

# The Ocean's Hot Dog

## The Development of the Fish Stick

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*“Der Mensch ist, was er isst.”*

—Ludwig Feuerbach<sup>1</sup>

The fish stick—the bane of schoolchildren who generally consider it an overcooked, bread-encrusted, cardboard-tasting, fish-less effort of lunchrooms and mothers to deceive them into consuming protein—is a postwar invention that came into existence as the confluence of several forces of modernity. These forces included a boom in housing construction that contained kitchens with such new appliances as freezers; the seeming appeal of space-age, ready-to-eat foods; the rise of consumer culture; and an increasingly affluent society. Yet the fish stick arose during the 1950s not because consumers cried out for it, and certainly not because schoolchildren demanded it, but because of the need to process and sell tons of fish that were harvested from the ocean, filleted, and frozen in huge, solid blocks. Consumers were not attracted by the form of these frozen fillets, however, and demand for fish products remained low. Manufacturers believed that the fish stick—a breaded, precooked food—would solve the problem. Still, several simultaneous technological advances had to take place before the product could appear.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ludwig Feuerbach, “Der Mensch ist, was er isst” (in essence, “you are what you eat”), quoted in Hans Werner Wüst, *Das Grosse Zitate Lexikon* (Vienna, 2004), 81.

2. On the industrialization of the postwar food industry, see Harvey Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty: A Social History of Eating in Modern America* (New York, 1993), 101–18.

These advances occurred in catching, freezing, processing, and transportation technologies. The postwar years witnessed a rapid increase in the size of merchant marines in many countries, with these merchant fleets adopting new, almost rapacious catching methods and simultaneously installing massive refrigeration and processing facilities onboard huge trawlers. Sailors caught, beheaded, skinned, gutted, filleted, and then plate- or block-froze large quantities of cod, pollock, haddock, and other fish—tens of thousands of pounds—and kept them from spoiling in huge freezing units. Once on shore, the subsequent attempt to separate whole pieces of fish from frozen blocks resulted in mangled, unappetizing chunks. Frozen blocks of fish required a series of processes to transform them into a saleable, palatable product. The fish stick came from fish blocks being band-sawed into rectangles roughly three inches long and one inch wide (~7.5 × 2.5 cm), then breaded and fried. Onboard processors eventually learned to trim fish into fillets and other useable cuts before freezing. Processors considered these other cuts the “portion,” which found a home in institutional kitchens (schools, hospitals, factories, and restaurants). Fish sticks had a largely *retail* success, however, because demand for them in schools and elsewhere waned as more manufacturers entered production and quality declined.

How Gorton’s, based in Gloucester, Massachusetts, entered the fish stick market and achieved a leading position is the story of this essay. Based on corporate archives and industry publications, it focuses on supply-side factors that contributed to the rise of the fish stick as an important icon of U.S. food-product ingenuity. I focus on Gorton’s for two reasons. First, the company was a pioneer in the portion and fish stick industry, has remained at the cutting-edge of product innovations in institutional and home products, and, along with the Birds Eye and Mrs. Paul’s companies, has dominated the fish stick industry in sales from the beginning.<sup>3</sup> And second, I believe the Gorton’s experience with the fish stick is paradigmatic of the industry. Materials from its corporate archives reveal clearly how technology, marketing, and other forces led to the invention of the fish stick. I do not intend this essay to be a paean to Gorton’s; the company was, however, a leader in product development and maintained levels of quality control higher than many other manufacturers.

Consumer demand, consumer attitudes, changes in the postwar American household and family—all of these things also contributed to the success of the fish stick. But its success had more to do with the revolutions in catching, processing, and preparing frozen foods, along with other factors: one was an apparently successful marketing campaign directed at busy housewives; another was the role of the federal government in developing,

3. Birds Eye is now owned by Unilever and sold under the Iglo, Birds Eye, and Findus brands; Gorton’s has been a subsidiary of Nippon Suisan Kaisha, Ltd. since 2001.

promoting, and regulating new food products and in providing markets for them through school lunch programs. University scientists—in the case of Gorton's, those at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)—gave rise to the modern fish stick through research funded jointly by the U.S. government and Gorton's. This research, which was tied to the expansion of supermarkets and the perfection of refrigeration, processing, shipping, and display of products, also fostered the creation of such products as the TV dinner. Gorton's, Birds Eye, and others showed the way with the fish stick, a product made of grade-A fish, light breading, and a few additives.

