

## *Trawlers Coaling, Boulogne, n.d.*

**Walter Elmer Schofield, 1867 – 1944**

oil on canvas

H. 30 x W. 36

Courtesy James A. Michener Art Museum  
archives



### **Biography**

The painting *Trawler's Coaling, Boulogne*, was made by Walter Elmer Schofield. He is an American painter who was born on September 10, 1867 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Walter Elmer Schofield was a landscape painter associated with the Pennsylvania Impressionists. Schofield specialized in snow scenes, painted in Bucks County and other locales in the Delaware River Valley, as well as marine landscapes often painted in Cornwall, England. A strapping outdoorsman who stood 6'4", Schofield usually painted outdoors, en plein air. He loved even the bitterest winter weather.

Schofield once said, "The landscape painter is of necessity, an outdoors man ... For vitality and convincing quality only come to the man who serves, not in the studio, but out in the open where even the things he fights against strengthen him, because you see, nature is always vital, even in her implicit moods and never denies a vision to the real lover."

Walter Schofield's early landscapes were soft and romantic, featuring muted greens, grays, and browns. You could say his paintings all used the same tones of each color. That means there wasn't a lot of contrast between the colors in his paintings. When he got older his style began to change. The colors in his later paintings are bright and energetic. He started to show bold colors, and broad, thick, heavy brushstrokes. The way he used thick paint and active brushstrokes help make his landscapes come alive. Notice how in *Trawler's Coaling, Boulogne*, the water looks like it is splashing, and the steam appears to be blowing across the harbor. Where else in this painting can you see his brushstrokes? What effect do the brushstrokes have on the painting?

Schofield lived in the United States, where he was based in the Philadelphia area, and Cornwall, in England, where his wife Muriel and their children resided. He most likely painted *Trawler's Coaling, Boulogne*, while on a visit to Europe, because Boulogne is in France, not too far across the English Channel from Cornwall, England.



Schofield descended from an extremely creative family; his mother, Mary Wollstonecraft Schofield, was the grand-niece of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, the author of *Frankenstein*.

Walter Elmer Schofield died on March 10, 1944 in Cornwall, England.

**This harbor looks really busy. Is there a war going on?**

Actually, many wars took place during Walter Schofield's lifetime, and the boats in this picture are doing something needed to help steamships during times of war. These boats are coaling.

A coaling boat is a boat made especially for gathering and delivering the coal used to power steamships in the 1800's and early 1900's. Some of the steamships were used for battle, but most of them were used for trade.

The British Empire in modern times was based on naval power. They had many military ships that traveled on oceans surrounding the United States, Spain, Germany and even as far away as the Philippines and South Africa. Their ships were fueled by coal, so Britain had to establish places throughout the world where they could obtain coal to fuel all their ships. This meant they had to be friendly with many different port cities, as well as have safe sea routes through which their military ships could travel.

In addition, trade between East and West became very active in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century (1800's). China, Japan and India had many products that were of interest to people in Europe. China provided delicious tea and beautiful silk. India had indigo, jute, rice, cotton and opium. In the middle of the century, gold was discovered in California, and wool, sugar and coffee were being grown in Australia, Ceylon and South Africa. At the end of the century, refrigeration was invented, and it then became possible to transport beef, lamb, butter and fruit halfway around the globe. People needed a way to transport these goods all over the world, and the coal-fueled ship was the answer.

There is a lot to be learned about international trade in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Feel free to read more in our activity sheet below called "*The Story of Trade.*"

**Are any of these boats fishing boats?**

Most of the boats you see here are called trawlers (thus the title of the painting, *Trawler's Coaling, Boulogne*). A trawler is a fishing boat that is used for fishing with a net called a trawl or seine. These nets hang vertically in the water with floats on top and weights on the bottom. The ends of the net are drawn together to encircle the fish. The trawler tows the net behind the boat, usually along the lake bottom. They move through the water in a very slow and straight pattern. Trawlers usually fish in the same area over a long period of time. A trawler can catch a lot of fish at one time, although the fishermen aren't able to control what type of fish they catch in their nets.



Today, many commercial fisherman fish with nets. Trawls are still used, but there are also many other types of nets. There are many regulations worldwide for the use of fishing nets. These regulations exist primarily to protect the world's fish and undersea population. The laws have reduced the capture of sea turtles and other non-edible species such as dolphins, sharks, big fish, and whales.

Each net works in a different way and enables fisherman to capture different types of fish. Learn more about the variety of fishing nets in use today while reading "Fishing Nets in Modern Times," below.

### **I've eaten bologna. What is Boulogne?**

Bologna is a food. It is a large smoked sausage made with a variety of finely ground, seasoned meats, usually including beef and pork. Sometimes it is called baloney. Boulogne is very different from bologna. Boulogne is France's biggest fishing port, and in modern times there is a big fish market there. It is at the mouth of the river Liane.

