

## Robert Beloff

by German Georgieff

Robert Beloff was born in 1941 in the Pinewald section of Berkeley Township, in the hospital that was previously the Royal Pines Hotel. His parents lived on New Bridge Road, in the Nugentown section of Little Egg Harbor. The road was later renamed Nugentown Rd. Off of that road is Beloff Drive, named after his family. His grandfather worked for the Tuckerton Railroad. His father was a bricklayer, doing union work when available, and working for himself at other times.

Bob had plenty of hunting opportunities within walking distance of his home while growing up. He hunted rabbits on the old Frasier peach orchard where Pinelands High School now stands. He remembered there being a still out there, operated by some men from Hammonton, until it was discovered by the revenuers and they busted it up. He hunted ducks in the Otis cranberry bogs behind the present school site. He remembered there being an artesian well feeding the reservoir but he's not sure what happened to it. His favorite wood duck pond was off of Bridge Rd., which was unnamed back then. Houses built on either side of the pond ended his hunting there.

During summers while in high school Bob worked for Rands U-Drive Boats, on Seven Bridges Road. He would handle the rentals and clean the boats when they returned. Each boat had a bait board but nobody seemed to use them, instead cutting the bait atop the engine box. A constant challenge was trying to slow the boats down as they rushed back, usually ignoring him and slamming into the dock. The job was worse when a summer thunderstorm would bring close to 50 boats back at the same time. He'd no sooner tie one off when another was right behind it. He remembers seeing all 53 boats go out most weekends, and 20 or so on weekdays, all coming back full of fluke, many of them undersized. And that didn't include the private boats docked at the marina. He thinks all of this is the reason we have so many regulations today. In any case, Hurricane Sandy destroyed Rands, and it was never re-built.

One unique Pine Barrens tradition Bob used to make extra money doing was what locals called "pineballing", which was the gathering of pine cones for the florist trade. He picked cones in the pygmy pines along Route 539, where the dwarf trees had cones within easy reach. A buyer would come along every so often to collect his cones.

Another source of income for Bob was trapping. He used to trap muskrat on the salt meadows at the end to Mill Creek Road in Manahawkin. It was a dirt road back then, and he could drive all the way to the meadows. The Beach Haven West lagoon community put an end to trapping on that marsh. While living in an apartment in West Creek he trapped the meadows behind them, where the Cox family used to cut salt hay. That land is now part of Forsythe Refuge and can't be trapped. He jokes how he hates the refuge for the limitations it placed on traditional activities while his wife loves it for all the land it's protected from development. He does agree that building has ruined much of the way life used to be in the region. While muskrats were always his main quarry, he also trapped fox, raccoon and mink. He recalls taking several mink where Seacrest Nursing Home now is located. He eventually worked on construction of that nursing home for Joe Palermo.

Bob trapped right up to the early 1960s, when union brickwork began taking up more of his time. Tending a trapline was time consuming, and he didn't miss hauling a heavy burlap bag full of wet muskrats off the meadows. Overall, however, he did enjoy trapping. If duck season was in, he'd bring his shotgun along while tending his traps and jump shoot ducks out on the meadows if the opportunity presented itself. He claims money can't be made trapping anymore.



*Photo Credit: Awardee's Family*

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Too much of the meadows have been lost to either development or the refuge.

He did clam a few times with his neighbor, Bill Driscoll, although he never considered himself very good at it. He said Bill would catch 2,500 while he caught 250 during the same time. He did enjoy doing it however.

A favorite pastime of Bob's was rabbit hunting with his beagles. He hunted the woods around Amasa Landing and the old farm where Atlantis Golf Course now is. He hunted the woods around his present house in Parkertown too, until building eventually put an end to that. More than once, when a hound ran off chasing a deer, he had to use the old hunter's trick of leaving his hunting coat behind, coming back in the morning to find the lost dog curled up on it.

It's been twenty years since Bob last hunted rabbits, and his hounds are all gone. He's spent his years since doing side work and helping his wife breed Labrador Retrievers. Their pups have always earned praise from buyers, but that is starting to be too much work. While they still have a few dogs, they don't know if they will produce any more litters. Considering all the growth in the surrounding area, Parkertown is still relatively peaceful. Bob now enjoys the quiet, his time with his family and his memories of what has been a wonderful area to grow up and live in.

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