

parties with his brother Jerome, on the **Hammer**, the crew boat of the Hammer brothers lumber mill. She was 26 feet long and powered by a 7 hp Minimus gasoline engine. They would charge what they could get from one dollar up for a trip. His best remembered boat was the **Josephine**.² She was 60x15x4 feet and powered by a 30 hp Fairbanks Morse diesel. His uncle owned the boat at first and let Lawrence run it for half the profit. Lawrence said he made a lot of money for his share the first year which was in the early thirties. It carried 49 passengers at \$1 each. Lawrence advertised that he went with one or 49 at \$1 per head, and Billy John Vereen recalls going one day with one paying fare when he got \$2 as mate.⁶ This did not happen often and Lawrence, after buying the boat from his uncle for \$400, captained the best known party boat at Little River. Other captains on the shore spoke of the **Josephine** as the **Queen Mary** of the Little River fleet and she was known throughout North and South Carolina as being bigger and better than anything afloat.³ The **Josephine** was sold in 1946 to be used as a freight boat.² Captain Long next ran the **Helen Jean** for Vance Kinlaw⁷ and then the **Joy**, a trolling boat, for Frank Juel.⁸ In the late '50s he built a trolling boat, the **Cheryl Ann**. It was 45 ft long and powered by a GM 671. He fished her until 1979 when he retired. The **Cheryl Ann** served as a floating part of Wayne Henderson's restaurant on the waterfront until she burned and was put on the hill in 1997. Captain Long passed in 1998 at 93 years of age.

Lawrence instilled the love of the water in his sons and now the Long name is still prominent on the Little River waterfront. Larry, the eldest, has appropriately named his boats the **Black Fish**. He carries charter par-

ties in the summer and fall and he fishes traps for black sea bass in the late fall and winter. Now he more or less specializes in shark fishing parties and has a thriving business. He started this in the early eighties and sometimes makes two trips a day. His latest **Black Fish** is about 45 ft long and powered by a 600 hp Detroit Diesel. Another son, Billy Long, operates the **Billy Boy**, a trolling boat and headboat that is also used for commercial fishing. Ricky Long runs the **Double R** and Tommy the **Captain Vick**. A grandson, Larry's son Chris, also operates a charter/commercial vessel the **Longway**.^{12,13,16,17}

Bill and David Clemons need to be addressed together as they worked very closely with one another. Bill the older brother first mated on the **Cadet** for Rob Mintz. He was on a familiarization trip to take over as captain of the **Cadet** when she came to the aid of the **Nightingale** when she

blew up.⁴ David started out mating on the **Edward** and the **Cadet**. He also worked on the **Eva Mae** when Bill Bessent owned her. Bill and David bought the **Eva Mae** from Bill Bessent in the early 1950s. She was used mostly for party fishing, but a couple of times she was used for shrimping in the fall. They fished her until they went to work for Vance Kinlaw in the middle fifties, Bill on the **Helen Jean** and David on the **Johnnie Jr**.¹⁸ After Bill's death, David took over the **Helen Jean** and ran her even after the Kinlaws sold her in the early '80s. He retired from boat operating in 1985 and now operates a successful tackle shop that caters to the fishing fleet.¹⁸

The **Eva Mae** needs special mention because of her interesting involvement with several people. Hugh McGinn bought her in 1940 for \$450. Donnie Mintz shrimped her one year and made Hugh back the money he paid for her. Bob High fished her the next year and sent Hugh a goodly sum. Bill Bessent bought her next for \$750 and kept her until he sold her to the Clemons for \$1500.^{1,18} They fished her until they went to work for Vance Kinlaw. She probably caught more Spanish mackerel than any boat fishing out of Little River. Bill and David brought in the top catch more often than nearly all the other operators put together. For a long time they held the one day record for bringing in 565 Spanish mackerel. The **Eva Mae** sank at her dock and disintegrated after Bill and David went to work on the big boats.¹⁸

Donnie Mintz was another early party boat operator coming into the fishery in the late thirties after a stint on the dredge **Tampa**. Donnie first worked as a mate on boats, one of which was the ill fated **Nightingale**.⁴ He ran shrimp boats also, operating the **Eva Mae** for Hugh McGinn in the mid-forties.¹ He had the **May**



Larry Long's granddaughter, Christina, and friend with a shark caught on his boat the **Black Fish**. (photo courtesy of Larry Long)



*Captain Donnie Mintz, left, and Captain Vivian Bessent, right, and an unidentified crewmember with a grouper caught on the **Rascal**, 1953. (photo courtesy of Mrs. Max Vereen)*

flower built right after the war and then after selling her bought and fished the shrimper **Charlotte** with Clancy Lewis.^{1,4} After this boat was sold he went in with Bob High to purchase the **Bennie Lane**. He soon sold out to Bob.⁵ His next boat was a shrimper, the **Betty Ann**, after selling her he purchased the **Les** from Adrian High in the mid fifties.^{4,5} She was 43 feet long and powered with a Chrysler Crown engine. He carried parties in the summer and shrimped her in the fall. At this time the party business was mostly concentrated between Memorial Day and Labor Day, so it made sense to shrimp in the off season if a boat could be readily converted from one type of business to the other.

Donnie's next boat was the **Bon Jon** which he got in the early nineteen sixties. She was 50 feet long and powered with a GM671. He traded the **Bon Jon** to his nephew Bobby Mintz for the **Summer Song**. He re-named her the **Bon Jon** to take ad-

vantage of the name recognition he had built up for the first **Bon Jon**. She was 55 feet long and powered by two GM871s. This was his last boat and he sold it to his nephew Leroy Mintz.⁴ For a couple of years Donnie ran the **Rascal** for Vivian Bessent on Sundays and I ran the **Les** for him. At that time Donnie's son-in-law "Max" Vereen was running my boat, the **Hobby**, full time.

One story I recall about Donnie was when we were going down the river to go to sea. I was ahead of Donnie in my boat and he was a couple of hundred yards behind me in the **Les**, when he suddenly stopped dead in the water. I started slowing down to see if he was having trouble, but shortly he got back underway. After we crossed the bar I called him on the radio to find out what had happened. He informed me that he had just gotten a new pair of bifocal glasses the day before and when he looked over the side, the water was

so close he was sure he was sinking. He had stopped and opened the engine hatch to see how high the water was in the bilge. We kidded Donnie about that many times. Max Vereen, Donnie's son-in-law, ran my boat for a couple of years before going into the oyster shucking business with his father-in-law.

Frank Juel was synonymous with deep sea fishing at Little River from the late forties into the eighties (Dunnegan 1994). He first became involved in fishing as a mate on the **Josephine** prior to service in the Navy during World War II.⁸ When he returned from the service he operated the **Martha Ann**, a 45 foot head boat purchased by his wife who operated the hotel at that time. In 1947, the Juels bought a war surplus 63 ft air sea rescue boat. They paid \$2,500 for it, but had to spend quite a sum in those days to reconfigure it for party fishing. Its original power plants were Hall Scotts that used 100 octane gas



Frank Juel's first **Hurricane** with the Myrtle Beach Beauty Queen contestants in the mid 1950s. (photo from the Dunnegan Collection)



Captain Danny Juel captains the **Pride of the Carolinas** a 90 foot modern head boat that carries parties to the Black Fish Banks and the Gulf Stream. This is the only head boat operating from Little River docks in 1999. (photo from and advertising brochure)



Chris Juel standing on the stern of the **Hurricane II** with the catch of black sea bass displayed for potential customers watching from the "Hill", mid 1950s. (photo from the Dunnegan Collection)

and gave it a cruising speed of 40 knots. These were replaced with Gray Marine 671s after one year because of the price and difficulty of getting 100 octane fuel. The hulls were very strong because of double planking, the inner ply on a bias with the outer which ran fore and aft. Frank felt he needed even more strength so he also had a keel placed in her. This was the first **Hurricane**.