### The Technology of Freezing, Packing, and Catching

The fish stick grew out of a half century of innovations in food-preservation techniques. Salt and other additives to prolong products' shelf life gave way to canning, refrigeration, and freezing so that unspoiled and wholesome fruit, vegetables, meat, and fish reached the consumer. Several individuals, the most well-known of whom was Clarence Birdseye, contributed to "quick freezing" processes and packaging innovations such as a moisture-proof cellophane wrapping. Quick freezing and other new processes rendered frozen products more palatable to consumers.<sup>4</sup> Early on, government and private researchers focused on freezing vegetables and fruits, not fish.<sup>5</sup> The first attempts to provide consumers with fresh or frozen fish using new refrigeration technologies failed; the fish had refrigeration burns, a tough texture, and they often smelled, and gills, stomach contents, and slimy skin frequently incubated bacterial infections. Refrigeration only retarded spoilage and had to be accomplished as quickly as possible after the fish were caught and cleaned—storing them on ice was not enough. Scientists therefore sought to combine refrigeration and freezing with various chemical dips. They experimented with mild antiseptics that were considered harmless to humans but killed fish bacteria, and poisons such as chlorine were even added to the ice itself. Soaking in brine with other chemicals was another possibility, although this led to the deterioration in appearance of the fish. Such antioxidants as ascorbic acid applied in glazes and additives were also effective in preventing oxidative rancidity (spoilage) of fish during storage. As in other areas of industrial food pro-

4. "Dinner, Frozen or Dried," *Newsweek*, 19 November 1945, 72–74; Don Wharton, "Birdseye Also Means Man," *Reader's Digest*, December 1946, 71–74; and Levenstein, 106–7. By 1926, Clarence Birdseye had established a twenty-ton quick-freeze operation in Gloucester that produced a crude form of the fish block, which was later to become the "ore" of the fish stick industry.

5. "Drip Control in Frozen Fish," *Food Industries* 13 (1941): 100; J. Perry Lane, "Time-Temperature Tolerance of Frozen Seafoods," *Food Technology* 18 (1964): 156–62; and "The 'Multiplier Effect' of Frozen Food Technology on American Life," *Food Technology* 15 (1961): 14–24.

duction, fishery specialists explored the use of antibiotics to deal with spoilage—though this was no panacea because failure to ice the fish promptly and properly after they were caught seriously interfered with antibiotics' effectiveness.<sup>6</sup>

Freezing technology is relatively simple: fans blow cold air over banks of finned coils, and this air freezes the products passing near the coils, often on conveyor belts in large assembly line–like facilities. Yet this freezer design had several negative features relative to fish processing. Air circulation in freezers, combined with a slight drop in vapor pressure when water from the fish condensed on the coils, accelerated fishes' dehydration. Researchers determined that a critical velocity of the dry, cold air existed, above which the fish were damaged: the higher the air temperature, the lower the air velocity needed to cause damage.<sup>7</sup> Researchers also established that freezing started in intercellular regions where salt concentration was the lowest, which resulted in intercellular fluids becoming more concentrated than fluids within cells. Water then left cells through osmosis, especially during extremely slow freezing; this "drip" (or dehydration) resulted in dry, tasteless meats, vegetables, and fish of low nutritional value and that often had an "off taste." Quick freezing overcame this problem partly because only small ice crystals formed in the fish, thus allowing the cells to remain intact.<sup>8</sup>

Like other agricultural- and food-industry technological changes, refrigeration and freezing ended the seasonality of many products. This enabled the food industry to meet the demand for fish and other products during winter months when supplies were at their lowest.<sup>9</sup> But, for many reasons, the time was not yet right for such "heat and eat" products: during the Great Depression, high unemployment and low incomes discouraged development of new food products; limited trawling and refrigeration capacity prevented the economical production, distribution, and sale of frozen seafood products; packaging was unattractive; and last, many of the

6. Louis Berube, "Modern Practice of Fish by Cold," *Food Industries* 9 (1937): 645; J. C. Bauernfeind, E. G. Smith, and G. F. Siemers, "Commercial Processing of Frozen Fish with Ascorbic Acid," *Food Technology* 5 (1951): 254–60; "Drip Control in Frozen Fish"; and D. D. Gillespie, J. W. Boyd, H. M. Bissett, and H. L. A. Tarr, "Ices Containing Chlorotetracycline in Experimental Fish Preservation," *Food Technology* 9 (1955): 296–300.

