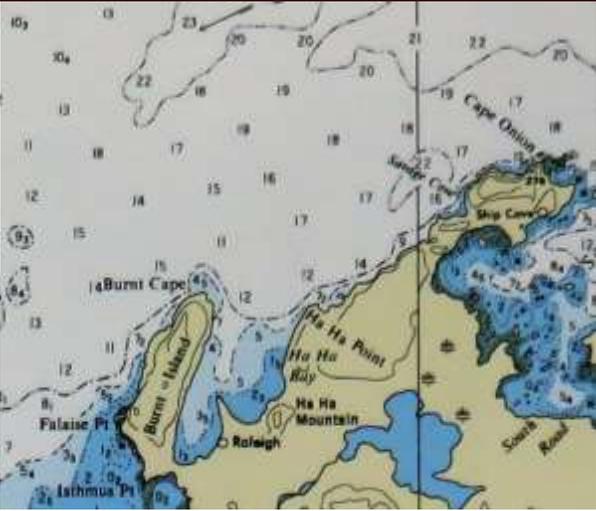


Raleigh



Edmund Taylor Raleigh



Lobster pots at the wharf in Raleigh. Photo by Kathleen Tucker

He gave up Fishing...

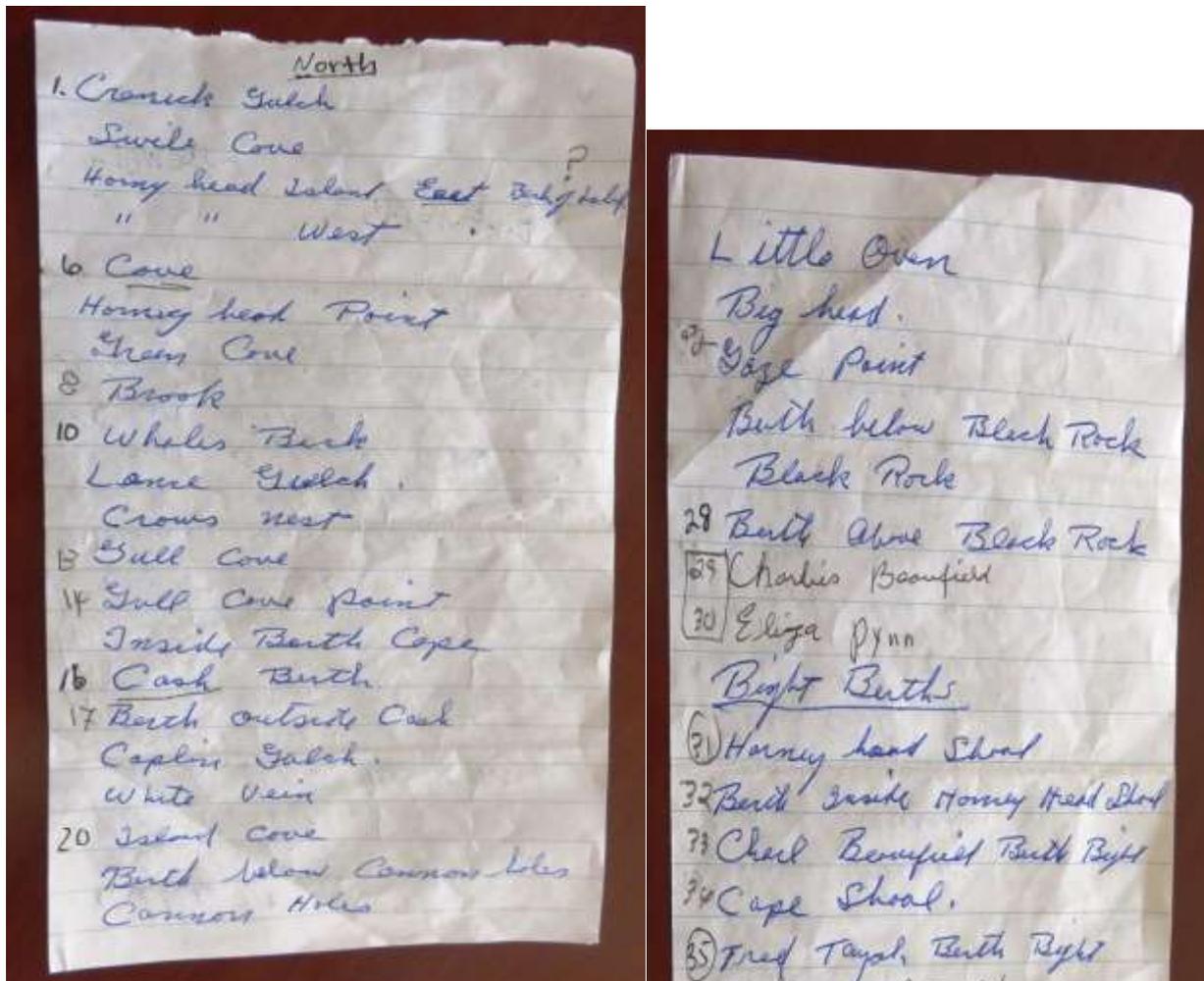
Edmund Taylor knows every trap berth in the area, though he didn't fish for long. As a boy he fished with his dad. "When I got big enough, I went in the boat with my dad, Ken Taylor, but I was his only son, so he had to hire sharemen to fish the cod traps. Later, when the fish got scarce, the local fishermen combined their crews and Dad sold his trap to Uncle George Decker in L'Anse aux Meadows."



