



The Lobster Gangs of Maine

James M. Acheson

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Winner of the American Association for State and Local History Award of Merit. (1988)

James Acheson's detailed account of lobstering in Maine quickly dispels notions that the lobstermen is the eastern version of the cowboy, struggling alone for survival against the elements. In reality, he writes, "the lobster fisherman is caught up in a thick and complex web of social relationships. Survival in the industry depends as much on the ability to manipulate social relationships as on technical skills." Acheson replaces our romantic image of the lobsterman with descriptions of the highly territorial and hierarchical "harbor gangs," daily and annual cycles of lobstering, intricacies of marketing the catch, and the challenge of managing a communal resource.

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