TOPIC 3.3

The Resident Fishery
TYPES OF FISHERIES

- The Shore Fishery
- Labrador Fishery
- Seal Fishery
- Bank Fishery
SHORE FISHERY

- After settlement, most fishing done along shores in small boats
- This fish was lightly salted and hard dried
  - Preferred by foreign markets
- No other nation produced fish this way
- Huge business for Newfoundland
SHORE FISHERY

- Most fishing was done by males, who left early morning and returned throughout the day with their catch.
- Other family members then cured the fish (salted, dried, etc.).
- Mostly a family business.
NEW TECHNOLOGY

- Included...
  - Newer boats (dories)
  - Long Line
  - Cod Trap
    - Caught more fish, but was more expensive, and needed bigger crews and boats to operate
PROBLEMS

• Newfoundland fishery boomed during Britain’s wars
  • Used to feed armies
• After conflicts ended, demand fell
  • So did price
• Market collapsed after 1815
• Cod stocks were also dropping
  • Population increased, more people fishing
PROBLEMS

- Places where most fish were caught were hit hardest
  - Conception Bay, Trinity Bay, Bonavista Bay
- People moved further offshore to find cod
  - By 1820s, search led fishers north to Labrador…
LABRADOR FISHERY

- This fishery served TWO purposes…
  - Provided a use for sealing vessels in the off-season
  - Allowed shore fishermen to still earn a living
- Only those with large boats could travel to Labrador
- As they spent weeks to months from home, some brought their families
LABRADOR FISHERY

• Two groups…
  • **Stationers**
    • lived onshore and left in small boats each day (like shore fishery)
    • Salted and cured fish on shore shortly after catching it
      • Labrador’s damp weather made for poor curing
LABRADOR FISHERY

- **Floaters**
  - Lived on boats and sailed up and down Labrador coast
  - Often travelled further north than stationers
  - Packed fish in salt and brought it to Newfoundland at end of each season to be dried
    - Risked damaging catch before returning home
LABRADOR FISHERY

• Catches were larger compared to shore fishery, however...
  • Produced an inferior product
    • Fishers made less money

• Over time, many people settled along Labrador coast
• Merchants set up shop
SEAL FISHERY

• Began when English settlers started catching seals that passed near the shore
  • Some began to use boats to search for seals floating on ice pans
• Many communities along south Labrador, Strait of Belle Isle and Twillingate settled by sealers (This is where most sealing took place at first)
SEAL FISHERY

• In early 1800s, many people began realizing how profitable seal fishery was
  • Began travelling north to take part
• In 1800s, was considered as important as cod fishery
  • By 1840s, over 14,000 people employed
SEAL FISHERY

• Seal oil and pelts (skin) were most profitable
  • Oil used for…
    • Lighting home and wharfs, streetlights, lighthouses, etc.
    • Soap manufacturing
    • Pelts used for furniture, gloves, boots, jackets, hats, etc.
  • Very popular in England
SEAL FISHERY

- Very risky business
  - Many did not get enough pelts to be profitable
    - Many poor years
    - Although one good year could make up for several bad ones
  - Very dangerous work (Death on The Ice)
- By 1850s, seals were in decline
  - Prices for seal oil fell (Other alternatives developed)
- By 1914, sealing made up only 5% of NL’s exports
BANK FISHERY

- Shore, Labrador and seal fisheries were in decline by late 1800s
- NL government offered subsidies (financial assistance) for fishers to travel to Grand Banks
  - Where fish were plentiful
BANK FISHERY

- Typically ran from March to October
- Many fishermen left on large fishing vessels (schooners)
- Made 3 or 4 trips to Grand Banks per season
- Remained there for several weeks at a time
BANK FISHERY

- Groups left schooners in dories and fished using hand lines or trawl lines
- Returned several times throughout the day to return catch
- Gutted, split and salted their own fish
BANK FISHERY

• Faced a number of dangers
  • Rough weather
    • Damage schooners
    • Dories lost in fog
  • Large ocean liners could capsize or run down dories
  • Cramped living quarters
  • Injured or sick people could have to wait several weeks to return home for medical attention
BANK FISHERY

- Bank fishery produced an inferior product as well
  - Lower quality
- Increased competition from Iceland and Norway
- Industry declined in 1900s