Edmund Taylor's Mail Boat 1958

"About that time, people started getting long-liners and going out further to fish. In the late '60s and early '70s the fishery was already dying," says Edmund.

"I gave up fishing and took up the Mail Boat instead," he says. Canada Post hired Edmund to deliver mail to communities on the tip of the northern peninsula twice a week, and when he wasn't delivering mail he was operating a water taxi business.



Edmund Taylor's list of Raleigh Trap Berths

Edward Bessey Raleigh

--Photos by Kathleen Tucker



Fishermen at Raleigh

Edward Bessey, son of Alf Bessey, was born in Raleigh in 1929. He married Martha Blake in 1955; she was the daughter of Israel Blake. She and Edward had five children: four boys and a girl.

Edward started fishing with his dad, Alf Bessey, his Uncle George (Alf's brother) and Uncle Al Taylor (married to Alf's sister). They started off with ⁱtrawls; then Alf Bessey bought a ⁱⁱtrap from Harry Adams.

Eventually, Alf gave up fishing and went to work in Goose Bay, so Edward and his Uncle George fished for a while, but they decided to part ways, so they split up the gear and Edward went out on his own, hiring ⁱⁱⁱsharemen. There were six in Edward's crew: Alan Taylor, Everett Blake, Cyril Campbell, Clayton Grinham, and two sharemen, John Broderick and Jim Hurley from Herring Neck.

The Draw System put an end to disputes and 'bad friends'

"Before the Draw, in the spring of the year once the ice was gone, someone might row out and put their marker in someone else's berth, and then they'd kick up all kinds of fuss over it. And then they'd become bad friends and have a ^{iv}row with one another. So that's when it was decided to put the berths in a draw."

Before the Draw System:

- Elliotts fished the Cash Berth.
- Abe Beaufield fished Arnie Head Point.

- Sim Elliott fished Crannick Gulch.
- Edward Bessey fished Arnie Head Island East and Little Oven.

Tidy berths: a tidy berth was a stretch of water, especially fishing grounds, subject to the turbulence of ocean currents and the ebb and flow of the tide.

