

# Mystery #18 Boothbay Harbor Region Fishermen's Cooperative Association



Cod may have been what put us on the map, literally, but by the 1960s lobster was where 90% of fishing income in the region came from. The gentlemen in this photo are a small portion of the 64 founding members of one of the first three lobster co-ops in the state and possibly the country. The original buy-in for the

Boothbay Region Fishermen's Cooperative Association in 1949 was \$10 per share. Most members purchased two shares. In return, they were part of a buying station where they had a vote in the decisions and discounts on fishing-related supplies.

Co-ops help to give lobstermen a voice and help them to negotiate a better price for lobsters. When lobstermen work together to run the wharf, keep expenses down, and pool their lobsters, they can negotiate for a better price. At the end of the year, they share in the wharf's profits in the form of a dividend that is based on the poundage of their catch for that year. Currently, there are no lobster co-ops in the Boothbay region but some wharves will hold back a certain price per pound to pay out at the end of the year as a "bonus."

## Resources:

The Boothbay Harbor Region 1906-1960 by Harold Clifford's

Various clippings and papers from the Boothbay Region Historical Society

Photo Requirements: Include this building in your photo but please stay off the wharf, it is badly in need of repair and is not safe.

**MAP CLUE**

