

Greg Plancich

Annotated Bibliography

The Work of the Slavic Immigrant and Fisherman in the Pacific Northwest

The following annotated bibliography serves as a basis for a research project due to take place during spring quarter of 2009. This annotated bibliography discusses the lives and work of fishermen of the Pacific Northwest. Further, when possible, seeks to shine a light on the contribution of Slavic immigrants. The Slavic immigrants were often referred to by many different names including Croatians, Slavs, Slavo-Americans, and Austro-Hungarians, as Croatia and the Yugoslav Republic were a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until the end of World War I.

Boxberger, Daniel.

“Ethnicity and Labor in the Puget Sound Fishing Industry, 1880-1930.”

Ethnology 33 (1994).

This article, published in Ethnology in 1994, interestingly discusses the role of Lummi Indians during the first 50 years of the commercial salmon fishery of the Puget Sound. Further, Boxberger goes on to describe the development of the fishing industry, various fishing methods, and the fish processing skills of the Lummi.

Donchenko, Adele. Slavs In America. 1976.

Donchenko’s publication, despite its shortness, provides a fascinating sociological look at Slav immigrants and most importantly, case studies of various individuals. These case studies include details on the work that some of these Slavs did, and also includes, amongst the xenophobia of other references, information about the cultural identity of many Slavs.

At the time, Croatia was a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and as such, when immigrating to the United States, despite being ethnically Slavic, many immigrants would be classified as Austrians or Hungarians.

FPC Pennant. Pennant. Fishermen’s Packing Corporation.

This bright red pennant, emblazoned with a large, “F P C,” denoted a ship as belonging to Fishermen’s Packing Corporation. At the time of its founding there were only twenty-two pennants for the twenty-two boats, three years later, there was a 400% increase in number of boats and as such, more than eighty ships flying the FPC pennant.

Golden Glow Salmon Label. Label. Fishermen's Packing Corporation.

Despite no longer being able to sell salmon under the Ocean Spray brand, Fishermen's Packing Corporation was able to continue selling its wares under both the Golden Glow brand and the Waterfall Salmon Steak brands.

Green, Roger. South Slav Settlement in Western Washington : Perception and Choice.

San Francisco: R and E Research Associates, 1974.

Roger Green's book discusses in great detail the settlement patterns of the Slavs coming from Croatia and how those that came from Gorski Kotar typically settled in mining towns such as Roslyn or Cle Elum, whereas those coming from the Dalmatian coast (where my family is from), typically settled near water, such as Tacoma, Seattle, Anacortes, Everett, and Bellingham, and participated in commercial fishing.

Hassenoehri, RaeJean. Everett Fishermen. Mount Pleasant, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2008.

Everett Fishermen is one of the best resources I had when searching for information about local fishing, and more specifically, local fishing done by Croatians during the time. The greatest find in Everett Fishermen was the hard data and statistics about Fishermen's Packing Corporation, which many of the physical artifacts in this annotated bibliography are from.

Founded in 1928, Fishermen's Packing Corporation had twenty-two captains for its boats. Following a meteoric rise, by 1931, there were more than eighty captains for its boats and the cannery was valued at over \$250,000, which in 2007 dollars is \$3,374,785.43, a princely sum for a local company.

Joseph, Scott. "Smith's Iron Chink: One Hundred Years of the Mechanical Fish Butcher."

British Columbia History 2005. EBSCOhost.

<<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ahl&AN=A000585615.01&site=ehost-live>>.

This article by Joseph Scott goes further into the mechanics of how the Iron Chink works, describing the multiple wheels that are turned to turn the belts that move the fish along the machine and also the knives and blades that gut the fish.

Juricic, Zelimir. "First Croatian Fishermen on Vancouver Island." [Weblog Croatians.com]

June 2001. 13 Feb 2009

<http://croatians.com/FISH-GIG%20HARBOR-FISHERM.htm>.

Zelimir Juricic's article tells the story of Samuel Jerisich of the Dalmatian Coast who immigrated to the United States in 1867, developed a small fishing company, and helped found Gig Harbor; he preceded the next set of settlers to the area by fourteen years. On November 11, 1976, Jerisich Park was opened to the public in memorial of one of Gig Harbor's founding fathers.

King County. Census Bureau. King County Census 1883. 1883.

The census from 1883 (Washington becomes a state in 1889), shows us the very beginning of the mass wave of Slavic immigration to the United States and to Washington State. While the growth percentage wise for this year is in the single digits, it is only a sign of things to come.

King County. Census Bureau. King County Census 1910. 1910.

By this time, the wave of Slavic immigration to the United States began to subside and we find that out of the roughly 10 million people that immigrated to the US between 1899 and 1910, about 22% of those were of Slav nations.

Major, Richard. "Anti-Croatian Prejudice." Croatians.com. 8 August 1997. 13 Feb 2009

<http://croatians.com/FISH-FISH%20PREJUDICE.htm>.

This article, along with others, goes in depth about the racism that Slav immigrants experienced and brings up a specific incident that occurred over a five-year period from 1913 through 1918.