The Juels bought two more 63 ft air sea rescue boats. One became the **Hurricane II** and was run by Chris Juel, Frank's father. The other was the **Sporty** and was captained by Billy Brown.⁸ Frank also owned the **Ocean King** for a while. She was 90 ft long, very narrow of beam, and drew about 6½-7 feet. Once at sea she was surprisingly fast considering she was powered by two Cummings diesels of only 165 hp. She was captained by Leroy Mintz.^{4,8} About 1950 Frank initiated Gulf Stream parties and the **Hurricane** and the **Ocean King** were the first to carry them. They would leave the dock at 7 to 8pm, run for 4 to 5 hours, fish until 10 or 11 am the next day, and return to the dock at about 4 pm. The fare was \$15 per head for the first couple of years and then went up to \$25.⁸

The next two boats the Juels had built. They were 65 ft long specifically designed for headboat fishing. One was very broad beamed and had three engines. Frank then got an 85 foot air sea rescue boat that had been used to make the film "P.T. 109." It had two GMV12s. Looking for more speed he bought a 77 foot aluminum hull vessel with two V12s. This vessel cruised at 22 knots, thus allowing the Gulf Stream parties to be a one day trip. Just about all of Frank's boats were named **Hurricane** and this gave him good name recognition.⁸ He hired Claude Dunnegan in the late '50s and early '60s to do promotional work for

him and many of the photographs contained herein were taken as a part of this effort (Anon 1994).

Frank sold out to Gus Speros in 1976.¹⁹ Since that time he has run boats for the Speros and owns a sport fisherman the **Tempest** which he charts for trolling inshore and for Gulf stream parties.

A story told about about one of the people Frank had hired as a mate concerns the trip back from winter work in Florida. The fellow was not adept at steering by the compass so Frank pointed him out a star to steer toward. Sometime later, after steering in circles for an hour or so, the fellow woke Frank up and asked him to point him out another star as he had passed the first one.

Frank's son Danny has followed in his father's footsteps and is active in the party boat business. He ran the 85 foot air sea rescue boat **Hurricane** for a while and also worked on boats in the Bahamas. From 1989 to 1994 he ran the **Captain Juel II**. He

is now the captain of the **Pride of the Carolinas**. This is a 90 ft aluminum hull head boat. She fishes on the blackfish banks and in the Gulf Stream.¹¹

Frank's father, Chris, also was involved in the sportfishery. He bought a small shrimp boat, the **Mildred Mary** and for several years fished for shrimp and then after World War II he began to use her for party fishing. In the early '50s he fished the **Hurricane II** for Frank. After a stint of this he then went back to the **Mildred Mary** and used her as a trolling boat. She was eventually sold to Tommy Long.^{8,16}

Chris was a colorful character. A World War I veteran, he first came to South Carolina after leaving the service, but then went back to his home state, Nebraska. He stayed for a month or so and returned to Little River. Asked why he came back, he said the prettiest women and the best "likker" was in the South. He was a veterinarian and for a while this pro



Captain Chris Juel discussing a shark with a friend, late 1950s. (photo courtesy of Frank Juel)



The Riverside Tavern in the early 1950s. Ice, bait, fishing tackle, groceries and sundries were sold to fishermen going out on the boats. (postcard courtesy of Vance Kinlaw)



*Vance and Helen Kinlaw, 1954, operated the Riverside Tavern from 1937 to 1990. They booked parties on the **Helen Jean** and **Johnnie Jr.** as well as rented wooden rowboats. (photo courtesy of Mrs. Leroy Mintz)*

vided his livelihood. He got a job carrying the mail and he was known to treat his customers' cows while delivering the mail.⁸

Mr. Luther Wilson at one time was involved in the beach seine fishery at Cherry Grove Beach in the 1930s. He bought a shrimp boat prior to World War II, the **Ella Dee**. She was 40-42 ft long and was operated by George Brooks. She carried fishing parties on occasion. After the war in 1947 he bought the **Helen Jean** and the **Johnnie Jr.** These boats and all subsequent boats Mr. Wilson had were managed by Vance Kinlaw, his son-in-law. Vance and Helen, his wife, opened and operated the Riverside Tavern in 1937 where they sold ice, drinks, fishing supplies, sundries, and basic groceries. Parties on the **Helen Jean** and **Johnnie Jr** were booked here. Prior to that Vance had worked on the dredge **Tampa**. They also rented bateaus to people for river fishing. The Riverside Tavern had rooms for rent at one dollar per night in the late '40s and early '50s. It was also the site for square dances with local musicians and later other dancing with

music supplied by the "Juke Box." In the 1950s it was a common occurrence to have an impromptu country music concert at the Tavern with Vance, Jerome Long, Victor Cox, and others entertaining the river front crowd on Sunday afternoons.

Lawrence Long first fished the **Helen Jean**. She was built as a shrimp boat and was 55 feet long and powered by a GM 671. Olin Carter was the next captain, and then Bill Clemons. She was lengthened to 65 feet after Hurricane Hazel in 1954. The **Johnnie Jr** was about 46-48 feet long and operated first by Will Blake and then David Clemons. The cost of the **Johnnie Jr** was about \$2,000 in 1947. A second **Johnnie Jr** was built in 1971 at about a cost of 8-10 thousand dollars. She was operated by Joe Elliott and then Leonard Elliott. The second **Helen Jean** was built in 1974 at a cost of 18-20 thousand dollars. She was 70x20x5 feet and powered by twin GM 671s. Captain David Clemons ran her. Both boats were sold in 1983. Vance designed the **Slow Poke** and had her built by Jerome Long. She was 24 ft long and

used for river parties and on occasion, a black fish trip.⁷

Vance and Helen closed the Riverside Tavern in 1990. It remained closed until 1997. It appeared that no one was willing to put in the long hours and have the patience to take on operating it until Steve Speros bought it in 1997. The movie "Lolita" was filmed in and around the Tavern in 1995.⁷

Vivian Bessent was an early entrant to the party boat business. He worked on dredges in Florida and South America before buying the **Molly** from Bob High in 1948.^{5,10,20,21} He ran her in the summer for a couple of years before giving up a winter job on the dredge. He bought one of the 63 ft air sea rescue boats in 1949 or 1950 in partnership with Mettler Vereen, and after converting her for party boat work he became a full time member of the recreational fishery at Little River (U.S. Dept Treasury 1955). She was named the **Rascal** and he fished her on the nearshore blackfish banks and later offshore. He bought the **New Rascal**, another 63 ft air sea rescue boat, in 1961-62 again



The new **Johnnie Jr.** in the mid 1970s. She was owned and booked by the Kinlaws. (postcard courtesy of Vance Kinlaw)



Captain Vivian Bessent and a party that he took out on his boat the **Rascal**, mid 1950s. Vivian is second from the right. (photo from the Dunnegan Collection)



The New Rascal in the late 1960s. Owned by Vivian Bessent then sold to Joe Elliot in 1975. (postcard courtesy of Mrs. T.V. Bessent)

in partnership with Mettler Vereen. He bought out Mettler in 1963 and continued to fish her until he sold out to Joe Elliott in 1975. He and Mettler also built the Blue Heron restaurant on the waterfront and for several years hired people to run it or rented it out.^{10,20} Vivian took his religion seriously and in his later years did not fish on Sunday. Donnie Mintz ran the **Rascal** on Sunday and I ran Donnie's boat, the **Les**.

