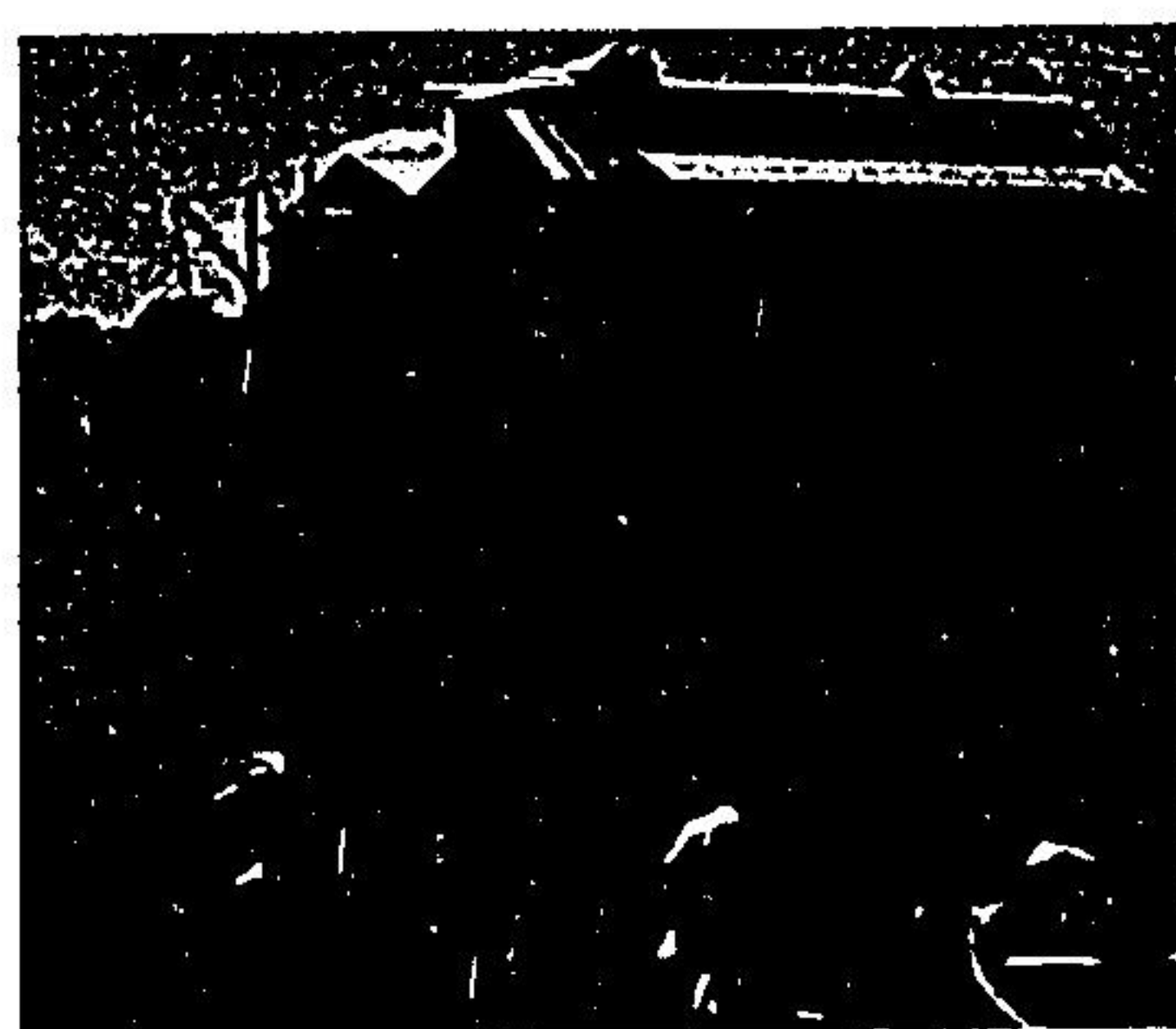
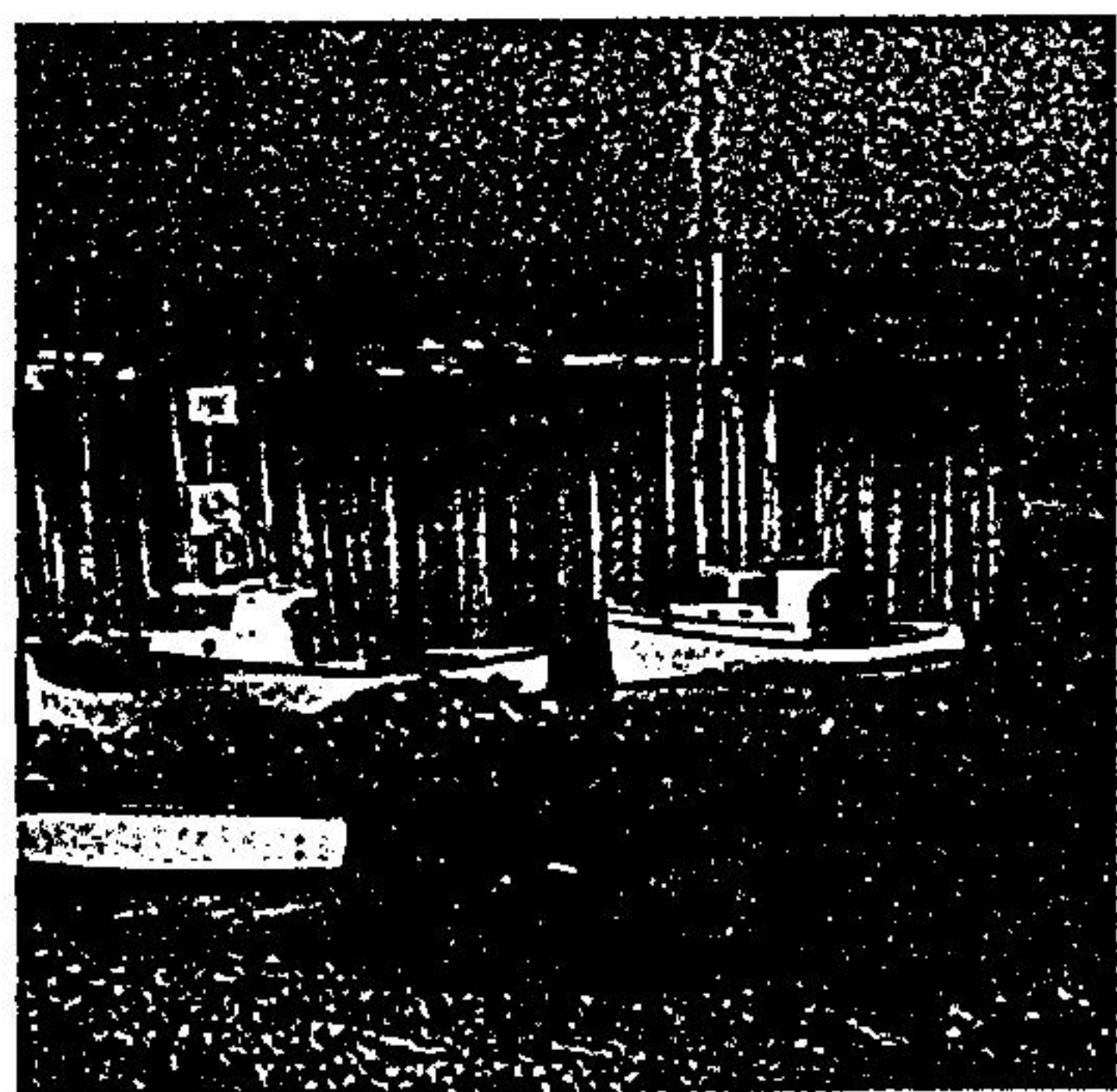