By 1913, Slav fishermen had become quite adept at a particular style of fishing along the Fraser River and it was assumed that a particularly poor Sockeye Salmon run that year was due to overfishing by "non-Anglo-Saxon Austrians," and later, in 1918, during World War I, the Washington State Fish Commissioner tried to bar Slavs from commercial fishing.

After lengthy legal battles, the Slavs won and were allowed to fish for salmon once again.

Years later, an independent commission sought to discover the cause of that year's precipitous drop in salmon population and it was discovered that due to railroad expansion further up the river, mud and rockslides blocked key parts of the river, making it unable for the salmon to get to their mating grounds.

Ocean Spray Salmon Label. Label. Fishermen's Packing Corporation.

This label is from a can of Ocean Spray Pink Salmon sold by Fishermen's Packing Corporation sometime in the early 1930s. Fishermen's Packing Corporation was sued by the Ocean Spray co-operative of cranberry fame, over a trademark dispute regarding the use of Ocean Spray. Despite Fishermen's Packing Corporation using Ocean Spray prior to the formation of the berry co-operative, the cooperative had grown to a larger size, and as such, seeing the damage that would come to the co-op's business, the judge ruled in Ocean Spray's favor and Fishermen's Packing Corporation could no longer sell salmon under the Ocean Spray name.

Petrich, Matthew. "Fishermen's Packing Corporation." [Weblog Croatians.com]

13 February 2009 <http://www.cratians.com/FISH-PACK%20CORP.htm>.

Matthew Petrich's article goes into deep detail about Fishermen's Packing Corporation, one of the larger fish canneries in the northwest. J. O. Morris founded the Everett Packing Company in 1913; he expanded his business into Alaska, where in 1916, a plant was built at Herendeen Bay. After returning back South, Morris and his partners opened the Nootka Packin Company on Vancouver Island.

In 1928, the fishermen that sold to Everett Packing Company, retained Morris as manager, and re-named the business as Fishermen's Packing Corporation. Morris had to relinquish his posts at the other packing companies.

In 1937, Fishermen's Packing Corporation purchased Booth Fisheries in Anacortes and moved the company headquarters there.

Petrich, Matthew. "Fishermen's Packing Corporation Stockholders."

[Weblog Croatians.com] 13 February 2009

www.croatians.com/1aFISH%20PACKING%20MEMBERS%20LIST.htm.

Petrich also provides a list of the initial seventy-seven stockholders of Fishermen's Packing Corporation and by taking a look through the list, it seems as if most, if not all, are of Slavic descent.

Also, one of the founding members was a Vinc Plancich, who was father of my grandfather's brother.

Unknown Creator. Champion Fishing Vessel. Seattle.

This photo depicts a fishing vessel named *Champion* and offers us a glimpse of how fishing boats were designed and built during the 1930s. With a diesel motor and a large, flat area on the stern of the boat, *Champion* and other fishing vessels were able to move with relative speed and, using that large area at the back of the boat, would be able to pull in and empty their nets and carry a considerable amount of fish.

Unknown Creator. Fishermen In Anacortes. Seattle.

This photo shows a port in Anacortes, WA, shows a number of men on a dock, surrounded by boats and fishing net strewn all along the ground. With this, we can begin to get a sense of what it was like to work in the fishing industry and the hard, tedious work that goes along with it.

Unknown Creator. Man With Fish. Seattle.

This photo, taken during at some point in the 1930s shows, in a lighthearted manner, some of the work that those working in the fishing industry experienced. This young man is holding, by the gills, a fish that is nearly his size. Having to net, unload, and gut hundreds of fish of that size each day, would likely not only make a man strong very quickly, but would also wear out his back and body just as quickly.

Webster, Edward. "Fishing in the Olympics." Evening News [Port Angeles] 1923

Webster's article in the Evening News, discusses the various types of fish that school in the Pacific Northwest and their migratory patterns. In turn, we are able to use this information to predict when and where the peak of the fishing season will be, allowing for a larger haul.

Wilma, David. "Automated Salmon Cleaning Machine Developed in Seattle in 1903."

HistoryLink.org. 1 January 2000. 15 Feb 2009

<http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&File_Id=2109>.

This article discusses the creation of the "Iron Chink," and automated fish cleaner and gutter that was developed by a Seattle inventor in 1903. Edmund Smith, the inventor of the Iron Chink, was an investor in several small fish canning businesses in the Seattle area. Becoming obsessed with a way to automate the process of cleaning and gutting fish, Smith's machine was able to clean 110 fish a minute instead of the two per minute that could be done by an experienced worker.

Wtulich, Josephine.

American Xenophobia and the Slav Immigrant: A Living Legacy of Mind and Spirit. Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1994.

Wtulich's book delves into detail about the immigration patterns of those emigrating from Yugoslavia to the United States and the racism and discrimination that they were subject to, particularly by Anglo-Saxons that had immigrated there years prior and had began to develop communities already. This was particularly prevalent out west, where Slavs began work in mines and fisheries.