

Capt. John Ellison, Port Stanley, Ontario.

October 7, 1893.

One of the most prominent business men of the place and has lived here many years. He is interested in several undertakings, including a saw mill for hard lumber, and has the control of 14 pound nets in this vicinity. Commenced fishing in 1880.

At that time there were:

2 pound nets at Port Stanley,

2 or 4 pound nets at Port Bruce,

No pound nets between Port Bruce and Long Point.

2 pound nets at Port Talbot

5 or 6 pound nets at Eagle,

4 pound nets at New Glasgow.

Making about 16 altogether between Long Point and Rondeau.

At Port Burwell they had probably been using pound nets 3 or 4 years before that time,

and the same at Port Talbot.

Does not think pound net fishing has been carried on between Long Point and Rondeau more than 17 or 18 years.

Previous to that time they employed chiefly drag seines. Never heard of their using gill nets much.

Scarcely any seining is now carried on. Do not get as good a class of fish with the seines as with the pound nets.

The number of seines at present between Long Point and Rondeau, not including those of the Long Point Co., is about 70. This number has been reached within about 6 years. Eight years ago there were probably not over 25. Most of the increase took place between then and 3 or 4 years ago, since which time none have been added.

One person can obtain license for only 5 pounds, but he may purchase or lease additional rights. Some men or firms control as many as

10 pounds. He has 14.

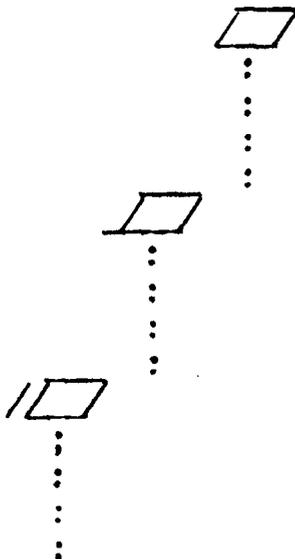
The pots of the pounds average about 26 feet square. They are mostly set in depths of 26 to 30 feet. In a depth of 26 feet make the pot 23 feet deep. The bottom of the pot is always kept above the bottom of the lake to prevent chafing.

The leaders generally range in length from 80 to 125 rods. In some places, as at Port Burwell, where the bottom slopes more gradually the leaders may be as long as 200 feet. The inner end of the leader is on the shore.

The pot has a 2 inch mesh; tunnel 4 inch mesh; hearts 5 inch mesh; leader 6, 7 and even 8 inch mesh. The above are all extension measure.

In some places may have as many as 3 to 5 pounds set in nearly a continuous line from the shore, outwards, Each succeeding pound is, however, a little to one side of the next inner one, and there is space left between the pot of

one and the end of the leader of the next one to permit of the free passage of boats. In such an arrangement as this the leaders of the outer pounds are about 50 to 60 rods long. In that distance you will get an increased depth of about 2 feet, so that each succeeding pot will be in about 2 feet deeper water than the one next inside of it. The depths would then range about as follows: 26 feet, 28 feet, 30 feet, etc. The arrangement of the nets may be represented as follows:



As the water becomes warmer with the advance of the season, the fish work further off shore, and better catches are made in the outer pounds. In cold weather the inner pounds do best.

Herring and pickerel are the principal fish taken in the pounds. Also take a considerable number of whitefish at times. The other fish secured in the pounds are perch (few), white bass (occasionally), black bass (sometimes 1 or 2 specimens in every other lift, at others not 1 in a week or ten days), pike (few), suckers and mullet (10 to 15 pounds at every lift), sheepshead, ling (sometimes half a dozen in a lift, sometimes more), sturgeon (comparatively few. Less abundant this year than in 1892). No salmon trout are ever taken.

The above enumeration is based upon the catch in his 14 pounds all considered together. The ground where his pounds are set is mostly gravelly and stony.

Count upon getting the first whitefish in the fall about October 5 or 6. They come on gradually, increasing in numbers up to about November 15 or 20, when they begin to be at their height. The spawning season continues to about December 10. They leave the shores here sometime the latter part of December.

In the spring the first whitefish are taken the last part of April, or the first part of May. They are not as abundant in the spring as in the fall. A good spring catch would amount to about 600 pounds, at a lift for the 14 pounds. This, however, is an unusual catch. They vary in abundance from day to day, but increase gradually in abundance as a whole, until the latter part of May. Thinks they come into shallow water at this season simply to find new feeding grounds. By June 1 they have nearly all disappeared from the shore. Thinks they go into deep places in the lake, especially between Long Point and

Erie, Pa., where they are fished for during the summer with gill nets by Americans.

He attempted to fish for whitefish off this region in deep water, some 12 years ago, but it did not pay and he gave it up. He fished during August in a depth of about 80 feet, but obtained only 5 or 6 whitefish.

