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*About the Author: Dr. Goodier is a prime authority on Great Lakes fishery, quoted and cited in many other works on this subject. Inland Seas® has been seeking this comprehensive coverage for several years, succeeding with this article.*

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## FISHERMEN AND THEIR TRADE ON CANADIAN LAKE SUPERIOR: ONE HUNDRED YEARS

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**L**ake Superior, deepest, largest and coldest of the Great Lakes, rests almost entirely within the rocks of the Canadian Shield. Its shoreline is imposing; precipitous cliffs fall to narrow banks which slip away to depths as great as 400 m. The sheltered bays and coves which punctuate this great sweep of shoreline were the earliest of habitation at Cloud, Jarvis, Sturgeon, Black, Thunder, Nipigon, Pays Plat, and Heron bays, the Montreal and St. Mary's rivers, and Leach and Lizard islands.

As with the early timber and mining camps, remote fishing stations have been instrumental in regional development and the maintenance of lines of communication across lonely expanses of territory.

Underlying this story are a couple of important themes. First, it is a tale of the increasingly intensive pursuit of new species, grounds and markets. Periodic technological innovations raised the efficiency of capture manyfold over that characterizing the infant industry. Pound nets were introduced in 1864, steam tugs around 1871, motor boats in 1899, baited hooks and lines in the 1890's, automatic gill net lifters around 1900, cotton gill nets about 1930, and nylon gill nets in the late 1940's.

The history of the Canadian fisheries from the 1880's to 1930's is also one of American investment and, to a large degree, domination. The flow of cash, equipment and men from south of the border was a strong catalyst to rapid development. However, rapid growth for Canada engendered a loss of her own resources and control over their management. A fish trust, under the direction of A. Booth and Co. of Chicago, fought actively and with much success to eliminate Canadian competition.

### Early Days of the Commercial Fisheries

Etienne Brule is credited as the first white man to penetrate the Indian territories of the Lake Superior region. In the wake of the earliest expeditions came the Catholic Jesuits, dedicated explorers in their own right and men of let-

ters who carefully recorded their thoughts and experiences but also a more tangible wealth of minerals and wildlife:

“At the point of Saint Esprit, Chagaoumigong (Chequamegon Bay), where the Outaouaks and the Hurons live, there are caught at all times of the year great numbers of whitefish, Trout, and Herring... These Herring are found in every part of the Lake on the South side, from Spring down to the end of the month of August; and a full list of all its fisheries would require a complete enumeration of all the coves and all the Rivers of this Lake.”<sup>2</sup>

The quest for fur trading profits accelerated the pace of exploration in the second half of the 18th century. Posts were established at the Kaministikwia River, Ashland (Chequamegon) Bay, and the St. Croix River. The numbing isolation of their wilderness home forced employees of the French, British, and American posts to develop a high degree of self-sufficiency and dependence upon local resources. Fish were a staple of their daily diet. To early travellers such as Alexander MacKenzie the supply must have seemed inexhaustible:

Lake Superior (abounds) in a great variety of fish, which are the most excellent of their kind. There are trouts of three kinds weighing from five to fifty pounds, sturgeon, pickerel, pike, red and white carp, black bass, herring, etc., etc. and the last and the best of all, Ticameg, or white fish, which weighs from four to sixteen pounds, and is of a superior quality in these waters. <sup>3</sup>

In the 19th century the explorer and pioneer were joined by another sort of visionary, the entrepreneur, who foresaw the commercial value of the waters.

#### The Commercial Fisheries of the United States

Along the American shore, the first large-scale fishing venture seems to date from 1822; in the course of its fall operation one seine alone took an incredible 1600 barrels of whitefish.<sup>4</sup> Fish were selling in Detroit for 6 dollars a barrel in 1830, the year Samuel Ashman and Eustache Roussain, former employees of the American Fur Company, erected camp at Whitefish Point and pursued a fishery extending 87 km from Shelldrake River to Grand Marais. <sup>5</sup>

From its central depot at La Pointe among the Apostle Islands, the American Fur Company vigorously sought new stations along the south shore between 1835 and 1841. The fortunes and misfortune of these fisheries, the market reverse after 1840, and the ultimate dissolution of the company in 1842 have been chronicled by Grace L. Nute.<sup>6</sup>

The demise of the American Fur Company was only a temporary set back for the industry, and fishermen and their families continued to cling tenaciously to their settlements and trade. The opening of the Sault Ste. Marie canal in 1855, an increase in market demands during the Civil War, and the introduction of steam tugs pushed the industry into its boom period.<sup>7</sup>

This dedicated pursuit of the American fisheries was marred by the depletion of many fish stocks. Significant losses at Ashland and Keeweenaw bays, Marquette, and Whitefish Point were reported during the 1880's.<sup>8</sup> Apparent declines of Apostle Islands and Isle Royale area lake trout were noted by the United States House of Representatives; while abundant stocks evident along the whole American north shore 20 to 25 years previous were by 1890 extant only near the Canadian border.<sup>9</sup> Production losses and a general glut of South Shore fishermen encouraged expansion into Canada in the late 1800's.

### The Commercial Fisheries of Canada

Inspired perhaps by the American Fur Company's success, the Hudson's Bay Company escalated their domestic fisheries into the commercial realm in 1839. By 1850 the three major posts at the Pic, Michipicoten, and Kaministikwia rivers maintained over 30 stations and annually shipped thousands of barrels of salt fish to market.<sup>10</sup> Although the Company's commercial involvement declined during the 1850's, the Canadian industry survived and flourished.

### Sault Ste. Marie and Eastern Lake Superior

Traditional Indian fisheries existed in southern Whitefish Bay and the St. Mary's Rapids. The skill and aplomb with which the native scoop-net fishermen guided their canoes through these dangerous rapids fascinated many early travellers: Henry R. Schoolcraft, Indian agent at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan,

The fishing canoe is of small size and is steered by the man in the stern. The fisherman takes his stand in the bow, sometimes bestriding the vessel, having a scap net in his hand. This net is made of strong twine, open at the top like an entomologist's. When the canoe has been run into the uppermost rapids and a school of fish is seen below, he dextrously puts down his net and having scooped up a number of fish instantly reverses it in the water, whips it up, and discharges its contents into the canoe.<sup>11</sup>

In one day the men of a single canoe might harvest 1400 whitefish (about 1800 kg).

The initial success of a few men acted as a strong lure for others, and stations began to dot the eastern shores. North of the Indian grounds, for example, Charles Rousseau (Roussain) settled at Coppermine Point about 1846 and began a fishing business at nearby Mamainse in the 1850's. In 1879 the Quebec and Lake Superior Mining Company constructed a large dock here and initiated tug service. Although the mines closed in the 1880's, Charles and later his son John Roussain remained and continued to fish between Mamainse Point and the Lizard Islands.<sup>13</sup>



Indians catching whitefish with dip nets in the Sault Ste. Marie rapids, 1890's.

In 1869 Mr. Post was conducting a large business at Parisienne Island and shipping his fish to Point aux Pins station for packing in ice; Point aux Pins boasted a dock and for many years had supported ship-building facilities.<sup>14</sup> In 1871 permanent buildings were erected at the Lizard Islands by Messrs. Sharman and Roussain.<sup>15</sup> The following summer Grant encountered a dozen Collingwood fishermen at Gargantua busily salting whitefish and lake trout; among them was W. Alexander Clarke, well-known on both Lake Huron and Lake Superior.<sup>16</sup> Enthusiastic fish buyers in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan included both commercial firms and local tourist lodgings. With the improvement of lake travel, fresh fish were loaded on the *Algoma*, the *Chicora*, and other steamers and regularly transported to markets in Cleveland, Detroit, and Toronto.<sup>17</sup>

In the last quarter of the 1800's, the Chicago-based A. Booth Packing Co. rose to a position of economic dominance, and for 50 years its fortunes were intimately bound to the growth of the Canadian Lake Superior fishing industry. Established in 1848 by Alfred Booth, the company acquired a lease to crown land on the south side of Quebec Harbour, Michipicoten Island, around 1860 (in consequence of a title dispute, the site was moved to the north side in 1905). Virtually landlocked, Quebec Harbour was strategically located as a base of operations for north-shore fishing. The site may have remained idle for a time although perhaps there existed some association between Booth and a venture of 1860 by James Dick, captain of the *Rescue* (one of the first Lake Superior tugs), its pilot Alexander Clarke, and Mr. McMurich:

