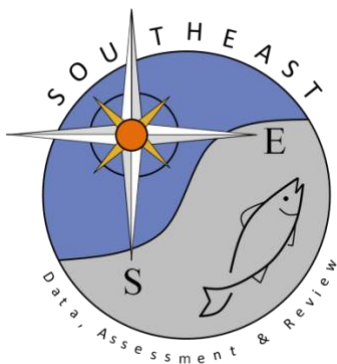


Talking Smack: the archaeology and history of Pensacola's red snapper fishing industry

Nicole Rae Bucchino

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TALKING SMACK: THE ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY OF
PENSACOLA'S RED SNAPPER FISHING INDUSTRY

By

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ABSTRACT

TALKING SMACK: THE ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY OF PENSACOLA'S RED SNAPPER FISHING INDUSTRY

Nicole Rae Bucchino

Though human populations living along northwest Florida's Gulf of Mexico coast have long utilized locally abundant marine resources, the formation of a red snapper fishing industry in Pensacola, Florida, brought marine resource exploitation in the region to an unprecedented level in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Along with other industries, commercial red snapper fishing in Pensacola underwent significant growth during this period and helped shape the port city's new importance as a cosmopolitan, southern economic center. Utilizing a historical ecological approach, this thesis provides a multidisciplinary analysis of commercial fishing culture, commercial fishing vessels, and the Gulf of Mexico red snapper fishery to explore the dynamic relationship the industry held with the local environment. Additionally, archaeological and historical evidence provides the basis for a model describing the structural and material characteristics of potential Pensacola commercial red snapper fishing shipwrecks in the region.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The end of the American Civil War offered almost limitless entrepreneurial possibilities for northerners looking to bring business south. Pensacola, Florida, with its mild climate, abundant timber, riverine infrastructure, and fertile saltwater shores, was one of the many southern port cities to bloom in the years following the war. While legacies of the timber industry and of the military's naval development tend to feature more prominently in local histories, the growth of a large and productive red snapper fishing industry in Pensacola contributed more, in some ways, to the city's cosmopolitan and unique nature at the turn of the century. The success of New Englanders in founding profitable fish houses and fishing fleets in the city drew fishermen, their families, and a large service industry support network from all reaches of the Atlantic.¹ As the "Gloucester of the Gulf," Pensacola's commercial fishing promised a great deal.

The connection between northwest Florida's Reconstruction-era fishing industry and the natural environment in which it existed resulted in a complicated relationship. Though the Pensacola fish houses could generate significant profit from locally abundant red snapper resources, success in business produced a greater demand for the fish than could be sustained. As a result, even within the first 20 years of the industry, observant fishermen noted a rapidly diminishing red snapper population. To recoup losses close to home, these fishermen found new, more fertile grounds to exploit, some as far away as Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula.² While the commercial red snapper fishing experienced some fluctuations in prosperity throughout its

¹ "Peaceful Invaders of Mexico," *Collier's*, March 18, 1916.

² United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, *A Review of the Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper Fishery*, by James S. Carpenter, Circular 208 (Washington, DC, 1965), 7-9.

lifetime, the lack of conservation efforts in the northern Gulf, a rapidly diminishing red snapper population, and an over-reliance on what eventually became Mexican territorial waters sounded the death knell for the Pensacola industry by the 1970s.³

Previous historical investigations into Pensacola commercial fishing focused primarily on those entrepreneurs who established major fish houses after the Civil War, notably Andrew F. Warren, S.C. Cobb, and Eugene Edwin Saunders.⁴ Apart from minor magazine articles and an oral history dating to the early 20th century, almost no historical investigations consider the broader development of the fishing community's working class during the heyday of the industry.⁵ Archaeologically, investigations have been limited to isolated shipwreck studies connected to the Gulf coast fishing industry through analyses of ship construction.⁶ Other archaeological investigations near Pensacola's fish houses and wharves focused more on the changing waterfront dynamics or on other archaeological features of the Pensacola landscape, considering the fishing industry only peripherally.⁷

³ William C. Hamilton, "The Warren Fish Company of Pensacola" REF 91.66, Pensacola Historical Society Resource Center, Pensacola Historical Society, Pensacola, Florida, 18.

⁴ Hamilton, 4; Captain J.W. Collins, "Notes on the Fisheries of Western Florida" in U.S. Commission of Fish and Fisheries, *Report of the Commissioner* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1885), 276.

⁵ Henry C. Rowland, "Snapper Fishermen of the Gulf," *Outing* vol. 15, 1904, 69; Captain Frederick Fredericksen, interview by Modeste Hargis, February 7, 1940, transcript, Pensacola Historical Society Resource Center, Pensacola Historical Society, Pensacola, FL.

⁶ Jason Raupp, "Hook, Line, and Sinker: Historical and Archaeological Investigations of the Snapper Wreck (8SR1001)" (master's thesis, University of West Florida, 2004); Robin Edward Moore, "Hamilton's Wreck: An Archaeological and Historical Inquiry into the Regional Maritime Culture of Pensacola, Florida, 1900-1920" (master's thesis, University of West Florida); James W. Hunter III, John R. Bratten, and J. COZ Cozzi, *Underwater Field Investigations 1999: The Santa Rosa Island and Hamilton Shipwrecks* (Pensacola, FL: Archaeology Institute, 2000); Chuck Meide, James A. McClean, and Edward Wiser, *Dog Island Shipwreck Survey 1999: Report of Historical and Archaeological Investigations* (Tallahassee, FL: Program in Underwater Archaeology, Florida State University, 1999).

⁷ Kendra Ann Kennedy, "Between the Bayous: The Maritime Cultural Landscape of the Downtown Pensacola Waterfront" (master's thesis, University of West Florida, 2010).

Preliminary inquiries into Pensacola's fishing industry revealed that contemporaneous changes from 1860-1930 are evident in the lifestyles of Pensacola fishermen, the types of vessels used to undertake commercial fishing, and the marine ecology supporting the fishing industry in the Gulf of Mexico. The 1860-1930 period represents both the beginning and expansion of the industry in Pensacola, and therefore provides an appropriate date range for the contextual scope of this project. While commercial fishing continued after 1930, this date marks the end of the dominance of sailing vessels in Pensacola, one of the major foci in this analysis and the only type of fishing vessel studied to date in the archaeological record. To build off of preliminary research, this thesis project integrates social, economic, and ecological facets to describe the dynamics of Pensacola's commercial fishing culture, the composition of the commercial fishing fleet, and the health of the Gulf of Mexico red snapper fishery. To this end, the project attempts to better capture, using historical and archaeological records, the onshore and offshore lives of the fishermen who worked daily to support a thriving fishing industry.

To examine the interrelationships among Pensacola's fishermen, their commercial fishing watercraft, and changes in marine ecology, establishing a connection among several important aspects of the city's maritime culture is necessary. Following in the footsteps of *Annales* historians like Marc Bloch and Fernand Braudel and anthropologists like William Balée, Carole Crumley, and Mark Leone, this thesis relies on a historical ecological approach to provide the most fruitful and holistic viewpoint. Such an approach allows for a varied and multidisciplinary perspective of the past, but one that embraces a common "language" of analysis. Most importantly, humanity's dialectical, rather than evolutionary, relationship with its surrounding environment is emphasized. In this way, the significant changes in fishing culture and fishermen's preference for watercraft from 1860-1930 directly affected the marine environment

in which they fished. This environment, too, had a real and measurable influence on how fishermen lived and why they selected certain vessels.

As outlined by Balée, four main concepts provide the basis for working within a historical ecological viewpoint. First, the approach recognizes that human behavior has affected the entire nonhuman world. Whether through building, farming, hunting, manufacturing, or any other human activity, all such endeavors have a direct effect on the environment.⁸ Second, characterizing humanity's influence on the natural environment as either negative or positive is incorrect; effects differ temporally, regionally, and culturally.⁹ Third, differing social, political, and economic systems in their variety of contexts and unique historical trajectories result in wholly unlike consequences for the environment. In a basic sense, generalizing human interaction with its environment based on its status as a "hunter-gatherer" group or as an "industrialized" society is difficult.¹⁰ Finally, Balée's fourth historical ecological concept suggests that researchers can understand humanity's interaction and interrelationship with its environment over time as "a single phenomenon to regional analysis using the paradigmatic concepts and tools of historical ecology."¹¹ This postulate, embodied in the idea of "landscape" explained below, is a far more universal perspective that embeds culture in both people and their surroundings.

The historical ecological perspective of the past has its roots in a number of anthropological and historical paradigms. From anthropology, historical ecology draws its

⁸ William Balée, "Historical Ecology: Premises and Postulates" in *Advances in Historical Ecology*, ed. William Balée (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 14-15.

⁹ Balée, 19-20.

¹⁰ Ibid., 22-23.

¹¹ Ibid., 24.

dedication to materialism from several schools of thought: historical materialism, cultural ecology, cultural materialism, and evolutionary ecology.¹² In very important ways, however, historical ecology loses the state-level societal focus and evolutionary determinisms of these earlier traditions. Research focus can thus range widely in differently temporal, cultural, spatial, and biotic contexts, viewing humans' interactions with their environment as a result of historical circumstance.

Historical ecology also draws from the ideals of the *Annales* School of historiography. Historian Marc Bloch was critical in pioneering the *Annales* tradition, emphasizing the need for diverse disciplines like history, anthropology, and geography to collaborate in creating a more holistic narrative of the past, a narrative realized by historian Fernand Braudel through the *événement* (short-term historical events), *conjuncture* (context), and *longue durée* (long-term history).¹³ As *Annales* historians recognized, history and science, at their most basic levels, use all three narrative scales in their interpretations. Another important contribution from Braudel is the concept of *paysage*, or landscape. As a focus for historical ecological research, the landscape is the product of both short-term and long-term history, the outcome of human interaction with the environment, and a force acting on human social, political, and economic characteristics.¹⁴ The *Annales* School's greatest contributions to historical ecology, then, are the basic unit of study (the relationship between humans and the environment) and the multi-scale approach to that study (*événement*, *conjuncture*, and *longue durée*). As anthropologist Carole Crumley

¹² Bruce Winterhalder, "Concepts in Historical Ecology" in *Historical Ecology: Cultural Knowledge and Changing Landscapes*, ed. Carole L. Crumley (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1994), 19-24.

¹³ Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft* (New York: Vintage Books, 1953), 35-47.

¹⁴ Fernand Braudel, *Memory and the Mediterranean* (New York: Vintage Books, 2001), 3-7.

argues, these *Annales* legacies “contribute to a shared grammar” among diverse fields of study and are “universally instructive and [focus] debate on central issues.”¹⁵

Understanding historical ecology as a viewpoint, rather than a paradigm in itself, thus opens disciplinary doors. This thesis examines Pensacola’s turn-of-the-century fishing industry with that spirit. Separating the development of Pensacola and coastal northwest Florida from the environment in which that development is situated is not possible. Based on prevailing ecological and economical conditions, fishermen selected the vessels they used and the grounds that they fished. Importantly, however, their interactions with the environment over time caused change that dictated how and where a profit could be made. In the broadest historical view, the rise and fall of the red snapper industry should be situated within the longer patterns of regional marine resources use. The establishment and growth of post-Civil War commercial fishing can thus be seen as the context in which temporally shorter changes occurred to lifestyles, technology, and the marine environment.

Though the goal of this thesis is to provide a comprehensive examination of the kinds of changes both influencing and resulting from Pensacola and northwest Florida’s red snapper fishing industry, each component of this argument requires its own consideration before describing the interconnectedness of each. To begin, chapter two provides historical background on the development, expansion, and decline of Pensacola commercial fishing in the context of long-term cultural exploitation of marine resources in Pensacola and the northwest Florida Gulf coast. Chapter three explores the types of vessels used by the city’s commercial red snapper fishermen from 1860-1930. Although historical records contain most information concerning the vessels of the red snapper fishing industry, particularly the *List of Merchant Vessels of the United*

¹⁵ Carole L. Crumley, “Foreward” in *Advances in Historical Ecology*, ed. William Balée (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), xii.

States (LMVUS), a comprehensive review of archaeological investigations of related shipwreck sites provides a glimpse at the larger technological trends taking place in Pensacola's fishing vessels. To these ends, this thesis considers material analysis of three archaeological shipwreck sites in northwest Florida attributed to the red snapper fishing industry: the Snapper wreck (8SR1001), Hamilton's wreck (8ES2238), and the alleged *Priscilla* (8FR813).¹⁶ Utilizing structural and material data collected from these wreck sites, chapter three also proposes a model for determining the likelihood of whether or not an unknown archaeological shipwreck in northwest Florida can be attributed to Pensacola commercial red snapper fishing during the age of sail. Toward this goal, three additional cases studies help prove or disprove the viability of the model.

Chapter four focuses on the offshore and onshore cultural milieu of those individuals engaged in the city's fishing industry. Tracing changes in the daily lifestyles of fishermen and their families is largely possible through an examination of the few existing primary and secondary historical sources. Archaeological excavations in downtown Pensacola also provide some understanding of the daily living conditions and social dynamics of the neighborhoods in which commercial fishermen tended to live. Additionally, quantitative data collected in the population schedules of the United States federal census (1860-1930) also make revisiting the lives of some of the less well-known individuals in Pensacola's history possible.

Looking toward the marine environment, chapter five provides a consideration of the environment as it relates to commercial red snapper fishing in the Gulf of Mexico. Discussion focuses on the biology of the red snapper species, the natural habitat of red snapper in relation to

¹⁶Moore; Hunter, Bratten, and Cozzi; Raupp, "Hook, Line, and Sinker: Historical and Archaeological Investigations of the Snapper Wreck (8SR1001);" Meide, McClean, and Wiser.

popular commercial fishing grounds of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as well as the trends in overall commercial red snapper catch sizes from 1880-1963. Finally, a brief overview of late 20th-century regulatory measures on the Gulf of Mexico red snapper fishery since the passage of the 1976 Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Management and Conservation Act provides insight on the utility of laws in preserving fish populations, especially those depleted prior to the implementation of regulatory laws.¹⁷ The ecological concerns in this chapter thus draw a longer-term picture of local interaction with the marine environment, placing the rise and fall of the red snapper fishing industry into context.

Finally, chapter six integrates the conclusions of each of the preceding chapters into a final discussion and conclusion. Commercial fishing culture, commercial fishing vessels, and the Gulf of Mexico red snapper fishery provide distinct areas of research for this thesis, yet correlations in their dynamics from 1860-1930 help elucidate the relationship between Pensacola's industrial growth and the local environment. Additionally, chapter six provides recommendations for future avenues of research into historical commercial red snapper fishing.

The work conducted for this thesis project is significant in a number of ways. First, apart from brief mentions in local histories, Pensacola's red snapper fishing industry has remained under-researched. Although this is in part because of the lack of historical and archaeological sources on the subject, the paucity of research may also be due to an unwillingness to engage in multi-disciplinary study. Taking a step forward, this thesis takes many different aspects of the fishing industry in Pensacola and combines them into one narrative guided by the principles of

¹⁷ Peter B. Hood, Andrew J. Strelchek, and Phil Steele, "A History of Red Snapper Management in the Gulf of Mexico," *American Fisheries Society Symposium* 60 (2007), 267-268. Passed in 1976 and updated in 2007, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Management and Conservation Act establishes the basis for United States governmental management and regulation of fish stocks. The law also provides for the creation of Regional Fishery Management Councils (including the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council) to prepare and oversee fishery management plans.

Annales-style history and historical ecology. Examining the interrelationships among the onshore and offshore lives of fishermen, the vessels of the fishing industry, and the environment in which the industry thrived and died will paint a more holistic portrait of one of the most influential periods in Pensacola and coastal northwest Florida history. Not only will this kind of comprehensive research provide something new to established histories, it adheres to recent trends in creating a “common language” in social scientific studies.

In addition, research into the structural and material signatures of archaeological shipwreck sites associated with Pensacola’s red snapper fishing industry, as well as historical data collected from the *LMVUS*, provides the basis for a model that can potentially determine whether or not an unknown wreck was once engaged in commercial fishing from the city between 1860-1930. The model formulated in this thesis provides baseline data on the measurements (length, beam, depth, and gross tonnage) of commercial fishing vessels over a 70-year period. Inquiry into significant structural, technological, and design features throughout the same period may also assist in determining vessels’ build locations. The large number of vessels employed in red snapper fishing and the number of unassociated shipwreck sites in and around Pensacola suggest that such a model has substantial utility for future local archaeological investigations.

Finally, this thesis is significant in that it also provides a conservation message relevant to modern resource use. While the prospects of making considerable profit from the Gulf of Mexico’s red snapper fishery were tempting for late 19th-century commercial fishing entrepreneurs, the long-term effects of a general lack of regard toward conservation or sustainability devastated the industry and created significant hardship for modern fishermen who now deal with strict governmental regulations. In this way, Pensacola’s relatively brief venture

into commercial red snapper fishing serves as a testament to the importance of acquiring a better understanding of humanity's relationship with its environment.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND OVERVIEW

Situated in northwest Florida along the north-central Gulf of Mexico coastline, the Pensacola area has a unique natural and cultural history that stands apart in North America. Landforms along the Pensacola Bay system derive from a series of flat, once-submerged terraces. Alluvial deposits from upland regions form the uppermost layer of sedimentary rock, laid down nearly one million years ago in the Plio-Pleistocene. Composed of quartz sands, gravel, and beds of clay and sandstone, this layer allows for the flow of numerous springs, rivers, and streams throughout the landscape. Major river systems and their valleys carve deep, well-fed freshwater zones that eventually run to meet the salty bays. Westward movements of quartz sand throughout the Pleistocene formed barrier islands around present-day Pensacola Bay, eventually cutting off the body of water from the rest of the Gulf of Mexico. The naturally deep-water bay sustains a wide variety of life and remains relatively protected by a narrow opening to the Gulf of Mexico.¹⁸ An intersection of ecosystems, Pensacola thus provides a broad spectrum of natural resources in a relatively small geographical area.

The ways in which different groups of people managed these resources has changed and developed over prehistory and history, yet almost all groups acknowledged and willingly exploited the area's assets. Embedded in this long-term pattern is Pensacola's fishing industry at the turn of the 20th century. Like the prehistoric and colonial populations that preceded, those commercial fishermen living in Pensacola and northwest Florida after the end of the Civil War developed, in the industrial context of their own time, a livelihood that allowed them to prosper.

¹⁸ Judith A. Bense, *Hawkshaw: Prehistory and History in an Urban Neighborhood in Pensacola, Florida* (Pensacola, FL: University of West Florida, 1985), 7-10.

Uniquely positioned to provide a wide variety of flora and fauna from terrestrial, freshwater, and coastal zones, the diverse and resource-rich environments of northwest Florida have sustained human populations from as early as 13,000 B.C. Gordon Willey's 1949 archaeological investigations provide the basis for understanding prehistoric culture in the area, but additional research since then has highlighted changes in the way prehistoric populations utilized different resource zones.¹⁹ Archaic groups (8,000 B.C.–1,000 B.C.) represent the earliest occupations for which there is substantial archaeological evidence related to subsistence and local resource utilization in the region. Investigations of Archaic settlement sites in the Escambia River Valley and tributary valleys reveal the application of both inland and freshwater hunting and gathering techniques.²⁰

Only during the Woodland Period (1,000 B.C.–A.D. 1,000), however, were lower bay coasts included as an area for settlement and marine resources incorporated into daily subsistence.²¹ Prehistoric components of the Hawkshaw site near downtown Pensacola along the Pensacola Bay coastline revealed that “mollusk gathering and fishing were a major part of the economy” with large fish either caught in shallow water zones with mesh nets or “caught in the deeper parts of the estuary with hook and line, spears, nets, or enclosures.”²² According to Jerald Milanich, archaeologists working in the region have recovered the remains of snapper varieties

¹⁹ Gordon R. Willey, *Archaeology of the Florida Gulf Coast* (1949; repr. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1998), 200-210; Judith A. Bense “Settlement Pattern, Climate, and Marine Ecosystem Correlations in the Escambia Bay Drainage System in Northwest Florida” (paper presented at 40th Southeastern Archaeological Conference, Columbia, South Carolina, 1983); Cheryl Claassen “Marking the Passage of Time in Shell Middens” (paper presented at 50th Annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, Denver, CO, 1985).

²⁰ Bense, *Hawkshaw: Prehistory and History in an Urban Neighborhood in Pensacola, Florida*, 13-14.

²¹ Jerald T. Milanich, *Archaeology of Precolumbian Florida* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1994), 117-118.

²² Bense, *Hawkshaw: Prehistory and History in an Urban Neighborhood in Pensacola, Florida*, 15 and 161.

along with a number of other sought-after fish species, notably catfish, sheepshead, jack, flounder, and mullet.²³

Later pre-Columbian groups like the contemporaneous Mississippian-influenced Fort Walton and Pensacola cultures (A.D. 1,000–colonial period) also drew heavily from the many different resources and raw materials available in northwest Florida, particularly along the bay and Gulf coasts. Survey conducted on Choctowatchee Bay on Eglin Air Force Base revealed that almost 87% of these late prehistoric sites in the area are situated along the coast.²⁴ Like other Mississippian groups in Florida and in the southeastern United States, political complexity, mound building, and high population densities characterized the Fort Walton and, to a lesser extent, Pensacola cultures. Unique among the coastal Pensacola settlements, however, was a markedly different means of subsistence. While agriculture predominated among those living inland, people living along the coast focused their efforts toward the use of abundant and readily available marine resources.²⁵ Indeed, upon the arrival of a Spanish settlement fleet under the command of Tristán de Luna y Arellano on September 24, 1559, Luna mentioned “some Indian fishermen” on the bay.²⁶

By the mid-16th century and onward, European influence in northwest Florida dramatically altered the cultural trajectories of pre-Columbian groups throughout northwest

²³ Milanich, 119.

²⁴ Prentice M. Thomas and L. Janice Campbell, “The Deptford to Santa Rosa/Swift Creek Transition in the Florida Panhandle,” *The Florida Archaeologist* 38, no. 2 (1985), 36.

²⁵ Milanich, 381; Bense, *Hawkshaw: Prehistory and History in an Urban Neighborhood in Pensacola, Florida*, 14.

²⁶ Don Luís de Velasco, Don Luís de Velasco to the Spanish Crown, September 24, 1559, Ramo 1, Patronato 179, No. 5, Archivo General de Indias, ed. and trans. Herbert I. Priestley, *The Luna Papers 1559-1661: Volume 1* (Deland, FL: The Florida State Historical Society, 1928), 243-247.

Florida and the southeastern United States. The spread of European disease resulted in a rapid decline of native populations and the eventual establishment of Spanish settlements in northwest Florida reshaped the region's cultural landscape, slowly folding it into a European dynamic. Like those that had utilized marine resources in and around Pensacola throughout prehistory, the Spanish and other colonial claimants continued to draw from the natural environment for sustenance and settlement.

Although the Spanish had numerous reasons to maintain a presence in *La Florida*, one of the primary drivers for settlement along the Gulf of Mexico coast was the need to create a middle point between active ports in the western Caribbean and potential new ports on the Atlantic coast of North America. The second viceroy of New Spain, Luís de Velasco, concisely argued this point in a 1559 letter to Philip II: "...if a port is colonized on the coast of La Florida...the route will be assured as far as the Azores Islands...."²⁷ Eventually, the Spanish chose the site of Punta de Santa Elena (present-day Port Royal, South Carolina) as the port that would best serve shipping in northern waters. The first step toward establishing this northern safeguard, however, was to settle along the Gulf coast so that settlers could then "go overland to the Punta de Santa Elena."²⁸

With the objective of penetrating the North American southeast from the Mississippi River to the Atlantic coast, Velasco oversaw the outfitting of a fleet of ships that would make landfall and settle Florida. Tristán de Luna y Arellano, the newly appointed governor of Florida, led this initial expedition and disembarked from San Juan de Ulúa (Veracruz, Mexico) with 500

²⁷Don Luís de Velasco, Don Luís de Velasco to His Majesty, Tlaxcala, May 25, 1559, ed. and trans. Herbert I. Priestley, *The Luna Papers 1559-1661: Volume 2* (Deland, FL: The Florida State Historical Society, 1928), 225.

²⁸Don Luís de Velasco, Don Luís de Velasco to His Majesty, Mexico, September 30, 1558, in *The Luna Papers 1559-1661: Volume 1*, ed. and trans. Priestley, 257.

military men and 1,000 colonists on June 11, 1559.²⁹ Passing over Mobile Bay as a candidate for the new settlement, Luna's fleet entered Pensacola Bay in mid-August 1559 and Viceroy of New Spain Don Lu  s de Velasco extolled the natural virtues of the bay and surrounding land on Luna's behalf:

It is one of the best ports that there is among what has been discovered in the Indies. The least water that the entrance has are eleven cubits, and having entered within, it has 7 to 8 fathoms, and it is a very spacious port, which has three leagues in width in front of where the Spaniards are now, and the entrance of the sound has a half league in width. The entrance has very good signs, and it has a red bluff on the eastern side opening the bay, and the naos can be anchored in 4 or 5 fathoms at one crossbow-shot from land, and the port is so secure that no wind can do them any damage.... The land is very good in its appearance. In it there are many walnuts and grapes and other frutiferous trees, and many other trees, and much game and fowl, and much good fish of many varieties.³⁰

Based on letters like these to the Spanish Crown, Luna and his men clearly prized Pensacola Bay for its strategic position on Gulf coast, but also chose the site for its deep water, abundant resources (including fish), and perceived safety as a harbor.

Less than a month after arriving in Pensacola Bay, however, a hurricane shattered any illusions of safety and overwhelmed Luna and his company, killing a number of people and destroying seven of their ten ships anchored in the Bay.³¹ The loss was significant: two of the ships devastated by the storm held valuable supplies that Luna's men had not yet carried ashore because of the lack of a reliable storehouse. The Dominican friar Davila Padilla described that

²⁹ Herbert I. Priestley, *Trist  n de Luna: Conquistador of the Old South: A Study of Spanish Imperial Strategy*, (Glendale, CA: The Arthur H. Clarke Co., 1936), 102-3.

³⁰ Don Lu  s de Velasco to the Spanish Crown, September 24[?], 1559, Ramo 9, Patronato 19, Archivo General de Indias, ed. and trans. in Priestley, 270-276.

³¹ James Daniel Collins, "Empire's Reach: A Structural and Historical Analysis of the Emanuel Point Shipwreck" (master's thesis, University of West Florida, 2008) 42-47. Research accounts for eleven vessels in the original fleet. One vessel, *San Juan de Ulua*, escaped damage because Luna had sent it back to Veracruz for supplies days before the hurricane.

the amount lost “was food enough for more than a year, even if the fifteen-hundred persons that were there had eaten to excess.”³² In his narrative, he also related that they were unable to salvage much but some personal goods from an intact caravel thrown ashore by the storm.³³ Similarly, a letter to the King from Luna bemoaned the loss of supplies and hopes for re-provisioning via Velasco in New Spain to ensure the success of their venture.³⁴ By 1561, the Spanish abandoned the idea of maintaining a settlement at Pensacola and did not return to the area until 1698.

As French and English influence in North America threatened Spanish dominion, the Spanish Crown once again attempted to settle the northern Gulf coast in northwest Florida through a series of settlements during the 17th and 18th centuries. Spanish naval officer Andrés de Arriola founded the Presidio Santa María de Galve in 1698 overlooking the entrance to Pensacola Bay on the present-day Naval Air Station Pensacola. Arriola’s was the first attempt to reestablish Spanish presence the area since the failure of the Luna expedition. The attempt was short-lived, however, and the French successfully drove the Spanish out by 1719.³⁵

Following the War of the Quadruple Alliance, the Spanish once again laid claim to Pensacola, establishing the Presidio Isla de Santa Rosa on Santa Rosa Island in 1722. Afflicted by a series of hurricanes not unlike the one that initially drove the Spanish from the area in 1559, the Spanish abandoned the presidio on Santa Rosa Island by 1758 and made a permanent move

³² Davila Padilla, quoted in Herbert I. Priestley, *Tristán de Luna: Conquistador of the Old South: A Study of Spanish Imperial Strategy*, 109.

³³ Davila Padilla, quoted in *ibid.*, 109.

³⁴ Tristán de Luna y Arellano to His Majesty, Port of Santa María, September 24, 1559, in *The Luna Papers 1559-1661: Volume 2*, ed. and trans. Priestley, 245.

³⁵ William S. Coker, “Pensacola, 1686-1821,” in *Archaeology of Colonial Pensacola*, ed. Judith A. Bense (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1999), 5-6.

to the Presidio San Miguel de Panzacola in the middle of present-day downtown Pensacola.³⁶

This mainland site, officials argued, was ultimately superior to the Santa Rosa Island settlement site and played host to numerous valuable resources including clay, timber, and fresh water.³⁷

After receiving Pensacola from the Spanish at the end of the Seven Years' War in 1763, the British also took advantage of the area's natural resource base. Abundant timber allowed for the construction and repair of ships to ply routes to British colonies in the West Indies and along the Atlantic coast of North America.³⁸ Florida's marine resources, especially the fish, caught the attention of one British official in 1764 who noted, "all the Bays and Lagoons are full of the best and most delicious kinds of Fish...a ship in a few days may catch her lading of Groupers, Snappers, Brim, and Cod...."³⁹ In the interior, successful lumber mills, brick-making operations, and a deerskin trade with Indian groups helped promote the potential of the area. Though Pensacola was considered militarily strategic by the British, activities to harvest and export shipbuilding timber, naval stores, and food supplies to the West Indies from Pensacola increased during the Revolutionary War, providing a new commercial dimension to Pensacola's waterfront.⁴⁰

Although Britain successfully exploited Pensacola for resources during the Revolutionary War, it was unable to hold the city against American-allied Spain. The Spanish onslaught during

³⁶ Coker, 14-18.

³⁷ Autos on the Hurricane of 1752, Superior Government Year of 1756, AGI Mexico 2445, manuscript on file, Archaeology Institute, University of West Florida, Pensacola, trans. R. Wayne Childers, 50-56.

³⁸ Cecil Johnson, *British West Florida, 1763-1783* (Hamden, CT: Archon, 1971), 186-187.

³⁹ George Johnstone to the Board of Trade, November 9, 1764, Colonial Office 5/574 Papers: 134, University Archives and West Florida History Center, University of West Florida, Pensacola, FL.

⁴⁰ Robin F. A. Fabel, *The Economy of British West Florida, 1763-1783* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1988), 62-64.

the May 1781 Siege of Pensacola allowed them to become, for the second time, claimants to Pensacola and areas of northwest Florida. Building upon the early British commercial military framework, the Spanish encouraged trade in timber and deerskin but were unable to stop the settlement of American citizens in the region. By 1821, Spain ceded Pensacola and the rest of West Florida to the United States government.⁴¹

As an American territory until 1845 when Florida gained statehood, Pensacola and the surrounding area developed significantly in the mid-19th century. The demand for terrestrial and marine resources found in northwest Florida provided settlers the means to establish both themselves and their commercial enterprises. Frontiersmen created a number of lumber mills, brick factories, and cotton fields along the many inland waterways and used these natural connections to the coast to export their goods. Among a variety of smaller frontier settlements along the northwest Florida Gulf coast, the port of Pensacola stood as one of the largest and most important. Advantageous because of its spacious, deep-water bay, shipping to and from Pensacola helped keep regional frontier towns supplied since no railroad connections would be established until after the Civil War.⁴²

Other important developments in Pensacola during Florida's tenure as an American territory included the construction of the United States Navy Yard in western Pensacola Bay by 1840 and the construction of Forts Pickens and McRee on strategic locations overlooking the entrance to Pensacola Bay in the late 1830s. Beginning in 1839, the United States military also expanded and built onto the mainland Fort Barrancas, the site of earlier colonial Spanish forts

⁴¹ John Phillips, "Flood Thy Neighbor: Colonial and American Water-Powered Mills in West Florida," *Gulf South Historical Review* 14, no. 1 (1998), 151.

⁴² Kennedy, 88-90.

and a colonial British redoubt. Since all of these projects required a great deal of construction material, military activity thus spurred the growth of the local timber and brick-making industries.⁴³

Commercial fishing had its beginnings in this period as well. The first men seeking to make a modern business out of the Florida fisheries came from New England in the 1840s and 1850s. While historical and archaeological records indicate that fishing had long been a means of sustenance for those living along the Florida coast, the diverse northerners arriving at this time sought to exploit fishing in a new, commercial way. Captains brought their fishing schooners south to explore the fisheries around Key West and the Gulf of Mexico in an effort to continue employment during the frigid and stormy New England winters. Apart from hurricanes that formed during a relatively predictable season in the late summer, the area could be a fisherman's paradise with its warm, dry winters. For this reason, many transient Yankee fishermen visited Florida on a seasonal basis to take advantage of the calm of the winter months.⁴⁴

In the years before the Civil War, New England fishermen in the Gulf of Mexico generally fished in the 15-20 ton sloops and schooners that operated in the North Atlantic during the summer months. These vessels were equipped with live wells able to hold 5,000-6,000 pounds (2,268-2,721.6 kilograms) in catch and were affectionately nicknamed "smacks" because of the sound of water in the live wells hitting the hull.⁴⁵ Red snapper, with fertile grounds

⁴³ Nathaniel Thurston, "A Study of Maritime Activity in Florida in the Nineteenth Century" (Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 1972), 67; Henry M. Brackenridge, *A Topographical Description of Pensacola and Vicinity in 1821*, ed. Brian R. Rucker (Bagdad, Florida: Patagonia Press, 1991), 13.

⁴⁴ Collins, "Notes on the Fisheries of Western Florida," 276.

⁴⁵ United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Fisheries, *Investigational Report No. 26: Fishery for Red Snappers and Groupers in the Gulf of Mexico*, by Norman D. Jarvis (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1935), 1.

between Cape San Blas, Florida, and Mobile, Alabama, quickly became the target for fishing crews. The fish were also an increasingly popular sale in the ports of Mobile and New Orleans. Captain James Kenny, one of these early fishermen and captain of the New England smack *Mississippi*, recalls a particularly successful day when “two hundred snappers were caught, which we took to New Orleans...[and] they sold like hot cakes.”⁴⁶ Although Pensacola had yet to become a major player in commercial fishing along the northern Gulf coast, the early success of red snapper provided the impetus for entrepreneurs to establish fish houses in Pensacola in the early 1870s.

Like many other American cities, Pensacola was subject to the devastating effects of the American Civil War. Strategic not only for its military position, northwest Florida held resources and transportation routes much desired by both the Union and Confederacy. Early in the war, Confederate troops reacted to encroaching Union forces by burning, destroying, and salvaging the region’s infrastructure of anything that would be of use to the Union opposition, including an unfinished railroad so desired by area citizens before the war.⁴⁷ Major-General Braxton Bragg neatly summarized this strategy in a letter to Pensacola’s commanding officer, Brigadier General Samuel Jones:

I desire you particularly to leave nothing the enemy can use; burn all from Fort McRee to the junction with the Mobile road. Save the guns, and if necessary destroy your gunboats and all other boats. They might be used against us. Destroy all machinery, &c., public and private, which be useful to the enemy; especially

⁴⁶ Captain J.W. Collins, “Notes on the Red Snapper Fishery,” *Bulletin of the United States Fish Commission for 1886* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1886), 299-300.

⁴⁷ George F. Pearce, “Pensacola, the Deep-Water Harbor of the Gulf: Its Development, 1825-1930,” *Gulf Coast Historical Review* 5, no.2 (1990): 130.

disable the sawmills in and around the bay and burn the lumber. Break up the railroad from Pensacola to the Junction, carrying the iron up to a safe point.⁴⁸

The Confederate destruction of the Navy Yard in August 1862, as well the Union's suppression of local trade in Florida and throughout the south through a naval blockade, proved particularly devastating for the growth of the local economy.⁴⁹

Though commerce lagged for a time during the war, Pensacola and its hinterlands returned to the task with renewed vigor after 1865. The unique geographical and environmental situation of Pensacola, always an influence in regional development, was undoubtedly one of the reasons why the city rebounded so quickly after the Civil War. Residents of the area altered and utilized natural resources for the success of post-bellum business ventures. Local, national, and international demand for the high-quality timber produced in northwest Florida drove an exceptionally successful industry in the years after the war.⁵⁰ New railroad connections to the Midwest and Atlantic coast, in addition to well-established maritime routes, allowed Pensacola to resituate itself as a regional hub of commercial activity. Railroads fed national and international demand for timber, while local shipping routes to the east kept smaller northwest Florida towns on Santa Rosa Sound and Choctawhatchee Bay well supplied and commercially viable.⁵¹ Industries in naval stores and shipbuilding also flourished during this period, with 63%

⁴⁸Braxton Bragg, Major-General Braxton Bragg to Brigadier General Samuel Jones, February 27, 1862, in *The War of the Rebellion: a Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, ed. United States War Department (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1901), 835-836.

⁴⁹ Brian Rucker, *Blackwater and Yellow Pine: The Development of Santa Rosa County, 1821-1865* (PhD diss., Florida State University, 1990).

⁵⁰ Pearce, 130.

⁵¹ South Walton Three Arts Alliance, *Of Days Gone By, Reflections of South Walton County, Florida* (South Walton Three Arts Alliance, 1999), 182, 206.

of employed sailing vessels locally constructed in places like Pensacola, Milton, Point Washington, East Bay, and Freeport by 1885.⁵²

A major post-bellum development that fed economic growth in the area was the construction and completion of railroad ties to the north, east, and west. Though the Florida legislature approved the Alabama and Florida Railroad Company plans to build a line from “the town of Columbus in the state of Georgia, to the line between Alabama and the territory of Florida, in the most eligible direction to the city of Pensacola” in January 1853, the establishment of a railroad in Pensacola with connections to the rest of the United States was not realized until October 22, 1880, when the Louisville and Nashville (L&N) Railroad Company purchased the line.⁵³ Companies and industries in Pensacola, new and renewed, vied to receive concessions from the L&N Railroad Company for the more effective and less costly export of goods throughout the United States.⁵⁴ This new economic potential, in addition to the established resource potential of the area, resulted in industrial and population growth throughout the last half of the 19th century.

Of particular importance to this research is the development of an active and prosperous fishing industry from Pensacola in the post-bellum years. With the re-opening of the south to northern business, ambitious New England entrepreneurs in Pensacola recalled the success of

⁵² United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Seventeenth Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1885), 61-300.

⁵³ *Charters of the Bank of Pensacola; Alabama, Florida and Georgia railroad company; Pensacola and Perdido rail road company; Blakely and Perdido rail road company; Montgomery rail road company; and Selma and Tennessee rail road company*, ed. John C. Clark (Philadelphia: John C. Clark, 1838); Edward W. Hines, *Corporate History of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad Company and Roads in its System* (Louisville, KY: John P. Morton & Company, 1905), 197.

⁵⁴ Collins, “Notes on the Fisheries of Western Florida,” 296-297.

early commercial red snapper fishing in the 1840s and 1850s.⁵⁵ By 1869, Pensacola business owners S.C. Cobb and partner Major John C. Ruse had established the Pensacola Ice Company with an offshoot venture in red snapper fishing, eventually known as the Pensacola Fish Company. Ruse died soon after, however, and Massachusetts native Andrew F. Warren stepped in to purchase Ruse's interest. Warren, with an education from Brown University and a long background in New England, eventually became one of the biggest names in red snapper fishing in Pensacola.⁵⁶

Cobb and Warren's Pensacola Fish Company had exceptionally small beginnings and fishing generally took place only during the summer. Since the company owned no vessels of its own, the owners contracted New England crews visiting during the winter months. Contracting vessels only during certain months of the year proved to be difficult for steady business so, by 1879, the company purchased its own, permanent fishing schooner: *J.W. Wherrin*. The Pensacola Fish Company quadrupled its fleet in the next two years, purchasing the schooners *Ripple* and *Niantic*, as well chartering the steamer *Millie Wales*. All three vessels had been constructed and handed down from commercial fishing operations in New England.⁵⁷

By 1880, Warren withdrew from the Pensacola Fish Company and collaborated with his brother-in-law, Silas Stearns, to found the Warren Fish Company, which became one of two major fish houses in Pensacola for the lifetime of the local red snapper fishing industry.⁵⁸ The Warren Fish Company, established on the Baylen Street wharf, owned five vessels and chartered

⁵⁵ Andrew F. Warren, "The Red Snapper Fisheries: Their Past Present and Future" (proceedings and papers of the National Fishery Congress, Tampa, FL, January 19-24, 1898), 331.

⁵⁶ Collins, "Notes on the Fisheries of Western Florida," 296.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Warren, 332-334.

one by 1885. In the same five years, three other Pensacola-based red snapper fishing companies participated in the industry: Vesta and Matthews, Santa Rosa Fish Company, and E.E. Saunders Company. Of the three, the E.E. Saunders Company (later renamed E.E. Saunders & Co.) would become the largest and would eventually contend with the Warren Fish Company as the major fish house in the city, operating from the Palafox Street wharf (see fig. 1). In his 1885 report to the United States Fish Commission, Captain J.W. Collins accounted for approximately 17 schooners and four sloops engaged in the red snapper industry, 13 of which New England shipyards built.⁵⁹ The growth in both the number of businesses dedicated to red snapper and the size of the city's red snapper fishing fleet in just 15 years is a testament to the profitability of the industry.

Although Pensacola was responsible for bringing Gulf fish to booming markets across the mid-west region and east coast of the United States, a number of important developments that arrived in Pensacola by the last two decades of the 19th century aided the city's new industry. One of the biggest obstacles for commercial fishers working out of Pensacola was the inability to access cost-effective transportation and preservation methods.⁶⁰ Until the construction of the Pensacola and Atlantic Railroad (later incorporated into the Louisville and Nashville Railroad), no railroad system connected Pensacola to larger markets. Although catches in red snapper, grouper, and mackerel were plentiful, most of the early trade remained relatively local and operated from the better-connected port of New Orleans. Unlike in the northeast United States, the distance between southern cities was much greater, and a lack of efficient rail transport made

⁵⁹ Collins, "Notes on the Fisheries of Western Florida," 278. Seven of these vessels were owned by the Pensacola Ice Company, seven owned by the Warren Fish Company, two owned by E.E. Saunders and Company, and one owned by the Santa Rosa Fish Company.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 276.



