

Peter M. Stuwitz and the Newfoundland Inshore Fishery in 1840

Helge W. Nordvik et Lewis R. Fischer

Volume 1, numéro 2, fall 1985

URI : https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/nflds1_2art01

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Faculty of Arts, Memorial University

ISSN

1198-8614 (imprimé)

1715-1430 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Nordvik, H. W. & Fischer, L. R. (1985). Peter M. Stuwitz and the Newfoundland Inshore Fishery in 1840. *Newfoundland Studies*, 1(2), 129–140.

Peter M. Stuwitz and the Newfoundland Inshore Fishery in 1840

HELGE W. NORDVIK AND LEWIS R. FISCHER

RESIDENTS OF A PARTICULAR area are not always the most perceptive observers of local activities.¹ Often an outsider is able to capture the nuances of a local scene with greater clarity than those who have experienced certain activities all their lives. As well, outsiders are frequently able to add a comparative dimension to their observations which is missing in local accounts. All these concepts apply to the descriptions of the Newfoundland fishery by Peter M. Stuwitz, a remarkably perceptive Norwegian who visited Newfoundland between 1839 and 1842.

Peter Stuwitz was born in Bergen, in western Norway, in 1806. The offspring of comfortable middle-class parents, by all accounts Stuwitz early demonstrated an inquiring mind. He entered the University of Kristiania (now Oslo) in 1832 to study theology and successfully earned his degree in 1837. While at university Stuwitz exhibited a great breadth of intellect. In addition to mastering the demanding curriculum in theology he pursued a concurrent interest in the natural sciences. The young man was particularly fond of marine zoology, and he published several minor papers in this discipline even prior to graduation. These works attracted sufficient attention to lead to his election to the governing board of the rapidly growing Bergen Museum as well as to research money to study lower marine animals on the coast between the Bergen and Trondheim fjords.²

While young Stuwitz was making his mark on the scientific community, the Norwegian government was becoming increasingly aware of competition from Newfoundland salt fish in both the European and American markets. As a result, the government decided to dispatch a three-man delegation to study the organization of the fishery. In the end, however, the delegation consisted of only two men: Johannes Haldorsen, an experienced sailor who was to prove invaluable on practical matters, and Peter Stuwitz, who was appointed chairman.³

Stuwitz and Haldorsen began their preparations for the visit to Newfoundland in November 1838, and departed from Norway in May 1839. They stopped off in London to complete their outfitting, and sailed for Newfoundland from Liverpool at the end of July, arriving in St. John's on August 30. The timing of the arrival was fortuitous: the fishery off the Avalon Peninsula and in Conception Bay was extremely successful that year. Stuwitz was thus able to make short trips to observe this fishery; his first report to the Department of Finance, Trade, and Customs was made on September 18. With the end of the fall fishery in southeastern Newfoundland in early November, he was faced with a quandary. Originally he had planned to spend the winter months in the United States, but he was beginning to believe that they should devote all their time to the study of the Newfoundland fishery. He opted for the latter course, planning an expedition to observe the winter fishery. He left St. John's on December 8 for St. Pierre, where he arrived six days later. Stuwitz spent a month on the French island collecting material on the local fishery before attempting to return to Newfoundland. He set sail for Fortune Bay on January 16, 1840, but storms forced his vessel back into port and it was not until January 26 that he reached his destination. The Norwegian spent three weeks in small fishing ports, and arrived back in St. John's on February 24.

Although Stuwitz and Haldorsen were unfamiliar with the precise sequence of events in the Newfoundland fishery, unwittingly they had once again timed their arrival in St. John's perfectly. Preparations for the annual seal fishery were in full swing, and Stuwitz decided that a journey to the front would provide valuable information at little cost. He therefore joined one of the vessels bound for the seal hunt. The craft departed St. John's on March 3, and returned with a bumper catch on April 12. Undaunted by this hectic pace, Stuwitz began immediately making preparations for his summer expedition, during which he planned to visit both the northern and southern coasts of the island, as well as Labrador and the Grand Banks.

Stuwitz headed first for the fishing grounds in St. Mary's Bay. He then journeyed to the Banks, where he went on board French, American and Portuguese vessels. The trip from the Banks to St. Pierre was a perilous one: the vessel came close to capsizing several times. This visit to the French outpost only lasted a week. Despite his desire to stay in St. Pierre to observe the steady stream of vessels returning from the Banks and to study their methods of processing the catch, he was anxious to leave for the Labrador coast. Accordingly, he departed from St. Pierre on August 3, intending to visit not only Labrador but also French fishing outposts on the Northern Peninsula.

