



THE NEW BEDFORD FISHING INDUSTRY INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS (Underlined words are in the Glossary)

Introducing The Port of New Bedford

The port of New Bedford is one of our nation's major fishing ports today. For several years, it has been the number one port in terms of how much money the catch is worth.

New Bedford's fishing fleet is housed in New Bedford Harbor. The city of New Bedford is on the west side of the harbor. The towns of Fairhaven and Acushnet are on the harbor's east and north. New Bedford Harbor is at the mouth of the Acushnet River, where the water from the river meets the Atlantic Ocean. This area is called an estuary. Here, the fresh water of the flowing river mixes with the salt water of the ocean tides.

New Bedford Harbor has a hurricane barrier with a 150 foot gate. It was built by the Army Corps of Engineers in the 1960s. The gate lets boats pass through. But when there is a threat of a hurricane or other bad storm, the gate is closed to protect the fishing fleet, the docks, and the town from a storm surge. Storm surges have badly damaged the harbor area in the past.

Read the questions. Underline or circle the answers in the text, or write the answers in the space. Use the extra space to take notes.

What is the port of New Bedford's rank in terms of the worth of the catch?

Identify three facts about New Bedford Harbor.

How does the hurricane barrier work?



Fishing in New Bedford: A Brief History

New Bedford is an ideal place for commercial fishing (catching fish to sell it), and this has always been a part of New Bedford's history in some way. New Bedford has a long seafaring history. In the past, New Bedford has also been a farming and industrial community. At different times in New Bedford's history, the fishing industry has supported shoreside businesses (businesses on land that are related to fishing). Today, commercial fishing supports many shoreside industries.

Subsistence farming and fishing

The earliest peoples probably fished in the estuary and did subsistence farming. They caught, grew or made most of what they needed to live.

Native peoples were the area's first inhabitants. They probably hunted and planted. They probably also harvested the estuary's great supply of fish, shellfish, birds, and marine mammals. By the 1600s, Native peoples who lived near the coast also traded with European seafarers.

The earliest European settlers arrived in the mid-1600s. They cleared the land they needed for their crops and livestock. They probably also fished the estuary.

What is "commercial fishing"?

What do you call a business on land that is related to fishing?

What does "subsistence" mean?

Which groups of people probably practiced subsistence farming and fishing?



Whaling

Gradually, seafaring became important in New Bedford. Whaling was the first major maritime industry. It lasted from about 1750 to 1900. Along with it came the related activities of shipbuilding and trading. Shoreside businesses also grew. Oil processing businesses refined whale oil. People used whale oil in lamps and other products. Metal-working businesses made items that the whaling ships needed, such as ship bells and sheathing to protect the boats.

Whaling reached its peak in 1857. That year, 329 ships were registered in New Bedford. Several factors led to the decline of whaling. One of these was the 1859 discovery in Pennsylvania of petroleum. People started using this instead of whale oil. Also, in the early 1900s people started using spring steel and other products instead of the boney baleen from some whales. Baleen was used for products such as hoops in women's skirts, hat frames, umbrella ribs, and fishing rods. In 1927, the schooner *John R. Manta* brought in the last whaling cargo.

Textile industry

Textile manufacturing replaced whaling as New Bedford's major industry from about 1880 to 1940. This industry's decline resulted from causes such as mills moving south, a mill workers' strike in 1928, and the Great Depression of the early 1930s.

What years were whaling important in New Bedford?

What whale product did people use in lamps?

There are 329 whaling ships in New Bedford. What year is it?

What were two factors that led to whaling's decline?

What years was the textile industry important in New Bedford?



The commercial fishing fleet

During the mid-1900s, several changes helped expand New Bedford's commercial fishing fleet. Boats switched from sails to motors. Improved diesel engines allowed for a safe journey to Georges Bank. This area has a great supply of fish. It is about 175 miles northeast of Cape Cod.

Being able to fish on George's Bank was important for people's livelihoods. Harriet Didriksen, a worker at New Bedford Ship Supply, recalled that her great uncle and her father, both from Norway, preferred to live in New York. But they moved to New Bedford because it was closer to Georges Bank. (*Working Waterfront Exhibit, New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park*)

Trucking and refrigeration

There was another important change around 1940. Before this, New Bedford's fishing vessels went to New York to sell their catch. But then trucks started transporting the catch. The fishing vessels could bring their catch to New Bedford and go back out sooner to catch more fish. Fisherman Daniel F. Mullins recalls:

We would go to Georges Bank...and steam back to New York;...because you couldn't sell the fish here, see. Well Bill Eldridge...started using a truck.... We had talked before about how some day the boats would be able to land fish in New Bedford, but we never thought trucks were the answer.