Figure 1. The E.E. Saunders & Co. fish house on Palafox Street Wharf circa 1890. *Source*: “Saunders’s fish company – Pensacola, Florida,” State Archives of Florida, *Florida Memory*, <http://floridamemory.com/items/show/29481>.

long-distance trade extremely expensive and prohibitive.⁶¹ The costs of preserving a fresh catch with ice and then transporting it were thus astronomical for small-scale fish houses.⁶² For this reason, most commercial fishing vessels out of Pensacola marketed their catch through New Orleans.⁶³ Within a short time of the completion of the railroad, however, both the Warren Fish Company and E.E. Saunders & Co. made deals with transportation agencies to bring rail spurs to the Baylen and Palafox Street wharves. Red snapper from Pensacola could thus reach distant markets more cost effectively.⁶⁴

An almost simultaneous innovation, the ability to produce artificial ice, allowed Pensacola to transport fresh fish by rail to previously unheard-of distances. Before, ice often had to be cut and transported from the Great Lakes or New England at an enormous cost to businesses in the south. The increasing popularity of artificial ice in commercial fishing by the mid-1880s was incredibly influential on the market for red snapper fishing. While most vessels in Pensacola before 1885 were live well schooners that kept fish alive during the short journey back to port, the advent of artificial ice resulted in a transition to “tight-bottomed” schooners. These schooners provided deeper hulls for icing catches and kept fish fresher for a longer period of time. With on-site ice capabilities in the local fish houses by 1896, the industry in Pensacola could provide fresh fish to locales as far away as Denver.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Warren, 331.

⁶² Hamilton, 4.

⁶³ Warren, 331.

⁶⁴ Collins, “Notes of the Fisheries of Western Florida,” 296-297.

⁶⁵ Collins, “Notes on the Fisheries of Western Florida,” 293; Hamilton, 4. Interestingly, the man credited with the invention of the mechanical refrigeration mechanism, Dr. John Gorrie, was from the nearby Florida Gulf port of Apalachicola.

After the introduction of rail transport and artificial ice to the Pensacola area, a new taste for fresh fish in America also worked to contribute to the “boom years” of the red snapper industry at the turn of the 20th century. The expansion of the railroad system opened new markets and increased trade opportunities. As early as 1880, Silas Stearns, an acclaimed naturalist and Warren’s partner in the Warren Fish Company, wrote an article in *Forest and Stream* advocating the eating of “neglected fishes.”⁶⁶ In large part, Stearns drew his choices of fish (red snapper, grouper, Spanish mackerel, etc.) and recipes from many of the European fishermen living along the Gulf.⁶⁷ He also argued that the Gulf could fill an important niche in sending fresh fish to market because the fisheries of the Great Lakes, where many of the Atlantic ports received their supply, froze during the winter months.⁶⁸ Areas like the mid-west, where fresh fish were impossible to acquire, soon developed a new taste for red snapper and grouper. In his report to the United States Fish Commission in 1885, Collins mentioned growing rail-based markets in Boston, Chicago, Denver, New Orleans, Jacksonville, and Minneapolis.⁶⁹

As with any industry projected to increase 50% annually, the opening of the commercial fisheries in Pensacola brought a significant number of employment opportunities.⁷⁰ The establishment of the major fishing businesses in the 1880s and their unparalleled success helped to make Pensacola the “Gloucester of the Gulf.”⁷¹ The Pensacola Navy Yard provided a number

⁶⁶ Silas Stearns, “Eating Neglected Fishes,” *Forest and Stream*, December 18, 1880, 387-388.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 389.

⁶⁸ Silas Stearns, “Examination of the Fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico,” in United States Fish Commission, *Report of the U.S. Fish Commission* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1885), 287.

⁶⁹ Collins, “Notes on the Fisheries of Western Florida,” 293.

⁷⁰ “Our Fish Industry,” *Pensacola Daily News*, May 25, 1900.

⁷¹ “Peaceful Invaders of Mexico,” *Collier’s*, March 18, 1916.

of maritime-related careers in the area before the advent of the fishing industry, but contractors or active sailors in the United States Navy held almost all of these positions. When the first New Englanders arrived to fish commercially off Pensacola in the 1840s, they ultimately provided the foundation for two of the most important characteristics that would make Pensacola fishing unique among other southern and Gulf ports: the use of established northern fishing methods and an exceptionally diverse work force.

Much of the commercial fishing out of Pensacola took place on 15-50 ton, two-masted, New England-style schooners originally brought down for seasonal fishing during the winter. Earlier schooners utilized live wells, watertight compartments in the fore and aft of the vessels that kept fish alive until the men processed them on shore.⁷² Since live wells did not present ideal conditions to keep fish alive for extended periods, trips were often limited to a couple of days and their crews of six or seven men stayed within 30 miles (48.3 kilometers) of the shore.⁷³ The introduction of tight-bottomed fishing schooners with artificial ice by the 1880s, according to Stearns, was far more profitable for the fish houses.⁷⁴

Aspects of Pensacola's commercial fishing vessels stayed constant throughout the major years of the snapper industry, notably the use of sail power and the use of the traditional New England handlining fishing method. While northern fishing giants like Gloucester largely used sailing vessels into the first decades of 20th century, engine-driven vessels began to make their debut around 1900.⁷⁵ Conversion to the engine took much longer for Pensacola, and the fleet

⁷² Fredericksen, interview.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Silas Stearns, "Examination of the Fisheries of Pensacola," 285-287.

⁷⁵ Mark Kurlansky, *Cod* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 132.

remained entirely under the sail until the 1920s. In the years before engines finally made their way into Pensacola's commercial fishing, the city's fleet was the last all sail-powered fishing fleet in the United States.⁷⁶ In part, the lack of desire to adopt the new technology was functional. Gulf fishermen had long decided that "primitive" handlining, a traditional European method brought to New England, was a superior means to catch red snapper and other Gulf fish.⁷⁷ Handlining is indeed a simple method: a fishing line with multiple baited hooks is set in the water and the fishermen then pull in their catch by hand. Cod and haddock fishing in the northern Atlantic, like that done from Gloucester, began to use the more complicated and expensive method of trawling as early as 1885.⁷⁸ This method did not work as well in the Gulf, however, because fishermen found that red snapper bit more freely at the handline.⁷⁹ While Pensacola's commercial fishermen may have been less technologically advanced than other fishermen in America, their catches did not suffer because of it and they remained dedicated to sail-power and handlines for some time.⁸⁰

Between 1885 and 1900, a few changes did occur in how fishermen undertook commercial fishing from Pensacola. While two-masted schooner smacks and handlining stayed in fashion, the development of artificial ice heralded a new kind of maritime employment. Live wells had largely disappeared, replaced by deep-hulled vessels that stored enough ice to keep

⁷⁶ Hamilton, 16.

⁷⁷ Collins, "Notes on the Fisheries of Western Florida," 287.

⁷⁸ Kurlansky, 130-133.

⁷⁹ Collins, "Notes on the Fisheries of Western Florida," 288.

⁸⁰ Warren, 333.

fish fresh for a month at a time.⁸¹ Although ice was convenient for this purpose, there was another reason why vessels needed to stay at sea for almost a month as compared with the relatively short trips they made in the initial years of the industry. Stearns, in his exploration of the Gulf fisheries in the 1880s, noticed a decrease in the supply of red snapper. His article in an 1884 bulletin of the United States Fish Commission questioned the existence of a “spongy matter” found along the shores of the Gulf and in the stomachs of some red snapper, believing that it might be a contributing factor to the scarcity of the fish.⁸² In an 1885 bulletin of the United States Fish Commission, however, Stearns recounted his research expedition throughout the Gulf, noting the “exhaustion of fisheries” through overfishing. In addition to his red snapper concerns, Stearns also recorded that the average sizes of bluefish catches between 1884 and 1885 suffered the same fate and had decreased by almost 33,000 lbs (14,968.5 kilograms).⁸³

As early as 1885, the fish industry was beginning to worry about its supply but it did little with regard to conservation. That year, the United States Fish Commission vessel *Albatross* discovered new snapper grounds between Tampa and the Dry Tortugas. These new grounds, along with the discovery of the “Lumps” (or “Western Grounds”) off Texas, renewed the industry and spurred new cities to establish fish houses dedicated to snapper.⁸⁴ Entrepreneurs established new centers in Carrabelle, Apalachicola, Panama City, Niceville, and Tampa in Florida; Pasacagoula in Mississippi; Gulf Shores in Alabama; and Freeport, Brownsville, and

⁸¹ Warren, 332.

⁸² Silas Stearns, “On the Position of the Fishing Grounds of the Gulf of Mexico” in *Bulletin of the United States Fish Commission* 4 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1884), 289-290.

⁸³ Stearns, “The Fisheries of Pensacola” 247.

⁸⁴ Isaac C. Camber, “A survey of the red snapper fishery of the Gulf of Mexico, with special reference to the Campeche Banks,” in Florida Board of Conservation *Technical Series* 12 (Tallahassee, FL, 1955), 61.

Corpus Christi in Texas.⁸⁵ With the discovery of fertile snapper grounds beyond the immediate offshore banks of Pensacola, fishing vessels utilized their artificial ice resources to keep business booming.

By the turn of the 20th century, commercial schooners based out of Pensacola more frequently fished off the northern tip of the Mexican Yucatan Peninsula in an area referred to as the Campeche Banks (see fig. 2).⁸⁶ Captains, by this point, usually hired crews of ten or more and spent up to a month at sea.⁸⁷ At the same time, a number of smaller vessels referred to as “chingamarings” or “chings” began fishing the near-shore grounds, approximately 30-150 miles (48.3-241.4 kilometers) that larger schooners of the fleet largely abandoned. Little historical or archaeological evidence exists regarding chings, but they appear to be any kind of vessel less than 20 tons that engaged in snapper fishing. Though large fish houses did not own great numbers of chings, they regularly purchased catches from independent ching crews as a supplement to what they received from the larger fleet smacks.⁸⁸

A 1900 article on the fishing industry in the *Pensacola Daily News* reported that the major fish companies in the area employed over 1,000 men with 50 large schooners.⁸⁹ In little more than 15 years, the number of commercial fishing smacks had tripled. A dearth of information survives on the red snapper fishing industry in Pensacola after 1900, likely due to

⁸⁵ Camber, 61.

⁸⁶ Camber, 63; Fred Hunt, *Campeche Days: After the Snapper from Pensacola* (1942; repr., Pensacola, FL: Pensacola Historical Society), 4-8.

⁸⁷ Fredericksen, interview.

⁸⁸ Modeste Hargis, “The Red Snapper Fleet,” The Florida Writer’s Project Collection, October 1940, Pensacola Historical Society Resource Center, Pensacola Historical Society, Pensacola, FL.

⁸⁹ “Our Fish Industry,” *Pensacola Daily News*, May 25, 1900.

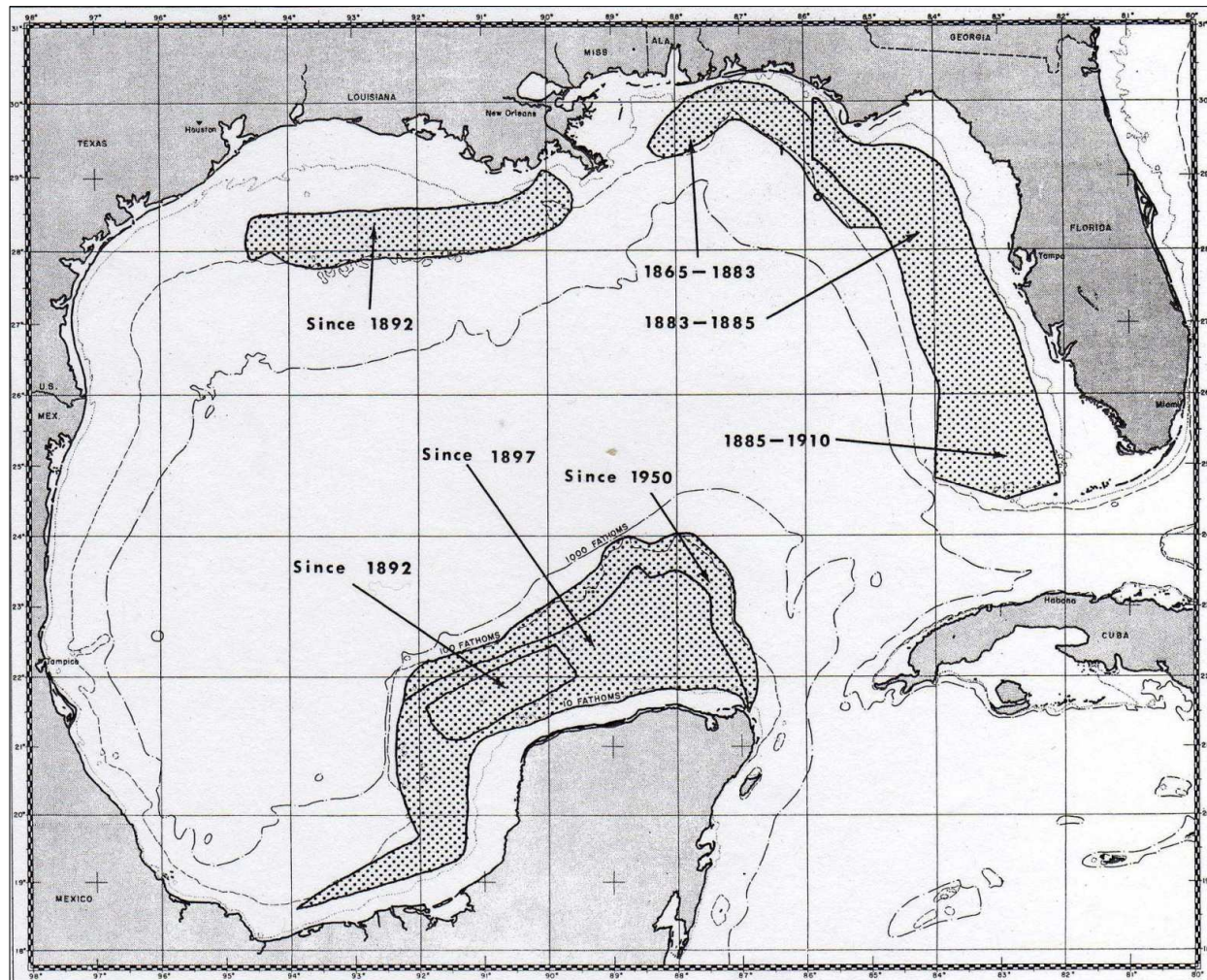


Figure 2. Changes in red snapper commercial fishing grounds in the Gulf of Mexico from 1865-1950. Source: U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, *A Review of the Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper Fishery*, by James S. Carpenter, Circular 208 (Washington, DC, 1965).

the number of severe hurricanes that struck the area during this time, but sources indicate that a series of unfortunate circumstances hindered the prosperity of the fishing industry.

In the first decade of the 20th century, the well-established and exceptionally productive Campeche snapper grounds became involved in a bitter border dispute between the Mexican government and snapper fishermen from Pensacola. In a somewhat dramatic final conflict, Mexican authorities seized the northwest Florida-built fishing smack *Silas Stearns* of the Warren Fish Company in Pensacola, *T.J. Traften* of Mobile, Alabama, and *Adams* of Galveston, Texas.⁹⁰ Mexico detained the smack crews for fishing the Campeche banks, argued to be within Mexican borders, and held them in a “vile” prison in the Mexican city of Progreso until the intervention of American diplomats.⁹¹ During talks with the Mexican government, the fish houses successfully argued that the Campeche Banks lay outside of the Mexican border and secured rights to these essential grounds for American red snapper fishing companies. While the crews promptly returned home, the smack *Silas Stearns* remained in Mexico until a captain from the Warren Fish Company retrieved her from Vera Cruz in December 1906.⁹²

While the dispute over the Campeche Banks with Mexico was relatively short-lived, a number of violent hurricanes struck Pensacola and northwest Florida in 1906, 1916, and 1926. Not unlike those that plagued the Spanish during their initial attempts to settle northwest Florida, these hurricanes were, and are, an unpleasant effect of the warm, wet climate that initially drew so many to the area in the 19th century. Photographs of downtown Pensacola following each of these hurricanes show scenes of intense destruction. The hurricane of 1906 destroyed fishing

⁹⁰ “Old Glory Protecting Sailors of Seized Boat, *Pensacola Journal*, May 6, 1906.

⁹¹ “Pensacola Fishermen in Vile Mexican Prison,” *Pensacola Journal*, May 3, 1906.

⁹² “The Seizure of the Schr. *Silas Stearns*,” *Pensacola Journal*, December 25, 1906.

vessels belonging to all of the Pensacola fish houses and left a wake of broken timber and destroyed wharves along the waterfront. A headline article for the *Pensacola Journal* on September 27, 1906, the day after the storm, vividly describes the disaster for the E.E. Saunders & Co. fish house:

The entire plant of Saunders & Co. is in ruins and the wharf is practically destroyed. The main building was shifted to the west of its original location and what now remains of it is tottering on the edge of the pier. Palafox Street...is filled with rubbish of every description, including timbers, lumber, reefs and pieces of vessels....⁹³

Apart from the fish house itself, damage to E.E. Saunders & Co.'s fleet also included damage to 32 of 40 fleet vessels.⁹⁴ The 1916 and 1926 hurricanes were equally devastating to Pensacola and its red snapper fishing industry. Lashed each time by high tides and strong winds, the Pensacola waterfront became a mess of buildings, boats, and ships. After 1916, both the Warren Fish Company and E.E. Saunders & Co. lost a number of fishing smacks and both Baylen and Palafox Street wharves required significant rebuilding efforts (see fig. 3).⁹⁵ The hurricane in 1926, the last of the "Big Six" storms, damaged most vessels in the E.E. Saunders & Co. fleet and the Warren Fish Company suffered similarly. Again, all of the wharves along the Pensacola waterfront suffered heavy damage and rebuilding came as an expense to private companies and to the city.⁹⁶ Having to repair, reconstruct, and restock every ten years after this series of damaging storms took a heavy toll on all the Pensacola fish houses, as it did for most business in the city.

⁹³ "Most Terrific Tropical Hurricane," *Pensacola Journal*, September 27, 1906.

⁹⁴ "Snappers at 10 Cts. Straight," *Pensacola Daily News*, October 3, 1906.

⁹⁵ "Pensacola Fish Companies Hard Hit by the Storm," *Pensacola Journal*, July 6, 1916; "City Wharves Are Heavily Damaged," *Pensacola Journal*, July 6, 1916.

⁹⁶ "Monetary Damage City Probably Not Over Two Million," *Pensacola Journal*, September 22, 1926.



Figure 3. The Pensacola waterfront nearly destroyed after the 1906 hurricane. *Source:* “View of Pensacola Harbor, in the aftermath of the hurricane of 1906 - Pensacola, Florida,” State Archives of Florida, *Florida Memory*, <http://floridamemory.com/items/show/28616>.

Disagreements over fishermen's wages between 1900-1920 were also of detriment to the stability of the industry in Pensacola.⁹⁷ While most of the major fish houses in Pensacola set prices for their snapper catch and ensured steadier wages for Pensacola fishermen, competition increased from other cities catching snapper and from large trawlers catching mass quantities of other fish species. In addition, the fact that the fish houses consistently received 30-40% of the vessel's share after arriving in port did not sit well with some fishermen.⁹⁸ Although strikes were generally short-lived and negotiated by unions, many men sought employment elsewhere around Pensacola until they could set sail again. On December 18, 1901, the *Pensacola Daily News* reported "from 50 to 100 are daily employed at the railroad docks in which work most [fishermen] are proficient."⁹⁹ For the fish houses, long strikes were bad for profit as fishermen not only demanded increased wages, but also the supply and demand for snapper decreased in the markets.¹⁰⁰

The effects of larger national and international events also took a serious toll on the industry in the 20th century. World War I, though temporarily increasing demand for red snapper, drew many fishermen to better paying jobs on Navy or merchant marine ships. The labor shortage for Pensacola's fish houses ended with the war and some renewal of the industry took place.¹⁰¹ At this time, however, the composition of the fishing fleet changed dramatically

⁹⁷ "Fishermen Peacefully Proceed with Strike," *Pensacola Journal*, September 17, 1919, 2; "Fishermen are Belligerent," *Pensacola Daily News*, January 14, 1902; "Fishermen on a Strike," *Pensacola Daily News*, November 27, 1901, 4.

⁹⁸ "Fishermen on a Strike," *Pensacola Daily News*, November 27, 1901, 4.

⁹⁹ "Striking Fishermen Seek Work in Other Lines," *Pensacola Daily News*, December 18, 1901, 4.

¹⁰⁰ "Fishermen are Seeking More Profitable Fields," *Pensacola Journal*, April 6, 1906.

¹⁰¹ Charles Robert McNeil, "The Red Snapper Industry in Pensacola, 1845-1965: An Historical Perspective" (master's thesis, University of West Florida, 1977), 19-21.

with the introduction of “bulgines” or internal combustion engines. Until the 1920s, Pensacola’s fishing fleet remained the last all-sail powered fleet in the United States.¹⁰² Unlike other fisheries that began making the transition from sail power in the late 19th century, Pensacola’s red snapper fishermen had seen no real profit or benefit in employing engines. Seasonal catches had remained relatively stable (albeit with more vessels fishing) and traditional fishing methods were inexpensive. The introduction of bulgines to the Pensacola fleet heralded the end of an era for both the city and the nation.

The Great Depression, followed by World War II, was especially harmful to an already hurting industry. With fewer fleet vessels and stiff pricing competition from larger fish producers in the Gulf, northeast, and Great Lakes, Pensacola houses were unable to affordably supply large markets. Like World War I, World War II depleted the Pensacola snapper fishing work force through offers of better pay for able-bodied seamen. Additionally, the threat of U-boats offshore in the Gulf of Mexico kept smaller vessels, still operating during the war, close to home.¹⁰³

Pensacola, for two decades after the war, continued to participate in commercial red snapper fishing. Landings increased for a time after World War II with a renewed work force and technological introductions to vessels like fathometers, reels, and wire line.¹⁰⁴ While it is clear that the red snapper fishing fleet in the Gulf of Mexico steadily grew in the 1950s and 1960s, the extent of Pensacola’s role during this time is unclear. Though vessels still operated from Pensacola, the city seems to have shifted to a secondary role in importance among Gulf fishing industries. Additionally, the eventual closure of Mexican territorial waters during these years

¹⁰² Hunt, 23.

¹⁰³ McNeil, 41.

¹⁰⁴ J.B. Siebenaler and W. Brady, “A high speed manual commercial fishing reel” *State of Florida Board of Conservation Technical Series 4* (St. Petersburg, FL: Marine Laboratory, 1952), 1-11.

included the expanse of fishing grounds that Pensacola fishermen relied upon the most: the Campeche Banks. While no recorded dates exist for the end of the two most prominent fish houses in the city, the Warren Fish Company and E.E. Saunders & Co., they each likely went out of business sometime in the 1960s.¹⁰⁵

A combination of factors thus contributed to the city's diminishing role and eventual withdrawal from large-scale red snapper fishing. First, the continued depletion of red snapper populations in the northern Gulf of Mexico had burdened the industry as early as 1881 when naturalist and Warren Fish Company partner Silas Stearns first observed declining sizes and numbers of fish. Second, significant rising costs in fleet maintenance were a burden to fish houses as vessels traveled a greater distance to the Campeche Banks. Third, by the 1890s, markets were no longer solely dependent on Pensacola for Gulf fish due to growing competition from diverse American fish companies in other areas of the Gulf of Mexico. Finally, Pensacola fishermen were unable to exploit Mexico's Campeche Banks grounds, an area that solely sustained the industry following the depletion of northern Gulf fishing grounds in the late 19th century. Though the "Gloucester of the Gulf" no more, Pensacola continues to partake in fishing today through recreational fishing and small commercial fishing operations for local and regional markets.

The history of the boom and bust of the fishing industry in Pensacola parallels, in many ways, the histories of the many industries that grew so rapidly in the area during the last half of the 19th century. The lumber and naval stores industries, Pensacola's most profitable natural

¹⁰⁵ Warren Fish Company Records, 1869-1974. 01/MSS 1986-029, Special Collections, Florida State University, Gainesville, FL. The Florida State University Special Collections and Archives currently hold historical records on Andrew F. Warren and the Warren Fish Company for the years 1869-1947. Florida State University acquired the collections in 1954 from the Warren Fish Company. Based on this collection information, the company was likely still in business by 1954 but no later than 1960. The records for the years 1947-1954 remain missing.

resource-driven industries, steadily declined as over-harvested timber stands no longer produced the quantity or quality of lumber that had earned such a reputation over the preceding decades. By 1939, two former industrial giants in Pensacola, the Bagdad Land and Lumber Company and the Bruce Dry Dock Company, closed their doors.¹⁰⁶ Like the fishing industry, the combined effects of destructive hurricanes, economic depression, international crises, and diminishing resources brought Pensacola's once-thriving shipping presence to a near standstill by the 1950s.

Despite the end of the city's great industrial era, Pensacola remains an important coastal city in the south largely because of the utility and beauty of its natural landscape. Situated on the same location overlooking Pensacola Pass as the historic Navy Yard, Fort Barrancas, and Presidio Santa María de Galve, Naval Air Station Pensacola drives the local economy and remains a strategic training facility for the American Navy and Marine Corps. In addition, an active tourism industry enjoys a large number of visitors who flock to the largely undeveloped white, sandy beaches of Santa Rosa Island. A part of this modern tourism derives from the legacy of the city's fishing industry: recreational fishing charters ply the waters daily as excited fishermen wait on deck in hopes of bringing in the day's biggest catch (see fig. 4). Thus, while the area no longer commands successful shipping industries as it did at the turn of the 20th century, its people and its landscape have adapted and found new ways to thrive.

¹⁰⁶ Kennedy, 185-186.



Figure 4. Pensacola tourists catch red snapper as a pastime on the shipwreck of the USS *Massachusetts* (BB-2) in 1958. *Source:* Karl E. Holland, "Bob Honaker ready to unhook a red snapper caught by Nancy Beach - Pensacola, Florida," State Archives of Florida, *Florida Memory*, <http://floridamemory.com/items/show/75383>.

CHAPTER III

THE SAILING VESSELS

As the first individuals to participate in fishing on a commercial scale from Pensacola, New England fishermen's need to adapt to Pensacola's unique, Gulf of Mexico marine environment was paramount. Fishermen carefully selected the vessels they utilized to meet the challenges of marine transport in the Gulf while making an effort to sustain their livelihoods. As maritime historian Richard Steffy contends, the design or choice of a vessel was heavily dependent on economic reasons. Pensacola commercial fishermen, like others with maritime livelihoods, chose the vessels they did to get their "cargo...from here to there as quickly, safely, and cheaply as was practical in order to make as much profit as possible."¹⁰⁷ Thus, informed by both the Gulf marine environment and commercial fishermen's preferential decisions in achieving maximum profits, red snapper commercial fishing vessels were uniquely suited for their purpose.

Pensacola commercial fishermen preferred two predominant vessel types, each fairly well represented in the historical record: the fishing schooner and the chingamaring, or "ching" (see fig. 5).¹⁰⁸ In 1885, an early year in Pensacola's commercial fishing enterprise, Captain J.W. Collins describes the utilization of both tight-bottomed schooners and live-welled schooners and sloops, most of "northern build."¹⁰⁹ Live-welled vessels earned the nickname "snapper smacks" for the sound of the water smacking the interior hull of the vessel as they traveled.¹¹⁰ After the

¹⁰⁷ J. Richard Steffy, *Wooden Ship Building* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1994), 10.

¹⁰⁸ Camber, 21.

¹⁰⁹ Collins, "Notes on the Fisheries of Western Florida," 283.

¹¹⁰ United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Fisheries, 1.

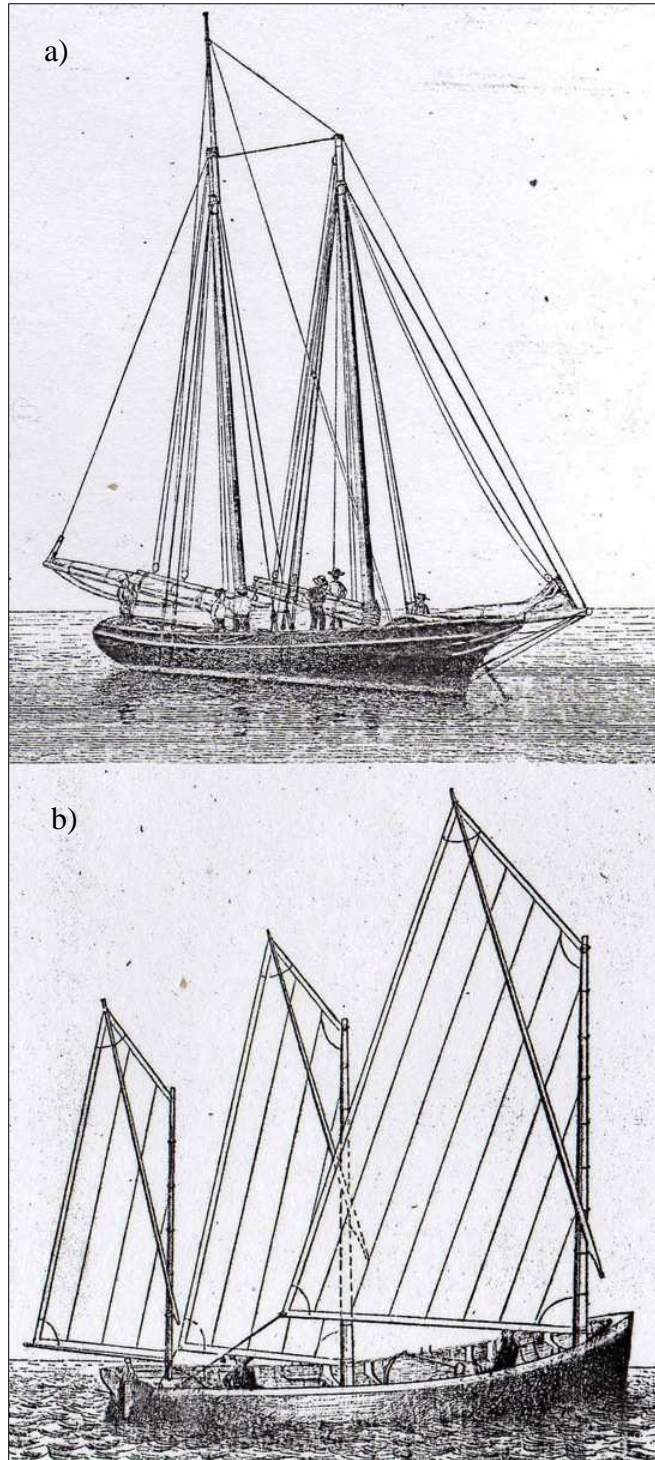


Figure 5. A typical Pensacola fishing schooner smack (a) and a typical Pensacola fishing ching (b). *Source:* Unknown original source, Fishing industry vertical file, Pensacola Historical Society Resource Center, Pensacola, FL.

introduction of artificial ice, tight-bottomed schooners became far more common, though the nickname “snapper smack” remained in describing all fishing schooners in later years.¹¹¹ Fishing schooners, live-welled or tight-bottomed, tended to be between 50-100 feet (15.2-30.5 meters) in length and had gross tonnages anywhere from 25-100 tons.¹¹² As is described in more detail below, the size of commercial fishing vessels depended largely on the years in which they operated. In general, the later, larger vessels tended to fish the Campeche Banks off the Yucatan Peninsula with crews of 8-12 individuals.¹¹³ The Pensacola fish houses continued using many of their sailing schooners long after 1920, though they were often rebuilt to include an auxiliary engine.¹¹⁴

Describing the second predominant type of commercial fishing vessel, the ching, is far more difficult. The earliest mention of the ching, in Captain Collins’s report to the United States Commission of Fish and Fisheries, suggests that the vessels were centerboard vessels with open decks with “long, sharp bow; round bilge, fine run, and vertical heart-shaped, square stern, the latter being rather light and very symmetrical. This craft is rigged as a three-masted schooner,

¹¹¹ Fredericksen, interview; “Panama City’s First Fishing Smack,” *Panama City Pilot*, November 12, 1908; “Milton Special to The Journal,” *Pensacola Journal*, June 23, 1905.

¹¹² United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Statistics, *Thirteenth Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 47th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1881), 1-185; United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Twenty-Third Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 52nd Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1891), 1-197; United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Thirty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 56th Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1900), 1-201; United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 61st Cong., 3rd sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1910), 1-127; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Fifty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 66th Cong., 3rd sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1920), 1-59; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 71st Cong., 3rd sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1930), 568-613.

¹¹³ Camber, 21.

¹¹⁴ Survey of The Warren Fish Company fleet by Marine Surveyor C.W. Oliver, March 25, 1939, Fishing Industry Vertical File, Pensacola Historical Society Resource Center, Pensacola, FL.

without jib, and carries three sprit sails, the mizzen only having a boom.”¹¹⁵ In 1935, Jarvis described chings as “nondescript” in design and rig, usually carrying three-six men as crew.¹¹⁶ Due to their smaller size and open deck construction, chings typically stayed only 30-150 miles (48.3-241.4 kilometers) from port and could carry 500-3,000 pounds (226.8-1360.8 kilograms) of red snapper collected over a trip of three to six days.¹¹⁷ Both Jarvis and Collins note that chings were not directly owned by the commercial fish houses like Warren Fish Company and E.E. Saunders & Co., but were instead rented from bar pilots generally by local black fishermen who sometimes sold their catch commercially.¹¹⁸

Of the fishing vessels utilized by the Pensacola-based industry, sailing vessels truly dominated the boom and bust years of commercial fishing. Pensacola’s fishing fleet, among all the fishing fleets working from United States ports, was the last all-sail fleet. The dominion of sail ended in Pensacola in the 1920s, approximately 40 years before the city’s major fish houses closed their doors. Sailing vessels shaped the beginnings of the industry, expanded that industry, and, as will be discussed later in this chapter, their disappearance from the Pensacola waterfront marked the end of traditional styles of fishing. For these reasons, the subsequent discussion and analysis of fishing vessels engaged in red snapper commercial fishing from Pensacola focuses solely on sailing vessels.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ Collins, “Notes on the Fisheries of Western Florida,” 285.

¹¹⁶ United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Fisheries, 7.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 7.

¹¹⁸ Collins, “Notes on the Fisheries of Western Florida,” 285; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Fisheries, 8. The racial division among black and white commercial fishermen is discussed at greater length in chapter 4.

¹¹⁹ Hunt, 23. Unfortunately, almost all of these sailing vessels are schooners, as chings seem to have been too small to require formal registration and are largely absent from the archaeological record.

To better understand the composition of Pensacola's commercial fishing fleet, this chapter utilizes both historical and archaeological records. The *List of Merchant Vessels of the United States (LMVUS)* is among the more important historical records considered, providing a significant amount of quantitative information on vessels' measurements.¹²⁰ Additional historical resources include newspaper articles, insurance records, the Fishing Masters' Association's *Fishermen of the Atlantic* publication, and various other records that mention the names of known Pensacola commercial fishing vessels.¹²¹ Archaeologically, this chapter explores three shipwrecks that are likely former fishing vessels: the Snapper wreck, Hamilton's wreck, and the alleged *Priscilla*.¹²² These wrecks are discussed in-depth to determine probable characteristics of fishing vessels and any associated material culture details that are unmentioned in historical records.

¹²⁰ United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Statistics, *Thirteenth Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-185. United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Twenty-Third Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-197; United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Thirty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-201; United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-127; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Fifty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-59; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 568-613.

¹²¹ "Harbor, River, and Marine News," *Pensacola Journal*, March 10, 1908; "Disabled by a Gulf Storm," *The Pensacola Journal*, March 21, 1908; "Harbor, River, and Marine News," *Pensacola Journal*, April 2, 1908; "Harbor, River, and Marine News," *Pensacola Journal*, April 4, 1908; "Harbor, River, and Marine News," *Pensacola Journal*, November 13, 1908; "Harbor, River, and Marine News," *Pensacola Journal*, November 28, 1908; "Harbor, River, and Marine News," *Pensacola Journal*, February 9, 1909; "Harbor, River, and Marine News," *Pensacola Journal*, February 17, 1909; "Harbor, River, and Marine News," *Pensacola Journal*, April 17, 1909; "Harbor, River, and Marine News," *Pensacola Journal*, April 28, 1909; "Red Snapper Plentiful for the Holidays," *Pensacola Journal*, December 23, 1909; "Marine Reports," *New York Tribune*, November 1, 1921; "Survey of The Warren Fish Company fleet by Marine Surveyor C.W. Oliver, March 25, 1939, Fishing Industry Vertical File, Pensacola Historical Society Archives, Pensacola, Florida; Fishing Masters' Association, *Fishermen of the Atlantic* (Boston: Fishing Masters' Association, Inc., 1912), 123-124; Fishing Masters' Association, *Fishermen of the Atlantic* (Boston: Fishing Masters' Association, Inc., 1914), 156-157; Collins, "Notes on the Fisheries of Western Florida," 284-285.

¹²² Jason Raupp, "Hook, Line, and Sinker: Historical and Archaeological Investigations of the Snapper Wreck (8SR1001);" Moore; Meide, McClean, and Wiser.

Utilizing a thorough examination of the Pensacola red snapper fishing industry's vessels (those that are visible historically and archaeologically), this chapter builds a "model" of the typical all-sail commercial fishing schooner working from Pensacola between 1860-1930. Trends and characteristics compiled from a variety of sources not only help reconstruct the city's fleet, they also help elucidate larger changes that took place in the industry's relationship with the Gulf of Mexico marine environment. Additionally, a model of fishing schooners during these years may also aid in the identification of unassociated archaeological shipwreck sites in the Pensacola and northwest Florida area. This chapter finally tests the compiled data by examining three local shipwrecks, one of which is a known former commercial fishing schooner, and two of which are otherwise unidentified.

List of Merchant Vessels of the United States

Published annually since 1868, the *List of Merchant Vessels of the United States* (*LMVUS*) contains a register of all actively working commercial vessels in the United States. While the *LMVUS* provides only limited information, a longer-term review of this annual publication for the years 1881-1930 allows significant insight into fishing vessel construction trends.¹²³ These trends, in turn, help describe the larger social, economic, and ecological changes that acted upon the historical trajectory of Pensacola commercial fishing.

The fields of information collected on each vessel in the *LMVUS* varies from year to year, but most years contain information on a vessel's official number, signal letters (if any), type of

¹²³ United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Statistics, *Thirteenth Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-185; United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Twenty-Third Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-197; United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Thirty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-201; United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-127; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Fifty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-59; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 568-613. *LMVUS* editions prior to 1881 were unavailable to the author.

rig, name, gross and net tonnages, length, beam (breadth), depth, year built, build location, and current home port. The years surveyed for this research, 1881, 1891, 1900, 1910, 1920, and 1930, all show variations in information.¹²⁴ For example, the 1881 *LMVUS* contains no information on vessel length, beam, depth, year of build, or build location.¹²⁵ Additionally, 1910 is the first year in which the *LMVUS* records the crew size.¹²⁶ In 1930, the *LMVUS* also provides the service of vessels, whether fishing, freight, etc.¹²⁷ These types of “hard” data are excellent primary sources of information on a huge range of vessels operating in Pensacola and in the United States for the last half of the 19th century and the early 20th century.

Until 1930, when the service of vessels is provided in the *LMVUS*, it is impossible to ascertain whether a vessel was engaged in fishing. Fortunately, newspaper articles, reports to government agencies, insurance documents, and the Fishing Masters’ Association’s *Fishermen of the Atlantic* publications all provide the names of vessels employed in Pensacola red snapper fishing.¹²⁸ By compiling names of vessels from these sources, it was possible to create a list of

¹²⁴ Unfortunately, the *LMVUS* for 1880 and 1890 was unavailable to the author and the 1881 and 1891 *LMVUS* were reviewed instead. Choices for the publication years surveyed for this research are intended to follow the ten-year data collected on commercial fishermen in Pensacola from the United States Federal Census.

¹²⁵ United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Statistics, *Thirteenth Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-185.

¹²⁶ United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-127.

¹²⁷ United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 568-613.

¹²⁸ “Harbor, River, and Marine News,” *Pensacola Journal*, March 10, 1908; “Disabled by a Gulf Storm,” *The Pensacola Journal*, March 21, 1908; “Harbor, River, and Marine News,” *Pensacola Journal*, April 2, 1908; “Harbor, River, and Marine News,” *Pensacola Journal*, April 4, 1908; “Harbor, River, and Marine News,” *Pensacola Journal*, November 13, 1908; “Harbor, River, and Marine News,” *Pensacola Journal*, November 28, 1908; “Harbor, River, and Marine News,” *Pensacola Journal*, February 9, 1909; “Harbor, River, and Marine News,” *Pensacola Journal*, February 17, 1909; “Harbor, River, and Marine News,” *Pensacola Journal*, April 17, 1909; “Harbor, River, and Marine News,” *Pensacola Journal*, April 28, 1909; “Red Snapper Plentiful for the Holidays,” *Pensacola Journal*, December 23, 1909; “Marine Reports,” *New York Tribune*, November 1, 1921; “Survey of The Warren Fish Company fleet by Marine Surveyor C.W. Oliver, March 25, 1939, Fishing Industry Vertical File,

known sailing vessels engaged in Pensacola red snapper fishing from 1881-1930 that includes the basic ship construction data featured in the *LMVUS*. After listing the *LMVUS* data on known fishing vessels, basic statistical analysis on each *LMVUS* year (1881, 1891, 1900, 1910, 1920, and 1930) provided the averages on vessel build location, length, beam, depth, and gross tonnage. Analyzing these averages over the survey period, a number of developments in Pensacola commercial fishing vessels become apparent.

Patterns in the location of build for all known sailing vessels employed in the red snapper commercial fishing industry provide some interesting insight into the cultural and economic relationship between New England and Pensacola at the time. In the 1881 *LMVUS*, New England shipbuilders supplied approximately 67% of the fishing schooners home-ported in Pensacola.¹²⁹ Since the major fish companies in Pensacola often chartered fishing boats from New England during the winters at this early date in the industry, this percentage is probably not representative of all of the vessels engaged in red snapper fishing. After 1900, however, the number of locally built fishing smacks steadily increased.¹³⁰ By 1920, local shipyards produced 29.6% of all known fishing vessels.¹³¹ The *LMVUS* mentions build locations at shipyards in Pensacola, Mary Esther, and Milton, while documents from a marine survey of the Warren Fish Company fleet

Pensacola Historical Society, Pensacola, Florida; Fishing Masters' Association, 123-124; Fishing Masters' Association, 156-157; Collins, "Notes on the Fisheries of Western Florida," 284-285.

¹²⁹ United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Statistics, *Thirteenth Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-185.

¹³⁰ United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Thirty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-201.

