

## THE SMELT FISHING INDUSTRY DESCRIBED INTERESTINGLY BY BY A LOGGIEVILLE PUPIL

By EELYN LORNA PERCY of  
the Loggieville School)

The smelt fishing industry on the  
Miramichi is about sixty years old.

About the year 1874 or 1875 a man  
from Bangor, Maine, was visiting in  
the vicinity of Napan Bay, when he  
thought that something could be done  
with the little white fish called Smelts  
as they seemed to be in abundance in  
the small rivers and bays.

He went back to Bangor and on his  
next visit to the Miramichi he brought  
with him a net in the shape of a large  
bag, which was open at the mouth  
and tapered off to a point at one  
end, with a small hole and draw string  
in it.

When the net was in the water, the  
small hole was closed by hauling the  
drawstring.

The net was set in the water on  
two pickets or poles, and as the tide  
ebbed or flowed, it carried the little  
fish into the bag when the mouth of  
it was open.

The mouth of the bag was closed  
by hauling ropes which were fastened  
on each lower corner.

When the net was hauled out of the  
water, the small hole or bunt was  
opened and the fish were emptied on  
the ice.

### Shipped to the U. S.

These fish after being frozen, were  
packed into boxes of different shapes  
and sizes. They were packed mostly  
on the ice, and hauled by teams to the  
nearest stations where they were ship-  
ped to the United States.

The natives of the Miramichi soon  
saw that a business could be worked  
up with these little fish and some of  
the enterprising young men, such as  
Mr. Robert Loggie and his brother,  
the late Andrew Loggie of Black  
Brook (now Loggieville) procured  
nets and started fishing at Napan Bay  
and Napan river.

When it was seen that there was a  
good market for these little fish in the  
United States, wooden boxes were  
made for this trade. These boxes  
would hold from twenty-five to fifty  
pounds each.

About this time a great number of  
people procured nets and began fish-  
ing for smelts, as soon as the ice  
made in the main Miramichi river.

As the industry increased, sheds  
were built for the purpose of packing  
these fish, and people hauled them to  
the building and sold them.

Prices in those days were very low.  
Fishermen received from \$15 to \$20  
a ton for them, as the demand in-  
creased the prices went up.

### Size of Nets

The license for nets set in the river  
called for a mouth or entrance thirty-  
three feet wide. The nets in the Bay  
had an extension of one hundred feet  
wide put on them. These were known  
as the "Big Mouth" Nets.

From year to year the size and  
shape of the nets were changed. The  
fishermen finding that the largest fish  
went upriver in shoal water, they  
made nets to suit the depth of the  
water.

Mr. George McKnight of Napan,  
N.B., introduced a net to fish in shoal  
water. It was called a "Box Net."

This net was made in the shape of  
a box with the lower or bottom cor-  
ners weighted down with stones, and  
the four upper or top corners held  
to the ice by ropes fastened to four  
or five little stakes driven into the  
ice. One end of this net was open  
with the leader running into it. This  
leader was for the purpose of leading  
the fish into the net.

### Put UP Blinker

About the year 1900 the A. & R.  
Loggie Company of Loggieville, N.B.,  
began to put up in oil the small smelts  
called blinkers. These were cooked in  
oil and put into small quarter pound  
cans. The sale for these fish was  
reached a higher price it did not pay  
to can them, therefore the smelt can-  
ning industry ceased.

### Nets Improved

In later years the box nets were  
improved in several ways:

First—They were made larger.

Second—They were made so that  
they could be used in deeper water.

Third—The meshes were altered in  
size.

At that time there were hundreds  
of men engaged in the work of fish-  
ing on the Bays in the winter. They  
took with them their camps (com-  
monly called shanties), also hovels to  
keep their horses in. This system is  
still in use.

In later years the government made  
a limit that no Big Mouth or Box Nets  
could be fished above the line running  
between Oak Point Wharf and Mr.  
Loggie's property at Point aux Carrs.  
This limit is still used.

From Oak Point Wharf to Newcastle  
bag nets are used, and a great many  
smelts and Tommies are caught.

The large packing boxes, which  
were used at the beginning of the  
smelt fishing are now out of date.  
The demand in the United States  
calls for small size boxes. These  
boxes hold from eight to twenty  
pounds each, and the fisherman some-  
times get as much as \$300.00 per ton  
for their fish.

### A Large Catch

This industry has now increased  
so that there are now several million  
pounds of fish handled in one season.