*Working Waterfront Exhibit,
New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park, Courtesy
Spinner Publications, Inc.*

Also at this time, refrigeration came in and a freezer plant was built. This made it easier to process fish at the port.

What were two changes that helped expand the fishing fleet?

Why did people want to fish at Georges Bank?

How did trucking change New Bedford's fishing industry?



Seafood auction

These changes in technology allowed fishermen to sell their fish locally. This led to a major development in New Bedford's fishing industry. At first, each boat's captain would sell the catch by going to different fish houses to find the best price. Then about 1941, the first seafood auction was started.

With the auction, the people selling the fish and the people buying it all came to the same place. There were very specific rules and strict time limits for bidding on the fish. The auction became very popular. In September 1947, the city added space for the auction to the Wharfinger Building at the harbor.

The auction had a chalkboard for marking the bids. On busy days, as many as three auctioneers stood at the chalkboard. They marked the bids using special auction lingo to help them write fast and keep up. For example, they would write "YT" for yellowtail flounder and a single initial for each bidder. At that time, the catch stayed on the boats until it was sold. Some boat captains were known as highliners. A highliner had a reputation for bringing back a quality catch. Their catch would bring the highest bids.

The bidding lasted just so long. Before it closed, boat captains had a chance to refuse bids that were too low. They would keep their catch on the boat, hoping for a better price the next day.

How did selling fish locally affect New Bedford's fishing industry?

What city building housed the seafood auction?

What is an example of auction lingo?

What is a "highliner"?

True or False: People could keep bidding at the seafood auction for as long as they liked.



The auction was fast-paced and packed with people. But only certain people were allowed in during bidding. At times there was a police officer on duty to keep everything under control. John F. Linehan, who was General Manager of New Bedford Seafood Producers Association from 1951-1959, recalls:

People who come in here from the outside think, "This is chaos." Well it wasn't. It was organized chaos, but everyone knew what he was doing.

*Working Waterfront Exhibit,
New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park,
Courtesy Spinner Publications, Inc.*

Once the auction closed for the day, the boats went to the fish houses that bought their catch and to offload it. Offloading is done by workers called lumpers. Lumpers are another important part of the fishing industry.

In 1985, there was a bitter strike between fishermen and boat owners. This ended the auction. Private sales took over, even though the city, boat owners, and the lumpers tried to revive it at different times.

Then in 1994, brothers Raymond and Richard Canastra of Fairhaven established the Whaling City Seafood Display Auction. In a display auction, vessels offload the catch into coolers. This lets buyers see the catch.

The display auction went electronic in 1997. Faxes and computers replaced the chalkboards. Today, the display auction is an important part of the fishing industry in the port of New Bedford and Southern New England.

How would you describe the auction atmosphere?

What is offloading?

Why did the auction close in 1985?

How does today's auction work?

What technology change happened at the auction in 1997?



Changes in technology

The auction was one change to the fishing industry in the last part of the twentieth century. There were also others. There have been many changes in technology.

Boats today take bigger catches than they used to. And they use fewer crew than before. Boats now use electronic fish finders to see the bottom. This makes it easier to find the fish. There have also been innovations in the way nets are made.

For a long time, the barometer was the instrument of choice for tracking the weather. Today, boats have computers and radios for this.

New electronics have allowed fishermen to communicate better with their family while away at sea. Kirsten Bendiksen tells how she let her husband Reidar know that their son was born while Reidar was at sea:

When Tor was born, I couldn't call him [Reidar] on the telephone. I had to put a message over AM radio, and it was heard by everyone, not just boats: 'And we have news for Captain Reidar. He has a son.' I wondered if he was even listening. I didn't know.

*Reidar and Kirsten Bendiksen Oral History,
Working Waterfront Festival, September 26, 2004*

The same instruments that now help fishermen communicate also let the government track them at sea. These work by GPS (Global Positioning System). By federal law, fishing vessels have to have these now.

Everyone in the harbor now has this tracking device. Government is always watching, every half hour to forty-five minutes, putting a fix on you, just what you're doing where you are. *Fisherman Oral History, Working Waterfront Festival, September 25, 2004*

What technology changes have taken place in the fishing industry?

What did boats use to track the weather before computers and radios?

How do you think it felt for a fisherman to learn about important family news this way?



Regulations

In the last part of the 1900s, government regulation became a big part of the fishing industry story. Fishermen often mention two laws that have had a big effect on the fishing industry.

