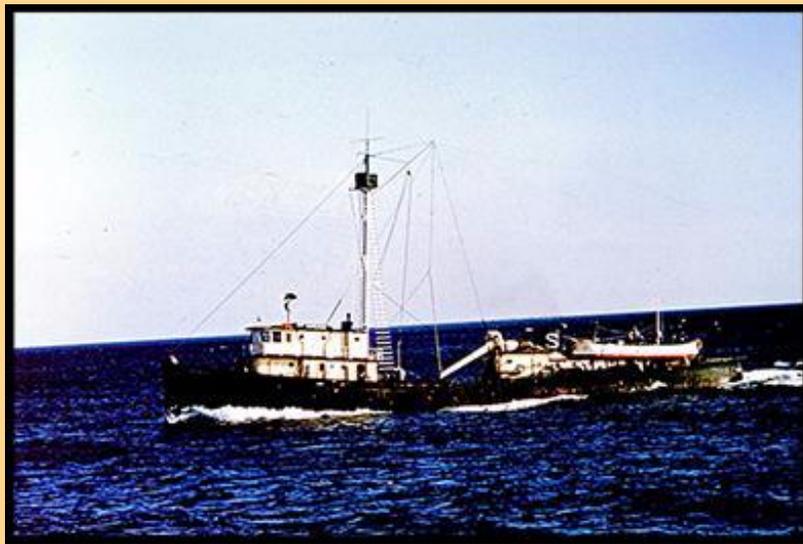




Item of the Week *from the* Long Island Collection

LONG ISLAND COLLECTION | DIGITAL LONG ISLAND | EAST HAMPTON STAR ARCHIVE



Napeague, a fishing boat, Captained by Norman Edwards

The photograph above, taken by Bruce Collins between 1954 and 1960, shows the Napeague, a bunker fishing boat. The image is part of a [collection of photographs taken by Bruce Collins](#), documenting life as a commercial fisherman, captain, and pilot for the Smith Meal Company, which closed in 1968. The Napeague was captained by Norman Edwards out of Promised Land, also part of the fish factory's fleet.

Norman Edwards was the youngest of three sons of Eva King Edwards and Captain Samuel Stratton Edwards, as well as the grandson of legendary whaler and bunker fishing pioneer Captain Joshua B. Edwards. Norman's father and uncles built the Edwards Brothers dock at Promised Land and many family members also worked for Smith Meal Company, which hired mostly African American crews from coastal Virginia and the Carolinas. Norman's crews came from Reedville, Virginia. In his obituary, Norman Edwards is credited with being the first to work with airplanes to spot schools of fish. He's also remembered for his uncanny ability to visually estimate the size of his catch.

Information provided by Bruce Collins indicates the Napeague was a newer style of steel-hulled fishing boat. Norman Edwards accurately predicted how changing to steel-hulled boats would reduce the amount of fish caught, because the steel hulls increased the sound vibrations from the engine, scaring the fish.

After Smith Meal Company closed in 1968, Norman Edwards continued to work as a commercial fisherman, going south to Port Monmouth, New Jersey and later Cameron, Louisiana, eventually "retiring" in 1984, according to his obituary. Norman Edwards died near Lion Head Beach, off Hog Creek, when his boat capsized during a sudden squall in 1997. His wife, Elsie Johnson Edwards survived him. Her oral history is part of [The History Project, Inc.](#) materials in the Long Island Collection.

Founded in 1997 by Tony Prohaska and Martha Kalser to collect oral histories documenting East Hampton Town during the 20th century, with a focus on the first half of the century. The History Project, Inc. features 180 recorded interviews. The finished project, along with transcriptions, was donated to the Long Island Collection.

EXPLORE MORE

The Digital Long Island Collection is part of New York Heritage Digital Collections. Included are searchable scans of deeds, drawings, etchings, inventories, letters, maps, paintings, pardons, patents, photographs, plans, postcards, prints, sculptures, sketches, textiles, tiles, yearbooks and more to come.

The East Hampton Star Archive is a fully searchable, online digital archive of our local weekly newspaper, that features each complete issue of the paper from 1918-1968, exactly as it appeared in print. Visit the archive online, for a tour of our Town's history that will fascinate both the amateur and professional historian!

The Karl Grossman Research Archive is an extensive collection of materials digitized from the personal archive of Karl Grossman, an investigative reporter, columnist, author, and current professor of journalism at SUNY Old Westbury. The archive brings together a decades long career in reporting and journalism with topics ranging from the economy and pollution to fishing and East Hampton Town. Patrons are capable of searching this 9,500+ item collection by collection name, year, title, or keyword search.

The Local Artist Research Archive is a collection of over 19,000 items digitized from Guild Hall, containing materials including personal letters, photographs, news clippings, and art catalogs concerning artists of the East End. Patrons are capable of searching this archive by collection, title, or keyword search.



Welcome to the Long Island Collection's "Item of the Week."

We are an archive dedicated to the history and people of Long Island, with a special interest in all things East Hampton and East End. Unlike some small local history rooms in other public libraries, we have over 100,000 items including, but not limited to, rare books, maps, photographs, deeds, postcards, letters, newspapers, and whaling logs. We also have a dedicated and hardworking staff ready to help you with any questions you may have. Unable to make it to the library? No problem! We upload images from the collection to Digital Long Island on a weekly basis, so there's always something new and interesting to behold.

Please visit us at the Library, make use of our extensive online digital resources, or contact us for assistance. Public hours are: Mon. - Tues. and Thurs. - Sat., 1:00-4:30 p.m.

Researched and written by Andrea Meyer, Librarian/Archivist, Long Island Collection.

Andrea Meyer began working in the Long Island Collection in January 2015. Her responsibilities include updating Digital Long Island, scanning, processing new collections, and assisting patrons with research. She earned her M.L.I.S. through Long Island University, and completed her M.A. in Archives and Public History at New York University through the dual-degree program. Andrea started working in archives in 2005. Prior to working for the East Hampton Library, Andrea worked at the New Jersey State Archives, at NYU Libraries, and as a private research consultant. Her clients included the New-York Historical Society. She is also involved with the Sag Harbor Historical Society.

andrea@easthamptonlibrary.org | (631) 324-0222 ext. 4 | www.easthamptonlibrary.org