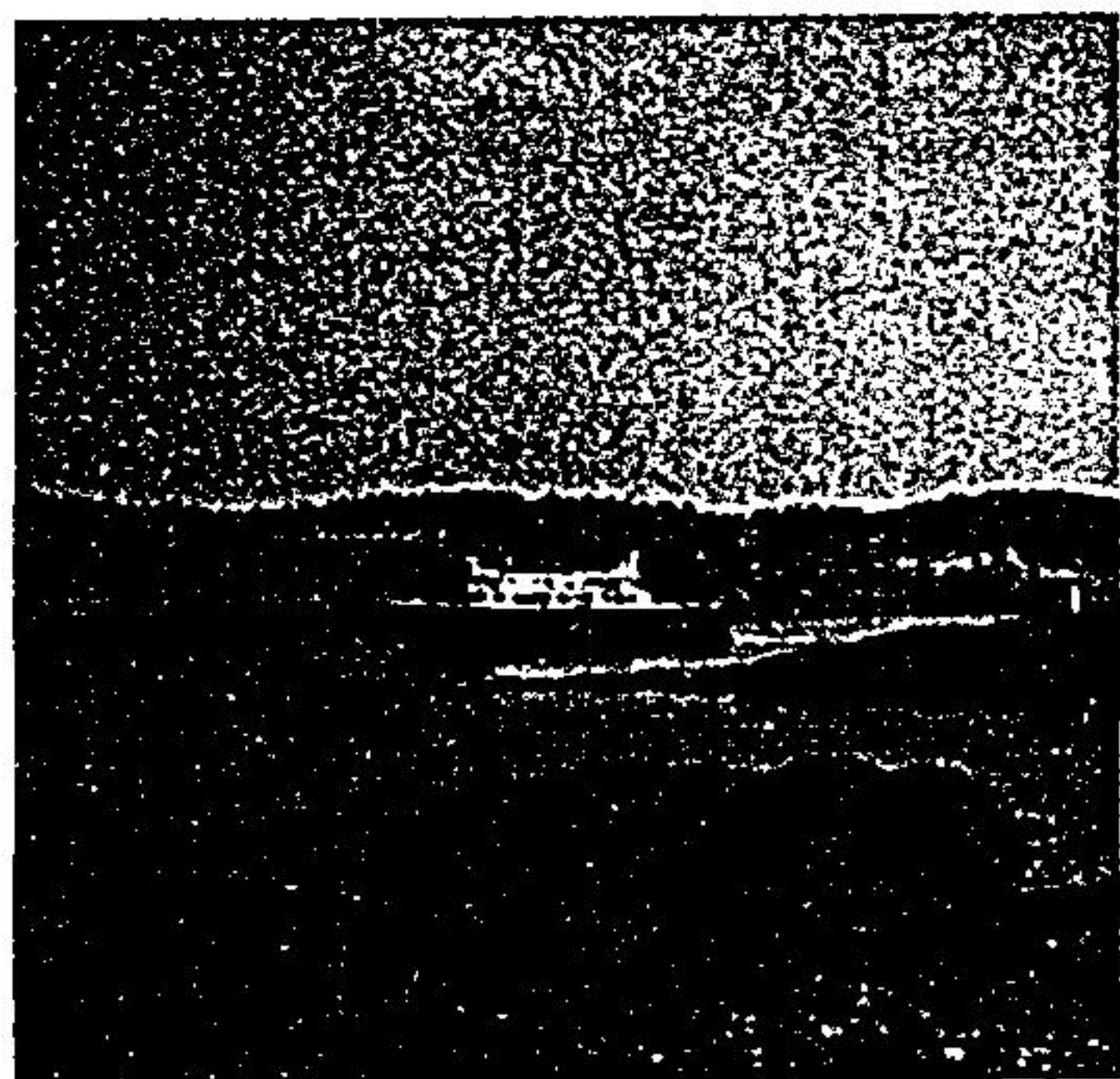




