



# St. Carol's



**Willis Whyatt**  
**St. Carols**

--Photos by Kathleen Tucker



The entrance to St. Carols

St. Carols: a few trap crews

Cape St. Anthony was the demarcation between St. Carols and St. Anthony Bight. St. Carols trap fishers always trapped at Big Cove, near Cape St. Anthony. There were no berths outside Crow Head.

What is named French Bay on the charts can also be called St. Carols Harbour, but is usually called 'the cove' by local fishers.

There were three trap crews and two hook and line crews in St. Carols.

At the time Willis was fishing, there was a good market for salmon; St. Carols' fishermen would gut it and sell it to the Plant in St. Anthony. When Willis was young, he could remember Uncle Clem Richards ran a business of sorts, packing salmon; he'd go as far as Little Brehat collecting it. He had salmon boxes, about as big as tote boxes, perhaps a little wider. The men would pack the gutted salmon's belly full of ice and package the fish in two tiers, then ice it all over and put two more tiers on top, and nail a cover onto the box. Fishermen obtained their ice from icebergs; there were two ways to break down the ice; chopping by hand, or a motor-operated grinder to grind the ice. And, if it was early in the year and ice wasn't available, they used snow. Anybody who processed salmon had an ice chopper, which could be purchased at the shop.

When the salmon were ready to be shipped, the fishermen loaded up the boat with boxes. A lot of the salmon was sold to the Co-op, which was located on the Point.

Salmon fishing was a big thing on the Northern Peninsula. It was licensed, and when they closed the salmon fishery, Willis says it was devastating. And there was a time—before Willis fished—when salmon had no value and was used as dog feed.



A Cod-fish with a blunt head, believed to be sign of a large catch to follow, was called a **LOADER**. The old schooner skippers used to say they would be sure of getting a full load of fish if someone caught a loader. They would take the head of the fish and hang it up in the schooner or near the splitting table or, in this case, on the wall of the shed.

#### St. Carols: Three Trap Crews

1. Tom Senior, Tom Junior, Baxter, Malcolm, and Isaac Rose
2. The Old Man (John Richards), Fred and Ben, and their father Cyril. And Willis and Louis Johnson, who was Willis' age; he was John Richard's nephew.
3. Abe Richards, Fred Richards and Harry Richards.

#### The Hook and Line Crews

1. Walt Grinham and sons from Raleigh.
2. Tom Compton from St. Lunaire.



A lucky horseshoe on a shed door in St. Carols. According to [Didier Naulleau](#), in Brittany, France, a horseshoe was commonly hung upside down with seven nails, usually above doors (rather than on them). The inverted horseshoe was said to maintain luck in, and prevent it from spilling. The horseshoe itself is said to prevent evil from passing through the door. The seven nails are for extra luck, as the number seven was believed to be a lucky number.

## Draw System

There was really no need for the Draw, as there were only three crews that trap-fished. But when the Draw was implemented, the only berths in Willis Whyatt's time were:

1. Salmon Berth
2. Capelin Hole
3. Harry Mugford's berth



Splitting table on the stage...and antlers on the shed roof.

## Trap Berths

1. Big Cove. An open berth with various fishers. Good berth for fish. Not in the Draw.
2. Oil Jacket Cove: thus named because the colour of the rock was the same colour as an oil jacket. This was an open berth and was too tidey to be in the Draw. A good berth for fish.
3. Harry Mugford's berth (he was from Salmon Cove, Conception Bay in the 1921 census and was born in 1855).
4. Western Cove Berth. Not in the Draw.
5. Capelin Hole (previously a salmon berth). This was in the Draw.
6. Salmon Berth. Best berth of all. Salmon nets and cod traps were set at the same time.



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Figure 1 St. Carols nautical chart