

Publication: Patchogue Advance 1926 - 1979; Date: Dec 5, 1946; Section: None; Page: 28

Captain Sam Newey Is Typical Of This Area's Bay and Boat Men

Still Lives in Brookhaven House in Which He Was Born 85
Years Ago; Louis V. Place Wreck Recalls

The Village of Brookhaven is not usually thought of as being particularly identified with the water, although it is situated on both the Great South bay and Carman's river. And it also has had a good share of men who have depended upon the water for their livelihood. Many remember Cap'n. Bythe Gerard and Cap'n Frank Smith who rented their boats to sailing parties when Smith's Point was a popular beach on Fire Island, and the life saving station there was an active one.

But the man who is most representative of our bay and boat men is Samuel Newey—"Cap'n. Sam", as he is generally known. He is not only a life-long resident of Brookhaven but he still lives in the house in which he was born 85 years ago.

Captain Newey attended the Brookhaven school which was then a one-room affair, but the building was later moved away and is now part of the Hawkins homestead on Beaver Dam road. At that time the pupils sat on benches, holding their slates in their laps, as there were no desks. Many of the boys, Cap'n Sam said, were full grown and worked on the bay in the summers and only attended school during the winter months. There were about 60 pupils and one teacher.

Big Oyster Hauls

When Captain Newey was married in 1888, he brought his bride (Lillian

May Lamb of Center Moriches) to his parents' home, which house he had enlarged to accommodate the two families. The addition is not unlike the interior of a ship in its construction of wooden sheathing. The house is situated at the foot of what came to be known as Newey lane and overlooks both the river and the bay. Samuel Newey started out as a bayman and recalls the time when it was not unusual for him to get 50 to 75 fish-tubs (each tub about a bushel and a half) of oysters a day, for which he would get 10 cents a piece—a good living in those days.

The largest oyster bed in these parts lay just off Smith's Point, according to cap'n Sam. He deprecates the prevalence of hook and line fishing, saying that the former method of net fishing was preferable, as small fish were thrown back and the supply was not depleted.

The Coast Guard claimed Samuel Newey for about 10 years and during that time his young family lived in a cottage which he had built on the beach close by the government house. While living on the beach they kept a horse on the point of the Tangier Smith property and crossed the bay for supplies at its narrowest part. In the winters there were often severe storms when they would be snowed in for weeks at a time.

Recalls Several Wrecks

Cap'n. Sam recalls several wrecks which occurred while he was in the Coast Guard, particularly those of the schooners Louise Randall and Louis V. Place. At one time the government

surf boat which was being used for rescue work was split open by the heavy sea. There were seven men, besides the captain, in a coast guard crew and Sam Newey thinks he is the only member living of the crew with which he served.

Boat-building had always been Cap'n. Sam's main interest and in 1900 he began devoting all his time to it. He started a ship-yard on the property adjoining his father's home, to which he had returned, and from that day to this, he claims he has never been without work to do.

A 65-foot freighter, the "J.H.B.", which he had built for himself and had used for carrying coal (which then sold for \$6.50 a ton) was later bought by the Vacuum Oil company. He subsequently built 14 boats for this company, vessels which traveled to India, Africa, and many foreign ports.

The year 1924 was a record year for in that time, he completed 54 boats. Many of these were sail-boats of the S B class for the Westhampton Beach Yacht club. Cap'n Sam is proud of the watch which the club presented to him in appreciation of these pleasure craft.

All the boats which Cap'n. Sam has built were designed by him, but he never used drawings. His favorite comment on this fact is that "no one can see two sides of a boat at one time, anyway."

That his boats have distinctive characteristics was recently proved when one of them was recognized in Florida. This cruiser was moored at Melbourne when a young member of the WAVES, Shirley Decker Pongonis, who grew up in Brookhaven, saw it and verified the fact that it was one of Cap'n. Sam's boats. Her father, Louis Decker, had worked in Newey's ship yard for some time and she was therefore quite familiar with the kind of boats that were built there.

After nearly a half century of boat-building, Cap'n. Sam decided to retire this fall and sold his business to a young man, Richard Tooker, of Center Moriches. He enjoys driving his car, and spends considerable time taking his wife and daughter to visit relatives and friends, but he still can be found quite often in the ship-yard where some of his original customers still store their boats every year.