

LONG ISLAND MARITIME MUSEUM
Baymen's Oral History Group
 • Edward Ockers •

Edward "Ed" Ockers was a life-long resident of West Sayville, and distant relation of Jakob Ockers, the famed "Oyster King" of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Like many other residents of Dutch heritage, he and his son, Lowell earned their living as commercial fishermen.

Common among the Dutch 'old timers,' was the good-natured practice of bestowing nicknames, many of which were quite unusual. Ed Ockers was humorously known as 'Melon Belly.'

LIMM Research Associate John Kochiss conducted these interviews in late July 1979 when Mr. Ockers was 75 years old.

TAPE: Ed Ockers, 1A

Contents:

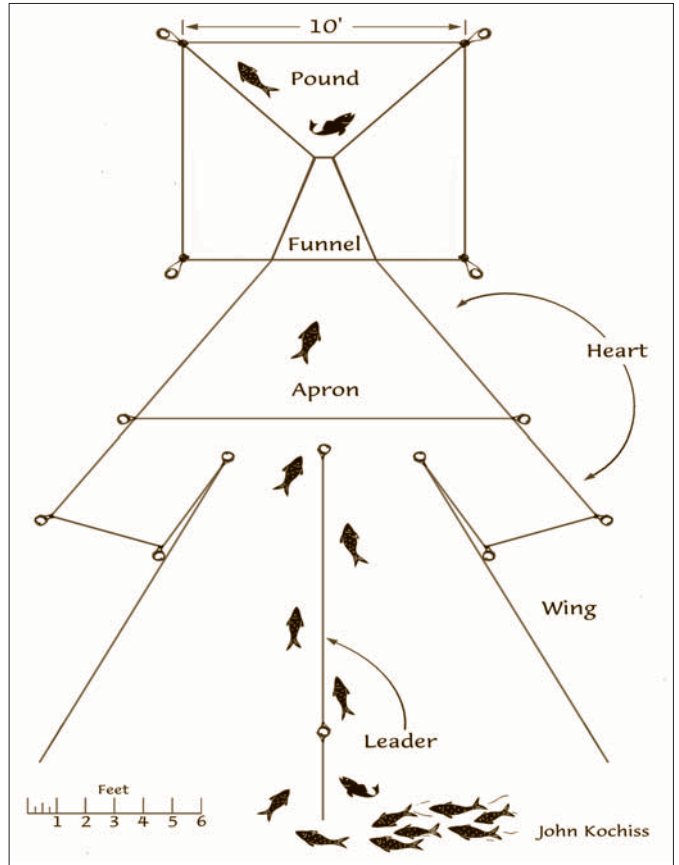
- Early history of Ockers family & life in West Sayville.
- Creation of South Bay Fish Company, (1913-1958)
- Pound fishing in the Great South Bay:
 - location
 - types of fish
 - how nets were set
 - design of traps

TAPE: Ed Ockers, 1B

Contents:

- Continuation of pound fishing in the Great South Bay (0:00-5:00).
- Eeling: traps, season, etc. (5:00-18:00).
- Netting: types, care, construction, preservation (18:00-24:00).
- Gill net fishing (24:00-29:00).

All times are approximate indications of subject/topic areas.



The practice of pound netting was common on the Great South Bay. Nets were strung from a series of wooden stakes driven into the bay bottom at twelve-to-fifteen-foot intervals. Fish, encountering the leader netting, would turn along it and be drawn into the net – through the heart-shaped center and into the pound.

Fishermen harvested them from a small skiff floated into the pound area of the trap. The net would be drawn in toward the boat, cornering the fish, which were then scooped out and into the skiff.