

Early Settlers of Newfoundland

Photos and text by Dave Parsons





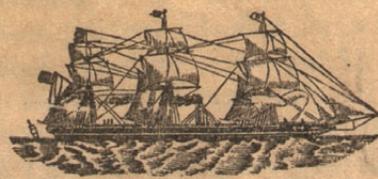
Wild iris grow in the squishy bogs surrounding the small town of Cupids, the location of North America's second English colony established in 1610.

Bertha Davis visits her family home in Clowns Cove also known as Freshwater, Newfoundland in 1929. Davis families arrived on the island in the 1700's. (Parsons collection)

Cover - The Cape Spear Lighthouse was built in 1955 and stands on the most easterly point in North America and looks out into the Atlantic Ocean. The site also houses the oldest surviving lighthouse in Newfoundland dating from 1839.

The historic home of Eli Davis was built around 1850 in Clown's Cove, Newfoundland. Davis, a fisherman and boat builder constructed the home "off level" and not plum which indicated a builder more at home constructing boats. The Davis family was actively involved in the Labrador fishery and in the construction industry in Boston. The home is a Registered Heritage Structure of Newfoundland.



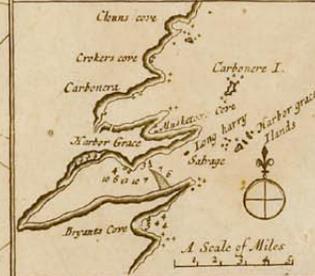
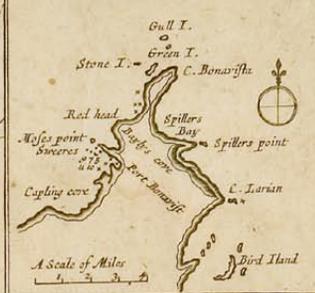



The S.S. "Conscript"
 will leave the
Coastal Wharf, (Hoyles Town,)
 —ON—
Monday next, September 3rd,
at 10 a.m.
 for Battle Harbor, calling at Harbor
 Grace and all intermediate ports.
 Freight received on Friday and Saturday.
 For Freight or Passage apply to the
Newfoundland Coastal S. S. Co. [Limited.]
 Aug. 31.

August 1, 1888 Freight Ship advertisement in the Newfoundland newspaper "Evening Mercury." (Parsons collection)

Parsons and Davis families have lived and continue to live throughout the Conception Bay area in Clown's Cove, Carbonera, Musketa Cove (Muskets Cove or Moskito Cove) and Harbor Grace. According to the **Sir John Berry census of 1675** which counted the planters or fisherman settlers on the Avalon Peninsula, Joseph Parsons and his family were established in Clowns Cove and William Davis and his family in Muskets Cove, both families (19 people) with boats and stages for fish preparation.

The 1706 map on the left shows in detail ship docks, trees water depth and even homes. The map on the right appeared in the 1698 book "The English pilot" and shows detailed inset maps as well as a distorted view of the entire island. The maps are from the Memorial University of Newfoundland Libraries Center for Newfoundland Studies.



CATALINA HARBOR



TRINITY HARBOR



The Maine Bank

Fishing Bank

C. Brittain

Freshwater
May 26-1931

Dear Son

Your letter came to hand on Saturday last feel somewhat glad that you and your family are well. And thankful to say that we are enjoying the same blessing this is the third letter we have wrote to you and you told us on your letter that you got none from us. You said on your letter that you sent us ten dollars. We told you on the last letter that we received the ten dollars alright more than thankful to you for it it come in O.K. you said sorry to hear the

Freshwater
May 26, 1931

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Your letter came to hand on Saturday last feel somewhat glad that you and your family are well. And thankful to say that we are enjoying the same blessing. This is the third letter we have wrote to you and you told us on your letter that you got none from us. You said on your letter that you sent us ten dollars. We told you on the last letter that we received the ten dollars all right. More than thankful to you for it come in O.K.

2

times are so bad in the States and that you have done nothing since Xmas but let it be never so bad in the States its not as bad as it is in NFLD. for theres hundreds and thousands dont know what they're going to do this summer. The whole country is in a confusion and dont know whats going to be the end of it we got our potatoes set but the mistess and me had to work hard to set them I got the felt for my house but I cant get nobody to keep me to put it on I suppose we'll have to try and put it on ourselves. The mistess will have to put on pants and get up on the house.

Sorry to hear the times are so bad in the States and that you have done nothing since Xmas but let it be never so bad in the States it's not as bad as it is in NFLD for there's hundreds and thousands don't know what they're going to do this summer. The whole country is in a confusion and don't know what's going to be the end of it. We got our potatoes set but the misses and me had to work hard to set them. I got the felt for my house but I can't get nobody to help me to put it on. I suppose we'll have to try and put it on ourselves. The misses will have to put on pants and get up on the house with me and I tell you it's no load on her to climb on the house although she is seventy.

with me and I tell you its
no load on her to climb
on the house although she
is seventy you want to
know if I heard from your
brother Jack well I havent
had a letter from him for
two months and he promised
to send me a few dollars.
but I havent heard from him
since if he promised to send
it and dont send it we
will have to do the best we
can without it the weather
is getting fine here now
the summer is come but
fish and salmon are
very scarce. I tell you
theres not many stages
built on Clowns Cove
this summer. the caplin
will have lots of room.

to run ashore. this summer
Uncle Eli and Uncle George
is not much of it neither
one of them John Hayward
is home walking about
dont know what he's going
to do this summer and
hundreds more like him
we had a letter from
Bertha the other day. and
she told us your sister Annie
had a big operation and
didnt know whether she'd
live or die and ^{but} we havent
heard anything about her since
myself and Mrs Davis
wrote sends best regards
to you and your wife and
family no more at present
from your loving father
William Davis
To his son George Will

You want to know if I heard from your brother Jack. Well, I haven't had a letter from him for two months and he promised to send me a few dollars but I haven't heard from him since. If he promised to send it and don't send it we will have to do the best we can without it. The weather is getting fine here now the summer is come but the fish and salmon are very scarce. I tell you there's not many stages built on Clown's Cove this summer. The captain will have lots of room to run ashore this summer.

Uncle Eli and Uncle George is not much of it neither one of them. John Hayward is home walking about don't know what he's going to do this summer and hundreds more like

him. We had a letter from Bertha the other day and she told us your sister Annie had a big operation and didn't know whether she'd live or die but we haven't heard anything about her since.

Myself and Mrs. Davis sends best regards to you and your wife and family. No more at present. From your loving father, William Davis to his son George Will



An old cannon is pointed out into Conception Bay on a foggy morning in the 1610 settlement of Cuper's Cove, today known as Cupids.



Humpback whales, with their distinctive tail patterns and freeloading barnacles feed off the coast of the Avalon Peninsula in the Witless Bay Ecological Reserve.



