

Informant: Chuck Tekula – VIDEO

Date: May 31, 2016

Interviewer: Nancy Solomon

Location: Center Moriches, NY

AUDIO LOG

00:25 – 2:00 Born November 10, 1951, Amityville. Parents original owners – Levitt house. Father – postal worker. First memories of how he got into fishing. Father loved fishing.

2:00 – Wrote story about fishermen for school. Admired commercial fishermen. They knew stuff – would not tell anything.

2:30 – Sold house in Levittown. Moved to Amityville. Bought clam boat. Old timers. Boat leaked.

3:20 – Worked part time

4:33 – Clammers ran the bay.

8:30 – Old timer story first started gillnetting

9:50 – Harry’s boat yard – very famous

10:20 – Bunkers’ oil has sweet smell.

10:52 – Net bigger than the bunker so not to catch the bunker.

11 - 13:30 – Story of his first big successful catch. 1983.

14:04 – 15:48 Being a good fishermen is knowing what is going on under the surface.

17: 50 – With all the regulations

18:12 – Ecological changes in the bay – the water has risen.

20:00 – Health of the bay is excellent. Quality of clams are great.

23:45 – Rain water hits mountains and bedrock, goes into stream and goes into fresh water and estuaries.

29:50 – Area could not clam. There were clams there.

34:48 – Cops that worked midnight shifts went fishing during the day.

35:00 – Could sell to anybody. Now they changed the law – 15 years. Fishing license you cannot get anymore. Needed a dealer’s license. Sells to fish markets.

36:00 – Cut back on operations because of hip problems. Had operation. Semi- retired.

36: 53 – Averages work three to four days a week.

37:13 – Clams five days. Only clams now. No early mornings. Labor intensive. Hard on back.

37:40 – Gillnetting. Cut down to two nets. 1,000 feet each.

38:05 – Over building. Everyone has boats in their back yards. Mini mansions. Squatters. Marking nets.

41:50 – Targeted species. Blue fish. Market never ever really gets completely saturated. Good for him. But tough for big operation. Tough to make money with those limits. Fluke. Weak fish.

44:20 – Only way to catch weak fish by following the dredge boats around. Every day thing for hundreds of years and it suddenly it ended. Clam boats stir up bottom too. Now you don’t see anything. What will the fish eat?

45:18 – No mention in any reports/ studies – huge change – no food for fish. The young don’t have the food.

45:50 – Course of the year – January: clams. Depends on weather. Days off makes traps or nets.

50:00 – Crabs – extra money. Still catches bunker today. Fall – bass season.

54:00 – Used to be 240 tags for striped bass. Now down to 196 tags. Big commercial fill quota in one day.

55:00 – Best days of catch, types of fish caught throughout summertime

56:38 – Every year is different. Last year exclusively blue fish, some weeks.

57:10 – Seeing different kinds of fish than in the past. Black drum.

58:00 – Croaker fish - seeing more – started about ten years ago. Different types of fish.

1:03:00 – Marina was inaccessible. New way of filling in breaches. Done in a week. But fish died.

1:06:00 – How the wind affects water patterns and surges. Fishing dynamics.

1:12:00 – Pulled fished from his area. Great South Bay – not allowed to use gillnet. Boat not big enough to go in ocean.

1:16:54 – Has been caught in storm. Two years ago. Has been in lots of storms.

1:20:15 – Big changes in weather patterns. Used to be able to predict but cannot anymore.

1:23:25 – will know when an east wind coming - called a maritime layer. Can come really quickly and strongly - almost out of nowhere – out in the ocean – not so much in the bay.

1:24:30 – Clouds are best thing to watch for storm predictions. Just having experience. Watch out for wind.

1:28:50 – Story of getting out of an unpredicted storm.

1:33:24 – Cannot believe stories of shortage of fish – no science behind it.

1:34:40 – Fogginess in water does not mean it is dirty and clear water does not mean it is clean. Fogginess in in water is algae – bay needs algae. Comes every year.

1:39:01 – Will not stop working on the water. Knows baymen working in their 80s. Loves working on the bay. May have to stop clamming if shoulders give out. As far is gillnetting – will keep doing it.

END