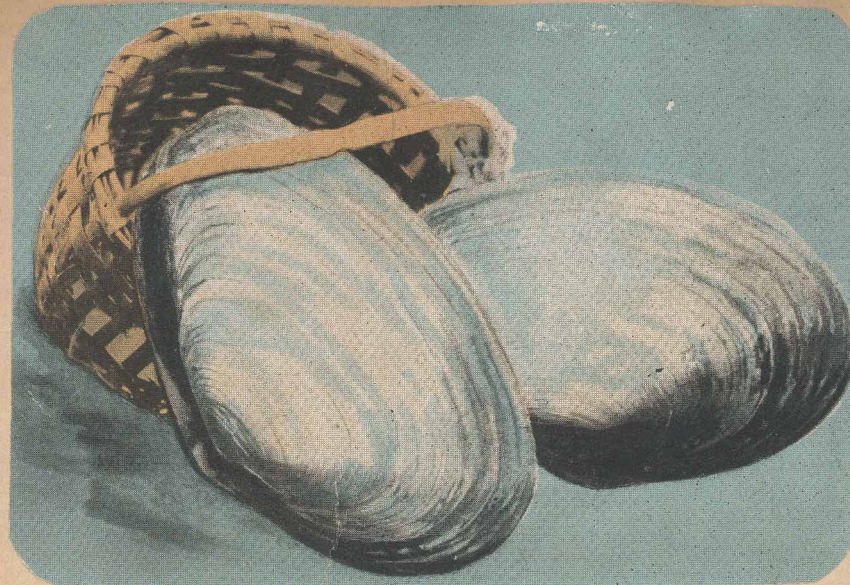


005-007

Clams and Quahaugs

You've seen the cartoon of the Old Cape Codder telling a visitor superciliously, "Them ain't clams, them's quahaugs." To a stranger sometimes the words are baffling and mystifying, and to a stranger all clams may look alike. But Cape Codders know the difference. Those delicious little white-shelled clams that are usually served steamed are softshell clams. Quahaugs are cousins of the softshell clam; they have a rounder, thicker shell. Both clams and quahaugs may be used for chowder. Quahaugs are served raw on the halfshell when small, generally listed as "Littleneck." As they grow larger they are used chiefly for chowder or for the less common quahaug pie. The sea-clam is built on the same lines as the quahaug but is many times larger and its meat is correspondingly tougher. It also makes a tasty chowder, with plenty of flavor in the broth, but needs longer cooking. The razor clam is a small clam with a long, narrow shell, thin and brittle. It makes chowder but is not so common as its cousins. So now you know, and next time you meet a Cape Cod clam-digger you needn't give him the chance to tell you, "Them ain't clams."



The Elusive Razor Clams

EVERYONE who has strolled on a Cape Cod beach for any distance has seen the long, black shells which so-called razor clams once occupied. The shells are usually paired, so that they can be closed together, and remind one of the old-fashion razor with the blade folded.

As a matter of fact, the razor clam is not a clam at all. It is a fish, long, thin, not shaped a bit like a true clam, and it lives buried in the wet sand on the flats, perhaps a quarter of a mile, or even more, below the high-water line. You can sometimes locate the razor clam while in its home by the tiny ring, with a little hole in it, in the sand above. The razor fish, for that is what the razor "clam" really is, makes that ring by squirting water up through the hole. Real clams squirt water like that, too; and at low tide you can often see the jets of water as they suddenly shoot up a foot or so like little geysers, from the mud.

A Cape Cod boy catches razor clams thus: He finds the tell-tale ring in the sand, and, thrusting his fingers into the sand, digs as fast as he can to the fish. Hurry he must, else the razor fish will slip like greased lightning from between his shells, downward, and out.

It is said that razor "clams" make a wonderful stew. Why not try digging up a few for that very purpose?

1951

Razor Clam Lies Along Cape Shore

The razor clam or razor fish, also known as the solen, lies along the shore of Cape Cod Bay from the Canal to Wellfleet. The fish is about five to seven inches long and about 1½ inches long. The author, Joseph C. Lincoln, has described it as an old-fashioned razor with its blade closed into the handle.

The shellfish is to be found in the mud about a quarter of a mile from the high-water mark, resting straight up and down. Although this clam is plentiful in the waters of the Bay, there is little demand for it as food. A part of this clam is excellent in chowders and in clam pies.

Keeps Its Mouth Shut

THE old Cape Cod codger says, "Lots of us humans ought to follow the example of the clam; it knows when to keep its mouth shut, and never opens it unless necessary."

SEPTEMBER 5, 1946

"Crab" Unchanged Through Centuries

Odd Sea Animal Found Here Among Few Places On Earth

A horse-shoe crab looks like a prehistoric monster, and that is exactly what he is, writes Elizabeth J. McSherry in the Falmouth Enterprise. She explains: He has not changed an iota since centuries before the dawn of history, when he left his impress on ground that the ages have buried and preserved for our instruction. You might think that "limulus" (the scientific name for horse-shoe crab) would confound the evolutionists by his unaltered appearance and habits, but not at all! Some of them claim he is the possible ancestor of all vertebrates, including scientists!

This odd and rather awesome looking crab is still a mystery. He may not be a crab at all, because his circulatory system is more complex than other crabs. His brain is tremendously complicated, and his sensory and motor nerve routes are separate, as in human beings. His blood is really blue, not because his family is so old, but because it has copper in it (hemocyanin) instead of iron (hemoglobin) like ours.



The Horse-shoe Crab

- 1952 -

Those things that look like eyes on the crab's shell can tell light from dark, but that is about all they are good for, so far as we know. Sometimes you see two or more horse-shoe crabs together, skimming along the bottom, holding onto each other's tail. The big one is the female of the group. She lays her eggs in the sand above high tide mark, in May or early June. When the eggs hatch they do not look like horse-shoe crabs. They are a larval stage, called "trilobite". These trilobites are the only animal alive today which was also alive in the period when fossils were formed.

There are a few horse-shoe crabs along the coast from Maine to New Jersey, but Cape Cod is their favorite resort, and far the greatest number of them will be found here. They have huge breeding grounds in Brewster, Orleans and Wellfleet. Sometimes in making their nests they kick up so much mud they cover oyster beds, which makes the oyster fishermen complain about them. They do not eat weeds or marine plants, but sea worms, or the soft parts of fish and clam debris.

Let them swim along their mysterious way. They were here long before we humans were; they may survive the atom bombs long after we are gone!