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DARIN KINSEY

FASHIONING A FRESHWATER EDEN: ELITE ANGLERS, FISH CULTURE, AND
STATE DEVELOPMENT OF QUÉBEC'S 'SPORT' FISHERY

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PREFACE

Conformément à l'article D45 du règlement des études de cycles supérieurs cette thèse était rédigée en langue anglaise. Néanmoins, un résumé qui expose les objectifs, la méthodologie de même que les résultats obtenus sont compris dans la section «Résumé».

In conformity with article D45 of the rules of graduate studies, this dissertation has been written in English. Nevertheless, it contains an extended introduction in French, which outlines the objectives, methodology, and results of the study in the section "Résumé."

ABSTRACT

Québec possesses such a vast assemblage of freshwater rivers, lakes, and streams filled with so many iconic game fish that many nineteenth-century British and American anglers came to view it as a pristine and even Edenic aquatic landscape. Contrary to the anglers' perceptions, Québec's "aquatic landscape" was a collection of complex habitats filled with fish species that had evolved over millions of years; habitats that in many ways had already been integrated into the fishing traditions of Amerindians and French colonists who preceded them. Although initially a small foreign cohort, the elite anglers who came to Québec represented a significant new cultural force. This angling elite shared an intellectual conception of nature, which caused them to infuse the landscape with new values even as they sought to control it for their own purposes. By the second half of the nineteenth century, government policies increasingly brought anglers' ideas and activities under State regulation through laws, licenses and leases, the use of fish culture, and well-targeted promotional schemes. Ultimately, anglers' efforts to create an exclusive paradise for their activities merged with this auxiliary intervention by the State to produce a cultural and environmental legacy that included the subordination of people, the diminution of the social importance of non-game species, and the creation of novel aquatic ecosystems through the introduction of foreign species. This study integrates scholarship from Environmental History, Québec Studies and Aquatic Sciences to reveal and analyse the environmental and cultural changes that accompanied elite anglers' acquisition of Québec's freshwater aquatic landscape and their role in its transformation from an idyllic and largely mythical "Anglers' Eden," to a State-managed fishery for sport.

Piscator Non Solum Piscatur

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFC – *Archives France-Canada*

BCE – Before the Christian Era

BAnQ – *Bibliothèque et Archives nationale du Québec*

CÉDEQ – *Centre de documentation des études québécoises (UQTR)*

FCHU – Daniel B. Fearing Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University

LAC – Library and Archives, Canada

MYA – Million Years Ago

NAFGPA – North American Fish and Game Protection Association

RÉSUMÉ

Un rapport sur la pêche récréative réalisé par Pêches et Océans Canada en 2005 a signalé avec enthousiasme : « Les lacs et les rivières d'eau douce du Québec attirent chaque année 50 000 pêcheurs à la ligne non-résidents, qui s'adonnent à la pêche en moyenne 500 000 jours et injectent plus de 60 millions de dollars dans l'économie provinciale annuellement. » Même si le rapport visait à présenter l'importance de la pêche sportive dans la province, il a également démontré l'existence d'une relation complexe entre l'État, les pêcheurs à la ligne et les environnements aquatiques du Québec. Cette relation n'est pas récente; elle date plutôt d'il y a longtemps et a fait l'objet de nombreuses histoires. Elle est également rattachée à des thèmes touchant les transformations de la terre par l'action de l'homme. L'objectif de cette étude est d'examiner le lien entre ces trois éléments (les pêcheurs à la ligne, l'État et l'environnement) dans la construction d'un espace culturel et écologique complètement nouveau qui allait être connu sous le nom de « pêche récréative » ou « pêche sportive ». L'étude cherche également à expliquer ce qui a attiré l'élite dans un espace dont la construction résulte de transformations culturelles et écologiques corrélatives, provoquées par cette même élite, à l'intérieur et autour des rivières et des lacs du Québec.

Le concept de la pêche pratiquée uniquement pour le loisir est le produit d'un groupe particulier : les pêcheurs à la ligne. Sans la présence des pêcheurs à la ligne et leurs cannes à mouche, sans leur temps libre et surtout, leur conception de la nature, on ne pourrait soutenir qu'il existe un tel espace, celui de la pêche récréative au Québec.

Bien que ces premiers pêcheurs à la ligne aient constitué un petit groupe élitiste, majoritairement composé d'étrangers, ils étaient socialement et économiquement influents et leurs intentions allaient bien au-delà du désir d'attraper le poisson. La complexité de leurs intentions est, peut-être, parfaitement illustrée par une expression latine qu'ils employaient souvent : *Piscator non solum piscatur* (« La pêche, c'est beaucoup plus qu'attraper le poisson. »). Cette expression traduisait l'idée selon laquelle les pêcheurs à la ligne associaient étroitement leur pratique à un ensemble de grandes expériences vécues avec la nature.

La plupart des historiens ont observé les pêcheurs à la ligne sous l'angle plus large des activités de chasse et de pêche en plein air. Cet angle d'analyse ne considère pas que la plupart des passionnés de plein air s'adonnaient exclusivement soit à la chasse, soit à la pêche, bien qu'on ait connu des exceptions notables. Chaque groupe avait des objectifs différents et employait une rhétorique différente. Notamment, chaque groupe pratiquait son art dans un milieu différent. Le chasseur suivait la trace du gibier terrestre à travers la forêt, muni d'armes qui étaient également employées pour la guerre. Le pêcheur à la ligne utilisait une modeste canne, afin d'attraper des animaux vivants dans un milieu très spécifique : l'eau. On trouvait dans la pêche un sens du mystère associé à l'environnement aquatique, qu'on ne trouvait pas dans la chasse. La plupart des historiens ont également passé outre l'étroit segment que constituaient les élites qui, à la chasse ou à la pêche, ont été largement responsables du façonnement du discours et des codes rattachés à leur art respectif.

Les pêcheurs à la ligne ne se voyaient certainement pas comme de simples pêcheurs. Les pêcheurs de métier utilisaient des filets, des barrages, des harpons et des

casiers. Ils perçaient des trous dans la glace et eschaient leurs hameçons avec des vers crasseux, des boules de lard gras et des morceaux nauséabonds de poissons ou de grenouilles. À l'opposé, les pêcheurs à la ligne employaient des cannes à mouche de bambou fendu fabriquées à la main, majestueusement parées. Elles étaient décorées entre autres d'anneaux d'argent et de laiton et étaient dotées d'un moulinet d'acier et d'albâtre rembobinant une ligne de soie de Chine. Les pêcheurs à la ligne concevaient des mouches et des leurres artificiels élaborés pour attirer des espèces précises. Ils s'enorgueillissaient de posséder des connaissances approfondies sur les poissons et la pêche, et nombreux sont ceux qui ont écrit des histoires détaillées au sujet de cet art ou qui ont dressé l'histoire naturelle de divers poissons et insectes aquatiques.

Surtout, les pêcheurs à la ligne possédaient une tradition littéraire de plusieurs siècles qui est devenue un genre complexe étudié par d'autres fervents de la pêche récréative. Cette tradition littéraire distinguait les pêcheurs à la ligne des autres personnes qui attrapaient le poisson. À travers leur littérature, ils ont développé leurs idées par rapport aux perceptions et valeurs des éléments de la nature qui sont nécessaires à leur art, l'eau et les poissons, et à l'importance de ces deux éléments pour la société. Dans la culture anglo-saxonne, le mécène littéraire le plus important de la pêche à la ligne au XVII^e siècle était Izaak Walton. En 1676, Walton a publié son *Compleat Angler* (Le parfait pêcheur à la ligne), qui allait devenir l'étude fondatrice du genre littéraire de la pêche à la ligne. Son œuvre a été très influente, non seulement parce qu'elle décrivait si exhaustivement l'art de la pêche à la ligne, mais aussi parce qu'elle intégrait à un enseignement classique des conseils pratiques, une pensée religieuse, une philosophie et même des descriptions protoromantiques de la nature. La

ténacité de l'influence de Walton, présente pendant plus de trois siècles, est due au fait qu'il a transformé l'activité consistant à capturer le poisson en une communion avec la nature, dans laquelle le poisson et l'« élément aqueux » étaient tous deux embellis.

L'idée voulant que les pêcheurs d'élite aient formé un groupe distinct de personnes qui véhiculaient dans les régions sauvages des concepts influents au sujet de la nature, lesquels ont ensuite été utilisés pour façonner un espace à la fois culturel et écologique, constitue la thèse principale de cette étude. Cette dernière remet en question l'interprétation courante en histoire culturelle et en histoire environnementale selon laquelle l'intérêt croissant pour les activités de plein air au cours du XIX^e siècle, surtout en Amérique du Nord, traduisait le désir de l'élite de fuir les villes malsaines et le stress de la vie urbaine pour aller chasser et pêcher dans la nature sauvage. Cette interprétation n'explique que partiellement le phénomène. Les pêcheurs à la ligne n'ont pas simplement « fui » vers la nature vierge du Québec, ni vers toute autre région sauvage d'ailleurs, dans une recherche passive de loisir, de paix ou de tranquillité. Ils se sont rendus dans les étendues sauvages avec leurs bagages intellectuels remplis d'attentes uniques par rapport au lieu de leur destination. Ils ont activement projeté leurs valeurs sur le paysage et ont cherché des moyens, en s'appuyant sur les lois et le contrôle exclusif du territoire, de s'assurer que toute autre personne le regardait et l'utilisait de manières similaires. Ainsi, le séjour des pêcheurs à la ligne dans une région sauvage représentait un acte débordant de potentiel pour changer le paysage culturel et environnemental.

En effet, cette étude révèle que non seulement les pêcheurs à la ligne regardaient le paysage avec des attentes romantiques qu'ils entretenaient par rapport à leur art, mais

aussi qu'ils l'ont façonné conformément à leurs idéaux et que, ce faisant, ils l'ont profondément transformé. Alors que les pêcheurs à la ligne croyaient avoir trouvé un environnement aquatique vierge au Québec, ils allaient en fait transporter leur art dans un milieu physique modelé par des millions d'années d'évolution tant géologique que biologique. Ils sont arrivés dans un environnement dont la surface avait été gravée maintes fois par les glaciers, puis remplie par une myriade de cours et de sources d'eau que les pêcheurs à la ligne trouvaient si enchanteurs. Par ailleurs, les cycles glaciaires ont joué un rôle tout aussi important dans l'évolution de populations de poissons relativement appauvries, surtout représentées par les salmonidés, des poissons d'intérêt sportif estimables et extraordinaires aux yeux des pêcheurs à la ligne.

Ces pêcheurs n'étaient pas, toutefois, les premiers à bâtir une relation avec cet environnement. Les Amérindiens les avaient précédés des milliers d'années auparavant, ainsi que les Français, plusieurs centaines d'années auparavant. Bien qu'aucun de ces groupes n'ait développé une culture de la pêche sportive clairement définissable, chacun d'eux maintenait une relation culturelle unique avec le poisson et la pêche. Les peuples amérindiens migrants ont intégré chaque partie de la migration saisonnière des espèces du bassin Saint-Laurent dans leur propre mode de vie. Ils ont mis au point des stratégies d'exploitation spirituellement respectueuses, mais écologiquement transformatrices. Les Français ont amené leurs propres traditions de pêche depuis les environnements aquatiques de la métropole et ils en ont emprunté d'autres aux Amérindiens du Québec. Même si la pêche était principalement pour eux un moyen de subsistance, et non un loisir, leurs activités étaient influencées par leurs croyances religieuses et leurs célébrations, aussi bien que par leurs relations avec leurs seigneurs.

Les éléments naturels, comme les cultures antécédentes, ont servi d'éléments fondateurs à partir desquels les pêcheurs élitistes allaient élaborer la pêche sportive au Québec. L'action des pêcheurs élitistes s'inscrivait dans les multiples transformations culturelles qu'a entraînées la Conquête britannique. Avec l'élite militaire et l'aristocratie de la Grande-Bretagne est apparue une culture clairement définie de la pêche en tant que sport de même qu'un ensemble de lois concernant le gibier et le poisson, à l'intérieur duquel la culture britannique avait évolué. Les œuvres d'officiers britanniques, comme Frederick Tolfrey, ont révélé comment on a commencé à adapter la culture de la pêche à la ligne au paysage culturel et environnemental du Québec et à ses limites géographiques. De manière encore plus significative, elles ont montré comment les idées au sujet de la valeur du paysage avaient commencé à s'infiltrer depuis l'élite jusqu'au peuple et à réarranger, déjà, les relations entre les groupes sociaux et l'accès à la nature.

Au cours des années 1840, le milieu fréquenté et façonné par les pêcheurs à la ligne britanniques s'est énormément agrandi, alors que les Américains démontraient un intérêt croissant pour les environnements aquatiques de la province de Québec. Par ailleurs, l'Amérique avait développé ses propres rapports élitistes avec la littérature waltonienne et la tradition culturelle de la pêche à la ligne. De nombreux Américains fortunés ont acheté, ou loué, au cours du « Gilded Age », période de prospérité de la fin du XIX^e siècle, d'énormes étendues de terre ainsi que les droits de rivières et de ruisseaux, et ont mis sur pied des clubs sélects qui allaient devenir semblables à des propriétés seigneuriales, sous de nombreux aspects.

Les pêcheurs à la ligne ont d'abord trouvé des alliés parmi les bureaucrates provinciaux, comme Richard Nettle, le surintendant des Pêches du Bas-Canada, et

E. T. D. Chambers, mandataire spécial de l'administration de la Chasse et de la Pêche du Québec), qui a tenté de s'attaquer au problème du fléchissement de la population du saumon. Au début du XX^e siècle, au fur et à mesure que les représentants provinciaux exerçaient un contrôle accru sur l'environnement aquatique fréquenté et façonné par les pêcheurs à la ligne, ils ont soumis ces pêcheurs à l'autorité gouvernementale d'une façon plus systématique. En s'appuyant sur les lois sur la location des terres et des ressources aquatiques, ils ont solidifié la relation néoseigneuriale entre les adeptes de la pêche à la ligne, l'État et le milieu sauvage du Québec. En échange de la promesse des pêcheurs à la ligne d'assurer une bonne intendance environnementale, ceux-ci se sont vus accorder l'accès exclusif à une grande partie de l'environnement aquatique du Québec. Leurs préoccupations pour la préservation et la conservation de l'eau et des poissons d'eau douce étaient sincères, mais étroitement liées au groupe restreint de poissons sportifs qu'ils désiraient.

Les pêcheurs à la ligne sont donc devenus extrêmement désireux de sauver le saumon et la truite, mais aucunement intéressés par les espèces utilisées par la population locale, comme l'anguille et la barbu de rivière. Surtout, l'intérêt pour la conservation a toujours été rattaché aux objectifs de l'État, qui visait à maintenir des relations économiques fructueuses avec les pêcheurs à la ligne. Cette relation économique était plutôt unique du fait qu'elle s'appuyait grandement sur le nouveau regard posé par l'État sur ses ressources de poissons d'eau douce : celles-ci étaient considérablement plus profitables lorsque pêchées une à une par des touristes en visite que lorsque prises en masse par les pêcheurs amérindiens ou canadiens-français.

Ce façonnement social et économique de la nature a toutefois mené à un conflit culturel. Les lois ont rendu obligatoire l'achat de permis, en déclarant illégale la prise de la plupart des poissons sportifs en masse à l'aide de filets, de barrages, de casiers ou d'autres méthodes, et l'instauration de limites quant aux périodes et aux endroits où les personnes pouvaient pêcher était destinée à modifier les comportements. Par ailleurs, elles ont entraîné des changements parallèles en ce qui concerne le statut légal des personnes et l'importance du poisson dans les limites d'autres traditions et à l'intérieur de l'écosystème. Ceux qui se procuraient des permis pour avoir le droit de pêcher avec une canne et une ligne devenaient de bons « protecteurs ». Ceux qui pêchaient de façon traditionnelle et illégale devenaient des « braconniers »; des membres nuisibles à la société qui détruisaient les ressources naturelles précieuses. Le système judiciaire a apporté une mesure de permanence et de légitimité et a construit les murs virtuels de ce qu'était devenu le paradis aquatique du Québec; il a transformé le « paradis de la pêche sportive » en un sport officiel, la pêche récréative, toujours présenté dans les magazines de plein air et les brochures de sociétés ferroviaires comme étant l'oasis des pêcheurs à la ligne.

On peut estimer l'importance que ces changements ont eue sur le plan culturel en considérant la campagne de résistance longue et tenace (d'une durée de plus de 60 ans) menée par la population locale au cours du XIX^e siècle et au début du XX^e siècle, contre ce qu'ils interprétaient comme étant le remodelage de leur propre rapport à la nature. Chaque année, de nouveaux gardes-pêches, des agents assurant l'ordre public, faisaient leur entrée dans le paysage pour lutter futillement contre ce que l'élite percevait comme des comportements destructeurs chez la population locale, au regard de leurs pratiques

de pêche et de l'impact qu'elles avaient sur certaines espèces. Finalement, la force de changement la plus significative est venue d'une nouvelle vague de pêcheurs à la ligne issus de la classe moyenne et qui ont trouvé le moyen de pratiquer leur sport au Québec, surtout en raison des changements économiques qui ont permis à un segment élargi de la société de consacrer temps et argent à la pêche à la ligne. Les cannes, moulinets et autres équipements de pêche non dispendieux ont aussi contribué à élargir la clientèle, de même que l'accès accordé au public à des sites de pêche plus nombreux. Même si les pêcheurs de la classe moyenne ont dû accepter de ne pouvoir capturer que les poissons inférieurs dans la hiérarchie des proies aquatiques, telles que l'achigan et la perche (le droit au saumon demeurait toujours le privilège de l'élite), ce groupe a joué un rôle majeur en servant de véhicule intermédiaire transmettant des notions de conservation et les valeurs de l'expérience de la pêche à la ligne au simple pêcheur de métier.

Sans aucun doute, les effets qu'ont exercés les pêcheurs à la ligne sur la société humaine au Québec sont les plus visibles pour les historiens. Néanmoins, les collectivités humaines ne représentaient pas les seuls groupes visés par les pêcheurs à la ligne. Les communautés de poissons étaient, elles aussi, inextricablement touchées par leurs activités. Que les poissons aient été conscients des changements ou non, l'homme a commis des gestes, par le biais des décisions gouvernementales notamment, qui ont modifié leurs relations millénaires avec les éléments de leurs habitats et, par voie de conséquence, avec les autres parties de la biosphère. Les fluctuations et les transformations se produisant au sein des populations de poissons sont causées par une multitude de facteurs, aussi il est difficile d'affirmer avec certitude quel effet la pêche à la ligne a pu avoir sur elles directement. De toute évidence, les pêcheurs sportifs et les

bureaucrates provinciaux ont volontairement et activement affecté les populations de poissons à travers leur emploi de la pisciculture.

À ce sujet, les sciences naturelles nous révèlent davantage d'information en ce qui a trait aux effets historiques de cette campagne de transferts et d'implantations de poissons. Dans certains cas, ils n'ont pas fonctionné. Dans d'autres cas, les implants ont réussi. Une réussite du point de vue des pêcheurs à la ligne signifiait que leurs poissons préférés allaient s'établir dans un habitat où ils prendraient plaisir à les capturer. La définition de « réussite » chez les pêcheurs à la ligne revêtait toutefois une signification différente sous la perspective des systèmes écologiques. L'un des cas de réussite a été le transfert de la truite arc-en-ciel.

Les truites arc-en-ciel faisaient partie des espèces repeuplées systématiquement chaque année par les alevinières provinciales. Nous savons que dans de nombreux endroits ces populations se sont établies et nous connaissons également les formes de changements généraux qu'elles ont pu entraîner. Les pêcheurs à la ligne adoraient la truite arc-en-ciel, car elle est très rapace; elle attaque violemment sa proie et une fois capturée, elle se débat féroce, ce qui lui fouette le sang et rehausse ses teintes arc-en-ciel. Les caractéristiques qui ont fait de ce poisson une cible si convoitée par les pêcheurs à la ligne en ont également fait un intrus s'intégrant bien dans son milieu écologique. Les poissons étrangers, tout comme les pêcheurs à la ligne étrangers, étaient engagés par procuration dans leur propre conquête du paysage.

Nous ne connaissons peut-être jamais les détails ayant trait à ces implants du XIX^e siècle, comme le lieu où les poissons se sont établis et le nombre d'habitants des nouvelles populations. Nous avons toutefois la certitude que l'arrivée des poissons

sportifs était directement liée à l'arrivée des pêcheurs à la ligne et à la pratique de la pisciculture. Ils représentaient la preuve biologique que les idées, les désirs et les actions des pêcheurs à la ligne pour façonner le paysage, ont contribué à des changements manifestes sur les plans culturel et écologique.

Grâce à sa démarche, cette étude contribue à la fois à une meilleure compréhension de plusieurs thèmes importants en études québécoises, tout en suggérant de nouvelles pistes de recherche, entre autres : le rôle de la culture et ses interactions avec le monde naturel; le rôle des espaces sauvages et de la nature dans l'établissement de relations entre l'État, la société, les classes sociales et les espèces animales; le rôle des activités de loisir dans le développement socio-économique du Québec. De manière plus indirecte, elle nous informe des dimensions historiques des sciences aquatiques menées au Québec.

Cette étude de l'élite des pêcheurs à la ligne au Québec indique qu'il est possible de mieux comprendre les transformations culturelles en décrivant plus en détail l'environnement, en tant qu'écosystème autour duquel les cultures humaines évoluent. Cette approche, qui comprend l'intégration d'œuvres propres à l'histoire environnementale et à la science, confirme que les interactions entre les classes et les groupes ethniques étaient extrêmement complexes. La façon dont l'élite sportive à la ligne, majoritairement anglophone, percevait le paysage et utilisait l'espace en fonction de ses idéaux, a entraîné des changements non seulement dans les rapports à la nature chez les Amérindiens et les Canadiens français, mais aussi dans les écosystèmes de la province.

Cette étude contribue également à la compréhension de la façon dont l'État exerce son pouvoir sur l'environnement. Certains historiens ont affirmé que les sports de plein air faisaient partie des impérialismes britanniques, qui ont contribué à la formation de l'identité du Canada. Cette étude révèle de façon précise comment une province est devenue un acteur auxiliaire d'un élément de cette culture du plein air, et comment elle a façonné sa propre identité culturelle et environnementale au cours de ce processus. Bien que l'impérialisme britannique, tout comme l'impérialisme américain, ait effectivement joué un rôle dans ce processus, l'instauration d'un impérialisme écologique a pratiqué une influence globale en traversant tous les groupes sociaux. En outre, les désirs exprimés de contrôler le paysage étaient associés de près à la volonté de la province de rendre ses terres domaniales rentables, tout en encourageant une nouvelle éthique de la conservation.

Enfin, vue sous un autre aspect, cette étude apporte une contribution thématique tout à fait unique. En explorant les éléments aquatiques du milieu, elle a apporté une nouvelle signification au paysage culturel et écologique qui avait été complètement ignoré, et fait la lumière sur une niche cachée, où les interactions entre les différents groupes de personnes de classes sociales différentes, les représentants de l'État et les diverses espèces ont créé de nouvelles relations. Malgré le fait que les principales relations à l'intérieur de cette niche sont établies entre des êtres humains et des êtres non humains qui sont des espèces aquatiques plutôt que terrestres, elles dévoilent de nombreuses caractéristiques similaires à d'autres relations entre les humains et les animaux; par exemple, le réflexe qu'ont les humains d'importer de nouvelles espèces dans une nouvelle région, d'anthropomorphiser leurs relations avec certaines espèces et

d'attribuer à d'autres espèces une telle signification sociale et économique que ces dernières acquièrent une plus grande importance aux yeux de la loi que certains êtres humains. Ces espèces étaient des poissons, vivant dans des milieux aquatiques, liés écologiquement à leurs habitats et à la biosphère, et culturellement à la société humaine.

INTRODUCTION

Historicizing Québec's Sport Fishery

In a 2005 report on recreational fisheries, Fisheries and Oceans Canada noted enthusiastically that “Québec’s freshwater rivers and lakes annually attract 50,000 non-resident anglers, who fish an average of 500,000 days and diffuse over 60 million dollars into the provincial economy per year.”¹ Albeit meant to show the value of the province’s sport fishery, it also demonstrated the existence of a complex relationship between the State, foreign anglers and Québec’s aquatic habitats. That relationship is not recent; rather, it is a long and storied one. The goal of this study is to examine the link between those three elements, namely elite anglers, the State and the environment, in the construction of a wholly new cultural and ecological space that would become known as the recreational or, “sport,” fishery. In addition, it will investigate how that construction resulted in a co-relative, cultural and ecological transformation within and around Québec’s freshwater aquatic habitats.

Those changes came about due principally to one group of people, elite anglers. Without these people, their fly rods, their time to spare and most importantly, their ideas about the value of nature, there arguably would be no such place as a sport fishery in Québec. While a relatively small group, elite anglers were socially, politically, and economically influential and their motivations went well beyond a desire to catch fish. The complexity of their motivations is, perhaps, best exemplified by a Latin expression they often employed in their written works—*Piscator Non Solum Piscatur*, which

¹ Pêches et Océans Canada, *Enquête sur la pêche récréative au Canada* (Ottawa: Gestion des pêches et de l’aquaculture, 2007), 9.

means: "There is more to fishing than catching fish." The expression conveyed the notion that anglers linked their fish catching to broader experiences, especially experiences with nature.

The State, too, played a role in the historical development of Québec's sport fishery as provincial bureaucrats eventually came to understand the essence of the anglers' Latin maxim in their own way. From their perspective, elite anglers were agents in the development of a mutually beneficial economic exploitation of nature: the province profited from the anglers' importation of wealth and a promise of stewardship of the waters, while anglers gained increasingly exclusive access to the wilderness, fresh water habitats and the province's renowned game fish. Nevertheless, elite anglers were doing more than bringing in tourist dollars or instituting a conservation mentality; they were importing a new set of values tied to romantic notions of nature.

The provincial government clearly understood this. A promotional guide, written in 1899, appealed to the anglers' search for romantic angling experiences, thusly:

There is a land which is justly known as the Angler's [...] Paradise - A Paradise twenty times greater than was the Eden of Mesopotamia since it covers 330,000 acres of territory, watered by thousands of lakes and by hundreds of streams larger than the largest rivers of Europe [...]. [T]his land [...] is the Province of Québec.²

Such a statement in a government document in Québec is astonishing. Here were provincial officials using the imagery of the biblical Garden of Eden to describe the province's physical geography, most of which was situated above the 44th parallel, to the

² Louis-Zéphérin Joncas and Edward Thomas Davies Chambers, "Preface," *The Sportsman's Companion: Showing the Haunts of the Moose, Caribou and Deer, Also the Salmon, Ouananiche and Trout in the Province of Quebec and How to Reach Them* (Québec: Commissioner of Lands, Forests, and Fisheries, 1899), no pagination.

“Eden of Mesopotamia.”³ This rhetoric demonstrated a radical shift in the way in which that part of North America perceived itself. After all, even in the great preserve of North American Roman Catholicism that was New France, comparisons of the landscape to Eden were rare and mostly antithetical. Paul Lejeune, a Jesuit missionary visiting the woodlands north of the St. Lawrence during the seventeenth century, wrote of the place as a barren and sterile land “filled with wild animals, black flies and savages.”⁴ For Lejeune, the wilderness of New France would require enormous effort and nothing less than divine intervention if it were ever to be civilized.

I.1 The Sport Fishery as an “Aquatic Eden” for Anglers

The Québec government’s references to Eden tapped into powerful imagery within the Western experience.⁵ The garden can be found depicted on global maps well into the modern period. As Europeans and Americans were pushing into new regions in Africa, Asia and North America during the nineteenth-century, many scientific expeditions went out in search of it. One American archaeologist following US forces into the Philippines in 1898 even claimed to have found it in the jungles outside of Manila.⁶ Nevertheless, provincial officials were not claiming that the lost earthly paradise described in the Book of Genesis could be found in Québec. Rather, they were

³ Similar imagery would also be utilised by government agents promoting colonisation in the North. These themes are explored in Serge Courville, *Immigration, colonisation et propagande : du rêve américain au rêve colonial* (Sainte-Foy, QC : Éditions MultiMondes, 2002).

⁴ Carole Blackburn, *Harvest of Souls: the Jesuit Missions and Colonialism in North America, 1632-1650* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000), 43. In her chapter on “Wilderness,” Blackburn gives a succinct account of the man/nature dichotomy in early New France.

⁵ F. Regina Psaki, *The Earthly Paradise: The Garden of Eden from Antiquity to Modernity* (Binghamton, NY: Binghamton University Press, 2002), 140; Jean Delumeau, *Histoire du paradis* (New York: Continuum, 1995). Delumeau wrote that “from 1540-1700 the earthly paradise supplied the subject matter for at least 155 literary works written either in Latin or in the various languages of the European West.”

⁶ “The Garden of Eden: Is it Now American Property?,” *The Hartford Courant* (November 14, 1900), 9.

playing off a contemporaneous interest to find places in the wilderness that might be considered primordial and pristine.

Much of that desire stemmed from the increasingly urbanized lifestyle that quickened the pace of life and rendered it more prosaic. The expanding cities became overcrowded with people and horses. Factories and industries darkened the sky with smoke and ash; tanneries and rendering plants polluted the waters with chemicals and offal. The cities wealthiest residents built their homes on high ground to avoid the stench-filled "miasma" that they believed poisoned their health.⁷ Those with the financial means and the necessary leisure time searched for their own personal versions of Eden out in the peripheries of the cities, where they could find fresh air and relaxation.⁸

The growth of science and the spread of technology during the nineteenth century also meant that if people could not find Eden, they could try and build substitutes.⁹ That interest in replicating Edenic habitats is visible in the city planning and landscape architecture of the Victorian period. It exemplified itself in the juxtaposition of seemingly natural yet completely man-made environments situated in densely populated urban spaces, such as New York's Central Park, London's Crystal Palace or Paris' *Parc Zoologique*.¹⁰ It also revealed itself in the appropriation and purposeful delineation of wilderness space. While historians have cited the creation of national parks and forest

⁷ From the Middle Ages and well into the nineteenth-century when it was supplanted by the "germ theory," there was both a popular and scientific belief in the "miasmatic theory," which held that diseases like cholera were caused by "bad" air.

⁸ For an exploration of leisure time as a nineteenth-century phenomenon in North America, see: Kathryn Grover, ed. *Hard at Play: Leisure in America, 1840-1940* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992).

⁹ Max F. Schulz, *Paradise Preserved: Recreations of Eden in Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

¹⁰ Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Vintage, 1996).

reserves as examples of a growing interest in conservation, their development also underscored a new desire to preserve habitats that many believed to be pristine. One such place was Yellowstone National Park, created from more than two million of the most “beautiful and stunning” acres of land in the American West in 1872 and often referred to as “America’s Eden.”¹¹

Sportsmen became central figures in the process of finding and fashioning landscapes that met their idyllic and Edenic expectations. They would generally find them and shape them in the peripheral areas of major cities. New Yorkers and Bostonians would first look to Maine and to the Adirondacks.¹² Eventually, however, they began to look further afield, beyond their own borders. Some sportsmen found Québec so unique and so harmonious with their own perceptions of the perfect wilderness landscape that they would deem it a veritable “sportsmen’s paradise.” In comparison with the rapidly urbanizing and expanding United States or England, Québec remained lightly populated. Most of the population of Canada still hugged the shores of the St. Lawrence. Outside of the narrow band of arable land they worked and lived upon, the vast majority of the province’s terrain remained covered by dense forest, much of it still unexplored. While Montreal was quickly becoming the most important city in Canada and one of the most important transportation and economic hubs in North America, it was also a doorway to a vast wilderness expanse filled with the kind of fish and game that excited urban sportsmen and where Amerindian tribes still held on to

¹¹ Marlene Deahl Merrill, ed., *Albert Charles Peale, Seeing Yellowstone in 1871: Earliest Descriptions and Images from the Field* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2005).

¹² Philip G. Terrie, *Forever Wild: Environmental Aesthetics and the Adirondack Forest Preserve* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1985).

vestiges of their culture and French-Canadian settlers were still carving out new settlements.

Some historians have linked the increased interest in field sports to that widespread reaction among the elite to leave the unhealthy sprawling cities and the stress of urban living, if only for a short period of time. Yet sportsmen did more than simply flee into the wilderness in a passive search for game, health, recreation or peace and quiet. Their intellectual rucksacks, packed with their own unique expectations of place, were brimming with the potential for change.¹³ Much of that potential came from the fact that sportsmen also possessed the Victorian interest in re-modeling nature along Edenic paradigms. More importantly, in their hunting and fishing activities, sportsmen were connected to traditions that went back even centuries.

Whether consciously or not, etymological clues show that the modern sportsmen's desire to find or create Edenic places mirrored far older relationships between the elite and paradisaical landscapes. The Hebrew word *pardès* (from which the word paradise is derived) denoted a well-watered countryside, or *eden*, where everything was "pleasant, savourous, and fragrant."¹⁴ That word finds its origins in a still older Persian word dating to the sixth century BCE: *apiri-daeza*, which meant a garden, often an orchard or a hunting park stocked with rare plants, trees and exotic animals that through their domestication and captivity celebrated the grandeur and importance of the ruling class. Intended for the exclusive use of royalty and elite bureaucrats, those who built these gardens made every effort to close them off from the rest of society, often using high

¹³ For an examination of the many ways in which sportsmen affected the environment, see: John Reiger, *American Sportsman and the Origins of Conservation* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2001).

¹⁴ Walter William Skeat, *An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1880), 420.

walls and guards. These *apiri-daeza* enshrined the concept that those with noble blood or extreme wealth deserved special access to nature and the gods, or God.

It is no less significant that the word “paradise” is derived from a compound word formed from *pairi*, which meant “surroundings,” and *diz*, which meant to make, mould or form.¹⁵ This construction of artificial Edenic environments by the elite found continuity throughout Western history. One can find them in the guise of the royal deer parks in France and Britain set apart for exclusive use of the King and protected by wardens. They are seen also in the elaborate gardens constructed by Louis XIV at Versailles or those of Peter the Great at St. Petersburg, or in the royal menageries of the eighteenth century. Even the subscription-based botanical gardens and zoos of the nineteenth century, while more accessible, were tinged with exclusivity.¹⁶

We also find that model in the nineteenth-century fish and game clubs established in Québec. The members of those clubs were not as homogeneous a group as the term “sportsmen” seems to imply. Often historians have employed that overly ambiguous term to describe virtually anyone who participated in outdoor sports. Defining “sportsmen”, however, requires a greater degree of nuance, if for no other reason than the fact that various sporting forms exercised a measure of exclusivity, even within their own groups. The division between hunters and anglers, for example, was very clear. Each group possessed their own unique interests, goals, traditions and history. Hunting was couched in concepts of militarism and the expression of masculinity through the

¹⁵ Delumeau, *Histoire du paradis*, 4.

¹⁶ Raymond Grant, *The Royal Forests of England* (Wolfeboro Falls, NH: Alan Sutton, 1991), 363-78; Jean-Pierre Digard, *Les Français et leurs animaux* (Paris: Fayard, 1999); Harriet Ritvo, “At the Edge of the Garden: Nature and Domestication in Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century Britain,” *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 55 (1992): 363-78; Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

conquest of other wilderness and other animals. Angling, on the other hand was a sport for the “contemplative” individual, the intellectual, the scholar, the poet and the romantic of both sexes.¹⁷

In addition, a small segment of elite practitioners within each group were largely responsible for shaping the discourse and the rules of their respective crafts. The elite angler’s sense of his own uniqueness was notable. President Grover Cleveland, an avid and well-known angler and a member of Québec’s Triton Game and Fish Club, expressed it best when he wrote, only slightly tongue-in-cheek, that anglers were to be considered “a separate class or sub-race among the inhabitants of the earth.”¹⁸ These men came to view Québec as a uniquely special Earthly paradise. Above all, this angling elite did not see themselves as mere fishermen. For them, the word “fisherman” conjured up images of grizzled old men who fished for subsistence or petty commerce. Those kinds of fish catchers, sometimes called “pot-fishers,” used nets and weirs or twine crudely attached to twisted saplings. In winter, such people cut holes in the ice and baited their hooks with filthy worms, greasy balls of lard and smelly chunks of fish or frogs. In the opinion of the elite “angler,” fishermen were at best to be snickered at and at worst a menace to the very future of their craft.

In contrast, the elite angler employed specially designed tools including ornately carved, handcrafted split-bamboo fly rods decorated with silver and brass rings, and steel and alabaster reels wound with lines made of Chinese silk. Instead of employing

¹⁷ While the angling elite discussed in this study officially excluded women, wives and daughters could go to clubs as guests, and they were encouraged to fish by their husbands and fathers. Some even built a parallel female angling culture. There are a few notable exceptions of women among the elite participating in angling, such as Princess Louisa, the wife of Governor General Lorne, who was a renowned salmon angler. See also, Lady Greville, ed., *The Gentlewoman’s Book of Sports* (London: Henry, 1892); David McMurray, “A Rod of Her Own: Women and Angling in Victorian North America” (Masters Thesis, University of Lethbridge, 2007).

¹⁸ Grover Cleveland, *A Defense of Fishermen* (Princeton, NJ: Private Printing, 1902).

live baits, they designed intricate artificial flies and lures that would attract specific species. They prided themselves in possessing detailed knowledge of fish species, and therefore many of them studied, and some of them wrote, detailed natural histories of fish and insects.¹⁹

Most importantly, the elite angler also had a centuries-old literary tradition that formed a general guide for other practitioners of the craft.²⁰ It was that literary tradition that most distinguished elite anglers from other people who caught fish. That literary tradition was built around the writings of a seventeenth-century English ironmonger, Izaak Walton. Walton made his fortune at his business at an early age and then retired to spend the rest of his life angling and writing about his experiences. He wrote a number of texts during his lifetime, but it was his little handbook on angling, entitled *The Compleat Angler*, that would become the “Bible” of the craft. That Walton blended his contemplative craft with elitism is unquestionable. Looking at it from our perspective, his suggestion that “both Rivers, and the inhabitants of the watery Element, were created for wise men to contemplate and fools to pass by without consideration” seems to almost foreshadow how deeply elitist the craft would later become.²¹

Since its initial publication, Walton’s *Compleat Angler* has never gone out of print, and it remains one of the longest continuously published text in the English language. Victorian anglers in both the United States and Canada revived it in

¹⁹ Colleen J. Sheehey, “American Angling: The Rise of Urbanism and the Romance of the Rod and Reel,” in Kathryn Grover, ed. *Hard at Play: Leisure in America, 1840-1940* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 83-86.

²⁰ Charles E. Goodspeed, *Angling in America: Its Early History and Literature* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1939); Reiger, *American Sportsman*; Arnold Gingrich, *The Fishing in Print: A Guided Tour through Five Centuries of Angling Literature* (New York: Winchester Press, 1974); Charles Chenevix Trench, *A History of Angling* (St. Albans: Hart-Davis MacGibbon, 1974); Thomas R. Dunlap, “Sport Hunting and Conservation, 1880-1920,” *Environmental Review* 12, no. 1 (1988): 51-59.

²¹ Izaak Walton, *The Universal Angler made so by Three Books of Fishing, Part 1 Being a Discourse of Rivers, Fishponds, and Fishing* (London: Richard Marriott, 1676).

importance by publishing re-editions. At the same time, they vigorously and significantly added to the literary genre by publishing “Waltoneseque” literature of their own. The Victorian renaissance of Waltonian values and virtue made for an even more sophisticated and often immensely more snobbish angling sub-culture, one that not only wished to find and fashion Edenic landscapes for sport angling but to keep them for themselves.²²

Modern anglers’ own exaggerated sense of importance matched the pretensions of the Eden builders of antiquity. Nevertheless, the anglers’ emphasis on building their paradisial landscape around water and aquatic habitats made them unique. So significantly different was their perspective that the use of the word “landscape” in association with a study of anglers becomes problematic. That is because the word “landscape,” derived from the Dutch word *landschap*, means a tract of land and evokes the image of a pastoral setting. Such imagery reflected a deep terrestrial bias that elite anglers did not share. They held a different worldview, one that rejected terrestrially oriented perspectives. As Walton had so preached, water was primordial. The anglers’ found their idyllic landscapes among the lakes, rivers and streams, which might only incidentally contain a terrestrial threshold upon which to perch a rod.

The anglers’ view of paradise would be better seen as “aquatic” than “pastoral.” Their “aquatic landscape” celebrated and romanticised the anglers’ understanding of an ideal experience with rod and reel, and the taming of the thrashing and leaping bodies of majestic fish. These included views of large bodies of water wherein an angler was

²² Izaak Walton, *The Compleat Angler; or, the Contemplative Man's Recreation* (London: T. Maxey, 1653), Chapter 1. Quote attributed to an “ingenuous Spaniard.”

normally present and most often celebratory images of the moment of catch. Above all, they encapsulated the anglers' idyllic vision of Edenic space.



Figure 1: The Piscatorial Idyll

This image fully encapsulates the “piscatorial idyll.” One sees the sweeping vistas, the angler at the moment of catch, the birch bark canoe and ambiguous guides—one standing poised to gaff a salmon fatigued by his struggle.

Source: Dean Sage’s *The Ristigouche and its Salmon Fishing* (Edinburgh: D. Douglas, 1888)

One such example is revealed in a drawing in Dean Sage’s *The Ristigouche and its Salmon Fishing* (1888) (See Figure 1), which reveals an elegantly poised Caucasian male, his features carefully drawn, standing at the foot of some unknown pool on the shore of the Ristigouche River between Québec and New Brunswick. Next to him rests the ubiquitous birch-bark canoe and a pair of swarthy guides, iconic symbols of the Québec angling experience. In his hands is a fly rod strained to a hyperbolic arc by the last desperate struggles of the large salmon or trout still hidden by the waters but

securely hooked to the end of the angler's line and connecting the angler to nature. The two anonymous guides patiently and subordinately await the fatigue of the fish to gaff their patron's prize and haul it onto the shore.²³

Just as the more celebrated paintings of the Romantic Movement, which included the spectacular landscapes and seascapes of William Turner, the much more humble aquatic landscapes found in angling monographs and angling magazines had hidden meaning.²⁴ If Turner's portrayals celebrated the sublime and juxtaposed the brutality of an ultimately untameable nature against the fragile lives of mortal and insignificant humans, angling illustrations depicted a placid wilderness where men held supremacy over the animal kingdom (See Figures 2-5).²⁵ Indeed, elite anglers would come to exercise a measure of supremacy over the landscape. The influence and control by elite anglers, most of whom were foreigners, could not have taken place without the assistance of indigenous actors. Like the more ancient forms of the *apiri-daeza*, the construction of a romanticized "Anglers' Eden" in Québec was associated with relationships between social classes, ethnic groups, non-human species and the State. Whether seen as a metaphor, cultural memory or even a real place, Eden has long represented a place of origin. Likewise, the Anglers' Eden that would be fashioned in Québec represented the development of new cultural and ecological space.

²³ Peter Coates, *Nature: Western Attitudes since Ancient Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Schama, *Landscape and Memory*; Clarence Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore: Nature and Culture in Western Thought from Ancient Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967); Dean Sage, *The Ristigouche and its Salmon Fishing, with a Chapter on Angling Literature* (Edinburgh: D. Douglas, 1888).

²⁴ William S. Rodner, *J. M. W. Turner: Romantic Painter of the Industrial Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

²⁵ Claude Blanckaert, "Les animaux 'utiles' chez Isidore Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire: la mission sociale de la zootechnie," *Revue de synthèse* 113, no. 3-4 (1992): 347-82.



Figure 2: A Tributary Lake to the St. Lawrence River

This vista presents an Edenic glimpse of some unknown “tributary lake”. Québec’s long frontage along the St. Lawrence promised nearly unlimited nooks and crannies such as this for anglers to seek out their sublime experiences.

Source: *American Angler*, December, 1896 (FCHU)

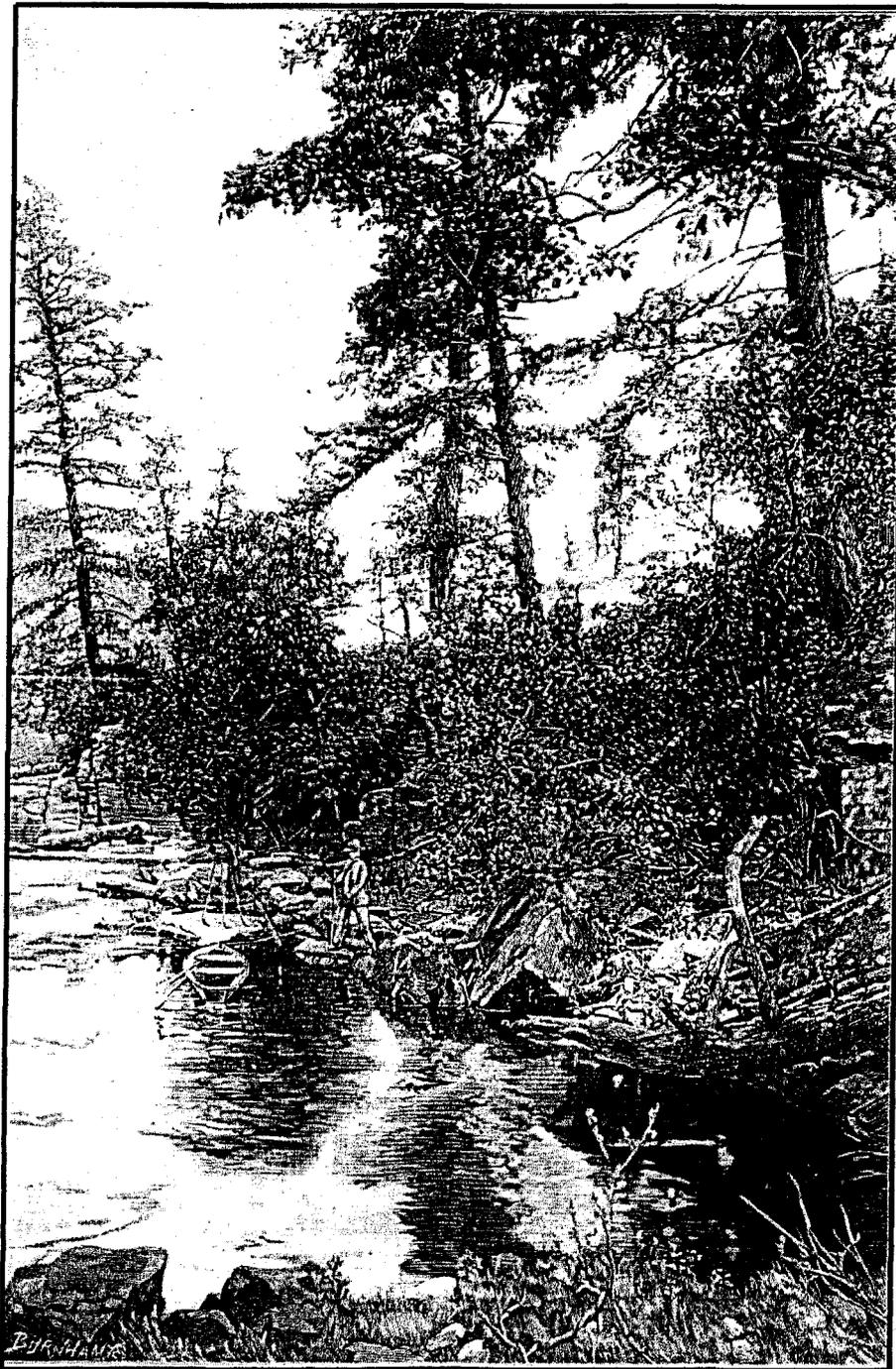


Figure 3: “On the Bank,” Somewhere in Québec

In this engraving an unknown angler stands alone amid towering pines. Such images accentuated the idea of Québec’s wilderness as a kind of natural cathedral where sportsman could participate in a spiritual experience.

Source: *American Angler*, 1898 (FCHU)

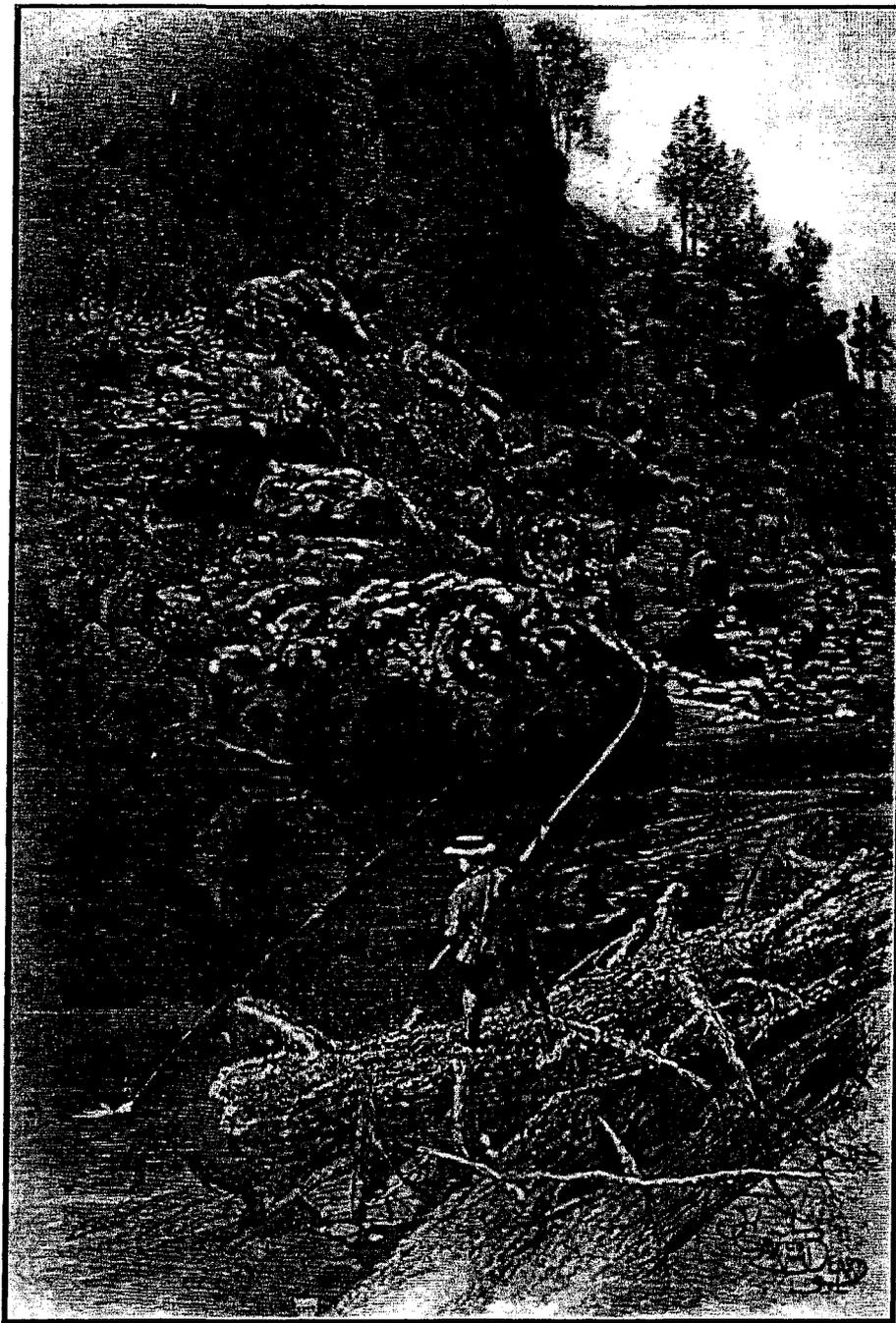


Figure 4: “A Two Pounder”

An angler struggles with a trout in a picturesque setting in an unknown stream in Québec. His arcing fly rod indicates the kind of inimitable experiences that the province offered to the discriminating angler.

Source: *American Angler*, 1898 (FCHU)

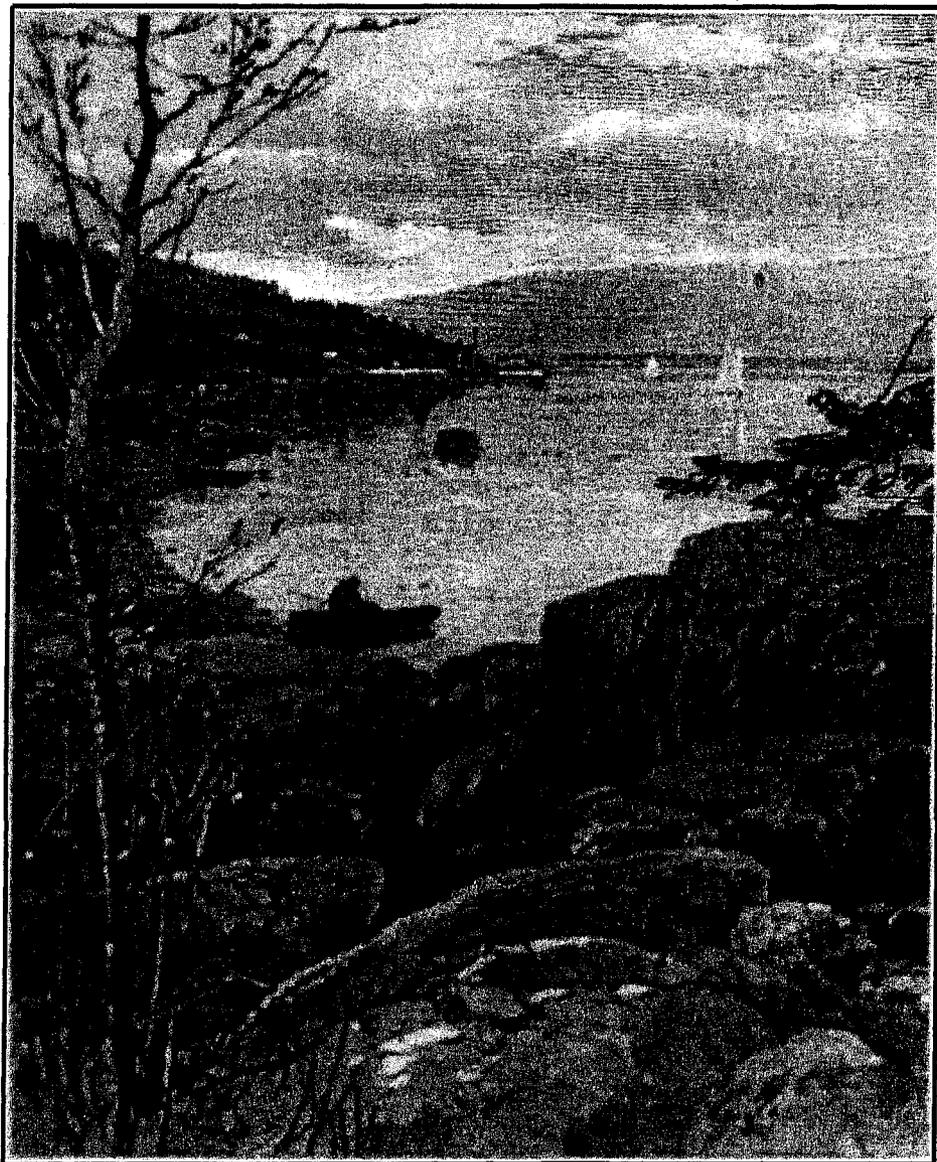


Figure 5: A Piscatorial Landscape on Lac Saint-Jean

This picture shows a slice of the socio-economic landscape that overlapped the Anglers' Eden. Here one sees a common fisherman embarking from the shore, and in the background, sailing ships are engaged either in commerce or leisure.

Source: E. T. D. Chambers, *The Ouananiche and the Canadian Environment* (New York: Harper, 1896)

I.2 The Elite Angler as an Historical Actor

Québec's history has deep associations with water. The first French explorers found Amerindians, and even other Europeans, exploiting fish all along the banks of the St. Lawrence. It would be on those same banks that France would establish its own permanent empire in North America.²⁶ French settlement was in part shaped by the royal grants of land known as *seigneurie*, which were designed to give access to water to the largest number of people possible. At the same time, missionaries, merchants and mercenaries used the capillaries of the inland water systems of New France as lines of communication for trade, especially in furs, between peoples and places deep in the Canadian wilderness and the central heart of the French metropole.²⁷

As North America entered the age of industrialization during the early nineteenth century, people began using Québec's rivers and streams in different ways. Timber merchants used the waterways to convey the tons of logs they extracted from the forests to the mills, where it was cut to build new North American cities further west like Toronto, Chicago, Minneapolis, Omaha and Kansas City. Other rivers became sources of motive power, spinning wheels that ran machinery that produced textiles. Later, water would turn the turbines that produced electricity for mills and factories. All of these forms of water-use exploited the kinetic energy of the water in order to move people, machinery and merchandise.²⁸

²⁶ Donald Creighton, *The Empire of the St. Lawrence: A Study in Commerce and Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).

²⁷ Peter N. Moogk, *La Nouvelle France: The Making of French Canada: A Cultural History* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2000); Peter Gossage, "Water in Canadian History: An Overview" ([Ottawa]: Inquiry on Federal Water Policy, Research Paper #11, 1985).

²⁸ René Hardy, "Exploitation forestière et environnement au Québec, 1850-1920," *Zeitschrift für Kanada-Studien* 15, no. 1 (1995): 63-79; William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991); Claude Bellavance, *Shawinigan Water and Power, 1898-1963: formation et*

The waters, however, were more than routes and sources of political, commercial and motive power. They were also basins of biological life—aquatic habitats—that were equally active and alive beneath the surface. It is in that context that the elite angler emerges not only as an historical figure, but as an agent of change. In search of fish and experiences, anglers journeyed from urban centers in the United States, and to a lesser extent from England, to the vast and still little-populated areas of the province where their Aquatic Eden teeming with large salmon and trout, species that had greatly declined or even disappeared from their own countries. In his interest in, his successful control over, and especially his subsequent shaping of aquatic habitats and species, the angler became fundamentally an agent in the fashioning of cultural and ecological space.

Nevertheless, until recently, the angler has not been seen as anything more than a figure of leisure. The earliest works were from scholarly anglers. William Radcliff's *Fishing from the Earliest Times* (1927) used classical works to explore the historical development and the social and economic place of the craft of fishing, which includes some discussion of fishing for leisure and sport.²⁹ In 1939, Boston antiquarian Charles Goodspeed published his *Angling in America: Its Early History and Literature*, which remains a rich and necessary source for understanding the development of angling as an elitist craft in North America.³⁰ Charles Trench's *A History of Angling*, published in 1974, specifically examines what he calls the “oldest of human sporting forms.”³¹ While

déclin d'un groupe industriel au Québec (Montréal: Boréal, 1994); Gerald J. J. Tulchinsky, *The River Barons: Montreal Businessmen and the Growth of Industry and Transportation, 1837-53* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977).

²⁹ William Radcliffe, *Fishing from the Earliest Times* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1927).

³⁰ Goodspeed, *Angling in America*.

³¹ Trench, *A History of Angling*.

all of these works are detailed sources of information about anglers and angling, they are also largely antiquarian in nature.

Historians have more recently become interested in angling as a cultural activity that connected people to the outdoors. Thus, they have tended to see the angler within the broader theme of outdoor, or field, sports. John Reiger identified the angler as a part of a nascent conservation movement in the second half of the nineteenth century.³² Reiger's work developed the thesis that sportsmen, hunters and anglers alike were instrumental in the development of a new conservation mentality in America. Some scholars, however, have criticized Reiger's thesis as exaggerative, portraying sportsmen as fundamentally destructive of nature because their activities involved killing animals.³³ While this study owes a debt to Reiger's scholarship, it finds his thesis problematic, not because the sportsmen's desire to "conserve" was couched within an activity based upon killing, but because their desire to "conserve" resources provoked so much change. Arguably, anglers were actively engaged in something more akin to transforming and fashioning rather than conserving. Criticisms aside, few other scholarly works treat anglers as judiciously as Reiger, even within the broader theme of field sports.

Indeed, the majority of those who have studied nineteenth-century field sports have overwhelmingly failed to appreciate how anglers saw themselves as a "sub-class," not just of other sportsmen but of a human society that took water and fish for granted. There are a few notable exceptions. Colleen Sheehy lucidly examined the complex elements of elitism, romanticism and the imagery of nature connected with the craft of

³² Reiger, *American Sportsman*.

³³ Dunlap, "Sport Hunting and Conservation, 1880-1920," 51-59.

angling during the nineteenth century.³⁴ Jennie Holliman placed the craft of angling within a larger phenomenon of sport in American culture.³⁵ Neither, however, mentions how foreign places, especially Canada, shaped the American anglers' collective imagination of both nature and the craft.

To better appreciate the role of Canada, one need turn to works in Canadian studies. Lamentably, despite Bill Parenteau's observation upon the wealth of archival material concerning field sports, there still remains little historical scholarship investigating the role of foreign elite anglers in Canada.³⁶ Once again, as in the United States, most historical works have combined hunters and anglers into a study of field sports. Of note is George Colpitts' examination of the role of wildlife in contributing to the mythology of Western Canada as a land of superabundance of wildlife resources, and Gregg Gillespie's study of how British sportsmen shaped the Canadian landscape to match their ideas of the ideal sporting landscape in England. Similarly, in Québec, Paul-Louis Martin has examined the evolution of field sports, particularly the process of appropriation of Québec's wilderness by Americans in the nineteenth century.³⁷ All of these works emphasize the hunter, with the angler treated only tangentially and most often superficially.

There are a few examples of scholarship that specifically examines anglers as historical subjects in Canada. Peter Thomas attempted to cast anglers in New

³⁴ Sheehey, "American Angling," 77-92.

³⁵ Jennie Holliman, *American Sports (1785-1835)* (Philadelphia: Porcupine Press, 1975).

³⁶ Bill Parenteau, "Angling, Hunting and the Development of Tourism in Late Nineteenth Century Canada: A Glimpse at the Documentary Record," *The Archivist*, no. 117 (1998): 10-19.

³⁷ George Colpitts, *Game in the Garden: Human History of Wildlife in Western Canada to 1940* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2003); Gregory Gillespie, "The Imperial Embrace: British Sportsmen and the Appropriation of Landscape in Nineteenth-Century Canada" (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Western Ontario, 2002); Paul-Louis Martin, *La chasse au Québec* (Montréal: Boréal, 1990).

Brunswick not just as sportsmen but as unique historical observers. Thomas portrayed the anglers' monograph as a valuable historical source, arguing that "[s]port has never been isolated from social history or the economic and political facts of life."³⁸ Although he has been criticized for not connecting his study to any modern historical discourse on angling, Thomas deserves recognition for bringing these often derided, and mostly ignored, sources to the attention of scholars.³⁹

Outside of Thomas' text, a handful of scholarly essays have specifically examined the activities of anglers in Canada. Bill Parenteau studied how anglers contributed to cultural conflict in Eastern Canada.⁴⁰ Mark Chochla showed how the influx of angling tourists transformed the local economy.⁴¹ Neil Forkey brought together both of these themes to show how the interests of rural Canadians and American angling tourists clashed in one border community.⁴² All these essays revealed how angling could provoke conflict on the local level focusing more at the effects of angling than the angler.

A number of theses and dissertations have studied the angler and his motivations in Canada. J. Michael Thoms offers a study of how anglers systematically marginalized Amerindian peoples in Ontario.⁴³ Thoms' socially oriented approach succeeds in

³⁸ Peter Thomas, *Lost Land of Moses: The Age of Discovery on New Brunswick's Salmon Rivers* (Fredericton: Goose Lane Editions, 2001).