Bill Bessent was another of the early boat men at Little River. He worked on several boats and was at one time the captain of the **Nightingale**.⁴ He fished the shrimper **Charlotte** for Clarence McCorsley before it was sold to Donnie Mintz and Clancy Lewis. He bought the **Eva Mae** from Hugh McGinn and fished her until he sold it to the Clemons brothers in 1952.¹⁸ He then purchased the **Marsella** and kept her until the late fifties when he replaced her with the **Betty Rae**. These boats were around 42-45 ft long, powered by Chrysler crown engines, and used chiefly for trolling inshore. Bill also had the contract to maintain bouys and lights at Little River for several years.

Sam Gardner of Myrtle Beach brought the **Carolina Queen** into the party boat fishery in the early 1950s. She was a 84 foot war surplus hull

refitted for party fishing. James Ivey Stone ran her along with a Captain Miles and Bill Copeland. She was docked beside the draw bridge across the waterway from Bellamy's Cross Roads, but parties were solicited at Little River. She was relocated at Atlantic Beach, N.C. after an attempt to carry parties from Gardner's Ocean Plaza Pier at Myrtle Beach did not work out. Sam had earlier owned an 85 foot yacht the **Patricia** that carried parties on occasion.

Mettler Vereen (Samuel Mettler) brought in the largest of the head boats up to this time when he purchased the 104 foot **Ocean Queen** in the mid fifties. She was another war surplus craft. She was docked at Vereen's Marina but also stopped to pick up passengers at a dock at Little River. Her deep draft made it necessary to have a flexible fishing schedule to accommodate the tide on the river bar. On occasion low tide and rough seas forced her to come back through the inlet at Southport, North Carolina and run down the Intracoastal Waterway to Little River. The **Ocean Queen** was struck and sunk by a freighter in Charleston, SC's harbor on 16 November 1965 as she was being repositioned to Florida for the winter. She sank with the loss of one person (Bowles 1965, Workman 1965).

Early river boat captains other than those that carried deep sea parties were Jerome Long, Lawrence's brother, and J.B. Lockamy. Captain Jerome had worked with Capt. Lawrence Long very early as a river boat man, probably helping him run the **Hammer** for Bob High.^{2,5} After WWII he owned the **Rueben** and ran her until he retired. She was a 24 ft outboard powered bateau.¹²

Captain J.B. Lockamy carried parties prior to WWII in open row boats. Rowing them four or five miles down river and back, sometimes getting just \$3 for the boat load. After the war he bought the **Beatrice** from Captain Victor S. Cox and fished her until he retired. Captain Lockamy was a man of simple tastes. Never known to curse and never owned a car or television set.^{1,4} His most violent expression was "Great Dow". One day the **Beatrice** got caught under the dock and was swamped when the tide rose. When Captain J.B., came down and saw her awash his only observation was, "Great Dow, look at the **Beatrice**."



Captains J.B. Lockamy, left, and Rob Mintz, 1954. Two of the early river boat party men. (photo courtesy of Mrs. Leroy Mintz)

Jimmy Stevens spent most of his time fishing out of Murrells Inlet, Calabash, and various parts of Florida. He was however part of the Little River scene on several occasions. He ran the **Martha Ann** for the Juels and also the **Sea Buster** and **Little Shrimp** around 1948. He owned several boats named the **Bonita** and on occasion he fished them from Little River docks.²² He bought an 85 footer, a **Bonita**, from Montauk, NY in 1980. She was fished from both Calabash and Little River. She was powered by three 671 Detroit diesels giving her a speed of almost 15 miles per hour. It took her about an hour to reach the fishing banks lying 10 miles off the bar, thus making her ideal for half-day fishing trips. She was sold after the fishing season of 1985.²³ Captain Stevens next boat was the 90 foot **New Captain Jim**. She was fished for a while out of Little River and was sold to the Speros in 1990 along with Captain Jim's Marina at Calabash, NC. This boat was then renamed the **Hurricane II**.²²

Joe Elliott worked with Vivian Bessent on the **Rascal** in the 50s and ran the **Johnnie Jr** for Vance Kinlaw and he also captained the **Tradewinds** and **Hurricane** for Frank Juel.^{7,8} He began half-day trips on the **Tradewinds**. Joe bought the **Rascal** from Vivian Bessent in 1975 and ran her for several years before retiring.²⁰

Joe's boys Ed and Randy have followed in their father's footsteps. Both helped on the **Rascal**. Randy, the eldest, commercial fished on the **Blue Seas** for several years before getting a charterboat, the **Venture**. This boat is a modern 32 ft fiberglass vessel powered with a 378 hp Detroit diesel.²⁴

Ed operated the **Johnnie Jr.** for L.D. "Tink" Benton in the mid-eighties and then the **Cyclone** for the Speros until 1994. He has operated

his own boat since then. It is a 32 ft fiberglass trolling boat powered by a 325 hp Catapillar engine. She is named the **Lucky Strike** and fishes from a marina located at the foot of the old highway 9 Intracoastal Waterway bridge.²⁴

Pat Bellamy got into the recreational fishery in the early fifties. He first owned the **Eselma**, a yacht that was used as a trolling boat (Myrtle Beach News 1954b).⁴ He named his subsequent boats the **Ron Tom** after his sons. He had a trolling boat and then a head boat. They were docked at the Ron Tom Marina which was about two miles up river from the town docks at Little River. Pat also ran a boat repair facility using a Travel Lift to haul boats. Pat got out of the party business in the mid-seventies and was magistrate at Little River for a while.

Terry Coffee started in the fishing business working with Frank Juel on one of the **Hurricanes**. He worked on the **New Rascal** in 1980 with Joe Elliott and then ran the **Virginia R** and the **Party Time** in the mid-eighties. Most recently he has served as captain of the **Pride of the Carolinas**. This was a stint of about ten years. In 1997 he took over the **Fish Screamer**.²⁵

Billy John Vereen (W.J.) was involved in the recreational fishery as the operator of yachts used by corporations to entertain executives and customers. Billy John began his fishing as a mate on the **Josephine** for Lawrence Long. He made a trip on the **Josephine** in 1938 to pick up YMCA campers at Mars Bluff, SC on the Pee Dee River and bring them to Camp Nixon.⁶

Billy John operated L.M. Boyd's yacht the **Lois Ann** for a couple of years and then the **Flying Fish** for Paul Russell. These were North Carolina industrialists. He took the **Flying Fish** to Florida and Bimini in the

winter. He ran parties now and then on Mr. Russell's boat, the **Russwood** (Myrtle Beach News 1954b). She was a 52 foot Huckins Fairform Flyer. Captain Vereen retired as operator of a Charleston Harbor pilot boat.⁶

Les High, Bob's brother was one of the first to carry parties offshore, but he died young and was active for only a short while. His son Adrian owned the **Les** and during the 1950s he ran parties in the summer and shrimped in the winter. He sold his boat to Donnie Mintz and moved to Florida, where he ran shrimp boats until he retired.^{1,4}

Robby Scarborough now operates the **Sundancer**. He carries up to 20 people to the black fish banks or to the Gulf Stream. In the past he ran the **Virginia R**, **Boss Hogg**, and **Sea Gypsy**.²⁶

Robert Small carried parties on the **Cheryl Ann**, the **Swift Ship I**, the **Shannon Maria**, and in 1997 started on a 36 foot trolling boat, the **Small Boys**.²⁷

The **Sophie**, carrying 35 people and run by Captains Leonard and Marlowe, was advertised as fishing from Little River in 1938 (Myrtle Beach News 1938).