- Crannick Gulch Point
- Swile Cove (if the fish were running, other fishermen would put their traps out to catch more fish. This was not an established trap berth, but fishermen put their traps wherever they could)
- Island Cove. There was a lot of tide coming around the Cape.
- Cannon holes

How the Draw System Worked

Edward Bessey recalls, “All the names of the skippers went into a paper bag and all the names of the berths went into another bag. Now, there was three of us: I was the Chairman at the time, and I had a man on either side of me; one had the names, one had the berths. The bags would be shaken up and I’d draw out the name. I’d call the skipper; he’d come up and put his hand in the bag and draw his berth. That was the first draw.

“Now, second draw, you could only have a second draw if you had two traps. There was only six or seven crews had two traps and they were entitled to a second draw, and when you drew your berth that was it. There were no other words about it; that was your berth for the summer.

“The big fish killers like the Elliotts used to have four or five cod traps. They had two crews, two motorboats, six men in a boat. There were still only two draws. If they put their traps out and weren’t catching much fish, they had extra traps and they’d put those out wherever they thought they could catch more fish, as long as they didn’t set their traps in someone else’s draw berth.

As for the Cash Berth, Mr. Bessey laughs, “If a feller got the cash berth, he had her made. He had his wallet full!”

A good summer’s fishing

In his memory, Edward Bessey’s best summer was when they brought in 600 ^v quintals of fish for the four of them (his father’s crew): 400 light salted (shore fish) and 200 Labrador. “If you had 100 quintals a man, you had what you call a good summer.”

Putting away the fish

Fish was stored in the stage, salted, until there was enough to wash it out and put it on flakes to dry. Bessey remembers, “That was hard work. You had to wash it and pack it up in the stage. ^{vi}Water horse fish was newly-washed fish, ready to wheel out onto the flakes to dry. ^{vii}Labrador fish was sold in bulk, and to put in one bulk of fish you needed twenty wheelbarrow-full of salt.”

Fishing was hard work, but it wasn't just the men who worked hard. Edward's wife Martha brought their children down to the stage in a baby carriage while she spread the fish to dry on the flakes. She cooked for the six sharemen as well, and did their laundry, scrubbing the clothes on a washboard and hanging them on a clothesline. The sharemen stayed in a bunkhouse and she cleaned that up as well.



Looking at Raleigh (on the right) from The Neck

Bessey gave up fishing

Eventually Edward gave up fishing. "There wasn't enough anymore." In the early '60s he went to work for Lundrigans, building the Raleigh road. He says he turned the first sod with the old D7 tractor on the Ship Cove Road, and worked for Lundrigan's for six summers on heavy equipment. He worked at other jobs too, such as clearing brush, and in the end, he worked for Highways (now called the Department of Transportation and Works) for close to 19 years, and then retired.

Raleigh Trap Berths

--Information contributed by Edmund Taylor, Edward Bessey and Gayden Pynn Sr.--

1. Crannick Gulch. Prime. Fished by Sim Elliott prior to the Draw System. A tidey berth.
2. Swile Cove. 2nd Draw. A tidey berth (if the fish were running, other fishermen would put their traps out to catch more fish. Not an established trap berth).
3. Arnie Head Point. Prime. Fished by Abe Beaufield prior to the Draw System.
4. Arnie Island East. Prime. Fished by Edward Bessey prior to the Draw System.
5. Arnie Island West. Prime.
6. Middle Arnie Head Cove. Prime.
7. Green Cove. 2nd Draw.
8. The Brook. Prime.
9. Whale's Back. Prime.
10. Launch Gulch. 2nd Draw.
11. Crow's Nest. 2nd Draw.
12. Gull Cove. 2nd Draw.
13. Arnie Head Shoal. Prime.
14. Middle Berth in the Bight. 2nd Draw.
15. Fred Taylor's Berth. 2nd Draw.
16. Charlie Beaufield's Berth in the Bight. 2nd Draw.
17. Nipper's Nest. 2nd Draw.
18. Cash Berth. Prime. It was said if you drew this berth your wallet was full. This berth was fished by the Elliotts before the Draw System came into effect.
19. North of the Cash Berth. Prime.
20. White Vein. 2nd Draw.
21. Island Cove Point. Secondary. This was called a tidey berth, meaning the tides were strong. There was a lot of tide coming around the Cape.
22. The Big Cannon holes. 2nd Draw. A tidey berth.
23. Little Cannon Holes. 2nd Draw. A tidey berth.
24. Big Head. Prime.
25. Gauge Point. Prime.
26. Black Rock. Prime.
27. Inside Black Rock. Prime.
28. Theophilus Pynn's Berth in the Bay. Prime.
29. The Little Oven. Prime. Edward Bessey fished this berth prior to the Draw System.
30. Gull Point Cove. 2nd Draw.
31. Capelin Gulch. Prime.
32. Below Black Rock. Prime.
33. Elijah Pynn's Berth. 2nd Draw.
34. Cape Shoal. 2nd Draw.
35. Berth below Swile Cove. 2nd Draw.
36. Lower Gull Cove. 2nd Draw.