³⁹ Alan MacEachern, "Lost Land of Moses: The Age of Discovery on New Brunswick's Salmon Rivers," *Canadian Historical Review* 85, no. 1 (2004): 152-53.

⁴⁰ Bill Parenteau, "A 'Very Determined Opposition to the Law': Conservation, Angling Leases, and Social Conflict in the Canadian Atlantic Salmon Fishery, 1867-1914," *Environmental History* 9, no. 3 (2004): 436-63.

⁴¹ Mark Chochla, "Victorian Fly Fishers on the Nipigon," *Ontario History* 91, no. 2 (1999): 151-63.

⁴² Neil S. Forkey, "Anglers, Fishers, and the St. Croix River: Conflict in a Canadian-American Borderland, 1867-1900," *Forest and Conservation History* 37, no. 4 (1993): 179-87.

⁴³ J. Michael Thoms, "Ojibwa Fishing Grounds: A History of Ontario Fisheries Law, Science, and the Sportsmen's Challenge to Aboriginal Treaty Rights, 1650-1900" (Doctoral Dissertation, University of British Columbia, 2004), ii.

demonstrating how anglers significantly impacted fisheries management laws and even fisheries science. While accurately portraying the consequences of the influence of anglers, his insistence that anglers' activities constituted the workings of a "racist cabal" is misleading and hyperbolic. While elite anglers were doubtlessly a group looking out for their own interests, suggesting that they were united with the government in a secret conspiracy is to grant them a measure of political power (especially foreign anglers), which they did not possess. Moreover, the evidence shows that the elite anglers' perception of "race" was in keeping with the social attitudes of other men and women of their class. Most importantly, their personal monographs and the activities of their clubs revealed that not only was their rhetoric varied, there was nothing secretive about the elite anglers' agenda. While Thoms provides great detail as to what anglers did to control the landscape, the question remains—how did their perceptions of nature cause such things to happen?

In contrast to Thoms, William Knight has developed a more nuanced thesis concerning the influence of anglers on Ontario fisheries policy. Knight looks not just at the influence of anglers on one ethnic group, but the consequences of their activities on the physical environment as well.⁴⁴ Knight's work strongly reinforced the conclusion of George Colpitts who, almost a decade earlier, revealed a strong correlation between the desires and practices of anglers and the development of provincial fish and game policy in Alberta.⁴⁵ Similarly, Yolande Allard's thesis on the Saint-François River in Québec also dealt with the influence of anglers on salmon conservation, reflecting on whether

⁴⁴ William Knight, "Our Sentimental Fisheries: Angling and State Fisheries Administration in 19th Century Ontario" (Masters Thesis, Trent University, 2006).

⁴⁵ George Colpitts, "Science, Streams and Sport: Trout Conservation in Southern Alberta, 1900-1930" (Masters Thesis, University of Calgary, 1993).

salmon conservation aimed to preserve a fishery resource or develop a new fishery for sport.⁴⁶

Finally, the works of amateur historians are worthy of mention if for no other reason than that they made the attempt to document a part of the past largely ignored by the professional historian. Sylvain Gingras and his associates have written two books that use archival documents to provide a collection of stories, photographs and anecdotes that paint a colourful picture of the place of anglers, especially members of the foreign elite, in the evolving cultural history of Québec.⁴⁷ Hoagy Carmicheal Jr. followed the traditions of the Waltonesque memoir and provided us with what is surely the most detailed history of anglers' activities on any one river in Québec. His well-documented history of the Cascapedia River leaves little doubt as to the profound influence American anglers could have, one that was arguably more important than the government, on local communities and their relationship to fish as a natural resource.⁴⁸

Even in a relatively small number of works, the recent historiography of angling by social and environmental historians has demonstrated that it was something more than a quaint form of leisure: anglers were indisputable agents of change. Although not always completely teased out from a more general study of field sport tourism, the angler has been shown to also be as a figure that provoked conflict through his attempts to control water and fish resources for sport. For all their details and invaluable glimpse of anglers' activities on certain rivers and lakes, however, the current historiography

⁴⁶ Yolande Allard, "Préservation ou développement : le cas du Saumon atlantique et de la rivière Saint-François, avant 1900" (Mémoire de maîtrise, Bishop's University, 1988).

⁴⁷ Sylvain Gingras and Sonia Lirette, *Le Club Triton: L'histoire du plus prestigieux club de chasse et pêche au Québec* (Québec: Éditions Rapides Blancs, 1989); Sylvain Gingras, *A Century of Sport: Hunting and Fishing in Québec* (St-Raymond, Québec: Éditions Rapides Blancs, 1994).

⁴⁸ Hoagy Carmicheal, *The Grand Cascapedia River: A History*, vol. 1 (North Salem, NY: Anesha Publishing, 2006).

offers no central thesis in which to understand the underlying motivations that made the angler such a transformative and conflicted figure.

The main reasons scholars have failed to synthesize the angler as an agent of correlated cultural and environmental change is due to an overly generalized definition of the angler. Almost wholly neglected by the scholarly studies but recognized universally by the early antiquarian works and even the recent amateur texts is the fact that angling was as socially stratified as the members of society who practiced it. For some, angling was little more than an occasional pastime. The typical angler left no record of his motivations and, outside of photographs, few accounts of his activities. For those among the intellectual and commercial elite, however, angling was a storied craft that went beyond avocation and often became part of one's social identity. As in the rest of society, it was the elite that made the rules and most often set the agenda. This was no different within the culture of angling. It, too, was initiated and maintained by a small self-identified "sub-culture" composed of highly influential members who not only fished for sport but connected their activities to exclusive social clubs and, above all, a literary movement whose highly romanticised representations of nature served both as a model upon which would be laid the foundation for many of the modern State-managed sport fisheries, including the one found in Québec, and a record of its activities.

As such, this dissertation places its focuses on the angling elite in order to demonstrate that the conflict associated with the influence of angling culture was symptomatic of something more than an attempt to *control* water and fish resources. It was also about the way one relatively small group of people saw and imagined the

nature. The development and construction of an Edenic sport fishery was also an invasive construction that gradually, yet persistently, re-modeled and re-evaluated the landscape through the introduction and institutionalization of new ideas, new values and even new fishes that leads to the correlated cultural and environmental consequences.

This dissertation examines elite angling culture and its relationship to the construction of landscape and relationships to nature by weaving together several broad narratives within environmental history and Québec Studies. The first narrative, drawn from environmental history, is that humans have historically been both affected by their environment and effected change upon it. The second, drawn from Québec Studies, is that history can be seen as a process of conflicts between various groups that result in a dynamic of cultural continuities and ruptures that can be observed over time.

Within this framework elite anglers' become agents of environmental and cultural change, whose examination adds greater nuance to both narratives by drawing upon and enriching two over-arching themes; the cultural representations of nature, and the impact of these representations on other cultures and the environment. Each of those themes could adequately encapsulate the case study of elite anglers as historical agents of landscape construction and change in Québec. Woven together, they more dramatically reveal how one group of people could simultaneously effect widespread changes that were both cultural (affecting the practices and values of diverse cultural and class groups) and environmental (affecting the very makeup of aquatic ecologies) in scope.

Historians have already demonstrated how various cultures have shaped nature and how nature has been invoked to shape culture.⁴⁹ Their studies reveal the fundamental role that nature played in shaping the ways in which human culture in all its idiosyncratic forms evolved and the way in which human culture interacted with nature. A common theme among these studies is the cultural desire (particularly prevalent in Anglo-Saxon cultures) to shape nature in order to re-construct paradise.⁵⁰ Leo Marx's classic cultural study has as a central thesis that settlers brought European ideas about nature to America and enshrined them in the idea of America as a new Eden that could redeem the world. Simon Shultz, on the other hand, showed how English-speaking peoples linked the ideas and concepts of nature in their literature, poetry and art to the creation of physical spaces, including enclosed gardens, estates and large architectural projects. Shultz believed that the Romantics of the Victorian Age (of which elite anglers were very much a part) turned their attention from interior spaces, such as exotic home decorations or even walled gardens connected to their homes, to external spaces, such as parks and managed forests. In a more recent discussion of the desire to construct Edenic environments, Carolyn Merchant argued that the construction of landscape was tied to the narrative of recovery from the Christian notion of the "fall from grace" and the expulsion from Eden.⁵¹ Yet Merchant's and even Shultz's interpretations ignore that Edenic constructions were often undertaken in and among pre-existing cultural and

⁴⁹ Among others, see: Schama, *Landscape and Memory*; Ian G. Simmons, *Changing the Face of the Earth: Culture, Environment, History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989); Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982); Ian G. Simmons, *Interpreting Nature: Cultural Constructions of the Environment* (London: Routledge, 1993); Lynda Villeneuve, *Paysage, mythes et territorialité* (Sainte-Foy: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1999).

⁵⁰ Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970); Schulz, *Paradise Preserved*.

⁵¹ Carolyn Merchant, *Reinventing Eden: The Fate of Nature in Western Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

ecological systems, and that those systems could be equally influential in the ways that Edenic constructions ultimately took shape.

That idea is at least partially addressed by Mark Fiege in *Irrigated Eden*.⁵² Fiege's examination of the irrigation schemes developed in the southern Idaho Snake River valley showed how ideal constructions of nature were superimposed over pre-existing ecologies and led to baffling new ecosystems. This study seeks to build upon Fiege's conclusions by showing how elite anglers' own unique Edenic representations and constructions were laid upon a landscape already defined by previous and long-established ecological systems. This means that elite anglers were first agents of landscape appropriation before they were agents of change.

The idea that people came to dominate territory through an imperialistic domination of ecological systems has been well established in the works of Alfred Crosby. His macroscopic study of Western migration during the thousand-year period from 900 to 1900 revealed how humans, through their deep cultural relationships with flora and fauna, came to colonize and dominate new regions around the globe.⁵³ William Cronon showed a similar process at work in the American Midwest in his study of the development of Chicago and its agricultural hinterland. American settlers moved westward, confronting an untamed "wilderness" landscape (which Cronon referred to as "First Nature"), and transformed it according to their own cultural values and expectations.⁵⁴ The resulting altered landscape (which Cronon referred to as "Second Nature") was then assimilated by means of communication, such as rivers, roads and

⁵² Mark Fiege, *Irrigated Eden: The Making of an Agricultural Landscape in the American West* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999).

⁵³ Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

⁵⁴ Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*.

rails, into early constructions of landscape. Cronon's study, like Crosby's, offered a general model to understand how large numbers of people appropriated vast expanses of territory and grafted them to previously settled cultural systems. Feige, Crosby and Cronon have added the dimension of ecology to the discussion of cultural constructions of nature. However, they all explore changes that took place within homogeneous societies, thereby underestimating the role of other cultures in influencing those cultural constructions of landscape.

Other studies in environmental history have examined how class and ethnic dynamics have influenced the cultural process underlying the intellectual and material construction of landscape. William Cronon's earlier study on New England, *Changes in the Land*, examined the changes provoked by Amerindian cultures prior to European contact to tackle the lingering but false impression that Europeans alone had brought change to the primordial and pristine landscape they discovered in North America. Karl Jacoby looked specifically at the consequences of elitist constructions of nature through his study of how the conservation agenda in the United States led to increased class conflict.⁵⁵ Jacoby convincingly showed that while the elite could influence governments to accept their values and enshrine them in conservation laws, hunting and fishing prohibitions and licensing requirements, they had a much greater challenge to convince common people to accept their worldview. Richard Judd, however, has also shown that common people exercised their own forms of supervision and care of natural resources, even if they were not appreciated or accepted by the elite.

⁵⁵ Karl Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, and the Hidden History of American Conservation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

Of course, research on cultural changes in its relation to social and economic dynamics has been central to Québec Studies. Gérard Bouchard proposed a theory of historical change centered around two fundamental principles: the dynamics of social class (*les élites* and *la culture populaire*) and the concept of cultural change (*changement culturel*) as a series of ruptures in the relationships among these groups.⁵⁶ Yvan Lamonde added nuance to Bouchard's rather abstract, binary social approach, which eschewed the importance of the individual over ideology by further stratifying the social hierarchy and enlarging the concept to cover discourses between urban and rural people and American culture.⁵⁷ Serge Courville and Normand Séguin's historical geographies added greater complexity to the discussion of cultural change by adding a more detailed spatial dimension (*espace*) to the study of relationships between classes.⁵⁸ René Hardy and Paul-Louis Martin both elaborated upon "space" by defining it as an environment with its own potential for change, Hardy through his studies of the forests of the Mauricie around which people adapted their culture and in the process changed the forest, and Martin, who through his studies of hunting, popular architecture and gardening revealed the many ways nature connected the Francophone culture in Québec to a larger North American cultural identity. The addition of the studies that consider ecological changes within the dynamic of cultural change would provide another material basis in which to interpret these studies of social dynamics in Québec.

⁵⁶ Gérard Bouchard and Martine Segalen, ed., *Une langue, deux cultures : rites et symboles en France et au Québec* (Sainte-Foy: Presses de l'Université Laval 1997).

⁵⁷ Yvan Lamonde, *Allégeances et dépendances: l'histoire d'une ambivalence identitaire* (Québec: Nota Bene, 2001).

⁵⁸ Normand Séguin, ed., *Agriculture et colonisation au Québec : aspects historiques* (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1980); Serge Courville and Normand Séguin, ed., *Espace et culture* (Sainte-Foy: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1995); Serge Courville, "Espace, territoire et culture en Nouvelle-France : une vision géographique," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 37, no. 3, (1983): 417-31.

Cultural relationships with nature, including issues of class and ethnic conflicts, were also defined by relationships between humans and non-humans. Robert Delort, Keith Thomas and Harriet Ritvo have specifically explored how historical relationships with animals reveal changing attitudes towards nature. Delort demonstrated that relationships between humans and non-humans have forged both our cultural identities and the place of animals within the natural world.⁵⁹ Thomas revealed how English social and religious traditions were reflected in relationships towards certain animals, such as why we kill some and why we live with others.⁶⁰ Ritvo demonstrated the correlation between social class and the morphology of animals in Victorian Britain.⁶¹ While she does not specifically mention the construction of Edenic landscapes, by showing the connection between British imperialism and exotic animals she nevertheless points to the ways in which elitist groups sought to improve landscapes they found to be inferior.

Cultural relationships to animals also shaped environments in unusual ways. Elinor Melville's study of the Spanish settlers and their domesticated sheep in New Spain during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is one such example.⁶² Melville showed that the introduction of a single non-indigenous species (in her case sheep) into a new ecosystem could not only radically change the landscape from one of lush, green vegetation to a dry and arid landscape of shifting earth, but that the changes could take place so rapidly that subsequent generations would come to believe that the landscape

⁵⁹ Robert Delort, *Les animaux ont une histoire*. (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1984).

⁶⁰ Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*.

⁶¹ Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987).

⁶² Elinor Melville, *A Plague of Sheep: Environmental Consequences of the Conquest of Mexico* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

had always been arid and dry. Melville's conclusion that significant change could occur without much notice demonstrates that not all landscape transformations were as readily observable as those described by Merchant, Cronon, Crosby and Fiege.

Melville's findings nevertheless remain an exception to the norm. This study, however, will seek to contribute to a better understanding of more nuanced and less visible changes by examining one group's relationship to a part of the landscape that almost none of the aforementioned studies have even considered: aquatic habitats or aquatic species. The elite anglers' fashioning of an Edenic sport fishery provides such an exceptional example because, while the cultural changes were visible enough, the most important environmental changes took place within the water, an environment still little known or understood by those outside of fisheries managers, biologists or ichthyologists.

This study bases its claims of environmental change on two issues: the use of fish culture, and changes in the relationships between the various cultural groups and freshwater fish species. Of the two, the systematic use of fish culture is the more persuasive argument. Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century fish culture was both an emerging science and a tool used to more broadly diffuse and transplant exotic fish species, and a number of historians have examined its use and influence as a tool of ecological transformation. John Reiger interpreted the use of fish culture as part of the nascent conservation movement in the United States. Joseph Taylor also examined its use as a panacea for salmon decline in the Pacific Coast fisheries during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.⁶³ Taylor argued that fish culture was a failed

⁶³ Joseph E. Taylor, III, *Making Salmon: An Environmental History of the Northwest Fisheries Crisis* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999).

solution to the dilemma of resource decline caused by deeply ingrained Western cultural patterns of systematic exploitation of the fisheries. A common thread in both of these interpretations is that anglers and States used fish culture as a part of conservation programs.

This study takes a different approach, based upon my own research on the scientific and cultural origins of the science of fish culture that revealed its use to be primarily illustrative of a broader manifestation of Western imperialism and improvement schemes. Elite anglers in Quebec, as elsewhere, saw and used fish culture in those terms as well.⁶⁴ Anglers employed fish culture primarily for the transplantation and diffusion of fish species they viewed as valuable into every aquatic nook and cranny within the range of their hatcheries. This study will seek to better solidify that thesis by connecting the use of fish culture by anglers to the larger process of ecosystem modification by the elite through the widespread importation of hundreds of exotic plants and animal species that has been revealed in the scholarship of Kim Todd.⁶⁵

The elite angler may have been a central agent in the fashioning of a sport fishery, but he could not have constructed that fishery alone. A great deal of the process was aided through the auxiliary intervention of the State. In fact, the State often moulded relationships between non-human and human and culture and environment. This was especially true in Canada, where the State very early in its development

⁶⁴ Darin Kinsey, "Seeding the Water as the Earth': The Epicenter and Peripheries of a Western Aquacultural Revolution," *Environmental History* 11, no. 3 (2006): 527-66; Reiger, *American Sportsman*; Taylor, *Making Salmon*.

⁶⁵ Kim Todd, *Tinkering With Eden: A Natural History of Exotic Species in America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001).

exercised great control over its natural resources.⁶⁶ The scholarship of Janet Foster, Alan MacEachern, and Tina Loo has all explored the complex links between the State and sportsmen in efforts to not only conserve but to commodify the Canadian wilderness.⁶⁷ These studies have tended, however, to emphasize the relationship between Canadians and the State in the re-modelling of wilderness. Foster, in particular, sought to rectify the false perception, mostly promoted by American historians, that Canadian conservation efforts were somehow only a tardy extension of an American movement. It is understandable that Canadians have since sought to highlight the very real and often very independent Canadian initiatives regarding the construction of nature. Nevertheless, those efforts have not generally acknowledged the overlap of international interests, such as that represented by the angling elite with local efforts.

In summation, this study seeks to contribute to the historiography of the angling phenomenon in North America by developing a broader and more nuanced understanding of how elite anglers' construction of a sport fishery within a multi-cultural milieu, aided by the auxiliary intervention of the State, led to changes in socio-cultural relationships, the creation of new ecological realities and a widespread redefinition of the value and utility of a part of the natural world.

⁶⁶ H. V. Nelles, *The Politics of Development: Forests, Mines and Hydro-Electric Power in Ontario, 1849-1941* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005 [1974]).

⁶⁷ Janet Foster, *Working for Wildlife: The Beginnings of Preservation in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978); Tina Loo, "Making A Modern Wilderness: Conserving Wildlife in Twentieth-Century Canada," *Canadian Historical Review* 82, no. 1 (2001): 92-121; Alan MacEachern, *Natural Selections: National Parks in Atlantic Canada, 1935-1970* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001).

I.3 Geographical Scope

The aquatic habitats in the Province of Québec are part of an immense region of more than 1,500,000 km with a great diversity of cultures, geographies and historical narratives. Nevertheless, environmental histories inevitably define themselves by the light they shine over a particular part of the physical geography. While this study's emphasis is the geographical region that would become known as the "Province of Québec," it is specifically concerned with the areas that were of greatest interest to angling elite (See Figure 6). Within the geographical area covered here, significant attention is paid to areas where the activities of fish and game clubs had an emphasis on angling.

As a consequence, a large part of the province is not considered here, including the territory north of the 52nd parallel to the Arctic Ocean and the area of Labrador, a region where very little angling tourism took place until the airplane began to be used in the twentieth century. In addition, other than the salmon fishing that took place in the North Shore region, this study does not consider any fishing activities that took place in the St. Lawrence above the mouth of the Saguenay, where the River becomes brackish and gives way to a marine habitat. The expansion of the angler's sport fishery into those regions in the second half of the twentieth century is an equally fascinating and relevant subject, and it is hoped that this study could be a stepping-stone for others to follow.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ A succinct description of the geography of Quebec and the features of its six natural regions can be found in Paul-André Linteau et al., *Quebec: A History (1867-1929)* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1983).



Figure 6: The Approximate Boundaries of the “Anglers’ Eden”

This map, while only showing major rivers, lakes and streams, nevertheless gives a good impression of the significant freshwater resources in the province. The highlighted area shows the most intense regions of sport fishing during the late nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, including the North Shore and Gaspé salmon rivers and Lake St. John. Many other places, however, attracted the elite anglers’ attention, such as the tranquil lakes of the Mauricie and the Laurentian regions.

Source: Map adapted from the Atlas of Canada Online.
<http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/site/index.html>

I.4 Sources

On the 31st of December 1981, a fire broke out in an archival depot on *la rue Dalton* used by the *Archives nationales du Québec* in Quebec City. The fire and resulting water damage resulted in the destruction of more than 6,671 boxes of archival material concerning leisure and hunting and fishing in Québec between 1883 and 1980.⁶⁹ This study, therefore, has had a challenging research agenda. For the most part, it has had to forego investigating details of particular game and fish clubs and the activities of their membership. Equally impossible was any statistical studies of club membership. Nevertheless, this has also provided a unique opportunity to ask different research questions and look in out-of-the-way places for equally illuminating sources.

In the absence of related documents in the archives in Québec, I turned my attention to the Daniel B. Fearing collection located at Harvard University's Houghton Library. A Newport, Rhode Island, millionaire, Daniel B. Fearing (1859-1918), amassed an internationally-renowned collection of more than 12,000 volumes on angling, fish culture and fisheries written and published in 20 different languages and spanning a period from the Middle Ages to 1917. What makes Fearing's collection so useful to this study, however, is that many of the angling monographs and journals contain miscellaneous materials such as clippings, notes, and letters. Exemplary of the miscellanea is a very warm and personal letter from Grover Cleveland crisply folded and left to repose for a century in the cover of his thin volume *A Defense of Fisherman* written in 1902. In the letter the former president humbly apologizes for a contribution he felt to be "a very insignificant appearance among the [...] volumes in your library

⁶⁹ "Rapport sur l'incendie du 31 décembre 1981 survenu au centre de pré-archivage de la rue Dalton à Québec" (Québec: Ministère des Affaires culturelles, Archives nationales du Québec, 1982).

devoted to the gentle art.” Added to this fascinating ephemera, Fearing’s own notes left in reddish-orange grease pencil can be found within the pages of his books revealing the man an ardent scholar of the works he so voraciously collected. All of the works from his collection are immediately recognizable by the distinctive light-green bookplate with the image of a rising trout done by the well-known Boston bookplate designer and engraver, Sidney Lawton Smith.

Fearing’s collection contains copies of rare angling monographs, pamphlets, and magazines, written by British and American elite anglers who visited and wrote about the waters, the fish, and the people of Québec for more than a century as well as annual reports of some of the most exclusive game and fish clubs in the province. In many cases, these documents contain letters, notes and other miscellaneous materials by their former owners, which provide additional clues that have aided in deconstructing the elite angler’s discourses concerning the particular importance of Quebec’s landscape and their mentalities concerning nature. They revealed how different groups of people saw each other, how they saw other species, and how the State was shaping elite narratives through their own interventions.

Yet, more significantly, Fearing’s collection contained such a vast corpus of the genre of angling literature that it permits a detailed examination of the rhetoric and ideas of elite anglers from England, the United States, and Canada as well as information related to fishing in France that was germane to this study. Indeed, it was this enormous body of work, spanning centuries and cultures, that enabled me to consider the independent role of the angler as an agent of change within a well-identified aquatic landscape in ways that other historians have not yet been inclined to explore.

Along with the rich archival materials from the Fearing Collection, I have interrogated both federal and provincial government documents from *les Archives nationales du Québec* and the National Archives and Library of Canada to explore the ways in which the province interacted with the angling elite both inside its own borders through laws, regulations and programs, and outside of its borders through promotional guides, targeted publications, and expositions. Specifically, the records of the federal Ministry of Marine and Fisheries has been consulted in order to glean the interactions between the State and anglers through the construction of a legal framework around the sport fishery, the enforcement of laws related to sport fishing, and the changing attitudes concerning the value of specific species as expressed through the adoption of the rhetoric of conservation and changing patterns of exploitation in the fishery. The annual reports of the provincial Department of Hunting and Fishing, along with those of the provincial hatchery administration have been used to investigate how provincial officials perceived and interacted with the angling elite and with others within the aquatic landscape and to show the scope and nature of fish culture activities.

Added to these documents are archival materials and material culture used to highlight the activities of individual actors, including documents, papers, letters, and photographs from the collection of *Correspondance du greffier et plaintes réglées* at the *Archives nationales du Québec* in Trois-Rivières, collections from the Literary and Historical Society of Québec, letters from the William B. Mershon Papers located in the Bently Historical Society in Ann Arbor, Michigan, photographs from the McCord Museum in Montreal, and artefacts from the *Musée de la Culture Populaire* in Trois-Rivières. Finally, correspondances with living relatives of several of the hatchery

superintendants have also provided original materials, including photos and letters that were not available in any public archive.

I.5 Chapters

The six chapters of this dissertation, arranged in two sections, seek to show how elite anglers, through the construction of a fishery for sport in Québec, became historical agents of cultural and environmental change. Any study that considers the primordial role of geography in the development of culture risks evoking the dreaded stigma of environmental determinism. I do not pretend in any way to presume that Québec's geography rendered inevitable the arrival or the long-term influence of elite anglers in the province. There were, of course, many reasons other than geography that made Québec an attractive place for them and those reasons will also be explored here.

It is indisputable, however, that something about the unique bio-geographical features found within the province did play a part in drawing anglers there. That connection between nature and the various human cultures that inhabited Québec in the formation of an Anglers' Eden encapsulates the first of the two sections of this study. Within that section, Chapter 1 examines the evolution of the physical geography and the fish fauna that the angling elite in Québec would incorporate into the cultural construction of landscape. In addition, the angler is situated both historically and ecologically into the chronology of geological time in order to identify him as only one feature of a larger and more long-term process of change.

Chapter 2 explores the early cultural relationships to the freshwater aquatic landscape that developed among Amerindians and French colonists prior to the arrival of a distinctive elite angling culture. The purpose of this examination is twofold. First, it

seeks to show the diversity of the cultural relationships that would later be impacted by anglers. Second, by highlighting fishing traditions with Amerindian cultures as well as that of the French in the Metropole and in their North American colony, it intends to confront the notion that angling was an activity imported by the British into a vacuous cultural space.

Chapter 3 examines unique aspects of the culture of “angling” that developed in England and its intellectual influence among the British and American angling elite that would come to Québec. It begins first with a study of influence of British officers who scouted out salmon pools and claimed them for their own personal recreation. It then turns to the expansion of those early contours of the sport fishery by elite American anglers. It examines a number of elitist fish and game clubs with American membership and emphasis on angling to show how elite American anglers came to exercise such enormous control over the freshwater landscape, and it follows the development of a specific American angling literary tradition that mythologized Québec as their own private angling paradise.

Section two of this study turns to an examination of the transformation of the Anglers’ Eden from a private construction by a relatively small and elitist group of individuals into a modern sport fishery institutionalized within the State and acculturated within the population at large. Chapter 4 looks more closely at the relationship between anglers and the State by shedding light on the transformation of the Anglers’ Eden through the application of laws, which both legitimized angling as the only legal method in which to interact with certain freshwater species and imbued those species with new, human-oriented value. It then looks at how bureaucrats promoted this new fishery in a

way that responded to the romantic expectations of the angling elite by promoting specific species and places, such as the ouananiche of Lake St. John, in ways that contributed to the creation of a new iconographic imagery of the province as a paradise for anglers.⁷⁰ Finally, it turns its attention to how the State adapted the science of fish culture to “improve” the province’s waters and meet the changing expectations of foreign anglers.

The institutionalization of the culture of angling also had a noticeable effect upon those earlier cultural relationships to the aquatic landscape highlighted in Chapter 2. Thus, Chapter 5 explores the ways in which the State-supported angling agenda led to the cultural and ecological subordination, even marginalization, of other peoples and other freshwater fish species that existed within the sport fishery’s legal parameters. It first demonstrates how the guide, along with the canoe man and his birch bark canoe, came to embody the anglers’ appropriation of Amerindian traditions. It then shows how angling tourism led to the restructuring of the freshwater fishing practices among French-Canadians through laws that privileged the top game fish in the anglers’ hierarchy.

Chapter 6 examines the fundamental cultural and ecological legacy left by elite anglers, a legacy that included the decline of their own influence. Highlighted here are the ways in which the institutionalization of the culture of angling by the State led to varying degrees of resistance to elitism, acculturation of elitist principles through a process of democratization, and the homogenization of angling as the only acceptable form of fish catching within the freshwater landscape. Finally, it employs contemporary

⁷⁰ Here the English toponymy used by anglers has been retained. If the modern French toponymy is not evident, it has been placed in brackets.

scientific studies concerning the manipulation of fish populations and the introduction of exotic species to consider the environmental legacy elite anglers left upon fish communities within the province.

PART I: NATURE, CULTURE, and the “ANGLERS’ EDEN”

CHAPTER 1

The Nature of the “Anglers’ Eden”: People and Piscifauna in Time and Space

“Is Eden out of time and out of space?”¹

-William Butler Yeats

The Anglers’ Eden is a term that encapsulates a shared ideal about idyllic experiences associated with fishing by an elite group of angling practitioners. It was also the intellectual germ around which the sport fishery in Québec would take shape. But, did that Anglers’ Eden exist only in the romanticized writings and contemplations of a privileged group of people with a passion for angling and time to spare, or was it an actual place or collection of places that could be situated historically in time and geographically in space? While much of the culture of elite angling was certainly tied to romantic notions, as a craft angling still required direct participation between the angler and the natural world. The elite anglers who came to Québec cast their flies upon curiously-named rivers like the Metabetchouan, Rimouski, Cascapedia and Moisie. They journeyed to troll in lakes called Memphremagog and Roberge and drifted in canoes through the Couteau Rapids, all in pursuit of grand and glistening Atlantic salmon, and all sizes, sorts and hues of red, grey, brown, silver, speckled and rainbow trout.

Clearly, the culture of angling was equally and inextricably tied to the tangible characteristics of the bio-geographical landscape. Yet what caused these natural features to become more than facts of nature, and to become raw materials of the cultural

¹ W. B. Yeats, *The Shadowy Waters* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1901).

construction that would become known as Québec's sport fishery, were the elite anglers and their shared perceptions of nature's value.

1.1 Elite Anglers' Perceptions

Anglers were arguably the most crucial actors in the transformation of freshwater habitats into a milieu for sport. Without their appearance in Québec during the nineteenth century, there doubtlessly would have been no such thing as a sport fishery. The angling elite hailed predominantly from the British and American upper class.² Included among them were British Governor Generals, military officers and aristocrats. By the mid-nineteenth century, their ranks would be swelled by the arrival of American Presidents and an assortment of politicians, poets and authors, capitalists, industrialists, rail barons and media moguls. Exemplary of the lot was Frederic Tolfrey, a young aristocratic officer in the British Army garrisoned in Québec. Another was the Scotsman Sir Herbert Maxwell, Unionist MP from Galloway, Scotland, and prolific writer of natural history and sporting literature, most notably books and articles on angling. From the United States, there was Daniel B. Fearing, long-time Democratic Mayor of Newport, Rhode Island, and passionate antiquarian of one of the world's largest collection of books on fish, angling and fish culture. Fearing seems to have enjoyed collecting angling books more than angling itself, but he maintained a membership in the prestigious Triton Fish and Game Club located about 160 km north

² Lady Greville, ed., *The Gentlewoman's Book of Sports* (London: Henry, 1892); Lyla Foggia, "Reel Women: The World of Women Who Fish," *The American Fly Fisher* 22, no. 2 (1996): 2-14; John Myerscough and John Lowerson, *Time to Spare in Victorian England* (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1977); S. F. Wise, "Sports and Class Values in Old Ontario and Quebec," in W.H. Heick and Roger Graham, ed. *His Own Man: Essays in Honour of Arthur Reginald Marsden Lower* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1973), 93-118.

of Québec City. A fellow American angler-cum-book collector-cum-author was Dean Sage. The scion of a wealthy New York timber merchant and benefactor of Cornell University, Sage became known as “America’s most literate salmon fisherman of the day.”³

These anglers must be counted among the most well read, well connected, well traveled, and often the wealthiest, men of their time. They were influential members of their professions, communities and social spheres. Above all, they viewed angling as something more than a hobby or a simple leisure pursuit. For them, angling adventures in exotic and far away places were seen as a privilege of their class, and their trophies and experiences were one more way to measure themselves against their social peers. As a result, they spent an enormous amount of their time involved with the intricacies of the sport and spent vast sums of money to angle in and control the places deemed “pristine” and where the fish that were their “game” were most abundant.

Moreover, they spent an equal amount of time writing and publishing accounts of their experiences that they hoped would preserve them a place in posterity.⁴ Through those writings it is possible to see how elite anglers perceived the aquatic habitats they found in Québec, as elsewhere, in terms of the romantic and the sublime. The natural raw materials from which their Anglers’ Eden was constructed were water and fish. But, for the elite angler, they were more than that. According to the patron saint of angling, Izaak Walton, water was: “The element of our art—the oldest daughter of

³ Peter Behan, “An Eye for Detail,” *Scottish Book Collector* 7, no. 10 (2005): 23-25; Sir Herbert Maxwell, ed., *Fishing at Home and Abroad* (London: London and Counties Press, 1913); Will Wildwood, “Brief Memoir of Daniel B. Fearing,” *The American Angler* 48, no. 7 (1918): 6-9; David B. Ledlie, “Dean Sage: Part I - Family Portrait,” *The American Fly Fisher* 3, no. 1 (1975): 6-9.

⁴ A measure of the breadth and depth of these monographs can be found in the Fearing Collection, see: Daniel B. Fearing, *Check-list of Books on Angling, Fish, Fisheries, Fish-culture, etc. in the Library of D. B. Fearing* (New York: Printed for private distribution, 1907).

creation' and the mightiest of all."⁵ Fish were "in variety and numbers, the most wonderful of all the animal creation, and the source of [...] amusement to men."⁶ The province's vast and almost innumerable assemblages of lakes, rivers and streams were seen as "magical," and "enchanted" places where "Titania and her sister nymphs revel[ed] amid the flowers of the dell [...] sipping nectar to the gods" among the "finny tribes."⁷ This Anglers' Eden was a place where boys became men and the fast-paced urbanite returned to his primordial roots to be rejuvenated by mystical experiences with "Nature" spelled with a capital "N." That "Nature" became an outdoor cathedral where anglers could engage in a meditative act of quiet contemplation—a place where water, fish and fellow anglers could share a special fraternal empathy for the inestimable value of aquatic habitats. This is why, for anglers, these experiences held an allure that transcended the actual catching of fish.

Their desire to better understand nature's workings led many to develop interest in natural history. Most of these men were learned and were interested in many topics, but natural history had a special place in their repertoire because achieving excellence in their craft required a deep knowledge of the habitats where the fish they sought could be found. It also required an understanding of the feeding habits of specific species in order that they could make the right choice of fly or lures to use depending upon the season of the year, the weather, and even the time of day. In many ways, their shared experiences and acquired knowledge contributed to the natural history of many fish

⁵ Izaak Walton, *The Compleat Angler; or, the Contemplative Man's Recreation* (London: T. Maxey, 1653).

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Richard Nettle, "A Beautiful Canadian Lake," *The American Angler* 22, no. 2 (1892): 59-63; Charles Lanman, "Our Finny Tribes - American Rivers and Sea-Coasts. The Salmon," *The American Whig Review* 6, no. 5 (1847): 490-97.

species and gave elite anglers a level of understanding of, and appreciation for, aquatic habitats that went far beyond the ordinary. For all their curiosity, knowledge and adoration of the natural elements of their craft, they saw their watery milieu through the lenses of the Romantic. The waters were not part of complex aquatic ecosystem but a form of living idyll where man, water and fish existed in a kind of charming and perpetual stasis that could be eternally enjoyed if protected from harm.⁸

In reality, the waters that made up their sporting paradise were anything but static. As the modern sciences of limnology and ecology reveal to us today, the places anglers coveted were dynamic ecosystems wherein multitudes of living animal and plant species existed through complex trophic relationships linked to the surrounding soil, the forest and the biosphere as a whole.⁹ The freshwater locations where anglers practiced their craft were not just “limped lakes” and “boiling pools” but living and evolving habitats. Water was not just “an element of an art,” it was a basin of life. Within the waters lived diverse fish populations that were more than “an amusement for men” but part of a system dependent upon water temperatures, depths and speeds, oxygen content, and quality and quantities of plant life and other micro-organisms.¹⁰

Thus, the Anglers’ Eden was like an emulsion of immiscible substances, including the tangible elements of geography, biology, chemistry and ecology, and intangible romanticism. In order to understand the consequences of the mixture of these intangible and tangible elements, one must first disentangle the culture of elite anglers

⁸ Roger Ebbatson, *An Imaginary England: Nation, Landscape and Literature, 1840-1920* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005); Martha Hale Shackford, “A Definition of the Pastoral Idyll,” *Proceedings of the Modern Language Association of America* 19, no. 4 (1904): 538-92.

⁹ Trophic dynamics are concerned with the place of organisms in a food chain and the interactions between them. See: R. S. K. Barnes and K. H. Mann, *Fundamentals of Aquatic Ecosystems* (Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1980).

¹⁰ Ibid.

from the natural ecology of the waters into which anglers cast their flies, as well as their perceptions of nature. To do that requires a search for historical meaning in human actions that transcends the nineteenth-century elite anglers' perspective and perceptions and incorporates a twenty-first-century understanding of Earth Sciences, including geology, biology and ecology.¹¹

Historians have already begun using Earth Sciences to understand past human interactions with nature. Donald Worster in the United States and Robert Delort in France have each demonstrated and documented how geological changes and even the evolutionary past of non-human species are essential for any deep understanding of the past. For Worster, the actions of both earthworms and glaciers are as essential to any understanding of how Americans shaped the prairies into a global breadbasket as is the development of Cyrus McCormick's steel plough.¹² Likewise, Delort has revealed that non-human species, including the fishes, have their own agency, which historians need to consider.¹³ Subsequently, trying to understand how anglers, through the creation of sport fishery, became significant agents of cultural and ecological change in Québec requires the perspective of all of the actors and agents, both human and non-human, across spatial and temporal periods extending back further than the appearance of the anglers themselves.

¹¹ For a discussion of biocentrism in Environmental history, see: Michael E. Soulé and Gary Lease, ed., *Reinventing Nature?: Responses to Postmodern Deconstruction* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1995); Donald Worster, *Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

¹² Donald Worster, "A Long Cold View of History" *American Scholar* 74, no. 2 (2005): 57-66. Worster's writing on the subject, while significant within the American corpus of environmental history, is not new. Darwin was the first to propose the fundamental importance of the common earthworm in the creation of arable soils. See: Samuel W. James, "Planetary Processes and their Interactions with Earthworm Distributions and Ecology," in Clive A. Edwards, ed. *Earthworm Ecology* (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2004), 53-63.

¹³ Robert Delort, *Les animaux ont une histoire* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1984).

1.2 A “Fish-Eye” View of Eden

Seeing the landscape of anglers in terms of ecosystems is antithetical to the anglers’ idyllic perspective. Yet recognizing the existence of dynamic ecosystems in the construction of a new cultural landscape is essential. Only by doing so do the objects of anglers’ construction, salmon, trout, and water, regain their own agency, their own history and their own independent and often conflicting agendas. Elite anglers may have been motivated more by romanticism than they were by science, but they were not obtuse. Many were fascinated by scientific studies concerning what fish could hear, smell and see. Most of this interest, however, derived from a desire to improve their angling success, but some anglers demonstrated a true measure of empathy for the animals they sought to capture and kill.¹⁴ Dean Sage wrote pensively about a conversation between himself and his French-Canadian guide Napoléon. Sage wrote: “[...] do you know, in fishing the killing is the most distasteful to me. The part I like is to see the salmon rise and to know they are hooked; after that I do not really enjoy it, for I cannot get over the thought that it seems cruel to torture these beautiful creatures. Yet I go on day after day killing salmon, with that unpleasant little feeling always present.”¹⁵

Even for the best informed and most empathetic of the elite anglers such as Dean, the realm beneath the surface of the waters where fish lived remained largely imperceptible and little understood by science. The life history of salmon, for example, would not be clearly resolved until the second half of the twentieth century. Moreover,

¹⁴ Charles Bramley, “As the Fishes See Us,” *The Fishing Gazette* [London], (August 11, 1894), 337.

¹⁵ Dean Sage, *The Ristigouche and its Salmon Fishing, with a Chapter on Angling Literature* (Edinburgh: D. Douglas, 1888), 129.

while there are still arguments about whether or not fish actually feel pain, we know that fish have excellent senses.¹⁶ Indeed, most have a sense of vision in the water that is immensely superior to humans', some species even having night vision capabilities and a field of view of a full 360 degrees. Unlike humans, fish are able to operate each eye independently and fix their gaze on two different objects at the same time.¹⁷ These eyes gave the fish an entirely different perspective of the Anglers' Eden.

From the fishes' perspective, the arrival of anglers marked the appearance of a new kind of human predator, one that employed tools and tactics that took advantage of the fishes' natural ability to see small insects on the water or brief flashes of light and shadow, and to quickly and powerfully strike and swallow. Ecologists have noted that relationships between predator and prey are complex and primarily based upon an imbalance of power between living organisms.¹⁸ The relationship between the angler and his prey illustrated how human culture attributed values to other species that went beyond their natural value within an ecosystem. Anglers deemed as "game" only a relatively small fraction of fish. The word "game," itself implied that the value of the species lay in their ability to amuse humans. Game fish were defined as "[...] those that will take the natural or artificial bait with sufficient boldness and vigor, courage, and rapidity of motion, to offer so much resistance, and give so much difficulty to the captor,

¹⁶ Lynne U. Sneddon, "Do Fishes Have Nociceptors? Evidence for the Evolution of a Vertebrate Sensory System," *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 270, no. 1520 (2003): 1115-21; James D. Rose, "The Neurobehavioral Nature of Fishes and the Question of Awareness and Pain," *Reviews in Fisheries Science* 10, no. 1 (2002): 1-38; James S. Diana, *Biology and Ecology of Fishes* (Traverse City, MI: Biological Sciences Press, 2004).

¹⁷ Ron Douglas and Mustafa Djamgoz, ed., *The Visual System of Fish* (London: Chapman and Hall 1990).

¹⁸ Pedro Barbosa and Ignacio Castellanos, ed., *Ecology of Predator-Prey Interactions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

as to render the pursuit exciting and agreeable, apart from any consideration of the intrinsic value of the fish.”¹⁹

The elite angler fitted the game fish into a hierarchy that mirrored his own elitist perceptions of society. At the top of the hierarchy was the mysterious “king” salmon, large, vigorous, rapacious and courageous. Sometimes exceeding 25 kg, the anadromous (living its adult life in the sea and migrating to freshwater to spawn) fish had all of the benefits of a sea fish in terms of its amount of flesh and its flavour, as well as its ability to be preserved. Moreover, its migratory behaviour, which brought it back to freshwater to spawn, made it vastly more accessible to humans. Historically it had been the fish of royalty, and it earned the protection of royal laws all across Europe during the Medieval and Early Modern period.²⁰ After the salmon followed a courtly array of progressively smaller species, mostly different forms of trout, taxonomic cousins of the salmon.

Anglers described their game fish in aesthetically pleasing terms, such as “beautiful”, “noble” and “delicate of flesh.” Of course, all hierarchies have their base. At the bottom of hierarchy of what nineteenth-century anglers referred to as the “finny tribes” were the so-called “coarse” species. These fish generally tended to shy away from baits and flies primarily because their diet consisted mostly of plant matter and other detritus on the muddy bottom. These fish generally offered no spectacular resistance if captured. They included “ugly” and “slimy” bottom dwellers like the “queer” and “odd” catfish and appropriately named “suckers” and the serpentine eel, all

¹⁹ Charles E. Goodspeed, *Angling in America: Its Early History and Literature* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1939), 119.

²⁰ David R. Montgomery, *King of Fish: The Thousand-Year Run of Salmon* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2003).

mostly dark-coloured, bottom feeders that were fed most actively at night. Elite anglers, especially in the Victorian period, gave little respect to these coarse species or, by extension, the people who generally fished for them and consumed them. Above all, the elite anglers' hierarchy revolved around species that reflected their own elitist concepts of power, strength, intelligence and aesthetics.

Nevertheless, the anglers' culturally oriented hierarchy remained a construct superimposed over a natural system, which went completely unrecognized even by the most astute among them. In ecological terms, both anglers and their prey shared important characteristics. Both belonged to exclusive groups; the people were at the top of a structure shaped by a contemporary belief in the "survival of the fittest," a philosophy that equated economic and social success with a "natural" process in which the elite naturally rose to the top of society.²¹ Atlantic salmon, as well as many populations of trout, also belonged to an exclusive group, but for reasons completely independent of anglers' values. Many of them were apex predators, meaning that within a given ecosystem they were at the top of the food chain.²² These fish had achieved and maintained a successful place within complex ecological systems, making them clear biological victors within Charles Darwin's concept of natural selection.²³

The ecological hierarchy of which these fish were a part did not classify them based upon their ability to mirror human values or amuse humans. Rather, it was a hierarchy based only on the animal's capacity to survive and reproduce itself within a habitat, a place known by ecologists as a "niche." In comparison, the angler's hierarchy

²¹ Here I refer to Herbert Spencer's theory of Social Darwinism, see: D. P. Crook, ed., *Darwin's Coat-tails: Essays on Social Darwinism* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007).

²² Mary F. Wilson and Karl C. Halupka, "Anadromous Fish as Keystone Species in Vertebrate Communities," *Conservation Biology* 9, no. 3 (1995): 489-97.

²³ Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992).

was constructed from cultural elements: codified behaviours and traditions of a craft laid out and developed over several centuries, also known as the “sportsmen’s code.” On the other hand, the fish within that hierarchy had their own codes; theirs were genetic elements found within their DNA that had formed out of a myriad of mutations and external forces that shaped them over millions of years.²⁴

Neither anglers nor the fish that they sought out were inhabitants of some timeless “Edenic” space located in Québec’s forests. Fish were more than “game” swimming around waiting to be caught, and anglers were more than “rich foreigners” out for some amusement by catching fish. Fish were part of an ever-changing ecosystem and anglers were members of the human species who at a particular moment in time and space were engaging in behaviours not without consequence to the environment in which they filled a niche.

1.3 The View across “Deep Time”

Central to the relationship that forged elite angling culture with the province’s natural features was time. Québec may have become one of the most pre-eminent destinations for the elite angler during the nineteenth century, but all of the features deemed so idyllic by anglers, like the crystal-clear lakes and the high concentration of rivers and streams filled with large populations of salmon and trout (both of the family *salmonidae*), found their origins in the geomorphology of a part of the temporal continuum known as Deep Time.²⁵ Deep Time, sometimes referred to as the *longue*

²⁴ Michael and Derek Mills Jefferies, *Freshwater Ecology: Principles and Applications* (New York: Belhaven Press, 1990).

²⁵ On the concept of Deep Time, see: Henry Gee, *In Search of Deep Time: Beyond the Fossil Record to a New History of Life* (New York: Free Press, 1999); Harold L. Levin, *The Earth through Time* (Hoboken,

durée, is a concept compiled from many ideas and evidences concerning the age and mechanics of the Earth, including Charles Darwin's theories of evolution, Jean de Charpentier's and Louis Agassiz's theories of glaciation and Alfred Wegener's theory of continental drift.²⁶ While there was a stirring of Deep Time thought and even a ecocentric consciousness among Victorians (especially among those who read Darwin and came to reject the philosophy of man's dominance over nature), little of this is found in the more conservative literature of elite anglers.²⁷ They did not see their Eden as the result of random events.²⁸ Rather most anglers believed that the same deity that created the garden in Genesis, created their Eden.

In his study, *The Culture of Time and Space*, Stephen Kern noted, "The first line of the Old Testament had always been able to anchor the inquiring mind and keep it from spinning out of control when contemplating the infinite expanse of the past."²⁹ Things like Deep Time were much too confusing and potentially disruptive of the social order to occupy the time of most people, elite anglers included. The vast majority of

NJ: Wiley, 2006); Ted Steinberg, *Down to Earth: Nature's Role in American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

²⁶ Joseph Carroll, ed., *Charles Darwin: On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2003); Louis Agassiz, *Études sur les glaciers* (Neufchâtel: Jent et Gassmann, 1840); Alfred Wegener, *The Origin of Continents and Oceans*, trans. John Biram (London: Methuen, 1968). One of the earliest study of glaciation in Canada was done by John William Dawson, see: John William Dawson, "Comparisons of the Icebergs of Belle-Isle with the Glaciers of Mont Blanc, with Reference to the Boulder-clay of Canada," *Canadian Naturalist* 3 (1868): 33-44. For a discussion of the controversies of these ideas during the nineteenth century, see: David N. Livingstone and D. G. Hart, *Evangelicals and Science in Historical Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Michael W. Friedlander, *At the Fringes of Science* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995); H. E. LeGrand, *Drifting Continents and Shifting Theories: The Modern Revolution in Geology and Scientific Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

²⁷ On the connection between spirituality and nature in Victorian society, see: Carl Berger, *Science, God, and Nature in Victorian Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983); Martin Fichman, *Evolutionary Theory and Victorian Culture* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2002).

²⁸ L. Douglas Kiel and Euel W. Elliott, *Chaos Theory in the Social Sciences: Foundations and Applications* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1996).

²⁹ Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space: 1880-1918* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986).

anglers were Christians who understood the world through the prism of their Judeo-Christian upbringing. Anglers saw the natural world as part of the orderly creation of an omniscient deity, a world that was only a few thousand years old. As one American angler, Edmund Davis, observed in his own monograph detailing his many summers on Québec's Cascapedia River: "Such a beautiful country is not an accident. God must have created this wonderful wilderness, where all is happiness, where all is peace."³⁰ Another American author, George Dawson (journalist, newspaperman, and politician of no relation to the Canadian geologist and surveyor), notable for having written the first American monograph solely dealing with fly fishing, wrote of his time on Lake Alice, located in Québec's Mauricie region, by first thanking God "for these woods, these mountains and these ever-singing waters. They are not only the angler's Elysium, but the great medicine chest of nature."³¹

One angler mused in the *American Angler* upon Darwin's claim that "[o]ur ancestor was an animal which breathed water, had a swim bladder, a great swimming tail and imperfect skull, and undoubtedly was an hermaphrodite." He quipped with a bit of the angler's humour: "Here is a pleasant genealogy for mankind."³² Ironically, he was not far from the mark, as paleoichthyologist John Long has reminded us: "We are merely highly advanced fishes."³³ Anglers may have paid little attention to the mounting evidence that their world was much older and their forest angling haunts far

³⁰ Ibid., 36; Edmund Davis, *Salmon-fishing on the Grand Cascapedia* (New York: De Vinne Press, 1904), 10.

³¹ George Dawson, *Pleasures of Angling with Rod and Reel for Trout and Salmon* (New York: Sheldon & Co., 1876), 19. Sara Wilcox provides a brief biography of Dawson, see: "News" *American Fly Fisher* 1, no. 1, (1998): 1.

³² John A. Long, *Palaeozoic Vertebrate Biostratigraphy and Biogeography* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994); "Notes and Queries: Man as a Pre-historic Fish," *The American Angler* 26, no. 6 (1896): 204.

³³ John A. Long, *The Rise of the Fishes: 500 Million Years of Evolution* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).

more complex than they believed, but much of the evidence of that was right beneath their feet.

In the summer of 1842, New Brunswick geologist Abraham Gesner crossed the Ristigouche River into Québec's Gaspé Peninsula on an exploration for valuable mineral deposits in the cliffs of Miguasha. There he stumbled upon what would become one of the most important collections of Devonian fish fossils in the world.³⁴ Although initially ignored, Gesner's findings eventually showed that much of the region that one day would become Québec's sporting paradise had once been the Paleozoic sea bed where the fossilized remains of the ancestors of the fish so popular with anglers could be found scattered amongst the now sun-exposed rocks. These fossils would help put together our current understanding of the fishes as a milestone in the construction of earth's biota and provide mounting evidence for Darwinian theories.

These fossils also demonstrate that the relationship between "highly advanced" nineteenth-century anglers and their most esteemed game fish was millions of years in the making. Roughly 50 MYA, the oldest ancestral salmon, classified as *Eosalmo driftwoodensis* and also known as the "dawn salmon", made its appearance in the fossil record. At first a freshwater fish, by 10-20 MYA (the same period that the human species split from chimpanzees) this species had diversified into the two families, *Salmo* in the Atlantic and *Oncorhynchus* in the Pacific.³⁵ At the time, fish were still the most

³⁴ Abraham Gesner, *New Brunswick: With Notes for Emigrants, Comprehending the Early History, and Account of the Indians, Settlement, Topography, Statistics, Commerce, Timber, Manufactures, Agriculture, Fisheries, Geology, Natural History, Social and Political State, Immigrants, and Contemplated Railways of that Province* (London: Simmonds and Ward, 1847); Hans-Peter Schultze and Richard Cloutier, *Devonian Fishes and Plants of Miguasha, Quebec, Canada* (Munich: Verlag Dr. F. Pfeil, 1996).

³⁵ M.V.H. Wilson, "Middle Eocene Freshwater fishes from British Columbia," *Royal Ontario Museum, Life Sciences Contributions* 113 (1977): 1-61.

diverse and rich animal life on the planet, and alongside this newly evolving salmon were other, even more ancient species like lamprey, sturgeon and eel.³⁶

All of these species would be greatly affected and transformed by the enormous environmental changes that took place on Earth when a general cooling of the climate began around 3 MYA. That period saw the beginning of a cyclical pattern of advancing and retreating ice sheets occurring every 40-100,000 years, known more commonly as the "Ice Ages." The most recent period witnessed the appearance of a massive glacier, known as the Laurentide Ice Sheet, which at its largest extent spanned the entire Arctic, 95 percent of Canada, and even reached as far south as the modern-day cities of St. Louis, Cincinnati and New York.³⁷ Somewhat misleading, this "sheet" was actually a collection of individual glaciers that ran together to form a great contiguous mass, in many places up to two miles thick. It spread as if a viscous substance, swallowing up dirt, rock and forest in what, by human standards, was a slow but persistent advance. When temperatures finally warmed approximately 10,000 years ago during the Holocene, this great lumbering mass of ice began to melt.

As the glaciers retreated back across the Arctic Circle, they deposited all of the earth, soil and debris it had accumulated, leaving behind a radically transformed

³⁶ On salmon evolution, see also: Montgomery, *King of Fish*. Montgomery rejects the generally accepted theory that salmon diversified sometime during the glaciation that started around 2 million years ago because of the existence of fossil evidence of modern species that pre-date those glacial build ups by 8 million years. Instead, he theorizes that modern Pacific salmon species first appear in the fossil record around 8-12 million years ago, a timing that coincides with the uplift of modern topography on the Pacific coast of North America and that this uplift is a likely cause for the isolation of ancient Pacific salmon that then led to the evolution of the modern species; in contrast, the topography of the east coast of North America is little changed over the past 100 million years which may account for the existence of only one species of Atlantic salmon.

³⁷ A classic text, and one still of significance, is Heikki Ignatius, *On the Late-Wisconsin Deglaciation in Eastern Canada* (Helsinki: Tilgmann, 1958); Claude Blankaert, "Les animaux 'utiles' chez Isidore Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire: la mission sociale de la zootechnie," *Revue de synthèse* 113, no. 3-4 (1992): 347-82. For a more recent study, see: J. T. Andrews, "Quaternary Geology of the Northeastern Canadian Shield," in Robert J. Fulton, ed., *Quaternary Geology of Canada and Greenland, Geology of Canada* (Ottawa: Geological Survey of Canada, 1989), 276-317.

landscape.³⁸ In the center of North America, the glaciers had carved out the deep basins that formed the Great Lakes. The water runoff created new hydrological systems like the Ohio and its tributaries, and re-arranged old ones such as those that made up the Niagara and the falls that would attract so many curious people in the millennia that followed. As the melted waters dispersed, the rock and biomass accumulated and swallowed up over centuries of advance were disgorged and deposited hundreds, and in some cases, thousands of miles away from its source. The dust of stones crushed by awesome weight blew away in the prevailing winds to settle across the Midwestern plains, adding a rich powdery loam to the soil that would give it great fertility, an ecofact that has had as great a bearing on American history as politics and culture.³⁹

In its northernmost extremities, in the area that would become Canada, glaciation left behind a scarred and pockmarked landscape and a huge expanse of exposed rock. In large regions of what would become Ontario and Québec, much of the fertile soil had been carried south, leaving behind a great swath of exposed rock strata formed more than a billion years ago during an era known as the Precambrian. This Precambrian “Shield,” as it would come to be called, gave a name both to a geographic fact and a culturally-shared expression of disappointment, reflecting the pointed judgment of the agriculturally-focused Europeans who settled Canada that the region was little more than an infertile, uninhabitable and pitiful obstacle to civilization and progress.⁴⁰

³⁸ The use of the word, “slow” is relative, velocities of ice sheets varied from between 10-200 meters per year, see: John Menzies, ed., *Modern and Past Glacial Environments* (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann 2002), 90-91.

³⁹ Worster, “A Long Cold View of History,” 57-66.

⁴⁰ W. F. Ruddiman and H. E. Wright Jr., ed., *North America and Adjacent Oceans During the Last Deglaciation* (Boulder, CO: Geological Society of America, 1987).

In Québec, specifically, the shield zone made up 95 percent of the province's territory. There the powerful glacial forces had also left millions of gouges, gullies and rents that, along with wetlands and bogs, became one of the most extensive networks of lakes, rivers and streams in the world. These aquatic habitats would form the "fish-filled" places that elite anglers saw as the Anglers' Eden created by an omniscient deity for their enjoyment. Yet the glacial retreat and advance had done more than carve out places for fish to live; it also shaped the kinds of fish species that would come to live within them. One of the consequences of these multiple advances and retreats of ice sheets would be a marked diminution of the biological diversity of the regions that witnessed them. With each retreat, there would be a subsequent re-colonization of life, but it was a timely and complex process. The species that recovered the most rapidly were the plants and insects. Again, rapidity is a contextual term. The Laurentide Ice Sheet retreated to its present location roughly 10,000 years ago, but it has only been in the last 3,000 years that the main vegetation zones found in Québec today were re-established. As such, in its geology, limnology and biology, scientists consider the region still in a period of recovery.⁴¹

These recurring periods of advance and thaw also played a part in shaping the fish fauna anglers found so appealing. Glacial melting changed the shape of the coastline and the salinity levels of the oceans. Many species, such as salmon, sturgeon and eel, adapted by evolving strategies that allowed them to live part of their lives in the ocean and part of their lives among the shallow freshwater tributaries of coastal waters.

⁴¹ The ways in which animals established new post-glacial habitats is still being studied, but it is clear that these forces were definitely more complex and took more time to re-establish than the flora, see: E.C. Pielou, *After the Ice Age: The Return of Life to Glaciated North America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

Among them, the many descendants of *Eosalmon* used the numerous corridors of water from postglacial seas and rivers to colonize new niches far inland.

The post-glacial environment also contributed to the creation of completely new species and the radical transformation of others. Glaciation had made many of Québec's aquatic habitats oligotrophic (aquatic environments having little plant matter and other nutrients required for sustaining fish populations); many species thus evolved with the ability to feed off of the abundant insect populations. As the glaciers receded and waters were absorbed or evaporated, some fish populations became isolated from the ocean and from other species. This isolation led to the evolution of new genetic cousins such as the red trout (*Salvelinus alpinus oquassa*), a subspecies of Arctic char unique to southern Québec, and the ouananiche (*Salmo salar ouananiche*), an Atlantic salmon whose ancestors at one point may have become isolated from traditional migratory routes to the sea.⁴² Above all, repeated glacial advance and retreat had the effect of privileging those fish species that were best adapted to cold-water systems with clear, fast moving waters and left the post-glacial aquatic landscape of Québec a perfect climate for the families of fish that included salmon, whitefish, graylings, trout, char, walleye and perch, many of the same fish with which anglers would populate the top tiers of their hierarchy.⁴³

⁴² On the rapidity of evolution among isolated fish species, see: Andrew P. Hendry, "Rapid Evolution of Reproductive Isolation in the Wild: Evidence from Introduced Salmon," *Science* 290, no. 5491 (2000): 516-18; Marjatta Säisä, "Population Genetic Structure and Postglacial Colonization of Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo Salar*) in the Baltic Sea Area Based on Microsatellite DNA Variation," *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences* 62, no. 8 (2005): 1887-904; C. C. Wilson, "Phylogeography and Postglacial Dispersal of Arctic Charr (*Salvelinus Alpinus*) in North America," *Molecular Ecology* 5, no. 2 (1996): 187-97; R.M. McDowall, "Diadromy and the Assembly and Restoration of Riverine Fish Communities: a Downstream View," *Canadian Journal of Aquatic Sciences* 53, no. 1 (1996): 219-36.

⁴³ *Wild Species 2005: The General Status of Species in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Endangered Species Conservation Council, 2006); W. B. Scott and E. J. Crossman, *Freshwater Fishes of Canada* (Ottawa: Fisheries Research Board of Canada, 1973).

There was yet one other bio-geographical feature that greatly magnified the importance of the fish fauna in Québec as seen through the eyes of elite anglers. Salmonids and perciforms were not just the clear winners of Deep Time transformations within the bio-geographical landscape there; they were almost the only winners in that region. Cyclical glaciation had resulted in an overall depauperate collection of fish species. Of the 20,000 freshwater fish species around the world, Canada was left with around 160 documented freshwater species, 117 of those occurring in Québec and most of those within the confines of the St. Lawrence watershed. In contrast, further south and west into the interior of the United States, where the effects of glaciation had been less severe or did not occur at all, the number of freshwater fish species rises to over 800.⁴⁴

The great irony is that Deep Time planetary transformations had left the aquatic landscape of Québec far less species-rich than most other places in North America. Its young forests had fewer bird populations, which left them filled them with the insects that were the main diet for the rapacious, insect-eating predatory fish that bravely jumped at flies and engaged in powerful and harrowing struggles against the hook and rod. Moreover, there were comparatively few “non-game” species to disrupt the anglers’ experience. All of this meant that any angler coming to Québec might confidently expect to find the idyllic and sublime angling experiences he sought. In short, while few biologists would define the post-glacial landscape of Québec as Edenic, from the point of view of nineteenth-century anglers—and the fish species that had

⁴⁴ Tim M. Berra, *Freshwater Fish Distribution* (New York: Academic Press, 2001).

succeeded in carving out an ecological niche— it was one of the most paradisiacal places on Earth.