Heading west, his first stop was Codroy, where he remained for a fortnight making observations on the inshore fishery operating along the west coast. From there he proceeded to Blanc Sablon; unfortunately, he had tar-

ried too long en route, and the fishery in that place was almost concluded. Still, the men were processing the fish, and he was able to make notes on that. At Blanc Sablon he separated from Haldorsen, ordering his companion to take their chartered vessel to L'Anse-au-Loup while he himself set out on foot along the coast. The two Norwegians rendezvoused two weeks later and continued to Battle Harbour. While the fishery had concluded there as well, bad weather had delayed the completion of drying operations, and they were able to observe that process until October 16. Stuwitz then departed south for the French fishing stations, but finding them abandoned because of the lateness of the season, he continued on to St. John's, arriving in the capital on November 6, 1840. The summer expedition of 1840 resulted in the very detailed study which Stuwitz submitted to authorities in Kristiania. Part of that report is reprinted here.

Stuwitz' original plan was to have his investigations completed by this time and to return to Norway. But he was far too conscientious to do this. In his opinion he had missed too much during the summer of 1840; a desire for scientific completeness required him to stay another season. Accordingly, he wrote to his superiors in Kristiania informing them of his change of plans. Then he sat down to plan a more rational itinerary for the summer of 1841.

Unlike the previous year, Stuwitz spent the winter period resting in St. John's in preparation for his summer journey. Indeed, he did not leave the capital until the end of June, when he sailed down the northeast coast. The first place he visited was Tilting Harbour on Fogo Island. While the report on his visit states that the fishery there was very similar to other inshore operations which he had viewed previously, he stayed on an extra week to observe the use of seines, which he had missed in St. Mary's Bay the summer before because of his trip to the Grand Banks. He then proceeded to the French fishing station at La Scie, and visited a succession of French outposts until early September, when he left Quirpon, the northernmost French settlement, for Labrador.

This time he set course for communities north of Battle Harbour, and arrived early enough to observe both the cod and salmon fisheries. He continued his work along the Labrador coast until November 20, but he and his companion almost stayed too long. Winter weather had descended on the area, and the Norwegians almost perished on the return voyage to St. John's. In one particularly bad storm the foremast was snapped in two, and water entered the cabins. Somehow the crew were able to save their ship, and the weary travellers limped safely into St. John's eight days before Christmas.

That he was undaunted by his narrow escape says much about the dedication of Stuwitz. He immediately made plans to go to Halifax, and from there to New England to observe the local winter fishery. But first he had

one final piece of business in Newfoundland. He wanted to recheck some of his observations made on the Conception Bay fishery. The weather, however, was stormy, and Stuwitz decided to make an overland journey. Conditions on land were little better than those at sea, and he suffered severely on his trek. A few weeks after returning to St. John's Stuwitz suffered a severe attack of what he first believed to be influenza. Unfortunately, his self-diagnosis proved wrong: the illness turned out to be a virulent form of tuberculosis. In his last letter to the Department dated June 7, 1842, he expressed the hope that he would soon be well enough to make his planned expedition to the United States.

But this time Stuwitz' optimism was misplaced. The letter of June 7 was his last official communication. Ravaged by a deadly disease, his body failed to respond to treatment. On June 21 Stuwitz died in St. John's at the age of thirty-six and was interred there. The Governor, Major-General Sir John Harvey, completed arrangements for his notes, sketches and specimens to be shipped back to Norway. Two personal friends of the deceased, Joseph Noad (later to be Surveyor-General) and Dr. H. H. Stabb, were entrusted with the task of packing the materials.⁴

Records in the Department of Finance, Trade and Customs state that the Stuwitz papers and specimens were packed in twenty-six wooden crates and shipped to Norway via London. In Norway they were examined by Amanuensis [lecturer] Halvor H. Rasch, later to be professor at the University of Kristiania. Rasch examined not only the specimens but also the twenty-one notebooks which Stuwitz had kept during his travels. Unfortunately for modern scholars, it has proven impossible to locate the specimens, rocks, and models that were dispatched from Newfoundland. It is probable that they have been lost; at any rate, Rasch reported that many of them were in poor condition on arrival in Norway. More fortunately, however, most of the papers that were in Stuwitz' possession appear to have survived. These include most of his notebooks, his personal notes, and the drafts of the reports and letters that he sent back to officials. Further, all of the letters to his family have survived. At the conclusion of the excerpt of his observations on the fishery we have appended a survey of all known archival material in Norway relating to Stuwitz' valuable investigations in Newfoundland.