Others who operated vessels from time to time included Lenzy Carter who ran the **Marbill** both at Little River and in Florida; Gerald Nixon who operated my boat, **The Hobby** for a short while; Bobby Gore who ran the **Joy**; Bill Brown on the **Sporty** and **Hurricane II**; and William Scott, the **Viola III** between 1950 and the mid-70s. In the period between the mid-70s and late-80s, the following were active: Neil Juel operated the **Golden Lady**; Jim Williamson; the **Big Mike** and **The Other Woman**; Ed Lenke captained the **Sea Gypsy**; Roger Owens the **Amberjack**; B.E. Lewis on the **Tom Cat**; Larry Platt on the **Dolphin** and the **Carolina Princess**; Chip Stevens on the **Cy-**

clone; and Norman Bligh on the **Carol Annes Bounty** (Moore 1977, Moore et al 1980, Moore et al 1985).

Nearly all boys growing up around the waterfront worked as mates on the boats. Many of them ended up operating boats but some went on to other things. Some of those who did not end up as captains were Willie Todd, Herschel Williamson, Buddy Dennis, Marion Cox, Jennings Vereen, Ronnie Nobles, Bobby Todd, "Termite" Williamson, William "Pompano" Elliot, "Bucky" Elliot, Corbin "Spider" Elliot, Joe Livingston, Michael Brown, Thomas Gore, "Winkie" Mintz, Johnnie McCorsley, Russell Carter, L.D. Tyler, Jimmy Bessent, Tommy Bessent, George Bessent, Richard Sanders, and Herman Humphries. Frank Juel would hire vacationing college students on his boats.

Hugh McGinn was only peripherally involved in the recreational fishery. As a young man he worked for the Corps of Engineers, was a hard hat diver and worked with underwater repairs and explosives. He finally ended up in the commercial shrimp and fish business at Little River. He did in the 1920s have bateaus which he rented to people and particularly the Corps of Engineers when they were surveying for the inland waterway. He caught and sold bait shrimp to recreational fishermen as a teenager in the '20s. Sometimes he made over \$30 in a day selling a gallon paint can full for \$1. He carried people river fishing in the '20s and was paid what they wanted to give. He owned a shrimper the **Gilda and Don** and on two occasions took parties on her. He provided fish boxes for the people to sit on. Hugh also had the contract to maintain the buoys and lights for the U.S. Coast Guard at Little River Inlet.¹

McGinn recalls commercial hand line fishing for black sea bass right

after World War II and catching 950 pounds in a day with help from one other man. He also caught 9000 pounds on one trip, potting from his shrimp boat the **Chippewa** in the early 1960s.¹ The **Chippewa** incidentally was one of the boats taken over by the Government in World War II. She had two 50 calibre machine guns mounted on her and a rack for depth charges. Hugh bought her in 1946. He made some remarkable catches with her and finally sold her when he retired in 1971 to Frank Juel along with the fishing facility.

One great story about Hugh appeared in the Myrtle Beach Sun News (Berry 1996c). Hugh was fishing off McClellanville and hit a real, large concentration of shrimp. When he loaded the **Chippewa** he wanted to mark the area, so he could return the next day. Knowing that other boats would come to a bouy, he caught a pelican that had become entangled in his try net and sprayed it with green paint, tied a line with a weight on it to the pelican's foot and threw it over the side as a marker. He came back to this marker for several days- feeding his bird generously with fish after he had gotten another load of shrimp. After the concentration of shrimp moved on he released the pelican. He often wondered what the Wildlife Department would think of a green pelican if it ever came to their attention. Some people envious of Hugh's success claimed he didn't release the bird, but cooked and ate it.

Wayne Henderson has been a fixture on the waterfront for years. He has run a fish house, a clam depuration plant and a restaurant. Over the years he has bought and sold several boats, and on occasion has taken parties on them, but has never really concentrated on this end of the business.²⁸

Gus and Steve Speros moved to Little River in 1973 from Maxton, NC. Steve, Gus's son, got a job mat-

ing for Captain Frank Juel and in 1976 the Speros bought out Frank. Steve operated the **Scuba** and the **Hurricane** himself for a while. They expanded their business buying the **Thunderbird II** from John Frick and in 1990 the **Captain Jim** from Jimmie Stevens. They also bought Captain Jim's Marina at Calabash, NC from Capt. Stevens. They now operate vessels from Vereen's marina, Calabash, and Southport, NC. Gus passed away in 1996 and Steve now operates the business. He maintains a ticketing office at Little River. The **Hurricane** Fleet as it is now identified offers all types of water related opportunities including half-day inshore trips, Gulf stream parties, trolling trips, shark fishing, dinner cruises, dance cruises, and chartered events.¹⁹ Steve recently bought the Riverside Tavern from the Kinlaws. He plans to sell sundries and open a restaurant on the premises.

L.D. "Tink" Benton became a fixture at Little River in 1980. He bought the hotel, the marina, Mary Juel's old house, and the restaurant that had been operated very successfully by Mary Juel for many years. He bought a 90 foot Aluminum hull vessel, the **Pride of the Carolinas**, about this time and has operated her as a party boat since. She is licensed for 80 pasengers and has been run by several captains beginning with Larry Platt, then Chip Stevens, and for ten years Terry Coffee. In 1997 Danny Juel took her helm. "Tink" had the **Sundancer** built in 1982. She is a 40 footer powered by a 692 detroit diesel and carries charters of up to 20 people. The **Sundancer** is run by Robby Searborough.²⁹

Mr. Benton has had an active advertising campaign designed to bring the crowds back to Little River. He uses at times television, newspaper, and beach magazines along with brochures to draw attention to fishing opportunities at his operations.²⁹

Mac Nobles was a familiar fixture on the waterfront from the 1950s through the 1970s. He was probably the best mechanic ever to work on the boats. He was equally at home with a diesel or gasoline engine. Mac was too accommodating for his own good, often working through the night to get someone to sea the next day. Hardly any boatman around was not obligated to Mac in one way or another. Mac's son Ronnie worked as a mate on boats and was associated with Jimmie Stevens for several years. He built a beautiful model of the 85 foot **Bonita** which is on display at the South Carolina Marine Resources Research Institute. Ronnie now has his own construction company.²³

James Ivey Stone worked for several of the boat owners for many years. These included Frank Juel, Sam Gardner, Mettler Vereen, and others. He was a talented mechanic and electrician as well as a good seaman. He often did much of the boat handling on the **Ocean Queen** and **Carolina Queen** when they were carrying parties. He converted military radios for marine purposes and several boats including mine had examples of his handy work on board.^{1,4}

Kenneth D. Nobles, a West Virginian, came to Little River in the late 1970s. He was involved in the cable television business, but he got interested in the party fishing. He bought the **Helen Jean** and **Johnnie Jr** from Vance Kinlaw and then the **Bonita** from Jimmy Stevens. He bought the **Tradewinds IV** from Frank Juel and also added the **Boss Hogg** and **Virginia R** to his fleet. The **Boss Hogg** was later sold to Gus Speros. Mr. Nobles also brought in a commercial boat, the **Captain K.D.** Nobles entered into a lease/buy agreement for Hugh McGinn's fish house. Nobles is no longer involved on the waterfront at Little River and all of his vessels and fishing facilities have been taken over by others.^{1,4}

The Fleet Over the Years

From the beginnings until 1930, probably only four to five head boats owned by Bob High, Les High, Victor Cox, Rob Mintz, and Liston Thomas made up the party fishing fleet. Fares ran from \$.50 to \$1 per person for a full days fishing.^{1,2,4} During the thirties the number of boats increased to probably a high of eight or nine just before World War II. The general price was \$1 per person for an all day trip (6 to 8 hrs).⁴ In the late forties war surplus boats came into the fleet and there were probably 10 to 12 boats fishing at one time or another. The fare was \$2 per person. In 1956, the gasoline powered vessels were restricted to six passengers by the Merchant Marine Act of 1956. This led to a differentiation between head boats and charter boats (six passengers or less). At this time there were about nine head boats and eight charter boats. A day to the blackfish banks was \$5, to the Gulf Stream \$15, and a charter \$35-\$60 for 4-6 people.