1.4 Conclusion

Elite anglers, mostly upper-class British and Americans, were the primary agents in the creation of Québec's sport fishery. Their perceptions of nature were affected by their social position, their religious beliefs and their education, as well as the romantic notions of their craft. They saw the waters and the fish as elements of something more than a sport or a leisure activity, but of a culture that provided a fraternal connection to the mysteries of Nature. But the Anglers' Eden that these men would construct was more than an intellectual or cultural construction. The raw materials for that construction came from the facts of nature that anglers' found in Québec. Through their eyes, the myriads of rivers, lakes and streams and a collection of fishes were unspoiled remnants of God's initial creation to be celebrated in poetry and prose. Yet, the reality was that their Anglers' Eden was also the consequence of myriad Deep Time changes. Their wilderness was a living part of the biosphere with a long and storied history of its own. Forests and fish, rivers and bubbling brooks were the by-product of the chaotic changes that took place across millenia. The fish they coveted emerged out of the forces of evolution; some species found fruitful niches during periods of glacial advance and retreat, while others went extinct due to repeated cycles of global cooling and warming.

An understanding of the landscape shaped by Deep Time changes was beyond the perception of even the most privileged of elite anglers. Nevertheless, the true nature of the Anglers' Eden was a landscape of unceasing change. Equally unbeknownst to this group of privileged people with a curious interest in piscifauna, they, themselves, would

become part of that process of change within that aquatic landscape. They were, however, only the most recent people to be added to the mix. Others had come before them who had been developing their own perspectives of and relationships to the aquatic landscape; those perspectives and relationships would prove equally consequential to the designs that the elite anglers' had on the landscape.

CHAPTER 2

The Anglers' Antecedents: Amerindians and French and their Cultures of Fishing

"I have seen [sturgeon] taken in abundance in front of the settlement at Montreal, when there were men there who were fond of fishing."¹
- Pierre Boucher 1663

One might excuse the angling elite's assertions that the aquatic landscape and habitats they coveted in Québec were pristine, paradisaical and even Edenic due to the general level of knowledge concerning geological change in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Yet there was something more disingenuous about their claims upon a landscape that they knew to have been inhabited and used by other people for centuries prior to their arrival.² Those earlier peoples, Amerindians, Métis and French colonists, had their own relationships to the aquatic landscape, and they were visible actors in every place where they fished. Elite anglers were aware of those relationships because they recorded them in their writings. While they generally criticized those relationships as being backward and inferior to their own, that did not change the fact that those relationships were complex cultural features that lay like stratum upon the biogeological features of the landscape. In putting down the footings for their Anglers' Eden, elite anglers cut through those earlier layers of culture, and in the process, covered up much of those cultural antecedents leaving little more than a dusty residue upon the character of their own fishery for sport.

¹ Pierre Boucher, *Histoire véritable et naturelle des moeurs et productions du pays de la Nouvelle France, vulgairement dite le Canada* (Paris: Florentin Lambert, 1664), 70-71. (My translation) [Note: All translations in the body of this text, unless otherwise indicated, are my own.]

² Charles C. Mann, *1491: New Revelations of the Americas before Columbus* (New York: Knopf, 2005).

Those independent antecedent cultural relationships need be examined in detail, not only because they gave character to the elite sport fishery, but in order to provide a more accurate depiction of those cultural relationships that elite anglers so often misunderstood, misrepresented and eventually supplanted.

2.1 Migratory Fish, Migratory Peoples

Ninety-five percent of the area that would eventually become part of the Province of Québec was within the glacially ravaged shield zone. The remaining five percent, tucked between it and the Appalachian Mountains to the south, consisted of the St. Lawrence lowlands, which ran from the southern Gatineau region all the way to the lower North Shore. The lowlands represent only a fraction of the geographical area of Québec (around 17,000 sq km), but that narrow strip of relatively flat territory along the St. Lawrence became a central focal point for human activity and the locus of much of the province's history. After the last glacial thaw, the river, with its outlet to the sea, became a source of a rich and varied collection of migratory fish fauna, far more diverse than found anywhere else in the shield zone.³

The first human cultures to settle in the St. Lawrence lowlands arrived there by about 9,000 BCE, becoming part of the process of post-glacial re-colonization.⁴ These human groups eventually formed into two distinct cultural groups, identified by modern

³ Serge Courville, *Le Québec : genèses et mutations du territoire : synthèse de géographie historique* (Sainte-Foy: Presses de l'Université Laval, 2000); Serge Courville and Normand Séguin, *Atlas historique du Québec. Le pays laurentien au XIX^e siècle. Les morphologies de base* (Sainte-Foy: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1995).

⁴ R. B. Davis and G. L. Jacobson Jr., "Late Glacial and Early Holocene Landscapes in Northern New England and Adjacent Areas of Canada," *Quaternary Research* 23, no. 1 (1985): 341-68; Peter Andrew Skog and Michael Robson, *Working the Tides: A Portrait of Canada's West Coast Fishery* (Madeira Park, BC: Harbour, 1996).

ethnologists as the Inuit and the Amerindians.⁵ The first group, the Inuit, lived in and exploited the arctic tundra and littoral, hunting caribou, seal, walrus, whale, polar bear and especially fish. While modern tourism has expanded into Inuit territory due mostly to transportation (bringing about many of the same consequences as are explored in subsequent chapters of this study), their culture and the fish they exploited remained beyond the scope of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century anglers.⁶

The Amerindian peoples further south of this region, however, did become important actors in the formation of the sport fishery. Their presence served to make Québec's Anglers' Eden unique in the opinion of the elite angler. More importantly, these people developed the first complex and diverse traditions of exploitation of freshwater fish in the region. By 1500-1600 AD, one could find Amerindian groups living in a zone of habitation that extended across the forested regions of northeastern North America. While some groups engaged in agricultural activities, for the most part these were only supplemental to hunting and gathering, which the majority of these groups relied upon following a seasonal migration pattern that sought to capitalize on the migratory life strategies of the region's biota.⁷

Although composed of various distinct tribes, the Amerindians can be grouped into two main linguistic and cultural groups: the Algonquian and the Iroquois.⁸ The Algonquian were sub-divided into tribes known as the Algonquin, Abenaki, Atikamekw,

⁵ J. V. Wright, *Quebec Prehistory: An Eleven Thousand Year Archaeological Outline* (Toronto: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1979).

⁶ Evelyne Cossette, "L'exploitation des ressources animales au cours du sylvicole moyen tardif (500 à 1000 après J.C.)," *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec* 27, no. 3-4 (1997): 49-67.

⁷ Denys Delâge, *Le pays renversé : Amérindiens et Européens en Amérique du Nord-Est, 1600-1664* (Montréal : Boréal Express, 1985)

⁸ Sylvie Savoie, "Les Algonquins dans la forêt québécoise vers 1600" ([Trois-Rivières]: Conseil de Bande des Abénakis and Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, 2004), 3-8.

Cree, Innus, Malecites, Mikmacs and Naskipis. The Iroquois were divided into the nations of the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Tuscarora and Mohawk (the latter being the most significant group in Québec), all eventually forming a loose confederation. While there was conflict between the Algonquian and Iroquois societies, they were strikingly similar in the ways they took advantage of the region's fish resources and in the ways they adapted their cultures (e.g. their migration patterns, rituals, tools, customs and traditions) to the various fish species found in the St. Lawrence watershed.⁹

The seasonal variations of the region, which included long winters with heavy snowfall, meant that animal and plant resources were not always abundant. Malnutrition and an omnipresent threat of starvation were common to all of these peoples. Unlike many other terrestrial plant and animal resources, Amerindians could find fish in abundance regardless of the season. In every season significant time and energy was spent in catching fish and preserving them. Although they no doubt ate fish because they provided sustenance, they were also unknowingly consuming an ideal source of human nourishment, rich in vitamins and minerals, high in protein and beneficial omega oils and low in cholesterol.¹⁰ Indeed, for migratory Amerindians, the St. Lawrence watershed served as a plentiful piscatorial reserve.

Indeed, the river was an enormous superhighway for migratory fishes, anadromous and catadromous, traveling to and from the Atlantic Ocean to spawn or

⁹ Ibid., 9-14.

¹⁰ On the nutritional adaptation of tribes concerning fish, see: Linda Murray Berzok, *American Indian Food* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005); Michel Noël, *Amérindiens et Inuit du Québec* (Québec: S. Harvey, 2003); Hélène Dionne, ed., *L'oeil amérindien : regards sur l'animal* (Sillery: Éditions du Septentrion, 1991).

mature. Anadromous fish, which include salmon, shad, smelt, striped bass and sturgeon, live their adult lives in the ocean and return to the freshwater rivers, estuaries and streams to spawn. Their young remain for many years in freshwater habitats until large enough to swim to the sea. As adults, they return to spawn in the same streams in which they were born. Catadromous fishes, of which the only representative in the St. Lawrence is the American eel, display similar migratory behaviour but in the opposite direction; they lived most of their adult lives in fresh water, only returning to the sea to spawn.¹¹

Amerindian fishing practices for eel and other migratory fish represented a convergence of human culture and non-human biology. Culture formed around ecology as the many different tribes met to exploit fish when and where they aggregated to spawn. For the fish, mating in large groups was an advantageous evolutionary strategy that ensured maximum genetic diversity for the next generation, while also affording the protection of numbers. The fact that spawning took place in shallow waters gave the young an opportunity to hatch in an environment with fewer aquatic predators. Yet doing so left the spawning fish vulnerable to terrestrial predators such as bears, wolves, raptors and especially humans.

The human predators developed their own cultural advantages from exploiting spawning fish. The large number of fish in one place meant that there would be plenty of them available for everyone, thus gatherings of tribes could generally take place free from conflicts. Such meetings could also provide important opportunities to trade

¹¹ Lawrence M. Page, *A Field Guide to Freshwater Fishes: North America North of Mexico* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1991), 432.

goods, find mates and make alliances.¹² Finally, fishing during spawning meant a greater return on investments of time and energy.

Local variations in fish spawning habits across species provided for a long window of such opportunity across tribal territories to benefit from aggregating fish populations. Starting in mid-March the anadromous fish began to arrive in waves on their annual migrations from the sea to spawn in the estuaries of the St. Lawrence. These included the relatively small (about 10 cm long) smelt, which ran in large schools, to the medium sized (4-5 kg) shad, and large (up to 50 kg) striped bass.¹³ By April, a collection of primarily freshwater species, including walleye, pickerel and suckers, began aggregating to spawn in shallow waters. The largest species, including salmon, sturgeon and channel catfish, began arriving in May, June and July. In the fall, many other species began shorter “feeding” migrations intended to put on extra fat in preparation for winter. In winter, with the freezing of the waters, fishing would continue by piercing holes in the ice to harvest fish such as the Atlantic tomcod that spawned in late December and January.¹⁴ Fishing activities for migratory species were particularly profitable during the period between spring thaw in mid-to-late March and the first snow in late October to early November. The period of available fish stocks was much longer than the average growing season for crops in the region, which no doubt played a role in the disinterest in extensive agriculture.¹⁵

¹² Joseph E. Taylor, III, *Making Salmon: An Environmental History of the Northwest Fisheries Crisis* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999).

¹³ Information on fish species from Fishbase, <http://www.fishbase.org>, last update 1 January, 2007. Page consulted 1 March, 2007.

¹⁴ Savoie, “Les Algonquins dans la forêt québécoise vers 1600,” 79.

¹⁵ Norman Clermont, “L’importance de la pêche en Iroquoisie,” *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec* 14, no. 1 (1984): 17-23.

The methods and tools that Amerindians used in their fishing activities were adapted to both the season and the fish. For very large fish such as sturgeon, which could be three to five meters in length, they used harpoons constructed of long poles of up to seven meters tipped with a barb of bone attached to a chord. Once the harpoon struck the fish, the barb detached inside its body and the fisherman held onto it by the chord and allowed it to run until fatigued. They also fashioned tridents and forks of wood, again with a central bone tip having a curved appendage on both sides that were flexible enough to open up and grip large fish. For smaller fish, they employed lines with hooks carved from wood or bone that they baited with bits of animal skin or fat.¹⁶

More often, however, small groups placed nets and weirs of different sizes depending on the type of fish sought. It was generally the task of women and young girls to construct nets from strips of rawhide, nettle and hemp. Not surprisingly, with the importance of fish in the society, nets often became significant pieces of tribal property. The seventeenth-century Jesuit missionary, Antoine Silvy, who lived among various Amerindian groups and studied their languages and practices, said that net construction was inspired by “a certain Sirakitehak who was said to have [...] invented the net after having attentively watched the spider as it was working to build its web to capture flies.”¹⁷ Nets were so valuable in some tribes that young women were married

¹⁶ Savoie, “Les Algonquins dans la forêt québécoises vers 1600,” 76-83.

¹⁷ Camille de Rochemonteix, ed., *Relation par lettres de l'Amérique Septentrionale (années 1709 et 1710)* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1904). This quote has been attributed to Jesuit missionary Antoine Silvy. On Silvy's life, see: Victor Tremblay, “Antoine Silvy,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online/Dictionnaire biographique du Canada en ligne*, <http://www.biographi.ca>, last update 5 February, 2005. Page consulted 12 October, 2001.

to them instead of a husband so that they could care for and protect these valuable tools throughout their lives.¹⁸

One form of fishing, often remarked upon in the monographs of the nineteenth-century angling elite as a “great curiosity,” was the practice of torch fishing at night for salmon, trout, sturgeon and eel. Western observers repeatedly noted, from the seventeenth century all the way to the late-nineteenth century, how Amerindian tribes gathered their canoes at headwaters during the night and, by placing a torch at the bow, attracted large fish to the surface. Acadian merchant Nicolas Denys commented in 1676 upon the method, writing: “The fish saw the fire that gleamed on the water, and came to swim in circles all around the boat where they were subsequently taken in large numbers.”¹⁹ Nineteenth-century anglers also did not fail to take note of the “romantic” spectacle. Often, however, anglers similarly opined that the practice’s disappearance was a foregone conclusion.

Torch fishing for eel was particularly common because the eel was so common all along the St. Lawrence. As the only catadromous species in the river, its presence there was unique. Eel lived most of their lives, to an age of up to 20 years, in fresh water, only returning to the ocean to spawn in the calm waters of the Sargasso Sea.²⁰ Pierre Boucher, a seventeenth-century governor of Trois-Rivières, noted that the fish “was taken in such large numbers that it is almost inconceivable to describe without

¹⁸ Katherine E. Lawn and Claudio R. Salvucci, ed., *Women in New France; Extracts from the Jesuit Relations*, vol. 5 (Merchantville, NJ: Evolution Publishing, 2005), 125.

¹⁹ Nicolas Denys, *Histoire naturelle des peuples, des animaux, des arbres et plantes de l'Amérique septentrionale et de ses divers climats* (Paris: Claude Barbin, 1672), 446-47; George MacBeath, “Nicolas Denys,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online/Dictionnaire biographique du Canada en ligne*, <http://www.biographi.ca>, last update 5 February, 2005. Page consulted 11 March, 2002.

²⁰ Douglas E. Facey, *Species Profiles: Life Histories and Environmental Requirements of Coastal Fishes and Invertebrates (North Atlantic): American Eel* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1987); C. Junker-Anderson, “The Eel Fisheries of the St. Lawrence Iroquoians,” *North American Archaeologist* 9, no. 2 (1988): 97-121.

having seen it yourself.”²¹ Pierre Charlevoix gives an account, nearly a century earlier, of how they were processed:

The savages dried these long fish by smoking them; then carried back to their huts, where they let them drip dry, then cut them from head to tail, splitting them along the back. They were then cleaned and folded open so as to smoke them from the inside out. The rafters of their huts were filled with them. As soon as they were completely smoked, they were tied together in packages of about one hundred; as such they would have plenty of supplies until the first snow when the moose hunt would begin.²²

What made the eel fishery so significant is that eel collection and preservation permitted tribes to bridge the crucial gap in the availability of foodstuffs during late winter and early spring.²³

One measure of how important fish were in the culture of the Amerindian peoples was the level of integration into their spiritual practices. Amerindian peoples practiced animism. They believed all animals, including fish, possessed spirits. One of the earliest historians of New France, Marc Lescabot, observed, “they always arrived shortly before the return of migrating fish in order to pay them homage and to welcome them back.”²⁴ The Michibichi represented the Great Spirit, or Manitou, of the water and fishes. Before fishing, a shaman would perform a ceremony involving blessings and the tossing of a small amount of tobacco into the water as appeasement. Celebration, intended to show respect to their spirit and ward off divine retribution, always followed the act of taking an animal’s life. For the same reason the remains of animals were never simply discarded, and never thrown into the fire. They cared similarly for the

²¹ Boucher, *Histoire véritable et naturelle des moeurs et productions du pays de la Nouvelle France, vulgairement dite le Canada*, 15-16.

²² Pierre-François-Xavier de Charlevoix, *Journal d'un voyage fait par ordre du roi dans l'Amérique septentrionale* (Montréal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1994 [1774]), 660.

²³ Berzok, *American Indian Food*, 37.

²⁴ Marc Lescabot, *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France: contenant les navigations, découvertes, et habitations faite par les François, és Indes Occidentales et Nouvelle-France, etc.* (Paris: Jean Milot, 1609), 828.

bones of fish, which they accorded reverence by returning them to the water for regeneration.²⁵

The spiritual beliefs concerning nature held by most Amerindian tribes have led some people to interpret that Amerindian peoples lived in a paradisaical environment of their own, where man and nature were in harmony. Scholars have shown, however, that the idea of the “ecological Indian” was a myth.²⁶ Amerindian societies did transform and modify the environment in which they lived.²⁷ They cleared forests using fire and tilled the earth to plant crops. Their exploitation of plants and animals led to changes in the populations of both. In particular, their fishing practices included the building of dams and the draining of ponds, both of which shaped and altered aquatic habitats.²⁸

Still, some scholars have argued that environmental changes caused by Amerindians were less noticeable compared to what would occur after European settlement. This is a compelling argument, since historians estimate the region’s total pre-contact population at around 100,000 people.²⁹ Nevertheless, demographics provide only part of the answer. More recent scholarship suggests that relationships to the environment were more complex; this included the exploitation of fish.

Joseph Taylor has advanced the theory, for example, that native fishing may have been just as exploitive, and perhaps more so, than that of Europeans, even at the height of the industrial period in the late nineteenth-century. Using the West Coast salmon fishery as a case study, he found that native exploitation only had the appearance of

²⁵ Ibid; Norman Clerment, “Le contrat avec les animaux. Bestiaire sélectif des Indiens nomades du Québec au moment du contact,” *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec* 10, no. 1-2 (1980): 91-109.

²⁶ Shepard Krech, III, *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999).

²⁷ William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983).

²⁸ Savoie, “Les Algonquins dans la forêt québécoises vers 1600,” 79-80; Taylor, *Making Salmon*.

²⁹ Population estimates from: Savoie, “Les Algonquins dans la forêt québécoises vers 1600,” 13.

being more ecologically friendly because it was migratory and spread out over a large area. In reality, Amerindians exploited some of the fish's most sensitive habitats, the spawning grounds, and harvested them at sensitive periods, when the fish were migrating to spawn. However, unlike the Europeans that replaced them, their fishing patterns were diverse and their own migratory behaviour ensured that they did not target the same fish populations in the same locations year after year, which gave fish populations a chance to recover.³⁰

Elite anglers saw none of this change. They perceived the landscape as sportsmen and they saw only a heavily forested wilderness full of crystal-clear waters inhabited by fish that was mostly unknown and unappreciated. Yet, to what extent were those assumptions true? Would it be reasonable to deem any of the fishing activities engaged in by Amerindians as being representative of a culture of sport? We do know that amusement and game were a part of Amerindian traditions.³¹ One of the most well known Amerindian sports of the region, lacrosse, could have far more spiritual and social meanings than could be encapsulated by the European understanding of sport and leisure.³² While most of the Europeans accounts seemed to suggest that Amerindian fishing activities were primarily oriented around subsistence, not sport, there is some anecdotal historical evidence to suggest that they did engage in fishing practices purely for enjoyment.

³⁰ Taylor, *Making Salmon*; Krech, *The Ecological Indian*; J. Rousseau, "L'indien de la forêt boréale, élément de la formation écologique," *Studia Varia* 8, no. 4 (1957): 37-51; Calvin Martin, *Keepers of the Game: Indian-Animal Relationships and the Fur Trade* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); Shepard Krech, ed., *Indians, Animals, and the Fur Trade: A Critique of Keepers of the Game* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1981).

³¹ C. Richard King, ed., *Native Americans and Sport in North America: Other People's Games* (London: Routledge, 2008).

³² Donald M. Fisher, *Lacrosse: A History of the Game* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

The English explorer and adventurer, Captain John Smith, noted of the Amerindian people of the Massachusetts coastal region that “[i]n their hunting and fishing they take extreme pains; yet it being their ordinary exercise from their infancy, they esteeme it a pleasure and are very proud to be expert therein.”³³ One later English settler to Georgia recounted how “Chicksaws wrapp[ed] their red trade britches around a forearm and d[o]ve deep to rocky ledges in search of giant catfish. The waving cloth was a moving lure that brought the strike and with fingers buried deep in the gullet the Indians battled the writhing body to the surface.”³⁴ In New France, Charlevoix described a method in his *Journal* for catching large sturgeon that seemed to provide a measure of risk and exhilaration that went beyond mere necessity:

Two men sat at each end of a canoe; the man at the rear steered the craft and the man in front wielded a short spear attached to a long cord tied to one of the crosspieces of the canoe. Once the sturgeon was spotted it was speared in one of the weak points in his scales, if the fish was wounded, it would flee; carrying the canoe along with it with great speed. After going approximately 150 feet, it died. The fish was then pulled in by the chord and thus taken.³⁵

These admittedly scant observations do suggest that there could be elements of sport associated with catching fish, at least in the way that “sport” came to be defined by Europeans. Moreover, modern Amerindian groups, in making indigenous land claims in Canada, have argued that hunting and fishing both for subsistence and sport is a significant part of their culture and traditions.³⁶ Thus, while the migratory Amerindian

³³ Charles E. Goodspeed, *Angling in America: Its Early History and Literature* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1939), 7.

³⁴ Austin Hogan, “An Introduction to the History of Fly-Fishing in America,” *The American Fly Fisher* 12, no. 4 (1985): 2-9; James Adair, *The History of the American Indians* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005).

³⁵ Charlevoix, *Journal d'un voyage fait par ordre du roi dans l'Amérique septentrionale*, 366.

³⁶ Jean Paul Massicotte and Claude Lessard, *Histoire du sport de l'Antiquité au XIX^e siècle* (Sillery: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1984), 205-15; Susan Haslip, “A Treaty Right to Sport?,” in *Murdoch University Electronic Journal of Law*, http://www.murdoch.edu.au/elaw/issues/v8n2/haslip82_text.html, last update June 2001. Date consulted 12 April, 2002.

peoples did not leave behind written record that clearly indicates a tradition of fishing for sport or amusement, and while their material artefacts are silent as to whether or not people used them only for utilitarian purposes, it nevertheless seems reasonable to assume that fishing could have been done for reasons of individual, or even communal, amusement.

What remains indisputable is that Amerindians had developed deep cultural relationships with fish and freshwater aquatic habitats over a period of thousands of years. In the space of a century, the angling elite (as will be explored in detail in Chapter 5) would largely romanticize those activities, discounting them at best, or at worst, treating them with disdain and seeking to eliminate them from the landscape.

2.2 *La Pesche* and *Desport* in New France

Not only did elite anglers fail to appreciate the Amerindians' cultural connections to the aquatic landscape, they also discounted the early presence and influence of the French. Arguably, French relationships in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with the aquatic landscape were primarily oriented towards marine environments, particularly the commercial exploitation of cod.³⁷ Moreover, even those commercial relationships to fish were far more important in the French metropole than they were in the colonies. A colonial interest in fisheries emerged as part of the reforms of *Intendant* Jean Talon near the end of the French regime, but those tardy efforts remained greatly overshadowed by the fur trade.

³⁷ E. T. D. Chambers, *Fisheries of the Province of Quebec: Historical Introduction (Part I)* (Québec: Department of Colonization, Mines and Fisheries of the Province of Quebec, 1912).

It would be wrong, however, to assume that a general lack of interest in commercial fishing in New France necessarily meant that there was a similar disinterest by individuals in fishing in freshwater rivers, streams and lakes for sport or amusement.³⁸ Fishing for sport can be found in many Western cultures going back to antiquity.³⁹ Nineteenth-century elite anglers not only were aware of those traditions, they celebrated them. Charles Lanman wrote that fish catching as a custom is “as old as the world,” and a love of the “sport” of angling was “an inherent part of humanity.”⁴⁰ Yet, to what extent did these broad Western conceptions concerning fishing (*la pesche*) and sport (*desport*) penetrate North America through the colonial presence of the French? And did those traditions contribute to or influence in any meaningful way the construction of a cultural place within the aquatic habitats that would exist simply for sport and leisure?

A clue might be found in the 1652 pronouncement by the Governor of New France, Jean de Lauzon, which recognized the general right of the population to engage in hunting and fishing (*la chasse et la pesche*) as long as they did not infringe upon the property of others.⁴¹ It would be incorrect, however, to assume that the Governor’s use of the term *chasse et pesche* indicated, without a doubt, that people were developing a

³⁸ Richard C. Hoffmann, “The Evidence for Early European Angling: The Mysterious Manuscript of Astorga,” *The American Fly Fisher* 16, no. 3 (1990): 8-16; W.L. Braekman, ed., *The Treatise on Angling in The Boke of St. Albans. (1496): Background, Context and Text of "The treatyse of fysshynge with an Angle"* (Brussels: Scripta, 1980); Alvaro Maseini, “Fly Fishing in Valsesia, Italy: An Ancient Technique,” *The American Fly Fisher* 24, no. 2 (1998): 2-5; Frederick Buller, “A Fourth-Century European Illustration of a Salmon Angler,” *The American Fly Fisher* 24, no. 2 (1998): 6-13; Fernando Basurto, “El Tratadico de la Pesca,” *The American Fly Fisher* 11, no. 3 (1984): 8-13; Richard C. Hoffmann, “The Evidence for Early Angling I: Basurto’s Dialogue of 1539,” *The American Fly Fisher* 11, no. 4 (1984): 2-9; Frederick Buller, “The Earliest English Illustrations of an Angler,” *The American Fly Fisher* 19, no. 3 (1993): 2-9.

³⁹ For more fly fishing in Ancient Greece and Macadonia, see: Frederick Buller, “The Macedonian Fly,” *The American Fly Fisher* 22, no. 4 (1996): 2-9.

⁴⁰ Charles Lanman, “The Annals of Angling,” *The Galaxy* 6, no. 3 (1868): 305.

⁴¹ Marcel Trudel, *Les débuts du régime seigneurial au Canada* (Montréal: Fides, 1977).

cultural landscape specifically for sport and leisure, most specifically a culture of sport fishing. While there was an identifiable tradition of fishing for leisure in the more mountainous regions of France in the south going back at least two millennia, most of the colonists to New France came from the northwestern provinces of France.⁴² Thus, the question remains whether or not the people who came to the colonies in North America were being given a right to fish for reasons of sport, or merely subsistence.

Moreover, one need also take care not to apply our modern, highly commercialized understanding of hunting and fishing to the words employed by a seventeenth-century French governor of New France. Indeed, much depends on what the words *chasse*, *pesche* and *sport* meant at the time Lauzon employed them. The English word “sport,” for example, finds its origins in the fifteenth-century French infinitive *à desporter*, meaning to “amuse oneself by exercise in open air, or by some game or pastime.”⁴³ But was the purpose of *la chasse* and *la pesche* intended to be an act of outdoor amusement? While today we have come to see the two words “hunting” and “fishing” as mutually inclusive outdoor recreations, the fact remains that past practitioners did not always see them that way.

Of the two, hunting held primacy of place throughout Western culture and that was certainly true in New France as well. Indeed, during the seventeenth century, *la chasse* was not merely a sport, but a form of military training, and an important means to siphon off potential militancy among the aristocracy in the rapidly centralizing political climate of the Old Regime in France. As the population of Western Europe increased, and governments became more centralized, hunting privileges became increasingly

⁴² Edmond Ardaille, *Des mouches et des hommes* (Nîmes: C. Lacour-Éditeur, 1994).

⁴³ Joseph T. Shipley, *Dictionary of Word Origins* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1945), 275.

restrictive. Kings and princes used their power and authority to maintain vast reserves as hunting parks that served much the same purpose as the *para-dizias* of antiquity. In the reserves and hunting parks, nobles chased managed herds of animals, dispossessing ordinary people from the forest, and making hunting culture even more inextricably intertwined with the elite.⁴⁴

In light of such restrictions in France, Governor Lauzon's pronouncement made the colony appear especially inviting to the young nobleman with nothing but time to spare. That, of course, was the intent. Both the promise of fertile hunting grounds and the freedom to hunt with few or little restriction was a powerful incentive for people to cross that vast physical and cultural gulf that was the Atlantic Ocean, and to put down roots on the faraway shores of New France. Colonial promoters like the Jesuit Louis Nicolas appealed directly to the most impressionable members of the aristocracy, the youth, through promises of unrestricted access to hunting. "After you have proudly served the crown and its flag of *fleur de lys*," Nicolas extolled, "you can give yourself over to the happiness that comes with the fertile land that his majesty will reward you with, as well as the handsome titles that you will earn, Baron, Count, Marquis, Duke, and Principe, if you so dignify yourself: You will have finally earned an easy life which can be found in the exercise of the chase."⁴⁵

Some historians have argued that the extension of such rights to those who came to live in the Canadian wilderness played an integral part of the success of New

⁴⁴ Baron de Noirmont, *Histoire de la chasse en France depuis les temps les plus reculés jusqu'à la révolution* (Paris: Bouchard-Huzard, 1867); Raymond Grant, *The Royal Forests of England* (Wolfeboro Falls, NH: Alan Sutton, 1991).

⁴⁵ Quoted in: Paul-Louis Martin, *La chasse au Québec* (Montréal: Boréal, 1990), 24.

France.⁴⁶ Charlevoix noted the effect that such privilege certainly equated to emigration to North America: "There are in New France, more of the noble class than in all the other European colonies combined [...]. There would be much fewer of them, if commercial opportunities were not afforded them, and if the right to hunt and fish had not been given to them as well."⁴⁷ Writing to the King in 1685, the Marquis de Denonville expressed a growing alarm that young nobles and military officers who came to New France took all too well to that "exercise of the chase". "Above all, my Lord, permit me to tell you," the Marquis implored, "that the nobility of this new country has become villainous and to increase their numbers is to do nothing less than increase the number of idle people in the colony." Numerous government officials during the period echoed the Marquis' concern. One complained that "[the nobility's] most important occupation is hunting, having no other skills, having not been born to labour of the earth, and having no disposable income in which to establish proper commerce."⁴⁸

Such comments revealed that *la chasse* was inarguably a very culturally significant activity engaged in, mostly for leisure, by the elite in New France. They also illustrate why the discussion of hunting is far from tangential to the search for understanding the place of *la pesche* as an activity of sport and leisure. The fact is that, while Governor Lauzon may have used the two words, *chasse et pesche*, together, each had a distinct and unequal place in French society. Nothing could underline that point more emphatically than a text written in Latin and published only twenty-seven years

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ For a general discussion of such problems, see: LAC, C11A, Fol. 210-236, Gédéon de Catalogne, "Mémoire de Gédéon de Catalogne sur le Canada," 7 novembre, 1712; Charlevoix, *Journal d'un voyage fait par ordre du roi dans l'Amérique septentrionale*, 173.

⁴⁸ LAC, C11A7, Fol. 93, Marquis de Denonville, "Letter of 13 November, 1685," cited in Martin, *La chasse au Québec*, 25.

after Governor Lauzon's pronouncement. This text, reproduced in a nineteenth-century French text on angling, was entitled *De Venations tractatus, in quo de Piscatione*. It evoked the spiritual connections that distinguished the cultural meaning of fishing from that of hunting.⁴⁹ The author noted that God's curse upon man after the sin of Adam applied only in relation to "animals of the earth." God had not struck fish with the same divine anathema because they lived in the water used to "wash the man of the original sin through baptism [...]." The reader was reminded that, "Jesus-Christ chose his apostles among the fishermen, and not among the hunters." Such a statement left little doubt that *la chasse* and *la pesche* were considered two fundamentally different pursuits, one "a rude and violent exercise and the other a calm and sedentary occupation," one tied to militancy and death and the other to spiritual connotations of redemption and rebirth.

It is also true that references to *la chasse* in New France are easy to find, while the same cannot be said of *la pesche*. Comparatively few references bear witness to activities of fishing in New France that one might reasonably assume as sport.⁵⁰ The *Journal des Jésuites* provides one such account; recording on the 31 October, 1656, *Sieur* Lepine claimed to have caught a thousand codfish while fishing at Malbaie, "a feat never equalled before in the country."⁵¹ In 1659, the authorities repeatedly warned the inhabitants of Montreal not to stray too far from the town to fish due to the presence of

⁴⁹ N. Guillemard, *La pêche à la ligne et au filet dans les eaux douces de la France* (Paris: Hachette, 1857), 1-2.

⁵⁰ Charles Goodspeed, writing on the history of angling in America tackled the same questions when attempting to find anglers in the early English colonies. His final assessment was that there is "scant evidence" to answer such a question definitively. That seems equally valid in the context of New France. See: Goodspeed, *Angling in America*, 5.

⁵¹ Chambers, *Fisheries of the Province of Quebec*, 28-29.

the Iroquois. Such accounts of fishing, however, remain disappointingly ambiguous.⁵² Since references to fishing in documents and letters of the period overwhelmingly refer to commercial fishing, was Lepine talking about his own activities of fish catching or those of a subordinate? Did he use a net, or a hook and line? Catching a thousand codfish with a net, while surely laborious, does not seem like a particularly remarkable feat at a time when such abundance was widely noted. Was the intent of his fishing endeavour for pleasure or commerce? The Jesuit account leaves the reader to speculate. Moreover, might one consider those warnings issued by officials to the inhabitants of Montreal concerning the danger of hostile Amerindians intended for lone individuals making sorties to a favourite brook to catch a few trout, or to parties of men in small ships fishing for subsistence?

Once again, it seems imperative to return to a search for the meaning, or meanings, of the word *la pesche* in eighteenth-century usage. Claude Gauchet's sixteenth-century French epic poem, *Le plaisir des champs*, published in 1540 (just six years prior to Cartier's claiming of a large part of the New World as part of a new French empire), describes the outdoor activities of both nobles and peasants. In its 344 pages, it offers only two references to fishing. These both deal with the taking of carp and catfish with nets.⁵³ Jean Nicot's *Thresor de la langue françoise* of 1606 (two years before the establishment of the city of Québec) describes *la pesche* simply as an activity "done with a hook and line."⁵⁴

⁵² Ibid., 30.

⁵³ Claude Gauchet, *Le plaisir des champs avec la venerie et pescherie, poème en quatre parties* (Paris: A. Franck, 1869 [1540]).

⁵⁴ Jean Nicot, *Thresor de la langue françoise* (Paris : Douceur, 1606), in ARTFL Project, <http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/efts/ARTFL/projects/dicos/TLF-NICOT/>. Date consulted 22 January, 2002.

The most important early French work on hunting and fishing does not appear until 1660. Entitled, *Les russes innocentes*, its author promises to give “the best secrets of fishing in rivers or in ponds.”⁵⁵ Most of the *secrets*, once again, deal with fishing with nets. Only one illustration shows a man fishing with a line wound around a pole. Most significantly, however, was Fortin’s suggestive title and description of his text as an *ouvrage très curieux, utile, et récréatif pour toutes personnes qui font leur séjour à la campagne* (a very curious, useful and recreational text for anyone vacationing in the countryside). Thirty-four years later, in 1694, generations after Governor Lauzon’s pronouncement concerning *la chasse et la pesche* in New France, the first edition of the *Dictionnaire de l’Académie françoise* gave the first unambiguous mention of *la pesche* as “a form of amusement and diversion.”⁵⁶ The dictionary definition and Fortin’s *ouvrage très curieux* seem to suggest that the actual meaning of *la pesche* was still evolving within French society throughout the seventeenth century.

While published works such as dictionaries and monographs undoubtedly reflected only a portion of what ordinary people were doing, they still offer important clues as to the existence and nature of fishing for sport in New France.⁵⁷ First, while there are many hand-written legal documents and reports concerning fishing activities in New France, most of these involve aspects of commercial fishing. Second, there were no printing presses in any of the French colonies in the New World before introduced by the British after their conquest of Canada. Thus, all of the printed material in the

⁵⁵ François Fortin, *Les russes innocentes* (Paris: Pierre Lamy, 1661).

⁵⁶ *Dictionnaire de l’Académie françoise. Première édition* (Paris : Veuve de Jean-Baptiste Coignard, 1694), in ARTFL Project, <http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/efts/ARTFL/projects/dicos/ACADEMIE/PREMIERE/>. Date consulted 22 July, 2001.

⁵⁷ Richard Hoffmann discusses the disparity between fishing activities discussed in printed works and the kinds of activities that were not written about in Richard C. Hoffmann, *Fishers' Craft and Lettered Art: Tracts on Fishing from the End of the Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

colonies, and published about them, came from presses in France. As more than half of the population of New France was, at any given time, either coming to or leaving the North American colonies, there was surely a consistent exchange of ideas and attitudes concerning fishing just by the coming and going of the population.

In a few rare instances, monographs with first-hand accounts of fishing activities in New France were later published in France and suggest some of the values associated with *la pesche* that one might find there. One of the authors of such a text was Pierre Boucher, the governor of Trois-Rivières, who wrote a chapter on fish in his 1663 report to Louis XIV on the resources of the colony.⁵⁸ His writings of the “grand rivers, lakes, and streams [...] filled with so many kinds of fish” serve as an indication of their social value. “In all these quarters there is an abundance of fish of all sorts such as sturgeon, salmon, catfish, bar, shad, and many others.”⁵⁹ The governor also hinted, however, that a sense of enjoyment did play a part in the fishing habits of the habitant, writing:

Sturgeon is to be taken from Québec upwards; and in all the great lakes there are great quantities of it; very few little ones are to be seen there; but all large sturgeons of four, six and eight feet long; I have seen them taken in abundance in front of the settlement at Montreal, when there were *men there who were fond of fishing* [emphasis added].⁶⁰

At the same time, the 1694 *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* revealed that *la pesche* could have a number of meanings other than sport; most importantly, some of those meanings were dependant upon whether they applied to the elite or the popular classes. One definition of *la pesche*, for example, encapsulated the “right to fish,” which suggested the presence of a cultural and legal meaning that went beyond an act of sport

⁵⁸ Boucher, *Histoire véritable et naturelle des moeurs et productions du pays de la Nouvelle France, vulgairement dite le Canada*, 69-73.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 45.

or amusement and extended to actual access to fish.⁶¹ That legal understanding revealed that a measure of elitism was associated with fishing in French culture, whether or not, it was associated with sport. Certainly, that elitism was reflected in the highly restrictive fish and game laws found France during the seventeenth century, which controlled the right to own fishing poles, hooks and lines and strictly prohibited fishing during spawning season. Royal game wardens routinely patrolled forests and waterways with the explicit authority to beat poachers senseless, and even punish those found with fishing implements by amputating their ears and even castration.⁶²

Despite the important cultural connections, geography made the French experience in North America very different, and in ways that surely affected the way colonists, especially commoners, defined the practice of *la pesche*. The ordinary *habitant* and *coureur du bois* in New France did not own expensive dictionaries and books, nor did most of them have the literacy to read them anyway. Regardless, we know that common people had other reasons to engage in fishing. As Roman Catholics, colonists were required to follow the Church's teachings concerning fasting from meat. Those fast days included every Friday, the forty days of Lent, and a collection of other holy days spread out around the year. All told, the Catholic population was required to go without meat almost half the days of the year.⁶³ This made fish an important social commodity, and no doubt the importance of fasting played a role in the permission extended by Governor Lauzon to common people to fish with few restrictions.

⁶¹ Noël de la Morinière, *Histoire générale des pêches anciennes et modernes, dans les mers et les fleuves des deux continents*, vol. I (Paris: Imprimerie royale, 1815).

⁶² An excellent overview of France's fish and game laws for a century can be found in: J. J. Baudrillart, *Traité général des eaux et forêts, chasses et pêches*, vol. II (Paris: A. Bertrand, 1833).

⁶³ Brian M. Fagan, *Fish on Friday: Feasting, Fasting, and the Discovery of the New World* (New York: Basic Books, 2006).

Nevertheless, some restrictions still remained. Legally, fishing rights for the ordinary French *habitant* extended no further than the waters adjacent to or upon their own parcel of land. Furthermore, they could not engage in any fishing that authorities could construe as commercial. Even those fish caught for their own use fell under the system of seigneurial rents, which obliged the *habitant* to give a certain portion of the catch to the *seigneur*. The rent varied, but it often included every sixth or eleventh fish.⁶⁴ Arguably, those restrictions were surely difficult to impose, amidst the backdrop of a vast wilderness free of the presence of royal guardians.

In his methods and equipment, the *habitant* fished much the same way as the local Amerindians. He employed hand lines, forks, nets, and traps that were all adapted to the season or the species of fish (Figures 7 and 8). Most ordinary colonists, who spent most of their time in work, surely would have considered the act of fishing more labour than leisure. Yet, as with all aspects of their lives, daily tasks oriented around subsistence could also occasionally become means of celebration and even amusement. One example was fishing for the Atlantic Tom Cod, a practice adopted from the Amerindians, by fishing through holes in the ice along the St. Lawrence during the month of December, when the fish migrated to its breeding grounds (See Figure 9). This activity was especially prevalent in the region of Lac St. Pierre and its tributaries near Trois-Rivières. The fish, which many referred to as *le petit poisson de Noël* (or the *poulomon*), became a symbol of the bounty of the land. By 1757, French colonists had firmly established this traditionally Amerindian fishing practice as their own, making it

⁶⁴ Raymond Douville and Jacques-Donat Cassanova, *La vie quotidienne en Nouvelle-France. Le Canada de Champlain à Montcalm* (Paris: Hachette, 1964); Robert-Lionel Séguin, *Les divertissements en Nouvelle-France* (Ottawa: Musées Nationaux du Canada, 1968).

part of their annual Christmas festivities.⁶⁵

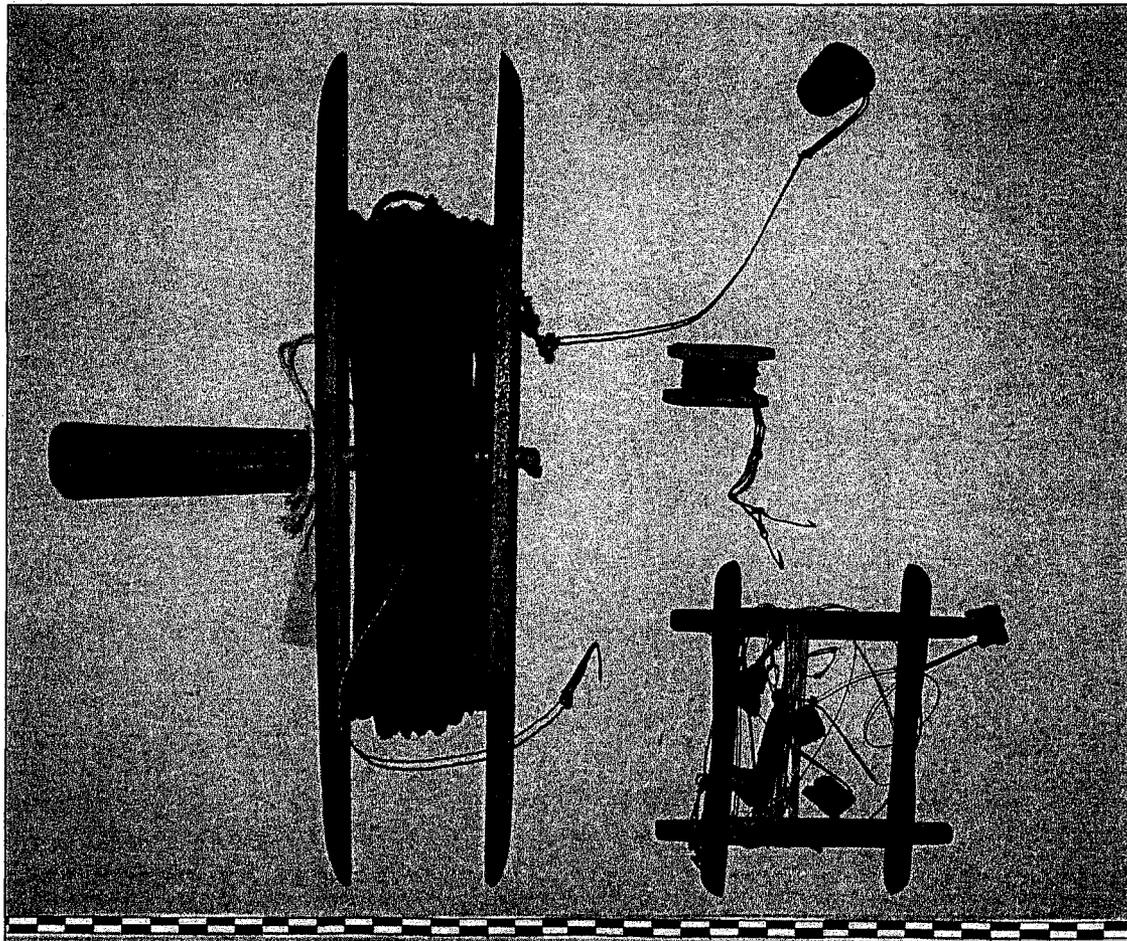


Figure 7: Miscellaneous Hand Lines

Three wooden hand lines of various sizes. The line is made of simple chord and the hooks of bent copper. These are very similar to the kinds of fishing implements used by Amerindians. They could be used for fishing for smaller fish by throwing the line over the side of a boat or canoe or passing it through a hole in the ice. Note: the hooks are protected with cork. (Rule=1cm)

Source: Musée de la Culture Populaire (Trois-Rivières, Québec)

⁶⁵ Marcel Moussette, *La pêche sur le Saint-Laurent : répertoire des méthodes et des engins de capture* (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1979).

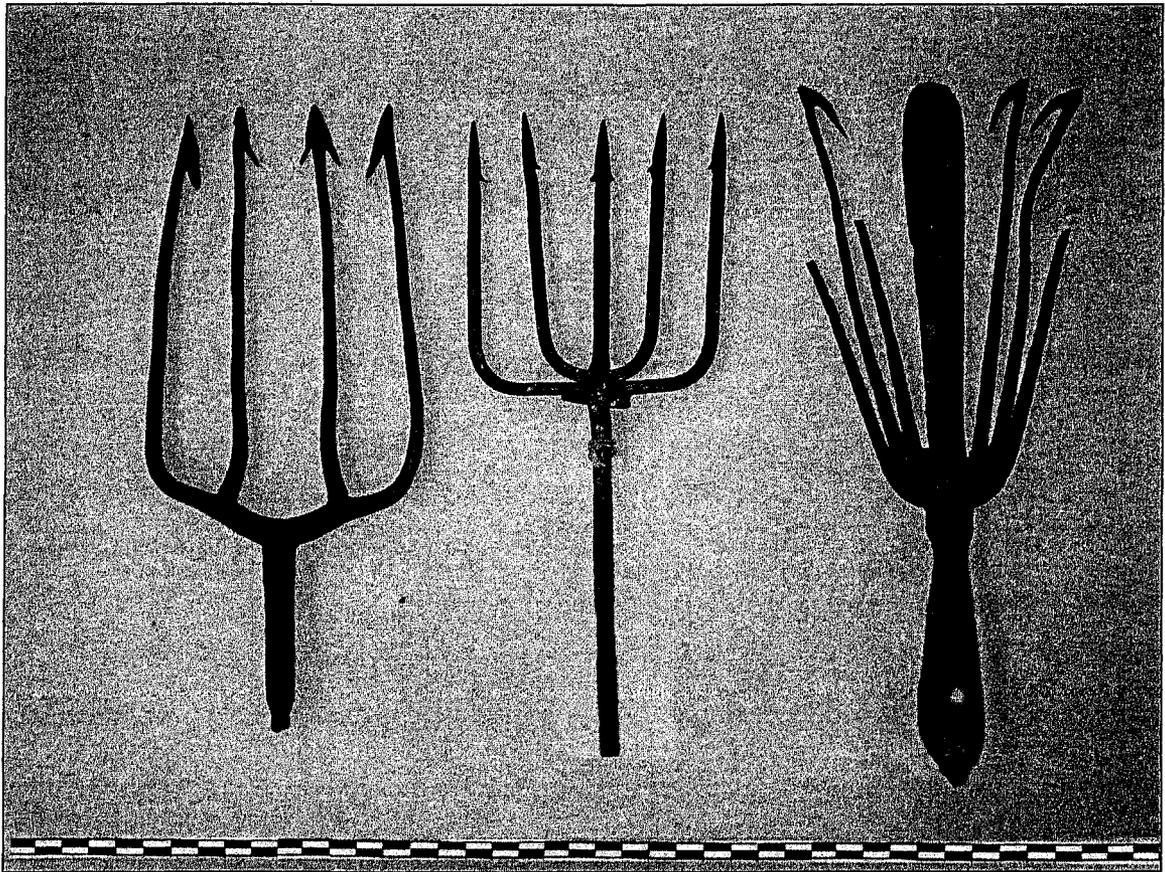


Figure 8: Miscellaneous Listers of Forged Iron and Steel

Three metal forks of iron and steel. These forks would be attached to wooden poles and used to catch larger fish such as salmon, sturgeon and eel. The implement on the right closely resembles the Amerindian harpoons described by Jesuit missionaries. (Rule=1cm)

Source: Musée de la Culture Populaire (Trois-Rivières, Québec)

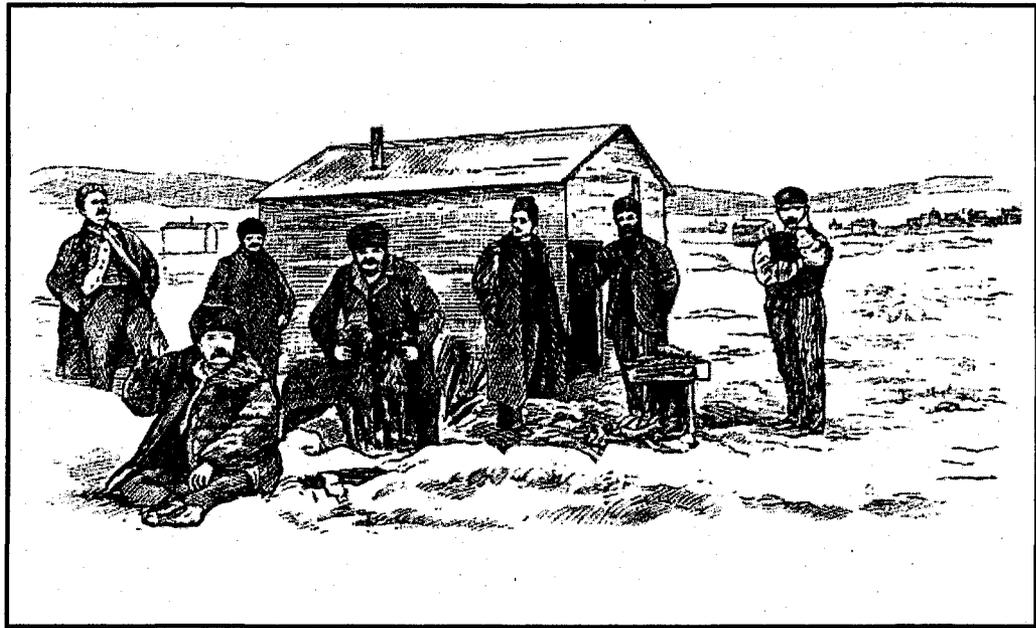


Figure 9: Fishing for "Poulomon" through the Ice.

Source: André-Napoléon Montpetit, *Les poissons d'eau douce du Canada* (Montréal: C.-O. Beauchemin et fils, 1897)

Both the aristocrat and the habitant in New France participated in one other activity that fit within the definition of the word *la pesche*: the keeping of fishponds. The fishpond had been a common feature throughout Europe since Antiquity, and it remained part of rural life in many places throughout the Medieval and into the Modern period.⁶⁶ Fishponds served as a ready larder of fresh fish, a rare commodity in a time when transportation was long and tedious and methods of preservation rudimentary. In that sense, fishponds were as much symbols of power and prestige as they were a source of food.⁶⁷ The Jesuit, Louis Nicolas, who spent so much time in New France documenting the people as well as the flora and the fauna, certainly knew of their

⁶⁶ LAC, F1614, Fol. 186, Louis Nicolas, "Traité des animaux à quatre pieds terrestre et amphibies, qui se trouvent dans les Indes occidentales, ou Amérique septentrionale" (Paris : Unpublished manuscript, c.1675), no pagination.

⁶⁷ C. C. Dyer, "The Consumption of Fresh-Water Fish in Medieval England," in Micheal Aston, ed. *Medieval Fish, Fisheries and Fishponds in England* (London: B.A.R., 1988), 27-37.

importance. He suggested in his writings that the striped bass found in the St. Lawrence would make “a good pond fish.”⁶⁸

Champlain wrote in his *Voyages* that “for the sake of occupying my time, I made a garden and surrounded it with ditches full of water, in which I placed some fine trout, and into which flowed three brooks of very fine running water from which the greater part of our settlement was supplied. I made there, also, a little reservoir for holding salt-water fish, which we took out as we wanted.”⁶⁹ In 1691, the *Intendant* of New France, Jean Bochart de Champigny (1645-1720), stated in a complaint about the *coureurs de bois* that they lived in contrast to those who “settle and add value to the land are rich or, at least, live very comfortably with their fields and fishponds around their houses [...]”⁷⁰ While it is difficult to ascertain how widespread the use of fishponds was in New France, the fact that French colonists were building them at all is notable for at least two reasons. First, it provides evidence that colonists were already altering the aquatic landscape by digging ponds and moving fish to new locations. More generally, it demonstrated that the broader French definition of *la pesche*, which encompassed many diverse activities involving fish, had crossed the Atlantic Ocean with the colonists.

La pesche was, indeed, an element of *desport* in New France, but it was also many other things. Above all, not only were all these elements of fishing secondary to the more popular activity of hunting, they were mostly covered in pervasively negative connotations in French culture that attributed fish and fishing to the activities of the

⁶⁸ Bernard LeBleu, “Le sport et l’éducation à travers l’histoire,” *L’Agora* [Ayers Cliff] 10, no. 4 (2004): 27-42; *Nouveau Dictionnaire de l’Académie Française*, Tome Second (Paris: Jean-Baptiste Coignard, 1718), 259.

⁶⁹ Samuel de Champlain, *Voyages of Samuel de Champlain (1604-1610)*, Translated by Charles Pomeroy Otis, vol. II (New York: B. Franklin, 1966).

⁷⁰ ACF, C11A 11, Fol.251-251v, Jean Bochart de Champigny, “lettre de l’intendant Champigny au ministre, 12 mai, 1691,” in Archives France-Canada, <http://bd.archivescanadafrance.org/acf/home.html>. Date consulted 7 June, 2002.

lower classes. Those ideas, too, cemented themselves into the Francophone culture that evolved in Canada. As André-Napoleon Montpetit noted in his text *Les poissons d'eau douce au Canada* of 1897:

There was once a time, not so very long ago, when the title of 'fisherman' in the district of Montreal, was the equivalent of calling someone lazy. One did not say 'pêcheur,' but 'poissonier.' [...] To have value in society, you needed to know how to use a hatchet and wheelbarrow. The only things of value were to be found in agriculture.⁷¹

2.3 Conclusion

If the aquatic landscape confronted by nineteenth-century anglers in Québec was complex and dynamic, so too was the cultural landscape. The Indian tribes of the St. Lawrence lowlands had long-established cultural ties to the freshwater, anadromous and catadromous fish species of the region. Many of their migration patterns were based upon the exploitation of a broad range of fish species, species that in many cases were themselves also migratory. While an important food source for primarily hunting and gathering peoples, the Amerindians' fishing activities were not merely acts of subsistence, but part of animist spiritual practices. While it may be nearly impossible to discern whether they fished specifically for sport and enjoyment in the ways defined by Westerners, it would be wrong to assume that amusement did not play a role.

The cultural influences that the French brought concerning *la chasse* and *la pesche* also became a part of the French cultural relationship to the North American landscape. While it is clear that, of the two, hunting remained by far the most popular outdoor sport, there are indications, even if ambiguous, that French colonists engaged in a wide range of activities associated with their culturally specific understanding of the

⁷¹ André-Napoléon Montpetit, *Les poissons d'eau douce du Canada* (Montréal: C.-O. Beauchemin et fils, 1897), viii.

word *la pesche*. This included exercising a right to fish, fishing for individual needs and fishing as a part of celebration and leisure, as well as the building and keeping of fishponds.

Both the Amerindian and French activities offer enough evidence, however, to contest the nineteenth-century elite anglers' notion that Québec was somehow a virgin landscape where they could implant and practice their craft without hinderance or influence from others. Such beliefs demonstrated a biased perception. Elite anglers eventually would be forced to confront the reality of these other relationships to the aquatic landscape developed by their cultural antecedents. Through those confrontations (which will be examined in more detail in Chapter 5), the elite angler once again revealed himself to be more than a manifestation of leisure. He was also an agent of cultural conquest who, through his campaigns to end older Amerindian and French relationships to the aquatic landscape, which he found destructive, engaged himself in the marginalization of other cultures. Thus, one must also see the elite anglers' construction of a sport fishery as a process of rearranging and tearing down earlier cultural and ecological relationships.

If other people were already occupying and using the aquatic landscape that elite anglers came to see as paradisial, in one sense, at least, they could claim in all sincerity that they were bringing something novel to the landscape. Neither Amerindians nor French colonists so clearly linked their fishing activities to the pursuit of sublime and contemplative experiences, nor did they so thoroughly romanticize the aquatic landscape with which they interacted. Such a concept truly was foreign; it found its roots in the rivers, streams, lakes, ponds and poetry of England.

CHAPTER 3

The Lords of the Fly Rod:

The English, the Americans and the Importation of “Waltonian” Values

“Let me tell you something: there is nothing like the experience in our [Canadian] rivers and, if you go salmon fishing with us, you are going to lose your pretty London flies...”¹

—Major James Brown

The British conquest of New France in 1763 resulted in the importation of cultural traditions that brought about social, political and economic conflicts and changes.² Some might consider the introduction of sporting forms as a minor introduction. Nevertheless, scholars have shown that even sporting forms had a potential to bring about cultural transformations and structural changes in society.³ One of those sporting traditions that the British would bring to Canada was a far less ambiguous tradition of fishing for sport and leisure than found anywhere in France or their North American colonies.

In the year of the Conquest, the English laws concerning fish and game (laws that would be subsequently imported into Canada) clearly defined fishing, or “angling,” as

¹ Paul-Louis Martin, *Tolfrey: un aristocrate au Bas-Canada* (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1979).

² Cameron Nish, *The French Canadians, 1759-1766: Conquered? Half-Conquered? Liberated?* (Vancouver: Copp Clark, 1966); Dale Miquelon, *Society and Conquest: The Debate on the Bourgeoisie and Social Change in French Canada, 1700-1850* (Vancouver: Copp Clark, 1977).

³ Pierre Bourdieu, “Sport and Social Class,” in Chandra Mukerji and Michael Schudson, ed. *Rethinking Popular Culture: Contemporary Perspectives in Cultural Studies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 357-73; Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning, *Quest for Excitement, Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process* (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1994).

“both a trade and a recreation.”⁴ Yet, it had not always been that way. The late-fifteenth century Old English word “angle” described the bent hook tied to a line that was used to catch fish. Just as it had been in France and later in New France, people in England did not at first see the act of fishing with an angle as something particularly noble. John Palsgrave, the author of the first grammar book in French (a Renaissance guidebook to aid English nobles to learn the language), wrote in 1530: “It is but a sory lyfe an yuell to stand anglynge all day to catche a fewe fisshes.”⁵ Over the next century, a readily identifiable culture of angling associated with the aristocratic elite, a sport of Lords, Ladies, and Gentlemen, would become a defining part of English culture. The way in which angling evolved into a cultural tradition in England provides a greater understanding of why it would later merge so comfortably with the cultural and environmental conditions in Québec

3.1 Angling Culture in England

Some of the rise in the popularity of angling in England had to do with geography. England is a land of many rivers and streams. It has six major ones. The most storied, of course, is the Thames that flows through the heart of London. However, the longest (by only a few kilometres) is the Severn. The four other major rivers include the Ouse, the Trent, the Tweed, and the Wye. All totalled, they add up to 1,366 km of waterway. France has a number of longer rivers, including the Loire, the Seine and the Rhone, but England remains unique. In addition to the major rivers, there are more than

⁴ William Nelson, *The Laws of England Concerning Game of Hunting, Hawking, Fishing, and Fowling, etc. And of Forests, Chases, Parks, Warrens, Deer, Dove, Dove-cotes and Conies, and All Other Game in General* (London: E. and R. Nutt and R. Gosling, 1727).

⁵ *Ibid.*, 95; John Palsgrave, *L'éclaircissement de la langue française* (Paris: Imprimerie royale, 1852 [1532]).

eighteen others rivers and tributaries, each more than 100 km in length, as well as the largest collection of chalk streams in the world.⁶ Chalk streams are unique aquatic ecosystems fed from underground aquifers.⁷ These spring-fed, gravel-bottom rivers provide cold, clear waters with the stable flows and consistent temperatures needed to support the kind of game fish that would come to occupy the top tier of the anglers' hierarchy, notably salmon and trout. Not surprisingly, chalk streams were popular destinations for English anglers.⁸ The large number of rivers and streams in an area of roughly 130,000 sq km means that no place on the island nation was far from the sight or sound of running water. Moreover, those waters have played an important part in the creation of the imagery of England. As William Wordsworth put it: "The waters have had a power over the minds of poets."⁹

That intersection of geography, poetry and the craft of angling led to a unique literary culture associated with the aquatic landscape. That literary heritage was part of the broader proliferation of all manner of printed materials during the English Renaissance (c. 1520s-1620s). Along with works of poetry, comedy and philosophy were personal guidebooks intended to give instruction and insight to the literate elite about every manner of their lives. Found among them are guidebooks on fishing, angling and the keeping of fish ponds. These works permit historians to analyze the ways in which the English came to perceive, use and even construct aquatic places, not only in England, but in every place where they came to exercise control.

⁶ R.A. Butlin and R.A. Dodgshon, ed., *Historical Geography of England and Wales* (London: Academic Press, 1990).

⁷ P. D. Armitage, J. Prenda, and A. Grayston, "Habitat Use by the Fish Assemblages of Two Chalk Streams," *Journal of Fisheries Biology* 51, no. 1 (1997): 64-79.

⁸ G. E. M. Skues, *Minor Tactics of the Chalk Stream and Kindred Studies* (London: A. & C. Black, 1924).

⁹ Samuel Lewis, *The Book of English Rivers* (London: G. Barclay, 1855), iv. One of the earliest geographies of England, the poetic *Poly Olbion*, put great emphasis on the country's rivers and streams, see: Michael Drayton, *Poly-Olbion* (London: M. Lownes, 1612).