This looks very good for the fisher-  
men, but there is another side to the  
story: Sometimes, it is known, there  
are more than one hundred nets lost  
by the ice running out of the lower  
bays, usually breaking up at Burnt  
Church or Grand Doons, some of these  
nets costing as much as \$100 each.

The smelt nets were originally  
made in the United States, but in  
recent years the material or web is  
brought either in England or the  
United States and the nets are made  
in New Brunswick. This plan gives  
more work to the people of this pro-  
vince.

### Open Water Fishing

In recent years a number of the fish-  
ermen along the upper and central  
parts of the Miramichi and also small-  
er rivers, fish before the ice makes.  
This is known as "Open Water Fish-  
ing."

At first pickets were driven into  
the mud in about twelve to twenty  
feet of water, then an ordinary bag

net was set on to these pickets. Scows  
were built to carry the men back and  
forth to their nets. When the ice  
began to make and run, it was found  
that these nets could be held, so later  
a frame of wood was made across  
the mouth of the net, and it was  
put under the water, with weights  
and anchors to hold it.

The frame was for the purpose of  
holding the mouth of the net open  
when under water, and there were  
two ropes running from the frame of  
the net to the top of the water, which  
were fastened on two buoys. In haul-  
ing the net they hauled these two  
ropes, bringing the net to the top of  
the water.

Men found this very hard and un-  
satisfactory work. In later years the  
nets have been improved. They now  
use points of about six or seven feet  
long, which they drive into the mud  
with a long pole and a piece of pipe  
on the end of it, which the men lift  
up and down, thus driving the points  
firmly into the mud.

From these points there are two  
ropes and two poles, which are fas-  
tened to the mouth of the net. The  
frames have been done away with,  
and the fishermen can set their nets  
and any amount of ice can run up  
and down the river without harming  
them.

### How Nets are Set.

The nets are set with a stake driven  
behind them, some distance from the  
tail, a rope comes up from this stake  
to the top of the water, a ring is tied  
to the end of the rope, and a small  
rope run from the tail of the net  
through the ring, back to the mouth  
of the net. This is known as a tail  
line, which holds the net from swing-  
ing with the tide, they haul the ropes  
that are fastened to the buoys, and  
this closes the net. They then haul  
the net into the scow, and empty the  
fish out of it. Then they throw the  
net back into the water and it is all  
set for the next tide.

When the fishermen go down river  
in the winter, some of them stop at  
the following places: Oak Point,  
Burnt Church, Grand Doon Island,  
Sam Lowes, Rocky Point, Neguac,  
Portage Island and Tabisuntac. These  
places are all on the north side of  
the river.

On the south side of the river the  
principal fishing stands are at East  
Point, Napan Bay, Point aux Carrs,  
Black River, Bay Side, Bay du Vin  
and Fox Island.

From the beginning of the fishing  
any person who fished a net had to  
have a license. The price at that time  
was \$2.00 per net. In later years the  
price was reduced to \$1.00 per net, and  
the rules stated the distance between  
each net must be 200 yards.

### Fish Graded

The season for smelt fishing now  
opens on November 25th and closes  
February 15th. The fish are graded  
as follows: Number 1s, Number 2s,  
and Extras.

Among the present principal buyers  
and shippers are: The A. & R. Loggie  
Company, Limited of Loggieville, N.B.,  
the W. S. Loggie Company of Chat-  
ham, N.B., and the Crocker Company  
of Newcastle, N.B. There are many  
others who buy and sell on a small  
scale. Each shipped has hired men  
on the ice to buy and collect the  
fish. These men are equipped with  
horses, sleds, scales and barrels.

The fish are weighed at the nets,  
placed in barrels and hauled to the

packing sheds, where they are packed  
into boxes. The packers are paid so  
much a box for packing them. The  
boxes are placed in a refrigerator car  
and shipped.



Sealed Tenders addressed to the un-  
dersigned and endorsed "Tender for  
Public Building, Moncton, N.B." will  
be received until 12 o'clock noon (day-  
light saving), Thursday, July 26, 1934,  
for the construction of a Public Build-  
ing at Moncton, N. B.

Plans and specification can be seen  
and forms of tender obtained at the  
offices of the Chief Architect, Depart-  
ment of Public Works, Ottawa, the  
Caretaker, Public Building, Frederic-  
ton, N. B., the Resident Architect, old  
Post Office Building, Saint John, N.B.,  
and the Caretaker, Post Office Build-  
ing, Moncton, N. B.

Tenders will not be considered un-  
less made on the forms supplied by  
the Department and in accordance  
with the conditions set forth therein.

