

Seaport Feature Building: JOE DAYTON'S SAWMILL

JOSEPH SUMMERS DAYTON

Born - September 7, 1896 - Richland, NJ

Died - May 31, 1962 - Parkertown

Joe was the eldest son of William S. and Flora Belle Dayton. William or "Bill" Dayton as everyone called him was a "Sawmill Man" nearly all of his lifetime. Joe started working with his Dad at the age of 14 in the various mills near this source of supply. They moved to 23 different locations as the timber from the cedar swamps was cut off and it was another time to relocate. Bill retired from sawmills after building one for the Lebanon State Forest at New Lisbon, New Jersey.

Joseph Dayton became a partner with Russell Adams in New Gretna, New Jersey in the early 1920's, who was also in the sawmill business. In 1924, Joe followed his Dad to Parkertown where Bill has established a sawmill, large lumber storage shed (large enough for boat building), a blacksmith shop and steam equipment to make boat siding bendable, flexible and pliable. Joe worked with his dad in the business known as "William S. Dayton and Son", Bay Avenue, Parkertown, New Jersey

At this location, Bill and Joe built the "Madam Queen" for youngest son, Edward J. Dayton which was a charter fishing boat sailing from Parkertown Yacht Club, Parkertown. The timber for the "Madam Queen" being from the swamps of the Daytons, was milled and built at the location on Bay Avenue. In 1937, Joe Dayton built the "Peggy D" on the same premises. This was a charter fishing yacht motored with a gasoline automobile engine and later fitted with a Chrysler Crown engine sailing out of the Parkertown Yacht Club with Joe Dayton as Captain.

During the 1940 World War II years licensing was granted as the "Captains" were require to "Box the Compass" and pass maritime tests at the Philadelphia Custom House, Philadelphia, Pa. Joe had previously "Captained" the "Cockatoo", his first charter fishing yacht out of Parkertown Yacht Club. These yachts were known as "Bateaus". The "Cockatoo" was sailed or brought down the north coast by Joe Dayton and Richard (Dick) McKandless, his son-in-law. In the early 1930's Joe's brother Elton S. Dayton caught the live shrimp by using nets for bait, ("shrimping" was the term used) as did Joseph B. Holman, to provide Joe Dayton with chum and live shrimp for croakers, weakfish, flounder, kingfish and stripers. Joe was a popular captain and had many fishermen from northern New Jersey and the Philadelphia area. At one time he was honored with a Salt Water Angler's Dinner:

Testimonial to Captain Joseph Dayton

Monday evening, November 22, 1937 at 8:00 PM at LaSalle Restaurant, Dover, New Jersey. This was quite a surprise for Joe with \$50.00 and a mantle clock given to Joe as gifts.

Dick McKandless with his artistic skill, painted the names on the "Madam Queen", "Cockatoo" and "Peggy D" as well as many of the other yachts in and around the area. In the early 1940's Joe sold the "Peggy D" to J. Chester Holman of Parkertown, his long time friend.

During the World War II years, Joe commuted each day to the Pemberton Lumber Company, Pemberton, New Jersey after which Joe began to concentrate on the sawmill business. Again, rebuilding the new mill on the old location, powered by the six cylinder Chevrolet motor, converting completely to electricity one year before his death. Brook Street was a new street skirting and affording new accessibility to the sawmill.

Cedar and Pine were the timbers milled from nearby swamps that were leased or purchased, or for which cutting rights" were acquired. Timber was cut and hauled by truck from Cedar Run, Great Swamp, Oak Lane, Port Republic, Oxycoccus, West Creek, and Manahawkin Swamp. Rights were acquired from Ezra Brown and George Kelly of West Creek, New Jersey.

Lath was sold to Jack Cervetto of Warren Grove, New Jersey. Boat lumber was milled for Milton E. Salmons of West Creek, and Woolbert Cranmer, Tuckerton. House lumber for Vernon Gale, builder of Beach Haven, lumber for advertising billboards for Wesley Bell, fencing for Firman Cranmer, Beach Haven. Shingles, piling and dock lumber are just examples of types of lumber milled at the Joseph Dayton Sawmill, Parkertown, NJ. The "Butt Blockers" (cut-offs from the butt end of Jersey cedar logs) were provided to the carvers, Hurley Conklin, Jay Parker, Clem and Gary Giberson for the carving of birds and decoys.

Those that worked with Joe at the sawmill and swamps through the years were Clarence Brown, Hershel Abbott, Norman Taylor, Joseph (Buddy) Cummings, William Sooy, Harry Simonson, William Giberson and Dick McKandless.

Joe never did officially retire as he died before his 65th birthday, but he did take the summers off from work just to relax and enjoy his family.



Fishing Trip on the Peggy D – Lester Cummings, Helen Cummings, Bobby Merrill, Margaret Holman, Capt. Joseph Dayton.

Photo courtesy of: Doris Maxwell

Editor's Note: This biography was written by Joe Dayton's daughter, Doris Maxwell of Leeds Point.