

Bob Doxsee

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Nancy Solomon of Long Island Traditions

Time: 42: 51

00:00 - 05:00

Photos: 10- 18 all taken on Ocean Boulevard – by pavilion, the A frame. 1952 storm. Nor'easter. You can see it is right up to the sidewalk. Some of the nor'easter they stay around for a long time – hurricane will go through pretty quickly. Bob took all the photographs.

Sea can remain wild after storm has passed by. These pictures were taken on a sunny day. Does not remember if anyone was living in these homes at the time. Homes or businesses? Just shacks.

#10 - This house was eventually demolished. Background house.

House that says "Keep off". Not a store. Just a cottage. Summer cottages. The town took over all this land. Part of the beach now – of Point Look Out.

#19 – directly behind house that town bought the property. Behind #10. That they demolished the house.

#20 – Father's Clam shells. Not where business was – this was on the inlet. Before Jones Beach jetty which would have protected it from the east. Kept washing away, washed under the rocks, and rocks and would wash into the water. Who put rocks there, the town? Yea.

Picture taken in 1939 or 1940. There was some state help. Rocks north and south of the inlet. Waves would come crashing in like this, go on to the rocks and the rocks would fall in. Huge boulders.

05:00 – 10:00

That can get expensive. This went on for quite a while. Eventually in 1944. Then father and uncle stopped fishing – went into clam business. Doing a lot of business then because Maine was taking all that we can give them which was quite a lot. Had dump trucks, to dump the shells, all the rocks into the water, as you can see here, it built up a reef. See #24.

# 27 pack of cigarettes. Shows comparison. The shells through water motion would make the shells leaf together like this – finger interlocked. Form this pattern where they will leaf together. Very sturdy reef. Not only that - was porous so when waves hit, reef would suck the wave into it and dissipate the power. All buried now with sand. But all those shells still there.

Did your father plan to use those shells as a reef? Yes my father was very forward thinking. He and Patterson. Presiding supervisor of Town of Hempstead. He and my father were very tight. Worked together on this project and Jones Beach project. Jones Beach jetty. Part of US Army engineers. Part of big plan but it worked. It really worked. Project continued whole time we were in clam business.

Dick Murphy started building the Jones Beach jetty around 1952 or 1953. Then all the shells went over there till that job was done.

# 22 – Back on Ocean Boulevard

#19 – Storm going on right here

#23 - In front of house that was demolished. Town is putting rocks along this bulkhead.

#25 - We call it Sunny & Abe's House because he had a restaurant there. Last use house was put to before town bought it. Town took over the property. Made it part of town park district and tore the house down. Right at foot of Cedarhurst Island

#26 – This is looking from Sunny and Abe's house – looking seaward. Can see bulkhead. One time this was land after this bulkhead, far out from where this picture was taken. Water's edge. At bulkhead – all water there now. All erosion.

Contraption – does not know what it is, something Sunny put there for the restaurant. Almost looks like a tire but probably isn't. Just artifact of some kind.

10:00 – 15:00

#28 – This is part of park district, further over to east, towards inlet. Down on the beach.

#29 - Town putting sand here, this bulkhead is extended sea wood, long time ago. A lot of erosion going on here. 1952.

# 30 Maps – compilation of changes in Jones' inlet

# 31 – Sunny & Abe's house again. Old Bulkhead being washed away.

# 32 – Bulkhead is right up against sidewalk. There was step down to get onto the beach. A lot of erosion going on. On south side of Point Lookout. Before talking about east side of Point Lookout where we put the rocks. This is town bay beach area.

#33 – Ocean Boulevard where the houses are being washed away. All 1952. Bob took all these pictures. Not this one but took all the others.

#36 – Dump truck, old army truck that we got – family business, through Bob's company.

Extension on tailboard so the shells could dump sea wood into the water. That's how we got that reef going out. Probably taken circa 1950.

#37 – Mrs. Mary Scott. Article from LI Forum. Meadow Island was part of National Seashore. A lot of shipwrecks back in those days.

15:00 – 20:00

Smith – guy they named recreation center after – 19<sup>th</sup> century – he was given the land as a reward for the lives he saved. Point is Town of Hempstead did not own Meadow Island. Meadow Island was privately owned.

Descendants of Smith had a hotel and a restaurant there facing south and daughter married Scott. She became Mary Scott. She was good friends with my father.

She had plans drawn up for Meadow Island – 20th century – around 1910. Had son who, who I remember very well, General McGlouland Scott.

What happened to the land? She had land on Indian River in Florida that she could not pay taxes on. She wanted to give to my father, and he could not pay back taxes either. So she lost that. She had a clothing store in Freeport on Church Street. Maybe a tailor shop.

