a person wants to use them or put in for a short period.

P.M.: So they don't dry out and split?

E.D.: That's the major advantage that they have over the plank on frame boat. A plank on frame traditionally constructed boat will last, it can go on forever, it can be replaced one piece at a time until eventually you've replaced the whole boat I suppose.

P.M.: Yes when we were down at the Brooklyn Boat Yard we saw some restorations going on of some, well they've got one boat down there that's I think turn of the century of early 20th century boat that they are restoring. It's quite an amazing thing to see that.

E.D.: Yes it certainly is

P.M.: But it's probably not going to have very much in a way of original parts when its finished.

E.D.: Right. We've done extensive rebuilds on smaller boats also but I can't really imagine how on one of these cold molded boats you would be able to do that extensive a repair job when whatever happens to them happens and sometime way down the road it's likely to.

P.M.: Are there any boats of any type that you can think of that you might call it a indigenous boat in other words a boat that had its origins here?

E.D.: Right in this particular area.

P.M.: Yes.

E.D.: Probably not, nothing to this small area of the coast. It wouldn't also be from further [a field] up and down the coast. There were builders, my grandfather built boats here a hundred years ago and had his particular designs. I don't think any of them have survived so there would be individual builders with their individual designs but as far as anything like the peapod that I was mentioning is a Maine coast invention but to pin it to one particular place would be hard to do.

P.M.: Yes there were people making peapods in different parts of the coast.

E.D.: Yes there were.

P.M.: And they are all pretty much the same.

E.D.: No they vary. Jimmy [Steele] has a shop down the road from here and builds a 13 and a half foot peapod which is the length of mine but they are completely different.

P.M.: Really how are they different?

E.D.: Just the shape of the hull. You wouldn't think a double ended boat of a given length could be as different but mine has more, the ends come up more plum, just not as wide. The whole shape, all the lines are quite different.

P.M.: Where did you get your lines for your boat?

E.D.: I took the lines off of an old Deer Isles peapod that would be probably close to a 100 years old now. It belonged to a man down in [Naskeag Point] here in Brooklin and his neighbor wanted one built like that. He was really struck by the looks of that boat so I took the lines off it

as best as I could. This was early on in my boat building and now I can take a very accurate set of lines but at that point by the time I got done taking lines it was a slightly different boat and built that one for him and then decided I wanted to stay building peapods for a time. Every year I would set up to build, I would make some changes, refinements.

P.M.: The Dow family, are they from Deer Island?

E.D.: The Dow family?

P.M.: Yes.

E.D.: That's where they landed first.

P.M.: I noticed that, I was in the [Keeping] society today and I was looking through the genealogy so it's kind of interesting that you ended up making a Deer Isle peapod.

E.D.: I've been studying

P.M.: Did you think that there was anything in y our mind that you thought might be appropriate for you to make that particular style?

E.D.: No I didn't think it through

P.M.: It just happened that way. Well thank you very much, it's been really fun. It's been great.