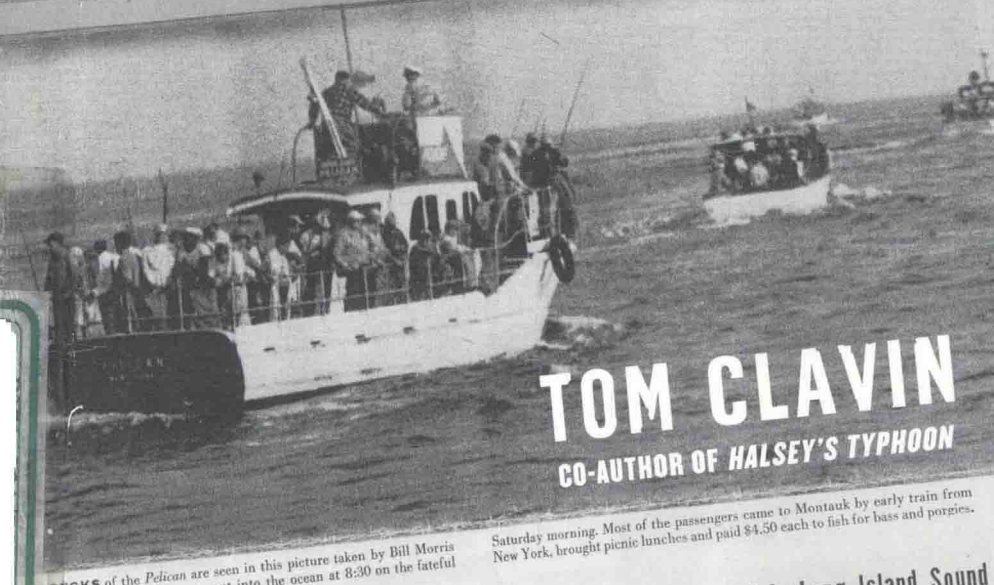


DARK

NOON

THE FINAL VOYAGE OF THE FISHING BOAT "PELICAN"

Story on Page 3



TOM CLAVIN
CO-AUTHOR OF *HALSEY'S TYPHOON*

Saturday morning. Most of the passengers came to Montauk by early train from New York, brought picnic lunches and paid \$4.50 each to fish for bass and porgies.

DECKS of the *Pelican* are seen in this picture taken by Bill Morris
Life as the fishing boat sets out into the ocean at 8:30 on the fateful

-foot fishing boat with 61 people aboard capsizes and 42 are drowned in Long Island Sound
it tipped, and then rolled over as the next sea struck. Other boats rushed to the rescue (be-

DARK NOON

THE FINAL VOYAGE
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Tom Clavin



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Maps by International Mapping Associates

To the "Pacers":

Friends from fourth
grade on . . . and on.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Events portrayed in this book are based on archival research, the report of the U.S. Coast Guard court of inquiry, over three dozen interviews, oral histories on audiotape, and contemporary and historical print accounts. I was especially fortunate to locate and interview, over a half century later, three of the nineteen surviving *Pelican* passengers. Their vivid recollections were invaluable.

No character in the book was invented, nor are there any composite characters. Neither is any scene “manufactured.” In writing the book after two years of research, however, I drew upon the common practices and concerns of 1951 together with interviewees’ impressions and observations to bridge a few small narrative gaps and to add texture to selected scenes. In particular, I augmented eyewitness accounts of survivors and rescuers with speculations of family members and other Montauk captains to provide more insight into Captain Eddie Carroll’s words and thoughts as the *Pelican* plunged into trouble that day in 1951.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The idea for this book was born on the fiftieth anniversary of the *Pelican* tragedy when I read an interview with Irene Stein in the September 1, 2001, edition of *Newsday*, a Long Island daily. Since then I have spoken to her and other people affected by what happened on the Saturday of Labor Day weekend in 1951. I must first thank those people who shared with me their painful memories, especially Irene Stein and her son John Stein Jr., Martin Berger, Angelo Testa Jr., Seymour Gabbin, and Rita Carroll.