#38 - This is by Mineola Avenue. Looking south towards the ocean. Last two houses on Mineola that are still there.

Inlet is on far side of rocks. This rock jetty that town built. This is inside – low tide. Water would come up to the sidewalk. Come up right through the rocks because the rocks were porous and water would come to the sidewalk. Bob did not take that picture. Picture taken late 40s.

We saw this picture before – on Ocean Boulevard.

This is the old wooden bulkhead before they put the old sandbags in.

#41 – last two houses on Mineola Boulevard. This is the last house when we moved.

#42 – same thing on Ocean Boulevard.

#44 – This is very old. All these pictures of Point Lookout. All the cars are parked on the Boulevard means there is no paving on the side streets. Would have been early 1930s.

#45 – This is after the town put the rock jetty in. This is where the last two houses are on Mineola Boulevard - east side of Point Lookout – looking north towards the draw bridge.

20:00 – 25:00

#46 - #49 - All the same thing on Ocean Boulevard. Bob took those pictures. You can see people on side walk and water running up to the sidewalk. Took pictures in 1952.

People who lived on Ocean Boulevard where they always getting flooded and damaged in the streets?  
No

In Sandy - only bayside got it and the north east side by the inlet got because it is lower. The land on ocean side is higher. By the ocean – they got no water in the streets. Got sand but no water. Maybe Ocean Boulevard got something but that would be about it from the waves coming over – the waves were so big.

Mentioned sandbags, shells you out, bulk heading were there other things that people or the town did to help protect against storms and hurricanes? They did a lot. Father made many trips to Washington D.C.

Jones Beach inlet jetty built in 1952, 1953. Things improved after that. Kept a lot of velocity seas from racing up in land.

Has memories of jetty being built. Took couple years to build. Two, three years maybe. Got the rock for the jetty from the up Hudson. Company called Track Rock. Brought the rock down in barges, around ocean and through Jones' inlet. Stone dock was at short beach – built for – to bring the rock in. All unloaded off the barges then put out on the jetty.

Knew people who worked on that project. Does not think they are still around – over half a century ago. Dick Murphy had the subcontract on Jay Vert Steers. He and my father were very close.

What were some of the memories that were being built? They made roads.

Dick Murphy was a character out of a book. He was a drunk but he got things done. Took a lot of short cuts. Not someone I would want to be involved with but he took our shells and that was big help to us. My father had a lot of dealings with Dick Murphy. A lot of it was not legal. Not still alive.

25:00 – 30:00

Had this thing called an alligator parked right outside. Pat and I lived in a house. This property, house we are sitting in was a vacant lot. Alligator - tank they use in a war – this was a sea going tank. Instead of just having treads – had caterpillar treads with panels on it so it can swim in the water. Huge thing. After treading was done, he did other contracted jobs. He went on the surf with this alligator and pulled out jetties out of the ocean. All kinds of crazy things.

Bowmen or Lowmen Well Drilling – from Bethpage. They wanted to drill wells on Fire Island Beach. New community going up – Dunewood. Dick had 100 foot barge named The Flint. Well drilling truck – heavy to begin with. Huge crane was on the barge. Caterpillars treads, had them tied down with real heavy wire cable, tied down to the deck. Dick was still working on the jetty.

He and my father owned very little tug boat the Frim? Small thing but handy. Made of steel. Dick wanted to get this barge towed to Fire Island beach the Frim to work in the morning which was impossible. Early spring towing this thing out through bay. I was not a bay guy, was an ocean guy. Our boats were the Victory and the Frim. I was on the Victory and couple of other guys were on the Frim. JC was on barge the Flint.

First had victory behind trying to keep in line then decided to go ahead. Got through this bridge then through Wantagh Bridge, got through state channel. Been a tough winter, some of the markers got pulled out of the bottom with the ice. Know how the ice does that? Naturally we run a ground.

Flint drew less water than other two boats. Victory drew a lot of water – should never have been there. We are drowning and Flint coming down on top of us. Frim turns sideways.

Then the Flint had a counter – was not a square bow. Sloping counter. Comes right over top of Flint just as Dick steps out. He goes flying into the water.

This was April. Water was cold. He starts drifting away. We have no line on him. I just get to the line and I hand him the line. We keep running a ground. Quadrant of the back of the boat - cables kept jumping off the quadrant.

Somehow we got to Captree State Park, through the drawbridge. I don't remember how we got to the drawbridge. It was night time. Thought we were going to leave the Flint there. Now we have to keep going. We didn't know the crossfire of the inlet.