Peter Stuwitz deserves an important position in the history of Newfoundland because of his perceptive observations of life there in the first half of the nineteenth century. While his reports by themselves cannot convey the full measure of the man they do bear witness to his genuine scientific curiosity and his keen insight into certain areas of Newfoundland life. His letters to his family, on the other hand, testify eloquently to the existence of a warm and compassionate human being.

But we should not be too parochial in our judgement. While Stuwitz'

records make him particularly important for historians attempting to understand one aspect of nineteenth-century Newfoundland, his short but distinguished career has also earned him a place in the first rank of eminent Norwegian natural and social scientists, starting with Jens Rathke (1769-1855), and running through Stuwitz to the social scientist Eilert Sundt, the explorer Fridtjof Nansen, and Johan Hjort, the first Director-General of the Norwegian Fisheries Directorate. The fame that Stuwitz earned for the Bergen Museum allowed that institution to attract endowments sufficient to provide money to men like Armauer Hansen, the scientist who discovered the cause of leprosy, and Vilhelm Bjerknes, the famed meteorologist. Modern students who examine his records should keep in mind that Stuwitz' reputation, earned largely because of his observations on the conditions on an island across the ocean from his native land, had a profound influence on developments in the country which dispatched him in the first place.

AN ACCOUNT OF EXCURSIONS ON THE COASTS OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR IN THE SUMMER OF 1840⁵

I HAVE ALREADY informed the Department in a letter of 1 August from St. Pierre-Miquelon that I left St. John's on 19 May. I arrived at Trepassey Harbour on 23 May and, although they were already partly engaged in fishing there, I decided to proceed as soon as possible farther west nearer to the fishing grounds. There were more boats there and the season was more advanced. At that time only a few boats worked from Trepassey as the fish were in an area farther west and large vessels, which only a few of the better-off fishermen can afford, are required for the fishing. In general, however, most of the people in Trepassey begin fishing later. In this district the fish come closer to the shore in the summer. The reasons for this are discussed below. The inhabitants, who annually observe the cod come opportunely to hand, therefore do not generally begin to fish before this period occurs. They can then use smaller boats⁶ and the yield is normally so good while the shoals of cod are there that they consider the summer fishing complete with the catch they make at that time.

I wanted to leave Trepassey for St. Mary's⁷ as early as Sunday but, although we made repeated attempts to sail, we did not succeed until midday on Wednesday. On the following Thursday morning we arrived at the fishing grounds off St. Mary's. We made several cruises before we discovered a single boat, either close or distant, as the fishing grounds cover so wide an area here and the shoals of fish seem to be concentrated in a few localities so that the fishermen have to cross enormous stretches of water to search for good fishing.

After we had been at sea for several days in the various areas where they were then fishing, we went to the harbour at Placentia where the fishermen go to process the fish caught off the coast. I stayed in Placentia about 14 days, which was much longer than planned for my survey, because of a contrary wind. For a short while the wind was fair but weak and, fortunately, we managed to use the opportunity to leave Placentia harbour and sail to one of the islands in the bay of the same name where

they were zealously engaged in fishing. I stayed about 14 days there as well and, as it was already Midsummer Eve,⁸ I could not remain any longer on the Newfoundland coast but had to leave for the Banks. Before I continue with the report concerning the trip to the Banks, I will here make some brief observations about the fishing at St. Mary's and the nearby area, especially with regard to the period I spent there before leaving for the Banks.

The fishing grounds off St. Mary's on the south coast of the Avalon Peninsula lie partly to the west of St. Mary's Bay off the coast between this bay and Placentia Bay, partly on the east side of the said bay stretching from St. Mary's harbour out towards St. Shotts. As I had to save as much time as possible and also assumed that the circumstances I had to investigate were basically similar in the two neighbouring districts, I decided to visit only one of the fishing grounds noted. I preferred the first cited, partly because it was generally most frequented on account of its size and also partly because I thought the conditions would be more varied there. . . .

