

# From The Archives: "Rube and The Babe"



There's always a question in one's mind as to just how true-to-fact reports of celebrities visiting our, then, remote South Jersey. Howard Taft, Grover Cleveland, Napoleon's brother and even Babe Ruth!

We've long heard and even seen a black and white, of baseballs all-time legend, The Babe, duck hunting on the bay – Our Bay!

Okay, we think, perhaps he came as far as Forked River to a gin mill – and maybe his publicity agent posed the photo simply to add to the legend.

So here we are on a wintry afternoon, upstairs at Perrine's, cataloging and computer recording stuff when a spiral composition book – the kind your mother

used to keep for recipes – is noticed. It's sandwiched between more formal journals of the Carvel's Island Gunning Club (long since gone to the wind and tides and development of "The Beach".) "Over to the Beach" was what we called what is now emblazoned on those bumper stickers screaming LBI, pasted on the rear end of the endless SUV's southbound.

Page one of The Spiral begins "War Season on Japs" with the date 1942 – "Gunning Season – 70 Days." - we determine the old script writing – fountain pen – was done by Ruben Corlies – or Uncle Rube- the man who spanned three generations, Life Saving Service, sneakbox and decoy maker, baymen and storyteller to the boys of Manahawkin.

**The journal begins ho-hum of sorts:**

*"Thurs., 15th (October) no one present. Fri, 16th Davidson and Shooby, members, and George DuMont as guest. Sat 17th same party with Armstrong added. Earl Corlies (Rube's son) gunned with the party on Friday. Wind ENE, fresh breeze, killed 6 ducks, stormy on Sat."*

"ENE, fresh breeze." Watermen – that's what the Census would record Rube and those like him who made their living on the bay – had the ability to know at any given moment the direction of the wind, for, when you think about it, where the wind was coming from or going to dictated what they did and how they did it. Entry after entry in this fragile journal, Corlies' fountain pen records wind direction, wind shift and its consequence on where he stationed the party and the number of ducks killed.

Except the October 30th and 31st entry where wind was overshadowed by celebrity:

*"Member (Armstrong), as guests Babe Ruth the great ballplayer who played with the Yankees and Vandermeer who is a pitcher for Cincinnati, and Lynn Bogue Hunt the writer and artist who is well know by his skill and ability as a artist, and I as guide of Carvel Island Gunning Club will class Mr Hunt and the well know Babe Ruth also as gunners and good shots, and Mr Johnny Vandermeer is very good with his arm on a duck as well as on home plate. Party killed 32 head. Ruben Corlies"*

There is another account of Mr. Ruth and Lynn Bogue Hunt on December 11th and 12th of 1942, but we'll save that for next time. Meanwhile, keep the dust off 'em - Grove

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