One of the earliest of the guidebooks to appear on England concerned pond keeping. The work was a translation, accomplished at the request of Englishman George Churchey in the year 1499, of a Latin text authored by the Bohemian Ianus Dubravius, entitled *De piscinis et piscium*. The keeping of fish ponds in Eastern Europe, especially along the Danube, had been a part of the traditions of the region since the Roman Empire.¹⁰ The English title was instructive enough, *A New Booke of Good Husbandry, Very Pleasaunt, and of Great Profite both for Gentlemen and Yomen: Conteining, the Order and Maner of Making of Fish-pondes, with the Breeding, Preserving, and multiplying of the Carpe, Tench, Pike, and Troute, and Diverse Kindes of other Fresh-fish* (1599).¹¹ Churchey's goal, it seemed, was to interest the propertied elite in the "profitable husbandrie" of fresh fish in England. It stands as an early archetype for the ways in which the English elite were seeking to remodel the aquatic parts of the landscape in order to improve the value of their land and increase the industry of England.

As we saw in the last chapter, however, the French had their own traditions of pond keeping that were at least as old as those in England, if not older.¹² What set the English guidebooks apart from those written by the French, however, were their often-elaborate sections that gave tips for catching fish, both pond stock and fish to put into the ponds. This included descriptions of how to construct rods and make baits, and

¹⁰ Eugene Balon, *Domestication of the Carp* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, Life Sciences, 1974).

¹¹ Richard C. Hoffmann, "Economic Development and Aquatic Ecosystems in Medieval Europe," *American Historical Review* 101, no. 3 (1996): 631-69; Jan Dubravius, *De Piscinis et Piscium qui in eis aluntur naturis libri quinque. ... Item Xenocratis de Alimento ex aquatilibus Græce et Latine (J. A. Rasario interprete) nunc primum æditus; cum scholiis C. Gesneri* ([Zurich], 1559); Jan Dubravius, *A New Booke of Good Husbandry: Very Pleasant, and of Great Profite Bothe for Gentlemen and Yomen: Contening, the Order and Maner of Making Fish-pondes, with the Breeding, Preserving, and Multiplying of the Carpe, Tench, Pike, and Troute, and Diverse Kindes of Other Fresh-fish* (London: William Whiteby, 1599).

¹² Guillaume Rondelet, *L'histoire entière des poissons* (Lion: M. Bonhome, 1558).

suggestions of what time of day and season to fish. One English work especially exemplary of these traditions is John Taverner's *Certaine Experiments Concerning Fish and Fruite* (1600).¹³ Taverner's pond keeping guide, meant to "improve" his "native countrie of England," gave practical tips and strategies both for catching fish to keep as breeding stock for the ponds and for harvesting them the eat or sell.

Thirty-five years later, in 1635, the genre of English handbooks on fishponds and angling would branch off on a different course entirely. In that year, Izaak Walton, a successful merchant and small-business owner, took an early retirement in order to take up his favourite pastimes, writing and angling. Walton published his own guidebook on angling and pond keeping, which was to become one of the most celebrated literary works in the English language: *The Compleat Angler, or the Contemplative Man's Recreation*.¹⁴ Walton's work, however, put the emphasis on angling. Organized as a discussion between two friends, "Piscator" and "Vivator," the original text discussed the virtues and the intricacies of the craft of angling. The dialogue is a window into the value held by upper-class Englishmen concerning nature, including the inherent value of water and fish and the ways in which interacting with them improved the human spirit and intellect.

Walton's text defines the ideal piscatorial landscape, figuratively, literally and spiritually. Its passages, while mostly describing place in areas around London, leave the impression that these places were in far-away, exotic lands.

Blest silent Groves, oh may you be
For ever mirths blest nursery,

¹³ John Taverner, *Certaine Experiments Concerning Fish and Fruite; Practiced by John Taverner, Gentleman, and by Him Published for the Benefit of Others* (London: William Ponsonby, 1600).

¹⁴ Izaak Walton, *The Compleat Angler; or, the Contemplative Man's Recreation* (London: T. Maxey, 1653).

May pure contents
For ever pitch their tents
Upon these downs, these Meads, these rocks, these mountains,
And peace stil slumber by these purling fountains
Which we may every year
find when we come a fishing here.¹⁵

Walton's work should be defined as a proto-Romantic work. The late-nineteenth-century author and poet, Richard Le Gallienne, in his preface for a Victorian re-publication of the first edition of the *Compleat Angler*, noted that Walton had written "a book in which the grass is forever green, and the shining brooks do indeed go on forever."¹⁶ His representation of aquatic places, particularly freshwater rivers and streams and lakes and ponds, as mystical abodes where humans could transcend the drudgery of everyday life by engaging in an art form that permitted a communion with nature is perhaps nowhere better described than in "The Angler's Song" (See Appendix I).¹⁷

While Walton's connections to nature and leisure were overt, there were also significant connections to those who had the time for such recreation: the aristocratic and commercial elite.¹⁸ Walton's connection to privileged members of society is overt. He dedicated his book to "the Right Worshipful John Offley of Madely, Esquire, My most honoured Friend." He lamented the passing of Sir Henry Wotton, poet, author, Provost of Eaton College and a passionate angler. In 1663, he found a home at Farnham Castle, where he stayed with George Morley, the Bishop of Winchester, and where he not only occupied himself with improving his *Compleat Angler* but writing the biographies of several other prominent men, including George Herbert and Richard

¹⁵ Ibid., see Chapter 13.

¹⁶ Ibid., preface.

¹⁷ Ibid., see Chapter 3.

¹⁸ T. Zouch, *The Life of Isaac Walton* (London: T. Wilson, 1823); A. A. Luce, *Fishing and Thinking* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1959).

Hooker. The ties to the angling and the literate elite's romantic views of nature and their privileged access to it were embodied in Walton's very life.

One thing that Walton's idyllic poetry and causerie did not discuss was the legal implications surrounding the practice of the art of angling. Later texts, inspired by and attempting to profit from Walton's success, did. The far less romantic treatise, *The Whole Art of Fishing being a Collection and Improvement of All that has been Written upon This Subject: with Many New Experiments. Shewing the Different Ways of Angling, and the Best Methods of Taking Fresh-water Fish* (1674), gives a specific and detailed overview of the boundaries imposed by the English State on angling practices. It also illustrates a number of reasons why angling would become so closely associated with both the elite and the State everywhere it was introduced.¹⁹

While there were no laws against fishing in public waters in England, there were few such places there in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The laws in England, just as in France, very strictly regulated who could fish, where they could fish, and what species they could take. There too, possessing any fishing equipment was felonious. The law stated: "None shall keep any Net, angle, Leap, Pitche, or other Engine, for taking Fish (other than Makers and Sellers thereof, and Owners of a River or Fishery)."²⁰ Landowners and Justices of the Peace had the legal right to search homes for fishing equipment and seize or destroy any that they found. Even military officers found fishing without permission of the "Lord of the Manor" might be fined for the infraction. Moreover, they had to pay for any infractions committed by their men.

¹⁹ *The Whole Art of Fishing, being a Collection and Improvement of All that has been Written upon this Subject; with Many New Experiments Shewing the Different Ways of Angling and the Best Methods of Taking Fresh-water Fish. To which is Added, The Laws of Angling* (London: E. Curll, 1714), 104.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 104-10.

Commoners caught fishing without permission, in addition to having their equipment confiscated, could also be fined and jailed for up to a month. Servants of the manor were given the legal permission to kill any poachers they came across who, once caught, attempted to flee.²¹

Places where fish spawned received the protection of law in England, as they did in France. In the first year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, laws were made for the “preservation of the spawn, fry, and young breed of eels, salmons, pikes, etc. prohibiting the taking of such in any streams, brooks, rivers fresh or salt, within this Realm [...]” This prohibition was extended to fishponds, which were considered both places of commerce and artificial breeding grounds. Here the penalty was even more severe: “Trespassers in ponds shall give treble damages to the party grieved, suffer three years imprisonment, be fined at the King's pleasure, give surety not to offend again in like kind, or abjure the Realm; and fugitive shal be out-lawed.”²²

Nevertheless, England's unique system of Common Law, which was based on judicial precedent, also played a role in shaping the craft of angling. Over the centuries, the law evolved a definition of riparian rights that ensured that all land owners along a water course had the same rights to the water and to the fishes that dwelled within them.²³ Owners could not block or divert the water flow by building dams, nor could they impede the free flow of fish by laying nets from bank to bank. Most importantly, a landowner could not sell or transfer the water rights to anyone without the sale or

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Joshua Getzler, *A History of Water Rights at Common Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Roland Wright, “The Public Right of Fishing, Government Fishing Policy, and Indian Fishing Rights in Upper Canada,” *Ontario History* 86, no. 4 (1994): 337-62.

transfer of the adjoining land. This system acknowledged the shared value of water and fish resources, but it also ensured that angling was mostly an activity of the landed elite.

Almost everywhere the English settled in British North America, Common Law riparian rights affected the way people used and managed water and fish resources. One notable exception would be in Lower Canada. There, the aquatic landscape would also be shaped by the French Civil Code, which had been reinstated by the British as a provision of the 1774 Québec Act.²⁴ That subject, and its role in shaping anglers' relationships to the landscape, will be examined in greater detail below. Here it suffices to say that the arrival of the English in Canada began a process of introducing and acculturating English traditions, customs and laws into the former French and Roman Catholic colony. That process would see radical reform efforts like those used by Lord Durham in the 1840s to merge Upper and Lower Canada in order that the English might assimilate the more-numerous French-Canadians. Durham's project was a miserable failure. Nevertheless, some aspects of English culture, such as the seemingly innocuous tradition of angling, penetrated into the cultural and ecological nooks and crannies in far more subtle ways.

3.2 The British Military Vanguard

A British model of field sports would first come to Canada by way of the military officers who came to North America to wage war. In fact, British officers often took time to hunt even while on campaign. Even as the British were preparing to assault the fortress of Québec, two of their officers were captured by the French while duck hunting

²⁴ Pierre André Côté, *Interprétation des lois* (Cowansville: Éditions Y. Blais, 1991).

on Île aux Coudres.²⁵ In the decades that followed the British conquest of Canada numerous military garrisons were established. These would become more than strategic imperial strongholds; they were also outposts of British culture. One of the most important duties of British officers was to survey the surrounding land for strategic purposes. As part of their training, officers learned to draw and paint in watercolours so that they could produce detailed sketches, often of high artistic merit, of the landscape. They often conducted their topographical and landscape studies in conjunction with their hunting and angling activities.²⁶ An excellent example of the conjunction of these two activities is James Peachey's *A View on Montmorenci River* (See Figure 10).

The watercolour is a strategic snapshot, but it also provides some of the earliest visual evidence of British fishing and leisure activities.²⁷ It is a piscatorial landscape that perfectly fits the paradigm of the romantic vista, including the well-dressed family partaking in a day of fishing near Québec City in the company of a rustic French-Canadian *habitant* perhaps serving as a guide or servant. We know, however, that since it was part of a collection of work designed to describe the landscape for military purposes, it is also an accurate portrayal. Such images reveal that the Waltonian ideals of angling were already beginning to take on their own unique expression in Québec. Still, they tell us very little about what the people in the image were thinking. Thankfully, officers would do more than draw and paint; some would also write eloquently about their experiences.

²⁵ Paul-Louis Martin, *La chasse au Québec* (Montréal: Boréal, 1990).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 24-25.

²⁷ W. Martha E. Cooke and Bruce G. Wilson, "James Peachey," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online/Dictionnaire biographique du Canada en ligne*, <http://www.biographi.ca>, last update 2 February, 2005. Date consulted 7 March, 2005.

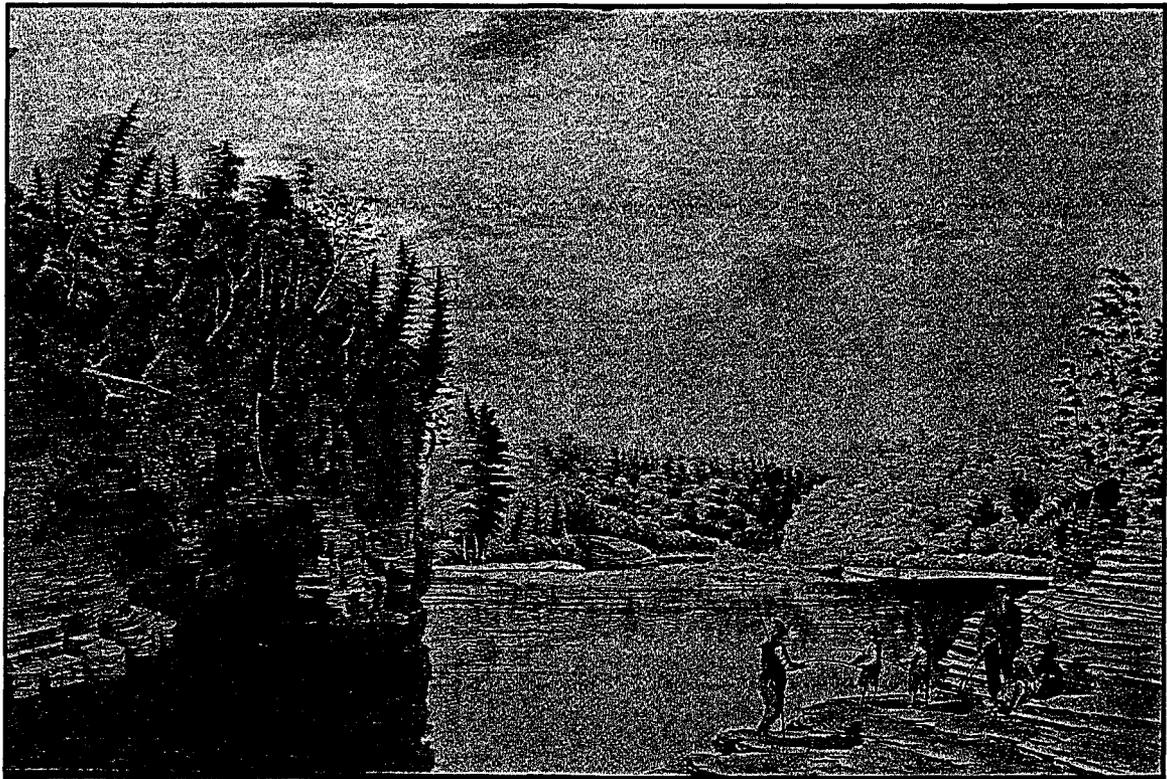


Figure 10: *A View on Montmorenci River Near General Haldimand's Country House* Watercolor by James Peachey completed in 1782. It shows a family angling together in the company of what is most likely a guide.

Source: LAC, 1989-220-3

Following the War of 1812, British officers in Lower Canada found themselves with a great deal of free time. They filled it with the social activities of their class, including picnics, dinners, banquets, balls and hunting and fishing. Once again, the first people to leave us detailed written accounts of that peculiarly English expression of fishing called “angling” were professional military men. Unlike in England, the British officer in Canada was not obliged to get special permission from any manorial lord to partake in hunting and fishing. He could do so wherever he liked.

One of the earliest, most colourful and informative accounts of angling comes from the writings of Lieutenant Frederick Tolfrey, a twenty-two-year-old British officer posted to the garrison of Québec in 1816. The passionate and polyvalent sportsman's story began even before he set foot in Canada.²⁸ As soon as his ship reached the Grand Banks off Newfoundland, he and his companions tossed over hook and line to catch a sample of the region's famous codfish. Having caught some and eaten them, he revealed the critical manner by which he would recount his entire experience in Canada, by immediately declaring the fish "inferior to [that] caught off the coast of Holland and England."²⁹

Tolfrey's angling experiences in the freshwaters of Québec's rivers and streams would prove far more satisfying, and much of that was due to a friendship that a mutual love of angling would inaugurate between himself and another officer at the garrison. Upon his arrival, he was given a message to meet Major James Browne. Arriving at Browne's quarters, Tolfrey described walls bedecked with all manner of game trophies and hunting and fishing implements.³⁰ This was not a passing remark upon life in a military garrison. His account bore witness to a significant cultural change regarding fishing for sport and leisure in Lower Canada. Tolfrey provides us with even more evidence of how nature contributed to transforming the craft as well. "Just like one would do with old coins," Tolfrey wrote, "the Major presented me his collection of artificial flies." Tolfrey remarked that the flies were "totally different from those used on the old continent." The Major explained: "Let me tell you something: there is nothing like the experience in our rivers and, if you come salmon fishing with us, you

²⁸ Martin, *Tolfrey*, 34-43.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 35.

are going to lose your pretty London flies [...].” Browne clearly indicated that British sportsmen had found something they judged to be unique in the waters in Lower Canada.³¹

Remarking that he was going to make a “real” angler out of the young novice, Browne conducted Tolfrey to the attic to show him his collection of salmon rods. Taking one in his hands, Tolfrey declared: “To tell the truth, it seemed rather a deformed instrument at first glance, but my doubts were transformed when I held it in my hands. It seemed a tool of great power, with proportions so perfect that it obeyed every movement and offered all the qualities of a lighter and smaller rod.”³² The Major remarked:

This rod, Mr. Tolfrey, is the *nul plus ultra* of salmon rods. I put it together myself and there isn’t anything better; you will note that it has only two joints built on a core of whale bone and cut down the middle. It’s the true secret of a good fly rod. Your pretty London rods, with their five and six joints with copper and iron pins are maybe handsome but you’ll see that they break like twigs when you hook one of the salmon from the Jacques Cartier.³³

Major Brown’s comments were about more than fly rods. They provided a clue as to new relationships forming around non-human species. The salmon of Lower Canada, larger and more rapacious, were nothing like the fish found in the waters of England. Nevertheless, Tolfrey’s dialogue with the Major also revealed that angling culture in Canada was already in the process of transforming to meet the new biogeographical conditions found there. Fishing rods were adapted in order to withstand the fight and weight of larger salmon. The anglers needed stronger line, so they made their own of “whip leather and chocolate,” while flies were made of *Limrick* hooks

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 36.

³³ Ibid.

imported from London and dressed with bear fur from Canada. A unique hybrid culture of angling derived from the natural features of Lower Canada and a British culture of angling were already coming into focus in the pages of Tolfrey's memoir.³⁴

Tolfrey's writings also give clues as to the geographic footprint of the culture of angling. The initial epicentre of Québec's sport fishery was found, not deep in the woods or along the Gaspé or the North Shore, but in the rivers and streams around Québec City. Indeed, hunting and fishing parties did not stray much further than a day's ride from the garrison. Although the French-Canadian and Amerindian population outnumbered Tolfrey and his fellow British soldiers more than 10-to-1, they did not keep their expeditions short out of any fear of ambush. He described the population as "harmless and docile."³⁵ Parties of men were limited more by the lack of roads and infrastructure to support long treks deep into the forest. Such treks were simply not necessary. There was plenty of excellent fishing to be had within distance of the post.

The most popular fishing spots for Tolfrey and his fellow officers were the Jacques Cartier and the Rivière Chaude. The 177 km long Jacques Cartier was situated in the south-central part of Québec (north of the St. Lawrence River). It found its source in the Laurentian Mountains and eventually spilled into the St. Lawrence 30 km west of Québec City. Unbeknownst to Tolfrey and his angling companions, the river itself was a witness to Québec's geographic evolution, the waters following the precise delineation between the nearly billion-year-old rock of the Canadian Shield to the north and the younger (500 million-year-old) sedimentary rock of the St. Lawrence lowlands to the South. A feature of the glacial transformations of the Laurentide Ice Sheet, the river

³⁴ Ibid., 37-38.

³⁵ Ibid., 12.

gradually sloped from its source down to the St. Lawrence River. Its cold, fast running waters, rocky cascades and shallow pebbled pools made it a perfect habitat for more than a dozen species of fish, especially the great salmon that Tolfrey's superior, Major Browne, described so superlatively.³⁶

Shortly after Tolfrey's arrival at the garrison, Major Browne organized a trip to the river to initiate him to the salmon fishing there. Tolfrey's account of his first angling excursion to the Jacques Cartier included the curious ethnic *mélange* of British, French, Amerindian and even American components that would become a familiar feature of the fishery. With what Tolfrey described as a "harmonious cry—something between an Indian war scream and a hoop from Leicestershire—of 'Vive Jacques Cartier'," the group set out for the river in American-style touring buggies and French-Canadian *calèches* filled to the brim with food and spirits and, of course, their fishing rods. For the excited Tolfrey, it was what he described as the beginning of a "crusade of extermination," that would end "with not a single fish left in the river after their passing."³⁷ This was, perhaps, youthful hyperbole, but it bore witness a condescending attitude towards nature by the elite, which would only slowly evolve into a concern for conservation.

Upon the group's arrival, Tolfrey's eyes beheld what he called a "romantic and picturesque" landscape of falls and trees, rocks and rolling water (See Figure 11). He quickly perceived hundreds of brown objects just under the surface of the water, but did not know what to make of them until told by the Major: "There are your salmon!" Tolfrey juxtaposed the image with his experiences in England, exclaiming: "This vision

³⁶ *Canadian Heritage Rivers System, Nomination of the Jacques Cartier River* (Québec: Ministry of Recreation, Fish and Game, 1987).

³⁷ Martin, *Tolfrey*, 46-48.

was new to me, something that I would have never believed possible to see. They were all over, hundreds upon hundreds [...] the sight of so many salmon assembled in one place was extremely interesting, even frustrating, and it alone was worth the effort of having crossed the Atlantic.”³⁸ But Tolfrey also quickly learned that the pleasures of angling for salmon in Lower Canada came with at least one unpleasant feature: the insatiable, bloodthirsty mosquitoes and black flies.

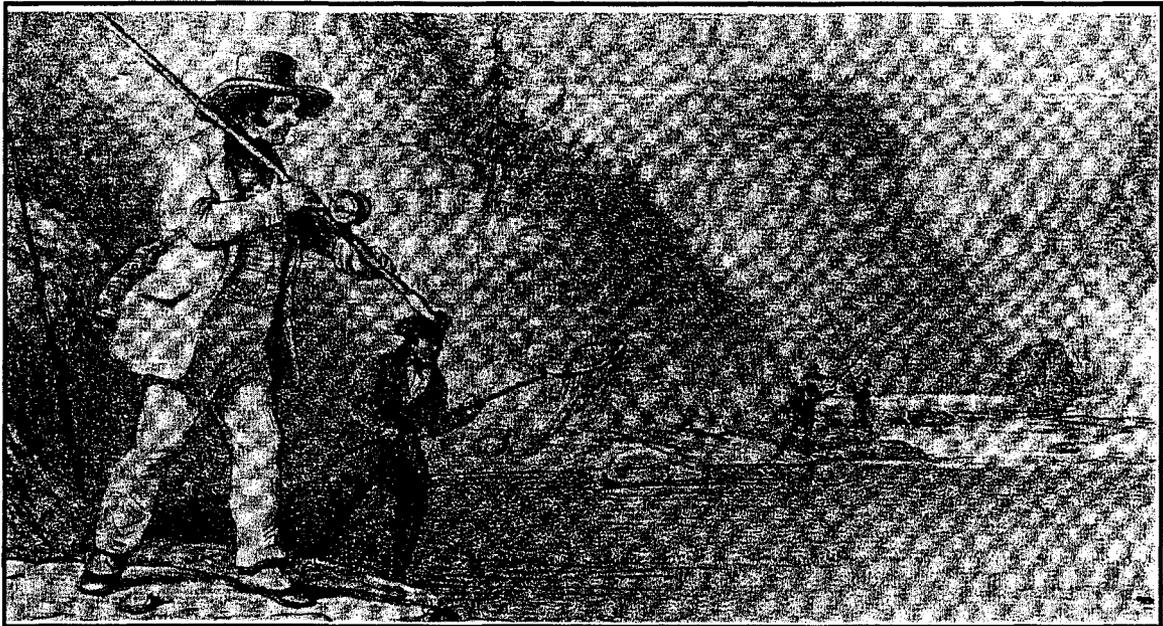


Figure 11: First Salmon of the Season in the *Hôpital*

Here a gentleman angler with his fly rod and creel pulls in a fish. His servant, or guide awaits with a net to haul in the catch.

Source: Frederick Tolfrey, *The Sportsman in Canada* (London : T.C. Newby, 1845).

While the Major had introduced him to a greasy and foul-smelling concoction made of lard and turpentine, Tolfrey had forgotten, in his haste to kill salmon and trout, to apply the concoction and ended up with a terrible fever and a face that he described as

³⁸ Ibid., 149-50.

“an enormous undercooked plum pudding.” The menacing insects became as ubiquitous a feature of the anglers’ accounts of the fishery as the Amerindians and the French-Canadians.

These groups were described by Tolfrey in more detail during his excursion to the Rivière Chaude, east of Québec City, indicating how British anglers were already defining the relationships with those antecedent cultures. Tolfrey’s observations of the porters and guides revealed not only the prejudices of the period, but how these people were being integrated as a form of curiosity and entertainment. The two men, he noted, were hired “to show us the extraordinary rapidity that they could take salmon and trout.” They rested the night in curious “wigwams” set up by their guides. Once they served their purpose, however, they sent the Amerindians to “a corner of the kitchen with a bottle of rum and a sac of strong tobacco.”³⁹ Although Tolfrey’s *The Sportsman in Canada* was published in 1845, nearly thirty years after the events he describes, the accounts were detailed and lively. Nevertheless, many of the places he described, such as the *hôpital*, a specific pool in the Jacques Cartier and the *pont Déry*, still exist to this day.⁴⁰ Moreover, Tolfrey provides evidence that local residents were already responding to British anglers by building inns and other establishments around the pools to benefit from the visits by military officers spending their off-duty time in the pursuit of salmon and trout. *The Sportsman in Canada* contained something more than a fine collection of popular and amusing stories of hunting and angling. It was an advertisement to anglers

³⁹ Ibid., 85.

⁴⁰ *The Sportsman in Canada* was Tolfrey’s second book. His first book, published in 1841, was entitled *The Sportsman in France; Comprising a Sporting Ramble through Picardy and Normandy, and Boar Shooting in Lower Brittany* (London: H. Colburn, 1841). It recounted his sporting exploits in France, where he had been ordered to go to learn French before leaving for Lower Canada. His books obviously made him famous enough, because he would later be hired by a tackle dealer in London to write a guidebook on fly fishing in Norway; it seemed to matter little that Tolfrey had never set foot in that Nordic country.

across the English-speaking world of a new sporting frontier abounding with valuable game fish, all within easy access of Québec City.

Tolfrey was not alone in leaving accounts of his angling experiences. Other soldiers published accounts of their sport in Canada. Walter Henry's *Events of a Military Life* (1843), an equally popular text, described a similar sporting relationship associated with his military service. He also recounts trips to Malbaie River, about 150 km downstream from Québec City on the North Shore.⁴¹ Neither was Tolfrey's *Sportsmen* the earliest account of British sporting in Lower Canada.⁴² Samuel Howitt's *Foreign Field Sports, Fisheries, Sporting Anecdotes* (1814) gave accounts of fishing in Canada along with tiger hunting in India and other activities around the Empire.

Yet Tolfrey's account was much different. His descriptions of angling represented a new nineteenth-century expression of the seventeenth-century Waltonian angling literature. Nearly two hundred years earlier, Walton's *Compleat Angler* instructed and sensitized readers to the value of fishing and aquatic habitats by guiding them through the discourse of imaginary characters fishing in Arcadian environments. Tolfrey's text was decidedly different in both structure and tone. It was empirical, descriptive and free from the ambiguous classical and religious allusions. His unapologetic prose described a tangible place. Yet at its core, it was no less a vehicle for elite perceptions of nature, and it reinforced the same notions that connected angling to privilege and constructed an Edenic image from nature.

Tolfrey's and his fellow officers' descriptions offer something more than a window into the introduction of ever-evolving Waltonian ideals into Lower Canada.

⁴¹ Walter Henry, *Events of a Military Life: Being Recollections after Service in the Peninsular War, Invasion of France, the East Indies, St. Helena, Canada, and Elsewhere* (London: W. Pickering, 1843).

⁴² Samuel Howitt, *Foreign Field Sports, Fisheries, Sporting Anecdotes* (London: E. Orme, 1814).

They show that the roots of the culture of England that had first emerged along the banks of the Thames, the Severn and the Wye had spread across the Atlantic to poke out through the banks of the Jacques Cartier and the Rivière Chaudé and myriads of other aquatic places tucked in amongst the vast wilderness. That rooting process would take on a completely new dimension with the arrival of another group of elite anglers that also shared the culture of Walton and adapted it in their own ways: the Americans.

3.3 American Anglers and the Conquest of the Aquatic Landscape

Frederick Tolfrey had little good to say about the few American merchants that he met during his time at the garrison of Québec. The animosity following the War of 1812 was surely mutual, but the war also led to a growing sense of curiosity about Canada. In the years following the war, mostly affluent Americans started making visits to Lower Canada. They came by steamboat from New York, Philadelphia and Boston. They arrived either by sailing around and down the mouth of the St. Lawrence or accessing the river via Lake Champlain. For the most part, their final destination was the falls at Niagara, but their grand tour of the St. Lawrence normally included explorations of both Quebec City and Montreal.⁴³

Joseph Sansom wrote one of the earliest travel accounts by an American in Lower Canada.⁴⁴ Sansom took the Hudson River route from Philadelphia. His *Sketches of Lower Canada* (1817) described a place still known by most Americans as “the refuge for loyalist exiles after the Revolution.” Sansom sought to redress that image by writing about a place that had too often been seen only “through the magnifying glasses of

⁴³ Martin, *Tolfrey*, 131.

⁴⁴ Joseph Sansom, *Sketches of Lower Canada, Historical and Descriptive: with the Author's Recollections of the Soil, and Aspect, the Morals, Habits, and Religious Institutions of that Isolated Country, during a Tour to Quebec in the Month of July* (New York: Kirk & Mercein, 1817).

superficial observers; who inverted the telescope, when they contemplated Independent America [...].”⁴⁵ Yale Chemistry professor Dr. Benjamin Silliman also wrote a memoir of his observations as a tourist in Lower Canada in 1819 that offered a more detailed account of the curious people, the lofty Church architecture and the various activities he saw in Montreal and Quebec City.

Neither tourist account made mention of the popular places for catching salmon or trout mentioned by Tolfrey. Sansom and Silliman were members of the American elite, but they were not anglers, and they did not see the landscape in such terms. It would be at least twenty-five years before any published evidence emerged showing Americans coming to Canada specifically with angling in mind. The first of those was the prolific American writer, Charles Lanman. Lanman visited and published numerous articles and books about many of the great rivers in North America. He found Saguenay River to be among the most extraordinary, calling it “probably the most remarkable river in North America.” As the main artery draining Lake St. John into the St. Lawrence River at its mouth at Tadoussac, its fast-moving waters are situated between steep cliffs, the product of having the riverbed gouged out by glacial retreat and advance. Lanman described it as “watering [...] a comparatively unknown wilderness.” The scenery was “wild and romantic to an uncommon degree [...] abound[ing] in waterfalls and rapids.”⁴⁶

It was an important meeting point for Amerindian tribes and became one of the most important waterways used by fur traders to access the fur-rich interior. It was also a major route for returning salmon. Where there were salmon and picturesque vistas, anglers would surely follow. Indeed, that is what drove Lanman there. He would be the

⁴⁵ Ibid., see “Preliminary Observations.”

⁴⁶ Charles Lanman, *A Tour to the River Saguenay, in Lower Canada* (Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1848).

first American to tour the province with an eye towards angling. He wrote in his monograph, *A Tour to the River Saguenay in Lower Canada* (1848): "I have not visited Canada for the purpose of examining her cities, and studying the character of her people, but solely with a view of haunting up some new scenery, and having a little sport in the way of salmon fishing."⁴⁷

The Saguenay was a very long way from Quebec City. Here Lanman's monograph bears witness not only to a growing interest by foreigners in the aquatic landscape but to the expanding geographical contours of Québec's Anglers' Eden. Tolfrey's fishery, with its epicentre near the mouth of the Jacques Cartier, had expanded well beyond its conveniently accessible banks into areas that were still very difficult to reach. Lanman recounts:

...on reaching Québec, I was informed that there was no regular mode of conveyance down the great river, and that I should have to take passage in a transient ship or schooner, which would land me at my desired haven [...]. Among the places I visited was the fish market, where it was my good fortune to find a small smack which had brought a load of fresh salmon to market, and was on the point of returning to the Saguenay for another cargo. In less than thirty minutes after I saw him, I had struck a bargain with the skipper, transferred my luggage on board the smack, and was on my way to a region which was to me unknown.⁴⁸

Although Lanman was not particularly interested in describing people, he did not fail to remark upon the inhabitants, writing: "In speaking of the Saguenay, I must not omit to mention its original proprietors, a tribe of Indians, who are known as Mountaineers [Montagnais]. Of course it is the duty of my pen to record the fact that, where once flourished a large nation of brave and heroic warriors, there now sits a little band of about one hundred families." He described the "hamlet" of St. Margaret

⁴⁷ Ibid., 125.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

[Sainte-Marguerite], where he and his friends spent the night, as containing “some eight or ten log shantees, which are occupied by about twenty families, composed of Canadians, Indians, and “half-breeds.” They obtain their living by driving logs, and are as happy as they are ignorant.”⁴⁹ Lanman’s inclusion of Amerindians and local people was part of what made the sporting landscape in Québec so interesting and attractive, even Edenic, to Americans.

Lanman devoted most of his time to descriptions of his experiences with the “finny tribes,” especially the “wild and beautiful salmon” and its cousin, the trout. The salmon, he wrote, “pays an annual visit to all the tributaries of the St. Lawrence lying between Québec and Big Island [Grosse Île], (where commences the Gulf of St. Lawrence,) but he is most abundant on the north shore, and in those streams which are beyond the jurisdiction of civilization. He usually makes his first appearance around the twentieth of May and continues in season for about two months.” He noted that he and his friends “threw the fly about six hours, (three in the evening and three in the morning,) yet we killed thirteen salmon, without losing a single line, and with the loss of only three flies.”⁵⁰

As described by Tolfrey, the ubiquitous black fly was the angler’s constant companion and a stinging reminder of the inherent paradox in the anglers’ paradise. Lanam felt compelled to remark that their amusement “was more than counterbalanced by the sufferings we endured from the black fly and musquetoë [sic].” He described the black fly as “about half as large as the common house fly,” and “as abundant in the air as the sand upon the sea shore.” The mosquito was an “uncommonly gaunt, long legged,

⁴⁹ Charles H. Farnham, “The Canadian Habitant,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* 76, no. 399 (1883): 376.

⁵⁰ Lanman, *A Tour to the River Saguenay, in Lower Canada*, 126.

and hungry creature,” with a “peculiarly horrible howl.” Bites from the “venomous creatures” caused him to have a fever and great discomfort. Lanman may not have known that the very presence of so many insects that permitted the anglers’ beloved salmon and trout to exist in the crystal-clear lakes, but he accepted them as part of the experience.⁵¹

Lanman revealed that Americans also shared the English culture of angling along with its values. Like Major Browne, he was awestruck by the superiority of the experience he found in Canada. He wrote: “Next to the salmon, the finest sporting fish of this region is the trout. Trout fishing in this region possesses a charm, which the angler seldom experiences in the rivers and lakes of the United States, which consists in his uncertainty as to the character of his prize before he has landed him, for it may be a common or salmon trout, or a regular-built salmon, as these fish all swim in the same water.”⁵² Like Tolfrey, Lanman passed on lore and stories of local experiences. For instance, he noted: “It is reported of a celebrated angler of Quebec, that he once spent a week on the Esquemain [River], and captured within that time, seventy salmon, and upwards of a hundred trout.” Lanman remarked that it seemed “a very large story,” but he had seen enough to “have faith enough to believe it true.”⁵³ Lanman wrote many books, including a biographical dictionary of the U.S. Congress and a biography of Daniel Webster. By far the more popular were his writings of outdoor adventures and

⁵¹ Ibid., 145.

⁵² Ibid., 149.

⁵³ Ibid., 150.

angling excursions, many of which were serialized in popular magazines like *Harper's*.⁵⁴

By the 1860s, tourist guidebooks to Québec written by Canadians like Henry Small were beginning to include information for anglers. Small's *The Canadian Handbook and Tourist's Guide* (1866) stated:

Volumes have been written to make known the inexhaustible mineral, agricultural, industrial, and commercial wealth of this colony, but few efforts have yet been made to lay before the public, or rather the travelling portion of the public, the natural beauties of its scenery—its streams, rivers, lakes and forests—lakes that in beauty, number, and variety of size, no other country in the world can vie with, replete with fish of every description within access alike of the million and millionaire.⁵⁵

The *Guide* gave exceptionally specific descriptions and directions to anglers looking for salmon. The “List of Salmon and Trout Rivers below Québec” included several dozen rivers and streams such as the Escoumain mentioned by Lanman, noting: “Between it and the Saguenay are two branches of the Bergeronne, both furnishing a few salmon and trout.” The River Portneuf had “plenty of salmon and trout.” The guide described the Godbout River as a “celebrated salmon river, one of the best in the Province.” The “widely celebrated” Moisie River was a place where “[f]ine large salmon are taken.” This was not just a list that gave evidence of an expanding Eden. The author left a cautionary note of where not to look, noting that the “streams emptying into the St. Lawrence from the south shore, are not worth mentioning as salmon rivers,

⁵⁴ Charles Lanman, *Adventures in the Wilds of North America* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1854); Charles Lanman, *Haw-ho-noo: or, Records of a Tourist* (Philadelphia: Lippincott and Grambo, 1850); Charles Lanman, *Letters from the Alleghany Mountains* (New York: Geo. Putnam, 1849); Charles Lanman, *A Summer in the Wilderness; Embracing a Canoe Voyage up the Mississippi and around Lake Superior* (Philadelphia: G. S. Appleton, 1847); Charles Lanman, *Essays for Summer Hours* (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, 1841).

⁵⁵ Henry Small, *The Canadian Handbook and Tourist's Guide, Giving a Description of Canadian Lake and River Scenery and Places of Historical Interest, with the Best Spots for Fishing and Shooting* (Montréal: Longmoore, 1866), 6.

having been ruined by mill-dams.” This was another indication that urbanization and industrialization had begun to encroach upon the early epicentre of the Anglers’ Eden.⁵⁶

Urban sprawl and the desire for new experiences had anglers on the lookout for new and hidden places. As usual, they began their search for those places in books. Nineteenth-century elite anglers were important consumers of natural history and a growing discipline of ichthyology, both old and new. Those interested in the freshwaters of Lower Canada read the writings of Charlevoix, Pehr Kalm and Issac Weld, as well as Augustus Salla and John James Audubon. Relevant portions of geographical surveys and explorations made their way into angling literature and sporting magazines. These monographs, natural histories and tourist guidebooks published in many different forms throughout the English-speaking world were virtual treasure maps guiding British and American anglers to an expanding Anglers’ Eden in Lower Canada. Many would not be content to simply angle; they would wish to have the waters all to themselves.

3.4 Québec’s “Neo-seigniorial” Fish and Game Clubs

Much of what motivated English and American anglers to come to Canada was the belief that they could find a better angling experience there than at home. In both England and the northeastern United States, mills, dams, tanneries and manufactories proliferated, and these industries often adversely affected rivers and streams by changing water speeds and temperatures and outright polluting them with human sewage, animal offal and the residue of industry. The construction of canal networks re-routed streams, and altered habitats and radically changed entire watersheds. The result was the

⁵⁶ Ibid., 45-47.

degradation of aquatic habitats and a precipitous decline of fish species, including many of the most valuable game species, like salmon, shad and whitefish, around which elite anglers organized their craft.⁵⁷

Elite angling clubs would take a lead role in attempting to educate the public at large about the value of aquatic species and habitats. London's exclusive (its membership was limited to 30 members) "Society of True Waltonians" was established in the 1830. Its "motives for meeting" were to "reason, converse, instruct, sing or recite, with sober pleasantry and unlicentious hilarity; to promote the principles of fair angling, by decidedly and vigorously opposing every description of poaching; and to cultivate and advance brotherly and true Waltonian feeling among the Members of the Society, and Anglers generally."⁵⁸

Across the Atlantic in America, people were associating angling with similar values. American historians of sporting culture most often credit the writings of the aristocratic immigrant-in-exile William Henry Herbert (better known by his pen-name Frank Forester) as being instrumental in introducing and promoting new elitist sporting values in America. Herbert's writings were influential in broadening the American audience for field sports during the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, Herbert only arrived in New York in 1831. While he arguably did much to introduce a more

⁵⁷ On the decline of wildlife resources and the reaction by elite sportsmen, see: John Reiger, *American Sportsman and the Origins of Conservation* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2001); Robert Peter Gillis, "Rivers of Sawdust: The Battle Over Industrial Pollution in Canada, 1865-1903," *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes* 21, no. 1 (1986): 84-103; Gilbert Allardyce, "'The Vexed Question of Sawdust': River Pollution in Nineteenth Century New Brunswick," *Dalhousie Review* no. 52 (1972): 177-90.

⁵⁸ *Society of the True Waltonians* (London: Society of True Waltonians, 1845).

aristocratic sporting code to hunting, the elitist traditions connected to angling had been long established in America before his arrival.⁵⁹

In 1732, two generations before the American Revolution, a group of upper-class residents of the city of Philadelphia established a club for those interested in angling along the Schuylkill River. The American group formed itself around the same principles of sport, contemplation and fraternity as the Society of True Waltonians. In 1776, with the declaration of Independence, it changed its name to "The Schuylkill Fishing Company," and its re-inauguration was "hailed with the fostering voice of approval, by every liberal minded gentleman in society." It may have been. Nevertheless, membership in the club was fixed at 25, and a set of by-laws regulated the behaviour of its members, even outside the club.⁶⁰

As the new nation was establishing itself comfortably west of the Appalachians, elitist traditions of angling followed. In 1830, in Cincinnati, a growing city on the Ohio River, a group of "lovers of the rod" inaugurated their own association, "The Cincinnati Angling Club." It, too, limited its association to 25 "distinguished members," and its constitution revealed that these independent American angling clubs remained very much connected to the Waltonian tradition. Members met four times a year, and at the last meeting they would "dine together," and have, either a discourse delivered to them upon angling and ichthyology, or else a chapter read to them from the pages of "honest

⁵⁹ William Milnor, "Off the Shelf: General Lafayette's Visit to the Schuylkill Fishing Company of the State in Schuylkill," *The American Fly Fisher* 23, no. 3 (1997): 19-22; Schuylkill Fishing Company, *A History of the Schuylkill Fishing Company of the State in Schuylkill, 1732-1888* (Philadelphia: The Members of the State in Schuylkill, 1889); Charles E. Goodspeed, *Angling in America: Its Early History and Literature* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1939), 29-54; Frank Herbert Henry William Forester, *Fish and Fishing of the United States, and British Provinces of North America* (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1849).

⁶⁰ Goodspeed, *Angling in America*, 29-30.

old Izaak Walton.”⁶¹ The Constitution of the club gave a clear indication of the distinctly different ways in which elite American anglers saw the aquatic landscape in ways that others, even sport hunters, did not, including the values they placed on them and how they intended to engage them in and around Cincinnati, and eventually in Lower Canada.

They believed the role of their association went well beyond simply catching fish. The Constitution noted that their “chief object” of association was “to spend in healthful and rational recreation, those hours of relaxation from the toils and labours of life which the constitution of our nature requires.”⁶² Yet their goals were not all about recreation. They saw themselves as intermediaries in evaluating, exploring, organizing and even improving aquatic habitats: such habitats were special and invaluable, and only the members were capable of understanding their true value to “mankind.” They meant their fraternity to bring human order to, and improvement of, the waters. They argued:

The neglect of the wealth of our rivers has been a just theme of reproach to the inhabitants of the Western Country in general...It is little to the credit of the citizens of the west, that their attention is so exclusively devoted to terrestrial affairs., that the aquatic portions of our country are almost totally neglected: and instead of receiving fair attention equal to their importance, have been abandoned to the management of those who have looked but little below the surface of their subject, and who are ignorant of the habits, qualities, and capabilities of the inhabitants of our [...] waters.⁶³

Herein one finds one of the central motivations behind the construction of sport fisheries established all over North America. Wealthy men of privilege were coming together in an attempt to “improve” civilization by taking advantage of what they believed to be one of the parts of the environment most neglected in the process. It

⁶¹ *Proceedings of the Cincinnati Angling Club* (Cincinnati: Cincinnati Chronicle, 1931): 1-3.

⁶² *Ibid*, 8.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 5.

would be these American anglers who, over time, would become the principle actors in the control of Québec's aquatic landscape for sport. They would be far more numerous than their British counterparts, who had to cross an entire ocean to get to the fish deemed "superior" to any on the British Isles. Iceland and Norway would be for English anglers what Canada would be for the Americans. The British sporting magazine *The Field* remarked: "[T]he principal rivers are all leased, chiefly by our American cousins, to whom money is no object; and when a Vanderbilt or a Jay Gould takes a fancy to any particular river or beat, there is no mistake about it—he will have it!"⁶⁴

They would adapt their model of the gentlemen's club, with a central goal of preserving and protecting the waters, to the political realities and unique history of Québec. There, Americans would establish hundreds of fish and game clubs between 1889 and 1915.⁶⁵ Paul-Louis Martin has principally studied the role of hunting in many of these clubs. Nevertheless, a number of those clubs placed even greater emphasis on angling, and in doing so became central features of the transformation of the aquatic landscape. Although not one of the earliest clubs, the Triton Fish and Game Club was certainly one of the most elitist, and counted among its membership a fair number of well-known anglers.

Like so many other clubs, its history was indubitably linked to the railroad. The Triton Club's territory lay around Lake Croix in the Laurentian Mountains. It was there that Alexander Ludders Light, an Englishman who came to Canada to build railroads, became enchanted by the lake that he had found while doing survey work as the chief engineer for the Government of Québec. After completing his work, Light requested

⁶⁴ "An Englishman Abroad," *The Field* 1, no. 12 (1882): 386.

⁶⁵ Martin, *La chasse au Québec*.

and received a significant land grant of roughly 800 sq km of territory around the lake from the Commissioner of Crown Lands in 1892.⁶⁶ This “gentleman’s park,” as Light called it, was said to be “honeycombed with trout-pools, rivers [...] thick with fish” and was located 140 km (about a 5-hour journey by rail) from Quebec City.⁶⁷

When Light died in July of 1894, he left provisions in his will for the establishment of a club. That club would be the Triton Fish and Game Club. It, like so many other parts of the Anglers’ Eden, would be originated by an Englishman but ceded to the Americans. With the exception of the honorary membership of Governor General Aberdeen and the resident secretary, the membership would become overwhelmingly American (See Table 1).⁶⁸ The Triton Club’s membership included former American presidents such as Grover Cleveland and Theodore Roosevelt. Overall, the membership was composed of men possessing the conspicuous privilege of the Gilded Age, including bankers, doctors, judges, lawyers, captains of industry, politicians, railroad executives and art collectors. Representative of the group were: Charles Armour of the Armour Packing Co. of Kansas City, Missouri; Daniel B. Fearing Mayor of Newport Rhode Island and F. T. Corning, President of Corning and Co., Peoria, Illinois. Of the 108 members on the roster in 1896, only six were from the Province of Québec, the rest being Americans originating from nine different states (See Table 2).⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Christopher Andreae, “Alexander Ludders Light,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online/Dictionnaire biographique du Canada en ligne*, <http://www.biographi.ca>, last update 2 February, 2005. Page consulted 5 March, 2005.

⁶⁷ “Fishing and Hunting in Canada,” *Fishing Gazette* [London], (November 7, 1894), no pagination. See Coll. F 8000.236 F.

⁶⁸ Statistics compiled from the Annual Reports of the Quebec Triton Fish and Game Club for the years 1894, 1896, 1898 and 1900.

⁶⁹ Quebec Triton Fish and Game Club, *Membership of the Triton Fish and Game Club* (Québec: T. J. Moore & Co., 1898).

International journalists remarked upon the club's inauguration. The *London Fishing Gazette*, a British angling magazine, referred to it as a call to "Gipsy-Life, without the usual inconveniences chronic to the career of nomads, appeals to a large number of people of good constitution, whose purse and time are not cramped."⁷⁰ Indeed, a share in the club was the exorbitant sum of \$250, with a \$30 annual membership fee (See Figure 12 and 13).⁷¹ James B. Townsend, writing in *Forest and Stream* in August of 1892, stated: "[M]y experience and my trip showed me conclusively these lakes and streams between Québec and the head waters of the Saguenay, at Lake St. John, are the Adirondacks of the future. The soil of the country does not permit of successful cultivation," but the waters in what he called a "virgin wilderness" he said, "teemed with large brook trout."⁷²

The main clubhouse was a large building located just a few dozen meters up the hill from the banks of Lake St. Croix. The large, three-story structure had more than twenty rooms, a kitchen, a salon, a large dining room and, of course, a library filled with texts on hunting and angling. The staff included the resident director who lived on site (eventually the only member from Québec), a chef, maids, a gardener, a steward and several caretakers. Guides were always available and were hired out to guests as needed. The stores of the clubhouse also alluded to the privileged lifestyle of the members and their guests, even when hundreds of miles away from their homes and deep in the Canadian bush. Along with the tinned beans and bacon paste, there were

⁷⁰ E. T. D. Chambers, "A September Outing in Canada," *Forest and Stream* 13 (14 October, 1893), no pagination. Cited in: *Charter, By-Laws, Officers and Members of the Sainte-Marguerite Salmon Club Prospectus of the Triton Fish and Game Club* (New York: John H. Gresham, 1894), 33-35.

⁷¹ In today's dollars \$250 USD was the equivalent of approximately \$6,000 USD. According to the United States Census of 1900, that sum represented almost half of the average American's annual salary. See: William R. Merriam, ed. *Census Reports, Twelfth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1900*. (New York: Norman Ross, 1997).

⁷² *Ibid.*

fresh lemons, assorted “French” soups, tinned salmon for those who may have had a bad day fishing, “German” sausages, the finest brandy, gin, port, rum, sherry, whisky and Champagne, as well as cigars and cigarettes.⁷³

While the club may have been in Canada, the business of the club took place in the United States. The annual meetings of the Triton Fish and Game Club were held on the second Wednesday in December in the City of New York. There, members voted on and made policies that would have lasting effects on the landscape and the lives of the people who worked there, such as the kinds of fish they would import or the rights of those non-members who worked on the property. Some groups not only built their clubs around exclusive waterways but around specific fish species. That was the case with a group of New Yorkers who formed an even more exclusive club with an emphasis on salmon fishing, the Sainte Marguerite Salmon Club. Attracted to the region by the writings of Charles Lanman were two bankers, a produce merchant and several stockbrokers from New York City. The club leased frontage on the Sainte Marguerite River, a tributary of the Saguenay with a significant annual run of salmon, and then incorporated the club with the initial issue of capital stock “in the sum of thirty thousand dollars, divided into thirty equal shares.” Yet membership in the Sainte Marguerite Salmon Club did not just depend on the ability to buy stock. New members were voted into the club by secret ballot of the other members; members could also be kicked out of the club by the same democratic process.⁷⁴

⁷³ Quebec Triton Fish and Game Club, *Constitution, By-laws, and Membership of the Triton Fish and Game Club* (Québec: T.J. Moore & Co., 1899), see “Guides and Supplies.”

⁷⁴ *Charter, By-laws, Officers and Members of the Sainte Marguerite Salmon Club* (New York: John H. Gresham, 1895); Triton Fish and Game Club, *Constitution, By-laws, and Membership of the Triton Fish and Game Club*, 4-10.

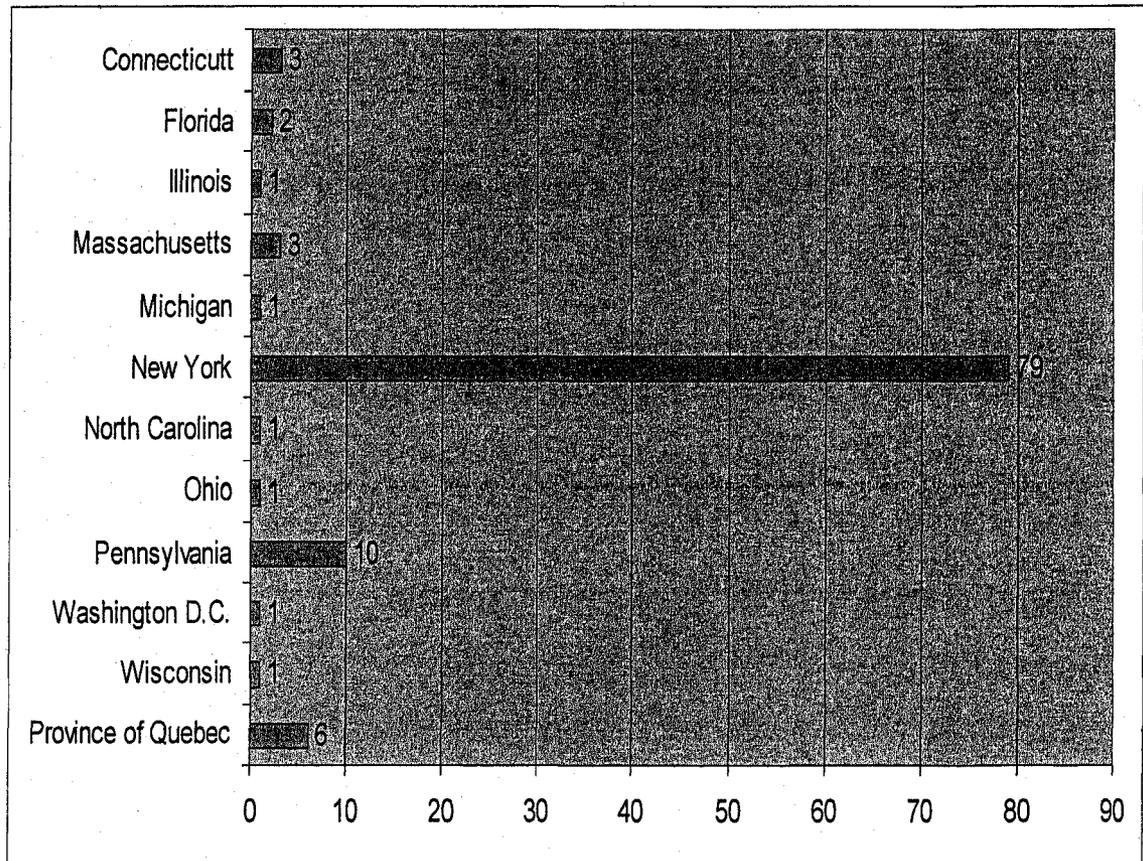


Table 1: Triton Fish and Game Club (Membership, 1898)

Of the 109 members of the club, 72% were from New York, with a large majority of those from New York City. Nevertheless, membership extended beyond the northeastern States.

Source: Quebec Triton Fish and Game Club, *Annual Report. 1898* (FCHU)

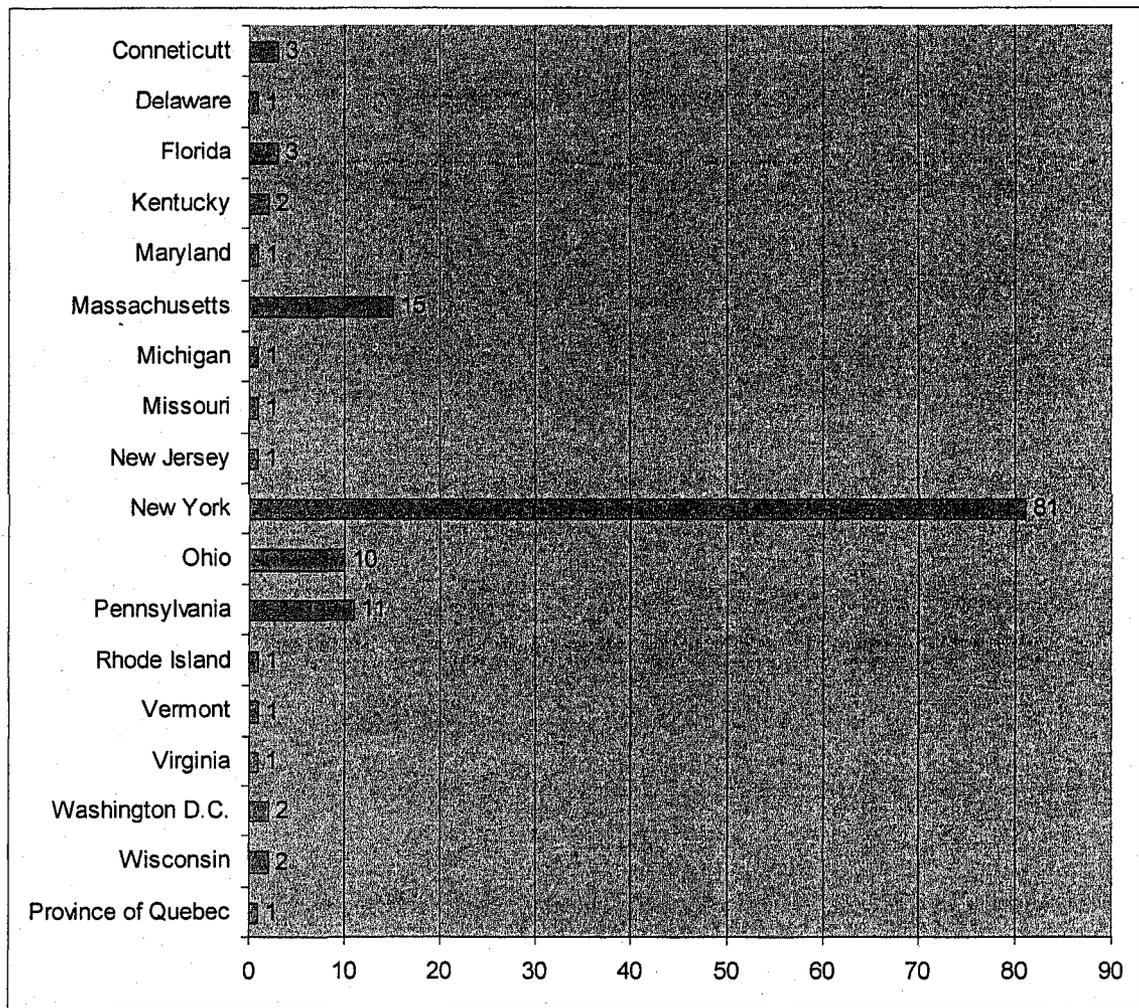


Table 2: Triton Fish and Game Club (Membership, 1911)

More than 10-years later, club membership had only increased by 20 members. New York membership was still overwhelmingly the highest, yet a larger number of States were present. At the same time, the number of members from the Province of Québec had dropped from six to one. That single Québec member was the Resident Director.

Source: Quebec Triton Fish and Game Club, *Annual Report. 1911* (FCHU)

Membership No. 493

THIS CERTIFIES THAT

M Hon. D.B. Fearing

IS A MEMBER OF THE

"Triton" F. & G. Club,

and is entitled to the RAILWAY PRIVILEGES
stated on other side.

NOT GOOD UNLESS
COUNTERSIGNED BY
MEMBER.

F. S. STOCKING,
C. P. A., QUEBEC.

. . . PRIVILEGES . . .

⊙

On presentation of this certificate, the baggagemen of the Quebec and Lake St. John Railway will check 200 lbs of express baggage consisting of tents, canoes, skiffs, wearing apparel, provisions, etc., and one dog.

Letters and telegrams reserving parlor car seats or sleeping car accommodation, and all enquiries, will have my personal attention.

F. S. STOCKING,
C. P. A.,
32 LOUIS ST, QUEBEC.

*General Ticket Agency
and Information Bureau.*

COUNTERSIGNED.

Figure 13: Membership Card

Daniel B. Fearing's membership card (never signed) shows the kind of privileges afforded to members, including the special relationship that clubs had with railroad companies

Source: F 1710.88.50, FCHU

Another club, the Roberval Fish and Game Association, was organized around a unique form of salmon, the ouananiche. The ouananiche was a land-locked variety of the Atlantic salmon found in Lake St. John and its tributaries. Anglers and naturalists argued for a time that it was a sub-species of salmon referred to as *Salmo salar ouananiche*. That mystery gave it some of its allure. In reality, the ouananiche of Lake St. John belonged to a relic population of Atlantic salmon which had at some point, millions of years ago, stopped migrating all the way to the Atlantic, but rather migrated only as far as the headwaters of Lake St. John, where it reproduced and deposited its ova. American, British and Canadian anglers wrote reams of articles and even some full-length books on this fish that would become an international symbol of the region.⁷⁵

The club was started by Horace J. Beemer, an American from Pennsylvania who had come to Canada in the 1870s as a supervisor for a canal project. He later went into business for himself with a group of partners from Montreal. His work on the city of Québec's municipal water system made him and his partners wealthy. Beemer's work also gave him knowledge of the provincial watersheds, and he became interested in owning the waters in and around Lake St. John. Beemer was eventually able to get an immense concession of territory of which he boasted, "to the south and the north, this sportsman's paradise is bounded by the forty-eighth and forty-ninth parallels [...]." It included a large part of Lake St. John, including the Grande Décharge, which many considered "the best of the ouananiche fishing in the Saguenay, the Metabetchouan, the

⁷⁵ Nathalie Tessier and Louis Bernatchez, *Caractérisation génétique des populations de ouananiche (Salmo salar) du lac Saint-Jean en vue de calculer leur contribution relative à la pêche en lac* (Québec: Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Faune, 1996).

Ouiatchouan and the Ouiatchouaniche and all its lakes and head-waters, the Ashuapmouchouan, the Mistiassini and the Peribonka and all their tributaries.”⁷⁶

There he established the Roberval Fish and Game Club. Roberval was a less homogeneous club, having a collection of American, British and Canadian members. The club members purposely tried to make their club special by building its mystique around the unique fish that inhabited the waters of their holdings: the ouananiche. The club wrote that their “capping attraction, and one so strong that it alone would offer a sufficient reason for a great club, is the fact that the Association’s waterways are those of the noblest fish that swims. There is certainly no more alluring music to a sportsmen’s ear than the tripping syllables that form the name, ouananiche. Every angler longs to whip the clear, cold waters where this noble fish awaits a struggle with anyone worthy his hardy spirit.”⁷⁷

The many rivers on the Gaspé Peninsula also began attracting the attention of wealthy and adventurous Americans. One particular river, the Grand Cascapedia, became a focal point for the discriminating salmon angler. The Grand Cascapedia begins in the glacially worn Schick-Shock Mountains and falls approximately 800 feet as it winds down to its mouth in Chaleurs Bay. Again, the British had fished there first, including William H. Vennings, Inspector of Fisheries for Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and Reverend William Agar, along with British officers posted in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick such as Captain George Campbell and Lieutenant Richard

⁷⁶ H. J. Beemer, *A Guide to the Lake St. John and its Tributary Waters* ([Montréal]: Published for H. J. Beemer by J. Lovell, 1894), no pagination; Herbert Houston, *The Roberval Fish and Game Association, in the Home of the Ouananiche: A Book Descriptive of the Association’s Vast Preserves in the Lake St. John Region of Quebec* (New York: Outing Publishing, 1910), 4.

⁷⁷ Houston, *The Roberval Fish and Game Association, in the Home of the Ouananiche*, 3-4.