Maritime Archaic stone points thousands of years old and a German map of Newfoundland from 1744 (Memorial University of Newfoundland Libraries Center for Newfoundland Studies).



Newfoundland, a windswept island in the rough and unpredictable seas of the North Atlantic, known for its wealth in codfish has been a rocky outpost for settlements for thousands of years. During the last ice age, glaciers scraped away the island's topsoil and deposited it 200 to 300 miles away on the ocean floor creating the rich fishing grounds of the Grand Banks. Likewise, generations of native peoples and Europeans as well as sea life have been attracted to the concentration and variety of fish in these waters.

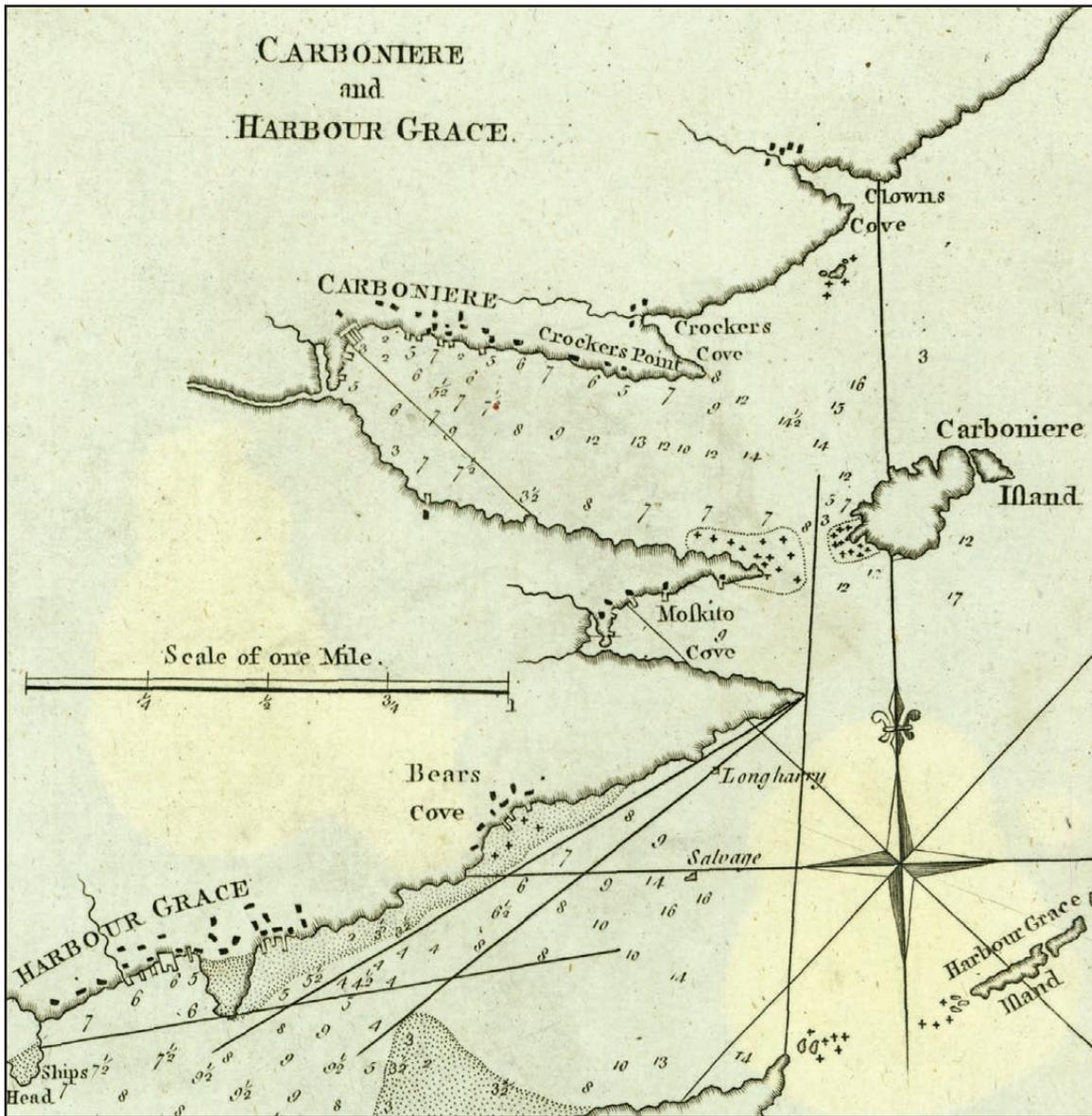
Off its granite shores the cold Labrador Current and warm Gulf Stream provide nutrients for abundant sea life. Seals and breaching humpback whales feed in the waters as occasional icebergs float down from the Labrador Sea. Steep, rocky cliffs make ideal nesting and feeding grounds for a variety of birds including northern gannets, common murre, kittiwakes, razorbills and Atlantic puffins. Halibut, mackerel, capelin and flounder also enjoy the cold waters.

Hunting seals, walrus and whales, with wooden harpoons, the Maritime Archaic people were the first to arrive on the shores of Newfoundland from Southern Labrador about 5,000 years ago when the island was covered by dense forests during a warmer climate. As human migration continued, the Dorset people or paleo-Eskimio wandered the island leaving behind art in the form of carvings of polar bears, walrus and even people, as they were eventually absorbed into the Thule people.

Later, sailing from Greenland and Iceland, the Vikings arrived on a grassy cove overlooking the Strait of Belle Isle on the northern tip of Newfoundland's coast about 1000 A.D. They built a complex of sod houses and left behind a wide array of materials including corroded rivets, scrap iron, spindle whorls, wooden bows and stone lamps.