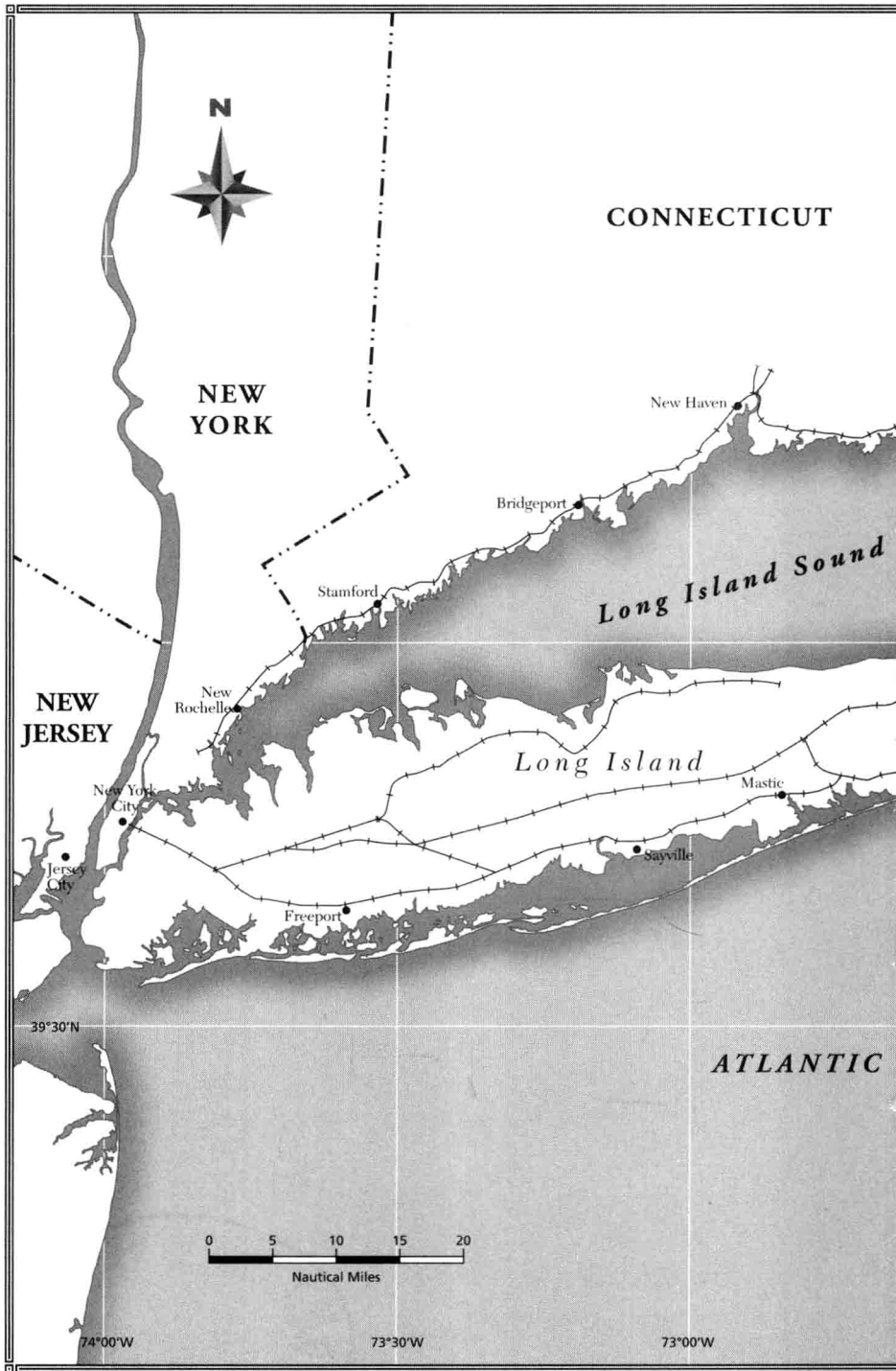
This book is also the result of extensive research and interviews with members of the Montauk fishing fleet, onshore witnesses, family members, and others who had details to contribute. I am grateful to Bill Akin, John Badkin, Howard Barnes, John Behan, John Blindenhofer, Frank Borth, Chris Brown, Bob Byrnes, Henry Clemenz, Sonja Connors, Renee Carey, Lisa Cowley, Frank Dickinson, Bruce DiPietro, Wally Drobeck, Cynthia Dunwell, Perry Duryea Jr., Julie Evans, Paul Forsberg, Bradley Glass, Roberta and Emmitt Gosman, Vincent Grimes, Jesi Hannold, Raymond Hegner Jr., Patrick Henry, Jim Hewitt, Bob Kaelin, Carey London, Joe Luksic, Joe Marmo, George McTurck, Ed Miller, Jim Miller, Frank Mundus, Paul Pasqualini, Tony Prohaska,