The first law was the Magnuson Act of the 1970s. It was created because foreign “factory ships” were coming to Georges Bank and catching huge amounts of fish. The U.S. vessels could not compete. They thought it was unfair that foreign ships could fish so close to the U.S. Before this law, foreign ships could not come within three nautical miles of U.S. land. The law increased this to 200 miles.

Later, new laws were created to build up the ocean’s fish stocks. The Sustainable Fisheries Act (SFA) was created for this purpose in 1996. It replaced the Magnuson Act.

To build up the fish stocks, the laws put strict rules in place. There are rules about where vessels can fish, how many vessels can have a license to fish, the number of crew on the vessel, and the number of days they can stay out fishing.

These newer laws have made it harder for fishermen to make a living. Some boats have gone out of business. This has hurt other businesses, such as gear manufacturers that supply the boats. Fishing vessels face large fines if they don’t follow the laws. But it can also be very hard to keep up with changes in the laws.

Today, people from inside and outside of fishing are working together. They want to keep the oceans full of fish, and also keep the fishing industry going. As fishermen will tell you, they are not just fishing to make a living for themselves and their family. They are fishing to feed people back on land.

What is a regulation?

What problem led to creation of the Magnuson Act?

What is the purpose of the Sustainable Fisheries Act?

What are some rules fishermen must follow today?

How could a law limiting fishing affect a business on land?

What are people working together to do today?



Change and continuity

In the face of many changes, some things about fishing have remained much the same:

- Fishermen and their families still regret that they must miss special family times to be at sea.
- Vessels may be less likely to be caught off-guard by storms than before. But being out in a bad storm is still something to avoid. And it's hard to forget if it happens.
- Today's vessels no longer need wind to move. But captains must still keep an eye on the wind for safety.
- Families on land still lose loved ones to the sea. They know this is possible with every trip.
- Fishermen come home from sea exhausted. At sea, they cannot keep the kind of regular work and sleep schedule that most people on land have.
- No matter how good the catch is on any trip, there is never a guarantee. The tide of good fortune can turn at any time.

Despite the hardships, many fishermen feel a strong connection to the sea and to fishing as a way of life. Deb Shrader is the director of an organization called Shore Support. She interviewed fishermen for a community study. One question she asked was why they stayed in fishing. They always said: "Because it's my life."

Rodney Avila is a fisherman and industry representative. He says there is "a sense of freedom when you're out there."

Jimmy Dwyer is a fisherman and lumper. For him: "It's a way of life. When I started it got into my veins, the saltwater."

What are some hardships that fishing involves?

How does Jimmy Dwyer express that fishing is a part of him?



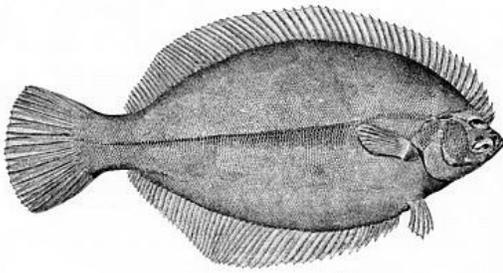
New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center

Seafood: Which Fish Is This?

Fishing vessels in the port of New Bedford fish for two main types of seafood:

- bottom-feeding fish, also known as ground fish (such as flounder, cod, and haddock)
- shellfish (mostly sea scallops).

The ***blackback flounder*** is also known as the winter flounder or lemon sole. It is one of the most common flounder species caught along America's North Atlantic coast:



Northeast Fisheries Science Center, NOAA Image

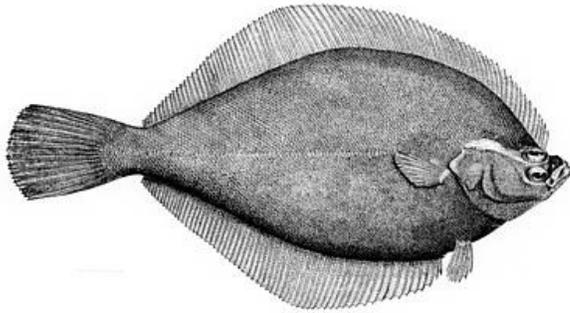
It is a "right-eyed" fish—both eyes are on the right side of the head.

What are the two main types of seafood the New Bedford fleet catches?

What do you call a fish with both eyes on the right side of its head?



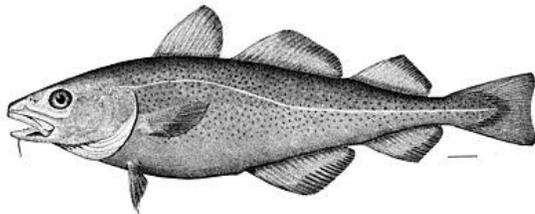
The yellowtail flounder is also caught today:



Northeast Fisheries Science Center, NOAA Image

At one time, yellowtail were not considered worth selling. They were thrown overboard.