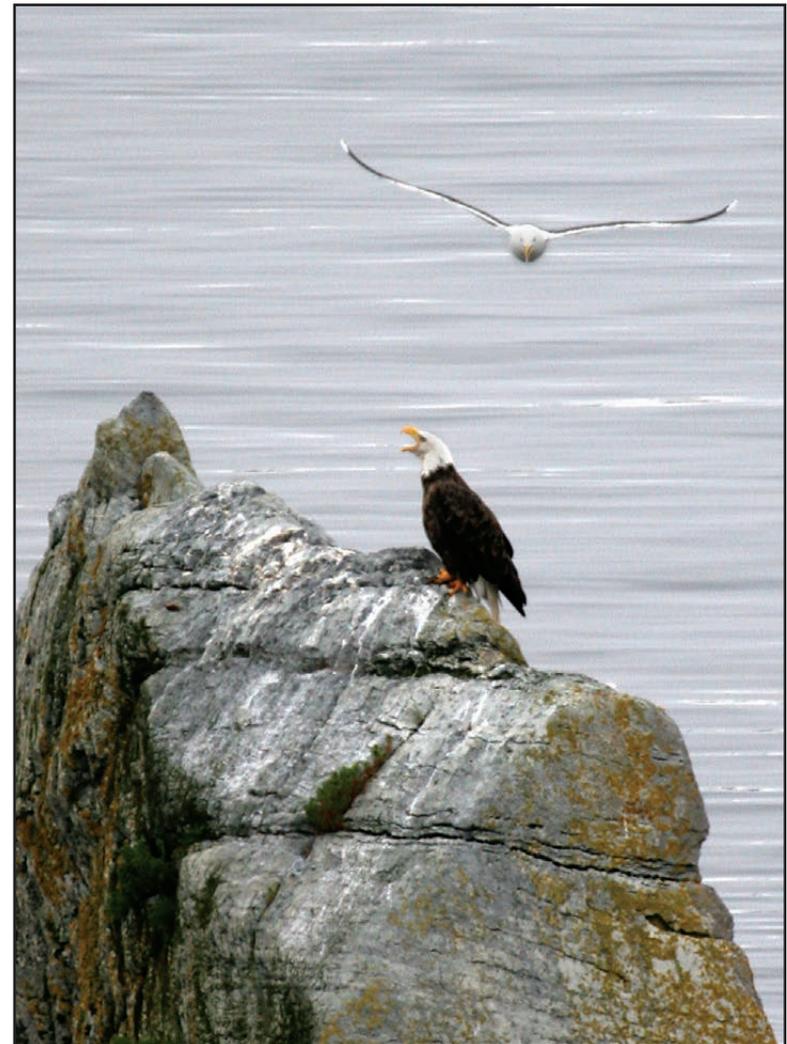


Atlantic puffins nest on rocky island outcrops in the Witless Bay Ecological Reserve. Birds will eat so many fish feeding their young, they are not able to take off and bounce from wave to wave flapping with full beaks and stomachs.



Clown's Cove today is considered part of Freshwater, yet the location in the past is referred to as Clowns Cove on the English 1770 map on the left, Clouns Cove on a John Parsons 1813 Carbonear headstone; Port de Cloune on a German 1744 map; (Map - Memorial University of Newfoundland Libraries Center for Newfoundland Studies).

Calling out his protest, a bald eagle perched on jagged rocks is harassed by a sea gull in the Conception Bay, just off the coast by Clown's Cove or Freshwater.



August 1, 1888 advertisement in the Newfoundland newspaper "Evening Mercury." (Parsons collection)

PARSONS' PURGATIVE PILLS
MAKE NEW, RICH BLOOD.

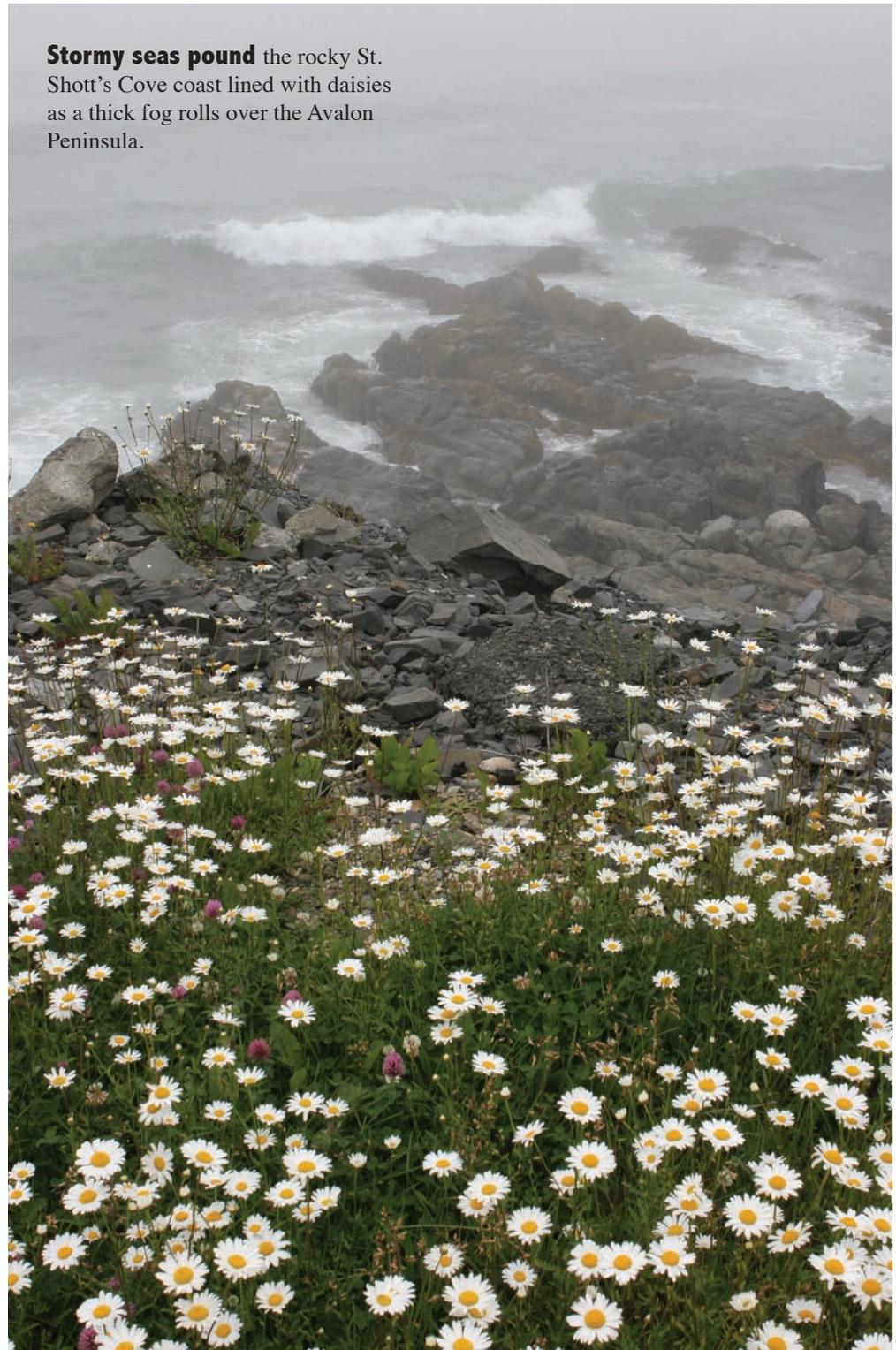
Positively cure SICK-HEADACHE, Biliousness, and all LIVER and BOWEL Complaints, MALARIA, BLOOD POISON, and Skin Diseases (ONE PILL A DOSE). For Female Complaints these Pills have no equal. "I find them a valuable Cathartic and Liver Pill.—Dr. T. M. Palmer, Monticello, Fla." "In my practice I use no other.—J. Dennison, M.D., DeWitt, Iowa." Sold everywhere, or sent by mail for 25 cts. in stamps. Valuable information FREE. I. S. JOHNSON & CO., BOSTON, MASS.

