

# History & Specifications

**The A. J. Meerwald is a Delaware Bay oyster schooner**, a distinct vessel that evolved to meet the needs of the local oyster fishery. Launched in 1928, the A. J. Meerwald was one of hundreds of schooners built along South Jersey's Delaware Bayshore before the decline of the shipbuilding industry that coincided with the Great Depression.



**1928:** The Meerwald family of South Dennis commissioned Charles H. Stowman & Sons shipyard to build the A. J. Meerwald. She was a bald-headed (without topmasts), gaff-rigged oyster dredge. Her construction is 'oak on oak': oak planks laid on oak frames, as was the tradition in Dorchester built vessels. She has relatively light scantlings, no knees and no horntimber, also characteristic of Dorchester schooners.

**1942:** In June, the Maritime Commission commandeered the A. J. Meerwald under the War Powers Act. She was turned over to the US Coast Guard who outfitted her as a fireboat. The vessel underwent a dramatic change at this time, with most of her sailing rig being removed.

**1947:** In January, the A. J. Meerwald was returned to the Meerwalds. Eight months later, they sold the vessel to Clyde A. Phillips who used her as an oyster dredge under power.

**1957:** The oyster industry crashed with the sudden appearance of the parasite Msx.

**1959:** Ownership passed to Cornelius (Nicky) Campbell who outfitted her for surf clamming. She operated primarily as a clam dredge into the late 1970's. She was essentially retired until her donation to the Schooner Project in 1989.

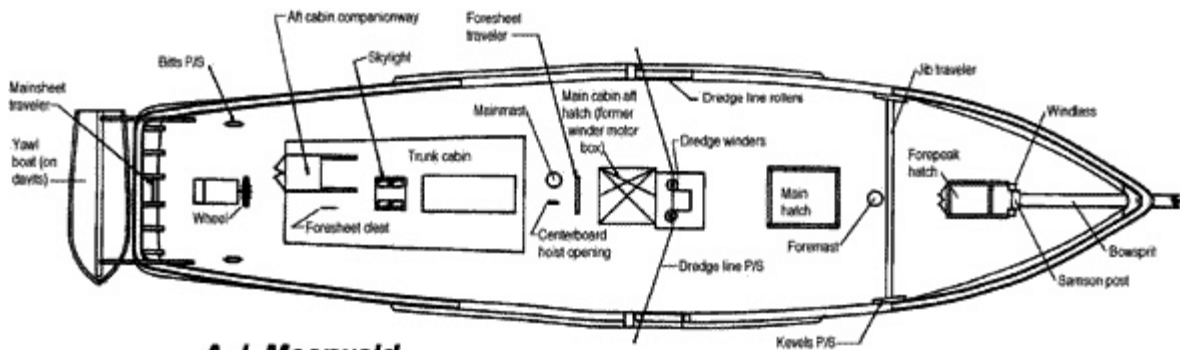
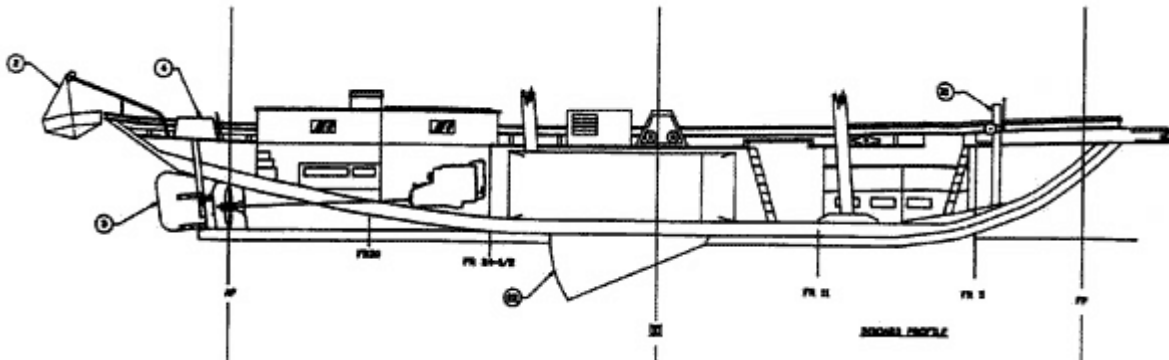
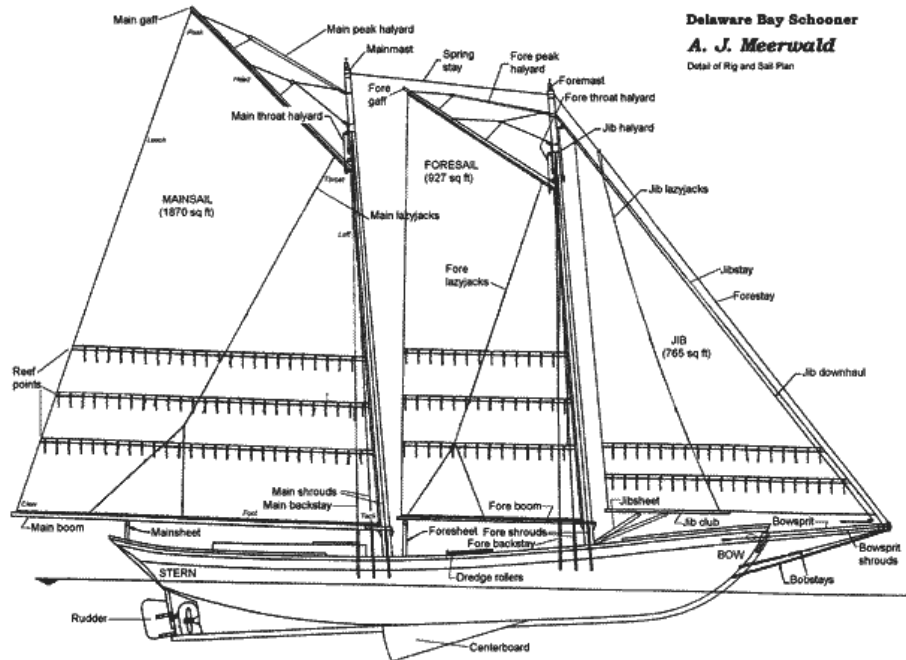
**1998:** on Earth Day, the A.J. MEERWALD was designated New Jersey's official tall ship by Governor Christine Whitman.

**2002:** Delaware Bay Schooner Project becomes the Bayshore Discovery Project.

**The A. J. Meerwald was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1995.**

# Deck plan

Length on deck - 85'  
 Draft - 6'  
 Beam - 22'3"  
 Rig height 70'  
 Freeboard - 4'  
 Sail area - 3562 Sq Ft  
 Gross Tonnage - 57 tons



**A.J. Meerwald**  
 Main deck arrangement  
 (P/S = Port and starboard)