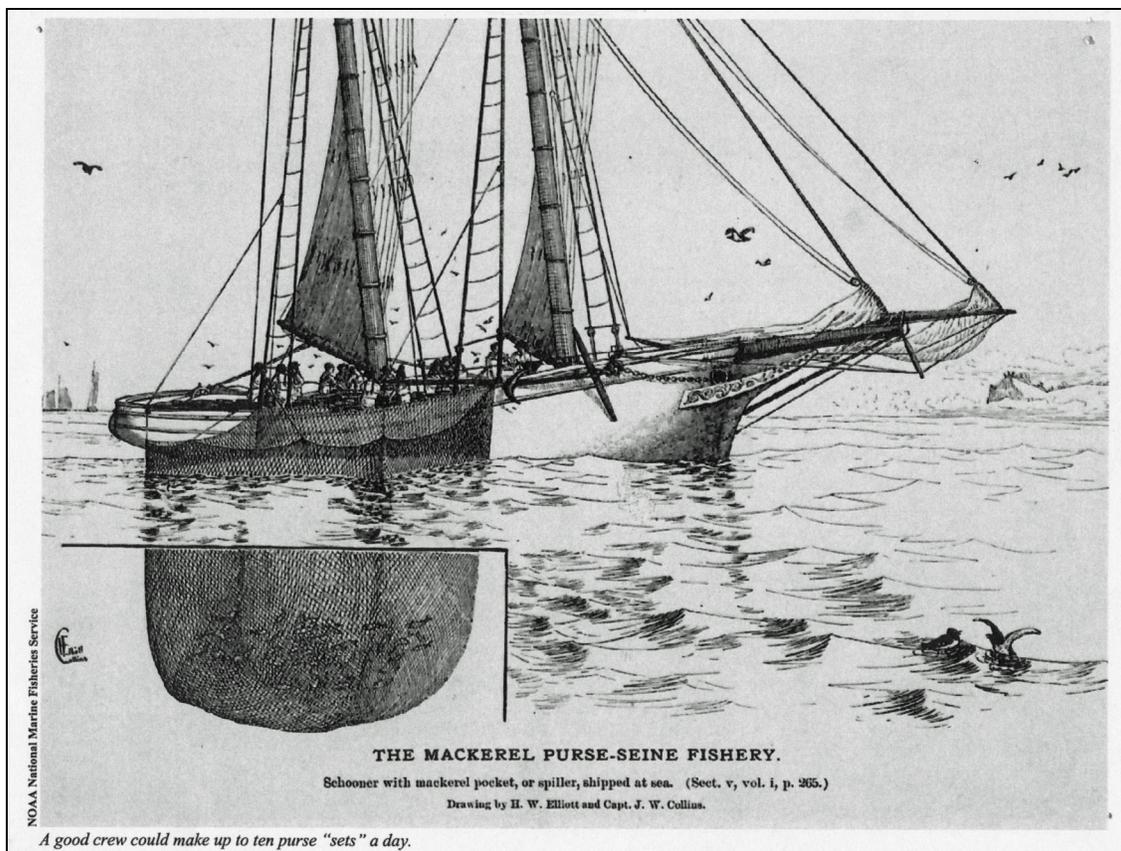


Mackerel Seiners

In the 1870's and 1880's two-masted mackerel seiners gave a great impetus to fishing on North Haven where they were the mainstay of the fishing industry. The vessels carried crews of 14 or 15 men going south in the Spring and north in the Summer. Most of the fish were salted down on board and taken to Portland for sale. In the last decades of the 19th century, more than 19 seiners sailed from North Haven, a number of them from Pulpit Harbor. Roscoe Babbidge of Pulpit Harbor, owned the *Eben Dale*. Sanford Cooper, also of Pulpit Harbor, owned a seiner. In total, nine seiners were owned by Pulpit Harbor men. A number of other seiners sailed from Pulpit Harbor, enough so that disputes sometimes arose concerning anchorage.

Several of the Pulpit Harbor stores outfitted the boats and supplied provisions for them. The cooper's shop near the harbor was an important asset that was needed to furnish thousands of casks to fishing vessels. On board, the barrels were carried in a "knocked down" condition and put together as needed by a cooper who sailed on every ship. Over 100 men on the island were engaged in mackerel fishing and many of Pulpit Harbor's residents owned a share in a vessel. In addition, knitting nets for all aspects of the fishing economy, was a part of the life of nearly every family of North Haven. Many islanders including a number of women and girls (some as young as eight and nine years of age) also worked seasonably at processing plants on the Thoroughfare. When the fishing industry "crashed" about 1890, many families were impoverished.