The boats shown in the *Along the Coast* magazine in 1960 fishing out of Little River plus a few others missed when the picture was taken, totalled six head boats, nine charter boats, and four river boats (Darby 1960). The largest of the boats, the **Ocean Queen** was licensed to carry 175 passengers. The rates had increased to \$6 for inshore head boat fishing, \$15 for the Gulf stream, \$50-\$60 to charter a boat and \$15-\$20 for

a party to fish in the river. Moon light cruises were \$2 per person.

Bearden (1969) reported eleven charter boats and four head boats operating from Little River. He listed costs per day on charter boats at \$80 to \$200 per day for the boat. Individual costs on the head boats were \$8 to \$12 for a blackfish trip or \$20 for a "Gulf Stream" trip.

In 1973, seven head boats fished out of Little river (Huntsman 1976b). There were at least ten charter boats and one river boat (Anon 1974, Bearden and McKenzie 1973). Head boat fares ranged from \$8-\$13 for inshore trips and \$20-\$25 for Gulf Stream trips.

The fleet in 1977 was made up of seven head boats, eight charter boats, and one river boat. Fares had increased to \$10 per half-day trip and \$15 per whole day trip for inshore bottom fishing; \$30 for a Gulf Stream trip; and had jumped to \$200-\$250 for an inshore trip and \$450 for an offshore trolling trip on charter boats (Moore 1977).

Moore et al (1985) listed five head boats and eight charter boats docked at Little River. Some of the head boats carried up to 100 passengers.

A tally by the National Marine Fisheries Service 1996 listed three head boats and ten charter boats (Dixon 1997).³⁰ Head boats charged \$26 half-day, \$60 for Gulf stream fishing, and \$65 for shark fishing.¹⁸ Charter boats ranged from \$375 for a half-day trolling to a 16 hour marlin trip



The Little River fishing fleet prior to Hurricane Hazel in the early 1950s. (photo courtesy Vance Kinlaw)



The Little River docks in 1960 showing most of the boats. (photo by Jack L. Thompson from Along the Coast, 1960)

for \$1200. Moonlight cruises were \$8 per person with dinner cruises, ocean cruises and a variety of other sea going excursions offered. Only one large head boat is fishing out of Little River in 1997. This is the 90 foot **Pride of the Carolinas** and it concentrates on half-day trips during the week with one Gulf Stream trip on Saturday. Ten or twelve charter boats still sail from the docks at Little River. No river boats were reported.

The Fishing Grounds

Prior to World War II all the ocean fishing took place on the blackfish banks. Blackfish, which is the familiar name for black sea bass, has dominated the fish assemblage in these habitats and is responsible for their name (Struhsaker 1969). These were located 5 to 25 miles offshore in depths ranging from 40-120 feet (Struhsaker 1969, Moore et al, 1980, 1985). The fish were congregated on patches of rocky outcrops which provide substrate for attached organisms. These attached animals such as hard coral, soft coral and bryozoans provided food and shelter for mobile organisms as shrimp, crabs, and mollusks which in turn were fed on by black sea bass and other large fish. These areas are commonly called live bottom or blackfish banks (Bearden and McKenzie 1973, Sedberry 1988, Struhsaker 1969).

In the early fifties some of the head boats began to take parties on over-

night trips to the snapper-grouper banks.^{4,8} These trips were referred to as “Gulf Stream trips” (Bearden 1969). These areas range up to 50 or more miles offshore in depths exceeding 80 feet (Moore et al, 1980, 1985, Huntsman 1976a). This area, the outer continental shelf, contains two different habitats that attract and concentrate fishes. One, the area lying between depths of 90 to 180 feet, is characterized by low relief patches of coral and rocky outcrops. The other, lying further offshore in 180 to 600 feet of water, is the area of the conti-

mental slope. Water temperatures on the outer shelf are influenced greatly by the warm Gulf Stream moving north along the shelf break. This results in most of the fish being tropical or subtropical species (Huntsman 1976a,b, Huntsman and Macintyre, 1971). The snapper-grouper complex, as it is known, is made up of many species of popular food fish such as red and vermilion snapper, red, warsaw, snowy, gag and scamp groupers, rock and speckled hind, tile fish, porgies and grunts (Huntsman 1976a,b).

Fishing for pelagics by trolling



The Little River docks in the late 1970s. (photo courtesy of Jack L. Thompson, Myrtle Beach, SC)



*A catch of black sea bass on the **Rascal**, mid 1950's. In the early days of the fishery no one ever thought that there could be a limit of the fish in the sea, so a fisherman landed and kept all the fish he could. (photo from the Dunnegan Collection)*



*A catch by a party fishing in the Gulf Stream on Frank Juel's **Hurricane**, mid 1950s. (photo from the Dunnegan Collection)*



A catch of Spanish mackerel on a trolling boat in the mid 1950s. A catch of over 100 fish by a party of four was not uncommon. (photo from the Dunnegan Collection)

boats takes place from almost in the breakers for Spanish mackerel to the outer shelf for marlin, sailfish, and yellow fin tuna. In between the catch may include king mackerel, dolphin, bonita, and bluefish. Most of these fish are abundant late spring through fall. (Moore et al 1980).

Shark fishing takes place inshore where the shrimp boats operate. Sharks are often caught in the area where the shrimp catch is culled.^{4,12}

River fishing catch varies by time of year with best spot, whiting, and croaker catches usually in the fall. Weakfish, red drum, and flounder are present all year but are caught mostly in the summer and fall. Spotted trout are caught just about year around (Bearden and McKenzie 1973, Moore et al 1980).

The Catch Over the Years

The earliest fishermen were out to catch the most and the largest fish possible. They were referred to as “meat fishermen.” Sometimes a

group would come from upstate North Carolina or South Carolina prepared to take home really large catches of fish, even a pickup truck load. At first some of these fish were probably sold or given to friends, but later with the advent of home freezers, large catches provided table fare throughout the winter. The captains made great efforts to satisfy their customers and to impress their peers. Lawrence Long recalls a catch on the **Josephine** which after the anglers left with all the fish they could handle, he was left with a small truck load, which he gave to a man parked on a hill who then sold them to others.²

In the 1950s and ‘60s, catches of several hundred Spanish mackerel in a day were common. Bill and David Clemons brought in 565 on a day trip on the **Eva Mae**. A party from Concord, NC caught nearly that many on my boat the same day.

Mary Platt, a long time resident of Little River, recalls fishing with the Juels on several occasions. On one trip in the 1950s she bought back 47

blackfish which probably weighed nearly 100 pounds.³¹ Faye Mintz fishing in the 1960s with her father in law, Rob Mintz, caught 177 spot on a river trip.³² In the fall, many times, a party would catch several 50 pound lard stands full of spot fishing in the river.⁴

The Gulf Stream parties would nearly always load the display rack on the hotel dock. One trip I made with Frank Juel in the early sixties had as its purpose to catch fish for Mary Juel’s restaurant. Six of us filled every fish box between six and nine-thirty am on a Sunday morning. We were glad to put away the fishing gear and head for home.

As half-day trips became more popular, the emphasis on large blackfish catches necessarily had to change just because of shorter fishing time, but also because of the limited number of fish on inshore banks. Larger boats carrying more passengers also cut down the average catch because it was often impossible to find large concentrations of fish close to shore in the immediate vicinity of the inlet.