It should be further noted that that section of the Newfoundland coast, where St. Mary's lies, is well known as a point where strong currents from several directions cross one another. This state of affairs, which makes navigation in these waters so difficult, is a very favourable circumstance for the occurrence of cod and other species of fish, according to the prevailing opinions of experienced men here in Newfoundland, as well as in Norway and other countries. I have in the above observations given some information on the localities near St. Mary's which are favourable for the occurrence of cod. The spot has also been well known since early times as one of the best fishing places in Newfoundland. Cod are generally found there in relatively large numbers on a regular annual basis and the quality of the catch is good. Cod appear in the early spring at St. Mary's. At first the shoals seem to be rather concentrated and located in a few regions, presumably those with particular local conditions, such as abundance of food, etc., which attract the fish and keep them on the bottom. Later, however, more general influences manifest themselves, such as rising temperature, a general revival and movement in the entire animal world, just as much among the creatures which live in the various places and localities on the sea bed as among the so-called pelagic or free-swimming species. The fish are thus driven up from the bottom, and the densely packed shoals, which now find the conditions for life and sustenance more extensive and more equally distributed even at different depths and in several areas, scatter in over the bottom in several directions.

When the millions of capelin and other small species of fish then swim in towards the coast to spawn, the shoals of cod storm in after the precious prey across the most shallow stretches by the shore and into the coves and bays. This period is the busiest time of the fishery. In favourable years the sea then gives so rich a harvest that the work of catching and processing fish can scarcely be handled. Before I left Placentia Bay the capelin had already begun to swarm in to the shore to spawn. They do not just chase in to the shoal waters but they even leap out of the water and up on the beach. In many places they lay densely strewn among the stones on the beach, and the masses of roe were often so piled up at the high-water mark that when I waded through them they reached well over my shoes along whole stretches of the shore. When the cod chase the capelin at this time, the shoals are so dense and enter such shallow areas, that the fishermen lower a seine in the middle of the shoals which they

draw together with ropes so that it forms a tuck net. In this way they sometimes catch up to several hundred quintals (each quintal circa three Norwegian *vaager*) in one haul. But before this rich harvest is converted to a marketable product, problems are often encountered which spoil a good deal of the catch. It should be noted that, when this period of the fishery commences, the summer months have already begun and it is necessary to work with might and main to save the fish from the damaging effects of the summer heat. Despite all efforts to prevent it, this often transforms large quantities of fish to food for the scavengers and fertilizer for the fields. . . .

There have been abundant fisheries at St. Mary's annually since early times, so that the population, not only in the nearest harbours but also far on the north coast of the Avalon Peninsula, put their trust in good luck for the catch there. They do this even though all fishing is capricious, because the outcome is to a large degree determined by circumstances which men cannot take into account as they are not acquainted with them. We cannot overcome the problems when we are confronted with them either. It has even been stated that up to 1,000 vessels gather at St. Mary's from different harbours to fish throughout the summer. The fishing is carried out partly with large so-called "western boats" and partly with smaller open boats which are called whaleboats on account of their shape. The western boats somewhat resemble *Hvaløer* boats in respect of hull shape. They are decked vessels but the deck is nevertheless fitted all over with hatches which lead to the different sections in the hold, some of which are intended for the day's catch while fishing, others for the washed fish, others again for the salt, provisions, etc. There are cabins fore and aft for the crew. These boats have two masts with boomsails and a jib.

I have been fortunate enough to have enriched my collection with a good model of one of these boats complete with fixtures. The model is built to a scale of one inch to the foot. A list of the fixtures is with the model as well as an estimate of the costs of a full-size version of the same boat. On average this type of boat has a capacity of about 200 quintals of salted fish.

The crew of a boat of this size consists of four or five men who work the vessel, fish, and process the catch. They are paid either by share or by wages for the whole fishing season from spring to the end of September (normally a man receives between £20 and £25 for this period as well as his keep). As noted above, the same boats or sloops, if one can call them that, are used for catching the fish, storing both the fish as they are caught and some processed fish, and also for transporting the load home when they come from more distant harbours. The further processing of the fish is carried out in the home harbour by so-called shoremen. These are people who occupy themselves solely with the processing of fish. In addition, the fishermen's own families, wives and children, participate to some extent in this work. The boat, however, returns to the fishing as soon as it is unloaded (generally they make three or four trips from the harbours along the coast of the Avalon during the summer). Only the large boats mentioned above can be used for the early spring fishing as in this period they have to search for the cod far from the coast in areas which can only be frequented by large vessels. The fishermen who come from distant harbours, and thus on account of the longer voyage have to have these large vessels, also carry on fishing in them all through the summer even when smaller boats could be used. But when, however, the cod come nearer to the shore, and so close that they can venture to fish without danger with smaller boats, the majority of the population in the nearby harbours begin their fishing. The smaller so-called whaleboats they use