Dashwood.⁷⁸ Together, Vennings and Agar would discover many of the 150 named salmon pools that dotted the bay's 42-mile length.⁷⁹ In 1879, a special "palace car" carrying the newly arrived Governor General of Canada, John Douglas Sutherland Campbell, known as the Marquess of Lorne, and his wife, the Princess Louise Alberta Caroline, arrived at the Cascapedia. Ottawa granted the Marquess a large part of the river and many of those pools as a part of the privileges of his office. The Governor General and his wife, and subsequent Governor Generals to follow, may have been royalty and representatives of the British Crown in Canada, but for the Americans who had already been leasing many parts of the Cascapedia, they were a threat to their own privileges. Successive Governor Generals who believed that Canada's valuable salmon rivers and pools were being leased too cheaply to Americans attempted to curb their influence. Many American anglers felt that they had legitimate claims to their leases and that the government was simply trying to push them out. In the end, the British Supreme Court would need to settle the controversy. That issue will be examined in more detail in the next chapter.⁸⁰

What remains indisputable is that all over Québec, freshwaters used by anglers, whether they be the holdings of prestigious clubs like the Triton or reserves for royal Governors, were becoming gathering places for the elite where wealth and privilege was being employed to make their Anglers' Eden exclusively theirs and around which not only a new tourism infrastructure was being developed, but a new social system that

⁷⁸ Richard Dashwood wrote his own angling monograph, entitled *Chiploquargan; or, Life by the Camp Fire in the Dominion of Canada and Newfoundland*. For a discussion of this see: Neil Forkey "Anglers, Fishers, and the St. Croix River: Conflict in a Canadian-American Borderland, 1867-1900," *Forest and Conservation History* 37, no. 4 (1993): 179-87.

⁷⁹ Hoagy Carmicheal, *The Grand Cascapedia River: A History*, vol. 1 (North Salem, NY: Anesha Publishing, 2006), 6-9.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 27-40.

echoed Québec's French heritage.⁸¹ Noble men and their noble fish had become the core of a new North American *apiri-daeza*. There, these "lords of the fly rod" were carving up the landscape into sporting enclaves large and small, reminiscent of the old *seigneurs* of New France.

3.5 Conclusion

In contrast to the Amerindians and the French, the English possessed a clearly defined culture of fishing for sport, and they carried that culture with them to Canada after 1763. That Anglo "angling" tradition had evolved in an English socio-political and environmental context where access to water and fish, combined with a legal system and a literary heritage, made fish and water valuable features of elite leisure. It was the link between angling and the written word that proved the most transformative, however. Guidebooks about fish keeping and fish catching that were intended to be part of schemes of improvement were eventually incorporated into the proto-Romantic writings of Izaak Walton, the author who would become angling's most endearing voice.

Those ideas about the value of nature connected to the English culture of angling merged easily within Québec's own environmental features. British anglers, many of whom wore the livery of the conquering soldier, were already adapting those notions to the unique aquatic habitats and cultural realities found in North America, which in many ways they found superior even to the English landscape. Most importantly, the monographs of British anglers reveal that the initial epicentre of the new Anglers' Eden was to be found in the waters located within a few days' ride outside of their garrisons,

⁸¹ Jean-Francois Hébert, "Le Château Saguenay et les débuts du tourisme au Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean," *Saguenayensia* 40, no. 1 (1998): 3-17.

such as the one in Quebec City, and the interest in fish species was clearly focused on large salmon and trout.

By the second half of the nineteenth century, the Anglers' Eden was being appropriated by a new group of anglers from the United States. The campaign to control the salmon rivers and trout pools of Canada by the American commercial elite, who had their own ties to the Waltonian tradition, was largely successful. Angling tourism with an eye to adventure was followed by direct purchase and private lease of the rivers, lakes and streams of Québec. Wealthy sportsmen exercised domination over the land through long-term leases from the Provincial government upon which they built up their private paradisiacal enclaves. The largest and most exclusive of these clubs were controlled by wealthy Americans from the nation's urban centers, who created neo-seigniorial sporting domains, both large and small, governed by their own constitutions and by-laws that infused nature with their own elitist values.

As will be seen in the chapters of the next section, the province did more than simply grant land, it built an auxiliary relationship with elite anglers. It would be a relationship between a group of people who not only saw the landscape in idyllic terms, but also believed that they had their own unique ability to understand the waters and the fish and their ability to conserve and improve aquatic habitats. That relationship, intended to be mutually beneficial for both anglers and the State, would be transformative of all the groups within the Anglers' Eden.

PART II: FASHIONING AND PRESERVING EDEN

CHAPTER 4

Hooking Anglers to the State: Appropriation, Promotion and Improvement of the “Anglers’ Eden”

Nature - “Either she is free and develops herself in her own ordinary course [...] or she is constrained and molded by art and human ministry.”¹

- Francis Bacon

The mid-nineteenth century saw a growing interest in aquatic habitats, which expanded to groups beyond the narrow circle of elite anglers. The invention of large public aquaria gave ordinary people a glimpse of the world beneath the waters.² Oceans, rivers and lakes were being observed more systematically through the empirical studies of natural scientists such as Georges Cuvier and Achilles Valenciennes. Their studies came to be vulgarized by new magazines of popular science and in the science fiction of men like Jules Verne.³ At the same time, governments in England, France and the United States became increasingly interested in exploring their coastal and freshwater resources, better organizing them and improving them to make them more efficient and profitable. In Lower Canada, men like Pierre Fortin, a Member of Parliament from Gaspé, made attempts to create oyster beds in the Gaspé Peninsula in order to diversify the economy for his constituents. At nearly the same time, Richard Nettle, Superintendent of Fisheries of Lower Canada, experimented with fish culture in his back

¹ James Spedding and Robert Leslie Ellis, ed., *The Works of Francis Bacon*, Vol. VIII (London: Longman, 1861-1879).

² Vernon N. Kisling, *Zoo and Aquarium History: Ancient Animal Collections to Zoological Gardens* (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2001).

³ Jules Verne, *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers* (Paris: J. Hetzel, 1871). Verne vulgarized the concept in his science fiction story largely inspired by the work of French naturalists like Cuvier. One of Verne’s characters in the novel was Ned Land a master harpooner from Quebec.

garden.⁴ This was the atmosphere in which State bureaucrats began paying closer attention to those men who had come north with their rods in search of fish and experiences.

4.1 The State Appropriation of “Eden”

In the most basic sense, both elite anglers and provincial government officials saw the aquatic landscape in the same way: as valuable natural resources. Unlike anglers who saw those resources in terms of idyllic landscapes and sublime experiences, the provincial officials were far more pragmatic. The natural aquatic landscape was to become a corollary of terrestrial resource exploitation like forestry and mining, which harnessed nature to the infrastructure of the State. To become part of the economy, however, the State had to link elite anglers’ values to a physical space that could be delineated, qualified and quantified. Therefore, the values of elite anglers became the central pillar around which the new fishery would be fashioned. Laws assimilated their values and gave the State the full authority to control, and profit from, angling. Bureaucratic agents appropriated the anglers’ rhetoric and romantic ideals concerning nature and the aquatic landscape. And, through the application of modern techniques of fish culture, the biological character of the fishery itself could be modified to match anglers’ expectations.

The earliest and most coherent vision for the integration of the province’s freshwater habitats into a new cultural landscape for angling is found in 1857, within the

⁴ Brian Stewart, *A Life on the Line: Commander Pierre-Étienne Fortin and his Times* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1997).

pages of Richard Nettle's *The Salmon Fisheries of the St. Lawrence and its tributaries*.⁵ Nettle was appointed to the post of Superintendent of Fisheries of Lower Canada that same year. Most historians who have examined Nettle's text have judged it demonstrative of a new concern for conservation in North America.⁶ Indeed, those concerns are abundant. In 144 pages, Nettle makes passionate pleas to stop the destruction of fisheries resources, and the text is full of quotable material to support the conclusion that his work was primarily a call for conservation. Nettle concluded that the problem of salmon decline was "man," who "had commenced a war of extermination, hunted...with nets of all description—with spear, with hook, with lister [or, leister], poisoned them with lime, spearing them by torch-light—mangling and wounding as many as he killed—and to crown all—denied them a right of way, by building dams—and thus destroyed their fisheries indeed."⁷ Nettle's discourse borrowed heavily from the rhetoric of American and British sportsmen, who had already been used to the near-total destruction of the salmon fisheries in England and the United States, as an example of the consequences of inaction.⁸

Read in its entirety, however, the text reveals much more than a call for conservation of a single fish species; it is also a study of a change in values and in the ways in which another part of the landscape would be brought within the socio-economic boundaries of the State. As both a passionate angler and a dedicated civil servant, Nettle saw the aquatic landscape in dualistic terms. It was both the romantic

⁵ Richard Nettle, *The Salmon Fisheries of the St. Lawrence and its Tributaries* (Montréal: John Lovell, 1857). A lister is a spear with three or more prongs used for harpooning fish.

⁶ Donald J. Pisani, "Fish Culture and the Dawn of Concern over Water Pollution in the United States," *Environmental Review* 8, no. 2 (1984): 117-31; John Reiger, *American Sportsman and the Origins of Conservation* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2001).

⁷ Nettle, *The Salmon Fisheries of the St. Lawrence and its Tributaries*, 8-9.

⁸ *Ibid.*

idea encapsulated by anglers' experiences and a discernable property of the State where both interest groups understood its value. At the same time, it was a place where some understood its value and others did not. It was also a landscape inhabited by (in Nettle's words) "good" and "evil" people, which largely translated into "anglers" and "non-anglers."

For Nettle, the "evil" men who "kill, burn, and mutilate every fish that ventures up our river" using nets and harpoons and the tools of "wanton destruction" were comprised mostly of common people and Amerindians.⁹ In opposition were the "good" anglers: literate men of culture and wealth who "angled" with rods and flies and employed a system of "fair play." Best of all were the foreign anglers who came to Lower Canada, who "sketched and fished to their hearts content," spent large sums of money and "within three months, [were] again seated; each by his own fireside, recording his adventures to his admiring, but less fortunate friends."¹⁰ In the same dualistic terms, Nettle described the rivers of the Gaspé and North Shore regions in unmistakably Edenic and providential ways. Nevertheless, he also saw those same places through the eyes of an agent of the State. The "salmon-filled" waters were "richer than gold—more valuable than the mines of Australia and California combined—a never failing source; a nation's wealth, contained within the bosom of the waters that lave your shores—God's special gift to man [...]."¹¹

Nettle the angler wished to save salmon for the sake of his craft. As the Superintendent of Fisheries, he wanted to protect a valuable natural resource. Salmon were the main attraction for anglers, but anglers appealed to sentimentalities in calls for

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 5,58.

¹¹ Ibid., 86.

their preservation. Bureaucrats appealed to State authority. Nettle saw the law as the only solution to “protect and conserve” salmon and other valuable game fish for the angler, and by extension, protect a valuable source of provincial revenue. The most fundamental of these laws would be the *Act for the Protection of Fisheries in Lower Canada*, signed into British law on the 30th of May, 1855, and admitted to the Statutes of Canada in 1858. The “Fisheries Act” (and subsequent Canadian statutes) was a broad measure that mostly dealt with provisions for control over commercial fishing.¹² Yet its specific provisions for the prohibition of killing, possessing or selling of the two most important freshwater game fish in Québec, salmon and trout, between the beginning of October and February, began a process of State recognition and management of a fishery for sport. It also outlawed the taking of such fish by nets, barriers or any other “self-acting” machine, or the use of torchlight and other light sources used at night to attract large fish to the surface. Later amendments would outlaw a broader range of fishing activities, including poisons and explosives. The amendment created new agents, wardens and guardians, with the authority to enforce the laws. Wardens and guardians could fine or even jail anyone breaking the fisheries laws.¹³ These laws and Nettle’s influence would have enormous consequences on both people and aquatic habitats; I will examine both in detail in Chapters 5 and 6. It suffices to state here that like the anglers’ hierarchy, the State’s own legal intervention was another attempt to apply a new human order to aquatic habitats and ecological systems.

¹² Canada, The Fishery Act, 1858, *The Statutes of Canada*. (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1858), 276-89; Canada. An Act for the Regulation of Fisheries and Protection of Fisheries, *Acts of Parliament of Canada*. (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1868), 177-93.

¹³ Nettle, *The Salmon Fisheries of the St. Lawrence and its Tributaries*, 125-26.

Historians are correct in seeing Nettle's writings as a seminal call for conservation. What it was not, however, was a call for the conservation of a sport fishery; no such fishery existed in any official capacity. In fact, the word "fishery" still applied to all acts of fish-catching in all waters, both marine and fresh. Nettle was the superintendent over all fishing activities in Lower Canada. It was his own personal interest in angling, and his understanding of the value of fish seen as "game," that underlay his appeals for protection of game fish. His initiative, however, was significant in moving the law in a direction that would provide the basis for the creation of a specifically delineated freshwater fishery for sport in Québec.

It would not be until 1867, when the *British North America Act* established the Dominion of Canada and the Province of Québec, that the possibility of such a fishery even arose. The Act granted ownership over all natural resources, as well as the right to exploit and manage natural resources as they best saw fit, to the new provinces that it created.¹⁴ Nevertheless, it left great ambiguity surrounding the definition of waters used for fishing, which would cause questions to arise concerning State jurisdiction and even private ownership of water. Much of the problem arose from the fact that anglers perceived the landscape in far different ways than the State. In Canada, as part of the legal inheritance of the British Empire, the State first saw bodies of water in terms of their military and economic importance. Bodies of water were either "navigable" or "non-navigable," based upon their utility as trade routes or avenues of attack. All navigable waters, for reasons of commerce and defence, therefore fell under the

¹⁴ H. Raymond Samuels, ed., *Toward a Federal Union of Canada: Reproduction of the British North America Act, 1867, and Other Selected Canadian Constitutional Documents in Original Presentations* (Ottawa: Agora Cosmopolitan, 2003). Resources on Amerindian reserves remained under the control of the Federal government in Ottawa.

jurisdiction of the federal government. Yet what exactly constituted a “navigable” body of water remained open to interpretation, and, once more, the law said nothing about all the other myriad “non-navigable” waters that fell outside the scope of federal interest.¹⁵

Yet, for the angler, the strategic importance lay in the kinds of species the waters contained. Salmon rivers were far more “strategic and important” by their terms. Moreover, the first wave of anglers who had come to Lower Canada could take advantage of special legal circumstances there to occupy as many of those places as possible. Unlike in the rest of Canada, where British Common Law dictated riparian rights, in Lower Canada and later Québec, land owners fronting non-navigable waters could grant, lease or even sell the fishing rights separately to other parties. Effectively, one person could own the land, and a different person could own the right to fish the waters adjoining them. Not surprisingly, when it came to enforcing laws like the *Fisheries Act*, this system led to a great deal of confusion.

A number of legal cases in the 1880s succeeded in clarifying water rights in Québec. They also had a secondary effect of permitting the province to broaden its jurisdictional footprint over the aquatic landscape, and gave anglers the opportunity to assert their own interests. The first was a judgement in the British Supreme Court in the case of *The Queen vs. Robertson* (1882), which led to the award of jurisdiction over all fishing rights in waters bounded by crown lands to the provincial government in Québec.¹⁶ Two years later, in 1884, the Province of Québec exercised its option to adopt a system of property rights derived from the French Civil Code that extended its legal control over all territory abutting non-navigable rivers “three chains-lengths of

¹⁵ “Québec Attorney General v. Healy, [1987] 1 S.C.R. 158,” in *Judgements of the Supreme Court of Canada*, <http://csc.lexum.umontreal.ca/>. Date consulted 14 June, 2002.

¹⁶ *The Queen v. Robertson*, (1882) 6 S. C. R. 52.

land (60 m) inland from the shoreline." Officially called *La réserve légale des trois chaînes*, it gave all rights, including the right of access for fishing, to the province, with the caveat that all private leases in effect prior to the application of the law could remain in effect.¹⁷

These two laws effectively nullified the English Common Law understanding of riparian rights by placing all rights to non-navigable rivers "not already owned by private individuals" under the jurisdiction of the province; fishing rights in lakes were officially included within the law in 1918. The government was now effectively the owner and manager of all of the land abutting non-navigable waters. It could regulate, control, sell or lease those lands and the adjoining waters as it pleased. This meant that, from now on, anglers would be negotiating all their leases, not with private individuals, but with the province.

A desire for sublime experiences within Québec's aquatic landscape may have motivated anglers, but the State had altogether different reasons for becoming an auxiliary agent to the anglers' interests. Anglers and the province may have been inadvertently inched closer together through the gradual legal control over aquatic habitats, but they also became closely connected by a political ideology of economic expansion through the exploitation of natural resources. While the granting of large and exclusive tracts of land and waters to fish and game clubs started in the 1880s, the relationship between the angler and Québec's provincial government only really began

¹⁷ *Réserve des trois chaînes et gestion du domaine public foncier au Québec*, 8 S. C. R. 101 (1977). For a more complete study of water rights in Québec, see: Henri Brun, *Histoire du droit québécois de l'eau (1663-1969)* (Québec: Commission d'étude des problèmes juridiques de l'eau, 1969).

to intensify near the turn of the century, reaching a crescendo with the political shift in 1897 that brought the Liberals to power for the next 39 years.¹⁸

That period would see the adoption of a broad policy of environmental exploitation that many have defined as *laissez-faire*.¹⁹ This policy included a push towards a broader, and more scientific, development of agriculture, mining and forestry. State agents conducted surveys of mineral, forestry and animal resources and adopted new policies to re-invigorate the commercial fisheries through standardization and education. Finally, the government encouraged the development of new industries such as lobster fishing and fur farming.²⁰ The integration of anglers into provincial efforts to broaden the economy fell squarely within the agenda of the Liberal government.

Yet for a number reasons the use of *laissez-faire* to describe that program of natural resource exploitation is problematic. It was evident that Liberals within the government and their appointed agents understood that a landscape once described as a place of limitless bounty by early French explorers and missionaries had already undergone noticeable, and sometimes deleterious, environmental changes. Previous governance had put few controls over resources other than seigniorial duties. People simply harvested wild animals, timber and plants as they wished. Richard Nettle's call to protect salmon during the 1850s had terrestrial parallels. As the human population grew and expanded into new areas, species that were once easy to find, such as moose,

¹⁸ Paul-André Linteau et al., *Quebec: A History (1867-1929)* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1983).

¹⁹ James Iain Gow, "Histoire de l'administration québécoise: chronologie des programmes de l'État du Québec (1867-1970)" (Université de Montréal, Département de sciences politiques. Notes de recherche n° 1, 1980).

²⁰ E. T. D. Chambers, *Fur Farming in the Province of Quebec: Describing the Most Approved Methods for Propagating Foxes and Other Fur Bearing Animals in the Province of Quebec* (Québec: Department of Colonization, Mines and Fisheries, 1913); Keith W. Hewitt, "Exploring Uncharted Waters: Government's Role in the Development of Newfoundland's Cod, Lobster and Herring Fisheries, 1888-1913" (Masters Thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1992).

deer, ducks and birds, became less common. The once numerous wapiti disappeared completely from Eastern Canada, and the passenger pigeon, once numbering in the billions and whose migrations through the province had once darkened the skies, was already well on the road to extinction.²¹

Those facts were sensitizing officials to the reality that the so-called “invisible hand” of capitalism could be ruinous to the long-term interests of the State.²² By the early 1880s, the provincial government had recognized a need to check the use of its natural resources. Paul-Louis Martin has described this as a new “ecological consciousness” growing out of a desire not to repeat the same destructive decisions that had been made in regards to national resources in Europe and the United States.²³ Intimately related to these concerns was the 1883 act that permitted the creation of sportsmen’s fish and game clubs for the protection of fish and game. The act gave a three-dimensional framework for the blueprint for the sport fishery laid out by Richard Nettle nearly thirty years prior, and spoke to the purpose of the State’s privileging of the anglers’ agenda. Through their exclusive arrangements, anglers and the State would become partners in a mutually beneficial relationship.²⁴ For the province, granting of large tracts of land to clubs like the Triton, Roberval and Cascapedia and other “sportsmen’s clubs” was not merely a scheme designed to profit financially from the

²¹ Gordon C. Hewitt, *The Conservation of the Wildlife of Canada* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921).

²² For more information on Liberal conservation efforts, see: Yves Hébert, “Conservation, culture, et identité : La création du parc des Laurentides et du Parc de la Montagne Tremblante, 1894-1938,” in John S. Marsh & Bruce W. Hodgins, ed. *Changing Parks: The History, Future and Cultural Context of Parks and Heritage Landscapes* (Toronto: Natural Heritage/Natural History, 1998), 141-60; Michel F. Girard, *L'écologisme retrouvé : essor et déclin de la Commission de la Conservation du Canada* (Ottawa: Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1994).

²³ Martin, *La chasse au Québec*, p. 81, 84-90.

²⁴ *Rapport du Ministre de la Colonisation, des Mines et des Pêcheries de la Province de Québec. 1916*, 133; *Acte pour faciliter la formation en cette province de clubs pour la protection du poisson et du gibier*, S. R. Q. 48 Vic. C. 12, art. 5493 (1885).

sporting interests of *les riches étrangers*, it provided a policy of good stewardship of Crown lands and waters. If anglers received access to some of the most attractive angling destinations on Earth, in exchange, the State could count on them to protect their own interests by protecting the fish resources on their leases.

The mutual benefits of the relationship between State officials and private anglers was clearly underscored in a promotional government document entitled *The Fish and Game Clubs of the Province of Québec: What They Mean to the Province. What Privileges They Enjoy*. Therein, the unknown author laid out the key “advantage” of allying themselves with the interests of the sporting elite:

Without the efficient protection afforded by the members of these clubs and by the guardianship which they are required to maintain over the territory entrusted to their care, large tracts of country now serving as fish and game preserves, whence large game, fur, fin, and feather overflow into the surrounding woods and waters, would now be destitute of game and game fishes.²⁵

For the State, a landscape “reserved” for the elite sportsman was a landscape “preserved.” Here, State officials did not necessarily mean to use the word preserve as an indication of keeping the landscape in its natural state. Rather, preserve meant to keep the fish and game resources in a healthy state for future generations. Here was encapsulated the central argument that would be echoed by State bureaucrats for the next generation.

Elite sportsmen, including anglers, however, were not just guardians of the game. They were leaders in a movement that would bring about positive improvement of otherwise ungoverned wilderness space. The same government document noted: “Many clubs and private individuals erect comfortable camps upon their leased fish and game

²⁵ *The Fish and Game Clubs of the Province of Québec: What They Mean to the Province. What Privileges They Enjoy* (Québec: Minister of Colonization, Mines and Fisheries, 1914), 7.

preserves, and some of them have erected really luxurious summer homes in the gorgeous woods of our entrancingly beautiful North Country, often overlooking a charming bit of lake or river scenery.”²⁶ The province viewed club construction, not just of clubhouses but of roads, trails and portages, as improvements that added value to Crown lands.

The same promotional document highlighted just how profitable the arrangement was in terms of the economy as well. The author proclaimed: “An estimate made a few years ago [...] pointed out that in one year nearly eleven hundred non-resident anglers purchased licenses for fishing with rod and line in the Province. About two hundred of them were salmon fisherman who paid \$25 each for their licenses.”²⁷ But the author did not fail to note that direct revenue earned from leases and licensing represented only “a very small fraction...of their actual money value to the province.”²⁸ Anglers were, in every sense of the word, tourists who added value to the economy from the moment they crossed the border. The author of the above report wrote: “One American salmon fisherman claims that each of his fishing trips to the province of Québec costs him over \$4,000.”²⁹ This included “costs for fishing rights, [...] traveling expenses in Canada, [...] hotel bills, guides, canoes, camps and equipments, supplies, etc.”³⁰

Provincial officials recognized that anglers brought value to a part of the landscape that had been otherwise unprofitable and left to unchecked exploitation. By evaluating the landscape through the eyes and interests of anglers, the State had completed the transformation from a cultural space used by anglers to a legal and

²⁶ Ibid., 5.

²⁷ Ibid., 8.

²⁸ Ibid., 8-9.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., 9.

economic entity within the boundaries of State control known as the “sport fishery.” Although the actual word “sport fishery” only appeared in an official government document in 1914, by that time its overall annual revenue was estimated at over 2 million dollars, a figure surpassing the value of all the commercial fishing operations in the Province of Québec.³¹

4.2 The Provincial Promotion of “Eden”

While government officials became increasingly sensitized to the need for conservation and convinced themselves that elite sportsmen were a practical solution, angling tourists would not be attracted by alarmist cries by government agents that game fish were becoming more difficult to find. Anglers were attracted specifically to the province by the promise of having unique experience in paradisiacal environments like those described in the pages of angling monographs written by men like Frederick Tolfrey, Charles Lanman and others.

Increasingly, the provincial government began to play the role that earlier anglers had once played in publicizing and promoting new angling haunts. In 1897, the provincial ministry published an in-depth ichthyological survey of the North shore by one of its special agents, Henri de Puyjalon. Therein, De Puyjalon boasted that “the number and quality of fish species that inhabit the waters of this province, as well as their habits and character will attract the interest of sportsmen.”³² Such a remarkable

³¹ The use of this term is first found in: E. T. D. Chambers, “The Province of Quebec: Inland and Sporting Fisheries,” in Adam Shortt and Arthur G. Doughty, ed. *Canada and its Provinces: A History of the Canadian People and Their Institutions by One Hundred Associates* (Toronto: T. & A. Constable, Edinburgh University Press, 1914), 561. In 1911-12, the value of all the commercial fisheries in Quebec were evaluated at \$1,868,000.

³² *Rapport du Commissaire des Terres, des Forêts et des Pêcheries de la province de Québec. 1897*, 72-74.

statement demonstrated that the purpose of the survey was perhaps more commercially than scientifically inspired. The response to it by provincial officials was equally illustrative. Officials in the Department of Hunting and Fishing hailed the discovery of this great abundance of fish species as a potential source of new revenue. Yet just as they understood the limited nature of their fish resources, they too acknowledged that the number of elite angling tourists with the ability to travel and pay for memberships and licences was equally limited.

That belief in the tourist as limited resource lay at the heart of a new, carefully constructed campaign that would target elite sportsmen. The superintendent of the Department of Hunting and Fishing, Louis Zéphérin Joncas, had studied the tourism industry in the neighbouring province of New Brunswick. He remarked to his superior, the Minister of Lands, Forests, and Fisheries:

For two or three years now, our neighbour, the province of New Brunswick, has not spared any expense to make known the riches of its wildlife and game fish through advertisements in sporting journals in the United States and England, illustrated brochures distributed by the thousands, nothing has been neglected. It has had much effect, because in only a few months, the number of sportsmen visiting New Brunswick has been augmented by ten.³³

Joncas believed that Québec risked losing revenue from sporting tourists if it failed to keep pace with its neighbouring province. Taking up the matter personally, he penned the first detailed provincial pamphlet to target affluent sportsmen. His 132-page text titled *The Sportsman's Companion, showing the haunts of the moose, caribou and deer, also of the salmon, ouananiche and trout, in the Province of Québec, and how to reach them* was both a guide to the province and a shrewd piece of promotional literature.

³³ *Rapport du Commissaire des Terres, des Forêts et des Pêcheries de la province de Québec. 1898, 36.*

While targeting all sportsmen, its descriptions were as appealing to the romantic imagery of elite anglers as elite hunters. It opened with the following statement:

There is a land which is justly known as the Angler's and Huntsman's Paradise—A Paradise twenty times greater than was the Eden of Mesopotamia, since it covers 330,000 acres of territory, watered by thousands of lakes and by hundreds of streams larger than the largest rivers of Europe.... This land—this sportsman's paradise—is the Province of Québec, a magnificent extent of country dived by one of the noblest water courses in the world, and affording, in its boundless virgin forests, and in its waters, fresh and salt, the greatest varieties of game and fish.³⁴

Of course, the guidebook makes no mention of the swarms of black flies and mosquitoes that were an accepted part of the anglers' sublime experiences. Nevertheless, this text was a masterful piece of early provincial tourism advertising, because it sought to attract anglers by adopting the Edenic imagery that they had been employing since the early part of the century. Moreover, it is notable that Joncas did not write the book alone. Indeed, the prose of the second author, Edward Thomas Davies Chambers (better known simply as "E. T. D."), is so distinctive, that it is likely that it was he, not Joncas, who wrote most of it, if not all of it, himself (See Figure 14). The use of Chambers as an author and authority in a government-sponsored tourist guide marked a remarkable shift in provincial efforts to market the aquatic landscape to anglers, because he was a well-known authority on Québec's fish and game and the sporting community in England and the United States. His influence in the formation of the sport fishery would be so profound that we need to look at his life in more detail.

³⁴ Louis-Zéphérin Joncas and Edward Thomas Davies Chambers, "Preface," *The Sportsman's Companion: Showing the Haunts of the Moose, Caribou and Deer, Also the Salmon, Ouananiche and Trout in the Province of Quebec and How to Reach Them* (Québec: Department of Lands, Forests, and Fisheries, 1899), no pagination.

In 1913, the Englishman the Right Honourable Sir Herbert Maxwell published a limited-edition collection of angling treatises and stories from around the world called *Fishing at Home and Abroad*.³⁵ The frontispiece bore the portrait of His Majesty King George V and offered its gratitude to a long list of Russian and English Dukes, Earls and high-ranking military officers. The author who penned the account of Canada was none other than E. T. D. Chambers, who Maxwell simply called “an experienced fisherman.”³⁶ Maxwell clearly saved his best adjectives for the noble figures in his gilt-edged tome. Chambers was not a nobleman, but he was much more than an “experienced fisherman.” He was the man who would use the term “sport fishery” in an official document in conjunction with Québec’s angling tourism. Through his writings, he would be the first to successfully merge the uniquely-defined Edenic space esteemed by foreign anglers into the economic sphere of the State.

³⁵ Sir Herbert Maxwell, ed., *Fishing at Home and Abroad* (London: London and Counties Press, 1913).

³⁶ *Ibid.*

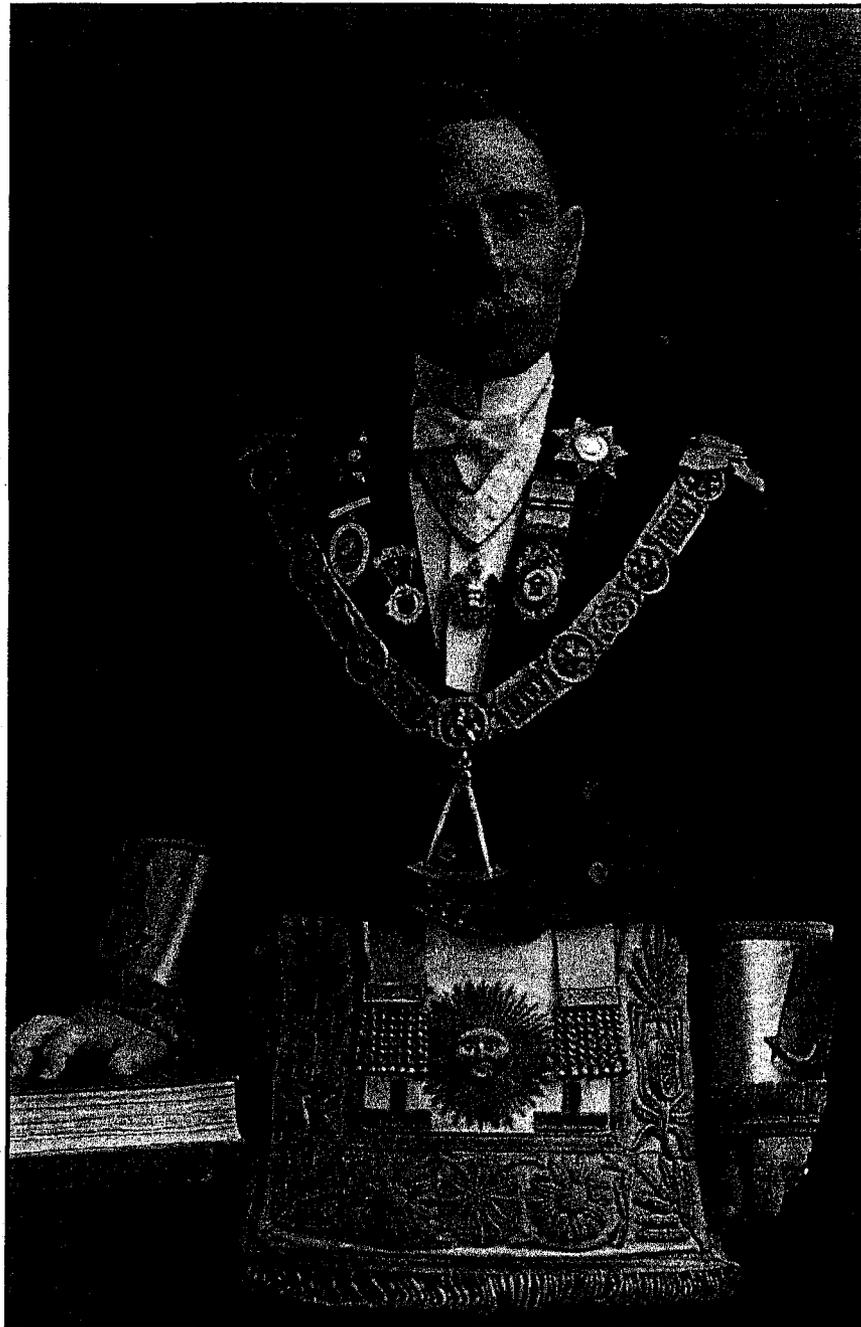


Figure 14: Edward Thomas Davies (E. T. D.) Chambers

Chambers is photographed in his Masonic regalia. His role as Grand Master mason in Québec perhaps helped him gain greater influence within the social economy of Québec City, and even the United States, than he may have achieved simply as a journalist.

Source: From the Crary Family Collection. Courtesy of Lowell Crary.

Born to a humble middle-class family in Sussex, England, in 1852, E. T. D. Chambers had come to Canada with his parents and elder brother as a young man, in 1870. The family came to Canada, like so many other English immigrants, in search of opportunities, and they settled in the small community of St. Andrew's, Québec, located in the county of Argenteuil. Chambers initially found employment as a teacher, spending time as the Principal of the Model School at St. Andrews and of the Academy at Granby, but his interest eventually turned to journalism and writing. In 1872, he established *The Progress*, the first newspaper in the county of Argenteuil. His English-language paper sought to address "questions of most vital importance to the prosperity of the country," including the "promotion of native industry," while promising to "scrupulously" avoid matters of religion and to "never become subservient to the selfish ends of party cliques and scheming intriguers."³⁷ *The Progress*, perhaps, avoided too many things of interest to its readers, as it folded only a few years later. Nevertheless, the experience proved sufficient for Chambers to get himself hired on the editorial staff of Québec's *Daily Chronicle*, where he would work for nearly twenty years, eventually becoming the paper's Chief Editor.³⁸

In addition to writing for the newspaper, Chambers developed a personal interest in the life of the city and its hinterlands, particularly the subjects of tourism and the unique fauna of Québec. More and more, Chambers dedicated his time to the "promotion of native industry" through activities devoted to the integration of the province's natural and wildlife resources into a new provincial industry of tourism. In

³⁷ E. T. D. Chambers, "Editorial," *The Progress* (August 7, 1874): 1.

³⁸ Henry Morgan, *Canadian Men and Women of our Time: A Handbook of Canadian Biography of Living Character* (Toronto: W. Briggs, 1912), 218; Stewart W. Wallace, *The MacMillan Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: MacMillan, 1963), 128.

that regard, the period from 1890 to 1904 would prove the most prolific for Chambers. Between those years, he authored or co-authored at least twenty major articles, five tourist guidebooks and a 350-page book on what was Québec's most distinctive game fish, the ouananiche. Within all of that work was the common theme of Québec's unique history, its picturesque scenery and the prolific fauna. Moreover, most of those articles were published within the pages of most of the popular American, British and Canadian periodicals, standards such as *Saturday Night*, *The World's Work*, *Canadian Magazine*, *Harper's Weekly*, *Forest and Stream*, *Shooting and Fishing*, *American Sportsman*, *Rod and Gun in Canada* and *The Land We Live In*, as well as a host of others.³⁹

His very accurate, detailed and interesting descriptions of Canada in general, and Québec more specifically, made his a recognizable and respected name among the elite angling literati in both the US and Europe. What made Chambers popular and, more importantly, trusted was his profound comprehension of the Waltonian soul of the craft of angling. His writing employed the romantic language of elite sportsmen better than any ordinary bureaucrat could ever have hoped to accomplish. Most importantly, he knew that those considering Québec as a place in which to partake in the "contemplative man's recreation" hoped to find more than large and vigorous game fish at the end of the rail-road line; they desired a unique experience. Chambers's flamboyant prose promised exactly that. His popular guidebooks did not simply inform the discriminating angler that Québec was a good place to fish. Rather, he wrote of its waters "set like gems in the midst of forests as yet hardly touched by the axe, and teeming with speckled trout, lake

³⁹ Many articles in these popular magazines were published without the author's name. In Chamber's case, nearly all of his work found in popular media consisted of feature articles in which his name was prominently displayed with his work.

trout, and black bass of rapacity and size to thrill with joy the heart of the angler accustomed only to the shy and puny denizens of their [native] streams.”⁴⁰ The significance of the latter would not have been lost on his American and European audience, in whose own countries such places were becoming very hard to find and even harder to access.

Chambers, like Joncas, understood that wealthy anglers had many choices, not just in Québec but other places in Canada, like New Brunswick, and other destinations around the world, such as South Africa, Norway and Iceland. Anglers, like their prey, had to be lured, even tricked. If the principal lure for a trout or salmon were a fly, it found its counterpart for the foreign angler in the descriptive guidebook. Usually published in collaboration with the most powerful agencies of the late-twentieth century, governments and railroad companies, these detailed guidebooks were without a doubt the most important media for State promotion of tourism before the widespread use of radio and television.⁴¹

The Sportsman's Companion, like other guidebooks, did not merely inform tourists, but also commercialized the government's natural and urban landscapes. It was also written to attract a specific audience. Provincial officials may have been desirous to cast as broad a net as possible, but they knew that their best opportunities lay in attracting anglers closest to home. In the case of *The Sportsman's Companion* it was, “our American friends to the south of us,” who were “always on the look out for a good

⁴⁰ W. H. Fuller and E. T. D. Chambers, “Sports and Pastimes” in Karl Baedekar, ed. *Baedekar's Canada: The Dominion of Canada with Newfoundland and Excursions to Alaska* (London: Daulau, 1894), 54.

⁴¹ For more on the use of tourist guidebooks in nineteenth-century Canada, see: Patricia Jasen, *Wild Things: Nature, Culture, and Tourism in Ontario, 1790-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995). A review of the use of guidebooks in Quebec between 1815 and 1880 can be found in Serge Courville, Jean-Claude Robert and Normand Séguin, “L'infrastructure touristique appréhendée à travers les guides touristiques et les annuaires,” *Le Pays laurentien au XIX^e siècle* (Université Laval, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, Université du Québec à Montréal, Rapport de recherche, Cahier I, 1992).

thing.”⁴² Polluted and degraded rivers in the northeast played a role, but there were other more deeply psychological reasons. Americans living in the closing years of the nineteenth century may have been “quick to see the advantages” because they were in the midst of seeing their own wilderness giving way to westward advance. As historian Thomas Dunlap noted, many embarked on a great search for new “arena for forming and testing the character of Americans that would substitute for [their] now vanishing frontier.”⁴³ Part of this impulse would result in the creation of the immense national parks in the United States like Yosemite and Yellowstone. It also caused affluent sportsmen to come to Québec.

It was not just that Québec represented a surrogate wilderness. Americans, especially in the Northeast, had come to see something especially exotic and fascinating about Québec’s cultural landscape.⁴⁴ Images of the French-speaking *habitant* harkened back nostalgically to another age. Authors exploited that image and the French-Canadian community as a whole.⁴⁵ American Charles H. Farnham referred to the people of Québec in an 1883 *Harper’s Magazine* article as a “picturesque peasantry.”⁴⁶ Even those few Americans who made sincere attempts to understand the French-Canadian culture, such as William Parker Greenough in his *Canadian Life and Folklore*,

⁴² Chambers, *The Sportsman's Companion*.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 7. Thomas R. Dunlap, *Saving America's Wildlife: Ecology and the American Mind, 1850-1990* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 6.

⁴⁴ Henry P. Wells, *The American Salmon Fisherman* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1886), 44-45; John J. Rowan, *The Emigrant and Sportsman in Canada* (Montréal: Dawson Brothers Publishers, 1881).

⁴⁵ This idea is explored more specifically by James Murton in “La ‘Normandie du Nouveau Monde’ : la société Canadian Steamship Lines, l’antimodernisme et la promotion du Québec ancien.” *Revue d’histoire de l’Amérique française* 55, no. 1 (2001) : 3-44; the concept of antimodernism is also explored by Ian McKay’s *The Quést of the Folk: Antimoderism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia*. (Montréal : McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1994).

⁴⁶ Charles H. Farnham, “The Canadian Habitant,” *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 76, no. 399 (1883): 375-93.

inevitably fell upon the charming image of the French-Canadian as a polite and humble yet simple-minded serf who “to a New Englander would not seem to be hard worked.”⁴⁷

Quebec City became a focal point for the Province of Québec as an exotic destination. Henry Ward Beecher said of the provincial capital that “Of all the cities on the continent of America, [it was] the quaintest.” The city was portrayed as a small bit of medieval Europe perched upon an enigmatic rock to be preserved as a “a curiosity that has not its equal in its kind, on this side of the ocean.” Henry David Thoreau had left his impressions a generation earlier when he wrote about the wooded hinterlands of Quebec City in his *Yankee in Canada* as part of “majestic scenery, where everything is on a grand scale,—mountains, woods, lakes, rivers, precipices, waterfalls.”⁴⁸ Though little read in his own lifetime, Thoreau’s work began to gain a wider audience just as Québec’s efforts to build a modern tourism industry began to take shape.⁴⁹

Chambers keenly understood the romantic sentiments so prevalent among affluent Americans of the time, and he knew how to exploit the stereotypical imagery that they associated with his province and incorporate that peculiar interest into the exotic in his descriptions of places, people and the game fish of the province. He consistently promoted both the landscape and the culture as eternal. The city of Québec was a place where, “[t]ime works few changes. She stands at the very threshold of this strong and impatient New World, in an age of progressive activity and enterprise, like a little patch of [Medieval] Europe, transplanted, it is true, upon a distant shore, and shutting out by

⁴⁷ William Parker Greenough, *Canadian Folk-Life and Folk-Lore* (New York: George H. Richmond, 1897), 172.

⁴⁸ Henry David Thoreau, *A Yankee in Canada: with Anti-Slavery and Reform Papers* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1888).

⁴⁹ Henry Ward Beecher’s influence was not lost on Joncas and Chambers, who included his quote in the preface to the *Sportsman’s Companion*, p. 1; Henry David Thoreau, *Excursions and Poems: The Writings of Henry David Thoreau* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1906), 92.

her mural surroundings, the influences that all the rest of the continent has failed to exercise upon her." The French-Canadian inhabitants were "a group guided by tradition, joyfully ignorant, and unperturbed by progress."⁵⁰ The idea of Québec's aquatic landscape being an Edenic paradise unchanged by time was reinforced even in the descriptions of the urban places that American anglers would pass through on their way to the forest.

Another reason Chambers had such a ready grasp of the mindset of the American angler was his close personal connections. His two sons both left Canada for the United States as adults, and Chambers and his wife made regular visits to see them and maintained close correspondence. Moreover, he appears to have counted among his friends and acquaintances a number of influential Americans. His 1898 *Angler's Guide to Eastern Canada* carried a dedication specifically to "my many fishing friends from the United States who come to Canada to do their angling."⁵¹ Chambers left the impression in his writings that he knew many of the popular American nature writers, including "Adirondack" Murray (who popularized the Adirondacks in his 1869 book, *Adventures in the Wilderness*), popular American magazine author Charles H. Farnham (the author of numerous articles on the people and landscape of both Québec and

⁵⁰ E. T. D. Chambers, *Modern Quebec Illustrated* ([Montréal], 1901); E. T. D. Chambers, "A French-Canadian Christmas," *North American Notes and Queries* 1, no. 6 (December 1900): 171-78; E. T. D. Chambers, "The Home of the Ouananiche," *Canadian Magazine*, no. 5 (1895): 39-40.

⁵¹ E. T. D. Chambers, *The Angler's Guide to Eastern Canada* (Québec: Morning Chronicle, 1898). The full citation reads: "To my many fishing friends from the United States who come to Canada for their angling and to the union of their national flag with that beneath which they do their fishing,--to this with all that such union implies and typifies [...]." Chambers mentions numerous Americans in his guides as having stayed in the locations that he describes, many of whom were nature writers themselves. Their names would have been easily recognizable by those reading his guides.

Canada for *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*) and A. Nelson Cheney, the President of the Eastern New York Game Protective Association.⁵²

The romantic imagery employed in his guides also indicated a clear understanding of American perceptions of Québec as a unique Anglers' Eden. His ornamental and occasionally bombastic prose unceasingly extolled the romantic, sentimental and even spiritual virtues of the angling haunts found in his native province. Of "La Grande Décharge" of Lake St. John he wrote: "Nature is here all vocal with melody.... She has an innumerable variety of feathered choristers, and there is music in the splashing of the leaping fish at play, and in the rustled twigs and crashing branches that speak of the flight from the presence of his sovereign man, of some frightened denizen of the woods."⁵³ Neither did Chambers neglect adding material meant to charm the rugged adventurer. He wrote of the birch-bark canoes used by tourists to travel the Saguenay as such: "It is a thrilling sensation to shoot the rapids in these frail craft, and to feel that nothing but a sheet of birch-bark and the untutored skill of your dusky guides stand between you and eternity."⁵⁴ Without a doubt, such descriptions appealed to discriminating Americans desiring either to be sentimentally nurtured or tried and tested, supposedly by what Mother Nature had left to offer in this relatively well-preserved corner of the North American continent.

The metaphor of the Anglers' Eden also resonated in Chambers's writings. A devout and pious Episcopalian, he did not fail to make allusions to the experience of Québec's aquatic habitats in spiritual terms. He noted: "In each foreign angler [...] we

⁵² W. H. H. Murray, *Adventures in the Wilderness, or, Camp-life in the Adirondacks* (Boston: Fields, Osgood, 1869).

⁵³ Chambers, *The Angler's Guide to Eastern Canada*, 30-35.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

find a fresh apostle who will spread the gospel of Québec's limitless resources to the friends around his hearth or campfire."⁵⁵ Here again, Chambers revealed his profound understanding of the elite sporting class. He recognized that no amount of publicity was as valuable to the province as that found in their personal monographs and by word of mouth.

The exchange and diffusion of one species in particular most defined this new relationship to the aquatic landscape of the province: the ouananiche. Québec's ouananiche is a rare species of Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) that evolved into an isolated sub-population due to the actions of glacial retreat.⁵⁶ Even in places where it now has access to the sea, it no longer migrates to the open ocean to live its adult life. Primarily found in the region of Lake St. John, it migrated down to the brackish waters near the mouth of the Saguenay River. Much of the life cycle of salmon was still a mystery to scientists. Some called it a new species, others a "land-locked" variety of salmon. Thus, the ouananiche (its name derived from the Montagnais word *ouanan*, meaning salmon and *iche* meaning small) was an enigma within an enigma. Anglers were attracted to it for its spectacular leaps out of the water while attacking prey.⁵⁷

For Chambers, the ouananiche reflected the values of the angler better than any other fish in the province (See Figure 15). Not ironically, it was this fish that had given E.T.D. Chambers an important part of renown in angling circles. But the fish also owed much of its own identity to Chambers's efforts, and he focused on its every detail, even down to his efforts to ensure that it was he, and not outsiders, who defined the way in

⁵⁵ Chambers, *The Sportsman's Companion*, 7.

⁵⁶ W. B. Scott and E. J. Crossman, *Freshwater Fishes of Canada* (Ottawa: Fisheries Research Board of Canada, 1973).

⁵⁷ E. T. D. Chambers, "The Philology of the Ouananiche: A Plea for Priority of Nomenclature," *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada. 2nd Series* 4, section I (1895): 131-39.

which it was spelled and pronounced. A reading of the angling literature during the period finds the fish's name spelled in at least a half-dozen different ways, including owananche, wanniche, and awenanish. Chambers even chastised the popular angling writer Kit Clarke in a review of his book *The Practical Angler* for his inaccurate descriptions of the "Wininnish."⁵⁸ His desire to have adopted a universal spelling of the name lay in his belief that it would preserve the species itself as an icon of Québec by retaining the Montagnais pronunciation and the French orthography. He ultimately made an official "Plea for the recognition of priority in nomenclature" that was read by his friend, Dr. George Stewart, in May of 1894, before the Royal Society of Canada. Chambers's argument passed scientific muster and became the official Linnaean designation (*Salmo salar ouananche*) that same year.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ E. T. D. Chambers, "The Practical Angler," *Forest and Stream* (26 May, 1892), no pagination. This review is glued to the inside cover of: Kit Clarke, *The Practical Angler; How, Where and When to Catch Fish. Giving a Description of American Game Fish Caught with Hook and Line, Methods of Capture, their Habits and Haunts and all Requisite Information whereby the Novice Can Acquire the Art, and Enjoy the Delightful Recreation of Going A-fishing* (New York: American News, 1892). See copy F 216.2 from the Fearing Collection.

⁵⁹ Chambers, "The Philology of the Ouananche," 131-39. That designation would be changed later in the century after scientists concluded that the ouananche was merely a "land-locked" form of *Salmo salar*.

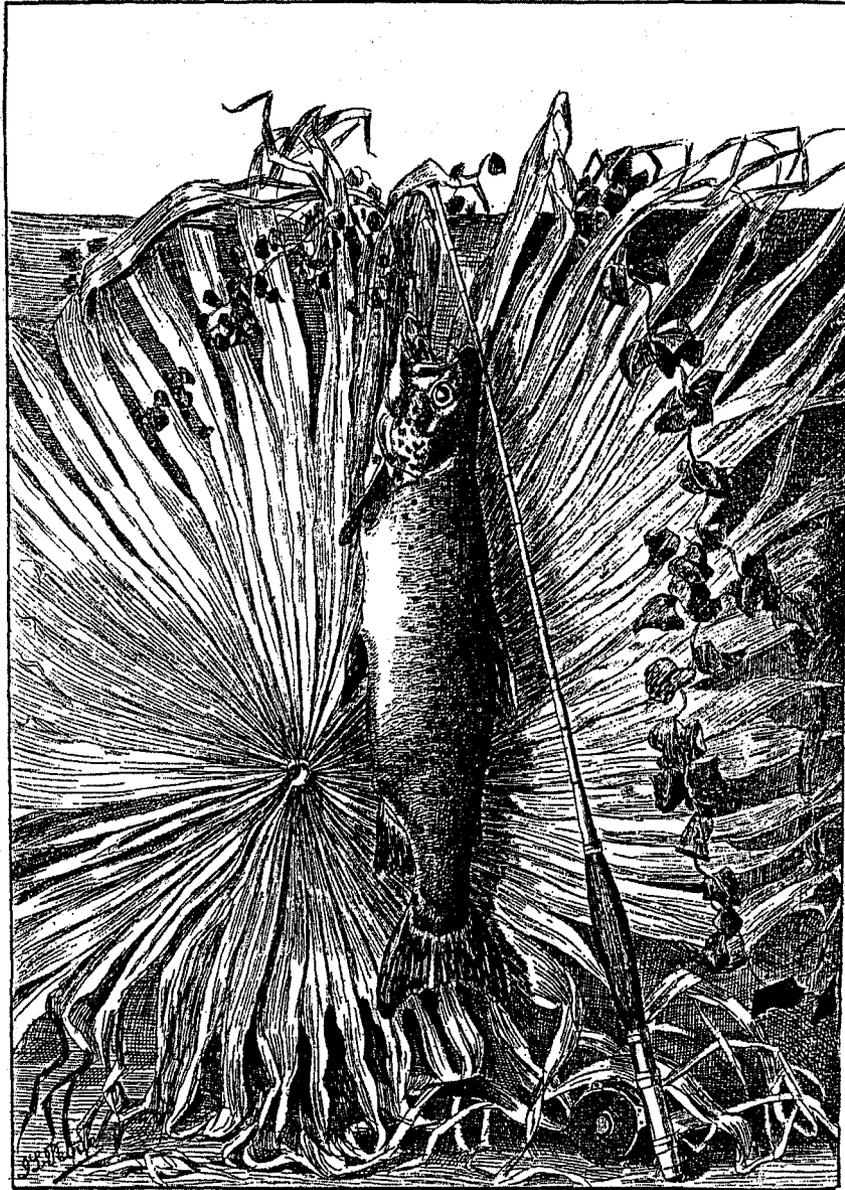


Figure 15: The Ouananiche of Lake St. John

Source: American Angler, 1892 (FCHU)

For Chambers, the image of the leaping ouananiche defined not only his province but the province's sport fishery. It was an inimitable and vivacious symbol of the nature of his adopted home. His *magnum opus* written in 1896, *The Ouananiche and its Canadian Environment*, captured those sentiments and made him an inseparable feature of the fish as an iconographic representation of the Province of Québec for foreign sportsmen.⁶⁰ The book also revealed Chambers to be well in tune with the changing trends of angling. Sporting magazines and books from England and the United States wrote regularly about the fish: how to catch it, where one might find it and, always, its enigmatic character. American author and angler Eugene McCarthy assigned its place in the anglers' hierarchy thusly: "[A]lready classed above the black bass and brook trout as a fighter, and ranking second only to the salmon, it is destined to become the most sought after and noted of our game fish [...] the existence of this wonderful fish is rapidly attracting the attention of noted fishermen." It was a fish that, when caught, had a "peacock-blue shading" that faded to "silver white and black."⁶¹ McCarthy added a smattering of danger to the mystique of the fish. "How much tackle will be broken," he wrote, "how many rods smashed, and arms lamed will result from the introduction of the angling public cannot be told."⁶² Another writer who spoke in glowing terms of the ouananiche was H. J. Beemer, the owner of the Roberval Fish and Game Club on Lake St. John. Beemer believed the unique environment of Lake St. John gave the fish its inimitable character.

⁶⁰ E. T. D. Chambers, *The Ouananiche and Its Canadian Environment* (New York: Harper, 1896).

⁶¹ Eugene McCarthy, *A Tale of Lake St. John: Comprising A Bit of History, A Quantity of Facts, and a Plenitude of Fish Stories* (Montréal: Desbarats, c.1900), 16.

⁶² Eugene McCarthy, *The Leaping Ouananiche: What it is, Where, When and How to Catch It* (New York: Forest and Stream, 1894), 9-10.

The very excitement and unrest of his surroundings render inactivity impossible to him, while the physical exertion, necessarily employed in his constant struggles amid the mighty forces of those turbulent waters, insures for him the possession of that courage, agility and strength that make him the recognized champion of the finny warriors of Canadian waters. In proportion to his avoirdupois, he can do more tackle smashing, pound for pound, than any fish that swims.⁶³

For that reason, Chambers's short writings, from the *Fishing Gazette* of London to the *American Angler* and *Field and Stream*, represented the core of a program that specifically targeted elite anglers. Other efforts included setting up booths for Québec in international fisheries exhibitions, and sending traveling exhibitions, complete with animals, whole beaver dams and even guides, to the Sportsmen's Expositions in Boston and New York City.⁶⁴ At the same time, the Department of Fishing and Hunting avoided the large and elaborately-illustrated full-page publicity used by other provinces, particularly Ontario and, to a lesser extent, New Brunswick. This was certainly not for lack of money or interest. On the contrary, Chambers knew that elite anglers were intelligent and well-read and that they shied away from places that used too much overt publicity. Simply put, the province of Québec's reliance on a minimum of targeted publicity revealed its deep comprehension of its elite audience and the sophistication of its tourism efforts.

Provincial promotion of its vast and supposedly untamed wilderness was paradoxical. Foreign sportsmen generally came from the cultural and commercial elite; while they sought the positive psychological effects of "unspoiled wilderness," they also championed modernity. Thus, their Edenic places had to be at the same time "natural" yet accessible, comfortable and modern. That meant that the province had to promote a

⁶³ H. J. Beemer, *A Guide to the Lake St. John and its Tributary Waters* (Montréal: Published for H. J. Beemer by J. Lovell, 1894), no pagination.

⁶⁴ "Miniature Forest, Mechanics Building Has Undergone a Remarkable Transformation for the Sportsman's Show," *Boston Daily Globe* (February 20, 1900), 4.

wilderness that was both “wild” and “untamed,” yet also as integrated as possible into the urbane and civilized order. They could do so because of the application of a number of modern technologies to the anglers’ experience.

One of the most important technologies adopted by anglers was the telegraph. In the early 1850s, Minister Pierre Fortin had worked to improve the lives of fisherman and the fishing industry of the St. Lawrence through the development and installation of a telegraph system that could inform fishermen of the arrival of the shoals of cod and transmit crucial information such as weather conditions and shipping accidents. Elite anglers took advantage of that same system by tasking their resident members with organizing guides to reconnoitre the rivers in the spring and report the arrival of returning salmon. That information was then telegraphed to club members in the States. With that news, they could come at just the right moment and not waste any of their vacation waiting for the fish to arrive, or be disappointed in their size or numbers.⁶⁵

That anglers could get to their clubs so quickly was due to the most important technological innovations of the age: the railroad. As Chambers extolled in his writing: “Anywhere in the province was within easy distance of hundreds of limpid lakes, varying from a few acres to miles in extent.”⁶⁶ The railroad network in the northeastern half of the United States was the most extensive in the country by the 1880s, and most of the major trunk lines had branch lines running to Montreal, which at the time was the financial epicentre of the American rail network. Provincial officials understood the paramount importance of the railroad for Québec’s developing tourism industry. Both

⁶⁵ Stewart, *A Life on the Line*. Also mentioned in: Chambers, “The Province of Quebec: Inland and Sporting Fisheries,” 560. Reports of the arrival of salmon were sent to club offices in the United States by resident directors and members were notified by newspaper and magazine announcements.

⁶⁶ Chambers, *The Angler's Guide to Eastern Canada*.

the province and the railroad industry had much to gain from tourism, and their relationship to promotion of the landscape became virtually symbiotic. Not only was that symbiotic relationship demonstrably evident in the number of club members who were somehow connected to the railroad industry, but in the advertisements used by Québec railroad lines in newspapers, magazines, travel guides and railroad timetables (See Figure 16). Québec's rail lines proliferated between 1870 and 1914, permitting wealthy Americans to leave Grand Central Station in New York City or any of the other rail terminals in America's major cities and travel right into the heart of Québec's bush in the comfort of their own personal Pullman cars.

Chambers understood the importance of the railroad to the tourism industry. He never failed to mention the implication of prominent railroad men in his accounts, such as Amos R. Little, President of the Philadelphia Fishing and Game Club and Director of the Pennsylvania Railroad.⁶⁷ More importantly, when describing the merits of a particular fishing destination, he was always careful to situate its proximity to the nearest rail line. His 1904 guidebook *Québec, and Lake St. John Railway: The New Route to the Far-famed Saguenay* prominently featured a full-colour cover of a hooked salmon ouananiche leaping vigorously from the water, encapsulated by the announcement: "The only rail line via the Laurentides Mountains" (See Figure 17), which he referred to as the "Canadian Adirondacks." This was a careful attempt to connect Québec to the American Adirondacks, which were a fashionable outdoor

⁶⁷ For a study of the economic importance of Montreal in the creation of America's rail network, see: Albro Martin, *James J. Hill and the Opening of the Northwest* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1975). For more information on the importance of the railroad in the United States, see: Maury Klein, *Unfinished Business: The Railroad in American Life* (Hanover, MA: University Press of New England, 1994). More specific information concerning the railroad boom in Quebec can be found in: J. D. Booth, *Railways of Southern Quebec* (Toronto: Railfare Enterprises Ltd., 1985); William Bender Wilson, "Amos R. Little," *History of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company with Plan of Organization, Portraits of Officials and Biographical Sketches II* (1895): 22-24.

destination that was becoming less exclusive and overcrowded.⁶⁸ The guide was sending the message that anglers could not only find more than fish in Québec, they could also find a more genuine leisure experience.

The promotional scheme used to attract anglers to Québec was not broad and flashy. This fact added to its appeal for men looking for unique experiences. The greatest strength of the marketing campaign was its precise promotion, which was expertly matched to the sensibilities of the target audience: the elite angler. This strategy succeeded largely because the State employed the expertise of an internationally recognized outdoorsman, E. T. D. Chambers, as its spokesperson and chief promoter, a man who understood anglers' romantic sensibilities and idyllic expectations and who had close ties to influential sportsmen. Yet, Chambers's expertise would be used in another role as well, one that would go beyond simply constructing an image and pass over into the realm of landscape modification.

⁶⁸ Paul Schneider's *The Adirondacks: A History of America's First Wilderness* (New York: Henry Holt, 1997) is a popular account of the Adirondack legacy. See also: Philip G. Terrie, *Forever Wild: Environmental Aesthetics and the Adirondack Forest Preserve* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1985) and *Contested Terrain: A New History of Nature and People in the Adirondacks* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997).

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Figure 16: Angling Supplies Advertisement

Advertisements like this one illustrate one of the many ways in which angling tourism diffused throughout the economy. Normally, fish and game clubs invited one proprietor of hunting and fishing stores to join their ranks, with the understanding that he would provide other members discounts on fishing supplies and equipment.

Source: E.T.D. Chambers, *The Angler's Guide to Eastern Canada : Showing where, when and how to Fish for Salmon, Bass, Ouananiche and Trout* (Québec : Morning Chronicle Office, 1898)

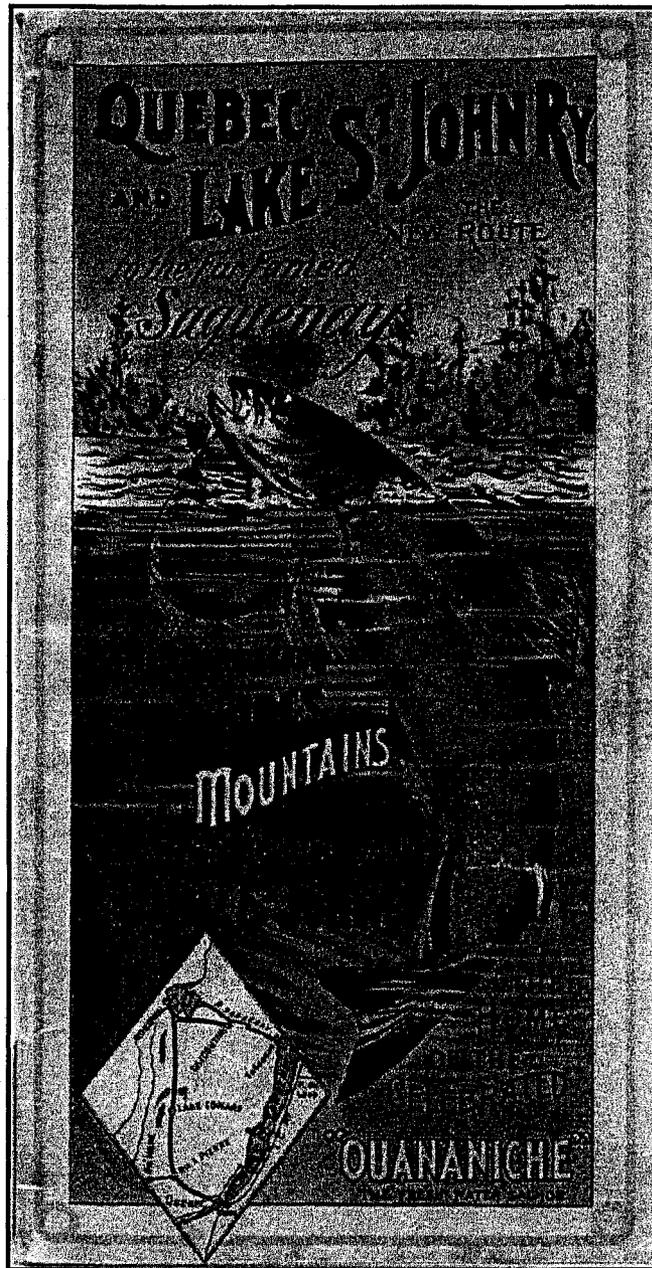


Figure 17: The Leaping Ouananiche (Québec & Lake St. John RR)

Multi-coloured guide books were very expensive to produce in the late nineteenth century. This one gives an indication of how Québec short lines were prepared to spare few expenses in order to cater to the sportsmen.