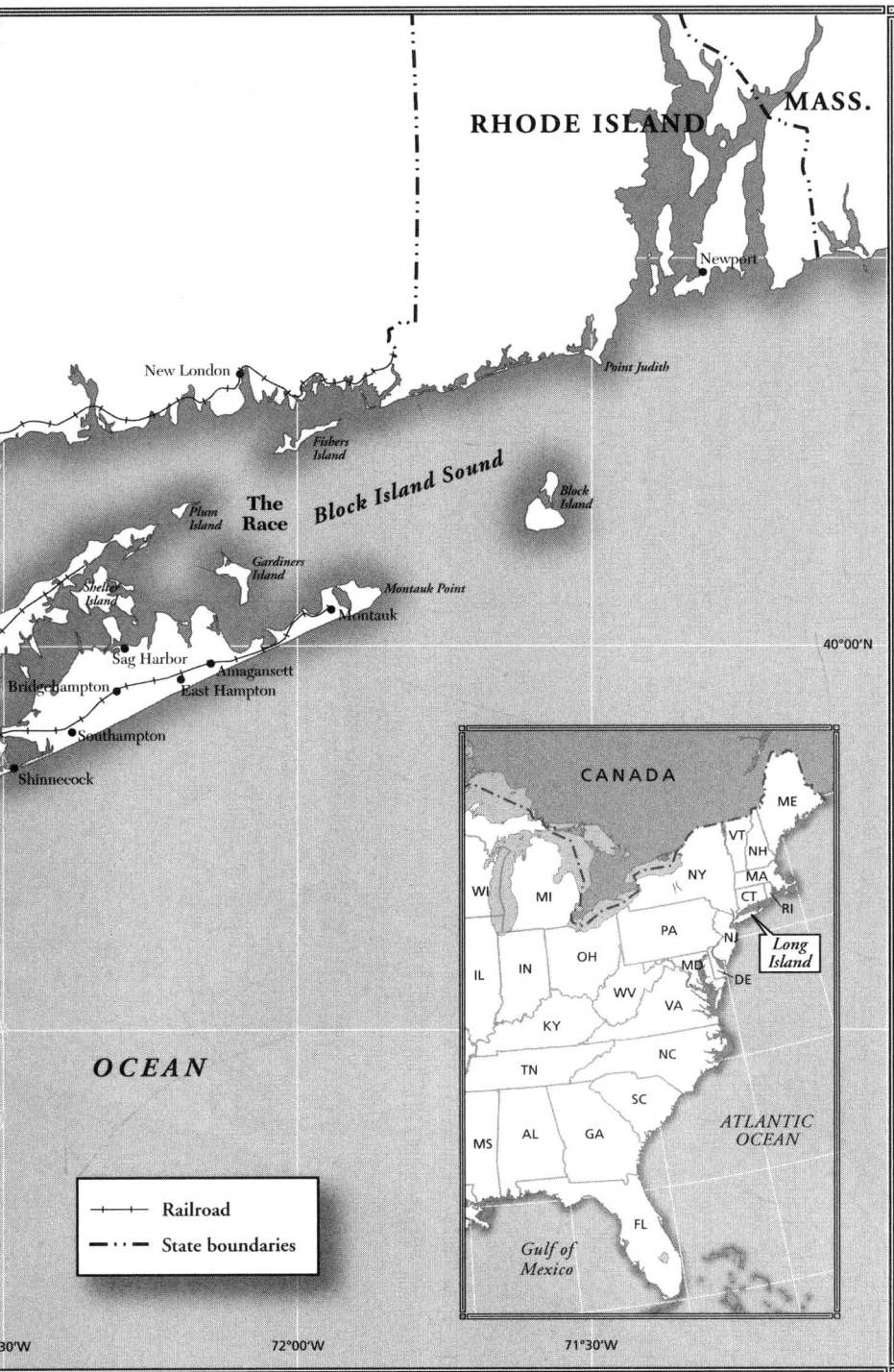
Tom Rock, Frank Tuma Jr., Bob and Sybil Tuma, Stuart Vorpahl, B.J. Wilson, Mark Wysocki, and Ron Ziel.

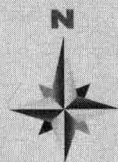
I'd also like to thank Robin Strong and others at the Montauk Library, and the resources of the *East Hampton Star*, the *New York Times*, *Newsday*, the archives of other New York City dailies at the New York Public Library, the East Hampton Historical Society, the Montauk Historical Society, and the U.S. Coast Guard.

