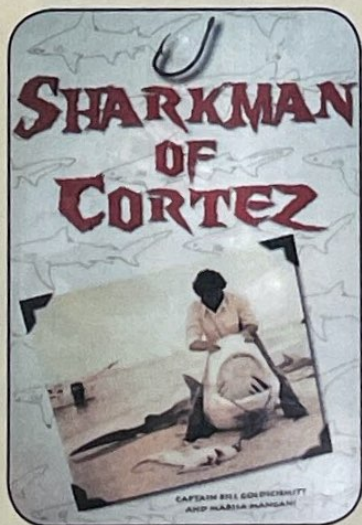


Memories of a Long Time Gone

by Captain Mark W. Gore

As one of the old shark fishermen in Siesta Key, Capt. Bill Goldschmitt enjoyed the life of a commercial fisherman and trapper. At the age of sixteen, he ran away from home in Pittsburg to a place he dreamed of as a boy. He was determined to make it on his own living off the bounty of the Gulf of Mexico, in Florida. These were the days of free loving women, wild parties and chasing the Gulf's many fish, crabs and big sharks. There were a lot fewer restrictions in the old Florida, and a man could make a good living from working the Gulf waters. This was the life that Capt. Bill chose to live. This life led him away from cold winters up north to the white sandy beaches with beautiful women in bikinis lying in the warm Florida sun. Florida in the 60's and 70's was a young man's dream and the commercial fishing business was booming. The things that happened

on these waters are the makings of legends. I wish to call your attention to the information and stories of those days that Capt. Bill offers up in his new book the "Sharkman of Cortez". The book tells of the conditions that led to the development of one of the best shark fisherman this state has ever known.



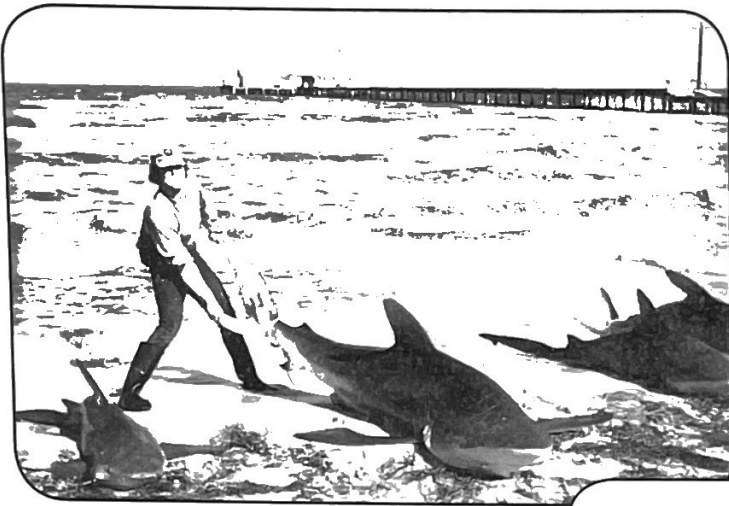
It is not exaggeration to say that those days created a class of men that have made a deep and permanent impression on our government and society today. The conditions under which they lived prevented them from feeling

bound by conventions of an established society, thus they were the creators of a new society. For nearly a hundred years, these men have been solving problems that required courage, self-reliance, responsibility and determination. The proof of this is in the disproportionate influence that Florida's fisherman and out-

doorsman have had over the years. The conditions that produced their power should be preserved for the study and instruction of those who come after us as they carry on our love of the outdoors and for this way of life. The preservation of stories like Capt. Bill's and those of many other old Florida fishermen is surely a worthwhile endeavor, and for that reason I am willing to also share my own experiences.

I was born in Tampa, FL in 1969. I grew up in Florida enjoying the countless bounty of fish that swam our waters. As I grew up, deer, hogs and wild turkey seemed to have taken possession of my soul. I lived to spend time enjoying the wonderful panorama of backcountry dirt roads and old Florida oak hammocks surrounded by cypress swamps. These are the idle and happy hunting and fishing grounds that I have long enjoyed. Some of these places have crystal clear spring fed rivers while others have tannin stained waters winding their way toward the Gulf of Mexico, but they are all beautiful to me. There were lots of old fish camps in small towns, where my grandparents cleaned fish for the





ryer; I still love to cook the same way today. Far beyond our cities and suburbs lies a natural Florida that most people do not know and sadly, most never will. Far beyond the shadows of big beach condos and dredging of channels and destruction of mangrove shorelines lies a past that few people remember. These were the days when you actually knew your neighbors and would share your catch with them for dinner.

The message that Capt. Bill Goldschmitt wanted to get across to his readers was simple. In our discussion about his book, he told me that life, as he knew it, changed when they took his life as a Shark fisherman away. The old days of living off the water and its bounty are over. He believes that the reason he is not allowed to long line for sharks anymore is because of the government's close ties to environmentalist groups. Capt. Bill said, "in the 40 years I was long lining for sharks I never once caught a loggerhead turtle, but the environmentalists and turtle freaks are claiming now that the grouper fisherman are killing all the sea turtles." He has not been able to commercially fish for sharks with long lines near shore in twenty years. Because of this, he believes that the shark population has grown so drastically that it is having a detrimental effect on the Sea Turtle population. Folks, I am a guide myself and I see the sharks that are on our coast and in our bays, they are everywhere eating everything! He said, "They will not let me long line for sharks because they know I will pull up all the monster sharks and it will hurt tourism and people will be afraid to swim on our beaches. The big sharks that stay close to shore cannot be landed on typical fishing gear and they know this! The gear that I use has breaking strength of 6000 lbs and, believe me, when you see in my photos and my documentation in

my book and with the calluses that were on my hands to show it, I will get those big killing machines boat side if they would let me!" He also said that with the laws now in place you cannot use a gun to dispose of a shark if you were able to get it boat side with normal fishing gear.

It is unfortunate when our federal government hires scientists, people who spend most of their time in ivory tower

labs, to make the decisions on our fisheries with no knowledge of the real world or what is going on in our waters. There laws seem to be made for one thing and one thing only, that is to help the group with the most money conquer their agendas. The sad thing, to this writer, is the passing of laws that destroy certain ways of life. This has been happening far too often in recent years. I bow and pray that there is a light at the end of the tunnel that will shine and help direct us all through the trials this country is going through.

The book "Sharkman of Cortez" is out now so get a copy and see how a boy became a man, conquer all his fears and live the Florida dream of catching some of the Largest Sharks ever seen. www.sharkmanofcortez.com. You can also see my taped interview with the Sharkman on You Tube by looking up Capt. Mark Gore and scroll through my videos for the "Sharkman of Cortez". □

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