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Introduction

German-Icelandic Fisheries History: Aspects of the Development since 1945

Scientific Symposium Accompanying the Opening Ceremony of the Fisheries Memorial in Vík
(Reykjavík, Sept. 14th, 2002: Proceedings)

For the majority of the era of German deep-sea trawling, the grounds off Iceland were one of the main fishing regions for German trawlers. After a period of exploitation and the development of suitable fishing techniques at the end of the 19th century, a stable time of successful fishing extended through the first half of the 20th century. The second half of the 20th century was dominated by conflicts on the fishing limits – the so called cod-wars –, the decrease of German fishing activities in the Icelandic region, and the development of Icelandic fish-export to foreign markets like Germany.

This period was the special focus of a scientific symposium organised by the German Maritime Museum in cooperation with the Icelandic Centre for Fisheries History Research and accompanying the opening ceremony of the fisheries memorial in Vík í Mýrdal on Sept. 15th, 2002.

The three papers published in the following were held at this symposium by contemporary witnesses to the events as well as by professional historians and covered both the conflicts on fishing limits – including a comparative view on the British-Icelandic conflicts – and the establishment of the fish trade between Iceland and Germany. To complete the picture, a fourth article is included in this edition, providing a brief overview of the fisheries memorial in Vík í Mýrdal.

The symposium took place with the kind support of the Förderverein Deutsches Schifffahrtsmuseum e.V., the Goethe-Zentrum in Reykjavík, and the German Embassy in Iceland.