The Rockland Opinion reported that, on North Haven, "vessels that had been fishing for eight months had not even wet their seine nets... the conditions of these men and their families can hardly be imagined."



So far this account is largely based on tradition and conjecture or seen dimly through the "mists of antiquity." Now we come to some facts and it is these facts that I am anxious to preserve lest they, too, be lost in the mists. They concern the vessels owned and sailed out of North Haven eighty or so years ago. The facts come from the only person who could possibly have given them so many years later, namely Zenas Burgess, a man of such sweetness, simplicity and charm that anything he said had a certain magical touch that cannot unfortunately be transmitted by the written word. It all came about in this wise.

I had acquired a List of U. S. Merchant Vessels of the Year 1890, and one cold, rainy day in May, 1958, I went through the book marking all the vessels hailing from North Haven. Armed with a list of these I called on Zene, then in his 93rd year, and told him what I had done. His eyes lit up, as they did so easily. "Wait a minute," he said, and then started to reel off the names. Details followed, coupled with anecdotes, events as fresh in his mind as though they had occurred yesterday.

Zene started going in seiners at the age of seventeen (1882) and went every summer for about eight years, serving in the following vessels:

Alice Fox, Cora E. Smith, Lottie E. Hopkins, Amy Wixon and Maud S.

Vessels carried crews of fourteen or fifteen men, towed one seine-boat and carried one or two dories on deck. They went south in the Spring off the Virginia and Delaware Capes, and followed the mackerel north in the summer as far as Bay Chaleur in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Sometimes they would bring fresh fish from southern waters into New York, but mostly they were salted down on board and taken to Portland for sale, landed and packed 200 lbs. to a barrel. The crews were not limited to local boys but might be filled in from other islands and places along the coast.

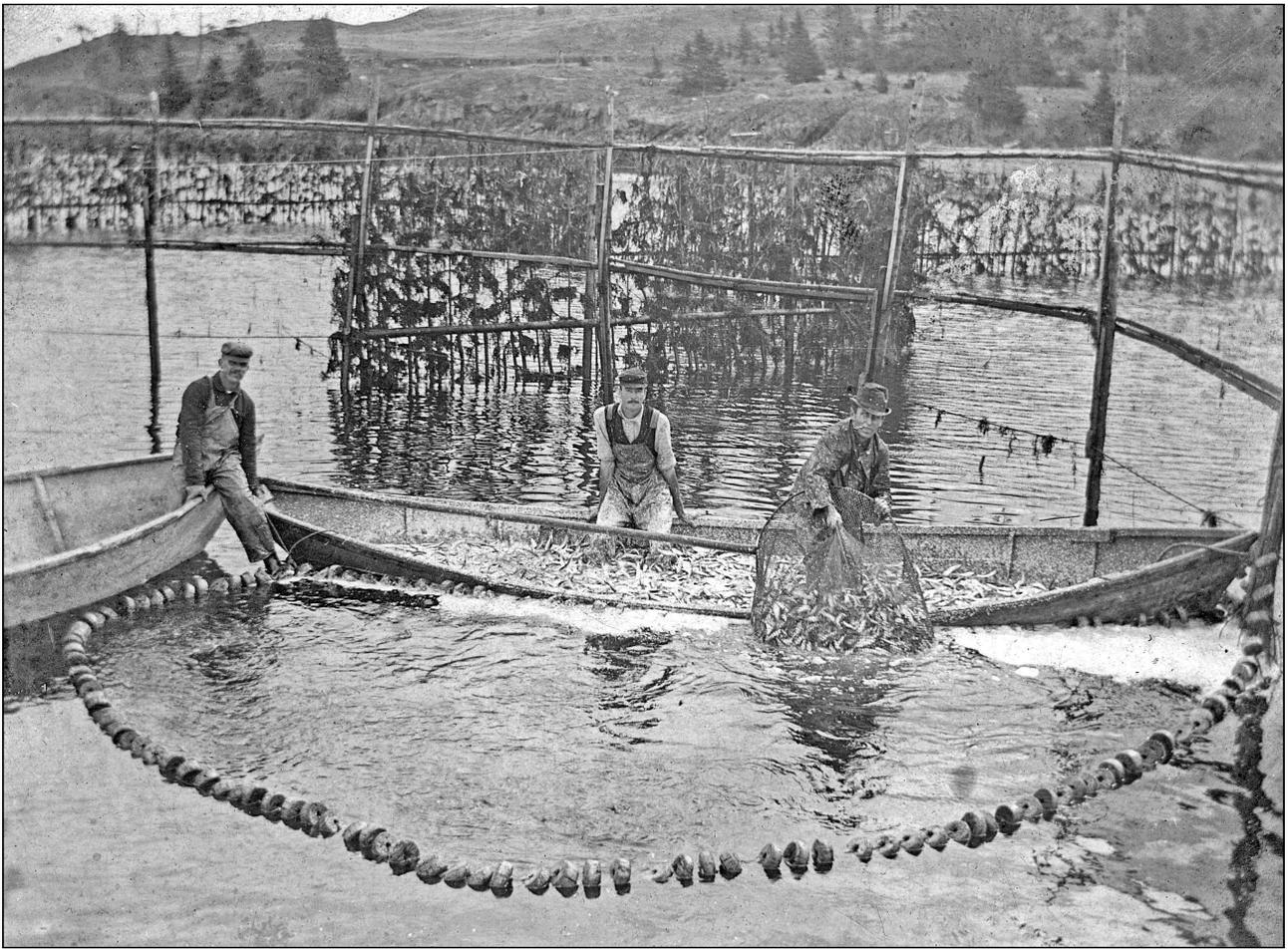
"One of the buyers always wore a tall beaver hat and carried a gold-headed cane. One time Fletcher Eaton, Ike Merrick and I had been up town, Fletcher pretty full of rum but had his words. There was an old boat hauled up on the wharf, seams open to the daylight, and Fletcher climbed aboard into the cuddy for a nap. Old feller with the beaver hat kind of curious to know what Ike and I were peeping at through the seams. He looked through and saw Fletcher who still had his words: 'How d'y do, Mister, won't you come aboard?'"

