

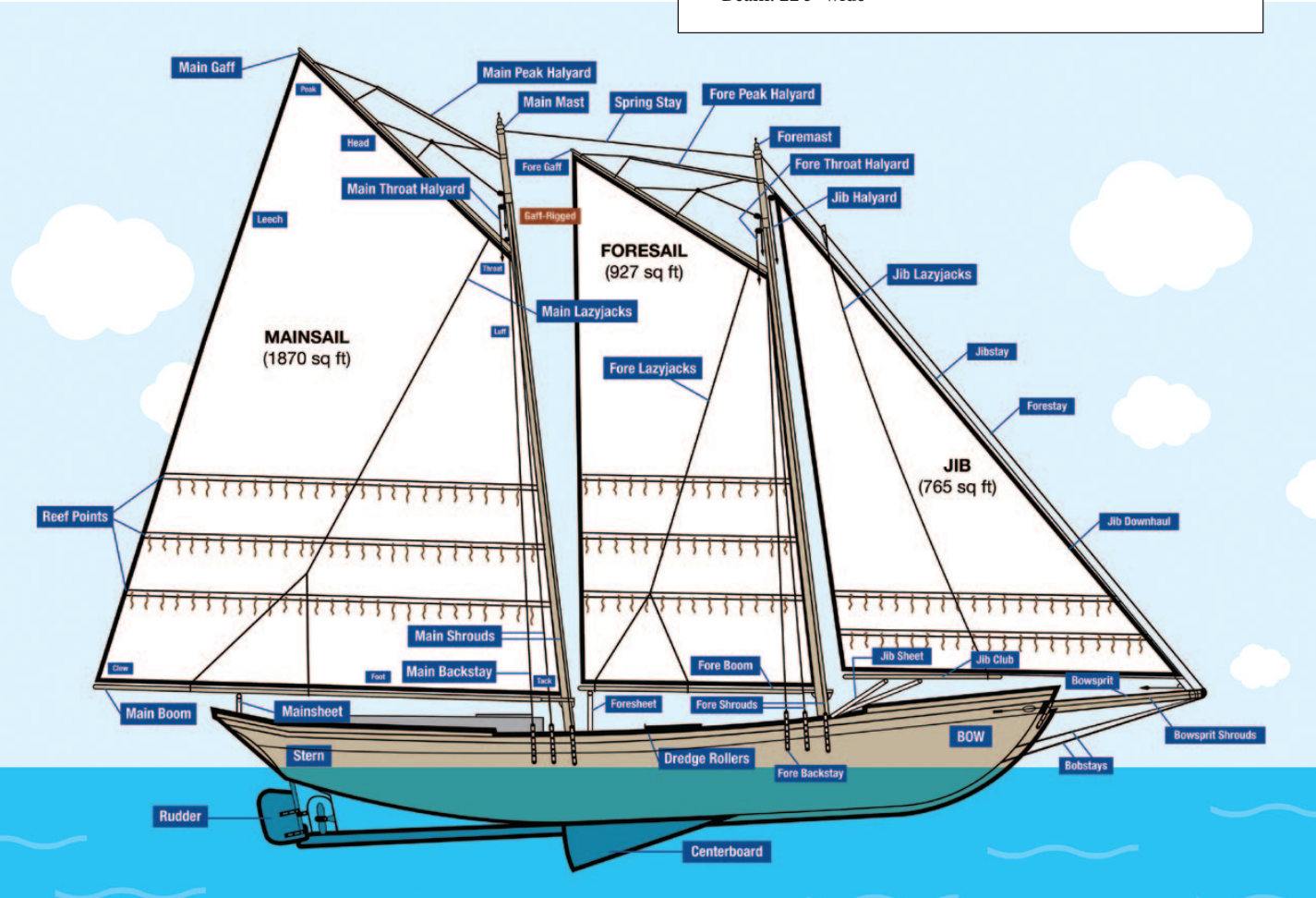
# A.J. Meerwald — New Jersey’s Tall Ship

Authentically restored 1928 Delaware Bay Oyster Schooner, owned and operated by the Bayshore Center at Bivalve

*Then...* The Schooner A.J. Meerwald is a “new style” schooner, a type built between 1925 and 1930 to plant and harvest oysters. In the 1920s, the oyster industry prospered due to improvements in schooner design including a larger dredge to collect oysters, a spoon bow design that provided a larger deck space, and an engine to use during harvesting.