Source: McGill University Rare Book Room

4.3 Fish Culture and the Improvement of “Eden”

Laws and tourism promotion responded directly to elite anglers’ ideas and values concerning nature, yet both largely influenced, and accessed, their aquatic Eden. Provincial improvement of the aquatic landscape was also done in a much more literal sense through the use of another emerging technology: fish culture, or the breeding, rearing and transplanting of fish species. As was seen in Chapter 2, for the French and most likely the French Canadian, piscatorial privilege extended beyond the act of catching certain species of fish to the means of accessing them and keeping them. Angling and the keeping of fishponds had long been related, but until the 1850s, pond keeping, while occasionally elaborate, never went further than penning fish in natural areas or digging ponds to keep fish, such as carp and breem, that were biologically disposed to being kept under captive conditions. It was only in the 1850s that pond keeping took on a more technological and scientific nature and became associated with State governance.⁶⁹

What made the modern science of fish culture different was that it employed the use of artificial fecundation. Artificial fecundation entailed the taking of ova and milt from adult fish and mixing them together artificially in tubs or pans. The fecundated eggs (referred to as “eyed ova”) were next transferred to specially designed hatching troughs until the young fish, known as fry, could be transferred to holding ponds and reared until old enough to transplant into rivers and lakes. The process of artificial fecundation meant that virtually any egg-laying fish (including those game fish most esteemed by American anglers, such as the various species of salmonid, salmon and

⁶⁹ Darin Kinsey, “Seeding the Water as the Earth: The Epicenter and Peripheries of a Western Aquacultural Revolution,” *Environmental History* 11, no. 3 (2006): 527-66.

trout), regardless of complex mating patterns, could literally be manufactured by humans. Its widespread use across Europe and North America set off an aquaculture revolution that for the first time made fish part of other modern industrial regimes of animal and plant domestication.⁷⁰

The practice of fish culture arrived in North America via translations of French scientific studies in the 1850s and through immigrants who had been practicing it privately in Europe. Richard Nettle's text on the salmon fisheries of the St. Lawrence was probably the first document in Canada to suggest that State fish culture efforts could forestall salmon decline. Indeed, Nettle saw the use of fish culture as one of the key component of his proposed program to change the ways in which people interacted with freshwater aquatic habitats in the province. Yet some were already engaged in the practice of fish culture in Canada. Nettle mentions that it was being practiced by a "Mr. Boswell," referred to simply as "a Quebec fisherman." Boswell apparently learned the practice from his brother living in Dublin, Ireland, but "villainous thieves" apparently ruined his efforts by stealing his breeding fish.⁷¹

In 1857, Nettle began his own fish culture experiments (using speckled trout) in a small basin in the courtyard behind his home in Québec City.⁷² Despite Nettle's position as Superintendent of Fisheries of Lower Canada, he failed to gain government support for a more general adoption of fish culture practices by the State. This was not surprising. Aside from France, who took the lead and poured million of francs into the

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Nettle, *The Salmon Fisheries of the St. Lawrence and its Tributaries*.

⁷² Theodatus M. D. Garlick, *A Treatise of the Artificial Propagation of Fish, with the Description and Habits of Such Kinds as are the most suitable for Pisciculture, Also Directions for the Most Successful Modes of Angling for Such Kinds of Fish as are Herein Described* (New York: A.O. Moore, 1858); Hugh R. MacCrimmon, "The Beginnings of Salmon Culture in Canada," *Canadian Geographical Journal* 71, no. 3 (1965): 96-103.

effort, few governments paid attention to what was still a scientific curiosity, which it would remain for at least another decade. In Canada, as in the United States and Great Britain, fish culture activities remained in the hands of private individuals, most of whom we know little about, like Mr. Boswell.⁷³

One private Canadian citizen whose fish culture activities we know much more about is Samuel Wilmot.⁷⁴ In 1866, Wilmot began experimental fish culture operations involving salmon in Wilmot Creek, which ran through his property in Newcastle, Ontario. Wilmot had plans to use his hatcheries to revive the declining salmon population in Lake Ontario. Nevertheless, his true motivation, not unlike that of others during the period, was largely economic. Not long after establishing his operation, he petitioned the federal government for a monopoly on all salmon in Lake Ontario, which he propagated in his hatchery. Since there was no way to tell the difference between his hatchery salmon and ordinary salmon, he was in effect asking for a monopoly on all salmon in Lake Ontario. Not surprisingly, the federal government refused his request. Only when he offered to work on behalf of the common good did he gain the support of the federal government. In July of 1868, that support came in his appointment as an agent of the Department of Marine and Fisheries with the responsibility of operating his Newcastle hatchery as part of federal salmon conservation efforts.⁷⁵ During Wilmot's tenure as superintendent, he developed a federal system of more than fifty hatcheries

⁷³ Kinsey, "Seeding the Water as the Earth".

⁷⁴ A. B. McCullough, "Samuel Wilmot," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography on line/Dictionnaire biographique du Canada en-ligne*, <http://www.biographi.ca>, last update 5 February, 2005. Date consulted 22 March, 2002; Neil Forkey discusses Wilmot's activities more specifically in "Maintaining a Great Lakes Fishery: The State, Science, and the Case of Ontario's Bay of Quinte, 1870-1920," *Ontario History* 87 no. 1 (1995): 45-64.

⁷⁵ MacCrimmon, "The Beginnings of Salmon Culture in Canada," 75-90; William Knight, "Samuel Wilmot, Fish Culture, and Recreational Fisheries in late 19th century Ontario," *Scientia Canadensis* 30, no. 1 (2007): 75-90.

located all across Canada. Wilmot was a driving force behind making fish culture a Canadian project. Yet he always connected fish culture to commerce and conservation.

When his tenure ended in 1895, the hatchery system began slowly to decentralize.⁷⁶ By 1915, the federal government had lost interest in the project and turned most of the hatcheries over to the provinces. The only federal caveat was that they were to be used in concordance with the goal of conserving salmon stocks and secondarily of a free distribution of fish to restock freshwater lakes, rivers and streams.⁷⁷ Québec was given direct responsibility for the hatcheries at Mont-Tremblant, St-Alexis-des-Monts, Lake Lyster and Magog, which in that year had, all combined, released over sixty-five million trout and salmon into the province's freshwaters.

Responsibility for the hatcheries, at first, seemed unwelcome. Fish and Game Commissioner Hector Caron feared that the hatcheries would become an unnecessary drain on his department's budget. Thus, his first reaction was to address those concerns. Caron's desire to make the provincial hatcheries, at the very least, economically self-sufficient proved a watershed for the use of fish culture in Québec. The changes would have a great deal to do with the man who Caron would charge with the responsibility for the provincial hatcheries, none other than the popular nature writer and tourist promoter, E. T. D. Chambers.⁷⁸

Caron named Chambers Superintendent of Hatcheries in 1916. To Caron, Chambers must have seemed the perfect choice for the job. His popular tourist writings

⁷⁶ Samuel Wilmot, *Report on Fish Breeding operations in the Dominion of Canada. 1881* (Ottawa: MacLean Rogers, 1882), 75-90; E. E. Prince, *Fish Culture in Canada* (Ottawa: Transactions of the Ottawa Literary and Scientific Societies of Canada, 1900), 163-82.

⁷⁷ *Rapport du Ministre de la Colonisation, des Mines et des Pêcheries de la province de Québec. 1916*, 130.

⁷⁸ *Rapport du Ministre de la Colonisation, des Mines et des Pêcheries de la province de Québec. 1917*, 163.

revealed that he was highly knowledgeable of the province's waters and its fish. Moreover, he was also a well-known and admired figure within the social and political landscape. He covered provincial politics as a member of the political press gallery. He was elected to the position of Alderman in Quebec City, a position he held for ten years between 1884 and 1894, and he served as the Grand Master of the Masonic Grand Lodge.⁷⁹ But Caron also knew Chambers as a departmental employee. He had been conducting contract work for the Fish and Game Department since 1911 as a "Special Officer."⁸⁰ That assignment put him in charge of investigating violations of the federal and provincial fish and game laws. At the same time, he began laying out the foundation for the creation and regulation of a fledgling provincial fur farming industry, writing a government guidebook in 1913 to aid fur farmers.⁸¹ Caron's choice strongly illustrated what the provincial government considered valuable about its newly acquired hatcheries. Somehow, they were to become a part of the industry of angling tourism. For many reasons, Chambers was well placed to make the necessary changes.

The champion of Québec's natural habitats wasted no time in attempting to make the hatcheries profitable for both the province and its visiting anglers. In what was a clear violation of the caveat placed on the transfer of the hatcheries by the federal government, he began to sell hatchery-raised fish to the fish and game clubs rather than distribute them freely. No official protest by the federal government followed, and

⁷⁹ Morgan, *Canadian Men and Women of Our Time: A Handbook of Canadian Biography of Living Character*, 214; Jessica Harland-Jacobs, "All in the Family: Freemasonry and the British Empire in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *Journal of British Studies* 42, no. 4 (2003): 448-42.

⁸⁰ E5 Ministère du Conseil exécutif, Arrêtés en conseil relatifs aux terres (transcription manuscrite), registre des "affaires d'état" (contenant 1960-01-027/55), "Lettre du Lieutenant Gouverneur sur la nomination d'un officier spécial au Département de la Colonisation, des Mines et des Pêcheries, 12 April, 1911," 237.

⁸¹ Chambers, *Fur Farming in the Province of Quebec*. See also: George Colpitts, "Conservation, Science, and Canada's Fur Farming Industry," *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 30, no. 59 (1997): 77-108.

ultimately Chambers proved as successful with organizing and managing the hatcheries as he had at developing the fox farming industry. Within two years, the provincial hatcheries had become a profitable concern. Demands poured in from all over the province for hatchery-raised fish. While the fish and game clubs were the most popular customers, private citizens also took advantage of the hatchery's produce to stock waters on their own property. The "demands were so numerous," Caron noted in his 1917 ministerial report, "that it was nearly impossible to meet them."⁸² That year, more than five million fish of various species were be distributed by the provincial hatcheries. Caron was happy to report to his superior, the Minister of Colonisation, Mines and Fisheries:

It is an undeniable fact that in many of our lakes where there were no fish several years ago, there is today, thanks to the young trout and salmon that we have transplanted there, magnificent fishing to be found there. Other lakes, where the fishing was becoming almost worthless, are now counted among the best stocked, thanks to our system. That is to say, Mr. Minister, that the acquisition of our fish hatcheries surely have met the needs of all those who are interested in sport, and those who have an interest at heart for the protection and improvement of our provincial fisheries.⁸³

Caron's statement makes clear that "sport" was now the central issue, of which "protection and improvement" were an integral part.

The early goal set by Wilmot to use State-supported fish culture for commercial and conservation efforts had always been undertaken in parallel with private efforts that emphasized sport. Those efforts were to be found in Québec as well, where private sportsmen were among the first to operate hatcheries. Unfortunately, these private groups rarely, if ever, kept records of their activities. We find only casual references to fish and game clubs stocking waters in the province. For example, the Laurentian Fish

⁸² *Rapport du Ministre de la Colonisation, des Mines et des Pêcheries de la province de Québec. 1917.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

and Game Club planted “[s]ome years ago, 400 yearling landlocked salmon in Lake Edward...and several thousand fry of [...] Atlantic salmon and Canadian Red Trout in different lakes.”⁸⁴ The Roberval club boasted of a “systematic and scientific plan for stocking the waters with salmon and other fish.”⁸⁵

Moreover, the federal program put together by Wilmot was not build from scratch, but rather benefited from the acquisition of private efforts already underway. One finds, perhaps, the best example of that process in the southeastern part of Québec, in the Eastern Townships. There were two provincial hatcheries there, one in Magog and the other in Baldwin’s Mills. Both had been a part of earlier private efforts tied to local initiatives. Those who built and ran them were prominent citizens with an interest in promoting sport fishing. One such individual was Alvin H. Moore of Magog, a prominent local manufacturer and field-sport enthusiast, who not only used his own funds to build the Magog fish hatchery but also supervised its operations.⁸⁶ The Magog hatchery would be one of the operations purchased by the federal government during the Wilmot period.

Another hatchery was established just a few miles away near Lake Lyster, in the town of Baldwin’s Mills. That hatchery found its origins in the desire of local sporting interests to stock their waters with game fish, the Lake Lester Fish and Game Club, founded in 1900 by Albert E. Baldwin, a druggist in Coaticook, and a group of prominent local businessmen. The group decided to build its own hatchery to stock the

⁸⁴ *The Fish and Game Clubs of the Province of Quebec*, 18.

⁸⁵ Herbert Houston, *The Roberval Fish and Game Association, in the Home of the Ouananiche: A Book Descriptive of the Association's Vast Preserves in the Lake St. John Region of Quebec* (New York: Outing Publishing, c.1910), 4. A detailed account of the Roberval Clubs hatchery operation is found in McCarthy, *A Tale of Lake St. John*, 47-51.

⁸⁶ Maurice Langlois, *Le premier maire de Magog : Alvin Head Moore, 1836-1911* (Sherbrooke: M. Langlois, 2001).

waters on club territory and the waters around town. They chose a location of a spring-fed lake called "Baldwin's Pond," and put another member of the club, W.G. Belknap, in charge of building the hatchery and ponds.⁸⁷ Belknap constructed a dam at the outlet of the pond, an 850-foot wooden aqueduct to carry fresh water from the pond to the hatchery and a hatchery house with a dozen wooden troughs for keeping eyed ova and fry.⁸⁸

Under Belknap's direction, the hatchery operated successfully as a part-time endeavour for five years. In 1905, the federal government approached the Lake Lyster Fish and Game Club and bought the hatchery and ponds for \$4,000, and Belknap was hired as the site's superintendent for what was to become a full-time federal operation. Belknap sold his home in town and built a new one for himself and his family on the hatchery grounds (See Figure 18).⁸⁹ Belknap's son, W. G., worked with his father as an assistant and eventually served as a liaison with other operations in the region, including the United States. The annual reports of the Québec Superintendent of Hatcheries imply that the hatchery operations around the province worked similarly. In general, those who did the hatchery work had no formal education, only practical experience that they handed down from father to son. In some cases, hatchery operations remained in the family longer than the government had an interest in them. Such was the case with the Elliot family in St-Alexis-des-Monts, where the grandson of the original superintended,

⁸⁷ Zack Belknap. Interview with author via correspondence (7 January-15 March, 2005).

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Darin Kinsey, "Fish Culture and Public Policy in Nebraska (1879-1929)" (Masters Thesis, University of Nebraska, 1997).

Joseph, now owns and operates a modern commercial hatchery not far from the remains of the original site.⁹⁰

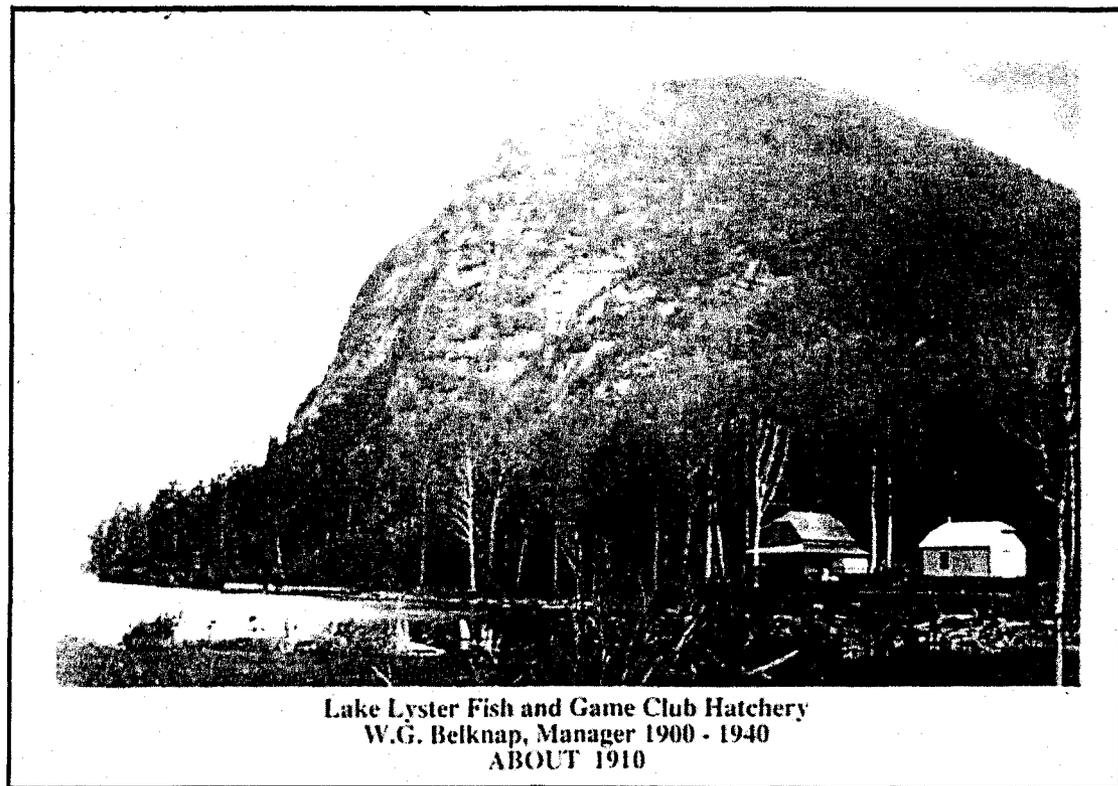


Figure 18: Lake Lyster Fish Hatchery

The Magog hatchery at the base of Mont Pinnacle. Belknap's home and the hatching house can be seen at the bottom right.

Source: Courtesy Stanstead Historical Society

In addition to operating the hatcheries inherited from the federal government, the province continued to develop relationships with private clubs operating their own hatcheries, and even offered subsidies to assist them. For example, the Sainte Marguerite Salmon Club noted: "The government of Québec proposed to the Club to put up a hatchery on the Ste. Marguerite River. The proposition was that the Club build a

⁹⁰ Marcel Elliott, Interview with author via telephone (21 March, 2007).

house suitable for the work with the quarters for two men, one of whom was to be appointed and paid by the Government, the other to be appointed and paid by the Club. [...] This has been done and the results for the last ten years seem to have been very good.”⁹¹

Chambers’s rapport with sportsmen was a large part of the provincial government’s development of its newly acquired hatchery infrastructure. Chambers was on friendly terms with men like A. Nelson Cheney, the New York Superintendent of Fish Hatcheries, and William Mershon of the Michigan Fish Commission. He wrote to Mershon, who was also an influential member of the Cascapedia Club, on a number of occasions in order to develop a relationship involving fish exchanges with the United States. In August of 1917, for example, he wrote: “I am exceedingly glad to be able to send you today the official permit from Ottawa for the officials of the Michigan Fish Commission to take trout in the Grand Cascapdia for breeding purposes, and in the close season.”⁹² The hatchery records during his tenure indicate exchanges with not just Michigan, but New York, Maine and even Switzerland.

Through networks at the local level that expanded internationally, Québec’s hatcheries became more than incubators for fish. They became the foci of environmental transformation. The government tapped the local knowledge of hatchery superintendents to locate populations of game species of merit in their operating areas, capture them, fecundate their ova and exchange them with fecundated ova from elsewhere, sometimes another hatchery in Québec or sometimes in another country.

⁹¹ Gard T. Lyon, *A Little History of the Sainte Marguerite Salmon Club* (Oswego, NY: Radcliffe Press, 1916), 19-20; *Charter, By-laws, Officers and Members of the Sainte Marguerite Salmon Club* (New York: John H. Gresham, 1895).

⁹² William Butts Mershon Papers, Bentley Historical Library, [Ann Arbor, Michigan], “Letter to Wm. B. Mershon, Esq., from E. T. D. Chambers, August 26, 1913.”

Chambers happily reported to the minister that on 7 March, 1927, his employees shipped 500,000 eyed salmon eggs to Bucksport, Maine, in exchange for 457,000 eyed trout eggs that were distributed among the hatcheries at Magog, St-Alexis-des-Monts, Baldwin's Mills and Lac Tremblant.⁹³

Fundamentally, the provincial hatchery structure was engaged in the same kind of activity as the English pond owners like John Taverner (discussed in Chapter 3) in the fifteenth century: a desire to "improve the waters," or what some modern historians have called "authoring" of ecosystems.⁹⁴ In this case, it was to improve the waters within the provincial sport fishery. This may have been done partially in response to perceived threats from other provinces that attracted anglers, particularly New Brunswick. In general, meeting the demands of anglers' changing interests seemed to be more significant. Between the mid-nineteenth and the early-twentieth centuries, the fishery expanded beyond the scope established by the elite anglers. A growing number of middle class anglers, from the United States in particular but also within Canada, sought to mimic the sporting habits of their social superiors, but did not have the money or influence to become members of exclusive clubs with access to salmon streams and pools.

One of the most popular indigenous species raised in the provincial hatchery was the red trout. Like the ouananiche, it too belonged to a relic population. It was not really a trout, but a unique sub-species of Arctic char found only in southern Québec (See Figure 19). The red trout came to be one of the most popular fish raised in the

⁹³ *Rapport du Ministre de la Colonisation, des Mines et des Pêcheries de la province de Québec. 1927, 380.*

⁹⁴ Jerry C. Towle, "Authored Ecosystems: Living Stone and the Transformation of California Fisheries," *Environmental History* 5, no. 1 (2000): 54-74.

provincial hatcheries. L. Z. Joncas, while Superintendent of the Department of Hunting and Fishing, did his best to ensure that the species would remain unique to Québec, going as far as lobbying Ottawa to pass a law forbidding its export to the United States. Nevertheless, the fish never achieved the same cachet as the ouananiche. Ironically, today the species is rare, endangered, and of little interest to anglers.

Whatever the species and kind of fish, if it found popularity with anglers, efforts were made to secure its eggs for hatching. This included species not indigenous to Québec. In 1914, W. G. Belknap went with a group of American biologists to the Detroit River to obtain whitefish ova and ship them back to the Baldwin's Mills facility, where he hatched them and distributed the fry in lakes throughout the province.⁹⁵ By far the most popular non-native introduction, however, was the rainbow trout. Rainbows became incredibly popular as game fish at the turn of the century. While not the largest of the salmonid species, they were exceptionally voracious and aesthetically appealing to anglers, particularly among the new group of middle-class anglers.

The first batch of 150,000 rainbow trout eggs arrived from the United States to the Department of Fisheries in Ottawa in 1921. These eggs were distributed to hatcheries around the country, including the Baldwin's Mills hatchery.⁹⁶ In the months of February, March and April of 1927, the hatchery at Tadoussac received nearly a million rainbow trout eggs from the Baldwin's Mills hatchery. The distribution of the resulting juvenile fish from the hatchery is illustrative of the kinds of activities that were taking place at other locations throughout the province.

⁹⁵ Zack Belknap. Interview with author via correspondence (7 January-15 March, 2005).

⁹⁶ *Rapport du Ministre de la Colonisation, des Mines et des Pêcheries de la province de Québec. 1921*, 320; *Rapport du Ministre de la Colonisation, des Mines et des Pêcheries de la province de Québec. 1922*, 322.

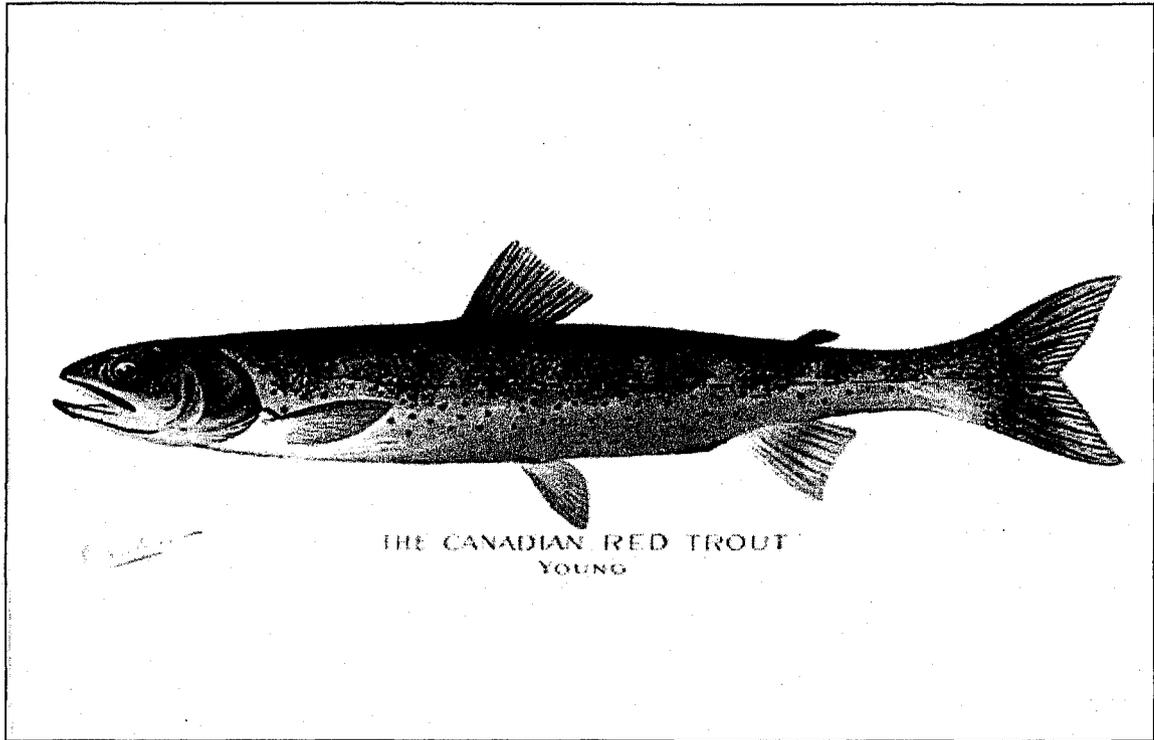


Figure 19: Red Trout

Source: Sherman Foote Denton, *Fish and Game of the State of New York* (New York: Forest, Fish and Game Commission, 1901).

<i>Location</i>	<i>No. of Fry Transplanted</i>
Lac Spider (Frontenac)	25,000
Lac Privé (Missisquoi)	10,000
Lac Selby (Missisquoi)	25,000
Lake Brook (Missisquoi)	25,000
Lac Frasier (Sherbrooke)	50,000
Rivière Noire (Shefford)	50,000
Lac Boisfranc (Hull)	20,000
Lac Privé (Près de Québec)	10,000
Lacs Grande Ligne & Martinlock (Québec)	10,000
Rivière St-Charles (Québec)	10,000
Lac près de Baldwin's Pond (Stanstead)	50,000
Lac Lester (Stanstead)	100,000
Lac Moreau (Montcalm)	25,000
8th Lake (Montcalm)	10,000
Lac Long (Chicoutimi)	20,000
Lac Charles (Chicoutimi)	20,000
Lac Emmuraille (Chicoutimi)	10,000
4 creeks on Grandby Mountain (Shefford)	10,000

Table 3: Hatchery Locations and Species Propagated in Québec during the Tenure of E. T. D. Chambers

Source: *Rapport du Ministre de la Colonisation, des Mines et des Pêcheries de la province de Québec* (1927), 386.

The numbers of transplanted fish (See Table 3) were representative of the annual norm for the seven other hatcheries and sub-hatcheries during Chambers's tenure. Indeed, Chambers turned the hatchery infrastructure dramatically away from its goals of conservation to one in which hatchery-raised fish would be used to replenish dwindling fish species in provincial waters. Under his leadership, hatcheries became part of the provincial government's tourist machinery. The State was now producing fish in hatcheries, not for reasons of commerce or conservation, but in order to maintain the idea of Québec as an Anglers' Eden *par excellence* for a very narrow, but influential,

group of people.⁹⁷ And, in that process it was changing the makeup of the fish fauna of Québec (See Table 4).

4.4 Conclusion

One of the factors that brought the province into closer relationship with anglers was the gradual, and mostly unrelated, process whereby the province gained more control over its own freshwater resources. As the aquatic landscape, formerly under the control of the federal government or private interests, came increasingly under the legal jurisdiction of the province, provincial officials had to deal directly with anglers concerning leases and access. By the turn of the century, angling had become such an important enterprise that provincial officials began to see its freshwater aquatic landscape in terms of its latent commercial value. A relationship of mutual interest formed between provincial officials who wanted to protect Crown lands and waters and elite anglers desirous of maintaining exclusive control over those areas that responded to their romantic notions of wilderness. By the early twentieth century, the landscape that anglers had once seen as an Anglers' Eden had become an identifiable freshwater sport fishery tied to the provincial bureaucracy and infrastructure.

That transformation from a cultural construction to part of the institution of the State came about from the new efforts to promote the fishery. Much of the success of provincial promotion of the sport fishery came through the careful appropriation of the anglers' own romantic language and imagery by the internationally known and respected Québec sportsman, E. T. D. Chambers. Chambers's articles, guidebooks and sportsmen's exhibits portrayed the aquatic landscape in Québec in ways that resonated

⁹⁷ Kinsey, "Seeding the Water as the Earth".

with anglers' already well-developed notions of Québec as a paradisaical enclave. That program of provincial promotion successfully linked the values of elite anglers to the province's own desire to profit from, while still preserving, its freshwater habitats.

Yet, the province did more than appropriate space from an image already well developed by anglers. By becoming an auxiliary agent to the desires of elite anglers, it was institutionalizing the sport fishery as a twentieth-century *apiri-daeza* that could be constantly re-modeled and improved. In the State's construction and re-construction of space, the use of fish culture proved instrumental. Once seen by the federal government as a panacea for the decline of salmon, under the direction of the province's chief fish and game promoter, E. T. D. Chambers, fish culture became a tool for the amelioration of the waters. Through the broad distribution of iconic game species such as the red trout and ouananiche and the introduction of exotic species like brown trout and rainbow trout, the province fashioned the sport fishery on a continual basis to ensure that it met the romantic expectations of anglers on whom they depended to keep the landscape valuable.

Nature and culture and the State were now tied together in a relationship designed to sell preconceived notions held by anglers. Not everyone benefited from that process. Many humans and non-humans alike found themselves increasingly pushed to the margins of an aquatic landscape they had once shared.

<i>Hatchery</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Species</i>
Baldwin's Mills	Eastern Townships	Bass
		Rainbow trout
		Red trout
		Salmon
Magog	Eastern Townships	Speckled trout
		Salmon
		Bass
		Brook trout
		Grey trout [Lake trout, or touladi]
		Rainbow trout
		Red trout
Saint-Alexis-des-Monts	Mauricie	Salmon-trout
		Speckled trout
		Brook trout
		Red trout
Gaspé	Gaspésie	Salmon
		Red trout
		Trout
Tadoussac	Saguenay	Salmon
		Grey trout [Lake trout, or touladi]
		Ouananiche
		Rainbow trout
Bergeronnes St-Félicien	Saguenay	Red trout
		Salmon
		Trout
Lac Tremblant	Laurentides	Brook trout
		Grey trout [Lake trout, or touladi]
		Lake trout
		Ouananiche
		Rainbow trout
		Red trout
		Salmon
		Salmon trout
Lac Manitou-Sud		Trout
		Ouananiche
		Speckled trout

Table 4: Fish Species Propagated in Québec Hatcheries (1869-1930)

Source: *Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Lands, Forests and Fisheries of the Province of Québec (1869-1905)*; *Annual Reports of the Department of Colonisation, Mines and Fisheries of the Province of Québec (1906-1930)*; "Report on Fish-Breeding in Dominion of Canada," *Department of Marine and Fisheries (1875-1930)*.

CHAPTER 5

“A Kingdom All Our Own”: The Elite Anglers’ Marginalization of Other People and Other Fish

“It is a kingdom all our own, far from all haunts of men.”¹

-E. T. D. Chambers

When E. T. D. Chambers waxed poetic about one of the many places in which he loved to angle in Québec, he was also encapsulating the elitism that underlay the sport fishery in formation. Like the biblical garden, Québec’s sport fishery was a paradise created from the top down, including affluent anglers and State bureaucrats who measured the value of the landscape in terms of what it had to offer them personally. The first was a group of men who believed they alone had a special relationship with and understanding of the waters and the fish species that lived within them, the other, a group of men who believed that moulding a landscape around the interests of one group of people was good for everyone.² Despite such beliefs, many other members of the animal kingdom, both human and non-human, inhabited the cultural and ecological space that was Québec’s sport fishery.

Within the boundaries drawn around the sport fishery were Amerindian peoples, rural French-Canadians and a new wave of middle-class anglers, all possessing a different perspective and a different set of values surrounding the importance of aquatic habitats. Their activities were not examples of the failure to develop fishery for leisure, they were examples of other relationships to a part of the natural world. Moreover, the

¹ E. T. D. Chambers, *The Ouananiche and its Canadian Environment* (New York: Harper, 1896), 201.

² Izaak Walton, *The Universal Angler made so by Three Books of Fishing, Part 1 Being a Discourse of Rivers, Fishponds, and Fishing* (London: Richard Marriott, 1676).

sport fishery included dozens of species to which elite anglers accorded little or no value. That lack of interest, however, did not make those species any less important within their ecosystems. This chapter looks at how elite anglers and the State came to perceive these “others” and attempted to fit them into the landscape of their own values.

5.1 Guides and Canoemen

The most visible group of “others” to occupy the space created by the angling elite were their fishing guides and canoemen. While a popular understanding of guides, at least in our contemporary sense, is of men and women who serve as knowledgeable intermediaries between tourists and the wilderness, their role in Québec during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was more strongly affected by issues of class and romantic stereotypes, both integral to the elite anglers’ perceptions and expectations of nature.³ Nowhere is the guide’s place more clearly illustrated than in anglers’ writings about their experience in the province.

One American angler, reflecting in his journal about his journey to his angling destination wrote: “[...] we looked back on the swarthy French and Indian guides, keeping trim their canoes with a dip of the paddle, and joining their voices in a wild woods chant; so that after it all was a strange and weird scene as we skirted along the picturesque shores of the lake towards the inlet.”⁴ His entry illustrates how guides became a reminder of the lack of civilization in the forest and their important role in providing a sense of authenticity, and the sublime, to the angler’s experience. Another

³ Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987); guides and guiding as a part of the outdoor experience is discussed by Patricia Jasen, *Wild Things: Nature, Culture, and Tourism in Ontario, 1790-1914*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

⁴ Frank S. Fay, “To Canada for Trout,” *The American Angler* 25, no. 4 (1895): 115.

American wrote of his guides: "They looked rather piratical, at first sight; and I began to wonder if my friend, who is a life insurance man, couldn't somehow get an accident policy on record, in case of an emergency [...]. Verily, we were in a foreign land."⁵ The guides and canoemen that anglers encountered generally came from three distinct ethnic groups. The first were the Amerindian tribes living in the peripheral regions around Québec; most often mentioned were the Mic-Mac and the Montagnais. The second consisted of rural French-Canadians, described by one author as "a class by themselves somewhere between the habitan [sic] and the Indian. They are the descendants of the old *coureurs de bois* and possess all the traits of their ancestors."⁶ The third group were the Métis, a group of mixed-blood peoples who developed their own distinctive culture, referred to almost exclusively as "half-breeds" by anglers. The ethnic origin of guides with whom anglers came into contact largely depended upon the location of the place where anglers sought their quarry. For the angler, they were all sufficiently curious to contribute to a truly unique angling experience.

All three ethnic groups were equally representative of peoples already living their lives on the margins of Canadian civilization.⁷ Amerindian tribes and Métis were targets of the Indian Acts, which largely divested them of their land, hunting and fishing rights and culture.⁸ At the same time, French Canadian trappers and traders, most of whom

⁵ George H. Payson, "Trouting in Canada," *The American Angler* 24, no. 10 (1894): 275.

⁶ André Lachance, ed., *Les marginaux, les exclus et l'autre au Canada aux XXVII^e et XVIII^e siècles* (Québec: Fides, 1996), 181-94; Herbert Houston, *The Roberval Fish and Game Association, in the Home of the Ouananiche: A Book Descriptive of the Association's Vast Preserves in the Lake St. John Region of Quebec* (New York: Outing Publishing, c.1910), 18.

⁷ Roland Wright, "The Public Right of Fishing, Government Fishing Policy, and Indian Fishing Rights in Upper Canada," *Ontario History* 86, no. 4 (1994): 337-62.

⁸ Mylène Jaccoud, "Le droit, l'exclusion et les autochtones," *Canadian Journal of Law and Society* 11, no. 2 (1996): 217-34.

were employees of the Hudson's Bay Company, were living in a time of great economic transformation as the fur trade gave way to the timber economy.⁹

Within that social, political and economic environment, guiding and canoeing for sportsmen, especially Americans, offered new opportunities. The development of the sport fishery created a new social niche for the integration of marginalized people into modern society, even if it was one of a subordinate role. Men who knew how to live in the forest and who had local knowledge of the hidden places to fish suddenly had a new socio-economic value. Men used to having only seasonal employment cutting timber and setting traps in the winter could now hire themselves out as guides during the spring and summer and earn a living all year round. Moreover, unlike most of the work within Québec's forest economy (an economy largely based on trade), sportsmen brought hard currency, paying on average \$1.00 to a \$1.50 per day for guide services.¹⁰

Guiding remains one of the most underappreciated, and little studied, new economies to have appeared in Québec during the late nineteenth century. While Geneviève Brisson has examined the role of guides in the creation of ideas about nature in Québec culture on Anticosti Island, there remains a great deal of work to do to examine these people within the socio-economic sphere of Québec's hinterland.¹¹ Based upon the number of wealthy sportsmen who came to occupy large tracts of Québec during the late nineteenth-century, the role of guides and the economy they supported was significant. One contemporary author remarked: "The coming of the *les Grand Messieurs* is one of the significant events in the year [...]. This very excess of liberality

⁹ Claude Gélinas, "La traité des fourrures en Haute-Mauricie avant 1831: concurrence, stratégies commerciales et petits profits," *Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique française* 51, no. 3 (1998): 391-417.

¹⁰ *Constitution, By-laws, and Membership of the Triton Fish and Game Club* (Québec: T. J. Moore, 1899).

¹¹ Geneviève Brisson, "L'homme des bois d'Anticosti. La figure du guide de chasse et les conceptions sociales de la forêt québécoises," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 60, no. 1-2 (2006): 164-89.

has lent to every American the reputation, among these simple Canadians, of being *bien riche*, and he is worshipped accordingly, and welcomed as the dispenser of all good things.”¹²

For the most part, however, an intimate historical portrait of these men who tirelessly worked in the guide trade during the nineteenth and early twentieth-century can only be painted with the broadest brush strokes. Guides were largely illiterate and, while they became a part of the folklore and literature of angling in Québec, the angler showed little interest in their personal stories. Compounding the problem in Québec was language. Anglers noted that anything more than simple communication with their guides was often problematic at best. One angler wrote:

If you have as little French at your command as I, you will experience an amusing time of it in this far-off region, where scarcely any one understands even a word of English; still, I managed to scrape my way along, stringing together in vile grammar and far from Parisian French my sentences, and making simple wants known, as best I might, to these kindly people, whose own French, you know, is itself only patois, but had their replies to me been couched in Chinese or Hindostanee, they would have been quite as intelligible.¹³

The well-known American sporting author, Kit Clarke, recognized the problem, also adding: “The boatmen or guides [in Québec] are either Montagnais Indians or Canadians, speaking the native French, and the language of either is an equally comprehensive mystery. Occasionally one will be found speaking a little English, and it will be advisable to secure such a man, if possible, for self-evident reasons.”¹⁴

One consequence of this linguistic confusion is that guides rarely found their own voice in anglers’ accounts. Thus, the anglers’ relationship with his guides and

¹² Houston, *The Roberval Fish and Game Association*, 168.

¹³ Richard F. Kimball, “The Ouananiche of Lake St. John,” *The American Angler* 22, no. 3 (1892): 76.

¹⁴ Kit Clarke, *The Practical Angler; How, Where and When to Catch Fish. Giving a Description of American Game Fish Caught with Hook and Line, Methods of Capture, their Habits and Haunts and all Requisite Information whereby the Novice Can Acquire the Art, and Enjoy the Delightful Recreation of Going A-fishing* (New York: American News, 1892), 116-17.

canoemen are mostly just as one-sided as the relationship between the angler and the fish. Once again, we are left with the literate angler's perspective, one that most often portrayed his guide in caricature as "strong," and "hardy," a "competent woodsman and canoe man" who was "stalwart," "polite" and "knowledgeable in his element" but otherwise "unintelligent" (See Figure 20). The popular Québec outdoor writer George Moore Fairchild offered a typical assessment: "Jean is a good trapper...he is full of the lore of the bush, but ignorant of everything else; superstitious as the Indians among whom he has so long dwelt, and as full of omens, but considers himself a good Catholic; cheerful and as light-hearted as a schoolboy, he is the guide *par excellence*."¹⁵

Not only did guides not have their own voice, as a result of the generalization of the landscape according to elite perceptions, they often lacked their own individual identity. More often than not it is impossible to know by reading anglers' accounts to which ethnic group their guides belonged. When identified by name, they rarely went beyond the use of first names, such as "Ovide," "Narcisse," "Pierre," "Jean" or even the corrupted "Jock" rather than "Jacques." The ambiguous and picturesque guide, whether Amerindian, Métis or French-Canadian, was simply a stereotypical part of the sublime scenery of an angling trip to Québec. Stripped of his individuality and his voice, the guide could be placed into the anglers' own literary and cultural space, where stalwart men like themselves negotiated life in the forest with illiterate natives.

¹⁵ G. Moore Fairchild, *Quebec, the Sportsman's Land of Plenty--for Salmon, Trout, and Ouananiche--Moose, Caribou and Red Deer* (Québec: Quebec Daily Telegraph, 1899), 21.

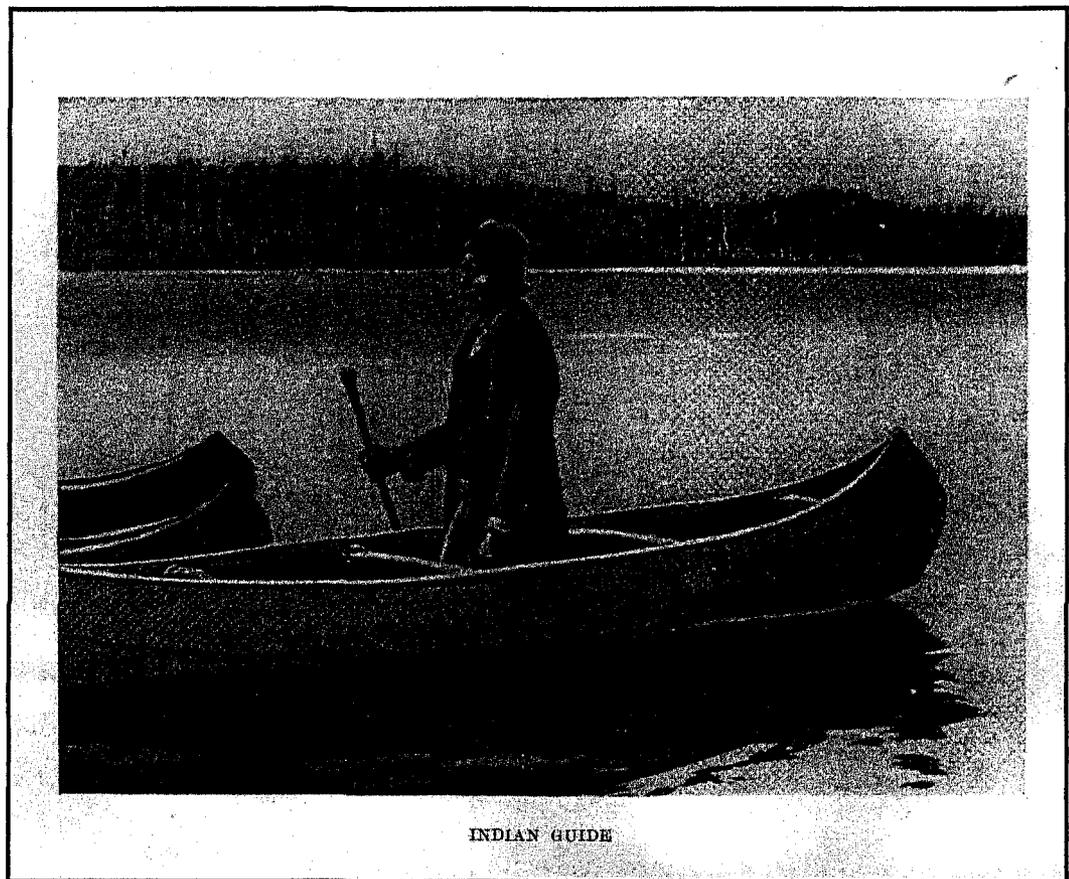


Figure 20: The Stalwart "Indian" Guide

Captured here with his oar in hand, pipe at the corner of his mouth and his regard to the horizon, the guide is portrayed as a central, yet passive, figure of the anglers' experience.

Source: E. T. D. Chambers, *The Ouananiche and its Canadian Environment* (New York: Harper, 1896).

The way anglers portrayed these voiceless guides still tells us much about the way in which Québec's modern sport fishery evolved from the paradisiacal enclave of elite anglers. Indeed, in many ways guides were a nineteenth-century imitation of the eighteenth century "noble savage."¹⁶ The culture of "primitivism" that developed in the eighteenth century was linked to ideas and concepts concerning life in Eden, or life

¹⁶ Stanley Diamond, *In Search of the Primitive: A Critique of Civilization* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transactions Books, 1974).

unencumbered by the structures and responsibilities of civilization. While the works of Rousseau and Chateaubriand, the most noted promoters of primitivism, celebrated peoples who lived outside of civilization as morally superior, this, of course, did not stop Europeans from exploiting them, sometimes to the point of extinction, and incorporating them into the mechanisms of civilization.¹⁷

Nineteenth-century anglers engaged in similar processes of degradation that coupled romanticization with exploitation, a process personified in the guide. Guides, like every other element within the angler's hierarchy, could be further sub-divided, depending on individual preferences. In his *Ouananiche and its Canadian environment*, E. T. D. Chambers remarked: "Some anglers prefer Canadians for guides, others Indians. The best of either are good enough for me. But some know one river better than another, and it is advisable to consult either with the hotel people or with somebody who has already made a given trip before engaging guides. For the Grande Décharge, I prefer the Canadien *voyageurs* to be found there. But in ascending the Mistassini or Peribonca River River, I like to be accompanied by some of the Montagnais Indians from Pointe Bleue (four miles from Roberval), who have their hunting grounds in the vicinity."¹⁸

Chambers, as a provincial promoter, did his part to romanticize the Amerindian people and add them to the repertoire of unique curiosities associated with Québec's aquatic landscape. He wrote: "The Montagnais are the most interesting of Canadian Indians and a racial curiosity. Their folk-lore is exceedingly rich, and they make splendid guides for the camper, the canoeist, and the angler in search of new and—by

¹⁷ Fergus M. Bordewich, *Killing the White Man's Indian: Reinventing Native Americans at the End of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Doubleday, 1996).

¹⁸ Chambers, *The Ouananiche and its Canadian Environment*, 151.

white men—untrodden and hitherto undiscovered trails through the forests and over the waterways of their far northern wilderness home.”¹⁹ He made his accounts more attractive by added stories of sorcery and even cannibalism. “Up to quite recent times,” he noted, “it was the custom among both Montagnais and Nascapes to strangle their old and infirm whenever they became unable to accompany the rest of the party upon their hunting trips.”²⁰

Some of his amateur anthropology was, no doubt, counterproductive. He admitted to having received at least one letter from a New England sportsman inquiring “whether the Indians and half-breeds up that way were peaceable, and if it was safe for ladies to accompany the party!”²¹ For Americans, who were less likely to understand French, guides with even a smattering of English were at the top, followed by French-Canadians who, despite their less civilized condition, were, after all, still of European heritage. Amerindians, for whom Americans had their own history of prejudice, stood apart, both as a curiosity and as a pathetic symbol of the march of progress. Many American sportsmen living at the end of the century had been witnesses to the sunset of the American Indian in the American West. Anglers regarded the presence of the Amerindian in Canada as a curious aberration that would disappear from there as well. One American angler described an Indian that he had come across in his angling adventures as a “degenerate child of nature [...] a dirty, greasy, half-naked savage, whose filthy person seemed to defile the very sunlight that fell upon him. [...] If he has any virtues when he is converted and civilized, then give all the glory to that gospel

¹⁹ Ibid., 123.

²⁰ Ibid., 305.

²¹ Ibid.

which has saved him, for the fact remains that in his natural state the Indian is about as disreputable a scoundrel as ever decorated a gallows.”²²

Still, the large majority of anglers' accounts by Americans demonstrate less hatred than curiosity and more nostalgia than disdain. One guidebook printed especially for anglers coming to the Lake St. John region wrote charmingly of the Montagnais Indians, but in a tone that left little doubt as to their place within the framework of the Anglers' Eden.

“[The Montagnais] [...] are probably the most interesting tribe in North America, and certainly no other Canadian Indians can nearly approach them in darkness of skin. They are so decidedly copper-coloured, that the Hurons of Lorette would appear quite pale-faced alongside of them. [...] There are scarcely any old men or women in the tribe. The hardships that they endure are certainly responsible for the absence of longevity. [...] They were a brave stock [...] they are great hunters, skilled trappers, great canoemen and runners. They are a racial curiosity, and worthy of study on the part of the intelligent tourist and the sight of them and their peculiarities will be entertaining to all.”²³

Numerous accounts used Amerindians to mark a watershed moment in the emergence of modernity. Dean Sage wrote:

The Mic-Mac Indians are not, as was once said might be implied from the name, a cross between the Irish and Scotch, but the remnant of a former powerful tribe, whose domains extended for hundreds of miles along the coast of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The most considerable number of these now live at the Mission of St. Anne de de Ristigouche, opposite Campbelton at the mouth of the river. Their numbers are somewhere between three and four hundred, and are gradually decreasing.²⁴

For all that they represented as symbols of the picturesque for anglers in Québec, guides and canoemen, whether French-Canadian, Métis or Amerindian, also had a

²² Sidney C. Kendall, *Among the Laurentians: A Camping Story* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1885).

²³ H. J. Beemer, *A Guide to the Lake St. John and its Tributary Waters* (Montréal: H.J. Beemer, 1894), no pagination.

²⁴ Dean Sage, *The Ristigouche and its Salmon Fishing, with a Chapter on Angling Literature* (Edinburgh: D. Douglas, 1888), 22.

tangible purpose. One angler writing about his experiences on Lac Alice and the environs summed it up succinctly: “[Québec] presents a more difficult problem, let me tell you. Thousands of miles of dark forests shade a multitude of lakes; many, no doubt, filled with trout ready to rise at any kind of a fly. But we must have guides and tents and cooking utensils, and a multitude of other things and we must know *where* [...]”²⁵ Guides knew where the pools of fish were and how to get to them. Nevertheless, the problem of where to go and how to get there grew less and less an issue as the century drew to a close, as monographs, and then magazines, readily gave detailed descriptions of where to go and the large hunting and fishing clubs mapped out their leased terrain.

In the more popular areas, guides had the local knowledge to conduct anglers to known “sweet spots” where anglers could fish from rock ledges or clearings. More popular was trolling, which entailed having the canoemen poll the canoe upstream to a certain point and then letting the current take the canoe along the water for a certain distance. Dean Sage gives a more specific and detailed account of just how the guides worked for the angler while casting for salmon from a canoe.

In fishing a salmon pool the canoe is anchored at the top, and dropped down a length or two after each cast is gone over. The anchor rope is managed by the man in the stern, and has sometimes attached to the end of it, in the canoe, a small cedar buoy which is thrown overboard when a fish is hooked, instead of raising the anchor. This enables the canoe to get under way sooner, and also indicates exactly the spot to return to—a very important thing sometimes in the long even flowing pools where small differences in location are hard to be distinguished. As soon as a fish is hooked the anchor is pulled in, or the buoy thrown over, by the Indian at the stern—the salmon generally hesitating a little before making his first rush—and the canoe paddled down as the fish goes until the angler can get ashore, when such is his purpose.²⁶

²⁵ Gardener Ladd Plumley, “Lac Alice and Other Lakes,” *The American Angler* 24, no. 8 (1894): 207.

²⁶ Sage, *The Ristigouche and its Salmon Fishing, with a Chapter on Angling Literature*, 22.

This quote, displayed in its entirety, reveals just how crucial the guide was to the anglers' experiences. The angler simply could not manage the mechanics of canoeing while fishing for a 10-15 kg salmon.

Moreover, not mentioned by Sage and generally brushed over by most other anglers' accounts, is the fact that getting to the specific spots where anglers wanted to fish often entailed a great deal of work and could also be fraught with danger. The guide had to arrange for the proper amount of gear and supplies, and when he was not negotiating dangerous rapids, he had to pick it all up and carry it across numerous multi-kilometre portages. These activities formed the core of the guide's service. Infinitely more important, this menial labour assured that anglers did not have themselves to toil while roughing it in the bush. Anglers may have wanted to experience nature while catching the fish they so esteemed, but they did not intend to get their hands dirty in the process.

Guides were there to do all of the so-called "dirty work" and to take care of every need of the angler. Chambers remarked: "It is wonderful with what rapidity they will cut tent poles, pitch tents, cut firewood, light the camp-fire, improvise pot-hooks and torch holders, cook and serve dinner, and cut and make fragrant bed of balsam boughs."²⁷ Indeed, anglers actually did little else on their trips than choose their flies, cast their line, reel in the fish, and tell stories around the campfire while sipping scotch. The guides would gaff the fish, kill them by striking them over the head, gut them, and

²⁷ Chambers, *The Ouananiche and its Canadian Environment*, 150-1.

pack them into crates of ice, sawdust, or even Preservaline and add them to their already weighty loads.²⁸

Aside from tents, cooking utensils, food and canoes, guides were also responsible for carrying the anglers' kit, which was most often quite extensive. G. M. Fairchild offered a list of the miscellaneous things no angler coming to Québec should neglect to bring with him into the bush:

Two fly rods at least, two reels, fly-book, four dozen trout flies (buy these flies in Canada, to be sure you are right), one dozen snelled hooks, half a dozen gut leaders, two common linen fish lines for the men, one landing net (unmounted), fish scales, one good cotton rope at least thirty feet long, jack-knife, cork-screw, one pound of mixed wire nails, small bush axe, leather belt, one flat file, one strong pair of tweezers, can opener, needles, thread, buttons, pins, brushes and comb, small looking-glass, fly oil, Carter's little Liver Pills, sticking plaster, bandages, cholera mixture, pipes, pocket compass, two towels, castile soap, small scissors, note-book and pencil, match box, copper wire, piece shoemaker's wax, revolver, cartridges, small whetstone, Vaseline, a cheap silver watch, and a map.²⁹

Such a list is an indication that the guide not only had to be knowledgeable, he had to be strong and healthy. Chambers remarked: "The strength and endurance of these guides are marvellous. I have known them to carry from three hundred to four hundred pounds of baggage each over the portages."³⁰ Another American angler wrote,

It was a marvel to us, when we left the boat and took to the road once more, to see the loads that our guides carried. We had read of the Indian or Canadian ability to carry loads, but here was the actual performance, and, after 'hefting' the packs, we looked with ever increasing admiration at the tough wiry little men that carried them. Each man was loaded with a huge bundle that we could hardly swing up on our shoulders. This was held in place by a broad carrying strap, fitting over the forehead, and a beautifully adapted to pulling a man's head off backwards.³¹

²⁸ Preservaline was a popular nineteenth-century chemical food preservative made from such toxic ingredients as formaldehyde, sulphites, borax, salicylic acid, and benzoic acid popular among anglers to preserve their fish for the trip home.

²⁹ George M. Fairchild, *From my Quebec Scrap-Book* (Québec: F. Carrel, 1907), 195-6.

³⁰ Chambers, *The Ouananiche and its Canadian Environment*, 156.

³¹ Payson, "Trouting in Canada," 277.

The guide, as labourer, revealed the reality within the romanticism. Yet another element in Fairchild's description of the necessary equipment is revelatory of the relationship between guide and angler: a map. The guide was a subaltern. Language issues aside, the elite anglers simply did not trust the men they hired because they were inferior members of society. The guide's subordinate place in the social economy meant that anglers almost never mentioned the very real role that he played in keeping the urban sportsmen alive in the woods. For the angler to have accorded his guide a higher place would have been nothing less than an act of self emasculation. After all, these were men who spent most of their lives mastering the board rooms, court rooms and legislative cloak rooms in New York, Boston and other urban centers in the United States, and they were not about to admit to any inabilities they might have as outdoorsmen (See Figure 21).

Here again, Chambers offers rare insight. He may have written for the elite and gained a measure of their esteem, but he was not a member of their class. He was an English immigrant to Canada who had worked hard to move up the social ladder to gain a certain measure of fame as a journalist and sporting author in his adopted country. His observations, while filled with romantic sentiments, were less often self-aggrandizing and tended to contain a larger comprehension of the activities of common people. He, among few others, understood that the guide, these "simple men of the forest," were men who often held the angler's very life in the palm of their hands. He observed :

"In many waters the angler has but one guide. At the Grande Décharge, and in the ascent of the various tributaries of Lake St. John, two are absolutely necessary. It would be certain death for one man to attempt to guide a loaded canoe in these heavy rapids; and, besides this, one man has almost all he can do

to carry the canoe itself over the portages, while the other is required to convey provisions and baggage.”³²

He also gave several examples that revealed the consequences of folly and injustice by the elite urbanite in the wilderness, such as the case of a group of Englishmen in the Lake St. John region:

The “Devil’s Whirlpool” in this river [the Natashquan] was some years ago the scene of an awful tragedy. A scion of an English ducal family, named Astley, persisted, against the advice of his friends and Indian guides, in essaying to run the whirlpool. As the canoe reached the centre of the dreaded vortex it whirled around and was engulfed. The Indian paddler saw what was coming and jumped, but was barely in the air when a shot from the rifle of one of Astley’s friends on shore made him share the fate of the Englishman. Their bodies were recovered about two miles down the river, disfigured beyond recognition.³³

Again, the reality of death and injustice came through the veil of romanticism. Indeed, the guide could be something more than a simple lackey who thanklessly took care of the every need of his rich clients in the woods. The Québec wilderness was a dangerous place, especially for those seeking to negotiate perilous rapids in unknown waters. Despite the fact that they so rarely received credit for it, guides possessed indigenous knowledge and skill sets that anglers needed in order to safely interact with places they were claiming for themselves. It was in those very actions that they revealed themselves to be something more than part of the picturesque scenery, but also part of became part of the sublime (See Figure 22).

³² Chambers, *The Ouananiche and its Canadian Environment*, 208.

³³ *Ibid.*, 137.

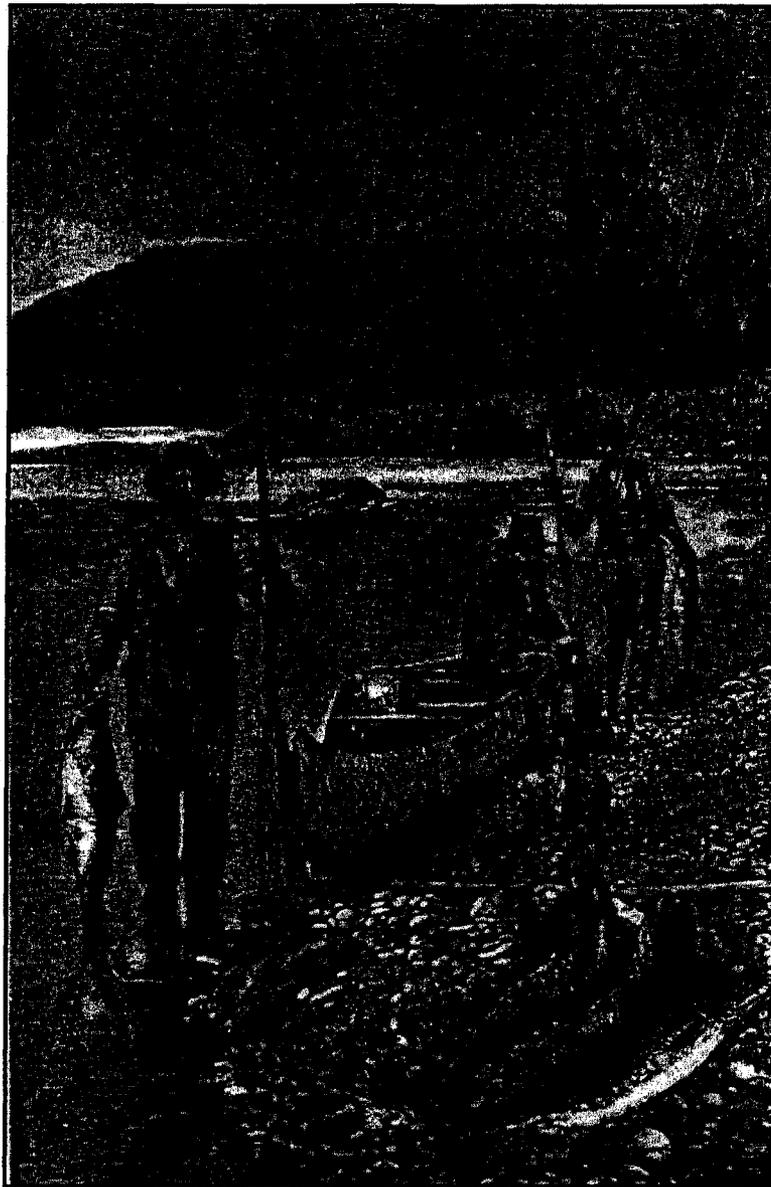


Figure 21: “The Landing”: A Portrait of the Anglers’ Hierarchy

Here an angler (possibly Wells himself) poses with his catch; fly rod in hand and seated on a birch bark canoe, his experience is complete. The work of the guides is just beginning.

Source: Henry P. Wells, *The American Salmon Fisherman*, 1886 (FCHU)



Figure 22: Agents of the Sublime

This illustration shows canoemen taking the angler through dangerous rapids while playing a fish, another highly stylized portrait painted into a photograph. It is hard to imagine that an angler would stand up in the middle of a canoe plunging through the rapids. It does, however, accidentally illustrate the changing nature of the piscatorial landscapes in popular magazines appealing to the middle-class angler. Note the railroad bridge that served as the route to the Anglers' Eden.