30:00 - 35:00

Pitch dark how we ever got there I don't know. Finally we get to Dunewood. The Flint was too wide to go through the channel.

Finally we get up to the pier at the dock. This was back in the mid-50s. It was after I was married. Must have been in 58.

Now he wants to unroll the truck. It has all these pipes on it. God knows what it weighed. It weighed tons. He had a big crane, kingpin on the crane. Somehow we got it off. We got it done. Nightmare. However accomplished what we did. But we did what we set out to do. It was so cold out.

I was 27 or 28 maybe - was just a kid. I should have refused to do it. My father told me to do it and I did it.

We did not have any liability insurance on the boat. Anything could have happened. We did it anyway.

But that was the kind of guy that Dick was.

One of the guys that Dick did business with was George Street - had a Mayco. He was one of our suppliers. George was not with us that night lucky for him.

During that period of time, my father had business that collapsed. Not because there were not any clams but because there were too many clams. The market was flooded with clams. So we were grasping at straws then.

George got involved with Dick unfortunately for George. There is another guy work for him Neil. He told him to rent a U-Haul trailer in your name, not my name. So he does it. You didn't care about jeopardizing somebody else. It's the way he did business.

George Street he was straight as a string. That's just the way he was. He didn't want this oversize trailer or whatever it was. They are riding along and they get stopped by the police. Cop says what's your name and he says George Street. He gave George's name. ID is in my other pants.

Prior to this he wasn't using his license. He was using his son's license. Now the son uses his license too right. The son is another story.

Poor George is oblivious to all this. Next thing he knows he has to go to court. It was a whole big mess.

You worked on the Jenny building project and bulkhead projects?

35:00 - 40:00

Did other people in town also work on these projects?

Yeah McDowell. He and my father were contemporaries. In those days you would go in and asked to speak with Mr. Paiser and they would be like oh come on in. Sit down.

Not like now. They worked closely with town officials. A lot different than the way things are now.

Do you recall whose idea it was to do these projects? Was at the town or the people in town hall?

Like I said my father and Peiser were very close. A lot of time people would complain because the shells had an odor. 'Oh we don't want those sticky shells'.

There was resistance to them. But they worked. They came together and formed a really tight barrier. At the same time they absorbed a lot of water. That was deep right down there.

Had a clipping mounted on a picture frame. I got it somewhere if you ever want to see if I can find it. Remember Russ Rayfield? No. He was an old party boy skipper – eventually go a job at conservation and waterways. Has picture of Russ, my father and McCloucland – doing annual spring checkup on, big electronic devise in those days was a faterbeater? – which costs nothing today but was a big deal in those days.

Going along the jetty – was 40 feet deep.

On Meadow Island – were there things you did to protect the houses and worker's houses? Water levels were much lower then.

What about during a storm, did you do anything? No don't think so. Doesn't remember - was a child. But young as I was I can remember - water level was a lot lower then.

We raised this all up last winter. See next door foot and half lower. Water was that far from back door and front door. It was really high.

What did it look like along here during Sandy? It was dark. Water covered all of the docks. It was right through the door. But the waves are unbelievable. The float overrode the poles and wound up in a corner. Hung up the back of the float was hung up on its dock.

10 by 10 foot freezer on the dock – saw it go by but I thought it was my office trailer but it wasn't. It was a 10 by 10 foot freezer. I can hear it. Had a lot of frozen clam chowder in there. Hundreds of pints of clam chowder would up in Island Park.

Poles are about eight feet higher than they were before.

Nugent? came down with his barge.

40:00 – 42:50

Ramp had to all be put back together. But lucky part was, it cost me quite a bit of money. He did it as cheap as he could. Frig had been demolished, stuck in corner, he got it up on dock. Had a 40 foot trailer, sea containers had knocked my shed off foundation – container was wrecked as well.

Good friend of mine came down with huge fork truck. Tight because shed was in the way. Got it out of there and got rid of container for me but at same time got remainder of freezer up on sidewalk. Town of Hempstead came with two big shovels – yellow machines –got it up and in the truck and got rid of it. Cost me nothing. What I had to pay Nugent, I got back for them taking away that stuff for me. I was lucky.

Were there things you remember doing before a storm hit that you thought this is something you should always do before a storm hits? You try to secure things as best you could. Throw lines on the boats. All kinds of things.

Are there certain things everybody should do before a storm if they live in an area like this? A lot of people put tape on the windows. Emergency lighting.

I lost two fork trucks and four vehicles. Didn't protect very well. I have never seen anything like that before.

**END**