Mates or strikers on the boats often supplemented their pay and tips by dressing the party's fish. The two in this picture are cleaning sharks caught by Larry Long's party. (photo courtesy of Larry long)



A catch of black sea bass in the mid 1950s. These fish would sometimes be given away, but most often would be carried home to freezers for winter time consumption. (photo from the Dunnegan Collection)

As the season progressed, the catch dropped as the banks became fished out. Low (1997) found that statewide average headboat catch per angler per day had dropped from 8.2 pounds to 1.3 pounds in the period 1977 to 1995. The decline of inshore catches may not be as great at Little River as in other areas because of the skill of the captains and relatively more area to fish. Charter boats carrying small parties still commonly bring in around ten pounds per angler when bottom fishing inshore.²⁶ A new size limit of 10 inches total length on black seabass will further reduce the number of fish bought back (Gaulden 1997).

The boats fishing offshore in the 1990s still bring in very respectable catches, not as consistently as in 1950s to 1980s, but sometimes over 50 pounds per fisherman. This is particularly true of charter boat parties. The offshore catch in 1977 was dominated by the red porgy, but in 1996 it was chiefly made up of vermilion snapper which may be indicative of excessive fishing pressure on the former species by this fishery (S.C. Dept of Natural Resources 1997).

Many fish are released alive today because of size and catch restrictions placed on the various species by state and federal regulations. However, more and more anglers are practicing tag and release and just enjoy the thrill of the water (Davy 1994). The Governor's Cup Billfish Tournament awards points for released fish that are included to determine winners in various categories (Anon 1997b). Don Hammond, program leader for the S.C. Department of Natural Resource's Finfish Utilization Program, estimated that prior to 1989, 90 percent of the billfish caught off South Carolina's coast were killed. Now the figure has been reversed and more than 90percent are released alive. Red drum size and bag limits along with tagging has been responsible for a

strong recovery of this species (Keeper 1997). This bodes well for the future availability of fish for the sportsman.

Fishing and Navigational Gear

In the beginning, customers fishing on the black fish banks were furnished with hand lines. These were fashioned from #24 tarred cotton twine. They were about 100 ft long having two 6/0 hooks tied off on two loops just above a sixteen ounce bank sinker.⁴ When not in use these were wound on a short piece of wood. Some of the boats had grooves worn in the rail from the dropping and retrieving of these lines. After World War II rods and reels came into general use the first rods were made of split bamboo and then later fiberglass. The hand lines were always provided free, but at first the rod and reels were rented for a small fee. Later rods and reels were provided gratis, and the hand lines phased out. Bait was usually salted squid, octopus, or cut up fish or salt pork and was furnished by the boat.

Riverboat fishermen used hardlines at first, but with smaller hooks and weights, but then they all went to rods and reels. Their bait was most often frozen shrimp that had been thawed.

Charterboats used rods and reels when trolling from the beginning. These used linen line at first, but then went to nylon, then Dacron or Monel. These rigs always used stainless steel leaders and various lures or a rigged bait made from whole fish or cut strips.

The Gulf Stream boats first used three hand lines tied end to end and only one hook. Soon these were supplemented by rods with hand reels and then electric reels and also a crank reel that was made from a bicycle rim

and pedals. Heavier sinkers and larger hooks were used.⁸ Bait again was usually salted or frozen squid provided by the boat (Huntsman 1976a).⁸

Later on light tackle was introduced by the individuals chartering boats. Some of these fishermen used spinning rigs.

Charters specializing in shark fishing use heavy gear with very powerful reels.

Many of the charter boats also rigged out two short hand lines with a rubber link or a piece of shock cord to keep the fish on the line. These were pulled from the stern and fished shorter than the regular trolling lines. The mate tended these lines and often they caught more Spanish mackerel and school bluefish than the party fishing rod and reels.

The first parties were seldom taken out of sight of land. Gause Hill, a very large sand dune which was several miles up the coast in North Carolina, was often used as a point of reference to locate the fishing banks and also to come home by. After 1929, when the Ocean Forest Hotel was built at Myrtle Beach, party boat operators used it as a reference point (Lewis 1988a).

Navigation prior to the late 1940s was done with a watch and compass. The fishing banks were found by steering a set course for a given length of time. When in vicinity of the banks, the mate would cast ahead of the boat as it moved slowly along. When he started catching fish two at a time a flag buoy was set. These bouys usually were a 10-12 ft bamboo pole with a cloth flag at the top, a cork float a quarter of the way up from the bottom of the pole and a weight attached to the end opposite the flag to hold the flag erect. Bouys had a line and an anchor attached to hold them in position. The skipper would allow the boat to drift away from the flag until the fish quit biting and then

would move back up to the bouy and make another drift. Sometimes the flag would be left overnight to mark a good spot.

Depth recorders came into the fishery in the late forties followed by fish finders which showed fish on a cathode ray screen. This made finding fish easier especially at the Gulf Stream. LORAN was the next navigational aid to be employed, first "A" and then "C". Now satellite navigation units are employed by the most sophisticated fishermen. This makes locating the fishing banks very much easier than in the old days.

Ship to shore radios were introduced to the fishery in the late 40s. Some were war surplus military tank radios converted to handle marine channels. First units operated on two or three channels, and then came VHF and now cellular phones are used by fishermen. Single side band radios are used for communicating when far offshore such as when marlin fishing.

The earliest engines to be used in the fishery were one and two cylinder gas engines. Some lacked reverse gears and were stopped or backed down by shutting them off and starting them back up in reverse. Two popular makes were Palmer and Lathrop, but there were many others.^{1,4} Automobile engines were popular during the thirties as well as marine engines built by Chrysler, Gray, Sterling and Continental. Conversion kits were available that were specific for certain automobile engines. Popular kits made by Osco and Barr Mfg provided jacketed manifolds for cooling, flame arrester carburetors, oil coolers and reduction gears. Many people just used the automobile engines as they were with the same gear box.⁴

The **Josephine** was the first party boat to have a diesel. She was powered by a 30 hp Fairbanks Morse that gave her a top speed of 6-8 mph.²

With the passage of the Merchant Marine Act of 1956, the gasoline powered boats were relegated to carrying six or less passengers due to fire hazards. As time went by, more and more boats went to diesel so that now just about all the boats in the fishery use this power. Popular diesel engines over the years have been GM 671s and 110s, Cummings, and Caterpillar. As boats got larger and speed was needed to get to the fishing areas faster, V12s were employed. Now popular engines are 600 hp Detroit diesels and 892 GM's up to 735 hp.

River boats first got to the fishing spots by oar power. In the mid-thirties outboards came into use by some. These early engines were somewhat unreliable and no one left the dock without a good set of oars. My uncle had a 2 ½ hp "Waterwitch" which was sold by Montgomery Ward for less than \$100. To my knowledge it never made a round trip to the fishing area around Tilgemans Point near the mouth of the inlet. Hugh McGinn recalls operating an eight horse Elto outboard in 1927 for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It had a hot shot battery and was hand cranked in forward or reverse by a knob on the fly wheel. None of these engines got into the fishery so far as anyone can remember. Hugh McGinn did buy a 10 hp Johnson in 1940 for \$160 which he used in the river.¹ All outboard engines up until the fifties had integral gasoline tanks and were hand started with a pull cord wound around the fly wheel. From the early fifties most river fishermen began to use larger outboards (10-18 hp). In the sixties they got up to 35 hp and some were electric started. Rob Mintz always had inboards on his river boats. First a one cylinder Lathrop and then a six cylinder Continental.

