

STORIES OF THE WATERMEN

Captain Ulysses mending a net while Helen Higgins
looks on, circa 1930.
Courtesy – Shady Side Rural Heritage Society





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INTRODUCTION

In **Stories of the Watermen**, students will explore the life of a waterman's family from the 19th and 20th centuries. They will examine historical documents and artifacts to uncover clues about life on the water long ago. Through participation in the field trip *Seasons of a Chesapeake Bay Waterman* offered by Discovery Village and the Captain Salem Avery House or visits to other Chesapeake Bay Gateway sites, students can compare and contrast these stories with that of a waterman today.

Activity Descriptions

Activity 1: THE CAPTAIN SALEM AVERY STORY

Students will explore the life of a 19th century Chesapeake Bay buy boat captain. They will read his biography and analyze historical documents (a census, family tree data, and an estate inventory) to learn more about the migration of his family and everyday life in a 19th century waterman's home.

Activity 2: PICTURE PREDICTIONS

Students will examine photographs of objects from the home and work of an historic waterman and make predictions about the function and importance of each object.

Activity 3: DAISY'S BIG DAY

Students will read a story about a day in the life of Daisy, a waterman's child, in the 1950s, and discover through her experiences the many different jobs and people involved in bringing seafood from the Bay to the dinner table.

Vocabulary

Buy Boat: a boat owned by a seafood buyer used to purchase fish, crabs, and oysters from local watermen to take directly to the market. This allowed the watermen to sell their seafood without having to travel to urban markets.

Harrow Plow: a heavy frame with disks pulled by horses or mules and used to break up and level plowed fields.

Kitchen Safe: Cupboard with punched metal doors used to store baked goods and other foods. Its perforated doors allowed for airflow and kept the food safe from mold, insects, and other pests.

Looking Glass: a wall mirror.

Watermen: persons making their living by harvesting and selling seafood.

Websites

www.chesapeakebay.net

www.mdsg.umd.edu

www.intandem.com/NewPrideSite/MD/Lesson4/watermen_TG.pdf