Boulogne is an important city in history. It has been an important town and port since Roman times, when it was the main link for trade and military movements between Roman Gaul and Britain. It was also an important town in medieval times. The wealthy noblemen of Boulogne, called Counts, built a castle on one corner of the old Roman fortifications, and the Old Town grew up within the Roman walls. By the river, the Lower Town grew as a port and fishing village within the protective shadow of the château. The English King Henry VIII battled Boulogne. He bombed the cathedral, and it was totally destroyed during the French Revolution. A new cathedral was rebuilt between 1827 and 1866, but the original crypt is in tact. The stone cannon balls of King Henry VIII can still be seen in the original crypt of the Cathedral. The town was also Napoleon's base as he prepared for invasion of England in 1802-5. There is a monument to Napoleon in the town, built by his soldiers when he went to battle. After Napoleon was defeated in 1815, the French monarchy came back to their throne. English people could again visit Boulogne. Many artists also visited the city, because it was a lovely place to paint the sea. The English painter J.M.W. Turner visited often. He created many sketches and watercolors of seascapes, sunsets and scenes of people around the coast.

Modern Boulogne is also an important city. There are ferries that connect Boulogne with England. These ferries originally served wealthy tourists, but today many people use the ferries as a quick and east way to and from England and France. Find Boulogne on a map of France. Can you tell by looking at a map of France how close Boulogne is to the coast of England? Today Boulogne is a popular seaside resort. Many people vacation there. Can you tell by looking at a map of France why Boulogne is a seaside resort?

### **Did Walter Elmer Schofield make other paintings of the sea?**

Artists from all periods of history tend to paint things they love, or things they



can look at in their daily lives. Since Walter visited his family along the coast of England many times in his life, he painted the sea often. Take some time to look at some other seascapes by Walter Schofield, at [www.michenermuseum.org](http://www.michenermuseum.org).

### **Do other artists paint the boats and sea?**

A picture that prominently displays the sea is called a seascape. When a picture includes boats or other vessels, it is sometimes called a marine or marine landscape. Seascapes have been painted for hundreds of years by artists all over the world. In all the paintings, the sea is painted differently, sometimes to show a mood, to share a feeling, to record a place or to tell a story.

Some artists live or vacation in places that are along the sea, so seascapes were a natural theme for them to work with. Some artists have used seascapes to tell us about the sea, its geography and natural qualities. Some artists have used seascapes as a way to tell stories from current events. Some artists paint seascapes to tell stories about fishermen. Some artists paint seascapes to tell stories about sailors. Still other artists painted the sea to tell stories from history. You can learn more about these seascapes with our activity “Artists Paint the Sea,” below.

### **Learn More**

Read about why artists paint the sea. Look at seascape and marinescape images from museums around the world in the activity sheet “Artists Paint the Sea.”

Learn more about different types of fishing nets used throughout the United States while reading “Fishing Nets in Modern Times,” below.

Look critically at three different seascapes in the Michener collection. Write a story or poem about the sea.

Feel free to read more about 19<sup>th</sup> century trade in our activity sheet “*The Story of Trade*.”

Create some original works of art while looking at and learning about seascapes in the activity sheets entitled “Looking at Seascapes” and “Seascapes,” below.

### **Related Images**

To see a variety of seascapes created throughout history, visit the websites of any of these major art museums.

Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York at [www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org)

Philadelphia Museum of Art in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania at [www.philamuseum.org](http://www.philamuseum.org)

Tate Britain in London, England at [www.tate.org.uk/britain](http://www.tate.org.uk/britain)

Yale University Art Gallery in New Haven, Connecticut at [www.artgallery.yale.edu](http://www.artgallery.yale.edu)

Portland Museum of Art in Portland, Maine at [www.portlandmuseum.org](http://www.portlandmuseum.org)



To see the seascapes of J.M.W. Turner, visit the website of Tate Britain, in London, England at [www.tate.org.uk](http://www.tate.org.uk).

### **Related Links**

Learn all there is to know about France at the *CIA World Fact Book* website at [www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov).

Learn more about the English Channel, the waterway that connects England to France, at [www.worldatlas.com](http://www.worldatlas.com).

Read *Frankenstein* online at the Online Literature Library at [www.literature.org](http://www.literature.org).

Learn more about ships and shipyards. Visit the Independence Seaport Museum in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania at [www.phillyseaport.org](http://www.phillyseaport.org).

Be inspired by the sea! Visit the Maine Maritime Museum in Bath, Maine, at [www.mainemaritimemuseum.org](http://www.mainemaritimemuseum.org).