¹³¹ United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-127.

additionally reference a build location in Millville.¹³² Brief references to the local construction of new fishing schooners can also be found in contemporaneous newspapers. A March 26, 1911, article from an unknown Pensacola newspaper describes the construction of a “new smack...to be 70 to 75 feet overall and...to be built by Pensacola carpenters” for the Warren Fish Company.¹³³

The introduction of auxiliary engines to the industry in the 1920s ended the supremacy of sailing vessels among the Pensacola fishing fleet. These new “bulgine” vessels, as journalist Fred Hunt describes them, were the same fishing schooners utilized in years prior with the addition of a diesel-powered engine.¹³⁴ The move away from sailing vessels was a practical one. As Norman Jarvis mentions in his 1935 report to the Commission of Fish and Fisheries, many commercial fishermen believed that there was “a decrease in the number of red snappers in certain areas of the Campeche Bank, indicated by the fact that the average catch per vessels is smaller than formerly....”¹³⁵ As a result, “a greater effort” was required, one that took the form of auxiliary

¹³² United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Statistics, *Thirteenth Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-185; United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Twenty-Third Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-197; United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Thirty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-201; United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-127; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Fifty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-59; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 568-613; Rudder Publishing Company, *The Rudder Marine Directory: A Trade List of Shipbuilding, Shipping, and Marine Industries* (New York: Rudder Publishing Company, 1920), 96. This research was unable to uncover any substantial information on local shipyards specifically building snapper vessels. Based on references to the cities building commercial fishing vessels for Pensacola’s fleet found in the *LMVUS* and marine surveyor records, the 1920 *Rudder Marine Directory: A Trade List of Shipbuilding, Shipping and Marine Industries* could provide the names of some of the local shipbuilding operations. In Pensacola, the *Rudder Marine Directory* mentions F.F. Bingham, Bruce Dry Dock Co., J.W. Bullock Shipbuilding Co., Dunwoody-Alken Towboat Co., Gulf Machine Works, Pensacola Marine Railway Co., Pensacola Shipbuilding Co., Pensacola Trading Co., Pensacola Vessel Construction Corp., E.E. Saunders & Co., and The Warren Fish Company. The *Rudder Marine Directory* also mentions Bagdad Shipbuilding Co. and Hoodless Shipbuilding Co. in Milton, and American Lumber Co. and Gulf Shipbuilding Co. in Millville.

¹³³ “New Fishing Smack Being Built Here,” Unknown Pensacola Newspaper, March 26, 1911, Fishing Industry Vertical File, Pensacola Historical Society Resource Center, Pensacola, FL.

¹³⁴ Hunt, 23.

¹³⁵ United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Fisheries, 14.

engines in the 1920s and experimentation with other methods of fishing beginning in the 1930s.¹³⁶

Jarvis's 1935 report also suggests that the utilization of traditional hand-lines to catch red snapper yielded small catches, resulting in a relatively high cost for red snapper as compared with fish from New England fisheries.¹³⁷ Likely a result of the Great Depression during the time of Jarvis's report, the price of red snapper was thus uncompetitive and the Pensacola commercial fisheries saw a significant drop in demand: "dealers in such markets as New Orleans, Memphis, Nashville, and Birmingham, who formerly ordered one or more carloads of 20,000 pounds each, per week...reduced their orders to about 2,000 pounds per week."¹³⁸ A significant amount of faith and investment went into re-outfitting the local fishing fleets with electric reels, hand-powered reels, and depth finders in hopes of creating a resurgence in demand for red snapper. As is described in greater detail in chapter five, these new innovations were successful for a time.

That the characteristics of Pensacola's fishing schooners were drastically altered during these years is evident in the 1930 *LMVUS*. While 27 known all-sail commercial fishing vessels are present in the 1920 *LMVUS*, only five are present in the 1930 *LMVUS*, and only one sailing vessel remained in the 1939 *LMVUS*.¹³⁹ Many of the vessels listed as sailing vessels in *LMVUS* publications prior to 1930 still worked the red snapper fisheries, but were reclassified as "motor" vessels in the *LMVUS* after the introduction of auxiliary engines. As evidenced in a 1939

¹³⁶ United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Fisheries, 14, 23-25.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 20-21.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹³⁹ United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Fifty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-59; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 568-613; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 76th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1939), 314-323.

document written by a marine surveyor regarding estimates on the values of 14 “wooden motor schooners” belonging to the Warren Fish Company, both northwest Florida and New England-built fishing vessels were refitted with auxiliary engines.¹⁴⁰ Interestingly, those five remaining all-sail fishing schooners still operating from Pensacola in the 1930s were built entirely by New England shipbuilders.¹⁴¹ The reasons why the fish companies selected only New England-built vessels to remain reliant on sail are unclear, though many were of extreme age by 1930 (18-43 years old) and may have simply been retired.

Throughout the reviewed *LMVUS* years, the most noticeable trend is the steady increase in vessel length, beam (or breadth), depth, and gross tonnage among New England and Florida-built schooners over time. In 1891, the first year in which all major measurements are provided, vessels originating in Florida had a mean length of 46.1 feet (14.1 meters), a mean beam of 15.0 feet (4.6 meters), and a mean depth of 4.6 feet (1.4 meters). Their gross tonnage averaged approximately 11.6 tons. For vessels originating in New England for the same year, the mean length was 54.1 feet (16.5 meters), the mean beam was 16.7 feet (5.1 meters), and the mean depth was 7 feet (2.1 meters). New England vessels’ gross tonnage in 1891 averaged 29.5 tons.¹⁴² Figure 6 shows the steady climb in all aspects of vessel size for both Florida and New England-built vessels during the analyzed *LMVUS* years. By 1920, Florida-built vessels averaged a 74.9-foot (22.8-meter) length, 20.5-foot (6.2-meter) beam, and an 8.7-foot (2.7-meter) depth, with a mean gross tonnage of 55.9 tons. New England-built vessels in 1920 averaged a 78.7-foot

¹⁴⁰ “Survey of The Warren Fish Company fleet by Marine Surveyor C.W. Oliver, March 25, 1939, Fishing Industry Vertical File, Pensacola Historical Society, Pensacola, Florida.

¹⁴¹ United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 568-613.

¹⁴² United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Twenty-Third Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-197.

(24.0-meter) length, 21.6 foot (6.6-meter) depth, and 9.1-foot (2.8 meter) depth, with a mean gross tonnage of 71.6 tons.¹⁴³ Data from the 1930 *LMVUS*, as seen in figure 6, is less comparative between build locations due to the lack of any all-sail Florida-built vessels working in commercial fishing that year. The data does show, however, that the mean size and tonnage of those vessels still operating as sailed fishing schooners continued to increase.¹⁴⁴

The *LMVUS* data analysis suggests that the differences between Florida-built and New England-built fishing schooners were slight in regard to overall size. Florida-built vessels tended to be somewhat smaller than New England-built vessels. Figure 6 shows not only the general increase in all vessel lengths in *LMVUS* years from 1881-1930, but also the marginally smaller size of Florida-built vessels.¹⁴⁵ Despite the averages visible in the *LMVUS* data, size is not a determinant of a fishing schooner's build location: some of the schooners built in Florida were actually larger than their New England counterparts. In the 1900 *LMVUS*, for example, the *Silas Stearns* is listed as being built in Milton, Florida, in 1897, and having a length of 67.5 feet (20.6 meters), a beam of 19.8 feet (6.0 meters), a depth of 7 feet (2.1 meters), and a gross tonnage of

¹⁴³ United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Fifty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-59.

¹⁴⁴ United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 568-613.

¹⁴⁵ United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Statistics, *Thirteenth Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-185; United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Twenty-Third Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-197; United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Thirty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-201; United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-127; Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Fifty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-59; Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 568-613. Although the 1881 *LMVUS* does not include data on any measurement apart from gross tonnage, the data on those vessels present in 1881 was taken from the data on vessels of the same name from the 1891 *LMVUS*. If the gross tonnages and names were the same, then the author presumed that the vessels between the two years were the same.

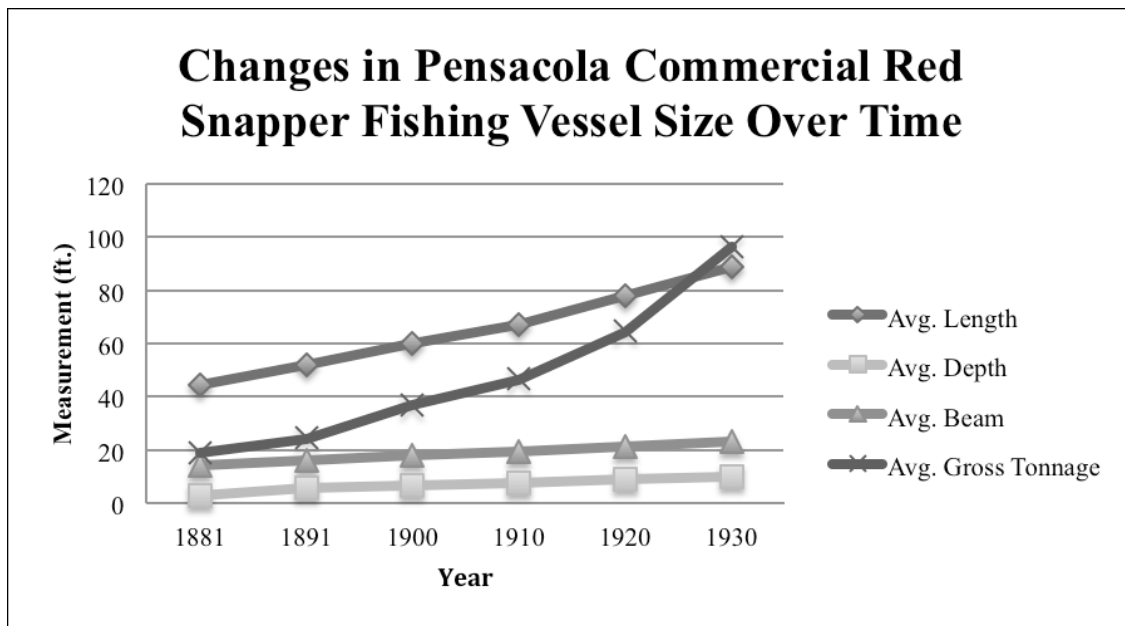


Figure 6. Line graph of changes in Pensacola commercial red snapper fishing vessel size over time.

41 tons.¹⁴⁶ A New England-built vessel in the same 1900 *LMVUS*, constructed in 1895 in Phippsburg, Maine, and named *Sarah L. Harding*, had a significantly smaller length of 53.6 feet (16.3 meters), a beam of 17.5 feet (5.3 meters), a depth of 6.3 feet (1.9 meters), and a gross tonnage of 31 tons.¹⁴⁷ Thus, while Florida-built fishing vessels tended, on average, to be smaller than New England-built fishing vessels for all years of the *LMVUS* reviewed for this research, the size difference based on build location is not necessarily true on a case-by-case basis.

Though the *LMVUS* data collected for this research likely does not account for every commercial fishing vessel home ported in Pensacola from 1881-1930, the data are largely representative of the composition of the red snapper fishing industry's fleet and represents over 80 individual vessels. For the analyzed years, a trend toward the increasing size of all vessels is

¹⁴⁶ Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Thirty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 174. This *Silas Stearns* is the same vessel entangled in the 1906 Mexican border dispute mentioned in chapter 2.

¹⁴⁷ Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Thirty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 170.

obvious. Less obvious, but equally important, is the increased use of local, Florida-built vessels that were slightly smaller but comparable to their New England-built counterparts.

The Snapper Wreck

Apart from vessels mentioned in the *LMVUS*, a few shipwrecks in the northwest Florida region can potentially be associated with Pensacola's red snapper fishing fleet, the first of which is the Snapper wreck. Though the Florida Bureau of Archaeological Research's Pensacola Shipwreck Survey first recorded the wreck in 1991, maritime archaeologists from University of West Florida (UWF) began serious inquiry into the Snapper wreck during the 2001 field school season. The vessel is located near Pond Creek in Bagdad, Florida, in the Blackwater River, close to the site of the former Ollinger and Bruce shipyard (see fig. 7).¹⁴⁸ Initial investigations revealed that most of the vessel remained intact and a UWF master's thesis on the wreck by Jason Raupp concluded that the vessel was a good candidate for identification as a Pensacola fishing schooner. In support of this conclusion, a local Bagdad resident suggested that the captain of the vessel tied it to the shipyard moorings sometime after 1935, possibly in abandonment or in wait of resurgence in red snapper fishing.¹⁴⁹

The Snapper wreck has no direct historical evidence associated with it and the archaeological record was inconclusive in providing identification for the vessel. Clues in the architecture, however, distinguish the wreck from other types of regional freight and barge-type

¹⁴⁸ Raupp, "Hook, Line, and Sinker: Historical and Archaeological Investigations of the Snapper Wreck (8SR1001)," 1-5.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 3-4.

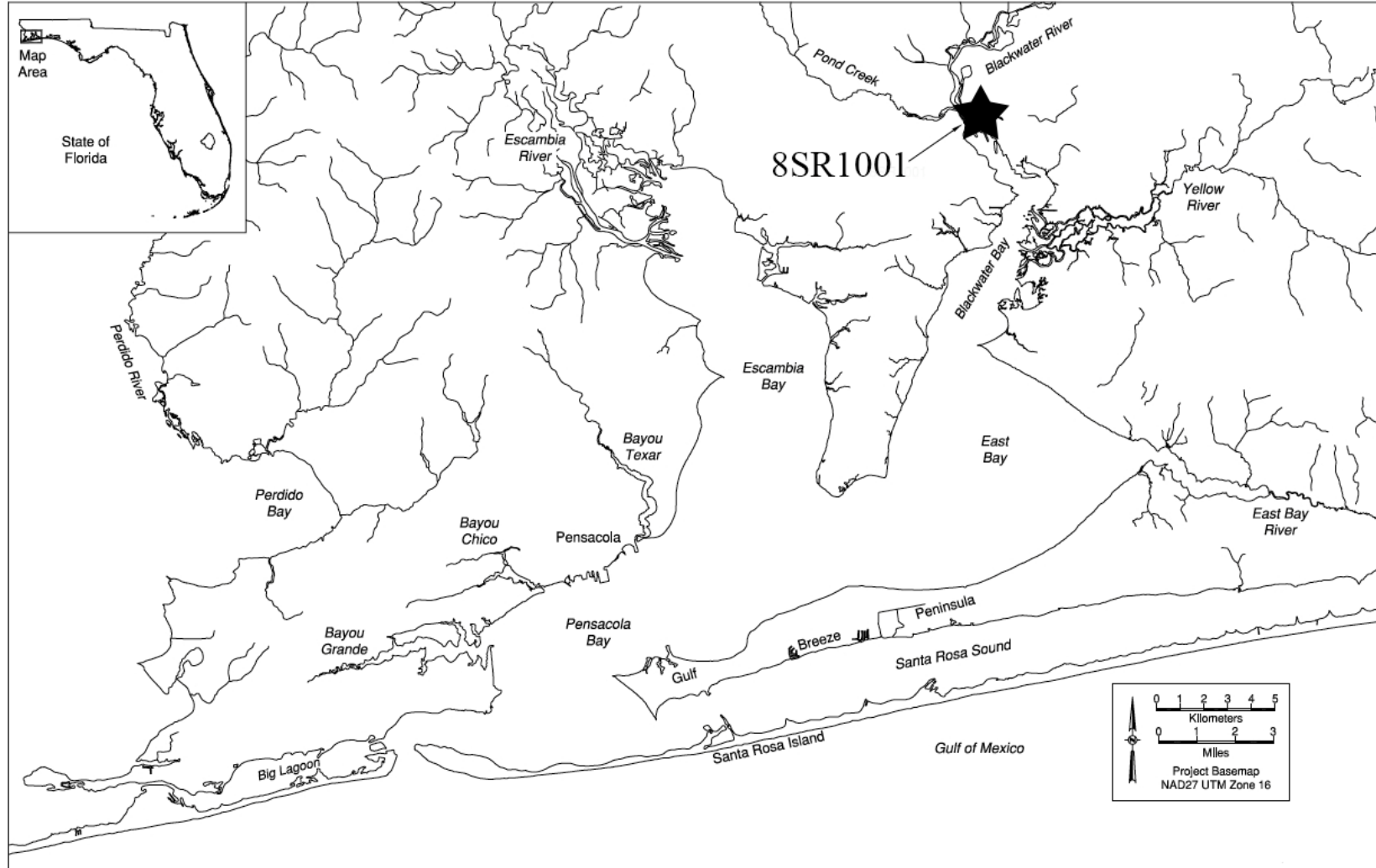


Figure 7. The location of the Snapper wreck (8SR1001). Image courtesy of the University of West Florida Archaeology Institute.

schooners common to the northwest Florida area. Raupp's 2001 investigations suggest that the vessel was approximately 100 feet (30.5 meters) long with a 21-foot (6.4-meter) beam.¹⁵⁰

Although his thesis did not provide an estimate for the depth of the vessel, based on averages for vessels of a similar length and beam found in the *LMVUS* and participating in Pensacola fishing, the hold of the Snapper wreck likely would have been close to 10 feet (3.0 meters) deep. Figure 8 shows a site plan of the Snapper wreck produced as a result of Raupp's investigations.

Archaeological investigations recorded a total of 42 framing stations of double frames along the exposed port side of the vessel. Dimensions of the frames are approximately 7 inches (17.8 centimeters) molded and 6 inches (15.2 centimeters) sided.¹⁵¹ Additionally, hull planking still intact on the port side of the wreck measured, on average, 2.4 inches (6.1 centimeters) thick and 9.8 inches (24.9 centimeters) wide.¹⁵² Wood analysis on the Snapper wreck revealed the use of primarily southern United States timber like white oak and southern yellow pine.¹⁵³ Fasteners on the wreck included both wooden treenails and iron fasteners, the latter often with associated iron washers.¹⁵⁴

Also identified on the Snapper wreck is the presence of a break, or "Great Beam," in the main deck at the beginning of the main mast step (see fig. 9).¹⁵⁵ The addition of a deck beam on top of the standard deck beam just forward of the main mast step allowed for a rise in the level of

¹⁵⁰ Raupp, "Hook, Line, and Sinker: Historical and Archaeological Investigations of the Snapper Wreck (8SR1001)," 135-8.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 85-87.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 90-91.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 123-125.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 94-95.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 105.

Note: gray dotted lines represents overlaid sheer line from a drawing of the *Mary E. Cooney*, a snapper smack in service for E.E. Saunders Fish Co. from 1912 to 1937.

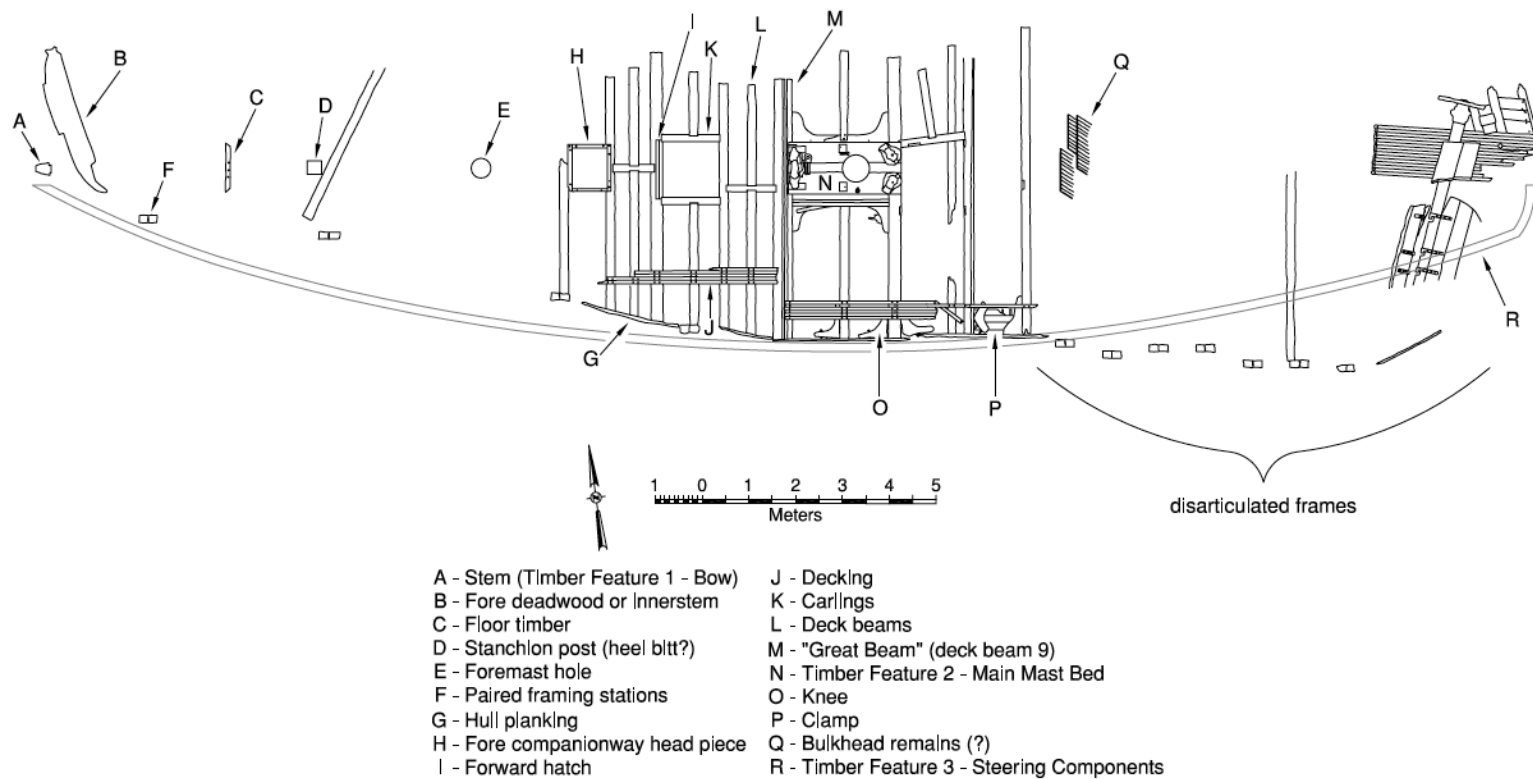


Figure 8. Site plan of the Snapper wreck. Image courtesy of the University of West Florida Archaeology Institute.



Figure 9. "Great beam" creating a break in the deck of the Snapper Wreck. Image courtesy of the University of West Florida Archaeology Institute.

the deck from the main mast step and aft. This break in the deck created two decks: the main deck forward of the main mast step and a quarterdeck abaft of the main mast step (see fig. 10). In *Campeche Days*, Fred Hunt mentions this break in the deck of red snapper fishing schooners in Pensacola, noting that the break was “something Southern schooners lacked.”¹⁵⁶ Francis W. Taylor, president of the Warren Fish Company from 1927 to 1959, also suggests that the only substantial difference between the Florida-built and New England-built vessels was the absence of a break in the deck that formed a quarter deck just forward of vessels’ mainmasts. This break was engineered on New England vessels to prevent storm-driven waves from washing away the helmsman and any cargo stored on the deck. Since the Gulf fisheries lacked this kind of turbulent north Atlantic weather, the breaks were left off of Florida vessels.¹⁵⁷

Investigations of the Snapper wreck likewise recognized a number of concreted iron construction features. First are two concreted iron pump housings aft of the main mast bed that measured 22.4 inches (56.9 centimeters) high and 16.5 inches (41.9 centimeters) in diameter.¹⁵⁸ Watercraft historian and scholar Howard Irving Chappelle mentions that these pumps were necessary upgrades on Gloucester fishing schooners after their introduction in 1876.¹⁵⁹ These bilge pumps were an exceptional improvement from easily clogged wooden pumps and gybing

¹⁵⁶ Hunt, 7.

¹⁵⁷ Francis W. Taylor, interview by Linda Ellsworth and James Moody, January 20, 1976, Pensacola Historical Society Resource Center, Pensacola, FL, 15-17.

¹⁵⁸ Raupp, “Hook, Line, and Sinker: Historical and Archaeological Investigations of the Snapper Wreck (8SR1001),” 107.

¹⁵⁹ Howard Irving Chappelle, *The American Fishing Schooners, 1825-1935* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1973), 572-579.

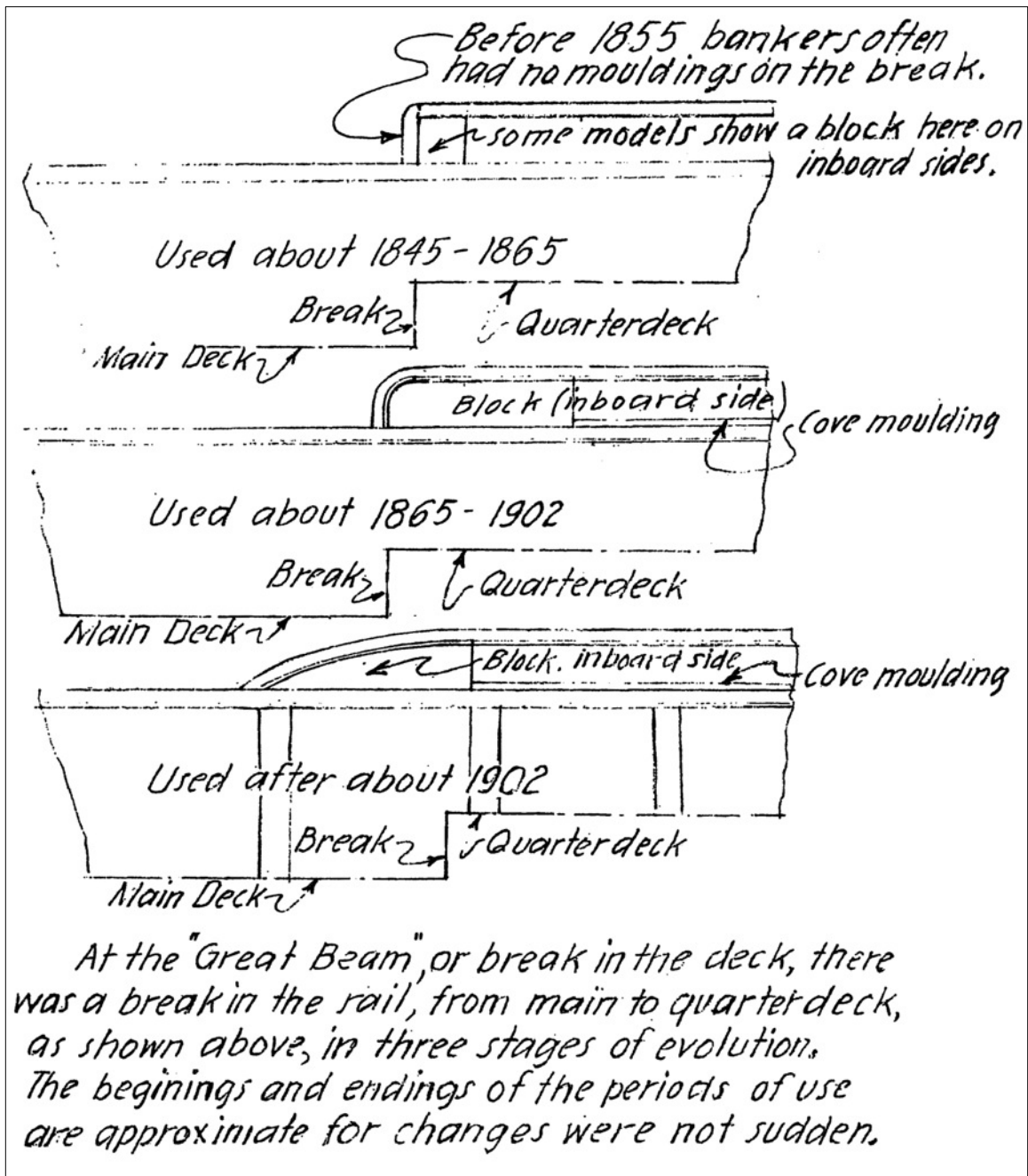


Figure 10. Illustration of how the "Great Beam" creates a raised quarterdeck. Source: Howard I. Chapelle, *The American Fishing Schooners, 1825-1935* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1973), 444.

(or jibing).¹⁶⁰ Chappelle also suggests that these buffers became standard on the fore and main sails in almost all schooners longer than 85 feet (25.9 meters) by the 1890s.

Though positive identification of the Snapper wreck is impossible given the lack of historical documentation on the wreck's abandonment in the Blackwater River, structural elements, design features, and comparative data from the *LMVUS* allude to the vessel's former occupation and to the period in which it operated. The sharply angled stem and nearly straight stern, as well as the presence of bobstay straps near the bow of the vessel, allowed Raupp to distinguish this particular wreck as a *Fredonia*-type schooner.¹⁶¹ The original *Fredonia* schooner was launched from Essex, Massachusetts, in 1889 with a 101.9-foot (31.1-meter) length, 23.4-foot (7.1-meter) beam, and 10.3-foot (3.1-meter) depth. Following her launch, vessels constructed for north Atlantic fishing began to exhibit the deeper, more seaworthy characteristics typical of *Fredonia*. Vessels based on the *Fredonia* model were thus exceptionally prevalent among fishermen for both their speed and reliability in poor weather conditions.¹⁶² A popular fishing vessel of the *Fredonia*-type also utilized in Pensacola's *Lottie S. Haskins* (see fig. 11). The significantly smaller size of *Lottie S. Haskins*, with a 70.5-foot (21.5-meter) (2.6-meter) depth, precludes her possible identification as the Snapper wreck.¹⁶³

When compared with data on the sailing vessels of Pensacola's commercial fishing fleet from the *LMVUS*, the Snapper wreck's length measurement falls on the larger side of fishing vessel averages. If the Snapper wreck was indeed 100 feet (30.5 meters) long during its use, it

¹⁶⁰Chappelle, 111-113.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 136.

¹⁶² Ibid., 176.

¹⁶³ United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 74.

would have been one of the largest sailing vessels in the fleet. Other vessels positively identified as commercial fishing vessels in the *LMVUS* that were also over 100 feet (30.5 meters) include the *Virginia* (renamed the *Buccaneer* after rebuilding in 1925), identified in the 1920 *LMVUS* as 101.2 feet (30.8 meters) in length, and the *Fern-Wood*, identified in the 1930 *LMVUS* as 105.1 feet (32.0 meters) in length.¹⁶⁴ Although the Snapper wreck lies outside of the *LMVUS* length averages for commercial fishing vessels in Pensacola, the vessel's length was not unprecedented for vessels operating in 1920 and 1930. Additionally, the Snapper wreck's estimated beam of 21 feet (6.4 meters) falls neatly within the *LMVUS* beam averages for all-sail fishing vessels in the years 1920 and 1930.¹⁶⁵

Most of the artifacts from the Snapper wreck are architectural and include a fastener, two pins, two tacks, some copper sheathing, and a wonderfully intact example of a prismatic glass deck light that was popular from 1850-1935. Raupp determined that the only other artifact, a snap case bottle base, was probably post-depositional due to its incongruity with the time frame of the rest of the artifact collection. Though not much can be said about the social life of fishermen in association with periods of change in the Pensacola fishing industry based on associated artifacts, the architectural elements and glass deck light do support the estimated dates of operation gained from the architecture of the vessel.¹⁶⁶

Based on the popularity of *Fredonia*-model schooners in fishing, the presence of bilge

¹⁶⁴ United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Fifty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 56; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 582.

¹⁶⁵ United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Fifty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-59; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 568-613.

¹⁶⁶ Raupp, "Hook, Line, and Sinker: Historical and Archaeological Investigations of the Snapper Wreck (8SR1001)," 126-132

pump and boom buffer technologies common to New England fishing schooners, and the fit of the Snapper wreck's dimensions within those of all known sailed fishing vessels home-ported in Pensacola in the *LMVUS*, Raupp's conclusion that the Snapper wreck once operated in red snapper commercial fishing is likely correct. Dates provided by use histories of the above, in addition to dates suggested by associated material culture discussed, suggest that the Snapper wreck was in use any time from 1890-1935, years that mark the height of the red snapper industry in Pensacola.¹⁶⁷

From the *LMVUS*, it may be possible to refine the active years of the vessel in Pensacola: no fishing vessels of this size appear as home-ported in the city until 1920.¹⁶⁸ In the 1910 data year, the largest identified commercial fishing vessel is a much smaller 78.8 feet (24.0 meters) in length.¹⁶⁹ Considering this data, it is more probable that the Snapper wreck operated in Pensacola some time after 1910, thus altering the likely years of utilization in commercial fishing operations to 1910-1935. Wood species analysis identifying the use of southern yellow pine and live oak provides little information about the build location of the vessel. Southern timber companies exported their in-demand timber to shipyards throughout the Atlantic.¹⁷⁰ The presence of the break, or "Great Beam," in the deck of the Snapper wreck noted earlier, however, suggests that the vessel was likely built in a New England shipyard. If indeed the Snapper wreck did

¹⁶⁷ Raupp, "Hook, Line, and Sinker: Historical and Archaeological Investigations of the Snapper Wreck (8SR1001)," 138.

¹⁶⁸ United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Fifty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-59.

¹⁶⁹ United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-127.

¹⁷⁰ Raupp, "Hook, Line, and Sinker: Historical and Archaeological Investigations of the Snapper Wreck (8SR1001)," 125.

operate as a commercial fishing vessel built in Pensacola, it would have presumably not had this construction feature.¹⁷¹

Based on archaeological analysis and supporting historical documentation provided by the *LMVUS*, this research tentatively identifies the Snapper wreck as a commercial fishing vessel built in New England and operating in Pensacola at any time from 1910-1935. As one of the largest commercial fishing vessels, the Snapper wreck exhibits characteristics of later sailing vessels employed in the industry and is an exemplar of the trend toward the fish companies' utilization of larger vessels to keep up with demand for fresh, Gulf red snapper.¹⁷²

Hamilton's Wreck

In 2000, a team of underwater archaeologists and students with UWF investigated what is now known as Hamilton's wreck, located just offshore of Magazine Point near the Naval Air Station in Pensacola, Florida (see fig. 12). The wreck lies in only four feet of water, a depth much shallower than its assumed draft of greater than six feet, but most of the port side remains intact (see fig. 13). The heavy wave action near the tumultuous Pensacola Pass has exposed and covered the wreck a number of times since its deposition.¹⁷³ The location of the vessel and corresponding historical evidence suggests that Hamilton's wreck was likely destroyed in one of the hurricanes that devastated Pensacola from 1906-1926. The scant material culture assemblage, outside the wreck itself, suggests that locals salvaged the vessel and possibly burned it to remove the shallow obstacle.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ Hunt, 7.

¹⁷² United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Fisheries, 7.

¹⁷³ Moore, 1-4.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 81.

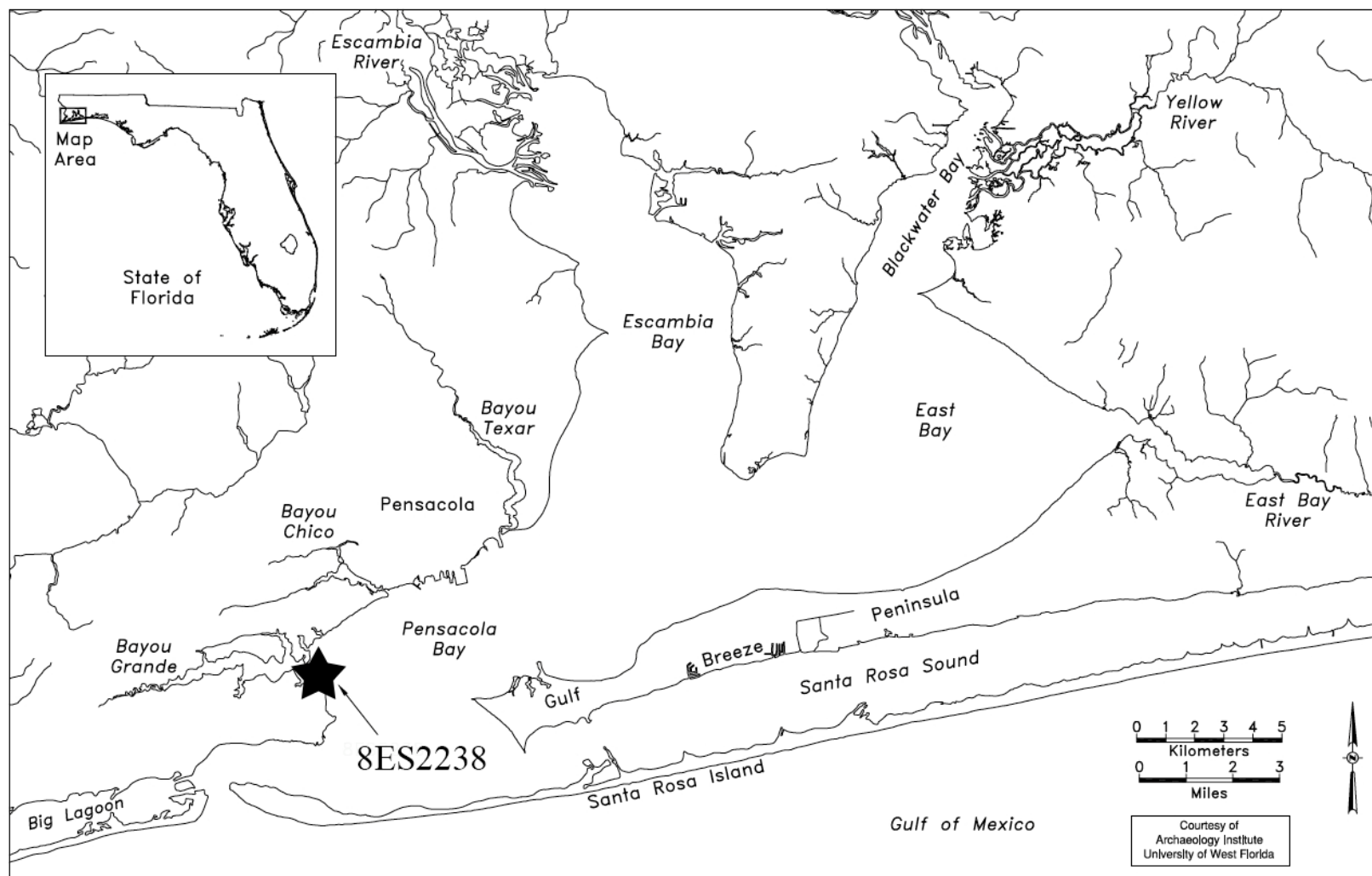


Figure 12. Location of Hamilton's wreck (8ES2238). Image courtesy of the University of West Florida Archaeology Institute.

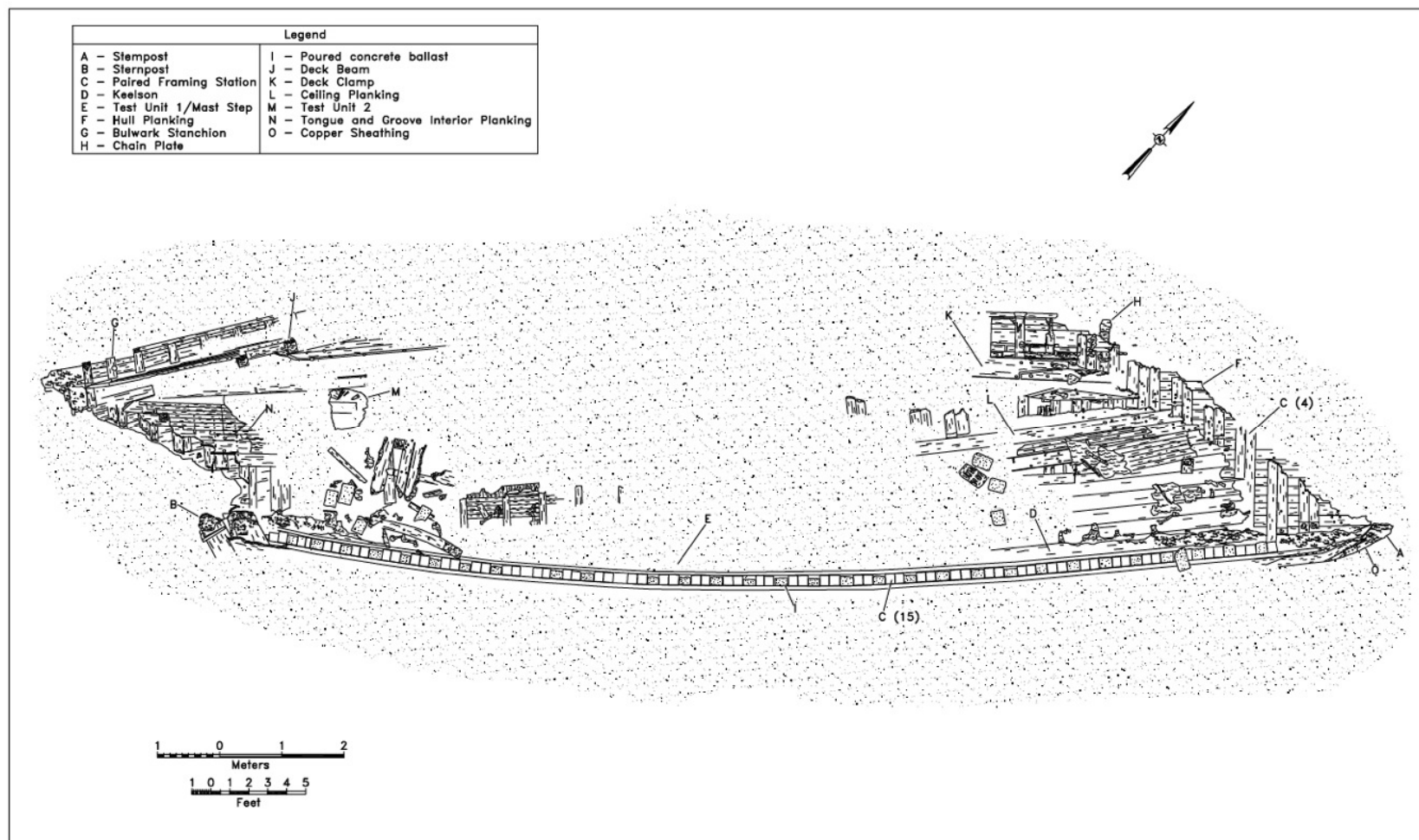


Figure 13. Site plan of the Hamilton's wreck. Image courtesy of the University of West Florida Archaeology Institute.

In 2012, the UWF Maritime/Terrestrial Combined Field School attempted to relocate Hamilton's wreck to conduct additional investigations into the main mast step area. Field school students utilized GPS coordinates provided from past investigations to relocate the wreck. Unfortunately, the highly dynamic environment in which the wreck is situated left Hamilton's wreck entirely covered with a fine sand overburden. Field school students attempted to relocate the wreck using three-foot (0.9-meter) fiberglass probes, but were unable to do so. The following information on Hamilton's wreck thus comes solely from the 2000 field season.