are sharp-sterned *Tokeipinger*, some equipped with sails and some only oars. The hold in the middle of the boat where the fish is stored is like what I described in a previous letter about the vessels in Fortune Bay and St. John's, boarded at the bottom and either equipped with decks or tarpaulins with which to cover the fish stored in it in order to protect them against sun, rain, damp and fog. Generally, two men work in these boats. They either work as master and servant or co-operate for the entire summer and share the profits of the whole catch when the season is over.

The fishermen at St. Mary's, like those everywhere in Newfoundland, do not generally use any other fishing gear than hand-lines. The tuck nets noted above are only used when the capelin swarm in to the shore and the cod enter the shallows in great numbers. These seines, which have bags or pouches bound by line from which the fish are emptied—always suspended in the sea it should be noted—are very expensive (the large ones even cost up to £100) and can thus only be acquired by merchants and the better-off settlers or by groups of people. They will not attempt to use longlines and I have not even heard cod drift-nets⁹ mentioned among the fishermen here. I will not at the moment comment in any greater detail on the variety and utilization of fishing gear here. I will just note that, as far as I know, our fishermen in Norway are far more advanced in this respect than the Newfoundlanders. Perhaps necessity and a greater uncertainty in our fisheries have taught our fishermen to work out and implement more techniques to gain profit, while the abundance of fish here in Newfoundland has made the fishermen slothful in that respect.

They use partly herrings and partly molluscs here as bait and also capelin and squid when they are plentiful. (As they do not use drift-nets here to catch the cod and the bulk of the fish have to be taken on hooks, the supply of bait is of utmost importance for the fisheries here. I must for the moment pass over this subject which will require a more comprehensive account in the final report on the fisheries here.)

In that period of the fishery that I stayed at St. Mary's the fishermen normally remained at sea for two or three days. They came into the harbour on Wednesdays and Saturdays, processed the fish they had caught and remained ashore on Sunday. They keep Sunday as a day of rest here as in England, although I saw fishermen working on Sunday morning when they had fish left over from Saturday which had not been split. They carry out this part of the processing as soon as possible, and it seems as if they never want to stop working once they have begun until they have the fish in salt. I have, however, never seen Newfoundland fishermen fish on Sundays. On the following Monday they went back out again after having taken fresh bait on board. The fish are kept whole until they come into the harbour, where the fish are split and prepared for salting. The fish are kept in this condition until the boat has a full load, which is then transported home where the washing of the fish, the whole drying process, etc. is carried out by workers there. The fish are consequently at that time left two or three days before they are split or even gutted. The fishermen thought that at this time of the year the fish sustained great damage through this but those I saw, which had lain thus whole for several days, were firm and stiff and did not have the appearance of having spoiled by being stored in this manner. But it should be noted that they had been stored in the closed holds discussed above and, just as I myself presume that this must protect the fish, so also did most of the fishermen there. Even if they did not actually express that opinion, I could conclude from the care with which they and fishermen in general here cover the fish they catch that this practice

must have good consequences.