Source: *American Angler*, 1898 (FCHU)

This is precisely what Chambers was describing when he wrote:

Here, in a very dangerous place where two currents violently collide, or in the very vicinity of a whirlpool, the guides, resting upon their paddles, hold back the canoe in the middle of a heavy rapid, until a propitious moment approaches for darting by the temporarily averted danger. There, both men are struggling for very life, straining every muscle to wrench the canoe out of a current that would dash it upon a rock, or forcing it against the treacherous, smooth rapid that would carry it down over yonder waterfall [...]. No swimmer could struggle successfully against that awful tide. But one false stroke and all would be over [...].³⁴

As important as guides were to the experience in the aquatic landscape, they were also viewed as a wild and unpredictable part of nature that required control and management through the influence of elite authority. One author wrote that the guide should be “cultivated” so as to make him more apt to do the angler’s bidding.³⁵ In a like manner guides were fitted within the system of social and economic controls engineered by the private game and fish clubs.

The annual reports of the Triton Game and Fish Club provide an excellent example of the place of the guide within the club. The *Constitution and By-Laws of the Triton Club* demonstrated the paternalistic relationship to the guide. Members were requested, with the added emphasis of capital letters, that when leaving camp they “PERSONALLY see that all fires are put DEAD OUT; and in this connection, that the brands are not thrown into the brush, where they are liable to ignite the moss, but that the fire, as it stands, is out with water; and further that the camping place is left CLEAN; guides cannot be depended upon to do either of these properly, unless they know they are under inspection.”³⁶ The guide himself needed guidance; otherwise, he could

³⁴ Ibid., 152.

³⁵ “Cultivate the Guide,” *America Angler* 22, no. 5 (1893): 178.

³⁶ Original emphasis. *Constitution, By-laws, and Membership of the Triton Fish and Game Club*, 24.

become a menace to the club, its membership and the environment over which the angler was tasked with good stewardship.

When fires or other tragedies occasionally occurred, club officials most often blamed their guides. William Seaton, the Resident Director of the Triton Game and Fish Club wrote, in the 1898 report,

I regret to say, that within the past few days, the camp at Bakery has been burnt, together with a considerable tract of adjoining forest. Another fire occurred upon the Fulerton portage, doing considerable damage; and yet another, at Lake Biscuit put our clubhouse in very considerable danger. These three fires, of distinct origin, occurred at the same time. The first two are believed to have been caused through the carelessness of the guides, probably in throwing away lighted matches, after using them for their pipes [...].³⁷

The subject of inept guides at Triton came up at the annual meeting in New York City in 1903. One of the members remarked that, "as a rule, [the guides] were incompetent."³⁸ He also criticized Resident Director Seaton for not providing better men and proposed that all the clubs in the district join together in a movement to educate their guides and "establish a common black list so as to eliminate the workless ones."³⁹ Another member, G.H. Johnson, agreed, remarking that "the [Québec] guides were not the equal of those found in Maine."⁴⁰

The problems with guides had less to do with poor skills than it did with a changing economy of labour. The explosion of new clubs, combined with the increased frequency of visitors caused by provincial publicity efforts, had created a twentieth-century tourist industry that the pool of Amerindians, Métis and French-Canadian loggers and trappers simply could not supply. The pool of skilled guides was being augmented by French-Canadian colonists encouraged to move north by the government.

³⁷ *Membership of the Triton Fish and Game Club* (Québec: T. J. Moore, 1898), 24.

³⁸ *Annual Report of the Triton Fish and Game Club. 1903* (Québec: T. J. Moore, 1903).

³⁹ *Annual Report of the Triton Fish and Game Club. 1906* (Québec: T. J. Moore, 1906).

⁴⁰ *Annual Report of the Triton Fish and Game Club. 1903.*

These people were mainly farmers and had poor knowledge of the area and equally little experience serving as guides.

Seaton explained that while “the club had agents at Lorette, St. Raymond and Roberval so as to procure the best men available,” the demand was simply greater than the supply of available men. He also redirected the blame to the members themselves, noting that they “often caused difficulty by changing their arrangements; after getting them hired for a certain date, those dates would be altered and the men thus thrown out of work would often refuse to be re-engaged.”⁴¹ The club decided to form a special committee to attempt to improve the situation. Their main goal was to be able to pay guides what they thought they were worth rather than the standard rate set by the province of \$1.50 per day plus all meals and a place to stay in club guide shanties. Ironically, the average price that anglers paid for a custom rod in New York was between \$50 and \$60.⁴²

The following year, the committee reported that it had “been in correspondence with fourteen of the clubs leasing territory in the Laurentian district. Having secured the addresses of the secretaries of the various clubs, letters were sent inquiring if these clubs would appoint committees to meet with our committee in Québec or elsewhere to discuss the entire matter. Of the clubs addressed, the following were decidedly in favour of taking the matter up and, if, for their own interests, they were not active in the matter, they signified their willingness and desire to aid us in any steps we might take.”⁴³ Not content with the progress, the committee decided to attempt to influence the Québec

⁴¹ *Annual Report of the Triton Fish and Game Club. 1903*, 5.

⁴² George Dawson, *Pleasures of Angling with Rod and Reel for Trout and Salmon* (New York: Sheldon, 1876), 47.

⁴³ *Annual Report of the Triton Fish and Game Club. 1903*, see: “Report on the Committee on Guide Service,” 17.

government directly by drafting a bill “somewhat after the style of the bill in the state of Maine with the changes that would be advisable to conform to the status of the Québec guides [...]”⁴⁴ Here were American anglers actively working to influence the Québec government in the control of other people’s activities and their economic power within their Anglers’ Eden.

In the end, the Triton Club found no satisfactory solution to the problem of ensuring that guides were both “competent” and “readily available.” They proposed the idea of making guides register, but concluded that such a measure would be useless, “owing to the fact that the majority of our guides are illiterate.”⁴⁵ Finally, a solution was adopted, requesting members “to fill out a card, which will be provided at the Club house, recording the behaviour and qualifications of each guide employed by him.” It remains unclear whether or not members actually furnished such critiques.

Guides and canoemen, whether Amerindians or rural French-Canadians, bore titles that seemingly identified them as indispensable intermediaries between urban elite anglers and nature, because they lived in the forest and possessed valuable skill sets and local knowledge of the fish and waters. Yet elite anglers brought their own preconceived notions of the landscape with them. While the anglers’ experience in the Québec wilderness would have been impossible and perhaps even deadly without the guides, they had little to learn from them. Reduced to caricatures in the anglers’ accounts and pushed to the margins of their experiences, at best guides were valets, and at worst, they were insolent and ignorant men who required the guidance of their social superiors. The ultimate form of marginalization for guides within the fishery, however,

⁴⁴ *Annual Report of the Triton Fish and Game Club. 1903.*

⁴⁵ *Annual Report of the Triton Fish and Game Club. 1903*, see section entitled “Circular.”

came not from the way that anglers portrayed them in their writing, or even how they were paid. It came in the guise of one brief phrase that was part of the by-laws of nearly every club: "Guides are strictly prohibited from engaging in any fishing activities."⁴⁶ The fish, and the experiences that went along with catching them, belonged to the elite anglers.

5.2 Common People, Common Fish

Amerindian, Métis and French-Canadian guides and canoemen were the most visible figures of marginalization within the perimeter of the Anglers' Eden and later the sport fishery, yet there were others. These "others" included people who were engaged in other types of freshwater fishing, whether for subsistence, reasons of commerce or their own particular definitions of sport and leisure. As the footprint of the sport fishery spread into new areas with the support and encouragement of federal and provincial legislation, ordinary people soon found that the anglers' influence had an impact on the ways in which they interacted with the freshwater landscape. They now had to buy licenses to fish. They could only fish for certain species at certain times, and the places they could do so were becoming increasingly limited. Now they were faced with the choice of fishing within the legal framework constructed around the sport fishery by the State, or (as will be discussed more thoroughly in the next chapter) conducting their activities outside of the law.⁴⁷

Occasionally, angling monographs noted some of the legal ways that common people fit their traditional fishing practices into the margins left by anglers

⁴⁶ *Constitution, By-laws, and Membership of the Triton Fish and Game Club.*

⁴⁷ *This section explores similar themes concerning the marginalization of people from resources and their own conception of their value found in Richard Judd, *Common Lands, Common People: The Origins of Conservation in Northern New England.* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).*

(See Figure 22). For example, despite his promotion of the ouananiche as Québec's iconic game fish, Chambers also had to admit that these same fish were part of the culture of the local inhabitants in the Lake St. John region. He wrote: "[T]he great bulk of the fish that are caught [in the region of Lake St. John] out of the first run of the ouananiche do not rise to the fly fisher's lures, but vulgarly seize some of the plebeian baits already referred to, and are yanked at the end of a stout rustic pole and line in strong habitant hands from their native element."⁴⁸ Fishery statistics show that in 1896, fishermen had taken 90,000 ouananiche in the province, revealing that even as the sport fishery was congealing and the freshwater landscape was being appropriated by the elite, common people were still fishing when and where they could in traditional ways.

Nevertheless, provincial authorities and anglers themselves would increasingly target these activities and the people who participated in them. Some rivers and lakes would see persistent government efforts to reduce the number of fishermen and the number of freshwater fish caught that were considered more valuable as "game."⁴⁹ In other places, more practical approaches were taken by anglers. Since they often had vast sums of money at their disposal, elite anglers could often compel common people to change their fishing habits through bribery. Moreover, the government knew of these tactics and explicitly condoned them. In 1897, the Department of Marine and Fisheries reported:

[...] other rivers, such as the Grand Cascapedia, Grand River and St. John's, the estuary nets have been bought by the anglers, that is to say, by an arrangement between the net fishermen and the anglers, the former have agreed not to fish their stations, for which they continue to be licensed and for doing they are paid by the anglers an amount equal to the annual net yield of

⁴⁸ Chambers, *The Ouananiche and its Canadian Environment*, 65.

⁴⁹ *Rapport annuel du Département de la Marine et des Pêcheries. 1869*, 71.

the station, the department agreeing not to issue any new licenses in estuaries where this arrangement is made.⁵⁰

The department found this process to be “perfectly fair,” remarking that “the holder of the license is recouped for the loss of profits derived from fishing and the angler gets a greater run of the fish in the river.” Moreover, officials claimed: “[U]nder this arrangement a larger number of breeding fish survive in the rivers, and in the rivers where it has been adopted, the fishing has most decidedly improved.”⁵¹ Of course, there were no scientific studies to back up such claims.

These local arrangements were nearly always in reference to the fish at the top of the angler’s hierarchy: salmon. Yet there were many other species in the freshwater rivers and streams of the St. Lawrence. These “other” fish also became part of the marginalizing process initiated by anglers and the State. One of the few sportsmen to recognize that the freshwater aquatic landscape in Québec was far more diverse than that promoted by the angling elite was E. T. D. Chambers. Once again, his observations straddled to cultural points of view. “There are many other species of fish in these waters, including perch and the different varieties of carp, but” he conceded, “[...] they are of little or no interest to the angler.”⁵²

That interest in game fish had been built into both the federal fisheries acts and the provincial fish and game laws. Within the freshwater landscape, these laws created new forms of social control around specific fish species. Moreover, in doing so, these laws left all other practices involving fish not designated as “game” outside the protection of the law. This led to a general shift by common people towards the

⁵⁰ *Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries. 1897, 152.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Chambers, *The Ouananiche and its Canadian Environment*, 87.

exploitation of fish species that were of no interest to anglers, because, by extension, fishermen could take these species without the need for licenses, without restraints involving quotas, and free from the fear of expensive fines.

This trend is visible in the catch statistics between the years when angling was still primarily a part of private endeavour (1869) and the years in which it was on the verge of becoming institutionalized (1896). Admittedly, those statistics are difficult to use with much precision because there was little coordination among fisheries officials and no scientific standards. A small number of local agents simply gathered information from fishermen who had little incentive to be completely forthright and sent their results to Ottawa for publication. The difficulty in extracting meaningful information from these statistics is compounded by the fact that, from year-to-year, federal officials used different variables to describe the catch; in some cases the reports list the catch by numbers of “barrels” of fish, in others by number of individual fish. In other cases, it is simply not clear.

Nevertheless, those statistics remain valuable in terms of broad trends concerning species. The statistics from the season of 1868-69, for example, recorded that 5,262 barrels of salmon were taken by common fishermen holding licenses to fish for them using traps and nets. At the same time, Québec fisherman took an almost comparable number (3,364 barrels) of catfish, 394 barrels of sturgeon, 321 barrels of unknown “mixed-fish,” 33,242 individual shad and 175,427 individual eel.⁵³ By 1898, the reports revealed that while the common fisherman was continuing to catch salmon, other species were beginning to figure even more prominently. That year, the figures for salmon were

⁵³ *Rapport annuel du Département de la Marine et des Pêcheries. 1869, 99.*

171,000 individual fish. Along with that, however, the statistics shows that the number of shad increased five fold to 150,160 individual fish. More importantly, the statistics revealed that fishermen working in freshwater habitats were taking an ever wider range of species, including pickerel, sturgeon, muskellunge, perch and an incredible amount (1,688,000 pounds) of “mixed-course fish” that were used mostly for fertilizer.⁵⁴

These statistics do provide insight into what kinds of activities were going on in parallel with the province’s ever-increasing socio-economic association with elite anglers. Over a thirty-year period (the same period in which anglers gradually gained dominion over the aquatic landscape), common fishermen were showing a pattern of angler avoidance, seen in the decline in exploitation of those fish high on the anglers’ hierarchy, particularly salmon, and increasing their exploitation of species of little interest to elite anglers.

The statistical trend in Québec fishermen’s interest in other species was not solely due to angler avoidance, however. The social value of species also changed due to environmental realities. This was perhaps most visible in the northeastern United States, where Americans, after having extinguished their own salmon runs, turned to shad, which eventually became a popular game and commercial fish (See Figure 23). As shad populations, too, began to decline at the turn of the century due to habitat change, pollution and over-fishing, interest in its conservation rose. As the species became rarer, it became more valuable economically and more culturally significant.⁵⁵

A similar process was taking place in Québec. As salmon became more and more the possessions of the privileged (first the French seigneurs, and then the English and

⁵⁴ *Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries. 1898, 184.*

⁵⁵ John McPhee, *The Founding Fish* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002).

American sportsmen), common people, both English and French, turned to what was seen as the next best thing. The fish to fill that role was shad. Shad was a relatively large fish, but the able fisherman could take it with either a rod and line or in large, hand-held nets. Although it was more boney than salmon and lacked its pink flesh, it came to be considered the next best thing. Its “flaky white flesh” was considered delicious and it gained the status of the “poor man’s salmon.”⁵⁶



Figure 23: Net Fishing for Shad

Source: Notman Photographic Archives, McCord Museum, Montréal

⁵⁶ Jean A. Robitaille, *Rapport sur la situation de l'aloise savoureuse (Alosa sapidissima Wilson) au Québec* (Québec: Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Faune, 1997), 46.

As the control over access to salmon and trout reached an apex at the turn of the century, shad became one of Québec's most important commercial fish staples; however, since the fish contained less fat it was more difficult to keep fresh, so its market remained largely local. In 1869, on the Isle St. Bernabé, a fisherman by the name of Jacques Lepage reported that he had caught 90 salmon [...] and 900 shad.⁵⁷ Lepage represented the typical catch ration of salmon to shad all along the St. Lawrence. Even the scattered statistics clearly reveal that the ratio between catches of shad and salmon increased in the decades to come as access to salmon by common people declined. Increasingly, shad, despite its short shelf life, became an export commodity (See Figure 23). In 1888, 545,000 pounds of shad, worth \$31,000, were exported from Québec, mostly to the United States.⁵⁸ A. N. Montpetit, the author of the first French-Canadian natural history of freshwater fish in Canada, called for the shad to be artificially propagated.⁵⁹ His call was ignored, a fact that most likely had as much to do with the fact that French-Canadian naturalists formed their own scientific milieu as the fact that shad had little value for elite anglers, who were rapidly becoming the main focus of hatchery operations.⁶⁰

The case of shad illustrates that species marginalized by elite anglers could still find social and economic importance among people situated further down in the social economy. Jocelyn Morneau has shown, in his historical analysis of rural life in the region of Lac Saint-Pierre during the nineteenth century, that other species, too, could be

⁵⁷ *Rapport annuel du Département de la Marine et des Pêcheries. 1869*, 74.

⁵⁸ André-Napoléon Montpetit, *Les poissons d'eau douce du Canada* (Montréal: C. O. Beauchemin et fils, 1897), 242.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Raymond Duchesne, "Science et société coloniale: les naturalistes du Canada Français et leurs correspondants scientifiques (1860-1900)," *Bulletin HSTC* 5, no. 2 (1981): 99-139.

central to local economies.⁶¹ Lac Saint-Pierre, an enlargement in the St. Lawrence between Sorel and Trois-Rivières, forms a lake, complete with islands and wetlands that flooded annually and provided an important area for migrating fish to spawn. Communities around the lake all took advantage of the fish fauna, primarily shad, eel, sturgeon, catfish, suckers and perch.

In spite of their importance within local economies, or perhaps because of them, elite anglers could denigrate those very same fish and the people who fished for them in their writings, and illustrations, even those who in no way threatened their sport fishing (See Figure 24). In his text *The Sportsmen and Naturalist in Canada*, Major W. Ross King wrote: “[...] some of my old comrades [...] will recall the amusement, *rather than sport* [emphasis added], that they afforded us on various perch-fishing expeditions.”⁶²

Perhaps the best example of marginalization within Québec’s freshwater landscape was that of the eel and the people who exploited it. The local Amerindians exchanged eel dried on the rafters of their longhouses for guns. The eel saved the starving settlers in Québec on more than one occasion. As the centuries passed, the common eel became an important staple all along the St. Lawrence, and it very early became associated with the common classes. Pierre Boucher, in his written account of his time in Trois-Rivières, wrote: “I must not omit to mention the eel [...]. They are long and thick, and taste very well, much better than those in France; they are salted to

⁶¹ Jocelyn Morneau, *Petits pays et grands ensembles: Les articulations du monde rural au XIX^e siècle. L'exemple du Lac Saint-Pierre* (Sainte-Foy: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1999), 161-5.

⁶² W. Ross King, *The Sportsmen and Naturalist in Canada; or Notes on the Natural History of the Game, Game Birds and Fish of that Country* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1866), 310.

keep the year round, which they do perfectly well, and they are very good for working people.”⁶³



Figure 24: Portrait of a French-Canadian Fisherman

This watercolour (c. 1905) by Canadian artist Walter Baker (1859-1912) gives one of the few clues as to the kind of individual fishing practices French-Canadians probably were engaged in for generations. Note the multiple poles, bait bucket and an additional hand line. Such portraits also served to demonstrate the different values held by “anglers” and “fishermen.”

Source: National Library and Archives of Canada Common people fished for eel from

⁶³ Pierre Boucher, *Histoire véritable et naturelle des moeurs et productions du pays de la Nouvelle France, vulgairement dite le Canada* (Paris: Florentin Lambert, 1664), 32.

April to October as they migrated back from the Sargasso Sea to their freshwater homes in the tributaries of the St. Lawrence. They used various methods that were not unlike those used by Amerindians, including spearing, damming of rivers and the construction of temporary weirs and traps (See Figure 25).⁶⁴ Eel became one of the primary food staples for many people living along the St. Lawrence in areas where farming was poor. Their flesh, usually boiled or fried, supplemented the diet of people who lived mostly on potatoes and radishes.⁶⁵ The eel's skin was dried to make soles of shoes, woven into rope and made into horse harnesses, and prized for its medicinal properties.⁶⁶

The 1869 report notes that a simple fisherman by the name of Napoleon Coté caught 5 salmon, 200 shad and 1100 eel.⁶⁷ These statistics from the Department of Marine and Fisheries bear witness to the typical ratio of eel to salmon all along the St. Lawrence. Historian Joseph-Arthur Richard recounted a popular story in his *Histoire de Cap St-Ignace, 1672-1970*, concerning the catch of 100,000 eel on the Rivière-Ouelle by the inhabitants in a single night in 1870.⁶⁸ The story may be an exaggeration, but it highlighted the important place of the eel for common people. Government statistics taken between 1869 and 1898 show that the importance of that fish only increased during the period. In 1869, the total reported catch was 175,427 eel; in 1872, 137,000;

⁶⁴ Roger Martin, *L'anguille. Traditions du geste et de la parole* (Ottawa: Leméac, 1975), 39-62.

⁶⁵ J. Geoffrey Eales, *The Eel Fisheries of Eastern Canada* (Ottawa: Fisheries Research Board of Canada, 1968), 48. See also, *Rapport annuel du Département de la Marine et des Pêcheries. 1869*, 61.

⁶⁶ Martin, *L'anguille*.

⁶⁷ *Rapport annuel du Département de la Marine et des Pêcheries. 1869*, 74.

⁶⁸ Joseph-Arthur Richard, *Histoire du Cap St-Ignace, 1672-1972* (Montmagny: Éditions Marquis, 1970), 369.

in 1880, 393,833; and in 1898, the catch had increased to 897,550.⁶⁹ After the turn of the century, the catch rose into the millions.



Figure 25: Spear Fishing for Eel by Torchlight

Source: André-Napoléon Montpetit, *Les poissons d'eau douce du Canada*, (1897).

Yet statistics alone are not enough to reveal how the ancient serpentine fish wiggled its way into the lives the people of Québec. One can find its deep influence upon the culture in the expressions left in the language and in popular folklore. As A.N.

⁶⁹ *Rapport annuel du Département de la Marine et des Pêcheries. 1869, 99.*

Montpetit noted, the French spoken in Québec became filled with popular metaphors and expressions involving the eel (*anguille*). There was: *Il y a anguille sous roche* (an expression meaning that something of importance had not yet been revealed); *Glissante comme une anguille* (Slippery as an eel); *Il s'échappe comme une anguille* (He can get away with anything). Someone who fidgeted incessantly, or possessed a doubtful moral character, was referred to as an *anguille*. A victim of robbery was said to have been *plumé comme une anguille* (plucked like an eel). A common English expression, "to put one's foot in one's mouth," found its meaning in the expression *avaler une anguille par la queue*. Finally, someone who was involved in an impossible task was trying to pluck an eel from the water by the tail, or *plumé une anguille par la queue*.⁷⁰ Moreover, the eel was also a popular sexual metaphor in a highly religious society. A popular song entitled *l'Anguille adjudée à la jeune* tells the story of a struggle between an older woman and a younger rival over the same man.⁷¹ The elite anglers' prized salmon had nothing close to the rich legacy of the eel in French-Canadian culture.

Despite its cultural importance to common people, no measure of the fish's importance can be found in the qualitative interest of the government. There was no mention of the artificial propagation of eel or measures for their protection. There was never any similar measure of concern given to eel as that given to salmon concerning overexploitation, the long-term viability of the species as a commodity, or even how it might be similarly affected by too much sawdust waste in the rivers or obstructions like milldams. The eel was nothing more than a staple of the common man, and no particular economic or scientific interest would be given to it until the common people,

⁷⁰ Martin, *L'anguille*, 147; Montpetit, *Les poissons d'eau douce du Canada*, 261.

⁷¹ R. E. Follett, "Preserve the Fishing," *Rod and Gun in Canada* 1, no. 9 (1900): 170-71.

particularly French-Canadians, came to exercise greater political sway in Québec in the 1960s and 70s.⁷²

The eel's historical importance rarely comes through in most of the monographs written by elite anglers. British angler Major Ross King offers a rare, but brief, commentary on the fish:

Important and valuable as are [salmon and trout], there is one which neither figures in the returns nor attracts the lovers of the gentle craft, and yet deserves mention before proceeding to the higher groups, on account of its usefulness to a large class of Indians, habitants [sic], and settlers, by whom it is taken in very great quantities. This is the "Longbec" or Common Eel (*Anguilla vulgaris*) [*Anguilla rostrata*], which both when freshly caught or when dried forms a most important article of food in many parts of the country.⁷³

But it was not merely that species like the eel and shad were of no interest to anglers, some, like the sucker, catfish and chub, were quite simply despised. As King noted: "A very common and inferior fish [...] is the Sucker the body of which is from eight to twelve inches in length, rounded and tapering, the colour varying at different seasons. The head is smooth, and the mouth protracted in order to enable it to grovel in the sand, where it is very destructive to the ova of other fish."⁷⁴ King's anthropomorphic descriptions tied this "grovelling" fish to the bottom rungs of the hierarchy. It shared its space with the catfish, known as a "frequent source of annoyance to the angler." It was "an ugly looking, ill-shaped fish, covered with a greenish yellow skin devoid of scales" and a mouth with "some six or eight fleshy horns or filaments, from one to two inches or more in length, according to the size of the fish." Its flesh was described as "very fat." King said that although he had caught them in large numbers

⁷² Jean A. Robitaille and Serge Tremblay, *Problématique de l'anguille d'Amérique (Anguilla rostrata) dans le réseau du Saint-Laurent* (Québec: Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Faune, 1994).

⁷³ King, *The Sportsmen and Naturalist in Canada*, 250.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 311.

“involuntarily,” he was never “tempted to try the taste of one.”⁷⁵ Or perhaps he had, and simply did not know it. A. N. Montpetit recounted a story of how one hotel owner in Ottawa responded to the pretentiousness desires of a group of American millionaires by substituting catfish for the mountain trout listed on the menu. He reported that the diners enjoyed it so much that they ate all that they could get.⁷⁶

Anglers advised to simply discard fish like suckers and catfish into the forest when caught accidentally. Chambers wrote, concerning the chub, that it was a “frequent cause of annoyance to the persistent trout fishermen in Canadian waters. These chub, often erroneously called gudgeon by both American and Canadian anglers, are known to the French-Canadian and Indian guides hereabouts as *ouitouche*; they are usually cast away with disgust by the angler whose hook has impaled them.”⁷⁷ Here one finds little of the empathy and respect given to the “noble” salmon even in the manner of its death. Chub were to be tossed like garbage into the bush and left to flop around and gasp to death while salmon received the respectful and rapid *coup de grâce*.

Yet fish at the bottom of the hierarchy were not alone in being targets of disdain. Any species could be targeted when discussed in relation to another higher on the scale, even trout. In 1852, one warden wrote: “[M]any people think that the trout destroys salmon, and that in order to promote the reproduction of the latter, one has to destroy the other as much as it is possible.”⁷⁸ The government often gave special licenses to clubs to net trout just for this reason. The Sainte Marguerite Salmon Club, for example, noted that it used such a license to kill “about 2,500 pounds of trout.” Of course, they found

⁷⁵ Ibid., 312.

⁷⁶ Paraphrased from Montpetit, *Les poissons d'eau douce du Canada*, 259.

⁷⁷ Chambers, *The Ouananiche and its Canadian Environment*, 276-79.

⁷⁸ *Rapport annuel du Département de la Marine et des Pêcheries. 1872*, 21.

ample reason to justify the slaughter as “[o]ne of the members killed a trout weighting one and half pounds and noticing that he seemed greatly distended at his belly, had him opened and found eleven salmon par!”⁷⁹

The anglers’ hierarchy was a cultural system that encapsulated the shared values of a group of elite towards not only specific features of nature, but the other people who used them. Moreover, that system was such a force for change that it pushed common people into its margins in observable ways. Once again, A. N. Montpetit offers the historian a different perspective from elite anglers in Québec. He came of age as the sport fishery was taking shape and was a contemporary of E. T. D. Chambers. Both men knew of each other’s work and shared a similar and intense interest in fish and fishing; each writing books on fish and fishing in Québec in the 1890s. Yet the two lived in separate cultural worlds.⁸⁰

Montpetit’s *Les poissons d’eau douce au Canada* carefully cited the works of notable zoologists such as Cuvier, Lacépède, Agassiz and George Brown Goode, but combined them with his own observations. As he stated it, he wrote the book with “a rod in one hand and a pencil in the other.” While the text was valuable in as much as it introduced the French-Canadian intelligentsia to an emerging science of ichthyology, it would not have been viewed by contemporaries as a particularly important work of science. As a piece of intellectual history demonstrating the growing importance of angling and its role in the marginalization of ordinary people from aquatic habitats in Québec, however, it remains highly illustrative.

⁷⁹ *Charter, By-laws, Officers and Members of the Sainte Marguerite Salmon Club* (New York: John H. Gresham, 1895), 20.

⁸⁰ W. Stewart Wallace, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Canada*, vol. IV (Toronto: University Associates of Canada, 1948), 325.

The preface of Montpetit's book is both revelatory and resentful of the ways in which the elite angler was already changing the values held by French-Canadians in relationship to freshwater aquatic habitats and species. He wrote:

I gathered, one by one, in the rivers, lakes, and streams of the country, the notes that I would later put together into a book, by the light of my lamp, in my leisure time, always respectful of the art of Walton and his numerous disciples, like Heney, Henshall, Barnwell, Perry, Murray, Goode, Mosher, Jordan, Mather, Creighton, Chambers, as many American authors as Canadian of English origins, beside which we can sadly place only a few rare French names.⁸¹

He followed his lament with a comment that exposed his understanding not only of his own marginal place within the intellectual corpus of the angling elite, but that of his entire culture. "Also, it is with understood worry," he wrote "in the presence of this cohort of distinguished foreigners, of passionate savants, that I risk publishing this book, in French [...]."⁸²

He also understood how the elite order re-ordered the aquatic landscape. He sought to make this understood to his readers using a curious metaphor. "Would you like to recall the feudalism of the Middle Ages?" he wrote,

then go fishing in the upper Saint-Maurice, or in certain lakes in the Eastern Townships, Lake Megantic and Alymer among others, and you will find there the same hierarchical structure of noble pretenders that is just as tyrannical, oppressive and all consuming, that goes from the small land-owners up to the king. The barons, counts, marquises, dukes, princes and kings are themselves, crappies, perch, bass, walleye, muskellunge, and pike. And, for the plebeians, owing full duty and obligation to their lords, there is the small fry, the aland, the sucker, the carp, the mullet, the complete gentry of the cyprinids [...]. These are the fish of the common people, especially children and women.⁸³

⁸¹ Montpetit, *Les poissons d'eau douce du Canada*, x.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid., 47.

His observation of these changes led him to a stunning denunciation of the entire process. He seemed to understand how the re-ordering of society based upon the use of species could have a marginalizing effect on his own people:

[...] these elite anglers, from England, Scotland, and the United States...they have planted *écus* in our hands—it shimmers, fascinates, and dazzles—but it is a seed that is deceptive and sterile. These people no longer fish in large canoes, made from a single pine trunk, but in yachts, barges trimmed in green, blue and sometimes gold, flying across the waves in full sail; they have fishing rods with scientific adjustments, automatic reels, wobbling lures, artificial flies, rings, and other ostentations apparatuses, and then there is the wine, from Jamaica, even Champagne—they distribute it all around to fascinate the good habitant.⁸⁴

Montpetit targeted the elite angler because he was the most visible and most influential agent of change, yet even as his text was coming off the press, State promotion and socio-economic changes in the United States border were affecting relationships with Québec's aquatic landscape. A new kind of angler was bringing a new set of values to Québec, and he, too, would quickly find himself in the marginal aquatic spaces left by the elite.

5.3 The Middle-Class Angler

Montpetit's keen observations were still rooted a polar ethnic and social structure in which the elite Anglo angler exercised sway over the Francophone commoner. He seemed unaware of that the culture of angling, especially in the United States, where most of the foreign angling tourists coming to Québec were originating by the turn of the century, was itself undergoing changes. At the end of the so-called "Gilded Age," in which the American economy saw a great polarization of wealth from which emerged the elite angler, there was a great burst of economic expansion that saw a more complex

⁸⁴ Ibid., viii.

stratification of the socio-economic structure that led to the development of a burgeoning middle class.

To be clear, one could not consider this economic expansion by any means as broad. Most of society was still composed of the working poor, who had almost no leisure time or disposable income. Nevertheless, more Americans did have some leisure time and disposable income, and many used them in the pursuit of angling. One publication remarked upon the growing “cosmopolitan” nature of the sport of angling. The author noted that the “young American angler saves his pennies to buy books on his favourite pastime [...] and these subscriptions are not exclusively among the wealthier classes, many of them being mechanics and clerks who are saving their weakly wages to increase their knowledge of the quarry they love to lure.”⁸⁵

Moreover, new members of the American middle class were apt to use their extra time and money in the conspicuous consumption of items and experiences that mimicked their social superiors.⁸⁶ The middle class began to rapidly appropriate and transform elitist notions of angling. The expensive and weighty elite monographs were being replaced by specialized and much less expensive weekly magazines, like *American Angler* (at its earliest subscription price, it cost 5 cents a copy) and *Rod and Gun in Canada*, that gave voice to middle-class angling experiences. While articles still celebrated Waltonian virtues, they discussed a broader range of species: interestingly enough, many of the same fish that were staples of the common people, like bass, pike, pickerel, walleye and muskellunge. Moreover, editors filled their magazines with stories

⁸⁵ “Angling as a Cosmopolitan Sport,” *The American Angler* 25, no. 2 (1895): 175; here I need make a distinction between the concept of “Working-class wilderness” and the broadening of the use of landscape through the integration of a new bourgeoisie that sought to mimic the activities of the social superiors.

⁸⁶ Elizabeth White Nelson, *Market Sentiments: Middle-Class Market Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2004).

about fishing in Canada and Québec. That great interest was an indication that angling in Québec no longer required one to be a multi-millionaire or a member of the social elite.

The middle-class angler could take advantage of expanding railroad lines, and responded to the targeted publicity to go for angling holidays of their own. Once they got there, however, many found to their great disappointment that the places left to them were already greatly limited. The middle-class angler could go to Québec with his Sears and Roebuck fly rod, but he lacked the connections needed to get access to the exclusive shares in the prestigious clubs that monopolized the province's salmon rivers and trout lakes. Middle-class anglers increasingly found that their experiences were impeded by lack of access to their own angling "sweet spots." These men filled the pages of their popular angling magazines with their frustrations and complaints about this lack of access.

In the United States, where people considered land ownership part of the democratic heritage, it was more difficult to close off large acreages to exclusive groups of people. An exception to that was found in the Adirondacks region where, as in Québec, wealthy interests staked out large private reserves during the nineteenth century. This ownership of large tracts of land by a small number of wealthy people came to be defended through the use of elitist arguments concerning conservation of natural resources. But, by the end of the century, middle-class American anglers were beginning to become sceptical about such claims. As one author in *American Angler* noted, many simply saw such arguments as part of a land grab by wealthy Americans that prevented access to natural resources that rightfully belonged to everyone. "It is

being talked in certain sections,” he wrote, “that either these great monopolies or else the game laws must go, and it is asked of what use are game laws, protectors and hatcheries, if a few millionaires are to have the sole benefit and monopoly of them, and of all that is good or desirable.”⁸⁷

The middle-class angler coming to Québec soon began using the same arguments to describe his own experiences there. Richard F. Kimball, writing in *American Angler* about his own adventure with the ouananiche of Lake St. John, reacted with a measure of disappointment and alarm at the conditions he stumbled upon there:

...the atmosphere seems surcharged with *Salmo fontinalis* of prodigious growth, so much so that difficult it is to prevent one's self from alighting at every station, jointing one's rod and wading in; the veins pulsate with anxious thrills, and longing expectancy possesses the soul, but alas! even should the attempt be made, one will find everything and place of advantage to the fisherman pre-empted by the angling clubs which overrun this Canadian country, leasing their rights from the Government, and standing with forbidding aspect and “no admittance” blazoned all over to ever one outside their sacred pale....⁸⁸

The sublime experiences promised by E. T. D. Chambers and a host of other promoters were outside of his reach, and the more he travelled around the province, the more frustrated he became at the fact that he had seemingly been robbed of “those ecstatic thrills, born of taking my fish upon some wild and virgin stream” by his inability to access the Anglers' Eden.⁸⁹ Kimball, the American, described such experiences of “going a-fishing” as being “agin' the grain” of [his] republican [...] soul.”⁹⁰ For Kimball, it was a question of egalitarianism. Everyone should have access to nature. For members of the English-Canadian middle class, the problem was equally

⁸⁷ “Interest in Protection Dormant,” *The American Angler* 20, no. 22 (1891): 337.

⁸⁸ Kimball, “The Ouananiche of Lake St. John,” 74.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

perplexing, but they couched their arguments within a different political paradigm. They did not necessarily see a problem with the upper class retaining a measure of privilege, but they did take issue with a system that tied such privilege to political favouritism. Articles in *Rod and Gun in Canada* saw the central issue as being an unfair system of granting leases that appeared tied to political favours. Ironically, they looked to the United States, particularly the State of Maine, as a model for more honest and transparent leases of Crown lands.

The provincial government did attempt to address the concerns of this growing group of anglers. While they did not make any serious attempt to address the issue of political favouritism, they did open several reserves, including a large public park in the Laurentians in 1895. The Laurentide Park would be the first national park in Québec, and great care was taken to develop it into a place that would be enjoyed by anglers and other sportsmen.⁹¹ Even in creating reserves, it seemed that the State had something more than altruistic motives. Creating reserves could arguably be seen as one more attempt to marginalize another group who were in many ways seen as a threat to the elite angling agenda.

There was a very real fear, especially among elite American anglers, that the arrival of these social inferiors would spoil their angling paradise, so long protected due to the system of privilege and sheer distance. By the end of the 1880s, the threat was becoming real and apparent. Dean Sage lamented about one of his favourite fishing spots by saying: "Let this lake become accessible, its beauties of water, foliage, and adjacent mountains made known, and what is the result? The invasion of summer

⁹¹ Follett, "Preserve the Fishing," 170-71.

tourists ensues [...] uncomfortable 'camps' are erected on its borders; in a year or two [...] the trout are exterminated, and every small animal and most of the birds are frightened away."⁹²

Many club members reacted to the influx of middle-class anglers (people they roundly considered "pseudo-sportsmen") by raising their membership fees to ever more astronomical prices. More importantly, the elite chastised these men by making them objects of ridicule in print, perhaps in hopes of discouraging them. The middle-class angler, much like the guide before him, found himself effectively stereotyped by the elite, who consistently portrayed him as a person without manners and devoid of a sense of real sportsmanship. He set up his camp directly across from others on the same stream. The middle-class angler impolitely cast his line in the same pools currently used by another angler. They were referred to as "donkeys," "cockneys" or "Murray's Fools" (a reference to those who unsuccessfully attempted to imitate the exploits of the popular American sportsman "Adirondack Murray").

American angler George Dawson wrote: "A Saratoga trunk on trout-stream or salmon river is as conclusive as a sonorous bray that a donkey is in the neighbourhood. Yet these are sometimes seen, ordinarily accompanied by a biped decked off in long boots, velvet pants and jacket, a jaunty hat bedizened with gaudy flies, and a body belt ornamented with bowie knife and pistol, as if he expected at every turn to encounter herds of wild cats or panthers, or a whole tribe of bloodthirsty Indians anxious for his scalp."⁹³ Even worse than the ridiculous portrait painted by Dawson was his accusation that such men were wholly ignorant of the "true art" of angling. He wrote: "How many

⁹² Sage, *The Ristigouche and its Salmon Fishing, with a Chapter on Angling Literature*, 140.

⁹³ Dawson, *Pleasures of Angling with Rod and Reel for Trout and Salmon*, 11.

weary miles I've paddled and tramped to get out of the reach of the huge army of "Murray's fools" who...swarmed that angler's paradise, with no more appreciation of the art, or of the delectable recreation of angling than a donkey has of the heavenly harmonies."⁹⁴ Such people were intellectual interlopers, and the only way to deal with them was through their complete ostracism.

Here was elitism at its most overt, directed not at common fishermen or Amerindians using the fishery in different ways, but at other anglers who seemed poised to usurp not the only Québec's precious aquatic landscape but the very traditions upon which their craft found its origins. Nevertheless, wealth and privilege, with bureaucratic support, ensured that the "donkeys," the "cockneys" and the "Murray's Fools" kept to their place among the bass, the perch and the public parks. For the most part, such efforts worked. Middle class American anglers would simply find it easier to go to Ontario. Ontario no longer had salmon runs, but its promotional efforts better matched the expectations of the middle class angler and it had its own tier of middle class game fish, particularly the black bass.⁹⁵

5.4 Conclusion

State agents effectively appropriated the values that elite anglers brought to Québec to construct a legal framework around the Anglers' Eden, forming a freshwater sport fishery. That framework fitted other people and by extension, other fish, into the elite anglers' hierarchy. One consequence of that process was the socio-economic and ecological marginalization of other people within the footprint of that fishery. Guides

⁹⁴ Ibid., 112-13.

⁹⁵ William Knight, "Our Sentimental Fisheries: Angling and State Fisheries Administration in 19th Century Ontario" (Masters Thesis, Trent University, 2006).

and canoemen found themselves within the paradisial enclave, but relegated to subordinate roles. Moreover, in order to give greater value to their experiences, anglers romanticized their Amerindian and French-Canadian guides as exotic denizens of the forest, even as they exploited and relegated them to caricatures with no legitimate right to engage in fishing on their own terms.

Common people who had long used freshwater fish resources for subsistence slowly, but surely, found themselves outside of the perimeter of a sport fishery that divested them of their own relationships with fish, particularly those most important to elite anglers, such as salmon and trout. State-imposed laws, fishing limits and licences, coupled with bribery and social pressure used by anglers, ensured that the interests of common people for certain freshwater fish species would overlap their own as little as possible. The result was a noticeable statistical trend in which common people increasingly began to concentrating their fishing efforts on fish species of little to no interest to anglers, such as shad, perch, muskellunge and eel. This shift imprinted the aquatic landscape with a social structure that closely mirrored the hierarchical values of elite anglers. Laws protected the anglers' interests as well as their game fish, while common people exploited their common fish with few restraints.

One other group, however, revealed just how profoundly exclusive Québec's Anglers' Eden, and the sport fishery that gradually took its place, were designed to be: the middle class angler. The diffusion of wealth at the end of the nineteenth century had created the possibility for a new group of anglers to travel to Québec in search of the experiences promised in earlier monographs and in new provincial promotional materials. Yet in their quest to find the renowned salmon and trout haunts in Québec,

they quickly found that they were not as welcome as the advertisements implied. They, too, found themselves marginalized through financial and social obstacles. Efforts to provide these people with public access by the province seemed to be just one more form of marginalization. The result was that many middle class anglers looked elsewhere, particularly in Ontario, for their own angling experiences.

The people left on the margins by the anglers' agenda did more than submit to the will of elite anglers or rail against the wall built up around Québec's angling *apiri-daeza*, they acted in ways that resulted not only their finding their own forms of access, but in ways that altered the elitist construction of the sport fishery.

CHAPTER 6

Paradise Lost, or Redefined?

Acculturating the Values of the Angling Elite

“In all his wiles, defeated and repulsed,
And Eden raised in the waste Wilderness.”¹

– John Milton

By the first decade of the twentieth century, the angling elite had succeeded, thanks to a conjunction of interests with the State, in turning Québec’s freshwater aquatic landscape into a sport fishery. While anglers’ activities may have led to the marginalization and subordination of many people within the sphere of that fishery, many more resisted by retaining their own values and practicing their own fishing traditions, even long after some of those practices and traditions had been made illegal. At the same time, others began gradually to adopt many of the material and even intellectual components of the Waltonian culture of angling and its romantic notion of paradisiacal aquatic places.

This chapter investigates how, through popular resistance, the acculturation and homogenization of their values and unintended ecological consequences, elite anglers gradually became dispossessed from their Anglers’ Eden as a sport fishery was created.

6.1 Social Control and Social Resistance in the Sport Fishery

Game and fish laws were not simply ways to limit access to resources. They were also intended to regulate social behaviour. They also changed the value of certain species and, by extension, the relationships people had with them. Whereas once the act of harpooning salmon or netting trout through the ice was a part of accepted practices

¹ John Milton, *Paradise Regain’d: A Poem, in Four Books*, book I (London: R. Everingham, 1688).

meant to feed one's family or even noble effort to settle the wilderness, the law now made them criminal acts. Richard Nettle once wrote that "laws are made for evil-doers," but it could also be said that the laws he had encouraged and enforced towards fishing also had the effect of transforming ordinary law-abiding people practicing traditional hunting and fishing activities into poachers and so-called "evil-doers."² From the perspective of the elite sportsmen, resistance to fish and game laws was a "manifestations of the 'malice' and 'criminal instincts' of a backward rural population."³ The very notion that Québec's aquatic landscape was a unique paradise that required preserving only helped to fuel the desire to enforce laws meant to preserve and protect it.

Elite sportsmen, including anglers, saw the preservation of their sporting landscapes tied directly to the preservation of law and order. Indeed, the very real need for such law and order in the face of systemic popular resistance within the Anglers' Eden demonstrated that something truly revolutionary was taking place. A whole new landscape was in the process of being created from common wilderness to private game reserve, and the process was disrupting already well-established relationships to nature. On one side were a small group of people, mostly foreigners, paying a great deal of money for exclusive access to their private sport fisheries, and they did not want the landscape they had worked so hard to appropriate and mould to be damaged or even destroyed. Protecting their interests were federal and provincial wardens and deputized guardians. On the other side were common people who had their own understanding of the water and its utility and who simply refused to accept what the elite were trying to

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

impose on them.⁴ More often than not, they had no one looking out for what they saw as their own interests, so they often took matters into their own hands.

Court documents at Trois-Rivières reveal that even the Curé of St. Tite, J. B. Grenier, was accused by a warden of the Maskatsy Fishing Club of having “illegally fished without right or permission, more than 100 pounds of speckled trout.”⁵ Whether the case against the priest was founded or not (a hundred pounds of trout was a large amount of fish), it shows that not even members of the clergy were exempt from efforts to maintain law and order within the sport fishery. Grenier vehemently denied the accusation, shrewdly using what was most likely a clerical error in the date to ridicule his accusers and implying that as a member of the clergy he should be held above all such suspicion. The matter was either dropped or handled out of court. Grenier’s troubles illustrated that resistance could be found across the entire social spectrum and in a myriad of forms. Amerindian guides, common fisherman, restaurant and mill owners and even children all participated in behaviours that were deemed inimical to the elite anglers’ attempts to shape people’s behaviours around their values.

Richard Nettle’s *Salmon Fisheries of the St. Lawrence* described a number of very early forms of resistance and the dynamic that developed between anglers, agents of the State and everyone else. They merit attention here in some detail, because not only do they lay the foundation for what would become a long-term campaign to establish law and order within Québec’s aquatic landscape which lasted long beyond

⁴ Richard Judd, *Common Lands, Common People: The Origins of Conservation in Northern New England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

⁵ AnQTR, 3A05-4602A, Correspondance du greffier, “Revd. Messire J. B. Grenier Ptre Curé de St. Tite au G. P. in re Club Maskatsy,” 10 April, 1896.

Nettle's tenure, but they also justify the use of the word "campaign" in association with the application of enforcement of the laws related to fishing and angling.

In one case Nettle recounted an incident on the Murray River, where he had been undertaking a local inspection in an area commonly frequented by poachers and confronted one man known to be a frequent offender:

...my gentleman came polling up the river in his canoe—our boy pointed him out as the *pêcheur au flambeau*, fortunately my friend had a copy of the lately passed [Fisheries] Act, forbidding the spearing of Salmon, in his pocket; he crossed the river, and held a parley with [the man], telling him it was unlawful to fish with the spear...and, that should he continue the practice, he would be summoned before the magistrates and fined.—This information was received with a very ill grace, and a determination expressed to fish when and how he liked; with a threat to any one who should attempt to prevent him.⁶

Determined to teach the man a lesson, Nettle and his group hid out in the woods until nightfall. Then, using the poacher's campfire as a guide, they snuck up to the camp to spy on them. When they set off with spears and canoes, Nettle's group ambushed them with a "volley of word and a volley of stones" crying out "not a fish you take this night!"⁷ The assaulted party returned the stones along with their own verbal insults.

Nettle referred to this altercation as a battle between "rods *versus* pole and spear."⁸ In reality, it represented the opening barrage of a campaign to impose new cultural restraints on interactions with nature. Yet stone throwing was only one of the many methods that would be used by guardians and wardens. As agents hired to uphold the provisions of the Fisheries Acts, they were given a great deal of official power to enforce the law. Not only could they impose fines, they could actually arrest offenders, ask judges for warrants to open mail or even enter private homes and business to search

⁶ Richard Nettle, *The Salmon Fisheries of the St. Lawrence and Its Tributaries* (Montreal: John Lovell, 1857), 36.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 38.

for fish taken out of season or illegal fishing implements. Many of the fines were incredibly steep (between \$1 and \$15), especially for people in the outlying regions, where hard currency was less commonly used. If those accused could not pay the fine, they were taken to the nearest prison. The provision allowing wardens to confiscate property was often the most serious, however. The loss of a canoe, tackle and nets might seriously impede a man's effort to conduct his trade and feed his family. Such facts did not seem to cause Nettle to waver from his task. Indeed, he was extraordinarily vigilant; in one case he brought one Edouard Matte, a farmer from Pointe-aux-Trembles, to court for the possession of one fish caught out of season.⁹ That was the example that provincial and private guardians and warden would be expected to follow.¹⁰

Priests and farmers were not the only people breaking the fisheries laws. Resistance was widespread with violators of all ages and genders. Charles Panet, a friend of Nettles and a self-described "disciple of Walton" wrote of a rather unusual, and equally illegal, method of salmon fishing. After asking the proprietor of a lodging where they were staying near Québec City if they had any fish, he sent for "le grand pêcheur," a woman of advanced age. She went to work in what Panet called a "scientific style," using "two long sticks, to which was attached an old piece of net." "Down she stalks to the river," he wrote, "tucks up her petticoats, and in she wades...astride on two rocks [...] she scooped up a great salmon [...]."¹¹ In this example, the value of nature for some common people becomes abundantly clear. The

⁹ "Order of Richard Nettle, Superintendent of Fisheries for Lower Canada, Residing in the City of Quebec, against Edouard Matte, Yeoman, of the Parish of St François De Sales, De La Pointe Aux Trembles, for Killing One Salmon," 26 January, 1858, *Thémis 2, partie 3: Cour des sessions de la paix, district de Québec, 1800-1900* [CD Rom] (Montréal : Société de recherche historique Archiv-histo, 1997-2002).

¹⁰ For a discussion of the theme of the reaction to the breach of "local commons", see: Louis Warren, *The Hunter's Game: Poachers and Conservationists in Twentieth Century America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997). Tina Loo also explores this phenomenon in Canada in *States of Nature*.

¹¹ Nettle, *The Salmon Fisheries of the St. Lawrence and Its Tributaries*, 83.

river was a food reserve and the State's new requirement for licenses or restrictions on catches was a tax on people's livelihood. The American angler, Richard Kimball, summed it up thusly:

The inhibition is, of course, distasteful to the people, who have heretofore had free access to these rivers; and they are not slow to give expression to their feelings. Indeed, one must have a profound reverence for the law or an intense terror of its penalties, who, with, a scant larder, can witness a dozen salmon leaping from the pool in front of his log cabin, without either "casting" for them or anathematizing the law which prevents him from doing so.¹²

Some relied on especially creative ways to get around the law. On La Rivière à Mars, the warden noted that it was "most prudent to protect all the rivers from...children under 12."¹³ It seemed that parents had been resorting to sending their minor children out to catch fish, knowing that they would be dealt with less harshly if caught. Certainly this was not out of keeping with the many other creative means employed by people to circumvent wardens and other figures of authority whose sole job, they perceived, was to keep people from feeding themselves or their family.¹⁴

Nettle not only found the utter indifference to the law by men, women and children problematic, he also remarked upon the same defiance of the law by timber companies and owners of sawmills. As Peter Gillis has shown, the problem was endemic across Eastern Canada.¹⁵ For anglers, sawmill owners sullied their craft because they built dams to create falls in order to create power to turn the saw blades. Those dams prevented migratory game species from returning to their spawning grounds and changed a myriad of other factors of importance to fish life, such as water flow,

¹² Richard F. Kimball, "The Ouananiche of Lake St. John," *The American Angler* 22, no. 3 (1892): 76.

¹³ *Rapport annuel du Département de la Marine et des Pêcheries. 1872*, 72.

¹⁴ Richard Jefferies, *The Amateur Poacher* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1879); D. J. V. Jones, "The Poacher: A Study in Victorian Crime and Protest," *The Historical Journal* 22, no. 4 (1979): 825-60.

¹⁵ Robert Peter Gillis, "Rivers of Sawdust: The Battle over Industrial Pollution in Canada, 1865-1903," *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes* 21, no. 1 (1986): 84-103.

water depth and water temperature. In addition, mill owners dumped their sawdust directly into the water, which coloured it with tannins, depleted oxygen-levels and covered the gravelly bottoms of rivers, which were important spawning areas for many species with a thick muck.

Nettle mentioned one such mill dam that he claimed was responsible for destroying the salmon fishing on the Escoumins, a river on the North Shore above the Saguenay highly prized by sport anglers. “A few years since it was prolific; would I could add it is so now. Alas! The contrary is the case. A dam was built on the river, the right of way stopped, and that splendid and valuable stream; once so abundant that the waters may be said to have been alive with fish—that the river in which thousands were annually taken—is utterly destroyed: and not a salmon is now to be caught [there].”¹⁶ For Nettle, this was just one more “evil” that could be dispelled simply through the “outlay of twenty dollars at the most” for the purchase of a salmon ladder or slide.¹⁷

Nettle’s crusade to make angling with a rod the only acceptable way to interact with fish within the aquatic landscape would take more than a handful of agents. With the amending of the Fisheries Act in 1868, the federal government gave legislative authority to a new federal Department of Marine and Fisheries. While the primary interest of the department was related to questions of the marine fisheries (e.g. the building of lighthouses, the provisioning of ships and the training of captains and mariners), it also had the responsibility of enforcing the Fisheries Acts in all waters, including freshwater lakes, rivers and streams. It provided for the appointment of

¹⁶ Nettle, *The Salmon Fisheries of the St. Lawrence and Its Tributaries*, 29.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 82.

fisheries officers in the provinces with the authority of Justices of the Peace and tasked with enforcing the fisheries laws.¹⁸

In 1869, Québec had twenty-three federal wardens to cover the entire province.¹⁹ For most of these wardens, the district under their control would have constituted a vast expanse of territory. Only a few rivers, particularly those important to elite anglers such as the Moisie, Natasquan, Watsheeshoo, Cap Whittle and Anticosti, had year-long local guardians.²⁰ To supplement the coverage, the federal government permitted private fish and game clubs to hire their own guardians. This became one more act demonstrating the confluence of interest between anglers and the State in their common efforts to change values and control behaviour. Moreover, the federal government assisted clubs by paying fifty percent of the salaries of their private guardians. The wealthiest clubs, like the Triton, simply used the incentive to pay higher salaries to their own guardians, who received between fifty and two-hundred and fifty dollars per year. (In comparison, guardians of non-leased crown lands were only paid an average thirty dollars per year). The number of private guardians is impossible to know, but the promise of higher wages and the number of clubs (sometimes members hired their own personal guardians to protect specific salmon pools all year round) meant that they surely represented a higher proportion of the surveillance of territory than that done by federal and provincial agents.²¹

¹⁸ "An Act for the Regulation of Fisheries and Protection of Fisheries," *Acts of Parliament of Canada* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1868), 177.

¹⁹ *Rapport annuel du Département de la Marine et des Pêcheries. 1869*, 18.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ George Dawson, *Pleasures of Angling with Rod and Reel for Trout and Salmon* (New York: Sheldon, 1876), 25.

Federal, provincial, and private records of guardians' and wardens' activities provide official documentation of how efforts to change behaviours and traditions related to fishing were resisted by common people. In the first year that the program went into effect, only one of the Québec wardens, Albert Blais, had his report published in the official record. Blais's lone report highlighting his activities in the huge area between Pointe Levis and Matane nevertheless remains significant, because it is so exemplary of the next half-century of authoritarian relations between fisheries agents and the population. That relationship was marked by reports of guardians and wardens desperate to show they were succeeding in changing attitudes in the face of continued evidence that their work was having little lasting effect. In Blais's case, he wrote of having confronted poachers along the Métis River fishing with spears, as well as mill owners indiscriminately dumping their waste into the waters. On the Rimouski River, he fined "all those who were found to be fishing with anything other than a rod and line."²² He noted that M. Sylvain, the owner of a mill dam for whom Blais had himself built a salmon pass, had later taken it down, referring to it in so many words as a "useless contraption."²³

Each year, surveillance by wardens and guardians in Québec steadily increased. By 1872, their numbers had risen from twenty-three to thirty. The number of agents in the province that could monitor freshwater fishing activities was still small considering that many of them were also responsible for maintaining the maritime fisheries along the North Shore and the Gaspé Peninsula as well. Nevertheless, reporting was becoming more consistent, with more wardens and guardians sending their superiors detailed

²² *Rapport annuel du Département de la Marine et des Pêcheries. 1869, 70.*

²³ *Ibid.*, 71.

reports that were subsequently published in the annual report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries. These reports ordinarily shared a number of common features and an underlying tone. They were generally positive, sometimes highlighting concerns but overall attempting to display a firm measure of control over their districts.

P. Beuchesne, warden in the district of Maria, wrote, “the law is everywhere being observed”²⁴, while in the district of Québec, guardians D. Roska and L. P. Huot reported: “The law was violated by several people in this district, but the guilty parties were discovered, hunted down, and fined.”²⁵ George Riverin and Ferdinand Saillant, guardians in the Saguenay, demonstrated the same dynamic when they boldly announced: There had been several violations of the law in the division,” but “[t]he delinquents were taken before the magistrate of the district of Saguenay, Judge Cimon, and summarily punished.”²⁶

When looked at individually, the reports seem to indicate that surveillance was generally effective. When looked at more critically, across a broader spectrum of time, however, it is possible to see these reports in a very different light. Year after year, violations of the law by individuals and companies reveal that there was a general disregard for the law. In the regions that elite angling tourists most frequented, reports display the highest degree of vigilance. Yet they also show that a culture of unrestricted use of the waters still existed. The warden responsible for the Matepédia and Restigouche regions declared that it required “the most careful surveillance” because the

²⁴ *Rapport annuel du Département de la Marine et des Pêcheries*. 1872, 68.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 69.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 69-70.

“Savages” who still frequented the region in the summer and the “whites who came to cut timber” were still taking fish without licences.²⁷

What also becomes obvious in looking at these reports over the long term is that with each passing year the numbers of wardens and guardians in Québec were augmented, and with each augmentation the number of cases of fishing violations increased, not decreased. The logical conclusion is that the agenda of law and order simply meant more agents came into contact with people breaking the laws. In the early years, residents of an area no doubt got word that a warden or guardian was in the area and could simply avoid him. In an article of *Canadian Life and Resources*, one journalist remarked: “When the government appoints its officer to protect the interests of the fish, the fishermen appoint sentinels to watch the officer.”²⁸ More agents made it more difficult to flout the law, yet it also meant increased conflict.

The conflicts that Nettle had once described as a “battle between the men of the rod and the men of the spear” fought with volleys of words and stones had become progressively more violent. Sometimes violations were so flagrant and numerous that the provincial guardians needed additional backup. Special constables from the Ottawa police force were sent to the division of the Lac des Deux-Montagnes in 1879 to assist local agents who were overwhelmed by the activities of poachers.²⁹ In that same year, in the division of Terrebonne, twelve individuals were apprehended and stiffly fined, and their names were published in the Sessional Record. Guardian J. L. Loranger wrote:

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 69.

²⁸ “Trout-Fishing in Nova Scotia,” *Canadian Life and Resources* 6, no. 5 (1908): 14-16.

²⁹ *Rapport annuel du Département de la Marine et des Pêcheries*. 1880, 149.

“One can only hope that such rigorous, but necessary, measures will bring an end—for at least a short time—to these infractions of the law.”³⁰

Loranger’s confidence in the long-term usefulness of such draconian measures was well founded. Eight years later, the situation remained essentially the same. P. W. Nagle, guardian of the waters of the county of Stanstead, remarked: “A vigorous enforcement of the fishery laws, coupled with a regular system of guardianship, renders the task of the poachers an uneasy one.”³¹ At the same time, one of Nagle’s colleagues in charge of the neighbouring Lake Megantic, J. B. McDonald, reported that he “had to closely watch the labourers, who will secure fish by all means, even having recourse to dynamite.”³² In the Lower Ottawa division, R. W. Jones admitted that “fishermen camp around, moving from place to place, where they think the fishing is better [...] they would as soon fish during close season or on Sunday as at any other time.”³³

Bill Parenteau has shown that in some areas of Québec, opposition to the law often went beyond lawbreaking by individuals to become organized acts of aggression by communities. He noted that “on the tributaries of the Saguenay River...there were persistent problems with organized groups of poachers. As a result the Department of Marine and Fisheries, at the behest of salmon leaseholders, dispatched an armed patrol steamer in 1897.”³⁴ Moreover, angry citizens occasionally intimidated wardens, threatened their lives, and on a number of occasions were murdered. Parenteau noted that on 28 April, 1899, one Québec warden, Guy Carr, had his barn and livestock put to

³⁰ Ibid., 150.

³¹ *Annual Report of the Department of Fisheries. 1888*, 174.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., 175.

³⁴ Quoted in Bill Parenteau, “A ‘Very Determined Opposition to the Law’: Conservation, Angling Leases, and Social Conflict in the Canadian Atlantic Salmon Fishery, 1867-1914,” *Environmental History* 9, no. 3 (2004): 25; see also, John Little, “Popular Resistance to Legal Authority in the Upper St. Francis District of Québec: The Megantic Outlaw Affair of 1888-89,” *Labour/Le Travail* no. 33 (1994): 77-124.

the torch by an unknown group of people. Carr apparently did not get the message, so the next evening his house was set ablaze. He asked for compensation from the Ministry of Marine and Fisheries, but he did not receive it and soon left the service of the department.³⁵

Resistance did not always come in the form of law breaking and violence. Some who thought themselves wronged made appeals for recourse to the government. In 1861, the Chief of the Montagnais at Moisie, Dominique, sent a petition to the federal government:

Can our words meet your views, we Indians? Can our words enter into your hearts, you that govern, who live here, we who are born here, and consider ourselves possessors of the soil, by the will of the Great Creator of the Universe? ...Our rivers taken from us, and only used by strangers. Through your will, we can only now look on the waters of the rivers passing, without permission to catch a fish, we poor Indians. ...And we are all of one mind, that since our lands and rivers afford us no more the means to live, you who govern should take our present distress into your consideration without loss of time, and for which we will most gratefully ever pray.³⁶

There would be no redress of grievances for the Montagnais for a long time to come. Their home had become a part of the Anglers' Eden and, like everyone else, they had to adapt to the new order. Others made complaints at the local level, such as J. B. Boucher, chief of a band of Amerindians living near Lake Edward in the Mauricie. On 12 September, 1890, he wrote to the Commissioner of Crown Lands to lodge a complaint against a local hunting and fishing club because its use of a steamboat on the lake was making so much noise it was chasing away the game the band needed for

³⁵ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 26.

