



SHRIMP BOAT PROJECTS

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Back to the future in Texas City

BY ERIC, ON APRIL 10TH, 2013



We shared with you a found postcard from Texas City (above left) in a logbook entry back on **March 28, 2011**, well before we were working as fulltime commercial shrimpers. Now, just over 2 years later, fully entrenched in shrimping on Galveston Bay as a genuine livelihood, and with our boat tied up in nearly the same spot as the postcard view, we came to the odd realization that we have basically *become* this postcard.



It is actually only recently that we moved the F/V Discovery to the small shrimp boat dock at the Texas City Dike (above left), a fascinating earthwork designed to keep sediment from building up in Texas City harbor and the lower bay. At 5.3 miles long, and a mega destination for recreational fishermen, the dike is sometimes referred to as the world's longest man-made fishing pier. As for the little shrimp boat dock, it feels like the last vestige of a once prominent shrimping scene here. Of course you could say the same about pretty much every place that marks part of the what's left of the infrastructure of the Galveston Bay shrimp industry. From Kemah and Seabrook to San Leon, Texas City and Galveston, the traces of active working waterfronts of yesteryear are everywhere.



As with most of where this project has taken us, I'm not sure we could have predicted we'd be here now. It's certainly no accident— the shrimp are here, and that's why we are here too. But the precise turn of events that has *allowed* us to be here, to have access to the only dock left reserved for shrimp boats on the dike, was never scripted. In many ways we had to earn our spot here by meeting the right people and proving that we could actually catch shrimp! If you're shrimping on the Texas City channel, there's no better place to tie up your boat than right here where you are basically a stone's throw from the channel. With only room for four boats at maximum, this little dock is precious real estate. It's owned by Boyd's One Stop, the most prominent bait shop in Texas City, and perhaps all of Galveston Bay, and the self-proclaimed "Live Bait Capital of Texas". After Hurricane Ike swept through here in 2008 and wiped out pretty much every bait shop and dock on the dike, Boyd's was the only shop allowed to rebuild a dock for its stable of shrimp boats. Places like Anita's— the namesake bait shop of Anita Collins whose husband sold us our boat and became our boat-building mentor during our boat yard work on the Discovery— places that had long defined the dike as a hugely popular fishing destination were all erased from the landscape overnight. With the landscape forever changed, and with many of the shrimpers who made their mark here now gone, it seems that we have now become a small part of it's next chapter.

BOAT, CULTURE, ECOLOGY, ECONOMY, GALVESTON BAY, UNCATEGORIZED

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