... Strowger this last season on Captain Dick's ground, at Michipicoten island, with 8 men in 6 weeks took 700 barrels; these fish would be worth, at least, \$8 per barrel, being chiefly large red Trout. <sup>18</sup>

Booth's first recorded operations in Canada began on Lake Winnipeg in 1871. That year a Mr. Griffiths erected permanent structures on Michipicoten Island, and by 1882 there were encamped on the island "a large number of miners and fishermen".<sup>19</sup>

American involvement in the Canadian industry assumed a higher profile in the 1880's and for a time competition was brisk. In 1882 businessmen from Sackett's Harbour, New York settled in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan and outfitted Canadian fishermen to work the shore northward for 120 km. Other interests followed, hiring many of their employees from the Georgian Bay area. Fifteen pound nets were maintained in Goulais and Batchawana bays in 1885:

The catch, which is large, is made up chiefly of sturgeon, wall-eyed pike, here called "pickerel", whitefish, and a few pickerel, locally known as "pike". Three collecting steamers, two of them belonging to Lake Erie, bring the fish from the gill-nets and pounds to the village (Sault Ste. Marie) and two others, one of them from Detroit, together with upwards of twenty-five gill-net crews, engaged exclusively in fishing. The fish are brought to the village packed in ice and shipped chiefly to Chicago and Detroit.

One buyer of prominence, Mr. Ainsworth, reported that 377,400 kg of Canadian-caught fish were handled by American dealers in the years 1884 and 1885.<sup>20</sup>

Through a series of market manipulations and business acquisitions in the 1890's, the A. Booth Packing Co. grew into the strong "fish trust" and assumed virtual control of the fisheries of Manitoba and the Upper Great Lakes. The Buffalo Fish Co., with Canadian operations established by James Clarke at Collingwood and Wiarton, and the Georgian Bay Fish Co., founded by John and Charles Noble at Killarney and first active on Lake Superior around 1885, became early subsidiaries. Owners of the Dominion Transportation Line, Ainsworth and Joseph Ganley's involvement in the Lake Superior and Lake Huron fishing and coasting trades predated 1880. They too eventually sold their interests to Booth but, along with James Clarke, remained as managers of the Buffalo Fish Co.<sup>21</sup> In the early 1900's, the Ganley Brothers continued to run a passenger boat between the Sault Ste. Marie and Quebec Harbour.

Booth also purchased the Wiarton-based Dominion Fish Co., placed it under the management of the Nobles, and extended that company's operations throughout Lake Superior and Lake Huron. In this manner, Booth was able to orchestrate the future of the lakes fisheries under the guise of a company incorporated in Canada. Booth maintained a major encampment at Gargantua Harbour, and at Dog Harbour erected a storehouse, small pier and shanties.<sup>22</sup> At the turn of the century, several Dominion Fish Co. structures also stood on South Lizard Island (known for a time as Fishing Island).

By 1905 Booth similarly controlled the Norman Fish Co. (a part of Norman, Reid and Tait Fish Co., Detroit), the Transfer and Coldstorage Fish Co. (Detroit), D. McLeod (Collingwood), and the Selgerson Bros. and Manitoba Fish Co. (Selkirk, Manitoba), representing a total of \$5.5 million dollars and annual sales of 100 million lbs of fish.<sup>23</sup> Small companies were a poor match for the combine. Securing support from the state of Michigan in 1904, the Wolverine Fish Co. of Detroit invoked anti-trust laws in both state and federal courts in an effort to curtail A. Booth and Co.'s operations. Failing in its bid, the Wolverine Fish Co. was itself incorporated two years later. However, not even Booth was immune to market fluctuations:

The fish and oyster firm of A. Booth and Co. was placed in the hands of a receiver Thursday afternoon. The petition asserts that the liabilities are \$5,500,000 and the assets \$8,000,000. The troubles of the company are alleged to be due in large measure to the inadequacy of the capital, coupled with the financial depression last fall.

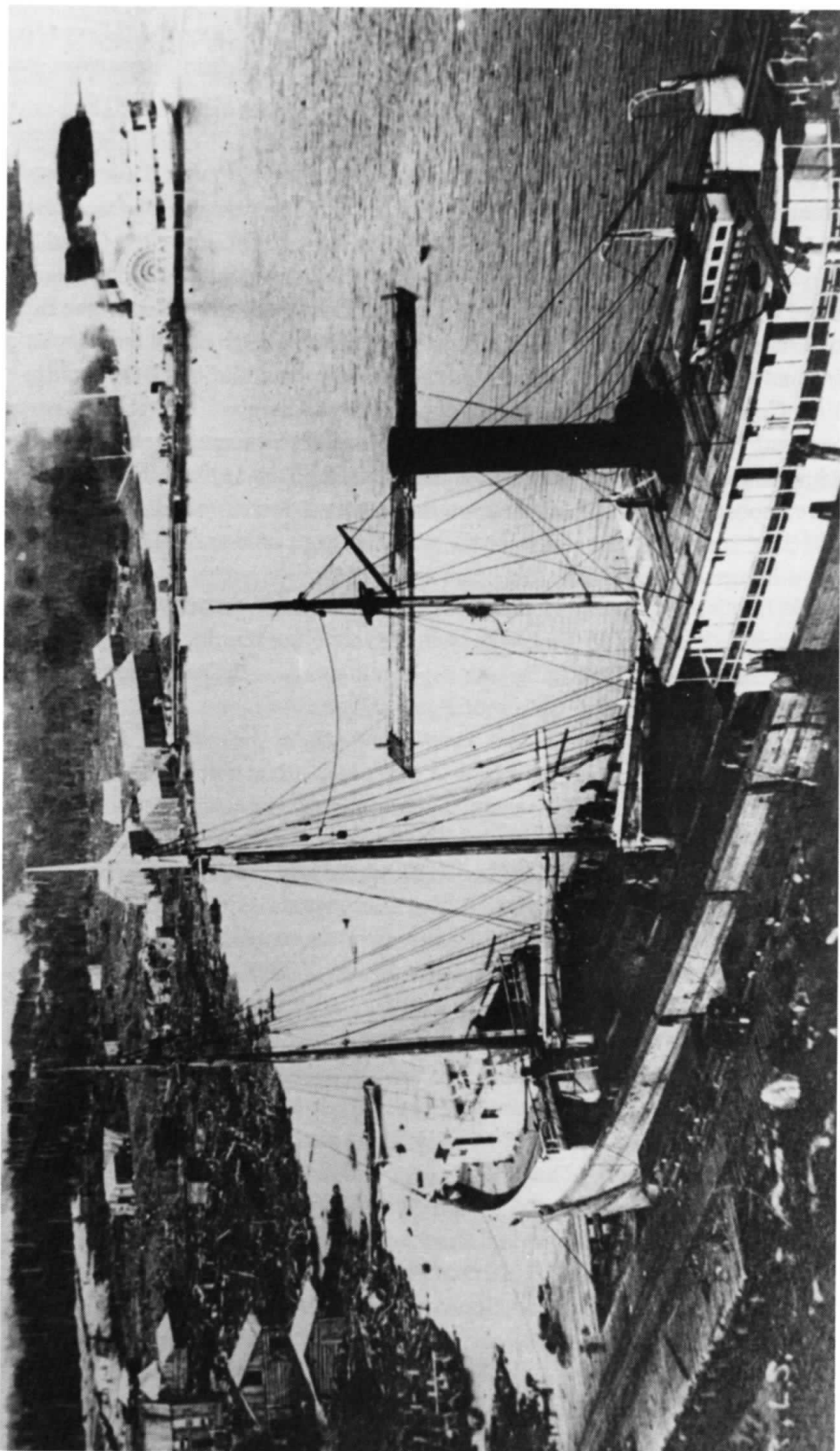
The embarrassment passed, A. Booth and Co. was reincorporated as the Booth Fisheries Co. in 1909, and the predation on smaller firms continued.<sup>24</sup>

Despite the impetus that Booth, as chief buyer, gave to fisheries development, its presence often frustrated free enterprise. Allegations against the company were voiced by government officials and fishermen alike but seldom motivated action:

Mr. Duncan deplores the fact that most of the fisheries of his large district are controlled by a powerful syndicate of United States citizens, who keep the earning rates of our Canadians at a minimum... The supplying of nets by this rich and obnoxious syndicate to our fishermen seldom turns to their advantage, as the cut rates in fish leaves a very small balance to the individual fishermen at the end of the season. The result is that, in order to live, they fish many more nets than licensed for.<sup>25</sup>

