

Excerpt from the Brunswick Record, November 29, 1962

### Many Vessels Unloaded Fish At Cundy's Harbor's Busy Wharf

By Lorene R Kitchin and Marian W. Jordan

At the turn-of-the-century Cundy's Harbor was considered the busiest fishing port of its size in the state.

The salt fish plant, established by Robert Watson in 1854 and carried on by his son Sidney Watson until his death in 1896, was running at full capacity under the name of Watson Bros. in 1900. It was operated by the third generation brothers Robert S. Watson and Carr W. Watson.

Cod, hake, haddock and other ground fish unloaded at the wharf, were cleaned, split and packed in hogsheads filled with salt brine. These fish were then spread on drying racks, called flakes, in the open-air to be cured by the sun.

After this curing process the fish were shipped by freighter to the markets at Gloucester, Mass. In later years this drying process was eliminated and the fish were packed directly from the hogsheads into the ship's hold and then sent on to the market. This type of fish processing lasted until the late 1930s

At the height of the season, about 20 men were employed at the fish wharf.

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Two more general stores were active at Cundy's harbor. At the turn-of-the-century, William A. Trufant was located at the south end of the Harbor... the Trufant, firm also operated a salt fish processing plant during the late 1800s. Around 1905 E W Holbrook bought out this business and operated it until his death in 1954.

Brunswick Telegraph, June 23, 1865

CUNDY'S HARBOR. We drove to Cundy's Harbor on Monday, with a friend, fished, walked on the beach to the south of the house of Capt John Purinton, lunched tremendously, and had a most delightful day of it. We found Mr. Purinton shearing his sheep, and getting good fleeces, say from 4 to 6 lbs.

Our friend Trufant, it being Monday, the fishermen generally coming in on Saturday, we found much at leisure, though he has been quite busy this spring. The fish are not running near so numerously as last season, and the price is low compared with the prices of 1864. Mr. Trufant thinks the bottom has been reached. The firm have enlarged their works at the Harbor, fitting up an oil house, steam chest for porgies, kettles for boiling lobsters, and trying out oil. We saw piles of fish prepared for the Canada and Western New York Markets. For the first the fish were small haddock, and dried perfectly hard. For the second they were cod, salted – so that Lot's wife would be ashamed of herself – large and perfectly green. The people call these *fat* fish, because white and moist. What ninnies! The Harpswell fishermen ought to send a missionary among them to teach them better. Some six or eight vessels were lying in the harbor on Monday. The mackerel have recently struck in, but none have been taken with the hook as yet. Those captured were in the porgy nets.

The fields, many of them, we found loaded with grass, and it is very forward. We saw no cutting, although some farmers told us on Saturday, the farmers would have to commence this week.

One thing we must say, that if parties want the best mackerel, in the season of them, in August and September, they can find them at Watson & Co.'s, Cundy's Harbor. We know whereof we speak, for Trufant has supplied us with bloaters, the fattest and thickest ever bought.

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