Vance Kinlaw and Sam Vereen rented wooden 16-18 ft boats to anglers for river fishing. At one time

during the '30s the fee was \$1 per day.^{1,7}

Both river and seagoing boats were most often repaired and maintained by the owners and crew. For many years, bottoms were cleaned and painted by putting the boat aground at high tide. When the tide went out the work was done and the boat refloated on the next high tide. Sometimes pine straw was burned under the boat prior to painting to cause enough heat to kill any worms that were present. The bottom planks retained enough moisture to keep from catching fire. Anti-fouling paint at that time was usually applied to a wet boat bottom. When twin screws came in, careening was no longer possible.⁴

Off Season Employment

The first party boat fishermen had to depend more on their off season activities to make a living than the summer recreational fishery. In the beginning party fishing was confined pretty much to the period corresponding to the school vacations, Memorial Day to Labor Day. After the party boat fishing season many of them converted their boats over to shrimping.^{4,17} Some of these were Bob High, Rob Mintz, Victor Cox, Bill Bessent, and Donnie Mintz. Rob Mintz also helped operate a beach seine fishery at Cherry Grove Beach for Mr. Luther Wilson.⁴ Late in the fall some fishermen moved from the beach seine fishery to the river to set gill nets for spot and stop seines for flounder. Victor Cox ran his boat the **Edward** through Sheep Head Creek to carry fish caught in Lucian Bryan's beach seine on Waties Island to market in the mid-1920s. The fish were salted and packed in 100 pound kegs.¹ Several men clammed and oystered and the **Prince**, a former purse seiner that had fished for the fertilizer fac-

tory carried their catch north to Wilmington, NC.¹ Seafood on many occasions during the 1930s Depression was bartered for farm products.^{4,17}

Following World War II more opportunities for off season work became available. Some worked at the nearby beaches in construction. Others extended their fishing season by taking their boats to Florida or getting jobs on boats down there.⁸ This group included Frank Juel, Jimmy Stevens, Olin Carter, Leroy Mintz, Danny Juel, and others. Some such as Victor S. Cox, Victor E. Cox, and Hugh McGinn and again Leroy Mintz went south with the shrimping fleet, Leroy and Hugh operating their own boats and Coxes building nets for others.^{1,3,4,33}

Victor Sloan Cox and Victor Earl Cox opened an oyster shucking house in the mid-fifties. They shucked oysters using the Pringle Heat Shuck method and packed them first in glass jars and then lithographed tin cans. These were distributed in the Pee Dee South Carolina area by me. After the Coxes got out of the business, Donnie Mintz took over their trade and ran a shucking house up until the 1970s.

Jerome Long was a skilled boat builder and spent his off season repairing or building boats for others. He was also a very good barber and operated a shop in the building that Dr. Stone used for an office. Lawrence Long spent two of his winters building his own boat the **Cheryl Ann**.

In 1960 Frank Juel initiated blackfish potting. He was very successful in catching fish, but not very good at making a profit at it. He recalls selling nearly a hundred boxes of blackfish for \$12 per 100 pound box.⁸ Lawrence Long's sons Larry, Billy, and Ricky have continued blackfish potting and the economics involved are much better now.^{12,13,16,34}

Of course every boat owner and many operators devoted much of their spring to getting boats ready for the summer season. The season also has been extended so that many are taking parties as late as November and as early as March.

The Fishermen

Very early, local people began to come to Little River probably to fish or to help with the haul seines at Waties Island. Later folks from around the Charlotte, Gastonia areas of North Carolina started coming to the Little River area. They camped on the waterfront and sometimes stayed a week or two. They travelled in T model Fords and other early makes of cars, taking a dirt road from Whiteville, NC to Longs, SC and then to Little River. People from this part of North Carolina from the beginning made up a large contingent of the people fishing at Little River and this has remained so to this day.^{1,4,8,9}

Most people coming to the coast from mid-and upper South Carolina had a more circuitous route to travel. They went from Conway straight to Myrtle Beach or through Wampee, SC to reach Ocean Drive and Cherry Grove Beaches. It was not until a good bridge was built to accommodate the Intracoastal Waterway and link up with Highway 9 in 1934 that a direct route from eastern South Carolina was in place. This route was paved in the late 1930s and this increased the number of visitors from mid-and upper South Carolina. The Intracoastal Waterway bridge also linked up what is now Highway 17 and made access from Myrtle Beach and other areas much easier.^{1,9} In recent years strong efforts by North Myrtle Beach and Myrtle Beach chambers of commerce have brought people from all over the world into the area and many have taken advan-

tage of the fishing at Little River.

Some great tales involving some of the individual fishermen are remembered by the captains.

One, Victor S. Cox recalled had to do with a slightly inebriated soldier just after World War II. He, despite all of Captain Victor's efforts, spent most of his day at sea balancing on the rail of the boat or on the edge of the cabin. He never fell off - until just as the boat tied up at the dock over he went and had to be fished out of the drink.

Another time a man drank a vast amount of whiskey on Frank Juel's boat and became belligerent. He began to threaten the crew and passengers with a knife and Frank in his efforts to control the man shot him in the shoulder. This allowed the crew to tie him up and he was transported to the Conway hospital when the boat could get him ashore. He was very contrite when the alcohol wore off and he sneaked out of the hospital and went home. Shortly thereafter he collapsed and apparently died of kidney failure (Dunnegan 1994).⁸

One time Frank had a man aboard the **Hurricane** who had to put his wife on a trolling boat because she thought she would get seasick when the headboat began to drift while fishing. He asked to use the ship to ship radio to talk to his wife and when he got her on the radio he tried to make her sick by talking about all kinds of queasy types of foods. This didn't sit right with one of the mates so he made a salt squid sandwich with a lot of mayonnaise and offered the man a bite. Guess who got seasick.⁸

By accident I discovered a fine seasick remedy. On a trip in the early fall we began to catch octopus on hook and line. I saved a few for a science class that a friend taught. They were put on ice in a Styrofoam cooler and placed below in the cabin. One of the party had started feeling

bad and had laid down in a berth beside the cooler. One of the octopii decided that he didn't like the cooler and crawled out on the ailing man's arm. This woke the man up and when he saw the creature on his arm made a mad dash up on deck. He stayed there for the rest of the trip and forgot about being sick.

Epilogue

Seventy-five years after a small group of young men found a way to make a living carrying people into the ocean to catch a mess of fish, what has become of this industry as it has matured? The boats have changed. Instead of a conglomeration of boats that had beginnings in some other field, the fleet is made up of high powered, high tech boats specifically manufactured for the purpose for which they are used. One boat now has more power than probably all the engines used between the industry's beginnings and World War II put together and certainly cost more. It no longer takes a whole day for a trip to the blackfish banks.

A fisherman does not expect to feed his family all winter on the catch from just one or two trips as he did in the '30s, but is happy with a small string and a pleasant day. Tag and release is the norm for many species and all are concerned with doing what they can to persevere and increase the stocks of fish.

The river front is no longer a mad house of people looking for a place on a vessel or captains soliciting parties every morning during the summer season. Ticket offices handle most of the business for the headboats and most of the charter trips are booked by telephone. The season is not just from Memorial Day to Labor Day, but from March into November.

Little River itself has changed from a small village with two or three

stores, to a bustling community with about all the amenities one could want. Retirees from other areas now make up a significant part of the population. The river front itself however has retained much of its character. The main street has been paved and the docks are wider and better maintained, but other than that it looks about as it did in the '30s.

