

GEORGE COMBS, JR. May 15, 1987

Interviewer: Nancy Solomon

- 007 Handout on father, aged 76, now lives in Maryland-eastern shore, famous decoy carver
- 012 Old time bayman, a family tradition
- 014 Family dates back to 1644 on Long Island. Came from Connecticut originally from England. Settled Hempstead, then Freeport (called Atlanticville Raynortown)
- 022 All ancestors were baymen or farmers. Great grandfather, George W. Combs was a market gunner, owned a shipyard on South Main Street in Freeport
- 029 Wink Carman's father worked for George Comb's grandfather. Jack Combs had bait dock on Swift Creek. Was also a rum runner for Bill McCoy - "the real McCoy"
- 036 Stories about father
- 045 Grandfather and origin of garvey in Long Island gunnin' boat
- 054 George W. Combs 1845-1939. Death in house he built. Atlantic Avenue. House torn down in 1970's. Boatbuilder, killie pots, schooner
- 066 Great great grandfather, Daniel Combs - pirate. Went to China. Came back and built a shipyard on Sportsman's Avenue. Sold to Scopinich brothers
- 083 Metz articles
- 086 Learned to build boats and work the bay as a child. Built garveys, some gunnin boats
- 095 Ice runners on gunnin boats. Went to Massapequa
- 102 Duck hunting, muskrat trapping, etc. Bay house in Massapequa. Still standing
- 115 Garveys towed gunnin boats for duck hunting. Father built his own boat
- 127 Building a garvey. Cedar sides and plank bottom. Started using plywood because it was easier. Fiberglassed over.
- 136 Garveys v. gunnin boats. Garvey has flat bottom. Gunning -rounded bottom with flat sides
- 155 Dogs and water
- 159 Made first boat at age 16. No friends built boats.
- 168 Influence of father and grandfather
- 181 Fell off dock a few times. Tide went out a few times when he went duck hunting, so he got stuck. Never got stuck on an island. "I had good teachers"
- 204 Qualities of baymen
- 208 Frustrated because of bay conditions and too many people, too many outboard motors. He will be the last bayman in the family. No future in bay
- 245 The sunrise on the bay. Being the last bayman. Personal characteristics - independent, secretive
- 284 Baymen's qualities. Adaptive. No more family history involved. He only catches bait now. Have to know nature
- 313 Catching killies. Was bad last year due to green algae and plankton and red breasted mergansers ate killies.
- 345 Catching killies. Bait-horseshoe crabs. When they come in to lay eggs
- 397 When to catch killies
- 410 Eel spears - made by Theodore Bedell in Freeport. Blacksmith. Hendrickson in Seaford also made eel spears
- 442 Baymen's tools - quality, price. Bedell only made baymen's tools. Other blacksmiths made wheels - Southard in Bellmore

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TAPE 2 SIDE A

001 Shows decoys. Family history

007 Hunters made own decoys and sold them,, Verity family made decoys. Charles Verity made skiffs in Freeport. Not same family as ones who made Verity skiff. Family name.

030 Bud Ellison and decoys. Market gunners. Need for ducks for food

050 History of decoy carvers in Long Island

065 Materials for carving

070 Catching bait and bringing to port

085 Boat guides. Awards for decoys

093 Made first decoy at age 12. Describes process

124 Duck types in the area. Shot birds for the feathers - used in hats. Feather v. market gunners. Most baymen shot ducks in the winter.

145 Styles of schooners. What he enjoys about duck hunting

173 Baymen v. ocean fishermen. No draggers until 1940's. Set liners. Types of nets baymen used and when they fished. Ocean men-year round

207 Some tension, not much. Baymen were more traditional. 1940's kids started doing something else. Ocean men-more recent in Long Island.

225 Ethnicity - English; Sayville-Dutch. Talks about Dutchmen -very clannish. Disliked outsiders

250 Seaford baymen. Kept to themselves

259 Freeport - more ocean men - closer to inlet

275 Eel pots. How made. Grandfather put them from Freeport -Amityville. Unique to travel that distance

310 Lobster fishing

325 Kinds of clams and where they are caught. Hard clams, skimmer clams, soft clams. Black mussels

368 Fog at nighttime. Ice drifts and flows

429 Never shot by another duck hunter. Avoids "yo-yos" from the City

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