And according to the Ontario Game and Fisheries Commission:

The price paid to the few would-be independent Canadian net fishermen for their fish by the alien corporation which practically controls the output of the Canadian fisheries is approximately 4 to 5 cents per pound, and sold at from 12 to 40 cents per pound, so that the profit to the corporation is apparently great. ...it would appear that while the cost of protection may be said to practically swallow up all the (Canadian) revenue derived from the fisheries, not only is the United States securing a considerable yearly revenue from them, but also no small proportion of the initial cost of capture, a situation which is obviously most unsatisfactory. <sup>26</sup>



McKay's Landing (Rosspport) 1890



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***“Some fishermen made a practice of landing fish caught in Canadian waters on the American side, avoiding both Canadian inspectors and American duty.”***

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Despite the active trade, citizens of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario complained of being ill-supplied with fresh fish. Exports of Canadian-caught fish from eastern Lake Superior totalled 95% in 1899 and only fish of inferior quality found their way back to the town's customers. On each pound of fish returned to Canada, there was levied a duty of 1¼ cent.<sup>27</sup> Local discontent, petitions from the Board of Trade, and fears that Canadian waters of the southeast could face depletion (as had American waters) prompted in 1905 the cancellation of the Dominion Fish Company's tug licenses south of Mamainse, thereby limiting these waters to local fishermen. Commercial fishing was also banned from the Lizard Islands grounds; three years after A. Booth and Co. had abandoned operations here, reportedly due to the damages wrought by excessive pound-net fishing. By 1910 fishermen noted a decline in the whitefish populations of the Michipicoten Island grounds.<sup>28</sup>

Whitefish Bay supported a fleet of small-time fishermen. In 1900 the Gingras family were the first fishermen at Gros Cap, running in sailboats as far as Goulais Bay and Persian Island. A short distance to the north was the steam-boat landing and fishing station of Batchawana:

The village is not a savory one, since the offal of fish is dumped not far off, forming a perpetual attraction to gulls and crows; and the idle horses of the lumbermen roam the point at will. <sup>29,30</sup>

In the mid-1800's a settlement of both whites and Indians developed north of the Goulais reserve, and by 1893 its population had risen to 150. A fish dealer, William Scott, was resident and ten Indian boats supplied both local and commercial concerns. In return for their patronage, A. Booth and Co. provided all nets and absorbed the cost of the one-dollar native licenses, a practice causing frustration among non-native fishermen who were obliged to pay ten-dollars.<sup>31</sup>

Such opportunistic pursuit of the industry pushed stations beyond Michipicoten Bay and northward along the coast-line of present-day Pukaskwa National Park. Around 1893 William Richardson established a base camp at Richardson Harbour and began fishing pound nets in Michipicoten Bay and gill nets about Otter Head. In the established tradition of centuries, the Pukaskwa River and flats were a gathering place for Indian fishermen during the fall months. Both commercial fishermen and poachers prospered here.<sup>30,32</sup>

Fishermen stationed at Michipicoten Island would occasionally erect temporary shelters on the isolated and windswept shores of Caribou Island. In the

surrounding water, Canadian gill nets frequently entangled with the hooks and lines of American poachers attracted to the trout-rich banks situated so conveniently close to the international border. Three tugs of the Buckeye Co. of Grand Marais, Michigan harvested a total of 210 tons of fish in the season of 1906; according to Canadian fishermen employed on these boats, 150 tons were hauled from Canada's waters north of Caribou Island. Poaching by both Americans and Canadians was considered a serious problem for both the east and west ends of the lake. According to one federal officer:

...All the tugs in my Division fish from two to four times more net than they get license for.

Some fishermen made a practice of landing fish caught in Canadian waters on the American side, thereby avoiding both Canadian inspectors and American duty.<sup>33</sup>

During the first quarter of this century, some fishermen of Lake Huron and the lower Great Lakes, caught in a crunch of too many people in competition for declining resources, shifted their operations to Lake Superior.

Prior to 1910 Leo Hussey established a company in the Soo, and in the late 1920's John Hussey maintained two tugs and a large gas boat at Gargantua, the Soo Fish and Trading Company.<sup>34</sup> In 1910 Frank Sullivan applied with \$12,000 to the Board of Trade to erect a fishing plant and act as local supplier.<sup>35</sup> The earliest fishermen at Agawa Bay were probably Jim Ganley's men. Later the Algoma Fish and Oysters Trading Company entered the trade under management of Mr. Gilpin and Mr. Clarke and constructed an ice house at Agawa Rocks in 1918 and a camp at S. Lizard Island.<sup>36</sup>

About 1890 J. Lapointe immigrated from Bay City to pursue his avocation at Spanish on Lake Huron. His sons carried the family name to Lake Superior, where Frank Lapointe worked for the Algoma Fish Company at Agawa prior to obtaining his own Haviland Bay license. He and his brother Joseph represented the major pound net interests of the east end, holding in 1930 twelve licenses from Gros Cap to the Pukaskwa River. Part of their catch went to the Booth Fisheries Co.'s 600 ton-capacity ice house at Batchawana Bay; this was supported by smaller houses at Gargantua (450 tons) and Michipicoten Island (360 tons).<sup>37</sup> The company also operated at the base of Pim St. in Sault Ste. Marie an ice-crushing plant, packing shed, and large net shed, known locally as the "Red Barn".

In the summer of 1933, James Purvis and Son Ltd. of Gore Bay (Manitoulin Island, Lake Huron), active participants in the North Channel fisheries since 1879, obtained a license to fish herring and chub in Thunder Bay. Their first foray into the Superior trade yielded 117 tons, 12 boxcar loads of fish frozen and shipped from Port Arthur to Buffalo.

In 1934 James Purvis obtained rights to Booth's station at Quebec Harbour and restored their tugs *Captain Jim* and *Flagship* for the industry. Booth had not actively engaged in the east-end fisheries since 1932; inefficient manage-

ment and depressed market prices have been variously blamed for its failure. Reduced to bankruptcy, its assets were supported by a New York bank and the corporation, now a subsidiary of Consolidated Foods of Chicago, flourishes today as a major purveyor of ocean fish.

Surviving the pre-war slow growth period, James Purvis' son Ivan built a successful operation by exploiting new grounds and opening new markets. In the 1930's his tugs began to regularly journey 110 km from Quebec Harbour to harvest the abundant lake trout of Superior Shoal. A high proportion were fat trout or siscowets, shipped fresh (for later smoking) or canned to new markets in Chicago, Brooklyn and Philadelphia. (Fat trout oil even served as a heat resistant lubricant in certain war-time steel smelters).

During the peak years, a crew of almost 40 hands and their families were stationed at Quebec Harbour. Each of 3 tugs with a crew of 7 would fish up to 9.5 km of net; another acted as freight boat and two gas boats were in constant use.<sup>38</sup>

Other fishermen also entered the trade. In the 1930's Alexander Mitchell retired from his position as lighthouse keeper at Parisienne Island, moved to Goulais Bay, and began a family fishing business. Gino Nori established a small fishery at the Lizard Islands in 1936, soon expanded to Mamainse, and eventually opened the City Meat Market of Sault Ste. Marie. The war-time boost in prices drew more fishermen into the industry. In 1944 Daniel and Jack McKay obtained licenses for 55,000 m of net for the Gargantua Harbour area, and Carmine Talarico worked the waters about Richardson Harbour. After the war, Talarico's camp at Old Dave's Harbour (Otter Head) supported 20 people, including the crew and their families. Twice weekly his two fish tugs would journey as far as Montreal River.<sup>39</sup>

Harold Lund acquired the Nori's fishery in the early 1950's. Ralph Gauthier bought Talarico's outfit in 1959 and so began the Mamainse Harbour Fisheries Ltd. In 1967, eight years after purchasing the licenses of James Purvis and Son Ltd., Ferroclad Fisheries also became owners of Gauthier's plant. It remains one of the largest Canadian companies on Lake Superior.