7. F. W. Knowles, "How Foods Are Frozen in the Northwest," *Food Industries* 12 (1940): 54–56, and "Reduces Drying in Air Blast Freezing," *Food Industries* 13 (1941): 92–93.

8. Gerald Fitzgerald, "Why You Freeze It That Way," *Food Industries* 22 (1950): 73–77. Another way to limit drip had nothing to do with additives. Chemists at the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries determined that the excess cutting of fish caused millions of cells to rupture, thus exposing their contents to the atmosphere. See Frederick King, "Cell Damage from Excess Cutting of Fish Adversely Affects Frozen Seafood Quality," *Quick Frozen Foods* (1962): 115–16.

9. Ivan Miller, "Quick Freezing Thaws Frozen Channels of Distribution," *Food Industries* 10 (1938): 199, 202.

products simply did not catch on. For example, the fishing industry tried marketing “fishbricks,” which were quick-frozen filleted fish packaged like blocks of ice cream. The main selling point was that “the housewife can cut the fish into any shape and be confident that the shape will be retained even after cooking”; no defrosting was necessary. But the First National and Kroger’s grocery stores could hardly sell the product, and moreover, most stores lacked frozen-food display cases to accommodate the bricks.<sup>10</sup>

The market began to change when General Foods, using the Birds Eye trademark, fostered the development of freezer cabinets in grocery stores.<sup>11</sup> Birdseye had first marketed his quick-frozen foods in 1930 in Springfield, Massachusetts, and thereafter hundreds of food processors moved quickly into the frozen-food industry and introduced thousands of products. On the basis of Birds Eye’s technology, Thompson Spa introduced main-course dinners in 1938; Mrs. Paul’s and Timeliness joined in, as did Swift and Sara Lee with such ready-to-heat foods as potpies. By 1945, there were 450 quick-freezing firms selling 600 million pounds of frozen foods through 40,000 retail outlets. War rationing of canned goods for the armed forces led even more customers to frozen foods. Supermarkets expanded their freezer display cases to meet this rising demand.<sup>12</sup>

The fish stick also prospered from changes in catch and transport technologies. Increases in the size and speed of trawlers and their rapid handling of products resolved the problems of freshness and economy. Small boats that stayed close to shore gave way to large, powerful vessels that might trawl for days at a time, often working in groups that sold ever larger catches to canning and other processing factories along the coasts. Nets made of durable and flexible materials (eventually plastics) made it possible to catch almost indiscriminately, and increasingly powerful winches hauled in nets bursting with sea life. Oceanographic data on water chemistry, currents, and fish populations and migration behavior enabled captains to find schools of fish more easily. Ultimately, such military innovations as sonar made it possible to locate potential catches with little delay.

A crucial innovation for the fish stick was the construction of vessels with huge capacities for refrigeration and freezing. After World War II, the nations of the North Atlantic launched floating factories and trawlers that froze catches at sea. New trawlers had storage capacities of 15,000 tons and more. Trawlers often worked in pairs, pulling nylon nets that were kilometers in length, hauling in the fish living on or near the bottom and pelagic fish (those that live in the open seas), and freezing them according to size, species, and other criteria.

International competition contributed toward the taking of massive

10. “Fishbricks for Fastidious Housewives,” *BusinessWeek*, 12 July 1947, 64.

11. Francis Schuler, “The Papal Decree, Kennedy Round Present Fish Sticks, Portions with Challenge,” *Quick Frozen Foods*, 1968, 152, 188–89.

12. “Dinner, Frozen or Dried” (n. 4 above), 72–74, and Wharton (n. 4 above), 71–74.

catches and over-fishing by the new trawlers and so-called floating factories, the fleets of many North Atlantic countries seeking out cod, haddock, and other fish. Most governments subsidized their fleets; for example, the Canadian government subsidized modern refrigeration plants and trawlers to provide steady employment for coastal fishermen in the maritime provinces.<sup>13</sup> Its support extended to Quebec province in the construction of a modern freezer and filleting plant at Grindstone on the Magdalen Islands, which supplied Gorton's with much of its catch. While the U.S. government belatedly got into the act of subsidizing trawler manufacture in the late 1960s,<sup>14</sup> by then fleets of trawlers had already depleted nearby fishing grounds such as Georges Bank off the New England coast. To ensure a steady supply of fish, Gorton's was forced to enter world markets with its own and also contracted vessels; to this day, Gorton's contracts with the Polish Distant Water Fleet.<sup>15</sup> The numerous fleets thereby contributed to the phenomenon of the "tragedy of the common":<sup>16</sup> rapacious over-fishing of a resource lest other ships or nations do so first.

