



MASSACHUSETTS CULTURAL COUNCIL  
Folk & Traditional Arts Program

FIELDNOTES  
INDIVIDUAL/GROUP

Accession No: EW-00-4-FN Date(s): 4/26/00

Individual/Group: Charles ("Charlie") Manghis

Fieldworker(s): Eleanor Wachs

Location of Interview: Charlie's Workshop in his home

Street: [REDACTED] City: [REDACTED] Zip: [REDACTED] Co: [REDACTED]

Phone: Daytime: [REDACTED] Evening: [REDACTED] Other: [REDACTED]

e-mail: [REDACTED] Website: [REDACTED]

Traditional art/skills: scrimshander / carver

Occupational Experience: 30 years experience

Ethnic Heritage: Yankee (Greek Orthodox) Religious affiliation: [REDACTED]

Date and Place of Birth: [REDACTED] Languages spoken: English

Other Possible Contacts: [REDACTED]

Summary Description: (quality of artistry, significance of individual/group within tradition, special needs, ability to communicate well in public.)

Scrimshander of exceptionally high quality; very knowledgeable about the history of this folk art, the local history of Nantucket; is articulate - even loquacious - and would be an excellent candidate for a folk artist in the schools program or apprenticeship program. Charlie shows a true dedication to the history and skill of this New England folk art. Has a variety of skills related to the craft - Excellent folk artist who deserves more exposure. He has never been interviewed for any folklore program

Charlie is a rare find! In all my years doing fieldwork in Massachusetts, I have come across few traditional craftspeople as talented, committed, articulate and enthusiastic about his craft than Charlie Manghis. It was a treat and a pleasure to interview him. Charlie is a scrimshander—his etches nautical scenes on pieces of ivory or whalebone. In the thirty years that he has been working full time as a scrimshander, he has produced over 2,000 pieces of artwork. His work ranges from small pieces, such as a belt buckle, to very large tusks. During our interview, he showed (and I photographed) several extraordinary pieces.

Because of his reverence for tradition, Charlie is in contact with the curatorial staff of both the New Bedford Whaling Museum, and especially, the Kendall Whaling Museum of Sharon, MA for which he has done much restoration work. Not only does Charlie check the documentary and historical sources for his ideas, scenes, and techniques, he also visits places in which scrimshaw and whaling take a part, including Hawaii and the South Pacific.

He works out of his home in a basement studio. Though he doesn't have far to travel for his work, he said, "I find it a pleasure to come to work every day!"

Charlie would be interested in participating in an apprenticeship program. He would be an excellent candidate for such a program since it is hard to learn the skills he has and he would be interested in passing them on.