### Port Coldwell

Like so many northern Ontario towns, Port Coldwell sprang up as a station along the newly completed Canadian Pacific Railway. Around 1879 Norwegian fisherman Ben Almos and his partner LeSarge arrived at the depot's snug harbour.<sup>40</sup> T. B. Van Every erected a large ice-house with freezer in 1889, shipping south by rail the produce of six boats.<sup>41</sup> By the 1890's Port Coldwell had become a regular port of call for the Beatty and Collingwood line of steamers and a fleet of 11 or 12 boats docked at the harbour, including the tugs of M. McInnes and A. B. Sutherland (the tug *Ida*), and Robert Jackson, A. Morrison and John Morrison (*Orcadia*) and a crew of five men.<sup>42</sup>

At this time, a small station was maintained on nearby Detention Island, and six men, possibly residents of Port Coldwell, operated three small boats at Peninsula Harbour.<sup>43</sup> The population of Peninsula had already risen to 200 when fishermen D. B. Hawkins relocated from Port Coldwell in 1892; Hawkins Island preserves his name. Beyond Peninsula and the traditional Indian grounds at Heron Bay and Pic River, the rugged and exposed coast south to Otter Head was typically avoided.

The pace of settlement accelerated after 1900, and by 1904 fourteen men were employed in the Port Coldwell fisheries. From Port Burwell (Lake Erie) came Captains Foster and E. D. M. Titus, owners of the first ice-making machine on Lake Superior.<sup>45</sup> Among Captain Titus's earliest employees was A. W. Nuttall, subsequently a pioneer of the Black Bay fisheries and eventually fisheries overseer for northern Lake Superior. The pre-World War I years also brought William Dampier (fishing from Heron Bay and Port Coldwell around 1900), Charles Miller, Allan and Donald Murray, and Charles "Tink" Winterton.

Prior to 1915, many fishermen sold their catch to the Dominion Fish Company (Booth Fisheries Company) or the Nipigon Bay Fish Company of Rosport. However, the company founded that year by the Nicoll brothers (Thomas, Charlie, Fred, Jack and Frank), formerly of Collingwood, galvanized the Port Coldwell industry into a new period of growth and remained the life force of the town until the late 1950's and the advent of the sea lamprey. The Nicolls proved to be shrewd businessmen. By employing fishing innovations and expanding their range they increased production. By offering fair prices and opening new markets they elicited the support of other local fishermen and curbed the Booth monopoly.

Gill net licenses of the 1920's restricted fishing to the general vicinity of Port Coldwell. By the 1930's the burgeoning industry was finding the home grounds limited, and a pioneering spirit developed as tugs sought more distant waters. In quest of lake trout, the Nicolls dispatched their tugs<sup>46</sup> southward toward the Otter Head and occasionally as far as Michipicoten Harbour.

During World War I the Nicoll Bros. established a number of markets for siscowet lake trout and Coldwell's trade in this breed was lucrative.<sup>47</sup> From the Pic, Jackfish and Spruce Banks, siscowet were brought ashore to be filleted and smoked for the Jewish trade. Colossal lifts were also made at Superior Shoal following its official and accidental discovery by the federal survey vessel *Bayfield* in 1929.

The death of Gideon Nicoll (Thomas Nicoll's son) in 1954 forced sale of the company first to Moffat and Maclean and subsequently to the Penti family, who operated it under the name of Coldwell Fisheries. Faced with failing lake trout stocks, neither group of owners found it profitable and the Port Coldwell fisheries ceased in the 1960's.

## Jackfish

Fishing camps existed at Jackfish station as early as 1876, and fishermen were well established here when about 1889 Alex Clarke of Collingwood erected fishing shanties and Ben Almos of Port Coldwell arrived with his brothers John and Fred. The 1894 roster of pound and gill net fishermen included A. Alexander, John Kerr, Ben Almos, Alex Olsen and Co. and H. Anderson and Co., their number augmented by Jacob Hendricks in 1897 and Peter Dahl, Sr. in 1900.<sup>48</sup> These fishermen conducted their business with rowboats, and after 1915 with gas boats. Between 1895 and 1898 an annual average of 14,500 kg of lake trout and 6,030 kg of whitefish were removed from the Jackfish Bay area. However, according to Dominion Fisheries Commissioner, E. E. Prince:

... the fishing has never been very extensively carried on upon this part of Superior, partly because the coast is very rocky and stormy and partly because in former years very destructive and wasteful fishing was pursued by U.S. poachers and the supply was seriously depleted. <sup>49</sup>

By 1900 there existed a brisk commerce in fish with the steamboat crews docking regularly at the C.P.R. coal loading piers. Ben Almos' sales book for the year 1905 records rail shipments to Toronto and the Leonard Brothers Fisheries of Montreal, plus local sales to the Boarding House commissary, which fed the boat crews, Harris' albattoir, which ran a catering firm, and Crawley and McCracken's restaurant.

Restricted in their range by the grounds of RosSPORT fishermen to the west and Port Coldwell fishermen to the east, Jackfish men fished south to the Slate Islands grounds.

Originally the Slate Islands were privately leased to Lieutenant Governor Patterson of Manitoba. Arriving at Jackfish in 1938, David Hendrickson shared the island grounds with Peter Dahl, Jr., fishing the western side and establishing his camp on McColl Island. The Dahl camp originated from 1907.

During the peak years of the 1900's approximately 40 families were settled in Jackfish, and school enrollment was 45 students. In the 1930's and 1940's its three resident gill net fishermen, sons of original settlers, were joined by various Port Coldwell and RosSPORT trolling fishermen. The Jackfish trout derby was a popular event during this period, drawing sportsmen from distant parts of Ontario and the United States.

Conversion of the C.P.R. trains from coal to oil, which made the town obsolete as a fueling depot, in conjunction with the ravages inflicted on the fisheries by sea lamprey predation, dealt a death blow to Jackfish. Today only foundations and a few decaying structures remain.<sup>52</sup>

## Rosspport

Although control of the fishery at Pays Play Bay continued to rest with the Hudson's Bay Company, the late 1860's and 1870's saw independent fishermen arrive from the south to establish scattered and meagre camps on the islands south of Nipigon Bay. Contact with the outside world was tenuous, and inhabitants must have often endured profound loneliness. In 1868 surveyor F. L. Osler encountered fishermen at St. Ignace Island, which fortunately enjoyed periodic calls by the steamer *Algoma*. But prior to the construction of the C.P.R. railway it was not unusual for paddlewheel boats to call only twice a year at more remote stations; salt, sugar and empty barrels were delivered each spring and barrels of fish removed each fall.<sup>53</sup>

Nearby Flour Island attracted both miners and fishermen. It was complete with dock, large storehouse and cabin, and during the 1870's was frequented by fishermen of at least two different Indian bands (totalling 38 men and 19 small boats by 1880).<sup>54</sup> To the south of St. Ignace Island, Bowman Island was the seasonal home for William Boon of Barrie, Ontario.<sup>55</sup> Similarly engaged in north shore fishing at this time was Andrew Dick. A fishing station existed at the remote location of Black's Dock, Sheesheeb Bay prior to 1883, and geologist Selwyn noted yet another station at Moffat's harbour opposite Bead Island.<sup>56</sup>

Quitting Toronto in 1881, George Gerow came with his family to Bowman Island station and commenced fishing for the John Leckie Co. of Toronto. Although most fishermen broke camp each fall, Gerow wintered on the island and here raised a large family (he remained a fisherman until the age of 88). Around this time Atanos "Harry" Legault, accompanied by three other fishermen native of the Montreal area, established an island base at French Harbour (south of St. Ignace Harbour).<sup>57</sup>

Soon as many as 18 fishermen had joined the resident miners of busy Chummy Harbour depot (Salter Island).

Department of Marine and Fisheries reports record additional fishing stations at Wilson Island (1877), Copper Island (1884 to 1886) and Simpson Island (1877, 1883). One provincial geologist praised the shoals at the Black River (now dammed to form the Aquasoban): "(it) affords one of the most esteemed fisheries upon the lake, and has long been the resort of neighbouring Indians".<sup>59</sup>

Near the head of Nipigon Bay, the village of Nipigon bustled with activity as it entertained scores of sportsmen seeking the renowned brook trout of the Nipigon River. In 1877 the O'Malley Brothers (an American concern of the south shore), plying these waters in the *Mary Hurlbert*, exported nearly 68,000 kg (1,500 half barrels) on the schooner *Manistee*.<sup>60</sup>

With the completion of the C.P.R., more settlers arrived to make Rosspport station their permanent home. William Mallot, for example, established a small fish company and store. The 1893 population of Rosspport was 100 people and at the turn of the century there were 18 fishing licenses registered at Rosspport and 9 at St. Ignace Harbour.<sup>61</sup>

In 1889 the A. Booth Packing Co., represented by the Port Arthur Fish Company, erected a fish house at Rosspport and began to engage in tactics designed to force inroads further into the local industry. A letter from manager C. W. Turner to his Port Arthur representatives expressed Booth's desire to station a man at Rosspport charged with raising the price of fish at the expense of the recently established Rosspport Fish Company; adding that this was "liable to stir up a great deal of strife". The Rosspport Fish Company was managed by Mr. Ashforth, a former employee of the A. Booth Packing Co. R. K. Smith took charge of the Rosspport Fish Co. in 1900, but it apparently survived only a few years longer.<sup>62</sup>

The establishment of several small independent firms in the 1890's in part thwarted Booth attempts at west-end monopolization.

