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Gloucester, Mass.

Capt. Wm. J. Hudder

(half-brother of Capt. Sol Jacobs)

Age 32. Has been fishing ever since he was 9 years old. Has been mackerel fishing for 15 years. Name of vessel, Schooner Rapid Transit of Gloucester.

Went south for mackerel this spring. Used to go south every year for mackerel before the close time law went into effect. Look for mackerel off the coast about latitude

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37, to the north of Cape Henry, about 35 miles off shore. Look for them there about the same time every year. Some years you will find the fish in shore if the winds are to the north, but if you have lots of westerly winds you will find them off shore, in about 25 to 35 fathoms of water. Would expect to meet them there about the 15<sup>th</sup> of March; that would be the

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first. Have been in New York Bay the 16<sup>th</sup> of March with a fare.

The fish when first seen are heading to the north, but when first seen they are laying quiet. Do not see the fish coming in from sea. May see them in the night the first thing, but may see them in the day time if it is fine weather, but if it is stormy you will see them in

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the night. It is about 65 or 75 miles from the gulf stream where we get the fish.

Mackerel have never been seen to the southward of the gulf stream. At least he never heard of it. The farthest south he has seen them is off Cape Hatteras, Body Island. Does not think mackerel cross the gulf stream to winter. May go to the edge of it and stay there

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all winter and feed.

They are generally poor in the spring when they come back.

These early schools go about N.N.E. when they begin to move up the coast, until they get up off the Delaware Breakwater, and then they strike about E.N.E. and go to the southward of Georges to Cape Sable. Never go to the north of Georges. Catch them every year to the southward

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of Georges. Reach Georges about the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> of May. All those fish go on the Cape Shore. Reach there about the 20<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> of May.

About three weeks after this first school another school comes along. This later school go further to the south – come in near Cape Hatteras. They come closer in shore than the others.

The small fish are

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always behind; large fish ahead. First you will see the large fish, and about three weeks afterward see the small ones. About 8 or 10 years ago both of these schools were all large schools, but now come in small schools, about 10 to 30 barrels. The smallest school he ever saw ten years ago contained about 50 barrels. There are so many

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seines and vessels that they make the fish wild, and they get in smaller schools. Find these fish in small schools at the very beginning of the season before they have been followed by the vessels at all.

Have followed the schools right from Cape Henry to Prince Edwards Island. Was following the same school all the time. We would keep ahead

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of the schools, and so we know it was the same schools.

They do not show up on the surface so well when the weather is cold as when it is warm. Mackerel will school whenever they feel like it, but, of course, warm weather is the best for them to school.

That school which touches the shore up Cape Sable, is the first they strike. Some of that early school run

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up by Yarmouth in the Bay of Fundy. They catch fish at Yarmouth before they get them in Cape Cod Bay; sometimes a week before. It is not much colder there than here.

When the fish leave this coast they take the same direction that they do in the spring when they come. Have not followed those fish any farther than Block Island. Has

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not followed them directly from Cape Shore to Block Island. Off Nova Scotia shore in the fall the fish are right in the Bay, about 4 or 5 miles from Halifax. Never saw any fish off on Le Have or the Western Bank. When the fish leave in the fall they go very slow until the last of November, and then they go very lively. Will not see any

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fish on the Cape Shore after the 10<sup>th</sup> of December, but are found as late as that every year. They remain later on that shore than they do here. They remain in schools up there as late as the 10<sup>th</sup> of December. Has seen them off Scatteri as late as the 10<sup>th</sup> Dec. Can tell any other kind of fish from mackerel in the water at night.

Has known mackerel

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to be caught in the winter, but not in any quantity. The men catch them on their hooks. Winter before last one time there was a heavy sea, and there were some mackerel on the deck of the vessel very often. That was about the 5<sup>th</sup> of February. They were washed on our deck by the sea. Has taken mackerel in codfish or haddock a number of times.

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Sometimes find mackerel on the Banks in the winter, if it is not a cold winter.

The movements of the schools are affected sometimes by other fishes. The schools are sometimes driven off the coast. This year the blue fish drove mackerel way down to the Bay of Fundy. Were driven 10 miles from Grand Manan. Horse mackerel also drive them. Shark

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do not drive them. Blue fish are the worst. Dogfish will not drive mackerel.

Frequently find mackerel of different sizes in the same school. Does not think he ever got a school but that there were different sizes. Sometimes get small tinkers about 7 or 8 inches long, with large mackerel, and sometimes will get them 9 or 10 inches – all sizes.

Sometimes

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in the spring when the fish are going to the Cape Shore, the head schools are about all large and uniform. Those are the No. 1s. This early school contains larger fish than the ones that come later. They are always larger. The large fish are always ahead.

The largest mackerel he has ever seen weighed 4 pounds. Does not know the exact length.

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That was caught off Cape May, in 1882, about 35 miles offshore.

The smallest mackerel he ever saw schooling were about three inches. Has seen them in the Gulf of St. Lawrence this summer. Has never seen such small fish on the southern coast. These small fish were about two months old. Were hatched that spring. They get to be about 6 inches by fall.

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Thinks the fish average a little larger this year than they used to. Last year were not so large. Only the Cape Shore fish – the head schools were about the same size. The fish we caught on the shore were better this summer than last. Have more No. 1 fish than we did 10 years ago. Ten years ago were about all No. 2s and 3s. Now about all No. 1s. Get better mackerel

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than we used to.