Without being able to discuss in detail here the importance of splitting and processing the fish as soon as possible, I must nevertheless remark that that method of storing fish should only be used when circumstances, as in the above-mentioned case, do not permit immediate splitting. All the fishermen here who use smaller boats in which they cannot hold more than one day's catch and with which they dare not venture farther out than to be able to return in the evening, always split the day's catch in the evening as soon as they come into harbour. It is quite evident that the fish gain considerably by being split immediately and that they deteriorate the longer they remain whole. How completely the fish processors here also acknowledge this is best understood from the tirelessness and perseverance with which they work night after night during the season to finish this part of the work. Accordingly they value a good splitter in the establishments here and he is well paid. If he is proficient in his trade he splits ____ cod¹⁰ an hour, which evinces a skill which we in Norway cannot easily comprehend when we compare that quantity with what we consider a capable man's day's work in Lofoten. I must here note, with regard to some of the fish processing in our own country, that the extremely beneficial influence and favourable consequences of prompt splitting and processing of the freshly-caught fish are almost completely lost and present a substantial obstacle to the manner in which the whole Lofoten trade is conducted. As far as I know, the fisherman in Norway is only a fisherman in the most restricted sense of the word, in that he catches fish and disposes of it in a fresh state as it comes from the sea to the so-called "Lofotfarere"¹¹ by bartering or selling. Not until the fish is in these merchants' hands does the processing begin. But even if the fisherman sells his catch as soon as possible, the aim is not to speed the processing and hence improve the quality. It is much more determined according to the fisherman's time and convenience and immediate interest. If he decides to speculate he perhaps even waits before selling in order to push up the price. When the deal is concluded the fish have to be counted and accepted by the buyer, which also wastes time. Such arrangements with a fresh natural product of this type must have a questionable effect on the quality of the product whenever they occur and prevent the most prompt processing possible. The circumstances are, however, in our case much more objectionable because the delay in processing occurs just at the time when the fresh product contains organs which are subject to the most rapid deterioration and which thus must have a more or less decomposing effect on the entire product.

The situation in this respect here in Newfoundland is quite different. The fisherman here not only fishes but is himself either the producer of the processed fish as it enters the trade, or is engaged by a merchant for the whole summer and delivers his daily yield, which is immediately processed by the aforementioned shoremen. None of these circumstances in themselves hinder the swiftest possible processing of the fish. It can perhaps be objected that one cannot assume that the fisherman, who has both to fish and process his catch, can carry out the combined tasks as satisfactorily as when these are done by several hired people. To this I must reply that, as far as the Newfoundland fisherman is concerned, his whole existence rests completely on what he can gain in his summer fishing. It not only brings him profit if he delivers good products but it also plunges him into the deepest desperation in the winter if he does not try to satisfy his merchant. The fish he delivers are subject to a strict inspection

and fetch widely differing prices according to quality. I will not for the present discuss the relationship between merchant and fisherman here but just add that the fisherman is under the yoke to the extent that he does not only have to fish but he has to fish well and to deliver good quality fish if he is to support himself the next winter with the cooperation of the merchant. I think that that must be strong enough motivation to force the fisherman to be especially careful with the processing of the fish, just as we can also presume that by frequent practice he must also generally acquire proficiency in the several tasks connected with processing. I must note with regard to the drudgery and the insignificant help the poor fisherman enjoys that there are always two men attached to one boat for the whole summer, whether they are fathers and sons, masters and servants, or friends who go fishing together for the summer. They work thus jointly and each boat's crew process the fish they catch. In addition, the men's families also work with them. Even if the fisherman has been out at sea the whole day, he splits the day's catch in the evening, salts it the same night, and is back out again the following morning. At all places where I have been present during the fishery, both last winter and this spring and summer, they have invariably followed this course in their work.

This translation gives some indication of Stuwitz' interests, concerns and manner of observing. At this point the manuscript continues with a description of his voyage to the Grand Banks fishery.

Notes

¹This essay is part of a larger project to produce a complete edition of Stuwitz' papers and letters. We would like to thank the Research Fund of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Bergen for funding to translate the material contained here. Christopher J. Munday, a graduate student at the University of Bergen, did much of the transcription, and we wish to thank him for his important contribution. Edgar Hovland and Trygve Solhaug, of the University of Bergen and the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration, respectively, rendered valuable assistance. In Newfoundland, we would like to thank James K. Hiller and Michael Harrington for their helpful suggestions.

²Biographical information on Stuwitz can be found in *Norsk Biografisk Leksikon* 15:202-04.

³The mandate for the expedition was set out in a series of proposals to the Storting (National Assembly) and in various resolutions and Orders-in-Council. References to these may be found in the report of the Finans- Handels- og Told Departementet (the Department of Finance, Trade and Customs), printed in *Departements-Tidende*, numbers 16 and 17, 17 and 24 April 1843.

⁴The reconstruction of Stuwitz' journeys in Newfoundland has been derived from the materials listed in the Appendix.

⁵This transcription was made from the Stuwitz *kopibok* in the University of Bergen Library, Ms. 313a. In this source the report on the summer excursion of 1840 ends abruptly in the middle of a description of his voyage to the Grand Banks.

⁶Stuwitz uses the Norwegian word *rokeiping*, which means an ordinary small boat with two pairs of oars.