³⁶ Quoted in Brian Stewart, *A Life on the Line: Commander Pierre-Étienne Fortin and His Times* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1997), 124.

survival. He had attempted to communicate with the members of the club, but since they only spoke English, they simply gave him some food and sent on his way.³⁷

Considering the marginalized status of common fisherman and Amerindians vis-à-vis elite anglers, it is perhaps understandable that they reacted as they did. Yet it is also too easy to paint wardens and guardians as insensitive agents of State authority. Most of these men were members of the same communities where they enforced the laws. That may explain, at least partially, why some were less than aggressive in their prosecution of the law. Moreover, cases like that involving John Carr, where the department failed to come to the aid of agents who had faced reprisals, surely inspired little confidence in agents and probably emboldened those who defied them. Thus, agents were no doubt forced to draw a fine line between enforcing the law and maintaining good relations with their neighbours, especially if they did not want to end up as targets of community ostracism and even violence. In that regard, the local guardians' own reticence to act, often for reasons of self-interest but also out of sympathy, need also be considered as a form of resistance.

Wardens and guardians understood, perhaps better than anyone else in the government, how the laws actually affected common people in their districts. They saw the impact of the system of fish and game clubs ruled over by elite sportsmen that often left lakes, rivers and streams filled with fish without a fisherman on the bank while local people went poor and hungry. Many guardians were sympathetic to the plight of their friends and neighbours and, surprisingly, they occasionally admitted to their acts of sympathy in their official reports. For example, John McCaw, guardian in the

³⁷ BAnQTR, 3A05-4602A, Greffe de la paix, Correspondances et plaintes réglées, 1843-1896, "Propos de J. B. Boucher," 12 September, 1890.

Sherbrooke and Megantic regions, showed such empathy for the people whom he caught poaching fish that he wrote: "Most of these poachers are so miserably poor that they have no money to pay the fines."³⁸ He told his superior that he chose to be lenient with them because had he sent them to jail "their families would suffer more than the culprits."³⁹ However, the final edited report contained what was certainly a compensating moral message meant to warn all guardians having similarly soft hearts. McCaw, it was noted, had been repaid for his kindness and attempts to reason with those engaged in "nefarious practices" through the destruction of the very boat he used to patrol Lake Megantic.⁴⁰

Sympathy with the practices of common people was not limited to local guardians. One of the most compelling cases is that of Pierre-Étienne Fortin, who had a long and distinguished career as a civil servant, serving both as a federal (1867-74) and provincial (1867-74, 1878-87) MP.⁴¹ From 1852-1867 Fortin was given the authority over the protection of the fisheries in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, which included the salmon rivers in the Gaspé.⁴² It was his duty to enforce the fisheries laws, and he did so with great diligence, but not without comment. He came to believe that many of the provisions of the Fisheries Act were not in the interest of the colonists and Amerindians who struggled to eke out a living in the poor agricultural lands of the Gaspé and North Shore regions.⁴³ Moreover, Fortin worried that the policy undermined provincial efforts to colonize the regions because provincial bureaucrats preferred the stable revenue from

³⁸ *Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries. 1898*, 160-61.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 160.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Irene Bilas, "Pierre-Étienne Fortin."

⁴² Stewart, *A Life on the Line*; Irène Bilas, "Pierre-Étienne Fortin: « Le Roi Du Golfe », " *Gaspésie* 24, no. 2 (1986): 16-17.

⁴³ Stewart, *A Life on the Line*, 174.

permits and leases derived from elite anglers over the livelihood of the citizens who needed to fish for food and commerce. His worries were not unfounded. In a number of cases, the Department of Colonisation enticed people to settle regions where they later found they were barred from engaging in fishing. One of the best examples was the region of Lake St. John. The government put enormous effort into convincing people to settle the region, often referring to the almost limitless bounty of fish and game. Yet in reality, the Roberval Fish and Game Club controlled most of the rivers, lakes and streams in the region. As deputy for Gaspé, Fortin engaged in his own form of resistance by speaking up for his ordinary constituents and against the enormous privileges bestowed upon elite anglers, mostly to no avail.⁴⁴

6.2 Acculturating the Culture of Angling

Law and order and resistance were not the only influential factors in the sport fishery. Another cultural force was at play that ultimately led to changing the exclusive character of Québec's sport fishery: the acculturation of angling values and practices. Both changes took place due to the long influence and support of the angling elite. Acculturation is the process by which diverse groups that have prolonged contact with one another begin sharing and adopting each other's cultural patterns.⁴⁵ As we have seen, British anglers began arriving in the second half of the eighteenth century and Americans by at least the 1840s, making the elite angler a cultural influence for at least two centuries. During that period especially, those groups that had been socially

⁴⁴ Ibid., 173.

⁴⁵ John W. Berry, *Cultures in Contact: Acculturation and Change* (Allahabad, India: G. B. Pant Social Science Institute, 1997).

marginalized within the fishery keenly observed their activities, and many gradually accepted and adopted, at least partially, the elite anglers' values and material culture.

Generally, elite anglers did not actively encourage other cultural groups to adopt their practices; indeed, as has already been shown, they could be openly hostile to the broadening of the craft to social inferiors. Yet in their attempt to compel social change by linking angling culture to the conservation of natural resources, anglers did become active proponents in the acculturation of the craft to a broader audience. Moreover, some elite anglers did conclude that the only way to truly protect their sport fishery was to convince those who lived and made a living within it that it was in their best interest to accept the anglers' world view, one where some fish were better than others, some people more deserving to fish for certain species and, most importantly, the best fishing practice was to take fish one at a time with a rod.⁴⁶ In Québec, elite anglers and State agents came together to form what would have to be considered one of the first international movements to establish conservation principles in North America: the North American Fish and Game Protection Association (NAFGPA). The NAFGPA counted among its members many of the same provincial actors responsible for the expansion of the sport fishery, including Québec Premier S. N. Parent, who served as President, and E. T. D. Chambers, who served as the organization's treasurer.⁴⁷ The NAFGPA sought to sensitize people and promote laws protecting the most important elements of the anglers' craft: the water and the fish species at the top of their hierarchy.

⁴⁶ John Reiger, *American Sportsman and the Origins of Conservation* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2001), Thomas R. Dunlap, *Saving America's Wildlife: Ecology and the American Mind, 1850-1990* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988).

⁴⁷ "Guardians of Game," *Rod and Gun in Canada* 4, no. 9 (1903): 333-35; Jacoby, *Crimes against Nature*.

While a number of historians have looked at organizations as illustrative of a new interest in conservation, their underlying motivations were also highly elitist. The conservation agenda began with small groups of people anointing themselves as responsible stewards of the land, ignoring the practices of common people, who often incorporated their own conservationist practices for reasons that were less than altruistic.⁴⁸ Richard Nettle's *Salmon Fisheries of the St. Lawrence* opened by saying it was a book written "for the poor," but "to the rich, who have influence."⁴⁹ Thus, from the very beginning of interest in forming a fishery for sport in Québec, the elite impulse to acculturate the concept of conservation to those beneath them in the social economy was strong.

The desire to acculturate the elitist mentality concerning the value and use of the aquatic landscape was reflected in the reports of wardens and guardians. In 1872, one agent in the Saguenay reported that he felt "the people are coming to understand that it's in their interest to preserve the salmon in hopes that one day they will be rewarded by the generosity of anglers who will bring them some money."⁵⁰ That same year, in the Ottawa district, W. L. Holland echoed the sentiment when he wrote: "The most efficacious method of assuring that the laws are followed is to show the people [...] that it is in their own best interest to protect the fish."⁵¹ Sometimes, anglers attempted to make local people understand just how much it was in their interest through extraordinary means. For example, in 1880, R. W. H. Dimock, guardian in the Cascapedia division, informed the department that the people along the Cascapedia

⁴⁸ Judd, *Common Lands, Common People*.

⁴⁹ Nettle, *The Salmon Fisheries of the St. Lawrence and Its Tributaries*.

⁵⁰ *Rapport annuel du Département de la Marine et des Pêcheries*. 1872, 69.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 75.

River were rewarded for leaving the salmon to the angler through a generous by distribution of the entire season's catch to the local population.⁵²

By the end of the nineteenth century, it is clear that the message of conservation, couched in self-interest, was making some headway. Much of that was due to the acculturation of the culture of angling among members of the American and Canadian middle class. Evidence that the message was filtering down from the foreign angling elite to the middle-class angler in Québec and Canada can be seen in the writings in *Rod and Gun in Canada*, a sportsmen's magazine that began publication in 1900. The magazine was filled with articles on Québec conservation issues. (As a side note, popular French-language magazines, such as *La vie forestière et rurale* and *La forêt et la ferme*, would not appear until the 1920s. When they did, they also took on conservation issues, sometimes translating articles from English periodicals into French.) Like related American periodicals *Field and Stream* and *American Angler*, *Rod and Gun in Canada* devoted an enormous amount of space to the conservation agenda and gave anglers a prominent voice within its pages.

The new middle-class anglers in Québec looked to the United States, particularly the states of Maine and New York, for guidance, as they were beginning to design their own interventions in regards to conservation.⁵³ They appealed for catch limits for everyone and the organization of local game and fish protection clubs.⁵⁴ They promoted fish culture activities, including the introduction of game fish and even forage fish, such

⁵² *Rapport annuel du Département de la Marine et des Pêcheries*. 1880, 139.

⁵³ That stance increasingly led to conflict between Canadian and American sportsmen. See Chapter 6 of Serge Gagnon, *L'échiquier touristique québécois* (Sainte-Foy: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2003), 153-77.

⁵⁴ R. E. Follett, "Preserve the Fishing," *Rod and Gun in Canada* 1, no. 9 (1900): 170-71, "Organization of the North American Fish and Game Protection Association," *Rod and Gun in Canada* 1, no. 2: 166-70.

as freshwater smelt, that they thought would increase the population of larger game fish. At the same time, articles in *Rod and Gun in Canada* show that middle-class Québec anglers were appropriating the elitist message of concern for the environment and modifying it to fit the populist call for a broader access to places to hunt and fish.⁵⁵

Most significant was the differing methodology and scope. Whereas the elite anglers mostly spoke among themselves through their monographs and by direct appeals to provincial leaders for the application of more laws and stiffer enforcement, middle-class Québec anglers put their emphasis on local education with an added veneer of nationalism that made such efforts more personal. A good example was an article by L. O. Armstrong of Montreal (which was a copy of a paper first read to the Québec Fish and Game Protective Association) entitled: "How Best to Form Public Opinion as to the Need of Fish and Game Protective Laws." Armstrong wrote of a "duty resting upon" not only "all good sportsmen" but "patriots" to the education of "public opinion [...]."⁵⁶ Moreover, Armstrong's rhetoric eschewed elitism and employed a more democratic tone.

The voter is the man we must get at. How can that best be done? We may be able to do it successfully by working hard on these lines viz:--We must educate him by letters to the local papers, supplemented by talks in schoolhouses and other centers in the districts where the poaching and indiscriminate slaughter of fish and game is most generally practiced.⁵⁷

Armstrong also addressed the whole issue of class that weighed down much of the rhetoric of the elite sportsmen. While he echoed the idea that it was in the interest of the

⁵⁵ Bill Parenteau and Richard W. Judd, "More Buck for the Bang: Sporting and the Ideology of Fish and Game Management in Northern New England and the Maritime Provinces, 1870-1900," in Stephen J. Hornsby and John Reid, ed. *New England and Maritime Provinces: Connections and Comparisons*. (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005).

⁵⁶ L. O. Armstrong, "How Best to Form Public Opinion as to the Need of Fish and Game Protection," *Rod and Gun in Canada* 6, no. 10 (1905): 543-55.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

poor settler to accept the conservationist agenda, he did so in plain language tempered with diplomacy, writing:

The idea is prevalent on both sides of the line that protective laws are made in the interest of the rich, and that they press hard on the poor man. The labour organizations have come out strongly against all preserves held by clubs or private individuals. There may be some arguments against preserves but fish and game protection is not injurious to the poor man. We know the contrary to be the case and what we want is to educate the settler and the poor man up to the same view. Netting and other illegal means of shooting and fishing, is really robbing him and those around him. There would be fishing...for everyone, and plenty for all if each individual would be satisfied with his share of rod and line fishing [...]. I myself have done a little of this missionary work, and my success has been such as to assure me that if it were done on a considerable scale a great change in public opinion would speedily take place. I have found the backwoods settler quite amenable to reason on this matter, and very ready to see that the movement is in his own interest when it is carefully pointed out of him.⁵⁸

Armstrong's commentary indicated that not only was the core message of conservation being acculturated into the middle class, that group was also striving to make the message more understandable to ordinary people.

The reports of the Department of Marine and Fisheries in the first decade of the twentieth century showed that the message was beginning to filter downwards. There was still rampant resistance, but now there were now also voices of compliance. In 1907, Hyacinth Lussier, referred to by the agent as an "old fisherman," said of a law outlawing the taking of fish under a certain size that "[t]he law is against me, this time, but I sincerely admit that it is right. Fishermen who are against this law don't understand their own interest."⁵⁹

Yet, this shift in voice also had an impact on the relationship between elite anglers and their State supporters. During the period in which Louis-Zéphérin Joncas led the Québec Department of Fish and Game, 1896-1903, he not only succeeded in

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ *Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries. 1907-08*, 140.

increasing promotion of Québec's aquatic landscape for anglers, he also made considerable efforts towards its conservation. He wrote: "The ichthyological richness [...] of the province of Québec is so great [...] but no matter how large, it would be wrong to believe [it] inexhaustible."⁶⁰ As a member of the Conservative party, however, Joncas shared the notion that it was the role of the elite (sportsmen included) to set the agenda. He was a strong proponent of a conservation agenda enforced through the application of law and order. He noted that the department was "powerfully aided in its protection work [...] especially by the Fish and Game Protection Club of Montreal."⁶¹ The association, he remarked, was "composed of notable citizens of Montreal, who had no other goal but to mercilessly go after all those (especially the rich) who disregard our hunting and fishing laws."⁶² Joncas's parenthetical note concerning the "rich" seemed an obvious attempt to deflect critics of the elitist sporting agenda.

When Joncas died in 1903, he was replaced by Hector Caron, a member of the Liberals. Caron resigned his seat in the Québec national assembly for Maskinongé to take the position. Caron had a great deal less experience concerning provincial fisheries; nevertheless, his leadership would see the continuation of the core of the conservation agenda put in place by Joncas.⁶³ Yet Caron did display differences, especially in regard to the influence of foreign elite sportsmen. Whereas Joncas had championed their influence, especially due to the revenue that they brought the province, Caron expressed doubts. In his annual report of 1914, he wrote in a tone that was decidedly different from his predecessor:

⁶⁰ *Rapport du Commissaire des Terres, des Forêts et Pêcheries de la Province de Québec. 1899*, 34.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 55-56.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Gaston Deschênes, ed., *Dictionnaire des Parlementaires du Québec, 1792-1992* (Sainte-Foy: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1993).

[...] permit me, Mr. Minister, to tell you that a large number of people, particularly sportsmen, delude themselves over...protection or conservation of our wildlife and fish, and they think themselves providing a great service by preaching of the necessity, without mercy, to punish a poor settler who... take[s] a few walleye or bass out of season. What of the recriminations that we hear spoken of by certain people against the permits which are given out to fish with nets and weirs in certain large lakes and other waterways, and even in the St. Lawrence. I hold to the belief that the fish in our lakes should be judiciously pruned, if you would permit the expression [...]. All this has led me to conclude that it is not unreasonable to believe that, if a total restriction was made, the [...] fish would multiply themselves indefinitely.⁶⁴

Caron's beliefs went against the prevailing science, even of the time, but more importantly, he was voicing a more popular concern for ordinary people vis-à-vis elite interests.

To be fair, many of the changes towards a broader democratization of the sport fishery were begun under Joncas's tenure, but this was mostly due to efforts to benefit from more middle class anglers in the United States and especially Canada who wanted to angle in Quebec. Joncas recognized as much when he wrote, in 1898: "Our own countrymen...are now beginning to rival the sportsmen from the neighbouring Republic and England."⁶⁵ Yet Joncas largely failed to appreciate the difficulties that those new anglers were having in finding their own place in Québec's aquatic landscape. Caron, on the other hand, would also be instrumental in pushing those changes toward a greater democratization of the sport fishery by opening up more Crown lands to the public, and his insistence that the provincial hatcheries be operated at a profit for the department and not merely as a service for wealthy fish and game clubs.

Clearly, the large fish and game clubs like the Triton and Roberval still exercised enormous sway, but at the same time many new, smaller and wholly local clubs with

⁶⁴ *Rapport du Ministre de La Colonisation, des Mines et des Pêcheries de la Province de Québec. 1914, 161-63.*

⁶⁵ *Rapport du Commissaire des Terres, des Forêts et des Pêcheries de la Province de Québec. 1899, 32.*

affordable fees were being established and were permitted to have access to the waters and at least a part of the anglers' experiences. In 1896, there were a little over fifty fish and game clubs; by 1915, there were almost three times that number.⁶⁶ That broadening demographic gave an outlet for many of the elite anglers' sensibilities concerning the value of water and game fish to also become an issue for increasing numbers of middle class anglers who lived in or visited Québec.

Elite anglers had pushed their agenda to make sport fishing the sole acceptable practice long enough and successfully enough that the result was a gradual elimination or strict control over of all other competing fishing relationships among the freshwater aquatic habitats. In the battle first recognized and set in motion by Richard Nettle in Québec between competing forms of fishing and the rod and line, anglers had emerged victorious, in no small part because the State had found sport fishing the most profitable and beneficial use for its freshwater fish resources. But that victory came with a price. As others began to acculturate the elite anglers' agenda, they chose (and often vulgarized) certain elements that they found appealing, such as romantic notions of water and leisure and the experience of fishing with a rod, and left others by the wayside, particularly the more snobbish class-related elements.

A measure of the gradual acceptance of angling among the francophone population can also be gleaned from Montpetit's *Les Poissons d'eau douce du Canada*. As we saw in the previous chapter, Montpetit used its pages not only to describe the freshwater fish species of Canada, but to speak out, sometimes harshly, against the methods employed by elite anglers. Nevertheless, his text was also one of the first

⁶⁶ Paul-Louis Martin, *La chasse au Québec* (Montréal: Boréal, 1990), 395-98.

works in French in Canada to translate the joys of fishing with a rod and line, even employing some of the romantic language of the Waltonians. He wrote: "Happy is the person who is born with the taste for fishing! He has before him many simple pleasures, which will cost him little, but permit him much benefit, without any remorse or regrets. If he is observant, he will be able to gain, while amusing himself, many of life's most important lessons directly from Nature."⁶⁷

But Montpetit also hinted at how the anglers' victory also set in motion what would be a trend towards not just acculturation but a homogeneity regarding fishing practices for sport and leisure. "I came to learn," he wrote, "that there existed but one noble form of fishing for a dignified man, fishing with a rod and a line."⁶⁸ There were some unique forms of fishing discussed within the text, including ice fishing and fishing with multiple lines. Nevertheless, his book discusses no less than a dozen different kinds of fishing poles and methods to construct them, along with numerous lures and artificial flies. Like the English angling guides of the sixteenth century upon which Walton came to be based, Montpetit's work was a guide not just to the freshwater fish of Canada but to an emerging and complexifying craft of angling among French Canadians.

Montpetit did not inspire any lengthy, romantic, angling monographs like those of the Waltonian tradition. However, for the French-Canadian upper class, angling would become a part of their outings in the wilderness, which were an important part of their summer leisure activities (See Figure 26). They, along with many North Americans, began integrating the technology of the Kodak camera into their experiences

⁶⁷ André-Napoléon Montpetit, *Les poissons d'eau douce du Canada* (Montréal: C. O. Beauchemin et fils, 1897), vi-vii.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

in what was a confluence of the culture of angling and a new “culture of nostalgia.”⁶⁹ By the 1920s, family photographs of French Canadian families holding large fish caught with their fly rods became a common feature of middle-class photo albums.

The process by which ordinary French Canadians, Amerindians and Métis acculturated the practices and traditions of angling is less certain. Clearly, angling became part of an expanding culture of sport in nineteenth and early twentieth-century Canada that diffused across the entire social spectrum.⁷⁰ More and more people, including those living in rural areas, had access to cheaply-made fishing rods and fishing tackle kits by mail order from the Eaton’s spring and summer catalogue. The acculturation of practices and even a broader sensitivity to the conservation of resources, however, did not keep people from continuing to break the law to catch fish, either by going onto club lands, fishing without a license or taking fish out of season. What was notable, however, was that increasingly they were doing so with a rod and line.

⁶⁹ Nancy Martha West, *Kodak and the Lens of Nostalgia* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000).

⁷⁰ Don Morrow, *Sport in Canada : A History* (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2005).

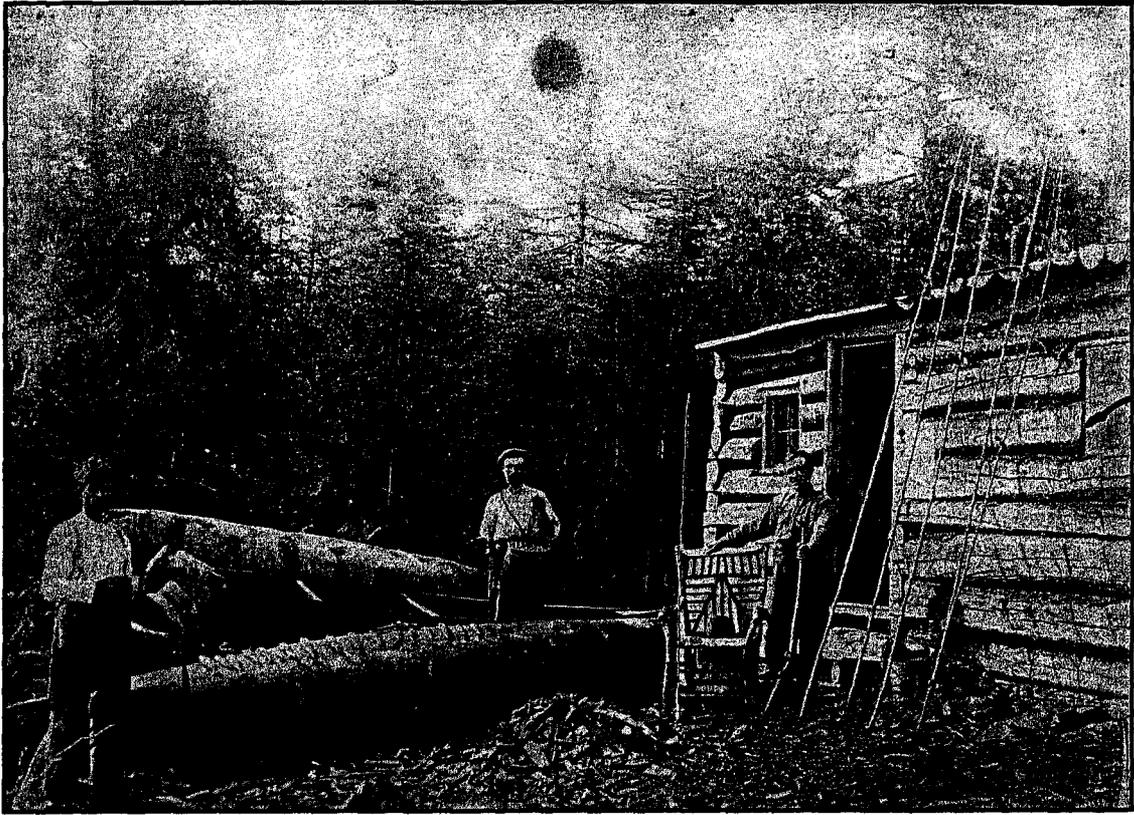


Figure 26: A Catch of Trout

This image, taken in the 1930s, shows a group of French-Canadians posing for a summer photo. It displays the key elements of the angling experience, including the bamboo rods, a creel, birch bark canoes and a catch of trout.

Source: BAnQTR, Fonds Jean d'Arc Clermont.

6.3 Consequences for the Community of Freshwater Fish

Different communities of people in Québec could speak out against elite pretensions, resist fisheries laws or even acculturate certain aspects of angling practices in a multitude of ways. Yet human communities were not the only biological entities affected by the changes that anglers brought to the landscape. The changes in the sport fishery also affected the “community” of fishes (biologists and ichthyologists classify fishes within ecosystems in terms of communities). Of course, fish had no active way of communicating their reaction to the anglers’ agenda; they could not write letters to their local MP or organize protests against laws that imperilled their existence. That does not mean, however, that the consequences upon these communities are unimportant to ponder and consider.

What it does mean is that we must return to the “fish-eye,” or ecocentric, view of the Anglers’ Eden and the sport fishery that grew out of it, and use what we know of aquatic sciences and ecology rather than history to speak for those fish communities. From that perspective, the State’s own acculturation of the anglers’ values led to fishery laws that had the unintended consequence of providing a layer of human protection to one specific group of fish species, game fish, within ecosystems inhabited by many other species. Despite the anglers’ and the States’ well-intentioned program of building fish ladders, they were of little value to migratory species that had not evolved the biological ability to undertake powerful leaps, such as eel and sturgeon. The paths to their homes and their spawning grounds were blocked, and nowhere within the reams of documentation surrounding efforts to save and preserve salmon are any concern found for their survival.

For fish outside the small group defined by the angling elite as “game,” there was no protection. People could take them in massive quantities, sell them, eat them or even spread them out in massive quantities on their fields as fertilizer. These activities most likely had their own ecological consequences, but we know little about them because they would be of little interest to anyone until scientists later in the twentieth century would begin to perceive freshwater habitats as a system rather than a milieu for sport. By that time, many fresh water fish in Québec had already seen their populations decline and some, such as the striped bass, had been all but exterminated.⁷¹

The most visible changes in Québec’s aquatic habitats came through the annual introductions of non-native species and the broad diffusion of native species into new watersheds.⁷² There is little dispute among scientists that some of the most significant changes in the freshwater aquatic ecosystems of Canada during the nineteenth century came as a result of the activities of anglers or fish culture activities conducted for or by anglers.⁷³ Much of the early fish culture work in Québec involved the rearing and transplantation of Atlantic salmon. Yet we have also seen that anglers were responsible for importing and diffusing many other non-native species as well.⁷⁴ Perhaps the two best examples were brown trout (Europe) and rainbow trout (western United States and Canada), both of the family *Salmonidae*.

⁷¹ *Wild Species 2005: The General Status of Species in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Endangered Species Conservation Council, 2006).

⁷² I am not concerned here with demonstrating ecological changes in specific rivers, lakes, or streams, but rather with showing more broadly that elite anglers, as a group, had engaged in activities that we know today to be transformational of ecosystems.

⁷³ Edwin John Crossman, “Introduced Freshwater Fishes: A Review of the North American Perspective with Emphasis on Canada,” *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences/ Journal canadien des sciences halieutiques et aquatiques* 48, no. 1 (1991): 46-57.

⁷⁴ R. L. Welcomme, “International Transfers of Inland Fish Species,” in *Distribution Biology and Management of Exotic Species*, ed. W. R. Courtney Jr. and J. R. Stouffer Jr. (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988).

Unfortunately, there have been few studies of the effects of nineteenth-century-introduced salmonids in Québec⁷⁵. One study done of the lakes in the Gatineau park did conclude that introduced salmonid species most likely resulted in the decline and local extinction of indigenous species.⁷⁶ There are, however, applicable studies across North America on the effects of salmonid introductions on ecosystems.⁷⁷ The authors of one study wrote that salmonid “[i]nvaders can influence freshwater systems at the individual, population, community, and ecosystem levels. Some of these impacts may be subtle or not easily predicted but they may be critical to understanding more obvious changes.” One of the changes cited by the author includes the evidence of trophic cascades, or a major shift in the relationship between predators and prey that disrupts the food change by decreasing the number of herbivore fishes and stimulating greater plant growth.⁷⁸

Other studies concerning introduced game fish in Newfoundland and Labrador (an area that has become more popular for elite anglers after the turn of the century as they fled the advance of more middle-class anglers) indicate: “Introduced non-native fishes and stocking of native fishes beyond their local range have established populations in many areas.” Many of the noted effects of these stockings were increased

⁷⁵ Andrea Bertolo, Pierre Magnan, and Michel Plante, “Linking the Occurrence of Brook Trout with Isolation and Extinction in Small Boreal Shield Lakes,” *Freshwater Biology* 53 no. 2 (2008): 304-321; Andrea Bertolo and Pierre Magnan, “Spatial and Environmental Correlates of Fish Community Structure in Canadian Shield Lakes,” *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences* 63, no. 1 (2006): 2780-2792; Bernard Angers, Pierre Magnan, Michel Plante and Louis Bernatchez, “Canonical Correspondence Analysis for Estimating Spatial and Environmental Effects on Microsatellite Gene Diversity in Brook Charr (*Salvelinus fontinalis*),” *Molecular Ecology* 8 no. 6 (1999): 1043-1053.

⁷⁶ F. Chapleau, C. S. Findlay, and E. Szenasy, “Impact of Piscivorous Fish Introductions on Fish Species Richness of Small Lakes in Gatineau Park,” *Ecoscience* 4, no. 3 (1997): 259-68.

⁷⁷ Crossman, “Introduced Freshwater Fishes.”

⁷⁸ Kevin S. Simon and Colin R. Townsend, “Impacts of Freshwater Invaders at Different Levels of Ecological Organisation, with Emphasis on Salmon and Ecosystem Consequences,” *Freshwater Biology* 48, no. 1 (2003): 982-94.

“[c]ompetition, predation and the possible introduction of parasites and diseases,” as well as “[d]irect genetic effects caused by interbreeding with native species.”⁷⁹

A similar study of oligotrophic lakes in northern Ontario found that the introduction of predatory brook trout exerted a “strong influence on prey.” The kinds of effects found were “changes in abundance, changes in habitat use patterns, and changes in the mean shoal sizes [number of fish swimming together] of potential prey species in lakes where predators were added.”⁸⁰ Studies in other areas of North America concerning introduced rainbow trout populations have shown that the species quickly overlaps the range of native brook trout populations. Rainbows prey on young brook trout and become a significant competitor for food resources, causing, in many cases, decreased growth in the brook trout community, which leads to a decline in the number of large fish in the population.⁸¹ Essentially, the brook trout is marginalized within its own ecosystem by a more dominant predator.

But non-native fish introductions not only had direct impacts on other fish communities. One California study revealed that the removal of introduced rainbow trout led to the rapid recovery of a declining species of mountain yellow-legged frog.⁸² Another study found that introductions had effects at all levels of the ecosystem. In several test cases involving introduced trout in fishless lakes, it was found that zooplankton assemblages and species of crustaceans were directly impacted by the

⁷⁹ Van Zyll de Jong, “Impacts of Stocking and Introductions on Freshwater Fisheries of Newfoundland and Labrador Canada,” *Fisheries Management and Ecology* 11, no. 1 (2004): 183-93.

⁸⁰ M. Pink and M. G. Fox, “Numerical and Behavioural Response of Cyprinids to the Introduction of Predatory Brook Trout in Two Oligotrophic Lakes in Northern Ontario,” *Ecology of Freshwater Fish* 16, no. 2 (2007): 238-49.

⁸¹ Larry B. Crowder and Elizabeth A. Marshall, “Assessing Population Responses to Multiple Anthropogenic Effects: A Case Study with Brook Trout,” *Ecological Applications* 6, no. 1 (1996): 152-67.

⁸² Vance T. Vredenburg, “Reversing Introduced Species Effects: Experimental Removal of Introduced Fish Leads to Rapid Recovery of a Declining Frog,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 101, no. 20 (2004): 7646-50.

introductions and only recovered once the fish were removed. Still, that recovery took time: on average, 19 years.⁸³

The fish species that anglers were introducing into their Anglers' Eden in Québec were not noticeably different from the species that exist today. It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that even if the changes went unnoticed at the time, persistent introductions of species were effecting transformations in the aquatic ecologies of the province. Certainly, anglers and their State allies were tampering with forces that were largely unknown to them.

It would only be in 1929 that an individual with any formal university education in science would take over the direction of the provincial hatcheries. B. W. Taylor, a McGill-trained biologist, took over from E. T. D. Chambers, who was ill and nearing the end of his life (he died in 1931). Taylor conducted the first biological study of freshwater species for the department.⁸⁴ His first annual report took a dramatic departure from those sent by his predecessor. He discussed the importance of the water quality, temperature, oxygen levels and the natural food availability for species that were intended for introduction and transplantation. He recommended setting up numerous permanent biological stations and he stopped some of the more questionable introductions, such as that of Coho salmon from British Columbia.

Nevertheless, under Taylor's more scientific tutelage, the hatcheries continued to operate solely for the production of game fish. His biological stations were not intended to simply to study native species, but to examine the waters for the best forms of game

⁸³ David B. Donald and Rolf D. Vinebrooke et. al., "Recovery of Zooplankton Assemblages in Mountain Lakes from the Effects of Introduced Sport Fish," *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences* 58, no. 9 (2001): 1822-30.

⁸⁴ *Rapport annuel du Commissaire des Terres, des Forêts et des Pêcheries de la Province de Québec*, 1930, 516-20.

fish to transplant therein.⁸⁵ Indeed, Taylor had inaugurated a new era in Québec's sport fishery, one in which science became a new auxiliary agent of the anglers' search for experiences.⁸⁶

While the introduction of science made the hatcheries more efficient, they did not stem the trend toward another form of homogenization: biotic homogenization. Biotic homogenization is the gradual replacement of indigenous species by foreign invasive species. Perhaps the best example of the process is the replacement of native plants in North America by weeds. Biotic homogenization almost always takes place as a result of human modifications. In fact, the whole story of human civilization, with its basis on plant and animal, is a process of biotic homogenization. Over thousands of years, the numbers of domesticated plant and animals have been reduced to the relatively few species of wheat, grain and corn, and poultry, pigs, cattle and sheep.⁸⁷ The creation of the sport fishery, while not yet as extreme, introduced a similar paradigm into Québec's freshwater habitats. Today, the status of 37 of the 117 freshwater fish species in Québec is considered to be either "Sensitive," "At Risk" or "May be at Risk."⁸⁸ Many of those species, like the Copper Redhorse (*Moxostoma hubbsi*), a form of sucker that had no value to anglers, have been impacted by only ten species of exotic fish introductions, among them those species introduced by nineteenth- and early twentieth-century anglers, including the rainbow trout, rainbow smelt and brown trout.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 524.

⁸⁶ A similar shift was occurring elsewhere in Canada, see: George Colpitts, "Science, Streams and Sport: Trout Conservation in Southern Alberta, 1900-1930" (Masters Thesis, University of Calgary, 1993).

⁸⁷ Frank J. Rahel, "Homogenization of Freshwater Faunas," *Annual Review of Ecological Systems* 33, no. 1 (2002): 291-315.

⁸⁸ *Wild Species* 2005.

6.4 Conclusion

By the early nineteenth century, elite anglers had begun a process in Québec of shaping the aquatic landscape according to their idyllic expectations that meant creating a place where the search for sublime experiences with “game” fish caught with a rod and line were the only acceptable practice. They came to believe that the best way to protect what they had come to see as an Anglers’ Eden from others lower down the social hierarchy who did not share their values was through the application of law and order. In the front line of that campaign were federal and provincial wardens and private guardians who were given the authority to fine, jail and even confiscate the fishing equipment of those breaking fishing laws. Nevertheless, politicians, guardians and common people resisted these authoritarian attempts to forcibly change traditional relationships with nature, through both non-violent and violent means. Their efforts to force change were met with more than a half-century of resistance and were mostly a failure, but that did not make elite anglers agents of a failed enterprise.

On the contrary, elite anglers should be considered victims of their own success. For they would be the model around which a cohort of middle class anglers, particularly Canadians aided by more liberal State agents like Hector Caron, who began to give them a greater place within the sport fishery, allowed even more re-modelling of the aquatic landscape. From the elite anglers’ perspective, that process might have reminded them of the stanza in Milton’s *Paradise Lost* where Satan himself breaks into Eden by leaping over the garden’s high wall like a “prowling wolf” into a “shepard’s pen.”⁸⁹ The new cohort of middle class anglers, who were more empathetic, diplomatic and inclusive,

⁸⁹ John Milton, *Paradise Lost: A Poem Written in Ten Books*, book IV (London: 1667).

proved far more successful in changing attitudes towards the conservation of freshwater fish and the importance of laws related to fishing through educated appeals to self-interest.

Ironically, that new appreciation led to the acculturation of angling across a broader cross-section of society. Common people began to have access to cheap rods, reels and equipment. Angling magazines replaced expensive monographs, an increasing number of national parks opened up new places to common people, and a once elitist craft began to filter down to a broader range of society. As people began to acculturate not only angling but ideas associated with it, such as the conservation of water and fish resources, the diverse practices once found in Québec's aquatic landscape began to disappear.

Yet, that process of acculturation did not affect just people. It also had a number of consequences, albeit unintended, upon the community of freshwater fishes. Some groups of fish, those highest on the anglers' hierarchy, gained a measure of privilege, due to human environmental intervention, over those species lower on the hierarchy. Exotic fish fashionable with more middle class anglers, like rainbow trout, were introduced into rivers, lakes and streams throughout the province. Those fish carried in their genetic baggage their own potential for chance. While it may be impossible to know exactly what changes they brought, we do know that many of these fish established new communities in Québec, communities that have likely forever altered the links between people, plants and other animals there.

Québec's freshwater sport fishery never really was an Edenic paradise in the real sense of the word. It was a place formed by geological and biological forces over a

long period of time. Due to a conjunction of interests by the State, anglers became a part of that process of change as they fashioned nature around a cultural ideal. Elite anglers became a force, like glaciers, that advanced across and then retreated from the landscape, but not without leaving their own profound and irreversible changes in the cultural and ecological landscape of the province in their wake.

CONCLUSION:

The Sport Fishery as an Intercourse of Nature, Culture and History

“When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe.”¹ - John Muir

“No Vulgar Fishes”: An Epilogue

In 1966, Michel Chamberland published a 350-page book entitled *La pêche au Québec*.² In the context of this study, this outdated angling guidebook, which would be of little interest even to modern anglers, represents an illustrative piece of intellectual and material culture. It is one of the first, if not the first, angling guidebooks to be written and published in French in Québec. In its pages can be found clear evidence that fishing for sport had been largely acculturated into Francophone society by the 1960s. Chamberland asked the central question, one posed by the seventeenth-century patron of angling himself, Izaak Walton: “Is fishing a sport?” Whereas Walton clearly answered in the affirmative and a whole literary genre grew up around his response, the nineteenth-century French-Canadian author, A.N. Montpetit, who asked the same question, found to his disapproval that it was, but that it was also an activity that belonged to the Anglophone elite, especially wealthy Americans. Chamberland removed the lingering ambiguity, and animosity, by responding that “[p]addling, lifting

¹ John Muir, *My First Summer in the Sierra* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1911).

² Michel Chamberland, *La pêche au Québec* (Montréal: Les Éditions de l'homme, 1966).

and lowering anchors, casting the line over and over again, struggling with the fish all made fishing more than an activity of leisure, but a form of exercise and sport.”³

Chamberland also linked his study to Waltonian traditions by evoking romantic and spiritual themes. He wrote: “Fishermen are also poets, and who wouldn’t be in the face of the pink-tinged Aurora Borealis or the radiant sunsets?”⁴ He cited famous American anglers such as President Herbert Hoover, who believed fishing “purified the soul.”⁵ And he noted Ernest Hemingway’s celebrated response to a question concerning what he thought was the best sport. Hemmingway had responded “fishing,” but he couldn’t say why because “describing the pleasures it gave was like trying to describe the taste of an apple.”⁶ The use of that quote was highly fitting, for Hemmingway was giving expression to the idea that fishing, or angling, could mean different things to different people. Certainly, Chamberland’s text revealed that Francophone anglers had taken angling culture, including its correspondent connections to nature, and unapologetically made it their own.

While Chamberland’s collection of fishing methods were diverse, including various methods of fishing from shore, trolling, the casting of artificial flies, and the use of bottom lines and bobbers, more important was the fact that he simply took for granted that all fishing for sport was done with a rod and a line. Nevertheless, there were important differences in the way Chamberland portrayed the craft. For example, the Anglo elite fished not for food, but to participating in a sublime experience of confronting and contemplating the mysteries of nature. They sometimes felt a sense of

³ Ibid., 13.

⁴ Ibid., 12.

⁵ Herbert Hoover, *Fishing for Fun - and to Wash Your Soul*. (New York: Random House, 1963).

⁶ Chamberland, *La pêche au Québec*.

empathy for “killing” the animals that they found to be so noble. For Chamberland, fishing for sport, even in a landscape of leisure, still required a measure of moral, rather than romantic, justification. Chamberland connected the spiritual to the natural elements of angling through traditional arguments of subsistence, writing: “There are people in the world who pity the fisherman and even the fish itself [...]. Providence provided that the big animals should eat the small ones and that all animals are there to be used as food for man.”⁷

There was another notable difference. Chamberland revealed a sport that had been acculturated in a much less elitist manner. While the sport was becoming less elitist in general by the 1930s, there was something distinctive about Chamberland’s language. Chamberland wrote that there were no “vulgar” fishes (in reference to the so-called “coarse” species) and, indeed, no kind of fish that one could deem “insignificant.”⁸ The author’s array of “sport” fish was not limited to a small collection of salmon and trout. His hierarchy of fish included bass, muskellunge and perch, and even some species once not even considered game fish, such as mooneyes and “panfish,” a general term used for all kinds of fish small enough to fit in a frying pan. The term is not far from the pejorative “pot fisher” used by elite anglers in the nineteenth century.

Of even greater significance is that fact that Chamberland’s list of species also contained a few that Montpetit could not have even found in Québec during his lifetime. Chamberland noted a few of those, including the brown trout and rainbow trout, which,

⁷ Ibid., 15.

⁸ Ibid., 14.

he said, “deserved our attention and admiration.”⁹ Yet he also knew these fish were part of a foreign influence within his waters. With a measure of pride he wrote: “I believe, however, that the most interesting of all is our beautiful speckled trout.”¹⁰ With his use of “our,” one can sense a connection to the growing nationalism that would, at least in part, lead to the declining influence of the foreign angling elite. For the people of Québec, indigenous fish species, many of which were seen as valueless, were also being redeemed as symbols of a unique cultural heritage.

Those connections became integrated into politics. Five years after Chamberland published his book, another watershed moment in the evolution of Québec’s sport fishery would bubble to the surface as a Francophone nationalist movement in Québec called for the end to the system of elitism and privilege associated with the waters. Henri Poupart’s polemic *Le scandale des clubs privés de chasse et pêche*, published in 1971, was a pointed denunciation of the system of private fish and game clubs that, while on the decline, still controlled 87% of the accessible areas available for sport fishing.¹¹ The storming of the ramparts of the vestiges of the privileged elite’s aquatic *apiri-daeza* in Québec would lead to the creation of the *Zones d’exploitation contrôlées* (ZEC) and a subsequent invasion of the popular classes into the aquatic landscape that would have its own cultural and ecological consequences.

Chamberland’s now dated fishing guidebook encapsulated more than how nature and culture had intersected in the creation of a new fishery. It also revealed the continuing and evolving intercourse of the culture of sport fishing, and the creation of

⁹ Ibid., 247.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Henri Poupart, *Le scandale des clubs privés de chasse et pêche* (Montréal: Parti pris, 1971).

the sport fishery as cultural space shaped from elitist mentalities of nature and an ecological space shaped to their expectations in Québec's wilderness.

Constructing Nature and Culture in the Aquatic Wilderness

Chamberland's monograph provides a panoramic snapshot of how the nearly two-century influence of elite anglers over the freshwater aquatic habitats continued to affect both the cultural and ecological landscape of Québec even decades after the elite anglers' presence and influence had declined. As this study has shown, the era of influence of elite anglers was one that saw an intersection of culture and nature with long-term historical consequences, some intended and others unintended. Their influence largely grew out of the romantic notion that they had found a pristine aquatic landscape, an Aquatic Eden, within the aquatic habitats of Québec. In reality, elite anglers would carry their craft to a physical environment shaped by millions of years of geological and biological transformations. It was a place where glaciers had carved and re-carved the land, leaving rents and valleys to be filled with myriads of rivers, lakes and streams. Glaciation played an equally important role in affording the region with comparatively few freshwater fish species. Many of the species that did evolve there were salmonids and perciforms, members of the families of game fish that so excited anglers' sensibilities.

Yet nature did not make the place for anglers and anglers were not the first to exploit fish there. Other cultures predated their arrival. These cultures established their own relationships and traditions around aquatic habitats and fish species. Amerindian peoples integrated every part of the seasonal migration of fish species into their own lives, and they developed exploitation strategies which were spiritually respectful but

maximized the return on investments of time spent fishing, which included fishing in places where fish agglomerated for spawning, using nets, weirs and spears. Likewise, the French who came in the sixteenth century carried over and developed their own cultural traditions around aquatic habitats. French colonists had the right to fish on waters adjoining their own land, but only for their own needs, and a part of their catch had to be paid to their seigniorial landlords as part of their dues. Fishing in New France, therefore, evolved into an act mostly of subsistence, not sport. Thus, what anglers believed to be a “paradisial” landscape was, in reality, a landscape shaped by the forces of geography, evolution and the presence of other cultures.

All of those features, natural and cultural, became elements of the anglers’ cultural construction of space. They were all present when the angling elite first made its appearance with the British conquest of Canada. Along with their language and laws, the English brought a well-defined tradition of fishing for sport. What made it so portable was its ties to the literary tradition popularized by Izaak Walton during the seventeenth century. That literary tradition tied angling and its romantic notions of nature to the elite who had the money to buy books and to spend leisure time practice the craft anywhere they could find water and fish. There was plenty of both in Québec.

The “contemplative man’s recreation” evolved its own elitist clubs and literature among the English-speaking people in the United States. After the War of 1812, wealthy American Waltonians began to come to Canada, especially the salmon rivers of Québec, in search of the “finny-tribes” in Edenic abodes. Some wrote their own books that, like treasure maps, brought more Americans, who bought up enormous quantities of land and rights of way to rivers and streams until the province stepped in to become

an intermediary in the process. That process was now linking the romantic perceptions and expectations of nature of a small group of people to the interests of provincial bureaucrats.

Through a combination of laws and social control, the aquatic landscape was systematically re-modelled to the benefit of anglers, who were granted what constituted a neo-seigniorial relationship over the most bountiful places to fish. In return for their privileged access, the province received revenue from licenses and leases, and they justified the privilege given to anglers by casting them as stewards protecting and preserving the waters and as tourists bringing employment and currency to outlying regions.

The latter promise of good stewardship became a cornerstone of the elite control of the aquatic landscape in Québec. While their concern for the preservation and conservation of water and freshwater fish was genuine, it was also tied to the narrow group of game fish they coveted. Conservation became associated with saving salmon and trout, while other "course" and non-game species like eel and catfish were left to be exploited by common people. Above all, interest in conservation was always connected to the State's interest in maintaining a profitable economic relationship with elite anglers. That economic relationship was directly tied to the romantic notions of the angler, one that gave enormous value to the experience with individual fish. The State came to understand that freshwater fish resources were many times more valuable when taken one at a time by a visiting angling tourist than when taken in large numbers by Amerindians for subsistence or by its own citizens for commerce.

The anglers' re-evaluation of nature came to be enshrined within the law. Laws mandated the purchasing of licenses to catch game fish, outlawed the taking of valuable sport fish *en masse* through the use of nets, weirs, traps and other methods, and put limits on when and where people could fish. These laws, meant to change behaviours, led to parallel changes in the legal status of people and the value of fish within an ecosystem. Those who purchased licenses to fish with rod and line became good "stewards." Those who fished in traditional ways that were against the law became "poachers" and harmful members of society that destroyed valuable natural resources. Nets, once so important to Amerindian peoples that young women were married to them for life, were banned. Listers and harpoons forged of iron by the French were labelled tools of destruction. The fish and game laws brought a measure of permanence and legitimacy to the angling agenda, and they formed the invisible barriers of what had become Québec's aquatic *apiri-daeza*. Slowly, they transformed the unofficial "Anglers' Eden" into the official sport fishery that is still commonly advertised today in outdoor magazines and VIA (railroad) brochures and on dozens of websites as a literal paradise for anglers.

A measure of how culturally transformative these changes were are found in the persistent, more-than-sixty-year-long campaign of resistance by common people against fish and game laws they interpreted as an elitist restructuring of their own relationships to the natural world. Each year brought more wardens and guardians, agents of law and order who fought what was almost a futile battle to change the behaviour of common people concerning fishing practices and the value of certain species. In the end, the most significant force for change would come from a new wave of middle class anglers, who

found their way to angling in Québec largely due to economic changes that permitted a broader segment of society to have their own measure of leisure time and to mimic the practices of their social superiors, including the craft of angling. Cheap rods and reels and fishing equipment also contributed to broadening the demographic, along with the opening of more fishing places to the public. Although middle class anglers had to accept fish lower on the hierarchy such as bass and perch (access to salmon was still the privilege of the elite), this group proved an instrumental intermediary voice for a conservation agenda that linked the values of angling and nature in ways that were better appreciated by ordinary fishermen.

These social changes provoked by elite anglers are surely the most visible aspects of their influence. Nevertheless, communities of people, whether they were Amerindians, French-Canadians, middle class anglers or common fishermen, were not the only groups implicated in the anglers' constructions. Their prey was also inextricably linked to these developments. Whether or not they were conscious of the anglers' agenda is unimportant. Human action from the terrestrial realm above was changing their own millennia-old relationships within their aquatic habitats and, by extension, to other parts of the biosphere. Fluctuations and transformations in fish populations are caused by a multitude of factors, thus it is difficult to ascertain the direct impact of angling on populations, or even the impact of the shift by fisherman to non-game species.

Yet there is little doubt that anglers and provincial bureaucrats were actively and purposefully affecting fish populations through their employ of fish culture. Studies in the natural sciences provide us with the necessary information to conclude that fish

culture activities, which included the transplanted of indigenous populations into new areas as well as the introduction of exotic species, did have an effect on the environment. In some cases, they were useless and most likely had few lasting effects on aquatic ecosystems. Such was the case with efforts to transplant Pacific Coho salmon into Québec's lakes. The habitat change was simply too radical, and such complex species were biologically incapable of rapid adaptation. Those fish would have simply died or been eaten by other fish. Any lucky survivors would have been doomed by the inability to reproduce. But there were also successful introductions. Success from the anglers' point of view meant their favourite fish would become established within a habitat where they could enjoy catching them. Human success had a different meaning from the perspective of ecological systems.

The introduction of ten thousand rainbow trout fingerlings into a small Québec lake would have had the potential for radical change. The rainbow trout were biologically predisposed to life in cold lakes and thrived on a diet of insects. Once spilled into the lake, many of the fish would have died within the first few hours and days due to shock and being eaten by predators. Nevertheless, some would have survived, and the chances of these fish establishing a viable population of rainbow trout were often greatly increased by the systematic re-stocking of the same lakes year after year. We know that in many places those populations did become established, and once they did we know the general patterns of change they may have caused. Rainbow trout were beloved by anglers because they are so rapacious; they violently attack their prey and, once hooked, fight ferociously, causing the rushing blood in their bodies to enhance their rainbow hue. The same things that made them so prized by anglers made them

successful ecological interlopers. They eat almost anything, including their own young, and once introduced into a foreign system they can quickly become the apex predator in the system and completely transform ecosystems. Foreign fish, like foreign anglers, were by proxy involved in their own conquests of landscape.

We may not yet know, or indeed ever know, the precise details concerning these nineteenth-century introductions, such as where they were established and in what numbers. There is no doubt, however, that the arrival of foreign game fish was directly linked to the arrival of a culture of angling that turned fish culture into a tool of the craft. Indeed, the only way and the only reason such fish were even there was because of the ideas, desires and actions of anglers.

Through their introductions of fish species, definition of landscape and diffusion of values, elite anglers represented more than men of wealth who came to Québec to fish; they were agents of change in the construction of a new cultural and ecological space that would come to be known as the sport fishery.

Asking New Questions at the Crossroads of Ecology and History

This study began with the broad thesis that there were connections between historically observable cultural changes and transformations of the physical environment. Using the sport fishery as a case study, it sought to examine the intersections between aquatic habitats and elite anglers in the formation of a fishery for sport. The word “intersections” invokes the image of a crossroads where several things or concepts meet in time and space, like elite angling tourists, other cultural groups, and migrating salmon. Yet the study has found in its conclusions something more complex. In documenting the historical influence of anglers in fashioning an aquatic landscape in

Québec according to a collection of commonly held notions concerning the value of nature, it has found that nature and culture are not merely interconnected, they are an intercourse of human activities, ideas, traditions, and even myths, with tangible facts of nature all woven together in ways that make the study of each as separate elements almost impossible to undertake.

The approach taken here to recognize nature's own agency and agendas, something largely ignored by traditional historical and social science studies, has a number of advantages and disadvantages. One of the most critical of the latter is the issue of scale. Admittedly, the sport fishery was, and remains, a collection of rivers, lakes and streams, people and species each having their own unique history even if anglers, themselves, tended to merge their unique specificities into their larger and mostly mythical conceptions of place. From the anglers' point of view every bubbling brook field with trout was a paradise and every guide was just another "Jacques," "Narcisse," or "Ovide." Arguably, telling the story of a sport fishery is like telling the history of a nation by subordinating the individual stories of millions of individuals who lived their own, often contradictory, lives within its borders. The patterns revealed in this study will not necessarily be applicable to every relationship between people and nature in Québec; nevertheless, it has demonstrated a salient position for further study.

Another factor related to scale is the issue of balance. In attempting to grant equal importance to both the natural and cultural aspects, this study necessarily integrated very specific data concerning past human activities into a much more general understanding of the physical environment in which those humans lived in the past. In the attempt to juxtapose detailed historical facts, such as the transplantation of 100,000

rainbow trout into a lake in 1915, with the assumption (albeit based upon modern science that such activities could be transformative), it has admittedly built a model that artificially magnifies the level of importance any group of people could have over such a large natural landscape, and has necessarily ignored many of the other natural features that may have also played a role in ecological change, such as weather, natural climate changes, and other natural pressures. Similarly, the impact upon fish populations was surely more subtle than this study's limited interdisciplinary approach could effectively appreciate.

Moreover, by the very nature of its heavy reliance on monographs written by the elite and documentary records produced by governments, it has offered a very top-down perspective of the formation of the sport fishery, and one that has given great agency to foreigners and especially to the State. Although there was great effort made here to be empathetic and tease out the voices and the independent agencies of subordinate groups, the elite only tended to see Amerindians, common people or even the middle class when they became problematic, and some of that bias has surely been reflected here. For related reasons, this study's interpretation emphasizing foreign influences may be overstated. Darcy Ingram's most recent doctoral thesis gives greater agency to individuals and groups within Canada, and I believe that a clearer picture of what took place in terms of the sport fishery lies somewhere in the overlap of his approach and my own.¹²

Notwithstanding the difficulties in finding balance between the forces of nature and human culture, this study has shown that there is much to be revealed in accepting

¹² Darcy Ingram, "Nature's Improvement: Wildlife, Conservation, and Conflict in Québec, 1850-1914" (Doctoral Dissertation, McGill University, 2007). This study was not considered earlier in this work, because it was completed as this one was concluding.

and integrating facts of ecology as components of historical study. Indeed, it has only been through this study's insistence on reconnecting the elite angler to a dynamic natural world, one operating through ecological systems, that his greater significance and the significance of the fishery that he constructed has emerged from the obscurity of the primary sources at all. That approach made the angler's relationship to the aquatic landscape as complex and consequential as the farmer's to the soil, the timber company's to the forest or the fisherman's to the sea. Only then is it possible to perceive that, even if being an angler was only one aspect of a person's identity, and even if elite practitioners were relatively few in number, the angler's desire for certain experiences within paradisiacal landscapes, to improve them or even to create them, changed both human and non-human relationships to the natural world within his sphere of influence.

By accepting the past as having taken place in a living environment and accepting non-humans as part of the landscape, this study has been able to ask a new set of questions. In answering those questions, many new connections between culture and nature have come to the fore. They revealed themselves in the ways elite anglers took ideas concerning nature developed in disparate places and times around the Atlantic world and projected them onto bio-geographical features forged from Deep Time and into the cultural relationships of other people that they did not completely understand.

The evolution of the romantic and idyllic space that I have called the "Anglers' Eden" to the institutionalization and exploitation of a State-managed fishery for sport came about through the activities and influences of many people, from English poets, eighteenth-century French statesmen, nineteenth-century British immigrants, Amerindians and French-Canadian fishermen and naturalists to progressive Canadian

fish culturists and American anglers and authors. Each played a role, some actively and others more passively, in creating a new cultural and ecological landscape—one that became a new commercial niche for the State to generate revenue from features of nature even as it forced other people to abandon traditional relationships with those same features and created new ecological niches for new species. The culture of angling, like other forces of nature, caused changes that remain inscribed in the landscape, in the people, in the fishes, and in the history of Québec.

Towards an “Ecocultural” Approach in Québec Studies

Through its interdisciplinary approach, which has incorporated works in environmental and cultural history as well as natural science, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the major themes within Québec Studies that have formed the cornerstone of this dissertation, and also suggests new avenues of research. For instance, this study has demonstrated the correlative nature of culture change and ecological change. Moreover, the State’s systematic use of methods of social control such as laws, regulations, fines meant to respond to the literary desires of elite anglers was related (both directly and indirectly) to natural systems; in this case to the control over aquatic ecosystems containing certain fish species. Finally, there was a clear exchange of ideas concerning the value of nature between various socio-cultural and State entities in Québec and people from the United States and Europe. This exchange not only adds further evidence to the concept of a shared North American identity (*Américanité*), but suggests an even broader connection to the eco-cultural changes associated with patterns of migration in the Atlantic world. Just as Québec was becoming a geo-political entity within Canada, the State began to engage itself in

grafting its aquatic ecosystems to the social fabric of the elite from across the metropolitan spheres in the United States and Europe.

In that way too, this study also contributes to a better understanding of the ways in which scholars have dealt with the concept of “imperialism” as an ideology that shaped the landscape, not just in Québec, but across Canada. While some historians have argued that field sports were part of the broad wave of British imperialism that contributed to the construction of Canada’s identity, this study suggests that this interpretation may be used too broadly.¹³ In the case of Québec, it was provincial authorities, themselves, who lent auxiliary assistance to at least one element of that sporting culture, angling, and in the process contributed to shaping its own iconic cultural and environmental identity. Québec became known as an “Anglers’ Eden” because a series of provincial bureaucrats saw it as profitable to let it be seen that way. It might also be argued that American anglers with their own brand of economic imperialism played a far more important role in Québec than the British. They brought their own unique expectations, concerns and character, to the process of construction that led to the subordination of peoples and landscapes into a hinterland for elite sportsmen.

It was by taking such an ecocultural approach that this work has made an original contribution to the study of humanities. In its focus, first and foremost, upon aquatic habitats as a biological element around which different actors interacted, it has given meaning to a cultural and ecological milieu that had heretofore been entirely neglected.

¹³ J. A. Magnan, ed., *The Cultural Bond: Sport Empire, Society* (London: Frank Cass, 1992); Tina Loo, *States of Nature: Conserving Canada’s Wildlife in the Twentieth Century* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006); Gregg Gillispie *Hunting for Empire: Narratives of Sport in Rupert’s Land, 1840-70* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007).

While cultural and social differences have been acknowledged, it's main thrust has been to shed light on a part of the landscape where interactions between diverse groups of people came together to form new relationships with nature. Those relationships include the reflex of humans to import species into new areas and to anthropomorphize their relationships with some, while enveloping others with such economic and social value that they achieved greater importance under the law than some human beings. It is clear that fish were not merely objects of human attention or elements of exploitation; they were living organisms that linked aquatic habitats to features of human society and the larger biosphere. Historians can find similar relationships between nature, the State, social class and non-human species in Québec, across the period studied here and even on to the present, regarding the forestry industry, mining, off-shore fisheries, the continued trade in fur and fur farming, to name only a few examples that could serve as avenues of research using an ecocultural approach.

Finally, this study's conclusions need to be taken into account by those working in freshwater aquatic sciences in Québec. The historical resources available to indicate where, when, and in what numbers fish species were introduced and transplanted during the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century are no doubt useful. Of greater import, however, are the cultural forces that have been in play for more than a century which have led to various cycles of evaluation and re-evaluation of the value of aquatic habitats and species. Québec's aquatic scientists, too, could benefit from an ecocultural approach because even as science has become more influential in the management of aquatic habitats, the State's continued search for tourism revenue from foreign anglers' reveals that the anglers' interests and their centuries' old edenic idealism continues to compete

with conservation efforts. Moreover, those conservation efforts have often failed to take note of the significant changes provoked by the agency of elite anglers' and the State in the fashioning of a freshwater Eden in Québec more than a century ago.¹⁴

¹⁴ Louis-Gilles Francoeur, "Les saumons sont revenus dans la rivière Etchemin," *Le Devoir* (26 November, 2004), B7; André Mercier, "L'affluence de pêcheurs a plus que doublé en sept ans," *Le Nouvelliste* [Trois-Rivières] (26 February, 2007), 25; Myriam Bacon, "La pêche sportive est porteuse d'espoir," *Le Nouvelliste* [Trois-Rivières] (19 October, 2005), 13.

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I. Interviews

Note: All interviews were conducted either by telephone or by e-mail correspondence during the periods noted below.

Interview with Lowel Crary. April-October, 2004. Mr. Crary is a distant relative of E. T. D. Chambers who provided a number of photographs and documents that proved useful to this study.

Interview with Zack Belknap. January-August, 2005. Mr. Belknap is the grandson of W.G. Belknap who ran the provincial hatchery in Baldwin's Mills. He provided photos and documents related to his grandfather's tenure as hatchery administrator.

Interview with Marcel Elliott. 6 March, 2006. M. Elliott is the grandson of Joseph Elliot who ran the provincial hatchery at St-Alexis-des-Monts in the Mauricie. His interview provided information related to his grandfather's activities as hatchery administrator for the province.

APPENDIX I: THE ANGLER'S SONG¹

As inward love breeds outward talk,
The Hound some praise, and some the Hawk,
Some better pleas'd with private sport,
Use Tennis, some a Mistris court:
But these delights I neither wish,
Nor envy, while I freely fish.

Who hunts, doth oft in danger ride
Who hauks, lures oft both far & wide;
Who uses games, may often prove
A loser; but who fals in love,
Is fettered in fond Cupids snare:
My Angle breeds me no such care.

Of Recreation there is none
So free as fishing is alone;
All other pastimes do no less
Then mind and body both possess;
My hand alone my work can do,
So I can fish and study too.

I care not, I, to fish in seas,
Fresh rivers best my mind do please,
Whose sweet calm course I contemplate;
And seek in life to imitate;
In civil bounds I fain would keep,
And for my past offences weep.

And when the timerous Trout I wait
To take, and he devours my bait,
How poor a thing sometimes I find
Will captivate a greedy mind:
And when none bite, I praise the wise,
Whom vain alurements ne're surprise.

¹ Izaak Walton, *The Compleat Angler; or, the Contemplative Man's Recreation* (London: T. Maxey, 1653).

But yet though while I fish, I fast,
I make good fortune my repast,
And there unto my friend invite,
In whom I more then that delight:
Who is more welcome to my dish,
Then to my Angle was my fish.

As well content no prize to take
As use of taken prize to make;
For so our Lord was pleased when
He Fishers made Fishers of men;
Where (which is in no other game)
A man may fish and praise his name.

The first men that our Saviour dear
Did chuse to wait upon him here,
Blest Fishers were; and fish the last
Food was, that he on earth did taste.
I therefore strive to follow those,
Whom he to follow him hath chose.