NEW BRUNSWICK



Get away to Grand Manan

by Claude Lemieux

Grand Manan, a 32-km (20-mile) ferry ride from the mainland, is the largest (24 km or 15 miles long) and most remote of the Fundy Isles. Its sister islands are Campobello, which can be reached by the Roosevelt International Bridge, and Deer, a 6.5 km (four miles) ferry ride from the coast. Commercial fishing is the chief industry on Grand Manan with lobster, herring, scallops and clams the main catches. The weather is pleasant, never too hot, and the early morning mist usually lifts by the time you've had your breakfast. There's no ragweed or poison ivy. It's an ideal family vacation spot. Modest but adequate accommodation and camping spaces are available.

The people of Grand Manan are friendly. They greet one another constantly, wave at strangers and even pretty young girls smile recklessly at middle-aged mainlanders. If you're not careful you may be contaminated by all this friendliness and perhaps even lose your big-city mask. Because local residents realize the quality of life they enjoy on their peaceful island could be spoiled by an influx of tourists, the lack of ultra-modern accommodation and limited ferry service might be viewed as a deliberate conspiracy against visitors. Not so. It's an unplanned but welcome conservation measure. The very lack of crowds, plus unquestionable natural beauty are what make Grand Manan particularly charming to those who do visit.

The 2,000 inhabitants of the island live mainly in eight small villages, all situated along the east coast except one. North Head is the most important because it is the ferry

terminal. The harbor is navigable at all times and there is adequate accommodation near the ferry. Grand Manan Airfield, near North Head, can receive light airplanes but there is no scheduled air service and the island has no car rental agencies.

Sunsets can be admired from almost anywhere on the island but the view from the "Whistle" at Long Eddy Point is beyond comparison. This scenic look-out at the northern tip of Grand Manan is accessible by car. The next village, along the paved highway that runs almost the entire length of the island, is Castalia. It has the only beer and liquor store on Grand Manan.

Dark Harbour is the only inhabited place on the west coast of the island. It's the centre of the island's dulse (an edible seaweed) industry and during the warm season pickers live in small huts precariously resting on a wind-swept sand bar. The Dark Harbour dulse, picked at low tide and dried on the beach, is reputed to be the best in the world. It is sold in Canada and the United States as a snack similar to potato chips.

Grand Harbour is a good place for buying island craftwork and souvenirs. It is close to the "Thoroughfare," a narrow strip of water between Grand Manan and Ross Island, site of the first permanent settlement in the island group in 1784. White Head Island is an island of special geological interest. The ferry from Ingall's Head Village to White Head makes three trips daily and boats can be chartered at Ingall's Head for trips to the islands of Kent, Sheep and Hay, known as the Three Islands. Among birds that can be admired on Grand Manan and its offshore islands are herring gulls, common eiders, black guillemots, razor bills, shearwaters, greater black-backed gulls, gannets and several other species. There's a tent and trailer park known as The Anchorage 4.8 kms (three miles) south of Grand Harbour. It is run by the province of New Brunswick and is about 1.6 km (one mile) from the main highway. To many visitors, Seal Cove is the prettiest village on Grand Manan. The numerous and colorful smoke houses beg the motorist to stop and have a look. Millions of herrings are smoked here each year in fish processing plants.