Mackerel feed upon these little shrimps, we call them, about an inch long. The water is solid full of it sometimes at certain seasons of the year. Most apt to see it in the fall. Saw more in September in Boston Bay this fall than ever saw before. Never see that feed on the Nova Scotia shore or down the Bay. All you see there is this little white

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stuff, about as white as snow. Does not know the name of it. Find that in the North Bay and on the Nova Scotia shore. Find it here in the spring, but not after the warm weather comes. Has taken little lant about 2 inches long out of mackerel when dressing them. Has found them with this red feed lots of times. They are poison then, and they will spoil rapidly. It will

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make your hands sore. Can keep those mackerel just about 12 hours. Might keep them about 10 days on ice. They spoil quicker than those without the red feed in them. It burns them and softens the fish right up. The bones will come out through the meat they are so soft. It will bring the blood right through your hands just in one night's dressing. Does not

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seem to take the skin off, but draws the blood out. Generally get the feed down south; sometimes find it off this coast, but not very often. Never see it off the Cape Shore nor in the North Bay. Get most of that feed in the spring when the fish get up about the Delaware Breakwater, about the 15<sup>th</sup> of May.

Does not notice any particular relation between

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the abundance of mackerel in any given place and the presence of this food. May see large quantities of this food without any fish around. This fall in Boston Bay there was lots of this feed and no fish. You would see the feed all the time whether the fish are there or not, but as a general thing, thinks the fish and feed go together.

Have found mackerel with ripe spawn

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about the last of May, down off Cape North; that is the early fish; not all that way. The large fish get in the Bay as quickly as they can in order to spawn. Has been there the 5<sup>th</sup> of June and found them there then. They get fat shortly after they spawn. Thinks they would find fish with spawn off this coast about the 10<sup>th</sup> of July. None of the fish which they land

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fresh in New York in the spring have spawned. Not much spawn in them at that time. Sometimes take fish in the Bay of Fundy in May with spawn in them. Thinks the fish go close in shore to spawn in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Thinks they spawn right around Prince Edward Island, close inshore. Mackerel spawn in the shallowest water they can get in. Does not

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Know whether they spawn during the day or night. Has seen eggs and milt running from fish when they were caught. Has seen this in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Mackerel seem to get sickly just before they spawn. Sometimes you will get a school about ready to spawn, and you would think they were all paralyzed. They are stupid. Sometimes we throw

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over dynamite cartridges, and that benumbs the fish so we can pick up a good many, but they soon come to – that is the way they are when spawning; rather stupid.

If you get a seine around fish in the spring when on the Cape Shore, you are sure of the fish: no trouble at all to catch them in the spring. It is not the same at the south. I have

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been down there and set 25 times in a day, and not stop a fish. This year had poor luck catching fish in the south spring fishery. Harder to catch south now than ever they were.

When the fish come up after spawning they are very lively, although they are poor.

Has never seen sickly or logy mackerel, but has seen dead mackerel; picked them up off the beach where

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they have drifted ashore. Does not think they were caught in a seine. They were poor. That was off Newfoundland, in Fortune Bay, near English Island.

Sometimes catch mackerel about the coast of Newfoundland. Not many this last two years; a few in White Bay. Has seen thousands in White Bay in years past. Used to use them for bait. Thinks

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they go further north sometimes. Has caught lots of them on cod hooks off Newfoundland.

Does not find half so many mackerel now as when he first went fishing. Just about a quarter as many as 15 years ago when he first went. Could row out 15 years ago and just set around and purse them up and bail them in. The decrease is caused by so many vessels, so

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many seines and so many men catching them. Probably 75 or more vessels go out of Gloucester now. Each vessel has 2 seines and 2 boats.

Thinks if the purse seine were not used at all there would be as many mackerel on the coast as there were 20 years ago. Thinks thousands of bbls. are wasted. There has not been as much waste in recent years.

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Has seen 400 or 500 bbls. turned out of a seine at one time, small fish about 7 inches long. Those fish were dead. They do not die very quickly after being hunted in the seine unless they are jammed up pretty tight. It will be 5 or 6 hours before they die if you give them plenty of slack.

Does not believe much in the purse seine. If the purse seine

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were done away with would get fish with the hook and line; get more than we ever did. Would get just as many fish as we do with the seines. Would not be much trouble to educate the men up to fishing that way. When fishing with hook and line you are throwing over live bait all the time and it keeps the fish around. Could catch 8 to 10 barrels every

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day this fall when fishing with hook and line.

Thinks lots of the mackerel fishermen would be glad if the purse seine were done away with today; that is seiners. Thinks they will get up a law by and by to stop these purse seine. Does not think the people would object much. But thinks they ought to have a few years notice, say about 2 or 3 years. They could

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get rid of all their old stuff in 2 or 3 years.

The only regulation he would suggest would be to do away with the purse seine altogether. If you could not do away with it entirely, does not think the close season would make much difference. The southern fishery never was very profitable. Does not think the close time law was any benefit to the fishery. It did not cover

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The spawning season at all. Thinks if there was a law gotten up to stop purse seiners from catching them, he would put it from the last of May until the 20<sup>th</sup> of July, or would stop the fishing in June and July. But thinks the fishermen as a rule would not approve of such a regulation. Thinks his brother (Sol Jacobs) would go right against that, because

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he is used to the purse seine he could not catch any fish with hook and line; would not get enough to eat. June and July would cover the spawning season. That would apply to the whole coast.

If they prohibited seining in the Gulf of St. Lawrence that would cover the whole business. It would keep it for those who fish with the hand lines, and

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would give the netters a chance.

Thinks the seine has a bad effect on the shore fishery to some extent.

This years his crew shared about \$436.00. That represented about 1300 bbls. All they got in the southern fishery was about 40 bbls. fresh. About \$1500.00. Got 30 cents each for some of them.

He likes the new class of vessels very much – better rough

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weather vessels than the old class, but they draw too much water for some harbors and bays. Has been in the Rapid Transit about a month. Was in the Abbie M. Deering early in the season. Was not in her last years. Was in an old fashioned vessel last year.