

Ed Warner Sr. Part 1
Interviewed by Nancy Solomon
July 24, 1997

Side A

Ordered seed oysters. Put in Mecox Bay/inlet. Always had oysters and seed clams. Paid \$4 - \$5/bushel – bought by Bluepoints company. Working since he was 12 – 13. Haul seined in Peconic bay for porgies and weakfish. Shipped in butter tubs. Was in Navy. Worked in the bay since his return. Has caught 32 bushels. Steamers also called long clams by his grandfather. Went eeling. Hard clams also called round clams. Smelt nets. Married in 1957. House is on grandfather's farmland. Other relatives live on property – is 5th generation of Warners.

Hard clams –biggest set was in 1940s. Moriches Bay – late 1930s. Red Creek Pond, Albert's Creek, Peconic River – very productive – 15 bushels per day. Cycles of no scallops – lasted weeks.

Trustee in Southampton. Uses mud rakes. Used banana rake also known as a Jersey rig – 38 teeth. Scratch rakes, tongs, long-lining – makes a half circle. Scoop nets used in clamming in Shinnecock. 6 – 7 baymen do long lining – Ken Mades, George Schellinger. Done today. "B.K." Don Warner, Dan Squires, Ray Jackson in earlier years – also made tools. Lives on Canoe Place – 90 years old. Warren Anderson made scratch rakes in 1890s. Jackson learned from Anderson. 1938 hurricane brought more clams to Shinnecock Bay. Brackish water. Inlet was breached.

Cold Spring, West Neck- Sebonac, North Sea Harbor – Cow Neck Point, Noyac Creek, Mill Creek, Sag Harbor Cover, Wooly Pond are good spots. Jamesport – mud hole, good for chowders in early 1900s. Older clams get blue inside. Scallops were earlier in Peconic Bay than other parts of the estuary.

Tools – sloops towed on one side. Used dredges. Went to Greenport, some to Riverhead. Were wide – 36 feet long, 14-foot wide. 10 bushels per man. Two men worked on a boat. The boat was low to the water so you would not have to pull dredge too high. Used cat boats with barn door rudder. No power. Sloops used until mid 1940s. Used on north fork mostly – New Suffolk.

Ed used long lining in a row boat in the 1940s. Many full time baymen then. Hard clams, soft clams, scallop season. Fell asleep shucking. Daughter could shuck 1 gallon per hour. Soft clams –outboard motor churned them out, or raked and shoveled. Hubbards Creek for soft clams. Went at high tide only – motor was on an angle.

Side B

Some areas you wanted an incoming tide or outgoing tide. Squires Point – brackish water – soft clam set every year. Sold clams to Fulton Fish Market – shipped by Swezey truck or railroad, no longer operating. Chet Shaefer and Reach Brothers also shipped via truck. Paid in stamps.

Mother made stews. Mecox Bay – had some oysters. West side of Rose Hill Road. Found on sticky bottoms. “Rabbit ear” oysters – small and crooked. Oysters lived in deep water, 6 – 7 feet deep. Used tongs and rakes. No power allowed. Planted seeds – 10 – 14 years ago, most died. Lived in Scallop Pond near Sebonac Creek and Bull Head bay. “Port of Missing Men” is there. Site of rum running. 18 – 20 feet deep. 200 baymen. 4-5 men per creek in its heyday.

Water started turning greener, eels declined, brown tide appeared. Road runoff – pitched roadbed towards pond. Bottom is like coral today. 1970s – more recreational boats.

Dredging has improved Cold Spring Channel. More bulkheading due to erosion. Storms are worse. No turf wars. Some fights if a bayman came too close. Limits. No limit on soft clams. \$50/bushel today. 7 – 8 bushels is a good catch. Sold to restaurants: Judge’s, Fish Net. Fish catches.

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Side A

Northport – Harry Berglin made him a custom rake. Scallop – used lead line on dredge. If he shortened the line he did not need to use lead line. Made adjustments on dredge height. Had good technique. Was a good student.