"Did I ever tell ye of the time Henry Duncan prayed for the widow Lunt? Well, we were laying in Lunt's Harbor, Long Island, over a Sunday. Not much to do, so Henry Duncan, Henry Fletcher and I thought we'd go to meeting up to the town. They had a preacher there, don't know whether he was a regular preacher or not, but he talked real good. After meeting we walked back with the widow Lunt who lived over on the westerly side of the harbor where the vessel was laying, and during the walk Henry Duncan made out to be real religious, to such an extent that the widow Lunt asked him to pray for her. She didn't seem to have nothing much, only a few sheep, so Henry started in to bless the sheep, praying that some would have twins, some triplets, and that kind of thing. I don't remember his

**Charles K. Cobb: North Haven Mackerel Seiners and Other Vessels
1880-1890**

Written in 1963, this paper has provided NHHS with a ton of wonderful detail!

Cobb was able to interview Zenas Burgess who was 93 at the time.



The bulk of the lower-grade fish were shipped abroad as laborers' food, chiefly to the West Indies, and salt mackerel remains an important fish to this day in areas such as Jamaica.



Beam Trawlers

According to Seward Beacom's book on Pulpit Harbor, after WWI, the East Coast Fisheries Company bought a number of French Mine Sweepers and converted them to beam trawlers. In the 1930's, after a decade of use, they were "mothballed" in Cabot Cove.