*and now...* The A.J. Meerwald sets sail from many ports throughout New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware, but her home port is at the Bayshore Center located in historic Bivalve, New Jersey, the “Oyster Capital of the World”! When visiting the Bayshore Center be sure to explore the Delaware Bay Museum inside the 1904 Oyster Shipping Sheds and grab a delicious bite to eat at the Oyster Cracker Café. *Open seasonally.*

- Specifications
- Rig: Schooner — a type of sailing vessel with two or more masts with sails that are fore-and-aft (in line). Mainmast is taller than the Foremast
  - Gaff-rigged: sails framed by wood on three sides
  - Bald headed: lacks topmasts
  - Masts: 68' Mainmast and 65' Foremast
  - Sparred length: 115' from bowsprit to end of main boom
  - Length on deck: 85'
  - Load waterline length: 78'3"
  - Beam: 22'5" wide
- Draft: 6' of the hull is in the water, 12' if the centerboard is down
  - Freeboard: 3'6" distance from the waterline to the deck level
  - Sail area: 3,562 square feet
  - Construction (wooden): hull – white oak, deck – cedar, spars – Douglas fir (masts, booms, bowsprit)
  - Weight: 57 tons gross registered tonnage or 114,000 pounds. That's the equivalent of 28 cars!



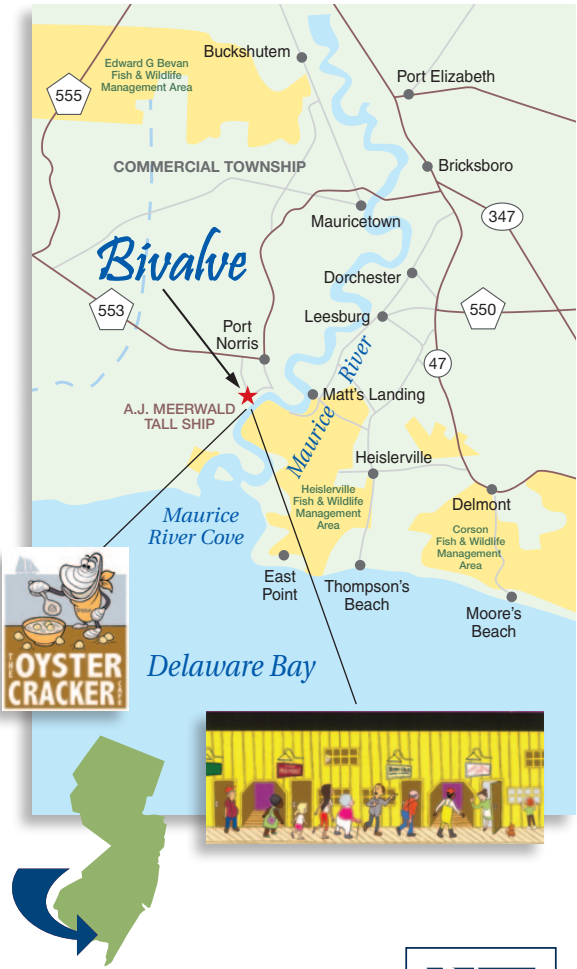
## Go Sailing Aboard New Jersey’s Tall Ship, the A.J. Meerwald!

Owned and operated by Bayshore Center at Bivalve.

*Join us for a public, educational, or charter sail*



Call for more information or visit us online for the latest *Go Sailing* schedule.  
**(856) 785-2060 or bayshorecenter.org**



Bayshore Center at Bivalve

2800 High Street (Bivalve)  
Port Norris, New Jersey 08349  
(856) 785-2060  
[bayshorecenter.org](http://bayshorecenter.org)

BAYSHORE CENTER AT BIVALVE

WHERE HISTORY AND THE ENVIRONMENT MEET

The mission of Bayshore Center at Bivalve is to advance the understanding of the human impact on New Jersey's aquatic environment through education, advocacy, and programming.



The Bayshore Center at Bivalve received an operating support grant from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation and the New Jersey Historical Commission, a Division of the Department of State.



A.J. MEERWALD

## New Jersey’s Official Tall Ship

*Then...*



*and now*



WHERE HISTORY AND THE ENVIRONMENT MEET





# Follow the History of the A.J. Meerwald from the Roaring 20s to Today

## The Roaring 20s

**1923-1930** “New Style” oyster schooners, like the *A.J. Meerwald*, are built around the Maurice and Cohansey Rivers to make improvements to schooner design.

**1928** Brothers Augustus “Gus” and William “Bill” Meerwald contract with Stowman & Sons Shipyard in Dorchester, NJ, to build the Schooner *A.J. Meerwald*.

The boat is named after their father, Augustus Joseph (A.J.) Meerwald.

**August 31, 1928**

The *A.J. Meerwald* is launched.

**1929** New Jersey produces one third of all U.S. oysters.



Gus (left) and Bill (right) Meerwald

Photo, BCB collection, gift of Sue Lane

Newspaper Clipping, Dollar Weekly News, August 21, 1928, BCB collection



*A.J. Meerwald*, 1929

## Enduring the Great Depression — 1930s

**1932-1939** Hard times fall upon the Meerwald family.

On July 23, 1935, the U.S. Marshal sells the *A.J. Meerwald* at auction to repay creditors.

