



## National Archives and Records Administration

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### **GULF OF MAINE MARITIME BOUNDARY ADJUDICATION**

There were long-time disputes over the boundary and national jurisdiction in the Gulf of Maine. Some of those dated back to the time of the American Revolution. In 1977, the issue took on new importance when both Canada and the United States established 200 mile fishing zones off their coasts. This led to overlapping claims, particularly as they applied to fishing in the Georges Bank.

The United States and Canada initially attempted negotiating a solution. In 1977, during the Carter Administration, the leaders of the two nations appointed negotiators to resolve the boundary and fishing issues on a separate basis. Those negotiations resulted in two treaties in 1979, the first covering management and allocation between the U.S. and Canada of east coast fisheries from Newfoundland to North Carolina and the second calling for a boundary dispute settlement relating to the maritime boundary. In order to go into force, both treaties had to be ratified. The fisheries treaty failed of support in Congress, so the treaties were not ratified and did not go into force.

In 1981, the Reagan Administration sought to move forward by de-coupling the treaties and moving forward on settlement of the maritime boundary. The treaty on that was modified by the U.S. during the ratification process, the changes receiving Canadian approval after several months. The instruments of ratification were exchange in November 1981, after which, pursuant to provisions of the treaty, the U.S. and Canada together submitted to the International Court of Justice the question of the delimitation of the maritime boundary dividing the continental shelf and the fisheries zones in the Gulf of Maine. In January 1982, the Court agreed to hear the case. Subsequently, the U.S. and Canada submitted written Memorials in September 1982, written Counter-Memorials in June 1983, and their official Replies in December 1983. Each side also presented two rounds of oral arguments in April and May 1984. The International Court of Justice rendered its lengthy decision on October 12, 1984.

There is one all-encompassing series of records:

P-100. RECORDS RELATING TO THE GULF OF MAINE CASE. 1977-1984.  
118 boxes.

The records consist of correspondence, reports, memorandums, memorials, statistical data, photographic materials, and publications relating

to the International Court of Justice case concerning the delimitation of the maritime boundary in the Gulf of Maine Area between United States and Canada, also known as the Gulf of Maine Case. These records originated in the Office of the Legal Adviser/Office of the Canadian Maritime Boundary Adjudication (L/CMB).