Cod, or Atlantic cod, is easily recognized by the “barbell” beneath its chin:



Northeast Fisheries Science Center, NOAA Image

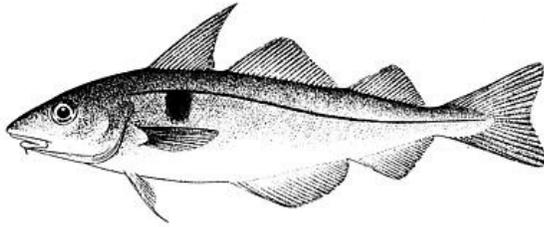
Cod is one of the most widely known food fish. It is sold under common names such as *rock cod*, *codling*, and *scrod cod*.

How have attitudes about yellowtail flounder changed?

Identify a distinguishing mark of a cod.



Haddock is very similar to cod, but smaller and with a more delicate flavor:



Northeast Fisheries Science Center, NOAA Image

Haddock is often sold with the skin still on, to tell it apart from cod. Haddock has a distinct black mark called "the devil's thumbprint."

How are haddock and cod different?

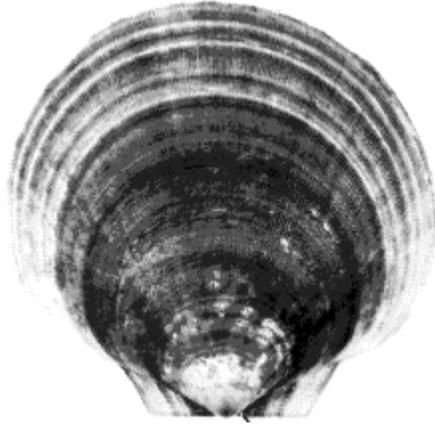
What is the "devil's thumbprint"?

Sketch one of the four fish shown above. See if someone comparing your sketch to the above pictures can identify it correctly:



New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center

Sea scallops have a smooth shell and are usually about 4 to 6 inches across:



Northeast Fisheries Science Center, NOAA Image

As on a tree, each ring on a scallop shell marks a year of age. Most sea scallops are caught in about 150 to 250 feet of water.

Once scallops are on the boat, the fishermen pick the pile. A major part of the work on board is shucking the scallops, done by hand on New Bedford's boats:



*Working Waterfront Festival 2004
John K. Robson Photos*

The scallop shells and all other parts that are not eaten are thrown back into the water.

How big are most scallops?

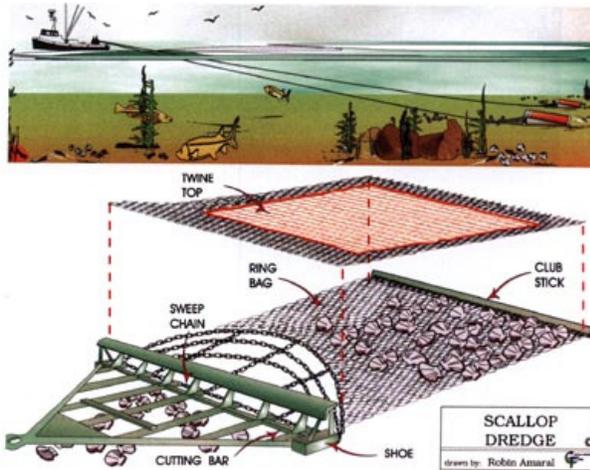
How can you tell a scallop's age?

True or False: Scallops are shucked on New Bedford's boats by special machines.



Scallopers are vessels that harvest sea scallops. Most scallop vessels pull two *scallop dredges* along the ocean floor. There is one dredge on each side. The *sweep chain* sweeps the scallops into the *ring bag*. The undersized scallops then fall back out through the regulation-sized rings.

**SMOLOWITZ
FIGURE 2
(page 48)**
The New Bedford style scallop dredge, with top removed for illustration. Drawing by Robin Amaral.



What do you call the nets on a scalloper?

Name two parts of a scallop dredge. What does each do?



Shoreside Marine Businesses: The Commercial Fishing Industry on Land

The fishing vessel bringing back the catch is the most visible part of the industry. It is the industry's core. But commercial fishing also involves many shoreside businesses. The dollar value of the catch is one important way that commercial fishing supports the local economy. Shoreside businesses are another.