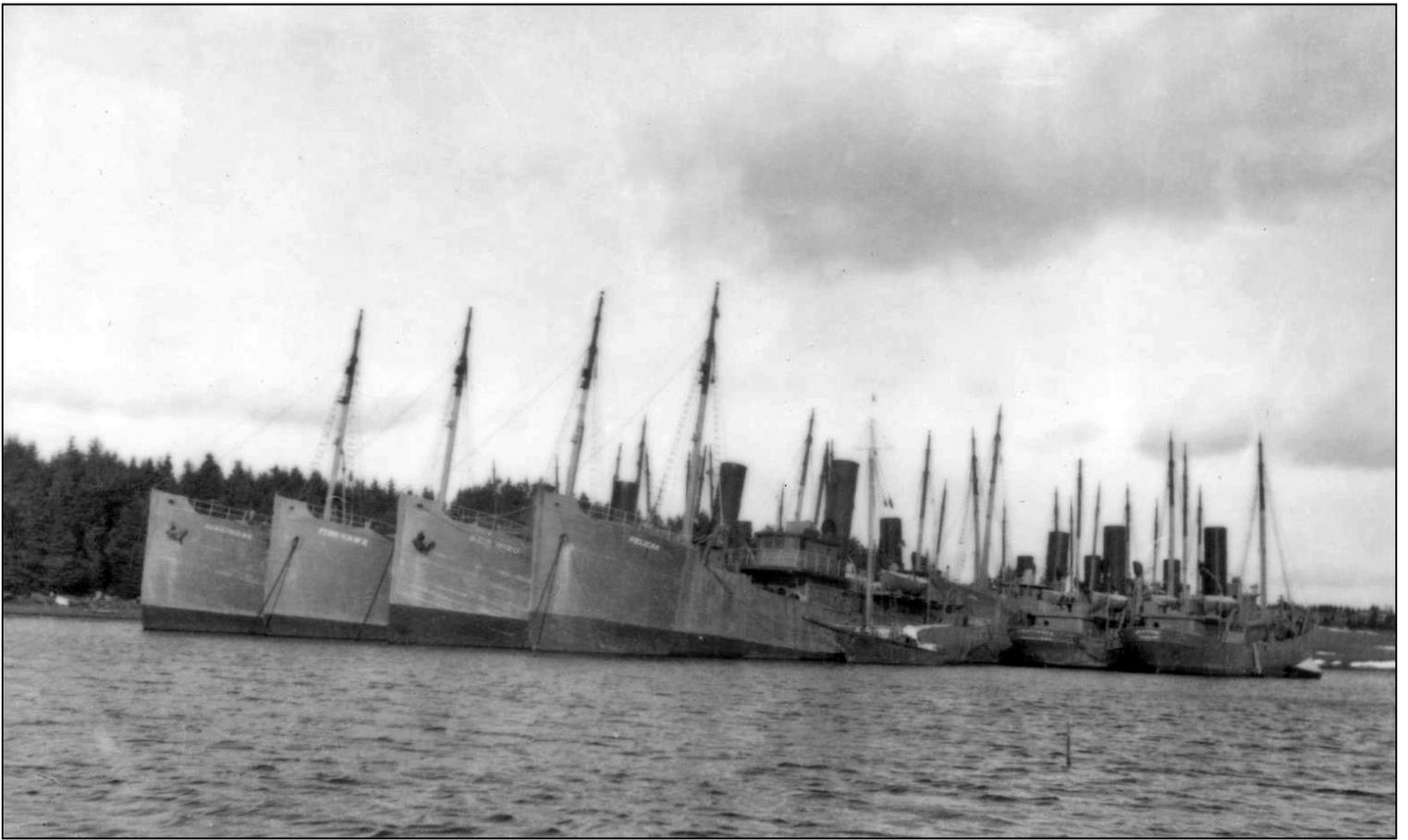
Ten years earlier, from 1920 through 1927, Lloyd Whitmore, using a French made record book, kept meticulous lists of the working trawlers as they came and went in Pulpit Harbor. He lists the names of over 21 trawlers and kept track of their catch and their coming and going in the Harbor. At least four large towboats also worked the Harbor bringing the trawlers safely in and out. The boats apparently worked year round as Whitmore's entries cover months from February through August. Captain Lewis Crabtree was the Port Captain.

