

# 25,000-pound annual catch not unusual in those days

By NEIL A. MATHESON  
Lobster fishermen had a rough time 20 to 75 years ago with almost unbelievably low prices compared to today, or did they? A talk recently with veteran Stannus Lapierre, Morell, brought out some interesting information.

Fishermen of those early years got roughly one-half cent per pound for lobsters, that brought as high as 55 cents per pound for markets at one time this season.

And the fishermen's lot was tough because "you were lucky if you were square with your merchant at the end of the season, and then he'd pile another six months' supply of goods on you. You were never out of debt," Mr. Lapierre said.

But there were compensations. Catches were much bigger and operating and living costs were much lower, then, he observed.

One boat normally fished 300 to 350 traps then and "I've seen us get as much as 25,000 pounds in a season," the veteran said as he looked back on more than 70 years experience — he was 87 in April.

They took all sizes in those days, except spawners. Lobsters in the latter part of the season traps would be half full of small lobsters — they baled them once a day. It would take a dozen of the small ones, perhaps to make a pound said the veteran who observed that three or four one-half lb lobsters will make a pound.

**FULL OF MEAT**  
"The little ones were chock full of meat at the season's end," Mr. Lapierre added.

Jerry Barry, Morell who packs lobsters for many years, and is still an active buyer, recalls the time the lobsters sold for two cents each, and they weighed three to four pounds. To day many lobsters wouldn't weigh a pound, he noted.

And there were large catches. Vince McGrath, Morell would take as many as 25,000 pounds a day. Al McAdam would take 1500 to 2,000, he added.

Season's takes of 25,000 to 28,000 pounds were common. Now 4,000 to 7,000 pounds is average though a few of the better fishermen get up to 12,000 or 14,000 pounds in a season, he observed.

The factory often had to keep going around the clock to process the fish, so great was the supply, Mr. Barry recalled.

"We canned 33,000 pounds in one day," he said.

Some of the canned lobsters went to England, though there were also "quite a few" shipped to the United States, said Mr.

## VINCENT McGRATH, MORELL

Barry who recalled they were \$10 a case one year. The same can be \$80 to \$90 a case now, he observed.

"There were other compensations for the lobster fishermen," he compared, and was cheaper, so was just about everything a family ate or used in those days, so money was worth much more, then, he observed.

**\$3 TO START**  
An amount of \$3 would get you going in the spring with the old Imperial — a new spark plug and a couple of dry cell batteries were all that was needed — engine and a tank of gasoline would last for more than half the season. It takes up to \$100 to get the present car engines in shape in the spring, he compared, and a tank of gasoline doesn't last long in them.

The season ran April 10 to July 20 and lobster cannery workers got \$18 and board for that period.

A family bought a 196-pound barrel of flour for \$4, butter was 15 cents per pound, tea 22 to 25 cents, eggs were 10 cents per dozen and sometimes less.

Sugar was five cents per pound and a live goose cost 45 cents and

a dressed one only 50 cents—it cost only five cents extra to kill and dress them. Mr. Lapierre recalled, "Many's the goose I got in those days at raffish. Every farmer had geese then," he said.

A load of wood cost 50 cents, and a man got only 50 cents per day working for a farmer, and he often worked well into the night for that, the veteran added.

A man got one-half cent for knitting the head for a lobster trap then. They are worth seven to 14 times that now, Mr. Lapierre noted as he suggested that prices and costs then a first now probably compared better than they appear to at a distance.

Coming events cast shadows

Coming events cast their shadows before.

With more than one million lobster traps lining the Maine coast in the summer, "the time is coming when restrictions will be placed upon the number of fishing licenses issued and the number of lobster that can be used." The prediction was made by Leslie Dyer, president of the Maine Lobstermen's Association.

Dyer said such legislation will be necessary to prevent the fishing grounds from being over-fished.

He described the typical Maine lobsterman as a small business man with investments of from \$5,000 to \$25,000, who spends up to 85 per cent of his gross income to stay in business.

Dyer said the association "doesn't want lobstering classed as sports fishing" and is opposed to efforts to repeal a state law that prohibits skidners from taking lobsters.