To find out what shoreside businesses there are, scan a local marine newspaper for the advertisements. Or walk around the waterfront area. You can learn about businesses such as these:

- vessel construction, maintenance and repair
- vessel provisions such as food, ice, and fuel
- nets and other gear for fishing vessels
- clothing for fishermen
- electronic communication systems for fishing vessels
- the seafood display auction (daily results are published in the *Standard-Times*)
- trucking
- fish processing (including cutting and packing)
- fish markets and seafood restaurants.

What are two ways the fishing industry supports the local economy?

Pick one of these types of work. Write a sentence giving a specific example of what you think the work involves.



You can also learn a great deal about shoreside businesses by taking a virtual tour of their Web sites. Here are some examples:

- Whaling City Seafood Display Auction
www.whalingcityauction.com
- Reidar's Manufacturing Inc.
Net mending, trawl construction
and other gear
www.reidarsmfg.com
- D.N. Kelley & Son Shipyard
www.dnkelley.com
- Grunden's Quality Foulweather Gear
www.grundens.com
- BOATRACS® Maritime Satellite Communication
www.boatracs.com

If you want to describe to someone else just how much the fishing industry really involves, you can start by quoting fishermen and industry writer Dan Orchard: "The fishing community doesn't end at the boat. There's a whole world out there."

Take notes about these and/or other shoreside businesses you learn about. Include the name and Web site or other contact information.



Issues for Today

The fishing community today must face many issues in order to keep the industry alive and thriving.

Sustainability and collaboration

To sustain something means to keep it alive and healthy. Today, the fishing industry is working to:

- sustain a healthy ocean environment, along with the fish stocks that depend on it
- sustain the fishing industry, which provides a living for fishermen and their families, as well as food for people on land.

Collaboration means to work with others. The industry today is collaborating with many groups. Fishermen and other industry representatives take part in discussions about how best to manage the ocean's fish stocks. There, everyone shares their point of view on the ocean and its supplies of fish. Fishing vessels host researchers at sea.

The groups the industry works with include researchers who care about the sea and fishing. The industry also works with government agencies, such as the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Here are some examples:

- SMAST—The School for Marine Science and Technology, University of Mass. at Dartmouth
SMAST works with the scallop industry to do underwater video surveys of sea scallops
www.smast.umassd.edu
- NOAA's Office of Sustainable Fisheries
www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/sfweb
- Sustainable Fisheries Division of NOAA's Northeast Fisheries Science Center
www.nero.noaa.gov/sfd

What does it mean to sustain something?

Identify two current issues of sustainability.

What word means working with others?

What are some groups the fishing industry is working with today?



There are also other ways that people are collaborating to sustain the fishing industry. One example is **The Fishing Partnership**, a non-profit organization with offices in Gloucester and New Bedford which works to support the health and well-being of fishing families here in New England. Since the organization was founded back in 1997, that support has taken different forms. Today, the Fishing Partnership works to connect members with a broad range of professional counseling services, provide assistance with health insurance applications, and offer safety and survival trainings and other special health-oriented events for fishing families.

There is another important aspect of sustainability: youth involvement in the fishing industry. Traditionally, fishing has been a living passed down from generation to generation. But today, there are more laws regulating fishing and more expenses related to owning a boat. These laws and expenses add pressures to the challenges that have always been a part of fishing. The ocean is moody. It can go quickly from being calm to being rough and raging. It can produce wildly varying yields—with a great catch on one trip and next to nothing on the next. Today's fishermen cannot be as sure that their child's best choice would be to make their living the way their parent did.

At a presentation to teachers and others in May 2005, Richie Canastra of the Whaling City Seafood Display Auction expressed just how critical it is to face these issues, so fishing in New Bedford won't become just a memory: "You're sitting in the Whaling Museum. I don't want to see you sitting in the Fishing Museum."

Why do fishermen need other people to speak up for them?

What pressures today add to the challenges that have always been a part of fishing?

Do you think New Bedford should have a fishing museum? Why or why not?



Safety at sea

Safety at sea is always a major concern. Fishermen today have many more ways to ensure safety than in the past.

Fishing vessels now have radios and other electronics. If a fishing vessel is in trouble, these can get help there faster—or make sure help gets there at all.

In the scary event of having to abandon ship, there are survival suits and life rafts. A survival suit can be put on quickly. The suits are full-body suits. They are insulated and sealed, so the icy water can't get in.

Today, a fisherman's job includes knowing how to use equipment. This involves training and practicing. Boat owners and captains must have a wide range of knowledge to maintain today's fishing vessels.

