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March, April, May 1877

# THE WEST SHORE.

VOL. 2—No. 10.

PORTLAND, OREGON, JUNE, 1877.

PER ANNUM \$1.50  
SINGLE COPIES, 25 CENTS.

## SALMON FISHING AND CANNING ON THE COLUMBIA.

It perhaps never entered the minds of Lewis and Clarke when they, in 1806, first saw the salmon bounding and tumbling in the icy waters of the lordly Columbia, that only seventy years later over 10,000 people would find remunerative employment every season in catching and canning fish on this river. Yet such is the case at present. With commendable patience the Columbia river salmon waited till 1829 before it received a scientific appellation, when Sir John Richardson kindly named it *salmo quinant*, in order to distinguish it from the *salmo salar* of the Atlantic, and the fish undoubtedly felt happier ever after this important occurrence.

The first salmon canned on the Pacific coast came from the Sacramento river, and were put up at Washington, opposite the city of Sacramento. The company engaged in it consisted of George and William Hume and Mr. Hapgood. Owing to a lack of experience the enterprise did not prove a success. Old trappers and hunters had often, within hearing of the Humes', spoken of the wonderfully large and fat fish to be caught in the Columbia, and at last, in 1865, George started for the then far-off country. On his arrival here he found H. N. Nice and Joachim Reed engaged in fishing extensively, preserving their fish by salting. George Hume secured a location on the river, and the name he then gave it, Eagle Cliff, it retains to this day. After erecting suitable buildings William Hume and Mr. Hapgood arrived here with the apparatus from the Sacramento river, and the first canning of salmon on the Columbia commenced in 1866, by the firm of Hapgood, Hume & Co. This firm finally dissolved, and each member started a separate cannery. After that nearly every year saw the erection of at least one new establishment. This season ten new canneries commenced operations. Now there are twenty-nine of them on the Columbia river, located on both the Oregon and Washington Territory side, as follows:

### AT ASTORIA.

Kinney & Co., George W. Hume, Sternberger & Co.

### AT UPPER ASTORIA.

Booth & Co., John A. Devlin & Co., J. O. Hanthorn & Co., Badolet & Co., Bradley, Davis & Co., Fisherman's Packing Co., Anglo-American Packing Co.

### Miles from Astoria.

Watson Bros., Tongue Point, Or.	2
Warren & Co., Brownsport, Or.	12
Pillar Rock Packing Co., Pillar Rock, W. T.	12
J. G. Megler & Co., Brookfield, W. T.	15
Hepburn & Co., Woody Island, Or.	15
Fitzpatrick, Davis & Co., Fisherton, W. T.	16
Col. River Salmon Co., Glen Ella, W. T.	17
Leveridge & Prindle, Bay View, W. T.	18
Oregon Packing Co. (Cook Bros.), Clifton, O.	24
Watson & Hanson, Manhattan, Or.	25
F. M. Warren, Cathlamet, W. T.	25
I. West & Co., Westport, Or.	40
Hapgood & Co., Watsford, W. T.	45
Wm. Hume, Eagle Cliff, W. T.	47
Cutting Packing Co., Eagle Cliff, W. T.	48
Joseph Hume, Eureka, W. T.	48
James Quinn, Quino's, Or.	49
Jackson, Myers & Co., Rainier, Or.	62
Warren & Son, Warrendale, Or.	143

Besides the above named canneries, there are numerous salting establishments along the river, which preserve and export a limited number of salmon every season, salted and packed in barrels. In appearance all canneries look nearly alike. We show an illustration of one at Upper Astoria, which gives a very correct idea of an establishment of that kind.

The fishing season proper usually



SALMON FISHERY AT UPPER ASTORIA.—Photo by D. Cassid.

lasts from May to August, for a period of about 120 days. The Columbia river salmon, as shown in our engraving, when captured just as they come from the ocean, may be supposed to be exactly ripe, and the peculiar temperature of the water, ice-cold at all seasons, fed by the melted snows of the mountain regions, seems especially adapted to maintain the fish in their best condition. On the Columbia, salmon are seen breaking the water outside of the bar as early as the 1st of April. Then it is said salmon will take the fly, but once in the body of the river all lures are neglected. Bent on reproducing their kind, animated with this sole instinct, the salmon rush ever onward up the stream, seeking the exact spot where they were born, in the smaller branches of the parent stream a thousand miles above, there to deposit their eggs, there to have them fructified, so that they

may fill the grand river once more with a new life. The volume of the Columbia river in the rainy season is so great that sometimes, in April and May, vessels can take their sweet water even beyond the bar. The theory of the Oregon salmon-fisher is, that this great bulk of fresh water pouring out into the Pacific allures the fish who have remained in the ocean, and that, once feeling its influence, they make for the river,

if Indians, pressed by hunger, still eat them, it is only through dire necessity.

The fishing boats usually leave at 4 P. M., returning at about 4 or 6 the next morning. The fishing is mostly done at night. The salmon knows a net when he sees it, and will avoid it in day time. The boats, as shown in the engraving, are built something like the Whitehall, only much heavier. A boat's crew consists of two men, one for pulling and the other to pay out or take in the net.

The nets are made of Barber's shoe-thread, nine to eleven threads to the strand, and the meshes are eight and a half inches, so that no small fish can be caught. The nets are from 200 to 240 fathoms long (a fathom is six feet), and, floated with corks and weighted with lead, fall as much as twenty feet into the water. These nets are valued at about \$200 each, as they are made by hand, and it generally takes about five weeks for one man to finish one. Next season, however, nets will be much cheaper. A genius by the name of Mathias Jensen, of this city, has invented and patented a machine for net-weaving, and has one in successful operation at the southeast corner of Second and Salmon. The patent is owned jointly by Messrs. Everson, Jensen and Bunting, and these gentlemen inform us that the price of nets will be reduced nearly one-half by this invention. Several nets have been made and tested, and are said to be superior to the hand-made.

The way the nets are set is to throw one end, held up by means of buoys, and to row in a straight line across the river, so as to stretch it at right angles with the stream, and then allow it to drift down with the current. The fish, swimming against the stream, are caught in the gills, becoming entangled in the meshes. Just as soon as the fish are caught if not drowned in the net, they are killed by a blow on the head. The average weight of Salmon is twenty pounds. The one we give an engraving of, weighed sixty-seven pounds, and was sent here by Cook Bros. of the Clifton Cannery, to be photographed. When brought to the cannery the fish are piled up on the wharf, and we have seen 1,500 salmon in a single pile. From this pile they are taken to a trough, thoroughly washed and placed on a long table; here, with a single blow of a huge knife, the head is severed and with a skillful single motion of a similar knife the fish is split open and disemboweled. The head and entrails are thrown away at many of the fisheries; at some of them, however, they are made into a very good article of oil. In fact, if people only knew it more generally, the head is the richest part of the salmon, and in the hands of a skillful cook, can be made into a delicacy. After the fish are cleaned, they are thrown into brine vats, where they remain for a time—this process is known as sliming—they



NET RACKS AND FISHING BOATS.—Photo by D. Cassid.

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