On another tack, Dyer said the recent United States Internal revenue service crackdown on expense account living has contributed to some extent to a decline in lobster prices this year.

He said restaurant catering to businessmen's meetings often were taken to serve lobster as the main course. Since the IRS crackdown, restaurant owners claim the call for lobsters for such affairs has dropped of more than 40 per cent.

**GETS PROMOTION**  
LONDON (AP)—Air Marshal Sir John Grandy, a fighter pilot in the Battle of Britain, today was named chief of the RAF Bomber Command. He will take up the post Sept. 1, succeeding Air Marshal Sir Kenneth Cross, whose new post will be announced later.

In all segments of the fishing industry, from the large trawler to the inshore powered dory, the new diesel power is being used. Space saving, reliability, and the fact that repairs of such engines are simple and fast are given as reasons for growing popularity of the diesel.

## Electronics spur fishing industry

Electronics has provided the most important advancement to the fishing industry in the post war years.

Compact radio telephones for instance have erased the feeling of loneliness and bolstered the morale of the fishermen.

Quick and efficient communication can be maintained between craft and also the shore.

Echo sounders can seek out schools of fish. The fishermen, with this modern aid, select the species and assess the quantity before setting his gear. He can also keep his gear at the depths most frequented by the fish he seeks. Bottom obstructions are avoided, eliminating much damage to fishing gear. Lastly, the echo sounder has proved to be an excellent navigational aid.

While this development is in its infancy and is somewhat limited, it is felt the day is not far distant when acidic and sonar equipment will be used for all methods of fishing in searching out the most productive areas.

**RADAR APPRECIATED**  
Radar's contribution to fishing is probably the most appreciated of the many electronic aids to navigation. It enables

the fisherman to navigate under nearly all adverse weather conditions which limit visibility. Not only can other fishing vessels in close proximity be observed, but fishing gear markings can also be located where visibility is limited.

In other areas of the fishing business there have been striking improvements. The automatic pilot has made the task of standing watch easier than driving a car equipped with power steering. Nets made from synthetic fibres have almost universally replaced natural materials. The synthetics are unaffected by marine organisms, and there is not the deterioration that formerly took place with natural fibres.

By and large steel and aluminum seem to be gaining steadily as the most popular material for fishing vessel construction. Few vessels of any size are today built of wood, although wood is still much in use in many countries for boats under 70 feet in length.

**RESEARCHERS probe temps.**  
This may not be news, but a well known scientific fact that the water is colder in the north than in the south has been confirmed.

The news is in how research scientists in San Francisco, California, made tests leading to the conclusion. Some 27,000 temperature measurements of the coastal waters of the Pacific from Cape Flattery, Wash., to San Diego, Calif., were completed recently by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

As their craft flew from altitudes of 800 feet to 1,000 feet along the coastline—a distance of 1430 miles—they used an airborne infrared detection device to measure the heat radiation of the water surface.

In this way they made the first continuous temperature record ever taken, since the flight was completed in a day.

In their 27,000 readings, they found the water temperatures ranged from a low of 46 degrees below a high of 63 degrees near Santa Barbara in southern California.



THERE WERE NO DRAGGERS IN McGRATH'S DAY

**CRASHED IN CHINA?**  
RANGOON (AP)—A Burma Airways airliner, missing since Monday with 21 persons aboard, is believed to have crashed in Communist China, an airline official said here today. A message from Communist Chinese authorities said an unidentified plane crossed the China-Burma border Monday evening and communication with it stopped abruptly, the official said. A search is on.

**CUT FROM MOVIE**  
LONDON (Reuters)—Resigned war minister John Profumo is to be cut out of a color movie made to stimulate army recruiting, it was reported today. The Daily Express gave the name of the movie as This is Our Life and said the sequence to be dropped of Profumo making an inspection.

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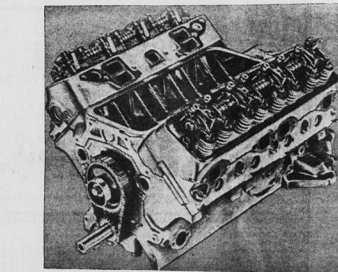
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