Thanks go also to my agent, Jennifer Unter of RLR Associates, for believing in this book and always being in my corner, and to my editor, Jonathan Eaton, for his diligent work in guiding it to port. Also chipping in with much-appreciated help were Kate Yeomans, author of *Dead Men Tapping: The End of the Heather Lynne II* and a longtime party fishing boat operator, and Walt Fields, Staff Commander in the U.S. Power Squadrons.

And I want to thank those whose support, encouragement, and help have meant a lot to me personally as well as to the writing of *Dark Noon*. Among them are Jon Bonfiglio, Heather Buchanan, Bob Drury and Denise McDonald, Michael Gambino, Harry Kohlmeyer, Kate Lawton, Kitty Merrill, Danny Peary, Rachel Pine, Allen Richardson, Tony Sales, Harold Shepherd, Hugh Wyatt, the gang at Nichol's, and especially my children, Kathryn and Brendan.







Block Island Sound

41°05'N

♂ BW BELL

♂ BW "EP"
♂ FL WHISTLE

Culloden Point

Montauk Yacht Club

Star Island

Montauk (La)

Rocky Point

Fishangri-la

Montauk

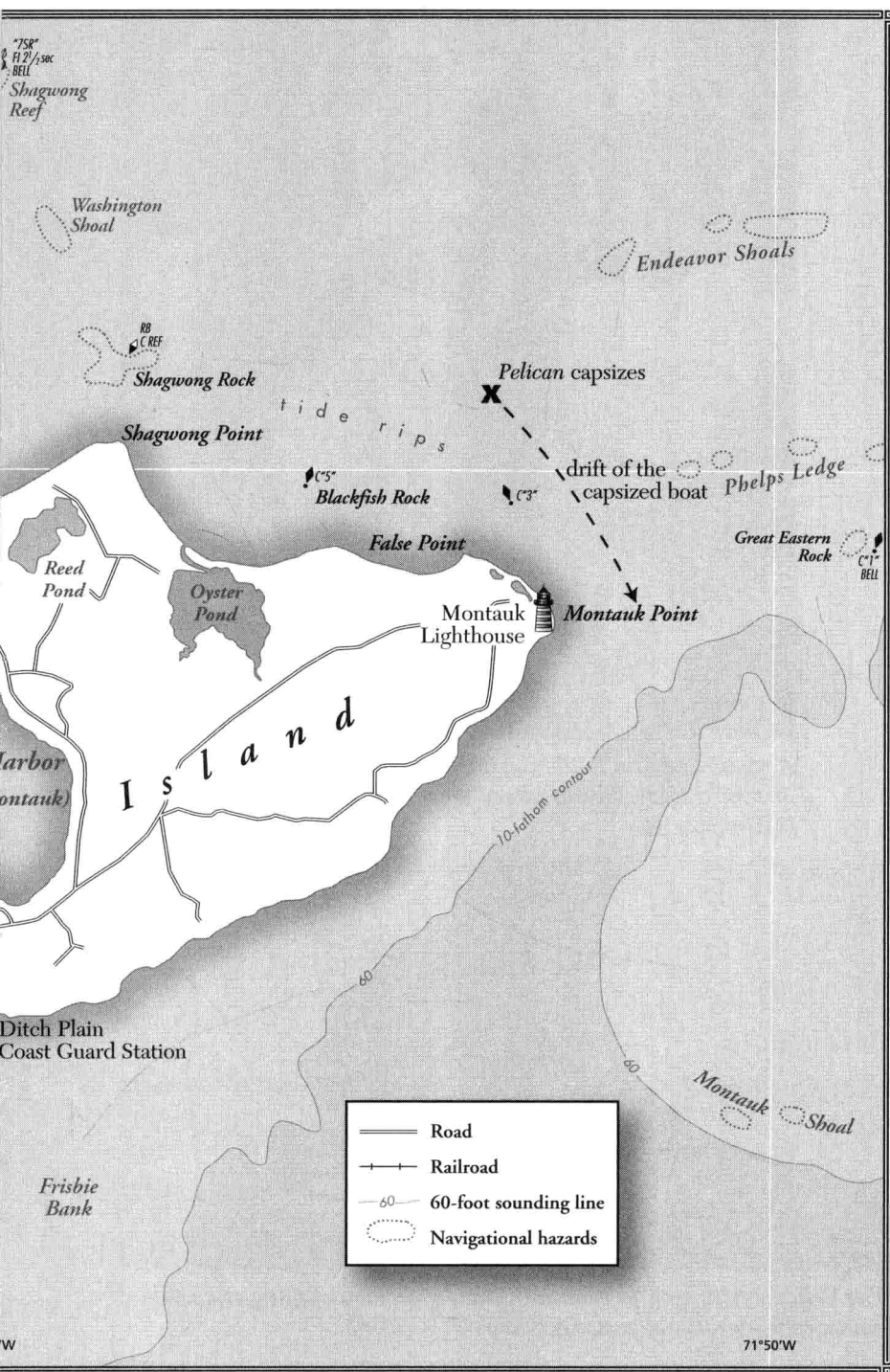
Fort Pond Bay

Fort Pond

L o n g

To Napeague Bay
↙

72°00'W

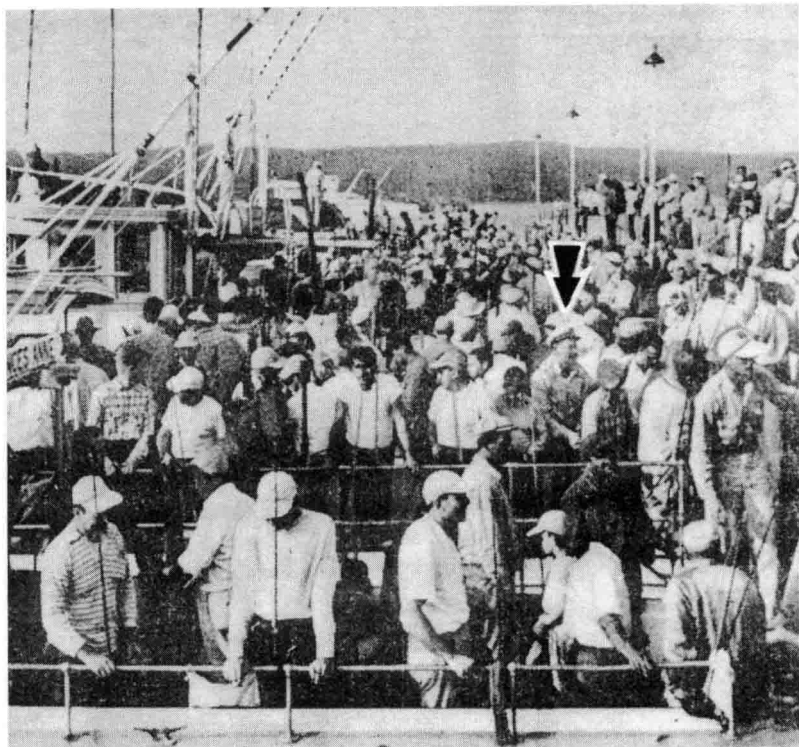




A rakish Captain Eddie Carroll aboard the Pelican the week before the tragedy. He considered many of his passengers his friends. (NEWS photo)



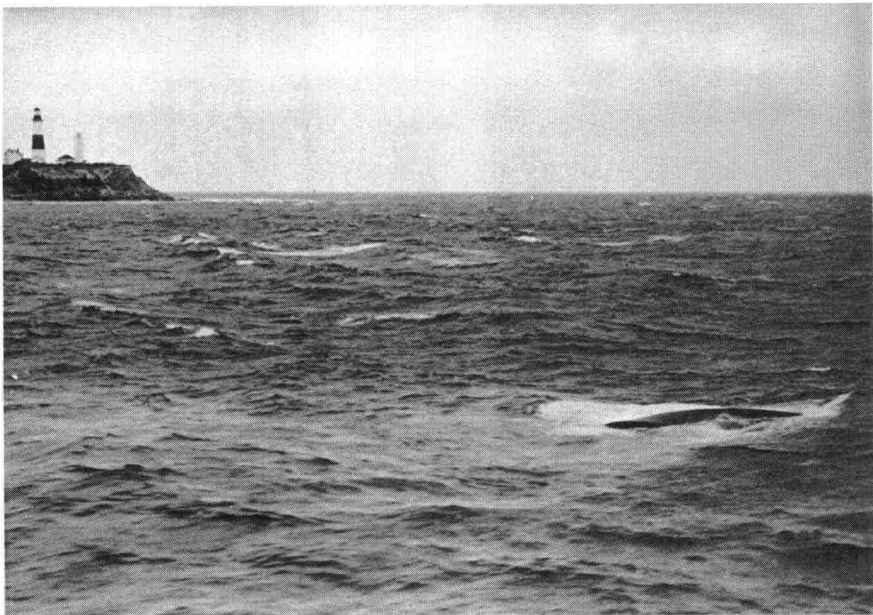
The Pelican returning to Montauk from a previous fishing trip, with a manageable number of passengers aboard. (Corbis)