The United States Coast Guard (USCG) works to ensure fishing vessel safety. In 1988, Congress created the Fishing Vessel Dockside Safety Exam Program. Fishing vessels can have a thorough inspection before they leave the dock. This helps improve safety at sea, and gives crews a better chance of surviving in an emergency. The vessel also gets a drill package, to help crew stay familiar with emergency procedures.

Kevin Coyle works in the USCG New Bedford field office. He is the Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Coordinator. Kevin emphasizes that safety involves collaborating: "Fishermen can rely on the Coast Guard to do everything within its control to come to the rescue when in harm's way, but fishermen must ensure they are doing everything within their control to keep themselves out of harm's way." Coyle says the local industry's participation in the program is among the highest in the country. He is proud of this record, and eager to see it continue.

How has the ability to stay safe at sea changed over time?

True or False: With today's technology, fishing vessels never have to worry about having trouble at sea.

What does USCG stand for?

What roles do the Coast Guard and fishermen play in safety at sea?



Ethnic Heritage

People all over the globe feel a connection to the sea. Many make their living from it.

New Bedford has been a successful port for a long time. So it is has attracted many people hoping for a better life.

Today, New Bedford's fishing industry is made up of people from many different ethnic groups (people who share a background, such as country of origin). Some groups have a long legacy in the area. Others have come just recently.

In 1980, The United Fishermen's Wives of New Bedford published a recipe book, *Fish is our Dish*. They talked about the diversity of their group:

Our fishing families come from many backgrounds: New England Yankee, Canadian, Irish, Portuguese and Scandinavian.

More recently, other ethnic groups have also joined the industry. Along with the skills that New Bedford's workers use day-to-day, they bring traditions of their ethnic background. They bring stories, songs, recipes, and other traditions. These have enriched New Bedford's history. They continue to enrich life in the area today.



NASA image

What is one reason that New Bedford has attracted so many ethnic groups?

What are some of New Bedford's ethnic groups?

What are some traditions that people of an ethnic group share?



New England Yankee

The area's Yankee population goes back to the earliest English settlers. Some of New Bedford's fishermen today know of ancestors who were part of the whaling era:

I wasn't born here, but my ancestry goes back to whaling days in New Bedford on my father's side, and we traveled all the time down here as kids. We used to see all the fishing boats... I went to school for commercial fisheries, marine technology. My first experience on a boat was in spring 1970. I went back and completed school in 1971, then found a full-time site on a dragger in New Bedford. I've been here ever since.

*Fisherman Oral History,
Working Waterfront Festival,
September 25, 2004*

Irish

Buildings, such as churches that were built by different groups, can show us about the history of ethnic groups in New Bedford. In the early 1800s, Irish people came to the area. This was taken from an article published in the *Evening Standard* in 1887:

A half-century often makes great changes. [Fifty years ago] there were mere handfuls of Irish in New Bedford and they worshipped in a little wooden church on Allen Street... In 1887 [there is] a fine stone church and chapel, three substantial wooden churches, three parsonages, three parochial school buildings and a hospital.

*The Irish in New Bedford: History of Irish Catholic Churches,
The Weekly Compass, March 10, 2005*

What group of people are Yankees descended from?

What buildings in New Bedford tell us about Irish people coming to the city?



Canadian

People from Canada also came to New Bedford. Many came from Canada's island of Newfoundland. Often, their ethnic background was Irish or from other countries of the British Isles.

Myra Lopes speaks of her pride in her family's Newfoundland fishing heritage:

The people who lived in Newfoundland, the whole community was an Irish group. They carried their tradition when they came here. I think they kept their own ethnic group—dances, church, corned beef dinner....The Newfoundlanders are extremely proud of their heritage. We were brought up to have great pride in the fact that my father was a fisherman.

*Myra Lopes Oral History,
Working Waterfront Festival,
September 25, 2004*

Can you name all the provinces of Canada?

Write them here:

What country is Newfoundland in?

What are some traditions that people from Newfoundland continued after coming to New Bedford?



Norwegian

In the twentieth century, many people came to the United States from Norway. Today many people of Norwegian background are part of New Bedford's scalloping industry.

Norwegians came from their homeland's shores and islands. Author Astrid Tollefsen wrote a book about New Bedford's Norwegian fishermen and families. She collected oral histories from people so she could tell their story. The book is called *Following the Waters*. It talks about why so many people left Norway:

The North Sea fish supply can be unreliable, and those who made their livelihood from the sea most often emigrated at times when fishing was poor in Norwegian waters.

Tollefsen, p. 10

When people come to a new world, ties with their home country can remain strong. Norwegians had a practice that some people called "pendling." This was named for the back-and-forth swing of a clock's pendulum. (Norwegians would say "forth and back".) "Pendling" described how many Norwegian people would keep leaving Norway and coming back again: "Almost all emigrants return to Norway whether to live or visit" (Tollefsen, p. 10).

