WILLIAM BOB LEEK

Bob Leek was born in West Creek and lived there all his life. A bayman, he tonged for clams and was known for outclamming most of the other clammers. Later on, he commercially fished for stripers from his own boat.

Bob built about a half dozen Bateau clam boats for special friends and family. He wouldn't sell them, but insisted on giving them away. He also built a racing garvey for a friend. He insisted on one more tradition — cutting his own lumber for the boat material. He worked in a saw mill on Stafford Forge Road.

Bob made a living off the land — and the water — wherever nature presented the opportunity.

When he was younger, he worked with his father, Major Leek, who earned his livelihood farming and cutting Jersey cedar. Major also had a large blueberry patch on the Wading River. Bob supplemented the family trade by selling seafood in the Browns Mills, Pemberton and New Lisbon areas.

He worked in the cedar swamp all his life. He scooped cranberries and picked pine cones. When he cut and sold firewood, he used a horse and buggy to haul it out of the swamp. Later on, an old Model A Ford did the job, with some help. One time the load was so heavy, Bob said, that the car's front wheels lifted off the ground and someone had to stand on the front bumper so the car could be steered home.

He was a guide for the Ocean City Hunting Club and the Little Eagle Hunting Club, and he was known as a great deer hunter. He bagged a huge eight-point buck on the Wading River, and some deer with 12-point racks. Bob was also a muskrat trapper and did some duck hunting. He hunted with his rabbit hounds and English setters.

Bob volunteered as a fireman in West Creek.