At the time of the Norse voyages, Newfoundland was also home to the Beothuk people who may have been descendants of the Maritime Archaic. They were encountered by Europeans, and unfortunately, were one of the first to be exterminated. The Beothuk lived in small family bands while they hunted inland caribou and coastal seals and birds while also fishing along the coast in bark canoes and inland rivers for salmon.

500 years after the Vikings, John Cabot was authorized by King Henry VII of England to “seek out, discover and find whatsoever isles, countries, regions or provinces of heathens and infidels... in what part of the world soever they be, which before this time have been unknown to all Christians.” Leaving from Bristol, England May 2, 1497 and sailing four and a half weeks, Cabot floated into an unknown bay and named the area “Terra Nova” or New Found Land. He sailed along the coast for a month and then returned to England with news of the sea “swarming with fish, which can be taken not only with the net, but in baskets let down with a stone.” Cabot’s accounts of the seemingly endless bounty of fish excited the merchants in Europe and in the 1500’s fleets of Basque, Portuguese, French and English ships and other Western European countries plied the waters for great quantities of codfish.

With a ready and increasing market in Europe, dry cod was nutritious, light, easily transportable and an almost indestructible commodity and many countries sought to take advantage of the bounty, especially England. With such a potential trade monopoly in their grasp, English merchants and government officials wished to bring the Island under their control. On August 5, 1580, Sir Humphrey Gilbert sailed into St. John’s harbor among the fishing ships of other nations and claimed possession of the Island in the right of the Crown and

Stormy seas pound the rocky St. Shott’s Cove coast lined with daisies as a thick fog rolls over the Avalon Peninsula.



distributed, that day, rooms or fishing locations to English merchants in St. John's and nearby harbors.

Ironically, after claiming the Island, England never officially made it a colony and refused to set up any form of government. Permanent settlement was fiercely discouraged by fish merchant monopolies, piracy and international rivalries. Despite this, the English managed to establish their own Crown approved colonies in the early 1600s. Unfortunately, anyone settling on the Island without direct English support, were on their own and had to fend for themselves against pirates, dangerous natives, greedy merchants, fleets of hostile fishing ships, battling nations, icebergs and harsh elements. Nonetheless, settlers still managed, one way or another to get to Newfoundland.

In 1620, a small book about the Island's abundance written by John Mason, the Governor of the English colony in Newfoundland's Cuper's Cove stirred up colonial fever in England and Scotland. With options for a future back in England looking quite bleak for the poor and landless, conditions were made worse by outbreaks of bubonic plague in the 1500s and 1600s while unsanitary conditions in cities and towns resulted in epidemics of cholera. Deadly civil wars, tyrannical royalty and landowners offered no rights or respite for citizens. Likewise, many English residents saw the advantages of living in Newfoundland that were not available back in England; the opportunity to own land, build a home and boat; start fresh and live off the bounty of the sea and land. As a result, many early settlements were populated by migrant fishermen and indentured servants that had remained hidden on the Island after a season of fishing and by the settlers remaining from the early English colonies.

Those early English colonies were established at Cuper's Cove (Cupids today) in Conception bay in 1610, Renew's on the southern shore of the Avalon Peninsula in 1612 and the Colony of Avalon (Ferryland) in 1621.

The first colony was established in August 1610. After sailing twenty-three days, a group of thirty-nine settlers in three ships landed at Cuper's Cove led by Bristol merchantman, John Guy, who was sponsored by The London and Bristol Company, a merchant formed endeavor including John Guy, who received a charter by King

CLOWN'S COVE—A fishing settlement on the north shore of Conception Bay, district of Bay de Verds. Distant from Carbonear by road 2 miles. Mail weekly. Population 150.

Butt Aaron, fisherman
Butt Alfred, fisherman
Butt Charles, fisherman
Butt George, fisherman
Butt James, fisherman
Butt John, jun., fisherman
Butt John, sen., fisherman
Butt Nathaniel, fisherman
Davis William, fisherman
Hiscock Azariah, fisherman
Moors Silas, fisherman
Parsons Edward, fisherman
Parsons George, fisherman
Pike Edward, fisherman
Pike Francis, fisherman
Pike Thomas, fisherman
Snow Frederick, fisherman
Snow George, fisherman
Snow Stephen, fisherman

Lovell's Province of Newfoundland directory, 1871 lists the fisherman of Clowns Cove, including the Parsons and Davis families. - Memorial University of Newfoundland Libraries Center for Newfoundland Studies.

An old homemade anchor

known as a "killick" is weighted with a stone and held together with old ropes and branches.





A savannah sparrow, perched in a pine tree in Cupids.

Nicholas Nichole Parsons and James Taylor Parsons were both born in Freshwater, Newfoundland. Nicholas on February 27, 1845 and James on June 25, 1877. Nicholas' father was Richard Parsons who was married to Mary Parsons in Clown's Cove on January 3, 1824. (Parsons collection)

Parsons Lane, a small gravel road in Clown's Cove is lined with a few dispersed small homes and open plots of lush, green fields.



New York State Education Department

Division of Visual Instruction

NEGATIVE

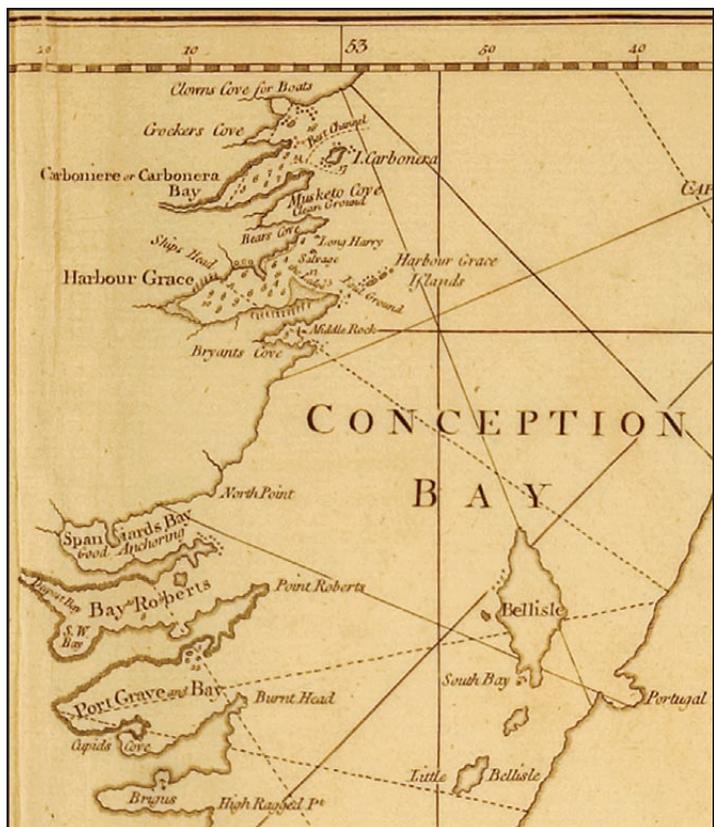
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Newfoundland.
(About 1901)

Washing and Salting Fish. St John



Cuper's Cove or Cupids Cove, the first settlement in Newfoundland and second in North America is shown in this 1771 English map. Also shown is "Clowns Cove for Boats," located about ten miles north on the top of the map and the "Best Channel" past I. Carbonera into Carboniere or Carbonera Bay. (Map - Memorial University of Newfoundland Libraries Center for Newfoundland Studies).