J. A. Nicol, formerly employed by the Canadian Pacific Railway at Heron Bay, assumed the post of Rosspport station master in 1896. Erecting a small ice house (with the aid of \$500 invested by the C.P.R. which desired to increase east-bound shipments) he entered the fishing industry initially as a buyer. Then in 1908 he built two large waterfront buildings, gradually acquired the license rights of many of the members of the Rosspport fisherman's cooperative, and built his Nipigon Bay Fish Company into one of the major enterprises along the north shore, actively competing with the Booth Fisheries Co. By 1940 he was shipping a boxcar daily, drawing on the produce of stations as far away as Magnet Point.<sup>64</sup>

In 1916 there were at least 22 fishermen at Rosspport outfitted with 7 steam tugs.<sup>65</sup> A few men fished independently of the Nipigon Bay Fish Co.; among these John Paulmart and his three sons (James, Steven and Robert) ran a packing house from 1915 into the 1940's and shipped fish as Independent Fish Company. Fishermen of both Lake Superior and lake Nipigon obtained their fish boxes from a sawmill established by Atanos Legault (resident of Port Coldwell for a time) on Salter Island in 1910.

After J. A. Nicol's death, his son Maurice continued to manage the Nipigon Bay Fish Company until its closure in 1953. In 1958 its two large buildings (leased at the time to the Fisheries Research Board of Canada) were leveled by fire.

### The Lakehead and Western Lake Superior

Despite the deterioration of the fur trade, Fort William's fisheries remained lucrative and in 1857 sent 733 barrels of fish to Detroit. The popularity of its

stations at Thunder Cape, Caribou, Hare, Pic, Shangoina and Welcome islands continued during the 1860's and 1870's. In 1875 fall stations were scattered as far afield as Victoria and Spar islands to the south and Shanganash Island and Roche Debout Point on the Black Bay Peninsula.

South of the Indian grounds and Jarvis Bay, American poachers were a familiar sight. As early as 1873, Americans operated a seine fishery for whitefish along the north shore of Pigeon Point, close to the international border and Canadian stations at Victoria Island and Pigeon River.<sup>67</sup>



Bill and Mary Schelling mending 8" trout nets, Rossport.



The development of fast efficient steam traffic was a catalyst to the fresh fish trade. Men of the vessel *Rescue* were involved in the west-end as well as the east-end fisheries:

... Black, Thunder, Nipigon Bay and Pie Island and neighbourhood, abound in whitefish and trout - 10 fish frequently fill a barrel - 20 as a general rule: nets should be 5½ to 7½ inch mesh. Our pilot (Alex Clarke), two years ago, in five weeks, with two men filled 175 barrels. He was furnished by merchants at the Saut with barrels and salt and \$5.00 when returned full - the rate this year being about \$4.00. Thirty barrels of whitefish were taken at one haul of a seine near Fort William. <sup>68</sup>

By 1870 two steamers were conveying fish from Fort William to Collingwood as part of their regular cargo. Development of eastern markets was a welcome relief in the face of discouraging American tariffs on pickled fish.

An impressive harvest of 2,276 barrels (206,500 kg) of whitefish and trout in 1874 preceded a complete failure of the Kaministikwia River area fisheries in 1875; combined effects of dredging and steamboats were blamed.<sup>69</sup> After 1875 local Indians were the sole fishermen of Fort William, and in 1881 the Hudson's Bay Company closed the post.

The decline of the fishing industry at Fort William was paralleled by its growth in neighbouring Prince Arthur's Landing (renamed Port Arthur in 1884). In 1879 the Lake Superior Fish Company commenced on a modest scale, changed hands several times and finally came to be owned by G. N. Wetmore and Fred Jones. A wharf was built, the business prospered, and by 1883 it employed 30 men, 6 large fishing smacks and two tugs calling daily at Sawyer Bay, Silver Harbour and Welcome Island. Most of the Lake Superior Fish Company's produce was sold in Winnipeg or to American firms in Duluth, Detroit (the U.S. Fish Freezing Company), and Minneapolis (Rich and Co., R. F. Jones). In 1885 two Duluth businesses, Cooley, LaVaque and Co. and the Duluth Fish Co., each ran a steamer along the north and south shores, including "one or two little Canadian harbours" among their stops.<sup>70</sup>

Sales were brisk at the Port Arthur fish markets belonging to the Maloney Brothers and to Walker and Trembley (both established circa 1883). Such was the lure of the west-end fisheries, it was anticipated that 28 fishermen from Lake Huron would be trying their luck on Lake Superior in 1882. Summer brought residents of Isle Royale to fish Thunder Bay waters under the sanction of the Canadian government, a courtesy reciprocated each fall when Canadian fishermen resorted to the island in order to avoid the restrictions of a closed season.<sup>71</sup>

The Lake Superior Fish Company survived at least until 1900 but may eventually have succumbed to the growing conglomerate of A. Booth and Co. The steamer *A. Booth* began running regularly between Duluth and Port Arthur in 1885 and was supplied by the newly established Port Arthur Fish Company.



Mending gill nets, Rossport.

Control of the fisheries from Thunder Bay to Jackfish was tightened with each succeeding year. New York markets absorbed most pickerel, and whitefish and lake trout were shipped as far away as Calgary.<sup>72</sup>

By 1891 seven fish tugs and numerous sailing vessels were docking at the Lakehead. The Booth tug *Dixon* was making biweekly trips to Duluth, and the Port Arthur Fish Company was fully owned by A. Booth and Co.

Complaints being leveled against A. Booth and Co. by eastern Lake Superior interests were echoed in the west. Commissioner of Fisheries E. E. Prince was outspoken:

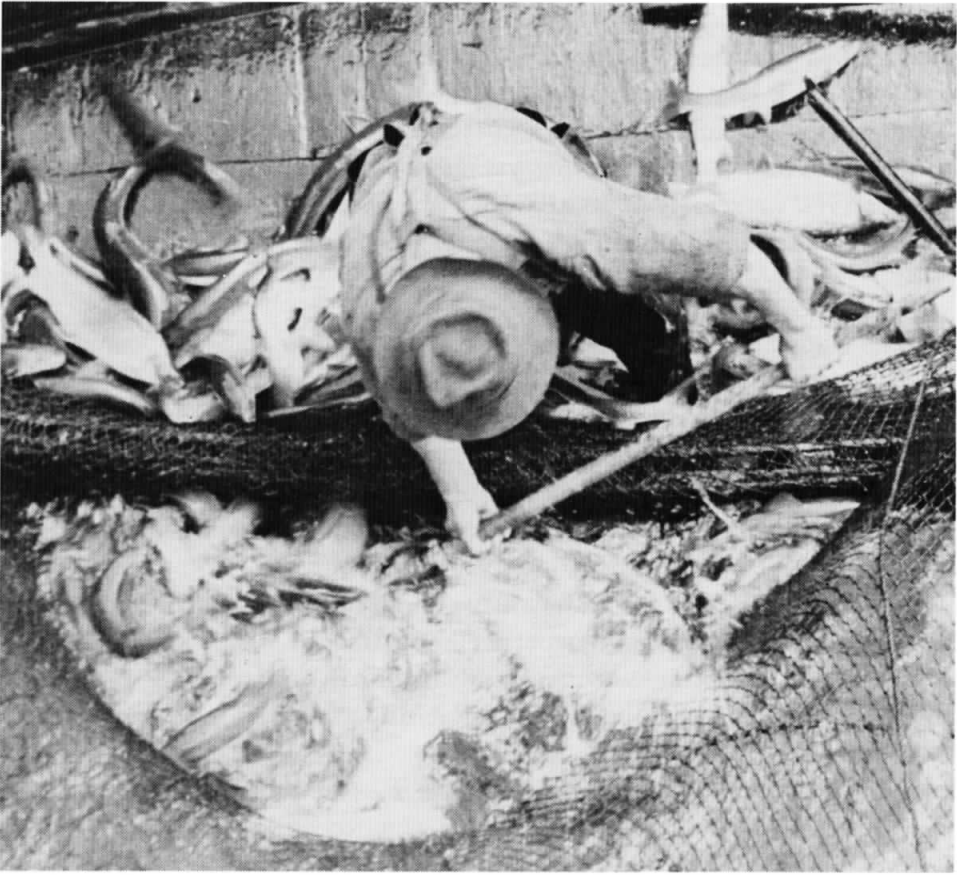
The Department has for many years felt that the Port Arthur Fish Co. was really monopolizing the valuable fisheries of Lake Superior especially the western part. My own opinion is that our fishermen are poor because such companies as this have them in their power, pay only their own prices and practically through foreigners run our valuable fisheries...