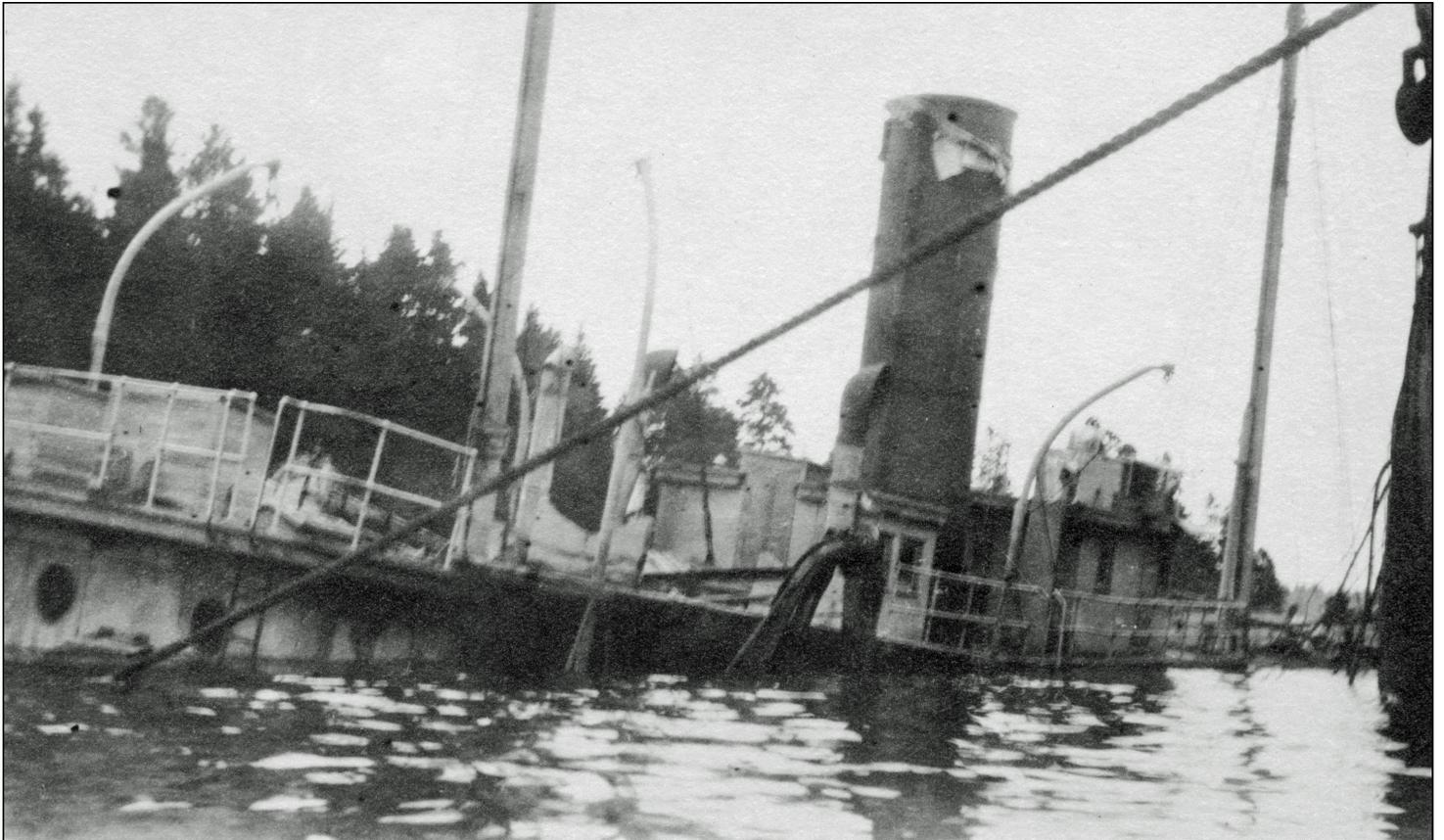
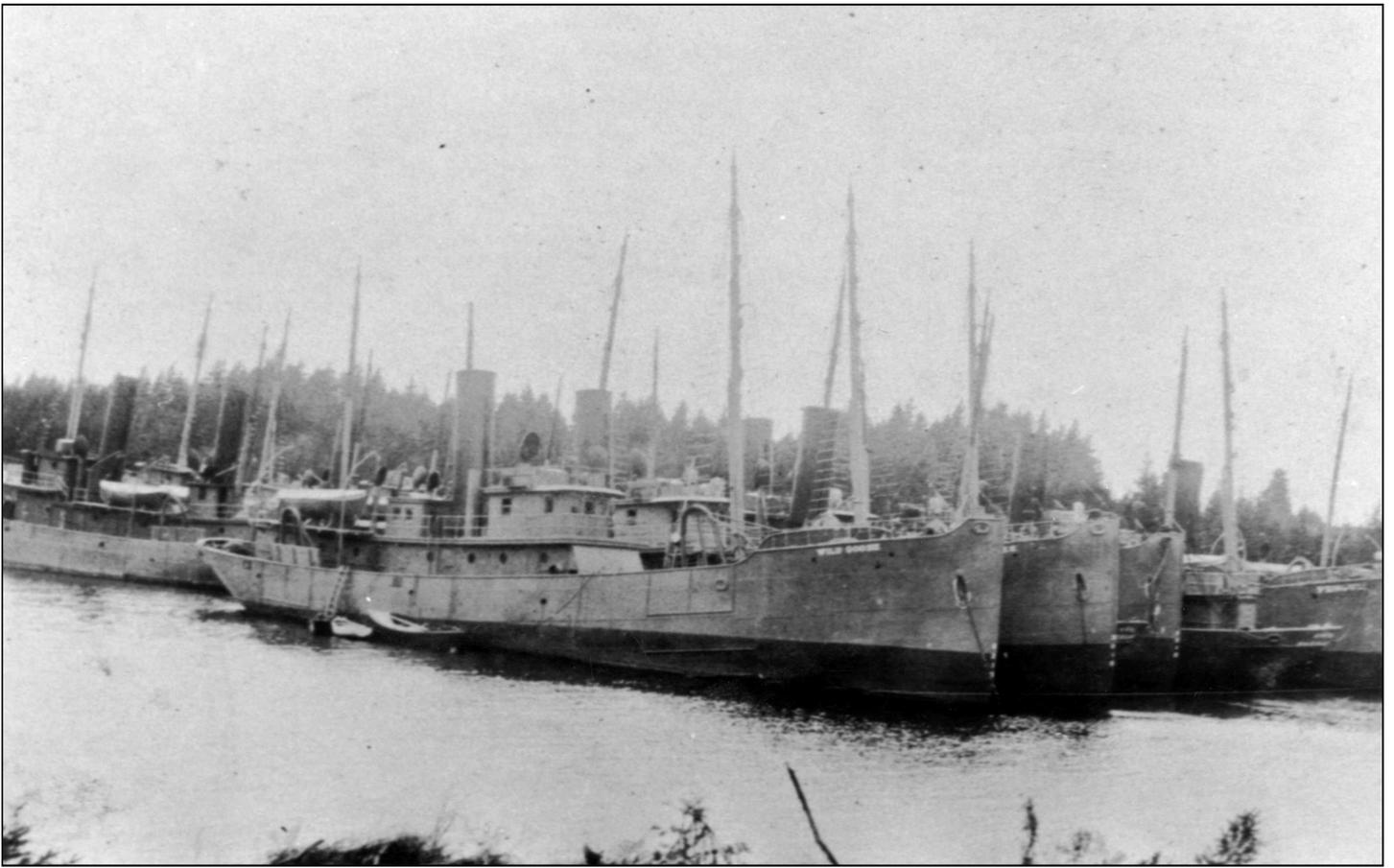
A number of the trawlers were wooden ships though the ones purchased from the French government had steel hulls. Some of the trawlers were rented for use as lobster smacks to transport live lobsters to market. Others fished the Grand Banks and Western Banks. From time to time there was talk of moving the ships because of the summer traffic of pleasure boats in the crowded harbor but that never happened.