"Making fish" in St. John's harbor was back breaking work. First the fish had to be gutted, headed and split. Then the fish were piled in layers and buried in salt for a few days. Afterwards workers spread the catch on platforms called flakes where they dried in the open air for many days. To prevent any spoiling the fish had to be carried into shelter every night and when rain threatened. In this hand-colored black and white 1901 magic lantern slide, workers prepare the fish. Notice the green pine boughs which were used to spread fish on. (Parsons collection)

James I. The settlers were quite industrious and built a dwelling house and a storehouse surrounded by a 90x120 foot enclosure. They cleared land for farming, cut timber, built a workhouse, blacksmith's shop, and a twelve-ton ship "Indeavour" for island exploration, six smaller fishing boats and another dwelling house.

After setting up the colony but before sailing back to England in 1611, John Guy issued the first eight laws of the colony for settlers and migratory fishermen at Cupers Cove:

1. Nothing harmful could be thrown into the water. Anything that would pollute or make the harbours dangerous had to be brought ashore. Penalty of 5£.
2. No person was to destroy or tamper with any stage, flake, cook room, etc. Penalty of 5£.
3. Each Admiral of each harbour was to use only the amount of beach and flake that was necessary for their boats. Penalty of 10£.
4. No person was to destroy or change the marks on any boat. Penalty of 5£.
5. No person was to use another person's boat unless it was absolutely necessary and even then permission had to be granted by the Admiral. Penalty 5£.
6. No person was to set fire in the woods. Penalty 5£.
7. At the end of a voyage, no person was to destroy any fishing stages, cook rooms, or flakes that were used that year. Penalty 10£.
8. No master of any ship was to use any person of the colony on his ship that had already been assigned a duty. This could only be done under special warrant granted by the Governor of the colony.

Next spring, after alerting England to the vast natural resources of Newfoundland, Guy returned with sixteen women settlers. Unfortunately, the company did such a good job promoting the Island and their work, other Bristol fish merchants became jealous of their campaign and did everything in their power to discourage settlement, including writing a "Petition of West Country Fish Merchants Against Permanent Planters in the Island of Newfoundland." They suggested the settlers were "taking the choicest harbors," taking the migratory fisherman's equipment and property and even trading with pirates



Carbonear Island, located just off the coast from Freshwater and Clown's Cove in Conception Bay was a refuge for settlers during repeated French attacks in the 1600s, and 1700s. In the bitter winter of 1697 during King William's War, French forces led by Pierre Le Moyne D'Iberville ravaged and burned settlements on the Avalon Peninsula including St. John's. About 200 local residents around Carbonear retreated to the island and fired upon the French with six pound cannons and refused D'Iberville's appeal that they surrender. Days later, the French attempted to land on the island but were again repelled. Many more battles occurred and more settlements including Carbonear were burned.

The clown in Clown's Cove is located in the rock formation below this text. Notice the head about the size of a small house with the large nose and chin facing towards the left near the top of the Flat Rocks cliffs.



among other complaints. The King himself replied to the merchants telling them not to “molest” any of the settlers and also addressed their other complaints.

The colony initially did well and John Guy started another colony at Renew's on the southern shore of the Avalon Peninsula where he moved people and supplies. In July of 1612, while sailing from Cuper's cove to Renew's, one of his men was shot and wounded by pirates. To prevent any future problems and to appease the pirate Peter Easton, whose home base was established at Harbor Grace, just north of Cuper's Cove, the settlers of Renew's gave him two of their four pigs.

Colonization continued and an attempt was made to establish a fur trade with the native Beothuk tribe. On November 6, John Guy and his crew sailed into Trinity Bay and met a small group of Beothuk in Bull Arm where they exchanged presents and shared a meal. Despite an initial meeting that went well, later that year fishermen noticed the Beothuk in the same area and fired their guns at them, scarring them away and thus ruining any future attempt at trading or improving relations.

Winter rolled in quickly and the weather turned cold and stormy. Out of the sixty-two people at Cuper's Cove, eight of them died from scurvy, as did many of their animals.

Despite difficult living conditions, on March 27, Nicholas Guy's wife gave birth to a son, the first English child born in Canada.

During the next spring, John Guy left Newfoundland in April 1613 never to return. He later became a Member of Parliament in England and fought hard for the rights of Newfoundland settlers.

By 1615, John Mason, an experienced pirate fighter, became the new governor of the Newfoundland colony. He fended off pirates in Newfoundland while exploring the island and performing his duties



Blueberries are numerous in the grassy areas around Clown's Cove as well as the entire island.

as governor. Later in 1620, the King of England gave him a commission and a ship so that he could drive the pirates out of Newfoundland. Mason was governor until 1621 and was later involved in starting colonies in Maine and New Hampshire.

Most settlement details after 1621 are few, however, there are reports that Mason's friend, William Alexander, had written in a book that "people were still living at Cupers Cove and they were doing well." It is known that the settlers still lived at Cuper's Cove after Governor Mason had left. Later, in 1628, he sailed again for Newfoundland, this time with his second wife Jane, most of his children and 40 more settlers, to officially take over as Proprietary Governor of Avalon.

As the colonies grew so did the merchant protests. Despite this, many English people, transient fishermen as well as indentured servants migrated and remained on the Island well after the fishing season, thus avoiding any dangerous return voyage to England. Many of the earliest outposts or fishing villages were populated by fishermen that remained hidden on the Island after a season of fishing while the fleet sailed away.

Staying on the Island had another advantage; it gave the settlers a longer fishing season. The Island also provided plenty of timber for building a home, cooking and heating. The sea and its many rivers and lakes also provided many sources of food.