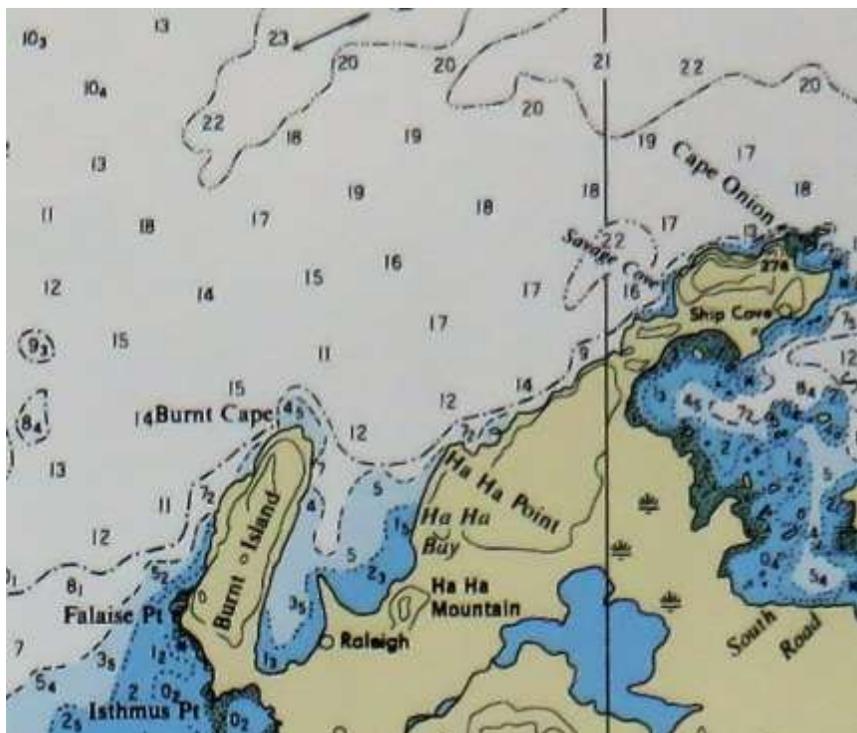


Figure 1 Raleigh nautical chart

ⁱ Trawl: a buoyed line, of great length, to which short lines with baited hooks are attached at intervals.

ⁱⁱ Trap: a type of fixed fishing-gear used in inshore waters, box-shaped with a length of net stretching from shore to entrance through which cod enter and are trapped.

ⁱⁱⁱ Shareman: member of a fishing crew who receives a stipulated proportion of the profits of a voyage rather than wages.

^{iv} Row: argument or dispute

^v Quintal: A measure of dried and salted cod-fish ready for the market; 112 lbs.

^{vi} To place split and salted cod-fish, just removed from a 'washing vat,' in a stack to drain; HORSE.

^{vii} Labrador: A variety of heavily salted, semi-dried cod produced in the Labrador fishery; often attributed with designations of 'cure' or grade.