



Another source of income from the bay was “market gunning.” A license could be obtained from Brookhaven Town for shooting ducks and other fowl for commercial resale. Here, the two men set out decoys. Behind their boat floats a “battery,” a watertight box surrounded by a platform, in which the duck hunter could hide. Decoys around the battery would attract flocks of ducks to settle down in the water, much to their misfortune.

While oysters provided the main source of income from the bay, clams were also harvested. In 1896 one thousand ton of clams were taken from the bay in the Patchogue area. This image was also taken from an article in Harpers Weekly, October 2, 1886, and it shows the various activities of the clam diggers.



Winter time could not stop the hardy bay men from pursuing their profession. One hundred years ago the bay used to freeze over solid almost every winter, easily supporting horses, sleds and wagons. Large holes were cut in the ice and the men would stand on narrow boards spanning the water and work their tongs and rakes, harvesting oysters and clams.