Nevertheless, the settlers, called planters (planted in place or fisherman) had to run a gauntlet of obstacles starting with building a shelter and surviving the harsh winter. The soil



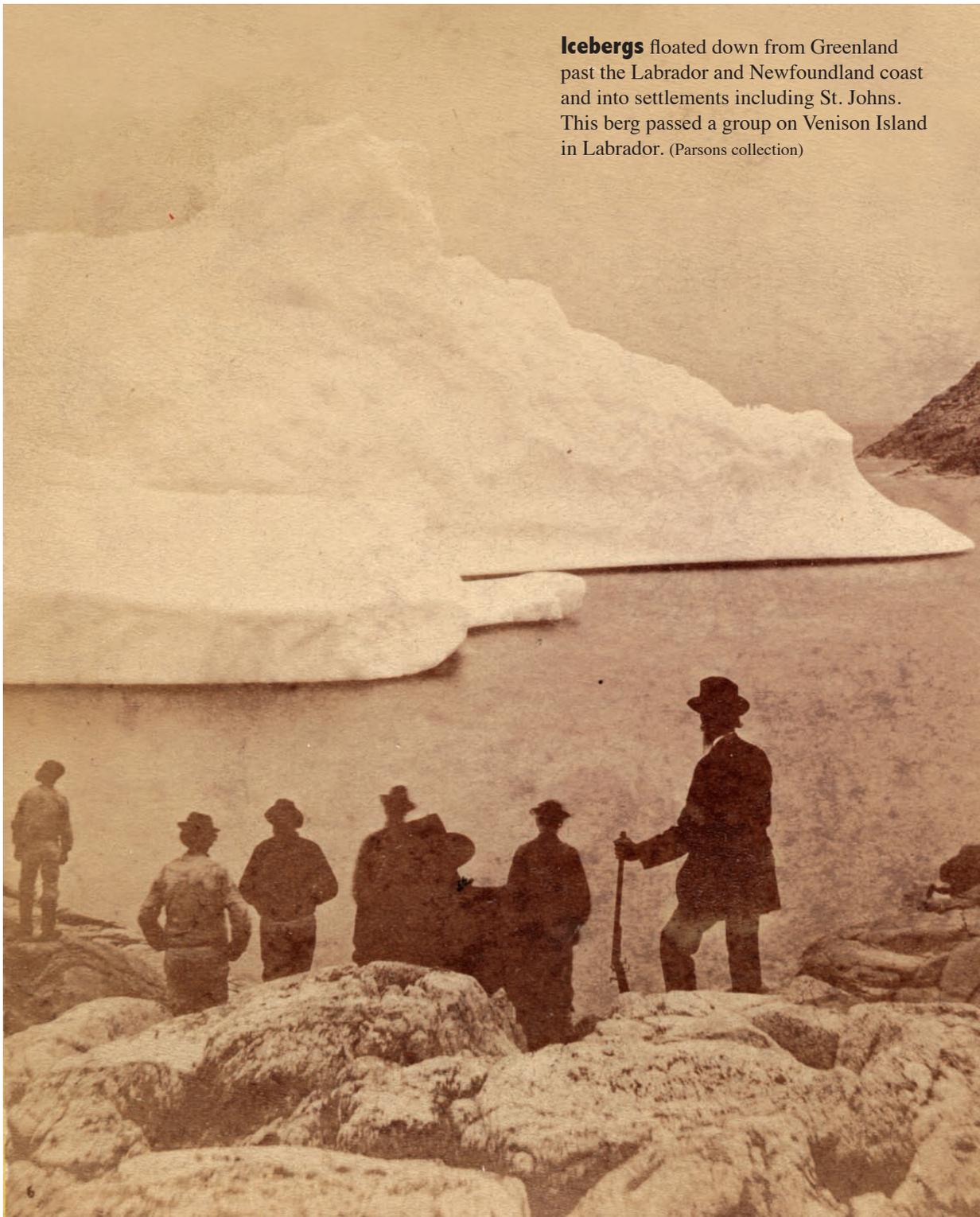
Ferryland vegetables and flowers grow in a garden at the Colony of Avalon. Archaeological excavations have revealed many early artifacts including the clay pipe below.

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Clown's Cove and Freshwater as viewed from the top of Flat Rock stand today on green grass during a gray summer day in July. In general, ninety-five percent of Newfoundland's population are descendants of British fishermen and seafarers, many from the small maritime towns in the southwest of England. Other "Newfies" trace their ancestry back to French and even Native American families, especially in Labrador.

Icebergs floated down from Greenland past the Labrador and Newfoundland coast and into settlements including St. Johns. This berg passed a group on Venison Island in Labrador. (Parsons collection)



was almost barren and growing crops was very difficult and malnutrition was common. Winters were cold and snowy on the “Rock,” a nickname to joke about settler’s struggle to live in such an isolated and elemental place.

Even the life giving seas were notoriously unpredictable. When freezing waters of the Labrador Current mixed with the warm Gulf Stream off the coast they created instant weather hazards, surprise storms and thick fog. As a result more than 7,000 shipwrecks reside off the coast of Newfoundland today.

“According to Lawrence Coughlan, an appointed deacon by the Bishop of London for Newfoundland in 1766, “The winters in Newfoundland are very severe, there being great falls of snow and hard frost; the Houses there are mostly very disagreeable to those who are not used to them; in general they are all wood, the walls, so called are studs put in the ground close together, and between each, they stop Moss as they call it, to keep out the snow; this they cover Bark of Trees, and put great Clods over that, some are covered with Board in such houses I have been and in the morning my bedside has had a beautiful white covering of snow. My shoes have been hard frozen, that I could not well put them on til brought to the fire.”

As merchant protests continued, they attempted to thwart any settler momentum. In West

Sod houses were some of the earliest dwellings, similar to this family's home along the coast in Labrador. They were easy to construct and took little wood to heat, however, they were exposed to Atlantic gales, so during winter months on the barren shores, many families took shelter at inland cabins known as "tilts," where wood was in greater supply. (Parsons collection)



County (West England) merchants convinced the English government to remove any squatters. As a result, in 1675, Sir John Berry, a Naval Commodore was dispatched to Newfoundland to order the settlers to leave the area between Bonavista and Cape Race.

However, Sir John, after seeing how hardworking and industrious the settlers were, ordered a census be taken. This would demonstrate to the Privy Council in England the injustice and an unnecessary hardship of sending such productive and well-established settlers back to England. Furthermore, after witnessing injustice towards the settlers, he encouraged settlement along with another sea Captain. “Captain Davies is of the same opinion for encouragement of a Colony for security of the fishing trade, or else the French would take the advantage to make themselves masters of all the harbours and fishing places.” He also pointed out many problems “whose abuses complained of are wholly occasioned by the West country adventurers” in other words the English migrant fisherman are the troublemakers who destroyed the settlers (fish drying) stages for firewood. Sir John also blames the unscrupulous Captains encouraging fisherman to stay on the Island “merely to save charges of returning them to England.”

