

**EARLY FISHING** We must now turn to the history of the fishing in these waters. In the early days fish were here in great abundance, the most common varieties being whitefish, sturgeon, salmon-trout, and herring. The Indians fished mostly in Smokehouse Channel, Indian Channel, and the Gut, and smoked their fish at the Island called Smokehouse.

**CAPTAIN MACGREGOR** After the Indians came the whites. The great pioneer fisherman of the Islands was the famous Captain Alexander MacGregor who was the first to turn the fishing here into a commercial enterprise. He was a Scotchman, belonging to Goderich, a man of sturdy rugged character, and an able seaman and fisher. He sailed and fished among the Saugeen Islands during the twenties of last century, and took up his headquarters on the island which he called his Main-Station. Here he built a large stone house now generally known as the Old Fort, on account of its tremendous walls and narrow windows. The date of its erection is somewhat uncertain. Norman Robertson in his interesting volume, *History of the County of Bruce*, gives the date as about 1834, and yet it is on record that "Larry" Bellmore the old fisherman of this region said he visited the building in 1830, and judged it then to be two or three years old, making the date thus about 1827. Whatever may be the date, Captain MacGregor and his men lived here for a considerable number of years, and caught great quantities of fish, mainly whitefish and herring, which they shipped mostly to Detroit. The Captain had a contract with a Detroit firm to ship them 3000 barrels or more yearly, for which he was to receive one dollar per barrel. It is said that he traded also with Toledo and several ports on Lake Huron and the Rivers. Associated with Captain MacGregor, in the fish trade, was his son Murray. Like his father he spoke four languages, as occasion required,—Gaelic, English, French, and Ojibway. In A. M. Stephen's "Early Days of Owen Sound," it is recorded that in the spring of 1843, "Captain Alexander McGregor and his son Murray bought a sailing vessel of fifteen ton burden called *The Fly*, from Mr. W. C. Boyd in Owen Sound" (on Georgian Bay). This was doubtless one of those vessels used for trading between Main-Station and Detroit.

But evil days came to the Captain and his crew. Until the late forties no fishing licenses had