Although the 2000 investigations of the wreck were only preliminary, Robin Moore, a UWF maritime archaeology master's student, wrote a thesis on Hamilton's wreck and connected it with the commercial fishing industry in Pensacola. Moore suggests that the wreck may have been fishing-related for two reasons: 1) the vessel's architecture is typical of schooners engaged in commercial fishing from Pensacola according to the *LMVUS* and other historical records, and 2) the artifact assemblage found in association with the wreck indicates a working-class vessel supplied for longer, offshore trips.¹⁷⁵ No positive identification of the vessel was possible through the material culture and wood analysis was inconclusive. Like the Snapper wreck, the types of timber used to construct Hamilton's wreck, species like southern yellow pine, bald cypress, and live oak, may have originated in the southern United States, but New England shipyards imported these durable, southern species from the late 19th century onward.¹⁷⁶

Archaeological inquiry into Hamilton's wreck provided some basic measurements for the vessel, measurements that correspond to those recorded in the *LMVUS* for fishing schooner averages in Pensacola. Moore estimates that the vessel was probably close to 65-69 feet (19.8-

¹⁷⁵ Moore, 109-110.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 124-125.

21.0 meters) in length during its operation. Actual measurements taken during field investigations put the length of the vessel at 62.96 feet (19.2 meters) from stem to stern. The 65-69-foot (19.8-21.0-meter) length mentioned in Moore's thesis adds length in the attempt to make the vessel's measurement more comparable to *LMVUS* lengths, which are measured along the tonnage deck.¹⁷⁷ Moore offers no estimate for the beam of the vessel, probably since most of the starboard side is missing. He does provide, however, a greater than 6-foot (1.8 meter) depth measurement for the hold.¹⁷⁸ The depth measurement was taken amidships from the top of keelson to the deck of the wreck, a measurement that is analogous to the method of depth measurement used in the *LMVUS*.¹⁷⁹

Based on a characterization of functional types of vessels from the *LMVUS* as compared with the Pensacola fish houses' vessel records, Moore suggests that Hamilton's wreck was much too large for the significant regional freight traffic stretching along Florida's northern Gulf coast. The vessel was also much smaller than those vessels participating in the "coasting" trade, which made routine trips to trade with ports in Central America and northern South America, as well as the Caribbean.¹⁸⁰ Since schooner construction (or refurbishment) is linked intimately with purpose, as Moore argues, there is significant reason for suggesting that Hamilton's wreck was likely associated with the fishing industry in the region.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ Moore, 79-80.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, viii.

¹⁸⁰ Moore, 56-58.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 58-59.

Without any other substantial evidence, the typical build and size of the wreck provide the best evidence of its original purpose. The 63-65-foot (19.8-21.0-meter) length of Hamilton's wreck is average for all commercial fishing vessels home ported in Pensacola for the 1910 data year, though it could also fit in the average length range for New England-built vessels found in the 1900 data year. The depth of the vessel, greater than 6 feet (1.8 meters), is also reminiscent of the averages for all fishing vessels in 1910, and potentially for New England-built vessels in 1900.¹⁸² Moore did not propose a measurement for the beam of Hamilton's wreck in his thesis, but based on the wreck's fit with 1910 commercial fishing vessel averages in Pensacola, the beam likely measured between 18-20 feet (5.5-6.1 meters).¹⁸³

A number of other significant construction features may also prove useful in determining whether or not Hamilton's wreck belonged to Pensacola's commercial fishing fleet. Still visible on the wreck are 35 stations of double frames, several of which survive intact on the buried port side of the wreck. Dimensions of the remnants of the starboard frames are 6.39 inches (16.2 centimeters) molded and 5.91 inches (15.0 centimeters) sided. Wood analysis of the frames indicates the use of southern yellow pine and bald cypress. Hull planking from Hamilton's wreck varies from 2.42-3.0 inches (6.1-7.6 centimeters) in thickness, and 3.3-7.9 inches (8.4-20.1 centimeters) in width. Archaeologists found both treenails and iron fasteners (often found with washer impressions). Two particularly interesting features of Hamilton's wreck are the presence of poured concrete ballast between each framing station and the use of tongue-and-grooved

¹⁸² United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Thirty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-201; United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-127.

¹⁸³ United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-127.

planks on the deck and interior of the hull. Moore suggests that these features are unique among construction characteristics of known fishing schooners.¹⁸⁴

Though it is impossible to say with certainty that Hamilton's wreck belonged to Pensacola's commercial fishing fleet, the basic measurements of the ship's architecture support this hypothesis. Identified fishing vessels similar in size to Hamilton's wreck were most popular in the *LMVUS* from 1900-1910, though many operated in the years after 1910.¹⁸⁵ Additionally, the identification of Hamilton's wreck as a Pensacola fishing schooner is supported through a comparison with the Snapper wreck. Both vessels feature some similar architectural elements: the presence of two masts, a raked stern, double-frames with similar scantlings, and the use of wooden treenails and iron fasteners with iron washers. Further evidence of the vessel's use as a commercial (rather than pleasure) vessel is seen in associated material culture. Kitchen wares did not belong to a single "dinner set," but were, instead, a hodge-podge of whiteware, earthenware, and stoneware ceramics likely thrown together for utilitarian, rather than aesthetic, purposes.¹⁸⁶ The presence of a number of personal hygiene items may also indicate that the crew spent a significant amount of time on the vessel. Shaving implements found on Hamilton's wreck, in particular, would have been popular considering Pensacola fishermen's facial hairstyles at the

¹⁸⁴ Moore, 80.

¹⁸⁵ United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Thirty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-201; United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-127.

¹⁸⁶ Moore, 108-112.

time.¹⁸⁷ Use dates suggested by the artifact assemblage are between 1900-1920, which supports the dates suggested by *LMVUS* analysis.¹⁸⁸

If Hamilton's wreck does represent a Pensacola commercial fishing vessel, determining a build location may be possible through further investigation of the main mast step area. If a break or "Great Beam" in the deck is present, a break like that found on the Snapper wreck and suggested by Hunt to be characteristic only of Northern commercial fishing schooners, then the vessel was likely constructed in a New England shipyard and originally intended for use in the North Atlantic fisheries.¹⁸⁹ The absence of a break would thus suggest a fishing schooner built in the South. Although attempts at investigating this area on the wreck in 2012 were unsuccessful, future investigations successful in relocating the vessel should attempt to focus some effort toward excavation of the main mast step area in search of the "Great Beam."

Based on the correlation of archaeological data from Hamilton's wreck with the *LMVUS*, Hamilton's wreck likely is what remains of a commercial fishing vessel from Pensacola. As such, Hamilton's wreck reflects the period of significant growth in Pensacola's fishing industry history between 1900-1920. Unfortunately, this period was also notorious for the hurricanes that devastated Pensacola's waterfront in 1906, 1916, and 1926.¹⁹⁰ These hurricanes resulted in significant losses for Pensacola's fish houses, both in vessels and other waterfront structures, and seriously hurt the industry's profitability during these years. As a possible victim of one of these

¹⁸⁷ Moore, 119. Figure 25 shows the shaved facial hairstyles commonly sported by fishermen after the turn of the 20th century.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 135-137.

¹⁸⁹ Hunt, 7; Taylor, 15-17.

¹⁹⁰ United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Fisheries, 15.

major storms, Hamilton's wreck represents one of the many difficulties the red snapper fishing industry faced in the early 20th century.

Alleged Priscilla

On the Gulf-facing shore of Dog Island, a small island off the coast of Carrabelle, Florida, in the Gulf of Mexico, lies the alleged *Priscilla*, a fishing schooner belonging to Pensacola's E.E. Saunders & Co. fish house in the first half of the 20th century (see fig. 14).¹⁹¹ According to the *LMVUS*, *Priscilla* was constructed in East Boothbay, Maine, in 1893.¹⁹² Local residents had known about the wreck's existence for some time, but state archaeologists first identified the site in 1987, adding it to the Florida Master Site File as a late 19th or early 20th-century vessel. Dr. Nancy White and University of South Florida archaeologists undertook subsequent investigation of the wreck in 1995, taking photographs and noting its condition at the time. The most extensive investigations of the wreck occurred in 1999 with the Dog Island Shipwreck Survey, a project conducted by the Florida State University Program in Underwater Archaeology with support from the Florida Division of Historical Resources. The Dog Island Shipwreck Survey obtained side-scan sonar images of the wreck, created a longitudinal profile of the forward area of the hull, and documented the wreck's condition at the time.¹⁹³

Archaeologists determined the potential identification of this Dog Island shipwreck with the commercial fishing schooner *Priscilla* based on an entry in Steven D. Singer's *Shipwrecks of Florida* and additional data provided by historian David Baumer.¹⁹⁴ Singer indicates that

¹⁹¹Meide, McClean, and Wiser, 90-91.

¹⁹² United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 273.

¹⁹³ Meide, McClean, and Wiser, 91-94.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 101.

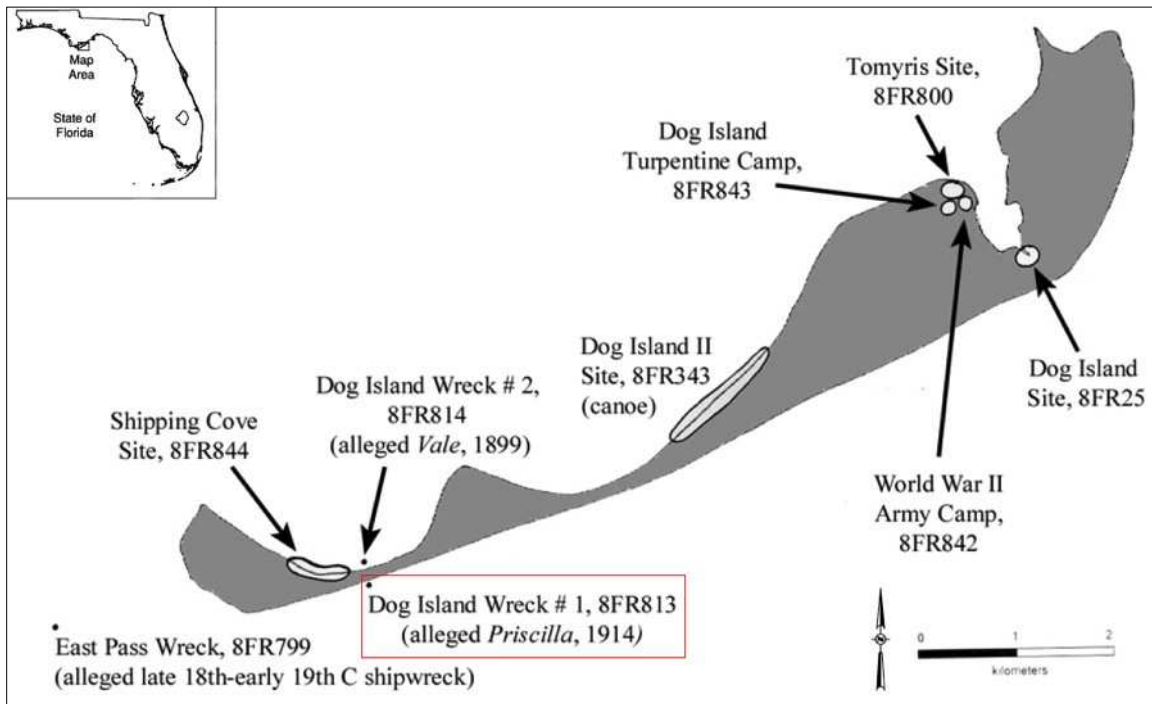


Figure 14. Location of the alleged *Priscilla* (8FR813). Source: Chuck Meide, James A. McClean, Edward Wiser, *Dog Island Shipwreck Survey 1999: Report of Historical and Archaeological Investigations* (Tallahassee, FL: Program in Underwater Archaeology, Florida State University, 1999), 31.

Priscilla was a Pensacola schooner of 48 tons, and was 69.3 feet (21.1 meters) long, 19.8 feet (6.0 meters) in beam, and 8.9 feet (2.7 meters) deep. The wreck is noted as “stranded on Carrabelle Bar, Sept. 24, 1914.”¹⁹⁵ Baumer, in a letter to state archaeologist Roger C. Smith, confirms that *Priscilla* was engaged in red snapper fishing from Pensacola for E.E. Saunders & Co. as noted in the 1900 *LMVUS*, but *Priscilla* was absent from the 1917 *Gloucester Master Mariner’s Association List of Vessels* and therefore likely wrecked some time before 1917.¹⁹⁶ Additional investigation reveals that *Priscilla* was registered in the 1914 *LMVUS*, for

¹⁹⁵ Steven D. Singer, *Shipwrecks of Florida* (Sarasota, FL: Pineapple Press, 1992), 40.

¹⁹⁶ Meide, McClean, and Wiser, 251-252.

which registration formally ended on June 30, 1914.¹⁹⁷ *Priscilla* is absent, however, in the 1915 *LMVUS*, for which registration formally ended on June 30, 1915.¹⁹⁸ Based on these dates, *Priscilla* probably wrecked sometime between June 30, 1914 and June 30, 1915, a date that correlates with Singer's entry in his *Shipwrecks of Florida*. If Dog Island is the "Carrabelle Bar" mentioned by Singer, then this shipwreck is a likely candidate for *Priscilla*.

Investigations into the alleged *Priscilla* revealed that the wreck is situated in a dynamic environment, much like Hamilton's wreck. Not only is the site subject to periods of exposure and reburial, Dog Island itself is slowly shifting toward the Florida mainland.¹⁹⁹ Photographs from 1987 investigations show the wreck completely exposed, while archaeological investigations in 1999 show the wreck in about 2.9 feet (0.9 meters) of water with no structure exposed (see fig. 15).²⁰⁰ As seen in figure 16, aerial photographs from January 2012 show the wreck as completely submerged.

Basic measurements collected for *Priscilla* during the 1999 Dog Island Shipwreck Survey suggest that the vessel was approximately 75.8 feet (23.1 meters) in length with a 20-foot (6.1 meter) beam.²⁰¹ There is some discrepancy, however, between the length of *Priscilla* as documented during the 1999 investigations and the length as recorded in the 1910 *LMVUS*. The

¹⁹⁷ United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Sixth Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 63rd Cong., 3rd sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1914), 72.

¹⁹⁸ United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Seventh Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 64th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1915), 64.

¹⁹⁹ Meide, McClean, and Wiser, 91.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 92.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 95.



Figure 15. The alleged *Priscilla* in June 1987 at low tide (a) and the alleged *Priscilla* in September 1995 at low tide (b). *Source:* Chuck Meide, James A. McClean, Edward Wiser, *Dog Island Shipwreck Survey 1999: Report of Historical and Archaeological Investigations* (Tallahassee, FL: Program in Underwater Archaeology, Florida State University, 1999), 31.

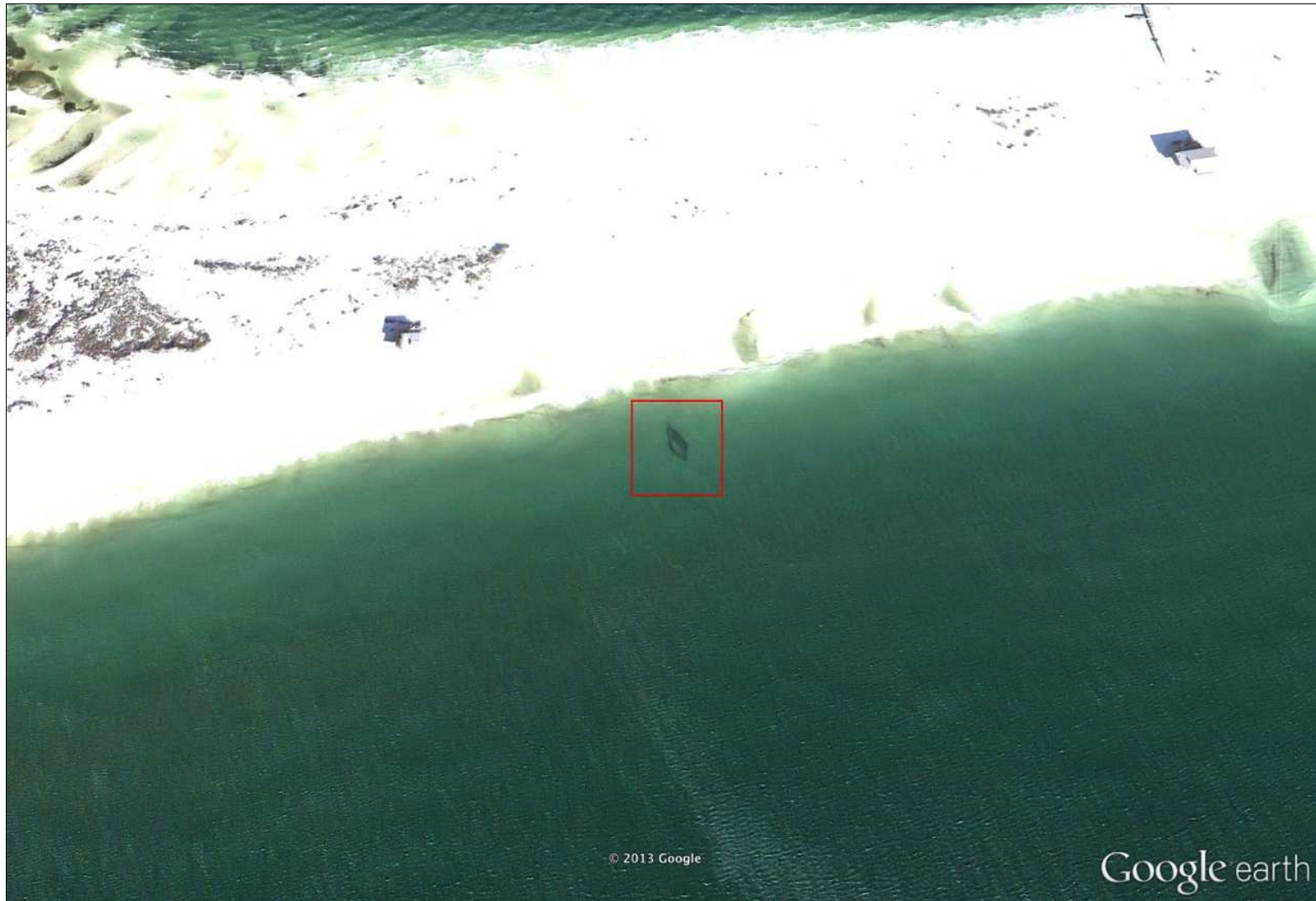


Figure 16. Aerial photograph of the alleged *Priscilla* taken in January 2012. Image courtesy of Google Earth.

1910 *LMVUS* records *Priscilla* with a 69.3-foot (21.1-meter) length, a 19.8-foot (6.0-meter) beam, and an 8.9-foot (2.7-meter) depth.²⁰² While the beam estimated by the Dog Island Shipwreck Survey is very similar to that noted in the *LMVUS*, there is a 6.5-foot (2.0-meter) difference in length between the two. This difference may be accounted for by the fact that the length recorded in the *LMVUS*, as mentioned earlier, was taken between the stem and the “rudder-post” along the tonnage deck of vessels.²⁰³ The 1999 investigations measured the entire exposed length of the wreck, which may have included the length added by the schooner’s angled stern that would not have been included in the *LMVUS* measurement.²⁰⁴

Apart from the basic dimensions of the wreck, a number of the Dog Island wreck’s architectural features suggest a fishing occupation. The Dog Island Shipwreck Survey’s longitudinal profile of the bow area suggests the presence of paired frames (see fig. 17). Surviving frames measure approximately 3.5 inches (8.9 centimeters) molded and 5.1-6.3 inches (13.0-16.0 centimeters) sided, comparable to those measurements of frames on both the Snapper and Hamilton’s wrecks. Hull planking on the wreck measures approximately 1.5 inches (3.8 centimeters) thick and 5 inches (12.7 centimeters) wide, also comparable to the hull planking measurements taken from the Snapper and Hamilton’s wrecks. Both wooden treenails and iron fasteners were noted on the wreck. Like Hamilton’s wreck, tongue-and-grooved planking was recorded on the interior of the hull.²⁰⁵ Wood analysis was not conducted for the alleged *Priscilla*,

²⁰² United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 98.

²⁰³ United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, viii.

²⁰⁴ Meide, McClean, and Wiser, 101.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 96-98.

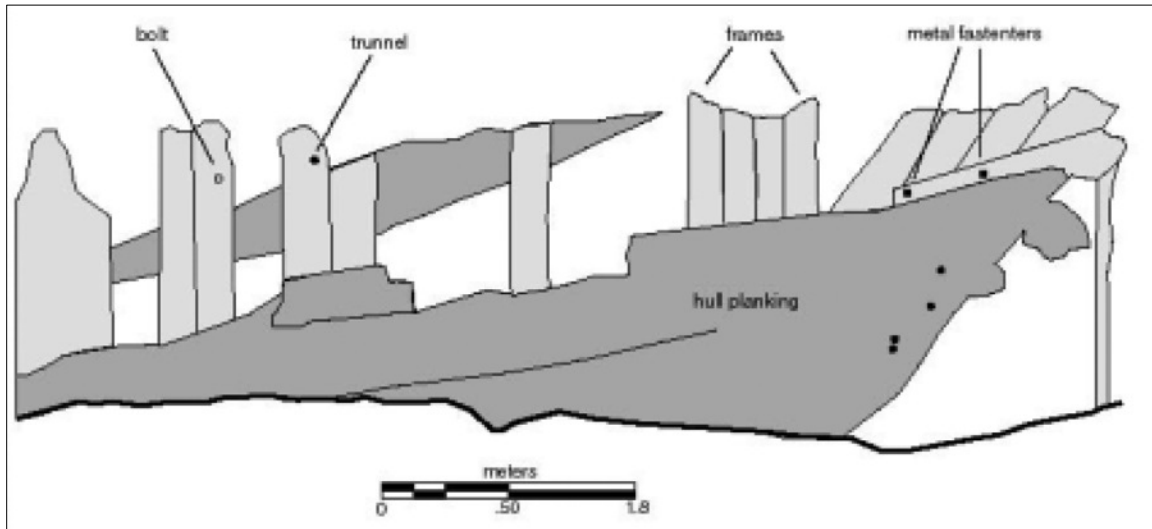


Figure 17. Longitudinal bow profile of the alleged *Priscilla*. Source: Chuck Meide, James A. McClean, Edward Wiser, *Dog Island Shipwreck Survey 1999: Report of Historical and Archaeological Investigations* (Tallahassee, FL: Program in Underwater Archaeology, Florida State University, 1999), 97.

though the pervasive nature of southern timber throughout Atlantic coast shipbuilding operations in the late 19th and early 20th centuries would provide little insight into the ship's build location.

While the absence of any material culture associated with the alleged *Priscilla* does not aid in positively identifying the wreck, the small amount of written documentation on the wreck is something both the Snapper wreck and Hamilton's wreck lack. Singer's source for the location of *Priscilla*'s wreckage is unsubstantiated in his *Shipwrecks of Florida*, but the date of the wrecking incident is supported by the presence and absence of *Priscilla* in the 1914 and 1915 *LMVUS*.²⁰⁶ With this scant documentary information and the nearly perfect fit of the alleged *Priscilla*'s basic measurements within the averages for commercial fishing vessels for the years

²⁰⁶ Singer, 40; United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Sixth Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 72; United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Seventh Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 64.

of the *LMVUS* before and after 1914, this Dog Island shipwreck is likely *Priscilla*.²⁰⁷ That the vessel length is average for these *LMVUS* years is also true despite which length measurement, the 75.8-foot (23.1 meter) length provided by 1999 archaeological investigations or the 69.3-foot (21.1-meter) length provided in the 1910 *LMVUS*, is used to compare. The approximately 20-foot (6.1-meter) beam of the alleged *Priscilla* is also about average for commercial fishing vessels in the 1910 and 1920 *LMVUS*.²⁰⁸ Based on this comparison of the alleged *Priscilla*'s dimensions with the *LMVUS* data, the vessel is very similar in build to commercial fishing vessels from Pensacola between 1910-1920 and is likely a commercial fishing vessel itself. If the vessel is indeed *Priscilla*, documentary evidence confirms its New England build location. If the vessel is not *Priscilla*, but is instead another unknown fishing vessel, the presence or absence of a break in the deck by a "Great Beam" could potentially confirm the vessel's build location if some integrity in the main mast step area exists.²⁰⁹

As a likely candidate for a fishing vessel, as well as a likely candidate for *Priscilla*, the Dog Island shipwreck is, much like the Snapper wreck and Hamilton's wreck, representative of the height of red snapper commercial fishing from Pensacola. The location of the fishing vessel's wreckage on Dog Island off Carrabelle indicates that commercial fishermen likely continued to fish grounds other than the extremely popular Campeche Banks after 1897.²¹⁰ *Priscilla* and her

²⁰⁷ United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-127; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Fifty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-59.

²⁰⁸ United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-127; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Fifty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-59.

²⁰⁹ Hunt, 7; Taylor, 15-17.

²¹⁰ Camber, 8.

crew may have been motivated to fish these “older,” well-known grounds due to competition, scarcity, or experimentation. Whatever the cause, the choice to fish Florida’s grounds was a fateful one and *Priscilla* never returned to her home on the Palafox Street wharf.

A discussion on the characteristics of Pensacola commercial fishing vessels is critical in describing various trends and features of sailing vessel preference among Pensacola commercial fishing ventures from 1881-1930. These trends aid in viewing Pensacola’s red snapper commercial fishing as an aspect of the historical ecological nature of Pensacola’s maritime heritage. Additionally, recognizing the qualities of the city’s commercial fishing vessels will aid in future potential identification of otherwise unassociated archaeological shipwrecks in the northern Gulf of Mexico.

Trends, Characteristics, and Features

The fishing schooners, or smacks, of Pensacola’s red snapper fishing industry are long gone from the city’s waterfront. Fortunately, the *List of Merchant Vessels of the United States* (*LMVUS*) provides critical qualitative data on vessel build locations and on the basic measurements of a large number of former fishing schooners home ported in Pensacola from 1881-1930.²¹¹ Although the *LMVUS* contains data on all sailing vessels in the city, additional documentary research allowed for the positive identification of vessels engaged solely in the

²¹¹ United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Statistics, *Thirteenth Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-185; United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Twenty-Third Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-197; United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Thirty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-201; United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-127; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Fifty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-59; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 568-613.

commercial fishing operations.²¹² Analysis of the build locations of known fishing vessels reveals that, from 1900-1920, the popularity of Florida-built fishing vessels increased gradually (see table 1).²¹³ No Florida-built, all-sail commercial fishing vessels remained in Pensacola in 1930, but this absence in the *LMVUS* is likely due to the fact that vessels were increasingly being fitted (or refitted) with diesel engines by this time and would have been classified as “Motor Vessels.”²¹⁴ The number of Florida-built commercial fishing schooners may have continued to increase beyond 1930, but they were no longer classified as “sailing vessels” in the *LMVUS* and thus are not a part of this analysis.

Substantiating the *LMVUS* trend in vessel build location based on archaeological investigations of the Snapper wreck, Hamilton’s wreck, and the alleged *Priscilla* is exceptionally difficult: these sites represent only three of approximately 80 historically identified Pensacola commercial fishing vessels. While the Snapper wreck (based on the presence of a break in the main deck) and the alleged *Priscilla* (based on historical documentation) are both New England-built vessels, the build location of Hamilton’s wreck remains unknown. Statistically, a little less

²¹² “Harbor, River, and Marine News,” *Pensacola Journal*, March 10, 1908; “Disabled by a Gulf Storm,” *The Pensacola Journal*, March 21, 1908; “Harbor, River, and Marine News,” *Pensacola Journal*, April 2, 1908; “Harbor, River, and Marine News,” *Pensacola Journal*, April 4, 1908; “Harbor, River, and Marine News,” *Pensacola Journal*, November 13, 1908; “Harbor, River, and Marine News,” *Pensacola Journal*, November 28, 1908; “Harbor, River, and Marine News,” *Pensacola Journal*, February 9, 1909; “Harbor, River, and Marine News,” *Pensacola Journal*, February 17, 1909; “Harbor, River, and Marine News,” *Pensacola Journal*, April 17, 1909; “Harbor, River, and Marine News,” *Pensacola Journal*, April 28, 1909; “Red Snapper Plentiful for the Holidays,” *Pensacola Journal*, December 23, 1909; “Marine Reports,” *New York Tribune*, November 1, 1921; “Survey of The Warren Fish Company fleet by Marine Surveyor C.W. Oliver, March 25, 1939, Fishing Industry Vertical File, Pensacola Historical Society, Pensacola, Florida; Fishing Masters’ Association, 123-124; Fishing Masters’ Association, 156-157; Collins, “Notes on the Fisheries of Western Florida,” 284-285.

²¹³ United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Thirty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-201; United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-127; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Fifty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-59. The larger percentage of Florida-built vessels in the 1881 *LMVUS* analysis is likely due to the inability to positively identify more than three commercial fishing vessels in Pensacola.

²¹⁴ Hunt, 23.

Table 1. Build Locations of Known Commercial Red Snapper Fishing Vessels, 1881-1930.

	New England	Florida
1881	66.7%	33.3%
1891	71.4%	28.6%
1900	82.4%	17.6%
1910	68.9%	27.6%
1920	62.9%	29.6%
1930	100.0%	0.0%

than one-third of commercial fishing vessels home ported in Pensacola were built in Florida.²¹⁵

That Hamilton's wreck may have been Florida-built is thus unlikely but not impossible.

An analysis of the basic measurements of known fishing vessels for each year of *LMVUS* data reveals a steady trend toward an increase in vessel size (see table 2). For all years from 1881-1930, vessel length, beam, and depth increased.²¹⁶ This "ballooning" of commercial fishing vessels was likely due to changing demands on vessels as fishermen tended to fish red snapper grounds farther away from Pensacola after the early 1890s.²¹⁷ The gross tonnage of fishing vessels shows the same increase from 1881-1930, due also to changing preferences among

²¹⁵ United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Statistics, *Thirteenth Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-185; United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Twenty-Third Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-197; United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Thirty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-201; United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-127; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Fifty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-59; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 568-613.

²¹⁶ United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Statistics, *Thirteenth Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-185; United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Twenty-Third Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-197; United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Thirty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-201; United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-127; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Fifty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-59; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 568-613.

²¹⁷ Camber, 10-13. Chapter 5 discusses this idea in greater detail.

Table 2. Average Measurements of Known Commercial Red Snapper Fishing Vessels, 1881-1930.

	Average Length (ft.)		
	New England Build	Florida Build	All Vessels
1881	58.4	30.8	44.6
1891	54.1	46.1	51.8
1900	62.3	49.4	60.0
1910	67.7	64.0	67.1
1920	78.7	74.9	77.9
1930	91.0	n/a	88.8
	Average Beam (ft.)		
	New England Build	Florida Build	All Vessels
1881	16.6	12.2	14.4
1891	16.7	15.0	16.2
1900	18.5	15.7	18.0
1910	19.6	19.0	19.5
1920	21.6	20.5	21.3
1930	23.7	n/a	23.4
	Average Depth (ft.)		
	New England Build	Florida Build	All Vessels
1881	5.6	3.1	2.9
1891	7.0	4.6	5.6
1900	7.0	4.6	6.6
1910	7.9	6.8	7.7
1920	9.1	8.7	9.0
1930	10.1	n/a	9.9
	Average Gross Tonnage (tons)		
	New England Build	Florida Build	All Vessels
1881	25.4	5.6	18.8
1891	29.5	11.6	24.4
1900	39.8	20.0	36.9
1910	47.6	34.4	46.7
1920	71.6	55.9	64.7
1930	105.0	n/a	96.6

commercial fishermen to utilize larger, tight-bottomed vessels instead of live-welled vessels farther offshore.²¹⁸

²¹⁸ United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Statistics, *Thirteenth Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-185; United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Twenty-Third Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-197.

Archaeologically, known shipwrecks that have been associated with Pensacola commercial fishing (the Snapper wreck, Hamilton's wreck, and the alleged *Priscilla*) fit well into the size ranges produced through an analysis of the *LMVUS* data. The Snapper wreck, with a length of approximately 100 feet (30.5 meters) and a beam of approximately 21 feet (6.4 meters), would be among the largest fishing vessels in the *LMVUS*, but a few comparably sized commercial fishing vessels do appear by 1920.²¹⁹

Slightly smaller at 65-69 feet (19.8-21.0 meters) in length and 6 feet (1.8 meters) in depth, Hamilton's wreck may be an earlier vessel than the Snapper wreck. *LMVUS* analysis suggests that Hamilton's wreck likely operated in Pensacola between 1900-1910.²²⁰ Finally, the alleged *Priscilla*'s archaeological measurements of approximately <75.8 feet (23.1 meters) in length and 20 feet (6.1 meters) in beam correlate well with *LMVUS* averages for commercial fishing schooners in Pensacola between 1910-1920.²²¹ This *LMVUS*-derived date range largely supports the assertion that the alleged *Priscilla* fished for E.E. Saunders & Co. in Pensacola in the years before it was put out of use (or wrecked, as Singer's *Shipwrecks of Florida* suggests) between June 30, 1914, and June 30, 1915.²²² The alleged *Priscilla* was thus likely engaged in

²¹⁹ United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Fifty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-59.

²²⁰ United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Thirty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-201; United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-127.

²²¹ United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-127; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Fifty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-59. The <75.8-foot length is derived from the fact that archaeological measurements were taken for the moulded length of the vessel, along the existing gunwale. Measurements of length in the *LMVUS*, as mentioned earlier, would have been smaller since they were taken along the tonnage deck between the stem and stern.

²²² Singer, 40; United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Sixth Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 72; United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Seventh Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 64.

Pensacola commercial fishing after Hamilton's wreck and before the Snapper wreck. If all three shipwrecks are actually former commercial fishing vessels, then they provide a tangible representation of the trend toward increased vessel size over time as suggested by analysis of the *LMVUS*.

Apart from overall trends visible in the *LMVUS* data, additional structural characteristics related to Pensacola commercial fishing vessels also provide insight into vessel preference. The three wrecks described in this chapter are all two-masted schooners either built in New England or derived from New England fishing schooner plans.²²³ All three of the wrecks exhibit a double frame construction, a popular feature of schooners beginning in the late 19th century.²²⁴ Furthermore, the wrecks all show evidence for the use of similar fastenings, primarily treenails, iron spikes, threaded iron bolts, and washers.²²⁵ While these kinds of fasteners would not have been uncommon on other vessels in the post-Civil War period, they are indicative of a group of vessels that belong in a similar date range.

Additionally, one architectural characteristic was visible on two of the three potential commercial red snapper fishing vessels. Hamilton's wreck and the alleged *Priscilla* both show evidence of tongue-and-groove wooden sheathing lining the interior of the hulls, a characteristic Moore contended was unique to Hamilton's wreck in his 2002 master's thesis.²²⁶ The presence of this type of planking on the alleged *Priscilla*, however, suggests that tongue-and-groove

²²³ Collins, "Notes on the Fisheries of Western Florida," 67-68; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Fisheries, 7.

²²⁴ Basil Greenhill, *Evolution of the Wooden Ship* (New York: Facts on File, 1998), 115.

²²⁵ Raupp, "Hook, Line, and Sinker: Historical and Archaeological Investigations of the Snapper Wreck (8SR1001)," 90; Moore, 70. Meide, McClean, and Wiser, 96.

²²⁶ Moore, 74.

sheathing may have been common on commercial fishing vessels out of Pensacola.²²⁷ Indeed, wooden tongue-and-groove interior hull sheathing may be a design feature of commercial fishing schooners in general: a conditions survey report on the Essex, Massachusetts, *Ernestina*, built in 1894 and the oldest surviving Grand Banks fishing schooner, notes the presence of white pine tongue-and-groove sheathing on areas of the vessel's inner hull.²²⁸

In regard to the material culture found in association with the Snapper wreck and Hamilton's wreck, some conclusions can be reached though both vessels were likely salvaged and left with few removable artifacts. The assemblages between the two wrecks have no significant overlap apart from similar iron fasteners.²²⁹ Most of the cultural information garnered from the assemblages comes from Hamilton's wreck, which had a significant number of hygiene-related items indicating that some amount of time was spent offshore.²³⁰ The variety of mismatched ceramics also indicates utilitarian food preparation, storage, and service.²³¹ Fishermen from Pensacola commonly spent up to a month at sea as the Campeche Banks opened up in the 1890s, requiring the use of both hygiene and food related items on board the ships.

Other characteristics exist in only one of the three wrecks. The Snapper wreck contains significant concreted features near the main mast step. Two of the concreted features are likely iron bilge pump housings, common to commercial fishing schooners following their introduction

²²⁷ Meide, McClean, and Wiser, 98.

²²⁸ Leon A. Poindexter, *2012 Conditions Survey Report with Recommendations and Rehabilitation Cost Estimates for Schooner Ernestina* (Rockport, MA: Leon A. Poindexter Seaport Vessels, Inc., 2012), 53.

²²⁹ Raupp, "Hook, Line, and Sinkers: Historical and Archaeological Investigations of the Snapper Wreck (8SR1001)," 126; Moore, 81-88.

²³⁰ Moore, 119.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 108-112.

in 1876.²³² Chappelle specifies that such iron bilge pumps were located approximately two feet (0.6 meters) abaft the main mast and measured approximately 14 inches (0.4 meters) in diameter depending on the manufacturer.²³³ Both specifications are comparable to what archaeologists found in association with Snapper wreck. The third concreted feature of the Snapper wreck is likely the remnants of an iron boom buffer forward of the main mast area.²³⁴ Manufactured by many of the same companies that also manufactured iron bilge pumps, boom buffers gained popularity in the 1880s.²³⁵ Finally, the Snapper wreck also contains a break in the main deck, created by a “Great Beam,” that raises the deck just before the main mast area to create a quarterdeck.²³⁶ Historical sources attribute this characteristic solely to New England-built vessels.²³⁷ Future investigations into Hamilton’s wreck and the alleged *Priscilla* may reveal any of the above design features found, thus far, only on the Snapper wreck.

A final characteristic, unique to Hamilton’s wreck, is the use of poured concrete ballast between the vessel’s paired framing stations. This type of ballast would have been permanent, though its presence between the frames may have worked toward increasing the cargo-carrying capacity of the vessels. Moore suggests that the use of poured concrete ballast was possibly due

²³² Raupp, “Hook, Line, and Sinker: Historical and Archaeological Investigations of the Snapper Wreck (8SR1001),” 107.

²³³ Chappelle, 582.

²³⁴ Raupp, “Hook, Line, and Sinker: Historical and Archaeological Investigations of the Snapper Wreck (8SR1001),” 110-113.

²³⁵ Chappelle, 548-550, 572-582.

²³⁶ Raupp, “Hook, Line, and Sinker: Historical and Archaeological Investigations of the Snapper Wreck (8SR1001),” 105.

²³⁷ Hunt, 7; Taylor, 15-17.

to a need to increase cargo space or as an alternative to fixing a leaky hull.²³⁸ Unfortunately, however, no historical or archaeological evidence attributes the use of such ballast to commercial fishing vessels of the late 19th or early 20th centuries. This uncommon usage may reflect a fishing captain's unique approach to creating space or to solving a problem.

Identifying Pensacola's All-Sail Fishing Schooners in the Archaeological Record

UWF master's theses by Robin Moore and Wesley Perrine utilized models for identifying basic differences among northwest Florida's coasting schooners, fishing schooners, and regional schooners that could be applied in helping to identify archaeological shipwreck sites.²³⁹ In general, their models rely on basic size measurements supplied by documentary sources to find characteristic differences among the different types of schooners. Moore suggests that typical lengths of commercial fishing schooners operating from the Pensacola waterfront in the late 18th and early 19th centuries were between 50-90 feet (15.2-27.4 meters) with hold depths between 5-10 feet (1.5-3.0) meters.²⁴⁰ Perrine's work puts Pensacola fishing vessel lengths for the same time period at less than 100 feet (30.5 meters) in length with beams of between 12.1-21 feet (3.7-6.4 meters).²⁴¹ The measurement ranges in both theses are fairly broad, somewhat conflicting, and, in the case of Moore's thesis, overlap significantly with characteristic sizes provided for local coasting schooners.

²³⁸ Moore, 78-79.

²³⁹ Wesley Perrine, "The B Street Schooner: Archaeological Investigation into Ship Construction and Design of a Nineteenth-Century Shipwreck in Pensacola Bay, Florida" (master's thesis, University of West Florida, 2012), 66-77; Moore, 29-60.

²⁴⁰ Moore, 57.

²⁴¹ Perrine, "The B Street Schooner: Archaeological Investigation into Ship Construction and Design of a Nineteenth-Century Shipwreck in Pensacola Bay, Florida," 72.

Utilizing the model of trends and characteristics of Pensacola's commercial red snapper fishing fleet from 1881-1930 as described above, archaeologists may be better able to identify previously unassociated shipwrecks in Pensacola and northwest Florida. To apply this model, the following discussion considers three shipwrecks. The first, *Buccaneer*, is historically well documented and can be positively identified as a former commercial fishing schooner. The two other wrecks, the B Street Schooner and Jack's wreck, have no associated historical documentation and remain unidentified.

Buccaneer

An icon of Pensacola's waterfront and the community's nostalgia for the age of sail, *Buccaneer* was one of the few remaining red snapper fleet vessels when it sank in Pensacola Bay in the 1980s.²⁴² Originally named *Virginia*, this knockabout schooner was built by A.D. Story in Essex, Massachusetts, in 1909. According to the National Register of Historic Places form on *Buccaneer*, the vessel worked in the New England fisheries until the 1920s when she was sold to E.E. Saunders & Co. The vessel operated solely on sail power until she was damaged by a storm in 1924 while at sea. E.E. Saunders & Co. had the ship rebuilt with an auxiliary engine in Baypoint, Florida, and renamed her *Buccaneer*. The fishing schooner remained in service at E.E. Saunders & Co. until an independent commercial fisherman from Mobile bought her in 1967. A year later, the Historic Pensacola Preservation Board purchased the vessel with hopes of preserving a part of historic Pensacola's waterfront.²⁴³

²⁴² Lawrence Mahoney, "Stalking the Big Red One," *Sun Sentinel*, June 5, 1988.

²⁴³ "*Buccaneer* National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form," 1973, Fishing Industry Vertical File, Pensacola Historical Society Resource Center, Pensacola, FL.