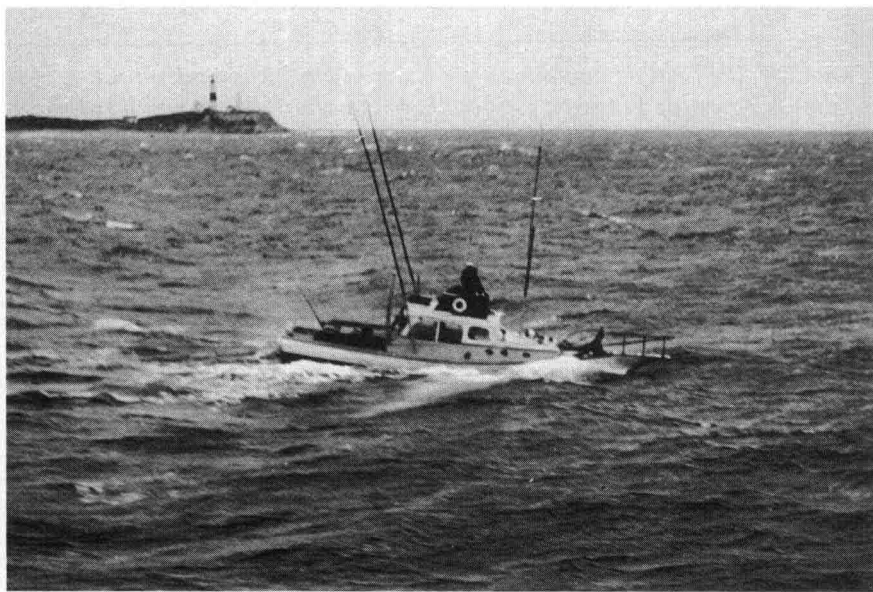
Captain Eddie (arrow) and passengers before leaving Montauk on September 1. When the Fisherman's Special arrived, the dock filled with potential passengers. (William Morris, Outdoor Life magazine)



The heavily loaded Pelican sets out on its last voyage, with anglers lining the railing. (William Morris, Outdoor Life magazine)



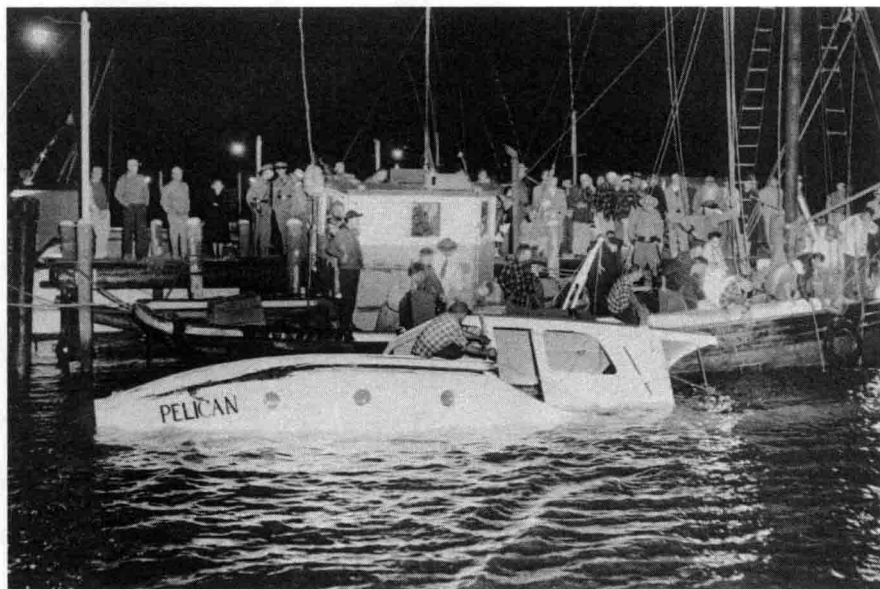
The hull of the capsized Pelican off the Montauk Lighthouse. Soon, Frank Mundus and Carl Forsberg would arrive to tow it. (Corbis)