Eating and lodging facilities have kept up with demand both in available rooms and cuisines offered. People are too sophisticated now however for the \$1 rooms at the Little River Hotel and Riverview Tavern of the '30s and '40s that were cooled with whatever breeze that came through the open windows. Nothing has taken the place of the meals offered at Mrs. Kate Vereens or Mrs. Mary Platts however.

What is the future of the fishery? The pioneers, who dominated the scene up until World War II, are gone and their successors, the second wave that flourished up until the eighties all have about called it a day. The third group, some of the sons of the first and second contingent, are now the old guard. A new generation is on the way. Some are first becoming owners and captains and others are mates learning the ropes.

Like everything that has survived for 75 years, the party fishing at Little River has changed, but in many ways remained the same. The old crowd has made way for the newcomers and the old boats have been replaced by the new, but every year finds old and new customers boarding the boats eagerly anticipating what the day will bring. When the 100th anniversary of the founding of the fishery comes around early next century, sons and maybe daughters of the present captains will surely be carrying out a new generation of fishermen.

Acknowledgements

I am obligated to a large number of people who took time out from busy schedules to help me put this history together. These included the fishermen: Terry Coffee, Edward Elliott, Danny Juel, Billy Long, Chris Long, Ricky Long, Tommy Long, Bobby Mintz, Danny Mintz, Ronnie Nobles, Robbie Scarborough, Robert Small, Jimmie Stevens, Billy John Vereen, and Max Vereen. The boat owners L.D. "Tink" Benton and Steve Speros. Family members of those involved in the fishery: Mrs. T.V. Bessent, J.R. Bessent, T.V. Bessent Jr., Cecille Cox, Faye Mintz, Winefred Mintz, and Patricia Vereen. Long time residents of Little River: Bridger Baldwin, Mary Platt, and Louise Stone. Mrs. Virginia Bradley of the Lake Shore Motel helped me locate some of the people new to the fishery.

I am particularly grateful to Mrs. Catherine Lewis, retired Horry County Librarian, and C.B. Berry a noted historian of the area. Both of them not only provided their published articles on the area, but also shared their valuable insights into many of the early events concerning Little River. The late Ralph Ellis and I spent several mornings going through his files documenting events in the fishery and recording his recollections. Frank Juel took several hours of his time to provide times, fishing methods, boats and events as he recalled from his long and varied career. David Clemons in several sessions gave an insight into early boats and fishermen as well as outside occupations of the boatmen. Lawrence Long at ninety-two went back into the earliest days of the fishery and told me of his involvement. Larry, his eldest son and I spent several productive sessions at his supper table as he brought me up to date on new fishing activities.

Vance and Helen Kinlaw provided much valuable information not only about their boats and their Tavern, but also about the early boatmen and their clientele.

Edward High, Captain Bob's son, was able to provide details of his father's boats and activities dating back to the first parties. I appreciated this valuable input.

Without the help of Leroy Mintz and Hugh M^cGinn my task would have been impossible. Hugh through his recollections gave me an oral history of Little River, spanning his eighty-five years. He went over this paper straightening out where I was wrong and adding to it where needed and I thank him.

Leroy and I spent many hours going over events as he or I recalled them and documenting his and his families involvement in the fishery. Faye, his wife, helped greatly in dating many happenings. Leroy's time went back to his teenage experiences prior to World War II.

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Lastly, I have to thank those early fishermen who were my mentors and friends. Their stories of the beginnings of recreational fishing in the Little River area were instrumental in inspiring me to undertake this effort. So to the late Victor S. Cox, Bob High, and Rob Mintz I say thanks and ask their forgiveness if I didn't get it just right.

Personal Communications

1. Hugh T. M^cGinn
4410 Mineola Ave.
Little River, SC 29566
2. Lawrence Long
-Deceased-
3. Victor S. Cox
-Deceased-
4. Leroy Mintz
P.O. Box 525
Little River, SC 29566
5. Edward High
452 Causeway Dr.
Wrightsville, NC 28480
6. W.J. Vereen
P.O. Box 667
Little River, SC 2956
7. Vance Kinlaw
P.O. Box 157
Little River, SC 29566
8. Frank Juel
Box 98
Little River, SC 29566
9. Ralph Ellis
-Deceased-
10. James R. Bessent
734 Tallwood Dr.
Charleston, SC 29412
11. Dannie Juel
P.O. Box 203
Little River, SC 29566
12. Larry Long
1491 Watson Dr.
Little River, SC 29566
13. Billy Long
P.O. Box 344
Little River, Sc 29566
14. Dannie Mintz
1621 Edgewood Dr.
Little River, SC 29566
15. Wilford Mintz
Box 134
Little River, SC 29566
16. Tommy Long
1567 Watson Ave.
Little River, SC 29566
17. Chris Long
1898 N. Twisted Oaks Dr.
Little River, SC 29566
18. David Clemons
1471 Highway 17
Little River, SC 29566
19. Steve Speros
P.O. Box 541
Little River, SC 29566
20. Mrs. T.V. Bessent
1569 Bessent Ave.
Little River, SC 29566
21. T.V. Bessent
684 Clearview Ave.
Charleston, SC 29412
22. Jimmy Stevens
P.O. Box 100
Little River, SC 29566
23. Ronnie Nobles
P.O. Box 406
Little River, SC 29566
24. Edward Elliott
3312 Mineola Ave.
Little River, SC 29566
25. Terry Coffey
1505 Watson Ave.
Little River, SC 29566
26. Robby Scarborough
P.O. Box 712
Little River, SC 29566

27. Robert Small
10805 Highway 917
Nichols, SC 29581
28. Wayne Henderson
4474 Waterfront Ave.
Little River, SC 29566
29. L.D. "Tink" Benton
P.O. Box 365
Little River, SC 29566
30. Mrs. Mary Platt
Highway 17
Little River, SC 29566
31. Mrs. Leroy "Faye" Mintz
P.O. Box 525
Little River, SC 29566
32. Mrs. V.E. Cox
1423 Mariners Place
Little River, SC 29566
33. Ricky Long
2406 Barry Street
Little River, SC 29566

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About the Author

Victor G. Burrell, Jr. is the director emeritus of the Marine Resources Research Institute of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. Dr. Burrell grew up in Florence, S.C. His first contacts with the Little River community began in 1935 when he was carried river fishing in a rented skiff by his uncle, Ted Burrell. Two or three of these trips a year became the norm up until about 1940. In 1937, Burrell was a camper at the YMCA camp at Cherry Grove Beach, S.C. It was the practice to carry the campers on an overnight camp out at what is now Ocean Isle Beach, N.C. The campers were transported there by a vessel chartered at Little River.

In 1937 the boat hired was the **Edward** piloted by Victor S. Cox.

After a stint in the U.S. Navy during World War II, Burrell completed a B.S. degree at the College of Charleston and went to work on a family business in Florence. He purchased a 41-foot boat built by Captain Eddie Gardner, a Charleston Harbor pilot, in 1950, and started carrying parties on weekends from Vereen's Marina on the Intracoastal Waterway. In 1952, Captain Victor S. Cox began running the **Hobby** during the week while Burrell operated her on weekends. This continued until 1958. Then Victor E. Cox took over for his father.

In the early 1960s Donnie Mintz

began to carry the **Rascal** out for Vivian Bessent on Sunday and Burrell ran his boat the **Les**. On occasion Burrell ran private boats for people and filled in on other boats at Little River. In 1965 Burrell returned to school at the College of William and Mary. He received a PhD in Marine Science in 1972. The **Hobby** was sold to finance some of the schooling and often when asked about her Burrell says we ate her. After graduation Burrell returned to South Carolina as a marine scientist at the Marine Resources Research Institute (MRRI) of the S.C. Wildlife and Marine Resources Department, where he became MRRI director in 1974 and retired in 1991.