The Historic Pensacola Preservation Board was, unfortunately, unable to maintain *Buccaneer*'s expensive upkeep costs. The vessel continued to deteriorate while docked downtown until she finally sank at the dock in 1977.²⁴⁴ Several months later, the Historic Pensacola Preservation Board raised the vessel but the cost of repairs was dramatically higher and, eventually, the Board determined that it was unfeasible for them to maintain the vessel.²⁴⁵ A number of preservation groups attempted to raise funds in order to save *Buccaneer*. One group, the Pensacola Heritage Foundation, sold t-shirts, paintings, and memberships to its foundation in an effort to turn the vessel into a working classroom through a program administered by the Industrial Technology Department of the Pensacola Junior College.²⁴⁶ The cause for *Buccaneer* was noble, but, ultimately, the money never appeared. An editorial cartoon, drawn by the locally famous J. Earle Bowden, depicts the community's frustration with efforts to save the *Buccaneer* (see fig. 18).²⁴⁷ Although she was nominated to and placed on the National Register of Historic Places, *Buccaneer* eventually succumbed to neglect in the 1980s and was eventually scuttled and left to quietly rest at the bottom of Pensacola Bay.²⁴⁸ Her location has since been lost.

Despite *Buccaneer*'s relatively disappointing later history, the vessel is one of the best documented and most loved of Pensacola's former commercial fishing fleet. Existing moulded loft plans for *Virginia* (the ship's former name), found in Chappelle's *The American Fishing*

²⁴⁴ "Buccaneer Raised," *Pensacola Journal*, August 17, 1977.

²⁴⁵ "Buccaneer in Poor Shape," *Pensacola Journal*, May 22, 1982.

²⁴⁶ "Save the *Buccaneer*," Unknown Newspaper, *Buccaneer* Vertical File, Pensacola Historical Society Resource Center, Pensacola, Florida.

²⁴⁷ J. Earle Bowden, Editorial cartoon, *Pensacola News-Journal*, September 4, 1977, *Buccaneer* Vertical File, Pensacola Historical Society Resource Center, Pensacola, FL.

²⁴⁸ Andrea Helen Fossum, "Historical Rationale and Museum Survey in Support of a Maritime Museum for Pensacola, Florida" (master's thesis, University of West Florida, 2001).



Figure 18. Editorial cartoon by J. Earle Bowden capturing *Buccaneer's* preservation issues. Source: *Buccaneer* vertical file, Pensacola Historical Society Archives, Pensacola, FL.

Schooners, 1825-1935, denote that her moulded measurements were approximately 115 feet (35.1 meters) in length and 22.5 feet (6.9 meters) in beam. *Buccaneer's* registered dimensions, those taken along the tonnage deck as in the *LMVUS*, were approximately 102.2 feet (31.2 meters) in length, 23 feet (7.0 meters) in beam, and 10.2 feet (3.1 meters) in depth.²⁴⁹ Indeed, the 1920 *LMVUS* confirms these exact measurements for *Virginia* and supplies a gross tonnage

²⁴⁹ Chappelle, 280-281.

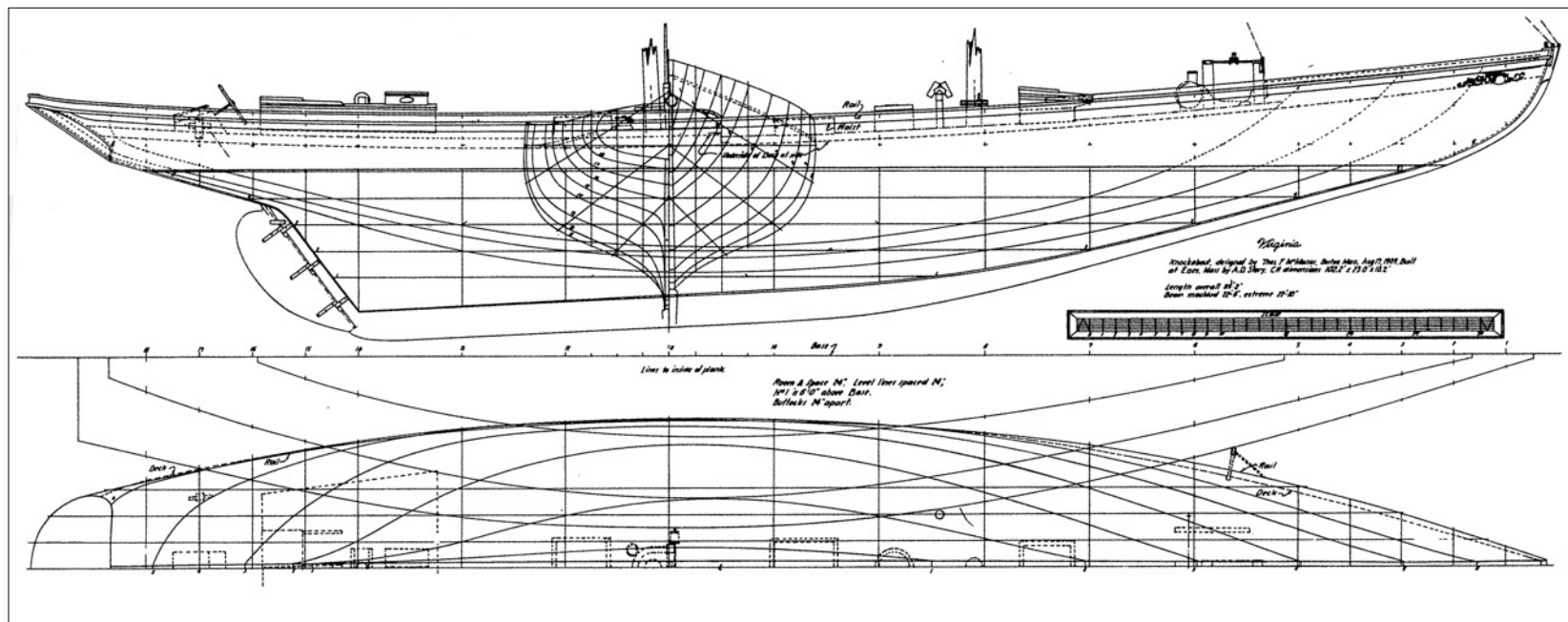


Figure 19. 1909 moulded loft plans for *Virginia* (later renamed *Buccaneer*) showing the break in the deck formed by a “Great Beam.” Source: Howard I. Chapelle, *The American Fishing Schooners, 1825-1935* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company,

measurement of 106 tons.²⁵⁰ Apart from these basic measurements, few specifics concerning construction features are included in the historical documentation. From the ship's lines, however, the presence of a break in the deck created by a "Great Beam" is evident (see fig. 19).²⁵¹

When compared to commercial fishing schooners discussed in this chapter, *Buccaneer* is similar in all aspects. At a registered 102.2 feet (31.2 meters) in length, *Buccaneer* is among the larger vessels in Pensacola's fleet, but is not the longest. In the 1930 *LMVUS*, the fishing schooner *Fern-Wood* is listed as measuring 105.1 feet (32.0 meters) in length and, in the archaeological record, the Snapper wreck measures approximately 100 feet (30.5 meters) in length.²⁵² *Buccaneer*'s beam of 23 feet (7.0 meters) and depth of 10 feet (3.0 meters) are also comparable to the averages for all known fishing schooners in the 1930 *LMVUS*.²⁵³ Thus, while *Buccaneer* operated somewhat earlier in the 1920s than other similarly sized vessels, she was certainly not anomalous. Additionally, the historically documented "Great Beam" on *Buccaneer* suggests that the vessel was built in New England.²⁵⁴ That New England shipyards built *Buccaneer* is substantiated both by Chappelle and the 1920 *LMVUS*.²⁵⁵

²⁵⁰ United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Fifty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 56.

²⁵¹ Chappelle, 281.

²⁵² Raupp, "Hook, Line, and Sinkers: Historical and Archaeological Investigations of the Snapper Wreck (8SR1001)," 81; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 582.

²⁵³ United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 568-613.

²⁵⁴ Hunt, 7; Taylor, 15-17.

²⁵⁵ Chappelle, 280; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Fifty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 56.

Buccaneer's status as a known commercial fishing vessel operating from Pensacola provides an excellent test of the trends and characteristics discussed earlier. Not only do the vessel's dimensions and known dates of operation fit within size change taken from the *LMVUS*, the presence of a "Great Beam" on this New England-built vessel helps substantiate author Fred Hunt's and Warren Fish Company President Francis W. Taylor's contention that only vessels built for North Atlantic fishing had breaks in their decks.²⁵⁶ If ever recorded archaeologically, *Buccaneer* would be an excellent candidate for a commercial fishing vessel based on this research.

The B Street Schooner

Investigated by UWF maritime archaeologists in 2009 and 2010, the B Street Schooner (8ES1903) lies directly on the Pensacola waterfront in a shallow area between South Clubbs Street and South Coyle Street (see fig. 20).²⁵⁷ Archaeologists explored three areas of the vessel, the amidships, bow, and stern areas, recovering some associated material culture and structural information.²⁵⁸ UWF graduate student Wesley Perrine wrote a master's thesis on the B Street Schooner, concluding that the vessel likely operated as a general freight vessel along the busy Pensacola waterfront some time from the mid-19th century to the early 20th century.²⁵⁹ Perrine also determined, based on the lack of artifacts, missing rigging elements, and signs of burning, that the vessel was likely salvaged and abandoned in the shallow waters of Pensacola Bay at the

²⁵⁶ Hunt, 7; Taylor, 15-17.

²⁵⁷ Perrine, "The B Street Schooner: Archaeological Investigation into Ship Construction and Design of a Nineteenth-Century Shipwreck in Pensacola Bay, Florida," 23.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 37.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 75-77.

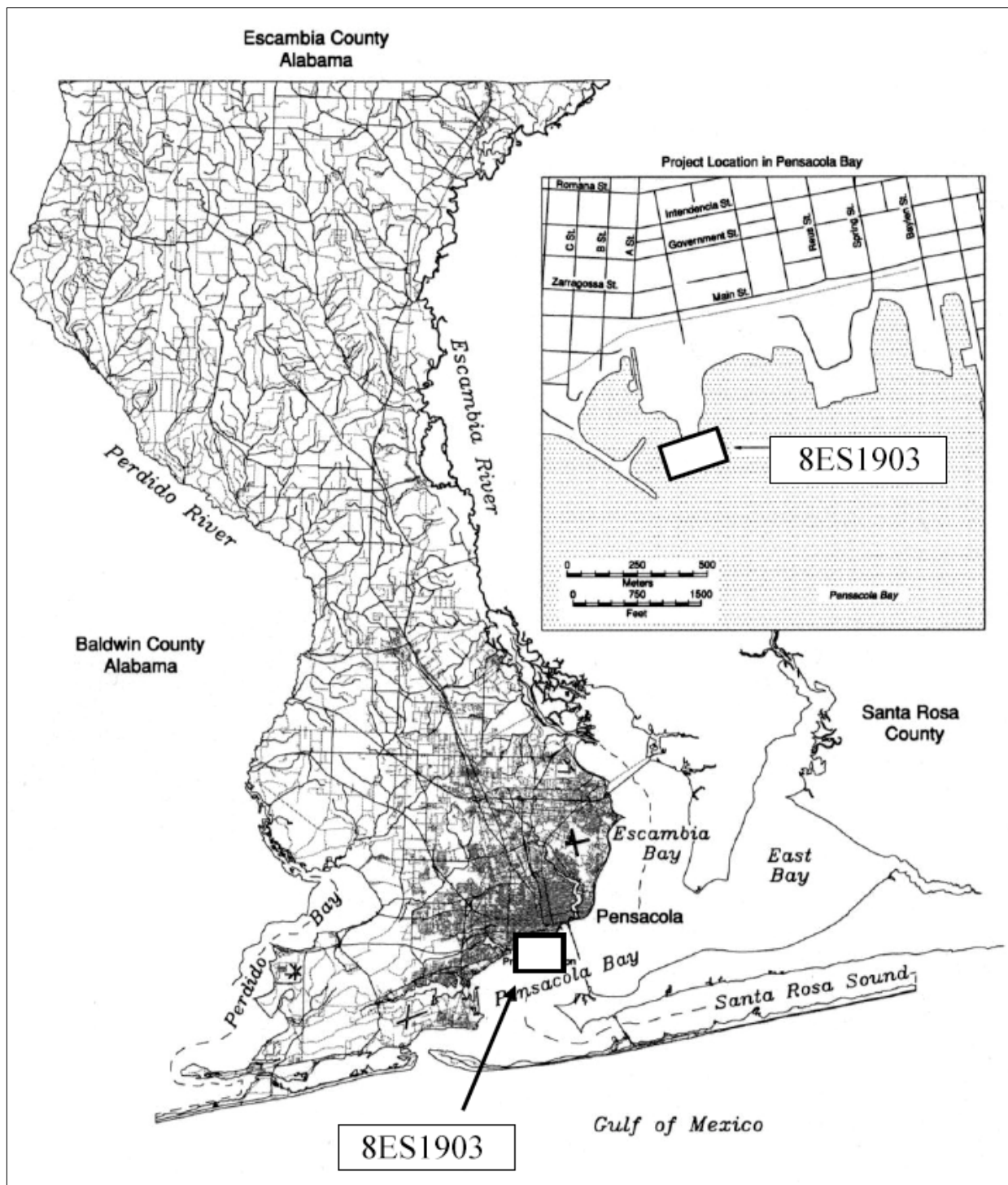


Figure 20. Location of the B Street Schooner. Image courtesy of the University of West Florida Archaeology Institute.

end of its life.²⁶⁰ In 2012, wetlands mitigation for construction projects occurring along the modern Pensacola waterfront led to the burial of the B Street Schooner under five feet of sand.²⁶¹ Previous archaeological investigations of the B Street Schooner are thus likely to be the final research attempts on the shipwreck.

Based on Perrine's investigations of the B Street Schooner, the vessel was determined to have been 149.6 feet (45.6 meters) long with a 34-foot (10.4-meter) beam.²⁶² Excavated units in the amidships, bow, and stern areas revealed closely spaced single framing stations with thick planking elements (see fig. 21). The sturdiness of these architectural elements suggests that the B Street Schooner was designed for strength and load bearing.²⁶³ Additionally, the use of single frame construction implies a mid-to-late-19th-century build date.²⁶⁴ Identified fasteners included treenails and iron bolts, drift pins, and washers, all commonly associated with vessels in Pensacola in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.²⁶⁵

The relatively limited artifact assemblage also suggests a similar date range. The vessel contained a variety of ceramic types that included plain whiteware, alkaline glazed stoneware, and coarse earthenware. Other associated artifacts included a 0.69 caliber lead shot, a glass globe, lantern, muntz metal sheathing, and an embossed Johnny Walker scotch bottle.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁰ Perrine, "The B Street Schooner: Archaeological Investigation into Ship Construction and Design of a Nineteenth-Century Shipwreck in Pensacola Bay, Florida," 85.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 88-90.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 43.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 48.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 48-50.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 43-46.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 59.

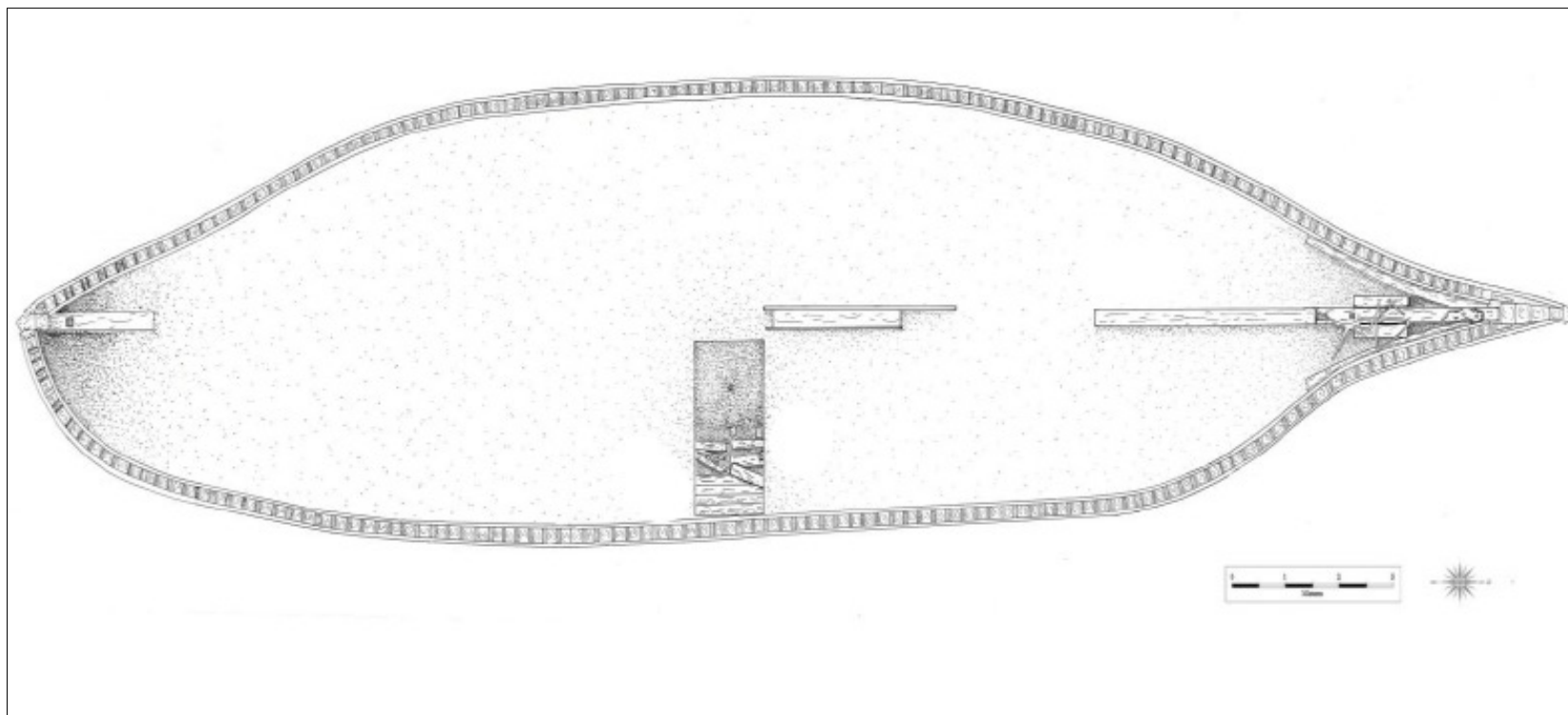


Figure 21. Site plan of the B Street Schooner. Image courtesy of the University of West Florida Archaeology Institute.

Perrine's analysis of the material culture indicates a probable date range for abandonment between 1905-1922.²⁶⁷ The B Street Schooner is thus easily associated with the relative time frame for the operation of commercial fishing vessels in Pensacola.

The B Street Schooner's architectural features, when compared with those of commercial fishing schooners, indicate that the vessel is an unlikely candidate for having worked in the local fishing industry. Of primary importance is that the B Street Schooner's dimensions of 149.6 feet (45.6 meters) in length and 34 feet (10.4 meters) in beam significantly exceed the dimensions for even the largest recorded fishing schooner in the *LMVUS* by 42% in length and 28% in beam.²⁶⁸ The single frame construction of the B Street Schooner is also unlike the typical double frame construction of any known fishing vessels. While shipyards of the mid to late 19th century built both single-framed and double-framed vessels, double-framed vessels tended to be more popular toward the end of the century.²⁶⁹ The tightness of the single frames in conjunction with thick planking also indicates the B Street Schooner was built for strength rather than speed, the latter being an essential quality of fishing vessels.²⁷⁰ Using his own basic model for determining former occupations of shipwrecks, Perrine determined that the B Street Schooner was probably not engaged in commercial fishing, but rather operated as a freight carrier.²⁷¹

²⁶⁷ Perrine, "The B Street Schooner: Archaeological Investigation into Ship Construction and Design of a Nineteenth-Century Shipwreck in Pensacola Bay, Florida," 65.

²⁶⁸ United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 582.

²⁶⁹ Greenhill, 115.

²⁷⁰ Perrine, "The B Street Schooner: Archaeological Investigation into Ship Construction and Design of a Nineteenth-Century Shipwreck in Pensacola Bay, Florida," 84.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 66-77.

Known fishing vessels do, however, have some characteristics in common with the B Street Schooner. Likely fishing-related shipwrecks like the Snapper wreck, Hamilton's wreck, and the alleged *Priscilla* all contain fasteners similar to those found in association with the B Street Schooner, indicating similar dates of construction.²⁷² Particularly interesting is the B Street Schooner's varied ceramic assemblage. The presence of a variety of lower-cost, relatively undecorated wares is similar to the ceramic assemblage from Hamilton's wreck (discussed in greater detail in chapter 4). That much of the ceramic assemblage is intrusive may be a possibility, however, since the site had no substantial ballast "cap." Though unable to determine the depositional nature of these ceramics, their potential association with the B Street Schooner may indicate the vessel's use as a working ship.²⁷³ The Hamilton's wreck ceramic assemblage exhibited similar characteristics. With little regard for ceramic style or flair characteristic of pleasure vessels, captains and laborers on both the B Street Schooner and Hamilton's wreck likely made do with what was readily available to them.

While the B Street Schooner does not match many of the trends in vessel size and construction common to Pensacola commercial fishing vessels, the vessel is no less important to the overall history of the city's waterfront. Indicative of an age when maritime industry and commerce were booming, around the same time that the red snapper fishing industry blossomed into a national enterprise, the B Street Schooner would have played a critical role in the transport of raw materials to and from Pensacola.

²⁷² Raupp, "Hook, Line, and Sinker: Historical and Archaeological Investigations of the Snapper Wreck (8SR1001)," 90; Moore, 70. Meide, McClean, and Wiser, 96; Perrine, "The B Street Schooner: Archaeological Investigation into Ship Construction and Design of a Nineteenth-Century Shipwreck in Pensacola Bay, Florida," 43-46.

²⁷³ Moore, 108-112; Perrine, "The B Street Schooner: Archaeological Investigation into Ship Construction and Design of a Nineteenth-Century Shipwreck in Pensacola Bay, Florida," 57-68.

Jack's Wreck

In 2011, a shipwreck eroded out of the surf zone in Gulf Islands National Seashore on Perdido Key, approximately 20 miles (32.2 kilometers) southwest of downtown Pensacola.²⁷⁴ Archaeologists from UWF investigated the wreck, naming it “Jack’s wreck” after the name “JACK” carved into one of the vessel’s exposed frames (see fig. 22). The vessel has no known associated historical documentation and its identity remains unknown. Surviving features exposed out of the sand include a number of framing stations, the keelson, ceiling planking, and outer hull planking, all of which are severely degraded due to surf and exposure to boring worms.²⁷⁵

Jack’s wreck did not undergo in-depth archaeological investigation; UWF archaeologists noted the site and graduate student Wesley Perrine wrote a brief report. According to Perrine’s report, surviving remains of the wreck are approximately 45 feet (13.7 meters) in length and 14 feet (4.3 meters) in beam and appear to be close to the vessel’s original dimensions. Many of the exposed framing stations are composed of double frames, suggesting that most or all of the ship was double framed. Some of the framing stations showed evidence of a burning episode (see fig. 23). Fasteners on the wreck included treenails, iron spikes, and an iron bolt and nut. No artifacts were found in association with Jack’s wreck. Based on the nature of the vessel’s construction described here, Perrine suggests that the vessel likely dates from the mid to late 19th century.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁴ According to the University of West Florida’s Division of Anthropology and Archaeology, archaeologists conducted initial investigations into Jack’s wreck in 1995. Unfortunately, the report for these investigations has been lost.

²⁷⁵ Wesley Perrine, *Survey of “Jack’s Wreck,”* (Pensacola, FL: University of West Florida Archaeology Institute, 2011), 1.

²⁷⁶ Perrine, *Survey of “Jack’s Wreck,”* 4.



Figure 22. “JACK” carved into the end of a frame on Jack’s Wreck. Image courtesy of the University of West Florida Archaeology Institute.



Figure 23. Burned ends of some of the double framing stations on Jack’s wreck. Image courtesy of the University of West Florida Archaeology Institute.

Although little is known about Jack's wreck archaeologically and historically, the existing information on the wreck places it squarely within the boundaries identified for known commercial fishing schooners. Jack's wreck is relatively small in length and beam at 45 feet (13.7 meters) and 14 feet (4.3 meters), but a number of vessels in the 1881 and 1891 *LMVUS* data years are within a 5-foot (1.5 meter) range of Jack's wreck's dimensions.²⁷⁷ The presence of double framing stations is consistent with known features of Pensacola commercial fishing vessels, as is use of the various treenail and iron fasteners. Additionally, the vessel's location just outside of the Pensacola Pass on Perdido Key indicates that it likely worked from or frequented the major port at Pensacola.

One known fishing vessel from Pensacola, in particular, nearly matches the given dimensions of Jack's wreck provided in Perrine's report. In 1891, the *LMVUS* lists the commercial fishing schooner *Sea Foam* home ported in Pensacola with a length of 43.9 feet (13.4 meters), a beam of 13 feet (4.0 meters), a depth of 5.5 feet (1.7 meters), and a gross tonnage of 17.79 tons, constructed in a shipyard in East Boothbay, Maine, in 1860.²⁷⁸ *Sea Foam* already had over 30 years working as a commercial fishing vessel by 1891 and it is not a surprise that she does not appear in the 1900 *LMVUS*.²⁷⁹ Sometime between 1891 and 1900, *Sea Foam* wrecked, was damaged, or succumbed to old age and was abandoned. As no historical records of *Sea Foam*'s demise are known, Jack's wreck may be a good candidate. Any future investigations

²⁷⁷ United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Statistics, *Thirteenth Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-185; United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Twenty-Third Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-197.

²⁷⁸ United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Twenty-Third Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-178.

²⁷⁹ United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Thirty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-201.

on Jack's wreck should include more extensive uncovering of the main mast step area to confirm or deny the presence of a "Great Beam" creating a break in the vessel's deck that would indicate a New England-built schooner.²⁸⁰ Based on this small amount of congruity with known fishing schooners, Jack's wreck may indeed be the remnants of one of the oldest red snapper smacks that operated out of Pensacola.

If Jack's wreck does represent the remains of a commercial fishing schooner, her size indicates that she likely operated long before the Snapper wreck and may be earlier than either Hamilton's wreck or the alleged *Priscilla*. Vessels operating between 1881-1900 would have seen a quick expansion of the Pensacola red snapper fishing industry as the construction of new rail connections and the introduction of artificial ice opened markets across the United States to the Gulf of Mexico's fresh fish.²⁸¹ As a potentially critical part of the development of commercial red snapper fishing in Pensacola, Jack's wreck certainly warrants further investigation.

Conclusion

The sailing vessels of Pensacola's red snapper fishing fleet, though no longer a constant on the city's waterfront, are local icons. With huge contributions made to the growth and development of both the Pensacola economy and the popularity of the Gulf of Mexico fisheries from 1860-1930, Pensacola commercial fishing helped usher in an age of prosperity for its fishermen. Whether fisherman crewed the near-shore chings or the offshore schooners, their fishing vessels reflect purposeful selection in order to reap the most profit in an effective manner.

²⁸⁰ Hunt, 7; Taylor, 15-17.

²⁸¹ Collins, "Notes on the Fisheries of Western Florida," 296-297; Hamilton, 4.

As fishing grounds changed over time due to fluctuations in red snapper catch reliability, vessel design and usage changed in response.

In large part, the historical and archaeological records capture the complicated relationship between commercial fishing and the environments in which they fished. One of the best historical records related to the types and sizes of sailing vessels engaged in Pensacola's fishing industry is the annual, government-published *List of Merchant Vessels of the United States (LMVUS)*. With this list, reviewed from 1881-1930, it is possible to trace both increases in vessel size and the increasing influence of local shipyards despite the considerable reliance on New England-built vessels. Archaeologically, the structural and material analysis of three potential fishing industry wrecks in northwest Florida, the Snapper wreck, Hamilton's wreck, and the alleged *Priscilla*, clearly reflect the need to partake in longer offshore trips to increase catch sizes. Given the progression in size among the vessels from the oldest (Hamilton's wreck) to the youngest (the Snapper wreck), the vessels likely correspond to the significant growth period of the city's industry. This historically and archaeologically documented "evolution" of the industry's sailing craft, particularly among the commercially owned and operated schooners, is useful in that it also provides the basis for a model with which to identify other shipwrecks as potentially fishing industry-related.

Understanding changes to the sailing vessels of Pensacola's commercial red snapper fleet over time is, however, only one aspect toward understanding the reciprocal relationship between industrial Pensacola and its surrounding natural environment. Subsequent chapters on the dynamic culture of commercial fishing during the sailing age and contemporaneous changes visible in the Gulf of Mexico's red snapper fishery will also help elucidate this complicated interrelationship.

CHAPTER IV

THE FISHERMEN

Embedded in Pensacola's Reconstruction-era industrial history are the life histories and accomplishments of the "great men" who founded the city's commercial fishing houses: Andrew F. Warren, Eugene Edwin Saunders, Silas Stearns, and Captain Thomas Welles, among others. For almost all of these individuals, large homes, well-marked graves, and appearances in most local history texts assure their place in the city's legacy. Little, however, has been written about the fishermen employed by Warren and Saunders, men who often traveled great distances to try their luck at supporting themselves or their families in a fledgling fishing enterprise.

Archaeological or historical records, and sometimes both, document the exceptional characteristics of fishing culture in Pensacola, though very little of each has survived the passage of time. Archaeologically, the area along the Pensacola waterfront that fisherman tended to inhabit from 1860-1930 remains a densely populated area, most of which is privately owned. Opportunities to investigate these areas are extremely limited and past projects have primarily taken place ahead of construction and focused on analysis of colonial materials. Those investigations along the waterfront with material culture contemporaneous to Pensacola's historical red snapper fishing industry cannot, however, be attributed specifically to commercial fishermen due to the large number of otherwise employed individuals also living in the area. Instead, these archaeological collections are representative of a wider working class society to which commercial fishermen belonged. Submerged shipwrecks that maritime archaeologists have investigated and determined to be related to Pensacola commercial fishing during this period have yielded almost all known archaeological evidence directly relatable to the city's fishermen.

In addition, the paucity of historical information on the fishermen of Pensacola requires that this chapter draw heavily from records of the United States censuses available from 1860-1930. Census records are helpful in that they provide a unique perspective on the domestic lives of fishermen living in Pensacola, an aspect of life that is largely absent in the scant records related to fishermen and fishing. The regularity and quantitative nature of federal census records also allow for a longer-term perspective on changes and trends in age, ethnicity, race, and marital situations among those who classified themselves as fishermen in the city of Pensacola. A reliance on census records for this research, partly a result of the scarcity of any other related records, affords an opportunity to approach the culture of Pensacola commercial fishermen in a new light.²⁸²

²⁸² United States Bureau of the Census, *Seventh Census of the United States*, 1850, Washington, DC, National Archives Microfilm Publications, 1967, Micro-copy no. 432, Florida, City of Pensacola, 1-35, Ancestry.com, <http://search.ancestrylibrary.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=8054> (accessed November 15, 2011); United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the eighth census of the United States*, 1860, Washington, DC, National Archives Microfilm Publications, 1967, Micro-copy no. 653, Florida, City of Pensacola, 1-48, University of West Florida Library Special Collections, Pensacola, Florida; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the ninth census of the United States*, 1870, Washington, DC, National Archives and Records Service, Micro-copy no. 593, Florida, City of Pensacola, 1-85, University of West Florida Library Special Collections, Pensacola, Florida; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the tenth census of the United States*, 1880, Washington, DC, National Archives Microfilm Publications, Micro-copy no. T-9, Florida, Pensacola, Election Precinct Number 2 First Division, 1-38, University of West Florida Library Special Collections, Pensacola, Florida; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the tenth census of the United States*, 1880, Washington, DC, National Archives Microfilm Publications, Micro-copy no. T-9, Florida, Pensacola, Election Precinct Number 2 Second Division, 1-30, University of West Florida Library Special Collections, Pensacola, Florida; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the tenth census of the United States*, 1880, Washington, DC, National Archives Microfilm Publications, Micro-copy no. T-9, Florida, Pensacola, Election Precinct Number 2 Third Division, 1-40, University of West Florida Library Special Collections, Pensacola, Florida; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the tenth census of the United States*, 1880, Washington, DC, National Archives Microfilm Publications, Micro-copy no. T-9, Florida, Pensacola, Election Precinct Number 2 Fourth Division, 1-32, University of West Florida Library Special Collections, Pensacola, Florida; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the tenth census of the United States*, 1880, Washington, DC, National Archives Microfilm Publications, Micro-copy no. T-9, Florida, Pensacola, Election Precinct Numbers 3,4,5, and 6, 1-49, University of West Florida Library Special Collections, Pensacola, Florida; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the tenth census of the United States*, 1880, Washington, DC, National Archives Microfilm Publications, Micro-copy no. T-9, Florida, Pensacola, Election Precinct Numbers 7,8, and 9, 1-28, University of West Florida Library Special Collections, Pensacola, Florida; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, 1900, Washington, DC, National Archives Microfilm Publications, 1963, Micro-copy no. T623, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 19, 1-42, University of West Florida Library Special Collections, Pensacola, Florida; United

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Among other available sources utilized here are first-hand accounts and periodical articles, a valuable qualitative supplement to collected federal census data. During the 1930s and 1940s, several local writers' projects made an effort to conduct oral histories on the men who worked in commercial fishing during its most prosperous period.²⁸³ In addition, Pensacola newspapers reflected on the city's past by interviewing "old salts" of the snapper industry.²⁸⁴ Former fishermen, primarily captains, who wanted to tell their story also published a couple of short manuscripts.²⁸⁵ That most of the information about the day-to-day lives of Pensacola fishermen comes from this period is not likely a coincidence. Fishing in the area remained under the strong influence of sail power until the mid-1920s: the "abundance" of information that appears in the 1930s and 1940s about local fishermen may, in part, be due to a nostalgia for a sailing age then-passed.²⁸⁶

Suggesting a Boas-ian definition of culture, Pensacola red snapper fishermen embody "a social group collectively and individually [characterized] in relation to their natural environment, to other groups, to members of the group itself and of each individual to himself."²⁸⁷ Although the composition and make-up of the Pensacola commercial fishing fleets changed in more than one way over time, the city's fishermen shared a highly distinctive lifestyle along the northern

organization kept information on all of the fishermen engaged in the commercial fisheries to pass on to census takers.

²⁸³ Hargis.

²⁸⁴ "Captain Billy Bell Recalls Good Old days When Ambitious Went Down to Sea in Ships," *Pensacola News Journal*, November, 5, 1939.

²⁸⁵ Hunt, 1-26; Henry C. Rowland, 69.

²⁸⁶ Kurlansky, 128-129.

²⁸⁷ Franz Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man: A Course of Lectures Delivered before the Lowell Institute, Boston, Massachusetts, and the National University of Mexico, 1910-1911* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921), 149.

Gulf of Mexico coast. Though borrowing from other commercial fishing cultures across the world as individuals moved and traveled, fishermen in Pensacola men formed a community unto themselves. Cultural distinctions included unique styles of dress, manners of speaking and communicating, areas of living within the city, and a surprisingly cosmopolitan sense of individuality within the larger community.

The lives and work of Pensacola's red snapper fishermen are critical components in a *longue durée* history of the region. Not only was the economy and waterfront of the city (and arguably, that of the entire northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico) drastically changed because of the booming business in the fishery, the advent of commercial fishing in the 1870s was a harbinger of the importance of recreational fishing in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. With the critical role of Pensacola's fishermen in the modern development of the local economy in mind, this chapter's particular perspective on fishing industry culture hopes to revisit the lives of some of the least-known, yet vital, individuals in Pensacola's history.

Composition

Before the city's fishing industry entered its heyday at the beginning of the 20th century, the ethnic backgrounds of Pensacola's fishermen very much reflected the local area's history. Few individuals in the "City of Pensacola" districts classified themselves as "fisherman" in the 1850 and 1860 federal censuses; most men (about 80%) claimed other maritime related professions like "sailor," "mariner," "seaman," or "captain." Characteristic of port cities, these maritime men represented several European countries and at least eleven American states. Professed fishermen in these districts for the 1850 and 1860 federal censuses, however, display a stark difference in heritage: almost all were natives of Spain, Portugal, or Mexico, a testament to

the historically significant Iberian influence in northwest Florida.²⁸⁸ This influence was lasting and, given the information on parental heritage collected in the censuses of 1870 and 1880 (but absent in 1850 and 1860), there is a strong possibility that many American-born fishermen of Pensacola in these early years had roots in the Iberian Peninsula. Common Spanish and Portuguese surnames such as “Marques,” “Cerillo,” and “Hernández” substantiate this premise.²⁸⁹ The nature of maritime professions in the city of Pensacola, in addition to ethnic backgrounds, began to change by the time of the 1870 federal census. While fishermen constituted a minority profession in the 1850 and 1860 censuses, they became a majority by 1870, representing 60% of seafaring jobs. Within a span of 20 years, a timeframe consistent with the rapid rise of the fishing industry evident in historical records, fishing became one of the most important maritime related professions in the city.²⁹⁰

Gulf natives, ancestral Spanish Gulf natives, and Spanish Europeans still dominated the profession in 1880, much as they had in 1850 and 1860, but a number of individuals from differing locales also began to take a prominent place among working fishermen in Pensacola.

²⁸⁸ United States Bureau of the Census, *Seventh Census of the United States*, Florida, City of Pensacola, 1-35; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the eighth census of the United States*, Florida, City of Pensacola, 1-48.

²⁸⁹ United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the ninth census of the United States*, Florida, City of Pensacola, 1-85; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the tenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Election Precinct Number 2 First Division, 1-38; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the tenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Election Precinct Number 2 Second Division, 1-30; Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the tenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Election Precinct Number 2 Third Division, 1-40; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the tenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Election Precinct Number 2 Fourth Division, 1-32; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the tenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Election Precinct Numbers 3, 4, 5, and 6, 1-49; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the tenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Election Precinct Numbers 7, 8, and 9, 1-28.

²⁹⁰ United States Bureau of the Census, *Seventh Census of the United States*, Florida, City of Pensacola, 1-35; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the eighth census of the United States*, Florida, City of Pensacola, 1-48; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the ninth census of the United States*, Florida, City of Pensacola, 1-85.

As Captain J.W. Collins mentioned in his 1885 report to the United States Fish Commission, many of these new fishermen were from New England. He also noted an increasing number of fishermen of extremely diverse European backgrounds headed south to Pensacola.²⁹¹ His claims are largely substantiated in census records: by 1880, fishermen from Maine, New York, Virginia, North Carolina, Scotland, Ireland, Portugal, Germany, and France are increasingly recorded.²⁹² This census period, a few years after the establishment of commercial fish houses in the city of Pensacola, represents the beginning of a truly “industrial” fishing venture.

With the founding of a solid and lucrative industry due, in large part, to technological innovations and the entrepreneurial leadership of men like Andrew F. Warren and Eugene Edwin Saunders, the faces of fishing in the city of Pensacola completely changed by the time of the twelfth federal census in 1900. Fishermen by 1900 represented almost 77% of those employed in maritime trades, not including fishing smack captains. The area’s traditional fishers of the previous 50 years (Gulf natives, ancestral Spanish Gulf natives, and Spanish Europeans) accounted for less than half of the fishermen. Among those born in United States, the number of New Englanders in 1900 quickly began to approach the number of Gulf natives (see fig. 24). Non-native individual fishermen came not from Iberia, but from other European countries like England, Italy, Austria, Norway, and Greece.²⁹³ Throughout the 1900-1930 census years, these

²⁹¹ Collins, “Notes of the Fisheries of Western Florida,” 282-283.

²⁹² United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the tenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Election Precinct Number 2 First Division, 1-38; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the tenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Election Precinct Number 2 Second Division, 1-30; Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the tenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Election Precinct Number 2 Third Division, 1-40; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the tenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Election Precinct Number 2 Fourth Division, 1-32; United States Bureau of the Census, Florida, *Population Schedules of the tenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Election Precinct Numbers 3, 4, 5, and 6, 1-49; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the tenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Election Precinct Numbers 7, 8, and 9, 1-28.

²⁹³ United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 19, 1-42; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the*

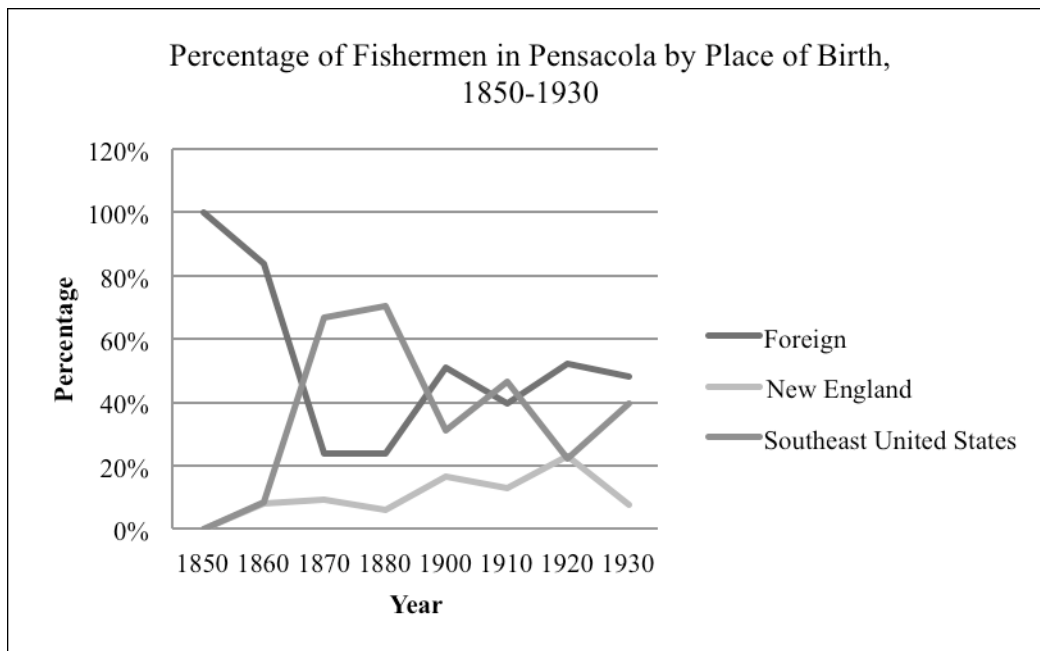


Figure 24. Percentage of Fishermen in Pensacola by Place of Birth, 1850-1930.

polyglot crews, born in a variety of European countries, dominated Pensacola's fishing industry.

By 1930, the federal censuses also record few other maritime related professions apart from those related to the fishing industry in the neighborhood surrounding Pensacola's primary port.²⁹⁴

twelfth census of the United States, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 20, 1-52; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 21, 1-35; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 22, 1-37; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 23, 1-35; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 24, 1-24; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 25, 1-13; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 26, 1-18; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 27, 1-64; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 28, 1-44.

