

[Page 100 - From Visits with Capt. Michael Tobin Coastal & Gulf Ferry Captain, Ret'd](#)  
ISSUE : [Issue 73](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1998/6/1

them not to eat but to set them. So you'd have triple the amount when they'd grow. (Did they give anything else out at that time? Would they give out salt fish?) Oh, no. No. There was lots of fish. You'd catch it yourself, you know. Fish, trout, salmon. You could buy salmon for fifteen cents a pound then. Codfish--now, we pay seven dollars--(back then it was) six dollars a quintal, that's 112 pounds. (Did you think there was going to be a day you wouldn't see a cod fish?) No, I never did. Never did, I can't believe that. And the whole problem is the trawlers. Trawlers destroyed the fish. Those big iron doors after the fish spawn. You know, a fish lays about ten thousand eggs. Those Pottnie 'rittce ?ieberage l'oom & Florals Grill The Home of Scottish Hospitality 50 Reeves St. 'n 'e'i SYDNEY 567-15111 :s "Cape Breton's Pub" DOWNTOWN SYDNEY 456 CHARLOHE STREET Legendary Low Prices! It All Started Herein Cape Breton. We're Proud to Employ Over 350 Employees! • Sydney • North Sydney • Glace Bay • Sydney River big doors--(they) haul them over the spawning ground and tear them up, crush them. And those that did escape, they weren't grown, they'd haul them up in the net, throw them back again. Oh, my God. The fish couldn't stand.... There are seventy plants in Nova Scotia and I think there's just as many in Newfoundland. Fish plants. You know, the fish had to be falling out of the sky to keep them all going. Nobody must have any sense regarding the... knowing how the fish grow and everything else. For 500 years we had more fish in Newfoundland than we could sell. Selling was a problem. But there was no fresh fish in my time, it was all salted. All them vessels running to Europe with loads and loads of fish all summer long. Winter, too, sometimes. Many of them were lost at it. (Many were lost at it?) Oh yes, several vessels lost in the wintertime. Coming back in the summer and the crews might be picked up by a passing ship, but more of them went down with the ship.... Another big industry in the spring of the year was the seal fishery. All those ships went out and, you know, besides getting meat and everything else for themselves, they made quite a bit of money. The seal oil was valuable. Now they're eating the fish, any that's left. There's six million seals now. There'll be another million this spring after they poach this year. There were years that we brought in seven hundred thousand seals. I have a record here. (What do you mean "we"?) In Newfoundland. They brought them in to the business people in St. John's, seven hundred and some-odd thousand seals in one spring. Now last year, I think the shore people killed about seventy thousand down there. So, you know, they're increasing. (Did you participate in the seal fishery?) No, I wasn't sealing--but I was out to the Viking disaster. She was a sealer and she blew up out there (March 1931). There was three people aboard to make a movie that particular trip. And some of them lit a cigarette down where the magazine was--see, that's where they keep the powder--and it exploded. There was I don't know how many died, thirty or something. We went out and picked up the remainder of the crew. (Did you see the explosion?) No. It exploded a couple of days before we left St. John's. I was on the S.S. Sagona. We went out and picked up the survivors. We had the reports



from Horse Island down in White Bay, that the ship was blown