The transportation of fresh or frozen goods also underwent rapid change on land, thereby enabling food processors to distribute throughout the country. These changes included new railway refrigeration cars, called "reefers,"<sup>17</sup> and large refrigerated trucks.<sup>18</sup> With the expansion of the federal highway system during the 1950s, trade associations of semi-trailer manufacturers joined the U.S. Department of Agriculture and National Bureau of Standards in examining refrigerated trailer performance in long and short runs with the goal of designing loading docks to minimize temperature changes and to keep labor costs down.<sup>19</sup> Still, the distribution of frozen foods remained a weak link in quality control; as late as 1966, J. Perry Lane of the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries' technological laboratory in Gloucester reported that most commercial refrigerated trucks failed to maintain proper temperatures.<sup>20</sup>

Another technology important to the fish stick was the supermarket

13. Miriam Wright, *A Fishery for Modern Times* (Oxford, 2001).

14. "Two New Freezer Factory Ships May Put U.S. Back into the Fish Industry Race," *Quick Frozen Foods*, September 1968, 97–98. On the economic, environmental, and social costs of the modern trawling industry in the North Atlantic, see Michael Harris, *Lament for an Ocean* (Toronto, 1998); Mark Kurlansky, *Cod: A Biography of the Fish That Changed the World* (New York, 1997); William Warner, *Distant Water: The Fate of the North Atlantic Fisherman* (Boston, 1983); and David Dobbs, *The Great Gulf: Fishermen, Scientists, and the Struggle to Revive the World's Greatest Fishery* (Washington, D.C., 2000).

15. E. Robert Kinney, personal communication, 20 October 2003; see also "Better Seafood Possible with New Fishing Boat," *Science News Letter*, 5 December 1953, 359.

16. Garrett Harden, "The Tragedy of the Commons," *Science* 162 (1968): 1243–48.

17. "Progress in Freezer Rail-Transportation," *Food Industries* 10 (1938): 62.

18. "Fresh and Frozen on the Same Delivery," *Food Industries* 17 (1945): 86–87.

19. "The 'Multiplier Effect'" (n. 5 above), 14–24.

20. Lane (n. 5 above), 197–201.

itself. The first U.S. supermarkets opened during the 1930s. Consumers flocked to them, although the Depression delayed further expansion until the postwar years, when they became a central feature of life.<sup>21</sup> During the period 1948 to 1963, large chains increased their share of the nation's grocery business from 35 to almost 50 percent. Managers installed high-capacity refrigerated display cases for the myriad frozen and other processed-food products.<sup>22</sup> In 1960, the Food Fair supermarket chain excitedly publicized the opening of its "completely mechanized, modern seafood distribution center" in Philadelphia at a cost of \$100 million, the center being capable of shipping more than a million pounds of frozen and fresh North Atlantic seafood weekly.<sup>23</sup>

Gorton's and other frozen-fish companies embraced these changes in catching, processing, refrigerating, freezing, and transporting during a time of rapid social, demographic, economic, and lifestyle changes in the United States that helped shape consumer demand and create a market for such convenience foods as the fish stick. During World War II, when women went to work in industry to replace men who had gone off to war, "convenience cooking" found an immediate market. Rosie the Riveter could work all day and still cook for her family at night using ready-to-eat items. A booming postwar economy and a rapidly growing population increased demand for new food products. The GI Bill of Rights contributed to upward mobility through educational and training opportunities for millions of demobilized soldiers. Spurred by federal subsidies and tax laws, a housing boom giving rise to suburban lifestyles followed. Real income rose steadily and Americans spent a higher percentage of it on food. The food- and kitchen-appliance manufacturers jumped on the mass-market bandwagon to help satisfy the demand for filling these new homes. In 1952, when the population totaled 152 million, only four million families, mostly farm-based, had freezers; by 1960, this number had quadrupled. The boom in housing permitted the design of kitchens large enough to accommodate freezer and refrigerator-freezer units.<sup>24</sup>

In this environment, food processors sought to convert new techniques

21. Max Zimmerman, *The Super Market* (New York, 1955); Ralph Cassady, *Competition and Price Making in Food Retailing* (New York, 1962); and Edward Brand, *Modern Supermarket Operation* (New York, 1963).