²⁹⁴ United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 15, 1-45; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 16, 1-50; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 17, 1-14; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 18. United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 19, 1-14; United States Bureau of the

Understanding racial composition in relation to Pensacola's fishing industry is somewhat more difficult, even with statistical data from the federal censuses. In 1850 and 1860, those census years directly before the start of the Civil War, no racially categorized "Black" or "Mulatto" individuals proclaim maritime professions in the city of Pensacola districts.²⁹⁵ By the end of the Civil War, far more racial diversity is present among the fishermen of Pensacola, though the degree to which the city's commercial fish houses employed "Black" and "Mulatto" fishermen is uncertain. Various historical sources consistently mention a distinct racial separation of the fishing workforce, with "White" crews dominating the most lucrative and

Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 20, 1-9; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 21, 1-18; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 22, 1-36; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 23, 1-62; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 24, 1-54; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 25, 1-14; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 26, 1-45; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 27, 1-47; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 28, 1-21; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 29, 1-35; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 30, 1-49; United States Bureau of the Census, Florida, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 31, 1-42; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 32, 1-18; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 33, 1-25; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 34, 1-46. Although this may reflect the local neighborhood of fishermen (discussed in detail elsewhere in this chapter), commercial fishing was not the only industry of Pensacola's port. Thus, the overwhelming numbers of fishermen in this area is thus an indicator of the importance and size of the fishing industry compared with other industries at the time. Pensacola's Navy Yard was also a major maritime employer, but most of its employees lived in and around the Warrington area rather than in downtown Pensacola.

²⁹⁵ United States Bureau of the Census, *Seventh Census of the United States*, Florida, City of Pensacola, 1-35; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the eighth census of the United States*, Florida, City of Pensacola, 1-48. This is not to say, however, that no racially categorized "Black" or "Mulatto" individuals engaged in fishing. Recreational and non-commercial fishing have a long history in northwest Florida and Pensacola as a means to supplement diets. Slave schedules contained in the United States Federal Censuses for 1850 and 1860 also, unfortunately, provide little information about commercial fishing ventures that "Black" and "Mulatto" individuals may have undertaken during this time, as there is no field for "profession" or "employment."

distant grounds.²⁹⁶ What the census reveals by 1910, however, is that the city's fish houses employed an increasing number of "Black" and "Mulatto" fishermen. These men remained a significant minority, however, representing only 7.7% of the workforce in 1910 and 13.4% of the workforce in 1930.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁶ Collins, "Notes of the Fisheries of Western Florida," 285; Hargis.

²⁹⁷ United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 17, 1-99; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 18, 1-43; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 19, 1-50; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 20, 1-12; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 21, 1-62; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 22, 1-30; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 1, Enumeration District 23, 1-16; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 14, Enumeration District 16, 1-29; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 14, Enumeration District 20, 1-26; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 3, Enumeration District 23, 1-36; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 15, 1-45; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 16, 1-50; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 17, 1-14; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 18; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 19, 1-14; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 20, 1-9; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 21, 1-18; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 22, 1-36; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 23, 1-62; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 24, 1-54; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 25, 1-14; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 26, 1-45; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 27, 1-47; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 28, 1-21; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 29, 1-35; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 30, 1-49; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 31, 1-42; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 32, 1-18; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 33, 1-25; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 34, 1-46.

Although census records lack qualitative information, they do provide a necessary backdrop for understanding the offshore and onshore lives of the men involved in Pensacola's fishing industry. Statistical data collected from the federal censuses also evince the various historically situated trends that commercial fishing underwent. While Pensacola had been somewhat diverse given its close relationship to Spanish, French, and English colonials before Florida's incorporation as a United States territory in 1821, the city was put on the map as a southern cosmopolitan center due in large part to its industry-scale utilization of the Gulf red snapper fisheries. Access to new means of transportation and new job opportunities allowed individuals and families to travel from all over the world to participate in what promised to be a lucrative trade. What resulted was a modern fishing culture in Pensacola uncharacteristic of most other southern port cities.

Offshore Experiences

When Modeste Hargis, member of the Florida Writers' Project, interviewed Captain Frederick Fredericksen in 1940, she took time to record the old salt's appearance; he was "a little old shriveled weather-beaten man neatly dressed in a khaki flannel shirt, dark trousers and a heavy blue coat, with a seaman's cap, setting on his head, which made him look the old deep-sea fisherman."²⁹⁸ Fredericksen had been working in Pensacola's fishing industry for E.E. Saunders & Co. since the 1880s when he arrived off a vessel from his home country of Sweden. Within five years, he became captain of a fishing smack and continued operating out of Pensacola until his retirement in 1925. Fredericksen's longevity of experience in the area's commercial fishing, from its beginnings in the 1880s to its decline after the 1920s, provides a uniquely personal narrative of the larger changes that had taken place. He recalled the transition from short fishing

²⁹⁸ Fredericksen, interview.

trips on the banks of the northern Gulf coast to the longer trips on the Campeche Banks that characterized the years after 1890, as well as the transition from sail to steam dominating Pensacola's harbor in the mid-1920s.²⁹⁹

Especially important is the insight Fredericksen gave about Pensacola fishermen's daily lives during trips offshore. In the early years of the industry from 1880-1890, crews of six to seven men traveled only 25-30 miles offshore to catch snapper for a day or two. The fish were stored in live wells of seven or eight gallons in the fore and aft of the vessels and brought back immediately. After 1890, Fredericksen describes a shift to much longer trips offshore. As vessels grew in size to hold more fish in cavernous hulls filled with ice, crews of 12 men were required to make the journey to the Campeche Banks for as long as a month. Despite the duration of these later trips, his crew ate well and often had fresh meat during the first two or three days at sea. Schedules were rigorous: men woke up for breakfast at 5:00 a.m., had "dinner" at 11:30 a.m., and ate "supper" at 4:30 p.m. He kept "a barrel of bottled beer and a gallon of good whiskey" on board for leisure hours, and the men often played games like cards or checkers. Before fishing smacks carried radios, Fredericksen played the accordion to keep the men entertained. Despite the diverse origins of the crewmembers, he recalled having no trouble with any of his men. Like many of the narratives about Pensacola's fishermen, a general ease of life seems to characterize Gulf commercial fishing.³⁰⁰

Where Fredericksen's recollections depart from others' is in his treatment of alcohol while at sea. Snapper fisherman Fred Hunt paints a somewhat darker picture of Pensacola's fishermen that is also echoed in other accounts. In his manuscript, *Campeche Days: After the*

²⁹⁹ Fredericksen, interview.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

Snapper from Pensacola, Hunt describes how many fishermen were “shanghai-ed” into going to sea by captains who gave them copious amounts of alcohol before dumping them onto a fishing smack, setting sail for the outer harbor, and forcing them into labor after they sobered up. Vessels like these had no alcohol onboard, and the first couple of days at sea were spent allowing crews to recover from their withdrawals.³⁰¹ Hargis also expresses the difficulties alcohol caused “in securing the maximum fishing effort” in her study of Pensacola’s commercial fishing fleet.³⁰²

With or without alcohol, the generally mild climate and calm seas of the Gulf made for a relatively undemanding time at sea, apart from the labor it took to catch and pull in fish. Henry Rowland, a magazine journalist, spent his first days onboard a commercial fishing vessel out of Pensacola during the fall of 1903, signing on as green hand “on a snug little fishing schooner” to get experience for an article he was writing for *Outing* magazine.³⁰³ Learning to catch and process snapper had taken time for Rowland, but he was finally able to work side-by-side with the other men onboard. Of course, the sometimes-dangerous jests of the seasoned fishermen made him learn some lessons the hard way: for example, when gutting his first fish, another crew member told him that sticking his fingers in the razor sharp gills would give him a better grip. Rowland playfully responded the next day by locking the man in the vessel’s refrigerated hull. Despite some initial adjustment, he took a liking to the light-hearted crew and a love for the life of red snapper fishermen is evident in his published article.³⁰⁴

³⁰¹ Hunt, 9-12.

³⁰² Hargis.

³⁰³ Rowland, 66.

³⁰⁴ Rowland, 66-75.

Commercial fishing trips were often successful into the 1910s, especially as the red snapper-laden Campeche Banks opened.³⁰⁵ In the earliest boom years, the major commercial fishing businesses in Pensacola (Warren Fish Company and E.E. Saunders & Co.) guaranteed stable pay for their smack crews. Unlike northern commercial fishing where market prices could significantly fluctuate every day based on supply, and a crew had almost no indication of how much income they would receive, Warren and Saunders introduced an innovative market system that set the price of their red snapper. Not only did this speed up delivery by reducing time spent at the docks haggling over price, it also provided a steadier source of income to the fishermen.³⁰⁶ During later, less successful years, Warren and Saunders reverted to a “shares” system of pay. In general, after 30-40% of the “vessel’s share” was deducted to cover trip-related costs for the fish house that owned the vessel, profits were split up on a share basis among the officers and the crew. Captains, mates, and cooks received one and one-third shares, while the regular crew received one share. If a smack failed to make enough to cover the trip expenses, the men received pay in fish.³⁰⁷

As Hargis noted in her interview of the snapper captain Fredericksen, the man had a particular way of dressing that reflected his many years at sea. Fredericksen’s status as a captain would have guaranteed a higher pay rate and more privileges onboard, but Hargis’s description of his manner of dressing is not unlike that of fishing smack crews captured in period photography.³⁰⁸ Figure 25 shows the typical work “uniform” of the Pensacola snapper fisherman.

³⁰⁵ Hamilton, 16.

³⁰⁶ Warren, 334.

³⁰⁷ Collins, “Notes of the Fisheries of Western Florida,” 293-294.

³⁰⁸ Hargis in Fredericksen, interview.



ON THE GULF COAST.

PENSACOLA, FLORIDA.

FISHING FLEET OF SAUNDERS & CO.

Figure 25. Pensacola fishermen off-load their catch at E.E. Saunders & Co. *Source:* Pensacola fishermen, Pensacola Historical Society Resource Center, Pensacola, FL.

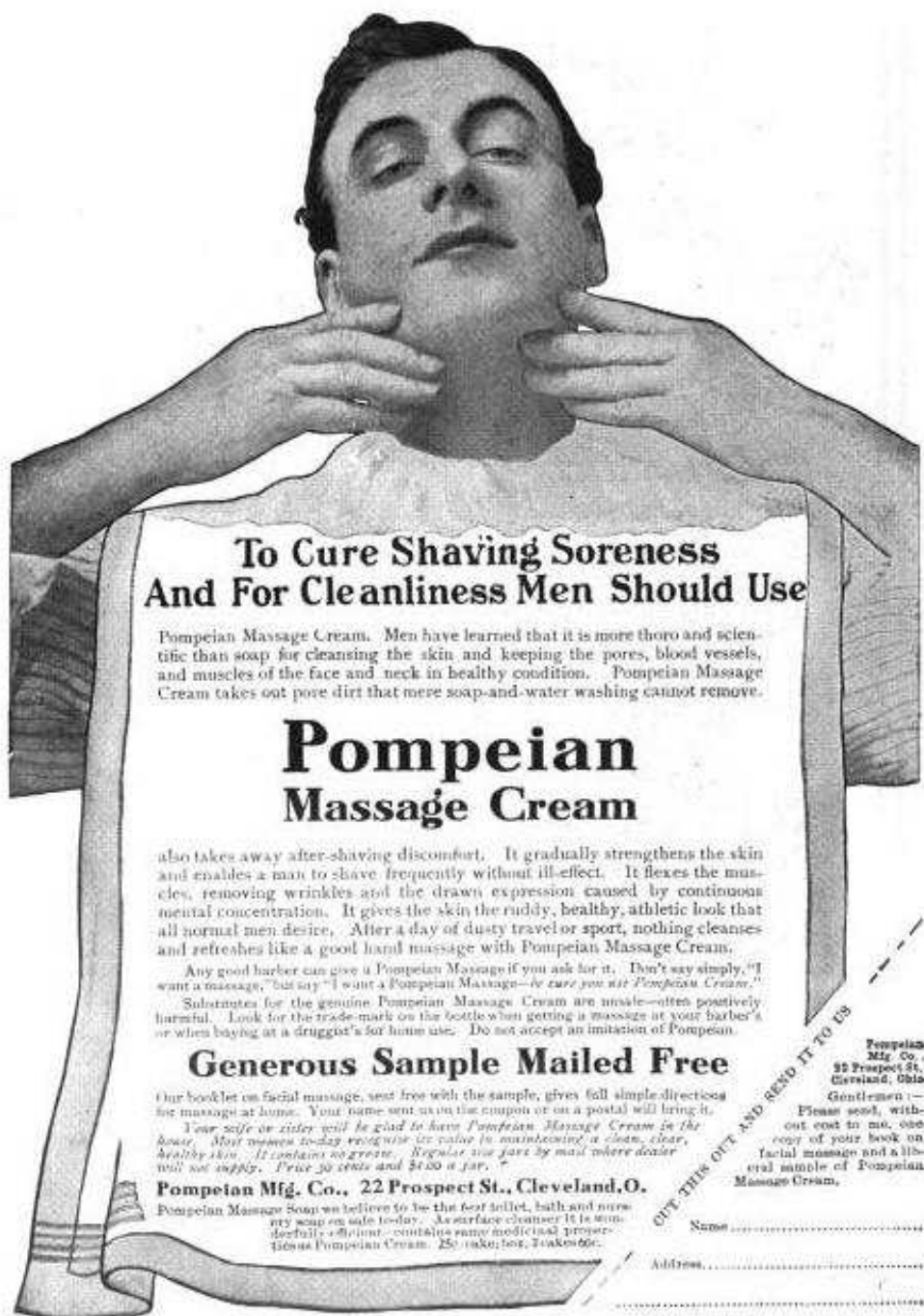
As seen in the surviving photographs of fishermen working on their boats at the Pensacola wharves during this period, the crews generally wore khakis or dark-colored slacks and white collared, button-down shirts, sometimes with suspenders. In the winter, they wore dark jackets and most photographs show them wearing a variety of different caps. The fishermen generally kept their hairstyles short and sometimes sported well-kept mustaches.

Interestingly, the offshore hygiene of Pensacola fisherman is archaeologically documented in association with Hamilton's wreck (8ES2238), submerged near the western shore of Pensacola Bay. The UWF investigation of Hamilton's wreck strongly suggests that the wreck was a schooner once engaged in the Pensacola red snapper fishing industry, though the name of the vessel remains unknown.³⁰⁹ Important for an analysis of fishing culture in Pensacola, Hamilton's wreck revealed a significant number of artifacts that characterize the importance of personal maintenance among the men of that particular vessel. Two separate field seasons uncovered two straight razors with bone or horn handles in addition to what Robin Moore's 2002 University of West Florida master's thesis identified as a molded glass jar embossed with "Pompeian Massage Cream."³¹⁰ A fisherman would have used this face cream to aid in shaving. A 1909 advertisement from *The Reader* boasts that Pompeian "takes away after-shaving discomfort" and, "after a dusty day of travel or sport," refreshes the face (see fig. 26).³¹¹ Other personal hygiene goods associated with fishermen found at the site of Hamilton's wreck include two small glass "cosmetic" containers, one of which probably held a dental paste, and an

³⁰⁹ James W. Hunter III et al., *Underwater Field Investigations 1999: The Santa Rosa Island and Hamilton Shipwrecks* (Pensacola, FL: University of West Florida Archaeology Institute, 2000), 67. Chapter IV of this thesis covers analysis of Hamilton's wreck in more depth.

³¹⁰ Moore, 114-116.

³¹¹ Pompeian Massage Cream advertisement, *The Reader*, May 1907, 693.



**To Cure Shaving Soreness
And For Cleanliness Men Should Use**

Pompeian Massage Cream. Men have learned that it is more thoro and scientific than soap for cleansing the skin and keeping the pores, blood vessels, and muscles of the face and neck in healthy condition. Pompeian Massage Cream takes out pore dirt that mere soap-and-water washing cannot remove.

**Pompeian
Massage Cream**

also takes away after-shaving discomfort. It gradually strengthens the skin and enables a man to shave frequently without ill-effect. It flexes the muscles, removing wrinkles and the drawn expression caused by continuous mental concentration. It gives the skin the ruddy, healthy, athletic look that all normal men desire. After a day of dusty travel or sport, nothing cleanses and refreshes like a good hand massage with Pompeian Massage Cream.

Any good barber can give a Pompeian Massage if you ask for it. Don't say simply, "I want a massage," but say "I want a Pompeian Massage—*be sure you use Pompeian Cream.*"

Substitutes for the genuine Pompeian Massage Cream are unsafe—often positively harmful. Look for the trade-mark on the bottle when getting a massage at your barber's or when buying at a druggist's for home use. Do not accept an imitation of Pompeian.

Generous Sample Mailed Free

Our booklet on facial massage, sent free with the sample, gives full simple directions for massage at home. Your name sent us on the coupon or on a postal will bring it.

Your wife or sister will be glad to have Pompeian Massage Cream in the house. Most women to-day recognize its value in maintaining a clean, clear, healthy skin. It contains no grease. Regular use gives by mail where dealer will not supply. Price 30 cents and \$1.00 a jar.

Pompeian Mfg. Co., 22 Prospect St., Cleveland, O.

Pompeian Massage Soap we believe to be the best toilet, bath and nursery soap on sale to-day. As surface cleanser it is non-irritating and contains no medicinal properties. Pompeian Cream, 25c (tube); 50c, 75c and \$1.00.

**Pompeian Mfg. Co.,
22 Prospect St.,
Cleveland, Ohio**

Gentlemen:—
Please send, without cost to me, one copy of your book on facial massage and a liberal sample of Pompeian Massage Cream.

CUT THIS OUT AND SEND IT TO US

Name.....
Address.....

IN WRITING TO ADVERTISERS, PLEASE MENTION "THE READER."

Figure 26. A 1907 Pompeian Massage Cream advertisement geared toward men. *Source:* Pompeian Massage Cream advertisement, *The Reader*, May 1907, 693.

Imperial Brush ivory or bone toothbrush.³¹² Together, this abundance of hygiene and shaving accessories among the personal goods recovered from Hamilton's wreck may indicate a desire, at least among the fishermen of this particular vessel, to maintain a certain image or level of health.

Particularly interested in describing life aboard fishing vessels is the variety of late 19th and early 20th century kitchen materials with elements for food preparation, storage, and serving found in association with Hamilton's wreck. The *mélange* of low-cost ceramics (plain whiteware, course earthenware, and stoneware) and mismatched utensils likewise indicates a utilitarian sensibility. Based on the material culture of Hamilton's wreck, there is a strong possibility that the ship was a working vessel, rather than a pleasure vessel, and was crewed by working-class individuals.³¹³

"Dress codes," a vigorous hygiene regimen, and working-class material culture were not the only potential signifiers of a Pensacola fisherman working in the period from 1870-1930. As is noted in a few sources, the captains and crews of red snapper fishing smacks had a unique system of language, one that likely drew from the general lexicon of all those individuals engaged in maritime related professions during this period. The phrase "snapper-o," mentioned in Rowland's magazine piece, was one of the most notable phrases of the Pensacola fishing industry and alerted all crewmembers to the sighting of snapper and the beginning of a long day of work.³¹⁴ The Stella Maris Missionary Cenacle located on the Pensacola waterfront on Baylen Street also published a list of "Common Fishing Expressions Used around Pensacola" which summarizes the men's unique language. Some of the phrases on this list are common sailing

³¹² Moore, 112-113, 117.

³¹³ Ibid., 108-112. Unfortunately for further analysis of life onboard Pensacola commercial fishing vessels, archaeologists recovered very few associated artifacts on the Snapper wreck and none on the alleged *Priscilla*.

³¹⁴ Rowland, 69.

expressions, including “come about” to indicate a turn to the wind and “tossing the lead” in reference to using a lead weight attached to a rope to “sound” the depth and nature of the sea bottom. Without any known comparisons among other fisheries, other phrases seem to be unique to Pensacola or, at least, to the red snapper fishing industry of the northern Gulf of Mexico. Of these phrases, some of the more unique are “Mobile” to indicate no fish and “Turk” or “Portuguese” to describe a lazy person. Each of these phrases may have some local significance, though little other historical evidence exists.³¹⁵ Possibly, the Stella Maris Missionary Cenacle published this list of common fishing expressions because there had been potential difficulty communicating effectively with the substantial population of fishermen strolling Pensacola’s waterfront.

A racial divide among Pensacola’s commercial fishermen also existed, as indicated in a number of historical sources, but census records are most telling about the nature of divisions between white and black fishermen in Pensacola. The first classified “black” fisherman appeared after the end of the Civil War in the 1870 census; by 1900, their numbers increased exponentially.³¹⁶ The 1910 census, however, is much more revealing about the differences

³¹⁵ Stella Maris Missionary Cenacle, “Some Common Fishing Expressions Used around Pensacola,” Pensacola Historical Society Collections, West Florida Historic Preservation, Inc., Pensacola, Florida.

³¹⁶ United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the ninth census of the United States*, Florida, City of Pensacola, 1-85; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 19, 1-42; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 20, 1-52; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 21, 1-35; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 22, 1-37; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 23, 1-35; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 24, 1-24; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 25, 1-13; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 26, 1-18; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 27, 1-64; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth*

between black and white fishermen. In the field for “general nature of industry,” census takers began to record the primary area in which the fishermen worked. While 92% of white fishermen are listed as “Gulf” or “Commercial” fishermen, approximately 64% of black or mulatto fishermen are listed as “Beach” fishermen, and almost all are Gulf states natives.³¹⁷ A few sources, such as long time snapper smack skipper Fredericksen and Florida Writer’s Project researcher Modeste Hargis, mention native, “all-black” crews that operated smaller vessels referred to as “ching-a-marings” or “chings.”³¹⁸ Since chings were three-masted, open-deck boats not built for spending long periods at sea, they generally stayed within the confines of the northern continental shelf and were probably associated with the “beach” fishermen of the census.³¹⁹ Although these black fishermen sometimes sold their catches to the large fish houses of Pensacola, Hargis mentions in 1940 that they “never ship in company with white crews.”³²⁰ It is likely that, as their white counterparts abandoned the diminished fisheries along the shore

census of the United States, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 28, 1-44. As mentioned previously, the Slave Schedules contained in the 1850 and 1860 United States Federal Censuses do not provide information on the employment of slaves and, thus, do not provide information on potential commercial undertakings for “Black” or “Mulatto” individuals before 1870.

³¹⁷ United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 17, 1-99; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 18, 1-43; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 19, 1-50; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 20, 1-12; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 21, 1-62; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 22, 1-30; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 1, Enumeration District 23, 1-16; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 14, Enumeration District 16, 1-29; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 14, Enumeration District 20, 1-26; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 3, Enumeration District 23, 1-36.

³¹⁸ Fredericksen, interview; Hargis.

³¹⁹ Collins, “Notes of the Fisheries of Western Florida,” 285. Chapter 3 discusses chings in greater detail.

³²⁰ Hargis.

between Mobile and Cape St. George for more fertile snapper grounds farther south, non-white commercial fishermen filled a vacated niche that offered a source of income.

Life spent on the water for those fishermen working off the beaches would have been markedly different from those making the long, offshore trips to the Yucatan Peninsula to fish the Campeche grounds. Although no first-hand accounts survive from the city's black or mulatto red snapper fishermen, Fredericksen's insight into the early years of the industry, before a lack of fish drew smacks farther from Pensacola, likely mirrors the lifestyles of those who remained near the shore at the height of the industry. Trips would have been relatively short, probably no more than a day or two as open-decked chings would have provided little protection from the elements. Short trips would have also been necessary to keep fish fresh since chings had neither live wells nor large, iced holds. Unfortunately, no archaeological remains or material culture are known that could provide greater insight into daily life aboard chings or of beach fishermen.

Despite the suggestion that "black" and "mulatto" individuals did not directly work for the commercial fish houses, the census reveals that the Pensacola's major fish companies indeed employed racially diverse men, especially in the later years of the industry. Though only four non-white fishermen appear in the census as working for the commercial fisheries in 1910, 24 are employed by 1930. The generalities of the census mire the nature of their specific jobs, but these men are indeed listed as working for a "fish house" or for a "commercial" operation.³²¹

³²¹ United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 17, 1-99; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 18, 1-43; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 19, 1-50; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 20, 1-12; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 21, 1-62; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 22, 1-30; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 1, Enumeration District 23, 1-16; United States Bureau of the Census,

Despite an increase in the number of “black” and “mulatto” men in the industry in these later years, white fishermen unquestionably dominated the industry and the presence of “all-white” crews working for the major fish houses is likely historically accurate. Based on first-hand accounts, like those of Fredericksen and Hargis, and United State Federal Census records alone, it would be difficult to explain the offshore racial divide solely because of a prevailing racism on behalf of white fishermen, but race is, however, a significant factor in the offshore lives of commercial fishing crews.

The ambiguous racial situation of black and mulatto commercial fishermen in Pensacola mirrors that of other Gulf of Mexico port cities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In a

Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States, Florida, Pensacola Ward 14, Enumeration District 16, 1-29; United States Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States, Florida, Pensacola Ward 14, Enumeration District 20, 1-26; United States Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States, Florida, Pensacola Ward 3, Enumeration District 23, 1-36; United States Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 15, 1-45; United States Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 16, 1-50; United States Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 17, 1-14; United States Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 18; United States Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 19, 1-14; United States Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 20, 1-9; United States Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 21, 1-18; United States Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 22, 1-36; United States Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 23, 1-62; United States Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 24, 1-54; United States Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 25, 1-14; United States Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 26, 1-45; United States Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 27, 1-47; United States Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 28, 1-21; United States Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 29, 1-35; United States Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 30, 1-49; United States Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 31, 1-42; United States Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 32, 1-18; United States Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 33, 1-25; United States Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 34, 1-46.

2005 dissertation for Florida State University, archaeologist Christopher Horrell explored local cultural and social processes of labor in the Florida port cities of Apalachicola and Carrabelle.³²² Like Pensacola, each of these small, coastal cities employed a diverse group of local, New England, and coastal European laborers engaged in the lumber, naval stores, and seafood (particularly oysters and sponges) trades.³²³ Also similar to the situation in Pensacola, some forms of professional racial segregation existed. Prior to 1900, most of the U.S. federal census categorized “Black” individuals held positions of manual physical labor on farms or sawmills.³²⁴ Over time, however, black individuals increasingly engaged in forms of maritime labor, especially in the naval stores trade from Apalachicola.³²⁵ The transition from exclusion to gradual inclusion in maritime occupations by the early years of the 20th century largely reflects the situation in Pensacola and may indicate the formation of a class-based (rather than race-based) waterfront identity.

Among western Gulf of Mexico ports, the exceptionally cosmopolitan city of New Orleans, Louisiana, also experienced race relationships among waterfront workers similar to that among commercial fishermen in Pensacola. Though waterfront occupations were generally segregated through much of the 19th century, racial constraints were loosened around the turn of the 20th century.³²⁶ Many racially diverse workers along the waterfront lived in similar

³²² Christopher Earl Horrell, “Plying the Waters of Time: Maritime Archaeology and History on the Florida Gulf Coast” (PhD diss., Florida State University, 2005), 1-2.

³²³ Horrell, 64-71.

³²⁴ Ibid., 74-75.

³²⁵ Ibid., 76-77.

³²⁶ Daniel Rosenberg, *New Orleans Dockworkers: Race, Labor, and Unionism, 1892-1923* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988), 7.

residential areas (as described below in Pensacola) and participated in unsegregated trade unions like the Knights of Labor.³²⁷ Indeed, trade unions in New Orleans were critical in institutionalizing the “half and half principle” requiring waterfront employers to employ both black and white individuals.³²⁸ Though race permeated the union discourse, attempts at solidarity among class-based lines undermined traditional administrative racial segregation.³²⁹ The slow introduction of black and mulatto workers into the commercial fishing workforce in Pensacola by 1910 may have been less formal and union-centered than what occurred contemporaneously in New Orleans, yet there are significant parallels in the formation of what may have been an overriding class-based identity as will be discussed in below.

Fishermen and the Community of Pensacola

In *Pensacola History Illustrated*, Jason Raupp presents a view of Pensacola’s fishermen as nomadic, unreliable, and generally lacking in domestic ties.³³⁰ Modeste Hargis’s 1940 interpretation of the fishing industry echoes Raupp’s sentiments that fishermen had few ties in the region.³³¹ While census records do reveal that a considerable number of these individuals were “diverse in origin,” especially after 1880, to generalize them solely as “ne’er-do-wells” ignores a great deal of evidence to the contrary.³³² Though a significant number of individuals classified as “fishermen” had no domestic foundation in the Pensacola community (meaning that

³²⁷ Rosenberg, 15.

³²⁸ Ibid., 69-70.

³²⁹ Ibid., 175-176.

³³⁰ Jason T. Raupp, “The Historic Red Snapper Industry of Pensacola,” *Pensacola and Northwest Florida History Illustrated* 1 (Winter 2010), 18-19.

³³¹ Hargis, 39.

³³² Raupp, “The Historic Red Snapper Industry of Pensacola,” 18.

they did not live with relatives, wives, or children), a substantial number of fishermen did boast those ties. The population schedules of the United States censuses that fall within the peak years of Pensacola's fishing industry, more so than available narrative accounts, provide a much-needed glimpse into the daily onshore lives of these individuals.

Making a daily living working from the city's waterfront, the fishermen of Pensacola did not wander too far from the wharves to establish homes. Throughout the surveyed census years from 1900-1930, fishermen tended to live in the working-class residential neighborhood along the southwest boundary of the city.³³³ Unlike the situation offshore, the racial divide that

³³³ United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 19, 1-42; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 20, 1-52; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 21, 1-35; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 22, 1-37; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 23, 1-35; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 24, 1-24; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 25, 1-13; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 26, 1-18; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 27, 1-64; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 28, 1-44; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 17, 1-99; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 18, 1-43; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 19, 1-50; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 20, 1-12; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 21, 1-62; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 22, 1-30; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 1, Enumeration District 23, 1-16; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 14, Enumeration District 16, 1-29; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 14, Enumeration District 20, 1-26; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 3, Enumeration District 23, 1-36; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 174, 1-6; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 22, 1-33; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 29, 1-64; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Pensacola, Enumeration District 30, 1-61; United States Bureau of the

separated fishing crews largely disappeared when it came to life onshore, much like the situation in New Orleans.³³⁴ All fishermen, “black,” “white,” or “mulatto,” found residence in this part of town. When plotted on a 1903 Sanborn Fire Insurance map of the city, this neighborhood is highly visible. Boundaries stretch from Romana Street to Main Street to the north and south, and

Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 31, 1-32; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 32, 1-58; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 33, 1-52; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 34, 1-51; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 36, 1-61; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 37, 1-27; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 38; 1-72. United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 39, 1-31; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 40, 1-56; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 15, 1-45; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 16, 1-50; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 17, 1-14; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 18, 1-43; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 19, 1-14; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 20, 1-9; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 21, 1-18; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 22, 1-36; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 23, 1-62; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 24, 1-54; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 25, 1-14; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 26, 1-45; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 27, 1-47; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 28, 1-21; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 29, 1-35; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 30, 1-49; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 31, 1-42; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 32, 1-18; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 33, 1-25; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 34, 1-46. Earlier census years could not be included in an analysis of fishermen’s neighborhoods due to census takers’ disregard for noting addresses.

³³⁴ Rosenberg, 7.

from Baylen Street to A Street to the east and west (see fig. 27). Filled with bars and saloons, South Palafox Street would have also been a regular haunt for local fishermen, though this particular street would have been less residential and more recreational.³³⁵

Pensacola fishermen engaged in the commercial fisheries lived in very few other places within the city. Fish company owners, clerks, and managers often had homes in the upper-class areas of North Hill and East Hill, but their lives were, in general, far different from those of the working fishermen. The only other locales that housed a high number of working men were the wharves. Both the Baylen Street wharf, home to E.E. Saunders & Co., and the Palafox Street wharf, home to the Warren Fish Company, had “dormitories” for the men. In 1920, more than half of those fishermen employed in the industry were living in such accommodations. Figure 28 shows the location of these dwellings and the number of fishermen who claimed their addresses there in the 1920 federal census.³³⁶

³³⁵ Wyatt Blassingame, “They Sail From Hangover Harbor,” *True: Fishing Yearbook, 1958*, 66-67.

³³⁶ United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 174, 1-6; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 22, 1-33; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola. United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Pensacola, Enumeration District 29, 1-64; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Pensacola, Enumeration District 30, 1-61; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 31, 1-32; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 32, 1-58; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 33, 1-52; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 34, 1-51; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola. United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 36, 1-61; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 37, 1-27; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 38, 1-72; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 39, 1-31; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 40, 1-56.

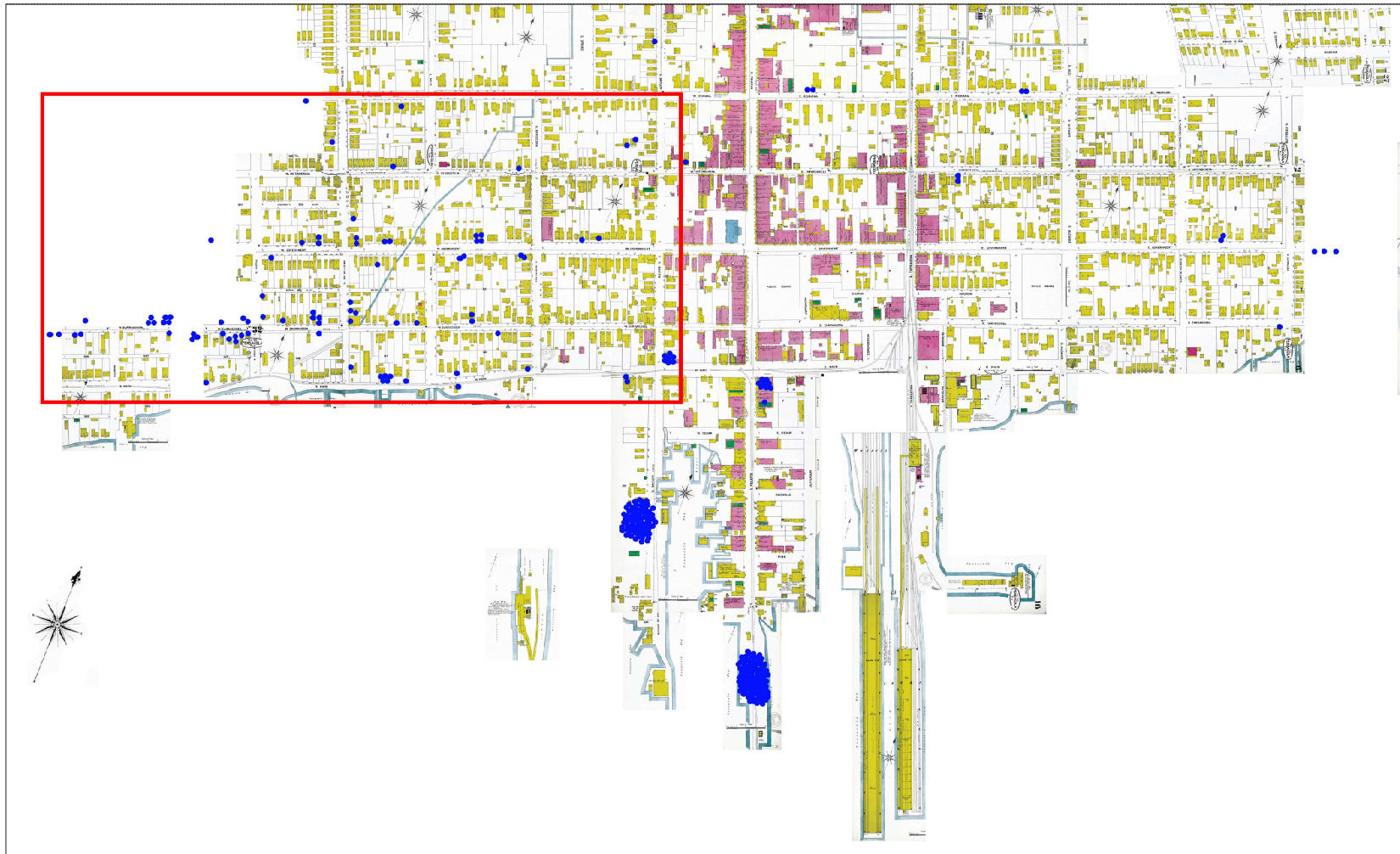


Figure 27. Many fishermen (plotted in blue) claimed residence along the Pensacola waterfront, forming a visible community in the southwestern area of the city (outlined in red). *Source:* Sanborn Map Company, *Insurance Maps of Pensacola Including Warrington and Wolsey, Escambia, County, Florida, 1903*, Sheets 1-32, Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Florida Collection, Digital Library Center, George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida. Image created by author.



Figure 28. Many fishermen (plotted in blue) also resided on the Baylen Street and Palafox Street wharves in dormitory-style housing. *Source:* Sanborn Map Company, *Insurance Maps of Pensacola Including Warrington and Wolsey, Escambia, County, Florida, 1903*, Sheets 1-32, Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Florida Collection, Digital Library Center, George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida. Image created by author.

This historic Pensacola neighborhood, encompassing residences on the mainland and the wharves, is poorly documented archaeologically: private ownership or continual habitation in the area since the late 19th century has provided few opportunities for archaeological survey. A number of projects in the last 30 years have investigated the area ahead of construction, though little of the material associated with the Reconstruction era and the early 20th century has been completely analyzed, a task beyond the means of this research. Of those collections with available data, the Main and Reus Street (8ES1378), Panton, Leslie, & Company (8ES34), and County Courthouse (8ES981) excavation locations correspond with the neighborhood in which Pensacola commercial fishermen tended to live. Figure 29 provides rough boundaries for these excavations in relation to 1920 federal census-provided addresses for commercial fishermen.

University of West Florida investigated the corner of Main Street and Reus Street (8ES1378) beginning in 1990, an intersection that falls neatly within the fishing neighborhood established above. Materials from the most recent proveniences of the 8ES1378 collection cannot be related specifically to fishing families from 1860-1900, but 1920 federal census addresses for fishing families mapped in correlation with excavation locations show that at least six fishermen lived in the boundaries of the modern excavation (see fig. 29). Additionally, the overwhelming presence of a variety of common refined earthenware ceramics, predominantly whiteware, likely indicates a working or middle-class neighborhood dating to the turn of the 20th century and hearkens to the Hamilton's wreck collection. A stoneware jug, similar to that found in association with Hamilton's wreck, was also recovered. Hygienic items, including three glass

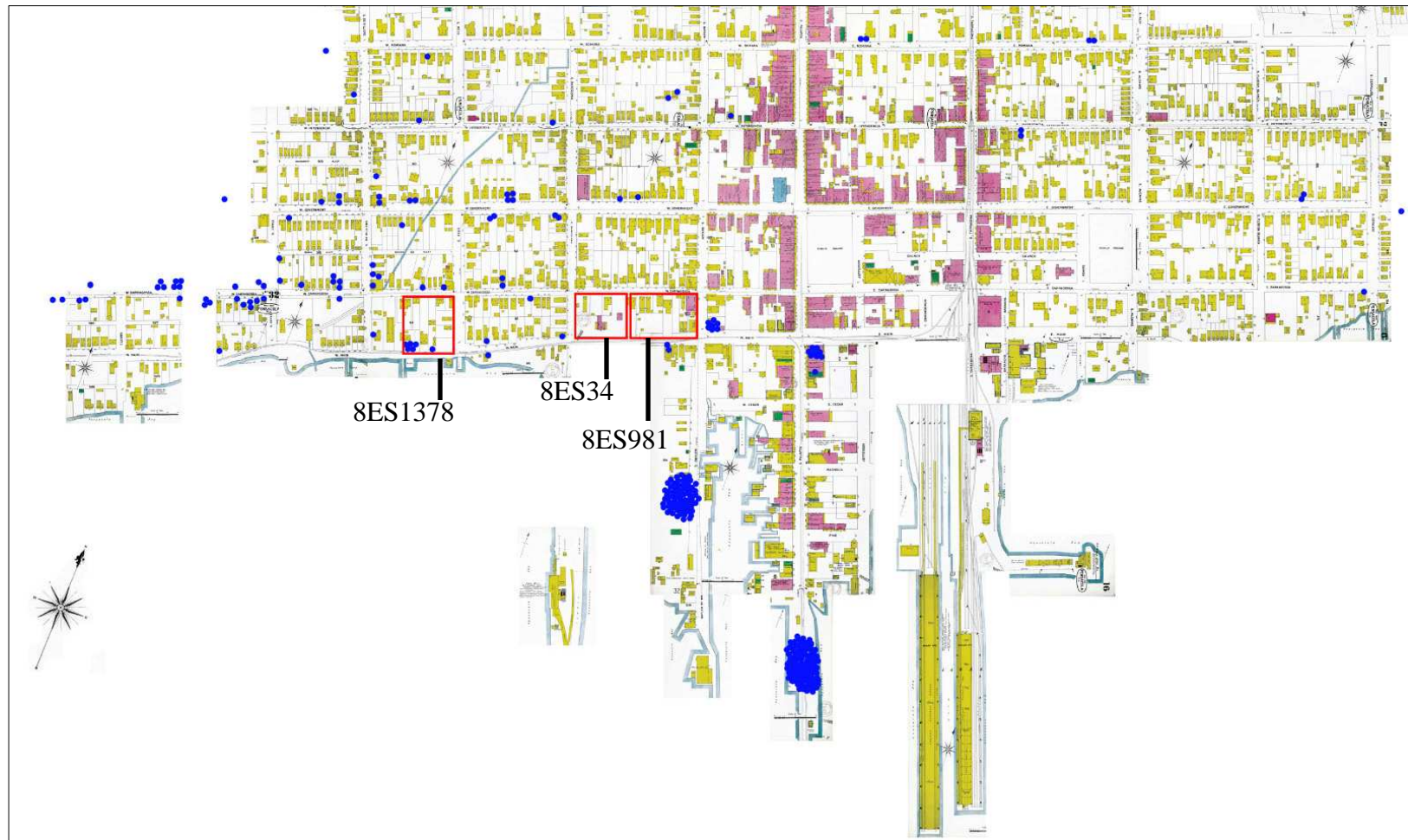


Figure 29. Excavation areas for three downtown Pensacola archaeological projects outlined over residences for fishermen from the 1920 federal census. *Source:* Sanborn Map Company, *Insurance Maps of Pensacola Including Warrington and Wolsey, Escambia, County, Florida, 1903*, Sheets 1-32, Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Florida Collection, Digital Library Center, George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida. Image created by author.

pharmaceutical bottles, a bone or ivory toothbrush handle, and a bone or ivory comb, additionally show correlations to the kinds of hygienic items found on Hamilton's wreck.³³⁷

Archaeologists have also investigated the area of downtown Pensacola that once housed the late 17th and early 18th-century Panton, Leslie & Company trading store and, eventually, late 18th and early 19th-century private residences (8ES34). Although avocational archaeologists undertook excavation in 1964 and 1975 and, since then, much of the unit and provenience data has been lost, a significant collection of turn-of-the-20th-century cultural material reveals many similarities to both the Hamilton's wreck and the Main Street and Reus Street collections. A variety of low-cost ceramics, including stoneware and plain whiteware, suggest a comparable working-class residential area. Additionally, the presence of 17 machine-molded pharmaceutical bottles and a bone or ivory toothbrush handle may indicate fishermen paid particular attention to hygiene onshore and offshore. The inclusion of a non-ceramic doll part in the 8ES34 collection also hints at the presence of children in this working-class neighborhood. Whether or not these children can be attributed to commercial fishermen's families, residents of this west Pensacola neighborhood would have likely been surrounded by family and close relatives.³³⁸

In the adjoining lot of the 8ES34 excavations, the County Courthouse (8ES981) project also encompassed areas of private residence dating to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The close proximity of the 8ES981 project to the 8ES1378 and 8ES34 excavations unsurprisingly yielded a similar working-class whiteware and stoneware ceramic collection, along with comparable hygienic items such as pharmaceutical bottles. The presence of a decanter, a variety

³³⁷ Norine Carroll, personal communication with author, July 23, 2013; Jennifer Melcher, personal communication with author, October 28, 2013.