Has observed no difference in the size of whitefish since he began fishing in 1880. The average size is between 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ and 4 pounds. The smallest size that can be marketed is about 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds. This species runs in size up to 18 and 20 pounds. They very seldom take any in their pounds weighing less than 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds, and he has always wondered where the young whitefish remain.

The bottom along this region where the pound net fishing is carried on consists of sand, gravel, clay, etc.

There is a gravel ridge extending from off Port Burwell to a point about 20 miles above

Port Stanley. It is 20 miles distant from the shore at Port Burwell, and runs close into the shore at its western end. The depth upon it off Port Stanley is about 60 feet. It shoals to the westward. It is too deep to fish upon with pound nets. Has thought this might be a spawning ground for whitefish.

The whitefish taken in the pounds along this part of the coast the latter part of November are spawning, which indicates that they come in here to spawn.

Has observed no difference in the abundance of whitefish since he began fishing in 1880. They now run about the same as then.

Pound net fishing was carried on during November of each year until 1892. During 3 or 4 years preceding 1892 they had been obliged to throw out into the lake, during all of November all the whitefish taken. Previous to that time and back to 1880 at least, they were obliged to dispose of their catches of white

fish in the same way only from the 10th to the last of November. The whitefish can be released alive and in good condition from their nets, providing the necessary care is taken.

His idea is that the close season for pound nets should not begin until November 10, and they should not be allowed to reset them again that year, as the whitefish spawn a few days into December. They should not be allowed to land any fish after November 10, and all nets should be brought ashore for the season. He thinks all the fishermen in this region would be satisfied with such an arrangement, but they would not like it if they had to stop November 1, for the rest of the year.

The opinion above expressed he would apply to all of Lake Erie. West of Rondeau they might not like it, as they have a large business with Ohio, by means of tugs.

Their pound nets are liable to be much damaged once or twice during every month of

October, as happened last night, causing the loss of several days in making repairs, and they would like to have as much time as possible at this season, or their fishing may not amount to much.

Does not believe, from his experience, that whitefish spawn much before November 20, and the spawning continues to a considerable extent into the first part of December. Last year he had nets set during the first few days of December and took spawning whitefish then.

Wilnot seems not to have a clear idea of their time of spawning. Perhaps he realizes that they cannot fish much in December.

Thinks that an increase in hatching operations would greatly benefit the fishing. A site for a hatching station at Port Stanley has been offered the Government, but it has not been accepted. It is supplied by a good stream, of mostly spring water, which empties into the lake about 1 mile below the port

entrance at Port Stanley. There is now one whitefish hatchery at Amherstburg. Would suggest the building of another at Port Stanley and 1 at Port Burwell.

The whitefish of lake Erie and lake Huron differ much. The former runs largest and sells better in the market; the latter is a slighter fish.

Here they begin putting down the stakes for the pound nets about April 15. Fishing begins the very latter part of April, and they begin to take herring at once. They are then taken through the entire season. Good fishing continues until into July. The best runs occur the latter part of June and in July. About first of August they begin to drop off, and they do not get good fishing again until about September 15 to 20, but this varies more or less in different years. The fishing keeps improving into the fall, the best fall fishing beginning about October 15. The herring are

taken most abundantly in his nets (fall fishery) during November.

He thinks the herring spawn even a little later than the whitefish, and that the height of the spawning season is in December, varying somewhat in time.

Herring are not as large in the spring as in the summer, but the difference is not great. They are larger in the fall than in the summer.

The shipping crates hold about 150 pounds. In the spring they put about 265 herring on an average into these crates, but in the fall they will hold only about 225.

He has not taken 100 pounds of cull fish this year (undersized fish). This, however, is quite unusual, and never happened before.

There is very little difference in the size of the herring taken at any one time of the year. They have run larger this year than usual. The largest herring he knows of

weighed $7 \frac{3}{4}$ pounds. It was caught during the summer about 7 years ago. There has been quite a sprinkling of large herring this year, averaging about $1 \frac{1}{4}$ pounds in weight. Could not distinguish these from the other herring except by size.

Never knew of cisco being taken about here

Begin to take pickerel as soon as the pounds are set in the spring, but do not get nearly as large quantities then as in October. There is only a sprinkling of them in the catch during the summer, The principal catches are made in September and October, ^{October} being the best month. They are less abundant in November.

Cannot see that there is any difference in the abundance of pickerel since he began fishing in 1880.

Pickerel and herring are not both caught abundantly together in the pounds at the same time. There is a great fluctuation in the catch of pickerel as of whitefish. Good

catches may sometimes continue for as long as one or two weeks, and then fall off for awhile. At times they are taken in immense quantities, and it is difficult to conceive where so many can come from.

There have been more yellow pickerel this year than he has ever known before. They ~~command~~ command a higher price than the blue pickerel.