22. Levenstein (n. 2 above), 113–14. The supermarket held a central place not only at home, but also in the ideology of cold war competition. The supermarket display case figured prominently in U.S. exhibitions at international trade fairs, as it did in the public sparring between Vice President Richard Nixon and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev in a debate in an American kitchen at a Moscow exhibition in July 1959. See also Ruth Oldenziel and Karin Zachmann, eds., *Kitchen Politics: Americanization, Technological Transfer, and the Reconstruction of Europe* (forthcoming).

23. "Food Fair's Seafood Distribution Center Stresses Frozen," *Quick Frozen Foods*, June 1960, 86, 107.

24. Levenstein, 101–6.



and products that grew out of military rations and meals into a “peacetime market for wartime foods,” with a focus on “pre-cooked” products.<sup>25</sup> To promote these new products, processors promulgated a strategy of mass marketing, new menus and recipes, and new products, including the fish stick. These foods and meals built upon a tradition of scientifically based recipes in the name of public health and efficiency that originated in university home-economics departments and Department of Agriculture extension services. When Quaker State Foods introduced its unfortunately named “One-Eye Eskimo” label of frozen meals in 1952, consumer response was underwhelming. Although soon thereafter Swanson made a hit with TV dinners, frozen foods were not yet a “housewife’s dream.” Initially, producers successfully marketed only frozen orange juice. As Laura Shapiro points out, while by 1954 the annual consumption of frozen foods had risen from seventeen to thirty-six pounds per capita, 80 percent of it was purchased by only 3 percent of the population.<sup>26</sup>

Still, the Birds Eye product line of General Foods introduced fish sticks to national fanfare on 2 October 1953. A newspaper article even claimed that this was “the most outstanding event” in seafood since the early 1930s. Fish sticks signaled the modern era of easy-to-prepare, nutritious foods. This shift toward precooked foods, and sea foods in particular, represented “the first big improvement in the use of raw food materials since the early days of the introduction of quick freezing.” Developed at Birds Eye’s seafood laboratories in Boston over a three-year period, fish sticks’ time-saving quality was its greatest attribute: “No actual cooking is required,” its promoters proudly announced. Just as important, the fish stick would “help increase the per capita consumption of fish.”<sup>27</sup> Nearly simultaneously, other manufacturers such as Gorton’s entered the fish stick business.

### The Gorton’s of Gloucester Corporation

Gorton’s predecessor was established in 1906, when four fishing companies were consolidated as Gorton-Pew Fisheries Company, a firm with nearly forty vessels. Gorton-Pew grew to a thousand employees on land and an equal number at sea, with some fifty-five vessels, fifteen wharves, and thirty-five buildings. The company survived the Depression and gained business during World War II. Sales slumped after the war, however, when the demand for fish declined as meat suppliers switched from the military to the domestic market. Innovations in catching, freezing, and processing fish offered great promise only if the processors could survive the shakeout and create consumer demand. Gorton’s overcame several rather lean years

25. Schuler, “The Papal Decree” (n. 11 above), 152, 188–89.

26. Laura Shapiro, *Something from the Oven* (New York, 2004), 8–22, 24–27.

27. “New Product Seen Spurring Fish Use,” *New York Times*, 3 October 1953.



to become a leader in fish sticks and several other fish products. How it did so illuminates the challenges facing fish processors during the postwar years, when new, scientifically tested products had to be developed, new regulatory pressures had to be met, and new foods had to be marketed in the changing retail setting of the supermarket.

In 1942, E. Robert Kinney of Pittsfield, Maine, a small town near Bangor, met Paul Jacobs of Boston. Jacobs worked for the New England Development Corporation, a Lincoln Filene-Cabot investment firm that sought to assist struggling New England industries. A history major at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, Kinney had intended to become a high school teacher, but preferring business to education, he left graduate school at Harvard in 1942 and moved to Bar Harbor, Maine. There he founded the North Atlantic Packing Company, a crab-canning business, and as its president and treasurer turned the struggling operation into a firm that grossed \$2 million annually in 1952. He joined Gorton's in 1953 as president, where he oversaw a sevenfold increase in sales. General Mills bought Gorton's in 1968, and Kinney became that company's president in 1973.<sup>28</sup>

Kinney, who knew firsthand the economic challenges facing Maine's coastal fishing towns, interested Jacobs in supporting North Atlantic Packing. Shortly after buying into the company and becoming its president, he expanded its product line into areas such as cat food made from fish by-products. North Atlantic Packing next marketed "Bar Harbor Ready-to-Fry" fishcakes in competition with Gorton-Pew. This led to legal disputes over copyright infringement on the use of "ready-to-fry," which Gorton-Pew claimed as its own. But representatives of the two companies soon recognized that it was better to combine forces; eventually, Gorton's president McGeorge Bundy, who was later an adviser to President John Kennedy and then head of the Ford Foundation, invited Jacobs to join the company's management.