³³⁸ Norine Carroll, personal communication with author, July 23, 2013; Jacqueline Rodgers, personal communication with author, October 12, 2013; Jennifer Melcher, personal communication with author, October 28, 2013.

of wine bottles, and wine bottle seals is, however, distinct from the other two collections, and may be indicative of heavy drinking habits not unlike those commonly attributed to commercial fishermen. Additionally, the collection includes a variety of typically feminine objects, such as jewelry, sequins, beads, earrings, cosmetic and hair pins. Though these items may indicate either the presence of women in a domestic context or in a brothel (a common establishment for the area west of Palafox Street along West Zaragoza Street in the late 19th and early 20th century), women were a significant component of this working-class community.³³⁹

Though much of the cultural material from archaeological investigations of Main and Reus Street (8ES1378), Panton, Leslie, & Company (8ES34), and County Courthouse (8ES981) cannot be attributed directly to Pensacola's commercial fishermen or their families, the collections should be seen as representative of the kinds of lives these men led during their time onshore. With decidedly lower-cost ceramics, a variety of personal and hygiene items, and the presence of women and children, the area west of Palafox Street along the Pensacola waterfront was likely a working-class neighborhood that housed all manner of maritime laborers and their families. As evidenced by addresses given to the United State federal census takers between 1900-1930, a wide diversity of commercial fishermen called that neighborhood home and probably spent much of their time there when on shore.

Despite the growth in the total number of fishermen employed by Pensacola's major fish houses, the number of those men without familial ties to the area remained relatively stable. Between 1900 and 1930, an average of 66% of fishermen were single and without children.³⁴⁰

³³⁹ Norine Carroll, personal communication with author, July 23, 2013; Jacqueline Rodgers, personal communication with author, October 12, 2013.

³⁴⁰ United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 19, 1-42; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the*

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The only year analyzed in which married fishermen marginally outnumber single fishermen is 1880.³⁴¹ In years after the turn of the 20th century, however, many of those fishermen who were single and living in the city took up residence in dormitory-style dwellings close to the fish houses on the Baylen and Palafox wharves.³⁴² For obvious reasons, this kind of housing would not have been amenable to keeping a wife or children.

United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 21, 1-18; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 22, 1-36; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 23, 1-62; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 24, 1-54; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 25, 1-14; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 26, 1-45; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 27, 1-47; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 28, 1-21; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 29, 1-35; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 30, 1-49; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 31, 1-42; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 32, 1-18; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 33, 1-25; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fifteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 34, 1-46. Earlier census years could not be included in an analysis of fishermen's neighborhoods due to census takers' disregard for noting addresses. For census years earlier than 1880, there is little to no data to help determine the marital status of individuals.

³⁴¹ United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the tenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Election Precinct Number 2 First Division, 1-38; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the tenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Election Precinct Number 2 Second Division, 1-30; Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the tenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Election Precinct Number 2 Third Division, 1-40; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the tenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Election Precinct Number 2 Fourth Division, 1-32; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the tenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Election Precinct Numbers 3, 4, 5, and 6, 1-49; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the tenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Election Precinct Numbers 7, 8, and 9, 1-28.

³⁴² United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 17, 1-99; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 18, 1-43; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 19, 1-50; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 20, 1-12; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 21, 1-62; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 22, 1-30; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of*

With no need to support a family, it is possible that there is truth to accounts of fishermen spending almost their entire trip's earnings in "riotous living" at the bars along South Palafox Street and the brothels of West Zaragoza Street's red-light district.³⁴³ The consumption of alcohol was a time-honored tradition among fishermen and Pensacola proved no exception to the rule. Recollections like those of fishing smack Captain Max Alford, that "the cheap wine they sell in those Palafox bars is a bigger menace to the snapper industry than any hurricane...." make Pensacola fishermen's drunkenness legendary.³⁴⁴ An article that appeared in a March 1916 edition of *Collier's* magazine noted that Pensacola lodging houses often took out unpaid fishermen's board bills in fish after the men squandered most of their earnings. The short-term but luxurious living of these fishermen after returning home from a trip did not always get a

the United States, Florida, Pensacola Ward 1, Enumeration District 23, 1-16; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 14, Enumeration District 16, 1-29; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 14, Enumeration District 20, 1-26; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 3, Enumeration District 23, 1-36; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 174, 1-6; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 22, 1-33; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola. United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Pensacola, Enumeration District 29, 1-64; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Pensacola, Enumeration District 30, 1-61; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 31, 1-32; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 32, 1-58; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 33, 1-54; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 34, 1-51; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola. United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 36, 1-61; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 37, 1-27; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 38, 1-72; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 39, 1-31; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 40, 1-56.

³⁴³ Hunt, 11.

³⁴⁴ Captain Max Alford in Blassingame, 66-67.

negative spin: in 1900, Pensacola's *Daily News* applauded the fishing crews for spending so much money in the city.³⁴⁵

In part, it may be possible to explain the lack of community ties in a majority of Pensacola fishermen based on age. Men who did not have wives and families generally fell within the 18-40 age range, with most in the younger ages of that bracket. The younger ages of men without wives or children is in contrast to those with wives and families, who generally fell in the 31-60 age range. To say that these younger, potentially more free-spirited fishermen had absolutely *no* ties to the community is also a simplification of what appears in the census data. Although not "heads" of their own households, some fishermen without wives or children lived with parents, brothers, sisters, or aunts and uncles. Although percentages fluctuated slightly in the years surveyed, the census of 1910 represented not only the peak of commercial fishing in Pensacola, but also the peak of single men living with ties to the community. In this year, half of single fishermen working out of Pensacola lived with immediate family or close relatives.³⁴⁶

For the fishermen who did have significant onshore connections, life was likely much different than that of the bar-frequenting and brothel-attending habits of single fishermen without

³⁴⁵ "Our Fish Industry," *Pensacola Daily News*, May 25, 1900.

³⁴⁶ United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 17, 1-99; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 18, 1-43; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 19, 1-50; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 20, 1-12; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 21, 1-62; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 22, 1-30; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 1, Enumeration District 23, 1-16; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 14, Enumeration District 16, 1-29; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 14, Enumeration District 20, 1-26; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 3, Enumeration District 23, 1-36.

familial ties. It is likely not the case that fishermen with families did not enjoy such luxuries, but they undoubtedly had obligations to provide and care for loved ones. Of the sources used for this research, only former snapper fisherman Fred Hunt alludes to a more complex make-up of the onshore fishing community in Pensacola. He understood that “skippers had homes and lived normal domestic lives between trips,” but that “foremast hands lived with no domestic ties.”³⁴⁷ Regarding fishing smack skippers (captains), the census data across the analyzed years largely substantiates Hunt’s claims: for those recorded as “captain,” all but one had a wife and/or children.³⁴⁸ The notion that the crew had no ties is, again, not so evident in the census records.

Looking at immediate family is not the only way to better understand how Pensacola fishermen interacted with or failed to interact with their onshore community. A number of newspaper articles detail strikes over fishermen’s wages between 1900-1920.³⁴⁹ Although the Warren Fish Company and E.E. Saunders & Co. set prices for their snapper catch and attempted to ensure better wages for Pensacola fishermen, prices still fluctuated to some degree. In addition, the fact that the fish houses consistently received 30-40% of the vessel’s share after arriving in port did not sit well with some. A November 28, 1901, newspaper article reported that approximately 700 fishermen organized under the Knights of Labor were striking against both major fish houses, “demanding a higher percentage of the catches.”³⁵⁰ While unions in the neighboring port of New Orleans were increasingly racially diverse after the turn of the 20th

³⁴⁷ Hunt, 8.

³⁴⁸ Interestingly, fishing smack captains in the census were not generally born in the United States. Most were foreign born and were from Scandinavian countries or Italy.

³⁴⁹ “Fishermen Peacefully Proceed with Strike,” *Pensacola Journal*, September 17, 1919, 2; “Fishermen are Belligerent,” *Pensacola Daily News*, January 14, 1902; “Fishermen on a Strike,” *Pensacola Daily News*, November 27, 1901, 4.

³⁵⁰ “Fishermen on Strike,” *The Richmond Dispatch*, November 28, 1901, 6.

century, the extent to which black and mulatto commercial fishermen participated in trade unions, like the Knights of Labor, in Pensacola is unknown.³⁵¹ Although strikes were generally short-lived and negotiated by fishermen's unions, many men sought employment elsewhere around Pensacola until they could set sail again. On December 18, 1901, the *Pensacola Daily News* reported, "from 50 to 100 are daily employed at the railroad docks in which work most [fishermen] are proficient."³⁵² The organization and collective interests purveyed by these striking men through fishermen's unions makes it clear that fishermen did not have a disregard for their lot on shore. Instead, they actively engaged in negotiating their position with the fish houses and in the community.

Boom and Bust

While many diverse groups resided in Pensacola, the relatively short duration of the fishing industry saw commercial fishermen disappear in the early 20th century almost as quickly as they appeared in the late 19th century. The short-term nature of the industry, however, does not diminish the importance of the commercial fisherman in the longer narrative of Pensacola and northwest Florida history. In the earliest years, locals long established in the city of Pensacola fished close to shore with no designs on a national business. Fishermen were a minority among other seafarers in the city, fishing trips were short, and men often had significant family lives. By the 1880s, the influx of northern investment and an international workforce rocketed the Gulf red snapper fisheries into becoming one of the most profitable industries in northwest Florida. With this newfound success, however, came a new lifestyle for Pensacola fishermen. Diverse, young, and looking for money, fishermen from throughout the Atlantic

³⁵¹ Rosenberg, 12.

³⁵² "Striking Fishermen Seek Work in Other Lines," *Pensacola Daily News*, December 18, 1901, 4.

quickly filled the city's docks and dominated seafaring. Trips offshore took just a single day, but could last a month or more as a changing fish population drove fishermen to more distant grounds off of the Yucatan Peninsula. Life offshore truly became an entire life spent fishing and one that developed its own unique cultural characteristics. Onshore, fewer men supported families of their own and Pensacola fishermen became famous for their revelries after trips. At the same time, however, many local fishermen invested in their onshore community by starting families, living with relatives, and attempting to better their lot at home.

With the introduction of oil-powered engines by the 1920s, the unique character of the country's last all sail-powered fishing fleet ended. Fred Hunt's reaction to the change was not positive: "In the early twenties the chugging bulgines [vessels with crude oil engines] began to befoul the clean Campeche horizon with its scrawling black trails; and by the end of the decade there were few Pensacola men left whose in'ards were not retching with greasy power plants."³⁵³ Although commercial fishing continued to operate from Pensacola using engine-powered vessels and mechanized means to haul in fishing lines, it did so for less than 30 years before the Gulf of Mexico red snapper fisheries were no longer profitable. In less than 80 years, fishermen had established a successful industry and saw it fade away in the face of the modern world.

Though it is difficult to write a social history with few archaeological or historical resources, the task is not impossible. Based on what information has survived through United States federal census records, periodicals, and a few narrative accounts, piecing together the lives of Pensacola's poorly remembered fishermen can begin. While data collected from census population schedules cannot replace the richness of the archaeological record or the sense of

³⁵³ Hunt, 5.

“lived” experience of first-hand accounts, it can aid in revising local histories by providing a source of information on the working people who are often lost in those histories.

CHAPTER V

RED SNAPPER MARINE ECOLOGY

Set upon a much longer backdrop of marine resource exploitation in northwest Florida, the relatively short history of commercial red snapper fishing from 1870-1930 is as vital to the state of the modern Gulf of Mexico red snapper fishery as the culture of Pensacola's commercial fishermen is to the development of Pensacola's present-day waterfront. While the survival of the city's major fish houses hinged on relatively disruptive social, economic, and political circumstances at the turn of the 20th century, unregulated fishing of the Gulf's red snapper severely diminished fish population sizes and wrought significant obstacles to the sustainability of industry-scale red snapper fishing.³⁵⁴ To elucidate the relationship between nature and culture in the Gulf of Mexico during the era of major commercial red snapper fishing, this chapter discusses the biological profile of red snapper, the natural habitat of the fish as it relates to the movements of Pensacola's commercial fleet, and the health of the industry based on catch size data collected from a variety of historical sources.

Red Snapper Biology

As one of the most abundant Gulf fishes, noted as early as 1764 by British officials visiting Pensacola, red snapper (*Lutjanus campechanus*) became the focus of serious commercial fishing efforts by the city in the 1870s.³⁵⁵ Red snapper were a favorite among fishermen and

³⁵⁴ United States Department of the Interior, 27-31; Camber, 42-43.

³⁵⁵ George Johnstone to the Board of Trade, November 9, 1764, Colonial Office 5/574 Papers: 134, University Archives and West Florida History Center, University of West Florida, Pensacola, FL; Camber, 16; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Fisheries, 3. Many documentary sources before 1955 use *Lutjanus aya*, *Lutjanus blackfordii*, and *Lutjanus campechanus* interchangeably to describe commercially fished red snapper. Today, the scientific name *Lutjanus campechanus* is the only one used to describe the fish.

consumers for their deep red color, delicious taste, ease of catch, and general abundance.³⁵⁶

Apart from their red coloration, red snapper are distinguishable by long, triangular faces with a fairly sloped upper face and large canine teeth. Fish can grow as large as 40 inches (1.0 meters) in length and can weigh as much as 50 pounds (22.7 kilograms). Red snapper also have relatively high life expectancies: the oldest recorded fish was approximately 57 years old. Females reproduce at around two years of age, with larger, older fish producing substantially more eggs than smaller, younger fish. The primary diet of red snapper includes smaller fish, shrimp, crab, marine worms, octopus, and squid.³⁵⁷

On a global scale, the habitation range for red snapper is fairly limited. Red snapper are common to the entirety of the Gulf of Mexico, as well as the southeastern Atlantic coast of North America and the northern Atlantic coast of South America. Specific locales of habitation for red snapper depend somewhat on their developmental stage. Juvenile snapper live in shallower waters over sandy or muddy bottoms. Adult snapper, however, typically thrive in deeper water from 5-53 fathoms (30-318 feet/9.1-96.9 meters) along the continental shelf. These adult fish dwell close to the seafloor near hard structures, including coral reefs, artificial reefs, limestone protrusions, ledges, or caves, and along areas with bottom contours such as gullies or lumps.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁶ Collins, "Notes of the Fisheries of Western Florida," 275; Camber, 16-17. The Gulf of Mexico is also home to a number of other species of snapper, most of which are edible and more popular among recreational fishermen. Common species include vermilion snapper (*Rhomboplites aurorubens*), gray or mangrove snapper (*Lutjanus griseus*), and yellowtail snapper (*Ocyrus chrysus*). None of these species grow to the size of the red snapper and are thus less desirable to commercial fishermen.

³⁵⁷ Cathleen Bester, "Northern Red Snapper Biological Profile," Florida Museum of Natural History, <http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/fish/Gallery/Descript/RedSnapper/Redsnapper.html> (accessed July 16, 2013).

³⁵⁸ United States Department of the Interior, 8; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Fisheries, 5.

Fishing Grounds

During the period in which Pensacola boasted an extensive fishing industry based on red snapper, the grounds from which fishermen could profitably catch their fish changed substantially (see fig. 30). The earliest years of commercial fishing after the establishment of the Pensacola Fish Company in 1872 (an offshoot of entrepreneur S.C. Cobb's Pensacola Ice Company) saw catches from within the 40-fathom (240-foot/73.1-meter) line between Mobile, Alabama, and Fort Walton Beach, Florida.³⁵⁹ Cobb chartered many of the fishermen and fishing vessels during these years, most arriving from New England to fish during the winter months.³⁶⁰ By 1883, with the establishment of the Warren Fish Company and the E.E. Saunders Company (later renamed E.E. Saunders & Co.), fishing grounds expanded farther to the east to include the area south of Cape St. George, Florida.³⁶¹

The Pensacola fish companies had established a relatively permanent red snapper fishing fleet by 1885, though fishermen already noted a diminishing fish population within the 40-fathom (240-foot/73.1-meter) line of the continental shelf along the coasts of Alabama and northwest Florida. Research missions conducted aboard the *Albatross* by Silas Stearns, brother-in-law to Andrew F. Warren of the Warren Fish Company and one of the first naturalists in Pensacola, attempted to locate new grounds for Pensacola commercial fishing to exploit.³⁶² Stearns's explorations led to the discovery of fertile grounds south of Tampa, Florida, along the

³⁵⁹ Camber, 10-11.

³⁶⁰ Silas Stearns, "On the Position and Characteristics of the Fishing Grounds of the Gulf of Mexico," in U.S. Commission of Fish and Fisheries, *Bulletin of the U.S. Fish Commission* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1884), 289; Collins, "Notes on the Fisheries of Western Florida," 296.

³⁶¹ Camber, 10-11.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, 10-11.

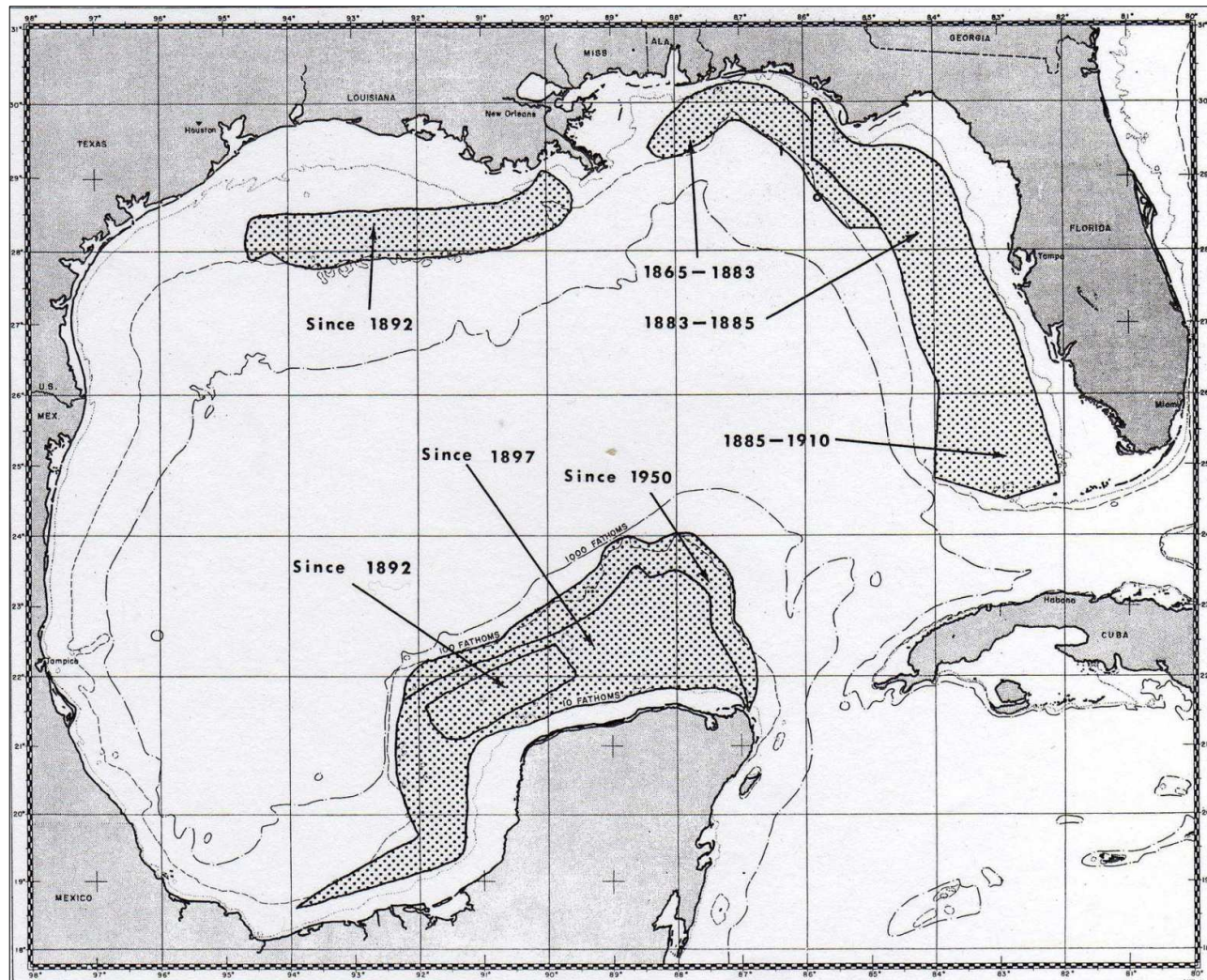


Figure 30. Changes in red snapper commercial fishing grounds in the Gulf of Mexico from 1865-1950. Source: U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, *A Review of the Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper Fishery*, by James S. Carpenter, Circular 208 (Washington, DC, 1965).

continental shelf to the Dry Tortugas.³⁶³ The discovery of these grounds was of critical importance for the survival of red snapper commercial fishing; however, the typical live-welled schooner smacks sailing from Pensacola were ill equipped to deliver fresh fish from these relatively distant locations. Additionally, live well catches were limited to 5,000-6,000 pounds (2,268.0-2,721.6 kilograms) and the profits from such a catch would have likely been insufficient to pay for a crew traveling to the Dry Tortugas from Pensacola.³⁶⁴

Though the fish companies used imported ice and tight-bottomed vessels to some extent after 1885 for fishing more distant grounds, a number of developments after 1895 truly allowed the industry to reach a new level of profitability. First, commercial red snapper fishermen began to experiment with fishing along the continental shelf of the Mexican Coast north and northwest of the Yucatan Peninsula around 1892. Known as the Campeche Banks, the grounds proved exceptionally fertile.³⁶⁵ Second, the development of artificial ice and the connection of Pensacola to national railroad lines in the mid-1890s allowed for the quick transportation of fresh fish to and from great distances (see chapter two).³⁶⁶ As a result, many of the industry's vessels began to rely solely on cheaply produced artificial ice as a means of transporting fresh fish, and subsequently moved away from live-welled vessels.³⁶⁷ Finally, the successful marketing of fresh red snapper to markets in the southeast, midwest, and northeast United States created strong

³⁶³ Stearns, "Examination of the Fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico," 286-287.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.; Camber, 11.

³⁶⁵ U.S. Department of the Interior, 7-8.

³⁶⁶ Clay E. Porch and Stephen C. Turner, "Reconstructing the Commercial Landings of Red Snapper in the Gulf of Mexico from 1872 to 1963," *American Fisheries Society Symposium* 60 (2007): 338.

³⁶⁷ Collins, "Notes of the Fisheries of Western Florida," 293; Hamilton, 4; U.S. Department of the Interior, 2.

demand for the fish, one that could be met only by exploitation of the Campeche Banks.³⁶⁸ For all of these reasons, the Campeche Banks became the primary fishing grounds for Pensacola and northern Gulf of Mexico commercial red snapper fishing by 1897.

The movement of the main commercial fishing fleet from the northern Gulf at this time created some opportunity for independent commercial fishing from Pensacola dominated primarily by “Black” and “Mulatto” crews.³⁶⁹ Discussed in greater detail in chapters three and four, these racially and ethnically diverse crews typically utilized smaller sailing craft, commonly referred to as chings. Though unable to take very large catches back to Pensacola, many of these independent commercial fishermen sustained lifestyles similar to those men who worked directly for the city’s fish houses.³⁷⁰ Thus, while the near-shore grounds were undoubtedly no longer profitable for the major commercial fish operations, these grounds remained fertile enough to sustain small-scale commercial red snapper fishing from Pensacola.

³⁶⁸ Stearns, “Eating Neglected Fishes,” 387-388; U.S. Department of the Interior, 25.

³⁶⁹ United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 17, 1-99; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 18, 1-43; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 19, 1-50; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 20, 1-12; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 21, 1-62; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 22, 1-30; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 1, Enumeration District 23, 1-16; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 14, Enumeration District 16, 1-29; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 14, Enumeration District 20, 1-26; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 3, Enumeration District 23, 1-36; Fredericksen, interview; Hargis. The United States federal censuses from 1850-1930 use the terms “Black” and “Mulatto” as racial types. The use of these types are continued here only to show the presence or lack of racial divisions during this period.

³⁷⁰ See chapter 4.

With the abandonment of the near-shore grounds by Pensacola's fish houses after 1897, a number of smaller commercial red snapper fishing operations also established themselves throughout northwest Florida to fish the northern Gulf. Smaller centers of red snapper fishing in Florida included Tampa, Carrabelle, Apalachicola, Panama City, and Niceville. Despite the minor success of these centers, none achieved the size or profitability of the major operation in Pensacola.³⁷¹

Fishing Methods and Gear

After 1900, very little about Pensacola commercial fishing methodology changed until the middle of the 20th century. Tight-bottomed schooner smacks continued to grow in all dimensions of size and auxiliary engines altered the locomotive composition of the fleet, but the equipment used to catch fish on a daily basis persisted. In 1935, Norman Jarvis, Assistant Fisheries Technologist with the United States Bureau of Fisheries, described the continued use of handlining since the development of the red snapper fishery after the Civil War. Handlining is a simple method of fishing with roots in the northern Atlantic fisheries.³⁷² For red snapper fishing in the Gulf, fishermen would draw a length of 100 fathoms (600 feet/182.9 meters) from No. 12 tarred cotton line, coil it in a small wooden tub, and attach a pear-shaped lead of approximately 3.75 pounds (1.7 kilograms). Attached to the lead, a short brass rod ended in an eye and box swivel with two or three-foot gangings, each with a No. 5 Mustad japanned hook (see fig. 31).³⁷³ Typically, fishermen stocked vessels with fresh skipjack, menhaden, cigarfish, shrimp, and

³⁷¹ United States Department of the Interior, 7; Camber, 38-39.

³⁷² United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Fisheries, 4-7.

³⁷³ Ibid. The term "japanned" refers to the type of lacquer finish on the hook.

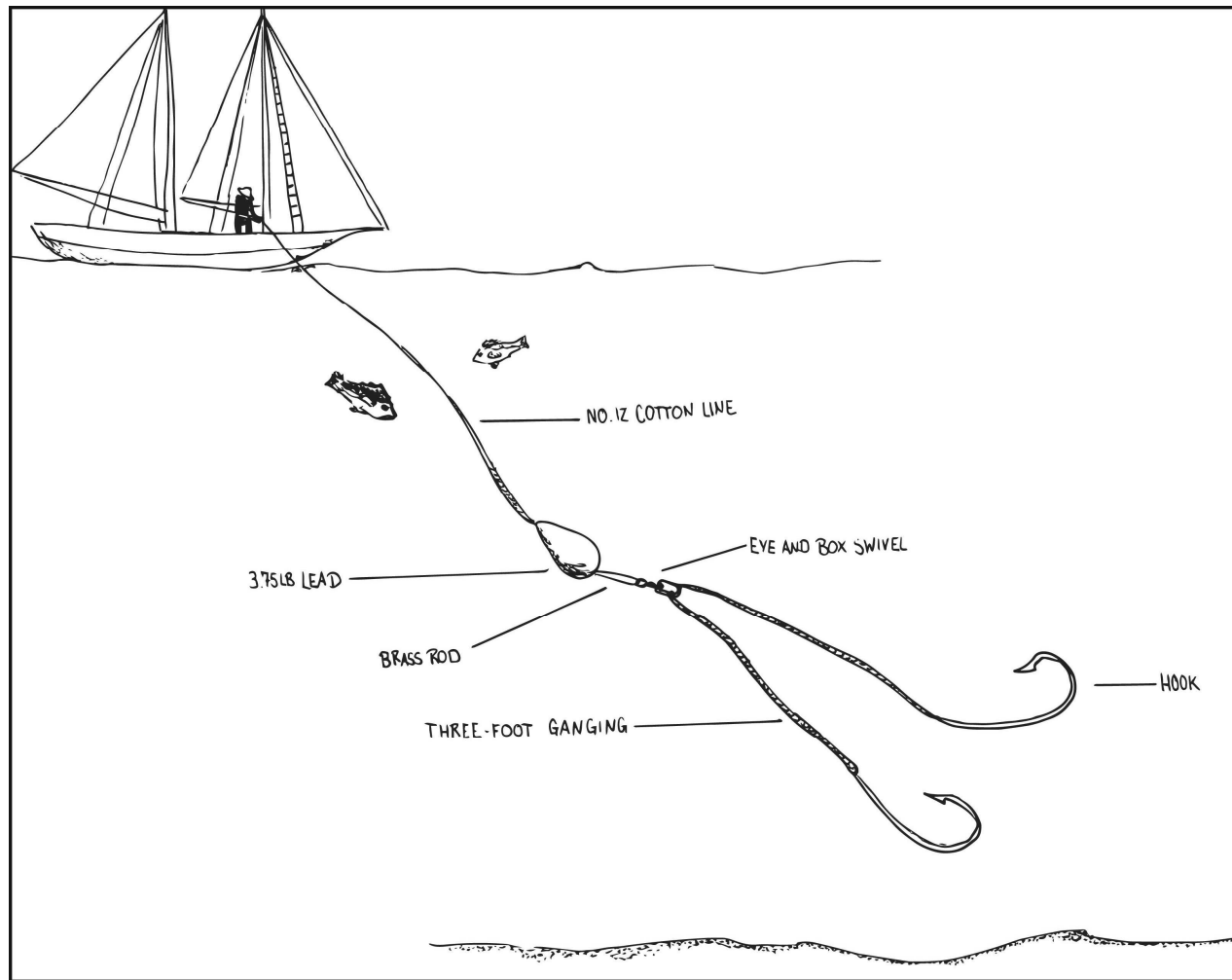


Figure 31. Typical handline and hook configuration among commercial red snapper fishermen from Pensacola. *Source:* Artwork by author, derived from Gustaf T. Sundstrom, *Commercial Fishing Vessels and Gear*, Circular 48, United States Fish and Wildlife Service (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1957), 8.

squid as bait and salt it for preservation during the journey out to the red snapper grounds.³⁷⁴ According to Jarvis, a skilled crew on a good day could catch up to 7,000-10,000 pounds (3,175.1-4,536.0 kilograms) of snapper with well-baited handlines.³⁷⁵ In 1955, C. Isaac Camber, Fisheries Scientist from the University of Miami's Marine Laboratory, noted only small additional changes to the method of red snapper fishing, which included the transition to untarred Nos. 54 and 96 hard lay net twine for the lines and the increasing use of Kirby Nos. 3, 4, and 5 hooks.³⁷⁶

Despite the dedication to traditional handlining methods, some experimentation in more efficient ways to catch red snapper did take place. During Jarvis's survey of the fishery in 1935, his research vessel attempted to use trawl lines and West Indies-style fish traps to catch snapper. Unfortunately, neither yielded exciting results. Jarvis determined that trawl lines were ineffective in catching red snapper, but may have some future in the grouper fishery. The fish traps were more successful, with a total of 99 red snapper caught during six trials. Though Jarvis determined that fish traps might be able to supplement the existing handlines, later reports on the fishery do not seem to indicate that fishermen implemented the use of fish traps.³⁷⁷

A few of the final, minor changes to commercial red snapper fishing methods arrived little more than a decade before the closure of Pensacola's major fish houses. In 1950, Warren Fish Company's Charles M. Greene, Jr. developed a power-driven reel to be utilized with stainless steel line that could recover the long handlines quickly. The cost of installing these

³⁷⁴ United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Fisheries, 4.

³⁷⁵ Ibid., 6.

³⁷⁶ Camber, 18-19.

³⁷⁷ United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Fisheries, 23-28.

electric reels was too much for the declining fish houses, however, and the Warren Fish Company developed a cheaper, hand-powered reel that used a bicycle's braking coaster as a reeling mechanism. These hand-powered reels became relatively popular among the Campeche Banks fishermen of the 1950s. Finally, the addition of fathometers (depth finders) to the fishing fleet in these later years allowed captains to more easily track and record favorite fishing spots. With the addition of these technologies, the commercial fleet achieved substantially greater fishing productivity in the years after 1950.³⁷⁸

Historical Catch Data and Fishery Health

To better understand the condition of the Gulf of Mexico red snapper fishery during the lifespan of commercial fishing from Pensacola, comparative data on the size of red snapper catches for available years from 1880-1951 may elucidate some of the issues the industry faced as it fell into decline in the mid-20th century. Figure 32 charts the sizes of red snapper catches in millions of pounds coming into Escambia County, Florida, based on C. Isaac Camber's analysis.³⁷⁹ Despite gaps for years with no available catch size data, catch sizes over the survey period reveal a great deal about the historical and ecological situations of the Pensacola's red snapper industry. After a period of strong growth, catch sizes peaked around 1900, but declined by approximately 2,000,000 pounds (907,184.7 kilograms) by 1916. After 1916, catch sizes stabilized until 1930, when they declined by another 1,500,000 pounds (680,388.6 kilograms). Some increase in catch sizes occurred in the late 1930s and late 1940s but never returned to anything above 3,000,000 pounds (1,360,777.1 kilograms) between 1930-1951.³⁸⁰ Although data

³⁷⁸ United States Department of the Interior, 10-14; Camber, 18-21.

³⁷⁹ Camber, 35. The City of Pensacola resides in Escambia County, Florida.

³⁸⁰ Ibid.

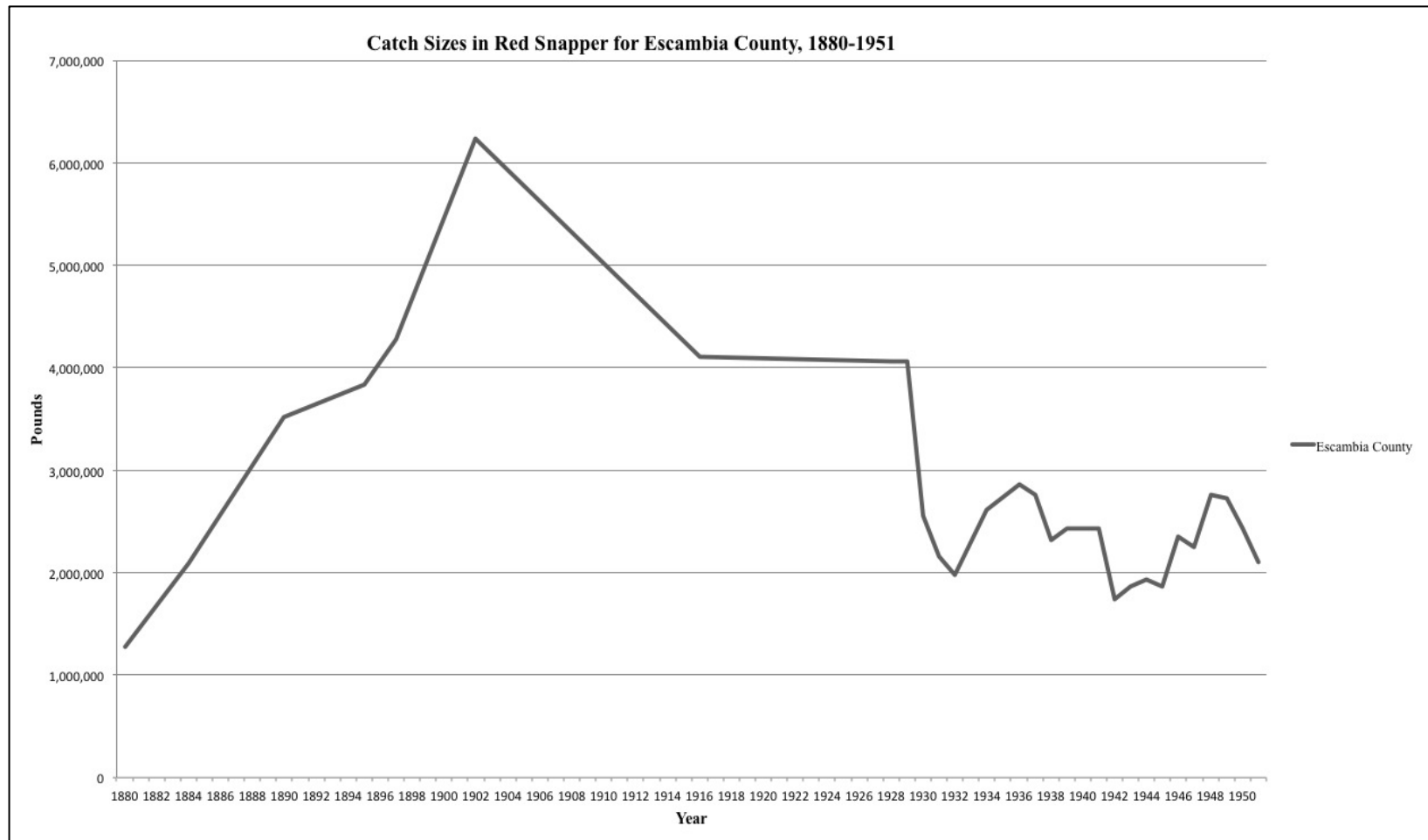


Figure 32. Line graph of changes in overall catch size of red snapper in Escambia County from 1880-1951.

for the years after 1951 does not exist for Escambia County alone, historical data suggests that catch sizes increased fairly dramatically with the addition of more efficient technologies to the fleet until the mid-1960s, the time when commercial red snapper fishing from Pensacola largely fell apart.³⁸¹

Considering the significant movement of the Pensacola fleet's common fishing grounds in the first few decades of the industry, one explanation for the continued decline in catch sizes after the turn of the 20th century is overfishing. In an 1885 bulletin of the U.S. Fish Commission, naturalist Silas Stearns relayed considerable alarm about the future of the red snapper in the area: "Most of the old fishing-grounds, which were large in extent and numerous, are nearly barren...."³⁸² Stearns's research and a general feeling that the northern Gulf of Mexico grounds were no longer profitable were important motivation in the search for new grounds like the Dry Tortugas and Campeche Banks.³⁸³

Although gaps in catch size data for red snapper from 1880-1951 make it difficult for modern researchers to piece together the historical ecological situation of the Gulf of Mexico fishery, management plans and assessments conducted in the 1980s following the passage of the 1976 Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Management and Conservation Act concluded that the red snapper population in the Gulf of Mexico was historically overfished and continued to be overfished.³⁸⁴ A significant factor in the population's depletion, according to subsequent reports, had been the overharvesting of fertile fish. Since larger and more commercially desirable red

³⁸¹ Porch and Turner, 340-342.

³⁸² Stearns, "Examination of the Fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico," 286-287.

³⁸³ Ibid.; U.S. Department of the Interior, 7-8.

³⁸⁴ Hood, Strelchek, and Steele, 268-269; C. Phillip Goodyear, *Recent Trends in the Red Snapper Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico* (Miami, FL: Southeast Fisheries Center Coastal Resources Division, 1988), 1-15.

snapper females have the ability to produce exponentially more eggs than smaller females, the population in the Gulf was likely unable to keep up with commercial demand each spawning season.³⁸⁵ In addition, the growing popularity of Gulf of Mexico's shrimp fishery in the early to mid-20th century led to significant bycatches of juvenile red snapper.³⁸⁶ Thus, while historical commercial red snapper fishing is not wholly responsible for the diminishing Gulf of Mexico population, years of unregulated fishing took a substantial toll on the fishery.

In part, however, historical circumstances can also help describe the fluctuations seen in overall red snapper catch sizes. Figure 33 charts some of the major historical events around the turn of the 20th century against a backdrop of catch sizes in millions of pounds coming into Escambia County from 1880-1951.³⁸⁷ The first 20 years of commercial red snapper fishing shows a steady rise in catch sizes with the expansion of commercial vessel sizes, the exploration of new fishing grounds, and the opening of the Campeche Banks in the mid to late 1890s.³⁸⁸ After the turn of the century, catch sizes declined somewhat, due most likely to the severe damage that the Pensacola waterfront suffered after unusually devastating hurricanes in 1906, 1916, and 1926. The loss of some fishing vessels and fishermen to the merchant marine during World War I likely also contributed to the diminished catch sizes after 1900.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁵ Cathleen Bester, "Northern Red Snapper Biological Profile."

³⁸⁶ Dhazn Gillig, Wade L. Griffin, and Teofilo Ozuna, Jr., "A Bioeconomic Assessment of Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper Management Policies," *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society* 130 (2001): 123-126.

³⁸⁷ Camber, 35.

³⁸⁸ Ibid.; U.S. Department of the Interior, 7-8.

³⁸⁹ U.S. Department of the Interior, 27.