In the shadow of the corporation were a number of independent entrepreneurs. A factory for the production of fish oil and fertilizer was operated by M. Nicholson. The Union Fish Company, established in 1891 by Harry Servais, eventually depended upon the harvests of 5 tugs operating in Thunder Bay. W. A. Beebe managed the American Fish Co., although this was probably a short-lived venture. Toward the end of the decade the Gagne Bros. made Port Arthur their home base. Louis Gagne and Gourdeau resided each summer at Magnet Island.<sup>75</sup>

In 1902 Robert Nuttall of Port Arthur arrived at Wolf River Station to harvest ice necessary for his Black Bay pound net business. With brothers Allen and Alonzo (A. W.), he constructed an ice-house at Hurkett Cove near the former Indian settlement of Cranberry (Chief's) Bay and conducted a pound net trade for many years. Other local fishermen of the early 1920's included Joe Collins and Kate Morrow, and prior to the 1920's the Nipigon Bay Fish Company maintained interests in the Hurkett fisheries.<sup>76</sup>

In Thunder Bay, Matt Miller began fishing on grounds near Amethyst Harbour in 1905, while John Arvelin established camp at Mary Island. John Bowman, formerly of Rosspoint, opened his fish market in Port Arthur around 1900 and together with the Dominion Fish Company and Nipigon Bay Fish Company became one of the main procurers of siscowet lake trout for the American markets. After 1910 the Exclusive Fish Market was opened by Douglas William and in 1916 the Fort William Fish Company was established by Thomas Craigie.

The prosperity which these companies enjoyed during the 1920's was sustained in part by the war-time escalation of the Thunder Bay herring fisheries (dating from about 1895). Two herring tugs in 1912 grew to nine by 1915 (harvesting 4500 to over 14,500 kg per day), and to over 20 by 1918 when 500 peo-



The Legault brothers' pound net catch.

ple were employed fishing, cleaning, salting or packing. Annual harvests averaged over 680,000 kg (1915 to 1922).<sup>77</sup> The long-awaited completion of a road from Dorion to Port Arthur in 1922 proved a great boon.

Facing bankruptcy, the Booth Fisheries Company abandoned its interests in the western fisheries in 1933. These holdings were acquired in part by the Royal Fish Company (Port Arthur) and the Nipigon Bay Fish Company, while W. H. Walmsley, manager of Booth's firm for over 12 years, pursued his own business for a time. During this sequence of takeovers, Cecil Humby acquired the Royal Fish Company. A. Kemp Fisheries of Duluth, also conducting business on a small scale in Port Arthur in the 1930's, purchased the Royal in the 1950's and became the dominant force.

Finlander fishermen settled at Tee Harbour and nearby Sawyer Bay in the 1920's but, plagued by fluctuating water levels, shifted their homes to Camp Bay in 1943. Meanwhile Roy Maki and Frank Dampier operating from Camp No. 5 on Squaw Bay are credited with inaugurating the Black Bay herring fishery in 1939.

The end of World War II brought home a number of younger fishermen. Their arrival and the completion of a road to Squaw Bay in 1948 rekindled the southern Black Bay industry. Market failures in 1951 caused temporary setbacks, but trawling for herring was successfully introduced in 1962 and escalated after 1967. Absent today, trawling was also a part of the Thunder Bay fishery in the late 1960's and early 1970's. Since 1960 Black Bay has supplied over fifty percent of Canadian-caught Lake Superior herring.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Canadian commercial fishing industry of Lake Superior, inaugurated by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1839, flourished after the 1860's. A. Booth and Co. eventually held sway over Canadian activities, operating through a monopoly which left limited opportunities for smaller private endeavors. This overwhelming American presence inspired rapid industry development and expansion. Today, hindsight would recommend a more reserved course promoting controlled management and local initiative.

A number of small firms fell heir to the Booth empire in the 1930's and many prospered until the troubled years of declining fisheries in the 1950's. The success of present-day businesses may be attributed to a resurgence of fish stocks, a wider utilization of traditionally unexploited species, improved harvest techniques and exploitation of new grounds.

Nevertheless, the number of family businesses are declining and the licenses of retiring small-scale fishermen are being acquired by several large firms. Of many of the fishing settlements which once dotted the shore, there remain only broken docks, cabin foundations and memories by old men.

Once Lake Superior seemed a limitless source. Seasonal inshore migrations of lake trout and whitefish supplied well the small boats of the early fisheries. Fishermen knew different grounds to receive stocks of fish differing in their times of appearance, market qualities and abundances. Some stocks were stressed unduly by dredging, damming, deforestation, log rafting, pollution, overfishing, and the sea lamprey. In this way, various species were brought slowly and selectively to commercial extinction.<sup>79</sup>

Errors of the past can become lessons for today. Dialogue between fishermen and scientists is proving mutually beneficial: wiser management will evolve from cooperation between these two groups.

#### ***Author's Acknowledgements***

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Herring catch laid out to freeze in autumn. CPR Docks, Port Arthur.

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*Sadly some of the fishermen interviewed have passed away. It is especially to the memory of those people that I dedicate this paper.*

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**Fishermen and their trade on Canadian Lake  
Superior: one hundred years. 1989. JL Goodier.  
Inland Seas 45(4): 284-305.**

Prior to publication, the editors of Inland Seas made numerous modifications to the text without informing the author. These resulted in loss of information and references. These modifications and the text as originally written are noted in the following pages.

p. 284, para. 2

Mary's rivers, and Leach and Lizard islands. [Ancient hunting and fishing grounds soon provided white men with a source of subsistence and, with the establishment of trading posts in the 18th century and fishing firms in the 19th century, a means of livelihood and prosperity.] As with the early timber and mining camps, remote fishing stations have been instrumental in regional development and the maintenance of lines of communication across lonely expanses of territory.

p. 284, para. 4

to rapid development. However, [in a pattern which was been repeated in other sectors of the economy,] rapid growth for Canada engendered a loss of her own resources and control over their management. A fish trust, under the direction of A. Booth and Co. of Chicago, fought actively and with much success to eliminate Canadian competition.

p. 284, para 5.

#### EARLY DAYS OF THE COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

Etienne Brulé is credited as the first white man to penetrate the Indian territories of the Lake Superior region. [Aided by Brulé's description, Samuel Champlain was able to sketch this "Great North Sea" on his map of 1632.<sup>1</sup>] In the wake of such early expeditions came the Catholic Jesuits, dedicated explorers in their own right and men of letters who carefully recorded their thoughts and experiences, [The Jesuit Relations describe not only a bounty of Indian souls for redemption] but also a more tangible wealth of minerals and wildlife:

p. 285, para. 5

to their settlements and trade. The opening of the Sault Ste. Marie canal in 1855, an increase in market demands during the Civil War, and the introduction of steam tugs pushed the industry into its boom period. [Events of these early years are described elsewhere.<sup>7</sup>]

p. 287, para. 1

Superior.<sup>16</sup> Enthusiastic fish buyers in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan included both commercial firms and local tourist lodgings, [the Chippewa House having gained some reputation among the latter.] With the improvement of lake travel, fresh fish were loaded on the "Algoma", the "Chicora", and other steamers and regularly transported to markets in Cleveland, Detroit, and Toronto.<sup>17</sup>

p. 291, para. 3

and commercial concerns. In return for their patronage, A. Booth and Co. provided all nets and absorbed the cost of the one-dollar native licenses, a practice causing frustration among non-native fishermen who were obliged to pay ten-dollars.<sup>31</sup> [With the decline of the fur trade, Indians along the entire shore of Lake Superior turned to employment in the seasonal fisheries. Lured to these enterprises, by 1900 many native families had abandoned their traditional lifestyles forever.]

