

# A BUTLER-BUILT BOAT STORY

From Marianne Miller

He's always spoiled me for my birthday; and when I dropped a not-too-subtle hint about a rowing skiff, my husband Tom was off on a mission.

Of course his first stop was to check with the best, George Butler, who had a waiting list as long as his boat rails. But George did mention that one of his skiffs—a boat he built years ago for his then-new wife Becky—was for sale. The wooden 14-foot boat first served as a crabber, then was later modified with a keel, mast and sail, then back to a classic skiff—"Butler-built" and simply beautiful. Over the years it was owned by Keith Swift, who used it as a pound net skiff, and by Tom Williams.



The *May Tick*

Perfect! Tom didn't hesitate and the acquisition was promptly completed; the little boat became part of the Miller flotilla, affectionately christened *May Tick*. And for over a decade, she provided generations of Millers delightful excursions in the creek and on the bay. She also enjoyed a bit of notoriety, being mentioned in several magazine articles.

But as the years went by, both her age and mine began to catch up with us, so I decided to donate her to the Museum for expert refurbishing by the Boat Shop and possible sale. How pleased I was when Cliff Ames called to say that Tides Inn is purchasing her for a part of its upcoming decorating project at the resort. So now this loveable little boat will have another life. Bon Voyage, *May Tick*, with love, Marianne.

# A BUMPER CROP OF CRABS



The 2018 Bay-wide Winter Dredge Survey conducted by Maryland and Virginia estimates the 2019 Blue Crab population to be 594 million, a 60% increase over 2018, and the 8th highest abundance in the past 30 years. Scientists attribute the increase to mild winter temperatures, higher than average rainfall, and effective fishery management. Happy crabbing!

# HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

## Reedville—The Town that Fish Built



Menhaden

*Brevoortia tyrannus*, or menhaden, are small bony fish about 12 inches long and one pound in weight. They populate the shores and inlets of the Atlantic seacoast in large numbers and swim in immense schools, hovering near the surface. Menhaden are easily trapped, but prior to the 1860s, their value was limited. Undesirable for human consumption, menhaden served only as fish bait and food for domestic animals. The accidental discovery in the 1850s that their oil could be extracted by boiling and sold commercially, quickly made menhaden America's primary source for oil, replacing the declining and unpredictable whaling industry. Prior to the arrival of Elijah Reed, Virginia had no menhaden industry. His success stimulated the Northern Neck's economic recovery from the effects of the Civil War and put Reedville on the map.

- Source, National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form for Reedville Historic District