Jacobs joined Gorton's during a difficult time: sales had declined, and 1953 marked the first time in twenty years that it had sustained a loss. (Things were not so bad as they had been in 1923, however, when Gorton-Pew Fisheries nearly went bankrupt after Benito Mussolini's government confiscated a huge cargo of cod.) Jacobs worked as director of advertising and promotion to regain appeal for the Gorton label, and he even convinced *Parents* magazine to award fish sticks its seal of approval. Perhaps because of new leadership or rekindled interest in fish products or successful advertising, by 1955 sales had shot up 27 percent. Jacobs placed salesmen in the East, Midwest, Southwest, and on the Pacific Coast to market Gorton's products. While producers initially had trouble convincing supermarkets to expand freezer display-case capacity to carry frozen products, Kinney and others

28. "E. Robert Kinney, former General Mills CEO '39 repaying 'debt' to Bates," <http://www.bates.edu/alumni-kinney.xml> (accessed 20 August 2007).

eventually succeeded in placing fish sticks and other ready-to-serve items in such grocery outlets as A&P, D'Agostino, Diamond K, Food Fair, and Star.

Like other producers, Gorton's devoted great attention to advertising, packaging, and display to generate consumer interest in fish sticks. The advertising firm of Petley, Clark, and Johnston investigated Birds Eye's fish stick advertising and in October 1953 recommended that Gorton's embark on a national campaign, the firm's president, G. E. Petley, sending Jacobs a series of newspaper and magazine clippings to underscore its potential.<sup>29</sup> Welles Sellow, a Gorton's vice president, followed with a memorandum to all brokers on "heat and eat" seafood, especially fish sticks, pointing out their convenience, quality, and great taste: "This is a new item—the potential for this product is *terrific*."<sup>30</sup> Manufacturers of fish sticks stressed their wholesomeness, modernity, and time-saving qualities: the "harried housewife" could "heat and eat" fish sticks, which were nutritious, based on scientific standards, and used only such wholesome ingredients as potatoes, salt cod, shortening, and meal. Jacobs likened the success of fish sticks for the fishing industry to that of "frozen juice . . . to the citrus industry." There was "seemingly no limit to the potential market" for fish sticks.<sup>31</sup>

Researchers, engineers, package designers, and salesmen were involved in the development of this new product. Jacobs glorified it in his standard stump speech, "The Fabulous Fish Stick Story," which he delivered during the early 1950s to business, community, and other groups. He called the fish stick a "tribute to the ingenuity of the American business man" and praised the product's uniformity and simplicity. The consumer had only to open the package, heat the contents, and serve. While cod and canning had a long tradition in New England, canned fish had never duplicated the flavor and appeal of fresh fish. Birds Eye's quick freezing allowed frozen fillets to be shipped anywhere and maintain their fresh taste. Jacobs observed that the fish industry thrived during the Depression because fish products were economical in cost, and it continued to grow during World War II when meat was in short supply. But as meat rebounded during the postwar period, it threatened to win the "battle of proteins." Modern boats, electronic location devices, better, more efficient trawling equipment, and new methods to cut and process, skin, and fillet permitted increased output, but these could not create consumer demand.<sup>32</sup> That job was up to the fish-product industry.

To engender "a positive response in most people's minds," Jacobs promoted an extensive advertising campaign to educate consumers about how fish had as much protein as meat and was easier to digest. He admitted the

29. G. E. Petley to Paul M. Jacobs, Gorton-Pew Fisheries Co., Ltd., 9 October 1953, Gorton's Corporate Archives (hereafter GCA).

30. Welles Sellow, memorandum, 3 July 1953, GCA (emphasis in original).

31. Director of Sales Promotion Paul Jacobs, memorandum, 1 December 1953, GCA.

32. Paul Jacobs, "The Fabulous Fish Stick Story," typescript (c. 1952), GCA.



















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