Heinrichs' Boat Works

Recollections of BOB HEINRICHS

The Heinrichs' Boat Works was started by my grandfather. My father and my uncles all worked for Grandpop, so as far as I know it was started by him. His name was Captain Edward Heinrichs.

I was born in 1921. When I was a kid, I went there to work. My job was to clean up after a boat was torn apart. My father. Gus Sr. and his brothers Pat (Francis), Joseph and Edward Jr. all worked at the boat works. They are all gone now. The boat yard had mostly boats from Long Beach Island. We built and repaired boats. They built a new building up in the front area and had the offices and machine shop that they used for turning shafts and propellers. The biggest boat they built was 50 feet long and 12 feet wide. It was later used for rum running.

These boats were garveys, tunnel stern with big Studebaker engines (two in each boat, I believe). That was during the prohibition days. There was a winch house with the marine railway tracks going into the water.

We moved from the boatyard. My grandfather lost it during the depression. None of the buildings are there anymore. The last thing I can remember about it is three great big rum runner boats had been pulled out of the water and stored there. That was after prohibition. They were there for a long time.

Right along the front of the creek was the machine shop. It was facing across the creek to the Elmer DiBois machine shop.

Heinrichs' Boat Works was strictly a family business. When my father left the business, he went to work for Adam Price and we moved up to Parkertown. Back in 1938, we had a terrible storm and the Tuckerton Railroad washed out where I now live, on Mill Street.

The engine room and the boat at Heinrichs' Boat Works were as clean as a pin. They had three big boats with Liberty aircraft engines in them. One guy bought one and took it to Ed Driscoll's and revamped it into a fishing boat. They didn't name the boat. During that time, a big 110-foot boat was brought into Tuckerton. I remember walking on it when it was brought up the creek. It was called the "Thetus." It was stored in the water.

There were three covered boat houses in Crowley's Basin where boats could pull right in, staying in the water. And I remember the sailboat that used to set there, called the "Deepwater." It burned down by the old fish factory off Story Channel one Sunday morning. It belonged to one of the Crowleys.

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Across the way, they constructed a building for a man by the name of Jimmy Shearer. He was great in Tuckerton. He was a radio producer and used to bring all kinds of toys down. Every Christmas, he had a party for all the kids.

I was born on South Green Street in Tuckerton and grew up in Tuckerton. We moved out to Parkertown because my dad went to work for Adam Price. I went to Tuckerton High School and made the big mistake of quitting in my junior year. I left there in 1940. Mr. Sprague, the principal, was my cousin. I am the oldest in my family. My real name is Nelson Robert. There was George, then Millard, Gus Jr., and Marilyn.

We used to sail our sneakboxes on Tuckerton Lake and Jimmy Shearer would give us prizes.

I went in the Navy in February of 1942 and got out in February of 1946. We patrolled the coast. I ended up in Guam. I got married a month after I got out. I worked as an auto mechanic in Tuckerton where the Citgo is on Route 9. I worked on speed garveys after that at Adam Price's. Adam had a crackerbox garvey with a 100 horsepower Ford Engine in it. It kept breaking down, so we eliminated it.

Paul Hughes was the last one to have our old boat yard, and I was never in there again after 1939. All the boats used to come down the creek for hurricane storage at that time.



Photo courtesy of Mike Mangum

Heinrichs' Boat Works
Our Tuckerton Seaport "feature building" is Heinrichs' Boat Works. We have been fortunate in having members of the Heinrichs family willing to share their family history with the Museum. We have plans to reconstruct the Heinrichs' Boat Works and Marine Railway on our Seaport site as a working boat shop where we will construct and repair traditional watercraft. Along the waterfront, we have plans for dockage to display vintage boats.