However any settlement “law,” was usually tyrannical treatment administered from ship decks by migratory fishing fleet admirals or captains that arrived along the Newfoundland coast for the summer fishing season. And for the remainder of



Codfish are laid out on stages to dry at Battle Harbor in Labrador. The platforms are raised and built of spaced wooden beams to provide air circulation. (Parsons collection)



Precariously perched stages and homes line the steep ledges along many of bay and coves along the Labrador and Newfoundland coastline. This 1800s stereoview photo is of a settlement on Venison Island, Labrador. (Parsons collection)

the year according to a Captain Palliser, “the merchants ruled the people at their pleasure.” Wealthy merchants not wanting any competition or to share in any profits encouraged fisherman to attack the settlers. Notorious “Fishing Admirals” may even chase any settler inland, destroy his possessions or press them back into service for the trip back to England.

Despite English merchant efforts to block colonization, large quantities of fish were caught and shipped to Europe by Newfoundland-based boats and by the 1750s over two thousand people were living permanently in the St John’s area alone.

Meanwhile, as defenseless settlers were trying to eek out a living, they had to survive troop invasions of outports or fishing villages while the British and French battled for borders, fishery rights and supremacy in Europe and North America during King William’s War from 1689 to 1713 and the Seven Years War, which ended in 1763.

Despite the British gaining control of the entire island in 1713, as always, while fishing rights were disputed and corrupt officials continued bickering, the real interests of the colony were never considered. It wasn’t until 1824 that Britain recognized Newfoundland and Labrador as a colony and allowed settlers to elect their own people into office and eventually form a responsible government. It was also at this time



Quidi Vidi, just outside St. Johns provides a shelter for boats and residents of the Rock.

Carbonear, located a couple of miles south of Freshwater and Clown's Cove has been the hub of the community. One of the earliest settlements in Newfoundland, the town is listed on late 1500s European maps as Cape Carviero. In the 1675 census, Carbonear had a permanent population of 55 and was the third largest settlement. The town is also mentioned in connection with pirate raids in 1614 and was burned repeatedly by the French during attacks of 1696-1697 and 1704-1705. The settlement was even attacked by American privateers in 1775. During the 1800's carbonear was a focus for fishing, shipbuilding, sealing, trading and commerce. The photo was taken in the 1930s. (Parsons collection)



during the 1890s, the fishery collapsed, and many frustrated and jobless Newfoundlanders migrated the United States for better conditions.

Those diehard Newfoundlanders that remained continued to govern themselves as a dominion under British Crown and rejected any union with Canada until 1933 when local rule was withdrawn by London. During those same years, the fishery collapsed yet again and the Great Depression took hold and for the next fifteen years settlers jointly governed with the British.

It was the beginning of another war in 1939, World War II that helped bring Newfoundland and Labrador out of the Great Depression. The U.S. and Canada, using the island's strategic location established military bases providing thousands of well-paying jobs for settlers.

Later, when the war ended in 1945 and the economy improved, Newfoundland and Labrador had a choice to make, join with Canada or remain dependent of Britain. After furious debates and close votes, Newfoundland and Labrador eventually became Canada's tenth province.

St. Francis Pt., LABRADOR, *Oct. 7th* 1906

RECEIVED from *Graham Shute*

Six Qtls. *0* Qrs. *0* Lbs. Labrador Fish as under

Qtls.	Qrs.	Lbs.	Merchantable	Casks Cod Oil containing
<i>6</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>		
<i>6-0-0</i> Total				

@ \$5.³⁰ pr. Qrt. or same as any other supplying merchant.

JOHN RORKE & SONS,
Per *Ernest Taylor*

V. I. LABRADOR, *Oct 9th* 1906

RECEIVED from *John J. French*

One Hundred Eight Qtls. *0* Qrs. *0* Lbs. Labrador Fish as under :

Qtls.	Qrs.	Lbs.	Merchantable	Cullage
<i>108</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0</i>		
<i>108-1-0</i> Total				

payable at \$5.40 Five dollars and forty Cents or Highest price paid by Supplying merchants on the Coast and 10[¢] per Qrt for 2th and 10[¢] for 1th for Making fish

JOHN RORKE & SONS,
Per *James H. Howill*

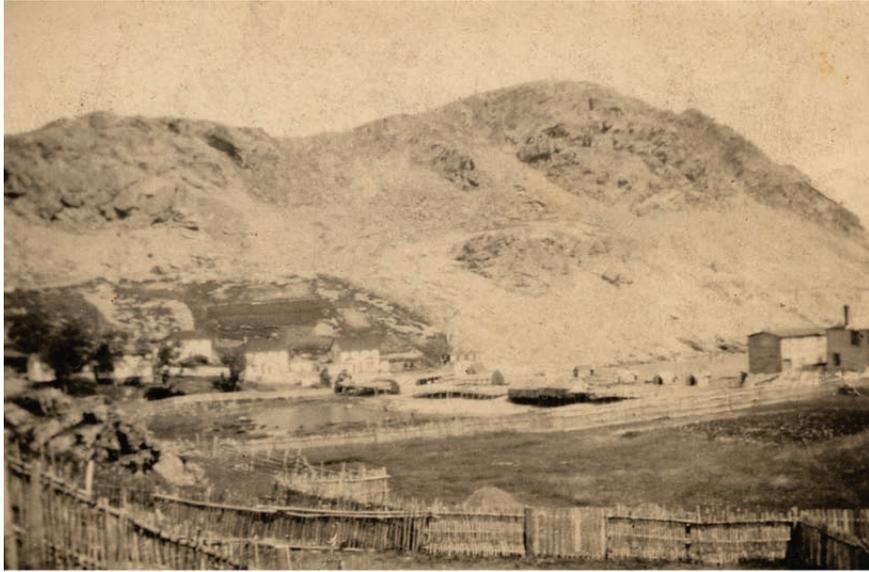


An early 1900s riding light from a schooner was hoisted in the fore-rigging during the night while the boat was anchored.

Receipts for fish, are written by representatives of John Rorke and Sons, an established fish merchant in Carbonear. Graham Shute received \$5.30 per quintal for his six quintals “or same as any other supplying merchant” and John French received \$5.40 per quintal (or Highest price paid by Supplying Merchant on the Coast) for his 108 from Venison Island, a popular fishing area. Quintal is an old English measure for 112 pounds (51 kilograms) of fish. Notice French also received additional payments including one for “Making Fish.” (Parsons collection)

Clown's Cove in 1929 looks much the same as it did in 2006. The photo was taken while Bertha Davis was visiting her father William Davis who was 79 years old at the time. (Parsons collection)

James T. Parsons and Bertha Davis pose for a formal portrait with their daughter in 1902. James came to the United States in 1899 with his father Nicholas. James and Bertha were married in Chelsea, Massachusetts on April 29, 1901. (Parsons collection)



Commonwealth of Massachusetts.