p. 292, top

west ends of the lake. According to one federal officer:

"... All the tugs in my Division fish from two to four times more net than they get license [for and have been doing so for the last three or four years and the Ontario Fish Officers are aware of this fact.]"

p. 292, para. 1

During the first quarter of this century, many fishermen of Lake Huron and the lower Great Lakes were caught in a crunch of too many people in competition for declining resources. [Yet these were the Lake Superior boom years and, undeterred by the dominance of the conglomerate, some fishermen from the south chose to] shift<sup>ed</sup> their operations to these northern waters.

p. 292, para. 3

fishermen at Agawa Bay were probably Jim Ganley's men. Later the Algoma Fish and Oysters Trading Company entered the trade under management of Mr. Gilpin and Mr. Clarke and constructed an ice house at Agawa Rocks in 1918 and a camp at S. Lizard Island; [the company was probably disbanded during the 1920's]<sup>36</sup>

p. 294, para. 1

Island today preserves his name. Beyond Peninsula and the traditional Indian grounds at Heron Bay and Pic River, the rugged and exposed coast south to Otter Head was typically avoided, [and A.P. Coleman found it deserted in 1899; at Spruce Harbour there was "... a well sheltered bay, once a fishing station, but the frame house, pier, and storhouse are now abandoned."<sup>44</sup>]

p. 294, para. 4

sought more distant waters. In quest of lake trout, the Nicolls dispatched their tugs<sup>46</sup> southward toward the Otter Head and occasionally as far as Michipicoten Harbour, [stopping to set nets at Morrison Harbour, White Gravel River, Simons Harbour and Oiseau Bay. Names such as Nicoll Cove and Gid's Harbour (near Oiseau Bay) attest to the company's presence.]

p. 294, para. 6

who operated it under the name of Coldwell Fisheries. Faced with failing lake trout stocks, neither group of owners found it to be a profitable venture, and the Port Coldwell fisheries ceased entirely in the 1960's. [Today no buildings remain at the site of the former harbour fishery, and the town site above is uninhabited.]

p. 295, para. 2

which fed the boat crews, Harris' abattoir, which ran a catering firm, and Crawley and McCracken's restaurant. [Other buyers of Lake Superior fish included the Waldman, Main and White fish companies of Toronto and Montreal and the Matheson Fish Co. of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan.<sup>50</sup>



About this time many of the town's fishermen were forced to vacate their site south of the Canadian Pacific Railway dock to make way for C.P.R. expansion. Railway crews erected new shanties and ice-houses for the fishermen a short distance to the north along Jackfish beach. The fishermen continued to use the dock and maintained a good relationship with the company, which in turn was pleased with the steady shipments of fish.]

p. 295, para. 3

Restricted in their range by the grounds of Rossport fishermen to the west and Port Coldwell fishermen to the east, Jackfish men fished south to the Slate Islands grounds [which enjoyed an early and well-deserved reputation for excellence. In 1884 and 1885 John and Charles Noble, managers of the Georgian Bay Fish Company, obtained licenses for the grounds and pursued an intensive and, reportedly, a wasteful fishery:

"... the fishing on these islands was formerly leased to Messrs. Noble who grossly abused it, and for many years it was practically worthless. The Department has applications from C.W. Gauthier [manager of the Detroit Fish Co.] and others but as there is ground for believing that these applications would simply destroy the fisheries in the same way that the Nobles did it was decided not to grant any license in the future.<sup>51</sup>

p. 296, para. 4

Soon as many as 18 fishermen had joined the resident miners of busy Chummy Harbour depot (Salter Island):

"... a wharf was built at Harrison's Landing out into sufficient depth of water for schooners and steamboats to come alongside with freedom and safety. Two dwelling houses, a store-house, blacksmith's shop and large baker's oven were substantially built, in order to afford necessary facilities for future operations."<sup>58</sup>

p. 296, para. 6

Near the head of Nipigon Bay, the village of Nipigon bustled with activity as it entertained scores of sportsmen seeking the renowned brook trout of the Nipigon River. [Commercial fishermen also found the settlement well located as a base for bay fishing.] In 1877 the O'Malley Brothers (an American concern of the south shore), plying these waters in the "Mary Hurlbert", exported nearly 68,000 kg (1,500 half barrels) on the schooner "Manistee".<sup>60</sup>

p. 297, para. 1

With the completion of the C.P.R., more settlers arrived to make Rosspport station their permanent home. William Mallot, for example, established a small fish company and store. [and after his death by drowning in 1887 his family continued the business.] The 1893 population of Rosspport was 100 people and at the turn of the century there were 18 fishing licenses registered at

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The establishment of several small independent firms in the 1890's in part thwarted Booth attempts at west-end monopolization. [While owning a license to fish outside the Rosspport islands in 1894, John Bowman also acted as a local buyer. Shortly after 1900 he expanded his business to Port Arthur and in 1918 entered the fish trade on Lake Nipigon. Similarly, Thomas Craigie began fishing at Nipigon in 1895, moved to Rosspport the following year, opened a fish store in Fort William in 1910, and finally in 1916 formed the Fort William Fish Company.<sup>63</sup>]

p. 297, para. 6

After J.A. Nicol's death, his son Maurice continued to manage the Nipigon Bay Fish Company until its closure in 1953. In 1958 its two large buildings (leased at the time to the Fisheries Research Board of Canada) were leveled by fire. [The 1960's also saw the loss of another mainstay of Rosspport's economy. Dating from 1938, the annual Rosspport Derby continued annually to attract over 1200 boats until the period of lake trout collapse 20 years later.]

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Welcome islands continued during the 1860's and 1870's. In 1875 fall stations were scattered as far afield as Victoria and Spar islands to the south and Shanganash Island and Roche Debout Point on the Black Bay Peninsula. [At Point Magnet F.J. Stevenson:

"... found Sir George [Simpson, governor of the Hudson's Bay Co]'s camping ground on a small island prettily situated off [Porphyry] Point. There were a lot of old empty fish barrels there and the remains of wigwams, lodges, canoes and sweat house."<sup>66</sup> ]

p. 299, para. 4

men, 6 large fishing smacks and two tugs calling daily at Sawyer Bay, Silver Harbour and Welcome Island. [Packing the fish required 360 cubic metres of ice in town and 130 cubic metres at Point Porphyry, among the region's most productive grounds until the 1950's.] Most of the Lake Superior Fish Company's produce was sold in Winnipeg or to American firms in Duluth, Detroit (the U.S. Fish Freezing Company), and Minneapolis (Rich and Co., R.F. Jones). In 1885

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Control of the fisheries from Thunder Bay to Jackfish was tightened with each succeeding year. [Large buildings were constructed at Fort Arthur and Rossport, and in 1888 1.8 million kg of ice were consumed in the handling of 466,000 kg of fish. New York markets absorbed most pickerel, and whitefish and lake trout were shipped as far away as Calgary.<sup>72</sup>

p. 301, para. 1

By 1891 seven fish tugs and numerous sailing vessels were docking at the Lakehead. The Booth tug "Dixon" was making biweekly trips to Duluth, and the Port Arthur Fish Company was fully owned by A. Booth and Co. [and under the management of Joseph Brimson (also agent for the Dominion Express Co.). In 1902 two freezers of 45,400 kg and 60,000 kg capacity were maintained in Port Arthur.<sup>73</sup> ]

p. 301, para. 2

Complaints being leveled against A. Booth and Co. by eastern Lake Superior interests were echoed in the west. Commissioner of Fisheries E.E. Prince was outspoken:

"The Department has for many years felt that the Port Arthur Fish Co. was really monopolizing the valuable fisheries of Lake Superior especially the western part. My own opinion is that our fishermen are poor because such companies as this have them in their power, pay only their own prices and practically through foreigners run our valuable fisheries... [The correspondence on file re: Brimson and the Port Arthur Company reflects very little credit on these parties as the Minister may recall. The whole matter was discussed before and the Dept. formed a very unfavourable opinion respecting them.

Accused of unduly favouring the company and turning a blind eye on their illegal practises, one overseer lost his appointment in 1897.<sup>74</sup> ]

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made Port Arthur their home base. Louis Gagne and Gourdeau resided each summer at Magnet Island.<sup>75</sup> [Their license eventually was taken over by F. Gerow of Rossport, and the site is still owned by the family.]