Even later generations can feel this bond to a family's country of origin. This is how Astrid Tollefsen feels:

Today two houses stand defiantly against wind and weather in two different countries—near two different seas—with two different histories. Yet, they are eternally intertwined, because they have both provided the setting for the lives of our ancestors.

Tollefsen, p. 1

Which part of the fishing industry are many Norwegians involved in?

What parts of Norway did people leave in the 20th century?

What caused people to leave Norway at this time?

True or False: People who go to a new country always adapt to the new ways and forget about their old country.

Identify the phrase that says these two houses will always have some connection to each other.



Cape Verdean

There are also many people in New Bedford from the country of Cape Verde. Many work as longshoremen, unloading freight from cargo ships.

Cape Verde is a group of islands west of Senegal, Africa. For centuries, Cape Verde was a colony of Portugal. There were many droughts in Cape Verde in the second half of the 1900s. Many Cape Verdeans had to leave. Patricia J. Rodrigues is the author of *Cape Verdean Voyages*, a collection of oral histories with people from Cape Verde. She says that they are “longing for the memories of the past while hoping for a brighter future.” She says Cape Verdeans keep a strong bond with their homeland:

My parents, grandparents, and extended family have always shared their stories about immigration and of their lives in Cape Verde with me. ... Despite the assimilating aspects of immigration, Cape Verdeans often maintain their identities abroad.

Rodrigues, Author's Note

The Schooner Ernestina is also a symbol of the region's ties with Cape Verde. It is housed in New Bedford Harbor today. In the 1950s and 1960s, Ernestina was a Cape Verdean packet ship.

The ship carried people and cargo back and forth between Cape Verde and the U.S. Because of the packet ships, Cape Verdeans could live and work for years in the U.S., and still keep strong ties to their home island.



What does a longshoreman do?

Where is Cape Verde?

“Assimilating” means to adapt to a new place or way of life. Does the author think people can assimilate and still keep their identity from the country they came from?

What former Cape Verdean packet ship is in New Bedford Harbor today?



Portuguese

Many people from Portugal also crossed the Atlantic to come to New Bedford. Many came in the whaling era from Portugal's Azores. The Azores are a group of nine islands that were common stopping points for whaling ships. More recently, many Portuguese people came from the mainland, from fishing villages on the coast. Portuguese people used their maritime skills for fishing in America. Today, many people of Portuguese background do ground fishing.

There are many Portuguese restaurants in New Bedford today. This is one sign that people of Portuguese background live in the area.

Another sign is the traditional music that can be heard. Many ethnic groups bring music of their homeland when they come to a new place.

Ana and Jose Vinagre, who performed at the 2004 Working Waterfront Festival, are two people who carry on the tradition of Portuguese Fado music. This music was developed in the port of Lisbon, Portugal. It was performed at waterfront clubs and in bars that sailors and seamen went to. Ana is one of the area's best known Fadistas (performers of Fado music). She was born in Portugal and came to New Bedford as a young woman with her husband Jose. They take great pride in their culture. They like to perform and to teach American audiences about Fado music.

St. Michael is an island in the Azores that some of the area's people come from. During the 2004 Working Waterfront Festival, New Bedford fisherman Victor Pereira talked about the differences between fishing in New Bedford and in his home island of St. Michael. Victor missed the colorful, handcrafted fishing boats that the island's fishermen used (oral history interview, 9/26/04).

What are the two areas that people of Portuguese background come from?

What are some signs that people of Portuguese background live in the New Bedford area?

What do you call a performer of Fado music?

Name an island in the Azores that some people in the New Bedford area come from.



Guatemalan Mayan

Mayan people from Guatemala are some of the area's newest residents. Many work in the fish processing plants.

Guatemala is a country in Central America, between the North Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. Mayans are the native peoples of Guatemala. The Mayan civilization flourished in Guatemala and areas around it for the first thousand years A.D. Guatemala became a Spanish colony for almost three centuries. It gained its independence in 1821.

As with other ethnic groups, Mayans have brought with them a rich musical tradition. Miguel Lucas and Andres Sam, two musicians and fishing industry workers, have an interesting story. Other immigrants may have similar stories. Miguel is from the town of San Andres Sajcabaja in the department of Quiche, Guatemala. There, he and Andres started performing music together as children. They lost touch as they grew up, but both ended up in New Bedford years later. They began playing music together again.

Miguel and Andres formed a musical group called Grupo Caliente. The group plays Guatemalan Mayan Conjunto music. Miguel describes the different kinds of music they play as a combination of Cumbia, Marimba Chichi, TexMex and popular Mexican.

