Page 67 - A Visit with Steve Whitty, Ingonish Beach
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dory and tow that big boat, the two dories. But there'd be generally a little draft of wind, and they were great sailors, you know. And as the years went by, they started getting the gasoline engines in their boats. The sixth man came in the boat--a man to run the engine. But I fished in a boat for two or three years be? fore the gasoline engines came here. If you were out in the bay you were okay, but if you got off'of Smokey and there wasn't an air of wind, well, you had to jump in your dory and tow your boat to get in. And you'd be surprised how two dories could tow that boat. Good oarsmen. The hulls of those boats would take, well-- you could salt 12 or 14 thousand pounds, that's split fish. Fire the head overboard and the bone you would fire overboard. You had your tub to put your fish in, and your splitting table. The way it was there, one fellow splitting and the other fellow the head and the other fellow the gut--the oth? er fellow'd fork the fish into the tub, and the other fellow probably'd get some? thing for you to eat down forward. It was a great life, the best life in the world. I loved it. You were your own boss. There was nobody boss over you. The captain of the boat, well, he'd never say anything to you. Everyone did their work right; well, he didn't have a chance to say anything. My father owned the boat, he owned the Whittier--T. J. W. Whittier. There were three brothers owned her: Tim, Walter, and Jed. When I fished in the boat at the Bird Islands, they were all aboard of her--my father. Uncle Jed, and Uncle Walter, and my oldest brother, Pius, and myself. That's the way it was all around here. It was generally all a family affair. I can point you out 22 of those sailboats were owned here in the harbour. All right, now. This place was getting along great at that time. Up until 19-and-23. God-darned plaster started up here (quarrying plaster in Ingonish). It worked here for 5 years. It started in 19-and-22--we built the trestle. In 19-and-23 they started ship? ping. And in 1927 it ended. All right, that was 5 years. And all the fishermen, the poor fellows gave up fishing and sold their boats for little or nothing. Most of them went to Newfoundland. They thought the plaster was going to last forever. They got clear of their boats. Their trawl gears went to hell, rotted and all of that. And they worked for 5 years, and it went down just like that. There were all the fishermen left on their behind. Had to start all over again, trying to get boats. But they never got those kind of boats. They couldn't afford it. Those kind of boats--all the stuff was taken out of the woods, way back in the country. The plank of those boats was all built out of hard? wood. All that beautiful hardwood, inch thick. And that was all sawed with whip- saws--a pit--one above and one below--boy. I've done enough of that in my life. So, they couldn't get vessels like that again. And you see them now with their bent tim? bers in the boats, but the timbers that went in those boats were all grown tim- bers--they found crooked sticks, the shape for your boat. An awful lot of work to them, but they were great b.oats, my God al? mighty .
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