REGISTRARS
OF VOTERS.
SEP 20 1902
CHELSEA.

Suffolk, ss.

No. 634

To all people to whom these Presents shall come:

GREETING.

KNOW YE,

THAT at the POLICE COURT OF CHELSEA,
holden at said Chelsea, within the County of Suffolk, on
the *nineteenth* day of *September*
in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and
one, two.
James J. Parsons
of Chelsea, in the said County of Suffolk,
formerly of *Newfoundland*
was admitted to become a CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES OF
AMERICA, according to the Acts of Congress in such case
made and provided.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto
set my hand and affixed the seal of said Court, at
Chelsea aforesaid, the *nineteenth*
day of *September*
in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred
and *two*

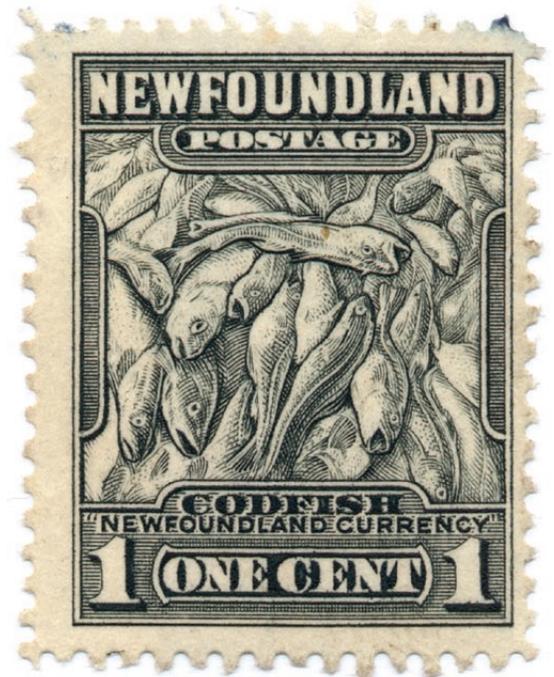
Joseph M. C. [Signature]



Despite the improved economy after the war, the main source of income for Newfoundland and Labrador was still fish. Unfortunately, once again, international competition for fish caused numerous problems for the outport settlers and local fisherman. In the 1970s and 1980s repeated failures in the cod fisheries were caused by massive foreign trawlers fishing year-round and hauling in 800,000 tons of cod a year. Canada set catch limits with short-term success as large fish companies were established in the province. Again, the companies, with their fleets of trawlers took the fish stocks to dangerously low levels and in 1994 the Canadian government banned all fishing of northern cod leaving Newfoundland and Labrador families out of work.

Even today the battle for fish continues and in this never ending backdrop of battling countries, merchant monopolies against seasoned settlers and free competition, a hardy, defiant and independent people still try to make a living off remote lands and waters in an elemental place with harsh weather, infertile planting grounds with unpredictable fog and cod.

Newfoundland Codfish
one cent postage stamp.
(Parsons collection)



James T. Parsons
became a U.S. citizen in
Chelsea, Massachusetts
on September 19, 1902.
(Parsons collection)



Bibliography

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Jennings, Gary. "Newfoundland Trusts in the Sea." National Geographic 112-141. Print

Marshall, Ingeborg. The Beothuk of Newfoundland, a Vanished People St. John's. Breakwater Books. 1989. Book.

Rolton, Chris. Stories of Carbonear. St. John's. Flanker Press, 2005. Book.

Thurston, Harry. "Newfoundland, The Enduring Rock." National Geographic 676-700. Print.

Wegenast, David. "History." Decks Awash 6 Dec. 1980: 4-11. Print.

Maiden Island or Maidenair Island to some locals stands with Carbonear Island in the distance and has not changed since 1926. The old photo also shows J. Moores fish store and fences in Clown's Cove, and today, just open fields. (Parsons collection)

Useful Websites:

Maps:

<http://collections.mun.ca/cdm/search/collection/maps>

Newfoundland Family Genealogy

<http://collections.mun.ca/cdm/>
<http://ngb.chebucto.org/>

Archaeology in Newfoundland and Labrador

http://www.btcrd.gov.nl.ca/pao/arch_in_nl/index.html

Carbonear Island History

<http://www.nlgeotourism.com/content/carbonear-island-historic/nf15F507C01C7B5623FB>

A Year in the Life of a 17th Century Newfoundland Planter

<http://www.crossroadsforcultures.ca/english/index.php?narId=3&language=en>

Newfoundland history

<http://www.crossroadsforcultures.ca/index.php?language=en>

The 1929 wharf with fishing boats and barrels lined up stand next to stacks of fish on stages and a weathered harbor shack for cleaning fish. In 2006 nothing remains from days past, only a rough boat ramp and open water. (Parsons collection)





An open field is all that remains of William Davis' house which once stood about 20 feet past the above fence. According to Graham Butt, a longtime resident "the roof of the house was right steep you know." So steep in fact, according to Davis in his letter in 1931 "I got the felt for my house but I can't get nobody to help me to put it on. I suppose we'll have to try and put it on ourselves. The misses will have to put on pants and get up on the house with me and I tell you it's no load on her to climb on the house although she is seventy." Graham also remembers Davis' third wife Flora Pike "the old lady, she used to make molasses hops and sell them to the kids going to school." Graham continued about William: "Oh, I remember him, he was a tall, tall straight man and he'd always walk with a cane you know and he'd go to church and he'd have that boulder hat on you know." (boulder hat - looked like a upsidedown bowl with a rim on it). "And he'd used to talk in a right loud voice. His brother used to live over there (pointing) - with John Hayward's father - Eli and his brother George."



Fishermen are squidden' in Conception Bay just off the Freshwater coast, or catching squid, rather than fish. The codfish stocks are still in decline, even well into the 21st century.



Fog rolls across Highway 10 outside Trepassay on the southern tip of the Avalon Peninsula. The area is home to the most southerly herd of caribou in Canada.



Terra Nova National Park is a beautiful landscape with thick boreal forests filled with bogs and ponds located in Eastern Newfoundland.



Archaeologists at Ferryland
uncover numerous artifacts, stone
walls and cobblestone floors at the
Colony of Avalon dating from 1621.

Tall slate cairns mark the highest points on the cliffs above the town of Cupids visible from Conception Bay and Cupids Cove.



The Coast of
NEW-FOUND-LAND
From Cape-Raze to Cape S^t. Francis.

Described by Henry Southwood
Anno 1675

English and French Leagues 20 to a degree
Duytsche Mylen 12 in een graet
Leagues de Spania 17 1/2 an grado



1675 Map from the Memorial University of Newfoundland Libraries Center for Newfoundland Studies.