An evolving community

New Bedford's maritime resources continue to offer the chance for a good livelihood, and the fishing community continues to change as new people come to do the hard work this type of work demands. Today, Vietnamese, Polish, and West Indian people are among some of the industry's newer members.

What country are many Mayan people in the New Bedford area from?

Identify the civilization that flourished in Guatemala for the first thousand years A.D.

Where in Guatemala is Miguel Lucas from?

What kinds of music does Grupo Caliente play?



From the Ocean to the Plate: Foodways

After the boat brings the fish into port, the lumpers have offloaded it, and it has left the auction house, it continues its journey to the plate.

Along the way, there are people who process and sell the fish. There are also people who cook it—women and men, in homes, restaurants, and galleys. These people can share a great store of knowledge about this final part of the fish's journey.

There are many terms for **marketed fish**. These can help you learn what might become of the fish next:

- **Whole**—as it comes from the water; must be scaled and cleaned before cooking
- **Dressed**—scales and entrails (internal parts) removed, and usually head and tail

- **Fillets**—sides of fish cut lengthwise from backbone; no bone; ready to cook



*Working Waterfront
Festival 2004
John K. Robson Photo*

- **Steaks**—cross section of fish with backbone; ready to cook
- **Chunks**—cross sections of large dressed fish with backbone; no other bone; ready to cook
- **Raw breaded fish portions**—cut from frozen fish blocks; coated with batter, breaded and packaged; ready to cook
- **Fried fish portions**—cut from frozen fish blocks; coated with batter, breaded and cooked before being packaged and frozen; ready to heat and serve

What is the fish's journey from start to finish?

Who are some people involved in the fishing industry on land?

What are some ways to prepare fish for market?



Knowing the many methods for **cooking fish** also gives you an idea of how it might end up:

- **Frying**—deep fat frying, pan frying, and oven frying
- **Planking**—baked on an oiled, preheated plank or a greased baking dish
- **Poaching**—simmered in a shallow pan of poaching liquid
- **Steaming**



*Working Waterfront Festival 2004
John K. Robson Photos*

(Fish is our Dish, p. 6)

Storing fish also has its special techniques. The two main ways today help us see the importance that technological developments have had in daily life:

- **Refrigeration**—in original wrapper, for up to a day or two
- **Freezing**—for up to six months raw, three months cooked. *(Fish is our Dish, p. 7)*

Before refrigerators and freezers, people often preserved fish by drying and salting. Helen Hillier's recipe for "Fisherman's Fish and Brewis," very popular in Newfoundland, calls for "1 box salt fish (dried)" *(Fish is our Dish, p. 49)*.

Florence Mullins' recipe for "Pickled Fish" tells us that people might have used canning to preserve fish. This recipe involved:

- putting strips of fish in a jar, alternating it with pickling spices and sliced onions
- pouring a mixture of vinegar, water, and spices over the fish. *(Fish is our Dish, p. 12)*

True or False: Planking is a method of cooking fish.

Why don't people salt or dry fish as much as they used to?

Have you ever had pickled fish? If not, would you like to try it? Why or why not?



The recipe above called “Fisherman’s Fish and Brewis” also shows us how recipes can teach us about **culture and ethnic background**. The names of different dishes show us that many different ethnic groups use the same food source to create dishes traditional to their own group:

- New England Fish Chowder
- Scallops Gone Yankee
- Newfoundland Fish Pudding
- Norwegian Baked Pollock
- Norwegian Fish Cakes
- Bacalhau (Portuguese salt cod)
- Portuguese Potluck Stew

Recipes can also give you a **math challenge**. For example:

Imagine you are working as chef in a restaurant, and you need to make four times the recipe below. The ingredients listed are for six servings. How much of each ingredient would you need?

New England Fish Chowder

| | |
|---|---|
| 2 lbs. haddock or almost any good fish | 1/8 tsp. thyme |
| 1/4 lb. salt pork | 4 potatoes (peeled and diced) |
| 1/2 c. diced onion | 1/2 qt. half milk and half light cream |

Fish is our Dish, p. 25

The people of New Bedford’s fishing industry have so much to teach us, and so many ways to do it. They can teach us through their recipes, stories of their fishing trips, and demonstrations of their skills. They can teach us how to tell others about how the fishing industry is important in so many people’s lives. And by helping us understand their community, they are teaching us about their world—and ours.

How can the names of recipes tell us about culture and ethnic background?

Use this space to solve the math challenge:

What else would you like to know about the New Bedford fishing industry?