

Page 8 - Lobster Factories around Cape Breton

ISSUE: Issue 20

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1978/8/1

but at that time there were lobsters. I know many times of swinging away from out? side, coming in here, and I'd have as much as 10,000 pounds. And that would only be from approximately 16 boats. 16 fishermen. At that time we were paying 4 dollars and 50 cents a hundredweight • that's big and- small. The little small ones they didn't take. And there was a restriction on tak? ing a berried lobster (a female with eggs). The factory was a long building along the shore • and it was all underpinning and went out over the water • so all the drain? age went straight in the water. The can? nery is all gone. But the cookhouse build? ing is still down there. The first year that I came here was in 1928 and I guess it must have been 1941 or '42 when the coldpack came in • what they call chilled meat • and buyers came in here and they could pay more for the chilled meat than Mr. Whitman could get for the canned lob? sters • because the price he got depended on whatever the pound sterling was, be? cause the vast majority of his product used to be shipped to England. Some were packed in glass jars and were shipped to the United States • but the biggest major? ity of his pack went in cans to England. Coldpack was buying them alive just the way they are doing it today. Only the mar? ket lobsters they now put in pounds till the price goes up • then they ship them in? to Boston. The smaller • what they call the canners • they boil those and this is "chilled meat," really fresh lobster, not packed in cans or anything. All what we call canners today are boiled and put into a freezer • for sandwiches and so forth. The big ones go in pounds, large tanks an? chored out so the water will flow back and forth and give the lobsters oxygen. They ship so many at a time in. The term canner is used today • they are below the size of the market lobster • but they aren't usual? ly canned. When I was smacking, I had to stay out un? til the fishermen came to me. I had to wait, because at that time they couldn't leave their lobsters out at night. If a storm came and they were lost, Mr. Whitman was duty bound to pay for them. So we had to stay till we got the last boat. Then by the time you got in here it was getting pretty dusky and with 10,000 pounds of lobsters, you couldn't carry enough crates in a 40-foot boat to hold them all. I used to take 50 crates, put them across the stern and up both sides and pile the crates above the washboard • and we used to have to diMp the rest in between. So when we got in here we still had maybe 25 to 30 crates of lobsters to pick up out of the boat. Now, that day's lobsters would go in crates in the water. I've seen times here that the girls couldn't even have Dominion Day off in order to get ahead a little bit for to have enough crates to go out the next day to pick up the lobsters. Some? times v/e'd have maybe 120, 130 crates of lobsters hanging over the wharf. It just kept them working steady every day but Sunday. 'HAPPY DAYS' Nova Scotia Talent Performs THE STUDIO QUILTS, HAND-WEAVING OIL PAINTINGS OF LOCAL SCENES Located in Bras d'Or Off Highway 105 where the view is magnificent MR. TIRE LTD. 267 Prince Street Sydney Ttie Radial Tire People Specializing in I:|||il!ai>; I.'.||||=HI.'| and the World Famous Bandag Re-treading Fully Equipped Mobil Unit IliONB: 539-5670