A rescue boat searches for survivors of the Pelican. This photo was taken by David Edwardes from an airplane. (David Edwardes/Corbis)

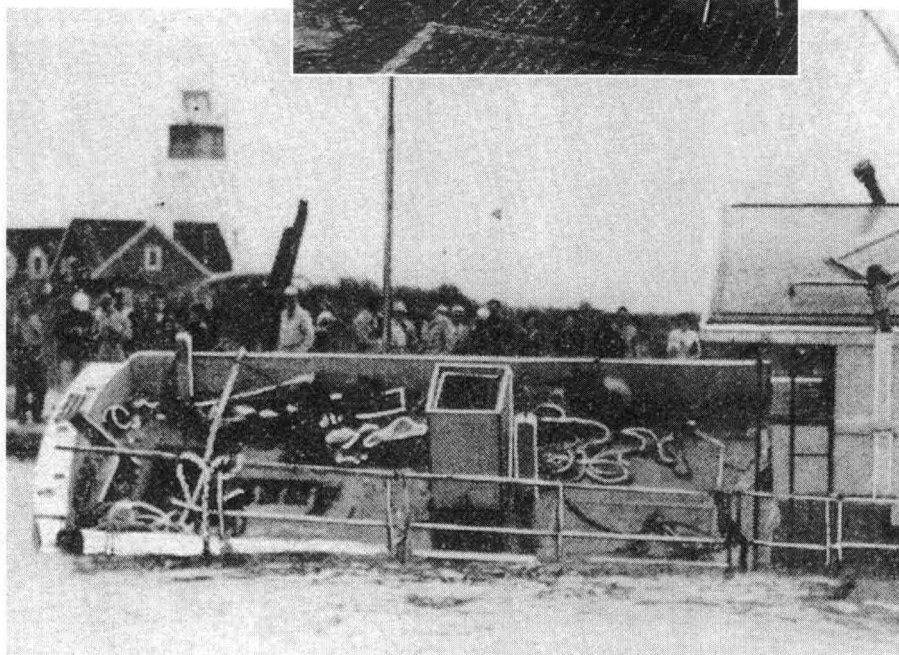


A rescue boat attempts to pick up survivors (hull is shown at lower right). By this time, however, the nineteen rescued would be the only survivors. (AP photo)

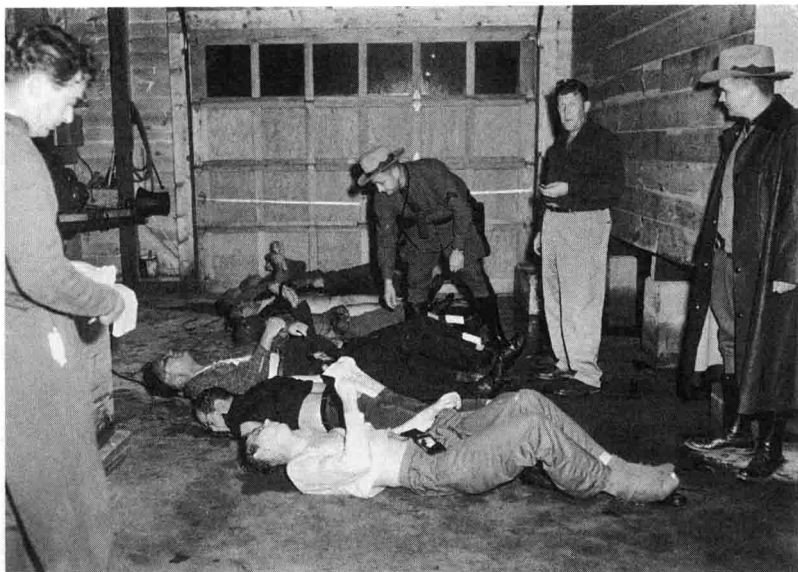


The crowd at Duryea's dock watches as the Pelican is righted by rescue workers. Ten bodies were found inside the boat. (Corbis)

A locker full of unused life preservers on the Pelican. Only one passenger, John Griffin, put on a life preserver; he survived. (Corbis)



The Pelican's starboard side, which took the brunt of the waves. (AP photo)



The makeshift morgue at Duryea's icehouse. There were more victims than the local funeral homes could accommodate. (Corbis)