⁷By *St. Mary's*, Stuwitz usually means Cape St. Mary's. His name for the fishing settlement is *St. Mary's harbour*, below.

⁸Midsummer Eve in Scandinavia is June 23.

⁹Drift-nets were common in the Norwegian fishery. They were used in the inshore fishery in

the Lofoten islands as early as the eighteenth century, and by the 1820s they were, together with longlines, far more common than the older method of fishing with a hook and line. The standard source for information on techniques in the Norwegian fishery is Solhaug.

¹⁰Stuwitz has a blank in the manuscript at this point. Presumably he intended to insert an estimate after verification from other sources, or did not recall the number. But Trygve Solhaug has suggested to us that the comparison Stuwitz intended to make here was inappropriate. Solhaug argues that since in the Lofotens inshore fishermen tended to process fish every evening after returning to shore, their productivity would of necessity be lower than a specialist in Newfoundland. A more reasonable comparison probably would have been with the full-time splitters employed on buyers' boats which sailed from Bergen and Aalesund to the fishing grounds. On average these men could split approximately fifty cod per hour.

¹¹A *Lofotfarer* is a fish merchant who travels to the Lofotens to purchase fish during the fishing season.

Appendix

Certain material relating to the visit of Peter M. Stuwitz to Newfoundland has been located in Norwegian repositories.

In the National Archives, Oslo: Finansdepartementets Kontor D—pakkesaker 1843. One package entitled Peter Stuwitz's sendelse til NyFoundland, reference no. 3A23755. The package contains seventeen dairies numbered as follows:

- 2 September to 17 October St. John's, Newfoundland
- 3 1839 17 October to 6 November
- 4 7 November to 4 December 1839
- 5 5 December to 28 December 1839
- 6 28 December to 17 January
- 7 17 January to 5 February 1840
- 8 5 February to 2 March 1840
- 9 2 March to 29 March 1840
- 10 30 March to 25 May 1840
- 11 26 May to 15 June 1840
- 12 unreadable; may be 1 July to 29 July
- 12b 15 July
- 13 unreadable; may be July 1840
- 14 Mid-September until the arrival at Battle Harbour
- 15 Arrival at Battle Harbour until the arrival at Croque Harbour 3 October to 21 October
- 16 Croque Harbour until arrival at St. John's 6 November
- 17 1841 30 January to 2 April

A folder marked "Stuwitz korrespondanse etc." which contains Stuwitz reisejournal no. 1. (This is probably the diary no. 1 missing in the series above. It covers the period from his departure from Norway to his stay in London and concludes with notes on a visit to Greenwich.)

Innberetninger & brev til Finans- Handels- og Told-Departmentet, etc. (Reports and letters received by the Department of Finance, Trade and Customs. This file contains material, chiefly correspondence, about the preparations for his trip to Newfoundland. It also contains some reports sent to the Department, duplicating in some instances material to be found in Ms. 313a, University of Bergen Library.) In addition to this material the correspondence files of the Department of Finance, Trade and Customs in all probability contain material relating to Stuwitz, both directly (letters to and from Stuwitz) and indirectly (for example correspondence with Mr. Tottie, Swedish-Norwegian Consul General in London). We have not, however, yet undertaken the extensive search that would be necessary to locate this material.

In the Bergen University Library:

Ms. 313a—Peter Stuwitz efterladte Manuskripter. This file contains material relating to the

140 *Nordvik and Fischer*

trip to Newfoundland, including the copybook from which the excerpt above is translated.

Ms. 447—Breve fra Peter Stuwitz i Tiden 1838-1842. This file contains fifty-one letters from Stuwitz to his parents and family in Bergen. The last letter is dated 7 June 1842. This file also contains some letters in connection with his death.

Ms. 918—Kopi af Stuwitz' Beretninger fra Newfoundland og flere Steder fra Aarene 1839 til 1842. Med anmerkning av Fredrik Meltzer. This is a transcript probably based on the reports and diaries in the National Archives, and consists of sixteen pages of manuscript originally of fifty pages (pages 13 to 46 are missing).

References

Departements-Tidende (The Norwegian Government Gazette). Nos. 16 and 17 (17 and 24 Apr 1843).

Norsk Biografisk Leksikon (The Dictionary of Norwegian Biography). Kristiania. 15:202-04. Solhaug, Trygve. *De Norske fiskeriers historie, 1815-1880*. 2 vols. Bergen: Universitetsforlaget, 1976.