Augustus and William's wives, Edna and Florence, purchase the boat from Texas-Pacific Realty Co. with backing from their parents.

**1936-1942** The *A.J. Meerwald* is inactive and tied up in Dennis Creek.



Capt. and Mrs. A.J. Meerwald (Mary)

Photo courtesy of Dennis Township Museum & History Center

## Wartime Mobilization — 1940s

USCG 86001-F & The Clyde A. Phillips



*A.J. Meerwald* as fireboat USCG 86001-F

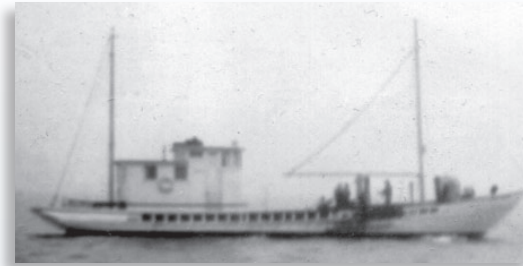
Photo by Robert Brewer, 1947, BCB collection, gift of the photographer

**June 1, 1942** The *A.J. Meerwald* is commandeered for the war effort. She is turned over to the U.S. Coast Guard and outfitted as a fireboat.

**1945** Delaware Bay schooners convert from sail to engine power to improve efficiency and address the labor shortage caused by the war and new opportunities.

**January 1947** After nearly five years, the *A.J. Meerwald* is returned to the Meerwald family for private use.

**August 26, 1947** The family sells the *A.J. Meerwald* to Clyde A. Phillips for \$30,000. Mrs. Phillips changes the name to *Clyde A. Phillips* and converts it to power.



*Clyde A. Phillips* under motor

Photo, BCB collection, gift of Clyde A. Phillips



Captain Clyde A. Phillips circa 1939

## Environmental Reckonings — 1950s & 1960s

**1957 – MSX**

The oyster industry is devastated by MSX, a protozoan parasite.

**1958-1986**

*Clyde A. Phillips* has multiple owners and falls into disarray.

**1959** Cornelius “Nicky” Campbell and Albert F. Mollinkopf purchase the boat and convert her to dredge clams offshore. Major outfitting including metal decking and hull sheathing. All of the equipment adds 10 tons of extra weight.



*Clyde A. Phillips*

Photo, BCB collection, gift of Lisa R. Yerges



Beautiful homes once reflected a prosperous economy prior to MSX in 1957.

Postcard, BCB collection, gift of Bill Biggs



Deck of *Clyde A. Phillips*

Photos by Clyde A. Phillips, BCB collection, gift of Clyde A. Phillips

## Restoration, Resilience, Renewal — 1970s & 1980s

**1970s — Automation**

The oyster industry introduces a self-dumping dredge and automated culling systems.

**1969-1985 — Oysters**

MSX mortality is low and oyster abundance improves since 1957.

**November 1986**

John M. Gandy finds the *Clyde A. Phillips* in Maryland and purchases her. He plans to restore her to sail.



*Clyde A. Phillips* in restoration

**September 1988** The *Clyde A. Phillips* Foundation, later Delaware Bay Schooner Project, Bayshore Discovery Project, and now the Bayshore Center at Bivalve, is formed by 23-year old Meghan Wren, who leads the organization for 29 years. John Gandy donates the boat. Surf clam rig removed and stabilization efforts begin.

**October 1988** After 10 years of being idle, *Clyde A. Phillips* sinks in the Maurice River and is raised.

## New Era & Recognition of the Delaware Bay — 1990s to Today

**1990 — Dermo** The parasite *Perkinsus marinus* causes oyster mortality rates to double.

**January 18, 1992** The *Clyde A. Phillips* is lifted from the Maurice River and set on blocking in Bivalve. Everett Marino of Dill's Seafood in Bridgeton makes his site in Bivalve available to be used as a shipyard. Work is achieved through volunteer labor, donated services and fundraisers.



Volunteer John Dubois, BCB Founder Meghan Wren and John Gandy at the restoration site

Photo, BCB collection



Meghan Wren Founder, BCB



*Clyde A. Phillips* at Marino's, Bivalve

Photo by Steve Eisenhauser, 1995, BCB collection, gift of photographer

**September 12, 1995**

Re-christened as the *A.J. Meerwald*.

**1998** The *A.J. Meerwald* is designated New Jersey's Official Tall Ship due to the efforts of a letter-writing campaign.



Meghan Wren at the re-christening of the *A.J. Meerwald*



Governor Christine Todd Whitman at Bivalve, NJ

**2018** The *A.J. Meerwald* and Gladys Meerwald Brewer, Augustus C. and Edna Meerwald's daughter, celebrate their 90th birthdays.



AJM at Barnegat Bay

Photo by Tola Murphy-Baran, 2018, courtesy of the photographer