Each Tender must be accompanied  
by a certified cheque on a chartered  
bank in Canada, payable to the order  
of the Honourable the Minister of  
Public Works, equal to 10 per cent. of  
the amount of tender, or Bearer Bonds  
of the Dominion of Canada or of the  
Canadian National Railway Company  
and its constituent companies, uncondi-  
tionally guaranteed as to principal  
and interest by the Dominion of Can-  
ada, or the aforementioned bonds and  
a certified cheque if required to make  
up an odd amount.

NOTE.—Blue prints can be obtained  
at the office of the Chief Architect,  
Department of Public Works, by de-  
positing an accepted bank cheque for  
the sum of \$50.00, payable to the order  
of the Minister of Public Works, which  
will be returned if the intending bid-  
der submit a regular bid.

By order,

N. DESJARDINS,  
Secretary

Dept. of Public Works,  
Ottawa, June 22, 1934.



Sealed Tenders addressed to the un-  
dersigned, and endorsed "Tender for  
Wharf Reconstruction and Harbor Im-  
provements, St. Andrews, N.B." will be  
received until 12 o'clock noon (daylight  
saving), Friday, July 13, 1934, for the  
wharf reconstruction and harbor im-  
provements at St. Andrews, Charlotte  
County, New Brunswick.

Plans and form of contract can be  
seen and specification and forms of  
tender obtained at this Department,  
at the offices of the District Engineer,  
Old Post Office Building, Saint John,  
N. B.; Canadian Construction Associa-  
tion (Saint John Branch), 111 Princess  
Street, Saint John, N. B. also at the  
Post Office, St. Andrews, N. B.

Tenders will not be considered un-  
less made on printed forms supplied  
by the Department and in accordance  
with conditions set forth herein.

Each Tender must be accompanied  
by a certified cheque on a chartered  
bank in Canada, payable to the order  
of the Dominion of Canada or of the  
Public Works, equal to 10 per cent. of  
the amount of the tender, or Bearer Bonds  
of the Dominion of Canada or of the  
Canadian National Railway Company  
and its constituent companies, uncondi-  
tionally guaranteed as to principal  
and interest by the Dominion of Can-  
ada, or the aforementioned bonds and  
a certified cheque if required to make  
up an odd amount.

NOTE.—Blue prints can be obtained  
at this Department by depositing an  
accepted cheque for the sum of \$20.00,  
payable to the order of the Minister  
of Public Works, which will be return-  
ed if the intending bidder submit a  
regular bid.

By order,

N. DESJARDINS,  
Secretary

Dept. of Public Works,  
Ottawa, June 22nd, 1934.



Sealed Tenders addressed to the un-  
dersigned and endorsed "Tender for  
Public Building, McAdam, N. B." will  
be received until 12 o'clock noon day-  
light saving), Wednesday, July 18th,  
1934, for the construction of a Public  
Building at McAdam, N. B.

Plans and specification can be seen  
and forms of tender obtained at the  
offices of the Chief Architect, Depart-  
ment of Public Works, Ottawa, the Resi-  
dent Architect, Old Post Office Build-  
ing, Saint John, N. B., the Caretaker,  
Public Building, Fredericton, N. B.,  
and at the Post Office, McAdam, N. B.

Tenders will not be considered un-  
less made on the forms supplied by  
the Department and in accordance  
with the conditions set forth therein.

Each tender must be accompanied  
by a certified cheque on a chartered  
bank in Canada, payable to the order  
of the Honourable the Minister of Public  
Works, equal to 10 per cent. of the  
amount of the tender, or Bearer Bonds  
of the Dominion of Canada or of the  
Canadian National Railway Company  
and its constituent companies, uncondi-  
tionally guaranteed as to principal  
and interest by the Dominion of Can-  
ada, or the aforementioned bonds and  
a certified cheque if required to make  
up an odd amount.

NOTE.—Blue prints can be obtained  
at the office of the Chief Architect,  
Department of Public Works, by de-  
positing an accepted bank cheque for  
the sum of \$20.00, payable to the order  
of the Minister of Public Works, which  
will be returned if the intending bid-  
der submit a regular bid.

By order,

N. DESJARDINS,  
Secretary

Department of Public Works,  
Ottawa, June 23, 1934.

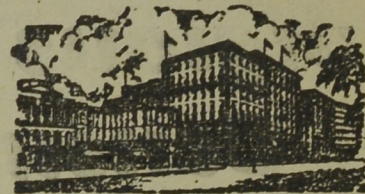
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