The largest trawlers used for fishing could carry up to 300,000 pounds of fish (mostly haddock and cod) though a catch of 75,000 pounds was cause for celebration.

According to Whitmore's notes, at least one of the trawlers was used to transport rum (during Prohibition!) and he speculated that it was one of the Pulpit Harbor trawlers, the Grebe, that was running rum in Massachusetts when it was fired on but escaped from the Coast Guard.

Whitmore mentioned several times that the fish were shipped to Portland or to Islesboro and Camden for packing and canning and smoking at Burnham and Morrill plants. Huge catches were reported in the 1920's, though by the time Whitmore closes his narrative only a few boats sail and their catch was small. The trawlers were finally sold off by their final owner, Deep Sea Fisheries. The boats were in poor condition and some had serious leaks by that date.





After ten years of active use, the trawlers were “mothballed”; one eventually sank.

FEUILLETS du REGISTRE de punitions du bâtiment où sont reportées les punitions de l'homme. 1	NOMS ET PRÉNOMS. 2	GRADES. 3	PAR QUI EST DEMANDÉE la punition. (Nom et grade.) 4	MOTIF DE LA PUNITION. 5	VISA DE L'OFFICIER en second. 6
	East Coast Fisheries Co.			1920-21.	
	Beam Trawlers.				
1	Albatross				
2	Brant				
3	Goat				
4	Curlew				
5	Fishhawk				
6	Gull				
7	Heron				
8	Kingfisher				
9	Loon				
10	Mudric				
11	Osprey				
12	Pelican				
13	Penguin				
14	Plover				
15	Sea Bird				
16	Shelduck				
17	Snipe				
18	Tern				
19	Teal				
20	Widgeon				
21	Wild Goose				
	"East Coast Fisheries Co. failed Sept. 1920"				
	Arctusa sch. sold 2/1/21.				

The Old Fisherman

(To S.P.)

**Four-score years and two years more
He's followed the ocean wave.
Where the water is deep or the breakers roar,
To gather the fish we crave.**

**Grizzled and worn and nearly blind,
He follows his daily task.
Thoughtful for others, always kind,
Favors from none does he ask.**

**In the little old boat, at the top of the tide,
He whiles the hours away,
From early morn, until eventide,
Ceaselessly day by day.**

**Alone with his thoughts like the whole day through,
A curly dog for a friend.
Plodding away till the fall of the dew,
Nearing his journey's end.**

**Never complaining, never a sigh,
Whatever his lot may be.
Drifting toward that land on high
And waiting patiently.**

**There should be a reward for such as he,
When he reaches the other shore,
No watching or waiting or toil should there be,
But peace for evermore.**

Foster B. Snow, 1932. For Solomon Parsons.

The St. Regis Paper Company

During the 1940's and 1950's the St. Regis Company of Bucksport logged large acres of North Haven. Up to 40 lumberjacks and their horses lived in camps and boarded in island homes while working on the island. At daybreak, men and horses headed into the woods where they used early chainsaws to cut trees into logs. All logs were taken to the nearest shorefront and floated to barges that were towed across the bay.

At times, workers lived on a boarding house barge anchored in Cabot's Cove while the men logged Sedgwick's Point. The timber that was logged generally was for wood pulp and the paper industry.



Boss Pepper loading wood in Pulpit Harbor, October 1959



Unloading and floating wood for the St. Regis Company of Bucksport, Maine



Wood loaded for transport to the mainland



The floating boarding house for St. Regis woodcutters working on North Haven, also known as the “St. Regis motel”.

The Pulpit Harbor Public Float

In the early 20th century, Charles Norton and Thomas W. Lamont planned to organize a packet company to bring supplies from the mainland directly to Pulpit Harbor. They got at least as far as constructing granite piers on the north side of the harbor when Mr. Norton died in 1924.

Charles Norton's widow gave the town half of the granite in the piers to honor her husband's memory. The piers remained undisturbed and unused for many years.

In the mid-1950's an agreement between the town and representatives of the Norton and Lamont families led to the town's construction of the wharf and float and the ease of the current parking lot.

By 1957 the Pulpit Harbor Public Float was ready to use; both Mrs. Strong, a summer resident of Bartlett's Harbor, and the town contributed to construction costs. Town water, electricity and a public phone followed the following year. In 1975, Raymond Beverage was appointed as Harbor Master; he was followed by Adam Campbell, the current Harbor Master.

The float is today maintained and repaired by the town under a perpetual lease. Both pleasure boats and many lobster boats make extensive use of the wharf which has become increasingly crowded in the 21st century. Many working fishing boats are moored in Pulpit Harbor and use the public float. As early as 1936 and continuing today, large "Windjammers", many converted from coastal schooners, also began to visit Pulpit Harbor so that their customers could disembark, walk around the island or into town.

Icebound

The glistening rays of rising sun
Fare forth in shimmering waving glare,
Where countless whitecapped waves have run,
Across our Island Thoroughfare.

Today the waters of the sea
Are gripped in Winter's firm embrace.
No more she murmurs fancy free
No rippling smile upon her face.

No more upon her bosom fair
Do gentle tide-waves ride and fall.
All life is stilled, an icy glare
Now casts a shadow over all.

The rugged fisher folk who glean
A livelihood from off our shore,
Gaze in sadness upon the scene,
And frigid atmosphere deplore.

Their boats now gripped in field of ice
Now silent watchmen of the night,
Bound as with rope in knots or splice,
And seeming shamefaced of their plight.

Foster B. Snow, 1934



Lloyd Whitmore standing on a frozen Pulpit Harbor, February 7, 1934