

Sharpies ^[1]

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by Lawrence E. Babits, 2006

Sharpies were late-nineteenth-century workboats that, according to tradition, were introduced into North Carolina from Long Island Sound by George Ives around 1876. Used in dredging oysters and hauling freight, the sharpie had an upright stem, a flat bottom, a low freeboard, and a round stern; local modifications added closed decking and a cabin. Its rig was initially two-masted with leg-of-mutton sails, but local North Carolina sharpies carried a variety of rigs. The cheap and easily built planked sharpie supplanted the log *periauger* ^[2] as a workboat, in part because trees large enough for dugout construction were no longer available and sawn planks were in relative abundance. After 1920 some sharpies were converted to gasoline power, although this modification did not prove entirely satisfactory. Eventually, motorized skiffs and deadrise workboats replaced the sharpie.

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