

Barnegat Bay/Regions

I. SYNOPSIS

This section features the most famous example of New Jersey folk art, that is, the Barnegat Bay duck decoy. Harry Shourds, a National Endowment for the Arts Folk Arts Heritage Award winner, carves a decoy in his workshop in Seaville. He says that his father and his grandfather before him were decoy carvers, and he explains that his decoys are working decoys, even though most people today buy them for decoration. Harry judges a good decoy by how it behaves in the water. Yet, he notes, he likes to put "a little imagination" into his decoys, unlike realistic decoys that he calls "model making." Each Harry Shourds decoy is completely hand-made and unique.

In contrast, in the segment on factory-made decoys, the owner explains that they take two decoys, one by Harry Shourds and the other by his grandfather, disassemble them, and use the head of one and the body of the other as masters on the carving machine. Most factory decoys, he says, are made of pine, whereas the traditional decoys are made of Jersey white cedar. But, he claims, they are making "a honest, legit copy."

Finally, decoy collector and hunter John Hillman demonstrates how he takes a "rig" of decoys on his sneakbox and sets them out on Barnegat Bay. He explains that the Barnegat Bay decoys are hollow, unlike Chesapeake Bay decoys, which are solid. Both the decoys and the sneakbox are constructed to be light because of the shallow nature of Barnegat Bay. John explains that he goes out on the bay, not to kill a lot of ducks, but because it's "like going on a picnic to me."

II. KEY WORDS

Barrier island - a long, off-shore body of land with the ocean on one side and a bay on the other separating it from the mainland

Bay - a body of water wither at the mouth of a river or between a barrier island and the mainland

Sneakbox - a traditional wooden boat from Barnegat Bay used in duck hunting

Decoy - a wooden model of a duck or goose used to lure ducks and geese to land on the bay

Stool - another name for a decoy

Rig - a group of decoys tied together and placed on the water in a particular arrangement

III. SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

A. THE HANDMADE DECOY

1. Objective

Students will understand the structure of an object by seeing how it is constructed and used.

2. Before Viewing the Program

Before the class, the teacher should download and reproduce the Decoy questions. If the teacher is only showing this segment she should introduce the location of Barnegat Bay. Then the teacher might define the term decoy. The teacher then should distribute the Decoy questions and go over them.

3. After Viewing the Program

After viewing the section, the class should be divided into cooperative learning groups to fill out the questionnaire. If the teacher is showing more than one segment, there is no need to reassemble the class until all segments are viewed. The teacher then should go over the answers with the entire class.

C. FACTORY-MADE DECOYS

1. Objective

The student will understand the difference between a hand-made object and a factory-made object.

2. Before Viewing the Program

Before the class, the teacher should download and reproduce the Decoy questions. If the teacher is only showing this segment she should introduce the location of Barnegat Bay. The teacher then should explain that the video segment they are about to view is about the difference between hand-made and factory-made decoys. The teacher should distribute the Factory-made Decoy questions and go over them.

3. After Viewing the Program

After viewing the section, the class should be divided into cooperative learning groups to fill out the questionnaire. If the teacher is showing more than one segment, there is no need to reassemble the class until all segments are viewed. The teacher then should go over the answers with the entire class.

D. OUT ON THE BAY

1. Objective

The student will understand how both the sneakbox and decoy are used together on the bay.

2. Before Viewing the Program

Before the class, the teacher should download and reproduce the Decoy questions. If the teacher is only showing this segment she should introduce the location of Barnegat Bay. The teacher then should explain that the video segment they are about to view is about how the Barnegat Bay decoys and sneakbox are used together. If the teacher is only showing this segment, she should explain both the

decoy and the sneakbox. The teacher then should distribute the On the Bay questions and go over them.

3. After Viewing the Program

After viewing the section, the class should be divided into cooperative learning groups to fill out the questionnaire. If the teacher is showing more than one segment, there is no need to reassemble the class until all segments are viewed. Then the teacher should go over the answers with the entire class.

V. SUGGESTED READING

"Folk Sculpture," pp. 94- 11; "Traditional Boats," pp. 112-123. In *The Folklore and Folklife of New Jersey*, by David S. Cohen. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1983.

Ridgway, Merce. *The Bayman: A Life on Barnegat Bay*. Harvey Cedars, NJ: Down the Shore Publishers, 2000.