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In 1902 Robert Nuttall of Port Arthur arrived at Wolf River Station to harvest ice necessary for his Black Bay pound net business. With brothers Allen and Alonzo (A.W.), he constructed an ice-house at Hurkett Cove near the former Indian settlement of Cranberry (Chief's) Bay and conducted a pound net trade for many years. [When R. Nuttall left the fisheries the business was managed by Alonzo Nuttall. In 1919 A.W. Nuttall employed 16 men for the winter fisheries of Black Bay.] Other local fishermen of the early 1920's



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fish. Annual harvests averaged over 680,000 kg (1915 to 1922).<sup>77</sup> The long-awaited completion of a road from Dorion to Port Arthur in 1922 proved a great boon. [A quick survey of the fishery fleet stationed at the C.P.R. docks of Port Arthur in the 1930's might have included the tugs of Rossport ("F. Gerow", "C. Gerow" and "O. Anderson"), Booth Fisheries ("Redfox" and "MacLeod") and the Fort William Fish Company, plus approximately 30 gas boats.<sup>78</sup>]

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Bay in 1943. Meanwhile Roy Maki and Frank Dampier operating from Camp No. 5 on Squaw Bay are credited with inaugurating the Black Bay herring fishery in 1939. [Difficulties in freezing and efficiently delivering the fish proved discouraging and the project was abandoned for a time.]

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remain only broken docks, cabin foundations and memories. [by <sup>Added</sup> old men]

p. 303, para. 6

But errors of the past can become lessons for today. [Our increased understanding of aquatic systems now permits a new maturity of outlook in resource utilization.] Dialogue between fishermen and scientists is proving mutually beneficial: wiser management will evolve from strengthened cooperation between these two groups.

p. 303, para. 7

J. Nuttall, I. Purvis, W. Sanders, W. Schelling. Sadly some of the fishermen interviewed have passed away since 1978, [the year I first visited the Superior north shore.] It is especially to the memory of those people that I dedicate this paper.

## FOOTNOTES

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6. G.L. Nute, 'The American Fur Company's fishing enterprises on Lake Superior', *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XII, 1926, 481-503.
7. G.B. Goode, *The fisheries and fishery industries of the United States Section 1 Natural history of useful animals*, U.S. Commission of Fish and Fisheries, 1884; U.S. Commission of Fish and Fisheries, *Report of the Commissioner of fish and fisheries. Part III. The fisheries of Lake Superior*, 1887, 31-70; U.S. House of Representatives, *Preservation of the fisheries in waters contiguous to the United States and Canada*, 54th Congress, 2nd Session, 24 Feb. 1897, Doc. 315; W. Koelz, *Fishing industry of the Great Lakes*, App. XI, Report to the U.S. Commissioner of Fisheries for 1925, U.S. Bureau of Fisheries, Doc. 1001, 1926; J. Van Oosten, 'Fishing industry of the Great Lakes', U.S. Dept of the Interior, Fish and

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11. H. Whitaker, 'Early history of the fisheries of the Great Lakes', *Michigan State Board Fisheries Commission*, 10, 1893, 172-181.
- 12. U.S. Commission of Fish and Fisheries, 1887, Ibid; Names of fishermen (and their dates of birth) listed in A. Knight, 'Select list of adult males in the region of Sault Ste. Marie - 1860-1885', ms, no date, included: George Abequash (1821, 1845), Micheal Belleau (1831), Micheal Boyer (1841), John B. Contain (1801), John Gordon (1811), William Grant (1816), John Kogeosh (1808), Daniel McKay (1832), Joseph and Paul Mayville (1801, 1854), Frank Mizia (1857), Michel Neveau (1824), Owen O'Donnel (1849), Alexander

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25. Dept. MF, **Ann. Rep.**, 1901.
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27. Ontario Dept. of Lands and Forests (Dept. LF), **Ann. Rep.**, 1899; Sault Star, 'Sault fish company', Sault Ste. Marie, 14 July 1910.
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29. A.P. Coleman, 'Copper regions of the upper lakes', 1899, in Ontario Bureau of Mines, **Reports**, 8, 1932, 121-174.
- 30. At Pukaskwa in 1892: 12 men, 4 boats, 14,600 m. gill net, 32,700 kg. lake trout; Richardson Hbr. in 1893: 13 men, 5 boats, and 1900-1915: 1 or 2 tugs harvested an annual average of 96,780 kg. lake trout and whitefish; Batchawana in 1904: 25 men, 2 tugs; Gargantua in 1904: 16 men, 1 sailboat, 2 tugs (Dept. MF statistics).
31. Duncan to Gourdeau, 31 Oct. 1902, PAC RG23 328 (2802); A.E. Ainsworth to

Duncan, 27 Oct. 1902, PAC RG23 328 (2802). Goulais Mission fishermen at the turn of the century included Alec Robinson, Paul John Robinson (Wabinong) and Abie Cress.

32. E.B. Borron, Ontario Bureau of Mines, **Reports**, 5, 1895; Bell, *Ibid.*

33. Duncan to R.N. Venning, Assistant Commissioner of Fisheries, 31 Dec. 1907, PAC RG23 249 (1954); Duncan to Gourdeau, 31 May 1906, PAC RG23 328 (2802).

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35. **Sault Star**, 'Wants to fish here' 29 Sept. 1910.

→ 36. Fishermen employed by the company included Capt. Bennett, Joe Gingras, Gabe Gingras, Sandy McCoy, Alex McCoy, and F. Bernard. Dick Roussain also fished at Agawa Rocks, joined by his son William in 1933. Others at Agawa included Philip Renner (and later son Wilfred) and Art Davieux. See M. Bussineau, **Diary**, 1915-17 ms., (Sault Ste. Marie Public Library); G.A. Macdonald, 'The Saulteur-Objibway fishery at Sault Ste. Marie' (MA thesis, Dept. of History, Univ. Waterloo, 1979).

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40. A. Almos, personal communication, Trrace Bay, 26 April 1979; The town at the time was known as Stewart Station, the name being changed to Port Coldwell around 1889.

41. Fort William Journal and Thunder Bay Mining News, 'Jackfish', 15 June 1889.
42. Dept. MF, Fishing licenses, Port Arthur, 1884-1898, PAC RG23 157 (471).
43. W. Anderson, 'Inspection of Peninsula Harbour and Port Coldwell, 1889', Marine Dept., Dept. MF, PAC RG12 1504 (7952-P7).
44. A.P. Coleman, 1899, Ibid.
45. Duncan to Gourdeau, 30 Sept. 1904, PAC RG23 328 (2802); F. Cron, Letter, The Great Lakes Fisherman, Oct. 1978.
- 46. The "Bessie M" was the first Nicoll tug and the "Coldwell" the second, both vessels of 75 tons. The "Bessie M" was replaced by the "Strathbelle" (formerly the "LaSalle"), and the smaller "Nigig" succeeded the "Coldwell" in its turn. The tug "Iris", originally brought from Rosspport, belonged to Harry England who may have begun fishing independently before 1920.
47. J. Nicoll to A.J. McNab, Hatchery Manager, Port Arthur, 22 Oct. 1917, PAC RG23 572 (708-8-8).
48. Dept. MF, Ann. Rep., 1876; Fishing licenses, Port Arthur, 1894-1898,; Fort William Journal and Thunder Bay Mining News, 12 Oct. 1889.
49. E.E. Prince, 'Memo: re application for fishing lease of Slate Island, Lake Superior', 25 April 1896, PAC RG23 157 (471).
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- 51. E.E. Prince, 'Memo: re Slate Islands', 2 Dec. 1897, PAC RG23 157 (471); also J.W. Kerr, Letters and diaries as fishery inspector, Hamilton, Ontario, 13 Feb. 1886, ms. 18 v.: 1860-1898, (Royal Ontario Museum).
- 52. Additional details of Jackfish history are to be found in K. Mercier, M. Corrigan, J. Maronese, V. Maronese and L. Black, Jackfish Village, ms. (P.E.O.P.L.E. project, Ontario Ministry of Education, 1973); J. Poole,

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53. F.L. Osler, **Diary**, OA, Osler papers 11-1-C; T. Devine to Hon. A. Campbell, Commissioner of Lands, 15 Oct. 1864, OA RG1 Box 1 (3); G. Gerow, personal communication, Rossport, 16 May 1981.
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Harding, Columbus, Ohio 1913).

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