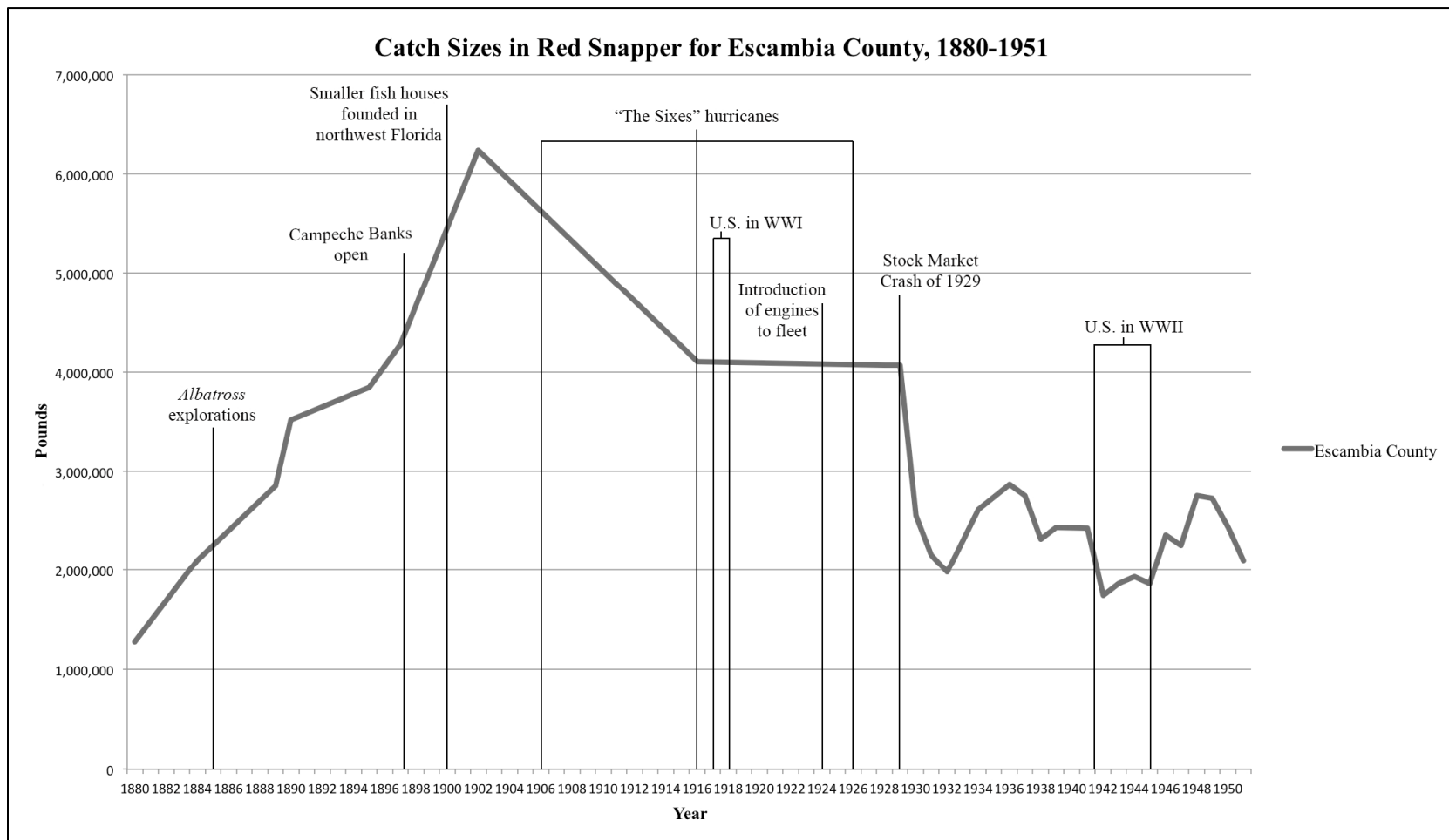


Figure 33. Line graph of changes in overall catch size of red snapper in Escambia County from 1880-1951 with contemporaneous historical events.

One of the most dramatic drops in catch size during the surveyed years aligns temporally with the stock market crash in late 1929 and the resulting Great Depression. Due to financial hardships faced by many Americans, the Pensacola fish houses saw a decreased demand for fresh fish in the more expensive, distant markets.³⁹⁰ Catch sizes recovered somewhat by the mid-1930s, but dropped again with America's entrance into World War II. Like during World War I, many of the fishing vessels and fishermen of Pensacola joined merchant marine forces. Additionally, the fish houses of Pensacola joined the war effort by putting many of their resources toward shipbuilding. The Warren Fish Company, in particular, converted some existing commercial fishing vessels into coastal minesweepers and built at least two *Accentor*-class coastal minesweepers based on United States Navy designs.³⁹¹

Following World War II, catch sizes increased, with some fluctuation, into the mid-1960s. Although data for Escambia County for the years after 1951 could not be recovered, comparable data from a modern report utilizing United States Fishery Statistics for west Florida and all northern Gulf states reveals a massive spike in catch sizes in the early 1960s (see fig. 34).³⁹² A similar positive trend for Escambia County is likely since, between 1880 and 1951, Escambia County represented anywhere from 48.8% to 91.5% of the overall catch for west Florida.³⁹³ Although this research did not focus on the engine and motor-powered red snapper

³⁹⁰ U.S. Department of the Interior, 27; Camber, 42-43.

³⁹¹ Arnold S. Lott, *Most Dangerous Sea: A History of Mine Warfare, and an Account of U.S. Navy Mine Warfare Operations in World War II and Korea* (Menasha, WI: George Banta Company, Inc., 1959), 34-36. Joseph M. Radigan, "Conquerer (AMc 70)," NavSource Naval History, <http://www.navsource.org/archives/11/03070.htm> (Accessed September 27, 2013). Joseph M. Radigan, "Conquest (AMc 71)," NavSource Naval History, <http://www.navsource.org/archives/11/03071.htm> (Accessed September 27, 2013). Approximately 70 of these Navy-designed minesweepers were built in 15 different shipyards across the United States.

³⁹² Porch and Turner, 341-342. After 1951, catch size data appears to no longer have been taken specifically from Escambia County. Instead, in the years following 1951, overall catch sizes incorporated the entirety of west Florida.

³⁹³ Camber, 35.

fishing vessels running from Pensacola after 1930, historical documents do not reveal the kind of expansion in fleet size that would create such a dramatic rise in catch sizes after 1951. Rather, the significant increase in catch size was likely due in part to the new, more efficient reeling and depth-finding technologies introduced into the commercial fishing fleets in the 1950s.³⁹⁴

Despite the fairly successful effort to restore the prestige of the commercial red snapper fishing in the early 1960s, Pensacola's major fish houses fell apart during these years, plagued with an aging fleet, a new 200-nautical mile Mexican Exclusive Economic Zone, and a diminishing red snapper population throughout the Gulf.³⁹⁵ Although commercial red snapper fishing continued from Pensacola on a much smaller scale into the 1970s, the Gulf of Mexico shrimp fishery quickly became the new focus of commercial efforts and red snapper fishing was relegated to new importance as a recreational tourism pastime.³⁹⁶

An Unknown Future

One of the enduring legacies of the historical red snapper fishing industry from Pensacola is the raging controversy over the health of the Gulf of Mexico fishery. With the passage of the 1976 Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Management and Conservation Act, drawing all United States fisheries under the governance of Regional Fishery Management Councils and the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council targeted the red snapper fishery in 1984 as a significantly overfished stock.³⁹⁷ Enacting a Fisheries Management

³⁹⁴ Hood, Strelcheck, and Steele, 267; U.S. Department of the Interior, 10-11; Camber, 45.

³⁹⁵ Porch and Turner, 337-338, 352.

³⁹⁶ Bob Jones, *The Gulf of Mexico: A Very Brief Historical Perspective* (Tallahassee, FL: Southeastern Fisheries Association, Inc.), 2-3.

³⁹⁷ Hood, Strelcheck, and Steele, 267-268.

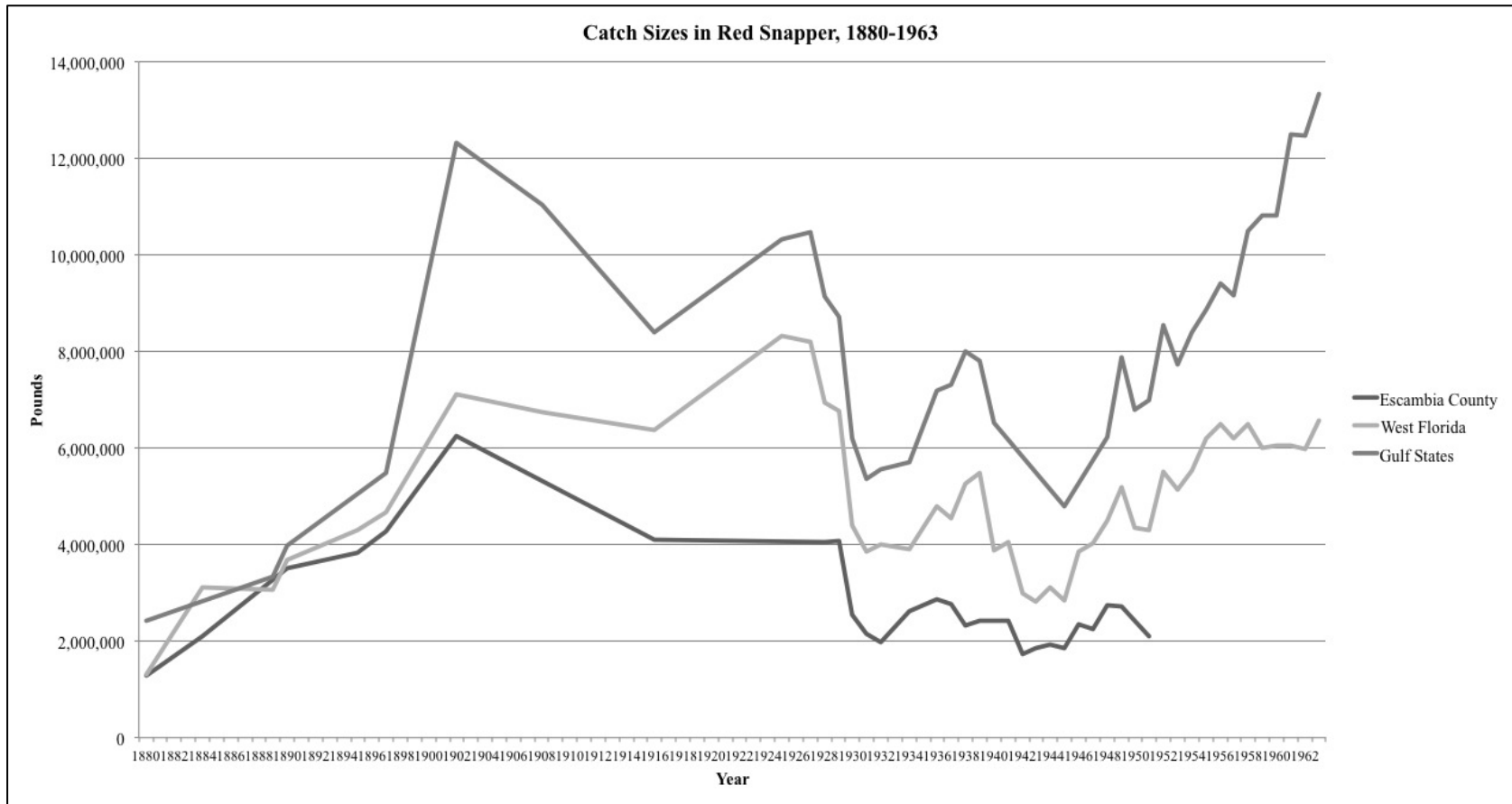


Figure 34. Line graph of changes in overall catch size of red snapper in Escambia County, west Florida, and all Gulf States from 1880-1963.

Plan to increase spawning stock biomass (the breeding population of red snapper fish in the Gulf of Mexico) while balancing the socio-economic demands of Gulf commercial and recreational fishermen, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council implemented quotas, limited access fishing permits, trip limit regulations, and closed seasons to help regulate fishing.³⁹⁸

While there is some agreement among fisheries scientists and managers that the Gulf's red snapper population is recovering due to regulatory measures, policies have remained relatively restrictive for both commercial and recreational fishermen. In 1990, the first effective year for commercial red snapper fishing quotas, commercial fishermen were limited to a total catch of 3,100,000 pounds (1,406,136.3 kilograms) of fish (gutted weight) from the Gulf of Mexico with a size limit of 13 inches (0.3 meters) or more.³⁹⁹ The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council loosened overall catch size regulations for commercial fishermen in 2006, allowing 4,190,000 pounds (1,900,552.0 kilograms) of fish (gutted weight) for commercial fishermen. The implementation of the Red Snapper Individual Fishing Quota Program the following year has also continued to slowly increase overall catch size for the Gulf.⁴⁰⁰ For 2013, commercial fishermen could catch a total of 4,300,000 pounds (1,950,447.2 kilograms) of red snapper (gutted weight).⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁸ Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, *Preliminary Draft of Red Snapper Individual Fishing Quota Program: 5-year Review*, (Tampa, FL: Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 2013), 7.

³⁹⁹ Hood, Strelcheck, and Steele, 274. The 1990 catch size limit is roughly equivalent to the overall catch in red snapper going through Escambia County in 1889.

⁴⁰⁰ Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 61.

⁴⁰¹ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Southeast Regional Office, *Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper Quota Increase and Recreational Season: Frequently Asked Questions, May 2013*, http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/faqs/documents/pdfs/gulf_of_mexico/reef_fish/2013/gulf_rs_2013_season_faqs_052313.pdf (accessed July 21, 2013). The 2013 catch size limit is roughly equivalent to the overall catch in red snapper going through Escambia County in 1896.

Some researchers argue that the current red snapper fishery is more productive than ever thanks, in large part, to juvenile shelters provided by new artificial reef programs and the prevalence of oil and gas platforms in the Gulf of Mexico. Fisheries scientists Robert Shipp and Stephen Bordone concluded in 2009 that:

The deployment of petroleum structures in the mid-twentieth century in the western Gulf and thousands of artificial reefs in the north central Gulf have markedly increased red snapper habitat in those areas. Currently, snapper populations around artificial reefs in the north central and northwestern Gulf support the majority of the U.S. harvest. If habitat is limiting, the designations of “overfishing” and “overfished” may be misleading, and “unrealized harvest potential” may be a more accurate descriptor of the current status of the stock given the increased presence of additional habitat for red snapper.⁴⁰²

Arguments like those of Shipp and Bortone fuel the call among both commercial and recreational fishermen for the substantial relaxing of red snapper fishing regulations in the Gulf of Mexico, regulations they feel significantly affect their livelihoods.⁴⁰³ Other fisheries scientists argue, however, that determining population health based on the variety of artificial reefs in the northern Gulf of Mexico is misleading and potentially damaging to conservation efforts.⁴⁰⁴

Though the degree to which the red snapper fishery has bounced back in recent years is a source for some debate, the role of historical commercial fishing efforts from Pensacola in shaping the modern ecological landscape is undeniable. The movement of the city’s fishing fleet

⁴⁰² Robert L. Shipp and Stephen A. Bortone, “A Perspective on the Importance of Artificial Habitat on the Management of Red Snapper in the Gulf of Mexico,” *Reviews in Fisheries Science* 17 (2009): 41.

⁴⁰³ Stephen T. Szedlmayer, “An evaluation of the benefits of artificial habitats for red snapper, *Lutjanus campechanus*, in the northeast Gulf of Mexico,” *Proceedings of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute* 59 (2007): 223-224; William E. Gibson, “Fishermen want looser limits as red snapper make comeback,” *Sun Sentinel*, May 9, 2013; “Red snapper fishing ‘haves’ are suing the ‘have-nots,’” *News Herald*, July 14, 2013.

⁴⁰⁴ J.H. Cowan, Jr. et al., “Red snapper management in the Gulf of Mexico: science- or faith-based?” *Reviews in Fish Biology and Fisheries* 21 (2011): 200.

due to a noticeably diminishing red snapper population began as early as 1883 and no effort toward conservation was made until nearly a century later.⁴⁰⁵ A variety of historical, social, and economic circumstances may have challenged the survival of Pensacola's major fish houses and the lively community of fishermen in the city from 1880 to the mid-1960s, but unrestricted exploitation of the Gulf of Mexico red snapper fishery and over-reliance on what eventually became Mexican territorial waters were ultimately major factors in the Gulf-wide decline of the once lucrative commercial red snapper fishing effort. While the local fishing economy now draws heavily on tourists who flock to Pensacola and the northwest Florida Gulf Coast for recreational red snapper fishing, the tourism industry must also work within the boundary of regulatory measures inherited from its commercial predecessor.⁴⁰⁶ Ultimately, Pensacola's historical red snapper fishing industry represented a new dynamic in the balance of the Gulf's marine environment, a balance cultivated over thousands of years and upset far more quickly by industrial-era culture.

⁴⁰⁵ Stearns, "Examination of the Fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico," 286-287; Hood, Strelcheck, and Steel, 267-268.

⁴⁰⁶ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Southeast Regional Office, *Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper Quota Increase and Recreational Season: Frequently Asked Questions*, May 2013.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Analysis of several aspects of the historical Pensacola commercial fishing industry in previous chapters highlights the dynamic relationship between human culture and the natural environment. Whether expressed through its vessels or the culture of its fishermen, the survival of red snapper commercial fishing from Pensacola relied substantially upon its environmental context. Similarly, the marine ecology of the Gulf of Mexico influenced the means by which commercial fishermen spent their time in search of a profitable catch. By weaving these various components together into a single narrative, a more holistic perspective of Pensacola's brief venture into commercial red snapper fishing and its effects on the modern Pensacola community emerges.

Marine resources have played an important, *longue durée* role in sustaining human populations living in northwest Florida. Archaeological sites reveal that freshwater and saltwater resources were incorporated into daily consumption as early as the Woodland Period (1,000 B.C.–A.D. 1,000).⁴⁰⁷ By the 18th century, colonial Europeans similarly recognized the potential of northwest Florida's abundance of marine fauna.⁴⁰⁸ Industry-scale utilization of marine resources, however, did not begin in the area until the late 19th century. During the Reconstruction of the 1870s, New England commercial fishing entrepreneurs and their crews of fishermen saw ample opportunity to develop a business that could rival its New England

⁴⁰⁷ Milanich, 117-119; Bense, *Hawkshaw: Prehistory and History in an Urban Neighborhood in Pensacola, Florida*, 15, 161.

⁴⁰⁸ George Johnstone to the Board of Trade, November 9, 1764, Colonial Office 5/574 Papers: 134, University Archives and West Florida History Center, University of West Florida, Pensacola, FL.

counterpart. Due to its relative abundance and appealing taste, red snapper became the target fish for commercial efforts.⁴⁰⁹

With a number of commercial fish houses established in Pensacola by 1885, business in red snapper began to boom locally and regionally.⁴¹⁰ Technological developments, including the introduction of artificial ice and new railway connections from Pensacola to the eastern Atlantic seaboard and the midwest, provided for substantial growth within the industry by the early 1890s.⁴¹¹ A resulting desire for fresh red snapper drove the industry to new heights around the turn of the 20th century. Employing a large number of fishermen and dockworkers along the Pensacola waterfront, commercial fishing helped transform Pensacola into one of the most active and cosmopolitan ports in the southeastern United States.⁴¹²

Filling a number of the wharves on the port of Pensacola waterfront, commercial fishing vessels were exceptional examples of “objects [designed] to accomplish specific ventures.”⁴¹³ Selected by the fishermen who captained them, these vessels provided for all the needs of their crews while allowing for substantial economic returns to the various fish companies in Pensacola. As a purposeful reflection of many different needs, commercial fishing vessels were thus ideally suited to accomplish their task.

⁴⁰⁹ Collins, “Notes on the Fisheries of Western Florida,” 276.

⁴¹⁰ Warren, 331; Collins, “Notes on the Fisheries of Western Florida,” 296.

⁴¹¹ *Charters of the Bank of Pensacola; Alabama, Florida and Georgia railroad company; Pensacola and Perdido rail road company; Blakely and Perdido rail road company; Montgomery rail road company; and Selma and Tennessee rail road company*, ed. John C. Clark; Hines, *Corporate History of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad Company and Roads in its System*, 197; Warren 331.

⁴¹² Collins, “Notes on the Fisheries of Western Florida,” 294; Hamilton, 4.

⁴¹³ United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Fisheries, 2.

The largest type of fishing vessels utilized by the industry was the two-masted schooner, or “smack,” of approximately 30-100 feet (9.1-30.5 meters) in length.⁴¹⁴ The Pensacola fleet was comprised of both commercial fishing schooners once engaged in the New England fishery and Florida-built schooners based on New England designs.⁴¹⁵ The first schooners engaged in commercial red snapper fishing from Pensacola contained live wells designed to keep fish fresh during short trips to the relatively close northern Gulf fishing grounds.⁴¹⁶ As artificial ice capabilities allowed for trips to more fertile, distant grounds in the southern Gulf, fishermen utilized tight-bottomed vessels with larger holds to carry more fish and more ice from greater distances.⁴¹⁷ To accommodate larger crews for a longer period of time, and to satisfy the increasing demand for red snapper, vessels steadily grew in size throughout the lifespan of the Pensacola’s historical red snapper fishing industry. By 1930, the average length of these vessels increased nearly 100% from 44.6 feet (13.6 meters) to 88.8 feet (27.1 meters). Even more impressive, vessels’ average gross tonnage increased nearly 400% from 18.8 tons in 1881 to 96.6 tons in 1930.⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁴ Steffy, 23.

⁴¹⁵ Collins, “Notes on the Fisheries of Western Florida,” 283.

⁴¹⁶ Carpenter, 2.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

⁴¹⁸ United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Statistics, *Thirteenth Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-185; United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Twenty-Third Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-197; United States Treasury Department, Bureau of Navigation, *Thirty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-201; United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-127; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Fifty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-59; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 568-613.

Archaeological evidence largely supports the changes to Pensacola commercial fishing vessels over time as documented in historical sources. Three shipwrecks in particular, the Snapper wreck, Hamilton's wreck, and the alleged *Priscilla*, exhibit characteristics of the later years of commercial fishing: tight-bottomed hulls, longer lengths, and deeper holds. The wrecks also provide insight into additional features of commercial fishing vessels working from Pensacola. The Snapper wreck has a unique architectural element, a "Great Beam" separating the vessel's main deck from the quarter deck, that historical evidence confirms as a feature of only New England-built vessels.⁴¹⁹ The large material cultural assemblage found in association with Hamilton's wreck indicates a turn-of-the-20th-century working-class vessel with significant accommodation for food preparation and serving, as well as personal hygiene.⁴²⁰ Though lacking substantial architectural or material culture remains, investigations of the alleged *Priscilla* revealed characteristics of most late 19th-century commercial fishing schooners that include a double-frame construction and the mixed use of treenail and iron fasteners.⁴²¹

As the large, deep-hulled schooners owned by the fish houses slowly moved south in search of new grounds, a smaller class of fishing vessel, the chingamaring or "ching," began to exploit the abandoned northern Gulf fishing grounds.⁴²² Without any substantial historical or archaeological evidence related to them, these vessels are difficult to characterize. Based on historical descriptions, chings were likely open-deck boats with three masts and a vertical, square-shaped stern. Chings carried between three to six men, though traveled only as far as 150

⁴¹⁹ Raupp, "Hook, Line, and Sinker: Historical and Archaeological Investigations of the Snapper Wreck (8SR1001)," 105.

⁴²⁰ Moore, 109-110, 112-113, 117-119.

⁴²¹ Meide, McClean, and Wiser, 96-98.

⁴²² Carpenter, 2.

miles (241.4 kilometers) offshore to return 3,000-5,000 pounds (1360.8-2268 kilograms) of red snapper on any given trip. With neither live wells nor enclosed hulls to ice fish, the amount of time chings could spend at sea was fairly limited and did not seem to have exceeded six days.⁴²³

Though without any quantitative data to document changes to ching vessels over the span of the Pensacola's red snapper fishing industry, these vessels would have undoubtedly gone through the same process of selection that the larger schooners went through. Not only could chings carry a fairly substantial catch and large crew despite their small size and open-deck nature, they were readily available to independent fishing operations, often as rentals from the Pensacola bar pilots.⁴²⁴

As the major seafaring profession in the city by 1870, fishermen serving aboard smacks and chings represented a variety of different ethnic, racial, and national backgrounds.⁴²⁵ Many of the locally born men held Iberian ancestry, reflecting the status of Pensacola as a Spanish colony until 1821. Other local fishermen were commonly categorized as "Black" or "Mulatto" in federal census records and likely had some degree of African ancestry. Non-local fishermen hailed from areas throughout the Atlantic, particularly the northeast United States, Scandinavia, and southern European countries like Greece and Italy.⁴²⁶ Despite their diversity, commercial fishermen

⁴²³ United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Fisheries, 7.

⁴²⁴ Collins, "Notes on the Fisheries of Western Florida," 285; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Fisheries, 8.

⁴²⁵ United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Fisheries, 7-8.

⁴²⁶ United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 19, 1-42; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 20, 1-52; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 21, 1-35; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 22, 1-37; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 23, 1-35; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District

carried a distinct fishing culture cultivated throughout the Atlantic that included unique styles of dress, maritime-influenced manners of communicating, and an established sense of individuality.

In the 30 years after the establishment of the first Pensacola fish house in 1872, the length and style of commercial fishing trips changed drastically. When offshore prior to 1890, fishermen worked in small crews of six or seven individuals on short trips within the boundaries of the continental shelf in the northern Gulf of Mexico.⁴²⁷ Following the discovery of the more fertile Campeche Banks of the Yucatan Peninsula, red snapper fishing trips after 1890 traveled nearly 600 miles (965.6 kilometers) from Pensacola, spending up to a month at sea on the larger, tight-bottomed smacks.⁴²⁸ As is evidenced by the material culture found in association with Hamilton's wreck, fishermen required significantly different accommodations to survive on these long trips. Food preparation, personal comfort, and entertainment were necessities for keeping the crew in good health.⁴²⁹

Interestingly, the trend in traveling to the Campeche Banks for red snapper led to the development of niche "beach" fishing operations. As many black and mulatto fishermen did not ship to sea on the commercial vessels heading to the southern Gulf of Mexico, such individuals primarily utilized chings to catch snapper independently of the city's large fish houses. Though not employed by them, these men often sold their catches to the fish houses and played a

24, 1-24; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 25, 1-13; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 26, 1-18; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 27, 1-64; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the twelfth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 28, 1-44.

⁴²⁷ Fredericksen, interview.

⁴²⁸ Carpenter, 7-8.

⁴²⁹ Moore, 109-110, 112-113, 117-119.

significant role in the city's industry.⁴³⁰ The extent to which life aboard chings mirrored that aboard the larger schooners is difficult to determine based on the paucity of historical and archaeological evidence. Ethnic and racial backgrounds, generally differing from those aboard commercial smacks, would have certainly played a role in shaping the offshore lifestyles of independent fishermen.

Despite the demands of spending days at sea on a fishing trip, most commercial fishermen had permanent roots in the working-class neighborhoods west of Palafox Street. Other fishermen settled in dormitory-style housing supplied by the major fishes on the Baylen and Palafox Street wharves.⁴³¹ The city's fishermen also had a local reputation for over-zealous

⁴³⁰ Hargis.

⁴³¹ United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 17, 1-99; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 18, 1-43; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 19, 1-50; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 20, 1-12; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 21, 1-62; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 22, 1-30; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 1, Enumeration District 23, 1-16; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 14, Enumeration District 16, 1-29; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 14, Enumeration District 20, 1-26; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 3, Enumeration District 23, 1-36; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 174, 1-6; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 22, 1-33; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola. United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Pensacola, Enumeration District 29, 1-64; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Pensacola, Enumeration District 30, 1-61; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 31, 1-32; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 32, 1-58; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 33, 1-54; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 34, 1-51; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola. United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 36, 1-61; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 37, 1-27; United States Bureau of the Census,

drinking and spending in the saloons and brothels along South Palafox Street and West Zaragoza Street.⁴³² While there is undoubtedly some truth to these tales, nearly 50% of fishermen lived with close relatives or with nuclear family.⁴³³ Though many more fishing smack captains had wives and children, some crew sported these ties to the onshore community as well.⁴³⁴

Unlike the offshore environment, federal census records suggest that very little racial segregation existed onshore. Black and mulatto fishermen commonly lived next door to white fishermen and had similar familial and marital ties. As in the ports of New Orleans, Apalachicola, and Carrabelle during the late 19th and early 20th century, an overriding class-based sense of identity may be the reason for the lack of racial division among fishermen in the residential area of west Pensacola.⁴³⁵

Archaeological evidence recovered from excavations in the former residential areas west of Palafox Street where fishermen once lived largely supports the identity of the community as a

Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 38, 1-72; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 39, 1-31; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the fourteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 40, 1-56.

⁴³² Hunt, 11.

⁴³³ United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 17, 1-99; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 18, 1-43; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 19, 1-50; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 20, 1-12; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 21, 1-62; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola, Enumeration District 22, 1-30; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 1, Enumeration District 23, 1-16; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 14, Enumeration District 16, 1-29; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 14, Enumeration District 20, 1-26; United States Bureau of the Census, *Population Schedules of the thirteenth census of the United States*, Florida, Pensacola Ward 3, Enumeration District 23, 1-36.

⁴³⁴ Hunt, 8.

⁴³⁵ Rosenberg, 15; Horrell, 76-77.

working-class one. An abundance of lower-cost whiteware, earthenware, and stoneware ceramics dominate the collections, a variety not unlike that recovered in association with Hamilton's wreck. Other personal hygiene artifacts from these excavations, including glass pharmaceutical jars, ivory/bone toothbrush handles, and ivory/bone straight razor handles, also correspond well to those in the Hamilton's wreck collection.⁴³⁶ These correlations suggest similar accessibility to goods among the individuals living onshore and offshore.

As dynamic as the vessels and the men of Pensacola's fishing industry, the Gulf of Mexico red snapper fishery of the late 19th and early 20th century underwent dramatic changes in terms of population density. While the relative abundance of the fish originally drew commercial fisherman to northwest Florida, traditional fishing grounds along the continental shelf in the northern Gulf were quickly depleted in the face of industry-scale efforts.⁴³⁷ The discovery of new grounds off Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula in the mid-1880s largely saved the business, though it placed considerably more demand on the fish houses to supply enough men, ice, and vessels to continue making a profit.⁴³⁸

Though total commercial catch sizes in red snapper fluctuated throughout the first half of the 20th century due to natural, economic, and political calamities, Pensacola fish houses were relatively successful until the 1960s.⁴³⁹ The establishment of 200-mile (321.9-kilometer) exclusive economic zones throughout Central and South America made it illegal for United

⁴³⁶ Norine Carroll, personal communication with author, July 23, 2013; Jacqueline Rodgers, personal communication with author, October 12, 2013; Jennifer Melcher, personal communication with author, October 28, 2013; Moore, 109-110, 112-113, 117-119.

⁴³⁷ Stearns, 289.

⁴³⁸ Collins, "Notes on the Fisheries of Western Florida," 278-279.

⁴³⁹ Camber, 35.

States commercial fishermen (particularly those fishing red snapper from northwest Florida) to exploit the majority of the fertile Campeche Banks. Additionally, the passage of the 1976 Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and the establishment of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council targeted red snapper as a severely overfished stock.⁴⁴⁰ New regulations limited the size and amount of red snapper that could be caught by commercial and recreational fishermen and further debilitated the industry.⁴⁴¹ Forced to return to the long-depleted grounds in the northern and eastern Gulf that were increasingly becoming regulated by the United States government, Pensacola's commercial red snapper fishing industry quickly fell apart and the major fish houses closed their doors.

Reflecting on the extent and nature of the changes to Pensacola commercial fishing vessels, commercial fishing culture, and the Gulf of Mexico red snapper fishery throughout the late 19th and early 20th century, the dialogue between human culture and the environment is apparent. The abundance of red snapper in the northern Gulf initially drew entrepreneurial fishermen to Pensacola after the end of the Civil War. Desirous to establish commercial fishing operations from the city to take advantage of climatic conditions and exploit marine resources unavailable in New England, industry-scale fishing commenced as early as 1872.⁴⁴² Many of the vessels utilized at this time were contracted northern fishing schooners otherwise not operating from New England during the winter months.⁴⁴³ As regional demand for red snapper increased

⁴⁴⁰ Hood, Strelcheck, and Steele, 267-268.

⁴⁴¹ Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 7.

⁴⁴² Warren, 331.

⁴⁴³ Collins, "Notes on the Fisheries of Western Florida," 283-285.

by 1885, however, the Pensacola fish houses invested in a full-time commercial fishing fleet composed of 17 schooners and four sloops crewed by 140 exceptionally diverse fishermen.⁴⁴⁴

Recorded first by red snapper fishery specialist Silas Stearns in 1885, the northern Gulf of Mexico red snapper population had noticeably diminished during the 13 years since commercial fishing began.⁴⁴⁵ These industry-influenced changes to the Gulf fishery significantly altered the manner of commercial fishing. Fishermen sought new grounds to exploit along the southern Gulf coast of Florida, the Dry Tortugas, and the Campeche Banks off the Yucatan Peninsula.⁴⁴⁶ Fortuitously, the contemporaneous development of artificial ice and new, expedient railway connections from Pensacola to most of the eastern half of the United States allowed red snapper fishermen to make profitable ventures to these distant grounds.⁴⁴⁷ Tight-bottomed schooners, growing increasingly large, dominated the Campeche Banks and smaller, open-deck chings took advantage of the deserted grounds in the northern Gulf.⁴⁴⁸

As a taste for fresh Gulf red snapper spread along eastern United States railway networks, demand drove commercial fishing to new heights. With more vessels needed to meet demand and more men needed to crew those vessels, the Pensacola waterfront developed an exceptionally large working-class community of which fishermen and their families were a significant part. With a distinctive culture influenced by both the demands of working in the Gulf

⁴⁴⁴ Collins, "Notes on the Fisheries of Western Florida," 277. The diversity of commercial red snapper fishermen is a result of their diverse birthplaces, evident in United States federal censuses for 1860-1930 and discussed in detail in chapter 4.

⁴⁴⁵ Stearns, 289.

⁴⁴⁶ Carpenter, 7-8.

⁴⁴⁷ *Charters of the Bank of Pensacola; Alabama, Florida and Georgia railroad company; Pensacola and Perdido rail road company; Blakely and Perdido rail road company; Montgomery rail road company; and Selma and Tennessee rail road company*, ed. John C. Clark; Hines, *Corporate History of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad Company and Roads in its System*, 197; Warren 331.

⁴⁴⁸ United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Fisheries, 7.

and an Atlantic-wide commercial fishing culture, red snapper fishermen had an indelible role in creating Pensacola's new status as a large, cosmopolitan port city in the early 20th century. Thus, while industrial overfishing led to population depletion among northern Gulf red snapper, those ecological changes influenced the development of both a substantially altered commercial fishing fleet, as well as a new, professional cultural identity among the crews of those vessels.

While the industry fluctuated to some degree following the devastation of hurricanes, World Wars I and II, and the Great Depression, red snapper fishing continued relatively unimpeded. Though all-sail vessels largely disappeared by 1930, newly added auxiliary engines adapted them to the modern waterfront.⁴⁴⁹ Other new technologies like fathometers, electric reels, and hand-powered reels continued to increase the efficiency of red snapper crews into the 1950s.⁴⁵⁰ By the 1970s, however, new political pressures to establish exclusive economic zones led to the closure of the Campeche Banks to Pensacola fishermen.⁴⁵¹ Due to the extreme reliance on these grounds since the 1890s, the loss of these grounds dealt a severe blow to the industry. Commercial fishermen were thus forced to return to a still-diminished northern Gulf red snapper fishery increasingly regulated by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council under new federal conservation laws.⁴⁵² Unable to profit under the long-term effects of uncontrolled commercial red snapper fishing, the iconic industry of Pensacola's waterfront came to a quiet close.

Based on analysis of the relatively short historical trajectory of commercial red snapper fishing in Pensacola and northwest Florida, this industrial-era culture's relationship with the

⁴⁴⁹ Hunt, 23.

⁴⁵⁰ United States Department of the Interior, 10-14; Camber, 18-21.

⁴⁵¹ Hood, Strelcheck, and Steele, 267-268.

⁴⁵² Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 7.

marine environment is essentially a dialectical one. As the Gulf of Mexico's red snapper fishery exhibited considerable influence on the development and expansion of commercial fishing efforts from Pensacola, so too did commercial fishing drive change upon the marine environment and, essentially, upon itself. In this particular historical case, the dynamics of change largely resulted in negative, long-term effects on both the environment and the industry. Despite the modern regulation of the fishery and the disappearance of the industry from Pensacola, however, visitors and residents continue to enjoy red snapper and other Gulf marine resources through the city's sizable charter fishing and tourist industries. As it has in the past, the situation of Pensacola along the Gulf of Mexico will continue to influence cultural interaction with the marine environment.

In describing and analyzing the nature of the relationship between Pensacola's historical commercial red snapper fishing efforts and its ecological setting, this research seeks to promote further attention to the benefits of a historical ecological perspective. Understanding the continued dynamics of change that culture and the environment have upon one another provides the best means toward approaching a more holistic interpretation of human history, one that weaves together the multiple scales of the *événement*, *conjuncture*, and *longue durée*. Whereas many previous studies into the Pensacola fishing industry have focused specifically on composing basic histories or investigating singular archaeological shipwreck sites, this research compiles multi-disciplinary data under an anthropological framework to illuminate the reciprocal influences of culture and environment on one another. Other social science enquiries should consider the applicability of historical ecology across all facets of human history and geography.

Resulting from investigation into a variety of aspects of historical red snapper fishing from Pensacola, this research is also significant in that it proposes a usable model for potentially

determining whether or not a shipwreck is the remnant of a commercial fishing vessel.

Archaeologists can utilize reference data collected on basic ships' measurements from 1881-1930, as well as structural and technological characteristics of known commercial fishing vessel shipwrecks, to identify years of operation and build location. Considering the significant amount of unassociated shipwrecks in Pensacola and northwest Florida, this model should provide a valuable resource to archaeologists.

Lastly, the socio-economic and ecological results of years of unchecked commercial red snapper fishing in the Gulf of Mexico were devastating. Without the ability to make a living in a relatively established maritime profession in Pensacola, the fish houses closed their doors and left hundreds of commercial fishermen and dockworkers unemployed. The red snapper fishery, though showing signs of recovery in recent years, still exists under strict regulation for both commercial and recreational fishermen.⁴⁵³ Given the fate of Pensacola's historical red snapper fishing industry, industrial endeavors should focus more attention toward responsible sustainability. In the long run, these practices would better promote the welfare of industry's social, economic, and ecological bases.

Although this research attempts to cover the many elements of Pensacola's historical commercial red snapper fishing industry, a number of opportunities exist for future research. Without substantial presence in historical documents or the existing archaeological record, very little is still known about the daily onshore and offshore lives of commercial fishermen. Additional archaeological investigations into the former addresses of residence for fishermen west of Palafox Street in Pensacola may yield the most potential. A subsequent better understanding of how these men interacted with the community and those around them would

⁴⁵³ Hood, Strelcheck, and Steele, 282.

elucidate a great deal about their stakes in life onshore. Even less represented are the “black” and “mulatto” individuals fishing from chings on the near shore grounds following the opening of the Campeche Banks. Opportunities for investigation of any archaeological shipwreck sites that could be contributed to these fishermen may help provide a more detailed description of both the changes wrought to the northern Gulf fishery in the years after 1890 and subsequent changes to ching fishermen’s lifestyles.

Additionally, a great deal is left for archaeologists to uncover on both Hamilton’s wreck and the alleged *Priscilla*. Investigations in the main mast step areas of each vessel could confirm or deny the presence of a break in the deck, also called a “Great Beam,” that forms a main deck and quarterdeck. The absence of this break would confirm or deny that the vessels were constructed in Florida. If one of the vessels was indeed built locally in Florida, further structural, material, technological, and wood analysis could spawn more extensive discussions on the vernacular traits of Florida’s fishing watercraft. Acquiring more accurate measurements for the lengths, beams, and depths of these vessels would also help determine a tighter date range for the operation of each vessel based on the model proposed in chapter three.

Further insight into characteristics of fishing smacks could moreover be gained through an examination of the only known Pensacola commercial red snapper fishing vessel still afloat: the *Lettie G. Howard*. Constructed in Essex, Massachusetts, in 1893, the *Lettie G. Howard* fished from Pensacola between 1910-1930.⁴⁵⁴ At 74.6 feet (22.7 meters) in length, 21 feet (6.4 feet) in beam, and 8.4 feet (2.6 meters) in depth, this vessel is a strong representative example of the

⁴⁵⁴ United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-127; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Fifty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-59; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, *Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 568-613.

larger schooners working on the Campeche Banks after the 1890.⁴⁵⁵ Similar to the Snapper wreck, the *Lettie G. Howard* is also a *Fredonia*-type schooner. Like they did with most other fishing schooners, the Pensacola fish houses rebuilt the *Lettie G. Howard* with a 36-horsepower auxiliary engine in the mid 1920s. Sold to New York's South Street Seaport in 1968, the ship eventually was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1989 (see fig. 35).⁴⁵⁶

In 1991, the South Street Seaport undertook significant efforts to restore the badly aged vessel to its original 1893 condition so that it could operate as a working museum ship. After two years and significant investment, restorations were complete and the United States Coast Guard certified the *Lettie G. Howard* as a Sailing School Vessel.⁴⁵⁷ As a still-active vestige of the Pensacola red snapper fleet, the *Lettie G. Howard* could provide a better understanding of the day-to-day work required to sail a commercial fishing vessel. The extensive documentation of the vessel before and after restoration could also reveal more details about fishing schooners' structural developments.

The history and legacy of Pensacola's historical red snapper fishing industry speaks profoundly to the ongoing relationship between human societies and the natural world in which they live. In considering the many aspects of that relationship, this investigation highlights the manner by which commercial fishing vessels, commercial fishing culture, and marine ecological conditions in the Gulf of Mexico red snapper fishery intertwined to influence the development of

⁴⁵⁵ United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Navigation, *Forty-Second Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States*, 1-127

⁴⁵⁶ Robbyn L. Jackson and Craig N. Strong, "HAER NY,31-NEYO,177- (sheet 1 of 20) - Schooner "Lettie G. Howard", South Street Seaport Museum, New York, New York County, NY," Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/ny1621.sheet.00001a/> (accessed November 1, 2013). A variety of photographs and drawings produced on the *Lettie G. Howard* prior to restoration are available from the United States Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs Division under the digital identification "hhh.ny1621."

⁴⁵⁷ South Street Seaport Museum, "*Lettie G. Howard*," South Street Seaport Museum, <http://www.southstreetseaportmuseum.org/category-s/1831.htm> (accessed November 1, 2013).



Figure 35. The *Lettie G. Howard* at South Street Seaport Museum in New York in 1989 prior to restoration. *Source:* Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

a fledgling commercial fishing enterprise in Reconstruction-era Pensacola. Expressed through a multi-disciplinary approach that encompasses the fields of anthropology, history, geography, and biology, this narrative attempts to provide a more complete sense of lived experience. As with other industrial endeavors in the United States and throughout the world, Pensacola's red snapper fishing industry helped drive the development of a modern economy still heavily dependent on natural resources. The desire to sell a little-known, red fish radically shaped a city that would, for a time, dominate northwest Florida.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

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