Pickerel spawn the last of April and first of May. Seldom get spawning ones in the pounds, but take only a few pickerel in the spring. They are probably elsewhere spawning at this time. There are no marshy bays, between Long Point and Rondeau, such as pickerel prefer for spawning. There are bold shores all the way.

Between April 15 and May 15 is the close season for bass and pickerel, and all fish of these species taken in the pounds during that period have to be released. However, they take very few black bass here at any time of the year.

There is no sport fishing about Port Stanley except for perch on a very small scale. It is carried on mostly on the pier at the entrance to the harbor.

If it becomes necessary to stop fishing with pounds November 1, thinks that they should simply prohibit the landing of fish after that time, and allow them to take up their nets as soon thereafter as they can. Such a regulation would be obeyed, and it would allow them to fish through all of October which they will not be able to do now.

In case the number of pounds is limited, it should be to fix the number which can be set in a given area. It should not state how far apart they should be. It is not always convenient to place the nets at regular distances apart, and is often expedient to fish several near together, as before described.

They should be allowed to set the pounds as early in the spring as the circumstances

will allow. Should be made to observe the close season for bass and pickerel in the manner they do now. And then to land their nets by November 10, and not put them out again that year.

The distance from Long Point to Rondeau is about 85 to 90 miles. There are about 70 pounds now in this distance. Thinks that perhaps 100 pounds might safely be allowed to every 100 miles.

He has 12 men to tend his 14 pounds, and do all the work connected with the fishery, including the running of the steamer. They are paid from \$35. to \$45. a month, and are not occupied all the time.

The pound nets last from 2 to 3 years. Their cost complete and set is about \$400. each.

Ten pound nets can be worked as cheaply as 5.

A limit should be placed upon the number

of gill nets used, and upon the area covered by them. The tugs now cover the lake with these nets. The American tugs will fish from 1 to 5 miles of gill nets each. On the Canada side, however, the gill net fishing is all upon a small scale, using only small boats.

To restrict the use of gill nets properly would give the poor man a better chance, as extensive gill netting is now in the hands of wealthy firms.

Using gill nets, the tugs follow the fish in their migrations, and can destroy them more rapidly than by any other means. They reach them in all their haunts, and give them no chance to rest.

He would not think of attempting gill net fishing about Port Stanley himself. The fish so taken are not in such condition as those caught in pounds, and they are very inferior in appearance. They also lose much of the catch through bad weather.

Knows of no factories in this region where fish guano is made either from fish or fish offal. Some dead fish brought in by them is given to the farmers, but the amount is very small.

No offal is ever put into the lake in this region. Thinks it would be very bad for the fishing and should be prohibited all over the lake. Off Cleveland much of the fish is cleaned on the fishing grounds, and the offal thrown overboard. The city offal from Cleveland is also carried out in scows and dumped into the lake. At least one big scow-load a day is disposed of in this way.

All fish offal not disposed of in Port Stanley to the farmers is buried.

Two or three trials were made this year in July to substitute a 3 inch mesh in the pots of the pounds for the 2 inch mesh, the result being that a large number of small herring were meshed. A 2 inch mesh is the smallest that

should be allowed for this purpose.

Capt. Ellison believes thoroughly in protecting the small fish. No fishery should be allowed to retain or bring in fish below a certain size. A limit or standard should be made for each kind of fish, but what the limit ought to be could not be determined off-hand.

Young pickerel are the smallest fish they have to contend with in any numbers. These small fish are thrown out at once. They are hardy and will readily stand the necessary handling. Herring will also live to some extent if shaken out of the net at once.

See immense quantities of young herring, very small, mainly in the spring, and in June and July, but also during the balance of the year. They occur together in schools at the surface, about the pier and out in the lake.

Port Stanley, Ont., October 7, 1893.

A heavy southerly storm October 6 prevented the men here visiting their nets. During the night the gale was very severe from southwest, and very great damage was done to all the pounds, nets being torn and poles wrenched out.

Mr. Brown went out in his tug about noon and returned about 4:30 P. M. He took fish from 2 nets, but there were only between 3 and 4 boxes altogether. We had only a few minutes to examine them as they were shipped at 5:10 P. M.

The catch consisted chiefly of blue pickerel with relatively only a very small number of herring. All the fish were of marketable size.

There were also a very few yellow pickerel and 2 sand pickerel. The latter were rather

larger than both the blue and yellow pickerel, about 18 inches long, but looked very much like them. The color above was a clearer yellow than in the yellow pickerel.

There was one white bass about 9 inches long, apparently the same as the small bass we saw at Queenstown, in the Niagara River, but was not so heavily banded. There were several narrow, dark, horizontal bands above.

No other kinds of fish were contained in this lot.

The principal thing to note in this connection is the relatively large number of blue pickerel as compared with herring. This, though a single instance, bears out the statement of Capt. Ellison, that pickerel preponderate in the fall. This was not the case at Port Dover.